Acknowledgments


TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
WITH AND FOR THE CITIZENS OF OVERTOWN
Overtown Redevelopment Area Design Charrette Report is the citizens' view of the ultimate growth and form of their community.

The main ideas were developed during a public design charrette held from July 16 through 23, 1999. The charrette was held at the Mt. Zion Church and was well attended by a good cross section of the community. Work continued in the week that followed the initial public workshop.

The citizens, with the assistance of a professional team, studied the many challenges faced by the community and proposed specific solutions. A presentation of work in progress by Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council's staff was held on July 23 and was a time to take into account further citizen and professional input. A final presentation will be held at a date to be determined by the Overtown Advisory Committee.

The Main Conclusions of the Charrette are:

1. Creation of a Center for Overtown with scale appropriate to the surrounding neighborhoods.
2. Redevelopment of two major districts along 2nd and 3rd Avenues. Historically, 3rd Avenue was the commercial center of Town, while 2nd Avenue provided an address for restaurants, jazz clubs, hotels and theatres. The master plan proposes to turn these streets back to their original uses, adding to the housing, entertainment and workplace components. The plan envisions the growth of this area and the connection to the central government/civic and commercial district that is downtown Miami.
3. Creation of new neighborhoods and restoration of the existing ones.
4. Creation of an infill strategy with plans showing the incorporation of future housing types with a range of affordabilities into the fabric which are reasonably sited to take advantage of the existing network of streets.
5. Creation and restoration of great streets.
6. Celebration of the public entrances to the community.
7. Turning the negative spaces under the highways into positive, safe places.
8. Improvement of existing public places and creation of new ones.
10. Expansion of schools and after school activities.

Other special projects proposed and/or considered in this report are:

- The integration of existing and proposed projects into the citizen's new vision (BAME, Folk Life Village, etc.)
- Gibson Park
- The Barkley Building
- The Cola Nip Building
- The Old Miami Arena
- The Culmer Center (and the area around it)
- The Dorsey Library
- The ramp to I-95 (by Mt. Zion Church)
- Several housing proposals for the different organizations and CDC's.
- Memorial stations.
- The Old Fire Station.
- Bus stops and street markers.
- Special sites for civic/recreational or other purposes (community garden, etc.).

TCRPC staff also analyzed the existing zoning code and this Report suggests some significant changes to it.
The mission of the Overtown Redevelopment Area Design Charrette is to engage the entire Overtown community in creating a unified vision for the residential and commercial renaissance of Overtown. The vision aims to restore Overtown as a destination to levels of self-sufficiency and economic and social viability.

This vision aims to:
• Empower Overtown residents and business owners to participate in and benefit from the renewal process;
• Elevate Overtown to new levels of economic and social viability and quality of life; and
• Make Overtown a national model for “grassroot” urban revitalization.

With community involvement the Overtown Charrette will identify the infrastructure and resources necessary to achieve this vision by promoting employment opportunities and economic growth as well as a clean, safe, attractive environment for residents, businesses, and tourists. To this end, the Charrette will seek out knowledge, wisdom, and opinions of Overtown residents, past and present; Overtown organizations; Overtown churches; Overtown business owners; and other individuals and/or organizations that have an interest in the community. The Charrette will build on past learning experiences and incorporate existing planning studies into a holistic strategy for implementation. This vision will be the guiding force for all future Overtown redevelopment.

Overtown Charrette Committee - May 12, 1999
**CHOOSE YOUR FUTURE**

During the process of creating this report, many local participants expressed the need for immediate action. They want to raise their community’s ambition to a higher level. This Citizen’s Vision is a tool for a historic turnaround, if City officials and Citizens work together as a united group. Great ideas of what could be done have have been drawn up. Coherent ideas for replacing the current chaos have emerged from working together on this project. These are attainable visions, not just pretty pictures. The physical place that could grow during the next generation would be a national model of inspiration, practicality and wonder.

