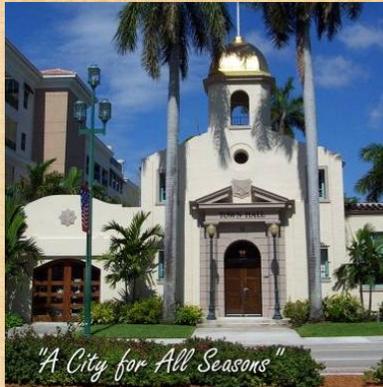


FLORIDA PUBLIC OFFICIALS DESIGN INSTITUTE AT ABACOA

JANUARY 2006

Design Institute Report



PARTICIPATING OFFICIALS:

COUNCIL MEMBER SUSAN HAYNIE, CITY OF BOCA RATON
COMMISSIONER SYLVIA POITIER, CITY OF DEERFIELD BEACH
COUNCILWOMAN LYNDA BELL, CITY OF HOMESTEAD
VICE-MAYOR STEVE LOSNER, CITY OF HOMESTEAD
MAYOR SHIRLEY GIBSON, CITY OF MIAMI GARDENS



An Institute dedicated to improving communities by offering elected officials training in smart growth and design.

The Florida Public Officials Design Institute at Abacoa (the Design Institute) is a collaboration of Florida Atlantic University's Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions (CUES) (www.cuesfau.org) and South Florida community leaders. The Center's mission is to work with policy-makers and the public in their pursuit of options for managing growth while preserving natural systems, promoting a strong economy and planning livable communities. A special thanks is given to the design team who volunteered their time and talent and made the January 2006 workshop possible (see Appendix 1).

This Design Institute would not exist without our sponsors, whom we especially thank for their belief in the importance of building memorable places. Our funders include:

- Florida Atlantic University and The Center for Urban & Environmental Solutions (CUES)
- The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart
- Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council

For more information about the Design Institute, contact Marie L. York, AICP, Associate Director for Northern Campuses and Chair of the Design Institute's steering committee at 561-799-8689, myork@fau.edu or Mary Beth Hartman, Project Coordinator, CUES, 561-799-8730, mhartman@fau.edu.

Please visit us on the web at www.floridadesigninstitute.org.

This report was prepared by Marie York, Mary Beth Hartman, Brian Herrmann and Michael Brunson. Special thanks are extended to the staff of the Cities of Boca Raton, Deerfield Beach, Homestead and Miami Gardens for their support in gathering information and resources for the Design Institute session.

Florida Public Officials Design Institute at Abacoa

JANUARY 2006 SESSION SUMMARY

January 26th and 27th marked the seventh session of the Florida Public Officials Design Institute at Abacoa with the following public officials participating:

- **Boca Raton Council Member Susan Haynie**
- **Deerfield Beach Commissioner Sylvia Poitier**
- **Homestead Councilwoman Lynda Bell & Vice-Mayor Steve Losner**
- **Miami Gardens Mayor Shirley Gibson**

Known for their leadership within their communities, these officials identified project sites and asked the Design Institute for guidance in facing their challenges. This was the beginning, followed by the gathering of information and data. Working with each city's departments, the Design Institute staff assembled materials for a briefing book that outlined the history of each community, identified the study locations selected by the officials and provided pertinent maps and data. Meanwhile, based upon the unique characteristics of the projects selected, a resource team was assembled, including experts in design, public policy, redevelopment, finance, transportation, and regional planning.

The formal Design Institute program officially opened the first day with resource team members visiting the project sites selected by the public officials in Boca Raton, Deerfield Beach, Homestead and Miami Gardens. The public officials led tours of the sites while staff presented additional information and answered technical questions. Later that evening, John Classe, Vice President of Planning and Infrastructure of Baldwin Park Development Company, delivered the keynote address at the Florida Atlantic University Jupiter Campus. Classe spoke openly about the economic realities of designing traditional neighborhood development. Classe also joined the team of experts on the following day.

The second day of the Design Institute consisted of an all day workshop during which the resource experts addressed the challenges of each project and all participants shared ideas and perspectives on the officials' projects.



John Classe delivers his keynote address

CITY OF BOCA RATON

Boca Raton Council Member Susan Haynie brought the Palmetto Park Road Corridor site to the Design Institute and sought input on how to overcome various obstacles when redeveloping the corridor.

The City of Boca Raton has initiated capital improvements, including infrastructure and streetscaping projects, for major corridors in its downtown. To date, the most comprehensive example of these improvements is found along the Palmetto Park Road corridor, where the original plan is considered to be complete.

The Boca Raton Design Institute study area sought to extend the boundaries of the improvement project on Palmetto Park Road. The design team examined the easternmost section of the thoroughfare. Such study should continue and improve upon earlier changes to the corridor, while allowing for the creation of a newly formed seaside village.

Boca Raton Commissioner Susan Haynie looks at Design Expert Juan Caycedo's recommendations



CITY OF DEERFIELD BEACH

Commissioner Sylvia Poitier of Deerfield Beach sought advice on how to redevelop Deerfield's Cove Shopping Center, located on Hillsboro Boulevard and the Intracoastal Waterway. The potential for redevelopment within the Cove study area is substantial.



Deerfield Beach Commissioner Sylvia Poitier Presents Deerfield Beach's Project Site

City officials would like for the Cove area to become an exciting environment where people experience a unique, pedestrian-friendly downtown that caters to both local and visitor needs. Though the City already enjoys a reputation as both a tourist destination and an attractive place to live, Deerfield Beach believes that redevelopment opportunities will enhance the market value of downtown and increase the quality of life in the area. The City is hopeful that the Cove site will provide the foundation for its new downtown and reconnect to the original street pattern. It also envisions decked parking to support downtown activities, including a future beach shuttle.

CITY OF HOMESTEAD

Councilwoman Lynda Bell and Vice-Mayor Steve Losner of Homestead brought an area known as "duplex city" to the Design Institute and sought recommendations on how to best redevelop and upgrade this site. The study area is bounded by Redland Road on the west, an old rail spur running north-south between NW 8th Avenue and NW 9th Avenue on the east, Campbell Road to the south and Kings Highway to the north.

The City of Homestead asked Design Institute experts how the study area can shed its image as "duplex city" while still providing attractive multi-family, duplex and residential housing structures. Also, how might revitalization of the study area incubate and contribute to a future "gateway city" ecotourism industry?



Homestead's Vice-Mayor Steve Losner & Councilwoman Lynda Bell with Design Institute Certificates

CITY OF MIAMI GARDENS

Mayor Shirley Gibson of Miami Gardens sought guidance from the Design Institute on how to improve and redevelop the City's Palmetto Expressway Corridor.

The study area consists of the Palmetto Expressway (SR 826) corridor. The Palmetto Corridor consists of two roadways of differing scale that actually make up the same spine. SR 826 is perceived to be the corridor's primary roadway. NW 167th Street is the service road overshadowed by the adjacent expressway (SR 826), which provides primary access to all commercial and residential property fronting the Palmetto Corridor. The two roadways present unique characteristics and demands; however, complementary function keeps them forever entwined as a corridor.

