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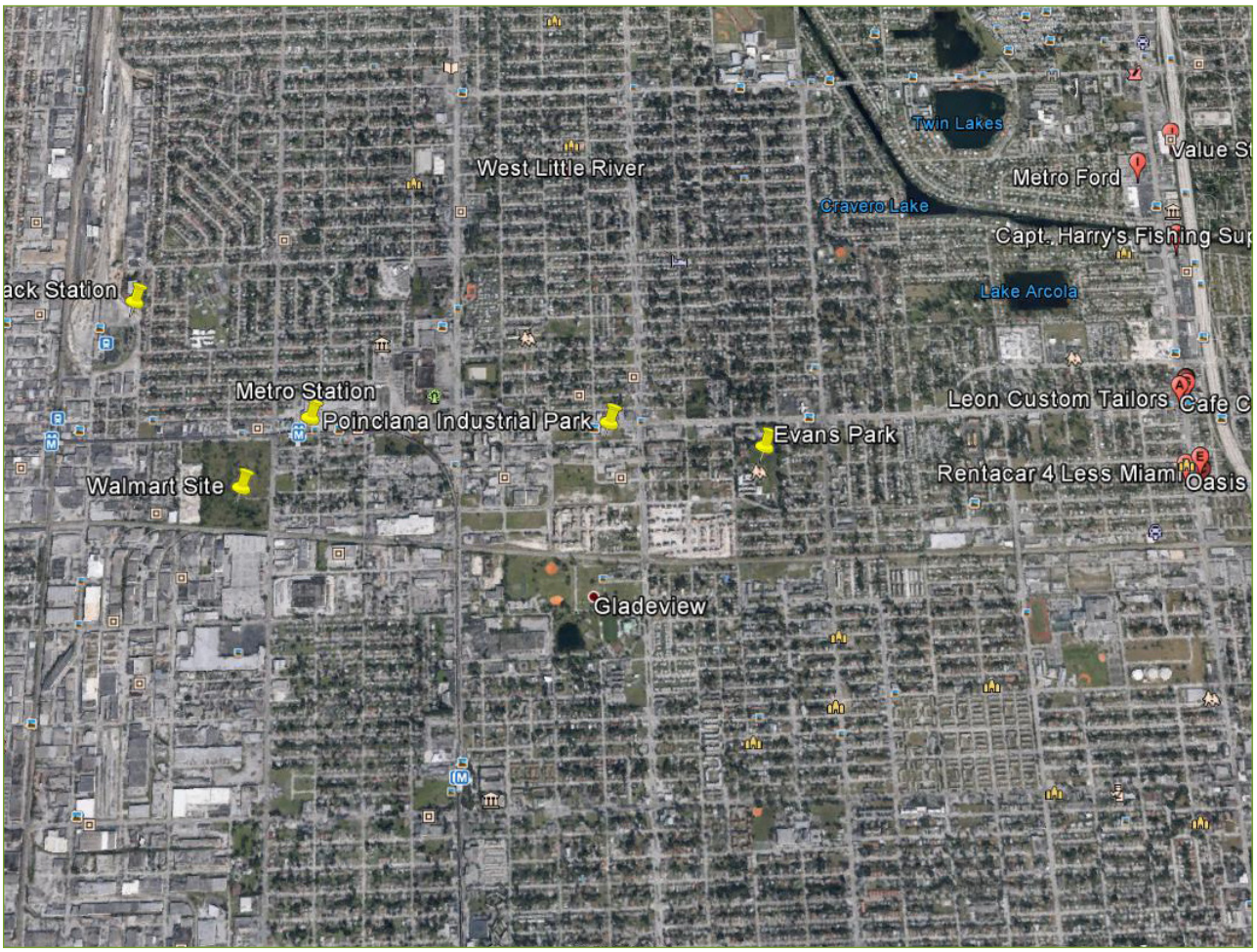

Technical Assistance Panel for the 79th Street Corridor Sites, Miami-Dade Economic Development Advocacy Trust

November 14 and 15, 2013
Miami-Dade County, Florida

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Urban Land Institute
Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council
Technical Assistance Panels

What are Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)?

Since 1947, the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) Advisory Services Program has been assisting communities by bringing together week-long panels of seasoned real estate, planning, landscape architecture, financing, marketing, and development experts to provide unbiased pragmatic advice on complex land use and development issues. Several years ago, the ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council began providing panel services of one or two days to address specific local government issues in areas such as housing, parking, redevelopment, and future land use development. The District Council has some 1,200 members spread along the east coast of Florida from Indian River County through the Florida Keys and from Puerto Rico.

How Do TAPs Work?

Sponsors request the services of a TAP with regard to a specific issue that can be addressed by a panel of experts in one or two days. The District Council assists the sponsor in refining the scope of the assignment and convenes a panel to address those specific issues. The sponsor works within ULI guidelines to provide background information to ULI panelists prior to the panel's convening. When convened, members of the TAP view the subject site, hear from public and private stakeholders, and then deliberate on the assigned issues. At the conclusion of its work, the panel presents an oral report to stakeholders; that is followed by a written report within approximately six weeks. To ensure objectivity, panel members cannot be involved in matters pending before the sponsor, be working for the sponsor, or solicit work from the sponsor during the panel's assignment period. Panel members volunteer their services to the project.

Who is ULI?

ULI was founded in 1936 as a non-profit institute to facilitate the open exchange of ideas and information among local, national, and international real estate industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places. Today it has more than 30,000 members worldwide. The ULI does not lobby or act as an advocate for any single industry. It is committed to providing leadership in the responsible use of land and creating and sustaining thriving communities.

Sponsors and Panel Members

Sponsor

- Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT)

MDEAT Board of Directors

- Marc A. Douthit, Esq.,Chairperson
- Ron Butler, 1st Vice Chair
- H. Leigh Toney, 2nd Vice Chair
- Stephanye Johnson
- Barbara B. Montero
- Carlos E. Morales
- George Ray III
- Rev. Dr. Walter T. Richardson
- Treska V. Rodgers
- Charles F. Sims

Panel Members

TAP Co-chairs

- Ralph Rosado, Executive Director
  South Florida Community Development Coalition

Panelists

- Javier Avino, Partner
  Bilzin Sumberg
- Tony Cho, President & CEO
  Metro 1 Properties
- Julio Collier, Associate
  Kimley-Horn & Associates
- Bill Fuller, Founder
  Barlington Group
- Joe Furst, Managing Director, Wynwood
  Goldman Properties
- Douette Pryce, Principal
  Pryce Resources LLC
- Javier Salman, Senior Associate, Architecture
  Stantec
- Betsy Suiter, Associate
  EDSA

ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council

TAP Vice Co-Chairs

- Dr. Charles Bohl, Associate Professor and Director, Graduate Program in Real Estate Development and Urbanism
  University of Miami, School of Architecture
- Charles W. DeSanti, Managing Partner
  Kitson & Partners

District Council Staff

- Carla Coleman, Executive Director
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Panel Process and Agenda

Panel Process

79th Street TAP members discuss their recommendations.