**LEAVE A WORTHY LEGACY**

This in an interesting time in the history of South Florida and Overtown, perhaps even comparable in some ways to the 1920’s when Florida was being rapidly settled. To lure people to the unsettled territory, developers went out of their way to create beauty and a sense of history. In the process, talented designers left marvelous gifts to future generations in Addison Mizner’s Boca Raton, George Merrick’s Coral Gables, and John Nolen’s new towns. Overtown had its own history, a great community with a bustling Main Street, with churches, black owned stores and shotgun houses. N.W. 2nd Avenue was dubbed “Little Broadway”. Now, at the turn of the millennium, Florida communities are resuming work on this legacy. It is time for Overtown to mature past the “anything goes” mentality which has gripped the community for so long. Imagine what your grandchildren might see in this place.
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EXISTING CONDITIONS

Different views of Overtown

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Overtown - bounded by the Florida East Coast railroad tracks, NW 7th Avenue, 5th and 22nd Streets - may have gotten its name because it was “over the tracks” from Miami’s white downtown business center. It was also referred to as “color town” in the early 1900’s.

It was settled in 1896 by black men who migrated from the South and the Bahamas for jobs in Miami. When Miami was founded that same year, about 40 percent of the men who backed its incorporation were black. Women were not allowed to vote.

While some blacks settled in Lemon City, Coconut Grove and other towns, Overtown became the major black community in Miami.

N.W. 3rd Avenue was a bustling Main Street, with churches, black owned stores and shotgun houses. N.W. 2nd Avenue, dubbed “Little Broadway”, pulsed with the sounds of jazz greats such as Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald and Aretha Franklin.

But in the name of urban renewal, buildings were razed to allow for “modern” expressways, the metrorail and housing projects that disregard the needs of the people and the community. Simultaneously, the end of the segregation freed Overtown’s most prosperous residents to move elsewhere, leaving the poorest behind. In the name of urban renewal, buildings were razed but never rebuilt.

Overtown became one of the most troubled neighborhoods in one of America’s most troubled cities.
The image on the left shows Overtown in 1945. A healthy grid showing how different housing types were incorporated into the fabric, reasonably sited to take advantage of the existing alleys and network of streets. The density along 2nd Avenue shows bigger structures that housed restaurants, theatres and hotels. It is also clear that the character of 3rd Avenue was different from the rest of the neighborhood in that it constituted the Main Street.

The image to the right is a 1999 plan view of the same area. It delineates I-95 and its “area of influence”. Buildings were razed to allow for its construction, but were never rebuilt on the empty lots. To make things worse, the residual spaces under the highway were never properly addressed and became negative and dangerous spaces. The community was clearly divided into four quadrants with the construction of Interstates 95 and 395. The elevated Metrorail can also be seen swinging north to south over the community.
1947 - The area in red shows the buildings that were affected by the construction of the highways.

1999 - Overtown’s historic fabric is impacted by I-95, I-395, the metrorail and housing projects that seem to ignore its character. In the name of urban renewal buildings were razed but never rebuilt.
Housing projects were a major contributor to Overtown's decline. Many developments were carried out with the intention of providing decent housing for the people in Overtown—but were sidetracked along the way by zoning ordinances, lending institutions, traffic engineering standards and industry habits stuck in the conventions of bad suburban development patterns. In doing so, developers slowly eroded some of Overtown's great network of streets and created enormous parcels where buildings got placed haphazardly, segregating these "projects" from the community. This condition was aggravated further by erecting fences and barricades around the projects. Within these new projects, there is no distinction between private and public property, no sense of ownership or pride for the community.

Today, however, we are seeing a shift in the thinking of the government, financial and development institutions. They are looking favorably on new urban neighborhood development. They understand that the community needs to be linked, not segregated. That buildings and "eyes on the streets" make cities safe. That people interacting in the streets, in shops and on their front porches are the heart of good and safe communities. (see page 41)
Overtown’s traditional structure was that of a real town formed by neighborhoods, each with a clear center. Like many other American cities, it lost its structure and the quality of its traditional neighborhoods to sprawl-type development, encouraged by “modern” zoning that has been imposed on the historic neighborhoods business districts of Overtown.

The citizen’s master plan proposes to restructure Overtown back to its traditional form by creating three distinct neighborhoods, each one with a clear center and edge. These neighborhoods are planned on a quarter-mile radius which results in a five-minute walk from the neighborhood edge to its center. The goal is to complete these neighborhoods as the basis for a healthy community.

Each of the three neighborhoods will have a distinct center of integrated retail, office, and residential uses; within the fabric, a wide mix of housing types, public spaces, and schools, churches, parks and corner stores. The edges, which are almost naturally created by the highways, provide a great location for community gardens.

