



# City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Staff Report

Applicant: City of Coral Gables  
Application: **Update of Zoning Code**  
Public Hearing: Planning and Zoning Board  
Date & Time: **July 29, 2020; 4:00 – 9:00 p.m.**  
Location: Virtual Meeting on the ZOOM platform  
**Online:** Meeting ID: 98638740327 Password: 706755.  
**Phone:** (305) 461-6769

## 1. APPLICATION REQUEST

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

1. *An Ordinance relating to the Zoning Code of the City Coral Gables, Florida (Zoning Code), adopted as Ordinance No. 2007-01, as amended, reorganizing the Zoning Code, revising and renumbering Article and Section numbers, transferring certain Divisions and sections from the Zoning Code to the Code of the City of Coral Gables (City Code), updating certain department names, but providing no substantive changes to the Zoning Code, providing for a repealer provision, a severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date.*
2. *An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text and map amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-212, "Zoning Code Text and Map Amendments," by amending the following provisions: (1) Article 1, "General Provisions," creating new zoning districts: Multi-family 3 (MF3), Multi-Family 4 (MF4), Mixed-Use 1 (MX1), Mixed-Use 2 (MX2), Mixed-Use 3 (MX3), and Design/Industrial District Overlay; and deleting: Multi-Family Special Area (MFSA), Commercial Limited (CL), Commercial (C), Industrial (I), and the north and south Industrial Mixed-Use Overlay Districts, and making the appropriate zoning map amendments to effectuate these changes; (2) Article 2 "Zoning Districts", creating new zoning districts and associated provisions, and deleting floor area ratio requirements in certain districts; (3) Article 3 "Uses", allowing certain uses in new zoning districts, and updating Telecommunication provisions; (4) Article 4 "Urban Design and Public Improvement Standards", refining public realm requirements; (5) Article 5 "Architecture", updating zoning districts to be consistent with Article 2; (6) Article 6 "Landscape" updating and increasing certain open space requirements; (7) Article 10 "Parking" updating certain parking requirements; (8) Article 14 "Process", revising and clarifying processes for zoning applications; and (9) Article 16, "Definitions", updating certain definitions; providing for repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date.*

## 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At the request of the City Commission, the Zoning Code will be updated and reorganized

The proposed updated Zoning Code aligns with the provisions outlined in the Comprehensive Plan - such as height, FAR, density, and mix of uses – to create a more user-friendly and effective regulatory document. Proposed changes to the Zoning Code regulations are consistent with standards outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. Proposed amendments follow recommendations of the Working Group, incorporate best practices, and improve consistency between the Zoning Code and the Comprehensive Plan.

The following articles/items are being amended in the updated Zoning Code, and are also identified in detail as Attachment C:

- General Provisions – archiving Industrial, Multi-Family Special Area, Commercial Limited, and Commercial districts to transition to proposed Multi-Family 3, Multi-Family 4, Mixed-Use 1, 2, and 3;
- Zoning Districts - creating new zoning districts with heights, FAR, and density to embed existing limits allowed in the Comprehensive plan; and creating the Design District to replace the North and South Mixed Use Design Districts
- Uses – updating certain uses to be allowed in new districts
- Urban Design and Public Improvement Standards – new article for public realm provisions
- Architecture – updating screening requirements and zoning districts
- Landscape – updating provisions and increasing certain requirements
- Parking – updating certain parking requirements, remote parking / payment-in-lieu, and exceptions for small lots
- Process – revising and clarifying processes for zoning applications
- Definitions – updating certain definitions

### ***Working Group and Staff Recommendation***

A Working Group was created with individuals from the Coral Gables community familiar with the existing Zoning Code. The group met on multiple occasions. In addition, City Staff worked with City consultant DPZ CoDesign to provide input and review preliminary proposed changes suggested by the working group. A Director or representative from City departments was invited to give feedback from various disciplines at multiple meetings.

