

THE NEW SOUTH DADE PLANNING CHARRETTE:

From Adversity to Opportunity

*As the hurricane-devastated communities
of South Dade are rebuilt, let's pause
for a moment
and ask ourselves:*

"Can we do a better job this time?"

The answer, clearly, is yes.

*Before Hurricane Andrew,
South Dade suffered from haphazard commercial and
residential development that
jeopardized the area's vast natural resources
and limited the formation of
viable neighborhoods.*

*The adversity of the storm has brought
South Dade the opportunity to become
a far better place to live.*

*This special section contains many ideas
for improving South Dade, from large-scale
regional issues to neighborhood concerns.*

*These ideas for building a better South Dade
represent thousands of hours
of volunteer effort by South Florida architects,
landscape architects, planners,
engineers, educators and students
working under the sponsorship of the
Innovation Committee of We Will Rebuild,
a community-wide task force.*

*With your support, this vision of a New South Dade
can become reality.*



Participants in the New South Dade Planning Charrette at the Robert Morgan Vocational Technical Center.

CHARRETTE INTRODUCTION

Without a clear vision for rebuilding, the South Dade region devastated by Hurricane Andrew has the potential of becoming the first large-scale suburban slum in the United States.

To counteract that possibility, the Innovation Committee of We Will Rebuild sponsored a charrette (a planning workshop) in November 1992 at the Robert Morgan Vocation Technical School in Miami. Design professionals, government officials, members of civic organizations, and residents of South Dade worked together to create plans for rebuilding.

The charrette was a cooperative venture of the University of Miami School of Architecture; Florida International University School of Design; the Miami chapters of the American Institute of Architects, the American Society of Landscape Architects, and the American Planning Association; and hundreds of volunteers. Charrette participants developed a vision of a New South Dade through 16 proposals that vary in scope and scale.

Our volunteer effort is not intended to be a substitute for specific planning which the citizens of South Dade still deserve. But if as a result of the thousands of hours of work represented here, we can promote renewed cooperation among multiple agencies in the public sector and provide private developers with idea for better rebuilding, then we might consider our efforts to have been useful.

The confusion which was experienced in the days since the hurricane was to be expected, but to some degree, it could have been mitigated by an urban organization which recognizes the essential natural conditions of South Florida and which provides focus for communities. The citizens of Homestead had a greater sense of comfort and coherence by having a main street and a city hall – in contrast to other county residents who asked questions like: Where do we go? Who is to help us? What do we do without a car?

The aftermath of the storm reflected the physical fragmentation characteristic of South Florida. This is largely due to the fact, that for too many years, the development of land has been seen primarily as a business opportunity rather than as an enhancement of the environment or as a means to form communities.

REGIONAL STUDIES – INTRODUCTION

After a natural disaster like Hurricane Andrew, the first needs are immediate: obtaining food, water, clothing and basic shelter.

Then come longer-term questions: Can a damaged home be rebuilt? Will a neighborhood shopping center reopen? Has a job been lost?

Concerns like these have been understandable priorities for thousands of South Dade residents struggling to put their lives back together after the devastating storm.

But there are other questions that need to be asked to ensure a healthy South Dade over the coming decades:

- What do we want South Dade to be like in 50 or 100 years?
- How can this 160-square-mile region best be rebuilt?
- What land areas should be preserved and protected?
- Can residents ultimately enjoy a higher quality of life than before the storm?

These regional studies can be the starting point for developing a vision of South Dade's future.

To help that vision take shape, here are ten things that should be done to improve the long-term sustainable growth, health and economic vitality of South Dade:

1. South Dade must be treated as a whole, rather than a patchwork of small settlements. The regional image will be improved by the reclamation and protection of wetland areas.
2. Rebuilding should be concentrated in pre-Andrew neighborhoods, not expanded into undeveloped areas.
3. Quick fixes that bring short-term cash flows and short-term solutions should be questioned regarding their long-term benefit to the region.
4. Urban growth toward the west and east that is unsympathetic to the

Today, the conditions emerging in South Dade parallel those of our deteriorated core cities: multiple property ownership, absence of predictable physical vision, lack of a centralized management for coordinated rebuilding, inadequate community involvement, and a parallel lack of awareness on the part of residents of their collective opportunities. If we do not change the current *laissez-faire* approach to private development, we are inviting urban stagnation to engulf the suburban dream.

At this moment there is no clear method for us to achieve the goal of rebuilding better. Multiple agencies make decisions in isolation – transportation, housing, health care, education – with little coordination among them, and private development receives little if any community input during the design process.

The opportunities illustrated by our studies can only be realized from a new kind of collaboration, requiring each public and private interest group to give priority to the public good. Each agency, developer and homeowner must share the vision. Our collective rebuilding must:

- Promote renewal of the natural environment.
- Prioritize rebuilding existing urban areas rather than building anew in peripheral areas.
- Provide an attractive environment for returning and new businesses.
- Focus existing neighborhoods with new multi-service, pedestrian friendly centers to enhance their self-sufficiency and strengthen their bonds of community.

We encourage the residents of South Dade to become involved in their community's rebuilding, to direct the autonomous interests of economy, environment, and private citizenship toward a vision of predictable and healthy growth.

We hope our ideas will be received in the spirit of the best intentions which accompany them, and we look forward to continuing to share our ideas and experiences with both public and private initiatives in rebuilding South Dade.

Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, AIA, Architect and Planner
Professor, UM School of Architecture

natural and agricultural systems must be stopped.

5. The long-term natural resources of the region must be preserved, including the Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park and the agriculturally rich Redland community.

6. The residents of South Dade are the caretakers of the national parks, and must protect the environment to insure both the future of the parks and the economic vitality of the area.

7. Water quality and quantity must be protected and controlled to sustain the supply of fresh water to urban, agricultural and natural systems.

8. Rapid transit can have a bigger impact on growth if done *now* rather than later. Transit will act as a spine for the future growth and density centers in South Dade.

9. Homestead Air Force Base will best serve the long-term economy of the region as a mixed-use complex with both military and civilian uses.

10. New planning and building techniques must be put into place to reduce the damage, pain and suffering from the next hurricane.

These regional studies are essential to understand the importance of how the regional systems work. By understanding how the region works we can reduce basic costs of services such as transportation; improve the quality and quantity of water by using the natural systems' ability to clean up and store water; and reclaim the beauty that was once the identity of South Dade.

The following regional studies represent practical and simple plans for the future of the South Dade region.

Daniel Williams, AIA
Architect and Environmental Planner

Regional Context Study

New hope for South Florida will spring from the memory of its historical landscape. South Florida is a unique landscape in the Americas. The region is situated at the extremes of natural and cultural distributions, and is shared by the species, races and cultures of tropical and temperate America. In South Florida, the temperate climate encounters the Caribbean temperament.

The environment of South Florida has suffered severe degradation. However, there is still a great opportunity in the fragmented landscapes and communities of South Dade to follow an environmental restoration plan that will ensure a sustainable balance between natural resources, and human needs and desires.

South Dade must regain the environmental integrity and aesthetic quality of its landscape. For in that landscape, the sources of its natural and cultural identity are deeply rooted.

To express its regional identity, the environmental restoration of South Dade should integrate natural systems, consolidate urban patterns, preserve agricultural lands, and promote the area's natural and historic richness.

