

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-3359

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE TOWN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE BIOPHILIC CITIES; PROVIDING FOR AUTHORIZATION; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Town of Surfside is committed to environmental sustainability and resiliency and improving community health and wellness; and

WHEREAS, the Town's efforts have continued through the years by developing and implementing innovative policies, programs, practices, and infrastructure, including adopting a Climate Crisis Report and Action Plan, engaging with local, regional, and national non-governmental organizations focused on opportunities to help mitigate and adapt to the challenges posed by the Climate Crisis, and supporting the Resilient305 Regional Strategy that raise awareness, supports engagement, and fosters a healthy, safe, prosperous, and resilient community; and

WHEREAS, evidence demonstrates that people are happiest, emotionally and physically healthiest, and most productive when working and living in close proximity to nature; and

WHEREAS, exposure to nature can reduce stress, aid recovery from illness, enhance cognitive skills, improve academic performance, and aid in combatting childhood and adult illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Biophilic Cities builds an understanding of the value and contribution of nature in cities to the lives of urban residents; and

WHEREAS, Biophilic Cities extend the idea of biophilia to urban environments, where the urban area works to conserve abundant biodiversity and nature and to creatively and responsibly add new elements of nature, and fosters connections to the natural world; and

WHEREAS, the "Biophilic City Network" is a community of biophilic cities that places nature at the core of design and planning and works to create abundant opportunities to learn about and connect with nature; and

WHEREAS, a commitment to join the "Biophilic City Network" with abundant and accessible nature will support the Town of Surfside's environmental sustainability and health goals;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Recitals Adopted. That the above-stated recitals are hereby adopted and confirmed.

Section 2. Approval. That the Town Commission hereby approves the Town's participation in the Biophilic Cities.

Section 3. Authorization and Implementation. The Town Manager is hereby authorized to do all necessary things to implement this resolution.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 14th day of January, 2025.

Motion By: Vice Mayor Paul
Second By: Commissioner Vildostegui

FINAL VOTE ON ADOPTION:

Commissioner Ruben A. Coto	<u>Yes</u>
Commissioner Nelly Velasquez	<u>Yes</u>
Commissioner Gerardo Vildostegui	<u>Yes</u>
Vice Mayor Tina Paul	<u>Yes</u>
Mayor Charles W. Burkett	<u>Yes</u>

Charles W. Burkett, Mayor


ATTEST:



Sandra N. McCready, MMC
Town Clerk



APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY FOR THE USE AND BENEFIT OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE ONLY:



Thais Hernandez, Esq.
Acting Town Attorney

“ATTACHMENT A”

The Town of Surfside was incorporated in 1935 as a beautiful pedestrian-friendly oceanfront community nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and Biscayne Bay in Miami-Dade County. Surfside is home to nearly 6,000 residents, as a community enhanced by its thoughtful urban planning that includes multi-family condominium and apartment buildings, a bustling business district, as well as public art, award-winning restaurants, resorts, spas and recreational facilities that are complemented by its charming residential neighborhood, enjoyed by residents and visitors year-round.

Surfside’s natural beauty and subtropical paradise integrates nature into its urban environment through its pristine mile-long public beach, walking and bike paths, lush public spaces and parks, providing residents and visitors with daily opportunities to connect with nature. Sustainability and green initiatives are a large focus in Surfside. The town’s designation as a “Tree City USA” reflects its commitment to preserving and expanding its urban tree canopy, which reduces heat, improves air quality, and provides habitats for wildlife. Public art projects, like the Turtle Walk sculptures celebrates loggerhead sea turtles, strengthening the community’s connection to nature while raising awareness about conservation.

Key Initiatives, Programs, Policies, and Projects to Advance Biophilic Cities

Surfside’s dedication to biophilic principles is evident in its wide range of sustainability initiatives, advocacy efforts, and local legislation.

Advocacy Efforts and Strategic Partnerships

The town reconvened its Sustainability and Resiliency Committee, and collaborates through partnerships to amplify its sustainability goals, having recently hosted **Platform Surfside: Flood Mitigation and Resilient Strategies for Coastal Communities**, an interactive exhibition highlighting innovative approaches to flood mitigation, climate adaptation, and sustainability. Held in November 2024, the event featured conceptual proposals and research from students at Syracuse University and the University of Miami Schools of Architecture, through workshops, presentations, and roundtable discussions, that engaged residents, leaders, and professionals in exploring sustainable solutions for coastal living.

Surfside is an active participant in the **Resilient305 Strategy**, which focuses on building resilience in Greater Miami and the Beaches.

