

*Florida East Coast Railway Station and Concourse*

# UNIVERSITY STATION RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT

Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan Map Amendments  
and Zoning Code Map & Text Amendments

*Zoning regulations to improve housing opportunities near the University Metrorail Station  
and to encourage use of mass transit facilities and pedestrian activities.*

Prepared by City of Coral Gables Planning Division Staff  
DRAFT June 2025

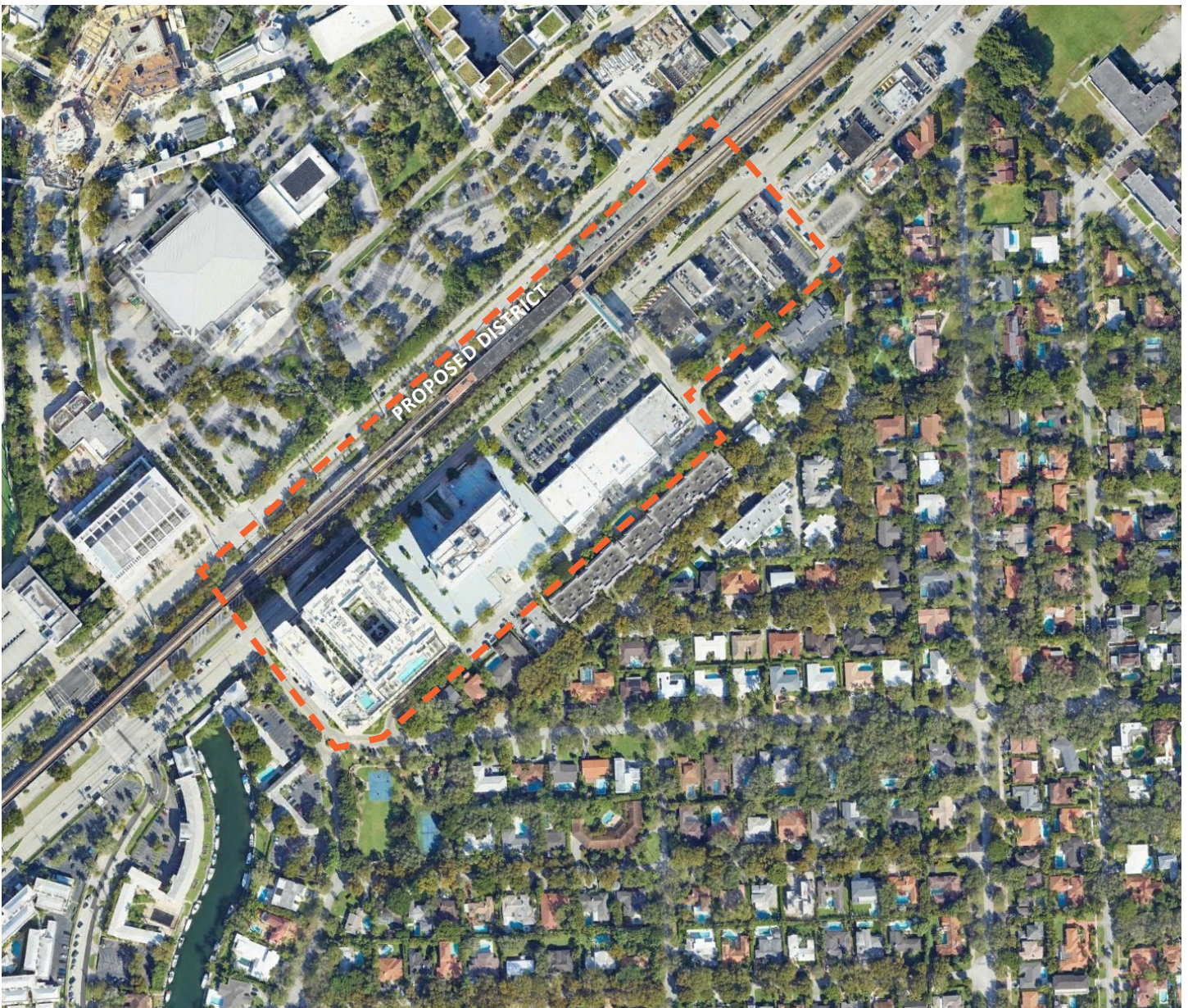


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## *Planning for a Rapid Transit Street On US-1*

The US-1 corridor within the City of Coral Gables is a quickly developing commercial corridor. Buildings along the southeast side of US-1 include a mix of older, single-story retail development and strip malls, with the tallest building on US-1, Gables One Tower, that sits on a parking level surrounded by a wall, and The Paseo de la Riviera, a recently constructed mixed-use building.

