

POPOSED MID-BLOCK PLAZA

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DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL & TOURISM

The new Publix could anchor a neighborhood retail cluster and help provide a more coherent overall merchandising mix.

General Principles

Healthy, sustainable communities always have a complete mix of uses, including residential and commercial, both office and retail, in addition to civic and cultural amenities. The value of these additional uses, beyond simply the residential neighborhoods most often associated with the "idea" of community, is substantial -- and range from the convenience of being able to access all of one's daily needs easily and close by, to providing the tax revenue necessary to underwrite and support schools and other community services.

In addition, main streets and downtown commercial districts provide an appealing array of formal and informal gathering places for residents to meet and interact. They also provide a sense of vitality and interest that counterbalances the more private and quiet aspects of life within the residential neighborhood fabric. And lastly, these mixed-use places help provide a greater sense of identity and focus for a community, offering a more meaningful and complete definition of "quality of life," including providing for a more diverse range of housing options and pricing levels, enabling teachers, public employees, and the sons and daughters, as well as the elderly parents, of community residents, to find comfortable and affordable places to live, within a community that knows and values their presence.

As suburban shopping centers become more ubiquitous, and their market impact on traditional main streets become more apparent and sustained, traditional shopping districts need to recognize and leverage the unique attributes that helped make them appealing and successful in the first place.

For communities like Surfside, which are both fulltime, "real" places, as well as resort destinations and second home communities, finding the perfect balance between local and visitor needs, as well as its ideal position in the larger regional market context, is critically important to maximizing the Town's character and appeal, as well as its ability to help fulfill its financial mandate on behalf of the community.

Observation

Surfside has had a viable commercial district since its earliest days, and in fact, had been the traditional local shopping destination for the communities immediately nearby, in addition to being a more fashion-oriented shopping destination for seasonal visitors, prior to the advent of the nearby Bal Harbour Shops. A combination of factors have contributed to Surfside's market decline with respect to those two historical roles, including the growth in suburban regional retail offerings and increased competition from other



Current Harding Avenue conditions suggest an auto-dominant environment with little provision or amenity for the walking customer, once they are out of their car. High traffic noise reduces opportunity for outdoor dining or special events.





96TH & HARDING - CURRENT CONFIGURTION

This intersection does not present a very welcoming or appealing presentation to visitors or shoppers entering Surfside's commercial district.



The proposed plaza at 96th & Harding creates a highly animated and compelling "people place," at Surfside's front door, welcoming visitors and shoppers, and creating a high-value commercial frontage with convenient and attractive access to the proposed new parking deck.

nearby community shopping districts, as well as the significant impact of making Harding part of the one-way regional arterial couplet, also known as north and southbound A1A, which dramatically affected the Avenue's character.

Regardless of the cause, many Surfside shops are struggling and the overall merchandising mix is beginning to lose its focus and coherency as the combination of high real estate values and low sales figures has started to stratify the commercial offerings between a preponderance of banking institutions and financial services, on the one hand and relatively low-value generic retail offerings on the other. Dining continues to be a viable option with the inclusion of the seasonal market, but still problematic in terms of the full-time resident market. A bright spot is the new Publix, which has the potential to anchor a neighborhood shopping cluster and help bring additional shoppers to the area, in addition to helping encourage a more clearly articulated retail mix and merchandising strategy for the downtown as a whole.

A final observation is the lack of any kind of formally defined public realm of any real quality or merit. While it is possible to have a public realm exclusively defined by streetscape, as in the case of Surfside's main street, Harding Avenue, that potential has been seriously compromised by Harding's dual role as pedestrian-oriented shopping street, and high-capacity regional arterial thoroughfare. This reality has been further compounded by the lack of any discreetly defined public spaces, such as plazas, courts, arcades, etc., which could provide a welcome respite from the unrelenting street corridor, as well as offer distinctive merchandising environment that can be leveraged to attract and support high quality retail.

