

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**

**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA REQUESTING AN AMENDMENT TO THE TEXT OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, TO INCLUDE A COASTAL MANAGEMENT ELEMENT, PURSUANT TO EXPEDITED STATE REVIEW PROCEDURES (S.163.3184, FLORIDA STATUTES) AND ZONING CODE ARTICLE 3, "DEVELOPMENT REVIEW," DIVISION 15, "COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT AND MAP AMENDMENTS;" TO INCLUDE OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES TO PROTECT COASTAL AREAS OF THE CITY; PROVIDING FOR A REPEALER PROVISION, PROVIDING FOR A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**WHEREAS**, an application has been received to amend the text of the Comprehensive Plan, Coastal Management Element; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City of Coral Gables, pursuant to Florida Statutes and the City of Coral Gables Zoning Code, has designated the Planning and Zoning Board as the Local Planning Agency; and,

**WHEREAS**, to promote public outreach and participation in the public hearing process, the City has provided the following notice: 1) required advertising per State Statutes and Department of Economic Opportunity guidelines; 2) City webpage posting of the public hearing agendas; and 3) electronic mailing to interested parties; and,

**WHEREAS**, the application, legal description, ordinances, mapping, legal advertising, public comments and all other supporting documentation were available for inspection and review at the City of Coral Gables Planning Department and City Clerk's office; and,

**WHEREAS**, in advance of public hearing consideration, the City's staff analysis and recommendation are available for inspection at City of Coral Gables Planning Department and City Clerk's office and available on the City's Web page at [www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com) for easy retrieval; and,

**WHEREAS**, Comprehensive Plan Text Amendments are proposed in Exhibit A; and,

**WHEREAS**, a public hearing was held before the Local Planning Agency (Planning and Zoning Board) of the City of Coral Gables on November 8, 2017, and December 13, 2017, at which hearing all interested persons were afforded the opportunity to be heard; and,

**WHEREAS**, at a public hearing held on December 13, 2017, the Local Planning Agency (Planning and Zoning Board) recommended approval/denial (vote: \_ – \_), finding that the proposed amendments are in furtherance of the Comprehensive Plan (CP) Goals, Objectives and Policies and the Zoning Code provisions as subject to all plans, exhibits and descriptions submitted by the applicant; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City Commission held a public hearing on November 14, 2017 at which hearing all interested persons were afforded an opportunity to be heard, and the item was \_\_\_\_\_ on first reading (vote: ); and,

**WHEREAS**, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Text are subject to Expedited State Review and are required to be transmitted to the Department of Economic Opportunity, South Florida Regional Planning Council and other review agencies for review prior to consideration by the City Commission on second reading.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES:

**SECTION 1.** The foregoing “WHEREAS” clauses are hereby ratified and confirmed as being true and correct and hereby made a specific part of this Ordinance upon adoption hereof.

**SECTION 2.** The requested amendments to the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan as provided below are hereby approved:

**SECTION 3.** The City Commission, pursuant to First Reading approval of the Ordinance authorizes transmittal of the request, as required by State Statutes, to the Department of Economic Opportunity, South Florida Regional Planning Council and other review agencies for review prior to consideration by the City Commission on second reading.

**SECTION 4.** All ordinances or parts of ordinances that are inconsistent or in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are repealed.

**SECTION 5.** If any section, part of section, paragraph, clause, phrase or word of this Ordinance is declared invalid, the remaining provisions of this Ordinance shall not be affected.

**SECTION 6.** It is the intention of the City Commission that the provisions of this Ordinance shall become and be made a part of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, as amended.

**SECTION 7.** This Ordinance shall become effective 31 days after the Department of Economic Opportunity determines the amendment submittal package is complete

and no petition is filed by an affected party. If the Department of Economic Opportunity requests a hearing by the Division of Administrative Hearings, this Ordinance shall become effective upon the issuance of a final order by the Division of Administrative Hearings determining the amendment is in compliance.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, A.D.  
2017.

APPROVED:

RAUL VALDES-FAULI  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

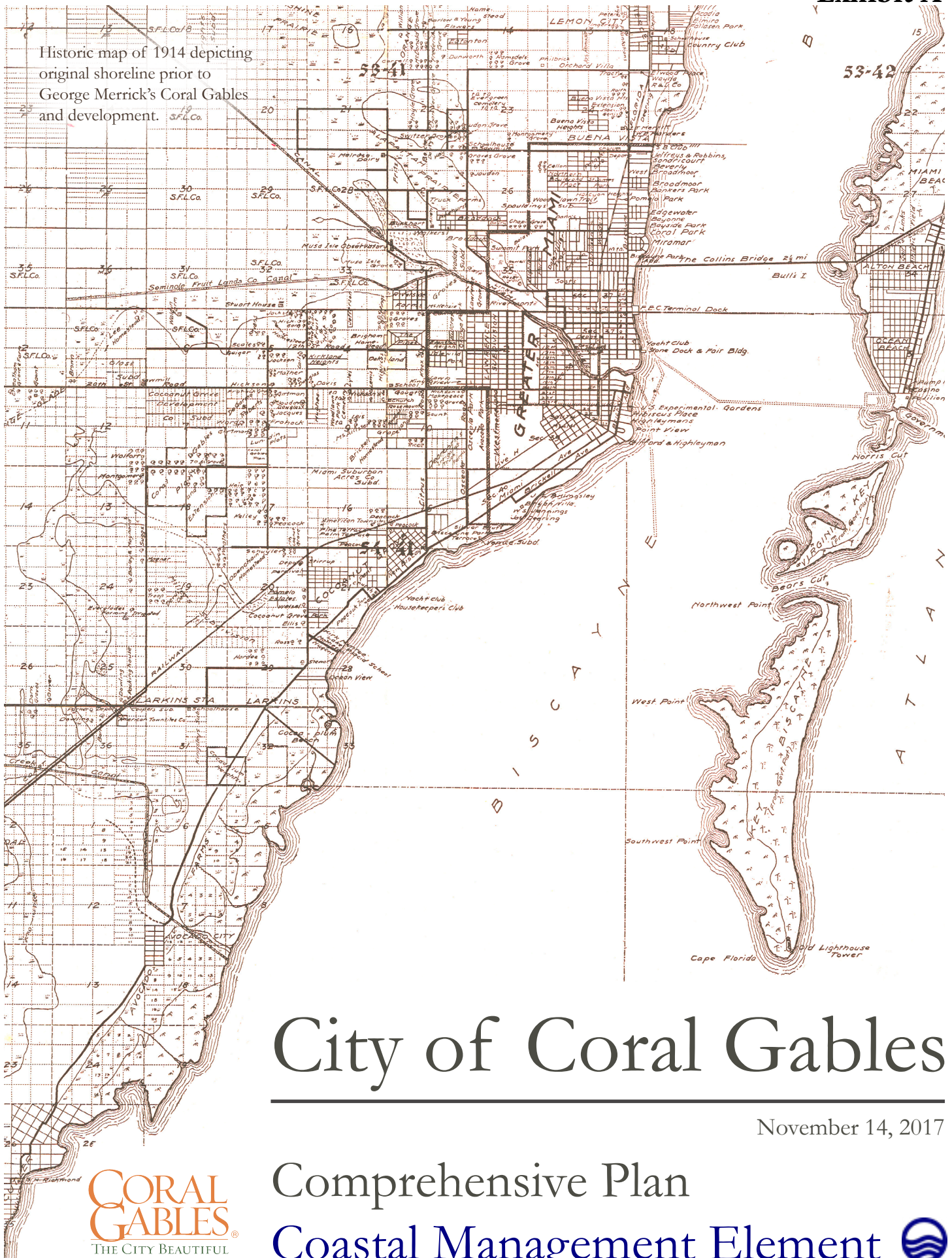
WALTER FOEMAN  
CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM  
AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

CRAIG E. LEEN  
CITY ATTORNEY



Historic map of 1914 depicting original shoreline prior to George Merrick's Coral Gables and development.



# City of Coral Gables

November 14, 2017

## Comprehensive Plan

## Coastal Management Element





TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

    1.1 Boundaries of Coastal Planning Area

2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

    2.1 Natural Resources

3.0 DATA AND ANALYSIS

    3.1 Existing Land Use

    3.2 Future Land Use

    3.3 Coastal Flooding

    3.4 Hurricane Evacuation

    3.5 Storm Surge Zones

    3.6 Comprehensive Plan Consistency

4.0 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

5.0 CONCLUSION





## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The City of Coral Gables is a well-planned mature community, with a long history of excellence in urban design and land use, which began with George Merrick's original plan. Through almost a century, from Merrick's ideas to the present, an emphasis on quality and strict adherence to zoning and building codes have led to orderly development of the highest quality.

