



# City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Staff Report

Applicant: City of Coral Gables

Application: **Comprehensive Plan Text Amendments – University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay**

Properties: 1150, 1190, 1250, 1320, and 1350 South Dixie Highway

Public Hearing: Planning and Zoning Board

**Date & Time: December 10, 2025; 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

Location: City Commission Chambers, City Hall,  
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

## 1. APPLICATION REQUEST

The City of Coral Gables is requesting review and consideration of the following:

*An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, granting approval of proposed amendments to the text of the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan pursuant to expedited state review procedures (S. 163.3184, Florida Statutes) and Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-213, "Comprehensive Plan Text and Map Amendments," to modify the required mix of uses when developed within the "University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay," to allow a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.5, and to provide for policies to implement the "University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay;" providing for a repealer provision, providing for a severability clause, and providing for an effective date.*

## 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On September 3, 2025, the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners adopted an ordinance creating the "Gables/University Station Subzone" within the County's Rapid Transit Zone (RTZ). As adopted, the County RTZ Subzone establishes County regulatory jurisdiction over designated parcels within a quarter-mile of the University Metrorail Station and supersedes the City of Coral Gables' Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code for those properties. The ordinance provides its own set of development standards, allowed uses, design guidelines, and review procedures to be administered exclusively at the County level.

In response to the County's ongoing RTZ expansion and its implications for local land use control, the City initiated its own regulatory framework to ensure that development adjacent to the University Metrorail Station remains consistent with community expectations, established planning principles, and Coral Gables' long-standing architectural and urban design standards.

The City's Overlay District is intended to serve as a local regulatory mechanism that complements transit-supportive land use patterns while maintaining the character and aesthetic identity of Coral Gables. The

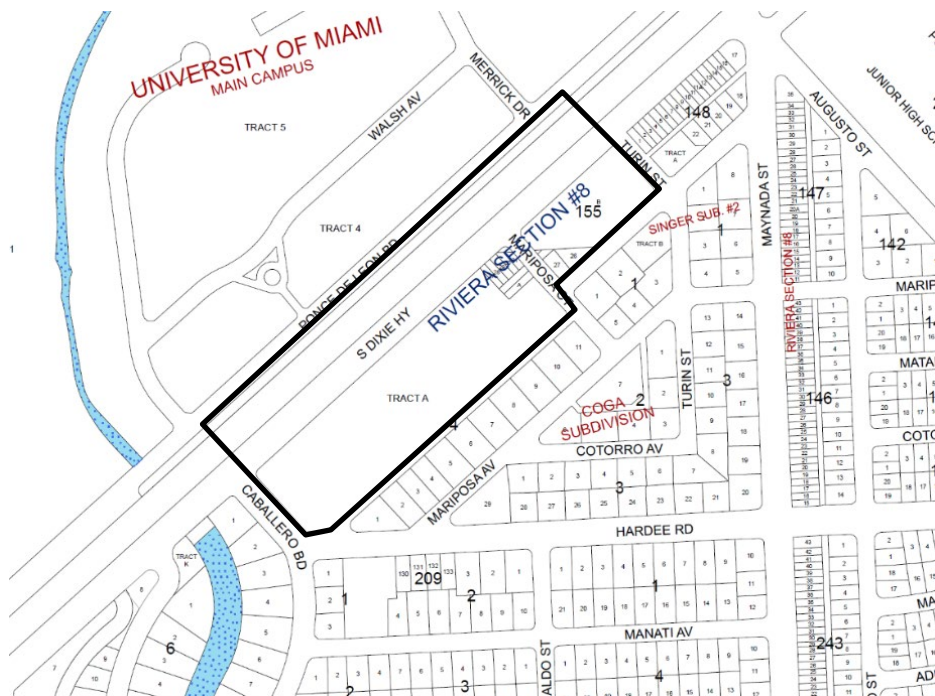
proposed District includes the parcels fronting the University Station area bounded by South Dixie Highway, Caballero Boulevard, Madruga Avenue, and Turin Street. The City produced a short informational video: <https://tinyurl.com/ycuz857y>.

