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CITY OF CORAL GABLES  
CITY COMMISSION MEETING  
VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT  
CORAL GABLES CITY HALL  
405 BILTMORE WAY, COMMISSION CHAMBERS  
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2015, COMMENCING AT 9:00 A.M.

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS:



- Mayor Jim Cason
- Vice Mayor Frank C. Quesada
- Commissioner Patricia Keon
- Commissioner Vince Lago
- Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick

City Staff and Consultants:

- Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark, City Manager
- Ramon Trias, Planning Director
- Craig E. Leen, City Attorney
- Walter Foeman, City Clerk
- Craig H. Coller, Esq., Special Counsel

CITY OF CORAL GABLES  
RECEIVED BY THE  
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Also Participating:

- Tucker Gibbs, Esq.,  
on behalf of the Riviera Neighborhood Association
- Jeffrey Bass, Esq.,  
on behalf of the Applicant
- Laura Russo, Esq., Co-Counsel for the Applicant
- Jorge Navarro, Architect
- Tim Plummer, Traffic Engineer

1 Public Speakers:  
2 Sandra Levinson  
Wayne Eldred  
3 Sonia Chao  
Hilario Candela  
4 Eva Gordon  
Tony Friguls  
5 Lucien Gordon  
Stuart Rich  
6 Christopher Zoller  
Antonio Facio  
7 Elsie Miranda  
Courtney Thompson  
8 Tracy Kerdyk  
Vivian Haydar  
9 Terri Scandura  
Roberta Neway  
10 Krista Rios  
Mark Trowbridge  
11 Maria Masvidal-Visser  
Stephen Diener  
12 Henry Pinera  
Pat Parker  
13 Jorge L. Arrizurieta  
Heidi Roth  
14 Patrick Nolan  
Chris Hernandez  
15 Suzanne Dockerty  
Cristina Santa-Cruz  
16 Eric Santa-Cruz  
Amado Acosta  
17 Philip Rinaldi  
Menachem Fellig  
18 Brooks Miller  
Rachel Bixby  
19 Paul Mass  
Susan Kawalerski  
20 Daisy Hayworth  
Debra Register  
21 Alicia Fernandez  
Tais Sanchez  
22 Valerie Quemada  
Carolina Estefan  
23  
24  
25

1 (Thereupon, the following proceedings were  
2 held.)

3 MAYOR CASON: All right. Good morning,  
4 everyone. Please take a seat. We're going to  
5 have a long day. We're going to get started.

6 Welcome to the Special City Commission  
7 meeting of October 22nd, on the Paseo de la  
8 Riviera project.

9 I'm going to start us off and ask our City  
10 Attorney to read the items and to give the  
11 Rules of Procedure and then we'll start. I'm  
12 hoping to finish up by three o'clock. We're  
13 going to have two minutes each, when you speak.  
14 Please limit it to two minutes. Otherwise a  
15 lot of people are not going to be able to  
16 speak.

17 So City Attorney.

18 MR. LEEN: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

19 Good morning. There are four items today,  
20 all for public hearing. The public hearing  
21 will be consolidated for purposes of the four  
22 items. I'll read them into the record now.

23 Please note that three of the items are  
24 ordinances. One is a resolution. Also please  
25 note that there are two readings. Today we're

1 here on first reading. Any final approval has  
2 to occur on second reading. Just please be  
3 aware of that.

4 Item A-1 is an Ordinance of the City  
5 Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, requesting  
6 an amendment to the Future Land Use Map of the  
7 City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan  
8 pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, "Development  
9 Review," Division 15, "Comprehensive Plan Text  
10 Amendments," and Small Scale amendment  
11 procedures, Sections 163.3187 Florida Statutes,  
12 from "Commercial Low-Rise Intensity" to  
13 "Commercial High-Rise Intensity" for the  
14 property legally described as a Portion of  
15 Tract A, Riviera Section Part 8, 1350 South  
16 Dixie Highway, Coral Gables, Florida; including  
17 required conditions; providing for a repealer  
18 provision, providing for a severability clause  
19 and providing for an effective date.

20 The Planning and Zoning Board made no  
21 recommendation, because there was a vote of  
22 three to three, and a vote of four is required  
23 to make a recommendation.

24 I should also note that the reason I'm  
25 reading these is, by law, I'm required to read



1 the titles into the record.

2 Item A-2 is an Ordinance of the City  
3 Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, providing  
4 for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables  
5 Official Zoning Code, by amending Appendix A,  
6 "Site Specific Zoning Regulations" Section  
7 A-83, "Riviera Section, Part 8," by removing  
8 provisions restricting FAR, height and setbacks  
9 for the property legally described as Tract A,  
10 Riviera Section Part 8; including required  
11 conditions; providing for a repealer provision,  
12 providing for a severability clause,  
13 codification and providing for an effective  
14 date.

15 Once again, the Planning and Zoning Board  
16 made no recommendation, because they had a vote  
17 of three to three.

18 Item A-3 is an Ordinance of the City  
19 Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting  
20 review of a Planned Area Development pursuant  
21 Zoning Code Article 3, "Development Review,"  
22 Division 5, "Planned Area Development," for the  
23 proposed project referred to as "Paseo de la  
24 Riviera" on the property legally described as a  
25 Portion of Tract A, Riviera Section Part 8,

1 1350 South Dixie Highway, Coral Gables,  
 2 Florida; including required conditions;  
 3 providing for a repealer provision, providing  
 4 for a severability clause and providing for an  
 5 effective date.

6 Here the Planning and Zoning Board  
 7 recommended approval, with various conditions,  
 8 by a vote of four to two.

9 Lastly, Item A-4 is a resolution of the  
 10 City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida,  
 11 requesting a Mixed-Use Site Plan Review  
 12 pursuant to Zoning Code Article 4, "Zoning  
 13 Districts," Division 2, "Overlay and Special  
 14 Purpose Districts," Section 4-201, "Mixed-Use  
 15 District," for the proposed project referred to  
 16 as the "Paseo de la Riviera" on the property  
 17 legally described as a Portion of Tract A,  
 18 Riviera Section Part 8, 1350 South Dixie  
 19 Highway, Coral Gables, Florida; including  
 20 required conditions; providing for a repealer  
 21 provision, providing for a severability clause,  
 22 and providing for an effective date.

23 Here the Planning and Zoning Board  
 24 recommended approval, with various conditions,  
 25 again, by a vote of four to two.

1 All of these items are consolidated for  
2 purposes of the public hearing. They would  
3 each receive a separate vote.

4 At this point, I'm going to go over the  
5 rules of procedure for today. I'd like to  
6 preface my remarks by saying, I spoke on  
7 ethical governance today at Coral Gables High  
8 School, and I just wanted to say, as the City  
9 Attorney and parliamentarian, and on behalf of  
10 the Commission, that this really is the  
11 pinnacle of American democracy, what we're  
12 about to do today, and when I was talking to  
13 the students, I showed them a painting of  
14 Norman Rockwell, with Abraham Lincoln, speaking  
15 to a Court on behalf of an accused person, and  
16 I can tell you the students, all of them, felt  
17 that the First Amendment and the right to  
18 petition the government and to speak on these  
19 items was the most important.

20 So we welcome everyone today. We do have  
21 some rules of public participation and decorum  
22 for City Commission and Board Meetings, which  
23 I'm going to -- I won't read them all, but I'm  
24 just going to go over them briefly.

25 First of all, this is a public hearing, and

1 the City encourages public participation, but  
2 because of the number of speakers today, each  
3 person is going to be limited to two minutes.  
4 That will be strictly enforced. We're strictly  
5 enforcing that, not because we do not like  
6 people to speak, in fact, we welcome your  
7 comments, it's being strictly enforced to  
8 ensure everyone can speak, so that we can  
9 finish the hearing by three o'clock, if  
10 possible, but certainly within a reasonable  
11 time.

12 And the problem is that if we don't hold  
13 strictly to two minutes and we go to four,  
14 five, six minutes, this hearing -- a lot of  
15 people may have to leave and may not have the  
16 opportunity to speak, and we value your time.

17 Second, if you do wish to speak, you need  
18 to fill out a card. And when you come up to  
19 speak, you're going to have to give your name  
20 and your address. And if you're representing  
21 an organization, if you're speaking on their  
22 behalf, you have to let us know, and if that  
23 organization is subject to the lobbying laws,  
24 you have to register as a lobbyist, but if  
25 you're speaking on behalf of yourself or your

1 home, you don't need to worry about that.

2 When the speaker's name is called, please  
3 come up, say those things, and then your two  
4 minutes will start, and when the two-minute --  
5 you're going to have a yellow light, and then a  
6 red light. When the red light stops, you're  
7 going to hear, "beep," and I, as  
8 parliamentarian, will respectfully ask you to  
9 stop speaking.

10 At that point, the Mayor will gavel you  
11 down, respectfully. Obviously we welcome your  
12 comments, but we are going to adhere to the  
13 rules today.

14 Next, no speaker or member of the public  
15 should refuse to obey the orders of the Chair  
16 or what I tell you on behalf of the Chair as  
17 parliamentarian. Please follow them.

18 All remarks shall be addressed to the  
19 Commission. Please don't -- one thing we'd  
20 like to avoid is arguments among people today.  
21 We would like everything to be addressed to the  
22 Commission. You can say your piece, whatever  
23 you feel, and whatever you think, but please  
24 say them to the Commission.

25 Also, please do not argue. You're going to

1 be given your time to speak and to say what you  
2 wish, but it should not be a back and forth, in  
3 an argumentative fashion, with the Commission,  
4 and that applies to the Commission, as well as  
5 myself, all of us. We will act with decorum.

6 And these provisions, by the way, are in  
7 our City Code or come from our City Code.

8 If there's going to be talking in the  
9 background, you should leave the room, because  
10 we want to make sure that the court reporter  
11 can hear everything that is said, and one thing  
12 we were told at prior hearings was that the  
13 court reporter could not take down the  
14 transcript, because people would talk over each  
15 other, so they couldn't get all of the  
16 information.

17 Now, please note, today, this is like a  
18 court hearing, what's going to happen in this  
19 room. Part of this application is  
20 quasi-judicial. So we're actually going to  
21 swear you in, if you're going to speak, after I  
22 finish this talk, and when you speak, we need  
23 to get everything in the transcript.

24 That's for purposes of the public record,  
25 and the Court, if there's any review in the

1 future, because no matter what you say, if we  
2 don't get it recorded in the public record, in  
3 the transcript, it will be lost for history.  
4 So we want to be able to transcribe everything  
5 that occurs today.

6 Please be concise and to the point. You do  
7 not have to use all two minutes, if you do not  
8 want to, but you're free to use the two  
9 minutes.

10 We would ask that no person speak more than  
11 once today. Everyone in the public hearing  
12 will speak one time, for their two minutes.

13 We would ask that no one delay or interrupt  
14 the proceedings today, and I anticipate that  
15 will not happen. I'm just going over the  
16 rules.

17 Please be kind and respectful to each  
18 other, even with the disagreements and views  
19 that probably will be expressed today.

20 With that, that's a basic review of the  
21 rules. Hopefully they won't come up. I know  
22 that this is a very respectful audience. We  
23 have great respect for our residents, but I do  
24 know that there are strong feelings today. So  
25 we just ask that you remember, we are going to

1 try to make -- and by "we," I mean, the City  
2 Commission, will try to make the best decision  
3 possible.

4 Now, with that, I would ask the City Clerk  
5 to swear in --

6 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: And Mr. Mayor and  
7 City Attorney, first of all, thank you for your  
8 good rules of decorum. I'm confident that the  
9 Commission and the Staff and the community will  
10 honor those.

11 I promised the Fire Marshal that nobody  
12 would be allowed to stand. So we have 40  
13 seats, with monitors, outside, close to the  
14 restroom and water fountain. We just need to  
15 really honor that requirement of the Fire  
16 Marshal. We did add extra chairs in here, and  
17 we also have 40 chairs outside. So with that,  
18 the swearing --

19 MR. LEEN: Mr. Mayor, I do also want to  
20 read in the procedure. There will be a brief  
21 introduction by City Staff, approximately ten  
22 minutes -- five to ten minutes. There will be  
23 an Applicant's presentation, which will be  
24 presented by the Applicant, Paseo de la  
25 Riviera, 45 minutes. There will be a City



1 Staff presentation of approximately 30 minutes.  
2 There will be a presentation by Tucker Gibbs  
3 for approximately 45 minutes. There will be a  
4 public hearing, where each individual, even if  
5 you're -- even if Tucker Gibbs is speaking on  
6 your behalf, you'll have the opportunity to  
7 speak yourself, two minutes each. There will  
8 be a rebuttal by the Applicant, 15 minutes.

9 At that point, there will be a Commission  
10 discussion, questions, and decision on first  
11 reading.

12 In addition, the last thing I need to  
13 inform you is that, the first three items are  
14 all -- pardon me, the first two items -- there  
15 are legislative items and quasi-judicial items.  
16 As you know, there's a Comp Plan Amendment  
17 today, as well as an amendment to the Zoning  
18 Code. Those are called legislative items.

19 In those items, the Commission, the  
20 standard of review they apply, is that they  
21 cannot -- they have to -- whatever they do has  
22 to be fairly debatable in what they do, and  
23 they need to consider the Comp Plan and they  
24 need to consider the laws, and then they make a  
25 decision in the best interest of the public.

1           There are items that, though, are  
2           quasi-judicial in nature, where we're looking  
3           at a specific Site Plan. For those items, the  
4           standard -- this is an evidentiary hearing. We  
5           will be taking evidence. There's Cross  
6           Examination. That's permitted. And let me say  
7           one thing about Cross Examination. You've all  
8           seen it on TV. Sometimes people don't like to  
9           be cross-examined. Just try your best to  
10          answer the questions and just understand that  
11          if you are cross-examined, that legally we're  
12          required to permit it. The Commission has no  
13          discretion. That's required by law. And if we  
14          didn't do that, the decision would be quashed  
15          by a Court. So we have to allow that.

16                 On the quasi-judicial items, when you  
17                 testify, what you say will be evidence. The  
18                 Commission will consider that, and then there's  
19                 three standards. They have to provide due  
20                 process. They have to follow the essential  
21                 requirements of law. And they also have to act  
22                 on competent and substantial evidence. They  
23                 cannot make a decision on evidence that is  
24                 outside the record.

25                         So everything needs to be in the record

1 today, and that's what the decision would be  
2 based on.

3 So, with that, Mr. Mayor, I will turn it  
4 back to you. And I would ask that the Clerk  
5 swear in --

6 MAYOR CASON: Let's have the City Clerk  
7 swear in those that plan to testify today.

8 City Clerk.

9 MR. LEEN: Anyone who plans to speak.

10 THE CLERK: If you expect to testify in the  
11 proceeding today, would you please stand and  
12 raise your right hand.

13 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: And that includes  
14 the outside audience.

15 COMMISSIONER KEON: Wait. Yeah, ask them  
16 to come in, though.

17 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: Craig, are they  
18 allowed to do it outside?

19 MR. LEEN: Yes.

20 No. Everyone who is outside, who plans to  
21 speak, I'd just like you to come in briefly, so  
22 we can see you. This is important.

23 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: Just as a  
24 clarification, everyone is required, to speak,  
25 even the Applicant or no?

1 MR. LEEN: Well, the Applicant is, but not  
2 the attorneys. The attorneys are not providing  
3 evidence. They're making argument.

4 Anyone who is going to speak.

5 MAYOR CASON: City Clerk.

6 COMMISSIONER KEON: We should go out and  
7 ask. Give me a minute to go out and ask,  
8 because a lot of people went out that door.  
9 I'm surprised they haven't come back in.

10 MAYOR CASON: And while we're at it, make  
11 sure that you turn your cell phones off,  
12 please. We don't want any phones ringing  
13 during the session.

14 COMMISSIONER KEON: Here they come.

15 MR. LEEN: Thank you. Thank you,  
16 Commissioner.

17 MAYOR CASON: Okay. Mr. Clerk.

18 (Thereupon, all participants were sworn.)

19 THE CLERK: Thank you.

20 MAYOR CASON: Thank you all. Please be  
21 seated.

22 All right. We'll start off -- yeah.

23 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Just a quick  
24 statement. Typically, in these events, these  
25 meetings where we have a lot of residents and

1 we have attorneys on both sides, sometimes the  
2 attorneys feel compelled to give us documents  
3 five minutes before we vote.

4 We don't like that. So if you have other  
5 documents that you're going to give to us right  
6 before we vote, we're going to ask that Mr.  
7 Gibbs, and I believe Mr. Bass will be speaking  
8 on behalf of the Applicant, give it to us at  
9 least by the end of your presentation, before  
10 the public comments start, so that we have some  
11 time to review it during a break or in certain  
12 lull periods.

13 A lot of time we get a stack of fifty  
14 documents five minutes before there's a motion  
15 made, and if that happens today, we're not  
16 going to consider them. So give us a little  
17 bit of lead time to be able to review whatever  
18 you need, if you're going to give us something  
19 else, okay?

20 So thank you.

21 MAYOR CASON: And one last procedural.  
22 Please, no clapping, yelling. We've had that  
23 at some of the Planning and Zoning Board  
24 meetings. We're not going to tolerate that  
25 today.

1           Please turn off your cell phones.

2           And with that, we'll ask the City Staff to  
3 begin the presentation. We're probably going  
4 to have a lunch break around 1:00, depending on  
5 how things go.

6           MR. LEEN: Yes. And just to echo what the  
7 Mayor says, I know that we've seen clapping.  
8 It's really -- it's against the rules of  
9 decorum. You're not supposed to clap. So  
10 please keep that in mind.

11          MAYOR CASON: Ramon.

12          MR. TRIAS: Good morning, Mayor. If I  
13 could have the PowerPoint, please.

14          Good morning, Mayor. Thank you very much  
15 for the opportunity to give you a presentation.  
16 You have a few materials on your desk.

17          Following up on the Vice Major's comment,  
18 We have been receiving letters until this  
19 morning. So you have the most updated  
20 information from the public before you. And  
21 we, in fact, even received some revised  
22 drawings by the Applicant last night at 8:40.  
23 I incorporated those this morning into our  
24 PowerPoint. So you have absolutely the latest  
25 discussion ready for you.

1 I discussed that with Tucker Gibbs.  
2 They're aware of the updates.

3 COMMISSIONER LAGO: So, Ramon, you've given  
4 Tucker all of the information that was put into  
5 the record by the Applicant?

6 MR. TRIAS: I've described it this morning,  
7 and will be able to see it, but nothing major.  
8 I mean, it's just very helpful to see the  
9 evolution of this project in the past week.

10 All right. Here it is. Thank you very  
11 much.

12 The project, as everybody knows, is bound  
13 by South Dixie Highway. It faces US-1. And  
14 then the back area of the project is Madruga  
15 Avenue, towards the neighborhood adjacent to  
16 the project. Caballero is also one of the  
17 boundaries.

18 And that site, as everybody knows, is very,  
19 very complex, and it's complex, because US-1 is  
20 a major corridor in South Florida. And then  
21 there is an existing building, that is 140-feet  
22 tall, right next door, which created  
23 significant controversy when it was built back  
24 in the 1970s.

25 And as you can see from this aerial,

1 there's a single-family neighborhood all around  
2 it, all around this area towards the back. So  
3 it's a very, very complicated site, from an  
4 urban design and town planning point of view.

5 And I don't think it was fully planned by  
6 George Merrick, when he came up with the  
7 fantastic vision for the City, that we get to  
8 enjoy today, 90 years later. So it's an area  
9 that has many issues, as it exists.

10 The current Land Use and the current Zoning  
11 are here depicted in these images, and right  
12 now the Land Use is Commercial Low Rise and the  
13 Zoning is Commercial.

14 And those are parts of the request that the  
15 Applicant has before you.

16 And, again, an Applicant can request  
17 whatever they think is right. It's up to you  
18 to make the decision. It's up to the  
19 Commission.

20 I won't go into great detail on the  
21 project. I will let the Applicant explain it.  
22 But, just, in the nutshell, what we have is a  
23 hotel on one side, a paseo throughout the whole  
24 site, and then a residential project, with  
25 commercial downstairs. So it's a mixed use



1 project. It's the classic mixed used project  
2 that has some high quality pedestrian areas and  
3 some arcades and is designed to maximize the  
4 pedestrian activity of the site.

5 It's also a rather controversial project,  
6 from many points of view. Many neighbors have  
7 expressed their views about the size. As  
8 originally submitted, it was 142 feet in  
9 height. There were also some issues with the  
10 setbacks on the back, as it relates to some of  
11 the requirements to protect neighborhoods.

12 So all of that was submitted and it has  
13 been reviewed many times, and the Applicant  
14 will have a chance to explain it in great  
15 detail.

16 What I would like to do is focus on some of  
17 the issues and some of the opportunities that  
18 we've had to have public discussion and  
19 conversation, because I think sometimes, when  
20 we get to this point, it may appear that this  
21 is the first time that a project is being  
22 discussed, and I want to make it clear that  
23 that's never the case.

24 When I get a chance, when I get the  
25 opportunity to explain a project here, it is

1 really the result of many people who have  
2 worked very hard through the review process,  
3 citizens, volunteers, members of our Boards,  
4 City Staff, from many different Departments,  
5 and so on, on a very, very detailed timeline of  
6 reviews.

7 So there are many opportunities to provide  
8 input, and one of the best opportunities is  
9 today. In fact, today that's why we're having  
10 this meeting, for the citizens to be able to  
11 give some idea of what their needs and their  
12 desires are, as far as the project.

13 So the very first step, it's always the  
14 Development Review Committee, which is when  
15 Staff gets a chance to see the original ideas  
16 and give input immediately, for the benefit of  
17 the Applicant, for the Applicant's ability to  
18 make the project better.

19 Then the Applicant is always required to  
20 have neighborhood meetings. In this case, the  
21 Applicant says that they had multiple meetings.  
22 At least two of them were part of the official  
23 process. There were some additional meetings.  
24 I encourage as many meetings as possible,  
25 because I think it's very important to

1 understand the opinions of neighbors.

2 We also have a very, very professional and  
3 extremely effective Board of Architects.

4 Volunteer architects that dedicate one day a  
5 week, and that they review the project. They  
6 look at it and they make suggestions. All of  
7 that took place.

8 In this case, the Applicant also had a peer  
9 review, which was an additional voluntary  
10 process, beyond the requirements of the Code.  
11 The City Commission had a chance to discuss, in  
12 concepts, some ideas about US-1. And as part  
13 of that discussion -- as part of that  
14 discussion, I think there was some interest in  
15 having the workshops and Charrettes, and trying  
16 to get the citizens' vision more clearly  
17 defined.

18 We had some specific meetings with  
19 particular Members of Staff to deal with very  
20 important issues, specifically traffic, which I  
21 think the cut-through traffic issue has become  
22 very clear to me, from listening to the  
23 neighbors, that that is one of the major  
24 concerns that we need to deal with, and I find  
25 it very important that we have some Conditions

1 of Approval, as proposed, that may be helpful  
2 in some of those issues.

3 There's a City-wide review by City Staff.  
4 Everybody -- and I thank them very much,  
5 because they do a great job providing input and  
6 suggestions. Everybody, who has a say on  
7 development, provides that.

8 We had a workshop, US-1, Red and Sunset  
9 Workshop, which is, again, an additional step  
10 in the process. It's not a required element in  
11 the process, according to the Zoning Code, but  
12 simply was the request of the citizens and the  
13 request of the Commission to open up the  
14 discussion.

15 There was further Commission discussion,  
16 and then -- I'm sorry, and then the project was  
17 reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Board  
18 several times, because the Planning and Zoning  
19 Board, again, they're volunteer members of the  
20 community, who dedicate their time to look at  
21 the projects and are very conscientious and  
22 spend a lot of time -- a lot of time discussing  
23 the issues, and then we will see, in the next  
24 few slides, that, in fact, there was a lot of  
25 discussion and there was no agreement. There

1 was no agreement or consensus on a final  
2 recommendation in some cases.

3 So that also happens, and, of course, now  
4 we are at the City Commission and hopefully  
5 there may be a second reading.

6 What I want to make clear, and I think the  
7 attorney has explained this multiple times, is  
8 that the first reading is not the final  
9 approval. The first reading is just the first  
10 reading. Then there's a second reading, and at  
11 that point, there's an opportunity, in that  
12 time frame, between the two, to perhaps make  
13 some revisions and improve the project. So  
14 that's the process.

15 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Ramon, before we move  
16 forward at this time --

17 MR. TRIAS: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER LAGO: -- I want to really  
19 highlight the three previous slides that you  
20 showed us, and I think that the City Manager  
21 maybe can chime in here.

22 I think it's important that we shed some  
23 light on the fact that -- what was the  
24 mechanism that we used to get notification out  
25 to the residents and the business owners, who

1 are interested in potentially attending one of  
2 those fourteen, so far, events? Did we follow  
3 all of the necessary protocols? Were the  
4 neighbors potentially notified? What was the  
5 radius? As I can see, you're putting up a  
6 slide which details this.

7 I just want to make sure that we followed  
8 all of the necessary procedures. In reference  
9 to this project, did we go above and beyond the  
10 standard call of duty, what we do -- because I  
11 see that we've had an excessive amount of  
12 meetings.

13 The US-1 corridor, I was there for that  
14 Charrette, but I'm just saying, in addition to  
15 standard meetings, what is your opinion,  
16 because I know you've been here some time  
17 already?

18 MR. TRIAS: Way beyond typical. Certainly  
19 we have a minimum requirement that was met,  
20 but, in addition, as you can see -- can I have  
21 the slide back, please?

22 As you can see, those are the times that  
23 the public was notified by Staff, by the City.  
24 Whatever meetings took place in addition to  
25 that by the Applicant, maybe they did a

1 fantastic job. We don't really keep track of  
2 that. We keep track of the required and the  
3 City processes.

4 So, as you can see, there were letters to  
5 property owners twice. The property was posted  
6 three times. There was a website posting six  
7 times. There were four newspaper  
8 advertisements. And then there were also  
9 multiple E-news and e-mail invitations.

10 As you know, as a matter of standard  
11 procedure, we list all of the projects in the  
12 E-news, in an effort to communicate better with  
13 the community. So all of that is going on. So  
14 all of that has been going on.

15 COMMISSIONER LAGO: When you say, "Four  
16 times newspaper advertisement," does that take  
17 into consideration the great idea that  
18 Commissioner Slesnick had?

19 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: This was the first  
20 time that a development project got included in  
21 our full page ad in Neighbors on Sunday, and I  
22 saw the ad myself.

23 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I think that's  
24 important. I just want to make sure we  
25 highlight that, because Commissioner Slesnick

1           came up with a great idea, and now it's become  
2           standard practice here in the City. We want to  
3           try to get as many individuals in this  
4           community notified of whatever events are  
5           happening. Doesn't matter the importance.  
6           Make sure that we get that information out  
7           there, and I think it was a great idea that  
8           Commissioner Slesnick came up with and we were  
9           able to put this out there.

10           MR. TRIAS: And through her leadership,  
11           we've been able to communicate much better with  
12           the community. And another thing we always do  
13           is that we have collected all of the letters --  
14           again, even last night, I received many  
15           letters, forwarded by Commissioner Slesnick,  
16           from the community, expressing their views.

17           And all of that has been collected, and  
18           it's a very thick document that is included in  
19           the binder. So I think that the opportunity to  
20           speak before this meeting, during this meeting,  
21           and in the next meeting, is there, and I think  
22           that the community will have a chance to  
23           express their views.

24           And those are some samples. There were  
25           some letters of support, many letters against



1 the project. So there were a variety of  
2 opinions all throughout the community.

3 And typical comments, I would say that they  
4 fell into two camps. One, that the project was  
5 out of scale. And other people thought that  
6 the project was a good improvement to the area.  
7 So all of that is input for you to consider and  
8 take into account, whenever you make a final  
9 decision.

10 MAYOR CASON: Ramon, one question.

11 MR. TRIAS: Yes.

12 MAYOR CASON: A lot of us get e-mail sent  
13 to us directly on the subject. Do you get  
14 those or do we have to -- if it's got the word  
15 "Paseo" in it, are you getting those or --

16 MR. TRIAS: If I'm copied, which I believe  
17 I was copied in practically all of them, I do  
18 get them and I forward them. Otherwise the  
19 City Manager forwards them to me.

20 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: If I'm copied, I  
21 forward, if he's not, so that he gets it, for  
22 the record, as well.

23 MAYOR CASON: So if any of us have gotten  
24 them with no CCs visible, then we can pass them  
25 to you --

1 MR. TRIAS: They're all public records. So  
2 if I get them, they're listed.

3 MR. LEEN: That's our standard procedure.  
4 It's forwarded, and then we put it in the  
5 record, so everything is in the record.

6 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Mr. Mayor --

7 MR. LEEN: Forward them to me, and then I  
8 forward them, for the record.

9 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: A lot of letters  
10 have come in, in the last week, that were just  
11 to the Commission, and Chelsea forwarded them  
12 all over to Ramon.

13 MR. TRIAS: Yeah. We got many last night,  
14 and some even this morning, and they're before  
15 you. So you have the latest, as of eight  
16 o'clock this morning. So we were working hard  
17 updating things.

18 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

19 MR. TRIAS: All right. So the other thing  
20 that I want to emphasize is that, thank you for  
21 your leadership, proposing the workshop on  
22 US-1, and I think that that was a great idea,  
23 and I think that probably is a small idea, in  
24 the context of what we really need, which is a  
25 Charrette for the whole City, to really come up

1 with a vision, that has support and makes sense  
2 to the community, because I think that there  
3 was some concern that that was not being done,  
4 and I understand perfectly well why that  
5 concern was taking place, and I want to make  
6 sure that -- my opinion is that we need to  
7 encourage public input as much as possible.

8 For that workshop, we had multiple ways to  
9 invite people and get that message across, and  
10 certainly Staff is very willing to do it  
11 better, and to come up with even better ideas  
12 on how to communicate with the community. So  
13 that was one thing we did that was unusual.

14 The peer review was sponsored by the  
15 Applicant. The workshop was sponsored by the  
16 City. Many of the people in this room, I  
17 believe, participated or had a chance to give  
18 their opinions. And all of these are just  
19 steps. I think none of it is a final moment in  
20 which somehow we come up with the last idea.

21 No, I think it's a work in progress, and I  
22 think that the area we looked at in the US-1  
23 Workshop was good, but probably not enough. I  
24 mean, we have to really look at the whole City  
25 and come up with a more clear vision.

1 Sometimes Commissioner Slesnick will ask me  
2 about the City's Master Plan, and I have to  
3 say, there's no such thing.

4 We have a Land Use Map. We have a Zoning  
5 Map, but a Master Plan, like the ones I've had  
6 a chance to produce and prepare in prior  
7 moments in my career, we don't have, and the  
8 City hasn't had that for quite a long time.

9 Now, as far as this project, there are four  
10 requests -- four requests, and it gets  
11 complicated because of the multiple layers of  
12 review and some, but the requests are four, and  
13 some of them -- I would say, at least the first  
14 one, which is the Comp Plan request, is a major  
15 policy choice.

16 This is significant, in the sense that the  
17 Commission needs to say, yes or no, and can  
18 say, yes or no, and the policy choice is about  
19 what the future of that area around the  
20 Metrorail, on both sides of US-1, should be.

21 I mean, that really is the best way to  
22 frame that question, and that's something that  
23 could be discussed later.

24 And then the details of that, as they're  
25 implemented in this project, are Requests 3 and

1 4, which is the Planned Area Development and  
2 the Mixed Use Site Plan. They are different  
3 requests, from a legal point of view. From a  
4 conceptual point of view, it's basically the  
5 same idea. It's just the way the project is  
6 designed. So that's basically it.

7 A major policy decision, in terms of what  
8 the area should be, and then the details of the  
9 project.

10 MR. LEEN: I would like to add something  
11 there. Item A-4, because it's a resolution,  
12 the actual vote on that will be on second  
13 reading, if this reaches second reading, but we  
14 noticed it today, as well, because we wanted  
15 you to be able to talk about both.

16 Item A-3, though, is -- the PAD review is  
17 also quasi-judicial. You're acting as a judge,  
18 in that you can impose conditions on Item A-3,  
19 and then you can always incorporate those in  
20 Item A-4 on second reading.

21 One other issue. I should say this at this  
22 time, the City follows the Jennings Rule. What  
23 that means is, you may wonder why you didn't  
24 get responses from Commissioners that got into  
25 detail relating to the site plan, the specific

1 site plan. It's because the Commission follows  
2 Jennings, which is, they act as judges, so they  
3 can't have what are called ex parte  
4 communications, which means that they can't  
5 engage in a discussing with you regarding Items  
6 A-3 and A-4.

7 Now, they can talk to you, of course, and  
8 they're your representatives, about Item A-1 or  
9 A-2. In A-1, for example, the Comprehensive  
10 Plan change, that's a change to the law. So  
11 there you're allowed to speak to them. The  
12 only reason they couldn't speak with you on the  
13 other things, and why we're emphasizing that  
14 these things are placed in the record, is that  
15 they're acting as Judges, in a sense, for  
16 those, and they're supposed to make their  
17 decision based on the record here today.  
18 That's required by law.

19 MR. TRIAS: Thank you, Craig.

20 Now, one of the questions that I get a lot  
21 is, what can you do on the site? What is the  
22 development that is allowed by right?

23 And the question is -- the question is  
24 asked, because the site has site specific  
25 requirements, has a Land Use designation, has

1 Zoning designation. It's a little bit  
2 complicated.

3 And I want to make it clear, that that is  
4 the way that the Code is set up and was set up  
5 years ago. None of us have done anything to  
6 make this like this, but what happens in the  
7 Code is that the site specific Zoning, which is  
8 the first column, which says, the FAR, which is  
9 the volume, the bulk of the project, is 1.5;  
10 the building height is 45 feet or four stories;  
11 the front setback is 125; and the rear setback  
12 is 50, appears to be what's allowed.

13 However, because of the way the Code is set  
14 up, if you go ahead and propose a project with  
15 the Med Bonus, the way that this has been  
16 interpreted in the past is that the Med Bonus  
17 goes on top of the site specific. That's the  
18 standard procedure, that Craig could explain it  
19 in more detail, more precisely.

20 So the reality is that many of those rules  
21 that appear so clear to me or to anyone looking  
22 at the Code, yeah, I mean, it says 45 feet, are  
23 not. And they're not, because the Code also  
24 anticipates additional height and additional  
25 FAR and additional flexibility with setbacks,

1 also, if the Med Bonus is applied.

2 And this is, we thought, changing the Land  
3 Use. This is without changing the Land Use or  
4 the Zoning.

5 Now, the actual request -- that's the  
6 currently permitted. That's -- right there, if  
7 one goes to the Med Bonus.

8 Do you have any question, sir?

9 COMMISSIONER LAGO: No. I just want to --  
10 since we're talking about the Med Bonus, do you  
11 think it's the appropriate time to maybe  
12 discuss the approval of an MXD overlay, in  
13 reference --

14 MR. TRIAS: Or that, too.

15 COMMISSIONER LAGO: -- because you touched  
16 on the setbacks, and I just want to make sure  
17 that everybody understands, because there's  
18 been some confusion, when I run into residents,  
19 when we talk about the overlay, we talk about  
20 the setbacks. What exactly happens to the  
21 setbacks? Do they stay in place? Or as per  
22 the Code right now, what would occur if an MXD  
23 overlay --

24 MR. TRIAS: The MXD overlay, which would be  
25 not exactly by right, but, then, again, it's



1 not changing the Land Use, either, so it's  
2 another step in the middle here, and I wanted  
3 to keep it simple, but you're right, that would  
4 be like the next step. If that happens, then  
5 the setbacks, in theory, could be zero. Now,  
6 in practice, they wouldn't be zero, because the  
7 project has to be reviewed by the Board of  
8 Architects and it has to be designed according  
9 to some reasonable standard.

10 COMMISSIONER LAGO: And I ask that,  
11 because, I mean, in Article 4 of the Zoning  
12 Code, on Page 4 of 24, it clearly states, on  
13 Point 3, that Site Specific standards of this  
14 Code shall not apply to properties seeking  
15 assignments of an MXD overlay. Approval of an  
16 MXD overlay shall deem underlying Site Specific  
17 Regulations as void.

18 I view that and understand that as, your  
19 setbacks of 125 in the front and 50 in the rear  
20 would be basically limited. Do you disagree  
21 with that or do --

22 MR. TRIAS: I agree. I agree.

23 MR. LEEN: Although there's one caveat.  
24 You could impose a condition, though, imposing  
25 setbacks, if you feel there's a harm.

1           COMMISSIONER LAGO: I just want to make  
2           sure that in Code, that's what it says right  
3           now, because there's just been a little bit of  
4           -- it's a little ambiguous, in my opinion.

5           MR. TRIAS: Now, the point that is  
6           important is that the Code says several things,  
7           and they're overlapping. So it's not as simple  
8           as saying, "Oh, okay, the Site Specifics are  
9           it."

10          And you're correct -- you're correct, you  
11          can do multiple things.

12          VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Ramon, let me ask you  
13          a question, because it's the first time we see  
14          it in this version, and Commissioner Slesnick  
15          and I were just talking, I think it's Tab 1 of  
16          our book, and it's Pages 2 and 3.

17          You show a little bit differently in the  
18          book. I think it looks better in the book,  
19          because it's got the visual comparison.

20          MR. TRIAS: Right.

21          VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I'm just saying, for  
22          the benefit of the other people that have the  
23          book.

24          MR. TRIAS: Yeah, and what happened is that  
25          I tried to simplify it for the public.

1           VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Yeah, I know. I  
2 understand that.

3           COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Ramon, maybe we  
4 should just have dates on some of these when  
5 they come out or maybe I should write them when  
6 they come in, because, on mine, the proposed by  
7 right is 3.0 for the FAR and 50 feet for the  
8 height, and you have 72.

9           MR. TRIAS: It's a little bit complicated,  
10 in the sense that the graphics -- and, you  
11 know, I'm going to say this, because every time  
12 I have to explain this, I feel that I'm not  
13 being clear.

14           And I want to explain clearly that that's  
15 the way the Code is. The Code is not clear.  
16 The Code is simply very unclear, and I wish I  
17 could give a simple answer. That would be my  
18 hope. My hope would be to tell you, "Yes, it  
19 is exactly what it says right there." That's  
20 the way I've always encouraged Codes to be.  
21 That is not the Code we have.

22           Now, it doesn't mean that the Code is bad.  
23 The Code is very good. It's just that it's not  
24 clear in some things, because it allows for the  
25 changes with mixed use and Med Bonus.

1           This column, the one that I'm showing here,  
2           is the one that I worked on last night, to make  
3           sure that it was as clear as I could be, okay,  
4           and that gives you a sense.

5           COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: So, by right, with  
6           the Mediterranean Bonus, you can build 72 feet  
7           or six stories?

8           MR. TRIAS: Right, or six stories. Yes.

9           Okay. So that's one issue. One issue.

10          Now, the second issue is that the request  
11          by the Applicant is significantly larger, okay.  
12          The Applicant is asking for something that is  
13          larger than what would be allowed by right or  
14          by right plus the Med Bonus and mixed use.

15          How is it larger? Well, there's a little  
16          bit more FAR. Well, significantly more, 3.5  
17          FAR, and the biggest issue, the biggest  
18          difference, I think, is the height. The height  
19          would get to be 190 feet 6 inches.

20          190 feet 6 inches is the tallest building  
21          that is approved in this City. We don't have  
22          any other designation beyond that, in terms --  
23          and, again, even that, in the Comp Plan, it  
24          reads 150. 190 and 6 inches is once you do the  
25          Med Bonus. So even that issue may be unclear,

1 depending on how you look at the Map.

2 So that's as best as I can do, in terms of  
3 explaining some of the before and after, so  
4 you're able -- yes, ma'am?

5 COMMISSIONER KEON: Can you go back to the  
6 slide you were at?

7 MR. TRIAS: Sure.

8 COMMISSIONER KEON: I want to know if  
9 everybody that's here and in this audience  
10 understands each one of those categories? Does  
11 everybody know what an FAR is? Do you know?  
12 Do you know?

13 If you don't know what an FAR is, raise  
14 your hand.

15 MR. TRIAS: All right. Let me explain it.

16 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay. Just tell them  
17 what it is. Building height is pretty clear.  
18 Front setback, all of those things are. Just  
19 very briefly say what FAR means.

20 MR. TRIAS: Floor area ratio is a technique  
21 that is used by planners to control the size of  
22 a project. And what it means is that there's a  
23 relationship between the building that is  
24 allowed and the actual site area.

25 For example, if the site area is a thousand

1 square feet, an FAR of 1 means you can do a  
2 building that is a thousand square feet. An  
3 FAR of 1.5 is, you can do a building that is  
4 1,500 square feet. So that's what it does. It  
5 relates the area of the site to the size of the  
6 building.

7 Having said that, even that -- and if  
8 you'll indulge me for one second, even that is  
9 an issue of interpretation of the Code, because  
10 some things count and some things don't count.

11 COMMISSIONER KEON: Right. But it's  
12 important that you understand that as the FAR  
13 goes up, the size of the building goes up also.  
14 The volume of the building on that given plot  
15 of land also goes up.

16 MR. TRIAS: So that's one of the regulatory  
17 techniques.

18 There are additional regulatory techniques  
19 that allow to shape a building of higher  
20 quality through the design process, through the  
21 many steps that I described.

22 Eventually, the most significant one, I  
23 think, is approval of the Board of Architects,  
24 where the issue of aesthetics plays a role. So  
25 it's not just the size. It's not just the

1 abstraction of the numbers. In this City, in  
2 Coral Gables, the aspiration is to achieve  
3 beauty, and that happens through the Board of  
4 Architects' review.

5 And if I need to explain it better, I'll  
6 give it a chance later on.

7 Now, as far as the Comp Plan, the first  
8 request, as the City Attorney mentioned, the  
9 Planning and Zoning motion to deny the request  
10 failed to pass. It was a three to three vote.  
11 Meaning, there's no official recommendation to  
12 you.

13 And some of the discussion was expected,  
14 because I believe this is the biggest issue,  
15 this is the real policy decision, in terms of  
16 what this area should be. Some people believe  
17 that it was a bad idea and some people believed  
18 it was a good idea. So that's why it was a  
19 three to three vote.

20 The Zoning Code Text, which removes the  
21 Site Specifics, also failed to pass three to  
22 three. It was a follow-up of that discussion.  
23 Clearly, they are tied. It doesn't make sense  
24 to remove one and not to make some changes.

25 The other side of the discussion, which

1 deals with the actual specifics of the project,  
2 there was a recommendation of approval, with  
3 conditions, and the conditions are significant.  
4 There was a recommendation of approval, if the  
5 project changes, and the vote was four to two.  
6 Even that was not unanimous. Even there, there  
7 was discussion back and forth.

8 Now, in the big binder, I sent you a memo,  
9 a memorandum, in the first tab, which has a  
10 series of conditions. That was a summary of  
11 the conditions that were discussed by Staff,  
12 and by the Planning and Zoning Board Members,  
13 and I want to thank them, because they actually  
14 did an excellent job of going beyond what Staff  
15 had even done. So they provided some really  
16 good ideas.

17 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Just a quick question,  
18 because I want to get my facts in order. I  
19 have a sheet here that has twelve  
20 recommendations.

21 MR. TRIAS: Right, and I forgot one.

22 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay. Which have been  
23 agreed upon by the Applicant. Do those  
24 directly correlate with the four-two vote from  
25 the Planning and Zoning Board?



1 MR. TRIAS: Yes. Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER LAGO: They fall in line?

3 MR. TRIAS: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER LAGO: But there is some  
5 additional concessions included.

6 MR. TRIAS: Yeah. What I added, beyond the  
7 request or the recommendations from the  
8 discussion from Planning and Zoning, I added a  
9 very substantial set of conditions that deal  
10 with traffic, traffic monitoring in the future,  
11 traffic -- because I really think the traffic  
12 is one of biggest issues.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: We don't have to go  
14 over that now, since you brought up the issue  
15 of conditions, but you can go over it later, if  
16 you have any --

17 MR. TRIAS: As of last night, I did get an  
18 e-mail confirming that the Applicant had agreed  
19 to all of the conditions, except one, and that  
20 one has to do with the height of the building.

21 So there's some progress that has taken  
22 place in the past week since I sent that  
23 original memorandum. I had met with the  
24 Applicant a couple of times. We've discussed  
25 the issues. And I have a couple of

1 illustrations, that, again, I got last night.  
2 So you have them as early as possible. And I  
3 hope the community understands that my effort  
4 here is to give you the latest information, and  
5 all of the information, absolutely all of the  
6 possible information that we may have.

7 So those conditions, we'll go into some  
8 detail later on, but, again, the Applicant can  
9 say that better. They should say it. But what  
10 they told me is that they're in agreement with  
11 almost all of them.

12 MR. LEEN: One thing. On Request Number 3,  
13 the PAD, you will be voting on that today.  
14 That is quasi-judicial, because it's an  
15 ordinance. You'll be voting on it today.

16 I wanted you to be aware, you have  
17 significant discretion with that item, because  
18 it's a PAD, and I want to read into the record  
19 one thing that you should be aware of. This  
20 relates to PADs. It says, "Relation to General  
21 Zoning Subdivision or Other Regulations, where  
22 there are conflicts between the PAD provisions  
23 and general zoning subdivisions or other  
24 regulations and requirements, these regulations  
25 shall apply," and they mean the Zoning Code,

1 "Unless the Planning and Zoning Board  
2 recommends and the City Commission finds, in  
3 the particular case, One, that the PAD  
4 provisions do not serve public benefits to a  
5 degree at least equivalent to such general  
6 zoning subdivision or other regulations or  
7 requirements or, Two, that actions, designs,  
8 construction or other solutions proposed by the  
9 Applicant, although not literally in accord  
10 these PAD regulations, satisfy public benefits  
11 to at least an equivalent degree."

12 The reason I raise that is, this provision  
13 can be used to adjust the Zoning Code lawfully,  
14 without variance, in order to address harms  
15 that you hear today, and so as long as there's  
16 evidence in the record that support it, this  
17 provision is what gives you the discretion to  
18 act and move things around.

19 It could be to address a harm. It could be  
20 for a number of reasons.

21 Yes, Commissioner.

22 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Mr. City Attorney,  
23 can you just define PAD for the audience and  
24 give an example?

25 MR. LEEN: A PAD is a Planned Area

1 Development. It's usually used for larger  
2 areas, where it gives the City and it gives our  
3 Zoning Officials more ability to approve  
4 projects, that -- you know, the most recent  
5 one, which is a good example, is the  
6 Mediterranean Village.

7 As you remember, one specific building in  
8 the Mediterranean Village might not comply with  
9 the Zoning Code, but when it's a PAD and you  
10 can look at all of the different buildings and  
11 move FAR, you know, which we discussed or  
12 other -- or parking or things like that, among  
13 the different buildings, it gives more  
14 flexibility, and it gives the Commission more  
15 regulatory authority to impose conditions and  
16 make adjustments to act in the best interest of  
17 the public, but ultimately the standard is the  
18 best interest of the public and making sure  
19 that whatever Zoning Code provision is being  
20 adjusted, is being met in some other way. It  
21 gives flexibility to the Commission.

22 MR. TRIAS: So, as I said, the Applicant  
23 has updated the project, and in the PowerPoint  
24 that I had submitted before, I said that it had  
25 not updated the project. At that time, that

1 was true. At this time, they have made some  
2 updates that they will be ready to discuss.

3 The first update is the one that I  
4 described. They have agreed to the conditions,  
5 and that's a page that I received last night,  
6 and you can see that the Applicant is basically  
7 saying, "The Applicant will comply," throughout  
8 the conditions, and then the one that they have  
9 not agreed on is the height.

10 The original height, as proposed, the one  
11 that you may have seen in the website, was 142.  
12 The project, as proposed as of this morning, is  
13 133. So they've come down slightly.

14 The discussion on the Planning and Zoning  
15 Board that received that four to two vote was  
16 120. Okay. So, in blue, you can see what was  
17 discussed by the Planning and Zoning Board.

18 The second issue is that they lowered the  
19 podium of the parking garage to 45 feet. 45  
20 feet is what's required, and that was one of  
21 the issues. It used to be 56. So they've come  
22 down, as you can see, about 10 feet or so.

23 They have not set back the 100 feet, but  
24 they kept the building. That was the other  
25 violation or the Code, the other non-compliance

1 with the Code. So, as we know today, as of  
2 this morning, the thick blue line is what the  
3 Planning and Zoning Board discussed, and the  
4 red arrows is where the Applicant is, and  
5 that's the outstanding issue, I think.

6 MR. LEEN: And one issue to say with that  
7 is, for a Comp Plan or a Zoning Code change,  
8 you're not allowed by law to impose conditions,  
9 but you can accept a proffer in relation to  
10 them, and what that means is -- you know, one  
11 concern that's been expressed is, well, if you  
12 change the Comp Plan, this could conceivably  
13 allow a 190-foot building in the future, even  
14 if in this one, you're imposing a requirement.

15 What we would do as part of the proffer,  
16 they would be proffering a restrictive covenant  
17 that will limit the height to what they're  
18 proposing. That will be put in our  
19 Comprehensive Plan. So that means future  
20 property owners would be bound to that, as  
21 well.

22 MR. TRIAS: That is the same information  
23 they gave us, two drawings, but nothing  
24 different here.

25 So in the memo, we had recommended

1           continuance until the Applicant revises the  
2           project. The Applicant has revised the project  
3           somewhat so let's listen to their presentation  
4           and then we can come back --

5           COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Can we go back one  
6           slide, Ramon?

7           MR. TRIAS: Yes.

8           COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: And, Mr. City  
9           Attorney, on the Comp Plan, it's my  
10          understanding that if we change it just for  
11          this, it doesn't apply to the other properties,  
12          like the one next door, that was just  
13          purchased, or where the Riviera Theater was, to  
14          go 190 feet.

15          MR. LEEN: Yes. You can limit your  
16          decisions today, both for the Comp Plan and for  
17          the site specific, to just this property.

18          VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Isn't that also the  
19          impact of the PAD?

20          MR. LEEN: Yes, the PAD would be just this  
21          property.

22          VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Yeah, there's no  
23          precedential effect. It's similar to -- I  
24          mean, we've done that in the past.

25          MAYOR CASON: Yes, the Collection.

1 MR. LEEN: It doesn't set a -- in my  
2 opinion --

3 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Is the Collection a  
4 PAD?

5 MR. LEEN: In my opinion, it doesn't set a  
6 legal precedent, in the sense that you're not  
7 bound by it in other cases. You'll have to  
8 consider it along with everything else, but you  
9 ultimately retain the discretion.

10 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I think what you meant  
11 to say was the Mediterranean Village, as a  
12 similar example.

13 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Is there usually a  
14 percentage or amount of land that you have to  
15 accumulate to have a PAD?

16 MR. TRIAS: Yeah. It's one acre minimum.

17 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: One acre.

18 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: One acre?

19 MAYOR CASON: Is it one acre?

20 MR. TRIAS: Yeah.

21 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: What's the size of  
22 this, for the public? It's a two point --

23 MAYOR CASON: Two point something.

24 COMMISSIONER KEON: 2.2?

25 MR. TRIAS: 2.6. I don't remember exactly.



1 It's in the Staff --

2 COMMISSIONER KEON: 2.6 acres?

3 MR. TRIAS: 2.6, yeah. I mean, it complies  
4 with that requirement.

5 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: But there are three  
6 or four others along US-1 right now that are  
7 larger than one acre sites.

