

MASTER PLAN OF LAND USE  
for the  
CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLA.

RADER AND ASSOCIATES  
ENGINEERS AND ARCHITECTS  
FIRST NATIONAL BANK BLDG., MIAMI, FLA.

JOB NO. 4617

MAY 4, 1962

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May 4, 1962

Mr. L. W. Robinson, Jr.,  
City Manager  
City of Coral Gables, Florida

Re: Submission of Report Presenting  
a Land Use Study for the City of  
Coral Gables - Job No. 4617

Dear Mr. Robinson:

With this report we submit the results of our study of the development of Coral Gables, which was undertaken for the purpose of preparing a workable land use plan.

Information used in the preparation of the report was obtained from personal interviews with business and governmental agencies, field reconnaissance trips, aerial photographs, and other standard statistical sources. Criteria for the land use plan were selected to preserve the residential atmosphere of Coral Gables and at the same time, guide the development of the central business district so that it may become one of the outstanding commercial districts in the nation.

For the purposes of this report, the city was divided into two separate major areas; one, the developed area lying north of Sunset Road, and the other, the largely undeveloped area lying south of Sunset Road. The northern section was further subdivided into the residential area, central business district, central business district perimeter area, and special study areas. Each of these areas were studied individually and plans were prepared for guiding their future development.

Summarizing the results of our study, we find that:

1. The initial city plan and the rigid enforcement of zoning laws has prevented the integration of commercial and residential neighborhoods and has generally maintained the character of the city in keeping with George Merrick's original concept;
2. Access to the central business district is not adequate to handle the traffic that would be generated by an intensely developed central business district;
3. The development in certain areas adjacent to the city limits is being retarded because of the adverse influence of the neighboring establishments outside the city limits;
4. The main thoroughfares leading to the central business district are congested and carry traffic passing through the city, in addition to traffic with an origin or destination in the central business district;
5. Vehicular circulation within the central business district is retarded by conflicting traffic movements, on-street parking, and frequent interruptions at uncoordinated traffic signals;
6. Demand for property within the central business district is being diluted by permitting ribbon commercial areas to develop;
7. Building vacancies are beginning to appear in the older sections of the central business district;
8. The southern perimeter area of the central business district is a heterogeneous mixture of commercial property, warehouses, vacant deteriorating structures, and residential property;
9. The zoning on Biltmore Way is encouraging the spread of the commercial district;
10. The five-street intersection at Coral Way and Le Jeune Road is impeding the flow of east-west and north-south traffic in Coral Gables.

In view of these findings we recommend that:

1. The land use plan presented herein be adopted;
2. The entrance to Biltmore Way at Le Jeune Road be cut off by extending the City Hall property to Merrick Park, and the area treated as shown in the master use plan;
3. The erection of multi-story buildings in the central business district between Le Jeune and Douglas Roads be restricted as follows:
  - a. Maximum height in the area two blocks north and one block south of Alhambra Plaza. Nine-stories or 100 feet.
  - b. Maximum height in the area three blocks south and two blocks north of Miracle Mile - 6 stories, or 65 feet.
4.
  - a. That the erection of six-story apartment buildings be restricted to the area lying one block west of Le Jeune Road between University Drive and Mendoza Avenue and the area north of the central business district between Minorca and Zamora Avenues, with the exception of the area occupied by the proposed cultural center and the City Hall.
  - b. That the erection of four-story apartment buildings be restricted to the area lying one-half block west of the six story apartment area between University Drive and Mendoza Avenue, as well as the remainder of the area north of Zamora Avenue.
  - c. That the zoning in the area one-half block east of Segovia Street between University Court and Mendoza Avenue be changed to permit the construction of two-story apartment buildings.
5. That the zoning changes recommended by No. 4 above, be delayed until there is an evident need for these multi-family dwelling units and that the area between Le Jeune Road and Segovia Street be rezoned on a block to block basis so that multi-family dwelling units will not be constructed in among single-family dwelling units.

6. The City provide off-street parking facilities in that area of the central business district between Giralda and Andalusia Avenues and that the long range plans be based on the provision of 550 parking spaces in each block. These spaces to be provided as they are needed by constructing multi-story parking garages on the City owned parking lots.
7. That building owners be required to provide off-street parking facilities in the area of the central business district between Giralda and Minorca Avenues at the ratio of one parking space for each 600 feet of net rentable floor space.
8. That building owners be required to provide their own off-street parking facilities in the area of the central business district between Andalusia and Almeria Avenues at the ratio of one parking space for each 500 square feet of net rentable floor space.
9. The land use in the southern area of Coral Gables be allocated as follows:
  - a. Single family residences - at least 90% of total area;
  - b. Multi-family dwelling - not more than 10% of total area;
  - c. Municipal, Club and Marina - at least 26 acres.
10. The zoning in the southern perimeter area of the central business district be revised to limit the type of establishments permitted to locate in the area;
11. Further development of the commercial ribbon district along Ponce de Leon Boulevard north of the central business district be discouraged;
12. The City initiate detailed studies of traffic flow to provide a basis for installing a coordinated traffic control system in the central business district;
13. The City take immediate steps to improve the following arterial thoroughfares: -
  - a. Ponce de Leon Boulevard between Tamiami Trail and the central business district;
  - b. Ponce de Leon Boulevard between the central business district and U. S. Highway No. 1;
  - c. Alhambra Circle between Le Jeune Road and Red Road;

- d. Granada Boulevard, between Tamiami Trail and U. S. Highway No. 1;
  - e. Coral Way between Le Jeune Road and Red Road;
14. Coral Gables, in cooperation with the proper governmental agencies, undertake the immediate improvement of the following arterial thoroughfares: -
- a. Douglas Road between Flagler Street and U. S. Highway No. 1;
  - b. Le Jeune Road from U. S. Highway No. 1 to Cartagena Plaza; (Formerly Cocoplum Plaza)
  - c. Old Cutler Road from Cartagena Plaza to Red Road;
  - d. A new road connecting the entrance of Matheson Hammock directly to Red Road;
15. Coral Gables create an off-street parking authority to plan and operate off-street parking facilities of adequate capacity and be responsible for the execution of a financial program that would make these facilities self-amortizing.
16. Coral Gables encourage the formation of citizen groups for the purpose of studying the proposed plan and assisting in its execution.

The above are the major recommendations included in our report. We believe their adoption will prevent the migration of the central business district and assist in perpetuating a high demand for property in the central business district and at the same time, guide the future development of Coral Gables so that its residential atmosphere will be maintained.

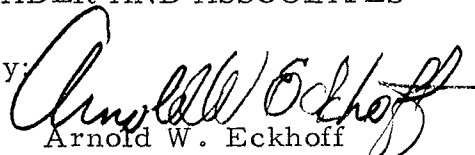
In the event there is any question concerning the material contained in the report, we would appreciate hearing from you.

It has been a pleasure working on this assignment and if we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call upon us.

Very truly yours,

RADER AND ASSOCIATES

By:

  
Arnold W. Eckhoff

AWE:rp  
Enc:

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

The purpose of this study is to prepare a workable overall master plan of land use for the City of Coral Gables. The land use plan, by definition, is essentially a statement of objectives or a general plan setting forth the desirable future use of private and public lands. It is normally prepared for use as a guide for directing the future development and redevelopment of a community and reference to the plan is a basic and necessary prerequisite for reviewing the city zoning code. This code is the actual legal tool and administrative method of controlling development within the community and putting into effect the features of the land use plan.

The process of planning is one of continually looking ahead and no city plan can be used in perpetuity without being up-dated from time to time. Through studies and analyses, changing conditions and their effect on urban development can be brought out and used to help clarify the community's goals. With the aid of these studies, future plans and projections can be coordinated with a long range financial program so that those capital improvements most urgently needed will be provided first. City planning then, is constantly undergoing change and the process is a continuous and living responsibility of each administration.

A review of the existing land use reveals that development within the southern section of the city has not progressed at the same rate as the development of the northern section. The section of Coral Gables lying north of Cartagena Plaza and Sunset Drive is almost completely built up with permanent structures conforming to existing zoning regulations, while the section south of Sunset Road is largely undeveloped. For this reason, only those areas in the northern section that appear to have developed contrary to the initial plan or have not developed because of intervening circumstances are considered in the report. The entire southern section is treated as a unit, and, while its development cannot be completely divorced from development in the northern section, it is believed its development will result in little direct effect on the northern section.

Chapter II contains a study of the central business district and presents a plan for the future development of the district and the feasibility of construction of multi-story buildings. Chapter III is devoted to the perimeter areas of the central business district and contains studies of specific areas in this transition zone. In Chapter IV those areas in the northern section which do not

appear to have developed in a satisfactory manner, or show signs of impending deterioration, are investigated, and a plan is presented for their improvement. The undeveloped area south of Sunset Road is studied and a plan for controlling its improvements is presented in Chapter V. Chapter VI contains suggestions for executing the plan.

## 2. BACKGROUND:

The early history of Coral Gables is well known by everyone acquainted with the city. The city's founder and developer, George E. Merrick, became active in the early real estate developments in Dade County in 1914. While engaged in these projects, he developed the idea of creating a "Master Suburb" that would be a beautiful and balanced city of well built homes in the Mediterranean architectural style. The initial area subdivided was the 1600 acre truck farm owned by George Merrick, and the name Coral Gables was taken from the coral rock, gable roofed homestead of the Merrick Family. This area was completely planned before the street construction was commenced and before the first lot sales were made in November of 1921.

To aid him in bringing his idea to reality, George Merrick brought together expert architects, city planners and engineers. During the early development, the architects spent two years in Spain, the Mediterranean and the South Seas studying design and gaining authentic knowledge of the native architecture. These studies were the origin of the Coral Gables "Mediterranean" style of architecture. Merrick's highly developed Coral Gables city plan provided for rigid control of subsequent construction through deed restrictions on each lot. No duplication of building front elevations was permitted and all plans had to be approved by a Supervising Architect in order to assure that the construction of each building would harmonize with the neighboring buildings and with the land use. The original 1600 acre subdivision eventually grew to an area of 12.3 square miles and extended along the shores of Biscayne Bay south to Chapman Field. This waterfront section, containing approximately six miles of waterfront property was intended for the most luxurious development of all, and would contain canals, lakes and a yacht basin. Unfortunately the real estate boom collapsed before the section could be developed and little has been accomplished in the area until recently.

The city was incorporated in 1925 and the zoning ordinance, first adopted in 1937, was based on the original deed restrictions, thereby maintaining a continuity of plan from Coral Gables' earliest development to the present day. The city has generally firmly adhered to the original zoning and planning and variances have been allowed only in limited cases necessitated by "hardship" and the trend of the times.

3. RELATIONSHIP TO THE METROPOLITAN AREA:

Coral Gables is located west of the city of Miami, approximately four miles from the Miami central business district. It is bounded on the north and east by the city of Miami; on the south by Biscayne Bay; on the west by the cities of West Miami and South Miami and by unincorporated sections of Dade County. During its early history there was very little development along the bordering regions and in the areas lying west and southwest of the city. However, the large influx of people to the South Florida area in the post-war period, and the expansion of urban areas brought about by the greater use of the automobile, has resulted in a metropolitan development which has grown past Coral Gables and covered a large area west and southwest of the city. Coral Gables is now located well within this metropolitan area and is faced with some special situations developing out of the urban expansion.

The use of some bordering areas and the necessity for increasing the capacity of east-west arterial streets needs to be re-examined in light of recent developments and a plan adopted for coordinating improvements within the city with those being provided in adjacent areas.

4. REASON FOR STUDY:

In order to coordinate this study with the future plans for the areas adjacent to Coral Gables, conferences were held with members of the staffs of the Metropolitan Dade County Park and Recreation Department, and other groups. A master land use plan for Dade County is now under study by the Metropolitan Dade County Planning Advisory Board. To date the Board has issued a report entitled "Preliminary Land Use Plans and Policies for Development". The report is intended to be a preliminary plan and will be followed by conferences with the community bodies, after which more detailed studies of the various districts and communities will be prepared. The refined plan will extend the policies of the Preliminary Land Use Plan to specific proposals in the neighborhood level.

Accordingly, by the preparation of this master plan of Land Use of the City of Coral Gables, it will be possible for the city to inform the Board of the city's plans and policies for its future development when the Board undertakes the detailed studies of each community.

## CHAPTER II

### CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

#### 1. DEFINITION OF AREA:

For the purpose of this report, the central business district is defined as that area bounded by Minorca Avenue on the north, Le Jeune Road on the west, Almeria Avenue on the south and Douglas Road on the east. These boundaries were selected to include the main core of the commercial and business district and to eliminate those areas that are characteristic of ribbon developments. When located adjacent to a central business district, such ribbon developments are customarily the product of an aging business district and as such, indicate deterioration within the core. However, in the case at hand they were established by the initial zoning and many establishments in the ribbon areas actually preceded development within the central business district. Generally, the areas immediately north and south of the central business district, are in reality a part of, or are closely related to, the business district, but have not been included because their development has not been as intense nor the problems encountered with their internal functioning, exactly similar.

#### 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The development of Coral Gables' central business district has been unique in that it has not had to follow the usual pattern plaguing other urban areas. Normally the central business district evolves from a small nucleus which gradually expands and engulfs adjacent residential areas, whose retreat results in an inevitable perimeter of deteriorating neighborhoods. Since sufficient area was set aside for the commercial district in the initial city plan of Coral Gables, and zoning laws have been devised and rigidly enforced to maintain the original concept, the central business district has not migrated, and remains confined within its predetermined boundaries. The advantage in this is two-fold. First, the integration of commercial and residential neighborhoods has been prevented and consequently today the city is free from those blighted areas which normally surround the central core; and second, confining the central business district to a predetermined fixed area has had the effect of demanding the most efficient land use and as structures approach obsolescence they are either refurbished or razed to provide space for more modern accommodations. In contrast to this, landlords in other urban areas find it economical to lease the deteriorating structure for what it will bring, and erect new structures in other locations, thus both adding to the central blighted area, and forcing the retreat of the residential area, which results in the expansion of the decaying perimeter of the central business district.

