



Natural Resources

Vision Statement: Maintain and enhance the natural environment in the City of Coral Gables and surrounding areas through the promotion of environmental protection and sustainability.

Goals, Objectives and Policies:

Goal NAT-1. The City is an environmentally sustainable entity containing a healthy ecosystem in which natural resources are conserved, protected, maintained, enhanced, and restored.

Objective NAT-1.1. Maintain the best possible air quality, meeting or exceeding state and federal air quality standards.

Policy NAT-1.1.1. The City shall support enforcement of applicable standards for air quality to control significant emissions of air pollutants in order to maintain and improve the existing air quality, including enforcement of City ordinances which prohibit open burning and excessive vehicle exhausts.

Policy NAT-1.1.2. Prohibit open burning and excessive vehicle exhausts.

Objective NAT-1.2. Secure provisions of potable water in sufficient quantity to meet present and projected needs, commensurate with reasonable demand.

Policy NAT-1.2.1. Coordinate and cooperate with local, regional, state and federal agencies for the management and conservation of fresh water resources to maintain adequate fresh water supplies during dry periods and to conserve water where practicable.

Policy NAT-1.2.2. Cooperate with Miami-Dade County and the South Florida Water Management District for the implementation of water demand management policies and programs.

Policy NAT-1.2.3. Cooperate with Miami-Dade County, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), and other appropriate agencies in the enforcement of all federal, state, and regional water quality standards.

Policy NAT-1.2.4. Cooperate with the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department (MDWASD) and the SFWMD to conserve water resources in emergencies.

Policy NAT-1.2.5. Explore opportunities for alternative water supply resources.

Policy NAT-1.2.6. Implementation of the 10-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan will ensure that adequate water supplies and public facilities are available to serve the water supply demands of the City's future population.

Policy NAT-1.2.7. The potable water network is an interconnected, countywide system, therefore, the City will cooperate with MDWASD to jointly develop methodologies and procedures for biannually updating estimates of system demand and capacity, and ensure that sufficient capacity to serve development exists. The City will prepare and submit a Water Conservation Plan to the County at the same time as the City submits the updated 5-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan.

Policy NAT-1.2.8. If in the future there are issues associated with water supply, conservation or reuse the City will immediately contact MDWASD to address the corresponding issue(s). In



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addition, the City will follow adopted communication protocols with MDWASD to communicate and/or prepare an appropriate action plan to address any relevant issue associated with water supply, conservation or reuse.

Policy NAT-1.2.9. The City will enforce Miami-Dade County’s Water Use Efficiency Standards. All future development within the City will be required to comply with water use efficiency techniques for indoor water use in accordance with Section 8-31, 32-84 and 8A-381 of the Code of Miami-Dade County, as amended. In addition, the future development will be required to comply with the landscape standards in Section 18-A and 18-B of the Miami-Dade County Code, as amended.

Policy NAT-1.2.10. The City will require the use of High Efficiency Toilets; High Efficiency Showerheads; High Efficiency Faucets; High Efficiency Clothes Washers; and Dishwashers that are Energy Star rated and Water Sense certified in all new and redeveloped residential projects.

Policy NAT-1.2.11. The City will educate the development community on the water saving benefits of the use of sub-metering for all multi-unit residential development which will include: separate meter and monthly records kept of all major water-using functions such as cooling towers and individual buildings in all new and redeveloped multi-family residential projects.

Policy NAT-1.2.12. The City will educate the development community on the water saving benefits of the use of Florida Friendly Landscapes guidelines and principles. The City will encourage through the use of educational materials, the use of the following techniques: rain harvesting through the use of rain barrels and directing runoff to landscaped areas; drip irrigation or micro-sprinklers; and the use of porous surface materials (bricks, gravel, turf block, mulch, pervious concrete, etc) on walkways, driveways and patios.

Policy NAT-1.2.13. The City will participate, when warranted, in the SFWMD’s Water Savings Incentive Program (Water SIP) for large-scale retrofits as recommended by the Lower East Coast Water Supply Plan.

Objective NAT-1.3. The City shall assure that generation, storage, transport, and disposal of wastes in the City is managed with the best available technology to protect environmental quality.

