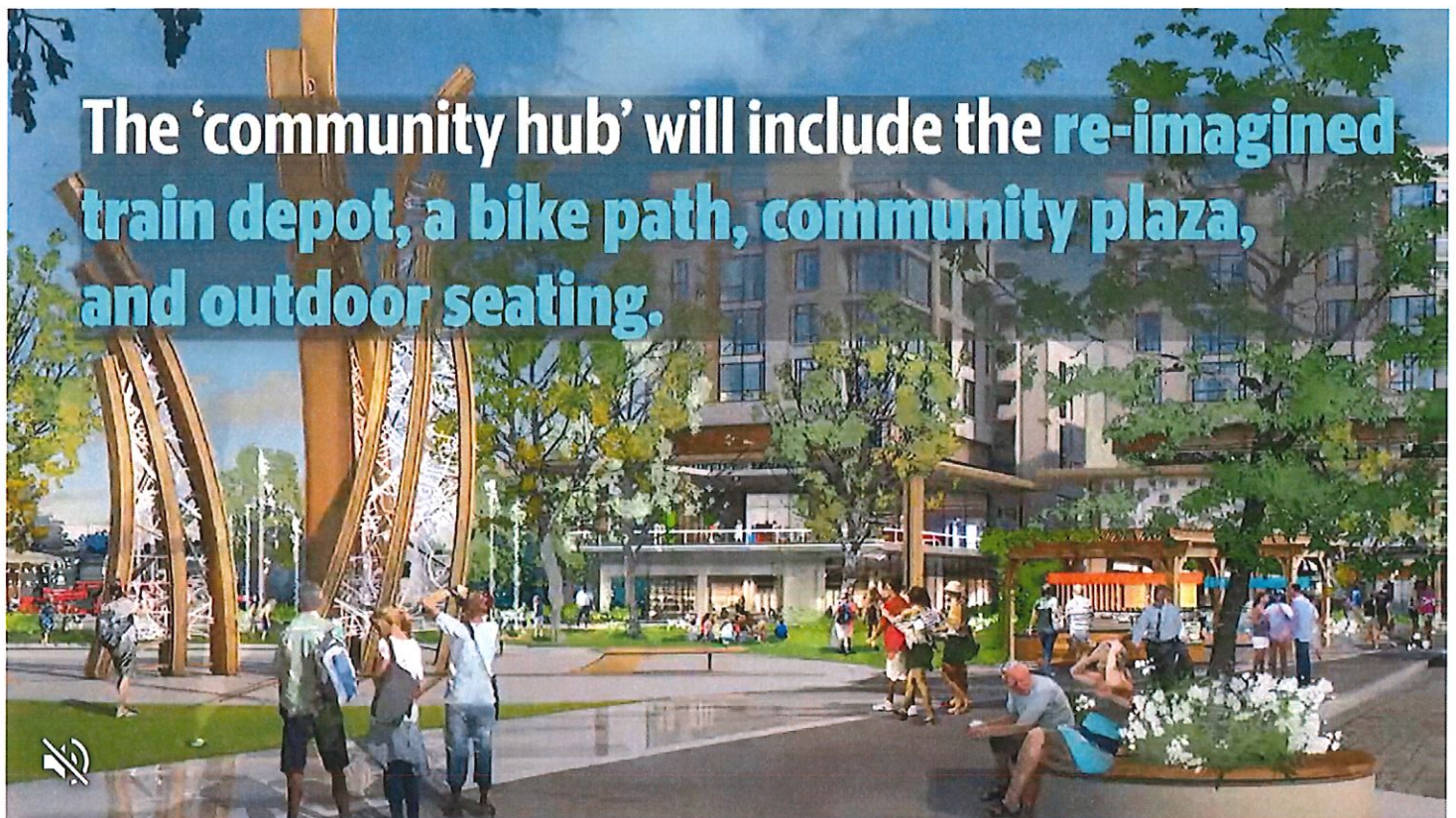


How long will it take? A look into the timeline for Myrtle Beach's re-imagined downtown

BY ADAM BENSON

UPDATED MARCH 23, 2023 3:55 PM



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ARTS AND INNOVATION: DOWNTOWN MYRTLE BEACH REVITALIZED

The iconic South Carolina city is facing an urban metamorphosis. Once vibrant enough to win a listing on the National Register of Historic Places, Myrtle Beach's core today is dotted with empty buildings, overgrown lots and real estate fliers. But over the next 15 years, a monumental plan to repopulate the district has potential to catapult its downtown back to the thriving area it once was.

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Mayor Brenda Bethune said the city expects to stay on pace with the deadlines officials set for themselves as the arts and innovation district takes shape.

“The city’s advanced master plan incorporates many projects that are large in scale. It is crucial that we have timelines in place for each, so that we stay focused and accountable to the community,” she said. “People need to see that we are staying on taking and taking these projects seriously.”

