

## Renovation of the Public Realm

Another, equally important strategy, and one that truly complements the creation of a conservation district is the renovation of the public realm. Within the MF-C Districts, renovation should encompass public investment in street lighting and other streetscape improvements within the public right-of-way, off-street parking improvements, and the preservation of open space.

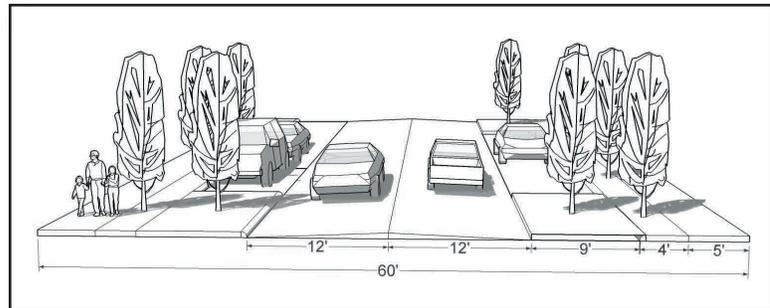
### A) Initiatives

#### 1. Streetscape

While the MF-C Districts mandate that certain developers provide an urban streetscape between the front façade of a building and the property line, the City of Coral Gables is ultimately responsible for maintaining attractive and functional spaces within the public right-of-way. The streetscape strategy calls for a four (4) foot landscaped parkway with regular street trees and a sidewalk of at least five (5) feet in length. The City should look at different funding sources to help subsidize the process of improving on-street parking, parkways, and sidewalks both in new projects where the development is exempt from streetscape improvements and in areas where development already exists and is unlikely to be redeveloped in the near future.

On-street parking improvements are an important element of the streetscape. Currently, on-street parking is comprised of continuous rows of parallel parking set amidst large spans of concrete. If parallel parking is required to be maintained on a particular street, then parking spaces should be alternatively developed with parkway extensions in a manner such that after every two spaces, there should be a five (5) foot wide by five (5) foot wide landscaped area which contains one (1) tree.

Cut-through traffic in the MF-C Districts is not viewed as a pervasive enough of a problem to implement traffic calming measures. Still, the introduction of landscaped planter islands at regular intervals will help slow down traffic on east-west streets. Should conditions change, traffic calming measures such as speed tables, traffic circles and partial street closures could be considered where appropriate.



*Model of streetscape improvements to Galiano and Salzedo*

In combination with efforts to complete physical street improvements and parking improvements, street lighting should be upgraded to increase safety and visibility along neighborhood streets and encourage neighborhood residents to walk to neighborhood-serving retail uses in the evenings. Providing a well-lit neighborhood not only makes residents feel more comfortable, but helps support retail businesses and enhances community interaction because of the activities made possible at night. The City should be conscious not to introduce street lighting that contributes to light pollution and intrudes on the privacy of residents at night. In general, street lighting should only project downwards and no more than five (5) feet onto private property.

Galiano Street and Salzedo Street run the entire length of the two MF-C Districts and are therefore just as important to improve with streetscaping as the east-west streets. Both Galiano and Salzedo Streets have a right-of-way of 60 feet; therefore the proposed streetscape improvements are the same as the east-west streets (improving the streetscape of Galiano and Salzedo was also a recommendation from the 2002 Charrette Report).



## 2. Off-Street Parking Improvements

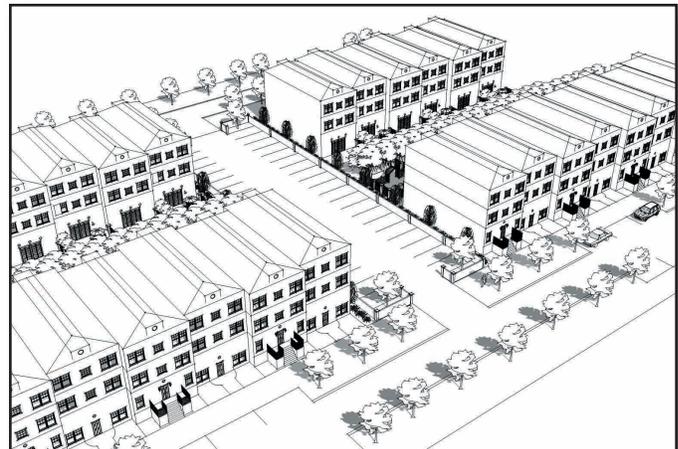
As a result of increased development and reduction of on-street parking, off-street parking will be a serious challenge in the MF-C Districts. In the future, the North Ponce neighborhood will emerge as a great “urban” residential neighborhood and it is predicted that the demand for parking will decline in comparison to other areas of the City because of the proximity to jobs, shopping and entertainment in the CBD. In the meantime, providing required parking will be a matter of tension and serious debate. There are a number of alternatives available to the City of Coral Gables for providing off-street parking.

### Alternative 1 – Interior Surface Lots

The City should actively pursue the acquisition of land for interior surface parking lots. This strategy ideally involves purchasing and assembling two (2) back-to-back lots along an east-west block within the MF-C Districts, so as to create at a minimum a fifty (50) foot wide lot extending from one side street to another to serve as a community parking lot, open to anyone during the day, and used primarily for neighborhood residents and their guests at night.

### Alternative 2 – Special Assessment District

The use of a special assessment district can help provide parking for a large number of cars while alleviating costs for any one single entity. Parking facilities would be financed through a special assessment that is imposed on businesses, multifamily residential developments, and mixed-use developments located within the geographic boundaries of the entire North



*example of an interior surface lot*

Ponce neighborhood, excluding the SF-C District. The assessments could be used to finance construction, acquisition, or maintenance of parking facilities in the area. Additionally, a parking and open space authority can be created to levy dollars for the construction of parking and open space within the sub-areas of the North Ponce neighborhood.

3. Open Space

With the increasing pressure of development at intensities pushing as great as land development regulations will allow, the MF-C Districts and all of the North Ponce neighborhood are watching open space quickly disappear. Residents are concerned that the development community will swallow up the remaining vacant lots in the area and leave residents with few community spaces to enjoy. In response to these concerns, the City of Coral Gables should make a concerted effort to purchase both vacant lots and distressed properties along east-west neighborhood streets for the preservation of open space for conservation purposes and for the development of future parks (this is also a recommendation from the 2002 Charrette Report). The City should explore the idea of partnering with a land trust to take on the task of acquiring land to cut costs, reduce the City's liability and increase the ability to acquire land at reasonable times. While the power of eminent domain is available, the City of Coral Gables should only use this tool as a last resort.



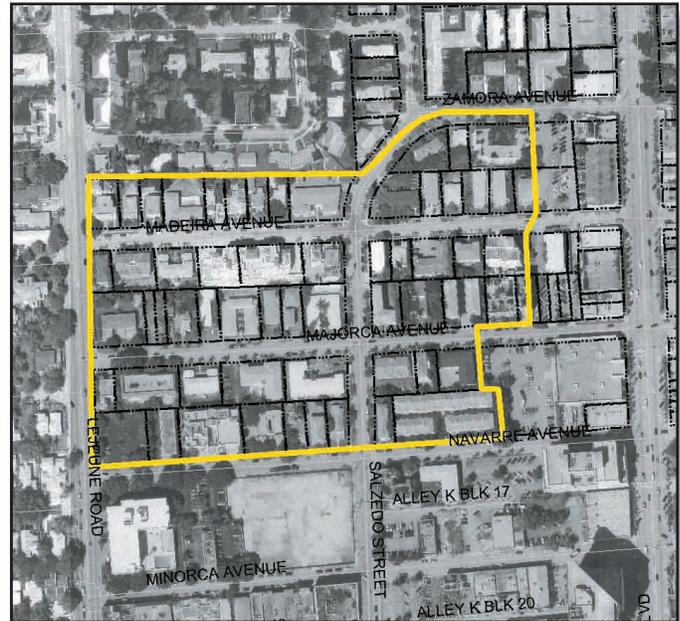
B) Funding

In order to fund improvements within the public realm to ensure that the traditional character of the MF-C Districts is preserved, the City must look to a variety of sources. As mentioned for off-street parking improvements, the City could create a special assessment district to supplement funding for parking facilities as well as streetscape facilities. The effects on property owners would be similar to the analysis proposed in the SF-C District. Another source of funding could be grants for streetscape improvements as well as open space. There are a number of national organizations, including Active Living by Design, that give grants for public improvements. Finally, non-profit land trusts may be a good source of funding for the acquisition of open space.

Other funding alternatives include various Federal sources such as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cmaqpgs>) offered through the U.S. Department of Transportation, state sources of funding which are primarily through the Department of Transportation (<http://www.dot.state.fl.us>) and County sources of funding.

## Low Intensity Mixed Use (LIMU) District

The area proposed to be established as the “Low Intensity Mixed Use (LIMU) District” lies generally between LeJeune Road and the mid-block line of the block between Salzedo Street and Ponce de Leon Boulevard, and between the north side of Madeira south to Navarre Avenue.