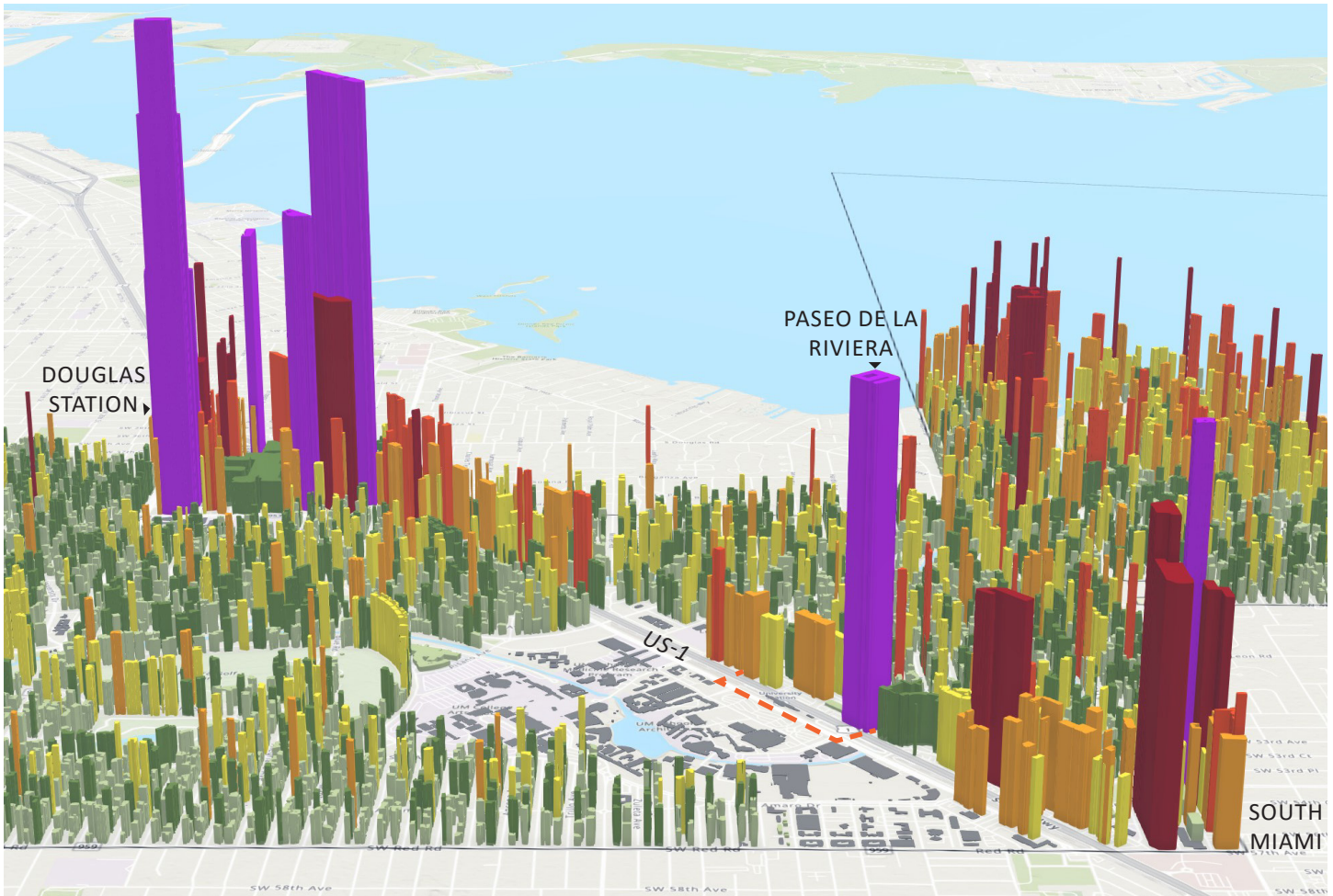
The University Metrorail Station is located on the University of Miami (UM) campus side of US-1 and is connected to the south by a pedestrian bridge. The area is planned for parks, a greenway, bikeways, and popup retail with soon-to-be-constructed Underline. The UM campus frontage is dominated by a parking lot screened by shrubs and fencing.





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## Revenue Model



To the southeast of these commercial developments are multiple blocks of low density multi-family and duplexes. Immediately south is the established residential Riviera neighborhood.

Redevelopment along US-1 has occurred primarily near the Douglas Doad Metrorail Station and the City of South Miami. The only recent redevelopment on the corridor between those two development nodes is the Paseo de la Riviera development. This recently-constructed mixed-use development shows significant revenue in this immediate area on a 2024 revenue model diagram. While the diagram illustrates that many existing

development patterns have proven to grow value over time and provide for a high quality of life and welfare for the community, this segment of US-1 provides relatively low revenue and value in the city.

