

REQUEST: Site Plan Level IV Review; Public Purpose Use / Las Olas Corridor Improvements

Case Number	R15062	
Applicant	City of Fort Lauderdale	
General Location	200 Las Olas Circle, 3000 E. Las Olas Blvd. and associated public realm improvements along E. Las Olas Blvd.	
Property Size	789,109 square feet / 18.1 acres	
Zoning	Planned Resort District (PRD) A-1-A Beachfront Area District (ABA) Park (P)	
Existing Use	Primary use is public parking	
Future Land Use Designation	Central Regional Activity Center	
Applicable ULDR Sections	47-12 Central Beach Districts 47-18.26 Exemption from Zoning for Public Purpose Uses 47-25.2 Adequacy Requirements 47-25.3 Neighborhood Compatibility Requirements	
	Required	Proposed
Building Height	200 feet (ABA) 200 feet (PRD)	22 feet: Oceanside Canopy 67 feet – 6 inches: Parking Garage
Structure Length	200 feet (ABA) 200 feet (PRD)	105 feet: Oceanside Canopy 261 feet*: Parking Garage
Structure Width	200 feet (ABA) 200 feet (PRD)	70 feet: Oceanside Canopy 186 feet: Parking Garage
Floor Area	4 (ABA) 6 (PRD)	N/A: Oceanside Canopy .32: Parking Garage
Parking	N/A	428 spaces
	Required	Proposed
Setbacks/Yards		
Parking Garage Front (E)	20 feet	24 feet – 6 inches
Parking Garage Side (S)	20 feet	61 feet – 6 inches
Parking Garage Side (N)	20 feet	522 feet
Parking Garage Rear (W)	10 feet	11 feet
Oceanside Canopy (E)	20 feet	65 feet
Oceanside Canopy (S)	20 feet	45 feet to columns (13.8' to canopy)
Oceanside Canopy (N)	20 feet	198 feet
Oceanside Canopy (W)	20 feet	108 feet
Notification Requirements	Sign Notice 15 days prior to meeting Mail notice 10 days prior to meeting	
Action Required	Approve, Approve with Conditions, or Deny	
Project Planner	Randall Robinson, Planner II	

*Public Purpose Request

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The City of Fort Lauderdale proposes to construct infrastructure enhancements along East Las Olas Boulevard on Fort Lauderdale Beach in order to create a strong visual and physical connection to the ocean while prioritizing public pedestrian space over vehicles. By consolidating existing parking the project provides flexible outdoor spaces to be used for day to day recreation as well as special events.

Specifically, the project includes a 428-space parking structure proposed north of the Las Olas Bridge fronting the Intracoastal Waterway. The parking garage is intended to consolidate surface parking from three existing lots and on-street parking into a single, four story structure. The proposed location for the garage allows for the Oceanside public parking lot to be pedestrianized in the form of a park and plaza. The first floor of the garage contains 5,850 SF of space for a police substation, marina operations, and/or

other future uses which may support economic development in the area. Pedestrian amenities including a wide pedestrian promenade and facilities such as bicycle lockers, a transit office and transit system, encourage safe and adequate pedestrian movement and support alternative modes of transportation.

Also included is an Oceanfront Park and Plaza, located on the site of the existing Oceanside parking lot. Features within the park include an architectural shade canopy with restrooms. The architectural shade canopy functions as a portico arrival canopy covering one full vehicular drop-off lane. The canopy also extends into the park plaza serving as a gathering area for pedestrians. A public restroom facility is located beneath the architectural shade canopy. The Oceanfront Park and Plaza also includes a children's interactive water feature. During special events the water feature can be turned off so that the hardscape area can be utilized for alternative uses.

PRIOR REVIEWS:

The Development Review Committee reviewed the proposal on December 8, 2015. All comments have been addressed.

REVIEW CRITERIA:

Pursuant to ULDR Section 47-18.26 publicly-owned structures may be erected and lands used for public purposes, in any zoning district in the City unless prohibited by the City's Comprehensive Plan, and subject to approval by the City Commission. Parking Garages are permitted in the Planned Resort District (PRD) and parks are permitted in the A-1-A Beachfront Area District (ABA) subject to Planning and Zoning Board approval, provided criteria outlined for the PRD and ABA Districts, Central Beach Development Design Criteria, Neighborhood Compatibility and Adequacy requirements are met, as defined further below. The applicant has provided responses to the review criteria, included in the plan sets.

The proposal includes requests for the following, which require relief from zoning regulations: building length of 261 feet where 200 feet is the permitted maximum; and parking garage ramp slope of 5-1/2% where 5% is the permitted maximum. Consideration of the approval of a use or structure for public purposes which requires relief from a zoning regulation of the city shall be initiated by filing an application for approval with the department by the property owner or the person or entity wishing to use the property for a public purpose.

