

NEIGHBORS

THE MIAMI HERALD

THURSDAY, MAY 17, 1979

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— ALAN FREUND / Miami Herald Staff

Shopping centers sprout in North Dade

Shopping center developers like Enrique Wolf, above, co-owner of Mazal Investments, are quickly turning available North Dade commercial land into large and small shop-

ping centers. Does North Dade need them? The developers think so, but some city officials say they would rather upgrade existing commercial areas.

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Local Methodists look to marketing

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Dixie Plaza at 145th Street and W. Dixie Highway is typical of newer, smaller neighborhood shopping centers being built in Northeast Dade.

Shopping centers take on new dimensions

By BOB KRANTZ
Herald Staff Writer

The expected population growth of northeast Dade is turning that area into a "hot spot" for development of shopping centers.

The growing Aventura and Turnberry Isle residential complexes, combined with possibly more high-density development on vacant land, already have attracted two major centers to the area.

Metro planners project that in 20 years, up to 90,000 people could be living in the area within a two-mile radius of Aventura. A 1975 study showed roughly 50,000 in the area.

At the same time, the gasoline crunch is also encouraging the developers to build small neighborhood shopping centers on several of North Dade's main roads.

Metro planner Bob Myers called the expected growth in the northeastern section a "double-edged sword," which could upgrade some areas and increase their property values, but also put small low-rent stores out of business.

Thus developers are grabbing up available commercial land in Northeast Dade, attempting to prepare for the future.

On Biscayne Boulevard, north of 163rd Street, one major complex is already under construction, with at least three other centers planned for the near future.

By far the most ambitious project under construction is the \$15-million Regina Square at Biscayne Boulevard and NE 185th Street.

When completed in March or April of 1980, the 233,000-square-foot complex will house about 100 stores and an eight-screen movie

theater, said Ted Deswart of Interterra Inc., developers of the center.

An Aventura spokesman also said that Don Soffer, developer of Aventura and Turnberry, is planning a regional shopping mall on a vacant lot southwest of the new county library. Construction of the mall, with at least five major department stores, should begin in April 1981, he said.

And still further growth in the area is anticipated once the 192nd Street Causeway is completed. The highway, which will link Biscayne Boulevard to Collins Avenue, is scheduled to be completed in December 1982.

While regional centers will continue to be built, developers increasingly are tapping available commercial land close to North Dade neighborhoods, anticipating that consumers will look for services close to home.

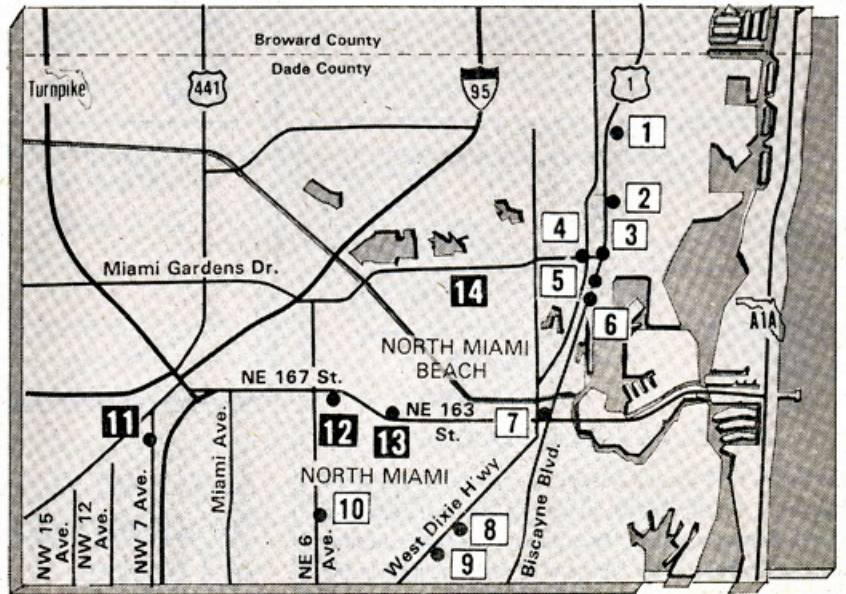
Ann Pinna, for example, lives in the California Club development off Ives Dairy Road in North Dade, but shops at the 163rd Street Shopping Center in North Miami Beach.