Neighborhood centers are ideal locations for public transit stops.

Within these neighborhoods, mass produced housing segregated by income level is replaced by different housing types (single family, town homes and multifamily), which offer a full range of affordability, are reasonably sited and take advantage of the network alleys and streets. Most daily needs and quite a few jobs can be found within a five minute walk of the front door; multiple car ownership for families and couples becomes optional.

An internal "loop" connects the different neighborhood centers, creating a strong connection between them. This loop could become a route for different types of public transportation (bus, trolley, jitney)

*The Vision will serve as a guide for the reconstruction of Overtown. It addresses the six main aspects that are necessary to achieve this goal:*

A. Business and Entertainment Districts
B. Housing
C. Education
D. Transportation
E. Zoning
F. Implementation
REBUILD TWO DISTINCT DISTRICTS ON N.W. 2ND AND 3RD AVENUES

Cities have traditionally set aside districts of specialized use, distinguished spatially and architecturally from their surroundings. Overtown had its own distinct districts. Overtown's nightlife gave the community its glitter and power. It was here that hotels such as the Mary Elizabeth and the Sir John housed celebrities and visitors. There was the Lyric Theatre: a vaudeville theatre, movie house and meeting place. NW 2nd Avenue between 6th and 10th Streets became known as "The Strip", others called it "The Great Black Way" or even "Little Broadway". All different names that described the same thing. Along NE 3rd Avenue, a series of businesses that served the needs of the population were thriving.

Given the history of NW 2nd and 3rd Avenues, the citizen's vision proposes to go back to its origins. The creation of two separate districts that together will become a Center for Overtown. The purpose of these districts is not to segregate but rather to preserve the vitality of the community.

The two districts have been identified as:
- The Commercial District (along NW 3rd Avenue)
- The Entertainment District (along NW 2nd Avenue between 6th and 10th Streets)

The reconstruction/reconfiguration of these districts will be subject to the following:

1. Façade Improvements:
   Buildings such as the Barkley Building need simple façade improvements and, depending on their actual structural shape, some interior recycling.

2. Reconstruction:
   Identify buildings that are worth preserving. Adopt a historic preservation strategy and reconstruct those buildings that are significant to the history of Overtown

3. New Development:
   Complete the fabric with new, mixed-use buildings.
Barkley Building

The existing Barkley Building on 3rd Avenue is a prime example of how a simple facade renovation can transform a building quickly to become a contributing element to the 3rd Avenue retail corridor. This drawing shows new awnings, windows and a fresh coat of paint on an existing structure. Ideally the existing City of Miami facade program can be used to make this a reality.
Façade improvements along N.W. 3rd Avenue
Facade improvements along N.W. 2nd Avenue
Facade improvements along N.W. 3rd Avenue
The Cola Nip Building on 9th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues has its roots deeply set in Overtown's community and memory. The reconstruction of this building should be included in the historic preservation plans of the area. The ground floor is ideal to house commercial uses with loft-type apartments upstairs, as proposed by the citizens.

The image to the left shows the actual building (building collapsed shortly after picture was taken). The one on the right is a computer generated image of what it could look like.
Ground floor retail, Second floor residential
Computer generated image showing before and after of the Ward House on 9th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. The Black Archives suggested they would like to reconstruct this building and turn it into a bed & breakfast.
With the expansion to the historic Lyric Theater under way, the increased potential for entertainment uses in the Folk Life Village is at an all time high. Rather than using the existing vacant lot to the south of the theater (southeast corner of 8th Street and 2nd Avenue) for parking, a higher use is recommended for this very important corner. This image shows a potential elevation for the new “Lyric Cafe” on the vacant lot. By looking at the Village in its entirety to accommodate Lyric overflow parking, this property can be freed from that use and provide a significant role in the redevelopment of 2nd Avenue and the Entertainment District as a whole.

*See page 38
THE ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

Public spaces and the buildings that occupy them should be designed to be inhabited, not just viewed. If done well, these spaces give the community a special life, as well as urban amenity and character to the surrounding neighborhoods. The Citizen’s Vision gives priority to the parcel adjacent to the Lyric theatre, between NW 8th and 9th Streets, hereafter referred to as the St. John CDC site.

