

PART I

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by the Planning Department as part of the ongoing study area planning process identified in Part III of the Comprehensive Development Master Plan. Specifically it addresses itself to the "First Priority Tools" in the chapter on "Implementation." On page 211, one of the guidelines for setting priorities states that:

" . . . Since studies for all the various neighborhoods cannot be done at once, priorities should be established based largely on development pressures. . . ."

There are four applications for changes of zoning and land use in the area which are scheduled for hearings before the Board of County Commissioners on February 10, and 11, 1975. The most significant is County Commission Hearing #94-9-CC-20 which is a request to change GU to RU-TH at a Special Exception for Townhouse Development. (9[±]acres). This hearing has been deferred by the County Commission three times. At the last hearing on November 11, 1974 the request for a deferral was made by the applicant for a study which " . . . would be very valuable. . . ." in determining the appropriate zoning and land use within the area. The other applications which are also located in Section 36-54-39, south of the aforementioned projects are as follows:

1. County Commission Hearing #75-2-CC-10, a request for a change from GU (General Interim) to RU-4A (Motel- Apartments), RU-5A (Business office use) and several variances and Unusual Uses to put the site plan into effect (8[±]acres).
2. County Commission Hearing #75-2-CC-11, a request for a change from GU to RU-5A (1.92[±]acres).
3. County Commission Hearing #75-2-CC-12, a request for a change from GU to BU-1A and an Unusual Use to permit a dog kennel and two variances.

Various departments and agencies have been consulted for preparation of this report. Their comments and evaluation are available on request.

Area Boundaries

East: Homestead Extension of the Florida Turnpike
West: S.W. 127 Avenue and theoretical S.W. 127 Avenue at Section line
North: Bird Drive Extension Canal
South: North Kendall Drive

This area includes sections 24 and 25 as well as section 36 less the part east of the Homestead Extension of the Florida Turnpike.

Metropolitan Relationships

The area is located in the southwestern part of the county approximately 18 miles southwest of Biscayne Bay and the Miami Central Business District. It is a highly significant private recreational area that provides valuable environmental amenities resource to the county as a whole.

The Homestead Extension of the Florida Turnpike which has been completed in 1974 has provided a sharp line of demarcation from the expanding urbanized growth from the east.

The area is characterized by open space areas such as horse and cow pastures, stables, riding academies, dog kennels, groves, farms, and plant nurseries. These are usually located on properties larger than two acres. Those smaller can be characterized as large residential estates. Until recently there was little development to the west. However, one half section adjacent to the north one third, has developed into a typical urban-suburban complex. The center one third is currently zoned for "planned unit development with a mixture of apartments, townhouses and commercial zones. The south one third is currently under construction consisting of a typical single family RU-1 subdivision and the open space use provided by the well field of the Miami Dade Water and Sewer Authority which extends to North Kendall Drive.

Recent Zoning Activity

During the past decade: 1965-75, there have been over 50 requests for changes in zoning and land use. The majority of the requests were for variances, Special Exceptions and Unusual Uses to accommodate special activities such as day camps, private schools, churches, riding academies, dog kennels, chicken farms, etc. However, recent application such as those referred to in the "Introduction" have created a need for this report. One request for a business strip zone in section 24 was denied with prejudice by the County Commission in September 1974. This was an important land use decision for the area since an approval could have opened the door to further encroachment of non compatible land use and would have eroded the existing quality of life for the area residents. (County Commission Hearing #74-9-CC-24 request AU to BU-1).

Relationship to Area

General Land Use Master Plan (Glump)

This plan which was approved in 1965 designates this area as low-density residential, (2.0 to 12.9 dwelling units per net residential acre). Major arterials indicated are: Bird Road to the north and 137 Avenue to the west and North Kendall Drive to the south. The Homestead Extension of Florida Turnpike appears as the "West Dade Expressway" to the east.

Recent area studies that include the areas to the east at South Sunset Drive Area Re-Study and South Dade Junior College Area Study which were published in 1973.

Proposed Development Master Plan Part I

The recommendations of this part of the Plan which relate to the study area are discussed under the following headings and paragraphs:

Development Pattern

- IA. 1. Limit urban expansion to those areas most suitable for new development or redevelopment on the basis of accessibility, cost of energy, extension of services, terrain, and criteria directed toward preserving vital aspects of the County's natural and man-made environment.

- IB. 4. Encourage and protect agriculture as a viable economic use of Dade County's land.

- IC. 2. Control increases of density where the character of the immediate area would be adversely affected.

- ID. 1. Conserve and protect existing sound residential areas. (Page X) *

- 2. Establish creative taxation as a technique to encourage preservation of agriculture, recreational, greenbelt lands, native pinelands, hammocks, and other open spaces within the urban area through the maintenance of private property and the protection of native and unique vegetation thereon. (Page 22)*

Comprehensive Development Master Plan Part III

* Metropolitan Dade County Planning Department, Part I of Comprehensive Development Master Plan for Metropolitan Dade County, May 1974.