The document lays out milestones the city intends to reach through 2035, along with a second set of goals that are more flexible as work commences.

PHASE ONE: 2020-2022

- Nance Plaza improvements
- City Hall need assessment
- Police station, municipal court and structured parking
- public parking improvements
- Construction documents for proposed Broadway theater in partnership with Coastal Carolina University
- Opening of HTC Aspire Hub co-working space
- Utility, roadway and streetscape and infrastructure engineering

PHASE TWO: 2022-2025

- Design and construction of a realigned Broadway Street
- Parking improvements and better pedestrian connections
- Design of a new municipal library
- Design of a children’s museum
- Increased activity in ground floor locations

PHASE THREE: 2025-2035

midway through the next decade, downtown Myrtle Beach will feature cultural assets, more organized parking and a state-of-the art public services complex for police and government if all goes according to plan.

- Mixed use ground floor active uses
- Mixed use residential
- U.S. Highway 501 realignment
- New municipal center
- New police station
- New municipal court

This story was originally published March 21, 2023, 5:00 AM.

ADAM BENSON



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Myrtle Beach buys up more land for larger downtown redevelopment project

BY CHASE DUNCAN CHASE.DUNCAN@MYHORRYNEWS.COM

Feb 16, 2023

1 of



y Janet Morgan janet.morgan@myhorrynews.com

have two vacant lots, the city now owns all of the property on three blocks from Kings Highway to Flagg Street between 7th and 8th avenues north.

he \$3 million three-parcel purchase Tuesday totals about \$33 million the city of Myrtle Beach has invested in the downtown area since December 2021.



The White Sands Motel was purchased by the city of Myrtle Beach for \$2 million on Tuesday. The motel is located at 708 Kings Highway. Photo by Janet Morgan / janet.morgan@myhorrynews.com
 net morgan

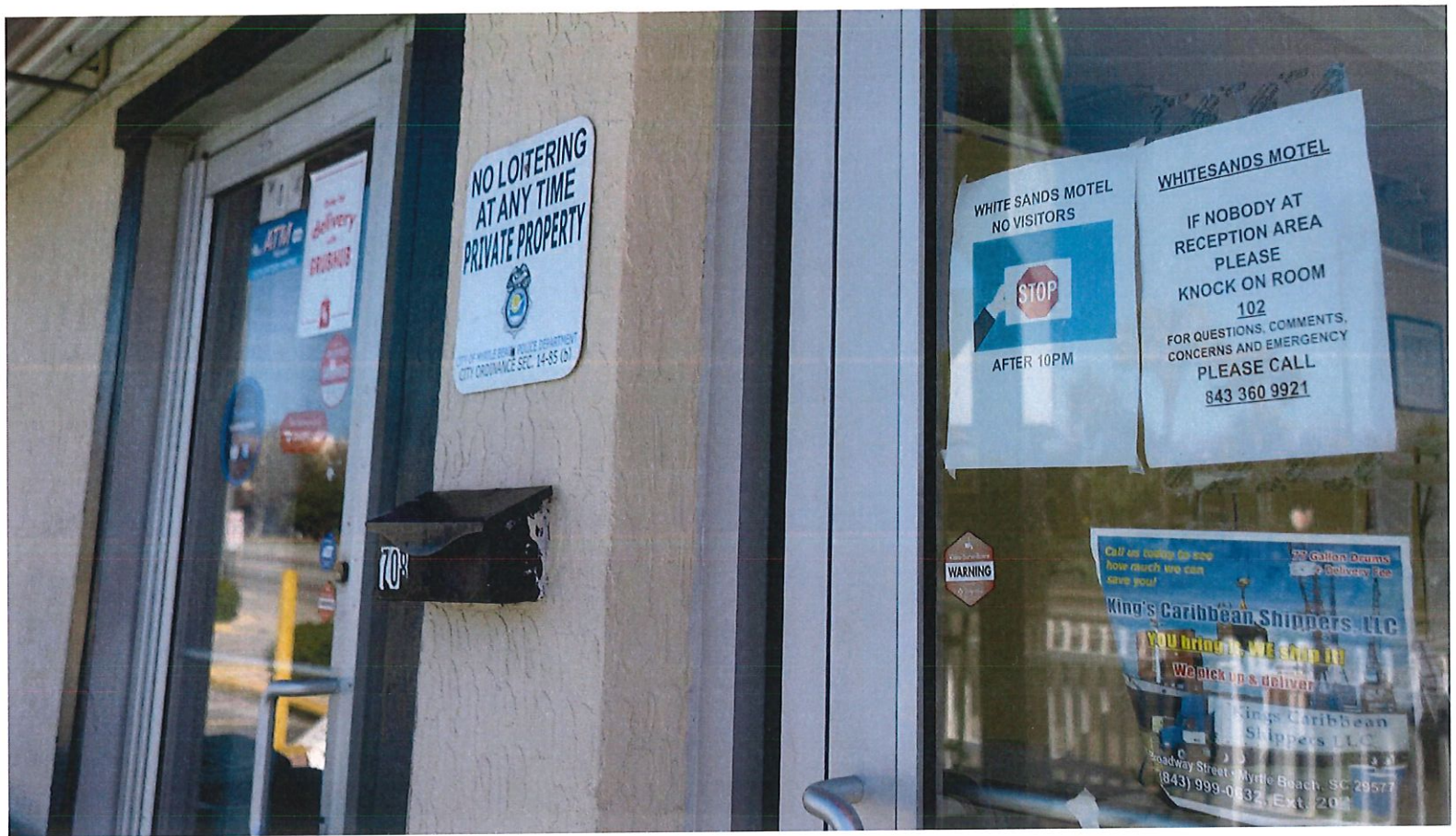
The two lots not owned by the city on the three blocks are an old go-kart track and a vacant lot, both owned by Burroughs & Chapin. All of the land is next to the 10.6-acre site of the former Myrtle Beach Pavilion and Amusement Park, also owned by Burroughs & Chapin. The old Pavilion site is where the Carolina Country Music Festival is held each summer.

