

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Workshop**  
**Agenda Item 1**  
**December 6, 2016**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Jim Cason**  
**Commissioner Pat Keon**  
**Commissioner Vince Lago**  
**Vice Mayor Frank Quesada**  
**Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark**  
**Assistant City Manager, Peter Iglesias**  
**City Attorney, Craig E. Leen**  
**City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman**  
**Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia**  
**Economic Development Director, Javier Betancourt**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Midge McCauley**  
**Venny Torre, Business Improvement District (BID)**

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Agenda Item 1 [0:00:00 a.m.]

Presentation and discussion of the Draft Downtown Retail Strategy.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Thank you for taking the time to participate in this workshop with us today. One of the things that I heard when I first came on board a little over a year ago as I started this job was a desire for a better retail experience in our downtown. Though, we had many great retailers, there's no organizing vision or strategy for our downtown

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area. So, the entire experience feels disconnected to the point that most people visit a destination and then leave without taking the time to stroll the entire area and shop and dine along the way. The streetscape project, while wonderful, is really just a major physical improvement to the street. But we also have to focus on what goes on in the stores. That's the impetus behind this downtown retail strategy, to forge a vision for Miracle Mile and the surrounding areas, develop a merchandise mix plan, and actively recruit retailers that help implement that plan, in partnership, of course, with our merchants, our property owners and our brokers. Towards that end, the City entered into a tri-party agreement with the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce and the BID, which has some members here today, with each organization contributing towards the engagement of a retail consultant to develop the plan. So, thank you, again, to the Chamber and the BID for being such great partners. The consultant that we identified and engaged is Downtown Works. They are a boutique firm out of Seattle and Philadelphia, specializing in street retail. Midge McCauley, principal of Downtown Works, is here today to present the draft final report. Midge and her partner have decades of experience in working with communities like ours on these strategies. And what really sets them apart is the focus on street retail and the strong implementation component, which includes hiring, training and supporting a dedicated retail advocate who'd be responsible for implementing a strategy, recruiting retailers and supporting our merchants. I'm happy to announce that with the strong support of our City Manager -- thank you, Cathy -- we were able to reclassify an existing open position in our department and have already hired Francesca Madeo Valdes to fulfill that role. Francesca was most recently with Tiffany's corporate headquarters in New York, where she worked as the Director of Media Relations. She has a great deal of experience in upscale luxury retail. But also, having been raised in Key West, has an appreciation and understanding of smaller South Florida communities steeped in history. Please join me in welcoming Francesca.

(APPLAUSE)

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Thank you. With that, and cognizant of the late hour, let me turn it over to Midge for the presentation of the retail strategy. We're very excited

about this initiative and welcome your questions, concerns and comments. It's a rather thorough presentation, so it may help to hold your questions and feedback until the end. And if we could get the presentation on the screen, please.

Midge McCauley: (INAUDIBLE). Thank you for inviting me here to present our findings and our recommendations with regard to this retail strategy. It's been a pleasure working with the Chamber, the BID, and with Javier and his group, and now with Francesca. So, what I want to do is talk to you about who we are and what we do, and then get into the meat of what we found and what we observed here in downtown Coral Gables. So, we're a small retail consultancy, and my background had been working as a leasing person for -- I'm sure you're familiar with the Rouse Company because they've been here and played a role in Coral Gables. And went on to understand that we really liked cities and we liked streets and we were very interested in what happened in streets. So, we have become consultants to rather large cities and smaller cities, and even small towns and developers across the United States. Our work takes us from the east coast to the west coast and north and south. And what we found is just as a developer needs a vision and a plan for what they want to develop; cities can do the same thing in their downtowns. And so, you need a vision and a plan, but what do you need to know to create this vision and strategy. And first of all, you have to look at the existing conditions and what's working and what's not working, and what's helpful and what's not helpful. We're coming in as outsiders to your community, so it's really important that you learn what the people who live and work here and are involved in your downtown and in the retail scene, what do they think. What's important to them? What are problems that they see? We have to identify what's the trade area, what's the size of the trade area, and what's the makeup of that area. And we look at both the demographics and the psychographics. And the demographics are just plain numbers; ages, ethnicity, income. But more importantly are the psychographics; how do people spend their time and how do they spend their money, and that's what the psychographics will tell us. We have to look at what's the quantity of retail. What are the quantity of uses? And more importantly, what's the quality of those? Do we have good operators? Do they have strengths? Do they have weaknesses? What are those? Oftentimes, downtowns -- the success of a downtown is

determined -- they use the metric, the vacancy rate. And we find the vacancy rate doesn't tell us a picture of whether a downtown has healthy retail or not. It's really the quality of the existing operators that tell whether we have a successful area or not. We also know that you need to focus in on an area. You know, all of Coral Gables is too big a study area. And so, you have to define that focus area to say here's where we want to put our efforts. If we put in ten new stores over a period of a year, people will notice that. If you put in ten new stores over a two-mile radius, hardly anybody's going to notice that. So, what's our focus, what's the merchandise mix, and more importantly, how are we going to get this mix that we think we want to have. So, you know, moving on here to what we found in downtown and what we thought was important. First of all, you're starting from a really good place. There are very few areas where we've worked where conditions are as good as they are here in Coral Gables. And one of the biggest pluses that you have is you're authentic. Your scale is right. You're not -- while you were a planned community back in the 1920s, you've developed your retail over years and it's not something that opened up overnight that took two years to build. So, the scale and the bones are right. The location is great. You're in the center of crossroads to the north and south, as well as east and west. The streetscape project that's underway now is pretty incredible. The design of it, the interest that this is going to create I think will be amazing. But what we do know that with streetscape projects, while they do enhance the quality of the location, they don't bring retailers. So, how do we get those retailers? We also think that that centralized valet is a stroke of genius. You have some really high performing restaurants and one that we know is of a group that has 50 restaurants, yours is the highest performing of any of them that they have around the country. And we -- you have relatively low numbers of fast food, which is not the case in most places where we go. You have a good cohort of home focused stores, and this is something that we can build on. There are 50,000 people who are here on a daily basis for work. And the Village of Merrick Park is a regional draw. It brings people to the region. That's a plus. Well, now what are some of the problems? And we heard this from the retailers is the seasonality of the business is problematic and it's problematic for two reasons. Number one, is how do you staff properly when you have a really busy season and then you have slower seasons. It's not, I think, a huge deterrent, but it is something that they're concerned about. And the other thing is then

maintaining your inventory levels and having the proper amount of inventory during a high season. Colonnades, while I know they're used to incentivize developers to build retail, they reduce storefront visibility and retailers don't want to be behind colonnades. And quite frankly, I don't blame them. And if you go to Mediterranean countries, you will never find their retail behind colonnades. So, the Village of Merrick Park, great asset to the area, but it's also disconnected from the downtown. The bridal stores, while beautiful stores, are not bringing repeat customers. Hopefully, they're not repeat customers. But -- and while you have a very prestigious university that has a very good sized student population, it doesn't -- you wouldn't know that it's here when you look at the commercial district downtown. These are our observations. Now, what did the people that we talked to think about Coral Gables and what kind of insights did they give us? That, again, they felt that the great plus was that you were an authentic downtown, very different from other offerings here in the Miami metropolitan area. And they -- and it's unique and they want to keep it unique and don't want to fill it with nationals. The streetscape improvements, I understand, have been thought about for many years and discussed for many years and they're actually happening. That was a huge plus. Parking is plentiful and it's affordable, but it's not particularly well signed and people don't know how to find it. If you're here on a daily basis, you know how to use it. But if you're somebody who comes infrequently, it's difficult to find the parking. The trolley is great. Many said they would like to see that service expanded. For some operators, the employees and the tourists are their main customers, which says, okay, the locals aren't shopping at their store. Now, you know, there could be a variety of reasons for that, but they want more locals coming here. They felt that you get a lot of visitors and high-income folks that are coming out of South America, the fluctuating currency sometimes are problematic and they see big highs and lows in their business. And the need to engage younger people that are between the ages of 25 and 45 and to not have Coral Gables perceived as a place that is just for very mature people that are extremely affluent. Some suggested that the Agave project would be a concern, but only a concern, because they don't know what it's going to be and they don't know what the retail component will be nor the size of it for sure. And many would love to see more residential units in the downtown. So, you know, that's kind of what we heard from the stakeholders, and these were

