

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Items E-17 and H-4
October 28, 2025
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

**Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Richard D. Lara**

City Staff

**City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

Public Speaker(s)

**Shamim Ahmadzadegan, AIA | Principal, Gensler
Maria Cruz
Jackson Holmes
Lisa DeTournay**

Agenda Items E-17 and H-4 [Start: 12:08 p.m.]

E-17: A Resolution of the City Commission pursuant to Zoning Code Article 1, “General Provisions,” Section 1-104 “Jurisdiction and applicability,” amending Resolution No. 2021-334 that granted Site Plan approval of the Mobility Hub, located at the site of Parking Garage 1, legally described as Lots 29 to 42, Block 2, Crafts Section, Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date.

H-4: A Resolution of the City Commission accepting the recommendation of the City Manager to approve a change order to contract RFQ 2020-021 for design consultant services for the State-of-the-Art Mobility Hub and with M. Arthur Gensler Jr. & Associates, Inc., in the estimated amount of \$750,000 or not to exceed

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the available budget, pursuant to Section 2-764(B) of the City's Procurement Code entitled change orders and contract modifications.

Mayor Lago: And welcome back. We're going to go to E-17, which is time certain.

City Attorney Suarez: E-17 is the resolution of the City Commission pursuant to Zoning Code Article 1, "General Provision" Section 1-104 "Jurisdiction and applicability," amending Resolution No. 2021-334 that granted site plan approval of the Mobility Hub located at the site of Parking Garage 1, legally described as laws 29-42 block 2 Craft Section Coral Gables, Florida; providing for repeated provision severability clause and providing for an effective date. This is a quasi-judicial item so everyone who will be providing testimony in this matter should be sworn in.

City Clerk Urquia: Those who will be appearing on this item please stand and raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you'll provide today will be the truth and nothing but the truth?

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: All right. Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: Mr. Mayor, we have the presentation for the mobility hub based on the prior selection of the City Commission and this is just further along to see if we can finalize the project and move on with the final design and then, of course, construction phase. We'll be looking at a Construction Manager At Risk as soon as the project is approved by the City Commission.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Thank you. Do we have a presentation from staff or anything like that?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes. Gensler is here to provide the presentation.

Mayor Lago: How are you doing, sir? Good morning.

Mr. Ahmadzadegan: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commission members, City Manager. Really happy to be back to present the updates of the elevation and facades that were selected from our last meeting. Let me see if this is working. Yes, it is. Just a quick reminder of what was selected out of the three options last time. What was selected was the option of Carved by Nature which was really focused on the abstraction of nature on the actual facade itself. These were some of the inspirational images that we had to guide the overall design. You remember these initial conceptual elevations. And I'm going through these fast because you've already seen these. And now is the development as we've looked at it further. So, this is the Cheesecake Factory on the bottom right-hand corner that you're seeing. You're looking at the elevation updated now with more detailing into the specific metal panels. What you're able to see here as well is the kind of specific location of the art display. As you remember, the idea of biophilia, landscape, art is all

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part of the facade and design of this project. So, this is one art niche that we've developed for a future sculpture that would go into this particular area. This is another view that you probably hadn't seen before. This is looking right at the entry off of Andalusia. One of the things just to take into account is the coloring of the facade now has kind of an off white or a champagne color to it so that it blends into the overall feel of the downtown area. Again, the pattern of the facade really does represent kind of a lush foliage, if you will, as if you're almost looking through the foliage of a canopy of a tree. The insertions that we have of the landscaping are very specifically placed so that they're above any obstructions. So, you can see on the left-hand side, you can already see the landscape insertion above the Miracle Mile Theater. And on the right-hand side, it's still above as you're walking down towards the main entry, you can still see the views of that landscaping, so really the idea is focused on nature. Again, just highlighting the integrations that we're seeing. This is another view from Miracle Mile. If you remember, previously we had a bird's eye view, which literally nothing but a bird would ever see. We wanted to actually make it more realistic in terms of what you would see at the corner looking directly at the building itself. You can see it blends in quite well here. The Miracle Mile Theater, it takes up kind of a lot of the facade that you were seeing before. But again, the way we place that landscape insertion is in a place where you can still see above it so that really what you're seeing is a lot of the landscaping and the biophilia that we've actually incorporated. On the left-hand side where we've opened it up right at the ramp is another insertion for art. One thing that I wanted to note specifically for Vice Mayor Anderson, as you can see here, we've updated that with a two-foot crash wall. So that's incorporated into the design. And again, just the art mural area again on this part would be something that we'll go through a process of selecting in the future. And again, the biophilia integration on the Miracle Mile facade. This is that main entry that we've created off of Andalucía that takes you directly through that paseo and connects you to Miracle Mile. We believe this is a really important urban planning concept to connect that main retail artery to the rest of the city. You can see that there's lots of biophilia at the canopy level directly above the main entrance. The patterning of the soffit ceiling that we've created through there also kind of represents the pattern that we have on the facade itself. There's a moment for a large piece of artwork at the ground where you see that staircase. And of course, a lot of retail and activation on the street so it's not just a dead facade and a dead street. And again, this is where that specific art display would go, front and center. Again, the artist to be selected in the future. This is one of my personal kind of favorite renderings is what happened at night. It's a really beautiful, almost a veil-looking facade on this with a soft glow. It really looks like you're looking through kind of a lush canopy of a tree. We're really trying to connect this facade and this building itself with what we think is the most important thing about Coral Gables, which is the lushness of the area, the trees, the foliage, the patterns that you see in the oolite and the limestone. And that's what we've really tried to create here. This is just a close-up. Again, so we've looked at the detailing of what each metal panel would be. As we get closer into dealing with the actual metal manufacturers, we'll get even more details to you. But one of the

