

An aerial architectural rendering of the North Beach Town Center Plan. The drawing shows a dense urban layout with multi-story buildings, streets lined with palm trees, and a waterfront area with a canal or river. The style is a detailed sketch with color washes in shades of blue, green, and yellow.

North Beach Town Center Plan

Update 2007



MIAMI BEACH

Planning Department

Introduction

The community of North Beach (63rd Street to 87th Terrace and from Atlantic Ocean to Biscayne Bay) is experiencing a resurgence in residential development. Since the year 2000, projects approved, permitted, under construction and completed total over 3,312 new housing units. Further, there have been approximately 2,311 apartment units converted to condominiums since 2003. As more and more residents with higher incomes move into the area, the commercial market can be expected to respond with new businesses that cater to the needs of the population. As the area's revitalization continues, its commercial districts can expect to draw from a wider geographic base, to include not only North Beach, but residents from the communities of Middle Beach, Surfside, North Bay Village, Bal Harbour, Bay Harbor Islands and portions of Miami Shores, North Miami and northeast Miami along Biscayne Bay.

North Beach contains several clusters of commercial uses that total 745,785 square feet of existing space. In order to develop coherent business marketing and recruitment plans, these clusters have been categorized in a hierarchy of commercial district functions:

1. Town Center which serves the entire market area
2. Neighborhood Centers (Normandy Village, Ocean Terrace and Resort District)
3. Sub-neighborhood convenience districts

All North Beach commercial districts will experience growth from the rising population and income in the residential areas. However, the Town Center will require the some assistance and incentives to develop according to the vision established by the community.

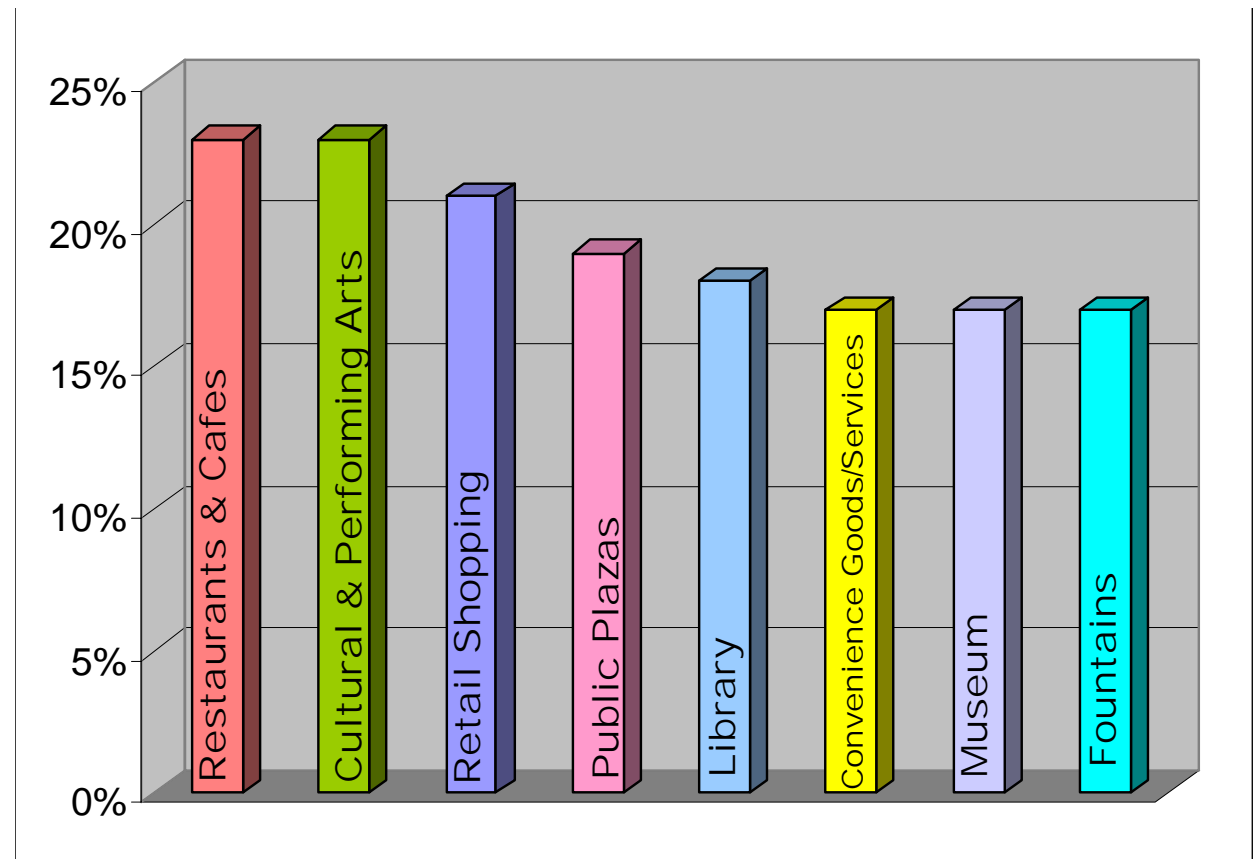


Most Important Uses for Town Center

Rated by NB community – June 2001 Charrette

In June 2001, the City of Miami Beach hosted a three-day planning workshop, known as a “charrette”, to plan for the future of the 71st Street commercial corridor and the adjacent 72nd Street parking lot and oceanfront park property. Over 200 people from the North Beach community participated in the meetings, which were held at the Radisson Deauville Hotel. One of the outcomes was a consensus to designate this area as the North Beach “Town Center”. The resident’s priorities for a successful Town Center are shown in this chart.

In a second planning workshop in December 2003, attended by over 100 persons, the community strongly supported the concept that the City should try to attract new retail/restaurant/commercial development to 71st Street by offering incentives such as a parking garages, special zoning and cultural attractions.