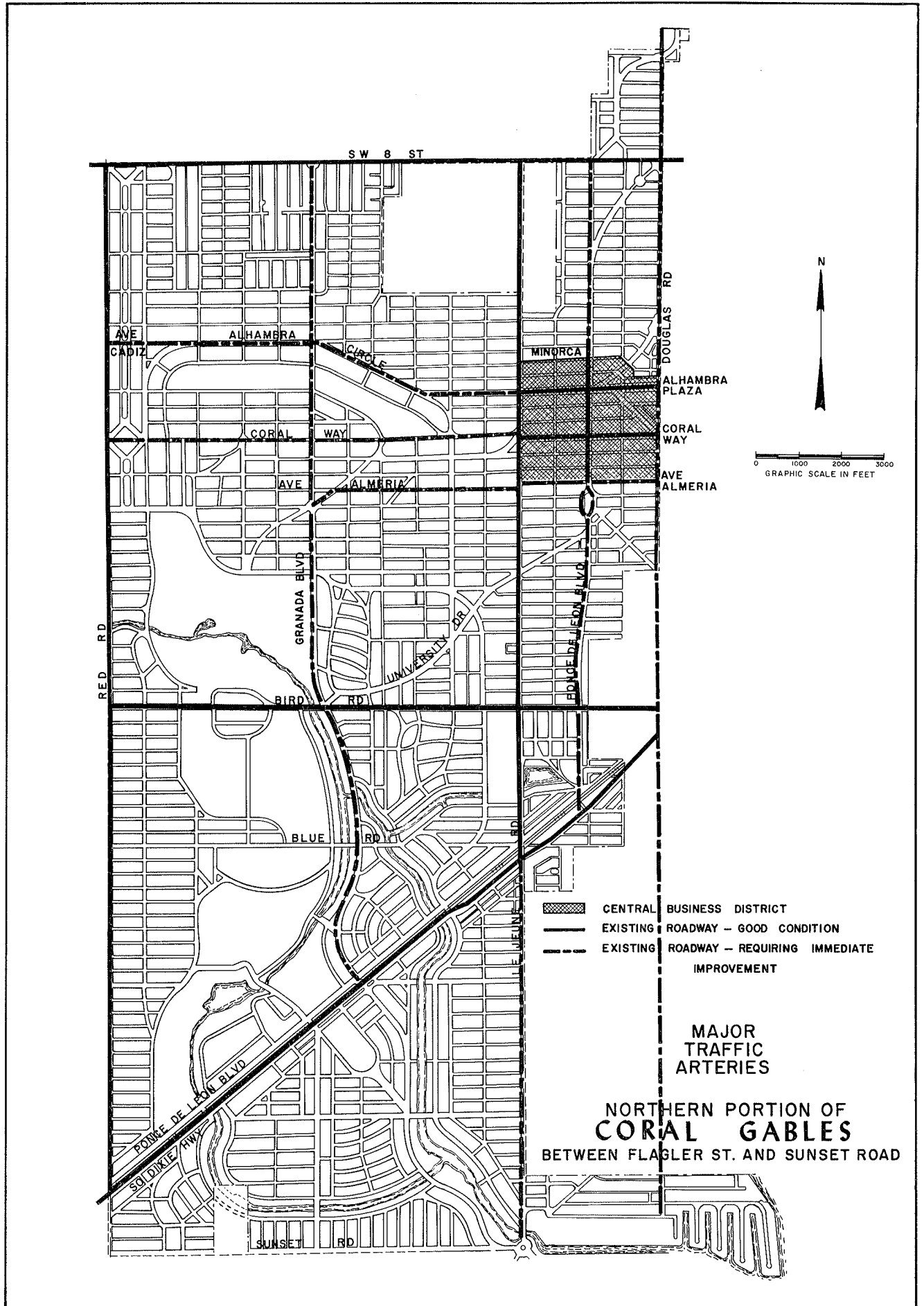
Although Coral Gables is a relatively young city and few structures within the central business district have reached an age where they are no longer suitable for occupancy by reputable establishments there are an appreciable number of vacancies in some of the older sections. This, to a large extent, is due to a shift in the center of activity and the erection of numerous modern and more desirable quarters rather than structural deterioration. Nevertheless, if the demand for land in the future is diluted by expanding the boundaries of the central business district, or is allowed to decrease because of loss of business to other commercial areas, it may be anticipated that deterioration within the core will become more pronounced. Those sections now experiencing a high vacancy rate will continue to decline and eventually become an eyesore to the community. Strict adherence to the present zoning insofar as it limits the location of commercial establishments and the correction or improvement of any municipal facility found to be inappropriate or detrimental are the best means of preventing this decline.




During the field survey it was discovered that some of the merchants were of the opinion that the volume of retail trade handled in the central business district was declining and that trade was being siphoned away from the district by the large shopping centers outside of the city limits. Undoubtedly the latter contention has more than an element of truth for those merchants dealing in casual purchase or convenience items. The drawing power of these establishments is normally limited to a small area and without a major trade generator in the business district, such as a department store, it may be anticipated that their marketing area will continue to shrink as more shopping centers locate in the southwest section of Dade County.

Due to the complex nature of the problem and the understandable reluctance of retail merchants to divulge information revealing their gross receipts, it has not been possible to check whether there has been a general loss in retail trade in the central business district, or whether the loss in trade is confined to establishments dealing in a particular class of merchandise. It is possible that those merchants estimating that the retail trade had declined are basing the hypothesis on what has actually been a general decline in retail business throughout Dade County during the last year. Periodic cycles of declining retail sales are not by themselves necessarily indicative of competition from outside the district, and it is reasonable to anticipate that the volume of retail trade will improve as southeast Florida recovers from the effects of the late recession. However, a continuing loss in the relative volume of retail trade conducted within the area is cause for alarm and requires immediate action before the movement becomes too entrenched.

### 3. ACCESS TO THE AREA:

When the plans for the city and the central business district were being prepared, intercity public transportation systems had already passed their



-  CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
-  EXISTING ROADWAY - GOOD CONDITION
-  EXISTING ROADWAY - REQUIRING IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT

MAJOR TRAFFIC ARTERIES

NORTHERN PORTION OF  
**CORAL GABLES**  
 BETWEEN FLAGLER ST. AND SUNSET ROAD

FIGURE 1

zenith, and although it was not apparent, were in the early stages of their declining years. Undoubtedly, the city planners believed that with two separate street car lines connecting the city to Greater Miami, and an adequate intercity bus system, they were fortunate in being able to provide the most efficient access into the central business district. Since this time the automobile has become more widely adopted, the majority of the families in Coral Gables have become two-car families, and the use of public transportation systems has steadily declined. Today the two street car lines have disappeared from the scene and only the public bus system remains. Since this media operates solely within the city limits, except for express service to downtown Miami, it serves no purpose toward connecting adjacent communities to the Coral Gables central business district. Also, this, together with the fact that the majority of the residents of Coral Gables are in an income bracket that reduces their dependence on public transportation, is indicative of abnormally large volumes of vehicular traffic in relation to the population within the service area.

All this traffic must arrive at the central business district via one of the five thoroughfares leading to the district. Unfortunately, these thoroughfares must simultaneously handle a large part of the traffic between the outlying communities and down town Miami, or the northern section of the County, because Coral Gables lies astride the major traffic arteries connecting opposite sections of the Metropolitan Miami area. None of these arteries except Le Jeune Road can handle more than two lanes of traffic in a given direction and most are capable of handling only a single lane due to pavement widths or street parking. These densely traveled arteries will, in effect, eventually form geographical barriers that will tend to isolate different sections of the city from each other and diminish the trading area of the central business district. In order to prevent this, it will be necessary within the near future, to widen the more congested thoroughfares and initiate detailed studies of traffic flow to provide a basis for installing a system of coordinated traffic control measures. Such a system is capable of reducing traffic interruptions and at the same time, will automatically adjust so that arteries experiencing peak periods of traffic during various times of the day will receive preferential treatment.

Alhambra Circle west of Le Jeune Road, although a divided thoroughfare, has pavement too narrow to adequately handle two lanes of traffic, and the capacity of the street can be improved by widening to 24'. The widened section of Alhambra Circle should be continued west along Cadiz Avenue to Red Road and the boulevard stops at Country Club Prado and Ferdinand Street should be reoriented to permit Cadiz Avenue to be a through street, so that it can pick up traffic originating west of Red Road and transmit it directly to the central business district. This will effectively reduce the traffic on the western section of

Coral Way and provide a basis for rerouting a large portion of the traffic from the congested Miracle Mile area.

The traffic on Le Jeune Road, which is now being widened, may be expected to increase substantially when the work is completed and traffic congestion on the street will become more acute as time goes by. Even though the Palmetto Bypass will relieve the north-south bound traffic flow within Metropolitan Miami, Le Jeune Road still remains one of the two main thoroughfares capable of handling traffic whose origin or destination lies in the northern or southern section of the Metropolitan Miami area. Population within these districts will become more dense as time goes by, and consequently it is entirely probable that Le Jeune Road will be over-crowded soon after the present widening program is completed.

Douglas Road, which lies adjacent to the eastern boundary of the city limits, handles local north-south bound traffic originating or terminating in the areas adjacent to its right-of-way. Since the road does not provide through access to the north, its major value may be attributed to the fact that it provides access to arterial streets between Coconut Grove and N. W. 7th Street. The frequent bottlenecks encountered along its right-of-way deters appreciable traffic growth and it is believed that under the existing conditions, the street does little toward providing a better access to the central business district. Inasmuch as Douglas Road is now part of the County road system, its immediate improvement should be undertaken by Dade County to provide a more effective access to, and a bypass around, the central business district.

Western bound through traffic over Miracle Mile and Coral Way is retarded by the extremely bad intersection at Le Jeune Road. It is virtually impossible to improve the traffic flow through this intersection as long as it remains a five-street intersection. Biltmore Way, which originates at the intersection, terminates four blocks later at the intersection of De Soto Boulevard and consequently is of little value to east-west bound through traffic. This street cannot be classed as a major thoroughfare and in the event that the street were closed at its origin by joining the City Hall property to Merrick Park, traffic flow through the Le Jeune-Coral Way intersection could be improved.

If the entrance to Biltmore Way adjacent to City Hall is blocked, it will be necessary to reroute all east-west bound traffic over Coral Way and therefore the capacity of Coral Way will have to be increased by widening the existing pavement. The traffic on Biltmore Way will decrease and further infiltration of commercial establishments along its right-of-way will be discouraged. This will be an advantage in that the migration of the commercial district will be halted and consequently a higher use of the land in the central business district will be assured. Since this land will probably not be in demand for commercial use, and it is centrally located for the majority

of the inhabitants of Coral Gables, it appears to be highly desirable for use as a civic center, as discussed in Chapter III.

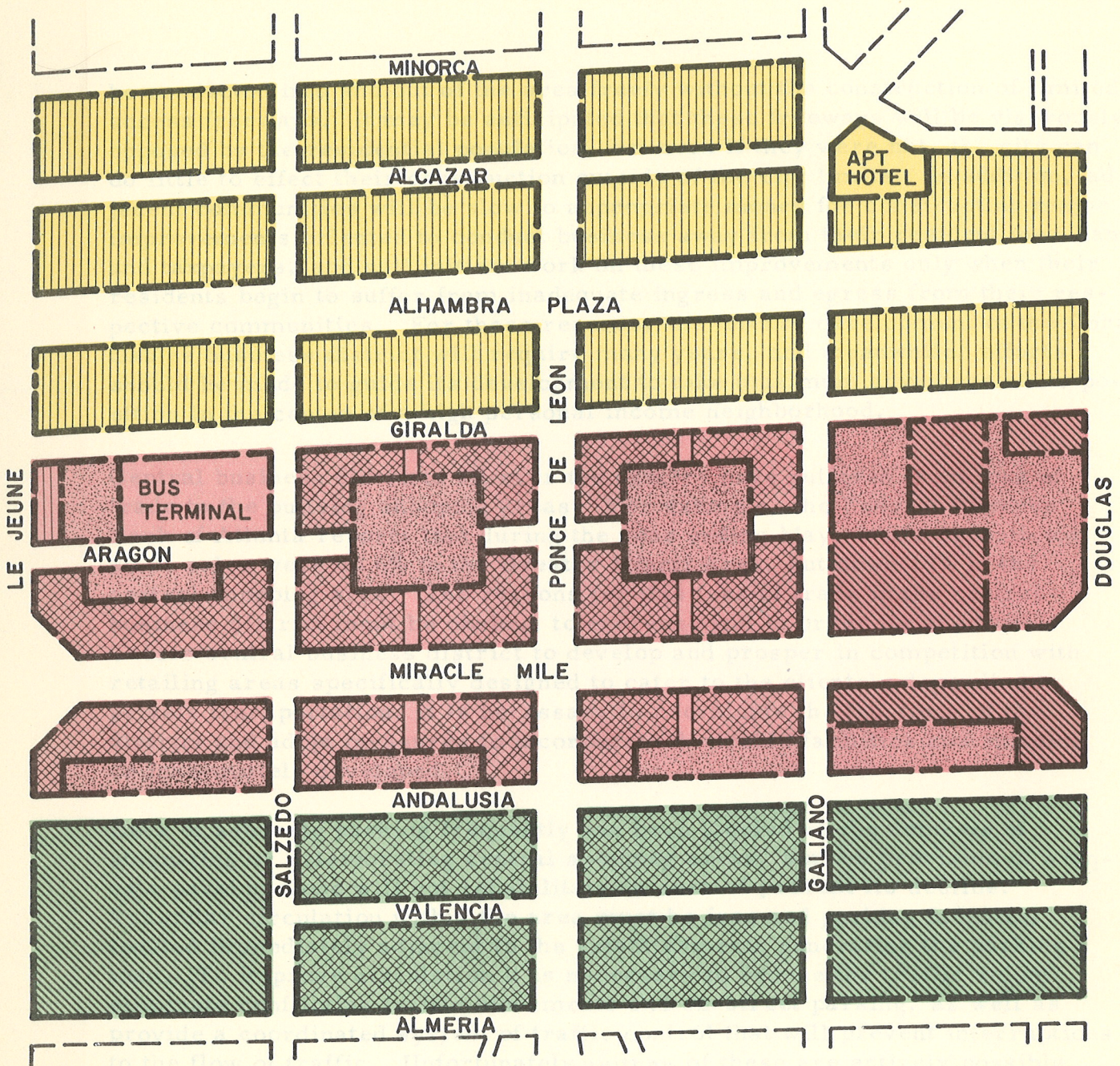
The flow of residential traffic originating in the area southwest of the central business district will be restricted as it approaches the business district if a new means for bypassing the core area is not provided. This can be accomplished by widening Almeria Avenue from DeSoto Boulevard to Douglas Road to take the place of Biltmore Way. In the event that this is accomplished it will provide a superior route for those residents in the Biltmore section commuting to the Greater Miami Area. In order for the street to handle a large volume of traffic it will be necessary to improve the alignment at Le Jeune Road to reduce both the turning movement and the time lost during each signal phase because of non-alignment of streets. Transit over this avenue will completely eliminate the need for passing through the business section when either the origin or destination does not lie within the section.