common threads that came throughout the conversations we had. But we also went and looked at other retail areas to say, okay, how does Coral Gables compare and compete in the various areas that we went. And so, these are places that we visited and took a look at and we think that what is most competitive to you are the ones that are closer in, which would be South Miami and CocoWalk, and we understand -- well, Coconut Grove as a whole. But that they're going to undergo some major redo's and revitalizations there, so we have to keep a close eye on what's happening there. I said, well, maybe this is an opportunity where we can perhaps relocate some people that are in these areas that don't want to go through all of the construction time. As you go further north, of course, you've got the Bal Harbour Shops and Aventura. We went to those just because they are such strong players in the marketplace, but don't feel that they are competition to you. The one thing that we can say about the Bal Harbour Shops is that they are the most productive shopping center in the country at close to \$3,000 a foot in sales. And you come to the Simon company kind of controls the market that surrounds your area with Dadeland Mall, the Falls, and now the new opening of the Brickell City Centre, and they have long arms that reach very far and wide, and they can get the tenants that they want. But the Dadeland Mall, I was really blown away by how well that performs at \$1,200 a foot for a large mall. Those are big numbers. So -- but there's nothing that's on this screen that is exactly like Coral Gables. You have a fine reputation. You can be stronger than you are now, and it's just going to -- you know, it goes to what's that merchandise mix need to be. Well, to figure that out too, we need to know who our people are that would be potential shoppers for the area. And so, we know we've got 50,000 people that are working here. We know that there are 50 -- just about the same amount of people that live here within the boundaries of Coral Gables. And that's a very healthy average household income of \$120,000. And that one of the things about Coral Gables is that 73 percent of the homes here use that homestead -- take that homestead tax exemption, which says to us that these are people who are very invested in the area and are probably more like year-round residents than they are, you know, transient type of residents coming in and out. And one thing that I do want to say about that is that the residential population of Coral Gables is not nearly large enough to support the amount of retail that's here in the city. And so, you can't just look within your city boundaries as to these are our customers and nobody outside. So, we have

to look at who outside our city boundaries are our customers. So, we look at drive times. It used to be everything was done in radius or radii, but it's really how long does it take people to get here. And we looked at the ten-minute drive times and the twenty-minute. And the ten-minute drive time is somebody who can come here very frequently, might be in town every day of the week or several times a week. And somebody who's 20 -- within 20 minutes could very easily be a frequent customer here, but with less frequency than those that are within that ten-minute drive time. This is a very sizable number of people. Within ten minutes, you have a quarter of a million people. And -- or not quite that. It's 200,000. And then -- but by the time you add in up to the 20 minutes, you're up to over 700,000 people that would quantify the number of folks that could possibly want to come here given the right reason. What we did find in the age group is there are not a lot of millennials. There are not a lot of the really younger groups of people here.

Commissioner Lago: May I ask you a quick question?

Ms. McCauley: Sure.

Commissioner Lago: I'm very interested by your previous slide. What was the number on it?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Seven fifty...

Commissioner Keon: Two hundred.

Vice Mayor Quesada: In 20 minutes.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: Two hundred thousand within...

Ms. McCauley: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: Ten minutes.

Commissioner Lago: The reason why I go back to this is, I mean, I think that we...

Commissioner Keon: Half a million.

Commissioner Lago: We've been talking about this all day. You're been talking about congestion. You're been talking about having people drive through the city. You're talking about you're trying to draw more people into the city. It's kind of like counterproductive to what we're talking about. We need more people to feed the retail and feed the businesses, but again, how are they going to get here?

Ms. McCauley: Well...

Commissioner Lago: We are aware -- we're clearly aware that it's -- you know, county wide transportation is subpar. I think we do an excellent job in reference to public transportation with the trolley and now, hopefully, we extend it. But we need some serious buy-in from the County in reference to mass transportation, which, in my opinion -- I mean, I don't know how my colleagues feel. I think we fall way short, especially when I travel to other cities. I know that each one of you travel throughout the country on a constant basis, and I think that we fall way short if we're going to be able to feed the 700,000 people that supposedly we need to attract to go to the businesses.

Commissioner Keon: Increase density...

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, increase density.

Commissioner Keon: Within the city.



Ms. McCauley: Well, that would certainly help, but you certainly don't -- I mean, if you weren't welcoming or trying to attract the larger number of people, you'd have to shrink your retail considerably, because you can't -- you couldn't begin to support the amount of retail that's here, and you certainly don't want any more new retail and you've got Agave coming on so...

Commissioner Lago: But I've heard recent figures -- and correct me, if I'm wrong. I'm not a retail expert. But I've heard that retail currently -- the vacancy -- the -- we're running about a 99 percent occupancy rate. Is that correct or is that far from the number?

Ms. McCauley: Well, the...

Commissioner Lago: Was it ninety and change?

Commissioner Keon: Which is also (INAUDIBLE)...

Ms. McCauley: The area that I was looking at, which is really our Central Business District, your vacancy rate, when we did our walk-through back in June, was much higher in the downtown. It was about 12 percent. But that was a day in time. We understand that a number of the spaces that we were looking at, while they may have been vacant at that point, possibly had signed leases on them and had potential tenants.

Commissioner Lago: I think you're correct. I think my number is more on citywide.

Ms. McCauley: Yeah, okay. Well, that could be. And again, when you look at that number...

Unidentified Speaker: It's about two percent.

Commissioner Lago: Two percent.

Ms. McCauley: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: So, I was off.

Ms. McCauley: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you, sir.

Unidentified Speaker: Two percent?

Commissioner Lago: Two percent vacancy.

Mayor Cason: You were -- started to talk about...

Commissioner Lago: We're at 98 percent occupancy.

Mayor Cason: The millennials and the need for...