Visions for 71 Street Town Center

Pedestrian & bicycle-friendly



Safe and attractive



Mixed-Use



Good shopping and restaurants



Civic/Cultural activities



Accessible Parking



Vision Plan - Overview



Existing buildings



Conceptual new buildings 5-year time period



Public land

Vision Plan - Overview

The vision for the North Beach Town Center involves the following opportunities and actions:

Private Sector

Mixed-use redevelopment sites/Anchor Blocks

Smaller infill development sites

Renovation/reuse of significant existing structures

Public Sector

Pedestrian/bicycle improvements

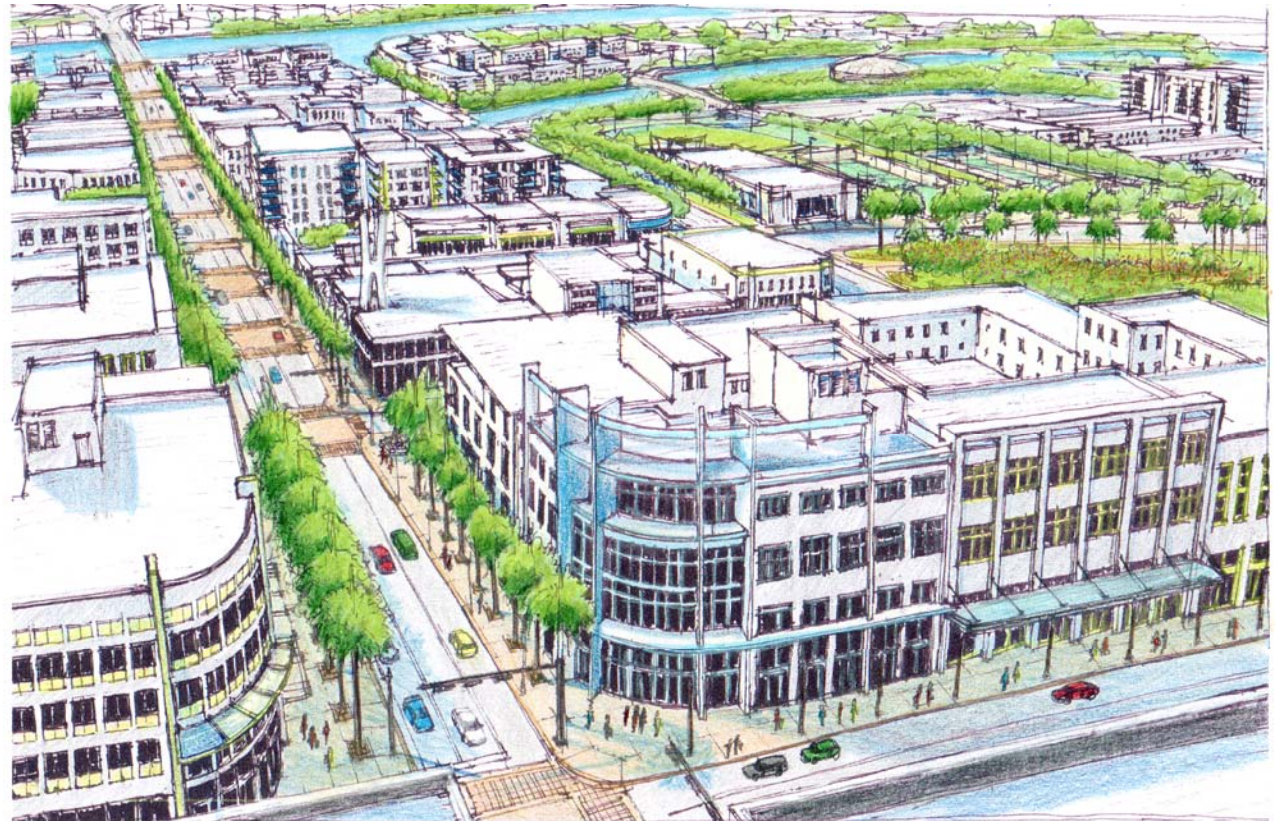
Public parking

Improved public transit service

Plazas and civic spaces

Cultural Facilities

Public Library

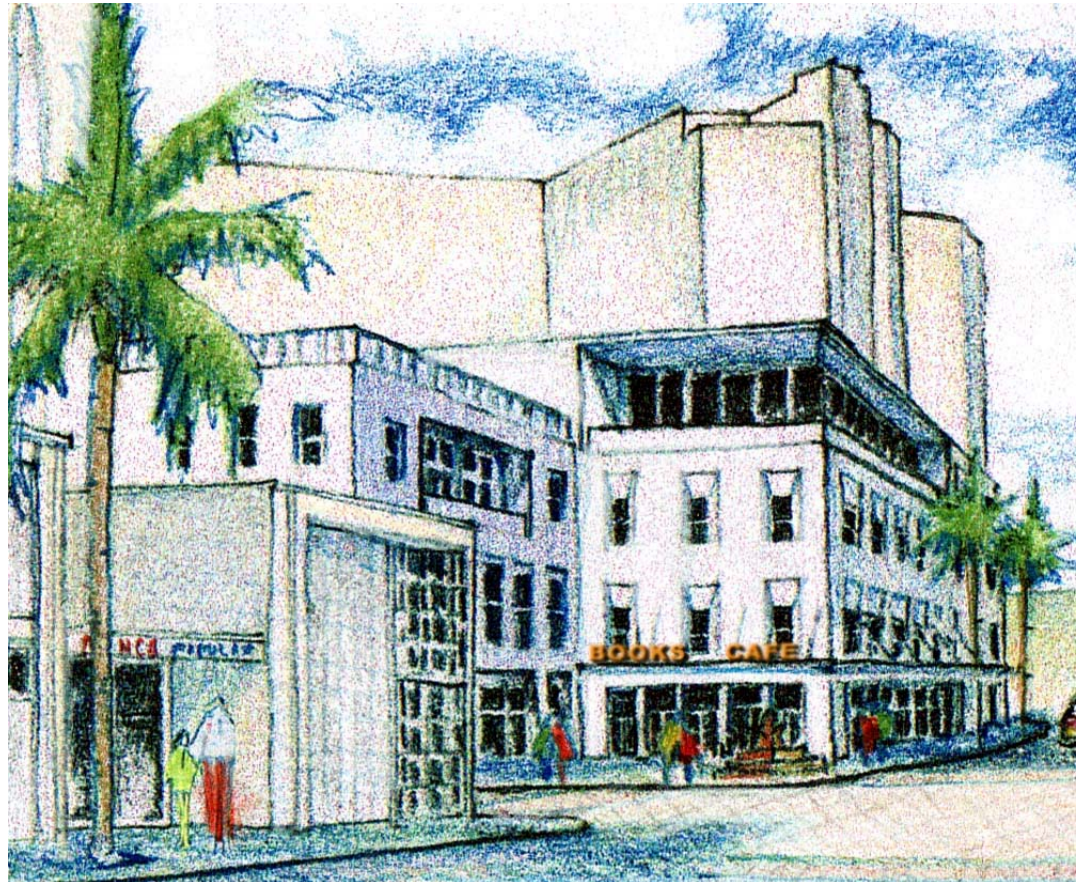


Mixed-use

Successful town centers contain a mixture of uses that generate daytime and nighttime activity. Retail, restaurant, entertainment and cultural uses should anchor the district at street level. However, a healthy mixture of residential and office uses in the upper floors of buildings is also a critical component to support the safety and economic vitality of the district.

Residential uses will provide a built-in market for the businesses and contribute to public safety with “eyes on the street”.

