# THE BILZIN SUMBERG NEW MIAMI INVESTMENT SURVEY SOU PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP URISM REAL ESTATE Bilzin Sumberg Be judged by the company you keep

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"There are many reasons why South Florida has emerged as a destination of choice for inbound investors," observes Bilzin Sumberg cofounding partner Brian Bilzin. "Not only does Miami function as a gateway to Latin America and other domestic and international destinations, but it offers a range of attributes on which many investors insist, including cultural diversity and a truly desirable quality of life. Perhaps most importantly, South Florida's growing reputation as a safe haven for foreign investment is helping to foster a slow but encouraging economic renaissance in and around Miami."

To assess what other business leaders are thinking about the pace and nature of economic recovery in South Florida, the firm developed *The Bilzin Sumberg New Miami Investment Survey*. The survey asks business leaders in the community their opinions about the state of investment in South Florida and about those factors influencing the pace of economic growth in the region.

#### SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

The survey confirms growing confidence in the business community that the economy is improving—albeit slowly. Despite an unprecedented global financial crisis and a host of political events, both domestic and international, which could affect the pace of recovery, respondents see indications of economic growth in the region.

#### SURVEY RESPONDENTS CONFIRM:

- a somewhat improving regional economy driven in part by individual investors and private equity/venture capital
- the impact of current infrastructure upgrades for attracting investment
- growing tourism
- the continued centrality of the real estate sector to regional economic growth
- the emergence of Brazil and other Latin American countries as drivers of local investment
- the federal EB-5 visa program in South Florida having had a slight impact on economic investment

#### THE REPORT ALSO REVEALS WHAT THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY THINKS ABOUT ISSUES CENTRAL TO SOUTH FLORIDA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE:

- the kinds of investments that will dominate in South Florida in the near term, and where they will come from
- threats to future investments in the region
- the benefits and challenges of public-private partnerships
- the best current lending sources
- what makes South Florida attractive to potential investors
- the best incentives for encouraging foreign direct investment

#### **KEY FINDINGS**

# GROWTH COMES FROM REAL ESTATE, TOURISM, AND HOSPITALITY, AMONG OTHER SECTORS.

Close to 60% of respondents see investment pouring into real estate. Many South Floridians measure the region's economic health by the vibrancy of the real estate, tourism, and hospitality sectors. Of survey respondents, 13% attribute growth to the hospitality and leisure sectors, taking the increase in area visitors who enjoy the vibrant culture of Miami, its world-class hospitality and its excellent climate as an encouraging signal of a strengthening economy. A strong majority of respondents (73%) thinks the current conditions for tourism are better than they were a year ago, and www.visitflorida.com, which tracks the volume of incoming tourists to the region, confirms a rise over last year.

#### INDIVIDUAL INVESTORS DOMINATE SOUTH FLORIDA INVESTMENT.

According to the survey, the South Florida business community expects individual investors (49%) to drive near-term economic growth in the region. Indeed, virtually half of respondents choose individual investors over all other types as most likely to invest in South Florida in the short term. Of respondents, 34% see private equity firms and institutional investors as contributing significantly to the South Florida economy, while only 1% suggest hedge funds will be the most likely source of investment capital. Nearly half of the respondents acknowledge some improvement in the current environment for financing in South Florida.

#### SOUTH FLORIDA'S ECONOMY SHOWS SIGNS OF SLOW BUT STEADY IMPROVEMENT.

A majority of the survey's respondents (58%) testify to an improving regional economy. While only 6% are bullish, pronouncing the economy strong and growing, 52% percent confirm slow growth.

#### IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE CAN SPUR ECONOMIC GROWTH.

Respondents clearly agree that enhancing infrastructure and transportation services in the region is important for luring additional investment dollars to South Florida. Among local infrastructure projects, respondents expect upgrades at Port Miami and at Miami International Airport to have the most meaningful impact on inbound investment.

#### LATIN AMERICA DOMINATES, BUT INVESTORS FROM RUSSIA, EUROPE, ASIA, THE MIDDLE EAST, AND CANADA ARE ACTIVE IN SOUTH FLORIDA.

