



# City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Staff Report

**Property:** 520 University Drive

**Applicant:** City of Coral Gables

**Application:** Overflow Parking Amendment to Ordinance No. 1952

**Public Hearing:** Planning and Zoning Board

**Date & Time:** **May 20, 2026, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

**Location:** Community Meeting Room, Police & Fire Headquarters,  
2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, Florida, 33134

## 1. APPLICATION REQUEST

The Application requests to amend certain conditions of Ordinance No. 1952 which changed the zoning of properties located at 430, 440, 450, and 520 University Drive.

*An Ordinance of the City Commission amending Ordinance No. 1952, as amended, which changed the zoning on Lots 1, 2, 3, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24 Block 120 and Lots 1 thru 5, Block 131, Country Club Section 6, (430, 440, 450, and 520 University Drive), Coral Gables, Florida, to remove certain conditions of approval for Lots 1 thru 5, Block 131 (520 University Drive): (1) that limit the use of the property to overflow parking, and (2), that revert the zoning of the property under certain circumstances to single-family zoning; all other conditions of approval contained in Ordinance No. 1952 shall remain in effect.*

The application request requires review and recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Board at one (1) public hearing, and consideration by the City Commission at two (2) public hearings.

## 2. APPLICATION SUMMARY

The City of Coral Gables is requesting to amend certain conditions of Ordinance No. 1952 which changed the zoning of properties located at 430, 440, 450, and 520 University Drive. In 1972, the City Commission adopted the change of zoning from Single-Family Residential zoning to Special Use zoning. The ordinance included four conditions of approval related to restricting the natural environment of the properties; limiting the use for overflow parking; providing for ingress and egress on University Drive and closing access to the properties when not used for parking; and reverting the zoning of the properties to single family residential use if not needed for overflow parking. Records show that the city did not erect a perimeter fence or other means of closing; all remaining conditions have been complied with during the last 50+ years.

The proposed amendment to Ordinance No. 1952 (provided as Attachment A) affects only the property located at 520 University Drive and proposes to remove the restriction to use this property only for overflow parking for the Youth Center and the Library. The City is currently considering improving the property at 520 University Drive with a dog park, and may desire to make other improvements with pathways/trails, trees, seating, and other appropriate

features. All other conditions - including keeping the property in a park-like manner and ingress / egress from University Drive - would remain in effect. Likewise, all current conditions and limitations for the properties at 430, 440, and 450 University Drive would remain unchanged.

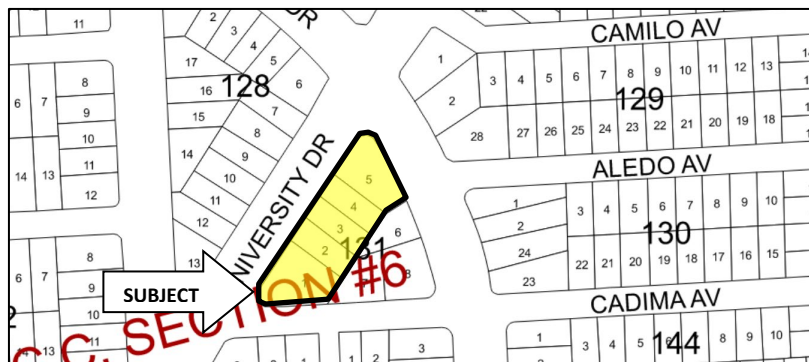
**Location**

The property is located at 520 University Drive, along the southeast of University Drive between Riviera Drive and Cadima Avenue, and shares the block with single-family residences. The subject site transitions the University Drive corridor between the residential character west of Segovia and commercial uses east of Sarto Ave / Le Jeune Road. The property also provides a buffer for the single-family neighborhood from the Coral Gables Public Library to the north.

The property is located across University Drive from the Coral Gables Library. Somerset Academy, Christ Journey Church, and the Coral Gables War Memorial Youth Center– as well as the Miami-Dade County Metrobus route 57 along Anastasia Avenue - are all within walking distance. Context information exhibited below.