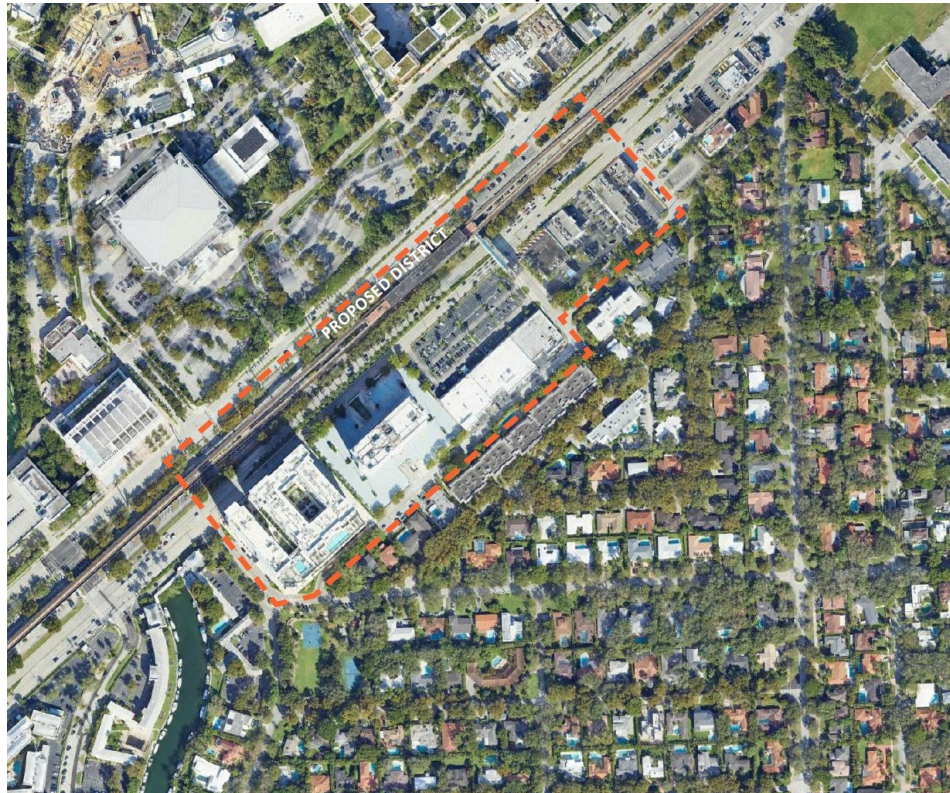
The City's proposed "University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay" was presented to the Planning and Zoning Board on July 2, 2025, when the Board recommended approval for the Comprehensive Plan map and text amendments and the Zoning Code text and map amendments related to the proposed overlay. The draft ordinances for the proposed amendments were later revised multiple times and approved on First Reading by the City Commission on October 28, 2025. At First Reading, the Commission discussed concerns for the potential redevelopment project, formerly known as 'The Mark,' continuing with the County's development path. The Commission therefore voted to select the Mayor, along with the City Manager, to meet and negotiate with the project's representatives.

Upon meeting with the representatives and to support the regulatory framework contemplated in the proposed overlay, the City is now advancing a related Comprehensive Plan text amendment. This amendment adds a new Comprehensive Plan policy establishing the University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay and outlines the land use, transit-oriented development, mixed-use, community engagement, and multimodal mobility objectives that will guide development within the district. Additionally, the amendment introduces a simplified mix of allowable uses and establishes a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.5 for properties within the future overlay district. The proposed Comprehensive Plan changes are therefore intended to ensure consistency with the anticipated overlay district and to align City policy with Miami-Dade County's recently adopted Coral Gables/University Station Subzone to provide an alternative development path.

