

Town of Surfside

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: 96th Street/Kane Concourse
South: 87th Terrace and Biscayne Bay
West: Biscayne Bay
East: Atlantic Ocean

Community Type

Municipality

History

Surfside is a town in northeast Miami-Dade County, situated on a barrier island between Biscayne Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. Occupying only .564 square miles, it is bordered by Bal Harbour on the north, by the North Beach neighborhood of Miami Beach on the south, and on the west by Indian Creek Village and the Town of Bay Harbor Islands across the Indian Creek channel. It is primarily a residential community, with multistory condominium buildings adjacent to the beach and a small business district.

The development of the community began during the land boom of the 1920s. Between 1923 and 1925, the Tatum Brothers subdivided the land in what is now Surfside. Starting in 1924, Henri Levy developed Biscaya Island, at the town's southwest corner, and a portion of the land from 87th to 92nd Streets. In 1929-1930 Russell Pancoast built the Surf Club at 90th Street and Collins Avenue. In 1935, fearing annexation by the City of Miami Beach, 35 members of the privately-owned club incorporated the Town of Surfside and financed the venture with a \$28,500 loan. Spearman Lewis was the first Mayor of Surfside. The Surf Club later became a gathering place for the rich and famous. Guests included Frank Sinatra, Elizabeth Taylor, Ava Gardner, Winston Churchill, and Dean Martin. The original historic structure was redeveloped as the Four Seasons Hotel at the Surf Club.

After World War II, Surfside continued to develop. In 1956, Surfside purchased the Lehman Estate on the northeast corner of 93rd Street and Collins Avenue and acquired additional land via eminent domain.

By 1957, Surfside had outgrown its original town hall. The current town hall on Harding Avenue at 93rd Street was renovated in 2001 and serves as a hub for public services and the chambers of the Town Commission.

In 1960, Hawthorne Park was dedicated. In 1962, the town built the Community Center at 93rd Street, which was later torn down and rebuilt. This multi-purpose facility is a central meetup spot for Surfside residents and features a pool with lap lanes, a plunge pool and slide, a children's activity pool, a jacuzzi, and the Surf-n-Sides poolside eatery. Additionally, the Community Center offers numerous events and programs for adults, seniors, teens, and kids. Other community and recreational facilities include the Tennis Center, the 96th Street Park, the Hawthorne Tot Lot, the Paws Up Dog Park, and Veterans Park and Community Garden.

Surfside has continued to see development to this day, with many condominium and apartment blocks built along Collins Avenue and the beach.

Surfside has a Commission-Manager form of government, with a Mayor, a Vice-Mayor, and three town Commissioners. Meeting agendas and minutes are available on the municipal website, as well as meeting videos going back as far as 2013. The site also has detailed information on a variety of specialized town boards and committees.

Community Dynamics

As of 2022, Surfside had a population of 5,625. The median age was 41.6 and the median household income was \$73,160. Between 2021 and 2022 the population of Surfside declined from 5,665 to 5,625, a decrease of .706%. At the same time, the median household income rose from \$67,544 to \$73,160, an increase of 8.31%. Regarding ethnicity in 2022, 56% of the population was White non-Hispanic, 21.6% was White Hispanic, 10.7% was Multiracial Hispanic, 4.64% was Other Hispanic, and 4.43% was Black. None of the households in Surfside reported speaking a non-English language at home as a primary language, and 88.2% of the population were US citizens. As of 2022, 42.3% of the residents of Surfside were born outside the US, which is much higher than the national average of 13.6%. In 2021, the percentage of foreign-born residents was 39%, indicating that the rate has been increasing. In 2022, the median property value was \$699,300 and the homeownership rate was 64%.

Business Landscape

The zoning map of the Town of Surfside (dated September 2018) shows the entirety of the town's central area restricted to buildings under 30 feet in

Commented [ER1]: While this is indeed important, it is not something we want to emphasize in this report.

height. This same restriction applies to Biscaya Island in the town's southwest corner, as well as the western and southern edges of the town facing Indian Creek and Biscayne Bay. Single-family dwellings occupy this entire central area. Land fronting the beach east of Collins Avenue is designated for structures up to 120 feet, and many high-rise buildings are located here, running the length of the municipality. The Surfside Comprehensive Plan includes maps of existing land use (dated 2017) and future land use, with projections up to 2036.

