NORTHEAST SIXTH AVENUE
City of North Miami, Florida

A Citizen’s Masterplan
CHARRETTE REPORT
July 14, 2000

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REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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City of North Miami
A Citizens' Master Plan

prepared by
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council

With and for the citizens of North Miami

Acknowledgements

Mayor Frank Wolland, Councilwoman Jeannette Carr, Councilman Scott Galvin, Councilman Michael Blynn, Councilman Ossmann Desir; City Manager Lee Feldman; City Staff: Deputy City Manager Anita Holloway; City Grants Administrator Miguel Seco; Director Parks & Recreation Department Jean Fountain; Director Administration Department Carol Mears; Director Community Planning & Development Ana Rijo-Conde; Director Public Works Mark Collins; Police Chief Tom Hood and all the officers and staff of the North Miami Police Department; Florida Department of Children & Families Dwight Danie; FDOT Jo Penrose; Gary Wohlforth; Ted Ravelo and the Central North Miami HOA; Clarence Merke and the Sunlist Grove HOA; North Miami High School, Charles Hankerson; Patricia Rogers Libert; Mij Sezzin and the residents of Keystone Point; North Miami Middle School Irene Wisenhaker Clark; North Miami Elementary PT.A Pradel Vilme and J. Michel Voltaire; Neighborhood Crime Watch John & Terry Sawyer; Bill & Penny Valentine, Greater North Miami Chamber of Commerce and all the citizens of North Miami.
Who Cares About NE 6th Avenue?

The experience of living, working and shopping along NE 6th Avenue should be one of the delights of North Miami. Around it, a diverse sustainable economy and an enchanting community life should be blooming year after year.

NE 6th Avenue, however, is now the kind of corridor most investors and residents prefer to avoid. A unique location is treated as if it were Anywhere, USA – a place where real estate values and commerce have been traded down for parking lots and rush hour capacity.

Five decades of single-minded road widening and inappropriate zoning practices have taken their toll. Irregular setbacks, different building heights, little or no landscaping, a large concentration of low income, multi-family buildings and endless parking lots are a result of current zoning codes. Absentee owners and a general lack of concern for the corridor make it seem as if the community has just given up on it. What will be done to make this corridor work for people, instead of just for cars?

NE 6th Avenue offers businesses great exposure, convenient access and a location that is hard to match. The proximity to downtown, the beach, entertainment, shopping and thousands of jobs makes it privileged. The properties that front this corridor should be some of the most valuable real estate in the region. Yet many developments are aging and are approaching obsolescence. What will replace them?

The Avenue remains inconvenient because of its excessive width. It is jammed at its intersection with NE 125th Street and almost empty for the rest of its length (especially in off-peak hours). Its design makes NE 6th Avenue the kind of road that scares away pedestrians, cyclists and transit users alike.

Choose Your Future

The citizens of North Miami want something better. They want to raise the community's expectation for NE 6th Avenue to a higher level. This Master Plan is the tool for an historic turnaround. Great visions of what could be done have been drawn up. Coherent ideas for replacing the current chaos have emerged from a community working together on this project. These are attainable visions, not just pretty pictures. The physical place that could grow during the next generation could be a national model of inspiration, practicality, and wonder.

Leave a Worthy Legacy

This is an interesting time in the history of this region, perhaps even comparable in some ways to the 1920’s when Florida was being rapidly settled. Developers went out of their way to create beauty and a sense of history to lure people to the unvisited territory. In the process, talented designers left marvelous gifts to future generations in Addison Mizner’s Boca Raton, George Merrick’s Coral Gables, John Nolen’s new towns and even in the original layout of the neighborhoods and streets of North Miami. Today, Florida communities are resuming work on this legacy. It is time for NE 6th Avenue to mature past the “anything goes” mentality, which has gripped the corridor for so long. Imagine what your grandchildren might see in this place.

Revitalizing NE 6th Avenue is central to the future of the economy and to the quality of life of the entire city. You’re all in this together. Using the images and designs in this booklet, seize the vision for making NE 6th Avenue one of the most memorable places in America. Join forces to transform the corridor’s physical image and performance by doing something each year. Start small if you must, but start now.

Who should care about NE 6th Avenue? Everyone should!
The memorable character of any region or community is established in its streets and public spaces. On a street like NE 6th Avenue, used by a lot of visitors and regional neighbors, there is no avoiding the fact that this corridor will form the lasting impression many people have of the City. Whether for passengers in mass transit vehicles or private cars, pedestrians or cyclists, NE 6th Avenue should be comfortable, safe, pleasing and even enlightening in terms of the experience it offers of the City.

This experience is particularly important to tourism. All tourism destinations of world-class status have great streets. Certain physical qualities are required for a great street. And it is the combination of all these elements, not just one or two, that contribute to create unforgettable mental images. What lasting impression is left after a drive down NE 6th Avenue today?

It is absolutely necessary to establish a sense of place. Sidewalks where people can walk easily and safely seem like an obvious and easy goal to achieve. But that alone doesn’t create a sense of place. Only healthy streets contribute to a sense of place. A healthy street is achieved when the following qualities are combined:

- Human Presence
- Congeniality
- Humane Protection
- Visibility, Light and Openness
- Order
- Connections

This report documents the plans and instructions to achieve these qualities.