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things that we're really excited about is what happens on the interior. So, you can see on the right-hand side, that's the view after you've parked your car. You can see the amount of beautiful light that actually comes through. Again, this is a safety issue, but it's also an aesthetic issue in terms of being able to look out, allowing the light to come in and a beautiful pattern that actually falls on the ground floor as the sun shines through this thing, again, is a constant reminder of this idea of landscape and foliage. This just kind of shows you some patterns that we've been looking at. This is a second pattern that we looked at to try and optimize. What we've shown you in the previous one and on all the facade renderings is this one. So, this is just another one to show you that we've been really looking at studying what that pattern could actually be. This is both of them together. This is a detail. Basically, what we're trying to show is how the entire system connects back to the structure itself. One of the things that we've tried to do here is to expedite the construction time by having the metal panels actually connect to two floors so that when it's under construction, you're actually putting up this building much faster than you typically would. So, we're really trying to expedite the construction process as well. The rooftop activation was something we didn't quite touch on last time, so a little bit more detail for you here. This was what it used to be before. You can see that there was stadium seating as part of it. There was an interior community space of about 2,300 square feet. And then the middle portion where we're calling a kind of multifunction space was really focused on a children's park area. If you remember, the Parks Department was actually involved last time. This is kind of what it looked like before. From what we've heard and what we've seen, there's a lot of green spaces and parks that have been constructed since that time. And so maybe the idea of a children's focused park on the roof didn't make as much sense given the recent developments that we've seen around the city. So, this is one option that we're proposing. For two reasons. One, to really keep the rooftop activated, and two, to monetize it as much as we can. So, expanding that restaurant slash community event space to 3,800 square feet so that if it becomes a tenant for the city where it's a restaurant, it's a much larger space and a space that could actually accommodate the restaurant. We would have outdoor seating. The seating would also spill out into the multifunction space, which is basically just a green turf area. It's much more simplified now. In front of that where you're seeing the purple is what we're calling an activation space. You'll see in more detail the idea is that it will have a cover on it so that there could be a kind of green on the screen, you could see movies kind of projected on that wall. You could actually have performances there of bands. So, it really becomes a space that becomes multifunctional and a draw to get people up there. The second option, not too dissimilar, was really expanding that idea of the restaurant and a much larger community space, in this case 6,000 square feet. We really imagined this idea of that outdoor terrace area would actually have sculptures that could be part of it as well but still having that activation space. This is just a view of what that rooftop would look like. This was really focused on the trellises. If you remember, we actually had photovoltaic cells to reduce the electricity bill for the building itself and sustainability for the project as well. So, this just kind of shows what was there before. And this is a conceptual rendering of what that rooftop

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could look like. So, to the right would be the restaurant space or the event space. You can see that there's outdoor seating that spills out. The green turf is directly in front of it. That could be set up for different types of events. In this case, this is projecting a movie so that there could be a movie night on the top of the rooftop. And that is what we have for you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.

Mr. Ahmadzadegan: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Looks like you've made a lot of progress. I know you've been working hard. Thank you for that. And thank you for your team, as always, being so considerate and working together on behalf of the city. Mr. Manager, do you have any further questions before I take it to the Commission?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, Mayor. We've looked at the roof differently now. We're going to have a 20,000-square-foot park in front of Publix and a 10,000-square-foot park right across from the Codina project. So that's why the different activation of that roof. We have two different designs that have come up, and we would like to get the opinion of the Commission. I think we'd like them very much if we could go back to those. And then we'd like to see if we can move forward with the Commission.

Mayor Lago: I'm happy you brought up the park because one of the things that I worked on with your guidance when we were negotiating with Publix over the last four years was when I told them I'd love to see a 20,000-square-foot park, and we were able to negotiate 20,000 square-feet. That opened us up. I think it gave us a lot more flexibility in regard to the programming for the parking garage. I think having that park, well, we would have liked to have it obviously anywhere but having it on the first floor I think it is going to pay significant dividends. It's going to be a better amenity, in my opinion, something pretty special.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, Mayor, your dealings with that park were really what motivated us to look at that differently because it's 20,000 square feet right diagonally across.

Mayor Lago: Great. Great location.

City Manager Iglesias: And if we could look at the facade, the skin again.

Mr. Ahmadzadegan: Okay. Just waiting for it to come back on the screen.

Mayor Lago: And I can't remember the last meeting, but I think when you came back, I think it was a pretty good consensus on the skin. I think it looked great.