8 COMMISSIONER KEON: Yes.

9 MR. TRIAS: Yeah, multiple sites could  
10 comply, absolutely.

11 MAYOR CASON: But each PAD is looked at as  
12 an individual project.

13 MR. TRIAS: Yes. Yes. By you. I mean,  
14 it's approved by the Commission.

15 MAYOR CASON: It doesn't make it precedent.

16 MR. TRIAS: Right. And it's not by right.  
17 I mean, I want to make it clear, it's up to the  
18 Commission.

19 COMMISSIONER KEON: And any changes to it  
20 have to come back before the Commission? It's  
21 a conditional ---

22 MR. TRIAS: And it's significant --

23 MR. LEEN: There's major amendments and  
24 minor amendments. Any material change -- in  
25 the common sense of the word -- there's

1 actually definitions in the Code as to what's  
2 material, but a material change would have to  
3 come before you, and, of course, Staff can  
4 always send even minor amendments to you, too,  
5 if they think it's --

6 MR. TRIAS: From a practical point of view,  
7 the answer is, yes.

8 COMMISSIONER KEON: The PAD gives us much  
9 more control over the development, an ongoing  
10 control over the development.

11 MR. TRIAS: Yes.

12 MAYOR CASON: Anything else you want to add  
13 at this point?

14 MR. TRIAS: At this point, I would like the  
15 Applicant to explain the project.

16 MAYOR CASON: All right. Let's have the  
17 Applicant come up.

18 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Good work.

19 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you, Ramon.

21 MAYOR CASON: Very complex here.

22 MR. BASS: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, Vice  
23 Mayor, Members of the Commission. Jeffrey Bass  
24 is my name. 46 Southwest First Street is my  
25 address. And it's wonderful to be here. We've

1           been at this for over one year.

2           MR. LEEN: Mr. Bass, could you -- I'm  
3           hearing that they can't hear you. Thank you.

4           MR. BASS: How am I doing now?

5           COMMISSIONER LAGO: Much better.

6           COMMISSIONER KEON: Much better.

7           MR. BASS: Okay. So let me restate then  
8           that it's wonderful to be here today. We've  
9           been at this for over one year.

10          The road we have traveled, in terms of  
11          public participation and outreach, is  
12          unprecedented. We have had small group  
13          meetings. We have had intermediate sized group  
14          meetings. We have had large group meetings.  
15          We have had public professional peer review  
16          meetings. We have done everything that has  
17          been asked of us, and a whole lot more.

18          I'd like to start by introducing our  
19          project team. I'm joined by my co-counsel,  
20          Ms. Laura Russo, and Mr. Jorge Navarro. We  
21          have our project architect, Mr. Jorge  
22          Hernandez. Timonthy Plummer, our traffic  
23          engineer, Robert Parsley, our landscape  
24          architect, and our principals, Mr. Brent  
25          Reynolds and Mr. Charles Nolan.

1           Our presentation, I'd like to just give you  
2           an outline as to how I will organize our  
3           presentation. I will address the legal and  
4           macro-planning concepts that will shape your  
5           consideration of our applications.

6           Mr. Hernandez will walk you through the  
7           architecture design and specific elements of  
8           the plan, placing a particular emphasis on the  
9           transition, the elegant sensitive transition of  
10          our buildings, as revised, to the context of  
11          the existing neighborhood.

12          And Mr. Plummer will address an issue of  
13          traffic circulation and the efforts that we  
14          have undertaken to be very confident that we  
15          will not be impacting the neighborhood to the  
16          south that has been very vocal in this process  
17          throughout.

18          A few housekeeping matters before I get  
19          started, although your City Attorney did a  
20          wonderful job. I'd like to be sure that the  
21          record of this proceeding includes and  
22          incorporates the record of the Planning and  
23          Zoning Board proceedings and the other  
24          instances when we've appeared before the  
25          Commission along the way.

1 MR. LEEN: Mr. Mayor, with your permission,  
2 everything will be incorporated in.

3 MAYOR CASON: Yes. Of course.

4 MR. BASS: Thank you, Craig.

5 As well as the reports, recommendations,  
6 transcripts and alike.

7 I'd also like to take a moment right now,  
8 before I get into the merits, to frame what  
9 your role is today and how you should process  
10 the evidence you receive.

11 Your City Attorney advised you, you are  
12 sitting today as judges. Judges look at facts.  
13 Judges look at evidence. Judges discount  
14 irrelevant emotional threatening comments, and  
15 we would ask that you do the same.

16 This is not a popularity contest. Your  
17 decision is not based, nor can it, as a matter  
18 of law, be based on which side has more  
19 supporters or opponents, which side cheers or  
20 jeers more loudly. It would be legal error to  
21 base a decision on that.

22 Next, because the issue of height has been  
23 described, I'd like to make it quite clear that  
24 Florida does not recognize a legal right to a  
25 view. No person has a right to claim a view

1 over another's private property. No person has  
2 a legal right to demand that private property  
3 be kept in a particular condition, because they  
4 enjoy the light and air that may pass upon it  
5 in its natural state.

6 That has been the law in the State of  
7 Florida since the famous Fontainebleau case,  
8 and when you hear conversations this morning  
9 about height, I would like you to keep that  
10 principle in mind.

11 But this is perhaps the most important  
12 thing that I will say to you, as part of my  
13 initial remarks. Heat is not a substitute for  
14 light. There has been, and I'd be quite frank  
15 to say, an enormous amount of heat thrown  
16 around this project. I would ask you to focus  
17 not on the heat, but on the facts that come  
18 out, that we're going to show here in the  
19 light. Facts are evidence. Threatening  
20 e-mails, not evidence. Discourteous outbursts,  
21 not evidence.

22 Our supporters have been accosted in their  
23 homes by opponents who simply dislike their  
24 opinion. This has been made very  
25 uncomfortable, very unnecessarily, and I would

1 ask that you focus the entirety of your  
2 attention on the facts that are presented today  
3 and discount all of that.

4 Umpires, judges, make calls based on what  
5 they see, based on an objective metric. The  
6 ball is a strike, if it's in the strike zone.  
7 It's a ball, if it's not. You don't call balls  
8 and strikes based on how loud one side screams.

9 So that said, let me turn to the merits,  
10 because it's vitally important that you  
11 recognize that this is the right project, at  
12 the right place, at the right time. It is the  
13 right project, at the right place, at the right  
14 time.

15 Let me start in my remarks to address the  
16 place. Is this a suitable place for a mixed  
17 use residential project? That question was  
18 asked and answered by our community in the  
19 '70s. What we present here is nothing new or  
20 novel. In the 1970s, our community came  
21 together, and at a public referendum, voted by  
22 a margin of two to one, to pass, at the time,  
23 the single biggest bond issue in the country,  
24 called the Decade of Progress.

25 Those bonds were used to fund the transit

1 system that we call Metrorail. It's a little  
2 known fact -- it's a little known fact, but the  
3 actual groundbreaking ceremony -- I'm going to  
4 move these over just a bit -- the  
5 groundbreaking ceremony for the entire  
6 Metrorail system took place at the University  
7 Station. We used to refer to Metrorail  
8 affectionately as Metrofail, but look at what  
9 has happened. Ridership at both, the  
10 University Station and system-wide, has seen  
11 unprecedented steady growth. It's happening.

12 Our project is located in walking distance  
13 to the University Station Metrorail System. It  
14 is a project that brings bodies there. And we  
15 understand the key to a successful transit  
16 system is having people living walking distance  
17 to the transit system.

18 Now, when you adopted your Comprehensive  
19 Plan, you set out policy decisions and you  
20 bound yourself to them. Your Comprehensive  
21 Plan is your Constitution for growth.

22 Your Planning Director framed the issue  
23 before you today as one involving largely a  
24 policy choice, and I would like to say that  
25 you've already made that policy choice. You've



1 made it in a lawful process, regulated by the  
2 State, and you put your answer to the policy  
3 question in your Comprehensive Plan.

4 Your Comprehensive Plan says, as a goal,  
5 locate higher density development along transit  
6 corridors and near multi-modal stations. It is  
7 a fact, it is an undisputable fact, that this  
8 development is located precisely in the sweet  
9 spot of the goal of your Comprehensive Plan.

10 So the decision to increase density or not  
11 increase density here is a decision you've  
12 already made, and I dare say, to not increase  
13 density here would be for you to make a  
14 decision contrary to your Comprehensive Plan.  
15 This is the right place to increase density.  
16 That fact is not disputable.

17 Your Comprehensive Plan also enshrines this  
18 City's commitment to mixed use. You have  
19 policies in your Comprehensive Plan that  
20 require you to promote mix used development, to  
21 provide housing in commercial services, near  
22 employment centers, to support infill housing,  
23 to encourage Land Use decisions that encourage  
24 infill, the re-development and reuse of vacant  
25 or underutilized parcels that support walking,

1 bicycling and public transit.

2 This is the right place for this project,  
3 by the objective measurements that are in your  
4 Comprehensive Plan.

5 Now, this is the right place for an  
6 additional reason. It comes as a surprise to  
7 many, but it's in your Comprehensive Plan, the  
8 City has adopted what is known as the Gables  
9 Re-development Infill District, the GRID. The  
10 GRID is a transportation concurrency exemption  
11 area. That is a long-winded way of saying  
12 that, as a policy decision, this Commission has  
13 determined that we need to promote development  
14 within the GRID, and we will not stop  
15 development within the GRID because of traffic.  
16 This is where you want your development to  
17 occur, in a compact, centralized way.

18 If you vote to deny development within the  
19 GRID based on traffic, you are taking an action  
20 inconsistent with your Comprehensive Plan.

21 This is the right place for another  
22 important reason. The lot depth. This is a  
23 uniquely deep commercial lot. It is the  
24 largest uniform rectangular commercial block in  
25 all of Coral Gables. This makes it uniquely

1 suitable for the type of mixed use that we are  
2 presenting, and when you look at the  
3 parcelization up and down the US-1 corridor,  
4 you will see that the parcel sizes and  
5 ownership patterns are themselves a defense  
6 against some of the concerns expressed, that  
7 your action here would spawn identical  
8 development up and down.

9 As the conversation occurred earlier, you  
10 have your controls through your PAD and MXD and  
11 the action that you take today will not spawn  
12 similar requests binding upon you to approve in  
13 this area of town.

14 Planning is all about adjacencies, and this  
15 is the right place, because our project is  
16 adjacent to the Metrorail. It is adjacent to  
17 the underline. It is within the GRID. And  
18 this is the right time.

19 The pedestrian bridge that has been long  
20 overdue and much talked about, I'm quite happy  
21 to say, is under construction as we speak.

22 The underline, one of the greatest locally  
23 born ideas that I have witnessed in my  
24 lifetime, is occurring directly across the  
25 street. This is the time when things are

1           happening here.

2           Transit oriented development is at present  
3           the best way to approach our transportation  
4           issues as a community. The Transportation  
5           Overlay Development Institute in Washington, DC  
6           this week just took the unprecedented step of  
7           endorsing Paseo de la Riviera as the embodiment  
8           of all of the guiding principles of transit  
9           oriented development that we, as a community,  
10          locally, regionally and nationally, should be  
11          embracing, if we want to, in a meaningful way,  
12          shift conversation about mobility away from  
13          single vehicle occupant trips and towards  
14          reliance on transit.

15          This is the right time, because, I think,  
16          as a community, we have unified on one  
17          principle, even our opponents, I believe, that  
18          sprawl, no more, that the type of development  
19          characterized as urban sprawl is no longer  
20          appropriate anywhere.

21          The regulations that we seek to change are  
22          regulations that have served to promote urban  
23          sprawl and --

24          COMMISSIONER LAGO: May I interrupt you for  
25          one second?

1 MR. BASS: Absolutely.

2 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Do you want me to hold  
3 my remarks until after, because I have a  
4 question in regards to the TOD Institute? I  
5 don't have any information in regards to that,  
6 and want to discuss it. Do you prefer to wait  
7 until your 45 minutes are up and then we can go  
8 into more of a detailed question and answer?

9 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: The only thing I  
10 would say, sir, is, we're going to keep him on  
11 a very tight time line.

12 COMMISSIONER LAGO: That's why I'm asking.

13 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: So I just want to  
14 be careful with --

15 MR. BASS: Mindful of the Vice Mayor's  
16 warning, we will give out the TOD documents  
17 during our presentation. I'm going to ask my  
18 co-counsel to gather them for me now.

19 COMMISSIONER LAGO: He's a stickler for  
20 those time documents. I'm telling you that.  
21 This is not the first time that he's brought  
22 that up.

23 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: It's just got to be  
24 within reason. We just don't want to get  
25 sandbagged by either side.

1           COMMISSIONER LAGO: All jokes aside, let me  
2           strike my comment and give you a little  
3           background. We've had certain instances where  
4           documents have been delivered to us right on  
5           the spot, you know, and it's just inappropriate  
6           for both parties.

7           MR. BASS: I'm going to hopefully make both  
8           of you happy and have Ms. Russo hand you out  
9           the TOD documents at this very moment in time.

10          COMMISSIONER LAGO: I'll leave my comments  
11          until later.

12          MAYOR CASON: Continue, please.

13          MR. BASS: Okay. Thank you.

14          So that brings me to the H word. I'm just  
15          going to say it, height. Let's just get right  
16          into it. Let's just talk about the height.

17          I was very interesting to see the comment  
18          that the Planning Director put before you as  
19          exemplary of the public comments.

20          The public comment that was on the slide  
21          before you said, "This building will cast a  
22          large shadow literally and figuratively over an  
23          established single-family neighborhood."

24          That's just false.

25          When you talk about height, it's important

1 to talk about height within context, okay.  
2 This building is not blocking anybody's view of  
3 the ocean. This building is not blocking  
4 anybody's view of a national historic monument  
5 or some other very significant thing to look  
6 at. The only thing this building blocks a view  
7 of, if it blocks a view of anything, is the  
8 Gables One Tower -- Gables One Tower, which  
9 nobody has described as a particularly lovely  
10 thing to look at.

11 But in terms of the impact of this height  
12 on everybody, in a legal sense, there is none.  
13 The height of our building interferes in no way  
14 with what anybody else needs to do on their  
15 property.

16 George Merrick had a very simple formula,  
17 and this is in our book, on how to address  
18 scale, and in the same breath, height, at this  
19 location.

20 Under George Merrick's algorithm, which is  
21 on the map, the appropriate height of a  
22 commercial building in this location is very  
23 simple, 1.5 times the width of the adjacent  
24 right-of-way. That was a rule of  
25 proportionality that created lovely spaces,

1 both positive and negative spaces.

2 Under Merrick's metric, our building comes  
3 in at 150 feet. So, historically, this has  
4 been planned as a place for taller buildings,  
5 because this is a place with wider public  
6 rights of way in front of it.

7 Now, I think it's important to say that  
8 Merrick had a different vision for the  
9 Industrial District, and that's why I think it  
10 would be inappropriate, and, in fact,  
11 arbitrary, to say that the Industrial District  
12 should serve as the metric for our height.  
13 Those streets are more narrow. It is not  
14 directly across the street from transit. But,  
15 importantly, Merrick noticed that there was a  
16 distinction between the Industrial District and  
17 the Commercial District, and he limited the  
18 height in the Industrial District, on the  
19 Merrick Plan, to 10 stories, not a limit placed  
20 on the Commercial, where we are.

21 Through the decades, this Commission has  
22 approved buildings that are, by the standard of  
23 today's conversation, tall. We have tall  
24 buildings. We have tall buildings next to  
25 single-family homes. We have the Gables Club



1 on Edgewater Drive. It's a tall, beautiful  
2 building. Edgewater Drive is a very narrow  
3 street. The Gables Club is across the waterway  
4 from million dollars homes in Cocoplum. It is  
5 adjacent to duplexes, and then single families,  
6 and the world keeps spinning. Nobody's harmed  
7 by that building.

8 There are other examples. They're in our  
9 book. I don't need to go through them for you  
10 now. They're on Page 42 through 52 of our  
11 submission. The Biltmore, a very tall  
12 building, very active building, been here for a  
13 long time, hasn't hurt anybody. Lovely to look  
14 at, single-family homes all around it.

15 Segovia Tower, the Bacardi Building, in  
16 Downtown Miami (sic). These are tall  
17 buildings, and they're as close, if not closer,  
18 to single-family homes.

19 You approved Mediterranean Village. You  
20 approved very tall buildings right across the  
21 street from single-family homes. So tall is  
22 fine, if the design is lovely, and our design  
23 is lovely.

24 Now, there were a few other items I'd like  
25 to touch upon before I turn it over --

1 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Let me stay on height  
2 for a second. So I understand the -- what you  
3 told us, how we can't make a decision --

4 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: Vice Mayor Quesada,  
5 Commissioner Lago is going to think that I like  
6 you more than him, if I let you ask a question.

7 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: But I thought that was  
8 true.

9 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I mean, I know I'm just  
10 a Commissioner and he's the Vice Mayor, but, I  
11 mean -- I'm trying to read through this  
12 Institute report.

13 MAYOR CASON: Let's do this, answer the  
14 Vice Chair's questions now. We'll add it to  
15 your 45 minutes.

16 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I'll wait. I'll wait  
17 until the end. My apologies. I'll wait until  
18 the end.

19 MAYOR CASON: Go ahead. Continue then.

20 MR. BASS: Let me wrap up, before I  
21 introduce Mr. Hernandez.

22 There have been suggestions throughout the  
23 course of our application that this is spot  
24 zoning. This is not spot zoning. My  
25 opponents, during the course of the P&Z, have

1           conceded, appropriately, that this is spot  
2           zoning. So any suggestion that this is (sic)  
3           spot zoning is just simply misplaced.

4           COMMISSIONER LAGO: Can you go a little  
5           indepth in regards to why it's not spot zoning?  
6           I just want to educate --

7           MR. BASS: With the permission of the  
8           Mayor, which I assume that I would have.

9           Okay. Spot zoning is a legal concept. The  
10          lead case of spot zoning is a case called Bird  
11          Kendall Homeowners Association versus  
12          Miami-Dade County. Spot zoning occurs when a  
13          property owner is singled out and given more  
14          privileges than would otherwise be allowed  
15          under the Zoning Code.

16          The suggestion was that by asking to remove  
17          the site specific through our Text Amendment,  
18          that we are spot zoning. We are not. This is  
19          the important part of that, by removing the  
20          site specific, we're not being granted anything  
21          other than what every other commercial property  
22          owner in Coral Gables enjoys, which is an FAR  
23          of 3.0.

24          So we're not spot zoning. What I would say  
25          is, we're correcting a case of spot zoning,

1 which is what we sought to do through out Land  
2 Use Amendment.

3 Did I answer your question?

4 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Yeah. That was a point  
5 of confusion, I mean, I'll be honest, with  
6 myself, on that issue. I wanted to be very  
7 clear about it, because I had received several  
8 e-mails, which I have responded to, and I  
9 wanted to make sure that was clear, not only  
10 for the individuals in the room today, but also  
11 -- at least for myself, which is very  
12 important.

13 MR. LEEN: Now, the official position of  
14 the City, just to understand, is that the Site  
15 Specifics are not spot zoning. Now, the  
16 Applicant is free to argue that, of course,  
17 but, you know, the Site Specifics are quite  
18 complex, and you have to look at each one. A  
19 lot of them are based on former governmental  
20 approvals. Some of them are in place because  
21 of annexations, and I think you have to look at  
22 each one in their own circumstance.

23 Now, you can consider the argument for its  
24 weight, though, in term of, you know, whether  
25 this is spot zoning.

1 MR. BASS: I hope it was clear before.

2 COMMISSIONER LAGO: It was clear. Thank  
3 you.

4 MR. BASS: So, yes, we have worked very,  
5 very hard with your Staff, particularly in the  
6 last two weeks. They have presented us with  
7 numerous new conditions. We've accepted almost  
8 all of them, and we have done so in writing.

9 They have been vigilant in pushing and  
10 pushing, and they have pushed us towards making  
11 this a better project.

12 So we have also worked with the  
13 neighborhood, and I'm going to ask that  
14 Mr. Hernandez and Mr. Plummer highlight for  
15 you, in their remarks, the changes that have  
16 been made on this project, based on the 60 plus  
17 meetings that we have had with our neighbors,  
18 but importantly those changes focus on access,  
19 ingress, the flow of circulation, and we have  
20 brought this building down in height from 156  
21 feet, as originally submitted then, to 142, and  
22 now we're at 133.

23 So, in this process, certainly this project  
24 has been shaped by the input and comments of  
25 our neighbors.

1           MAYOR CASON:  Could you, at the end of your  
2 presentation, read the language of the GRID, as  
3 in relation to the University of Miami?  I  
4 think the GRID language had some specific --

5           MR. BASS:  I will.

6           COMMISSIONER KEON:  The infill --

7           MAYOR CASON:  Right.

8           MR. BASS:  There's two issues.  There's the  
9 GRID on transportation concurrency, but then  
10 there's the Comp Plan on infill, and the Comp  
11 Plan on infill tells you, you should encourage  
12 mixed use and higher density development near  
13 employment centers, such as the University of  
14 Miami, so people can live and work without  
15 being dependent on getting into --

16          MAYOR CASON:  Okay.  So it was in that  
17 particular piece of --

18          MR. BASS:  It was in the Comp Plan, on  
19 mixed use and increasing residential density.

20                 Lastly, your Comp Plan has a very  
21 frequently overlooked design element, that we  
22 emphasized at the Planning Board, and I'd like  
23 to emphasize now.  The goal of your design  
24 element is as follows:  Maintain the City as a  
25 liveable City, attractive in its setting, and

1 dynamic in its urban character.

2 This application ingests long overdue  
3 dynamism into an area of US-1 that has, for the  
4 better part of the last century, been dominated  
5 by strip mall type development, that it is time  
6 to consign to our past.

7 So that said, we would ask for your  
8 approval of our applications on first reading.  
9 I'd like now Mr. Hernandez to present to you,  
10 before Mr. Plummer.

11 Thank you.

12 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

14 MR. HERNANDEZ: Good morning --

15 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Good morning.

16 MR. HERNANDEZ: -- Fellow Mayor and  
17 Commissioners. It's a privilege to be here.  
18 My name is Jorge Hernandez, and I reside at  
19 5726 San Vicente, and my place of business is  
20 at 337 Palermo Avenue.

21 This project is about connectivity. It  
22 connects people to places, creating community.  
23 It ensures development that delivers quality of  
24 life, public realm improvements, that promote  
25 walking, biking and other alternatives to

1 conventional vehicular single occupant traffic.  
2 And most importantly, it offers opportunity for  
3 social exchange, fostered beautifully by a  
4 design series of public realm spaces, some  
5 imagery of which you're looking at.

6 The architecture of this project turns away  
7 from the architecture of sprawl, from the  
8 architecture of strip malls fronting vast  
9 parking lots congested with cars and fenders,  
10 adjacent to our narrow City sidewalks on US-1.

11 It turns away from that, and, instead, it  
12 looks towards another paradigm. A paradigm of  
13 the architecture of community, open and  
14 fostering, as community can, richness and  
15 diversity.

16 Next board, Patrick, please.

17 The Paseo de la Riviera project connects  
18 US-1 to Jaycee Park and to the neighborhood  
19 beyond. It connects us to the US-1 corridor,  
20 and to the future underline, up the pedestrian  
21 bridge to UM or to the Metrorail, and via the  
22 Metro, to the general greater Miami community  
23 beyond.

24 Why can this happen here? It has already  
25 been mentioned that this is a very unique place



1 in our City. It is exactly at the same block  
2 where the Miami Metro station is, and it is  
3 exactly across the same block where the  
4 pedestrian bridge is being built.

5 Most importantly, it is the only  
6 rectangular commercially zoned block in this  
7 City that is 325 feet deep. Merrick's GRID is  
8 220. Two 100-foot lots, one 20-foot alley.  
9 That re-planning, for some reason, occurred in  
10 1949 and 1965, and we don't know why, but it  
11 did, and it produced a very unique block right  
12 here.

13 The diagram on your right shows what we  
14 call the urban grain diagram. When blocks are  
15 less deep, buildings go broad shouldered to the  
16 frontage. All of the strip malls on US-1, and,  
17 yes, even the Gables One Building, is built  
18 broad shouldered to US-1 and creates a barrier.

19 You cannot walk from Madruga to US-1,  
20 unless you go around the entire block. Most of  
21 the residents here will tell you that. What we  
22 have done here, because of the unique  
23 properties of this block, is, we have turned  
24 the grain of this project perpendicular.

25 So rather than the broad shouldered

1 dimension of the buildings being on US-1, the  
2 narrow face of the buildings are on US-1. What  
3 does this accomplish? It accomplishes a series  
4 of spacial canyons, corridors, spacial  
5 corridors from the back of the block to the  
6 front of the block.

7 Those corridor bring light through the  
8 block. Luckily, because the block is turned on  
9 the southeasterly direction, on Madruga, it  
10 bring light and breezes. Our southeast breezes  
11 are the prevailing breezes in this part of the  
12 world. Brings breezes through the block. Most  
13 importantly, it casts all shadows to the north  
14 and northwest. So the shadows are cast on US-1  
15 and on other commercial property. No  
16 residential property will receive a shadow from  
17 this project, regardless of height. It would  
18 have to be in the opposite hemisphere to do  
19 that. It cannot cast shadow on a residential  
20 property.

21 This is an opportunity that is unique in  
22 the City. These are the diagrams that show  
23 that urban pattern.

24 The project -- let me speak briefly about  
25 the project. I know that you've all reviewed

1           it before, but, for the record, the project and  
2           the two images I'm showing are the facade on  
3           US-1 or the ground plane or the site plan.

4           The project contains two buildings, a  
5           hotel, with 252 keys, an apartment building,  
6           with 234 apartments. It has 20,000 square feet  
7           of commercial along the ground floor, and there  
8           is a parking garage or parking deck which parks  
9           \$838 cars, 12 cars in excess of current Code  
10          compliance.

11          But more importantly, the project garners  
12          its name from its signature element, the paseo.  
13          That element lends its spirit and its name to  
14          the project.

15          So because of the ability to turn the  
16          grain, the project focuses around that urban  
17          space that you see landscaped there in the  
18          middle, landscaped with fountains, public art  
19          and totally accessible.

20          That space is almost as large as Merrick  
21          Park across the way, the symbolic park in front  
22          of City Hall, almost that large, okay.

23          There are other features of the project.  
24          The project has over 1,000 linear feet of  
25          arcades and colonnades; that is, nearly

1 one-quarter mile of arcades and colonnades.  
2 Those stitch around the entire perimeter of the  
3 project, making the project face all of its  
4 primary streets, US-1, Madruga, Caballero.

5 Lastly, there is a private lane that is  
6 introduced into the project. It is our own  
7 space, it is private space, and we fashioned it  
8 35-feet wide for the benefits of stacking all  
9 cars away from US-1. We will have Mr. Tim  
10 Plummer speak about the way traffic has been  
11 handled, but when you consider the private  
12 lane, the paseo, which is 72 feet wide and 325  
13 feet long, and the arcade on Caballero,  
14 one-third of the frontage of US-1 is open,  
15 unbuilt. That's very valuable real estate.

16 And more importantly, one acre of the  
17 ground plane, 41 percent of the 2.6 acres of  
18 the site, is open, unbuilt. Very valuable real  
19 estate, and it's given over to the kinds of  
20 spaces that Mr. Bass talked about when he  
21 talked about what the vision of design is for  
22 this City. Space is a public enjoyment and  
23 social communion.

24 Can I have the next boards, please?

25 Now, one of the spaces that -- I'm going to

1 take the mike.

2 Is this on? It's on now? Yes.

3 Okay. So one of the spaces -- and I'm very  
4 sorry that this is behind the stenographer.  
5 One of the spaces that we want to emphasize on  
6 is, in the peer review, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk  
7 said, "US-1 is not a lovely place to walk." I  
8 think we all know that.

9 So some of these pedestrian spaces, some of  
10 these public realm improvements, have been  
11 directed clearly at making this place a civil,  
12 liveable place. They are about what we have  
13 done with the sidewalk experiences.

14 There are sections in your booklets, from  
15 Page 38 to 40, that show before and after  
16 sections through the sidewalks. I would just  
17 like to focus on two of them, if I may.

18 So this is the section through US-1, and  
19 the sidewalk in US-1 is approximately 10 feet  
20 wide. You might find that hard to believe,  
21 because it doesn't feel 10 feet wide.  
22 Sometimes there's two feet of little planting  
23 strips. Often there are large concrete  
24 overhead cobra -- what they call cobra lighting  
25 posts, and these take up some portion of that

1 10-foot dimension, in some places, that  
2 wheelchairs cannot get even past those  
3 sidewalks.

4 So here's the current US-1 sidewalk,  
5 10-feet wide, with a wall, that then protects  
6 the private space of the Holiday Inn Hotel, and  
7 this is the sidewalk at the western most  
8 corner. We are setting our buildings back, and  
9 we are building arcades and colonnades and  
10 porticos, and the sidewalk will be almost 42  
11 feet wide there. That is in excess of most of  
12 the sidewalks on Miracle Mile, even after the  
13 sidewalk improvements.

14 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Where is that?

15 MR. HERNANDEZ: Right here. Thank you,  
16 Commissioner Slesnick. That is right here.  
17 I'm showing it very clear, because, you see,  
18 because of the geometry of the turning radius  
19 or the turn of the property line, those up here  
20 fall on the property line. Five feet away,  
21 this is 42 feet wide. So we're greatly  
22 increasing the sidewalks there.

23 Can we have the ones for Caballero, please?  
24 I'm only showing you two of them.

25 This is the condition in Caballero.

1 Caballero has no sidewalk. Half a block from  
2 US-1, as you approach US-1, you're walking in  
3 the middle of the street.

4 Again, we are pulling our building back.  
5 We are augmenting the existing right-of-way  
6 with our sidewalks and creating almost an  
7 18-foot wide sidewalk condition on Caballero.  
8 This is just some of the examples of these  
9 public benefits of this project, which has to  
10 do, as you saw, with the PAD.

11 I'd like to say that this project, we had a  
12 very nice discussion about the Code and the  
13 layering that the Code promotes for excellence  
14 in design. This project is a Mediterranean  
15 design project. Not one that looks backward in  
16 a retarded terra fashion, but I think one that  
17 looks forward and sees Mediterranean design as  
18 a living tradition, in the way Merrick saw it,  
19 when he inherited from classic and classical  
20 architecture, from the Renaissance, from the  
21 19th Century and so on.

22 So we had discussion about Mediterranean  
23 architecture at Commissioner Slesnick's meeting  
24 the other day. This is a project that looks at  
25 taking Mediterranean architecture, putting all

1 of the liveability components we talked about,  
2 and casting it for a new life. That is my  
3 aspiration for the project.

4 The next slides, please.

5 So I'd like to talk just briefly now on the  
6 issue of scale, height and proportion and  
7 transition, and this will be my final point.

8 You've already heard Mr. Bass mention that  
9 the Merrick plan of 1926 was very clear about  
10 how to make public space. It was not an  
11 abstract dimension, like we think of height  
12 today. It was not 140, 150, 120. That's  
13 abstract. Merrick tied it to a proportion. A  
14 building's height was related to the street in  
15 front of it, so it could be classically  
16 designed, proportioned after classic  
17 proportions.

18 So on the US-1 corridor, which you see on  
19 the left, which is 100 feet wide, Merrick would  
20 have envisioned a building 150 feet tall, well  
21 within our proposed height. That was before  
22 last night's revisions with the Planning and  
23 Zoning Director.

24 Can I have the next one, please? And back  
25 to the site plan.



1           That system of Merrick proportioning has,  
2           in fact, envied all of the design work of the  
3           project. On the left, you have a section  
4           through the project, with the hotel on the left  
5           and the apartment building on the right, and  
6           you can see the tall pink space is also  
7           proportioned in these classical manners.  
8           That's the paseo. That would be cut right  
9           here, and through here, and the courtyard,  
10          which is the focus of the apartment building,  
11          is 1.5 times the size of the Biltmore  
12          courtyard.

13                 So this project not only stylistically  
14                 looks at the tradition of Merrick and  
15                 Mediterranean architecture, it looks at it from  
16                 the very skeleton, the bones of the spaces, and  
17                 how they're rendered.

18                 Next, please.

19                 This is the profile of our project. To the  
20                 left of the first red line is our project, in  
21                 all of its profiles, and to the right of that  
22                 red line is what is beyond the project, what is  
23                 to the south.

24                 So if you start reading it from the left to  
25                 the right -- I'm sorry if it looks a little bit

1           like an EKG diagram -- so to the left of the  
2           project is 142 feet 6 inches. The step is the  
3           56 feet, which is the top of the parking  
4           garage, and we'll talk about the variations  
5           that happened last night later. That's the 56  
6           feet. Yeah, let me show you. Sorry.

7           So I don't know if you can see it. Here,  
8           I'll do this. This is the 142 feet. This is  
9           the 56 feet. This is 39 feet tall, which is  
10          the height of the building just behind the  
11          hotel, and so it goes 142, 56, 39. Across from  
12          Madruga is a duplex. Duplexes are allowed to  
13          be 34 feet high. So that's only a five-foot  
14          step up, and then there's Jaycee Park.

15          And on Manati, the first single-family  
16          house across Jaycee Park, which according to  
17          the Code, is allowed to be 29 feet tall.

18          COMMISSIONER LAGO: Mr. Hernandez, can you  
19          give me an idea, just really quickly, what is  
20          the span in reference to the length from the  
21          project to the townhome, from the townhome to  
22          Jaycee Park, from Jaycee Park to the first  
23          residential home? Because I can't read that  
24          far. I apologize.

25          MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah. No, neither could I,

1 if I were sitting where you are.

2 So this is the duplex, not a townhouse.

3 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Excuse me, I apologize.

4 MR. HERNANDEZ: No. No. It's okay. Just  
5 for the record. This is a duplex, not a  
6 townhouse.

7 This is Madruga, which is a 30-foot  
8 right-of-way, okay, and we are, under the  
9 submitted project, setting back 15 feet. So  
10 this is the end of our project. This would be  
11 a 45-foot right-of-way and then the duplex.

12 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: This is in our packet,  
13 right? What page was that?

14 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes. All of this is in  
15 your packet.

16 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Do you know what  
17 page this is on?

18 MR. HERNANDEZ: I'll have somebody bring it  
19 up.

20 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I want to go off the  
21 diagram. I want to go off the diagram. That's  
22 why.

23 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Yeah. Do you want  
24 me to go back to the diagram?

25 COMMISSIONER LAGO: No. My question was,

1 from the moment that you have -- from the  
2 15-foot setback to the --

3 MR. TRIAS: Mr. Mayor --

4 MAYOR CASON: Ramon, can you help on this?

5 MR. TRIAS: Mayor, the presentation that  
6 the architect is making is based on the  
7 information that was submitted before. I mean,  
8 the dimensions. So I need to know from them --  
9 you need to know what they're proposing. Is it  
10 133 feet and 45 feet, like I said and like you  
11 represented to me last night, or not? The  
12 Commission needs to know.

13 MR. HERNANDEZ: Just to clarify, I said  
14 that I would talk about the dimensions of the  
15 project as originally submitted, and I  
16 mentioned, in the middle of the conversation,  
17 that that original submission --

18 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: It's Page 54.

19 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

20 And I mentioned, in the middle of the  
21 presentation, that that submittal was altered  
22 last night.

23 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Mr. Trias' response in  
24 regards to the height, we can discuss that  
25 later. We can discuss it later, but what I

1 want to know is, in linear feet, what is the  
2 span from when the project ends to the first  
3 residential home, with Jaycee Park being in the  
4 middle? Just give me an idea.

5 MR. HERNANDEZ: It's well over 400 feet.  
6 Jaycee Park is a standard block, 200. Hardee  
7 is 100-foot right-of-way. That's 300. Manati  
8 is a 60-foot right-of-way. That's 360. And  
9 the duplex is on a 100-foot deep lot. So  
10 that's -- plus the 30-foot right-of-way. So  
11 it's well over 400 feet.

12 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Plus your 15-foot  
13 setback?

14 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: And, Jorge, is the  
16 duplex -- the rear of the duplex is on Madruga?

17 MR. HERNANDEZ: That's correct.

18 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: So the front is on  
19 Hardee.

20 MR. HERNANDEZ: Hardee, which a 100-foot  
21 street. That is correct.

22 I'd just like to say that we have been  
23 working very well with Staff and hard with  
24 Staff, very diligently with Staff, as of  
25 recent, to be able to bring the scale of the

1 project down.

2 I was presenting what was originally  
3 submitted, because that's what you received in  
4 your booklets, given the conversation that we  
5 had this morning about late submittals, but as  
6 of last night, and into the public record, the  
7 project was reworked and the apartment building  
8 was brought down to 133 feet, and I'm sure  
9 we're going to talk about this later, but what  
10 I submitted is what's in the public record,  
11 what the community has a right to access as of  
12 last night, that was the original project, but,  
13 again, because of the neighborhood concerns and  
14 because of Staff and our ability and  
15 willingness to work with Staff, the project has  
16 been brought down.

17 MAYOR CASON: So the back building is 45  
18 feet, which is the height of the duplex?

19 MR. HERNANDEZ: The duplex can be, by law,  
20 34 feet, and the back building is now 45 feet.

21 MAYOR CASON: So you dropped it from 56 to  
22 45?

23 MR. HERNANDEZ: To 45.

24 MAYOR CASON: Okay.

25 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Mayor, and we'll

1 discuss the issue of potentially what the exact  
2 height is going to be, if there is a second  
3 reading on this after. Let's get through the  
4 presentation.

5 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes. There's only one more  
6 point. The point I was trying to make  
7 previously is, we've heard a lot about  
8 neighborhood scale and transition, and so the  
9 project already had a natural transition,  
10 because of the single-family homes, and then  
11 Jaycee Park, and then duplexes and three-story  
12 condos, and we have continued that staircase,  
13 if you will, by going to 39 feet behind the  
14 hotel, now the 45 feet, it was 56, behind the  
15 apartment building, and then the 133 feet, the  
16 new height, of the apartment building.

17 The point is, it's a natural transition in  
18 the way adjacency and urbanism should work to  
19 the single-family neighborhood.

20 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: And the 39 is still  
21 39?

22 MR. HERNANDEZ: Excuse me?

23 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: The 39 feet is  
24 still 39?

25 MR. HERNANDEZ: The 39 is still 39, yes.

1           So this drawing to the left talks about the  
2           line of sight from Madruga. That property  
3           owner, I believe, is here to testify today.  
4           He's a supporter of the project. And it shows  
5           that the 45-foot height, which we now have  
6           brought down from, is the red -- we were at  
7           56 -- but we are not affecting whatsoever the  
8           Code intention, which is 45-foot height. His  
9           line of sight is free and clear.

10           The last thing I want to say is that, I've  
11           worked with some developers across the ages  
12           here. Some of you know, because some of you  
13           are young, but I have spent the last 30 years  
14           coming here, speaking on behalf of good  
15           planning and on behalf of the City, but I can  
16           say that except for when I worked with Ralph  
17           Sanchez on Old Spanish Village, NPI, and, in  
18           particular, Brent Reynolds, has worked very  
19           diligently with this neighborhood. He has kept  
20           an open door to this neighborhood.

21           No one has been barred or shut out from  
22           coming into the offices of NPI. Conversations  
23           have always been civil. Not always were two  
24           minds -- not always did two minds become one  
25           mind, but sometimes they did. Some people were



1 convinced and became supporters of the project.  
2 In other cases, they're not supporters of the  
3 project, but whenever we could, we incorporated  
4 their suggestions. Some of them were very good  
5 suggestions.

6 And Mr. Plummer is going to talk about  
7 that, in terms of traffic.

8 I'll talk about the good suggestions we  
9 incorporated in terms of the architecture and  
10 the planning. We are going to contribute to  
11 the underline, which is one of the conditions  
12 of request. We have, with neighbors, discussed  
13 planting and improving the planting on Jaycee  
14 Park, which he is more than willing to do. We  
15 introduced the traffic circle, which is a round  
16 point at that bad intersection of Caballero,  
17 Madruga and Hardee.

18 We increased the public realm benefits. We  
19 augmented more of the streets. And this  
20 relationship, I'm sure, will continue.

21 I'm being tapped in the back. I thank you  
22 for your attention, and my time, and I'm sure  
23 we'll have more time to talk afterwards.

24 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER KEON: Could you just quickly

1 go back and tell me the heights again? On Page  
2 53 in this booklet, it is, but they're --

3 MR. HERNANDEZ: 54. 54.

4 COMMISSIONER KEON: Well, that's along  
5 Madruga. There is also -- look at Hardee.  
6 Okay.

7 So instead of 142, it's now?

8 MR. HERNANDEZ: 142, 133. Was 56, is 45.

9 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay. Now it's 45.

10 MR. HERNANDEZ: 39 remains 39.

11 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay.

12 MR. HERNANDEZ: Then there is Madruga,  
13 which is a narrow right-of-way, and the duplex  
14 is allowed to be 34 feet tall.

15 COMMISSIONER KEON: No. I just needed to  
16 know what yours were. 133 and 45, 39.

17 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Yeah.

18 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay. Thank you.

19 MAYOR CASON: Okay. At some point, not  
20 now, but later, if you would run down the  
21 conditions that you've accepted that came out  
22 of the Planning and Zoning. There's a whole  
23 list of them. But let's get to the traffic  
24 now, which I think is one of the key issues.

25 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes. Thank you very much

1 for your attention.

2 MAYOR CASON: And to the extent that you  
3 went over, we'll give Tucker Gibbs the same  
4 amount of time, so --

5 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: I also acknowledge  
6 that some of the reason why they went over is  
7 because of your own curiosity, so --

8 MAYOR CASON: I'm sure we'll be curious  
9 on --

10 (Simultaneous speaking.)

11 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: There's still  
12 additional curiosity to dive into.

13 MAYOR CASON: Let's get to the parking  
14 aspects now.

15 MR. PLUMMER: Good morning. My name is Tim  
16 Plummer. I'm the president of David Plummer  
17 and Associates, with offices at 1750 Ponce de  
18 Leon Boulevard, here in the City Beautiful.

19 I'm going to be taking a few minutes to  
20 discuss the traffic related items of the  
21 project, including the general transportation  
22 characteristics of this area, the GRID, the  
23 uniqueness of the roadway system south of the  
24 project, the access plan, and how it has  
25 evolved with neighborhood input, the traffic

1 impact study, and finally our mitigation plan.

2 First, let me talk about the general area.  
3 Obviously, it's been discussed, the project is  
4 on US-1, a major arterial. The University  
5 Station, Metrorail Station, is approximately  
6 700 feet away. As we know, the Mariposa ped  
7 bridge is supposed to open in late 2016 and  
8 that will greatly enhance pedestrian safety and  
9 mobility.

10 The underline hopefully will be coming  
11 forward, which will greatly improve the  
12 pedestrian and bike amenities in the area.

13 Also very important to this project is that  
14 the project is in the GRID. The Comp Plan says  
15 that the City shall continue to pursue and  
16 promote infill and re-development in  
17 appropriate parts of the City, especially  
18 within the City's GRID.

19 Because the City has deemed the GRID an  
20 area where they want re-development, projects  
21 are exempt from traffic concurrency. That  
22 basically means that projects in the GRID do  
23 not need to meet the City's level of service  
24 standards.

25 What the City does do, though, is require

1 traffic impact studies, to make sure that  
2 traffic is mitigated with any operational and  
3 safety improvements.

4 Let me talk a little bit about the  
5 uniqueness of the neighborhood to the south.  
6 I've got one board up there. And one of the  
7 main things about this neighborhood to the  
8 south is the physical barriers of the Mahi  
9 Canal and the Gables Waterway. Really, the  
10 only ways to get into this neighborhood is via  
11 US-1 and Maynada intersection, the Hardee  
12 bridge, the Granada bridge and the Maynada  
13 bridge.

14 The street grid does not go through in this  
15 neighborhood to the south, like many of our  
16 neighbors in Coral Gables. This area to the  
17 south is very well-protected from traffic  
18 intrusion.

19 I want to talk a little bit about the  
20 access plan. Originally we had a full movement  
21 access plan from US-1 and Madruga, just like  
22 the Holiday Inn has today, where you can go in  
23 and out from Madruga, in and out from US-1.

24 We had numerous meetings with neighbors  
25 starting in late 2014, and we listened to their

1 concerns. The main traffic concern was  
2 minimizing project traffic using the  
3 residential streets.

4 Let me take this and go through our access  
5 plan.

6 Is it on? There we go.

7 I've broken the access plan into a couple  
8 of boards, because there's a lot of different  
9 movements. First I'm going to talk about the  
10 hotel access. Hotel access southbound or  
11 northbound from US-1 will have a valet area at  
12 the hotel drop-off area. Valet drivers will  
13 then take the car, go onto US-1, and access the  
14 parking garage.

15 If you leave from the parking garage on  
16 your own, as a hotel user, the only way out is  
17 to go northbound on US-1. There will be a gate  
18 located at this location, that will prevent  
19 anyone from using the parking garage to go on  
20 Madruga. The only exception is the valet  
21 drivers.

22 The valet drivers will have control of the  
23 gate. They will be able to come out, come back  
24 to Madruga, to bring the car back.

25 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Let me stop you for a

1 second. I missed it when you first said it at  
2 the beginning. Green is, what?

3 MR. PLUMMER: Green is inbound. Green is  
4 coming into the site.

5 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Purple is outbound?

6 MR. PLUMMER: Yes, purple is outbound.

7 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I'm sorry to make you  
8 do it, but can you just explain what you just  
9 said one more time.

10 MR. PLUMMER: That's okay. Sure, one more  
11 time.

12 If you're a hotel user, you're coming into  
13 the site, coming via US-1 southbound or  
14 northbound, you're going to come into Caballero  
15 and drop off your car at valet at this  
16 location, at the hotel entrance.

17 The valet driver will then take your car  
18 and come onto US-1 northbound and enter the  
19 garage. That's where they'll drop off the car.

20 If you get your car on your own and leave  
21 the garage, the only way out of this garage,  
22 and this is important -- this is for any user  
23 of the garage -- you must exit to northbound  
24 US-1. There will be a gate here. You will not  
25 be able to go south and onto Madruga Avenue.

1 We did that because that was one of the  
2 neighbors' main concerns. They didn't want  
3 traffic going through the neighborhood.

4 So the only exception, and, again, this is  
5 for the hotel user, is the valet will have  
6 control of the gate and they will be able to  
7 bring the car down Madruga, drop it back off at  
8 the valet. The hotel user picks up their car  
9 and goes north on US-1 -- north or south, quite  
10 frankly. They can go either way.

11 COMMISSIONER LAGO: So what is your plan to  
12 stop stacking or to deter stacking? Is it the  
13 use of the private lane, the 35-foot wide  
14 private lane?

15 MR. PLUMMER: Absolutely. Yeah, we've got  
16 300 feet from US-1 to the parking garage.

17 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Car to car average,  
18 what, ten feet?

19 MR. PLUMMER: About 22 feet per car. We've  
20 got a football field for stacking.

21 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay.

22 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: For the benefit of  
23 those watching at home and in the audience that  
24 may not know what stacking is, can you just  
25 please explain what stacking is?



1 MR. PLUMMER: Absolutely. That's just the  
2 line of cars, as they're going into a driveway,  
3 they're going into a valet area, they're going  
4 into a garage.

5 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: So when I'm sitting in  
6 traffic to drop off my car at valet, if I'm  
7 five cars deep, that means we're stacked five  
8 cars?

9 MR. PLUMMER: You're stacked five cars.

10 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Mr. Plummer, can you  
11 also give me an example of a different  
12 development that has used this type of football  
13 field of stacking opportunity?

14 MR. PLUMMER: Hard to find. This is pretty  
15 unique.

16 COMMISSIONER LAGO: And let me tell you  
17 why -- again, I'm going to go back to questions  
18 that I received from, not only residents, but  
19 business owners in the area.

20 MR. PLUMMER: Sure.

21 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I want to make sure  
22 that if we do move on to a second reading, that  
23 there's actual proof that there's not going to  
24 be stacking on US-1.

25 MR. PLUMMER: Absolutely.

1           COMMISSIONER LAGO: The whole Commission  
2 here is very clear, and we're going to discuss  
3 later about minimizing traffic in the  
4 neighborhoods. I want no traffic in  
5 neighborhoods, if possible, but, again, people  
6 get lost. You know, sometimes it happens. I  
7 live in an area, San Amaro, which is across  
8 from UM. I mean, we do have our own issues and  
9 we're trying to do everything we can to  
10 minimize that, but, in this case, since we have  
11 a brand new project that is potentially going  
12 to go into this area, I want to talk about --  
13 besides the traffic, I want to really talk  
14 about US-1, because US-1 already is a  
15 nightmare, that basically cuts right through  
16 our City.

17           I know I can't hold you to it a hundred  
18 percent, but can you give me some sort of  
19 reassurance that stacking will not occur on  
20 US-1?

21           MR. PLUMMER: Yes. Based on all of our  
22 studies -- and this is a project that has very  
23 minimal traffic impacts, and I'll give you an  
24 example, because I get asked about this a lot,  
25 too.

1 I've got friends who live in the  
2 neighborhood to the south, many friends. This  
3 project generates approximately one-tenth of  
4 the traffic of Mediterranean Village.  
5 One-tenth. This is a very low impact traffic  
6 project, especially as what could be built as  
7 of right, and I'll get into that in my  
8 presentation.

9 COMMISSIONER LAGO: And that's something  
10 we'll discuss later.

11 MR. PLUMMER: We'll discuss later, but --

12 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Mr. Plummer, will  
13 you be here all day?

14 MR. PLUMMER: Oh, yeah, I will be here all  
15 day.

16 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: I have more  
17 questions.

18 MR. PLUMMER: I'm sure.

19 MAYOR CASON: Here all day until three  
20 o'clock.

21 MR. PLUMMER: Yeah, absolutely.

22 So let me go over the access plan for the  
23 apartment users, the retail and the restaurant  
24 users. There's an option, if you're coming  
25 southbound on US-1, to use the signal at

1 Mariposa Court, come up Madruga, and come into  
2 the parking garage.

3 You can come US-1, U-turn to come into the  
4 private driveway, or if you're coming  
5 northbound on US-1 coming into the parking  
6 garage.

7 Again, very important, the only way out of  
8 the parking garage is to go to US-1 and go  
9 northbound. Again, to protect the residential  
10 streets from some of that traffic impact.

11 Now, will there be some people coming in  
12 from this area to the south? Potentially. And  
13 we've addressed that in the traffic study. We  
14 think, more or less, it's going to be ten  
15 percent. What does that mean for that ten  
16 percent? That is, in the morning, one car  
17 every twelve minutes, and in the p.m. peak  
18 period, one car every eight minutes. It's a  
19 very minimal amount.

20 Now, we do recognize we haven't stopped  
21 everybody, but we anticipate it to be a very  
22 low number, and your City Staff has reviewed  
23 it, your independent traffic consultant has  
24 reviewed it, and has agreed with those numbers.

25 Now, one of the things we also did is,

1 added an additional valet drop-off area here,  
2 as well, for the hotel -- for the restaurant  
3 and retail user. We've got a 300-foot  
4 length -- 300 plus foot length of cueing.

5 One of the things that we listened to, as  
6 well, was, originally, the service vehicles  
7 were going to do their services off of Madruga  
8 Avenue. We heard from the neighbors. They  
9 didn't want that unsightly, so we've moved that  
10 internal to the site, off of the private drive.