Policy NAT-1.3.1. Ensure that when new sewers are extended into an area currently using septic systems for wastewater disposal, all buildings must connect with the public wastewater collection system at the time of building permit, if lines are available.

Policy NAT-1.3.2. Cooperate with appropriate public agencies to ensure that solid and hazardous wastes generated within the City are properly managed to protect the environment.

Policy NAT-1.3.3. The City shall cooperate with appropriate public agencies to assure that solid and hazardous wastes generated within the City are properly managed and disposed of properly to protect the environment.

Objective NAT-1.4. The City shall conserve and protect the remaining natural systems of the City in recognition of the inherent values of these areas left in their natural state, through appropriate land use designations and implementation of protective development regulations.

Policy NAT-1.4.1. The City will coordinate with South Florida Water Management District, Miami-Dade County, and state agencies to conserve and protect the natural resources of Biscayne Bay.



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Policy NAT-1.4.2. Coordination with other public and private plans and programs for conservation of natural resources.

Policy NAT-1.4.3. Utilize wetlands and submerged lands for purposes which are compatible with their natural values and functions. Revise city land development regulations where warranted to provide these areas with the maximum possible protection.

Policy NAT-1.4.4. Protect and conserve the natural functions of existing soils, fisheries, rivers, lakes, floodplains, estuarine marshes, native habitats/plant materials/ecosystems and marine habitats through enforcement of existing local, state, and federal regulations designed to protect and conserve these functions (see NAT-1: Soils and Minerals Map and NAT-2: Natural Resources Map).

Policy NAT-1.4.5. Protect existing and annexed wetlands within the City by designating those areas as "Conservation" on the Future Land Use Map.

Objective NAT-1.5. The City shall preserve areas of significant environmental and public value through appropriate land use designations and implementation of protective development regulations.

Policy NAT-1.5.1. Continue to cooperate with adjacent municipalities, Miami-Dade County, the South Florida Water Management District, and other appropriate jurisdictions to preserve and protect natural resources and natural areas.

Policy NAT-1.5.2. Continue to cooperate with the appropriate local, state and federal agencies for the protection of wildlife, endangered and threatened species and significant plant, flora, fauna and animal habitats.

Policy NAT-1.5.3. Wildlife shall be protected within the City.

Policy NAT-1.5.4. Existing native vegetative communities within the City shall be protected.

Objective NAT-1.6. Ensure that development projects and activities mitigate adverse ecological changes or improve previously degraded environmental conditions.

Policy NAT-1.6.1. Those areas designated on the Future Land Use Map for Conservation will not be subject to development, with the only allowable exception for open space and recreational uses after the review and approval of the City Commission.

Policy NAT-1.6.2. Require site-plan review and approval of all proposed development and redevelopment to prevent unnecessary destruction or inappropriate use of existing natural resources and natural sites.

Policy NAT-1.6.3. Continue to enforce landscaping standards that require the preservation of existing natural growth where practical, and the removal of invasive, exotic plant species.

Policy NAT-1.6.4. Continue to utilize the best available technical criteria and information for the formulation of regulations and ordinances to ensure that future development is compatible with the functioning of existing natural systems and resources conservation.

Policy NAT-1.6.5. Explore strategies for promoting environmentally sensitive development, such



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as the U.S. Green Building Council’s “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)” certification.

Objective NAT-1.7. The City shall conserve, appropriately use, and protect minerals, soils and native vegetative communities. Assure the maintenance and conservation of trees within the City through continued maintenance of trees on all properties and the site plan development review process.

Policy NAT-1.7.1. Ensure the preservation of trees during development or redevelopment wherever possible, and consistent with the tree preservation ordinance and landscape ordinance. Where trees approved for removal as a last resort, require that they be replaced with quality trees of equal or greater canopy.

Goal NAT-2. The City shall conserve, manage, use and protect natural and environmental resources and maintain and enhance the natural balance of ecological functions in the coastal area.

Objective NAT-2.1. Maintain or improve coastal area and estuarine environmental quality, as measured by existing baseline environmental indicators for water quality provided by Miami-Dade Department of Environmental Regulation and Management. This objective shall be achieved through the implementation of the following policies.

