



COA (SP) 2022-038
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Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts

2327 SALZEDO STREET
CORAL GABLES
FLORIDA 33134

☎ 305-460-5093
✉ hist@coralgables.com

STAFF REPORT
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
FOR THE PROPERTY AT BALBOA PLAZA, A LOCAL HISTORIC
LANDMARK, LOCATED AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF CORAL WAY (A
LOCAL AND STATE DESIGNATED HIGHWAY AND A CONTRIBUTING
RESOURCE WITHIN THE “CORAL WAY HISTORIC DISTRICT”),
DESOTO BOULEVARD, SOUTH GREENWAY DRIVE, AND ANDERSON
ROAD

- Proposal:** The application requests a recommendation of approval for the alteration of the historic street grid and the introduction of a vehicular roundabout.
- Architect:** Department of Transportation and Public Works Highway Division, Miami-Dade County
- Owner:** Miami-Dade County
- Legal Description:** N/A
- Site Characteristics:** The subject property is located at Balboa Plaza at the intersection of Coral Way, DeSoto Boulevard, South Greenway Drive, and Anderson Road.

BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS

An amendment to the Coral Gables Zoning Code to allow for the designation of the city plan as historic was adopted by the City Commission on April 24, 2018. That amendment is now found in Article 8, Section 8-104 (D) entitled “Procedure for Designation of the City Plan and Amendments to such Plan.” The Coral Gables Historic City Plan was designated as a local historic landmark on June 21, 2018.

The Zoning Code requires that any material amendments to the City Plan shall be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Board, who will make a recommendation for a Special Certificate of Appropriateness to the City Commission. The City Commission will ultimately render the decision whether to grant or deny the issuance of the Special Certificate of Appropriateness.

Please note: each request for an amendment to the City Plan will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, as is the normal process for any Certificate of Appropriateness application. Approval of one amendment by the Historic Preservation Board will not be used as a precedent or blanket approval for other applications.

PROPOSAL

In accordance with Section 8-104 (D) 2 of the City of Coral Gables Zoning Code, the application requests a recommendation of approval to the City Commission for an amendment to the City Plan for the alteration of the historic street grid and the introduction of a vehicular roundabout.

The proposed alterations include removal of the existing triangular traffic islands, the installation of a roundabout and new traffic islands with crosswalks, and minor road realignment.

Per the applicant's Letter of Intent and attachments, the intersection has changed through the years except for the northeast quadrant which contains the Granada Golf Course. The existing conditions have no demarcated pedestrian crossings or pedestrian connectors on any approach. Eastbound and westbound vehicular directions are free flow while northbound and southbound directions are controlled by stop signs.

Improvements that will benefit the area include:

- Two-way stop control will be removed.
- Roundabout will be implemented.
- New crosswalks will be added on all legs.
- Green area will expand with the proposed design.
- Lighting will be proposed on all legs.

The applicant has further provided traffic data, Coral Gables population data, and a safety analysis with a recommendation from Miami-Dade County Engineering Division who validated this proposal through a traffic operational analysis which concluded that "*A traffic circle is recommended at the study intersection as a traffic calming device will mitigate the angle crashes occurring at the subject intersection.*"

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

The following Standards have application in this matter:

10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

STAFF OBSERVATIONS

Section 8-104 (D) 2 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code reads as follows:

2. In the event that the City Plan is designated historic, any material amendments to the City Plan, including but not limited to, the closing of streets and any developments that would affect such City Plan, shall be in accordance with the following procedure notwithstanding any provisions in this Article to the contrary:
3.
 - a. The Historic Preservation Board, at a public hearing, shall review and make recommendation for a Special Certificate of Appropriateness on any proposed

amendments to the City Plan under a balancing of interests weighing the following factors: historic integrity, development, and public purpose.

The Historic Preservation Board is tasked with considering the appropriateness of the amendment to the City Plan while taking into consideration: the historic integrity of the City Plan and the effect of the proposed amendment on the historic integrity, development, and the public purpose being served by the amendment.



Figure 1: Coral Gables Sections A & B, Plat Map (1921/22)

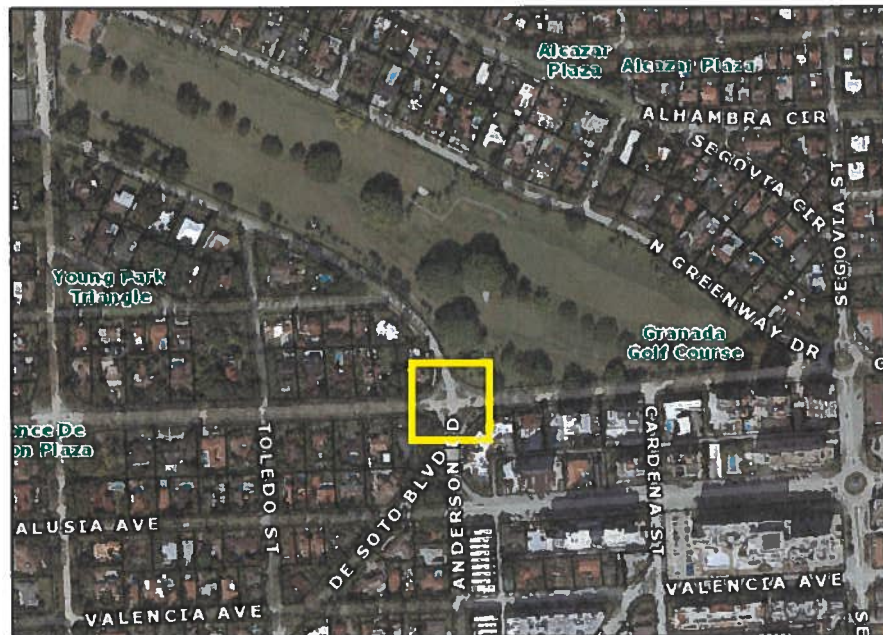


Figure 2: Balboa Plaza, Current Context (2022)

Courtesy of Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser

VARIANCES

No variances have been requested with this application.

BOARD OF ARCHITECTS

The proposal does not require Board of Architects review.

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD

Pursuant to Section 8-104.D.2.b, “*Any development that would cause an amendment to the City Plan shall also be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Board.*” Review by the Planning and Zoning Board will be required.

STAFF CONCLUSION

The application requests a recommendation of approval for the alteration of the historic street grid and the introduction of a vehicular roundabout.

The Historic Preservation Board is tasked with considering the appropriateness of the amendment to the City Plan while taking into consideration: the historic integrity of the City Plan and the effect of the proposed amendment on the historic integrity, development, and the public purpose being served by the amendment.

In support of the application, the applicant has provided details on previous changes to the intersection which impacted the integrity of the site when compared with the historic plat map, provided information on the population increase of Coral Gables over recent years, and provided a list of public benefits associated with the proposal.

While all of the above should be considered by the Board, it is Staff’s opinion that the proposed roundabout is a major alteration to the City Plan. There is less concern with the introduction of crosswalks and the minor road realignment. Staff recommends that the applicant explore other options for traffic control and pedestrian safety at or near the intersection which would have a less significant impact on the historic street plan.

The Historical Resources Department Staff recommends the following:

A motion to **DEFER** a recommendation of approval to the City Commission for the alteration of the historic street grid and the introduction of a vehicular roundabout for the property located at Balboa Plaza at the intersection of Coral Way, DeSoto Boulevard, South Greenway Drive, and Anderson Road and **DEFER** a recommendation of approval of the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the applicant time to work with Staff and address any Board comments to achieve a design that is compatible with the historic city plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Warren Adams
Historic Preservation Officer