City Manager Iglesias: It's Carved by Nature, but we have a couple of two final designs on the Carved by Nature, just slightly different. It's hard to pick between both of them because they're both quite— Yes.

Mr. Ahmadzadegan: So, these are the side-by-side. The first one, which is what we're calling Option one, is what all the renderings were actually based on because obviously we had to pick one for the rendering. And then this is the Option two, which is a slightly different scale for the actual pattern itself. So, we wanted to bring this up to you for your comments.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner.

Commissioner Lara: Beautiful, exciting, very vivid imagery. And I think this bodes very, very, very well going forward for the mobility hub. As far as the two choices, everyone's got an opinion. I really like the first one the most, only for me because of the bigger size, I suppose, of the shapes versus the other one that has, to me, a little bit more of a web-like view because there's a thinner pattern on some of the structure skin there. The first one just feels to me a little more tropical, jungle kind of motif. And especially when you see the sun coming through on the inside and it creates the space, the little geometric spaces on the floor with the shadow and the light. Wonderful. That's great. Anyway, I just like that. They're both beautiful. I prefer the first one.

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Through the Mayor. I would say I like the first one better too. It's a little more lacy, a little more flowing in a way. Great concept. So, I like the fact that you brought some choices. That was a good idea. The only thing I hope, and I appreciate the wall, is if we find some way to get that artwork, architectural expression of art more visible in the ramps. Is there any way to bring that forward so it would be more visible as opposed to behind a wall or cars? So not that I'm an architect, but there may be a way to do that with a screen. I don't know. Something else similar, but you've done a great job. We had a nice presentation last night at the Coral Gables Garden Club. An individual from the Florida Native Plant Network came forward and spoke about what Singapore did. And when I expressed what we were doing here, they expressed a willingness to collaborate. So, you might want to reach out to them. They may have some suggestions on how we can support the biophilia even better because I'm certainly not the expert. But I do know that, you know, right plant, right place is a critical piece in what you choose to do. And I know we have an engineering additional amount needed for this project. And it was something that, you know, I always had voiced in the first iteration of this mobility hub in the past, was the fact that, you know, the weather is increasingly getting worse. My heart goes out to the folks in Jamaica. I compared the top speeds of wind in Andrew, which we experienced here many moons ago now, 30-some-odd years ago, to what they're facing now. It was a 145 mile per hour storm with top speeds around 175. This one's 175 with the gusts coming in at 200. So, we need to seriously look at engineering

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on this. It's money well spent. We have in our recent history that we all can remember times when money wasn't adequately invested on the engineering. My first year in office, we had Champlain Tower. We've seen the FIU Bridge go down. We've seen parking garages at campuses go down. Fort Lauderdale Police Station experienced problems. So, I think it's, you know, I don't want to say penny wise, pound foolish. I'd rather put the money into properly engineering this building and every building going into our city. And I know with our City Manager; we'll make sure that that gets done. And then I shared some additional ideas with the City Manager regarding additional areas that we could possibly do activation or uses in the building on dead corners that can now become active generating corner areas. I know you haven't had time to explore the market for those things. So, I look forward to hearing those from you in the future.

Mr. Ahmadzadegan: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir. Anything else? I like number one also. I think it's great. I think it's soft. The building looks great. And we need parking. So, I think it's a good move forward. Do you need a motion?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: So, we will – through the Mayor. So, we will proceed with Option number one and we're going to move forward with the project. If we could do also with H-4 along with this, with E-17.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, any public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor. First speaker, Mrs. Maria Cruz.

Mrs. Maria Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I cannot understand how anyone can say that this building blends in with what's there. I like the interior. I like the first floor. So far, that is no issue. But when you look at the monstrosity, the height of that building compared to what's there, I mean, when I was looking at what the presentation, every building next to it, across from it, looks like a little midget compared to this monstrosity. I think the problem in my eyes, and I think the problem in the people's eyes, is the height. If it were lower, it would be much better. And I know that we're convinced that it has to be high. But let me tell you, poor Miracle Mile and Miracle Theater is horrific the way it looks.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Jackson Holmes.

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Mr. Jackson Holmes: Greetings. Jackson Holmes. I live at 35 Sedonia Avenue in Coral Gables. Shall I say, praise God, we're here. And the Mayor has told me I only have three minutes, so I want to get to the heart of this. But I'll start out by saying that I prefer design number two. And my reason being is, and now I get into the safety message. We will have, according to Kevin Kinney, the former Parking Director, the safest parking garage in the country. Now, part of that is, do we have that picture that I sent you? Is the transparency of the garage. If no other garage that I, all right, there, good, we have the picture. Now, if you look at that, imagine you're walking on the street with the photo behind me. And you see a woman being mugged by some mugger, presumably a male, right? You can pick up your phone, call 9-1-1, and the Coral Gables police can meet the mugger on his way out of the garage. You can't even get out of the garage. This is one of the elements that makes this the safest in the country. What I'm worried about is that design number two, no, design number two is consistent with that. It gives plenty of transparency, right? But design number one that was preferred by you, Honorable Vice Mayor, is more obscure. I think it reduces safety. How am I doing here? I still got one minute and 20 seconds. So, getting back to the safety issue, as I focused on these garages, and I was published in the Miami Herald in 1998 talking about these garages. So, I followed this maybe more than anyone alive. What am I getting to here? With no parking, Miracle Mile dies. We need the parking and give me a second because I'm losing my train of thought. Women are the people who like to shop. That's a fact of life. If the city is going to make money off of Miracle Mile, we need to make those women safe. And if we do make them safe, and this does make them safe, then we as a city get more money. We get to take care of our unions, and we get to pay our bills, and I got 20 seconds left. I'll include myself in this. I'm an adjoining property owner, so I have a unique perspective. I think we're the oldest property-owning family on Miracle Mile. My grandfather knew George Merrick. The property owners will make more money, too. Thanks for listening.