The viability of Surfside's tourism market, and its ability to continue to attract and sustain that market, was specifically raised by the Town, both in terms of the tax revenue potential implicit in that economic sector, but also in terms of the added market demand it generates for local retail goods and services.



The downtown commercial & tourism district study area would be conceived as a discreet district specifically intended to accommodate the needs of the commercial and tourist-related businesses, while containing and limiting their impact on adjoining residential neighborhoods.

Discussion

Local business owners expressed frustration with the downtown business climate and many are struggling to stay in business. Inconsistently placed crosswalks, vehicle-biased signal timings, and pedestrian-unfriendly streets, and other autocentric attributes, in general, make pedestrian movements difficult and unpleasant, for both residents and shoppers alike, throughout the downtown core. Parking is also a significant issue, in both location and capacity, and there is no coherent, comprehensive system in place for managing parking as a key asset for the downtown businesses.

In discussing specific issues and recommendations, debate focused on balancing growth against concern over possibly destroying the character and charm that attracted residents to the town in the first place. Residents don't want to lose Surfside's small-town features by overbuilding the downtown. Additional concern was also expressed, again, over the potential impact increased commercial vitality may have on adjoining residential streets and neighborhoods. The recent and dramatic loss of hotel rooms within the town was also brought up, particularly in light of the fact that there are so few redevelopment opportunities remaining along the beachfront, and that most of Surfside's existing hotel inventory was converted to condominiums during the most recent real estate cycle. This is a two-fold problem in that not only are the tax revenue implications significantly different for hotel properties verses residential condominium properties, but the actual effective occupancy rates between the two residential types could be quite different in a seasonal second-home market context, like Surfside's, and that could make a significant difference in terms of follow-on economic activity within the community (i.e., the market for goods and services).

Therefore, it is important to understand the following recommendations were designed to function as many pieces working together in a single plan, to achieve a unified goal. To move forward with the plan while leaving one or more pieces out will only serve to devalue the entire process, and compromise it's ability to deliver the desired outcome.

Reconfigured Traffic Patterns & Street Sections

Other than carving new public realm out of the existing downtown fabric, the next single most critical recommendation (if not *THE* most critical) is the need to reestablish two-lane, two way traffic flows on Harding, along with the enhanced parking and streetscape improvements that reconfiguration would allow. The benefits of this would be many, including slowing traffic throughout the pedestrian-oriented shopping precinct and greatly improving both the safety and the quality of the physical environment, for strolling, shopping and outside dining.

Also, this would make driving to and from the Harding commercial area from the adjoining neighborhoods and other nearby communities a much simpler and more enjoyable task, helping to reestablish Surfside's Harding Avenue as the local shopping destination of choice for nearby residents.

It would also greatly facilitate turning movements and access to and from the nearby parking lots and proposed new parking decks, minimizing the need for, or likelihood of, Harding Avenue shopping-related traffic encroaching into adjoining residential neighborhoods. And lastly, eliminating the one-way couplet of Harding and Collins (Collins would also revert back to a four lane, two-way section in this scenario) would eliminate the local east-west street network from the larger regional traffic flow system currently associated with the existing A1A couplet, greatly enhancing east-west pedestrian movements and intersection safety.

Local and regional traffic movements will be significantly rationalized, improving traffic efficiencies for both. Through North-South regional traffic, currently transiting through Surfside on longer trips, will now conveniently bypass Surfside's mixed-use, walkable downtown main street, as well as the substantially more residential portion of Harding to the south of downtown, improving both property values and quality of life for those residents. Local trips can be conducted exclusively on Harding, without putting additional traffic and turn movements on Collins, as is currently the case, which complicates both pedestrian and vehicular movements.

And then Collins can be optimized for moving the now primarily through-traffic safely and efficiently, by the use of well-coordinated signal timing, safe and effective pedestrian crosswalks, the removal of on-street parking and rationalized and effective access management. Both thoroughfares and the adjoining land uses should benefit immensely from this proposed change.



