

Invest:

Miami 2017

An in-depth review of the key issues facing Miami-Dade's economy
featuring the exclusive insights of prominent industry leaders



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Overtown:

One of the oldest neighborhoods in Miami, Overtown has seen its fortunes rise and fall over the years, going from a vibrant cultural center, to an area plagued by slum and blight. A new emphasis on constructive investment that both benefits the economy of the city while celebrating its rich cultural heritage will bring jobs, visitors and a new era of prosperity to the area.





Things are cooking in Overtown:

The tide is turning for one of the county's most culturally important neighborhoods

For years, Overtown has suffered from the lack of economic development, private investment and unemployment. However, in recent times, the area has experienced a renaissance, building on its rich heritage and enthusiastic arts community. The local government has catalyzed meaningful investment into the neighborhood, transforming Overtown into a hotbed of cultural and economic activity. Financing mechanisms from both the county and the city provide tax dollars that are being injected into infrastructure, while improving the local environment and creating much-needed jobs for residents.

Overtown is an area of the City of Miami that predates the city itself, and its potential is being rediscovered through a variety of redevelopment projects. Situated roughly south of NW 20th Street, north of Northwest 5th St., east of the Miami River and the Dolphin Expressway, and west of the Florida East Coast Railway and west of 1st Ave. The 1.32-square-mile neighbor-

hood is home to roughly 22,000 residents, a number which has grown by 4 percent since 2010.

The population is split 50-50 between men and women with the median age of 36. The median annual income of those in the age range of 25 to 44 is \$30,713 and those between 45 to 64 is approximately \$20,000. The neighborhood is also one of the most economically disadvantaged in Miami and Miami-Dade County. As such, numerous redevelopment initiatives have been initiated in an effort to reinvigorate this once-vibrant area in the heart of the city.

■ History

Overtown is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Miami and is extremely important in understanding the city's African-American history. Henry Flagler, a railroad magnate and oil tycoon, was one of the earliest developers of Miami. In the early 1900's, he built the first highways in the city along with luxury resorts and the

Overseas Railroad, which linked the Florida Keys to mainland Miami. Even before 1896, the year in which the City of Miami was incorporated, Overtown housed the black laborers whom Flagler employed on these projects.

From the 1930s through the 1950s, Overtown was known as “The Little Broadway of the South” due to the high-profile artists and musicians that often visited and performed in the community. However, during the 1960s, the neighborhood went into sharp decline following the construction of two large highways that ran through the neighborhood’s center. This construction resulted in the razing of more than 20,000 homes and a sharp reduction in population from 50,000 residents, before the highways were built, to fewer than 10,000 as businesses left the neighborhood and economic activity ground almost to a halt. Today, the neighborhood’s Black Archives History & Research Foundation of South Florida Inc. (Black Archives) is revisiting Overtown’s vibrant history as well as its role in the cultural development of the Miami area.

■ Community focus

The Southeast Overtown/Park West Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was established in 1982 in accordance with the State of Florida’s 1969 Community Redevelopment Act. Its goal is to spearhead new development and redevelopment efforts that provide affordable housing and business opportunities and to enhance the quality of life of those who reside in the redevelopment area (RA). Furthermore, it is also tasked with improving the public health, safety, morals and welfare of the stakeholders and residents in the RA.

The CRA is funded through a unique financing tool called Tax Increment Financing, which earmarks a specific portion of property tax dollars collected by the Miami and Miami-Dade. The CRA then reinvests these funds into projects such as infrastructure improvements, renovations of buildings, facade enhancements and the establishment of economic incentive programs within the RA. Finally, the CRA is able to purchase and develop property within the RA, and invest in public parks and spaces. The governance of the CRA is undertaken by the CRA Board, which is comprised of the City of Miami Commissioners, and the policies for redevelopment are enacted by the board’s executive director; a position that is currently filled by Clarence E. Woods.

The CRA offers four types of economic development incentives: a Direct Grant Program (DGP); a Tax Increment Rebate Program (TIRP); a Commercial Facade Improvement Program (CFIP); and technical assistance. The DGP provides direct funding to commercial properties and multifamily developments in the form of a grant. The TIRP is limited to large scale developments and provides a reimbursement to the developer for up to 50 percent of the capital costs of their project once completed. The CFIP provides funding to applicants that wish to undertake exterior improvements to their properties like new sign installation, awnings and painting. As far as technical assistance is concerned, the CRA helps facilitate, among other things, assistance with project permitting, reviews and waiver requests with the City of Miami Building Department. The CRA also assist with grant writing and provides access to small business loans that originate through strategic partnerships.