Lewis Mumford on the problem of transportation:

"It is an absurdly impoverished technology that has only one answer to the problem of transportation; and it is a poor form of city planning that permits that answer to dominate its entire scheme of existence…Future generations will perhaps wonder at our willingness, indeed our eagerness, to sacrifice our cities and towns, the education of our children, the care of the ill and aged, the development of the arts, to say nothing of ready access to nature, for the topsided system of mono-transportation…”

Excerpt from The City in History, 1961
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NE 6TH AVENUE
City of North Miami, Florida

The NE 6th Avenue Master Plan is the citizens’ view for the ultimate growth and form of this corridor as a public amenity and a regional destination.

The main ideas were developed during a public design Charrette held from May 12 through May 19, 2000. The Charrette was held at the City of North Miami Griffing Adult Center and was well attended by a good cross section of the community. A work in progress presentation was held on the evening of May 19, 2000, at the Council Chambers. Work continued in the weeks that followed these initial public events.

The citizens, with the assistance of a professional team, studied the many challenges faced by the community and proposed specific solutions. A final presentation by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council staff was held on July 14, 2000. At that time, further citizen and professional input was taken into account to produce this final report.

The citizens studied the different elements that compose NE 6th Avenue and described a set of elements to transform and improve the Avenue:

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<th>The Citizens’ Requests</th>
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<td>• Narrower Street</td>
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<td>• Landscape Publix Lot</td>
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<td>• Solve Congestion at NE 125St &amp; NE 6 Ave</td>
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<td>• Crossings For Kids</td>
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<td>• Ice Cream Shops</td>
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All these ideas are graphically and textually described in this report.
The North Miami Design Charrette grew out of a proposal of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council commissioned by the City of North Miami. The entire Treasure Coast design studio staff and a number of other urban design and architecture professionals - (Correa Valles, Cesar Garcia Pons, Derrick Smith, Maria DeLeon Fleites, Glattings Jackson) - worked vigorously on the charrette and master plan for a full week. The charrette began with a public “Kick-Off” session on Friday night, May 12, 2000, at the Griffing Adult Center. Here the citizens familiarized themselves with the charrette process and the design team, and expressed issues of concern in their community. Over 40 residents, City staff and elected officials turned out the next morning for the citizen design workshop. With the assistance of the design team, citizens discussed design issues, drew their ideas onto maps of the City, and created their own Master Plans for the corridor.

At the end of the day, the plans were presented by a representative from each group. Ideas common to each of the citizen designs were quickly identified. It is this consensus the designers used to create the Master Plan.

The team set up its studio at the North Miami Police Station, where the doors were open for visitors all day and into the night throughout the week of May 11, 2000. An interim presentation of work-in-progress was made at the North Miami Council Chambers on May 19, 2000.

A final presentation of the charrette Master Plan was delivered on July 14, 2000.

The Meaning of Charrette-
Charrette means “cart” in French; various architectural school legends hold that at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in 19th Century Paris, students were still sketching as carts carried their boards away to be juried.

Today charrette means a high speed, intensive creative session in which a team concentrates on specific design problems with citizens and presents solutions.
The assembled public broke out into five citizen teams which created the plans above. A representative from each team then presented their plan. It became clear there were common elements to all the proposals.
The Citizens Master Plan - With the assistance of the design team, citizens discussed real design issues and drew their ideas onto maps of the area.

Above: Plans produced by participating citizens
The study area is the NE 6th Avenue corridor between NE 121st Street and NE 147th Street. Specific proposals were also made for the intersections at NE 6th Avenue and NE 125th Street, NE 6th Avenue and 135th Street, as well as for the vacant parcels along the corridor, and the expansion of schools and businesses on or near the corridor.
The "five-legged" intersection: five streets converge at this intersection, signal cycles cause delays along all these streets. There is insufficient stacking space for automobiles, especially along NE 125th Street, west of NE 6th Avenue. Insufficient stacking space causes cars to block access to other streets and businesses alike.

The triangular park wedged between Dixie Highway and 6th Avenue was intended to be a public space. Yet, it is separated from the community by interstate highway-sized arterial roads. There are no residential units present along the edges to ensure this park will remain relevant to the community.

The buildings that front the intersection (Walgreens, 7-11, McDonalds, and Chevron) do not relate to the street or to this most important gateway to the City of North Miami. Instead, they are setback in an expanse of surface parking. The effect is a brutal environment for the pedestrian, and for the image of North Miami.

The Front Door

North Miami has a great history in its neighborhoods and housing stock, but it needs to devote more attention to the entrances to the City.

The intersection of NE 6th Avenue and 125th Street is the intersection of "Main & Main". The City's downtown begins at this intersection. Nothing here signals the importance of the environment that lies ahead. A small McDonalds sign "announces" you have arrived.

NE 6th Avenue is one of the public faces of the community. An intricate combination of accumulated design errors, local neglect and policies beyond local control, have created the sense of hopelessness we heard described over and over. Where a community showcase belongs, three state roads converge. Overwhelmed, it seems as if the City has abandoned the properties along this corridor to the worst of contemporary development practice and let traffic engineers decide its fate.

But one key element has changed. Although it is a state road, the community has decided it can be reinvented as the grand entrance to the City.
"Welcome to Anywhere, U.S.A."