An application for location of a public use or structure may be approved or approved with conditions based on the following findings:

1. There is a need for the use or structure to be located where proposed;
2. The use meets a valid municipal purpose;
3. The location of the use or structure is not in conflict with the City Comprehensive Plan;
4. Off-site or on-site conditions exist which reduce any impact of permitting the public use or structure;
5. On-site improvements have been incorporated into the site plan, which minimize any adverse impact as a result of permitting the public use or structure;
6. Alternative locations have been identified and reviewed or it has been determined that no feasible alternative locations are available;
7. The proposed site is found to be the most feasible for location of the public use or structure;
8. The public purposes to be met by the location of the use or structure outweigh the application of the zoning regulation and prohibiting the location of the public use or structure.

The planned enhancements create a strong visual and physical connection to the beach while prioritizing public pedestrian space over vehicles. By consolidating existing parking the project provides flexible outdoor spaces to be used for day to day recreation as well as special events.

Pursuant to ULDR Section 47-12.6.B, the following criteria shall apply for developments in the Central Beach:

1. It shall first be determined whether the proposed development or use is compatible with the character of the overall plan of development contemplated by the revitalization plan for the central beach area;

2. It shall then be determined whether the architectural design of the proposed development is compatible with the design guidelines provided in Sec. 47-25.3. The design guidelines provided in Sec. 47-25.3 are intended to provide a framework for design review of proposed developments and outline the design elements which have been determined to be compatible with the revitalization plan;
3. The design guidelines provided in this section are not intended to be exclusive. Alternative architectural and design concepts outlined in the development application will be considered during review of the development application. It shall be the applicant's burden to show that the proposed alternative architectural and design concepts are compatible with the character of the overall plan of development contemplated by the revitalization plan for the central beach area and not incompatible with the design guidelines provided in this section;
4. It shall then be determined whether the proposed development incorporates design or architectural elements which mitigate the development's impacts, if any, on existing uses in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development;
5. The goal of the city in the adoption of the revitalization plan is to facilitate development of the Central Beach area as a world-class destination resort. The primary objective of the design review shall be to implement the overall plan of development and to foster redevelopment as contemplated in the revitalization plan.

The draft Central Beach Master Plan (CBMP) was intended to take the place of previous plans for the Central Beach area and the applicant has made efforts to accommodate the intent of the guidelines as well as the architectural design criteria of the code. As per ULDR Sec. 47-25.3.A.3.e.i.b, consideration shall be given to the recommendations of the adopted neighborhood master plan in which the proposed development is to be located, or which it abuts, although such neighborhood master plan shall not be considered to have the force and effect of law.

The parking structure is set back 80 feet minimum from the Las Olas Bridge to provide an adequate amount of landscape and buffer space for the nearby residents and travelers along Las Olas Blvd. Per the Fort Lauderdale Beach Community Master Plan, all four sides of the garage are wrapped with an architectural skin. The architectural skin is made of aluminum fins and a green wall system. The architectural skin creates a visual screen for the parking and to develop a visually appealing element.

The Oceanfront Park and Plaza is located adjacent to the beach and serves as a gathering space for pedestrian focused activities. The park integrates architectural elements, functional vehicular circulation, pedestrian circulation, open space, and unique site elements into a pedestrian sensitive environment aimed at stimulating revitalization. Features within the park include an architectural shade canopy with restrooms. The canopy mimics the organic patterns of the ocean waves and pays homage to the curvilinear forms of the existing wave wall. A public restroom facility is located beneath the architectural shade canopy. The restrooms take a utilitarian approach focusing on public safety considerations, durability, and ease of maintenance. A 1,130 square foot children's interactive water feature is provided at the Oceanfront Park near the core of the pedestrian activity. The water feature uses a variety of nozzle heads to create dynamic water patterns for play and visual interest. All spaces within the park are accessible and visible to promote safety and security for the users. Adequate site lighting is provided to promote safety and security for park users, while complying with the FWC turtle lighting standards.

Multi-functional green space is provided throughout the site to encourage gathering and recreation opportunities. The green spaces also contribute to an aesthetically pleasing environment for surrounding residents and users. The open green spaces to the North and South of the Las Olas Bridge include enhanced landscape and flexible space for residents, boaters occupying the marina, and the public. The space is large enough to host recreational activities, support boat show activities, or host other programmable events.

A pedestrian promenade is proposed to hug the perimeter of the Intracoastal Waterway and extends eastward along Las Olas Boulevard. The promenade is to serve as a shared pedestrian walkway and biking path making a strong connection from water-to-water (Ocean to Intracoastal Waterway). The promenade uses a colored, stamped concrete to mimic a traditional boardwalk. Seating and lighting fixtures will be provided along the promenade to encourage safe and comfortable use.