A number of grants have been issued by the CRA to organizations in Overtown to assist with job readiness and placement among other things. For example, in May 2016, \$165,000 was granted to Miami Dade College to operate and manage its Hospitality Institute Job Training and Job Placement Program. In March 2017, the CRA issued a grant to Suited for Success worth \$112,000 to help the non-profit to continue to operate

its employment skills training program that provides participants with free professional attire to utilize for interviews and the workplace. Another \$320,000 was awarded to Human Resources of Miami Inc., which operates the Overtown Beautification Team Program that beautifies the NW 3rd Avenue business corridor and also offers on-the-job training for landscape services and property maintenance. In March 2016, \$500,000 was granted to the Black Archives for its continued operation of The Black Archives Historic Lyric Theater Cultural Arts Complex.

Finally, in March 2017, a \$200,000 grant was approved by the CRA to Neighbors and Neighbors Association to manage the Business Incubator and Development Program at the Overtown’s Business Resource Center. The center provides technical assistance, workshops and training, office services, assistance with identifying capital funding sources and business mentoring partnerships for small businesses and residents within the CRA.

“ From the 1930s through the 1950s, Overtown was known as “The Little Broadway of the South.” ”

For the people

How the Southeast Overtown / Park West Community Redevelopment Agency (SEOPW CRA) is making the city a better place to live



Keon Hardemon

Chairman — Miami City Commission

Chairman — Southeast Overtown / Park West Community Redevelopment Agency Board

investments in improving businesses. The restoration of Overtown's historic Josephine and Dunn Hotel is an example of this effort. The formerly dilapidated structure will now operate as a bed and breakfast. We are taking community assets that were in disrepair, repairing them and providing destinations for visitors to come and experience Overtown.

The development of the Overtown community also encompasses the development of its people. Here in the CRA, we have made a substantial amount of investment into job training for our residents. Programs such as Hospitality Employees Advancement and Training Inc. provide a curriculum for Food and Beverage, Culinary and Hotel Operations. This initiative will help to enhance resident's ability to secure employment opportunities in South Florida's growing industries.

What are Overtown's plans for the workforce housing segment?

To me, workforce housing should be affordable housing because affordability is relative. Individuals such as our young attorneys, government employees, and educators struggle to pay market rate for housing. People who work, need an affordable place to live, that's safe and appears in the same light as market-rate units. The CRA has plans to develop these types of properties.

We have issued bonds that will generate funds to go towards developments. We also have financing that we are capturing money from through the development that's happening with Moisha Mana in Wynwood. That will result in contributions upwards of \$7 million. In the CRA, we are always looking at ways to involve new partners. Anytime we do a new development, we want to increase the number of housing units. The affordability part of the development, for the market and for the workforce is important to that mix. ■

What are Overtown's current major needs and how is the CRA and the board overall addressing them?

The needs of the Overtown community varies – affordable housing, infrastructure, and job training are the foundation. The CRA has invested millions into enhancing the quality-of-life. The agency is responsible for the creation of several new affordable housing developments, such as Island Living, Courtside Apartments and Plaza at the Lyric. In addition to creating new housing stock, the agency works to preserve existing structures.

Town Park North, South and Village are housing communities that are recipients of the CRA's rehabilitation grants that will restore and enhance the homes. This effort is intended to preserve homeownership within the community.

In addition to housing, the CRA has also made

■ Housing initiatives

There are three existing multi-family housing developments in Overtown that are currently being renovated by the CRA. They are: Town Park Plaza North, Town Park Plaza South and Town Park Village No. 1. The CRA has invested \$15 million in Town Park Plaza North, which was erected in the 1970s and has endured decades of deterioration. It consists of 20 buildings and 169 condominium units and, upon its completion, will feature new doors, windows, central air systems and appliances, renovated landscaping, and upgrades to the water and sewer lines. Town Park Plaza South has received a \$13.5 million grant from the CRA. Built in 1971, it is also in need of repair and will include external and internal renovations similar to the ones taking place at Town Park Plaza North for its 116 units. Finally, the CRA has granted \$1.5 million to Town Park Village No. 1 to cover partial renovations of the 147 Housing and Urban Development Cooperative Apartments.