Several different scenarios were created to propose alternative development programs for the St. John’s CDC site. Scheme A looks at a complete build-out of the site for commercial and mixed-use development.

The Citizens’ proposal would bring a mix of uses to this parcel. The concept is simple. The existing streets are kept and a couple of new ones are created in order to keep these parcels linked to the rest of the neighborhood.

Along NW 2nd Avenue are mixed use buildings that house a variety of uses from restaurants to cafes and jazz clubs on the ground floor, office on the second and residential above that.

The 9th Street Pedestrian Mall is flanked by mixed-use buildings (commercial, office and residential), bringing life and safety to this area and turning the mall into a central piece of the community. Parking for these buildings is provided in the core of the block.

During the week of the Charrette, a group of investors expressed their interest in building a 25,000 SF Caribbean bakery in Overtown. The proposal at left shows how this structure is accommodated in the parcel behind the Lyric Theatre, along NW 8th Street. The big box structure that this use requires is flanked by small liner retail along the 9th Street Mall and NW 8th Street.

Structured parking that will accommodate 400 cars is also incorporated into this scheme to satisfy the parking needs of all the proposed uses. Again, the same concept: liner buildings that house commercial uses are placed along NW 8th Street and the Mall in order to keep the pedestrian character along these streets.

A 10,000 SF hall that could accommodate a variety of uses (conference center, nightclub, restaurant) is located in the corner of NW 2nd Avenue and the Mall.

Structured parking that will accommodate 400 cars is also incorporated into this scheme to satisfy the parking needs of all the proposed uses including overflow Lyric parking. Again, the same concept: liner
buildings that house commercial uses are placed along NW8th Street and the Mall in order to keep the pedestrian character along these streets.

Scheme A also incorporates the existing proposal of an addition to the Lyric Theatre. Next to this addition, a public plaza is proposed. The plaza is surrounded by commercial uses on two sides. The Mall defines its northern edge.

Given the uses that surround it, this plaza could become a destination. A purpose-built stage for ritual and interaction. It is also the perfect setting to host structured or communal activities, festivals, celebrations, markets and specialized functions.

This is a very viable market area. It is adjacent to a mature downtown that attracts thousands of locals and tourists, provides office space, has excellent visibility and vehicular accessibility. The Citizen’s proposal is to revitalize this area which has been in decline.

Scheme B

This scheme shows a very similar program to Scheme A, however a +/- 15,000 s.f. destination restaurant/club is located on the 9th Street Mall. In this scenario, the parking garage has been rotated and the footprint of the bakery reduced to approximately +/- 20,000 s.f. As in scheme A, this proposal shows the currently vacant lot just to the south of the Lyric theater (the southeast corner of 2nd Avenue & 8th Street) as occupied by a new restaurant. With the new and old arenas having direct frontage along 8th Street as well as the potential of the Historic Folk Life Village, this site seems perfect for a high profile restaurant.
NEW CONSTRUCTION: SECOND AVENUE ELEVATIONS

2nd Avenue Elevation

This view, looking eastward from 2nd Avenue towards the Metro Rail, shows the western elevation of a proposed alternative development program for the St. John's CDC redevelopment site. This scheme incorporates a mixed-use program including the Work America Caribbean bakery/retail project. The restored Lyric Theater is to the right.

Northern Elevation

This view is looking south at the same mixed-use scenario for the St. John's property. Townhouses are fronting the 9th Street Mall with the Metro Rail directly to the east. This proposal seeks to enliven the 9th Street Mall by having habitable uses adjacent to the north and south.
Existing condition on N. W. 3rd Avenue and N.W. 17th Street.

Buildings along N.W. 3rd Avenue, particularly close to N.W. 17th Street, are either pushed back or missing from the fabric. The street disintegrates into a series of isolated buildings. An ambivalent zone is created along the street which only contributes to blur its structure.

Although on-street parking is allowed along this street, the lack of shade trees, occasional speeding traffic, some narrow sidewalks and single use buildings scattered along the way do little to create a pedestrian friendly environment.
The image shows a possible reconfiguration of NW 3rd Avenue as a traditional main street. Trends in real estate today, particularly in retailing, demand a sense of place. The most attractive retail excursion this Street has to offer is the best time-tested model in the business: the Main Street experience.