Even though Granada Boulevard does not lead directly to the central business district, it has a direct influence on the flow of the traffic to and from the district since it is the main boulevard connecting the northern and southern sections of the city to the arterial streets leading to the district. This boulevard is already experiencing heavy traffic loads during the periods of peak traffic movements. The pavement is not only in poor condition throughout much of its length, but also is too narrow to handle an appreciable increase in vehicular traffic. Widening this boulevard would provide better access into the central business district from remote sections of the residential neighborhood and encourage people to visit the district for the purchase of convenience items. To relieve north-south traffic it will be necessary to widen this boulevard from U. S. Highway No. 1 north to the Tamiami Trail.

Le Jeune Road between U. S. Highway No. 1 and Cartagena Plaza should also be improved under this street improvement program, as discussed in Chapter V.

#### 4. PROPOSED PLAN:

An intensely developed central business district needs a marketing area with a population in excess of a quarter-million people. This is far larger than the potential population of Coral Gables and therefore, it may be assumed that if such a development is attempted in the central business district, its trading area must extend into the adjacent communities surrounding Coral Gables. In order to accomplish this, both the major thoroughfares and the public transportation systems leading to the district must be improved. Because of the necessity of routing crosstown traffic through the central core, it is improbable that the additional traffic generated by an intensely developed business district can



## CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

- |  |                                  |  |                   |
|--|----------------------------------|--|-------------------|
|  | RETAIL - SERVICES & SUPPLIES     |  |                   |
|  | RETAIL - SPECIALTY SHOPS         |  |                   |
|  | OFFICE AREA                      |  |                   |
|  | PARKING AREA - MUNICIPAL         |  |                   |
|  | MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT 9 FLOORS |  | ON-SITE PARKING   |
|  | MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT 6 FLOORS |  | MUNICIPAL PARKING |
|  | MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT 6 FLOORS |  | ON-SITE PARKING   |

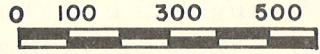


FIGURE 2

be conducted into and out of the area freely without the construction of limited access freeways. It may be anticipated that these freeways will be vigorously opposed by the residential population, but even if they were not, the city can do little to effect their construction outside of the city limits. In addition, adjacent communities will be slow to appropriate money for constructing major improvements oriented to conduct business away from their resident merchants and taxpayers, and will initiate work on these improvements only when their residents begin to suffer from inadequate ingress and egress from their respective communities. For these reasons, the intense development of the Coral Gables business district will require many years, and meanwhile, efforts should be made to guide its development to take maximum advantage of its position in the center of a high personal income neighborhood.

Central business districts all over the country have suffered from loss of trade to the outlying shopping areas. For example, the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta reports that during the year ending May, 1961, department store sales were up 6% in the Greater Miami Area, but down 10% in the central shopping area. The reasons for this loss of trade in the central business district must be obvious to everyone and in order for the Coral Gables central business district to develop and prosper in competition with retailing areas specifically designed to cater to the clientele depending on private transportation, it is necessary to reevaluate the functions of the district and adopt measures to incorporate desirable facilities now missing or inadequately developed.

Lack of adequate parking frequently has been labeled as the nemesis of stagnating or deteriorating central shopping areas, but the provision of adequate parking alone will not rehabilitate an area or prevent its decline. Vehicular circulation within the area must be free and parking facilities located immediately adjacent to the establishments generating the parking load. To improve circulation it is necessary to reduce the traffic volume, eliminate conflicting traffic movements and on-street parking, as well as provide a coordinated system of traffic control that will prevent interruptions to the flow of traffic. Unfortunately neither of these are entirely possible in a prosperous, growing community, but if adequate off-street parking is provided in the locations where it is needed, then all the slow moving traffic, constantly circulating through the area in search of a parking space, will be removed from the traffic stream. These vehicles not only impede circulation with their slow speed and erratic motion, but also add to the congestion by making repeated trips around the block until suitable space is found.

In its broad scope, the improvement plan illustrated in Figure 2 is based upon the supposition that the establishments within the central business district fall within three general categories, namely, specialty shops, retail services and supply establishments, and professional office buildings. The retail area of the central business district can be made substantially more appealing to the potential client by changing its configuration

so that functionally it is similar to a series of associated shopping centers. This can be accomplished by combining adjacent blocks in the retail area into shopping complexes and using the bisecting street as a dual entrance to the parking area located in the center of the complex. This plan provides parking immediately adjacent to the establishments in the complex and removes the necessity for on street parking around its perimeter. Space is available along the perimeter of the central business district, adjacent to Douglas and Le Jeune Roads. Establishments oriented towards low unit profit and large volume sales which customarily generate large volumes of traffic should be located in this area. At these locations the traffic generated by the establishments will not have to penetrate the core of the central business district and aggravate the flow of traffic within the core. The central core adjacent to Miracle Mile has become an established specialty shop retail area while the Alhambra Plaza area has become an office building district. It is recommended that future planning attempt to perpetuate these trends.

When the central business district is completely developed in accordance with the proposed plan, it is probable that the space allocated for parking is not large enough to provide adequate parking facilities at ground level and that multi-story parking facilities will have to be constructed as indicated in paragraph 5.

The elimination of street parking will increase the capacity of the streets in the central business district and, consequently, improve vehicular circulation. In time, it is probable that each complex will be dominated by related establishments and it will not be necessary for the pedestrian to cross busy thoroughfares to inspect and compare merchandise in numerous establishments. When the need arises, adjacent complexes can be tied together with pedestrian tunnels so that traffic interruptions at surface cross walks can be eliminated. These tunnels can be architecturally treated to have attractive interiors and be provided with wall display cases for advertising establishments in adjacent complexes and thus serve as a handy directory to each individual area.

Complexes predominantly devoted to office buildings and establishments dealing in services will not suffer from pedestrian congestion generated by non-related activities that have little or no influence on their prosperity. Each complex, however, should benefit from the traffic generated by its neighbor and enjoy more activity than it would if isolated from each other. The drawing power of the central business district will be a function of the drawing power of each establishment within the district and will be greater than the sum of the individual drawing powers of all the establishments in the district.

As the district develops and new structures are erected in accordance with the limitations defined in paragraph 5, criteria should be adopted for providing an additional setback of five feet so that the side streets can be widened in the future as traffic on them becomes more dense.

5. MULTI-STORY BUILDINGS.

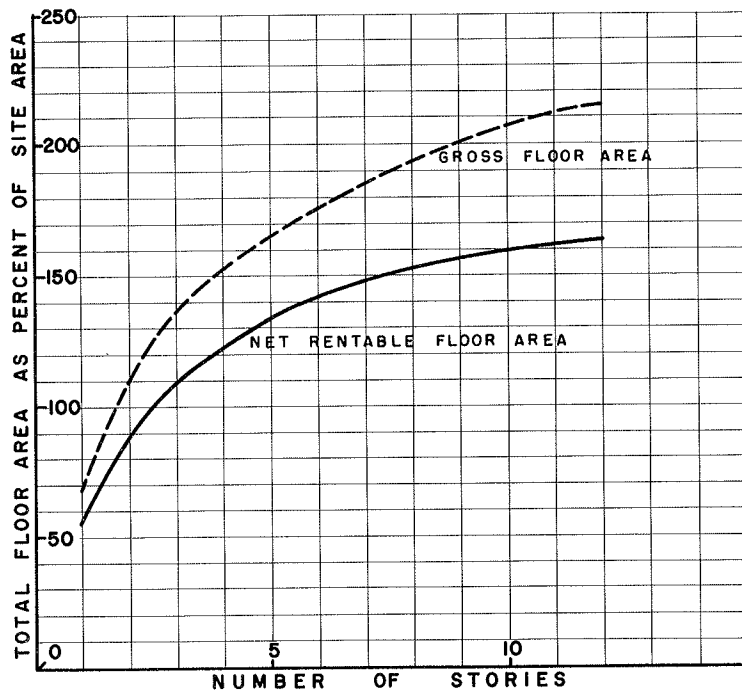
The wide acceptance of multi-story buildings in modern American cities is, to a large extent, attributable to the acute demand for land near the center of the growing metropolitan area, the cost of this land, and the necessity or desirability of concentrating larger numbers of people in a smaller area where vertical transportation may be used to supplement, or as an extension of, surface transportation. Unfortunately, the concentration of multi-story buildings in a central business district is not without disadvantages in that the high population density places critical demands on the community facilities serving the area. In a community where a large percentage of the resident population depends upon private transportation, circulation within the district, as well as ingress and egress to and from the district often becomes so congested that the district strangles on the vehicular traffic it generates unless large sums of money are spent on facilities to relieve traffic congestion. It is believed that neither the demand for land nor the cost of land in the Coral Gables central business district has advanced enough at this time, to warrant complete removal of all restrictions controlling building heights. Each new complex should be considered on its own merits and on the basis of its compatibility with the overall trend of development within the central business district.

(a) The Alhambra Plaza Area:

The established trend of locating large office buildings along Alhambra Plaza appears to be well founded. At this location these buildings are free of the congestion of the retail trade area and are adjacent to the apartment area lying north of the central business district. The area has immediate access to the residential section and other sections of Greater Miami, via Alhambra Circle, Le Jeune Road, Ponce de Leon Boulevard, and Douglas Road. These unencumbered entrances and exits are ideal for handling large volumes of peak hour traffic and since each leads directly to other arterial streets, all sections of Metropolitan Miami are easily accessible. Multi-story buildings in this section will not detract from the residential area, and their tenants will not compete with the retail shoppers for parking space. They will provide more office space for a larger portion of the professional residents of Coral Gables and are desirable in that a commercial district devoted to this type of service has a pronounced stability and resists deterioration to a high degree. When the area has established

itself as a professional center, it may be expected that its growth and prosperity will be self-perpetuating and that the business people located in the district will strive to maintain the integrity of the area and prevent future deterioration.

It is believed that it would be impractical for the city to attempt to furnish municipal parking facilities in the Alhambra Plaza district, and that the responsibility of providing adequate off-street parking should be delegated to the building owner. The parking space should be located immediately adjacent to the proposed structure on a site encompassing both the structure and the parking facility. It is estimated that the average parking space should not be less than one vehicular parking space for each 600 square feet of net rentable building floor area. If this is accomplished, it is immediately apparent that the ratio between building floor area and building site area will vary directly with the height of the structure and, consequently, the parking area will vary in the same ratio. With a fixed building site this means that the area of the floor plan must decrease to provide more vehicular parking space as the building height is increased. Since the increase in building height results in a reduction in the area of the floor plan and an increasing percentage of the floor area is utilized for stair wells, elevators, halls, and public space, it is obvious that increasing floor area by providing additional stories will eventually reach a point of diminishing returns. As may be expected, the practical and economical building height limitation will occur prior to this time. In the following figure the increase in floor area for a building providing its own ground level parking on the building site is shown in relation to building heights, or the number of stories.



**MULTI-STORY OFFICE BUILDINGS**  
 BUILDING FLOOR AREA vs. NO. OF FLOORS PER BUILDING  
 (WHEN VEHICULAR PARKING IS PROVIDED ON SITE)

From these curves, it is apparent that the provision of additional stories above the ninth floor nets the property owner very little increase in rentable floor area. This indicates that the population density of the district can be increased very little, under the assumed conditions, by permitting the erection of buildings in excess of nine stories, and that it will be necessary to provide multi-level vehicular parking on the building site to further increase population density. It is not believed that there is a demand for land in the office building district to warrant this additional expense at this time. However, it is recommended that the landlord be given the option of providing off-street parking in any manner he sees fit and that he be awarded a building permit on the basis of providing one parking space for each 600 square feet of rentable floor space. If he elects to construct multi-story parking facilities in order to utilize a larger proportion of his building site, this should be considered as fulfillment of his obligation for providing off-street parking.

(b) The Miracle Mile Area:

The areas one block south and two blocks north of Miracle Mile have developed as retail and service areas with the major concentration of establishments dealing in apparel and luxury items concentrated on Miracle Mile. These establishments draw large numbers of people in relation to their floor area and, consequently, the demand for vehicular parking facilities in this section is greater than anywhere else in Coral Gables. Since the majority of the shops in the area are relatively small establishments, they are not in a financial position to support off-street parking facilities for their clients, particularly in view of the fact that a satisfactory parking lot for an individual establishment would have to be large enough to provide adequate space for peak parking loads which are often 200% to 300% of the average parking requirements. In a large diversified retail complex, parking is more uniform throughout the business period. The peaks in the demand for parking space generated by one establishment rarely coincide with the peaks generated by other establishments in the complex and consequently, it is more economical to provide parking for the entire complex than for each of the establishments in the complex. Since each of the establishments in this section are individually owned and operated, it is difficult for them to provide common parking facilities. On the other hand this service can be rendered by the city quite efficiently.

If each block is considered as a separate shopping complex, adequate off-street parking space will be required within the block to provide for the parking requirements generated by the establishments in the complex. This parking load will, of course, vary with the volume of the retail trade,

which in turn varies more or less directly with the total building floor area in the complex.

If six story buildings are constructed in this area, it is probable that each block will ultimately generate enough retail business to require approximately 550 vehicular parking spaces. As can be seen from Figure 2, this number of parking spaces cannot be provided by ground level parking and ultimately it will be necessary for the city to construct multi-level parking facilities in each Miracle Mile complex. It is estimated that four story parking garages will be required in each complex at the location shown on Figure 2, when the area becomes more intensely developed. When this occurs it may be anticipated that the value of the land will exceed the cost of constructing an equal area of elevated parking space, and therefore, these multi-story parking facilities are in reality the most economical solution to the parking problem. The land value in the blocks immediately adjacent to Miracle Mile has already exceeded the elevated parking construction cost. It is probable that land values in the blocks between Giralda and Aragon Avenues will exceed this cost in the very near future.

Due to the abnormally large parking loads generated within this section of Coral Gables, it is believed that it is not advisable to authorize the construction of buildings in the area that exceed six stories in height, unless the prospective tenant is willing to provide his own off-street parking in the ratio of two parking spaces for each thousand square feet of gross rentable area.

