



City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Staff Report

Property: **Gables Crest Preparatory (2000 Ponce de Leon Boulevard)**

Applicant: Gables Crest Preparatory

Application: Conditional Use Review

Public Hearing: Planning and Zoning Board

Date & Time: September 10, 2018; 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: City Commission Chambers, City Hall,
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

1. APPLICATION REQUEST

Application request is for conditional use review to allow a school on property zoned Commercial District, which is permitted as a conditional use, on the property located at 2000 Ponce de Leon Boulevard. The Resolution under consideration is as follows:

A Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida granting conditional use approval pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, "Development Review," Division 4, "Conditional Uses" and Article 4, "Zoning Districts," Division 3, "Nonresidential Districts," Section 4-302, "Commercial District" for a school on property zoned Commercial District for the property legally described as Lots 17 thru 24, Block 17, Coral Gables Section "K" (2000 Ponce de Leon Blvd), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, providing for a severability clause, and providing for an effective date.

An application for conditional use review requires review and recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Board at one (1) public hearing, and consideration by the City Commission at one (1) public hearing (Resolution format).

2. APPLICATION SUMMARY

As directed by the Commission, Staff is drafting a Zoning Code text amendment to allow schools as a conditional use in Commercial districts. Currently schools are only allowed as a conditional use in Special Use districts.

An application for a new school within the existing building at 2000 Ponce de Leon Boulevard has been submitted by Gables Crest Preparatory. The application package submitted by the Applicant is provided as Attachment A. At the present time, the Commission has not approved the conditional use Zoning Code text amendment. The current application has been processed in anticipation of the Commission approval of the conditional use text amendment.

The Applicant is requesting approval for a boutique private school to serve grades 6 through 12, which will utilize the existing 7-story building at 2000 Ponce de Leon Boulevard. Enrollment is proposed to start at 80 students and grow over a 8-year period to 448 students. The themed school will focus on music, entertainment, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). At full enrollment, the school will use approximately 82 of the 99 existing spaces within the parking structure. The request requires public hearing review with a recommendation to be provided by the Planning and Zoning Board and City Commission approval as it is a conditional use.

The property is legally described as lots 17 thru 24, Block 17, Coral Gables Section “K” (2000 Ponce de Leon Blvd), Coral Gables, Florida, and is shown on the following location map and aerial:

Location Map



Property Designations and Surrounding Uses

The following tables provide the subject property’s designations and surrounding land uses:

Existing Property Designations

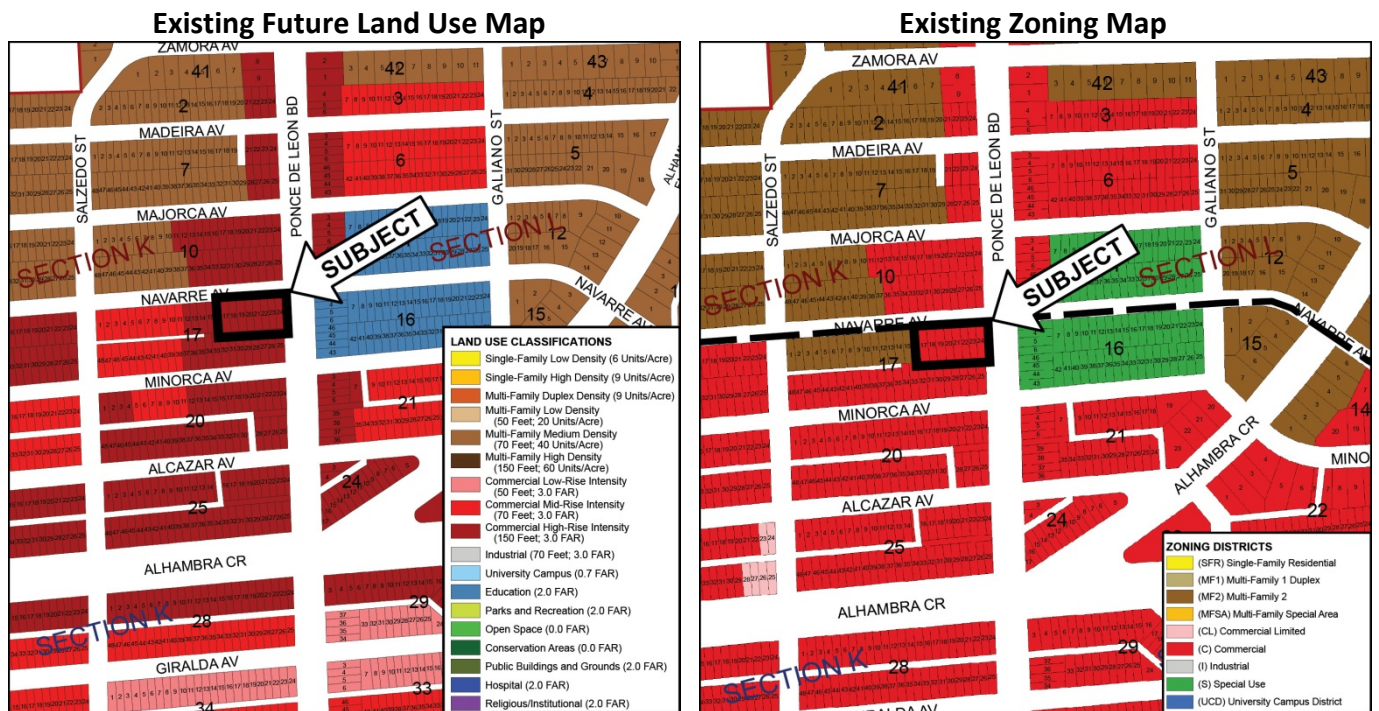
Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designation	Commercial, High-Rise Intensity
Zoning Map designation	Commercial (C) District

Surrounding Land Uses

Location	Existing Land Uses	CP Designations	Zoning Designations
North	One (1) story commercial building	Commercial, High-Rise Intensity	Commercial (C) District

Location	Existing Land Uses	CP Designations	Zoning Designations
South	Fifteen (15) story commercial building	Commercial, High-Rise Intensity	Commercial (C) District
East	Two (2) story school (Coral Gables Elementary School)	Education	Special Use (S) District
West	Surface parking lot (City of Coral Gables Lot 13)	Commercial, High-Rise Intensity	Multi-Family 2 (MF2) District

The subject property currently has the existing land use and zoning designations, as illustrated in the following maps:



City Review Timeline

The submitted application has undergone the following City reviews:

Type of Review	Date
Board of Architects (If signage is proposed)	TBD
Planning and Zoning Board	09.10.18
City Commission	TBD

Proposal – Conditional Use Review

Staff is in the process of drafting a Zoning Code text amendment to Zoning Code Section 4-302, “Commercial District (C)” to allow for a school as a permitted conditional use on property zoned commercial. Conditional uses require public hearing reviews with a recommendation provided by the Planning and Zoning Board and review and approval granted by the City Commission pursuant to the requirements established in Zoning Code Article 3, “Development Review,” Division 4, “Conditional Uses.”

Parking

The existing building offers 99 parking spaces total on floors 2, 3, and 4. The existing uses (5,150 sqft of office and bank on the ground, and 3,322 sqft of office on the 7th floor) currently occupy approximately 30 spaces. At the proposed maximum enrollment of 448 students which will eventually occupy the entire building, the school will utilize 82 spaces. The applicant has proposed a student driver policy to limit the number of student drivers. If needed in the future, additional parking can be obtained from the abutting City surface parking lot. Other transportation options include the Metrorail/Ponce de Leon Trolley located in the front, and the future Gables Greenways biking routes on Salzedo.

3. FINDINGS OF FACT

This section of the report presents City Staff's evaluation of the Application and Findings of Facts. The City's responsibility is to review the Application for consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan (CP) Goals, Objectives and Policies and compliance with the Zoning Code and City Code.

