



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE**  
**City Commission Agenda Memo**  
**REGULAR MEETING**

**#14-0875**

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor & Members of the  
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

**FROM:** Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM, City Manager

**DATE:** August 19, 2014

**TITLE:** QUASI-JUDICIAL – De Novo Hearing of Site Plan Level II – 105 North –  
Happy Land FL LLC - Case R14011

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**Recommendation**

It is recommended the City Commission adopt a resolution approving the issuance of a Site Plan Level II Development Permit for 105 North (Case R14011), approved by the Development Review Committee.

**Background**

The 105 North development project was reviewed by the DRC on March 25, 2014 as a site plan Level II, subject to a 30-day period for City Commission Request for Review. The project was reviewed by the Design Review Team (DRT) for consistency with the Downtown Master Plan.

The proposed 36,216 square-foot retail furniture store is located on the north-west corner of North Federal Highway and NE 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The development meets the intent of the Master Plan Design Guidelines by framing the street to promote a well-defined, pedestrian-oriented design and active street frontage. The three-story structure incorporates high-quality materials, is well articulated and features lightly tinted glass to allow for expansive views into the building from the pedestrian perspective.

The site is located in the city's urban core, in the City Center zoning district. The vision for this area as defined in the Downtown Master Plan is for high-quality architecture offering interest at the street level and design layout options that frame a human-scale experience, encouraging a comfortable place to walk, and promoting a "live, work, play" environment to support multi-modal access to work, shopping, schools, parks, and other recreational and cultural venues.

The site plan received preliminary site plan approval on June 19, 2014. The site plan, elevations and renderings are provided as **Exhibit 1**.

Pursuant to ULDR Sec. 47-26.A.2, City Commission Request for Review, the Commission voted (4-1) at the July 1, 2014 Regular City Commission meeting to set a De Novo hearing to review the application at the Regular City Commission meeting on August 19, 2014. The topic of discussion focused on the amount of parking proposed.

The property is located in the Downtown Regional Activity Center - City Center (RAC-CC) zoning district, which is exempt from parking requirements. Therefore there is no requirement for parking spaces to be provided on-site. The applicant is proposing six parking spaces and a loading area on the ground floor behind the building frontage, based on their business expertise to support operational needs for the use proposed. The applicant has indicated that the limited amount of parking is sufficient for the success of their business operations, based on the following factors that further define operational needs:

- The proposed high-end furniture store will be primarily a show room supplementing on-line ordering. The target clients are high-end condominium owners from throughout South Florida;
- The furniture store will accommodate clients on an appointment only basis. Each appointment is expected to last 2-3 hours. There are expected to be a maximum of 4 appointments per day;
- There will be 4 employees at the facility: a manager, a designer, a sales person, and a facilities/maintenance person. The employees are expected to park off-site through monthly permits for off-site parking at a nearby parking facility;
- The applicant has engaged a parking management company to coordinate off-site parking and to provide valet parking services on an as-needed basis. The applicant has prepared a valet parking plan to demonstrate how 18 cars can be parked on-site under a valet parking scenario. Valet parking will be provided on an as-needed basis and for special events, and off-site valet parking resources will also be identified on an as-need basis;
- The applicant is exploring the opportunity to design and construct on-street parking within the adjacent right of way of NE 1<sup>st</sup> Street, anticipating that 5 to 9 additional on-street parking spaces could potentially be provided along NE 1st Street;
- The hours of operation for the furniture store will be 10am to 8pm, Monday through Saturday;

The site is located in the RAC-CC zoning district, which for many years has been exempt from parking requirements in order to allow flexibility in redevelopment of the central city core. This model has provided some certainty in the Downtown City Center for development driven by predicted market demand and created a policy in support of reduced automobile dependence. While throughout the City there remains and will

continue to be a reliance on automobiles, this offers opportunities to transition into a community supportive of multi-modal options, especially starting with areas in and around the Downtown core.

The goals for the Downtown include a high-density, compact & pedestrian- friendly design that encourages a strong sense of place, supported by a comprehensive approach to parking, as one of the key components to the overall planning process. The City's recent Vision Plan efforts and associated policy changes are embracing new thinking about the role of better managed parking, in creating a more livable and sustainable city and respective network of streets. Providing abundant and free vehicular parking encourages dependence on automobile use. Balancing and reducing the need for parking is a key component of achieving active mixed use areas and quality urban spaces that contribute towards a more livable community, encouraging car and bicycle share programs, pedestrian activity, cycling and transit use.

