



ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

JOEL H. BROWN

CHIEF JUDGE

RUBEN O. CARREROU

COURT ADMINISTRATOR

LAWSON E. THOMAS COURTHOUSE CENTER

175 N.W. FIRST AVENUE

MIAMI, FLORIDA 33128

October 5, 2009

Patrick G. Salerno, City Manager
City of Coral Gables
405 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, Florida 33134

Re: Coral Gables Branch Court Improvements
City Commission Hearing-October 13, 2009

Dear Mr. Salerno:

Miami-Dade County, Florida, on behalf of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida (11th Circuit), has requested that the Coral Gables City Commission amend Resolution No. 28447 to allow for interior renovations of the Coral Gables Branch Court, located at 3100 Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

On October 13, 2009, a public hearing has been scheduled beginning at 9:00 a.m. for the City Commission to consider said request ("Public Hearing"). I will be appearing at the Public Hearing to provide information and respond to any questions that may arise regarding the proposed renovations. The following information will be provided:

- Resolution No. 28447, passed and adopted by the City Commission on March 8, 1994, authorized the renovation of the existing building on the site to allow for ninety per cent (90%) administrative use and ten per cent (10%) accessory use in the Court Administrative Building, presently known as the Coral Gables Branch Court.
- In connection with the approval of such allowable uses, the City Commission imposed certain conditions, to include: (a) that no court proceedings shall commence after 4:30 p.m.; (b) that the courtrooms shall not be operated on weekends or holidays; (c) that no criminal felony cases shall be conducted at that location; (d) that there shall be no holding or jail cells at that location; and (e) that the two proposed courtrooms shall not increase in number or size ("Conditions").
- To date, all of the Conditions have been strictly adhered to and by all accounts the Coral Gables Branch Court has been an invaluable benefit to the City of Coral Gables and its residents.

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- Since 1994, due to the overwhelming utilization of the Coral Gables Branch Court by residents and businesses to resolve legal disputes, the cumulative caseloads of the judges assigned there have increased from 10,082 in 1994 to 21,706 by the end of 2008. (Caseload projections for the end of 2009 indicate that last year's caseloads may be exceeded.)
- Presently, there are four judges assigned to the Coral Gables Branch Court, who share the two courtrooms, with one judge using a hearing room as her chambers.
- Moreover and most significantly, due to the large volume of cases and the limited courtroom space, it has become increasingly difficult to schedule trials and hearings.
- The proposed interior renovations, to include the addition of one courtroom and judicial chambers ("Interior Renovations"), would significantly alleviate the scheduling problem. Conversely, if the Interior Renovations are not made, in all likelihood, one of the judges will have to be reassigned to another court facility (outside of Coral Gables) in the interest of controlling the hearing and trial dockets so as to effectuate the prompt disposition of cases.
- The Interior Renovations will not increase, but merely reconfigure, the square footage of the Coral Gables Branch Court and will only increase the allowable accessory use from 10% to 16% of the facility. (*See* Floor Plans enclosed herewith.)
- No exterior renovations are contemplated.
- Furthermore, there would be no increased public traffic.
- Funding for the Interior Renovations have been approved and appropriated by the Board of County Commissioners for Miami-Dade County. In fact, funds have already been expended to relocate office space from the first floor to the second floor of the Coral Gables Branch Court, so that the first floor could be used for the Interior Renovations.
- Upon awarding the construction contract, with the approval of the City of Coral Gables, the construction work would be done after 4:30 p.m. during the week and during regular business hours on the weekends, it is anticipated that the Interior Renovations will be completed within six (6) months from commencement of construction.

The 11th Circuit appreciates the partnership we have had with the City of Coral Gables since 1994 as we have both striven to provide unfettered access and quality services to the residents of Coral Gables. Bearing that in mind, in order to enhance such access and services, I respectfully request that you recommend to the City Commission the approval of an amendment to Resolution No. 28477 to allow for the Interior Renovations.

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Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to your Zoning Department staff and the City Clerk, who have been very helpful in our preparation for the Public Hearing.

