

Griffin Road Corridor Redevelopment Community Charrette
Summary Report

Prepared for:

City of Dania Beach

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Introduction

Dania Beach is located in Broward County between Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood. Immigrants settled in Dania Beach in the 1880s and established the first city to incorporate in Broward in 1904. As reflected in the City's name, the first immigrants were Danish. Like any city in Broward, Dania Beach faces a variety of issues such as land use, transportation systems, economic development, and the desire to become a sustainable city.

In 2001, Dania Beach annexed several unincorporated areas. At present, the City of Dania Beach is comprised of 6.31 sq. mi., or 6.09 sq. mi. of land and 0.22 sq. mi. of water. Along with annexations the City's population also increased. According to the 2000 Census the population was 20,061. By 2006, the population reached 28,802. Between 2009 and 2010 the population is estimated to reach 29,098. The City's population is: 70.14% White, 23.74% African-American, 0.30% Native American, 1.39% Asian, 0.03% Pacific Islander, 2.27% from other races, 2.14% from two or more races. This reflects an increase in ethnic diversity over the last nine years. Additional 2000 Census data show the community experienced a 29.8% drop in home value last year. Also, households with children are 18.8%, which is nearly 10% less than the national average.

Today, it is the City's mission to provide a unique small-town quality of living for all its residents and guests. The City's small town charm includes a historic arts and antique district and award-winning beaches.

For its part, the leadership of the City of Dania Beach recognizes that in order to grow and prosper it is paramount to involve the city's residents in planning and re-development decision-making. Broward Smart Growth Partnership (BSGP), a collaborative of diverse professionals and organizations created to provide leadership, education; promote livable and sustainable communities in Broward County recognized Dania Beach's needs and interests and entered into a partnership. Under the leadership of Gloria Katz, BSGP president, the Board of Directors agreed to assist the community and seek the help of Professor Ralph B. Johnson at the FAU School of Architecture and his Site Planning course students. Professor Johnson is also a BSGP Board member.

BSGP was able to secure funding from the Community Foundation of Broward. These monies were used to carry out a community-wide planning/visioning charrette for the Griffin Road Corridor in Dania Beach. As part of its mission, BSGP introduced Smart Growth principles and concepts during the charrette. This process helped the City's residents to

think holistically about future re-development within the given project study area.

Griffin Road is an important east-west transportation corridor in Broward County and the City of Dania Beach. Griffin Road is parallel to and south of I-595. Griffin Road connects I-95 and State Road 7 where transit use has the highest concentration in Broward County. At the east end of the Corridor is the heavily used park and ride station location for the regional Tri-Rail system with close proximity to the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport and Port Everglades. The Griffin Road Corridor is west of I-95 to State Road 7, approximately 1.5 miles.

Regionally, Griffin Road is important to transportation in Broward County. Locally, the Griffin Road Corridor supports a diverse array of needs for the community of Dania Beach. Over time, areas along the corridor have slowly deteriorated due to inadequate development and urban planning. Through the implementation of Smart Growth principles the Griffin Road Corridor has the potential to become a thriving urban corridor that can inspire context-sensitive solutions for re-development and that can help to achieve a greater sense of place for Dania Beach.

Background

The BSGP had several anticipated goals and outcomes in common including: (1) to educate and empower citizens and elected officials; (2) to help citizens and officials better understand community needs in a Smart Growth context; and (3) to assist the City of Dania Beach to become a sustainable community that works with its elected officials to achieve that goal.

The City of Dania Beach, in collaboration with BSGP successfully provided an ongoing process to educate residents about Smart Growth principles. Citizens were invited to participate with city staff and elected officials in a community-wide planning/visioning charrette for the Griffin Road Corridor. This included educational information about how the application of Smart Growth principles and concepts can impact not only re-development but also the future master plan for the western segment of the City. At the charrette, the FAU students from Professor Johnson's Site Planning class were instructed to serve as facilitators and recorders of community input. The information collected was the basis for further research and analysis to help outline economic development recommendations to city officials found in this report.