The purpose of the LIMU District is to accommodate a mix of low-to-mid density residential and commercial uses to meet the needs of residents and workers. The LIMU District will create an attractive and viable pedestrian-oriented development pattern that brings together the activities of daily life. The LIMU District complements the North Ponce area, providing a smooth transition between multi-family residential neighborhoods, the North Ponce Mixed Use (NPMU) District, and the Central Business District, which lies directly to the south of the Low Intensity Mixed Use District, while protecting the character and integrity of the existing neighborhoods.

### Existing Conditions

The LIMU District is located in the SW corner of the North Ponce neighborhood and abuts the Central Business District (CBD), which is to the south. It is currently a collection of multi-family buildings, some of which are older than 50 years and some of which are as new as being constructed within the last two years. Like other parts of North Ponce, this area suffers from an unattractive streetscape, generally with uninterrupted parallel parking on both sides of the street with minimal or no landscaping in the public right-of-way. There is no public open space or green space in the LIMU District.

### Issues

The LIMU District does not stretch to North Ponce Boulevard but rather it extends to the back of the more intense part of the NPMU District. The LIMU District is intended to encourage mixed use buildings at a lower scale than what is permitted in the NPMU District. The fact that Salzedo Street bends to the west and the City boundary extends west to LeJeune Road in this part of North Ponce (where in the rest of the area the City boundary extends only one parcel west of Salzedo) and creates a two-block wide area naturally lends this area to permit mixed use buildings rather than just multi-family buildings. The fact that the CBD directly abuts the LIMU District also encourages low intensity mixed-use buildings. The LIMU District can be viewed as a transitional area from both the CBD (high intensity commercial uses) and the NPMU District

(high intensity mixed uses) to the multi-family and single-family residential areas to the north and west. The goal of the LIMU District is to create a pedestrian-friendly area that is home to a limited amount of retail and office space and residential units in buildings that are no more than sixty (60) feet tall.

## Recommendations

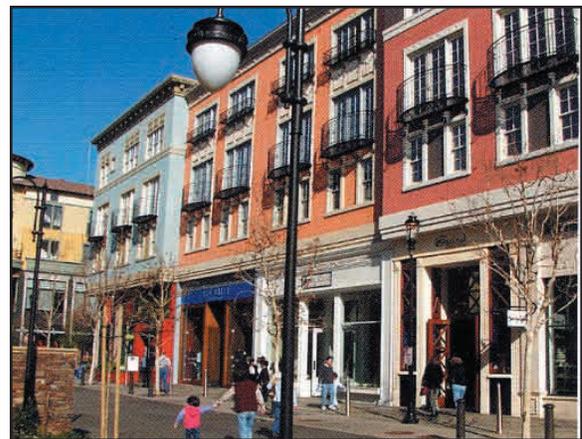
Pressure for higher density development has produced concerns among residents, business owners, and city officials, but has also provided an opportunity to direct future growth in an organized manner and create an attractive urban neighborhood catering to residential and commercial users. Recommendations include the creation of a low to medium-density mixed-use district to regulate land development and renovations to the public realm.

### Land Use District

The LIMU District is the fringe of the North Ponce Mixed Use District, and is anticipated to develop with the character, lifestyle, and friendliness of a village. The character of the LIMU District is anticipated to be a combination of mixed-use development at a lower scale than the NPMU District along Ponce de Leon Boulevard and the preservation and enhancement of existing multi-family “near downtown” neighborhoods.

The LIMU District accommodates and encourages a mix of low to medium density uses that meet the needs of residents of the District and provides for an attractive pedestrian environment. Encompassing a small area of roughly 16 acres, the LIMU District reflects similar characteristics to those in the NPMU District, however, the LIMU District encourages less intense commercial uses and restricts mixed use development to those buildings with frontage on Salzedo Street.

The recommended LIMU District creates a distinctive, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhood that permits the development of multi-family dwelling units, accessory units, live-work units, retail, restaurants, and office uses in select locations. The LIMU District also permits assisted living facilities, day-care centers, private swimming pools, utility and infrastructure facilities, places of worship, and group homes under specific conditions as minor conditional uses, subject to approval under a discretionary review process. Additionally, planned area developments and schools are provided as major conditional uses. While encouraging a mix of uses, the LIMU District is careful to limit the size and location of commercial uses so as not to impede on the traditionally residential character. Specifically, the LIMU District attempts to create a structure where retail and office uses occupy the first and second floor of a mixed-use building with residential located above.



*Example of low intensity mixed use development*

Existing provisions in the zoning code that allow for greater height with the assembly of properties is not allowed in the LIMU District. Performance standards within the recommended LIMU District are focused on encouraging a pedestrian-friendly environment, but preventing intense development. Minimum setbacks provide for short front setbacks and provide no minimum side setbacks, which could encourage developers to build townhomes or a retail/office facade to the edge of the property line creating a consistent building façade along the street. The LIMU District also restricts the building envelope and the way in which buildings are designed and positioned on the lot, including standards for lot size, lot dimensions, lot coverage, building height and maximum floor area ratio that reflect a low-intensity mixed used neighborhood.

Like the rest of the North Ponce area, the LIMU District has no public parks and few functional green spaces. The recommended LIMU District requires that development allow a minimum of 25% open space, with no more than 15% covered. However, because of the desire to encourage consistent building facades along Salzedo, open space requirements for development along Salzedo are reduced to 20%.

The adaptive re-use of historically significant structures (as identified in the 2000 Janus Historic Resources Report) in the LIMU District is encouraged. See page 29 for details on the incentives available for developers.

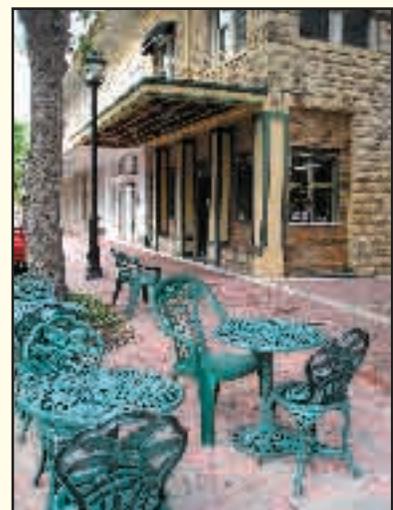
The recommended LIMU District provides incentives to consolidate off-street parking in high quality, centralized facilities. Developers can reduce costly requirements for off-street parking by reducing the height of buildings to four stories or less. Those developers who choose to provide off-street parking may be eligible for transferable parking rights, in which they can provide extra parking spaces for one development site and use those extra spaces to satisfy or partially satisfy the parking requirements of another development within the LIMU District.

Shared parking shall be made available when residential and non-residential land uses have different parking demand patterns and therefore, are able to use the same parking areas throughout the day (this was also a recommendation of the 2002 Charrette Report). The reduction in parking required allows developers to reduce their costs and increase space for other residential and commercial uses, and encourages developers to provide a mix of adjacent uses.

Additionally, the LIMU District provides strict design standards on parking facilities to ensure that they accommo-



*Examples of pedestrian friendly streets that are appropriate, in scale, for the LIMU District*



date users needs, but do not serve as a source of visual impairment. Standards are established for screening, landscaping, lighting, and the appearance and location of facilities.

In a further effort to maintain a welcoming and safe pedestrian environment, the recommended LIMU District requires proposed projects greater than forty (40) feet in height to make improvements to the area between the front setback line and the edge of the street. The required streetscape encompasses an on-street parking zone, a parkway zone, a pedestrian zone and an open space zone next to the building façade. These elements together create an attractive environment for both residents and pedestrians and provide ample space for pedestrians to walk comfortably and feel safe from traffic without crowding the entrance ways to buildings.

The role of the Low Intensity Mixed Use District is to provide “near-town” housing opportunities and a “quasi-urban” lifestyle of “walkable” neighborhoods and easy access to amenities such as restaurants, cultural uses, and neighborhood supporting retail and services.

The key planning objectives are to:

- enhance connectivity of streets and sidewalks;
- enhance the profile of the LIMU District;
- provide quasi-urban amenities in the LIMU District that are easily accessible to residents of the adjoining neighborhoods;
- promote mixed-use development in the LIMU District that puts commercial uses at the ground floor along Salzedo Street and residential uses that relate to the adjacent neighborhoods along other street frontages; and
- reinforce the abutting residential neighborhoods.

These Strategies anticipate that the LIMU District’s existing residential neighborhoods will continue to benefit from public and private reinvestment according to neighborhood-supported plans and market forces that are already in place.

### Improvements to the Public Realm

Salzedo Street, which bisects the LIMU District, has a right-of-way width of 60 feet, which is the same as Galiano Street and most of the east-west streets in the MF-C Districts. Salzedo Street is recommended to be improved in the same manner as the other streets in the North Ponce neighborhood with 60-foot rights-of-ways.

Madeira Avenue and Majorica Avenue, the two east-west streets in the LIMU District, have irregular right-of-way widths. Using GIS parcel information obtained from the City, it appears that Madeira Avenue has a ROW width of 54 feet and Majorca Avenue has a ROW width of 52 feet. The streetscape plans for the SF-C District, which are 50 feet wide, can be adapted to meet the slightly wider streets in the LIMU District.