Today the city could be understood as two distinct halves, united by Sunset Drive. The north half follows Merrick's plan and includes a majority of the historic architecture of the city. It is not along the coast, and coastal management issues are incidental, and result from historic environmental conditions. On the other hand, the south half of the city was developed along Biscayne Bay and is directly affected by Coastal Management issues.

The Coastal areas of the City are generally high quality neighborhoods or nature preserves. There are no blighted areas. Existing and future land uses are generally consistent.

Current and historic maps included among the support documents of the element summarize data on development, infrastructure and storm and flooding effects.

The purpose of the City of Coral Gables Coastal Management Element is to plan for or restrict development where appropriate where such impacts would further damage or destroy coastal resources. In accordance with 163.3178(2)(f), the City of Coral Gables must prepare the Coastal Management element, and the following applicable items shall be included:

- 1. Include development and redevelopment principles, strategies, and engineering solutions that reduce the flood risk in coastal areas which results from high-tide events, storm surge, flash floods, stormwater runoff, and the related impacts of sea-level rise.*
- 2. Encourage the use of best practices development and redevelopment principles, strategies, and engineering solutions that will result in the removal of coastal real property from flood zone designations established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.*
- 3. Identify site development techniques and best practices that may reduce losses due to flooding and claims made under flood insurance policies issued in this state.*
- 4. Be consistent with, or more stringent than, the flood-resistant construction requirements in the Florida Building Code and applicable flood plain management regulations set forth in 44 C.F.R. part 60.*
- 5. Require that any construction activities seaward of the coastal construction control lines established pursuant to s. [161.053](#) be consistent with chapter 161.*
- 6. Encourage local governments to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to achieve flood insurance premium discounts for their residents.*

This support document includes the following data:

1. Inventory and map of existing land uses. As the city limits only include residential and preserve uses along the coast, no areas of redevelopment have been identified. Maps have been included which describe location and site planning conditions development.  
**See Figure 6.**
2. Inventory of future land uses. Existing and future land uses are generally consistent. Maps have been included.  
**See Figure 7.**
3. Natural disaster planning maps. Updated flood hazard zones and hurricane evacuation areas have been included.  
**See Figures 11-13.**
4. Existing infrastructure. Roads and bridges, water and sewer and waterways for drainage have been mapped. A historical narrative is included to provide context to long-term planning efforts. Areas designated for urban uses have been fully developed. No development on raw land is anticipated. Thus, no new major infrastructure is planned.  
**See Figure 9.**
5. Public access. Park and open space have been illustrated in diagrams.  
**See Figure 4.**

In addition, there are no coastal dunes or deep water ports within the city limits.

The following conclusions were reached:

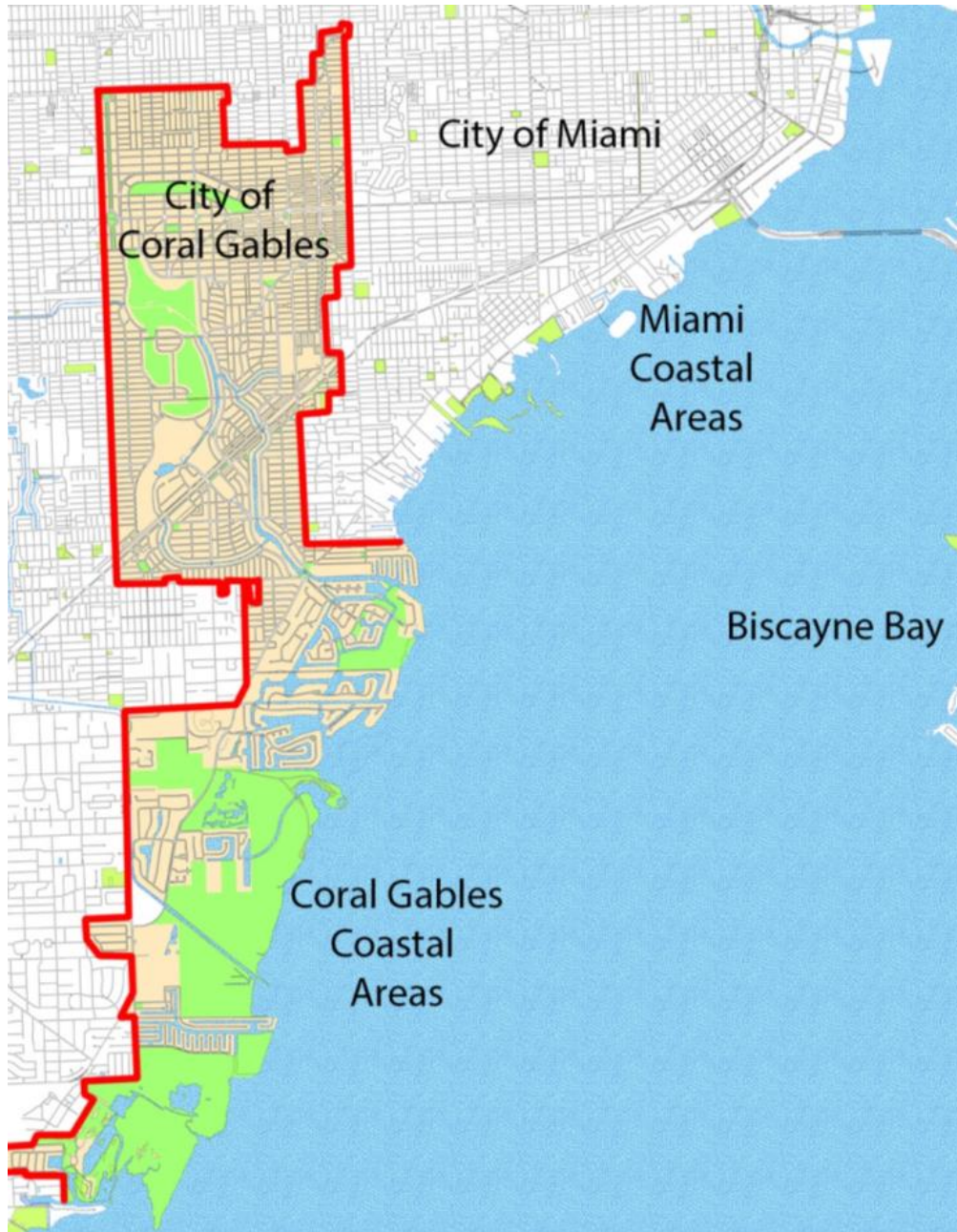
1. The visions for coastal Coral Gables should be:

*Provide development principles that support the highest quality of life and promote sustainable coastal areas.*

2. The City's existing and future land use reflect decades of high quality development and environmental preservation.
3. Goal, objectives and policies are recommended for adoption which strengthen current city development and preservation trends and update regulatory requirements.