11 COMMISSIONER LAGO: What are the effects of  
12 making that change, in reference to the design,  
13 in reference to the cost, just to get an idea,  
14 of making that change that residents requested?

15 MR. PLUMMER: The service vehicles?

16 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Yeah, at the resident's  
17 request.

18 MR. PLUMMER: I would have to have Jorge or  
19 -- but there absolutely was a cost to it.

20 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Jorge, is there any  
21 change?

22 MAYOR CASON: How many cars can you  
23 accommodate in that -- your private lane, 100,  
24 maybe?

25 MR. PLUMMER: Well, we have a 35-foot wide.

1 So if we ever had to, in a peak condition, that  
2 actually can be two inbound lanes.

3 COMMISSIONER KEON: And the length of it  
4 is?

5 MR. PLUMMER: The length of it is 300 feet.  
6 It's about 22 feet per vehicle is what we  
7 usually go with, to give a little distance  
8 between the bumpers and everything else. So  
9 that's over twenty vehicles.

10 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I wanted to get a  
11 response in reference to --

12 MR. HERNANDEZ: If Mr. Mayor would allow  
13 it, I'll happily answer it.

14 MAYOR CASON: Yeah.

15 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Through the Mayor.

17 In reference to the change that was made  
18 with the service vehicles at the request of the  
19 residents, what financial impact does that have  
20 on the project, just design-wise? Does it take  
21 away from FAR? Does it take away from the  
22 buildability of the project? I just want to  
23 get more of an idea.

24 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes. The loading dock is  
25 two stories high, so it cuts out that footprint

1 for two levels of parking, not just one level  
2 of parking. So it makes -- you know, you lose  
3 that much parking. But, as I've said, the  
4 project was overpacked. We'll talk about  
5 parking later.

6 Of course, the 34-foot lane that we created  
7 in our own property for stacking and car  
8 management did give us sufficient turning  
9 radius, and it was a far -- we welcomed it,  
10 because it improves the beauty and the quality  
11 of the project, but, yes, there was a cost.

12 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

13 MAYOR CASON: So in two lanes, you have  
14 something like 700 feet to park cars?

15 MR. PLUMMER: Yes. That's correct.

16 And, again, the point here is, we had many  
17 meetings with the neighbors. We listened to  
18 their concerns and we addressed them to the  
19 best of our ability, to make sure we had  
20 adequate stacking, that we minimize the impact  
21 to the streets to the south and that we handle  
22 the service vehicles in a way that they thought  
23 was reasonable.

24 I'm going to just briefly talk about the  
25 traffic study. We did five intersections, a.m.

1 and p.m. peak periods. The City and the City's  
2 independent traffic consultant asked for  
3 additional studies, including the delay study  
4 at US-1 and Caballero, a valet operation study.  
5 We submitted all of that information. It's  
6 been thoroughly reviewed. We've been given an  
7 approval. The study does meet the City  
8 standards and it's been approved by the City  
9 and their independent traffic consultants,  
10 Atkins.

11 Now, since the Planning and Zoning Board  
12 meeting, the Applicant has agreed to fund an  
13 independent traffic calming study, administered  
14 by the City, one year after opening, and pay --  
15 and will be paid -- and the Applicant will pay  
16 for any warranted traffic calming devices. So  
17 that study won't come from me. That will come  
18 from someone that the City chooses.

19 Further, the Applicant has agreed to fund  
20 an independent annual traffic monitoring study,  
21 administered by the City, for five years. If  
22 the project traffic exceeds, what I've  
23 estimated, by more than 10 percent, then the  
24 City will conduct a traffic impact study and  
25 determine if any mitigation is needed. And all



1 of that, the study and any mitigation, will be  
2 funded by the Applicant.

3 Now, let me give you a little context on  
4 that for the City. That last condition  
5 especially, that's almost straight from the  
6 Village of Merrick Park Development order. The  
7 project traffic impact from this project are  
8 somewhere, if it's Mediterranean Village, a  
9 tenth, a fifteenth or a twentieth of what  
10 Village of Merrick Park is. So these are very  
11 conservative traffic conditions. Some I really  
12 haven't seen in the City for a project of this  
13 size.

14 MAYOR CASON: In your traffic study, you  
15 referred to five or six percent and a one  
16 percent figure. Could you explain the impact  
17 from Route 1, Dixie Highway?

18 MR. PLUMMER: I'm not sure exactly what  
19 you're asking me.

20 MAYOR CASON: In the study, you talked  
21 about, the total impact would be something like  
22 one percent coming into Caballero.

23 COMMISSIONER KEON: Right.

24 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Ten percent through --

25 MR. PLUMMER: Yes.

1           MAYOR CASON: Could you explain what -- in  
2 relation to what?

3           VICE MAYOR QUESADA: You have that on Page  
4 -- he's talking about Roman Numeral Page IV.

5           MR. PLUMMER: The traffic study basically  
6 looks at the distribution of traffic, how it  
7 gets in, how it gets out. The vast majority is  
8 on US-1. As I said earlier, we anticipate  
9 about ten percent coming in from Hardee. We  
10 expect Caballero -- because the hotel is one of  
11 the smaller uses, about ten percent of the  
12 overall traffic will use Caballero leaving and  
13 either go south or north on US-1.

14           MAYOR CASON: So that's coming into the  
15 project. That's --

16           MR. PLUMMER: That's coming in and coming  
17 out.

18           MAYOR CASON: And if I'm not mistaken, I  
19 think I got some statistics yesterday that  
20 there's something like 100,000 cars that  
21 average daily transit on Dixie Highway.

22           MR. PLUMMER: No, that's not correct.

23           MAYOR CASON: What's the numbers?

24           MR. PLUMMER: I can give you the numbers.  
25 The numbers on US-1, from the Florida

1 Department of Transportation, in 2014, 79,500  
2 daily two-way trips.

3 MAYOR CASON: Okay.

4 MR. PLUMMER: That's from their database.

5 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: What does that mean, a  
6 two-way trip?

7 MR. PLUMMER: Two way. So they measure  
8 northbound and southbound all day long, and  
9 they take those statistics for quite a few days  
10 and average them. And what's been interesting,  
11 because we've heard from the neighbors and, I  
12 get it -- you know, I've lived here a long,  
13 long time, is, you know, the volume is so high  
14 on US-1 and we're in gridlock. And there are  
15 issues with that, no doubt about it.

16 Just so you know, FDOT, same numbers, in  
17 1999, the volume was 76,500. Now we're at  
18 79,500. Now, in between -- it's a little  
19 cyclical, sometimes a little higher, sometimes  
20 a little bit lower, but from 1999 to now, there  
21 hasn't been much growth on US-1.

22 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Just to clarify a  
23 little bit further, so you said it's 79,500.  
24 So that means -- does that mean just about  
25 40,000 in each direction or is that 79,000 in

1 each direction?

2 MR. PLUMMER: Yeah, because usually what  
3 happens is, when someone goes northbound on  
4 US-1, they generally comes back southbound on  
5 US-1. So that's a 24-hour period.

6 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: So that's both  
7 directions?

8 MR. PLUMMER: Sometimes the directions are  
9 52 percent, 48. I mean, it fluctuates a  
10 little.

11 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I always assumed it  
12 was more.

13 MR. PLUMMER: Yeah. No, it seems that way.  
14 It seems that way.

15 Another important thing to note about US-1,  
16 the County and the City has adopted a level of  
17 service standard of 150 percent of capacity.  
18 150 percent. Why? Because we have the  
19 Metrorail adjacent to US-1. It's a major  
20 arterial. This is where the County and the  
21 City has said, "This is where we want our  
22 growth and re-development."

23 Let me just quickly then go through the  
24 improvements on the project. I'll start with  
25 Madruga Avenue. One of the things that we

1 noticed right away with Madruga, and we heard  
2 from the residents, there's speeding that goes  
3 on back there. As a matter of fact, a friend  
4 of mine, that I ran into during breakfast  
5 yesterday, had no idea there was a street name.  
6 He thought it was an alley.

7 He said, "People go up and down the alley."

8 And I said to him, "You know that's an  
9 actual street in the City."

10 "No, it's not."

11 "Yes, it is."

12 So what we're going to propose is to narrow  
13 that street a little bit, to 22 feet, to help  
14 control some of the speeding.

15 The other thing, in the existing condition,  
16 when you come Madruga Avenue westbound, it  
17 comes in at an skewed angle, very difficult,  
18 unsafe. It's very difficult to look over your  
19 left shoulder to see oncoming traffic. We're  
20 going to fix that, and have Madruga come in at  
21 90 degrees.

22 COMMISSIONER KEON: At what point is that,  
23 as it's approaching Caballero?

24 MR. PLUMMER: As it enters Hardee. It  
25 enters Hardee --

1 COMMISSIONER KEON: Right. Right. As a --

2 MR. PLUMMER: Right.

3 (Simultaneous speaking)

4 MR. PLUMMER: -- come in at 90 degrees, so  
5 when a driver gets there, they'll have much  
6 better sight distance, better safety.

7 COMMISSIONER LAGO: And by tightening up  
8 the street and making it 22 feet wide, the  
9 excess is obviously going to be made into  
10 sidewalks -- additional sidewalks, additional  
11 green landscaping opportunities?

12 MR. PLUMMER: That's correct. And that  
13 will help control the speeding. The narrower  
14 the street, the less people speed.

15 COMMISSIONER KEON: The problem with that  
16 street, Madruga, and I don't know if you can  
17 address it, is that, you know, it sits behind  
18 some of those strip malls and whatever, and it  
19 ends up as a parking alley for trucks and  
20 whatever else.

21 I mean, so somehow you need to address the  
22 issue of that not being -- that it is a street,  
23 it needs to be treated as a street, and you  
24 can't have parking and loading and unloading on  
25 that street.

1           So, you know, from our enforcement issues,  
2           Manager, we need to -- the police now need to  
3           begin to address that issue, anyway, because  
4           it's very hard to get through there even at the  
5           width that it is, because it's -- it is treated  
6           as an alley by the people that use it, and you  
7           need to enforce the parking and put the signage  
8           there now, regardless of what happens with this  
9           project.

10           MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: Understood.

11           COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: It really needs to  
12           be re-landscaped, too, and there's a lot of  
13           utility poles in the back, and it is the back  
14           of the duplexes across the street, on the south  
15           side.

16           COMMISSIONER KEON: Right, you know.

17           COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: So you have a lot  
18           of parking. It looks very ugly. It looks like  
19           an alley, because it's --

20           MR. PLUMMER: It does look like an alley.

21           COMMISSIONER KEON: Well, the duplexes  
22           treat it as an alley, also, because they use --  
23           you know, all of their trash bins and things  
24           are all visible from there. We need Code  
25           Enforcement to take a look at that entire

1 street, and whatever -- irrespective of this  
2 development, so that it is treated as a street  
3 and not an alley.

4 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: We'll have Parking  
5 and Code --

6 COMMISSIONER KEON: Great. And Police.

7 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: -- take a stroll.

8 COMMISSIONER KEON: If you can get those  
9 three to work together and address those  
10 issues. Thank you.

11 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: Understood.  
12 Understood.

13 MR. PLUMMER: And, then, lastly, we're  
14 proposing a mini-roundabout at Caballero and  
15 Hardee. Again, that will help control some of  
16 the speed, and it will make it easier for  
17 pedestrians to cross into the park or the  
18 residents that are coming from their homes  
19 coming to the project.

20 A couple of things since the Planning and  
21 Zoning meeting, and if we can put up the  
22 PowerPoint. The project, as Mr. Bass  
23 mentioned, received a very enthusiastic  
24 endorsement from the Transit Oriented  
25 Development Institute in Washington, DC. This



1 is a national planning initiative to promote  
2 and accelerate the roll out of walkable mixed  
3 use communities around rail stations. This is  
4 Paseo de la Riviera.

5 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Just for individuals  
6 like myself, I don't know if my colleagues are  
7 aware of this, can you give me a little bit  
8 more information in reference to the magnitude  
9 of this institution? I mean, is this something  
10 that they just give out to anybody?

11 Is this institution at the forefront of  
12 what --

13 MR. PLUMMER: My understanding is, this is  
14 the first -- yeah, I haven't spoken to them.  
15 They're just wrapping up. I think they had a  
16 three-day conference, and if you go on their  
17 website, you'll see all of the speakers that  
18 they had from across the country.

19 My understanding is that this is the first  
20 time they've endorsed a project, and they've  
21 taken a policy stance, when they see projects  
22 like these, that meet their standards, they  
23 want to stand endorsing them, because, you  
24 know, across the country, transit oriented  
25 development is very, very important.

1           And what the report states is that this  
2 project is a groundbreaking opportunity for the  
3 City to achieve its stated goals of reducing  
4 traffic congestion, while increasing Metrorail  
5 ridership.

6           Now, again, after listening to the  
7 neighbors during the P&Z hearing, we heard many  
8 themes like, we're worried about cut through  
9 traffic, drivers aren't going to U-turn on  
10 US-1, and how are these apartment users going  
11 to get to Publix. So let me just address a  
12 couple of these things.

13           Again, especially with the apartment users,  
14 we really think, when they're coming from  
15 Downtown Coral Gables, Downtown Miami, wherever  
16 they work, they're going to come south on US-1,  
17 use Mariposa Court to come in Madruga. Will  
18 some U-turn? Yes, they will, and some of that  
19 depends on the time of day.

20           Now, how about Publix? How are these  
21 apartment users going to get to Publix? Well,  
22 basically, they're going to get there the same  
23 way the residents south of them get there.  
24 Again, they have to exit northbound on US-1.  
25 They're very likely going to use Maynada, to

1 South Alhambra, to get to Publix.

2 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Which is the route that  
3 I use.

4 MR. PLUMMER: Yeah, absolutely.

5 Now, you know, the concern about cut  
6 through traffic and going to Publix or wherever  
7 you're going, again, as I mentioned, the  
8 physical barriers of the Mahi Canal, there's no  
9 reason for these folks -- you can't get there.  
10 You can't get anywhere you really need to go,  
11 because you have the physical barriers of the  
12 Mahi Canal and the Gables Waterway.

13 Now, I also think, potentially, again,  
14 depending on time of day, Saturday morning,  
15 Sunday morning, whenever you do your shopping,  
16 some of these apartment users will also go on  
17 US-1, go to the Stanford Drive intersection,  
18 and make the U-turn, and come in and use US-1  
19 to get to Publix.

20 Now, we looked at one street. It could  
21 have been any of them, but we looked at Alfonso  
22 Avenue. Again, just to stress the point about  
23 the cut through traffic, if someone is exiting  
24 the project and goes south on Maynada, which is  
25 a collector, why would they use Alfonso Avenue,

1 for instance? You know, if you go west, it's a  
2 cul de sac. If you go east, there's nowhere to  
3 go. You run into Granada. You run into the  
4 Gables waterway. And you could use any of  
5 these streets north of here as an example.

6 MR. LEEN: You know, at this point, I would  
7 just raise, for the Commission, for Mr. Gibbs  
8 to speak, to have about 50, 55 minutes. That  
9 will take us to noon at this point. The City  
10 is not going to present any further.

11 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I mean, that's  
12 perfectly fine. Mr. Gibbs can take as much  
13 time as he wants.

14 MR. LEEN: So if you could --

15 MR. PLUMMER: I'll conclude, Craig. Thank  
16 you very much.

17 Again, so in summary, this is a very unique  
18 location, on a major arterial, approximately  
19 700 feet from the University Drive Metrorail  
20 Station, in the GRID, which is important, which  
21 makes this project exempt from traffic  
22 concurrency.

23 We did a very thorough study, and it meets  
24 the City standards. Your Staff Report states,  
25 "Traffic analysis has been reviewed by City

1 Staff and its consultants, and determined it is  
2 compliant."

3 We provided a traffic mitigation plan, with  
4 traffic calming, operational and safety  
5 improvements. We modified the original access  
6 plan to better meet the needs and desires of  
7 the residents to the south.

8 Your Staff Report states, "The proposed  
9 circulation and operations of automobile  
10 traffic minimize impacts on neighborhood  
11 streets." It also goes on to say that the  
12 traffic impacts have been minimized through  
13 site plan design and the valet operation plan,  
14 which incorporate input from the neighbors.

15 Now, I mentioned just briefly the as of  
16 right commercial scenario that could happen on  
17 this site. And that project could generate 100  
18 percent more traffic than we're talking about  
19 today with the Paseo de la Riviera project.  
20 Put another way, this project generates about  
21 half of what a project as of right could  
22 generate on this site.

23 The Paseo de la Riviera project is a very  
24 traffic friendly project, compared to what  
25 could be built on this site. We've listened to

1 the residents. We've adjusted our plan to  
2 minimize traffic impacts on residential  
3 streets. City Staff and their independent  
4 traffic consultant agree with our traffic study  
5 conclusions. The area to the south is very  
6 well protected from traffic intrusion, one of  
7 the best in Coral Gables, and the Applicant has  
8 agreed to fund future independent traffic  
9 studies to ensure any traffic related impacts  
10 are addressed.

11 And I will be here all day to answer any  
12 questions that you might have.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Madam City Manager,  
14 just a quick question through the Mayor,  
15 briefly. The City consultant that Mr. Plummer  
16 has mentioned, who gave his independent  
17 approval of what the Applicant has provided,  
18 was that paid by the City or was that paid by  
19 the Applicant?

20 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: No, I believe it  
21 was paid by the City.

22 No? It was paid by the Applicant? Oh, my  
23 apologies. I'll find out, sir, and let you  
24 know. I'll have Staff come --

25 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I want to make sure,

1 because that may be part of -- I want to bring  
2 that up after, you know, if there is a second  
3 reading. It's something that I need to  
4 discuss.

5 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: I understand. I  
6 understand. I will get that corrected. I  
7 believe we are the client, regardless of who  
8 pays for it, but we'll find out who and how  
9 much.

10 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Again, we're dealing  
11 with professionals, but I just want to make  
12 sure that there's no cause for concern and that  
13 we --

14 MR. TRIAS: The City Manager is correct.  
15 The City is reimbursed, but the City is the  
16 client.

17 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay. Perfect. Thank  
18 you.

19 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: If it's okay at this  
20 time, Mr. Mayor, I have several questions for  
21 Mr. Plummer.

22 MAYOR CASON: Yeah, sure. Go ahead.

23 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I just want to stay on  
24 the traffic topic.

25 Now, Tim, I know I -- in all projects, I

1 bug you quite a bit on these, but I know --

2 MR. PLUMMER: I know you from the old  
3 Traffic Advisory Board days.

4 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: There you go.  
5 Exactly. That's where this all began.

6 Okay. So I'm looking at Page 1 of your  
7 report, and there were responses to the Atkins  
8 comments on behalf of the City of Coral Gables.  
9 So we had asked a question, and this is a just  
10 term I had never seen before.

11 MR. PLUMMER: I'm going to go grab my  
12 report.

13 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Okay. Grab it, but  
14 listen to the question as you're walking over.  
15 It says, in Section 2.2, Traffic Counts, what  
16 is -- "Was the axle factor applied?"

17 I had never heard the axle factor before,  
18 so I just want a little clarification on what  
19 the axle factor is.

20 MAYOR CASON: Tractor-trailers versus  
21 passenger cars. More axles.

22 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Is that what it is?

23 MAYOR CASON: Yeah.

24 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Yeah.

25 MR. PLUMMER: Absolutely. What the axle



1 factor is, and it's an adjustment for trucks,  
2 all different kinds of trucks that have more  
3 than two axles. The standard car has two  
4 axles. An eighteen wheeler has many more. So  
5 when they get counted, they get counted as many  
6 cars going over that traffic count. So there's  
7 an adjustment, based on the axle factor, to get  
8 it to passenger vehicles.

9 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Understood. Okay.  
10 Got it.

11 MR. PLUMMER: That's all it is. So it's a  
12 factor that increases it.

13 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Okay. To give you a  
14 more accurate count of actually how many  
15 vehicles came through. Okay. That makes  
16 sense.

17 MR. PLUMMER: It makes a truck into a  
18 couple of passenger vehicles.

19 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: All right. I'm  
20 looking at Page 7 and 8 of your report or Page  
21 65 or 66 of our large booklet here. You have  
22 two diagrams here, Exhibit 2 and Exhibit 3,  
23 existing lane configurations, and then you have  
24 existing peak period traffic volumes. I was  
25 hoping you'd have this blown up, because this

1 blow up is -- I think it's great. It talks  
2 about, really, the ingress and egress, and you  
3 actually have the traffic counts.

4 A few questions for you on this.

5 MR. PLUMMER: I'm sorry, again, what page  
6 are you on?

7 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: It's going to be Page  
8 66 of the large document that we have or Page 8  
9 of your report.

10 MR. PLUMMER: Yes.

11 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: It would be great if  
12 we can get this to the screen, for those at  
13 home and those in the audience, but, if not, I  
14 will try to do my best to describe what we're  
15 looking at.

16 We're looking at a diagram of an aerial of  
17 the streets and it has the exact number of  
18 traffic counts of how many vehicles they  
19 measured inbound and outbound. And, then, I  
20 believe, on Page --

21 MR. PLUMMER: And this is existing. That's  
22 very important. This is --

23 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: This is the existing,  
24 and then I'm going to compare it with Page 69,  
25 which is future.

1 I think this draws a nice comparison for  
2 me, because I want to know what the actual  
3 impact is going to be, based on your studies.  
4 I know we see you more than any other traffic  
5 consultant in the City, so I consider you to  
6 really know the City well when it comes to  
7 traffic.

8 I see here, we were talking about Madruga.  
9 We were talking about Hardee and that interplay  
10 of the intersection. You showed us a diagram  
11 of the traffic circle. When I compare that  
12 diagram to Page 69, I don't see much of a  
13 change in the traffic counts. Am I reading  
14 this improperly?

15 COMMISSIONER KEON: Vice Mayor Quesada,  
16 what about Page 74? That one says, "Future  
17 with project peak projections traffic volumes."  
18 That's without the project.

19 MR. PLUMMER: That's without the project.

20 COMMISSIONER KEON: That's without the  
21 project. So you need to go to --

22 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Oh, I'm sorry, it  
23 wasn't a true apples to apples.

24 COMMISSIONER KEON: You need to go to 74 to  
25 compare apples to apples.

1           VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Thank you for  
2 clarifying that.

3           MAYOR CASON: Would you discuss, then, the  
4 extra traffic between now and the future, if  
5 this is approved? What is the addition,  
6 because --

7           MR. PLUMMER: Yes. So we do an analysis,  
8 that we always do in all of our traffic impact  
9 studies, called Future Without Project, and we  
10 research any traffic studies that have been  
11 approved and we incorporate those traffic  
12 volumes to those traffic studies, and then we  
13 also put some growth on the traffic counts,  
14 knowing that, you know, we take a count in  
15 2014, the project is not going to be built  
16 until 2016 or 2017, so we increase what we call  
17 the background volume a little bit.

18           VICE MAYOR QUESADA: So if I'm reading this  
19 correctly, the most amount of traffic -- and  
20 I'm going no exclude US-1, because the US-1  
21 numbers -- is this over a two-hour period?

22           MR. PLUMMER: This is during -- we take a  
23 peak period. So we look at the highest two  
24 hours in the afternoon and the morning, and  
25 then we take the highest four consecutive

1 fifteen minutes within that two-hour period.

2 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Okay. So on US-1 -- I  
3 sort of don't even want to apply the US-1  
4 numbers, because there are so many that really  
5 just don't apply -- I'm looking down, coming  
6 down Caballero, and that seems to be the street  
7 that you anticipate that it's going to have the  
8 most traffic around the project. And the  
9 existing, as we sit here today, the inbound  
10 coming off of US-1, is 130 vehicles in a.m.,  
11 and the p.m. is 72 vehicles. And with the  
12 projected peak traffic volumes in the future,  
13 after, you know, the Applicant's proposed  
14 project is built, assuming it's built exactly  
15 the way they want it, it's a jump of five  
16 vehicles in the morning and a jump of four  
17 vehicles in the evening.

18 MR. PLUMMER: Right.

19 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: How accurate are you,  
20 typically, with these things? I know that's a  
21 terrible question.

22 MR. PLUMMER: Yeah.

23 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: So I've been sitting  
24 here five years and I was in the Traffic Board  
25 before then, and I've seen a lot of your -- I

1 guess I should answer that question, because  
2 I've seen your studies and then I've seen the  
3 projects come in and out. Do you typically do  
4 benchmarking after the fact?

5 I know at the end of your presentation now  
6 you said that the Applicant would be willing to  
7 do future studies.

8 COMMISSIONER LAGO: As part of development.

9 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: In the past,  
10 historically, have you done those studies and  
11 do you keep records of how accurate you've been  
12 or not? I know that's -- I don't have the data  
13 in front of me, so you can say anything you  
14 want, but I'm asking you, since we're sitting  
15 here in this -- I'm going to ask you to be --

16 MR. PLUMMER: Yeah, the answer is, it  
17 depends. You know, if there's a condition on a  
18 project, like this one has, then the client  
19 will have us go out, because they're required  
20 to, to measure the traffic. The Village of  
21 Merrick Park is an excellent example.

22 For five years after the Village of Merrick  
23 Park --

24 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: You did the  
25 projections on Merrick Park on the traffic.

1 MR. PLUMMER: I did the projections on  
2 Merrick Park, right, and I -- and that's a  
3 perfect example. That's probably my best one  
4 that would make sense to everyone. Everyone  
5 knows the project.

6 So we had a condition that we had to  
7 monitor the traffic for five years after final  
8 CO, annually for five years, and measure the  
9 traffic, the ins and outs, to see how we did on  
10 projections. And if it exceeded more than ten  
11 percent, this is almost a literal condition  
12 from the Village of Merrick Park --

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Is that standard? Is  
14 that standard?

15 MR. PLUMMER: No. No. Now, that was a  
16 development of regional impact.

17 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Agreement.

18 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: No, but, sir, this  
19 was -- the concern that the residents had was  
20 that the traffic projections would not be  
21 realistic. So we -- the Commission built in  
22 that annual requirement, and it actually --

23 COMMISSIONER LAGO: That's one of the good  
24 things about having you here, because you  
25 actually played a significant role in putting

1 this deal together.

2 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: It actually came in  
3 less than what was projected.

4 MR. PLUMMER: Yes. I would say,  
5 Commissioner Quesada, and don't exactly quote  
6 me on the numbers, we never got near a hundred  
7 percent, but they generally came in at about 80  
8 to 85 percent of what the projections were. So  
9 we were well conservative on the numbers.

10 Now, does that happen in every study? I  
11 can't tell you that for a fact, because it's  
12 very rare that we go back and measure. This  
13 will be one of them. Mediterranean Village  
14 will be another one that you're going to get to  
15 keep your eye on, but rarely does it happen.  
16 It only happens in major, major projects, as  
17 part of a development order condition.

18 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Okay.

19 MAYOR CASON: Let's hold any other  
20 questions for after hearing from Tucker Gibbs,  
21 so that we can have the citizen input, as well.

22 COMMISSIONER KEON: Mr. Mayor, while Mr.  
23 Gibbs is coming up, before we break and before  
24 we take citizen input, can we address this  
25 issue of the GRID? I'd like Craig Collier to



1 talk about it, because I think it has a much  
2 longer and a pretty significant history here,  
3 other than just our City and ordinances that  
4 our City passed, and I would like if Craig  
5 Collier and Ramon could just address that issue  
6 quickly, when Mr. Gibbs is done.

7 MR. LEEN: Not right now.

8 MAYOR CASON: Yeah.

9 MR. LEEN: After.

10 COMMISSIONER KEON: Thank you. After.

11 MR. GIBBS: Good morning. My name is  
12 Tucker Gibbs. I have a Law Office at 3835  
13 Utopia Court, in Coconut Grove, and I'm here  
14 today representing the Riviera Neighborhood  
15 Association, and my clients object to this  
16 application as an unwarranted increase in  
17 commercial intensity, residential density, bulk  
18 and height, abutting along an established low  
19 density residential neighborhood, their  
20 neighborhood.

21 This is a complex proposal. I mean, it's  
22 taken an hour and a half to describe it, and  
23 you all still have questions. And this  
24 multi-faceted proposal seeks to more than  
25 double the allowable square footage on the

1 site, and a member of the Commission -- I  
2 forget who -- talked about FAR, and I just  
3 wanted to give another comment about FAR.

4 While FAR is a measure of allowable square  
5 footage, it's also a measure of intensity, and  
6 that's one of the issues we're here today  
7 about, is intensity, that this project is very  
8 intense.

9 And when you look at going from an FAR of  
10 1.5 to 3.0, and I'm not a math genius, but I  
11 can tell you, that's a big increase, and that's  
12 the problem. That's one of the problems here.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I'm sorry to interrupt  
14 you. I just want to make sure that everybody  
15 understands. Can you give, in your own words,  
16 an explanation of the difference between  
17 intensity and density, so the homeowners who  
18 are listening today can actually have a grasp  
19 of that, if they're not already aware of it?

20 MR. GIBBS: FAR is a measure of intensity.  
21 It's the square footage that you have in your  
22 building, and I'm being very broad on that.  
23 It's probably a net square footage.

24 The density is units per acre. So if you  
25 have 20 units an acre or you have 30 units an

1 acre -- I think the Comprehensive Plan in Coral  
2 Gables says the maximum in high density  
3 residential is 75, with bonuses, 75 units an  
4 acre. So that's the difference.

5 But here they're asking to more than double  
6 the allowable square footage. They're also  
7 asking to more than triple the allowable  
8 height, and your Planning Director talked about  
9 the fact that even though it could go up to 190  
10 feet, they're not planning on going to 190  
11 feet. I think the latest iteration is 133  
12 feet, is what I heard today.

13 So they're seeking to do that. And also  
14 eliminate setbacks and step backs established  
15 to protect the adjacent low density residential  
16 neighborhood, and those are the site specific  
17 regulations. That's part of the PAD, part of  
18 the MXD issues that we're going to be  
19 discussing today later on.

20 And all of this expansion, all of this  
21 growth, is happening without a City approved  
22 plan regarding the future development in this  
23 area. This massive project is being presented  
24 as the exemplar of future development in the  
25 area, and that's how it was described by the

1 City's own consultant at the peer review. This  
2 is going to be the place setter. This is going  
3 to be what's going to allow other people to  
4 come in and develop in the area.

5 And at its core, the application seeks to  
6 cram as much commercial and residential  
7 development on this 2.66 acre property as you  
8 all will let them, and protection of the  
9 adjacent residential neighborhood is taking a  
10 back seat to its relationship with US-1, with  
11 Metrorail and with the University.

12 That's the focus of this project, and  
13 that's what you've heard a lot about, it's how  
14 it's going to relate to Metrorail, how it's  
15 going to relate to US-1, how it's going to  
16 relate to the University, and how it will allow  
17 people to come in through the Paseo, into  
18 Jaycee Park.

19 But this project will be a massive increase  
20 in intensity, height and bulk. It's over  
21 400,000 square feet -- that's how much --  
22 facing a residential neighborhood, and you can  
23 talk about that nice little drawing that showed  
24 the distance between the building and the  
25 duplex across the street, Jaycee Park, and the

1 first building, but the fact is, it's 400,000  
2 square feet. It's a massive, massive building.

3 What makes this worse, and I'm not sure  
4 what the application says now, because the  
5 application itself said that they were going to  
6 ask -- the Applicant was seeking to include not  
7 only its property, but -- the Holiday Inn, but  
8 also the Gables One and the shopping center as  
9 part of the Text Amendment application,  
10 releasing all of the regulations for all of  
11 Tract A, and I'm not sure if that's the case or  
12 not any more because --

13 MS. RUSSO: If I may address that, just to  
14 clarify the record?

15 Good afternoon. For the record, Laura  
16 Russo, with offices at 2655 Le Jeune Road. If  
17 you read your minutes of the Planning and  
18 Zoning Board record, I stood up and made the  
19 representation that the Text Amendment was  
20 limited solely to our portion of Tract A.

21 So I just want to say that the Site  
22 Specific Text Amendments are only for our  
23 portion of Tract A and I made that perfectly  
24 clear on the record at the Planning and Zoning.

25 MR. LEEN: That's true. Mr. Gibbs, we

1           accepted that. I mentioned that at the  
2           beginning of my remarks. They would be limited  
3           to Tract A based on the objections that have  
4           been raised by you and the proffer.

5           MR. GIBBS: Right. And I just wanted to be  
6           sure about that and I wanted to have it on the  
7           record from the Applicant and I appreciate  
8           that.

9           So what my clients want is a plan in place  
10          before a project like this is even considered  
11          by the City. A well-thought-out plan, that's  
12          been vetted by City Staff and the Planning  
13          Board, and with the citizen buy-in, and  
14          approved by the City Commission, that truly  
15          protects the abutting and nearby low density  
16          neighborhood.

17          Until then, any development that involves  
18          increases in intensity, bulk and height, like  
19          this project, should be tabled or rejected.

20          Mr. Mark Alvarez is our planner. He is  
21          here today to speak, and he will be discussing  
22          the context and scale of the proposal.

23          I will follow him with a review of the  
24          specific applications. So I will leave it to  
25          Mr. Alvarez, who is our professional planner.

1 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER KEON: Thank you.

3 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: So we didn't bring our  
4 binoculars with us.

5 MR. ALVAREZ: I know.

6 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: If you have a smaller  
7 printout to hand out of that or no?

8 MR. ALVAREZ: It's okay. I just want to  
9 talk about that briefly.

10 MR. ALVAREZ: My name is Mark Alvarez. I'm  
11 a professional planner, address at 3109 Grand  
12 Avenue, Number 331, Miami, Florida 33123.

13 I'm representing the Riviera Neighborhood  
14 Association. They asked me to review this from  
15 a planning perspective, the application.

16 Don't look at that yet. I'll tell you  
17 about it in a minute.

18 COMMISSIONER LAGO: All right.

19 MR. ALVAREZ: I just wanted to save time  
20 and get it up there.

21 I think I want to start -- well, first of  
22 all, I need the PowerPoint, whoever is in  
23 charge of that.

24 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: It's up.

25 MR. ALVAREZ: Before I start, though, I

1 want to start -- I went to the Riviera  
2 Neighborhood Visioning Report from 2007, when  
3 it was finalized, and I read something here  
4 that I want to read to you, just to open this  
5 up. And it says, "The report has been  
6 undertaken as a result" -- and they state the  
7 purpose -- "to be proactive, so that we can  
8 arrive at the ideas for our community which can  
9 hopefully guide the City, as well as the  
10 commercial interests, toward planned  
11 redevelopment. We would like future  
12 construction to be cohesive architecturally, of  
13 an appropriate scale and with specific design  
14 standards."

15 It went on to talk about buffer, but the  
16 important part, "By planning in this manner, we  
17 feel that we would be able to welcome changes  
18 and encourage appropriate updating in the  
19 commercial areas, with predictable outcomes  
20 that we feel our property values would be  
21 stable and our lives will be more tranquil"  
22 It's a very important statement.

23 And in contrast to -- Mr. Bass opened up,  
24 and he said this in the Planning Advisory  
25 Board, too, he said, "Planning is all about



1           adjacencies," and that's partially true. I  
2           agree with that, in part, but planning is  
3           also -- in Coral Gables, it has been about  
4           adjacencies and replicating the ones that work,  
5           and when they don't work, such as the Gables  
6           One Tower, to reject them and go forward in a  
7           different path, but it's also about  
8           predictability.

9           We all know that Coral Gables has to grow  
10          and will change, and especially when we have  
11          something like Tract A, where there's a very  
12          suburban zoning -- excuse me, site specific  
13          zoning, but how does it grow? It has to grow  
14          in a way that people anticipate what's going to  
15          happen, not something that's completely out of  
16          bounds.

17          The Land Use plan today goes two steps up.  
18          So I'm going to talk to you not about views and  
19          breezes and sunlight. I'm not going to talk  
20          about those aspects. I'm going to talk about  
21          the planning perspective.

22          And I brought that chart up that you can't  
23          read from there, which was a response to -- the  
24          Applicant gave out their supplemental book,  
25          which looks like this, and they had ten

1 examples of places where high intensity  
2 development is next to low density residential  
3 uses.

4 And when we looked at that, we found, among  
5 the ten -- and I'm going to grab the mike -- we  
6 found -- what I looked at is, of course, the  
7 Biltmore is very predictable. It was just  
8 about the first thing in Coral Gables in 1932.

9 I know you can't read it.

10 But the Biltmore is also -- it's fifteen  
11 stories, but it's just the tower. That's all  
12 it is. The rest of it is about eight stories,  
13 and it's surrounded by vast open space, and the  
14 houses that are there, that are adjacent to it,  
15 the oldest ones were built about the same time.

16 So it was predictable. If you moved there,  
17 you liked it, and it's okay.

18 The rest of these, up to the last two,  
19 Bacardi Building, 396 Alhambra, Coral Gables La  
20 Roc, Segovia Towers, Gables on the Green, David  
21 William Condos, the condos that are over here,  
22 I guess, to our west and south a little bit,  
23 they're all part of a planned area. That whole  
24 area on the Future Land Use Map, four blocks of  
25 it -- four big blocks, is dark brown. That

1 area was planned as high density residential.

2 And, again, so people who live across the  
3 golf course, they expected it. They knew.

4 This was planned.

5 The Bacardi Building, 396 Alhambra, Gables  
6 Club, Le Roc, they're all in the CBD. If you  
7 are in the CBD -- if you live next to the CBD,  
8 you expect that you're going to have tall  
9 buildings there. It's part of the expectation.  
10 So you moved there, because you like that.

11 Down here, we have Gables Club and Gables  
12 Waterway Towers, I would suggest that they're  
13 not very good examples of good planning,  
14 because Gables Waterway Towers is a  
15 non-conforming structure. It's low density, in  
16 the Future Land Use Map. It's non-conforming.  
17 And I understand the Gables Club is a result of  
18 litigation and a court order.

19 So I just went through that, because I  
20 thought, how could this mistake happen ten  
21 times? And it doesn't, because it's not about  
22 adjacencies. It's about what's planned to  
23 happen there. So that's where I want to focus.  
24 So I'm going to start the presentation.

25 So the request -- there are five requests

1 for -- I'm going to take this down -- there are  
2 actually four requests, because I separated the  
3 parking covenant. And the ones I'm going to  
4 speak about, really, are the change in Land Use  
5 and the PAD, and the reason why, is that as a  
6 planner, and I told people in the Association  
7 this, and most of them agree with it, too,  
8 nobody has a problem with the mixed use. We  
9 agree, that's the way forward. That's what  
10 needs to happen.

11 And the other is the Zoning Code Text  
12 Amendments to release it from the site specific  
13 zoning. Again, it's something that -- the way  
14 we have to move in the future -- thank you,  
15 Craig -- to allow those buildings to come  
16 forward, be urban and not have a parking lot in  
17 front of them.

18 So I'm really speaking to the Future Land  
19 Use Map change, and, to some extent, the PAD  
20 approval. So what I want to start out with --  
21 this is a little small. I expected to have a  
22 larger screen, but I'll do my best with it.

23 What I started out with is just a quick  
24 introduction to the project. It has the paseo,  
25 which is what it's named after, a very large

1 70-foot entrance in the front, a smaller  
2 archway in the back, about 20 feet.

3 But here's the -- and when we look at this  
4 project, I think we've all been attracted by  
5 the fact that it has a very large sort of open  
6 space area that's public benefit. And that's  
7 fine. But, again, remember that that's in  
8 exchange for the MXD, the PAD and the  
9 Mediterranean Bonus.

10 What I want to focus on are the numbers,  
11 and I think three times this morning somebody  
12 has been asked to explain FAR, density, and  
13 their relationship to the building's mass. So  
14 I'm going to do the same.

15 Floor area ratio is called intensity, and  
16 it's used in commercial buildings, and it's a  
17 measure of the floor area -- it's the ratio of  
18 floor area in the building, on all of the  
19 floors, to the amount of land that's below it.  
20 However, it does not include all of the area.  
21 It does not include parking. It does not  
22 include mechanical areas. It does not include  
23 a number of spaces that are exempted. It's  
24 actually a really good measure of understanding  
25 how many people in a commercial space are there

1 during the daytime, because it really looks,  
2 for lack of a better way to put it, at the  
3 leasable, the pay area of a project, but it  
4 doesn't give us a good idea of how big the  
5 project is, because there's parking, because  
6 there's mechanical spaces, there's lobby spaces  
7 in hotels. All of that is not counted.

8 So to look at that and just look at it and  
9 misstate it and say, that's the size of the  
10 building, it's not. The building, for example,  
11 in this one, the residential building is a  
12 courtyard building, and it becomes bigger to  
13 the outside, because it's hollow in the middle,  
14 and FAR doesn't tell us that.

15 So I wanted to point out, this project, of  
16 course, if it's within its FAR, like two  
17 one-thousandths, no development would ever miss  
18 FAR and give up much there, and that's fine.  
19 However, I just want to point out the size of  
20 the building. And the size of the building, if  
21 you add all of the floor area, this is why the  
22 parking pedestal is big, this is why the  
23 building is big, if you add it all up, it's  
24 about seven and a half times those 2.7 acres on  
25 the ground. That's why it looks big, even

1           though it's got a density that's not really so  
2           much.

3                     And then the other thing is called -- I  
4           think I used the word, density. That was all  
5           intensity.

6                     Density is residential density, and it's  
7           defined in your Zoning Code, it's used in your  
8           Comprehensive Plan, and in the City of Coral  
9           Gables, in density, residential density is  
10          dwelling units per net acre. Some cities use  
11          gross. You use net acres. It's just the size  
12          of the lot.

13                    And it's expressed in dwelling units per  
14          acre. So that's pretty simple. Dwelling units  
15          in your City does not include hotel. I can  
16          tell you, in a lot of jurisdictions, it does  
17          include hotel. The County uses hotel. So I  
18          can't use the statement I usually say about it,  
19          and I usually say, it gives you an idea of how  
20          many people are in the project and require your  
21          services, who are there at nighttime. They're  
22          nighttime users. Here we miss some of them,  
23          because you don't include hotel as part of your  
24          density.

25                    And, in fact, because it's a commercial

1 site, you don't measure the density at all, but  
2 I'll tell you what the density is. Just for  
3 the residential, it's 86.4. That's a very high  
4 density project. 86.4 units per acre. We're  
5 talking about a lot of density here, by any  
6 standards.

7 And if you were to include the hotel, and I  
8 used gross on that case, because that's the way  
9 the County does it, there's 125 units per acre  
10 on that property. It's a very dense project,  
11 from a housing standpoint.

12 Now, again, Mr. Bass will probably get up  
13 here and say, "Well, we don't care. We don't  
14 use that. That's not our metric, because it's  
15 commercial property," and that's true, but I  
16 want you to be aware of the size of this  
17 project and the potential impacts not just to  
18 traffic, but people require services, parks,  
19 water, sewer, et cetera.

20 These slides are going to be difficult,  
21 because they just changed the height. So I'm  
22 going to have to go with it as best I can, and  
23 I know they're also hard to read.

24 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Let me ask you a  
25 question. These documents, have you provided



1 these documents to us before? Has the  
2 Applicant had a chance to review them? Has our  
3 Staff had a chance to review them?

4 No, it's okay.

5 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes.

6 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I understand it, but  
7 that's why I started at the beginning of the  
8 hearing saying that I hate the sandbagging  
9 tactic, because we don't have the time to  
10 review it and analyze it.

11 I have a lot of questions with the  
12 documents, because I want our Staff to review  
13 it.

14 Mr. Gibbs --

15 MR. ALVAREZ: If I could answer.

16 MR. LEEN: Mr. Gibbs is indicating that's a  
17 legislative issue, so he -- you know,  
18 technically, under our Code, for  
19 quasi-judicial, they don't have to be provided  
20 in advance. That's technically true, but what  
21 I would just say is that you heard the  
22 Commission's request, so going forward -- you  
23 know, if there's a second reading on this item,  
24 obviously you will be able to make objections  
25 then.

1           VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Mr. Gibbs, all I want  
2 is an opportunity to have a chance to review it  
3 and speak to the Staff Members. I'm not an  
4 expert in planning. So he's talking about the  
5 FAR. He's talking about massing, which is  
6 helpful, which is great, I want to hear it. I  
7 just want to have time to digest it and fully  
8 understand it, prior to voting on a topic  
9 either way.

10           MR. GIBBS: And I understand --

11           VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I mean, you're an  
12 attorney. I'm an attorney. You know, when you  
13 go to litigation, you go to court, you can't  
14 surprise the other side with documents. So I  
15 just want to be fully informed and prepared  
16 just to vote.

17           MR. TRIAS: May --

18           MAYOR CASON: Ramon, do you have a point on  
19 this?

20           MR. TRIAS: Let me tell you factually what  
21 happened. This was provided last night to the  
22 television folks, and as a result of that, I  
23 did see it last night, the presentation, but  
24 that's the factual issue.

25           COMMISSIONER LAGO: If you feel comfortable

1 and have no issues with it, I mean -- but I  
2 agree with what the Vice Mayor is saying. I  
3 want you to hand over all of the documents. I  
4 just don't want to be a disservice to you,  
5 flipping through something up here, while I'm  
6 not paying attention to what this gentleman is  
7 saying.

8 MR. GIBBS: And all we're doing is making a  
9 presentation. This is a courtesy. We don't --  
10 I mean, if you want, we hand it out. If you  
11 don't want, we don't hand it out and Mr.  
12 Alvarez can speak to it.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I want you to hand it  
14 out, but, in my opinion, and I think the Vice  
15 Mayor will agree and my colleagues will agree,  
16 it's kind of a disservice to you if I can't  
17 review this. Look, I got these documents how  
18 many days ago, Madam City Manager? A week,  
19 would you say?

20 So I've been able to review these  
21 documents. I haven't been able to review what  
22 you're about to give me.

23 MR. GIBBS: And we understand that, and  
24 part of it was, he was going to make a  
25 presentation, and all this is, is to support

1 his presentation. It's basically --

2 MAYOR CASON: Why don't you continue with  
3 your presentation then?

4 MR. GIBBS: Okay. Because I'm happy to --  
5 because we only had -- we weren't even going to  
6 hand these out. We were going to put them on  
7 the record and give them to our opponents. We  
8 didn't hand them out. We didn't want to hand  
9 them out to you, so you'd be sitting there  
10 reading them.

11 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Can you just make sure  
12 you hand them over to the Applicant and over to  
13 Mr. Trias, so that we can ask some questions  
14 about it later, just clarifying? That's it.

15 MR. GIBBS: Absolutely. And this is first  
16 reading and we're able to --

17 MR. LEEN: Yes. And it's in the record  
18 that we've accepted -- we're accepting  
19 everything in the record.

20 MAYOR CASON: Go ahead and continue,  
21 please.

22 MR. ALVAREZ: I was careful of this part of  
23 the presentation. Quite honestly, there's a  
24 full report that I have. We did not hand that  
25 out today, because we were not in time for the

1 rule. Assuming this gets to second reading, we  
2 would give that to you.

3 COMMISSIONER LAGO: You're going to have  
4 all the necessary time that you need. Just  
5 understand that.

6 MR. ALVAREZ: No. No. No. I mean,  
7 there's a report that we would give later, if  
8 we go to second reading, that covers all of  
9 this, again, where you can ask questions.

10 I tried to limit this to, I bring no new  
11 data in, that this is just from the record.

12 MAYOR CASON: Okay.

13 MR. ALVAREZ: If that helps.

14 I want to look at the project scale, and  
15 the height has been reduced, so these are going  
16 to be a little bit difficult, but, again, I'm  
17 looking -- again, this is not about the views,  
18 it's not about the sunlight, the shadows. This  
19 is about, what do we expect in this area, and  
20 the expectation of what goes on in that  
21 commercial corridor right now and what could go  
22 on in that commercial corridor and what goes on  
23 across the street in U of M.

24 And when we talk about the massing of a  
25 building, we always talk about height, but

1 height -- of course, a tall, skinny building is  
2 less massive than a very fat tall building.  
3 They're both at the same height.

4 So we have to look at that facade and see  
5 how big the facade is, and, actually, your  
6 Board of Architects, although they don't do  
7 this exactly, they do look at the width of  
8 facades and they look at these things to some  
9 extent. So the practical solution was, let's  
10 look at the facades and how they compare.

11 And so I went around the building, just  
12 took all of the measurements, based on  
13 yesterday's measurements, not last night's, and  
14 the facade of this is about 43,000 square feet  
15 area that it presents, with the paseo in the  
16 middle, not including the paseo.

17 The size of it, unlike the Gables One  
18 Tower, which nobody seems to like as it is, at  
19 least that's fairly tall and skinny on its  
20 side. The side of this project is, actually,  
21 again, quite massive and the side of it is  
22 about 42,000 square feet of area that people  
23 would look at it. That's the bulk of the  
24 building facing you at Jaycee Park or at the  
25 canal. That's the Caballero side, I'm sorry.

1           And to give you an example, the Gables One  
2 Tower is about 13,000 square feet of area  
3 facing that park. So this is quite a lot  
4 larger.

5           We move around to Madruga, to building --  
6 actually, this is the largest amount of area on  
7 that building, because the paseo has some  
8 structure in it at this point, and it presents  
9 about close to 46,000 square feet of area to  
10 the neighborhood. I'm not talking about sight  
11 line and sunlight and breezes, but this is the  
12 bulk that faces the neighborhood, and it's more  
13 bulky than even that side of the Gables One  
14 Tower, which, again, is about 36,000 square  
15 feet facing the neighborhood.

16           And then we move around to what's in many  
17 cases the most bulky side of it, the north  
18 side, that would face the lane. It's about  
19 42,000 square feet. Again, Gables is only  
20 13,000. It's just a comparison, so you  
21 understand that this is not only the tallest  
22 building from Brickell to -- along US-1, from  
23 Brickell to Dadeland, this is a very large  
24 building, as it presents itself. Partly  
25 because of the courtyard, a lot because of the

1 parking and the plinth that's underneath it.

2 The paseo does relieve that, but not to the  
3 extent it should.

4 Yeah. We need a bigger screen next time.

5 I did a context comparison with everything  
6 that's around this building, and this, of  
7 course, is much more larger than single-family  
8 homes, about 22 times the size, but it's silly  
9 to even say that. It's larger than everything  
10 around it. It's larger than the Bank United  
11 Center in its facade. It's not taller, but  
12 it's much larger. It's larger than -- if we  
13 were to develop the two blocks on US-1, north  
14 of here, which are not part of the sitting  
15 today, they could not be as massive in their  
16 facade as this building. They could go up to  
17 about 36,000 square feet in their facade, if  
18 they used all of their zoning, which it would  
19 be hard for them to do, because it's a narrow  
20 block.

21 It's larger than the Coga right behind it,  
22 the very long three-story building, the Coga  
23 Building, the apartment building that's right  
24 behind it on Madruga. It's much larger than  
25 that. That's also about 30,000 square feet.



1           Again, this, in the context of where it is,  
2           of what people would expect, it is much, much  
3           larger than everything else, and anything that  
4           we would expect the City to do in its need to  
5           grow.

6           Next I want to talk about Merrick's vision.  
7           Merrick's vision was brought up in the Planning  
8           Advisory Board, and it was brought up in the  
9           context of height, and, again, it was a scale  
10          issue. And I remember looking at this and I  
11          thought, wow, that's very interesting. Could  
12          George Merrick have thought, we're going to do  
13          this on US-1, and that's a common planning idea  
14          of 1.5 times the right-of-away, which is called  
15          enclosure, but would he have ignored the  
16          neighborhood behind it?

