

# EXHIBIT A

## BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT OF CORAL GABLES

July 24, 2017

Dear Cathy and Javier,

We hope all is well.

Firstly, we would like to thank you and the city staff for your willingness to engage and work with us to build the necessary 'buzz' as we come towards the finish of the Streetscape on Giralda.

It goes without saying that this project has had a very major impact on all of the businesses on the street and the current protracted work before things are finished continues to significantly impact businesses. When we initially wrote to you, we were still under the understanding of a completion date being the end of May and now we understand the date has been revised again to the end of August, possibly even September.

We do feel it necessary to stress that a lot of damage has and continues to be done to the businesses on the street and it is critical that we now take some proactive steps, plan and then execute an intelligent marketing, PR and event plan which will effectively and most importantly efficiently, communicate the amazing new asset that downtown Coral Gables has. In this vein, we simply don't have time to continue to discuss what we think would be a fair amount for the grant from the city, but rather have taken the decision to accept the grant that has been offered, partnered with the support and commitment from the BID and get to work on planning and executing for the activation of Giralda Plaza.

The first event of this will be the grand opening of the street which has been scheduled for September. With this in mind, we would ask that you please make 100% certain and do whatever needs to be done to have the street fully ready and operational with substantial completion by September 1<sup>st</sup>. We simply cannot plan and promote an event only to have to reschedule it: this would simply be a disaster!

We accept your option to provide a grant in the amount of \$125,000 to support the above-mentioned activities. It would be our preference to have this as an immediate lump sum and will be supported by a \$25,000 commitment from the BID. When this is confirmed, we will immediately be engaging the services of Prism creative group and we will be setting some strategies for events, marketing, design and planning. The BID is going to continue to make the best effort and dedicate resources to make it possible. We are very confident that we can do an amazing job with this!

We understand that you require a detailed account of the use of these funds and we are absolutely committed to providing this on an ongoing basis. We hope that a process that would work would be that we can get a commitment and timing for the grant, we will work on a plan as to how best use the funds to get maximum benefit which we will provide as soon as we can complete it. We will then also keep detailed records and tracking of expenditure along the way against the plan we create.



**BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT  
OF CORAL GABLES**

As a final note, we again want to stress the magnitude of the damage that has been done to the businesses on both Giralda & Miracle Mile due to this streetscape project and we really hope that you can both recognize and appreciate this, as well as continue to work with us and continue to support us as we all work together to try and rebuild the traffic and activity in the downtown Coral Gables.

Thanks and best regards,

Nick Sharp  
Co-Chair Giralda Committee

Taciana Amador  
Executive Director

Executive Committee  
Business Improvement District



June 22, 2017

Nick Sharp, Owner  
Threefold Café  
141 Giralda Avenue  
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Dear Mr. Sharp,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Giralda Plaza Subcommittee of the Coral Gables Business Improvement District (BID) requesting further assistance from the City as a result of the Streetscape project. We are excited about the approaching completion of this transformational project, but certainly understand the difficulties that construction has caused to area merchants.

Throughout this project, we have remained committed to assisting the impacted businesses through this challenging time. To date, the City has dedicated hundreds of thousands of dollars to supporting area merchants through such things as extensive signage (over 200 signs and counting), over 32,000 complimentary self-parking validations, nearly 10,000 valet vouchers, several City-organized special events, enhanced marketing, permit fee waivers, and other activities. The City Commission also approved the merchants' request to close the street to vehicular traffic for a two year trial period. In recognition of the continuing difficulties faced by merchants, however, the City is prepared to do the following:

1. Provide a \$25,000 grant to support the Giralda Plaza Subcommittee's marketing and programming activities, such as events, promotional materials, advertising and related expenses (not to include the purchase of alcohol, or consultant contracts). We will provide an additional \$25,000 (for a maximum \$50,000 contribution), if matched in cash by the BID, merchants or others towards the approved activities. We would require a detailed marketing plan, to include measurable results. Dollars would be reimbursed upon proof of expenditures, and all dollars must be expended within a year of substantial completion of the street.
2. Extend the *Giralda Alfresco* event for an additional month, through the end of July, if the BID were to agree to continue to provide entertainment and promotional support. This event represents an estimated City contribution of between \$60,000 - \$75,000.
3. Expend up to \$15,000 to program and promote the grand opening of Giralda Plaza, in conjunction with the BID and merchants.
4. Sponsor *Giralda Under the Stars* (for the coming season only), at an amount of \$5,000 per event (up to \$30,000 for the season). The sponsorship is intended to enhance, not replace, existing funding in order to elevate the event and increase participation.