**Aerial Map**



**Lot, Subdivision, and Plat Map**

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

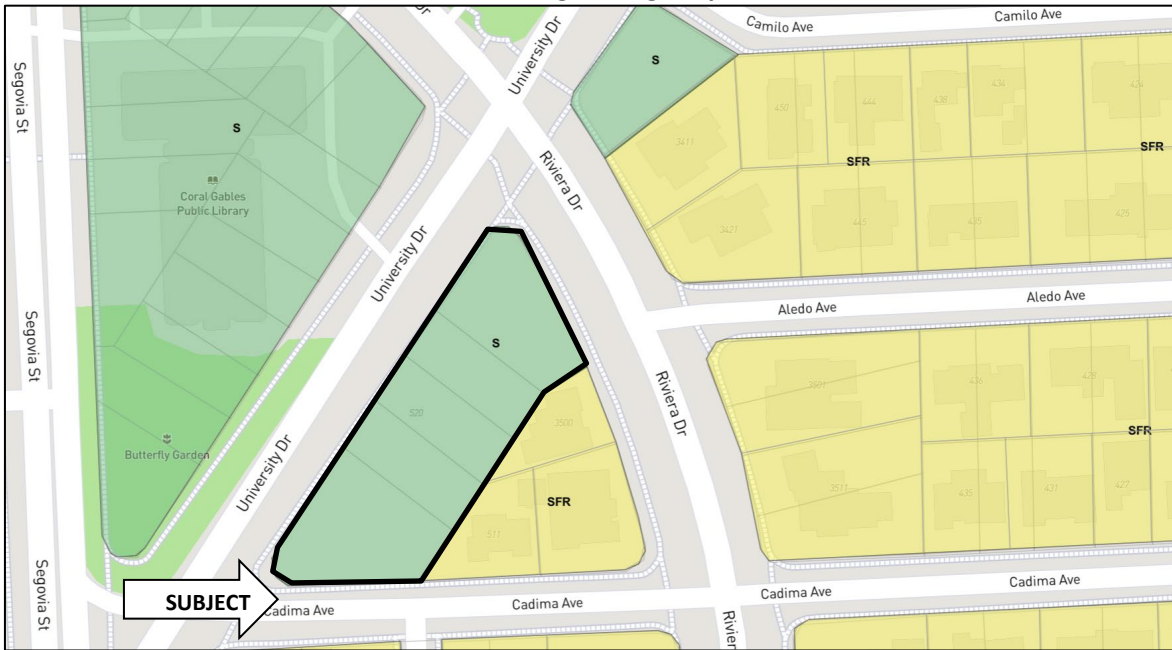
**Existing Property Designations**

Future Land Use Map designation	Public Buildings and Grounds
Zoning Map designation	Special (S) Use