A significant amount of new office space is highly desirable on 71st Street for a number of reasons. One is to provide space to relocate existing businesses that are occupying valuable ground floor space that should be converted to retail use. Another reason is to create a better balance between employment and residential uses in North Beach. Creating more opportunities for people to live and work in North Beach in the future, will reduce commuting trips and help to minimize growth in traffic congestion.

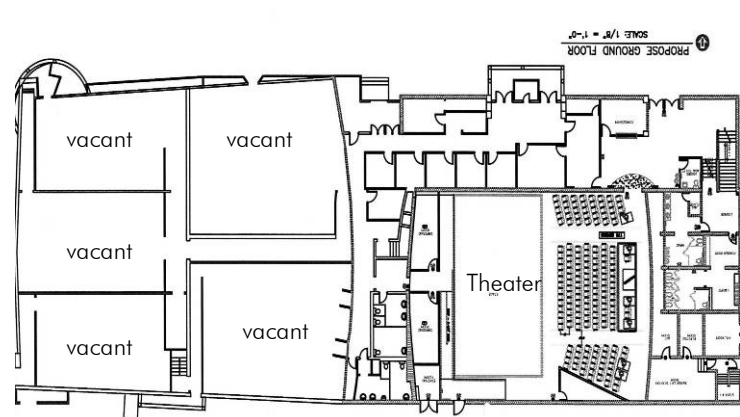
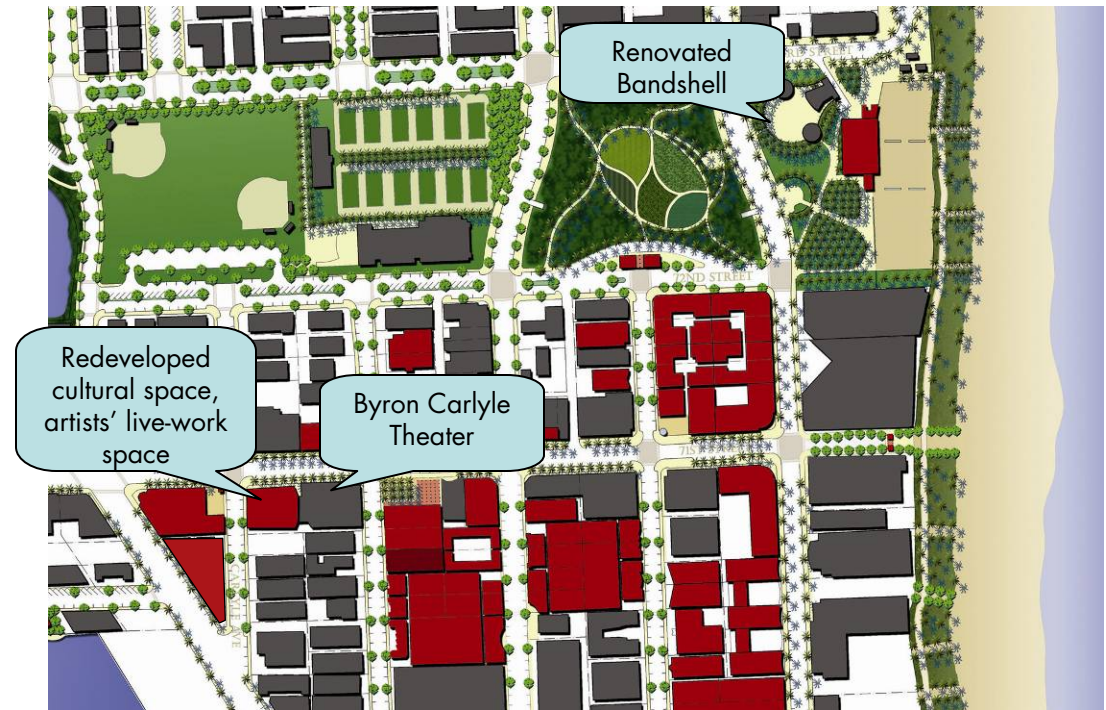


Cultural Arts

Cultural Arts will be one of the principal strategies for revitalization of the Town Center.

The City of Miami Beach opened the Byron Carlyle Theater in April 2004 with a fully renovated 330 seat theater equipped for live performances and film. The western half of the building remains vacant. As the City evaluates options for its future, the goal should be to provide cultural uses that will complement and reinforce the use of the theater. Opportunities should be explored for a joint public/private partnership to demolish the west section and replace it with cultural arts uses on the ground floor and offices and live/work studio space for artists on the upper floors. This will create a vibrant “cultural cluster” on this site.

