



City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Staff Report

Applicant: City of Coral Gables
Application: **Zoning Code Text Amendments – Ground Coverage**
Public Hearing: Planning and Zoning Board
Date & Time: **March 12, 2025; 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.**
Location: Community Meeting Room, Police and Fire Headquarters,
2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

1. APPLICATION REQUEST

The City of Coral Gables is requesting review and consideration of the following:

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text amendments to the City Of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, Article 2, "Zoning Districts", Section 2-101, "Single-Family Residential (SFR) District," and Section 2-102 "Multi-Family 1 Duplex (MF1) District," and Article 16, "Definitions," to provide exception to the separation of accessory structures from the main structure under certain requirements and provide for open-air accessory structures with ground area coverage requirements; providing for repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and an effective date.

The request requires three (3) public hearings, including review and recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Board, and 1st and 2nd Reading before the City Commission.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The City of Coral Gables has consistently prioritized innovative design that enhances aesthetics, architectural integrity, and functionality while ensuring development remains compatible with the surrounding community. As requested by a City Commissioner with discussions from residents, staff has studied the current ground coverage provisions of the Zoning Code to analyze the building types being constructed with the existing limitations. Various scenarios were studied, including small lots, setbacks, and architectural forms, to better understand their impact on new residences. Based on this analysis, staff has drafted Zoning Code text amendments to refine the performance standards for ground area coverage requirements to allow open-air structures to be attached to the residence.

The current ground coverage regulations allow the residence to have 35% ground coverage, and an additional 10% for accessory buildings or structures, such as a detached garage, gazebo, trellis, etc. There is currently no distance separation required between the main residence and the accessory structure; therefore in small properties, the distance is minimal and unusable. The Code also correctly encourages terraces, breezeways, porches, and other open-air structures by excluding from Floor Area Ratio (FAR) calculations, but it is often difficult to provide these features as the square footage is calculated against the ground coverage limitation of the main residence. As a result, residents are unable to provide even an open-air connection to a detached garage.

The proposed amendments allow open-air accessory buildings or structures to be attached to the principal

structure while requiring enclosed accessory buildings or structures to maintain a minimum five-foot separation. This modification ensures that the total cumulative ground area coverage, including accessory structures, remains within the existing forty-five percent (45%) limit in Single-Family Residential (SFR) and Multi-Family 1 (MF1) districts, while also encouraging open-air structures and features, and covered access to detached garages.

The "ground coverage" requirements outlined in Appendix A | Site-Specific Zoning Regulations were also considered and analyzed for impacts. Many neighborhoods south of US1 have unique characteristics with their own set of standards. As the intent of the proposed text amendments are to provide options for less solid walls and more open-air appendages, staff studied the few Site Specifics that contain different ground coverage regulations. The ground coverage limitations provided below apply only to the respective subdivisions or "sections" as specified in Appendix A.

- **Coral Waterway (Section A-28-2)**
 - Current: Max 30% for the residence, up to 20% of the rear yard for accessory structures.
 - Proposed: Total coverage (residence + accessory structures) cannot exceed 50% (4,500 sq. ft. on a 10,000 sq. ft. lot).
- **Snapper Creek Lakes (Section A-94)**
 - Current: Max 15% for the residence, with up to 5% of the rear yard for accessory uses.
 - Proposed: Total coverage (residence + accessory structures) cannot exceed 20%. Open-air accessory structures can be attached to the main building.
- **Hammock Lakes (Section A-56)**
 - Current: Max 25% for the residence, with up to 5% of the rear yard for accessory structures.
 - Proposed: Total coverage (residence + accessory structures) cannot exceed 30%. Additional flexibility is allowed for open-air accessory structures.
- **Pine Bay Estates (Section A-75)**
 - Current: Max 30% for the residence, with up to 5% of the rear yard for accessory uses.
 - Proposed: Total coverage (residence + accessory structures) cannot exceed 35%. Open-air accessory structures can be attached to the principal building.
- **Kings Bay (Section A-63-2)**
 - Current: Max 15% for residences facing S.W. 67th Avenue (Ludlam Road); max 30% for all other residences. Accessory uses may cover 5-20% of the rear yard, depending on location.
 - Proposed: Total coverage (residence + accessory structures) cannot exceed 20% to 50%, depending on location. Open-air accessory structures can be attached to the main building. Residences facing S.W. 67th Avenue may face stricter limitations.