(c) Southern Area of Central Business District:

The land in this area has not been as intensely developed as the land adjacent to Miracle Mile and many establishments locating within the area are such that they prefer to provide their own off-street parking facilities. It is probable that this trend will continue in the future and, therefore, the maximum use of the land will be obtained with buildings approximately six stories in elevation. Buildings above this height will be required to devote an excessive proportion of the building site to provide off-street parking, and consequently will not lead to the highest and best use of the land. For this reason, it is recommended that building heights in the area be limited to six stories and that each landlord be required to provide his own off-street parking facilities.

6. POTENTIAL INCREASE IN MUNICIPAL INCOME.

When the central business district is fully developed in accordance with the

plan outlined in Figure 2, which restricts five story buildings to the eight-block area north and south of Alhambra Plaza between Le Jeune Road and Galiano Street, it is probable that building floor space will increase from the existing 1,700,000 square feet to approximately 6,000,000 square feet for a net increase in excess of 4,000,000 square feet. \$50,000,000 will be added to the improvements in the central business district, assuming that the average cost of the floor space is only \$12.50 per square foot. These improvements, of course, would result in an increase in the land values with any reasonable degree of accuracy, it is reasonable to assume that they will increase at least 50%, or \$5,000,000, by the time a central business district is fully developed. At the present tax rate this \$55,000,000 increase in property values in the central business district will yield approximately \$350,000 in additional taxes and property owners will realize approximately \$15,000,000 a year from increased rents.

The high personal income of the inhabitants within the Coral Gables marketing area is reflected in the distribution of retail sales per inhabitant. In the following table the estimates of retail sales per inhabitant in Coral Gables are compared with other areas in Dade County.

	Dade		Miami		Hialeah		Coral Gables	
	\$ per Inhab.	% of Retail Sales	\$ per Inhab.	% of Retail Sales	\$ per Inhab.	% of Retail Sales	\$ per Inhab.	% of Retail Sales
Food	\$ 338	21.6	\$ 430	16.5	\$ 321	30.5	\$ 374	19.1
Eat & Drink	163	10.4	232	8.9	100	9.5	176	9.0
Gen'l. Mdse.	188	12.0	426	16.3	91	8.6	138	7.1
Apparel	128	8.2	160	6.1	75	7.1	307	15.7
Furn.-Hshld.	81	5.2	175	6.7	37	3.5	157	8.1
Automotive	305	19.5	660	25.3	47	4.6	344	17.6
Gas Station	94	6.0	136	5.2	102	9.7	98	5.0
Lumber	80	5.1	120	4.6	98	9.3	91	4.6
Drugs	75	4.8	97	3.7	65	6.2	74	3.8
	<u>\$1452</u>	<u>92.8</u>	<u>\$2436</u>	<u>93.3</u>	<u>\$ 936</u>	<u>89.0</u>	<u>\$1759</u>	<u>90.0</u>
Total Retail Sales	\$1567	92.8	\$2611	93.3	\$1053	100.0	\$1955	100.0
Effective Buying Income	\$2208		\$2122		\$1775		\$2759	

Source: Sales Management "Survey of Buying Power".

Coral Gables has 4.6% of effective buying income of Dade County, 3.7% of the population and 4.6% of retail sales.

Miami has 29.8% of effective buying income of Dade County, 31% of the population and 5.6% of retail sales.

From the table it is apparent that the Coral Gables business district is well established as a marketing center for wearing apparel, but is not realizing its full potential as a retail center for general merchandise and automotive equipment. The under development of Coral Gables' central business district is illustrated by the fact that the effective buying income per inhabitant within Coral Gables exceeds the total retail sales per inhabitant by 40% while the effective buying income per inhabitant within the city limits of Miami is 20% less than the total retail sales per inhabitant.

This indicates that Miami emphatically remains the retail center for many commodity groups. When a wider variety of retail establishments are provided in Coral Gables it is reasonable to assume that the large resident purchasing power will result in an increase in retail sales per inhabitant. Eventually the per capita retail sales will amount to approximately 80% of the effective buying income in comparison to the existing 70%. This indicates that by 1970, the retail trade within Coral Gables should approach \$125,000,000 annually, as compared to the existing annual retail trade of \$70,000,000.

## CHAPTER III

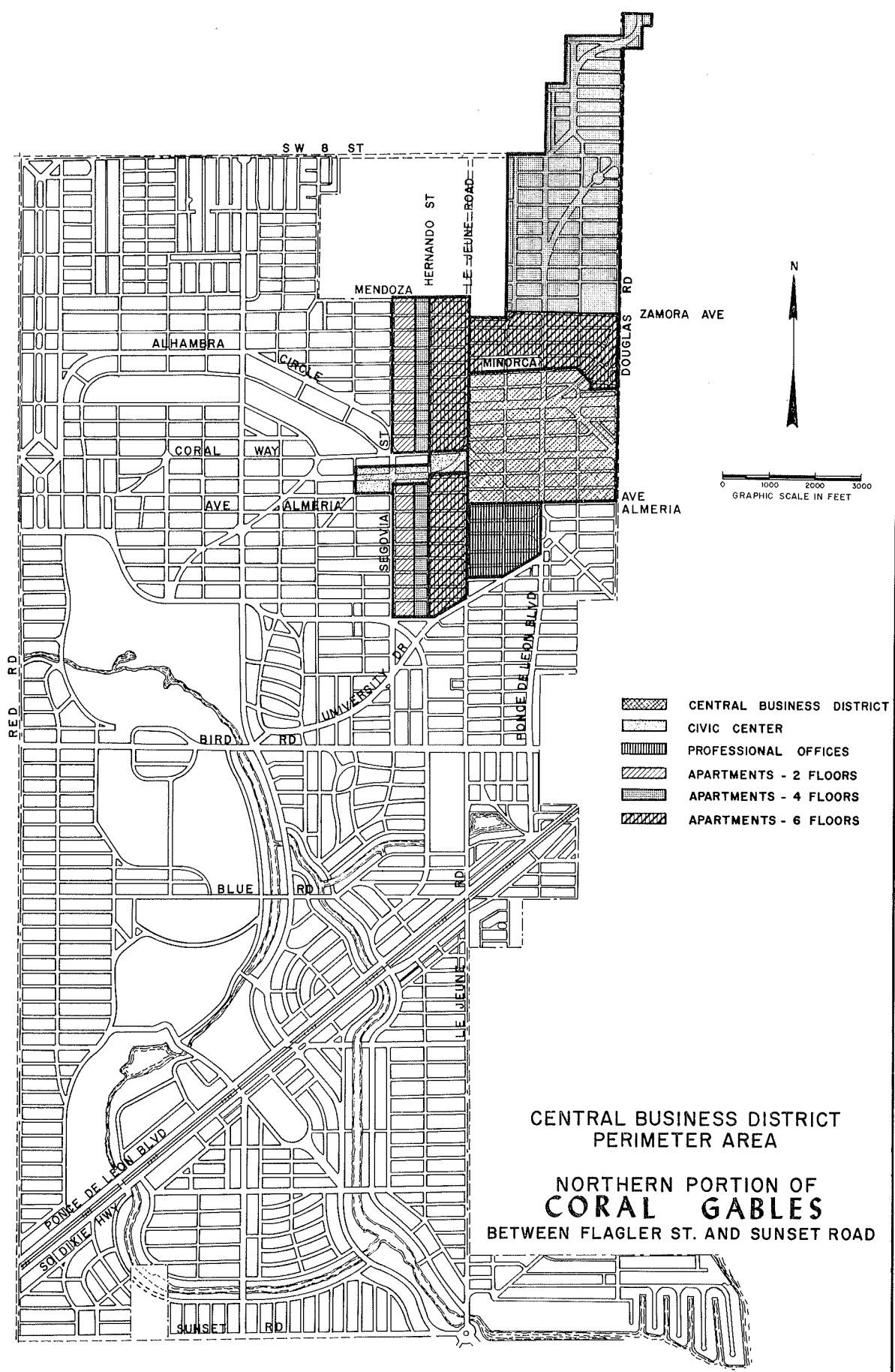
### CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PERIMETER AREA







#### 1. RIBBON DEVELOPMENTS:

As pointed out in the preceding chapter, in order to perpetuate the integrity of the central business district it will be necessary to guard against the inevitable structural deterioration and obsolescence within the district. This is difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish by legislation judging from the difficulties experienced in many of the larger growing metropolitan areas. Enforcement of slum clearance programs, even though diligently pursued, are often plagued by insurmountable obstacles which breed indifference and public apathy and weaken the municipal authority. Perhaps the best and least involved way to prevent progressive structural deterioration and obsolescence is to devise ways to make it unprofitable to continue using the facility. This is also difficult to accomplish through taxation and one of the most obvious expedients appears to be contingent upon maintaining an active demand for land use within the district. It is immediately apparent that this cannot be accomplished if the demand for additional commercial property is satisfied by permitting the business district to expand into adjacent areas. These developments not only dilute the demand for commercial property, but are a source of growth cancer in themselves. They cannot be made to function efficiently because of their limited depth and strangle the central business district by congesting the thoroughfares leading to the district. The nucleus of such areas are already established along Ponce de Leon Boulevard north and south of the central business district and the present zoning along Biltmore Way invites the development of an additional commercial ribbon area. The development in a large part of these areas has progressed too far to consider other use for the land and it will be necessary to direct future city planning so that these areas will continue to function efficiently without jeopardizing the development of adjacent areas.

#### 2. CIVIC CENTER ON BILTMORE WAY:

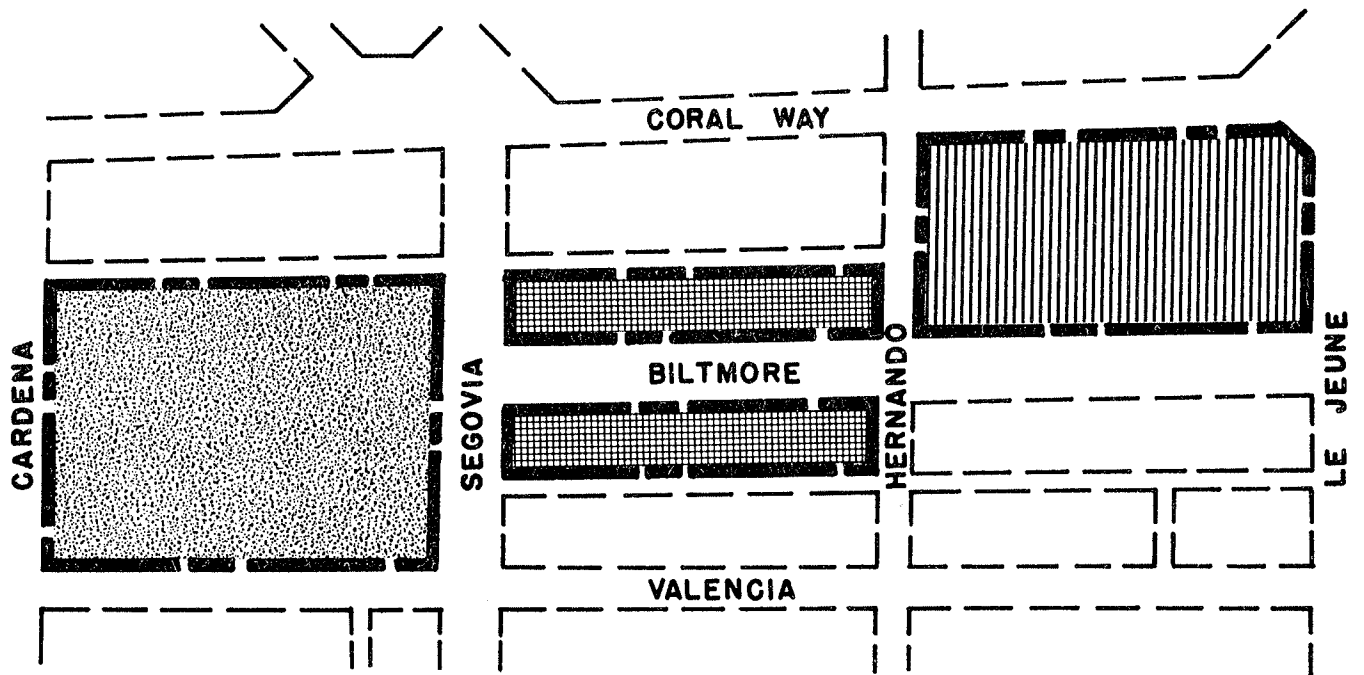
Realigning the entrance to Biltmore Way, as discussed in Chapter II, will discourage the infiltration of commercial establishments into this area. This section is centrally located to a large number of the inhabitants of Coral Gables and can be reached via main boulevards without traveling through congested commercial districts. The location is therefore well suited for development into a civic center and recreational area, as shown in Figure 4. Closing Biltmore Way between Segovia and Cardena Streets will discourage traffic originating in the Biltmore section from passing



-  CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
-  CIVIC CENTER
-  PROFESSIONAL OFFICES
-  APARTMENTS - 2 FLOORS
-  APARTMENTS - 4 FLOORS
-  APARTMENTS - 6 FLOORS

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT  
PERIMETER AREA

NORTHERN PORTION OF  
**CORAL GABLES**  
BETWEEN FLAGLER ST. AND SUNSET ROAD



## CIVIC CENTER AREA



CITY HALL BLOCK



FIRE AND POLICE STATIONS



CITY CULTURAL CENTER

NORTH

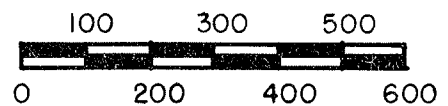


FIGURE 4

through the area on the way to the central business district, and will effectively isolate the area from the commercial district. This site would then be suitable for the location of a civic auditorium, public library and similar facilities. The undeveloped areas fronting on the north and south sides of Biltmore Way immediately east of Segovia are suitable for other municipal functions such as a new fire house and police station, when these facilities are required. This would permit the abandonment of the existing facilities in the central business district and place them in an area that is contiguous with all other municipal functions and make them more accessible to the general public. Such a center is urgently needed to maintain the cultural atmosphere initially envisioned by Merrick and to add to the distinction of the community.

3. SOUTHERN PERIMETER AREA OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT:

In recent years many new professional office buildings have been constructed in the area adjacent to Ponce de Leon Boulevard south of the central business district. These structures are attractive and their tenants and clients do not generate sufficient vehicular traffic to adversely affect the adjacent residential neighborhoods, or congest the main arteries leading to the central business district. The buildings are an asset to the community and the establishments quartered in them are of the type desired to maintain the integrity of the city. Nevertheless, the invasion of the residential neighborhood by these pseudo-commercial establishments potentially endangers the neighborhood's ability to resist further inroads by the commercial district, and establishes a precedent for the formation of other ribbon districts. Inherently, these developments weaken the demand for land in the central business district and are a source of annoyance to the residential neighbors. The present southern limit zoned for these establishments should be maintained in the future and all additional demands for space satisfied by the central business district and the area immediately south of the central business district, as explained later.

