



MEMORANDUM

To: Delray Beach Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board

From: Laura Simon, Executive Director

Date: 08-08-25

Subject: Response to Recent Public Misstatements Regarding DDA Taxation, Programming, and Community Engagement

Dear Board Members,

In light of recent public comments and community concerns, this memo provides clarification and factual response to several inaccuracies circulating about the Downtown Development Authority's work, funding, and impact.

1. DDA Millage Rate and Tax Responsibility

There have been public statements, including from the Mayor, suggesting that the DDA is "raising taxes." This is **incorrect**.

- The **DDA's millage rate has remained consistent** and has **not increased**.
- Any changes in revenue to the DDA are due to **increases in property values and net new construction**, not a change in DDA tax rates.
- The DDA's budget remains **modest and strategic**, designed to support vital services and programs for the downtown district without adding financial strain to property owners.

We remain committed to transparency in all financial decisions and will continue to publish our budget publicly and review it in open meetings.

2. Clarifying Savor the Avenue

There has also been a public mischaracterization of **Savor the Avenue** as a "charity event."

- **Savor the Avenue is not a fundraiser or charity event.** There is only a charity component to this event.
- It is a **signature economic development initiative** produced by the DDA to support downtown restaurants by driving business and visibility **ahead of the traditionally slow summer season**.



- The event was started to highlight the Downtown Delray Beach restaurants as a result of the Retail Market study conducted by the DDA in 2006, as are all of the programs produced by the DDA.
 - The event generates revenue for downtown restaurants both participating in the event and those located within the footprint. It brings both residents and tourists downtown on an off night (Monday).
 - This event directly supports the **economic vitality of the downtown district**, aligning with the DDA's mission.
 - Savor the Avenue has a charity partner who receives a cash donation from the participating restaurants, along with HUGE marketing exposure. A different charity is chosen every year and we have many charities requesting to participate.
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3. Serving and Communicating with Downtown Residents

Some downtown residents have expressed concern that the DDA "doesn't do anything" for them or fails to communicate. We respectfully disagree and offer the following clarifications:

- The DDA provides **ongoing beautification, safety initiatives, holiday lighting, clean and safe programs, marketing, and events** that directly enhance residents' quality of life and property values.
- We support cultural institutions, including **Old School Square**, which offer year-round public programming and cultural enrichment.
- We sent direct mailers to downtown residents the past two summers offering complimentary VIP seats at our concerts at Old School Square.
- **Communication Channels in Place:**
 - Monthly e-newsletters
 - Social media (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok)
 - Website updates
 - Public board meetings
 - Direct mailers
 - Annual Town Hall where residents can offer feedback
 - Surveys

We also welcome feedback from residents and are currently exploring ways to improve our outreach and engagement tools to better serve all downtown stakeholders.



The DDA is proud to serve downtown Delray Beach and to support a vibrant, inclusive, and economically thriving district. Misinformation only serves to distract from the real work being done on behalf of both businesses and residents. We appreciate the Board's continued support and leadership as we clarify these narratives and continue advancing our mission.

Respectfully,

Laura L. Simon
Executive Director
Delray Beach Downtown Development Authority