

City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Division  
DRAFT September 24, 2015

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DOUGLAS ST ENTRANCE • CORAL GABLES  
WALTER DeGARMO • PHINEAS E. PAIST • DENMAN FINK ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS



# Objectives







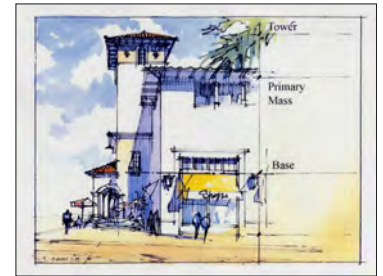
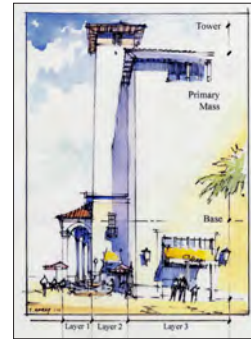
## Workshop Objectives

The City of Coral Gables initiated the June 12-13, 2015 public workshop to inform the future planning and development of the North Ponce area of the city. The study area was previously examined as part of the Downtown Coral Gables Charrette in 2002, and the City engaged a team of faculty from the University of Miami School of Architecture who had organized and carried out the original charrette to contribute expertise that might inform the current public dialog. In commissioning the workshop, the City anticipated the need to plan and manage the ongoing evolution of the study area including:

- The protection/preservation of the small-scale historic apartment buildings;
- The development of standards for compatible new development;
- More specific regulation of the transitions between intensive development along the commercial corridors and smaller scale buildings along the interior residential streets;
- Strategies for improving the pedestrian character and quality of the area including public space, streets and streetscapes.
- The opportunity to protect and enhance the area as a diverse, compact, walkable urban neighborhood for living and working directly connected to the downtown.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Engage citizens, stakeholders and city staff in a dialog about the overall urban character of the area today and in the future, considering planning, design and policy issues related to the history, sense of place and quality of life of the North Ponce area of the city;
- Gather input from the public through a variety of individual and team activities;
- Identify key issues, challenges and opportunities in the study area, and;
- Generate recommendations for the City's consideration.



Sketches from the 2002 Downtown Coral Gables Charrette, illustrating urban design and architecture ideas for downtown and North Ponce.





# Facilitator Team





## Facilitator Team

### Dr. Charles C. Bohl

Associate Professor; Masters of Real Estate Development + Urbanism (MRED+U) Program Director.

Expertise: City and Regional Planning, Placemaking, Participatory Planning, Mixed-Use Development.



### Jorge L. Hernandez

Professor; Principal, Jorge L. Hernandez, Architect.

Expertise: Architecture Design & Theory, Architectural History, Urban Design, Historic Preservation.



### Joanna Lombard

Professor; Joint Appointment: School of Medicine.

Expertise: Architecture, Landscape & Urbanism, Health Care & Built Environment.



### Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk

Malcolm Matheson Distinguished Professor of Architecture; Master of Urban Design Program Director; Dean 1996-2013; Founding principal, Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company.

Expertise: Architectural Design, Urban Design, Town Planning, New Urbanism.







# Study Area



## Study Area

The study area is bounded by major commercial corridors: Lejeune Road to the west, SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Douglas Road to the east, and Alhambra Circle/Alhambra Plaza to the south. This portion of Coral Gables includes a wide variety of residential, commercial and civic buildings, with a large percentage of the residential consisting of older one-to-three story multifamily buildings, including a significant number of pre-WWII historic buildings scattered throughout the study area. The majority of buildings, however, are of post-WWII vintage, primarily 1-3 story multi-family buildings from the 1960s-80s, which have traditionally provided a large share of the city's affordable housing.

The street network of the study area includes five parallel streets running north-south – Lejeune, Salzedo, Ponce, Galiano and Douglas. Lejeune, Ponce and Douglas are major commercial corridors planned as wider thoroughfares and zoned for taller mixed-use buildings. Salzedo is the parallel street to the west of Ponce and Galiano is the parallel street to the east. When compared to Ponce, Salzedo and Galiano are narrower and more residential in nature. A cross grain of perpendicular, smaller-scaled streets run east-west where most of the historic and smaller scaled buildings are located. There are also two important diagonal corridors: East Ponce de Leon Boulevard and the diagonal section of Alhambra Circle that runs north of Alhambra Plaza from Ponce to Douglas. Of the

three major commercial corridors, Ponce de Leon Boulevard is the central spine connecting the CBD with SW 8th Street and is zoned for the largest scale of development.

In terms of the block pattern formed by the street layout, the depth of the north-south blocks is fairly consistent in the study area at around 200 feet. The east-west block lengths, however, vary from 450-feet west of Ponce (between Salzedo and Ponce) to 600-feet or more in the two block lengths that run east of Ponce (between Ponce and Galiano, and Galiano and Douglas).

The study area also is home to historic civic properties including the Douglas Entrance, the Coral Gables Woman's Club and the Coral Gables Elementary School, and Phillips Park. The North Ponce study area resists definition as a single "neighborhood," but its location in the most urbanized area of the City, the concentration of multifamily housing and mixed-use development, and the proximity and connectivity to downtown Coral Gables provide a common frame of reference and orientation.

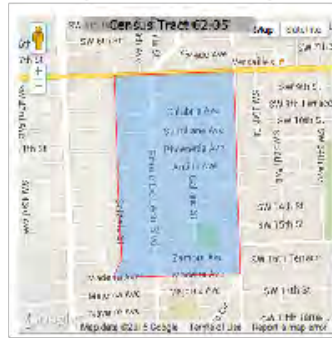
The study area is a demographically distinct area within the city. The table on the next page illustrates some of the major differences in population and housing characteristics between the North Ponce study area and the City of Coral Gables as a whole.



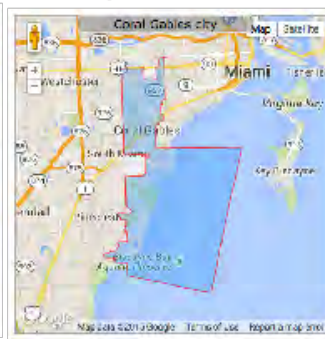
## Study Area Demographics

### Demographic Comparison of the North Ponce Study Area and the City of Coral Gables

North Ponce District  
(Census Tract 62.05)



City of Coral Gables



					Census Data Years
<b>Total Population</b>	3,621	46,780			2010
Hispanic or Latino origin	78.1%	53.6%	7.7% of city's population		2010
Races, non-White (Black, Asian, American Indian, Other)	12.2%	9.0%	24.5% more than city		2010
<b>Employment: % Pop in Labor Force</b>	72.6%	59.9%	3.2% more than city		2013
<b>Median HH Income</b>	\$38,767	\$90,649	12.7% more than city		2013
<b>Age</b>			42.8% of city median		2013
Median Age	35.9	38.8			2010
% of Population Ages 0-21 years old	16.7%	30.0%	2.9 years younger		2010
% of Population Ages 22-44 years old	50.6%	28.2%	-13.3% less than city		2010
% of Population Ages 45 years and older	32.6%	41.6%	22.4% more than city		2010
<b>Educational-High School Grad or Higher</b>	94.8%	95.9%	-9.0% less than city		2010
<b>Marital status (age 15+)</b>					2013
Married now	39.0%	47.6%	-1.1%		2010
Divorced or separated	25.2%	10.7%	-8.6% less than city		2010
Never married	31.9%	37.4%	14.5% more than city		2010
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	2,518	20,266	-5.5% less than city		2010
Renter occupied	85.1%	36.2%	12.4% of city's units		2010
<b>Households</b>			48.9% more than city		2010
Total Households	1,989	17,946			2010
Non-Family HHs (sing les and unrelated)	57.3%	37.6%	11.1% of city's HHs		2010
Non-family 1-person HH	45.6%	29.2%	19.7% more than city		2010
			16.4% more than city		2010

As the figures in the table illustrate:

- The population of the North Ponce District is younger than the city's population, with a much larger percentage of people between the ages of 22-45.
- They are more likely to be single and live in small households of 1 or 2 persons.
- They are more diverse, including a much larger percentage of residents of Hispanic or Latino origin and slightly more mixed race than the city.
- They are working age, more likely to be engaged in the labor force than the city popu-

- lation as a whole (reflecting the smaller numbers of children and retirees in the district).
- They earn significantly less in terms of household income, which is likely related to that fact that they are in the early stages of their careers and a much larger percentage of their households are single income households.

The workshop benefitted from the participation of many people living and working in the study area, including some who have been in the North Ponce district as little as a month and others as long as 41 years.