17          And so I look at this, and, first of all,  
18          just to put this in perspective -- I'm really  
19          sorry you can't read this, the policy -- you  
20          actually have a comprehensive policy that says,  
21          "To promote George Merrick's vision, consistent  
22          with the established historic and cultural  
23          fabric of the City."

24          So, in fact, when the Applicant brought  
25          this up, they were right to do it, because my

1 first thought was, well, who cares? It's  
2 irrelevant. We go by the New Code. But I  
3 understand George Merrick's vision has great  
4 gravity in the City, and always had, and it's  
5 what guides it to be the City that you are.

6 So what George Merrick did, he had four  
7 height districts, and there's a map here, and  
8 you can barely see it up there. The red lines  
9 along US-1 are the fourth high district.  
10 That's the highest. The green is -- there's  
11 green and blue, second and third, and then the  
12 fourth height district is, more or less,  
13 everything else, which is white, and the fourth  
14 height district is basically limited to 40  
15 feet, to, in those days, they said, the ceiling  
16 line, approximately the roof line.

17 The first height district, the red one,  
18 which everybody has talked about, is the one  
19 that says you should build a building to one  
20 and a half times the right-of-way in front of  
21 it, 150 feet. Well, George Merrick didn't let  
22 you down, because I looked at it more carefully  
23 and I realized, if you look at it, when you  
24 blow this up -- yeah, you can see it -- the  
25 block that we're talking about has the arrow,

1 and at that time, the plating had an alley mid  
2 block, and Madruga was on the other side.

3 And this fourth height district only goes  
4 halfway through the block. In other words,  
5 Merrick's vision was that the half of the block  
6 that faces the neighborhood is the fourth  
7 height district, consistent with that street,  
8 consistent with that neighborhood. Only the  
9 part on US-1 goes tall, consistent with that  
10 street.

11 And if we look a little further, this gets  
12 worse, because Tract A moved Madruga. The old  
13 platting, that block was 250 feet wide. So  
14 Merrick's vision didn't go all of the way back  
15 -- I mean, his split on the block didn't go to  
16 where Madruga is now. It was to where Madruga  
17 was before.

18 Let's go back to that map.

19 All right. You see, Madruga is a straight  
20 line. Madruga was in line with where Madruga  
21 is to the north of Mariposa Court and south of  
22 the waterway. It was all one Madruga. Then  
23 Tract A moved it. Tract A, as -- I think,  
24 Ms. Russo talked about it in the peer review,  
25 Tract A moved Madruga over and then the Coga

1 project cut it down from 60 to 30 feet from the  
2 other side.

3 So Merrick's vision was actually that this  
4 first 125 feet of the block is where the 150  
5 feet counts. The rest of it was supposed to be  
6 low, kind of what your Zoning Code says to do,  
7 although this was a little more stringent.

8 It cuts right through the midline of the  
9 buildings on the project, that 125 feet. That  
10 could be 150 and the rest was supposed to be  
11 40.

12 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Let me stop you for a  
13 second. I don't understand the slide. So what  
14 am I looking at exactly?

15 MR. ALVAREZ: I'm sorry, that's -- the plan  
16 view from the application is the roof view.  
17 It's just the roof line view, without looking  
18 at the site plan. It's the view from the roof.

19 So that's the --

20 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Rearward extent of  
21 Fourth Height District.

22 MR. ALVAREZ: Correct.

23 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: So, on the left, what  
24 street is that?

25 MR. ALVAREZ: On the left would be

1 Caballero. On the right would be -- can you  
2 hear me -- on the right would be where the lane  
3 is. Madruga is on the bottom and US-1 is on  
4 the top. It doesn't come out very well, and I  
5 apologize. I will bring the screen next time.

6 So this is going from the right-of-way back  
7 125 feet, and the rest of it would be the  
8 Fourth Height District.

9 So George Merrick's vision was, in fact,  
10 not at all to have this whole block be 150 feet  
11 tall. And, in fact, when we compare this to --  
12 Mr. Trias had a diagram in his report that  
13 showed -- the red line is the existing Code.  
14 The building -- and, again, to orient you, the  
15 right side of the building is US-1. The gap in  
16 the middle is Madruga, and this is the house  
17 across the street from Madruga.

18 His slide had the red line and he showed  
19 you the requests for the setback relief that  
20 the building -- the pink building, which you're  
21 looking at it from -- oh, gosh, from US-1 to  
22 Madruga. I can't say south and north here.  
23 That the building intrudes a little bit into  
24 the setback requirement, which is the red line.

25 But Merrick's vision, I put on there, is

1 the green line, and you see how the building,  
2 as it is now, doesn't conform at all to  
3 Merrick's vision. It's much, much more through  
4 our building to the back, where it was supposed  
5 to go low, to respond to the neighborhood, to  
6 respond to Madruga.

7 COMMISSIONER KEON: Can I --

8 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes, please.

9 COMMISSIONER KEON: Just clarify for me.  
10 You're saying, on the Highway, the height  
11 visioned by Merrick was 147? Is that what that  
12 number says up there?

13 MR. ALVAREZ: No. The Fourth District  
14 Height would be of one and a half times the  
15 right-of-way of US-1, which would be 150. They  
16 said they're within that.

17 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay. So 150 would be  
18 the height. And you're saying the difference  
19 between what is being proposed and Merrick's  
20 vision is the area -- the depth of the building  
21 from the green line to the red line? You're  
22 saying that is what's not consistent, right?  
23 It's not the height, it's the depth of the  
24 building between the green line and the red  
25 line?

1 MR. ALVAREZ: No. The depth of the  
2 building, from the edge of the building to the  
3 green line is what's not consistent with  
4 Merrick's vision. The slide I used was  
5 Mr. Trias' slide, telling you that the red line  
6 was where they're not consistent with your  
7 Zoning Code requirements now.

8 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay. So it isn't  
9 height, it's the depth?

10 MR. ALVAREZ: It's height and depth.

11 COMMISSIONER KEON: Both?

12 MR. ALVAREZ: It's both. It's how it  
13 responds to the neighborhood.

14 COMMISSIONER KEON: You're saying the  
15 height is the same. It appears to be the  
16 depth, is what that slide seems to be?

17 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes. In absolute terms, it's  
18 not the height. It's really a setback issue.

19 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I think that's an  
20 important statement, though.

21 MR. ALVAREZ: I'm sorry?

22 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Because what you're  
23 telling us is, this is not an issue about  
24 height right now.

25 MR. ALVAREZ: It's a little of both. It's

1 that the height extends back too far. So it's  
2 how you want to read it. It's a height or  
3 setback issue.

4 COMMISSIONER KEON: Right. So it's the  
5 height next to the neighborhood, not the height  
6 along US-1?

7 MR. ALVAREZ: Right. The height along US-1  
8 is fine. So let's call it a setback issue.

9 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay. All right.  
10 That's exactly what I need, a little bit more  
11 clarification. It's not the actual height,  
12 it's the height that faces the neighborhood --  
13 that abuts the neighborhood, excuse me, not the  
14 one on US-1.

15 MR. ALVAREZ: I guess I'm going from this  
16 historically. I went left, from 1930,  
17 Merrick's vision, and the next thing that was  
18 on the list was to look at the peer review.

19 And I had hoped when I -- I wasn't there,  
20 but I read the transcript twice, and the stated  
21 purpose of that review, as it was introduced by  
22 Mr. Bass and the Applicant, was to see -- look  
23 for the role of the Paseo de la Riviera as a  
24 model project for the corridor, you know, to  
25 see if there was any, as I said, DNA that they



1 could put into the rest of the corridor.

2 It was introduced. Mr. Bass talked about  
3 it being on the GRID, and that it should be  
4 more dense, because it's near Metrorail, but  
5 the disappointment was that although there was  
6 some questions about the height -- Elizabeth  
7 Plater-Ziberg asked for some clarifications  
8 about the height. There was never a discussion  
9 about what the height should be or what the  
10 bulk should be of the building, and it's one of  
11 the central issues, and it was completely  
12 silent on a recommendation as to what it should  
13 be.

14 I thought that was a little bit  
15 disappointing, from a peer review, because  
16 that's clearly one of the big issues. There  
17 was a lot of discussion about connectivity,  
18 about the pedestrian connectivity of it, about  
19 its location with regard to Metrorail, but the  
20 absolute bulk was never really discussed, other  
21 than a few comments, again, by Ms.  
22 Plater-Ziberg, about how the -- she called it  
23 the Courtyard Building, the residential  
24 building, was massed on the surfaces and how  
25 the definitions were and how the plinth seemed

1 a little big and how the hotel building seemed  
2 to be a more attractive or a more likeable  
3 building. But other than that, they never  
4 really made a recommendation, and I found that  
5 silence to be -- it left me thinking, why did  
6 we have this, if we didn't get to a conclusion  
7 that we needed?

8 The community perspective is the next thing  
9 that comes up, and this is the Red Road, US-1  
10 Workshop that was held in the summer. There  
11 were a number of poling techniques -- can you  
12 read that? That is really bad -- there are a  
13 number of poling techniques that they used to  
14 understand what the community wanted for this  
15 corridor, and there was a question and answer  
16 session, which is on YouTube.

17 There were one word response cards. There  
18 was an open-ended survey, visual preference  
19 surveys, and Mr. Bowl (phonetic) has documented  
20 all of that in his report.

21 The one word survey, where people put down  
22 one word or one short phrase on their card, to  
23 say what they think about the existing corridor  
24 and what they think they want for the future  
25 corridor, what's put into what's called these

1 word diagrams, where the larger the word is,  
2 the more that thing was said, the more they  
3 heard that. The smaller word is, the less they  
4 heard it. And if the word doesn't exist there  
5 at all, it just never came up.

6 So we see that in the existing corridor,  
7 people talk about it being dangerous and ugly  
8 and too much traffic, but what I'm really  
9 interested in is the future corridor vision  
10 that came out of those one word responses, and  
11 we see very big words, mixed use, pedestrian  
12 and boulevard, and I told you, we all have no  
13 issues with that. I have no issue, as a  
14 planner. I think mixed used is good for this  
15 area, but the question is, what scale? How big  
16 should it be?

17 And the only word that addresses scale on  
18 that diagram, you'll see it in the middle in  
19 white, it says, "Low rise." Never did anyone  
20 say anything about mid rise or high rise in  
21 those surveys. There was no discussion about  
22 it, apparently, at least, and I'm using what's  
23 in the report, and they've documented all of  
24 the responses that went into those diagrams.

25 So what you come out with is, low rise.

1 People are looking for low rise. And I'm  
2 pointing to the word, "Low rise."

3 The community perspective -- and you can't  
4 read this, I realize -- to go further, they had  
5 a question. It was Question 4. And it said,  
6 "What character should the US-1, Red Road,  
7 Sunset areas have in the long-term future?"

8 And I pulled all of the responses out that  
9 had anything to do with height or scale, and  
10 there are five -- about eleven of them, and the  
11 green arrows pointing down were people who  
12 thought it should be lower. There were a few  
13 people who thought density or intensity or  
14 height should increase. But, by far, the  
15 majority of opinion on those survey forms,  
16 where people handed in a card that was  
17 open-ended to that question, people said --  
18 I'll read the red ones. Somebody said,  
19 "Greater density and height along US-1 and  
20 remove most use restrictions."

21 The other one said, "Transition from height  
22 on US-1 to medium density, four-story  
23 development, and three-story townhomes in lots  
24 behind US-1."

25 Next one, "Low rise buildings along US-1,

1 45 feet, with parking underground and heavy  
2 landscaping. No visible parking."

3 The gray one, no objection. Really, it  
4 could have been either way. I included them  
5 all.

6 The other gray one, "Height is not the  
7 issue. It's design flow through connectivity,  
8 substantiality and public spaces."

9 That's fine. I agree with all of that,  
10 except height still is an issue.

11 Green, "Lower density, with spacial  
12 continuity."

13 The red one, somebody again thought that we  
14 should allow development that's needed, but  
15 they said, "Density cannot be the argument to  
16 oppose, unless you qualify what kind of  
17 density."

18 I agree completely with that. I agree,  
19 because we probably need to increase the  
20 density here, but we don't know how much, and  
21 that's the problem.

22 Somebody said, "Development must maintain  
23 height restrictions to prevent overwhelming  
24 presence in adjacent neighborhoods. Parking  
25 must be contained in garages versus on the

1 street."

2 Again, the overwhelming presence, "No high  
3 rise buildings greater than five stories."

4 Somebody said, "Zoning for different  
5 segments, requiring specific height and  
6 setbacks."

7 And then somebody said, "Limit building  
8 height. Be careful not to create a Brickell  
9 like canyon," and that was from somebody who  
10 was apparently a 37-year resident.

11 That's what came out of the workshop.

12 MAYOR CASON: How many people participated  
13 in the workshop?

14 MR. ALVAREZ: I don't recall. I wasn't  
15 there. I'm using the document --

16 COMMISSIONER KEON: Ramon can tell you.

17 MR. TRIAS: On Friday night, I counted 130.  
18 On Saturday, about a hundred.

19 MAYOR CASON: Okay. Thank you.

20 MR. ALVAREZ: Okay. To go a little further  
21 on community perspective, I looked at this  
22 report -- which I quoted from in the beginning.  
23 I went too far -- The Riviera Neighborhood  
24 Vision. The Riviera Neighborhood Vision  
25 happened at a time when the City was changing

1 its Zoning Code. The same pressures were going  
2 on about commercial development along the edge  
3 of the neighborhood, and the neighbors were  
4 concerned about the intensity of the commercial  
5 development, was the biggest one; how the  
6 Mediterranean Bonus would affect that  
7 intensity, and height was also an issue that  
8 was addressed, and, of course, there was  
9 traffic and all of these others.

10 And there was a height plan developed in  
11 that study, and the height plan was basically  
12 based on the existing heights that were going  
13 on. And the highest project at the time was  
14 down here by El Santona, I think, and the  
15 statement was, up to seven stories was  
16 acceptable, because that one was at seven  
17 stories, but it came back to four as it went to  
18 the low density neighborhood. And that's what  
19 happened at Riviera.

20 And then I just wanted to give a little  
21 context. During the presentation, both PAD and  
22 here, a lot of smart growth concepts have been  
23 talked about. This project is all about new  
24 urbanism and smart growth. It's not part of  
25 your Code, but that's what's being presented to

1 you, and so I wanted to just touch on that a  
2 little bit.

3 Smart growth, new urbanism talks about a  
4 transect, and they categorize the City into six  
5 basic transects, from T-1 to T-6. T-1 is  
6 natural, T-2 rural, T-3 suburban, like the  
7 neighborhoods behind here, single-family homes,  
8 T-4 is more dense residential areas. What was  
9 of concern to us, that we would be thinking  
10 about, is this a T-5 or a T-6.

11 And you'll never be able to read this, so  
12 I'm going to explain it.

13 The most salient difference about a T-6  
14 designation, which is the high one, is that  
15 it's generally the urban business district of a  
16 City. Cities have one of those. And this  
17 isn't the CBD. This isn't the Central Business  
18 District. This is a corridor about two miles  
19 south.

20 Okay. And in that, you would have  
21 buildings that are vertically mixed uses  
22 attached or aligned fronts, setbacks small to  
23 none, FAR very high, coverage is very high,  
24 structured parking typical, net density range  
25 of 25 to 100 units an acre. That's for the



1 core. And that's what we see. And this we see  
2 in your City, too.

3 And Miami has Miami 21, and that's what we  
4 see in some of the T-6s there. There are some  
5 gradations in Miami.

6 T-5 is described as what's called the  
7 center. It said, "It's similar to the core in  
8 having buildings that are vertically mixed  
9 uses, as well as horizontal mixed, but the  
10 geographic character is more of a main street"  
11 or arterial, in our case, "rather than a two  
12 dimensional interconnected Downtown."

13 By its location, this is a T-5. Everybody  
14 knows that. This isn't the Central Business  
15 District. This is a corridor. And T-5 has a  
16 lower FAR than the CBD, more open space,  
17 building heights in the range of five stories,  
18 some places you'll see six, depending on where  
19 you look at these transfix.

20 Density allows for some surface parking,  
21 transit is often viable, and that residential  
22 density is in the range of 15 to 40. We're in  
23 a place that should be a T-5. And, in fact,  
24 what you have now conforms to that.

25 So as I went through all of these things, I

1 found that there was convergence to an answer  
2 about the scale of this project, and whether we  
3 looked at Merrick's vision or the peer review,  
4 community workshops, the neighborhood, Riviera,  
5 smart growth, we find out two things,  
6 basically, the project as proposed is too big.  
7 And where we have some answer to scale, we keep  
8 coming to this area of seven stories, mid rise.  
9 Seven stories.

10 And mid rise -- oh, you'll never read this  
11 -- do we have a -- I promise, the next  
12 presentation, I'll have a big screen.

13 I'm going to have to read through these.  
14 But mid density -- just to give you the overall  
15 view, mid density, you can do mid density in  
16 the Land Use category that it has now. They're  
17 allowed 77 feet, with Mediterranean Bonus.  
18 Actually, if you didn't change the Site  
19 Specifics, 72 and a half feet. That's enough  
20 for seven stories. It's a little tight in  
21 Coral Gables, because you can't put the things  
22 on top of the roof, but 77 feet is enough for a  
23 six or seven-story building. It's enough for  
24 the mid rise that keeps coming up as a  
25 convergence on the answer.

1           We don't need to change the Land Use Map to  
2           gain the density that's being talked about. We  
3           can do it without changing the Land Use Map.  
4           It's just unwarranted.

5           So I made a chart and I went through all of  
6           the -- and I promise, for second reading, if we  
7           have one, that you will have this on a book. I  
8           went through all of the goals, objectives and  
9           policies that are relevant to this proposal,  
10          and I'm going to go through some of them.

11          And the columns to the right, the one  
12          that's the first colored column, would be how  
13          that goal, objective or policy is supported in  
14          the current Land Use Plan designation, and then  
15          the next one would be, if we go up two steps,  
16          to high intensity commercial, is it still  
17          supported, or, in some cases, maybe there's an  
18          affirmative response, that says you should go  
19          up to that high when you go from red to green.

20          If you see green to red, we shouldn't be  
21          doing it. If we see green to green, it's okay,  
22          it doesn't contradict the Comprehensive Plan,  
23          but you don't have an affirmative, positive  
24          answer that says, there's this policy that  
25          motivates you to do this. You don't have that.

1           So I'm going to read through a few of them,  
2 not all of them. Future Land Use Policy 1.1.1  
3 talks about depicting the Future Land Uses  
4 found to be in the public interest, and they  
5 are the basis for regulations program, actions  
6 and rules of the City. In other words, what  
7 you have on the Future Land Use Map is  
8 considered consistent and it is the basis of  
9 what development shall be, and it's supportive  
10 of the Comprehensive Plan as it is now, as it  
11 is. And if we change, we're not sure yet.

12           Future Land Use Objective 1.11, "Maintain a  
13 pattern of overall density residential use with  
14 limited medium and high density residential  
15 uses in appropriate areas to preserve the high  
16 quality character of residential neighbors."

17           This is about protecting the residential  
18 neighborhoods and creating transition.

19           Right now we have a Land Use category that  
20 supports that. If we go two steps more dense,  
21 it's really getting hard to say we support  
22 preserving the high quality character of the  
23 residential neighborhoods, because we've put  
24 much more mass in here than we ever expected in  
25 this area, much more than anything that exists

1 there, even the building that people don't  
2 like, the Gables One Tower.

3 Policy 1.14.1 talks about, "The location  
4 and the extent of residential and  
5 non-residential Land Uses shall preserve the  
6 character of existing neighborhoods." The same  
7 issue.

8 Policy 1.1.1 under -- Design Policy 1.1.1  
9 talks about promoting George Merrick's vision  
10 within the context of the cultural and historic  
11 fabric of the City.

12 I'm sorry, I skipped one, Future Land Use  
13 Objective 115 talks about the importance of  
14 comprehensive planning, and that's what I'm  
15 trying to do through this whole presentation,  
16 is talk about the area, how does this relate to  
17 the area? And I'm not talking about views and  
18 sunlight and wind and all of that. Just how  
19 does this fit into the block as it is? Are we  
20 looking at it comprehensibly? What's going on  
21 in the rest of the area?

22 "Housing Objective, support infill of  
23 house," well, yeah, it supports that, because  
24 we're putting housing in a commercial area,  
25 where we wouldn't have it.

1           Mobility Objective -- I'm sorry, Mobility  
2           Goal, "To provide accessible attractive  
3           economically viable transportation options."  
4           Well, something close to Metrorail, and with  
5           the pedestrian access and so forth, in both  
6           cases, it supports it, but that's by design.  
7           It's not because of the Land Use Plan Amendment  
8           that's being requested. That would be  
9           supportive under both, whether it's Commercial  
10          Low Rise or Commercial High Rise.

11           Mobility Objective 1.1, "To reduce the  
12          impacts of vehicular traffic."

13           I would say that it's supported, in both  
14          cases, by design, but we have to be careful,  
15          because Mr. Plummer talked about the  
16          possibility of what could go there now, and  
17          everybody does this. It's the sort of  
18          theoretical thing that you could get an FAR 3.5  
19          retail center in that small site. You really  
20          can't. But, theoretically, yes, that site  
21          could create horrendous traffic impact.

22           For example, Home Depot needs 10 acres to  
23          develop. So, you know, Walmart is more --

24           COMMISSIONER LAGO: Could I ask you a  
25          question just in regard -- because you made a

1 statement and I just want to clarify it, for my  
2 own edification.

3 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes. Please.

4 COMMISSIONER LAGO: You said it wouldn't be  
5 feasible for a grocer or some sort of retail  
6 outlet to go into this parcel. Can you give me  
7 a little explanation of why you say that,  
8 because I have -- from Staff, Staff has told me  
9 that that's as of right. It's a possibility.  
10 That's something we're going to discuss more in  
11 detail later. I just want to hear your opinion  
12 of why you don't concur with that statement.

13 MR. ALVAREZ: I mentioned it, because it  
14 was brought up, and it's typically brought up  
15 as the worst case scenario of what could be  
16 there now, could be, say, yes, a Publix  
17 Supermarket or, theoretically, something -- an  
18 FAR of 3.5, that's all retail, but practically  
19 it couldn't get in there, because the site is  
20 just not large enough, because you need parking  
21 and most retail is not developed that way.

22 And whenever you hear that, you have to  
23 think, well, does that change when I go to the  
24 high density commercial? It doesn't. It  
25 actually would get worse.

1           No, I'm sorry, in this case, the FAR stays  
2           the same. It wouldn't change at all. So, in  
3           both cases, you could get the Publix in there  
4           or whatever it is that's so horrible, under  
5           both Land Use designations, the same thing  
6           could go in, because, technically speaking, in  
7           the long term, 30 or 40 years, this project is  
8           not tied to the Land Use designation. So  
9           something worse could always go in there. It  
10          is a theoretical idea and they sort of brought  
11          it up and I wanted to cover that, that it's  
12          not --

13           COMMISSIONER LAGO: No, but I also wanted  
14          to have a discussion back and forth, because,  
15          like you say, it's theoretical, but as of right  
16          is as of right, and when you're talking about,  
17          you know, traffic patterns and congestion,  
18          that's a fact.

19           MR. ALVAREZ: It's as of right in both  
20          cases.

21           COMMISSIONER LAGO: Yeah, but whether one  
22          usage or one end product is worst than the  
23          other, again, in design, that's not what I'm  
24          here to discuss. What I'm here to find out is,  
25          what's more impactful to the residents that



1 live in that neighborhood and how can we try to  
2 minimize that as much as possible and provide a  
3 great product. So I'm trying --

4 MR. ALVAREZ: I understand what you're  
5 saying, but the difficulty is, you have four  
6 approvals here. And the approval for a Land  
7 Use Plan doesn't affect that. You can get  
8 something horrible in, in either case. The  
9 Land Use Plan Amendment doesn't affect the  
10 horrible traffic situation in the worst case  
11 scenario. It doesn't affect the worst case  
12 scenario, because all that amendment does is  
13 change the height. It's the same FAR. It's  
14 the same size of land.

15 So the worst case scenario, to be fair,  
16 happens in either one, and it shouldn't be used  
17 to judge the Land Use Plan Amendment. It's a  
18 perfectly good way to judge the project itself  
19 and the PAD and the MXD, but not for the Land  
20 Use Amendment.

21 MR. LEEN: Could you conclude, because I  
22 know that Mr. Gibbs has about 15 minutes?

23 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes. A few minutes, I know.

24 Mr. COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Mr. Alvarez,  
25 this is an excellent presentation, but if we

1 had gotten this two or three days ago -- I  
2 stayed up really late last night finishing all  
3 of the reading and then we also got -- I think  
4 all of us got about 20 or 30 more letters since  
5 eight o'clock last night, which we read.

6 Can we have this printed during the break  
7 or something? I mean, this is a lot to take in  
8 and it's like a whole course, and as much as  
9 I've tried to understand everything, it's just  
10 very difficult and I have it all blown up over  
11 on this screen. So I don't think the audience  
12 is really taking this all in, either.

13 MR. LEEN: One thought. We have it on the  
14 record.

15 MR. ALVAREZ: I'm going to let you answer  
16 that, actually.

17 MR. LEEN: We have this in the record.  
18 I'll make copies for each Commissioner and they  
19 can always ask you questions at the end, after  
20 the public hearing.

21 MR. ALVAREZ: Okay. Yeah. I apologize. I  
22 actually had other things to present, but I cut  
23 them back, because it required a report, and  
24 I'm just going with this. And I know it's a  
25 lot. It's our fault. We were not in before

1 the five-day deadline and we did what we could  
2 to try to follow it.

3 So I'm going to end on one last thing, on  
4 one last policy. Mobility Policy 1.1.3. This  
5 is the one that Mr. Bass has presented as sort  
6 of the positive affirmation to increase the  
7 density. The whole reason why we need to go  
8 from a future Land Use of Commercial Low  
9 Density to Commercial High Density, and that  
10 policy says, "To locate higher density  
11 development along transit corridors and near  
12 multi-model stations."

13 Here's the problem. I don't want to be  
14 disingenuous, we all know you need to increase  
15 density to serve the Metrorail Transportation  
16 Oriented District aspect of this. We don't  
17 know how much. But the real problem here is  
18 that this policy, if it's to be used as the  
19 policy we hang this whole change in Future Land  
20 Use Map on, it doesn't say what we're doing.

21 Because the change from Commercial Low Rise  
22 has the same FAR, 3.5, as Commercial High Rise,  
23 and that's intensity, which this doesn't talk  
24 about -- this talks about density -- and you  
25 don't measure density in a Commercial Land Use.

1 It sounds like a technicality, but this is the  
2 policy that they hang the whole thing on, as to  
3 why they need more density. That policy talks  
4 about residential density. All that we're  
5 changing, and we could increase the density  
6 within the Land Use that it has right now --  
7 right, it's a hotel of about 152 rooms. We can  
8 put more in there right now -- all this changes  
9 is the height, and this policy doesn't speak to  
10 the height.

11 This policy says, we're doing something,  
12 we're changing something in the Future Land Use  
13 Plan, because that something will give us  
14 higher density, and this change does not give  
15 us higher density. We're getting it anyway,  
16 but it doesn't conform to this policy, and so  
17 this policy is not really relevant to the Land  
18 Use change.

19 So it really is just upon you, as the  
20 Commission, to decide this, but the actual  
21 basis that they presented, I think, is  
22 irrelevant, because it's the wrong metric.  
23 It's residential density and we don't affect  
24 residential density.

25 MR. LEEN: Thank you.

1           COMMISSIONER KEON: Can I ask one question?  
2           What is the document you're quoting from?

3           MR. ALVAREZ: Your Comprehensive Plan.

4           MR. LEEN: Do you have a point of order?

5           MR. BASS: I have some questions for Mr.  
6           Alvarez.

7           MR. LEEN: You have Cross Examination? He  
8           has a right --

9           MAYOR CASON: We have 15 minutes for you at  
10          the end. Is there anything else you want to  
11          say, any other points?

12          MR. LEEN: Mr. Mayor, he wanted to cross  
13          examine him.

14          MAYOR CASON: Okay. Go ahead, and then  
15          we --

16          MR. LEEN: He has a right to cross examine  
17          him. Go ahead.

18          COMMISSIONER LAGO: I think Mr. Gibbs  
19          wanted to make a statement.

20          MR. LEEN: No. No. But before Mr. Gibbs  
21          speaks, he has the right to cross examine,  
22          because you just heard evidence.

23          COMMISSIONER LAGO: I just want to make  
24          sure that everybody understands what's going  
25          on, that we're following the proper procedures.

1 This is not out of norm.

2 MR. LEEN: Yes. You have the right to  
3 cross examine.

4 MR. BASS: May I proceed?

5 MAYOR CASON: Go ahead.

6 MR. LEEN: Mr. Mayor.

7 MAYOR CASON: Yes.

8 MR. BASS: Mr. Alvarez, nice to see you.

9 MR. ALVAREZ: A pleasure, as well. Thank you.

10 MR. BASS: Always a pleasure. Just making  
11 it clear, this is going to be a very, very  
12 Coral Gables friendly Cross Examination. I  
13 don't want any like tension in the room. We're  
14 good. But I just have to clean up the record  
15 on a few areas.

16 Mr. Alvarez, the visioning report you  
17 referenced, do you have a copy of it there?

18 MR. ALVAREZ: I'm sorry, which one?

19 MR. BASS: The RNA visioning report.

20 COMMISSIONER KEON: The 2007.

21 COMMISSIONER LAGO: The April 25, 2005,  
22 this one?

23 MR. BASS: I just want to make sure that  
24 that's the one, yes.

25 Do you know whether or not this has been

1 adopted by the City?

2 MR. ALVAREZ: This is --

3 MR. BASS: Yes or no, please. Has this  
4 been adopted by the City?

5 MR. ALVAREZ: No.

6 MR. BASS: That's a, "No." Thank you.

7 You talked about our Future Land Use  
8 Amendments.

9 MR. ALVAREZ: Correct.

10 MR. BASS: Can we develop residential on  
11 our property?

12 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes, you can.

13 MR. BASS: Without changing the Future Land  
14 Use?

15 MR. ALVAREZ: The residential comes in as a  
16 mixed use, which is the Zoning.

17 MR. BASS: I'm not asking about the Zoning.  
18 I'm asking about the Future Land Use Amendment.

19 We are here seeking a Future Land Use  
20 Amendment. At present, can we build  
21 residential under our existing Future Land Use  
22 designation?

23 MR. ALVAREZ: You could build residential  
24 under a lower designation with the MXD.

25 MR. BASS: Yes or no, Mr. Alvarez, without

1 any other changes, could we come in today and  
2 build on our property? With its existing Land  
3 Use Map designation, can we build residential?

4 MR. ALVAREZ: My understanding is that on  
5 high and medium, that you can.

6 MR. BASS: If that's your answer, that's  
7 your answer.

8 You indicated earlier that you were without  
9 objection to the height that we proposed on  
10 US-1, correct?

11 MR. ALVAREZ: No. What I said was that the  
12 height on US-1 was within the range of George  
13 Merrick's vision, on that part of the  
14 presentation, for that first 125 feet of the  
15 block.

16 MR. BASS: And could we come within the  
17 range of George Merrick's vision for height  
18 without a Future Land Use Map change?

19 MR. ALVAREZ: No.

20 MR. BASS: Thank you. I have no further  
21 questions.

22 MR. ALVAREZ: But that was a maximum.  
23 Well, but to understand, that was a maximum  
24 that George Merrick's vision had.

25 MR. LEEN: Okay. Mr. Gibbs.



1           MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

2           And after Mr. Gibbs speaks, we'll have the  
3 fifteen minutes, if you need that much --

4           MR. BASS: Just a point of order, Mr.  
5 Mayor. We had agreed, my fifteen minutes would  
6 be at the close, after all of the public  
7 speakers.

8           MAYOR CASON: That's fine.

9           MR. GIBBS: And for brevity sake, again, my  
10 name is Tucker Gibbs. 3835 Utopia Court is my  
11 office.

12           Today I'm only going to speak to the -- I  
13 was going to speak to the Land Use change.  
14 Mr. Alvarez spoke to that.

15           I'm going to speak to the two issues,  
16 mostly the PAD, but also the MXD proposals.

17           What I wanted to do is -- so I have to go  
18 through my papers here -- in dealing with the  
19 PAD, the developer -- according to your Staff,  
20 the Developer wants to use the PAD option in  
21 order to avoid two provisions in the Zoning  
22 Code, which are Section 3-502.C.9, which  
23 requires a maximum height of 45 feet within 100  
24 feet of the adjacent right-of-way.

25           And I understand, from speaking to

1 Mr. Trias, that last night there was some  
2 agreement that they've met the requirement of  
3 the 45 feet, and I just want to be sure about  
4 that.

5 And the second issue -- but not all of the  
6 way back 100. So I just want to be sure.

7 So that provision has not been totally  
8 satisfied. And the Number 2 issue was, Section  
9 4-201, which is in Table 155 or I-15, requires  
10 a vertical step back of 10 feet, at a maximum  
11 height of 45 feet, on mixed use buildings.

12 I'm saying that, because I want to talk  
13 about the City Attorney's comment earlier in  
14 the evening -- earlier in the day, regarding  
15 the PAD provisions.

16 And Mr. Leen read, and I'm going to read it  
17 again, this is titled Section B in the PAD  
18 regulations, and it says, "Relation to general  
19 zoning subdivision and other regulations.  
20 Where there are conflicts between the PAD  
21 provisions and general zoning subdivision or  
22 other regulations and requirements, these  
23 regulations shall apply, unless," and the  
24 Planning and Zoning Board recommends and the  
25 City Commission finds, and they have the two

1 issues that Mr. Leen quoted to you all earlier  
2 today, that will allow you to -- well, will  
3 allow you to look at this and make a choice,  
4 and this is the issue: Staff has said in its  
5 report that the Applicant can use the PAD  
6 provisions to essentially waive provisions  
7 which require a maximum height of 45 feet  
8 within a hundred feet of the adjacent  
9 right-of-way, and Mr. Leen has kind of implied  
10 that, and I don't want to put words in the City  
11 Attorney's mouth, so --

12 MR. LEEN: I said, "Adjust," but it has to  
13 be -- adjust, but they have to still meet --  
14 whatever the purpose of that provision is, they  
15 have not -- the Commission had to determine,  
16 find, that the adjustment meets the same need,  
17 and they can impose conditions.

18 MR. GIBBS: And I understand. That's the  
19 concern that we have, and our position is, it's  
20 incorrect, because it talks about conflicts,  
21 and it talks about conflicts between two  
22 provisions, the PAD provision and a provision  
23 in the Code relating to that PAD provision.

24 So if there's a provision --

25 MR. LEEN: Mr. Gibbs, the reason I was

1 raising it, was partially in favor of you,  
2 because I thought that -- I wanted the  
3 Commission to know that, for example, they  
4 could reduce parking requirements to lower the  
5 height of a building, for example.

6 MR. GIBBS: Right. And I understand that,  
7 and I think that -- well, I won't go into that.  
8 I'm talking about it, in the terms of this  
9 issue of the step back and the rear setback,  
10 and that's pretty important, because it talks  
11 about a conflict, and the condition precedent  
12 to you all making a decision is that there must  
13 be a conflict between the PAD provision and a  
14 provision in the Code, and I wanted to say, as  
15 to the issue Number 1, which is the PAD  
16 provision that requires a maximum height of 45  
17 feet within a hundred feet of the adjacent  
18 right-of-way, there is no conflict, and I'll  
19 tell you why.

20 The PAD provision says 45-foot height  
21 within a hundred feet of a right-of-way, and  
22 that's in 3-502B. The Zoning Code provision,  
23 in the C District, because the assumption --  
24 and maybe I'm wrong in this, the assumption is  
25 that you're going to go back to your C

1 Regulations. They're requesting that you get  
2 rid of the Site Specifics provisions, which go  
3 back to regular old C Zoning, and the C Zoning  
4 requires, in 4-302D5B, which requires a 45 feet  
5 height within a hundred feet of the C property  
6 line, which would be the Madruga right-of-way,  
7 which is the same issue.

8 And, also, in the MDX (sic) regulation, if  
9 you give them MDX designation, overlay,  
10 whatever, they require the same 45-foot height,  
11 within a hundred feet of the right-of-way, next  
12 to residential property. That's in Section  
13 4-201E6.

14 What I'm trying to say is, no offense, you  
15 can't have that, for lack of a better word,  
16 total discretion to play with your Code, if  
17 there isn't a conflict, and that's the concern,  
18 and there is no conflict here.

19 So that's my position. It's my client's  
20 position.

21 So in the PAD, the whole issue of waiving  
22 any portion of that 45 feet, a hundred feet  
23 from the right-of-way, you cannot do, because  
24 there is no conflict. Now, if the Applicant  
25 wants to waive it and change it, there's a

1 variance process, and the Applicant can go  
2 through that variance process, but they can't  
3 use the PAD to get out of that setback and out  
4 of that height issue.

5 Now, the height issue is superfluous,  
6 because they've already agreed that they're  
7 going to be 45. They just haven't agreed that  
8 they're going to go back a hundred feet.

9 That's the concern, and that's one of my  
10 issues on the PAD.

11 MAYOR CASON: And, Craig, I'd like you to  
12 opine.

13 COMMISSIONER KEON: You know what, I would  
14 like either Craig or Ramon to respond to that,  
15 because I really am having a lot of trouble  
16 understanding what you're saying. I'm having  
17 trouble following you.

18 MR. GIBBS: I'm raising a legal issue.

19 MR. LEEN: He's raising a legal objection,  
20 for purposes of the record, which he is  
21 entitled to. The way I read it is that it does  
22 talk about conflicts between the PAD provisions  
23 and general Zoning regulations, and it says the  
24 PAD provisions apply, but then it also says,  
25 unless the Planning and Zoning Board recommends

1 and the City Commission finds, in the  
2 particular case.

3 You know, there's an unless, which, to me,  
4 I feel takes it out of the conflict issue, and  
5 it says -- the one that I think is more  
6 interesting is the one that says that actions,  
7 designs, construction or other solutions  
8 proposed by the Applicant, although not  
9 literally in accord with these PAD regulations,  
10 satisfy public benefits to at least an  
11 equivalent degree.

12 So the way I read that is that you do have  
13 flexibility to adjust. If they propose  
14 something or you impose a condition, that meets  
15 these needs, I still retain the opinion that  
16 you can do that. It's within your discretion.  
17 And that's the way that we have interpreted the  
18 PAD provisions. But he's perfectly entitled to  
19 raise his objections.

20 MR. GIBBS: And I don't necessarily  
21 disagree with that aspect of it. I'm talking  
22 about, the threshold issue is, is there a  
23 conflict. That's the threshold issue. Once  
24 you say there is a conflict between those  
25 provisions of the Zoning Code that are

1 applicable and the PAD provision, if there's no  
2 conflict there, you don't get to go to Sub 1  
3 and Sub 2, which deal with that issue. That's  
4 my legal issue.

5 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay. But our attorney  
6 is advising us that that is not the threshold  
7 issue. Is that right?

8 MR. LEEN: That's not the way that we view  
9 this language or have interpreted it. There's  
10 different ways to approach the language.

11 COMMISSIONER KEON: We're being advised  
12 that it is not.

13 MR. GIBBS: No, I understand.

14 MR. LEEN: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to  
15 interrupt.

16 COMMISSIONER KEON: No, I'm sorry. You're  
17 telling us -- I just want to be clear, because  
18 you're telling us that is your opinion, and our  
19 City Attorney, who is the advisor to the Board  
20 on these issues, is telling us it is not.  
21 Okay. So there's a disagreement between you  
22 and the City.

23 MR. GIBBS: Right.

24 MR. LEEN: He's saying it's a condition  
25 present.



1           MAYOR CASON: So we have two opinions.

2           COMMISSIONER KEON: You know, you disagree  
3 with the Applicant, and that's fine, but I  
4 need to know when you don't agree with the  
5 attorney.

6           MAYOR CASON: And, for the record, the  
7 Planning and Zoning Board voted four to two for  
8 the PAD?

9           MR. LEEN: Yes.

10           In my view, if you approve it pursuant to  
11 the PAD, then it does comply with the PAD  
12 provisions, but may be in violation of the  
13 Zoning Code. And so to me, the action itself  
14 creates the conflict. This is the way it's  
15 been interpreted, and that's part of the  
16 purpose of a PAD, is to be able to have that  
17 sort of flexibility.

18           Mr. Trias.

19           COMMISSIONER KEON: To have that  
20 flexibility.

21           MR. TRIAS: The two issues that were raised  
22 are separate. The setback of 10 feet, the  
23 Planning and Zoning Board was okay with that  
24 one, and also the Board of Architects, and that  
25 has to do with the fact that the hotel, if you

1 were set back ten feet, it would interfere with  
2 the paseo, which then creates some issues that  
3 are not beneficial for the public. So I don't  
4 think there's an argument about that request.

5 However, the Planning and Zoning Board  
6 recommended compliance with the 100-foot  
7 setback and 45 feet, as far as the four-two  
8 vote.

9 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay.

10 MR. GIBBS: Right. Okay.

11 So I'll leave it at that, as that we have a  
12 disagreement. It's our position, though, that  
13 they would have to seek a variance.

14 Okay. And, finally, I'm going to finish  
15 off with the issue of density again. The issue  
16 of density is important. Mr. Alvarez talked  
17 about it in a very technical way, but very  
18 important. That if you're looking at just the  
19 number of units, you have 86 units an acre on  
20 this site.

21 If you look at your Comprehensive Plan, the  
22 highest density residential is 70 some -- 60  
23 units per acre and 75 dwelling units an acre  
24 with architectural incentives. That's just  
25 your residential. And I'm not talking about

1 anything else. It's just a point of  
2 measurement of what you all are approving.

3 Not only are you increasing, tripling, the  
4 floor area ratio, the intensity of the project,  
5 you are vastly increasing the number of  
6 dwelling units per acre and the density, and  
7 those issues are very important. Not to  
8 mention what Mr. -- I will mention it,  
9 Mr. Alvarez's issue about the massing. Very  
10 technical argument there, but the point is,  
11 that's a big building. And why is it a big  
12 building? Because the inside has an atrium up  
13 in there or something hollowed out in it.

14 That makes that building look, from the  
15 outside, massive. It has a massive face to the  
16 neighborhood. And that is an issue for my  
17 clients, as well, and what I'd like to do is --  
18 we have other issues we will bring up at second  
19 reading. We will present a report to you prior  
20 to second reading. I will present an outline  
21 to you prior to the second reading, as well, so  
22 you all will have it --

23 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: So there are issues  
24 that you're not discussing today that, in  
25 anticipation that this moves to second reading,

1 you will bring them up for the first time at  
2 the second reading?

3 MR. GIBBS: Yes.

4 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I don't like that.  
5 That's not playing fair.

6 MR. GIBBS: Well, I mean, we're going to  
7 put notice out. And I will tell you, we have  
8 argument that we're presenting.

9 MR. LEEN: No. No. No. That's fine, but  
10 can you present it five days in advance, like a  
11 summary?

12 MR. GIBBS: Yes, absolutely, and that's  
13 what I said. That's what I said I would do.

14 MR. LEEN: One other thing, and you may  
15 want to stay up here, since there's been a  
16 debate on this issue, I do want to read two  
17 other things that I think are relevant, when  
18 you read these all together.

19 3-503, you're required to make certain  
20 findings when you approve the PAD. I want to  
21 read two of them, which I think supports the  
22 interpretation I've given you. 3-503A, one of  
23 the findings you'll make is, in what respects  
24 the proposed plan is or is not consistent with  
25 the stated purpose and intent of the PAD

1 regulations. And then B says, and it's read  
2 together, the extent to which the proposed plan  
3 departs from the Zoning and subdivision  
4 regulations otherwise applicable to the subject  
5 property, including but not limited to density,  
6 size, area, bulk, and use, and the reasons why  
7 such departures are or are not deemed to be in  
8 the public interest.

9 What this implies -- really, it says it  
10 expressly, but how I read this is that you can  
11 depart, as long as you deem it to be in the  
12 public interest. That's part of the finding  
13 you make.

14 MR. GIBBS: We'll have to just agree to  
15 disagree.

16 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Ramon, what we just  
17 discussed, the last few comments that were made  
18 by this gentleman in regards to the unit count  
19 per acre and how we're basically deviating from  
20 the standard norm --

21 MR. TRIAS: Yeah. What happens is that the  
22 mixed use regulations allow for no unit count,  
23 no density limits, in the Downtown, and up to  
24 125 units for acre in the other areas, such as  
25 this one. So there is some regulation --

1 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Flexibility.

2 MR. TRIAS: Yeah, but 125 is the maximum,  
3 unless you are Downtown. Unless you're in the  
4 Central Business District. In that case,  
5 there's no limit.

6 COMMISSIONER LAGO: There's no limit.

7 MR. TRIAS: For mixed use, once the  
8 Commission approves a mixed use project.

9 MAYOR CASON: Let me ask the Applicant,  
10 when do you plan to exhibit -- to discuss  
11 Exhibit P and what this means? Do you want to  
12 do this at the end? Because there's nothing  
13 attached to it that tells you what it is.

14 MR. BASS: Sorry. Yes, that will be part  
15 of our rebuttal, our closing and our rebuttal.

16 MAYOR CASON: Okay. Fine.

17 Do you all want to ask any more questions?  
18 Otherwise we'll take a lunch break and come  
19 back.

20 COMMISSIONER KEON: I'd like to take just a  
21 few minutes, and it shouldn't take more than 10  
22 minutes, to have this discussion about the  
23 GRID, because the GRID keeps coming up from  
24 both sides of this presentation, and about the  
25 infill GRID and whatever else, and the City

1 Ordinance that's addressing the infill GRID.

2 It's 3148, that was passed, when --

3 MAYOR CASON: Okay. And then after  
4 discussion of the GRID, we're going to take --  
5 can you all do a half an hour lunch break?

6 COMMISSIONER KEON: This is from 1995, and  
7 we're being told that, you know, the City of  
8 Coral Gables passed this, because the City of  
9 Coral Gables supported this and wanted this and  
10 whatever else.

11 I would ask Mr. Collier to please address  
12 this issue, because it's my understanding that  
13 this infill GRID was determined and identified  
14 through the MPO by the County, and it was the  
15 County's legislation, and so that there was  
16 consistency between the cities and the  
17 municipalities and the County, that the City,  
18 in turn, adopted this. That this was not  
19 originated by the City, and didn't just come  
20 out of the blue from the City, as to how we  
21 wanted to develop, but it was a regional issue,  
22 and to have consistency, it became a municipal  
23 issue.

24 MR. LEEN: Mr. Mayor, if I could just  
25 introduce him.

1           Greg Coller is our Special Land Use and  
2           Zoning Counsel. He's one of the recognized  
3           people in the field. He was the former -- he  
4           recently retired from the County. He was the  
5           Chief of the Land Use and Zoning Section of the  
6           County Attorney's Office. Very knowledgeable  
7           person, and we're fortunate to have him here to  
8           give us advice.

9           COMMISSIONER LAGO: Just before you go into  
10          it and answer the Commissioner's question, I  
11          just want to know, your fees and everything  
12          that's associated with you is being paid by the  
13          City, correct?

14          MR. COLLER: That is correct.

15          COMMISSIONER KEON: Thank you.

16          MR. COLLER: Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor and the  
17          Commission, thank you.

18          With respect to the issue of concurrency,  
19          in 1988, when the County adopted its Master  
20          Plan, one of the first Master Plans under the  
21          new Chapter 163, we created an exception -- we,  
22          the County, sorry -- created an exception area,  
23          called the Urban Infill Area, which is east of  
24          the Palmetto Expressway.

25          And the problem with concurrency, it had



1 the unextended consequence of encouraging  
2 development, urban sprawl and placing pressure  
3 on the UDB. So that is what the County did.

4 The County's Master Plan, although not  
5 required compliance by the City, there's a  
6 provision called the Intergovernmental  
7 Coordination Element. The concept is that the  
8 County and the cities coordinate their  
9 development.

10 So this concurrency exception is not a new  
11 thing, but it was encouraged for the cities to  
12 follow suit, particularly in this circumstance,  
13 where we have Metrorail, and the County shows  
14 this as being a high intensive area, to take  
15 advantage of Metrorail.

16 And that was the purpose for it.

17 COMMISSIONER KEON: Right. And part of it  
18 is, in order to do that and to receive Federal  
19 funds and whatever else for the Metrorail,  
20 there were certain things that were required,  
21 and some of it is these issues of development  
22 around transportation sites and a number of  
23 other issues.

24 So although, you know, we are subject to  
25 it, I think, you know, anyone portraying that

1 this was initiated by the City, for the purpose  
2 of the City, because we wanted to see that  
3 level of density, I think it's a little bit of  
4 a misinterpretation of the facts.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. LEEN: And just for the record, it is  
7 part of our Comprehensive Plan. That's  
8 recognized and it's perfectly appropriate to  
9 bring up. I think the issue that the  
10 Commissioner is raising -- this is tied into a  
11 broader matter.

12 COMMISSIONER KEON: It's a regional --

13 MR. LEEN: It's a regional issue.

14 COMMISSIONER KEON: And it's not --

15 MR. COLLER: It's a regional issue to  
16 encourage density along the Metrorail, to make  
17 Metrorail a successful operation. So that was  
18 the purpose.

19 COMMISSIONER KEON: Right. And in  
20 accordance with Mr. Bass' statement about facts  
21 and your referencing of baseball, you know,  
22 that it's either -- it's a strike or it's a  
23 ball, sometimes, you know, it's a ball, but  
24 it's a ball that hits the batter. So, you  
25 know, it's still a ball.

1           And in that sense, you're given the  
2           opportunity to mitigate that being hit by  
3           getting on base, right?

4           So, you know, I think I look at this now  
5           as, it may be a ball or it may be, you know, a  
6           strike, but the mitigation is, it's hitting the  
7           neighborhood. So it's not so clear, that it's  
8           not either just a strike or just a ball and  
9           only has the same consequences of a strike or a  
10          ball in every setting, because the other factor  
11          is, somebody is getting hit by it and that  
12          changes it.

13          MAYOR CASON: All right. We're going to  
14          take a lunch break. Come back at 12:05, a half  
15          an hour and -- 1:05 and continue.

16          (Lunch recess taken.)

17          MAYOR CASON: I'm going to call five people  
18          at a time, so they can sort of line up that  
19          way. We'll see who is not here and we'll go in  
20          groups of five, but the first five will be,  
21          Alicia Fernandez, Tais Sanchez, Menachem, is it  
22          Fellig -- did I pronounce that right -- Mark  
23          Trowbridge, and Brooks Miller.

24          MR. LEEN: Remember the time limit is two  
25          minutes. It's going to be strictly enforced.

1 The reason why it will be strictly enforced is,  
2 we want to make sure everyone can speak. We  
3 believe we have -- Mr. Mayor, is it 60, 59?

4 MAYOR CASON: We have at least 60. So at  
5 two minutes, it's still several hours, and with  
6 the in between.

7 MR. LEEN: So please keep it to two  
8 minutes.

9 MAYOR CASON: And, remember, also, we've  
10 gotten hundreds -- you know, hundreds of  
11 e-mails and we've read the transcripts of the  
12 Planning and Zoning, so a lot of people here,  
13 we know your position. So try to give us  
14 something -- as he said, it's not a popularity  
15 contest, it's not counting numbers, it's give  
16 us arguments for your point of view, that we  
17 can take into consideration, and tell us if  
18 you're for or against.

