

People



T. Spencer Crowley III

Co-Chair, Land Use and Development Practice

Miami

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” Spencer Crowley is a great lawyer and extremely proficient.

- *Chambers USA*

Spencer Crowley’s practice focuses on large scale land use and environmental permitting matters, including zoning, growth management, urban development, transportation, sovereignty submerged lands, coastal regulation, marina permitting, wetlands, and water resources. He has worked with the Governor’s Commission for a Sustainable South Florida, the South Florida Water Management District, and Duke University’s Wetlands Center in the Florida Everglades. He has assisted clients in the land use permitting of major projects such as the Babcock Ranch, Midtown Miami, Pier 66, Lauderdale Marine Center, Village at Gulfstream Park, Miami World Center, and Brickell City Centre. Further, Spencer represents the Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami International Boat Shows.

In addition to his private practice, Spencer has served on several waterfront boards. In 2008, County Commissioner Carlos Gimenez appointed Spencer to the committee charged with reviewing and recommending changes to Miami-Dade County’s Manatee Protection Plan. In 2007, Spencer was appointed to serve as Miami-Dade County Commissioner for the Florida Inland Navigational District, and he was reappointed for an additional 4-year term by Governor Rick Scott in 2012. In 2005, Miami Mayor Manny Diaz appointed Spencer to the City of Miami’s Waterfront Advisory Board where he served as chair. More recently, Spencer was named vice president of the Florida Ocean Alliance.

Areas of Experience

- Real Estate
- Economic Development and Incentives
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Regulation
- Florida Land Use and Entitlements
- State Legislative and Executive Lobbying
- Land Use and Development
- Local Government Advocacy
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Water Task Force
- Hospitality
- Hospitality Regulatory Compliance
- Hospitality Acquisition and Development
- Distressed Property

Education

- J.D., University of Florida Levin College of Law, 2001, Certificate in Environmental and Land Use Law
- M.B.A., University of Florida, 2001, Specialization in Real Estate and Urban Analysis
- M.A., University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, 1998
- A.B., Duke University, Environmental Science and Policy, Geology, 1996

Admissions

Bars

Florida

Related Content

- Akerman Sponsors Annual University of Miami Real Estate Impact Conference
February 07, 2025
- Akerman Sponsors Trustee Luncheon Featuring Alvah H. Chapman Jr. Award of Excellence
November 13, 2024

Spencer holds an undergraduate degree from Duke University, a Masters degree from the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, and JD and MBA from the University of Florida where he served on the Florida Law Review and the Environmental Moot Court team.

Akerman Sponsors Annual ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean Vision Awards
September 26, 2024

Notable Work

Marina and Coastal Permitting

Mega Yacht Arena: Representing client in permitting of 50 slip mega yacht marina. Project involves negotiation of submerged land lease with the city, waiver of public purpose restriction by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement trust Fund, permitting managed mooring field as seagrass mitigation for the project

Allied Marine and Bertram Yacht Headquarters: Represented former owner of Allied Marine and Bertram Yacht headquarters in Miami, specifically in matters related to marina slip allocations, maintenance dredging, and fortification of aging coastal infrastructure

Hotel Development: Represented private hotel developer in matters related to Sate conveyances of submerged lands to a municipality, specifically obtaining determination that private marina can be authorized on municipally owned submerged lands with deed restrictions

Epic Marina: Representing owner and operator of 8 slip Epic mega-yacht marina at mouth of the Miami River, specifically in obtaining authorization to add vessel fueling or bunkering from the upland facilities and in matters related to transfer of upland property

Radio Tower: Represented upland property owner in matter related to aging and unpermitted radio tower, specifically in convincing authorities having jurisdiction over regulatory matters that tower should be removed

Condominium Counsel: Represented residential condominium in regulatory and proprietary issues related to marina permit in Biscayne Bay, specifically using grandfathering provisions of state and local regulations

Key Biscayne Yacht Club: Represented Key Biscayne Yacht Club in regulatory matters related to expansion and dredging at their facility; specifically working with US Army Corps of Engineers to close out seagrass mitigation

Private Marinas Transaction: Represented lender in transaction to acquire 11 private marinas in Florida

Boat Yard: Representing owner of boat yard on south Fork of the Miami River in all matters related to environmental permitting, remediation, and operation of a boat yard and brokerage service.