*Example of improvements to the private realm*

## North Ponce Mixed Use (NPMU) District

The area proposed to be established as the “North Ponce Mixed Use (NPMU) District” applies to properties along Ponce de Leon on both sides of the street from Navarre Street on the south to SW 8th Street on the north – to Galiano on the east and to the mid point of the block between Ponce de Leon and Salzedo to the west.

### Existing Conditions

The character of the buildings in the NPMU District varies from block to block and within the same block in most instances. In some cases, tall commercial office buildings front onto Ponce de Leon while in other parts of the District one-story retail buildings occupy the street frontage. A short stroll along Ponce de Leon will reveal a mix of tall commercial office buildings and one-story retail buildings. In some areas commercial retail and office buildings of varying heights occupy the entire block while other blocks change in use from commercial on Ponce de Leon Boulevard to multi-family residential on the back side of the block.

Similar to the Low Intensity Mixed Use District, the NPMU District accommodates a mix of medium-density residential and commercial uses to meet the needs of residents and workers, and creates an attractive and viable pedestrian-oriented development pattern that brings together the activities of daily life. The NPMU District provides a smooth transition between multi-family residential and downtown Coral Gables, while protecting the character and integrity of those neighborhoods. Through performance standards that place a strong emphasis on aesthetics, mass, and scaling, the North Ponce Mixed Use District ensures a continuous development pattern that supports a diversity of uses while maintaining appropriate relationships between buildings and structures within the District.



*Examples of the diversity of building types along Ponce de Leon Boulevard*

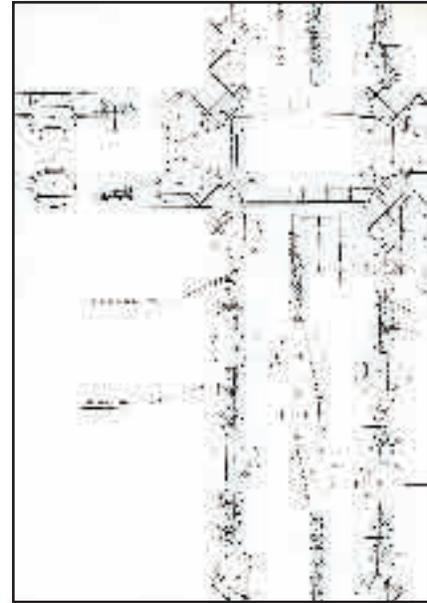


## Issues

With the exception of the small triangular park at the intersection of Ponce de Leon Boulevard and East Ponce de Leon Boulevard there are no public parks or open spaces in the North Ponce Mixed Use District.



Ponce de Leon Boulevard has a right-of-way width of 100'. Currently the road width is 48' wide (four 12' wide travel lanes). Adjacent to the travel lanes are angled parking spaces, which take up another 13' of pavement. This leaves 13' of space from the edge of the road to the private property line. The angled parking, combined with the four uninterrupted travel lanes make it very difficult to cross Ponce de Leon Boulevard either on foot or in a vehicle. The City is currently in the process of changing Ponce de Leon Boulevard. Under the new plan, for which construction started in the summer of 2005, there will be a 14' wide landscaped median that tapers to 4' at intersections to allow for turning lanes. The travel lanes will be reduced from 12' to 11', which will help slow down traffic. The angled parking will be eliminated in favor of parallel parking, of which there will be no more than two spaces in a row without a landscaped planter separating the parking spaces. This leaves 12' for sidewalks in the public right-of-way. No driveways or curbcuts are permitted on Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

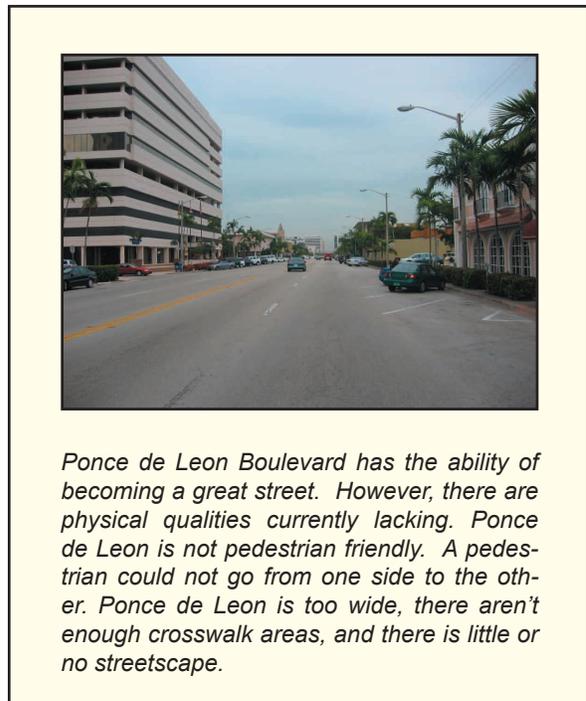


*new plan for Ponce de Leon Boulevard  
(City of Coral Gables, Public Works)*

Currently, the free City trolley that operates along the Ponce de Leon Boulevard corridor and into the CBD has a very high ridership. Many people that work in the CBD park near a trolley stop in the North Ponce area and ride the trolley to work.

## Recommendations

These Strategies anticipate that the North Ponce Mixed Use District will be a mixed-use, architecturally diverse, pedestrian-friendly, and varied-scale "in town" neighborhood. The objective is to create a large urban residential base with ground floor retail uses to enhance the experience at the street-level, and opportunities to develop office space on upper stories of vertically mixed-use buildings.



*Ponce de Leon Boulevard has the ability of becoming a great street. However, there are physical qualities currently lacking. Ponce de Leon is not pedestrian friendly. A pedestrian could not go from one side to the other. Ponce de Leon is too wide, there aren't enough crosswalk areas, and there is little or no streetscape.*

Ponce de Leon Boulevard is the main thoroughfare and the spine of activity within the North Ponce neighborhood. Pressure for higher density development has produced concerns among residents, business owners, and city officials, but has also provided an opportunity to direct future growth in an organized manner and create an attractive urban neighborhood catering to residential and commercial users. Recommendations include the creation of a medium-density mixed-use district to regulate land development and renovations to the public realm.

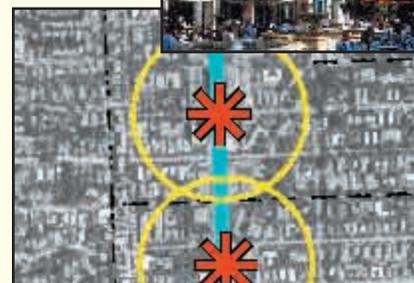
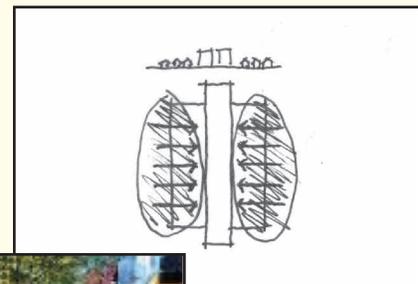
### 1. Land Use District

The North Ponce Mixed Use District permits vertically and horizontally mixed uses throughout the District, subject to performance standards to ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses, a meaningful pedestrian environment and appropriate transitions between high, medium and low rise buildings.

The objective of the North Ponce Mixed Use District is to promote the comprehensive redevelopment of the Ponce de Leon corridor in a pedestrian friendly manner and to provide incentives for land assembly, ideally of whole blocks to the east of Ponce and to the mid-block on the west. Under the proposed North Ponce Mixed Use District, a developer who controls an entire block between Ponce de Leon and Galiano/Salzedo could redevelop the entire area as mixed use, subject to performance standards with regard to the location and intensity of particular uses and the varying bulk regulations to ensure compatibility with adjacent sub-areas and uses. For example, general retail would be limited to street level along Ponce de Leon and along east-west streets to a depth of one hundred (100) feet from the right of way of Ponce.

#### ATTRACTING THE "QUASI-URBAN" MARKET:

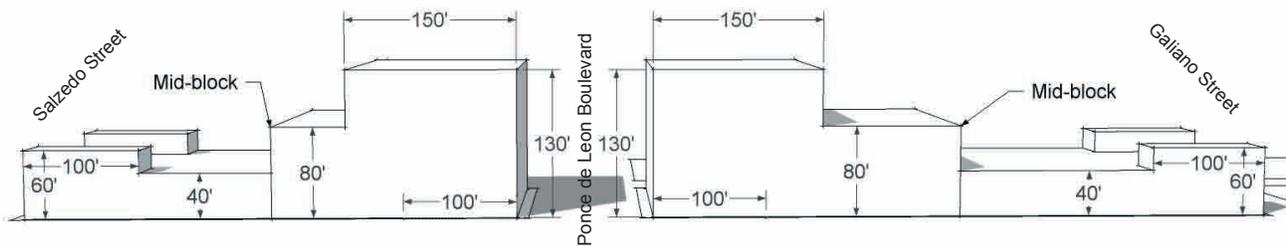
1. Make the place walkable. "Quasi-Urban" households like to walk. The experience should be interesting and comfortable.
2. Provide inter-connectivity. Integrate the residential and commercial fabric of the community with connected streets and sidewalks.
3. Provide nodes of activity. Public nodes foster a pedestrian life of culture, community, and commerce. Nodes of activity cultivate public gathering.
4. Concentrate uses. Pedestrian access is facilitated by concentrating human and building densities.
5. Create places. The urban fabric from public node to neighborhood edge should define a community of place.