5. Waive the sidewalk café fees for outdoor dining furniture for a two-year period. This represents an estimated value of \$280,000 over that period needed for enhanced maintenance of the street, which the City will need to cover from other sources. In light of this commitment, we are unable to commit to purchasing or financing merchants' outdoor dining furniture, as requested.
6. Continue to produce City-organized events and related promotional activities that help to activate Downtown and support area merchants for at least one year from the date of substantial completion of the Streetscape project (these events were originally set to expire on the date of project completion).
7. Partner with Freebee on a one-year pilot project to provide free on-demand, door-to-door transportation service throughout Downtown, at a cost of \$175,000 to the City. This partnership includes promotional opportunities for area merchants.
8. Continue to provide valet service at Giralda, in a safe and efficient manner, understanding that complimentary valet vouchers will cease at project completion.
9. Extend the provision of complimentary self-parking validations for an additional 3 months from the date of project completion (this program was originally set to expire on the date of project completion).
10. Extend the waiver of fees for all façade related improvements for an additional 3 months from the date of project completion (this program was originally set to expire on the date of project completion).

I hope this letter demonstrates the City's sincere commitment to assisting the merchants through this difficult period of construction. We look forward to working with you to implement these initiatives, and as always, remain open to additional suggestions.

Sincerely,

Javier A. Betancourt  
Economic Development Director

cc: Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark, City Manager, City of Coral Gables  
Peter Iglesias, Assistant City Manager, City of Coral Gables  
Taciana Amador, Executive Director, Coral Gables BID

Hi Cathy,

We hope all is well.

The merchants of Giralda have formed an association which has been created as a sub-committee under the BID. This committee will work with the city for the ongoing management of Giralda Plaza amongst other things. The following is a letter on behalf of the merchants of Giralda Plaza, written by the new Sub-committee and supported fully by the BID Board.

We would like to schedule a meeting as soon as possible, but not later than the 16<sup>th</sup> of May to discuss some below and any other upcoming and current topics regarding Giralda.

**Background:**

As you know, the Giralda merchants have really taken a beating over nearing the past year due for the most part to the construction on the street and probably more importantly the nature of the construction being that it was completely dug up, dusty etc. for the most part. And whilst the ending product is going to be truly fantastic, we really want to make sure that we all prepare well and set it up to be a success which will not only help the merchants get above water level again, but also be a truly great asset for the city and residents for many, many years to come.

As you know originally, albeit incorrectly: the merchants were told this project would take 3-4 months and be finished before 'season' started.

When this was clearly not going to be the case, we met with the City and contractor (around the time of the first or second town hall meeting approx. Sep 2016) where it was committed to us that the street would be completed no later than April 2017 (with the expectation expressed that it would be possible to finish sooner around February). This was KEY information at the time when everyone was discussing the potential to halt the project until summer 2017. After this meeting and commitment was made, the street merchants still had many outstanding questions and concerns as well as several specific requests. As a result of this you met with Gail Ackerman, Lily (La Dorada) and Peter Iglesias on October 11 where specific requests, commitments to timing and events (and consequences for non delivery) were presented. The following is a summary of the response we received from you on Oct 19, which we list to highlight the level of commitment and support that was considered at the time that we are hopeful we can now solidify into actions:

- Guarantee finish date was provided as April 15, 2017
- If this date was not met, it was not supported that the city would pay merchants rent, but there was an indication of providing increased marketing dollars every month or partial month construction continued past this date.
- We asked for a guarantee that Giralda under the Stars would take place. Whilst noting the experience would be different, this commitment was given.
- The city committed to contributing to:
  - o the operational costs of producing/holding the Giralda under the stars events;
  - o hiring all of the outdoor furniture for the events; and
  - o cleaning/setting up the street safely etc.

Not a single Giralda under the stars ever took place.

- We asked for a waiver of outdoor permit fees and charges for 2 years. A commitment was made to waive certain and controllable fees whilst specifics were not given.
- Merrick Way entrance to Giralda Laneway: This was completed shortly after the meeting and is still functioning now.

- Valet at both ends and free vouchers: This took place shortly after the meeting.
- Paseo works: Various undertakings took place.
- Marketing budget to supplement the BID: A budget was being prepared for this. To our knowledge nothing was ever finalized nor to our knowledge have any marketing dollars been spent during construction specifically relating to Giralda.

As of now we have not heard an update or a final updated completion date for Giralda but based off the most recent committed schedule, which was reaffirmed as being accurate when the BID board met with the City on April 4, May 31 is the new deadline.

We understand that there were several issues, however the main one being initially the design of the lighting system, then of the light poles themselves and finally the delivery of said light poles.

And now, having seen the installation required of the light poles (and trees) it is clear why it wasn't possible to pave from both ends of the street, without them being in place.

We are not sure whose fault the whole pole issue was (and probably it was several), but it certainly wasn't the merchants. Yet, this issue has added in excess of 6 months to what Giralda would have taken had the poles been available on day 1. This is a HUGE cost that has been borne by the merchants. One small merchant on the street shared their financials for Q1 2017 vs. 2016:

- sales are down an average of \$27k (23%)/mth for the first 3 months of 2017;
- total sales down over \$80k for Q1

The above is an example from a single small store that is still managing to do 'ok'. There are much, much worse and more severe examples of the huge impact this project is having on the street, from a time period where, had the poles not been an issue, the project would not have impacted.