Miami Gardens' officials realize the difficulty of establishing and maintaining a new identity for a portion of the City. They must properly weigh and balance the needs and concerns of numerous parties. Residents, planners, and investors do not always share the same viewpoints and officials are seeking guidance on how best to improve the Palmetto Corridor.

Through brainstorming sessions, the design team suggested ideas, developed alternative solutions and made recommendations for the City's study area.

Design Expert John Classe & Mayor Shirley Gibson



City of Miami Gardens



CITY OF MIAMI GARDENS

www.miamigardens-fl.gov

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City of Miami Gardens

Mayor Shirley Gibson



Shirley Gibson is the first Mayor of the City of Miami Gardens; the third largest city in Miami-Dade County and the thirty-third (33) municipality to be incorporated in Miami-Dade County.

Ms. Gibson has a diverse background in the public and non-profit sector. In 1996 she was elected to the public offices of Community Council Three and the Miami Dade's Democratic Party Executive Committee. She was elected for two terms to Community Council Three.

Ms. Gibson served as chairperson of the North Dade Municipal Advisory Committee and the Committee to Incorporate the City of Miami Gardens. She is a member of the National Council of Negro Women Dade County Section; a retired seventeen year Miami Dade Police Officer; a previous business owner for more than fifteen years, and is skilled in community organizing. She is a skilled negotiator, using a collaborative approach to incorporate diversity, inclusiveness, and responsibility for effective outcomes. She co-hosted the "Miami Talk" radio program and has been a guest panelist on several local television programs discussing community related issues.

Ms. Gibson is a graduate of St. Thomas University with a B.A. in Criminal Justice and M.A. in Pastoral Ministry.

City of Miami Gardens

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City of Miami Gardens

Florida Public Officials Design Institute at Abacoa January 2006

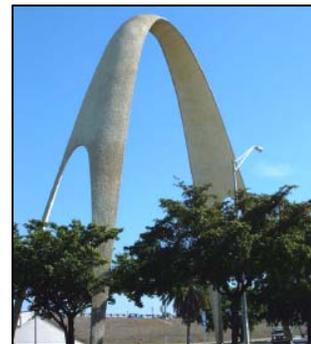
City History



The City of Miami Gardens is located in northern central Miami Dade County, midway between Fort Lauderdale and Miami. It covers an area of approximately 20 square miles. With a population of 106,000, it is the third largest city in Miami-Dade County, after the cities of Miami and Hialeah.

Miami Gardens' primary demographics do not reflect those of the nation, state, or Miami Dade County. According to the City's website, "Miami Gardens is a solid, working and middle class community of unique diversity. It is the largest predominantly African-American municipality in the State of Florida and boasts many Caribbean residents." Seventy-nine (79) percent of Miami Gardens' residents are African-American, 16 percent are Hispanic, and just 4 percent of the population is Anglo. Of the city's 31,000 household units, nearly 94.5 percent are occupied. Approximately 22,000 or 71 percent of residents own their homes, while 7,200 or 23 percent rent.

Miami Gardens is home to several South Florida landmarks. Dolphins Stadium (home of the Miami Dolphins and Florida Marlins) and Calder Race Track are found at the city's northern boundary. The campuses for Florida Memorial University and St. Thomas University are located just south of the Palmetto Expressway. Unfortunately, the city's most frequently used pathway is the massive Golden Glades Interchange, which is the convergence of two major arteries, the Florida Turnpike and I-95. This highly congested and aesthetically unappealing roadway hardly serves as a "welcome" to the city.



Other city landmarks are significant for their architectural styling. According to City documents, "Much of Miami Gardens was built during the post World War II era of the

50's and 60's. Many prominent buildings were designed in a diverse architectural style now known as Miami Modern or MiMo. These usually high quality, modernistic, often flamboyant structures have been rediscovered. The Arch leading into the Sunshine State International Park provides a most dramatic example. The Park itself exhibits the most significant grouping of MiMo industrial architecture in existence. Many, many residences as well as commercial and religious buildings exhibit MiMo-style fenestration and design elements" (Miami Gardens in Five to Ten Years, City of Miami Gardens, March 2005).

City officials wish to embrace this era of architectural identity. They hope to encourage the retention of significant MiMo structures, as well as promote new buildings that adopt similar, though updated, elements of the style. They see this opportunity as an identity creator.



City Form

The city's central location provides easy access to several major highways: Interstate 95, the Palmetto Expressway (SR 826), and the Florida Turnpike. Both the Florida East Coast Railway and the South Florida Tri-Rail System bisect the city. Vibrant commercial corridors line both the Palmetto Expressway (furniture trade) and U.S. 441/SR 7 (automobile trade).

Location, infrastructure, and access are very desirable resources for a young city. When Miami Gardens recently incorporated in 2003, these resources became instant building blocks for the city. However, the city also inherited an urban form and landscape that is essentially built-out (93%). Thus the City of Miami Gardens did not rise over time – logically assembling and developing vacant lands and realizing potential resources - but was formed immediately by jurisdictional legislation.

As a result of this crafting process, the boundaries for the City of Miami Gardens are cast from the seamless, low rise, suburban sprawl that characterizes much of Broward County, which lies immediately to the north. Such development lacks individualism and fails to establish an identifying form. With the exception of signage and a few monumental athletic facilities, Miami Gardens' identity is relatively undefined. This problem of form permeates all levels of scale, including the intersection (node), the corridor (street), the neighborhood (district), and the jurisdiction as a whole. Like many South Florida communities, Miami Gardens' miles of arterial and sub-arterial roadways connect the various components of a highly disassociated and auto-centric built environment. Strip shopping centers, office parks, uninspired civic institutions, and housing subdivisions line these roadways, often substituting for a true, pedestrian-accessible downtown with surrounding neighborhoods.



City Visioning

Since Miami Gardens' incorporation in 2003, City officials have taken multiple steps toward establishing a comprehensive plan and reshaping the existing built environment. They have conducted initial inventories of parks, schools, and planned developments, commissioned studies, obtained improvement grants, enacted development moratoria and performed visioning exercises. An inventory of MiMo architecture has been completed. The City also is an active participant in the multi-jurisdictional collaborative to master plan the US 441/SR 7 corridor.



