



Jungle Island's new owner in talks with adventure park hotel brand

Lease extension and hotel development could head to a vote in November

By [Katherine Kallergis](#) | July 07, 2017 05:40PM



Rendering of Jungle Island. Inset: John Dunlop

Jungle Island's new owner has more in store for the Watson Island attraction after it wraps up a multimillion-dollar renovation.

Aventura-based ESJ Capital Partners is in talks with an international adventure park hotel brand to bring a hotel to the 19.35-acre park. A spokesperson for ESJ declined to name the brand.

The firm closed on the [\\$60 million lease transfer](#) of Jungle Island earlier this year and is going before the Miami City Commission next week with a resolution to enter into an amended lease.

ESJ's resolution would extend the lease from 2060 to 2099. It would also allow for the development of a hotel, providing a rent payment of 1 percent of the annual gross revenue from a new privately funded \$50 million hotel, according to public documents. The firm would also invest about \$700,000 in the Ichimura-Miami Japanese Gardens and about \$500,000 for a green energy educational facility, ESJ said in a statement.

Four-fifths of the commission would have to approve a measure to put the item on the November ballot so that voters can approve or reject a referendum that would extend the lease and allow for a hotel.

ESJ is already working on the [multi-phased renovation](#) and redevelopment of the park, beginning with zip lines with views of downtown Miami, the park and Miami Beach. ESJ, an asset management firm with European backers, will also add children's rides, animal exhibits, a private beach club, water slides and a multi-acre Crystal Lagoon, as well as food and beverage upgrades.

The island is also home to Island Gardens, a mixed-use development that's now [tied up in litigation](#).

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