Although she said she likes shopping in the major department stores at the center, she said she would patronize a small neighborhood center with a drug store, dry cleaners and other services.

Developers apparently see such projects as good investments. But this involves more than just finding the vacant land and building on it.

In addition to projected growth figures, developers also look into property values, neighborhood income levels and potential competition.

Such ventures require a good
Continued on page 17



These North Dade shopping centers are now operating, under construction or in the planning stages: 1) minicenter, 203rd Street and Biscayne Boulevard, planned; 2) regional mall at Aventura, Biscayne and 192nd Street, planned; 3) Regina Square, 187th Street and Biscayne, under construction; 4) minicenter, W. Dixie Highway and Miami Gardens Drive, planned; 5) minicenter, 175th Street and Biscayne, planned; 6) minicenter, 170th Street and Biscayne, planned; 7) Railway Plaza, NE 163rd Street between Biscayne and W.

Dixie Highway, under construction; 8) Dixie Plaza, 145th Street and W. Dixie Highway, recently completed; 9) minicenter, 145th Street and W. Dixie Highway, under construction; 10) minicenter, NE Sixth Avenue and 147th Street, under construction; 11) Northway Shopping Center, NW Seventh Avenue and 151st Street, recently completed; 12) 770 Shops, 770 NE 167th St., recently completed; 13) 163rd Street Shopping Center, 1421 NE 163rd St., operating; 14) Sky Lake Mall, 1690 Miami Gardens Dr., operating.

Shopping centers getting smaller, growing faster

Continued from page 16

banker, lots of money and a little luck, according to Enrique Wolf, co-owner of Mazal Investments.

Mazal Investments, based at 1975 NE 135th St., North Miami, is one of the most active developers in North Dade.

It is currently building three small shopping centers in North Miami and North Miami Beach. And within three months, Wolf said his company hopes to break ground on two more.

Costs are steadily increasing, he said, but so is the demand for such mini-centers.

Wolf used the 8,000-square-foot center to be built at Biscayne Boulevard and 203rd Street as an example of the high costs he faces:

- \$175,000 for 25,000 square feet of land.
- \$25,000 for water service.
- \$200,000 for construction.
- \$50,000 for financing, legal costs and advertising.

That brings the total to about \$450,000 to build a small center that could house no more than eight stores, Wolf said.

But the high costs haven't seemed to deter other developers from turning prime commercial land into neighborhood shopping centers.

On W. Dixie Highway through North Miami and North Miami Beach, three small centers are under construction, with another one planned in Ojus.

Developers are also grabbing up available land on NE Sixth Avenue, NW Seventh Avenue and 163rd Street for new commercial operations.

Fred Davis, owner of Davis Construction, said his company will break ground in two months on a new shopping center in the 17500 block of Biscayne Boulevard.

Building a complex similar to his Davis Plaza at NE 25th Avenue and Miami Gardens Drive, Davis said he hopes to keep construction costs down so that the small stores will rent for \$300 or \$350 per month.

"They're small stores but they appeal to the little man, the man who wants to sell newspapers, for instance, can make a living," Davis said.

And Gene Snyder, a Sunny Isles real estate man, is seeking tenants for a proposed 19-store mini-center in the 17000 block of Biscayne Boulevard.

Abe Rothstein, a developer from North Miami Beach, has applied the same mini-center concept to his Dixie Plaza, a 28-store center on W. Dixie Highway between 145th and 146th streets.

In the land development business for 25 years, Rothstein said the widening and improving of W. Dixie Highway (now in progress) will help increase business at the center.

Elsewhere, construction is under way for the 19-store Railway Plaza on 163rd Street between W. Dixie and Biscayne. G & D Enterprises is converting a former Volkswagen dealership into landscaped, wood-decor shopping center.