In addition to Town Park, there are four new affordable housing developments that have been granted a total of \$43.5 million in funding by the CRA. The smallest grant of these four, totaling \$7.5 million, went to Courtyard Family Apartments, a midrise Affordable Housing Development which features 84 one, two and three bedroom units which are available to families earning no more than 60 percent of the area's median income. Island living at 1201 NW 3rd Avenue received \$9 million in funding from the CRA and features 70 units with 5,000 square feet of retail space on its ground floor. The CRA also provided \$10 million in funding for 90-units at St. John's Plaza, which will feature a day care center for residents in addition to its own retail space of 8,000 square feet once completed.

Finally, the CRA provided \$17 million in funding for the 158-unit Affordable Housing Development known as Plaza at the Lyric. In addition to the 11,000 square feet of commercial space on its ground floor, the Plaza at the Lyric features two separate standalone buildings, a parking garage lined by townhouses, a playground, community room, gym, computer room and library. Furthermore, the CRA mandated that during construction, the general contractor hold job fairs and provide training for individuals that included an internship program to officially certify them for the trades in which they are trained.

■ Large-scale developments

There are a number of high-profile developments currently being undertaken in Overtown, including Miami Worldcenter, and a station for All Aboard Florida's, commuter rail service Brightline.



Clarence E. Woods
Executive Director,
Southeast Overtown /
Park West Community
Redevelopment Agency

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was created by state statute and our governing bodies are Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami. As such, the mission of the CRA is to eliminate slum and blight. Behind that, the mere elimination doesn't paint the full picture. We are eliminating slum and blight in an effort to incentivize private investors to come and build projects that would increase the tax base. This would eventually provide more taxes so that we can continue to make investments that will improve the quality of life for the residents of the CRA.

The CRA receives funding from both the city and the county through ad-valorem taxes. The county's portion of those ad-valorem taxes is about 39 percent and the city's portion is 61 percent. Being within the city, we are a municipal CRA and our board members are the five commissioners of the City of Miami. Any redevelopment efforts that we undertake is approved by our board, from the City of Miami commission. They are more hands on and they help create the vision for where we're going with our redevelopment efforts. But because we also get funding from the county, the county approves our budget as well. We also have a working relationship with the county commissioner for this area.

With the strategic location of Overtown, the CRA has been able to successfully attract large scale projects such as Miami Worldcenter and All Aboard Florida's office headquarters. This is due to our proximity to Downtown Miami, the beaches and the airport that are also close to Overtown. Modality is a factor because Brickell, Miami Beach and the airport are all places within 30 minutes or less from Overtown. This attracts our partners.

The land right now is also the least expensive in the area. The CRA also has the ability to provide incentives for their projects. We have tools such as tax increment financing, bond issuance and assistance with permitting. Additional tools include infrastructure upgrades, as well as land assemblage for large scale projects. ■

■ **Miami Worldcenter**

The development of Miami Worldcenter is being conducted by Miami Worldcenter Associates, a joint venture between Falcone Group, CIM Group and Centurion Partners. Its goal is to transform the Park West area and to create a bridge between the Central Business District and the Arts and Entertainment District that will generate the demand pedestrian friendly activities. The development will sit on 27 acres near Downtown Miami and will feature 450,000 square feet of retail, 2,000 residential units, 1,700 hotel rooms, 600,000 square feet of exposition space, and 100,000 square feet of parks and public space.

The center's main point of interest will be its retail promenade, which will include high street shopping, dining and entertainment options and will be developed by the Forbes Company and Taubman. The residential component of the center will include a mix of luxury condominiums,

boutique hotels and market-rate apartments. It will have four towers: the 700-foot high PARAMOUNT Miami Worldcenter, which will house more than 500 residences; LUMA, the 429-unit luxury rental tower developed by Orlando's ZOM and two other towers lining northeast 7th Street offering 863 market-rate rental units. The completed project is predicted to be worth \$2 billion.

“ The Miami Worldcenter will transform the Park West area and connect the business and arts districts. ”

■ **Brightline**

Brightline is a South Florida rail service operated by All Aboard Florida, a subsidiary of investment company Florida East Coast Industries that connects Miami to Orlando. The Brightline station that will come to Overtown will be part of a complex known

as 3 MiamiCentral and will feature 20 restaurants and food stalls that showcase local companies in a marketplace known as Central Fare. Around and below this, 130,000 square feet of shops will occupy the property's street level while above the marketplace there will



ST. JOHN PLAZA APARTMENTS

Overtown Miami



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be two residential towers with 800 rental apartments as well as an office high-rise. A grocery store will also be situated beneath the garage, and above the garage, there will be more office buildings which will house, among other things, All Aboard Florida's new office headquarters. The construction of the station will impact the community's economic activity as more trains and businesses come into the neighborhood.