Marina Slips Transactions: Represented clients in transactions to transfer marina slips pursuant to Miami-Dade County Manatee Protection Plan

Private Marina Development: Represented developer of townhouse project on Normandy isles in Miami Beach in relation to development of private marina, specifically using the grandfathering regulations of Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Code.

Dredging: Provide strategic input into dredging of flood shoal at Baker's Haulover inlet and placement of dredged material on Bal Harbor beach and in the near shore environment

Permitting: Assist city of Miami with permitting of public seawall using pilot program between US Army Corps of Engineers and National Marine Fisheries Service

Federal Legislation: Attend annual federal legislative meetings in order to seek congressional appropriations for dredging projects along East Coast of Florida

Federal Funding: Attend annual federal executive branch meetings in order to seek prioritization of funding in the U.S. Army Corps work program.

Permitting: Represented clients in after-the-fact permitting of docks in Indian Creek waterway, in order to resolve federal violations and enforcement action

Permitting and Reconstruction: Represented client in permitting and reconstruction of approximately 30-slip marina facility along western shoreline of Miami Beach in Biscayne Bay

Marina Permitting: Represented several clients in marina permitting of private marina facilities in North Bay Village, FL, specifically in relation to compliance with manatee protection plan, upland access agreements, and proprietary authorization through grandfathering provisions

Land Use

Brickell City Centre: Represented Swire Properties in development of the Brickell City Centre project in downtown Miami, a \$1.5 billion, 5.5 million square foot mixed-use development in the city's financial district. The project includes office space, retail, residential units, hotel, and underground parking. A model of large-scale mixed-use projects, it is the first Special Area Plan built under the Miami 21 Zoning Code.

Midtown Miami Project: Represent client in regards to Midtown Miami project in Miami, Florida. Advised client in land use, zoning, and site plan approval matters for 56 acre urban infill project in downtown Miami which will contain 645,000 square feet of retail development and 4,500 residential units.

Babcock Ranch: Represent purchaser and developer in land use matters for approximately 90,000-acre Babcock Ranch property in Charlotte and Lee County, Florida, and in sale of approximately 74,000 acres to the State of Florida, one of the largest purchases of conservation lands in Florida's history. Advised client in land use entitlement matters, several intergovernmental agreements regarding infrastructure, and environmental permit matters for the planned new town which will contain approximately 19,500 residential units and 6 million square feet of non-residential development. Assisted client in dispute with petitioner in a Chapter 120 administrative hearing challenging the validity of the comprehensive plan amendments.

Indiantown DRI: Represent client in land use matters for Indiantown DRI, the first DRI approved in Martin County in 20 years and the first Community Development District ever created in Martin County. Lead counsel for mixed-use DRI containing 1650

residential units, 60,000 square feet of commercial space, 15 acre elementary school site, and a 20 acre community park site.

Hallandale Beach: Represent Hallandale Beach, Florida in regards to the Villages at Gulfstream Park DRI. Retained as special land use counsel to the city to help review and process a mixed-use DRI at the Gulfstream Park horse racing facility. Development program included 750,000 square feet of retail, 140,000 square feet of office, 1500 residential units, 500 hotels rooms, and a 2,500 seat attraction facility.

AVE DRI: Represent client in regards to the AVE DRI in Opa-locka, Florida. Helped file DRI application for mixed-use office and industrial complex consisting of approximately 2.5 million square feet of development. Assisted in the adoption of a comprehensive plan amendment which established an airport master plan for the Opa-Locka Airport.

Distressed Mortgage Debt: Represent purchaser of distressed mortgage debt secured by mixed-use DRI in Collier County, FL. Performed full land-use and environmental due diligence on the subdivision, including status of environmental permits, entitlements, and eligibility for legislative extensions.

Distressed Mortgage Debt: Represented purchaser of distressed mortgage debt secured by historic hotel in Miami Beach, FL. Performed full land-use due diligence on the property, including status of entitlements and eligibility for legislative extensions.

Lender: Represent lender that foreclosed on an approved mixed-use DRI. Obtaining amendments to approved development plans, working with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on process to designate eagle nest as “lost” and therefore eliminate bald eagle buffer on the property.