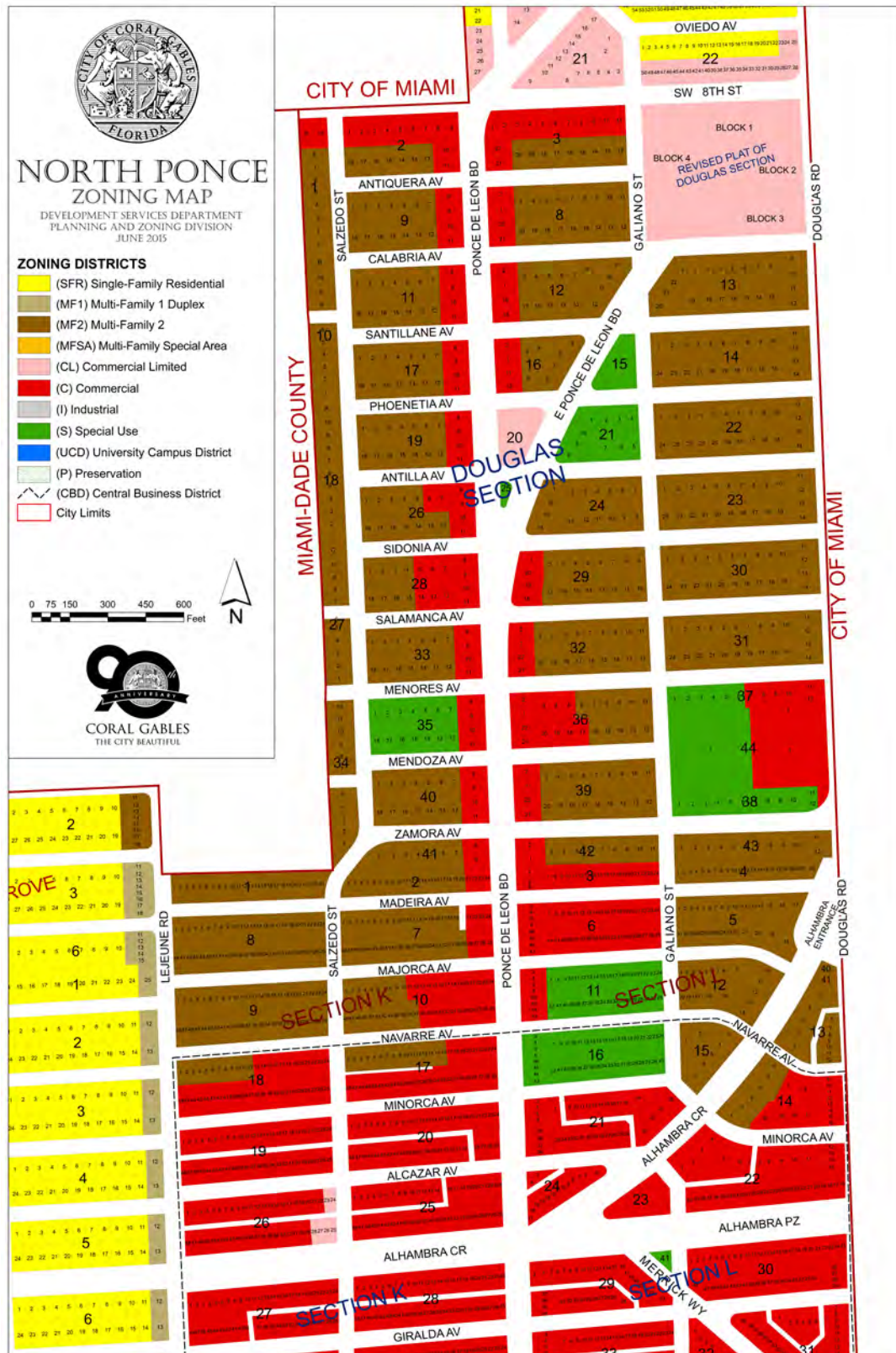


## Aerial

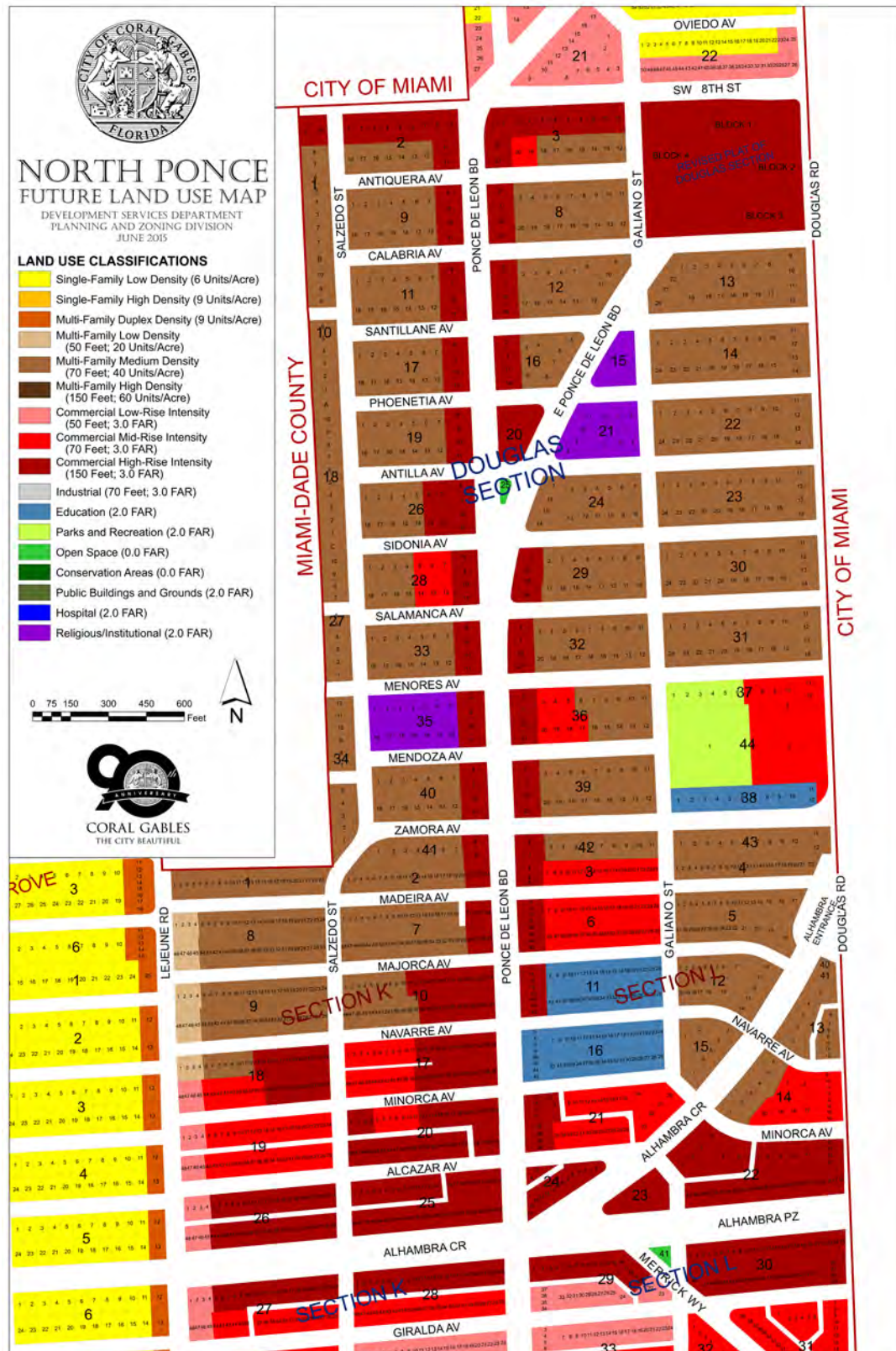




# Zoning Map

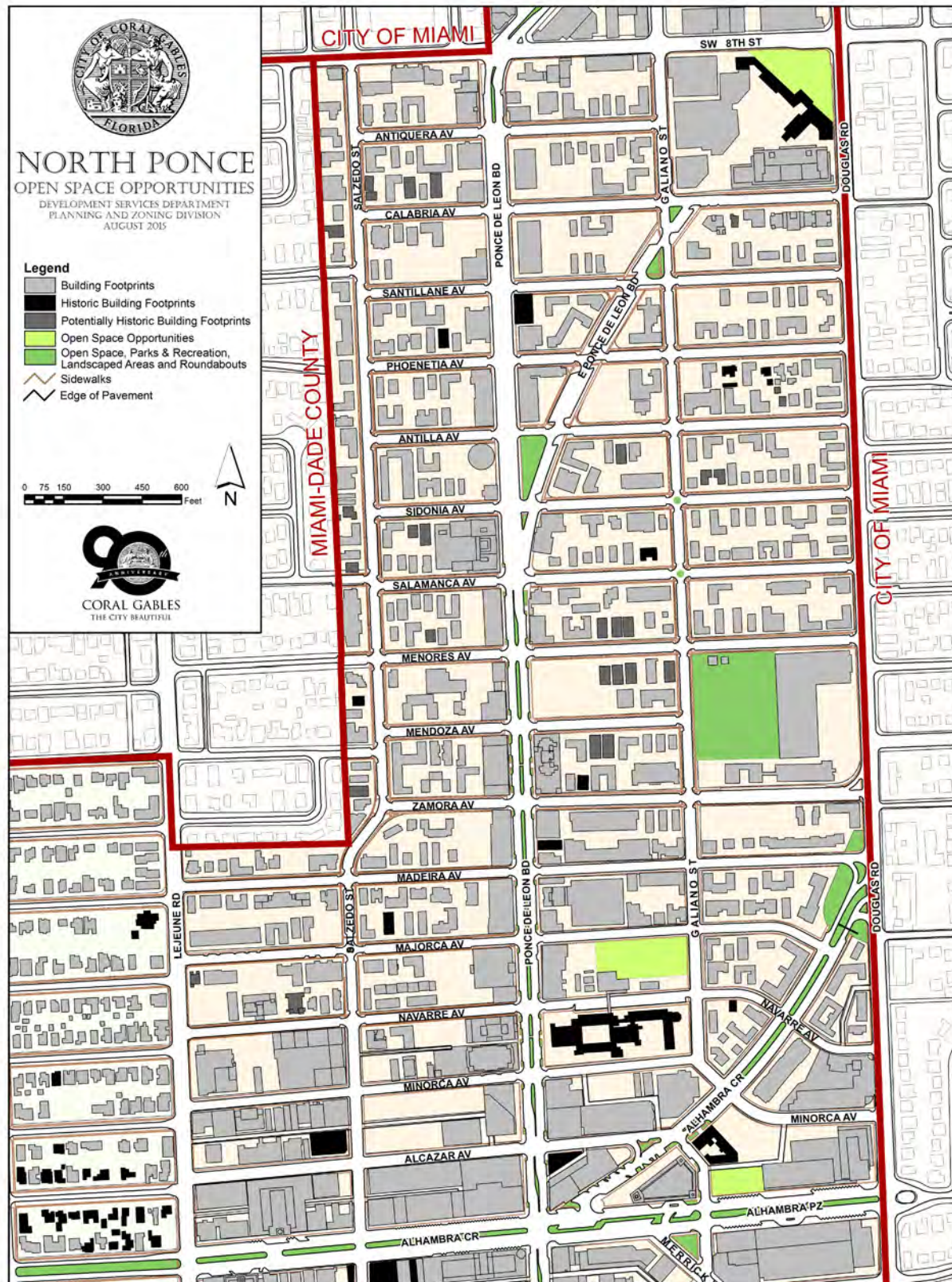


# Future Land Use Map





## Parks and Open Space Opportunities





**CITY OF MIAMI**

**SW 8TH ST**

**DOUGLAS RD**

**ANTIGUERA AV**

**CALABRIA AV**

**SANTILLANE AV**

**PHOENETIA AV**

**ANTILLA AV**

**SIDONIA AV**

**SALAMANCA AV**

**MENORES AV**

**MENDOZA AV**

**ZAMORA AV**

**MADEIRA AV**

**MAJORCA AV**

**NAVARRE AV**

**MINORCA AV**

**ALCAZAR AV**

**ALHAMBRA CR**

**LEJUNE RD**

**SAIZEDO ST**

**PONCE DE LEON BD**

**GALIANO ST**

**NAVARRE CR**

**MINORCA AV**

**ALHAMBRA CR**

**MERRICK**

**CITY OF MIAMI**

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY**

**Legend**

- Building Footprints
- Historic Building Footprints
- Potentially Historic Building Footprints