Two of the three parcels the city committed to buying on Tuesday are vacant lots. The city bought the pair of vacant lots for \$1 million.

The third, 708 Kings Highway, is where White Sands Motel stands. The city bought it for \$2 million and has agreed to lease the structure to White Sands Motel business owner Bouchra Baihoum for eight months at \$2,500 a month.

Baihoum said the sale was something the city wanted, rather than herself.

"The city wants it, so I have to sell it," she said. "If the lease could have been longer than that, I would really appreciate it. Because I spent more than 20 years paying off payments, and I was hoping to do something else on this property."



The White Sands Motel was purchased by the city of Myrtle Beach for \$2 million on Tuesday. The motel is located at 708 Kings Highway. Photo by Janet Morgan / janet.morgan@myhorrynews.com
net morgan

White Sands Motel is sandwiched between the recently purchased Subway restaurant and Auto Money Title Loans. The city is also leasing those structures to the business owners.

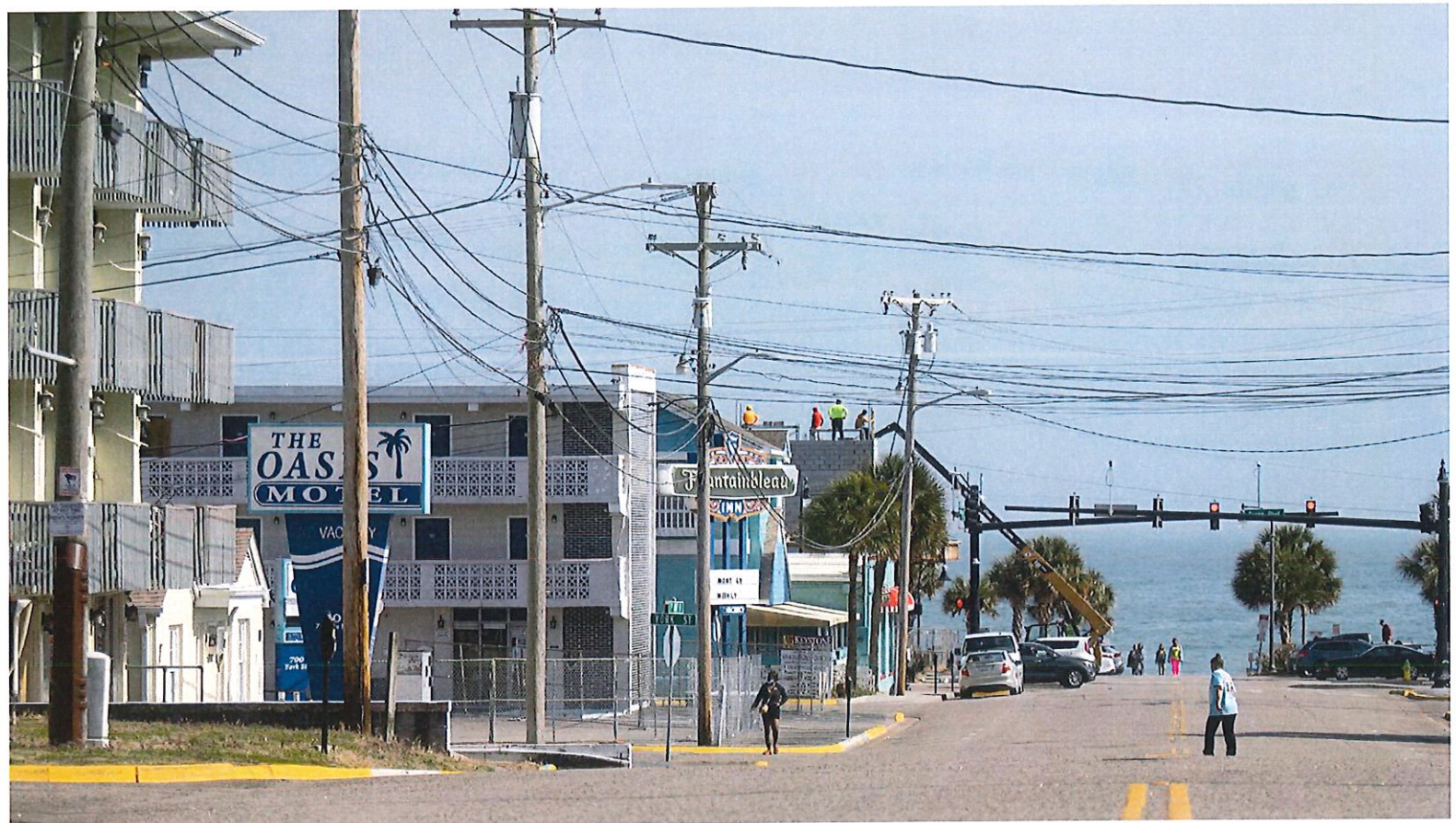
Assistant City Manager Brian Tucker said Tuesday's purchase is the final piece to move ahead with a larger redevelopment plan for the city.