Project Summary

On Saturday, March 28, 2009, the BSGP and its partners, FAU students and the City of Dania Beach stakeholders convened the charrette. This charrette was conducted at Meli Park Community Center within the Griffin Road community to encourage local participation. Local and televised advertisement including written notices were sent to all residents impacted by the corridor. The focus of the meeting was to mobilize economic redevelopment and revitalization initiatives in the City specific to the Griffin Road Corridor. The March 28th charrette activities introduced the citizens to the vocabulary of smart growth, zoning and economic development. A thorough exploration of the potential mixed-use redevelopment strategies including residential, retail, commercial, business and open space for the Griffin Road Corridor was conducted.

The charrette opened with a welcome from the Mayor of Dania Beach, Anne Castro. Commissioner Walter Duke, Jeremy Earle, CRA Executive Director, Corinne Lajoie, Principle Planner and Acting Community Development Director, Chamber of Commerce and Planning representatives were also present. Next, Gloria Katz and Prof. Johnson outlined the day's agenda and activities. Discussions on planning, zoning issues and economic development were presented by invited experts including Dan Holmes, Community Development Director of Lauderdale Lakes; Mandy Spangler, Senior Associate of Carras Community Investments; Bob Swindell, Executive Vice President of the Broward Alliance. Joy Riddell, a BSGP board member discussed planning for basic needs to create safe streets including pedestrian-friendly sidewalk design and function, and the importance and value of bike lanes to multi-modal transit along the corridor. Gloria Katz provided information about Smart Growth principles including images to show how the corridor could look as it evolved over the period of economic revitalization and growth.

After the BSGP information conversation, community participants divided into eight groups. Each group worked on an independent mapping exercise to identify and demonstrate desired uses for the corridor. The FAU students assisted throughout the exercise by recording the different points of view given by the stakeholders. Discussion topics covered issues and concerns such as community desires, pros and cons of existing conditions, and opportunities for constructive change. The stakeholders shared personal preferences and addressed specific issues such as land use, zoning and mix of uses, implementation of Smart Growth principles, safety, recreational uses, and economic development. As a direct result the stakeholders were able to develop a vision to help Dania Beach become a destination that offers great places to live, work and play; and, to create a sense of place.

Specific details garnered from each of the eight participating community groups were recorded and tabulated in the “Summary of Griffin Road Corridor Data Matrix” table (appendix C). The “Summary” is a compilation of participant responses and offers a sampling of community interests. It is a succinct compilation of stakeholder responses indicating certain land use preferences or potential redevelopment scenarios including retail, restaurant, hotel, bank, housing, mixed use and other.

On May 13, 2009, a follow-up meeting was held at the Meli Park Community Center with Dania Beach stakeholders to conclude the process. Gloria Katz, Mandy Spangler, and Ralph Johnson presented results from the March 28th charrette which emphasized specific economic development implications of the stakeholders’ vision for the Griffin Road Corridor. A summary of that plan follows in the Executive Summary.

Executive Summary; Economic Development Plan for Griffin Road

Cities, and the communities that shape them, are alive and in a constant state of flux – growing, changing, adapting, evolving. Policymakers develop plans to regulate growth, but ultimately, it is the people that are the agents of change their community and their participation in the planning process is essential to the long-term sustainability of a neighborhood.

On Saturday, March 28th, the Broward Smart Growth Partnership facilitated the first charrette for the western portion of Dania Beach – the Griffin Road Corridor. Residents were asked to share their thoughts of the neighborhood: their likes, dislikes, needs and desires. Despite the diversity of participants, there was a commonality among their comments and suggestions. Overwhelmingly, residents wanted access to neighborhood services (banks, restaurants, gas stations, shopping, movies), a pedestrian friendly streetscape (sidewalks, traffic calming, landscaping), multimodal transportation systems (bus stops, bike paths, sidewalks), and a combination of mixed use, multistory development with ample parks and open space. All of the themes coincide with smart growth principles.