This segment of US-1 is also designated to be a “Community Urban Center” on the Miami-Dade County’s SMART Corridor plan. As such, a Coral Gables / University Station Sub-Zone has been recently proposed by the County and is currently being considered to preempt the City’s Zoning regulations and processes.

# Mixed-Use Districts (Zoning Map)



## LEGEND

 Proposed District Boundary

Mixed-Use 1 (MX1)

Mixed-Use 2 (MX2)

Mixed-Use 3 (MX3)

Multi-Family 1 Duplex (MF1)

Multi-Family 2 (MF2)

Multi-Family 3 (MF3)



Multi-Family 4 (MF4)

Preservation (P)

Single-Family Residential (SFR)

Special Use (S)

University Campus District (UCD)





# Commercial Intensities (Future Land Use Map)



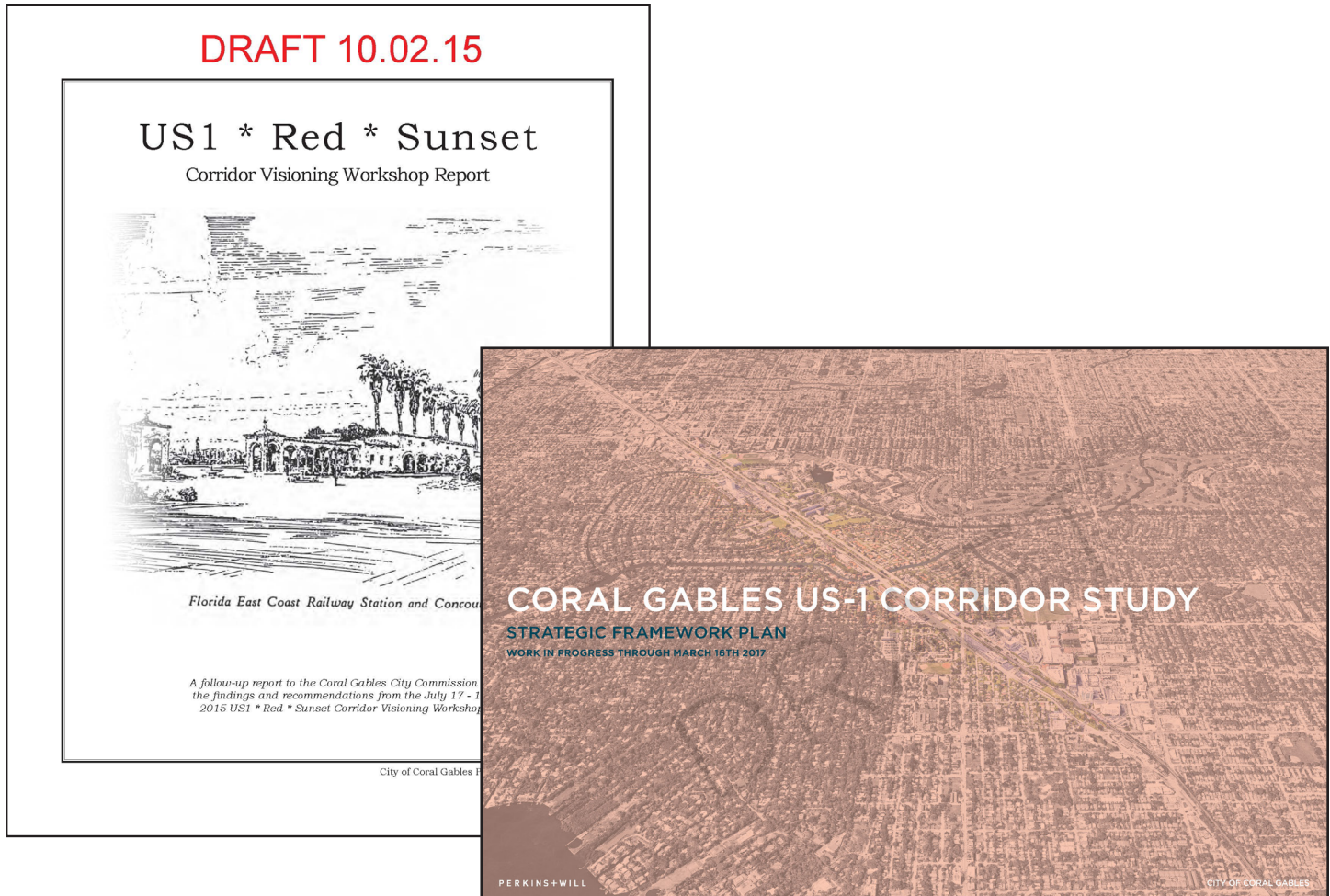
## LEGEND

Proposed District Boundary

Commercial High Rise Intensity	Industrial Use	Park and Recreational Use
Commercial Low-Rise Intensity	Mixed Use	Public Buildings and Grounds
Commercial Medium Rise Intensity	Multi Family Duplex Density	Religious or Institutional
Conservation Areas	Multi Family High Density	Single Family High Density
Educational Use	Multi Family Low Density	Single Family Low Density
Hospital Use	Multi Family Medium Density	University Use
	Open Space	