Coming out of the Fountainbleau Inn basement, Jamie Martin of JMEC checks out what's been left behind. JMEC is the company that will be demolishing the building. Asbestos removal is expected to continue for a few weeks and then the building off 7th Avenue North and Flagg Street will be demolished. The basement walls will be taken out and dirt will be used to fill in the hole. The Fountainbleau Inn is one of a dozen properties in the downtown area the city has purchased. Photo by Janet Morgan/janet.morgan@myhorrynews.com

The land acquisitions began in December 2021 with the city buying 10 parcels in the downtown area.

Those 10 parcels that we bought at that point were a primary and public safety concern," Tucker said. "As we evaluated the redevelopment opportunity, we recognized it could be more impactful if we were able to assemble a larger contiguous piece for a larger redevelopment property project. So that's, we've been, we've been working toward that since then."



The Fountainbleau Inn and Oasis Motel on 7th Avenue North are just two of a dozen properties in the downtown area the city has purchased. Photo by Janet Morgan/janet.morgan@myhorrynews.com

Many of the buildings the city bought between 7th and 8th avenues north from Kings Highway to Flagg Street have been demolished including restaurants Bodo's and Carnacle Bill's Rum & Raw Bar, and motels Fountainbleau Inn, Sea Palms, the Sea Nymph and Oasis. Left standing and being leased include Nathan's Famous Hotdogs and Scoops Ice Cream, Midtown Inn and Bombay at the Beach.



The Myrtle Beach City Council agreed to purchase a pair of neighboring properties on 7th Avenue North on Tuesday. The council agreed to buy 10 other properties in December for \$15 million. All of the property is located east of Kings Highway in the downtown area. Photo by Janet Morgan/janet.morgan@myhorrynews.com

own," Tucker said of the White Sands Motel, Subway and Auto Money Title Loans.

With Tuesday's purchase, the city owns all of the block from Kings Highway to Chester Street between 7th and 8th avenues north. It's 4.35 acres.

The city owns most of the block from Chester Street to York Street between the avenues except the .24 acre old for-kart track. The city's land on that block is 1.81 acres

The city also owns most of the block between the avenues from Flagg Street to York Street totaling 1.11 acres. The remaining lot on Flagg Street, a .24-acre vacant lot, is owned by Burroughs & Chapin.



The remains of Bodo's German Restaurant & Pub are heaped in a pile off 8th Avenue North in Myrtle Beach. Photo by Janet Morgan / janet.morgan@myhorrynews.com

The purchases connect property between avenues reaching to the buildings facing Ocean Boulevard up to the Arts and Innovation District across Kings Highway.

City staff has repeated the area was targeted because it has been in decline for more than 20 years with deteriorating buildings that has deterred businesses from investing in the city's traditional center.

Tucker has said the connecting property and location to the ocean is what creates a magnet to developers since they would only have to negotiate a price with the city rather than with multiple property owners. And, he added, it gives the city more control in picking what goes on the property when developers submit bids and plans. The city has not released the names of interested developers, but Tucker said plans may include anything from retail to residential projects.