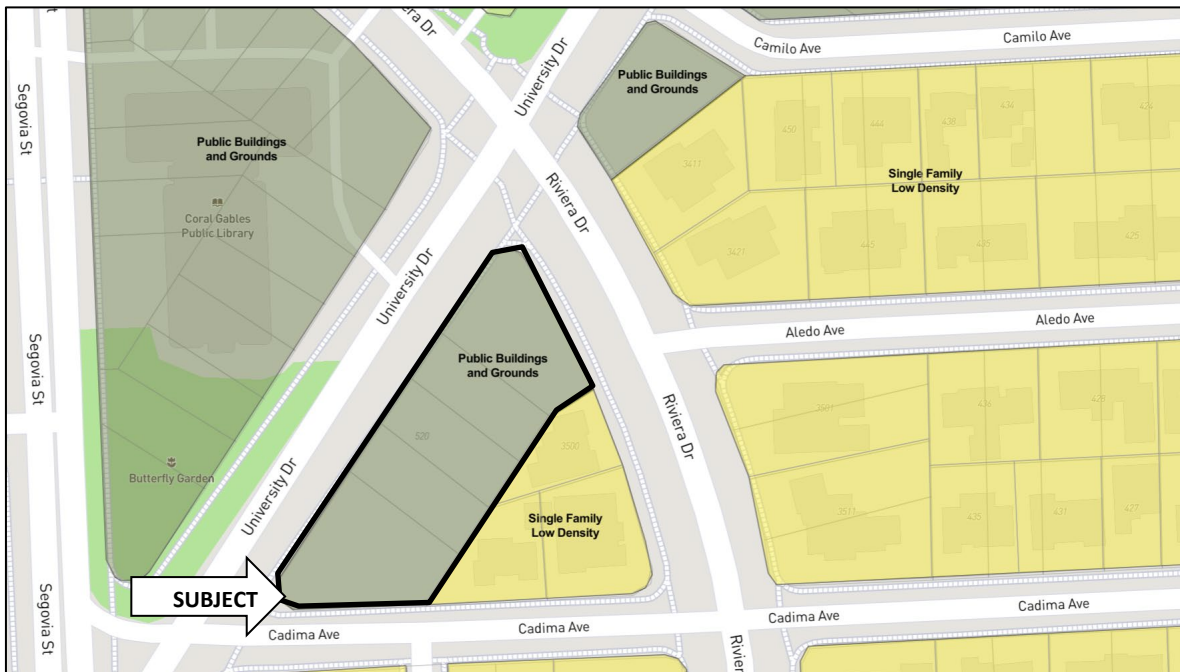
**Surrounding Land Uses**

LOCATION	EXISTING LAND USES	FLUM DESIGNATIONS	ZONING DESIGNATIONS
North	Civic uses (Library and Youth Center)	Parks and Recreational Use; Public Buildings and Grounds	Special Use
South	Residential	Single-Family Low Density	Single-Family Residential
East	Residential	Single-Family Low Density	Single-Family Residential
West	Civic uses (Library and Youth Center)	Parks and Recreation; Public Buildings and Grounds	Special Use

**Existing Zoning Map**



**Future Land Use Map**



### 3. FINDINGS OF FACT

This section of the report presents City Staff’s evaluation of the Application and Findings of Facts for the requested amendments.

The zoning of the subject property was changed in 1972 from single-family residential to special use with the intent to only use 520 University Drive as overflow parking. Ordinance No. 1952 included conditions of approval that limited the use of the land, even when not actively used for parking. The proposed changes to these conditions of approval are only applicable to the property located at 520 University Drive and are provided below in ~~strike through~~ / underline format:

- A. The ~~forementioned lots~~ property at 520 University Drive shall not be paved for off-street parking. The property ~~but~~ shall be kept in a park-like manner, and the trees and foliage of the said ~~lots~~ property shall be preserved in their present state as much as is feasible.
- B. ~~That it is the intention of the Commission that the said~~ property at 520 University Drive ~~lots should only~~ may be used for overflow parking from the Youth Center and the Library on unimproved surfaces, and may also function as a public park.
- C. When used for temporary overflow parking, ~~That~~ ingress and egress shall only be from University Drive, unless other streets are necessary for safety as determined by the Police Department and that there shall be erected a means of closing said lots should there be no necessity for additional parking for the Youth Center and the Library.
- D. ~~That in the event the above described property shall not be needed for municipal offstreet parking lots, then the property shall revert to single family residential use.~~

#### Findings of Fact – Zoning Map

Zoning Code Section 14-212.4 provides review standards for Zoning Code Map amendments:

Standard	Staff Evaluation
<p>1. <b>It is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan in that:</b></p>	<p><b>Yes.</b> The proposed amendments do not authorize uses that are prohibited under the existing Future Land Use designation of Public Buildings and Grounds, which is intended to accommodate buildings and adjacent land areas used for local, state, or federal governmental purposes, as well as public and semi-public services, including utilities. The property at 520 University Drive may continue to be used for overflow parking if needed, while also allowing the site to function as public park space on a daily basis.</p>