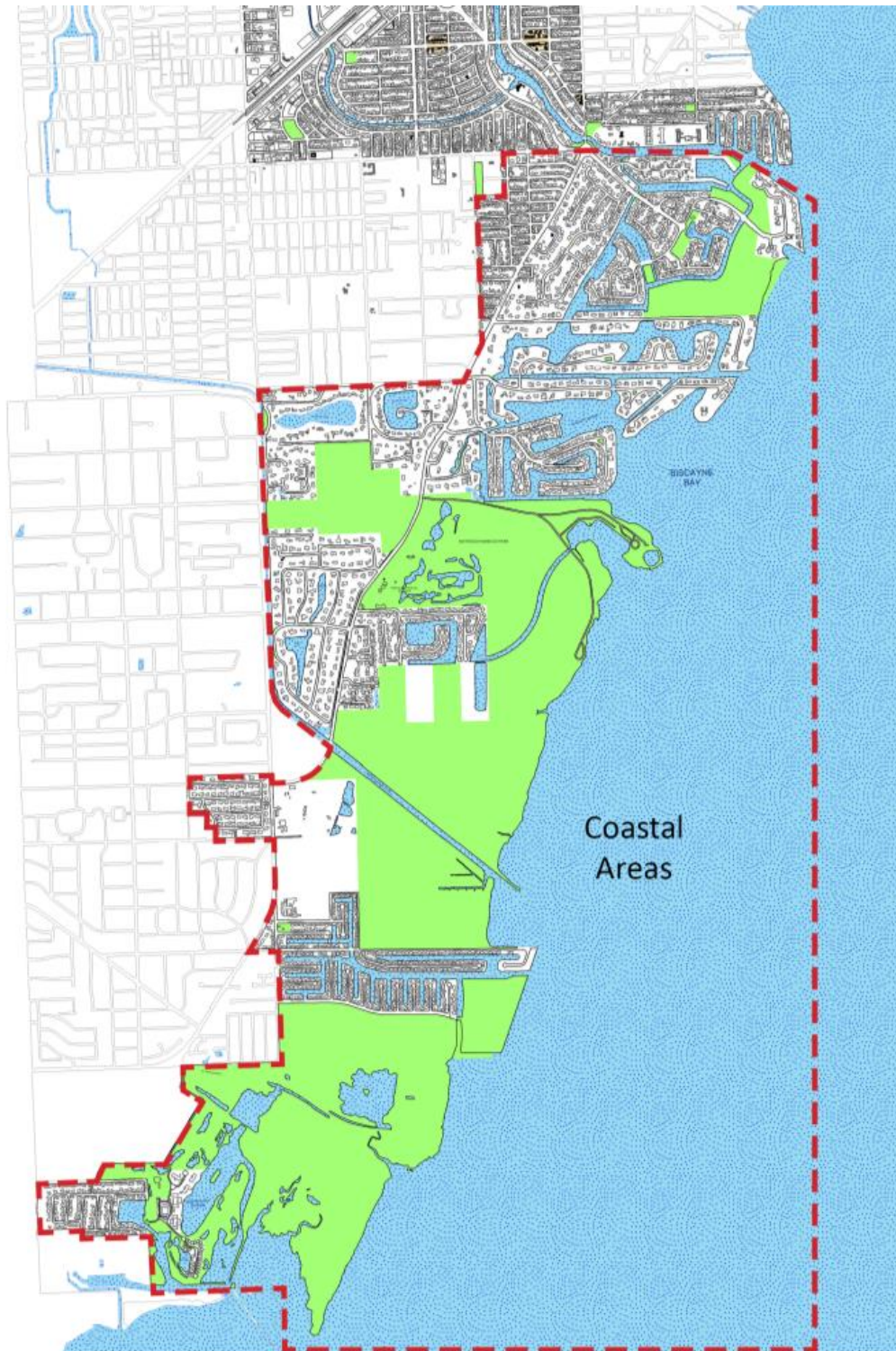
### **1.1 Boundaries of Coastal Areas**

In general the coastal boundaries include an area located east of Old Cutler Road to the eastern municipal boundary. The origins of this coastal route predate the building of roads in Miami-Dade County, as a trail along the high ridge of South Florida’s coastline (See Map SAF-1).



**Figure 1. Coastal Areas within the City of Coral Gables**

Lower risk areas in the city that will benefit from further coastal management include parcels adjacent to waterways and lowlands. These waterways were designed in the master planning of Coral Gables as canals that follow the historic system of slews and wetlands.

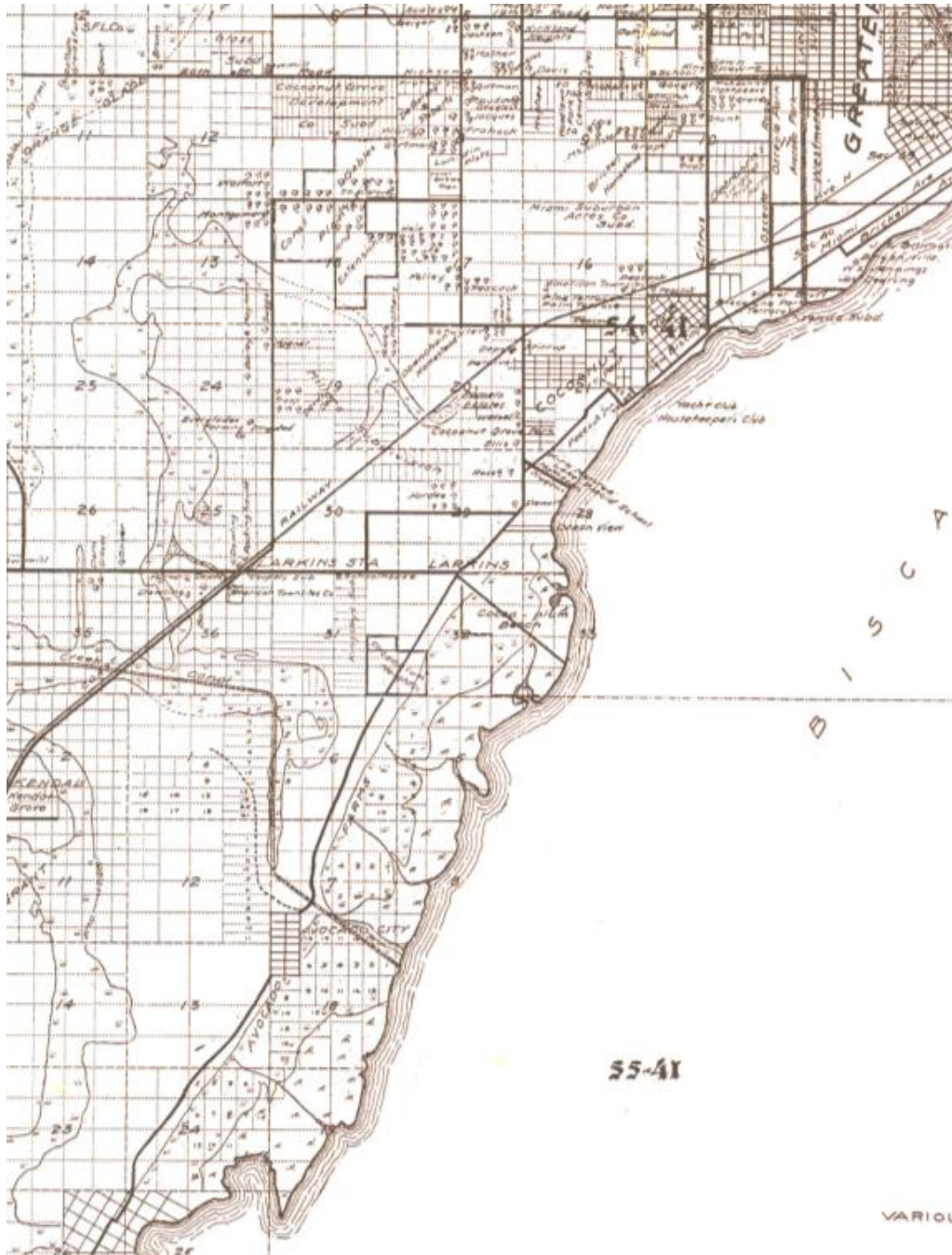


**Figure 2. Coastal Areas**

For the purposes of comprehensive planning, all city located south of Sunset Drive will be considered a coastal area.

**2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS**

**2.1 Natural Resources**



**Figure 3. Historic 1914 Miami-Dade County Map**

Before the development of the region in the early 1900's, the flow of water to the coast was directed differently than it is currently. Early maps document the natural coastal line along Biscayne Bay and the system of slews and wetlands which flowed into the Bay.

The 1914 map predated the platting of Coral Gables as an urban area, and documents precisely the location of historic natural systems. Many of the historical wetlands and coastal areas were incorporated into George Merrick’s original plans for the city as golf courses or green open spaces. Contemporary storm surge maps also reflect the historical condition of the land. Many historic natural areas have been preserved as parks or open space, and provide public access to the water.



**Figure 4. Existing Public Access within the Coastal Areas**

The City of Coral Gables' coastal areas include the frontage on Biscayne Bay and immediate parcels adjacent to waterways. Most of the frontage on the waterways has been developed. However, the higher risk areas along the bay contain mostly preserved lands with pockets of recent single-family development.

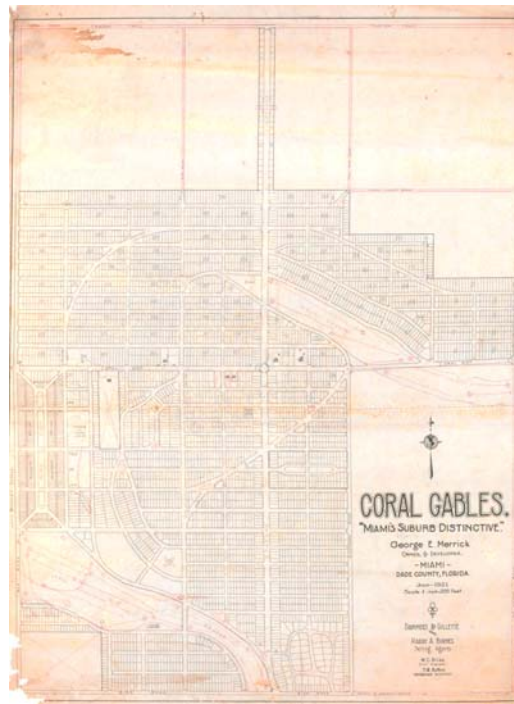
The historic discussion provides significant data for the analysis of present costal conditions. The early city plan and later areas annexed into the city limits included significant green areas and preserves, as depicted in figure 4.