The Sea Palms is being prepared for demolition on Friday, Sept. 2, 2022. It is located on 7th Avenue North within sight of the ocean across the street from the Oasis Motel. Photo by Janet Morgan/janet.morgan@myhorrynews.com

The process began when the city passed its master plan in 2019. That created a blueprint for future development. Pages of the plan are filled with drawings of what the area could look like if it were revitalized and redeveloped.

The plans include the Arts and Innovation District fronted by the Nance Plaza fountain across Kings Highway from Subway, White Sands Motel and Auto Money Title stores. The city bolstered the master plan with an update in 2020. The city defined the Oceanfront Redevelopment Project as 14th Avenue South to 22nd Avenue North and created a special tax district within the area.

Throughout the city limits, and beyond, the city of Myrtle Beach owns more than 1,040 acres, according to Horry County land records. The city's property includes numerous public parks, Whispering Pines Golf Club, cemeteries, the Myrtle Beach Convention Center, ball fields, beachfront parking, dog parks, the Boardwalk, playgrounds, police and fire departments, drainage ponds, buildings in the Arts and Innovation District, easements and land adjoining the Burroughs & Chapin property downtown.

In the land records, there's the 20-acre Pelicans Ballpark site the city owns with Horry County. There's also a 0.87-acre tract near Lee's Landing off S.C. 90 listed as a radio and beacon site. There's a 0.32-acre site straddling the city limits of North Myrtle Beach and Briarcliffe Acres listed as a well site.

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Thanksgiving dinner returns as future of Myrtle Beach's Midtown is in question

Myrtle Beach, North Myrtle Beach officials share visions and goals for 2024

LOCAL

Will Myrtle Beach's housing crunch bite into its downtown development? The city has a plan

BY ADAM BENSON

UPDATED MARCH 21, 2023 8:45 AM



Myrtle Beach hopes to create a mixed-income Workforce Community with housing lining the edge of the district. The plans envision businesses on the ground level of Mr. Joe White Avenue with residential spaces above with balconies facing the street. The City of Myrtle Beach is presenting a vision for the re-development of a section of downtown known as the 'Arts and Innovation District.' Illustrations courtesy of the LS3P architecture firm. October 10, 2021. LS3P



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Arts and Innovation: Downtown Myrtle Beach revitalizes

The iconic South Carolina city is facing an urban metamorphosis. Once vibrant enough to win a listing on the National Register of Historic Places, Myrtle Beach's core today is dotted with empty buildings, overgrown lots and real estate fliers. But over the next 15 years, a monumental plan to repopulate the district has potential to catapult its downtown back to the thriving area it once was.

EXPAND ALL

MYRTLE BEACH

Kristen St. Pierre is rare among Myrtle Beach's residents.

A landscape designer at architecture firm SGA|NW, her apartment is located a staircase above the Broadway Street office — putting her in the heart of a downtown district that's evolving before her eyes.

"I love it. I'm really excited with everything that's up and coming here," St. Pierre said. "I just moved here from Chicago where everything's walkable. Grocery store, transportation, entertainment. So living here knowing it was going to be different, it was definitely important to have some walkability to some amenities."

The city's planned arts and culture hub spanning Broadway, Oak, Main streets and 9th Ave N. includes space for mixed-income housing — a well-documented challenge across South Carolina that continues to vex its fastest growing regions.

St. Pierre's apartment is a few blocks from the area, but she's one of the few residents living downtown.

TOP VIDEOS

https://www.myhorrynews.com/news/local/myrtle_beach/myrtle-beach-moving-forward-with-revitalizing-downtown-area/article_28600e8e-2a7b-11ed-8225-172d03468ffc.html

Myrtle Beach moving forward with next steps in downtown revitalization

Assistant City Manager Brian Tucker said phase 1B for the downtown master plan is underway

BY IAN LIVINGSTON BROOKING IAN.BROOKING@MYHORRYNEWS.COM

Sep 2, 2022



Nance Plaza fronts several projects in the Arts and Innovation District of Myrtle Beach off 9th Avenue North and Kings Highway. Photo by Janet Morgan/janet.morgan@myhorrynews.com

The revitalization of downtown Myrtle Beach has reached a turning point.

During a workshop meeting Thursday, city council members were provided an update on improvements involving the Arts & Innovation District and surrounding areas.

Assistant City Manager Brian Tucker said phase 1B for the downtown master plan is underway, focusing on utility infrastructure such as water and sewage lines.

"The sign this sends to everybody locally, and external investors and developers, is we're doing this," Tucker said. "We're at a point now where we're ready to do it."

A timeline given to council indicates the city plans to enter into contracts with developers by February with the hopes of construction starting in late March.

Once construction gets underway, a chunk of the area around Oak Street will be shut down as crews work on underground pipelines. The intersections that are to be closed feature Jackson Street, Broadway Street, 8th Avenue North and 9th Avenue North.

