

Community Background Report

West Kendall

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: Snapper Creek

South: S.W. 128th Street

West: SR 821

East: SR 874

Community Type

Neighborhood

History

West Kendall is a substantive neighborhood in Miami-Dade County, Florida, within the census boundaries of Kendall. The census boundaries define communities that lack separate municipal government, but which otherwise resemble incorporated places, such as cities or villages. The ZIP Code serving West Kendall is 33183. The neighborhood is often confused with the census area of Kendall West, a subdivision located west of the Florida Turnpike. West Kendall is adjacent to the neighborhood of The Crossing and parallel to Kendall. The Board of County Commissioners has purposely distinguished and designated the area of Kendall as West Kendall and East Kendall communities (Wikipedia: West Kendall). The neighborhoods were separated in order “to balance population with regard to determining boundaries for proposed incorporation as new cities; when sufficient community support for study is properly petitioned to the Board of County Commissioners” (Kendall Federation of Homeowners).

Over the past 26 years, West Kendall has outgrown its agricultural base and has become one of the fastest growing, “most densely populated communities in all of Florida” (Kendall Federation of Homeowners). Looking at the area surrounding the Kendall Tamiami Executive Airport, one can see that the airport has become a central point in West Kendall. Office condos and a luxury car dealership stand nearby. Two other dealers are on the way and in the planning stages are a Holiday Inn Express Hotel, more single-family homes to add to the extensive already existing inventory, a multi-acre shopping center with restaurants and shops, and a 40-acre church (Piniero 2006).

Miami-Dade County leaders, never shy to match a street sign to a famous name, will add a new one to its long list in West Kendall. A street including part of Southwest 136th and 143rd streets near 137th Avenue changed its name to Lexus Boulevard, the nation's largest Lexus auto dealership recently opened in West Kendall. The uniquely designed facility "has already won architectural awards" (Azar).

Ten years ago, it consisted of dirt roads, grassy fields and industrial warehouses. (Piniero 2006) "No longer is West Kendall out in the middle of nowhere," said Steven Hendrikse, managing partner of Southeast Property, which owns and manages chunks of land in the area. Resident want to "live here and work nearby, that's what's really driving the business".

Joaquin Azar, general manager of Lexus of West Kendall, mentions traffic and other urban constraints as to why the car dealer chose to open in a location otherwise considered remote. Mr. Azar said 85 percent of the new dealer's clients and employees live in Greater Kendall. "It's a growing area," Azar said. "The closest facility is on U.S. 1 and traveling east is a problem. To go from West Kendall to U.S. 1, it takes you 40 minutes easily."

Within the Lexus Dealership two other competing dealers are on the way. A Toyota dealership should be opened next year on the abutting property and Chrysler plans to build on land it owns across the street. "It just gives more validation to the location, the future is here, this is where everything is headed" said Joaquin T. Azar, store manager for Lexus of West Kendall. Most of the growth is on land once used for agricultural and industrial purposes. Small businesses, including many auto repair shops, now fill warehouse complexes where crops once thrived (Azar).

A 40 acre strawberry field nearby soon will be replaced with London Square, a shopping center developed by Robert Shapiro that will hold offices (Piniero 2006). "We were a bit lucky we opened in a booming area," said Cristy Vazquez-Garcia, vice president of development and managing broker of Greenwich Development and Real Estate. The company, which opened in the area in 2003, is building two 36-unit office condo buildings on Southwest 137th Avenue between 124th and 138th streets, near the planned hotel. Though mostly local developers such as Shapiro, Greenwich and Southeast Property are taking stock in airport area lands, South American and Caribbean folks are not far behind. Hendrikse, managing partner of Southeast Property, believes many clients from other countries are investing. "I think it's because of the economic situation down South," he said, "some want to get some of their money out of that market and into the U.S. market". The land developed across from the airport "took several years to start building. We had to put in the water, telephone, power and everything because everything was agricultural." He said it was difficult "to even get customers to buy into the land. But that has changed" (Hendrikse 2006).

With new development comes more traffic. The Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization is currently working on solutions to relieve traffic in Kendall. The main analysis is a "premium transit study" that will recommend alternative transportation methods for congested areas. The three corridors studied include: Kendall Drive from Krome Avenue to Downtown Kendall; The Turnpike/117th Avenue from State Road 836 to the Tamiami Airport; and State

Road 874 from State Road 836 to the Tamiami Airport (Martinez 2006). Time is something the Kendall community is running out of, according to Margarita Iglesias, a West Kendall homeowner and real estate agent. “Traffic is already at a standstill,” she said. Officials expect to finish the study by the summer and select an alternative by winter 2006 (Martinez 2006).

Community Dynamics

The U.S. Census Bureau did not report the West Kendall neighborhood separately from Kendall in 2000. Its demographic numbers are part of Kendall. To gather data and to perform a in depth analysis providing a better understanding of the neighborhood the Census Tract 84.11 was used, which corresponds to the neighborhood boundaries.

West Kendall is mainly a white community with 84.16% White, 15.23% African American, 0.61% Native American, and with 73.11% of the population Hispanic or Latino of any race.

The education level is also lower than the County’s 46%, with 45% of the population having no schooling, more specifically 33 percent of the area’s population has attained a High School diploma, and only 15 of that same 33 percent went on and acquired college education. West Kendall’s population is considered a commuter community with 35 percent of its workforce traveling out of West Kendall to work and more than half of the working population drives 30 minutes or more (US Census, 2000).

The median income for a household in the neighborhood was \$55,517, and the median income for a family was \$61,241. The per capita income for the Crossings was \$23,762. 6.5% of the population and 5.1% of families were below the poverty line. 5.4% of those under the age of 18 and 5.3% of those 65 and older were living below the poverty line.

Sources

Azar, Joaquin T. Manager of Lexus of West Kendall. Personal Interview. Friday, May 19 2006.

Kendall Federation of Homeowner Association. <http://www.kfha.org/history.asp>.

Martinez, Ani. Doing Something About Traffic. Miami Herald, The (FL). April 9, 2006. Final Edition. Section: Neighbors. Page: 30PP.

Pineiro, Yudy. West Kendall Keeps Growing at Fast Pace. Miami Herald, The (FL). March 19, 2006. Section: Neighbors. Page: 3WK.

Pineiro, Yudy. Next Stop: Approval of Tracks for Future Train. Miami Herald, The (FL). May 14, 2006. Section: Neighbors. Page: 3WK.

Rabin, Charles. New Street Name Honors Dealership. Miami Herald, The (FL). May 1, 2006. Section: Metro & State. Page: 3B.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2000). Statistical File 3, P31 and P32 for. Census Tract 84.11, Miami-Dade County, Florida. <http://www.census.gov>.