Mayor Lago: Thank you so much.

City Clerk Urquia: Lisa DeTournay.

Mayor Lago: Good afternoon.

Ms. DeTournay: Hi. Good afternoon. Lisa DeTournay, 10 Aragon Avenue. I'm up here. It's a little frustrating because I've been up here many times, and I've addressed this issue as well as some other large development. I feel like the city should lead by example in that we are allowing a certain amount of height to be built, especially if there's a Mediterranean bonus. But I think we should keep our heights down as low as necessary and not to project what we might be using something for in the future. This is supposed to be a parking garage, so I think the top floor should be for parking. That way we could fit all the cars that you said are required. We could reduce at least one floor, something like that. I don't like the height, especially compared to the block right on Miracle Mile where the maximum is four stories, I believe, and next to the Miracle Theater. So,

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I wish that everybody who's always spoken about lack of building higher and higher in this downtown area, so we don't look like a Brickell. I wish we could all be heard. This actually sounds like it's kind of a done deal. So that's why I'm disappointed. I'm lucky I have a flexible work schedule that I could take time off to come in here. But I hate to be after the vote as well. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Just very briefly, just for the record, I think it's important. Mr. Manager, what is the currently allowable height as per the zoning code? If there's no changes to the zoning code, what is allowed currently by the zoning code?

City Manager Iglesias: That area, Mayor, is MX3. So, it would be with Med bonus, it would be 190.5. We are not seeking a Med bonus, so we are under 150. So, we do not need the Med bonus to reach this height. This is a very difficult project. It's a parking garage. If we look at the Menorca Garage, it's been very, very successful because we have not gone to a Mediterranean style that provides a very closed, very difficult forced ventilation garage. So, this will be clear heights that can be from an adaptive reuse, can be used for either a commercial, either an office or a multifamily future occupancy. So, we've dealt with a lot of issues on this parking garage to deal with the present and the future.

Mayor Lago: So, two quick points. When was that zoning change made, just for the record? I know I've repeated this probably a dozen times and I'll keep repeating it. When was the zoning change made?

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, that was years ago. It was before I was ever in office, correct? Or anyone here?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, sir.

Mayor Lago: I just got to put things clearly on the record because later it will be said that we changed the zoning code, and we didn't change the zoning code. We're actually not even seeking a Med height. Number three, the reason why the building, the structure, has to go vertical is because of the depth of the lot. If we had a deeper lot, due to the parking, due to the configuration of the ramps, you would have a much smaller building in height. But due to the fact that it's a very thin lot, you have to go vertical. There's no other choice. If we owned, obviously, before, Steve Battelle wanted to have 10 floors on Miracle Mile. I stopped that. I made sure that was not allowed. If we owned the properties on Miracle Mile, we did change the zoning, then you would have a much smaller parking lot because you would have more depth all the way into Miracle Mile. But I would never allow a parking structure to be on Miracle Mile. I stopped that. I stopped 10 story buildings from being built on Miracle Mile. I just want to put that on the record because I know

that sometimes we forget. And by the way, you're always welcome to join us. It's always a pleasure to have residents here. Thank you for being here. Mr. Clerk?

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Through the Mayor. A couple things I want to note, too, because I had received calls from residents, you know, behind the plaza about the fan noise from the plaza area parking garages. Between the belts and the bearings making noise plus the forced air ventilation noises, that is avoided by having the high ceilings that are in here. But, yes, it does add some additional height. But getting away from that noise, which is annoying residents, is an important factor, too. So, it's roughly a little over 45 feet shorter than what is allowable on that site. And as I've said before, I hope this is the last parking garage that we need to construct so that, you know, we have other options on other pieces of property that don't require this type of height. And it's right in the center of the downtown where it is easiest for folks to be able to travel. But 45 feet below is a big reduction in height. And without that noise, I think those two factors compel me to say that this is the best choice for this parking garage.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor?

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, the additional height that the Vice Mayor was talking about is also very important from our adaptive reuse perspective. We use a typical parking garage height of 7 feet, and you cannot use it for anything else. And so, we have this parking garage through adaptive reuse can be used, as I mentioned, for either office or multifamily. And when you have a regular parking garage with a 7-foot height, which would be this garage has at least three additional feet at every story, you cannot use it for anything but storage. The storage of cars or storage of refrigerators, one or the other, but it really doesn't lead to any adaptive reuse. We have the speed ramps, and these are flat floors. And we have areas where we can have the MEP come up vertically. So, this garage has been looked at from a current use and certainly a future use perspective.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Any other comments from my colleagues?

