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Magic City among 3 big projects to move forward in Miami

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The Miami City Commission voted to advance three major development proposals that could reshape different neighborhoods on March 28.

The Magic City Innovation District in Little Haiti and the Miami Produce center in Allapattah were both approved on first reading for their respective special area plans (SAP). They will both require a second vote, which is currently scheduled for late June.

The 7 at Blue Lagoon project received final approval from the City Commission, and must navigate the administrative entitlement and permitting process before it can break ground.

In all three cases, these projects would bridge dense residential development to neighborhoods that currently have mostly low-lying residential buildings. Little Haiti and



MAGIC CITY INNOVATION DISTRICT

Allapattah have traditionally been low-income neighborhoods with large minority populations. Housing costs have increased in both areas.

The \$1.36 billion Magic City Innovation District would cover 17.75 acres at 6300 N.E. Fourth Ave. The new zoning would permit 2,630 residential units totaling 2.64 million square feet, 2.21 million square feet of office space, 520,970 square feet of commercial space, 201,600 square feet of hotel space with 432 hotel rooms, 119,610 square feet of expo space, 6,061 parking spaces, and 3.8 acres of civic/open space. The maximum height would be 25 stories.

After negotiations with city officials and feedback from residents, the developers agreed to contribute \$31 million into the newly formed Little Haiti Revitalization Trust, which would support community efforts such as affordable housing and local small business development.

The partners in the Magic City Innovation District at Canadian billionaire Guy Laliberté, founder of Cirque du Soleil; Tony Cho of Miami brokerage and development firm Metro 1; Miami venture capital firm Dragon Global; and Miami-based Plaza Equity Partners, led by Neil Fairman, Anthony Burns and George Helmstetter. Laliberté is housing a new entertainment and technology company there.

Robert Zangrillo, of Dragon Global, recently stepped down from his supervisory role in the real estate project after he was indicted in March for his role in a nationwide college admissions bribery scheme.

“Our team has been diligently working with institutions and community leaders to ensure that the project embraces the rich culture that has been thriving in Little Haiti for decades,” Fairman said. “As we move forward, we will continue to identify partnerships and opportunities to facilitate growth and cultural prosperity in Little Haiti.”

Miami Produce Center

Miami Produce Center LLC, managed by Miami Beach developer Robert S. Wennett, tapped Danish architect Bjarke Ingels for a bold design in Allapattah. Four of the buildings would rise 19 stories each, and the other four would be 10 stories. Several of the buildings would be elevated atop tall columns while appearing to balance on top of the neighboring buildings.

Located on 8.25 acres at 2140 N.W. 12th Ave., Miami Produce Center would have up to

1,200 residential units in 859,782 square feet, 239,886 square feet of offices, 227 hotel rooms in 113,652 square feet, 74,800 square feet of retail, 76,347 square feet for schools, and 1,149 parking spaces.

The project would replace a food distribution warehouse.

“The Miami Produce Special Area Plan will be a catalyst for creating a more sustainable, pedestrian and transportation-oriented community within Miami’s urban core,” said Bilzin Sumberg attorney Javier Aviñó, who represents the developer. “Miami Produce addresses our community’s growing demand for new housing options that lower the barrier to entry for residents in search of a central location with access to public transit.”

7 at Blue Lagoon

The 7 at Blue Lagoon LLC and the Weiss Group of Cos. want to build 888 apartments, 294 hotel rooms, and 1,412 parking spaces.

Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr attorneys Miguel Diaz de la Portilla and Elinette Ruiz-Diaz de la Portilla helped the developers secure approval for the 6.9-acre site at 4865, 4875 and 4885 N.W. Seventh St. It would have six buildings, with a maximum height of 16 stories.

The development agreement said 53 of the units would be affordable housing and 84 units would be workforce housing.

The property is just east of the Waterford at Blue Lagoon, a major business park.

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