The MDEAT process centered on the following five steps:

- Representatives from the ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council met with MDEAT staff to discuss issues related to the TAP study area. The ULI District Council Executive Director and the TAP chair also attended a pre-TAP community meeting at the Joseph Caleb Center on the evening of October 17. The meeting, which was organized by MDEAT, included neighborhood residents, businesses, area activists, and other interested parties.
- ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council staff researched MDEAT's goals for the TAP and, based on that information, selected the TAP members who had the expertise most tailored to addressing the issues raised.
- The members of the TAP received a complete set of pre-meeting briefing materials about the study area.
- The TAP met in Miami on November 14 and 15, 2013, holding its closing presentation at the Joseph Caleb Center.
- The TAP, under the leadership of the ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council, prepared a report on its recommendations and conclusions.

Panel Agenda

The agenda (included as Appendix A) for the two-day TAP was organized as follows.

On November 14, the panel began its orientation with a lunch meeting and tour of the study area. MDEAT staff used the lunch and tour to acquaint the panel with the area and its broader community and planning context. The tour was followed by a working dinner that allowed panel members to further discuss the study area.

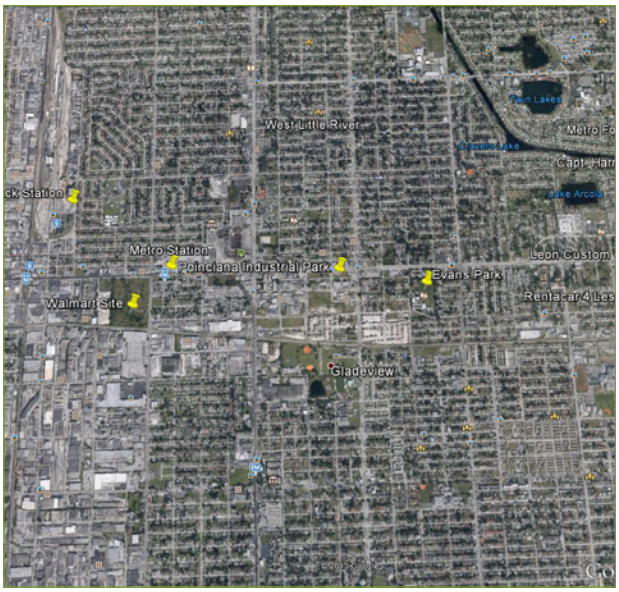
On November 15, the panel spent the morning and afternoon working on the issues that it had been asked to address, along with issues raised during the October 17 ULI District Council and TAP chair session with members of the study area community. At 5:30 PM, the panel members presented their observations and recommendations to an audience of interested citizens, community groups, and others. Their comments are incorporated in this report.

Background: The TAP Focus Area

Miami-Dade Advocacy Trust

MDEAT convened the TAP to help identify strategies to encourage economic development along an area in Miami known as the 79th Street Corridor and its adjacent neighborhoods. The TAP was asked to focus specifically on strategies and incentives that would result in catalytic projects at three priority locations that offered the highest potential for job creation for the area:

- Intersection of NW 7th Avenue and NW 79th Street and a desired gateway project at that site.
- Poinciana Industrial Park site.
- Area around the planned Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) project near NW 37th Avenue and NW 79th Street.



79th Street Corridor, the TAP focus area.

MDEAT, which was established in 1992, grew out of the Metro-Miami Action Plan that was created in 1983 to address socioeconomic disparities that were considered the primary cause of the unrest that ravaged Miami's inner-city communities in the early 1980s. Those disparities included local inequities within the criminal justice system, economic development and employment, housing, education, and health and human services. Today MDEAT provides a variety of social services and economic assistance for small and minority businesses. It also provides numerous resource publications and databases that include a Social Compact study of inner-city and emerging neighborhood markets.

MDEAT's September 2013 Economic Development Summit featured discussions on economic growth and development in Targeted Urban Areas.

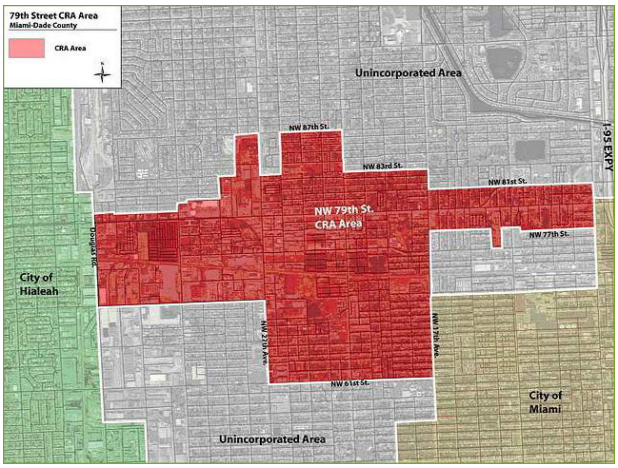
79th Street Community Redevelopment Agency and 79th Street Corridor Initiative

The following provides highlights of the 79th Street Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and 79th Street Corridor Initiative Planning Framework.

The 79th Street Community Redevelopment Agency

The CRA was established in 2009 by the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners (BCC). In 2011 the BCC approved a redevelopment plan for the area and established the CRA's trust fund. The plan seeks to stimulate and guide the redevelopment of the NW 79th Street Corridor and to create a better place to live and work. Recommendations relate to economic development, housing, mixed use and transit-oriented development (TOD), streetscape improvements, and safety (community policing).

Depicted to the right, the CRA planning area is bordered by the city of Miami to the southeast and the city of Hialeah to the west. Because the base year property evaluation at the time of its establishment in 2009 is higher than current values, the CRA has limited funds for projects. (Its 2013-2014 proposed budget shows only $8,679 in revenue, a drop from the prior year's projected revenue of $18,054.)