By providing greater flexibility in accessory structures, the proposed amendments encourage innovative architectural design, expands space utilization options, and ensures that accessory structures are thoughtfully integrated into residential properties, particularly benefiting properties with limited lot sizes while maintaining a cohesive and aesthetically appropriate built environment.

3. PROPOSED ZONING CODE TEXT AMENDMENT

The proposed Zoning Code text amendment is provided below in ~~striketrough~~/underline format.

ARTICLE 2. ZONING DISTRICTS

Section 2-101. Single-Family Residential (SFR) District.

D. Performance standards. The following performance standards shall regulate design provisions for structures in the District. The Board of Architects shall have authority over the following performance standards and shall make any adjustments as required by compatibility with neighboring properties, site characteristics, and design goals in the Comprehensive Plan. The Board of Architects may deny any proposed project based on aesthetic design as applied to the unique conditions of each building site. Where there are specific standards for properties that are specifically set forth in the Site-Specific Zoning Regulations, the regulations in the Site Specific Zoning Regulations shall apply (see Appendix A).

6. Ground area coverage. Ground area coverage requirements shall be as per Section 2-100, Residential Districts Table and as follows:

- a. A maximum of thirty-five (35%) percent of the building site shall be covered by the ~~main~~ principal building and shall include cantilevered portions of the building except balconies. ~~Also included are roof overhangs that are greater than five (5) feet.~~ Accessory buildings or structures, including swimming pools, may occupy additional ground coverage, but the total ground area occupied by the ~~main~~ principal building or structure and accessory structures shall not exceed forty-five (45%) percent of the building site. One- or two-story open-air accessory structures may be attached to the principal building, subject to the Board of Architects review and approval of the massing of the open-air accessory structure(s) as it relates to the principal building. Detached accessory buildings or structures shall maintain a minimum separation of five (5) feet from the principal building. To encourage historic designation, the Board of Architects shall have authority to grant a ten (10) percent increase of ground area coverage to accommodate historically designated structures in accordance with the design standards of that Board.

Section 2-102. Multi-Family 1 Duplex (MF1) District.

- D. Performance standards. The following performance standards shall govern the general development of structures in the District. All duplexes shall have the exterior appearance of a single-family house. Where there are specific standards for properties that are specifically set forth in Appendix A. Site Specific Zoning Regulations, the regulations in Appendix A shall apply.

6. Ground area coverage. Ground area coverage requirements shall be as per Section 2-100, Residential Districts Table and as follows:

- a. A maximum of thirty-five (35%) percent of the building site shall be covered by the ~~main principal~~ building and shall include cantilevered portions of the building except balconies. ~~Also included are roof overhangs that are greater than five (5) feet.~~ Accessory buildings or structures, including swimming pools, may occupy additional ground coverage, but the total ground area occupied by the main building or structure and accessory structures shall not exceed forty-five (45%) percent of the site. One- or two-story open-air accessory structures may be attached to the main building, subject to the Board of Architects review and approval of the massing of the open-air accessory structure(s) as it relates to the principal building. Detached accessory buildings or structures shall maintain a minimum separation of five (5) feet from the main building.

ARTICLE 16. DEFINITIONS

Accessory use, building or structure means a use which: 1) is subordinate to and serves a principal use; 2) is subordinate in area, extent, and purpose to the principal use served; 3) contributes to the comfort, convenience or necessities of the users or occupants of the principal use; and 4) is located on the same building site as the principal use, but is physically separate from the principal building or structure unless otherwise permitted by these regulations. Attached open-air accessory structures in Single-Family Residential and Multi-Family 1 Districts may include one- or two-story breezeways, loggias, porches, and other open-air structures.

Duplex means a residence building designed for, or used as, the separate homes or residence of two (2) separate and distinct families, having the exterior appearance of a single-family dwelling house. Each individual unit in the duplex shall have all living rooms accessible to each other from within the unit and each individual unit is to be occupied exclusively by one (1) family plus servants, who are living and cooking as a single household.

Single-family residence means a building used or designated to be used as a home or residence in which all living rooms are accessible to each other from within the building or roofed walkway, and in which the use and management of all sleeping quarters, all appliances for cooking, ventilating, heating or lighting are under one control, and to be occupied by one family plus servants, who are living and cooking as a single household.

