

Mr. Chairman:

I hope this message finds you and your family well & safe. It was my intent to attend this afternoon's Planning Board meeting. However, due to a business conflict, I am unable to make it. In spite of this, I thought it would be important to share with you my preliminary thoughts regarding the application being presented before you on 1505 Ponce de Leon Boulevard. As a neighbor of the empty lot property, I am conceptually in favor of the proposed development before you. However, as a resident of the City of Coral Gables with governmental institutional knowledge of the community as a whole, I wanted to voice my serious concerns regarding the systematic and consistent removal of on-street parking throughout the NE quadrant of our city. Below are some preliminary points for you and the Planning Board to consider:

- The City's streetscape/landscape master plan was either approved by the Commission in the late 90's or in the early 2000's. I simply can't recall. However, I believe the principal driving force of this plan was to foster a pedestrian city, while at the same time creating shaded walkways (sidewalks) and finally beautifying urban areas.*
- In theory, this plan was inspirational, attractive and easily accepted. However, the plan lacks reality. While those who developed and later approved it wanted to achieve an emphasis on a "walking city," they lacked the sense of the South Florida culture, sub-tropical weather, and it's need to prioritize vehicular traffic. This may have much to do with cultural, social and practical priorities. Bottom line is... Coral Gables is NOT a walking destination/community.*
- In spite of this, every single development plan proposed and approved in the last ten (10) years has one common element... the reduction of on-street parking to create "beautiful" curbed bump-outs with ground covering (shrubbery) and some sort of shading trees along the on-street areas of front and side setbacks of mixed use projects. In many ways, this is acceptable. However, a simple analysis of the costs associated with maintaining these bump-outs and associated landscaping may reveal an astronomical loss of parking revenue. In order to have built these "beautifying" city elements, on-street parking was eliminated where additional parking spaces could have been maintained. Take a look at the bump-outs... Many occupy one or two parallel parking space opportunities. I am certain the project before you tonight will eliminate at least 40% to 60% of existing on-street parking. This inevitably creates a serious hardship for the immediate neighborhood it will occupy.*

- *The majority of the multi-family residential buildings in this quadrant are annual rentals. Many of these apartment buildings lack off-street parking and are highly dependent upon on-street parking, which is already limited. Many were built in the 40's, 50's and early 60's when most households had only one vehicle.*
- *Incidentally, I am a proponent of beautifying the city and creating shade for pedestrians. Numerous cities throughout the Northeast have accomplished this. Among them, Atlanta, Charlotte, Boston, Chicago and New York. However, they have done so without eliminating the public commodity of on-street parking.*
- *Each landscaped bump out (completed at the developer's expense and in many cases maintenance) is a wonderful haven for rodents, insects and cigarette butts. Not to mention, they creates long-term maintenance hardships driven to ensure the vitality of the plant material used.*
- *In summary, As the city continues to approve the antiquated streetscape/landscape master plan, a majority of on-street parking has been systematically reduced or eliminated.*

I hope you and your colleagues take into serious account the importance of maintaining and NOT reducing the valuable public commodity of on-street parking. In future public meetings, I plan on further articulating these last minute bullet points and welcome the opportunity of participating in this dialogue. Thanks for taking the time to consider my comments and feedback regarding not only this project but the others that will come before you in the coming months and years.

Respectfully,

*Ralph Cabrera
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Coral Gables, FL. 33134*



Meeting: Planning and Zoning Board

Meeting Time: June 21, 2022 at 6:00pm EDT

Disclaimer:

Tell us what's on your mind. Your comments and information will not be read during Commission Meetings, but will become part of the official public record. If you do not want your personal information included in the official record, do not complete that field.

1 Comment  Closes for Comment June 20, 2022 at 5:00pm EDT

The online Comment window has expired

Agenda Item

E.-4. 22-4237 A Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida approving Mixed-Use Site Plan and Conditional Use review pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process" Section 14-203, "Conditional Uses," for a proposed Mixed-Use project referred to as "1505 Ponce" on the property legally described as Lots 1 through 6 and Lots 17 through 22, Block 36, "Douglas Section" (1505 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, 126 and 122 Menores Avenue), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date.

[Legislation Text](#) [06 21 2022 Staff Report - 1505 Ponce w attachments](#) [06 21 2022 Attachment A - Applicant Submittal](#)

1 Public Comment



Rachel Lauzurique at June 18, 2022 at 1:49pm EDT

Support

I own a fourplex located at 123 Salamanca Avenue. One block from this site. I support the proposed construction to be located at 1505 Ponce de Leon Blvd. It will be a welcome addition to an ugly empty lot and an excellent improvement to the area. It will increase adjacent property values.

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