



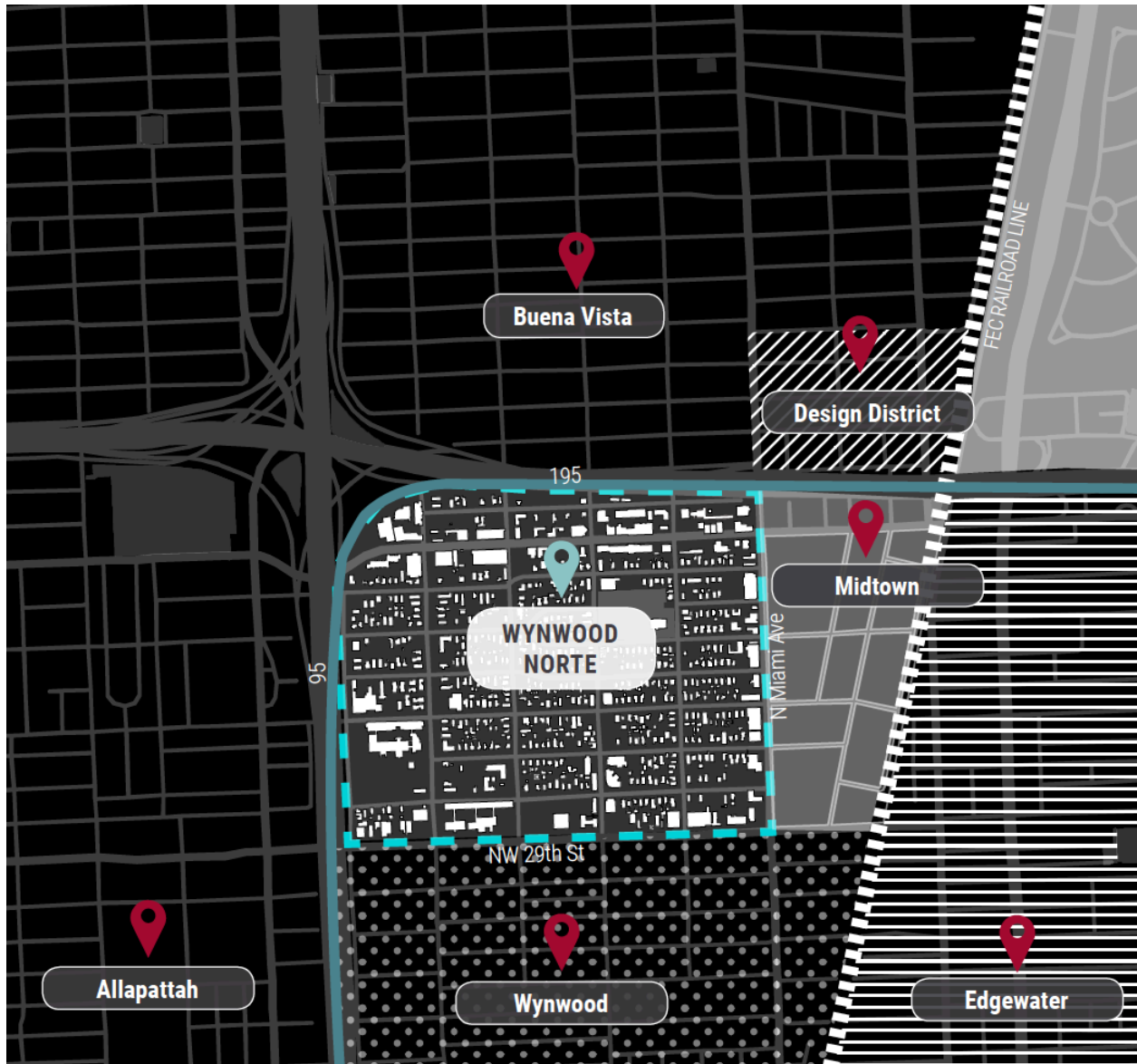
ARC 204 - ARCH DESIGN IV
Assignment #3
Wynwood Norte – reinventing a midrise high-density fabric for Miami



Ben Eine mural at Jose de Diego Middle School (Source: Jaime Rojo)

CONTEXT:

The district of Wynwood Norte, situated at the northern edge of the City of Miami's urban core, has historically been, and still is, an affordable, close knit and culturally rich community of over 4,000 inhabitants. Its modern history started in 1917, when the area north of NW 30th Street was subdivided and sold by the early Miami pioneers Josiah Chaille and Hugh Anderson. During the 1950s through the 1970s it became known as Little San Juan, due to the notable influx of Puerto Ricans. With some exceptions along the major thoroughfares, the district's urban fabric is mostly made up of small and mid-sized residential buildings, both one- and multi-family in terms of occupancy.