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## Past Planning Initiatives



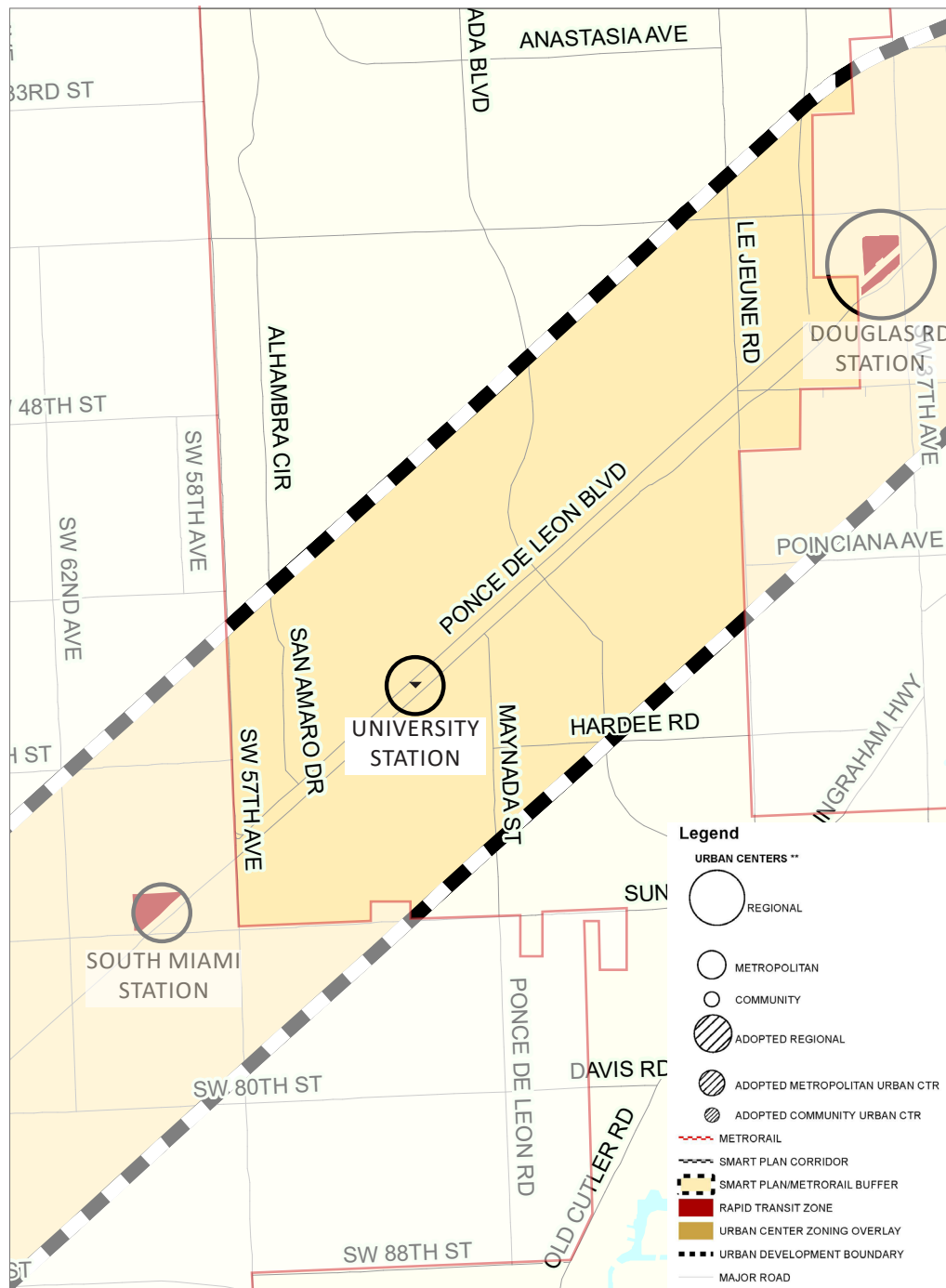
The US-1 corridor has been discussed multiple times for several years. Most recently, the City initiated a visioning workshop in 2015. Part of the recommendations from the public input collected at the workshops included the need to prepare a transit-oriented zoning overlay, with requirements for building massing and setbacks; guidelines for paseos and public spaces; parking requirements and shared parking strategies; and enhanced sidewalk requirements on US-1.