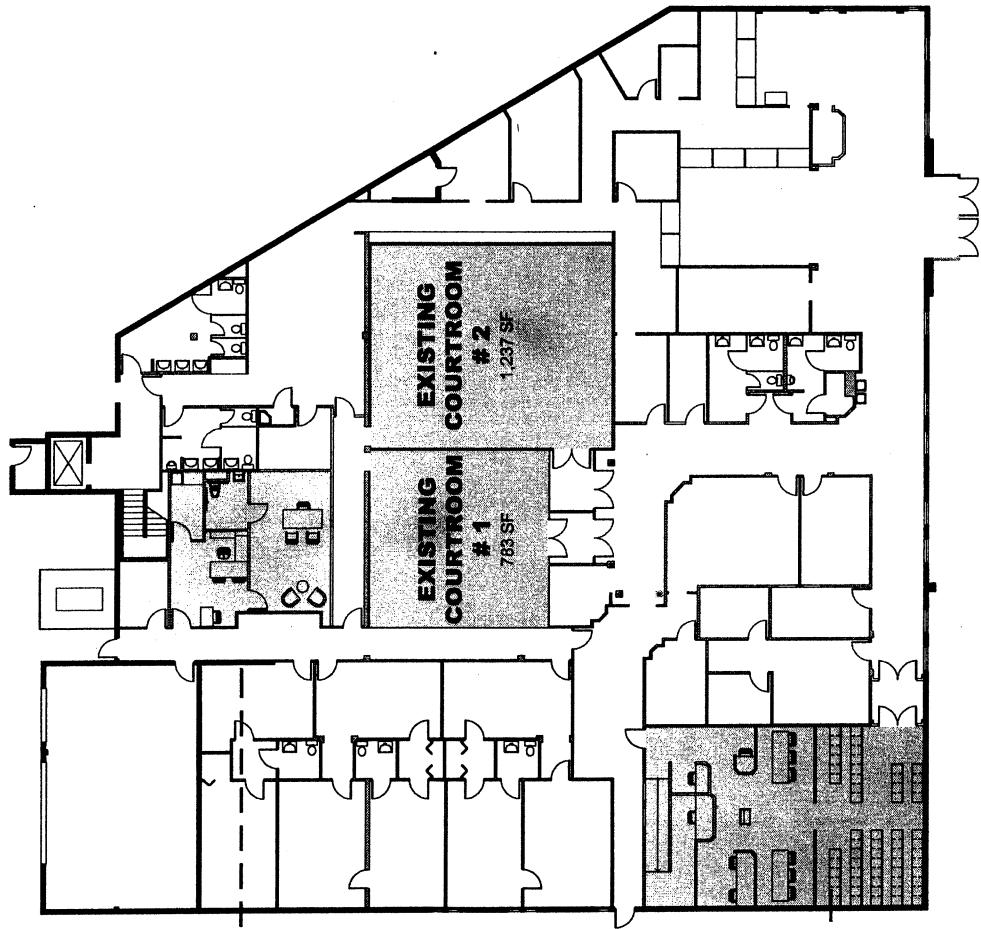
Thank you for your consideration. However, should you need additional information prior to the Public Hearing, please contact me at (305) 349-5720.

Very truly yours,


Joel H. Brown
Chief Judge

JHB/W002
Enclosures

Cc: Maria Jimenez, Assistant City Manager, City of Coral Gables, Florida
Ruben O. Carrerou, Court Administrator, Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida
Rick Martinez, Director of Facilities, Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida
Wendy Norris, Director, General Services Administration, Miami-Dade County



PROPOSED OFFICE

592 SF

EXISTING COURTROOMS

EXISTING BUILDING	20,366	100%
1ST FLOOR	16,913	
2ND FLOOR	3,453	
PROPOSED COURTROOM	1,256	6%
EXISTING COURTROOM	2,020	10%
TOTAL COURTROOM	3,276	16%

PROPOSED COURTROOM

3

1,256 SF

MIAMI-DADE CORAL GABLES COURTHOUSE

3100 PONCE DE LEON - CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33134

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SERVICES DIVISION

111 NW 1 Street, Suite 2020
Miami-Dade, Florida 33128
(305) 375-4400

MIAMI-DADE
COUNTY

Planning, Design, Construction, Procurement

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:
LOT 1 THRU 13
AND THE 20 FT. WIDE ALLEYS
CORAL GABLES, CRAFTS 66
AT BOOK 10 AT PAGE 1

EXISTING PARKING SPACES: 75

**EXISTING
COURTHOUSE**

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:
LOT 17 THRU 13
AND THE 20 FT. WIDE ALLEY IN BLOCK 34
CORAL GABLES, CROFTS SECTION
PLAT BOOK 16 AT PAGE 49