Griffin Road Corridor

Griffin Road is a major thoroughfare in Dania Beach. The east-west corridor connects major federal and state roads (Federal Highway/US 1 and State Road 7/441) as well as interstate highways (1-95 and Turnpike) and Broward County’s primary airport (Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood

International). Currently, the roadway does not take advantage of the high traffic counts. Other than scattered retail shops and restaurants, passersby have few reasons to stop within the district. Instead, cars zoom past the corridor to neighboring destinations such as the Hard Rock Casino.

Residents are also leaving the area to satisfy many of their basic needs. Without any financial institutions and few retail shops, locals are taking and spending their money outside of the corridor. The district's capital leakage (money leaving the area) combined with the corridor's failure to attract capital (money coming into the area) are both major challenges to the economic stability of the district.

The physical landscape reflects those challenges. The district suffers from vacant lots, aging infrastructure, limited landscaping and poor maintenance. Economic and demographic conditions are deteriorating, and safety issues prevent many residents from enjoying the area.

Nevertheless, the Griffin Road Corridor has the opportunity to capture significant growth. The district's proximity to major transportation networks and economic engines make it a prime place for redevelopment. In addition, the economic activities proposed by the City – especially the expansion of the marine industry – should generate widespread growth into the area. According to a recent study by Integra Realty, the marine industry – already one of the largest contributors to the local economy – could create up to 5,000 new jobs with an additional \$500 million in potential wages and \$650 million in annual impact. If the proposed waterway improvements are completed, a number of new businesses will be attracted and existing enterprises will be expanded. The Griffin Road Corridor's location (along the waterways and near Port Everglades) provides an opportunity for marine clusters (groups of competing, collaborating and interdependent businesses) in the district.

Striking a Balance: Community Economic Development

Traditionally, community and economic development have been considered two very distinct fields. Community development has concentrated on social issues for families and individuals whereas economic development has focused on business and industry. However, smart growth principles suggest that these activities go hand-in-hand and are both vital to the revitalization and redevelopment of neighborhoods.

Combining the attributes of each theory, community economic development provides a holistic approach to neighborhood revitalization.

Community economic development improves social conditions, provides economic opportunities and enhances the physical environment for members of the community. It is not only about the businesses but also the people and the places in which they live and work.

In order to ensure the redevelopment of the Griffin Road Corridor, development must strike a balance between community and economic needs: promoting new development while ensuring historic preservation, providing vehicular transportation while encouraging pedestrian uses, and supporting commercial uses while sustaining residential stability. Balanced growth (smart growth) is the key to creating vibrant communities.

Using Smart Growth to Achieve Economic Development

Managing growth more efficiently and in a fiscally prudent manner is necessary to stimulate and sustain local and regional economies – especially during a financial crisis. Smart growth can not only reduce costs but also generate income. Compact development reduces overall infrastructure and service costs. Mixed-use developments have higher occupancy rates and property values. Walkability and access to transportation systems improves business productivity. And, vibrant communities become desirable places for residents to live and businesses to locate.

Over the years, South Florida has transformed from a suburban area into a diverse, urbanized community. In order to accommodate current and future residents, municipalities such as Dania Beach are redeveloping underutilized land, creating mixed-use districts and increasing density. These redevelopment opportunities increase cultural opportunities, reduce community times to employment centers, and provide affordable and workforce housing opportunities. (See figures 1 – 5 projects of FAU students.)

Developing a “Smart” Economic Development Plan

To stay competitive, the Griffin Road Corridor must promote smart growth principles and implement economic development plans that focus on the community. During the initial planning stages, the district must:

- ***Develop a communitywide vision.*** Residents are the agents of change in a community and it is essential to get their input at the onset of the planning process. The visioning charrette was an important first step.