### **3. DATA AND ANALYSIS**

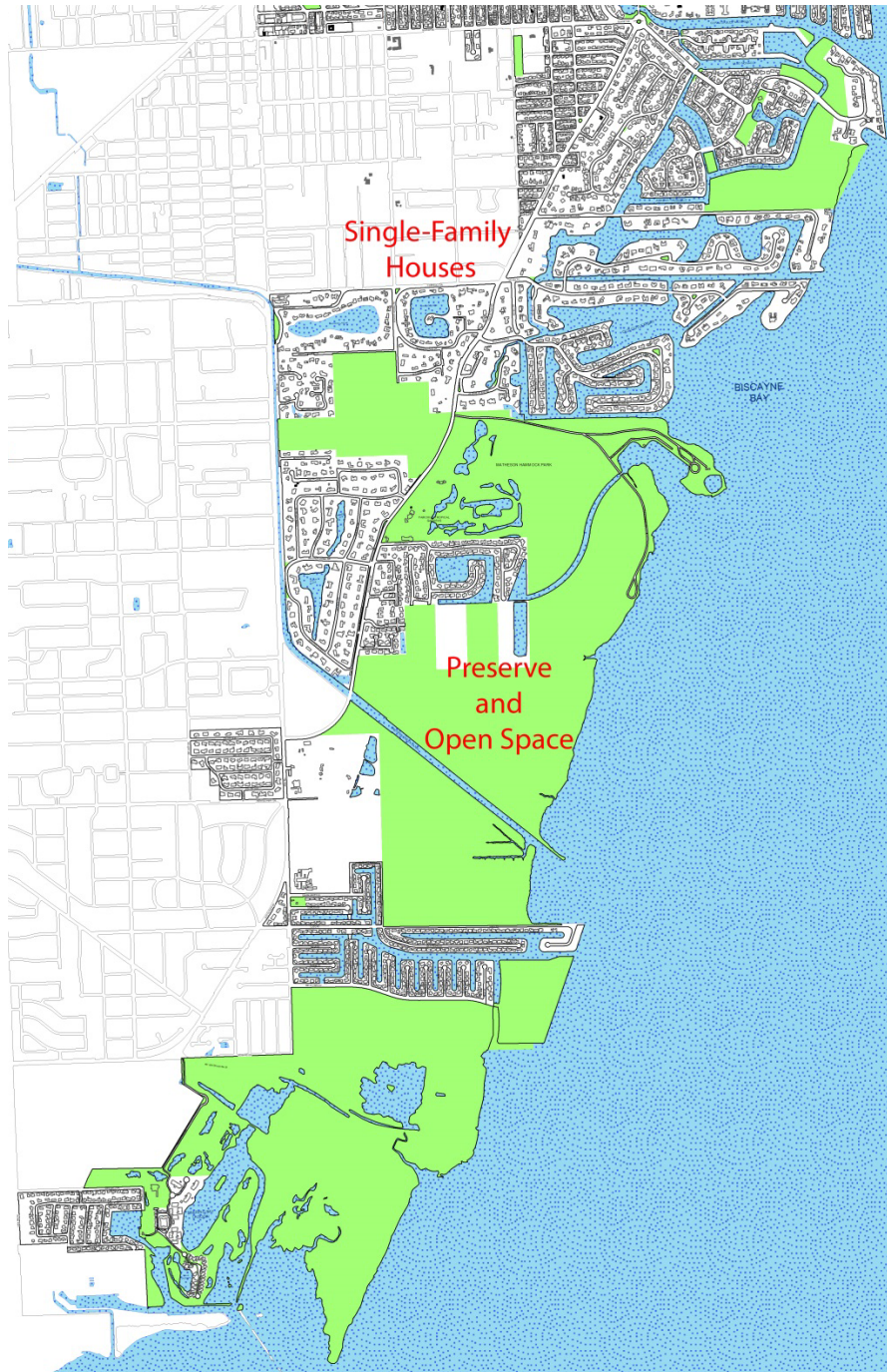
#### **3.1 Existing Land Use**

The development pattern of the coastal areas is very different than the pattern of the north half of the City. The north half of the city follows George Merrick's original 1920's plan, and reflects some of the historic natural features in the design of major open spaces. The coastal areas, on the other hand, were developed in the second half of the twentieth century, as residential subdivisions. The historic site conditions required the construction of multiple canals and the extensive of fill for buildable lots. Current site development standards would not permit this type of development, and large parcels have remained undeveloped.

Although development standards of the coastal areas may not reflect current best practices for site planning, the residential areas located along the coastal areas are stable neighborhoods. No redevelopment is needed in coastal areas of Coral Gables.



**Figure 5. Historic 1921 Coral Gables Map**



**Figure 6. Existing Land Uses**

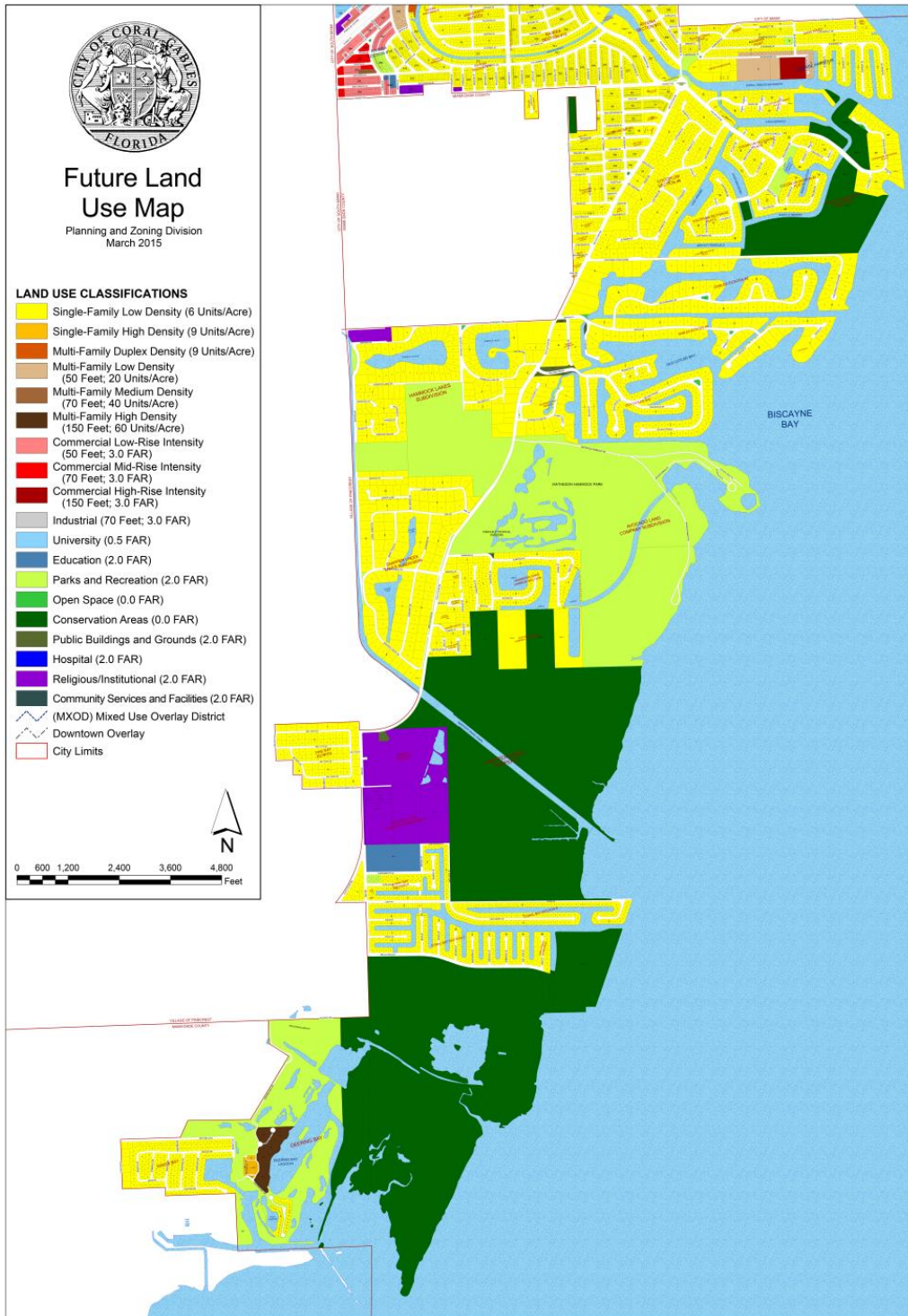
The 1921 map depicts some of the earliest urban development in the area which would become the City of Coral Gables. Even though early urban plats are fragmentary, they followed an overall plan, which eventually resulted in a resilient pattern of blocks and streets which has lasted virtually unchanged for almost a century. The north half of the City does not have coastal areas. The south half of the city was developed along the Biscayne Bay shoreline.