In addition to more suitable parking requirements, complementary efforts include a focus on multi-modal options that encourage "complete streets", new bicycle accommodations, electric charging stations, etc. reducing sole dependence on vehicular trips. In combination, this work is promoting a downtown with supporting residential and commercial uses, by relieving traffic congestion and maintaining the integrity of urban design and walkable, active street-frontages.

Per Transportation & Mobility staff analysis, standard (ITE) parking utilization rates would call for additional parking than provided for the project. However, as is typical with most ITE sample surveys, the demand is based on furniture store land use samples comprised of single-use suburban sites, where ample parking exists and few or no alternatives to driving are provided. The highest peak demand observed is then used to set the minimum. Therefore, current parking demand analysis rates do not accurately represent furniture showrooms in downtown settings. In urban settings, proximity to transit, and walkable areas can help offset parking requirements, and managing parking can act as a catalyst in promoting alternative modes of travel.

Parking policies and solutions that focus on creating a downtown setting that is compact, walkable, and interesting, with safe and ample sidewalks and incorporating multi-modal transportation options are all important elements of creating a sustainable environment that sets the tone for the overall downtown experience. As part of these efforts, staff also recognizes the need to improve the City's fragmented pedestrian and bicycle networks, and overall connectivity including to existing and future transit routes.

As the City continues to grow and individual projects contribute to the built environment, this work will continue to focus on a comprehensive parking approach and the recently endorsed Transit Oriented Design (TOD) standards. In combination these efforts include controlling the total volume of downtown parking spaces, better utilizing existing spaces, strategically locating supporting parking facilities, completing the on-street parking network, developing parking resources to inform the public of the location of available parking spaces, encouraging shared parking facilities for uses that experience peak

parking demands at different times, encouraging people to park once and walk from destination to destination, avoiding self-contained parking that discourages visitors from passing by all downtown businesses, and emphasizing quality building design and active street frontages.

There are approximately 8500 existing residential units within a half mile radius of the site and another 1546 units currently under construction. A return to the steady growth in per-capita driving patterns that characterized previous years is unlikely, provided the projected continuation of higher fuel prices, aging “Baby-Boomer” population, anticipated demand for vehicles and recent trends in less willingness to spend time on vehicular modes of travel. The “Millennial” generation has been a leading factor of this recent change in transportation trends, driving significantly less than previous generations of young Americans. Making up a significant part of the overall population, their choices will play a crucial role in determining future transportation infrastructure needs. They are considerably more likely to live in urban and walkable neighborhoods, and embrace mobile, internet-connected technologies which are rapidly spawning new transportation options and shifting the way young Americans relate to one another, creating new avenues for living and to rely on alternative forms of transportation.

Utilizing flexibility in parking requirements by encouraging market demand, supports reduced automobile dependence and results in redevelopment of underutilized parcels of land. In combination with consolidation of more intense, incremental development this provides an opportunity to create a more unified, active Downtown with areas of distinct character and more continuous, active streetscapes, supportive of higher density and central business district development in the City’s core.

The City Commission shall determine whether the proposed development or use meets the standards, requirements and criteria of the ULDR and shall approve or approve with conditions necessary to ensure compliance with the standards, requirements and criteria for the proposed development or use, the site plan level II permit.

### **Resource Impact**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

**Strategic Connections** This item is a Press Play Fort Lauderdale Strategic Plan 2018 initiative, included within the Business Development Cylinder of Excellence, specifically advancing:

- **GOAL 7:** Be a well-positioned City within the global economic and tourism markets of the South Florida region, leveraging our airports, port, and rail connections.
  
- **OBJECTIVE 2:** Facilitate a responsive and proactive business climate.

This item also advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035* Vision Plan: supporting the Vision priority: “We Are Connected”, in context of transit improvements including the

Wave streetcar, encouraging a more dense & walkable urban core.

Attachments:

Exhibit 1 – Applicant’s Narrative

Exhibit 2 – Site Plan, Building Elevations and Renderings

Exhibit 3 – Call-Up Notification

Exhibit 4 – Flagler Village Civic Association Letter

Exhibit 5 – Resolution to Approve

Exhibit 6 – Resolution to Deny

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