

Reimagining Miami's Waterfront Speedway as a Street for People



For three weeks, parking lots along Miami's Biscayne Boulevard were transformed into public space. Photo via Modern Cities

By Angie Schmitt Mar 14, 2017

Miami's Biscayne Boulevard is eight roaring lanes of traffic cutting off downtown from the waterfront. But maybe not for long. In what could be a transformative project, Miami is looking to convert this surface speedway into a walkable boulevard, reports the Jacksonville-based blog [Modern Cities](#). The city recently received a \$422,000 Florida DOT grant to study the removal of some traffic lanes.

As part of that effort, the Downtown Development Authority and the Knight Foundation recently teamed up to temporarily transform a large parking area along Biscayne Boulevard into a public space called "Biscayne Green." It looks like it was an enormous success, [Modern Cities](#) writes:

Each day, visitors could experience the space as a passive user engaging with a dog park, outdoor lounge, children's playground or a large flex field. Other users were attracted to Biscayne Green by participating in events ranging from food festivals, concerts, physical fitness classes, outdoor movie nights and coworking and networking events.

Organizers hoped to provide an interactive sneak peek into the future of downtown Miami, a future that features a highly functional, walkable environment that meets the needs of Miami's Central Business District and waterfront. Instead of Biscayne Boulevard serving as a barrier, downtown stakeholders are interested in improving connectivity by constructing a permanent promenade to serve as a destination for residents, workers and visitors.

Fabian De La Espriella, project manager of the Downtown Development Authority, told [Modern Cities](#) about how the temporary public space is connected to a long-term plan:

The goal was to elevate the conversation about the importance of transforming our signature thoroughfare from barrier to destination, making downtown a more walkable, accessible, connected and inviting place to be. Allowing people to witness what it means to prioritize people over cars, and to experience the boulevard like they've never done before in order to get a sneak peek of what the future of Downtown could hold was in part a way to influence the change that needs to take place. Being able to see the community response to the public spaces and events planned as part of Biscayne Green are a true reflection of the desires of the local community. Gathering the necessary support from residents and community leaders is key to move the project forward.



Biscayne Green is one of a number of projects proposed and underway by the Miami DDA to make Downtown more livable and walkable. These include a \$13MM revitalization project to widen sidewalks and improve streetscapes along the Historic Flagler Street in the heart of downtown's Central Business District; [Baywalk](#), a linear bike and pedestrian corridor path spanning the perimeter of Biscayne Bay from the CBD to Brickell; and a Complete Streets initiative to transform the SE/SW 1st Street corridor between SW 2nd Avenue and Biscayne Boulevard into a multimodal street that provides transit priority and accommodates all street users, including cyclists, in a safe and comfortable manner.



Here's a look at what the permanent redesign of Biscayne Boulevard might entail:

**Appendix F:
Typical Section**



Existing

234'-0" Right-of-Way



Proposed

234'-0" Right-of-Way