In 2016-17, the City hired Perkins Will to create a strategic framework plan for the US-1 Corridor. After

a series of public workshops with the community, the work of the study slowed down and was canceled. In-progress recommendations were similar to the 2015 study with tree canopy and wide sidewalks; reduction of parking lots along US-1; increase pedestrian safety and wider sidewalks along US-1; and reduce vehicular access from properties on US-1.

While many of the recommendations were adopted with the Zoning Code Update in 2021, the land use and zoning maps have not been changed to reflect redevelopment on US-1.

# Miami-Dade County SMART Corridor



Miami-Dade County's SMART plan identifies the University Station as a Community Urban Center.

The County has actively been adopting rapid transit sub-zones at each Metrorail station, including Douglas Road and Palmetto Bay.



## *General Regulations*

	<i>Current Regulations</i>		<i>County Proposed RTZ</i>	<i>City Proposed District</i>
<b>Review</b>	Change of land use / Zoning and Conditional Use		Special exception review/ approval	Expedited review (see Sec. 2-408.D(9))
<b>Future Land Use</b>	Commercial Low-Rise	Commercial High Rise	Business and Office	Commercial High-Rise Intensity
<b>Zoning</b>	Mixed-Use 1 (MX1)	Mixed-Use 3 (MX3)	RTZ-SMART Corridor	Mixed-Use 3 (MX3)
<b>Height (ft)</b>	45	150	Max height of existing buildings w/in ¼-mile (150')	120 (no Med Bonus height) (+13.5 w/ 5% public open space) 147 maximum
<b>Density</b>	125		125	125
<b>FAR</b>	3.0 (1.5 per Site Specifics)		No Limit	3.0
<b>Med Bonus</b>	+0.2, +0.3 additional (3.5 FAR total)		-	+0.2, +0.3 additional (3.5 FAR total)
<b>Use of TDRs</b>	Not allowed for this area		-	3.75 FAR w/o Med Bonus 4.375 FAR w/ Med Bonus (25% max additional)
<b>Setbacks</b>	20 feet (10 feet with arcade) on US-1 (Front: 125 feet, Rear: 50 feet, per Site Specifics)		0 ft	20 feet (10 feet with arcade) on all parcels facing US-1; 25 feet rear setback with landscape buffer on 300'+ parcels
<b>Open Space</b>	10% on ground level		15% (incl. upper floor terraces)	10% on ground level (incl. setback areas)
<b>Stepbacks (ft) and Paseos</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Front/side street: 10' step-back above 45'</li> <li>Int. side: 15' stepback above 45'</li> <li>Rear w/out alley: 10' step-back above 45'</li> <li>Rear w/ alley: 3' stepback above 45'</li> </ul>		None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US-1: 30' stepback above 100'</li> <li>Fronting adjacent residential districts: 10' stepback above 45'</li> <li>No paseo required</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 per studio/1-bd</li> <li>1.75 per 2-bd</li> <li>2.25 per 3-bd +</li> <li>1 per 300 sf comm, office</li> <li>1 1/8 per hotel room</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0 per residential unit</li> <li>1.8 per 1,000sf comm.</li> <li>0.6 per 1,000sf office</li> <li>0.3 per hotel room</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parking required, except for ground floor restaurant, retail, residential.</li> <li>Reduction: 50%</li> <li>Waiver for 25% w/ parking plan and Remote Parking</li> </ul>



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## *Total Required Requests*

1. Future Land Use Map Amendments:

- Change to Commercial High-Rise Intensity; and
- Create the “University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay.”

2. Mixed Use Overlay Districts Map Amendment:

- Create the “University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay.”

3. Zoning Map Amendment:

- Change Mixed-Use 1 (MX1) to Mixed-Use 3 (MX3).

4. Zoning Code Text Amendments:

- Remove inconsistent Site Specifics within district in Appendix A and US-1;
- Add District as TDR receiving site in Article 14; and
- Insert new “University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay.”