19 Alicia.

20 MS. FERNANDEZ: Good afternoon. My name is  
21 Alicia Fernandez.

22 MR. LEEN: One other thing. Mr. Clerk,  
23 everyone has been sworn in? I just need to  
24 state it on the record. We're continuing.  
25 You're still under oath.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. FERNANDEZ: My name is Alicia  
3 Fernandez. I live at 6000 Granada Boulevard.  
4 I have been a Coral Gables resident for more  
5 than 50 years.

6 Thank you.

7 I have a been a Coral Gables resident for  
8 more than 50 years, lived on my current address  
9 for 30 years, within the Riviera neighborhood,  
10 an area that's been highlighted recently, as  
11 the Developer is proposing a mixed use project  
12 for the current Holiday Inn site on US-1.

13 My home is within walking distance to the  
14 project. I value this community, and I am  
15 grateful for all that it is, and that's why I  
16 am excited for the change that the Paseo de la  
17 Riviera project will bring. This project will  
18 improve the area, as it will bring much needed  
19 open community space and neighborhood oriented  
20 retail, that will be accessible through just a  
21 short walk from our homes. The prospect of a  
22 family friendly place is very exciting.

23 When I first heard about the Paseo de la  
24 Riviera project, I was a bit fearful it was  
25 going to be too large and out of scale. When I

1 learned more about it, I came to understand  
2 that it is appropriate in scale and much needed  
3 for the neighborhood.

4 The Development Team has answered all of my  
5 questions and is committed to working with the  
6 neighbors. I fully support this project.

7 Thank you.

8 MAYOR CASON: Thank you very much.

9 Tais Sanchez.

10 MS. SANCHEZ: Good afternoon, Mayor, County  
11 Commissioners. I am Tais Sanchez. I live here  
12 for 48 years, in the beautiful and safe Coral  
13 Gables.

14 I am so happy with the new project, Paseo  
15 de la Riviera. I approve that.

16 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

17 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Thank you.

18 MAYOR CASON: Menachem Fellig.

19 MR. FELLIG: Menachem Fellig, 1251 Hardee  
20 Road. I'm here to support the project. The  
21 reason for that is -- well, first, a few  
22 things, it's really saddens me to see the kind  
23 of vigilant hatred which has been going on. A  
24 community is made up of many different options.  
25 We all have different views of how exactly the

1 City should look, and that's great, and it  
2 would be great to have a great conversation,  
3 which I believe the Developer has had with  
4 anybody who has cared to listen, and they've  
5 developed into their project many of the ideas  
6 and points, and have taken into consideration,  
7 and they've really redrawn and made efforts to  
8 make this, you know, everybody's vision  
9 together.

10 You know, before, I was standing in the  
11 hallway, and somebody, you know -- I was  
12 talking and somebody came up to me and just  
13 pointed to me and said, "You're the enemy," and  
14 I find that just absolutely unacceptable.

15 This is crazy.

16 But the project is beautiful. The  
17 Developer is open to listen. They've listened.  
18 From day one, they've come to me, and they've  
19 asked, "This is our vision. What's your  
20 vision? What are your concerns?"

21 I live at 1251 Hardee. I'm right behind  
22 the project. And every step of the way, this  
23 is what we're thinking, what do you want, what  
24 do you want to see, how do you want to see  
25 this, and they've incorporated most of what

1 they could into the project.

2 I'd rather have a taller building, which is  
3 beautiful and beatifically designed, with a  
4 closer setback to my home, than a deeper  
5 setback into the property and an ugly short  
6 squatted building.

7 Currently the gray building that's there is  
8 tall, but in no way -- does not infringe in any  
9 way on my life or my lifestyle. It was there  
10 when I bought the home. I knew what I was  
11 buying. And since then, I've lived there ten  
12 years, it has absolutely no repercussion on the  
13 height.

14 The door of the developer is open and will  
15 continue to be open once the project is built.  
16 It's a single owner apartment building. So if  
17 there's an issue, you know who you're going to  
18 talk to. If there's a problem, you know who to  
19 talk to. You're not dealing with dozens and  
20 dozens of homeowners that don't care. They  
21 have to rent it out from year to year, the  
22 apartments. They have to rent out the  
23 storefronts and that guarantees that it's going  
24 to be a beautifully, well-maintained project.

25 There's something for everyone. The



1 ability to walk out of my home and walk to a --  
2 and walk to a place that's great, and I think,  
3 for everybody, this is a great project.

4 MR. LEEN: Time is up.

5 MAYOR CASON: Thank you very much.

6 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Sir, could you just  
7 come back one second? I just have one real  
8 quick question. I know you're pressed for  
9 time. I appreciate you being here, all of you.  
10 I appreciate all of you being here.

11 When you say you live right behind the  
12 project, how far are you from the setback of  
13 the property?

14 MR. FELLIG: 1250 -- well, I don't know in  
15 feet, but 1251 Hardee Road, you can spit from  
16 the -- from my end to the other end. I mean,  
17 that's just across from Madruga. So literally  
18 right there. We are the closest home to the  
19 majority of that property.

20 So we really -- when I look out my back  
21 window of my home, I'm looking at the parking  
22 lot of the building. When I look up out of my  
23 second story, when I look across, I'm looking  
24 into the hotel rooms.

25 COMMISSIONER LAGO: So you would consider

1 yourself to be the closest resident to  
2 property, the proposed project?

3 MR. FELLIG: Without a doubt.

4 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Without a doubt. No, I  
5 ask you, because I've driven by the property  
6 several times. I was there again last night,  
7 stopped. I just can't remember the exact  
8 addresses. I apologize.

9 MR. FELLIG: Right. So 1251 is the corner  
10 property, on the left side, facing the canal.  
11 The left side is the park, Jaycee. The right  
12 side is the property. And there's a corner  
13 property, which Madruga and Hardee -- where  
14 they hit Caballero. So that's it, ground zero.

15 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay. Thank you, sir.  
16 I appreciate it. Thank you for being here.

17 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

18 I don't see Mark Trowbridge here. Is he  
19 here? If not, we'll move on to Brooks Miller.

20 MS. KAWALERSKI: Mayor, Brooks Miller had  
21 to leave. He conceded his time to me.

22 MAYOR CASON: Okay.

23 And if Mark Trowbridge comes, we'll pick  
24 him up later on.

25 The next five will be, Amanda Rich, Matt

1 Rich, Debra Register, Bob Rich -- I guess  
2 that's the same family -- Bob Rich and Rachel  
3 Bixby.

4 MS. RICH: I'm going to yield my time.

5 MAYOR CASON: And you're Amanda? Thank  
6 you. Okay.

7 MR. LEEN: So just regarding yielding time,  
8 we do have a rule about that. I just want to  
9 be clear. If time has been yielded to you, the  
10 person has to be here. You have to let the  
11 Mayor know when you start, and he doesn't have  
12 to give you all of the time, but he may give  
13 you an extra minute or two, but then those  
14 people can't speak. So just understand that.

15 MAYOR CASON: Yeah. I would prefer people  
16 -- if you're going to speak, to speak, keep it  
17 to the two minutes, because we're going to be  
18 hours as it is.

19 You are? Is this Matt?

20 Matt. Are you going to yield or --

21 Okay. Debra Register.

22 You are?

23 MR. ACOSTA: Amado.

24 MAYOR CASON: You're not yet.

25 MR. ACOSTA: I thought you said Amado

1 first.

2 MAYOR CASON: No. Next I have -- no. Matt  
3 Rich. Have we done the two Riches? Excuse me  
4 -- no, I don't think so. No.

5 MS. REGISTER: My name is Debra Register,  
6 and I reside at 1240 Placetas Avenue, Coral  
7 Gables, Florida.

8 Unfortunately I'm just outside the thousand  
9 feet, and I'm not getting notices of a lot of  
10 the activities, which I think that, One, that  
11 it should be expanded, but what I'm here mostly  
12 about is parking.

13 Presently UM has a building, which is the  
14 eyesore of our neighborhood, as far as height,  
15 and it's not enough parking. They park on our  
16 side streets. The people from the hotel also  
17 park on our side streets.

18 When we take away the parking under the  
19 Metrorail, where are those people going to go?  
20 Where are the buses going to go that come in  
21 and bring the teams that will stay at the  
22 hotel? Where will the cabs park, that park on  
23 our side streets now, waiting to take people to  
24 the airport or wherever they may go?

25 This project does not provide for enough

1 parking, and I'm afraid that they will turn and  
2 let UM lease their spaces.

3 We will bring in students that will --  
4 because these are not condos with permanent  
5 residents, we will bring students in. Students  
6 leave and come. With that, you have U-Hauls.  
7 How are they going to, one week as everybody is  
8 coming in to move back to go to UM, and you  
9 have all of these U-Hauls that pull in to bring  
10 their stuff?

11 Parking is a problem in our area for the  
12 side streets, for our whole neighborhood, and  
13 they say that it doesn't affect the south part,  
14 which is Maynada, but Hardee south it does.

15 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

16 MS. REGISTER: So I'm here as relating to  
17 the parking.

18 MR. LEEN: Time is up.

19 MAYOR CASON: And I'll ask, I'm sure the  
20 Applicant will address some of those points,  
21 allegations made, at the end.

22 COMMISSIONER KEON: Is that your primary  
23 objection to this project, is the parking  
24 elements?

25 MR. REGISTER: No, I have many.

1           MAYOR CASON:   Okay.

2           COMMISSIONER KEON:   Oh, okay.

3           MAYOR CASON:   Bob Rich.

4           COMMISSIONER LAGO:   Thank you very much, by  
5           the way.

6           MAYOR CASON:   Says he will yield on the  
7           card.

8           All right.   The next five will be Rachel  
9           Bixby, Paul, I think it's, Mass, Susan  
10          Kawalerski, Daisy Hayworth and Amado Acosta.

11          First Rachel Bixby.   Is she here?

12          If not, next will be Paul, I think it's Mass.

13          MS. KAWALERSKI:   And he left, saying that  
14          he's against the project and is yielding his  
15          time.

16          MAYOR CASON:   Thank you.   Sue.

17          MR. LEEN:   So exactly how many people are  
18          you speaking for?

19          MS. KAWALERSKI:   The Riches, a brother and  
20          sister team, the Riches, and also Paul Mass,  
21          who had to leave, and also Brooks Miller had to  
22          leave, and he wanted to make sure that he  
23          conceded his time.

24          MR. LEEN:   Mr. Mayor, I would suggest  
25          giving her four minutes.

1           MAYOR CASON: Yeah. Four minutes. You  
2 think you can -- make it concise.

3           MS. KAWALERSKI: I will try my best.

4           MAYOR CASON: Okay. Thanks.

5           MS. KAWALERSKI: And good morning Mayor  
6 Cason, Vice Mayor Quesada, Commissioners, City  
7 Manager and other Clerk.

8           My name is Sue Kawalerski. I live at 6830  
9 Gratian Street, in the Riviera Neighborhood,  
10 where I've owned my home since 1998. That's  
11 almost twenty years.

12           And I have to say, I live in one of the  
13 best neighborhoods in Coral Gables. I live  
14 amongst people who are very active in the  
15 community, in our currently walkable community.  
16 It is just a phenomenal community. And you're  
17 going to hear from a lot of them today, by the  
18 way, who are making a real effort for their  
19 voices to be heard and for you to understand  
20 the importance of your decision regarding this  
21 project today.

22           In fact, you've heard me before, I think,  
23 maybe a couple of Commission Meetings ago,  
24 talking about the Visioning Report, and I  
25 really thank you for holding that two days'

1       worth of visioning workshops, because that was  
2       very important for us residents, to express  
3       ourselves, and I have to give a special thank  
4       you, also, to Commissioner Slesnick, for, after  
5       that, holding a massive meeting at the  
6       Biltmore, where over 300 residents -- I would  
7       say that most of them were residents -- really  
8       had a chance, up close and personal, to express  
9       how we feel, not only about this project, but  
10      about the entire US-1 corridor, because  
11      whatever happens on the US-1 corridor will  
12      ultimately affect our neighborhood and the  
13      other neighborhoods along the corridor.

14             So thank you for these two opportunities,  
15      and thank you for this opportunity.

16             Our planner, Mark, happened to mention  
17      something that I'm very fond of talking about,  
18      and that's the Visioning Report. The Visioning  
19      Report, the Word Cloud that he showed you, is  
20      something that I emphasized when I spoke to you  
21      last time.

22             That Visioning Cloud encapsulated every  
23      person's opinion on what should be done with  
24      the corridor, and the only reference to any  
25      height, size, dimension, whatever, was the



1 term, low rise. That's the only thing that  
2 came out of the Visioning Report that mentioned  
3 scope and scale, low rise, and that's exactly  
4 what I'm here to tell you that the Riviera  
5 Neighborhood is all for. We are all for low  
6 rise.

7 The Paseo project obviously is not low  
8 rise. Our planner talked about the amount of  
9 residential units per acre, which far exceeds  
10 -- I mean, it's in the scope of high rise.  
11 It's not even mid rise. It's definitely high  
12 rise. When you're talking about 80 plus units  
13 per acre, it's nothing but high rise. That's  
14 totally against what the Visioning Report came  
15 out and recommended.

16 It's totally against what the 300 plus  
17 residents came out and recommended to  
18 Commissioner Slesnick.

19 The project is simply too big. We are not  
20 against progress, but we are concerned about  
21 the scope, the scale and the character, as it  
22 pertains to our adjacent single-family home  
23 neighborhood. It's too tall. It's too dense.  
24 It's too intense.

25 And by the way, I don't know how us

1 residents could ever have been heard today,  
2 because I didn't understand most of what was  
3 happening this morning. You have to be a  
4 lawyer or a planner to understand this stuff,  
5 don't you?

6 And so we had to hire a lawyer and we had  
7 to hire a planner, because we would be in  
8 weeds, truthfully. We would be talking about  
9 emotion, instead of fact, and with our lawyer  
10 and our planner, we're able to talk about fact.

11 And Commissioner Lago, you said you wanted  
12 to hear about fact, when we spoke last time.  
13 We're now going to base our arguments not on  
14 emotion, but purely on fact, and you've heard  
15 the facts this morning.

16 This project is not low rise. It's high  
17 rise. It's dense. It's intense. The name  
18 Paseo should be called, really, the Pass  
19 Through, because it will be a pass through.  
20 It's going to be a pass through, with heavy  
21 traffic -- car traffic into our neighborhoods,  
22 and as much as people are discounting --  
23 planners and Zoning people are discounting the  
24 traffic element in these projects, I don't know  
25 how you can ignore traffic as being the most

1 impactful thing that this project will deliver  
2 to the neighborhood.

3 MR. LEEN: Time is up.

4 MS. KAWALERSKI: Is that my two minutes?

5 MR. LEEN: I have four minutes. That's  
6 four minutes.

7 MS. KAWALERSKI: Was that my four minutes?

8 MAYOR CASON: Yeah.

9 MR. LEEN: Yes.

10 MS. KAWALERSKI: Hay caramba.

11 MAYOR CASON: I'll give you another minute.

12 MS. KAWALERSKI: So let me just say --

13 MR. LEEN: No, time is up.

14 You said to go ahead?

15 MAYOR CASON: Give her another minute. I  
16 gave her another minute.

17 MS. KAWALERSKI: One minute? Okay. Let me  
18 get my place here. I have to go down the list.  
19 Give me one minute.

20 We're against the project. We're not  
21 against progress. Please consider, the scope,  
22 the scale and impact and traffic is important.  
23 Parking -- what one of the last speakers said,  
24 the parking is going to be an issue, okay.

25 We want to make sure that our community is

1 walkable. I don't want cars going down my  
2 street so fast that I can't cross it.

3 So, Commissioners, you have a big  
4 responsibility today as representatives of us  
5 residents. That's your job. You represent us,  
6 the residents, okay. We've lived here for a  
7 long time. So there are probably voices in  
8 your head right now, a lot of conflict, a lot  
9 of voices in your head right now.

10 Probably one of those voices is a voice  
11 saying, "Forget those residents, we need  
12 progress, okay." That's your responsibility,  
13 progress.

14 COMMISSIONER KEON: I don't think so.

15 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I don't have that voice.

16 COMMISSIONER KEON: I don't think there's a  
17 person sitting up here that has that.

18 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. I'm saying, that  
19 might be one of the voices, one of many.

20 COMMISSIONER LAGO: No, it's not.

21 COMMISSIONER KEON: No. No.

22 MS. KAWALERSKI: But I'm telling you, some  
23 of you may have that, and all I'm saying is,  
24 let one voice be very clear in your  
25 decision-making. Let that be the voice of

1 integrity. That's a value system that you  
2 can't deny, and I appreciate your votes.

3 MR. LEEN: Time is up.

4 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

5 MR. LEEN: There's Cross Examination now.

6 MAYOR CASON: You want to clarify  
7 something?

8 MR. BASS: Yes, please.

9 Thank you for your time.

10 MS. KAWALERSKI: You're welcome.

11 MR. BASS: And thank you for your  
12 participation in this process.

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: Thank you.

14 MR. BASS: I just have one or two quick  
15 questions.

16 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.

17 MR. BASS: You live on Gratian Street?

18 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes, I do.

19 MR. BASS: You cannot see the Gables One  
20 Tower from Gratian Street, correct?

21 MS. KAWALERSKI: I didn't say I could.

22 MR. BASS: I would just like to be clear,  
23 you cannot see the Gables One Tower from  
24 Gratian --

25 MS. KAWALERSKI: I cannot see the Gables

1 One Tower.

2 MR. BASS: Okay. And you will not be able  
3 to see this project from Gratian Street?

4 MS. KAWALERSKI: It's not a visual impact I  
5 was talking about.

6 MR. BASS: But when you said it was too  
7 big, I just wanted to be clear on its impacts  
8 to you. So you'll agree with me, it will have  
9 no visual impact on you, at your home?

10 MS. KAWALERSKI: Well, let me clarify, sir.  
11 Big in terms of intensity and density and the  
12 flow of the traffic as a result of that into my  
13 neighborhood. I will be able to see all of  
14 those cars zipping by on South Alhambra. I  
15 will be able to see that.

16 MAYOR CASON: Any other Cross Examination,  
17 any other point?

18 MR. BASS: No, just one other point.  
19 You live very close to a school zone?

20 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes, I do.

21 MR. BASS: And cars don't zip through a  
22 school zone, do they?

23 MS. KAWALERSKI: No. As a matter of fact,  
24 because we have a wonderful Parking Department  
25 and Enforcement Department in Coral Gables, I

1 actually have parking ambassadors on my street,  
2 morning and afternoon, to divert traffic off of  
3 my street, and back onto Sunset, and they  
4 cannot park on my street, and they're there to  
5 enforce the laws.

6 Thank you Commissioners.

7 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER KEON: Thank you.

9 MR. LEEN: Well, just a comment. There may  
10 be some Cross Examination. You just have to  
11 understand, the law requires it, and you're  
12 supposed to answer with a yes or no.

13 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

14 MR. BASS: Thank you.

15 MAYOR CASON: Daisy Hayworth.

16 COMMISSIONER LAGO: How are you? Thank you  
17 for being here.

18 MS. HAYWORTH: Good afternoon. Thank you  
19 for letting me come in today and voice my  
20 opinion. I'm Daisy Hayworth. I live at 1042  
21 Cotorro Avenue. And after listening to all of  
22 the arguments today, I am more convinced that  
23 the Paseo project was thoughtfully designed,  
24 and, in my opinion, most certainly satisfies  
25 the aesthetics of the City Beautiful.

1 My husband Steve and I thoroughly support  
2 this project.

3 MAYOR CASON: Thank you very much.

4 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER KEON: Thank you.

6 MAYOR CASON: Amado Acosta.

7 And, then, after that, the next five will  
8 be --

9 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I think Mr. Acosta is  
10 having some time yielded to him, so he may be  
11 requesting additional time.

12 MAYOR CASON: Who yielded to you?

13 MR. ACOSTA: I'm not yielding to anybody.

14 COMMISSIONER LAGO: No, I'm saying, not  
15 you, sir. I think you had mentioned before  
16 that someone was yielding time to you.

17 MR. ACOSTA: No.

18 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay. All right. I  
19 just want to make sure.

20 MAYOR CASON: But after you, we have Phil  
21 Rinaldi, Tony Friguls, Isia Albert, and  
22 Cristina Santa-Cruz.

23 MR. ACOSTA: Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor,  
24 Mr. Vice Mayor, Commissioners, Ms. Manager, and  
25 Mr. Attorney. My name is Amado Acosta. I live



1 at 1225 South Alhambra Circle, which is the  
2 street where the City -- the traffic expert  
3 said the traffic will come through to go to  
4 Publix, okay.

5 So, yeah, no impact on the neighborhood.

6 The second thing that I want to say is that  
7 this City did adopt the Visioning Report. Here  
8 it is, with the date and everything -- you have  
9 a handout of this now -- where the City adopted  
10 this.

11 Then, when the City adopted it, it was  
12 referred to the Planning Department. The  
13 Planning Department took a Visioning Report and  
14 started looking as to how to implement it.

15 So what happened is, then the City got into  
16 a re-write of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan  
17 and the Zoning Code. So it was not until 2009,  
18 when that work was finished, that the Planning  
19 Department was able to answer.

20 In your handout, you have a letter from the  
21 then Director of the Planning and Zoning  
22 Department, to our President, Josie Ramirez, in  
23 the RNA. In there, he enumerates -- he makes  
24 an attachment, and he has a chart, and he goes  
25 point by point the issues that are raised on

1 the Visioning Report.

2 And then he has a column, where all of the  
3 items, how the items are being met by the  
4 Zoning Code and the Comprehensive Land Use  
5 Plan.

6 Now, you tell me, can the citizens depend  
7 on government, when government issues a report  
8 saying we're complying with this? I think the  
9 answer is clear.

10 Another thing is, it was mentioned that --  
11 it was mentioned that if one building gets  
12 approved, not all of the other buildings get  
13 approved --

14 MR. LEEN: Time is up.

15 MR. ACOSTA: -- because it won't apply to  
16 them.

17 MAYOR CASON: That's correct.

18 MR. ACOSTA: If you believe in that, you  
19 believe in fairy tales.

20 MAYOR CASON: Are you talking about Judge  
21 Juan Ramirez?

22 COMMISSIONER KEON: Yes.

23 MR. ACOSTA: I'm not talking about -- Josie  
24 Ramirez. Juan Ramirez is her husband.

25 MAYOR CASON: Yes. He sent an e-mail this

1 morning being in favor of the project, for the  
2 record.

3 Phil Rinaldi.

4 MR. RINALDI: Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor,  
5 Commissioners, City Departments.

6 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Good afternoon.

7 MR. RINALDI: Thank you for the time to  
8 speak. My name is Phil Rinaldi. I reside on  
9 San Esteban Avenue and I'm actually quite  
10 distant. I'll answer the question now, I  
11 cannot see the project from my house.

12 The fact that I can't see the project  
13 doesn't mean I don't have an interest. I  
14 support development, certainly re-development  
15 of sites in the City that are underdeveloped,  
16 underutilized, as happened in the industrial  
17 area, and as was asked, we need to talk about  
18 facts, rather than emotions. I don't have data  
19 to support what I'm going to say, but I do  
20 think facts also can be stated without hard  
21 data.

22 Three issues I'll raise with you in the  
23 interest of time. First is this issue of  
24 scale, which I don't know whether that's  
25 density or intensity or mass, but clearly this

1 project is significantly larger than anything  
2 in existence today adjacent to these  
3 residential areas.

4 And the fact that we can debate whether the  
5 FAR is the right FAR and whether it's  
6 Mediterranean and mixed use, we are essentially  
7 bringing Central Business District type  
8 development down into the US-1 corridor, and I  
9 suggest to you, if we're not careful, we will  
10 end up with a Downtown Dadeland look, along  
11 this corridor, through our City, where despite  
12 Mediterranean, will be quite unattractive.

13 The second issue I think I'll raise is  
14 traffic. I have significant doubt about the  
15 traffic studies. I don't know what the data  
16 says exactly, but the idea that you could have  
17 several hundred residents inside this complex  
18 and we would get a handful of cars per hour at  
19 peak is a pipe dream. Most of the people in  
20 this community do not go to work at the  
21 University of Miami or in areas adjacent to  
22 public transportation in Downtown Miami. So  
23 this will have traffic impacts, not to mention  
24 going northbound on US-1 and making U-turns.

25 MR. LEEN: Thank you.

1 MR. RINALDI: The third issue, quickly,  
2 you're supposed to make your decision taking  
3 into consideration the public interest.

4 MR. LEEN: Time is up.

5 MR. RINALDI. Public interest isn't one  
6 citizen, it isn't one developer. The public  
7 interest is all of us, and all of us, the  
8 residential citizens, are going to lose --

9 MR. LEEN: Respectfully time is up.

10 MR. RINALDI: -- the quality of life.

11 MR. LEEN: Time is up.

12 MAYOR CASON: Thank you. Appreciate it.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you, sir.

14 MAYOR CASON: Tony Friguls. I can't  
15 pronounce that. I'm sorry.

16 MR. FRIGULS: Good afternoon.

17 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Good afternoon.

18 MAYOR CASON: Hi.

19 MR. FRIGULS: My name is Tony Friguls. I  
20 live at 1131 Manati Avenue, just two blocks  
21 from the site project. First of all, I would  
22 thank all of you for giving us the opportunity,  
23 and listening to our comments before you really  
24 make up your mind and make your final decision  
25 on whether to allow the project to be built, as

1 presented, or not.

2 After all of the mumble jumble that we have  
3 heard this morning, you know, the only thing  
4 that I understand is like this proposed project  
5 probably is three times the size permitted by  
6 the current Zoning.

7 Said in another way, I think the existing  
8 Zoning Code does not permit the project as  
9 presented.

10 Having lived in Coral Gables for 40 years,  
11 I have learned, as a homeowner, how strict the  
12 City is with all of the Zoning regulations, and  
13 it is a good thing. As a way of an example,  
14 not too long, my next door neighbor was given a  
15 citation for painting his house on a Sunday.

16 One neighbor complained to the City, and  
17 the City came to enforce to existing Zoning  
18 Code, not painting on Sundays.

19 Some people may consider it an overkill  
20 enforcement, but in Coral Gables, the Zoning  
21 Code must be protected.

22 I'm sure you are all familiar with this  
23 magazine about the City Beautiful. They give  
24 the 90 reasons why to live in Coral Gables, and  
25 among those reasons, they refer to the top ten

1 reasons to live in Coral Gables, and they call  
2 it the bragging rights. Among those bragging  
3 rights, and I read, is the Coral Gables Zoning  
4 and Planning have been the backbone of its  
5 control development. Coral Gables has the  
6 unique look today primarily because of vision  
7 planning and the street buffer Zoning Code.

8 Am I going to be killed or --

9 MAYOR CASON: Yes.

10 MR. LEEN: Time is up.

11 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Finish. Take 15  
13 seconds. Finish.

14 MR. FRIGULS: Fifteen seconds.

15 Well, just the point is that -- you know, I  
16 think this bragging right has been earned,  
17 because all of the Commissioners before you,  
18 for the last 90 years, that has made the right  
19 decision to keep this in place. Today you have  
20 the opportunity to do the same.

21 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

22 MR. FRIGULS: So I will not take any more time.

23 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you, sir.

24 MAYOR CASON: Isia Albert. Not here?

25 Cristina Santa-Cruz.

1           COMMISSIONER LAGO: Good afternoon.

2           MS. SANTA-CRUZ: Hi. My name is Cristina  
3 Santa-Cruz. I live at 1212 Manati Avenue, and  
4 I'd like to commend the architect for his  
5 beautiful design, and I think that the paseo  
6 with the retail and restaurant will be a very  
7 nice addition to the neighborhood, a chance of  
8 changing to a mixed use facility and the  
9 reduction of setbacks on US-1. Nobody wants to  
10 be driving by and just see a sea of cars.

11           I think that the traffic coming in and out  
12 of US-1 has been well thought out and I really  
13 don't think there's going to be a big impact to  
14 the south. However, I am opposed to the height  
15 variance that's being requested.

16           I don't see that there's any compelling  
17 reason or benefit to the community to granting  
18 the height variance. The appropriate scale for  
19 a building on this site has already been  
20 determined and it's determined by the Zoning  
21 Code.

22           The attorney for the Developer spoke as  
23 though getting this height variance was their  
24 due and that's not the case. What they're due  
25 is what's in the Zoning Code, and they're



1 requesting a change to that.

2 The diagrams provided by the architect  
3 regarding the step down on the heights, they  
4 actually indicate the maximum heights allowable  
5 by the Zoning Code, not what is actually there  
6 right now. So, in fact, the step downs are  
7 going to be much more drastic than what is  
8 there. The setbacks along the rear of the  
9 property aren't in keeping with the vision of  
10 the City.

11 I would like the Commission to consider the  
12 fact that this project will set a precedent  
13 along the US-1 corridor. If we're not prepared  
14 today to change the appearance of that whole  
15 corridor, then I strongly recommend that you  
16 vote against approving the height variance.

17 The fact that your experts, the architects  
18 and land planners, who know what they're  
19 talking about, who know what they're looking  
20 at, that are on the Planning and Zoning Board,  
21 were not able make a recommendation and had  
22 reservations about this project, should be a  
23 warning to you that this project, at its  
24 current height, is not appropriate for this  
25 site.

1 Thank you.

2 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you very much.

4 MAYOR CASON: Eric Santa-Cruz.

5 The next five will be Daniel Diaz-Leyva,  
6 Parker Thomson, Roger Terrone, Suzanne Dockerty  
7 and Haen Taudt.

8 MR. SANTA-CRUZ: Good afternoon. My name  
9 is Eric Santa-Cruz and I have lived a 1212  
10 Manati Avenue for fifteen years.

11 I would like to voice my opposition to  
12 several of the variances requested by this  
13 project. The City of Coral Gables is known as  
14 the City Beautiful because of the vision of  
15 George Merrick.

16 The original vision has been re-examined on  
17 numerous times in the City's history, most  
18 recently in 2007, when the City undertook a  
19 complete re-writing of the existing Zoning  
20 Code.

21 At this time, there were numerous community  
22 meetings, consultant reports and countless  
23 hours of work that went into the Zoning Code,  
24 resulting in a seamless update of Merrick's  
25 original vision for the City.

1           Why are we now looking at spot zoning a  
2           site that was discussed exhaustively during the  
3           2007 Zoning Code re-write?

4           The Applicant's project has some good  
5           points and some bad. As stated, the City  
6           Comprehensive planning notes to locate high  
7           density development along transportation  
8           corridors, but this density should be increased  
9           in compliance with the Zoning Code.

10          The peer review of the project by DPZ, a  
11          world renown planning firm, supported site  
12          planning, but was silent regarding height and  
13          massing. Reluctance to endorse the height and  
14          massing indicates that they are not in favor,  
15          and clearly understand the benefits of  
16          densification within the current Zoning Code.

17          In summary, everything, peer review,  
18          community meetings, good planning practices,  
19          existing Zoning Codes, all point to the fact  
20          that this project is too large.

21          Please uphold George Merrick's vision for  
22          the City and deny the variances for height and  
23          massing that are being requested by this  
24          project.

25                 Thank you.

1           MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

2           COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you, sir.

3           MAYOR CASON: Daniel Diaz-Leyva.

4           (Unintelligible speaking.)

5           MAYOR CASON: Okay. That's fine, yes.

6           MR. ARRIZURIETA: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

7           I also would like to speak, and I guess  
8 I'll wait my turn, but Mr. Diaz-Leyva asked me  
9 to read his -- my name is Jorge Arrizurieta,  
10 and I reside at 1118 Placetas Avenue.

11           "Dear Mayor and Commissioners. My wife,  
12 Cristina, and I recently purchased a home at  
13 1232 Manati Avenue, on June 1st, 2015.

14           "As an owner directly in the line of sight,  
15 and one standing to be immediately impacted by  
16 the development, I believe it was important to  
17 voice my opinion.

18           "I had previously submitted, for the  
19 record, a letter in support, dated June 19th.  
20 Attached please find same.

21           "Please allow this e-mail to serve as  
22 further confirmation of our support for the  
23 Paseo de la Riviera project. We learned about  
24 the project while we were considering making  
25 our purchase. We took the time to learn more

1 about it, from the scope and use, to the  
2 traffic impact and beautification efforts for  
3 the neighborhood.

4 "We came to the conclusion that the project  
5 will be a positive transformation to the  
6 neighborhood and enhance its value.

7 "We appreciate that the developer, NPI  
8 International, will put in place the necessary  
9 traffic calming devices to create flow for the  
10 hotel's valet parking, to substantially limit  
11 the impact to the neighborhood.

12 "Additionally, the developer will build an  
13 access point for ingress and egress through the  
14 -- to and from US-1 only for the apartment  
15 building. This should substantially mitigate  
16 the concern for increased traffic from the  
17 development of the project to the neighborhood.

18 "We also learned that the developer will  
19 implement beautification initiatives to enhance  
20 not only Jaycee Park, but also Madruga Avenue,  
21 which currently appears as an unkept alley  
22 running behind the commercial properties along  
23 US-1.

24 "Finally, we look forward to a more  
25 urbanized feel to the neighborhood, when the

1 project is complete, including having high  
2 quality restaurants and cafes walking distance  
3 from our home and in proximate access to a  
4 transit center for Metrorail and trolley  
5 service.

6 "It is for these reasons that we support  
7 the project. As a resident not only of the  
8 City of Coral Gables, but one standing to be  
9 immediately impacted by the project, I  
10 respectfully request that you vote in favor of  
11 it.

12 "Thank you for your consideration, Danny  
13 Diaz-Leyva."

14 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

16 MAYOR CASON: Parker Thomson.

17 COMMISSIONER KEON: I think Parker left.

18 MR. BASS: Mr. Mayor, Mr. Thomson was here  
19 all morning. He had to leave. He did submit a  
20 letter and would like his support of the  
21 project recognized.

22 MAYOR CASON: Okay. Thank you.

23 Roger Terrone. Not here? He wrote he was  
24 in support of the project.

25 Suzanne Dockerty.

1 MS. DOCKERTY: Good afternoon.

2 MAYOR CASON: Hi.

3 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Good afternoon.

4 MS. DOCKERTY: I'm Suzanne Dockerty. I  
5 live at 1230 Catalonia Avenue. I've been a  
6 resident for 30 years. I have my law practice  
7 in Downtown Coral Gables, and my husband and I  
8 own investment property in Coral Gables.

9 We are definitely in support of this  
10 project. I believe the density, intensity is  
11 exactly what's required on the US-1 corridor,  
12 with the Metrorail.

13 It's a beautiful project and the developer  
14 has gone through extraordinary outreach to the  
15 community and set a great example.

16 So please support the project.

17 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

19 MAYOR CASON: Hagan Taudt. And it says  
20 here he was in favor of the project. He lives  
21 on 5105 Granada.

22 The next five will be Chris Hernandez,  
23 Heidi Roth, Patrick Nolan, Jorge Arrizurieta  
24 and Elizabeth Marcus.

25 MR. HERNANDEZ: Hi. My name is Chris

1 Hernandez. I live at 5726 San Vicente Street.  
2 I've grown up in that home for 23 years, and my  
3 father is Jorge Hernandez, the architect of the  
4 project. I'm not here to support him today,  
5 but more so to support the project.

6 Originally when I came to the Planning and  
7 Zoning hearing, I came to support him, with my  
8 brother and my mother, and as I sat here and  
9 watched people testify, I realized that there  
10 was a large demographic that's not being  
11 represented very well in this room today, as  
12 well as before, and that's the young  
13 professionals in Coral Gables.

14 Like myself, a lot of my friends grew up in  
15 the Gables. We've lived there all of our lives  
16 and we really like it a lot. So I talked to  
17 them after the Planning and Zoning hearing,  
18 after I spoke on an impulse, and kind of got a  
19 gist of what everybody's opinion was from my  
20 peers and they were all largely in favor, for  
21 two reasons.

22 The first reason was that it would provide  
23 a social environment for us to grab a cup of  
24 coffee, have a bite to eat, and to just  
25 socialize, in the Gables, without having to



1 cross US-1 or venture into the South Miami  
2 area, but the more important reason that there  
3 was a large support from people my age was that  
4 it would provide an opportunity for us to live  
5 in the Gables.

6 I've lived in the Gables for 23 years. I  
7 still live with my dad. He'll probably kick me  
8 out soon. But I like the idea of being able to  
9 stay in the Gables and raise my family in the  
10 Gables.

11 I have friends who just started their first  
12 families, a lot of them just starting their  
13 careers like myself -- I'm here on my lunch  
14 break -- and just the possibility of  
15 potentially living in the Gables for a  
16 reasonable price, rather than the sky high  
17 property values that exists now in  
18 single-family homes, is an idea that's  
19 appealing to me and my peers.

20 So I did come to speak on that demographic,  
21 that there's not a lot of here today. Thank  
22 you very much for your time.

23 MAYOR CASON: Thank you very much.

24 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you, sir.

25 MAYOR CASON: Heidi Roth.

1 MS. ROTH: Hello, ladies and gentlemen, the  
2 Commission, Mayor Cason. My name is Heidi  
3 Roth. I reside at 5105 Granada Boulevard.  
4 I've have been a devoted resident of Coral  
5 Gables for over 40 years. I've maintained my  
6 law practice here for over 30. And I'm here in  
7 support of this Paseo project.

8 We can't live in a time capsule. Change is  
9 inevitable. And the City has always developed  
10 and allowed change in a very well-thought-out  
11 manner, and the plans for this project  
12 certainly capture that.

13 The City has gone from a sleepy town, to a  
14 sophisticated beautiful city, but we have this  
15 corridor along US-1 that's replete with  
16 eyesores, and the existing structure, the  
17 Holiday Inn, is one of them.

18 This project would not only allow to change  
19 that, but in a beautiful way, it would create a  
20 destination, a pedestrian friendly location, a  
21 place to go, a place to meet, and would also  
22 promote much needed access and usage of our  
23 Metrorail system.

24 It's certainly consistent with the concept  
25 of the City Beautiful, and it would also allow

1 us to avoid something like another CVS or  
2 Walgreens that appear to pop up everywhere.  
3 That would not be consistent with our City  
4 plan. And, therefore, I'm here in support of  
5 it.

6 And, also, my husband's name, who was  
7 called. He sat here since 9:00 a.m. He had to  
8 leave shortly before the afternoon break, and  
9 he asked me just to also express his support.

10 He had operated a restaurant in this town,  
11 The Charade, for over 20 years, a full, devoted  
12 supporter of Coral Gables, and he also wanted  
13 to mention his daughter's views, also, a Coral  
14 Gables resident, an architect, Cornelia Taudt  
15 Ehrling, who resides at 1021 Placetas, close to  
16 the project, and she asked to express her  
17 support.

18 Thank you.

19 MAYOR CASON: Thank you very much.

20 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay. That was a great  
22 restaurant. It was a great restaurant.

23 MAYOR CASON: Pat Nolan.

24 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Good afternoon.

25 MR. NOLAN: Good afternoon. I'm Patrick

1 Nolan. I live at 915 South Alhambra Circle,  
2 and, I mean, there have been several people  
3 that have been trying to channel the wishes of  
4 George Merrick today, so far I've heard, and I  
5 thought it would be interesting to actually  
6 have a quote from George Merrick, who said,  
7 "It's my earnest desire that the people of  
8 Coral Gables shall be given the opportunity to  
9 express their wishes in all matters affecting  
10 the City, and that the wishes of the citizens  
11 so expressed be carried out."

12 Okay. So he actually said that. It  
13 wasn't, you know, something that he might do.

14 I would also quote from an editorial in  
15 1960, the Coral Gables Times. It said, "The  
16 future of Coral Gables is at a crossroad. The  
17 decision is whether to follow the road that  
18 leads to a highly urbanized community, with  
19 multiple dwellings and a big city atmosphere,  
20 or to continue on the road which will keep the  
21 quiet residential atmosphere in which all of us  
22 are so proud. Coral Gables has been faced this  
23 dilemma, but has never come to grips with it.  
24 The future cannot be put off. It must be  
25 plotted now. Too much Coral Gables planning

1 has been after the fact, instead of before it.

2 "The fairest way to determine the future of  
3 Coral Gables is to leave it to the people who  
4 live there."

5 This editorial was prompted by two  
6 high-rises that were built in 1960, and in  
7 response, there was a citizen's group, The  
8 Committee for the Preservation of Present  
9 Zoning Ordinances. This early effort goes to  
10 show that one of the wonderful things about  
11 Coral Gables people -- I should say, residents  
12 and voters -- have not just cared about the  
13 quality of life recently, they've always cared  
14 about it. They always tried to have input in  
15 the City, and we hope that you do the right  
16 thing.

17 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

18 Jorge Arrizurieta.

19 Did Jorge leave? No, here he is.

20 MR. ARRIZURIETA: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.  
21 I've also got retired Judge Juan Ramirez and  
22 Josie Ramirez's letter. May I read that?

23 MAYOR CASON: Yes.

24 MR. ARRIZURIETA: Do I get additional time  
25 for that?

1           MAYOR CASON:  If you read their letters.

2           MR. LEEN:  Mr. Mayor, I would suggest maybe  
3 three minutes total, then.  How long is his  
4 letter?

5           MR. ARRIZURIETA:  It's probably about a  
6 minute and a half long.

7           MAYOR CASON:  Okay.

8           MR. LEEN:  Then four minutes, maybe.

9           MR. ARRIZURIETA:  Four would be great.

10          MAYOR CASON:  Speak fast.

11          MR. ARRIZURIETA:  I can do that.

12                 "Dear Mayor, Commissioners and Mr. Trias.  
13 I have lived in Coral Gables for over 35 years  
14 and have lived at 1200 South Alhambra Circle  
15 for the last 18 years.

16                 "My wife, Josie, was the president of the  
17 RNA in the past.

18                 "As a judge, I could not be active in the  
19 association, but since my retirement, I am now  
20 free to take positions.

21                 "I think if the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan  
22 were trying to build his Taj Mahal in Coral  
23 Gables, he would be voted down.  I don't  
24 pretend the Paseo project will become as  
25 famous, but neither will it be so mammoth.

1           "I have seen a presentation on the project,  
2           and I think it will add tremendously to our  
3           community and beauty and sophistication. Sure,  
4           it will add some traffic, but so did the Shops  
5           at Merrick Park, yet it's my favorite shopping  
6           center in South Florida.

7           "Will it impact traffic? Of course, but so  
8           did all of those homes that were built in  
9           Homestead and those did not add anything to our  
10          community, as they commute between Downtown and  
11          South Dade.

12          "I believe a lot of the users will cross  
13          the street and make use of the Metrorail. I  
14          urge you all to consider this project favorably  
15          and approve it. I think it will be a great  
16          improvement of the current use with the Holiday  
17          Inn.

18          "Thank you for your consideration. Very  
19          truly yours, Juan Ramirez, Retired Chief  
20          Judge."

21          Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor and Honorable  
22          Members of the City of Commission. My name is  
23          Jorge Arrizurieta. My wife, Mari, and I, have  
24          been living in this great neighborhood for the  
25          past 15 years. We purchased our home at 1118

1 Placetas Avenue in June of 2000.

2 Also, as some of you might know, I have  
3 been a consultant to NPI on a number of  
4 matters, including this one, and as a result, I  
5 am a registered lobbyist for MPI.

6 We have been living four blocks from the  
7 eyesore that the Holiday Inn has been for this  
8 neighborhood, and, frankly, never understood  
9 why such a beautiful neighborhood would have  
10 such disparity on the busy and commercial US-1  
11 corridor.

12 I will take this incredibly tastefully  
13 designed building, with courtyards, public  
14 spaces, along with a neighborhood restaurant,  
15 coffee shop, that I can walk to with family,  
16 instead of the unsightly and unsafe  
17 establishment we currently have in the Holiday  
18 Inn.

19 Frankly, irrespective of where you sit on  
20 this issue, and, as we know, it's always a  
21 matter of opinion, it is really hard to not  
22 appreciate the strategic location of this  
23 property. This is as good a transportation hub  
24 as you're going to find in our entire County.  
25 It is located across the street from UM,



1 Metrorail, a trolley stop, bike path, the  
2 future Underline, and the future long awaited  
3 pedestrian bridge.

4 Another strip retail center, such as its  
5 neighbor to the east, or a big box retail  
6 operation, which can be built as of right,  
7 would be a very tragic result to this process.

8 We must embrace inevitable change, a  
9 quality development that improves the quality  
10 of life of the neighborhood and the City,  
11 increases property values, not what has been  
12 falsely argued.

13 My neighbors, who argue traffic, frankly,  
14 I'm not sure why they bought their homes in  
15 this area that sits right off of the Highway  
16 that US-1 has always been and will always be,  
17 with or without this quality project.

18 Notwithstanding MPI, who has been  
19 incredibly flexible in understanding, not to  
20 mention, generous, has agreed to pay for the  
21 additional traffic calming circle on Caballero,  
22 to ensure that the traffic is further curtailed  
23 and calm.

24 It's time we embrace an opportunity to  
25 bring the look and use of our City's US-1

1 corridor, from 57th Avenue to 42nd Avenue, to  
2 the current century. This project has sparked  
3 a much needed discussion about what this  
4 corridor should be and what it should look  
5 like.

6 There seems to be a consensus that as much  
7 as we appreciate a nearby CVS, Denny's and  
8 Starbucks, et cetera, our City's border shall  
9 not continue to solely be the collection of  
10 outdated suburban type of strip retail centers  
11 that it has been for far too long.

12 I trust, with your careful analysis and  
13 excellent judgment, Paseo de la Riviera will  
14 become the excellent start of a much needed  
15 thoughtful, tasteful and balanced  
16 re-development of the City's US-1 corridor.

17 We ask you for your support of this worthy  
18 project. Many thanks for your service. Many  
19 thanks for your leadership.

20 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you, sir.

22 MAYOR CASON: Elizabeth Marcus and then  
23 Mark Trowbridge.

24 No, there are many more. No. No.

25 Mark.

1 And following will be --

2 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Ladies first.

3 MR. TROWBRIDGE: I've never been accused of  
4 being a lady.

5 MAYOR CASON: Mark, go ahead.

6 MR. TROWBRIDGE: All right. Thank you very  
7 much.

8 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Good afternoon.

9 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thanks for the invitation.

10 I'm Mark Trowbridge, President of our  
11 Chamber of Commerce. We're located at 224  
12 Catalonia Avenue, in the City Beautiful.

13 Mr. Mayor, Mr. Vice Mayor, Members of the  
14 Commission, Madam Manager, and Mr. Attorney,  
15 Mr. City Clerk, thank you for inviting and  
16 allowing the Chamber of Commerce to join you  
17 today, as you deliberate on the Paseo de la  
18 Riviera project, that is currently seeking your  
19 approval.

20 We appreciate your commitment to our  
21 community and the thoughtfulness that you'll  
22 put into today's decision, and how you move  
23 forward with this project in Coral Gables.

24 I was joined earlier today by our Chairman,  
25 Wayne Eldred, by our incoming Chairman John

1 Allen, and other members of the Chamber,  
2 including Laura Russo, a past Board Member.

3 Our chamber has been part of the Coral  
4 Gables community now for 90 years. We grew up  
5 with the City. We share a similar history with  
6 the City Beautiful.

7 Our mission has always been to develop  
8 business, build community, while fostering the  
9 economic interests and financial prosperity of  
10 our business, first and foremost.

11 As a Chamber, we believe that the Paseo de  
12 la Riviera project is an ambitious one. And  
13 while height issues and density are not our  
14 Chamber's purview, we do see this project as a  
15 catalyst for the current and future  
16 redevelopment of the US-1 corridor, the  
17 commercial corridor. An often forgotten part  
18 of our business community.

19 This part of the community needs a little  
20 TLC. It needs our attention, the City, Chamber  
21 Community, and this project puts the  
22 opportunity to shine a spotlight on it front  
23 and center.

24 We're excited to see energy around this  
25 part of Coral Gables, that is not tied with

1 traffic or congestion or potential consumers  
2 whizzing by at 50 miles an hour, never thinking  
3 about stopping or spending.

4 We have an opportunity to change the  
5 conversation and take an outdated property and  
6 make it much better, make it much better.

7 Today, if you drive behind the Holiday Inn,  
8 you see a broken fence and several dumpsters  
9 overflowing with garbage. Not exactly our idea  
10 of Coral Gables. Not anybody's idea of the  
11 City Beautiful. And even harder sell to those  
12 businesses who may wish to locate here and  
13 bring their families and employees and  
14 customers to the City Beautiful. Better yet,  
15 how about the visitors, who can help tell our  
16 story around the country and the globe. They,  
17 as it turns out, are our best cheerleaders and  
18 sales people.

19 I've stood before you many times over the  
20 last decade, and shared that it is our belief  
21 that in order for Coral Gables to remain  
22 competitive, we need to put our muscle behind  
23 those types of projects and opportunities that  
24 allow us to achieve great things as a  
25 community. They don't come around very often,

1 and if we send a message that we are not open  
2 to change, they may not come again.

3 MR. LEEN: Time is up.

4 MR. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you.

5 MAYOR CASON: Thank you very much.

6 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

7 MAYOR CASON: Jerry Marcus.

8 MR. LEEN: Mr. Clerk, the timer is not  
9 beeping.

10 MAYOR CASON: You need to re-beep it.

11 After Jerry Marcus, will be Roberta Neway,  
12 Krista Rios, Nancy Iliffe and Nathan Zeder.

13 MS. LEVINSON: Good afternoon. My name is  
14 Sandra Levinson, and I live currently at 918  
15 Alfonso Avenue. We've been voters and  
16 registered -- citizens and registered voters  
17 since 1989.

18 Liz Marcus was here earlier, and had to  
19 leave, as many other people did, and ask if I  
20 could speak for her --

21 MAYOR CASON: Sure.

22 MS. LEVINSON: -- myself and the Riviera  
23 Neighborhood Association. This is her letter.

24 "When my grandfather moved to Coral Gables  
25 in the '20s, he specifically chose Riviera

1 Neighborhood, because it had the strictest  
2 Building and Zoning Codes in the country.  
3 These Codes are now being threatened by the  
4 proposed Paseo de la Riviera mixed use  
5 development, which, if approved, would replace  
6 the Holiday Inn on US-1.

7 "My parents built their home on Caballero  
8 in 1957, and I moved into my own home, on the  
9 same street, in 1973. I have witnessed this  
10 neighborhood grow and develop, yet it has  
11 remained quiet and peaceful, where the streets  
12 are safe to walk your dog and for your children  
13 to play.

14 "The first disruption to our neighborhood  
15 came in the late '70s. While residents were  
16 away on vacation one hot summer, a high rise  
17 building, known as the IRE Building, was  
18 constructed.

19 "Thankfully, Dorothy Thompson, who later  
20 became Mayor of Coral Gables, placed a  
21 moratorium on high rise buildings along US-1,  
22 leading up to Riviera Drive, protecting the  
23 high rise -- protecting the quiet residential  
24 neighborhoods, like mine, from commercial  
25 overdevelopment.

1           And I'll paraphrase.

2           I and other residents of this neighborhood  
3           are asking the Coral Gables Commission --  
4           asking the Coral Gables Commission to follow  
5           the Zoning laws that are already on the books  
6           and set standards for the future of development  
7           along the US-1 corridor, adjacent to low  
8           density residential neighborhoods.

9           Any changes should be made with the  
10          complete feedback and approval of the community  
11          in mind.

12          MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

13          MS. LEVINSON: Thank you.

14          COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you very much.

15          MAYOR CASON: Thank you very much.

16          Jerry Marcus.

17          No clapping please.

18          Jerry Marcus.

19          MR. LEEN: Just to remind you that there  
20          should be no applause.

21          MAYOR CASON: Yes.

22          MS. NEWAY: Good afternoon. I'm Roberta  
23          Neway. I live at 1236 South Alhambra Circle.  
24          I've always been at that address. That's  
25          always been my permanent address.



