

# DOWNTOWN SURFSIDE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



Organizational Plan  
*Final Draft for Review*

Town of Surfside, Florida

*September 26, 2013*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. History of the Initiative</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. Benefits of a BID for Downtown Surfside</b>	<b>3</b>
Objectives of the proposed Business Improvement District (BID):	3
<b>4. Proposed BID Programs</b>	<b>4</b>
Advocacy Strategies – Downtown Issues	4
Image-Based Marketing Strategies – Primary BID Budget Expenditures	4
<b>5. Proposed Budget</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6. Proposed BID Boundaries</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>7. Organizing the Business Improvement District</b>	<b>7</b>
Creating a BID	7
Assessment/Budget	7
Governance	8
Timeframe	8

# 1. Introduction

In January 2013, the Town of Surfside began work with Redevelopment Management Associates (RMA) to create a plan for organizing a Business Improvement District (BID) for Downtown Surfside.

The scope of the project included:

1. Build ownership and consensus amongst commercial property owners regarding improvements, programs, services, and management of the BID.
2. Establish, in cooperation with the Downtown Vision Action Committee (DVAC), the geographical boundaries of the BID.
3. Establish, in cooperation with DVAC, a proposed budget and determine the formula for property assessments.
4. Present the district plan in public meetings.
5. Prepare the property owners and the merchants for the formal establishment of the BID pursuant to Florida Law.

The recommendations that follow comprise the BID Plan for the purpose of documentation required for Town Commission approval. These recommendations reflect RMA's belief that forming a BID to benefit the commercial district along Harding Avenue would be the most fair and effective mechanism for providing ongoing stakeholder participation and a source of funding for future improvement programs.

## 2. History of the Initiative

During the Commission Meeting on January 18, 2011 the Surfside Town Commission created the Downtown Vision Advisory Committee (DVAC). Since its inception, DVAC has proven to be an effective advisory organization through a process that has included actionable items at every meeting, including the following projects, initiatives and topics of discussion:

- Downtown Code Enforcement
- Parking Lot Improvement/Landscaping
- Vacant Windows Ordinance

- News Racks Ordinance
- Awnings Ordinance
- Upgrading Alleys
- Wayfarer Signage Program
- Branding
- Facade Upgrading Program
- Parking Structure Feasibility Study
- The Current Forty Foot Height Allowance and Amalgamation of Properties
- Development of an East West Corridor on 95th Street from Abbott Avenue to the Beach
- Rebuilding of Harding Avenue Sidewalks
- Sidewalk Cafe Ordinance and FDOT Agreement
- Miami-Dade "Mom & Pop" Grants
- Signage Ordinance
- Moratorium Ordinance
- Business Improvement District (BID)

As a direct result from the enacting of the Moratorium Ordinance in April 2011, sixteen property owners, a number from the same family trust, representing a majority of Downtown properties, met with the Town Manager and Town Staff. Property owners supported Downtown Vision Initiatives, including formation of a BID, and requested that the Moratorium Ordinance be rescinded.

The Planning & Zoning Board approved the rescinding of the ordinance and endorsed all of the vision initiatives in May 2011. The Town Commission subsequently voted in July 2011 to rescind the moratorium and to accept the vision initiatives as a blueprint on condition that each initiative is brought to the Commission for full vetting.

The basic premise of a BID is that the Town agrees to continue to provide a base level of service and that enhanced services, such as extra police protection for expanded special events, maintenance for specialty landscaping, downtown marketing programs, cleaning after special events, and the retention of consultants to secure tenants, are funded with a self-imposed assessment on the property owners.

Use of these funds could be governed by the Board of Directors of a new not-for profit organization created to oversee the BID. The process for establishing the District and ensuring that funds are collected and properly spent would be governed by Florida Statutes, Chapter 170 and by an agreement between the new not-for profit organization and the Town of Surfside.

### **3. Benefits of a BID for Downtown Surfside**

The proposed Business Improvement District (BID) could focus on improving the commercial district along Harding Avenue by acting as an advocate for Downtown Surfside, promoting a new image for the district, and establishing an annual marketing program in order to compete with other South Florida shopping and dining destinations. The BID would represent the interests of both property and business owners and provide an ongoing, dedicated source of revenue to support BID programs.

