
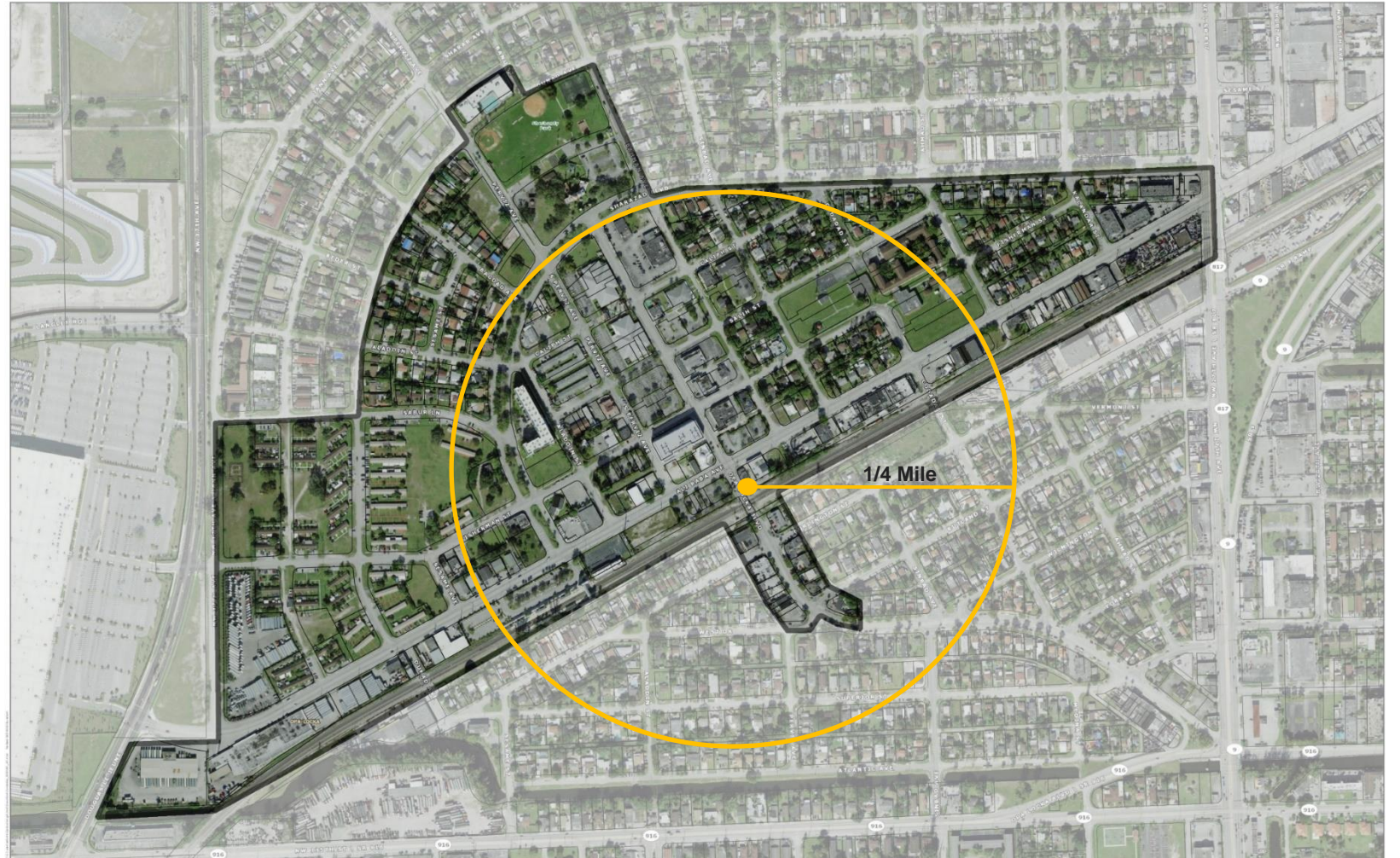
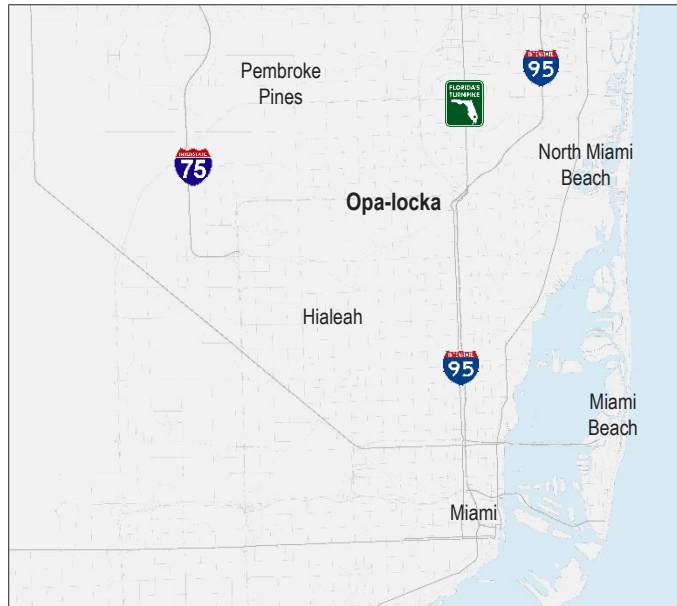
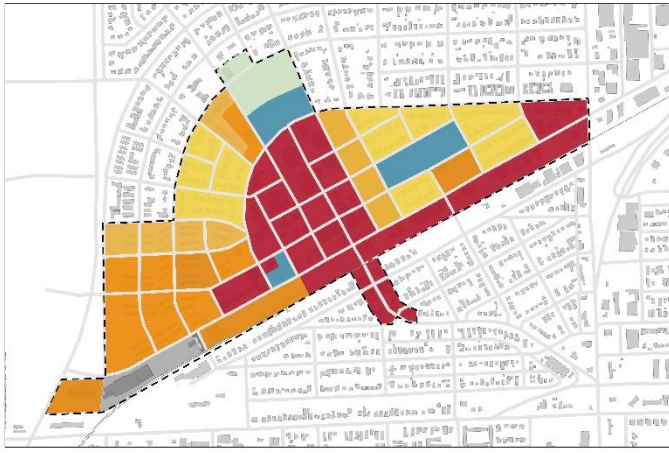




