

## **I Introduction**

The FEC Corridor is a physically and economically distressed inner-city redevelopment area consisting of more than 1400 acres. The corridor is comprised of a mix of industrial, warehouse, commercial and residential uses with a disproportionate share of vacant parcels and underutilized buildings. Many of the neighborhoods within the corridor have double-digit unemployment rates due to the loss of 19,150 jobs in the area between 1980 and 1995. In recent years the corridor has begun to experience a heightened level of private real estate investment activity within certain districts and pockets. Investment has been most evident within the Biscayne Boulevard corridor, the adjacent Design District and along 4<sup>th</sup> Court north to 79<sup>th</sup> Street. The FEC Corridor study area also contains important east/west connections between Interstate 95 and Biscayne Bay along which 70 percent of the city's remaining land zoned for industrial uses can be found.

The FEC Corridor was the subject of a redevelopment study initiated in January of 2000 by the City of Miami through a Task Force comprised of government officials, business leaders, community non-profits and the real estate development community. The mission of the Task Force was "to identify and facilitate redevelopment opportunities within the corridor by facilitating private sector investment in underutilized areas; stimulating and safeguarding industrial and commercial uses; ensuring compatible land use buffers; improving transportation accessibility; and, enhancing employment opportunities for city residents as well as the overall economic impact on the city, all within the context of creating and preserving a livable community." The Task Force meetings focused on developing a general understanding of the FEC Corridor, its strengths and weaknesses and its market potential. In order to study the corridor in greater depth, city staff and the Task Force created three committees to concentrate on specific neighborhood sub-areas along the corridor: Little Haiti to the north; Wynwood to the west and south; and Edgewater to the east. Each committee identified problems, needs and opportunities within their respective neighborhood sub-areas and formulated a vision statement with specific recommendations to help facilitate neighborhood revitalization.

The Task Force released a report on their "Findings and Recommendations" in September of 2000. An implementation work plan was then formulated to focus on specific areas of need and opportunity, as identified by the Task Force, for the three neighborhood sub-areas. The City of Miami then selected Florida International University to head up a consultant team of urban planners, architects, engineers and GIS experts to develop a comprehensive strategic redevelopment plan that would focus on economic development, transportation, land use and urban design.

The FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan was funded by the City of Miami, the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust.

## **II Community Participation Process**

Community participation was an integral and on-going element to the FEC Corridor redevelopment planning process. Two rounds of neighborhood workshops or "community conversations" took place in the designated neighborhoods of Wynwood, Edgewater and Little Haiti during April and May of 2001. The purpose of the conversations was to engage neighborhood residents and stakeholders in the planning process and to develop a fuller understanding of the issues, needs and aspirations of the community. The initial neighborhood meetings dealt exclusively with mutual capacity building in these areas, while the second round of meetings enabled residents and stakeholders to partake in a "concept mapping" exercise for their neighborhood. The consultant team utilized the concept maps in the subsequent development of the draft plan. Following the completion of the draft plan in January of 2002, a third round of community conversations was held gain to comment and further input on the plan.

## **III Existing Conditions**

### **A. General Description of the Project Area**

#### **1. Project Boundaries**

The "formal" project boundaries (see map ?) for the FEC Strategic Redevelopment Plan are 79<sup>th</sup> Street to the north; Biscayne Boulevard to the east; 14<sup>th</sup> Street to the south; and Interstate 95 to the west. However, because the scope of plan aimed at identifying and stimulating economic reinvestment activity, it was essential that these more narrowly defined boundaries be expanded "contextually" to include economic development, transportation and land use issues and opportunities that have real or potential impact on the FEC Corridor study area. As such, the plan considered Edgewater east of Biscayne Boulevard to the Bay; the bordering Omni and Overtown neighborhoods to the south; and, the larger FEC Corridor to the north and west of the study area.

#### **2. Land Use**

Existing land uses in the FEC Corridor study area follow patterns of historical development activity and the requirements of existing and past zoning districts (see figure? The redevelopment study area is generally defined as the FEC Corridor and approximately 2000 acres to the east and west of the railroad. Land uses and future development patterns surrounding the more narrowly defined study area boundaries will significantly influence the redevelopment of the FEC Corridor.

The FEC right-of-way functions as the spine to the overall land use pattern within and adjacent to the corridor. The FEC runs north/south through the study area then bends west at NW 73<sup>rd</sup> Street where industrial, warehouse, and multi-family residential uses comprise most of the land area. Industrial and warehouse uses are the predominate land use pattern south of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Street split. The 55-acre FEC Buena Vista/Port of Miami

container staging facility located between NW 29<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Streets along the western boundary of the FEC right-of-way represents the largest and most distinguishing land use within the study area.

The FEC Corridor study area is also distinguished by its north/south and east/west roadway network. Interstate 95 forms the western boundary of the study area, while Interstates 195 (SR 112 to Miami International Airport/Julia Tuttle Causeway to Miami Beach) and 395 (Venetian Causeway) traverse the corridor at NW 36<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets respectively. The northern boundary of the study area is NW 79<sup>th</sup> Street (John F. Kennedy Causeway to North Miami Beach). The eastern boundary of the study area is Biscayne Boulevard (U.S. 1/Federal Highway).

Commercial/office and retail uses within the redevelopment area are primarily located along major and minor arterials, including Biscayne Boulevard, NW 79<sup>th</sup>, 62<sup>nd</sup>, 54<sup>th</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets, and North Miami, NW 2<sup>nd</sup> and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues. Centers of commercial and retail activity exist along NW 79<sup>th</sup> Street between NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Biscayne Boulevard (Biscayne Shopping Plaza), NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in Little Haiti between NW 54<sup>th</sup> and 62<sup>nd</sup> Streets, the Design District along NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue between NW 36<sup>th</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Streets and the Wynwood Fashion District along NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street and NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Light manufacturing and warehouse uses are concentrated in Wynwood between NW 20<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Streets, Little River Industrial Park in Little Haiti, NE 4<sup>th</sup> Court, and in various locations along the FEC right-of-way.

Residential uses are primarily located within interior blocks separated from the commercial and retail corridors and industrial/warehouse districts. Concentrations of single-family uses are located in Wynwood north of NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street and west of North Miami Avenue, in Little Haiti north of NW 36<sup>th</sup> Street and west of NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and in the northeast section of the study area west of 4<sup>th</sup> Court. Multi-family residential uses are scattered throughout the redevelopment area but are mainly concentrated along NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and south of NW 79<sup>th</sup> Street in Little Haiti. Multi-family residential is also concentrated along NW 54<sup>th</sup> Street and in Wynwood south of NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street.

A distinguishing characteristic of the entire FEC Corridor study area is the inordinate amount of vacant and underdeveloped land, located particularly along commercial corridors. Vacant and underutilized land and buildings at key intersections creates a blighted overall appearance. This condition is exacerbated by barren streetscapes, decaying public infrastructure and a general lack of green space throughout the corridor.

### **3. Economy**

The loss of approximately 20,000 jobs within the FEC Corridor between 1980-1995 has had a profound impact on the local economy. Most of the job loss occurred within the labor-intensive apparel-manufacturing sector. The loss of jobs and general

disinvestment has resulted in property deterioration, abandonment and overall blighted conditions along commercial corridors and in industrial areas.

Within the last 5-7 years various economic sub-markets have emerged that have brought business investment, jobs and a growing vitality to certain neighborhoods and pockets within the corridor. Most notable, is the Design District, an 18-square block community that has become an important center of the home furnishings and interior design industry in South Florida. Also of note, is the emerging media industry along the FEC Corridor. Media businesses are located within the Media and Design Districts and along 4<sup>th</sup> Court in the vicinity of NW 79<sup>th</sup> Street.

As previously noted, the vast preponderance of job loss within the FEC Corridor occurred in the apparel-manufacturing sector. However, today's Wynwood Fashion District remains an important commercial and retail center. The Wynwood industrial area is also showing signs of manufacturing diversification. According to the Economic Market Assessment prepared for this study (see attachment ?), "custom" furniture and metals manufacturers have begun to locate in the Wynwood industrial area. These light manufacturing growth sectors have responded to the success of the nearby Design District.

The FEC Corridor and its surrounding neighborhoods are also in close proximity to major employment centers including: the Downtown, the Port of Miami and Jackson Memorial Hospital. And because of its favorable highway access, the corridor is in short commuting distance to Miami International Airport and employment centers on Miami Beach.

The FEC Corridor Economic Market Assessment determined that the FEC Corridor is severely lacking in high-end retail services such as supermarkets, drugstores and "box retail" type uses. The presence or absence of high-end retail establishments is indicative of the general economic health of a particular area. Notable retail establishments help diversify the local economy, increase commercial property values, create jobs and improve the overall quality of life for neighborhood residents who benefit as consumers. Given the recent level of private (Design District) and public investment (PAC) activity along the Biscayne Boulevard Corridor west to NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and 4<sup>th</sup> Court, the FEC Corridor has become well positioned for a significant increase in new retail development.

#### **4. Housing and Population**

**(additional text)**

(See attachment ? - FEC Economic Market Assessment)

#### **5. Traffic Circulation**

Overall, the street system within the FEC Corridor study area can be defined as a symmetrical grid, although this pattern is interrupted along the FEC right-of-way. The

local streets define a system of rectangular shaped blocks with the longer dimension oriented east and west.

The FEC Corridor is served by Interstate 95 that runs north and south along the western boundary of the study area and Interstates 195 and 395 that function as expressways running east and west connecting the mainland to Miami Beach. The major north/south arterial roadway is Biscayne Boulevard (US 1/Federal Highway) that forms the eastern boundary of the study area. North Miami Avenue and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue function as minor arterial north/south roadways, while NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Biscayne Boulevard function more as collector streets through the area. The major east/west arterials are NW 79<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Streets, while NW 71<sup>st</sup>, 62<sup>nd</sup>, 54<sup>th</sup>, , 29<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, Streets are minor arterials NE 69<sup>th</sup>, 61<sup>st</sup>, 46<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets function as collector streets. (See attachment ? Transportation Assessment Report for a full description of the traffic circulation system).

## **6. Streetscapes and Public Infrastructure**

(See attachment FEC Corridor Streetscape Assessment for a description of the existing streetscape system).

## **7. Existing Open Space and Recreation**

Public open space and recreation is scattered throughout the FEC Corridor Study area (see map ?). Notable parks include Wynwood's Roberto Clemente Park located at NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and NE 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Williams Park located at NW 17<sup>th</sup> Street and NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Dorsey Park located at NW 17<sup>th</sup> Street and NW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, and Little Haiti's Edison Center Park located at NW 5<sup>th</sup> Court and NW 62<sup>nd</sup> Street.

Open space and recreation uses within the FEC Corridor study area are minimal, and with few exceptions, pedestrian connectivity non-existent. The issue of connectivity also applies to open space and recreation resources outside the study area, including Morningside Bayfront Park and Margaret Pace Park to the east along Biscayne Bay. The Little River bends through 79<sup>th</sup> Street and Biscayne Boulevard in the northeast section of the study area, however, pedestrian access is severely limited (See attachment ? Open Space and Recreation Assessment for a complete description of parks and open space).