The area bounded by Almeria Avenue, Ponce de Leon Boulevard, University Drive and Le Jeune Road was not included in the central business district as defined in Chapter II, even though it is immediately adjacent to the district and contains numerous modern retail establishments. The distinction between the two areas was made to emphasize their dissimilarity and to illustrate that it would not be desirable to guide the growth of each district along identical paths. This area, which lies south of the central business district, is a heterogeneous mixture of commercial property, warehouses, vacant deteriorating structures, and residential property. This development therefore has not been consistent with the best land use and if permitted to continue unchecked, will eventually jeopardize both further development of the central business district and property values in the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The property fronting on Ponce de Leon Boulevard and University Drive is almost completely occupied by retail and business establishments, and consequently it is too late to consider any plan based upon preventing the migration of the commercial district. For the most part, these structures are relatively new and neither their appearance nor the activity generated by their tenants appear to have had an appreciable adverse effect upon the adjacent residential section. On the other hand the interior of this section seems to have suffered from the presence of too many establishments with divergent functions. This has destroyed the continuity of the area and the transition from the residential neighborhood to the central business district is unharmonious and frequently not in accord with the esthetic standards found elsewhere in Coral Gables.

The small residential section between Le Jeune Road and Salzedo Avenue adjoins this multi-purpose area without the benefit of a buffer strip or landscape screening to protect its privacy. This small neighborhood cannot help but suffer in the event that the present development trend continued.

In order to restore the character of the interior area it will be necessary to revise the existing zoning regulations to narrow the base of acceptable establishments permitted to locate in the area. Acceptable establishments should be limited to those having attractive appearances, generating small volumes of vehicular traffic, harmonizing functionally with each other and the neighborhood and forming a well adjusted transition zone between the residential and commercial districts. In view of the fact that many small professional offices already have been established in the area, and that these organizations are compatible with the above requirements, it is believed that an effort should be made to orient the zoning regulations so that these organizations will actively seek quarters within the area in preference to other locations in Coral Gables. If improvements within the area are directed along these lines, they will discourage the migration of the commercial district and upgrade the character of the perimeter area.

4. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PERIMETER AREA:

The sections of Coral Gables immediately north of the central business district and west of Le Jeune Road are largely composed of residential neighborhoods. Each section has developed along individual patterns and each will be influenced by the further development of the central business district, and therefore each are discussed separately in the following paragraphs:

(a) Area North of the Central Business District:

The section of Coral Gables north of the central business district between Salzedo Street and Douglas Road is devoted to apartment house use. (Fig. 3.)

The older establishments within the area were constructed without adequate provision for off-street parking and consequently the landscaped parkways in these areas are used so intensely for vehicle storage that it is impossible to maintain the appearance of the neighborhood. In the future, the revised zoning regulation requiring one off-street vehicle parking space per dwelling unit should prevent the reoccurrence of this situation at the newer apartments. However, parking space criteria will change as time goes by and it may soon be necessary to increase the requirements for off-street parking. Many of the older structures in this neighborhood are approaching an age when they will not be able to generate an annual return commensurate with the highest and best use of the land and in all probability will be replaced with more modern facilities.

The land fronting on Ponce de Leon Boulevard in this section has been zoned for commercial use with the result that commercial establishments are infiltrating into the area as discussed in the early part of this chapter. It will be advantageous to prevent the further infiltration of this commercial ribbon development and rezone the remaining undeveloped property for apartment use. This will insure the homogenous development of the area and result in a more attractive place in which to live.

(b) Area West of Le Jeune Road:

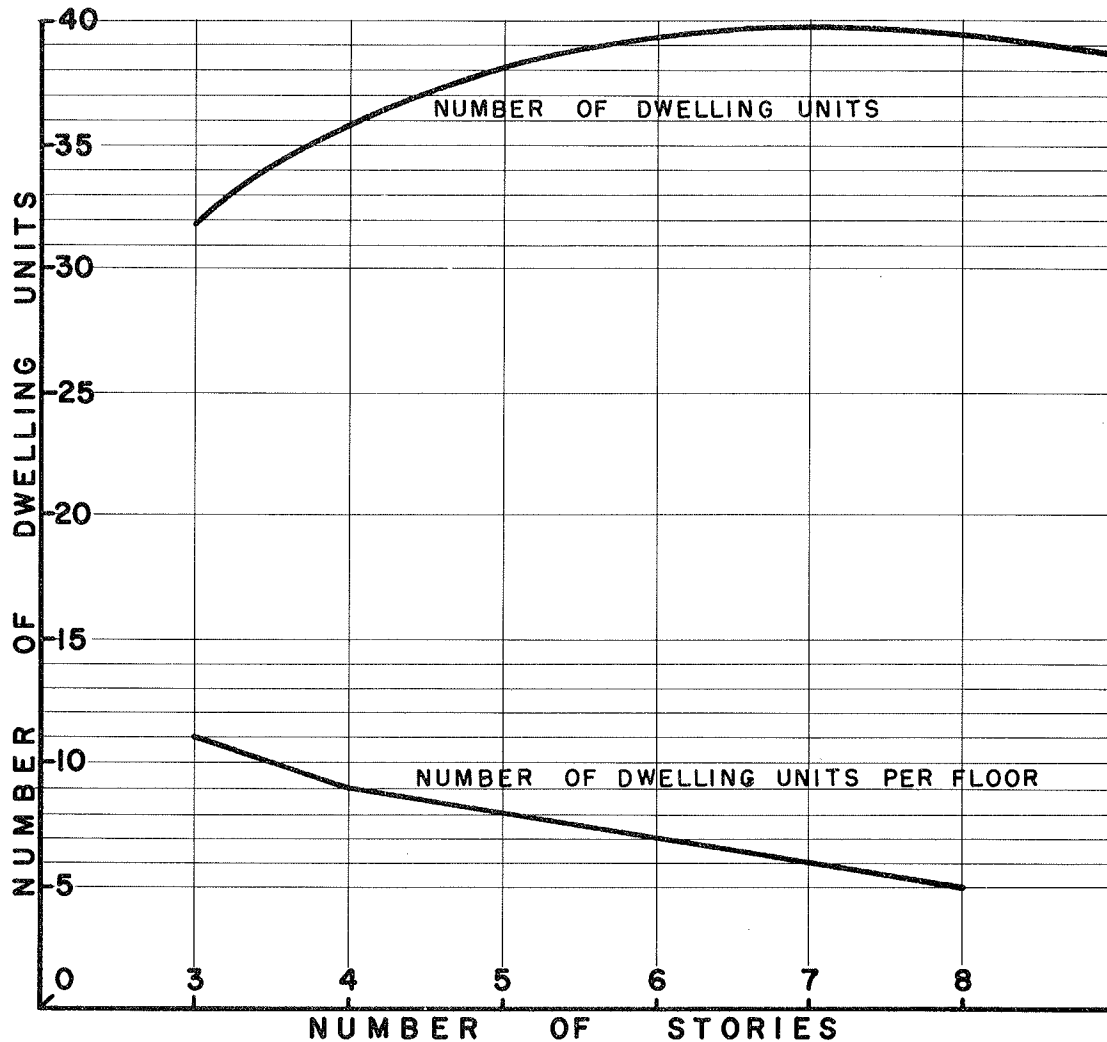
The residential areas between Segovia Street and Le Jeune Road north of Coral Way and south of Biltmore Way lie adjacent to the central business district and consequently their future development will be influenced by the intensity of the development within the business district. As activity in the district increases, these neighborhoods will gradually lose their suburban atmosphere and their isolation from the district will disappear. Concurrently many of the present residents will become dissatisfied with the increasing invasion of their neighborhood by traffic to and from the district, and take active steps to relocate themselves in other areas remote from a commercial district. New tenants moving into the area will not place the same emphasis on isolation as the former tenants and in all probability will be satisfied with or enjoy, the activity in the neighboring district. As time goes by, there will be greater demand for medium to low cost housing in the area by the employer within the central business district. Inevitably this demand will result in leases being executed for fractional portions of private residences, and the character of the neighborhood will decline.

As the population density increases in the neighborhood, property owners will find it desirable to solicit permission for the construction of apartment houses. This is more or less characteristic of the normal pattern of the development of an expanding urban area, and while it cannot be avoided, it can be controlled, to prevent undue neighborhood deterioration during the transition period. As this time approaches, the neighborhood will lose prestige and property owners will not actively support the maintenance of

neighborhood appearance. These external signs of neighborhood deterioration should be anticipated and counteracted with a plan for rezoning for multi-family structures as the need arises. This rezoning will make it possible for the property owner to increase his income from the land and encourage the demolition of substandard structures. It will be inadvisable to rezone the entire area at one time, since this would result in scattered infiltration of apartment houses throughout the entire section. Such heterogeneous neighborhoods are undesirable and their formation should be avoided if at all possible. Rezoning should be accomplished by individual blocks and progress so that each block is completely redeveloped before the next block is rezoned. In this way the remaining residential area will be protected from integration with multi-family dwelling for a considerable part of the transition period.

(c) Multi-Story Dwelling Units:

It may be anticipated that in subsequent years, as the central business district becomes intensely developed, that there will be an accentuated demand for dwelling units immediately adjacent to the northern and western sections of the central business district. Assuming that the central business district is largely developed with 6 and 9 story buildings, it is improbable that this demand can be satisfied with multi-family dwelling units limited to a height of three stories. This demand, together with the fact that it is usually desirable to provide a buffer strip between the single family dwellings and the central business district, indicates that it is desirable to consider the erection of multi-story dwelling units around the perimeter of the central business district. This would have the added advantage of permitting a more intensive use of the land and consequently, lead to the elimination of many of the substandard structures in the area. These multi-story dwelling units should not be permitted to extend to the adjacent single family dwelling unit neighborhood and should be separated from the single family dwellings by a gradually decreasing limitation in building heights. Assuming that each building site will be required to provide its own off-street parking, at grade level, in the ratio of one parking space for each of the first 20 dwelling units, and one parking space for each additional two dwelling units, then it is apparent, as in the case of the office building, that there will be a building height beyond which it will be impossible to increase the number of dwelling units on a given building site. In the following figure, it is apparent that the maximum use of the land will be attained when these structures have been constructed to a height of six stories. This analysis is based on the supposition that a front set back of 15 feet, a rear set back of 5 feet and a side set back equivalent to 10 feet, plus 3 feet for each additional story above the third floor will be required. The analysis is based on a building site of 100' x 200', but is applicable to any site with a frontage in excess of 140 feet.



**MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING UNITS**  
 MAXIMUM INCREASE IN NO. OF DWELLING UNITS vs. FLOORS  
 PER BLDG. (WHEN VEHICULAR PARKING IS PROVIDED ON SITE)

It is therefore recommended that the maximum building height of the multi-family dwelling units immediately adjacent to the central business district be limited to six stories and that these structures be limited to an area one block west of Le Jeune Road and four blocks north of the central business district. In the next half block west of Le Jeune Road, it is suggested that multi-family dwelling units be limited to four stories and in the remaining half block that they be limited to two stories. In the remaining area north of the central business district, it is recommended that multi-family dwelling units be limited to four stories.

CHAPTER IV  
SPECIAL STUDY AREAS

INTRODUCTION:

The majority of the area lying north of Cartagena Plaza and Sunset Drive has been built up with permanent uses conforming with the initial planning and harmonizing with its surrounding uses. However, events and trends which could not have been foreseen during the initial planning of Coral Gables have resulted in certain isolated areas not developing in a satisfactory manner or beginning to show signs of impending deterioration. A study of these areas is presented in this chapter.

1. TAMIAMI TRAIL:

One area which has been lagging in development and shows indications of impending deterioration in some of its existing development is the frontage along the south side of Tamiami Trail (Figure No. 5). This frontage lies along the north boundary of Coral Gables and extends from the city limit line adjacent to Lorca Street west to the Country Club Prado entrance. The area now is zoned for commercial use, with the exception of the lots on both sides of the intersection of Monterey Street, which are zoned for residential use. The commercial zoning extends for a depth of one lot off Tamiami Trail and varies from 83 feet to 145 feet deep. The commercial use abuts up to the adjacent residential use lying to the south without a buffer between the two uses and without a service alley along the rear of the commercial use.

This strip commercial is typical of many such ribbon developments. These ribbons were brought about by the trends of spreading urbanization and the greater use of the automobile. With the increase in both automobile speed and traffic density, many of the arteries have become traffic choked, neon lighted midways extending for miles through congested metropolitan areas. The advent of the modern shopping centers with their advantages of professional management, cooperative advertising and acres of free parking has greatly reduced the effective market area and sales volume of these commercial ribbons. Under present conditions these commercial ribbons along the major arteries have been the cause of greater traffic confusion and have suffered from declining sales, smaller profits, stagnation and rapid deterioration. The ribbon has become a strangling cord for the artery it borders and the business it contains.

