

West Dixie Highway Implementation Strategy

Report of Findings – Existing Conditions

Prepared for the North Miami Beach
Community Redevelopment Agency

Prepared by RMA, LLC - March 17, 2015

WEST DIXIE HIGHWAY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Report of Findings – Analysis of Conditions

Background

The purpose of this analysis is to identify short and long term improvements to the West Dixie Highway corridor to catalyze redevelopment. This report will provide the baseline inventory of existing and proposed land use, upcoming capital projects, existing infrastructure and potential for redevelopment. The project limits for this Implementation Strategy include the West Dixie Highway corridor from 163rd Street to 173rd Street and will also include the parcels directly adjacent to the West Dixie Highway Right of Way to the FEC railway.

The next step(s) to finalize this strategy include proposed meetings with adjacent property owners and businesses in order to develop recommendations for short and long term redevelopment. A recommended Implementation Strategy will be presented to the CRA Board in June 2015. In general, the West Dixie Highway corridor presents a more immediate opportunity for redevelopment given its City assets and planned capital projects.

Current Land Use Patterns

The West Dixie Highway corridor within the project limits has three distinct sub areas as follows:

1. 163rd Street to Snake Creek Canal Bridge - Commercial
2. Snake Creek Canal to 170th Street – Civic/Residential
3. 170th Street to 173rd Street – Neighborhood Commercial/Office

Area 1: 163rd Street to Snake Creek Canal

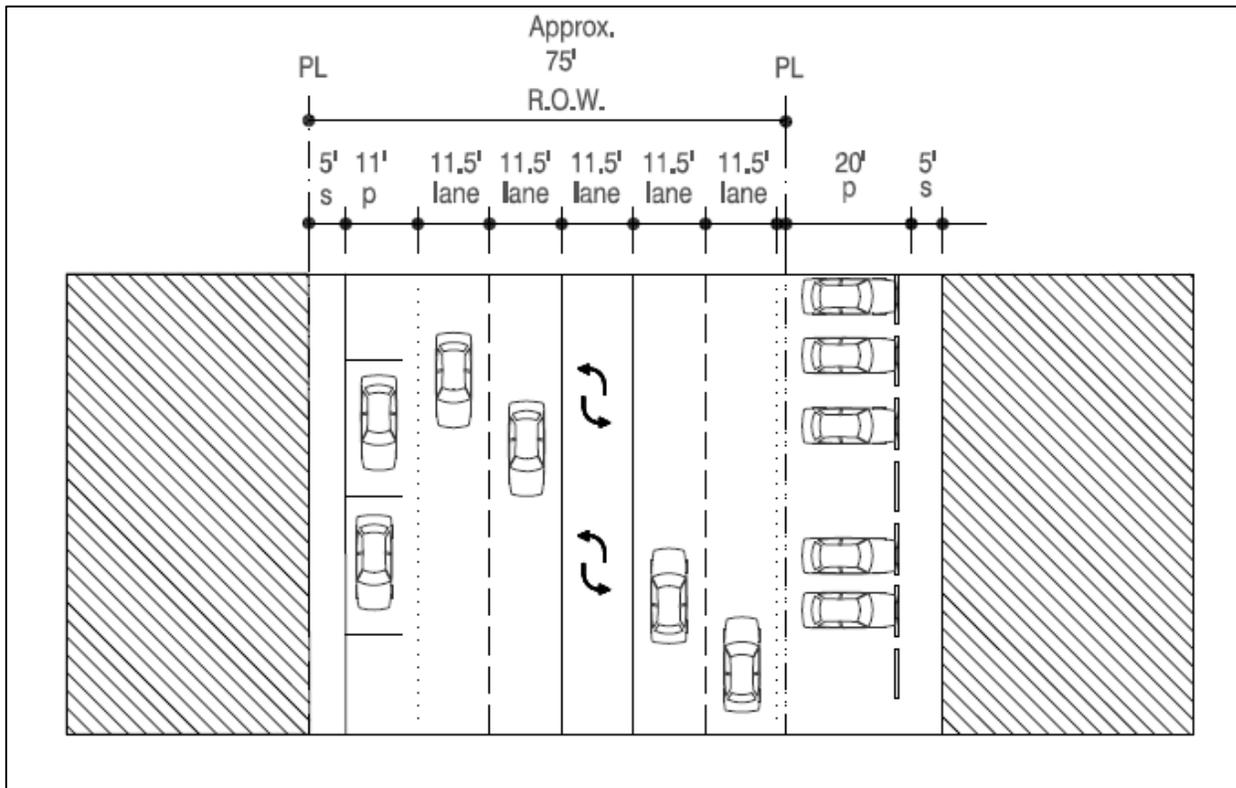
The area between 163rd Street and the Snake Creek Canal bridge is currently zoned for mixed use however redevelopment has been stalled in this area and there has been little redevelopment (with the exception of the NW corner of 163rd Street and West Dixie). The NE corner of 163rd Street and West Dixie Highway was developed in the 1990's prior to the current mixed use zoning.

