

# CITY OF CORAL GABLES

--MEMORANDUM--



*The City Beautiful*

**TO:** Staff and Residents  
**FROM:** Vice Mayor Anderson  
**DATE:** May 22, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Why Parking Garage One Needs Replacement

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Due to the volume of emails, comments and calls received expressing a variety of opinions regarding whether Garage 1 on Andalusia needs replaced with a larger garage, this memo summarizes some of the key reasons why I believe the garage must be replaced and additional parking spaces provided to support the parking needs of the Central Business District.

## **I. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT (ADA):**

Garage 1 was built in the 1960s, some 42 years before the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law. The ADA requires any facility open to the public to provide individuals with disability reasonable accommodations and access to the services and amenities offered to able bodied patrons. At the time Garage 1 was constructed, accessibility was not considered. While able bodied individuals can use the stairs that provide direct access to Andalusia and businesses across the street such as Chocolate Fashion, individuals using a wheelchair or with other mobility devices were forced to use the alley and take a dangerous, circuitous route. Even assuming the entrance and existing driveways had no more than a 1:12 slope, as shown in the photographs below, it is unsafe wheelchair use for multiple reasons.

In addition, the elevator – aside from being so old that it is extremely difficult to find parts for repairs – is too small to provide a compliant accessible route for an individual using a large wheelchair. Installation of a larger elevator would require major structural renovations. It is currently estimated that the cost to bring Garage 1 into full compliance with the ADA and the required 40-year structural recertification would exceed \$1.5 million. In addition, providing an accessible ramp to the Andalusia sidewalk would result in the loss of several parking spaces. Even then, the garage would still be dangerous due to insufficient space to provide a safe accessible route because a person in a wheelchair would have to maneuver behind parked vehicles.



Please note that the photograph above showing the rust in the garage was shared by a resident who was complaining about the deteriorating condition of this garage. Investing more than \$1.5 million to bring this garage into ADA compliance is not a good investment especially given the parking needs of Miracle Mile which are addressed below.

## II. ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS & PARKING NEEDS:

Some residents have suggested that a new parking garage should be built on alternative locations in the Central Business District (CBD). This is not a better alternative for several reasons: **(1)** These locations, which the city does not own, are not available; **(2)** Even if the sites were available, it would cost several million to purchase the land; **(3)** The City would still need to address the structural and ADA violations in Garage 1; **(4)** The City would then need to build another garage which could accommodate the needed parking; and **(5)** The parking location at Garage 1 is the location that most patrons visiting Miracle Mile or businesses on Andalusia use. I have resided within a short walking distance of the Mile for over three decades, and I have seen Garage 1 completely full on many occasions and a line of cars waiting to get in. Just as at restaurants, patrons will go elsewhere when finding parking too difficult.

The photograph to the left below is a recent photograph of the parking capacity sign taken at Garage 1 and the photograph to the right is of Garage 4 located in the 300 block of Andalusia.



The number of parking spaces needed in the CBD is an issue that has been studied for some time, first in 2013 and again in 2018. The study showed that because of its prime location, Garage 1 reaches full capacity 85% to 99% of the time. Based upon the data collected in 2018 on municipal parking facility usage, it is estimated that the City needs 1,050 to 1,100 additional parking spaces.

The 2018 calculations, however, did not address residents’ requests for a dedicated bike lane on Andalusia for travel to the Adult Activity Center, Publix, shops along Andalusia and Miracle Mile. Nor did it address the request by residents that we add shade trees. in the CBD for many years. Shade trees, if properly spaced and sized, will reduce the temperature by at least 10 degrees thereby improving walkability in the area. See *Street trees are essential for Walk Appeal* at <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2016/12/19/street-trees-are-essential-walk-appeal#:~:text=Street%20tree%20spacing,tree%20at%20every%20property%20line>.

The chart below uses conservative numbers to calculate the number of parking spaces that need to be added (ranging from 800 to 1000) even if no bike lane or shade trees are installed. As for the number of spaces needed for trees, the calculation is based upon the space needed for small trees, such as Buttonwoods. However, because the purpose is shade, a few more parking spaces would need to be taken to allow for 10-ft x 10-ft planters for medium-sized shade trees.

<b>Analysis of Parking Needs of Miracle Mile and Adjacent Businesses</b>			
<b>2013 &amp; 2018 Economic &amp; Parking Needs Study Required 800-1000 Additional Spaces before 97 lost for streetscape:</b>	<b>800 Low End</b>	<b>1000 High End</b>	<b>900 Median</b>
Plus Parking Lost in 2019 on Mile due to Streetscape Improvements	97	97	97
Plus Estimated Parking Loss for installation of trees and a bike lane on Andalusia from LeJeune Road to Adult Activity Center and Parking Garages	51	51	51
Plus Estimated Parking Loss for Small Shade Trees on Valencia	79	79	79
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>1027 Low End</b>	<b>1227 High End</b>	<b>1127 Median</b>
<b>Actual Proposed Spaces for Garage 1</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>626</b>

Based on the conservative estimates above, the total parking spaces needed for this highly desirable, centrally located parking location is 1027 spaces. The actual number of spaces planned for Garage 1 is 626 which is certainly not an excessive. It is important for to provide adequate parking for our CBD, which currently provides 27% of the City’s total property tax revenues. These revenues enable our city to maintain one of the lowest property tax mileage rates for residents in Miami-Dade County.

Moreover, the budgeted revenues from parking have exceeded pre-Covid levels and are budgeted at \$17.6 million this year. See the Coral Gables Finance Department’s Summary of Quarterly Financial Report for the six months ending March 31, 2023. Further, it is projected that the revenues from Garage 1, if built with 626 parking spaces and an activated ground floor and roof, will cover construction costs within 10 years.