In the strip commercial under study, approximately 50% of the land is vacant

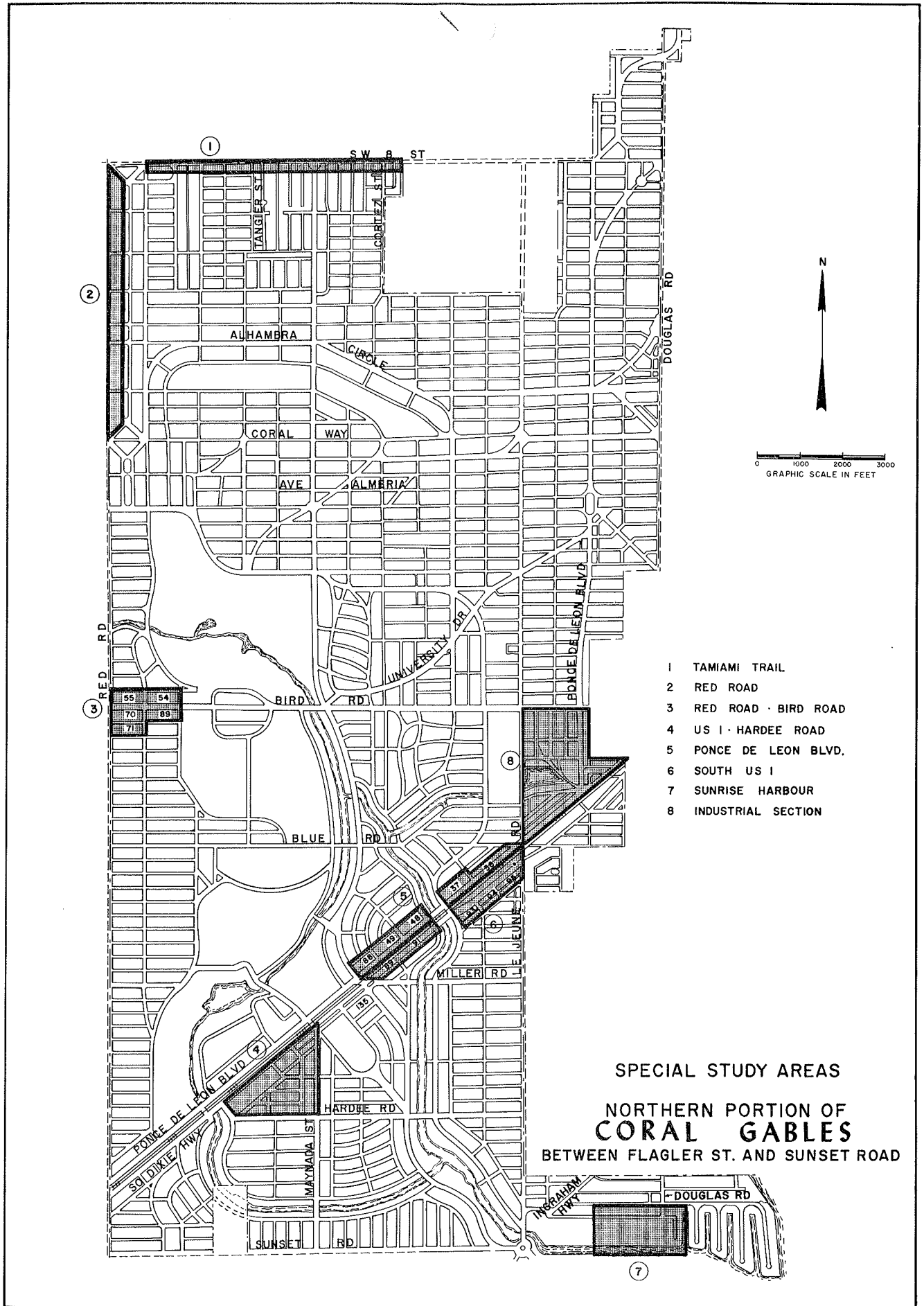


FIGURE 5

and the remaining 50% is built up. Approximately one-half of the built up area appears to be occupied by healthy business and the other half consists of vacant shops or what appears to be unprofitable businesses. This low rate of occupancy in the entire commercial strip by apparently profitable businesses is due to many factors, the most obvious of which are:

1. The traffic on Tamiami Trail is rather dense and moves at a moderate rate of speed. Inasmuch as the Trail is one of the few major east-west arteries in the Metropolitan Area, it carries a considerable volume of cross-city traffic. Only a portion of the traffic could be considered as destined for the businesses in the area and a smaller portion could be considered as potential impulse customers for attractive businesses in the area.
2. The area lacks adequate parking facilities.
3. The area lacks adequate depth for reasonable building depth and off-street parking in front of the buildings.
4. The area lacks a service alley in the rear.

In order for the area to develop in an attractive manner and enjoy a profitable existence without serious future deterioration, it is our recommendation that the area from Cortez Street west to Tangier Street, that consists mostly of vacant property, be established for apartment use. The minimum depth of the use should be set at two lots or 145 feet. To permit orderly development of the area, each apartment site should be limited to a minimum size of 100' x 145' and should have adequate off-street parking with access limited to streets leading to Tamiami Trail wherever possible. The above change will have the added advantage of strengthening the remaining commercial use, which is now faced with dilution, decreasing volume of business, and possible deterioration if commercial use is retained for the entire area.

2. RED ROAD, FROM TAMIAMI TRAIL SOUTH TO CORAL WAY:

A second area that is located along the city boundary and has remained relatively undeveloped is the frontage along the east side of Red Road from Tamiami Trail south to Coral Way (Figure No. 5). This area now is zoned for residential use, as is the adjacent property lying in Coral Gables and abutting it to the east. The residential frontage is one mile in length and has been divided into 94 lots, but has only 14 residences constructed on it. The development of this one mile of residential frontage has been hindered by the heavy volume of traffic on Red Road and by the strip commercial which lies on the west side of Red Road and faces the area. A portion of

this strip commercial lies in the city of West Miami and a portion lies in the unincorporated area of the county. It is interesting to note that this strip commercial fits the pattern of most strip commercial ribbons as discussed previously inasmuch as vacant lots are scattered along the strip and many existing businesses do not appear to be either attractive or profitable.

The one mile of residential frontage in Coral Gables forms the westerly one-half of the blocks lying parallel to Red Road and located between Red Road and Country Club Prado. These blocks are relatively isolated from the adjacent section of Coral Gables by the 200 foot width of Country Club Prado, a street having a divided roadway with trees and shrubs planted along the middle boulevard area. The isolated position of the blocks gives this situation several unique advantages over similar situations. The isolated position also means that a study of the proposed use for the frontage on Red Road will require studying the block as a unit, rather than studying the frontage along Red Road alone.

In these blocks, the lots which front on Country Club Prado have developed into a good residential area with only a few vacant lots remaining. Several of the home owners also own the lot abutting their lot and facing on Red Road which they have developed into rear yards with swimming pools and landscaped gardens or are holding the lots for the purpose of controlling the future development.

For this area to develop in an orderly and attractive manner, it is our recommendation that highly restricted apartment use be permitted in these blocks with the following reservations: the minimum building site depth shall be restricted to the width of the block, the apartments shall face Country Club Prado or its cross streets, no access be permitted on to Red Road, a buffer consisting of a wall or trees and shrubs be placed along Red Road, adequate off-street parking be provided, the architectural style and landscaping be closely controlled to permit development of the apartments in harmony with the surrounding areas.

The development of a highly restricted apartment use in this area should be aimed to attract people in about the same income bracket as are now living in this and adjacent sections. The development of such highly restricted use on deep building sites fronting on Country Club Prado and isolated from Red Road by a good buffer should result in a use that will remain active without serious future deterioration of the area.

### 3. RED ROAD AND BIRD ROAD INTERSECTION:

A third area that is located adjacent to the city boundary and contains undeveloped building sites is the property at the intersection of Bird Road with

Red Road (Figure No. 5). The undeveloped sites exist in Blocks 54 and 55 lying in the northeast quadrant of the intersection, and Blocks 70, 71, and 89 lying in the southeast quadrant of the intersection. These blocks and the surrounding area in Coral Gables are now zoned for residential use.

Three of these blocks, Blocks 54, 71 and 89 have only a few vacant building sites located in each block. The majority of each of these blocks and the area adjacent to them, including the unincorporated area of the county fronting on the west side of Red Road and facing Block 71, are occupied by residential use. Accordingly, we recommend that the residential use now permitted in these three blocks be retained.

The remaining two blocks, Block 55 which is located at the northeast corner of the intersection and Block 70 which is located at the southeast corner of the intersection, are approximately one-half occupied by residential use. In Block 55 there are five existing residences located in the north and east portion of the block and in Block 70 there is one large estate located on the east one-half of the block. The undeveloped portion of these blocks lies immediately adjacent to the intersection of Red Road and Bird Road. Probably the major reasons that have hindered the development of these corner areas are the shopping center developments in the unincorporated section of the county at the northwest and southwest corners of the intersection and the volume and noise level of the traffic at the intersection. Also the development may have been hindered by possible speculation that commercial use, especially for service stations, would be permitted in the near future on these two "prime corners".

To permit unrestricted commercial use on these two corners would open the door to the first commercial use permitted in this area of the City of Coral Gables. This action would amount to planting the seed of a commercial cancer that would eventually lead to ribbon development spreading east along both sides of Bird Road. On the other hand it is improbable that the property fronting on Red Road one block north and south of Bird Road will ever develop as residential property, and rigid adherence to the present zoning is tantamount to confiscation of private property. To alleviate this situation and at the same time prevent the continued migration of commercial establishments along Bird Road it is suggested that consideration be given to rezoning Blocks 55 and 70 so as to permit the construction of architecturally controlled private medical clinics on the west 100 feet of these 2 blocks. The zoning on the next 100 feet of these blocks should be changed so that the land can be used for parking lots to serve the clinics. These lots should have a minimum set back from the street right-of-way of at least 25 feet. The zoning on the remaining portion of each block should not be changed. They should also be screened with well designed and maintained landscaping to hide them from the street and adjoining residential property. At the time of the zoning changes, provision should be made for additional set backs

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along both Red and Bird Roads so that each street can be widened in the future without razing any newly constructed building.

4. PONCE DE LEON BOULEVARD FROM LE JEUNE ROAD TO GRANADA BOULEVARD:

An area that is located adjacent to the F. E. C. Railway and has remained relatively undeveloped is the frontage along the northwest side of Ponce de Leon Boulevard (Figure No. 5). This area includes the southeast 1/2 of Block 36 and all of Blocks 37, 48, 49, 88, and the southeast portion of Block 85. In these blocks the permitted use and the existing development are as follows:

S. E. 1/2 Block 36: Commercial use permitted, several recent office buildings constructed and majority of block vacant.

Block 37: Residential use permitted, vacant.

Block 48: Residential use permitted, vacant except for one older residence.

Block 49: Residential use permitted, vacant except for two new residences.

Block 88: Residential use permitted, vacant.

S. E. Portion Block 85: Residential use permitted, vacant.

The area adjacent to these blocks, including the northwest 1/2 of Block 36 and the blocks lying northwest of the study area, are occupied by residential use that has been constructed recently.

The general factors influencing the lack of development of these blocks include the F. E. C. Railway parallel to the blocks, the increase of traffic on Ponce de Leon Boulevard in recent years, and the possible construction of the much discussed Expressway, either on or adjacent to the F. E. C. Railway. The Railway does not have a large volume of traffic inasmuch as it does not carry the daily commuter traffic, nor does it carry frequently scheduled passengers and freight traffic. The major use of the Railway comes in the winter season when truck farm produce is transported north from the farming areas in South Dade County.

An additional factor influencing the development of the commercial use in the southeast 1/2 of Block 36 has been the relatively isolated position of this commercial use from similar or harmonizing uses. The recent construction of the professional office buildings in this block somewhat limits consideration of other uses for this block. Accordingly, it is our recommendation that the existing commercial use permitted in the southeast 1/2 of Block 36 be retained.

An additional factor influencing the development of the residential use in Blocks 37, 48, 49, 85 and 88 is possible speculation and anticipation that more intensive use of portions of these blocks may be permitted in the future. In keeping with the existing residential use facing these blocks from the northwest side and the location of Ponce de Leon Boulevard and the F. E. C. Railway on the southeasterly side of these blocks, it is our recommendation that the existing residential use be retained on the northwesterly 1/2 of the blocks and the existing residential use be changed to multi-family use on the southeasterly 1/2 of the blocks. This division of the blocks into separate uses is quite acceptable in this particular case because the alley through the middle of the blocks would separate the two uses from each other.

5. SOUTH DIXIE HIGHWAY FROM LE JEUNE ROAD TO MILLER ROAD:

A second area that is located adjacent to the F. E. C. Railway and has remained relatively undeveloped is the frontage along the southeast side of South Dixie Highway between Le Jeune Road and Miller Road (Figure No. 5). This area includes the northwest one-half of Blocks 89 and 91 and all of Blocks 93, 94 and 95. In these blocks the permitted use and existing developments are as follows:

N. W. 1/2 of Block 89: Apartment use permitted, vacant.

N. W. 1/2 of Block 91: Apartment use permitted, approximately 2/3 occupied by what appears to be motels but may be apartments.

Block 93: Apartment use permitted on northwest portion and duplex use permitted on southeast portion, vacant.

Block 94: Apartment use permitted on northwest portion and duplex use permitted on southeast portion, vacant.

Block 95: Commercial use permitted on northwest portion and residential use permitted on southeast portion, vacant except for one service station on north corner.

Block 135, lying between Block 89 and the Ponce de Leon High School, is the only other vacant block fronting on the southeast side of Dixie Highway in this area. This block has not been included in the study because the block is owned by the City of Coral Gables and it is anticipated that the City will use it for a worth-while civic use to be determined by the needs of the City.

The area lying adjacent to and southeasterly of the above blocks is occupied by residential use, except for the south half of Blocks 89 and 91 which are

occupied by duplex use complying with the zoning code.