Ms. McCauley: Yeah. Okay, so the millennials, you don't -- they're choosing to be probably more in the Brickell area and South Beach. It's not a large cohort for you. But what is really big for you is that age group that's 35 to 64, and that's your peak earning years. This is when people have disposable income. They're very good customers, and they're probably more family oriented than they are young singles, which the millennials would be. So, the question is, do you want to attract the millennials and make that a focus, or do you want to really take care of the people who are already here? So, what we found very interesting is that, if you look at the last point there, are the household incomes were much lower than we anticipated that they would be, but it also may be that there are a large number of people that are not counted for here in Miami, because -- or in your trade area, because this is not their primary residence, you know, and

they're included in the census elsewhere. So -- but I told you we are very interested in what the psychographics are and what makes up the people that are in the community. And we found that in this 20-minute trade area, that 46 percent of this population -- and I'll go on to the next slide shortly that talks about these groups -- are people that are looking for moderately priced stores or stores that are discount in nature. But we also were able to pick out the very top groups that would be urban inclined shoppers that represent about 15 percent of your market, and these are people who you're already merchandising to and we would suggest that you continue to merchandise to. So, when we talk about this large cohort of 46 percent or almost half of your market makes up the largest group, and all of these names -- the tapestry group of -- Esri produces the data that we use. They have created 70 -- 65 tapestry groups, they call them, and they can identify how these people spend their time and their money. And of your market, 36 percent of the people call into this category called Southwestern families. And Southwestern families are probably married -- not probably -- they are married or single parents. They have families. They're very devoted to their children and their families. They're very cost conscious. They are shopping at the big boxes, and you have plenty of those that surround your area and are probably taking care of the merchandising needs for that large of a population. These others are much smaller groups, the international marketplace. These are folks -- about 40 percent of that group are born outside of the United States, but they've moved here. They're living here, and they're hardworking people, but they don't have a lot of disposable income, so they're very cautious shoppers. So, what we wanted to do and what we did do is we went into, okay, out of all of these groups that show up on the database that talks about your trade area, who are the groups that if you give them the right product would be urban inclined, would come to downtown Coral Gables to do their shopping? And so, the groups that we found are listed here and most of these are fairly high-income people who are trendy. They like fast fashion.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Can you define -- can you explain what those are?

Ms. McCauley: Okay.

Vice Mayor Quesada: What is a metro renter?

Ms. McCauley: A metro renter is a young person. A metro renter is generally somebody who's in their 20s to 35 who are renting apartments or they're renting houses. Now, they are not at the peak of their income. They're just starting out as professional people or young workers. But the important thing about them is they're great shoppers. They spend all their money on themselves. They're not encumbered by debt. They don't have children. They don't have to think about anybody else, but me.

Mayor Cason: How nice.

Ms. McCauley: And so, you know, they're a welcome group. And -- but you know, and they're your largest group of this group that we want. So, we want them to come here, come to the restaurants. The one thing that they do is they spend more on their entertainment and restaurants and going out for food than they do on their apparel. So, the next group you want are the urban chic who really want to be seen in the best restaurants and they really like to shop. And they are going to be going into stores that are very high fashion looking for fashion -- they're not looking for timeless clothing. They're not looking for investment clothing. They're looking for clothing that they're going to wear this season and next season they may be giving it away to the thrift shop. Your top tier, which is your next largest group, they're the folks with the money and the old money, and that's probably the highest income of all of the tapestry groups. And they are the ones that we would say are looking for slow fashion. They are looking for that investment piece. They're looking for something that's going to last for years. And they're the one -- you know, and the women may relate to this; the men probably won't. But there's a wonderful designer named Eileen Fisher who has gotten into doing a store called Eileen Green, which is if you buy apparel from Eileen Fisher and you're paying a nice price point, 2 or \$300 apiece for something and you've worn it for four or five years, so Eileen Fisher said please bring your apparel back to me and I will (INAUDIBLE) it and I will sell it in another store called Eileen Green, so that they can offer this rather what we would call slow fashion to people who can't afford them. And

she's opening stores around the United States called Eileen Green. So, this is -- you know, I think it's just -- it's fascinating that this is sustainable fashion. This is -- the top tier is going to be buying that, and then they're probably going to be selling that -- reselling that to the trend setters or to somebody who's in style who perhaps doesn't have the same amount of income. Out of all of these groups, most of them are very fashion conscious, with the exception of the Laptop and Lattes, and they're the intellectuals that are hanging out in the coffee shops. And -- but yet, they're spending their money on good organic food. They're going out to restaurants. They're just not big apparel shoppers. But put them in your coffee shops and life will be good. So, studying these and going after these people is really what we want to do when it comes to merchandising. So, one of the things that we also do we think -- is when I talk to you about it's not the vacancy rate. It's really the quality of the operators that you have here. We do this thing called a qualitative and quantitative assessment. So, we look at the number -- the types of uses you have and the quality of the stores. Here is -- oh, and this slide is the focus area. This is where we decided this is where we want to focus our recruitment efforts, where we think we have the greatest chance of success in finding good users to replace the stores that are currently vacant or to replace retailers as they decide not to continue leasing in a particular area. So, you'll see it's Miracle Mile. It's two blocks north and south along Ponce; Aragon, which already has some good retail along -- some great retail along, quite frankly; and Giralda, which it's obvious that's where the streetscape is going. You have a good collection of some really independent, smaller restaurants that we hope stay and that we can add to. So, out of this assessment, we looked at 260 spaces. That's -- in those focus area blocks, there are 260 spaces, entrances to buildings. And out of those 260 spaces, 170 of them are actual retail uses. And in retail, we consider restaurants being part of retail. And so, we looked at the makeup of that and found that the total of apparel is 14 percent, which is very low, and I'll get into that when we talk about what the...

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Mayor Cason: Apparel.

Ms. McCauley: Was 14 percent of the total of the spaces, of the 170 uses, was apparel. That's low. Food and beverage -- when we looked at -- we took the food out and we looked at, well, what types of restaurants do we have? What kind of food do we have? Full service restaurants were 60 percent of that group of restaurants. That's a good number. That's a good number. You want more full service restaurants than you want to have -- your fast food was only 5 percent of all these total restaurants. Good numbers. So, that's healthy, but again, we'll talk about this later. And then out of the -- in the apparel -- or in the retail, the non-food, these were the percentages of what we found. Again, we'll talk about that later. So, you know, we're concerned about how things look and feel and how relevant these stores are to this trade area and to the experience that people have here in downtown Coral Gables. So, it's not just what each one does, but it's putting the stores together and it's the total mix that determines who comes and shops here and how good their experience is. So, we want to talk about that experience in each one of the businesses that we went to. So, we look in every store. We give them a score. We say, okay, here are the five categories that we look at. We look at their façade, their signage, how well are they maintaining the outside of their store. How are their windows? Are they well displayed? Are they showing -- are they captivating enough that somebody will make that decision in three seconds to come into their store and buy goods? And then we also look at the interior. We look at the organization of the inventory. We look at the amount of inventory, and we give scores to these various categories. And so, if you are a 20, you're doing everything right. If you are a 5, that means you have your door open. You do have some merchandise in there, you have a sign, but we don't think it's very good. So, what we found here, we think the conditions in Coral Gables are certainly some of the best that we've come across in an area that we've been studying, but we -- 40 -- almost 43 percent of the people we thought were really good to great, and their façades were good looking. They're well inventoried. Their windows are interesting. And -- but we also found that we have almost an equal number that could use some help in some of these areas. And so, these are people that you want to concentrate on when you're working with your implementation strategy. These are retailers that you talk to about what improvements they could possibly make to their business. You also discuss that with their

landlords. And then we only found one store that was a five, and I looked at that particular store today and I think maybe I scored them a little too low. I do think that they are -- that they could be better. And again, that's with just a small amount of education and recommendations that that could be improved.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, you're saying that we would -- for example, that one that scored poorly, you want us to go in and basically help them with their operations?

Ms. McCauley: Well, no. We would go and have a discussion with them and say here's what we found and we would suggest to you that, you know, A, B and C are things you could do to help yourself. We're not going to attempt to run anybody's business.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah.

Ms. McCauley: We just -- but we think this is important information to share with landlords.

Vice Mayor Quesada: How helpful has that been in your previous experience? Because I would imagine, just like anything, some people will appreciate it and try to take note and others will tell you to go fly a kite.

Ms. McCauley: Well, I think you just answered your own question...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah.

Ms. McCauley: There. Generally, those who are really low scoring aren't very receptive to your ideas.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah.

