

# **Town of Miami Lakes**

## **County**

Miami-Dade

## **Boundaries**

North: Northwest 170th Street/Palmetto Expressway/State Road 826

South: Northwest 138th Street/West 84th Street/State Road 916

West: Interstate 75/State Road 93

East: Red Road/Northwest 57th Avenue/State Road 823

## **Community Type**

Municipality

## **History**

Miami Lakes is located 15 miles northwest of Downtown Miami. It is bordered on the south and west by the City of Hialeah, on the east by the City of Miami Gardens, and on the north by the unincorporated community of Country Club. The town has a total area of 6.51 square miles, of which 5.66 square miles are land and 0.85 square miles are water.

The development that is now Miami Lakes was constructed by Sengra (now the Graham Companies), beginning in 1962 on land formerly owned by Florida state senator Ernest “Cap” Graham, which had been the site of his family’s dairy farm. The original development east of the Palmetto Expressway was master-planned over 60 years ago. The Grahams stated that it would be a 30-year project, but they are still developing to this day.

Unlike many cities and towns created during the early 1960s, the Grahams decided to adopt a master plan that would allow for decades of growth, construction, and changing market conditions. Lester Collins, former Dean of the Harvard School of Architecture, was enlisted to create the plan. Collins laid the foundations for an integrated community, including residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed uses. The town is an early model of “New Urbanism”, with shopping and services located within walking distance of residences, narrow pedestrian-friendly streets, and plenty of neighborhood parks.

The original plan features curving tree-shaded roadways and numerous curving lakes, which are unusual compared to most surrounding areas with their treeless streets on a square grid with rectangular lakes. This original

development, which is on the east side of the expanded Town of Miami Lakes, has neighborhood shopping centers, tot-lot parks, and a town center named Main Street. Collins' original concept for the town continues to be incorporated into new planning and development, and has been recognized by national and local media as one of the best examples of community master planning in the nation. Urban planners nationwide have consistently praised the Miami Lakes Master Plan for its winding streets, lush landscaping, generous parks, peaceful cul-de-sacs, mixed land use, and exclusive business parks.

A significant portion of Miami Lakes is still owned by the Grahams, mostly apartment buildings, shopping centers, office buildings, and undeveloped land. Former US Senator Bob Graham, the younger half-brother of family patriarch William "Bill" Graham, is one of the owners. Katharine Graham, the late publisher of the *Washington Post*, had a share by marriage.

The Master Plan began over 50 years ago, when the Graham family began development of what was their dairy farm. When it incorporated in December of 2000, the Town of Miami Lakes became the 31st municipality in Miami-Dade County. Miami Lakes operates under a council-manager system, where the elected town council establishes policy that the council-appointed town manager administers and oversees in day-to-day operations. The Mayor is elected at-large for a four-year term. A calendar of council meetings and the accompanying agendas are available on the municipal website. Users can also access recordings of town council and public meetings via Vimeo, linked on the site.

## **Community Dynamics**

As of 2021, Miami Lakes had a population of 30,582. The median age was 42.1 and the median household income was \$84,504. Between 2020 and 2021 the population of Miami Lakes declined from 31,021 to 30,582, a decrease of 1.42%. At the same time, the median household income rose from \$77,535 to \$84,504, an increase of 8.99%. Regarding ethnicity in 2021, 55.6% of the population was White Hispanic, 26.7% was Multiracial Hispanic, 7.76% was White non-Hispanic, 6.68% was Other Hispanic, and 1.2% was Asian. None of the households in Miami Lakes reported speaking a non-English language at home as a primary language, and 88.7% of the population were US citizens. As of 2021, 49.9% of the residents of Miami Lakes were born outside the US, which is much higher than the national average of 13.6%. In 2020, the percentage of foreign-born residents was 50.9%, indicating that the rate has been decreasing. In 2021, the median property value was \$443,600, and the homeownership rate was 63.9%.

## **Business Landscape**

Several companies are headquartered in Miami Lakes, including BankUnited, NA, one of the largest banking institutions in the United States. Other notable enterprises in the town are Potamkin Auto Group, the Graham Companies, Fine Art Lamps, Pacer, New Generation Computing, South Florida ENT Associates, Inktel, Isaco International, Safari, 1st Financial, American Bancshares Mortgage, LLC, National Molding, Lotspeich, and Oliva Cigar.

The municipal website promotes commercial activity in the town by offering resources for planning and initiating new businesses. There is an online step-by-step New Business Guide, as well as a link to a web portal created by LocalIntel, offering a wide variety of business tools and market research data reflecting economic and infrastructural conditions in the Miami Lakes area.

The Miami Lakes Chamber of Commerce serves as a voice for progress and improvement in the region. The chamber offers networking events, economic development initiatives, and other member benefits.

## **Transportation Characteristics**

The Town of Miami Lakes is located in northwest Miami-Dade County, on both the east and west sides of the "big bend" of the Palmetto Expressway. The northern boundary of the town's eastern half is defined by the Palmetto Expressway/State Road 826. As the Palmetto curves to the southwest/south, it bisects the town into roughly equal halves. Interstate 75/State Road 93 forms the western boundary of the town, before turning eastward to form the southern boundary of the western half of the town, and becoming identified also as State Road 924. In the eastern half of the town, the roadway defining the southern boundary is Northwest 138th Street/West 84th Street/State Road 916. The Florida-924 Toll Road/State Road 924 runs parallel to and just north of this boundary, dipping south of the boundary towards the east. Red Road/Northwest 57th Avenue/State Road 823, another sizeable roadway, forms the eastern boundary of the town.

Curving streets, cul-de-sacs, lakes, lots of neighborhood parks, schools, and shopping areas characterize the plan of the town, especially in its eastern half. The peripheral I-75 and the centrally located Palmetto Expressway have high volumes of traffic, but the local streets throughout the town are relatively free of congestion.

According to DATA USA 2021 statistics, most people in Miami Lakes drove alone to work, with an average commute time of 32.6 minutes. The average car ownership was two cars per household.

Miami Lakes is 15 miles northwest of Downtown Miami and 10 miles from Miami International Airport (MIA).

Miami Lakes is served by Miami-Dade Metrobus. Freebee on-demand ride services are available in Miami Lakes seven days a week, using electric cars. Freebee commuters can also enjoy a free connection from Town Hall or Veterans Park to the Palmetto Metrorail Station far south of the town's boundaries, and back to starting points. This service is available Monday through Friday.

The Miami Lakes Greenways and Trails Master Plan was published in 2014, and is available on the municipal website. The plan complements the town's Comprehensive Master Plan to create safe and convenient non-motorized transportation for connecting communities, recreational parks, schools, office parks, and businesses. The plan provides a network of off-road, shared-use paths (for bicycling, walking, in-line skating), as well as a network of on-road facilities, including bike lanes on major thoroughfares and neighborhood greenways on low-speed, low-volume streets.

## Sources

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