# Opa-Locka: A whimsical beginning

 Opa-Locka, Florida



**Images:** Top Left; proposed zoning. Bottom Left; context map. Above; study area.

**Caption:** Encompassing roughly 165 acres, Downtown Opa-locka will be comprised of three distinct districts that will work together in activating this future destination; Downtown West, Downtown Core, and Downtown East.



**Caption:** Once the heart of commerce in the City, Opa-locka Boulevard is often deserted and lacking any non-governmental or social service attraction. Public realm and mobility improvements, incentive programs to attract and develop locally owned businesses, grants and loans for façade and landscape improvements, selective infill, and public programming with re-invigorate this street and return it to the center of activity for Opa-locka.



**Caption:** Eventually sold to private investors, the former military barracks lining the streets of Downtown West contribute little to creating a sense of place or building community. Working with property owners, developers, residents, and the City & CRA, we developed a realistic and buildable development with densities and funding strategies that re-shape the area with mixed-income and mixed-use housing that will be the catalyst for re-activating commercial demand in downtown.



**Caption:** Long-time existing property owners have the desire to attract restaurants and retail to the heart of downtown but lack the capital to make the needed investment to achieve that. Working with the CRA and property owners our team identified and programmed the strategies to turn these historic buildings into assets by expanding the façade and landscape improvement grant program, implementing local business development and attraction tools, investing in public realm improvements, and supporting public programming to help activate the streets.



**Caption:** The once iconic City Hall building epitomized the early character and design of Opa-locka. The City's years of financial woes along with limited investment and care has taken its toll on the building that is the terminus of "Main Street". Through our recommendations of achieving a Main Street Florida Designation, developing a rehabilitation program, and expanding investment with City departments and the CRA to improve the overall site, including the adjacent park to act as a community gathering area and event space for the desired return of festivals and family-friendly events and activities will re-activate this important part of Downtown's renaissance.



**Caption:** Downtown lacks any sense of arrival yet is surrounded by primary roadways, including access to I-95 and the Florida Turnpike. Developing and implementing low-cost gateway features building on existing iconic or identifiable elements within Downtown will welcome visitors and future residents.

