

Town of
Surfside



Parking Structure Feasibility Study

Final Report



March 2013

 RICH & ASSOCIATES, INC.
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Stantec





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We would also like to thank those business owners, managers and residents who gave graciously of their time to meet with us or speak with us on the phone regarding particular parking issues

The Rich and Associates and C3TS/Stantec team looks forward to working with the Town's Parking Advisory Committee, the Downtown Vision Advisory Committee and the Town Commission as the various projects are reviewed and decisions are reached regarding the alternatives provided

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Section 1 – Executive Summary

Section 1 – Executive Summary

Introduction

Downtown Surfside was once a premier shopping area with national retailers. Situated between the City of Miami Beach and the Village of Bal Harbour, the commercial district over the last 50 years has experienced a slow and steady decline. In recent years however, there has been a new energy downtown due to new initiatives by the Town and its Downtown Vision Advisory Committee (DVAC) as new residential and hotel projects have been approved and started construction. The new development projects, coupled with reduced vacancies in existing commercial space and conversion of service type businesses to retail and restaurant establishments has created a parking deficiency in public parking particularly during the four month winter season and on summer weekends. Because not all residents are convinced that a parking shortage exists, the Town commissioned this study by Rich and Associates and C3TS/ Stantec to not only quantify and qualify the Town’s parking needs but also to identify if a parking structure(s) is/are necessary or feasible for addressing the Town’s parking requirements both now and in the future to ensure the long-term survival of downtown.

Results Summary

Study Area

The defined study area extends from 92nd Street to just north of 96th Street and from the Ocean to just west of Abbott Avenue. This area is primarily the commercial district of Surfside which encompasses four blocks centered on Harding Avenue and extending from 96th Street to 94th Street between Collins Avenue on the east to Abbott Avenue on the west. Slightly further south of the core commercial district is the Town’s Community Center and Town Hall at 93rd Street at Collins Avenue.

Parking Supply

Within the downtown there are a few private parking areas intended for customer / visitor use which means that most customers or visitors to the downtown are relying upon the public parking provided by the Town in one of six public lots or use of on-street parking. The private areas that are provided for customer use such as the Publix Lot, Wells Fargo Bank Lot and Big Daddy’s Lot are all generally intended for use only while visiting that business which would mean that if someone wished to make multiple stops they would have to physically move their vehicle or risk being towed. In order to facilitate a pedestrian friendly environment, Rich and Associates generally recommends that a community provide or control the parking such that at least 50 percent of the parking is publicly available. This means that someone can park once

and visit multiple destinations (shopping, dining, personal business etc) without having to move their vehicle. Excluding the parking intended for residential use, Surfside has 58 percent of its parking publicly available which after completion of the Grand Beach Hotel (opening late 2013) and 92nd Street Hotel projects in conjunction with development of some other residential privately developed and provided parking will reduce the proportion of publicly available supply to just 36 percent of the total non-residential affiliated parking spaces downtown. This means that public parking is not keeping up with private parking supply due to new developments.

Apart from the private parking lots associated with the businesses noted above, much of the other privately provided parking is in small groupings or along the Harding Avenue alleys which because of their location and condition are generally not intended for customer or visitor use. Even though a business may have some parking adjacent such as in the alleys or small parking areas, many may find that the amount of parking is insufficient to provide for all their needs and so must rely upon the public parking. As such, many of the downtown businesses, particularly the restaurants, are relying on the publicly provided parking to provide for their customer and staff needs.

The existing publicly provided parking totals 601± spaces with 461± off-street parking spaces and 140± on-street spaces. All publicly available spaces require payment. This is accomplished using either using a series of "Master Meters" which cover multiple parking spaces in the Town's parking lots and along certain on-street location or 51 single head meters at several locations. A trial whereby the old individual mechanical parking meter heads were replaced with 30 new meter heads that will now accept credit cards resulted in the revenue during the first two months of the experiment increasing by 184 percent.

