

Town Center District History

Throughout the last year, the City of Sunny Isles Beach has been working to solve a discrepancy in the Town Center District. This timeline breaks down the history of the Town Center District and how the City has been addressing the issue.

2000.

The City of Sunny Isles Beach's Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2000. A city's comprehensive plan is the blueprint for existing and future development. The plan's goals, objectives and policies reflect the City's vision for its future and how it will meet the needs of existing and future residents, visitors and businesses. Sunny Isles Beach's comprehensive plan has been amended 13 times throughout the last 19 years to reflect the redevelopment that has occurred, along with a current vision for moving forward. [View the current Comprehensive Plan.](#)

2002.

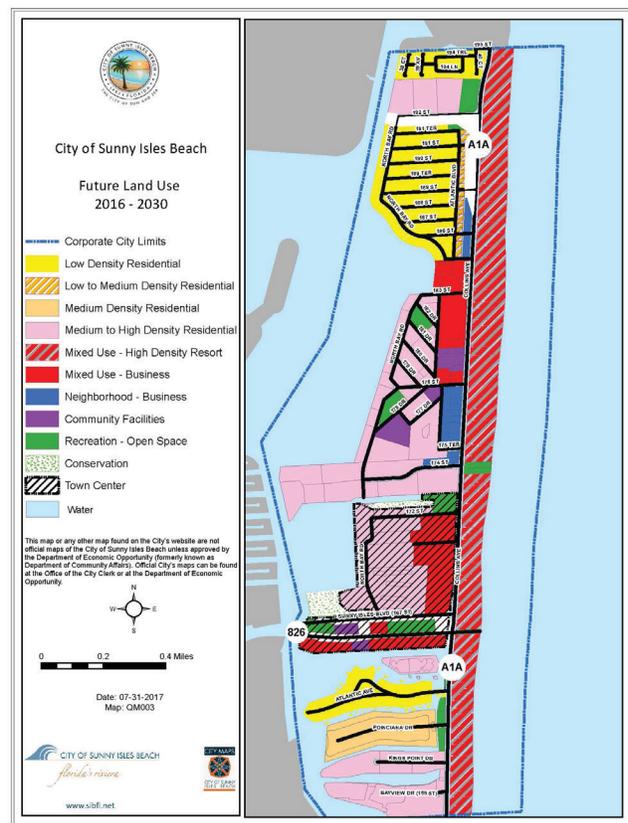
In 2002, the Land Development Regulations, or Zoning Code, was created.

2004.

In 2004, the current Town Center Zoning District was created. The Town Center District spanned from 172 Street south to the south side of Sunny Isles Boulevard, spanning east to Collins Avenue and west to the Intracoastal Waterway. The base floor area ratio (F.A.R.) was 2.50 and the base density was 60 dwelling units for all property within the boundaries of the Town Center. In addition, FAR and density bonuses were available, depending upon the location of the property. Transfer Development Rights were also permitted in order to increase FAR and density.



Town Center District in 2004



2005.

In 2005, the City completed its first Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) to identify all necessary topics to be amended in the Comprehensive Plan. One of the topics was to provide for limitation on floor area ratio, especially in the Town Center District.



2007.

In 2007, the Town Center District language was redefined by a proposed intensity and density limitation as part of a first reading of the ordinance for the amendment of the Comprehensive Plan. Under the State of Florida requirements, additional data and analysis was to be provided. Rather than provide the required data and analysis, the City chose to remove the density and intensity limitations during the second reading of the ordinance. The Comprehensive Plan amendment was approved, and the City received an “In Compliance” notice from the State of Florida Office of Comprehensive Planning. However, the City did not amend the Zoning Code to conform to the Comprehensive Plan.

2011.

In 2011, a new Florida State Statute strengthened the requirements for density and intensity to be included in cities’ comprehensive plans. However, the City did not amend the comprehensive plan to include intensity and density in the Town Center District. The City submitted four Comprehensive Plan EARs to the state from 2011 to 2016, all of which received “In Compliance” notices from the State of Florida Office of Comprehensive Planning.

Site Plan Approvals from 2004-2018.

During this time, 13 site plan approvals occurred in six buildings: 400 Sunny Isles Beach Marina, Parque Towers and Office Tower, Chabad Lubavitch Russian of South Florida Inc, St. Tropez on the Bay, One Netanya Centre, and Jerry’s Famous Deli (Epicure Site).

2019.

In early 2019, the City discovered the inconsistency between the City’s Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations (Zoning Code) in the Town Center District.

July 2019.

After the discrepancy between the comprehensive plan and the zoning code was discovered, the City proposed an amendment to the comprehensive plan at the July Regular Commission Meeting. The text-based amendment permitted density in a range from 60 to 85 units per acre and floor area ratio in a range from 2.5 to 3.5.

Proposed Text Based Amendment

When parcels are located within the Town Center Planned Development District Designation as depicted on the Future Land Use Map, additional density is permitted in a range from 60 to 85 units per acre and Floor Area Ratio in a range from 2.5 to 3.5. Town Center Land Development Regulations shall implement this District Designation.

Additional density and FAR intensity bonuses may be permitted within the Town Center for developments that comply with bonus program requirements.

August 2019.

The City held a Special City Commission Meeting on August 28, 2019 to propose a moratorium and zoning in progress ordinance in the Town Center District, which stopped the consideration of any new projects. The moratorium and zoning in progress passed on first reading in a 4-1 vote.



