



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
CONFERENCE MEETING

#25-1152

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: December 16, 2025

TITLE: Presentation of a Proposed Living Seawall Permit Fee Assistance Program
- **(Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)**

City Staff will present on the potential creation of a Living Seawall Permit Fee Assistance Program to incentivize the use of living seawalls.

Living seawalls are shoreline protection structures that mimic natural habitats with benefits that include habitat enhancement, biodiversity support, water quality improvement, and enhanced aesthetic value for communities. Unlike traditional, flat, featureless surfaces, living seawalls are covered in specially designed panels. These panels are often created using three-dimensional (3D) printing technology to produce intricate and complex shapes, such as rockpools, crevices, mangrove roots, and textures that mimic natural coastlines. Living seawalls aim to increase marine biodiversity by providing an environment for a variety of organisms that would not be able to live on a flat, featureless wall. Organisms like oysters and other filter feeders can colonize the surfaces, helping improve water quality.

With advancements in 3D printing technology, the cost to create living seawalls has come down to be comparable with standard concrete seawalls. City staff conducted an informal review which identified that seawall manufacturing in South Florida can cost approximately \$29.00 per square foot for a traditional seawall and in some cases, a living seawall cost is approximately \$30.00 per square foot.

In Fort Lauderdale, from January 2024 to October 2025, 106 seawall permits were issued and one (1) was a living seawall. To encourage property owners to choose a living seawall instead of the standard concrete seawall, staff are proposing a Living Seawall Permit Fee Assistance Program.

The idea of an incentive program for living seawalls is relatively new. Several municipalities are looking to create or have already created incentives. North Bay Village implemented a program that rebates forty percent (40%) of the base permit fee and the City of Miami Beach Land Use and Sustainability Committee is discussing policy language that would address expedited permitting and a fifty percent (50%) fee reduction for living

seawalls. Coral Gables just recently adopted a twenty-five percent (25%) permit fee reduction as well.

City staff recommend creating two (2) potential maximum assistance amounts based on the property type:

Proposed Living Seawall Permit Fee Assistance Program		
	Residential Properties	Commercial Properties
Base Permit Fee Assistance	100%	100%
Maximum Assistance Amount	\$3,500	\$7,000

The existing base permit fee for a seawall project is 1.75% of the job cost. The average cost for a living seawall for a residential single-family home is roughly \$100,000 which would provide an eligible permit fee incentive of \$1,750.

Strategic Connections

This item is a FY 2026 Commission Priority, advancing the Infrastructure and Resiliency initiative.

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029* Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- The Infrastructure Focus Area, Goal 3: Be a sustainable and resilient community

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035* Vision Plan: We Are Ready

Attachment

Exhibit 1 – Presentation

Prepared by: Marco Aguilera, Chief Waterways Officer, Public Works

Department Director: Brad Kaine, Public Works