



COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Land Use and Development Committee

FROM: Kathie G. Brooks, Interim City Manager *KGB for KGB*

DATE: March 20, 2013

SUBJECT: **DISCUSSION REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARKING LOT BETWEEN 72ND AND 73RD STREET AND COLLINS AVENUE**

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS

A discussion regarding the possible development of the parking lot between 72 Street and 73 Street and Collins Avenue was referred to the Land Use and Development Committee by the City Commission on December 12, 2012.

The City-owned property commonly known as the "72 Street Parking Lot" in North Beach is a 3.87 acre city block situated in the center of North Shore Park, which extends from the Atlantic Ocean on the East to a canal bordering Park View Island on the west. The lot contains 320 parking spaces, and a sewer pump station in the center of the site with underground force mains connecting to the north and south.

Ownership History: The land that became North Shore Park was acquired by the City of Miami Beach in 1941 after a 14-year-long effort to convince the U.S Coast Guard to release it. Originally the land was part of a larger tract owned by the federal government for the Biscayne House of Refuge, one of a series of U.S. Federal Life Saving Service Stations located along the southeastern coastline beginning in 1875. By 1921, the need for life saving stations lessened by the advent of modern navigational aids and a quickly developing inhabited Florida coastline. Following the hurricane of 1926, the site became an overgrown wasteland and an obstacle to development in North Beach. Finally, in 1941, by authority of Congress, the land was exchanged for a site on Causeway Island in Biscayne Bay for the use of the Coast Guard. Ironically, because the original Life Saving Station Reservation charter of 1875 prohibited the sale of any portion of the Reserve, Congress, in 1941, had to grant the land to a local land reclamation contractor, the Paul Smith Construction Company, in exchange for creating the site for a new Coast Guard station on Causeway Island. The contractor was then able to sell the exchanged land to the City of Miami Beach for a public park. However, the park license was granted to the City of Miami and subsequently had to be sold to the City of Miami Beach.

Referendum: Sec. 103.2(b)2. Of the City Charter states: "The sale, exchange, conveyance or lease of ten years or longer of the following properties shall also require approval by a majority vote of the voters in a City-wide referendum: . . . (3) 72nd Street Parking Lot: The City-owned surface parking lot bounded by 73rd Street on the North, Collins Avenue on the East, 72nd Street on the South, and Harding Avenue on the West; . . ."

Land Use and Zoning: The Site is currently zoned GU Government Use District; the underlying Future Land Use Map designation is CD-3 Commercial High-Intensity. Main permitted uses for the GU District are government buildings and uses, including but not limited to, parking lots and garages; parks and associated parking; schools; performing arts and cultural facilities; and monuments and memorials. Uses not listed above may be approved by the City Commission through a public hearing. The maximum allowable building height is seventy-five (75) feet or seven (7) stories, and the maximum allowable floor area ratio is 2.75.

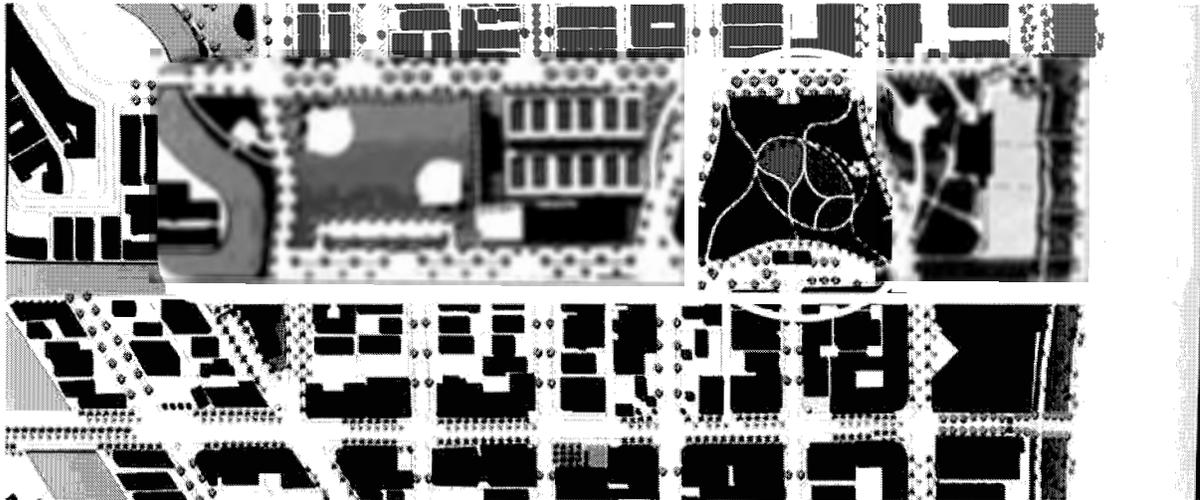
Previous Development Proposals: In 1999, the City issued an RFP for development of the 72 Street parking lot. In February 2000, the Commission authorized the Administration to enter into negotiations with the winning proposal, the Pointe at North Beach by the Equity One development team. The proposed project consisted of a 51,500 sf. Publix, 81,465 sf. movie theater, 36,500 sf. retail/restaurant area, 906 parking spaces and an optional community theater. By November 2000, the City terminated negotiations with the Pointe at North Beach as a result of the proposer's failure to secure commitments from anchor tenants.