- ***Identify opportunities and strengths.*** Strategies should build on existing community strengths and take advantage of existing opportunities. The corridor's location and high volume use are major assets.
- ***Base decisions on accurate data and statistics.*** Market information is used to inform public decisions and private investment and must accurately represent the capacity of the community. The data can be used to determine opportunities for the creation of new businesses that are underrepresented in the district (i.e. financial institutions) as well as expansion of existing enterprises (i.e. marine businesses).
- ***Balance social desires and community needs.*** The goals and objectives should reflect not only the desires of residents and businesses, but should also satisfy the community's needs. A combination of qualitative (visioning charrette) and quantitative (market reports) data should help inform district priorities.

Once the community determines *what* they want to see along the Griffin Road Corridor, they must determine *how* they implement the vision, completing the following steps:

- ***Determine strategies to fulfill goals and objectives.*** Determine redevelopment priorities, cost-effective programs, high impact projects, and catalytic developments that meet the specific objectives of the plan.
- ***Access sources of capital.*** Access to capital is critical during these economic times. Communities must be more creative in the way they access funds. They can no longer rely on one source of financing, but instead, must leverage a variety of public and private sources.
- ***Build community capacity.*** Communities must identify the resources, infrastructure, and organizational capacity required to successfully achieve goals and objectives. Plans should utilize neighborhood resources and grow community capacity including neighborhood organizations, community-based and small developers and other critical civic leaders and implementation agents.
- ***Foster economic growth.*** A variety of strategies are used to implement economic growth. Some focus on lowering costs (i.e. affordable housing, healthcare, daycare, and transportation); others concentrate on increasing incomes (i.e. job creation, job training, business

incubators, business attraction). Methodology should be in place to benchmark success and measure community and economic impacts.

Appendix A

Selected FAU Student Projects

Several vacant sites along the Griffin Road Corridor were selected for students to produce site designs according to residents vision. Site Planning Course. Ralph Johnson, instructor

Figure 1

SW 23rd Avenue Block of Griffin Road

This project demonstrates how open space and residential can be accommodated on Griffin Road. The site is heavily planted with live oak trees.



Figure 2

SW 25th Terrace Block of Griffin Road

This project demonstrates how mixed uses can be applied to a relatively small site. All of the buildings are located with entrances close to the wide sidewalks and the parking is in the rear. Griffin Road has new landscaped median and streetscape.



Figure 3

SW 32nd Avenue Block on Griffin Road

Located adjacent to a canal the mixed use buildings take advantage of the amenity with a restaurant and outdoor dining. They are also located on wide sidewalks with covered bus stop and street landscaping. Parking is located in the rear with some on-street parking.