1 I walk and I bike a lot. For about the  
2 last fifteen years, I've been crossing US-1, at  
3 South Alhambra, on foot, to commute to work. I  
4 also walk to Publix, Whole Foods. Today, to  
5 get here, I walked, I took the Metro, I took  
6 the trolley. I probably know what conditions  
7 are like for pedestrians better than anybody  
8 else in this room for this neighborhood.

9 I also know that we need density near mass  
10 transit, but I feel that the Paseo is too dense  
11 and that it will discourage, rather than  
12 encourage, walking and biking.

13 It's a beautiful building on paper, but  
14 given its bulk and its proximity to smaller  
15 dwellings, I'm afraid it won't be as pretty  
16 once it takes form. Moreover, unfortunately,  
17 we do not have the infrastructure to support  
18 the traffic it's going to generate.

19 For one thing, they talk about people  
20 making U-turns on US-1. People do make U-turns  
21 during rush hour. I have to deal with it.  
22 It's dangerous. It encourages road rage.  
23 People get reckless. Not a good idea.

24 Then, there's the traffic that's going to  
25 happen on the connector streets, not only

1 because of Publix and Whole Foods, also people  
2 taking their kids to school, people going to  
3 South Miami. I don't mind cars on my street,  
4 but we need to have our traffic controlled. We  
5 need our streets safe.

6 Right now South Alhambra, the blocks right  
7 before US-1, they're very unfriendly to  
8 bicyclists. They are not friendly to  
9 pedestrians. And Caballero needs sidewalks  
10 along the entire street.

11 How are people going to get to the Metro,  
12 how are people going to get to the underline on  
13 a bike or walking if they're afraid to do so.

14 Please, work to make this development  
15 friendlier to bikers, pedestrians and less  
16 dense.

17 MR. LEEN: Time's up.

18 MS. NEWAY: Thank you for your time.

19 MAYOR CASON: Thank you. Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

21 MAYOR CASON: Krista Rios.

22 She wrote down that she's in favor of the  
23 project.

24 Nancy Iliffe.

25 Oh, you're here?

1 MS. RIOS: Good afternoon. My name is  
2 Krista Rios, and I live at 1251 South Alhambra  
3 Circle. I've lived in Coral Gables for my  
4 entire life, 26 years, and my current home for  
5 the last 21.

6 My home is just a block down from the  
7 proposed development, so I grew up in the  
8 immediate area where this project is being  
9 placed. I know what it's like to be a little  
10 kid, a teenager and a young adult and live in  
11 this area, to grow up with my family there in  
12 that very neighborhood. I also went to college  
13 and law school at the University of Miami,  
14 across the street from the proposed  
15 development, and I now practice in Coral  
16 Gables, at a firm very close to it, just off of  
17 Ponce.

18 As a long-time resident, former UM student  
19 and current professional working in the area, I  
20 have the opportunity to -- I'm so sorry -- I  
21 have the opportunity to look at proposed  
22 development from various angles. Not only is  
23 the design absolutely beautiful and will  
24 undoubtedly be a tremendous asset to the  
25 surrounding area, as a means of uniting the

1 community, job creation, better, safer and more  
2 access to restaurants, shops, et cetera, but  
3 the project, in turn, will help to greatly  
4 boost the infrastructure of the City as a  
5 whole.

6 I think this project is something immensely  
7 important for Coral Gables, especially the  
8 areas directly around the project. It has my  
9 utmost and complete support, and I respectfully  
10 ask that it has yours, as well.

11 Thank you.

12 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER KEON: Thank you.

15 MAYOR CASON: Nancy Iliffe.

16 COMMISSIONER KEON: Nancy Iliffe. She went  
17 to work. She said she was coming back.

18 MAYOR CASON: Okay. She said she was a  
19 proponent. If she comes back, I'll let her  
20 speak.

21 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: You said she was --

22 MAYOR CASON: A proponent, in favor of the  
23 project.

24 Nathan Zeder.

25 COMMISSIONER KEON: Zeder.

1           MAYOR CASON: How are you?

2           MR. ZEDER: Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor,  
3 Members of the Commission, Nathan Zeder. I  
4 live at 1025 Cotorro. I've lived in the  
5 general area my whole life and in my current  
6 property for two years. I could not be more in  
7 favor of this project. I think it's an  
8 incredible improvement architecturally over,  
9 obviously, what we have now. It will provide a  
10 business area, a place to meet and congregate  
11 in an area right now that we do not have, other  
12 than, you know, an ugly Starbucks, as well, or  
13 a couple of Thai restaurants.

14           The ability to improve that whole aspect,  
15 to bring people in, to have a hotel that's  
16 nice, that people can stay at, I really do not  
17 see anything bad about this project and I'm in  
18 full support.

19           Thank you very much for your time.

20           MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

21           COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you, sir.

22           MAYOR CASON: The next five will be John  
23 Allen, Aramis Alvarez, Hilario Candela, Daisy  
24 Hayworth and Valerie Quemada.

25           Daisy spoke? Okay.

1           So is John Allen here? John Allen? And he  
2           said he was in favor of the project. If he  
3           comes, he can speak.

4           Aramis Alvarez.

5           UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: He had to leave.

6           MAYOR CASON: He says he's in favor of the  
7           project, lives on South Alhambra.

8           Hilario Candela.

9           And after these next two, we have Max  
10          Ferrari, Sonia Chao, Jose Antonio de la Torre,  
11          and Antonio Facio.

12          MR. CANDELA: Good afternoon. My name is  
13          Hilario Candela. I live at 6201 Granada  
14          Boulevard. I have lived in the Gables for the  
15          last 50 and some years, and I have practiced in  
16          the Gables for that same amount of time as an  
17          architect. I love Coral Gables, and I have  
18          always adhered to the vision of what Coral  
19          Gables is all about.

20          I have studied the project personally and  
21          professionally very carefully, and I can attest  
22          that the project, as carefully designed by  
23          Professor Hernandez, meets the vision, which I  
24          know pretty much in detail, as well as the  
25          planning guidelines of Mr. Merrick.

1 I urge you, the City Commission, to give  
2 this project your serious and positive  
3 consideration, move the project forward and  
4 approve it.

5 I thank you very much.

6 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you, sir.

8 MAYOR CASON: Valerie Quemada.

9 MS. QUEMADA: Good afternoon.

10 MAYOR CASON: Good afternoon.

11 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Good afternoon.

12 MS. QUEMADA: Thank you for the opportunity  
13 to speak. I'm here wearing a couple of hats  
14 this morning.

15 MR. LEEN: Please state your name and  
16 address.

17 MS. QUEMADA: I'm sorry, Valerie Quemada,  
18 and I'm here wearing a couple of hats this  
19 morning.

20 MR. LEEN: And address.

21 MS. QUEMADA: Oh, and address? I'm at 10  
22 Aragon Avenue.

23 So, as a resident, I do support the  
24 project, but I'm also a realtor in the  
25 community, and I'm here actually speaking on

1       behalf of a couple of people that do live in  
2       the more immediate area.  So I'm going to go  
3       ahead and read the e-mails that they had sent  
4       forth to me.

5               I have Ike and Connie Newton, that are at  
6       1265 South Alhambra.  She wrote, "Valerie, Ike  
7       and I discussed this and we agree with you.  We  
8       believe that this would be a beneficial  
9       project, that would enhance property values  
10      along US-1.  We are, as you are, confused as to  
11      why this new development would create traffic  
12      issues.  It would certainly create no more than  
13      a Holiday Inn would."

14              That was Connie and Ike.

15              And now we have Michelle Curtin, who is at  
16      1205 Mariposa Avenue, and that is in Villa  
17      Capri, and she wrote me a little bit more  
18      details.

19              "Dear Commissioners, as a condominium owner  
20      in the immediate area, on Mariposa Avenue, I  
21      strongly support and urge you to pass the Paseo  
22      de la Riviera Project Development Plan.

23              "I bought my condo ten years ago, when my  
24      daughter was a student at the University of  
25      Miami.  We loved the area, when she arrived,



1 and I therefore kept it after her graduation.  
2 However, the area has degraded significantly  
3 over the last ten years. Improvements with an  
4 eye for the future, not merely replicating the  
5 past, is vital to maintaining property values  
6 in the area and to enhancing the quality of  
7 life for the residents.

8 "Nationwide, the most successful trend has  
9 been pedestrian oriented areas, with multi-use  
10 buildings and businesses, which allow for  
11 residents and commuters to use public  
12 transportation and walking exclusively. Few  
13 cars, no pollution.

14 "I look forward to a resident and business  
15 owner area, with beautiful open spaces, and  
16 businesses which will best interest serve the  
17 community. If we fail to do this now, the area  
18 will continue to lose value due to lack of  
19 forward thinking vision. This would be  
20 irresponsible to your present and future owners  
21 and investors.

22 "Please do what is best for the community  
23 and pass the Paseo project.

24 "Sincerely, Michelle Curtin."

25 Thank you for your time.

1 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

2 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

3 Max Ferrari.

4 MS. CHAO: Good afternoon. As you can  
5 tell, I'm not Max Ferrari. He's my husband. I  
6 am Sonia Chao, the next person on your list.

7 MAYOR CASON: Okay. All right.

8 MS. CHAO: He had to leave, unfortunately.

9 MAYOR CASON: Let me say that he was in  
10 favor of the project.

11 MS. CHAO: Correct.

12 He's also the legal representative of the  
13 owner of the house at 1111 Alfonso Avenue,  
14 where we currently, temporarily, reside, while  
15 our own home is being fixed.

16 I am an architect and an urban designer,  
17 and I'm here to support this project. We  
18 believe that this project is a bridge between  
19 Merrick's original vision of the City, when he  
20 determined that building heights be one and a  
21 half times the width of the public right-of-way  
22 on which they front, but that the proposal is  
23 also, aside from being very handsomely  
24 proportioned and well-designed, in the spirit  
25 of the characteristics of Coral Gables, it also

1 speaks to our overall County's increasing  
2 challenges, including climate change.

3 We know that approximately 300 new  
4 residents are arriving in Miami-Dade County  
5 each day, whether they're legally entering or  
6 illegally entering. We know that this also  
7 means that there are projections by the  
8 Miami-Dade County Planning Office that projects  
9 that by 2050 there will be over three million  
10 individuals, closer to three and a half million  
11 individuals, living in our County. You can  
12 also find this data at the Florida Clearing --  
13 Clearinghouse Data site.

14 We know that ever since the late 1990, when  
15 then Governor Bush commissioned a study  
16 entitled Eastward Ho, that there have been  
17 scientists and urban designers and planners  
18 coming together to think about the challenges  
19 in front of us, to propose new ideas in which  
20 we can think about how to better steward our  
21 natural resources, while reducing our CO2  
22 emissions, as well as understanding that we  
23 have a responsibility to accommodate newer  
24 populations -- growing populations in our area.

25 What this meant, and since that time, there

1 have been many other studies, more recently by  
2 the Climate Compact that you all might very  
3 well know, as well as the 750 Study that has  
4 been done, recommendations that align  
5 themselves with your own Commission's Comp  
6 Plan, essentially all underline the need for us  
7 to move away from sprawl and move towards more  
8 urban types of development.

9 That's why, in closing, I ask all of you to  
10 please consider not only Merrick's vision and  
11 his intention, but think about our children and  
12 need for us to be more close to transportation  
13 and living in communities that reflect the  
14 future.

15 MR. LEEN: Time is up. Time is up.

16 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

17 MS. CHAO: Thank you very much.

18 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

19 MAYOR CASON: The next five will be Jose  
20 Antonio de la Torre, Henry Pinera, Antonio  
21 Facio and Ana Lam and Tony Friguls.

22 MR. DE LA TORRE: Good afternoon.

23 MAYOR CASON: Good afternoon.

24 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Good afternoon.

25 MR. DE LA TORRE: My name Jose de la Torre.

1 I live in 6601 Maynada Street, since 1989. I  
2 have worked in the City Beautiful for almost  
3 thirty something years, and I don't going to  
4 sell my house. I am going to keep living in  
5 the same house.

6 The project, for me, is a positive one. I  
7 think it's going -- we need something new, that  
8 bring new blood and new life to this part of  
9 the City, that is without any new projects in  
10 the last, for me, forty years.

11 And as you can see, living in Maynada, I  
12 have enjoyed the traffic for morning and  
13 evening every day, and I don't think this  
14 project is going to bring more traffic to this  
15 area.

16 We have to let the 21 Century be in that  
17 part of the City, and I prefer to have this  
18 project than another commercial property, when  
19 the building of the Holiday Inn will be down,  
20 sooner or later, and I would prefer to have the  
21 Paseo than to have a Walgreens or another  
22 commercial property, that it would bring more  
23 traffic and other issues.

24 Thank you so much.

25 COMMISSIONER LAGO: What is your name,

1           again, sir?

2           MR. DE LA TORRE:   Jose de la Torre.

3           MAYOR CASON:   De la Torre.

4           MR. DE LA TORRE:   Jose Antonio.

5           MAYOR CASON:   Henry Pineda.

6           COMMISSIONER LAGO:   Thank you, sir.

7           MAYOR CASON:   Thank you.

8           UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER:   I would like  
9           to yield my time to Henry, my two minutes.

10          MAYOR CASON:   All right.

11          UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER:   And so would I.

12          MR. LEEN:   Mr. Mayor, I would suggest four  
13          minutes, then, total.

14          MAYOR CASON:   Four minutes.

15          MR. LEEN:   Which is the prior precedent  
16          that was set.

17          MR. PINERA:   Actually, I'm here also  
18          representing a lot of the neighbors that don't  
19          have a voice and aren't here and I will explain  
20          why.

21          MR. LEEN:   You have a presentation?

22          Mr. Mayor, at most, I would suggest, five  
23          minutes, at most.

24          MAYOR CASON:   Yes, at most, because people  
25          -- from my perspective, people should come and

1 speak if they feel strong about it.

2 MR. LEEN: And there will be an opportunity  
3 to cross examine, too.

4 MR. LEEN: Do you have an objection?

5 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Henry, do you feel  
6 comfortable with five minutes?

7 MR. LEEN: Our Code allows them to speak on  
8 behalf of people. It says that.

9 MAYOR CASON: Do what you can on five,  
10 please.

11 MR. LEEN: You're not representing them as  
12 an attorney? You're not an attorney, are you,  
13 sir?

14 MR. PINERA: No.

15 MR. LEEN: They've asked you to speak and  
16 they've given you their view? Okay.

17 MR. PINERA: Yes. Yes.

18 MR. LEEN: All right. Mr. Mayor, how much  
19 time are you giving?

20 MAYOR CASON: Five minutes.

21 MR. LEEN: It should be strictly enforced.

22 MR. PINERA: Okay.

23 MR. LEEN: Thank you.

24 And still please put your address on the  
25 record.

1 MR. PINERA: Okay. My name is Henry  
2 Pinera, and I live at 1215 Aduana Avenue, and  
3 first I'd like to go ahead and present to you  
4 guys the visual representation that we have  
5 here, as well as the petition that we turned in  
6 to the City Clerk. We turned in a signed  
7 petition, with 788 signatures, mainly Coral  
8 Gables residents.

9 We opted to not go for an online petition.  
10 We wanted to have local views of how this was.  
11 We then took those local views and represented  
12 more specifically the Riviera Neighborhood  
13 sentiment. The red color indicates that  
14 someone from a household signed against the  
15 project as it currently stands.

16 You'll also note that we did attempt to  
17 capture the public sentiment in favor. So if  
18 somebody, while we were going around, and this  
19 is representing like 12 people getting petition  
20 signatures, if somebody would tell us, "Oh, I'm  
21 definitely in favor of the project," we tried  
22 to capture that in green, as well. So we  
23 wanted to try to give you as accurate a  
24 representation of how the Riviera Neighborhood  
25 feels about this.



1           So with that, I'd like to go ahead and get  
2 started on my comments.

3           MR. LEEN: I need to ask you, so you're  
4 saying, under oath, that's accurate?

5           MR. PINERA: Yes.

6           VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Did you turn in that  
7 petition?

8           MR. PINERA: Yes, the Clerk has that.

9           MR. LEEN: Mr. Bass.

10          MR. BASS: I'll have Cross Examination.

11          MR. LEEN: Okay.

12          MAYOR CASON: Go ahead.

13          MR. PINERA: The Clerk has that.

14          VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Okay. Thank you.

15          MR. PINERA: Okay. Outside of a few  
16 election contributions, I have never been  
17 involved in politics or activism. This project  
18 changed that. Approving this project at  
19 anywhere near the proposed intensity will  
20 transform our neighborhood.

21                 These two massive structures will overwhelm  
22 the park that I love to take my two baby boys  
23 to. When I purchased my home almost six years  
24 ago, I made the decision to live in a truly  
25 residential community. I did not choose the

1 Brickell corridor. I did not choose the Gables  
2 Central Business District. I did not choose to  
3 live by the Industrial District.

4 This is the area where the two buildings  
5 that Mr. Trias cites as comparable to this  
6 building, to justify its intensity.

7 I chose the Riviera Neighborhood because of  
8 the idyllic characteristics it had to offer.  
9 When I made this choice, I and many of the  
10 others in the audience, made it with an  
11 implicit trust that Coral Gables would not  
12 drastically change its Zoning in the manner  
13 being proposed.

14 Gables' reputation is largely built on good  
15 Comprehensive Planning. The piecemeal approach  
16 that you see before you is not good planning.  
17 The entirety of the Holiday Inn has a 350-foot  
18 linear profile on US-1. So 350 feet of US-1 is  
19 what is covered, in terms of the facade.

20 The entirety of the holiday -- okay, yet  
21 according to the peer review of this project,  
22 this will be the built example that embodies a  
23 new vision for the corridor. Does allowing a  
24 Developer's vision for 350 linear feet to be  
25 the template for a two-mile stretch of US-1

1 sound like good planning?

2 In this area -- in this area right here,  
3 there are a total of 182 residential units.  
4 What is being proposed is that -- 234  
5 residential units are being proposed in the  
6 apartment and 250 hotel rooms are being  
7 proposed right here.

8 Does that sound like good planning? This  
9 area is a fraction of the size of this area,  
10 yet it has multiple times the number of  
11 occupants. It is also being positioned at a  
12 strategic egress point for the neighborhood,  
13 one of two strategic egress points, right here.

14 Does that sound like good planning?

15 We need you to do the right thing, as our  
16 elected representatives, and vote, no, on the  
17 transformation of our neighborhood, and request  
18 that a Comprehensive Plan for the corridor be  
19 put in place.

20 MAYOR CASON: Thank you very much.

21 MR. PINERA: And I would like to make an  
22 amendment to what I said earlier, because I  
23 realized that -- I did not necessarily color  
24 all of this in, so I want to make sure I get  
25 that on the record, and clarify my statement.

1 I will testify that the submissions of the  
2 petitions, that all of the signatures on the  
3 petitions are accurate, to the best of my  
4 knowledge, and that this is as good a  
5 representation of that.

6 I can't testify that there's not one little  
7 block that may have been miscolored, but it  
8 is representative.

9 MR. LEEN: I need to say something for  
10 purposes of the record. I know there's going  
11 to be a Cross Examination.

12 You cannot consider, particularly in the  
13 quasi-judicial proceeding, simply whether  
14 people are for or against something. You have  
15 to act as judges, and sometimes you may have to  
16 act against the popular sentiment.

17 Now, on the legislative matter, you can  
18 consider their view, but you still, in the end,  
19 have to act in a fairly debatable manner. And  
20 the only reason I asked you that was because,  
21 in terms of evidence, this is simply  
22 demonstrative, then. You can see it for what  
23 it's worth, but what's been put in the record  
24 is the petitions, and those are the evidence  
25 that will be put in the record.

1 MR. PINERA: Thank you, Mr. Leen, for  
2 clarifying that.

3 MAYOR CASON: Cross Examination.

4 MR. BASS: Mr. Pinera, nice to see you  
5 again. Good afternoon.

6 MR. PINERA: I look forward to being cross  
7 examined. I think I'm doing something right.

8 MAYOR CASON: Go ahead.

9 MR. BASS: You live on Placetass?

10 MR. PINERA: Aduana Avenue.

11 MR. LEEN: Microphone.

12 MR. BASS: Aduana.

13 MR. PINERA: 1215 Aduana Avenue.

14 MR. LEEN: Please speak into the microphone.

15 MR. PINERA: 1215 Aduana.

16 MR. BASS: Can you see the Gables One  
17 Building from your home?

18 MR. PINERA: No.

19 MR. BASS: I have no further questions.

20 MAYOR CASON: Okay. Antonio --

21 MR. PINERA: Come on. Come on. Give me  
22 something more.

23 MR. LEEN: Please. Please.

24 MAYOR CASON: City Attorney.

25 MR. LEEN: There should be no argument.

1 Mr. Gibbs -- well, there should be no  
2 argument. You made your point. Both sides  
3 made their point.

4 MAYOR CASON: All right. The next speaker,  
5 and I think I mentioned these, were Antonio  
6 Facio, Ana Lam, Tony Friguls.

7 Is Antonio Facio here?

8 He was in favor of the project.

9 Next Ana Lam? Is Ana here? She wrote that  
10 she was in favor of the project and she lives  
11 on Ortega Avenue.

12 And Tony Friguls. Against. Okay.

13 The next five will be Lucien Gordon, Eva  
14 Gordon --

15 MS. GORDON: I'm sorry, I signed up first.  
16 I'm going to go before him.

17 MAYOR CASON: Okay. Let me finish saying  
18 who is the next up, so they can be ready.

19 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay.

20 MAYOR CASON: Gordon Gregory, Stuart Rich,  
21 unless he's already talked earlier, and Chris  
22 Zoller.

23 MR. LEEN: So you have a presentation, as  
24 well?

25 MS. GORDON: Yes, if you'd like to pass

1 this around.

2 MR. LEEN: Are you able to do this in two  
3 minutes?

4 MR. GORDON: Yes. Very quick.

5 MR. LEEN: Okay.

6 MS. GORDON: You can just pass it around.

7 Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My  
8 name is Eva Gordon. I live at 1020 Andora  
9 Avenue, and I am opposed to the proposed  
10 project, because it is against our existing  
11 Zoning Code. The rest was stated in my letter  
12 to you on July 28, no need to repeat it.

13 I would like to propose that we stop  
14 approving exceptions and we start with a real  
15 visioning session and a real traffic study, not  
16 in the summer, and not during the holidays.

17 My vision is right there. You can see it.  
18 There are several nice buildings, not Renzo  
19 Piano or anything, or not Jorge Hernandez, but  
20 nice buildings, that have been built in the  
21 last ten years, 500 and 550 South Dixie, 5100  
22 Riviera Drive, 1121 Madruga, 1430 South Dixie  
23 and the University Inn Condo, which is a little  
24 older, but still pretty, and it should be an  
25 incentive for us to consider.

1 All are compatible and work with the  
2 adjacent residential neighborhood and show  
3 respect to the surroundings. They were built  
4 according to Zoning Code and the developers  
5 made money on them, and some of them were my  
6 clients, when I was still a Senior VP at  
7 Gibraltar Private. I served on loan committee.  
8 Financed many commercial and residential  
9 buildings, some with Jorge Hernandez, whom I  
10 love and adore, and we shared many clients. So  
11 I know that some of these people made money,  
12 made lots of money, and that was good for them  
13 and good for me.

14 I'm not interesting in interpretations of  
15 the vision of George Merrick or anybody else.  
16 I spoke to many young families. I was shocked  
17 how stunned they were, when they found out  
18 about this project. Some of them -- and this  
19 is where our future lies -- paid 1.3 million  
20 dollars, 1.9 millions just the other day, two  
21 and half million, and they have little kids,  
22 and they gave up Brickell, they gave up the new  
23 urbanization for a residential peaceful  
24 surrounding.

25 And that's what I'd like to propose,



1 please.

2 Thank you very much.

3 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

4 MR. LEEN: Mr. Mayor, are the photos --  
5 excuse me, ma'am, are the photos in that book,  
6 are they the same as the ones --

7 MS. GORDON: The same.

8 MR. LEEN: Okay. So we're not going to put  
9 the demonstrative in the record, but we will  
10 put the photos.

11 MAYOR CASON: The booklet is in, right.

12 MR. LEEN: Thank you.

13 MAYOR CASON: Is Lucien Gordon going to  
14 speak, as well?

15 And, then, as I said, we'll have Gordon,  
16 Gregory, Stuart Rich and Christopher Zoller.

17 MR. GORDON: I'm Lucien Gordon. I live at  
18 1020 Andora Avenue. I don't want to take away  
19 any of Eva's thunder. Please excuse me.

20 We do not want to compound the clerical  
21 errors that occurred on Edgewater Drive and the  
22 result in traffic on Edgewater Drive and Ingram  
23 Highway.

24 In 1973, some clerk goofed and permitted  
25 the construction of 90 Edgewater. We walked up

1 13 flights to pick our apartment on the  
2 penthouse floor, and enjoyed it until we left  
3 five years later.

4 As a result of the clerical error, the  
5 Goulds sued, and after ten years, were  
6 permitted to build 10 Edgewater and 60  
7 Edgewater Drive, with the result in traffic  
8 complications thereof.

9 We have a similar situation on US-1, where  
10 some aberration in the governmental processes  
11 permitted the construction of the Gables,  
12 whatever you call it, Tower. As a result of  
13 that, we are now confronted with the current  
14 construction projects.

15 Please do not allow history to repeat  
16 itself. Thank you.

17 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you, sir.

19 MAYOR CASON: Gordon Gregory. Not here?  
20 Stuart Rich. Did they speak this morning?  
21 You are?

22 MR. RICH: Stuart Rich.

23 MAYOR CASON: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER KEON: Stuart Rich.

25 MAYOR CASON: Okay.

1 MR. RICH: Stuart Rich, 1222 Aduana.

2 COMMISSIONER LAGO: How are you, sir?

3 MR. RICH: Nice to see you.

4 COMMISSIONER LAGO: You, too.

5 MR. RICH: And I'm going to speak on behalf  
6 of one who cannot speak for itself, that is to  
7 say, Jaycee Park. Everybody has said -- a lot  
8 of words going around here, a lot about Jaycee  
9 Park. I'll show you --

10 MR. LEEN: Would you give us your name and  
11 address, sir.

12 MR. RICH: Stuart Rich.

13 MR. LEEN: And address.

14 MR. RICH: 1222 Aduana Avenue, Coral  
15 Gables.

16 MR. LEEN: Thank you.

17 MR. RICH: Okay. These are actual  
18 photographs. They're worth a thousand words,  
19 so my speech will be short. My daughter took  
20 this picture of the park, Jaycee Park,  
21 recently. It's from the corner of Manati and  
22 Caballero.

23 It's a gorgeous park. Trust me. If you  
24 haven't been there recently, go there and take  
25 a boxed lunch, you'll enjoy it. Everybody

1 does.

2 Little kids are in the picture. It has  
3 every amenity you could want. It does not need  
4 improvement by developers. Thanks anyway.

5 It's grown in size thanks to the City.  
6 Thank you very much. It's perfectly manicured.  
7 Thanks, again, to the City employees that do  
8 this. And it's been improved several times.  
9 It has all of the amenities, okay. That's  
10 where we stand. That's what we want.

11 Okay. Now, speaking of truth, this is the  
12 official submission by Lawyer Russo with the  
13 application for the Paseo.

14 Okay. And here's the view from the park of  
15 Paseo, and I guess it's not lost on you that  
16 all of the upper floors are hidden by a tree,  
17 which, as far as I can see, I can't find it,  
18 okay.

19 My daughter also took this one, and this is  
20 a true photograph, dead center of the park.  
21 There is some grassy areas where you can play  
22 Frisbee. Dead center looking at the Holiday  
23 Inn.

24 If the Holiday Inn -- and I worked this out  
25 by proportion ratios, if it's 30 feet tall and

1 the proposal is something in the neighborhood  
2 of 145 -- that number seems to keep varying --  
3 this is where the top of that will be, and this  
4 is a terrific imposition. This is not low  
5 density and low volume.

6 This needs to not happen as planned. Thank  
7 you very much.

8 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you, Mr. Rich.

10 MAYOR CASON: Christopher.

11 MR. ZOLLER: Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor,  
12 Mr. Vice Mayor, Honorable Commissioners, Madam  
13 Manager, City Attorney.

14 MR. LEEN: Thank you.

15 MR. ZOLLER: My name is Christopher Zoller.  
16 I reside at 900 Bayamo Avenue. I've been a  
17 resident of Coral Gables since 1987. I've been  
18 in my home, on Bayamo Avenue, since June of  
19 1991.

20 Just a quick aside, for an extra 30  
21 seconds, yes, Mr. Bass I can see the Gables One  
22 Tower, and I can hear the Metrorail from my  
23 driveway.

24 For 18 years, my offices were at 1360 South  
25 Dixie Highway. At the same time, I was there

1 with Commissioner Slesnick, our entrance and  
2 exit was only on Caballero Boulevard.

3 I can promise you, Vice Mayor Quesada,  
4 there is already stacking on Caballero  
5 Boulevard. Trying to get on or off US-1 from  
6 Caballero is a nightmare, especially if you're  
7 heading southbound of US-1 and you think you're  
8 going to be able to turn left onto Caballero.  
9 You'll wait and wait and wait for the light at  
10 South Alhambra.

11 Meanwhile, while you're waiting and trying  
12 to go southbound from Caballero, you'll wait  
13 even longer trying to get across US-1. It's a  
14 very, very difficult, and has been for many  
15 years, access. So there is stacking already.

16 I say this only because my most recent  
17 opportunity to voluntarily serve this City is  
18 with the Vice-President on the Transportation  
19 Board. I've also served on the Property  
20 Advisory Board, the Budget and Finance Board,  
21 and, of course, I'm a past Chairman of the  
22 Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce.

23 Mr. Bass was right on two things of his  
24 rights, his three rights. This is the right  
25 time and this is the right place for a brand

1 new wonderful development. There are many,  
2 many things about this Paseo de la Riviera that  
3 I really like. I love the components of having  
4 some retail, some restaurants. I do think we  
5 do need a wonderful hotel there. I also think  
6 that there's a need for some apartments. It's  
7 just that there are too many hotel units, too  
8 many apartments, and the original proposal  
9 asking for 834 parking space does not describe  
10 to me a public transit friendly development.

11 So I urge you two things, please do not  
12 grant a rezoning of this entire 1,100 foot  
13 block and please ask the Developer to come back  
14 to the table with something a little more  
15 reasonable.

16 Thank you.

17 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you, sir.

19 MAYOR CASON: I think we had someone, if  
20 I'm not mistaken, speak for Daniel Diaz-Leyva  
21 earlier?

22 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER KEON: Yes.

24 MAYOR CASON: We did, okay.

25 Next is Terri Scandura, Tracy Kerdyk,

1 Vivian Haydar, and Paul Van Wallegghem.

2 MS. SCANDURA: Good afternoon, Mayor Cason,  
3 Commissioners. My name is Terri Scandura. I'm  
4 a professor at the University of the Miami. I  
5 live in the Riviera Neighborhood and my house  
6 is on that chart.

7 I've been a resident and a registered voter  
8 in Coral Gables for over ten years. Before I  
9 lived on South Alhambra Circle, I lived at 710  
10 Santurce Avenue.

11 Prior to living in Coral Gables, I lived in  
12 Pinecrest and I lived in Schenley Park, and I  
13 dreamed of living in the Gables. And I saved  
14 my money and I bought a home in the Gables. I  
15 didn't wait for someone to build a condominium  
16 that I could move into.

17 Pinecrest and Schenley Park are wonderful  
18 communities, but they can't hold a candle to  
19 Coral Gables. It's one of the most beautiful  
20 cities I had ever seen, and it's due to the  
21 committment and foresight of leaders, such as  
22 you, that our residents have such a high  
23 quality of life.

24 I've never spoken at a meeting like this.  
25 I'm not politically involved. But I must tell



1 you that I strongly oppose the proposed  
2 development. This project will negatively  
3 impact the quality of life that I cherish in  
4 Coral Gables. It will result in high density  
5 rental units and more traffic in our  
6 neighborhoods and on the roads that I travel  
7 to, daily, to and from work.

8 This sets a precedent for further  
9 development along the US-1 corridor. The area,  
10 as it is currently zoned, is acceptable, and  
11 new projects should be consistent with this.

12 So I'm asking you to vote, no, for the  
13 project, to preserve the quality of life in  
14 Coral Gables and stop the spiraling development  
15 along US-1.

16 And I wrote to all of you, but I'm going to  
17 add something else that I didn't have on my  
18 letter, because I watched the presentation this  
19 morning and I learned a lot. The size and the  
20 scope of this building would be a dream for the  
21 University of Miami, to build for educational  
22 purposes.

23 I've watched the University of Miami be  
24 turned down, time and time again, to build  
25 buildings of this scope, and the University of

1 Miami was asked to stay within the Building  
2 Codes. So I'm asking you to ask these  
3 developers to stay within the current Code or  
4 else turn around and let the University build  
5 their buildings, for educational purposes, of  
6 this size and scope, because it would only be  
7 fair.

8 Thank you.

9 MAYOR CASON: Thank you. Tracy Kerdyk.

10 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

11 MS. KERDYK: Good afternoon, Mayor,  
12 Commissioners, City Attorney, City Manager,  
13 Staff, and everybody else who's here.

14 Of course, my name is Tracy Kerdyk. I'm a  
15 native of Coral Gables, Florida, and I've lived  
16 here for the 49 years that I've been alive. I  
17 currently reside at 935 South Alhambra Circle.

18 As you know, I come from a family that has  
19 been in politics -- in Coral Gables politics  
20 for several decades. I have watched them make  
21 very tough decisions, including sometimes  
22 losing their best friends over it.

23 Their philosophy, though, was always to try  
24 to do the best for the citizens of Coral Gables  
25 and their quality of life.

1 I am here today, never spoken at a  
2 Commission meeting, but I'm here today to ask  
3 each of you to do the right thing for the  
4 citizens and our community.

5 The Paseo de la Riviera project is a  
6 massive project, that does not meet the current  
7 Zoning Codes. I know that over the past ten  
8 years there have been several studies, and each  
9 time, the Commission has decided that the  
10 current Zoning Codes were correct for the  
11 property.

12 So why now are we trying to build something  
13 that excessively exceeds this Code? I'm  
14 against this project, because of the size, the  
15 density and impact it has on the surrounding  
16 neighborhoods, including my neighborhood.  
17 However, I perfectly understand what can be  
18 built on the project site, and I'm willing to  
19 live with the current zoning and beautification  
20 of the area.

21 I've heard from several people, saying that  
22 they love the ideas of the restaurant, the  
23 hotel. I'm not saying, don't build something  
24 there, but keep it under the current Zoning  
25 Codes.

1           The other major point I want to bring up is  
2           the future of the US-1 corridor. I am very  
3           concerned that if this project passes, it will  
4           create a precedent of unfounded massing,  
5           creating future traffic issues and diminishing  
6           the quality of life for the citizens.

7           In closing, I just have one thing to ask  
8           you. If you took any tall commercial building  
9           in the City of Coral Gables, Downtown, and took  
10          and put in the property, you would have to put  
11          two of them. A typical building in the City of  
12          Coral Gables, usable space, is 200,000 square  
13          feet. This project is over 400,000 square  
14          feet. You'd have to put two there. Would you  
15          want that in your neighborhood?

16          MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

17          MS. KERDYK: Thank you.

18          COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

19          MAYOR CASON: Vivian Haydar.

20          MS. HAYDAR: Good afternoon. My name is  
21          Vivian Haydar, and I've never spoken in public.

22          MR. LEEN: Speak into the microphone,  
23          please.

24          MS. HAYDAR: Sorry. Good afternoon. My  
25          name is Vivian Haydar. I've never spoken in

1 public. This is the first time. But I'm so  
2 against this project --

3 MR. LEEN: Could you provide your address?

4 MS. HAYDAR: Oh, I'm sorry. 5905 San  
5 Vicente Street, Coral Gables, Florida.

6 MR. LEEN: Thank you.

7 MS. HAYDAR: The reason I'm here today and  
8 I stayed the whole morning listening to  
9 everyone, the ones that -- come, was because,  
10 the reason I moved to Coral Gables and I bought  
11 more than twenty years ago, was to be able to  
12 have quiet, peacefulness and no traffic.

13 I think Coral Gables is unique. If you  
14 compare it to other cities in Miami-Dade  
15 County, you can see the difference, in the  
16 sense that people go out with their children,  
17 walking their dogs, everything, especially the  
18 Jaycee Park. That's where I take my  
19 grandchildren to play. It's going to be  
20 over -- it only has like ten parking spaces.  
21 That's not going to be -- after they build the  
22 800 parking spaces across the street from  
23 Jaycee Park, that's going to be, I mean,  
24 complete change.

25 And for me, I have seen grow up -- Coral

1 Gables grow from places where you couldn't  
2 build high rises, now -- in ten years we're not  
3 going to have the same City Beautiful if we  
4 continue at this trend.

5 This is the first project on US-1 on this  
6 -- with this high rise, and it's not going to  
7 stop there. It's going to continue, after they  
8 change the Code.

9 So I urge you to please consider -- the  
10 majority of residents in Coral Gables, we want  
11 to keep the neighborhood that we have right  
12 now.

13 Thank you very much.

14 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

16 MAYOR CASON: Paul Van -- I can't read this  
17 very well.

18 (Inaudible speaking.)

19 MAYOR CASON: Okay. Thank you.

20 The next five will -- unless you've already  
21 spoken, Sonia Chao, Elsie Miranda, Courtney  
22 Thompson, Aramis Alvarez and Max Ferrarati.

23 Is Sonia Chao here?

24 She spoke in favor of the development?

25 Okay. Elsie Miranda.

1 MS. MIRANDA: Good afternoon, Mayor and  
2 Members of the Commission. My name is Elsie  
3 Miranda. I live at 1114 Aduana Avenue. I've  
4 lived there for 22 years. And I've lived in  
5 the City of Coral Gables for 44 years.

6 The project before you today has the  
7 attention of a vast majority of citizens of the  
8 City of Coral Gables, as well as various  
9 property owners of commercial land in the area  
10 in question, who are interested in the  
11 decisions that you will make regarding the  
12 commercial -- regarding -- sorry -- the use of  
13 the land and the US-1 corridor, and how it will  
14 impact the future of our neighborhoods,  
15 particularly since this project requires  
16 variances to the Code, which more than doubles  
17 in height and density.

18 To that end, I wish to use an event that  
19 occurred last month on Le Jeune as a metaphore  
20 for the issue before you today. Last month,  
21 after leaving the Publix near Miracle Mile, I  
22 witnessed a small Daschshund getting spooked by  
23 a very loud sound, and it got loose from its  
24 owner, and it began what seemed like an eternal  
25 jaunt across Le Jeune Road.

1           There was a trolley fast approaching, and  
2           the owner, unable to do anything about it,  
3           screeched, and I closed my eyes, waiting for  
4           the worst.

5           Then, suddenly, to my surprise, the trolley  
6           driver applied the brakes and the short legged  
7           creature made its way safely across Le Jeune  
8           Road.

9           Metaphorically speaking, I believe that the  
10          Dachshund represents the City's current Zoning  
11          Code and the beauty and integrity of our  
12          neighborhood. The Paseo project, while lovely,  
13          is like the trolley barreling down the road,  
14          which threatens to kill the dog, but I beseech  
15          you today, as elected representatives of all  
16          the residents of the City, to apply the brakes  
17          to this project and to allow the project to  
18          come before you again within the Code that the  
19          City currently upholds.

20                 Thank you.

21                 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

22                 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

23                 MAYOR CASON: Courtney Thompson.

24                 MR. THOMPSON: Good afternoon,

25                 Commissioners, Mayor, City Manager, friends and



1 neighbors. My name is Courtney Thompson. I  
2 reside at 5307 Orduna Drive. That is within  
3 the scope of this neighborhood. However, I  
4 will upfront say, I do not look at this  
5 building, however, my area of the neighborhood  
6 abuts up to all of the frontage of US-1.

7 So one of my concerns -- and, by the way,  
8 most of you -- those of you in the room who  
9 know me, along with the Commissioners that know  
10 me, know I'm an entrepreneur, a businessman  
11 here locally for the last 35 years. I'm a  
12 capitalist, and I'm also a community oriented  
13 person, but I'm also a centrist.

14 So I come to you today with the overview of  
15 saying that, Number One, I have a three-fold  
16 concern, and one is the overall Zoning, which  
17 you've heard over and over today. Does this  
18 fit into our Zoning scenario, and inclusive of  
19 the fact that this was addressed, I think,  
20 seven years ago, and where we are today in  
21 that? Are we going to re-zone everything? Are  
22 we going to re-zone all up and down US-1?

23 Second is the overall density and scope and  
24 intensity of this project. I think it's a  
25 beautiful project. You did a marvelous job.

1 It's absolutely gorgeous. My wife is a  
2 designer and an architect, and she thinks it's  
3 wonderful, in terms of its look, and we think  
4 that if it's taken into the proper scope, we'd  
5 love to see something replace the Holiday Inn.

6 Also, I would like to ask for an additional  
7 one and a half minutes. I have a letter here  
8 from Dorothy Thompson, but I will also say that  
9 we heard a lot of facts and statistics today,  
10 and those facts and statistics are often very  
11 confusing. We filled the room up with numbers  
12 today.

13 It is the right place. It is the right  
14 time. It just may not necessarily be the right  
15 project in its scope. I think we should also  
16 consider the transit multi-model study that's  
17 going to go on. That's going to take  
18 approximately one year. I think that's an  
19 important tale-telling scenario.

20 We need the hotel. There's no question we  
21 need a good hotel there. However, I think what  
22 should be also taken into consideration are the  
23 time periods of which people who will be  
24 staying in the hotel, what that egress and  
25 ingress will do to that specific sector.

1 I also have a traffic study that was sent  
2 to me by the Coral Gables Police, that I would  
3 like to enter and have our Clerk enter in, for  
4 your consideration. And I will have those  
5 numbers sent over by e-mail to you, as well.  
6 That concludes what I have to say.

7 I would like to say the following on behalf  
8 of Dorothy and Jack Thompson. Dorothy wrote  
9 this to me approximately a week ago, and she  
10 said, "Courtney, I am out of town this week,  
11 therefore, I will not be able to attend the  
12 Commission Meeting on Thursday, October 22nd.  
13 Please include, as part of your presentation,  
14 my recollection and opinions concerning zoning  
15 and re-zoning along the US-1 corridor from Red  
16 Road to Le Jeune.

17 "Long before I sat on the Coral Gables  
18 Commission, there was a plan to locate what is  
19 now the Dadeland Shopping Mall where the  
20 University Shopping Center currently sits and  
21 has been for over 50 years. The neighborhood,  
22 under the leadership of Judge Carroll, rose up  
23 in opposition to a Dadeland-sized commercial  
24 development at that site. Later, the  
25 University Shopping Center was built and

1 welcomed by the neighborhood. It was a  
2 sensible alternative.

3 "Sometime in the late 1970s, the formerly  
4 named IRE Building began to be built, startling  
5 the neighborhood with its 13-story oversized  
6 proportion to the surrounding residential area.  
7 No other building of its size existed along the  
8 Coral Gables corridor at that time or probably  
9 anywhere else along US-1.

10 In 1979, responding to the concerns of that  
11 neighborhood of the IRE Building, and being a  
12 resident there myself at that time, I ran for  
13 the City Commission seat being vacated by  
14 Commissioner Bob Brake (phonetic).

15 "I won the seat and soon after I called for  
16 a moratorium to be imposed for a period of six  
17 months, to my recollection, in order for the  
18 City to do an indepth study of that corridor,  
19 which resulted in a rezoning, to allow no more  
20 than four stories, which has been the case up  
21 until now.

22 "The City has maintained --"

23 MR. LEEN: Time is up.

24 MR. THOMPSON: "-- an attractive passageway  
25 for residents, visitors and commuters while

1 driving through that short stretch of the Coral  
2 Gables US-1 corridor."

3 MR. LEEN: Time is up.

4 MR. THOMPSON: "Stately Royal palms line  
5 the median and accentuate the open space,  
6 uncluttered by high rise structures. It is my  
7 fervent hope that the City Beautiful ambiance  
8 will not be altered.

9 "As an added comment, when the County broke  
10 ground on the Metrorail stations at Riviera and  
11 Douglas in 1978, there was a promise made to  
12 the City --

13 MR. LEEN: Time is up.

14 MR. THOMPSON: "-- that no commercial  
15 buildings would be allowed within Coral Gables  
16 City limits.

17 "Thank you for reading this letter and  
18 thank you for the time."

19 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you, sir. I  
21 appreciate it.

22 MAYOR CASON: Aramis Alvarez.

23 COMMISSIONER KEON: He had to leave.

24 MAYOR CASON: Leave? Said he's a proponent  
25 of this project. It was high quality and I

1 consider it an enhancement to this community,  
2 where I've lived since 1972.

3 The next five will be Carolina Estefan, Max  
4 Ferrarati, Maria Masvidal and Hilario Candela.

5 COMMISSIONER LAGO: He already spoke.

6 MAYOR CASON: He did?

7 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Hilario already spoke.

8 MAYOR CASON: All right. And then Stephen  
9 Diener.

10 Carolina Estefan?

11 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Good afternoon.

12 MS. ESTEFAN: Good afternoon.

13 MAYOR CASON: Hi.

14 MS. ESTEFAN: My name is Carolina Estefan  
15 Chahine and I live in 6506 Leonardo Street,  
16 Coral Gables. I grew up in this neighborhood.  
17 I appreciate it for what it is truly, the City  
18 Beautiful.

19 I am a mother of three small children. The  
20 neighborhood has following generations, like  
21 me, that have grown up. They've moved back,  
22 because they appreciate the landscape of the  
23 neighborhood.

24 We have Jaycee Park, which will be  
25 completely overshadowed by this project.

1           It's personally outrageous to me that this  
2           is being even considered for development in  
3           this area, being the zone that it is. It is  
4           not suitable for even a T-5 zone. I just don't  
5           understand how this could happen.

6           But now that it is under consideration, I  
7           would like to discuss the massive nature of  
8           this project, and how incompatible it is with  
9           the historic nature of the City.

10          We all pay a lot of money to come and live  
11          there. Home values are high in that area. And  
12          it's, you know, one of the few neighborhoods  
13          that that has, you know, the landscaping, the  
14          lighting, the right-of-ways for pedestrians,  
15          the sidewalks.

16          Just in the last two months, I have two of  
17          my kids that have learned to bicycle ride, and  
18          I feel perfectly safe doing so in this  
19          neighborhood, because the traffic does not  
20          allow so much congestion and vehicles to go to  
21          very high speeds.

22          Now I'm very concerned about this. We are  
23          very invested in this. All my life, I've lived  
24          there, and, you know, I'm hoping that we can  
25          preserve the nature of our area for our future

1 generations.

2 Thank you.

3 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER KEON: Thank you.

5 MAYOR CASON: Max Ferrarati. Not here.

6 He was at Alfonso Avenue and said he's in  
7 favor of the development.

8 Maria Masvidal, and then Stephen Diener.

9 MS. MASVIDAL: Good afternoon.

10 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Good afternoon.

11 MS. MASVIDAL: First of all, I think that  
12 everybody here that has said --

13 MR. LEEN: Name and address, please.

14 Remember, your address. Name and address.

15 MS. MASVIDAL: Maria Masvidal-Visser, 421  
16 Maya Avenue. I'm part of the Dutch South  
17 African Village or adjacent to it.

18 One of the reasons we moved 30 years ago to  
19 this area was because it's a very quiet area.  
20 I submitted a letter October 19th with six  
21 points. I think they've all been said here  
22 today.

23 So what I'd like to add are basically two  
24 things. One, in my case, we have multiple  
25 members of different ages in our home. I have



1 a mother that's 90 years old, and that needs  
2 sometimes assistance in regards to our first  
3 responders. We also are close to the facility  
4 where the Urgent Care is and the way that we go  
5 there is either through Caballero or through  
6 Mariposa. And it's already very difficult to  
7 get in and out. There's hardly any parking.

8 So I do also ditto what Chris Zoller was  
9 saying in regards to stacking. It is  
10 incredible, the traffic. So I think that's  
11 something that we really have to consider.

12 In regards, also, we are all taxpayers and  
13 we do need services. And I think a project of  
14 this magnitude will actually press those first  
15 responders. So, you know, they have to cross  
16 Dixie Highway, too. So I think that you have  
17 to take that into consideration.

18 Thank you.

19 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

21 MAYOR CASON: Stephen Diener. And, then,  
22 after that, it will be the last five, Maria  
23 Longo, Pat Parker, Sandra Levinson and Wayne  
24 Eldred.

25 MR. DIENER: My name is Stephen Diener. I

1 live at 10 Aragon. I may be a little different  
2 here, so I'd just like to explain something.

3 In the last 30 years, I have lived and  
4 traveled all over the world, but I always come  
5 back here. It's like a dog. This is the third  
6 time. I live here. So I see the progress, you  
7 know, different things, and I was here at your  
8 last meeting, actually, the Budget Meeting, and  
9 I found it very interesting.

10 And I talked to a lot of people here.  
11 Without being pandering, I find this a very  
12 special place. No kidding. And I've been on  
13 the Riviera. Lived there. This is a real  
14 special town.

15 But what's interesting is, when I travel  
16 and talk to people, "Come from Miami? Fine."  
17 You say you come from Coral Gables, they know  
18 there's something going on. They're not even  
19 from here, U of M, but they know you've got a  
20 special thing here, okay.

21 Now, the only thing that I can say is, you  
22 pay a price for being on the board of faceless  
23 towns in this country, who have no idea of  
24 their heritage or where they came from.  
25 They've got population, they've got their

1 shopping centers, you know, the whole deal,  
2 right, but it seems to me you've got a very  
3 positive burden, with respect.

4 I like the idea that I know about this town  
5 and what this Mr. Merrick did, and I spent time  
6 in Spain, and it looks a lot like this in  
7 certain areas, and it was seventy years ago,  
8 right?

9 I think that's something to be preserved.  
10 I may be corny.

11 Now, the only thing that I know, as an  
12 outsider, with respect -- these guys have done  
13 tons of work, there's no question, the variance  
14 of what they're proposing to your current Code,  
15 right, is really extensive.

16 It's like you've been talking about  
17 automobiles and stationwagons and these guys  
18 are bringing in an eighteen wheeler here, and I  
19 just don't understand it.

20 And I personally think of two things. It's  
21 seems excessive, if you believe, which I do,  
22 that's why I'm here -- I wasn't born here --  
23 you've got something going. There's a  
24 friendliness. I cannot walk to Miracle Mile  
25 enough.

1           So if I live in a building, I'm sorry, and  
2           I have to drive three minutes to get to  
3           Downtown to have a meal, then poor me.

4           MR. LEEN:   Time's up.

5           MR. DIENER:  And one thing before I leave,  
6           don't kill the Downtown business.  That's  
7           happened in other suburbs.

8           MR. LEEN:  Time's up.  Thank you, sir.

9           MAYOR CASON:  We won't do that.

10          MR. DIENER:  The guys around town will have  
11          a story.

12          MAYOR CASON:  Maria Longo.

13          MR. LEEN:  Thank you, sir.

14          COMMISSIONER LAGO:  Thank you.

15          COMMISSIONER KEON:  Thank you.

16          MAYOR CASON:  Pat Parker.

17          MS. PARKER:  Hi.  I'm Pat Parker.  I live  
18          at 8855 Southwest 83rd Street.  I work with  
19          Coldwell Banker at 4000 Ponce, and I've lived  
20          here since I was 16 years old, and I've sold  
21          homes in Coral Gables for the last 38 years.  
22          I've talked to every one of you at different  
23          times.