**District Location.** Context information exhibited below.

***Lot, Subdivision, and Plat Map***



**Aerial Map**

**Site Data and Surrounding Uses.** The following tables provide the subject property's designations and surrounding land uses:

**Existing Property Designations**

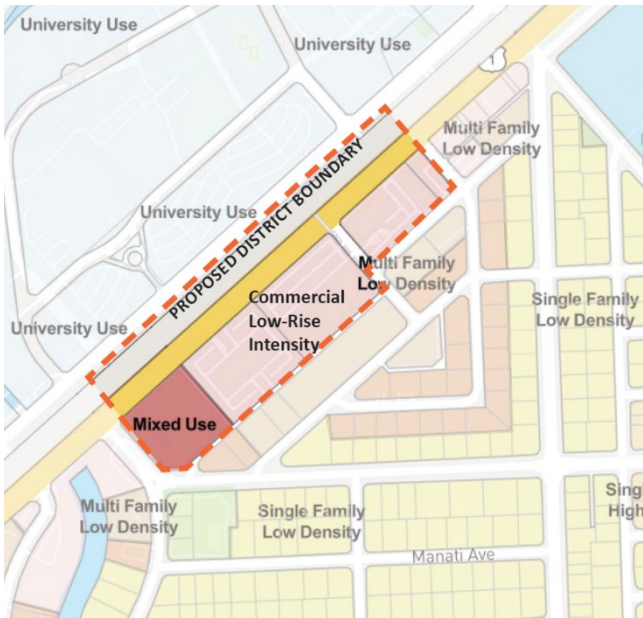
Future Land Use Map designation	1150, 1190, 1250, and 1320 South Dixie Highway: <u>Commercial Low-Rise Intensity</u> 1350 South Dixie Highway: <u>Mixed Use</u>
Zoning Map designation	1150, 1190, 1250, and 1320 South Dixie Highway: <u>Mixed-Use 1 District</u> 1350 South Dixie Highway: <u>Mixed-Use 3 District</u>
Coral Gables Redevelopment Infill District	Yes

**Surrounding Land Uses**

LOCATION	EXISTING LAND USES	FLUM DESIGNATIONS	ZONING DESIGNATIONS
Northwest	University of Miami	University	University Campus District (UCD)
Northeast	Mixed-Use	Commercial Low Rise Intensity;	Mixed Use 1 (MX1) District
Southwest	Gables Waterway Offices and Apartments;	Commercial Low Rise Intensity; Multi Family Low Density;	Mixed Use 1 (MX1) District; Multi-Family 3(MF3);
Southeast	Apartment Buildings, Duplex, and Park	Multi Family Low Density; Multi Family Duplex Density; Park and Recreational Use;	Multi-Family 1 Duplex (MF1); Multi-Family 3 (MF3); Special Use (S);



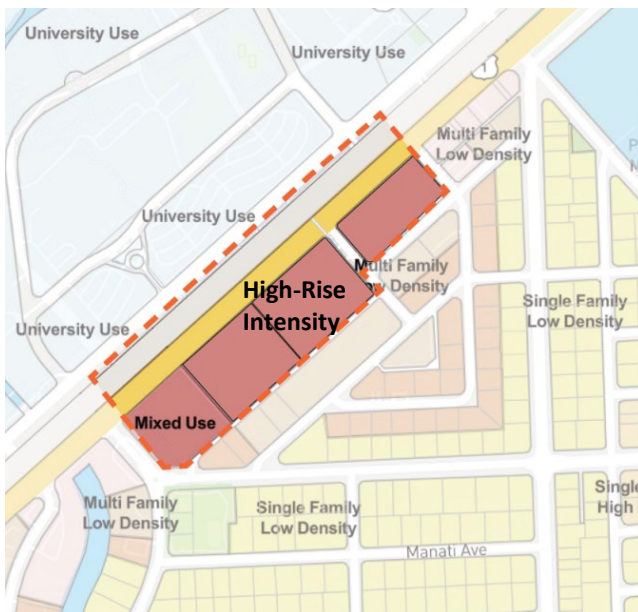
**Existing Future Land Use Map**



**Existing Zoning Map**



**Proposed Overlay District Future Land Use Map**



**Proposed Overlay District Zoning Map**



### 3. PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT AMENDMENTS

The proposed Comprehensive Plan text amendment is provided below in ~~strike through~~ / underline format.

## FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT

### Policy FLU-1.1.2

Residential land use classifications are as follows (Land use descriptions provided herein are general descriptions, refer to underlying/assigned Zoning Classification for the list of permitted uses):

Table FLU-1. Residential Land Uses.			
Classification	Description	Density / Intensity	Height
Single-Family Low Density.	Single-family detached homes.	Maximum 6 units/acre.	Per the Zoning Code.
Single-Family High Density.	Single-family detached and attached homes, including townhouses.	Maximum 9 units/acre.	Per the Zoning Code.
Multi-Family Duplex Density.	Duplex homes, including townhouses.	Maximum <del>9 units/acre</del> <u>per the Zoning Code.</u>	Per the Zoning Code.
Multi-Family Low Density.	Multi-family residential of low height and density.	Maximum 20 units/acre, or 25 units/acre with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.	Up to 50' maximum (no limitation on floors), or up to 77' maximum (with a maximum of 2 additional floors) with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.
Multi-Family Medium Density.	Multi-family residential of medium height and density.	Maximum 40 units/acre, or 50 units/acre with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.  If developed pursuant to Residential Infill Regulations (bounded by: Douglas Rd, LeJeune Rd, SW 8th St & Navarre Ave): Maximum 75 units/acre, or 100 units/acre with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.	Up to 70' maximum (no limitation on floors), or up to 97' maximum (with a maximum 2 additional floors) with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.  If developed pursuant to Residential Infill Regulations (bounded by: Douglas Rd, LeJeune Rd, SW 8th St & Navarre Ave): Up to 100' maximum with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.
Multi-Family High Density.	Multi-family residential of high height and density.	Maximum 60 units/acre, or 75 units/acre with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.	Up to 150' maximum (no limitation on floors), or 190.5' maximum (with a maximum 3 additional floors) with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.

**Policy FLU-1.1.3.**

Commercial land use classifications are as follows (Land use descriptions provided herein are general descriptions, refer to underlying/assigned Zoning Classification for the list of permitted uses):

**Table FLU-2. Commercial Land Uses.**

<b>Table FLU-2. Commercial Land Uses.</b>			
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Density / Intensity</b>	<b>Height</b>
Commercial Low-Rise Intensity.	This category is oriented to low intensity pedestrian and neighborhood commercial uses, including residential, retail, services, office, and mixed use.	<p>Maximum F.A.R. of 3.0, or 3.5 with architectural incentives. Up to an additional 25% F.A.R. may be granted for properties qualifying as receiving sites for Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs).</p> <p>Residential use shall only be permitted as part of a mixed-use development as provided herein with maximum of 125 units/acre. Density shall be unlimited for properties within the Central Business District (CBD) and the Design &amp; Innovation District.</p> <p>Within a Mediterranean Village development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. residential use shall be permitted, and</li> <li>2. the intensity of the project shall be regulated by a maximum F.A.R. of four (4.0), and shall be controlled by an approved Mediterranean Village PAD Plan</li> </ol>	<p>Up to 50' maximum (no limitation on floors), or up to 77' maximum (with a maximum of 2 additional floors) with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.</p> <p>If developed pursuant to Design &amp; Innovation District regulations: Up to 120' maximum (limitation of 10 floors) with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.</p>
Commercial Mid-Rise Intensity.	This category is oriented to medium intensity pedestrian and neighborhood commercial uses, including residential, retail, services, office, and mixed use.	<p>Maximum F.A.R. of 3.0, or 3.5 with architectural incentives. Up to an additional 25% F.A.R. may be granted for properties qualifying as receiving sites for Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs).</p> <p>Residential use shall only be permitted as part of a mixed-use development as provided herein with maximum of 125 units/acre. Density shall be unlimited for properties within the Central Business District (CBD) and the Design &amp; Innovation District.</p> <p>Within a Mediterranean Village development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. residential use shall be permitted, and</li> </ol>	<p>Up to 70' maximum (no limitation on floors), or up to 97' maximum (with a maximum 2 additional floors) with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.</p> <p>If developed pursuant to Design &amp; Innovation District regulations: Up to 120' maximum (limitation of 10 floors) with architectural incentives and up to 137.5' maximum with parks incentives per the Zoning Code.</p>