As part of the reconfiguration of 3rd Street program, some “bump-outs” should be added at certain intersections and every three to five parked cars. These extensions of the sidewalk will cut pedestrian time crossing at intersections and improve the safety of turns. These bump-outs also serve as planting areas. However, this streetscape device should be used sparingly within the neighborhood in order to preserve its authentic image.
ESTABLISH NEW DESIGN GUIDELINES

For N.W. 2nd and 3rd Avenues to become great streets again, there must be good instructions provided for their reconstruction. The current zoning code for these streets will not allow for the kind of streets wanted under the citizen’s vision. Clear and precise instructions for building and street dimension will deliver predictable and desired results and ensure that design goals can be understood and adhered to by developers, engineers and planners. Placement standards like those indicated here clearly show the important regulating dimensions of Main Street buildings, such as building heights, placement and allowable mix of uses.

A similar coding should be developed for all streets.

A zoning overlay consistent with good urban design and town-building principles expressed here is recommended.

Street Improvement Suggestions For N.W. 2nd and 3rd Avenues

Regarding 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 transit waiting stations.

 Regarding the fronting of buildings

- Buildings should have mixed uses: apartments and offices above the shops.
- Buildings should have awnings or arcades over the sidewalk for shade.

 Regarding Parking

- The street should have parallel parking to separate moving cars from the sidewalk wherever possible.
- Develop the concept of “shared parking”
- All other parking should be accommodated behind buildings and accessed through an alley.

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· The core of the blocks should be clear of any construction. These cores should be used for parking and when so needed, parking structures should be built in them.

Regarding Crosswalks

· Crosswalks should be highlighted with bricks, pavers, concrete bands or simple color in the pavement.

Regarding the Street

· Reconstruct N.W. 2nd and 3rd Avenues as “Main Streets”.
· Maintain two travel lanes, one in each direction for all streets.
· Develop parking lanes on both sides of the street.

Regarding Street Lighting

· Eliminate cobra head high-type streetlights.
· Select a more elegant light standard and fixtures.
· Maintain consistency of lighting fixtures throughout the district.

Regarding Landscaping

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

Regarding Café Seating

· City zoning should allow and encourage outdoor dining particularly in the Entertainment District.

Regarding News Stands

· Ideally there should be one or two news kiosks in each neighborhood center staffed by a merchant.
Memorable places require two elements:

- A clear master plan
- The proper building types

The first element, the master plan, was created from the Citizen’s Vision. These same citizens also asked the charrette team to design some building types that would “fit” within their community as well as satisfy housing needs of existing residents and, at the same time, attract new ones.

The image on the left shows a typical house in suburbia, clearly designed with the car as the central element. This type of housing fosters the complete detachment and isolation of its dwellers from the rest of the community. The placement of housing and the types used in suburbia are of little importance or consequence as most new suburban development is devoid of a sense of community. However in Overtown, an authentic community, the placement and types of housing is critical to successful redevelopment. Overtown has a very rich history of housing types. The image on the right shows the recently renovated Dorsey House. A type that clearly relates to the street with a wide front porch. A house that relates to the lot, to the block and encourages community interaction. A building type so versatile, that through the years it has been used as a single family home, office, and in July 1999 was host for the 23 designers that worked to produce these images.

Other types that follow these same principles have been included in this report. The image below from the master plan suggests how housing should be placed along streets to foster involvement and interaction with other residents and the community.
**House Types**

**Construction:** CBS

**Use:** Single Family

**Facade:** Front Porch

**Description:** 2 Story

- 3 Bedroom
- 2 Bathroom
- 2 Story Outbuilding w/ 1 bedroom

**Lot:** 25' x 100'

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**Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council**

Indian River - St. Lucie - Martin - Palm Beach
CONSTRUCTION: CBS
USE: Single Family
FAÇADE: Front Porch
DESCRIPTION: 1 Story
2 Bedroom
1 ½ Bathroom
Outbuilding
LOT: 20'x 100'

