AGENDA ITEM NO. _____

City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
November 8, 2011

ITEM TITLE:

Ordinance on First Reading. Zoning Code Text Amendment. An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for a text amendment to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, Article 4, "Zoning Districts", Division 2, "Overlay and Special Purpose Districts", Section 4-201, "Mixed Use District (MXD)", amending the residential unit density for MXD projects; and providing for severability, repealer, codification, and an effective date.

DEPARTMENT HEAD RECOMMENDATION:

Approval.

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning and Zoning Board at their 10.19.11 meeting recommended unanimous approval (vote: 5-0).

BRIEF HISTORY:

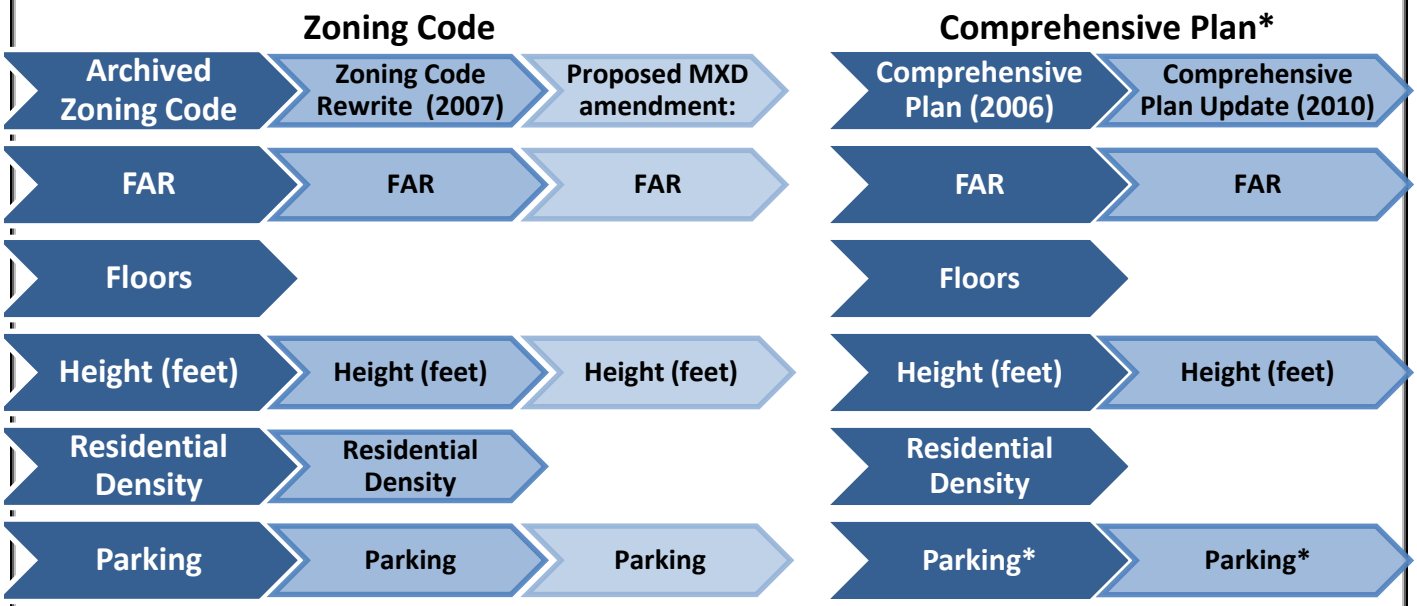
This request is to amend the text of Zoning Code Article 4, "Zoning Districts", Division 2, "Overlay and Special Purpose Districts", Section 4-201, "Mixed Use District (MXD)". The amendment would remove the residential density limitation in the North and South Industrial Mixed Use Overlay Districts (MXD) and Central Business District (CBD).

