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Downtown Hollywood stumbles as Downtown Miami and South Miami are resurgent

Even if you do most things right – designing for pedestrians, enacting incentives -- reviving legacy downtowns is slow, bumpy work. I long wondered what happened to once lively downtown Hollywood, which seemed to have many of the elements in place but seemed to be going backwards as other urban centers, from Las Olas Boulevard in Lauderdale to Coral Gables, South Miami and Brickell came back to life with a vengeance.

My colleague Amy Sherman assays the reasons in her piece on Hollywood today in The Herald. For some other relevant case studies, see my piece this summer about [the revival of Biscayne Boulevard](#) north of downtown, and my colleague Elaine Walker's smart stories about the incredible burgeoning scene in [downtown Miami](#) and the urban success story that is [downtown South Miami](#). Both detail how sound planning decisions helped resuscitate dormant areas to most everyone's benefit even amid a crippling recession.

Here is what Amy wrote:

In downtown Hollywood, you can eat crepes at a French restaurant, splurge on homemade chocolate truffles, buy artsy glass night lights and enroll in an African dance class. This is not your typical South Florida shopping strip, with few chains in sight.

Unique? Definitely.

Successful? That's tougher to gauge.

After decades of investments and plans, Hollywood's core is sprinkled with hits but also littered with misses.

Some shop owners say the city's signature moves -- building a unique ArtsPark and green-lighting high-rise condos -- have not lured the crowds envisioned. Shoppers notice it too.

"It used to be a little bit more hopping," said Anne Rosenthal, who has driven from North Miami Beach for years and was downtown recently for lunch at Sage. "It's really cute. They have good restaurants. Unfortunately it seems to be going down. It used to be more people would walk around."

Downtown Hollywood has gone through cycles of success and struggles for years, and elements of both are present today.