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# Congress Avenue Corridor

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# Community Background Report

## Congress Avenue Corridor

### Boundaries

North: Northlake Boulevard

East: Congress Avenue

West: Congress Avenue

South: Lantana Road

**Community Type:** Neighborhood

### Background

The Congress Avenue Corridor runs north to south, approximately 15 miles along Congress Avenue. Twenty-eight Census block groups are adjacent to the Corridor, which begins in Lake Park and crosses Riviera Beach, West Palm Beach, unincorporated areas of Palm Beach County, the Town of Haverhill, the Town of Glen Ridge, the Village of Palm Springs, the Town of Lake Clarke, and ends in the City of Atlantis. Two major destinations located along the corridor include the South Florida Fairgrounds and Expo Center and the Palm Beach International Airport.

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and the Palm Beach County Planning Department have identified the Congress Avenue Corridor as part of the “urban core” of Palm Beach County. In 2005, Palm Beach County established a 25 square mile Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) intended to focus redevelopment efforts and reinvest in existing resources while discouraging urban sprawl. The URA is home to 76,000 Palm Beach County residents and spans from Okeechobee Boulevard in the north to Lake Worth Road in the south. From east to west, the area runs from Interstate-95 to Haverhill and Jog roads. As of 2005, population growth in the area is projected to increase by nine percent in the next five years. [1]

In a study prepared by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, the Congress Avenue Corridor was described as the easternmost of the three Priority Redevelopment Areas (PRA’s) in the County’s URA. The PRA extends from Southern Boulevard to Forest Hill Boulevard and has been attracting greater development activity since 2007 due to “a large inventory of vacant parcels, completion of the Australian/Congress Avenues overpass, and the continued annexation of parcels on Congress Avenue to the Village of Palm Springs” (pp 2-10). The Congress Avenue Corridor runs through several neighborhoods represented by associations including Echo Lake Association of Neighbors, Spencer Lakes Property Owners Association,

Palm Beach Lakes South Neighborhood Association, and the Villages of Palm Beach Lakes Property Owners.

## Community Dynamics

The Congress Avenue Corridor has numerous senior centers in close proximity to major intersections. These are mostly rehabilitation centers and hospices including Brighton Gardens, the Village of Palm Beach Lakes Manor Care, Parliament East Condominiums, Kingwood Executive Center Park, Lakeside Village Condominiums, Lake Clarke Gardens Condominiums, Boundbrook Condominiums, Sunshine Mobile Village, Atlantis Sherbrooke Villas Condominiums, and Atlantis Regency Condominiums. The Agency for Aging is very active in this largely elderly community. Along the Congress Avenue Corridor and other corridors in the area, the police department has established “weed and seed” programs in efforts to keep children away from potential criminal activity.

Property parcels identified as in need of redevelopment are Palm Beach International Airport and the old Zayre’s shopping center. Along Southern Boulevard and Congress Avenue, a thirty-five acre parcel belonging to Palm Beach International Airport is zoned for light industrial use. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council completed a master plan for the corridor which includes short- and long-term redevelopment alternatives. The short-term plan focuses on redeveloping the largest parcels, including the site of the former Zayre’s shopping center, at busy intersections including Congress Avenue and Summit Boulevard and Congress Avenue and Southern Boulevard. The long-term plan calls for redevelopment of a larger inventory of vacant and underutilized parcels along Congress Avenue.

In 2007, Gibbs Planning Group prepared a retail market study of the Palm Beach Urban Redevelopment Area including Congress Avenue for the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. [3] They found that between 500,000 to 800,000 square feet of moderately priced retail space could be supported within the area by 2008. This in turn could yield between \$120 and \$200 million in sales each year. They recommended the development of a primary and secondary regional oriented trade areas. The primary area would be bound by State Highway 98 in the North, Interstate 95 in the East, 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the South and North Jog Road in the West. The 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 be made like a “walkable town center” with a parking allowance of 4.5 cars per 1000 square feet. In addition to the 500,000-800,000 square feet of existing retail space that should be redeveloped for the primary and secondary areas, the URA can also maintain up to 60,000 square feet of restaurants.

## Useful Tables

Population Characteristics	
Population	61,705
Median age	37
Residents 65 and over	17.4%
Residents under 18	24.7%
Married-Couple Households	40.3%
Non-Hispanic Whites	47%
Blacks	30%
Hispanics	19%
Foreign born	23%
English spoken at home	72%
Spanish spoken at home	17%
Other Language spoken at home	11%

Income	
Median household income	\$36,730
Per capita Income	\$19,547
% Households Below the poverty line	12.3%

Housing	
Description	2000
Housing Units	26,418
Total occupied	23,511
Owner occupied	14,230
Renter occupied	2,709

## Sources

- [1] Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. (2007). The Palm Beach County Urban Redevelopment Area; Planning Study and Corridor Master Plans. Palm Beach County Planning Department.
- [2] United States Census Bureau. *2000 Decennial Census, Summary File 3* [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov/>
- [3] Gibbs Planning Group, Inc. (2007). Retail Market Study Palm Beach Urban Redevelopment Area.