

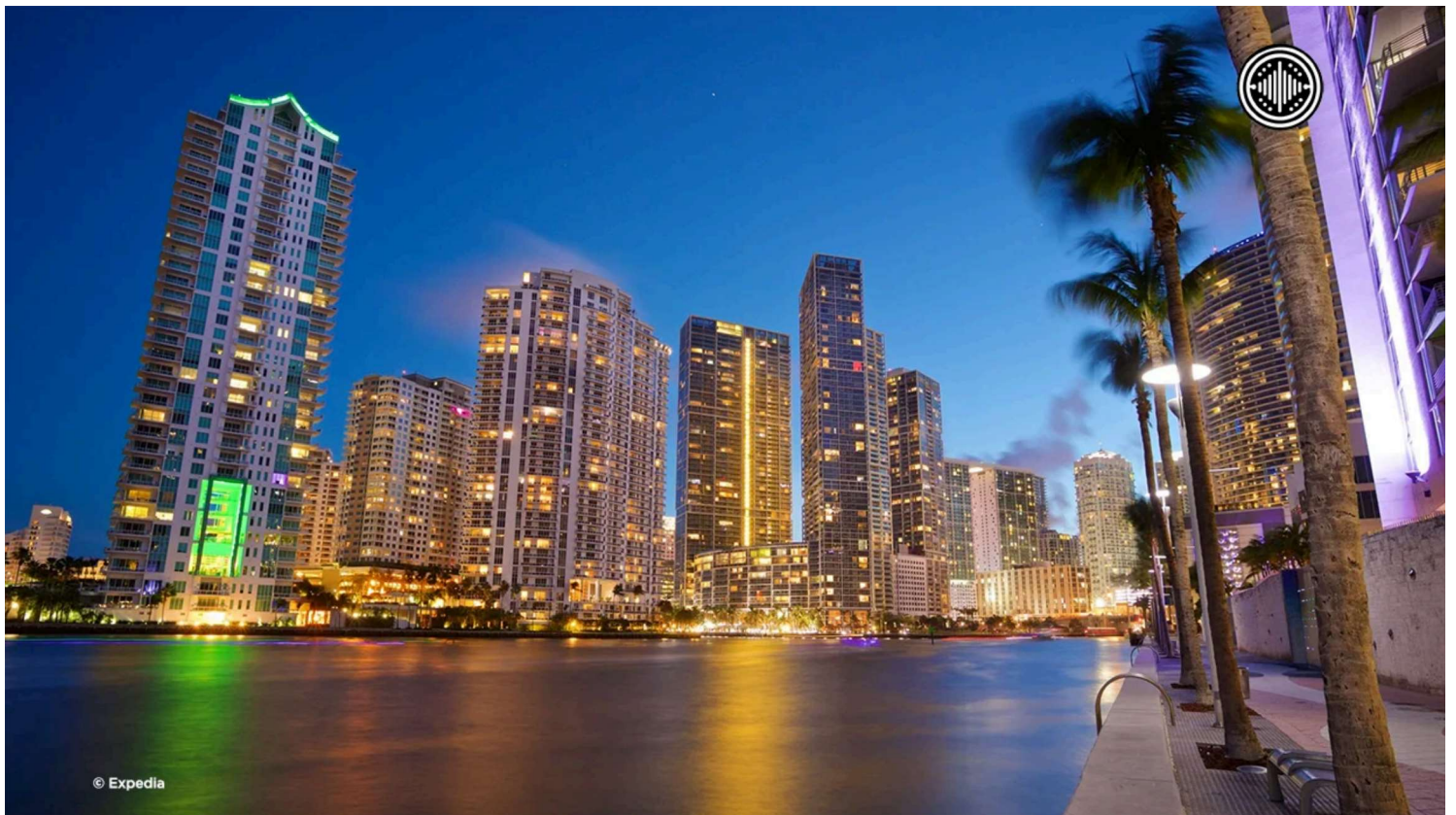
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## Miami Expands Transit Zone to One Mile, Opens Door for Taller Buildings

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— Categories: Real Estate



A new zoning program in Miami allows for denser, high-rise developments within a one-mile radius of existing and planned rail stations, including Metrorail, commuter rail, and Brightline stations located inside the city. This program permits developers to construct residential and commercial projects with significantly increased height and unit counts compared to previous local rules. The goal is to address housing supply and affordability challenges while encouraging greater use of public transit.

Previously, Miami's zoning code, known as Miami 21, placed strict limits on building heights near low-scale residential neighborhoods. The new Transit Station Neighborhood Developments program removes some of these height restrictions inside expanded transit zones. While transit-oriented development typically focuses on a half-mile radius considered a reasonable walking distance, the new one-mile radius has raised concerns among residents and city planners.

Critics argue that expecting pedestrians to walk a full mile to a transit station is unrealistic, especially given Miami's hot and humid climate. Despite these concerns, the Miami Planning Board voted 6-3 to recommend approval of the program after an extensive two-hour public meeting. The City Commission gave its final approval on July 24.

City planning director David Snow and assistant planning director Sevanne Steiner told the Miami Herald they expect the densification process to be gradual, with the tallest buildings concentrated closer to stations. "The rules and incentives are designed to encourage lower heights and density past the half-mile radius," they said.

The new zoning process requires multiple steps, beginning with a land-use change under the city's comprehensive plan. Properties must be designated as "transit-node" areas based on their capacity to handle increased development. Developers can then submit Transit Station Neighborhood Development plans under either a general or enhanced category.

The general category permits moderate height and density increases, while the enhanced category demands more extensive commitments. Developers opting for the enhanced plan must improve or build rail stations and create a detailed master plan for streets and pedestrian connections. Additional public benefits, including new pedestrian and bike paths or a transit circulator shuttle, are required for projects extending to the full one-mile radius.

Due to the substantial requirements of the enhanced category, only well-funded developers with the capacity to undertake large-scale urban projects are expected to pursue these plans. This means that the most intensive developments will be limited to areas where such ambitious construction is feasible.