The approximately 2,254-acre 79th Street Corridor CRA planning area is located immediately west of I-95, extending two miles from NW 7th Avenue at the east end to NW 37th Avenue on the west end. At the west end it includes only those parcels fronting on 79th Street on the north side; on the south side it extends for about one-third of a mile to include an industrial area centered around the FEC railroad tracks running approximately parallel to 79th Street. The center portion, located between NW 17th and NW 27th Avenues, widens and extends from NW 62nd Street to the south and NW 87th Street to the north (a distance of one mile). The east end of the corridor (east of NW 17th Street) is centered on 79th Street and is less than 1,000 feet wide.

79th Street Corridor Initiative

The goal of the 79th Street Corridor Initiative <http://79thstreet.org/overview.php> is to use TOD and existing community assets to transform the corridor from a fragmented set of residential, commercial, and industrial sites that is often viewed as undesirable into a community where people choose to visit, live, and work. The initiative is led by four non-profit organizations with expertise in community economic development: the Urban League of Greater Miami, Neighborhood Housing Services of South Florida, Dade Employment and Economic Development Corporation (DEEDCO), and the Center for Neighborhood Technology. It is focusing on the western end of the corridor between NW 27th and NW 37th Avenues, an area that has excellent access to public transportation. Three lines intersect there: MetroRail, which connects to downtown and jobs north and south; Tri-Rail, which connects to the Miami International Airport and jobs in Broward and Palm Beach counties; and Amtrak, which connects to the rest of the country.

79th Street Corridor

79th Street is a major east-west transportation corridor in unincorporated Miami-Dade County. The extensive development of the 79th Street Corridor occurred in the years following World War II. That included development of one of the first large shopping centers in South Florida: the Northside Shopping Center built in 1959 (top image on the next page). By 1970 the area was substantially developed; as a result, today over three-quarters of the buildings are over 40 years old and in need of many improvements.

The study area is characterized by a high unemployment rate and a high proportion of people with lower incomes. In 2008, the average household income was estimated at $30,893, significantly lower that the county average of $62,377. The lower income is reflected in the finding that a little over one-third (34.18 percent) of the study area's population (12,277 in 2008) is living in poverty. That compares to the countywide rate of 14.74 percent. Almost 70 percent of residents are Black.

Located two blocks west of the MetroRail stop, the North Side Shopping Center (above) typifies the single-use form of development separated from the street by parking in front that was typical along the corridor during its growth period after World War II. The 79th Street Corridor Initiative calls for envisioning the center as a mixed-use town square for the surrounding area that provides connections to the adjacent streets and MetroRail.

However, despite the major civil disturbances of the 1980s and a history of declining social and economic conditions, the area has assets to build on. That includes the exceptional access to public transportation described on the prior page and the numerous residents who have lived in the area for many years and are bound together by strong community ties, a shared history, and investments in community resources such as churches, schools, and neighborhood facilities and parks. Needs include better housing and job opportunities, new investments and building upgrades, and sidewalk and parking improvements. Also important is the development of the many vacant parcels that spot the area. Approximately 20 percent of the area is vacant.

The 79th Street Corridor is well positioned to promote an important regional asset: good access to public transportation that includes MetroRail.

Community Concerns

Residents' hopes for the area focused on the need for new economic investments that would lead to jobs for area residents and address concerns about economic justice and disenfranchisement. In addition to more jobs and catalytic economic investments, residents' comments included the need to:

Corridor residents view Poinciana Industrial Park and other vacant sites as community assets that should be utilized to attract much needed jobs and economic investment to the area.

- Use the Poinciana Industrial Park as an opportunity to bring about positive change because of its central location in the corridor and access to public transportation. That includes serving as an economic engine for the community by capturing some of the international trade and logistic investments now going elsewhere in the county. To make that happen, government needs to dedicate resources to upgrade the infrastructure.

- Attract more mixed-income rather than lower-income housing, family-oriented entertainment and art uses, and chain restaurants (many left after the disturbances of the 1980s).
- Enhance walkability.
- Improve the feeling of safety.
- Enhance, not displace, the many small mom and pop businesses in the area.
- Create an authentic place that celebrates the corridor's international character.
- Negotiate community benefits from the new Walmart on the western edge of the corridor. That could include the corridor improvements outlined in the bullets above that will give someone driving to the Walmart a reason to stop (not drive through).

They also pointed to using the new Walmart on the corridor's western edge as a catalyst for corridor redevelopment.

Issues for the TAP

As described in more detail in Appendix B (Questions for the TAP), the TAP structured its comments to address a number of topics related to strategies that will encourage economic development along the 79th Street Corridor and in its adjacent neighborhoods. The following describes the three specific sites and site-related issues that the TAP was asked to focus on, including how each site could be used as a catalyst for job creation for the TAP study area.

Intersection of NW 7th Avenue and NW 79th Street

The TAP examined how the MDEAT and Miami-Dade County could encourage redevelopment of the site as a gateway project for the community at NW 7th Avenue and NW 79th Street. Specific topics included:

- Land uses and specific projects would make the unincorporated side of NW 7th Avenue more of a gateway to the neighborhood.
- Possible public-private partnerships.
- Funding ideas for the gateway improvements.
- Conditions or incentives that could attract private sector investment to the site.

Poinciana Industrial Park Site

The TAP looked at the:

- Possible highest and best uses for the Poinciana Industrial Park site.
- Public sector actions needed to make the site attractive for a public-private partnership project and market-rate investment.
- Most important strategies to put in place.
- On-going incentives needed for job growth.

Transit-Oriented Development at NW 37th Avenue and NW 79th Street

The TAP focused how the TOD site and surrounding area be used to generate economic development for the corridor:

- Specific strategies and incentives that could be available (e.g., from the 79th Street CRA, local government, and sources related to TODs).
- Potential land uses best suited to the site.
- Next steps.

Overall

The TAP was asked to address two overall issues: the best method to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for one or more of the specific sites and recommendations for other tools, techniques, or capacity that the CRA could pursue to help support investment and development on those sites.