The remaining parcels fronting West Dixie Highway, between 164th Street and the Snake Creek Canal were built in the 1950's when West Dixie Highway was still a two lane road. Currently a portion of the parking on the east side of the road encroaches on the right of way and there is limited sidewalk connectivity. The following diagram illustrates the existing roadway cross section.



West Dixie Highway looking South from Snake Creek Canal Bridge

FIGURE 1: WEST DIXIE HIGHWAY EXISTING CONDITIONS: NE 164TH STREET TO SNAKE CREEK CANAL



Area 2: Snake Creek Canal to 170th Street

The area between the Snake Creek Canal and 170th Street consists of a self contained residential condominium and the Spanish Monastery and North Miami Beach Tennis Center, both of which are local and regional destinations. The land use and zoning in these areas are not proposed to change, however there are opportunities to enhance the functionality of the two civic uses and recreational opportunities along the east side including construction of an urban greenway and potential expansion of the Snake Creek Canal greenway east of the Spanish Monastery creating a waterfront park at its terminus, which is part of the City Tennis Center. There is also a longer term future opportunity for private redevelopment of the Tennis Center site as well.



Spanish Monastery adjacent to Snake Creek Canal

Area 3: 170th to 173rd Street

The area between 170th and 173rd Street consists of neighborhood commercial uses such as restaurants, shops, office uses and neighborhood services. These uses seem to be well used by customers and employees however the buildings themselves are outdated, built in the 1960's and 1970's and the parking configurations are not functional.



Neighborhood Commercial Area between 170 and 171 Street

On the east side of Dixie Highway, there is a City owned parking lot and City and County owned properties adjacent to the FEC railway to 173rd Street. On the west side of Dixie Highway the parcel depths are narrow and about an alleyway that separates them from apartments, condominiums and a day care center. Lot depths for the commercial parcels range from approximately 115 to 125 feet. Furthermore, it appears from right of way maps, that the building adjacent to 170th Street be encroaching on the City's right of way and that some of the surface parking lots along Dixie Highway may be encroaching on County right of way. This will have to be further reviewed.

Proposed Land Use and Zoning

Mixed Use/Town Center (163rd Street to Snake Creek Canal)

The area between 163rd Street and the Snake Creek Canal will remain mixed use, however development standards will be changed to provide more development flexibility and encourage nearer term redevelopment. As such, the area surrounding West Dixie Highway is recommended as the "core" area of the Mixed Use Town Center (MU/TC) zoning category, which means this is planned for the most intense development. It is also the location of a proposed Transit stop, just to the east for the future commuter rail proposed for the FEC railroad. It is intended to be the most "active" and pedestrian oriented areas along the West Dixie Highway corridor based on the *Purpose and Intent* of the MU/TC zoning as follows:

"The intent is to enable transit-oriented development that contributes to the creation of an urban downtown and the formation of a quality pedestrian oriented, mixed-use district. The objective is to shape development to create a "place," an exciting, enlivened social gathering point and a destination that encourages the establishment of a wide mix of commercial and residential uses that offer the flexibility to meet a variety of market needs. The aim of these regulations is to create an environment that attracts day and

evening activities so that the street is occupied by visitors, residents, business owners and operators who have a clear and vested interest in the vitality of the Fulford Mixed-use Town Center District.”

As redevelopment occurs the issues with parking and the lack of protected pedestrian areas and green space shall be resolved per the zoning requirements which have required setbacks, landscape and pedestrian access/urban greenway standards. However, in the near term there may be immediate impacts to the existing businesses, particularly related to parking with the proposed Snake Creek Canal Bridge project that will be discussed in a later section.