© 1999 TCRPC/Natasha Alfonso
**House Types**

**TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL**

Indian River - St. Lucie - Martin - Palm Beach

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**CONSTRUCTION:** CBS  
**USE:** Single Family  
**FAÇADE:** Front & Side Porch  
**DESCRIPTION:** 2 Story  
3 Bedroom  
1 1/2 Bathroom  
2 Story Outbuilding w/2 bed/1 bath apartment  
**LOT:** 36' x 100'
CONSTRUCTION: CBS
USE: Single Family
FAÇADE: Side Porch
DESCRIPTION: 2 Story
2 Bedroom
1 1/2 Bathroom
Outbuilding w/
1 bed/1 bath apt.
General views of different house types
This plan is an update to the existing Folk Life Village Plan. The design team revised the overall build out to accommodate additional parking requirements anticipated by large-scale users such as the Lyric Theater and Bethel AME. This plan also recommends that 9th Street remain open to two-way traffic with parallel parking and to continue the palate of materials used on the 9th Street Mall. There are numerous areas where infill is possible. These other areas are illustrated throughout the Master Plan.
With significant infill opportunities in Overtown, this image suggests an appropriate scale and architecture for the neighborhood. With small front setbacks, wide porches, and outbuilding rental possibilities, these proposals were created to make affordable infill housing a potentially profitable venture.
AERIAL VIEW OF THE NORTHERN NEIGHBORHOOD - PROPOSAL TO RECONFIGURE EXISTING PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECTS

Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
Indian River - St. Lucie - Martin - Palm Beach
As an alternate scheme to the existing St. John’s CDC proposal, this scenario uses the townhouse building to increase densities and push the buildings closer to the street. By reducing the building setbacks two things occur:

1. The buildings are able to contribute to defining the street and giving a dignified façade to the public realm.

2. By having the buildings on the perimeter of the site looking outward, the block interior can be designed as beautiful parking areas.

In addition to the residential program, this scheme allows for an additional 25,000 s.f. of retail/office space along 2nd Avenue. There is also the inclusion of the restaurant program just south of the Lyric Theater as in the other schemes. (See page 24-27)
Overtown has several schools. However, new housing development will bring additional students. The Citizen's Vision proposes a possible expansion strategy for each one of the existing schools.

Frederick Douglas Elementary
Phyllis Wheatly Elementary
Dunbar Elementary
Booker T. Washington
The vision includes the future expansion of Gibson Park and Fredrick Douglas Elementary School with the next 20 years in mind. Because the Overtown population is expected to increase, it is essential that public facilities be planned and constructed in order to fulfill the quality of life of the residents. With this said, the following four drawings represent a phased plan for expansion of the park and school. This is one example of how the other schools in Overtown can be expanded and reconfigured to create high quality learning and civic environments.
The first phase is to relocate teacher parking to the rear of the site to allow for a new addition to the school. This addition creates a private courtyard for the elementary school children.
PHASE 2

The second phase is to remove the portable classrooms in front of the existing school and build a civic front addition to the school. Also during the second phase there is a planned expansion to the north of the existing St. John’s site along with the addition of shared parking for the church and park.

1. Remove portable class rooms and build new front facade
2. St. John’s expansion potential
3. Additional parking
The third phase concentrates on building a new multi-use community center building, public library, children’s/senior center and additional parking and roadway infrastructure.
The fourth phase is the removal of existing structures to allow for the maximum amount of playing fields and open green space. During this phase additional parking is also added to be utilized by the school, church and multi-purpose building.
THE PUBLIC PARK

The public park can be defined as an open space belonging to the public as of right and provided with a variety of facilities for the enjoyment of leisure.

On this image we can see highlighted the different parks, community gardens and open public spaces proposed.

Most of these parks remain true to the long tradition of public places we have found as a common ground where public culture is expressed and community life developed. The safer and more well-behaved these places are, the more likely it is they will be used by the community as a whole. And in order for parks to be safe, it is imperative that they remain as "visually open" as possible.

Some of the parks proposed here are directly adjacent or incorporated into schools (like the case of Gibson Park), others are parks under the highway, community gardens or simply open spaces in the center of the neighborhoods.