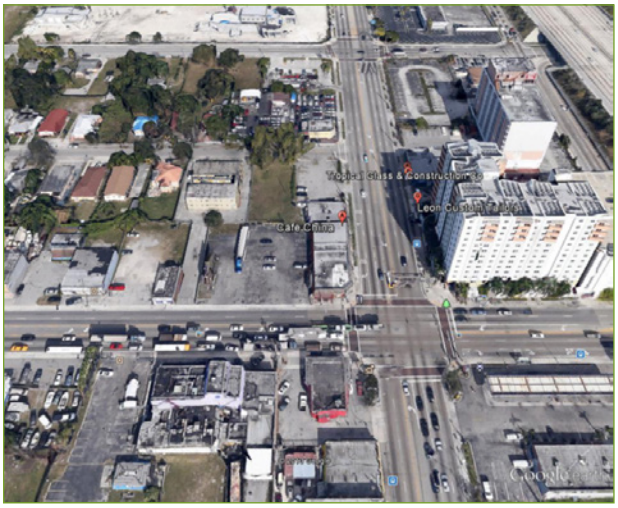
Panel Response to the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust Questions

TAP Chair Ralph Rosado (shown to the right) began the panel's public presentation of its recommendations by introducing the panel and highlighting the qualifications of each member. He also reiterated the role of the panel – "to bring multiple perspectives and areas of expertise and fresh eyes to the area." He then reviewed the panel's focus on the full study area corridor, specifically three sites within it:

- Intersection of NW 7th Avenue and NW 79th Street.
- Poinciana Industrial Park Site.
- Area around the planned transit-oriented development TOD project at NW 37th Avenue and NW 79th Street.

The following highlights general information about and the TAP's recommendations for each site and its overall recommendations. Ideas included those that can be implemented quickly and those that will require more time.

TAP Chair Ralph Rosado leads panel members in a work session discussions.



The 79th Street and NW 7th Avenue intersection presents an opportunity to create a gateway that attracts drivers from I-95 and draws them along the corridor.

Create a defining gateway at the intersection of NW 7th Avenue and NW 79th Street.

The TAP's comments focused on making the NW 7th Avenue and 79th Street intersection a gateway to the 79th Street Corridor. Seventh Avenue, the TAP commented, historically served as a major north-south and neighborhood connector. With the suburban movement in the 60s and 70s, 7th Avenue was left behind, resulting in disinvestment and a prevalence of small storefront businesses generally located on shallow lots sandwiched between large regional uses distinct in scale from the rest of the neighborhood.

TAP comments centered on steps that would convert the largely strip development uses to ones that create a destination point and establish a sense of place and excitement. Specific TAP recommendations are outlined on the next page.

- Rezone the entirety of the frontage blocks along 7th Avenue to allow for deeper, more significant development and eliminate less desirable uses over time. The rezoning, the TAP stressed, is essential to create the space needed for an iconic gateway to the corridor. Such a gateway will establish a positive first impression for the corridor and communicate economic progress. The rezoning could be accomplished through adoption of an overlay zone that would eventually lead to an urban form of development, rather than the current generally low-density suburban one.
- Review and redesign traffic patterns coming off I-95 to incorporate and enhance the intersection's gateway role. Directional signage from I-95 to the corridor and, in particular the Poinciana Industrial Park, is also important.
- Use the proximity to and visibility from I-95 to attract more intense development that serves as an anchor for additional investments. Such a project should create a sense of arrival to the corridor and serve as a draw that will make drivers want to travel west (versus east) along the corridor.
- Install streetscape improvements that will make that portion of the corridor more desirable as a place to stop, walk around, and visit the businesses along it. Streetscape improvements also add value to and enhance businesses in the area. Allowing on-street parking should be part of the package. Also important is attractive pedestrian-scale street lighting to create a greater feeling of safety, landscaping, and general clean-up and code enforcement. The CRA Plan provides a good resource for such ideas.
- Include housing (market-rate or the result of a public-private partnership) in the gateway. Housing could be located above retail and commercial space as part of more intense development. Housing, the TAP commented, would attract more people to the area, thus sparking additional investments.

A drive along 79th Street near the 7th Avenue intersection.

In Orlando, the Parramore Heritage Community is a diverse area of residential neighborhoods, businesses, and industry located west of the downtown Orlando core and is also the historic home of Orlando's African-American community. Today the area is experiencing a new surge of growth. That includes the Parramore Town Center (the traditional commercial and industrial heart of Parramore), an area that is home to City View apartments (pictured above) as well as the Florida A&M University School of Law and a federal courthouse.

Use the Poinciana Industrial Park Site as the catalyst for jobs and new investments.

Assets and Challenges

The TAP began its discussion of the Poinciana Industrial Park with comments about its assets and some of the obstacles to new investment.

Assets include:

- Access to rail (the FEC Railroad line) that runs along the south side of the site.
- Location in an Enterprise Zone, Empowerment Zone, and Targeted Urban Area.
- Miami-Dade County's ownership of 30 acres within the site. The county acquired the land and used federal Community Development Block Grant dollars to install the infrastructure (sewers, roads, and water).

The challenges include the need to:

- Ensure that further brownfield remediation, if any is required, is completed in a timely fashion so as not to discourage redevelopment interest.
- Clear up several U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) liens.
- Provide buildings ready for occupancy. The lack of completed buildings ready to move into (what most companies want versus what is there now: vacant land) has hindered it as a business location.

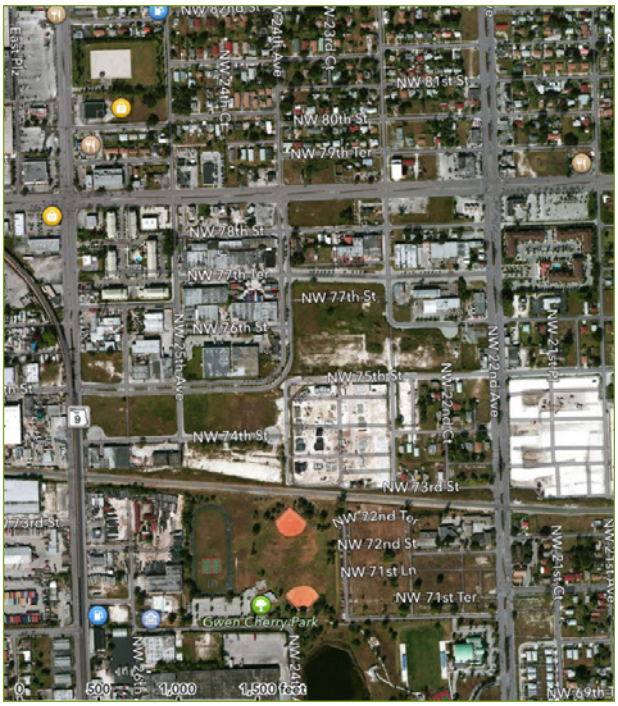
TAP Recommendations

TAP comments centered on making the Poinciana Industrial Park a job and economic growth generator for the corridor. Success will come from creating the conditions for risk taking. That will require a new vision for the site, a related set of updated implementation strategies, and strong, committed leadership from the area and the county. "The 79th Street Corridor should be about job density," a TAP member observed.