4. REVIEW TIMELINE / PUBLIC NOTICE

City Review Timeline

The submitted applications have undergone the following City reviews:

REVIEW COMMITTEES AND BOARDS	DATE
Planning and Zoning Board	03.12.25
City Commission – 1 st Reading	TBD
City Commission – 2 nd Reading	TBD

The following has been completed to solicit input and provide notice of the Application:

PUBLIC NOTICE	DATE
Legal advertisement	02.28.25
Posted agenda and Staff report on City web page/City Hall	03.07.25

5. FINDINGS OF FACT

In accordance with Section 14-212.5 of the Zoning Code, the Planning and Zoning Board shall not recommend adoption of, and the City Commission shall not adopt, text amendments to these land Zoning Code unless the text amendment:

Standard	Staff Evaluation
a. Promotes the public health, safety, and welfare.	The proposed amendment promotes public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring adequate separation for fire safety, ventilation, and emergency access. Additionally, by allowing open-air accessory structures to be attached, the amendment provides greater flexibility in outdoor living spaces while maintaining compliance with existing lot coverage limits.
b. Does not permit uses the Comprehensive Plan prohibits in the area affected by the text amendment.	The proposed amendment does not introduce or permit any uses that are inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. It solely modifies the performance standards for ground area coverage related to accessory structures without altering the allowable land uses.
c. Does not allow densities or intensities in excess of the densities and intensities which are permitted by the future land use categories of the affected property.	The proposed text amendment does not allow densities or intensities in excess of what are permitted by the future land uses, as it strictly pertains to requirements about accessory structures within the allowable ground area coverage.
d. Will not cause a decline in the level of service for public infrastructure which is the subject of a concurrency requirement to a level of service which is less than the minimum requirements of the Comprehensive Plan.	The proposed text amendment will not affect the level of service for public infrastructure.
e. Does not directly conflict with any objective or policy of the Comprehensive Plan.	The proposed amendment does not directly conflict with any objective or policy of the Comprehensive Plan. Instead, it aligns with the Plan's goals of promoting high-quality

residential development, maintaining neighborhood character, and allowing for functional and aesthetically integrated site planning.

The proposed text amendment fulfills Objective DES-1.1 of the Comprehensive Plan by promoting high-quality, creative design and site planning that aligns with the City's architectural heritage and the character of surrounding development. Additionally, the amendment supports Policy DES-1.1.5 of the Comprehensive Plan by maintaining proper relationships between buildings, access to light and air, and the balance of open space. Furthermore, by preserving the total cumulative ground area coverage limit of forty-five percent (45%), the amendment ensures that density, bulk, and massing remain consistent with existing zoning regulations and the surrounding urban fabric.

Staff finds that all five of these criteria are **satisfied**.

6. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

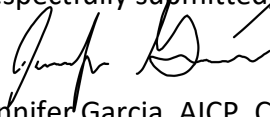
The Planning and Zoning Division recommends **approval**.

7. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Legal advertisement published.
- B. Presentation PowerPoint

Please visit the City's webpage at www.coralgables.com to view all Application plans and materials, notices, applicable public comments, minutes, etc. The complete Application and all background information also is on file and available for examination during business hours at the Planning and Zoning Division, 427 Biltmore Way, Suite 201, Coral Gables, Florida 33134.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Garcia, AICP, CNU-A
Assistant Director of Development Services
for Planning and Zoning
City of Coral Gables, Florida

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PUBLIC NOTICE - PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MEETING

Coral Gables | Publish Date: Feb 28, 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that the City of Coral Gables, Florida, Local Planning Agency (LPA)/ Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) will conduct Public Hearing on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., Community Meeting Room located at Coral Gables Police and Fire Headquarters, 2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, Florida 33134.



Ground Coverage

Zoning Code Text Amendment

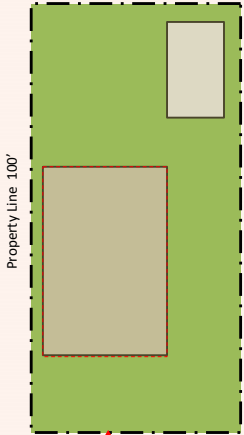
PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD
MARCH 12, 2025



1

BUILDING LOT COVERAGE

Property Line 50'



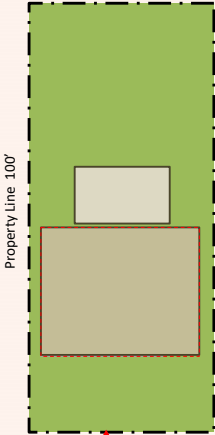
Property Line 100'

Front

Uncovered access to detached garage

vs.