Parking Demand

In order to assess the parking needs in downtown Surfside, Rich and Associates has relied upon a proven methodology of collecting information via surveys unique to the community which is then validated by on-site observations recording parking lot occupancies. As noted previously Surfside, like many South Florida communities, experiences increased pressure on its parking system particularly during the winter months. Recognizing this, the surveys distributed to business owners asked for levels of activity during both the out-of-season period as well as during the in-season months. This permitted the firm to conduct the occupancy counts during the out-of-season period and correlate the results to the level of reported activity based on the survey material. The accuracy of this information then allowed the application of the in-season results to the demand model and the extrapolation of the expected parking lot occupancies during the season. This confirmed anecdotal reports of high occupancy as the analysis showed that Surfside would experience full occupancy of its public parking lots on which so many businesses depend due to a lack of alternative private parking.

In addition to the defined parking demand from customer/visitors and staff to downtown Surfside destinations, there is additional pressure placed on the parking system from nearby workers. These include contractors finishing downtown condominium residences and during certain periods of the year employees of the Bal Harbour Shops in the Village of Bal Harbour across 96th Street from downtown making use of Surfside parking. While the added parking demand from contractors is not expected to continue indefinitely, it is expected to continue for the next three to perhaps four years.

Correlation of the results from the surveys to the occupancy of the existing parking supply has resulted in Rich and Associates concluding that the lack of parking is a constraint on existing and future businesses being able to reach their full potential. Lack of parking is likely to discourage some patrons to visit Surfside as the need to “hunt for parking” is just not worth the inconvenience.

This led to an analysis of the amount of parking being provided in downtown Surfside compared to the amount of parking required by application of the Town’s zoning ordinance to the defined square footage by land use. This analysis shows a current deficiency of 276± spaces between the number of parking spaces required and the total number of public and private parking spaces provided. This deficiency accounts for agreed reductions in the requirements by certain religious organizations recognizing the needs of the Orthodox community. This deficiency may be due in part to accommodation made by the Town through its Offsite Parking Fund Ordinance which allows business which may be deficient in the amount of parking that they can provide to pay a set amount for each deficient space to the Town which the Town would then apply to development of additional public parking.

Projections of parking demand and supply to be created as part of several development projects either under construction, in-process or being reviewed by the Town show that additional parking demand will be created. While most of the anticipated developments will provide for their needs, at least two projects will likely require the use of publicly available parking to satisfy a portion of their needs. Assuming the occupancy of an additional 14,000 square feet of building space which is currently vacant plus the added demand from the development projects means that the downtown is projected to be short by a net 303± spaces within the next several years as these additional projects are completed. The potential to eliminate approximately 72 spaces along Harding Avenue as part of a streetscape project could increase the potential shortage to 375± spaces. Additional adjustments that deduct a total of 71± private spaces developed in excess of the zoning code requirement for The Chateau and two hotel projects that would not be available to the general public and artificially reduce the parking deficit would increase the calculated shortage to 446± spaces. This information is explained in Section 2.

Alternatives

Given the magnitude of existing and projected parking deficits Rich and Associates and C3TS/Stantec have investigated various parking structure alternatives to help address this parking shortfall. Three sites were identified by the Town as possible sites for the Town's first parking structure. Each of these is an existing surface parking lot and all three are on separate blocks downtown. The three sites identified are:

- a) Abbott Avenue Lot.
- b) Post Office Lot (plus the adjoining privately owned building housing the Surfside Post Office).
- c) 94th Street Lot (with possibility of partnering with owner of adjacent properties for combined development).

The Abbott Avenue Lot site and 94th Street Lot site are sufficient to accommodate a parking structure on just the Town owned property while the Post Office site would require the site of the adjacent building. These three sites are the only sites that would have sufficient dimension to accommodate the geometry of a parking structure.

Financing options and costs as discussed for each of the projects assume the Town finances the development of the parking structure through issuance of a tax-exempt Parking Revenue Bond which would be guaranteed by downtown parking revenues. With complementary uses associated with each of the sites, there are also possibilities for public / private partnership opportunities to have the Town and others jointly develop the projects or through other possible arrangements have the parking developed independent of Town financing.

It should be noted with each of the options discussed that the parking capacities noted are limited by the existing 40 foot height limit downtown. If additional spaces were needed, in many cases this could be accommodated by adding additional levels but obviously would require amending current codes. Therefore, the capacities have been limited to comply with existing height restrictions. It should also be noted that the cost discussed with each of the alternatives in the next few pages reflect the project cost to be financed which includes not only the cost of construction but also includes professional fees, insurance, contingencies and assumes that approximately \$1.5 million in equity from the Parking Trust Fund would be contributed to reduce the amount borrowed for each alternative.