2: Source: PlusUrbia

Due to the surroundings' explosive growth of the last 10 to 15 years - notably through the redevelopment of the Design District to the north, Midtown to the east, and Wynwood to the south - the neighborhood's inclusive character, with around 25% of affordable housing, far above Miami's average of 5%, finds itself heavily challenged. As a consequence of speculation, land values have drastically increased, threatening a family-oriented community of which 82% are tenants. The pressure of displacement is difficult to counter, and the city has therefore decided to update the Miami 21 zoning code for this specific neighborhood. Rather than to try protecting the existing built structures through the continuation of a low-density zoning, with a majority of one-family zoning, higher densities and new incentive mechanisms are promoted

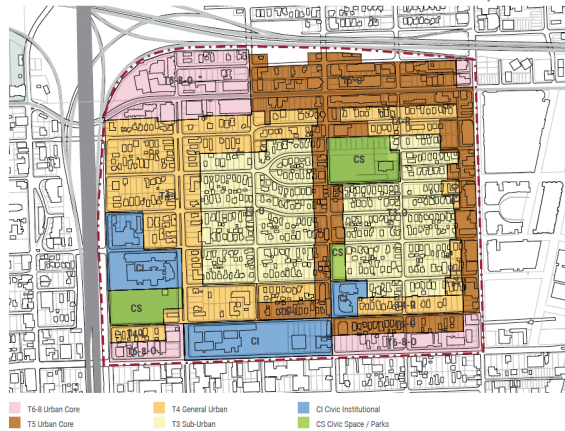
in order to keep the district’s affordable character. The argument is made that retention of the one-family zoning would inevitably lead to the demolition of existing structures – often grandfathered multi-family units - in favor of new luxury homes, a trend that would indeed contradict claims for the resilience of inner-city densification. This argument weighs even heavier in view of climate change and sea-level-rise, Wynwood belonging with an average elevation of around 14 feet to a small group of relatively safe inner-city neighborhoods.

The updated zoning plan, a so-called Neighborhood Revitalization District (NRD), will be available to the students on blackboard. Some of the central components include:

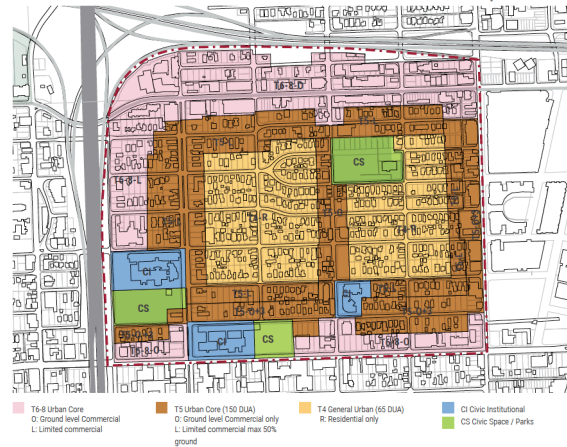
- general upzoning compared to Miami 21 (f.e. from T3 to T4, and from T4 to T5)
- additional density increase within the categories (to 150 units per acre)
- density incentive to build on small lots in order to avoid assemblage
- prohibition of Special Area Plans (SAP)
- acceptance of off-site parking solutions / waiver of parking requirements for small lots
- delivery of demolition permits only in conjunction with a new building permit
- public space improvements, including the creation of woonerfs (living streets)
- incentives to create a mixed-use environment that is less car dependent

