

**BEACH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP
Monday, January 13, 2025, 12:00 P.M.
Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center
501 Seabreeze Blvd, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316
South Building – 2nd Floor East Conference Room**

		Cumulative Attendance September 2024 – August 2025			
	P/A	Regular Meetings		Special Meetings	
Bahia Mar Doubletree	P	3	0	0	0
Lisa Namour, Chair					
Alternate-Vacant					
Marriott Courtyard, PHF Oceanfront	P	3	0	0	0
Michael Fleming, Vice Chair					
Steve Zunt, Alternate					
The “W” Hotel, Capri Hotel, LLC	P	1	3	0	0
Vacant					
Alex Caceres, Alternate					
Ritz Carlton Hotel	P	3	0	0	0
Jose Torres					
Samuel Fuerstman, Alternate					
Greater FTL Chamber of Commerce	P	3	0	0	0
Ina Lee					
The Westin Ft Lauderdale Beach	A	2	1	0	0
Laurie Johnson					
Michael Berry, Alternate					
B Ocean Fort Lauderdale	P	3	0	0	0
Sabrina Graves					
German Villa, Alternate					
Sonesta Hotel	P	3	0	0	0
Ryan Frederick					
Jeff Peterson, Alternate					

Staff

Judy Erickson, BBID Program Manager
Ericka Franceschi, Assistant to Vice Mayor Glassman
J. Oppertlee, Prototype, Inc.

Guests

Vice Mayor Steven Glassman, District 2 Commissioner
Dan Lindblade, President and CEO, Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce
Bill Brown, President, Central Beach Alliance

Ted Botimer, Vice President of Research Strategy & Revenue Management, Visit
Lauderdale

Tasha Cunningham, The Brand Advocate (Luis Galvez also present)

I. Call to Order / Roll Call / Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Chair Namour. It was noted a quorum was present.

II. Welcome and Introductions

Vice Mayor Steven Glassman, District 2 Commissioner

Mayor Glassman thanked the BID for their work and stated that he was very proud of all of their accomplishments.

Dan Lindblade, President and CEO, Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Lindblade stated that he would be discussing strategic planning for the future.

Bill Brown, President, Central Beach Alliance

Mr. Brown had no comments at this time.

Ted Botimer, Vice President of Research Strategy & Revenue Management, Visit Lauderdale

Mr. Botimer had no comments at this time.

Tasha Cunningham, The Brand Advocates (Luis Galvez also present)

Ms. Cunningham had no comments at this time.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chair Namour noted that the November 18th minutes incorrectly stated that she said Florida Fish and Wildlife did not intend to allow Tortuga because of turtle nesting season. She clarified that the discussion was actually about the steps the Committee needed to follow to gain approval for events on the beach and how the BBID works proactively within that process.

Motion made by Ms. Graves, seconded by Ms. Lee, to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2024, Regular Meeting as amended. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

IV. Lunch and Networking

V. Strategic Planning Workshop

Mr. Dan Lindblade facilitated the Strategic Planning process.

Mr. Lindblade asked everyone to share their vision of what they wished to accomplish through the Strategic Planning process. Chair Namour thought it was important to identify two or three accomplishments for the year.

Several ideas were shared, emphasizing the importance of identifying initiatives that drive tourism growth during business need periods, strategically allocating BBID funds based on performance data, and leveraging marketing insights to support progress. Committee members underscored the need to establish clear and actionable goals to guide these efforts.

Mr. Brown said that as we reflect on the accomplishments of the CRA, we should acknowledge its pivotal role as a catalyst for the progress achieved. Now that the CRA is sunsetting, it is essential to focus on maximizing these accomplishments and ensuring their enduring impact. He emphasized that the hotel community is the economic engine of this beach and that the broader community has some responsibility to support initiatives that sustain this success. By fostering collaboration between the hotels and the city, there is still significant potential to build on these achievements and drive further progress.

Ms. Johnson emphasized the importance of hosting different events during various times of the year to ensure sustained economic benefits. She also noted that the beach's needs should be met both from a group perspective and from a transient perspective since each of those segments was important to the area.

Mr. Botimer, Visit Lauderdale, stated that with detailed geolocation data, he will provide insights during the discussion. He encouraged the Committee to ask questions and noted the support of Visit Lauderdale.

Mr. Luis Galvez, The Brand Advocates, stated his purpose for attending was to listen and learn about what the Committee wanted so his company could apply the appropriate marketing strategies.

Ms. Cunningham of The Brand Advocates looks forward to participating and gaining understanding of the BBID's strategy and goals to drive progress.

