



# City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Staff Report

Applicant: City of Coral Gables  
 Application: **Zoning Code Text Amendment – Driveway Materials**  
 Public Hearing: Planning and Zoning Board  
 Date & Time: **October 11, 2023; 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.**  
 Location: City Commission Chambers, City Hall,  
 405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

## 1. APPLICATION REQUEST

The City of Coral Gables is requesting review and consideration of the following:

*An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables official Zoning Code, Article 6, “Landscape,” by amending the utilization of artificial turf on open joints of pavement; and Article 10, “Parking and Access,” by providing review of materials in pavement joints; and providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and an effective date.*

The request requires three public hearings, including review and recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Board, and 1st and 2nd Reading before the City Commission.

## 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Currently, the Zoning Code allows artificial turf to be in open joints of pavement in any location and to provide a buffer to separate the artificial turf from other landscaping. However, the Commission desires to not allow artificial turf in the front yard. Additionally, a goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to encourage the purchase of recycled materials over non-recycled materials.

As requested by a member of the Commission, Staff has prepared Zoning Code text amendments to prohibit further installment of artificial turf in open joints of pavement. As an alternative to artificial material, a list of materials is provided to utilize in open joints of driveway pavement. Staff recommends using river rock, jersey shore gravel, marble chips, blackstar rock, Mexican black pebbles, or other gravel materials that are loose, permeable, and recyclable. The materials must not be smaller than ¾ of an inch each to provide enough gaps to infiltrate the underlying soil. The adjacent and swale materials at the driveway will be considered for compatibility. The City Architect will review the materials, as appropriate.

New driveway permit applications will be required to comply and submit a site plan showing the proposed materials. However, existing properties with artificial turf in between open joints of pavement will not be required to comply and be able to replace their materials as needed.

The text amendment was presented at City Commission on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 for first reading and voted to approve with a vote of 4 to 1.

### 3. PROPOSED ZONING CODE TEXT AMENDMENT

The proposed Zoning Code text amendments are provided below in ~~striketrough~~/underline format.

#### ARTICLE 6. LANDSCAPE

Section 6-103. Landscape general requirements.

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A. The following are general requirements that are applicable to all rights-of-way (r.o.w.) and private properties within the City, unless exempted herein:

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6. Plant materials.

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b. Vegetation requirements specified herein shall be installed in accordance with all of the following unless noted otherwise:

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vii. Artificial Turf. Areas of recyclable artificial turf require a permit and are allowed as a component of the overall design for landscape requirements as follows:

1. SFR and MF1 Zoning Districts: allowed within the rear yard, with an acceptable buffer, as determined by the Public Works Landscape Services Division. All other locations may be approved only if site conditions limit landscape options, as determined by the Public Works Landscape Services Division.
2. Special Use (S) Zoning Districts: allowed within athletic fields when not visible from any street. Additionally, a minimum buffer width of five (5) feet shall be provided with landscape to provide water drainage. Other locations within this zoning district visible to the street, require Conditional Use review and approval pursuant to Section 14-203.
3. All other zoning districts: not allowed at ground-level. Other locations may be allowed in accordance with the open space requirements of the Zoning Code.

All artificial turf shall resemble the natural color of grass and be installed and maintained in accordance with all of the following:

- ~~Artificial turf may be utilized in open joints of pavement in any location and shall provide a buffer to separate the artificial turf from other landscaping;~~
- Plant-based and natural infill materials shall be utilized to the greatest extent possible, such as soybean oil in the backing, sugarcane in the thatch, and crushed walnut shell for the infill;
- Synthetic materials, such as polypropylene, polyethylene, latex, and polyurethane shall be minimized, lead free, and flame resistant;
- Subgrade shall be equipped to provide proper water drainage with an evenly graded, permeable aggregate base that is at least three inches in depth with sufficient space for tree root growth provided;

- Areas containing any pits, tears, marks, discoloration, seam separations, uplifted surfaces or edges, heat degradation, and excessive wear are prohibited.