The open-air bandshell in North Shore Park, a MiMo architectural landmark, offers an alternative type of performance venue in an outdoor setting. The City should move ahead with plans to renovate the bandshell and enhance its programming.



Anchor Sites

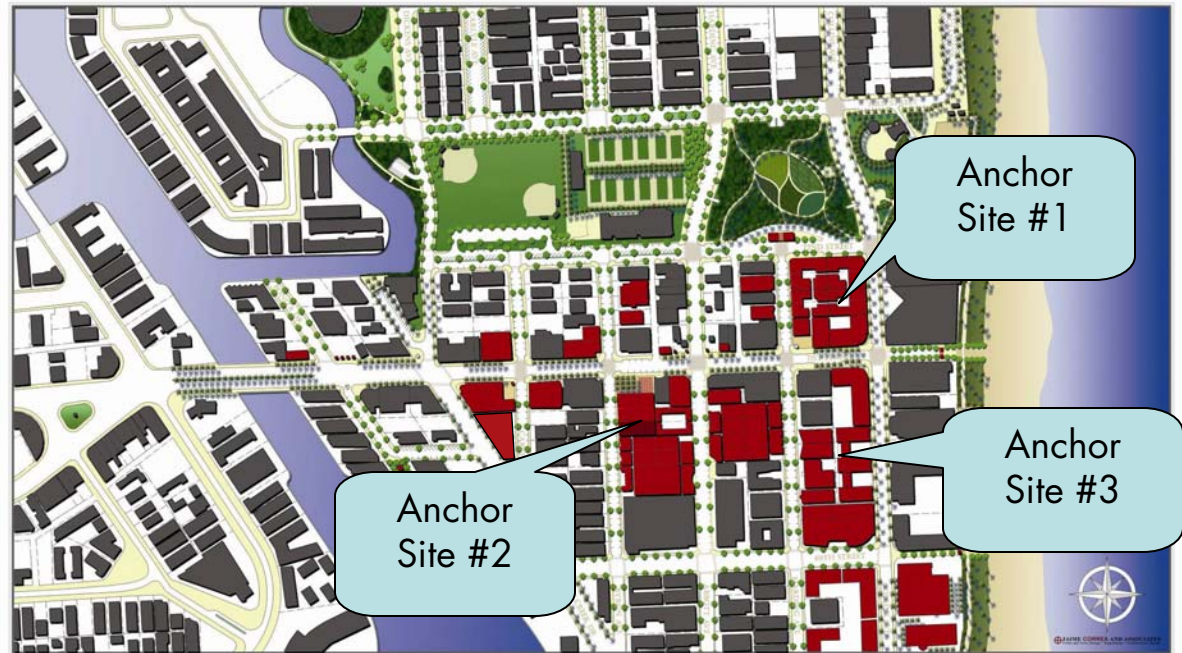
There are three sites on 71st Street of sufficient size and configuration to offer potential for transformation into new mixed-use activity centers. Any of these sites could attract high quality retail tenants and function like anchors in a shopping center.

Site #1 – 75,300 sq. ft. (3 owners)

Site #2 - 62,445 sq. ft. (City National Bank and CMB) or up to 98,745 sq. ft. (5 owners)

Site #3 – 137,500 sq. ft. (9 owners including CMB)

The anchor sites and the cultural arts facilities define a compact area of four blocks on 71st Street that can be the first phase of the revitalization of the Town Center.



Parking

Public Parking is the principal means by which the City of Miami Beach can help to attract private sector investment to the North Beach Town Center. The availability of ample public parking will make 71st Street a favorite shopping/dining destination for residents and visitors from Middle Beach to Surfside.

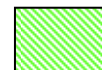
The Walker Parking Study (2003) projected a demand for 964 additional parking spaces by the year 2008 and 1,312 additional spaces by 2013.

The first phase of parking development should be a new 450-550 space garage located immediately south of the City National Bank building, between Abbott Ave. and Harding Ave. The second phase would be to construct parking garages within Anchor site #2, which has the potential for 674 parking spaces or more, depending upon the number of lots that can be assembled. Alternate parking sites should be evaluated if either of these two preferred sites cannot be developed through public/private partnerships.

The existing parking district on 71st Street, which exempts retail and restaurant uses from on-site parking requirements, should be expanded to 72nd St. Office and cultural uses should be exempted from parking requirements as well.

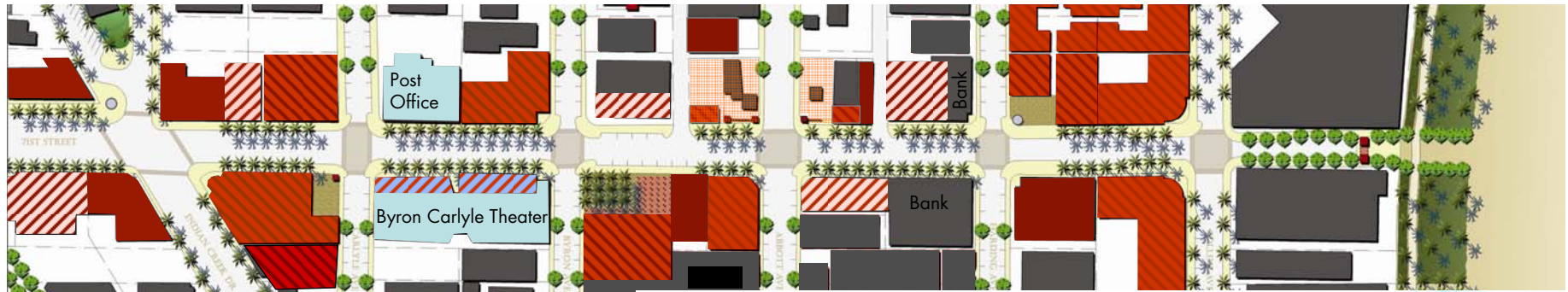






Proposed parking sites



Alternate parking sites

Retail Infill



-  Existing retail or restaurant space
-  New construction – ground floor retail
-  Convert existing office/residential to retail use
-  Cultural-related uses- windows facing sidewalk

Successful commercial districts are full of life. They have continuous buildings with storefronts that contain many display windows and doorways that create visual interest and activity. Many of the existing buildings along 71st Street do not offer retail or restaurant uses at the ground level. Each of these property owners should be encouraged to convert the ground floor to retail or restaurant uses to strengthen the commercial character of the Town Center and create a consistent pedestrian activity zone along the street.