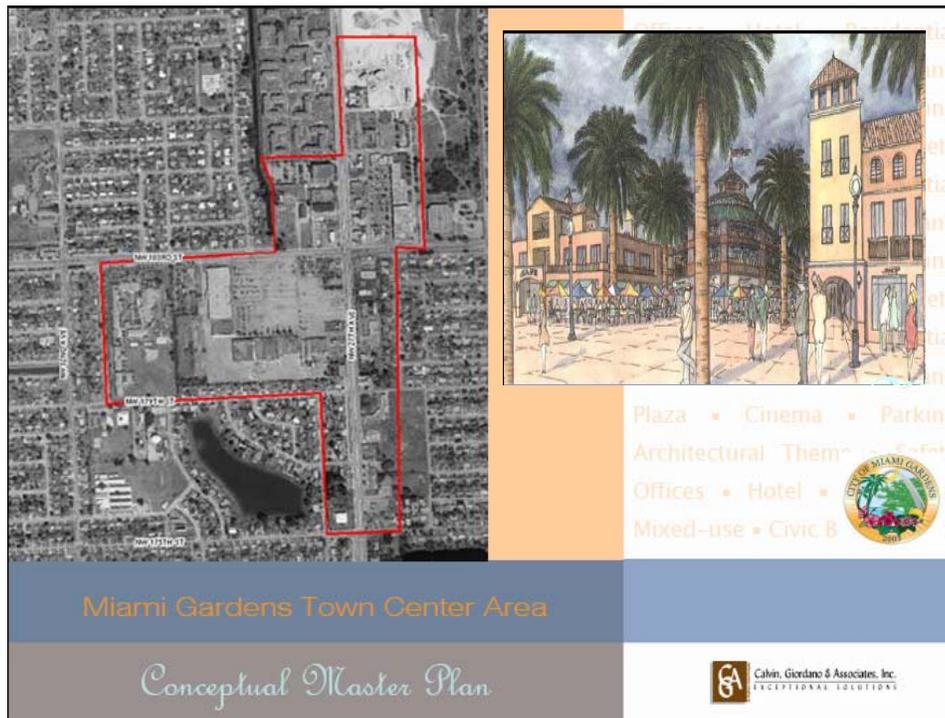
In July 2005, an Existing Land Use Inventory was performed, as well as a Vacant Land Use Analysis. These and other activities will assist the City in creating a formal Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP). According to the City's website, "The CDMP will provide direction for various elements of planning, such as future uses of land, improved roadways, housing needs, new parks and greenspace." During recent CDMP visioning exercises, residents of Miami Gardens were asked to list three improvements that they would most like to see in their city. Their answers were: (1) general appearance, (2) streetscape improvements, and (3) building facade improvements.



Such responses demonstrate that citizens of this community desire surroundings that are both sustainable and appealing. Officials view mixed-use redevelopment that emanates from appropriate activity nodes and corridors as critical to addressing these desires. However, land values are increasing and land scarcity is a real concern. Many prominent corridors and intersections are victim to underperforming commercial land-uses.

A New Town Center

Central to Miami Gardens' redevelopment efforts are City plans for a new, mixed-use downtown district at the southwest quadrant of the intersection of NW 27th Avenue and NW 183 Street (Miami Gardens Drive), which currently is site of the underperforming, recessed Carol City Shopping Center. The corner will house a transit station with surrounding mixed-use, commercial, and residential development (condominiums, townhouses, restaurants and shops). Plans are underway to extend the northern branch of Miami Dade's MetroRail System to Dolphins Stadium. Much of the new section will run parallel to NW 27th Avenue. Transit oriented development (TOD) will play an integral role in redevelopment plans along the entire corridor. Also, the City foresees at the intersection's northeast quadrant, a modern civic complex that integrates City Hall, a police station, a library, and a new civic center.



Preliminary visioning calls for the creation of a “new urban destination” at Dolphins Stadium, to be both privately and publicly financed. Stadium and team owners have expressed a strong desire to expand the current facility and create a year-round convention, family entertainment, and tourist attraction. Plans for both the city’s new town center and Dolphins Stadium promote principles of new urbanism, including a human scale. However, controversy surrounds the City’s plan to utilize big box retail (a Super WalMart has been secured) as the primary commercial anchor for upcoming redevelopment. Such a juxtaposition of scale creates many unique design challenges that will surely test the City’s commitment to true humanism.

Officials must not limit their design efforts to the NW 27th Avenue corridor. Rather, they must initiate real placemaking throughout the entire city, including the study area described below.

The Project Study Area

The study area consists of the Palmetto Expressway (SR 826) corridor, to be referred to as the Palmetto Corridor. The Palmetto Corridor consists of two roadways of differing scale that actually make up the same spine. SR 826 is perceived to be the corridor’s primary roadway. Yet, NW 167th Street, which is the service road literally overshadowed by the adjacent expressway, provides primary access to all commercial, business, and residential fronting the Palmetto Corridor. The two roadways present unique characteristics and demands; however, complementary function keeps them forever entwined as a corridor.

BOUNDARIES

The Palmetto Corridor study area extends from the Golden Glades Interchange (SR 826, Interstate 95, Florida Turnpike, and Tri Rail's future intermodal facility) to NW 57th Avenue (Red Road). Notable intersecting cross streets include NW 12th Avenue, NW 17th Avenue, NW 27th Avenue, NW 37th Avenue, NW 42nd Avenue and NW 47th Avenue. In general, the Corridor includes fronting commercial, business, and residential uses. However, the neighborhoods buffered by these liner uses must also be considered. The southerly east-west edge of the Palmetto Corridor study area expands to incorporate the campuses of Florida Memorial University and St. Thomas University, as well as two light industrial business parks (Sunshine State International Park and Palmetto Lakes Industrial Park). The secluded (i.e., fenced with manned gates), spatially organized grounds of each university provide a truly peaceful respite amid their tired and non-cohesive surroundings. The two business parks are older, as reflected in elements of their design. Boundaries are quite permeable, provide many access points, and allow streets to connect with much of the surrounding, traditional grid.



SR 826/Palmetto Expy.

CONTEXT SENSITIVE DESIGN

One of the fundamental processes of civic organization is the establishment of a transportation network. Perhaps no other endeavor so dictates the future of our built environment. Decisions concerning effective and efficient transportation design determine, not only influence our spatial sequencing and circulation, but the resulting visual quality of our communities. Context sensitive design seeks aesthetically pleasing, contextually-scaled building design that ensures the highest and best land use, while promoting and protecting both manmade and natural resources.

Officials contemplating changes to roadway infrastructure must address a difficult question: Is it the prevailing purpose of a corridor to most effectively move automobiles through the area? Or is a roadway a tool for creating contextually inspiring growth and development? The two answers counteract one another. The more effective a roadway is at moving vehicles, the less likely it is to promote a traditional urban street pattern and human scale. On the other hand, a roadway that is smaller in scale and highly integrated into the surrounding street network will never move comparable amounts of traffic. In the

case of the Miami Gardens' study area, the infrastructure exists to both, move automobiles and create contextually inspired growth and development. Though the latter is not the primary issue of concern for officials, it is critical to the long term health and sustainability of every neighborhood which the Palmetto Corridor bisects.

Within the Palmetto Corridor, context sensitive design involves balancing the needs of the region (moving automobiles on SR 826) with the needs of the community (establishing an identity for both the city and Corridor, as seen from SR 826), while promoting appropriately scaled new urban growth and connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods along NW 167th Street.