A computer rendering of Harding Avenue depicts a revitalized Aarding mixed-use commercial boulevard with wider sidewalks, new infill mixed-use redevelopment, improved landscaping, and dramatically improved streetscape and pedestrian environment.



HARDING AVENUE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT PHOTO MONTAGE SHOWS BEFORE AND AFTER CONDITIONS

Expanded Retail Core & Clarified Merchandising Zones

As part of the overall reconstitution of Harding Avenue and the downtown commercial core, it is recommended that the retail core be expanded south to coincide with the new Publix market and related neighborhood retail goods and services, to help rationalize uses and building types that are no longer relevant and/or appropriate in these areas.

It is also recommended that the two vacant lots on 96th Street adjacent to the business district (between Abbott and Byron Avenues) be included as part of the retail core.

This will allow the Town to make better use of infill opportunities to add additional parking capacity in this area, helping to sustain any new commercial development in this area, but more importantly, to help support the enhanced community functions related to the new Civic Center.

All of this, combined with the improved traffic circulation and parking distribution, along with the public realm enhancements both along Harding and incidental to it -- in the form of the new plazas and east-west commercial streets -- will allow for a full and comprehensive restructuring of Surfside's commercial offerings. This will include more distinctive and discreet merchandising clusters and co-tenanting opportunities associated with the grocery-anchored neighborhood retail and services cluster on the south end, a reinvigorated boutique/fashion cluster on the north end, a dining and entertainment "street" experience toward the east end of 95th, between Abbott Avenue and the beach, and thematic shopping and dining venues clustered around the proposed new pocket parks and plazas, to be integrated and dispersed throughout.

Taken collectively, this comprehensive approach will yield compounded benefits to both the business community and the Town as a whole, far in excess of the initial investment.



DOWNTOWN BUSINESS AND TOURISM DISTRICT Improvements and clarifications in the downtown core will permit a more clearly articulated range of distinct merchandising and activity zones within the town center, resulting in greater market capture and revenue potential.

Enhanced Public Realm

It is recommended that the Town create a constellation of public gathering places strategically placed throughout the downtown commercial district, and an enhanced pedestrian realm along the mixed-use portion of Harding Avenue.

This would include a dramatic new entry plaza at the north end of Harding and 96th street, helping to anchor the north end of the commercial district, and providing a more tangible connection between Surfside and the Bal Harbour Shops. This would result in a more appealing entrance into the Town from the north and west, and more effectively leverage the regional attraction of the Bal Harbour Shops in terms of consumer perceptions and the overall market positioning of Surfside's Main Street.

In addition, to help compensate for the long block lengths in facilitating pedestrian connections between the new and/or improved parking areas along Abbott, and the Harding Avenue retailers, we recommend creating new mid-block plazas, and attractive pedestrian arcades, effectively linking the two. These plazas will allow pedestrians to move quickly and conveniently between the parking areas and the shopping street, and directly into vibrant new formal plazas and meeting places, around which shops, restaurants and cafes can coalesce.

To take further advantage of these unique settings, the roadway section would be designed and detailed with distinctive paving patterns, possibly a center fountain, and landscape enhancements, to help slow traffic and provide improved midblock pedestrian crossings at these locations.

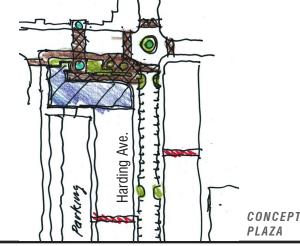
And finally, utilizing the additional right of way along 95th street to create a new east-west oriented commercial street, modeled on commodore plaza in Coconut Grove, with small boutiques, shops and cafes, terminating on the eastern end at a new beachside plaza with improved resident amenities and the ability to host special events, as needed, in addition to its more utilitarian daily functions, providing a pedestrian connection from the Harding Avenue business district to an ocean overlook and the beach.



