1-1-2011

Tamiami

Community Background Report

Tamiami

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: S.W. 8th Street
South: S.W. 42nd Street
West: S.W. 142nd Avenue
East: Florida Turnpike (SR 821)

Community Type

Neighborhood

History

Tamiami is a neighborhood with boundaries similar to the census-designated place located south of southwest 8th street in Miami-Dade County, Florida. "Tamiami" is a name created from the combination of the words "Tampa" and "Miami". The Tamiami Trail, a roadway that connects the two cities, was the reason for this unique combination (Wikipedia: Tamiami). April 25, 2003 marked the 75th anniversary of the completion of the Tamiami Trail, the Trail was built through sandy pines, oak hammocks and finally the inhospitable swamps of the Everglades. Finishing the Trail required a dozen years, $8-million, almost three million sticks of dynamite (Klinkenberg 2003). The Tamiami trail has been under renovation since 1999 and has been the connecting rod to the surrounding neighborhoods. Construction on the Tamiami Trail has been intense over the past years as the "Florida Department of Transportation's Calle Ocho" project continues its eastward grind from the Palmetto Expressway through Coral Gables and into West Little Havana. The project's goal is to restore what used to be a smooth and safe roadway, "there were several gas stations along the Tamiami Trail that are not there anymore and in the past, there was no environmental control,", "so many of their gas tanks had ruptured and their gas or diesel escaped into the water table" (De Valle 1999).

The neighborhood of Tamiami is also home to Florida International University (FIU). The university was founded by Charles Perry who recruited the three co-founders, Butler Waugh, Donald McDowell and Nick Sileo. They decided to establish the university on an abandoned

Tamiami Airport in the summer of 1969 and launched the monumental task of creating a new university. Alvah Chapman, former Miami Herald publisher and Knight Ridder chairman, used his civic standing and media power to assist the effort (Ivonne 1985). FIU was known until 1984 as a commuter campus, until the first dormitory building on its Tamiami campus was built and finished in 1985. The multi-building design is in contrast to the student housing at FIU's Bay Vista campus, located at 2800 NE 147th St. Tamiami campus' student housing cost nearly $10 million, paid for by bonds floated by the Dade County Educational Facilities Authority. These buildings dot the northeast corner of the campus at 107th Avenue and Southwest Eighth Street (Kelly Rovira 1984).

Much of the residential lanscape is shaped around the neighborhood park. The Tamiami Park located at 11201 SW 24 Street, Miami, Florida, houses 6 lighted tennis courts and an Olympic-sized pool (Miami-Dade: Parks and Recreation). The park used to be a temporary 1.7 mile IndyCar track, used between 1985 and 1988 by IndyCar and the 1988 Marlboro Challenge. The race never attracted the crowds needed which preferred attending the downtown IMSA race. The race disappeared in 1989. Cars reached an impressive 116.6 mph (Silhouette.com: Racing). Tamiami Park's pool is the most modern, competition-size pool maintained by Miami-Dade County. The park's pool has been removated in the past, trying to elevate the facilities standards. Neighborhood residents, who enjoy the pool, have voiced their opinions, when the County closed the pool . "What's happening at the Tamiami pool is taking time, but a very positive thing for the community," said Tamiami pool manager George Parrado. "It's not every day that we can upgrade our facilities like this. Its the largest pool that the county operates, and the whole idea is to make it our showcase" (De la Cruz 1989).

Further, the Tamiami neighborhood every year welcomes the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition (The Fair). The Fair Expo Center is at the heart of southwest Miami-Dade County and is adjacent to beautiful Florida International University campus and Tamiami Park. The 80 acre land where "The Fair" takes place, serves the Miami's community year round with events, youth programs, competitions and corporate functions except for three weeks out of the year when the annual county fair takes place here (FairExpo.com). The Fair is held during the spring. One of the largest county fairs in the entire country, The Fair attracts nearly one million visitors each year helping put the neighborhood on the map (FairExpo.com).

Community Dynamics

As of the census of 2000, there were 54,788 people, 16,285 households, and 14,233 families residing in the Tamiami. The racial makeup of the Tamiami was 90.57% White, 0.89% African American, 0.10% Native American, 0.59% Asian, 0.02% Pacific Islander, 4.85% from other races, and 2.99% from two or more races. 86.98% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

There were 16,285 households out of which 42.1% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 66.0% were married couples living together, 16.2% had a female householder with no husband present, and 12.6% were non-families. The average household size was 3.33 and the average family size was 3.50. The median income for a household in the Tamiami was $47,503, and the median income for a family was $49,763. Males had a median income of $30,716 versus $26,426 for females. The per capita income for the Tamiami was $17,601. 9.4% of the population and 7.6% of families were below the poverty line. 12.0% of those under the age of 18 and 9.7% of those 65 and older were living below the poverty line.

Sources

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