## **ARTICLE 10. PARKING AND ACCESS**

### Section 10-104. Materials, construction, and drainage

A. Surfacing. Surfacing of all access aisles, driveways and off-street parking areas shall be composed of one or more of the following:

1. Asphalt.
2. Chattahoochee gravel laid in asphalt with all loose gravel removed.
3. Clay or cement brick.
4. Concrete.
5. Decorative concrete pavers.
6. Loose gravel, provided that areas of loose gravel are set back five (5) feet from all property lines and bordered by another permitted driveway material.
7. Rock laid in asphalt with all loose gravel removed.
8. Wood block.
9. Permeable pavement or pavers.
10. Marble, porphyry, or other specialty paving supportive of vehicular traffic.

B. Open Joints of Pavement. River rock, jersey shore gravel, marble chips, blackstar rock, Mexican black pebbles, or other gravel materials that are loose, permeable, and recyclable. Such materials shall be no smaller than ¾ of an inch each to be utilized in open joints of pavement on surfaces, subject to review and approval by the City Architect. The adjacent and swale materials at the driveway will be considered for compatibility.

C. Engineering standards. The design, materials, drainage requirements, and engineering specifications of parking spaces, access aisles, driveways, points of ingress and egress, turnarounds, and other related items not specifically addressed in this Article shall comply with the technical standards promulgated or approved by the Director of the Public Works Department.

D. Parking of vehicles on any surface on private property other than the aforementioned surfaces shall be prohibited.

## **4. REVIEW TIMELINE / PUBLIC NOTICE**

### **City Review Timeline**

The submitted applications have undergone the following City reviews:

REVIEW COMMITTEES AND BOARDS	DATE
City Commission 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	09.26.23
Planning and Zoning Board	10.11.23
City Commission 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	TBD

The following has been completed to solicit input and provide notice of the Application:

PUBLIC NOTICE	DATE
Legal advertisement	09.29.23
Posted agenda and Staff report on City web page/City Hall	10.06.23

**5. FINDINGS OF FACT**

In accordance with Section 14-212.5 of the Zoning Code, the Planning and Zoning Board shall not recommend adoption of, and the City Commission shall not adopt, text amendments to these land Zoning Code unless the text amendment:

Standard	Staff Evaluation
a. Promotes public health, safety, and welfare.	The intent of the proposed amendment is to prohibit further installment of artificial turf in open joints of pavement and provide a list of alternative materials. This amendment is beneficial for Coral Gables and its residents as these materials are better suited for the environment and uphold George Merrick’s vision of natural vegetation throughout the city. Artificial turf consists of plastic materials and contributes to the carbon footprint from manufacturing, transporting, and installing processes. In addition, artificial turf displaces living plants, damages the soil underneath, and causes surface runoff and flooding. Therefore, providing an alternative list that comprises of different types of loose, permeable, and recyclable gravel materials in open joints of driveway pavement promotes public health, safety, and welfare.
b. Does not permit uses the Comprehensive Plan prohibits in the area affected by the text amendment.	The proposed amendment does not affect any uses permitted in the Comprehensive Plan.
c. Does not allow densities or intensities in excess of the densities and intensities which are permitted by the future land use categories of the affected property.	The proposed text amendment does not allow densities or intensities in excess of what are permitted by the future land uses.
d. Will not cause a decline in the level of service for public infrastructure which is the subject of a concurrency requirement to a level of service which is less than the	The proposed text amendment will not affect the level of service for public infrastructure.

minimum requirements of the Comprehensive Plan.

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| e. Does not directly conflict with any objective or policy of the Comprehensive Plan. | The proposed amendment does not directly conflict with any objective or policy of the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed amendments meet Objective FLU-1.12., FLU-1.14., Policy DES-1.1.2., Goal GRN-1., Policy GRN-1.2.2., and Objective GRN-1.4. |
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**Staff comments:** Staff finds that all five of these criteria are **satisfied**.