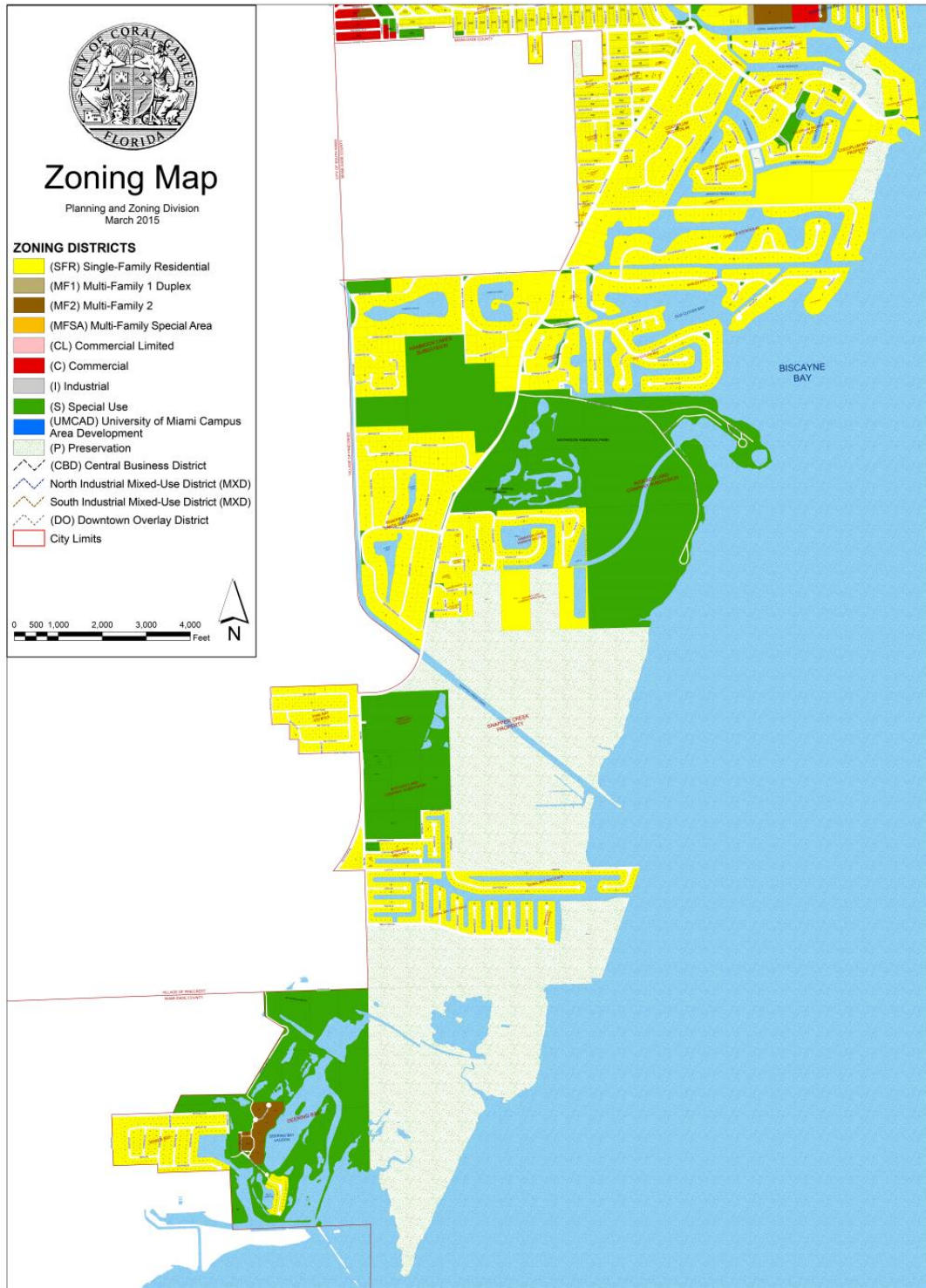
Proposed policies strengthen the application of building code requirements and FEMA regulations.



**3.2 Future Land Use**

Existing and future land uses are generally consistent. The Future Land Use Map promotes high quality neighborhoods and preserve areas.





**Figure 8. Zoning Map**

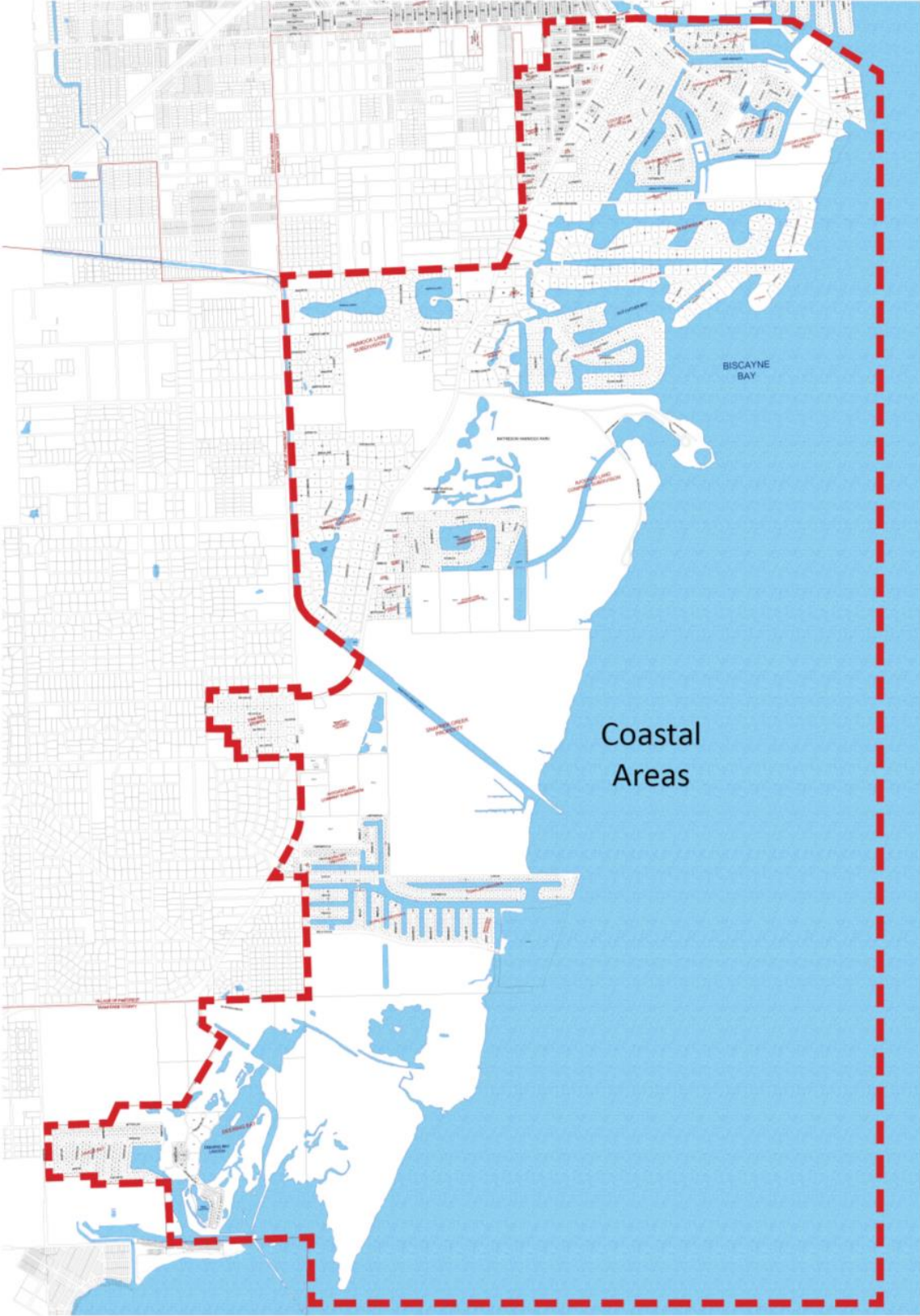
**City of Coral Gables**  
**Coastal Management Element**

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The adopted land use map of Coral Gables depicts designates approximately half of the shoreline as preserve and a significant acreage that would be subject to perilous flooding is also designated preserve.