In the short term, survey respondents believe that the majority of Latin American investors in the region will come from Brazil and Venezuela (72% and 16%, respectively). Survey respondents expect the greatest influx of capital outside of Latin America to come from China and Russia, with the Middle East, Spain, and Canada also predicted.

# THE U.S. EB-5 VISA PROGRAM CONTRIBUTES TO ECONOMIC GROWTH IN SOUTH FLORIDA.

A majority of respondents indicate that the EB-5 program, which grants foreign citizens legal entry to the United States for the purpose of making investments, has either a significant or a slight impact on economic investments in the region, although over a third of survey respondents did express uncertainty about whether the program actually is responsible for increased investment in the region.

#### TAX AND OTHER INCENTIVES ARE CRITICAL TO PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH.

Survey respondents believe that by creating tax concessions and special economic zones to incentivize foreign direct investment, Florida could accelerate the rate of cross-border investment into the region. The business community participating in the survey also believes that streamlining procurement processes would foster more public-private partnership transactions.

Reflecting on the principal findings of the survey, Bilzin Sumberg managing partner John Sumberg notes: "As enthusiastic as we are about preliminary signs of recovery in South Florida, it is prudent to welcome recent signs of economic activity in our region with cautious optimism. We see evidence of increasing cross-border investment into Miami and other South Florida markets. However, traditional large bank lending still is restricted, and although private equity funds, hedge funds, and community banks are providing alternative sources of financing, we believe the pace of growth will be moderate into 2013.

If you take commercial real estate as an index, there is no doubt that the Miami market is hotter than it has been in the last three years. In 2009 and the first half of 2010, the market was virtually frozen. Starting in the second half of 2010 we began to see workouts and sales of distressed debt. This year we have seen an uptick in new construction and acquisitions in several sectors. If we step back and look at major business-friendly infrastructure projects in the region, like the improvements at Miami International Airport and at Port Miami, and if you note the increasing investment activity in sectors like health care and life sciences, as well as in real estate, you have the fundamentals of continued moderate economic growth in 2013."

## **RESPONSES AND ANALYSIS**

Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire measuring their thoughts and perspectives on the current state of the economy and the direction of investment in South Florida. The following charts represent the collective input of all respondents. An overview of the survey methodology can be found at the end of this report.

#### SURVEY CONTENTS

#### **QUESTIONS 1-10: ECONOMY AND INVESTMENTS**

The first ten questions of the survey cover issues related to the regional economy and the appetite for investment in South Florida.

#### **QUESTIONS 11-15: TOURISM, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND TRADE**

The next five questions poll respondents on factors credited with spurring economic growth in South Florida.

#### **QUESTIONS 16-20: LABOR, GOVERNMENT, AND FLORIDA LIVING**

The next five questions address factors that will influence the rate of local economic growth, such as the nature and quality of the labor pool, the role of government in encouraging cross-border investment, and the quality of life in South Florida.

#### Q1: HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE CURRENT CONDITION OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA ECONOMY?



- STRONG AND GROWING
- GROWING SLOWLY
- STABLE
- WEAKENING
- WEAK AND SHOWING SYMPTOMS OF A RECESSION

Although the majority of respondents are cautious about predicting its pace, they acknowledge that economic recovery has begun in South Florida. Almost 7% define the current condition of the South Florida economy as "strong and growing," and another 52% assess the pace as "growing slowly." While a full quarter of respondents view the South Florida economy as stable, only 16% view it as weakening or weak and showing recessionary symptoms.

"Declining home equity in 2007 and 2008 hit Floridians hard, and the downturn that followed made things worse by driving unemployment up and tourism down. Even though South Florida's economy still lags behind the national average, our survey respondents confirm the turnaround has begun. Recently we have witnessed the number of Chapter 11 bankruptcy filings in South Florida significantly declining, which is a signal that the economy in this region is turning the corner. At the same time, we are observing some of the barriers that inhibited corporate restructurings and other deals relaxing, and as a result, credit appears to be easier to access for healthy businesses that want it. These trends are good news for the regional economy."