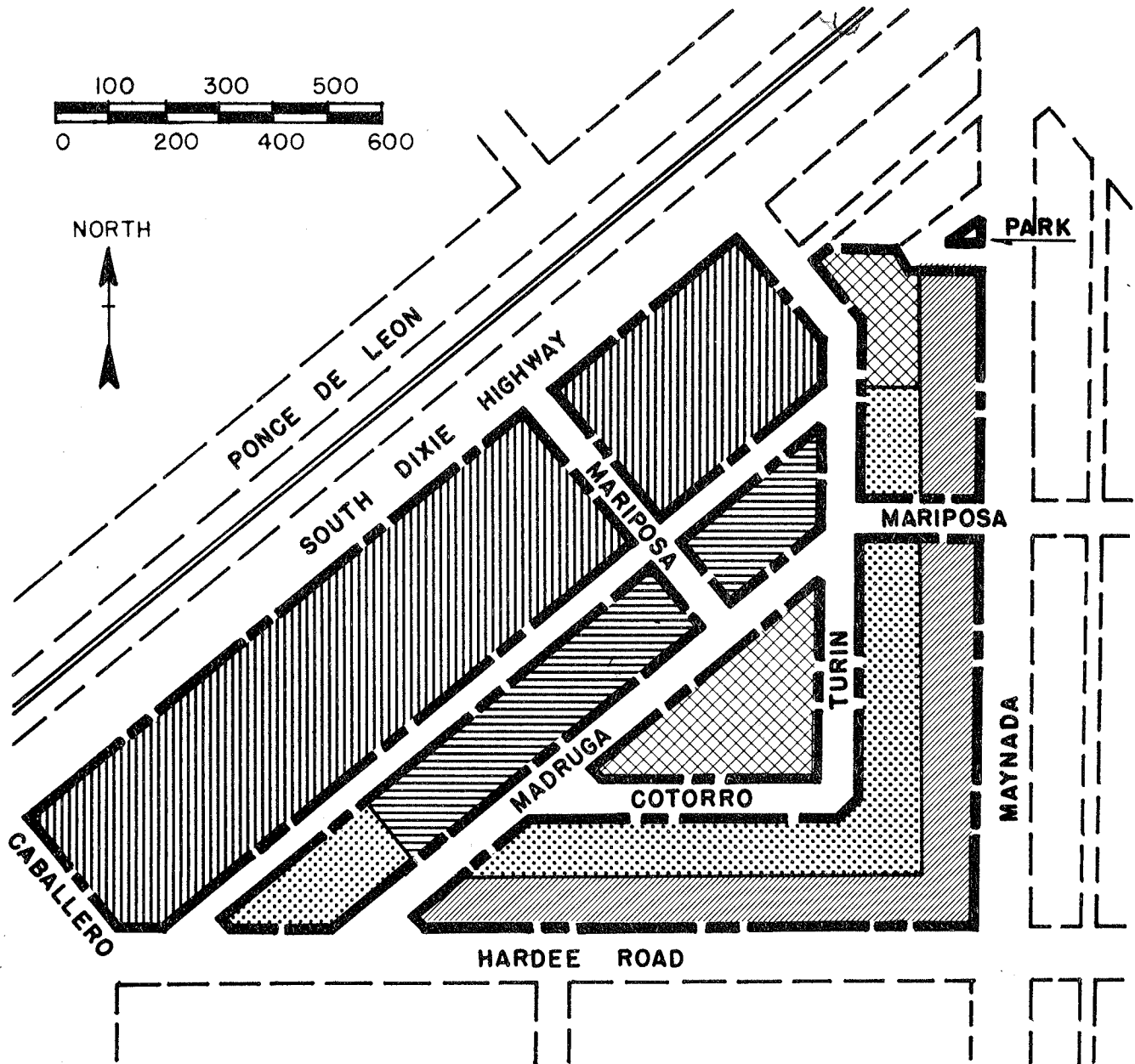
In Blocks 89, 91, 93 and 94 the apartment use along South Dixie Highway backs up to duplex use on the southwest portion of the blocks, and this duplex use faces the residential use in the adjacent area lying south of these blocks. This progressive change from high density multi-family use is an acceptable planning practice. Accordingly, it is our recommendation that the existing use permitted in these blocks be retained. The undesirable factors resulting from the high traffic density on South Dixie Highway that may have been hindering the development, can be handled in several ways. For example, the number of windows and other openings in the building walls facing South Dixie Highway could be eliminated or restricted so as to reduce the effect of traffic noise. Also, vehicular access to the property could be permitted only from the rear alley so as to control present ingress and egress problems created by the heavy traffic on South Dixie Highway. With careful architectural and landscape treatment, we believe this apartment use could be developed into an attractive and profitable use.

In Block 95 the commercial use on the northwest portion backs up to residential use on the southwest portion of the block, and this residential use faces the large residential use in the adjacent area lying south of Block 95. To permit an orderly progression from the commercial use to the large residential area, it is our recommendation that multi-family use be permitted in the southeast portion of Block 95. This division of the block into separate use is quite acceptable in this particular case, because the alley through the middle of the block would separate the two uses from each other.

6. DIXIE HIGHWAY-HARDEE ROAD TRIANGLE:

The area fronting on South Dixie Highway and bounded by Maynada Street on the east, Hardee Road on the south and Caballero Boulevard on the southwest, (Figure No. 5), is a large triangular shaped tract that has remained undeveloped with the exception of the University Shopping Center along Dixie Highway and some commercial business at the intersection of South Dixie Highway with Maynada Street. Although the majority of this tract was subdivided as a part of the Riviera Section of Coral Gables, the streets, sidewalks and other improvements were never constructed in this tract. The present use permitted in this area includes residential, apartment and commercial in agreement with the platting within the tract.

The original platting produced several rather small blocks, and the original use created the awkward situation of residential use facing directly onto commercial use. In order to eliminate the disadvantages found in the original platting and planning, it seems advisable to consider a replatting of



# DIXIE HIGHWAY · HARDEE ROAD TRIANGLE


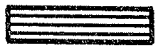



-  COMMERCIAL CB
-  COMMERCIAL CA
-  APARTMENTS
-  DUPLEX
-  SINGLE FAMILY

FIGURE 6

the entire tract. A proposed development plan with this idea in mind is shown in Figure No. 6. One of the major advantages of this plan is to create progressive change from low density single family use along Maynada and Hardee Road through more dense multi-family use which acts as a buffer to the commercial use along South Dixie Highway. We feel that a plan such as this will be acceptable to both the owners of the property and the home owners in the adjacent area.

7. SUNRISE HARBOUR:

Sunrise Harbour is a recent development located along the north bank of the Coral Gables Waterway at the point where the waterway enters Biscayne Bay (Figure No. 5). This development lies between Biscayne Bay and Ingraham Highway at the southern terminus of Douglas Road. The present use permitted includes residential use on the majority of the area, apartment use on twenty-two lots plus a 12-1/3 acre tract, and commercial use on a 7-1/2 acre tract. The area appears to be developing in a satisfactory manner with a number of residences and apartments either completed or under construction.

Inasmuch as the development has been proceeding in a satisfactory manner and in conformance with its intended use, no review of the land use will be made in this study. However, during the past two years the City of Coral Gables has received several requests for permission to construct apartment buildings which would be higher than the three-story limit now governing both this area and the entire City of Coral Gables. In order to make a reasonable and logical appraisal of the effect of multi-story buildings it is necessary to give consideration to the access roads to the area, the land use in the surrounding area, and the relationship of building height to the size of building site.

Access to and from the surrounding area consists, first, of the major arterial roads leading to the Sunrise Harbour area and, second, of the streets running from these arteries to the apartment area where the multi-story buildings have been proposed. The major arteries to Sunrise Harbour are Ingraham Highway and the section of Douglas Road lying north of Ingraham Highway. These roads offer only a limited amount of good access due to their common features of narrow right-of-way, narrow pavement, and varying configuration and alignment. However, both roads are located outside the city limits of Coral Gables and, therefore, their improvement is outside the jurisdiction of the City of Coral Gables. Access from Ingraham Highway, which borders Sunrise Harbour on the west, into the apartment and commercial area, which is located in the central portion of Sunrise Harbour, is by way of several narrow residential streets leading off Ingraham Highway. These urban

streets, including Douglas Road south of Ingraham Highway, were designed to handle local residential traffic only and were not designed to act as collector streets capable of carrying large volumes of traffic. With the full development of both the apartment area and the commercial area in accordance with the existing requirements and height limits, the traffic generated will undoubtedly be greater than can be handled by the present access. Any increase in building heights that would result in increased population density in the apartment area would create additional traffic volume and could only lead to strangulation of traffic in the area.

A review of the land use in the surrounding area reveals that Sunrise Harbour, which consists mostly of single family residential use, is bounded on the north by the residential area of Miami's Coconut Grove, on the east by the residential area of Coral Gables' Riviera Section, and on the south by the large undeveloped tract in the City of Coral Gables that lies along the south bank of the Coral Gables Waterway. This undeveloped tract is zoned for residential use on lots having a minimum size of 12,500 square feet. The above residential use surrounding Sunrise Harbour covers a considerable area and includes several fine residential areas. Inasmuch as this residential use consists of one and two story homes, any structure extending above the present three story height limit would be quite visible in this surrounding area. Also, the intense utilization of the land created by the increased population density of the tall multi-story buildings would not be in harmony with the single family use in the surrounding residential area.

The location of the multi-story buildings in a large residential area of fine residences needs special consideration for the relationship of the building height to the size of the building site in order for the building not to look awkward and out of place. A multi-story building does not look awkward or out of place in an area of one and two story residences if the building is constructed on a parcel of sufficient size to permit landscaping and other treatments that aid the building to blend with the surrounding area. A case in point here is the Old Biltmore Hotel. This tall structure is constructed in an area of fine residences and good landscaping, and yet does not look out of place. This is due to the combination of the large parcel of land on which it is constructed, the landscaped golf course abutting it to the south, and the large open area abutting it to the north. Such a combination does not exist in Sunrise Harbour.

Other considerations may be involved in reviewing a general building height limitation, but the above are the most vital considerations in evaluating the effect of multi-story buildings in the Sunrise Harbour area. Based on the above considerations we find no justifiable reason to recommend a change in the basic three story building height limit now in effect. It must be remembered that, in a master land use plan such as this study, recom-

mendations are limited to area-wide planning and not to specific recommendation on individual parcels or building sites. Therefore, it is not within the scope of this study to consider any individual request for a change in the building height limit. These requests should be handled separately by the respective city officials and city committees or commissions, and should be based on an evaluation of the general policy and the special considerations of the specific case.

#### 8. INDUSTRIAL SECTION.

The industrial section, as referred to in this report, is defined as the area bounded by Ponce de Leon Boulevard on the south, the city limits on the east, Le Jeune Road on the west and Bird Road on the north. The majority of the area within the section has been developed for use of light industrial, wholesale and retail establishments, and as the demand for space within the section becomes more acute, it is anticipated that applications will be made for increasing the floor space by vertical expansion of the structures within the district.

The area is directly accessible to other sections of the Metropolitan Miami area via Le Jeune Road, Bird Road, U.S. Highway No. 1 and, to a limited extent, Ponce de Leon Boulevard and Douglas Road. Le Jeune Road is at the present time being widened to a four-lane thoroughfare from U.S. Highway No. 1 to Tamiami Trail. When this work is completed, Le Jeune Road will become one of the major north-south arteries in the Metropolitan Miami area, and it may be anticipated that it will handle a volume of traffic comparable to that now using 27th Avenue. Bird Road is likewise a major arterial thoroughfare, handling the east-west traffic through Coral Gables and is operating near its potential capacity during the morning and evening rush hours. U.S. Highway No. 1 is also incapable of handling an appreciable increase in traffic during the rush hours. Because of the heavy traffic congestion existing on these arterial thoroughfares it is believed that any intense development within the industrial district would lead to further congestion and ultimately adversely affect the flow of traffic to other traffic generating areas adjacent to their right-of-ways.

In the event that multi-story buildings were permitted in the industrial section, the industrial establishments locating in the upper floors would in all probability, be restricted to the type of light industry, such as garment and electronic manufacturers, who employ a large number of personnel in relation to building floor area. For this reason, multi-story buildings higher than three stories would generate an abnormally large volume of traffic in relation to the total floor area, and result in a concentration of activity that would be detri-

mental to the adjacent residential areas and the flow of traffic on the main boulevards through Coral Gables. It is believed that it is in the best interest of Coral Gables to deaccentuate industrial expansion in the area and to limit the potential industrial population by restricting building heights to those now specified by the building code.

## CHAPTER V

### AREA SOUTH OF SUNSET ROAD

#### 1. DESCRIPTION OF AREA:

This section of Coral Gables lying south of Sunset Road and the Coral Gables Waterway covers the area between Old Cutler Road and Biscayne Bay. The land slopes from Cutler Road, which is located along the eastern border of the pine ridge, to the tidal inundated mangrove swamps paralleling the shore line. The mangrove area is unsuitable for immediate development and must be cleared and filled before it can be subdivided. The initial plan prepared by the Coral Gables Development Corporation for the improvement of this area proposed the dredging of numerous canals and tidal basins and using the excavated material to fill the adjacent low lands. This plan was never executed and the entire area remained in its natural state until a relatively few years ago, when development of small isolated sections was initiated by private parties. This land is virtually the last remaining undeveloped waterfront property close to the center of the Metropolitan Miami area and will be in great demand whenever it is improved and placed on public sale.

#### 2. EXISTING LAND USE:

All of the land prepared for development up to this time has been used for the building sites of private residences. Matheson Hammock, which is located in the central part of the area, is devoted exclusively for the use of a public recreational area, and contains a marina, picnicing areas and a bathing beach. This land is allocated for the perpetual use of the public and consequently its development is not within the scope of this report. Other recreational areas within this section, such as Fairchild Gardens, are also oriented to public use and are not available for subdivision.

#### 3. ACCESS INTO AREA:

The major access to this area is accomplished via Le Jeune Road and the Old Cutler Road. Access to the extreme southern section may also be accomplished via Red Road. Both of these arteries connect directly to U. S. Highway No. 1, and all major east-west thoroughfares in the southwest section of Metropolitan Dade County. Le Jeune Road gives direct access to the northernmost section of the county, but Red Road is blocked at N. W. 14th Street by the Miami International Airport. In the event that the Palmetto Bypass is extended south from its existing terminal at U. S. Highway No. 1, the area will be directly accessible to all of the major highways terminating in Southern Florida. The section of Le Jeune Road between U. S. Highway

