

## Miami-Dade begins fractured reopening; Fort Lauderdale considers partial Las Olas closing for restaurants



MIAMI BEACH, FLA. (WSVN) - As South Florida businesses embark on the road to recovery amid the coronavirus pandemic, they're counting on support from the community and public officials to bounce back.

The cities of Miami, Miami Beach and Hialeah are among the municipalities set to start allowing businesses to reopen on Wednesday.

Retailers, barber shops, and nail and hair salons are scheduled to reopen with restrictions.

**7News cameras captured crews sanitizing signposts and benches in downtown Miami, Tuesday afternoon, ahead of the expected influx of people.**

**“Right now, we are in a very extensive cleaning mood, where they’re cleaning out bus benches. Anything that is touched, it is cleaned,” said Miami Commissioner Manolo Reyes.**

In South Beach, Jaime Delatorre was getting his optical shop ready for reopening. He said his business, Eye Max, has been on Lincoln Road for 18 years, and he’s feeling good about bouncing back.



“Bittersweet, but I’m optimistic. I’m an optimistic person, and I believe we can get through this,” he said.

Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber said reopening businesses two days after several other municipalities in Miami-Dade County was the right move.

“We don’t want to rush into an opening because, frankly, while people are excited and a little antsy, we want to make sure that we don’t get too crowded too soon and do something we regret,” he said.

This first phase of reopening in these cities will include most businesses, but restaurant dining rooms are not scheduled to reopen until May 27.

“We’re going by county and state guidelines,” said Sven Vogtland, the founder of Coyo Taco. “All of our food will be served in to-go containers. All of your staff will be wearing gloves, masks, some wearing face shields.”

Some businesses in Miami Gardens are also scheduled to reopen Wednesday, but full service restaurants, barber shops and salons will remain closed for the time being.

Miami Mayor Francis Suarez said that as all of these businesses begin to reopen, there will be an effort to enforce social distancing rules.

“It’s going to be in three parts. One, obviously, is our police department, the other one is our code compliance department, and the third is the businesses themselves,” he said. “What we did when we implemented the mask rule at groceries and in pharmacies and in banks and in construction sites was, we put it on the owners. If we see widespread abuse and neglect, then we can shut a business down if we have to.”

In Fort Lauderdale, city commissioners are set to discuss the closure of part of Las Olas Boulevard on weekends, or perhaps even an on-street parking lane, so restaurants can use the space for outdoor restaurant seating.

7News cameras captured some restaurant servers taking orders from customers wearing face masks at outdoor dining areas along Las Olas, Tuesday afternoon.

Local businesses have been working with the office of Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis to come up with creative ways to drive revenue, and they came up with the idea of closing the iconic street to vehicular traffic.

Area residents and staffers who spoke with 7News agreed with the suggestion.

“I don’t think there’s any harm in giving it a shot and trying to help out the businesses that exist on Las Olas,” said David Maya, president of the Las Olas Isles Homeowners Association.

“I think it’s great because it gives us more room to invite our customers in,” said Taylor Fuentes, who works at Ann’s Florist, Coffee & Wine Bar on Las Olas.

Ann’s Florist has a sizable patio area with enough space to allow customers to practice social distancing, but many other businesses on Las Olas do not have that space, so employees said the move to close the roadway would make a considerable difference in helping them out.



“No one can survive two months without working,” Fuentes said.

Bob Moorman’s family owns Carroll’s Jewelers on Las Olas.

“People have asked if we’ve been through this before. Yes, after 75 years in business, we’ve been through a few depressions and recessions,” said Moorman.

Moorman said he’s all for adapting to the new norms.

“Change is good,” he said.

Maya said area residents will go for the partial closure of Las Olas, with limits.

“There’s all kinds of people who have been here for a long time, who want to keep things kind of status quo, who are happy with the way things are,” he said. “Look, it’s not a commitment that we’re making, that we’re committing to this forever and ever. Is this a good time to test it out and see if people like it? Yeah, why not?”

City commissioners discussed the measure during their meeting, Tuesday night.

“The concern I’ve been hearing from my constituents on the eastern part of Las Olas is basically letting traffic get through,” said Fort Lauderdale Vice Mayor Steven Glassman. “[There’s also] the concern about [emergency medical services]. EMS time is already very bad.”

“My thought is, if we do explore it, explore it first with one lane really to see how that works,” said Fort Lauderdale Commissioner Ben Sorensen.

Fort Lauderdale City Manager Chris Lagerbloom said this is very much a work in progress, and his office will be working on it for the next few days to see what they can come up with, hopefully in time for the Memorial Day weekend.

To read Miami-Dade County’s “new normal” guidelines, click [here](#).

For more information on reopenings in Broward County, click [here](#).

Anyone with questions and concerns about the coronavirus can call the Florida Department of Health’s 24-hour hotline at 1-866-779-6121.