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Southern Boulevard Corridor

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Community Background Report

Southern Boulevard Corridor

Boundaries

North: Southern Boulevard

South: Southern Boulevard

West: 200th Avenue

East: Atlantic Ocean

Community Type: Neighborhood

Background

The Southern Boulevard Corridor travels approximately 22 miles, spanning 29 Census block groups, as it runs east-west between the City of West Palm Beach and the Village of Wellington. Major points of interest located in the Corridor include the South Florida Fairgrounds and Expo Center and the Palm Beach International Airport. The Corridor also passes through Cloud Lake, the Town of Glen Ridge, Loxahatchee Groves, the Village of Palm Springs, and Royal Palm Beach.

Community Dynamics

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and Palm Beach County Planning Department have identified the Southern Boulevard Corridor as part of the “urban core.” [1] In 2005, Palm Beach County established a 25 mile Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) to focus its redevelopment efforts and reinvest in areas with sufficient resources while discouraging urban sprawl. In 2007, the URA was home to 76,000 Palm Beach County residents.

Urban planners have approached the Southern Boulevard Corridor as a northern “gateway” to the Military Trail and Congress Avenue Corridors. Several neighborhood associations represent communities along the Southern Boulevard Corridor including East Airport Area Homeowners Association, Parker Ridge Neighborhood Association, Southside Neighborhood Association, Central Park Neighborhood Association, and El Cid/Prospect Park / Southland Park Homeowners Association. Area mobile home parks include Lion Country Safari RV Park, Oakland Park, Sleepy Hollow Park, Wright's Private Trailer Park, Blue Grass Trailer Park, and Bill's Mobile Home Park.

The 2000 Census counted 64,028 residents living in the block groups lining the Southern Boulevard Corridor. The Corridor’s population is largely educated with 80% of the population

having at least a high school diploma or equivalent and 24% of the population with a bachelor's degree.

The socio-economic data show variability among the many block groups along the Corridor. In 2000, these block groups had median household incomes between \$26,000 and \$67,000 with some exceptions. The most notable outliers were Census Tract 78.18 Block Group 1, which had a median income of \$147,348, and Census Tract 35.02 Block Group 6, with a median household income of \$200,000. Still, the median household income for the Corridor as a whole was \$52,040.

In 2000 the area was mostly comprised of single-family homes which accounted for 75% of housing units compared to 24% multi-family units. The median home price was \$156,144 with a median rent of \$619.

Several major roads and highways can be found along or in close vicinity to the Southern Boulevard Corridor. Both Interstate-95 and the Florida Turnpike have ramps leading to the corridor. Southern Boulevard has several senior centers in close proximity to major roads including Strathmore Gate West, Greenway Village Condominiums, Village Walk (consisting primarily of villas and single-family homes), Buena Vida (with an active homeowners association), Golden Lakes Village Condominiums, and Belvedere.

Though this profile concentrates on descriptions of the Corridor, the size of the geographic area lends itself to great differences between smaller neighborhoods, many of which are gated communities insulated from factors affecting other neighborhoods. A Countywide Community Revitalization Team (CCRT) was established in 1997 as an advisory board to coordinate activities for neighborhoods in unincorporated areas of Palm Beach County that were undergoing revitalization efforts. These areas can be viewed as neighborhoods in transition requiring assistance in coordinating redevelopment projects. CCRTs in the Southern Boulevard Corridor include Royal Palm Estates, Wallis Street West & East, Forest Glenn, Gun Club Estates, Sleepy Hollow, Forest Homes, Sky Ranch Estates and Ranch House, and Homewood Area.

