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## **Myrtle Beach, North Myrtle Beach in 2025: Big projects, mayor elections on the horizon**

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The Arts and Innovation District in downtown Myrtle Beach. Photo by S.T. Cardinal/Tommy.cardinal@myhorrynews.com



With 2024 in the rearview mirror, local leaders are planning and looking ahead to 2025.

Revitalizing downtown Myrtle Beach and regulating short-term rentals in North Myrtle Beach are priorities for city leaders, and business news is highlighted by the entrance of Trader Joe's near Socastee and a Guy Fieri restaurant/arcade concept near North Myrtle Beach. Also on the calendar are local elections for mayor and council seats in both cities.

### Downtown master plan

In Myrtle Beach, Mayor Brenda Bethune said there could be progress on the planning front for the future of a group of parcels the city owns near the former Pavilion site.

"We will continue to explore and develop a master plan for our property east of Kings Highway," Bethune said. "A thriving downtown is crucial to our longterm economic viability."

Myrtle Beach buys more land, gets state opioid settlement money and applies for grants

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The former Pavilion site, a 10.6 acre plot sandwiched between Kings Highway and Ocean Boulevard, is owned by Myrtle Beach Farms Company Inc. (Burroughs and Chapin). Across 8th Avenue North from that parcel, the city has been purchasing land with the goal of revitalizing downtown through redevelopment. Since 2021, the city has purchased 22 parcels bound by 8th Avenue, 7th Avenue, Kings Highway and Ocean Boulevard for a total of \$32 million.

What's in store for the area could become more clear in 2025 as progress on the master plan continues.

### **Needed improvements to Pelicans Ballpark**

For a few weeks in 2024, it seemed as though the Myrtle Beach Pelicans may have played their last innings at the beach.

In September, MLB-mandated improvements to the Pelicans Ballpark had yet to be funded, and city, county and Pelicans leaders had not come to an agreement on how the cost for renovations to the stadium would be split between the three.

(The city of Myrtle Beach owns a 70% stake in the stadium and Horry County owns 30%.)

In 2020, MLB announced new facility standards which teams must adhere to by April 2025. To meet those standards, at least \$15 million would need to be invested into the 26-year-old stadium, city spokesperson Meredith Denari said in September, adding that the cost could increase to \$80 million depending on how many improvements/renovations are agreed upon.

"It's also important to note that these mandated upgrades are not something the city of Myrtle Beach, Horry County or the Pelicans asked for. Major League Baseball has imposed the list of changes – focused on player development, not the fan experience – with no plans or financial backing to pay for it," Myrtle Beach spokesperson Meredith Denari said in September. "We want the Pelicans in Myrtle Beach and are working on a way to make that happen."