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Institute of Government and Public Policy

at the H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship
Nova Southeastern University

The Promenade Project
Final Report

MIAMI AT MIDNIGHT

Prepared for
SEOPW CRA and OMNI CRA

December 30, 2004

MIAMI AT MIDNIGHT:

FINAL REPORT

The following recommendations should be read in context with the **MIAMI AT MIDNIGHT** Interim Report of September 30, 2004. This report and the attached materials propose community-based, pedestrian-oriented corridor, parking and community transit improvements to achieve substantially enhanced intermodal transfers between I-395/95, the Port of Miami, and other elements of Miami's multimodal transportation system.

The City of Miami wishes to build a streetcar to link the Midtown development efforts (*located at the Buena Vista Railroad Yards*) and the Miami Design District (*see* Biscayne Corridor Map) with Miami's Downtown. The improvements are proposed to pass through the Omni and Park West communities, but not Overtown.

Through city staff and consultants, the City of Miami has expressed concerns that the **MIAMI AT MIDNIGHT** recommendations may compete against the Miami Streetcar Initiative for similar funding sources. A close reading of the **MIAMI AT MIDNIGHT** Interim Report (*especially Section 3*) provides good argument to the contrary.

In fact, the best way to increase the likelihood of near term federal, state and local funding for Miami's Streetcar Initiative and to reduce construction time and business disruptions is to incorporate into the Miami Streetcar Initiative the funding and design strategies referenced in the **MIAMI AT MIDNIGHT** Interim Report by the following means:

- **Insist that the streetcar vehicle and track installation be downsized**.

  Instead of assuming a Portland-style, Czech manufactured, standard gauge traditional streetcar vehicle (e.g., *the space between rails measures at 4 feet, eight and one-half inches wide, the vehicle is eight feet wide and 11 feet tall and requires a 14 inch station platform, a twelve inch deep track slab and 90 pound rail or so track*), consider developing a meter gauge light rail as used in Switzerland or similar smaller equipment. Such narrow gauge rail equipment (*i.e., 30 inch to meter gauge, limit vehicle size to seven feet wide by nine feet tall with low floor heights in the five to ten inch range, etc.*) will be less expensive than the proposed system. It will run with the automotive traffic in the streets of Miami and Miami Beach and on the bridges over Biscayne Bay in less space, operate on smaller and easier to install rails (*65 pound or less*) and involve shorter and fewer business disruptions during the construction and operational phases of the project given reduced track foundation work and a tighter turning radius. It has been an article of faith that

Miami's Streetcar Initiative must use the same technology as Bay Link. That being the case, a review of the Bay Link presentation (*also see*: Miami-Dade MPO Bay Link *and project newsletter* "*Rolling Along: Bay Link Study Completes Phase II/ Fall 2004 Edition"*) would show that for the reasons stated, meter gauge or less light rail will outperform other light rail systems, will cost less to install and operate, will be more human scale and accessible from any sidewalk, and will provide a better fixed-guideway transit system given the Miami/Miami Beach built and natural environment.

❖ **Use savings to expand transit services to Miami's many communities.**

The costs saved by downsizing the vehicle, tracks and track foundation can be used to extend the route from the current N.E. 2nd Avenue alignment (*north of 14th Street*) to a northbound N.E. 2nd Avenue/southbound Miami Avenue alignment. Additionally, a reverse route should be planned along a northbound Miami Avenue/southbound N.W. 2nd/3rd Avenue alignment. Transit and economic development should be available to everyone. Overtown got more than its share of interstate disruption; it should at least be allowed to participate as an equal partner in the Streetcar Initiative economic and transportation benefits.

❖ **Develop community housing and businesses as intermodal strategies.**

Pedestrian-oriented parking structures and mixed-use liner buildings need to be located on both sides (north and south) of the I-395 corridor to provide parking for the entertainment districts, sporting events, and the Port of Miami. Properly designed, they will solve the parking and access problems for the Orange Bowl, the proposed Marlin's Ballpark, the Performing Arts Center and Miami's multimodal transportation system. Through the use of liner buildings, these community-based, pedestrian-oriented intermodal improvements will successfully respond to workforce housing and small business development challenges. While there is little likelihood that the Streetcar Initiative as planned will ever be able to use Federal Interstate Highway funds (*e.g., a streetcar transit system between the Miami Design District and the Downtown)*, when it is morphed into an intermodal project as described by the **MIAMI AT MIDNIGHT** reports, hundreds of millions of dollars will come into play for use in an intermodal project that responds to broader constituencies and more numerous and fundamental transportation policies. As explained in the **MIAMI AT MIDNIGHT** reports, millions of additional dollars will also be available through other state and federal agencies.

❖ **Finally, give all the communities of Miami something good to remember.**

Given the magnitude of locally available Federal Interstate funds, Miami-Dade County should help to expand the Miami Streetcar and community intermodal system improvements west to the Orange Bowl (and the proposed Orange Bowl East-West Corridor Transit Station) via the N.W. 12th Avenue Bridge and the N.W. 5th Street Bridge and develop a water taxi/water bus linkage to the Miami Intermodal Center. By this means, the communities related to the development of the Orange

Bowl site, the Miami Streetcar, and the related community-based, pedestrian-oriented intermodal (MSCPI) improvements, will be recognized as part of a single world-class city center. With such community and transportation related redevelopment efforts, Miami will become so enjoyable to visit and so internationally desired as a residential and business locale that equal attention will be given to local, regional and national sporting, cultural, or civic events, whether they occur in Miami during the day or in **MIAMI AT MIDNIGHT**.