South Dade once was intimately linked with the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades system. Water used to flow naturally from the Kissimmee River into Lake Okeechobee and over the

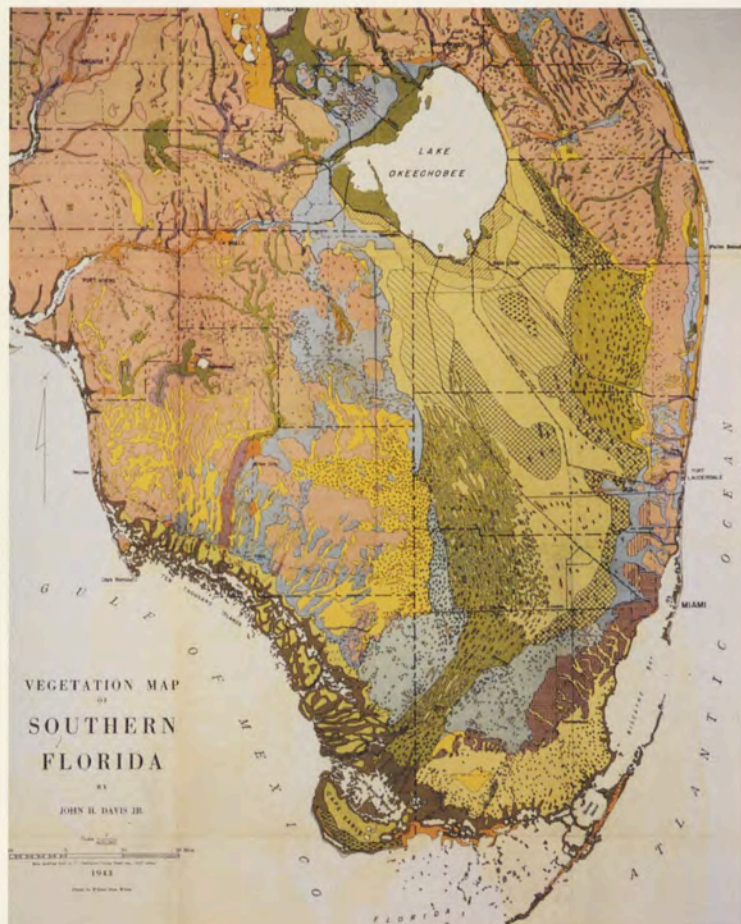
Everglades southwesterly to Florida Bay. In the rainy season, it flowed through glades in the Miami rockland ridge southeasterly to Biscayne Bay. Unfortunately, the regional drainage system, developed to accommodate agriculture, fragmented the landscape and adversely altered this naturally efficient water system.

Communities on the Miami rockland ridge were established at the highest elevations between glades along the Florida East Coast Railroad. The agricultural and recreational uses of the glades unified and defined these communities, but the north-south and east-west pattern of urban sprawl which developed over the decades has stripped nature and community of a regional sense of place.

South Dade is the threshold to Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park and the Florida Keys. It should become the keystone in the national system of parks, preserves, refuges and sanctuaries from Big Cypress Swamp to Dry Tortugas, which reunites the Everglades with Biscayne Bay.

Juan Antonio Bueno, ASLA, PE
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Joseph Dillon Ford
Landscape Architect Intern
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Left: The unique and diverse vegetation of South Florida has been severely degraded by environmentally irresponsible development, making the recovery from hurricanes even more difficult. Vegetation Map of Southern Florida by John H. Davis, 1943 (Courtesy of Hydrologic Associates USA, Inc., and the South Florida Water Management District).

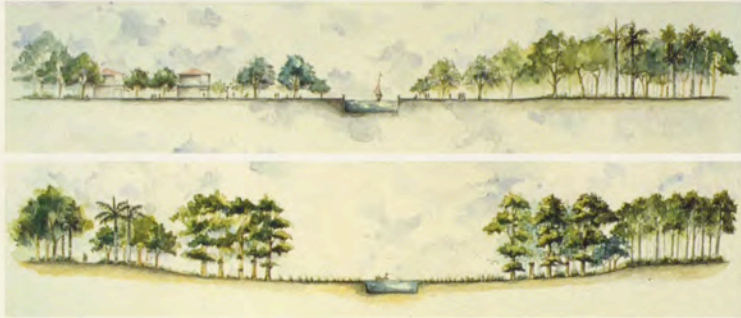
Above: Satellite image of Florida showing the fragmentation caused by the regional drainage system; and the encroachment of urban and agricultural development into the Kissimmee River basin, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades (Courtesy of Big Cypress Basin and South Florida Water Management District).

Natural Patterns Study

The natural landscape of South Dade has been altered by a century of urban and agricultural development. This growth has disintegrated the ecosystems of the region.

While clearing of forestlands and draining of wetlands have provided new opportunities for development, a heavy price has been paid: pollution of groundwater, intrusion of salt water, depletion of soils, reduction of wildlife habitat, decline in native plants and animals, and loss of scenic beauty.

The environmental restoration of South Dade must address the reclamation of wetlands, the reforestation of the region, and the establishment of a greenway network.



Top: Cross section of suggested greenway trail corridor along canal in urban area. Bottom: Cross section of suggested greenway wetland corridor along canal. Drawings by Ana María Pagés.

The reclamation effort would include the public acquisition and management of the wetlands east of Homestead Air Force Base, and south of the Base and Florida City. This expansion of parkland would reintegrate one aspect of the regional ecosystems, and would reconnect the Everglades to Biscayne Bay, Card Sound and Barnes Sound.

Hurricane Andrew felled much of the already reduced tree canopy in South Dade. The reforestation program must address proper selection, as well as installation and maintenance, of vegetation in order to reduce future storm damage. The replanting effort would emphasize the use of appropriate native species based on the climate, soil and water conditions of the specific sites. Wherever possible, this re-creation of

the original plant communities would encourage the recovery of wildlife, and refresh the rural and urban communities.

South Dade has the opportunity of creating a regional greenway network of wildlife, park and urban corridors that would enhance the natural, rural and urban character of the region. The existing canal, road and rail right-of-ways could provide the connectors for the natural systems through rural and urban areas.

Trail corridors would offer hiking, riding and biking paths throughout the region. These trails would also afford access to the significant natural and cultural sites of South Dade. Wetland corridors would create wildlife habitats and recreation opportunities while improving groundwater quality and flood control capacity.

The greenway network would help preserve agricultural lands and consolidate urban fabric by defining the edges of rural and urban communities.

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Right: Proposed greenway network along canal, road and rail right-of-ways; and proposed wetland reclamation connecting the Everglades National Park and Biscayne National Park. Drawing by Marta Canavés.

Urban and Agricultural Land Use Study

Before Hurricane Andrew, South Dade was suffering from urban sprawl, a lack of community identity and involvement, and the blurring of natural and urban land use.

These problems can be reduced during the rebuilding process by carefully delineating urban, agricultural and natural land use patterns.

Besides improving the region's valuable agricultural industry, this approach will promote regional beautification.

Metro-Dade County's boundary for urban development must be made an actual physical barrier – not just a line drawn on a comprehensive plan – using a combination of improved canal systems and parks linked with boulevards or parkways.

Within this reduced urban boundary, commercial and residential areas could be created on undeveloped land, and vacant "pockets" of land in other developed areas would be completed.

Most urban areas destroyed by Hurricane Andrew should be rebuilt, as compact, mixed use, transit and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods.

New construction should be envisioned as an integral part of multiple-use communities designed to reduce the costs of government services and to

increase a sense of neighborhood. Higher density should be allowed in the new town centers along U.S. 1.

To help improve delivery of health care, governmental and emergency services, South Dade community centers must be developed throughout the region. These may be new buildings, or they may be adaptations of existing schools, parks, churches or other facilities.