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- b. Does not allow densities or intensities in excess of the densities and intensities which are permitted by the future land use category of the parcel proposed for development. **Yes.** The proposed amendments do not authorize densities or intensities beyond what is permitted under the applicable Future Land Use Map classification of Public Buildings and Grounds.
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- c. Will not cause a decline in the level of service for public infrastructure to a level of service which is less than the minimum requirements of the Comprehensive Plan. **Yes.** The proposed amendments will not cause a decline in the level of service for public infrastructure below the minimum requirements of the Comprehensive Plan.
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- d. Does not directly conflict with any objective or policy of the Comprehensive Plan. **Yes.** The proposed amendments - specifically the removal of the provision requiring the zoning to revert to single-family use without public hearings - advance objectives and policies that support the rights of all individuals to participate in planning and land use decision-making processes. The remaining amendments further support the use of publicly owned land for park purposes.

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**2. Will provide a benefit to the City in that it will achieve two or more of the following objectives**

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- a. Improve mobility by reducing vehicle miles traveled for residents within a one-half (1/2) mile radius by: i. Balancing land uses in a manner that reduces vehicle miles traveled; ii. Creating a mix of uses that creates an internal trip capture rate of greater than twenty (20%) percent; iii. Increasing the share of trips that use alternative modes of transportation, such as transit ridership, walking, or bicycle riding. **Yes.** The proposed amendments would allow the property at 520 University Drive to function as public park space, thereby increasing the availability of recreational and open space amenities within the residential neighborhood. Providing public parks in close proximity to single-family residences may help reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by decreasing the distance residents must travel to access recreational opportunities and neighborhood gathering spaces. Residents are more likely to walk or bicycle to nearby parks when those amenities are conveniently located within their neighborhoods, rather than relying on vehicle trips to more distant facilities. These accessible destinations strengthen pedestrian connectivity, encourage outdoor activity, and promote active transportation within residential areas – all within walking distance of residents’ homes. The amendments are consistent with the City’s established policy of providing parks within one-half mile of all residences, which is intended to encourage residents to reach neighborhood parks within approximately a ten-minute walk.
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- b. Promote high-quality development or redevelopment in an area that is experiencing declining or flat property values. The proposed amendments would not have an impact on development.
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| c. Create affordable housing opportunities for people who live or work in the City of Coral Gables. | The proposed amendments would not have an impact on the creation of affordable housing. |
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| d. Implement specific objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. | <b>Yes.</b> The proposed amendment to remove the provision requiring the land to revert to single-family use without public hearings supports several Comprehensive Plan objectives. The amendment allows property owners to participate in land use decisions, respects protected private property rights in local decision-making processes, and promotes land use compatibility through appropriate transitions between uses. Collectively, these elements further the City's goals related to government transparency, walkability, and preservation of neighborhood character. |
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3. Will not cause a substantial diminution of the market value of adjacent property or materially diminish the suitability of adjacent property for its existing or approved use.
- Yes.** The proposed amendments will not result in a substantial diminution in property value or neighborhood character. Neighborhood parks - particularly within established residential communities such as Coral Gables - are widely recognized as community amenities that contribute positively to surrounding areas. Access to nearby open space, recreational opportunities, and pedestrian-friendly environments can enhance the desirability of residential neighborhoods and support long-term neighborhood stability.
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**Staff comments.** The requested amendments to the zoning provisions are intended to allow greater flexibility in the use of the property at 520 University Drive (hereinafter referred to as “the property”). Although the zoning designation would remain Special Use (S), the property would no longer be limited solely to overflow parking. Instead, the proposed amendments would also permit the site to function as a public park. In addition, removing the provision requiring the property to revert to single-family zoning without public hearings would help ensure appropriate public participation from the surrounding neighborhood regarding any future zoning changes, and is consistent with Florida case law that requires quasi-judicial hearings.