Service Road parallel with SR 826

BRANDING THE CORRIDOR: SIGNAGE AND STATUARY

The primary concern of local officials is to effectively brand the Corridor by promoting existing and future clusters of themed commercial growth. Both signage and statuary are effective branding tools, often functioning as the “iconic representation” of an area. California’s “HOLLYWOOD” sign is perhaps the most recognizable sign in America. In Boston’s Kenmore Square, the neon Citgo sign is associated first with its parent corporation, but also as an iconic landmark for the city. Los Colinas, a planned community located midway between Dallas and Fort Worth, uses statuary of horses to brand its identity. To transform the Palmetto Corridor into a projection of the larger city, Miami Gardens may wish to explore such options.

NW 37th Ave & SR 826



The process of commercial branding is likely to involve the use of two entirely different types of signage, off-premise signs and on-premise signs. Off-premise signs include both logo signs and tourist-oriented directional signs. According to Scenic America, a non-profit dedicated to protecting the nation's natural beauty and distinctive community character, “logo signs and tourist-oriented directional signs are small, business directional signs that have proven to be successful in regions across the country. Both supply passers-by with needed tourist and services information without marring the area's visual quality. Logo signs and directional signs displays are smaller and less obtrusive than billboards and generally cut advertising costs for roadside businesses” (Scenic America).

On-premise signs are located at the site of the advertising use. Again, according to Scenic America, “A proliferation of on-premise signs can create visual clutter that detracts from the unique character and beauty of a place. However, appealing signs that are compatible with local character contribute to a neighborhood or downtown, cultivating local pride and inviting travelers to stop” (Scenic America)

EXISTING IDENTITY

Numerous large furniture outlets and smaller design oriented businesses line the Palmetto Corridor. Carls Furniture and Rooms to Go are located just west of NW 12th Ave (south side of the Corridor). A large furniture related complex is found just east of NW 37th Avenue (north side of the Corridor). El Dorado Furniture and Brandsmart are located just west of NW 42nd Avenue (south side of the Corridor). Individual advertising for each business is on-premise and unremarkable. There is no attempt to advertise the area as a “corridor” or “district”.



A large MiMo-style arch marks the NW 12th Avenue entrance to the Sunshine State International Park (south side of Corridor). The business park spans both the east and west sides of NW 12th Avenue, and is accessible to rail. The Golden Glades Interchange is adjacent. The arch is a notable South Florida landmark. Unfortunately the arch fails to establish a cerebral connection with either the form or function of the associated business park, which purports to contain the most significant grouping of MiMo industrial architecture in existence. Gateway and individual business signage are unremarkable.

The Palmetto Lakes Industrial Park occupies space between NW 47th Avenue and NW 57th Avenue / Red Road (south side of the Corridor). The Palmetto Lakes Industrial Park is quite large, containing an abundance of light industrial warehouses, flex space, and businesses. Gateway signage is unremarkable. Signage for individual businesses is sporadic. The park provides easy access to the nearby Opa Locka Airport. In general, land values in this area will continue to rise. Decisions concerning future land use are on the horizon.

The city's most visible commercial/industrial corridor is also the primary gateway to both Florida Memorial University and St. Thomas University. Existing signage and nearby infrastructure needs to be upgraded.

Notable intersecting cross streets on SR 826 include NW 12th Ave., NW 17th Ave., NW 27th Ave., NW 37th Ave., NW 42nd Ave., NW 47th Ave. and ending at NW 57th Ave. (clockwise from top left)



Issues for Design Institute Consideration

Miami Gardens' officials realize the difficulty of establishing and maintaining a new identity for a portion of the city. They must properly weigh and balance the needs and concerns of numerous parties. Residents, planners, and investors do not always share the same viewpoints. Given the above context, and the needs and concerns conveyed herein, officials are seeking guidance on how best to approach improvements to the Palmetto Corridor. Specifically, they wish to consider the following:

- 1) As seen from SR 826, how might the City best “brand” the Palmetto Corridor, including establishing a “gateway” identity for the City and a “destination” identity for existing commercial clusters (furniture retail) and nearby resources (business parks, universities)?
- 2) How should the City address the issue of signage, specifically off-premise signs and on-premise signs? What types of ordinances would be appropriate? Can an iconic symbol appropriately brand the City and the Corridor?
- 3) What changes to land use, zoning and codes are necessary for the Corridor to establish itself as a premier area for investment and infill development? What measures can be taken to promote further the clustering of desired businesses along the Corridor, as well as related businesses?

- 4) Given the presence of SR 826 and the regional desire for the most efficient traffic flow on this roadway, how might the City promote appropriately scaled new urban and TOD-style growth along NW 167th Street – or should it? The furniture retail industry typically requires “big box” showrooms. Is such a form (in such high volume) compatible with the tenets of traditional urbanism? Can intersections along NW 167th Street serve pedestrians from local neighborhoods and, if so, how?
- 5) What steps will ensure that the Corridor behaves as an integrated part of the new downtown core? At the same time, how does the Corridor differentiate itself from the new downtown, avoid competition with the new downtown businesses, and not impinge on the feel and character of the new downtown?
- 6) What role might overlay districts play in all of the above?



Chapel at St. Thomas University



Florida Memorial College

Examples for Future Reference

- Montgomery County, Maryland, has done an excellent job of marketing the I270 Technology Corridor, a clear example of freeway branding. Though the end goal is somewhat different, many of the fundamental challenges regarding clustering and image promotion are similar.
- Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, is exploring ways to convert four-lane, divided US. Highway 17 from a corridor built to effectively move automobiles through town to a roadway that allows for contextually inspiring growth and development in frontage areas currently serviced by adjacent service roads. Like the Palmetto Corridor, the current duality of scale hinders growth and dismantles healthy and sustainable neighborhoods.
- In Albemarle County, Virginia, guidelines require commercial franchises and chain stores to develop designs that are “consistent with community character, preserving a sense of place and creating a more attractive space for customers than typical big box design” (Scenic America). Scenic America www.scenic.org



Design Institute Recommendations

Please note that the following information is the result of the free flowing conversation and dialogue between the design experts and public officials present at the Design Institute on January 27, 2006. This report presents a summary of the ideas, suggestions and recommendations resulting from the design team's discussions. It supplements the diagrams, drawings and checklists provided to the officials during the Design Institute session.

Miami Gardens: The Palmetto Expressway and 167th Street

Mayor Shirley Gibson enthusiastically introduced the City of Miami Gardens to the Design Institute team. Her comprehensive presentation illuminated the City's assets, and appropriately conveyed the challenges that confront a new jurisdiction. The Mayor's "can do" attitude permeated the room.

Design team members Milt Rhodes and Suria Yaffar, who visited the site, continued the session with an extensive presentation of their observations and findings following their site visit to Miami Gardens the previous day.