The small downtown district of Surfside covers an area running the length of two blocks, between 96th Street and 94th Street, along Collins and Harding Avenues. Buildings in this area are restricted to a height of 40 feet. Surfside has a Downtown Vision Advisory Committee, responsible for recommending improvements to the town manager, with a focus on enhancing the unique look and historical identity of the district. The committee is also charged with retaining and attracting businesses, creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment, introducing parking innovations, and collaborating with neighboring municipalities on joint initiatives that benefit the residents and businesses of Surfside.

The Surfside website includes a visitors page, promoting local businesses in the categories of food and beverage, flowers, gifts, retail, salons, spas, barbershops, hotels, and a variety of services. Descriptions, website links, and contact information are given for each business listed.

Transportation Characteristics

The main north-south arteries of the Town of Surfside are Collins Avenue/Highway A1A/Jimmy Buffett Memorial Highway and Harding Avenue/Highway A1A/Jimmy Buffett Memorial Highway. The small downtown district is located along these two roadways, between 96th Street and 94th Street, at the north end of the town. The main east-west roadway is 96th Street, which defines the northern boundary of the municipality. This street crosses Indian Creek to Bay Harbor Islands as the Kane Concourse.

The Transportation Element of the Surfside Comprehensive Plan contains multiple maps from 2017, showing existing and future conditions for the number of lanes on roadways, functional roadway classifications, levels of service, pedestrian facilities, transit routes, and traffic generators.

According to DATA USA 2022 statistics, most people in Surfside drove alone to work, with an average commute time of 32 minutes. The average car ownership was two cars per household.

The municipal website gives details on parking in Surfside, including lot locations, parking rates, permit registration information, car charging stations, and general FAQs.

Miami-Dade Metrobus serves Surfside, with most stops located along Collins and Harding Avenues.

Freebee on-demand free rides are available to Surfside residents every day of the week. The website shows a map of the service area, which includes the Kane Concourse in Bay Harbor Islands and the Bal Harbour Shops. Users can download the app for free via the municipal webpage.

Sources

1. Wikipedia, Surfside, Florida, 2024. Url: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surfside,_Florida
2. Surfside, Florida, Residents, About the Town of Surfside, 2024. Url: <https://www.townofsurfsidefl.gov/residents/about-the-town-of-surfside>
3. Surfside, Florida, Commission, Town Boards and Committees, Champlain Towers Public Records Documents, Champlain Tower South Information & Resources, 2024. Url: <https://surfside.one/public-records-search/>
4. Surfside, Florida, Commission, Town Commission, 2024. Url: <https://www.townofsurfsidefl.gov/departments-services/town-commission>
5. Surfside, Florida, Commission, Town Commission, Public Records, 2024. Url: <https://www.townofsurfsidefl.gov/departments-services/town-clerk/public-records>
6. Surfside, Florida, Departments, Planning, Zoning Map & Code, Zoning Districts Map, Town of Surfside Zoning Map, September 2018 (PDF). Url: <https://www.townofsurfsidefl.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/planning-documents/maps/zoningmap.pdf>
7. Surfside, Florida, Departments, Planning, Comprehensive Plan, Complete Comprehensive Plan, Town of Surfside Comprehensive Plan Adopted Update June 2018 (PDF). Url: https://www.townofsurfsidefl.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/town-clerk-documents/comprehensive-plan/comprehensive-plan-2018/comprehensive-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=1f765194_4

8. Surfside, Florida, Commission, Town Commission, Town Boards and Committees, 2024. Url: <https://www.townofsurfsidefl.gov/departments-services/town-clerk/town-boards-and-committees>
9. Surfside, Florida, Visitors, 2024. Url: <https://www.townofsurfsidefl.gov/departments-services/visit-surfside>
10. Surfside, Florida, Departments, Planning, Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Element, June 2018 (PDF). Url: https://www.townofsurfsidefl.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/town-clerk-documents/comprehensive-plan/comprehensive-plan-2018/2-transportation-element.pdf?sfvrsn=eb755194_5
11. Surfside, Florida, Departments, Parking, 2024. Url: <https://www.townofsurfsidefl.gov/departments-services/parking>
12. Surfside, Florida, Residents, Freebee Transportation Service, 2024. Url: <https://www.townofsurfsidefl.gov/news-and-events/news-detail/2024/04/08/freebee-service-begins-april-10>
13. Google Maps, 2024. Url: <https://www.google.com/maps>
14. Data USA, 2021. Url: <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/surfside-fl>