Findings of Fact - Conditional Use Site Plan Review

The Applicant's proposal for conditional use review in order to allow a school on property zoned Commercial District, which will be permitted as a conditional use with the proposed Zoning Code text amendment, requires review and evaluation pursuant to various sections of the City's Official Zoning Code. To provide an overview of the purpose and intent of the Conditional Use provisions, Zoning Code Article 3, "Development Review," Division 4, "Conditional Uses," Section 3-401, "Purpose and Applicability" provides for the following:

"The purpose of providing for conditional uses within each zoning district is to recognize that there are uses which may have beneficial effects and serve important public interests, but which may, but not necessarily, have adverse effects on the environment, particularly residential areas, overburden public services, or change the desired character of an area. Individualized review of these uses is necessary due to the potential individual or cumulative impacts that they may have on the surrounding area or neighborhood. The review process allows the imposition of conditions to mitigate identified concerns or to deny the use if concerns cannot be resolved."

Staff's Findings: Based upon the Findings of Facts provided herein, Staff finds the Application satisfies the provisions of the Zoning Code for the Conditional Use Review for the proposed school. Staff review finds that the proposed plans and Staff's recommended conditions of approval incorporate measures to mitigate potentially negative impacts that could have adverse effects on neighboring properties.

Staff's responsibility is to review the application in accordance with the criteria provided in Zoning Code Article 3, "Development Review", Division 4, "Conditional Uses", Section 3-408, "Standards for review" and provide Findings of Fact regarding the proposed application. Staff has compared the Applicant's proposal with the review criteria set out in Zoning Code Section 3-408, and found that the application complies with the following standards and criteria:

- A. *“The proposed conditional use is consistent with and furthers the goals, objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and furthers the purposes of these regulations and other City ordinances and actions designed to implement the Plan.”*

Staff comments: As concluded in this Staff report, this Application is “consistent” with the CP’s Goals, Objectives and Policies to expand educational facilities with the recommended conditions of approval.

- B. *“The available use to which the property may be put is appropriate to the property that is subject to the proposed conditional use and compatible with existing and planned uses in the area”.*

Staff comments: A school as a conditional use on property zoned Commercial District will be permitted with the corresponding Zoning Code text amendment, as directed by the Commission. The proposed conditional use is compatible with the surrounding uses which include the Coral Gables Preparatory School and many large mixed-use buildings along Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

- C. *“The proposed conditional use does not conflict with the needs and character of the neighborhood and the City”.*

Staff comments: The proposed school will not conflict with other commercial uses and will serve the growing population from the mixed-use buildings on Ponce de Leon and established residential neighborhood of multi-family buildings. The proposed secondary school will complement the existing elementary school located across the street and offer easy access for parents working in nearby offices and commercial spaces.

- D. *“The proposed conditional use will not adversely or unreasonably affect the use of other property in the area.”*

Staff comments: The Application will not adversely or unreasonably affect the use of properties in the area and will supplement them by providing additional secondary school options for the neighborhood. Easy access to the Ponce de Leon Trolley and future Gables Greenways biking routes on Salzedo will offer car alternatives to relieve congestion.

- E. *“The proposed use is compatible with the nature, condition and development of adjacent uses, buildings and structures and will not adversely affect the adjacent uses, buildings or structures.”*

Staff comments: The proposed use is part of a proposed City-initiated Zoning Code text amendment to allow schools as a permitted conditional use on property zoned Commercial District, which is the Zoning designation of this property. If approved, the school would add a secondary school to the area.

F. *“The parcel proposed for development is adequate in size and shape to accommodate all development features.”*

Staff comments: The school’s classes are kept small to 15 or less students. The spaces for 11 classrooms with various cyber cafes, activity rooms, wellness rooms, etc are designed to be adequately sized for small classes.

G. *“The nature of the proposed development is not detrimental to the health, safety and general welfare of the community.”*

Staff comments: The school will not be detrimental to the health, safety and general welfare of the community. The proposed school use will be beneficial to the area as it will offer a secondary school to nearby neighborhoods and complement the existing elementary school.