They felt strongly that what takes place off of the Palmetto corridor is equally important to that which occurs on the corridor. Nearby design, corresponding physical and economic activity, and existing regulatory structure all influence the behavior on NW 167th Street. By extensively exploring Miami Gardens' more pressing design needs, the team addressed each of these - all in the context of improving the study area. Five specific issues were identified; MIMO architecture, infill, university edges, transit, and NW 167th Street. Power Point slides and drawings were used to both organize and illustrate the team's suggestions.

Mayor Shirley Gibson



1. MIMO

Miami Garden's MIMO architecture is a strong identifying asset. The design team applauded the City's effort to preserve and promote the style.

- *They urged the City to identify the elements specific to the MIMO style, and then incorporate these into the building code.*

It is critical that the correct elements be identified and coded. This will prevent "incorrect, artificial or weak" interpretations of the style.

2. Infill Development

Miami Gardens is poised to receive regional transit, an amenity which many cities lack. Design experts believe it is very important that the City promote and exploit this fact. Transit should be a formative factor in determining both infill and future development patterns.

Neighborhood Structure

Miami Garden's residential housing is characterized by its numerous subdivisions; many of which fail to establish a defined edge. They either blend together or simply end.

- *The design team believes much of the current landscape must be retrofitted with infill development.*

The design team used illustrations to transpose a hierarchal neighborhood structure over top of existing sprawl. They then highlighted central nodes and pedestrian sheds. The proposed town center project was identified as the City's primary node – a Transit Oriented Development (TOD). Both regional and local transit will pass through the town center area.

Design experts drew a ½ mile radius circle around the town center (TOD) node on the map. The circle is representative of the ten minute pedestrian shed, which is the average distance a person will walk to regional transit.

- *The City should encourage transit oriented development within the nodal area and along its primary corridors.*

The design team applied similar structure to the subdivisions that surround the town center area. Mr. Rhodes identified possible neighborhood centers (transit stops and busy intersections).

- *The City should encourage intensification around each neighborhood center.*

The design team also drew a ¼ mile circle or five-minute pedestrian shed around each neighborhood center. Ideally, the full expanse of the town center pedestrian shed (the perimeter of the circle) will touch each outlying neighborhood center. Over time the places within each shed will begin to identify with their particular neighborhood and its' center. Under these conditions the furthest anybody must walk for transit is ¼ mile.

Design Expert Milt Rhodes



Industrial Parks

Industrial Parks are usually characterized by heavy machinery, large trucks, and often are incompatible uses. Cities do not desire these for their downtowns, nor do they want them as their primary “identifiers”. For this reason industrial parks are often situated on the outskirts of town. In Miami Gardens, both of the City’s major industrial parks are located along primary corridors, not far from jurisdictional boundaries.

The Opa Locka Airport and the Golden Glades interchange should be viewed as significant assets for nearby industrial parks. Each park presents a redevelopment opportunity for the City.

Design Expert Suria Yaffar



- *Design experts urged the City to reinforce and then make the most of the relationship between the Palmetto Lakes Industrial Park and Opa Locka Airport. The City should encourage mixed-use commercial/office as well as industrial growth here. The design team believes the area could generate significant jobs and spur demand for nearby residential development.*
- *Similarly, the Sunshine State International Park should make the most of its accessibility and relationship to the Golden Glades Interchange. The design team believes there is an opportunity for significant redevelopment, primarily spurred by the adjoining intermodal transit facility.*

Despite its location, design experts cautioned the City not to view the Sunshine State International Park area as a “Gateway” to the City. When automobiles travel along a high speed corridor, it becomes increasingly difficult for drivers to make a cerebral connection to their surroundings. Miami Garden’s famed arch is a wonderful identifying feature that does allow that connection. It entices people’s minds and draw them toward the true gateway - closer to NW 27th Avenue.

3. University Edges

The design team believes the edges surrounding St. Thomas University and Florida Memorial University are too porous and underutilized.

- *The edges surrounding St. Thomas University and Florida Memorial University should be built-up and intensified.*

An opportunity exists to infuse neighborhood structure here. These neighborhoods were developed on a lot-by-lot basis. Large infill opportunities currently exist. Housing in nearby neighborhoods is predominantly owner-occupied. Support from both the City and

community would allow surrounding subdivisions to take advantage of the natural centers that the universities create and then utilize those edges as central nodes.

The City must improve the character and intensity of existing streetscapes. They should relax existing setbacks and allow both single family homes and attached housing units to permeate. Wide sidewalks should be included on both sides of the street – with little or no planting strip. (See illustration A)

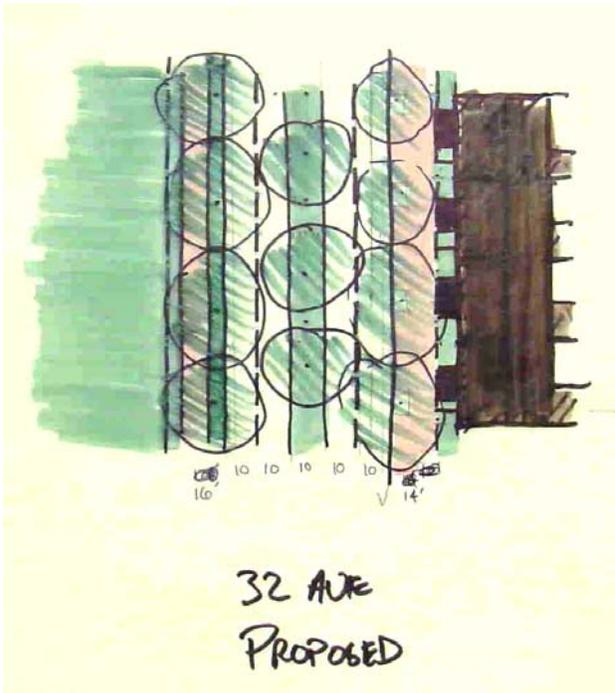


Illustration A

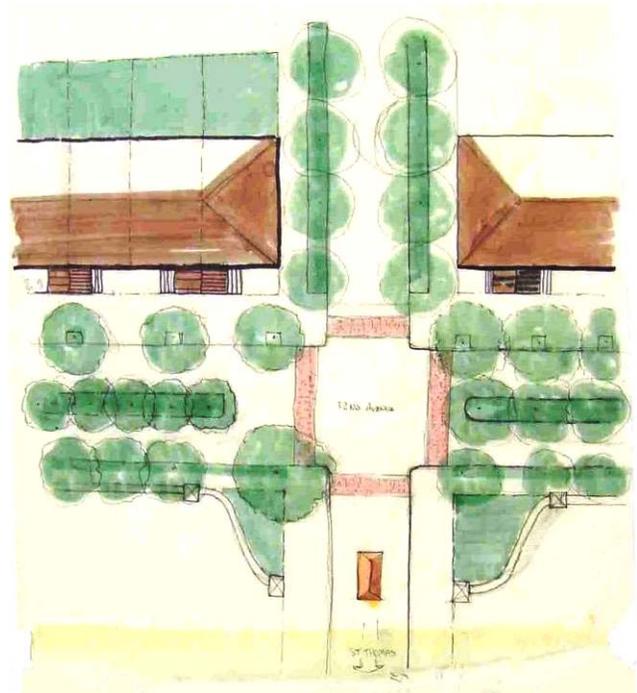


Illustration B

Miami Gardens must take ownership of the public realm, including the City's streets. Each street should be viewed as a linear park.