■ **MLS Stadium**

The proposed construction of David Beckham's MLS stadium will be a landmark for Overtown. After failing to secure a spot for the stadium near PortMiami, Beckham and his investors have purchased about 9 acres of land for \$18.95 million between NW 6th and 8th Streets and NW 6th and 7th Avenues just north of Overtown's stretch of the Miami River. The stadium will seat roughly 30,000 fans and cost an estimated \$200 million to construct. According to a November 2016 report, the plans to construct the stadium are already having a positive effect on real estate values in the neighborhood and are attracting high-profile residential and hospitality investors.

■ **Challenges**

Despite the redevelopment that is taking place in the neighborhood, the challenge of renovating dilapidated buildings and eliminating crime still exist. To tackle crime-related issues, the CRA has signed an agreement with the City of Miami Police to establish a six-member problem-solving team, known as the CRA police.

Because development increases property values, there is concern that residents will not be able to afford the properties they once lived in after the renovations are complete. To combat this, there are land-use restrictions on many of the new and existing developments that mandate that the properties remain affordable for 50 years after completion.

■ **Community boost**

Positive actions are being taken to create an atmosphere of positivity and tackle unemployment. Known as "the Blue Shirts" because of their distinctive bright blue t-shirts, the Overtown Beautification Team is part of a program to create employment opportunities and improve the environment of Overtown with regular maintenance and street cleaning. The program is sponsored by the CRA, which in March 2016 voted to increase the hourly wage of participants from \$11 to \$15 per hour. Started in 2011, participants of the Overtown Beautification Team also receive support in financial



Ola Aluko
CEO & President,
**St. John Community
Development
Corporation**

St. John Community Development Corporation (CDC) was founded by St. John Missionary Baptist Church in 1985. It was founded on the premise to help rid slum and blight in Overtown and to economically empower its residents through development. This long-awaited project will help fill the gap of the much needed "quality" affordable housing stock in Overtown. Much development is occurring around Overtown and projects such as this, within Overtown, will not only serve the residents, but also provide them with a sense of pride and empowerment knowing that they too can live in quality residences.

St. John Plaza Apartment has a mix of efficiencies - one-, two- and three-bed room apartments. We want to ensure that we cater to the vast array of families - such as the single mothers, single individuals and large families - all who need accommodation. A plus with St. John Plaza is that there is a child-learning center serving children from one to five years old which will be used as a feeder institution into the neighboring elementary schools.

We are promoting ourselves as a "true community builder" and will remain in Overtown after the project is finished. We have to ensure that we produce a product that the community can appreciate and enjoy for years to come.

Following our objective of empowerment, St. John Town Homes I was designed to enable the ownership of townhomes. It was a way to get those born in Overtown, or those with a close association, to move back and own in Overtown. With St. John Town Homes II we are mirroring that concept; however, as a workforce and affordable housing complex. As a community developer, we have heard the cry by many stating that they are over qualified for affordable housing, but cannot afford market rate housing as it's offered today.

There is a serious need for workforce housing in the Miami-Dade Downtown area. Those who work downtown want to live within minutes from work, but are unable to. Our response to the need is to develop a workforce and affordable housing mix. ■

management, soft skills training, counseling and assistance in transitioning into full-time employment.

The developers of Miami Worldcenter has also earmarked local employment opportunities as an essential part of a community benefits agreement. Local residents are encouraged to attend ongoing job fairs for possible employment. Applications are accepted from local skilled workers, such as plumbers, carpenters and painters as well as unskilled positions. Altogether, the project is expected to create 33,500 jobs.

The Overtown Business Resource Center is a shared office space designed to offer help, advice, technology and facilities to small businesses and individuals looking for employment opportunities. Supported by the CRA, its business incubator program, provides wifi, business-related workshops and technical assistance for startups. The center also offers a Community Workforce Training Program which consists of screening services, work placement and referrals for Overtown residences.

■ **Art and culture**

The CRA, along with other community organizations, have taken steps to preserve and showcase the colorful cultural and artistic heritage of Overtown.

The Black Archives is an organization within Overtown with the goal of preserving and documenting the photographic history of black culture in South Florida. Founded in 1977, by Dorothy Jenkins Fields, it houses manuscripts, typescripts, electronic media, photographs and its archives are open to professional and amateur historians.

