LOCAL NEWS

Fort Lauderdale staff greenlights 8-tower Live Local project at Galleria mall



A rendering of the proposed megaproject that would transform the Galleria mall in Fort Lauderdale. The current plan calls for eight

buildings, all standing 30 stories high. (Architectonica/Courtesy)



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The eight-tower Live Local project expected to transform the Galleria mall has received the required administrative approval from the city of Fort Lauderdale, according to documents obtained by the South Florida Sun Sentinel on Thursday.

Because it is a Live Local project aimed at increasing the city's stock of affordable housing, the developer is not required to seek approval from the City Commission or planning board.

Despite receiving city approval, the developer still has several requirements that need to be fulfilled before the project can move forward, Mayor Dean Trantalis told the Sun Sentinel. And he's not so sure the developer will be able to meet them, he said.

The controversial project calls for eight 30-story towers, all 300 feet tall, with a total of 3,144 residences.

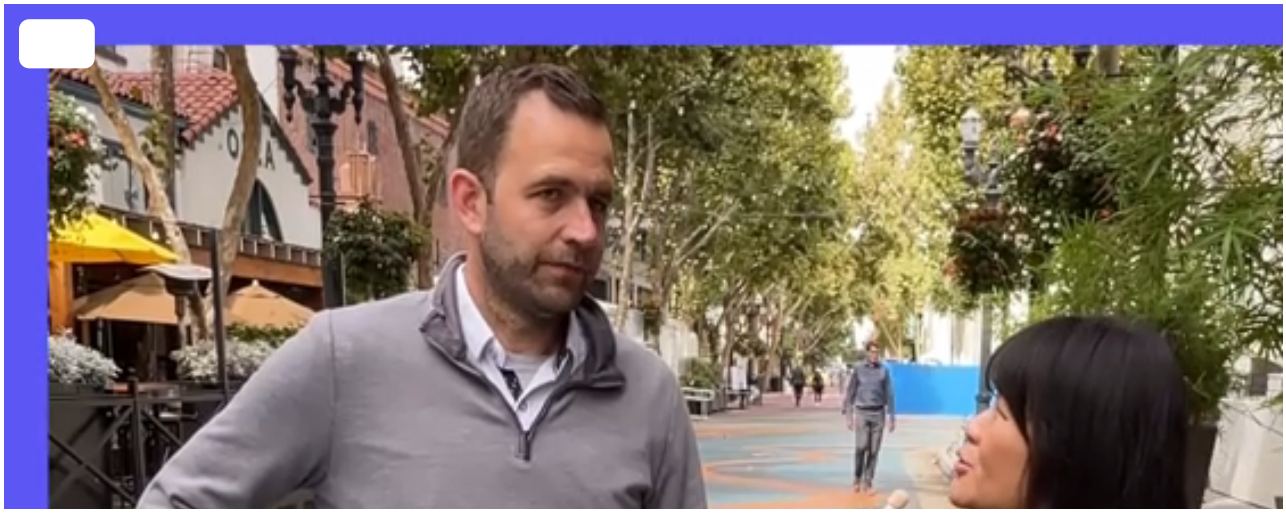


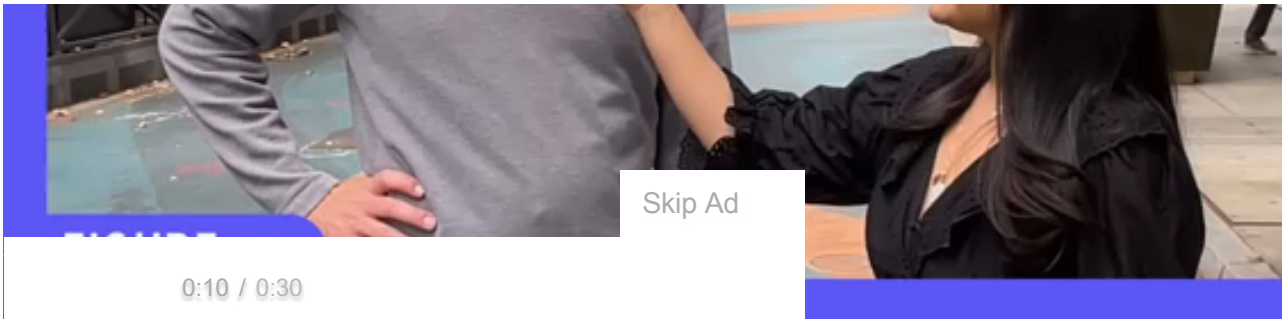
Under current plans, Galleria East will have five towers with a total of 1,981 residential units, according to city records. The homes would be a mix of 1,181 market-rate residences and 800 workforce housing units.