We know that you already know all of this and that you and your team have been working hard to minimize time, impact and work with us the best that you can, but we do just want to clarify the context leading to the below requests.

We also very much appreciated the work done in recent months to assist in getting things ready for a successful launch, including the closing of the street.

However, there are 4 points that we want to raise to see if as a city, we can work together on, in a proactive way to not only assist the merchants get back on their feet, but also ensure that we have a great start and a sustainable future for what we are sure should be a fantastic street.

#### 1. **GRAND, Grand opening event**

- In the near term, when we know the final completion date for Giralda plaza, we would like to finalize the always planned 'block party' or launch party for the street. Given that we still don't know the finish date and that it has run a little over, the reality is that there has been \$0 spent on launch marketing for the street at this moment. As such, we think that it is crucial to launch the street in a major, major way with a huge event that is capable of gaining city wide coverage. Everything from the execution to the event itself, use of organic local marketing channels (free bloggers, food reviewers, local media personalities, local print media chiefs/personalities, local celebrities etc) as well as quality local entertainment.
- We see the only way that we can get the 'buzz' created in such a short timeframe between now and then is to have a substantial launch event planned.

- c. We would ask that the City contribute to this grand opening event with a contribution of \$25,000 that would come alongside funding from the BID, sponsors and other partners to create a quality high profile event noticed city wide.

2. **Year 1 sponsorship/funding for the 'Giralda Plaza Sub-Committee'**

- a. The BID has created a sub-committee that will initially look to setup a management agreement with the city for Giralda Plaza.  
In addition to this, this sub-committee will manage the ongoing scheduling and day to day items involved with a closed street with outdoor dining, but that will also be very attractive for outdoor street based events, activities and activations.
- b. However, another element that we think is absolutely crucial and is a HUGE opportunity right now is the creation of a well thought out, tasteful, current/modern plan for the schedule of events and even the creation of not yet thought of events that will really highlight this beautiful location and the City of Coral Gables on a scale throughout all of Miami and beyond. We think Giralda Plaza could become such a great place it is mentioned as a key location neighborhood of Miami in the same way that Wynwood, Lincoln Rd and Ocean Drive are currently.  
We also think that this can be done on a very reasonable budget. We estimate that for the first year, the net cost to have someone work with this new committee to create, plan, schedule and execute a tasteful rolling year plan would be around \$150k.
- c. I would like to ask that we could have a conversation about the city being the founding sponsor of this sub-committee and provide the year 1 funding to execute this vision, i.e. \$150k which is largely in reference to the existing commitment to contribute to marketing \$'s based off the April 15 date, but also that we think this is a great message to be giving showing the City supporting the merchants with a positive and forward looking investment in the future.
- d. If successfully executed the activity on the street will be a huge success and with this, we think that it is both fair, reasonable and possible that the funding to continue this program for future years would be met (at least in part) by the merchants on the street directly.
- e. We think it is impossible to ask the merchants to fund this, which we think is very necessary, now.

3. **Outdoor Dining Permit fees:**

- a. We understand the outdoor dining regulations are being worked on at the moment, with finalization expected soon.  
We would like to ask that the city consider waiving the fees for outdoor dining for the first 2 years.
- b. Whilst we note that most likely the outdoor seating is going to be a welcome addition to the street, it is going to take us all some time to build our customer base back up again to the point where the outdoor seating is actually increasing our capacity (and therefore overall business).
- c. i.e. If there are people sitting outside, but not people inside it is actually just additional rent and cost vs. what we previously had. Again, we are sure that in time the success and popularity that will come will have locations full inside and out at which time paying rent for outdoor is not an issue at all and hence we ask for the consideration of a 2 year waiver on the fees.

4. **Furniture Purchasing:**

- a. We understand that the city is working on a set of pre-approved furniture which would expedite the permit process along with the outdoor dining permit. However, as of now we aren't sure what they are.
- b. Further to this, it has been expressed by several merchants on the street that they simply do not have the cash reserves due to the impact on their business to make the capital purchase required for outdoor tables, chairs and umbrellas.  
We think it would be a huge shame if the street re-opens, launch events are created and then there are only half of the streets merchants actually able to take advantage of it. Not only for them, but also the overall atmosphere of the street will be significantly impacted.
- c. We would like to ask that the City consider 2 options regarding the outdoor furniture:
  - i. Contribute to the purchase of the furniture: could be full, part, %, etc.
  - ii. If a direct contribution is not possible (imagine ownership issues could arise): a creation of a financing system for merchants to utilize to make the necessary capital purchases

We really wanted these items not to be seen as a hand out or as compensation but rather something that is achievable by the city, working with the merchants (and other 3<sup>rd</sup> party organizations) that will ensure a successful launch and activation to what will be a great final result, yet noting that there has been some very severe financial suffering put on the lap of the merchants through no fault of their own.

Please let us know your initial thoughts if you can, and if you can advise some times that work for you to meet to discuss. Again, given the proximity we now are to completion we trust that you agree with us that fast action is imperative.

Thanks and best regards

Nick Sharp  
Giralda Plaza Sub-Committee