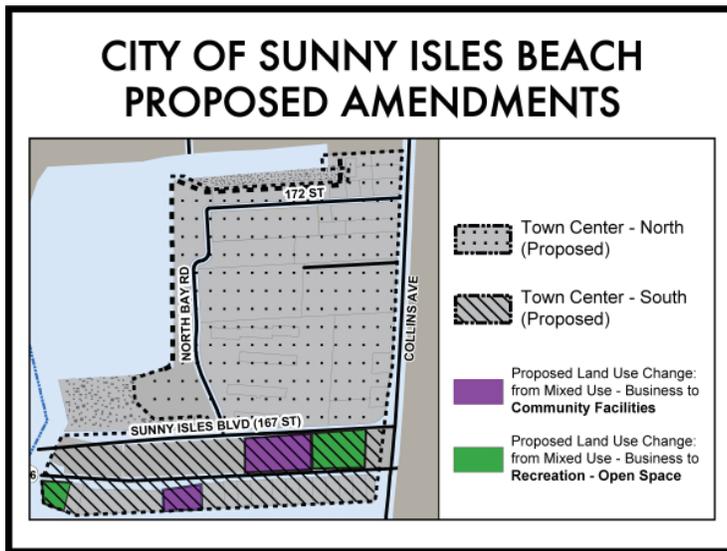


September 2019.

At the September Regular Commission Meeting, the City Commission voted 4-1 to enact the moratorium and zoning in progress in the Town Center District.

October 2019.

At the October Regular Commission Meeting, city staff presented an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, which subdivides the Town Center District into Town Center North and Town Center South. The proposed Town Center North will extend from the westbound lanes of Sunny Isles Boulevard north to 172 Street and Town Center South will encompass the



blocks south of Sunny Isles Boulevard. The amendment defines the density and intensity for only the Town Center South to align with the interpretation relied on for the last 12 years. The proposed base density for the Town Center South is 75 dwelling units per acre, and the base Floor Area Ratio intensity is 3.50, with additional bonuses and Transfer Development Rights to increase density and FAR available.

The amendment also changes the designation of four land parcels in the Town Center South. Bella Vista Bay Park and Gateway Park would change from mixed-use business to recreation and open space, meaning all future uses of that land must

be for recreation and open spaces purposes. Miami-Dade County Water and Sewer Facility and the Gateway Park parking garage changed from mixed-use business to community facility, meaning all future uses of that land must be for community facility purposes. None of those four parcels have any development rights.

The ordinances passed on first reading in a 4-1 vote, and the City transmitted the amendments to the State of Florida for review.

December 2019.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment package was transmitted to the State Department of Economic Opportunities (DEO) and other review agencies. The City of Sunny Isles Beach received no objections or recommendations from the DEO. However, they did provide two (2) minor comments which are not mandatory and cannot form the basis of a challenge. Pursuant to the comments, the word "Overlay" was added after Town Center South and Town Center North. The Florida Department of Transportation-District Six (FDOT-D6) and South Florida Water Management District provided comments of a more general nature unrelated to this application. The South Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRPC) stated there are no regional impacts from this application while no other agencies provided comments.

The City Commission adopted the Comprehensive Plan amendments at the December 20, 2019 Regular Commission Meeting. The adopted ordinances were transmitted to DEO and the amendments were found in compliance by the DEO. Currently, the process is being held by a challenge brought against the City's proposal to correct the Town Center South Overlay.



January - June 2020.

In January 2020, Calvin, Giordano & Associates (CGA) began facilitating the public engagement process for the Town Center North District. Between January and June, the City held five outreach events, including 18 separate input-seeking meetings with a variety of community stakeholders, which resulted in more than 530 comments. The outreach process consisted of stakeholder meetings with residents, landowners, developers, and elected officials; gathering and analyzing information about present conditions; public outreach through pop-up activities, an open-house workshop and online survey; and synthesizing all the community input. The process was designed to achieve three goals: maximize inclusiveness and transparency; gain insight into a range of opinions; and offer balanced, neutral and legally defensible recommendations.

On June 4, 2020, CGA presented their initial findings and recommendations to the City Commission.

September 2020.

At the September 17, 2020 Regular City Commission Meeting, the City Commission voted to extend the moratorium for six months from September 19, 2020 to March 19, 2021. This decision allows additional time for the City to complete its research, analysis, and consider various options with respect to the adoption of potential amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan and/or Land Development Regulations to address issues relating to future development within the Town Center.

October 2020.

On October 14, 2020, the City held a public virtual and interactive Town Hall meeting about re-envisioning the Town Center North Overlay. The City discussed findings and progress of the TCNO report and strategy options, while also gathering feedback on the potential strategies for the TCNO.

[Watch the Town Hall Meeting.](#)

January 2021.

At the Regular City Commission Meeting on January 21, 2021, an ordinance was proposed to extend the moratorium by an additional six months from March 19, 2021 to September 19, 2021. After careful considerations and discussions, additional time is needed for City staff and its consultants to conclude its studies, and to process and implement potential changes to the Comprehensive Plan and/or Land Development Regulations pertaining to the densities and intensities in the Town Center. The ordinance was adopted at first reading and is scheduled for second and final reading at the March 18, 2021 Regular City Commission Meeting.

February 2021.

At the Regular City Commission Meeting on February 18, 2021, the City Commission will vote on whether to approve the Town Center North Overlay Final Report. The final report outlines four strategies CGA created based on the public feedback received throughout the public outreach phase.

[Read the Town Center North Overlay Final Report.](#)

Moving Forward.

At the end of the Town Center North Overlay Public Engagement Project, the City must decide what it wants to achieve (policy goals) with regards to the future of the TCNO and how to achieve it (regulatory implementation). The City Commission may select one of the four strategies to move forward with, ask for a variation of the paths or revisions, or provide direction to staff regarding other options. Once they provide feedback, staff will prepare the policy and regulatory amendments necessary to implement their decision.