## **B. Existing Districts**

### **1. Design District**

The Design District is a designated 18-block area bounded by Biscayne Boulevard to the east, Northeast 43<sup>rd</sup> Street to the north, North Miami Avenue to the west and Northeast 36<sup>th</sup> Street the south. Historical accounts indicate that the district was formerly a pineapple plantation. Then in 1921, Theodore V. Moore, the "Pineapple King of Florida" built a furniture showroom on Northeast 40<sup>th</sup> Street. The district's boon period occurred during the 1970s when it was home to many fabric and furniture

showrooms and the center for South Florida's decorating trade area. An increase in crime during the 1980s followed by a general economic downturn, caused many businesses to relocate north to the Design Center of the Americas (DCOTA), a 550,000 square foot mall in Dania Beach.

Only a five-minute drive from South Beach, the Design District has become an important center for the home furnishings and interior design industries. The district has also attracted a number of art galleries and furniture design and architecture firms. The District markets itself as a 'community of design' that is accessible to the public with the convenience of storefront buildings within easy walking distance of one another. As part of an implementation plan, the City of Miami has allocated funds to redesign the streetscapes, lighting landscape and utilities in the district.

## 2. Arts and Entertainment District

The Arts and Entertainment District, also referred to as the Media District, is a 10-block designated area bounded by NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to the east, NE 15<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, the FEC railroad to the west and NE 13<sup>th</sup> Street to the south. The district primarily consists of clubs, restaurants and media related businesses. The district will ultimately be defined and enhanced by the planned Performing Arts Center of Greater Miami (PAC). The PAC complex will occupy both sides of Biscayne Boulevard between NE 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets. The Pac will consist of a 2,480-seat opera house, a 2,200-seat concert hall, and a 200-seat studio theater. A September, 2001 economic impact analysis of the PAC prepared by Hamilton, Rabinovitz & Alschuler (HR&A) projects between a \$1.2 and \$2.5 billion spin-off in private real estate development to occur in the surrounding neighborhood within a 25-year build-out period. The HR&A economic impact analysis also projects the creation of between 12,700 and 27,100 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs in the neighborhood.

## 3. Little Haiti (Creole District)

The heart of Little Haiti, sometimes referred to as the Creole District, is a commercial stretch of NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue that extends north of NW 54<sup>th</sup> Street to NW 62<sup>nd</sup> Street. The commercial node of Little Haiti is located at the juncture of NW 59<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in the general vicinity of the former Caribbean Market. The commercial strip along NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue is comprised of numerous food, variety, and hair and beauty supplies stores.

The City of Miami's Little Haiti neighborhood boundaries comprise a significant geographic area. The neighborhood's boundaries extend from Interstate 95 to the west; NW 79<sup>th</sup> Street to the north; the FEC right-of-way to the east; and NW 36<sup>th</sup> Street to the south. The larger neighborhood consists largely of small, single family homes with a scattering of multi-family rental housing along the commercial corridors and near the industrial areas of the FEC Corridor. The Little River Industrial Park is located between NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the FEC north of NW 67<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### 4. Fashion District

The Fashion District is an approximate 35-block area that comprises most of Wynwood's industrial area. The district's general boundaries are Interstate 95 to the west; NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street to the north; North Miami Avenue to the east; and NW 22<sup>nd</sup> Street to the south. The heart of wholesale and retail activity is located along NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the nearby Fashion District Center complex located at 2750 NW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Most of the remaining district is comprised of apparel factories that produce dresses, sportswear, shoes and handbags. Recently, the Fashion District has become interspersed with new custom, light manufacturing uses associated with the nearby Design District.

### IV Project Analysis

#### A. Guiding Redevelopment Principles

The overall FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan has been shaped by certain guiding principles that were first articulated in the findings and recommendations of the FEC Task Force planning process then echoed during the subsequent community conversations. The guiding principles and their key components are strongly interrelated, and when viewed together, provide a holistic and integrated perspective that is fundamental to successful urban redevelopment:

##### **Principle # 1 - A Diverse and Sustainable Economy**

Private investment and job creation can be effectively achieved within the FEC Corridor and balanced with other quality of life initiatives to ensure employment accessibility, economic diversity, fiscal sustainability and safer and more livable communities.

##### **Components**

- Mixed use
- Transit-oriented neighborhood centers
- Manufacturing retention and expansion
- New, higher-end retail development
- Expanded housing choice and opportunity
- Recreation and open space development
- Neighborhood conservation and historic preservation

##### **Principle # 2 - Mixed-Use**

Mixed-use is the land development and urban design scheme that enables diversity of use and urban form. Mixed-use development can make urban neighborhoods and centers more energized, walkable and convenient.

##### **Components**

- Allowable mix of residential, retail, office and live work uses both within districts and building types
- Community character as a basis for quality and urban design guidelines
- Attainment of appropriate urban scales and densities
- Opportunity for inclusion of open space and recreation in the redevelopment mix
- Inducement for transit oriented development

### **Principle # 3 - A Balanced and Integrated Transportation System**

The FEC Corridor can achieve a balanced and integrated transportation system that emphasizes transit service, walkability and connectivity. The transportation plan should also enable a regional interface.

#### **Components**

- Location of job centers
- Enabled mixed-use, transit oriented development schemes
- Opportunity for local/regional transportation planning interface
- Walkable, pedestrian oriented streets
- Improved connectivity between neighborhoods, downtown, recreation, public institutions, shopping and employment centers through a hierarchy of transit oriented alternatives

### **Principle # 4 - A Spectrum of Housing Choice and Opportunity**

Strong urban centers should offer a range of quality, low- to high- density housing that is affordable to aspiring homeowners within the local redevelopment setting. Affordable homeownership and rental opportunities must also be available to workers interested in relocating to the urban center.

#### **Components**

- General availability of safe, decent and affordable housing
- Mixed-use as a viable redevelopment incentive
- Attainment of appropriate urban scales and densities
- A range of public and private financing options
- Transit-oriented development
- Location of job centers
- Neighborhood conservation and historic preservation

## **B. Overall Redevelopment Analysis**

The intent of the FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan is to operationalize the aforementioned guiding principles. These principles can be achieved by building on the corridor's existing competitive advantages and creating new and appropriate redevelopment opportunities. The plan considered the "action driven" nature of the strategic redevelopment plan in performing the economic development and land use

analysis components. A market perspective was applied that considered the competitive advantage of the FEC Corridor within the larger local and regional economy. The competitive advantage model weighs the economic capacity of a given location (region, city, inner-city) by assessing certain "conditions" that either enhance or diminish economic opportunity and investment. The enhancement of a locale's factor conditions or inputs, including land, public transit, inventory of commercial and residential buildings and public infrastructure, is considered an important requisite for gaining competitive advantage in the market.

In applying the competitive advantage model to the FEC Corridor certain advantages and disadvantages readily emerged. The key findings are as follows:

Advantages:

*Proximity to the Downtown and other Employment Centers*

Proximity to downtown and other major employment centers such as the Miami Beach, Port of Miami, Jackson Memorial Complex Miami International Airport and the new Performing Arts Center is the FEC Corridor's most significant competitive advantage. The FEC railroad track offers the potential for rail passenger service along the corridor between downtown Miami north through the FEC Corridor to points north in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. The existing track allows passenger services to begin with significant cost savings in infrastructure. The right-of-way also offers other opportunities for public use such as greenways and bikeways.

*Proximity to Freeway, Expressway and Arterial Circulation System*

The entire FEC Corridor is surrounded and traversed by freeway (Interstate 95), expressway (Interstates 395 and 195) and major and minor arterial ( e.g. Biscayne Boulevard, NW 79<sup>th</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> Streets, N. Miami Avenue) roadways that provide the existing capacity, or the future potential, for direct and convenient access and connectivity between neighborhoods. Arterials are particularly important in redevelopment planning because they move people (producers and consumers) between primary traffic generators such as employment and shopping centers. Arterials also serve as well known "paths" that connect to established "nodes" or centers of intense human activity.

*Presence of "Known" City Districts*

The presence of functional city districts such as the Design District, the Arts and Entertainment District and its new Performing Arts Center, the Fashion District and Little Haiti, aka the Creole District, serve as "known" destination points for commerce, entertainment and employment opportunity.

*FEC Buena Vista Site*

The current FEC Buena Vista site is viewed as a "potential" asset to the redevelopment of the FEC Corridor. The 55-acre site is under single ownership and is strategically located south of the Design District.

*Inventory of Industrial Properties*

Wynwood and Little Haiti contain an important inventory of industrial buildings and land that are ideally suited for light manufacturing, loft space and other economically productive uses.

*Proximity to Biscayne Bay and Miami Beach*

Another of the FEC Corridor's important "locational" factors is its proximity to Biscayne Bay and Miami Beach. Proximity and accessibility to water is a significant competitive advantage. The economic success of Miami Beach has already begun to spin-off back across the Bay to the Design District and the Biscayne Boulevard commercial corridor.

Disadvantages:

*Fragmented Land Use Pattern*

Most of the commercial corridors within the FEC study area lack cohesiveness and are substantially underdeveloped and visually unappealing. This lack of cohesion and physical blight extends into many blocks and side streets.

*Absence of a Functional and Integrated Mass Transit System*

Most of the FEC Corridor lacks commuter and light rail service. Bus service is provided along many of the commercial corridors but the service is generally indirect and slow.

*Fragmented Land Ownership Pattern*

With only a few exceptions, most of the land parcels within the FEC Corridor are small and individually owned making land assemblage for redevelopment purposes difficult.

*Lack of Connectivity between Neighborhoods and the Downtown*

There is little evidence of connectivity between individual neighborhoods within the FEC Corridor and between neighborhoods and the downtown. This can be attributed to several factors including the fragmented land use pattern, absence of an integrated mass transit system and the general lack of pedestrian pathways and greenways.

*Shrinking Inventory of Industrial Land and Buildings*

There is currently significant demand being placed on industrial properties within the FEC Corridor by light manufacturers, loft type developers and warehouse operations. The industrial inventory will need to be preserved and maintained to ensure the most productive use of this space.

### *Decaying and Lacking Public Infrastructure*

The streetscape survey and assessment of the FEC Corridor determined that many of the arterial roadways, collector and local side streets have decaying public infrastructure as evidenced by crumbling streets, sidewalks, gutters and curbing, along with a general paucity of landscaping, street trees and street lighting. There also exists inadequate stormwater sewer drainage on many streets within the corridor.

### *Inadequate Water and Sanitary Sewer Service*

Many commercial and industrial areas within the FEC Corridor lack sufficient water and sewer capacity. Major redevelopment projects in these locations will require significant water and sewer improvements.