ENHANCED DOWNTOWN PUBLIC REALM A: 96th & Harding Avenue B: Mid-Block Plazas C: Business District Beach Connection D: Community Center



SKETCH OF PROPOSED PLAZA AT 96TH & HARDING



CONCEPTUAL SKETCH PLAN OF



96TH & HARDING PLAZA

One of the biggest challenges facing downtown Surfside is the need to carve viable public spaces, out of what is – essentially -- fully builtout urban fabric. Though the techniques and strategies discussed for reestablishing a viable pedestrian realm along Surfside's shopping thoroughfares in the streetscape section of the document will help tremendously, the need to augment that with plazas, squares, and other more formally defined gathering places is critically important, both to Surfside's commercial and social vitality, but also to establishing a legitimate sense of place.



3-D model aerial rendering showing the proposed 96th Street and Harding Avenue pedestrian plaza, which can be animated with outdoor dining and special events, providing a vastly improved entrance experience for Surfside's visitors

There are a number of proposed interventions throughout Surfside's downtown, intended to create a walkable network of just such places, closely linked to the adjoining residential neighborhoods, as well as to the enhanced pedestrian network along Surfside's major commercial and civic boulevards. However, Surfside's historically weakest link -- in terms of defining place **and** in terms of effectively leveraging the value of its larger community context -- remains the northern terminus of its downtown shopping street, Harding Avenue.

Part of the problem can be attributed to the unfortunate decision, made some time ago, to convert Harding to a one-way, threelane, southbound suburban arterial road, encouraging pedestrians and drivers alike to see the corner of 96th and Harding as simply a nominal threshold, devoid of human activity, to be traversed as quickly and as unconsciously as possible.

Some point to the overt gesture on the part of Saks Fifth Avenue, to deliberately turn its back to Surfside and to 96th Avenue, as a contributing factor to this perception. But a lot of it can simply be blamed on the fact that the buildings framing the northern entrance to Surfside, and to Surfside's commercial heart -- as elegant as they may once have appeared -- have subsequently become squeezed between a rigidly defined perimeter block, and an overtaxed intersection, that puts pedestrians in a vehicular dominated setting that is both unappealing and repulsive.

The impetus behind the idea of creating a new, highly animated public plaza on the southwestern corner of 96th and Harding are many. First and foremost is the desire to create a generously proportioned, and well appointed, public room at this location. One that not only provides a welcome respite from the tightly constrained design parameters dictated by the need to accommodate large volumes at 96th Street and Harding Avenue (as well as the possibility of a new roundabout), but also -- a desire to present a truly welcoming front door to the community which speaks well of the nature of the people and businesses that reside here.

The other reason for a public plaza at this location was to more effectively leverage the potential value of the well-known regional shopping destination immediately north of Surfside, and directly across 96th Avenue from the proposed plaza -- the Shops of Bal Harbour.

Though Surfside does not aspire to be Bal Harbour, nor will every Bal Harbour shopper find the retail offerings in Surfside consistent with their shopping agenda at any given time, there is no question that a more overt effort to link the two shopping destinations will ultimately drive more customers to Surfside, and thereby help Harding Avenue merchants provide the residents of Surfside with the highest quality local goods and services possible, while still allowing Surfside to be uniquely itself, with no apologies necessary.

And lastly, one of the means by which this proposed plaza could be achieved, offers an additional potential benefit to the Town: as part of the larger effort to help revitalize and sustain downtown living and shopping in Surfside, a structured parking deck has been proposed for the western side of the block between Harding and Abbott, and between 96th and 95th streets. By "shifting" a part of the private development envelop that is currently occupying the northeastern-most end of that block, east of the alley (where the bank building currently resides) westward across the alley, through the enticement of incentive zoning, it will be possible to not only create the aforementioned plaza, but also to generate a "liner building" of significant quality and presence, to line the northern façade (the one facing 96th avenue) of that proposed mid-block parking deck.