Mixed Use/Neighborhood Center (170th to 173rd Street)

The area between the Snake Creek Canal and 170th Street is not part of the proposed rezoning and shall remain Residential Medium Density (RM-23) on the west and Community Facility (CF) on the east. However there are certain public benefits prescribed by the mixed use zoning as well as the CRA's Tax Increment Recapture Program, such as an urban greenway and connectivity to the Snake Creek Canal that could be funded through private redevelopment within the MU/TC or MU/NC.

The area between 170th Street to 173rd Street is being rezoned to Mixed Use Neighborhood Center (MU/NC). It is intended to allow for mixed use development and commercial uses that serve the residents of the immediate area as well as the multi-family areas to the west based on the *Purpose and Intent* of the MU/NC zoning as follows:

“The intent is to support a balanced mix of land uses characterized by compactness, pedestrian friendly design, and neighborhood scale framed by architecture and landscape design appropriate to local history and the natural environment. Development patterns shall generally reflect planning and design principles such as walkable neighborhoods oriented around the five-minute walk, primary orientation towards public transit systems, a centrally located community-serving land use or land uses and greater integration of housing, employment, shopping and recreation at the neighborhood level.”

The primary (near term) opportunity for redevelopment is on the east side of Dixie Highway adjacent to the FEC railway. Here, a larger scale mixed use development could occur through assembly of parcels. The City could have a direct impact in facilitating this kind of development by engaging in a public/private partnership that would include some of the City owned parcels in the assembly. This will be analyzed further as part of the overall Implementations Strategy.

The west side of Dixie Highway will most likely take longer for complete redevelopment as prescribed by the MC/NC zoning. However, there are short term opportunities for redevelopment of the existing properties that will also be analyzed further as part of the overall Implementation Strategy.

A map of the West Dixie Highway Study Area and proposed zoning districts is depicted on the following page.

Infrastructure and Capital Improvements

West Dixie Highway Roadway and Bridge Improvements

As part of the *Miami Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Transportation Improvement Program, 2015* has funded Design and Engineering services for this fiscal year to widen West Dixie Highway from NE 164th Street to NE 173rd Street and widen and replace of the West Dixie Highway Bridge crossing the Snake Creek Canal. The overall scope of work includes design and construction drawings for both the bridge and roadway. Components of the bridge/roadway widening project include raised landscape medians (north of Snake Creek Canal), sidewalks, bicycle lanes, lighting, curb and gutter, a continuous storm water drainage system and intersection signalization improvements.

A Notice to Professional Consultants was issued on December, 30 2014 to solicit qualifications and select a firm to provide the overall master plan and construction drawings for the project in total. It is anticipated that the County will have a qualified Architectural/Engineering firm under contract by this June 2015. The Scope of Services also includes public involvement as part of the master planning process and potential right of way acquisition. While the design and engineering of this project will be completed simultaneously. Miami Dade County has allocated \$400,000 for design and construction services in FY 2014/2015.

As part of the *“Draft” Miami Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), 2016*, \$2,614,000.00 has been allocated to the replacement of the West Dixie Highway Bridge, which crosses the Snake Creek Canal for Fiscal Year 2015/2016. Funding for the roadway improvements has also been included in the *Draft MPO TIP, 2016* in the amount of \$8,500,000.00 over the next three years, and to be completed in FY 2017/2018.

From the preliminary summary of the project prepared by Miami Dade County, it is anticipated that the bridge replacement and widening will require some right of way acquisition. The areas identified in the preliminary report include 30 feet of right-of- way from the Snake Creek Canal to NE 167th Street, on the east side adjacent to the Spanish Monastery and 5 feet of right of way from NE 164th Street to NE 165th Street. However, the required R.O.W. at the Spanish Monastery may or may not be dependent on the final cross-section (2 or 4 lanes) north of the Snake Creek Canal.

The right of way between NE 164th Street and NE 165th Street would most likely come from the east side of West Dixie, adjacent to Lorenzo’s Farmers Market (there is very little R.O.W. on the west side of Dixie adjacent to the Post Office), if so, it could impact the existing parking that backs out onto West Dixie Highway.