ZONING

CURRENT



PROPOSED



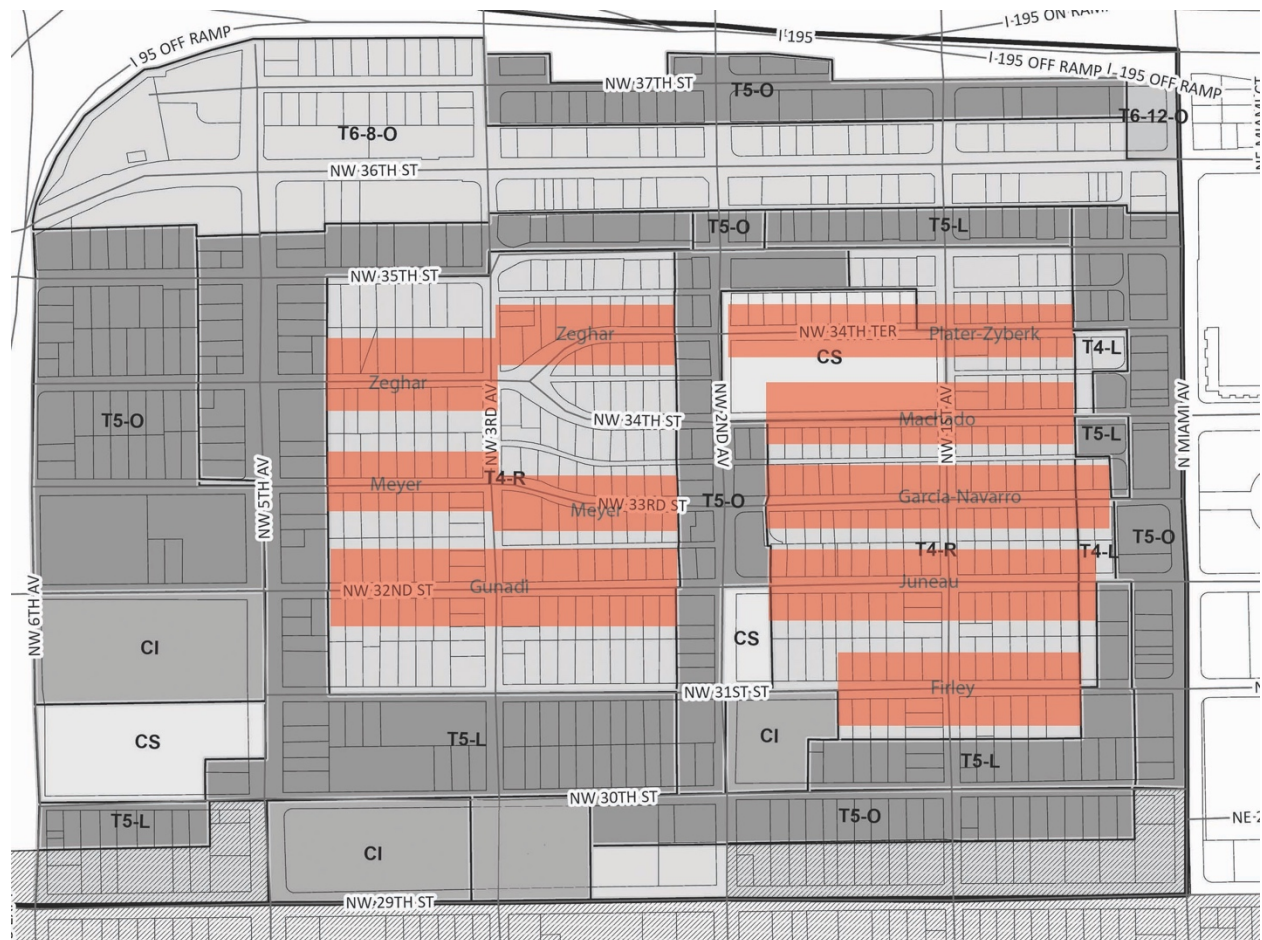
3 Comment: the “proposed plan” to the right is not the final version

DESCRIPTION:

Process:

In order to strengthen rather than destroy the existing community, the students will pick a cleared or underdeveloped lot, or one that is currently on the market. For this, and in order to avoid overlaps, each section will receive a predetermined area (see map underneath). The choice should be limited to T4 lots, and can potentially, after discussion with the instructor, be extended to a double-lot. The overall aim is for each section to test the impact of new development on a specific street section.