The Black Archives research center is housed in another cultural landmark of Overtown: The Black Archives



Overtown’s historic Lyric Theater has been a prized centerpiece of the community for more than a century.

Historic Lyric Theater Cultural Arts Complex. Founded in 1913 by Geder Walker, a black community businessman, it featured gospel, jazz, vaudeville plays, stage/ film performances and the literature of the Harlem Renaissance. It was renovated in 1999, and in 2005, the theater was expanded to include a welcome center, concession stand and dressing rooms. A third expansion took place in 2012 under the Black Archives’ current Executive Director Timothy A. Barber, and included a research center, stage expansion to augment the stage capacity of the theater and a gift shop and exhibition hall.

In December 2016, the Black Archives Historic Lyric Theater Cultural Arts Complex partnered with the



Nitin Motwani

Principal Associate — Miami Worldcenter

“ I’ve been involved with the Miami Worldcenter project for almost 11 years, and the reality is that we could just sell the land to condo developers. If that was the plan, Overtown would look like many other parts of downtown. We feel that when you own 30 acres in the middle of a city, you have a responsibility to its residents. We’ve always envisioned wider, 18- to 35-foot sidewalks that allow people to run, walk, push strollers, ride bikes or sit outside and enjoy the weather. We’re planning for great public spaces in which people can get fresh air and we want to improve infrastructure that hasn’t been improved in decades. We need to continue to invest and not take the opportunities in Miami for granted. ”



Urban Collective to host an exhibition of contemporary art from the global African diaspora as part of the Soul Basel arts event. Soul Basel is a collaborative effort between the CRA, community organizations and the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau Art of Black Miami, to showcase black art exhibitions in Overtown during Miami's Art Basel Week. From November 2016 to February 2017, it hosted "Visions of our 44th President", a retrospective of pieces featuring and inspired by President Barack Obama.

Regular programming includes the "Lyric Live" Amateur Night Showcase, held on the first Friday of every month. During the event, contestants share their talents on stage and receive either boos or an applause from the audience. The monthly showcase includes live music and performances from an authentic Junkanoo Band and the annual "South Florida Marching Band Precision Camp," which is a chance for student musicians from 13 to 18 to receive music lessons and perform at the end of the one-week course.

Overtown's Folklife Village will be a four- to six-block cultural entertainment destination, inspired by the history of Overtown. The area will feature a mixed-use marketplace with art, retail, restaurants and live entertainment. Overtown is also hosting a series of installations from the Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) from April to May 2017.

The installations come to Overtown as part of a grant that a local community group, the Urban Collective received as part of the Inside|Out program, which is funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Works by artists such as Colombian Fernando Botero and Haitian-born American Edouard

Duval Carrie are featured in the exhibition.

The CRA also funds the annual Overtown Music and Arts Festival in partnership with Headliner Market Group. Free to the public, the festival was started to highlight the history, culture, music and arts of the community, as well as create vending opportunities and attract investment to the area. The festival has been running for seven years and includes live performances by nationally-known recording artists and local musicians and a vast array of vendors showcasing artwork, ethnic cuisine, unique crafts and jewelry, and an expanded youth zone with interactive arts activities for children. The 2017 event will be held in July in the Overtown Business District. The previous years' attendances have reached more than 10,000 people and featured performances from Grammy-nominated vocalist Ameriie, and Grammy-winning UK musician Estelle.

The Sweet Butter Miami Pop-up and Dinner show is one of the unique events held at newly renovated Overtown Performing Arts Center. The event combines a four-course meal of southern and New-Orleans style cuisine with a show featuring dancing and live music.

■ Looking ahead

With both housing and business development initiatives in place, the goal of the Overtown CRA is to continue to improve the lives of residents in the redevelopment area. As housing becomes more available in Overtown, the CRA will look to bring in residents that have more disposable income that can drive the need for goods and services and create a nightlife for Overtown, which has been absent from the community for more than half a century.

With the boom of crowd-drawing events, along with the recognition of historic landmarks such as the Black Archives Historic Lyric Theater Cultural Arts Complex, Overtown is rediscovering its soul. Strategic investments in transportation, infrastructure and essential housing; bolstered by the renewed economic interest in the city with large projects popping up should mean that the current growth of the area will not lose momentum. As anyone at the Sweet Butter Pop-up Dinner Show will tell you, Overtown really is cooking. ■

Capital Analytics would like to thank the Southeast Overtown/ Park West CRA for its contribution in compiling this chapter. To learn more, visit their website www.miamicra.com/seopwcra