Land Use	Acres
Single-Family Residential	+/- 1,380
Conservation	+/- 1,175
Parks & Recreation	+/- 700
Multi-Family Residential	+/- 20

Proposed policies strengthen preservation and compatibility of proposed coastal development.



**Figure 9. Existing Infrastructure**

### **3.3 Coastal Flooding**

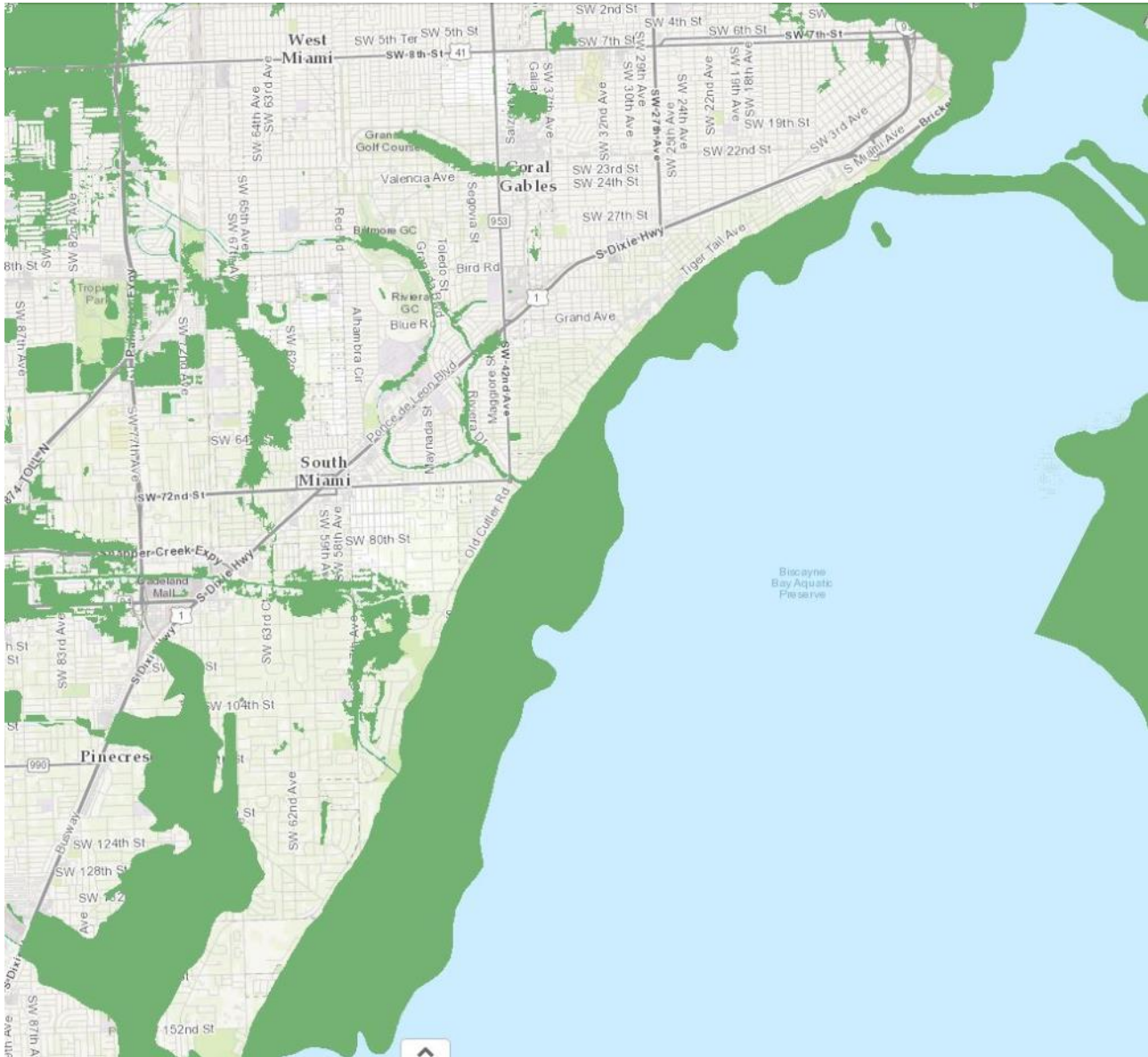
The City of Coral Gables acknowledges sea level rise and its potential adverse effects on the city, its infrastructure, and other assets. As such, the City is assessing the impacts of sea level rise, storm surges, and King Tides on its infrastructure and other assets. The purpose is to develop an adaption plan that contains measurable indicators which triggers the timely sequencing of improvements to accommodate sea level rise and its associated effects.

Miami-Dade County is situated between the Atlantic Ocean and Everglades National Park, with Coral Gables located in the east-central portion of the county. As in most of South Florida, much of the city's topography is low-lying with elevations ranging from 0 to 22 feet NAVD88 (North American Vertical Datum of 1988), built up on porous limestone allowing groundwater to rise from below. These relatively low elevations, coupled with geology and proximity to the ocean, leave Coral Gables especially vulnerable to the effects of sea level rise. In some of the city's extremely low lying coastal areas, these effects are already being felt during extreme high tides, most notably King Tide events.

In 2011, the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact published the *Unified Sea Level Rise Projection for Southeast Florida*. This document was created for Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties and municipalities within these counties. This document allows these municipalities to be well-informed with regard to sea level rise and attempt to be prepared for its effects.

The City of Coral Gables prepared the Assessment of Sea Level Rise Impacts on Existing City of Coral Gables Infrastructure and Preliminary Adaptation Plan in October 2017, and is available at the Public Works Department in the City of Coral Gables.

**City of Coral Gables  
Coastal Management Element**



**Figure 10. 100-Year Floodplain**

The areas subject to coastal flooding are identified in figure 10: Coastal High Hazard Area. In the Public Safety Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Coral Gables, the city is required to abide by the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA) defined as the area below the elevation of the category 1 storm surge line as established by a Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH), as indicated in Policy SAF-2.1.3.

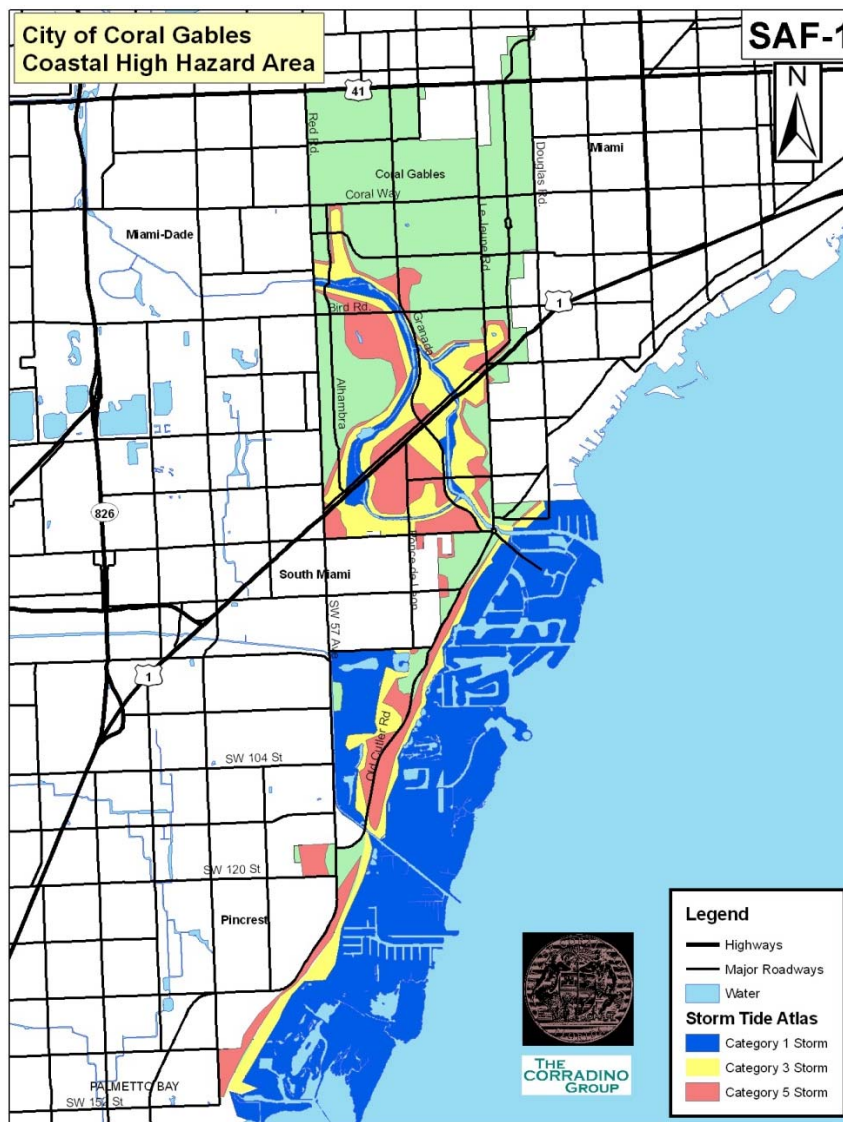
Proposed policies clarify FEMA requirements and encourage effective management of infrastructure.