The proposed amendments would also allow the property to be utilized as park space, which is generally more compatible with adjacent single-family residential neighborhoods. Currently, the land is limited to use as overflow parking. Although surface parking lots are presently adjacent to single-family residential areas throughout the City, public parks are more consistent with the character and scale of residential neighborhoods and provide a more compatible transitional use. The proposed amendments to Ordinance No. 1952 would permit the property to also function as a park; however, any future physical improvements to the site would be required to be thoughtfully designed to ensure compatibility with adjacent residential properties.

### 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-1.1.4.</b> Support incentives that promote walking, bicycling and public transit and those that improve pedestrian and bicycle access to/and between local destinations such as public facilities, governmental facilities, schools, parks, open space, employment centers, downtown, commercial centers, high concentrations of residential, private/public schools, University of Miami and multimodal transit centers/stations.	Complies
2.	<b>Policy MOB-1.1.5.</b> Improve amenities within public spaces, streets, alleys and parks to include the following improvements: seating; art; architectural elements (at street level); lighting; bicycle parking; street trees; improved pedestrian crossing with bulb-outs, small curb radii, on-street parking along sidewalks, pedestrian paths and bicycle paths to encourage walking and cycling with the intent of enhancing the feeling of safety.	Complies
3.	<b>Objective FLU-1.17.</b> The City acknowledges the need to locate schools proximate to urban residential areas and, where possible, collocate public facilities, such as parks, libraries and community centers with schools.	Complies
4.	<b>Objective GOV-1.1.</b> Provide ample and effective opportunities for public participation at all levels of City of Coral Gables governance and decision-making.	Complies
5.	<b>Policy REC-1.1.3.</b> The City shall maintain existing recreation land and facilities through the use of proper management and funding techniques. The City shall ensure that recreation facilities are well managed, well maintained, and that quality recreation opportunities are available within a 10 minute walk to all residents. This shall be partially achieved by continuing efforts toward collecting, maintaining, and updating data concerning public and private resource inventory, recreation improvements, and demand factors, and by improving design criteria and evaluation to attain a high quality park and recreation system. The City shall strive to undergo a Recreation Needs Assessment periodically to gather community input on recreation programs and facilities.	Complies
6.	<b>Objective REC-1.4.</b> Promote convenient public and private recreation and open space resources and opportunities for the optimum use of residents by providing facilities within a 10 minute walk for every resident within the City.	Complies
7.	<b>Policy PRP-1.2.1.</b> Allow public participation from any affected person, as is consistent with controlling law, and be a party to a hearing on any land use decision.	Complies
8.	<b>Policy PRP-1.3.2.</b> Ensure that public meetings and public hearings afford the right to participation by the public as a general matter and afford administrative due process about matters that are decided during quasi-judicial hearing processes and procedures.	Complies

**Staff Comments:** The above evaluation indicates that the request for amendments to the change in zoning is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s goals, objectives, and policies as determined by Staff.

Consistent with the Mobility goals, objectives, and policies identified above, the proposed amendments support the City’s mobility initiatives by locating park space in close proximity to residential areas, which may reduce automobile dependence and encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use. The amendments also advance the Property Rights goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan by promoting transparency and public participation in land use decisions.

As currently adopted, Ordinance No. 1952 requires the property to revert to single-family zoning when they are no longer needed for off-street parking. This provision could allow a future land use change to occur without meaningful public participation by surrounding residents through the public hearing process. The proposed



The following has been completed to solicit input and provide notice of the Application:

PUBLIC NOTICE	DATE
Mailed Notification for PZB meeting	05.07.26
Sign posting of property	05.08.26
Legal advertisement	05.08.26
Posted Staff report on City web page	05.15.26

**5. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends **Approval**.

**6. ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Ordinance No. 1952.
- B. Notice mailed to all property owners within 1,000 feet of the property.
- C. PowerPoint Presentation.

Please visit the City’s webpage at [www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com) to view all Application 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