24                 This is really, really important.  When we  
25                 sell a home in Coral Gables, we tell the

1 people, "You will always be protected by the  
2 City. The City Commission will watch your  
3 interest. The zoning will be kept." I make  
4 sure my customers stay in compliance with the  
5 Building and Zoning, and I'm asking you to stay  
6 in compliance with Building and Zoning.

7 If people live in an area where they expect  
8 a building to only be a certain height, they  
9 expect that building to be only a certain  
10 height.

11 The traffic is terrible in that area. I  
12 drive there all of the time. I'm all around  
13 Caballero, Hardee. The traffic is fast, and  
14 it's gotten an awful lot of traffic already,  
15 let alone add all of these units and all of  
16 these people.

17 You keep talking about just the hotel.  
18 What about the component of the apartments and  
19 how many people and possibly students is going  
20 to drive into the apartments?

21 That little park is so precious and we've  
22 always gone to protect the children in that  
23 park, nobody is talking about protecting the  
24 children in that park, putting that many people  
25 -- the commercial being right by the park, the

1 safety of our children has always been  
2 paramount.

3 So I'm asking you to be real cautious in  
4 any change you make, and someone said that this  
5 is an individual decision for this property.  
6 It is not. You know how many parcels have  
7 already been sold, the University, the one  
8 where my pet gets groomed, all of those have  
9 been sold already. Everyone is looking to you  
10 to make the right decision.

11 Coral Gables has always protected its  
12 citizens and we're asking you to do the same.

13 MAYOR CASON: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

15 MAYOR CASON: The last two, Sandra  
16 Levinson, and then Wayne Eldred, and then we'll  
17 close the public -- okay. So Wayne Eldred.

18 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I think Wayne left.

19 MAYOR CASON: Wayne is -- said, in favor of  
20 the project. So that ends the public comment.

21 Do you all want to take a break or do we  
22 want to hear -- do you want to have your  
23 rebuttal now and then we'll take a break?

24 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Can we just take a  
25 five-minute break?

1 COMMISSIONER KEON: Five minutes.

2 MAYOR CASON: A true five.

3 MR. LEEN: So you'll do your rebuttal when  
4 we come back. Yeah, and the public hearing is  
5 closed on first reading now.

6 MAYOR CASON: Yeah. True five, please.

7 (Short recess taken.)

8 MAYOR CASON: We are going to continue.  
9 Please take your seat.

10 All right. Now we're going to give the  
11 Applicant a chance to address anything that has  
12 been raised, that you would like to bring up.

13 MR. BASS: While we're waiting for  
14 Commissioner Slesnick, Mr. Mayor, we have some  
15 additional letters of support, which we're  
16 going to give to the Clerk at this point in  
17 time.

18 MR. LEEN: Where is Commissioner Slesnick?  
19 Let me get her. I'll be right back.

20 MAYOR CASON: Before you start, I want to  
21 thank everybody that participated today. This  
22 was a great example of civility. We didn't see  
23 that at some of the Planning and Zoning, and we  
24 had some rather obnoxious e-mails,  
25 unfortunately, but I think today everybody was

1 a great representative of Coral Gables. We've  
2 had a very civil discussion and I want to thank  
3 you all for that.

4 MR. BASS: Mr. Mayor, Members of the  
5 Commission, just a few points in rebuttal. I  
6 don't expect to use my fifteen minutes. I  
7 really -- you all have been wonderfully  
8 patient.

9 I would just like to highlight a few  
10 points, so that everybody has a clear  
11 understanding of where we are, and I'd like to  
12 address some of the comments that I've heard  
13 from the objectors, and how the conditions  
14 imposed by your Planning Department address and  
15 resolve them.

16 So there was a concern raised by a neighbor  
17 that we would be leasing parking spaces to  
18 users who were not our own. There is a  
19 condition that has been imposed by your Staff,  
20 which we have accepted, that prohibits that.  
21 So that concern has been fully and completely  
22 addressed and resolved through that condition.

23 There was a comment made about how we would  
24 manage taxicabs, and that is addressed in a  
25 condition, with respect to how that will be



1 managed, and we have accepted that condition.  
2 So the issue of taxicab management and the  
3 hotel operations are all subsumed within a  
4 condition, which we have accepted.

5 I'd like to talk a moment about traffic,  
6 while I'm on that topic. I'd like to highlight  
7 for you what the evidence showed and what it  
8 did not.

9 The evidence by Mr. Tim Plummer, a  
10 professional, whose report was reviewed and  
11 approved by Atkins, your professional, confirms  
12 that traffic is not an issue with this project.  
13 This is a very traffic friendly project, was  
14 the expert testimony. You heard nothing to the  
15 contrary by anybody qualified to give you that  
16 opinion and the opinions offered by Mr. Plummer  
17 were validated by Atkins.

18 I think it's important to emphasize that an  
19 as of right project, without any public  
20 hearings, would generate 100 percent more p.m.  
21 peak traffic than this, which is another way of  
22 saying, we generate 50 percent less traffic  
23 than what could be built there commercial as of  
24 right.

25 I'm not a big fan of quoting the media, but

1 I think it's important to note, as you sit  
2 here, that the Herald and its independent  
3 reporter went out and observed the traffic  
4 conditions in the neighborhood, and reported  
5 that there is not a traffic problem in the  
6 neighborhood, at least in the eyes of that  
7 reporter.

8 I'd like to talk about what you get from  
9 this project, and I'd like to focus this  
10 portion of my rebuttal on the public realm  
11 improvements that you get from this project,  
12 which you would not get from an as of right  
13 project, and I would like to support the  
14 conclusion that through your PAD, and the  
15 design and the architecture, we have brought  
16 forward a project which gives more to this  
17 community than could otherwise be achieved  
18 through the literal interpretation of the  
19 Zoning Code, as written, and Jorge Hernandez  
20 went through them, but I'd like to just  
21 highlight a few, because they're substantial,  
22 and, importantly, they support your finding  
23 that the PAD purpose is served by this  
24 application.

25 Open space. This is a commercial property

1 on precious commercial land. Yet we are giving  
2 to the public an acre of ground floor open  
3 space. That's just incredible, if you stop to  
4 think about it. Forty percent of our ground  
5 floor is open to the public.

6 We have a thousand linear feet of arcades,  
7 covered sidewalks, creating walk-ability for  
8 the public.

9 We have our paseo, which is a half acre in  
10 size. This is a very substantial public realm  
11 gesture. Sure, one could build a very  
12 uninspired, undifferentiated slab as of right  
13 there, and you would get none of this, and the  
14 quo for the quid, what you get in exchange for  
15 the application we are making, is something  
16 everybody agrees is a beautiful project.

17 Even our opponents agree that this is a  
18 beautiful project, in terms of its design. I  
19 have not heard anybody, in the any of the  
20 multiple proceedings, come out to say that the  
21 design is somehow beneath the quality of  
22 design, the fitting of this great City.

23 To a certainty, our design is beautiful,  
24 but beyond that, our design integrates very  
25 important public realm improvements that we

1 believe both necessitate and justify the  
2 approval of our PAD on this project.

3 One-third of our frontage on US-1 is open.  
4 These are not little gestures on insignificant  
5 properties. These are substantial gestures  
6 towards making this project as absolutely  
7 lovely as it can be.

8 Mr. Hernandez showed you what I believe to  
9 be a quite compelling illustration of the fact  
10 that the tallest part of our project are right  
11 up against US-1 and the project observes a very  
12 gracious, sensitive, and natural step down from  
13 its tallest piece, to its intermediate piece,  
14 to its shortest piece, to Madruga, and that a  
15 natural barrier exists between our project and  
16 the nearest single-family homes on the other  
17 side of Jaycee Park, but if you heard one  
18 vitally important fact this morning, if you  
19 wanted to boil it all out down, Rabi Mendi  
20 Fellig stood before you, the person singularly  
21 most impacted by this project, and he stood  
22 before you, and what he said was, he's a  
23 supporter.

24 But what he also said, and I take this, as  
25 a lawyer, very, very, seriously, the way he was

1 treated through this process was one of open  
2 dialog, was one of inclusion, was one of  
3 hearing about a legitimate concern and  
4 addressing it, and for Mr. Fellig and his home  
5 on Madruga, what we propose is a vast  
6 improvement over the condition that exists at  
7 Madruga, and that comes from the person who is  
8 absolutely most impacted by it.

9 I thought it was quite honest by those who  
10 spoke before you to concede that most of them  
11 can't see and won't see this project. That's a  
12 fact. And so while there has been a great  
13 amount of discussion about this issue of height  
14 and scale, I think the necessary predicate for  
15 that discussion is, from where is scale  
16 observed? Where are you perceiving this  
17 height? Are we having a discussion about the  
18 perception of height for that 45 to 90 seconds,  
19 when you're in your car, on US-1, heading north  
20 and you can see it and now it's in the rear  
21 view mirror? Is that the conversation we're  
22 having?

23 I can tell you the conversation we're not  
24 having, is that the height of this building is  
25 interfering with the use of anybody's property,

1 private property, in any way. It is not  
2 casting a shadow on Jaycee Park, literally.  
3 That's an impossibility.

4 So the suggestion that it is, is just  
5 absolutely unsupported by the evidence.

6 And I think it's important to note, as  
7 Mr. Plummer showed you, the traffic issue on  
8 the adjacent streets, I drive them every day.  
9 I drive them every day, and there is no reason  
10 for any person who lives or is staying at this  
11 property to exit onto US-1 north and cut  
12 through their neighborhoods. Where would they  
13 be going, unless they were driving in a giant  
14 circle? That would make no sense. They're not  
15 driving to an employment center to the south.  
16 They're not driving to an airport to the south  
17 or any other major urban center. There's  
18 nothing to the south. There would be no reason  
19 to leave this property and drive on Alfonso.  
20 You get nowhere if you do.

21 So, yes, there is concern about traffic.  
22 Our project does not contribute, in a  
23 meaningful way, to the traffic that exists  
24 there at present. In fact, we dare say, it  
25 would reduce it, because many people would live

1 at our project and take the Metrorail, who are  
2 already driving through that area at present,  
3 and I would say that with the University of  
4 Miami medical facility coming onboard there,  
5 this would be an absolutely fantastic place for  
6 people to live, who work there, and who could  
7 achieve the heretofore impossible dream in our  
8 City, which is living and walking to work. It  
9 is almost impossible anywhere, but with our  
10 project, it will be possible here.

11 And I'd like to emphasis another important  
12 fact. This is US-1. US-1 doesn't belong to  
13 any one neighborhood group. We heard the  
14 evidence. Approximately 79,000 people a day  
15 pass through US-1. This is not as if we were  
16 proposing some development deeply imbedded  
17 within an established residential neighborhood.  
18 We are not.

19 We are proposing a project on a major  
20 north-south arterial, walking distance to  
21 transit, exactly where a project like this  
22 should be proposed.

23 We have, as part of our approvals,  
24 committed to improve the safety and flow of  
25 vehicles through installing the -- I think

1 they're now called round points, re-adjusting  
2 the alignment of Hardee, making landscape  
3 improvements to Jaycee Park. All of them, we  
4 believe, to make our project something that  
5 people should emulate when they come to you and  
6 seek to build something in your City.

7 You have heard and you have seen, the  
8 evidence is undisputed, that there are no other  
9 parcels in this segment of US-1 of a  
10 substantial depth to accommodate other projects  
11 of this scope. What you heard as a basis for  
12 objection from many was that you would be  
13 establishing a precedent, but we all know that  
14 that's not true, because you have your PAD  
15 ordinance and you have your jurisdiction, and  
16 anything and everything that wants to be built  
17 there, in accordance with your PAD regulations,  
18 needs to travel the mighty difficult and long  
19 road that we've been traveling for the last  
20 year. It ain't easy, and you're not going to  
21 be surprised. You will have absolute control  
22 over the other projects that come forward.

23 Mr. Pinera showed you a map. We didn't  
24 have the benefit of any advance notice of  
25 seeing that. I might go out on a limb and



1 suggest that our methods maybe differed from  
2 Mr. Pinera in how we approached people in their  
3 homes to get their support, but what you have,  
4 this exhibit, Mr. Mayor, that you had mentioned  
5 prior to the lunch break, and it's exhibited  
6 here, the yellow dots show the supporters for  
7 our project, and these were supporters who have  
8 shown their support to us in writing as the  
9 owner/resident of the home. Those are the  
10 yellow dots there.

11 MAYOR CASON: This one has blue and purple.

12 MR. BASS: The blue and purple, that shows  
13 on both sides, and then we separated yellow in  
14 the exhibit that is before. It's just  
15 supporters, because those colors became hard to  
16 read.

17 MAYOR CASON: Okay.

18 MR. BASS: So to be sure, there are  
19 supporters and opponents, but there are also  
20 supporters. There are many of them and you've  
21 heard from many of them.

22 MR. LEEN: Mr. Bass, and you put that  
23 together and you know that they're supporting?

24 MR. BASS: We put them together. We have a  
25 letter supporting each yellow dot from the

1 supporter.

2 MR. LEEN: And you're proffering that as  
3 counsel?

4 MR. BASS: I proffering that as counsel,  
5 and I will say, in our brief inspection, for  
6 example, of the other exhibit, Mr. Daniel  
7 Levya, whose comment was in the record as a  
8 supporter, is shown as an opponent on our brief  
9 spot check of their map.

10 So that said, I'd like to make a couple of  
11 more clarifications of the conditions, the  
12 recently imposed conditions of your Staff, and  
13 our acceptance of them. I don't know that I  
14 need to go through each and every one, but I  
15 would like to say that Staff has asked us to  
16 commit, as we have, in writing, to forty  
17 conditions, I think it was. We've agreed to  
18 all of them.

19 Where we part company is only minor, in my  
20 opinion, only minor. We're talking about a  
21 differential in height from the 132, which we  
22 propose on the residential, to the 120 --

23 MAYOR CASON: 133 or 132?

24 MR. BASS: I'm sorry, 133.

25 MAYOR CASON: 133.

1 MR. BASS: I'm undercaffeinated at this hour  
2 of the day. I apologize, but I was close.  
3 From 133 to 120 on the residential building  
4 only. They have asked for 120. We are at 133.

5 COMMISSIONER KEON: On the hotel, you're  
6 at?

7 MR. BASS: 142.6 on the hotel.

8 And on what I'll call the step back metric  
9 that we went through before, we believe that  
10 we're providing actually a better condition in  
11 the adjacency, through the lowering of the  
12 height, as we did through the vertical and  
13 horizontal plane, the way that we lowered the  
14 garage feature.

15 MR. LEEN: And at this moment, you're  
16 proffering a restrictive covenant that reflects  
17 that, you said, I believe?

18 MR. BASS: Yes. I am re-affirming our  
19 prior commitment of voluntary --

20 MR. LEEN: And you're okay with that being  
21 put into the Comp Plan, as well?

22 MR. BASS: We are okay with that being put  
23 into the Comp Plan, and we are also okay, as we  
24 talked about previously, but let me just  
25 affirm, because it goes to the issue of a

1 potential fall of dominos, that the request  
2 that we're seeking has been modified on the  
3 Zoning Text Amendment to reflect only our  
4 property.

5 And if the City Attorney were to opine that  
6 we didn't need that, because with the PAD we're  
7 okay, we could give up the request entirely, if  
8 we had to. I don't know that we have to. I  
9 think we can solve the problem --

10 MR. LEEN: I've given the opinion that I  
11 didn't think we needed to amend the Site  
12 Specifics. That's up for the Commission to  
13 decide.

14 In terms of consistency, we thought it's  
15 better for the site specific to reflect the  
16 actual facts on the ground, but it's  
17 discretionary.

18 MR. BASS: I agree. It's just a different  
19 way to chop up the same -- we get to the same  
20 result either which way. It's whichever way  
21 gives you all more comfort.

22 So I believe, that said, the time is now  
23 for me to thank you, again, for your incredible  
24 patience in listening to us, and to ask that  
25 you vote to approve our applications before you

1 on first reading, and to schedule a second  
2 reading sometime around the first week of  
3 November, if such is the will of this  
4 Commission.

5 MAYOR CASON: You all want to ask questions  
6 while he's here? I have a couple of questions  
7 to start with.

8 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Are we going to hear  
9 from --

10 MAYOR CASON: I don't know. Craig, are  
11 we --

12 MR. LEEN: No. Under the procedures, it's  
13 now in your hands. You can ask questions.

14 MAYOR CASON: It's in our hands right now.

15 I wanted to ask you, who will your clients  
16 be on the apartments? They're relatively small  
17 units. Are you looking to get professors? I  
18 remember earlier on there were some people  
19 saying, "I know you're going to rent these to  
20 students," and, for some reason, that was a bad  
21 thing. I don't understand that.

22 But how does that fit in with the  
23 University being across and traffic?

24 MR. BASS: I'm going to answer the question  
25 as honestly as I possibly can. Given the

1 limitations that we have under the Fair Housing  
2 Act and other laws that sort of limit how one  
3 can control who comes and who doesn't, this is  
4 designed to be for young professionals, who, as  
5 an alternative to living in Brickell or in  
6 Downtown, don't want to have a car, but who  
7 work in the Downtown area or who work at the  
8 University of Miami, whether because they're  
9 working in a new medical facility or because  
10 they're on staff there or I'm not going to rule  
11 out the possibility that they could be a  
12 graduate student there or a student there. It  
13 could happen. It's not designed for them.

14 But the organizing principle is, for people  
15 who need to commute to work. This is where you  
16 can live and not have to do so in a car, but  
17 the direct answer to your question is, this is  
18 not designed as student housing. It is not  
19 intended to be student housing. It is intended  
20 for, like we had a witness come before you,  
21 those folks who would love to be able to  
22 continue to live in Coral Gables, can't afford  
23 to buy a house in Coral Gables, want to use all  
24 of your amenities and eat in your restaurants  
25 and shop in your stores, may have to get to

1 Downtown for work, but would do so on the  
2 Metrorail.

3 MAYOR CASON: Will these be rentals or  
4 condos or are you not sure yet?

5 MR. BASS: These are, right now, rentals.  
6 And we talked about that long and hard through  
7 this process, and clearly there are some who  
8 would view condos more preferable to rentals.  
9 There is a real need for rentals, nice rentals,  
10 in this area, and we would suggest to you that,  
11 as it relates to our ability to control the  
12 quality of the operations, the quality of the  
13 amenities and the behavior of the occupants, we  
14 have maximized that control, by continuing to  
15 own them ourselves, and then staying in the  
16 property, as we intend to do, to make sure that  
17 that asset shines at all times.

18 MAYOR CASON: And the last question I have  
19 for the moment is, why do you need the floor  
20 between 120 and 133? What's your economic  
21 argument for that? If you didn't have it, what  
22 would you have to give up? What can you tell  
23 us?

24 MR. BASS: Well, let me start with where we  
25 came in. We came in with originally 156. We

1           went down to 142. And like a rubik's cube, you  
2           can't twist one side of one of these buildings  
3           without precipitating a whole host of other  
4           cascading changes that need to be necessitated,  
5           in terms of parking, in terms of how the  
6           mechanical elements of the building work, how  
7           the loadbearing engineering elements of the  
8           building work.

9           For us, also, because this is not a hobby,  
10          it needs to work economically, and as you cut  
11          to 120, we get dangerously close to this being  
12          economically non-viable, in terms of the money  
13          that we would need to borrow, the cost of that  
14          money, the time of that money, and the risks  
15          involved.

16          We were uncomfortable going to the 133, but  
17          have done so to address -- we're getting  
18          vitally close to not being able to make it  
19          work, if we take the residential down.

20          COMMISSIONER LAGO: Let me ask you just a  
21          quick question.

22          MAYOR CASON: Let me just finish up my last  
23          question. How does the possibility of shared  
24          parking fit into the rubik's cube?

25          MR. TRIAS: Mayor, if I can make a comment.



1 on this. The Applicant has agreed to the 133.  
2 However, I don't believe that they've had the  
3 time to completely re-design the project. I  
4 will look forward to the opportunity to work  
5 with them, prior to second reading, to see how  
6 close we can get to the 120.

7 COMMISSIONER LAGO: That's what I was going  
8 to ask. I was going to ask, you know,  
9 obviously, our goal, if we do approve on first  
10 reading, we move, I have several conditions I'm  
11 going to talk about.

12 The first one would be, I would hope that  
13 you, through our City Attorney and through our  
14 City Manager, would meet with representatives  
15 from the RNA, and just to discuss different  
16 options on the project.

17 Number One, I think that we need to lower  
18 the scale of the project. I want to see -- and  
19 I imagine the Commissioners probably agree with  
20 me, going off on what the Mayor just stated, I  
21 think that hopefully we could come to an  
22 appropriate number, where we can get support  
23 from the neighbors. That's Number One.

24 Number Two is the issue of what we talked  
25 about, shared parking. I had requested from

1 Staff, I'm not sure if Ramon has it, was to  
2 really discuss our parking requirements, which  
3 are the most stringent of any municipality, and  
4 as the Vice Mayor has mentioned before, and I  
5 don't want to misquote you, but we have floors  
6 of unnecessary parking in this City, that make  
7 buildings excessively bulky.

8 The appearances are there. You can't get  
9 rid of them. And they're required, as per the  
10 Code. Nobody parks in, I think, one to two  
11 floors of Merrick Park, no matter if it's  
12 Christmas, no matter if it's Thanksgiving, no  
13 matter if it's Black Monday or Black Tuesday.  
14 I don't know which one it is.

15 COMMISSIONER KEON: Black Friday.

16 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Black Friday. You can  
17 tell my wife is the one that's out there  
18 shopping. Whatever it is.

19 The point being is that I think that we can  
20 really tweak the project, if we discuss shared  
21 parking. It's not that the building is going  
22 to be underparked. So that's one thing.

23 I've read Points 1 through 12, which  
24 Mr. Trias has done a great job, in regard to --  
25 I don't want to use the word concessions, but

1 agreements --

2 MAYOR CASON: Conditions.

3 COMMISSIONER LAGO: -- conditions to the  
4 Development Agreement. Point 3 talks about  
5 exclusive parking. It's very clear when you  
6 read it. It says, parking spaces may be not be  
7 sold or rented to those who are not users or  
8 residents of the Paseo de la Riviera.

9 I want to be clear. You have to put,  
10 University of Miami will not be renting spaces  
11 across the street. I don't want to just single  
12 out the University of Miami. I want to single  
13 out everybody.

14 MR. BASS: We have accepted that condition.

15 COMMISSIONER LAGO: And that condition has  
16 been accepted. So I think that's important,  
17 that the residents are aware of that, because  
18 they have, you know, a concern, and I  
19 understand that.

20 So I ask you, depending on what happens  
21 today, before we go to second reading, I want  
22 to make sure, and I spoke to the City Attorney  
23 before, and I hadn't spoken to the Manager,  
24 that we get all parties in a room, and we  
25 discuss how we can make this project less

1 intense and dense.

2 I don't know if I can get some --

3 MR. BASS: I, on behalf on my client, we  
4 agree to participate in that.

5 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay.

6 MR. BASS: We have participated in that  
7 before with your City Attorney, through  
8 Counsel, but I'll say again, you tell me where,  
9 you tell me when, and we'll be there  
10 open-minded.

11 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Mr. Bass, when  
13 you're scaling back, are you scaling back on  
14 the apartment building?

15 MR. BASS: The apartment building.

16 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: The number of  
17 units?

18 MR. BASS: We have taken a floor off and  
19 I'll just confirm --

20 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: It used to have  
21 three-bedroom units, correct, and now you've  
22 got a variety of sizes?

23 MR. BASS: It always had a mix of one, two  
24 and three, but when we took the floor to get to  
25 the 133 -- let me get an answer to the question

1 of the number of units that we took away with  
2 that, if any?

3 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: While he's asking,  
4 Craig, just as clarification, if their tenants  
5 are not -- if the parking has to be only  
6 purchased or rented by the tenants, what  
7 prevents the tenants from subleasing it to  
8 others?

9 MR. LEEN: Well, that would be a condition  
10 of approval. We could use Code Enforcement. I  
11 mean, we could pull the approval.

12 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: I understand. I  
13 don't think we want to be in the business of  
14 enforcement. I think we want to obligate the  
15 developer to be the enforcer and that it should  
16 negate -- there should be a penalty if a tenant  
17 subleased it to somebody else, because that is  
18 usurping what your intention is.

19 MR. LEEN: Certainly. You could put  
20 additional conditions. You can make them  
21 report to us. You could make them monitor  
22 that. There's a lot of different ways you  
23 could address that. If that's a concern, we  
24 can meet with them to impose more conditions  
25 that would basically require you to ensure that

1 that's not done. Is that something that you  
2 would be willing to proffer? I know you were  
3 talking --

4 MR. BASS: I'm sorry, I was trying to get  
5 an answer -- may I answer Commissioner  
6 Slesnick's question first, and then --

7 MR. LEEN: Yes.

8 MR. BASS: If you could refresh me with the  
9 question, I'll get you an answer.

10 MR. LEEN: Sure.

11 MR. BASS: In the height reduction, we  
12 eliminated a floor of parking, but we did not  
13 change the units of the apartment building. So  
14 the unit count --

15 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: So it's a floor of  
16 parking, so you're out so many parking spaces.

17 MR. BASS: Correct, to get to the height  
18 reduction that we got to.

19 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: So you still have  
20 the same number of units.

21 MR. BASS: Same number of units.

22 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Okay.

23 MR. BASS: Same number of units.

24 MAYOR CASON: So is that without any  
25 consideration up to now of shared parking under

1 a PAD, which we did in the Agave project?

2 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Or we're going to  
3 have shared parking.

4 MR. LEEN: I thought that involved shared  
5 parking.

6 MR. TRIAS: Mayor, I want to clarify that  
7 Staff has not reviewed the re-design. That  
8 still had to be submitted. What the Applicant  
9 has agreed to do is cap at 133, and internally  
10 they have done some re-design.

11 Now, we would have to do all of that review  
12 prior to second reading.

13 MAYOR CASON: Right. But my question is,  
14 is there a potential in the discussion going  
15 between first and second reading to reduce  
16 another floor of parking, to get it dropped,  
17 without touching your revenue generating parts?

18 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Mr. Mayor,  
19 respectfully, we can just force it on them.

20 MAYOR CASON: But I'm just wondering --

21 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I'm trying to say,  
22 listen, what we're looking for is to  
23 continue -- so, no, I'm trying to be nice.  
24 Again, that's why we're having this discussion.

25 So basically the Commission, as it has

1 stated, we're looking to trend in that  
2 direction.

3 MR. BASS: I hear you.

4 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Your hear me clear?  
5 You hear me clear?

6 MR. BASS: I hear you.

7 MR. TRIAS: If we could get your goal, what  
8 you would like to get to, I plan to work with  
9 the Applicant to get as close to that as  
10 possible. So if you could tell us what you  
11 would like --

12 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Well, Mr. Trias, and  
13 Mr. Bass, I think when we eventually make a  
14 motion up here, what we do, I think, will be  
15 very clear as to what we would want to see, if  
16 anything.

17 MAYOR CASON: If it's the 13 feet that  
18 we're talking about, is that a parking floor?

19 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Could be mixed. Could  
20 be a mix. I mean, that's what they have --

21 MAYOR CASON: But, I mean, you're talking  
22 about how you're close on your economics on  
23 this, but the parking doesn't add anything to  
24 your economics. It probably lowers your costs.

25 COMMISSIONER LAGO: It lowers your costs.



1 It's about \$20,000 per parking space to  
2 construct. So you're actually seeing -- I  
3 think you're averaging probably about --  
4 correct me if I'm wrong -- I had one of several  
5 meetings with Mr. Trias, you're talking about  
6 between 90 to 100 parking spaces per floor. So  
7 you're talking about a cost savings of two  
8 million dollars per floor.

9 MAYOR CASON: So that's something you can  
10 explore.

11 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I mean, I would like  
12 nothing more than to, like I've mentioned  
13 before, was the issue of potentially doing what  
14 we did with Merrick Manor, where we, going off  
15 what the Vice Mayor just said, we basically  
16 forced the hand of going underground parking.

17 My understanding is that the geotechnical  
18 report here states that that is not a feasible  
19 opportunity for this project.

20 MR. HERNANDEZ: That is correct. That is  
21 correct. The Hundred Year Flood is at six.  
22 The floor level is eleven. You cannot park in  
23 five feet of height.

24 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I just want to make  
25 sure we mention all of these things, so that

1 the residents understand, we're exploring every  
2 option to try to push this as much as we can,  
3 and --

4 MR. BASS: And just for the court reporter,  
5 that was Jorge Hernandez speaking. So, please,  
6 just say your name.

7 MR. HERNANDEZ: And I know that there are a  
8 number of you that are very interested in  
9 energy efficiency and climate change. The data  
10 for this area is from the 1930s. So when I say  
11 the Hundred Year flood level is at six, it's  
12 from the 1930s.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: And another concession  
14 that I want to mention, also, that Mr. Trias  
15 helped me, along with the City Manager, and the  
16 City Attorney, really get included in this  
17 agreement -- this proposed agreement, is the  
18 fact that this building would be LEED.

19 You know, again, we're in the process of,  
20 next Commission, I think -- Ramon, if you want  
21 to stay one second -- we're going to be putting  
22 forth an ordinance, which all of this style of  
23 buildings, as of right buildings, which have  
24 been approved, because we have many as of right  
25 projects that have been approved lately in the

1 City of Coral Gables, that have become LEED,  
2 because this Commission has requested that they  
3 have that LEED style of construction.

4 MR. TRIAS: Yeah. The first amendment to  
5 that is coming before you, and will make it  
6 mandatory for mixed use projects.

7 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Right now this project  
8 doesn't have to be mandatory.

9 MR. TRIAS: Right.

10 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Right now, this  
11 project, we're requesting that they make sure  
12 that this project is LEED.

13 Can I just talk about one thing that's  
14 really important?

15 MAYOR CASON: Go ahead.

16 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I really want the  
17 residents to understand and my colleagues,  
18 because maybe they haven't been afforded what  
19 I've been afforded, I got to sit down with the  
20 Developer on three different occasions, and I  
21 got to sit down with Mr. Chip Withers,  
22 Commissioner Withers, who is not here today, on  
23 three occasions. I was supposed to get  
24 together with him yesterday, but he's not able  
25 to join us today, even though he sent a letter

1 of support -- excuse me, not support, excuse  
2 me, opposing the project. I want to get that  
3 correct.

4 One of the things that I was able to  
5 understand, after sitting down with the  
6 Applicant, is what potentially an as of right  
7 project would look on this piece of property,  
8 and I don't want to disclose too much of the  
9 information that you shared with me, because I  
10 don't know if you shared it with anybody else,  
11 and I know it's, you know, certain information  
12 that maybe you want to keep private, but I  
13 think there's a big misconception here in  
14 reference to what can be put on this property  
15 as of right.

16 And I want to make sure that I can discuss  
17 that here in public and not --

18 MR. LEEN: I think now you have to put it  
19 in the record, actually.

20 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I want to make sure  
21 that everybody is aware, because I want to be  
22 transparent. I want to be transparent about  
23 this.

24 You know, you're talking about potentially  
25 having a big box retail that would be an as of

1 right project, with two or three levels of  
2 parking, with three levels of medical office on  
3 top of that. So you're talking about six or  
4 seven stories.

5 In the discussion that we had, I wanted to  
6 find out, and I heard before the traffic  
7 specialist, Mr. Plummer, speak in regards to  
8 the fact that there will be a hundred percent  
9 increase in traffic from what is being proposed  
10 today.

11 Has that been vetted? Has that been like  
12 shown to be fact? Can anybody give me a little  
13 bit more information in regards to that?

14 MR. LEEN: Yes, and I do need you to put  
15 that in the record. Please put in the record  
16 what would be as of right there, what the  
17 Commissioner was informed.

18 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Oh, no, what they  
19 showed me was basically what --

20 MR. BASS: To answer your question, let me  
21 just take it one by one.

22 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Of course.

23 MR. BASS: To answer your question about  
24 traffic, let me have Mr. Plummer supply you  
25 with the assumptions for the as of right

1 project that generated the conclusion, so that  
2 we do apples to apples.

3 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I want everyone to be  
4 aware, especially the residents, of what truly  
5 is an as of right project, that does not have  
6 to come before the Commission for approval,  
7 because there's a lot of -- I met with some of  
8 the residents, and they say, "That's not  
9 allowed, that would have to come before the  
10 Commission to get a variance."

11 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Before Tim starts,  
12 are we talking about not requiring the  
13 four-story limitation on US-1?

14 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Well, it already says,  
15 with a Mediterranean Bonus, you'd be allowed to  
16 have six. That's an as of right project.

17 MAYOR CASON: Yeah.

18 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Right now you have 45  
19 feet, four stories. If you produce a  
20 Mediterranean style design, it would be six  
21 stories, even seven stories.

22 MAYOR CASON: 77.

23 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Or 72.

24 MS. RUSSO: The answer is that we don't --

25 MR. LEEN: I need to interrupt. I'm sorry.

1 I need you to put into the record what is as of  
2 right, and what was informed to the  
3 Commissioner. That needs to happen, and I need  
4 someone who is testifying to that. So please.

5 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Mr. Bass, the project  
6 that potentially would come in this location,  
7 that has been offered to the client, which is a  
8 shopping center style, with a grocer in the  
9 bottom, please discuss that, so the Commission  
10 is aware of it.

11 MR. BASS: Okay. I'll go as far as I can,  
12 but I want to answer the question that was  
13 asked, which was a slightly different question,  
14 but let me answer the City Attorney's first.

15 Yes, there has been interest expressed in  
16 the property by end users, who would be grocers  
17 and medical office providers, who would  
18 conceivably build a combination of both, retail  
19 and professional offices, with structured  
20 parking on that site.

21 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay. And you have a  
22 letter of intent showing interest in this?

23 MR. BASS: That I don't know.

24 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay. I'm asking --  
25 I'm asking a question, to see if that --

1 MR. BASS: But what I think is important,  
2 and I'll see how far I can go with the  
3 disclosure there, because -- and I think it's  
4 important for this conversation --

5 COMMISSIONER LAGO: The reason why I ask is  
6 because Mr. Plummer before made a statement  
7 that there's a hundred percent increase from  
8 what is being proposed today, if we go in an as  
9 of right fashion with the product that you're  
10 just mentioning right now. And I want to be  
11 clear, and I want to give -- if you want to  
12 talk about it, please, you know, come forward.

13 MR. BASS: And Mr. Plummer will give you  
14 with specificity the assumptions he made for  
15 the as of right project, that he modeled the  
16 comparative traffic analysis from.

17 COMMISSIONER LAGO: That's what I want to  
18 hear.

19 MR. BASS: Which is what I thought you  
20 wanted to hear.

21 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Exactly.

22 MR. BASS: So he will tell you, in terms of  
23 the type of use and the amount of that type of  
24 use, the corresponding traffic generator.

25 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Yes.



1 Mr. Plummer, thank you, sir.

2 MR. PLUMMER: Again, Tim Plummer, with  
3 David Plummer and Associates, 1750 Ponce de  
4 Leon Boulevard.

5 The program I was given as an as of right  
6 plan includes 89,000 square feet of medical  
7 office, about a 5,400 square foot restaurant,  
8 and 16,000 square feet of a supermarket.

9 And as I stated on the record previously,  
10 in the p.m. peak hour, that generates about a  
11 hundred percent more net new trips compared to  
12 the Paseo de la Riviera project. I can submit  
13 this into the record.

14 COMMISSIONER LAGO: And that is based,  
15 obviously, on your experience, adjacent Trader  
16 Joe's, which I've gone to, which I will never  
17 go back again -- I mean, let's be clear. I  
18 Mean, if anybody's gone there on a Saturday,  
19 you can't find any parking.

20 COMMISSIONER KEON: I've never gone there  
21 because of that.

22 MR. PLUMMER: These numbers are based on  
23 the ITE Trip Generation Manual, which is what  
24 our impact study is based on, which is what's  
25 professionally accepted.

1           With the same assumptions that we used in  
2           our traffic study regarding transit ridership,  
3           internalization, those kinds of things, same  
4           assumptions, and that's what the conclusions  
5           are.

6           MAYOR CASON: Laura, I think it would be  
7           helpful, because we haven't actually gotten to  
8           the conditions that you've agreed to, we've  
9           gotten bits and pieces, but I think it would be  
10          good for people that are watching to know, the  
11          questions that came out of the Planning and  
12          Zoning and elsewhere that -- we heard, 40, and  
13          then we heard, 20, just quickly go through what  
14          it is. In addition, there was screening on the  
15          back, there was all kinds of lights and --

16          MS. RUSSO: Sure. And it depends on how  
17          you look at them, there are twelve conditions,  
18          but there are subconditions within the  
19          condition, so by counting each and every one of  
20          them, I totaled 42. And, as Jeff said, we're  
21          agreeing to 40 of the 42, and he already made  
22          the exemption as to the two that we wish to  
23          preserve, which is the 142.6 for the hotel  
24          site, and 80 feet of depth to the 45 height.

25          But other than that, we've agreed to the

1 traffic condition, which is one year  
2 monitoring, and we've agreed to five years of  
3 traffic monitoring after Certificate of  
4 Occupancy. We've agreed on a construction  
5 staging plan, working with the Parking  
6 Director, Mr. Kevin Kinney, in terms of making  
7 sure that construction workers, during  
8 construction, are not parking in the  
9 neighborhood. I've already even spoken to Mr.  
10 Kinney about that.

11 We've also agreed to address with  
12 Mr. Kinney the valet operations, as well as  
13 taxicab parking, and all of this is done during  
14 the construction staging and between  
15 construction and operations, for some of the  
16 operational components.

17 MAYOR CASON: Screening of the back, there  
18 was something --

19 MS. RUSSO: The screening, we've agreed to  
20 screen the back of the parking garage, and  
21 we've also agreed to activate the first level  
22 of the parking garage. Before, the first level  
23 of the parking garage, on the Madruga  
24 elevation, had been parking. We've agreed to  
25 line it with an active use, and we've agreed to

1 also make it a green a wall in the back, and  
2 these were conditions that were imposed by the  
3 Planning and Zoning Board.

4 So we've agreed to all of those.

5 Do you have a list of our conditions?

6 And, of course, we've agreed as a  
7 restrictive --

8 MR. LEEN: Ms. Russo, do you -- the parking  
9 issue --

10 MR. RUSSO: With respect to the parking,  
11 yes, we will agree to additional conditions to  
12 make sure that the parking is not subleased by  
13 tenants to other users. We'll make sure that  
14 the lease agreements with the tenants make that  
15 a violation of the lease agreement, so the  
16 landlord will have the ability then to sue the  
17 tenant, if they were to violate that.

18 So it's our intent to do everything that we  
19 can to make sure that parking is not shared  
20 with others, other than the users of the  
21 building.

22 COMMISSIONER KEON: I'd like another  
23 condition for you.

24 MS. RUSSO: You want another one?

25 COMMISSIONER KEON: I do.

1 MS. RUSSO: Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER KEON: I'd like you to ensure  
3 that you will house all employee parking on  
4 site, that every person that is employed in  
5 those buildings will have a parking space  
6 within your parking garage. There is no reason  
7 for anyone, not a valet, not a housekeeper --  
8 there is not one reason for anyone to park on  
9 any neighborhood street anywhere.

10 MR. BASS: Just as a friendly amendment,  
11 and I got it, I'm not fighting with you --

12 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay. I'm just asking  
13 you that that is --

14 MR. BASS: One of our ideas was to  
15 subsidize their transit pass.

16 COMMISSIONER KEON: Good. And if they  
17 choose not to do that, and if they come in a  
18 car, I don't want to see one single employee,  
19 not one single employee, park in anybody's --  
20 on any public street, in any swale, on any  
21 public street.

22 MAYOR CASON: And there's another thing  
23 that you all, if we get to a second reading,  
24 should --

25 MS. RUSSO: We'll accept that condition.

1           MAYOR CASON: -- discuss. It's the  
2           possibility of doing something with a trolley  
3           that will help reduce the need for parking,  
4           because we've used -- we're planning to expand  
5           the trollies anyway. UM's got a trolley that  
6           doesn't connect with our trolleys, and there  
7           possibly could be some things done with UM, but  
8           it seems like that would obviated the need for  
9           some of this overparking that we've seen. So  
10          to discuss that and see if that's feasible.

11          MS. RUSSO: Yeah. In our response, you  
12          will note that what we did is, we're going to  
13          take time, between first and second reading, to  
14          look at some options. Some of it being,  
15          discussing with the University of Miami -- we  
16          know they have the Hurry Canes buses, and to  
17          look at different options to be able to expand  
18          the connectivity between the project and other  
19          business sections between the project, the  
20          University Station, Merrick Park.

21          MAYOR CASON: Yeah, because I've raised  
22          this with the new president of UM as one of my  
23          priorities, is to -- because their trolly goes  
24          Coconut Grove, you can't get from the  
25          University --

1 MS. RUSSO: And South Miami.

2 MAYOR CASON: And South Miami, but you  
3 can't get to the Gables.

4 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Yeah, but just like we  
5 did with Mediterranean Village, where we got  
6 them to comit over 15 years to have, I think  
7 it's four extra trolleys, correct --

8 MAYOR CASON: They offered four for 15  
9 years -- 25 years.

10 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Four for 15 years. We  
11 need to have something similar.

12 MS. RUSSO: Yeah, and what we'd like to  
13 do --

14 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I'm not asking it has  
15 to be that scope, because that project is four  
16 times the size of this project.

17 COMMISSIONER KEON: Exactly.

18 MAYOR CASON: Ramon.

19 MR. TRIAS: Condition 7 is a mobility  
20 contribution, okay, and it anticipates  
21 negotiating the amount and the type of user  
22 that we can use. So if you request it more  
23 specifically, we'll just add that into the --

24 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: But I'd ask that  
25 you not be more specific at this point, that we

1 would be able to sit down and really work  
2 through those issues, so that we know that what  
3 you want we can deliver.

4 MAYOR CASON: Yeah.

5 COMMISSIONER LAGO: But I will give you one  
6 specific item, and I agree with the Manager, I  
7 want to make sure that if there's any trolleys,  
8 they don't go to the heart of the residential  
9 neighborhood. I want them off -- away. You  
10 know, obviously, continue to push anything that  
11 has to do with the residential neighborhoods,  
12 protect the neighborhoods.

13 MAYOR CASON: Frank.

14 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Yeah. I feel like  
15 this conversation has made an assumption that  
16 hasn't been decided yet, whether we're for the  
17 project or against it. The conversation, I  
18 feel, skipped a step.

19 So I just want to give my opinion on where  
20 I'm at right now. I would just want to say a  
21 few things, based on what I've heard today,  
22 based on the evidence that's been presented,  
23 because I know that's what we have to apply in  
24 this situation and the standard that was  
25 explained to us this morning, we -- first thing



1 first, you know, I think the Holiday Inn is a  
2 tired building, in the sense that it's shown a  
3 little bit of age. I think it's inevitable  
4 that something will come there. Obviously, we  
5 just want to make sure it's the right thing,  
6 it's within the vision that, you know, our  
7 founders had and the vision that we have for  
8 the City, as elected officials.

9 You know, and I think my comments and my  
10 thoughts on it are summed pretty well -- there  
11 were a few individuals that spoke, that, you  
12 know, I really agreed with their opinion. I  
13 like the way they phrased it. They phrased it  
14 very well, and it's a combination of what  
15 Courtney Thompson, Chris Zoller -- I'm sorry,  
16 one more person that I really liked what she  
17 said -- Cristina Santa-Cruz, they like the look  
18 of the project. They don't like the size, and  
19 they don't like the scale of it.

20 Then I believe Commissioner Lago said  
21 something, that he didn't like the scale,  
22 either. Correct me if I'm wrong. I'm not  
23 trying to put words in your mouth.

24 So I like the look. I like the design. I  
25 really like the first floor, I'll be honest

1 with you, from the designs that I've seen.  
2 Jaycee Park, I've -- you know, I have a  
3 love-hate relationship with Jaycee Park. I  
4 love going there, but everytime I go, my wife  
5 kicks my butt in tennis.

6 So, you know, I know the neighborhood well.  
7 I've been going in that area a long time. I  
8 know that's outside of what I need to base my  
9 opinion on, but my opinion here, you know,  
10 today, based on the evidence that's been  
11 presented, as what we've seen, you know, I  
12 really want to see a sit down conversation  
13 between the residents and the developer after  
14 this meeting.

15 You know, I am very much inclined to make a  
16 motion to allow it to move to second reading,  
17 and the reason for that is, I'm trying to be  
18 fair on both sides here. Number One, that  
19 neighborhood, it's a true residential  
20 neighborhood. You know, I don't want the  
21 impacts of traffic or a commercial development  
22 impacting that residential neighborhood.  
23 That's very important.

24 But at the same time, and part of the  
25 conversation that Commissioner Lago was having

1 with Mr. Bass, as well as Mr. Plummer, there's  
2 still quite a bit that can be done in an as of  
3 right setting, that we would have no control of  
4 stopping. So a lot of times up here, residents  
5 or a developer will get mad at us or happy at  
6 us for reasons that sometimes we don't realize  
7 why it's happening, and I think it's important  
8 for you to understand what's at least going  
9 through my mind. It's a delicate balance of,  
10 you know, where the as of right begins and  
11 where the variance ends, and there's somewhere  
12 in between that we're always looking at.

13 You know, one of the first items that I  
14 voted on, as an elected official, was actually  
15 the Somerset Academy, and I believe Mr. Gibbs  
16 was there, as well.

17 MAYOR CASON: That was the longest meeting  
18 we ever had.

19 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Yeah. You know, and  
20 it's funny, and I apologize, I've digressed a  
21 little bit from the issue, but I think it's  
22 important to understand how that ended up.

23 Number One, Mr. Gibbs didn't surprise us  
24 with so much information at the hearing, which  
25 I think he saw I was visibly upset with that,

1 but, you know, what ended up happening is, it  
2 was a healthy conversation. We went back  
3 between readings, and the neighborhood was  
4 satisfied, and the developer was satisfied, and  
5 I think it was a win-win situation that came  
6 out of that.

7 So I just want to be very clear, when it  
8 comes to traffic in the neighborhoods, you  
9 know, I have great respect for Mr. Plummer,  
10 just because he's analyzed more projects in  
11 this City than, I think, anyone else, and he  
12 represents the City the vast majority of the  
13 time. However, Mr. Zoller's statements threw  
14 me off a little bit, because I served on the  
15 Traffic Board with him.

16 I think, when you serve on a traffic board  
17 or you sit up here, you look at traffic, you  
18 really learn to understand what the impacts are  
19 on traffic. So I know he lives in the area and  
20 I know he was on the Traffic Board with me, and  
21 we served together. So he understands the  
22 nuances.

23 So the fact that there currently is  
24 stacking -- was there an opportunity, I had a  
25 chance to speak to you -- someone over here cut

1 me off from questioning, Ms. Madam Manager,  
2 which I want to come back to those questions  
3 after, if I feel it's a consensus that the  
4 project -- we want to continue going into some  
5 of these nuances, but I think it was important  
6 for all of us to understand at least where were  
7 at, because if the votes aren't there to move  
8 forward, then I think we're wasting everyone's  
9 time.

10 So the traffic, obviously, is big concern.  
11 When I look at the numbers here, when I look at  
12 the person who has put it together, when I look  
13 at -- there was another traffic consultant  
14 looking at it, it makes me feel like the  
15 traffic impact is going to be severe. However,  
16 again, what Mr. Zoller said really jumped out  
17 at me. It's what some of the other residents  
18 have said, Ms. Kawalerski, as well, which knows  
19 the -- you know, I greatly respect her opinion  
20 when it comes to the pedestrian walkability and  
21 the bike paths and the interplay with traffic,  
22 just because of her experience and my dealings  
23 with her. So that throws me off a little bit.

24 So I want to hear more about the traffic  
25 aspect, and if it does move to a second

1 reading, I want additional drill down into  
2 those specifics.

3 As far as the parking, Debra, one of the --  
4 I think she spoke fifth or sixth, she mentioned  
5 parking in the area is currently a problem  
6 coming from the -- what is it called -- Gables  
7 One Tower? Is that the one -- the formal name  
8 of it?

9 COMMISSIONER KEON: Yeah.

10 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Something that we did,  
11 that was very successful in the past, North  
12 Ponce, we implemented residential parking  
13 restrictions and we did it around actually  
14 Commissioner Lago's neighborhood, before you  
15 lived there, around the University of Miami,  
16 and that was very successful.

17 I know it's not an issue today; however,  
18 I'm going to ask that at the next Commission  
19 Meeting, it's an item that we put up for  
20 discussion, to put residential parking permits  
21 around that building, based on some of the  
22 comments we've heard today, and, obviously, if  
23 this Commission decides to continue the  
24 conversation, I would make it another  
25 requirement, that we make residential parking

1           permitting sections there.

2           And I know there's a lot of intricacies  
3           with every neighborhood, because, if you go  
4           visit a friend, you don't want to get towed,  
5           because you're visiting a friend, and I know  
6           that Kevin Kinney, in the Parking Department,  
7           has done a good job to figure that out.

8           So I just wanted to give you my thoughts of  
9           where I'm at. I want to see this move to a  
10          second hearing. However, if it does stay at  
11          the same scale that it's currently at, my vote  
12          at second hearing will be, no, it will be  
13          against the project, but, again, I think we  
14          have an opportunity here, as a neighborhood,  
15          because I do think we have a nice design, and I  
16          do think we have a developer that's willing to  
17          work with the neighborhood, and, you know,  
18          they've worked some, and I think we need to  
19          make them work some more. And that's where I'm  
20          at right now.

21          COMMISSIONER LAGO: I just want to add a  
22          few things here in reference to what the Vice  
23          Mayor --

24          MAYOR CASON: Yeah, go ahead. Then I want  
25          to ask the Attorney --

1           COMMISSIONER LAGO: I want to make sure  
2           that when we do have -- like I requested  
3           before, when we have the Applicant and the  
4           neighbors get together, either it'd be with the  
5           City Attorney or City Manager, whoever we  
6           decide to be present, I want to make sure they  
7           discuss certain issues. Like I'm a huge fan,  
8           and I know that Commissioner Slesnick mentioned  
9           it before, and this whole Commission, as a  
10          whole, mentioned it the other day when we met,  
11          we talk about open public spaces, right?

12                 It's my understanding, Ramon, and correct  
13          me if I'm wrong, that open public spaces, as  
14          per the Code, has to be 21 percent. Is it 20  
15          or 21?

16                 MR. TRIAS: 20 percent.

17                 MR. LEEN: 20. So you're talking about  
18          here 40 percent of this project is going to be  
19          open space. I mean, that's significant. I  
20          mean, that's what we want to push for, and I  
21          brought that up the other day, when we  
22          discussed the potential development that may be  
23          coming next to Merrick Park, with that green  
24          space, which we've all heard rumors that there  
25          may be some sort of boutique hotel coming.



1           Again, we have to make decisions at that  
2           point. I think that it has to be a give and  
3           take between the Applicant and the residents.  
4           Do we have more open space, and we have to give  
5           a little bit of height, or do we get rid of  
6           that open space, and have more of a box?

