

## BANKING/FINANCE

# What It's Like Running Grocery Stores During Coronavirus



SHUTTERSTOCK

Sprouts Farmers Market Inc., which saw sales rise 16% to \$1.6 billion in the first quarter, its best growth since 2015, is well suited for the shift toward healthier lifestyles, according to CEO Jack Sinclair.

by Edward Ludlow

After taking the reins of Sprouts Farmers Market Inc. last year, Jack Sinclair set out a clear vision for how to revive a grocery chain that had seen growth stall.

The chief executive officer, who previously ran Walmart's U.S. grocery division, is planning to add distribution centers and push into lucrative markets in Florida and California. Then coronavirus hit in March.

Panic buying ensued. Social distancing measures came to stores with masks and plexiglass barriers. Next came worries about meat shortages. All while the masses cooked from home like never before and turned toward healthier fare as the pandemic's death toll mounted.

Sinclair says Sprouts, which has 344 stores across 23 states, is well suited for the shift toward healthier lifestyles. Stores are loaded with organic produce. There's a butcher and a fish market. They also have aisles of vitamins and health supplements. The chain is often compared to Whole Foods, a unit of Amazon.com Inc.

In the first quarter, sales rose 16% to \$1.6 billion, Sprouts' best growth since 2015. That's left Sinclair, a Scotsman whose other retail stops include 99 Cents Only Stores and Safeway in the U.K., trying to adapt and leverage the moment. For starters, the company plans to add 20 stores this year.

**There's been a lot of headlines about masks. What are you seeing?**

In Los Angeles, for example, all customers have got to wear masks when they come into the store, and that's created some behavior issues in communities we serve.

Some people clearly don't like wearing masks.

**What happens to all this PPE, plexiglass barriers and deep cleaning in the future?**

I am fairly convinced that the safety procedures are here to stay. They are a good thing for the industry going forward. The scope of where we clean and how often we clean has dramatically ramped up.

Masks are a really interesting one in terms of how society is going to view that going forward. It's clear some of our customers don't like wearing masks when they come in to store, but certainly it's here for some time to come.

**There is a lot of speculation about how the virus will alter grocery shopping. What have you've witnessed?**

We are seeing very significant shifts towards organic.

Exactly the same trend in grass-fed beef, specialist chicken.

**There's also the shift to online grocery shopping. What has happened at Sprouts?**

The overall e-commerce trend has grown significantly. We had to recruit a lot of people, alongside Instacart hiring people. But the demand kind of reached a peak and is flattening off now. We are seeing a little bit of an uptick in pickup because of these newer stores we have added offering curbside pickup.

It's fairly small at this stage. Our April business in terms of e-commerce was 13% of sales.

**So what does the U.S. reopening look like so far?**

I have been surprised at the pace of consumer change not moving that fast in places like Georgia and Texas. What we are watching for is a return to normal. Transactions are going down, but the baskets are going up dramatically, so we are ending up with very strong comp sales.

Saturdays and Sundays are a little bit weaker than they were.

**The lockdown has been a boon for grocery stores. What has that meant for Sprouts?**

Building a lot of stores over the last couple of years, some stores took a bit of time to get moving. People are coming in now to those stores. And because almost everyone is out of stock, we are getting customers discover us for the first time.

Customers are saying: "Wow, I didn't know you were here."

**Edward Ludlow reports for Bloomberg News.**



## CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **VIRTUAL COUNCIL ZONING MEETING** on **Wednesday, June 10, 2020, beginning at 11:30 AM**, to establish a one-year moratorium on the acceptance and approval of Planned Unit Development (PUD), Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) and Community Mixed Use (CMU) rezoning applications within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Doral. The City Council will consider this item for **FIRST READING**. The meeting will be held with the elected officials, administration and City staff participating via video conferencing.

Governor DeSantis' Executive Order Number 20-69 and Extension 20-112 suspended the requirements of Section 112.286, Florida Statutes and the Florida Sunshine Law, that a quorum to be present in person, and that a local government body meet at a specific public place. The Executive Order also allows local government bodies to utilize communications media technology, such as telephonic and video conferencing for local government body meetings.

**Public Comments:** members of the public that wish to provide comments may do so by emailing the City Clerk at [cityclerk@cityofdoral.com](mailto:cityclerk@cityofdoral.com). Comments must be submitted with your name and full address by **Tuesday, June 9, 2020**. The comments will be circulated to the elected officials and administration, as well as remain as a part of the record for the meeting.

The meeting will be broadcasted live for members of the public to view on the City of Doral's website (<https://www.cityofdoral.com/government/city-clerk/council-meetings>) as well as Channel 77 and Facebook Live.

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

**ORDINANCE No. 2020-02**

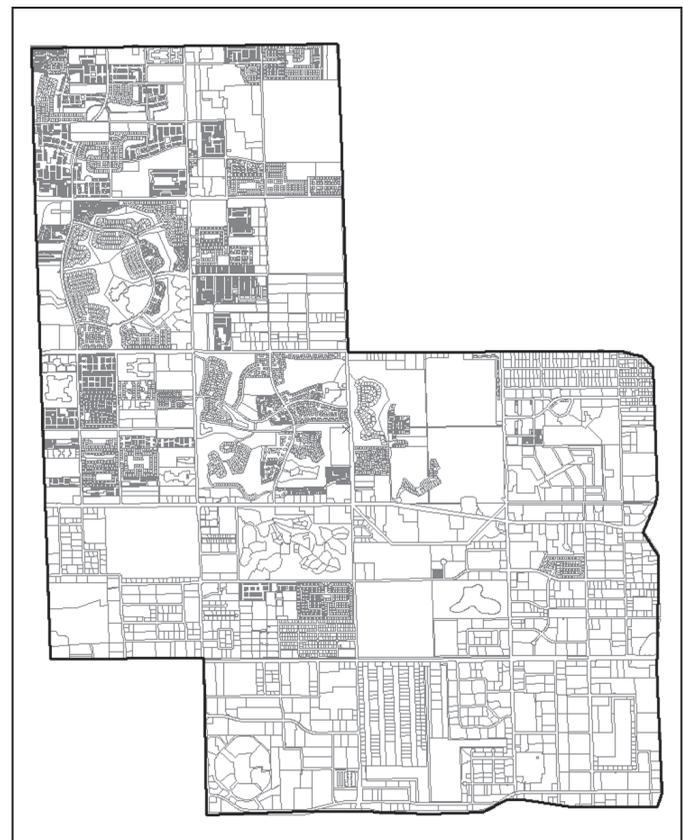
**AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING A ONE-YEAR TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL OF PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD), DOWNTOWN MIXED USE (DMU) AND COMMUNITY MIXED USE (CMU) REZONING APPLICATIONS WITHIN THE JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES OF THE CITY OF DORAL; PROVIDING FOR EXEMPTIONS; PROVIDING FOR VESTED RIGHTS; PROVIDING FOR A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

**HEARING NO.:** 20-06-DOR-02

**APPLICANT:** City of Doral

**REQUEST:** The City of Doral (the "Applicant") is requesting the Mayor and the City Council approval to establish a one-year temporary moratorium on the acceptance of Planned Unit Development (PUD), Downtown Mixed Use (DMU), and Community Mixed-Use (CMU) rezoning applications within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Doral.

**Location Map**



Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes If a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person who is disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

Connie Diaz, MMC  
City Clerk  
City of Doral

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