### 3.4 Hurricane Evacuation

A Hurricane Watch is issued for a coastal area when there is threat of hurricane conditions within 48 hours. A Hurricane Warning is issued when hurricane conditions are expected in a specified coastal area in 36 hours or less. Hurricane conditions include winds of 74 miles per hour (64 knots) and/or dangerously high tides and waves.

Proposed policies update areas and procedures for evacuation.

The most recent hurricane evacuation plan pertaining to Coral Gables is in the Miami Dade County, Storm Surge Planning Zones 2013 edition. Miami-Dade County recommends evacuation of parcels east of Old Cutler Road for hurricanes of Category 2 or greater. In 2017, Hurricane Irma provided the opportunity to verify and use updated data. The Hurricane Irma experience has been incorporated in the proposed Goals, Objectives, and Policies.



**Figure 11. Storm tides diagram**

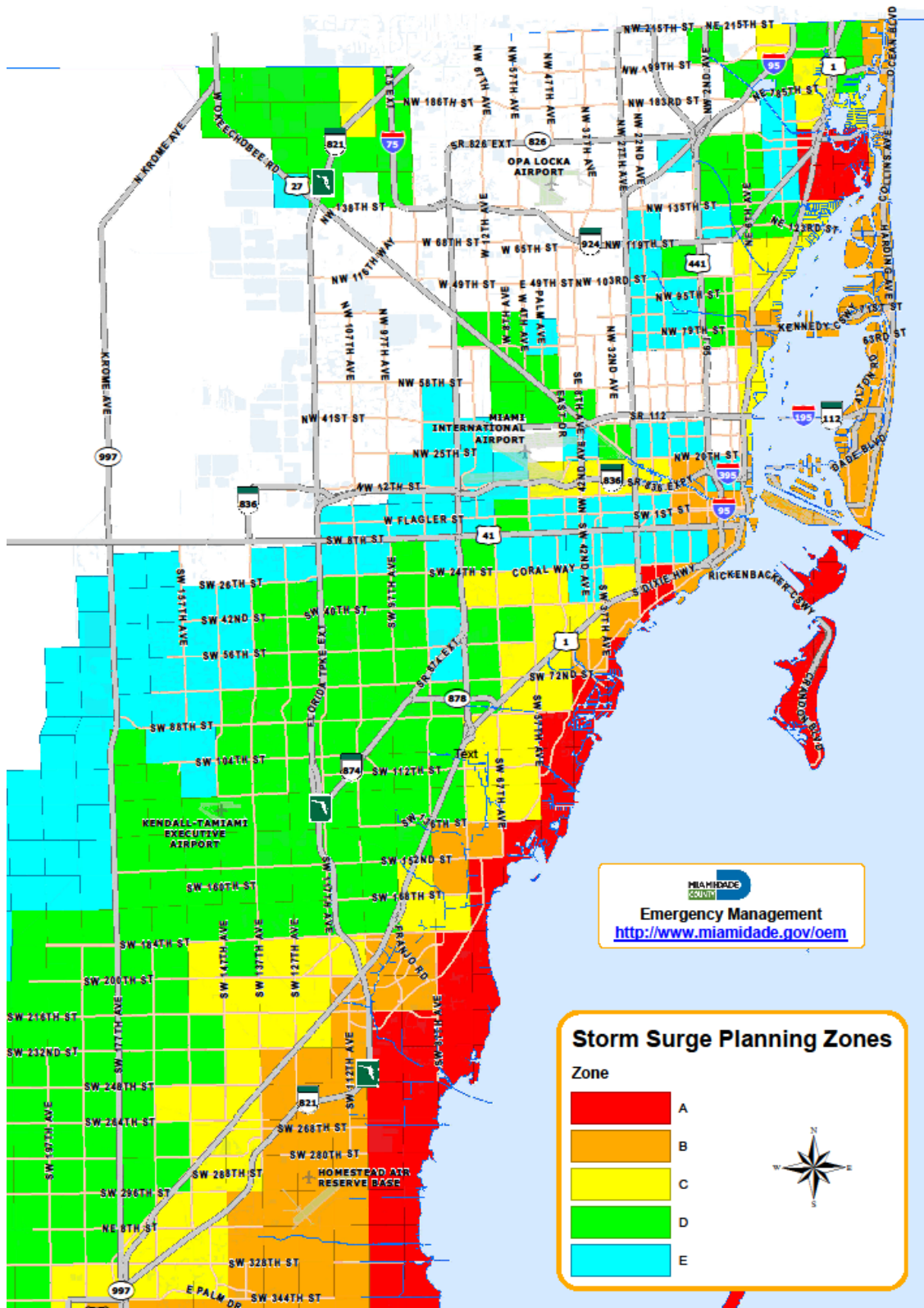


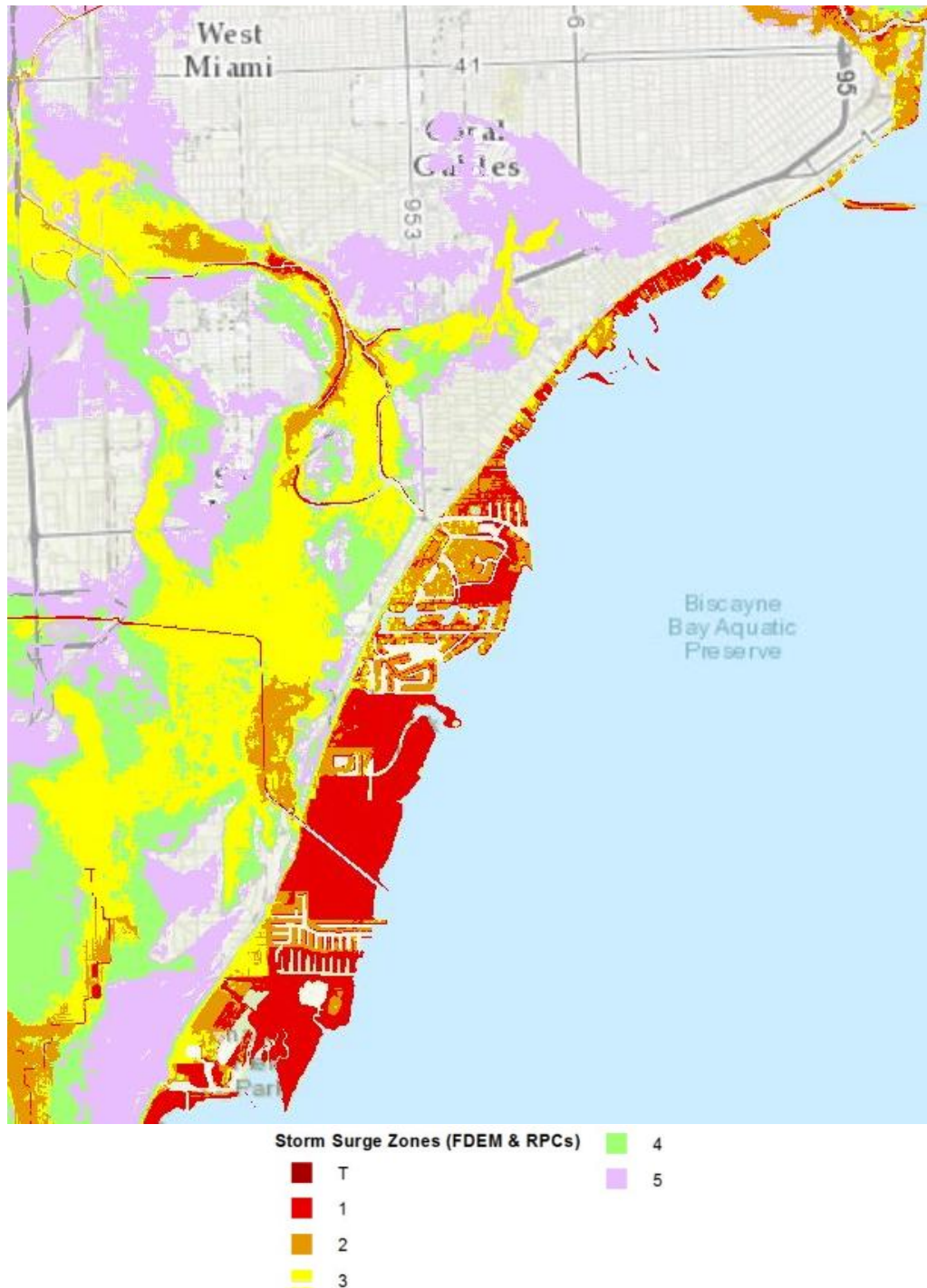
Figure 12. Natural Disaster: Miami-Dade County Storm Surge Planning Zones



### 3.5 Storm Surge Zones

As indicated in the Miami-Dade County Storm Surge Zones, east of Old Cutler Road is at risk for storm surges.