- City Parking Lots
- Sidewalks
- Edge of Pavement

0 75 150 300 450 600 Feet

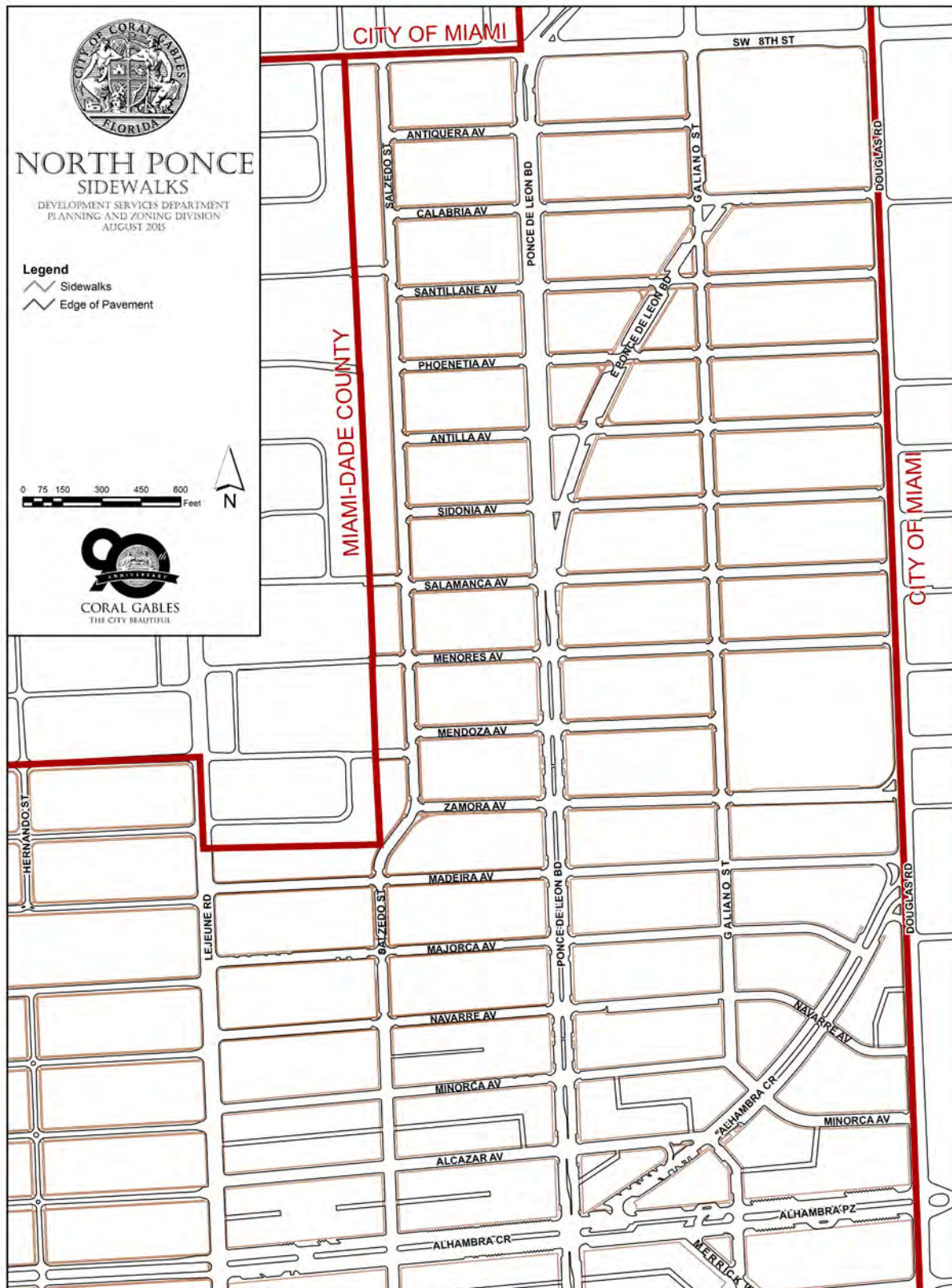
**CORAL GABLES**  
THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

**NORTH PONCE**  
CITY PARKING LOTS  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
PLANNING AND ZONING DIVISION  
AUGUST 2015

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES**  
FLORIDA



## Sidewalks



# Community Input







## Community Input

### PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Special Town Hall Meeting E-News
- Regularly Scheduled E-News
- City Website - Upcoming Events
- City Website - Master Calendar
- Emails to registered homeowner associations in the study area
- Flyers distributed to local businesses and public buildings
- Coral Gables TV promotion
- Newspaper Advertisement

