

Introduction

The South Andrews Study Area includes properties on either side of an approximately mile-long stretch of South Andrews Avenue, extending from the Tarpon River on the north to State Road 84 (South 24th Street) on the south. It is bounded on the west by the Florida East Coast Railway corridor, which runs parallel to S. Andrews Avenue about one block to the west.

The area is anchored by Broward General Hospital, a large multi-block complex near the center of the area. Other than the hospital, which generates significant employment and visitor traffic, the area is an older, underdeveloped part of the city characteristic of many close-in, first-ring suburban districts. In view of the significant growth in Broward County and the more recent resurgence of interest in development in downtown Fort Lauderdale, the area seems a logical candidate for significant infill redevelopment.

This study was commissioned by the City of Fort Lauderdale to explore the potential for the area, and identify opportunities and strategies to promote healthy and orderly redevelopment.

Key Elements of the Plan

The South Andrews study area is thought to represent a major redevelopment opportunity that could transform it from a relatively underused resource to a dense and vital urban corridor offering a diverse mix of uses serving both the nearby neighborhoods as well as the broader region beyond. Its strategic location between the downtown and the airport places it squarely in a key position in any regional transportation framework. A growing disenchantment with long commutes into the inner city is sparking renewed interest in residential development in close-in neighborhoods. The hospital will continue to grow and serve as an engine for development in the area.

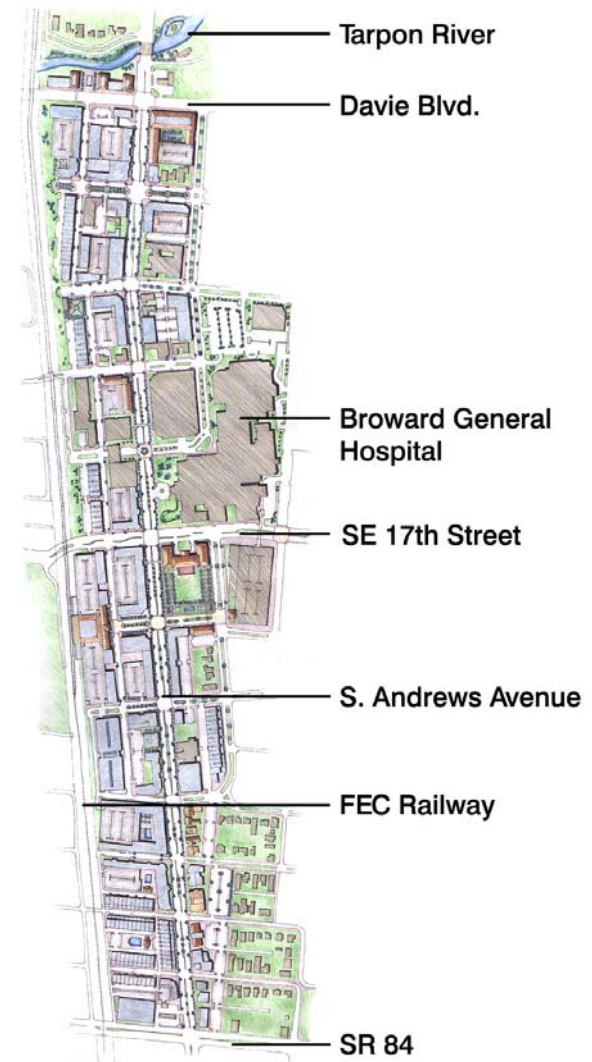


Figure 1.1 The Charrette Plan

While positive factors can be cited, several constraints must be addressed in order to foster successful redevelopment. The existing land subdivision and ownership pattern is quite fragmented in places, resulting in a number of small parcels. Parking, while not a problem today, will be difficult to accommodate in the quantities needed for the intensity of development anticipated. Land values have already escalated to the point that only fairly dense, mid-rise development is economically feasible.

The proposed redevelopment plan for South Andrews envisions a lively, mixed-use urban neighborhood characterized by low to mid-rise buildings of a variety of commercial and residential uses, constructed close to the right-of-way lines and defining a pedestrian-friendly environment at the street level. The buildings have active street frontages with parking located behind them or at the interior of the blocks, frequently in parking garages.