Abbott Avenue Lot

Three alternatives have been developed using the Abbott Avenue site.

Alternative 1 would be a two-level underground parking structure beneath the entire length and width of the Abbott Avenue parking lot and actually extending to the west beneath Abbott

Avenue for a more efficient parking structure. This option also proposes replacing the existing surface parking lot with a public park. The underground parking structure would provide 448± spaces replacing the existing 207± space surface lot resulting in a net addition of 241± spaces for the downtown. However, as an underground parking facility this structure would have a total project cost to be financed (excluding the cost of the above ground Public Park) of \$27.4 million. This figure includes the cost of building the underground parking structure and the slab which forms the roof of the building and supports the park as well as professional fees, contingencies, insurance and the equity contribution from the Parking Trust Fund of \$1.5 million. It is possible to reduce this cost with alternative methods of financing the park.

The second alternative proposed for the Abbott Avenue lot would be an above grade facility, encompassing approximately one-half of the existing parking lot. The parking structure would be situated at the north end of the property while the southern half nearest 95th Street would be developed as a smaller version of the public park associated with Alternative 1. This parking structure would have a capacity of 414± spaces producing 207± net additional parking spaces for the downtown. Another amenity possible with this project would be townhomes constructed along the west face of the structure facing Abbott and therefore providing a buffer between the parking and the residential properties (and Young Israel project) to the west. It is expected that this would be built by a private developer selected by the Town independent of the parking structure construction. This parking structure (excluding the Public Park and townhomes) would have project cost to be financed of approximately \$13 million.

The final alternative investigated for the Abbott Avenue Lot would be a derivative of Alternative 2 in which instead of only using one-half of the parking lot, the parking structure would extend the full length of the site. This would eliminate the possibility of the public park but would still allow for the possibility of the townhomes along the western face. This structure would have a project cost to be financed of just over \$7.2 million after accounting for the equity contribution from the Parking Trust Fund of \$1.5 million. This parking structure would provide 514± spaces or 307± net additional spaces for the downtown.

Post Office Lot

Due to the size of the parcel associated with the Post Office site, only one option is possible to meet the design geometry of the parking structure. This however would require the adjoining building presently housing the Surfside Post Office. This building is not owned by the Postal Service but by a private individual who leases the space to the Postal Service. This may also afford a public / private partnership opportunity to develop the parking structure and replace the post office within the newly constructed building.

A parking structure if developed on this site would have a capacity of 280± spaces which produces 219± new spaces for the downtown. Not including the cost of the existing building or property, this alternative would have a project cost to be financed of \$5.3 million.

94th Street Lot Site

Two alternatives were investigated for the 94th Street Lot site. One alternative sought to take advantage of a possible opportunity to cooperate with an adjoining property owner(s) to develop parking and associated commercial space on combined parcels. This alternative has the benefit of extending the downtown commercial district and at the same time expanding the downtown parking supply in a public / private partnership opportunity. This could mean that the Town develops the parking on the combined parcel while the private developer constructs the commercial space and relies on the public parking structure for its needs. An alternative could have the developer lease the Town's parking lot parcel and develop the entire project independently with the Town guaranteed that a certain number of parking spaces would be publicly available.

Assuming the condition whereby the Town built the parking, this project is anticipated to provide 370± spaces. After deducting the spaces in the existing surface lot and the spaces likely needed by the commercial space (assuming 50,000 gsf), this project would provide 88± net additional spaces for the downtown. This facility is projected to have a \$9.2 million project costs to be financed. This analysis does not include the additional property taxes and potential food and beverage (2%) taxes that would be created by the project.

The final alternative considered on the 94th Street lot site limited the parking structure to just the existing parking lot parcel. As such, this would only allow the development of a parking structure without the associated benefits (such as added commercial or public benefit space) but would meet the goal of adding to the parking supply downtown. This structure would provide 223± total parking space or 124± additional parking spaces for the downtown. With a project cost to be financed at just over \$3.5 million it is the least expensive of the alternatives investigated.