MIAMI TODAY

Dover, Kohl & Partners

When the sun goes down and the moon rises over Miami, the residents, visitors, local business owners of the Overtown, Park West and Omni neighborhoods once again walk through their city streets, visiting with neighbors, friends and business associates, enjoying a quality of life that compares to any in the world.

MIAMI AT MIDNIGHT

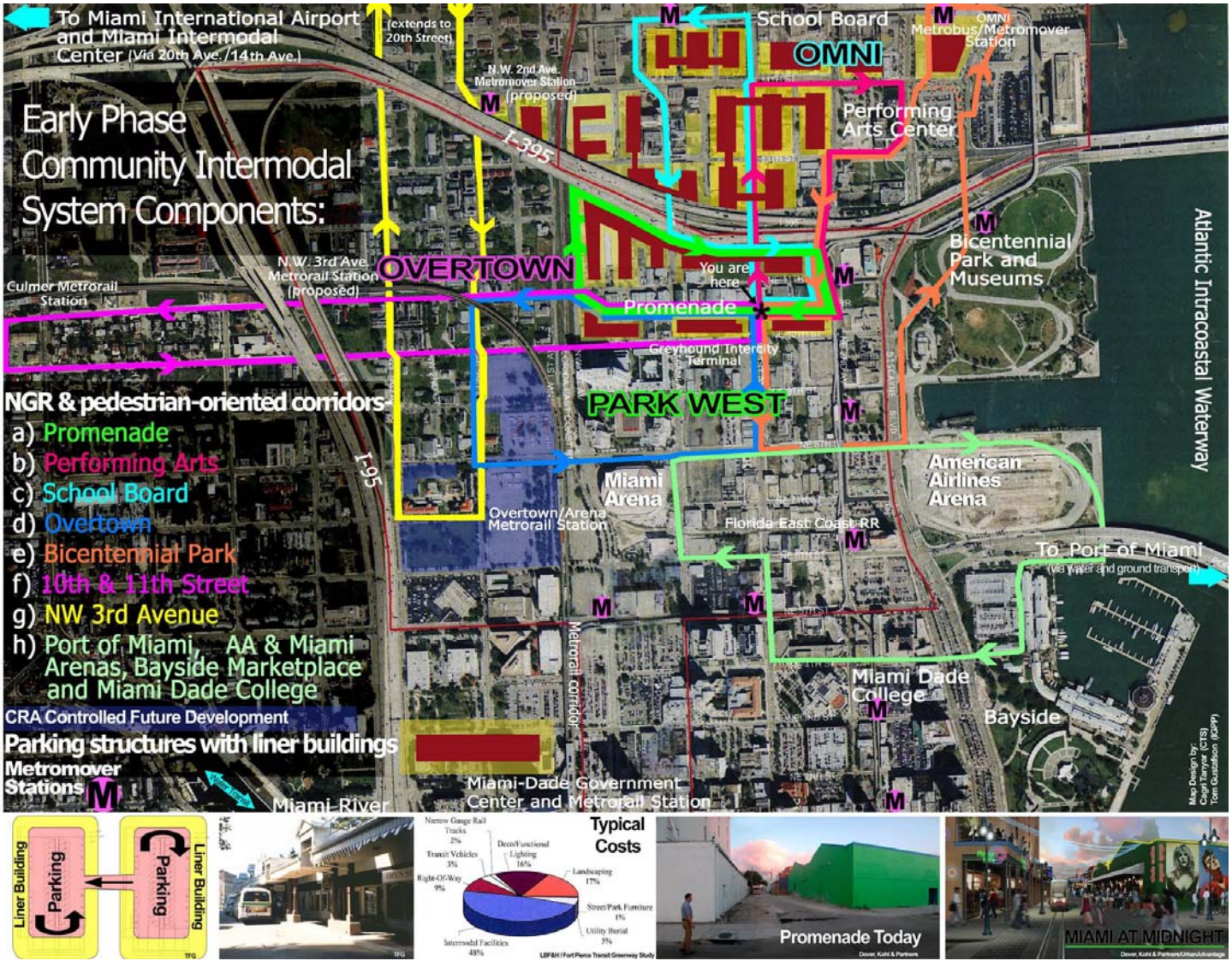
As a cool moist breeze rolls in from the waterfront, a cornucopia of familiar rhythmic music fills the street. We walk arm-in-arm from one late night establishment to the next. It's midnight in Miami and it feels really good to be alive.

Dover, Kohl & Partners/Urban Advantage

The **MIAMI AT MIDNIGHT** recommendations should be reviewed from the context of their innovative design and funding approaches that will support community redevelopment throughout the Overtown, Park West and Omni ("OPO") communities and their inherent ability to establish a new, economically driven, paradigm for transportation expenditures:

> *World-class mobility and exceptional economic growth can be more readily achieved through the development of seamless multimodal transportation systems, not more road building; therefore a prudent transportation policy would be to use these available road building funds to fully develop community-based, pedestrian-oriented intermodal facilities, and related community, transit and multimodal improvements.*

MIAMI AT MIDNIGHT



Please send your comments and questions regarding the above matters to Tom Gustafson, Director of Government Relations, Institute of Government and Public Policy, H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship, Nova Southeastern University. He can be reached by email at tgustafs@nsu.nova.edu, by telephone at (954) 262-5128, by facsimile at (954) 262-4241 or by cell phone at (954) 661-7848. The mailing address is: 3301 College Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33314.