Galleria West will have three towers with a total of 1,163 residential units, including 690 market-rate residences and 473 workforce housing units.

The Galleria West phase also includes 170 hotel rooms; 9,140 square feet of office space; 5,001 square feet of restaurant space; and 4,806 square feet of commercial space.

Galleria East calls for 61,200 square feet of commercial fitness space; 32,596 square feet of commercial space; and 1,360 square feet of restaurant space.





A joint venture that includes GFO Investments, InSite Group, Prime Finance and Atlas Hill Real Estate purchased the 31.5-acre property for $73 million in September 2025.

The month before, redevelopment plans were submitted to City Hall under the Live Local Act.

Under the state's Live Local Act, at least 40% of the 1,981 residential units, or 793 units, must be rented to households making no more than 120% of the county's area median income for a minimum of 30 years.

Based on the current median income of $102,500, renters eligible for the workforce housing apartments would be making from $82,000 to $123,000 a year.

The developer plans to remodel the mall as part of the first phase, Commissioner Steve Glassman told the Sun Sentinel on Thursday.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the mall redone," said Glassman, who added he was not sure when work would get underway.

"The rest, I just have to hope that the area is going to be able to handle all of the traffic and all the capacities," Glassman said. "I know staff took a long time reviewing it. Time will tell, not just in terms of will it get built, but how will this work out."

Opponents of the project, many of whom live nearby, say they are worried about the impact of such a large project on roads as well as infrastructure, including water and sewer pipes.

Stephanie Toothaker, attorney for the developer, sent the following statement to the Sun Sentinel: “We are extremely excited to receive the official Certificate of Completeness representing administrative approval for the new Galleria development. The project went through the city of Fort Lauderdale’s comprehensive development review process, which confirms adequate infrastructure capacity and the project’s compliance with Fort Lauderdale’s Uniform Land Development Code and Florida’s Live Local statute.”

Toothaker added: “The approval includes extensive requirements for transportation mitigation, utility coordination and phased permitting milestones that will be satisfied throughout the redevelopment process. On behalf of the development team, we look forward to continuing in a collaborative way with the city, the community and our neighbors as we reimagine The Galleria as an economic, social and cultural asset that will contribute in a positive way and make Fort Lauderdale’s future even better.”

Fort Lauderdale is requesting that the developer complete several requirements before obtaining a building permit.

City records obtained by the Sun Sentinel show the following details:

Regarding traffic, prior to issuance of the first building permit, the applicant will be required to submit revised civil and site plans demonstrating consistency with the assumptions, access configurations, circulation patterns, trip generation characteristics, and roadway operations evaluated in the approved traffic study dated Sept. 28, 2026.

Any modification to the approved development program, access configuration, internal circulation system, or traffic operations determined by the City's Engineering Permitting division to materially affect the findings of the traffic study shall require the preparation and approval of an updated traffic impact study.

Prior to the first Certificate of Occupancy, the applicant will be required to obtain all required permits, approvals, and authorizations from the Florida Department of Transportation for improvements impacting Sunrise Boulevard.

Prior to the issuance of a building permit, early start or any phased construction approvals, the applicant must demonstrate having obtained a Broward County Surface Water Management License as required prior to any construction activities that alter the flow of surface water.

In accordance with the Water and Wastewater Capacity Availability letter issued by the City Public Works Department dated Dec. 18, 2025, existing water has the capacity to support the proposed development, but the existing sewer distribution system requires improvements to accommodate flow increase from the proposed development.

Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall provide a final School Capacity Availability Determination letter that confirms that school capacity is available, or if capacity is not available, that mitigation requirements have been satisfied.

At the time of the issuance of building permits, the applicant will be required to pay a Park Impact Fee for the proposed residential units.

It remains to be seen whether the developer can achieve all the requirements the city has put in place, Trantalis said.

"It's a mistake to say it's fully approved," the mayor told the Sun Sentinel. "It's not fully approved. And that's important. It will never be able to fulfill the conditions attached to the approval, which include traffic and infrastructure requirements. It's technically approved subject to those requirements. And they are not going to be easily surmounted. And I don't know if it's going to be cost effective for the developer to achieve them."

Vice Mayor Ben Sorensen had his own reservations about the project and its impact on surrounding neighborhoods.

"The way Live Local is right now, it just gives us very little opportunity to deny it," Sorensen said. "I continue to have massive concerns with Live Local and the impact it's having on our community, especially the infrastructure impacts. We are already stretched, from traffic to water to sewer to stormwater."

Sorensen said he'd like to see the state amend the Live Local Act because of the impact it's having on cities around Florida.

"We need to be working with other cities to challenge Live Local," he said.

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