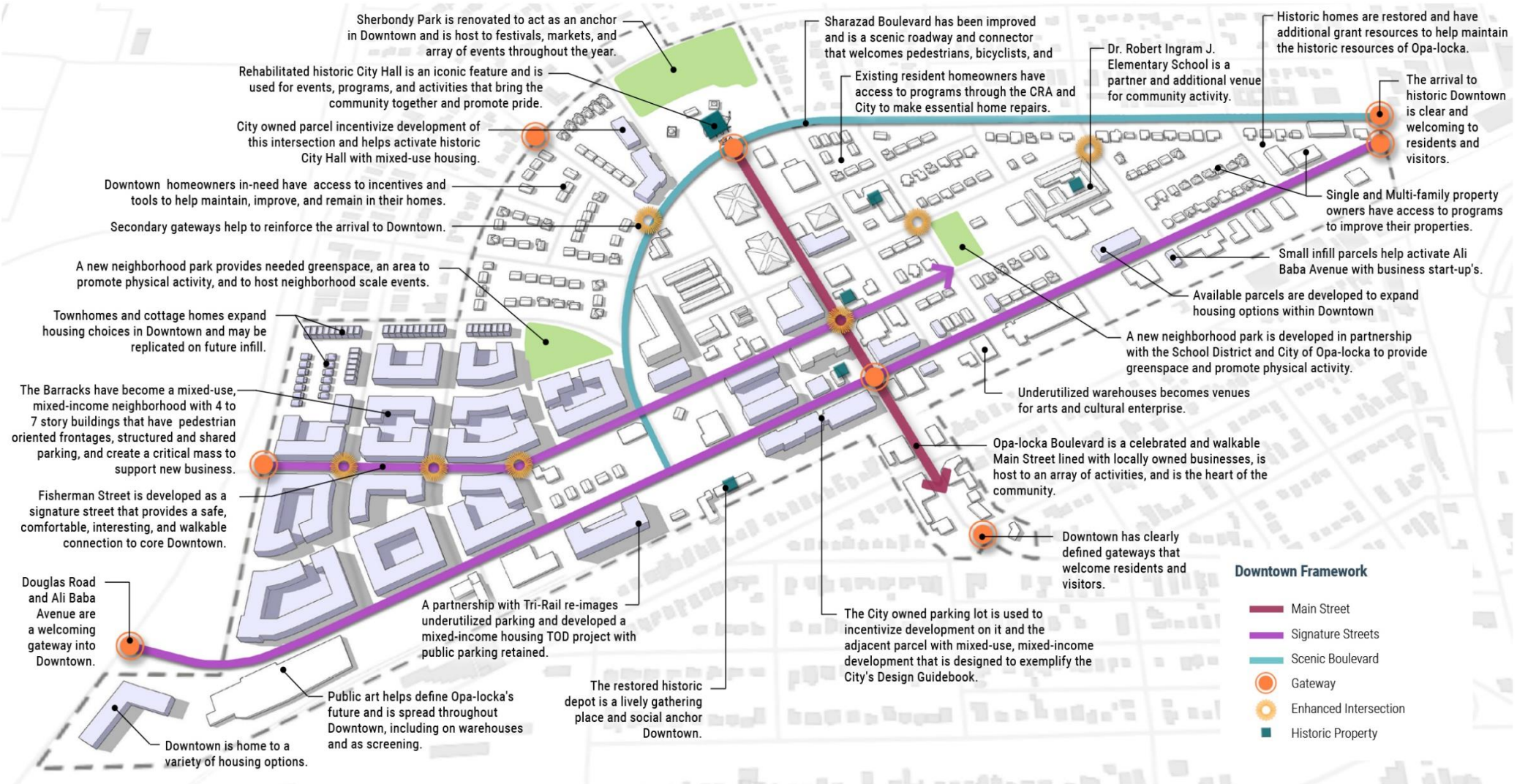


**Caption:** Opa-locka and its future developers recognize the positive health and social benefits of vibrant public parks. To compliment the redevelopment of Sherbondy Park adjacent to historic City Hall in Downtown Core, a new park with equipment and activity for the Downtown West area will create a special place for future residents as the former military barracks are redeveloped and balance the proposed new park development in partnership with the Miami-Dade County School District in Downtown East.



**Caption:** The historic Opa-locka Elementary School remains the only public school within the Downtown Opa-locka area. Future public realm investments including shaded and lit sidewalks, bike lanes, and drainage improvements will help increase connectivity from the surrounding neighborhoods to the school. Implementing an improvement plan with the Miami-Dade County School District to help return the building to a greater sense of prominence, along with the adjacent site improvements and development of a new neighborhood park for Downtown East will help return this to a source of community pride and gathering area.

**The BIG PICTURE: Opa-locka 2032** Home to more than 2,000+ new residents, a growing business community, new innovators and entrepreneurs, the artists / chefs / musicians / other practitioners of Opa-locka's living culture, and a diverse mix of others who together will bring one of South Florida's most distinctive Downtowns to life!



**Caption:** A key focus will be on incorporating mixed-income and mixed-use housing, investing in public realm improvements and spaces, business development and attraction, and public programming will be the drivers in activating Downtown, improving the quality of affordable and market rate housing available, and allow the large numbers of home-based businesses and area entrepreneurs to grow their business in Downtown storefronts.



**Caption:** As gentrification is displacing many of the historically African American neighborhoods in the greater Miami area, our team worked with the CRA and community organizations, including the Carrie B. Meek Foundation and the Opa-locka Community Development Corporation to participate in meaningful ways to shape the vision for the future of Downtown Opa-locka.