In terms of the roadway widening portion of the project from 164th Street to 173rd Street, this was added in 2012 at the request of the City of North Miami Beach. In 2010, the City of North Miami Beach hired URS to conduct a Traffic Impact Analysis of the West Dixie Highway corridor from NE 164th Street to NE 173rd Street. The results of the analysis were forwarded to Miami Dade County in February 2011 with a request to widen this portion of the road from two-lane with an exclusive turn lane to a four-lane median divided roadway with dedicated turn lanes.

The primary analysis, completed in 2010 was based on the projected future growth and roadway Level of Service (LOS) by 2035 within the overall Miami Dade Beach/CBD transportation planning area, which also includes the barriers islands and the City of Miami.

The Operational Analysis conducted in 2010 concluded that existing condition LOS failure or approaching failure (E and F) were primarily located south of the Snake Creek Canal and along NE 172nd Street between US 1 and West Dixie Highway. The study indicated 2010 LOS between NE 164th Street and NE 172nd Street to be stable or free flowing (B and C). The posted speed limit for West Dixie Highway is 30 mph, which is fairly maintained in this area. The chart below summarizes the 2010 operational analysis:

2010 ARTERIAL ANALYSIS RESULTS FOR WEST DIXIE HIGHWAY ⁱ									
Arterial Segment	Result Type	AM Peak				PM Peak			
		SB		NB		SB		NB	
		Speed (MPH)	LOS						
West Dixie Highway	Total	13.7	E	15.4	D	14.4	D	15.3	D
US 1/West Dixie (172)	Segment	6.1	F	2.7	F	7.2	F	2.7	F
NE 172/NE 167 Street	Segment	24.1	B	28.4	B	23.5	C	28.4	B
NE 167/NE 164 Street	Segment	24.3	B	27.7	B	23.0	C	27.4	B
NE 164/NE 163 Street	Segment	4.0	F	21.5	C	4.4	F	19.4	C

The findings projected an increase of population and employment of 32 to 36% within the entire Beach/CBD transportation planning area by planning year 2035 and estimated roadway LOS increasing in some cases to failing as indicated in the table below. Within the segment

FUTURE YEAR 2035 ARTERIAL ANALYSIS RESULTS FOR WEST DIXIE HIGHWAY ⁱⁱ					
Arterial/Segment	Result Type	SB		NB	
		Speed (MPH)	LOS	Speed (MPH)	LOS
West Dixie Highway	Total	7.9	F	11.9	E
US 1/West Dixie (172)	Segment	1.9	F	1.8	F
NE 172/NE 167 Street	Segment	11.6	E	28.4	B
NE 167/NE 164 Street	Segment	20.5	C	22.2	C
NE 164/NE 163 Street	Segment	4.5	F	17.1	D

between NE 164th Street and NE 172nd Street the major impacts to roadway capacity were projected to be southbound. However, it should be noted that the analysis conducted by URS was purely based on vehicular traffic and did not take into account mass transit or transportation alternatives in its modeling, including the future Tri Rail Coastal Link Station proposed at NE 164th Street. Furthermore due to the large planning area and the proposed changes to the land use and zoning, the 2010 models and projection may not be indicative of conditions if the analysis were conducted today. As part of the master planning process being conducted by Miami Dade County, the City or CRA may want to consider updating and/or conducting a more localized traffic impact analysis.

Intersections and Access Management

According to the URS Traffic Impact Analysis current levels of service at all signalized intersections within the study area, with the exception of NE 163rd Street and West Dixie Highway were above capacity with a LOS of A or B. However future modeling conducted for the study concluded that these LOS would deteriorate or in some cases fail based on projected 2035 traffic analysis.

In terms of pedestrian traffic at intersections, there were two intersections that were observed to be particularly dangerous for pedestrians. At the intersection of NE 164th Street and West Dixie Highway there is a lack of separation between the pedestrian areas and vehicles, particularly crossing West Dixie Highway. On the east side of Dixie Highway there is no protected landing area for a pedestrian crossing the street and the parking configuration backs out into the road. Due to this condition, there was also a lack of organization for vehicles observed either turning at the intersection or leaving adjacent parking areas. The intersection at NE 167th Street and West Dixie Highway was also observed to be highly dangerous, due to its configuration and lack of visibility at NE 22nd Avenue. The pedestrian crossings were not clearly marked and at NE 167th Street there was no pedestrian crossing signal.

