

A Brief History of Watson Island Developments

- 1920s Watson Island was created from sand and debris dredged when Government Cut was deepened for ships.
MacArthur Causeway was constructed.
Three slips for large ships were proposed.
Chalk's International Airlines, a seaplane service, opened on the island.
- 1940s Miami Outboard Club and Miami Yacht Club built clubhouses on the island.
Goodyear blimps began mooring there.
- 1949 Watson Island was deeded to city of Miami by the state to be used for public purposes only; any private development was to be approved by the state; leasing the land for private development would require a public vote. (It was originally deeded to the city in 1919 but later deeded back to the state.)
- 1961 Ichimura Miami-Japan Garden was built.
- 1976 Dade Helicopter moved to the island.
- 1979 Theme park Diplomat World was proposed.
- 1985 The tourist fishing fleet relocated to the Island.
- 1986 A marina, hotel, and boat exhibition center were proposed. Carollo claimed it would cost taxpayers and accused some involved parties of communist ties. In the aftermath, the commission approved the "Carollo Amendment", requiring a voter referendum on sales of city property when there are less than three bidders.
- 1990s Proposals for the island included an air transport center, a mega-yacht marina, bringing back Chalk's, the Miami Science Museum, a naval museum with a light aircraft carrier, an indoor ski resort, and a commercial port.
- 1995 The public voted to allow Parrot Jungle to relocate there.
- 2000 Building two giant cruise ship terminals was proposed.
- 2003 Jungle Island (formerly Parrot Jungle) opened on the island.
- 2004 Miami Children's Museum relocated to the island.
- 2014 Port of Miami Tunnel opened.



What's on Watson Island today?

- Jungle Island
- Miami Children's Museum
- Ichimura Miami-Japan Garden
- Miami Outboard Club
- Miami Yacht Club
- Public Boat Ramp