Meetings with the Working Group and Staff provided input for DPZ CoDesign’s initial assessment and analysis. It was generally agreed that the Zoning Code Update would focus primarily on those parts of the Code related to open space, mixed-use projects, and various densities of residential, commercial and industrial uses - outside of single-family residential zoning, which already has recent text amendments following a process guided by an advisory panel and adopted in April 2018.

Recommendation of the Working Group and Staff meetings can be summarized as follows:

- clarify the organization of the Code
- make the Code easier to use
- address particular Site Specifics
- update MF2, MFSA and Mixed-Use District categories

- clarify height and FAR regulations
- consider parking reductions
- clarify open space requirements
- relief for small site development (below 20,000SF)

### ***Planning and Zoning Board***

Following initial meetings with the working group, DPZ CoDesign began to update the Zoning Code by addressing the structure of the Zoning Code, followed by a review of the content. The Planning and Zoning Board discussed the Zoning Code Update at a Public Workshop September 21, 2018; October 17, 2018 PZB meeting; February 13, 2019 PZB meeting; and the October 16, 2019 PZB meeting.

### ***Project Webpage***

All the Zoning Code Update process and background information including meeting/workshop agendas, presentations, public notices, minutes, attendance, etc., have been available for public review and inspection on the City webpage at [www.coralgables.com/zoningupdate](http://www.coralgables.com/zoningupdate).

### ***Commission Workshops***

There were three workshops held by the City Commission

- June 24, 2019 – discussed topics pertinent to the Central Business District and the Business Overlay District including meaningful open spaces and improved paseos in downtown areas.
- September 4, 2019 – discussed topics pertinent to North Ponce and other multi-family districts. Parking requirements, open spaces, eliminating FAR requirements in multi-family districts were also discussed.
- March 5, 2020 – draft of the proposed zoning code was presented to the City Commission.

## **3. PROPOSED REORGANIZATION AND UPDATED ZONING CODE**

The proposed reorganization is provided as Attachment A. The proposed Updated Zoning Code and Zoning Map changes are provided as Attachment B.

## **4. FINDINGS OF FACT**

In accordance with Section 3-1405 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:

- A. Promotes the public health, safety, and welfare.
- B. Does not permit uses the Comprehensive Plan prohibits in the area affected by the district boundary change or text amendment.
- 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.
- 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 the minimum requirements of the Comprehensive Plan.
- E. Does not directly conflict with an objective or policy of the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff finds that all five of these criteria are **satisfied**, as the proposed updated Zoning Code aligns the provisions outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

The first goal of the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Element states: *"Protect, strengthen, and enhance the City of Coral Gables as a vibrant community ensuring that its neighborhoods, business opportunities, shopping, employment centers, cultural activities, historic value, desirable housing, open spaces, and natural resources make the City a very desirable place to work, live and play."* Single-family district regulations remain the same. Multi-family districts provide transition and have been enhanced. In Commercial and Industrial districts it provide flexibilities. Mixed-use is permitted in varying degrees and strongly encouraged by updating certain parking requirements and providing parking exemptions for smaller sites. Definitions and Development Process are also being updated, revised, and clarified. Additionally, provisions for public realm improvements is added in the urban design and public improvements standards.

Proposed updates to the Zoning Code such as height, FAR, density, and mix of uses are within the existing limits allowed in the Comprehensive Plan with an overall goal of improving the regulations and provisions specifically, in the city's downtown and urban areas as it relates to higher quality development, mixed-use, maintaining density in urban areas, and housing diversity/options. The proposed updates are necessary in order to ensure that the City of Coral Gables continue to be *"a community that is attractive to live, work, play and visit."*

## 5. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY

In accordance with Section 3-1407 of the Zoning Code, the Planning and Zoning Board shall determine whether the Zoning Code text amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a compilation of adopted goals, objectives and policies that establishes a format for future direction and vision for the City of Coral Gables. The proposed text amendment to the Zoning Code is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan based upon the following:

Ref. No.	Comprehensive plan Goal, Objective and Policy	Staff Review
1.	<b>Goal FLU-1.</b> Protect, strengthen, and enhance the City of Coral Gables as a vibrant community ensuring that its neighborhoods, business opportunities, shopping, employment centers, cultural activities, historic value, desirable housing, open spaces, and natural resources make the City a very desirable place to work, live and play.	Complies
2.	<b>Objective FLU-1.1.</b> Preserve Coral Gables as a "placemaker" where the balance of existing and future uses is maintained to achieve a high quality living environment by encouraging compatible land uses, restoring and protecting the natural environment, and providing facilities and services which meet or exceed the minimum Level of Service (LOS) standards and meet the social and economic needs of the community through the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Classifications and Map (see FLU-1: Future Land Use Map).	Complies
3.	<b>Policy FLU-1.1.9.</b> From 2004-2007, the City completed a comprehensive rewrite of its Zoning Code regulations. The City shall annually review its Zoning Code regulations and make necessary changes in order to:	Complies

Ref. No.	Comprehensive plan Goal, Objective and Policy	Staff Review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively regulate future land use activities and natural resources identified on the Future Land Use Map;</li> <li>• Adequately protect property rights; and</li> <li>• Implement the goals, objectives, and policies stipulated in the Comprehensive Plan.</li> </ul>	
4.	<b>Objective FLU-1.2.</b> Efforts shall continue to be made to control blighting influences, and redevelopment shall continue to be encouraged in areas experiencing deterioration.	Complies
5.	<b>Objective FLU-1.7.</b> When amendments to the Zoning Code are processed, discourage the proliferation of urban sprawl by including a regulatory framework for encouraging future infill and redevelopment within existing developed areas. In drafting the infill/redevelopment program, the City shall coordinate public and private resources necessary to initiate needed improvements and/or redevelopment within these areas.	Complies
6.	<b>Policy FLU-1.7.1.</b> Encourage effective and proper high quality development of the Central Business District, the Industrial District and the University of Miami employment centers which offer potential for local employment in proximity to protected residential neighborhoods.	Complies
7.	<b>Policy FLU-1.9.1.</b> Encourage balanced mixed use development in the central business district and adjoining commercial areas to promote pedestrian activity and provide for specific commitments to design excellence and long term economic and cultural vitality.	Complies
8.	<b>Policy FLU-1.10.2.</b> The City shall continue to maintain regulations consistent with the Comprehensive Plan which regulate the use and development of land in a manner which, at a minimum, provides for land use consistent with the Future Land Use Plan map series, interpretive text and Land Use Element goal, objectives and policies; regulate the subdivision of land; regulate signage; regulate development and use in areas subject to seasonal or periodic flooding, provide for stormwater management; open space and regulate on-site traffic flow and parking.	Complies
9.	<b>Objective FLU-1.11.</b> Maintain a pattern of overall low density residential use with limited medium and high density residential uses in appropriate areas to preserve the low intensity and high quality character of the residential neighborhoods.	Complies
10.	<b>Policy FLU-1.14.1.</b> The City shall enforce Zoning Code provisions which continue to address the location and extent of residential and non-residential land uses consistent with the Future Land Use Map in order to preserve the character of existing neighborhoods.	Complies
11.	<b>Goal DES-1.</b> Maintain the City as a livable city, attractive in its setting and dynamic in its urban character.	Complies
12.	<b>Policy DES-1.1.6.</b> Maintain the character of the residential and nonresidential districts, and their peculiar suitability for particular uses.	Complies
13.	<b>Policy DES-1.2.1.</b> Continue the award of development bonuses and/or other incentives to promote Coral Gables Mediterranean design character providing for but not limited to the following: creative use of architecture to promote public realm	Complies

