



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
City Commission Agenda Memo  
REGULAR MEETING**

**#23-0288**

---

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

**FROM:** Greg Chavarria, City Manager

**DATE:** June 20, 2023

**TITLE:** First Reading - Ordinance to Amend City of Fort Lauderdale Unified Land  
Development Regulations (ULDR) Section 47-27.7 to Include an Option to  
Designate Thematic Historic Districts and to Amend Existing Historic  
Preservation Criteria and Procedures – Case No. UDP-T22007 –  
**(Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)**

---

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends the City Commission consider an amendment to the City of Fort Lauderdale Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) to include an option to designate Thematic Historic Districts and to amend historic preservation criteria and procedures.

**Background**

At the October 4, 2021, Historic Preservation Board (HPB) meeting, the Board made a motion to send a Communication to the City Commission requesting an amendment to the existing Historic Preservation ordinance to include the ability to designate a thematic historic district. At its November 2, 2021, conference meeting the City Commission requested that staff prepare this amendment for consideration. October 4, 2021, HPB Minutes are provided as Exhibit 1.

A Thematic Historic District recognizes a group of properties that are united under a common theme but are not located within a contiguous area. Thematic historic districts are different from a traditional historic district in that properties included in a thematic district are not located in a continuous area, meaning the structures may be scattered throughout a neighborhood, several blocks, or even city-wide. Additionally, the properties that are within the boundary but that are not identified as a thematic historic resource would not be reviewed by historic preservation for any changes or modifications to their properties. Thematic Historic Resources are not always individually eligible for Historic Landmark Designation and their significance is usually defined through their relationship to the other properties identified as part of the Thematic Historic District.

In a traditional historic district, a geographic boundary is defined and all properties within that boundary must be reviewed by historic preservation staff and if necessary, the HPB,

for any changes or modifications to the exterior of the structures and properties, regardless of whether the property is contributing or non-contributing.

The inclusion of the option to designate a Thematic Historic District follows the existing process for historic designation and the properties included in the thematic district would need to meet at least one of the seven criteria for historic designation. Properties would also be evaluated for their architectural integrity to ensure that the physical fabric present is representative of its significance. Once a complete application is received, a historic designation application for a district would require three public hearings including the HPB, Planning and Zoning Board (PZB), and City Commission.

At the August 1, 2022, HPB meeting, the board reviewed the proposed text amendment to include thematic historic district in the historic preservation ordinance and requested a minor modification to the definition of a “Thematic Historic District.” A motion was made stating that the HPB supports the proposed ordinance. The August 1, 2022, HPB Staff Report and meeting minutes are provided as Exhibit 2 and Exhibit 3, respectively.

At the October 19, 2022, PZB meeting, the Board requested that staff conduct additional public outreach and return to the PZB in February 2023. The October 19, 2022, PZB Staff Report and meeting minutes are provided as Exhibit 4 and Exhibit 5, respectively.

Following the October PZB meeting, staff scheduled a webinar on December 7, 2022, to review the proposed amendments. Invitations to the webinar as well as further information concerning the proposed amendments were sent to all Civic Association presidents, and the information was posted on the City’s calendar, the historic preservation webpage, the Nextdoor account, and Twitter. Additionally, information was provided on the City’s historic preservation webpage including links to examples of other thematic historic districts designated in other municipalities.

The webinar on December 7, 2022, provided an overview of the proposed changes, the historic designation process, and examples of other thematic historic districts. There were 22 registrants for the webinar. One participant asked questions related to application costs; staff anticipates that fees would be the same as the existing historic district application fee of \$2400. The presentation was posted on the City’s historic preservation webpage and registrants as well as others who expressed interest were emailed the webpage link. No other comments were received during this period of public outreach.

On February 15, 2023, the PZB, acting as the local planning agency, reviewed the application and recommended denial (by a vote of 9-0), finding the proposed changes are not consistent with the City of Fort Lauderdale Comprehensive Plan. The primary finding of fact by the PZB was that the City already has the ability to designate historic landmarks and historic districts, and the Board did not find that it was necessary to include thematic historic districts as another option for designation. The February 15, 2023, PZB Staff Report and meeting minutes are provided as Exhibit 6 and Exhibit 7, respectively.

### **Amendments Summary**

The proposed amendments to Section 47-24.11, Historic designation of landmarks, landmark site or buildings and certificate of appropriateness include the following:

- Proposed language that will incorporate the ability to designate a “Thematic Historic District” in the City of Fort Lauderdale; and
- Additional definitions for “applicant,” “agent,” “site improvement,” “Thematic Historic District,” “Thematic Historic Resource,” and “visible from the public right-of-way,” as well as updates to other definitions that further clarify the text contained within the ordinance; and
- Modifications to the historic designation section to clarify the application process and procedures for historic designation as well as to amend or rescind a historic designation; and
- Modifications to review criteria for Certificates of Appropriateness including general criteria and criteria for new construction; and
- Proposed language to amend the administrative review process and (staff level review and approval) to add site improvements with reference to the City of Fort Lauderdale’s Historic Preservation Design Guidelines; and
- Reference to Sections 166.03 and 553.79, Florida Statutes that affect our review process and procedures; and
- Miscellaneous edits to address any inconsistencies throughout the text to clarify the process for obtaining certificates of appropriateness and requirements.

The proposed text amendment is provided as Exhibit 8.

### **Comprehensive Plan Consistency**

Pursuant to Section 163.3202, Florida Statutes, land development regulations are to be consistent with and implement the adopted comprehensive plan of the City. The proposed amendment is consistent with the following provisions of the City’s Comprehensive Plan:

ELEMENT:	Historic Preservation Element
GOAL 3:	Ensure historic preservation goals are met through the coordination and implementation of various local, state, and national preservation tools.
OBJECTIVE:	Objective HP 3.1: Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) Continue to implement the protection of historic properties and archaeological resources in the Unified Land Development Regulations.
POLICY:	Policy HP 3.1.1: Continuously update and revise ULDR criteria to address current historic preservation needs.

### **Resource Impact**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

### **Strategic Connections**

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2024* Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- The Neighborhood Enhancement Focus Area
- Goal 4: Build a thriving and inclusive community of neighborhoods.
- Objective: Create a continuum of education services and support

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

This item supports the Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040 Comprehensive Plan specifically advancing:

- The Neighborhood Enhancement Focus Area
- The Historic Preservation Element
- Goal 1: The City shall prepare and adopt a long-term approach to historic preservation which identifies and evaluates the City's historic resources.

### **Attachment**

Exhibit 1 – October 4, 2021, HPB Minutes

Exhibit 2 – August 1, 2022, HPB Staff Report

Exhibit 3 – August 1, 2022, HPB Minutes

Exhibit 4 – October 19, 2022, PZB Staff Report

Exhibit 5 – October 19, 2022, PZB Minutes

Exhibit 6 – February 15, 2023, PZB Staff Report

Exhibit 7 – February 15, 2023, PZB Minutes

Exhibit 8 – Ordinance

---

Prepared by: Trisha Logan, AICP, Development Services Department

Department Director: Christopher Cooper, AICP, Development Services