Neighborhood serving retail, in contrast, would be restricted to the corners of east west streets along the west side of Galiano and would be limited to five thousand (5,000) square feet for each corner. Individual stores would be limited to 2,500 square feet. The permitted uses for neighborhood serving retail include bakeries, barber shops and salons, book stores, convenience stores, delicatessens, dry cleaners, florists, grocery stores, hardware stores, ice cream stores, music / video stores, banks, produce stores, restaurants / cafés (including eat-in and take-away) and tailors. These types of retail uses, provided at a small scale within a quasi-urban neighborhood, add to the quality and character of the neighborhood.

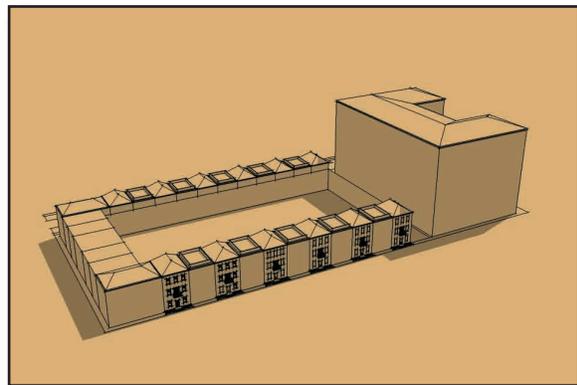
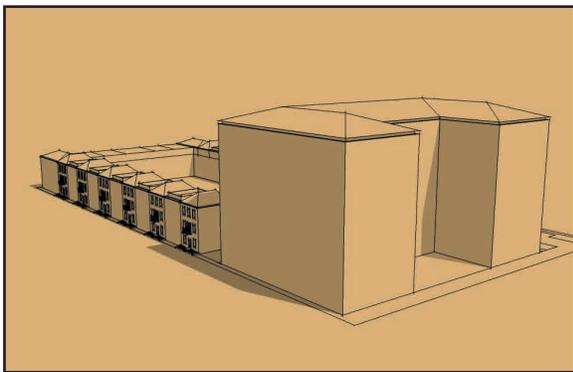
Multi-family residential (townhouses, apartments, and condominiums) would be permitted throughout the block and required to be on the ground and facing the street from a point that is 100 feet back from Ponce de Leon to the corner of Galiano and Salzedo, with the exception of neighborhood serving retail on the corners of Galiano and Salzedo as permitted.

Bulk regulations and design standards are proposed to ensure that the character of the area is pedestrian friendly and at a human scale at the street level. For example, high rise buildings (maximum height of 150') are limited to lands within the North Ponce Mixed Use District which are located within one hundred and fifty (150) feet of the right of way on either side of Ponce de Leon. However, when a site in the NPMU District is a receiving site of a transfer of floor area, the high-rise portion of a building can go up to one hundred and ninety (190) feet. Buildings between one hundred and fifty (150) feet and the mid-point of the block (between



*Above — depiction of proposed maximum building envelope for the North Ponce Mixed Use District*

*Below — a model depicting a theoretical redevelopment of an entire block between Ponce de Leon Boulevard and Galiano or Salzedo Street*



Ponce and Galiano) would be limited to a maximum height of eighty (80) feet — ninety-seven (97) feet when receiving additional floor area through a TDR. Between one hundred and fifty feet of Ponce and the mid-point of the block, street level uses would be restricted to residential with significant design and landscape for front yards of residential uses which are not town-houses. The maximum building height between the mid-point of the block and 100 feet away from the right of way of Galiano/Salzedo is forty (40) feet (sixty (60) feet when floor area is received through a TDR) to ensure that this area has an apparent and active residential street character. Within one hundred (100) feet of Galiano/Salzedo, the maximum permitted height increases to sixty (60) feet (eighty (80) feet when floor area is received through a TDR) so long as the north-south dimension of the building at 60 feet in height does not exceed thirty percent (30%) of the north-south dimension of the entire block.

The NPMU District is also eligible to receive Transfers of Development Rights (TDR's) from the MF-C Districts. Redevelopment projects in the MF-C Districts which satisfy any number of "development incentives," i.e. reducing density, providing public parks or public parking (see pages 25-26), can transfer floor area to the NPMU District. The same transfer of development rights can happen within the NPMU District. Development rights cannot be transferred from the NPMU District to the MF-C District or any other district.

The North Ponce Mixed Use District creates a distinctive, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhood. Restaurants are allowed and encouraged to provide outdoor seating along Ponce de Leon Boulevard and along side streets off of Ponce de Leon Boulevard up to the mid-block. Side setbacks are eliminated and developers are encouraged to build to the setback line to create a consistent building façade along streets within the neighborhood. Standard ten (10) foot front setbacks are called for throughout the North Ponce Mixed Use District, within which developers are responsible for providing a detailed urban streetscape connecting improvements in the public right of way to urban open space zones on private property. While the North Ponce Mixed Use District provides for buildings up to one-hundred and thirty (130) feet in height, standards require that buildings are setback as they increase in height, so that a cornice line is established at a height which conveys importance to the pedestrian environment.

The North Ponce Mixed Use District facilitates a compatible medium-density, mixed-use activity center that brings together a variety of residential, office, retail, and neighborhood services and encourages a high-quality pedestrian environment. The Ponce de Leon Corridor of the North Ponce Mixed Use District represents a distinctive neighborhood block, but encompasses characteristics in building intensity and uses that require different performance standards for different portions of the District.

Encouraging pedestrian-oriented developments and continuous urban streetscapes does present challenges to those city ser-

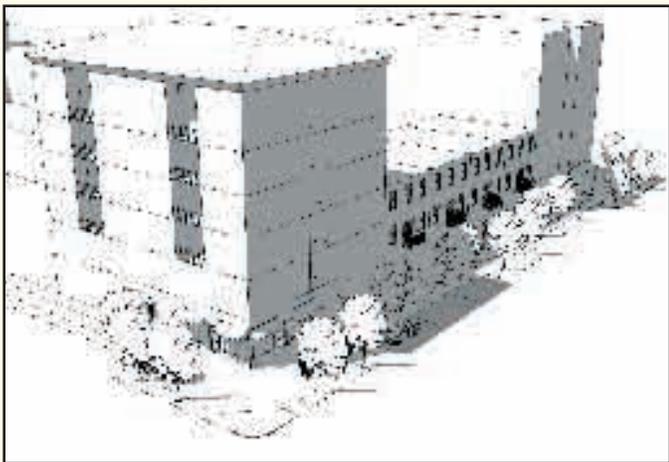
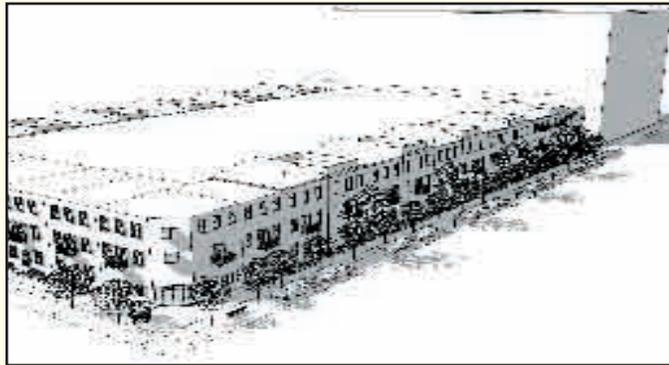


*Example of a pedestrian friendly facade*

VICES that employ automobiles to carry out their duties. Because of the consistent building facades and lack of curb cuts in the North Ponce Mixed Use District, proposed regulations provide for the use of service corridors as a means for deliveries, police and fire service, emergency medical services, garbage collection and other city services. These service corridors accommodate automobile traffic while effectively screening unattractive activities from the street.

There is a twenty (20) percent minimum open space requirement, with a maximum of twelve (12) percent of that space to be covered, throughout the NPMU District. This gives developers more flexibility in where their open space is located and what it looks like. However, in an effort to include more functional green space in the District, it is mandated that developers building a project taking up roughly half of a neighborhood block must dedicate pocket parks open to the public on site or adjacent to the building.

The recommended North Ponce Mixed Use District presents methods for satisfying burdensome parking requirements. First, transferable parking rights are available to those developers who place extra parking spaces on site. The developer may transfer the extra spaces to satisfy the requirements on another site or sell them to another developer on the open market for use within the NPMU District. Second, shared parking shall be made available when residential and non-residential land uses have different parking



*Above — two models of theoretical redevelopment projects. The top model focuses on the streetscape improvements and the bottom model focuses on the possibility of neighborhood retail and added permitted height along Galiano Street.*

*Below — an example of a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented street.*



demand patterns and therefore, are able to use the same parking areas throughout the day (this was also a recommendation from the 2002 Charrette Report). The reduction in parking required allows developers to reduce their costs and increase space for other residential and commercial uses, and encourages developers to provide a mix of adjacent uses. Third, developers can opt to “buy-out” a portion of their parking obligation. In other words, a developer may pay money (\$12,500 per parking space) to the City in lieu of providing a portion of the required parking. The money would be put into a fund which is set aside for acquiring land and building public parking facilities within the NPMU and MF-C Districts. A developer could not buy-out all of the required parking — residential uses would be required to have at least one space per unit and non-residential space could buy-out up to two-thirds of the parking requirements, i.e. providing at least one-third of the normal requirement. The parking buy-out program was also a recommendation of the 2002 Charrette Report.