Ref. No.	Comprehensive plan Goal, Objective and Policy	Staff Review
	improvements and pedestrian amenities; provide a visual linkage between contemporary architecture and the existing and new architectural fabric; encourage landmark opportunities; and creation of public open spaces.	
14.	<b>Policy DES-1.2.2.</b> Require that private development and public projects are designed consistent with the City's unique and historical Mediterranean appearance in balance with contemporary architecture.	Complies
15.	<b>Policy DES-1.1.5.</b> Promote the development of property that achieves unified civic design and proper relationship between the uses of land both within zoning districts and surrounding districts, by regulating, limiting and determining the location, height, density, bulk and massing, access to light and air, area of yards, open space, vegetation and use of buildings, signs and other structures.	Complies
16.	<b>Objective HOU-1.5.</b> Support the infill of housing in association with mixed use development.	Complies
17.	<b>Policy HOU-1.5.1.</b> Encourage the development of diverse housing types such as smaller, more affordable units within the downtown area and mixed use development overlay area.	Complies
18.	<b>Policy HOU-1.5.2.</b> Encourage residential mixed use as a means of increasing housing supply within the Downtown/Central Business District/Mixed Use Development Overlay Area, thereby promoting increase in commercial and retail activity, increased use of transit, reduction of auto dependency, in association with minimizing visual and physical impacts of nearby lower density areas.	Complies
19.	<b>Policy HOU-1.5.8.</b> The City shall continue to promote diversity in housing types by providing land use designations and zoning districts on the Future Land Use Map and the Official Zoning Map, respectively, to ensure that single-family, duplex, multi-family housing units, and mixed use development are allowed within the City.	Complies
20.	<b>Policy MOB-1.1.1.</b> Promote mixed use development to provide housing and commercial services near employment centers, thereby reducing the need to drive.	Complies
21.	<b>Policy MOB-1.1.2.</b> Encourage land use decisions that encourage infill, redevelopment and reuse of vacant or underutilized parcels that support walking, bicycling and public transit use.	Complies
22.	<b>Policy MOB-1.1.3.</b> Locate higher density development along transit corridors and near multimodal stations.	Complies
23.	<b>Policy GRN-1.3.6.</b> Continue promotion of mixed use, research creation of transit-oriented development design standards.	Complies

Staff finds that the proposed text amendment to update the Zoning Code **is consistent** with the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed updates to the Zoning Code build upon the Goals, Objectives, and Policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan to improve the regulations and provisions in the city's downtown and urban areas as it relates to higher quality development, mixed-use, maintaining density in urban areas, and housing diversity/options. Staff may propose minor text amendments to the Comprehensive Plan in the future, and additional zoning code amendments, to best implement policy direction resulting from the current zoning code update process.

## 6. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The following has been completed to provide notice of the request:

Type	Date
Legal advertisement for PZB Zoning Code Update workshop	09.12.18
Legal advertisement for October 2018 PZB meeting	10.05.18
Legal advertisement for February 2019 PZB meeting	02.01.19
Legal advertisement for September 2019 PZB meeting	08.30.19
Legal advertisement for October 2019 PZB meeting	10.04.19
Posted March 5, 2020 Commission Workshop on City web page	02.03.20
Legal advertisement for June 2020 PZB meeting	07.17.20
Posted agenda at City Hall	07.17.20
Posted Staff report on City web page	07.24.20

## 7. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Zoning Division recommends approval.

## 8. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Draft Ordinance of Reorganization of Zoning Code.
- B. Draft Ordinance of Updated Zoning Code and Zoning Map amendments.
- C. Summary of Substantive Changes.
- D. Summary of City Attorney Opinions.
- E. Zoning Code Update Meetings Summaries.
- F. 07.17.20 Legal advertisement published.
- G. PowerPoint Presentations.

Please visit the City's webpage at [www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com) to view all materials, notices, applicable public comments, minutes, etc. The complete 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,



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for Planning and Zoning  
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