Proposed policies strengthen infrastructure and pollution strategies.



**Figure 13. Natural Disaster: Miami-Dade County Storm Surge Zones**

### **3.6 Comprehensive Plan Consistency**

In Section 3-1506 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code provides standards for proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. These standards and evaluation are listed below.

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Standard	Staff Evaluation
1. Whether it specifically advances any objective or policy of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.	Yes. The proposed text amendment advances multiple objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan with the promotion of environmental protection and sustainability.
2. Whether it is internally consistent with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.	Yes. The proposed text amendment is internally consistent with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan with the promotion of environmental protection and sustainability.
3. Its effect on the level of service of public infrastructure.	The proposed text amendment will provide quality development principles that serve to eliminate inappropriate and unsafe development in the coastal areas.
4. Its effect on environmental resources.	The proposed text amendment will have a positive effect on environmental resources.
5. Its effect on the availability of housing that is affordable to people who live or work in the City of Coral Gables.	The proposed text amendment will limit unsustainable development in the coastal areas and environmentally sensitive areas of the city, and therefore encourage development closer to downtown and denser areas of the city.
6. Any other effect that the City determines is relevant to the City Commission's decision on the application.	This Comprehensive Plan Text Amendment is a requirement set forth by the state to manage development along the coastline and other flood hazard areas of the city. This amendment preserves and maintains the scenic vistas as embodied in the original city plan.

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#### **4.0 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

The proposed Comprehensive Plan goals, objectives, and policies (GOPs) for the Coastal Management Element have been reviewed for consistency. New GOPs to be adopted are provided as Attachment A.

#### **5.0 CONCLUSION**

Coral Gables coastal areas developed last in the history of the city. Some areas were originally approved by Miami-Dade County and later annexed. Thus, development patterns are distinct in the coastal zone than in the other half of the city. Existing development allows the implementation of policies that protect natural systems and promote sustainability.

Proposed Goals, Objectives and Policies for Coastal management strengthen current practices or update regulatory requirements. As a developed City of sound planning, conditions are expected to remain similar to the present, and the Comprehensive Plan Coastal Management Element is designed to incrementally preserve and improve the quality of life of the residents.



**COASTAL  
MANAGEMENT  
ELEMENT**



Comprehensive Plan  
City of Coral Gables





# Coastal Management

**Vision Statement:** Provide development principles that support the highest quality of life and promote sustainable coastal areas.

## Goals, Objectives and Policies:

**Goal CMT-1.** Maintain, protect, and enhance the quality of life and appearance of Coral Gables’ Coastal Zone including the preservation of natural resources as well as the enhancement of the built environment.

**Objective CMT-1.1.** Preserve and protect existing natural systems including wetlands and mangrove systems within Matheson Hammock Park and those portions of Biscayne Bay that lie within the City's boundaries.

**Policy CMT-1.1.1.** The City will adhere to Miami-Dade County DERM standards and require DERM approvals in its permitting procedures to ensure that facilities in the Coastal Zone or near major canals do not pose a significant threat to water quality.

**Policy CMT-1.1.2.** Encourage the reduction in point and non-point sources of pollution into Biscayne Bay through coordination with Miami-Dade County DERM, the South Florida Water Management District, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and any other appropriate state and federal agencies in order to reduce pollution into Biscayne Bay.

**Policy CMT-1.1.3.** Marinas and docks will meet marina siting requirements and city development standards, and receive appropriate county, state, and federal approvals in the land development regulations.

**Policy CMT-1.1.4.** Site development criteria will ensure that development or redevelopment within the Coastal Zone will not adversely affect the natural environment or lead to a net loss of public access to the City's natural resources.

**Policy CMT-1.1.5.** All City owned property within the Coastal Zone that may be identified as areas of significant or unique natural resources will be designated as Environmental Preservation Districts, and the City will also consider designating private properties within the coastal with significant or unique natural resources as Environmental Preservation Districts.

**Objective CMT-1.2.** Continue enforcement of the Florida Building Code, which establishes construction standards that minimize the immediate and long term impacts of buildings and structures on coastal areas.

**Policy CMT-1.2.1.** The City will increase inspection and code enforcement efforts for coastal area construction to ensure the proper standards are met.

**Objective CMT-1.3.** Support Board of Architects review process to maintain the aesthetic quality and compatibility of buildings and structures in coastal areas.

**Policy CMT-1.3.1.** Board of Architects will review all buildings and structures for compatibility with coastal management policies.

**Policy CMT-1.3.2.** Develop informational materials to explain the city’s Coastal Management Policies and aesthetic standards.





**Objective CMT-1.4.** Ensure that land development regulations and policies for the Coastal Zone are consistent with the City’s ability to provide the capital facilities required to maintain adopted LOS standards and those needed to maintain or enhance the quality of life within the Coastal Zone of the city.

**Policy CMT-1.4.1.** Review zoning regulations for consistency with coastal management policies.

**Policy CMT-1.4.2.** The Coastal Zone of the City will adhere to the level of service standards as adopted.

**Policy CMT-1.4.3.** Rise in sea level projected by the scientific community, and studied by the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact, shall be taken into consideration in future decisions regarding the design, location, and development of infrastructure and public facilities in the City.

**Goal CMT-2. Promote best practices and procedures to minimize peril of flood.**

**Objective CMT-2.1.** Reduce natural hazard impacts through compliance with federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations and by targeting repetitive flood loss and vulnerable properties for mitigation.

**Policy CMT-2.1.1.** Review the Land Development Code to update for requirements on flood elevations.

**Policy CMT-2.1.2.** Establish regulations to minimize the disturbance of natural shorelines that provide stabilization and protect landward areas from storm impacts.

**Policy CMT-2.1.3.** Participate in the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Nation Flood Insurance Program.

**Policy CMT-2.1.4.** Maintain records consistent with the Federal Insurance Administration’s listing of community selection factors.

**Goal CMT-3. Promote best practices for post disaster redevelopment and hazard mitigation.**

**Objective CMT-3.1.** Coordinate with the Miami-Dade County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to develop and implement post-disaster redevelopment and hazard mitigation plans that reduce or eliminate exposure of life and property to natural hazards towards the protection of health, safety, and welfare within the City.

**Policy CMT-3.1.1.** Coordinate with existing resource protection plans through appropriate regulatory procedures.

**Policy CMT-3.1.2.** Participate in the preparation and adoption of a county-wide post disaster redevelopment plan that establishes an orderly process for reviewing private and public development proposals to restore the economic and social viability of the City in a timely fashion.

**Policy CMT-3.1.3.** During post-disaster redevelopment, structures that suffer repeated damage to pilings, foundations, or load bearing walls shall be required to rebuild landward of their present location or be structurally modified to meet current building codes.





# Coastal Management

**Policy CMT-3.1.4.** Temporary building moratoriums may be declared in the coastal areas as a result of storm damage.

**Policy CMT-3.1.5.** Coordinate with the State of Florida and Miami-Dade County and other public agencies and utilities to ensure that damaged infrastructure is replaced or improved.

**Goal CMT-4.** Improve public awareness, appreciation, and use of Coral Gables’ coastal resources by preserving water-dependent and water-related uses, ensuring adequate public access to such uses, and minimizing user conflicts.

**Objective CMT-4.1.** Wherever feasible, increase public access to Biscayne Bay, the City’s shorelines and waterways.

**Policy CMT-4.1.1.** The City will ensure that development regulations are not altered so as to prohibit water dependent facilities or uses such as swimming, boating, and fishing and will encourage and support such facilities and public uses.

**Policy CMT-4.1.2.** The City will incorporate provisions for public physical and/or visual access to the shoreline in its waterfront zoning regulations

**Objective CMT-4.2.** The City shall strive to allow no net loss of acreage devoted to recreational and commercial Working Waterfront uses in the coastal area of the City of Miami.

**Policy CM-4.2.1.** The comprehensive plan and land development regulations will encourage water-dependent uses along the shoreline.