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# Little Havana

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# Community Background Report

## Little Havana

### County

Miami-Dade

### Boundaries

North: Miami River

South: Southwest 11th Street

West: Southwest 22nd Avenue

East: Interstate 95

### Community Type

Neighborhood

### History

Settlement came to the area around Flagler Street just as it came to the City of Miami. This was one of the highest elevations, which made it easy to build on without the necessity of draining the land. Still, East Little Havana was west of the center of activity, near Biscayne Boulevard and Miami Beach. The opening of bridges enabled traffic of people and goods over the Miami River. Many of Little Havana's earliest structures are still standing, though in questionable states of repair.

Today the 1.4 square mile Little Havana is primarily known for the culture of its people, which migrated and mixed through housing booms and busts. People of many different cultures have resided in this area, with the well-to-do in the 1910s, 20s and 30s. Then between the 1930s and the 1960s it became a primarily Jewish community. In the 1960s affluent Cubans began to move into the area. They had mostly moved west and north when in the 1980s many more immigrants came from Cuba, settling in Little Havana where the culture had solidified its roots. Though Haitians were also migrating to the Miami area in large numbers, they settled further northeast. Nicaraguans settled in Little Havana, because they were comfortable with the culture, language and similar political perspectives. In the 1990s many more Central American immigrants came to Little Havana and as a result more of the middle class moved to other areas of Miami. The population had become Honduran, Salvadoran, Nicaraguan and Cuban. Cubans were no longer the majority but held more political influence than the others combined as they were more likely

to be citizens and active voters. Though Little Havana had fallen into blight and was prime for redevelopment, developers did not come to the area with large projects till the late 1990s.

## Community Dynamics

Using 2000 Census data, the City of Miami found Little Havana as having the highest density of residents. Though the area remains poor, it is ripe for redevelopment. The delicate approach to redevelopment in this politically charged neighborhood hinges on promoting neighborhood identity while changing the neighborhood's structures.

Since 2000, there has been much development in Little Havana of multi-level residential condos, commercial buildings and living facilities for the aged. This development has occurred mostly along the main business corridors of Flagler Street, Southwest 8th Street, Southwest 8th Avenue and Southwest 12th Avenue. More recently developers have been attracted to the Miami River as an opportunity to build on available waterfront property.

The City of Miami Master Plan is targeting improvements to the area's parks and other recreation facilities, which include facilitating pedestrian connections to the Robert King Homes Park, south of Northwest 7th street, and better management of parking around the Miami Marlins Stadium. Streetscape improvements are also encouraged by the community along Southwest 8th and 12th Avenues and along Northwest 2nd Street, West Flagler Street, South River Drive and Southwest 1st, 7th and 8th Streets.

## Demographic Highlights

According to 2000 Census, eighty-three percent of households were built before 1970 and the demographic information is as follows:

- There are approximately 17,500 households with a median income of \$14,900.
- 40% of these households have an income below \$12,000.
- Only 9% of occupied housing units are owner occupied.
- 66% of the population over the age of 25 without a high school diploma.
- 10,183 of the population is below the age of 18.
- 10% of households are headed by women with children under 18 years of age.

- 14% of the population is over 65 years of age.

## Business Landscape

Little Havana's commercial corridors are many for its size. Commercial property is located along Northwest 22nd, 17th, and 12th Avenues and Northwest 7th, Southwest 1st, Southwest 8th and West Flagler Streets. These corridors are characterized by businesses such as restaurants, botanicas, small shops, car dealerships, record stores and cigar factories. Using 2000 Census data, the City of Miami found Little Havana as having the highest density of residents, which is attractive to local and national retail businesses.

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