The key elements of the redevelopment plan include:

- Using the existing, well-defined street grid as the basic template for the urban development pattern. This offers a strong orienting device as well as being easy to subdivide into areas of differing characteristics.
- The subdivision of the study area into four smaller areas to create areas of differing character and use. The areas range from the North End, with an eclectic mix of uses, to the South End, which is quieter and more residential in nature. In between lies the Hospital District; this will be dominated by the hospital and several complementary uses such as professional office and elderly housing. Just south of the Hospital District lies the proposed Town Center for the South Andrews area. This mixed-use area could potentially capitalize on a number of factors, such as a multi-modal transit facility and a full-service hotel to both complement the hospital and



Figure 1.2 S. Andrews at proposed hotel



Figure 1.3 The Tarpon River Crossing

provide a critical mass of activity for an active, urban environment.

- A variety of roadway improvements intended to add curbside parking at all possible locations, improve the landscape and pedestrian amenities, and generally make the street environment more inviting to pedestrians.
- Several important community amenities, including a Central Plaza as a focal point for the Town Center. Greenways and pocket parks would also add public open space to the area, which will be of increasing importance as the intensity of development increases.
- The potential for a multi-modal transit station located along the FEC corridor near the hospital. Such a facility could serve as a park-and-ride station into the downtown as well as a generator of pedestrian traffic for the Town Center.
- A full-service hotel designed to serve the needs of hospital visitors as well as the growing business community in the area. The hotel is proposed to share a block with the Central Plaza, so that it could also capitalize on the increased pedestrian traffic.
- A variety of different medium density housing types, ranging from luxurious townhomes to loft style apartments to live/work studios.
- Opportunities for an upgraded type of warehouse/storage facility that, when built in conjunction with structured parking, would provide secure, stacked storage space for such specialty items as exotic cars and trailerable watercraft, as well as more conventional storage needs.



Figure 1.4 The Rail Station on SW 18th Street



Figure 1.5 South Andrews street scene

Development Program

It is anticipated that a great majority of the existing property in the study area will redevelop over the next 20 years. With easy access to downtown, the airport, and the beaches, the South Andrews area could well become the next “hot” area of Fort Lauderdale. Property values are already anticipating substantial redevelopment and indicate that any future development will have to be fairly intensive in order to be economically feasible.

A conjectural development program was produced as part of this study in order to evaluate the implications for the area in terms of infrastructure needs, potential value added, etc. The cumulative effects of redevelopment over the next 20 years would include the following components:

- 1.65 million square feet of residential construction, representing approximately 1500 dwelling units
- 1.45 million square feet of commercial construction, principally office uses, but including 250,000 square feet of retail space and 200,000 square feet of civic/institutional uses.
- 350,000 square feet of flex/warehouse space.

The eventual projected total for development in the study area is approximately 5.1 million square feet. This includes the Broward General Hospital complex, which is projected to account for approximately one third of the total. The average floor-area ratio for development calculates to about 1.2, which indicates development averaging four to five stories in height over much of the study area, requiring a high percentage of structured parking.



Figure 1.6 SW 1st Avenue street scene



Figure 1.7 The hotel at Town Center

Aside from the hospital, this new development will require approximately 7000 additional parking spaces. About 1000 of these will be provided as on-street curbside parking, while the remaining 6000 will have to be provided on site. As discussed elsewhere in this report, a key element of this redevelopment plan involves various strategies for consolidating and re-assigning parking so that it does not have to be provided on the same site as the proposed development. Traditional code requirements for each parcel to provide its own parking would greatly hamper the redevelopment potential of many of the smaller parcels.

Implementation

The implementation of the South Andrews Master Plan will require a series of actions to create an effective and positive change in the character and dynamics of the area. These actions will include:

- Modifying the land development regulations to allow mixed-use, higher density buildings;
- Amending the existing Regional Activity Center that controls the amount of residential development in the area;
- Making improvements to the streets, particularly South Andrews Avenue;
- Increasing the public parking reservoir to meet future demand;
- Providing mechanisms to consolidate parking in several locations rather than requiring each property to include the appropriate amount of parking on-site;

- Creating a management structure that will shepherd the redevelopment program in the future;
- Creating an effective marketing plan to raise the visibility of the South Andrews area and to attract new businesses and pedestrian activity;
- Finally and most importantly, there must be mechanisms and sources to fund the improvements suggested in the Master Plan.

All of these points are discussed in greater detail in the body of the report, along with an analysis of costs and funding sources. While the numbers may seem daunting, it must be remembered that this represents the cumulative effect of twenty years of development activity. The South Andrews area appears to be poised for dramatic improvement in the future, so it is all the more important to adopt a compelling vision in order to guide future growth.