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1-1-2011

# Allapattah

Recommended Citation

"Allapattah" (2011). *Miami Dade County*. 37.
https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/mpo_dade/37

# Community Background Report

## Allapattah

## County

Miami-Dade

## Boundaries

North: State Road 112
South: The Miami River and State Road 836
West: Northwest 27th Avenue
East: Interstate 95

## Community Type

 Neighborhood

## History

The Allapattah community, which its name has its origins in the Seminole word for alligator, began in 1856 and covers 4.653 square miles within the core of the City of Miami. The neighborhood is east of the Miami International Airport and bounded by major highways and the Miami River, which are important to local area businesses. Allapattah is served by the Metrorail, with three stations: Civic Center, Santa Clara and Allapattah. Today the area has a large wholesale produce market and a cut flower district, which is served by the South Florida Rail Corridor running east-west between NW 22 and 23 Streets. Additionally, the area is also well-known for its clothing outlets, serving as a trading ground for buyers and sellers especially from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Allapattah was predominantly White until the late 1950s, when there was a large influx of African-Americans displaced by the construction of Interstate Highway 95 in Overtown, and southern migration of blacks from the Liberty City and Brownsville neighborhoods. Cubans began moving into the neighborhood in the 1960s. In the 1980s there was an influx of Dominicans, Nicaraguans and later Haitians.

Along with the federal government's interest on the 'war on poverty' in the 1960s came a general growth in the size of government. Institutions of the penal system, the courts and medical facilities were built in and around Allapattah. The area's employment base grew due to the

proximity of these institutions, but so did the byproducts of rapid neighborhood and industrial change. Homelessness is one of the issues many of the area's concerned residents would like resolved.

In 1997, the City of Miami designated Allapattah as an Empowerment Zone (EZ) neighborhood, which gave small businesses in the area special eligibility for grants and loans. Because of its central location in Miami-Dade County and proximity to downtown, the airport and seaport, Allapattah offers an opportunity to further promote its community and economic development strategy through the development of affordable home ownership in the neighborhood. Allapattah's housing stock has suffered from conversions of single family homes to rooming houses and un-permitted additions to existing housing units. Large concentrations of public housing and multi-family rental apartments in the City's traditional target areas of Allapattah, Little Havana, Model City and Overtown have also had a negative impact on the surrounding residential areas, resulting in the gradual deterioration of the existing housing inventory.

## Community Dynamics

According to 2000 Census figures, seventy-seven percent of households were built before 1970 and only twenty percent of occupied housing units is owner occupied. More recently area residents are looking towards the City's In-fill Housing Initiative Program to focus on the development of city and county-owned parcels in the City's Home Ownership Zones. This initiative, coupled with the reform of the Housing Agency, could produce long term results to bring the neighborhood back from blight. The development of the Melrose Townhomes Project and the Fern Isle Gardens Townhomes Project provides an example of the potential which exists when the public and private sectors work together to provide affordable homeownership opportunities for those working poor families in the City. However, there are others who are also critical of the level of development in Allapattah, fearing gentrification and displacement.

The City of Miami has established a Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET) Office in Allapattah to help bring stability to this neighborhood, and contribute to the revitalization of the area by improving the physical, economic and social conditions. The Allapattah NET has brought increased police presence, cleared the area of many abandoned vehicles and has reduced illegal mechanical repairs in this neighborhood. The dredging of the Miami River and better housing should raise the employment rate and the average wage for residents of Allapattah.

## Demographic Highlights

Allapattah's demographics are as follows:

- In 2000 the population was 40,406: 72.23% Hispanic, 18.33% African American and 6.89% White Non-Hispanic
- Approximately 6,100 households have a median income of $17,900
- 37% of these households have an income below $12,000
- 64% of the population over the age of 25 do not have a high school diploma
- 6% of the population is below the age of 18
- 13% of households are headed by women with children under 18 years of age
- 4% of the population is over 65 years of age

## Business Landscape

Allapattah's commercial corridors are along NW 36 Street, NW 20 Street, NW 7 Avenue, NW 27 Avenue, NW 17 Avenue and NW 7 Avenue. Industrial activity intensifies between NW 27 and NW 7 Avenues, from NW 20 Street north to the South Florida Rail Corridor between NW 22 and 23 Streets, a stretch of nearly 1,500 feet. This industrial district is the largest working industrial area of the City. Many trades are well represented here and a wide range of services are offered- clothes manufacturers, auto repair shops, paint and body shops, carpentry and upholstery shops, shipyards and dry docks located along the banks of the Miami River.

Allapattah contains a major produce district where restaurants purchase their supplies. This market delivers a large volume of produce at lower costs than that found in local supermarkets. The Allapattah Produce District is bounded approximately by NW 10 Avenue to the east and NW 17 Avenue to west and between NW 20 and 24 Streets. This is the largest open-air food distribution center in Miami that serves local supermarkets and "bodegas" alike with the freshest variety of south Florida produce, tropical fruits and many other products. This District is considered a major employment center and has been estimated to have over 2,000 employees, primarily in low to semiskilled capacity that is consistent with skills of the inner city workforce. Goodwill Manufacturing is looking to expand in Allapattah, currently with a location at 2121 NW 21 Street.

In addition, Allapattah encompasses Miami's Civic Center Health District, which contains several medical institutions including the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, The University of Miami Jackson Memorial Medical Center, The Sylvester Cancer Center, The Ryder Trauma Center, Cedars of Lebanon Hospital, Veterans Administration Hospital and the Miami-Dade College Medical Center Campus. The majority of employees reaching these large institutions commute by train, arriving to the Civic Center and Allapattah Metrorail Stations. Social service institutions are also located in the area and support the population receiving medical attention.

## Sources

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