Ms. McCauley: Okay, but I think you have to give them the opportunity and say...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Of course.

Ms. McCauley: Okay, here's what we found. Just like many of the people that we have to deal with, we're always surprised at how seriously people take the recommendations. So -- but the one thing we do know is if we don't make those recommendations, nothing's going to change. In some cases, they do. So, you know, we found here that the two areas that we were weakest in as a whole retail wise was on signage. Signage is underwhelming. You can't see -- we'll get into the awnings as well. But you know, there was -- we were looking at three stores today that we thought was one store just because the one store signed well; the other two did not. So, signage and window presence, which means that there are too many windows that aren't well, you know, designed. So, you know, and this is a comment that my colleague Kelly felt was really important. These are the best conditions anywhere we've worked, and we've worked in downtown L.A. We've worked in downtown Seattle. We've worked in a lot of downtowns. You have the cleanest windows of any place we've worked. Now, I'm not sure with the commencement of the streetscape improvements that that's true just because the dust and dirt gets kicked up, but you know, people were paying attention and cleaning their storefronts. And yet, you know, the one thing that we found is the branding is not particularly good and the reason for that is that we have too many common elements that are the same and it's having awnings that will stretch along a whole building façade, may have five different retailers in it, but yet, the retailer is required to use the building sign. And retailers spend a lot of time and effort in their branding efforts, and a retailer should be allowed to express their brand, their use of color, the way they sign, as long as it's in keeping with your sign and design criteria, which I might suggest is something that we look at and see if it's as contemporary and up to date as it could be. You know, and we use, as an example, if you look at this -- we were standing across the street from this store -- and you all know what this store is -- we couldn't tell what it was and we see Barnes & Noble everywhere. We had no clue that that was a Barnes & Noble store, because where's the sign? And I didn't see it. So, anyway, I think that would be one of our strong recommendations



to you is to take a look at your signage and design criteria and allow for more individualization as far as retailers, as long as it's in keeping with your design and signage criteria.

Mayor Cason: I'm thinking back to places like Georgetown and outside of Alexandria, Virginia that have...

Ms. McCauley: Yeah.

Mayor Cason: The signs that come out this way where you can actually walk down and see what it is. I mean, that made much more sense than the way we have our signs now.

Ms. McCauley: Right. Well, you have a few perpendicular signs -- that's when they come out -- but they're very small and you couldn't see them a half a block down the street. So, they must be allowed, like your signage criteria, but they aren't very large. And having big signs is not bad as long as they're good signs, you know, and how they look is really important. So, when we looked at the overall mix...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Can I interrupt for one second?

Ms. McCauley: Sure.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: So, what she's saying is really important, because we're the problem in terms of awnings and wanting to have that building having that continuity of awning sign of the perpendicular words, but it's too small. And so, we need to liberate ourselves from ourselves I think in some of the positioning for the downtown. So, I didn't want to interrupt, but I didn't want them to think that the retailers were to blame. I think we are.

Ms. McCauley: Yeah. And that frequently is the case where the criteria is too stringent. It's probably been done by somebody other than a retail designer, and I would ask that you get a

really good retail firm to take a look at your criteria and say, okay, here's how you can improve it. Here's where it's really good and take a look at that. And there are some very excellent firms that are out there that can do that kind of thing and are known for doing it. So, too often these criteria have been done by either city planners or local architects. And while they're all very talented people, retail is not their specialty. So, when we looked at the overall merchandise mix, we know -- I mean, retail is part art and it's part science. And the art comes from we've spent many years knowing what works and what doesn't work. And so, if we look at your existing mix here, we know that your apparel, men's and women's, is too low. We need to increase the amount of apparel offerings. What we're trying to do is to create enough of a critical mass of these various uses that would intrigue somebody to come who lives here in Coral Gables to come downtown and shop, but also that larger trade area to come here and shop, because there are enough options in these particular categories. Food and beverage, that can be increased. We think -- you know, ideally, if somebody said what's the ideal number? It's somewhere between 30 and 33 percent of a downtown should be food. It has replaced what used to be that department store anchor. You know, we say food is the new black. Food is the new department store. So, you can increase the number of restaurants and food offerings that you have here. I would certainly increase -- you've got the beginnings of some really beautiful furniture and home stores here. That could be increased as well. We want to get these non-retail uses, banks, office lobbies, anything that's kind of passive, off your main streets and off your main retail streets. So, if we could reduce that by ten percent, you know, half of what you have here, that would be a big win. I think that personal care is pretty much in line with what it should be. Miscellaneous...

Commissioner Slesnick: When you say personal care, is that hair salons and so forth?

Ms. McCauley: That's hair salons and services, massage...

Commissioner Slesnick: Barber shops.

Ms. McCauley: And -- yeah. And any kind of cosmetic...

Mayor Cason: I think we're seeing -- Mark and I cut the ribbon on about 300 businesses in the last six years. And what I'm seeing more of is, other than the restaurants, you're starting to see exercise related businesses, service businesses, hair cutteries, massages, you know, swimming therapy and all those sorts of things. I see a lot more of that coming in.

Ms. McCauley: Well, you know, like swimming therapy and things like that, you know, I probably wouldn't want to put them on your main street, because there are certain service uses that are better off not being on a main street, but on a intersecting street. But one of the things that's really missing in your downtown is -- and when we talk about national trends, the great national trend has been in the world of athleisure, which is -- this goes beyond, you know, wearing tennis skirts and...

Commissioner Keon: It's Lululemon.

Ms. McCauley: But it's -- pardon?

Commissioner Keon: It's like Lululemon and those...

Ms. McCauley: Yes, Lululemon, Athleta, both of which are at the Village of Merrick Park, but there are plenty of those types of stores that are out there and they're not any of those represented in your downtown. And...

Mayor Cason: What you don't see much of are those kind of things you'd see in Key West, like a store that sells hot peppers, another one that sells cutlery. I mean, the kind of really interesting thing...

Commissioner Slesnick: Earl of Wales.

Mayor Cason: Earl of Wales.

Commissioner Slesnick: I like Earl of Wales.

Mayor Cason: I mean, things that you would see in Europe, for example, if you were in (INAUDIBLE)...

Ms. McCauley: Yeah.

Mayor Cason: The kind of really interesting things where you want to come downtown. We just don't have that here. You either come here to get married or eat. I mean, basically.

Ms. McCauley: Well, yeah, and that's it. I mean, you know, as far as the wedding business, we say let that go its own way through attrition. We don't say kick them out, but we certainly aren't going to be going after that because that's, again, you know, it's not a repeat customer business.

Vice Mayor Quesada: But our downtown core -- I mean, I'm sure you have more well thought out opinions than we do, because you specialize in this for a living. But from what I've seen, our downtown core lives and dies on the business citizen, the business resident, the Monday through Friday, 9 to 5. That's why we have those, you know, restaurants like Hillstone and BrickTop's that -- and Seasons 52 that do well. And what ends up happening is our Friday nights are more full and have more foot traffic, so that's why I think those type of establishments have worked for us and that's why they thrive in the city. Because you don't see it Saturday afternoon, Sunday afternoon or Saturday and Sunday night. There's a little bit of a brunch thing happening, but people eat and then they leave, which I think goes to your point of why we need more...

Ms. McCauley: Right.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Apparel and home stores.

Ms. McCauley: Right. You need more stores that the local people -- I think you really need to merchandise to your local residents and your local workers. And...

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, how do we do that?

Ms. McCauley: Well, it's by changing the mix of stores, and that's by recruiting. And you have already -- let me...