Surface parking lots that face 71st Street should be replaced with retail or mixed use buildings. As an interim measure, retail kiosks may be placed along the street edge of these parking lots. The City Code should be amended to permit such kiosks.



Plazas



Small urban plazas located at strategic intervals along 71st Street would create focal points for activity and offer a reprieve from the intense vehicular environment. Plazas may contain fountains, public art, trees, shade structures, cafes, childrens' activities, or many other features that attract customers to the commercial district.

One key opportunity for such an urban plaza is a portion of the city-owned parking lot at the SE corner of 71st Street and Byron Avenue. If this lot is redeveloped as a part of a mixed-use project, as envisioned in Anchor Site #2, then the portion of the lot fronting on 71st Street could be left as open space with the new retail building set back 30-50 feet from the street. This open space could be designed as an active public gathering space. It should include amenities that reinforce the retail function of the stores lining the plaza, as well as the cultural activities in the Byron Carlyle Theater located in the adjoining block.



Civic Square

The 72nd Street municipal parking lot is an integral part of the enormous tract of public open space stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the inland waterway. It is a legacy from the mid-19th Century, prior to settlement of the South Florida coastline, when the Federal government established the Biscayne House of Refuge on this tract of land. Because it is situated in the heart of North Beach, this land has the potential to function like grand linear parks in other cities, only on a much smaller scale (examples: The Mall in Washington DC and Central Park in NYC).



Bandshell Park on the east and North Shore Park on the west bookend the municipal parking lot. Public parking is a critical need in this location to serve the adjoining commercial districts and the park and beach activities. However, with improving technology it is increasingly feasible to depress the parking partially below grade and reclaim the surface area for green space. It should be designed as a lushly landscaped civic square and function as a community gathering space. Examples of civic squares are Bryant Park in NYC, Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia and Pioneer Square in Portland.



Pioneer Square - Portland, Oregon



Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Library

The North Shore Branch Library, currently located at 7501 Collins Avenue, has outgrown the space in its existing building. Rather than expanding the existing library building, the City is interested in adaptive reuse of the building to serve proposed uses and activities in the adjoining Altos Del Mar Park. The optimal place to relocate the North Shore Library is somewhere in the Town Center, where it will contribute to the vitality and mix of uses that will draw people there for multiple purposes. There are several possible strategies for moving the library. One is for a private sector developer to provide library space in a mixed-use development in consideration of appropriate public incentives. Another is to build a new library on City-owned property, possibly as part of a parking structure.



Transparent façade in new mixed-use development visually connects 2nd floor library activity to the street



Children and adults enjoy special programs at the branch libraries (photo from Miami-Dade County Public Library's Sunny Isles Beach branch)

Complete Streets

The street and sidewalk environment should be enhanced to make the Town Center more safe and inviting for all users, including motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders. This involves careful balancing of the competing needs of many stakeholders and a willingness on the part of design engineers to exercise the flexibility inherent in highway design standards. To that end, design decisions should be guided by “Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities” published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE).



When redesigning the streets in the Town Center, the following should be considered: decrease the design speed for vehicles to 25 mph, utilize minimum lane width and turning radii, increase sidewalk width whenever possible. Every intersection should have brick paver or textured crosswalks and pedestrian-activated countdown signals. Curb extensions should be added to intersections where appropriate to shorten the crossing distance. Drainage inlets will need to be relocated in some cases to accommodate curb extensions. Major intersections should also include textured pavers in the travel lanes to alert drivers that they are in a pedestrian zone. Pedestrian refuge islands should be placed where there is unused striped space in the center of 71st Street between Abbott Avenue and Dickens Avenue. Pedestrian refuge islands should be incorporated into the redesign of the intersection of 71st Street/Indian Creek Dr/Dickens Av. Street trees should be added throughout the Town Center.



Complete Streets (continued)

71st Street, which serves as the “Main Street” of the Town Center, should have the highest level of attention to design quality for multiple uses. However, other streets and avenues also call for significant improvements. 72nd Street is already programmed for reconstruction in the North Shore GO Bond Neighborhood Streetscape project. It will have a landscaped parking median between Dickens and Abbott, and street trees, curb extensions, crosswalks and pedestrian lighting throughout. Collins Ave will receive some improvements with FDOT funding with the permanent return of the third traffic lane. The others—69th Street and Dickens, Carlyle, Byron, Abbott, and Harding Avenues—require redesign to narrow driving lanes, widen sidewalks, add street trees and pedestrian scale lighting.

The transformation of streets in the Town Center will need to be phased over a period of time as public funding becomes available or as private development completes segments of the street frontage near their property. The City should prepare master design standards to coordinate and guide the street improvements.



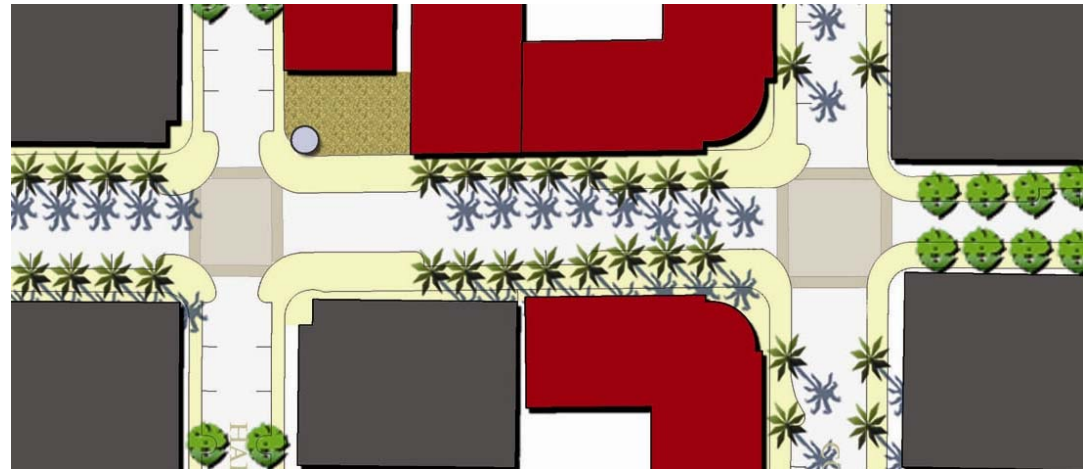
Street tree planted in curb extension in parking lane (source: ITE / Kimley-Horn & Assoc.)