Ms. Caceres supports a strategic approach with clear goals, ROI, and data from marketing and events to guide future direction. She emphasized collaboration across group and leisure perspectives and noted Omni's impact on shaping the future.

Mr. Frederick, marking one year with the Sonesta, expressed his support for this strategic planning effort. He asked how to find more opportunities like Tortuga and other events that could benefit hotels on the north end of the district. He also emphasized the importance of mitigating media coverage on hurricanes and heat.

Ms. Graves expressed her excitement about the potential for hotels to collaborate more

closely, stating that this collective effort will make everyone stronger.

Ms. Erickson, BBID Program Manager, expressed gratitude to attendees and conveyed her eagerness to collaborate on a strategic approach to advance BBID's success.

Acknowledging the frequent changes in hotel teams, Ms. Lee emphasized the importance of educating newcomers in hotel management, sales, and marketing, while highlighting the essential role of General Managers. She suggested involving sales and marketing teams in meetings to collaborate with GMs and strengthen area promotion efforts.

Mr. Torres emphasized the importance of ensuring that information and strategies are effectively communicated and cascaded to hotel marketing and sales teams, highlighting their critical role in driving success.

Mr. Lindblade noted the commonality of the vision among committee members. He said the greatest expansion ever happened in Fort Lauderdale following the great recession. He said Fort Lauderdale is building an international brand, much more than events. He said it was all about building a better experience. He stated that the committee would meet in the future to fine-tune what has been done, including marketing and looking at statistics.

Mr. Lindblade encouraged committee members to consider the area's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. He noted that today's strategic planning workshop was about taking in the information, and a second session may be necessary to fine-tune that information further.

Mr. Lindblade said the big issues are related to resilience, and the vision would include how to best respond to issues such as a rising sea level, the City's neighbors, and more. He said the progress should be monitored while making recommendations on service enhancements, special programs, and events. He reviewed the objectives of establishing Fort Lauderdale Beach as a premier resort destination while significantly increasing tourism to expand business revenue, increase economic growth, enhance the physical appearance, and increase the attractiveness of the area. He discussed what a great job the city has done building new assets and those forthcoming. Mr. Lindblade said that the development of pedestrian-friendly sidewalks is another area for improvement, including shade and lighting. Creating a unique sense of place and improving the overall image of the beach.

Ms. Lee inquired about sidewalks and directed her question to Vice Mayor Glassman. She praised him as an outstanding advocate for the beach and expressed her appreciation for his efforts. Vice Mayor Glassman shared that the City is currently planning a comprehensive Sidewalk Master Plan. He also encouraged residents to engage in discussions with their representatives at the County and State levels. Additionally, Mr. Lindblade noted that other agencies, such as the Florida Department of Transportation, are available to assist.

2024 YoY Marketing Performance

Ms. Cunningham, The Brand Advocates, presented a Marketing Performance Update. She discussed the marketing focus from 2023 and 2024.

Ms. Lee advocated for hashtags and thought Fort Lauderdale should adopt a cohesive approach that could be pulled through by the hotel marketing and media teams.

Data and Insights Presentation

Mr. Botimer presented data and insights, focusing on findings from the annual Longwoods survey. This survey helps define Greater Fort Lauderdale (GFL) as a destination, providing critical information on visitor demographics, travel purposes, spending patterns, etc. These insights are invaluable for those aiming to attract visitors and enhance the destination's appeal.

GFL is predominantly a leisure destination, with 62% of visitors staying overnight and accounting for 82% of total spending. Notably, 77% of overnight visitors have been here before, demonstrating strong retention, with 52% returning within the year.

When considering strategies to attract visitors, a key focus should be on visitors from outside of the area and the need period, which falls post-Easter through pre-Thanksgiving. This includes the technically challenging storm season, from August 15 to October 15, when attracting visitors requires additional effort.

Events and marketing during this timeframe should prioritize overnight visitors, as they contribute more significantly to the local economy compared to day visitors. By targeting audiences beyond the local area, the BBID can maximize its economic impact during these critical periods.

Key Takeaways

- Greater Fort Lauderdale attracts a younger, high-spending audience, average age 45-years, who plan trips well in advance.
- While 40% of travel involves visiting friends or relatives, the majority stay in hotels, resorts, etc.
- The beach is the top draw, complemented by standout dining experiences: casual dining (64% GFL vs. 56% U.S. general population), unique local cuisine (39% GFL vs. 30%), and fine/upscale dining (33% GFL vs. 19%).
- Entertainment (68%) and cultural activities (38%) enhance the destination's diverse appeal.
- Marketing should target planning windows and focus on platforms beyond destination websites, as only 10% of visitors use them for trip planning.
- Visitors from warm areas are more likely to travel during the off-peak period than those from regions with pleasant summer weather. Primary focus is to strategically

target over-indexing markets earlier to align with the planning window for stays between July and October, driving overnight visitation and maximizing impact.