Commissioner Lara: Maybe just a quick comment, Mr. Mayor. It comes up often. It comes up often in the Commission meetings. It comes up often when you speak to residents, when they come to office hours, when you read about it online as well. But it's worth repeating, right? We know we have zoning, and we have the code, which establishes in every particular section maximum height permitted. So, when a building comes before us and it's within the permitted height, it's implicit that that height is also ensuring compatibility with the surrounding areas that have been

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zoned that way. I'm talking about the way it currently, not as it is, you know, would be proposed if there's a variance or some sort of departure from the zoning designation. So, while many would prefer, as a matter of their, you know, taste, to keep buildings no higher than two, three, or four floors, that's fine, and it's great to hear those views. But it would be a misstatement to say that permitting or allowing a building to be erected that falls well within the maximum heights permitted by the zoning as being either at best in bad taste or at worst in derogation or contrary to the law because that would be false. So, if there's a concerted desire to change the heights of what's permitted by the MX designations, then that's a conversation that we should have with the residents for another day or a different mission, right? But when we're talking about a building that is, as the City Manager stated, isn't even being sought with a Mediterranean bonus to be higher, it's a misstatement to say that it's either over development or out of control based on the height alone. So, I just think it's a conversation that we're going to be having over the course of time with the residents where we take into consideration their views. But I think it's important also to say that in many respects, when you talk about property owners and being able to build as of right, that's what we're talking about when you fall within stated height restrictions.

Mayor Lago: Anyone else for the good of the order?

Commissioner Fernandez: I still believe this building is too tall, even though it is within the height that's allowed. You are correct. It is within, but I still believe that it is above what residents have been asking us to do. I appreciate the changes that have been made to the design. I still do not believe that it falls in line with the Miracle Mile side of the building. I would have liked to have seen something that may have been more in line with, or at least on that side, more in line with what's on Miracle Mile. Those are just my comments. I would be a no vote today on this.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor. So, I have four points. From day one, I have not supported this. I've tried to stay with an open mind, not put my guard up or biased. I will not be supporting this design for the mobility hub or the Comp Plan. This is not what I promised the people, and I will follow through with what I promised them. I agree that we do need a garage. Absolutely, we do. I'm not opposed to that. In fact, I think we need two garages, not only there, but in the other parking lot as well, that we're planning to sell to a developer with an MX3 zoning. So, you can only imagine what's going to go there. Ultimately, the plan to sell the other garage to a developer, I can definitely not agree with that. The plan is here, as stated in previous Commission meetings. It was to go ahead and help fund this garage. But most importantly, and most importantly, I will not support the fact that we are going through approval of this mobility hub, the comp plan, and the design without voter input at all. We are not talking to the neighbors, and I completely disagree with that. Now, I do want to be thankful for Gensler. The design is pretty. Now, I don't think it's still, I think they went a long way. I like a lot of the aspects that were there.

It doesn't fit in back of the Actor's Playhouse. I think we need to, it's out of character. However, the design is beautiful. I will be definitely no vote as same as day one.

Commissioner Lara: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Lara: So, I too have heard from many residents Commissioner Castro, who are very much in support of this and including the, the enhanced design that has an activation on the top on the roof with a proposed restaurant, outdoor venue for live events as well as movies, right? These are all ways that I think will help generate business, drive the economic engine for Miracle Mile, which we all, I think we've all desperately needs that, needs it, right? But in terms of voter input and resident, I should say, correct that, resident input, you know, this is at least the second time in the last, you know, 30 days or so that this has been on the agenda. We've had the renderings available today. We've had three members of the public come to speak on this issue regarding public comment. One was quite vocal and Mr. Holmes in support of it as well. I think that opportunity and process have allowed for what your concerns are. And, and I think that one can make a very strong compelling argument that, you know, we're right on the right track on, on the basis that I will take the, the lack of individuals appearing here today against the mobility hub is actually a tacit or implicit endorsement of it. My view.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: If I may.

Commissioner Castro: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for the privilege. Mr. Manager, I've heard Commissioner Castro said that she doesn't support this comp plan change. I'm confused. Can you -- we're changing the comp plan here?

City Manager Iglesias: No, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So, I just want to put that on the record. That was mentioned twice as a comp plan change. It's on the record. I literally just heard that, that we're not changing the comp plan. So that's number one. Number two. That's the fact. Are we, are we changing the comp plan?

City Manager Iglesias: No, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Because I have someone looking at me saying, no, we're not changing the comp plan. We are not going to MX3. We're not seeking Med bonus. I know that people want to have smaller buildings in height. And I'm perfectly fine with that. I voted against Gables Station when they

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*Agenda Items E-17 and H-4 – Resolution pursuant to Zoning Code Article 1
General Provisions, Section 1-104, "Jurisdiction and applicability" and a Resolution for change order for Mobility Hub*

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asked for seven additional floors in height. I voted against The Plaza. I voted against the then parking garages. I voted against Miracle Mile to make sure it wasn't 10 floors. I've done my due diligence. I've done my work. And by the way, I love the rhetoric of anti-development. And I asked the Clerk to provide documentation, and I will be sending it out. This Commission has voted lockstep on every single project except for one where Melissa Castro voted against it. But in every single project, we're batting over 90% in regard to projects. Mr. Clerk, am I incorrect, or no?