Another issue analyzed by URS was access management utilizing restrictive medians in some areas. The study concluded that due to the already restricted right-of-way a median would be unlikely between NE 164th and 167th Streets. However there is an opportunity for a median from approximately NE 167th to 170th Street incorporating left turn lanes at the City Tennis Center. The area between NE 170th and 171st Street could present more challenges due to the number of curb cuts and already limited access to parking on the west side of West Dixie Highway. Specifically there are 7 curb cuts that lead to private parking for the businesses on the west side Dixie Highway and there is no cross access and limited internal circulation in these parking areas. Parking issues will be discussed further in this report, however, if there is not a concerted joint effort between these businesses, Miami Dade County and the City, there may be opposition to any kind of restrictive median in this area.

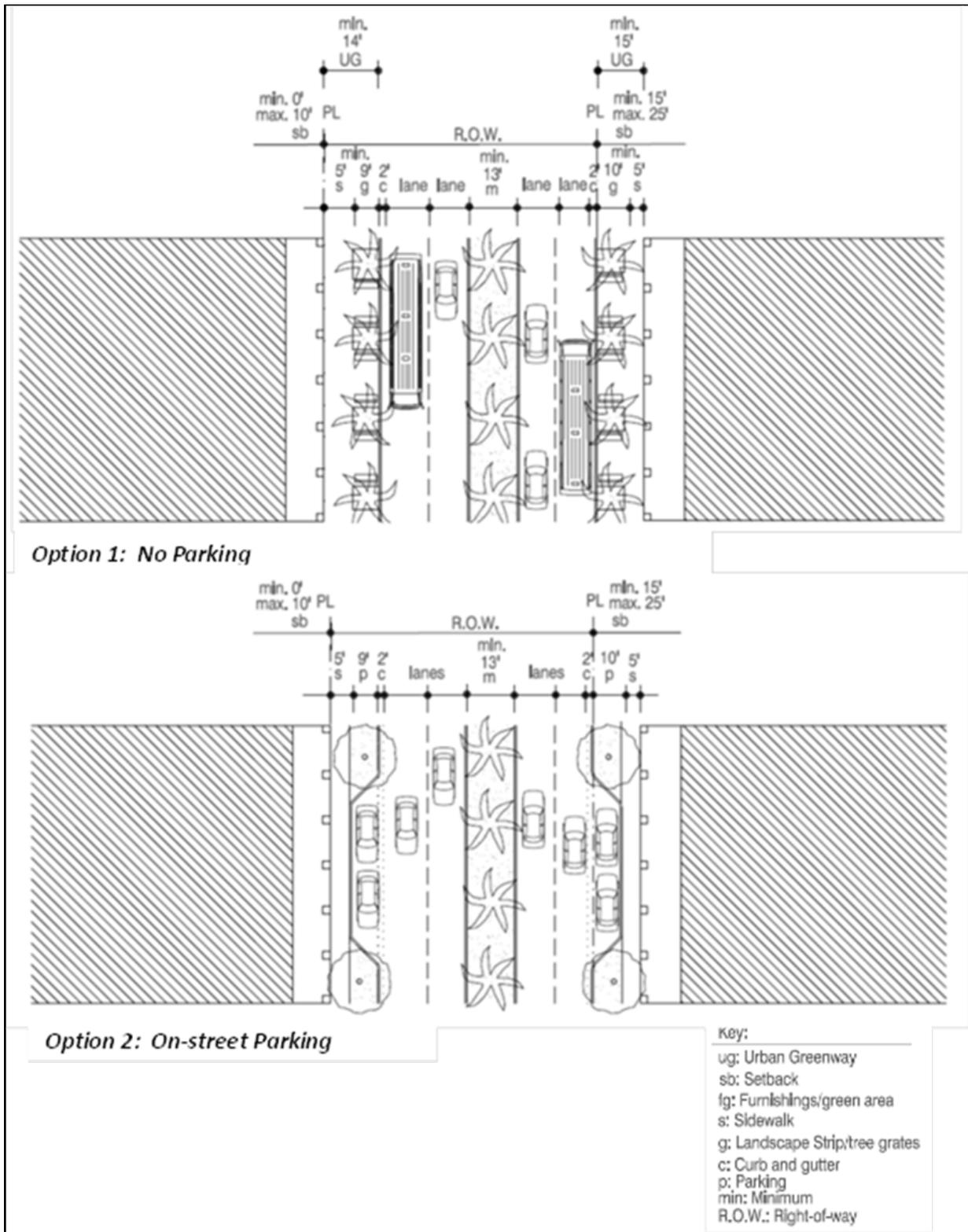
Recommended West Dixie Highway Cross Sections (per MU/NC and MU/TC Zoning Districts)