While the economic analysis associated with each of the options has shown that several projects could require significant parking rate increases, these must also be weighed in the context of additional public benefits that could be created in conjunction with the parking structure development (e.g., a new downtown park). The determination of whether the Town could construct a parking structure or structures could also have an impact on the proposed streetscape project that could eliminate on-street parking along Harding and provide wider sidewalks. Not only are the wider sidewalks more pedestrian friendly, they may also allow more restaurants to have outdoor dining. Obviously, such a project could not proceed without replacement parking created such as in a parking structure. Added opportunities to partner with the private sector may also allow the Town to realize the mutual benefit of added parking and additional community development at lesser costs and rates.

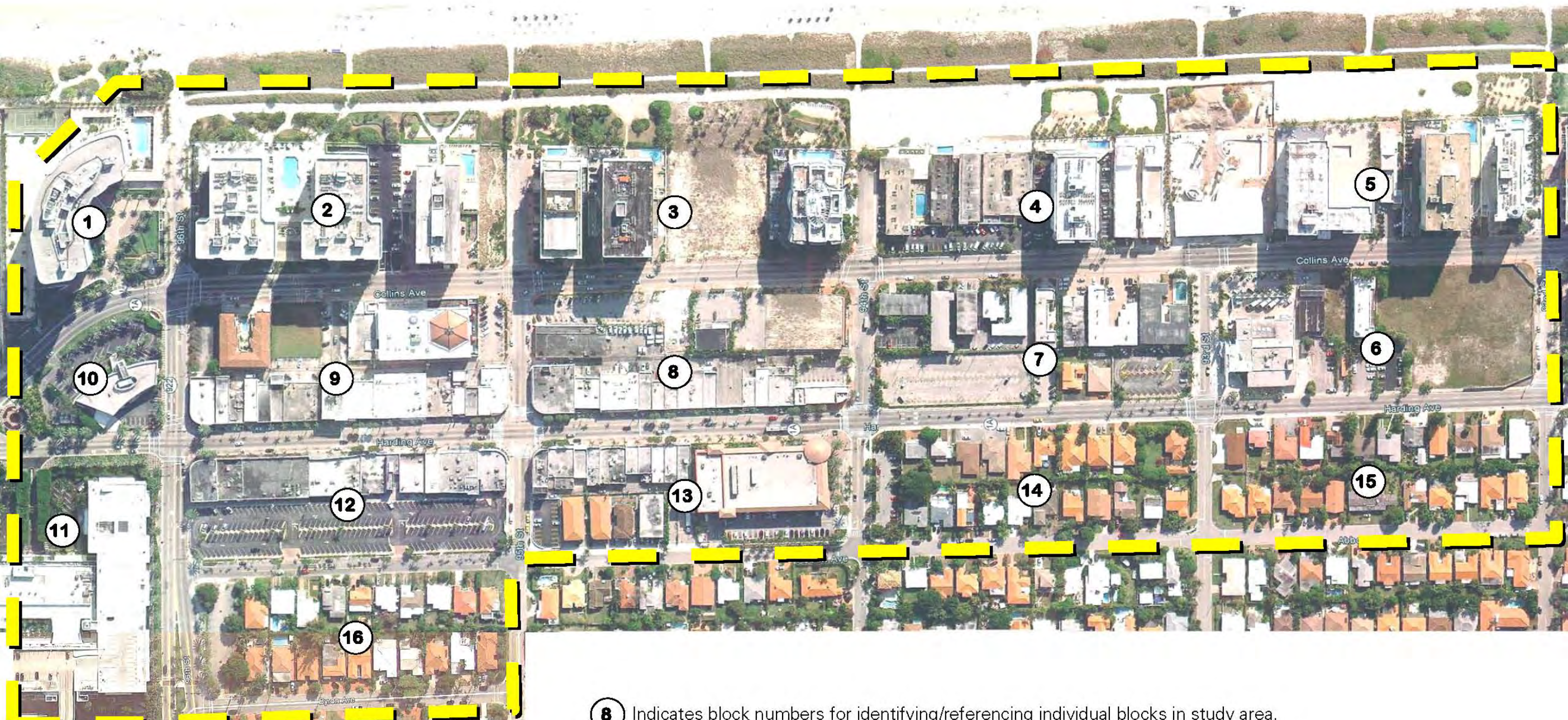
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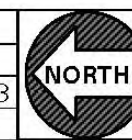


8 Indicates block numbers for identifying/referencing individual blocks in study area.

Sheet Title:

STUDY AREA

File No.	1234
Scale	NTS
Date	1-24-13
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MAP Number:

MAP 1