Elizabeth Guyton, Architect Intern
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Top right: South Dade urban boundaries as presently indicated in the Dade County Comprehensive Master Plan for the Year 2010.

Bottom right: Proposed limits of urban development.

Far right: Map of thirty-three identifiable communities in South Dade showing community centers (in black) with squares, parks and schools within green boundaries.

Drawings by Project Team.



Historic Preservation and Tourism Study

The recovery plan for South Dade seeks to preserve the area's historical sites, protect the unique exotic fruit industry and address the needs of local, regional and international tourists for different types of recreation.

In particular, the Redland's unique low-density residential and agricultural landscape should be recognized and deserves special consideration as a valuable resource.

A new agricultural research center and park would be created in Princeton at U.S. 1 and SW 248 Street, to serve as a gateway to the South Dade agricultural area.

The center would provide new jobs for residents, and offer such amenities as an agricultural museum, demonstration farm, culinary center and restaurant. The center and its experimental groves would also include an agricultural and environmental extension school, a farmers' market and a business, marketing, and tourism facility for local growers and their associations. Existing packing houses and warehouses would be restored to accommodate these new uses.

Programs developed through the agricultural center could also serve to increase the commercial market for the

unique fruits and vegetables grown in South Dade.

The agricultural center would be a major stop along a new tourism network of bike trails, horse trails, and hiking paths, set along existing road corridors. These paths would link many of the tourist attractions in the area and terminate at Everglades National Park.

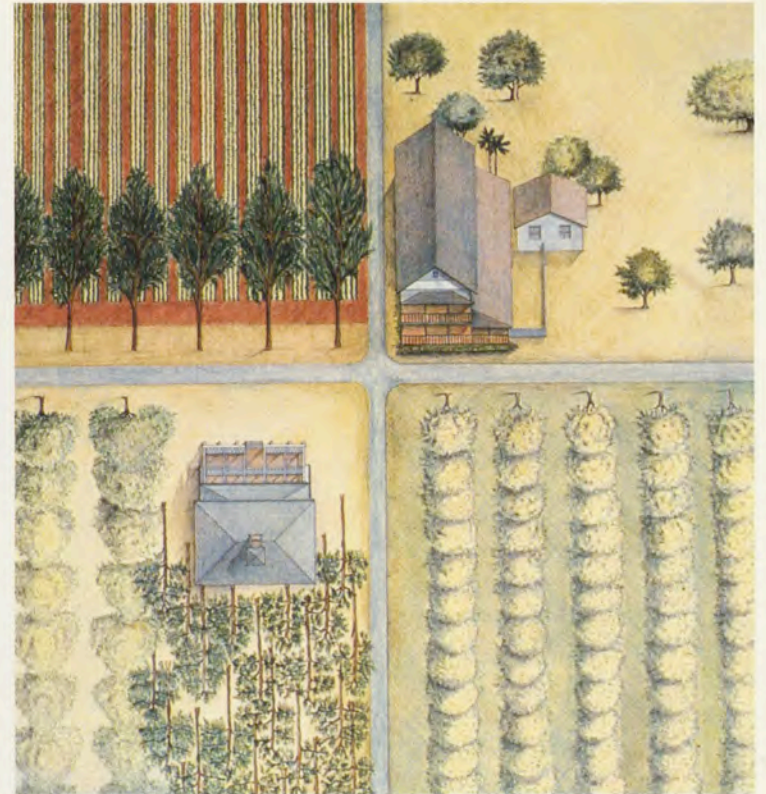
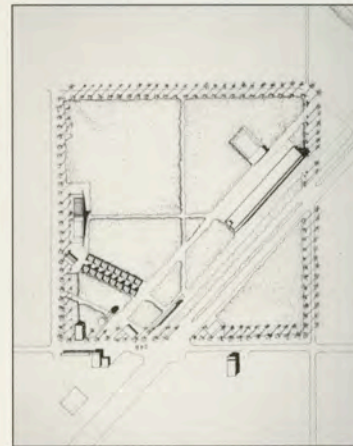
A historic corridor of homes, farms and businesses would be created along Silver Palm Drive (SW 232 Street). New construction would be regulated by a historic preservation code to match the rural frame architecture used in the region between 1904 and 1925. This would maintain the established identity of the region and improve its attractiveness for tourists. Signage and native plants would be used to visually connect historic sites along the corridor.

The entrance to the Fruit & Spice Park on Coconut Palm Drive (SW 248th Street) would be improved, and Redland Methodist Church would be rebuilt as a focal point in the Redland Historic District.

Margot Ammidown

Director, Metro Dade Historic Preservation Division

Rocco Ceo, Architect Intern
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Top left: South Dade's rich concentration of historic and cultural sites becomes the focal point for a new agricultural research center and park.

Bottom left: Plan for the new agricultural research center and park.

Above: Detail of historic corridor of houses, farms and stores along Silver Palm Drive.

Drawings by Project Team.

Transportation Study

For several decades, automobile transportation has been overemphasized in South Dade, to the detriment of bus, rail, bicycle and pedestrian travel. Besides promoting urban sprawl along the road network, this concentration on the automobile has increased traffic and air pollution problems in the area.

However, South Dade does have several railroad lines, both working and abandoned, that could be developed for alternative means of transportation. New mass transit stations for bus and rail service could be built along the U.S. 1 corridor, with foot and bicycle path "feeders."

One of the first steps in developing an alternative to the automobile is creating an express busway along the FEC railroad right-of-way on the west side of U.S. 1. This could later be converted into a service road or commercial railway bed for expanded Metrorail rapid transit trains running from Dadeland South to Cutler Ridge, Goulds and Florida City.

Several miles to the west of U.S. 1, the CSX rail right-of-way through the Redland could be converted through the national "rails for trails" program into a scenic path for bicycling, hiking and horseback riding.

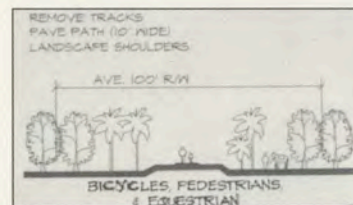
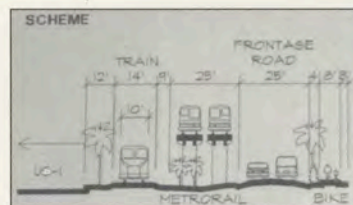
New and existing roads in South Dade should be coordinated with proposed "greenways" developed along South Florida Water Management District canals. This will encourage physical and visual connections across the Florida Turnpike and U.S. 1.

Native vegetation could be planted in expressway and turnpike right-of-ways to offset the high costs, energy loss and pollution caused by the need to mow existing right-of-ways.

The DOT work program should be reviewed with an eye to giving priority to public transit and to eliminating road expansion which encourages increased traffic and growth.