The proposed mixed use zoning for West Dixie Highway includes regulating plans for street networks, pedestrian areas and urban green but also recommends future roadway cross sections for West Dixie Highway which would be compatible with the future development regulations and create more pedestrian connectivity between districts.

Area 1: NE 163rd Street to the Snake Creek Canal

This area is proposed as a mixed use town center (MU/TC) area. The URS Traffic Analysis recommends a four lane cross section with dedicated turn lane; however the MU/TC zoning recommends a four lane median divided roadway to the north of NE 164th Street based on future redevelopment. Furthermore, the proposed cross section provides two options, one with on street parking and one without. These options should be further evaluated from a traffic perspective in terms West Dixie Highway master planning process. Figure 2 on the following page illustrates the two proposed options for consideration north of NE 164th Street to 167th Street.

Figure 2: West Dixie Highway Recommended Cross Section Options, south of Snake Creek Canal



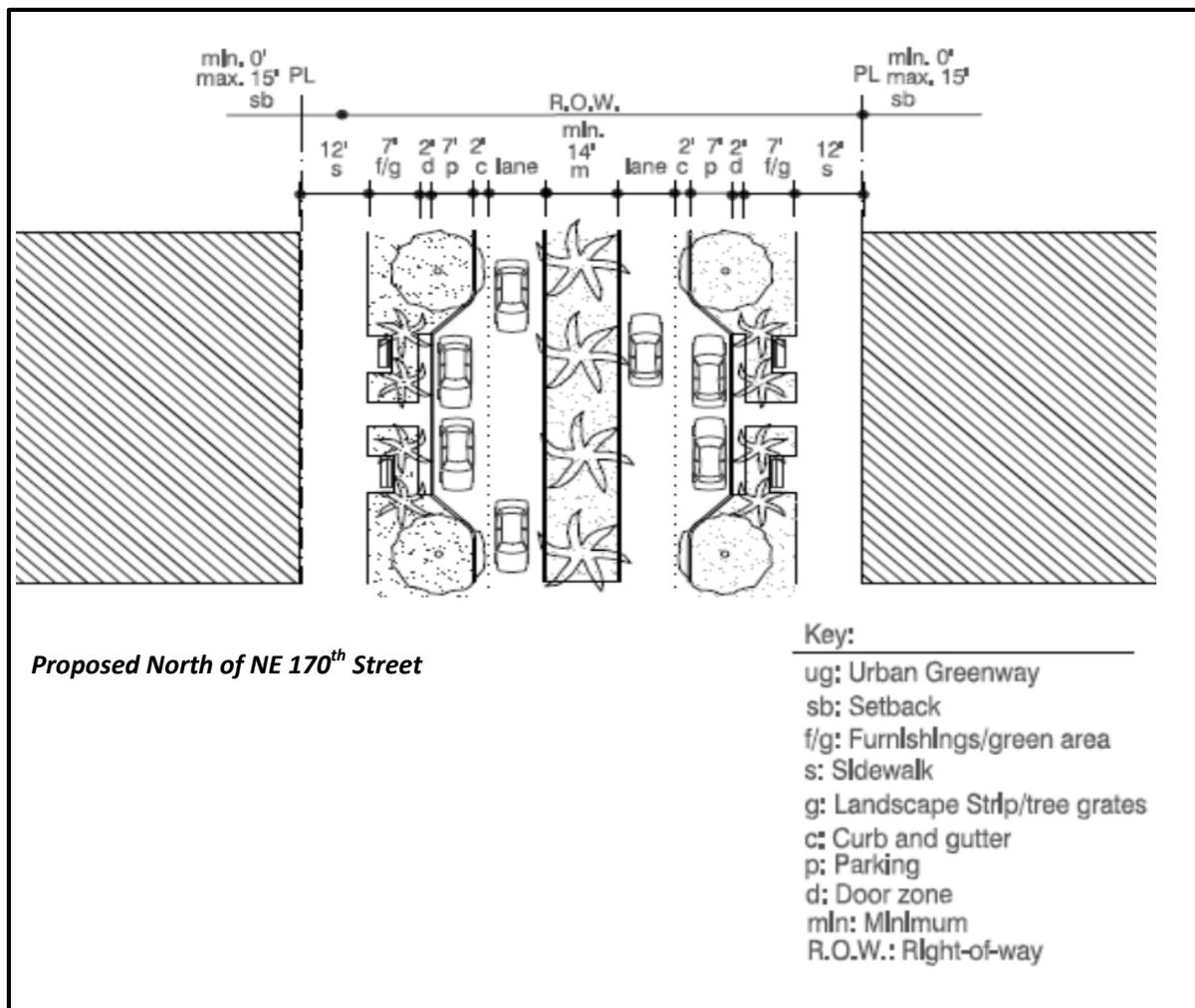
Area 2: North of the Snake Creek Canal to NE 170th Street