#### ***Objectives of the proposed Business Improvement District (BID):***

- *To identify and implement organization strategies to advocate for Downtown Surfside issues including parking, urban design/image, and zoning/permitted uses.*
- *To identify and implement marketing strategies to promote and market Downtown Surfside as a unique, historic destination for dining, shopping, and recreation to Surfside/South Florida residents and visitors to the area.*
- *To establish benchmarks for measurement of success.*

## 4. Proposed BID Programs

A Downtown Surfside BID could accomplish these objectives by developing strategies to improve the Downtown area, through advocacy and image-based marketing:

### *Advocacy Strategies – Downtown Issues*

- Parking – encourage the Town to implement “user friendly” parking solutions and explore further the need to create additional parking spaces in the Downtown area, including the possibility of new parking structures.
- Future Streetscape Improvements – work with the Town to identify future opportunities for streetscape improvements, including:
  - development of an East West Corridor on 95th Street from Abbott Avenue to the beach
  - upgrading alleys
- Façade Improvements – encourage property and business owners to improve facades and awnings through Miami-Dade “Mom & Pop” Grants and any future funding sources.
- Downtown Code Enforcement – encourage property and business owners to work with the Town to identify priority code enforcement issues and effective strategies for improvement.
- Zoning – encourage a comprehensive review of zoning code to ensure that commercial zoning is most conducive to increasing business and creating the best business mix.

### *Image-Based Marketing Strategies*

- Build upon the approved Town of Surfside 5-Year Strategic Tourism Plan.
- Identify a “brand” for Downtown Surfside.
- Promote image/brand through website(s), social media, public relations, and advertising.

The benefits of a BID are that it could provide a mechanism for implementation of these activities and an ongoing source of funding. The activities of the BID would supplement, and would not replace, any activities currently undertaken or funded by the Town of Surfside.

Proven success of image-based improvement initiatives can be seen in BID districts throughout the nation as well as in the state of Florida, such as the BIDs in Coral Gables ([www.shopcoralgables.com](http://www.shopcoralgables.com)) and Naples ([www.fifthavenuesouth.com](http://www.fifthavenuesouth.com)).

## 5. Proposed Budget

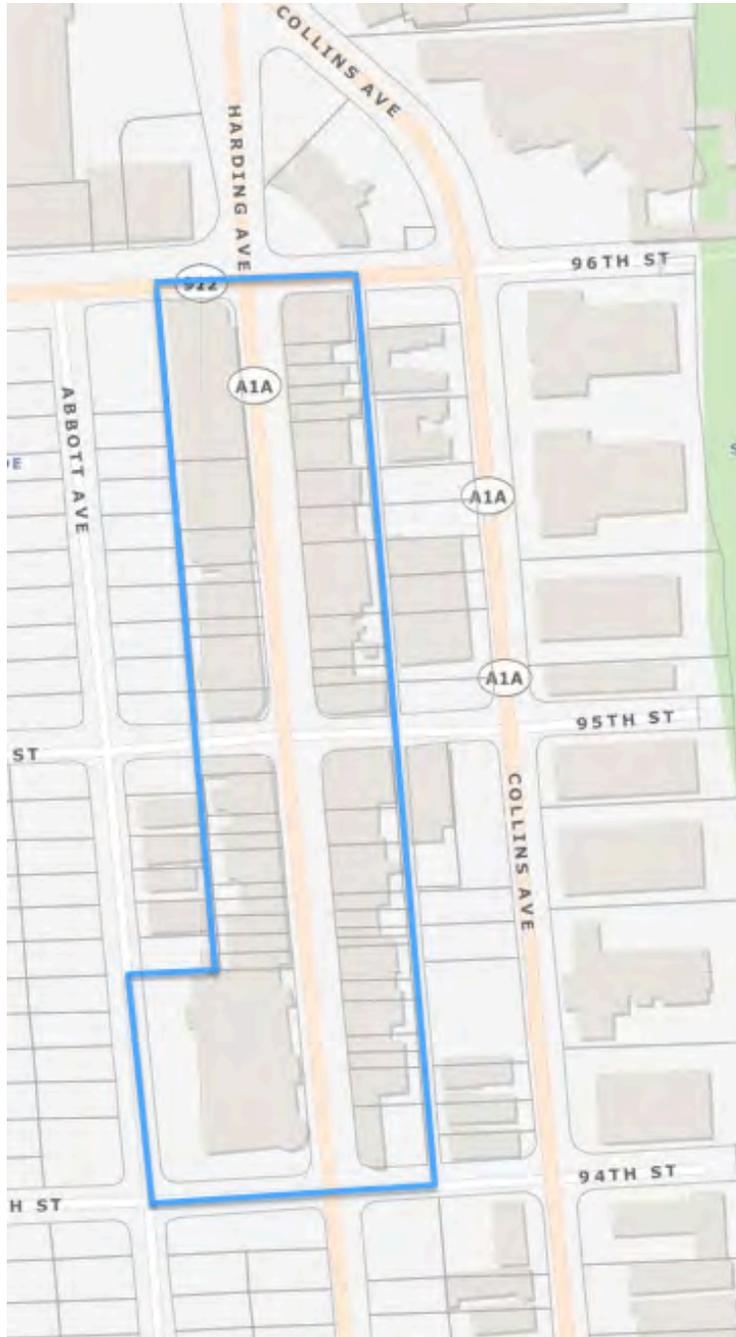
A first year budget for the BID might contain the following components, although a final budget would be created by the BID once it had been formed:

Advocacy Coordination / BID Support	\$ 30,000
Image/Marketing	\$ 30,000
Events support	\$ 15,000
Reserve/Contingency	\$ 5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>

## 6. Proposed BID Boundaries

Commercial properties along Harding and Collins Avenues between 93<sup>rd</sup> Street and 96<sup>th</sup> Street were analyzed for inclusion in a possible Business Improvement District for Downtown Surfside. Using a standard of “similar benefit” from possible BID programs, RMA is recommending the BID boundaries include those commercial properties fronting Harding Avenue between 94<sup>th</sup> and 96<sup>th</sup> Streets.

This district comprises the area generally described as Downtown Surfside and contains retail, restaurant and other small businesses that serve the Surfside/South Florida markets and visitors to the area.



During meetings with property owners, there was discussion regarding possible inclusion of the Collins Avenue area of Surfside adjacent and to the east of to Downtown businesses. RMA recommends that initial efforts for the BID discussion focus on the commercial district along Harding Avenue, and that if a Business Improvement District is created, opportunities for Collins Avenue hotels to 'opt-in' to BID initiatives be encouraged where appropriate.

## **7. Organizing the Business Improvement District**

Chapter 170, Florida Statutes, provides that a municipality, subject to the approval of a majority of the affected property owners, may levy and collect special assessments against property benefited in a retail business district for the purposes of stabilizing and improving such district through promotion, management, marketing, and other similar services in such districts.

### ***Creating a BID***

Creation of a BID would require actions approved by the Surfside Town Commission. These actions include:

- Resolution of the Town Commission – This resolution would include the proposed cost of improvements, required public and property owner notice, location of the retail district to be improved, the expense to be paid by special assessments, and when assessments are to be paid.
- Vote of the property owners – Following approval of the resolution by Town Commission, property owners of affected properties would vote on creation of the BID. To apply the assessment, there would need to be a majority (50 percent plus one) of property owners approving the BID. Property owners that do not vote would be considered a “no” vote.
- Public Hearing/Equalizing Board – Upon the approval of the BID by the property owners, the Town Commission would hold a final public hearing, which would include an equalization hearing to consider complaints as to the special assessments.

### ***Assessment/Budget***

A BID is a special assessment district. The BID assessment would be collected as part of the property tax bill. Assessments might be based upon:

- assessed value of parcels
- parcel area
- building square footage
- other potential factors

For Downtown Surfside properties, information is available from the Miami-Dade County Property Appraisers office, including assessed value, lot square footage, and total building square footage. An assessment based on assessed value is recommended. Property values have remained stable since 2011, increasing slightly. Each 1-mil assessment would result in approximately \$43,000 annually for the BID.

To achieve the ~\$80,000 budget for programs described above, a 1.5-mil assessment could be levied to create approximately \$65,000. A source of funding for the additional \$15,000 would need to be identified, possibly through events grants.

The resulting Surfside BID would be a small district and create a relatively small annual assessment. For comparison purposes, the last annual assessment for the Coral Gables BID was approximately \$819,000.

### ***Governance***

A Board of Directors of a new not-for-profit organization would manage the BID. According to discussions to date, an example of the composition of a BID Board of Directors might include 9 voting members:

- five (5) property owners subject to assessment within the district
- three (3) business owners from within the district
- one (1) resident liaison
- one (1) liaison from the Town of Surfside (ex officio)

Except for the Town liaison, members could serve staggered three-year terms.

### ***Timeframe***

RMA recommends the Downtown Surfside BID assessment be proposed for an initial period of five years and be extended for an additional period of five years upon approval of the Town Commission. However, upon receipt of a petition executed by affected property owners representing in excess of fifty percent (50%) of the most recent assessment roll, the Commission may elect to abolish the District.

Key to consideration of extension to the district would be successful implementation of the advocacy, marketing and other BID programs.