...time later, the city's infrastructure project manager, said the projected completion date for the new phase is 2027.



Four road projects planned for Myrtle Beach

By Janet Morgan janet.morgan@myhorrynews.com

Tucker said the overall cost of phase 1B is about \$12 million. He said the city has \$6 million funded and the remaining money will be utilized through bonds.

Miller said the total costs for the utility infrastructure in the Arts & Innovation District will be about \$26.7 million, which includes the \$12 million for phase 1B. Utility infrastructure includes water, sewer and road construction.

The progress in the Arts & Innovation District can be seen primarily along 9th Avenue North with the HTC Aspire Hub and the parking lots behind the row of buildings from Nance Plaza to Broadway Street.

Tucker said the parking lots are built for longevity with a 100-year life expectancy.

"It was created and designed for sustainability, the ability to manage its own stormwater without having to acquire property or eat up parking spaces for stormwater retention ponds," Tucker said. "It sets the tone for the type of development that we want to do. If we're willing to do this for a parking lot, what else are we going to do and how else are we going to invest in the city?"

The Arts & Innovation District includes the area of Main Street, Broadway Street, Oak Street and 9th Avenue North.

The district is planned to feature amenities for residents and tourists, including shops, restaurants, a theater, a new library and housing.



Myrtle Beach secures more land downtown, continuing the push for redevelopment

By Ian Livingston Brooking ian.brooking@myhorrynews.com

City Councilman John Krajc called Thursday a "momentous day" for the city, praising previous and current city staff for guiding the city to where it is today.

...is in place so that they can make their move and privately invest in the public project of the city of Myrtle Beach,” Krajc said.

Miller said it’s hard to pinpoint an overall cost for everything pertaining to the Arts & Innovation District.

However, there were some costs discussed during Thursday’s presentation.

The new theater planned for the district is expected to cost around \$12.8 million, Tucker said. The new theater is part of a partnership between Coastal Carolina University and the city.

Following meetings with the university earlier this week, Tucker believes the city and CCU will be finalizing contracts soon.

Tucker said the theater will be used 317 days the first year and is expected to bring more than 29,500 new visitors to the area. But over a decade, Tucker said, the theater could bring in more than 350,000 new visitors to the Arts & Innovation District.



Municipal improvement district in Myrtle Beach approved. What comes next?
By Ian Livingston Brooking ian.brooking@myhorrynews.com

Along with a new theater, Chapin Library will also be getting an upgrade.

During Thursday’s presentation, the three-story community library was discussed. As in previous plans, it is drawn in to serve as the focal point for the community hub inside the Arts & Innovation District.

Tucker said there are no plans of what to do with the current Chapin Library building now.

Tucker said the city will likely move forward with the construction of other projects as phase 1B continues. Tucker anticipates the construction of “vertical buildings” to take place in the next year or two.



Myrtle Beach continues land buys for stormwater retention near the Arts & Innovation District

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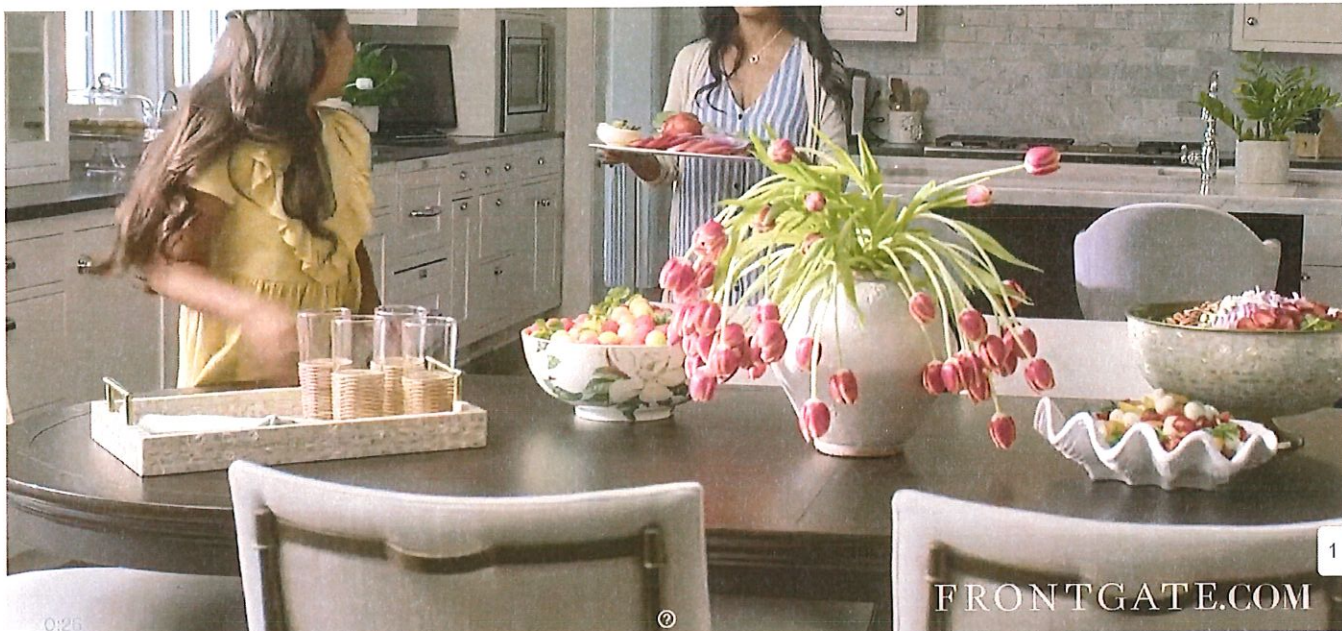
Myrtle Beach leaders approve downtown redevelopment to clean up 'nuisance' properties