The adaptive re-use of historically significant structures (as identified in the 2000 Janus Historic Resources Report) in the LIMU District is encouraged. See page 29 for details on the incentives available for developers.

While the NPMU District provides alternatives for parking requirements, there are strict regulations in place to assure that parking lots and automobile traffic do not impede on pedestrian amenities within the District. Design standards in particular are instrumental in detailing guidelines for screening and landscaping around surface lots. Design standards also restrict surface lots and require that structured parking conform with the architectural style and character of the primary use building.

## 2. Renovation of the Public Realm

Creating a Mixed Use District which is attractive to residents, businesses and customers of those businesses, is dependent on a working relationship between the public and private sectors. Along with the creation of the North Ponce Mixed Use District to regulate the use of private property, the success of the North Ponce Mixed Use District along Ponce de Leon Boulevard relies on renovations and improvements within the public realm. Renovations should include streetscape improvements, parking improvements, and the addition of public parks.

### A. Initiatives

#### i. Streetscape Improvements

Ponce de Leon Boulevard currently has public right of way of one-hundred (100) feet, with on-street angled parking and sidewalks. Private developers of projects greater than four stories in

height are required under the recommended North Ponce Mixed Use District to improve the area between the front setback and the edge of pavement. However, the City of Coral Gables will be responsible for improving the streetscape in the public right of way in front of buildings and



*A model of a whole block of redevelopment, with parking provided in a garage which is masked by townhomes that face the street.*

any buildings lying within the North Ponce Mixed Use District that are four (4) stories in height or less. Improvements include installing a four (4) foot landscaped parkway with regular street trees and a sidewalk of at least five (5) feet in width. Additionally, where private developers will be responsible for making initial improvements, improvements which lie in the public right of way will be dedicated to the City of Coral Gables. The City should be prepared to maintain a high-quality streetscape and make additional public improvements, including street lighting and the installation of public art and street furniture where appropriate.

Finally, when a redevelopment opportunity presents itself at the north end of the corridor, the City should seek to create a trolley kiosk and “terminal” area (this is also a recommendation from the 2002 Charrette Report). If possible, the terminal area should include parking available for trolley riders. Currently the northern end of the trolley is where Ponce de Leon Boulevard intersects with SW 8th. A kiosk and terminal area would increase the visibility of the trolley system and help increase ridership through the dissemination of information on routes and headways.

### ii. Parking

Development intensities provided for under the recommended North Ponce Mixed Use District will create a need for parking above and beyond existing inventory. Both developers, within their required streetscape improvements, and the City of Coral Gables, shall provide parking to meet the needs of current users and in preparation for the influx of commercial and residential users. Off-street parking improvements will be an important element of encouraging pedestrian-oriented development and meeting the needs of residents, employees, and visitors to the NPMU District. The NPMU District provides for shared parking amongst users. However, the City of Coral Gables may have an additional responsibility to provide central and accessible parking in the event that government uses and/or entertainment facilities locate within the District.

### iii. Open Space

Public parks are an important amenity for all neighborhoods, but especially urban neighborhoods in which there is a reduction in the amount of private space enjoyed by those living and working in the area. With increasing development, especially the future addition of medium-

density residential uses, there is a great need and desire to have attractive public parks within walking distance. In addition to the requirements for dedication of pocket parks placed on large-scale projects above twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet of lot coverage, the City of Coral Gables should make a concerted effort to purchase both vacant lots and distressed properties in the area, with the intent of turning them into parks or open space. 

### 3. Planning and Design Principles for Commercial Corridors

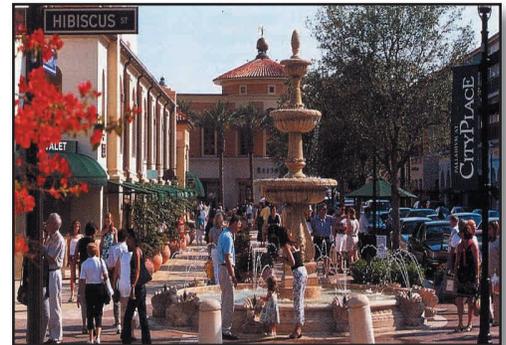
Principles are derived from the lessons learned from decades of planning and design trial and error in cities and towns across the country. They establish basic criteria for guiding design decisions on new development in existing environments. The major planning and design principles for mixed use corridors are:

(1) Connect the primary assets. Mixed use corridors should be used to link important sections of neighborhoods and cities such as community centers, civic buildings, cultural centers, landmarks, parks and open space, and historical sites.

(2) Support pedestrians and transportation modes. Mixed use corridors should facilitate space for safe pedestrian circulation through wide, distinctive, and secure sidewalks as well as make possible the movement of autos, bicycles, and mass transportation (trolleys, buses). Parking should be on-street wherever possible, and off-street parking should be designed to enhance the desired streetscape effect. Vehicle intrusion into the streetscape should be limited by limiting the number of curb-cuts and driveways permitted along a street.

(3) Foster community gathering. Mixed use corridors must again become distinctive public spaces that promote social interaction. Open space and activity nodes must be created within the corridor, enhanced by plazas, benches, fountains, lighting, landscaping and shaded areas. Outdoor seating and dining should be created wherever possible. Mixed use corridors are excellent places to hold community activities (parades and festivals).

(4) Concentrate building density. Fostering intense activity for the entire length Ponce de Leon Boulevard, with a concentration of building density and mixed-use development, ideally those connected to the primary



assets, is a vehicle for creating the added value that will attract investors through providing a critical mass of feasible commercial activity. This development pattern promotes vivid zones with a mixture of office and housing types, both with convenient retail access. This, in turn, has the potential for creating a neighborhood which is also a destination for people from outside the neighborhood as well. Higher-density buildings, with windows and balconies fronting streets, also promote safer environments by providing “eyes on the street”.

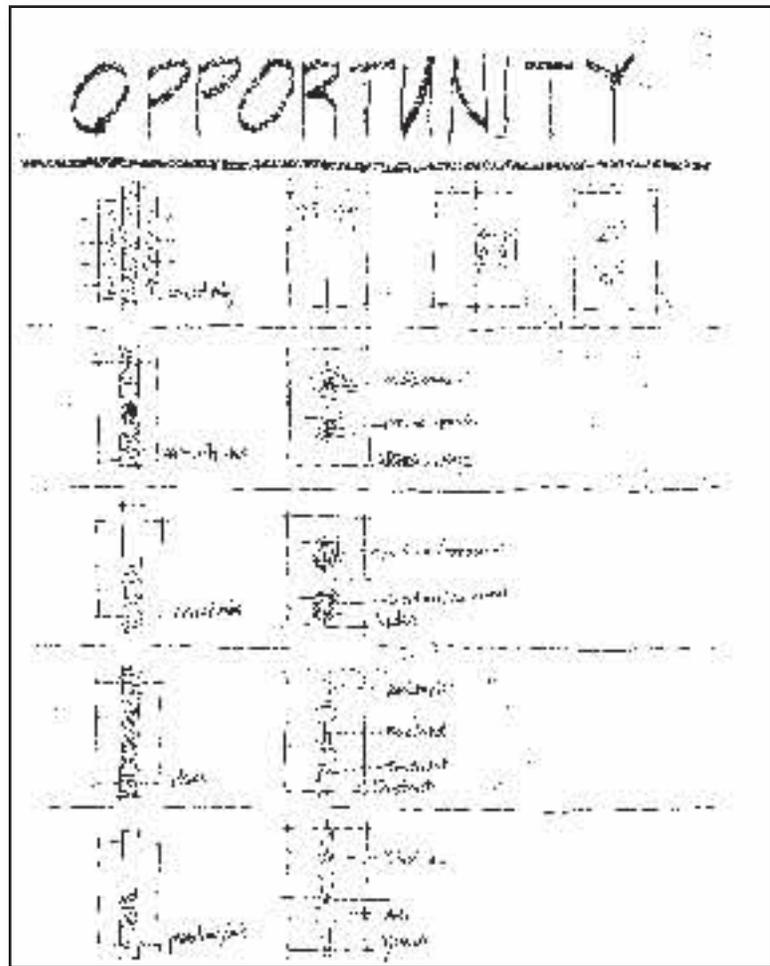
(5) Create identity (theme). The character of a place, when discovered and deeply understood, can provide sources for a theme for the redevelopment of a corridor. This theme, while it must be rooted in the best assets of the city to which the corridor is connected, must also somehow express the dreams and aspirations of the neighborhood citizens whose lives are connected to the corridor, and therefore can be shared with the city and the region.