GO Bond streetscape plan for 72nd Street

Complete Streets (continued)

Curbside parking should be removed in the eastern portion of the block between Collins Avenue and Harding Avenue. This will facilitate the turning movement of traffic between Collins Av and 71st Street by removing the friction created by parking. It will also provide valuable sidewalk space for pedestrians, street furniture and sidewalk cafes at this premier commercial crossroads. Opportunities should be studied to remove selected parking spaces elsewhere along 71st Street in order to provide expanded sidewalk space, especially at transit stops.

Bicycle safety should be studied carefully in the Town Center because it is envisioned to be a major destination for neighborhood cyclists. There are limited opportunities for marked bike lanes due to constrained right-of-way widths, however 69th St., Abbott Ave. and 71st St. (west of Indian Creek Drive) may be candidates. The City is already planning to designate bike lanes on 73rd Street, which will connect to off-road bicycle trails along Dickens Ave. and the Beachwalk. For the most part, bicyclists will need to share the road with motorists; therefore, it is important to slow the speed of traffic, erect "share the road" signs, utilize bicycle-safe drainage grates, and install plenty of bicycle racks.



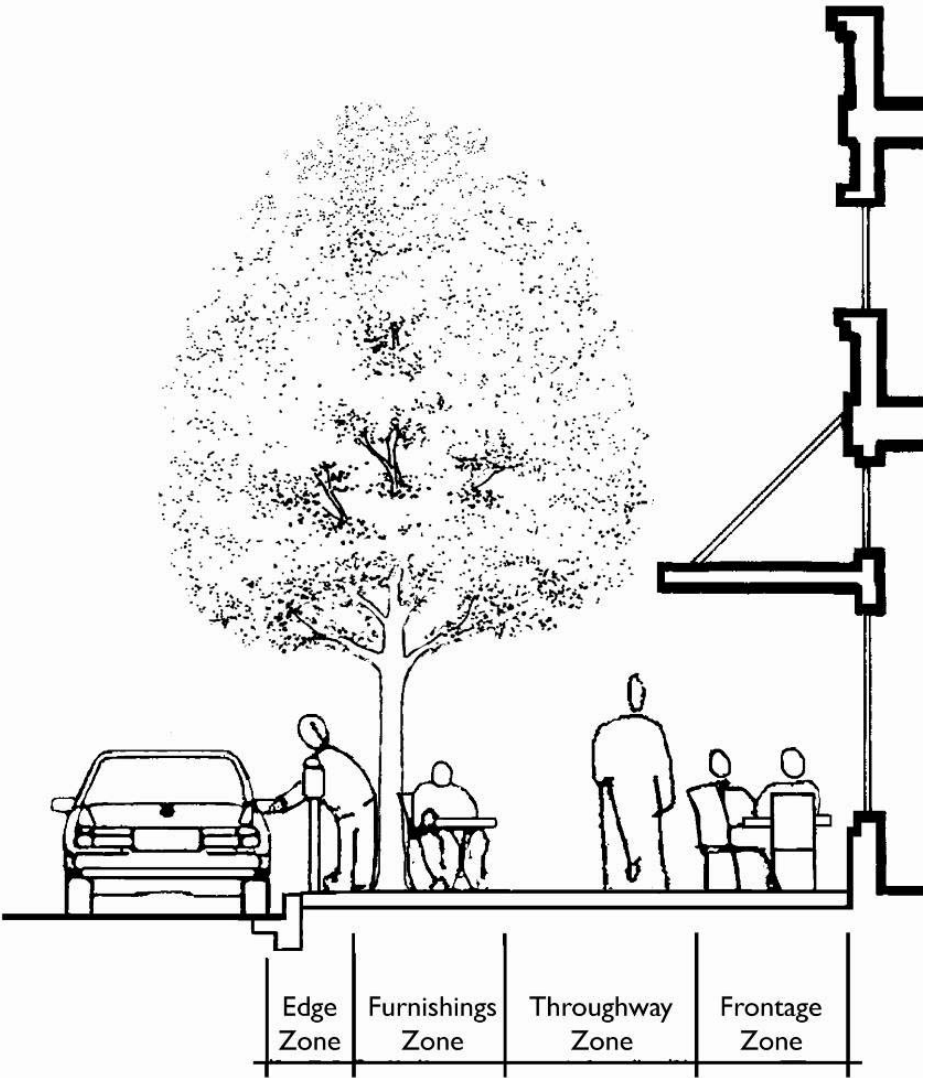
Sidewalks

In Context Sensitive Design, the roadside consists of four distinct functional zones, as illustrated in the drawing on the right. The width for sidewalks on an arterial street in an urban commercial district is recommended by ITE to be 19.5 feet, and the minimum suggested width in a constrained right-of-way is 12 feet.

The existing condition on 71st Street provides only 10 feet of sidewalk width in most cases. In order to make more efficient use of this limited space, the following actions are recommended: Organize signs and street furnishings into the recommended roadside zones. Replace existing royal palms with trees or palms with smaller diameter trunks that can grow successfully in tree wells with walkable surfaces. Encourage property owners to provide a frontage zone on private property. Construct curb extensions at street corners wherever possible and use the added sidewalk width for bus shelters, information kiosks, bicycle racks, newspaper vending, additional seating or landscaping.