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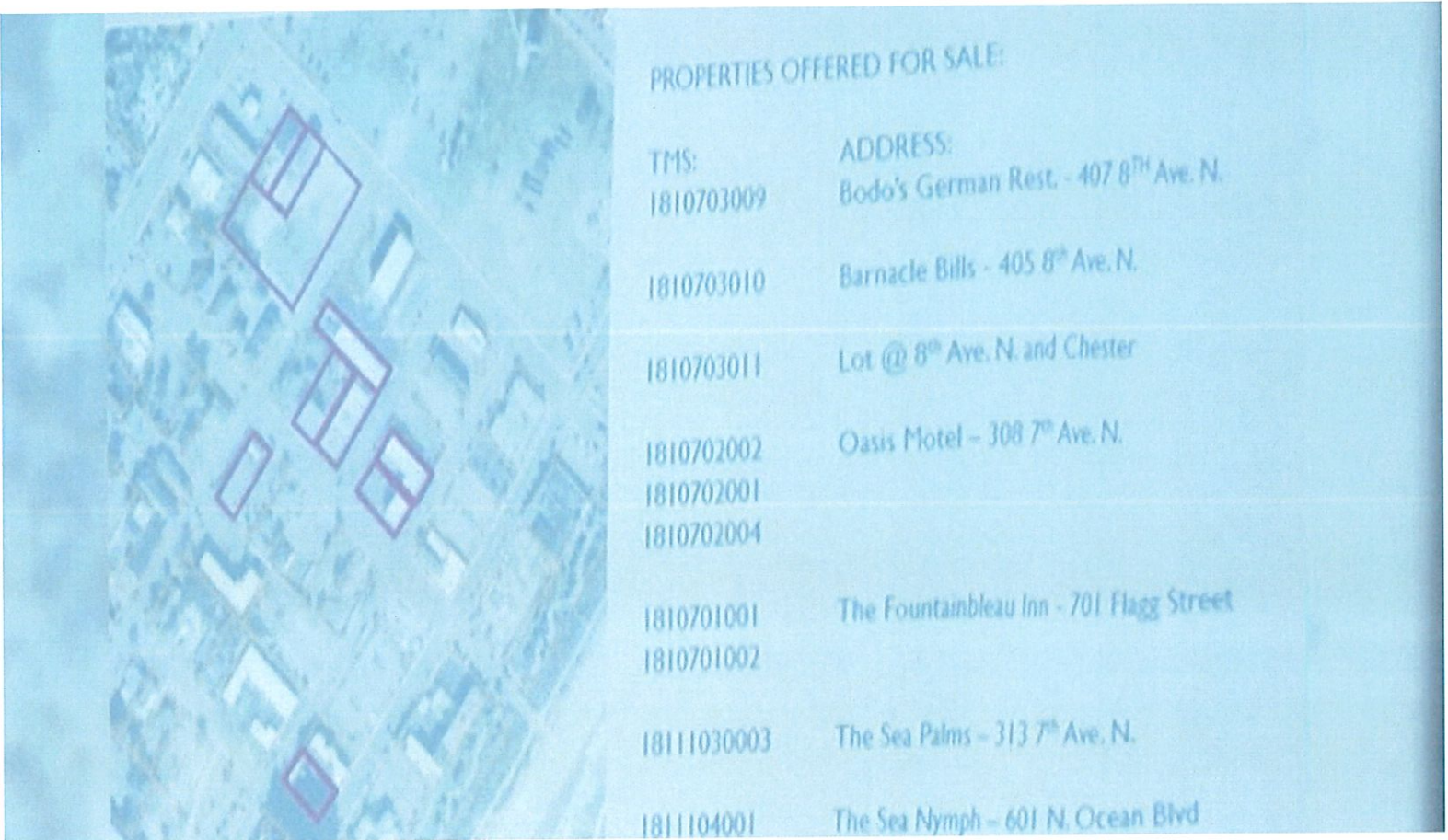
by Jennifer Roberts

Published: Dec. 15, 2021 at 9:55 AM EST



MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (WMBF) - The City of Myrtle Beach is taking another step towards revitalizing downtown and this time it will involve acquiring properties some residents label as 'nuisances' to the area.