The old entryway to St. Thomas University at the intersection of NW 32nd Avenue and NW 61st Street should be redesigned. (See illustration B)

- ♦ *Design experts propose significant changes to NW 32nd Avenue. The roadway is 62 feet wide. The existing turning lane should be converted to a planted median. The two interior lanes (12 feet wide) and the two outside lanes (14 feet wide) should be retracted to 10 feet each. The pedestrian right-of-way on either side should be widened. The 16 feet of right-of-way that fronts the University should contain a sidewalk with a planter strip on either side. The City should consider infill for the opposing side, possibly a new "academic village" (with living arrangements for teachers and / or students). A 14 foot wide sidewalk, with incorporated plantings would front the village. (see illustrations A,B, and D)*
- ♦ *Brick crosswalks are appropriate for the intersection that fronts the old gate. The opposing sidewalks carrying pedestrians into the University campus should be enhanced as well. (see illustration B)*

4. Transit Issues

**Mayor Shirley Gibson and Design Expert
Suria Yaffar**



While design experts were optimistic about impending rail transit for the City, they expressed concern over the design. Along the NW 27th Avenue corridor, track for the system will be suspended 26 feet above ground. In the town center area the right-of-way for the system is rather narrow and runs immediately adjacent to the avenue. South of downtown Miami, a similarly elevated section of the

system runs alongside US 1. The Metro infrastructure is absorbed by a railroad right-of-way. On the western side, a greenspace and parallel roadway (to US 1) separate the Metro from fronting uses. The plans for Miami Gardens do not call for any such buffer. In Miami Gardens the system will front commercial districts and residential neighborhoods.

The design team believes the system will harm businesses and neighborhoods that front the transit side of NW 27th Avenue. Transit infrastructure consumes significant air rights. The two story, one hundred foot spans will create a “boundary effect” similar to that of a highway overpass.

1. The structure will separate rather than incorporate neighborhood entrances.
2. It will visually impede drivers attempting to view businesses along the avenue.
3. It will hinder commercial development wherever the Metro fronts businesses – including the proposed town center property.

Just north of town center the transit line will crossover NW 27th Avenue, continuing north along the avenue’s eastern edge – similar consequences are anticipated.

- *The design team urged the City to consider reassembling NW 27th Avenue. The City should retract the avenue’s center lane. This will narrow the street. The City should vacate additional land along the transit side of the roadway. A greenway with bike path and other pedestrian amenities should be constructed beneath the transit line. This might facilitate construction of a local street between commercial businesses and the new transit greenway / railway.*

The greenway could be used to accentuate a “gardens” theme throughout the City.

Additional Transit Connections

Mayor Gibson stated that the City had submitted a request to the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to evaluate internal transit circulation. The intent is to garner community busing dollars.

The design team identified the Golden Glades Intermodal Facility, State Road 7 (441), and NW 27th Avenue as “regional” transit corridors and hubs. People will enter Miami Gardens through loops and corridor routes of the local bus service, which should interconnect already identified TOD’s and neighborhood nodes – utilizing stops every ½ mile along corridors. The goal is to provide regionalized access to every place in the City. Design experts urged the City to examine bus routes which run up and down the corridor and across other corridors, noting that shorter “key destination” routes offer a better time frame to riders and are therefore more important than longer routes.

Commissioners Sylvia Poitier and Chuck Clark



The design team urged the City to further establish a greenway and bikeway system. They highlighted a major east-west canal located on the south side of the City. They suggested that the canal could easily be converted into a pedestrian oriented greenway, enabling people to commute between universities, job centers and transit nodes.

The City may wish to consider a sign code. With the new elevated transit line, the NW 27th Avenue corridor becomes far more susceptible to visual clutter. Signage, lighting, benches, trash cans and bike facilities near transit will create healthier and safer streetscapes along with promoting citywide pedestrianism.

Economic Impact

Miami Gardens must evaluate the economic impact of the new transit line running along NW 27th Avenue.

- *Design experts urge the City to perform an economic study and market analysis.*

The study should examine the effect on the business community (NW 27th Avenue), future projects at Calder Race Track and Dolphin’s Stadium, redevelopment areas, and the City’s industrial parks.

The design experts made note of the magnificent oaks trees and Florida pines found throughout Miami Gardens. They believe the economic study should examine how they enhance the value of their properties which they are on.

- *The City should consider implementing a tree protection ordinance. Such an ordinance would address removal and replacement policy. The City of Boca Raton was mentioned as a case study.*

5. NW 167th Street

NW 167th Street is not a service road for big box retail or access road to the Palmetto Expressway, but rather a real city street.

- *The City must establish NW 167th Street as a “real street” and valuable contributor to the public realm.*

The design team narrowed the focus of the Palmetto corridor, establishing boundaries at Red Road (west) and the Golden Glades Interchange (east). In developing a proposal for NW 167th Street, they considered a number of factors, including: frontage use, the uses behind the corridor and the expressway. As a result, they believe:

- *NW 167th Street should locate higher intensity uses near the corridor’s edges, where existing industrial, big box, and highway commercial exist. Lower intensity uses should locate in the middle of the corridor. Over time, the means by which frontage is assembled along the corridor will define the City.*

Travelers using the Palmetto Expressway will benefit from improvements to NW 167th Street as well. The Palmetto Expressway is a “canyon” or “barrier” that is designed to move cars rapidly through the City. Quite often traffic congestion slows this process. Because the roadway is built on varying grades, there are places where the Palmetto Expressway is at ground level. Those traveling the expressway would experience a calmer, more enjoyable trip if NW 167th Street promoted good urban design and a healthy public realm.

