Barricade removal applauded for Opa-locka's 'Triangle'

Contributed by STAFF REPORT
Friday, 14 December 2012
Last Updated Friday, 14 December 2012

OPA-LOCKA — Signs of a new day arrived for residents of Opa-locka's notorious "Triangle" as community leaders and residents gathered to witness the removal of the metal barricades that divided the Opa-locka community for nearly three decades.

The barricade removal is the latest in a series of changes to recast the neighborhood as "Magnolia North."

Opa-locka was founded in 1926 as an idyllic, self-sustaining suburban development with imaginative design, urban planning and architecture. Through the years, the city, and in particular the Magnolia North neighborhood, have been marked by struggle and plagued by crime. A similar cloud has formed over many urban areas across the country in the 1980s also shrouded Opa-locka in peril.

In an effort to control drug traffic, the barricades were installed in 1987.

"The community environment in Opa-locka is shifting towards the positive," said Opa-locka Mayor Myra Taylor. "The barricade removal is a testimony of our residents, community leaders and city officials working together to transform Opa-locka and bring a fresh new outlook in the Magnolia North community."

The barricade removal comes as a major part of the "Community Gateways" program which will infuse art and design throughout the city. The revitalization is sponsored by the Opa-Locka Community Development Corp. (OLCDC) in collaboration with Miami-Dade County Art in Public Places, and funded in part by grant and stimulus funds via the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Public art created by visionaries such as Jennifer Bonner and Christian Stayner (Los Angeles, Calif.), Rosario Marquardt and Roberto Behar (Miami), and Gale Fulton Ross (Sarasota) will replace the barricades blockading the neighborhood starting with 15050 Duval St.

"This historic, but distressed community is ready for a new reality and community residents are ready to move on, unite and look toward a better, brighter future," said Willie Logan, OLCDC president/CEO.

“The
addition of world-class art installations will highlight the enormous improvements to housing in the area and the infrastructure and design enhancements.”