### AGENDA

Friday, June 12, 2015, 6:00 – 8:30 PM

Kickoff Presentations and Public Discussion:

- Five Points of a Healthy Neighborhood, Joanna Lombard
- Residential Building Types and Historic Preservation, Jorge L. Hernandez
- Creating Quality Urban Neighborhoods, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk
- Coral Gables 2002 Charrette: Recap and Changes Since, Charles C. Bohl
- Audience Q & A

Saturday, June 13, 2015, 8:30 am – 12:30 pm

8:30 am - 9:00 am

Workshop Registration and Refreshments

9:00 am - 11:00 am

Study Area Trolley & Walking Tour

11:00 am - 11:30 am

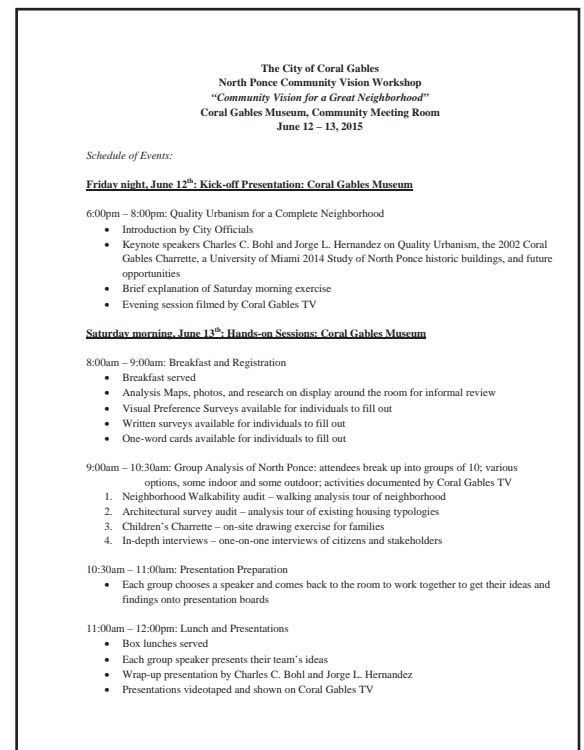
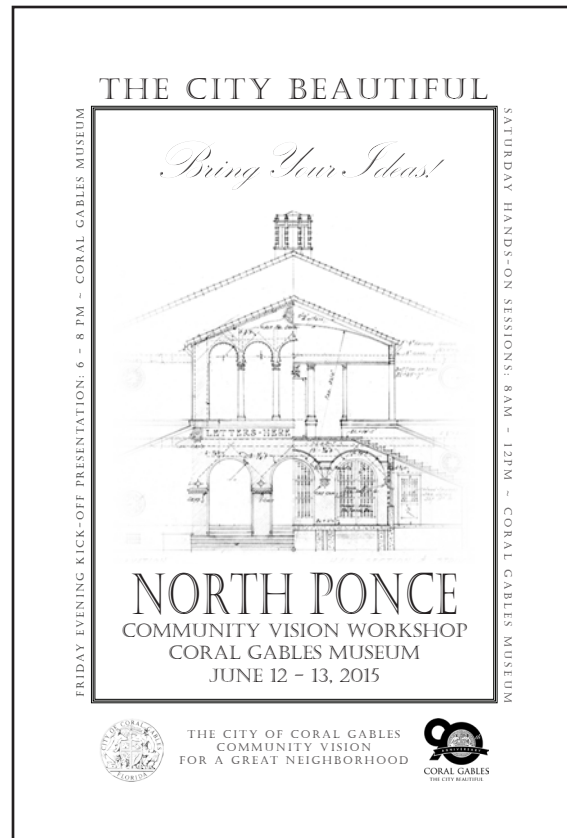
Individual and Group Workshop Activities

11:30 am- 12:15 pm

Report back from team discussion sessions

12:15 pm – 12:30 pm

Wrap up and next steps



## Study Tour



Participants took a trolley tour of the study area to be able to discuss urban design and planning ideas with direct knowledge of neighborhood needs.



The trolley tour included multiple stops where participants walked neighborhood streets to examine typical building types, streetscape, and quality of life issues.















## Table Working Groups



Following the trolley and walking tour, participants worked together in table groups to discuss ideas and establish their vision for North Ponce.



## One Word Cards

<p>In ONE word...</p> <p>Describe North Ponce today:</p> <p><i>Confused</i></p> <p>What is your vision for the future?</p> <p><i>Liveable</i></p> <p> NORTH PONCE COMMUNITY VISION WORKSHOP </p>	<p>In ONE word...</p> <p>Describe North Ponce today:</p> <p><i>CHARACTER</i></p> <p>What is your vision for the future?</p> <p><i>PRESERVATION</i></p> <p> NORTH PONCE COMMUNITY VISION WORKSHOP </p>
<p>In ONE word...</p> <p>Describe North Ponce today:</p> <p><i>Mediterranean</i></p> <p>What is your vision for the future?</p> <p><i>Diversity, more families</i></p> <p> NORTH PONCE COMMUNITY VISION WORKSHOP </p>	<p>In ONE word...</p> <p>Describe North Ponce today:</p> <p><i>NO SHADE TREES</i></p> <p>What is your vision for the future?</p> <p><i>BIKABLE</i></p> <p> NORTH PONCE COMMUNITY VISION WORKSHOP </p>
<p>In ONE word...</p> <p>Describe North Ponce today:</p> <p><i>neglected</i></p> <p>What is your vision for the future?</p> <p><i>healthy</i></p> <p> NORTH PONCE COMMUNITY VISION WORKSHOP </p>	<p>In ONE word...</p> <p>Describe North Ponce today:</p> <p><i>HODGEPODGE</i></p> <p>What is your vision for the future?</p> <p><i>HARMONIOUS</i></p> <p> NORTH PONCE COMMUNITY VISION WORKSHOP </p>

## One Word Cards



### One Word describing North Ponce today:

- Mediterranean
- Cute spot
- Incohesive
- Rustic Character
- No shade trees
- Neglected
- Confused
- Cold
- No personality
- Ordinary
- Character
- Hodgepodge
- Promising
- Insightful
- Diversity
- Comfortable



### Vision for the future:

- Diversity
- More families
- Rustic character
- Taller buildings
- Bikable
- Revitalized
- Healthy
- Livable
- Greenery
- Outdoor cafes
- Bike and Pedestrian trails
- Mini parks for kids
- Harmonious
- Preservation
- Strong community feel
- Walkable and Bikable
- Attractive destinations
- Green and commercial
- Continued enhancements through zoning changes
- Rezoning provisions for B&B's
- Inspiring
- livability
- Opportunity



## Surveys

**COMMUNITY SURVEY**  
**HANDS-ON SESSION, JUNE 13, 2015**

*Thank you for your participation and for sharing your ideas.  
Please leave this form at the sign-in table when complete.*

1. Do you live or work within the study area? (please circle)

☒ Live   ☒ Work   Neither   Other (explain)

If so, for how long?  
*34 YEARS*


2. What do you love most about the North Ponce area?  
*LOTS OF SPACE, BUT MOST WASTED*

3. In your opinion, what aspects of the area need improvement?  
*NEED CANOPY TRAILS  
PEDESTRIAN & BIKE*

4. What uses do you feel should be added (for example, civic uses, types of business spaces, etc)

5. What character should the North Ponce area have in the future?  
*LIVING SPACE*

6. Additional Comments and Suggestions

 **NORTH PONCE COMMUNITY VISION WORKSHOP**

**COMMUNITY SURVEY**  
**HANDS-ON SESSION, JUNE 13, 2015**

*Thank you for your participation and for sharing your ideas.  
Please leave this form at the sign-in table when complete.*

1. Do you live or work within the study area? (please circle)

☒ Live   Work   Neither   Other (explain)

If so, for how long?  
*8 years*

2. What do you love most about the North Ponce area?  
*Ponce Trolley • walkable, grid streets • affordable • small, old buildings*


3. In your opinion, what aspects of the area need improvement?  
*• trolley improvement • street trees (shade) • supportive historic preservation*

4. What uses do you feel should be added (for example, civic uses, types of business spaces, etc)

*more walkways, small*

5. What character should the North Ponce area have in the future?  
*a healthy mix of uses*

6. Additional Comments and Suggestions  
*• temporary parks on vacant lots • trolley improvements • splash pad @ Ponce Park • limit tall buildings • open elementary school • faster lanes on all streets*

 **NORTH PONCE COMMUNITY VISION WORKSHOP**

*+ Park @ Major + Delgado*

**TROLLEY TOUR WORKSHEET**  
**HANDS-ON SESSION, JUNE 13, 2015**

*Thank you for your participation and for sharing your ideas.  
Please leave this form at the sign-in table when complete.*

1. What was your favorite part of the tour?

*The intersection of Sidonia and Ponce going north and the possibility for an expansion of the park connecting it to the children's play area + cemetery. coffee shop connection to the hotel.*



2. Did you learn anything new about the North Ponce area? What did you learn?

*Architectural details and variety. Massing, FAR, typology + style combinations. Parking challenges.*

3. Of all of the ideas discussed on the tour and during the Workshop presentations, which ideas are the most exciting to you?