The intersection of NE 6th Avenue, NE 125th Street and West Dixie Highway is chaotic. The flow of traffic is unnecessarily intricate and interrupted, and the environment repels pedestrians. This sense of chaos is heightened by the hodge-podge of freestanding structures in the vicinity: gas stations, fast-food joints, video-rentals, etc. These structures have been designed without regard to the urban identity of North Miami. Their designs originate in distant corporate offices that have little interest in improving the urban environment of North Miami. They follow a formula that pays limited attention to the building traditions of the community.

Several factors add to the chaos at this intersection:
- Insufficient stacking distance
- A "5 legged" intersection
- High volumes of traffic
- Inappropriate zoning practices
- Poor street design

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), together with the County and the City, is working on a proposal to redirect traffic that should alleviate some of the congestion at this intersection. The images on the left show the proposed solution that will be implemented in October of this year.

Although this may provide some alleviation of the problem, it is not the best long term solution for North Miami. This redirection of traffic will improve the situation at the intersection, at a cost of impacting the surrounding neighborhoods. It will not solve the physical appearance of the entrance to downtown, the poor street design, or add to the real estate value and attractiveness of the City.

In order to address the major issues that affect this intersection today, the Master Plan proposes a complete reconfiguration of this intersection as well as the intersection of NE 125th Street and West Dixie Highway (west of 6th Avenue). These two intersections need to be addressed to restore order and, at the same time, set the stage for new commercial investment and a dignified entrance to downtown.
How can this environment be improved for both pedestrians and drivers? First, an elliptical roundabout should be installed in place of the intersection of West Dixie Highway, NE 125th Street, and NE 6th Avenue. When a modern roundabout is introduced, traffic signals are eliminated. The roundabout is a yield-at-entry circle. In other words, drivers already in the ellipse have the right of way, and drivers entering the ellipse must wait for a gap in the circulating traffic. Not only will a roundabout ease congestion, but it will also force drivers to slow down both day and night. Wherever roundabouts have been installed in the United States and in Europe, they have been accompanied by a drop in automobile accidents and have demonstrated greater efficiency in regulating the flow of traffic. This is because they keep cars moving constantly at a lower speed that does not intimidate pedestrians. In contrast, long waits and quick accelerations characterize large signalized intersections.

In addition to installing a roundabout, the Master Plan recommends the reconfiguration of the intersection between West Dixie Highway and NE 125th Street (west of NE 6th Avenue). The blocks immediately west of NE 6th Avenue are to be reconfigured so that West Dixie Highway no longer meets 125th Street at an angle. Eastbound traffic is redirected, not into the surrounding neighborhoods, but to intersect NE 125th Street at a 90 degree angle. This turns a complicated intersection into a normal condition. Notice the geometry of this new block. It allows for a constant flow of traffic, without encouraging speeding. This doubles the "stacking" length for the intersection, reducing the wait for westbound drivers wishing to turn onto Dixie Highway west of the intersection.
These two reconfigurations (the roundabout and the blocks) work together. One does not replace the other nor do they work alone. They will be effective if implemented simultaneously. Once the elliptical roundabout is constructed, the properties that surround it should be rebuilt with mixed-use buildings that hug the ellipse, shaping the space and giving it meaning. This will add value to this intersection by giving it an urban identity.

The reconfigured blocks, the roundabout, and the buildings that define it, will help to turn a chaotic and hostile intersection into something graceful and urban, a unique public space that would be the pride of the community. Most importantly, this proposal will begin to restore the balance between pedestrian and driver, an example of sustainable growth for North Miami and the rest of South Florida.

Traffic calming devices, a small gesture, is also proposed at NE 5th Avenue. Every effort should be made to protect the surrounding neighborhoods.
Phase 1:
The roundabout and two travel lanes around it are installed. No buildings need to be removed except for the Chevron station and the Goodwill store. Chevron may find a different location would better serve its customers, as this location is safely accessible only by westbound drivers on 125th Street. These are the first steps in transforming the auto-oriented strip into a town center, a place that instills pride in North Miami.

Phase 2:
The zoning code is rewritten. Instead of mandating buildings to be set back far from the street, the code calls for buildings to be built along the sidewalk (the “build-to line”). The wide sidewalks around the ellipse are planted with a double row of live-oaks. If designed properly, this could be an ideal location for sidewalk cafes.

Ultimate Build Out
A continuous colonnade wraps around the space. The colonnade can be two stories high, with retail on the ground floor, and office space on the second floor. The upper floors are residential. Tasteful balconies extend from the facades and allow for the residents to watch the activity that takes place in the town center. This also benefits the City by placing "eyes on the street" both day and night.

Buildings are placed along the property line, leaving the center of the block open. The center of the block can then be organized to allow for shared parking. Access to these parking lots is through narrow lanes that act as service streets or alleys. In the future, these parking lots could accommodate parking structures. If the entire area is treated as one project, every effort should be made to scale down buildings. A commemorative obelisk, column, or fountain should be placed at the southern end of the ellipse. Drivers on West Dixie Highway, 125th Street, and 6th Avenue will see it from a distance, and it will signal to them that it is time to slow down. The buildings and trees that line the ellipse will reinforce the shape of the public space and give visual clues to drivers that this is not a through-highway, it is a town center. Instead of saying, "Welcome to Anywhere, U.S.A." this intersection will say, "Welcome to North Miami."
A Dignified Entrance To Downtown: Looking south from 123rd Street towards the new roundabout at the City’s new “Main and Main” intersection -- NE 125th Street, West Dixie Highway and NE 6th Avenue.
Inhuman Scale

NE 6th Avenue reveals several design problems that compromise both the safety of the street and the quality of the space. The street is excessively wide, and instead of a median pedestrians can use when crossing such a wide street, there is a "suicide lane" (a turning lane that serves both northbound and southbound traffic).