## **C. Market Conditions and Future Redevelopment Potential**

The aforementioned summary of factor conditions depict the relative economic strengths and weaknesses of the FEC Corridor. The summary concludes that the area has a competitive advantage with regard to its general location and proximity to the downtown, employment centers, Biscayne Bay and Miami Beach. The corridor also benefits as a result of its good highway access and overall roadway network, the location of prominent "city districts" within its boundaries and a significant inventory of industrial land and buildings. Conversely, the FEC Corridor is at a competitive disadvantage with regard to its fragmented and blighted land use pattern, lack of mass transit, poor connectivity, fragmented ownership pattern, decaying and inadequate public infrastructure, insufficient water and sewer capacity and dwindling industrial inventory. The following section focuses on specific market segments to determine the overall redevelopment potential of the FEC Corridor.

### **1. Industrial Market**

One of the important economic advantages of the FEC Corridor is that the area comprises over 70 percent of the city's land zoned for industrial use. Most of the property in these zones is currently being used for manufacturing and warehousing type operations. The bulk of the competition for manufacturing and warehouse space lies west of the FEC Corridor in the Cities of Hialeah and Medley.

According to a recent survey, there is currently 62.5 million square feet of industrial space in the Miami metropolitan area with a 7.5 percent vacancy rate. Gross lease rates range between \$2.35-\$3.35 per square foot. Total industrial space outside the city limits within Miami-Dade is currently at 94.8 million square feet with a vacancy rate of 5.2 percent. Gross lease rates in the county range between \$5.65-\$7.65 per square foot. There is a shortage of buildings sized 100,000 square feet and larger throughout the area that should encourage new

construction in that market segment. Increases in site prices will make it more difficult to locate 'ready to go' land. Increases in warehouse/distribution prices are also anticipated. These increases could reach five percent. Lease prices for this space was also expected to increase by up to five percent. Absorption levels are expected to remain constant.

While the FEC Corridor has a competitive advantage with regard to industrial and warehouse space, much of the current use is underutilized storage and low-end processing type uses. This is reflected in the median \$8 per square foot acquisition price and \$2-3 gross lease rates in the area. However, recent demand for warehouse type space by custom design light manufacturers, media businesses, and loft developers is expected to alter the mix and raise acquisition and lease rates.

In the FEC Corridor Redevelopment Market Assessment prepared for this study (see attachment ?), an industrial trend analysis was performed to determine the corridor's manufacturing strengths in relation to Miami-Dade and the South Florida regional economy. The trend analysis determined that the Miami PMSA lost nearly 19,000 manufacturing jobs between 1977 and 1997. This is consistent with FEC Corridor job loss statistics for approximately the same reporting period.

In assessing the real economic impact of various manufacturing sectors it is necessary to weigh such factors as - new firm formation, employment growth, payroll for production workers, value added by manufacture, new capital expenditures and value of shipments. Value added is considered the best measure for comparing the relative economic importance of manufacturing among specific sectors and defined geographic regions. Within the PMSA, new firm formation for the 1977-1997 reporting period occurred in only four manufacturing sectors - fabricated metals, furniture, food products and medical instruments. Job growth occurred only in fabricated metals and furniture. An analysis of both the fabricated metals and furniture manufacturing sectors indicated significant increase in production workers, wages, value added by manufacture, capital expenditures and value of shipments.

The industrial trend analysis determined that design related manufacturers - fabricated metals, furniture, custom upholstery, marble, etc. have recently located in the Wynwood industrial district. The field survey and analysis identified 19 design related firms in the area. Additionally, 18 design related retail firms were identified including retail furniture, lighting fixtures, antiques, art, bedspreads and carpets.

The industrial trend analysis also determined that various plastics-related manufacturing sectors have clustered within the Miami PMSA. Further analysis concluded that the majority of these firms are located within the FEC Corridor west of the study area in the City of Hialeah. According to the survey and analysis, 257 plastics-related firms are located in the Miami PMSA, the largest

concentration in the State of Florida. The statewide average wage for employees in plastics-related firms is \$30,987. The analysis concludes that marketing of plastics firms to the FEC Corridor is a potentially sound strategy given the existing agglomeration of plastics firms in the Miami PMSA, average wage and their propensity to locate within railroad corridors.

## 2. Retail and Wholesale Market

Retail trade is one of Miami's most important industrial sectors. Retail accounts for 27% of the area's jobs, buoyed by the strength of the tourism industry. The economic impact of tourism is currently estimated at \$13.5 billion. The demographics of Miami's millions of visitors have been changing. In 1989, 61 percent of the area's tourists were Americans; in 1999, an estimated 61 percent were foreign. Miami's retail vacancy rate has stabilized, while the rent index rose 4 percent. Shopping center completions total 850,000 square feet,

Retail and wholesale trade establishments comprise nearly 30 percent of all businesses within the FEC Corridor. Wholesale trade accounts for over 37 percent of the sales volume within the corridor. While retail trade accounts for over 15 percent of the corridor's establishments, it generates only 4.6 percent of the sales volume. Retail's small share of the sales volume is attributed to the fact that most retail establishments within the corridor are small, "mom and pop" type operations. The absence of large retail and "big box" establishments is conspicuous. A locational analysis (see map ?) of large retail and big box establishments performed for this study revealed that the FEC Corridor, with the exception of one Publix Supermarket and two Walgreens Pharmacies, is void of more commonly known, larger retail establishments.

## 3. Commercial and Office Market

The FEC Corridor has been significantly impacted by the near saturation of the Miami Beach commercial real estate market. The corridor also competes with the commercial office market in Airport West. The corridor's Design District has been the focus of "Beach" activity for the past decade. The success of the Design District coupled with the growing media industry has created a surge in commercial real estate activity along the Biscayne Boulevard corridor and in neighboring locations such as Wynwood and the 4<sup>th</sup> Court commercial corridor.

The median acquisition price for commercial space in the FEC Corridor is currently \$11-12 per square foot compared to \$26 on Miami Beach. However, commercial square foot rates have escalated to \$20 within the Design District and along the Biscayne Boulevard corridor. Current commercial lease rates are generally in the \$12-15 range. Lease rates of \$17-18 per square foot are more common in the Design District and along Biscayne Boulevard.

## 4. Residential Market

The FEC Corridor's residential market is segmented and comprised of several distinct sub-markets. The median price in the corridor is currently \$33 per square foot. Current sale prices also typify the segmented market. The sale prices for single-family homes range from a low of \$25,000 in Little Haiti to \$269,000 in Buena Vista East just north of the Design District. The current median home price within the corridor is \$91,133.

The square footage of single-family homes also varies greatly. The average size of a single-family home within the corridor is 1,420 square feet. Residential sales activity within the corridor has been strong. A January 2002 survey of the Multiple Listing Services indicated that 69 homes were currently on the market. The residential market is generally strong throughout the corridor. However, the Biscayne Boulevard corridor west to NE 4<sup>th</sup> Court and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue has been particularly active. The anecdotal response to this activity is that Miami Beach media and design entrepreneurs have located within the corridor to be closer to their business establishments. Rent prices have also escalated throughout the corridor. A recent survey of the Brentwood Village multi-family complex indicate rents from \$800 for a one-bedroom unit to \$1,000 for a two-bedroom unit.

## **V Redevelopment Strategies**

### ***A. Overall Transportation Plan***

*A stated goal of the 2020 Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) is to link all transportation facilities and services into a cohesive statewide transportation network that enhances Florida's economic competitiveness. Specific objectives are proposed that have direct implications for the FEC Corridor including 1) improving connections between seaports, airports, railroads and the highway system for efficient interregional movement of people and goods, and 2) managing and preserving designated transportation corridors in cooperation with local governments and through advanced acquisition of right-of-ways.*

*The "guiding principles" of the FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan are expressly integrated in the Overall Transportation Action Plan. For example, the transportation action plan is predicated on the vision that the FEC Buena Vista Yard will evolve into a mixed-use, high density development and that the larger corridor, distinguished by the Arts and Entertainment District, Little Haiti and the Design District, will become a regional tourist attraction. To realize this vision, a premium transit system that provides high quality services to local residents, businesses, and the population in surrounding areas is recommended. It is consistent with the Priority II plan in the 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan, which specifies a premium transit line in the Northeast Corridor. The construction of a premium transit line is expected between 2010 and 2015. The FEC Corridor premium transit should be considered an integral component of the Northeast Corridor premium transit.*

### ***Premium Transit Service***

***The plan for a premium transit service for the FEC Corridor is based on the assumption that redevelopment and population growth will occur incrementally over the next ten to fifteen years. The area is also expected to become a regional attraction for working, living, shopping and recreational purposes. Due to the fact that more intensive development is likely to occur along NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Biscayne Boulevard will become more highly congested, a premium transit on NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue will not only provide a driving alternative and make the area more pedestrian oriented, but will also relieve anticipated congestion on major roadways.***

*Beside the trolley services, future services provided by TriRail and possibly AmTrak to connect Miami downtown with their regional service networks are also possible. These services may be operated on FEC tracks, but no interference between these services and the trolley services is anticipated.*

### ***Roadway Improvements***

***Due to the fact that the existing FEC Buena Vista Yard is expected to redevelop into a high-density, mixed-use development with a segment of new box retailers, good access to and from the development site is essential. Recommended access roads are North Miami Avenue to the west of the development site and NE 34<sup>th</sup> Street to the east of the site. The plan recommends that NE 34<sup>th</sup> Street be the principal east-west connector to Biscayne Boulevard. NE 34<sup>th</sup> Street will need to be widened to accommodate increased traffic volumes between the FEC Buena Vista site and Biscayne Boulevard.***

***East-west connections in the Edgewater area between NE 15<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 36<sup>th</sup> Streets are relatively poor. This situation could be remedied by making certain improvements to NE 29<sup>th</sup> Street, the only minor arterial connecting Biscayne Boulevard to the area west of Interstate 95. Currently, NE 29<sup>th</sup> Street is misaligned at NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. By realigning it on both sides of NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and widening it between NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Biscayne Boulevard, traffic circulation between the east and west sides of I-95 would be improved along with access to the FEC Buena Vista site. Additionally, NE 29<sup>th</sup> Street would serve as a more viable alternative route to NW 36<sup>th</sup> Street. Recommended improvements will require land acquisition between NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Biscayne Boulevard.***

***The intersection of NE 36<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue may need to be reconfigured to improve vehicle flow and safety. A concept plan is shown in Figure T9. Detailed engineering studies will be necessary to evaluate the concept and to develop design alternatives.***

***Considering that North Miami Avenue is a major gateway from the north via I-95 and I-195 to the FEC Buena Vista site, traffic volumes are anticipated to increase***

*as the area redevelops. It is also important to maintain North Miami Avenue as a north-south thoroughfare, to allow neighborhoods to the west to easily access downtown and the freeways. Therefore, it is recommended that North Miami Avenue remain a minor arterial with four lanes for traffic. The avenue could accommodate sidewalks and a possible median. However, as a designated arterial designed to mitigate projected redevelopment impacts the plan does not recommend street parking that would limit the avenue's traffic carrying ability.*

*Finally, there have been demands from local residents in the Edgewater area to improve local access to I-95 by building new ramps at NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street. Currently, the area residents and businesses need to travel across downtown or to the I-195 ramp at N. Miami Avenue to access freeways. However, given that NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street is less than 3,000 feet from two major interchanges (I-95 and I-395 to the south, and I-95 and I-195 to the north), a detailed engineering study by the Florida Department of Transportation is necessary to determine the feasibility of new ramps to ensure that safety and the efficiency of traffic operation on I-95 will not be compromised.*

## **B. Transportation and Streetscapes**

### **1. Transportation**

#### **Implementation Strategy # 1 - Development of a Premium and Connected Transit System**

The Transportation Plan recommends the development of a premium transit system that provides high quality service to neighborhood residents. An efficient and consumer-oriented transit system with growing ridership should be an important goal of the development plan. The plan's principal redevelopment strategy (see Section V-A) outlines three (3) premium transit service alternatives that contemplate the projected incremental redevelopment and growth rate of the FEC Corridor. The near term trolley service proposal is a practical and "doable" implementation strategy that will encourage the level and quality of mixed-use and transit-oriented development set forth within the plan's Guiding Principles and its redevelopment concepts.