Neighborhood Planning

The Comprehensive Development Master Plan is necessarily broad in scale because it is metropolitan in scope. While this approach is desirable in order to obtain an overall guide for the entire planning area, it is equally necessary to divide the area into smaller units where details of the general plan can be refined and implemented. This process, known as "neighborhood planning," includes the following steps:

1. identification of a comprehensive system of neighborhood study areas:
2. preparation and periodic revision of studies for these areas: and
3. implementation of proposals recommended within these areas.

In order to effectively serve as a process for detailed refinement of the Comprehensive Development Master Plan, neighborhood planning must be actively pursued on a continuous basis and carefully coordinated with the proposals of other agencies and departments concerned with different phases of community development and environmental preservation.

Identification of Study Areas. The entire County has been organized into sub-areas as a framework. Built-up, or urbanizing portions of the County should be further subdivided into a system of neighborhood study areas. In developing a system of study areas, a number of factors should be considered, such as municipal boundaries, and areas for which neighborhood

studies have previously been completed; the Model City planning area; various Neighborhood Development Program areas, and some special studies such as the East Everglades and the I-75/Airport area. Consideration should also be given to the frequency of requests for zoning changes.*

Since studies for all the various neighborhoods cannot be done at once, priorities should be established based largely on development pressures. Areas that are under intense pressure to growth or changing conditions should be studied first. In addition, other means can be developed to establish priorities for neighborhood studies, such as an evaluation and comparison of neighborhood indicators to determine which localities have the greatest need. Such indicators could include water and sewer availability, environmental deficiencies, housing conditions, and public safety (Page 211).*

The goal of planning "with people" instead of planning "for people" is especially significant to those citizens who are concerned with conditions in their neighborhood. Preparation of meaningful studies for such neighborhood Planning areas usually requires two distinct types of participation -- citizen and staff. Participation by citizens (property owners, residents, businessmen and others having an interest in the area) involves working with the staff to review the material prepared by Planners and others. (Page 212)*

In some neighborhoods, citizens have also organized themselves into other special citizen groups -- i.e. a Home Owners Association, Garden Club or similar civic group. Where such organizations are active, the opportunity for more meaningful input by citizens is usually greater. Members of such groups are generally more aware of the problems and knowledgeable about the opportunities for their neighbor than are the citizens of areas where no such organization exists. Furthermore, some organizations of this nature are actually involved in various forms of implementation -- such as neighborhood clean-up or beautification programs (Page 213)*

The "Proposed 1985 Metropolitan Development Pattern" map (July 1974) which is attached to Part III delineates Sections 24 and 25-54-39 as "Agriculture and Open Land" Section 36 partially delineated as "Parks and Recreation" identifies the projects of the Miami Dade Water and Sewer Authority well field. The balance of the section west of Homestead Extension of Florida Turnpike is delineated as "Low Medium Density, (up to 5.0 d/us per gross residential acre.*

The "Proposed 2000 Conceptual Metropolitan Development Pattern" (July 1974) delineates all three sections as part of "urban development" area with no specific density.*

* Metropolitan Dade County Planning Department, Part III Proposed Comprehensive Development Master Plan for Metropolitan Dade County, July 1974.

II EXISTING CONDITIONS

Physical Characteristics

According to the "Generalized Topography and Hydrography" Map of Metropolitan Dade County (1971), the ground elevation of this area ranges from 5 - 10 feet above mean sea level. The "Soil Association Map" of Dade County (1965, identifies the area soils as . . . "poorly drained rockland with some moderately drained deep marls in the north and east portion, and some moderately well drained shallow soils in the northeast and southeast. . . ."

The Snapper Creek Canal at the northeast at S.W. 117 Avenue and the Bird Drive Extension Canal at the north boundary provide drainage for the area.

Land Ownership Patterns

The Bird-Kendall Ranch Area is a needed land use in Dade County. It is an open space oasis in the midst of a disjointed urban-suburban sprawl. Possibly one of the reasons for the bypassing of urban development in this area is wide variety of single ownerships that exist ranging from 60± acres south of Sunset Drive in pasture land to the 1 1/4 acre residential parcels at the northern end which are zoned EU-1 (one acre estates). The 60 acre parcel is currently receiving the special agricultural exemption. The following data which identifies the number and size of the parcels under separate ownership is as follows:

1.	More than 10 acres	13
2.	10 - 5 acres	26
3.	Less than 5 but larger than 2.5	121
4.	2.5 - 1	271
5.	Less than 1 acre	<u>26</u>
	Totals Parcels	457

Existing Land Use (Figure 1)

Ranch-style and large estate uses predominate in the area. Several institutional uses are interspersed in the area consisting of two churches with related nursery and school uses, one private preparatory school (15± acres) on Sunset Drive, a Florida Power and Light substation, and parking facilities for American Hospital at the northeast corner (5 acres±).