This site plan illustrates the layout of the Ponce de Leon Boulevard area. The plan shows the "EXISTING COURTHOUSE" (2013655) as a large shaded rectangular building. To the west of the courthouse is a large area labeled "EXISTING PARKING SPACES: 75", enclosed in a dashed rectangular boundary. To the east of the courthouse is a "STAGING AREA". The plan also shows "EXISTING OFF STREET PARKING" along the streets. A dashed line labeled "EXISTING OFF 6TH STREET PARKING" indicates the proposed location for new parking. The plan includes a north arrow and labels for "MAJAGUE AVE", "SANTANDER AVE", and "PONCE DE LEON BOULEVARD". A legend in the bottom left corner provides the legal description: "LOT 1 THRU 13 AND THE 120 FT. WIDE ALLEY IN BLOCK 34 CORAL GABLES CRAFTS SECTION PLAT BOOK 10 AT PAGE 40".

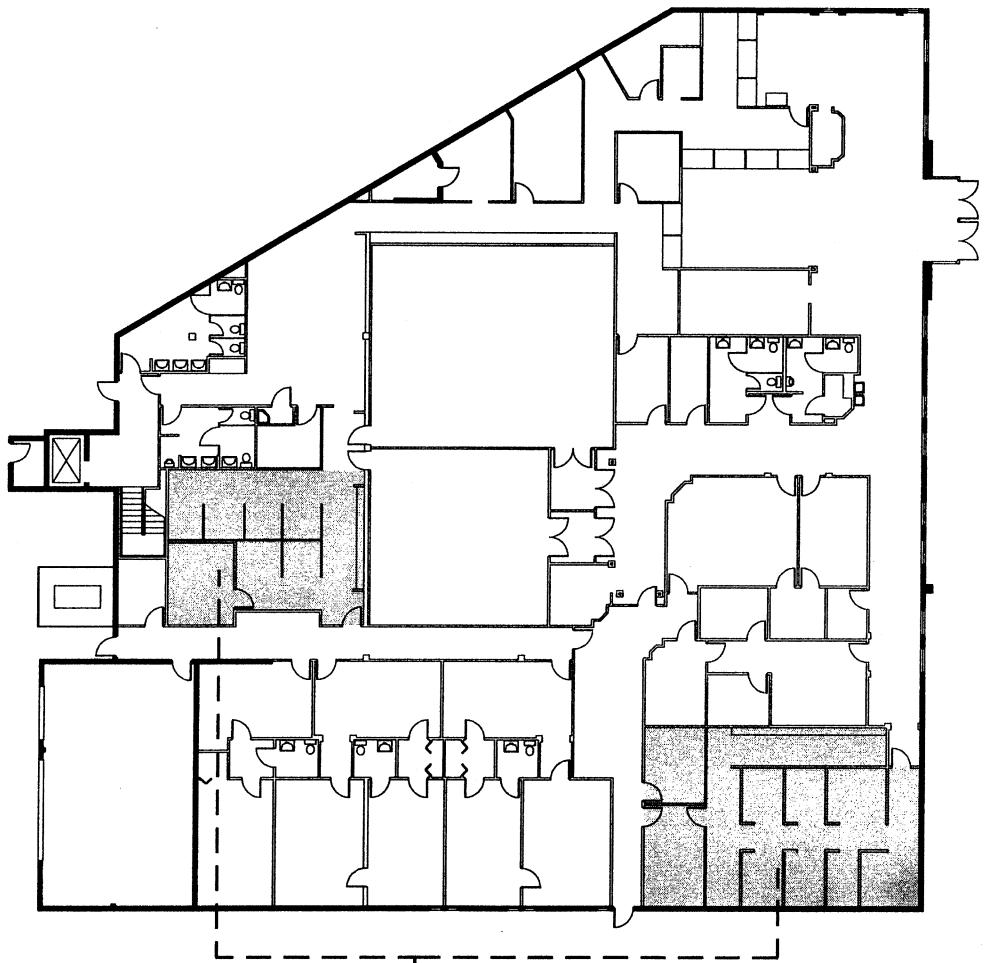
CORAL GABLES COURTHOUSE

3100 PONCE DE LEON - CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33134

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SERVICES DIVISION

Miami-Dade, Florida, 33126
(305) 375-4400

The logo for Miami-Dade, featuring the word "MIAMI-DADE" in a bold, sans-serif font inside a dark, rounded rectangular frame.



**EXISTING OFFICE
AREA TO BE REMODELED**

MIAMI-DADE CORAL GABLES COURTHOUSE

3100 PONCE DE LEON - CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33134

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