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, we have a landlord -- I'm sorry, just...

Ms. McCauley: Go ahead.

Vice Mayor Quesada: You're making me...

Ms. McCauley: Go ahead, please.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Think of other things here. We have a landlord in town that they have property that they sort of -- they wait until they're having the right tenants, which I think is the right thing -- it's smart.

Ms. McCauley: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I think they've done a good job with that. But other than that one specific landlord that I'm thinking of, I mean, how do you convince other landlords to turn away a tenant to pick a better tenant? You know, that's...

Ms. McCauley: Well...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Isn't that the million-dollar question?

Ms. McCauley: That is the million-dollar question, and you do that by having somebody who's out there recruiting retailers.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Because for the most part, a landlord doesn't care, because they see their profits going out the window every month that it's vacant. As long as they're paying that, you know, triple net lease and they have someone, you know, in there, that's all they care about.

Ms. McCauley: Yeah. And you know, we'll get to that a little bit later as we go into what the recruiter's role is, but it is really working hand in glove with those landlords. And it's very difficult to try and convince a landlord that they're doing the wrong deal and say don't do that deal, unless you have something to offer them, an alternative. And up until now, you haven't had a strategy. You haven't had somebody that can offer them an alternative, so they take the easy way out. You'd be amazed at the number of landlords that are willing to work with you, because you've articulated a good strategy for what it is you're attempting to do. So, when we get into -- you know, let's talk about the merchandise mix a little bit, which we just talked about. You know, it's these categories that we want to go after. This is where Francesca will be focusing her efforts. She's not going out looking for an ice cream store. She's going to be out there looking for home furnishings. She's going to be looking for that great independent athleisure store and convincing them that they need to be in Coral Gables and this is a great place to be. And she's going to go armed with all kinds of good information to give them. And so, that's the role of the retail recruiter. She will also be reaching out to restaurants; quick, casual and full service restaurants and other uses that would be perfect for Giralda. And it doesn't mean that we can't put restaurants on Miracle Mile as well or on Ponce, but you know --, because ultimately, it's where the operator wants to go that determines where the business locates. But we're going to be looking -- we divide retailers into three categories. Magnets. A magnet is a retailer that you would bring in that will attract other retailers. And because they're there, other

retailers will locate there. A neutral is a retailer comes in, they're good, but they're not going to attract other retailers, but they're not going to inhibit retail. The inhibitors are the ones you want to avoid. These are the ones you're talking to that landlord about please don't do that deal, because if they do that deal, then other good operators do not want to come next to them. And we gave you some examples here. This would vary from community to community, because there are plenty of communities if they brought in a Starbuck's they would be the happiest group of people in the world and they think that they have reached the zenith of retail. But in a community such as Coral Gables, putting a store like a Quizno's subs or a Subway on Miracle Mile would be a deterrent to other good operators coming in. So, we're going to go after these magnets. So, our recommendations -- you've already done number one. That's to hire this person who's going to shepherd the plan. Having a strategy will just collect dust on somebody's desk and it would be a waste of your money and our time if you didn't have somebody who's going to steward the plan. And Javier has been on this from day one and has done a great job in, number one, having to go through 200 applications for this position.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And no pressure, Francesca. But -- and then we also had Midge's insight in terms of candidate qualities that we should be looking for.

Ms. McCauley: Right. You know, and I participated in the final interviews and we had a good group of people who were qualified to take on this position. And so, you've done recommendation number one. Number two, while we've got this wonderful streetscape, it's got to be maintained and spit polished and...

Mayor Cason: No chewing gum.

Ms. McCauley: And no chewing gum. And I've already seen gum out there on the test pavers. They are beautiful, by the way. I've seen both what's going to happen down near Giralda and what's happening here on Miracle Mile. And I think it's going to be an extraordinary streetscape. I always worry about trees. Trees can obscure retail stores, so make sure they're

properly limbed and that they're the right trees to replant. We do see that a lot of the trees are blocking signage, so another important reason to relook at this -- your signage criteria, because we can't see a lot of the signs. So, the maintenance is -- wayfinding. Signs -- well, we just don't see them. And if we do see them, they're awfully tiny. And it's showing where it's easy -- you have a lot of parking. It's just that a number of people don't know how to find it, so that would be another recommendation. Support these existing operators. Those that aren't meeting the standards that we think are really good retail standards, have discussions with them. Have discussions with their landlord. If the person or the store doesn't up their game, you know, you have those conversations with the landlords and find out when lease expirations are and maybe those leases don't get renewed. Make sure that as you're going forward with the Agave project, which we think is wonderful, because they're going to bring great residential and I believe a hotel into downtown, which I -- we love. But make sure that there's the connection all the way down Ponce, that there are no gaps between that project and Miracle Mile. And brand those trolleys. Your trolleys look like everybody else's trolleys. We know of people that get on the wrong one, because they're the same colors as Miami's trolleys. But then somebody mentioned to me, well, they're Miami's colors. They're also every other city's trolley colors. Make yours stand out, you know, a coral colored streetcar or trolley wouldn't hurt, but I'll let that up to you, but I would certainly brand them. And getting, you know, really good retail friendly design on the storefronts and within the stores, important. Encourage, lead people to good designers as you're working with them. More downtown residential. I'd love to see more residential above storefronts. Every time you put, you know, residents on the street, you have more eyes on the street.

Mayor Cason: We agree with that.

Ms. McCauley: You have lights and you have activity. But set it back, so you're not creating, you know, large kind of valleys that are dark. And recruiting -- we've hired Francesca and we're working with her, and we will continue to work with her for the next few months, and we will always be accessible to her and to Javier with any questions or concerns that they have. But you



know, how do you measure the progress of your success? And it isn't -- you know, someone will say, well, how many stores have you opened? Well, that's tough to say how many stores are going to open within a short period of time. Maybe none. But well, how you can count what it is you're doing is how many people have you prospected? How many of these people that you consider are good prospects have come to tour downtown? Because remember, the recruiter does not have control over the deal making. The recruiter is just a matchmaker. But how many people have been brought downtown? How many people have entered into a conversation with the landlord and into negotiations? Later on, you can count, well, how many leases got signed and how many stores have opened. And then -- but that's over a period of years. And let's say within five years, you should be able to see increases in rents. If you do your job well, rents will increase and this is, you know, sometimes some people consider this a problem. But land -- retailers that are doing their jobs, if they can afford to come into an area and start a business, they should also be able to sustain the sales -- you know, they should be able to sustain any kind of growth in rents because, as the area gets better, their sales go up as well. It would be probably not -- it would be the opposite of what we would want to have to have a retailer come in and, over time, their sales go down. Our goal is for them to grow, and when they grow, the rents grow and then the income to the city gets larger. So, that's what we're looking for. And one of the things -- and the last thing I'll stop with -- today's retail world is really changing. And as we know, everybody's said, oh, the Internet's going to do away with bricks and mortar. Well, we don't think that's true. Bricks and mortar is going to change. I think the size of stores will change. Some of the stores that -- well, we're even seeing that in restaurants. Restaurants were usually 7,000 square feet. Then they went down to 5,000. Really, the sweet spot for restaurants today is 2,500 to 3,500 square feet. A restaurateur would prefer to have concepts of smaller uses than one large restaurant. And we're seeing in the department stores they're having to change. They've gone online, but they found their online business drives their store business. And it's really all about the experience. And the one thing that Coral Gables is going to be able to deliver to people is you're going to have an extraordinary experience here with good retailers, good restaurants, with a streetscape that is incomparable and - but, boy, make sure that those restaurants and cafés and retailers are able to spill out into the street and have as much active

seating on these sidewalks as you can possibly get. And one of the ways, you know, Nordstrom being from Seattle, we always have to wave the Nordstrom flag. They do a great job in their flagship store there. But one of the coolest things that they've done and they're going to be doing at all their stores and they have already done in Village of Merrick Park is they're putting in a bar and a café on the fashion floors, because a woman will spend more money on an apparel if her husband's with her or her boyfriend or significant other and that person is comfortable during the shopping experience. She will spend less on apparel if that person is with her and is...

