

An Existential Question, but No Master Plan

Written by Erik Bojnansky, BT Senior Writer
November 2018

Promises, mega-projects, and the future of Little Haiti



Miami city officials may soon hear two separate proposed projects, each with a massive number of new apartments, retail, office, hotel rooms, and other uses in Little Haiti, a working-class neighborhood that is already experiencing major changes.

On November 13, a partnership of four real estate and investment companies is scheduled to ask the Miami City Commission for its blessing to build a 7.8-million-square-foot “mixed-use urban campus environment,” called the Magic City Innovation District, near 60th Street and NE 2nd Avenue, just a couple of blocks from the landmark Caribbean Marketplace and the Little Haiti Cultural Center.

And on December 5, representatives of the Podolsky family are expected to make their own pitch to replace Design Place, a low-rise apartment complex at 51st Street and NE 2nd Avenue with a 5.4-million-square-foot community, Eastside Ridge.

Both applications are known as special area plans, or SAPs, under an application process that allows property owners with more than nine acres of land to seek massive development rights in exchange for public benefits.

If approved, these projects would add another 13 million-plus square feet of residential and

An Existential Question, but No Master Plan

Written by Erik Bojnansky, BT Senior Writer
November 2018

commercial development to northeast Miami, and that makes residents and activists in Little Haiti, Buena Vista, and the Upper Eastside nervous.

“There is much opposition to both projects,” states Morningside activist Elvis Cruz in an e-mail to the *BT*. “They are enormous projects that will forever change the character of the area.”

But the developers of these two projects aim to change that perception by negotiating directly with local organizations, mainly within Little Haiti. They’re also doling out money to groups in the Little Haiti area.

“We are committed to the economic, social, and cultural prosperity of Little Haiti, and the diverse population of people who live and work there,” declares Neil Fairman, one of the developers of the proposed Magic City Innovation District.

Eastside Ridge and Magic City aren’t the only mega-projects planned in northeast Miami.

Last year, the operators of Miami Jewish Health Systems, a 20-acre healthcare facility for the elderly just west of Design Place, won city approval for its “Empathic Village” redevelopment plan that includes a new three-story complex for dementia patients, a 140-room hotel, and a conference center.

An Existential Question, but No Master Plan

Written by Erik Bojnansky, BT Senior Writer
November 2018



An Existential Question, but No Master Plan

Written by Erik Bojnansky, BT Senior Writer
November 2018



letters@biscaynetimes.com