		2. the intensity of the project shall be regulated by a maximum F.A.R. of four (4.0), and shall be controlled by an approved Mediterranean Village PAD Plan	
Commercial High-Rise Intensity.	This category is oriented to the highest intensity commercial uses, including residential, retail, services, office, and mixed use.	<p>Maximum F.A.R. of 3.0, or 3.5 with architectural incentives, <u>or 3.5 if developed pursuant to University Rapid Transit District Overlay</u>. Up to an additional 25% F.A.R. may be granted for properties qualifying as receiving sites for Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs).</p> <p>Residential use shall only be permitted as part of a mixed-use development as provided herein with maximum of 125 units/acre. Density shall be unlimited for properties within the Central Business District (CBD) and the Design &amp; Innovation District.</p> <p>Within a Mediterranean Village development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. residential use shall be permitted, and</li> <li>2. the intensity of the project shall be regulated by a maximum Floor Area Ratio ("F.A.R.") of four (4.0), and shall be controlled by an approved Mediterranean Village Planned Area Development ("PAD") Plan, and</li> <li>3. additional height may be granted for specified uses or provide architectural embellishment</li> </ol>	<p>Up to 150' maximum (no limitation on floors), or 190.5' maximum (with a maximum 3 additional floors) with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.</p> <p>If developed pursuant to an approved PAD, within the Central Business District (CBD) and limiting density to 100 units/acre: Up to 205.5' maximum with architectural incentives per the Zoning Code.</p>

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**Policy FLU-1.1.5.**

Mixed-Use land use classifications are as follows (Land use descriptions provided herein are general descriptions, refer to underlying/assigned Zoning Classification for the list of permitted uses):

Table FLU-4. Mixed-Use land use.	
Classification	Description
MXD, Mixed-Use or MXOD, Mixed-Use Overlay Districts ( <u>MXOD</u> ).	Mixed uses are permitted to varying degrees in the multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial land use categories, pursuant to underlying land use regulations and applicable Zoning Code provisions.
	The general intent of the MXD is to promote a multi-faceted pedestrian friendly environment comprised of an assortment of uses, including the following:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential;</li> <li>• Retail/Commercial;</li> <li>• Office;</li> <li>• Industrial; and</li> <li>• Public Open Spaces.</li> </ul> <p>No single use may comprise more than eighty-five (85%) percent of the MXD floor area ratio. <u>However, if developed pursuant to the University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay, a minimum of two (2) uses shall be included, with no minimum or maximum percentage thresholds.</u></p> <p>A maximum of 125 units/acre shall be allowed. Density shall be unlimited for properties within the Central Business District (CBD) and the Design &amp; Innovation District.</p> <p>The proportionate mix of uses shall be reviewed per development application. The following table establishes minimum and maximum thresholds based upon the FAR of the <u>Mixed-use</u> building. <i>See Table FLU-4.1 below</i></p> <p>Additional MXD or Mixed Use Overlay District (MXOD) development standards, including maximum intensities, and height, are provided in the Zoning Code.</p>
MXOD, Mixed-Use Overlay Districts ( <u>MXOD</u> ).	<p>An MXOD may be permitted as an overlay in the Multi-Family Medium Density, Commercial and Industrial land use categories (see FLU-2: Mixed-Use Overlay District Map).</p> <p>Properties within the MXOD have the option of developing their property in accordance with the underlying land use.</p>

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**Policy FLU-1.9.5.**

Establish and implement a University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay, which should include:

1. A boundary for the District, adopted on the Future Land Use Map.
2. Zoning regulations that would locate higher density and intensity development near the University Station MetroRail Station to encourage housing and other compatible uses that are supportive of pedestrian activities on the ground level of mixed-use buildings.
3. Mixed-use development along the US-1 corridor that is consistent with the goals of the Miami-Dade County's Strategic Miami Area Rapid Transit (SMART) plan to promote increased ridership of the rapid transit system.
4. Expedited development opportunity that serves as an alternative, compatible development path under the City's review authority and jurisdiction, with greater opportunities for community engagement.
5. Development strategies that provide greater mixed-use and housing opportunities in close proximity to transit, employment, park systems, and educational institutions, and promote and encourage use of mass transit facilities and pedestrian activities along the US-1 corridor.