## Opportunities and Development Alternatives for the Corridor

### The Opportunities

#### Connectivity

The streetscape improvements to Ponce de Leon Boulevard and the east-west connector streets, plus the provision of pedestrian crosswalks encourages connectivity within the North Ponce Mixed Use District, thus knitting together all of North Ponce. The streetscape improvements would promote movement between and within all the neighborhoods and across the Ponce de Leon Boulevard Corridor at key points, while focusing automobile movement along the corridor and away from residential areas.



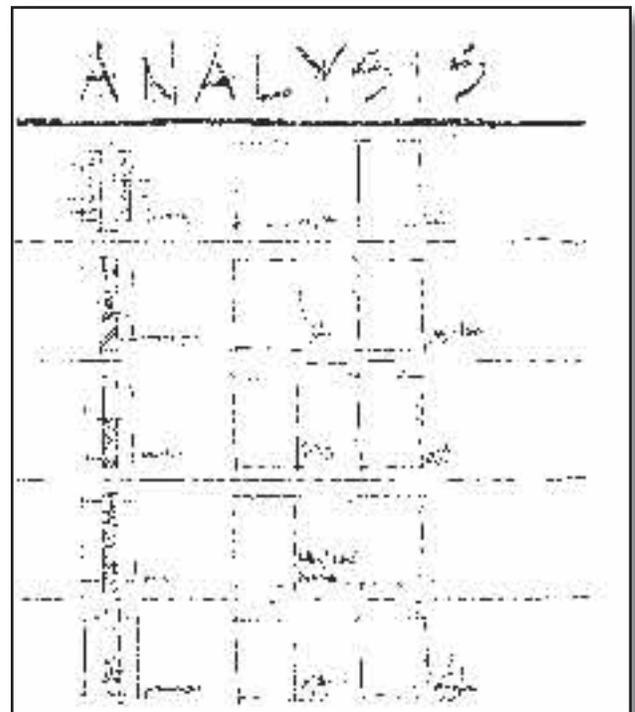
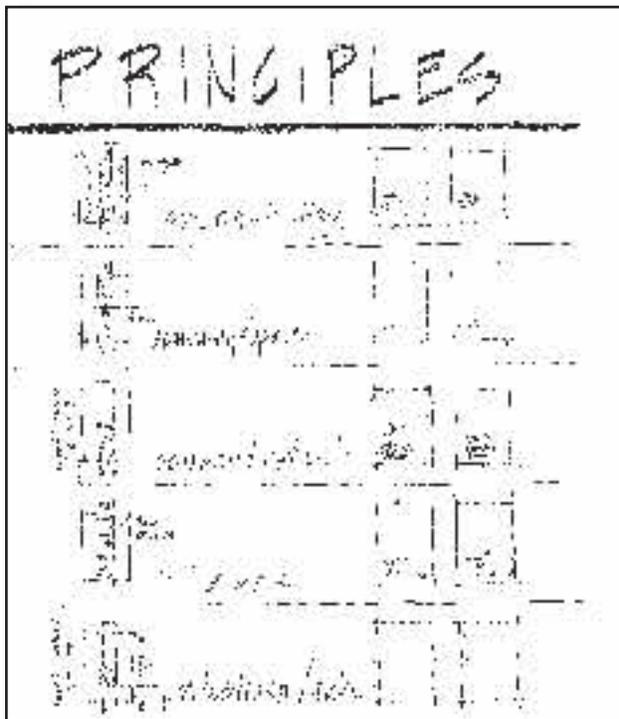
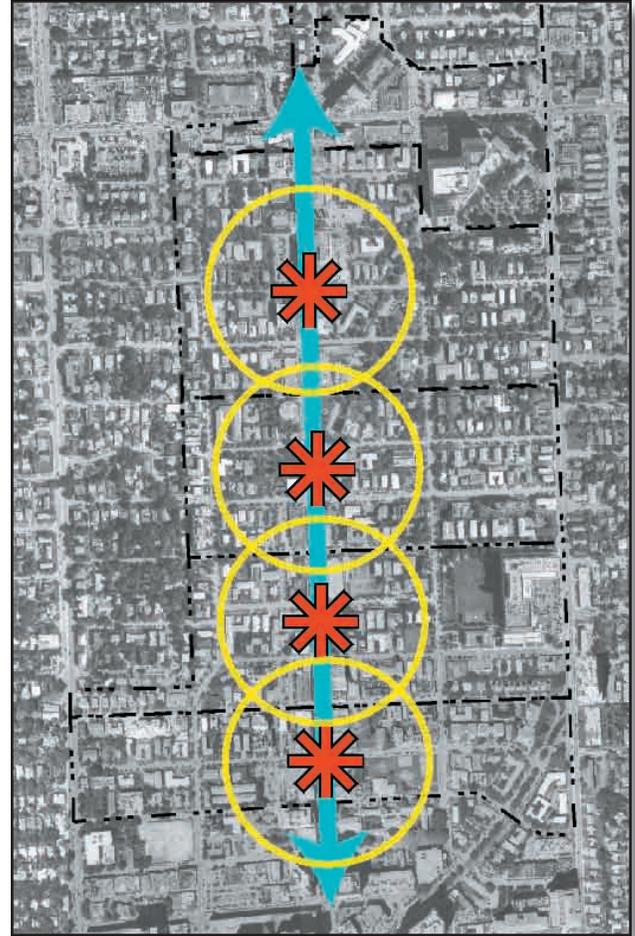
### Community Space

Community spaces could be focused around activity nodes that are within a ten (10) minute walking radius from residential neighborhoods.

The entire Ponce de Leon Boulevard corridor can function as a kind of “linear living room” for the City of Coral Gables. However, specific nodes should be created, with public plazas and parks and a trolley stop, to provide the kind of informal gathering places that can foster a greater level of community interaction.

Overall, the corridor needs to embrace some of the good qualities revealed on the adjunct neighborhood districts. It should project unity, coherence, rhythm, balance and continuity.

These attributes can be achieved by articulating building mass and facades, setbacks and heights, landscape intensity, parking and signage disposition, and use of building materials and colors, etc.



### Concentrate

The activity nodes, located at areas along the Ponce de Leon Boulevard corridor, can become vivid hubs of urban life as locations for the creation of critical masses of higher-density, mixed-use development, housing diversity, and variation of building types.

### Places

If properly connected to the neighborhoods, these activity nodes could become the kind of gathering places that enhance a sense of community through shared spaces and activities that can potentially bridge physical, cultural, and economic differences and celebrate the diversity of the City of Coral Gables.

### Catalytic Project

The most powerful antidote to what ails the Ponce De Leon Corridor would be a market-shifting redevelopment project. In many communities, mixed use projects are designed as “lifestyle centers,” places where the emphasis is on a quasi-urban neighborhood lifestyle. The demographics of the area do not support a lifestyle center like Mizner Park in Boca Raton, however, there is clearly support in the market place for lifestyle housing, e.g. near downtown residential neighborhoods to the north and west of the Ponce de Leon Corridor.

These Strategies recognize that there is a unique opportunity for a catalytic redevelopment project north of Sidonia Avenue on the east side of Ponce de Leon. Although assembly of sufficient land to carry out a truly character-influencing redevelopment is daunting, these Strategies acknowledge the enormous benefits which would flow from such an undertaking and explicitly anticipates the possibility. For example, if a developer were able to assemble one or more full blocks between Ponce and Galiano to the north of Sidonia Avenue, the Strategies provide that the rights of way of North Ponce should be vacated, along with the rights of way of any intervening east-west streets, provided that the resulting development created an urban place of form and function which reinforced and improved the character and quality of life of the North Ponce neighborhood. The Strategies recognize that the cost of land assembly would be substantial and that the redevelopment potential of such land assemblies would depend on the ability of a developer to exploit all of the development entitlements appurtenant to the land. The Strategies propose that a full block redevelopment to the north of Sidonia Avenue