With reasonably structured incentive zoning, it should be possible to get a great new public plaza, approximately 60 feet deep by 160 feet wide, creating a great new front door for Surfside, a reconstructed and substantially rehabilitated new historical building facade, and a well-designed liner building for the newly proposed municipal parking deck, all for the price of a simple land swap.

The private building owner gets a newly refurbished historical facade, improved customer access to a considerably larger pool of parking, and the ability to accommodate contemporary customer service needs, in a brand new facility abutting the new deck.

In addition, they will have additional ground floor leasing opportunities for the new retail and dining venues attracted by the handsome new plaza and the high traffic volumes (now thankfully, pleasantly) passing by. A complete "win-win," for the town, for the community, and for the private landowner whose participation is critical to making it all happen.

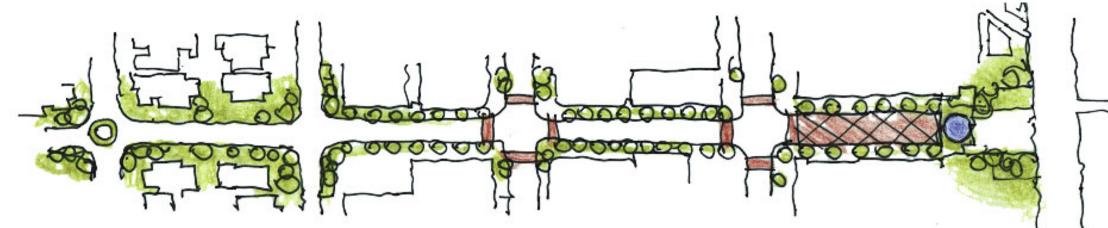
Additionally, it may be possible to do something similar on the opposite corner, across Harding, by moving a portion of that corner building to the vacant lot on the corner of Collins and 96th. Of course, the vacant lot would have to be purchased by the Town and the property owner would have to be amenable to this concept.







PROPOSED BEACH-END PARK, OCEAN VIEW PERSPECTIVE, SHOWING THE ATTRACTIVE NEW RESIDENT AMENITIES AND ENHANCED BEACH ACCESS.



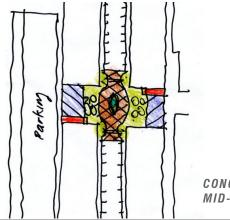


95TH STREET: BEACH CONNECTION

Though improved pedestrian beach access is generally recommended as part of the overall community master plan, it is also recommended in the context of the downtown improvement strategy, specifically along the 95th Street corridor. This particular location is not only a critical conduit for the northern Surfside residential neighborhood's beach access, but it is one, if not the only, place in which an effective physical and perceptive connection between the Harding Avenue business district and the ocean front can be realized. Specific detailed plans depicting a multipurpose plaza suggest a versatile public venue that can be used to help stage events such as art shows, farmers markets, craft and seasonal fairs, etc., taking advantage of the juxtaposition of Surfside's enhanced downtown main street qualities and beachfront locale.



PERSPECTIVE OF PROPOSED MID-BLOCK PLAZA, SHOWING PROPOSED STREETSCAPE AND TRAFFIC CALMING IMPROVEMENTS



CONCEPTUAL SKETCH OF MID-BLOCK PLAZA



MID-BLOCK PLAZAS

As part of the strategy for creating a network of pedestrian plazas and gathering places throughout the downtown, mid-block plazas play an important role in facilitating direct pedestrian movement between the retail merchandising street frontages, where the shopping and dining activity is focused, and the parking areas from which a large percentage of the customers heading to those activities will be coming from.

The idea is to create mid-block plazas around open and attractive pedestrian passages, which connect the stair and elevator cores of the parking decks directly with the street, and to "cluster" high-value retail and dining uses around these openings.