This area is not within the proposed mixed use rezoning and primarily consists of community facilities and a condominium which is outside of the CRA boundaries. As noted above the primary issues for this area are safety for both vehicles and pedestrians and the general operation of the intersection of NE 167th Street/22nd Avenue/West Dixie in order to improve safety. The URS Traffic Analysis recommended a four lane median divided cross section which extends north on West Dixie Highway, however the proposed zoning did not address a cross section for this area particular area, but does make recommendations just north of NE 170th which will be further discussed below.

Area 3: NE 170th Street to 172nd Street

This area is proposed to become a mixed use/neighborhood center. Due to much of the disorganization of the existing parking on the west side of the road and recommendations that this area become a neighborhood serving commercial/mixed use district, the proposed cross section for Dixie Highway is recommended as a two-lane divided with wide urban greenways and on street parking to support the businesses.

Figure 3: Proposed West Dixie Highway Cross Section, north of NE 170th



Sanitary Sewer

The West Dixie Highway corridor north of NE 163rd Street has availability for sanitary sewer connections and is serviced by Miami Dade County. However, there area approximately four parcels that are not connected, primarily on the west side of West Dixie highway, but including the Tennis Center. The sewer main runs along West Dixie Highway and businesses will be required to connect as redevelopment occurs.

Parking

The City of North Miami Beach owns two parking lots along West Dixie Highway, one at the Tennis Center, the other on the east side of West Dixie Highway between NE 170th and 171st Street. The Tennis Center parking lot is shared by the Spanish Monastery. Currently the parking lot is in disrepair, primarily due to the large tree roots that have permeated some of the asphalt. This could pose a problem in terms of future renovations to the parking lot . During large scale events the parking overflows into neighboring areas.

The parking lot between NE 170th and 171st Street is approximately 1.39 acres and primarily serves the adjacent properties, with future redevelopment the City may consider leveraging the current parking lot as part of a public private partnership in exchange for providing additional parking to serve neighboring uses.

Assets

Parks, Open Space and Cultural Facilities

The Ancient Spanish Monastery, located north and adjacent to the Snake Creek Canal is a popular destination for tourists and venue for special events. It also is an operating church offering regular services on Sundays. The Spanish Monastery also sponsors a lecture series and outdoor concerts and offers an array of classes including yoga and chess.

Arthur I. Snyder Tennis Center located just north of the Snake Creek Canal provides tennis courts, paddleball courts and racquet ball courts in addition to passive green space. Offerings include tennis lessons, memberships and team play. The property actually runs to the south behind the Spanish Monastery terminating at the Snake Creek Canal. This portion of the property is currently underutilized and is hidden by the tennis courts, but could serve in the future as an extension to the Snake Creek trail or a waterfront park. Just to the north of the tennis center is a 25 foot wide linear parcel which is adjacent to the FEC right-of-way, and runs from NE 170th to 171st Street. It is currently used as an alleyway, but could potentially be incorporated into an urban greenway system. City owned parcels are depicted on the following map.

¹ Source: West Dixie Highway, Traffic Impact Analysis, December 2010, Prepared by URS (Table 5.1)

ⁱⁱ Source: West Dixie Highways, Traffic Impact Analysis, December 2010, Prepared by URS (Table 5.3)