

# Florida's attorney general sought more control over drug-trafficking cases, draft of bill shows

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TALLAHASSEE

Ahead of the legislative session that began Tuesday, Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody has been pushing to expand her office's control over local drug prosecutions and investigations. But she appears to have backed off the idea after receiving pushback from state attorneys and local prosecutors.

Draft language of a bill shopped by Moody's office and obtained by the Herald/Times shows the attorney general was proposing to give a statewide prosecutor under her office jurisdiction over drug-trafficking cases normally handled by local state attorneys offices. The draft language declared that certain crimes involving the trafficking of narcotics are crimes "occurring in every judicial circuit within the state."

The draft proposal, as written, suggests that certain crimes related to trafficking narcotics are statewide crimes, even if the physical crime never crossed circuit lines.

Moody's office has been discussing the proposal with prosecutors for months and the proposal has gone through several iterations. The idea was deemed "unacceptable" and potentially unconstitutional by the Florida Prosecuting At-

torneys Association executive board, which provided feedback to Moody's office, emails show. Moody also met with several state attorneys on Monday morning in St. Augustine to go over the feedback.

After the meeting, FPAA President Jack Campbell said in an interview that the drug-crime jurisdiction issue is likely off the table. He said "the agreement is that we're going to make sure everybody's happy with whatever the language is before it goes forward."

The suggested changes come as Gov. Ron DeSantis — in tandem with Moody's office — has taken unprecedented steps at controlling local prosecutors' actions in an effort to crack down on what he perceives to be progressive prosecutors who might be more lenient on criminals.

Other elements in the proposed draft legislation would give the attorney general more influence into post-conviction decisions in capital cases and could give state law enforcement more control over DNA testing after sentencing. It is unclear whether the proposals remain under consideration for the 2024 legislative session. No legislation had been filed by Moody's office as of Monday.

"While there is no filed legislation at this time regarding the referenced language, we will continue to work with interested parties throughout this legislative session to strengthen criminal justice statutes in order to reduce

crime and increase public safety," said Chase Sizemore, Moody's spokesperson.

In DeSantis' proposed budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, he proposed an additional \$6.6 million to create 40 new positions in the Office of Statewide Prosecution. The governor's office did not immediately respond to a request seeking comments, but the justification listed on his budget website says the money would be for workload associated with prosecuting "gang, violent crime and drug activity within Florida."

Moody's office draft proposal reflects an attitude shared by DeSantis and Moody, both of whom have posited themselves as tough on crime.

In 2022, DeSantis removed Democrat Hillsborough State Attorney Andrew Warren from office, in part, because of his pledge to not prosecute those who seek or provide abortions and appointed a Republican prosecutor in his place.

A year later, DeSantis suspended Democrat Monique Worrell as state attorney for the 9th Judicial Circuit, criticizing her for failing to impose mandatory sentences for drug and gun crimes.

At the news conference where DeSantis announced Worrell's suspension, Moody presented data about Worrell dismissing charges or not filing charges. The proposed bill would require the attorney general to submit similar data about

each state attorney to the governor's office, the speaker of the House and the Senate president annually.

News of the drafted bill came alongside other proposals to rearrange Florida's judicial system. Two months ago, the Florida Supreme Court rejected a proposal introduced by Florida House Speaker Paul Renner seeking to consolidate some of the state's 20 judicial circuits. That would have resulted in some circuits, such as Monroe County in the Florida Keys,



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to merge with larger circuits, such as Miami-Dade County.

The majority of prosecutors, public and private defense attorneys and many sheriffs opposed the consolidation proposal. Monroe County State

Attorney Dennis Ward, who was vocal in his opposition to consolidating circuits, says the potential bill is a roundabout way to achieve the same goal.

"This is consolidation in another version," Ward said.



The following is an upcoming GMX procurement opportunity:

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)**  
**GMX PROCUREMENT/CONTRACT NO.: RFQ-24-02**  
**GMX WORK PROGRAM NO.: 83618-007.020**  
**GMX PROJECT/SERVICE TITLE: DESIGN ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE WIDENING OF EASTBOUND SR 836 FROM SR 821/HOMESTEAD EXTENSION OF FLORIDA'S TURNPIKE (HEFT) TO EAST OF NW 97 AVENUE AND WIDENING OF WESTBOUND SR 836 FROM WEST OF HEFT TO NW 87 AVENUE**

For detailed information please visit the Procurement Department website at <http://www.gmx-way.com/business/solicitations>, or call the Procurement Department at 305-637-3277 for assistance.



## CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **COUNCIL ZONING MEETING** on **January 24, 2024 beginning at 6:00 PM** to consider a text amendment to Section 74-170 "Tobacco/vape dealers" of Chapter 74, "Miscellaneous and Supplementary Regulations," of the City's Land Development Code. The City Council will consider this item for **FIRST READING**. The meeting will be held at the **City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166.**

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

**ORDINANCE No. 2024-07**

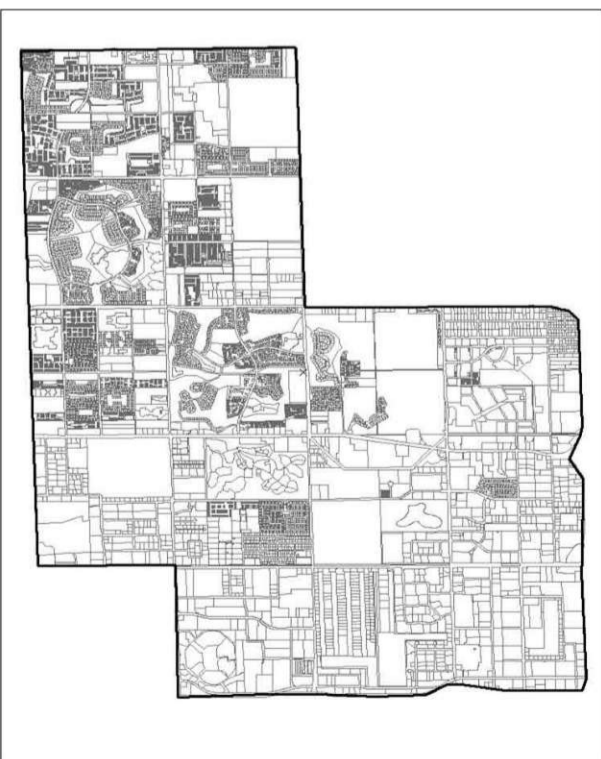
**AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTION 74-170, "TOBACCO/VAPE DEALERS," OF CHAPTER 74, "MISCELLANEOUS AND SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS" OF THE CITY OF DORAL LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, TO INCLUDE HEMP AND CBD DEALERS for purposes of location/distance restrictions, and to also include moveable places of BUSINESSES; PROVIDING FOR A REPEALER; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

**HEARING NO.:** 24-01-DOR-06

**APPLICANT:** City of Doral

**REQUEST:** The Planning and Zoning Department respectfully recommends that the Mayor and City Councilmembers approve an amendment to Section 74-170 "Tobacco/vape dealers" to include hemp and CBD dealers for purposes of location/distance restrictions, and to also include moveable places of businesses.

**Location Map**



Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, if a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

Connie Diaz, MMC  
 City Clerk  
 City of Doral



## CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **COUNCIL ZONING MEETING** on **January 24, 2024 beginning at 6:00 PM** to consider the variances in connection with the proposed Doral Marketplace Retail site plan. The meeting will be held at the **City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166.**

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Resolution:

**RESOLUTION No. 24-**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, APPROVING/DENYING (I) A VARIANCE FROM THE DORAL BOULEVARD MASTER PLAN TO PERMIT A SETBACK OF 24-FEET FROM THE PROPERTY LINE FRONTING DORAL BOULEVARD IN LIEU OF THE MINIMUM 40-FEET, (II) A VARIANCE FROM SECTION 77-185(a)(1) OF THE CITY'S LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE TO PERMIT PARKING SPACE LENGTHS OF 18-FEET, IN LIEU OF THE 19-FOOT MINIMUM, (III) A VARIANCE FROM SECTION 77-193(2)(d) OF THE CITY'S LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE TO ELIMINATE TWO (2) PARKING ROW LANDSCAPE STRIPS, AND REDUCTION OF TWO (2) ADDITIONAL PARKING ROW LANDSCAPE STRIPS TO 4.4-FEET AND 5.2-FEET, in lieu of the 7.5-FOOT minimum, AND TO PERMIT A 3.2-FOOT PARKING LANDSCAPE STRIP ALONG AN ADDITIONAL PARKING ROW in lieu of the minimum 5-FEET REQUIRED, AND (IV) A VARIANCE FROM SECTION 77-193(1) OF THE CITY'S LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE TO ELIMINATE THE PARKING AREA PERIMETER LANDSCAPE BUFFER WIDTH IN CERTAIN AREAS, AND PROVIDING FOR A 5-FOOT PARKING AREA PERIMETER LANDSCAPE BUFFER WIDTH IN OTHER AREAS, in lieu of the 7-FOOT minimum, for the PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE INTERSECTION OF NW 41 STREET AND NW 107 AVENUE, DORAL, FLORIDA, AS LEGALLY DESCRIBED IN EXHIBIT "A"; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

**HEARING NO.:** 24-01-DOR-01

**APPLICANT:** Doral Marketplace, LLC (the "Applicant")

**PROJECT NAME:** Doral Marketplace Parking Variances

**PROPERTY OWNER:** Doral Farms, LLC

**LOCATION:** Southwest corner of NW 107 Avenue and NW 41 Street

**FOLIO NUMBER:** 35-3030-000-0020

**SIZE OF PROPERTY:** ±10.05 acres

**FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY:** Business

**ZONING DISTRICT:** Commercial Corridor District (CC)

**REQUEST:** The Applicant is requesting four (4) variances in connection with the proposed Doral Marketplace Retail Site Plan.

Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL. The application file may be examined at the City of Doral Planning and Zoning Department located at 8401 NW 53 Terrace, Doral, FL 33166.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, if a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

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**Location Map**

