



Miami River Seafood and Lobster in East Little Havana

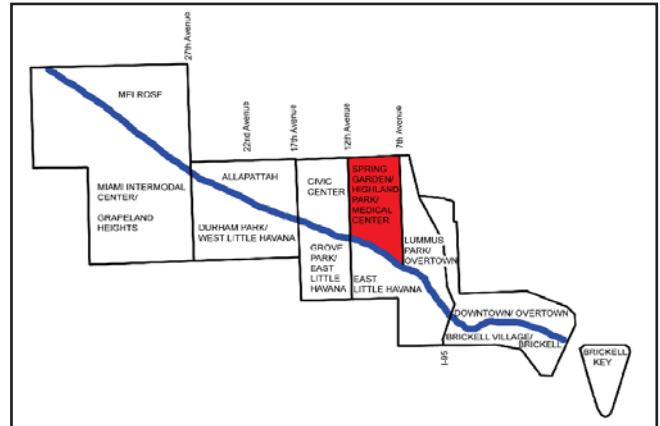
physical and cultural enhancement to the neighborhood but will provide improved educational opportunity as well.

A redevelopment site of particular interest in this district is the former Miami News site, a large riverfront parcel to the east of NW 12th Avenue. The successful redevelopment of this site is viewed by many as a critical to the success of the surrounding area. While its size and waterfront location are appealing, the site has limited access; the possibility of improving access to the site from NW 12th Avenue southbound should be investigated so as to improve the site's linkage to the medical and civic centers flanking 12th Avenue just across the river.



Redevelopment site- The former Miami News Site (20)

SPRING GARDEN/HIGHLAND PARK/MEDICAL CENTER (7th Avenue to 12th Avenue, north bank)



Like much of the Miami River corridor, these neighborhoods were once home to pioneer homesteaders, starch millers, and tourist-attraction operators. One early Miami settler, William Wagner, established a homestead in the 1850s in what is today called Highland Park; the house he built for his family remained in place until the 1970s and now stands, restored, in Lummus Park. Wagner's daughter sold his land in 1909; in 1911 the homestead was platted as a subdivision called Highland Park. The first lots had been sold and the neighborhood's first houses built when in 1913 the area was annexed into the City of Miami, the western boundary of which had previously been 7th Avenue.

Miami's third mayor, John Sewell, built a mansion northwest of Highland Park in 1916; Halissee Hall, as he named it, remains today in the midst of the Jackson/University of Miami Medical Center that grew up all around it.



Two-story masonry house in Spring Garden

This district's riverfront remained undeveloped until 1918; however, an entrepreneur known as Alligator Joe ran a successful attraction for tourists visiting by riverboat at the point formed by the intersection of the river and Wagner Creek. Spring Garden subdivision remains today as one of Miami's four historic districts and the active Spring Garden Civic Association.

Allowable uses along the Spring Garden riverfront are medium-density multifamily residential; allowable uses along Wagner Creek (known as the Seybold Canal south of NW 11th Street) are liberal commercial, restricted commercial, office, and both single-family and medium-density multifamily residential.

Liberal commercial zoning is inappropriate for the riverfront, and should be re-oriented toward water-dependent commercial or industrial use, possibly allowing associated mixed-use development for increased compatibility with the both the Spring Garden and Lummus Park neighborhoods and with the river itself. Similarly, residential development as allowed under the medium-density residential zoning classification is not appropriate to the riverfront; the establishment of stricter height, FAR, and parking limits for these parcels is recommended so as to maintain the scale and character of the Spring Garden waterfront.

As on the riverfront, liberal commercial uses should not be allowed on the Seybold Canal; water-dependent commercial or industrial uses, with associated mixed-use development, should be required where zoning presently allows for liberal commercial. Existing single-family zoning along the canal should be protected, while multifamily zoning should be treated as discussed in the previous paragraph so as to maintain



Spring Garden Neighborhood Conservation District study area, outlined in red (21)

the scale and character of the historic district.

Running from southeast to northwest through the Spring Garden/Highland Park/Medical Center neighborhood is Wagner Creek, a partly culverted, partly exposed tributary of the Miami River. South of NW 11th Street, in Spring Garden, this water body is navigable and is known as the Seybold Canal. Not long ago declared to be the state's most polluted waterway, efforts to improve Wagner Creek have been moving forward slowly; efforts to dredge contaminated sediment from the creek are moving forward and the Miami River Greenway Master Plan recommends improving the banks of the creek with



Looking north up the Seybold Canal. On the right is canal front property, that is well suited for water-dependant commercial or industrial uses.



One story masonry house with mediterranean details



Two-story masonry house in Spring Garden

walkways and passive green spaces to the extent possible.

