

“They want to create a downtown in the heart of the sprawl, turning the worst of suburbia into the best of the New Urbanism.”

– Florida Trend

Downtown Kendall

Transforming Miami-Dade’s “Edge City”

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Area: 324 acres
Client: Chamber South, South Miami, FL
Year Adopted: 1999
Website: chambersouth.com/index.php?submenu=community&src=gendocs&link=Downtown%20Kendall&category=Community

For more information, visit doverkohl.com.



Town Square: The heart of the new Kendall community, overlooked by multi-story mixed-use and civic buildings.



Residential Square: Rowhouses and an urban apartment building create a safe edge to a neighborhood park.



Shops and restaurants occupy the ground floor along the main street.



The Project

The Master Plan and Overlay Code for Downtown Kendall is the product of a June 1998 charrette dealing with a high density urban center in Miami-Dade County. The study area contains transportation corridors and intersections of four heavily traveled, regional roadways that crisscross a high intensity of retail, office, hotels, and nearby residential neighborhoods. The study area has experienced remarkably fast growth, but poor pedestrian accessibility and visual blight are prominent in Downtown Kendall, as in most such auto-oriented suburbs. The Plan, which was created in partnership with Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, UrbanAdvantage, Hall Planning & Engineering, and Thomas Gustafson, will establish order among the physical chaos, facilitating development in a sustainable pattern and creating a lasting identity for the area.

Approach

The design team conducted a seven day charrette in June 1998, soliciting input from community members, business owners, elected officials, and technical experts. The resulting plan allows any number of developers to realize projects within the patchwork of individual properties, with each property contributing to a unified whole. A form-based code accompanies the Master Plan to ensure that new projects are consistent with the vision for Downtown Kendall, which is for it to become a model for transit-oriented development. At the forefront is an architecturally varied cityscape designed around the pedestrian rather than the automobile.

Status

The Master Plan was approved by the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners in 1998 and the code was adopted in December of 1999. This new ordinance replaces the existing zoning districts to form a new zoning district in the Miami-Dade County Zoning Code. The Downtown Kendall project has been featured in *Florida Trend*, on NBC 6 and WPBT reports, and in a special issue of *Business Week*, "21 Ideas for the 21st Century." Construction on several sites is complete and more than 3200 new dwelling units in mixed-use settings have been approved.

Change over Time

Thirty years ago Kendall Drive was a narrow country road and Dadeland Mall's first buildings were sprouting at the rural edge of a young metropolis. Today this location is embedded in the suburban growth that followed, closer to Downtown Miami and the coastal edge than to the western or southern reaches of metropolitan development. The region's recent commitment of re-directing growth away from rural areas and back to the transportation corridors of the earliest settlements is slowly taking form with the first building projects heeding the visionary call of *Eastward, Ho!* The Downtown Kendall plan is a response to this vision. Mixed-use buildings will front upon a network of interconnected streets, parking garages will be placed mid-block to replace the vast expanses of surface parking, and transit is being re-integrated into the area.

“When fully built out – probably in two or three decades – downtown Kendall’s population will be double the current size of Opa-locka, county planners estimate, with most residents living within walking distance of the Metrorail line. In contrast, the US Census in 2000 reported 3,800 residents in the eastern portion of Kendall, an unincorporated portion of Miami-Dade County.”

- Frank Norton, *Miami Today*



Downtown Kendall, 2034 Aerial View: Interconnected streets, mixed-use development, and mid-block parking transform the auto-oriented landscape.



Snapper Creek Canal: Before



A new Snapper Creek Canal, with pedestrian bridges, wide sidewalks, shade trees and mixed-use buildings.



Dadeland Boulevard: Before



The proposed Dadeland Boulevard will be centered around the pedestrian, with colonnades designed to protect people from the elements, building facades that face the street, and on-street parking to slow traffic.