The width of the lanes is in excess of what it needs to be. Lanes that measure eleven or twelve feet have eroded North Miami’s neighborhoods. These lane widths are found on high-speed interstate highways. The right of way, including five lanes, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks totals seventy-one feet. Only twelve feet, or approximately sixteen percent are available to the pedestrian. It has been observed that the most successful streets allocate between thirty and fifty percent of their section to the pedestrian.

In addition to an excessive street width, there is a problem with head-in parking in most of the multi-family buildings along the corridor. This is accompanied by curb cuts that further reduce the safety of the pedestrian. With this sort of arrangement, there are expanses of black asphalt in front of residential units, with cars parking up to bedroom or living room windows. The combined effect of such unsound practices further increases temperatures along the entire street. A pleasant stroll along the corridor is unlikely.

The ultimate consequences of these design characteristics is the creation of an often deadly avenue, especially for the elderly and children, who more often must face the elements on foot in an environment designed primarily for high-speed driving. The higher the speed of traffic, the more serious and the vehicular accidents (involving both cars and pedestrians).
Time To Be A Great Street

Clear and precise building and street dimensions ensure design goals can be understood and followed by developers, engineers and planners. The Master Plan proposes a reconfiguration of NE 6th Avenue width as well as the uses and regulations of the buildings along it. The following diagrams of NE 6th Avenue show travel lanes, parallel parking lanes, medians along certain blocks, planting strips, sidewalks, and building placement.

The Master Plan proposes a unique reconfiguration of the corridor. Two different sections are proposed:
• two 11’ travel lanes with on-street parking on both sides and very wide sidewalks.
• two 11’ travel lanes with a central landscaped island and on-street parking on both sides.

Both sections are alternated throughout the entire corridor. The first one, a more “urban” section, is proposed near main intersections, where retail is encouraged. The second one, with the landscaped island, is present along the more residential portions of the corridor. This shift from one to the other causes traffic to move at slower, safer speeds and will invite pedestrians to spend more time on it. The section is variable for several reasons:
• motorists constantly have a “visual block” ahead that discourages them from speeding (avoiding the straight shot effect).
• medians contribute to safer crossing at areas near schools and where the residential component is higher.
• medians are interrupted at main intersections where mixed-use buildings with arcades create small retail areas. The interruption of the median contributes to this commercially oriented environment.

These mixed-use districts at the main intersections serve yet another purpose: residents along the Avenue and in the surrounding neighborhoods can satisfy their daily needs within a five minute walking distance from their homes.

Bike paths are not present in this section of NE 6th Avenue. The Master Plan suggests the implementation of the shared-lane concept or the designation of a specific bike path one street east of the corridor.
EXISTING CONDITION

Right Of Way 71'

FOUR 11' TRAVEL LANES 44'
ONE 11' TURNING LANE 11'
CURB & GUTTER 4'
TWO 6' SIDEWALKS 12'

PROPOSED: SHORT TERM

Right Of Way 71'

FOUR 10' TRAVEL LANES 40'
ONE 13' LANDSCAPED MEDIAN 13'
CURB & GUTTER 4'
TWO 7' SIDEWALKS (Encroaching) 14'
This section should not be installed along the entire length of NE 6th Avenue. At important intersections the median is absent, but the buildings are brought closer together. Colonnades along the ground floor cover widened sidewalks and provide an inviting shopping environment. Apartments are located conveniently above the stores. The change from the median cross-section to the colonnaded cross-section should occur several times throughout the Avenue. This further calms traffic because drivers will need to be constantly aware of the shifts in the street. NE 6th Avenue will continue to be a direct and efficient traffic route, but it will do so at lower speeds.
Looking North From NE 121st Street

The center turning lanes are removed and replaced with a landscaped island. One driving lane in each direction is converted to parallel parking and wider sidewalks. The total number of parallel parking spaces created along the street eliminates the head-in parking. Where once there was asphalt in front of homes, porches and front gardens could be constructed. This would add value to both the private residences and the public realm.

This section should not be installed along the entire length of NE 6th Avenue. At important intersections the median is absent, and the buildings are brought closer together.

- Parallel parking
- Planting strips for improved landscaping and protection to pedestrians
- Added second story
- Added porches
- Wide, continuous sidewalks
- Landscaped island
- Front gardens

©2000 TCRPC/Shailendra Singh with CVV
The view of NE 6th Avenue toward the residential section reveals some of the same problems as in the commercial areas. The intersections are wider than they need to be and there is a lack of shade. The proposed view illustrates a narrow residential street with a planted median, parallel parking and wide sidewalks. Coral Way in Coral Gables is an excellent example of a two-lane residential street with a large traffic volume. Because the street is so narrow, cars proceed with caution. The oak trees meet above the road and form a tree-tunnel. The houses have low garden walls along the property lines that delineate the private space without appearing defensive. Because of the quality of the urban space and the attention paid to architecture and landscape, Coral Way has maintained its value better than any other residential area in the region. What is remarkable is it is a major traffic thoroughfare, yet continues to hold its value.