Policy NAT-2.1.1. Development affecting coastal and estuarine water resources shall enhance biological and economic productivity of coastal resources.

Policy NAT-2.1.2. The wastewater disposal systems of the City shall maintain water quality at or exceeding applicable local, regional, state and federal standards.

Policy NAT-2.1.3. The City shall cooperate with the South Florida Water Management District, state agencies, and local government jurisdictions for area-wide water resources planning and management.

Policy NAT-2.1.4. The City shall cooperate with the appropriate state and local agencies for identifying, controlling and eliminating point sources of water pollution.

Policy NAT-2.1.5. All federal and state water quality standards shall be enforced in the City.

Objective NAT-2.2. Protect and conserve remaining coastal resources, including wetlands, living marine resources, wildlife habitat, and historic resources.

Policy NAT-2.2.1. Coordinate with appropriate public agencies for the management of the coastal zone to provide a balance between irreversible commitments and conservation of resources. Methods for coordinating with Miami-Dade County and neighboring local governments to prevent estuarine pollution and protection of Biscayne Bay, control surface water runoff, and protect living marine resources shall be identified and set forth in interlocal agreements or other methodologies.

Policy NAT-2.2.2. Review and incorporate appropriate changes to the City’s Natural Resources Element for natural resource protection consistent with management plans by Miami-Dade County, and state and federal agencies.

Policy NAT-2.2.3. Land use planning and management of development regulations in the coastal



zone shall be based on sound ecological principles and the public benefit.

Policy NAT-2.2.4. The City shall maintain its canals and waterways, with specific attention to maintenance dredging and spoil disposition activities to enhance existing water quality. Maintenance shall result in minimal disruption of natural habitat. Discharge of pollutants and disposal of wastes into canals, storm drains, submerged lands, or open waters is prohibited. The City hereby incorporates by reference the Emergency Operation Plan and the direction provided in the hazard mitigation annex of the Operations Plan.

Policy NAT-2.2.5. Historic sites shall be identified and protected, and performance standards for development and sensitive reuse for historic resources shall be established.

Objective NAT-2.3. Restore and enhance disturbed or degraded natural resources and implement programs to mitigate future natural resources disruption or degradation in the coastal area. This objective shall be achieved through the implementation of the following policies.

Policy NAT-2.3.1. Existing coastal wetlands and submerged lands should not be drained or filled, and should be restored or enhanced where disturbed or degraded by development. The City shall monitor dredge and fill permits issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and shall further monitor new development applications to the City to ensure that this policy is enforced.

Policy NAT-2.3.2. Specific and cumulative impacts of development or redevelopment upon wetlands; water quality, water quantity, wildlife habitat, living marine resources, and shoreline systems shall be limited by strictly regulating land alteration activities likely to result in erosion and sedimentation, or long-term water quality degradation and habitat loss.

Policy NAT-2.3.3. Protect existing natural shoreline areas, establish construction standards which minimize the impact of man-made structures on shoreline systems, and restore altered shorelines within the City's jurisdiction.

Goal NAT-3. The functions of natural groundwater aquifer recharge areas within the City shall be protected and maintained.

Objective NAT-3.1. Manage the natural ground water aquifer recharge conditions in a safe, effective and reliable manner as required by current design standards and codes.

Policy NAT-3.1.1. Encourage improved groundwater recharge by requiring all new construction projects to consider providing the following

- Greater pervious open and green space.
- Pervious pavements.
- French drains, slab covered trenches or drainage wells, and limit overflows.
- Allow direct overland flow discharge to surface waters (canals or bay) only when no other practical or effective method of storm water discharge is possible.

Allow positive drainage discharges to surface waters only when other methods are impractical or impossible, and only when adequate pollution control (grit and grease) is provided.

Policy NAT-3.1.2. Encourage designs, which will diminish groundwater withdrawals and increase high quality groundwater recharge.

Policy NAT-3.1.3. Comply with SFWMD and Miami-Dade Code and environmental protection rules for stormwater disposal methods. Refer to the LOS for drainage for retention standards to be met.