Related Professional Experience

- South Florida Water Management District
- Governor’s Commission for a Sustainable South Florida
- Duke University Wetlands Center, Florida Everglades

Published Work and Lectures

Panels

- 38th Annual Environmental Permitting Summer School, Speaker, “Permitting and Development in the Marine Environment,” July 17, 2024
- 37th Annual Environmental Permitting Summer School, Speaker, “Permitting and Development in the Marine Environment,” July 19, 2023
- 36th Annual Environmental Permitting Summer School, Speaker, “Permitting and Development in the Marine Environment,” July 19, 2022
- 35th Annual Environmental Permitting Summer School, Speaker, “Permitting and Development in the Coastal Marine Environment,” July 20, 2021
- Florida Chapter of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitats, Panelist, “Resilience in South Florida,” April 2020
- Langan Land Development Panel Discussion, Panelist, “Site Solutions in South Florida: Less Land Means More Difficulty in Acquisitions and Development,” Miami, FL, October 2018

- Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, Panelist, “Boating Access Infrastructure Permitting: with Tori White, Chief, Regulatory Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville, FL; Tim Rach, Program Administrator, Office of Submerged Lands and Environmental Resources Coordination, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Tallahassee, FL; Virginia Fay, Assistant Regional Administrator, Habitat Conservation Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, St. Petersburg, FL; Nick Wiley, Executive Director, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Tallahassee, FL; and Victoria Foster, Chief of Staff to State Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Vero Beach, FL” Sanibel, FL, February 2015
- Urban Land Institute, Technical Assistance Panelist, Margate Community Redevelopment Agency on the City Center Project
- Urban Land Institute, Technical Assistance Panelist, Deerfield Beach Community Redevelopment Agency on the Cove Shopping Center and Sullivan Park

Published Works

- *Miami Herald*, Quoted, “Jungle Island Plans to Become an Eco-Adventure Resort,” February 2021
- *Law 360*, Quoted, “COVID Construction Files: Berkowitz’s Miami Observatory,” February 2021
- *Guide to Doing Business in Florida*, Co-Author, “Land Use: Easements and Zoning,” September 2013
- *Guide to Doing Business in Florida*, Co-Author, “Real Estate Regulation,” August 2011
- *The Environmental and Land-Use Law Section Reporter*, Author, “‘What Do You Expect?’ - Reasonable Investment Backed Expectations after Good v. United States,” Volume XXII, Number 3, July 2001
- *Florida Law Review*, Author, “The Clinton Administration’s Battle to Gain Evidentiary Privilege for Secret Service Agents - Another Tainted Legacy?,” 1999

Lectures

- Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat Florida, Panelist, “Expert Panel on Resilience,” April 16, 2020
- University of Florida, Professor, “Large Commercial Development Project – Compressed Course,” January 6-9, 2020
- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Moderator, “The Waterfront: Water Taxis with Brett Bibeau, Managing Director of Miami River Commission; Irene S. Hegedus, AIA, ACHA, Chief Transportation Enhancements, Miami-Dade County; Max Vlessing, President, Water Taxi Miami; William Walker, President, Water Taxi of Ft. Lauderdale; Neal Schafers, ASLA, Planning, Urban Design, Capital Improvements & Transportation, Miami Downtown Development Authority,” January 2017
- 4th National Working Waterfronts & Waterways Symposium, Moderator, “Maintaining the Stream of Commerce: Issues Facing the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway,” November 17, 2015
- University of Florida Levin College of Law, Environmental & Land Use Law Program, Presenter, Spring Break Field Course, March 2015
- Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team (BBRRCT) “Water Front Master Planning in Miami-Dade County”; Discussion of Biscayne Bay related FIND activities, May 21, 2014
- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Moderator, “The Beach Corridor Transit Connection Study: with Gus Pego, Secretary,

FDOT District 6; Ysela Llort, Director, Miami Dade Transit; Alice Bravo, Assistant City Manager, City of Miami; Jimmy Morales, City Manager, City of Miami Beach; and Javier Betancourt, Deputy Director, Miami Downtown Development Authority,” Miami, October 2013

- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, “November 5 City-wide Referendum: Coconut Grove Waterfront with Commissioner Marc D. Sarnoff, City of Miami, District 2” October 2013
- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Moderator, “Tour of Miami Marine Stadium & Reception with Hilario Candela, Miami Marine Stadium Architect and Jorge Hernandez, Friends of Miami Marine Stadium Co-Founder,” July 2013
- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Moderator, “Baywalk Master Plan Study: On the Waterfront - Miami’s 15 Mile Promenade with Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Collin Worth,” June 2013
- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, “Bringing Downtown Back: How Strategic Investment Can Create Thriving Urban Neighborhoods with Clarence E. Woods, III, Denis Russ, Nick Inamdar, Joseph Furst and Jihad Rashid,” February 2013
- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Guest Speaker, “Hop On, Hop Off: Brickell Trolley Tour,” January 2013
- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Panel Speaker, “Miami-Dade’s \$12 Billion Water and Sewer Fix,” November 2012
- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Moderator, “Redefining Downtown Miami: Brickell Citycentre,” September 2012
- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Moderator, “Waterfront Emergence: Volvo Ocean Race and Marine Stadium Restoration Activate the Downtown Miami Waterfront,” April 2012
- Ralph E. Boyer Institutes on Real Property and Condominium Law’s 24th Institute on Real Property Law, Speaker, “Land Use Update - Growth Management after the Death of the Department of Community Affairs; Recent Legislation and the Future Regulation of Land Development,” October 2011
- Urban Land Institute South Florida Chapter, Moderator, “Florida Growth Management in the New Era: A Guide to Understanding Florida’s New Legislation: with Tom Beck, Michael Busha, Valerie Hubbard, and Trish Blasi,” West Palm Beach, June 2011
- Urban Land Institute South Florida Chapter, Moderator, “Florida Growth Management in the New Era: A Guide to Understanding Florida’s New Legislation: with Tom Beck, Francisco Garcia, Jack Osterholt, Valerie Hubbard, and Trish Blasi,” Miami, June 2011
- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Panel Speaker, “Closing the Gaps: Miami Riverwalk and Baywalk,” December 2010
- Urban Land Institute Workshop, Moderator, “The ‘Community Renewal Act’: What Does It Really Mean?,” July 2009

Affiliations

- United States Superyacht Association (USSA), Board of Directors
- Florida Ocean Alliance (FOA), Vice President
- Miami-Dade County Boating and Waterways Committee, Member, convened to provide County Mayor Carlos Gimenez with recommendations for the County’s “New Normal Initiative” related to reopening County facilities after COVID-19 pandemic, April 2020
- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, New World Center Committee, Vice Chairman, 2011-2012, Chairman, 2012-2014
- Florida Inland Navigation District, Appointed as the Miami-Dade County Representative, Commissioner

- City of Miami Waterfront Advisory Board, Appointed by Mayor Manny Diaz, Past Chair
- Urban Land Institute (ULI), Program Committee, Member
- Duke Club of South Florida, Board Member
- Duke University Alumni Admissions Committee, Member
- University of Florida, Law Alumni Council, Member
- Duke University Nicholas School of the Environment, Advisory Board Member
- The Florida Bar, Environmental and Land Use Law Section, Member
- Plymouth Congregational Church, Board of Trustees
- Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, Member
- Key Biscayne Key Rats Pee-Wee Football Team, Assistant Coach

Honors and Distinctions

- *Chambers USA*, 2019-2024, Ranked in Florida (South Florida) for Real Estate: Zoning/Land Use
- *Chambers USA*, 2015-2018, Ranked in Florida for Real Estate: Zoning/Land Use (Up and Coming)
- *Best Lawyers*, 2023-2025, Listed in Florida for Real Estate Law and Land Use and Zoning Law
- *The Legal 500*, 2016, 2019-2020, 2023-2024, Recommended for Real Estate and Construction - Land Use/Zoning; 2024, Recognized as a “Leading Lawyer”
- *Connect CRE*, 2023 Lawyer in Real Estate Award Winner, Florida & Gulf Coast
- Builders Association of South Florida, 2022 Legislative Leadership Award Recipient
- Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Real Estate Committee, R.E.A.L. (Real Estate Achievers and Leaders) Awards, Land Use Lawyer of the Year, 2016
- Outstanding Lawyers of Miami-Dade County 2011, Recognized as a “40 Under 40,” Award Winner
- Urban Environment League 2011, Recipient of the Orchid Award “Dedication to Access to the Waterfront”
- Urban Environment League 2007, Recipient of the Orchid Award “Coconut Grove Waterfront Master Plan”
- *University of Florida Law Review*