In North Miami, instead of benches exposed to a blazing sun, there would be shaded bus stops designed to reflect the local architecture. New homes should be built on empty lots. These homes should reflect the building traditions of Florida: front porches, sturdy hurricane shutters, warm colors, and tropical gardens.
As a part of the construction of the landscaped island and the sidewalk widening program, bump-outs should be added every three to five parked cars and at certain intersections. These extensions of the sidewalk will cut pedestrian crossing time and improve the safety of turns. These bump-outs also serve as planting areas.

**ELEMENTS OF NE 6th AVENUE**

**The Street**
- Reconstruct NE 6th Avenue and maintain two travel lanes, one in each direction.
- Develop parking lanes on both sides of the street.
- Add a landscaped island along the residential and school areas.

**Sidewalks**
- Enlarge sidewalks to make it easier to walk down the street.
- Remove the existing obstructions that disrupt pedestrian flow.
- Improve street lighting for better safety.
- Bury the utility wires underground to reduce visual clutter.
- Plant large street trees to shade the sidewalk and create an edge where the buildings are set back.
- Add trees between parking spaces and at corners by using "bump-outs"
- Add appropriate street furniture and provide dignified and unified transit waiting stations.

**Fronting of Buildings at Main Intersections**
- Buildings should have mixed uses: apartments and offices above the shops.
- Buildings should have awnings or arcades over the sidewalk for shade.

**Parking**
- The street should have parallel parking to separate moving cars from the sidewalk wherever possible.
- Angled parking should be reserved for side streets.
- All other parking should be accommodated behind buildings and accessed through an alley.

**Crosswalks**
- Crosswalks should be present at all major intersections and should be highlighted with bricks, pavers, concrete bands or simple color in the pavement.

**Street Lighting**
- Eliminate cobra head type streetlights.
- Select a more elegant light standard and fixtures.
- Maintain consistency of lighting fixtures throughout the corridor.

**Landscaping**
- Customizing street tree plantings on a block-by-block basis will be necessary.
- Utilize large, native shade trees (i.e. live oaks) along the sidewalks and palm trees on medians.
- Plant a continuous strip along the more residential areas.

**Outdoor Café Seating**
- Outdoor dining should be allowed and encouraged in the City’s Zoning Code for the corridor.

**Newspaper Stands and Street Furniture**
- Ideally there should be one or two news kiosks in each commercial district staffed by a merchant.
- Benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, phone booths and other street furniture should be consistent and well maintained.
Street Furniture encompasses a wide variety of objects that must be present on a “good street”. This term includes street lights, benches, trash containers, kiosks, drinking fountains, bus stops, information boards, bicycle racks, signs, and newspaper stands. On a successful street, these objects should be thoughtfully designed, complementing the architecture of the place.

In North Miami there seems to be no coordination between these elements. One finds "cobra head" street lights. While these lights effectively illuminate the roadway, they are out of scale to the pedestrian. Several smaller lanterns can light the sidewalk and roadway as effectively as a few strong cobra head lights.

Trash bins are often located in the sidewalk or alongside it. They are sometimes surrounded by unsightly wooden or chain-link fences. Public litter containers are not consistent in location or materials.

On certain corners, large groups of newspaper racks create a sense of "anything goes." In the future kiosks should be encouraged to open along the street, especially at prominent intersections. In addition to newspapers, they can provide magazines, postcards, calling cards, and maps. If located conveniently, kiosks contribute to a lively street and can become neighborhood gathering places.

Some of the bus stops in North Miami do not provide adequate shelter, and none respect or even attempt to develop the architectural traditions of the community. Bus benches are exposed to the elements, lessening the likelihood they will be used. Benches in North Miami are used for advertising, contributing to a feeling that one is part of a billboard when waiting for the bus. In general, one would feel more inclined to use transit if the transit stop provided both comfort and dignity.
In the Master Plan, the large empty lot at the northwest corner of NE 6th Avenue and NE 135th Street is developed with mixed-use buildings that would help to spur the renaissance of the entire avenue. Though most of the buildings along it are residential, it would benefit the community to include small businesses at the main intersections. These buildings should have colonnades along their entire length.

Colonnades provide protection for the pedestrian. Above the stores are a variety of housing units; the building plans are flexible enough to accommodate efficiencies and apartments with one, two, or three bedrooms. They are accessed from a private forecourt along the street. This project combines elements common to successful streets in both Florida and the Mediterranean: colonnades, intimate balconies, a small plaza with a fountain that marks this neighborhood gathering place.
The vacant property at the northwestern corner of NE 6th Avenue and NE 135th street offers an incredible opportunity to accomplish two important goals:

- Define the mixed-use district at this important intersection, and
- Build the first structure that responds to the new regulations proposed for the corridor.

The northeastern lot (where a duplex family house sits today), should be incorporated into the future plan. What replaces it should mirror the northwestern corner.

Following is a series of floor plans and renderings (see page 24) of these two corner buildings.
Above: Floor plan showing retail, entrances to the residential units, and two formal plazas at the intersection of NE 6th Avenue and NE 135th Street. A colonnade runs along the building’s front.

Top Right: Second floor plan showing fourteen residential units (one and two bedrooms).

Bottom Right: Roof plan.
Publix is set back over 350 feet from NE 6th Avenue, rendering it incapable of contributing to the lively streetscape necessary for the Avenue to be attractive and safe (see existing conditions). The parking lot is a gaping hole along 6th Avenue.

