

August 25, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Suramy Cabrera, Director
Development Services Department
City of Coral Gables
427 Biltmore Way, 2nd Floor
Coral Gables, Florida 33134

Re: Planning Division Application / Statement of Use / Property located at 4241 Aurora Street in Coral Gables, Florida (the “City”) (Miami Dade County Folio No. 03-4120-017-1410)

Dear Ms. Cabrera:

On behalf of 4241 Aurora, LLC (the “**Applicant**”), please accept this as our Statement of Use in connection with the proposed redevelopment of the above referenced property (the “**Property**”). Specifically, the Applicant is requesting the following in connection with a new mixed-use project proposed at the Property (the “**Project**”): (1) Mixed-Use (MXD) Site Plan Approval; (2) Transfer of Development Rights; and (3) Remote Parking.

I. PROPERTY INFORMATION

The Property is located at the intersection of Aurora Street and San Lorenzo Avenue within the City’s premiere shopping and dining destination, Merrick Park. The Property consists of Lots 12 through 22, Block 6 of the Coral Gables Plat, Industrial Section, as recorded in Plat Book 28, Page 22 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The Property is currently designated Industrial pursuant to the City’s Future Land Use Map with a corresponding Mixed-Use District (MX2) zoning designation and as located within the Design & Innovation District Overlay and Gables Redevelopment & Infill District (“**GRID**”). Please note that the Project is also being pursued simultaneously with the City’s companion Parks Incentive Zoning Code and Comprehensive Plan Text Amendments (collectively, the “**Text Amendments**”)¹.



¹ Please note, these Text Amendments were approved at first reading before the City Commission on August 22, 2023.

II. PROPOSED PROJECT

As detailed in the enclosed plans prepared by Arquitectonica dated August 25, 2023, the Applicant seeks the approval of a 13-story mixed use development containing approximately 8,387 square feet of ground floor retail space, 9,028 +/- square feet of office use, and 80 residential units (the “**Project**”). The Project will replace the vacant undeveloped lot at the Property with a high-quality, mixed-use development designed with ground floor commercial uses to activate this corridor with a more inviting, pedestrian friendly environment similar to the other pedestrian oriented uses along Aurora Street and San Lorenzo Avenue. The Project has also been designed to provide approximately 6,683 +/- square feet (32%) of open space improvements that will beautify the area with shade trees, landscaping, seating areas, outdoor dining, and world-class public art.

As part of these open space enhancements, the Project proposes a landscaped public open space at the South end of the Property that has been designed as an active gathering space for the local community. The nearly 5,000 square foot public open space will be improved with lush landscaping and outdoor seating areas that will serve as an additional amenity for the enjoyment of the future residents and visitors of the Project, as well as those in the surrounding Merrick Park neighborhood.

At the upper levels the Project includes residential and commercial uses to complement the existing uses in the area as consistent with the goals and policies of the MX2 Zoning District and the Design & Innovation District Overlay regulations. The proposed office and residential uses are compatible with the other types of residential and office uses within the Merrick Park neighborhood and will serve to complement the existing retail, restaurant and entertainment uses in the areas. The residential component of the Project has been designed to provide a diverse range of residential housing options in the form of 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom units, which will increase the availability of housing for families looking to downsize and live near all the amenities that Merrick Park provides. These residential unit types will also serve the employees of the nearby office complexes and commercial shopping plazas who are looking for larger units to accommodate their housing needs. As a result of the larger unit types being proposed, the Project is proposing a lower residential density than would otherwise be permitted.

Additionally, the Project advances multiple objectives, goals and policies of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The Project will improve a vacant and underutilized land with a high-end mixed-use development that will provide additional housing and employment opportunities within close walking and biking distance to public transportation near the Merrick Park neighborhood. Proximity to the Douglas Road Metrorail Station, various Miami-Dade County bus routes, and the Coral Gables trolley provides the future residents and visitors of the Project with convenient access to public transportation and promote the utilization of alternative forms of transportation for daily commutes.

Lastly, the design of the Project results in an enhanced building massing while maximizing the amount of ground level open space and remaining within the allowable FAR permitted. The Project provides for an increased 50-foot building setback from the South property line which allows for a large public open space to be accommodated along San Lorenzo Avenue. The residential tower and building height have been situated along the northern portion of the Property

with a step down to a 4-story office building fronting the public open space. The utilization of the larger setbacks and the variations in building heights help achieve an overall enhanced massing with open space improvements that create a focal point for the neighborhood. These features also significantly allow natural elements – such as light and air – to interplay with the Project’s extensive landscaping and publicly accessible open space.

As such, in accordance with the future land use category, the Project provides a balanced, mixed-use development with residential uses, office space, neighborhood friendly retail services, and open space for the community within an enhanced building envelope.

III. REMOTE PARKING REQUEST

The Applicant seeks to take advantage of the surplus parking in the immediate area by providing a portion of the required parking at an off-site location within 1,000 feet of the Property in accordance with Section 10-109 of the Zoning Code². The proposed office, commercial and residential programming for the Project requires approximately 182 parking spaces, subject to confirmation of a shared parking study. The Applicant seeks to provide approximately 136 on-site spaces in the internalized parking garage. The remaining parking spaces will be provided at an off-site location and via a public benefit contribution per Section 10-109(A) of the Zoning Code. Specifically, the remote parking locations will be provided at the Shops at Merrick Park parking garage, conveniently located less than 800 feet from the Property at 4250-4251 Salzedo Street.

The Design and Innovation Overlay District regulations provide for mixed-use developments in an urban area that offers excellent multimodal alternatives including the Coral Gables Trolley and Metrorail Station and that contains a variety of parking garages with surplus spaces available. This environment promotes the use of alternative modes of transportation and reduces the need for the provision of on-site parking facilities, as is this case here. In furtherance of these efforts, the Project will incorporate adequate bike and scooter storage to promote the use of and improve access to alternative forms of transportation.

IV. TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS


In connection with the Project, the Applicant is seeking the Transfer of Development Rights (“TDRs”) in accordance with Section 14-204 of the City’s Zoning Code. Specifically, pursuant to Section 14-204.5(A) of the Zoning Code, the Property is eligible for TDRs as a receiver site that is currently zoned MX2 and located within the Design & Innovation District. The Applicant intends to utilize the TDRs in order to provide an additional 25,812 square feet of FAR per Section 14-204.5(B) of the Zoning Code. The Applicant will work with the City to identify the historic sending sites and purchase the requisite TDRs as a condition of approval with the requirement that this process is finalized prior to building permit issuance for the Project.

² Please note, the Project’s proposed remote parking request is vested under the previous Remote Parking standards since the Project submitted a BOA application in October of 2022.

V. **CONCLUSION**

Based on the foregoing, the proposed Project is consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the intent of the Mixed-Use regulations under the Zoning Code and complies with the requirements of Section 2-201 for approval of a MXD Site Plan, subject to approval of the companion Text Amendments. As such, we look forward to your favorable consideration of our Application. Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 305-579-0821.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jorge L. Navarro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "N".

for
Jorge L. Navarro, Esq.