TAP ideas for such strategies are outlined below.

Branding: A clear vision and business and marketing theme are needed to effectively promote the Poinciana Industrial Park and communicate what it is all about (the unique experience it will deliver). Branding steps could include:

- Developing a new vision that conveys a compelling image of what is planned for the park



The Poinciana Industrial Park's location on NW 79th Street presents a strategic opportunity to target development that will trigger additional investments and jobs that service area residents. Two positive factors are the site's location fronting 79th Street and Miami-Dade County ownership of 30 acres of the site.

Food-related uses would build on existing uses and create an identifiable theme that aids in marketing.

and the desired outcomes. The vision should inspire action and provide a framework for public and private investments that will help achieve it in 21st century terms. A new vision is important to take into account and coordinate with changing demographics and economic conditions and opportunities (PortMiami, for example).

- Deciding on a business theme that contributes to the desired brand for the industrial park. A potential theme to pursue is food-related, as it builds on a successful use in the park and represents a potential growing job sector.
- Preparing an internal park overlay district that would include design and color requirements that help brand it.
- Using landscaping and lighting interventions to define and make the industrial park and public spaces more defined. Such improvements will also add value to the businesses within the industrial park.
- Preparing a park logo and tag line that communicate its vision to assist with marketing the development opportunities.
- Designating a lead person or two (a representative of MDEAT and/or Miami-Dade County, for example) that could work in cooperation with the Beacon Council to market the site.

Space Types and Locations: The Poinciana Industrial Park could include a range of uses and building types. That could involve light industrial production, warehousing, wholesale distribution, and incubator and/or co-working space for new businesses created by local residents. The parts of the site fronting on 79th Street could serve as public food-related uses such as a gateway, multi-use building(s) that include a small bakery or coffee shops, a green market, and associated businesses (retail outlets for businesses in the industrial park that use the rear of their buildings for their wholesale distribution). Such uses on 79th Street will serve as a neighborhood anchor and create activity on the street and a place where residents could gather. Sports or recreational uses could also be incorporated into the area fronting 79th Street.

Food-related businesses (above) could also serve as a focus of job training and business development programs.

A farmers' market (top image above) located on the 79th Street Corridor would reinforce the theme of food-related uses and provide a community gathering place. Park uses (lower image above) would also provide a place for residents to come together.

The idea is to activate that area with businesses that attract both out-of-area visitors and neighborhood residents.

Co-working space could create the places where young entrepreneurs and those with new start-up companies can come to carry out their individual work in shared space.

Job Creation and Education Link: Resources to grow jobs for the neighborhood and the residents who can fill those jobs should be an essential part of developing the Poinciana Industrial Park. As one TAP members put it, tie the industrial vision to the educational vision. Two examples are a business incubator to help grow local businesses and a charter high school to prepare students for those jobs. Both investments would benefit and help retain Poinciana Industrial Park businesses and area residents. The school should focus on technical and business training and offer apprenticeship programs with industrial park businesses. The Carrie P. Meek Entrepreneurial Education Center is a potential partner for such a program. Located at 6300 NW 7th Street, it is an outreach center of Miami-Dade College's North Campus that offers a specialized focus on entrepreneurship and economic and community development. It offers college credit and non-credit courses for both degree- and non-degree-seeking students and provides opportunities to pursue certificate and vocational programs.

Incentives and Partnerships: The TAP recommended a number of strategies to incentivize new investments and partnerships, particularly for businesses that hire locally. The first step should be to review the incentive ideas contained in the CRA 79th Street Community Redevelopment Plan and the possible incentives through its location in an Enterprise Zone, Empowerment Zone, and Targeted Urban Area.

In Washington, DC, the year-around Union Market (above) is an urban village that provides a place for local artisans and food vendors to sell their goods. The market is an economic engine for the area and the site of community events and festivals. Currently, more than 100 businesses employ 1,500 people in food production and distribution.

Poinciana Industrial Park's buildings fronting 79th Street (examples below and on the top of the next page) could be used for retail uses that invite the public in and contribute to and activate the streetscape by fronting the streets with windows and doors that allow views into and out of the buildings.

One strategy applies to the full corridor as well as Poinciana Park. That is to review the existing overlay district zoning for relevance. For example, more car and truck services and sales are something that some feel the corridor has enough of, and yet such uses are promoted heavily, to the possible detriment of other viable uses.

Other strategies for the Poinciana Industrial Park are to:

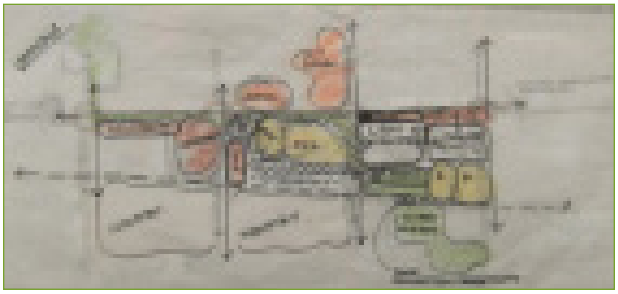
- Partner with Miami-Dade County to leverage its land within the industrial park (for example, write-down the cost or enter into a favorable land swap for a specified piece of land to make the deal work).

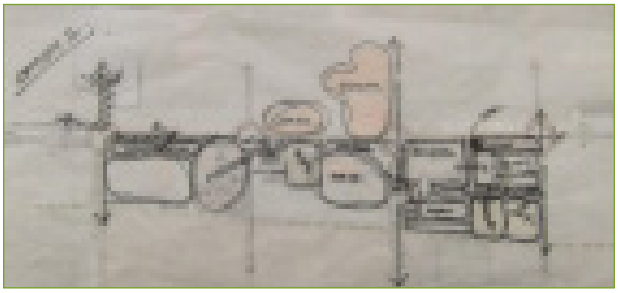
- Waive building and impact fees.
- Fast track approvals.
- Offer low interest rate loans.
- Suspend county taxes for a set period of time.
- Provide infrastructure such as streetscape and utilities improvements.
- Extend incentives to any co-developed land.
- Purchase and develop contiguous land purchased with the park.