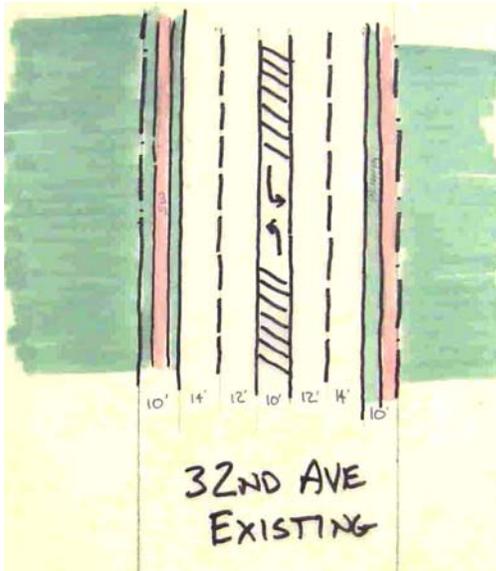


Illustration C

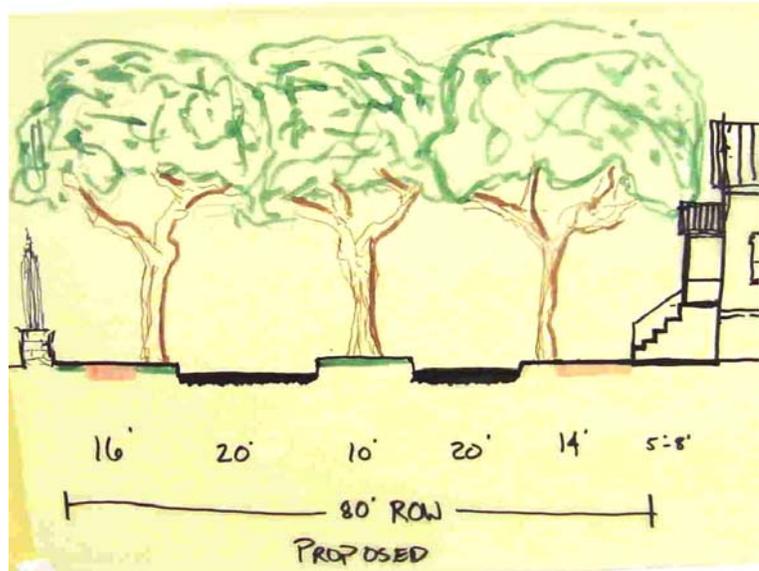


Illustration D

Designing NW 167th Street

Both sides of the Street (see: illustration C)

The design team believes it is possible to turn both the north and south sides of NW 167th Street into “real” streets. They estimate the following dimensions:

- ♦ *On the north side, plans call for an eight foot setback, six foot wide sidewalk and 10 foot wide planting strip. The City should maintain the street’s one-way status (20 feet) while also providing a lane of on-street parking. A 10 foot wide planting strip would separate the street from its retaining wall.*

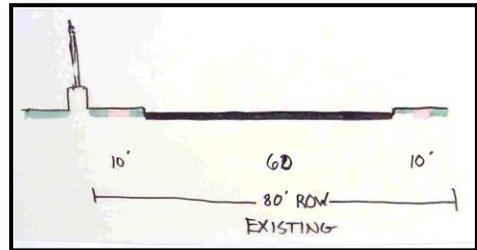
- ◆ On the south side, plans call for a 15 foot sidewalk with incorporated canopy of palms. The City should maintain the street's one-way status (20 feet) while also providing a lane of on-street parking. The expressway will be fronted with either a vertical, planted, retaining wall (10 feet) or a terraced wall with plantings on each terrace (>10 feet).
- ◆ The current 40 mph. speed limit should be lowered to 20 mph.
- ◆ Four to six story buildings should be encouraged (four stories – 120 feet wide lot, six stories – 150 feet wide lot). This would avert some of the difficulties associated with 10 story (with three levels of parking) buildings. Design experts feel it is important to “line” the first four floors of the building so that a safe and interesting street environment is created.

167th Street - south side / eastbound traffic (see: illustration C)

- ◆ St. Thomas University fronts the south side of the corridor, providing about 400-700 feet of greenspace. Design experts believe this “relief” will enhance the experience of pedestrians walking the street.
- ◆ To enhance the south side of the corridor, design experts envision “fingers” of higher intensity use extending off of NW 167th Street - taking advantage of access to the universities and the permeability of neighborhoods.

Urban Design Standards

Major corridors in Miami Gardens are characterized by “tired” strip malls, auto dealerships and big box retail with parking lots the size of whole neighborhoods. In order to facilitate future construction, as well as the retrofitting of development built during the suburban expansion years (i.e. large parking lots with buildings sited at the back of the lot) the design team recommends that the City begin developing new Urban Design Standards.



- The City should look into developing basic Urban Design Standards for primary corridors and elsewhere.

Urban Design Standards are intended to create pedestrian-oriented, visually cohesive, and economically viable neighborhoods. They are designed to promote a clear, consistent and predictable process when redeveloping land. The design team provided just a few, of the more than forty, that the City should consider:

- **Block Perimeter (size of the block):** The block perimeter can be a basic Urban Design Standard that is codified and documented as necessary. With codification, a person intending to subdivide existing development, request a rezoning or make other changes, therefore, knows beforehand that there are standards that must be followed. The design team urged the City to make “in town” blocks smaller than those found elsewhere.

- **Articulation of Buildings:** *Articulation is a basic Urban Design Standard that deals with the layout or pattern of building elements visible to the streetscape. These include walls, doors, roofs, windows and cornices. Large big box retail is often simple and dull. It is less conducive to a pedestrian friendly scale and often lacks three-dimensional articulation. The design team urged the City to mandate breaks in future buildings at 40, 60, or 90 feet. They pointed to MIMO architecture as an example of a style that encourages such form.*
- **Liner Buildings:** *Liner buildings are used to line the street frontage of a surface parking lot, parking garage or other large structures. They can also camouflage “big box retail” and provide additional shopping and commercial opportunities. Liner buildings can be residential, commercial or a mix of the two. They must have ground floor street access. Certain depths – in relation to lot sizes – are required for a functioning liner (i.e. a commercial liner requires a 45’ deep bay).*

The design team stated that liners would be most conducive to NW 167th Street big box and future vertical construction and along the NW 27th Avenue transit corridor (town center and transit garages).

Regulatory Measures

Mayor Gibson reiterated that Miami Gardens is a new city and, for now, has forced to use the Miami Dade County code and zoning regulations. The City is in the midst of a two year process in which a Comprehensive Plan and additional codes will be developed. As a result, the Mayor believes developers are rushing to get projects done before more stringent guidelines take effect.

Currently, the City feels powerless to make developers “legally” comply with their desires. Whether a project goes before the Miami Gardens Council or appears before the Miami Dade Board of County Commissioners the results are often inadequate. Essentially, at this stage, the City lacks the authority and mechanisms to appropriately influence growth.

Location and access to regional transit will likely spur significant interest in infill development. Looking to the future, the design team conveyed the need to: “Code it before they come.” The City’s land is its greatest asset. Those who propose to develop should already recognize that Miami Gardens desires an “urban” rather than a “suburban” landscape.

The design team urged the City to develop regulatory policies and mechanisms that force developers to build better projects. They pointed out that most corporations (Home Depot, Publix and Target) have a plan A, B, and C. It’s up to the City to require the plans with the best design.

- In the meantime, the design team believes overlay districts provide the most immediate means of updating and addressing the code.