Commissioner Keon: Complaining.

Ms. McCauley: Moaning and groaning and doesn't have anything to do.

Mayor Cason: So, the guy's off getting liquored up...

Ms. McCauley: You get...

Mayor Cason: And she's off shopping.

Ms. McCauley: Right. And you know what we're also seeing is it's a safe place for singles to go.

Mayor Cason: Yeah.

Ms. McCauley: You know, you're not going to run into bad characters on Nordstrom's third floor fashion level, so it's a safe place. And it's not unlike when Borders Books many years ago, when they were still in business, they did the first coffee café in Philadelphia, because we did the deal with them there, and they were really nervous about offering food in a bookstore. Well, that became the go-to place in Center City, Philadelphia for single people to meet one another

because of its safety. So, you can buy clothes, you can find husbands (INAUDIBLE) girlfriends. You know, go for it. And you know, with that, I'm finished, and I'm sorry it took so long.

Mayor Cason: I have two...

Ms. McCauley: But I'm happy to answer any questions.

Mayor Cason: Two questions. What -- in terms of what the City can do in terms of valeting and the pricing of valet and making it more fun for the people that are under 35. My -- I mentioned this to people before. My son used to work in Brazil and he comes up and runs a group of people in Blue Lagoon from Oracle, and I say, come to eat in Coral Gables. And he says, Dad, they say it's too boring, so they go to South Beach. In other words, sophisticated music or an entertainment overlay district, which we've discussed before, is a way to, after eating, instead of leaving and going somewhere else, they stay and they bring the foot traffic along with the interesting -- that makes it possible for interesting stores to stay open late instead of closing early, because no one's going to be there after dinner.

Ms. McCauley: Well, I think that all comes from going out and selecting the right operator who's going to open a concept that's going to be really interesting to his age group. And I've heard this comment more than once about, gee, we'd like to go someplace to go have a drink after we've had dinner and that determines where we have dinner. And so, that's an important element to pay attention to. What you don't want to do is you don't want to open the floodgates to bar bars.

Mayor Cason: Right.

Ms. McCauley: And so, it's really curating who those operators are. And yes, I would encourage --, because people do -- don't necessarily want to go home to bed at 10 o'clock at night. They may want some later night activity. But I would be very cautious about where you

locate that and that you don't open the floodgates to bar bars coming in, which probably wouldn't happen just because of the cost of the real estate. You know, these places where they want to do raves and late-night dancing and all-night bars generally go to...

Mayor Cason: I'm just saying where you can have jazz...

Ms. McCauley: Yeah.

Mayor Cason: You can have a piano. You can have a violin.

Ms. McCauley: Yeah.

Mayor Cason: We don't have any of that and we...

Ms. McCauley: No.

Mayor Cason: I mean, we've gone the other direction over the years, having small signs. I mean, if you look back, I think there was a Junior Jaycee study in 1965 that I read that said what don't you want in the city. They didn't want a downtown. They didn't want people to come in here and...

Ms. McCauley: Well...

Mayor Cason: Go downtown and so on. A lot of the small signs and get them off the sidewalks and no billboards to share with the restaurants assuming...

Ms. McCauley: Yeah.

Mayor Cason: Was because there was a time when they didn't want anybody down there.

Ms. McCauley: Well, that was -- everybody was trying to compete with the malls, and that started in the 60s and went through the 70s. How many streets did we close down in this country? Like thousands of streets were closed to just pedestrians only. There are only about three or four of those that remain closed today that are successful. They've all opened -- I think there's only a total of less than 30 that remain closed throughout the United States. And of those 30, probably four or five of them are successful.

Mayor Cason: And would you encourage...

Ms. McCauley: And that was at that same time.

Mayor Cason: Would you encourage us -- I mean, right now we have valet doing the streetscape at \$5, which is probably the cheapest valet in Florida. It would seem to me that to the extent you can keep valet down low or lower than most other places, it's going to bring people in. They don't have to worry about the parking, driving around, all the congestion.

Ms. McCauley: Yeah.

Mayor Cason: They can just leave their car and pick it up anywhere.

Ms. McCauley: Right. You know, I can't speak to the pricing. I would certainly make sure that it's comparable or less with other communities. But if you had the right operator, if you have a really cool concept, people will pay to park. So, it's getting the right operators and being competitive, you know. I don't necessarily -- you know, \$3 -- saving \$3 on a valet parking probably isn't going to bring somebody to a restaurant or not. It would be -- that would be my opinion and sometimes I'm not right.

Commissioner Keon: What do you think about the valet -- the extent of valet parking that's not centralized valet, where you have, you know, so many restaurants that have their own valet and so you could have on three corners, you could have a valet in front of three restaurants that are only for those restaurants, as opposed to having more of a centralized valet where people could -- you know, could park and they'd have to walk down the street or walk a block or walk and pass by stores rather than just drive up in front of that restaurant, leave their car and go.

Ms. McCauley: Well, I like the centralized valet idea. I mean, I think that was a stroke of genius.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Ms. McCauley: It's a question of getting the word out there that you can drop off at one place and pick up at another. And that's educating the public about how to use it. But I would -- you know, I wish other cities did this, but they don't.

Commissioner Keon: But we have -- we allow -- we have more than the centralized valet. We have the centralized valet, and then any restaurant that would like valet can have their own valet. You know, so for a retail strategy, are we better off to centralize all of our valet or do you have that mix where you let each restaurant have their own valet plus a centralized valet?

Ms. McCauley: Well, you know, I'm not sure that that's an answer that I could answer now. I think I'd have to be talking to restaurant operators about how they felt about that.

Commissioner Keon: Could you talk about that, though? Maybe you can work with her on that. Because, I mean, I noticed Abbracci has their own valet. Ruth's Chris has their own valet. They're right across the street from each other. You go up the corner here and (INAUDIBLE) has their own. BrickTop's has their own. Fleming's has their own. The next person up has their own. And you know, so you never encourage -- you're never encouraging people to walk down

a street. You never encourage them to pass by another storefront. You're never encouraging them to do anything except pull up, hand their keys, walk in, eat and walk out.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Yes. We...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: This is an interesting discussion, because we had intended after streetscape -- and there is an after streetscape...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: That we would move all of our valet parking to centralized valet parking, but for hotels, so that if you're going to be in the downtown, you're going to play by our rules with our space and our centralized vendor yet to be selected. That's the intention, but we didn't want to make too many changes amidst streetscape construction.

Commissioner Keon: No, no, no. But I'm -- you know, going forward, I would much prefer to see a centralized valet than have everybody have their own valet, but I think that's probably a significant issue that our Chamber can help us with because, you know, have a culture that is -- that's the culture and that's -- so it's a matter of changing the culture too.

Ms. McCauley: Well, I'm -- if I were a restaurateur and, you know -- I wouldn't want to have to deal with having to have my own valet parking. I'd love it if somebody else offered it and it was, you know, out in front of my store, but I haven't gone to market and had that conversation with restaurateurs so...