The front portions of the lot could be reclaimed as part of the neighborhood by constructing mixed-use, multi-story liner buildings along NE 6th Avenue, which would result in the loss of only the most distant parking spaces (see Phase I). The ground floor can be occupied by Publix itself. There are certain parts of the store that may profit if better connected to the pedestrian environment. The sidewalk location of Publix’s bakery, flower shop, or film lab in these buildings should be advantageous. The liner buildings have a pass-through to the grocery store at the rear of the lot.

As North Miami completes the modifications to NE 6th Avenue and other projects outlined in this report, the streetscape will mature. Sooner or later, Publix can look to the extensive parallel parking along the Avenue to supplement its own lot. The logical final step is the construction of buildings on the remaining edges of the block (see ultimate build-out). This will have many advantages: it will improve the view from adjacent houses, it will allow for more residents within walking distance of their basic needs, and Publix will benefit by being located at a new focus of pedestrian-oriented commercial activity. If it is designed correctly, it will enhance the value of nearby residences. Residents will then be able to rediscover the joy of walking down a tree-lined street not only for their daily needs, but also because it will be a delight to do so.
What If?

Before And After
A New Public Park

The parcel of land on the southwest corner of NE 147th Street and NE 6th Avenue is special. It is strategically located at the northern entrance to the City. It contains very old large trees, including several live oaks. This land would be best utilized if it becomes a neighborhood park that announces the entrance to a special place.

The City does not have an overabundance of public parks, and none are as strategically located as this one to make a powerful statement that you have arrived at a unique destination. It should become available to the City to take full advantage.

The Park needs to be better connected to residents and other activities in the area to ensure it is safe and used throughout the day. Therefore, this proposal calls for a narrow lane along the western and southern edges of the park. Behind this lane are rowhouses, which allow for single-family dwellings. These rowhouses, however, are not an unbroken block. Careful attention has been paid to the sitting and number of units so not one of the trees need be removed.

Additionally, there is a new building at the corner of the lot which ideally would house the Parks and Recreation Department. The ground floor is open so views are not interrupted. On the second floor are the offices, and a staircase is located in the tower. The offices could be secured on the second floor so that the tower can remain open to the public. From the top of the tower, North Miami residents would have incredible views of the city.

These buildings, along with the rowhouses, a dignified bus shelter, the median planted with royal palms, and the ancient oak trees form a compelling gateway to the NE 6th Avenue corridor.
THE NORTHERN ENTRANCE TO THE CITY: NE 6TH AVENUE AND NE 167TH STREET
THE NORTHERN ENTRANCE TO THE CITY: NE 6TH AVENUE AND NE 147TH STREET

Northeast 6th Avenue with Parks and Recreation building in midground

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Great location, the revitalization of downtown, scenic views, shade, comfort, feeling of local importance, landscaping, the abundance of residences and the proximity to thousands of jobs. These are all contributing factors that will attract new visitors and residents. It is important to prepare the City for that growth so it happens in the citizens’ terms.

Until today, North Miami has been dealing with parking along NE 6th Avenue in the most damaging way for both its image and pedestrians. Each entity is to provide for its own parking. And this is accomplished by setting back buildings and paving their fronts. Other qualities being affected are:

- Character of the urban setting
- Locality and sense of place
- Proportions and spatial relationships
- Style and design

The best way to address parking is to locate it behind buildings. But it would be unrealistic to propose razing all existing buildings and pushing new construction all the way to the front property line, leaving the rear of the lots empty to accommodate parking. What can be done in order to create a similar scenario? One way would be to incorporate the first layer of lots (one lot) directly behind each building, and turn that into parking for the buildings along NE 6th Avenue. These lots would also serve as a buffer between the multi-family and mixed-use buildings along the corridor and the neighborhoods that lie behind. Another way to make up any parking lost in front of buildings is to develop on-street parking wherever possible along the full length of NE 6th Avenue.

Left: this scheme will allow for parking to be moved to the rear as well as provide parking lots within a half block of the corridor throughout its entire length.
The Design Team analyzed North Miami's Zoning Code for NE 6th Avenue. The image to the right shows North Miami's Zoning Map. This is a Regulating Plan that assigns specific uses to certain sectors. This map goes hand in hand with a Zoning Code that further describes the permitted uses in the different areas.

This technique of assigning certain uses to certain sectors on a regulating plan, developed in the 1950's and 1960's, is quality neutral at best and is responsible for today's segregation of uses. Multi-family buildings, setbacks that vary according to different heights, no incentive for businesses or other types of housing, parking problems and a general aesthetic decay, are consequences of the application (or lack thereof) of these outmoded codes and ordinances.

The goal of a good zoning code is to provide the following:

- An attractive built environment
- Human scale and comfortable streets
- High potential for attracting investment
- Built to be diverse/built to last
Parking Placement
Parking along the corridor should be in the rear of the buildings (especially in the mixed-use districts). Front setbacks on the mixed-use districts along the corridor should be zero. A required rear set back or a maximum building depth should be established. The image on the left shows parking capacity if one row of lots is used for parking.

Parking Quantity
- Instead of minimum parking space requirements...
- Use maximum
- Give credit for shared parking
- Pay & Go - create a public parking fund trust

Diagram 1:
No extra parcels needed to accommodate parking.

3 Story Single Use Building: 19,000 sf. 34 spaces
Floor Area Ratio: 1.27

3 floors: Residential 18 units @ 1,050 sf. 27 req'd.

