



**City of Coral Gables  
CITY COMMISSION MEETING  
January 28, 2025**

**ITEM TITLE:**

**Ordinance on Second Reading. Zoning Code Text Amendment.**

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, Article 5, "Architecture," Section 5-200, "Mediterranean Standards;" Article 3, "Uses," Section 3-402, "Restrictions related to location;" and Article 16, "Definitions;" to enhance the quality of Coral Gables Mediterranean design by requiring a conceptual design review; removing repetitive criteria; relocating inappropriate standards; incorporating and improving certain criteria; and including additional Mediterranean building examples; providing for severability, repealer, codification, and for an effective date.

**DEPARTMENT HEAD RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval.

**PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

The Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval (vote: 6-1) of the proposed Zoning Code text amendments at their October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024 special meeting.

**BRIEF HISTORY:**

No changes have been made since First Reading.

Based on feedback from previous discussions with the Blue Ribbon Committee, City Commission, and concerned residents, the following summarizes the proposed text amendments to the Coral Gables Mediterranean style design standards:

- Require a Conceptual Review by the Board of Architects for Mediterranean buildings
- Provide prerequisites that proposed Mediterranean buildings must comply with in order to apply for Mediterranean design bonus
- Strengthen intent/purpose and review process of Mediterranean Bonus
- Remove certain criteria in Levels 1 & 2 that are redundant in underlying zoning district requirements
- Move/relocate certain criteria to more appropriate sections of the Zoning Code
- Incorporate provisions from the Mediterranean Village PAD Architectural Standards in Zoning Code Appendix C
- Expand list of precedents to include additional examples of tall Mediterranean buildings
- Include character-defining elements of Mediterranean architectural design

During the Zoning Code Update, certain criteria of the Coral Gables Mediterranean style design tables were identified to be applicable to all building styles, and incorporated as an architectural requirement within the underlying zoning district (MF2, MF3, MF4, MX1, MX2, and MX3). The proposed improvements to the Mediterranean style design standards remove these repetitive criteria.

Additionally, there are current standards in the Mediterranean style design tables that are related to certain uses and specific locations – such as drive throughs and porte-cocheres – or other general provisions that are not related to Mediterranean design. Therefore, these standards are proposed to be relocated to the more appropriate sections of the Zoning Code.

The architectural elements and proportions of the recently built Plaza (formerly known as the Mediterranean Village) have received significant recognition. The project was approved as a Planned Area Development (PAD) with its own Mediterranean architectural standards and adopted into the Zoning Code as Appendix C. As these architectural standards only apply to the Plaza, the proposed text amendments include provisions that are drafted from the Mediterranean Village PAD – such as classical proportion, vertical hierarchy, fenestration, and other elements. Some of the language was updated as deemed appropriate by the Board of Architects during the review of these proposed text amendments.

Lastly, the proposed improvements to the Mediterranean design requirements include many additional architectural precedents – specifically additional examples of tall Mediterranean buildings – as well as architectural features that define Mediterranean design, to aid architects in the development of their design. The proposed architectural precedents were reviewed at multiple meetings with the Board of Architects.

No changes to the current Mediterranean style bonus heights, floor area ratio (FAR), or density are proposed, and therefore will not be impacted by the proposed improvements to the criteria.

The proposed text amendments have been reviewed and discussed extensively at multiple public meetings. Below summarizes the reviews and meetings:

Type of Review	Date
City Commission meeting – Discussion/memo	06.13.23
Board of Architects meeting – Prerequisites and Level 1 criteria	10.05.23
Board of Architects meeting – Levels 1 and 2 criteria	10.19.23
Board of Architects meeting – Architectural precedents	11.09.23
City Commission meeting – Discussion/presentation	11.14.23
City Commission meeting - Discussion/update	12.12.23
Planning & Zoning Board meeting - Introduction	04.10.24
Planning & Zoning Board meeting - Discussion	05.08.24
Board of Architects – Architectural precedents and Character-defining features	05.30.24
Planning & Zoning Board meeting	06.12.24
Planning & Zoning Board meeting	07.10.24
Planning & Zoning Board meeting	08.14.24
Board of Architects meeting	09.05.24
Planning & Zoning Board meeting – PZB feedback on proposed changes	09.11.24
Planning & Zoning Board Special Meeting	09.26.24
Board of Architects meeting – Architectural precedents	10.24.24
Planning & Zoning Board Special Meeting	10.29.24
City Commission – First Reading	12.10.24