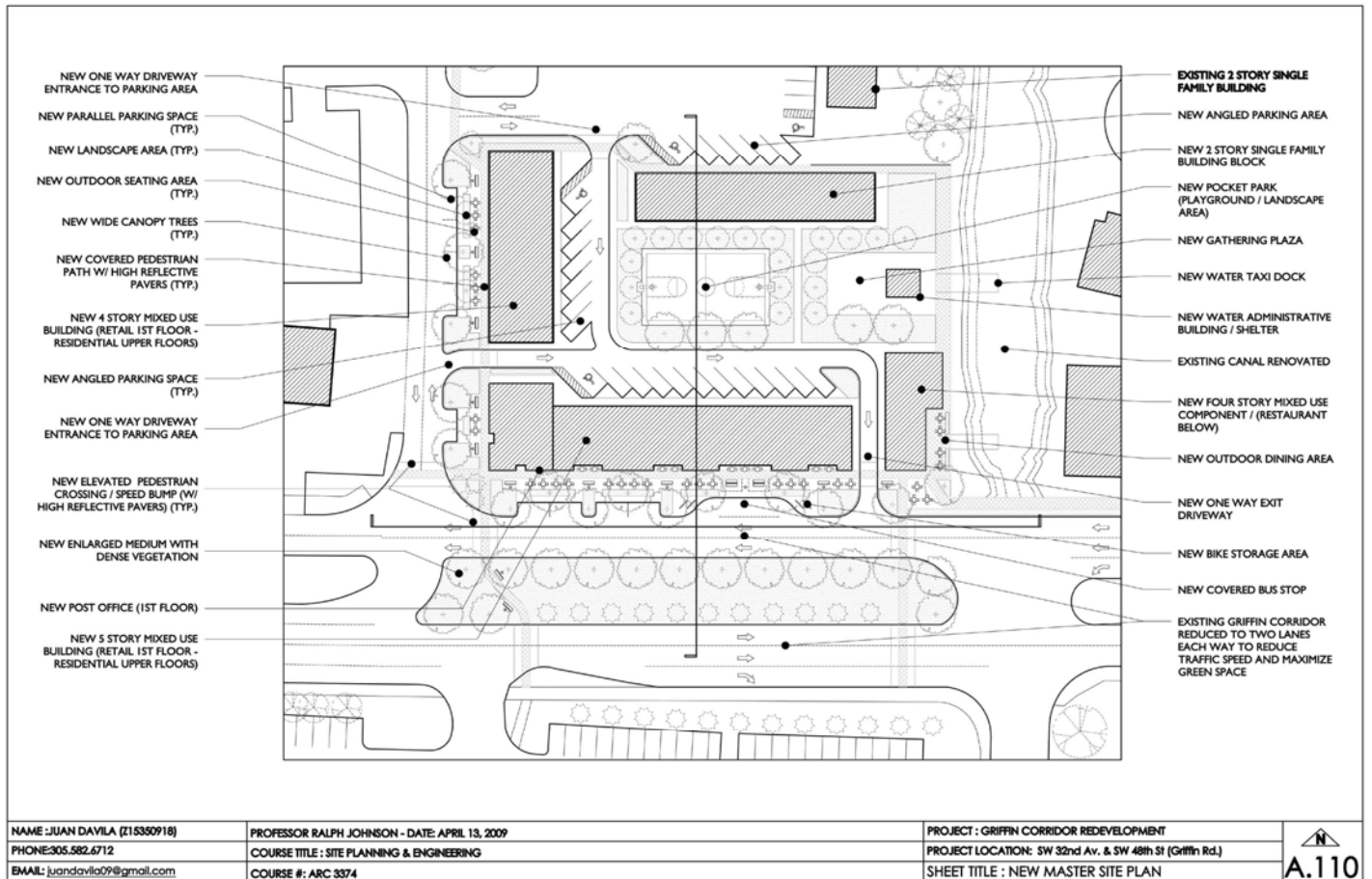


Figure 4

These elevations demonstrate how buildings might look along the Griffin Road Corridor. Ground floor retail, restaurants, bank, etc. were some of the uses residents recommended.