During the Tuesday council meeting, leaders [approved a resolution](#) that allows them to purchase various parcels of real estate located in the Oceanfront Redevelopment Project Area in Myrtle Beach. That's between Ocean Boulevard and the developing Arts and Innovation District.



List of properties City of Myrtle Beach looking to acquire by the end of the month (City of Myrtle Beach)

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Seven of the properties are associated with older motels, one is a vacant lot. The remaining are commercial properties.

During the council meeting, the assistant city manager Brian Tucker presented a chart that reveals so far this year, The Myrtle Beach Police Department has responded to more than 600 calls for service in those 10 areas which include Fountainbleu Inn and Sea Nymph motel.

That's elevated over the last two years," Tucker said before city council members.

He says city leaders approving a resolution to purchase those 10 parcels fits into the downtown master plan for revitalizing the area while making it somewhere people want to visit on a regular basis.

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The police department is very supportive of our move today," Tucker said. "In order to be serious about downtown redevelopment, they have to take some big steps, some bold steps, I think we had a 7-0 vote to take those steps."

Myrtle Beach leaders will buy the properties for \$15 million.

The money comes from already approved Tax Increment Financing, also known as TIF bonds.

Tucker says these select parcel properties were already being offered or marketed for sale.

He added, the city making this move is in direct response to the concerns of the residents they serve.

This is city council listening to the people of Myrtle Beach," Tucker said. "Responding to requests from residents to move Myrtle Beach into the next chapter."

The city hopes to close on the properties by the end of the month, with a goal to begin the demolition stages sometime in early Spring.

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Myrtle Beach leaders provide updates on downtown revitalization efforts

by Jennifer Roberts

Published: Aug. 6, 2021 at 7:47 PM EDT



MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (WMBF) - Renovation and revitalization are two big things that are happening in downtown Myrtle Beach.

On Thursday, city officials unveiled its latest efforts to spruce up the area and make it easier to walk around.

Councilmembers held a workshop at the John T. Rhodes Myrtle Beach Sports Center, and the agenda was all about the city's revitalization efforts for the downtown area.

This is a very important day," said Myrtle Beach Mayor Brenda Bethune. "For the community, for council."

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The master plans for the project were adopted in 2019, but Bethune said Thursday was another opportunity to share more of the progress city leaders have made with the plans.

One of those plans involves the Broadway Theater, which officials say has construction documents complete. However, there are more items to check off on their to-do list before any bids can be made.

Improvements to the Myrtle Beach Boardwalk are also in the works. The project has been a major topic of discussion among residents and tourists who want to see the wooded structure repaired.

It's a little rough," said Christian Poteet, who's visiting the area.

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Designer company Pike McFarland Hall Associates Inc. presented plans to council members Thursday with ways to bring some new life to the boardwalk.

A key ingredient to that idea? Fake wood.

Designers are proposing using synthetic wood, which has a longer lifespan compared to natural lumber.

A city spokesperson said council members have not made any final decisions about whether to move forward with using synthetic wood.

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One of the workshop's biggest, and most talked-about updates, surrounded the roads.

The city previously made recommendations to the South Carolina Department of Transportation with ways to better connect nearby communities to the Arts and Innovation District.

Those ideas include creating intersections and pedestrian walkways so people can conveniently get to the district.

This is in the same area where the DOT is expected to realign Highway 501 at the Broadway Street intersection, eventually connecting to 7th Avenue North at Oak Street.

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Downtown development project members said SCDOT has accepted their ideas which will make the Arts and Innovation District more pedestrian-friendly.

In the Arts and Innovation District, the traffic patterns are what I call wonky," said Lauren Clever, Director for Downtown Development. "The intersections are very odd, they're angled weird. We're really looking at aligning those roadways so they make sense. Whether they're signalized intersections or four-way stop signs with significant pedestrian markings on the streets."

We need the proper infrastructure," she said. "That's water, sewer, storm drainage, and our roadways, and the pedestrian connection and the biking we want to include. That's always been a goal and vision for this area. There are a lot of moving parts. And the 501 realignment project is a key project. It takes some really heavy traffic out of that small business area and diverts it out to the oceanfront as another major corridor into the City of Myrtle Beach in the downtown oceanfront area."

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Clever says the city is waiting to hear back from SCDOT on when the designs reflecting their recommendations are updated.

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