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Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor

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Community Background Report

Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor

Boundaries

East: Tamarind Ave.

West: State Road 7

North: Okeechobee Blvd

South: Okeechobee Blvd

Community Type: Neighborhood

Background

The Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor spans approximately 10 miles crossing 16 Census block groups as it runs east to west. The block groups adjacent to the corridor cover a land mass of 32 square miles through unincorporated Palm Beach County, West Palm Beach, Royal Palm Beach, and a portion of Haverhill. The corridor connects residential neighborhoods in the west to major points of interest in the east, including a university, a Tri-Rail Station, a performing arts center and the nearby Palm Beach International Airport.

Community Dynamics

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and the Palm Beach County Planning Department have identified portions of the Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor as part of the County “urban core.” In 2005, Palm Beach County established a 25 square mile Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) to focus on redevelopment efforts and reinvest in areas of existing resources while discouraging urban sprawl. The URA is home to 76,000 Palm Beach County residents. [1] The URA area 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 Jog Road. Population growth in the area was projected to increase by nine percent from 2005.

Several neighborhood associations represent some of the communities in the Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor, including the Lake Mangonia Neighborhood Association, Roosevelt Estates Homeowners Association, the Villages of Palm Beach Lakes Property Owners Association, Palm Beach Lakes South Neighborhood Association, and Riverwalk Homeowners Association. The Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor is also an area with several mobile home parks including the Oakland Park Mobile Home Park, Twin Lake Mobile Home Park, Meadowbrook Mobile Home Park, Plantation Mobile Home Park Estates, Mobilaire, Holiday Plaza Mobile Home Park, Seminole Village Mobile Home Park, Casa Loma Mobile Home Park and Mobile Manor.

As of the 2000 Census, 49,003 people living in the block groups falling within the Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor. Less than one in five residents (19%) were under the age of 18. Those residents ages 65 and over comprised 28% of the Corridor's population. The median age was 43 years. Married-couple families accounted for 36% of all households.

Non-Hispanic Whites accounted for 60% of the population. In 2000, 22% of the population was composed of Blacks while Hispanics made up 14% of residents. Over one in five (22.4%) residents in the Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor was born outside of the United States. English only was spoken in 75% of the households while 11% of household primarily spoke Spanish at home. For the population ages 25 and over, 18% had a bachelor's degree or higher and a vast majority (76%) of the population had at least a high school diploma or an equivalent degree.

The median household income in 2000 for the communities near the Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor was \$31,879. The per capita income was \$19,018 with 11% of households falling below the poverty line.

The Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor had 28,501 housing units. Single-family homes made up 25% of housing units. Multi-family homes accounted for 68% of housing units. Occupied housing units were primarily owner-occupied (59% of occupied housing units) with renters comprising 41% of occupied housing units. The median home price was \$65,159 and the median rent was \$677.

Several major roads and highways can be found along or in close vicinity to the Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor including South Tamarind Avenue, Interstate-95, North Congress Avenue, Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard, North Military Trail, North Haverhill Road, North State Road 7, North Jog Road, and the Florida Turnpike. The Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor also has five senior communities where the majority of residents are over the age of 55 years. [2]

The Countywide Community Revitalization Team (CCRT) was established in 1997 as an advisory board to coordinate activities for unincorporated areas of Palm Beach County that are undergoing revitalization efforts. These are neighborhoods in transition requiring assistance in coordination of their redevelopment projects. Palm Beach County has 104 CCRT areas. CCRT in close proximity to Okeechobee Boulevard include Meadowbrook Mobile Home Park, the Plantation Village, Haverhill West, Haverhill East, the neighborhoods surrounding Stacey Street, Pine Ridge/Cherry Lane, Schall Circle, and Westgate. The best represented neighborhoods in CCRT meetings are Haverhill East, Haverhill West, and Westgate.

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 Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor, were interviewed by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. [3] 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, sidewalk connectivity, bus shelters, commercial to residential transition, the loss of affordable housing units in the area, and neighborhood identity issues. One obstacle to development, identified by respondents was costly drainage. Palm Beach County's drainage requirements together with its requirements for access and road widths were cited as hindering urban redevelopment.

A general recommendation of the URA study was to improve the retention of storm water in the area. According to Palm Beach County, an estimated 15% to 20% of the 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.

Transportation was also discussed in terms of the need to make areas of Okeechobee Boulevard more pedestrian friendly and business friendly. 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. Redeveloping corridors within the URA, as suggested by the residents could curb westward expansion.

Useful Tables

Population Characteristics	
Population	49,003
Median age	43
Residents 65 and over	27.5%
Residents under 18	19.1%
Married-Couple Households	36%
Non-Hispanic Whites	59.9%
Blacks	22%
Hispanics	14%
Foreign born	22.4%
English spoken at home	75%
Spanish spoken at home	11%
Other Language spoken at home	14%

Income	
Median household income	\$31,879
Per capita Income	\$19,018
% Households Below the poverty line	11%

Housing	
Description	2000
Housing Units	28,501
Total occupied	22,609
Owner occupied	13,306
Renter occupied	9,303

Sources

[1] Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. (July 2007). Palm Beach County Urban Redevelopment Area; Planning Study and Corridor Master Plan. Palm Beach County. Gibbs Planning Group, Inc. (2007). Retail Market Study Palm Beach Urban Redevelopment Area.

[2] Senior Housing Net. (n.d.). Know More about Classic at West Palm Beach. Retrieved July 23, 2009 from http://www.seniorhousingnet.com/seniorliving-detail/classic-at-west-palm-beach_6100-common-circle_west-palm-beach_fl_33417-554279

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