MINDY MORA, PARTNER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S RESTRUCTURING & BANKRUPTCY PRACTICE "Miami is one of the hottest growth areas in the nation. The growth is fueled by international investment from Latin America, Europe, and Asia. Miami has the good fortune of having a significant population of foreign nationals looking to make it their home and multinational corporations using it as a base. All this leads to a resurgent real estate market that is healthy across a number of sectors, including hospitality and residential condominium construction."

JIM SHINDELL, PRACTICE GROUP LEADER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S REAL ESTATE PRACTICE

#### Q2: WHAT TYPE OF INVESTOR IS MOST LIKELY TO INVEST IN SOUTH FLORIDA OVER THE NEXT 12-18 MONTHS?

#### Q3: IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, TO WHAT LENDING SOURCES ARE SOUTH FLORIDA INVESTORS TURNING FIRST IN THIS ECONOMY?



According to the survey, the South Florida business community expects individual investors (49%) to drive nearterm economic growth in the region. Indeed, virtually half of respondents choose individual investors over all other types as most likely to invest in South Florida in the short term.

Respondents divide relatively evenly among institutional investors (14%), private equity firms (20%), and other types of investors (17%) as potential near-term contributors to the South Florida economy. Only 1% point to hedge funds as a likely source of investment capital in the region.

"South Florida, and Miami in particular, is an attractive venue for individual investors for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that the region's many features such as cultural diversity, an attractive climate, and a convenient location—are big draws for individuals who either want to live in or visit the places where they invest. Functioning as a gateway to Latin America as well as to Europe and to Asia, South Florida with its thriving tourism and hotel industries, has inspired the confidence of individual and institutional investors alike who, confronting economic challenges everywhere around the world, are seeking markets already showing signs of recovery."

BRIAN BILZIN, COFOUNDER, BILZIN SUMBERG





OTHER

According to survey respondents, banks (27%), private equity and venture capital funds (30%), and large U.S.-owned banks (24%) currently top investors' list of preferred financing options in the South Florida region over foreign banks, institutional financiers, or other sources of capital.

"As a litigator, I advise people doing deals to consider not just the cost of the money they are borrowing but the consequences that different sources of capital may have on dispute resolution if a deal goes south. The sources of funding are regulated differently, and they are governed by laws and statutes in ways that are different than the manner in which banks are regulated and governed. As a result, I counsel savvy businesspersons to consider the rights and remedies available to them should a dispute arise down the road before they decide how to structure a deal."

#### MICHAEL KREITZER, COCHAIR, BILZIN SUMBERG'S LITIGATION PRACTICE

#### Q4: IS THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT FOR FINANCING IN SOUTH FLORIDA:



- SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED OVER LAST YEAR
- SLIGHTLY IMPROVED OVER LAST YEAR
- ABOUT THE SAME AS LAST YEAR
- SLIGHTLY WORSE THAN LAST YEAR
- SIGNIFICANTLY WORSE THAN LAST YEAR

More than half of the survey respondents characterize the environment for financing in the South Florida region as slightly improved over last year, although a significant portion (33%) respond that it is relatively unchanged. Only 9% of respondents believe the environment for financing is worse than it was last year, either slightly or significantly.

"The bottom line is that most respondents believe Miami is in a very slow ascent out of the trough we've been in. As a result, substantial new capital and greater availability of financing is critical to Miami's continued recovery."

JAY SAKALO, PRACTICE GROUP LEADER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S RESTRUCTURING & BANKRUPTCY PRACTICE

#### Q5: WHAT IS THE GREATEST THREAT TO FUTURE INVESTMENT IN SOUTH FLORIDA?



Virtually half of those surveyed identify global economic conditions as the greatest threat to investments in the region. Additional respondents express concern about shifting domestic regulation and policies and both the health of South America's economy and the rate of its economic growth.

The high cost of financing, labor concerns, and specific concerns about the European Union do not register significantly as individual threats among the respondents, but collectively account for another 15% of the threats identified.

"When I look at what survey respondents identify as threats to future investment in South Florida, several themes emerge. I suspect that concerns about the European Union didn't register significantly because, for many respondents, the concerns about the EU are subsumed in larger concerns about the global economy. And the fact that only between 7% and 8% identify the high cost of financing as a principal barrier to investment suggests to me that the local community has confidence in the inevitable corrections that accompany an improving domestic economy, including reduced barriers to financing."