7           And to me, I'm in favor of just, you know,  
8           making sure there's a delicate balance in  
9           regards to that issue, and I think that if  
10          we're not careful, we could get into a  
11          situation where we could just have a box, like  
12          I mentioned before, and I know that maybe right  
13          now we're not going to talk about it in full  
14          detail, but Mr. Plummer submitted into the  
15          record the actual traffic study, and I want the  
16          Applicant to sit down with the residents and  
17          explain what could be potentially done, and  
18          what the interest is from a proposed partner  
19          that they're courting, if this project does not  
20          move forward. I want them to be aware of that.

21          I think it's good to put everything on the  
22          table and be as transparent as possible, and if  
23          we could have our City Attorney and Mr. Trias  
24          sit down and explain why that's as of right and  
25          does not have to come before the Commission.

1 That is my biggest fear, because my biggest  
2 fear is stepping into a situation where we  
3 really spin out of control in regards to  
4 traffic.

5 So, please, make sure, and I want to put  
6 that on the record today, that if we do move  
7 forward to a second reading, and once the  
8 Applicant and the residents do sit together,  
9 that has to be a focal point. We need to look  
10 at the options that are on the table.

11 MAYOR CASON: Mr. Attorney, would you  
12 explain what's required if we're going to move  
13 to a second, and then we'll have discussions,  
14 but I want to get the legal part first?

15 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay.

16 MR. LEEN: So Item A-1, that's the  
17 Comprehensive Plan change, that's what would  
18 move the designation from Commercial Low Rise  
19 Intensity to Commercial High Rise Intensity.  
20 That's where the issue about height is.  
21 There's been a proffered covenant. You've  
22 heard what the proffered covenant is.

23 For purposes of first reading, I would  
24 recommend that you accept that. It doesn't  
25 mean that at second reading you have to accept

1 it, and I doesn't mean that you can't impose  
2 something different as a condition of approval  
3 of the site plan, for example, but in terms of  
4 the Comp Plan, all you can do is accept  
5 whatever covenant is proffered. So if you end  
6 up approving this, I would accept whatever is  
7 the proffered.

8 Now, if you vote, yes, on A-1, you can move  
9 to the other ones. If you vote, no, on A-1,  
10 this whole matter dies at that time, because if  
11 that doesn't pass first reading, you can't  
12 approve the rest of this project.

13 So Item A-1 is the Comp Plan change, and  
14 you should vote on that first.

15 Based on that, Item A-2 is the change to  
16 the site specific, and it's been proffered that  
17 this will only relate to this particular  
18 property, and it will be written like that for  
19 second reading. If you vote -- I've given a  
20 prior opinion that you don't necessarily have  
21 to vote, yes, on this, although it's  
22 preferable. If you vote, yes, on A-1, it's  
23 consistent to vote, yes, on A-2, but you don't  
24 have to, because you have A-3, and A-3 is the  
25 site plan.

1           When we've been talking about the  
2           quasi-judicial component, that's Item A-3, and  
3           of these conditions we're discussing, that are  
4           meant to address the harm, and any other  
5           condition you want to impose, they're all  
6           imposed on Item A-3 or they're proffered. In  
7           fact, all of the conditions being discussed  
8           right now are being proffered. You've accepted  
9           them all, except for the issue regarding the  
10          height, and the Commission has indicated that  
11          they want you to work with me and with Mr.  
12          Gibbs to try to address the scale and height.

13           MAYOR CASON: So a question. If in order  
14          to move to a second reading, where all of these  
15          things can be discussed and we'll make a final  
16          decision sometime in November --

17           MR. LEEN: You would need to vote. In  
18          order to go to second reading, you would need  
19          to vote, yes, on all them.

20           MAYOR CASON: If any of these were voted,  
21          no, other than A-1, could you come back in the  
22          second reading and vote?

23           MR. LEEN: I mean, you could continue with  
24          A-1, but I would not recommend a vote of, yes,  
25          in A-1 and, no, on any of the other ones,

1 because then you're allowing the Comp Plan  
2 change without any of the conditions of  
3 approval or anything like that.

4 MAYOR CASON: That was my point.

5 MR. LEEN: I would look at the three  
6 together. However, if you vote, no, on A-1,  
7 this cannot proceed to second reading.

8 MAYOR CASON: Okay. Pat.

9 COMMISSIONER KEON: I do. I'd like to  
10 start with asking Ramon -- you know, I've heard  
11 a lot of discussion here about the  
12 70-story building -- or the 100, and whatever,  
13 42 --

14 COMMISSIONER LAGO: 133, 140.

15 COMMISSIONER KEON: 140, whatever. The IRE  
16 building, how it appeared overnight. You know,  
17 that's not -- I don't know that personally, how  
18 it came about, so I'd like to know -- was that  
19 built with variances or was that -- what was  
20 the story at that time?

21 COMMISSIONER LAGO: That's 145 feet.

22 COMMISSIONER KEON: If you know off the top  
23 of your head.

24 MS. RUSSO: I have the information. I did  
25 research on the IRE building, because we

1 constantly heard how it was --

2 COMMISSIONER KEON: Yeah, I'd like the  
3 facts on that just put on the record.

4 MR. RUSSO: I have the facts.

5 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay.

6 MS. RUSSO: I have the City's Zoning Sheet.

7 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay.

8 MS. RUSSO: It did obtain some variances.  
9 The variances it obtained were for setbacks.  
10 As you know, it had the front setbacks, the  
11 same ones we have of 125 feet, and 50 in the  
12 back. It obtained setbacks, because it has its  
13 parking garage -- as you know, it's a half  
14 level up and a half level down. The parking  
15 garage is five feet from the setback. So that  
16 was considered. It did not get a variance for  
17 height. Its only variances were for the  
18 parking garage structure.

19 COMMISSIONER KEON: Okay.

20 MS. RUSSO: These variances for the project  
21 were approved in May of 1971, and I have an  
22 article here written by Edwin Knight, Decision  
23 Changes Building, and I have a zoning  
24 worksheet, and I have an article that showed up  
25 in December of 1971.

1           So the project was approved. It was  
2 noticed. People went to the project. It was  
3 the permitted height. So it did not come in  
4 the middle of the night. And the real  
5 controversy came, later on, after it was built,  
6 because it didn't have signage and it was when  
7 the IRE became either a major tenant, and it  
8 put the fluorescent signage on the side of the  
9 building, which was something that was seen  
10 from miles and miles away.

11           I'm going to turn in here -- I have the  
12 Zoning Sheet that was calculated. And just so  
13 you know, the Zoning Code -- there were a lot  
14 of different components to the Zoning Code back  
15 in 1971, and an article here from The Times  
16 from 1971.

17           COMMISSIONER KEON: All right. So that was  
18 the permitted height at the time that that  
19 building was permitted and it was built.

20           MS. RUSSO: And just so you know, there  
21 were two other buildings that were approved on  
22 the site, that did not get built. One of them  
23 was called the Coral Gardens Apartments  
24 Shopping Center and the other one was the  
25 Gables Tower Luxury Apartments. They were

1 approved in the '60s.

2 So, you know, the Holiday Inn was built in  
3 '61. The University Shopping Center was  
4 already existing. So this was the middle  
5 parcel, and there was a mixed use building that  
6 was approved in 1964, which was geared for  
7 University of Miami students and University of  
8 Miami faculty, and it was a high rise. At the  
9 time, it was 150 feet, and it got approval, and  
10 it was approved.

11 There must have been some change in the  
12 market, because shortly thereafter, there was a  
13 revised site plan that was presented to the  
14 City for the Gables Tower Luxury Apartments,  
15 with high end retail on the ground floor.

16 So that site, you know, had three  
17 different, and one was actually built -- three  
18 different high rises approved for the site.

19 COMMISSIONER KEON: Right. So it seems  
20 that that site, where the University Shopping  
21 Center is now, the IRE Building, the current  
22 setting of the Holiday Inn, were -- at that  
23 time, could build to the height that the IRE  
24 building is, and it was -- up until then, it  
25 hadn't been, but it could be they built it and



1           there was a reaction from the community, that,  
2           you know, gasped and said, "Oh, my God, how  
3           could you allow that," and the reaction was to  
4           make it four stories, which is -- you know,  
5           when you look back, whether it was good  
6           planning or bad planning, it doesn't seem to  
7           be. It seems to have been reactionary, not  
8           really a planning issue at all, but just a  
9           reaction.

10                 So I certainly can -- I don't -- I think  
11           the site warrants more than four feet. What I  
12           don't like -- I don't like is, I don't like  
13           strip malls. I don't like large asphalt  
14           services -- surfaces along our street fronts.  
15           I think as you go down LeJeune Road and you  
16           look at, you know, the buildings now, as you  
17           come out -- you go by Merrick Park, you start  
18           to come up, you see duplexes, whatever, you  
19           come in toward the Downtown, and you see some  
20           office buildings, and then you hit the asphalt  
21           parking lot of the Publix, and I think it's a  
22           very, very unattractive space, for a very, very  
23           beautiful City. And, you know, and then you  
24           move along and you don't see it again.

25                 I don't like that along the highway,

1           either, either the University Shopping Center  
2           or the Holiday Inn part now. I think it's very  
3           unattractive. I don't think, you know, where  
4           the Rivera Theater is and where Swensen and  
5           that is all built, isn't quite as back, because  
6           it's not quite as deep, but it's not  
7           attractive.

8           Having attractive buildings front our  
9           streets, I think, is a much better way to build  
10          and a much better way to develop our cities.

11          What's going to happen in turn, though, is,  
12          it means that you're going to hide parking, and  
13          so parking is going to be built and decks are  
14          going to be built underneath, and so, in turn,  
15          what you're going to have to do to get rid of  
16          what I think is very, very unattractive  
17          development, is you're going to have to allow  
18          height. You're going to have to go up, to  
19          improve the appearance and the aesthetics of a  
20          community.

21          I also think that the development that is  
22          before us today, by its design, is -- again, I  
23          mean, everyone has said, is really a beautiful  
24          design. I think the paseo is beautiful. I  
25          think the open space is very nice. I think the

1 green -- the grass and the greenness around it  
2 is very attractive.

3 I think, their building transit oriented  
4 development at Dadeland or Datran Center is  
5 very, very unattractive, because it is all  
6 concrete. It's all concrete. There are no --  
7 you know, there is, I guess, one kind of  
8 roundabout that has some sculpture or something  
9 in it, but, you know, for the community as a  
10 whole -- and, you know, I think we need to  
11 serve the residents of the Riviera Neighborhood  
12 Association, but, you know, we need to serve  
13 our community as a whole. We need to serve  
14 every resident, and sustain the aesthetics of  
15 our community in general, and I think that  
16 changing the building type along that corridor  
17 will do that.

18 So, you know, actually, I hope in some  
19 ways, not the height, not the density, but the  
20 type of footprint that this building will  
21 create, with the paseo, with some open space,  
22 with covered walkways, I hope it will be the  
23 design that will follow as some of these other  
24 buildings in these spaces are re-developed and  
25 we move away from asphalt parking lots and

1           whatever. It is a much, much more attractive  
2           look, and much more in keeping with the  
3           aesthetics that currently exist in the City of  
4           Coral Gables and have always been -- always  
5           been important to the City, from Merrick's  
6           time, you know, forward.

7           What I do have a concern about is just the  
8           density and the size of the project. There  
9           isn't anything else along -- you know, that  
10          once we leave our Downtown, as you go along, in  
11          the City of Coral Gables, anyway, there isn't  
12          anything that goes to that 142 feet height. I  
13          mean, even as we go into the area -- as you  
14          continue down US-1, and, you know, you turn  
15          left and you into -- you know, along Sunset and  
16          that whole kind of commercial area that is our  
17          southern border there, also is not at that  
18          height, and I think that it should be -- what  
19          is built along the Highway there should be more  
20          in keeping with the density and the height and  
21          the massing of, you know, what continues into  
22          that southern part of our City.

23          So I like the project very much. I  
24          really -- I will tell you everything that I  
25          like, but I will not, in the end, approve a

1 project if you don't bring down the density and  
2 bring down the height of that project.

3 And not -- either not just by removing, you  
4 know, parking. It's you need to remove some of  
5 the units, too.

6 You know, and I know that every time you  
7 remove salable space, it reduces, you know,  
8 your return, but, you know, you buy a piece of  
9 property with the hopes that you're going to be  
10 able to develop it. You kind of know what's  
11 going to be there. And that's a risk that you  
12 take.

13 So, you know, in someplace else, you may  
14 make a little more money, but, you know, here,  
15 there is -- you know, there is a very strong  
16 commitment to aesthetics and to planning and  
17 whatever in this community that I think that we  
18 have to hold everyone to that develops here.

19 So it needs to be -- I think the 120 that  
20 the Planning Department has been talking about  
21 is probably a better scale even for both of  
22 them, but I think you need to come down, and I  
23 don't want to see it happen at the expense of  
24 the green space or the paseo or everything  
25 else.

1 I know there are a lot of conditions here  
2 that are imposed on you, and I think some of  
3 them are rather costly. Personally, I would  
4 rather see you bring down the density than  
5 expect that you should, you know, provide a lot  
6 of amenities to the City that maybe are not  
7 directly related to your project.

8 But I would like to see it down -- you  
9 know, to come down a little bit, and I know it  
10 is a transportation corridor, there is  
11 increased density, but, you know, we are  
12 increasing the density, but not maybe as much  
13 as you would like to see.

14 And I feel very strongly about this issue  
15 of employee parking. I mean, I find it very  
16 distressful that when you go up Sunset Drive,  
17 the swales along the Sunset Drive, in front of  
18 the Women's Club and the Presbyterian Church  
19 and all of that, are filled with cars, that are  
20 employee parking for some businesses that are  
21 in the Gables, along Yumuri and in that area,  
22 that had no for employee parking and employees  
23 are now parking there.

24 I think it detracts from the appearance of  
25 Sunset. I think it is -- what was a very nice

1 grassy strip and very pretty, is now dirt.  
2 It's just dirt, because employees and people  
3 have parked there.

4 So I want to make sure that going forward,  
5 that whatever we allow, that we ensure that  
6 employee parking is dealt with, within what you  
7 build. I don't want to see anybody parking on  
8 anybody's swale anywhere in this City, unless  
9 you invited them to come park there.

10 MAYOR CASON: Commissioner Slesnick.

11 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: I wanted to Tim --  
12 I'm still back on asking questions, because I  
13 didn't want to take up your time. I worked at  
14 EWM, right next door, on Caballero, for 20  
15 years, and we had usually 40 people in the  
16 office and filled the parking spaces in the  
17 University Inn Complex there. If we had office  
18 meetings of even 20 or 30 more people, we had  
19 cars on the City streets, on Caballero, and at  
20 the park, where we were ticketed and everything  
21 else, and that was only 50 or 60 cars.

22 And I know still a lot of people park in  
23 that area at the park, when they really need to  
24 be parking -- I've been told, the residents  
25 have seen them walking over around the corner

1 to the Gables One Tower. So I think we need to  
2 look at enforcing that, if that's a problem.

3 Someone wrote me a letter last night, that  
4 said that perhaps Hardee should be closed off  
5 or made one way somewhere near the park, so  
6 that the traffic doesn't go in or come out, at  
7 least one part of that, and I was just looking  
8 at the numbers that you have, where there's 136  
9 cars coming. That's one of the real fears for  
10 the people that live on Hardee down that way,  
11 because I remember, when I was with EWM, we had  
12 a no right-hand turn sign when we came out of  
13 our parking space, and yet half the people,  
14 half the agents in our office, turned right and  
15 went up Hardee Road.

16 It wasn't enforced. There were no police  
17 officers there. You're making an illegal  
18 right-hand turn.

19 What do you think of that idea, as far as  
20 making Hardee Road one way into Caballero or  
21 one way out, at that point, just so that you  
22 can get to the park?

23 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Commissioner, because  
24 you asked it, I received the same e-mail. That  
25 was sent to us by Mr. Ojeda, Tony Ojeda.



1           COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Thank you. I  
2           didn't know. We got a lot of letters last  
3           night.

4           COMMISSIONER LAGO: No, I responded to him,  
5           also, whatever. He's here, just in case you  
6           want to refer to him in person.

7           MR. PLUMMER: That's a possibility. That  
8           would be a potential traffic calming  
9           alternative. I thought of Commissioner  
10          Quesada, because that came up in another  
11          project. We did something very similar, when  
12          City National Bank and the Bacardi Headquarters  
13          came forward on Le Jeune, at Sevilla, when the  
14          traffic signal came in.

15          There was a concern that as people left the  
16          parking garage, they were going to come onto Le  
17          Jeune and go west on Sevilla. So we made -- as  
18          you know, Sevilla now is one way eastbound,  
19          just for that section, so you cannot go into  
20          Sevilla and go westbound when you leave.

21          Now, to answer your question previous or  
22          your comment, there was another traffic study  
23          for that project, where we put in a bunch of  
24          traffic calming on Anderson, and that traffic  
25          calming device on Sevilla.

1           There was a concern for the residents to  
2           the south, the next few streets, before you get  
3           to Anastasia, "Well, Mr. Plummer, everybody is  
4           just going to continue down south on Le Jeune  
5           and then they're going to cut through our  
6           street."

7           So one of the conditions was, a traffic  
8           calming study, I believe it was six months  
9           after opening -- six months to a year, and we  
10          did the analysis and those streets had almost  
11          no impact on them. The volumes that we did --  
12          we had before counts, before the project was  
13          built, after counts, and it didn't come  
14          anywhere near meeting the traffic calming  
15          threshold. So improvements like that, if  
16          that's something the residents are interested  
17          in, are potential traffic calming improvements  
18          that, One, would have to be approved by the  
19          City and the County, because it's a traffic  
20          flow modification, and that is one way to  
21          control traffic. It's more restrictive.

22           COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: What are the  
23           chances of having a light out there on  
24           Caballero, because that was another problem?  
25           If you want try to go left on Caballero, you

1 really can't. You can barely get right.

2 MR. PLUMMER: Right. That came up  
3 constantly in our meetings with the neighbors.  
4 The State is very stringent on their traffic  
5 signal spacing.

6 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Because there's one  
7 two blocks --

8 MR. PLUMMER: Because of the one at South  
9 Alhambra, it would be like a 70 percent  
10 variance, which, you know -- I never say,  
11 never, but the chances really are, it will  
12 never happen. It's too close to each other.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I appreciate that  
14 honesty. That's what I want to hear.

15 MR. PLUMMER: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

16 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: I know, along, in  
17 front of EWM, which has just been recently  
18 sold, and I understand there's going to be  
19 townhouses -- lovely townhouses that are two  
20 million up on the water, right across from  
21 Jaycee Park, and that the former EWM site,  
22 they're talking about making a restaurant and  
23 so forth there.

24 Again, you're going to have more traffic if  
25 that becomes a restaurant. I mean, it's all

1 going to be developed sooner or later, but it  
2 seems like it's really going to bog down if we  
3 don't have -- right now you can go -- you can't  
4 go left on their alleyway right in front. It  
5 says, don't go left -- cars go that way all of  
6 the time, too -- so you can get over to the  
7 light.

8 Do you think there's any way of working  
9 with the owner of that property?

10 MR. PLUMMER: Yes. When those projects  
11 come forward, one of the things they're going  
12 to have to do in the traffic impact study, if  
13 this project moves forward, they will have to  
14 take into account the traffic impact from this  
15 project. It's part of our background traffic  
16 that we talked about, the future without their  
17 project. And then they're going to have to go  
18 through the same process and address those  
19 issues and make sure that the traffic impacts  
20 are taken care of, and that could be a  
21 potential solution.

22 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Yeah. That's it. The  
23 fact that it will be studied one year, if this  
24 is approved, one year after construction, and  
25 any necessary changes made, is a safety measure

1 that I'm not willing to compromise, and I know  
2 that -- you know, I imagine you wouldn't  
3 compromise, on, and I know that -- you know, I  
4 imagine you wouldn't compromise, either. If  
5 anything, I would extend it from one to two  
6 years.

7 COMMISSIONER KEON: But that's one of the  
8 benefits of developing under a PAD, is the  
9 amount of control that the City will maintain  
10 over this site with regard to all of the  
11 conditions and things that we will impose. So  
12 it gives us a much greater ability to continue  
13 to work with what happens there, in protecting  
14 the neighborhood.

15 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Just some final  
16 comments.

17 Thank you, Tim.

18 MR. PLUMMER: You're welcome.

19 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: I think Mr. Bass  
20 and Mr. Gibbs both made excellent presentations  
21 here today, and you're commended for doing such  
22 a fine job, keeping it civil, as well as the  
23 whole audience. I like the project and I  
24 especially like Jorge Hernandez's style. I've  
25 always admired -- I worked on the museum with

1 him and the building is beautiful.

2 I really would love to see this over on one  
3 of those vacant parking lots next to the  
4 BankUnited Center, since this is going to have  
5 a lot of students or graduate students, and so  
6 forth in the rental building, and they need a  
7 hotel.

8 I still don't understand, most major  
9 universities have hotels right on campus, their  
10 own hotels, that would service the University  
11 Health Center or whatever is going on there,  
12 service the people coming to stay and visit at  
13 the University, have -- you could use the  
14 building, the rental building, for long stay  
15 for professors who are only coming in here for  
16 six months.

17 I mean, I would rather -- I think the lady  
18 right behind you mentioned that she would love  
19 to have the University have more right, in  
20 order to build higher. This is a perfect  
21 project for an empty parking lot, that's right  
22 over there, that doesn't have anything going  
23 on, just to the north of the Bank United.

24 No clapping.

25 MAYOR CASON: We'll be having a chance to

1 meet, I think in early December, with the Board  
2 of Trustees and the new president of UM. We  
3 can make suggestions as to future development  
4 there, as a separate issue, though.

5 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: But, I mean, it's  
6 so well-designed and it would be perfect for  
7 being there on campus if we can give the  
8 University of Miami more space.

9 I would like to say that I wish all of you  
10 could have been at brainstorming. I know you  
11 had other things, and you were in Africa, a  
12 little bit far to come, but we had 300 to 400  
13 people at the brainstorming session, and  
14 everybody was thrilled to have input and to be  
15 heard, and that's why they really appreciated  
16 being there.

17 But out of that brainstorming session, the  
18 surveys are coming back, and I'll share them  
19 all with you, is that the majority of the  
20 people there feel like we're moving too fast  
21 and just giving so many variances away, that  
22 the Comprehensive Plan is really not being  
23 followed, that we're giving variance, after  
24 variance, after variance, and when I ran for  
25 office in March, that came up, too, and people

1 just kept saying, "I appreciate your thought in  
2 trying to keep this a little bit under, not  
3 controlled development, but smart development,  
4 for Coral Gables."

5 And, for me, the Comprehensive Plan change,  
6 according to our City Attorney, are legislative  
7 in matter, and that they should be really  
8 vetted more and heard more from the citizens,  
9 and I would like to have something in January  
10 or February or March, another Charrette, as  
11 Mr. Ramon Trias suggested, having a Charrette  
12 where we study changes throughout Coral Gables.

13 I find US-1 very unattractive in most  
14 places, especially where the Rivera Theater  
15 used to be, the Holiday Inn, the shopping  
16 center where Fridays is. They're all very  
17 unattractive. I remember when people didn't  
18 want palms down US-1 and we had to fight to get  
19 the palms down US-1, and now they're lovely.  
20 You know when you're in Coral Gables because  
21 you have palms most of the way.

22 I really, really feel we need to look at  
23 changing all of the zoning along US-1, raising  
24 the height limitations, and have our Planning  
25 and Zoning Board be the ones that make the



1 rules and regulations.

2 And Mr. Bass was talking about baseball,  
3 and this is a great analogy, because we're near  
4 the World Series, the way to win games is to  
5 have a good pitcher on your team, and good  
6 pitchers know where the strike zone is, and I  
7 feel the City is in the same mode. The City  
8 has been well run for 90 years. It has a good  
9 Comprehensive Plan, and good Zoning Laws, and  
10 that the pitchers, the City Commission, and the  
11 Staff, should aim for the strike zone, and have  
12 a winning game, and I think by going out and  
13 spreading balls out all over, that a  
14 development's here, and a development's here,  
15 and we have about seven or eight more -- if you  
16 go to the City website now, the E-news came  
17 out, and I encourage all of you to sign up for  
18 the E-news, because our City Manager put all of  
19 the projects on that, that are already under  
20 construction, going through the process, that  
21 have been permitted or that are in the pipeline  
22 coming up, where they're going to be in the  
23 same mode, that they're going to have to keep  
24 coming back to the City Commission to get  
25 variance, after variance, after variance.

1           So go to your City E-news, on the City  
2 website, and look at the 43, 46 projects that  
3 are coming to our City.

4           The Herald wrote that we need to be  
5 progressive and we need to have some of these  
6 projects and so forth. Everybody wants to come  
7 to Coral Gables. Everybody wants to come to  
8 Coral Gables. That's why their money is a good  
9 investment here, and I don't blame everybody  
10 wanting to come here and build wonderful  
11 projects and this is a beautiful project.

12           I think the residents are sick and tired of  
13 having to come before us and argue their  
14 points, when they feel their neighborhoods  
15 aren't protected, and they have to get an  
16 attorney and come here -- and take off work and  
17 come here and talk to us in order to be heard.

18           We have a Zoning Code, which is a strike  
19 box. We have a Zoning Code, and we should  
20 follow it, and variances should only be given  
21 when there's an emergency or when it will make  
22 something -- a neighborhood, in general, very  
23 pleased with it, and the rest of the citizens  
24 of Coral Gables.

25           The citizens of Coral Gables want to be

1 heard, and I remember when 90 Edgewater came  
2 in. None of you were around then. You're too  
3 young.

4 Laura, you were here.

5 90 Edgewater came in, and people fought it.  
6 And the next elections after that, all three of  
7 the Commissioners that were there were voted  
8 out of office, because 90 Edgewater came in,  
9 and the new Commission at that time wanted to  
10 stop the further development in that area, and  
11 that's where we got into a lawsuit for four  
12 years.

13 And eventually we have 10 and 60 Edgewater.

14 COMMISSIONER KEON: Right. And it also  
15 cost the City three million dollars.

16 MS. RUSSO: That was the settlement. It  
17 was an eight million dollar judgment.

18 COMMISSIONER KEON: It was a three million  
19 dollar settlement, because instead of  
20 planning --

21 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Planning, in  
22 advance.

23 COMMISSIONER KEON: You reacted. And you  
24 know what, you cannot be reactionary.

25 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: And I feel we are

1 being really very, very reactive and being in  
2 emergency room mode, when we should be slowing  
3 down and just considering everything, and  
4 studying this beforehand.

5 And that's why I really would like to push  
6 my fellow Commissioners to have a Charrette in  
7 January or February or March and just postpone  
8 all of this for three months in order to study  
9 it.

10 I think this is a good project, but I  
11 wouldn't vote for more than six stories or  
12 eight stories.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: But six stories is as  
14 of right, with the Med Bonus.

15 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Okay. With  
16 Mediterranean. Okay, if you wanted a  
17 Mediterranean style office building or a  
18 doctors' building, that would be an attractive  
19 building, with some stores on the ground floor.

20 I'm just saying, I would really not vote  
21 for more than --

22 COMMISSIONER KEON: No.

23 COMMISSIONER LAGO: But the question is,  
24 though, when you see the amount of traffic that  
25 comes in with that type of situation, do we

1 want more traffic?

2 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: No. Again, I don't  
3 believe there's going to be more traffic.

4 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Mr. Plummer --

5 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: I know what he  
6 says.

7 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I'm not a traffic  
8 engineer.

9 MAYOR CASON: Wait a second.

10 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: I worked next door  
11 for 20 years, next door, and I just know what  
12 60 cars can do to a neighborhood, and if you're  
13 still going to have a garage and you're going  
14 to cut back 90 spaces, so you're going from 835  
15 or whatever, minus 90 spaces, you can only have  
16 700 cars, 750 cars.

17 750 cars going in and out on the  
18 neighborhood and trying to weave your way in  
19 and around, and I hear you want bicycles and so  
20 forth, and maybe we'll have more bicycles, but  
21 the neighbors are going to have their  
22 neighborhood intruded upon, no matter what, and  
23 if you have a store there, an office building  
24 in the front, you can have people come in, in  
25 the front. You can regulate where the traffic

1 is going.

2 You can cut off Hardee Road, so that they  
3 have to come in and out of US-1. Everybody  
4 would have to come in and out of US-1.

5 COMMISSIONER LAGO: So why don't we have  
6 our independent traffic consultant review the  
7 as of right project with a traffic study?

8 MAYOR CASON: Yeah.

9 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Well, that's what  
10 we ask. But I feel we're just being asked to  
11 vote today --

12 COMMISSIONER LAGO: No, but I'm saying, our  
13 own -- the one that we -- Atkins -- why don't  
14 we have Atkins vet that and see if that is  
15 truly legitimate.

16 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: I just feel like  
17 we're just rushing into everything.

18 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Let me answer, because  
19 you've mentioned it several times, in several  
20 meetings. Currently, right now, there's a  
21 moratorium in North Gables of any development.  
22 I don't think we're rushing.

23 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: No. No, not  
24 anymore. It ended in August.

25 COMMISSIONER LAGO: But right now we

1 haven't had any projects come from North  
2 Gables --

3 COMMISSIONER KEON: Well, anything that's  
4 not as of right.

5 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Not anything that's not  
6 as of with.

7 MR. LEEN: That's been lifted. That's been  
8 lifted.

9 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Wait. That was lifted  
10 as of two weeks ago, right?

11 MR. LEEN: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER LAGO: But, hold on, let's  
13 address it. And I know that we've mentioned  
14 several projects that have been coming to the  
15 City --

16 MR. LEEN: A month ago.

17 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: No, lifted as of  
18 August 26th.

19 COMMISSIONER KEON: Yeah, it was in August.

20 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: It wasn't two weeks  
21 ago.

22 COMMISSIONER LAGO: But, I mean, again, I'm  
23 doing a little bit of research, because I've  
24 heard the comments about the projects that have  
25 been coming to the City, a lot of the projects

1 that have come to the City have been as of  
2 right. The problem is that they have to  
3 come --

4 MAYOR CASON: A vast majority.

5 COMMISSIONER LAGO: They have to come to  
6 the Commission, like the 13-unit building that  
7 came -- that's going next to Sir Pizza,  
8 because -- excuse me -- it's a Site Plan  
9 approval. That's an as of right building.

10 MR. LEEN: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: But that's an  
12 industrial area, too, and that --

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Hold on. How about the  
14 hotel that's under construction, about 2020 --

15 COMMISSIONER KEON: Aloft.

16 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: That's in the  
17 Central Business District, 2020 Salcedo and  
18 2020 Ponce. We have two 16-story buildings --

19 COMMISSIONER LAGO: But I'm giving you an  
20 example, where I want to be very, very careful,  
21 when we say that there's ramped overdevelopment  
22 and that there's -- when you can look back at  
23 the projects that are under construction or  
24 have been approved -- for example, the  
25 Collection Residences was an as of right



1 project. The only thing we did on that  
2 project, which we all, as a Commission, as a  
3 body, approved, was we provided them with not a  
4 density increase, not an intensity increase,  
5 not more units, not more density, what we just  
6 provided was a better footplate in regards to  
7 the product, and everybody agreed upon that.

8 So I'm with you. I agree. We need to be  
9 very careful, you know, in reference to what we  
10 approve and how we approve projects, but I want  
11 to be even more prudent, when we speak about  
12 what we've approved in the City.

13 I don't want to start fear -- instilling  
14 fear in people that we're overdeveloping and  
15 people are scared. People want to invest in  
16 this City. That's why you see people coming  
17 here.

18 For example, Oficina, that was approved on  
19 Ponce, as of right.

20 I mean, every project, and I've been here  
21 for two years, except maybe --

22 COMMISSIONER KEON: Med Village.

23 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Med Village is one --  
24 give me one second, Mr. Trias, I'm making a  
25 point here, okay --

1 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: And then I'm next.

2 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay. Mediterranean  
3 Village, which had been on the docket for four  
4 years -- I've been here two years -- that's the  
5 only project that we have approved with  
6 significant variances.

7 I mean, I can go down the list of items  
8 that we've approved since we've been here,  
9 where they've been as of right. The project  
10 that we approved last week, correct me if I'm  
11 wrong, was that as of right?

12 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: How about the A  
13 Loft Hotel?

14 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I wasn't here, but that  
15 was as of right.

16 MAYOR CASON: That was as of right.

17 Ramon, you want to say something?

18 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I just want to make  
19 sure -- and I love -- listen, I love having  
20 healthy discussions. We can have as  
21 many Charrettes. I'm for it. I think it's a  
22 great idea to have Charrettes. I think it's  
23 spectacular to hear public input. That's why I  
24 told you to make sure that every time we have  
25 these Commission Meetings, that we put up how

1 many times we've taken public input. It's  
2 important.

3 That's why every individual in this room,  
4 that has written me an e-mail, gets a response,  
5 and it says, "If you want to meet with me,  
6 here's my cell phone. If you want to have  
7 coffee with me, I'm more than willing to meet  
8 with you and have a discussion with you."

9 What I don't want to do is instill fear in  
10 people that we're out there giving away the  
11 City, which we're not. As of right -- and I'm  
12 willing to sit down with you and go project by  
13 project by project -- right now we currently  
14 have, in the City, two cranes. Two cranes in  
15 the City, okay, in this entire City.

16 What do you want to do? Do you want to  
17 stop development in the City as a whole, just  
18 stop giving out building permits? I don't  
19 think that's what we want in the City.

20 What we need to do is very prudent and get  
21 the best design possible and have as much  
22 public open space as possible. That's what we  
23 need to do. We need to protect the residents,  
24 have as much open space as possible and have  
25 the best design possible. That's what George

1 Merrick has always wanted. But I don't want to  
2 instill fear in people and say that we're --  
3 you know, development is ramped, when we have  
4 two cranes in our entire City.

5 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: But we have more  
6 coming.

7 COMMISSIONER LAGO: An as of right project.  
8 You can't stop as of right --

9 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: That's fine, but --

10 MR. LEEN: Okay. The rules say that there  
11 cannot be arguments among Commissioners.

12 MAYOR CASON: Yeah, listen.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: We're not arguing. The  
14 last thing I want to do is argue. I'm having a  
15 conversation. I have too much respect for her  
16 to argue with her.

17 MAYOR CASON: Let me just ask if you have  
18 one last comment, before we have motions on  
19 this.

20 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I have a motion.

21 MR. TRIAS: It's just to correct the  
22 terminology. When I hear, as of right, what I  
23 think you mean is that there is no rezoning or  
24 change of Land Use.

25 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Yes, sir.

1 MR. TRIAS: That's what you --

2 MR. LEEN: Yes, because the mixed use  
3 building comes to you for site plan review, but  
4 you don't have a basis to just reject it. I  
5 think that's what's being said, but they do  
6 come -- you're allowed to impose Conditions of  
7 Approval, but we do allow mixed use buildings  
8 in our Zoning Code, but they come before you  
9 for Conditional Use Review.

10 So it's something a little bit in between.

11 COMMISSIONER KEON: Can I ask --

12 MAYOR CASON: Nevertheless, last thoughts.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I think Commissioner  
14 Keon had a comment.

15 COMMISSIONER KEON: I'd like -- through the  
16 Mayor -- if Mr. Trias could just, for proper  
17 nomenclature -- would you define a variance?

18 MR. TRIAS: I'm just trying to help a  
19 little bit.

20 COMMISSIONER KEON: You know, it keeps  
21 being said that we're granting variances, we're  
22 granting variances. These are not variances.  
23 Could you please define a variance, and how it  
24 differentiates from the change in Zoning or the  
25 change in Land Use.

1 MR. TRIAS: Yes. The variances are  
2 approved by the Board of Adjustments and they  
3 have to do with dimensions, for example,  
4 setbacks, details of development.

5 Just to clarify, so there's no confusion,  
6 the way I hear your discussion, when as of  
7 right has been said, what you really mean is  
8 that it's not a Change of Land Use or Change of  
9 Zoning.

10 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Yes, sir.

11 MR. TRIAS: The only distinction, like the  
12 City Attorney said, is that many times you have  
13 a Conditional Use Review for a mixed use, okay,  
14 which is not a Rezoning or a Land Use, but it's  
15 not really as of right, either, because you  
16 have to take action. So if we could say,  
17 Rezoning and Land Use and forget about  
18 variances and other terminologies, so we're  
19 clear, then I think you're correct.

20 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I'm going to ask a  
21 simple question, Ramon -- two questions. How  
22 many years have you been here? How many years  
23 have you worked for the City of Coral Gables?

24 MR. TRIAS: Over three years.

25 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay. In those last

1 three years, how many projects has this  
2 Commission granted additional density and  
3 intensity? I can name one, Mediterranean  
4 Village.

5 MR. TRIAS: I think you're probably right.

6 COMMISSIONER LAGO: So I just want everyone  
7 to hear that. We have -- this Commission has  
8 granted one project, one project, additional  
9 intensity and density. I'm willing to sit down  
10 with anybody. I have all the stats. I'm  
11 willing to sit down and go over it, if you'd  
12 like.

13 I just want to be clear, because sometimes  
14 things are said, and before you know it, they  
15 become fact. They become fact, and I need to  
16 make sure that we talk real fact, not hearsay.

17 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Yes.

18 MAYOR CASON: And I'm going to propose that  
19 in one of the future Commission Meetings, we  
20 have a discussion of the 42 projects that are  
21 before the DRC or that didn't get through the  
22 DRC, that were proposed and people are counting  
23 as upcoming projects -- a lot of them have been  
24 abandoned, have been reduced, after they go  
25 through the process that you described in the

1 beginning.

2 We have some that are coming for  
3 permitting, some that are permitted, very few  
4 that are actually under construction, and then  
5 we can have a discussion of facts on the  
6 question of development and overdevelopment.

7 I don't think this is the place right now.  
8 I just wanted to ask, did you have any final  
9 thought, anything you wanted to say before -- I  
10 think the Vice Mayor wants to make a motion.

11 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: I just wanted to  
12 ask, if a big box store came in, does the  
13 100-foot setback on the Caballero side take  
14 effect? I mean, won't they have to have  
15 100-foot setback?

16 MR. TRIAS: If they don't go through any  
17 kind of mixed use --

18 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Variance?

19 MR. TRIAS: No.

20 COMMISSIONER LAGO: It's not a variance.

21 MAYOR CASON: You don't use "variance."  
22 That's not a word we use.

23 COMMISSIONER KEON: It's not a variance.

24 MR. TRIAS: And I hear you, and I wish the  
25 Code was as clear as that.



1           COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: But as of right,  
2 they would have to address that 100-foot  
3 setback?

4           MR. TRIAS: On US-1, yes.

5           COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Yes. Okay. So  
6 that would be a smaller store?

7           COMMISSIONER LAGO: No.

8           COMMISSIONER KEON: No. It would be the  
9 parking lot.

10           COMMISSIONER LAGO: Then the problem is  
11 this -- this is the additional, Article 4,  
12 Zoning Districts, .3, "The Site Specifics  
13 standards of this Code shall not apply to  
14 property seeking assignment of an MXD overlay.  
15 Approval of an MXD overlay shall deem  
16 underlining site specification regulations as  
17 void."

18           When you do that, immediate, correct me if  
19 I'm wrong, the individuals here from our City,  
20 you would immediately lose the rear and front  
21 setbacks, front setback, 125 feet; rear  
22 setback, 50 feet, would immediately evaporate.

23           We, as a City, if an individual, entity  
24 decides to build a big fox, 45 feet, plus the  
25 Mediterranean Bonus, 77 feet, they would

1 immediately apply for what I just mentioned  
2 before. Would they be granted, Mr. Trias, that  
3 release from the setbacks?

4 MR. TRIAS: Yes, but it would have to be  
5 approved by you.

6 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: You know, sir, we  
7 really want to be accurate and careful with the  
8 answers. It's been a long day.

9 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I understand.

10 MS. SWANSON-RIVENBARK: And so I just don't  
11 want to put Ramon in the box, so to speak,  
12 regarding that.

13 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Again, I'm not putting  
14 him in a box, but I want to make sure that when  
15 questions are asked, people get detailed  
16 responses.

17 MR. LEEN: I mean, I know the answer to  
18 this. It would have to be a mixed use project.  
19 So it would have to qualify, and then they  
20 don't apply. However, you can impose them.

21 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Will they have to go to  
22 the Commission?

23 COMMISSIONER KEON: Yes.

24 MR. TRIAS: The answer is, yes.

25 COMMISSIONER KEON: If it's a mixed use, it

1 would have to come --

2 COMMISSIONER LAGO: So they can have the  
3 option to have their setbacks removed?

4 MR. TRIAS: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Okay.

6 MR. LEEN: We've given that opinion in this  
7 case, because, remember, I told you, you don't  
8 need to amend the Site Specifics here. The  
9 principal reason you don't, aside from the PAD,  
10 is that there's a mixed use overlay that's  
11 going to be coming before you on second  
12 reading, which eliminates the Site Specifics.

13 MR. TRIAS: The fundamental issue is,  
14 there's a real distinction between a Change of  
15 Land Use and Change of Zoning and everything  
16 else you do. So I will recommend the  
17 discussion is narrowed and it deals with a  
18 Change of Land Use and a Change of Zoning, and  
19 then everything else.

20 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I'm sorry I put you in  
21 the box.

22 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Mr. Mayor, I would  
23 like to make a motion.

24 MAYOR CASON: All right. We're going to  
25 have -- the Vice Mayor is insisting on a motion

1 on A-1.

2 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Unless there's any  
3 other --

4 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Wait. I want to say  
5 one last thing, before we make a motion, and  
6 just go for it. I want to reiterate,  
7 Applicant, representatives from RNA, our City  
8 Attorney, our City Manager, whoever else needs  
9 to be in that meeting from Staff, Mr. Trias,  
10 his staff, I would like to please schedule a  
11 meeting immediately, to sit down and discuss  
12 the future of this project and make the RNA  
13 representatives aware of everything that's on  
14 the table.

15 COMMISSIONER KEON: You have to allow him  
16 to make the motion.

17 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I'm just asking. I  
18 want to make that my colleagues -- I'm saying,  
19 do my colleagues accept that? I just want to  
20 reiterate that again, because I think that's  
21 important.

22 I want to have the residents involved in  
23 every step, if we do move forward.

24 MAYOR CASON: Mr. Vice Mayor.

25 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I would like to make a

1 motion at this time. I just want to give a  
2 little bit of clarity, briefly. This is for  
3 those that don't know, watching at home or in  
4 the audience, this is first reading. There are  
5 two readings to this. The final decision on  
6 whether the project moves forward or not, in  
7 what capacity, occurs at second reading.  
8 That's the finality of it.

9 MR. LEEN: Yes.

10 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: With that being said,  
11 I would like to make a motion -- I move this  
12 dais to approve Item A-1, based on the comments  
13 I made earlier, that if the scale is not cut  
14 down by second reading, if the Applicant  
15 doesn't proffer a reduced scale of the project,  
16 my vote will be, no, at second reading, but  
17 right now my vote is, yes, because I want to  
18 continue the conversation moving forward on  
19 Item A-1.

20 MAYOR CASON: Do we have a second?

21 COMMISSIONER KEON: I'll second it.

22 MR. LEEN: Commissioner, would your motion  
23 include accepting, for purposes of first  
24 reading, the covenant that was proffered?

25 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Yes.

1           COMMISSIONER LAGO: Can I just add one  
2 thing? Would your motion accept a reduction in  
3 the size of the paseo, if the building can be  
4 brought down lower?

5           COMMISSIONER KEON: No.

6           MR. LEEN: That should be on A-3.

7           COMMISSIONER KEON: That's part of the  
8 negotiation.

9           COMMISSIONER LAGO: I know. I know. I  
10 know. That's part of the negotiation. I just  
11 want to leave it open to see -- to make sure  
12 that everything is on the table.

13          VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I will incorporate  
14 that into my motion for A-3, not in A-1.

15          MAYOR CASON: Okay.

16          City Clerk.

17          THE CITY CLERK: Commissioner Keon?

18          COMMISSIONER KEON: Yes.

19          THE CITY CLERK: Commissioner Lago?

20          COMMISSIONER LAGO: Yes.

21          THE CITY CLERK: Vice Mayor Quesada?

22          VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Yes.

23          THE CITY CLERK: Commissioner Slesnick?

24          COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: No.

25          THE CITY CLERK: Mayor Cason?

1           MAYOR CASON: Yes, because I think that  
2           based on what we've done before, between the  
3           two lawyers involved in this, with some time,  
4           we've been able to make a lot of progress, and  
5           I think that this project can be improved in  
6           the time between now and the next time it is  
7           brought up. So I think it's worth it, so I  
8           vote, yes.

9           COMMISSIONER LAGO: I agree wholeheartedly.

10          MAYOR CASON: A-2.

11          VICE MAYOR QUESADA: So moved.

12          MAYOR CASON: Vice Mayor makes the motion.

13          COMMISSIONER LAGO: I'll second the motion.

14          MAYOR CASON: Commissioner Lago seconds.

15          MR. LEEN: Can I ask? Is the motion  
16          accepting the condition that's it's only for  
17          this --it's not a condition, but it's going to  
18          be limited to just this property?

19          MAYOR CASON: This site.

20          COMMISSIONER KEON: This site.

21          MR. LEEN: This site only? This specific  
22          site.

23          MAYOR CASON: Yes.

24          COMMISSIONER KEON: Yes.

25          I'll second it.

1           MAYOR CASON:  It's too late.  Commissioner  
2           Lago did.  You can second the next one if you'd  
3           like.

4           City Clerk.

5           THE CITY CLERK:  Commissioner Lago?

6           COMMISSIONER LAGO:  Yes.

7           THE CITY CLERK:  Vice Mayor Quesada?

8           VICE MAYOR QUESADA:  Yes.

9           THE CITY CLERK:  Commissioner Slesnick?

10          COMMISSIONER SLESNICK:  No.

11          THE CITY CLERK:  Commissioner Keon?

12          COMMISSIONER KEON:  Yes.

13          THE CITY CLERK:  Mayor Cason?

14          MAYOR CASON:  Yes.

15          VICE MAYOR QUESADA:  I move on Item A-3,  
16          with the amendment that Commissioner Lago  
17          mentioned earlier.

18          MAYOR CASON:  Do we have a second?

19          COMMISSIONER KEON:  I'll second it.

20          MR. LEEN:  And as part of that motion, you  
21          accept all of the proffered conditions?

22          VICE MAYOR QUESADA:  Yes.

23          COMMISSIONER KEON:  Yes.

24          MR. LEEN:  And then you're including the  
25          condition about -- obviously you're accepting



1 the proffered covenant, as well, and you are  
2 saying that you want this lower and you want us  
3 to work together.

4 COMMISSIONER LAGO: And I also want to make  
5 sure that you take into consideration  
6 Commissioner Keon's statements in reference to  
7 what's been proffered, and that if some things  
8 can be, you know, taken back, to make the scale  
9 even smaller, we're more than willing to  
10 listen.

11 MAYOR CASON: And also to look at the  
12 possibility with shared parking and the  
13 trolley, to be able to reduce the height.

14 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: So amended.

15 COMMISSIONER KEON: And the employee  
16 parking.

17 MAYOR CASON: All right. City Clerk.

18 COMMISSIONER KEON: I'll second it.

19 THE CITY CLERK: Vice Mayor Quesada?

20 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Yes.

21 THE CITY CLERK: Commissioner Slesnick?

22 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: No.

23 THE CITY CLERK: Commissioner Keon?

24 COMMISSIONER KEON: Yes.

25 THE CITY CLERK: Commissioner Lago?

1 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Yes.

2 THE CITY CLERK: Mayor Cason?

3 MAYOR CASON: Yes.

4 MR. LEEN: Mr. Trias, we do not need to  
5 vote on A-4, do we?

6 A-4 is just going to be carried with the  
7 other three, because it's a resolution so it  
8 only requires one reading.

9 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I want to do an add-on  
10 motion, as well. I want to make it a  
11 requirement for the Applicant, if the Applicant  
12 is going to present the next time around,  
13 they're required to meet with Mr. Gibbs prior  
14 to the next meeting, sort of an informal --

15 COMMISSIONER LAGO: I'll second the motion.

16 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: -- mediation.

17 MR. LEEN: So you want a mediation. Also,  
18 are you going to -- okay. Do this one first.  
19 There was another issue raised.

20 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Yeah. There's one  
21 more issue. That's my second --

22 MAYOR CASON: All right. So on the  
23 question of mediation, do you want to say  
24 anything?

25 MR. BASS: I always -- Jeff Bass, for the

1 record. Always happy to spend time with my  
2 friend, Tucker Gibbs. The question is, is that  
3 in addition to the mediation -- is that in --

4 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: In addition to the  
5 mediation? What other mediation has been  
6 discussed?

7 MS. RUSSO: There was a requirement that we  
8 meet with the City Attorney and the City  
9 Manager and Members of the RNA.

10 MR. BASS: Because Commissioner Lago had  
11 imposed the condition.

12 MAYOR CASON: We had already put that in  
13 there.

14 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: I just want to ensure  
15 that there is a meeting between the two of you  
16 prior to the next time. Whether the Manager is  
17 present or the Attorney is present --

18 MR. BASS: Yes, but it's the same meeting.

19 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: -- it doesn't bother  
20 me.

21 COMMISSIONER LAGO: And, please, again, I  
22 don't want to hear later that the neighbors did  
23 not receive the information in reference to  
24 what is available as of right. Please, that's  
25 important.

1 I need to make sure everybody is clear and  
2 understands what's on the table.

3 MR. TRIAS: And, Mayor, if I could, we need  
4 to work all this out before we schedule the  
5 second reading.

6 MAYOR CASON: Right. You have to do your  
7 studies.

8 All right. Do you want to keep that  
9 motion? They've already agreed to it.

10 VICE MAYOR QUESADA: Okay. Then I will  
11 withdraw the motion.

12 And the last one is actually not a motion,  
13 it's just a statement. Mr. Bass, Mr. Gibbs, I  
14 would like you to write this down, Section  
15 3.304 Subsection C, Submission of Evidence.  
16 You're laughing. I'm not. We need to be fully  
17 informed.

18 The presentation today, there was a lot of  
19 detail that you guys provided. I don't  
20 appreciate that tactic. I don't. It drew my  
21 attention away from the substance and made me  
22 focus on the procedural aspects, which I  
23 shouldn't be focused on.

24 When we are not fully informed ahead of  
25 time, I feel like you're trying to do it at the

1 last second to try to trip us up or the other  
2 side up. So it goes to both of you. I don't  
3 want any surprises. Everyone should be fully  
4 informed before we get here, so that we can  
5 make a true, you know, decision, with some  
6 finality, based on the evidence presented to  
7 us.

8 So I know you're both professionals. So  
9 please, you know, respect our Code. Thank you.

10 MAYOR CASON: All right. With that, the  
11 meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER KEON: Thank you all very  
13 much.

14 COMMISSIONER SLESNICK: Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER LAGO: Thank you.

16 (Thereupon, the meeting was concluded at 4:58  
17 p.m.)

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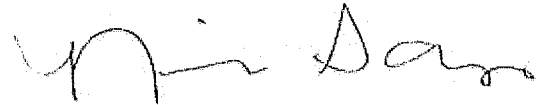
STATE OF FLORIDA:

SS.

COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE:

I, NIEVES SANCHEZ, Court Reporter, and a Notary Public for the State of Florida at Large, do hereby certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that the transcript is a true and complete record of my stenographic notes.

DATED this 10th day of November, 2015.



\_\_\_\_\_  
NIEVES SANCHEZ