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BISCAYNE BOULEVARD

Without palms, is street royal?

■ Cupcakes and pleasantries marked a protest to save royal palms along Biscayne Boulevard.

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The chocolate cupcakes had neon green skewers shaped like palm trees.

But for the three community activists handing out the cupcakes to drivers moving slowly through a busy Biscayne Boulevard intersection, it was more of a protest than a party.

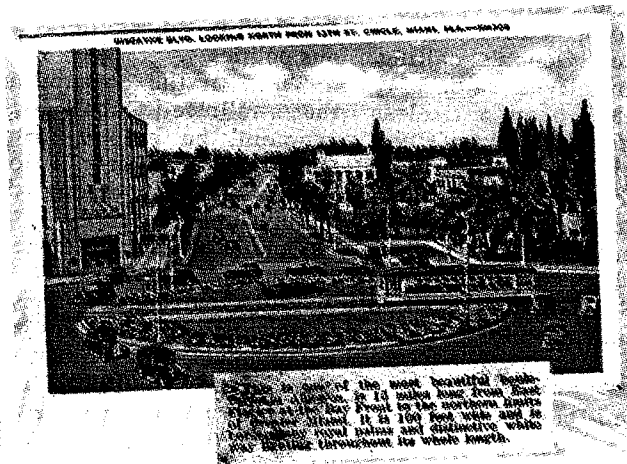
Their goal: Inform people the Florida Department of Transportation is removing some of the royal palms that line the boulevard as part of the ongoing road construc-

tion project from Miami to North Miami.

The royal palms would be replaced with mostly live

oaks, which give off more shade. But the critics say the

•TURN TO ROYAL PALMS, 2B



VINTAGE: A period postcard of Biscayne Boulevard.

BISCAYNE BOULEVARD

Biscayne Boulevard may lose its palms

• ROYAL PALMS, FROM 1B

live oaks are more susceptible to toppling over in hurricane winds and don't offer the same sub-tropical sense of place as royal palms.

"Here, have a cupcake," Teri D'Amico said as she passed the dessert through the passenger-side window of a Volkswagen Jetta stopped at a red light on Biscayne at Northeast 69th Street.

Elvis Cruz, wearing a necktie dotted with palms, handed the driver a flier outlining the group's concerns.

"Go to SavePalms.com to find out how you can help!" Cruz said as the light turned green.

D'Amico, Cruz and Sean-Paul Melito planned the event to correspond with the 80th anniversary of Biscayne Boulevard's opening. On Feb. 11, 1927, a portion of the boulevard opened extending to 29th Street, but the road had been in use before that, The Miami Herald and University



MARICE COHN BAND/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

GRASS ROOTS: Elvis Cruz and Teri D'Amico hand out fliers and cupcakes to cars on Biscayne Boulevard. They are working to keep royal palms on Biscayne Boulevard.

of Miami records indicate.

Reports of the time called it one of the most beautiful boulevards in America, and praised its border of royal

palms and white lights.

But Robert Flanders, president of the Upper Eastside Miami Council, says changing times require a change in

landscaping.

"Their vision of the boulevard is a snapshot of the 1930s. Our vision is for a pedestrian friendly road of

the future," Flanders said.

Flanders and other supporters of Florida's Department of Transportation's plan to replace some of the royal palms with live oaks say the majority of residents in affected neighborhoods approve of the project.

"For the last 10 years, we have been meeting with the community to develop a plan that would meet their needs," Transportation Department spokesman Brian Rick said. "The plan for shade trees has been endorsed by the community. However, there are some who now oppose it."

In addition to planting the live oaks along the sidewalk, the plan calls for adding medians dotted with royal palms.

The protesters are hoping city and state officials decide to keep the palms.

"I think one answer for the entire boulevard might not work, so we need to look at individual blocks to see what's best for that particular area," D'Amico said.