In November 2000, the City issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for development of the parking lot. In April 2001, the Commission accepted the Related Group of Florida as the number one ranked development team and authorized the Administration to negotiate and contract and a development plan for the site. A series of community workshops and public hearings took place over the following year wherein there was a lack of consensus on the developer's proposal to build a residential tower with ground floor retail and public plaza space. In April 2002, the Commission voted unanimously to terminate negotiations with the Related Group. The sentiment of the Commission was to keep the property for public use. They directed the Administration to determine what should be done with the land along with the process of finalizing the North Beach Master Plan.

North Beach Town Center Plan: In July 2007, the Mayor and City Commission adopted the North Beach Town Center Plan. This plan culminated several years of work with the community wherein consensus was reached over redevelopment of the 71 Street commercial corridor and a vision plan for a "Civic Square" in the parking lot in North Shore Park. Following is the relevant text from the Town Center Plan:

The 72nd Street municipal parking lot is an integral part of the enormous tract of public open space stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the inland waterway. It is a legacy from the mid-19th Century, prior to settlement of the South Florida coastline, when the Federal government established the Biscayne House of Refuge on this tract of land. Because it is situated in the heart of North Beach, this land has the potential to function like grand linear parks in other cities, only on a much smaller scale (examples: The Mall in Washington DC and Central Park in NYC).

Bandshell Park on the east and North Shore Park on the west bookend the municipal parking lot. Public parking is a critical need in this location to serve the adjoining commercial districts and the park and beach activities. However, with improving technology it is increasingly feasible to depress the parking partially below grade and reclaim the surface area for green space. It should be designed as a lushly landscaped civic square and function as a community gathering space. Examples of civic squares are Bryant Park in NYC, Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia and Pioneer Square in Portland.



Intermodal Terminal: Over the years, the 72 Street parking lot has been considered as a potential site for an intermodal transfer station. The Coastal Communities Transit Study (CCTS) identified opportunities to improve bus transit service in the short term and lay the groundwork for a more advanced type of transit service in the future. The goal was to attract “choice” riders with service that is more attractive, accessible, reliable and frequent. Key components of the plan were to consolidate many of the 14 bus routes that currently serve Miami Beach into one local and one express bus route running north/south on A1A, and to connect the north/south route to the east/west bus service at strategically located transfer terminals. This would streamline the currently confusing and duplicative service and free up resources to provide a fleet of smaller buses to initiate local circulator routes similar to the South Beach Local.

In 2008, the City commissioned a Transit Center Feasibility Study for the 72 Street lot by HDR Engineering. The study found it to be a viable site for use as a transit transfer station; however, the alternative concept drawings for the site plan were later found to be flawed from an engineering standpoint. In 2010, the City Administration tried to resurrect the project in an effort to transfer a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant from a site in South Beach. Refined engineering drawings that were deemed acceptable by Miami Dade Transit (MDT) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) required the use of more than one-half of the entire site, leaving undesirable options for parking and other uses. Furthermore, MDT had failed to implement the most important recommendations of the CCTS concerning streamlining of the bus routes, therefore there was limited need for passenger transfers. Ultimately, the City determined that the benefits of a bus transfer station at this site did not outweigh the costs of giving up valuable public land and returned the FTA grant funds to the federal government.

It is worth noting that the idea of an Intermodal Terminal may become viable in the future if transit service is substantially improved and new technologies introduced.

Alternative land use and development scenarios:

Considerations for evaluating possible development scenarios for the 72 Street parking lot should include the following:

1. Consider preserving the lot for public park and governmental uses, as recommended in the North Beach Town Center Plan. Develop a dynamic public square that would

- be an attraction for residents and tourists and support local businesses. Encourage redevelopment of the private property along the edges of the park by virtue of having frontage on a first class public space and by preserving views to the ocean.
2. Ensure that there will be accessible, low-cost parking to serve users of North Shore Park and the business districts, either on-site or in nearby locations.
 3. Consider engaging a consultant to thoroughly explore opportunities and needs for this site with the community and develop consensus for a development program.

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends that the Land Use Committee provide staff with policy direction on this matter.

KGB/JGG/RGL

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72 Street Parking Lot Fact Sheet

Site Data

3.87 acres

320 parking spaces

Sewer pump station

Existing Zoning

GU - Governmental Use

Main permitted uses: government buildings and uses, including but not limited to parking lots and garages; parks and associated parking; schools; performing arts and cultural facilities; monuments and memorials. Any use not listed above shall only be approved after the city commission holds a public hearing.

Setbacks, floor area ratio, signs, parking, etc: the average of the requirements contained in the surrounding zoning districts: TC-1, CD-2, RM-2 and RM-1

Future Land Use Plan

CD-3 Commercial High Intensity

Floor Area Ratio:	2.75 maximum
Density:	150 dwelling units per acre
Building Height:	75 feet or 7 stories maximum