#### **Implementation Strategy # 2 - Provision of Roadway Improvements**

The Transportation Assessment performed for this plan indicated that roadway conditions and capacity within the FEC Corridor are seriously deficient in many locations. East-west connectors between Interstate 95 and Biscayne Boulevard have severe capacity and design issues. Capacity and roadway conditions are particularly problematic in

**the general areas of the FEC Buena Vista site where significant redevelopment activity is anticipated.**

**The recommended Roadway Improvements (see Section V-A) will need to be addressed by the city to accommodate the level and quality of redevelopment envisioned in this plan**

### **Implementation Strategy # 3 - Design of a Interstate 95 and NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street Interchange**

**The Wynwood and Edgewater Neighborhoods have limited access to Interstate 95. This issue is particularly acute in Wynwood where the truck traffic generated from local industry and businesses must travel through neighborhood streets to locate the most convenient access to the Interstate. As such, a limited I-95/NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street interchange is proposed for further study by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The proposed I-95/NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street interchange is also being reviewed under the Downtown Transportation Master Plan.**

### **Implementation Strategy # 4 - Creation of a Transit Marketing Program**

**It is recommended that a Transit Marketing Program be create and targeted to specific neighborhoods along the FEC Corridor. Community-based ridership development can be an effective marketing strategy when tailored to the transit needs of neighborhood residents.**

## **2. Streetscapes**

The Overall Streetscape Action Plan is inextricably linked to each of the "guiding principles" of the FEC Corridor Redevelopment Plan. Streetscapes provide a powerful physical image of the city and its neighborhoods. The image of the public realm - the quality and appearance of the street and public spaces - relies on an ordered and harmonious assemblage of elements. Public infrastructure serves to unify dissimilar elements and uses, provides coherence and rhythm to the streetscape, enhances pedestrian and vehicular circulation, establishes order and manages development strategy as well as serving public safety and health. The following action plan focuses on potential streetscape prototypes and the targeting of public infrastructure resources.

### ***Implementation Strategy # 1 - The FEC Linear Greenway***

***As previously noted, the FEC right-of-way can be characterized as the spine of the entire FEC Corridor study area. The right-of-way is viewed by most residents as an under-utilized eyesore and an obstacle for pedestrian movement throughout the corridor. The right-of-way has ample width to accommodate a linear greenway or trail***

*system that would connect neighborhood to neighborhood and neighborhoods to districts and the downtown area. An aesthetically inviting greenway would also promote and improve pedestrian access and movement east and west of the FEC Corridor.*

### **Implementation Strategy # 2 - The Buena Vista Mixed-Use Grid Prototype**

The proposed Buena Vista Mixed-Use Redevelopment concept provides an opportunity to create highly visual and functional streetscapes that can serve as prototypes for redevelopment activity throughout the FEC Corridor. The proposed redevelopment concept will extend the existing street grid network through the site providing connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and districts.

### **Implementation Strategy # 3 - Create Highly Visual and Functional East/West Connectors**

In order to improve overall connectivity throughout the FEC Corridor, it is recommended that public investment be targeted to streetscape improvements along key east/west connector streets. The FEC Corridor plan provides prototypical streetscape and intersection improvement plans within each of the redevelopment concept areas. Prototypical east/west streetscape improvements are provided for NE 25<sup>th</sup> Street and NW 79<sup>th</sup> Street. Intersection improvements are provided for NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue at NW 36<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Streets.

### **Implementation Strategy # 4 - Create Community "Gateways" into Little Haiti**

The plan recommends that gateways be created to support the community identity of Little Haiti and to promote business activity in the neighborhood's business corridors. The proposed east/west gateway is NW 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue with entrance points at Interstate 95 and Biscayne Boulevard. The proposed north/south gateway is NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue with entrance points at NW 79<sup>th</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> Streets.

### **Implementation Strategy # 5 - Create Pedestrian-Oriented Improvements on Biscayne Boulevard**

Biscayne Boulevard currently (it mainly functions a major arterial) is a barrier to east/west pedestrian movement within the corridor restricting public access to Biscayne Bay. In order to provide pedestrian access and improve the visual image of the Biscayne Boulevard streetscape, the plan recommends that a planted median be installed between NE 14<sup>th</sup> and NE 36<sup>th</sup> Street where possible with crosswalks provided at selected intersections. Sidewalks 10 feet in width are recommended on both sides of the Boulevard.

## **C. Principal Redevelopment Districts**

The planning process identified five redevelopment concept locations within the FEC Corridor study area that could serve as "demonstration" or "catalyst" type projects for implementing each of the guiding redevelopment principles. Each redevelopment concept is intended to be fully integrated within its surrounding neighborhood and connected to the overall redevelopment plan for the corridor.

### **Redevelopment Concept #1- Arts and Entertainment District**

#### **Project Description**

The proposed Arts and Entertainment District redevelopment concept builds on the planned Performing Arts Center (PAC) of Greater Miami and the potential economic impacts of the redevelopment of the Omni and Park West neighborhoods after the Performing Arts Center is completed. The Performing Arts Center will consist of a 2,480-seat opera house, a 2,200-seat concert hall and a 200-seat studio theater. The multi million dollar complex will be located on both sides of Biscayne Boulevard between NE 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets. The site is located in the Omni/Park West area which is characterized by a mix of low-rise office, industrial and warehouse buildings, a scattering of single family homes and apartments, and considerable vacant land.

For the purposes of the FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan, the PAC and surrounding Omni/Park West areas represent the southern portion of the redevelopment study. The southern boundary of the FEC study area is NE 14<sup>th</sup> Street with Biscayne Boulevard and North Miami Avenue serving as the eastern and western boundaries respectively. The more defined area of the FEC study is a generally depressed area with a mix of low-density residential and commercial uses and a significant number of vacant parcels. While the Arts and Entertainment District has important economic and transportation links to the Wynwood/Edgewater planning sector, the area has been further delineated for the purposes of the FEC redevelopment study.

The proposed Arts and Entertainment District concept combines the economic energy and redevelopment potential of the Performing Arts Center with broader opportunities within Omni/Park West and nearby Overtown. The Overtown neighborhood has a long history of music and entertainment that can provide a logical complement to the larger Arts and Entertainment District. The proposed concept is to create a retail and mixed-use corridor between NE 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets that clusters various arts and entertainment type uses. The redevelopment concept envisions a late night entertainment district that revitalizes the area and provides economic support to the future Performing Arts Center.

#### **Project Objectives**

Transform an existing blighted area into a vibrant arts and entertainment district  
Provide physical and economic support to the new Performing Arts Center  
Provide new mixed-use opportunities to the area  
Improve pedestrian access and circulation within the district  
Provide improved connectivity between the FEC Corridor, the district and the downtown

### **Project Participants**

City of Miami  
Performing Arts Center  
City of Miami Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)  
Private lenders  
Business owners and private developers in the district  
Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust  
Neighborhood residents

### **Funding Resources**

City of Miami Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) TIF funds  
City of Miami capital improvement funds  
Tax incentives via state Enterprise Zone and City of Miami  
City of Miami Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program  
Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust  
Private lending

### **Redevelopment Concept # 2 - Buena Vista Mixed-Use District**

#### **Project Description**

The proposed FEC Buena Vista Mixed-Use District concept provides the opportunity to redevelop 55 acres of prime commercial land currently used by the Port of Miami as a staging facility for truck containers into a vibrant mixed-use district that would complement the growing local economy associated with the Design and Media Districts and the evolving Wynwood manufacturing area.

The FEC Buena Vista site is bounded by NW 36<sup>th</sup> Street to the north; NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the FEC Railroad to the east; NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street to the south; and North Miami Avenue to the west. The Design District lies immediately north of the Buena Vista site. A mix of retail and commercial uses line the abutting commercial corridors. A

significant single-family residential neighborhood is located west of North Miami Avenue.

The redevelopment concept for the FEC Buena Vista site would be to extend the existing grid street system located north of 36<sup>th</sup> Street and west of North Miami Avenue through the entire site creating a pedestrian oriented street pattern that would begin to facilitate a vibrant, mixed-use community setting. The mixed-use concept would consist of a combination of residential, commercial and light manufacturing loft space within the northern 35 acres of the site. The remaining 20 acres within the southern portion of the site would accommodate an urban design treatment of “big box” retail development.

The proposed FEC Buena Vista Mixed Use District also includes open space and public transit development along the FEC right-of-way. The concept plan envisions a community park at the northeast corner of the site and a nearby trolley stop. The trolley concept would be combined with other pedestrian oriented improvements within the proposed FEC greenway that would extend north and south through the entire study area.

### **Project Objectives**

- Create a vibrant mixed use urban environment that will complement the existing economic and social revitalization of the area
- Incorporate an urban design scheme of an appropriate scale and density to support a new City of Miami Midtown area
- Integrate the Buena Vista site into the existing urban neighborhood grid system
- Create a functional transit oriented development
- Improve the nearby collector roadway system
- Increase job opportunities, particularly for residents within the surrounding neighborhoods

### **Project Participants**

- The Florida East Coast (FEC) Railroad and/or their development designee(s) will take the lead role in obtaining financing and governmental approvals to complete the project
- Other participants in the project may include, but are not limited to, the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County, Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust

### **Funding Resources**

- Land disposition to be determined by the Florida East Coast Railroad
- Construction of the project will be financed by a designated private developer(s)

Off-site improvements may be funded by a combination of private developer contributions, City of Miami capital improvements and federal (e.g. EDA, CDBG) and state resources (transportation fund)  
Tax incentives via state Enterprise Zone and City of Miami  
Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust

## **Redevelopment Concept # 3 - Little Haiti Market and Manufacturing District**

### **Project Description**

The proposed Little Haiti Market and Manufacturing District redevelopment concept provides the opportunity to create an authentic mixed-use neighborhood incorporating, retail development, manufacturing jobs, infill housing and active recreation within the context of the existing Little Haiti community.