In September of 2006, a number of local officials, service providers, developers and neighborhood residents from the Palm Beach Urban Redevelopment Area (URA), including the Southern Boulevard Corridor, were interviewed by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. General comments concerning existing development of the area included concern about the outdated look of buildings on the major corridors and the lack of landscaping and green space. The six issues identified in the URA were road connectivity and sidewalk connectivity, bus shelters, commercial to residential transition, the loss of affordable housing units in the area, and neighborhood identity issues. [2]

One obstacle to development respondents identified was costly drainage. Palm Beach County's drainage requirements together with its requirements for access and road widths were identified as hindering urban redevelopment. Another problem for the area is the retention of storm water. According to Palm Beach County an estimated 15% to 20% of land area needs to be dedicated to storm water retention. The lack of neighborhood connectivity implied that communities were developing in isolation of each other. Residents also called for the construction of community centers and parks that could provide after school activities for children in the area. Another issue was the lack of industrial space, negatively affecting businesses in the area. Interviewees suggested reducing road closures and requiring pedestrian connectivity in gated communities. It was recommended that methods be developed to encourage

commuters to visit local businesses instead of creating corridors in the image of expressways. Residents also indicated a need for more affordable housing units and for the limitation of westward expansion. Participants suggested that westward expansion could be curbed by redeveloping corridors within the URA.

The Southern Boulevard Corridor’s urban center and area of concentrated economic development is located between State Road 7 and Interstate-95. Further west the Corridor has several acres of low to high residential land which is adjacent to industrial/institutional land uses north of Southern Boulevard. These land uses have been studied for several years and are changing at a measured pace.

In 1995, a portion of the Southern Boulevard Corridor was included in the Jog Road Corridor Study Report, which focused on an area along North Jog Road from Southern Boulevard to the Florida Turnpike. The study identified the neighborhoods east of Jog Road as affordable residential land while the land west of Jog Road was industrial/commercial. The study pointed out how most residences had private wells and most roads were largely unpaved. The report recommended retaining Belvedere Road as a predominantly residential area.

In 2007, Gibbs Planning Group prepared a retail market study of the Palm Beach Urban Redevelopment Area which included portions of the Southern Boulevard Corridor. The study found that between 500,000 to 800,000 square feet of moderately priced retail space could be supported by the area within a year. The study estimated that retail activity in this area could yield between \$120 and \$200 million in sales each year. Development of a regionally oriented trade area was recommended. The primary area would be bound by State Highway 98 in the North, Interstate 95 in the East, 10th Avenue North in the South and North Jog Road in the West. A secondary area would be bound by State Highway 704 in the North, I-95 in the East, State Highway 802 in the South and the Florida Turnpike in the West. These centers should reflect “walkable town center” (pp.3) with a parking ratio of 4.5 cars per 1000 square feet. Estimates also claimed that the URA could maintain up to 60,000 square feet of restaurants. [4]

The Palm Beach County Urban Redevelopment Area Study reviewed the County's 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), noting Bus Rapid Transit will serve major north-south corridors and the Palm Tran Bus Grid system will service east-west corridors. The 2030 LRTP also lists Southern Boulevard as an alternative location for either light rail transit or bus ways. [5] The first key recommendation of the Transportation and Mobility section of the Palm Beach County Urban Redevelopment Area Study is to "Establish Transportation Concurrency Exception Areas” supporting transportation oriented development along Military Trail and Congress Avenue including intersections where they meet Southern Boulevard.

Useful Tables

Population Characteristics	
Population	64,028
Median age	36

Residents 65 and over	11.8%
Residents under 18	26.3%
Married-Couple Households	56.2%
Non-Hispanic Whites	62%
Blacks	11%
Hispanics	22%
Foreign born	20%
English spoken at home	70%
Spanish spoken at home	22%
Other Language spoken at home	8%

Income	
Median household income	\$52,040
Per capita Income	\$25,482
% Households Below the poverty line	7%

Housing	
Description	2000
Housing Units	24,325
Total occupied	22,145
Owner occupied	16,421
Renter occupied	2,180

Sources

[1] Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. (2007). The Palm Beach County Urban Redevelopment Area. Palm Beach County Planning Division.

[2] Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. (2006). Palm Beach County Urban Redevelopment Area Study: Summary of Interviews-September 5-8, 2006. Palm Beach County Planning Division.

[3] Palm Beach County Planning Division. (1995). Jog Road Corridor Study Report. Palm Beach County Planning Division.

[4] Gibbs Planning Group, Inc. (2007). Retail Market Study Palm Beach Urban Redevelopment Area.

[5] Leftwich Consulting Engineers. (March 2005). Palm Beach 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. Palm Beach County Metropolitan Planning Organization.