Creating a Comprehensive Community Revitalization Plan

1. Creation of a Community Decision Support Infrastructure

It is essential that there be a close partnership with a "learing/design" center. This would become a sort of "new town hall" -- a physical place that can demonstrate the principles of sustainable development, convene the process, and provide institutional memory. The centers would support the sustainable development process by providing a meeting place, a source for information and technical assistance and access to design and decision support tools like geographic information systems and planning simulation and indicators software. Creation of Community Design Center will be enhanced by forming partnership will seek local, regional, and national entities who share our vision and who are interested in collaborating with resources and expertise.

2. Identify Assets of the Community

Often local government led efforts often start with a "needs assessments". Funding priorities are then based on the identified "needs". A better way is to create coherent strategies around a communities assets. Needs based planning leads to increased dependency and not development.

So called "poor" communities often have significant assets. These include the skills of residents, public transportation, land available for assembly, undervalued market potential, home ownership, job access, rail freight, and rights-of-way, a sense of place, knowledge of the community, and location efficiency.

There must be an effort to pull together a comprehensive "inventory" of community assets. A good sustainable development planning effort requires an understanding about "what's here now and how does that work". The Collaborative program's first task is gathering information and data about the present state of a community in four system layers - natural, built, economic and social. Computer mapping tools (GIS) are used to help people better see and understand the data. Inventory efforts can be done, in part, through close partnerships with regional planning agencies and universities but the central data warehouse is always readily available to the Collaboration's management in an easily usable form. This database will have a Geographic Information System (GIS) interface showing the current and potential land uses. GIS mapping of the economic and business layout of the area. GIS permits the spatial mapping of a wide variety of data including Employment statistics, land use patterns, zoning, tax assessments, eligibility for Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Zone incentives, properties and space available for acquisition or rent. Land Use Database: The Collaboration will create a data base of key properties, with as much information about them as can be identified from the public record. The database will include information on:

- Ownership
- Tax Assessment
- Liens
- Zoning
  Water and sewer access
- Demographic information
- other information which would influence development decisions

3. Next, Vision the a Future

Successful collaborative planning efforts must start with a visioning process. Stakeholders must first envision the future that they want and then build that vision project by project.

First, identify the broad values to be achieved. Typically a community will be envisioned as economically and socially viable places to work and live where there is stable, affordable housing, a continuum of care of assistance to homeless families and individuals, safe streets and public spaces, access to intermodal transportation systems, provision of quality education, opportunities for people to find good jobs and employers to find good workers, and the renewal of "civic culture" and public responsibility. The goal is to transform the community from a fragmented set of residential, commercial, and industrial sites with a reputation as being dangerous and undesirable into a cohesive neighborhood conscious of its tangible and intangible assets and directing its future.

The visioning and planning process will determine what the community wants to achieve, supported by an information system that will identify measures of success and reports back to the community periodically on progress to date. Visioning and planning needs to engage large numbers of people in the community in a process that breaks out of "taken-for-granted" mind sets and defines a new and better future. This type of planning assumes that a comprehensive sustainable development strategy will identify efficiencies and synergies that will make large-scale development less expensive and more feasible than small scale, incremental improvements. Information is the feedback loop that tells the community whether it is achieving the goals outlined in the Plan. Feedback of this sort requires that the community first come to consensus on its goals and priorities; then those goals and priorities have to be translated into measurable objectives. Once this has been accomplished, it is then possible periodically to issue a scorecard on the redevelopment process. How are we doing? Are we on track? Do we need to adjust our plans to adapt to changing circumstances?

The goals identified in visioning process and incorporated into the Redevelopment Plan and turned into a scorecard or "instrument panel" that will permit every community resident to track the project's progress. Periodic reporting on these progress indicators will enhance the ability of community residents to participate in the development process.

4. Next, Create the Sustainable Development Plan:

Strategy to Achieve the Vision - Exploit Community Assets - Harness Market Forces. The visioning process will result in a Sustainable Development Plan that will integrate all of the elements - from land use to green infrastructure to jobs - into a coherent plan, with projections of capital and organizational requirements. Components include:

- **Infrastructure Upgrade Strategy**: An analysis needs to done of the current status of the Community's infrastructure. Many of Miami-Dade County's low income neighborhoods are serviced by septic systems, inadequate sanitary sewers, and inadequate stormwater drainage. Inadequate infrastructure is an major impediment to housing, commercial, and industrial development. This lack is an opportunity to create new lower cost, appropriately-scaled infrastructure which works with, rather than against the environment, and provides other benefits, such as open space and trees. Green infrastructure can also include: micro climate cooling to reduce energy costs and CO_2; add to the definition of the neighborhood edge; improve value of property; reduce

impacts of hurricanes and flooding; recharge potable water supply; and provide neighborhood centers etc