Example of a well-planned roadside zones (San Jose, CA)

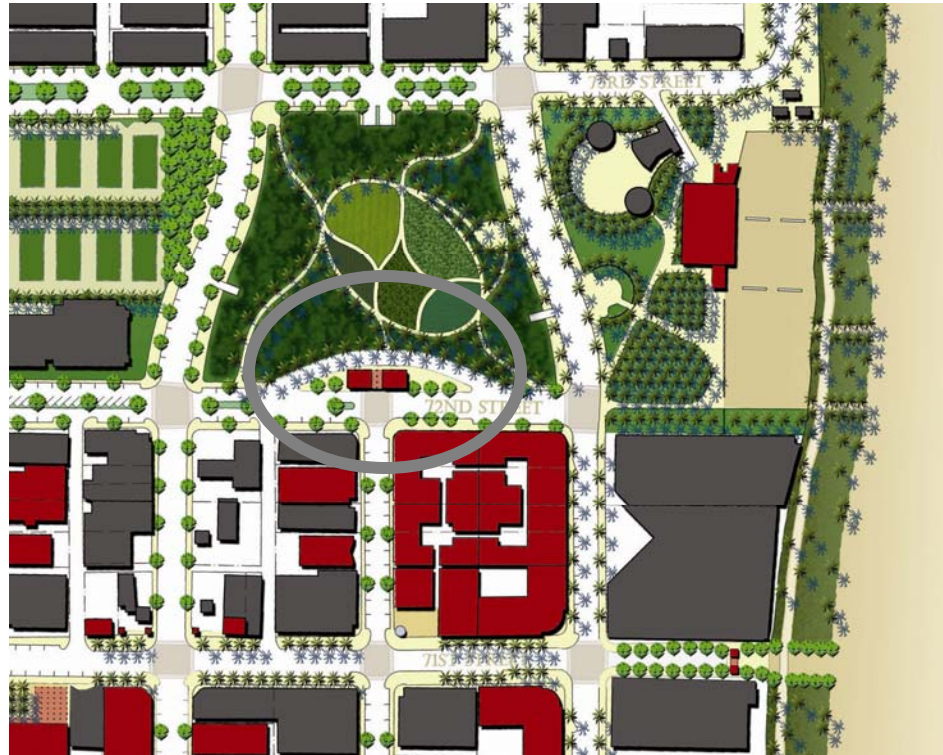


Roadside Zones (Source: ITE, Community Design + Architecture)

Public Transit

The Coastal Communities Transit Study identified opportunities to improve bus transit service in the short term and lay the groundwork for a more advanced type of transit service in the future. The goal is to attract “choice” riders with service that is more attractive, accessible, reliable and frequent. Key components of the plan are to consolidate many of the 14 bus routes that currently serve Miami Beach into one local and one express bus route running north/south on A1A, and to connect the north/south route to the east/west bus service at strategically located transfer terminals. This would streamline the currently confusing and duplicative service and free up resources to provide a fleet of smaller buses to initiate local circulator routes similar to the “South Beach Local” (formerly the Electrowave shuttle).

What this means to North Beach is that it would gain a local circulator bus loop with small attractive vehicles that would pick up residents in the neighborhoods and bring them to the Town Center for shopping, entertainment, or their place of work. A bus transfer terminal would be located in the Town Center, somewhere on the perimeter of the 72nd Street municipal parking lot, where passengers could access the north/south bus routes to go to South Beach, Downtown Miami, Bal Harbour, Aventura or any other destination in the county.

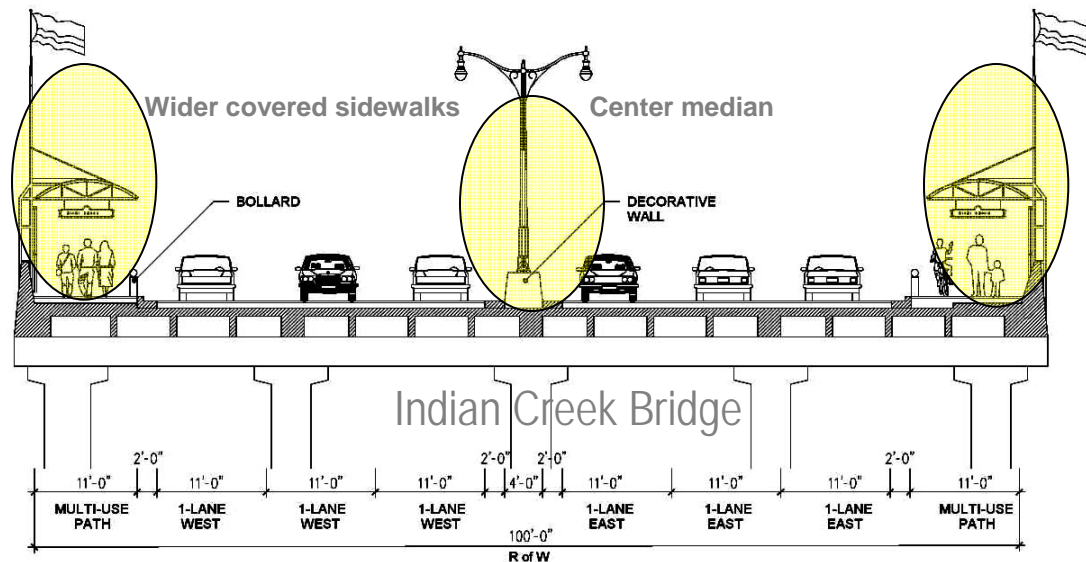


Example: Shirlington Transfer Station, Arlington VA.