## 5. FINDINGS OF FACT

This section of the report presents City Staff’s evaluation of the Application and Findings of Fact. The City’s responsibility is to review the Application for consistency with the City’s Comprehensive Plan (CP) Goals, Objectives, and Policies, compliance with the Zoning Code, and compliance with other applicable portions of the City Code.

Zoning Code Section 14-213.6 provides review standards for Comprehensive Plan amendments:

Standard	Staff Evaluation
1. Whether it specifically advances any objective or policy of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.	The proposed amendment of establishing a maximum FAR of 3.5 and permitting a simplified mix of uses within the future ‘University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay’ advances several Goals, Objectives, and Policies to encourage compact development patterns and multimodal mobility. The proposed policy for the Overlay District further advances several Goals and Objectives of the City’s Comprehensive Plan by creating a regulatory structure for higher-intensity mixed-use development near the University Metrorail Station.
2. Whether it is internally consistent with Comprehensive Land Use Plan.	The proposed FAR and mixed-use flexibility amendments are internally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan as it supports the established vision of directing higher-density development to areas with existing multimodal transportation infrastructure and are appropriate for a station-area district. The proposed policy integrates with existing mobility, land use, and urban design policies.
3. Its effect on the level of service of public infrastructure.	The proposed amendment is not expected to reduce the level of service of public infrastructure below adopted Comprehensive Plan standards. The University Station area is already served by high-frequency transit, and the amendment is intended to direct development to locations where infrastructure capacity—particularly transit, water, sewer, and roadway systems—is already available. Future projects will also undergo concurrency review at the development stage, ensuring that any incremental demand for public infrastructure is adequately addressed consistent with the City’s concurrency requirements.
4. Its effect on environmental resources.	No adverse impacts to environmental resources are anticipated as the amendment supports redevelopment within an already urbanized corridor and encourages development near existing transit facilities to reduce development pressure in less urban areas. By supporting multimodal mobility and reducing automobile dependence, the amendment indirectly contributes to greenhouse gas reduction and promotes a more sustainable development pattern.
5. Its effect on the availability of	The amendment may encourage additional residential

housing that is affordable to people who live or work in the City of Coral Gables.	development opportunities within walking distance of transit and employment centers and therefore support the production of multifamily housing types that can diversify the City's housing inventory. While the amendment does not directly mandate affordable housing, increasing overall housing supply in a transit-served area enhances opportunities for both workforce and mixed-income housing consistent with the City's housing goals.
6. Any other effect that the City determines is relevant to the City Commission's decision on the application.	The amendment provides an essential policy foundation for the City's proposed University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay, which is intended to serve as a local regulatory alternative to Miami-Dade County's recently adopted Gables/University Station RTZ Subzone. By codifying the City's proposed Overlay District into the Comprehensive Plan, the amendment strengthens the City's ability to guide development with appropriate scale transitions, pedestrian-oriented design features, and architectural standards consistent with Coral Gables' character. The amendment enhances regulatory predictability, supports intergovernmental coordination, and ensures that future development within the station area reflects community expectations and locally adopted planning principles.

Based upon the Findings of Facts provided herein, Staff finds the Application satisfies the provisions of the Zoning Code for the proposed Comprehensive Plan text amendment. The amendment includes long-standing planning objectives that align with regional transit development and provides a policy basis for the companion overlay district to guide future growth in a manner consistent with community character and expectations.

### Consistency Evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan (CP) Goals, Objectives and Policies

This section provides those CP Goals, Objectives and Policies applicable to the Application and the determination of consistency:

REF. NO.	COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVE AND POLICY	STAFF REVIEW
1	<b>Policy MOB-1.1.1.</b> Promote mixed use development to provide housing and commercial services near employment centers, thereby reducing the need to drive.	Complies
2	<b>Policy MOB-1.1.2.</b> Encourage land use decisions that encourage infill, redevelopment and reuse of vacant or underutilized parcels that support walking, bicycling and public transit use.	Complies
3	<b>Policy MOB-1.1.3.</b> Locate higher density development along transit corridors and near multimodal stations.	Complies
4	<b>Goal FLU-1.</b> Protect, strengthen, and enhance the City of Coral Gables as a vibrant community ensuring that its neighborhoods, business opportunities, shopping, employment centers, cultural activities, historic value, desirable housing, open spaces,	Complies