*Increasing affordable housing attracting the creative class by providing smaller + more numerous apartment units. Encouraging more mix of uses.*

*If you would like to be contacted about your responses, please write your name and contact information on this page.*

 **NORTH PONCE COMMUNITY VISION WORKSHOP**  **CORAL GABLES THE CITY BEAUTIFUL**

## Surveys Results Summary

### Do you live or work in the study area and for how long?

Live: Ranged from 2-8 years  
 Work: Ranged from 1 month to 30 years  
 Live/Work: Ranged from 1.5 years to 41 years  
 Neither: Two participants were from other neighborhoods and two were stakeholders from other communities with an interest in the study area, including representatives of property owners and developers

### SURVEY QUESTIONS

#### Question 1: What do you love most about the North Ponce area?

- Quiet
- Rustic character
- Close to downtown amenities
- Character - Proximity to DBD
- Lots of space, but most wasted
- Close to downtown and along the trolley route
- Historic buildings
- Feels walkable
- Certain portions have a lot of character
- Walkable neighborhood
- Close proximity to shops and restaurants
- Good transit
- Parks
- Relatively affordable housing
- Potential to add the character of Coral Gables in a new way
- Its historical connection to the city's beginning
- Convenience
- Ponce Trolley
- Affordable
- Walkable, grid streets
- Diversity
- Small, old buildings

#### Question 2: In your opinion, what aspects of the North Ponce area need the most improvement?

- Parking
- Trolley improvements
- street (shade) trees
- supportive historic preservation
- sidewalks at Alhambra entrance
- Parks
- Reduced parking requirements
- Some “tweaked” zoning
- The quality of the small multifamily buildings
- Parking
- Streets lack shade trees
- Many streets are too wide, encouraging cars to speed through
- New buildings are overly dominated by parking
- Many buildings seem to not have been updated
- Preservation of the older buildings
- Maintaining older scale of development
- Need more shade/canopy trees
- Streetscape
- lighting
- Parking
- More parks
- Better choices for grocery stores
- Frontage types & setbacks should be inviting

## Survey Results Summary

### Question 3: What uses do you feel should be added to North Ponce in the future?

- live/work
- Residential services (coffee shop)
- parks
- Office buildings
- Cafes
- Restaurants
- Post Office
- Library
- Bike lanes
- Tennis courts
- housing
- Board walks
- Pedestrian and Bike routes
- Cafes
- Transitional zoning between blocks conducive to townhouse/courtyard apartments vs. multifamily
- Open space
- Pedestrian experience
- parks
- canopy trees
- small active public spaces
- additional shops and restaurants along Ponce
- market/grocery stores
- drycleaner
- specialty cleaner
- cafes
- bed and breakfast
- Residential
- civic uses
- Mid block Paseos
- transition from commercial to residential
- easing parking requirements (for galleries etc.)
- Temporary parks on unbuilt lots
- Park @ Majorca and Salzedo

### Question 4: What character should the North Ponce area have in the long-term future?

- Urban residential neighborhood
- Rustic character
- vibrant street life
- Preservation
- Living space and walkways
- Diverse styles, heights
- Historic & non historic
- Mostly residential off Ponce!!
- Walkable low-rise multi family
- Encourage residential units (affordable)
- Enhancements to the pedestrian experience including parks
- Respect the history
- Encourage small incremental development in the character of the best 1920's examples 4-plex, 8-plex through reduced parking requirements.
- Keep tall buildings to the Ponce corridor.
- Pockets of density/ mixed use mingling with residential
- Retain a Mediterranean flavor
- Professional & residential
- Retail limited to Ponce
- A healthy mix of historic and modern Mediterranean



## Table Groups - Visual Preference Survey



ONE OF THE BEST!!



Affordability OK  
Too much driveway,  
Needs landscaping.



Bad Parking Garage  
No  
Bad Street scape  
OK transition



Good Architecture  
Bad parking area  
in front



Bad 1st Floor



Hotel/Inn? Transient pop.  
Otherwise Not effective



greenery



ONE OF THE  
BEST ARCHITECTURAL  
SUB EXAMPLES!

Architecture



NO



- NO DOORS  
for shops  
- Tall Blank  
walls.

- utilities on  
sidewalk  
- No shade trees



OK  
Needs ground floor  
activity /entrees



[illegible]

## Table Groups - Ideas for North Ponce

Table 1:

- Want to see more varied roof lines
- Eyes on the street, stoops, porches, windows
- Like shady streets
- Want to see more parks and improved parks

Table 3:

- No parking for buildings less than 3 stories
- Encourage historic preservation through policy incentives
- Coding for building type and scale
- Alhambra Circle – want to keep it quiet and residential. People come here to get away from noise, traffic, night life on Brickell. Keep it quiet, preserve the historic buildings.
- Big issue – how deep will big development go into the neighborhood

Table 2:

- Small urban incremental development that fits in rather than superblocks
- Less parking
- Take advantage of the new sharing economy: Car2Go, Uber
- North Ponce is a multimodal neighborhood already – make it better, support its strengths
- The diagonal of East Ponce is an opportunity to shape a great urban space – terminated vistas on both ends

Table 4:

- Need a small market / grocery on Ponce (Publix turns its back on the neighborhood)
- Ponce Park should be urban, green, and usable
- Make pedestrian areas exceed 50% of the ROW width
- The frontage is not so nice when it is used for parking / driveways. Keep it green.
- Mandatory Mediterranean Architecture



## General Public Comments During Workshop

- Differential food service parking requirement should be eliminated in downtown / North Ponce
- Public and private parking spaces could be mixed in one garage
- Residential parking zones should grow
- Public / private redevelopment of Tim Plummer's building, lot
- Impossible to walk across LeJeune and Douglas: provide a pedestrian crossing light for schools.
- No traffic circles on Salzedo
- Consider Transfer of Development Rights for Density (to increase du/acre) not just FAR / bulk (perhaps allow North Ponce properties to be receiving sites?)
- Current land values are \$150,000 / potential unit for land purchase
- Apparently there is demand for rental units of 500 – 600 sf
- MF2 requirements don't make sense for rental buildings, units are too big to rent affordably. 2,300 average square feet. This size unit only makes sense for condominiums.
- High parking ratios make buildings bulky.
- Parking ratio favors 2 and 4 bedroom units – 1.75 and 2.25 parking spaces. Adjust parking ratios to be more sensitive to market / apartment size
- North Ponce has few civic amenities for apartment dwellers.
- Downtown is really dead on Sunday. Great opportunity for Ciclovias on Salzedo and Galiano.
- Douglas Entrance could be a great neighborhood space
- Kids routes to school – secret routes through the blocks (paseos) candy stores and pet shops along the way.
- Many people don't realize that North Ponce already has: 3 coffee shops, a neighborhood grocery store, a small post office, and the Virginia Miller art gallery
- A lot of downtown employees park in North Ponce and walk down
- Consider street widths with new development.
- If we allow small rental units in a large building will it compete with small historic rental buildings?
- Bed and Breakfast Ordinance needs adjustment – annual review and parking requirement is unreasonable.
- Require parking garage liner when facing the street or abutting residential properties
- No setbacks required for projects extending back into the neighborhood from Ponce (97' building height maximum according to FLUM – is additional stepping down appropriate?)
- Should properties be allowed to rezone from MF2 to commercial?
- Consider an increased gap between buildings
- Is the canyon effect desired on Ponce?
- North Ponce group could provide input on the design of Ponce Park
- Consider coffee shops fronting the park (ground floor of chateau bleu)
- The fluorescent lights in parking garages are visual pollution.
- The auxiliary generators for high-rise buildings violate the noise ordinance (need a muffler)
- Phillips Park requires more care / maintenance – needs to be designed, activated and maintained at the same level of other Coral Gables parks.
- Document smaller coral gables apartment buildings – find the original building drawings.
- Change in character from north to south
- Rethink the restaurant / café parking ration – 12/1000 is very high
- Consider a dedicated trolley lane.
- Office Depot uses 20% of its parking
- Salzedo – lady's veil was planted 20 years ago
- Consider shared parking lots
- Consider bike share programs and Car2Go when calculating parking ratios
- Consider decoupling unit purchase and parking space purchase – allowing the market to determine appropriate amounts of parking.
- Some envision North Ponce character to feel like the West Village.