# Proposed Future Land Use Map Amendment



## LEGEND

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# *Proposed Zoning Map Amendment*



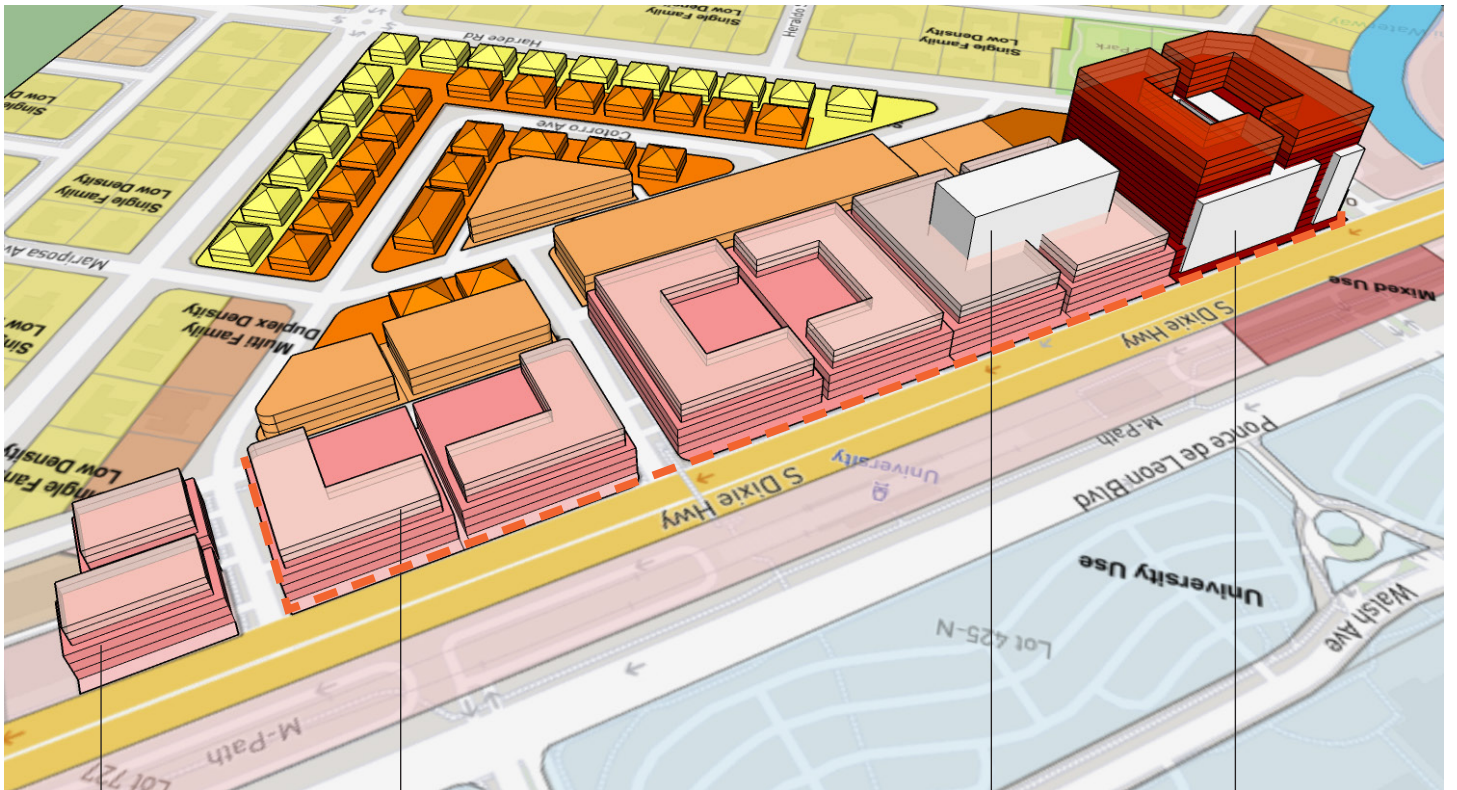
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Proposed District Boundary

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- Single-Family Residential (SFR)
- Special Use (S)
- University Campus District (UCD)

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## *Massing Comparison - Existing*