North of NW 11th Street is Highland Park, a residential neighborhood distinguished by its significant concentration of frame vernacular single family homes dating from 1910s and 1920s. Few of its houses are elaborately ornamented, but its wood frame houses feature functional elements appropriate to the climate of the region, with porches, deep overhanging eaves, and layouts inviting cross-ventilation. The design of the neighborhood is of particular significance; Highland Park stretched long and narrow from NW 11th to 20th Streets, with blocks focusing on a series of centrally-located open spaces reminiscent of the neighborhood squares of Savannah, Georgia.

The neighborhood fell into decline as the decades wore on, and its original plan was interrupted with the construction in the late 1960s of an embanked highway severing the neighborhood at NW 14th Street. North of 14th the area was zoned Governmental/ Institutional to compliment the adjacent hospital-related uses, while the southern remnant was targeted for related high-density residential and office development. Construction of the Culmer Metrorail station at NW 11 Street reinforced this intent, but Highland Park failed to develop as anticipated. The area became one of speculative investment and deferred maintenance, with few homeowners and a transient renter population. Another result of the decline was the alteration of the characteristic features of many of its homes – porches enclosed, and floor plans subdivided by the creation of rental units. Preserved, however, were the neighborhood’s mature oak, banyan, and mahogany trees, as well as one of its original community greens – a mahogany-shaded circle at the



Spring Garden's tropical riverfront character

intersection of NW 13th Street and 8th Avenue.

The recent construction of new single family housing in the neighborhood has sparked interest in the preservation of Highland Park, and the Miami City Commission has issued a directive to rezone the neighborhood to lower density. A survey the neighborhood’s historic resources is under way; already a portion of the area has been found eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. A neighborhood conservation district should be established to encourage restoration of the neighborhood’s historic housing and to ensure that alterations and new development in the neighborhood reflect the massing, siting, and articulation of existing structures.

Between the Spring Garden Historic District and Highland



Mature tree canopy in roundabout at NW 13th Street and NW 8th Avenue



Wood frame house with roof bracket details in Highland Park

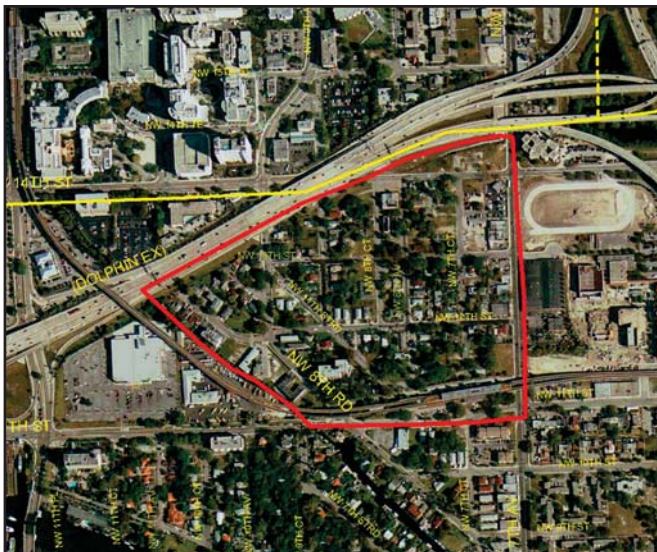


A potentially historic house in Highland Park that has been severely altered from its original layout

Park is a group of blocks forming a triangle; this area should be investigated for its potential to simultaneously 1) accommodate higher-density development taking advantage of the nearby Culmer Metrorail station and 2) compliment the adjacent historic neighborhoods of Spring Garden and Highland Park. Key factors in ensuring compatibility include location of parking, height and unit density of development, and treatment of project edges and entrances. In keeping with the open, eyes-on-the-street urbanism of Spring Garden and Highland Park, gates and high walls would be inappropriate, as would auto-oriented entry ways. All new development should respect the one- to two-story frame and masonry residential stock of these neighborhoods, with their rich and eclectic architectural character – including substantial concentrations of frame

vernacular, bungalow, and Mediterranean revival structures – and mature tree canopies, including oak hammocks and a generous assortment of gumbo limbo, mahoganies, royal poincianas, coconut palms and royal palms.

Central to this transitional area between the two neighborhoods is the Culmer Metrorail station. In keeping with Miami-Dade Transit’s policy of encouraging transit-oriented development at all Metrorail stations, it is anticipated that an RFP for public-private development will be released by the transit agency in the near future. Guidelines for development compatible in scale and character with the adjacent historic district should be developed prior to release of an RFP, and Miami-Dade transit should involve representatives of the City of Miami Planning Zoning Department, the Miami River Commission as well as residents of the Spring Garden and Highland Park neighborhoods in the project selection process.

