



Fort Lauderdale development likely to intensify south of New River: panel

Developers may become more active in northwest area, less so downtown and the beach

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Dev Motwani, Ken Stiles and Jack Seiler on the New River in Fort Lauderdale

Intense real estate development in Fort Lauderdale may shift from the downtown area and the beach to neighborhoods south of the New River and other areas.

“You’re going to see a tremendous [development] amount of activity downtown, and that will continue,” said Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jack Seiler. But in upcoming years, “I think you’re going to see more on South Andrews Avenue.”

Seiler was one of five members of a panel who spoke Wednesday night at the sales center for the [Gale Residences Fort Lauderdale Beach](#).

Another panelist, Ken Stiles, co-CEO of [Fort Lauderdale-based Stiles Corp.](#), cited the potential for development of the area around the Broward Health Medical Center at 1600 South Andrews Avenue.

“It’s just waiting for somebody to step in and do something there,” Stiles said. “There’s not a lot of opportunity downtown anymore ... so you’re going to have to look elsewhere.”

Yet Stiles also said assembling large tracts of land in the South Andrews Avenue corridor is a challenge: “There are a couple of big landholders there that make it difficult for us to go in there.”

Fort Lauderdale-based [developer Dev Motwani](#) said the city’s planned streetcar system, the Wave, will reinvigorate the South Andrews Avenue corridor when it starts operating there.

“Imagine what’s going to happen when the Wave starts operating,” he said. “Housing is an obvious play” for developers in the South Andrews area, “but there’s also retail [opportunity]. You can bring restaurants and shops that you didn’t have the daytime population for.”

Sean Jones, vice president of Milton Jones Development Corp. in Dania Beach, said he expects more new construction to unfold northwest of downtown Fort Lauderdale in the Sistrunk Boulevard corridor.

“You’re going to see more intense development in the northwest,” Jones said, citing such catalysts as the summer startup of the Brightline passenger train service at its Fort Lauderdale station, located at 101 Northwest Second Avenue.

The Fort Lauderdale economy is on a roll. Employment in metropolitan Fort Lauderdale increased by 28,604 jobs in 2016, more than in Palm Beach County and Miami-Dade County combined, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

But financing development in Fort Lauderdale still can be difficult, Jones said. “It’s a great place. But many times, banks are looking at things on a national basis, and on a national basis, they’re starting to pull back on financing,” he said.

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