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City of Miami Beach

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Community Background Report

City of Miami Beach

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: Northeast 85th Street

East: Atlantic Ocean

West: Intercoastal Waterway

South: South Point/1st Street

Community Type

Municipality

History

The island community of Miami Beach was originally built as a winter residential community for wealthy families and tourists, and today is nearly totally developed, with only 1.5% of its developable land area vacant. The City of Miami Beach is comprised of a main island approximately seven miles long and a number of smaller natural and manmade islands. Included within its limits are approximately seven square miles of land and nine square miles of water. The Army Corps of Engineers' beach renourishment project has added 230 feet of sand to the City's oceanfront, resulting in a beachfront conservation area of 206 acres. The new beach has spurred renewed interest, both in public and private, in the City's primary asset, and the resulting boardwalk, park redevelopment, and Ocean Drive private rehabilitation.

Previous visioning efforts with the citizens of Miami Beach showed strong nostalgic sentiments for the Miami Beach "the world once new", and simultaneously, "a hope for the City yet to become". Citizens believe the City's strengths are geographic location, beautiful beaches, rich architectural heritage, and an abundance of parks and public open spaces. Miami Beach seeks to diversify its economic base.

The City of Miami Beach has a legacy of unique architectural structures. Scattered throughout the City are buildings which incorporate Mediterranean and Art Deco Architectural styles. The major concentration of these structures is located in the southern portion of the City. The National Register of Historic Places designated one square mile of Miami Beach as the Miami Beach Architectural District, more commonly called the Art Deco District. The District exhibits a high level of consistency in building scale and style resulting from the rapid development of buildings built between 1923 and 1945 which were under the control of a small number of developers. Only 25 architects were responsible for the design of 75% of the buildings in the District.

Community Dynamics

Longtime residents of Miami Beach usually divide the Beach into three geographic sections because they are all mutually distinct from one another. The three divisions of Miami Beach are South Beach (5th-41st Street), Mid-Beach (41st-79th Street), and North Beach (79th-87th Street). These geographic areas are still divided into smaller area neighborhoods which become distinct because of their natural barriers to other area and restricted access. Even though all of Miami Beach has, and is still, experiencing tremendous growth in both population and development, South Beach has probably experienced the most growth. It is one of the most pedestrian-friendly communities in the county and because it is so attractive, there is great demand for affordable housing. Workforce housing is a major issue for the City.

With a population of approximately 88,000 Miami Beach has a residential diversity, which includes many foreign national and ethnic groups that minimizes the dominance of any single group. A recent graduating class from a local public school was comprised of 75 nationalities.

Miami Beach is progressive in its urban planning and zoning. The City carefully manages historical preservation, new parking garages and new developments. A citywide plan for a network of bicycle paths was completed in 2005. The bikeways and paths will benefit roads in the denser areas of the City. The City is also joined a public-private partnership to establish and support a bicycle sharing program. This membership based program allows for hourly rentals of bicycles that are stationed on public right-of-ways and display advertisements that help pay for the cost of the program.

The City has also initiated the construction and management of several new parking garages. City administration believes providing more parking garages will help alleviate the continuous circulation of vehicles trying to find a parking space until the transit system is improved.

As recent as 2000 Miami Beach publically admitted the decision not to permit a Metrorail extension to the Beach was a mistake. In 2004 planning aspects of the BayLink Project were presented to the FTA.

According to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, sixty-three percent of households were built before 1970 and the demographic information is as follows:

- 2 percent Black, 51 percent Hispanic, and 46 percent White, Not-Hispanic
- 16 percent are under the age of 18 and 16 percent of the population is aged 65 or over
- 4 percent of family households are headed by single women with kids
- 85 percent of City residents aged 25 or older have attained a high school degree or higher while 42 percent have attained a bachelor degree or higher. The County percentage of residents holding high school diplomas is 77 percent and 26 percent have bachelor degrees or higher.
- An average of 3.4 percent of the civilian workforce was unemployed between 2005 to 2009
- The Census estimates 69 percent of all housing units are occupied
- The median household income is \$41,900
- 11 percent of families are in poverty; this is lower than the County's 13.5 percent poverty rate.
- 42 percent of households are owner occupied

Business Landscape

The City of Miami Beach promotes itself as a ‘24-hour Marketplace’ as it offers services in the retail and service sectors around the clock. Miami Beach, unlike most municipalities in the County, is nearly built out. The City is increasing density on the ground to build its inventory of retail square footage and the availability of public parking. While Miami Beach is a walkable city, businesses would like to attract a larger market to shop, dine, and enjoy arts and performances. Previously Miami Beach envisioned itself as a bedroom community to professionals working in Miami’s downtown, which now has ample residential space available.

Sources

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