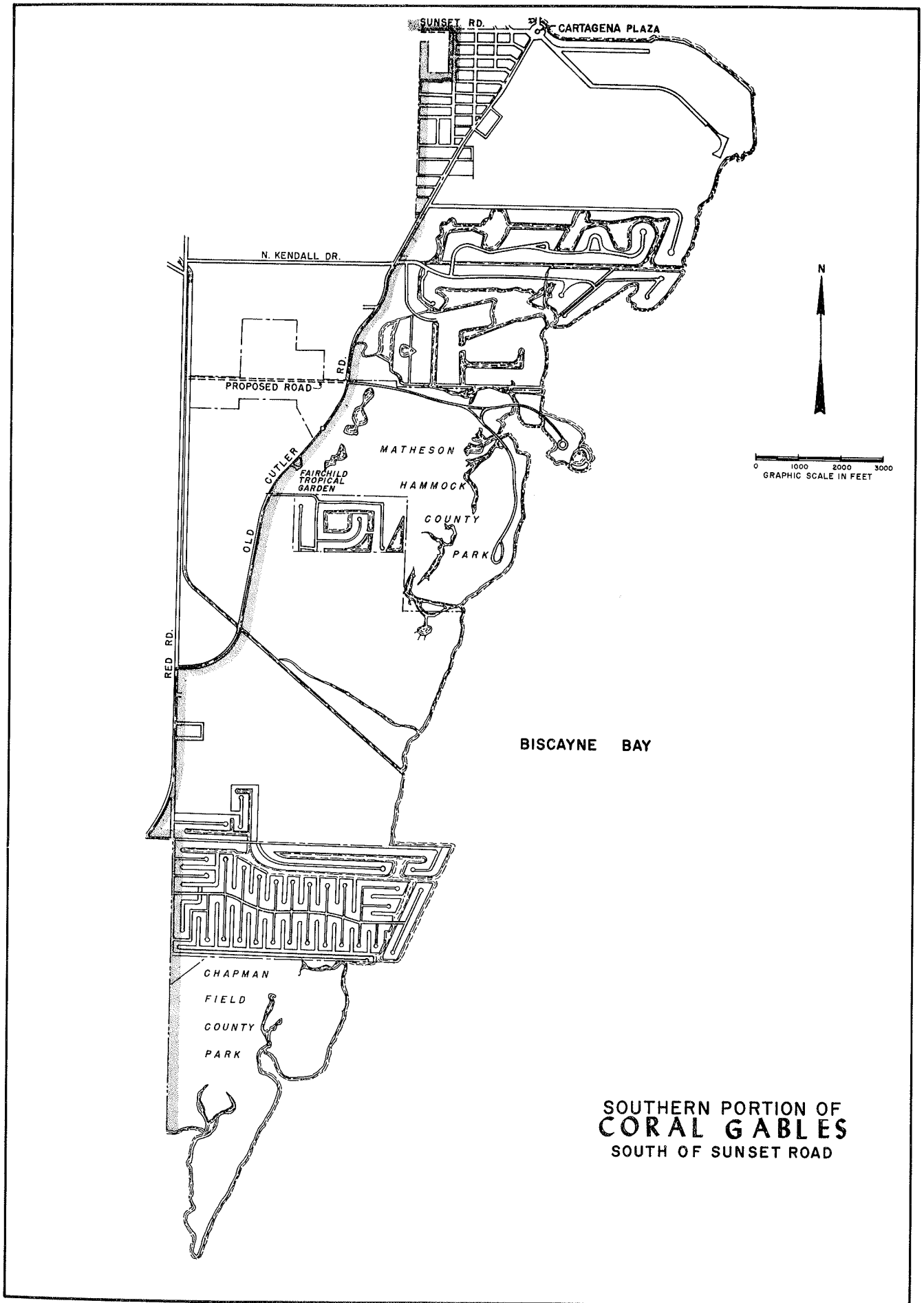


FIGURE 7

No. 1 and Cartagena Plaza has not been scheduled for widening under the existing improvement program and consequently can handle only a single lane of traffic in each direction. At the present time the "Main Highway" through Coconut Grove carries a large part of the traffic between downtown Miami and the area south of Coral Gables and relieves the peak hour commuter traffic on this section of Le Jeune Road. The Main Highway is already operating near capacity during the rush hour and since there is considerable local resistance to improving this road it is doubtful that it will provide much relief for the traffic congestion on Le Jeune Road in the future.

Red Road, which provides the most direct access from U. S. Highway No. 1 to the extreme southern section of Coral Gables, also handles a large and growing volume of traffic originating or terminating in the southern unincorporated areas. At the present time this thoroughfare can handle only two lanes of traffic, one in each direction, and is badly in need of pavement repair. It is understood that eventually the metropolitan government intends to widen and improve this section of Red Road but no definite date has been set for this construction work.

#### 4. RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

The southern section of Coral Gables contains approximately 2500 gross acres of land, exclusive of the area contained in Matheson Hammock, Fairchild Gardens and Chapman Field Park. If the mangrove swamps are to be developed by dredging water ways to obtain fill to create a subdivision it is probable that the remaining land area of the completed project will not exceed 1700 net acres. If this area is developed exclusively for single family residences it will be capable of supporting a maximum population of 13,000 to 14,000 inhabitants. On the other hand, if a portion of the area is zoned for multi-family dwelling units its potential population could easily exceed 30,000 inhabitants, which is almost equivalent to the present population for the entire city of Coral Gables. It is immediately apparent that a residential section with this population density would be handicapped by the two street access into the area. The low topography of the majority of the area also prevents consideration of its intense development prior to the construction of a major sanitary sewer system. Since this area is one of the last remaining undeveloped waterfront areas on the western side of Biscayne Bay within reasonable distance of the Metropolitan Miami area, it is believed that its highest and best use can be obtained by zoning a large part of the land for single family home sites. A small part of the land, however, should be reserved for multi-family dwelling units so that luxury apartments can be constructed on or near the water front for upper income families interested in yachting, but not wishing to maintain large homes. These multi-

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family facilities should be limited to less than 10% of the area of the southern section of Coral Gables and so that they can be properly separated from their neighbors, they should not be permitted to cover greater than 15% of the building site. So as not to unduly impair the view of the private residences and to prevent excessive population densities it is recommended that their height be limited to five stories of 60 feet.

The population of Coral Gables now exceeds that which can be adequately served by the single Municipal Country Club on Granada Boulevard and while the southern area is being developed, it is desirable that consideration be given to an additional municipal club and recreational area. Its need is emphasized by the fact that although the residents of Coral Gables own and operate many private pleasure craft, the City provides no facilities for docking and launching small boats. The area in the vicinity of Tahiti Beach is well situated for the construction of a municipal marina. At this location, the marina would be centrally located for the majority of the citizens of Coral Gables and, at the same time, be able to provide fueling and repair facilities for those private yachts now moored along the Coral Gables waterways. The site has considerable native beauty and could also serve as a bathing and outdoor recreational area. At this location, the park and marina could be separated and screened from adjacent residential areas and would enhance rather than detract from the desirability of living in the southern section of Coral Gables. It is estimated that at least 20 acres should be set aside along the bayfront for this park and marina.

Prior to the complete development for the southern section, consideration should be given to providing a scenic highway through the area paralleling Old Cutler Road and the shore line. This highway would provide better access for the residents living in the area and at the same time enhance the beauty of the southern section. It would be a particular asset, inasmuch as there is no comparable drive along the western shores of Biscayne Bay, and there are very few places where tourists visiting the area can enjoy a leisurely drive overlooking the waters of Biscayne Bay. This highway should be designed and the right-of-way acquired for its construction prior to authorizing any further land development in the southern section. In those areas that are already developed, it will be necessary to solicit the cooperation of the land developers, and it is probable that right-of-way in these sections will have to be acquired through the right of eminent domain. The design capacity of this highway would have to be determined by a detailed study. Nevertheless, it is believed that a right-of-way with a width of at least 100 feet should be acquired so that the route can be provided with broad landscaped parkways characteristic of other sections of Coral Gables.

If the ultimate population of the southern section increases to 14,000 people, there will be approximately 2400 children in the age bracket of 6 to 18 years living in the area. This number of children cannot be absorbed in the existing school system and it will be necessary to provide space within or immediately adjacent to the section for the construction of elementary and secondary schools. It is believed that a site with an area of at least 10 acres will be required for the elementary school and two other sites, a total area of 20 acres, will be required for the secondary schools. The School Board has indicated that they have considered a site immediately west of Old Cutler Road in the unincorporated area of the county for the location of an additional school when it is required. It is also possible that the area west of Matheson Hammock, now owned by the County and used for a plant nursery, could be obtained for additional school facilities. If so, this property is well located for a school site and would be within three miles of any part of the southern section.

The provision of public school sites is, of course, not the responsibility of the City of Coral Gables. However, before adopting a plan for the complete development of the southern area consideration should be given to this problem so that the School Board's thinking can be incorporated into the plan and unnecessary expense of acquiring improved property can be avoided when the schools are required.

5. POTENTIAL TRAFFIC INTO THE AREA:

In the event that the southern area of Coral Gables is developed for single family residences, it may be anticipated that these people will be in an income bracket which permits each adult member of the family to operate his own motor vehicle. Under these conditions it is immediately apparent that commuter traffic during the morning and evening rush hours will be extremely heavy in relation to the population density. When the area is fully developed it is probable that in excess of 1000 vehicle trips per hour will originate and terminate within the area during the rush hour. When this traffic is added to the traffic generated in the area west of Old Cutler Road and the traffic passing through the area from or to the southern unincorporated section it is apparent that the capacity of Old Cutler Road will have to be increased. The improvement of Red Road and the growing traffic congestion on Old Cutler Road may discourage a large part of the traffic generated in the southern unincorporated areas from continuing to use Old Cutler Road, in which case its main function will consist of handling traffic generated in the immediate area. Le Jeune Road north of Cartagena Plaza will have to handle a large part of this traffic, as well as the traffic generated in the adjacent Miami and Coral Gables residential areas. Potential bottlenecks are already apparent in this section of Le

Jeune Road and traffic congestion may be expected to intensify as the southern area develops. Commuter traffic bled from Le Jeune Road north of the Coral Gables Waterway by the Main Highway through Coconut Grove has retarded the growth of traffic on Le Jeune Road up to this time. Unfortunately the main highway is now operating near capacity during the rush hours and if the additional traffic generated by the development of southern Coral Gables attempts to follow this route into downtown Miami it will encounter frequent and increasing unavoidable delays. The improvement and widening of Le Jeune Road is therefore the only solution available to Coral Gables for the provision for this increased traffic. Since half of the right-of-way in Le Jeune Road in this area lies within the City of Miami it will be necessary to develop this road in conjunction with Miami. It is believed that the potential traffic on Le Jeune Road will require a pavement width adequate for four lanes of moderate speed traffic.

Commuter traffic is of course, at its minimum during the weekend, but during this period the traffic to the recreational areas of Matheson Hammock and Fairchild Gardens is at its peak. This traffic, for the most part, is generated in the residential sections in the western area of Metropolitan Miami and if provided with a more direct access from Red Road, it could reach these areas with a minimum of travel on Cutler Road. The proposed road connection as shown on Figure 7 between the entrance to Matheson Hammock and Red Road would provide this direct access, but cannot be built by the City of Coral Gables since its right-of-way would lie outside of the city limits. This must be accomplished by the Metropolitan Dade County government, and an effort should be made by the city officials to persuade metropolitan officials to accomplish this at the earliest possible date.

As pointed out earlier in this chapter it will be necessary to improve Cutler Road to handle the anticipated traffic when the southern section of Coral Gables is fully developed. To prevent frequent traffic interruptions along the improved Old Cutler Road, it is desirable that the subsequent development of the residential section be designed so that as few streets as possible and no private driveways have direct access to Old Cutler Road. In the event that the future subdivision area permits each residential street to enter Cutler Road, it will be necessary to reduce the speed limit along Cutler Road and consequently reduce its capacity during the rush hours.

The above can be accomplished by two different methods. One method consists of constructing an access street parallel to Old Cutler Road with entrances spaced approximately at one-half mile intervals, and the other by planning the subdivision so that residences do not face Old Cutler Road

but a street parallel to it which, as before, has a limited number of entrances. Either plan may employ a landscape screen to shield the residential neighborhood from the traffic on Old Cutler Road and both have been employed with considerable success in other communities.

At the present time neither the county nor the state have any firm plans for handling the large and increasing volume of traffic generated in the southern unincorporated areas of the county. The undeveloped areas around Homestead and Islandia have not undertaken any firm direction whereby resulting future population and traffic needs can be projected and until there is an evident need for the improvement in the highway facilities in the southern section, it is probable that highway construction will be limited to the improvement of existing facilities. When the nature of development of the highway system and the growth and concentration of population in southern Dade County is better known, the proposed land use of the area of Coral Gables south of Sunset Drive should again be reviewed.

## CHAPTER VI

### EXECUTION OF THE LAND STUDY

#### 1. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED:

While the fundamental principal justifying the city's existence has not changed since the beginning of civilization, the city's form and character have varied with each social order and technical advancement. In recent times each decade imposed some additional problem requiring the re-evaluation of previous concepts of city planning and necessitating the physical revision of many municipal facilities. Advancements in communication and transportation have of course, exerted the most profound influence on the internal functioning of the city during the 20th century, and have presented entirely new problems for the city planners and administrators.

No longer is man content to dwell in the neighborhood where he is employed and his move to suburbia has resulted in the need for numerous changes in municipal facilities and methods of conducting business within the city limits. Frequently the population at large resist these changes and often obstruct the execution of plans for the revision of the city's physical configuration. It is often difficult to carry any major planning program to completion if the majority of the citizens are not thoroughly acquainted with the merits of the program. The persons responsible for the execution of the revised city plan will be handicapped by numerous small pressure groups who have united for the common purpose of defeating any plan which will require changes in their daily pattern of life, or necessitate revisions to the method of conducting business within the city.

These objections, for the most part, originate with people who have a sincere concern for the welfare of the city. Their objections are motivated by a genuine belief that any radical departure from inherited conceptions will result in financial loss for themselves and the community. They are aware that the old formula contains many undesirable features, nevertheless they are familiar with its structure and are prepared to rely on their individual ingenuity to circumvent its shortcomings.

#### 2. COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

It will be impossible for the city administrators to put into execution any plan not understood or unacceptable to the majority of the citizens. The basic groundwork for the adoption of a revised city plan should be laid with an initial educational program to acquaint the residents of the purpose and aim of the new plan. Perhaps this can be accomplished best by inviting in-

fluent citizens to form committees for studying the plan and carrying it to the people. These committees should also function as consultants to the city manager for the review of individual problems as they develop.

At the present time, the control and direction of all city parking facilities is one of the many and diverse responsibilities handled by the City Commission. In the future, the Commission should appoint a group of local businessmen to serve as a parking authority. This authority should be empowered to take full control of the existing parking facilities and authorized to undertake the planning, financing and acquisition of future parking facilities in accordance with the central business district development plan presented in Chapter II. Such an authority is necessary to assure the orderly development and financing of the parking facilities.

Another committee the city should establish is a citizens' committee similar to the Committee of One Hundred found in many modern cities. This committee could search out and contact businesses, federal and state governmental agencies that would be interested in establishing offices and headquarters in Coral Gables. The many successful business and professional people living and working in Coral Gables represent almost every business and professional field. A committee of these citizens would give the city the benefit of the combined contacts and knowledge of these people. Also, the city would benefit by having local men in associated fields available to discuss the advantages of Coral Gables with business and professional men considering the relocation of their offices in other sections of the country.

One of the outstanding truisms of city planning, as pointed out earlier in this report, is based on the fact that it is neither feasible nor desirable to establish any plan for the future development of a city that is inflexible in nature and cannot be adjusted to its changing environment. Planning for the future is a never-ending task and requires the guidance of people familiar with the latest trends in urban development. For this reason it is necessary that the city establish a strong planning department with sufficient authority to implement the currently accepted development plan. It would also be advantageous if this department were aided by a consulting firm, possibly on a retainer basis, to assist the department in their work.