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West Little River

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Community Background Report

West Little River

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: Northwest 107th Street and Little River Drive

South: Northwest 79th Street

West: Northwest 37th Avenue

East: North Miami Avenue

Community Type

Neighborhood

History

West Little River is a neighborhood of 1.3 square miles in the City of Miami, near Opa-Locka, El Portal, Little Haiti and Liberty City. Like the Model City neighborhood, there exists a widespread pattern of housing abandonment and unresponsive absentee landlords who have not maintained their properties. Housing overcrowding and the lack of code enforcement are also major problems in this area.

Due to the lack of any large publicly owned parcels, which could facilitate the development of substantial housing units in the first year, ongoing land acquisition activities will be undertaken by the City. In addition, as part of the City's strategy, both site acquisition and/or project financing assistance will be made available to both private developers and not-for-profit community development corporations for the development of privately-owned parcels in the zone.

Community Dynamics

For this community, the expansion of homeownership opportunities is vital to stabilization. The low-income residents of this community require homebuyer counseling and education during the

process of qualifying for homeownership. In most instances, it is difficult for many of the families to qualify for mortgages, and it is imperative that the City, working with local financial institutions, structure a mortgage qualification process that would enable prospective homebuyers to benefit from the homeownership opportunities that will be available in the community over the next five years. Some institutions have been founded to encourage homeownership, such as the Neighborhood Housing Services.

Demographic Highlights

The following are demographics for the area:

- This is a low-income, high-poverty area.
- The poverty rate for persons in 2000 was 30 percent, increasing since 1990.
- The percent of families in poverty also increased in these years from 22% to 26%.
- Households are also more likely to rent rather than own their housing units and both homes either renter or owner occupied were valued below County average home and rent values.

The ethnic composition of this neighborhood is steadily changing. Increasingly, blacks are moving from West Little River, while Hispanics are moving in with growing numbers.

Business Landscape

This area has been targeted as a neighborhood for increased governmental improvement since 1993 and possibly earlier. Today West Little River is a designated City of Miami Targeted Urban Area (TUA). The Task Force on Urban Economic Revitalization has identified the absence of entrepreneurial environment as one of the most significant barriers to economic growth in Miami-Dade County's TUAs. TUAs are historically impoverished and underserved black neighborhoods that lack sufficient commercial and industrial activity to generate much needed capital investment and jobs.

In fiscal year 2001, many small black owned businesses in the West Little River area were granted funding. In that same year, less than one percent of architectural, engineering and landscape architectural firms receiving certification for competency were located in West Little River. This certification is required in order to be placed on a pool of businesses that are eligible for governmental contracts.

West Little River's commercial properties are concentrated along Northwest 27th and Northwest 22nd Avenues and along Northwest 27th and 7th Avenues. West Little River also has access to the Little River Canal but abutting properties are mostly residential, not industrial or marine land use.

Sources

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Revitalization Strategy Area Profile, 2003.

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