2 Story Mixed Use Building: 12,650 sf. 34 spaces
Floor Area Ratio: 0.85

1st Floor: Retail 6,325 sf. 25 req'd.
2nd Floor: Residential 6 units @ 1,050 sf. 9 req'd.

Diagram 2:
One building parcel taken from residential area.

4 Story Mixed Use Building: 25,300 sf. 54 spaces
Floor Area Ratio: 1.13

1st floor: Retail 6,325 sf. 25 req'd.
2nd, 3rd, 4th fl: Residential 18 units @ 1,050 sf. 27 req'd.

3 Story Mixed Use Building: 19,000 sf. 54 spaces
Floor Area Ratio: 0.84

1st floor: Retail 6,325 sf. 25 req'd.
2nd floor: Office 6,325 sf. 19 req'd.
3rd floor: Residential 6 units @ 1,050 sf. 9 req'd.
AN OVERLAY CODE FOR NE 6TH AVENUE

Building Placement
- Remember buildings have FRONTS and BACKS
- Instead of building setbacks, use BUILD-TO lines

Mixing of Uses
- Require first floor retail
- Require a percentage of the building to be residential

Building Height
"The eye should see more street-wall than sky" In most cases, mixed-use buildings should be three to four stories high, with maximum height relative to the width of the Avenue.

"The height-to-width ratio of the space generates spatial enclosure, which is related to the physiology of the human eye. If the width of a public space is such that the cone of vision encompasses less street wall than sky opening. The degree of spatial enclosure is slight. The ratio of 1 increment of height to 6 of width is the absolute minimum, with 1 to 3 being an effective minimum if a sense of spatial enclosure is to result. As a general rule, the tighter the ratio, the stronger the sense of place and, often, the higher the real estate value. Spatial enclosure is particularly important for shopping streets that must compete with shopping malls, which provide very effective spatial definition. In the absence of spatial definition by facades, disciplined tree planting is an alternative. Trees aligned for spatial enclosure are necessary on thoroughfares that have substantial front yards."

Except From: Architectural Graphic Standards (Ninth Edition)

Lot Sizes
- Reduce minimum lot size requirements to 50’. It will add flexibility and encourage more building and investment under the Overlay Code
Streets

- Code streets, not areas.
- The new Code should address specific streets—their width as well as the height and use of buildings that surround them.

Illustrations

- Use graphics to describe siting, uses, building heights, setbacks, etc.
- Use the illustrations in this report to communicate the vision.
Making Memorable Places

Memorable places require three elements:

- A clear master plan
- Great streets
- Appropriate building types

The first element, the Master Plan, was created by the citizens who asked the charrette team to design building types that would fit their community, satisfy the housing needs of the existing residents and at the same time, attract new ones. The team analyzed different residential building types along NE 6th Avenue. A residential building type is defined as a structure that provides a habitable private realm while defining public realm.

Several building types that relate to the street with wide front porches and gardens instead of parking have been proposed. These buildings also relate to their lot and block to encourage community interaction. The Master Plan suggests the location for these building types.

There are three different ways to rejuvenate NE 6th Avenue that are relative to the building types:

Façade Improvements:

Some buildings, such as the one on NE 6th Avenue and 131st Street, require simple façade improvements and, depending on structural condition, some interior renovation.

Restoration/Preservation:

Identify buildings that are worth preserving. Adopt a historic preservation strategy and restore those buildings that are significant to the history of North Miami.

New Development:

Complete the neighborhood revitalization fabric with new, flexible development.
The images that follow show an analysis of existing building types, current parking requirements and proposed changes and strategies to bring them up to Code and Standards when NE 6th Avenue is reconfigured.

**Existing Building Types**

**Single Family House:** A residential building type. There are very few single family houses remaining along the avenue. Some, existing like the one on NE 135th Street, offer great opportunities. These strategically located units should be razed to allow for new development wherever possible.

**Front Courtyard Residential Building Type - Existing**

A multi-family dwelling located in a corner lot. Units are contained within a "U" or "O" shaped shell with a yard at the center, facing the street. Units share common areas.

If well maintained, the front courtyard is a great addition to the streetscape but provides little privacy to the users.

The building is set back 23 feet. Head-in parking for 26 cars is located behind and along the side street.

**Front Courtyard Residential Building Type - Proposed**

The 50' x 100' lot in the rear of the property is incorporated into the parcel. Parking (30 spaces) is relocated to the rear of the property.

Parking along the side street is replaced with landscaping.
Rear Courtyard Residential Building Type - Existing
A multi-family dwelling located in a corner lot. Units are contained within a "U" or "O" shaped shell with a yard at the center, behind the building. This configuration provides very private courtyards. This type of courtyard building is easily secured and therefore preferred for urban resettlement.

The building is set back 23 feet. Head-in parking for 35 cars is located in front and along the side street.

Rear Courtyard Residential Building Type - Proposed
The 50' x 100' lot in the rear of the property is incorporated to the parcel. Parking (40 spaces) is relocated to the rear of the property.

Parking along front and side streets is replaced with landscaping.

Dingbat - Existing
The building type most profoundly destructive to pedestrian usage. A building is raised on columns in order to maximize parking underneath. This building type occurs where the purpose is to maximize on-site parking.