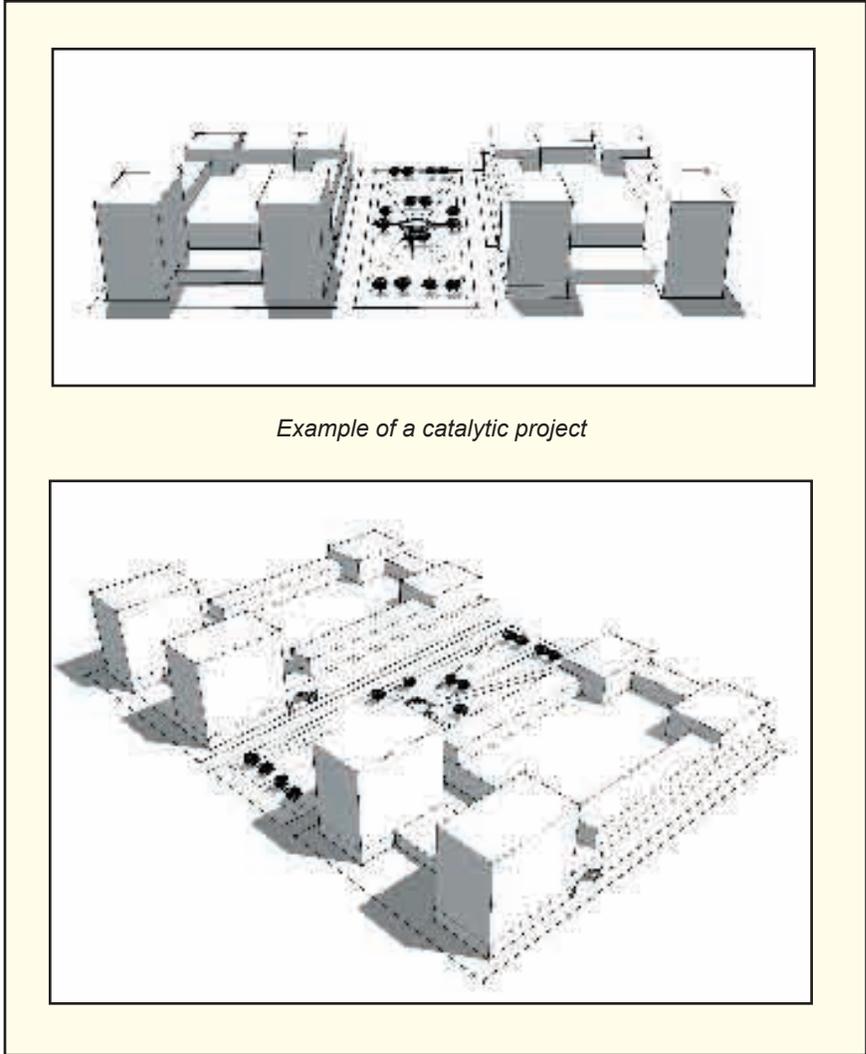


should be given substantial flexibility with regard to required parking and height. For example, if at least thirty percent (30%) of the assembled land were planned as a plaza, piazza or “square,” buildings within one hundred and fifty (150) feet of the right of way of North Ponce would be permitted to a height of one hundred and sixty (160) feet. Buildings within one hundred feet of Galiano would be permitted to a height of one hundred and twenty (120) feet and buildings in between would be permitted to a height of eighty (80) feet.

The importance of a catalytic project is increased by the nature of the redevelopment area. The Corridor is more than 3,000 feet long and it will be extremely difficult to achieve a significant change in market perception on a

parcel by parcel, incremental basis. At some point the market will turn, but in the meantime, each developer is a pioneer and the absence of momentum exposes the entire enterprise to world events and economic cycles.

The preferred redevelopment scenario would be an appropriate catalytic project with the power to transform the market’s perception of the future of the Corridor and to stimulate second and third generation redevelopment investment. Ideally, the project would involve ten (10) or more acres of land and would involve a mix of retail and residential uses with a mix of housing types including mid-rise apartment/condominiums and town homes. The project should include a significant public open space in order to create a greater sense of place, a “there” there (this is also a recommendation from the 2002 Charrette Report). If possible the project should be divided into two or more phases, however, the first phase should involve at least 25,000 square feet of retail and 100 dwelling units. The residential density, based on gross acreage (without regard to the permitted intensity of non-residential uses) should be at least 30 units to the acre to give potential developers flexibility to create a range of unit sizes. The height of the mid-rise should not exceed 100 feet and buildings should be designed so that building height varies substantially.



*Example of a catalytic project*

The City of Coral Gables should be prepared to participate in land assembly for a catalytic project and to provide economic incentives in the form of TIF rebates or other economic incentives to reduce risk and improve the character of the project.

Along Ponce De Leon Boulevard itself, major redevelopment is anticipated, including active public sector involvement in redirecting the corridor's physical character and market trajectory. These Strategies recommend development of a catalytic project in a highly-visible location in the North Ponce Mixed Use District in order to jump-start the redevelopment of the rest of the North Ponce neighborhood.

## Commercial Areas

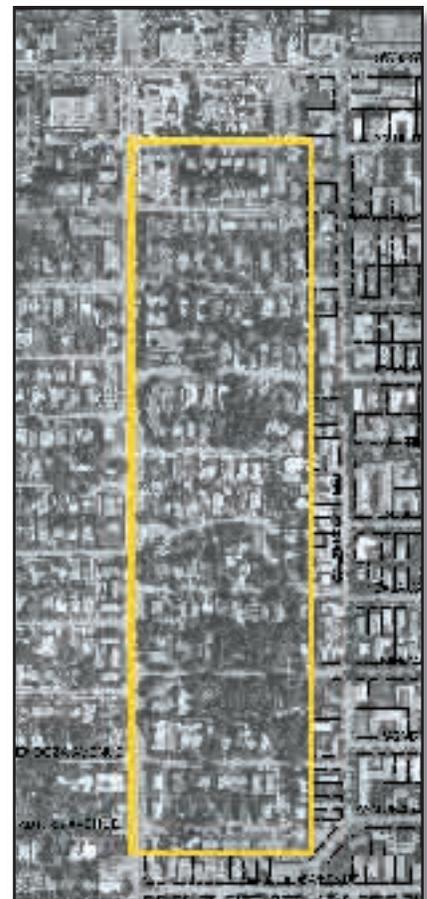
There are two existing commercial areas contained within the North Ponce area. One is centered generally along SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street and the other is located in the far northeast corner of the North Ponce neighborhood, close to Flagler Avenue.

These commercial areas have little, if any, relationship to the other North Ponce sub-areas. The buildings are primarily oriented towards the major street they are located along and there is little hope, or need, to re-orient the buildings to connect to the surrounding North Ponce sub-areas. Therefore, the only recommendation for these commercial areas is to prevent the expansion of their commercial land uses to surrounding residential neighborhoods by the strict enforcement of the Zoning Code and Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan.



## Area of Influence and Opportunity

This area abuts North Ponce and has been an arena of much discussion in the City of Coral Gables regarding the possible acquisition of the area. Although as of now there is no policy decision regarding this area, the future land use designation could affect North Ponce and likewise the future of the North Ponce neighborhood could affect the area.



## Summary

### Development And Redevelopment Strategies

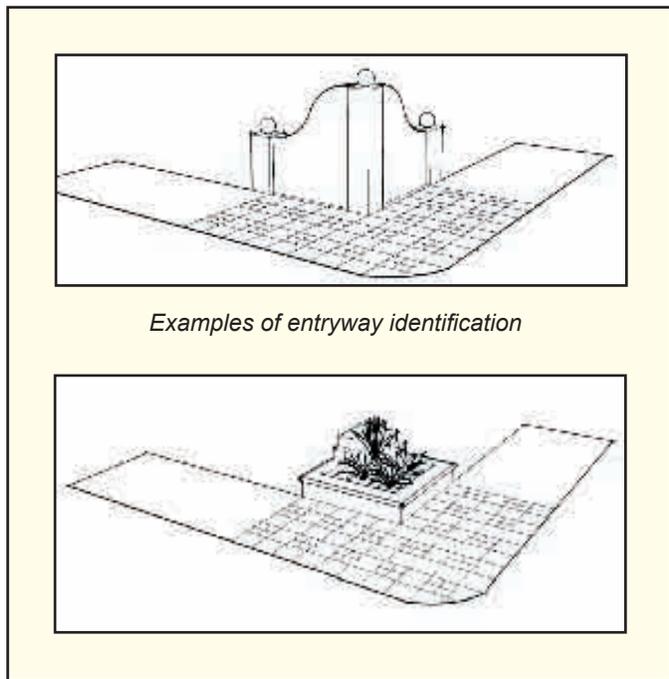
Redevelopment is the natural order of things in the built environment. Unfortunately, the reality of the market is that redevelopment occurs naturally only when the value of the land is significantly greater than the value of the land and improvements. While low rent retail – tenants of last resort — are undesirable to the community at large, they nevertheless generate income which is valuable to the owner, especially if the owner is not invested in maintenance, repair and improvement. Accelerating the pace of development and redevelopment requires strategies which overcome or shift market forces to make development and redevelopment economically feasible. There are a variety of strategies which can be employed to achieve a desired redevelopment outcome.

### Renovation Of The Public Realm

It is axiomatic that real estate products with a “good address” are more valuable than others with less attractive addresses. A good address is comprised of several elements including location and the image and character of the place and the nature of the street. The Ponce De Leon Corridor is blessed with great location, practically in the center of the North Ponce neighborhood. The image and character of the Corridor as a place leaves much to be desired, as does the local street network.

A key redevelopment strategy must be the renovation of the image and character of the Ponce De Leon Corridor as a desirable “address.” Elimination of unattractive signage and addition of street landscaping are needed if the image of the area is to be improved. The market is very sensitive to public commitments to change because of the opportunity for wealth creation that is created when specific direction is supported by concrete and visible action. Public investment in streetscaping, for example, is far more likely to reposition the image of place than an even larger public investment in storm water management, although the latter may be more important in the long run.

One way that the City of Coral Gables could demonstrate its “commitment” would be to identify a set of improvements which could be implemented throughout the Corridor. The idea of a “palette” of improvements is something that was identified several times



in the 2002 Charrette Report. Entryway identification is a strategy that many communities have successfully implemented. While it would be imprudent to install street trees along block faces which are going to be redeveloped in the future, improvements at intersections where existing setbacks are sufficient to allow pavers could establish a new “vocabulary” for the Corridor. The scope of the intersection improvements could be modest so long as they are striking in the character and are distributed throughout the corridor.