At the October 29, 2024, meeting, the Planning & Zoning Board recommended approval, with minor revisions, of the proposed enhancements to the Mediterranean style design standards, vote: 6-1. All the Board's revisions have been incorporated into the provided draft Ordinance. Two of the Board's recommended revisions are not clear on the meeting record: 1) regarding encroachments into the side setback and 2) applicability of required habitable space. These two items have been incorporated to be consistent with prior discussions by the Board of Architects regarding changes to the Mediterranean design standards.

The Planning & Zoning Board also discussed concerns with the current review procedure of proposed buildings (site plan requests) that are reviewed simultaneously with future land use and zoning map changes. The current procedure allows for applications requesting a change of land use and zoning to proceed to Board of Architects review, prior to Commission consideration or approval of the changes. The Board of Architects is only granting 1, 2, or 3 stories, if deemed by the BOA to comply with the Mediterranean design standards, and does not consider the request for future land use and zoning map changes. It is the Planning & Zoning Board that reviews the future land use and zoning map changes, and then provides a recommendation to the City Commission, which has the only authority to approve or deny the map changes that allow the significant additional building height. Therefore, the Planning & Zoning Board made another separate recommendation to the City Commission to consider discussing and changing the public review procedure, such as requiring a recommendation from the Planning & Zoning Board to the Board of Architects for the changes to the land use or zoning of the property prior to the review of the proposed building by the Board of Architects.

The draft Ordinance for the Zoning Code text amendment is provided as Exhibit A.

**LEGISLATIVE ACTION:**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Resolution/Ordinance No.</b>	<b>Comments</b>

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION(S):**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Form of Notification</b>
06.06.23	City Commission meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
11.07.23	City Commission meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
12.05.23	City Commission meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
04.05.24	Planning & Zoning Board meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
05.03.24	Planning & Zoning Board meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
05.29.24	Board of Architects meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
05.27.24	Legal advertisement for Planning & Zoning Board meeting - June
06.07.24	Planning & Zoning Board meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
06.24.24	Legal advertisement for Planning & Zoning Board meeting – July
07.05.24	Planning & Zoning Board meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
07.29.24	Legal advertisement for Planning & Zoning Board meeting - August
08.09.24	Planning & Zoning Board meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
08.26.24	Legal advertisement for Planning & Zoning Board meeting - September
09.06.24	Planning & Zoning Board meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
09.16.24	Legal advertisement for Planning & Zoning Board special meeting - September

09.20.24	Planning & Zoning Board meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
10.16.24	Legal advertisement for Planning & Zoning Board special meeting - October
10.24.24	Planning & Zoning Board meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
11.04.24	City Commission meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
12.03.24	City Commission meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
01.17.25	City Commission Legal Advertisement
01.21.25	City Commission meeting agenda posted on City webpage.

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

No.	Amount	Account No.	Source of Funds
1.	\$0		
2.	\$0		
Total:	\$0		

**Fiscal Impact:** The approval of the proposed criteria for Coral Gables Mediterranean style design will not have a direct fiscal impact on the city.

**BUSINESS IMPACT:**

The intent of the proposed text amendment is to provide revised criteria for Mediterranean style buildings that are the architectural style required per the Zoning Code within certain districts or that are seeking bonuses, such as appropriate proportions, additional architectural precedents, and other useful design tools to aid in the design development.

The proposed criteria will not have an additional cost for compliance, as the new standards relate to the proportional design and layout of buildings to be reviewed by the Board of Architects which is the current review procedure. The review for compliance will be included in the current Board of Architects submittal fees and not create a new charge or fee for the property owner. The applicable buildings requiring Mediterranean style design or seeking bonuses are located in or near the densest urban areas of the city (eg. downtown, North Ponce, Design & Innovation District, US-1 corridor, and other major commercial thoroughfares). A range from 6 to 10 Board of Architects applications seek Mediterranean style design review or bonuses per year.

**EXHIBIT(S):**

- A. Draft Ordinance.