H. *“The design of the proposed driveways, circulation patterns and parking is well defined to promote vehicular and pedestrian circulation.”*

Staff comments: The Applicant will utilize the on-street parking to not interfere with the vehicular circulation on Navarre or Ponce de Leon Boulevard. The addition of the school use on Ponce de Leon Boulevard will contribute to the pedestrian circulation patterns of the recently improved Ponce de Leon streetscape.

I. *“The proposed conditional use satisfies the concurrency standards of Article 3, Division 13 and will not adversely burden public facilities, including the traffic-carrying capacities of streets, in an unreasonable or disproportionate manner”.*

Staff comments: The Application will not adversely impact public facilities as there will be no increase in the overall building square footage.

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.	Goal FLU-1. Protect, strengthen, and enhance the City of Coral Gables as a vibrant community ensuring that its neighborhoods, business opportunities, shopping, employment centers, cultural activities, historic value, desirable housing, open spaces, and natural resources make the City a very desirable place to work, live and play.	Complies

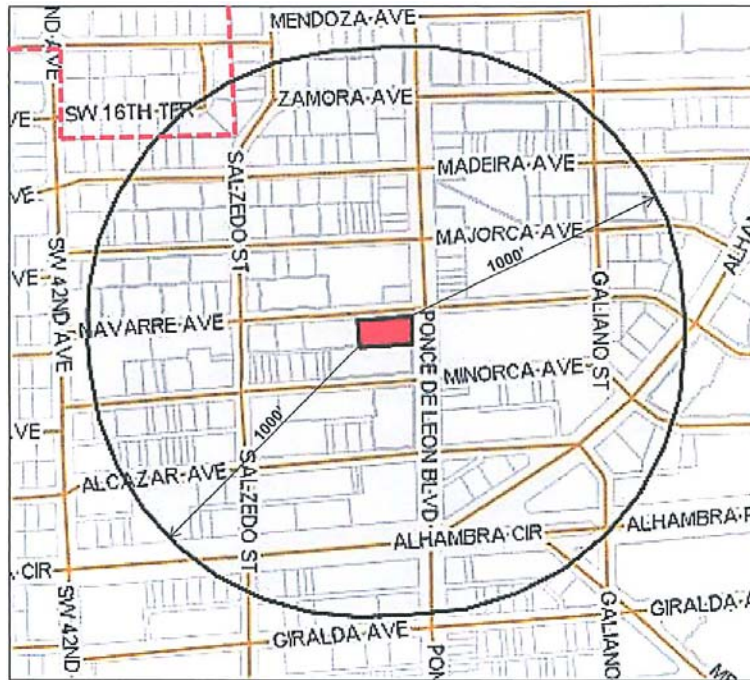
Ref. No.	CP Goal, Objective and Policy	Basis for Consistency
2.	Objective FLU-1.1. Preserve Coral Gables as a “placemaker” where the balance of existing and future uses is maintained to achieve a high quality living environment by encouraging compatible land uses, restoring and protecting the natural environment, and providing facilities and services which meet or exceed the minimum Level of Service (LOS) standards and meet the social and economic needs of the community through the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Classifications and Map (see FLU-1: Future Land Use Map).	Complies
3.	Policy FLU-1.9.2. Encourage the detailed planning of downtown, which is defined as the central business district, to establish sound economic, aesthetic and land use principles for effective utilization of both public and private resources.	Complies
4.	Objective FLU-1.12. The City shall enforce the Zoning Code which maintains the high aesthetic community design standards.	Complies
5.	Objective FLU-1.14. The City shall enforce Zoning Code provisions which continue to preserve and improve the character of neighborhoods.	Complies
6.	Policy FLU-1.14.1. The City shall enforce Zoning Code provisions which continue to address the location and extent of residential and non-residential land uses consistent with the Future Land Use Map in order to preserve the character of existing neighborhoods.	Complies
7.	Goal FLU-3. The City as a part of its development review process shall engage public/community participation and collaboration to provide for a transparent development review process.	Complies
8.	Objective FLU-3.1. The City shall continue its efforts to notify stakeholders, residents, property owners and neighborhood associations of pending development reviews to provide transparency within the development process.	Complies
9.	Policy EDU-1.8.2. The location of future educational facilities should occur where capacity of other public facilities and services is available to accommodate the infrastructure needs of the educational facility.	Complies
10.	Goal DES-1. Maintain the City as a livable city, attractive in its setting and dynamic in its urban character.	Complies
11.	Policy DES-1.1.6. Maintain the character of the residential and nonresidential districts, and their peculiar suitability for particular uses.	Complies