Commissioner Keon: You could have it here.

Mayor Cason: Why don't you look into it?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Kevin and I have had some informal conversations about that already so we'll continue that, and actually, I'll bring Midge into that conversation, as well as the Chamber and others. So, I think it's...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, please.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: It's a good discussion to be...

Mayor Cason: Any -- you wanted to say a couple things?

Venny Torre: Yes. Thank you for letting me speak. I do have a couple comments, and I wanted to ask a question of Midge while you all are here. The first comment is the discussion you were just having about the hours of operation and how to liven it up a little bit, the BID has been, in the last few months, really getting involved in this. We do have an item in our overlay that has been sort of the same discussion. And I know that -- just what you mentioned, I've had the same discussion with Commissioner Lago. I'm sure that Commissioner Quesada feels the same way. We do want to stay a little bit later at night. So, I would love for a hearty discussion to be had when this item comes up in the next few months, so we really can get deep into this and really figure out a way that works. I think that we're all trying to get to that same place. If we can really get deep into it, we may come out with something that really works well. We're trying to get there.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I don't disagree with you. I just think there's a slippery slope once you get into it, because we don't want to become -- I mean, I like what we are. I think we all like what we are, but the moment you start going a little too much, then -- I mean, we don't want to be Las Olas. We don't want to be some of these other areas that are just...

Venny Torre: Totally agree.



Vice Mayor Quesada: Becoming a place where everyone's just going to get drunk.

Venny Torre: Totally agree. That's why we need to (INAUDIBLE)...

Vice Mayor Quesada: That's why I think it's a slippery slope.

Venny Torre: But it's something we are talking about, and we want to make sure that once the streetscape is done, we have...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Oh, no. I agree with you, absolutely.

Venny Torre: So, we really should get into it, and that's what I was trying to make a point of.

Commissioner Keon: I'm wondering if as -- we seem to be opening more hotels in the city. As hotels open, you know, if when we work with the hotel operators, that there's a bar in the hotel or there's like a little jazz place within the hotel -- I mean, that -- I know in New York, I find so often you go maybe after dinner is you'll go into a hotel that has a bar and has a -- you know, but we don't have any of that here...

Vice Mayor Quesada: The point...

Commissioner Keon: But we are opening more hotels and we have more hotels coming online. So, you know, maybe with that -- Agave is going to have a very nice hotel. Maybe we can look to those operators to see if that couldn't become a component of, you know, something that we would like to see, because it's -- yeah, it is a little difficult.

Venny Torre: Point is that she brought it up, you all brought it up. I think it's a good time...

Commissioner Keon: No, I think it's a good time to have...

Venny Torre: To go head and start talking about this.

Mayor Cason: (INAUDIBLE) come back with some ideas that we can bounce around.

Venny Torre: I do have a second point. On the Agave project that's coming through, there was a retail study that was done, and I remember that some of the discussions were about the sizes, components that made up Miracle Mile, whether they were the right size, they were locked in some form of time (INAUDIBLE) where you couldn't really bring in some other types of retailers. And then also a discussion was whether we needed some larger retailers, some anchors of some type, and that's what I think Agave was trying to accomplish by the larger (INAUDIBLE). And I wanted to hear Midge's comments as to where Miracle Mile sits in terms of the sizes. Is it locked in time? Can we enlarge the spaces? Is the scale right now something we want to work with because it represents the historical aspect of it? Should we change it? I want to hear more about what that means to us.

Ms. McCauley: Okay. I think the sizes and the options that you have are wonderful. And retailers today aren't getting larger; they're getting smaller. So, I would say you don't need any large spaces down on Miracle Mile. If Agave can create some larger spaces and there are appropriate users for those, then let them do that with their project. I don't think you have to touch anything along -- other than taking a look at façades and awnings and signs and dated storefronts on Miracle Mile. Every time a new retailer comes in, a storefront can get updated. One of the best malls in the United States is North Park, in Dallas, Texas, and that was built back in the 1960s, and they haven't changed anything about the common area there. But every time a store comes in, they put in fabulous storefronts. And so, that mall has stayed relevant and current forever, just for the use of the storefronts.

Commissioner Lago: In reference to that, is that...?

Commissioner Keon: So has Bal Harbour.

Commissioner Lago: A private mall, 100 percent private? Or is it...

Ms. McCauley: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Individually owned bays?

Ms. McCauley: No.

Commissioner Lago: Kind of like what we have on the Mile?

Ms. McCauley: Yeah --- no, no. No, North Park is owned by a developer.

Commissioner Lago: No, I ask that, because, again, the idea is, you know, you have certain owners who have owned these pieces of property for 30, 40 and 50 years. And you know, cost is sometimes an issue, so you want them to revamp the façade. You want them to make sure that everything is -- I brought -- let me give you another -- an idea that I brought up and I brought it up to this Commission and I know that staff is working on it. You know, it'd be interesting if maybe we could just have a uniform palette for the Mile. Instead of having fifty different colors down the Mile, we could have, you know, five or six beautiful colors that are more in line with what Coral Gables stands for. Because if you look at kind of the buildings right now, you'll see there's all different colors.

Ms. McCauley: Well, I'm a fan of all different colors.

Commissioner Lago: Oh, you are?

Ms. McCauley: I'm a fan of you branding your retail, not as Coral Gables, but as retail. And the best retail centers in the country...

Commissioner Lago: Well, I'm happy to hear that.

Ms. McCauley: Allow that individuality, you know.

Commissioner Lago: I'm taking advantage...

Ms. McCauley: And that's why they're the best that they are.

Commissioner Lago: I'm taking advantage that you're here.

Ms. McCauley: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: So, I wanted to get your opinions on this.

Ms. McCauley: Well, then I'd like to bring up another topic too. As you were talking about zoning and as I was walking and refreshing my memory as I was going down Miracle Mile today and I was told there's a bank coming into a corner location. And whoa, I was very disappointed to hear that, because we haven't had that before. And well, maybe we want to think about a zoning overlay at least for Miracle Mile where some of these service uses...

Vice Mayor Quesada: It's so hard. Because here's the thing, a bank, for a landlord, it's the best. It's a 15-, 20-year lease...

Ms. McCauley: Yeah, but it's bad for retail.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I understand that. But this is the question I was asking you earlier.

Ms. McCauley: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: If I'm a landlord and I don't live in Miami, I don't live in South Florida. I live in Wisconsin. I own that piece of property -- which a lot of times happens in Miracle Mile. I'm not saying Wisconsin, but I'm saying an out-of-town owner.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: But nothing's wrong with Wisconsin.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Nothing's wrong with Wisconsin. But the point is, they could care less. They want a tenant that's going to pay. And a bank is going to pay them religiously.

Commissioner Lago: Triple net, no concerns.

Vice Mayor Quesada: All day long, no concerns.

Ms. McCauley: Right. But it's our job to convince them to not do that.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah.

Ms. McCauley: And we have seen overlays been used very successfully, keeping perhaps -- you know, in places where they've had way too many drug stores and they don't want more drug stores or places where fast food has crept into a retail fashion street. And these overlays have been done successfully. And so, it's just something to think about, you know, just a comment.

Mayor Cason: Well, we'll have you -- we'll probably have you back again as you move this forward and we get successful recruitment, and particularly, with the discussion of signs, because...

Ms. McCauley: I'm happy to come.

Mayor Cason: We're always hearing, not only from the business owners, but everybody that have a hard time finding the stores and...