# Key Topics and Issues







## Key Topics and Issues

The workshop employed a variety of participatory methods for gathering public input including:

- The audience question and answer session at the kickoff presentation;
- A trolley/walking tour of the study area with facilitators and city staff
- Response cards that asked participants to characterize both the existing conditions and their vision for the future in one-word or short phrases.
- Survey forms with a series of short and open-ended questions
- A visual preference survey
- Group table discussions that produced written and verbal summaries

The workshop specifically engaged participants in a discussion of neighborhood character beginning at the Friday evening kickoff session and continuing through the Saturday morning table discussions. Summaries of the public input appear in the Appendices of this report.

There was strong consensus amongst workshop participants who expressed a preference for a 2-4 story scale along the east-west residential streets, transitioning to taller mixed-use buildings on the major north-south corridors and the blocks closer to the downtown core (Alhambra Circle/Alhambra Plaza). When asked about the preferred characteristics and qualities of their ideal neighborhood concept for North Ponce, participants highlighted walkable mixed-use places with attractive streetscapes, sidewalks with shade trees, small parks, plazas and gathering places, and a mix of old and new buildings, historic and civic buildings.

Many workshop participants are currently living and working in the study area and want to see it continue to improve as a place to live, work and play with more cafes, shops, services and gathering places for everyday living within walking distance along the major north-south commercial corridors and at the ends of the east-west residential east-west streets as they approach the commercial corridors. They are seeking a more pedestrian-oriented lifestyle, which is why they

are choosing to live in or near the downtown. Many people work from their home, at a nearby office or in flex space, such as a coffee shop, at least part of their time. They use transit and bikes regularly and would walk, bike and use transit more if the conditions, destinations and service continue to improve and expand.

There was also strong agreement, as evidenced in the visual preference survey results and presentations of the table discussion results, for building types that line the street and create attractive streetscapes – urban rowhouses, townhomes and apartment buildings – as opposed to the post-WWII multifamily buildings in the study area with deeper setbacks, frontages that fail to address the street, and “dingbats,” in which living areas elevated above exposed parking at the street level. The tour and discussions identified a variety of barriers to the development of smaller scale building types, which is leading developers to aggregate property in order to build much larger buildings in order to contend with FAR, unit size and parking regulations.

There were concerns expressed over the encroachment of new, large-scale development into the residential side streets and how best to manage this development and transition from the commercial corridors to the residential areas. The speed of traffic and the difficulty in crossing the major commercial corridors were a common complaint, as well as the speed of cut-through traffic on side streets. Participants also identified as a concern the small number of public parks and gathering spaces in the study area. Many participants noted that older, multi-family buildings in the study area have provided some of the more affordable housing to be found in Coral Gables, and expressed concern about the loss of affordable housing as the area becomes more sought after and properties are rehabbed and redeveloped.

There was extensive discussion of ways to make the study area more pedestrian- and bike-friendly covering the full range of public realm topics including street design, connectivity, pedestrian paths/paseos, public gathering spaces, streetscapes, bike lanes and facilities, street trees, traffic, crosswalks, and lighting.





# Recommendations





## Historic Preservation

Protect historic resources by creating incentives for owners to designate and maintain the historic buildings.

- 1.1. Protect the two-to-four story scale of this historic neighborhood, and plan and code for transitions between this scale and taller, more intense development along the major north-south corridor of Ponce de Leon Boulevard.
- 1.2. Identify historic properties and rate them in terms of their preservation significance and potential.
- 1.3. Maintain an active map of all historic properties and include properties eligible for historic designation as a result of periodic neighborhood surveys. The University of Miami School of Architecture and the City could collaborate on this task.

1.4. Promote the new Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) options for this neighborhood and explore the possibilities of having this neighborhood also be a receiving site for TDRs to support the preferred preservation and infill development objectives. Potential sending of TDRs into the North Ponce area should only be determined after a plan is approved that studies existing densities/heights to determine where to send.

1.5. Extend the existing CBD zoning provisions that allow new buildings and additions to historic and existing buildings to have an FAR of 1.45 without having to comply with parking requirements.

1.6. Promote and inform owners of local and federal tax incentives for historic properties and available programs for grant funding for such properties.



## Public Space, Streets, and Pedestrian-Friendly Design

Great neighborhoods have great streets and attractive public spaces designed for pedestrians and users of all ages. With the exception of Phillips Park, the North Ponce study area currently lacks well-designed public gathering spaces. The major commercial corridors and some very significant residential streets also provide very poor quality for pedestrians and cyclists. Douglas and Lejeune are unattractive and hostile routes for pedestrians, and Ponce is not yet an attractive, pedestrian-friendly corridor. The study area is also characterized by some long, east-west blocks that are not conducive to pedestrian circulation within the neighborhood. Long block lengths can discourage children and others from walking to and from the elementary school from nearby residential areas, or anyone that might want to walk from their homes to a North Ponce park or the downtown. Recommendations to improve pedestrian character and connectivity include:

1.1. Public input regarding Ponce de Leon

Boulevard was unanimous in declaring it unattractive, far too wide and dangerous to cross for pedestrians. Most of Ponce de Leon Boulevard above the elementary school remains an extremely wide thoroughfare that encourages speeding and makes pedestrian crossings hazardous. Streetscape improvements on Ponce and Alhambra Circle/Plaza since the 2002 charrette represent aesthetic improvements and help slow traffic some, however they are not designed to facilitate pedestrian activity, including basic crossing of the streets. Future streetscape improvements should prioritize and start with design for pedestrian and cycling activities, including both the safety and quality of the pedestrian and cycling experience. Unlike Lejeune and Douglas, the primary Ponce corridor essentially terminates at SW 8<sup>th</sup> St and US 1 with sharp dogleg turns. Pedestrian- and bike-friendly design can therefore be greatly

elevated on this corridor since Ponce does not act as a through-street in the manner of Lejeune and Douglas.

- 1.2. Per the recommendations related to the management of large-scale development (below), plan for mid-block paseos in the blocks east and west of Ponce de Leon Boulevard to enhance walkability and provide a safe path to the school and the downtown. Paseos can be narrow, pedestrian pathways required for infill and redevelopment at strategic mid-block locations to the rear of large-scale projects.
- 1.3. Work with the County to establish safe, effective crosswalks for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the higher traffic through-streets of Lejeune and Douglas. The Cooper Robertson work on the Miracle Mile streetscape and City Hall/Merrick Park study area is one of the critical crossings and should promote an initial model for a safe, attractive crossing that connects downtown to city hall and the residential neighborhoods to the west of Lejeune.
- 1.4. Consistent with George Merrick's original plan and development of Coral Gables, and the 2002 Charrette study of tree species along specific streets, continue to establish a streetscape strategy for each of the North Ponce blocks with signature street trees and street lights, as well as sidewalk enhancements.
- 1.5. Develop an identity of landscape and streetscape features to occur facing the neighborhoods on the east and west sides of Ponce de Leon to provide an attractive transition approaching Ponce de Leon and signify its central position as a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood boulevard.

- 1.6. There is a strong desire for smaller pocket parks located within the residential areas east and west of Ponce for local residents. The City should look for opportunities to acquire small properties for this purpose or work with property owners and developers to create small public spaces as part of infill and redevelopment projects.
- 1.7. Conduct a study of the streets and intersections in the residential neighborhoods to the east and west of Ponce to identify opportunities for traffic circles or other traffic calming techniques to discourage or slow cut-through traffic and improve the pedestrian character of the neighborhoods.
- 1.8. Develop dedicated bike lanes along Segovia and Ponce de Leon Boulevard for safer north/south travel; and along Zamora/Madeira to connect to Miami's SW 16<sup>th</sup> ST for east/west travel.
- 1.9. Create and maintain a map of green space connectivity and potential connectivity that may inform public realm improvements of parks, squares and paseos.
- 1.10. Plant shade trees to provide shaded sidewalks.
- 1.11. Locate / relocate trolley stops that are easily accessible and comfortable places for pedestrians to wait (eg, relocate the trolley stop currently on the traffic island at the junction of Ponce and East Ponce).