City Clerk Urquia: From a recollection, you are, sir.

Mayor Lago: Okay. I want to make sure. So, we can do, we can do this political rhetoric back and forth, this game of anti-development and heights and all stuff. But this commission has voted lockstep in regard to projects. Don't forget projects that come before us, come before us is because it's required by the zoning code because they're mixed-use developments. And sometimes you're able to work with a developer in an effort to get a park. Case in point, Publix. Case in point, a constellation group in front of Nordstrom's. Case in point, Ameria, which we got a 15,000 square foot park. What it required, we had to tweak the project. So, there are some good things when you come, and you negotiate.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: I'm not done yet. So, I'm all in favor of having a robust conversation. But let me tell you the biggest problem why I'm voting in favor today. So, my mother is a legit, is legitimately a person who requires a handicapped parking space. She's had dozens of surgeries, spine fusions, multiple hip surgeries, a litany. I could be here for hours talking about her, her issues, but I don't want to violate all of her HIPAA, all of her HIPAA rules. Okay, with all due respect. My mother, who loves to go to downtown, just like my grandmother, before she passed away 10 years ago, Mara Julia. Tells me I don't like to drive around and look for parking. And I won't drive, and I won't park in the parking lot because I don't feel comfortable parking there. I don't feel it's safe and my car is too big. She has a standard Volvo; it's not like she's driving an Escalade or anything like that. I don't feel comfortable and it's not appropriate. So, I find myself driving around or eventually having to spend more money and use valet, which is something that I don't want to use. I should be able to park in a parking lot that is of the same quality as, for example, the Design District has or Dadeland has. We don't have that here in our downtown. If you look at the Andalusia parking garage, excuse me, not the Andalusia, the Mediterranean one.

City Manager Iglesias: Museum.

Mayor Lago: Museum, excuse me, the Museum Parking lot. When you're in there, it is pitch dark. The lack of ventilation is unhealthy, in my opinion. And the design is a shoebox with some roof tiles on it that makes it look Mediterranean. I have spoken to the architect because I worked for

that architect for four years, Willie Bermello. He even says, I follow the criteria set forth by the city, but it's not something that I'm super uber excited about. OK, I was told this is basically the way there was supposed to be small little windows with roof tiles. So, we have confines. And what do I say that? Because a parking garage can only be made to look so Mediterranean. You really don't have the articulation to make something that everyone's going to agree with. But I think we have softened up this parking garage as much as we can. We've lowered the height. And it is something that is going to be an economic driver, like Commissioner Lara said. Twenty-seven percent of our tax base comes from the downtown. We have to stop kicking the can down the curb and make this investment. We're not going to make everybody happy. But this is an investment in our future, one that will be funded by revenue that comes from parking. So, we can go back and forth and talk about development and, you know, kind of, you know, do all these beautiful soundbites so that the blogs can go out there and fire away. And at the end of the day, we need to do what's right for our downtown and finally deliver on a parking garage that will bring relief. The current state of our two parking garages is embarrassing. We can do so much better for the business community, for our residents and for the people who come to visit our downtown every single day.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: And I wanted to go ahead and respond to Commissioner Richard Lara. I've had plenty, plenty of residents and I have had this and I respect Rip Holmes' opinion. I very, very much do. In fact, I do want parking garages there. Just not at this scale. Okay. In fact, I don't want one parking garage. I want two parking garages because I think from this whole Commission, I spend a lot of my time on Miracle Mile and Giralda. I could tell you I don't like to park on a ninth or tenth floor. I'm not going to. And I prefer to park on the street close to the restaurant I'm going to. Or if I don't find close parking, I'll park valet. I don't love going into garages and going around and around. Now, when you're talking about MX3 and that we're building according to code. Yes, we are. But I want to keep something in consideration. This is our property. This is city property. Do we really need to exercise the zoning code? Do we really need to build as far as we can build? I know we're not using Med bonus. I appreciate that. At the end of the day, this is in our hands. I would be happier with this garage being a little lower. I would be. I wouldn't even care so much about the design, but I do care about the fact that I promise the people not so much height. I'll be willing to compromise but not in this manner. This is huge. And that's it respectfully. That's it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes, ma'am.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And so, we can. Because comp plans are complex things for people to understand. And I've had to sit down with some folks sometimes and explain what it meant. A change in the comp plan would mean it would exceed the height of 190.5 feet.