Longer Range Strategies

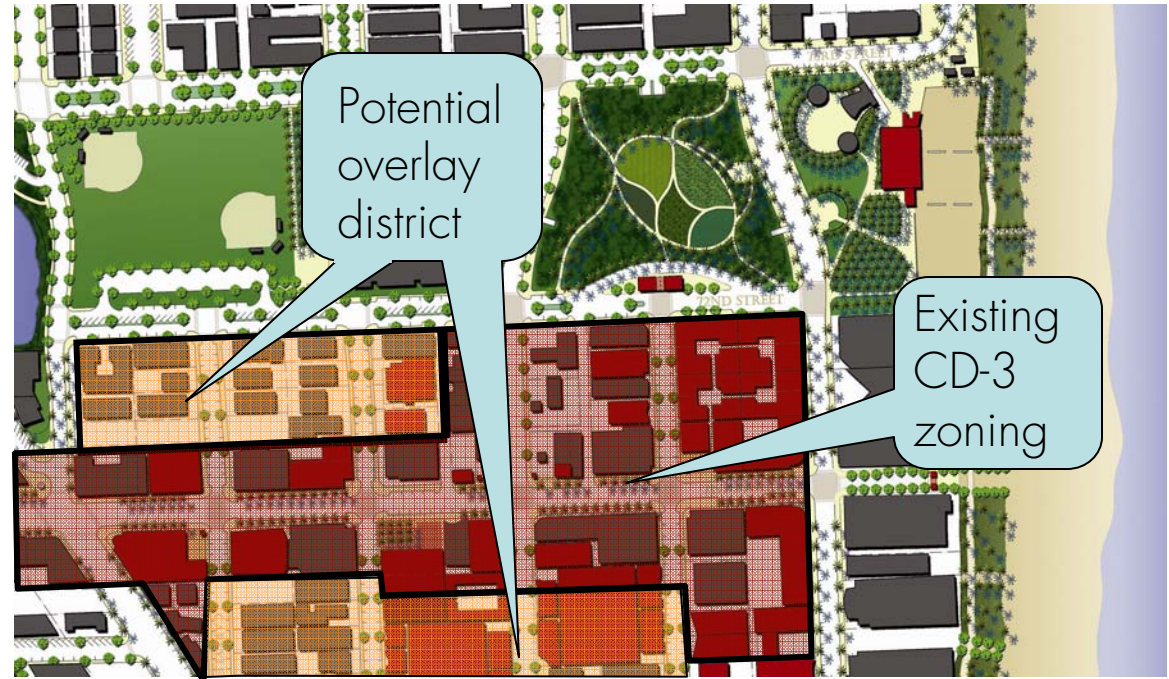
The second phase of the Town Center revitalization strategy is to complete the pedestrian / retail linkage to Normandy Fountain. The total distance from the Normandy Village commercial district to Collins Avenue is only 1600 feet, or roughly the same length as Lincoln Road. Thus, 71st Street has the potential to become a unified commercial district if sufficient activity and amenities can be developed along the entire length of the street.

The FDOT Livable Communities Study recommended pedestrian-friendly improvements to the bridge spanning Indian Creek Waterway. These would include maintaining the same number of lanes of traffic, but narrowing the lanes slightly to achieve a traffic calming effect and provide additional space for a center median and wider sidewalks. A decorative shade structure would be added to the sidewalks to make the bridge more conducive to walking and bicycling.



Longer Range Strategies

Ultimately, the Town Center should be expanded toward North Shore Park between Dickens and Abbott Avenues. Properties with similar characteristics on the south side of 71st Street may also be considered for the expanded Town Center. A commercial shopping and dining *district* made up of several square blocks will be more successful than a linear shopping street. The north/south side streets and 72nd Street all provide opportunities for pleasant pedestrian environments with less vehicular traffic than 71st Street. A zoning overlay district should be tailored to the special character of the area.



Next Steps

1. Community input on the plan
2. Planning Board and City Commission approval of the plan
3. Implementation

Public Sector Initiatives

Streetscape and sidewalk design standards
Public parking
Improved public transit service
Cultural facilities
Public library
Code amendments
 Form-based code/design guidelines
 Parking incentives
Civic Square

Private Sector Initiatives

Mixed-use redevelopment sites/Anchor Blocks
Smaller infill development sites
Renovation/reuse of significant existing structures



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Visions – Byron Plaza



Appendix

Retail Trade Area Analysis

Prepared by GIBBS PLANNING GROUP – July, 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A rejuvenated North Beach will be able to support up to 629,400 square feet of new retail development by 2008 (in addition to its existing retail), including 95,000 sf of general neighborhood merchandise stores (such as Kohl's), 115,000 sf of discount department stores/warehouse clubs (such as Target or Sam's Club), 23,500 sf of apparel-related categories, 105,100 sf of food-related establishments (including a 45,000 green grocer such as Trader Joe's or Wild Oats), 173,300 sf of miscellaneous retail and 17,500 sf of recreation and service retail operators.

The area is continuing to grow at a fairly rapid pace and the projected incoming population will be underserved in many retail categories, especially in the medium price range. The retail mix will need to serve current residents, the expected new population and, if developed in a unique manner, some tourist population.

This study recommends that new retail development be implemented in an urban mixed-use format with street front retail shops. Unlike Lincoln Road Mall, it should have vehicular access, but still be pedestrian-friendly. Traffic calming measures should be taken, especially along Collins and Harding Avenues so that pedestrians will feel safe walking to shops along these streets. Store front parking should be provided and parking meters and lots enforced so that customers have adequate access to the stores. Employees and shop owners must not park in front of the retail establishments as these convenient spots need to be left for their customers.

A clean, friendly environment will be essential to the success of this retail. The North Beach Town Center must be a place where people from all walks of life can feel comfortable gathering. It must have a community feel to it and provide places for people to relax and enjoy themselves and the atmosphere. As part of this end, the potential for placing office space and residential units above the retail needs to be explored. The addition of people on a 24 hour/7 day a week will contribute significantly to the feeling of safety and community. Most people do not choose to shop where they do not feel safe. Adding residential units, maintaining the streetscape and adequate lighting will be essential elements in achieving this goal. Shop owners within the town center will need to operate in a sound, proven manner. Store hours must be convenient for the customers, not the owner, or people will shop elsewhere. Store fronts should be tastefully decorated and well maintained, including cleaning the glass twice daily and repainting no less than once a year. Attractive landscaping is also a plus.