## East Ponce Boulevard Quadrant

The East Ponce de Leon Boulevard was a historically important street in Merrick's original plan and connects Ponce de Leon Park (the triangular park fronted by the Chateau Bleu at the intersection of Ponce and East Ponce) to the important historic buildings and sites including the Coral Gables Woman's Club, Freedom Plaza, and Douglas Entrance. The triangular Ponce de Leon Park and separate triangular traffic island where the trolley stop is located at the intersection of Ponce de Leon and East Ponce de Leon Boulevard are currently islands isolated by excessive asphalt on every side. East Ponce de Leon was described as an "off ramp" for north bound Ponce de Leon traffic and the East Ponce corridor itself is excessively wide for a local street that cuts diagonally through just three blocks before terminating at the Douglas Entrance.

- 1.1. Per the 2002 Charrette, the intersection at Ponce and East Ponce de Leon Boulevard represents an excellent opportunity to create a distinctive high-quality public gathering space for the North Ponce District. The streets, intersection, park and traffic triangle should be redesigned to create an urban park or square at this location, reclaiming portions of asphalt for public space.
- 1.2. East Ponce should be studied for a complete redesign of the streetscape to create a high quality, pedestrian-friendly street that connects Ponce and the central square to the Woman's Club and Douglas Entrance. The angled public parking on both sides of East Ponce creates a "surface parking lot" character. This currently serves as free parking for the commercial hotel (Chateau Bleu) and alternative parking arrangements for the proposed rehab of the hotel should be considered. The public was not opposed to the continued use of the site as a hotel, however the current building is considered unworthy of such an

important site and participants are hopeful that the rehab will represent a significant redesign with improved facades facing Ponce, the park, and East Ponce.

- 1.3. The Woman's Club itself represents an important historic building in the study area and the street configuration, streetscape and park space surrounding the building should be studied for improvements to reinforce this as a second civic space along East Ponce.
- 1.4. Wide curb radii and turn lanes on Calabria and Galiano where they intersect also create another isolated triangular green with two prominent trees. This intersection should be redesigned with narrowed streets, enhanced streetscapes including street trees and a better connection to the green space.
- 1.5. The vacant site on the northwest corner of East Ponce and Santilane, diagonally across from the Woman's Club, represents a key opportunity to encourage urban infill consistent with the urban rowhouse/urban apartment building types preferred in the visual preference survey.



## The Alhambra Circle Corridor / Quadrant

The diagonal offshoot of Alhambra Circle, running north from Alhambra Plaza to Madeira Avenue and Douglas, is another area of the North Ponce study area that was the focus of much attention at the public workshop from both residents and property owner/real estate developers. Entering from Douglas, Alhambra Circle provides a historic, picturesque entrance with a view to downtown. The northern blocks include many 1960s-70s era one- and two-story buildings, including many apartment buildings, likely to be redeveloped.

On the blocks immediately north of Alhambra Plaza, the north side of the street is lined by exposed parking garages on Alhambra Circle and Alcazar Avenue. A historic, 2-story courtyard building, La Palma Ristorante (formerly Hotel Cla-Reina), sits at the northeast corner of Galiano across from predominantly blank walls of the building at 115 Alhambra Circle. The street then splits into north-south lanes with a green median consistent with a boulevard character. Residents expressed concern with plans for a much taller residential tower on adjacent parcels and the proximity of the historic Coral Gables Elementary School immediately west of Alhambra Circle warrants further consideration.

1.1. This is clearly a downtown location that can provide excellent pedestrian access to downtown workplaces, shops and restaurants – a true work-live lifestyle - for the residents of existing and future urban residential development. The older 1-2 story buildings along the length of the corridor are likely to be redeveloped over time, and the boulevard should be planned to accommodate urban building types – rowhouses, townhomes or apartment buildings – to create a distinctive address for downtown living in Coral Gables.

1.2. There is a critical need to study the transi-

tion in height and massing of buildings as the Alhambra Circle corridor quickly transitions from the high-rise commercial towers on Alhambra Plaza to the residential blocks just north along Alhambra Circle. The presence of the historic and very active elementary school and protection of the La Palma building are also important considerations.

1.3. There is a relatively new, 4-story residential building that runs an entire block on the east side of Alhambra Circle between Minorca and Navarre Avenues. The City should evaluate the relative success of this project in terms of scale, massing, parking and street frontage and compare and contrast this with other urban building types. The building modifies the “dingbat” configuration of many older buildings in the study area that elevated habitable space above completely open and exposed parking at the street level by slightly depressing the parking level, landscaping the primary street frontage and elevating the entrances.

## Large Scale Development on Major Commercial Corridors

The depth of large-scale development along Ponce and these other major commercial corridors should be managed to protect the neighborhood character from extensive encroachment into the historic and smaller scale residential portions of the neighborhood.

- 1.1. Encourage the tallest portion of all proposed projects along Ponce to frame the street section of Ponce Boulevard, generally upholding the 1926 Merrick Plan for Coral Gables.
- 1.2. Limit the extent to which larger scale projects on these major commercial corridors encroach into the east-west block lengths to no more than 200-to-250 feet. As block widths within the study area vary, this could be reduced to 200 feet max.
- 1.3. Require a gradual step down in height and massing as the buildings extend east or west from the corridors into the residential side streets. The step down observed for the building at 1300 Ponce along the south side of Sidonia Avenue in the workshop walking tour provides an existing example, and it was recommended that this be a maximum encroachment that could be reduced by one lot width to allow for a paseo.
- 1.4. Provide a spatial break in the form of a paseo, mews or pedestrian way between large-scale projects and the 2-to-4 story neighborhood scale.
- 1.5. For buildings that are allowed to extend to the 200-to-250 foot depth, require the building fronting Ponce to come all the way to the urban ground plain and provide active, approved frontages along the commercial corridor.
- 1.6. Require liners along the facades of parking garages (north and south sides) and also back sides facing lower residential buildings setting

up mid-block paseos. The parking garages could also be articulated as separate buildings lined with commercial and/or residential uses on the ground floor.

- 1.7. Internalize the service functions of large buildings away from the public realm.
- 1.8. Enforce existing zoning code language that promotes urban features such as arcades, landscaped sidewalks, pedestrian connectivity and public realm improvements for all new developments.
- 1.9. To support the establishment of a fine grain mix of uses in the North Ponce study area:
  - 1.9.1. Allow ground floor retail of 5000 square feet or less with no requirement to provide any additional parking, whether in a large, multi-story mixed use building or a one-story building.
  - 1.9.2. Allow first floor mixed-use in the blocks just east and west of Ponce de Leon Boulevard to provide small-scale, live-work, local retail destinations for the neighborhood. This could be limited to the first 200-250 feet of frontage immediately adjacent to Ponce.
  - 1.9.3. Adopt enabling language in the zoning code to explicitly permit bed and breakfast (B&B) establishments throughout the study area. The North Ponce area's proximity to downtown Coral Gables makes it an ideal location for B&B establishments, and B&Bs can provide opportunities for the rehab, adaptive reuse and preservation of historic buildings. The workshop team recommends studying existing provisions that support B&Bs in the County and City of Miami codes as potential models to adapt and adopt for North Ponce and downtown Coral

Gables.

- 1.10. Study the provision of expanding the use of resident parking tags for streets that may be impacted by large scale development occurring along the commercial corridors.



## Large-scale Development North of Alhambra Circle and Alhambra Plaza

The 2-3 blocks immediately north of Alhambra Circle/Alhambra Plaza are experiencing significant development pressure and activity throughout the study area along Alcazar, Minorca and the south side of Navarre.

- 1.1. Conduct a careful study and enact regulations to ensure smooth, gradual transitions between the Commercial High-Rise, Commercial Mid-Rise, and residential zones moving from the intensive CBD conditions north towards the 2-to-4 story residential neighborhood fabric. Management of larger scale development should be consistent with the recommendations for the east-west transitions from the commercial corridors discussed above, but in this case will require transitions downward in height and massing across multiple blocks moving from south to north.
- 1.2. Develop a Douglas Road strategy in collaboration with the City of Miami that establishes a shared vision of future development to provide assurance on height and density for property owners, and a unified experience for Douglas Road as the eastern boundary of the City of Coral Gables.

## Support for Small-Scale Infill and Redevelopment

The workshop included a mix of residents, property owners, developers, architects and city staff with knowledge of the challenges associated with rehabbing and constructing small scale buildings consistent with the preferred character of the neighborhood. Like much of South Florida, land use regulations often disadvantage small scale development and inadvertently lead to the aggregation of smaller lots into large parcels, often entire city blocks, resulting in very large scale development juxtaposed with single-story buildings. It will be crucial to analyze and modify existing regulations - FAR, unit size (sq ft min/max) and parking requirements - to support the preservation, adaptive reuse and infill development at a 2-to-4 story buildings in the North Ponce study area.