Mayor Lago: That was my point.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We'd have to exceed the height and we're not doing that. If we had proposed a garage at 190.5 feet and then done a reduction of over 45 feet, then people would be happy. So last night I attended the Garden Club meeting, and I talked about this garage and the biophilia and getting input. It was a packed room. I had to sit back behind the plants that were being raffled off because there were no other seats left. Not a single person said they don't like the proposed design. I reviewed my emails. Again, today, not a single email has been received. You know, we always usually receive some. Nothing. That they don't like this proposed design. The flat floors. If you like the existing garage we have, the people that are disabled, the people that have an injury, are going to have a hard time navigating on something with a sloping type of design. That's the way you pack more cars into a shorter garage. Then you have the noise. If you really want to experience it, go to Trader Joe's. The fans running and then the auxiliary fans that they have to push out and it's still noisy and it's like a dungeon in there with a lack of light. Not a good experience for folks. I've received plenty of complaints about the fan noises on these other garages. People don't like it. So, for the ambiance and being able to enjoy the experience on the Mile and shopping, would you like to have the buffeting fans? Or would you like to be able to hear the birds? Would you like to be able to hear the music? So, I'm in favor for all those reasons. It hasn't maximized the height. I think the design has improved dramatically. I was here five years ago. I opposed that design and you've listened, and you've made something that's much more compatible to the Art Deco design that exists on that block. We're respecting the past and reflecting it in the future design of this. Thank you for your hard work. I'm ready to move this one forward. I'll make a motion to approve this.

Mayor Lago: If I may, just before we vote. I've heard from multiple residents. Obviously, they're in favor that it's not 190 feet. Now, we brought it down to what it's at right now. The mistake that we made, Mr. Manager, and it's our fault. We should have come here today with a 190-foot building. Exactly. And we should have negotiated right on the dais here today. Of course, we'll give you 140 feet. You want to be 145 feet? Look at us. We would have been heroes. Now, we're villains. It's okay. We're finally getting it done.

Commissioner Lara: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Lara: I disagree with you. The residents of Coral Gables, and I know you're being facetious, okay?

Mayor Lago: But I'll make a motion. I'll make a motion. Mr. Manager, I'd like to have it 190 feet. Let's make it to 190, and then we'll lower it to 150 here, and then we'll be heroes. We'll be heroes. You know how many residents have come up to me and how many business owners have come to me and said, Vince, please, this is enough. The design has been thoroughly discussed. We worked on this. This is a no-brainer. Let's move forward. Let's not play politics. Let's just get this done. Enough is enough. This is an investment in the future. Investment in the future. So, we got to help, and we got to help now. So, I know I'm joking around, trying to have a good time because everything is so serious, but at the end of the day, we have vetted this since I got here, and this is an opportunity to move forward. Go ahead.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, I guess, question for the Manager. I've heard about the reduction in height. What was the original proposal, and where are we at now, in comparison?

City Manager Iglesias: The original proposal, we are at the same height. So, we haven't reduced the height?

City Manager Iglesias: No, we're under 150 feet, and we are at the same height. We redesigned the skin, the bottom floor. We're redesigning the skin, the bottom floor, and the activation on the roof. Those are the design changes.

Commissioner Fernandez: As far as the adaptive reuse, it requires a certain height for each floor. What is that height?

City Manager Iglesias: The height is over 10 feet. What happens with a parking garage, parking garages are normally done at 7 feet, and they're not designed, and you can't really not adapt them to either multifamily or office space because it's too low. So, with this garage, we can adapt it to either multifamily or office space.

Commissioner Fernandez: Right. So, I guess what I had, and I guess we haven't been able to discuss it because we haven't discussed this on the dais when I have been present. What I had asked, I guess about a year and a half ago, was the potential of reducing the number of floors that are created for adaptive reuse, which would naturally reduce the height of the building. So, if we reduce it by three floors that we're building to the 10-foot height back to the 7 feet, we are now reducing the height of the building by about 9 feet. So, it is a noticeable difference. That was the conversation we had because, in my opinion, I think we'll still need a certain number of floors for parking, regardless of the need in the future. So, that's where my conversation had been. I know that you all have had conversations yourselves and you're okay with the height. That had been my

request in the past to try to address some of that height that we really probably won't need and a change for adaptive reuse that may be 50 years down the road.

Mayor Lago: But if I may, and I understand your comment. We've had this conversation on the dais before where no one can look at a building and tell me that building is 9 feet lower than it was proposed to be. Because we've had this discussion when it comes to parks and you say, this building never had a park. But to maximize and allow a developer to be able to give us a 20,000, 15,000 square foot park, 10,000 square foot park, we have to shrink the footprint of the building. Shrinking the footprint of the building, stack that intensity density and FAR with an additional floor so we can make them whole. I would rather see green space, more foliage, more beauty on the first floor than just have a property that's setback to setback. We also have to respect property values. So, we have, for example, in the area of Merrick Park, we have gone above the zoning code and allowed for an additional floor. But now we have multiple different parks that are popping up. And in the downtown, when I started here 13 years ago, we had one park, Ponce Circle Park. Now we're scheduled to have half a dozen parks coming into the downtown. That's a game changer. Those are the types of negotiations that we have to do. Case in point, the Codina Cadre building. We had to allow 17 additional feet. But we got a piece of property that, what do you think the value of that piece of property is, Mr. Manager?

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, it's in the millions.

