



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

#25-1121

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

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: November 18, 2025

TITLE: Resolution Establishing an Initial Application Fee of \$2,000 for the
Undergrounding of Overhead Utilities Program – **(Commission Districts 1,
2, 3 and 4)**

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Commission adopt a resolution establishing a \$2,000 Initial Application Fee on new applications for the Undergrounding of Overhead Utilities Program, to recover administrative costs associated with the review and evaluation of project applications. Staff further recommends that neighborhoods that filed applications prior to the date of the resolution, be exempt from the proposed application fees as neighborhoods will be required to resubmit applications based on the new undergrounding administrative processes.

Background

On November 4, 2025, the City Commission adopted an amendment to Chapter 25 of the City of Fort Lauderdale Code of ordinances, Sections 25-129.4, 25-129.17 and 25-130 - Streets and Sidewalks, Undergrounding of Utility Facilities to address additional upfront fees, additional balloting process, and delegation of staff authority (CAM #25-1098).

The recently approved Code amendments include:

Section 25-129.4 – Initiation of Process

- Clarifies the step-by-step process for initiating underground utility projects;
- Specifies that projects begin with a petition from property owners requesting undergrounding;
- Establishes clearer roles for the City, consultants, and utility companies during project development and coordination;
- Defines the sequence of actions required before an assessment is imposed, including preliminary design, cost estimation, and notice to affected property owners;

- Improves transparency by requiring coordination among all utilities to avoid duplication and ensure consistency in design;
- Authorizes the City Manager (or designee) to engage professional consultants to assist with design, coordination, and cost estimating;
- Clarifies that consultant costs shall either be reimbursed through special assessments or paid from funds provided by petitioning property owners;
- Strengthens language on coordination between the City and utility providers, ensuring that undergrounding projects align with utility providers' schedules and standards; and
- Provides flexibility for the City to manage multiple undergrounding efforts simultaneously and streamline communications with affected stakeholders.

Section 25-129.17 – Revisions to underground utility line assessments

- Strengthens assessment language between the City and the property owners.

Section 25-130 – Bonds

- Provides a technical clarification that proceeds pledged to the payment of bonds may exceed the amount of bonds issued.

The program allows neighborhoods to petition for the conversion of existing overhead utility infrastructure to underground systems. The process requires City coordination with multiple utility providers, preliminary engineering assessment, and financial feasibility evaluation prior to initiating the design or construction phases.

The proposed \$2,000 application fee will offset the administrative time and resources necessary to evaluate and process each request. The City staff review includes, but is not limited to:

- Preliminary utility coordination;
- Cost estimation;
- Boundary verification; and
- Eligibility determination.

City Staff recommends that the City Commission exempt five (5) neighborhoods from the proposed application fee as applications were submitted prior to the ordinance

amendments and the proposed resolution. City staff will work with the following neighborhoods to resubmit applications based on the new undergrounding administrative processes:

1. Harbor Beach
2. Harbour Inlet
3. Rio Vista
4. Seven Isles
5. Sunrise Key

Resource Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action. Anticipated revenue is dependent on application submissions.

Strategic Connections

This item is a FY 2026 Commission Priority, advancing the Infrastructure and Resilience Initiative.

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

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

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

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

- The Neighborhood Enhancement Area
- The Urban Design Element
- Goal 2: Encourage urban design which responds to the climate and character of Fort Lauderdale, is pedestrian friendly, human-scaled and contains the infrastructure and amenities to create a vibrant public realm

Attachment

Exhibit 1 – Resolution

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