ALBERT E. DOTSON, JR., PRACTICE GROUP LEADER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & LAND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

#### Q6: WHAT IS SOUTH FLORIDA'S GREATEST SELLING POINT FOR POTENTIAL INVESTORS?

- DIVERSITY INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- LATIN AMERICAN INTEREST IN SOUTH FLORIDA
- MULTILINGUAL WORKFORCE
- NEW BUSINESS INCENTIVE PROGRAMS
- REGION IS SAFE HAVEN FOR FOREIGN INVESTORS
- VIBRANT HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY
- OTHER

Slightly over 31% of respondents indicate that the high level of Latin American interest in South Florida is the greatest selling point for future investment in South Florida.

A significant portion of respondents, 29%, believe that the region's greatest selling point is its reputation as a safe haven for foreign investors. Ostensibly, these respondents think investing in South Florida can insulate investors' capital from political and socioeconomic turbulence and significantly reduce exposure to potential losses.

The perceived diversity of investment opportunities also registers with respondents, with 18% indicating it is the region's greatest selling point for investors.

"Latin Americans are not a singular, homogenous bloc of consumers or voters with identical values and interests. In Florida, for instance, roughly a third of the state's Spanish speakers are Cuban-American. We need a better understanding of the diversity of our local population and its investment priorities. The survey responses suggest a need for micro-targeted research into the attitudes, behaviors, and preferences of the various regionally-based nationalities in Florida, especially in their capacity to spend money and consume regionally based goods and services. With international businesses accounting for approximately one-sixth of Florida's entire economy, understanding how to make the community even more attractive to investors from different countries is a win-win."

A. VICKY GARCIA-TOLEDO, PARTNER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & LAND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE



"Miami has grown into a preeminent legal market that is convenient, sophisticated, and affordable, particularly for international investments and litigation. The ecosystem of legal and related professional services formerly only native to New York—not only lawyers, but also investigators, forensic accountants, and other important services—is now present in Miami."

MARTY STEINBERG, COCHAIR, BILZIN SUMBERG'S LITIGATION PRACTICE

"Florida courts and arbitration tribunals are playing an increasingly important part in the international dispute-resolution process, signaling acknowledgment of the region as a bona fide international trade center."

MITCH WIDOM, PRACTICE GROUP LEADER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S LITIGATION PRACTICE

## THE BILZIN SUMBERG NEW MIAMI INVESTMENT SURVEY

#### Q7: THE MAJORITY OF INVESTORS IN SOUTH FLORIDA WILL COME FROM WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING LATIN AMERICAN\* COUNTRIES OVER THE NEXT 12-18 MONTHS?

\*LATIN AMERICA REFERS TO MEXICO, THE CARIBBEAN. CENTRAL AMERICA AND SOUTH AMERICA



BRAZIL COLOMBIA

MEXICO

VENEZUELA

OTHER 

At 72%, a strong majority agrees that Brazil is the most likely source of near-term Latin American investors in South Florida. Venezuela comes in second with 16%; no other option registers significantly.

This survey response suggests the verifiable trend of Brazilian tourism in the South Florida region. Lured with a favorable exchange rate and comparatively low prices for goods and services, Brazilians were the top international travelers to Florida in 2011, and their numbers continue to rise, according to www.visitFlorida.com.

"Because of cultural similarities, its proximity to Latin America, and the depth and strength of its local bar, Miami has emerged as the dominant venue for arbitrations involving Latin America."

#### JOSE FERRER, PARTNER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S LITIGATION & INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION PRACTICE

"Respondents' references to Latin America as a substantial source of new investment dollars are a further reminder of the region's dependence on and link to global economic conditions. Regulators could encourage yet more Brazilian tourism and potential investment in the region by easing visa requirements. That said, I am surprised that Mexico and Chile do not register higher in the survey as sources of cross-border investment activity. Chile recently signed a new income treaty with the United States related to the withholdings of dividends that will take effect in 2013 and, as a consequence, we expect to see a lot of incoming activity from that country. We already are seeing a strong appetite for investments among Mexican firms because of an income tax treaty that eliminates certain withholdings."