Local streets are also in need of upgrade. The formula for great local streets is relatively simple — pedestrian friendly/traffic-calmed travel lanes, parkways with ground cover and street trees and a sidewalk of at least five feet in width which is part of a network of pedestrian ways. A powerful incentive for redevelopment would be to provide street renovation funding in support of qualified redevelopment proposals. The incentive would be particularly powerful if storm water management improvements were needed.

## Catalytic Project

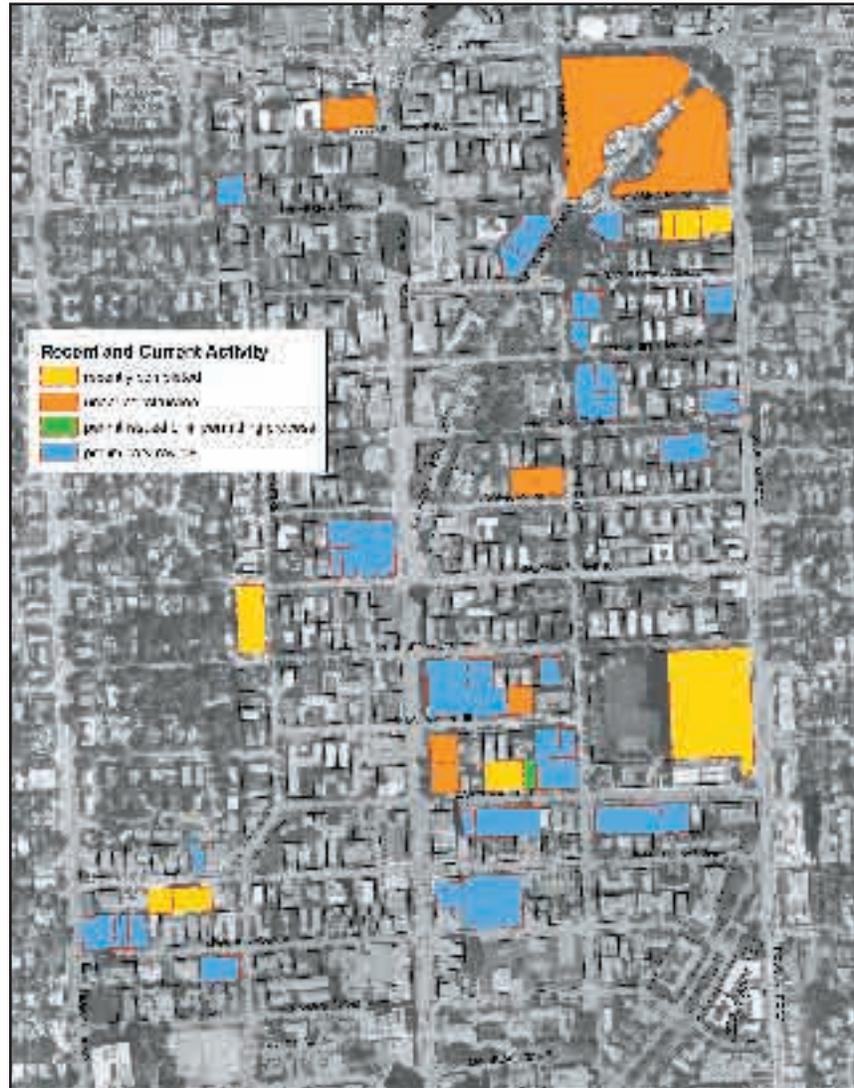
A key strategy in most redevelopment scenarios involves land assembly — consolidation of land ownership to create modern parcels of land which can be efficiently developed. Historical patterns of development created small lots which can not be effectively redeveloped because of land development code requirements, e.g. off-street parking, and because a new store on a single lot in a block of otherwise obsolete store fronts has little or no chance of success.

Land assembly involves more than creating usable parcels of land. Land assembly is also a technique for eliminating negative elements from the built environment. A key negative land use in the Ponce De Leon corridor are obsolete motels which contribute to the reality and perception of crime and unsafe conditions. Strategic land assembly would result in the elimination of these negative influences and if the balance of land in the block where a motel is located could be assembled, the enhanced development potential could help to fund the cost of eliminating the motels. Generally, the size and dimensions of a redevelopment parcel have a significant impact on the value of land, e.g. the per square foot value of a 50 x 100 foot lot is less than the per square foot value of 250 x 400 foot block, because of the relative efficiency of redeveloping the parcels.

In addition, the assembly of entire blocks along Ponce De Leon would allow for the development of projects which would establish a transition from commercial retail along the Ponce De Leon frontage to residential along the neighborhood boundary away from the Corridor.

## Sense of Urgency

There is concern by the City and interested parties in the North Ponce Corridor that the ability to effectuate real change in the Corridor is slipping away as time passes. As evidenced by the graphic to the right, many projects have either been recently constructed (yellow), are under construction (orange), in the permitting process (green) or are in the approval process currently (blue). Some of the projects are perceived as out of scale with the existing development and/or not conducive to a pedestrian environment. Not all of these project are “undesirable” projects but the map demonstrates that the pace of redevelopment has quickened recently and therefore the recommendations from this report need to be implemented rapidly.



## Goals And Objectives

Goal 1: Create "Addresses" For Redevelopment.

**Objective 1.A.** Enhance the public realm to create high quality addresses for private investment in redevelopment. 

**Objective 1.B.** Develop a two-phase catalytic project on approximately 10 acres of highly visible property along the Ponce de Leon Corridor in order to show the potential for the corridor and to differentiate the corridor from other areas in the Coral Gables and Miami-Dade County marketplace.

Phase 1: a "quasi-urban" residential project with a secure but transparent "semi-public" realm on 5 or more acres.

Phase 2: a residential/retail mixed-use project on 5 or more acres. Public acquisition, condemnation, or public support of private acquisition (e.g., TIF rebates and/or regulatory incentives) should be used if necessary to expedite land assembly.

**Objective 1.C.** Prioritize public investments by allocating public funds to enhancement of the public realm around committed redevelopment projects.

**Objective 1.D.** If necessary to augment the market, create regulatory incentives for redevelopment of the character and quality anticipated by the Strategies.

**Objective 1.E.** Reduce sign "clutter" through code enforcement and regulatory programs that provide incentives for quality signage. 

**Objective 1.F.** Encourage the adaptive re-use of the historic fabric (as identified in the 2000 Janus Historic Resources Report) by eliminating parking requirements for developers who re-use a historic building.

**Objective 1.G.** Discourage the assembly of properties and larger buildings on land located away from Ponce de Leon Boulevard by 1) not allowing greater height as larger parcels are assembled as currently is allowed in the Zoning Code; 2) reducing parking requirements for buildings which are less than 40 feet in height; 3) allowing developers to transfer unused development rights from the MF-C Districts to the NPMU District, subject to performance standards.

Goal 2: Protect And Enhance The Character Of Existing Residential Neighborhoods That Surround The Corridor.

**Objective 2.A.** Amendments to the comprehensive plan and land development regulations should be sensitive to the preservation of the positive character features of the residential neighborhoods that surround the corridor.

**Objective 2.B.** Functionally relate redevelopment projects to the surrounding neighborhoods.

New residential uses should face existing residential uses and when market-feasible, small neighborhood-serving retailers could be located in vertically mixed-use buildings at corners along Galiano and Salzedo Streets at major cross streets.

**Objective 2.C.** Redevelopment projects should be designed and massed such that buildings that face residential neighborhoods:

- are 1 to 3 stories in height;
- are residential in character; and
- block street-level views of taller buildings within the redevelopment project

**Objective 2.D.** Encourage the development of senior housing and assisted living facilities (ALF's) in the North Ponce Corridor by eliminating all of the required parking normally associated with such facilities.

Goal 3: Maximize The Impact Of Every Public Dollar Invested.

**Objective 3.A.** In general, tie public investment in the corridor to committed redevelopment projects.

**Objective 3.B.** Coordination of public investment with other ongoing governmental and nonprofit efforts, including:

- workforce housing
- senior housing/ALF's
- social services
- county redevelopment plans

Goal 4: Create A Pedestrian-oriented Environment Along The Ponce De Leon Corridor and Within all of the North Ponce Districts

**Objective 4.A.** Widen sidewalks to at least twelve (12) feet starting with the frontage of the catalytic project area.



**Objective 4.B.** Enhance crosswalks at signaled intersections.

**Objective 4.C.** Provide transit (trolley) stops at regular intervals along the Ponce de Leon Boulevard and provide distinctive trolley stop signs.



**Objective 4.D.** Provide shade, shelter, and amenities at transit stops.

**Objective 4.E.** Provide a trolley kiosk and terminal area at the north end of the Ponce de Leon Boulevard.



**Objective 4.F.** Explore the feasibility of adding on-street parking to corridor.

**Objective 4.G.** Minimize building setbacks, concentrate density, and minimize open surface parking areas.

**Objective 4.H.** Investigate the use of traffic calming measures where appropriate.

**Objective 4.I.** Utilize transfer of development rights (TDRs) to encourage developers to provide open space and parks.

**Objective 4.J.** The City shall develop parks and recreation and open space when feasible and according to the need, outlined in the City's Comprehensive Plan, Parks & Recreation element.