Ms. McCauley: Yeah. They do because when I meet these building owners, they're not retail -- they're not retailers. They're not retail oriented. They -- and they don't know. And we're here to help them with that process. And we may be talking to them about, please, don't do this use, but we're here to help you find the right use. And ultimately, it's in your best interest if you have -- and I'll use an example, Washington, D.C., Connecticut Avenue used to be the highest end retail street within the district of Washington, D.C., and Georgetown has had its ups and downs. And during the period that Connecticut Avenue was hot, the retailers wanted Connecticut Avenue or they didn't want to be in D.C. Well, Georgetown started to get a little bit better, so some of these retailers on Connecticut moved over to Georgetown. When they left, they landlord replaced them with banks. And now you have banks on just about every key corner along Connecticut Avenue. They have not been able to sustain the retail that they had. It's all gone to Georgetown. And what's happened to Georgetown? The rents have doubled in the last ten years. What's happened on Connecticut Avenue? They've stayed the same or gone down. And so, they may have gotten a bank in their building that's paying them above market, but what they've done is they've destroyed the market.

Mayor Cason: Got you.

Ms. McCauley: So, I mean, you can make that argument to a landlord and try to convince them to do the right thing. Because ultimately, I mean, if they're in there for the long haul, they're going to create value for their building by putting in the right mix of stores and not putting in the (INAUDIBLE). It's the same thing...

Vice Mayor Quesada: You're preaching to the choir.

Ms. McCauley: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I just think it's a tough sell.

Ms. McCauley: Well, then we can preach...

Commissioner Lago: But Vice Mayor...

Ms. McCauley: It is a tough sell.

Commissioner Lago: When you talk about tough sell and now you can potentially make that tough sell when you have facts like what she's mentioning right now. I never knew that.

Vice Mayor Quesada: But you know what ultimately is going to happen...

Commissioner Lago: She has a very compelling argument when she actually gives you data, which you know, helps you make that sell.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And we just have to be -- and I know we've taken that step already --, but we have to be very proactive so that every landlord on Miracle Mile and Giralda knows that, hey, talk to us before you sign any leases.

Ms. McCauley: And that's...

Vice Mayor Quesada: And we have to have a resource that says, look, all these tenants -- the moment you think you're going to have a vacancy, talk to us first, because we may have someone that wants to come in.

Ms. McCauley: Exactly.

Vice Mayor Quesada: We're going to make your life even easier.

Ms. McCauley: And we want to get all the lease expiration dates that we can possibly get so that we know a year in advance when a lease is turning over, because...

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, we have to be incredibly proactive if we're going to be able to achieve these goals.

Ms. McCauley: Yeah.

Mayor Cason: Yeah.

Ms. McCauley: Well, you've already...

Mayor Cason: Thank...

Ms. McCauley: Started.

Commissioner Slesnick: Were you suggesting...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Francesca, no pressure.

Commissioner Lago: One of 280 applicants.

Mayor Cason: Well, thank you very much.



Commissioner Slesnick: Let me just ask one more question. Were you suggesting from where Agave is up to Miracle Mile that you have mostly stores along there?

Ms. McCauley: It could be stores...

Commissioner Slesnick: Because...

Ms. McCauley: Or restaurants, but not...

Commissioner Slesnick: Well, right now you have professional offices and a bank...

Ms. McCauley: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: And a bank on Miracle Mile on the corner, so you have a couple of banks and real estate office and...

Ms. McCauley: Well...

Vice Mayor Quesada: (INAUDIBLE) currently exists.

Ms. McCauley: You know...

Commissioner Slesnick: I know. I mean, are you suggesting that we try to get stores in there as some of these...

Ms. McCauley: Over time, I would. Over time...

Commissioner Slesnick: I know Commissioner...

Ms. McCauley: But you know, it's going to be a long time...

Commissioner Slesnick: But Commissioner Keon, when we were talking about the Agave project really pushed to have larger storefront windows along...

Commissioner Keon: No, what we pushed for is when Agave came to us with their initial design, they had created a mall-like environment where their retail was all very deep in their complex, and we made them bring all of their retail out to the street. So, their retail was on Ponce. And we said to them, you cannot have retail buried deep in this project, because we do not want you to develop a mall in our downtown. You cannot put a mall downtown.

Commissioner Lago: Large storefronts, visible lighting.

Commissioner Keon: But it's more -- that it's very visible and that it's on Ponce, so that we bring all of that -- and the hope was is that that would be a connector to the Mile. And I think Agave has accepted in the development agreement are we finishing the street...

Mayor Cason: Streetscape.

Commissioner Keon: Where there is an agreement with Agave to finish the street from the corner of Ponce and the Mile on the side that Agave is, all the way down to Agave, all the way down to their project, on both sides of the street of Ponce in not the exact same pavers as the Mile, but in a complementary style so it creates a visual extension...

Venny Torre: Connection, right.

Commissioner Keon: A connection from Agave -- or from Ponce all the way down to Miracle Mile, so we create that T or that intersection. And it was a long discussion about trying to encourage and looking at Ponce along there to encourage retail development, so you don't have

to walk, you know, more than, you know, even a half a block before you hit a shop or a retail store, that you don't have to walk like two blocks because once you walk a block, you're not going to walk anymore. They're not going.

Commissioner Slesnick: Well, there are some people in that building on the 2700 block that are little professional offices, upholstery stores and so forth that are talking about moving out. So, this would be a good time for...

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: Everybody to find out when they're moving out, and there's also a Kinko's or whatever -- I mean, a -- whatever.

Commissioner Keon: The FedEx or whatever...

Commissioner Slesnick: FedEx, yes.

Commissioner Keon: That is, whatever that store is.

Commissioner Slesnick: Because it would be wonderful to walk from Agave up to Miracle Mile and to Giralda and back.

Ms. McCauley: Right, and to have all of that retail focused right on Ponce.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mayor Cason: Okay. We're going to end the workshop. And Walter needs one minute in order to...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And Mr. Mayor, if I can just say one thing, though. Thank you for all your knowledge and your direction and guidance.

Mayor Cason: Very helpful.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We really appreciate it. But I also want to thank the Chamber and the Business Improvement District, because while the City paid half, they were in too. They paid 25 and 25, and it was so all three groups, working together, I think that's really going to be the key to the success.

Mayor Cason: Right, right.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And we appreciate all of their work in the past and all their work moving forward.

Ms. McCauley: Well, and we thank you for hiring us.

Mayor Cason: Okay.

Ms. McCauley: We've enjoyed this assignment.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much. We're going to take -- Walter needs 30 seconds to get the TV back on as we move back to the conclusion of our regular session.

Commissioner Keon: You know, this issue -- the signage, Mayor Cason, this issue with signage that they talked about here, we really need to start looking at these mixed use projects like now on the signage for those.

Mayor Cason: I agree. The signage is...

Commissioner Keon: A new signage program.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Which one?

Commissioner Slesnick: Which one?

Commissioner Keon: For their whole issue of signage, we really need to look at, as we're encouraging in these mixed use projects the use of arcades, we have to look at a signage program that can identify what those stores are so they can be successful.

Commissioner Slesnick: And I'm like the Mayor. I'd like to see the signs hanging up perpendicular...

Commissioner Keon: Yes, right.

Commissioner Slesnick: Because you can't...

Commissioner Keon: Both.

Commissioner Slesnick: Look down and see -- someone was asking where a restaurant was the other day. I say, oh, it's about halfway down, but you can't see it.

Vice Mayor Quesada: That's true.

Commissioner Keon: From the street and from within the walking path, yeah.

Mayor Cason: Okay. Let's...

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Mayor Cason: Walter's ready to go. We have three items left.