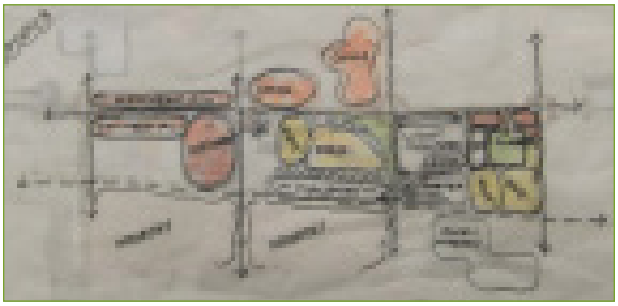
An example of how buildings can front and activate the street.

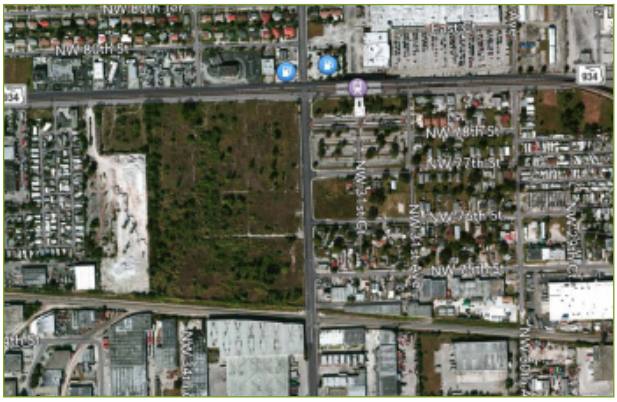
Request for Qualifications (RFQ), Request for Proposals (RFP), or Florida P3 Intent to Negotiate (ITN):

- Prepare and work with the Beacon Council and other economic development organizations to widely circulate an RFQ to develop the industrial park. The RFQ terms could be negotiated with one or more applicants. An advantage of an RFQ is that those proposing are asked to submit a description of their qualifications to conduct the work; however, they are not required to make a specific proposal, define an approach, or name a price. That way, a public agency is able to select the most qualified firm without regard to price. After selections the parties enter into negotiations to determine the price. In an RFP, those proposing submit a description of how they would approach the project and name those who will be performing the work. Cost is also included.
- The P3 INT process was enabled by HB 85 signed by the Governor in June 2013. The law will further the use of public-private partnerships that have been implemented by some sectors for various types of infrastructure (water and transportation, for example) and housing. Proposed projects must be in the public interest. The law allows several organizations or businesses to come together to achieve an outcome and negotiate a price. For more information, go to <www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=49273>.









Examples showing site development options are provided above. Each contains the core components recommended by the TAP. The NW 37th Avenue and NW 70th Street TOD planning area is illustrated to the left.

In approaches, building on and helping grow businesses from within the neighborhood and hiring locally should be a primary goal that will be augmented by the earlier recommendation for a charter high school and business incubator. A survey to identify the talents and skills of corridor residents and how they could translate into business and employment opportunities would also advance that goal.

Capitalize on the transportation rich NW 37th Avenue and 79th Street area.

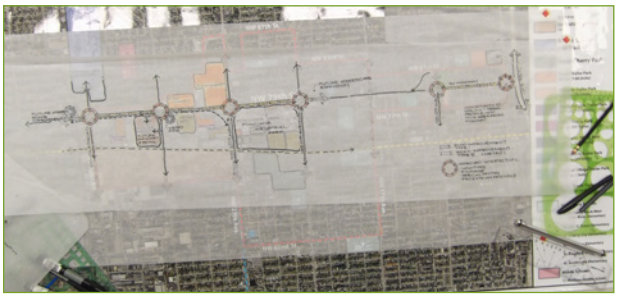
The western edge of the 79th Street TAP focus area is a public transportation hub, making it a ripe opportunity for transit-oriented development (TOD) that combines a mix of uses that include housing, commercial, and retail. In that area MetroRail, Tri-Rail, and Amtrak are located in close proximity.

Because of those facilities, significant retail and housing are already approved and under or soon-to-be under construction, the TAP observed. That includes plans for a new Walmart and the multifamily housing development underway at the MetroRail site. Market uses should be allowed to expand naturally, the TAP added. The market could lead to other chain stores such as a Home Depot or Lowe's as well as new mixed-income housing once more retail is established. Positive marketing of the area will be important to attracting such new investments.

Above, the area where NW 37th Avenue and NW 79th Street meet is a major transportation hub. MetroRail, Tri-Rail, and Amtrak stops are located in close proximity, creating excellent opportunities for new development that will anchor the NW 79th Street Corridor's western edge and attract new investments that will be positive for the full corridor.

To the left, a new Walmart and multifamily residential development are positioned to benefit from the proximity to transportation and further anchor the western end of the corridor.

As illustrated in the drawings below, the TAP recommended creating a park to support the new housing and putting in place a streetscape that will connect the new TOD with the Poinciana Industrial Park as well with small businesses along the way. Encouraging small retail stores should also be a part of the plan. They will add value to businesses that are already in the area or soon will be.



The TAP prepared a series of illustrations that depict ideas for enhancing the corridor and connecting the uses along it.

Unify and connect the corridor and the voices.

The TAP concluded their observations with a discussion of unification connections – both the corridor and the voices that will need to pull together if hopes for the corridor are to become a reality.

The Corridor

The 79th Street Corridor lacks an identifiable urban form and sense of place. Instead, its predominate feature is numerous vacant lots interspersed with low-scale strip centers that include a lot of automotive-related uses, a development form and type of uses that have hampered redevelopment. Providing an urban form and range of uses that connote a sense of entry and place are a focus of our recommendations, the TAP stressed. An important part of that is to make the corridor more pedestrian-friendly and having it serve as both a physical and visual connector between the uses along it.

> *"Today, revitalizing the 79th Street Corridor is more like developing a vacant site than traditional redevelopment that builds on an existing urban form and business uses. Our comments, therefore, focus on those actions that, over time, will convert the corridor to a place with a defining urban form and robust economic uses that attract additional investments and provide meaningful jobs for residents."* (The ULI Technical Assistance Panel)

Strategies should include:

- Cues that slow traffic and make it safe to walk along and cross the corridor. Eliminating the outermost travel lanes and providing on-street parallel parking are two such strategies.
- Landscape buffers between the road and sidewalk (which should be wide and attractive) to protect the pedestrian and enhance the walking experience.
- Provision of shade (natural and as part of buildings), which is particularly important in a sub-tropical sunny climate.
- Pedestrian-scale lighting.