The geographic focus of the redevelopment concept is NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue between NW 58<sup>th</sup> and 62<sup>nd</sup> Streets extending east along the FEC Railroad right-of-way. The Little Haiti Market and Manufacturing District is the centerpiece of the Little Haiti sector plan.

The redevelopment concept is to create an ethnically diverse, open market place that would appeal to both local residents and the larger tourist economy within South Florida. The market place would convert to a nighttime restaurant and entertainment district creating a more vibrant neighborhood center and a more profitable entrepreneurial environment. The market place would be integrated with new active and passive recreational space planned for the area enhanced retail development along NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Light manufacturing and warehousing and distribution in the surrounding Little River Industrial Park would support the economic activities of the market place and the larger Little Haiti community.

Public investment strategies for the redevelopment area would include land acquisition for park development and public infrastructure and streetscape improvements along NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, 59<sup>th</sup> and 62<sup>nd</sup> Streets. Other public support would include facade improvements on NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and business incentives to existing and aspiring entrepreneurs within the proposed Little Haiti Market and Manufacturing District.

### **Project Objectives**

- Develop a mixed use community consisting of retail, light manufacturing, residential and recreation
- Enhance the existing retail district of Little Haiti
- Create expanded recreational opportunities for the Haitian community
- Provide new entrepreneurial opportunities within the neighborhood

Increase job opportunities, particularly for the residents of the surrounding neighborhood

### **Project Participants**

The City of Miami will have the lead responsibility in land acquisition and disposition for public improvements  
Haitian American Foundation, YMCA, neighborhood residents  
Private lenders  
New and existing entrepreneurs

### **Funding Resources**

City of Miami bond issue  
Tax incentives via state Enterprise Zone and City of Miami  
City of Miami capital improvements; Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program  
Miami-Dade County CDBG and Section 108 Loan Guarantees  
Private lending

## **Redevelopment Concept # 4 - 79<sup>th</sup> Street Business and Greenway Corridor**

### **Project Description**

The goal of the proposed 79<sup>th</sup> Street Business and Greenway Corridor redevelopment concept is to create new and revitalized business opportunities within a visually aesthetic, pedestrian oriented environment.

The 79<sup>th</sup> Street area is the northern limit of the FEC Corridor study area. For the purposes of the FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan, the area is integral to the larger Little Haiti sector plan that extends north of 54<sup>th</sup> Street, east to Biscayne Boulevard and west to I-95. The more narrowly defined boundaries of the 79<sup>th</sup> Street Business and Greenway Corridor redevelopment concept is a stretch of 79<sup>th</sup> Street that extends from the intersection NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue east to Biscayne Boulevard.

The redevelopment concept has three primary elements: 1) business façade renovations along 79<sup>th</sup> Street, 2) streetscape improvements along 79<sup>th</sup> Street and the entrance to 4<sup>th</sup> Court, and 3) open space and greenway development along The Little River and the FEC right-of-way.

The first element is a façade renovation program. The 79<sup>th</sup> Street redevelopment concept area includes several retail blocks that would be appropriate for a business façade renovation program. Existing facades are in general disrepair and visually detracting to the commercial corridor. Façade renovations would include fresh painting and

stuccowork, new and repaired doors and windows, architectural detailing, appropriate signage and canopies.

The second element of the redevelopment concept would include streetscape improvements along 79<sup>th</sup> Street and at the entrance to 4<sup>th</sup> Court. The 79<sup>th</sup> Street right-of-way is deplete of landscaping and other streetscape amenities. Streetscape improvements at the entrance to 4<sup>th</sup> Court would enhance on-going private investment activity and provide a pedestrian linkage to the proposed FEC greenway.

The third element of the 79<sup>th</sup> Street redevelopment concept consists of open space development along Little River and the FEC right-of-way. The Little River currently has no public access and limited viewing. The open space development concept would be to create public access and viewing opportunities at key locations between 79<sup>th</sup> Street and Biscayne Boulevard. The juncture of 79<sup>th</sup> Street and the FEC right-of-way represents the northern gateway to the proposed FEC greenway concept.

### **Project Objectives**

- Improve the facades and general physical appearance of the 79<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Corridor
- Create new and expanded entrepreneurial opportunities along 79<sup>th</sup> Street
- Create trolley service from 79<sup>th</sup> Street south through the entire FEC Corridor
- Improve the streetscape of 79<sup>th</sup> Street between NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Biscayne Boulevard
- Create public access and passive recreation along Little River
- Begin a greenway along the FEC right-of-way extending south through the entire corridor

### **Project Participants**

- City of Miami
- Neighborhood residents
- Miami-Dade County
- Business owners and private developers
- Private lenders
- New and existing entrepreneurs

### **Funding Resources**

- City of Miami capital improvements; Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)Program
- Tax incentives via state Enterprise Zone and City of Miami
- Miami-Dade County CDBG and Section 108 Loan Guarantees
- Private lending

## **Redevelopment Concept # 5- 25<sup>th</sup> Street Conservation District Project Description**

The proposed 25<sup>th</sup> Street Conservation District redevelopment concept provides the opportunity to revitalize and preserve significant residential structures within the study area while integrating a prototype for west to east pedestrian oriented access and public improvements to Biscayne Bay.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Street redevelopment concept is part of the Wynwood/Edgewater planning sector that extends north from approximately NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street to 54<sup>th</sup> Street, east to Biscayne Bay and west to I-95. The 25<sup>th</sup> Street concept area extends east from the FEC right-of-way to Biscayne Bay. The street crosses two important north/south arterials, Biscayne Boulevard and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The 25<sup>th</sup> Street redevelopment concept includes the following elements: 1) preservation of architecturally and historically significant residential and mixed use structures 2) streetscape improvements, and 3) open space development.

The first element of the redevelopment concept envisions the creation of a conservation district for the full length of 25<sup>th</sup> Street. The district would be implemented by zoning amendment with the inclusion of design standards. A survey of residential properties along 25<sup>th</sup> Street determined that several of the structures would be appropriately suited for bed and breakfast type uses. The survey of the area also identified key vacant parcels at the intersection of 25<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and east of Biscayne Boulevard. The pending disposition and development of several of these parcels will impact the design cohesiveness and integrity of the 25<sup>th</sup> Street corridor.

The second element of the redevelopment concept envisions general streetscape improvements along 25<sup>th</sup> Street from the intersection of NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue east to Biscayne Bay. The improvements would include (where appropriate) the repaving of streets and sidewalks, curb repairs and upgrades, crosswalk pavers, street plantings, street lighting and street art/furniture. Pedestrian access to Biscayne Bay will necessitate the development of a planted median along Biscayne Boulevard with crosswalk pavers at the intersection. In order to create an overall west to east pedestrian access to Biscayne Bay, the median would need to be extended where appropriate from 14<sup>th</sup> Street north to 36<sup>th</sup> Street to accommodate pedestrian movement.

The third element of the redevelopment concept envisions a pocket type park on Biscayne Bay that would serve as a scenic vista and an end destination for walkers and bicyclers. Sidewalk improvements, crosswalk pavers and the installation of bicycle lanes would facilitate access to the park destination. The park would consist of landscape improvements for relaxation and an enhanced view of the bay. The park would include low maintenance amenities such as bicycle racks, benches, street level water features and public sculpture.

## **Project Objectives**

- Create a NE 25<sup>th</sup> Street Conservation District
- Create new "bed and breakfast" type business opportunities to enhance the conservation of historically significant properties
- Provide pedestrian access to Biscayne Bay
- Provide streetscape and public infrastructure improvements
- Create a pocket park on Biscayne Bay

## **Project Participants**

- City of Miami
- Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
- Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust
- Neighborhood residents
- Business owners
- New and existing entrepreneurs
- Private lenders

## **Funding Resources**

- City of Miami capital improvements; Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program
- FDOT
- Private lending
- Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust
- Tax incentives via state Enterprise Zone and City of Miami

## **VI Overall FEC Corridor Action Plans**

**The FEC Corridor - its rail line, right-of-way, adjacent roadways and neighborhoods - needs to be viewed as a critical asset to the City of Miami and the larger region of Southeast Florida. Much of the short to medium range endowment of the FEC Corridor's competitive advantage can be significantly enhanced by the City's implementation of the redevelopment concepts and strategies proposed within this plan**

### **D. Transportation and Streetscapes**

#### **1. Transportation**

**Implementation Strategy # 1 - Development of a Premium and Connected Transit System**

**The Transportation Plan recommends the development of a premium transit system that provides high quality service to neighborhood residents. An efficient and consumer-oriented transit system with growing ridership should be an important goal of the development plan. The plan's principal redevelopment strategy (see Section V-A) outlines three (3) premium transit service alternatives that contemplate the projected incremental redevelopment and growth rate of the FEC Corridor. The near term trolley service proposal is a practical and "doable" implementation strategy that will encourage the level and quality of mixed-use and transit-oriented development set forth within the plan's Guiding Principles and its redevelopment concepts.**

#### **Implementation Strategy # 2 - Provision of Roadway Improvements**

**The Transportation Assessment performed for this plan indicated that roadway conditions and capacity within the FEC Corridor are seriously deficient in many locations. East-west connectors between Interstate 95 and Biscayne Boulevard have severe capacity and design issues. Capacity and roadway conditions are particularly problematic in the general areas of the FEC Buena Vista site where significant redevelopment activity is anticipated.**

**The recommended Roadway Improvements (see Section V-A) will need to be addressed by the city to accommodate the level and quality of redevelopment envisioned in this plan**

#### **Implementation Strategy # 3 - Design of a Interstate 95 and NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street Interchange**

**The Wynwood and Edgewater Neighborhoods have limited access to Interstate 95. This issue is particularly acute in Wynwood where the truck traffic generated from local industry and businesses must travel through neighborhood streets to locate the most convenient access to the Interstate. As such, a limited I-95/NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street interchange is proposed for further study by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The proposed I-95/NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street interchange is also being reviewed under the Downtown Transportation Master Plan.**

#### **Implementation Strategy # 4 - Creation of a Transit Marketing Program**

**It is recommended that a Transit Marketing Program be create and targeted to specific neighborhoods along the FEC Corridor. Community-**

**based ridership development can be an effective marketing strategy when tailored to the transit needs of neighborhood residents.**

## **2. Streetscapes**

The Overall Streetscape Action Plan is inextricably linked to each of the "guiding principles" of the FEC Corridor Redevelopment Plan. Streetscapes provide a powerful physical image of the city and its neighborhoods. The image of the public realm - the quality and appearance of the street and public spaces - relies on an ordered and harmonious assemblage of elements. Public infrastructure serves to unify dissimilar elements and uses, provides coherence and rhythm to the streetscape, enhances pedestrian and vehicular circulation, establishes order and manages development strategy as well as serving public safety and health. The following action plan focuses on potential streetscape prototypes and the targeting of public infrastructure resources.