REF. NO.	COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL, OBJECTIVE AND POLICY	STAFF REVIEW
	and natural resources make the City a very desirable place to work, live, and play.	
5	<b>Objective FLU-1.1.</b> Preserve Coral Gables as a “placemaker” where the balance of existing and future uses is maintained to achieve a high quality living environment by encouraging compatible land uses, restoring and protecting the natural environment, and providing facilities and services which meet or exceed the minimum Level of Service (LOS) standards and meet the social and economic needs of the community through the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Classifications and Map (see FLU-1: Future Land Use Map).	Complies
6	<b>Objective FLU-1.2.</b> Efforts shall continue to be made to control blighting influences, and redevelopment shall continue to be encouraged in areas experiencing deterioration.	Complies
7	<b>Policy FLU-1.10.2.</b> The City shall continue to maintain regulations consistent with the Comprehensive Plan which regulate the use and development of land in a manner which, at a minimum, provides for land use consistent with the Future Land Use Plan map series, interpretive text and Land Use Element goal, objectives and policies; regulate the subdivision of land; regulate signage; regulate development and use in areas subject to seasonal or periodic flooding, provide for stormwater management; open space and regulate on-site traffic flow and parking.	Complies
8	<b>Policy FLU-1.11.1.</b> Maintain and enforce effective development and maintenance regulations through site plan review, code enforcement, and design review boards and committees.	Complies
9	<b>Goal GOV-2.</b> Intergovernmental coordination shall be maintained as a major means of achieving consistency among all government agencies implementing plans and programs affecting the City of Coral Gables.	Complies
10	<b>Objective GOV-2.1.</b> Coordinate and cooperate City Comprehensive Plan activities with other jurisdictions and agencies at all levels and functions of government to achieve mutually beneficial goals and objectives.	Complies
11	<b>Policy HOU-1.5.1.</b> Encourage the development of diverse housing types such as smaller, more affordable units within the downtown area and mixed use development overlay area.	Complies
12	<b>Objective GOV-2.2.</b> Continue and improve coordination activities among government agencies with planning and impact assessment duties affecting the City, with other units of local government providing services but not having regulatory authority over the use of land, and with the comprehensive plans of adjacent municipalities, the county, and adjacent counties.	Complies
13	<b>Objective GOV-2.3.</b> Maintain and strengthen intergovernmental coordination and establish a leadership role on local, regional and state issues.	Complies

Based upon the Findings of Fact provided herein, Staff finds that the application satisfies the provisions of the Zoning Code for the proposed request. Furthermore, the proposed text amendment is consistent with multiple objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan that encourage infill and redevelopment in underutilized parcels, especially compact development along transit corridors and near multimodal stations. The proposed policy further advances several goals and objectives by creating a specific regulatory structure for site plan review of potential higher-intensity mixed-use development near the University Metrorail Station. The proposed amendments are also consistent with the City’s Mobility Element’s Vision to provide

progressive direction for a multi-modal transportation system, and its development principles as outlined in Policy MOB-1.1.1, Policy MOB-1.1.2, and Policy MOB-1.1.3.

Staff finds that all five of these criteria are **satisfied**.

## 6. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Zoning Division recommends **approval**.

## 7. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Revised University Station District Overlay.
- B. 10 28 25 City Commission Draft Ordinance - Comprehensive Plan Map.
- C. 10 28 25 City Commission Draft Ordinance - Zoning Code and Map.
- D. Excerpt of 10 28 25 City Commission Meeting Minutes.
- E. 09 03 25 Miami-Dade County Ordinance and Floor Amendment.
- F. 07 02 25 PZB Staff Report.
- G. 07 02 25 PZB Meeting Minutes.
- H. Mailed notice.
- I. PowerPoint Presentation.

Please visit the City's webpage at [www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com) to view all Application plans and materials, notices, applicable public comments, minutes, etc. The complete Application and all background information also is on file and available for examination during business hours at the Planning and Zoning Division, 427 Biltmore Way, Suite 201, Coral Gables, Florida 33134.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Garcia, AICP, CNU-A  
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for Planning and Zoning  
City of Coral Gables, Florida