

# Scenic Watch



News  
June  
2021

"\$1.1 billion riverfront master plan proposed for downtown Jacksonville"



Photo: Gallery in Jacksonville Daily Record

"Jacksonville developer Steve Atkins says he wants to lead a nearly \$1.1 billion redevelopment of mostly city-owned property, including the former Jacksonville Landing, on a stretch of the Downtown Northbank riverfront.

At an invitation-only event June 1 at the Florida Theatre, Atkins presented his 'Riverfront Jacksonville' redevelopment plan for about 25 acres along the St. Johns River.

Atkins, who is SouthEast Development Group LLC managing director, says he will try to persuade the city and Downtown Investment Authority to pay for \$536 million in a public-private partnership to build 1.8 million square feet of space from the former Jacksonville Landing to the former Duval County Courthouse and old City Hall site, rebranded in 2020 by DIA as The Ford on Bay.

### City buy-in

As of May 28, DIA staff and Mayor Lenny Curry's administration have seen all of SouthEast's master plan work, according to Atkins.

It is unclear if city officials are willing to accept Atkins' request for about \$500 million in tax money.

Atkins said Goldman Sachs and Piper Sandler together committed to financing the estimated \$1.1 billion upfront if the city agrees to an incentives package to repay its share over time...

With all but 2.5 acres targeted as publicly owned, Atkins also would have to convince city officials to change or integrate taxpayer-backed development plans active on the riverfront...

The city also awarded nearly \$375,000 in stipends to three national firms in March for a competition to design a 4.5-acre public park at the former Landing site with a selection expected in October.

The DIA and city have renamed the site Riverfront Plaza. DIA CEO Lori Boyer said a plan to put the remaining land on the market for private development after park construction is underway.

Atkins said SouthEast's team recognizes the park competition but did not commit to keeping the design selected by the DIA should the city agree to work with him.

'I'm hoping that some of the best (park) ideas are things that we might be able to collaborate with folks on in this plan,' Atkins said...

### Next steps

A spokesperson for Atkins said SouthEast said in a May 30 email the company plans to formally approach the DIA in July with a development proposal."

-- Mike Mendenhall, Jacksonville Daily Record

[Read entire article](#)

[For a gallery of renderings of Riverfront Jacksonville, click here](#)

Miami Art Murals Content Control Issue:  
"Wynwood is fighting a proliferation of commercial advertisement murals"



Photo: Wynwood BID

"Go for a walk in Wynwood and you'll see the colorful, detailed work of street artists and graffitists whose creations have made the neighborhood a world-renowned destination. Along some storefronts, masquerading as art, you'll also see advertisements for liquor companies, beers, designer clothing, Netflix specials and television shows, and chocolate milk.

Now, the Wynwood Business Improvement District (BID) is fighting what its board characterizes as the commercialization of Miami's famed arts district.

'Since the beginning of 2021, we've counted more than 20 advertisement murals,' Manny Gonzalez, executive director of the Wynwood BID, tells New Times...

The Miami 21 zoning code for Wynwood prohibits signs or 'advertising devices of any kind' that are visible from a public right-of-way. The city's planning and zoning code on murals regulates where such pieces of art can be displayed. Artists are required to apply for mural permits, which are issued by the city manager once the artist meets certain criteria, including payment of fees.

Once an artist has acquired a mural permit, they can obtain all the building

permits the city requires for a mural to be put up. Applicants are required to comply with all the terms set in the zoning code or risk having their permit revoked and being disqualified from applying for future mural permits.

Although the zoning code allows for murals to have a 'limited commercial sponsorship message,' the Wynwood BID says most of the advertisement murals going up in Wynwood are unpermitted.

The business that allowed the Jack Daniel's mural, for example, was slapped with a citation for violating the Miami 21 code by 'illegally erecting, placing, or mounting an outdoor advertising sign.' The proposed correction on the citation was for the business owner to take down the advertisement or acquire a permit. Each code violation carries a fine of \$1,000 per day until the issue is resolved.

The zoning code says fees can be charged to the artist who creates the mural, the person or company who commissions it, the owner of the property where the mural is placed, the advertising sponsor of the mural, or the person or company who owns or licenses the product being advertised.

'This past year and a half, there seems to be a middle person contacting major companies and telling them it's OK to put advertisement murals in Wynwood,' Gonzalez speculates.

Gonzalez says the BID believes this middle person is being paid tens of thousands of dollars to secure advertising space and to hire the artists to create the murals. That complicates enforcement, according to Miami police Cmdr. Dan Kerr, because the fine is no match for the lucrative potential of bringing advertisers to the area. Kerr, a self-proclaimed fan of all things Wynwood, says his concern is that artists might not know about the zoning code or that they can be cited for painting the murals.

In March, for example, Kerr says he talked to an artist creating a commercial mural who was oblivious to the zoning regulations.

The artist was told to paint by whoever they were working for,' Kerr says. 'Under the guise of hooking the artist up with a gig and money, the people commissioning the artists are jeopardizing them civilly. That's one thing that bothers me.' Kerr and Gonzalez say local artists and taggers will sometimes spray-paint over the advertising murals to make a point about commercialism not being welcome on the neighborhood's walls.

'For 15 years, the neighborhood has been a haven for artists to portray art to the public,' Gonzalez says. 'If you are a true artist of graffiti in Miami or in South Florida, it's basically against the moral code of the artist to do advertisements. Your reputation is everything.'

But some artists say that art isn't free and painting advertisements is a good way to make money to pay the bills so they can have leeway to work on passion projects.