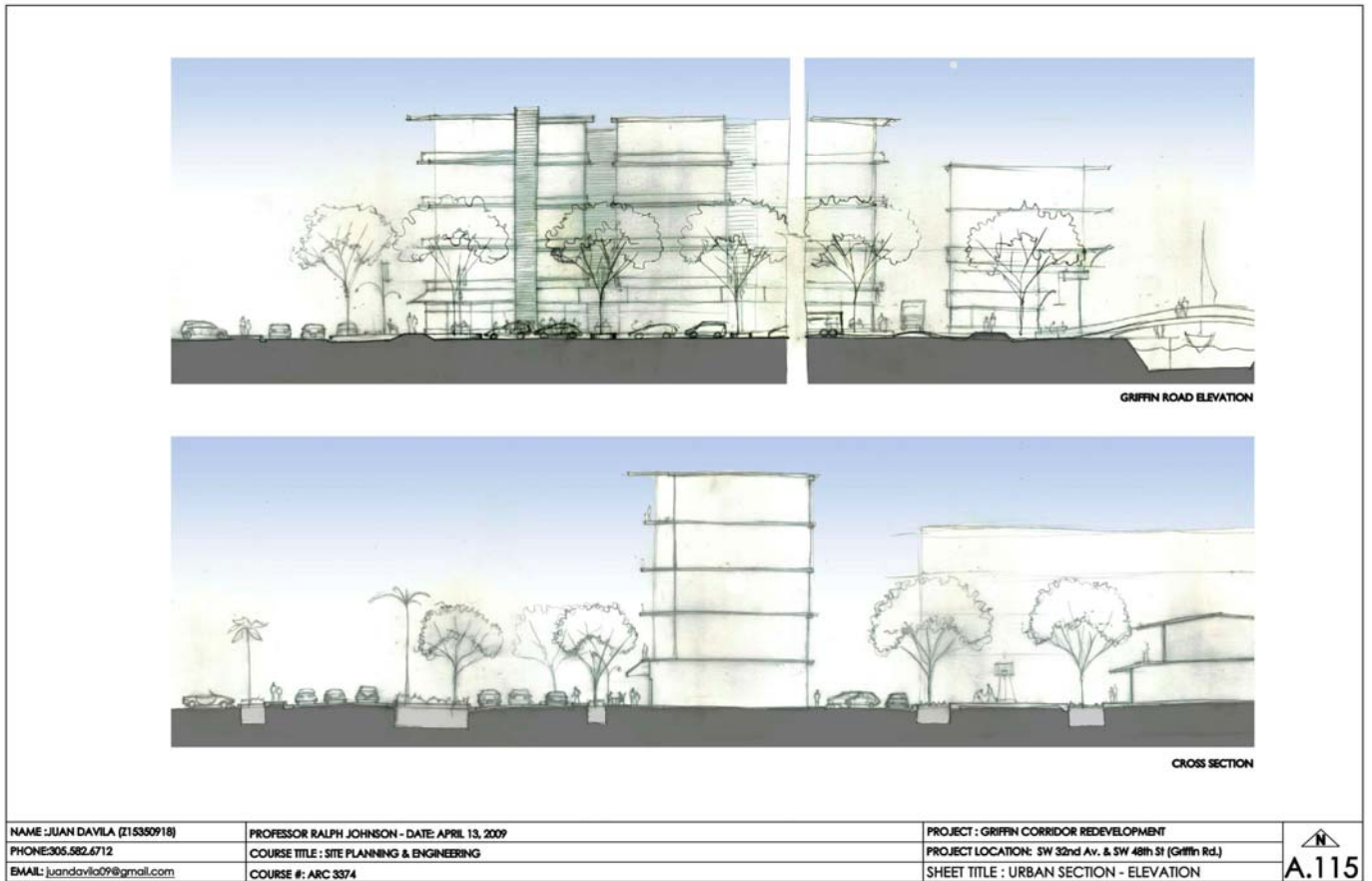


Figure 5

SW 34th Terrace on Griffin Road

This site is also located on a canal whereby Marine type industries and other mixed use share the open space. Restaurants and residential are also included.



Appendix B

March 23th Charrette Photos

Documentation of the interaction between members of the community, FAU students and City officials and staff are illustrated in the photos that follow.



Continue Charrette Photos:



Appendix C

Griffin Road Corridor Community Charrette Data Matrix

As shown in the photos above in Appendix B residents specified their preferences, dislikes, and vision for the Griffin Road Corridor in a interactive Charrette on March 23, 2009. The following matrix demonstrates those preferences. Each group represents a table consisting of residents and FAU students.

Dania Beach - Griffin Road Corridor Community Charrette Data Matrix			
Group Number	Likes About Existing Corridor	Dislikes about Existing Corridor	Would like to see in the future
Group 1	Restaurants	Feels unsafe to shop at night	Lower Speed Limit
		Empty Buildings	Controlled commercial growth
		Poorly maintained commercial landscaping	Landscape in Median
		Traffic Speed to high	Low Shrub Height
		Decrepit Business Signage	More pedestrian Circulation
		Existing overall Building Height	Mixed use developments
			Parks
			4 lane roads
			Fix feeder roads
Group 2	All Woods 25 th Ave	Strip Malls	3 Story Max Height
		Adult Entertainment	More Parks / Green Space
		Speed of cars	Whole's Food Market
			Improve Landscape
			Parks with walk paths
			Usable By-paths
			More Sound Buffers (Residential)

