



CITY OF DORAL COUNCIL MEETING MEMORANDUM

ITEM TITLE:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 53 "ADMINISTRATION", TO ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR THE REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS; PROVIDING FOR INCORPORATION OF RECITALS; PROVIDING FOR INCORPORATION INTO THE CODE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION:

Approval

BRIEF HISTORY:

The proposed text amendment seeks to modify Chapter 53 "Administration" to establish a formal "Special Exceptions" process through transparent and consistent procedures, with enforceable conditions

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: (IF APPLICABLE)

Date:	Resolution/Ordinance No.	Comments

FINANCIAL INFORMATION: (IF APPLICABLE)

No.	Amount	Account No.	Source of Funds
1.	\$0		
2.	\$0		
Total:	\$0		
Fiscal Impact Statement: The proposed item has a fiscal impact on revenues and/or expenditures of \$_____			

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

How does this item align with the City's Strategic Plan?

ATTACHMENT(S):

A. Ordinance



Memorandum

Date: September 10, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers

Via: Zeida Sardinas
City Manager

From: Michelle M. Lopez
The Corradino Group
Interim Planning and Zoning Director

Subject: **Special Exceptions - Land Development Code Text Amendment**

Introduction

The Planning and Zoning Department is requesting that the Mayor and the City Council approve the proposed text amendment to the City of Doral (the “City”) Code of Ordinances (the “Code”), amending Chapter 53 “Administration” to establish a process for the review and approval of special exception permits.

Public Advertisement

The public notice was advertised (legal advertisement) in Miami-Dade County’s designated publicly accessible website at least 14 calendar days prior to the proceeding (Council Meeting). A copy of the legal advertisement is provided in “Attachment A.”

Background

The City Code currently provides that certain uses may be approved as “Special Exception” uses in various zoning districts; however, the Code does not provide a clear or comprehensive framework for reviewing, evaluating, and approving Special Exception uses. The proposed text amendment seeks to modify Chapter 53 “Administration” to establish a formal “Special Exceptions” process through transparent and consistent procedures, with enforceable conditions.

***Council Meeting
September 10, 2025***

Staff Analysis

The City Code currently allows certain uses to be approved as “Special Exceptions” within various zoning districts; however, the Code lacks a clearly defined and comprehensive framework for the review, evaluation, and approval of such uses. This ambiguity can lead to inconsistencies in process, uncertainty for applicants, and limited enforceability of conditions of approval.

The proposed text amendment modifies Chapter 53, “Administration” of the City Code to establish a formal Special Exceptions process that incorporates transparent, consistent procedures and the ability to impose specific, enforceable conditions to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses and alignment with the City’s adopted goals and policies. The amendment also standardizes review criteria and submittal requirements to provide predictability for both applicants and decision-makers.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency Review

The proposed text amendment is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Element Goals, Objectives, and Policies:

***Policy 2.1.1:** Doral’s future development goal is to be a premier place to live, work and play, and to accomplish that the City is dedicated to maintaining and developing extraordinary community features and facilities associated with “#1 Great Cities” around the world including outstanding place and building design, plentiful parks, excellent schools and community education opportunities, beautiful streets, interesting cultural and artistic venues, smart technology, environmental conservation, efficient government services, and easily-accessible vehicular and personal mobility. All land use amendments shall contribute to the enhancement of these ‘#1 Great City’ features and facilities.*

***Policy 2.1.18:** Code enforcement and other available regulatory measures shall be used to prevent incompatible land uses from locating adjacent to or near otherwise stable and viable uses, especially residential neighborhoods. The rezoning process may be used to discourage residential development in close proximity to industrial zoned areas and areas with unacceptable noise and/or odor levels. Incompatible non-residential land uses within established residential neighborhoods may be given incentives to adaptively reuse or replace structures to uses that are compatible with the residential area. Where it is physically not feasible to separate incompatible land uses such as residential and non-residential, buffering shall be required to promote a smooth land use transition. Buffering shall be specified in the Land Development Code and may include the following:*

- a) Physical barriers, including berms, hedges or other landscaping, as well as walls or fences aesthetically designed for screening purposes. Physical barriers may also include densely vegetated open space; and/or;*
- b) The development of a transitional use between the incompatible uses. For example, a low intensity office development could be used to buffer a retail commercial center and a residential area.*

***Objective 2.2:** Land Development Code Maintain, and revise as necessary, an effective Land Development Code (LDC) that clearly implements the goals, objectives and policies of this Element, and the adopted Comprehensive Plan as a whole, and regulates development quality and impacts.*

This proposed amendment will have no adverse impact on the City's Comprehensive Plan. Rather, it will provide a consistent mechanism for aligning Special Exception approvals with the Plan's land use compatibility and community enhancement policies

Land Development Code Consistency Review

The following is a consistency review of the criteria established in Section 53-213(c) of the Land Development Code for considering text amendments to the Land Development Code.

- (1) Consistency with the comprehensive plan, or in the case of a plan amendment, consistency with the remainder of the plan and its goals, objectives, and policies.

The amendment directly supports Comprehensive Plan goals by formalizing procedures to ensure that Special Exception uses meet adopted LOS standards where applicable, mitigate potential adverse impacts, and contribute to the City's overall livability and economic vitality.

- (2) Consistency with applicable sections of this Land Development Code.

The amendment complements existing zoning district regulations by providing a structured pathway for evaluating uses that may be appropriate in specific contexts but require case-by-case review. This ensures that such uses meet applicable development standards and are compatible with adjacent properties.

- (3) Additionally, as to rezoning amendments:
 - a. Whether justified by changed or changing conditions.
 - b. Whether adequate sites already exist for the proposed district uses.
 - c. Whether specific requirements of this Land Development Code are adequate to ensure compatibility with adjoining properties as required by the comprehensive plan.

This review criteria do not apply to the proposed text amendment. This review criteria are only applicable to rezoning applications.

Recommendation

Staff requests that the Mayor and City Councilmembers approve the proposed text amendment to Chapter 53, "Administration" of the City Code to establish a formal process for the application and approval of Special Exception permits.