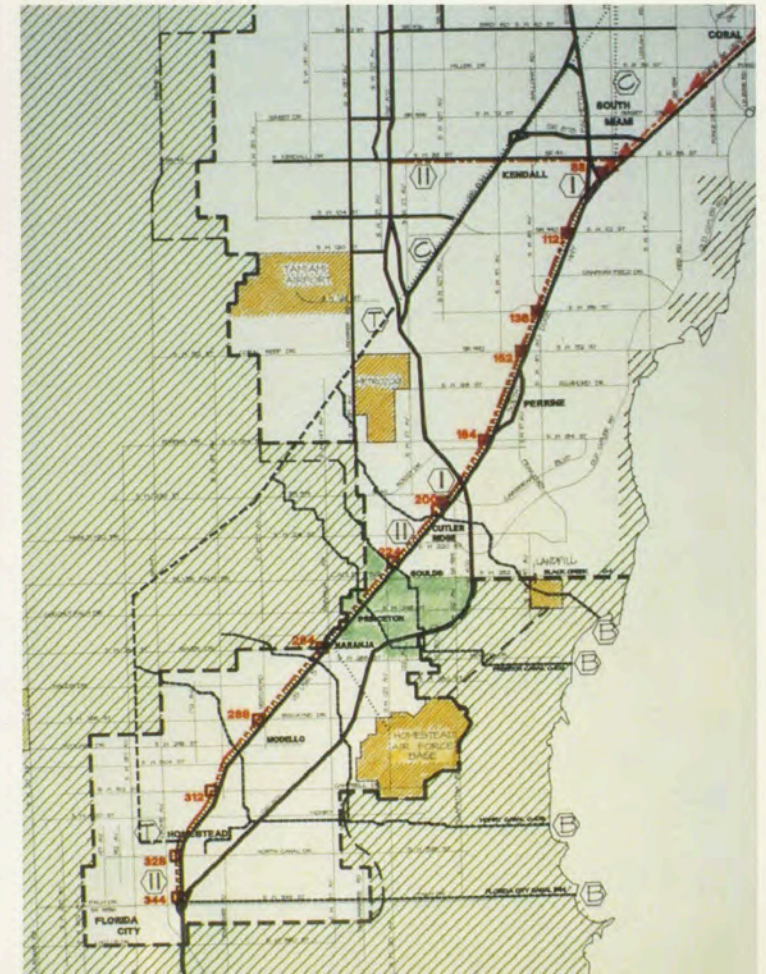
An independent committee – "Citizens Advocating Responsible Transportation in South Dade" (CARTS) – should be established to expand on these recommendations.

Thorn Grafton, AIA, Architect



Above, top to bottom: Cross sections of proposed U.S. 1 corridor and proposed CSX corridor. Drawings by Thorn Grafton.

Right: The new South Dade transportation network emphasizes new mass transit stations for bus and rail service along the U.S. 1 corridor with foot and bicycle feeders, and proposes a scenic path for bicycling, hiking and horseback riding along the CSX corridor. Drawing by Ward Grafton.





CASE STUDIES – INTRODUCTION

The following case studies demonstrate that the objectives of sound regional and environmental planning can be accomplished in the design of communities, neighborhoods, and civic institutions. The case studies, though designed for specific sites, serve as models for the reconstruction of a new South Dade. Transportation centers, neighborhoods, community centers, job centers, schools and the preservation of historic structures throughout South Dade have been the focus of these projects.

During the charrette, local residents assisted in identifying 33 communities in South Dade. Thirty-one of these communities lack an officially recognized and locally effective vehicle for leadership and representation. This situation has contributed in no small measure to the chaotic and dissimilar responses that these areas experienced since the storm. Several of the following case studies address this issue by creating centers for these communities consisting of a public park, a meeting hall, and a special parking space for mobile social service units. These centers would facilitate the delivery of social and health care services while reinforcing community identity and encouraging the institution of and participation in civic life. In emergency situations, these centers would serve as shelter and distribution points – providing a localized

service that was sorely missed following Hurricane Andrew. The location of each community center would be determined by its residents using existing schools, churches, new transit centers or other public land.

All of the proposals elaborate on the physical beauty and unique character of the South Dade region. By planting an orange “naranja” grove at Naranja’s Town Square; designing a preservation plan coordinating historic agricultural landscapes and rural buildings; and enhancing South Dade’s waterways as public amenities, these proposals celebrate the inherent beauty of our region. Neighborhoods specifically designed to encourage walking and the use of mass transit while giving prominence to public spaces which integrate civic buildings, social centers and housing are the key to these projects.

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The Church/Community Center Study

Churches are the spiritual and emotional haven of their communities, especially during and after large scale crises. Prior to the storm, West Perrine was home to a high concentration of small neighborhood congregations. Many were devastated by the hurricane.

An interdenominational community center addresses both the short and long term burdens and needs of this community. Until local churches are able to rebuild, one or a combination of these new centers can fulfill the religious needs of the community. Three proposals of varying scale and program are analyzed for three hypothetical sites.

The Neighborhood Center

The proposed neighborhood center located at the northeast corner of SW 178 Street and SW 104 Ave., across from the Ben Shavis Park, will serve area residents.

The program consists of a main communal worship space, offices, and a day-care center which can function as an emergency shelter when necessary, and is administered by a congregation of the community’s choice.

The Town Center

The Town Center located in the community’s hub of activity, at the corner of Homestead Ave. and Hibiscus Street, can serve up to 500 residents. This town hall is an emergency shelter and disaster relief distribution center, and doubles as a place of worship for several community churches. Aside from the main worship space, this center provides day-care facilities, senior citizen services, and office for a number of religious and community agencies. There are also check cashing facilities, a clinic, a fruit and vegetable market, and a police sub-station.

The Ecumenical Center

Located on Eureka Drive and SW 107 Ave., on a site large enough to promote new residential developments at its perimeter, this center serves more than 500 residents.

Four chapels are flanked by a preschool, a retreat center, offices for national and international religious organizations, classrooms, training facilities, and a youth recreation center – all organized around a cloister. The center is to be administered by a board of directors comprised of local church representatives and residents.

The chapels serve as emergency shelters during and after a hurricane and are equipped with emergency generators, a cistern, post office boxes, emergency storage areas, a kitchen, and a first aid station. The center fronts onto a public square with designated parking space for mobile social service units.

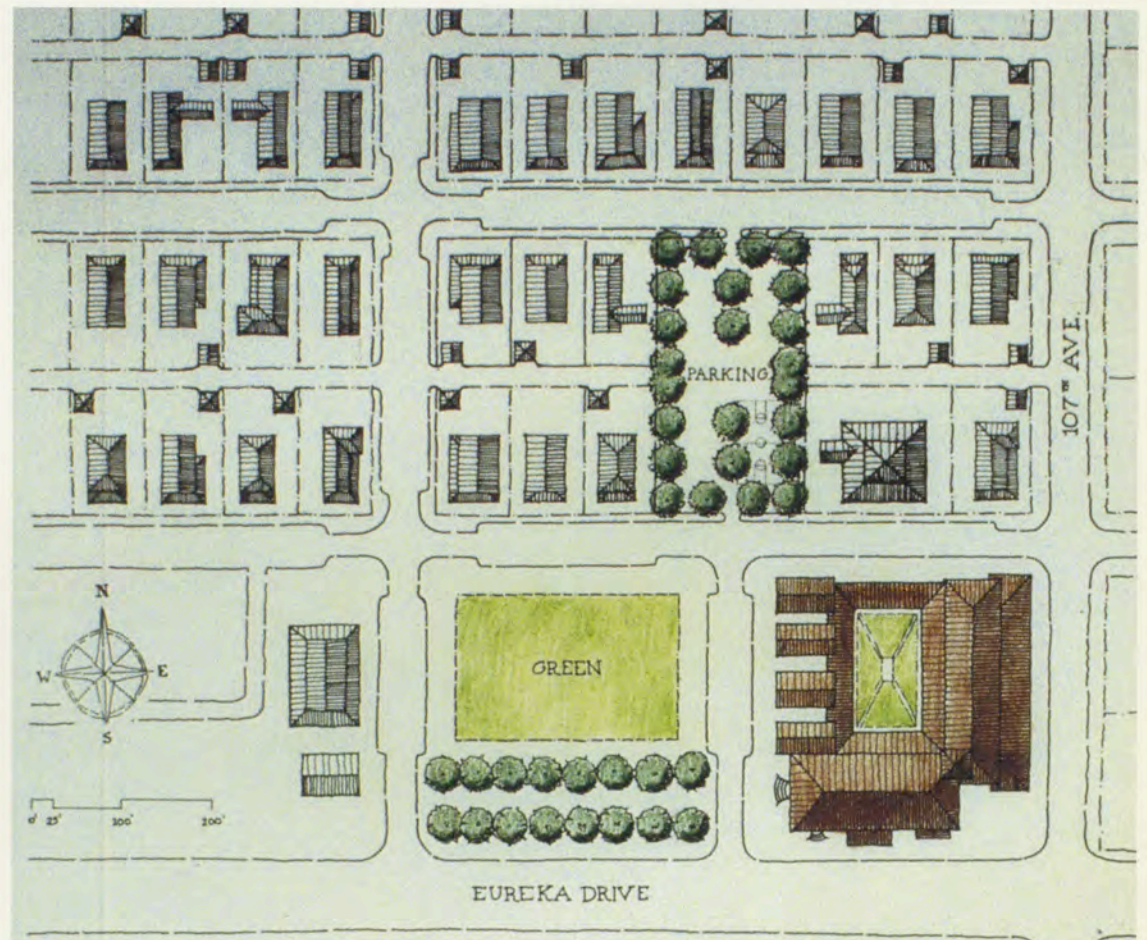
Frank Martínez, Architect Intern
Assistant Professor,
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Right: Site Plan, Ecumenical Center,
West Perrine.

