

FOCUS LATIN AMERICA

Mexican President's Anti-Corruption Effort Takes PR Blow



GUSTAVO MARTINEZ CONTRERAS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mexico's president has made punishing corruption the centerpiece of his political agenda, so when Emilio Lozoya, above, one of the country's most corrupt and self-confessed ex-officials, was photographed dining out carefree at a luxury restaurant in Mexico City, it wasn't exactly good optics.

Associated Press

Mexico's president has made punishing corruption the centerpiece of his political agenda, so when one of the country's most corrupt and self-confessed ex-officials was photographed dining out carefree at a luxury restaurant over the weekend, it wasn't good optics.

The photographs of Emilio Lozoya, the former head of the state-run oil company who is now a government witness in a corruption case involving allegations of hundreds of millions in bribes, couldn't have come at a worse time.

Currently, Mexico's attorney general is trying to lock up 31 academics in a maximum security prison because he claims they improperly received about \$2.5 million in government science funding years ago. The laws at the time allowed such funding, and the researchers say it wasn't misspent.

Meanwhile, the same attorney general hasn't managed to jail any of the top figures implicated in a big corruption case at the state-run Pemex oil company that almost bankrupted the firm.

Mexico City security analyst Alejandro Hope was blunt about the uproar Monday: "The optics suck. They're horrible."

Even López Obrador was angered by the photos of Lozoya in a Mexico City restaurant, even though as a protected witness he is not confined to his home or under any form of arrest.

"I believe it is legal, but is immoral that these things happen. It is imprudent, at the very least," López Obrador said. "That is why there is so much indignation at him eating at a luxury restaurant. Even though he can legally do so, he is a witness to acts of corruption that damaged Mexico a lot."

It is all the more embarrassing because López Obrador announced Monday he will make only his second trip outside the country to visit the United Nations on Nov. 9 — to give a speech about the dangers of corruption.

Lozoya fled to Spain, was arrested there and extradited back to Mexico in 2020. He quickly decided to turn state's evidence and testify against other former officials, in return for not going to jail himself.

Lozoya alleged that former President Enrique Peña Nieto and his right-hand man, then treasury secretary Luis Videgaray directed him to bribe lawmakers, including five senators, to support controversial energy and other structural reforms in 2013 and 2014.

Lozoya also faces corruption charges related to Pemex's overvalued purchase of a fertilizer plant and to millions in dollars of bribes paid by Brazilian construction firm Odebrecht. He has said Peña Nieto and Videgaray told him to use \$4 million from Odebrecht to pay foreign campaign consultants for work on Peña Nieto's 2012 election campaign.

Videgaray has denied the accusations. Peña Nieto, who left office in 2018 and is reported to live abroad, hasn't spoken publicly since the allegations surfaced. Neither man faces any charges.

And the businessman accused of bilking the government on the fertilizer plant deal quickly repaid some of the money and was released.

So the only people prosecutors have really gone after in the case are the opposition politicians who allegedly received the bribes, and that has raised suspicions in a country where the law has long been used only to punish political enemies.

The office of Attorney General Alejandro Gertz Manero said in a statement that the case against Lozoya and the other allegedly corrupt officials continues. He said Lozoya's case will come up again at a Nov. 3 hearing.

But Lozoya has already won numerous extensions in his case. "Lozoya has been able to play for time, and he may be betting on this administration ending," said Hope, the security analyst.

The photographs of Lozoya dining out with friends pretty much put to rest the idea that López Obrador was going to energetically prosecute crimes of the past, the analyst said.

"This is the last nail in the coffin of the fantasy that this case was going to blow the lid off the sewer of corruption," Hope noted.

Gertz Manero's office, meanwhile, is still trying to lock up 31 academics and researchers in a maximum security prison usually reserved for drug lords even though one judge has already refused to issue arrest warrants for them.



CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY (LPA)** meeting on **October 27, 2021 beginning at 5:30 PM** to consider an amendment to the text of the City of Doral Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Element, Policy 2.1.2 entitled "Doral Décor District" (DDD), modifying permitted uses, eliminating retail and service percentage restrictions, and establishing total number of residential dwelling units permitted; and eliminating the "Community Mixed Use Opportunity Area" land use category. 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. 21-

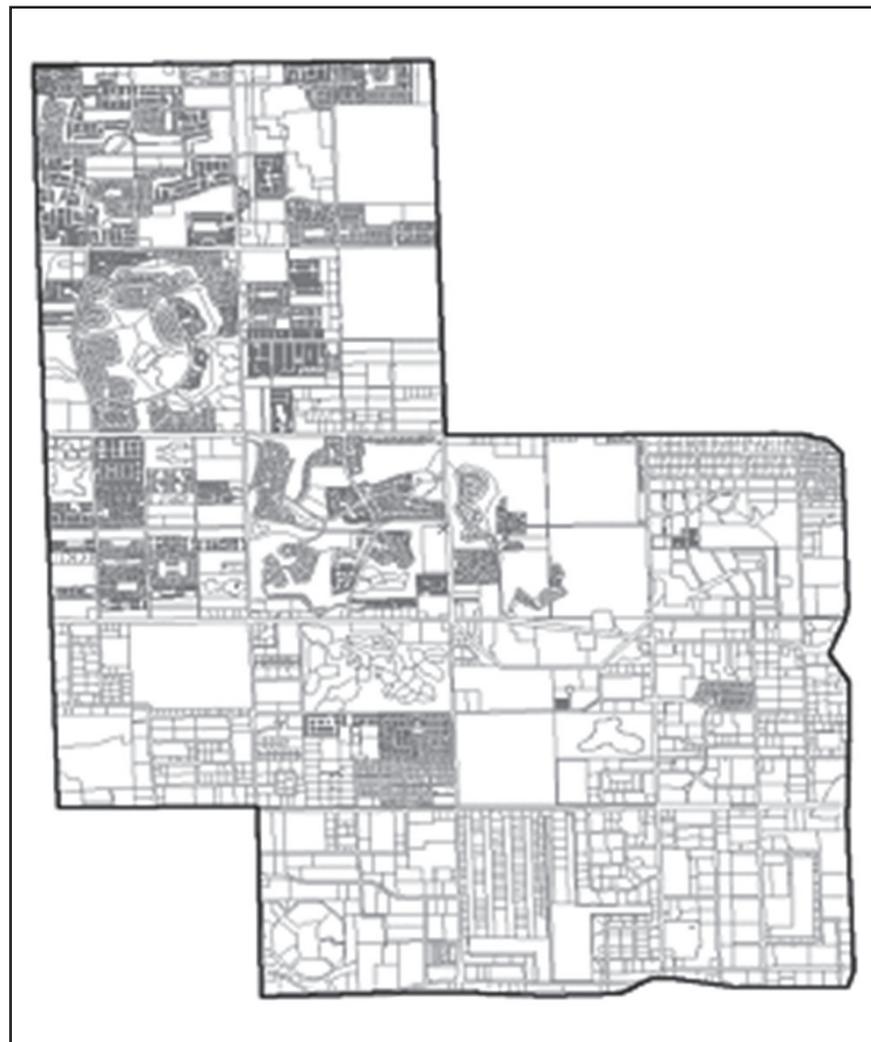
A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, SITTING AS THE LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY, RECOMMENDING APPROVAL / DENIAL OF, OR GOING FORWARD WITHOUT A RECOMMENDATION TO TRANSMIT TO THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY A TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE CITY OF DORAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT, POLICY 2.1.2 ENTITLED "DORAL DÉCOR DISTRICT" (DDD), MODIFYING PERMITTED USES, ELIMINATING RETAIL AND SERVICE PERCENTAGE RESTRICTIONS, AND ESTABLISHING TOTAL NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL DWELLING UNITS PERMITTED; ELIMINATING THE "COMMUNITY MIXED USE OPPORTUNITY AREA" LAND USE CATEGORY; AUTHORIZING THE TRANSMITTAL OF THE TEXT AMENDMENT ADOPTION PACKAGE TO THE STATE LAND PLANNING AGENCY IN THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND OTHER REQUIRED GOVERNMENTAL REVIEWING AGENCIES PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 163.3184, FLORIDA STATUTES; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

HEARING NO.: 21-10-DOR-01

APPLICANT: City of Doral

REQUEST: The City Manager's Office respectfully recommends that the Mayor and City Councilmembers approve an amendment to the text of the City of Doral Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Element, Policy 2.1.2 entitled "Doral Décor District" (DDD), modifying permitted uses, eliminating retail and service percentage restrictions, and establishing total number of residential dwelling units permitted; and eliminating the "Community Mixed Use Opportunity Area" land use category.

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 is 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