Staff Comments: Staff’s determination that this Application is “consistent” with the CP’s goals, objectives and policies that are identified is based upon compliance with conditions of approval recommended by Staff. The conditions of approval included will prevent any potential negative impacts in the surrounding area.

4. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The Applicant completed the mandatory neighborhood meeting with notification to all property owners within 1,000 feet of the property boundary on 08.13.18. The Zoning Code requires that a courtesy notification be provided to all property owners within 1,000 feet of the boundary of the property. The notice indicates: Application filed; public hearing dates/time/location; where the application files can be

reviewed and provides for an opportunity to submit comments. Approximately 721 notices were mailed.



Courtesy Notification Radius Map

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

Public Notice

Type	Date
Public information meeting	08.13.18
August PZB Courtesy notification - 1,000 feet	08.17.18
August PZB Posting of property	08.17.18
August PZB Legal advertisement	08.17.18
Posted August agenda on City web page/City Hall	08.17.18
September PZB Courtesy notification - 1,000 feet	08.30.18
September PZB Posting of property	08.30.18
September PZB Legal advertisement	08.31.18
Posted September agenda on City web page/City Hall	08.31.18
Posted Staff report on City web page	09.06.18

5. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Zoning Division based upon the complete Findings of Fact contained within this Report recommends **approval with conditions** of the Application.

Summary of the Basis for Approval

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objective and Policies. Staff's support of the application for Conditional Use Review in order to allow a school on property zoned Commercial District, which will be allowed as a conditional use with corresponding proposed Zoning Code text amendments, is based on compliance with the Comprehensive Plan (CP) Goals, Objectives and Policies, Zoning Code and other applicable Codes as enumerated in the complete Findings of Fact presented herein.

Conditions of Approval

In furtherance of the Comprehensive Plan (CP) Goals, Objectives and Policies, Zoning Code and other applicable City provisions, the recommendation for approval of the Application is subject to the following conditions of approval:

- i. Student enrollment for current application request shall not exceed 170 students, grades 6-10. Additional student enrollment will be reviewed by Staff and considered by the Commission at the time of the school's enrollment expansion.
- ii. Applicant shall obtain applicable County approval(s) and execute a 3-year contract with the Parking Department for on-street parking spaces for purpose of pick-up/drop-off use and use of parking lot for vehicle route / queue area. After 3 years, the vehicle route / queue area shall be relocated, as approved by the Parking Director.
- iii. Passageway improvements with permeable pavers, lighting, and other pedestrian amenities to be approved by Public Works and Planning & Zoning Directors.
- iv. Modify arcade to remove island curb at garage entrance and minimize the existing plantings between columns for easier building access.
- v. Permeable pavers and landscape within the existing grass strip along the drop-off zone to be approved by Public Works and Planning & Zoning Directors.
- vi. Supply 3 bike spaces per classroom for bike parking within the property.
- vii. Pick-up/drop-off shall not interfere with the pedestrian circulation on adjoining Navarre sidewalks.

6. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Applicant's submittal package.
- B. Courtesy notice mailed and legal advertisement published.

Please visit the City's webpage at www.coralgables.com to view all application materials. The complete application 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,



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for Planning and Zoning
City of Coral Gables, Florida