Bottom Right: Perspective, Ecumenical Center,
West Perrine.

Bottom Left: Neighborhood Center,
West Perrine.

Drawings by Project Team.



New Transit Station and Town Square Study

By extending bus or rail transit southwards along the FEC railroad right of way just west of U.S. 1, South Dade residents can receive two major benefits: an inexpensive, convenient alternative form of transportation, and the creation of new "town squares" that serve as focal points for the sprawling communities.

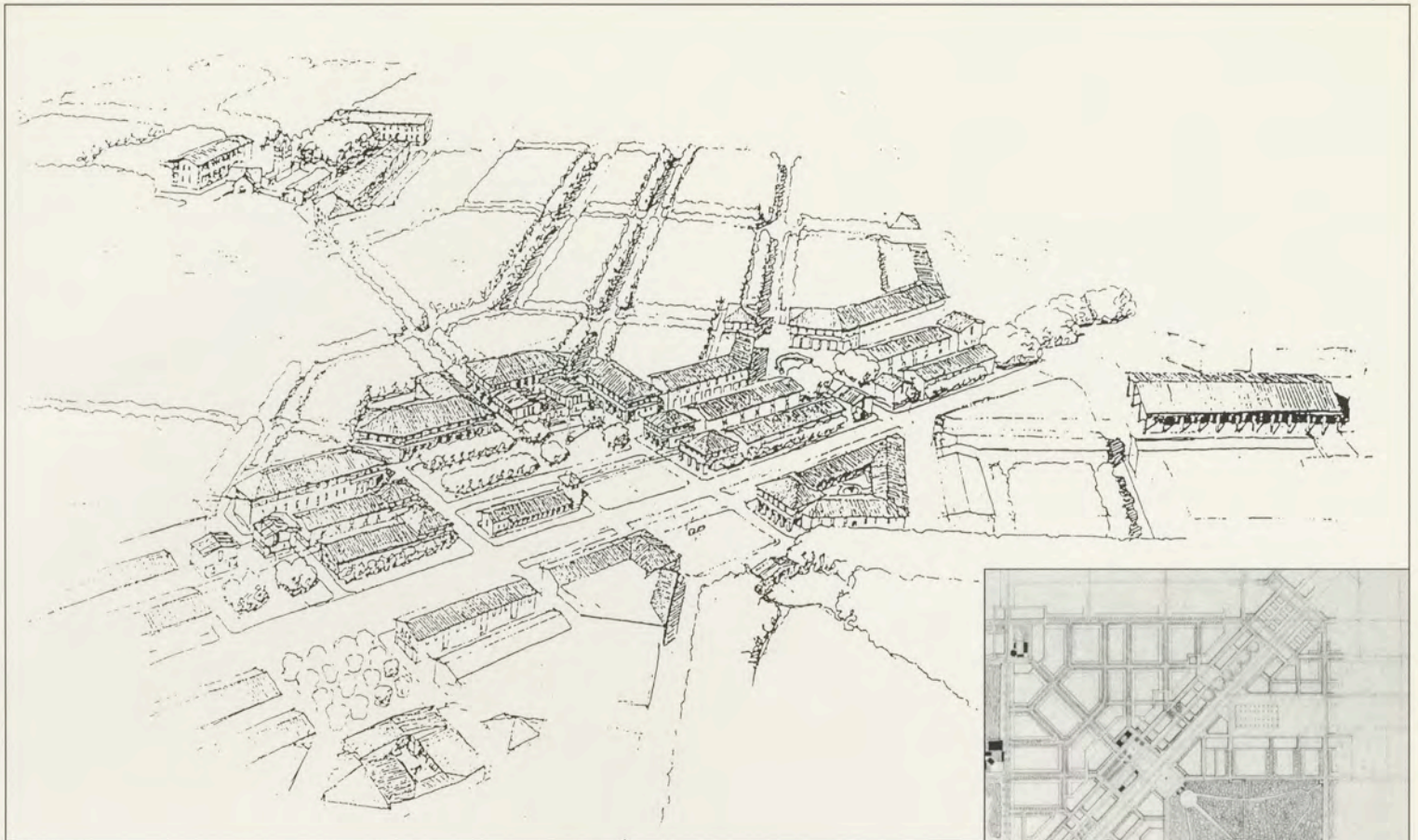
Each town square spans U.S. 1, and has a particular identity, symbolizing that community. As a result, bus and rail riders – as well as automobile drivers – immediately recognize when they have entered a specific town: Perrine, Princeton, Goulds, or Naranja.

This case study examines two sites along U.S. 1 proposed as model transit stations and town squares. Broader and more detailed plans are necessary to encourage efficient, pedestrian-friendly community development that promotes the use of mass transit.

Goulds

The transit stop for Goulds is placed at Cauley Square, at the intersection of Miami Avenue & U.S. 1, where the post office already offers a community focus. On the west of the town square, the historic buildings of Cauley Square are to be rebuilt. On the east, the town square includes the entry to the existing park on Bailes Road.

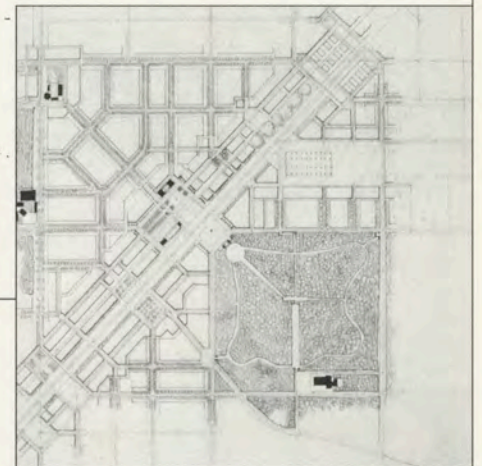
Proposed construction includes a transit station, a town green, a meeting hall, additional commercial and residential buildings and a special parking space for mobile social service units.