Mayor Lago: In the millions and it's going to be a beautiful 10,000 square foot corner park adjacent to two blocks away from a 20,000 square foot park. So, I think that those plazas, the open spaces, I know what you're saying, Commissioner, and I don't disagree with you, but I think that we have to sometimes take into account looking at a building and saying, is that 150 or is that 141? And then you think to yourself, I really can't tell. What did you get for that? Well, you got the opportunity for, in five years potentially, to do adaptive reuse. Or you got the opportunity to put a beautiful park on the first floor, and you didn't go setback to setback. Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, some of the things that I've asked the architect to look at and through the City Manager were additional uses of the dead spaces in the corners. You know, I did a simple search for various things that don't exist in the City of Coral Gables or anywhere nearby, such as rock-climbing gyms, top rope climbing gyms. Now's the time to play with the usability of some of these corners in the building. So, it brings more people in, not just to use that, but then to go down and dine and go down and shop. You know, you're talking six inches here and six inches there. Pennywise pound foolish, which some people would say. But if you can bring in, I mean, my daughter from, who's not even here now, sent me this video of the kids in a mall basically doing bungee jumping on a trampoline. The kids were having a blast. Everybody was having a blast. We can bring that kind of life. They need time to do their research. And I understand that there was

mailed notice on this project. There was mailed notice. We've followed due process. The motion is on the floor. I imagine we should just take a vote.

Mayor Lago: Go ahead, Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor. Yes. What we've done is something different. We have not done a Mediterranean garage, which is dark, has very short ceilings, high sounds for, high noise for, as the Vice Mayor said, for forced ventilation because you do have carbon monoxide there. This will be a light, airy, very, very high garage. The usability is there. As a matter of fact, we've had very, very good reports on our Minorca garage because we've done the same thing. This is at a much higher level. What we are doing is forcing a design that doesn't work on a parking garage. And as the Mayor said, the architect of the museum garage has told me that the only reason he did that because he was forced with the programming. And so, we are forcing a design that does not work. We're forcing a design that lacks usability. We're forcing a design that people do not like. And that's why they do not use it as effectively as they should.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Mr. Clerk, we have a motion and a second.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, sir.

Commissioner Castro: No.

Commissioner Fernandez: I think you've made very compelling arguments, but I'm still not there, so I'm a no today.

Commissioner Lara: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

(Vote: 3-2)

Mayor Lago: Moving on to H-4.

City Attorney Suarez: H-4 is a Resolution of the City Commission accepting the recommendation of the City Manager to approve a change order to contract RFQ 2020-21 for design consultant services for the state-of-the-art mobility hub and with M. Arthur Gensler Jr. and Associates Inc. in the estimated amount of \$750,000 or not to exceed the available budget pursuant to Section 2-764B of the city's Procurement Code entitled Change Orders and Contract Modifications.

City Manager: Mayor, Commissioners, we are trying to finish the project. This project was started prior to the pandemic. It's been mothballed and it's back. It's back. We have a structural engineer

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that has retired. We need to get a new structural engineer, which is part of this work, and we are redesigning the bottom floor, the skin, and the activated roof. So, these are additional services for Gensler to finish the project so we can hopefully start building next year.

Mayor Lago: This is to get us to construction documents and finalize the construction documents, correct?

City Manager Iglesias: That is correct, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Perfect. Do we have any public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Go ahead.

City Clerk Urquia: Mrs. Maria Cruz.

Mayor Lago: All right, Mr. Clerk. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor. Mr. Jackson Holmes.

Mayor Lago: Yes, sir. Mr. Holmes.

Mr. Holmes: Thank you very much. Forgive me. I'm just going to extemporize here, but first of all, they've earned every single penny. Vice Mayor Anderson needed a different design, and I'm just extemporizing here, but if you want the tie-breaking vote, then you've got a lot of work to do to come up with a different design. I didn't expect that my hero behind us was going to pull a rabbit out of a hat. I thought we were at an impasse, and then at the last meeting where he appeared, I realized that he had done it, and it takes a lot of work. When you do the redesign of a two--, you know, again, I'm extemporizing here, but I asked my hero, Mr. Ahmadzadegan, how did you come up with the nation's safest parking garage? I said, what inspired you to do what no other parking garage has ever done, come up with the safest parking garage in the country? And he hemmed and hawed, so I asked him again, right? And then I finally said, oh, my God, trade secret. I won't ask you a third time. So, he's done the impossible, and he needs to be compensated. Thanks.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: I'll entertain a motion.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll move it.

Commissioner Lara: I'll second.

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Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, we have a motion and a second.

Commissioner Fernandez: No.

Commissioner Lara: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: As much as I feel he needs to be compensated, I don't agree with us moving forward, so no.

Mayor Lago: Before I vote for the record, I just got to make sure we get it on the blogs. Mr. Manager, will you provide us in regard to the average percentage for a project when you're in construction that is around 6 percent used for design? Where are we right now in this project?

City Manager Iglesias: We would be between 60 and 70 million, so it would be 3.6 to 4.2 million.

Mayor Lago: So, we're well under the standard in regard to what the industry standard is, and I recommend that before the blogs type something up, they make sure that they review this, they can Google it, and they can see what the industry standard is in regard to design fees for construction projects.

City Manager Iglesias: Mr. Mayor, that's based on state standards.

Mayor Lago: Yes, state standards. Thank you very much. Yes. Moving on.