- In a first step each student will pick or be attributed a specific lot (or double-lot), and analyze it in the context of the wider surroundings, using a variety of tools including GIS and, if possible, site visits (or streetview). In addition to the standard socio-economic focus of such analysis the students will also undertake an epiphenomenal search: what are the cultural specificities and/or random details of the existing neighborhood that have taken on a physical form? What do you find intriguing? What could inspire your future proposal and make it unique?
- The students will then define their own program in regards to the social and functional mixture they would like to provide. What is the demand? For whom would they like to build? What could be appropriate communal amenities? How can populations of diverse backgrounds and needs be successfully mixed?
- In the last step of the analytic part, the students will overlap their first programmatic ideas with the spatial and typological insights gained during assignment #2. This will be an iterative and non-linear process, during which a certain element of playfulness should not be underestimated. What type of spaces and entrance sequences intrigued me? How could they get adjusted to the depth of a typical Wynwood lot? Is it feasible to combine two different types on one property?



4 Indication of project areas according to sections

Zoning code:

The students have access on blackboard to a simplified version of the new NRD zoning code for Wynwood Norte. We will assume that bonus building heights as a result of the public benefits program can be implemented due to the provision of affordable housing.

Parking:

It is assumed that the overall masterplan will reserve space for on-street parking and the construction of shared parking structures. The students therefore do not have to provide parking on their lot, but can do so, if they wish.

Building Materials:

The choice of materials is open to the students.

Comment:

This assignment, though mostly following the rules of a new zoning code, also has an experimental vocation. It is meant to visualize what shapes, conditions and human relations are created by high-density living. How close can we get to each other? How to use the designer's skills to turn spatial scarcity into an opportunity for social exchange? Where is the limit? How to translate social and cultural pluralism into a resilient architectural form? How to define quality in typological terms, and how to prioritize it over purely economic considerations? These and many other reflections surpass the realm of pragmatism, and explain why it has been decided to ease or modify some of the code's requirements, most notably through the elimination of minimum apartment sizes and the insistence on cross-ventilation for all residential units.

RESILIENCE:

The here-presented project constitutes for the given timeframe a demanding exercise for second year students. As it cannot address all facets of resilience it proposes to focus on the question of inclusion, density and ground elevation: how to design attractive human environments that can cope with existing and emerging threats without losing the capacity to create and strengthen social interaction? How to balance and connect interior and exterior, private, communal and public spaces, to propose a new and resilient type of tropical urban environment?

In order to allow for the incorporation of solar panels, rainwater harvesting, and potentially other technologies, the roofs of the new buildings should not be fully covered by roof terraces.

As mentioned before, cross-ventilation for all residential units is an important component of resilient architecture in a tropical environment. It has therefore been decided to request this feature as part of this student project, as is the need to provide sufficient shading for sun-exposed facades.

The students are invited to make additional proposals. They are also invited to reflect about the limitations of a zoning code that values individual property rights within a subdivided historic grid over more comprehensive masterplanned initiatives.

RESOURCES:

The students have through blackboard access to the Wynwood Norte NRD-2 plan, and the earlier Wynwood Norte Vision plan. The City's GIS mapping tool, with various analysis and visualization options, can be found under:

<https://gis.miamigov.com/gisapps/>. This tool will also help to identify lots that have been cleared since the publication of the last aerial imagery (click on the properties in order to view detailed information).

The students are encouraged to search for additional information and material, for example through ESRI or CADMAPPER. However, the accuracy of the material has to be checked and, if necessary, adjusted to the reality.

Note: on many 2D and 3D plans that are available through the internet, also the official ones, the building footprints are not reliably positioned on the lots.

SITE VISIT:

Due to the current sanitary emergency site visits will, or will not, be organized by the instructors of each section.

DELIVERABLES:

to be communicated at a later stage.

DATES:

The exercise starts on Monday 8th of March 2020 and will be presented on Wednesday 28th of April.

Some intermediate milestones are:

- Wednesday 10th of March: potential site visit (to be determined by the respective instructors)
- Monday 15th of March: termination of analytical phase and programming (as described in the 3 steps under "Process")
- Friday 2nd of April: intermediate review
- Monday 5th and Wednesday 7th of April: Workshop