HARDING AVENUE, SHOWING PROPOSED STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS



EXAMPLE OF A MID-BLOCK PLAZA

The street opens up to a shaded plaza, where cafes spill out into the public space and people gather informally. Access to adjoining parking deck s opens directly onto the rear of the plaza. Between 96th and 95th street, the mid-block connection would be between the east side of the new parking structure, and the west side of Harding Avenue. Between 95th and 94th street, the connection would be on the east side of Harding to the lot or new parking structure behind the post office. And between 94th and 93rd street, the connection would again be on the east side of Harding, as the parking structure would be above the retail and dining venues embedded in the ground floor of the deck itself.

This approach will create highly animated gathering places at regular mid-block intervals, as well as take maximum advantage of the focused traffic generated by these convenient connections to the parking areas by creating highly valuable additional corner restaurant/ retail locations for the property owners.

In addition, it is proposed that these mid-block plazas be coordinated with other streetscape and traffic calming measures to help reinforce the pedestrian crossing points with special paving and landscape features, to help make drivers even more aware of pedestrians, and to help further moderate vehicular speed along Harding Avenue.

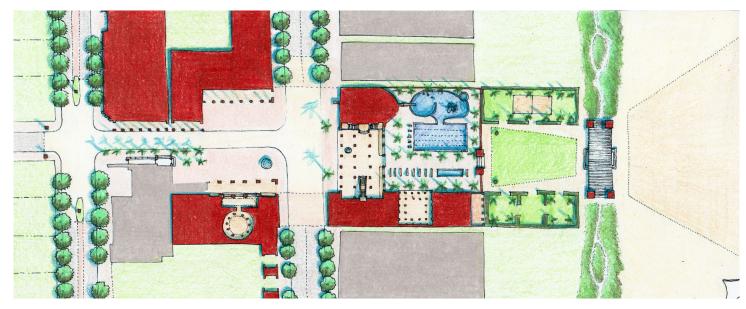
Early Diagrams To Convey Civic Zone Concept





EARLY COMMUNITY/CIVIC CENTER ZONE CONCEPT

3-D model rendering, showing an early conceptual design proposed for Community Center scheme, which featured a large open loggia framing a formal view of the ocean beyond.



Early Community Center concept plan, showing an open plaza bridging Collins Avenue and formally linking the Town Hall to the proposed new Community Center.



COMMUNITY AND CIVIC ZONE

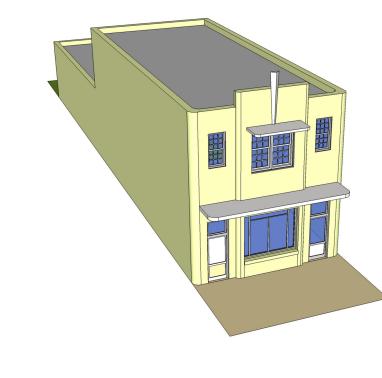
One of the fundamental cornerstones in Surfside's community master plan is the proposed creation of a comprehensive Community and Civic Center, which would anchor and define the physical and emotional heart of the community, as well as provide a complete array of community amenities and services in one convenient, central location.

The rationale behind this proposed new Community and Civic Center is based upon the proximate juxtaposition between the existing beachside community center, and the Town Hall, which is located directly across Collins Avenue from it, reinforcing the obvious logic of this approach.

Live/Work Units

As part of the proposed extended mixed-use commercial district, south along Harding Avenue, it is recommend that Live/work types be introduced as an appropriate and context-sensitive means of transitioning between the more overtly commercial mixed-use buildings further north and east, and the purely residential buildings further south and west, along Harding. This innovative building type will also allow local residents and smallscale investors to both live and work in Surfside, by providing an affordable means to locate their business here, and/or to own a small residential income property that they can personally manage themselves, in addition to operating their business from the same property. It is recommended that live/work units be allowed along Abbott Avenue between 96th and 94th Streets, and along Harding between 94th and 93rd Streets, as many of these property owners are having issues with the adjacent commercial zone and traffic, and this solution could help mitigate or alleviate these concerns by providing a valuable use appropriate to the location of these properties that could significantly increase their value and utility.