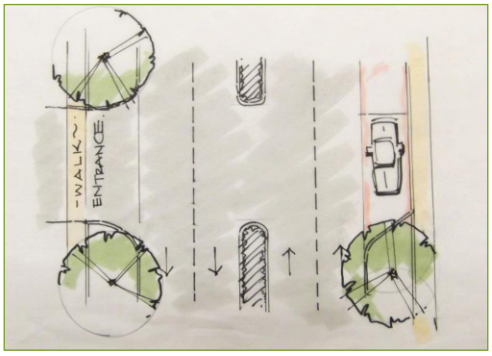
- Clearly marked and conveniently located pedestrian crosswalks. Curb bulb-outs and traffic signal timing that allow a pedestrian to easily cross the street will also improve the experience of crossing the street.
- Building facades that front the corridor with transparent doors and windows pulled up close to the sidewalk, thereby activating the street and providing more eyes on it to create a greater sense of safety.
- Bicycle lanes and well placed bicycle racks.

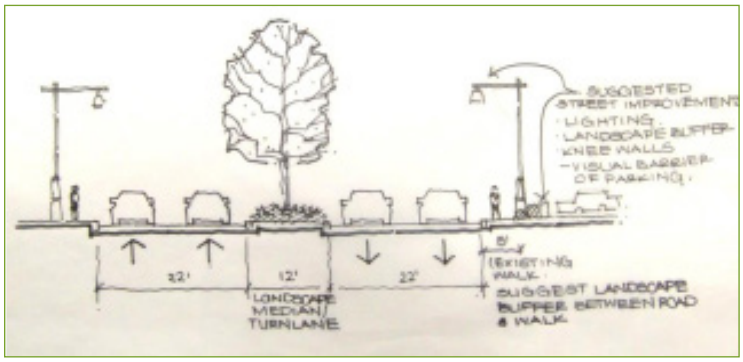
Such improvements can be done in the short-term and make the road safe for all users (bicyclists, drivers, and pedestrians), fulfilling the definition of "complete streets." They will also create the feeling that something positive is happening, which is important to capturing and maintaining the interest and enthusiasm of residents, businesses, and public officials.

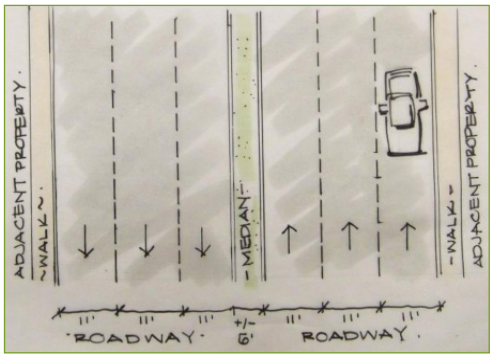
Two next steps should include:

- Exploring parking alternatives that are conducive to safe, additional pedestrian and commercial activity, including a parking analysis.
- Convening a meeting of the various Miami-Dade County departments that need to be involved and on board if the streetscape plan is to be implemented. The meeting should include key people from planning and zoning to discuss recommendations that have zoning implications (for example, the TAP recommendation to rezone the gateway area at NW 7th Avenue and 79th Street to provide deeper lots that will enable more meaningful development).

Streetscape Beautification







Voices

The 79th Street Corridor has been the focus of numerous plans and committed organizations and community leaders. Taking the next step in improving the corridor and bringing jobs and new economic investments to the corridor will require that the relevant organizations come together and work toward a shared plan. They also need to speak with one unified voice when communicating the assets of the corridor and speaking to public officials, funders, and the development community.

That unified voice should include agreement on the same set of priorities: what needs to happen and in what order. When it comes to setting priorities, the TAP noted, the Poinciana Industrial Park is a good place to start. It is in the center of the corridor and has the benefit of being largely owned by Miami-Dade County. A forward looking group of current stakeholders should be formed to provide advice on and help champion plans for the industrial park. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts, the TAP emphasized. A steering committee for the area should be created, the TAP continued. It should promote long-term coordination of efforts led by the various key stakeholder groups and institutions committed to the neighborhood.

A major boost in unifying the voices and places along the corridor is the recent announcement of a Citi Foundation $250,000 grant to Neighborhood Housing Services of South Florida (NHSSF) to increase economic progress in the corridor. Backed by the Citi Foundation and the Low Income Investment Fund, the initiative will work to advance what the grant calls a quarterback model of community development by building the capacity of trusted organizations that align their resources, objectives, and efforts. The quarterback role will include creating or helping expand local stakeholder networks. NHSSF is a non-profit, one-stop-shop that works to revitalize neighborhoods and strengthen communities in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. It provides programs and services that promote, support, and sustain homeownership and neighborhood revitalization.

The advice to unify the corridor will be significantly advanced by the recent announcement of a $250,000 grant to Neighborhood Housing Services of South Florida. The one-year grant will be used to expand and accelerate efforts to transform the 79th Street Corridor from a fragmented set of residential, commercial, and industrial sites into a more cohesive neighborhood with transit that connects jobs, retail, and services.

It is also time for Miami-Dade County to step in and play a more active role, both in the Poinciana Industrial Park and enhancing and connecting the full corridor. The 79th Street Business Association can play an important role in creating and maintaining a unified voice as well. The association meets regularly with the 79th Street Corridor Initiative to discuss new developments in the ongoing partnership to revitalize the corridor.

TAP Concluding Comments

The 79th Street corridor, the TAP concluded, is well positioned to start taking the steps that will lead to the economic investments and jobs residents seek. With unified community leadership and county involvement, those steps will also revitalize and make that area a desirable place to live, work, and visit. Important to that are the:

- Three anchor areas along the corridor: the NW 7th Avenue area just east of a major north-south connector, I-95; the largely county-owned Poinciana Industrial Park in the middle of the corridor; and the public transportation investments shaping its western edge (also the three TAP focus areas).
- The sound plans (those of the 79th Street Corridor CRA and 79th Street Corridor Initiative) and leadership organizations focused on the area (the previously mentioned two organizations, MDEAT, and Neighborhood Housing Services of South Florida and its recent receipt of a grant to strengthen the capacity of the organizations working in the area to align their resources and pull in the same directions).