RICHARD GOLDSTEIN, CHAIR, **BILZIN SUMBERG'S TAX PRACTICE** 

#### **Q8: OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES AND** LATIN AMERICA, FROM WHERE WILL SOUTH FLORIDA INVESTORS COME OVER THE NEXT 12-18 MONTHS?



SPAIN 

OTHER



Survey respondents identify a number of countries or regions outside of Latin America from which investors will come over in the near term. Popular responses are China (28%), Russia (27%), the Middle East (16%), and Spain (12%). In addition, respondents specify Canada as a potential source of near-term investors.

"Most of the survey responses point to countries—e.g., China and Russia—that one would expect. In addition, there has always been a steady, healthy flow of Canadian tourists here in South Florida, even though Canada may not be the first source of inbound tourism that comes to mind. This probably explains those respondents that pointed to Canada in the 'Other' category."

#### JEFFREY RUBINGER, PARTNER, **BILZIN SUMBERG'S TAX PRACTICE**

"There has been a tremendous increase in interest from investors from Eastern Europe (most significantly, Russia and other CIS countries) who find U.S. assets, including real estate, very attractive. South Florida closely follows New York City as an epicenter of investments from Eastern Europe into the United States. What is notable is that Russian clients are no longer just buying condos by the ocean. Instead they're now doing large, sophisticated deals, such as investments in technology, services, commercial real estate, retail, and other sectors and, in the process, creating jobs in the United States. Having said that, we have helped U.S. companies in M&A transactions in Russia, so it is a two-way street."

SERGE PAVLUK, PARTNER, **BILZIN SUMBERG'S CORPORATE PRACTICE** 

#### Q9: WHICH INDUSTRY IN SOUTH FLORIDA WILL BENEFIT MOST FROM INVESTMENT IN THE COMING 12 -18 MONTHS?

#### Q10: AMONG REAL ESTATE INVESTORS, WHAT INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES CURRENTLY ARE THE MOST ATTRACTIVE?



- FINANCIAL/PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
- GOVERNMENT/EDUCATION
- HEALTH CARE/LIFE SCIENCES
- HOSPITALITY & LEISURE
- REAL ESTATE
- RETAIL & TRADE
- TRANSPORTATION & UTILITIES
- OTHER

Survey respondents overwhelmingly name the Real Estate sector as the one most likely to benefit from investment activity in the coming year (over 58 %). The percentage of responses for Hospitality & Leisure and Health Care & Life Sciences also reach double-digits (approximately 13.5% and 10%, respectively), and Financial & Professional Services and Retail & Trade are identified as sectors that will receive investors' attention as well, although to a lesser degree.

"South Florida is seeing major traction in its hotel market. While Miami's hospitality market is strong region-wide, the highest-performing submarket is Miami Beach, with the downtown/Brickell area as a close second. Miami Beach is almost fully absorbed and is experiencing one of the strongest growth rates of any major submarket in the country, outperforming national averages and standing out as one of the top investment markets for hospitality in the United States."

#### LORI SCHUMACHER, PARTNER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S REAL ESTATE PRACTICE



- CONDOMINIUM HOMES
- HOSPITALITY & LEISURE
- INDUSTRIAL
- MULTI-FAMILY RENTALS
- OFFICE
- RETAIL

Respondents (58%) point to the real estate sector as the greatest beneficiary of near-term investment, with 72% identifying either condominiums or multi-family rentals as the best opportunities for current investors in the area's real estate market.

"The evolution of downtown from predominantly an employment-only district to a global center for commerce and urban living has been accompanied by significant growth in condominium and multi-family rental units. With the majority of condo units constructed over the past decade now occupied by primarily full-time residents, for example, it is easy to appreciate why real estate investors have been attracted to these opportunities."

#### ADAM LUSTIG, PARTNER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S REAL ESTATE PRACTICE

### THE BILZIN SUMBERG NEW MIAMI INVESTMENT SURVEY

Q11: HOW DOES THE CURRENT CONDITION OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA TOURISM INDUSTRY IN 2012 COMPARE TO ITS PERFORMANCE IN 2011?