3D models of possible live/work units, illustrating several permutations of this innovative and versatile Building type. Live-works can be used as small scale infill mixed-use development opportunities within existing commercial fabric, and/or as sensitive transitional building types between primarily commercial and primarily residential areas.



Downtown Residential Units & Courtyard Hotels

Describing this concept in more specific terms -this recommendation is intended to help recapture hospitality market share and tax revenue lost through condominium conversions of previously existing hotel properties along the beachfront.

This could be accomplished by specifically designing new upper-story residential development to be designed to function as hotel/condominiums, whereby part-time residential purchasers would contract with a comprehensively managed citywide rental and management entity, that could market and operate their residential unit as a de facto hotel room, when not personally occupied by the resident owner.



This strategy should help to substantially replace the lost bed-tax revenue from the hotel towers on the beach, and add both vitality and life to the downtown, as well as assist in establishing a "captured" market for local shops and restaurants.

At the same time, this comprehensive approach should help ensure that these visitor's needs will be effectively managed such that local residents will not be adversely impacted by their presence. And finally, the Form-Based Codes will dictate that these upper-story uses be appropriately stepped back from the existing ground floor commercial frontages, to help maintain the existing scale and character of Harding Avenue as it exists today.

It is also recommended that the Town designate the Best Western Hotel property and the property across the street and on the northwest corner of 94th Street and Collins Avenue as a special hotel district (yellow hexagons). They could potentially use the municipal parking lot on Harding Avenue between 93rd and 94th Streets as part of their parking requirements, allowing them to better use of their available land, and when possibly assembled together for use as a single property, could be used to attract or develop a high-end resort-style hotel and conference center, which could provide a substantial financial benefit to the Town.

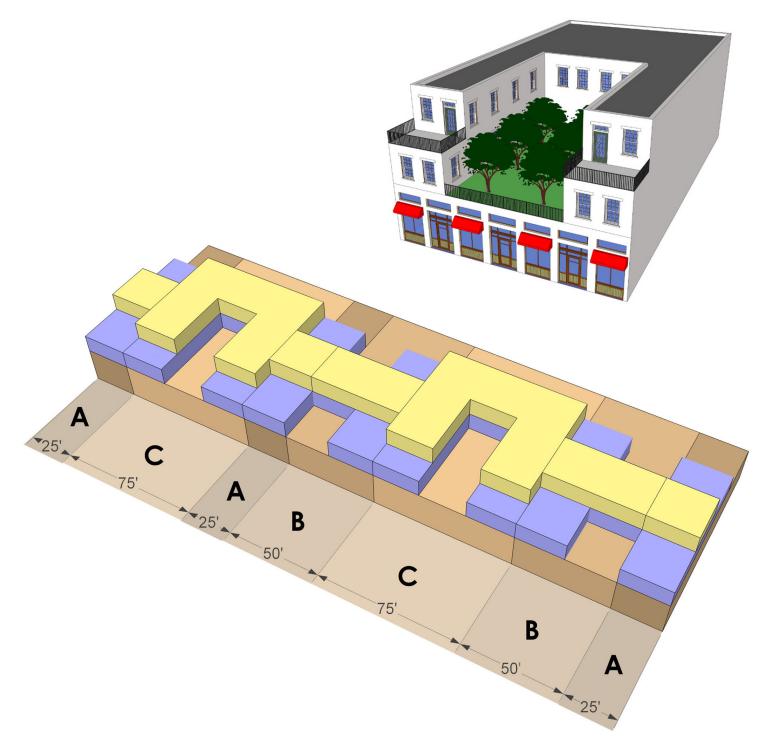


DIAGRAM OF HOW COURTYARD HOTELS COULD BE MORE ORGANICALLY ARTICULATED, BY STEPPING BACK THE UPPER FLOORS IN SPECIFIC RELATION TO LOT SIZES.