Ms. Lee asked what type of restaurants were frequented by Tortuga event attendees. Discussion ensued. Mr. Botimer noted that Tortuga and Riptide are high-impact events.

Mr. Botimer stated that Fort Lauderdale is a destination area that people visit repeatedly. The committee members discussed the statistics presented. It was noted that short-term rental use is down approximately nine percent. Ms. Caceres discussed the need to determine and evaluate the compression impact of the Convention Center. She thought that data from Mr. Botimer would help determine the next steps. The size of events hugely determines economic impact. She used 2,500-rooms on peak as an example. She stressed the importance of analyzing the beach's role in meeting such needs. Mr. Botimer reiterated his understanding of her point, emphasizing the importance of classifying events by size and room night requirements, analyzing room block allocations, and leveraging foot traffic data to improve integration. He committed to discussing this further with the GFL and Omni Hotel teams.

Ms. Cunningham asked about staycation visitors from other Florida locations who vacation in Fort Lauderdale. Mr. Botimer said "other Florida" is as large as New York.

Mr. Lindblade stated that he would like clarity on the international travel opportunities. Ms. Erickson mentioned IPW being hosted May 2026 at the Convention Center as a high-impact trade event that drives international tourism.

SWOT Analysis

Mr. Lindblade emphasized the importance of reflection and the Board's role in evaluating Fort Lauderdale's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

The major strength in Fort Lauderdale was identified as the beach. Other strengths included a well-maintained beach, proximity to air and cruise ports, weather, friendliness, cultural diversity, proximity to downtown, safety, events, venues, and assets, mobility and transportation, collaboration, great rate discipline, beach concessions, variety of options (formal, casual), and dining.

The weaknesses identified were as follows: lack of shopping, traffic, homelessness, weather, understanding of Florida geography, sea turtles, lighting, lack of nighttime experiences, infrastructure, parking, summer season, midweek occupancy, group destination competition, signage, and beach place.

The opportunities identified were as follows: North Beach Village, Sunrise Lane Improvement, Landscaping, Group guest experience, U.S. Travel Association's IPW (leading inbound travel trade show and international marketplace), Seville St. Water Taxi Station, Convention Center, Calendar Coordination between venues, New Marina, Aquatic Center, Parking, and Wayfinding.

The threats identified were as follows: weather, 17th St. Causeway, reduced number of direct flights, cost inflation, outmigration, political climate, funding limitations for capital improvements, poor planning, workforce housing and transportation, and seasonal safety.

Mr. Lindblade recommended that the committee check its mission statement and vision to ensure validity.

There was some discussion about strategies with assigned responsible persons, which included:

1. Reprise a collaborative summit for the beach
2. Coordinate need dates, target end of February (Ms. Graves)
3. Develop a marketing plan by the end of January (Ms. Cunningham)
4. Establish an infrastructure improvement workgroup, conduct BBID walk audit in February for nighttime and May for daytime (Chair Namour)
5. Event Research & Strategy (Ms. Cunningham, Ms. Graves)
6. Convention Center and Visitors Bureau strategy (Ms. Johnson).

The Committee discussed the \$1.2 million BBID budget.

Mr. Lindblade suggested that committee members begin thinking about events that could be enticed to move to or take place in Fort Lauderdale. He also suggested conversations with VisitLauderdale, and event promoters such as Live Nation and Chris Stacey. Ms. Lee mentioned an event like the international fireworks competition as a key attraction for the beach during the business need period.

Ms. Lee noted that Visit Lauderdale vets events and emphasized the importance of knowing which they fund. While Visit Lauderdale cannot allocate marketing dollars within Greater Fort Lauderdale, the BBID could target areas like Weston for staycations. She encouraged Ms. Cunningham to understand and leverage Visit Lauderdale's marketing program and vetted events to better reach target audiences for the summer planning window.

Strategic Priorities and Action Planning

Board discussion and goal setting for 2025.

Recap and Next Steps

Summary of key discussion points and decisions.

Confirmation of next steps and follow-up actions.

Chair Namour said a marketing plan will be presented at the next meeting. She asked the committee members to bring their alternates and asked for input about re-opening the FY25 Reimbursable Event Grant application. It was decided to get through the 2026

events before reopening 2025 application.

Ms. Erickson noted that the BBID has approximately \$250,000 remaining in the BBID promotional line item.

VI. Adjournment

VII. Adjourn

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 3:28 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by G. Johns, Prototype, Inc.]