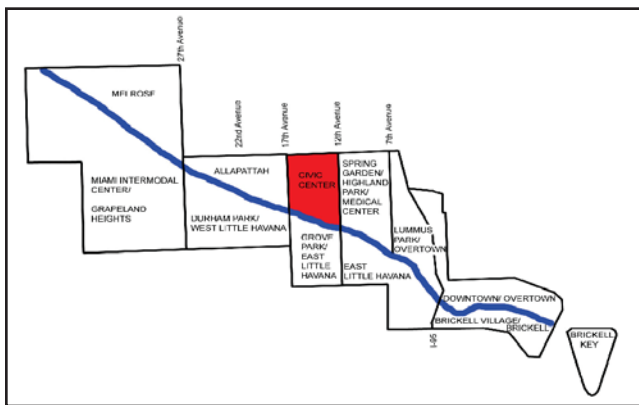


Highland Park Neighborhood Conservation District study area, outlined in red (22)

The Jackson Memorial and University of Miami Hospitals situated to the north of Highland Park, together with the Lindsay Hopkins Technical School, the Miami-Dade Community College Medical Campus, County Medical Examiner’s Office, and numerous other health-related institutions in the district, form an major employment center not only for the middle river but for the region. Secreting two historic structures that offer clues to the medical center’s past – Halissee Hall and the Alamo, the original Miami Hospital building – the complex is a labyrinthine warren of structures, streets, and pedestrian ways much in need of a master plan. Also in need of room to expand, the complex’s major institutions should partner to ensure that their growth does not negatively

impact the surrounding neighborhoods. The University of Miami has taken steps toward initiating such a partnership; its neighboring institutions should give the effort their full participation and carry it forward. Together, these entities could make strategic investments that would both improve their own environment – including access to and amenities for the Miami River, Wagner Creek, and the area’s parks – and the quality of life of their neighborhoods, including Highland Park, Spring Garden, Lummus Park, the Civic Center, and Allapattah.

CIVIC CENTER/ MEDICAL CENTER (12th Avenue to 17th Avenue, north bank)



This neighborhood was once home to the Miami Golf Links. The Miami Country Club, located at the river’s edge, lives on only in the subtlest of ways: a tiny residential subdivision called Golf View Park. Today, the Civic Center riverfront is zoned not for recreation but for an awkward trio of uses: mainly office, waterfront industrial, and a small section of medium-density multifamily residential.

Another significant chapter in the Civic Center neighborhood’s heritage is Merrill Stevens, the neighborhood’s sole industrial waterfront business – and Miami’s oldest such business. Merrill Stevens is a strong presence on the Civic Center waterfront and an important contributor to the region’s marine economy.

The remainder of the Civic Center’s waterfront, however, is less vital. An underutilized civic club on a substantial riverfront parcel lies adjacent to acres of surface parking lots, and a gated multifamily structure stands in the way of public access to the river. Consideration should be given to rezoning all non-waterfront industrial parcels along this segment of the Miami River for mixed use development encouraging water-dependent and related uses as well as restaurants, markets, and residential. Public access to the river should be maximized and amenities

provided so as to benefit the large employment and residential base of this district.

North of the riverfront, there are several distinct



Merrill Stevens- Miami’s oldest waterfront industrial business

“neighborhoods”: a cluster of government-owned court-related uses (including the State’s Attorney’s office and a County jail), a cluster of bail bondsmen’s offices (many located in converted single family homes, including several historic houses), a pair of hospitals (Cedars, a private hospital, and a Veteran’s Hospital and residential facility), and predominantly medium-density multifamily residential district distinguished by difficult circulation and lack of coherence and neighborhood identity. As in Spring Garden, Highland Park, and the Medical Center, Wagner Creek should be cleaned and made accessible to the public – both to neighborhood residents and to the neighborhood’s many workers – to the greatest extent possible.

A potentially significant redevelopment opportunity in the Civic Center neighborhood focuses on the Mahi Shrine site (24). Located on the riverfront with close proximity to the Civic Center’s court complex and public and private hospitals, this site also has excellent north-south transportation access via NW 12th and 17th Avenues. With the cooperation of Miami-Dade County, two County-owned surface parking lots located to the east of the Shrine site could be jointly developed in a public-private venture (25); such a partnership would result in creation of the Miami River’s largest waterfront development site. Commercial (including restaurants, cafes, bookstores, and shops), residential, office, and hotel uses could be linked to the water’s edge via a “Riverwalk”-type plaza and accessed both from the greenway as well as from the river itself.

The following page illustrates one of many development scenarios that could occur on the Mahi Shrine Site and the surface parking lots to the east.