Design Expert John Classe, Mayor Shirley Gibson, Design Experts Suria Yaffar and Milt Rhodes



- An unintended consequence of the Miami Dade County Code is its occasional vagueness or contradiction. Design experts believe the Code’s jumbled language allows jurisdictions to hold-up just about any project they wish. Though they do not necessarily applaud this action, the design team offered it as an alternative to approving bad design.
- An empowered City staff could turn the tables on developers who are seeking to gain approval at the eleventh hour by “encouraging” them to make the changes the City desires now rather than facing delays and the threat of additional demands under the impending code.

In Summary, the Key Issues:

- Key Issue 1: Mobility
- Key Issue 2: Transit Impacts
- Key Issue 3: Neighborhood

The following list of actions summarizes the issues:

1. Transit oriented development
2. 167th – mobility issues - pedestrian
3. Infill development
4. MIMO – guidelines
5. Adjust 27th Street (in relationship to Metrorail)
6. Slower street NW 167th Street
7. 32nd Avenue – design road and new housing typology
8. Height limit – four to six stories mixed use
9. Urban infill – University edge
10. Develop new Urban Design Standards
11. Perform economic study
12. Examine relationships with existing industrial parks



Session Photos



Florida Public Officials Design Institute at Abacoa January 2006 Resource Experts

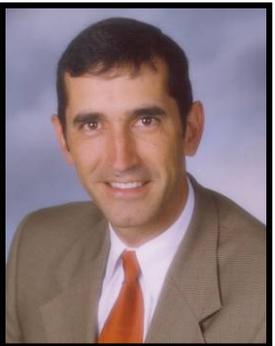
Marie L. York, Facilitator



Marie L. York, AICP, is the Associate Director of the Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions at Florida Atlantic University and heads up the Northern Campuses office, whose primary focus is on urban design. Ms. York is a founding member of the Florida Public Officials Design Institute at Abacoa. She is the chair of the New Urbanism Division of the American Planning Association, serves on ULI's SE Florida/Caribbean District Council, is certified with the American Institute of Certified Planners, and is an alumna of Leadership Florida. She is a Knight Fellow in Community Building with the University of Miami's School of Architecture; served on the Executive Committee of the American Planning Association Chapter Presidents' Council and is past President of the Florida Chapter. myork@fau.edu

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Chuck Clark



Charles T. (Chuck) Clark, Mayor Pro-Tem of Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, was first elected to public office when voters placed him on the Town Commission in March 2004. A professional accountant, Clark served in the U.S. Army from 1955 to 1976, entering as a private and retiring as a major. He held numerous command positions during his lengthy military career, which included combat and supervisory responsibility for personnel numbering up to 2,500. A 1970 graduate of Auburn University with a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Russian Language (with a Business minor), Mayor Pro-Tem Clark later became a tax auditor and supervisor for the State of Pennsylvania from 1987 to 1993. He also worked for Prudential Bache in Philadelphia and once owned Gable Hardware in Philadelphia. Prior to starting his own accounting company, he worked as a tax auditor for the State of Florida in West Palm Beach, where he was responsible for analyzing taxpayer records to verify compliance with tax laws.

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Tim Hernandez, AICP, a Principal of New Urban Communities Corporation, is a builder/developer focused on infill, redevelopment and traditional neighborhood development (TND) opportunities in South Florida. Prior to forming New Urban Communities with his partner Kevin Rickard in 1999, Mr. Hernandez spent sixteen years with Pulte Home Corporation in Chicago and South Florida in land acquisition, land development and marketing, and four years as a City Planner and Community Development Director in North Chicago, Illinois. Mr. Hernandez has a B.S. in Urban Planning from Michigan State University and an MBA from the Kellogg school at Northwestern University. He currently serves on the Palm Beach County Transportation Performance Standards committee, the Fort Lauderdale CRA Advisory Board and is a member of the Board of Directors of both the Abacoa Partnership for Community and the Delray Beach Village Foundation. He has taught a master's level course in Urban Design at Florida Atlantic University and has presented to the Urban Land Institute, the Congress for New Urbanism, the American Planning Association, the National Association of Homebuilders, and the Seaside Institute, among others. THernandez@NewUrbanCommunities.com

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Leo E. Noble



Leo E. Noble is the founder and president of Noble Consulting, Inc. Mr. Noble has served in senior management positions for Craven, Thompson & Associates, one of the largest engineering firms in the State of Florida, and co-founded an engineering and consulting firm that was later known as Lawson, Noble and Webb, Inc. Based in West Palm Beach, the company completed a diverse array of design and construction projects throughout Florida and the Caribbean Basin. While in his present capacity with Noble Consulting, Inc., Mr. Noble developed a concurrency plan for the Palm Beach County School District that involved the crafting of a complex inter-government agreement between 26 municipalities, the School Board, the County Commission and various segments of the business community that tied permits for new housing to the availability of classrooms. In addition, Mr. Noble has extensive community and public service affiliations. leonoble@aol.com

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Charles L. Siemon is a planning and planning law consultant who has provided professional services to public and private sector clients in regard to land use planning, environmental planning, open space preservation, downtown revitalization, new community development, facilities financing and growth management. He was also responsible for the development and implementation of a master plan for downtown redevelopment in Boca Raton, the City of Oviedo and most currently the City of Coral Springs. Mr. Siemon has produced award-winning expansion area master plans, served as a lead consultant in the development of a Comprehensive Management Plan for the New Jersey Pinelands, was the lead consultant to the State Planning Commission of the State of New Jersey, and served as facilitator for the New Jersey Governor's Wekiva River Study Commission. In addition, he has extensive experience in state and federal trial and appellate courts in litigation involving the taking issue, civil rights, impact fees, environmental impacts, comprehensive planning, zoning, condemnation of open space, wetlands preservation, beach access, annexation, state and local roles in land use decision-making and money damages as a remedy from land use decisions. He is a member of the Planning and Law Division of the American Planning Association and the American Bar Association, Illinois and Florida Bars and has been admitted to practice in front of numerous state and federal trial and appellate courts, including the United States Supreme Court. He also served as a Lecturer at the DePaul University College of Law (8 years) and Northwestern University College of Law (11 years). info@siemonlarsen.com

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Michael Sobczak is an Associate with Glattig Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart, and has over twenty years experience in professional and academic landscape architectural practice. His expertise is in site planning and design for parks, plazas, and streetscapes, and has been the senior designer on waterfront, corporate, and institutional planning and design projects across the country. His most recent projects at Glattig Jackson include Master Plans for Indian Riverside Park - Phase 2 and the House of Refuge Museum in Jensen Beach; the Master Plan for a Community Park in Lakewood Park, St. Lucie County; Urban Design Guidelines for Flagler Heights in Ft. Lauderdale; and Streetscape Design Guidelines for the Brickell Village Area in Miami. Prior to his position at Glattig Jackson, Mike was a professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Florida teaching design studios, graphics and construction courses. Mr. Sobczak holds a Master of Landscape Architecture degree from the University of Virginia with a focus on urban design, and a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree from the University of Florida. msobczak@glattig.com

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