- STRONGER THAN 2011 AND GROWING ROBUSTLY
- GROWING SLOWLY BUT STILL AHEAD OF 2011
- STABLE
- WEAKENING COMPARED TO 2011
- WEAK AND SHOWING SYMPTOMS OF FURTHER DECLINE

It is clear that most respondents view the current state of the region's tourism industry favorably. Almost 58% indicate that they think tourism has grown slowly since last year; 21% think tourism is stable in the region; and 15% view it as stronger and growing robustly.

"The impact of tourism on the South Florida economy is pervasive. When tourism is up, the demand for and price of hotel rooms rises, and with it, the demand for associated amenities, such as restaurants and spas, which drives revenue. Increased and sustained revenue stimulates jobs and investment in hotels. Today, hotels are considered to be among the region's most sought-after assets as foreign and domestic buyers look for high-performing, quality projects. A recent report shows that since 2000 Miami has been one of the most active hotel investment markets in the country with over \$3.4 billion in transaction volume. In 2011 we witnessed the second-strongest year in deal-volume history, with \$557 million in sales—a 154% increase—that year alone. As a result, we are seeing more hotels change ownership and new hotels come to the market. Even taking into account the slow seasons of summer and fall and before the holiday rush, Smith Travel Research ranks Miami as the fourth market in the country for revenue per available room and average daily rate and the fifth for sustained occupancy."

SUZANNE AMADUCCI-ADAMS, PARTNER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S REAL ESTATE PRACTICE Q12: AS A POTENTIAL INFLUENCE ON BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT, HOW DO YOU ASSESS FLORIDA'S CURRENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS?



- NEEDS SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT
- NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT
- NO IMPROVEMENT NEEDED
- DOES NOT IMPACT INVESTMENT DECISIONS

Survey respondents believe that enhancements to state transportation systems and other infrastructure would influence investment in South Florida positively, and almost 96% think that some or significant improvements are necessary.

"Improvements in transportation and other infrastructure are fueling an uptick in tourism, a lifeblood of the state, and a significant contributor to the region's attractiveness for foreign direct investment."

CARTER MCDOWELL, PARTNER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & LAND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

## Q13: WHAT IMPACT WILL CURRENT OR ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS TO REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE HAVE ON BRINGING NEW INVESTMENT TO THE SOUTH FLORIDA ECONOMY?



- SIGNIFICANTLY POSITIVE IMPACT
- SOME POSITIVE IMPACT
- NO IMPACT
- MAY HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT

Respondents are most enthusiastic about upgrades to Miami International Airport and Port Miami as possible influencers on investment in South Florida.

With regard to their potential for spurring new investment in the region, infrastructure projects at Miami International Airport and Port Miami receive almost universally positive responses from survey respondents. Strong majorities also perceive work on the area Metrorail system and on the Florida Turnpike as potentially positive for investment. The downtown Miami trolley is the only infrastructure upgrade project that receives a muted reaction from respondents, with half of them indicating they think it will have no impact on drawing new investments into the region.

Throughout the survey the infrastructure investment options presented are deemed as potentially negative only one percent of the time.

#### Q14: WHICH INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT LIKELY WILL HAVE THE GREATEST POSITIVE IMPACT ON INVESTMENT IN SOUTH FLORIDA?



- METRORAIL AND OTHER NON-RAIL MASS TRANSIT, SUCH AS THE DOWNTOWN TROLLEY
- MIAMI INTERNATIONA AIRPORT
- PORT MIAMI
- FLORIDA TURNPIKE
- SUCH INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS WILL HAVE NO EFFECT ON INVESTMENT IN SOUTH FLORIDA

When prompted to pick one infrastructure project that will have the greatest positive impact on individuals in South Florida, most respondents indicate that improvements to Port Miami will likely have the greatest positive impact on investments in the region.

"This is an exciting time in Miami's history, with major development projects in the works on the part of foreignbased companies that will enhance the region's quality of life and elevate it to world-class status. These projects include Swire's Brickell CitiCentre, Genting's Resorts World Miami, the Port of Miami Tunnel project, and the Airport City project, to name a few. No longer is Miami just an epicenter for Latin American cross-border commerce; it is emerging as a true gateway city for virtually all corners of the world."