Sustainability Policies and Zoning Updates

Surfside recently adopted legislation to promote sustainability and resiliency to include mandating green building practices in accordance with LEED standards, and requiring electric vehicle charging stations in new developments. The Town also established a resiliency fund to address the impacts of sea level rise and incorporated sustainability goals into its comprehensive plan. These policies have

positioned Surfside as a leader in climate adaptation and environmental stewardship.

Local Green Initiatives

Green initiatives in Surfside emphasize resource conservation and community engagement. The town is a founding community of the Clean Energy Coastal Corridor under the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program and banned Styrofoam and plastic straws. The dune renourishment project strengthens coastal defenses, while tree canopy expansion and LED streetlight conversions combat the urban heat island effect and improve energy efficiency. Additionally, the bike-share program promotes eco-friendly transportation and reduces vehicle emissions.

Public Art and Educational Programs

Art and education are central to Surfside's biophilic efforts. The Turtle Walk art installations celebrate local wildlife, while partnerships with organizations like the CLEO Institute and the Youth Environmental Alliance provide hands-on education about Florida's fragile ecosystems. The Town sponsors an annual Earth Day Resource Fair and "Plastic Fishing Festivals" to encourage people to gather plastic litter from the beach and create art.

Climate Adaptation and Resilience Projects

As a coastal town, Surfside has made significant investments in climate adaptation. Its stormwater management system includes advanced drainage infrastructure to mitigate flooding, and its Climate Action Plan outlines strategies for long-term resilience. Solar incentives for residents and businesses, combined with freeboard requirements for flood resilience, further demonstrate Surfside's proactive approach to addressing climate challenges.

Conclusion

From its mile-long beach and urban tree canopy to its sustainability programs and advocacy efforts, Surfside exemplifies how development in a small urban community can harmonize with nature. By fostering strategic partnerships, implementing innovative policies, and engaging residents through art and education, Surfside is a leader for sustainable coastal communities worldwide.

“ATTACHMENT B”

The Town of Surfside envisions a sustainable, resilient, and biophilic future where nature is fully integrated into the community's identity and daily life. Building on its history of environmental stewardship, Surfside is committed to protecting its natural assets, enhancing green infrastructure, and fostering a culture of sustainability. The following goals address specific actions to achieve this vision:

- **Address Sea Level Rise and Beach Erosion**
 - Enhance beach renourishment initiatives to safeguard Surfside's coastline.
- **Improve Stormwater Management and Water Quality**
 - Develop green infrastructure projects such as permeable pavements, and bio-retention swales to reduce flooding.
 - Upgrade drainage systems to meet modern standards and reduce water pollution, prioritizing human health and ecological balance.
- **Mitigate Climate Change and Air Pollution**
 - Promote initiatives for renewable energy sources for municipal operations and encourage adoption across the community.
 - Advocate for climate-conscious policies, including local heat protections for outdoor workers.
- **Enhance Green Spaces and Urban Nature**
 - Improve the urban tree canopy in public spaces and encourage private tree planting through tree giveaways.
- **Advance Sustainable Building Practices**
 - Incorporate permeable paving materials into municipal, commercial, and residential developments to improve water absorption and reduce urban runoff.
- **Support Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Composting**
 - Expand local composting programs, such as Compost for Life, and enhance recycling efforts through education and mandatory commercial recycling.
- **Strengthen Infrastructure for Resilience and Sustainability**
 - Integrate bioswales and other green stormwater management solutions into infrastructure projects.

- Enhance Infrastructure with underground utilities for urban resilience.
- Conduct a greenhouse gas inventory to guide future climate action.
- **Foster Community Engagement and Education**
 - Expand sustainability-focused communication to inform and involve residents in environmental initiatives.
 - Host workshops and educational programs on topics like composting, rain barrels, waste reduction, and climate resilience.
 - Promote public art projects, such as Turtle Walk sculptures, to celebrate local biodiversity and inspire stewardship.
- **Support Land and Ocean Conservation**
 - Prioritize the conservation of natural habitats and ecosystems on land and in the ocean.
 - Advocate for policies that improve biodiversity and protect endangered species, including efforts to protect and restore coral reefs and marine life.

Conclusion

If Surfside is accepted into the Biophilic Cities Program, it will also become the criterion for our Sister City Program. Other focus areas include implementing our Dune Management Plan that includes removal of non-native invasive flora and re-introducing native plants to strengthen the dunes and provide shade for the adjacent recreational paths, improving walkability to improve community health and safety, developing an urban forestry program, assessing the viability of implementing bioswales to supplement our stormwater management system, initiating composting at our community garden and increasing access to private composting services, and continuing our engagement with academic institutions (e.g., Syracuse University, University of Miami) to inform the needed changes to our built environment as we adapt to the challenges of the Climate Crisis. Most importantly, by becoming a Biophilic City, Surfside will have greater access to other communities who have implemented successful initiatives to enhance nature in terms of features and access in their communities.