### ***Implementation Strategy # 1 - The FEC Linear Greenway***

*As previously noted, the FEC right-of-way can be characterized as the spine of the entire FEC Corridor study area. The right-of-way is viewed by most residents as an under-utilized eyesore and an obstacle for pedestrian movement throughout the corridor. The right-of-way has ample width to accommodate a linear greenway or trail system that would connect neighborhood to neighborhood and neighborhoods to districts and the downtown area. An aesthetically inviting greenway would also promote and improve pedestrian access and movement east and west of the FEC Corridor.*

### **Implementation Strategy # 2 - The Buena Vista Mixed-Use Grid Prototype**

The proposed Buena Vista Mixed-Use Redevelopment concept provides an opportunity to create highly visual and functional streetscapes that can serve as prototypes for redevelopment activity throughout the FEC Corridor. The proposed redevelopment concept will extend the existing street grid network through the site providing connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and districts.

### **Implementation Strategy # 3 - Create Highly Visual and Functional East/West Connectors**

In order to improve overall connectivity throughout the FEC Corridor, it is recommended that public investment be targeted to streetscape improvements along key east/west connector streets. The FEC Corridor plan provides prototypical streetscape and intersection improvement plans within each of the redevelopment concept areas. Prototypical east/west streetscape improvements are provided for NE 25<sup>th</sup> Street and NW 79<sup>th</sup> Street. Intersection improvements are provided for NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue at NW 36<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Streets.

#### **Implementation Strategy # 4 - Create Community "Gateways" into Little Haiti**

The plan recommends that gateways be created to support the community identity of Little Haiti and to promote business activity in the neighborhood's business corridors. The proposed east/west gateway is NW 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue with entrance points at Interstate 95 and Biscayne Boulevard. The proposed north/south gateway is NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue with entrance points at NW 79<sup>th</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> Streets.

#### **Implementation Strategy # 5 - Create Pedestrian-Oriented Improvements on Biscayne Boulevard**

Biscayne Boulevard currently (it mainly functions a major arterial) is a barrier to east/west pedestrian movement within the corridor restricting public access to Biscayne Bay. In order to provide pedestrian access and improve the visual image of the Biscayne Boulevard streetscape, the plan recommends that a planted median be installed between NE 14<sup>th</sup> and NE 36<sup>th</sup> Street where possible with crosswalks provided at selected intersections. Sidewalks 10 feet in width are recommended on both sides of the Boulevard.

#### **Transportation and Streetscapes Action Steps**

**In order to achieve the aforementioned Transportation and Streetscapes Implementation Strategies in a timely and successful manner the following "action steps" are recommended. Each action step will require appropriate responses by the City's respective departments, boards and commissions.**

##### **Within 14 days of plan approval:**

- Prepare a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the engineering feasibility and design of the trolley transit system**
- Consider the creation of a "dedicated transit development fund" to support the proposed premium transit system**
- Prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the design of the "gateway" entrances on NW 62<sup>nd</sup>, NW 79<sup>th</sup> and NW 54<sup>th</sup> Streets**
- Commence discussions with FDOT regarding the design of a limited I-95 and NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street interchange**
- Commence discussions with FDOT regarding the proposed median on Biscayne Boulevard**

##### **Within 30 days of plan approval:**

**Commence discussions with property owners and businesses regarding proposed roadway improvements on NW 36<sup>th</sup>, NW 34<sup>th</sup>, and NW 29<sup>th</sup> Streets and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> and North Miami Avenues**  
**Design proposed streetscape improvements to NE 25<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Develop design workshops for proposed NE 25<sup>th</sup> Street and Little River pocket parks in collaboration with the ASLA and FIU School of Landscape Architecture**

## **B. Economic Development**

In order for significant private redevelopment to occur within the FEC Corridor, there is the need to "endow" those factor conditions in which the corridor already enjoys a competitive advantage and, concurrently, identify means for addressing those factor conditions in which the corridor is at a competitive disadvantage. In short, the city needs to capitalize on the FEC Corridor's existing economic strengths, seize new and growing opportunities and improve upon each of its weaknesses. The following are the key components of the overall Economic Development Action Plan:

### **Implementation Strategy # 1 - Priority be given to the Principal Redevelopment Concept Areas of Buena Vista, Little Haiti and the Media District**

Priority for public investment and monetary and regulatory incentives should be targeted to the three principal redevelopment concept areas - the Buena Vista Mixed-Use District, Little Haiti Market and Manufacturing District, and the Arts and Entertainment District. These redevelopment project areas offer the greatest potential as catalyst projects. The FEC Buena Vista site is strategically located south of the Design District and I-195 and west of Biscayne Boulevard. The 55-acre site has good access from NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street to the south and from NW 36<sup>th</sup> Street to the north. North Miami Avenue provides excellent access along the western boundary of the site. The FEC Buena Vista site has the potential for significant private leveraging given surrounding private investment activity in the area.

The Arts and Entertainment and Little Haiti Market and Entertainment redevelopment concepts will complement the infusion of existing public investment in the areas. The Arts and Entertainment redevelopment concept will broaden and enhance the new Performing Arts Center, while the Little Haiti Market and Manufacturing concept will stimulate retail and light manufacturing in combination with planned public park improvements

It is expected that new residential uses within the redevelopment concept areas will support new retail and commercial development within the concept area and the larger FEC Corridor. A relationship is expected between new residents and business starts in the area, especially entrepreneurs based in units designed for living and work.

## **Implementation Strategy # 2 - Manufacturing Retention and Expansion**

Emerging manufacturing sectors such as fabricated metals and custom design furniture creates real economic opportunity within the FEC Corridor. The growing success of the Design District provides a market for custom or "niche" type manufacturing within the surrounding industrial zones. The anticipated redevelopment of the FEC Buena Vista site provides the opportunity for the Design District to expand south into the Wynwood Neighborhood where most of these custom, light manufacturers are locating. Additionally, other manufacturing sectors are growing in the greater Miami area including plastics, medical instruments and food products. These sectors offer viable manufacturing expansion opportunities in Wynwood and the industrial areas of Little Haiti including the Little River Industrial Park. In order to build on this competitive advantage a manufacturing retention and expansion strategy needs to be implemented that would include the following components:

### **Economic Incentives**

Manufacturing establishments normally have high start-up costs associated with capital expenditures, building renovations and site improvements. Economic incentives in the form of tax exemptions and reduced water and sewer hook-up fees are positive inducements for small manufacturers.

### **Public Infrastructure Improvements**

The physical condition of many of the public roads servicing the manufacturing districts of Wynwood and Little Haiti are in need of improvement. Additionally, water, sanitary sewer and stormwater sewer services are inadequate in many of these areas. The City of Miami working with the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) should be able to target capital facilities funding to these areas for public infrastructure, city service and utility improvements

### **Creation of Manufacturing Districts**

The city should consider a zoning classification to promote new and expanding manufacturing sectors. This zoning classification would accommodate clean and custom manufacturing sectors such as furniture design, fabricated metals and tool and die. Given the job creation focus of the FEC Corridor study, provisions should be included that protect the shrinking inventory of manufacturing space.

An initial public infrastructure investment should be targeted to the proposed Wynwood Manufacturing District. This area was previously targeted for public infrastructure improvements as part of a Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant application. The District's boundaries are NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street to the north; NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to the east; NW 25<sup>th</sup> Street to the south; and NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the west. Public improvements would include new water and sewer lines with complete upgrades from the existing 8-inch to 12-inch diameter pipes to comply with City standards for industrial uses. The new 12-inch water and sewer lines would connect to nearby

interceptors. New street lighting is also proposed for the District as this has been a major deterrent for businesses looking to locate in Wynwood.

### **Implementation Strategy # 3 - Support an Integrated Transportation System**

A coherent and integrated transportation system is fundamental to successful economic redevelopment initiatives. The FEC right-of-way and adjacent roadway system should function as paths leading to job, shopping and entertainment centers within and beyond the boundaries of the FEC Corridor redevelopment area. As such, they should:

- help to identify and promote the redevelopment area
- provide clear connectivity to local and regional urban centers
- possess strong aesthetic qualities
- be designed to accommodate pedestrian movement

The challenge for the city is to harness its rail and roadway capacity to maximize economic and social activity and improve its overall physical image. At the same time, there is a strong need to create real pedestrian access and circulation. These ingredients must be integrated in the overall redevelopment plan if the FEC Corridor is to aspire to the vision of a sustainable and livable community.

### **Implementation Strategy # 4 - Support Expansion of the Retail Sector**

Support for an expanded retail sector within the FEC Corridor will help improve and diversify the area's economic base, create jobs and improve the overall quality of life for neighborhood residents. The FEC Buena Vista site will provide the initial impetus for higher-end retail development. The proposed redevelopment concept includes 350,000 square feet of "big box" retail. Large-scale retail development on the Buena Vista site should spin-off a combination of large and smaller national chains to appropriate nearby locations on NW 29<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. New retail development should also be supported within the Media District redevelopment area and in Little Haiti along NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and NW 79<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **Implementation Strategy # 5 - Develop a Marketing Plan for the Corridor**

In order for the FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan to be successful, it will be important that a marketing plan be developed that coordinates and integrates existing marketing efforts ( e.g. Design District, Media District) with marketing strategies aimed at promoting new redevelopment areas within Wynwood, Edgewater and Little Haiti (e.g. Wynwood Manufacturing District, Little Haiti Market District).

The marketing plan should be led by the City of Miami with the involvement and support of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust

and the Beacon Council. Other marketing interests should include the Performing Arts Center, the Design District, the local media industry and the Miami Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

#### Economic Development Action Steps

In order to achieve the aforementioned Economic Development Implementation Strategies in a timely and successful manner, the following "action steps" are recommended. Each action step will require appropriate action by the City of Miami's respective departments, boards and commissions.

#### Within 14 days of plan approval:

- Initiate proposed Special Districts (SDs) zoning review and approval process
- Commence preparation of EDA Capital Facilities Grant Application for targeted Wynwood area

#### Within 30 days of plan approval:

- Consider reductions or exemptions for water and sewer hook-up fees for businesses that expand or relocate within the FEC Corridor
- Create a CDBG public infrastructure fund for the Wynwood Manufacturing District
- Establish a targeted Commercial Revitalization Program to improve the commercial corridors of NW 79<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue
- Commence discussions with various business and economic development marketing entities regarding the formulation of the City's FEC Corridor Economic Development Marketing Plan

#### Within 90 days of plan approval:

- Commence civil engineering of water and sewer improvements in the Wynwood Manufacturing District
- Appoint FEC Corridor Economic Development Marketing Committee
- Prepare Target Industry Analyses of the Furniture, Media, Plastics and Fabricated Metals manufacturing sectors to determine their market, space and worker training needs

#### Within 6 months of plan approval:

- Commence public infrastructure improvements in Wynwood Manufacturing District
- Prepare FEC Corridor Economic Development Marketing Plan

## **A. Housing**

According to the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the rationale for infill development market potential is partly based on demographics. Smaller families, singles, childless married couples and empty nesters are growing demographic groups seeking housing that reflects their lifestyle and life cycle. Recent studies have shown, that baby boom generation (age 45 and over) homebuyers who prefer more dense and compact housing alternatives will account for over 30 percent of total homeowner growth this decade, double the same segment's market share in the 1990s. Generally, the larger city has a competitive advantage over suburban and smaller cities as a housing location for many non-traditional households. Accessibility to transit and proximity to employment centers, particularly anchor institutions like hospitals or universities have historically been good locations to capture an infill market. Developers of infill housing are also selling a lifestyle that includes proximity to culture, nightlife and walking neighborhoods. The key to successful infill housing is to build on existing assets of the immediate neighborhood and surrounding districts.