			Bus Stops with Shelters every Mil
			Safety Railings along Walkways
			Landscape on both sides of road
Group 3	Good restaurants	No "Fantasy Lounge" on 35th Ave	Max 3 to 4 stories (Airport Restrictions)
	Nursery (Living Color)	No Billboards	To look like Las Olas Blvd. Fort Lauderdale
		Empty Boat Marina on 34th Terr	Restaurants with parking or rear
		Old apartment Building 28th Ave	Gas station near Baptist Church
		To much fast traffic	Gas Station near Cracker Barrel
		Unsafe intersection 28th Ave	Trolley Station or Trolley Transportation
		Dislike Pain/Rehab Clinics	More Banks
		"Mi Casa Es Su Casa" on 28th Ave	Additional Grocery Store on 44th Ave
		No access on commercial property 35th Ave	More Parks, Walking trails / Dog parks / Recreational
			More bus shelters
			Wider Sidewalks and crosswalks
			More Street Lighting
			Medical Building by Tri-rail Station with pediatrician, massage therapy and pharmacy.
			Mixed use Buildings (Apartments on top / banks and restaurants on bottom.
		More Vegetation	
Group 4	Old Hammock Building	Billboards (some in Spanish)	Low Landscape at intersections
		Dangerous intersection on 28th Ave	Retail on Bottom
		Unsuccessful Business on 28th Ave	3 Story Mixed use with Lofts above
		Closed Restaurant on 38th	Larger Median
			Mixed use in SW 23rd Ave (Site 3)
			Mixed use in SW 29th Terr (Site 5)
			Mixed use in SW 32nd Ave (Site 6)
			Mixed use in SW 34th Terr (Site 7)

			Shopping in SW 21st Av (Site 1)
			Post Office on 31st St Across Publix
			Bank on 40 th Ave
			Bank on 38 th Ave
			Lowe's on 441
			Bus Shelter on 31st Ave by Publix
			Bus Shelter on 38 Way
			Bus Shelter on Anglers Ave
			Bus Shelter on State Road 7
Group 5		Noise From Traffic	Taller Buildings on south side
		Dangerous to cross street	Office buildings that will benefit from sun light on opposite side
		Speed Limit is too high	Gateways for each street.
		Traffic pattern conflicts with access	Noise Buffers
			Easier access from industrial to business areas
			Shuttle service along griffin looping marina mile and Tri-rail
Group 6		Not enough crosswalks	More Wide Sidewalks
		Not enough shopping places	More Gas stations
		No place to exercise, no park	More malls (shopping centers)
		Traffic is too fast	More banks
		Unpleasant streetscape	More Restaurants
		Not walkable	More Trees / Parks
		No bank within community	Narrower Road to add room for landscape and walkways
		Not enough trees	Maximum 3 stories building height
		Insufficient public transportation	More Bus shelters
Group 7	Highway Access	Trailer parks	More commercial
	"Residential" Feel	Overhead Power lines	Shopping Centers / Movies
		Excessive amount of pavement	Restaurants / Banks
		Street does not unify functions, becomes a	More Green Space

		barrier	
			Outdoor Dining
			On Street Parking
			Wider Sidewalks
			Recreational areas in Vacant Lots
			Covered transit stations
			Variety in building design
Group 8	Existing Restaurants	Negative Commercial	Covered Bus Shelters
	Easy Vehicular Access	Abandoned Buildings	More Landscaping
	Animal Shelter		Bike Routes
			Widened Roads
			Strip Malls (Parking on rear Side)
			City Sewer System
			City Water System
			More Mixed use (4 Story Max)
			Clean Neighborhood
			Centralized Restaurants / commercial
			Parks or Public Squares