> *"With its transportation assets, the largely county-owned Poinciana Industrial Park, and committed leadership organizations, the 79th Street Corridor is in a strong position to move forward with bringing more jobs and economic investment to the area. The key will be continuing and unifying into one voice the strong leadership organizations focused on the corridor and making strategic use of investments."* (The ULI Technical Assistance Panel)

The TAP recommendations are designed to work as a package to further the goals for the corridor. Moving along the corridor from east to west, they call for:

- Creating a defining gateway at the intersection of NW 7th Avenue and NW 79th Street – that place that demonstrates what the corridor is about and gives those driving through or by the corridor a reason to stop and stay a while. Improvement should include putting in place traffic patterns and directional signage that will encourage travelers on I-95 to visit the corridor; redesigning the streetscape (sidewalks and the street itself) to make the corridor more walkable and desirable as a place to locate a business or stop a while; and using rezoning to allow for the deeper lots required for more intense, urban-scale development that will anchor the eastern end of the corridor and serve as a symbol of economic growth.
- Using the Poinciana Industrial Park site (the heart of the corridor that is already largely publicly-owned and a first priority focus) as the catalyst for jobs and new investments. Steps should include devising a shared economic development and educational vision for the site and creating a marketing theme and brand to communicate that vision. Offering a package of incentives that will encourage investments, fronting 79th Street with public-accessed uses front that will activate the street, and using a Request for Qualifications (or RFP or P3) to find the best matched developer are also key.
- Capitalizing on the transportation rich NW 37th Avenue and 79th Street area and new development already underway. The potential for greater density at the western edge of the corridor provides a bookend for similar development in the gateway area at the east end of the corridor. There, the TAP recommended, public improvements should be made that will facilitate the burgeoning market demand already underway. Providing parks for the housing and connections between transportation uses and the developments and businesses beyond them was suggested.

- Unifying and connecting the corridor and the voices – speaking with one voice and pulling toward the same priorities are the keys to success. Without that one voice, goals to revitalize the corridor and provide new jobs for residents will not be fully realized. A symbol of that unity could be reflected in the treatment of the corridor itself. That would mean designs that create a sense of place and arrival at different points along the corridor and facilitate the movement of walkers, bicyclists, and drivers along the street and between the anchors.

In short, it is time to move forward with revitalizing the corridor. The leadership and the ideas are in place. The next step is to work in unison to start implementation. For that, 21st century community-private sector alliances that speak with one voice and are focused on the future, not the past, are required.

APPENDIX A: TAP AGENDA

ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean
Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) Workshop
79th Street Corridor Sites/Economic Development
November 14 & 15, 2013 Agenda

Thursday, November 14, 2013

12:00 – 1:30 pm	Panel arrives, meets over lunch with MDEAT Staff ***City Hall Restaurant, 2004 Biscayne Blvd., Miami, FL***
1:30 – 2:00 pm	Travel from Restaurant to Caleb Center to meet tour van ***Joseph Caleb Center, 5400 NW 22nd Ave., Miami***
2:00 – 3:30 pm	Van tour of Study Area
3:30 – 6:00 pm	Return to Caleb Center; set up workroom/organize program of work ***Joseph Caleb Center, 5400 NW 22nd Ave., Miami***
6:00 – 6:30 pm	For Panelists staying at hotel, drive to check in at ***Crowne Plaza Hotel, 950 NW 42nd Avenue, Miami*** ***All others, go directly to Hereford Grill***
6:30 – 8:30 pm	Panel Dinner ***Hereford Grill, 782 NW 42nd Avenue, Miami***

Friday, November 15, 2013

7:30 – 8:30 am	Breakfast for Any Panelists Staying Overnight at Hotel ***Crowne Plaza Hotel***
8:30 – 10:00 am	Panel work session (closed to public) ***Joseph Caleb Center, 5400 NW 22nd Ave., Miami***
10:00 – 10:30 am	Break
10:30 – 12:30 pm	Panel work session (closed to public)

12:30 - 1:30 pm	Working lunch onsite (catered)
1:30 - 4:30 pm	Panel work session (closed to public)
4:30 – 4:45 pm	Break
4:45 – 5:30 pm	**P**anel review of Draft Report (closed to public)
5:30 – 6:30 pm	Presentation of Preliminary Recommendations; Questions & Answers ***This meeting open to public. Joseph Caleb Center, 5400 NW 22nd Ave., Miami***

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS FOR PANELISTS

Panelist's Questions & Focus
79th Street Corridor Technical Assistance Panel

The focus of this TAP is development of strategies to encourage economic development along an area in Miami known as the 79th Street Corridor and its adjacent neighborhoods. Most specifically, the TAP panel will direct its efforts to three main geographic sites along the corridor:

- the intersection of NW 7th Avenue and NW 79th Street and the needed gateway project at this site,
- the Poinciana Industrial Park site, which is mostly vacant at this time, and
- the area around the planned TOD project at NW 37th Avenue and NW 79th Street.

By concentrating its attention on these sites, the panel will identify strategies and incentives to create catalytic projects at the three locations, with the highest priority being job creation for the area.

As part of this project, the panel is asked to review prior studies and analysis of the area.

1. How best can MDEAT and Miami – Dade County encourage redevelopment to create a gateway project for the community at NW 7th Ave. & NW 79th St.?
   a. What land uses/specific projects would make the unincorporated side of NW 7th Avenue more of a gateway to the neighborhood?
   b. What public/private efforts are possible?
   c. How could these improvements be funded?
   d. What conditions or incentives could attract private sector investment to this specific site?

2. What are the possible highest and best uses for the Poinciana Industrial Park site?
   a. What public sector actions need to take place to make this site attractive for a public/private partnership project? For market-rate investment?
   b. What strategies are most important to put in place?
   c. What on-going incentives are needed for job growth?

3. How can the TOD site and surrounding area be used to generate economic development for the corridor?
   a. What specific strategies & incentives are/could be available (CRA, local government, transit-oriented)?
   b. What are the potential land uses best suited for this site/location?
   c. Next steps?

4. Overall
   a. Would a Request For Proposals (RFP) method be recommended for one or more of the specific sites?
   b. What other tools, techniques or capacity is recommended for the CRA to pursue that will help support investment and development on these sites?