**Consistency Evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan (CP) Goals, Objectives and Policies**

The Planning and Zoning Division has reviewed the CP and finds the following CP Goals, Objectives and Policies are applicable. Consistent CP Goals & Objectives and Policies are as follows:

Ref. No.	CP Goal, Objective and Policy	Basis for Consistency
1.	<b>Objective FLU-1.12.</b> The City shall enforce the recently adopted Zoning Code which maintains the high aesthetic community design standards.	Complies
2.	<b>Objective FLU-1.14.</b> The City shall enforce Zoning Code provisions which continue to preserve and improve the character of neighborhoods.	Complies
3.	<b>Policy DES-1.1.2.</b> Provide for rigorous design guidelines, standards, and review processes via the City’s Zoning Code that ensure high quality design of buildings and spaces.	Complies
4.	<b>Goal GRN-1.</b> The City of Coral Gables will take measurable steps towards becoming a “sustainable” community by providing a healthy setting for residents, workers, property owners and visitors and increase awareness of green development practices and ways to have a significant impact on the City’s environment including the following: protecting the quality of air, water, land and other natural resources; conserving native vegetation, fish, wildlife and worldwide ecosystems; minimize the carbon footprint; and reduce greenhouse emissions.	Complies
5.	<b>Policy GRN-1.2.2.</b> The City shall continue to educate and encourage the purchase of recycled materials over non-recycled materials whenever the opportunity arises and is financially feasible.	Complies
6.	<b>Objective GRN-1.4.</b> The City shall research and entertain the following policies to further promote “greening” of the landscape.	Complies

The proposed text amendment to Section 6-103.6. of the Zoning Code prohibits further installment of artificial turf in open joints of driveway pavement. Additionally, Section 10-104 will provide a list of alternative materials to utilize in open joints of driveway pavement. This is “consistent” with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan.

Per Objective FLU-1.12 and Objective FLU-1.14, the City aims to “enforce the recently adopted Zoning Code which maintains the high aesthetic community design standards” and “enforce Zoning Code provisions which continue to preserve and improve the character of neighborhoods.” The City’s effort to utilize the list of alternative materials instead of artificial turf in the open joints of driveway pavement maintains the aesthetic quality and natural appearance of properties within Coral Gables. Artificial turf

does not always emulate a natural appearance and can negatively impact the aesthetics of a driveway and entrance.

The text amendments also meet Policy DES-1.1.2. The text amendment states the City Architect will review the gravel materials in the open joints of pavement on driveways, as well as review the adjacent materials at the driveway for consistency. The City Architect will ensure to maintain high-quality design of driveway surfacing.

Lastly, the City fulfills Goal GRN-1, Policy GRN-1.2.2., and Objective GRN-1.4. The City is taking the appropriate steps to utilize more sustainable gravel materials that are loose, permeable, and recyclable as opposed to artificial turf that is primarily composed of plastic materials. These alternative materials are better equipped to protect air, water, and land resources, as well as conserve natural life and minimize carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions. In essence, this amendment is the City's effort to keep driveway landscaping green.

## 6. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Zoning Division recommends **approval**.

## 7. ATTACHMENTS

### A. Legal advertisement published

Please visit the City's webpage at [www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com) to view all Application plans and materials, notices, applicable public comments, minutes, etc. The complete Application and all background information also is on file and available for examination during business hours at the Planning and Zoning Division, 427 Biltmore Way, Suite 201, Coral Gables, Florida 33134.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Garcia, AICP, CNU-A  
City Planner  
City of Coral Gables, Florida

MIAMI-DADE

STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE:

Before the undersigned authority personally appeared GUILLERMO GARCIA, who on oath says that he or she is the DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, Legal Notices of the Miami Daily Business Review f/k/a Miami Review, of Miami-Dade County, Florida; that the attached copy of advertisement, being a Legal Advertisement of Notice in the matter of