The question is whether a specific inner-city area is a good location for expanded housing choices and what types of strategies might capitalize on this advantage. At the same time, housing affordability and design issues need to be addressed. As such, the Overall Infill Housing Action Plan for the FEC Corridor emphasizes an alternative housing market that establishes the "urban neighborhood" as the basic building block. The urban neighborhood addresses choice by being flexible enough to allow for varying densities and housing types. Its common characteristics are the attention given to the city block and street grid system, the historical and cultural context, and the interconnectedness of streets, sidewalks, open space and transit lines to city services, institutions, culture and employment centers.

A redevelopment vision for the FEC Corridor and its neighborhoods is to provide a spectrum of housing choices and costs to appeal to the varied preferences and lifestyles of Miami's existing residents and attract new residents to the city. Housing choices should include single-family homes, lofts, upper story apartments in neighborhood business and historic districts and the older inner city neighborhoods of Wynwood, Little Haiti and Edgewater. The broad range of quality housing choices will be integrated into walkable neighborhoods where residents have easy access to employment, shopping, culture, parks, schools, churches and mass transit.

### **Implementation Strategy #1 - Zoning as a Planning Tool for Housing Choice**

Mixed-use zoning that would expand upon the city's Special Districts (SDs) classification is recommended for proposed redevelopment areas within the FEC Corridor. Mixed-use zoning will allow for various housing types in combination with

other pedestrian-oriented uses and amenities. Mixed-use zoning will also enable more dense, compact urban communities and transit-oriented development.

The 55-acre FEC Buena Vista site has the single greatest potential for creating the density and mixed-use development envisioned in this plan. The concept plan proposes 75,000 square feet of loft space and the potential for 150 new units of housing through the proposed SD 1 zoning.

The plan also recognizes the advantages of creating housing opportunities in close proximity to existing neighborhood centers and commercial corridors. Neighborhood centers serve as focal points for shopping, services, entertainment and mass transit. New residential development opportunities need to fan out within walkable distances from neighborhood centers. Therefore, special district mixed-use zoning is recommended in Little Haiti and in close proximity to the Design and Media Districts where redevelopment concept areas are proposed to create additional mixed-use development scenarios and expanded housing opportunities for new and existing residents.

### **Implementation Strategy # 2 - Removal of Existing Barriers to Infill Housing Development**

According to the Urban Land Institute (ULI), an optimal infill site is located in a receptive neighborhood with well-maintained properties, good land price, adequate facilities, no major land problems, appropriate zoning and potential development profitability compared to alternative sites. The major barriers to infill housing development within the FEC Corridor are land assembly, public infrastructure costs, excessive risks and an overall blighted image. The City of Miami can proactively address these issues in several ways:

land assembly can be achieved by common land acquisition methods in Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs) and Empowerment Zones or through zoning incentives to private and non-profit developers

given the high costs of public infrastructure and utility improvements in older inner-city locations, CDBG and capital improvement funds will need to be targeted to these locations

the issue of "excessive risks" can be minimized by increased police presence in the area and by assuring investors and property owners through public infrastructure investment

overall blighted conditions can be improved with highly visible streetscape improvements, targeted code enforcement and façade improvement incentives for commercial properties

### **Implementation Strategy # 3 - Target Existing Housing Resources to the FEC Corridor**

There will be a need to target existing housing resources to the FEC Corridor for both homeowner and rental housing assistance. The need will be greatest for households under 80 percent of the median income. Real opportunity exists due to the fact that upwards of 90 percent of the single-family housing stock within the FEC Corridor is renter occupied. This creates substantial opportunity for lower income households who wish to own their own home.

It is recommended that the City of Miami's Homebuyer Financing Program be eventually targeted to single and two family neighborhoods in Wynwood and Little Haiti. Given the rehabilitation needs of the existing housing stock, it is recommended that a privately leveraged and CDBG funded "Purchase Rehabilitation Program" be developed. Other sources of funds might include SHIP, HOME and Miami-Dade Neighborhood Housing Services (MDNHS).

The City of Miami should also consider developing a "Model Block Program" for neighborhood blocks within Wynwood and Little Haiti that have historical or architectural significance. A variety of funding mechanisms e.g. mortgage loans, rehabilitation grants, public infrastructure improvements, could be "piggybacked" to provide a quick and concentrated neighborhood revitalization initiative.

A model block demonstration program is recommended for a ? block section of Little Haiti located between ? and ? A model block program enables the city to target public infrastructure and housing and community development resources to a targeted neighborhood location that could be a catalyst for further private investment in surrounding blocks and other neighborhood areas. A model block demonstration program also provides the opportunity to implement several of the Guiding Principles of the FEC Corridor Redevelopment Plan. For example, the Little Haiti model block area promotes Guiding Principle #1 - A Diverse and Sustainable Economy by expanding housing rehabilitation and homeownership in a location that is convenient to the proposed FEC trolley line, the proposed Little Haiti Park and the NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue retail district. The model block program also provides the opportunity to integrate a neighborhood conservation and historic preservation component. The proposed model block program addresses Guiding Principle #3 - A Balanced and Integrated Transportation System by providing housing rehabilitation and home ownership on walkable, pedestrian oriented streets with improved connectivity between neighborhoods, downtown and recreation. Lastly, the model block program advances Guiding Principle #4 - A Spectrum of Housing Choice and opportunity by providing safe, decent and affordable housing, transit-oriented development and neighborhood conservation and historic preservation.

#### **Implementation Strategy #4 - Create New Housing Financing Mechanisms**

Targeting of existing housing resources alone will not enable the level of housing production that is needed for the FEC Corridor. Untapped resources such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LITHC) program will need to be creatively utilized and

combined private financing to create a viable housing production incentive. The LIHTC has become the nation's primary mechanism for encouraging the production of housing to be occupied by low-or moderate-income households. The program's flexibility has enabled the production of units in a variety of markets while serving a broad range of housing needs. The program grants tax credits against the tax liability of the property owners over a 10-year period. Annual credits are granted against the costs of the buildings, site improvements and equipment provided that rents on the units against which the credits are claimed meet the affordability standards of the metropolitan area. Nationally, the LIHTC program has worked effectively for smaller-scale multi-family rental projects of 40-50 units.

New mixed-income homeowner and rental projects will require both private and public sector financing. Even in the LIHTC program, where syndication proceeds play an important role in financing developments, new debt and equity resources need to be created to make the projects economically viable. This may necessitate the layering of subsidies, particularly in the case of non-profit housing developers.

*Given the transit and homeownership focus of the FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan, the opportunity exists to create mortgage financing tools that will serve as incentives to prospective homebuyers. One such example is the Location Efficient Mortgage (LEM) that was developed by the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) in Chicago. The LEM takes advantage of the "hidden asset" of transit density in urban neighborhoods to encourage homeownership and promote increased transit ridership. A LEM allows lenders to recognize the savings made by a household whose primary means of transportation is public transit rather than the private automobile. Lenders can stretch their standard debt-to-income ratio thereby allowing more low-and moderate-income families, first time homebuyers and dedicated transit users to obtain mortgages or larger mortgages than they would otherwise qualify.*

*Fannie Mae, the nation's largest supplier of homeownership capital has sponsored a \$100 million LEM underwriting experiment market test. Mortgage lenders throughout the country are being trained to underwrite the loans. LEMs are currently available in Seattle, San Francisco and Chicago.*

*A locally crafted LEM could be combined with other "incentives" for homeowner investment within the FEC Corridor. Grants and deferred payment loans (DPLs) could be provided to cover closing costs or be used as a principal reduction subsidy.*

*The City should also develop a local adaptation of HUD's former Rental Rehabilitation Program to address multi-family rental housing property conditions within the FEC Corridor. There is a significant number of small-scaled (under 50 units) multi-family properties, particularly within Little Haiti, that provide basic and affordable housing for low income households. While many of these properties have*

*become obsolete and will ultimately be razed, there are many that could be rehabilitated to provide both decent and affordable rental housing for local residents.*

### **Implementation strategy # 5 - Sponsor an Affordable Urban Housing Design Competition**

The FEC Corridor's existing R-1 and R-2 zoning districts offer unique but challenging opportunities for scattered-site infill development. As the corridor continues to redevelop, the demand for single-family attached and detached housing units should continue to increase. The challenge is not only to create housing that is truly affordable to local residents but also to create affordable housing that has interesting design qualities and is in harmony with the long-standing character of Miami's neighborhoods. To achieve this goal, it is recommended that an "Affordable Urban Housing Design Competition" be conducted to stimulate innovative ideas and concepts for addressing housing affordability and quality design within the FEC Corridor.

Design competitions typically invite architects, designers, planners, landscape architects, and students of these disciplines. The city would also need to select a suitable site that it has under control.

#### **Housing Action Steps:**

In order to achieve the aforementioned Housing Implementation Strategies in a timely and effective manner the following "action steps" are recommended. Each action step will require an appropriate response from the City of Miami's respective departments, boards and commissions.