These last, the parks in the center of the neighborhoods, are particularly important as places for ritual and interaction. They become the perfect setting to host communal activities, festivals, markets and special functions. They can also house any kind of ornamental additions to the street space, among them fountains and monuments of various sorts.
SPECIAL PROJECTS - BUILD A NEW CRA BUILDING

N.W. 3rd. Avenue
And N.W. 10th Street
This scheme looks at the critical and highly visible intersection where 9th Street meets 3rd Avenue in front of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church. This proposal seeks to create a public plaza in front of the church as a focal point to the western edge of the Folk Life Village. It includes the reduction of lane widths north bound on 3rd Avenue as well as entrance features signaling this important location. This scenario also keeps the existing 9th Street in front of the Dorsey House open to traffic, a critical component to the vitality of this neighborhood.
The old Miami Arena: Existing condition and proposed changes - A liner building is proposed on N.W. 8th Street in order to create a more human scale along this road. New mixed use buildings complete the fabric and a multi-modal transit station is proposed next to the actual metrorail station. Since the charrette the Florida Marlins have announced plans for a new baseball stadium in downtown Miami. While the idea for a Bicentennial Park site on Biscayne Bay is provocative, it will do little to jump start the redevelopment of Overtown. Here is another proposal for the reuse of the old Miami Arena site: the new home for the Florida Marlins. An urban baseball stadium—ala Jacobs Field in Cleveland and Camden Yards in Baltimore—wrapped with mixed-use buildings and carefully knitted back into the fabric of Overtown. This would be a wonderful addition to the community and the catalyst for a true renaissance of the entire area.
...the old Miami Arena becomes the New Home for the Florida Marlins baseball team?
SPECIAL PROJECTS - BUILD NEW TRANSIT STOPS

Main Bus Stop

Different proposed transit stops

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TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
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The Culmer Center today exists as a typical "big box" surrounded by a sea of parking. A proposal for expansion of its uses together with the addition of others that will make the place safer and oriented more towards the pedestrian than to the car is proposed here.

The concept is simple. The existing streets are extended and break up this parcel making it again an intrinsic part of the neighborhood. In the scheme, the Culmer Center remains in its current location. Its parking is rearranged to accommodate single family attached homes and some retail.

This new structure helps tie the Center into the new fabric without harming the proposed neighborhoods.
SPECIAL PROJECTS: CELEBRATE COMMUNITY ENTRANCES - MARKERS ON 20TH AVENUE, 20TH STREET AND 8TH STREET

20th Street

N.E. 3rd Avenue and 8th Street

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
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Zoning in Overtown: A Comparison of the Past and Present

Zoning classifications and categories for Overtown in 1935 and 1999 are amazingly similar. What has changed over time is the meaning and requirements of the codes. These changes are dictating a completely different shape and scale for Overtown.

Today and in 1935, a large portion of the study area has R-3 and R-4 zoning—medium and high density multifamily residential. In 1935, R-3 zoning primarily allows single family and multifamily residential structures of two to four stories. No unit/acre ratio is suggested. R-4 is basically the same as R-3 but allows apartment houses, hotels, and hospitals. On-site parking requirements are only one space per 20 units.

Most of the rest of the study area had B-3 or Business zoning in 1935 allowing office and retail buildings. All types of residential are allowed within the B-3 district. Height of nonresidential buildings is controlled by compatibility with neighboring structures. On-site parking is not required for the first 5,000 square feet of floor space and only one space for every 1,000 square feet thereafter. The vertical mixing of uses in B-3 buildings is a natural condition for the time. Minimum building lot sizes for R-3, R-4, and B-3 range from as small as 300 square feet to 2,500 square feet.

Today R-3, R-4, and B-3 have very different meanings. B-3 zoning has been replaced by C-1 (Commercial Restricted). Minimum lot sizes required to build R-3, R-4, and commercial buildings have increased between 2 and 8 times (5,000 and 20,000 square feet). Maximum residential building heights allowable are now 6 to 12 stories, two to six times what was previously suggested by the code. In commercially zoned areas, building height is unlimited. Unit/acre ratios have been introduced—65 units/acre and 150 units/acre respectively. On-site parking space requirements have increased 20 fold and more. Cellular phone towers have become a permitted use within all areas of Overtown.
Today, what zoning allows in Overtown is very similar to what is allowed in the Brickell Avenue area. The graphics above illustrate how building under current zoning in Overtown could transform the area into a series of isolated buildings surrounded by parking lots and garages. This condition has little to do with The Citizen’s Vision: establishing a human scale and comfortable pedestrian environment which will make Overtown a desirable place to live and visit. Other implications of the code include:

- “overzoning” which implies land values and maximum development scenarios that are unrealistic
- eliminating participation by smaller investors which represent 80% of the investment in most redeveloping towns and cities (i.e. the “big fish” syndrome)
- focusing of investment on constructing one larger building on one block instead of development that will fill Overtown with buildings more quickly
- unnecessarily delaying the complete infill of Overtown
- creating conflict between what the citizens desire and what developers/investors are instructed to build under the code
- increasing the need for car ownership—reducing the amount of money in the family budget for housing and food
- creating inconsistencies with the City of Miami’s Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan, Future Land Use goals, objectives, and policies [particularly LU-1, LU-1.1, LU-1.1.3, LU-1.4.3. AND LU-1.4.8].

While this report points out potential zoning code issues and suggests a method and generic principles for changing the code (see page 29), it does not present a new code on overlay for the redevelopment area. The intent of the design charrette was to record and memorialize the citizen’s Vision for redevelopment of their community. At the same time, it should be clear that unless potential conflicts between what the current code allows and what the citizen vision aspires to, it is unlikely that what the citizens envisioned during the charrette will be built.
IMPLEMENTATION: BUILD THE VISION

IMPLEMENTATION
MIAMI - DADE EMPOWERMENT ZONE

- 5000 jobs committed to be created
- $1 billion in residential and commercial loans from 18 financial institutions in the area
- $7.9 billion in construction projects
- $93 million in grant funds (Miami-Dade)
- $130 million in tax exempt bonding authority
- $3 million in federal grants available in 1999 and $3.7 million in 2000
- $2400 tax credit per new employee hired in the Zone (18-24 yrs. old)
- Quality Zone Academy Bonds (School Funding)
- Miami-Dade competed with nearly 300 other areas to become 1 of 20 who have been recently designated as an Empowerment Zone.
- HUD/ Neighborhood Partnership Initiative. Overtown is one of thirteen communities selected nationwide-- $50 million available for assistance

OTHER IMPLEMENTATION ORGANIZATIONS

- City Of Miami
- Florida Department of Community Affairs
- John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- Citizens for a Better South Florida
- Hilda Tejera Family
- National Audubon Society
- South Florida Community Urban Resources Partnership & Dept. of Agriculture
- Fannie Mae
- Sun Trust Bank
- Esposito-Santo Bank
- NatWest Bank
- Miami Community Redevelopment Agency
- South Florida Water Management District
- Miami Downtown Development Authority
- Overtown Advisory Board
- Charrette Steering Committee
- Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
- South Florida Regional Planning Council
- Miami/Dade County
- The Citizens of Overtown
The Overtown Redevelopment Area Design Charrette grew out of a joint proposal to the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils under the Florida Department of Community Affairs’ “Eastward Ho!” Partnership Initiative. Eastward Ho! was created to support the redevelopment and careful urban design of Florida’s historic coastal communities. The Eastward Ho! corridor - roughly east of I-95 from Ft. Pierce to Homestead - lies within the jurisdictions of the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils.

The entire Treasure Coast design studio staff and a number of other urban design and architecture professionals, worked vigorously on the charrette for a full week. Beginning with a public “Kick-off” session on Friday night, July 16, 1999 at the Lyric Theater, the citizens familiarized themselves with the charrette process and the design team and expressed issues of concern in their community. Over 60 residents turned out the next morning for the citizen design workshop. With the assistance of the design team, citizens discussed design issues and drew their ideas onto maps of the town. At the end of the day, all the maps were presented by a citizen representative from each group. It was with these presentations that consensus was realized. Ideas common to each of the citizen designs were quickly identified. It is this consensus that the designers used to create the Vision.

The team set up its studio at the Dorsey House where the doors were open for visitors all day and into the night throughout the entire week. An interim presentation of the work-in-progress was made at the Lyric Theater the following Friday, July 23, 1999.

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 the citizens and presents solutions.
Above: The assembled public broke out into eight citizen teams which then created the above plans. A representative from each team then presented their plan to the participants. It became clear that there were common elements to all of the proposals.
The team of designers set up studio at the Dorsey House where the doors were open for visitors all day and into the night throughout the entire week.
THE CHARRETTE

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