CITY OF CORAL GABLES - PUBLIC HEARING - LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY / PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD - OCT. 11, 2023

in the XXXX Court, was published in a newspaper by print in the issues of Miami Daily Business Review f/k/a Miami Review on

09/29/2023

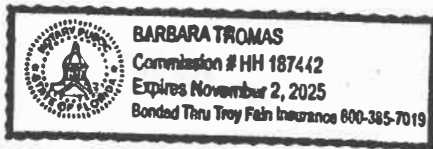
Affiant further says that the newspaper complies with all legal requirements for publication in chapter 50, Florida Statutes.

*Guillermo Garcia*

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29 day of SEPTEMBER, A.D. 2023

*Barbara Thomas*

(SEAL)  
GUILLERMO GARCIA personally known to me




**CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
HYBRID MEETING ON ZOOM PLATFORM**

<b>City Public Hearing Dates/Times</b>	<b>Local Planning Agency / Planning and Zoning Board Wednesday, October 11, 2023, 6:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>City Commission Chamber, City Hall 405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL 33134</b>

**PUBLIC NOTICE** is hereby given that the City of Coral Gables, Florida, Local Planning Agency (LPA)/ Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) will conduct Public Hearing on the following:

1. An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for a text amendment to Article 2 "Zoning Districts," Section 2-405 "Residential Infill Regulations Overlay District (RIR)" of the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code to provide a maximum building length of three hundred feet for all properties seeking approval pursuant to the Residential Infill Regulations; providing for severability, repealer, codification, and an effective date. (07 12 23 PZB meeting - deferred by Applicant; 09 21 23 PZB meeting - deferred by PZB)
2. A Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida granting conditional use approval pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-203, "Conditional Uses" for a School on a property zoned as Mixed- Use-1 (MX1) located at 141 Grand Avenue, Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and an effective date.

10/11/2023

3. An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code (Zoning Code), amending Article 10, "Parking and Access," Section 10-112 "Miscellaneous Parking Standards," creating provisions for considering reduction of parking requirements for affordable housing located near a major transit stop as required by the Live Local Act, Ch. 2023-17, Laws of Florida; providing for repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date.
4. An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, Article 6, "Landscape," by amending the utilization of artificial turf on open joints of pavement; and Article 10, "Parking and Access," by providing review of materials in pavement joints; and providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and an effective date.
5. An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, Article 2, "Zoning districts," Section 2-403, "Giralda Plaza District Overlay," by allowing a television screen on the inside of a window on the pedestrian street of Giralda Plaza; providing for severability, repealer, codification, and for an effective date.

The Planning and Zoning Board will be holding its board meeting on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, commencing at 6:00 p.m. Pursuant to Resolution No. 2021-116, the City of Coral Gables has returned to traditional in-person meetings. However, the City Commission has established the ability for the public to virtually provide sworn testimony or public comments (non-sworn and without evidentiary value). Any individual who wishes to provide sworn testimony virtually must have their video on and must be sworn in.

Members of the public may join the meeting via Zoom at (<https://zoom.us/j/83768709513>). In addition, a dedicated phone line will be available so that any individual who does not wish (or is unable) to use Zoom may listen to and participate in the meeting by dialing: (305) 461-6769 Meeting ID: 837 8870 9513. The public may comment on an item using the City's E-Comment function which may be found on the City's website at: (<https://coralgables.granicusideas.com/meetings>) once the meeting's agenda is published, or by sending an email to [planning@coralgables.com](mailto:planning@coralgables.com) prior to the meeting.

The meeting will also be broadcasted live for members of the public to view on the City's website ([www.coralgables.com/cgtv](http://www.coralgables.com/cgtv)) as well as Channel 77 on Comcast.

Sincerely,  
City of Coral Gables, Florida  
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