



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

**FROM:** Lee Feldman, ICMA-CM, City Manager

**DATE:** May 21, 2013

**TITLE:** First Reading of Ordinance – ULDR Amendment – Downtown RAC  
Flexibility Units – Case 1-T-13

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**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the City Commission approve on first reading an ordinance amending the City of Fort Lauderdale Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) to revise Section 47-13.20. Downtown RAC Review Process and Special Regulations, Section 47-24. Table 1. Development Permits and Procedures, and Section 47-28. Flexibility Rules, as recommended for approval by the Planning and Zoning Board.

**Background**

The Downtown Regional Activity Center (RAC) is a land use category intended to encourage development and redevelopment in the City's Downtown urban center, which is an area of regional significance. The City's Downtown Master Plan (updated in 2007) envisions the Downtown RAC as a truly livable urban center with diverse, healthy residential neighborhoods and an urban fabric consisting of a walkable pattern of streets, public spaces and buildings. The Downtown Master Plan also envisions an expansion of mass transit as a critical component.

As per the City of Fort Lauderdale 2008 Comprehensive Plan, the Downtown RAC has a maximum allowable density of 11,060 dwelling units. As the economy continues to improve, the City of Fort Lauderdale has experienced an influx of new residential and mixed-use development projects in the Downtown RAC. These projects have nearly exhausted the supply of dwelling units in the downtown, leaving only about 391 market rate units and 426 affordable housing units remaining for allocation for new developments.

Residential development projects in the Downtown RAC must adhere to both the City's Comprehensive Plan and the 1989 Broward County Land Use Plan (BCLUP), including the County's "flexibility rules". BCLUP flexibility rules allow municipalities the ability to adjust a predetermined amount of residential units or land use acreage within designated flexibility zones (or "flex zones"). The City of Fort Lauderdale is divided into 18 flex zones. Each zone contains a total number of residential flexibility units that can be built within that flex zone. As shown in **Exhibit 1**, the Downtown RAC is located in Flex Zones 49 and 54, which contains about 3,500 remaining flexibility units (1,073 remaining units in Flex Zone 49 and 2,396 remaining units in Flex Zone 54). As can be seen, the boundaries of Flex Zones 49 and 54 extend beyond and include the Downtown RAC; however, at this time, there is no ULDR mechanism in place for the allocation of flexibility units in the Downtown RAC. Instead, allocations of flexibility units have only occurred outside of the Downtown RAC.

The proposed amendment is part of a larger project that aims to increase the supply of dwelling units in the Downtown RAC in order to help the downtown reach its desired residential density. In this phase of the project, the amendment proposes a process that will release the remaining +/- 3,500 units that are available in Flex Zones 49 and 54 for use in the Downtown RAC, as well as continued use outside of the Downtown RAC. Flexibility units that are allocated within the Downtown RAC will continue to be distributed within their respective flex zone boundaries (Flex Zones 49 and 54).

The proposed ULDR amendment will ensure that dwelling units remain available for new residential development projects in the Downtown RAC so that it can continue to evolve as a vibrant live, work and play environment with street level activity that will support local businesses and future transit initiatives, such as the Wave Streetcar. By allowing the use of flexibility units in the Downtown RAC, the proposed amendment will help guide future residential growth to the Downtown, while preserving surrounding residential neighborhoods. The proposed amendment will also ensure that when flexibility units are used in the Downtown RAC that they must adhere to the design guidelines set forth in the Downtown Master Plan.

Staff has determined that the proposed ULDR amendment furthers the goals, policies and objectives of the City's Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Master Plan. Downtown Fort Lauderdale is the urban center of the City and was designated as a RAC in order to encourage more intense development, attract residential uses to the downtown area, and discourage urban sprawl. By allowing residential flexibility units in the Downtown RAC, this area will continue to thrive as a vibrant, active urban center with a walkable pattern of streets and a sufficient population to support mass transit and the local economy.

The Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) recommended approval of the amendments by a vote of 9-0 on April 17, 2013. The PZB staff report and meeting record are available as **Exhibits 1** and **2**, respectively. Department of Sustainable Development staff also presented the proposed ULDR amendments to the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) on March 14, 2013. The DDA board members overwhelmingly supported the project. In addition, staff presented the proposed amendments to the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations on April 9, 2013. Finally, the Downtown Fort Lauderdale Civic Association voted to support the proposed ULDR amendments in April 2013.

The City Commission shall hold a public hearing to consider the ULDR amendments and the record and recommendations forwarded by the Department of Sustainable Development and the PZB. The City Commission shall hear public comment on the amendments when determining whether the proposed ULDR amendments meet the goals, policies and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and intent of the Downtown Master Plan.

### **Resource Impact**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

### Attachments

- Exhibit 1 - Staff Report from the April 17, 2013 PZB Meeting
- Exhibit 2 - Draft Minutes from the April 17, 2013 PZB Meeting
- Exhibit 3 - Ordinance

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