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Dixie

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Community Background Report

Dixie

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: Northwest 14 Street

South: Northwest 6 Street

West: Northwest 7 Avenue

East: Florida East Coast Railway

Community Type

Neighborhood

History

Dixie’s boundaries encompass an area of 0.4 square miles, all of it within the area of Overtown and just south of Dorsey Park. The approximate boundaries of Dixie Park are Northwest 14 Street on the North, the FEC railroad on the East, Northwest 6 Street on the South and Northwest 7 Avenue on the West. These boundaries are taken from City of Miami documents published in 1961 which list Lummus Park, Dixie Park, and Dorsey Park in the area now recognized as Overtown. The City of Miami Planning and Zoning Board publication divides the entire city into 53 “neighborhood units” without defining Overtown. Some of these neighborhood units continue to exist as neighborhoods today, such as Belle Meade, Little River, Brickell and, Coconut Grove, but others do not. Liberty Manor, Liberty Heights, Liberty Square and, Liberty Plaza are generally recognized as Liberty City. The neighborhood is longitudinally divided by Interstate-95 and its many access ramps. The northwest corner of Dixie borders a small clutches of middle-class homes, which have merged as the Spring Garden neighborhood and the Health District, a few blocks where several medical institutions are located.

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, Overtown’s economic activity remained relatively stable though steadily declining. Civil rights were increasingly recognized in Miami and blacks were more comfortable moving suburban neighborhoods (Liberty Square) further north and west of the city center because it offered less overcrowding and concrete structures with indoor plumbing. During the early 1960s, state highway engineers, planners and consultants routed

Interstate 95 through Overtown, replacing densely settled land with massive transportation structures. Later, State Road 836 (the Dolphin Expressway) further divided the two parts of Overtown into four. The previous landmarks forming Overtown's boundaries were eclipsed in their significance and no longer acknowledged as relevant to neighborhood transition. The interchange of expressways, standing some thirty feet or more above ground and visible from miles away, became the most obvious structure defining Overtown.

Community Dynamics

There are two public schools in Dixie Park, Booker T. Washington High School and Frederick Douglass Elementary School. There are three City of Miami parks in Dixie, Athalie Range, Gibson Park and Henry Reeves Park. A greenway is planned to travel through the eastern boundary of Dixie, along the Florida East Coast railway. Northwest 17th Street connects D.A. Dorsey Park, Town Park, and Williams Parks to the planned location of this greenway.

The Lyric Theater and the D.A. Dorsey House are structures of historic and cultural importance located in Dixie. The J & S Building, Greater Bethel AME Church and Mount Zion Baptist Church are structures also of historic significance and regularly draw congregants. All of these structures are between Northwest 8 and 9th Streets on Northwest 2 and Northwest 3rd Avenues.

Business Landscape

Thirty-five percent of properties in Dixie are designated for residential land use. 50 of 65 residential properties are low density multi-family units, most likely rental units. Thirty percent of residential properties in Dixie are vacant. Seventeen percent of properties in Dixie are designated for commercial land use. These are barber shops and beauty salons, convenience stores, restaurants, grocery stores and rental properties. Eighteen percent of these properties are religious and civic institutions.

Recent capital improvements in this area have been minor, improvements of ADA facilities at Gibson Park and on-going improvements to the Lyric Theater. The population has steadily migrated from Dixie to more suburban areas since the 1960s. Blight and a lack of services remain.

Sources

City of Miami, Planning and Zoning Board. (1961). A comprehensive analysis of neighborhoods of Miami. City of Miami.

Miami Dade County Planning Department. (2010). Existing Land Use Data. Miami-Dade County.

Miami Dade County Property Appraiser. (2010). Property Parcel Data. Miami-Dade County.