Above: Aerial Perspective, looking north towards Cauley Square Transit Station, Goulds.

Right: Site Plan: Cauley Square Transit Station, Goulds.

Drawings by Charles Barrett.



Naranja

The transit stop for Naranja is located at SW 260 St., just north of the existing rail junction for Homestead Air Force Base. It has two components: a commuter station serving the residential neighborhoods south of U.S. 1, and a commercial depot addressing the farm-lands to the north and west.

The town square is surrounded by a health care facility, a youth center, and a recreation center for senior citizens. The plaza is paved with local stone and shaded by a grove of orange "naranja" trees.

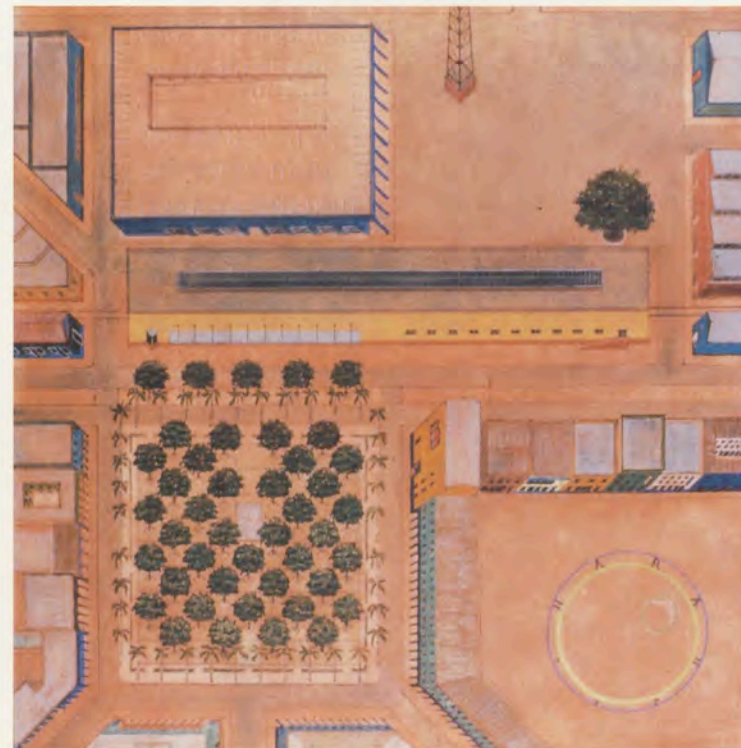
During the week, the commercial depot provides for the packing, storage, processing and transportation of farm goods. On weekends, the depot functions as a farmers' market for fruits, vegetables, flowers, and nursery plants.

The commuter station serves as the center of Naranja's public transportation system. Local jitneys, buses, automobiles and pedestrians converge at the town square throughout the day.

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Lecturer, UM School of Architecture

Mónica Ponce de León, Architect Intern
Lecturer, UM School of Architecture

Ramón Trías, Architect Intern
Research Associate,
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council



Right: Aerial View, Transit Station and Square, Naranja.

Top Right: Site Plan, Transit Station and Square, Naranja.

Bottom Right: Site Plan, Naranja.

Drawings by Project Team.



The Deerwood Park Study

Located near Metrozoo along SW 152nd Street, Deerwood consists of several components – a strip shopping center, an industrial park, a residential neighborhood, a network of canals and quarry lakes – none of which work together.

The shopping center was not a successful venture before the hurricane, while the industrial area and the housing subdivisions were growing slowly. One problem is a road network with limited accessibility to Richmond Heights and other adjacent neighborhoods.

In this case study, Deerwood's natural amenities, such as canals, quarry lakes, and open land, are protected and planned as public amenities that add beauty and value to the neighborhoods.

Deerwood's existing residential neighborhoods are rebuilt as they were before the hurricane. Open residential land is developed with a variety of hous-

ing densities.

The shopping strip is redesigned around the existing anchor stores to front onto SW 152 Street. A series of arcaded shops and artisan studios are developed along the canal.

In order to function as a town center, the shopping center is linked with new pedestrian bridges across the canal to the residential neighborhoods.

A town hall on a public square gives the community an emergency shelter and distribution staging site.

The light industrial park adjacent to the Florida Turnpike is separated from Deerwood's residential areas by a low-tech, live/work area. New loft buildings incorporate light industrial shops with residential housing above.

Rich McLaughlin, Architect Intern
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council



Left: Site plan, Deerwood Park.
Above: Perspective, Live/Work neighborhood, Deerwood Park.
Drawings by Project Team.

The Naranja Lakes Study

Naranja is a community of approximately 1,300 acres adjacent to a part of the drainage system that originally connected the Everglades and Biscayne Bay.

Within its boundaries are commercial and light industrial buildings, residential properties, agricultural land, and open land suitable for new development. This study provides a vision of Naranja as a community with a center.

In this case study, the southern edge of U.S. 1 maintains its agricultural character and some of the industrial properties lining the northern edge of U.S. 1 are reclaimed for agriculture. This serves two purposes: it creates a public awareness of the region's unique agricultural character and reinforces community identity by creating a greenbelt between Naranja and neighboring towns.

The residential portion of Naranja is subdivided into three identifiable neighborhoods:

The Transit Center Neighborhood

Four-story mixed-use buildings surround the proposed Naranja transit station on U.S. 1 across from the main town square.

Retail stores, offices and residential apartments serve the local neighborhood and nearby agricultural areas. Facing the town square and its grove of "naranjas" is a civic building which doubles as an emergency shelter and distribution center. In this neighborhood, the land along Tallahassee Road is designated for small farming lots.

The "Rebuilding" Neighborhood

This single-family neighborhood is slowly rebuilding itself and no changes are proposed.

The "Walk-away" Neighborhood

An area where condominium projects were destroyed and whose residents collectively decided not to rebuild has been called the "walk-away" neighborhood. The former pattern of scattered one-story apartments is replaced by a new street network with 200' x 400' blocks for single-family houses and townhouses. A new neighborhood square is surrounded by shops, offices, and apartments.

A portion of the walk-away subdivision is returned to its natural state as a wetlands park and recreation center. That land is reclaimed with native plant species to encourage animal habitats.

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Estella Valle, Architect Intern



Right: Site plan, Naranja Lakes.
Far Right, Top: Axonometric, "Walk-Away" neighborhood square, Naranja Lakes.
Far Right, Center: Perspective, "Walk-Away" neighborhood, Naranja Lakes.
Far Right, Bottom: Main Street, Transit Center Neighborhood, Naranja Lakes.
Drawings by Project Team.

Florida City: Agricultural Workers' Housing Study

New housing for agricultural workers is one of the keys to a prompt recovery of South Dade's agricultural industry. This is most evident in Florida City, where Hurricane Andrew devastated trailer parks and substandard, overcrowded rental housing. Affordable and structurally sound housing alternatives are essential for the agri-workers, a third of whom are permanent South Dade residents. This case study presents two recommendations, illustrated on the same site.

Option A – Detached Housing

A 40-acre parcel in Florida City is designed as a traditional neighborhood with a strong sense of community and identity. Neighborly connections from block to block are encouraged by a network of affordable housing, a town square and a market, a day-care center, a health care facility, and neighborhood parks. The pedestrian-friendly plan consists of a series of small blocks surrounding the main square and forming several other smaller parks and playgrounds.