Height Allowed  
by Mixed-use 1

Height Allowed by  
Med Bonus II

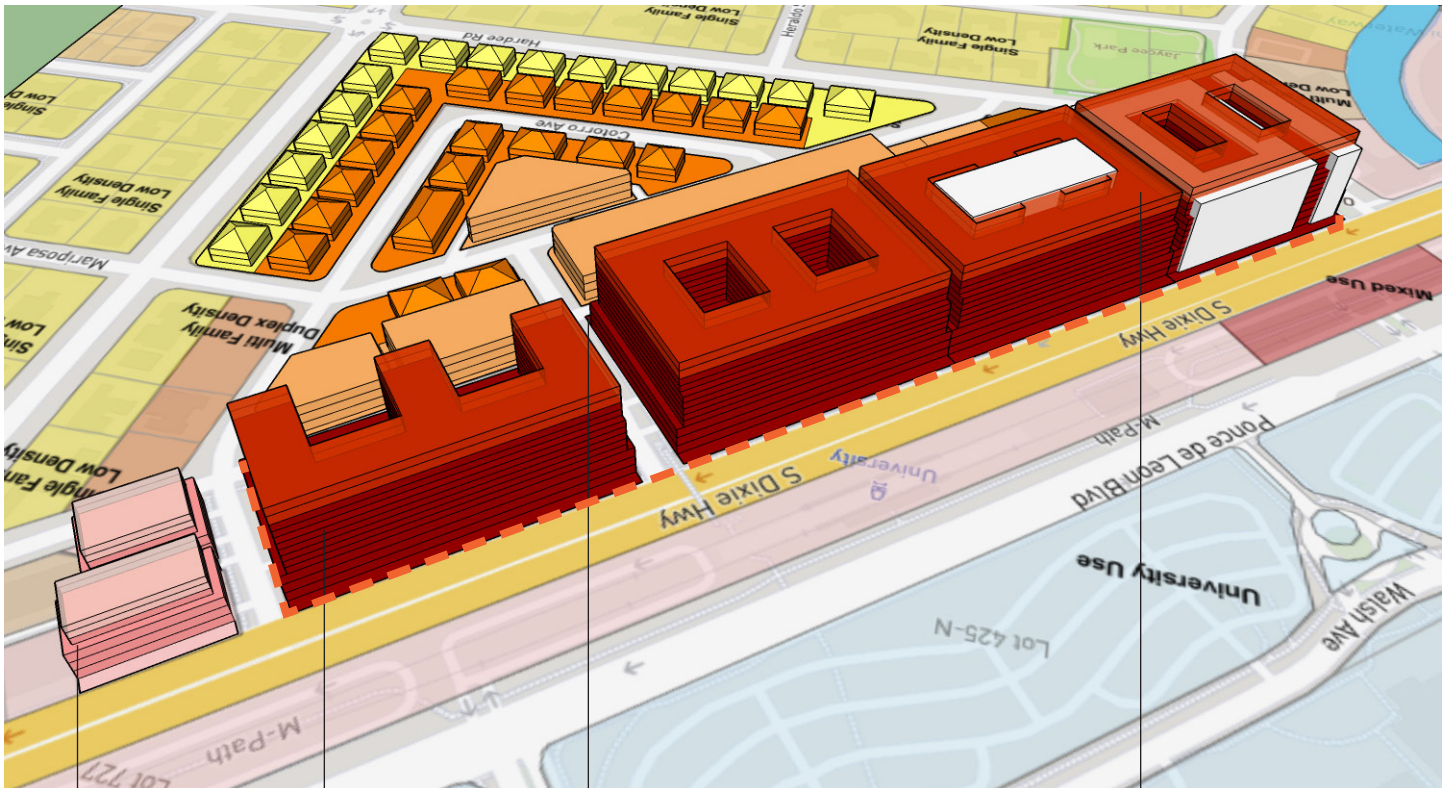
Existing UM  
Office Tower

Existing Mixed-  
use Tower



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## *Massing Comparison - Proposed*



Height Allowed  
by Mixed-use 1

Height Allowed by  
Proposed District

Additional Rear Setback  
Requirement

Height Allowed by  
Open Space Bonus

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# *Proposed Zoning Code Text Amendment*

## *Create a new Rapid Transit District Overlay in the Zoning Code to address a unified character for the University Station area and provide tailored regulations for high-quality development.*

### Section 2-400. District Overlays.

The several Overlay Districts provide mandatory additional regulations for specific areas within the Multi-Family (MF) and Mixed Use (MX) Districts. The District Overlays include:

- Central Business District Overlay (CBD)
- Zain/Friedman Miracle Mile Downtown District Overlay (DO)
- Giralda Plaza District Overlay
- North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation District Overlay (NPCO)
- Residential Infill Regulations Overlay (RIR)
- Design & Innovation District Overlay
- North Ponce Mixed Use District Overlay
- University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay

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### Section 2-408. University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay.

#### A. Purpose and applicability.

1. The purpose of the University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay is to implement the goals, objectives, and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan to locate higher density development along transit corridors and near multimodal stations. These standards are consistent with the intent and provisions of Miami-Dade County's Rapid Transit Zone that provide for transit-oriented development adjacent to the existing mass transit system.