Dingbat - Proposed
Wherever possible, encourage enclosure of the ground floor - at least of the side that faces the street. This enclosure should be habitable space (retail or residential), not just blank walls.
Generic Multifamily Buildings - Existing
Most of these buildings do not reflect a specific building type or architectural style. What they all have in common though, is parking along the front of the property.

Generic Multifamily Buildings - Proposed
Create a plan that will incorporate one row of lots at the rear of these buildings. Parking will then be moved to the rear. Front gardens and porches should be enforced as part of a parking relocation program.
This building is a perfect example of how simple changes can contribute to a better public environment.

Head-in parking is moved to the rear of the building. This allows the reconfiguration of the Avenue, where parallel parking with bump-outs every three to five cars and a median are incorporated. Bump-outs and median are then landscaped.

The enclosed balconies are "opened up". Screens are removed and railings replace walls. They become porches where people can sit and enjoy the view and at the same time, keep an eye on what is happening in the Avenue. A simple coat of paint gives this building the finishing touch.
This building does not contribute to a lively streetscape. It lacks a distinguishable visible entrance, and has large expanses of blank wall along the street. It is referred to as a "dingbat" building, raised above a parking area, hovering above the sidewalk and making the street feel unsafe.

The transformation depicts the same parking arrangement, however detailed with traditional elements, such as a wrought-iron gates and narrow windows. Windows, modest balconies and roof overhangs have been added to the façade. These changes are considerably more economical than replacing the entire building. They transform a defensive fortress into a positive pedestrian friendly structure.
The Master Plan shows how parallel parking can be used to prevent cars from parking head-in on residences along NE 6th Avenue. This allows paved areas in front of multifamily homes to become gardens. Native shrubs and trees can be used to minimize watering and to attract butterflies and birds. Instead of squeezing between parked cars to get to the front door, residents can now walk down a path from the sidewalk. Also, as this drawing shows, windows should be proportioned differently. Instead of leaky and insecure crank windows with jail bars, casement windows with hurricane shutters should be installed. If a central air-conditioning system is introduced, the boxes can be removed from the façade. The shingles should be replaced by durable Spanish tiles.
This building shows architectural details common to any drive-through burger joint. There is a large setback, a false mansard roof, a mix of wall textures, and incorrectly shaped windows. Improvements to this building type are relatively easy. The tiles can be replaced with a continuous parapet. Balconies can be grouped so that the façade appears more vertical. Window heights should be increased and louvered hurricane shutters should be added. Street and sidewalk setback should be infilled with ground-floor retail and a colonnade. The roof of this colonnade would serve as a terrace for the apartments above. These changes do not require a structural overhaul, but will heal a gap along NE 6th Avenue.
Mixed-use buildings for NE 6th Avenue

Mixing uses in a single building placed along the sidewalk is a time-tested model successful in defining "main" and retail streets. It also is a way to increase housing opportunities, safety, foot traffic and commerce along such streets. NE 6th Avenue is a natural place for mixed-use buildings. Where a two-story structure may be unaffordable for some to build all at once, the construction can be phased to build the ground floor retail first followed by construction of second floor office or residential.

This proposed building sits on a 50’ lot. Today, the zoning code for the avenue requires a minimum of 120 of frontage. This dimension should be changed in the new overlay code, reducing it to 50’ for the mixed-use districts and 75’ for the more residential area.

Row Houses along NE 6th Avenue

During the Charrette, several participants expressed the desire/need for row houses along the corridor.

The Master Plan proposes a specific location for this type around the entrance park on NE 6th Avenue and NE 147th Street, as well as around schools and other open areas. These parks and open areas are the ideal setting for row houses. Row houses help maintain the place lively and safe, while parks complement the limited private open space within each of the units.

This proposed house sits on a 35’ x 90’ lot. It is a 3 bedroom, 2½ bathroom unit. Additionally, it has a one-car garage and a one-bedroom-one bathroom apartment in an outbuilding.

BUILDING TYPE CHARACTERISTICS:

Construction: CBS
Use: Mixed Use Building
(Commercial/Residential)
Ground Floor: Commercial
Second Floor: Two 700 SF apartments
Facade: Front Porch or Awnings
Security: 0’ setback. Public rooms and Retail off the sidewalk.
Footprint: 32’ x 60’
Total Area: 3840 SF

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New Construction

This mixed-use building is unique in the way it handles parking. Parking occurs in the rear on the ground floor. The entire rear half of the building provides shelter for parked vehicles, and allows for a greater number of residential units above. The entrance to the residential lobby is along the street between two stores. Colors and materials reflect the architectural palette found in Florida and the Caribbean.
The High School expressed its need and desire for expansion during the Charrette. In doing so, it is important that the school reinforce the community-building principles found in the plan. During the last few decades, school boards have chosen to disregard several hundred years of experience by creating school buildings that are not worthy of their communities. These recently built schools are usually one story high, contain few or no windows, and are surrounded by extensive parking lots and playing fields. This arrangement is characterized by an inefficient use of land, a depressing learning environment, and disconnection from the community.

In contrast, older urban schools are compact, usually two or three stories tall, with dignified entrances and auditoriums located along the street. They have modest recess areas toward the rear. Neighborhood parks can serve as extensions of the school playing field. This illustrates well-designed schools work best if located in well-designed neighborhoods. Some excellent examples of these older schools exist in big cities, small towns, and villages across the United States (For example, Coral Gables Elementary, located in a bustling downtown).
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Images from the May 12, 2000 Charrette
NE 6th Avenue North Miami, Florida