

Retail-driven developments aim to revitalize South Miami

South Dixie Highway corridor is heating up with shops and restaurants

By [Katherine Kallergis](#) | July 19, 2016 03:05PM



Clockwise from left: Renderings of 5887 Sunset Drive and 5958 South Dixie Highway

Investors and developers have been quietly flocking to South Miami with a retail-driven mindset.

The upscale city bordering Coral Gables has drawn interest from both national and local players as they look to affluent South Florida suburbs for investment opportunities.

Last fall, Federal Realty Investment Trust and its two local partners, Grass River Property and the Comras Company, announced they bought the majority interest in the [Shops at Sunset Place for \\$110 million](#). The goal is to [revamp the aging outdoor mall](#), which serves as an anchor for downtown South Miami. New tenants so far include outdoor furniture store Frontgate.

In the meantime, a number of smaller projects along South Dixie Highway are banking on [South Miami's](#) potential.



5958 South Dixie Highway building in 2014, before it was knocked down earlier this year

Nearby residents may be familiar with the construction *Michael Comras* site at 5998 South Dixie Highway, once home to the popular New Chinatown restaurant. The building, which sold to investment firm Greenstreet Real Estate Partners for \$5.6 million in 2013, has been razed to make way for a restaurant and office project.

Michael Comras, who's handling marketing and leasing, told *TRD* that the new 16,000-square-foot building will have offices on the second floor totaling about 3,300 square feet, three restaurants on the ground floor, and onsite parking. The roughly 31,000-square-foot plot fronts South Dixie Highway, Southwest 73rd

Street and 59th Court. "It's really set up to be a great gathering spot," Comras told *TRD*.

Amicon Construction is working on the ground-up development, slated to open in about a year.

J.P. Perez, project manager, said the new two-story building will be a combination of concrete and structural steel with a coral stone facade, anodized bronze and impact glass. The second story walkway will overlook the ground level, and the building will also feature aluminum railings and wood grain porcelain. STA Architectural Group designed the development, which will be set back 40 feet from the curb fronting South Dixie Highway.

A five-minute walk away, the former MacDonalD's Imperial Cleaners store is being gutted, broken up into new retail spaces, and completely renovated. Beilinson Gomez Architects is redesigning that project, at 5840 Southwest 71st Street. [McKenzie](#) Construction and Craft are working on the exterior, including coating the outside with an engineered wood product, according to a spokesperson for McKenzie.

And in between both projects is 5887 Sunset Drive, where Comras said the owner is creating a pedestrian paseo between that building and the SunTrust bank branch. "We're taking an existing building and expanding it," he said.



Rendering of 5887 Sunset Drive from South Dixie Highway

Asking rents for ground floor retail space in the area are between \$65 a foot and \$75 a foot, with the property at 5998 South Dixie Highway "on the higher end of the spectrum," Comras said. Those restaurants will be a mix of casual and upscale – but not fast food.

East of Sunset Place, the Wendy's at 6601 Red Road sold to a [group of partners for \\$9 million](#) in November. They eventually plan to redevelop the 38,000-square-foot lot, which is technically in Coral Gables. And on the other side of U.S. 1, closer to the planned South Miami projects, a developer purchased the lease for land near the South Miami Metrorail station in May. [Treo Group paid \\$13 million](#) for the site, which has a five-year development timeframe.

While property investment is still underway, tenants have already moved into other spaces.

In the fall, a shared office space firm opened across the street from Sunset Place, at 5790 Sunset Drive. Around the same time, Denmark-based cafe concept [Dr. Smood](#) opened its store steps away at 5801 Sunset Drive.

"We're really strong believers in the South Dixie corridor," Comras said. "There's just a lot of room for improvement."

Tags: [amicon construction](#), [comras company](#), [Greenstreet Real Estate Partners](#), [mckenzie](#), [michael comras](#), [south miami](#)