



City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
December 10, 2024

ITEM TITLE:

Ordinance on Second Reading. Zoning Code Text Amendment.

An Ordinance of the City Commission providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables official Zoning Code Article 12, "Ambience Standards," Section 12-100, "Lighting," and Article 16, "Definitions," to provide for illumination standards and definitions; providing for repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date.

DEPARTMENT HEAD RECOMMENDATION:

Approval.

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval, as amended, of the proposed Zoning Code text amendment at their November 13, 2024 meeting (vote: 6 – 1).

BRIEF HISTORY:

The following changes have been incorporated in the draft ordinance since First Reading:

- Further calibration of the maximum lumens allowed for lighting fixtures
- Require a dimming of building façade lighting of 30% after midnight of rooftop features, as recommended by the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) and International Dark Sky Association (IDA)'s model lighting ordinance
- Limit lumens output for "uplighting" of building facades and objects for bird safety
- Limit permanent lighting to non-colored light fixtures
- Clarification that compliance will be the owner's responsibility
- Clarification that lighting required by law for safety is exempt
- Clarification that the Board of Architects may approve additional areas of the building to be illuminated beyond the façade base and top
- New standards to apply retroactively to existing buildings and structures

As discussed at the September 10, 2024, City Commission meeting, a member of the City Commission has requested a Zoning Code text amendment to address many residents' concerns of the temperature/brightness of light, building illumination, light pollution, and general excessive lighting.

The current lighting provisions of the Zoning Code in Article 12, "Ambience Standards," provide for minimal lighting restrictions for non-residential uses abutting residential areas. Additionally, the current mixed-use and multi-family zoning districts require lighting to conform to dark skies standards, which has been determined to be infeasible in most cases.

With the engagement of active residents and utilizing many parameters included in the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) and International Dark Sky Association (IDA)'s model lighting ordinance, Staff has prepared Zoning Code text amendments, summarized below:

- Expand the purpose and objectives of the existing and proposed lighting provisions;
- Provide certain exemptions, if required by law or motion-activated and not directed toward the windows of neighbors;
- Require that fixtures with multiple bulbs to be appropriately spaced to maintain low ambience;
- Limit redundant light on private property adjacent to existing street lighting;
- Require Board of Architects approval for illumination of the façade tops of mixed-use buildings;
- Limit the light color temperature to 3,000 kelvin within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods;
- Provide for lumen maximums for certain locations of residential properties and types of lighting fixtures (fully shielded, partly shielded, unshielded, low voltage, etc);
- Limit heights and setbacks of light poles in residential properties;
- Limit the illumination of non-residential buildings (mixed-use, office, etc) to the façade base and top, unless approved by the Board of Architects; and
- Require after-work-hours light reduction for parking lots and rooftop parking and after-midnight dimming of 30% of rooftop features.

Board of Architects

The Board of Architects (BOA) discussed exterior lighting of non-residential buildings at their November 7, 2024, meeting. The Board discussed the even color or tone of 3000 Kelvin, but agreed to regulate it only within residential neighborhoods. Additionally, the Board suggested that the façade base and any architectural features should be illuminated. Members of the BOA emphasized the importance of designing exterior lighting that is appropriate to the design style and character of the building. In general, the Board desired to review and approve building illumination for non-residential/commercial buildings to ensure that the proposed lighting is consistent with the building’s design style and character. The Board’s suggestions were incorporated into the proposed text amendment.

Planning & Zoning Board

At the Planning & Zoning Board meeting of November 13, 2024, the Board discussed the importance of lighting for safety while considering the negative impact excessive light could have on neighboring properties. Some board members discussed if the proposed requirements should be incorporated as guidelines and not be codified provisions of the Zoning Code, while other members desired to apply the requirements retroactively to existing buildings. The Board recommended approval (vote: 6 – 1), with clarifications that compliance will be the owner’s responsibility; a clarification that safety lighting is exempt; and a clarification that the Board of Architects may approve additional areas of the building façade to be illuminated, beyond the allowed base and top. Most of the Board did not agree that the ordinance should apply retroactively to existing buildings.

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

LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

Date:	Resolution/Ordinance No.	Comments

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION(S):

Date	Form of Notification
09.03.24	City Commission meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
09.17.24	City Commission meeting agenda posted on City webpage.
11.01.24	Legal advertisement for Planning & Zoning Board.
11.08.24	Planning and Zoning Board meeting agenda and staff report on City web page/City Hall.
11.27.24	City Commission Legal Advertisement.
12.03.24	City Commission meeting agenda posted on City webpage.

EXHIBIT(S):

- A. Draft Ordinance.
- B. 11 13 24 Planning and Zoning Board Staff Report.
- C. Excerpt of 11 13 24 PZB Meeting Minutes.
- D. PowerPoint Presentation.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

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

Fiscal Impact: The approval of the proposed provisions for outdoor lighting in the Zoning Code may have a fiscal impact on the city. The City has a few non-residential buildings that are adjacent to residential properties, such as City Hall, the War Memorial Youth Center, and the future Fire House #4, that may require lower kelvin lights, shielding of light fixtures, or reduction of parking lot lighting after hours.

BUSINESS IMPACT:

The intent of the proposed text amendment is to provide regulations for outdoor lighting to limit light pollution and improve the environment, particularly within residential neighborhoods.

Most businesses are located within non-residential buildings and not adjacent to residential areas. However, if the business is abutting or adjacent to residential properties, the proposed lighting requirements may have an additional cost for compliance, as new light bulbs or lighting fixtures may need to be installed by the business or property owners. Additionally, the light reduction for surface parking lots, rooftop parking, and illuminated rooftop architectural elements that may require the business or property owner to purchase dimming light bulbs or light fixtures for compliance. Furthermore, the prohibition of multicolored light fixtures would also require the replacement of light bulbs for some businesses. Reports of certified results of lighting tests or specifications of light fixtures may be required by the business after installation to confirm compliance. The review for compliance will be included in the current permit fees and not create a new charge or fee on businesses. Approximately 29 electrical permits for commercial exterior renovations and new construction were issued within the last year, that may have included outdoor lighting.