But not everyone is happy to see unchecked commercial growth in the area. North Miami Beach, for example, would be better off improving existing centers, said Councilman John Kurzman.

"There's definitely enough centers to cater to the residents. There's no shortage by any stretch of the imagination," he said.

Kurzman, recently elected to city council, is vice president of the North Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce and former chairman of the city's planning and zoning board. He said he hopes to set up a citywide master plan to guide future growth and improve existing structures in the city.

North Miami officials, like their counterparts in North Miami Beach, are also looking to clean up existing commercial areas, rather than encouraging new ones.

Bruce Bradburn, North Miami assistant city manager, said he is hoping the downtown redevelopment project — aimed at improving the appearance of the area — will encourage landlords outside the downtown area to do the same.

"[Downtown redevelopment] could have a spin-off effect on West Dixie Highway and all around the city," he said.

But as long as economic conditions permit, developers will continue to build.

John Smith, head of the Council of North Area Chambers of Commerce, stopped just short of predicting a boom in North Dade.

"I see healthy, steady growth in the area in the next few years," he said. "Even the gas situation won't affect it, it'll just force people to shop, work and play closer to home."

Wolf said he sees no end to the trend toward small neighborhood shopping centers. A gas crunch, he said, would encourage more such projects.

"There's no slow-down in sight," Wolf said. "I can see building more next year. People don't want to drive all the way to Dadeland or 163rd Street Shopping Center. They're returning to the small neighborhood stores."

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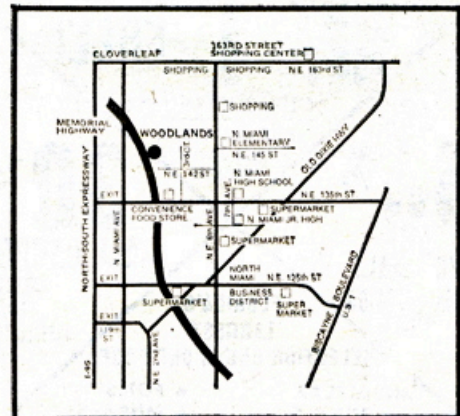
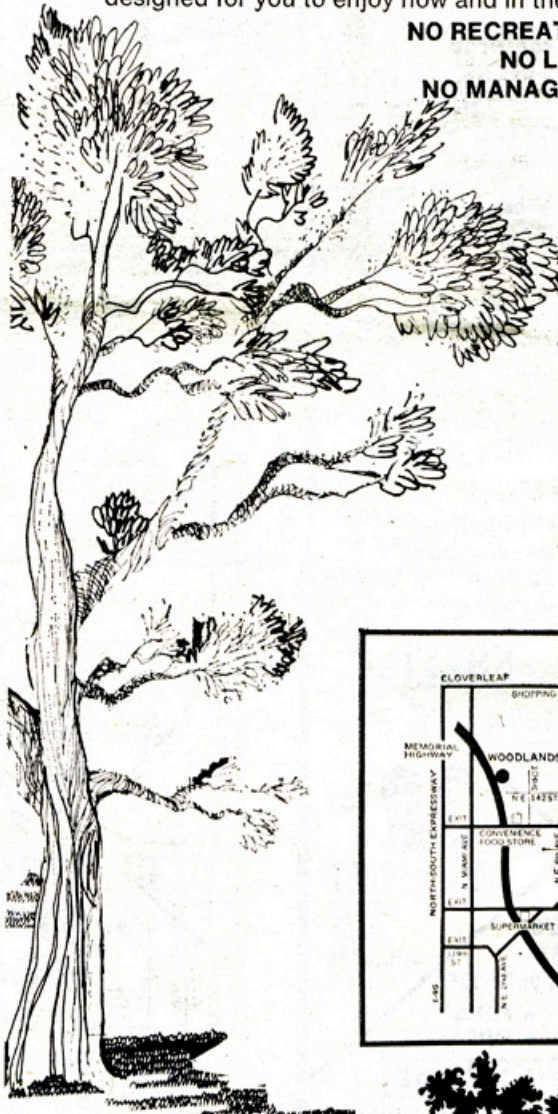
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