

The Neighborhood

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Downtown Biloxi, Mississippi

Howard Avenue was a hub of commercial activity in the early 1900s, home to Barq's Root Beer and Biloxi's first Mardi Gras parade. A downturn in the 1960s left the avenue adrift, but a new project is underway to build a mixed-use entertainment development along the strip.

Here are six must-visit spots bringing new life to the Mississippi Gulf Coast.



1

Fly Llama Brewing

Brewmaster David Reese came to Mississippi a decade ago and, after helping open another brewery, debuted Fly Llama in 2021. Reese's brainchild features more than 32 craft beers, hard seltzers, and nonalcoholic beverages on tap. "I wanted to be downtown, and I saw so much potential," he says. "There wasn't a lot going on when we came in, but I believed in it."

2

Makin' Groceries

Lauren Turner Christy quit her teaching job to sell vegan tacos from a tent in 2019, and two years later she opened this café. The plant-based kitchen offers breakfast and lunch, plus meal-prep services and catering—always accommodating dietary restrictions and allergies. "The transformation Biloxi has undergone has been truly incredible to be a part of," she says.

3

Ground Zero Blues Club

Actor Morgan Freeman is a co-owner of this blues club, which opened in 2022 as a sister venue to the original Ground Zero in Clarksdale, Mississippi. "The Blues Trail runs from Memphis down to the Gulf Coast," says co-owner Lee Young. "We're trying to really create an atmosphere on Howard Avenue, similar to Magazine Street, similar to Beale Street."

4

Skål Axe Throwing

Inspired by Viking history, Daniel McNatt started Skål Axe Throwing in 2020. The venue hosts axe-throwing competitions, coaches show first-timers the ropes, and private lanes are available for individuals and groups. "I grew up on the coast and have always considered Biloxi home," McNatt says, "so downtown is absolutely where we knew we wanted to be from the start."

5

Marley's Music

In 2020, Marley Roberts, along with his dad and his grandfather, founded this music shop, which sells new and used records, CDs, DVDs, and turntables. Roberts aims to provide a community for fans of all genres. "I wanted to open a record store I would want to go to," he says, "where things are priced based on the condition, rather than who the artist is."

6

Greenhouse Biloxi

Biscuits are the specialty at this café, which opened in 2020 following the success of a location across the bay in Ocean Springs. "We just felt like the timing was right for [this] area," says co-owner Jessie Zenor. "Everybody was so supportive, helpful, and patient." No doubt the sweet potato biscuit sammy with egg, ham, and pimento cheese helped win over supporters.