Property Line 50'



Property Line 100'

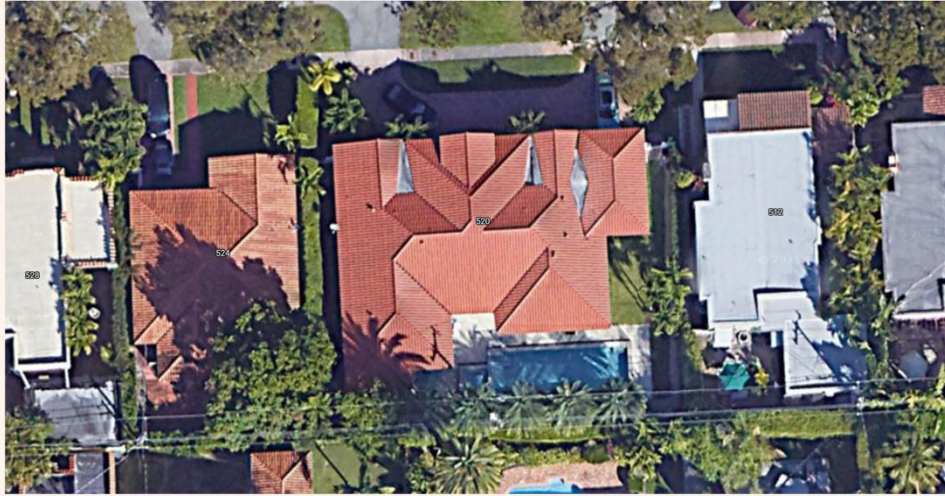
Front

Unusable space

2

2

BUILDING LOT COVERAGE



Single-family with today's code regulations

3

3

BUILDING LOT COVERAGE



Duplexes with today's code regulations

4

4

BUILDING LOT COVERAGE

Lot Area	5,000 sq.ft.
Front Setback	25 ft
Interior Side Setback	5 ft
Side Street Setback	15ft
Rear Setback	10 ft
Max Buildable Area	1950 sq.ft. 39%
Required Min Open Space	2000 sq.ft. 40%
Required Max Principal	1750 sq.ft. 35%
Required Max Accessory	500 sq.ft. 10%
Separation Distance	5 ft



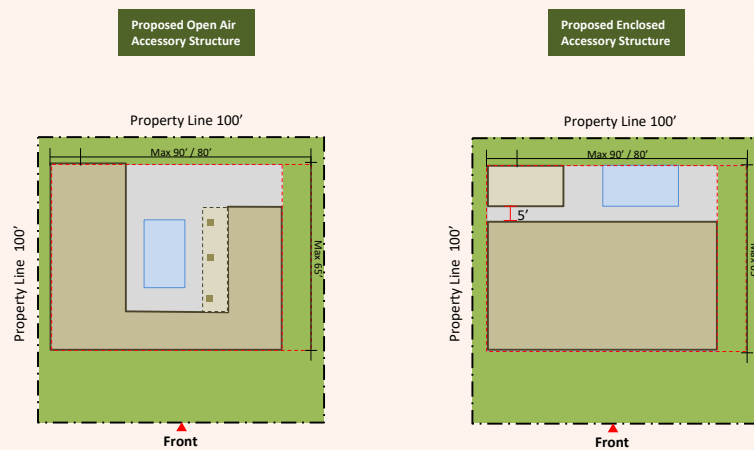
Small Lot with One Side Street

5

5

BUILDING LOT COVERAGE

Lot Area	10,000 sq.ft.
Front Setback	25 ft
Interior Side Setback	5 ft
Side Street Setback	15ft
Rear Setback	10 ft
Max Buildable Area	5850 sq.ft. 59%, or 5250 sq.ft. 52%
Required Min Open Space	4000 sq.ft. 40%
Required Max Principal	3500 sq.ft. 35%
Required Max Accessory	1000 sq.ft. 10%
Separation Distance	5 ft



Building Lot Coverage Diagram

7

7

BUILDING LOT COVERAGE

2

2

Encourage more architectural design flexibility and expand options for space creation.



9



Ground Coverage

Zoning Code Text Amendment

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD
03 12, 2025



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