STAN PRICE, CHAIR, BILZIN SUMBERG'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & LAND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE Q15: HOW MUCH WILL PORT MIAMI AND PANAMA CANAL EXPANSIONS HELP BRING NEW INVESTMENT TO THE SOUTH FLORIDA ECONOMY?



- WILL PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT
- WILL PROVIDE SOME SUPPORT
- WILL PROVIDE NO SUPPORT
- MAY HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT

Respondents reiterated their expectation that work on Port Miami will encourage new investments in the area.

#### Q16: HOW IMPACTFUL IS THE U.S. EB-5 PROGRAM IN SPURRING INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT IN SOUTH FLORIDA?



- SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON ECONOMIC INVESTMENT
- SLIGHT IMPACT ON ECONOMIC INVESTMENT
- NO IMPACT ON ECONOMIC INVESTMENT
- NOT SURE

A majority of respondents indicate that the EB-5 program, which grants foreign citizens legal entry to the United States for the purpose of making investments, has either a significant or a slight impact on economic investments in the region, although over a third of survey respondents did express uncertainty about whether the program actually is responsible for increased investment in the region.

"The Immigrant Investor Program, known as EB-5, allows foreign investors to obtain permanent resident status upon investment of either \$1 million or \$500,000 in a Targeted Employment Area (defined as a high-unemployment or rural area) and the creation of 10 full-time jobs for U.S. workers. It's clear that the City of Miami has recognized the potential of the EB-5 program as a tool for job creation and economic development in Miami as it is currently in the process of establishing an EB-5 Immigrant Investor Regional Center, which would allow foreign investors to invest in Miami through the Center and subsequently obtain an EB-5 visa."

ALAN AXELROD, CHAIR, BILZIN SUMBERG'S CORPORATE PRACTICE

#### Q17: WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT INCENTIVE THAT FLORIDA COULD OFFER TO ATTRACT NEW INVESTORS?



- TAX CONCESSIONS
- SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE
- LAND DEVELOPMENT SUBSIDIES
- R&D SUPPORT
- OTHER

According to the opinions of survey respondents, tax concessions and the creation of special economic zones are the most effective incentives that Florida could offer to attract foreign direct investment.

"More often, foreign investors inquire in the initial stages of due diligence whether their potential investment can be leveraged with government support. South Florida has recognized the long-term positive job-creation impact realized from a short-term deferral of income tax. Special economic zones such as enterprise, empowerment, and CRAs provide an enhanced return on investment for the community, government, and foreign investor."

BRIAN ADLER, PARTNER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & LAND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

#### Q18: WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PRIVATE-SECTOR CHALLENGES TO SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC/ PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (P3) TRANSACTIONS?

#### Q19: DO QUALITY-OF-LIFE ISSUES, SUCH AS THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, CRIME RATES AND THE STATE OF THE ARTS AND CULTURAL SCENE, INFLUENCE SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT DECISIONS?



- GOVERNMENT SELECTION INEFFICIENCIES
- FINANCING STRUCTURE COMPLEXITIES
- LOCAL PROFESSIONALS' LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH P3 TRANSACTIONS
- OTHER

Asked to identify challenges to successful public-private partnership transactions, survey respondents point to inefficiencies in the government selection process and financingstructure complexities as the two biggest challenges.

"The development climate has never been better, especially for the redevelopment of environmentally impaired properties. Investors are realizing the incredible value to be had from developing impaired sites."

HOWARD NELSON, PARTNER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S ENVIRONMENTAL & LAND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES



• YES, QUALITY OF LIFE IS A PRIMARY FACTOR FOR INVESTORS IN SOUTH FLORIDA

- YES, QUALITY OF LIFE IS A SECONDARY FACTOR FOR INVESTORS IN SOUTH FLORIDA
- NO, QUALITY OF LIFE HAS NO DISCERNIBLE IMPACT ON INVESTMENT IN SOUTH FLORIDA

Overwhelmingly, respondents agree that quality-of-life issues are either a primary or a secondary factor for encouraging investment in South Florida. The area's climate, arts, and culture attract tourists and investors alike.