The overall recommendation is to focus on the desired *character* for the district and change the zoning code and regulations to achieve that character. This could be achieved through a mix of TDRs, unit bonus provisions or design review, however it is recommended the code itself be updated to specifically support the preferred types of development on small lots and to discourage undesirable development models.

The visual preference survey results and public dialog identified a strong preference for a low-to-mid rise scale, similar to the height of the 2-4 story buildings currently in the district, but more urban, compact and mixed-use. The visual preference survey showed a strong preference for a variety of urban rowhouses, townhomes and small apartment buildings and mixed-use buildings. Participants were supportive of allowing smaller unit sizes within buildings as long as they conform to the 4-story height limit. Smaller units are needed to meet the growing demand from smaller household sizes including individuals, young married couples without children, empty nesters, etc. Smaller unit sizes will also generally translate into

more affordable housing on a rent per square foot basis. Specific recommendations include:

- 1.1. Identify a range of approved 2-to-4 story urban residential and mixed-use building types consistent with the preferred character suggested by the visual preference survey results for infill and redevelopment within the neighborhoods.
- 1.2. Identify and adopt new street type and frontage standards that are distinct for the mixed-use corridors versus the residential interior blocks. This requires a plan for each street - they are different and require individual approaches.
- 1.3. Allow for a variety of live-work building types and uses in more of the study area. This is consistent with the mixed-use objective discussed above. Live-work buildings are consistent with the desire of residents to live and work in the same location or within walking distance of their home and provide an ideal transitional building type between larger scale, more commercial development and residential areas.
- 1.4. Set a maximum height limit for buildings but measure height in floors, not feet, to allow for variations in ceiling heights and future adaptability. Measure height from the Florida Building Code minimum for Finish Floor Elevation (currently Base Flood Elevation +1) so that property owners and developers aren't penalized for responding to sea level rise.
- 1.5. Accessibility: evaluate options for the accommodation of handicap ramps within front setbacks for small-scale infill. There is an emerging conflict between addressing sea

level rise and longer and longer handicap ramps.

- 1.6. Consistent with the recommendations supporting preservation of existing buildings, extend the 1.45 FAR standard for no parking requirement in the CBD to the North Ponce District for small-scale infill development;
- 1.7. Evaluate raising the FAR to 2.0 to enable 3-story “brownstone” scale residential infill with 0’ setback (see three-story scenario below).
- 1.8. Allow for smaller unit sizes (see the three-story scenario with calculations in the next item). The city will need to study this further, but the demand for smaller, more affordable studio and one-bedroom apartments has outstripped supply and the increasing cost of rental property and demographic trends are only going to continue to drive demand for smaller units. Micro apartment projects in cities are renting units in the 250-400 square foot range, so the city should be able to identify a happy medium between these and the current standards. Renters of smaller, urban apartments are also much more likely to walk, bike and use transit for their mobility.

#### 1.9. Re-evaluate density limits for small-scale infill.

- 1.9.1. For discussion and further study:  
Density standards often sound large when applied to smaller, infill lots simply because they are expressed in terms of acres. Note that one acre = 43,560 sq ft, or close to nine (9) typical 5,000-sq ft lots.

**Scenario:** A small 8-unit apartment building on a typical 50 x 100 ft lot is equal to 69 dwelling units per acre. Assuming 60% lot coverage and a three-

story building, this yields 9000 sq ft gross. Deducting 25% for circulation leaves 6,750 sq ft divided by 8 units = 844 sq ft per unit. Thus a small, three-story, 8-unit apartment building on a 50 x 100 sq ft lot would require an allowable density of 75 units/acre to fit comfortably. A 75 DU/acre standard in this scenario yields 8 units on a typical urban infill lot. [Note: due to egress requirements for two stairs in four-story buildings, this three-story scenario for 50 x 100 foot lots is likely the maximum build-out.]

- 1.9.2. In general, all zoning requirements should be calibrated assuming a single lot. Re-evaluate and test height, setbacks, lot coverage, landscape requirements, and other standards to identify and address any other impediments to small property owners / small scale development.



## Miscellaneous Recommendations

- 1.1. Affordable Housing: recommendations above to support the preservation and adaptive reuse of existing residential buildings, and the infill of small-scale development and smaller unit sizes can help maintain more affordable/workforce housing for Coral Gables residents, however this will remain market based and low-to-moderate income residents could be priced out as the demand for in-town living continues to increase. A more assertive affordable housing approach will require public policy approaches.
  - 1.1.1. The city should make a connection with the county housing department to purposefully include affordable units in the city, including units within new projects.
  - 1.1.2. The city should consider annexing the county area between Salzedo and Lejeune from Madeira to SW 8<sup>th</sup> St as an area for affordable housing within the city. Residents from this neighborhood participated in the workshop and view themselves as connected with the North Ponce area. These blocks are logically part of the North Ponce district and integral to the city, but fall outside of its jurisdiction. The larger “Little Gables” area is similarly surrounded by the City of Coral Gables on three sides and could be an area for expansion related to affordable housing goals.
- 1.2. Encourage green roof strategies for all flat roofs in the North Ponce area to ameliorate urban heat island impacts and provide better views when seen from above.
- 1.3. Plan regular (perhaps annual) town hall style meetings with neighbors, stakeholders and city staff to evaluate and manage progress in the neighborhood.

## Recommended Short-Term Action Steps

### 1. Historic Preservation

- Ⓐ Verify accuracy of maps. Create an interactive map for public information, as a 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary project.
- Ⓑ Prepare marketing documents for Transfer of Development Rights.

### 2. Public Space, Streets and Pedestrian-Friendly Design

- Ⓒ Arrange a design studio for Ponce de Leon Park and its vicinity with Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. **(In progress)**
- Ⓓ Identify possible future locations for four neighborhood parks, to be included in the City Capital Improvement Program.
- Ⓔ Identify possible future locations for four neighborhood parking lots, to be included in the City Capital Improvement Program.

### 3. East Ponce Boulevard Quadrant

- Ⓕ Identify two neighborhood streets for enhanced sidewalks and landscaping, to be included in the City Capital Improvement program.

### 4. Alhambra Circle Corridor/Quadrant

- Ⓖ Review proposed changes of land use or zoning based on input from workshop. Proposed land uses for North Ponce project located within the Central Business District should not exceed Commercial Mid-Rise Intensity.
- Ⓗ Require enhanced pedestrian features, such as arcades, paseos and enhanced sidewalks, through the site plan review process.

### 5. Large Scale Development on Major Commercial Corridors

- Ⓘ Propose shared parking, including remote residential parking in the evening. **(In progress)**
- Ⓙ Revise parking requirements for small restaurants and delis located at the ground floor of mixed-used buildings. **(In progress)**
- Ⓚ Eliminate parking requirements for existing and new buildings under 1.45 FAR.

### 6. Public Outreach

- Ⓛ Continue to engage residents and property owners on North Ponce planning efforts.
  - Host public Commission Workshop (for example, at the Coral Gables Museum) to continue the discussion of the future of the North Ponce area with the community.
  - Establish quarterly meetings with the community.
  - Send meeting invitations and questionnaires to all residents and property owners within the study area boundary.
  - Create a North Ponce study webpage with an online survey for community members to provide feedback.
  - Create an email listserve of community members interested in North Ponce and send area-specific email updates.

## Illustrative Master Plan - Recommended Short-Term Action Steps





## Recommended Long-Range Action Steps

### 1. Historic Preservation

- Ⓐ Promote historic preservation of existing small apartment buildings as an affordable housing strategy.

### 2. Public Space, Streets and Pedestrian-Friendly Design

- Ⓑ Develop neighborhood park and landscape master plan.

### 3. East Ponce Boulevard Quadrant

- Ⓒ Study design of neighborhood streets, with an emphasis on reducing pavement, enhancing tree cover and widening sidewalks.

### 4. Large Scale Development on Major Commercial Corridors

- Ⓓ Prepare Ponce Mixed-Use Zoning Overlay, which should include:
  - Requirements for building massing and setbacks to limit overall building bulk
  - Guidelines for paseos and public space
  - Parking requirements, including shared parking strategies
  - Flexible uses, including bed and breakfast and live-work units
  - Incentives for more affordable housing typologies
  - Preservation Incentives for historic multi-family buildings

### 5. Public Outreach

- Ⓔ Continue to engage residents and property owners on North Ponce planning efforts.
  - Continue quarterly meetings with the community.
  - Monthly updates of a North Ponce study webpage with an online survey for community members to provide feedback.
  - Email listserve of community members interested in North Ponce with area-specific email updates.

## Recommended Illustrative Master Plan - Long-Range Action Steps