Adequacy and Neighborhood Compatibility:

The neighborhood compatibility criteria of ULDR Sec 47-25.3 include performance standards requiring all developments to be “compatible with, and preserve the character and integrity of adjacent neighborhood, the development shall include improvements or modifications either on-site or within the public rights-of-way to mitigate adverse impacts, such as traffic, noise, odors, shadow, scale, visual nuisances, or other similar adverse effects to adjacent neighborhoods. These improvements or modifications may include, but shall not be limited to, the placement or orientation of buildings and entryways, parking areas, bufferyards, alteration of building mass, and the addition of landscaping, walls, or both, to ameliorate such impacts”

The properties to the north are zoned PRD, properties to the south are zoned ABA and SBHMA, properties the west across from the Intracoastal Waterway are zoned RS-8 and Park. The uses of the surrounding properties consist of restaurants, retail, multi-family residential, and marina facilities. The current use of the subject site is surface parking and a marina office building. The proposed improvements, which include a parking garage, pedestrian amenities, parks, and open space are compatible to the adjacent neighborhood. The proposed parking garage is shorter than any of the surrounding buildings.

The applicant has submitted narratives regarding the project’s compliance with Section 47-25.2, Adequacy Requirements, and Section 47-25.3, Neighborhood Compatibility Requirements, attached with the site plan and submittal material, to assist the Board in determining if the proposal meets these criteria. A context plan and perspective renderings depicting the height, mass, scale, shadow, materials and details, etc. of the proposed development as it relates to surrounding properties have also been provided with the site plan submittal material.

Circulation

The traffic impact analysis completed for the Las Olas Boulevard Improvement project contains a detailed analysis of future (2025) intersection operating conditions at the two A1A/Las Olas Boulevard intersections. The analysis included a review of expected future traffic conditions for three scenarios: no-build, leaving existing roadway geometry; reduce westbound lanes on Las Olas Blvd. to two lanes on the approach to Seabreeze Blvd., with a single through lane and a single shared through/left turn lane; two westbound lanes with a single through lane and a single exclusive left turn lane. The results of the analyses indicate that all three alternatives are expected to operate at adopted level of service (LOS “C” or better). In conclusion, the westbound travel lanes of Las Olas Boulevard between northbound A1A and Seabreeze Blvd. can be reduced from the existing three lanes to two and still maintain acceptable operating conditions.

One of the main goals of the project is to improve pedestrian facilities. The sidewalks along Las Olas Blvd. have been widened in order to provide additional area for pedestrians and enhanced connectivity between the beach and the Intracoastal area. There will be a modification of the existing driveway entrance on Seabreeze Blvd. which will interconnect with a new driveway exit on SR A1A northbound. Improvements will be made to Las Olas Blvd to remove the median, remove the dedicated westbound left turn lane, and create a mountable curb condition in order to prioritize the pedestrian. The intersections of Las Olas Blvd. and both SR A1A northbound and southbound will be raised to a mountable curbed condition as a part of this project, with transitions to the standard curb and gutter condition as required by FDOT. Las Olas Circle will be reconstructed as a part of this project. The northeastern corner of the site, where Birch Road and Las Olas Circle intersect will be modified in order to create a safer traffic pattern. The timing of the traffic signals may also be modified to help create a priority for pedestrians. This may include an “all-pedestrian” phase at the intersection of SR A1A northbound and Las Olas Blvd, allowing pedestrians to cross in all directions at once with no vehicular traffic.

As the use does not change (parking facilities and open space), negative impacts to vehicular traffic are not anticipated.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency:

The proposed development is consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan in that the public use is permitted in the Central Regional Activity Center land use category. The project generates a total of 85 peak hour vehicular trips. If approved there will be 537 vehicular trips remaining (including all pending projects) in the Central Beach Regional Activity Center.

STAFF FINDINGS:

Staff recommends the Board approve this request, subject to conditions herein and consistent with:

ULDR Section 47-12, Central Beach Districts

ULDR Section 47-18.26, Exemption from Zoning for Public Purpose Uses

ULDR Section 47-25.2 Adequacy Requirements

ULDR Section 47-25.3 Neighborhood Compatibility Requirements

PLANNING & ZONING BOARD REVIEW OPTIONS:

If the Planning and Zoning Board determines that the application meets the criteria as provided in this section, the Planning and Zoning Board shall recommend to the City Commission that the site plan be approved or approved with conditions necessary to ensure compliance with the standards and requirements of the ULDR and criteria for the proposed development or use and if consented to by the applicant.

If the Planning and Zoning Board determines that the application does not meet the criteria provided for public use within the SBMHA, or if the applicant does not consent to any recommended conditions, the Planning and Zoning Board shall recommend denial to the City Commission.

Exhibit 1 – Traffic Impact Analysis