"At a time when other parts of the country are still struggling, Miami is seeing a record level of activity on the part of major international players who are placing confidence in our city as an ideal place in which to do business and invest. This can be attributed to a number of factors, namely Miami's centralized location as a gateway city; the relative affordability of available, quality assets; and the overall desirability as a place where people want to be."

MARSHALL PASTERNACK, PARTNER, BILZIN SUMBERG'S CORPORATE PRACTICE

#### Q20: DOES YOUR ENTERPRISE HAVE PLANS TO ADD TO OR DECREASE YOUR SOUTH FLORIDA WORKFORCE OVER THE NEXT 12-18 MONTHS?



A majority of individuals who took the survey did not respond to the final question, which attempted to measure expectations for hiring workers in the region.

## CONCLUSION: ABOUT "THE NEW MIAMI"

As Scott Baena, chair of Bilzin Sumberg's Bankruptcy & Restructuring Practice, notes: "Global cities are defined by their connectivity, their industry diversity, and their ability to set new national and international standards. Nowhere is this more apparent today than in Miami, which is reinventing itself as a center for international trade and as a vibrant tourist destination. In the past several years, international investors have contributed more than five billion dollars to Miami's economy in the form of long-term, large-scale projects. That investor confidence heralds a bright future for South Florida. At a time when most cities are struggling, Miami is quickly gaining a reputation as the newest stand-out, world-class city."

When Bilzin Sumberg's *New Miami Blog* launched in July of this year, its home page announced: "This is a dynamic point in Miami's history. It is a city in the midst of a promising rebirth, emerging as a global destination and center for commerce."

Bilzin Sumberg Managing Partner John Sumberg observes; "That 'rebirth' is most evident in sectors like tourism and hospitality. Hotel sale and development activity over the past year tells an encouraging story of a rebounding local economy. But it is a story that will continue to be tempered by the realities of the larger global economy. With traditional bank financing well below pre-recessionary levels and a still-substantial inventory of distressed property symbolically dotting the horizon, Miami's commercial renaissance is—and will continue to be—a work in progress.

The New Miami Blog and The New Miami Investment Survey are ways that we at Bilzin Sumberg monitor the pulse of the local business community and share our insights and your confidence in and concerns about the strength and pace of economic renewal in and around Miami. In a few short years, Miami has transformed itself from an outpost for Latin America to an epicenter of commerce on a global scale, and Bilzin Sumberg and its lawyers are at the center of this action."

## **ABOUT BILZIN SUMBERG**

Bilzin Sumberg is located in the heart of Miami. As an indigenous firm, Bilzin Sumberg is deeply committed to and ingrained in the commercial life of South Florida. Our lawyers and staff participate in a majority of the city's significant business, legal, and government initiatives, and are engaged in and committed to community service. We are proud to be synonymous with Miami and its surrounding areas.

Operating as close and trusted advisors to clients in a variety of industries, Bilzin Sumberg combines a local footprint, a national practice, and a global perspective. Our expertise and sophisticated understanding of complex legal and business issues enables us to help our clients grow and protect their organizations at all stages of the business continuum. Our commitment to recruiting top talent, to investing in long-term relationships, and to making a difference in our community yields the contacts, experience, and resources that our clients need to make their strategic visions a reality.

## DEMOGRAPHICS AND METHODOLOGY

The law firm of Bilzin Sumberg distributed its *New Miami Investment Survey* via e-mail to a group of senior executives and advisors including CEOs, CFOs, CLOs, and other company officers in the second half of 2012, and released the findings in Q4. Thirty-five percent of the 198 respondents identified themselves as company officers or executives and 21% identified themselves as managers or part of senior management. Industries represented include real estate (16%), legal (38%), and insurance/banking/financial services (12%).

Survey respondents include 65% who work for local businesses, and 17% who work at multinational companies. Among respondents, 58% are employed by organizations with 50 or fewer employees, and 27% are at organizations with 250 or more employees.

Due to rounding, all percentages used in all questions may not add up to 100%.

For more information about *Bilzin Sumberg's New Miami Investment Survey* or *Bilzin Sumberg's New Miami Blog* (www.newmiamiblog.com), visit us at www.bilzin.com or contact Michelle Weber, Executive Director, at mweber@bilzin.com.