2. The District is established in order to maintain the following objectives:

- a. Enhance the aesthetic and physical character of US-1 corridor that are consistent with the high-quality design and architecture of the City.
- b. Promote and encourage use of mass transit facilities and pedestrian activities along the US-1 corridor by requiring pedestrian-oriented building design and site planning.
- c. Provide greater housing opportunities in close proximity to transit, employment, park systems, and educational institutions that are not in environmentally vulnerable and sensitive areas.

d. Foster the activation of public areas and streets with a consistent design intent regarding ground floor building design, sidewalks, crosswalks, bike infrastructure, pedestrian amenities, and other elements in the public right-of-way.

e. Provide public benefits for adjacent residential neighborhoods to address the potential impacts of new developments that could degrade the aesthetics and welfare of the adjacent neighborhood.

#### 3. Applicability.

a. The District applies to properties within a quarter-mile and as identified as "University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay" on the official Zoning Map of the City of Coral Gables.

b. Unless otherwise provided in this section, all provisions of applicable underlying zoning district designations affecting an individual property shall control use and development.

c. All of the standards provided below shall be mandatory for properties seeking approval pursuant to the University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay.

#### B. Regulations.

1. Building sites. Buildings on building sites within the District of twenty-thousand (20,000) square feet or more, or with street frontage of two hundred (200) feet or more, shall require review and approval by the City Commission.

#### 2. Height.

a. MX3 properties in the District shall be at a maximum height of one hundred and twenty (120) feet. Additional bonus heights with architectural incentives shall not apply.

b. An additional thirteen feet and six inches (13.5) of building height may be granted by the City Commission for each additional five (5%) percent of landscaped open space provided as on-site publicly accessible open space to a maximum building height of one hundred and forty-seven (147) feet.

c. Height of architectural elements may exceed the maximum height in the District by a maximum of twenty-five (25) feet.



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### 3. Use of Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs).

Building sites within the District may receive Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) for a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 4.375, pursuant to Section 14-204.5.

### 4. Setbacks and Stepbacks.

- a. US-1: Up to one hundred (100) feet in height: twenty (20) feet setback, except an arcade may encroach into the setback a maximum of ten (10) feet. If over one hundred (100) feet in height: thirty (30) feet stepback.
- b. Fronting adjacent residential districts: Up to forty-five (45) feet in height: no setback. If over forty-five (45) feet in height: ten (10) feet stepback.
- c. Adjacent residential districts: For building sites with a depth greater than three hundred (300) feet, a rear setback of twenty-five (25) feet with a landscaped buffer shall be required.

### 5. Ground floor design.

- a. The first four (4) stories, at a minimum, shall be designed to activate the street with habitable space of twenty (20) feet minimum depth and with consistent high-quality materials, such as natural stone, cast iron, and other materials.
- b. Any storage of vehicles or off-street parking that is above grade shall occur behind the provided habitable space.
- c. Ground floor commercial or residential shall be accessed from the public sidewalk.
- d. Commercial and residential entrances shall be located adjacent to transit stops or to access to multimodal stations.

### 6. Open space and landscape.

- a. The building and open space frontage on US-1 shall be coordinated with existing and proposed public realm enhancements to ensure a unified and pedestrian-friendly public space.
- b. Pedestrian shading shall be provided with building arcades, overhangs, or shade trees that foster pedestrian activity.
- c. Plant species or landscape design that improves stormwater management shall be provided.
- d. A paseo shall not be required for any building length.

### 7. Parking.

- a. Ground floor retail, residential, and restaurants shall be exempt from the parking requirements.
- b. Developments within five hundred (500) feet of the station entrance may receive a parking reduction of fifty percent (50%) maximum. An additional twenty-five (25%) reduction may be granted with a parking plan that demonstrates the necessary amount of parking for each individual development.
- c. Properties shall be eligible to use remote parking in a parking structure that is located within 1000' of the subject site, pursuant to Section 10-108.B.
- d. Off-street parking shall be set back a minimum of twenty (20) feet from the front property line and shall be screened with habitable linear space. Off-street parking is prohibited within the setback.

### 8. Public Benefit.

- a. Landscaping, furniture, shade, water features, art, and other pedestrian amenities shall be incorporated on and off-site to enhance pedestrian activity.
- b. Developments shall provide sidewalks, crosswalks, safety improvements to intersections, mobility pathways, and other pedestrian connections to adjacent or nearby multi-modal systems.
- c. Potential impacts of new development on rapid transit infrastructure, adjacent properties, or public facilities shall be addressed with improvements to the transit system infrastructure, connections to transit, traffic calming, emergency services facilities, public parks or public open spaces, tree canopy enhancements, public infrastructure, and other improvements.

### 9. Expedited Design Review.

All proposed buildings shall be reviewed by the Board of Architects and receive preliminary design approval within four (4) full board meetings. If approval has not been granted within four (4) reviews by the full board, the Applicant may request final review and approval by a panel of Special Masters, per Section 14-103.3.