#### **Within 14 days of plan approval:**

- Initiate zoning review and approval process
- Designate Little Haiti area for Model Block Demonstration Program
- Inventory housing and ownership pattern in Model Block area
- Initiate a systematic approach to managing and disposing of vacant land by directing County/City Legal Departments to develop procedures for tax lien foreclosures on delinquent properties
- Streamline City's housing rehabilitation application process
- Create a "housing team" at NET offices to provide direct customer service for housing rehabilitation and homebuyer assistance programs

#### **Within 30 days of plan approval:**

- Partner with community non-profit, with LISC support, for property conveyance, marketing, homebuyer assistance and financing for Model Block Demonstration Program

Provide support to non-profit builders such as Habitat for Humanity and Wind & Rain to pursue Corridor-wide rehabilitation projects  
Restore and improve the City's Single Family Rehabilitation Program  
Target code enforcement activities to Model Block area  
Target public infrastructure funds for lighting, sidewalks, curbing and landscape improvements to Model Block  
Target SHIP, CDBG and HOME funding to Model Block

Within 6 months of plan approval:

Initiate an Affordable Urban Housing Design Competition  
Selective demolition and site clearance of obsolete properties within the Model Block area coupled with infill strategy incorporating housing design guidelines from Affordable Urban Housing Design Competition  
Leverage housing funds with LISC funding and participation from individual private lenders or private lenders consortium for Model Block  
Create an interactive database of vacant land including status of liens and tax payments to facilitate property research  
Establish a revolving loan fund (RLF) from which prospective homebuyers can borrow at no- or low-interest to pay off property liens  
Work with local lenders to design a Local Efficient Mortgage (LEM) instrument for FEC Corridor neighborhoods  
Create local Rental Rehabilitation Program targeting multi-family rental properties in Little Haiti  
Complete a comprehensive update of the 1976 Dade County historic resources survey

## **VII Program of Regulatory Actions**

### **A. Zoning**

*Zoning is viewed as the principal planning tool for the implementation of the FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan. Carefully crafted and articulated zoning codes typically offer the most effective redevelopment incentive to prospective real estate investors, small and large.*

*The vision of the FEC Corridor as an inter-connected and vibrant mixed-use urban environment will require zoning changes that mirror the guiding principles of the overall plan and specific redevelopment strategies. Fundamental is the mix of uses that goes hand-in-hand with the concepts of creating human scale, walkable, safe, convenient and transit-oriented city neighborhoods. Creating a viable mix of uses also offers increased*

*diversity, housing choice, vitality and enhanced opportunities for neighborly interaction. To be successful mixed-use must enhance and protect the quality of life and property values for neighborhood residents and investors. As such, it assumes a high quality of design and professional management.*

*An assessment (See attachment ? FEC Economic Market Assessment) of the City of Miami's Zoning Ordinance and FEC Corridor zoning districts concluded that existing zoning provides little incentive nor an articulation of the level and quality of mixed-use development envisioned for the FEC Corridor. Mixed-use appears primarily through Special Districts (SDs) within the city's zoning code. An expansion of the city's SD zoning classifications has been determined to be the most practical means for creating an effective mixed-use zoning tool for the implementation of the FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan.*

## **B. Design guidelines**

## **C. Projects and Programs within the FEC Corridor Study Area**

### **A. Community and Economic Development Resources**

#### Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program provide a comprehensive and flexible source of funding to address local housing, economic and community development needs. Eligible activities include: **acquisition of real property**, including land, air rights, easements, right-of-ways and buildings; **public facilities and improvements** for the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation or installation of public improvements; **rehabilitation** of residential property, whether privately or publicly owned, and commercial/industrial property, but where such property is owned by a for-profit, rehabilitation under this category is limited to exterior improvements of the buildings and the correction of code violations; **special economic development activities** to support eligible economic development activities and other categories of basic eligibility, each of which must meet a national objective of the CDBG program including commercial or industrial improvements carried out by the grantee or a nonprofit sub-recipient; and, **homeownership assistance** to finance low- and moderate income households in the purchase of a home.

The City of Miami utilizes its CDBG funds for housing and economic development activities including homeownership assistance, housing rehabilitation and façade improvements in targeted neighborhoods. The city's Homebuyer's Financing Program provides deferred payment loans to income eligible homebuyers (less than 80 percent of the area median income). The financing covers closing costs, down payments and second mortgages. The city also administers a Single Family Rehabilitation Program (1-4 units) combining both CDBG and SHIP funding (\$2million). Façade improvement grants of \$4,000 are targeted to commercial businesses in CDBG eligible neighborhoods

#### HUD Section 108 Loan Guarantees

The Section 108 Loan Guarantees Program provides HUD the authority to pledge full faith and credit of the U.S. Government as a means of guaranteeing loans under the CDBG program. Under this provision, a grantee may request loan guarantee assistance for activities specifically eligible under Section 108, which may include many of the same activities that other CDBG funds may assist including housing rehabilitation and economic development. Under the program, a grantee may borrow up to five times its annual entitlement grant. The loan repayment period can be as long as 20 years. While most guaranteed loans are repaid using an income stream from the activity assisted by the loan proceeds, CDBG grant funds (and program income) can be used to make interest and principal payments on the loans.

Miami-Dade County's Urban Revitalization Task Force administers a Section 108 Loan Program for large scale economic development projects within seventeen Targeted Urban Areas (TUAs) including Little Haiti.

#### Miami-Dade Neighborhood Housing Services

Miami-Dade Neighborhood Housing Services (MDNHS) administers a \$4 million First Mortgage Product that is targeted to first time homebuyers in Miami-Dade. Bank Atlantic and HSBC Bank USA have provided lending commitments to the program. Reduced interest rates currently at 6.5 percent are available to qualified income eligible (below 80 percent of the area median income) homebuyers. The MDNHS helps ensure mortgage readiness through its training and counseling program.

#### Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) utilizes the incremental increase in ad valorem tax revenue within a designated geographic area to finance redevelopment projects within that area. As property values rise above an established aggregate valuation (the "frozen" tax base), tax increment is generated by applying the millage rate to that increase in value and depositing in a trust fund an amount equal to such increased tax revenue. The trust fund is the source for repayment of indebtedness.

Florida redevelopment activities are initiated by the governing body of a city or county adopting a resolution finding the existence of one or more slum or blighted areas or a shortage of housing affordable to low or moderate income persons within its jurisdiction. The resolution must also find that the "rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or a combination thereof," of the area is necessary. The governing body must further find the need for a **community redevelopment agency** ("CRA") to function within that local government's boundaries to carry out the purposes of the Redevelopment Act. The governing body by resolution may designate itself as the CRA, create a separate CRA by ordinance, or designate a pre-existing downtown development entity. The next step in the redevelopment process is to prepare a plan for redevelopment within the designated slum or blighted area (referred to as a "community redevelopment area").

The boundaries of the City of Miami's Omni Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) are the FEC Corridor to the west; NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street to the north; Biscayne Bay to the east and Interstate 395 (State Road 836) to the south. The CRA includes the Media Entertainment District including the location of new Performing Arts Center (PAC) of Greater Miami.

#### Enterprise Zones

The State of Florida Enterprise Zone program offers opportunities for entrepreneurial initiatives and small business expansions. Businesses locating in enterprise zones qualify for property, sales and corporate tax credits.

All of the major commercial corridors and industrial areas within the FEC corridor study area are located within the boundaries of a State of Florida Enterprise Zone.

#### Miami-Dade Empowerment Zone

The Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust is authorized to issue up to \$130 million in tax-exempt bond financing to new and existing businesses within its eight Empowerment Zone (EZ) assemblies. Each neighborhood assembly will also receive an allocation of \$1 million to finance local economic development and human service projects.

The Miami-Dade Federal Empowerment Zone (EZ) Wynwood Neighborhood Assembly includes a portion of the FEC Corridor study area (see map ?) between Interstate 95 and Biscayne Boulevard south of NW 28<sup>th</sup> Street. A smaller portion of the EZ extends to NE 36<sup>th</sup> Street between the FEC and Biscayne Boulevard. The Wynwood Neighborhood's priorities are housing and economic development. Funding allocations in the first year of the program included a Commercial Façade Program on NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue; a \$100,000 Street Landscape Beautification Program; and a Micro Loans Program for small businesses. Funding allocations for the second year included community-based projects; and for equity investment in local businesses.

#### City of Miami Tax Exemption Districts

The City of Miami recently approved a property tax exemption program for qualified developers and entrepreneurs willing to invest in underdeveloped areas of the city including the FEC Corridor neighborhoods of Wynwood and Little Haiti. The new program will provide incremental tax relief for a period of ten years on new commercial investment.

#### Qualified Target Industry (QTI)

The Qualified Target Industry (QTI) Tax Refund is a tool available to Florida communities to encourage quality job growth in targeted high value-added businesses. New or expanding businesses, serving multi-state and/or international markets, in targeted industries or designated corporate headquarters are eligible for this refund. Pre-approved applicants who create new jobs to Florida, paying 115% of the average annual area wage, can receive tax refunds up to \$3,000 per new job created, up to \$6,000 in an Enterprise Zone or Rural County. Additional "per job" bonuses are available for businesses paying 150 or 200 percent of the average annual area wage.

#### Quick Response Training (QRT)

Quick Response Training (QRT) is a customer driven training program designed as an inducement to secure new value-added businesses to Florida and provide existing businesses the necessary training for expansion. Through this incentive, Florida is able to effectively retain, expand and attract employers offering high-quality jobs. Workforce Florida, Inc. administers the program, with technical advice provided by the Department of Education. Eligible projects are new or expanding Florida businesses that produce exportable goods or services, create new permanent full-time jobs and employ Florida workers who require customized entry-level skills training

#### Economic Development Transportation Fund (Road Fund)

The Economic Development Transportation Fund, commonly referred to as the "Road Fund," is an incentive tool designed to alleviate transportation problems that adversely impact a specific company's location or expansion decision. The elimination of the problem must serve as an inducement for a specific company's location, retention or expansion in Florida and must create or retain jobs.

#### Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

The Incumbent Worker Training Program is funded by the Federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and administered by Workforce Florida, Inc. Through this program, Florida is able to provide grant funds to companies for training currently employed workers to keep Florida's workforce competitive in a global economy and to retain existing businesses. The IWT program is open to all Florida businesses that have been in operation for a minimum of one year prior to the application date, have at least one employee, and are current with all state taxes.

#### High Impact Performance Incentive Grant (HIPI)

The High Impact Performance Incentive Grant (HIPI) is a negotiated incentive used to attract and grow major high impact facilities in Florida. Grants are provided to pre-approved applicants in certain high-impact sectors (currently silicon technology and transportation equipment manufacturing) as designated by the Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development. In order to participate in the program, a company must be in a designated high impact sector; create at least 100 new full-time equivalent jobs (if a research and development facility, create at least 75 new full-time equivalent jobs) in Florida in a three year period; and make a cumulative investment in the state of at least \$100 million (if a research and development facility, make a cumulative investment of at least \$75 million) in a 3-year period.

#### Capital Investment Tax Credit (CITC)

The Capital Investment Tax Credit (CITC) is an annual credit against Florida state corporate income tax liability. The amount of the annual credit is equal to 5 percent of the eligible capital costs and can be taken for 20 consecutive years. Eligible capital costs include all expenses incurred in the acquisition, construction, installation and equipping of a project from the beginning of construction to the commencement of operations. For projects making a cumulative capital investment of at least \$100 million, the credit may be applied towards one hundred percent (100%) of the project's annual Florida corporate income tax liability for 20 consecutive years. If the cumulative capital investment is at least \$50 million but less than \$100 million, the credit may be applied to seventy-five percent (75%) of the project's annual corporate income tax liability. The ultimate value of credit will depend on the project's Florida corporate income tax liability for the 20 years following commencement of operations. Florida's Corporate Income Tax Rate is 5.5% of apportioned taxable income.

### **B. Significant Private Development Activity**

Tuttle Project - 115,000 square foot of design and retail space located on Biscayne Boulevard and Federal Highway will mark the entrance into the Design District.

Brentwood Palm Apartments - NW 54<sup>th</sup> street and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Renovation of former Sabal Palm Apartments project into market rate apartment units

Wynwood Tower Apartments - 225 NE 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. New construction of ? affordable rental housing units with parking structure

Terminal Fabrics - 120 NW 25<sup>th</sup> Street. Conversion of 125,000 square foot warehouse building into commercial loft space.

### **C. Significant Public Investment Activity**

Performing Arts Center

NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Surface Reconstruction Project