Mixed-use projects are only permitted in Commercial (C) and Industrial (I) zoning districts. Currently, two (2) MXDs overlay districts exist in the City, which are the North and South Industrial MXD Districts. A 125 unit per acre density limitation was included in the MXD provisions during the drafting of the initial provisions in 2004 and 2006. This amendment proposes to remove the residential density limitation in the North and South Industrial Mixed Use Districts (MXD) and Central Business District (CBD). This amendment does not propose any other changes to the performance standards, bulk/mass, floor area ratio (FAR), permitted building height, setbacks, etc. Redevelopment of parcels would continue to be regulated by FAR, height (feet) and parking.

The Planning Department, since the start of the of the Zoning Code re-write in 2004, has refined the Zoning Code to provide progressive performance standards and innovative regulations for building design, bulk/mass, etc. More specifically, this was completed through the adoption of the Mixed-Use Districts (MXD) (2004 and 2006), Zoning Code re-write (2007), and the recent Comprehensive Plan update (2010).

All of these Code updates provided additional flexibility for development of properties. The chart below illustrates those changes. Future MXD developments would continue to be regulated by FAR, height (feet) and parking.

Code updates providing additional flexibility for development of properties



*Parking is regulated by the Zoning Code

Planning Staff conducted research and found that many local governments in recent years have removed residential density limitations in their urban core areas or infill areas.

This "form based" approach to regulating residential density is intended to encourage additional residential density in defined urban downtown areas, and result in public realm improvements and pedestrian amenities that would otherwise not be provided. This amendment pertains only to mixed use projects which are required to secure both site plan and conditional use public hearing review and approval. This would allow City Staff, the Planning and Zoning Board and the City Commission to provide specific conditions of approval if necessary.

Staff would also note that the Code already has in place a minimum residential unit size of 575 square feet. No change is necessary to these provisions.

The removal of the residential density limitation in the North and South Industrial Mixed Use Districts (MXD) and Central Business District (CBD) in the opinion of Staff shall promote additional opportunities for residential development in the downtown and areas that have easily accessible transit opportunities. Both geographic areas are served by the Coral Gables trolley as well as Miami-Dade County Metrorail transportation systems. This text amendment strongly supports numerous Comprehensive Plan Goals Objectives and Policies to provide a supply of housing that addresses the City's needs that shall include a variety of housing opportunities for all income ranges, provide housing diversity to enhance the City's social and economic growth and continue to be a distinctive, diverse, attractive and desirable place to live.

This amendment was envisioned as a part of the update of the Comprehensive Plan which began in 2007. This amendment specifically supports the following 2010 updated Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives and Policies as follows:

Objective HOU-1.5. *Support the infill of housing in association with mixed use development.*

Policy HOU-1.5.1. *Encourage the development of diverse housing types such as smaller, more affordable units within the downtown area and mixed use development overlay area.*

Policy HOU-1.5.2. *Encourage residential mixed use as a means of increasing housing supply within the Downtown/Central Business District/Mixed Use Development Overlay Area, thereby promoting increase in commercial and retail activity, increased use of transit, reduction of auto dependency, in association with minimizing visual and physical impacts of nearby lower density areas.*

Please refer to the Staff report for additional analysis and background information (See Exhibit C).

The following Exhibits are included as background information:
A. Draft Zoning Code provisions.
B. Draft Ordinance.
C. 10.19.11 Staff Report.
D. Excerpt of 10.19.11 Planning and Zoning Board Meeting Minutes.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

Date:	Resolution/Ordinance No.	Comments
N/A		

OTHER ADVISORY BOARD/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION(S):

Date	Board/Committee	Comments (if any)
10.19.11	Planning and Zoning Board	Unanimous approval (vote: 5-0).

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION(S):

Date	Form of Notification
10.07.11	Legal advertisement.
10.14.11	Posted agenda at City Hall.
10.14.11	Posted agenda, staff report, legal notice and all attachments on City web page.
10.28.11	Legal advertisement.

APPROVED BY:

Department Director	City Attorney (If Applicable)	City Manager

EXHIBIT(S):

A. Draft Zoning Code provisions.
B. Draft Ordinance.
C. 10.19.11 Staff Report.
D. Excerpt of 10.19.11 Planning and Zoning Board Meeting Minutes.