However, the most significant is the property of the Miami Dade Water and Sewer Authority with 150[±] acres at the south west corner. This area is part of a large well field which extends west into Section 35-54-39. This project is identified as a part of the well field, (80[±]acres); however, more than half of this area (45[±]acres) has been leased to W F U N for a radio transmitting station. This provides a buffer area from the developing single family subdivision to the west of theoretical S.W. 127 Avenue. According to information received from Miami Dade Water and Sewer Authority a contract has been let for the construction of a lime storage lagoon on a portion of their property. (The total number of acres owned by Miami Dade Water and Sewer Authority is 230[±]). This lagoon will ultimately be used to store the natural limestone contained in the raw water which is removed in the water softening process at the Alexander Orr, Jr. Water Treatment Plant at Galloway Road, south of Miller Road.

Agricultural Tax Exemption

According to the data received from the Tax Assessor there are approximately 80 parcels in the area which are being taxed at a reduced rate due to a provision of the "Agricultural Tax Exemption" Statute of the State of Florida. A land evaluator from the Tax Assessor's office recently completed a field check of the area and estimated that at least forty more parcels may qualify based on current use of the properties. Basically, the first acre with a home site is taxed at the regular rate with the additional property taxed at a lower rate if it is considered a bona fide agricultural use.

Existing Zoning (Figure 2)

The predominate zones in this area are as follows:

GU -	1,060 ± acres
AU -	600 ± acres
EU - 1	40 ± acres
BU-IA	5 ± acres
EU-M	3 ± acres

The GU zoned area extends from Miller Road to North Kendall Drive on the south. The AU zoned area extends from S .W. 43 Street on the north to Miller Road on the south. The EU-1 zone consists of a narrow strip of land frontage on S.W. 43 Street to the Bird Drive Extension Canal. The five acre BU-1A zone is located at the northeast corner of this area. The EU-M zone consists of a small triangular parcel at S.W. 80 Street and the Homestead Extension of the Florida Turnpike.

III RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning Guidelines

The Proposed Comprehensive Development Guide has provided generalized guidelines for the future development of Dade County, there are some additional guidelines that should be followed to help preserve the integrity of the area.

1. Future traffic and transportation improvements should give careful consideration to the existing horse traffic that is generated in the area on existing rights-of-way.
2. Projected road alignments should be re-evaluated to prevent the conflicts that may occur due to horse traffic.
3. Some linkage of various ranch and riding academy facilities should be explored to provide maximum use of this type of recreational activity. A possible means of implementing this proposal may be a "park and recreational district." Bridle paths and horse trails were discussed in the Linnear Park Study. However, due to a conflict with the Bikeways Proposal this idea was dropped. Since the completion of H.E.E.T. to the east it may be appropriate to consider the possibility of using a portion of the swale area inside the fence for future equestrian trails if proper safeguards can be provided for separating the horse and vehicular traffic.

Conclusions

Recommended Land Use (Figure 3)

The existing land use should be preserved and extended to the vacant parcels that are currently overgrown with weeds and various noxious exotic plants such as the Brazilian Pepper and Australian Pine. The only significant changes should occur as indicated in section 36 which provides for a gradation of densities beginning with two per acre at North Kendall Drive and one acre and agricultural uses to Sunset Drive.

Recommended Rezoning (Figure 4)

The changes recommended are being made to implement the Recommended Land Use Plan and are as follows:

Parcel 1 - BU-IA to EU-1

This parcel is currently used as a parking lot for the American Hospital to the north. This land use can continue under a special permit in the EU-1 zone since it relates directly to the hospital use.

Parcel 2 - GU to AU

This existing interim zoning district has no validity now since the predominate land use is oriented towards established agricultural and open space activities.

Parcel 3 - GU to AU

This represents a continuation of the agricultural and ranch oriented activities that are related to the permitted uses within the AU zone.

Parcel 4 - GU to EU-1

This represents a gradation in intensity from agricultural to one acre estate uses which permits horses and other open space uses as a more restricted basis.

Parcel 5 - EU-M to EU-1

This represents a closer reflection of the existing use. In addition it lies within the recommended EU-1 zone to the west. This small parcel (3¹/₂ acres) is a remnant of the larger existing E U M zone which was cut of by Homestead Extension of Florida Turnpike.

Parcel 6 GU to EU-M

This represents another gradation of densities from 1.0 in the recommended EU-1 to the north and 2.0 which is the average density in the EU-M zone.

While the zoning decisions in the past have been to significantly increase density and use along North Kendall Drive, it does not follow that this area should reflect that tendency. There are two significant differences that should be carefully considered in evaluating the future land use between North Kendall Drive and Sunset

Drive. The existence of a 250 acre well field of the Miami Dade Water and Sewer Authority adjoining most of the area in question. The type of development especially the land intensive type could create problems for the quality of the water taken from the well field.

The existence of a viable ranch-type, agricultural area that has been established over a long period of time. The density gradation recommended: 2.0 dwelling units per acre (EU-M) to larger estates and agricultural related uses. This arrangement of densities we believe will create the most compatible land use pattern. There may be sufficient zoned land for multiple family and single family in the general area to provide for future housing needs.