Parking Management

Along with the restoration of the previously existing thoroughfare configurations and traffic movements on Harding and Collins Avenues, the next most critical tool for improving customer service and convenience, and thereby enhancing the market appeal in Surfside's commercial district, would be the implementation of a comprehensive parking management system, including the addition of new downtown parking lots and structured decks, all fully integrated into the existing neighborhood fabric.

This can be accomplished, both architecturally and urbanistically, by strategically dispersing parking resources throughout the downtown area such as to minimize excessive and unnecessary traffic movements, and also to maximize the efficiency and convenience of parking for both local residents and for retail customers coming to Surfside from outside the community to patronize its local shops and restaurants.

A comprehensive parking system could utilize a number of innovative features, such as demand pricing, time of day/day of week pricing incentives, shared parking strategies, and valet and validation policies to improve customer satisfaction and to achieve efficient utilization of the parking infrastructure asset. Parking will also be instrumental in marketing the downtown to additional uses and investment, including upper story residential and office uses, and the possibility of pursuing development of the previously mentioned "horizontal hotel" concept, whereby new upper-story downtown residential



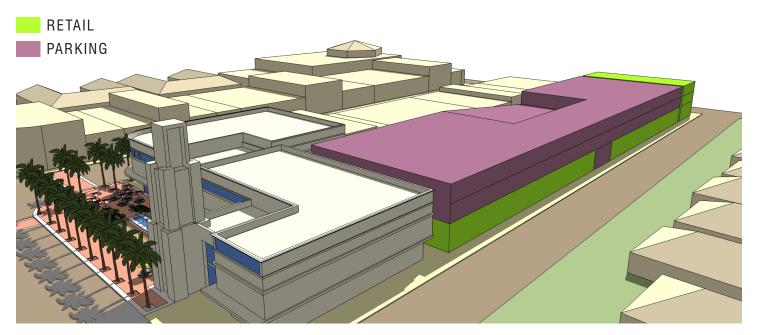
PRECEDENTS FOR ATTRACTIVELY INTEGRATING PARKING STRUCTURES INTO AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT:

ABOVE AND RIGHT TOP: Urban Parking Structures Lined With Storefronts RIGHT: Townhouses Wrapping A Parking Structure

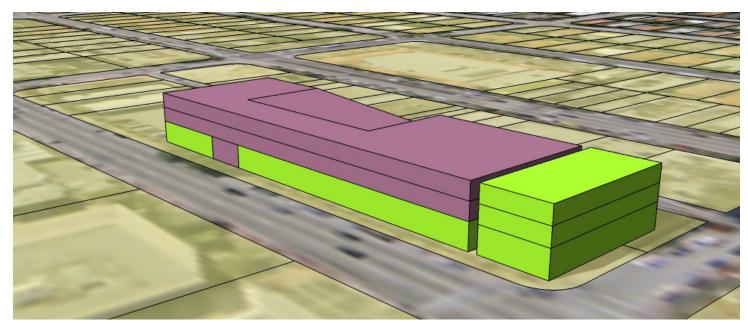








PROPOSED PARKING STRUCTURE ON ABBOTT AVENUE BETWEEN 96TH AND 95TH STREETS (ILLUSTRATIVE MASSING DIAGREAM)



PROPOSED PARKING STRUCTURE AT COLLINS AVENUE AND 95TH STREET (ILLUSTRATIVE MASSING DIAGRAM)



tall, with liner retail on the first floor. At the ends/corners there would be a shallow liner building to hide the parking structure behind it.

Parking structures would be a maximum of three stories

PROPOSED PARKING STRUCTURE ON HARDING AVENUE BETWEEN 94TH AND 93RD STREETS (ILLUSTRATIVE MASSING DIAGRAM)

development is effectively leveraged to help promote and sustain tourist-related visitation and other economic activities, through comprehensive marketing and operations.

In addition, the lot on Harding between 93rd and 94th Streets can be multi-purposed as parking for the business district, for the community center complex, for municipal vehicles, for the restaurant and retail below it, and for a resort/convention hotel at the Best Western site. The location between the streets allows for flexible overflow parking in both directions.