One artist, who asked New Times not to identify them by name, says advertisements in Wynwood have been a problem for a long time, but they just recently became a problem for the BID.

'The question for me is, is it really a problem? Or is this the only way artists can get paid in Wynwood?' the artist says. 'I make murals in Wynwood. I always try pushing the art and keeping it relevant. I think the problem is more than with advertisements. The advertisements are needed because no one pays the artists in Wynwood. The property owners don't really like to pay for art.'

The artist says he believes advertisements in Wynwood are a positive phenomenon because artists have bills to pay and families to support just like everyone else. But he agrees there should be some regulations and controls. A painted Jack Daniel's bottle 'does nothing for the culture,' he says. But there are ways to promote products, such as by creating a piece of work with a small tag underneath or on the side that says the art is sponsored by a particular company.

Museum of Graffiti co-founders Alan Ket and Allison Freidin say they too are supportive of commercial art that allows artists to get paid.

Freidin says there aren't a lot of opportunities for graffiti artists to make money, so any deal that allows them to showcase their talents and take home a paycheck is ideal..."

-- Alexi C. Cardona, Miami New Times

[Read entire article](#)

"The past lives on: The old Key West jail will be a museum"



Photo: In Keys Weekly

"The fifth version of the Key West jail in Jackson Square on Whitehead Street was built in 1892 after a fire had reduced much of the island's commercial center to ashes a few years prior. With 18,000 residents at the time, the city of Key West was the most populous in Florida, and a stately and solid jail and courthouse was designed to symbolize that pride – not to mention provide a more fireproof facility.

An African-American child of slaves, Charles Fletcher Dupont was elected sheriff in 1888 and was helping to oversee the jail. In 1891, he prevented the attempted lynching of two pro-Spain Cubans accused of murdering a pro-independence Cuban.

Such stories are just the tip of the iceberg for the old Key West jail on Whitehead Street, and, fittingly, it is now in phase three of a renovation that will turn it into a museum, hopefully to open for the 2022-23 tourist season.

The project and construction were approved by the Monroe County commission at its April 21 meeting and is being guided by the Key West Art and Historical Society. The plan is to build a museum that recreates a circa-1900 jail experience and tells Monroe County history. Whitehead Street 500 block looking south from Courthouse about 1900. Monroe County Library Collection."



-- Charlotte Twine, Keys Weekly

[Read entire article](#)

## Anna Maria: "Roundabouts a thing of the future"



Photo: Kane Kaiman

"They'll be coming round the island when they come.

Funding for the construction of roundabouts at some Anna Maria Island intersections could be available in 2030, according to the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2020-45 long-range plan.

Roundabouts could come sooner depending on the timing of the Florida Department of Transportation 'Complete Streets' project studies and municipal undertakings in Holmes Beach.

According to the cost-feasible outline of the MPO's long-range plan, three island



intersections could receive roundabout construction funding in 2030:

Cortez Road at Gulf Drive in Bradenton Beach

East Bay Drive at Manatee Avenue in Holmes Beach

Gulf Drive at Manatee Avenue in Holmes Beach"

-- Kane Kaiman, The Islander

[Read entire article](#)

Additional roundabout projects:  
Scenic or not?

**Florida Tech**

[Roundabouts, 30 mph speed limit proposed for Babcock Street near Florida Tech campus](#)

**North Port**

[Roundabout we go: North Port's solution at busy intersection](#)

**Sebastian**

[Proposed FDOT roundabout on County Road 510 draws concerns about traffic confusion](#)

**Osprey**

[\\$3M Roundabout Will Relieve Dorman & Boyette In 2023](#)

**Daytona Beach UPDATE:** No on roundabout

[Daytona Beach's A1A and ISB intersection no longer targeted for a roundabout](#)

"South Florida teen planting the seeds of life with mangrove nonprofit"



Photo: Mangrolife FB

"Jonah Basi may be 16 years old and a junior at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, but he's got a big vision for what he wants South Florida to look like in the future.

'I want to see huge green mangroves all along the seawalls that I know are contributing to that cleaner water,' he says. 'A blue waterway that's reflecting the sky and not reflecting the toxins and everything that's in it. And a waterway that's not filled with trash.'

And he's not waiting for anyone else to do it. Basi, who founded the nonprofit MangroLife, is getting his hands dirty and being the change he wants to see in the world.

'This is the most important fight there is for me,' he says. 'This is the topic of my college application essays. This is all I talk about.'

Heartbroken to see the constant garbage and pollution clogging the Fort Lauderdale waterway behind his family's new home, he decided to do something about it — not just collecting trash, but seeds of life.

Propagules are the seeds produced by red mangroves. Basi finds them floating on the water, and since last fall he's been planting them, first along the seawall behind his home, then growing them in tanks and replanting the seedlings in pots

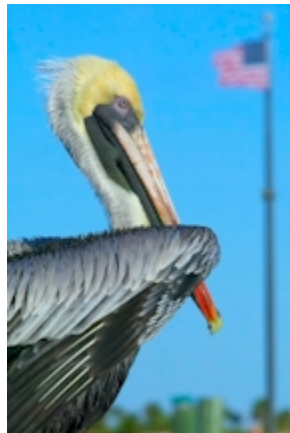
as they grow.

'But those ones, instead of keeping them on our property we've always had the intention to transplant them,' he says.

And that's how MangroLife was born. Baby mangroves, nurtured by Basi in his backyard until they're big and strong enough to be replanted where they're needed most — along the shorelines and seawalls, near ailing waters desperate for the good they bring."

-- Louis Aguirre, Local 10 News, Fort Lauderdale

[Read entire article](#)



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