The houses are arranged on each block like pinwheels, each directly adjacent to the 10-foot wide sidewalk. This layout creates a more secure public area and uncommonly large side and back yards, even though lots are smaller than average (60' x 60'), creating a comfortable density of six units per acre. The houses are similar to those designed by non-profit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity. The three- and four-bedroom houses of approximately 1,200 square feet are designed for easy construction, using conventional and prefabricated systems.

Option B – Courtyard Housing

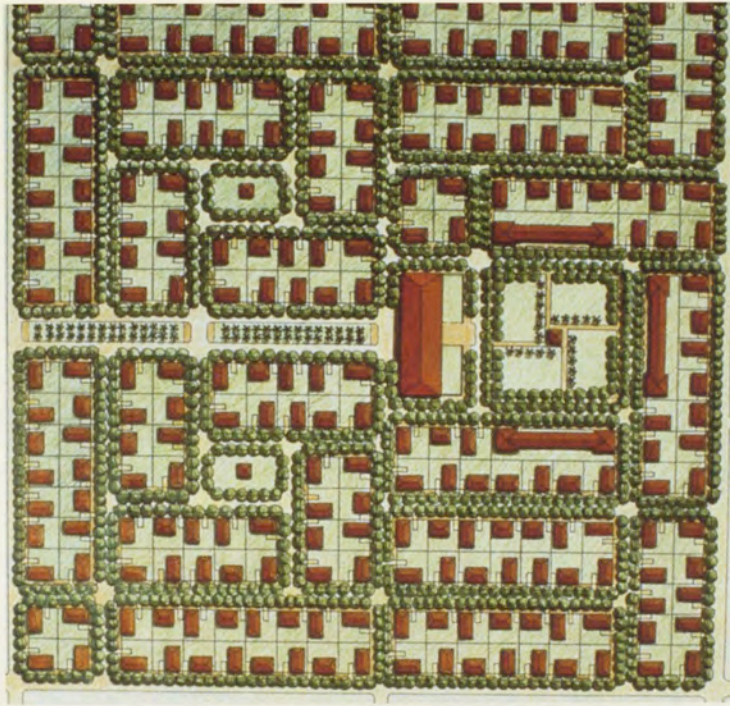
A gateway and a decorated water-tank herald the entrance to a new courtyard housing project to be named Little Guatemala. The neighborhood's urban patterns, proportions and elements are based on traditional Latin American communities, so residents can take pride in these cultural references.

The 16-square blocks in the housing development are organized around a central plaza and include a public fountain, a church, an open-air chapel, a community center, public gardens and an orange grove. A smaller plaza is dedicated to Rigoberta Manchu, the 1992 recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Flexible courtyard housing accommodates the requirements of varying household sizes. Buildings are embellished with characteristic motifs, and the neighborhood is painted in the colors of the Everglades' sunset.

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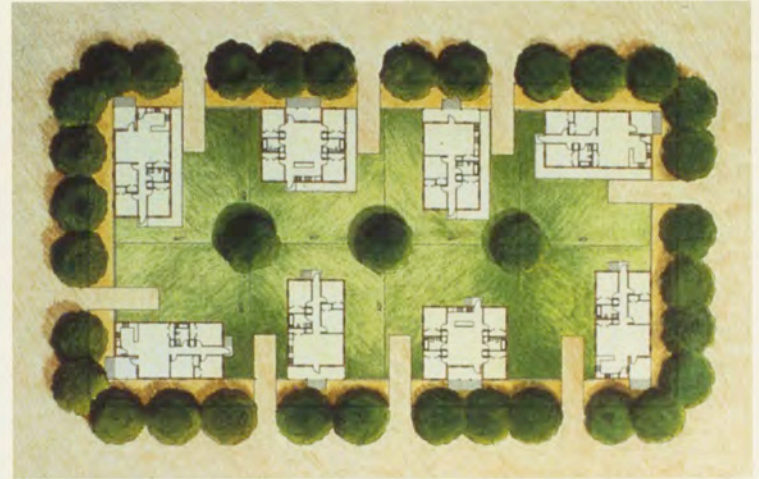


Above: Roof plan, detached single family housing, Florida City, Option A.

Top Right: Site plan, typical block, detached single family housing, Florida City, Option A.

Bottom Right: Perspective, residential street, detached single family housing, Florida City, Option A.

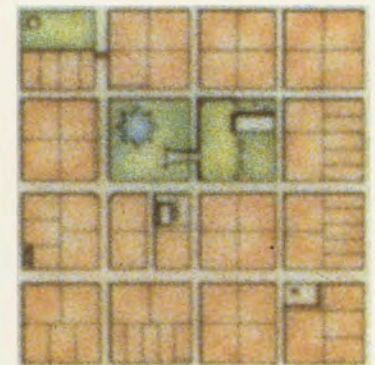
Drawings by Project Team.



Above: Perspective, Plaza de la Estrella and Community Center, Florida City, Option B.
Drawing: Roberto Behar.

Top Right: Site plan, courtyard housing, Florida City, Option B. Team drawing.

Bottom Right: Perspective, Entrance to Little Guatemala, Florida City, Option B.
Drawing: Roberto Behar.



The South Miami Heights Community Center and Caribbean School Study

Caribbean Elementary was one of three Dade County public schools destroyed in the hurricane that must be rebuilt from the ground up.

Owners of the larger properties adjacent to the school have expressed their willingness to undertake a cooperative venture with local residents to create a community center for the neighborhood, while building single- and multi-family housing units on undeveloped land.

In this case study, Caribbean Elementary is rebuilt as a full-service school, incorporating a health care facility, an early childhood center, and adult education classrooms. The school's cafeteria doubles as a community center, meeting hall, and emergency shelter, while the media center doubles as a community learning center.

The new community center faces a new neighborhood green space, always available for gatherings, with a special parking area designated for mobile social services.

A small portion of the undeveloped properties around the school is dedicated to a police athletic league program, a public park, a game area, and public services.

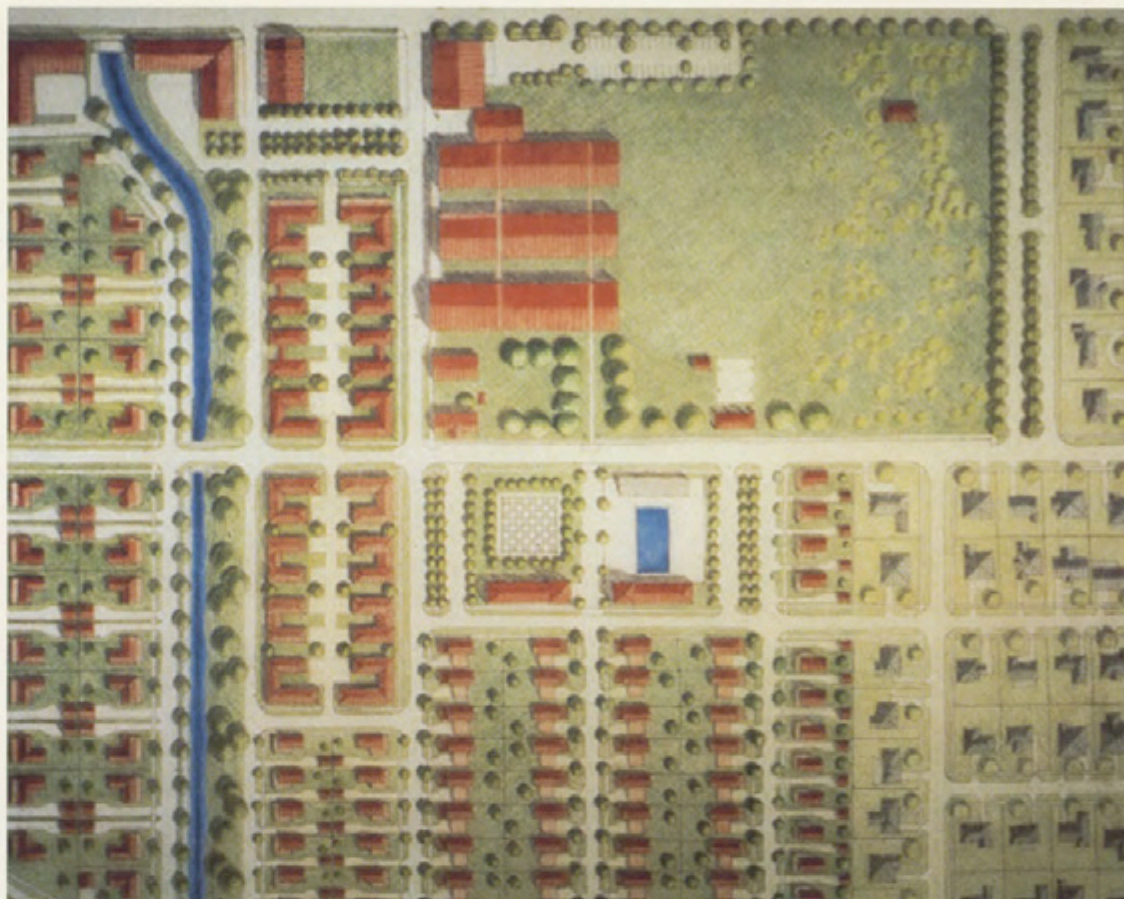
The remaining properties are developed as low-density housing.