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- **Land Assembly Strategy**: A strategy will need to be devised to enable the Collaboration to proactively engage in a land assembly effort. Parcels will have to be acquired and combined in order to facilitate the construction of the new housing, retail, and industrial facilities

- **Commercial Development**: The Sustainable Development Plan will provide direction for the commercial revitalization of the community. It will identify business and job opportunities and will involve new construction, application of new technologies, expansion of retail opportunities, etc. This process itself will be carried out in a way that it optimizes the job and economic benefits for residents.

- **Jobs Strategy Development**: Urban decay has resulted in a lack of new investment and new jobs. There are not enough good jobs for residents. Welfare reform has compounded the problem by increasing the competition for the already inadequate number of jobs available. The vast majority of new jobs are being created far away in the distant suburban areas to the west. The development of the jobs strategy will be closely linked to the visioning process and the business development strategy. The Strategy will be based on information gather in the following studies

    - <u>Employment Analysis</u>: an analysis of current employment by category, unemployment, skills, potential to develop existing micro- businesses.

    - <u>Analysis of job creation potential:</u> Employment in construction, retail, new business development, and other additions to the neighborhood.

- **Housing Strategy Development**: Housing development should done in partnership between the private sector (both nonprofit and for profit) and the public sector. All development will be compatible with the broader overall "vision" of the Collaboration's Sustainable Development Strategy, To be successful the Collaboration's housing strategy must address specific barriers that inhibit market driven housing development activities. The goal is to give developers access to developable parcels with clear title and adequate infrastructure.

- **Business Strategy Development**: The goal of the any such strategy will be to work with the owners of existing commercial and industrial business to help them to work cooperatively to find new ways to become more profitable. A further goal is to institute a program to market available industrial and warehouse sites in the community to businesses interested in taking advantage of the community's unique opportunities. New businesses, of course, mean new jobs. The marketing effort will be aided by the creation of two critical information data bases. The Land Assembly Database can be used to help identify properties in the District suitable for sale or rent to businesses moving into the District or expanding existing operations.

- **Human Services:** A good smart growth comprehesive community planning effort will need strong schools, health centers and social service institutions. The community collaboration structure will encourage and support the development of a comprehensive strategic planning process around education and human services to complement the jobs and economic development focus of the core project. This effort will explore the current

and potential connections between human services delivery and economic development. Schools and health centers represent a significant component of the community economy; they hire staff and purchase goods and services. Leaders of this strategic planning process are proposed to come from the Community Advisory Committee. The accomplish these goals the following actions will be taken

- <u>Inventory the Organizations and Institutions in Target Area</u>: This inventory will present a comprehensive picture of the social networks that hold this community together and the many and varied routes by which residents can become engaged in neighborhood revitalization.

- <u>Assess the Availability and Quality of Schools</u>, Health, and Human Services: This assessment will determine where community residents receive their education, health services and other human services, what services are unavailable, and how community residents judge the quality of these services.

- <u>Develop a Schools, Health, and Human Services Strategy</u>: Based the information from Actions 29 and 30, a schools, health, and human services strategy will be developed which will be incorporated into the Sustainable Development Plan.

- **Transportation: Intra-community Mobility Strategy**. The challenge is intra-community mobility. Some residents, particularly seniors and youth, cannot drive, so such a community-centered transportation strategy is essential. For others, efficient intra-community mobility could make the difference in being able to live a full life without owning a car. The Collaborative project management will inventory existing intra-community transportation assets and identify barriers to mobility; then explore and evaluate a range of options to enhance intra-community mobility. There are at least three elements of a community mobility strategy:

    - <u>Sidewalks</u>: Good quality sidewalks throughout the community,

    - <u>Strong pedestrian linkages</u>: A community design which encourages and enhances pedestrian access to jobs and amenities, and

    - <u>Jitneys</u>: An intra-community transportation system that links with public transit, shopping, etc.

- **Culture and Tourism**: Culture is both a value in itself, as an expression of the identity and aspirations of community residents, and a "destination" for people outside the community, including potentially tourists. What are the existing cultural assets in the target area? How can the Sustainable Development Strategy enhance their stability and outreach? To answer these questions the project management team will develop a cultural and tourism strategy. As part of this task the project management team will inventory existing cultural institutions and resources in the community and surrounding area. They will explore a range of options for strengthening the cultural life of the community.

5. Finally, Implement the Plan