

Village of Palmetto Bay

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: Southwest 136th Street

South: Southwest 184th Street/Eureka Drive

West: US Highway 1/South Dixie Highway

East: Biscayne Bay and Deering Bay Drive

Community Type

Municipality

History

The Village of Palmetto Bay is a suburban community of 8.44 square miles in eastern Miami-Dade County, 15 miles southwest of Downtown Miami, on Biscayne Bay. It is bordered by the Village of Pinecrest on the north and by the Town of Cutler Bay on the south.

The area has been inhabited by people of many cultures, including Paleo-Indians, Tequestas, Seminoles, Afro-Bahamians, and Anglo-Americans. The Old Cutler Fossil Site, located on what is now the Deering Estate, was excavated in 1985 and revealed evidence of habitation from 10,000 years ago. Fossilized remains from now extinct animals were found, including mammoths, sloths, dire wolves, and saber tooth tigers, as well as human skeletons.

In 1838, during the Second Seminole War, the federal government awarded a large parcel of land in South Miami-Dade to Dr. Henry Perrine. The land grant encompassed 36 square miles covering an area that today is a part of Pinecrest, Palmetto Bay, and The Falls. His son, Henry Perrine, Jr., began the settlement process on the family's land grant in 1875. He offered twenty-acre tracts free to those who would build a home, clear one acre, and grow one tropical crop. The Perrines set up a tent and established a home near the present-day Charles Deering Estate.

In 1883, Dr. William Cutler arrived and acquired 600 acres next to the Perrine land grant. The Town of Cutler, formerly located at the intersection of

Southwest 168th Street and Old Cutler Road, grew quickly. Vegetable farms and fruit groves were planted after drainage canals were created, enabling the cultivation of crops.

A decade later, businessman Charles Deering bought much of the land in Cutler to build his estate. Deering chose 360 acres on the ridge overlooking Biscayne Bay, on which he constructed his Moorish style mansion. The State of Florida and the County bought the Deering Estate in 1985 for \$24 million, to be used as a park site. Today, the Richmond Inn on the estate, the last surviving structure of the historic Town of Cutler, remains one of Miami's best examples of early Florida frame-vernacular architecture and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The estate grounds are now environmentally protected lands and a historical preserve.

In August 1992, Palmetto Bay and the surrounding South Miami-Dade area were severely damaged by Hurricane Andrew. Many of the homes and businesses in Palmetto Bay were destroyed. In the subsequent years, the area was slowly rebuilt. Although many areas of Miami were heavily affected by Hurricane Andrew, Palmetto Bay was one of the worst affected and remains a reminder of the hurricane's extensive disaster in the city today.

In 1995, the Alliance of Palmetto South Homeowners Association petitioned Miami-Dade County to incorporate Palmetto Bay. The process was hindered by a series of delays, and it was not until 2002 that the Village of Palmetto Bay was incorporated and became Miami-Dade County's 33rd municipality.

The Village of Palmetto Bay is governed by a five-member Village Council and operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The legislative body of the village consists of a Mayor, a Vice-Mayor, and three Councilmembers, representing the three residential areas designated by the Village Charter. Meeting agendas, minutes, and meeting videos are available on the municipal website.

The village maintains six park facilities, which offer active and passive recreation. The Parks Master Plan, updated in 2023, serves as a 10-year roadmap for future park improvements. The Deering Estate has its own areas dedicated to recreation and preservation.

Community Dynamics

As of 2022, Palmetto Bay had a population of 24,267. The median age was 41.6 and the median household income was \$144,987. Between 2021 and 2022 the population of Palmetto Bay declined from 24,327 to 24,267, a decrease of

.247%. At the same time, the median household income rose from \$131,605 to \$144,987, an increase of 10.2%. Regarding ethnicity in 2022, 41.3% of the population was White, 25.7% was White Hispanic, 20.2% was Multiracial Hispanic, 3.82% was Asian, and 3.02% was Multiracial non-Hispanic. None of the households in Palmetto Bay reported speaking a non-English language at home as a primary language, and 91.4% of the population were US citizens. As of 2022, 28.3% of the residents of Palmetto Bay were born outside the US, which is higher than the national average of 13.6%. In 2021, the percentage of foreign-born residents was 29.3%, indicating that the rate has been decreasing. In 2022, the median property value was \$715,700 and the homeownership rate was 78.2%.

Business Landscape

The village's official zoning map shows the vast majority of its land dedicated to single-family residential uses, with the Deering Estate occupying a large area just east of Old Cutler Road, on Biscayne Bay. There is a strip of land devoted to commercial uses running along the municipality's western boundary, and nearly all business properties are located here along US Highway 1/South Dixie Highway. Businesses are a mix of big box stores, smaller retail stores, services, grocers, restaurants, auto dealers, and lodging.

In the southwest corner of the village, with US Highway 1/South Dixie Highway running north and south through it, is a sizable area designated as "Downtown Urban Village". This designation indicates a mix of residential, commercial, institutional, and office uses, laid out for greater walkability and bikeability. The municipal website has a page detailing the Downtown Palmetto Bay Code, adopted in 2020 to reflect the Urban Village concept.

The Palmetto Bay Business Association meets regularly, with the goals of promoting local businesses and networking.

Transportation Characteristics

The main transportation artery for Palmetto Bay is US Highway 1/South Dixie Highway, which also forms the village's western boundary. The northbound and southbound lanes of this roadway diverge between Southwest 168th Street and Southwest 183rd Street, and numerous businesses are located in the area between the split lanes. The South Miami-Dade Busway runs parallel to US Highway 1/South Dixie Highway, just west of the village's western boundary.

Palmetto Bay's municipal website features a Traffic and Transit page, with a wealth of information. Users can report a traffic concern using an online form

and interactive map, view the Bicycle Master Plan and download a map of the village's bicycle network, or access a variety of official transportation planning documents. These include Downtown Traffic Studies, the Traffic Calming Master Plan (2023), and the Transportation Master Plan (2004).

According to DATA USA 2022 statistics, most people in Palmetto Bay drove alone to work, with an average commute time of 36.2 minutes. The average car ownership was two cars per household.

The village is served by Miami-Dade Metrobus, but only on a few of the busier streets.

Two free “I-Bus” circulator buses are available to transport passengers to and from the Dadeland South Metrorail Station in Kendall, during the morning and afternoon peak commuting hours. The circulator runs from the St. Richard's Holy Rosary Catholic Church designated park and ride area, at 7500 Southwest 152nd Street, directly to the Metrorail station on the Miami-Dade County TransitWay. There is no service on weekends or holidays. Riders can download a free app to access schedules and track buses in real time.

Palmetto Bay also offers on-demand free rides via Freebee, using electric cars. The service is available Monday through Saturday. A free app is available for riders.

Sources

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