On the eastern edge of this community, an existing canal is enhanced to become a neighborhood amenity. Native planting is proposed in the 120 foot median of 117th Avenue to create a lineal park.

Suzanne Martinson, AIA, Architect
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Top : Context Plan, South Miami Heights.



Bottom Left: Perspective, School Cafeteria/
Community Center, South Miami Heights.

Above: Site Plan, South Miami Heights.

Drawings by Project Team.

The Homestead Air Force Base Study

A combined civilian and military airport can be instrumental in the economic recovery of Homestead and is in the national interest of both the U.S. Departments of Defense and Transportation. Therefore, this case study proposes Homestead Air Force Base be rebuilt as a mixed-use civilian and military airport.

The secured "military zone" would accommodate air rescue and Coast Guard flight operations, along with the Air Force Southern Command Headquarters, relocated from its current location in Panama.

The "civilian zone" includes an overnight courier exchange compound, a large scale aircraft maintenance facility along the existing staging platform, a passenger terminal, and an additional runway for commercial passenger traffic.

The primary access road on the existing base is converted into a boulevard that bisects a new industrial park and terminates at the passenger terminal. The industrial park hosts a wide range of high-tech facilities, with office, assembly and storage buildings.

The existing rail line spur is preserved for daytime passenger use and freight use at night. This line feeds into the Metrorail corridor, which can be used to

connect the airfield with northern destinations in the county. Tri-rail would be extended from Miami International Airport to the Dadeland Mall Transit Station. This rail line feeds into the U.S. 1/Metrorail transit corridor, thereby providing a direct link between these two air terminals.

The Homestead Air Force Base housing area is replaced with an "innovation" neighborhood built according to the Traditional Neighborhood District code recently adopted by Dade County. It includes a public square, a town meeting hall and emergency distribution center, and a parking area designated for mobile social services.

A variety of housing is built along existing streets and utilities around the existing golf course. Small hotels and bed and breakfast inns serve business visitors as air travel at the facility increases.

Reinaldo Borges
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Site Plan, Homestead Air Force Base.

Drawings by Project Team.



Perspective, "Innovation" Neighborhood.



Perspective, Industrial Park.



Perspective, Industrial Park.

The Cutler Ridge Business District Study

Located midway between Dadeland and Homestead at the crossing of the Florida Turnpike and U.S. 1, Cutler Ridge is the logical regional focus of South Dade's business and shopping.

The "crossroads" site now includes a light industrial work center to the north, cohesive residential neighborhoods to the east and west and the South Dade Government Center and Cutler Ridge Mall to the south. The Black Creek Canal at the southern edge connects Cutler Ridge to other neighborhoods and to Biscayne Bay.

Before the storm, the Cutler Ridge Mall was not economically healthy. This case study recommends rebuilding the mall as a real town center and a central business district for South Dade.

Access to Cutler Ridge is improved by connecting U.S. 1 and the turnpike in all four directions, extending the access road on both sides of the turnpike and locating the proposed busway/light rail system stop on the east side of U.S. 1.

Office buildings create a buffer zone between the highway and new housing areas. A day care center, housing for senior citizens, and a place of worship are a part of the new residential neighborhood.

For the Cutler Ridge Mall, two options were studied.

Option A assumes the existing department store buildings in the southern quadrant remain in their present location and the indoor shopping mall is replaced with retail stores fronting onto the street, and a town center, all surrounding a linear green space.

Option B assumes the old shopping mall is replaced with an office and retail area built around a large park-like square.

In both plans, the new public space is anchored by department stores and lined with arcade shops. Offices and apartments are located above the shops. Civic buildings such as a community hall, post office, transit station and church are included in the neighborhood. An outdoor performing arts center and bandshell, an

amusement park for tots, an outdoor sports bar, and cafes are to be added as well.

Both plans create gathering places for community organizations, service providers, churches, and homeowner associations.

A new regional park promoting pedestrian, bicycle and canoe trails is developed along the Black Creek restoration and reclamation area adjacent to the South Dade Government Center.

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Top Left: Perspective, shopping street, Option A.

Above: Perspective, park square, Option B.

Left: Perspective, linear green space, Option A.

Drawings by Project Team.

Above: Perspective, shopping arcade, Option B.



Site Plan, Option A.



Site Plan, Option B.

AFTERWARDS

Where do we go from here?

The ideas formulated by the New South Dade Planning Charrette are designed to stimulate fresh thinking about the rebuilding process. Never before have so many volunteers from diverse fields of professional expertise come together to look at the challenges and opportunities for the future of South Dade in such an intense manner.

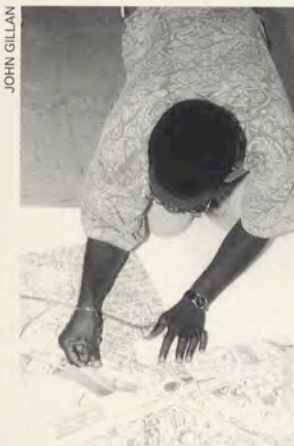
This study has begun that process of establishing collective awareness at many levels: designers understanding residents' needs; agencies grasping each other's objectives and opportunities; professionals working in interdisciplinary teams comprehending each other's point of view; universities and professional associations building on each other's strengths; visionaries acknowledging the reality of situations; and realists appreciating the need for a vision.

If only one idea from the charrette is incorporated in the overall plan for South Dade, then this volunteer effort will have been proven worthwhile. But because our collective creative process has been guided by the principle of "visionary realism" – finding solutions that are practical as well as inspiring – we believe that many of today's concepts will become tomorrow's reality.

Already, several proposals are proceeding into a planning and predevelopment phase, as residents, businesses and public agencies continue working toward the future – one that fulfills our hopes by remaining firmly rooted in South Dade's unique natural and cultural context.

If you like these ideas, talk to your neighbors, community leaders, and elected representatives. Together, we can create a New South Dade.

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