



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

#24-0497

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

FROM: Susan Grant, Acting City Manager

DATE: June 18, 2024

TITLE: Public Hearing – Quasi-Judicial Ordinance Approving a Public Purpose Use
and Structure – 515 NW 15th Avenue – City of Fort Lauderdale – Dorsey
Riverbend Stormwater Pump Station – Case No. UDP-S22084 –
(Commission District 3)

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission consider an ordinance approving a public purpose use and structure for a stormwater pump station and associated facilities within a Residential Single Family/Low Medium Density (RS-8) Zoning District on a vacant, City-owned property generally located at 515 NW 15th Avenue.

Background

The City of Fort Lauderdale, at the recommendation of Jorge Camacho, HDR Engineering, Inc., is proposing to construct a stormwater pump station, an associated electrical building, and an emergency generator on a property located at 515 NW 15th Avenue. Pursuant to the City's Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) Section 47-18.26, Public Purpose Uses, uses or structures approved by the City Commission for public purposes are granted relief from zoning regulations as specified in the application. The relief requested from the ULDR in the application is to allow a stormwater pump station as a use in the Residential Single Family/Low Medium Density (RS-8) zoning district, reduce the landscape strip requirement along all property lines adjacent to residential property from 10 feet to two feet and six inches, and reduce the minimum lot size requirement from 6,000 square feet to 5,650 square feet.

Stormwater infrastructure is being improved to reduce street flooding and stormwater runoff in the area. The dimensions of the stormwater pump station are approximately eighteen feet by fifty-one feet and will collect stormwater runoff by gravity from the Dorsey-Riverbend neighborhood as well as the Durrs neighborhood, to be conveyed via stormwater force main to a proposed outfall at the North Fork of the New River. The property where the proposed pump station will be constructed is a 5,650 square foot lot.

A Location Map is attached as Exhibit 1. The Application, Project Narratives, and Plan Set are provided as Exhibit 2.

Public Purpose Use

Pursuant to ULDR Section 47-18.26, Public Purpose Use, 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; provided, however, no building or use permit shall be issued by the City for any such plans, locations or use without prior approval by the City Commission.

An application for Public Purpose Use must contain a concept site plan, a description of the zoning regulation(s) from which relief is necessary, the need for the public use or structure including a description of other similar uses or structures and their locations in the City, why the proposed location is necessary and desirable, and a description of mitigating impacts to the surrounding neighborhood.

An application that included a site plan, landscape plans, floor plans, and building elevations was submitted to the City on December 30, 2022, depicting the project. The request is for approval of the public utility use within the RS-8 residential zoning district. The use is permitted in the residential land use designation within the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The exemption to the landscape buffer requirement is due to Florida Power and Light (FPL) requiring a 10-foot easement on the southern portion of the property. The request for the reduction in minimum lot size is needed to upgrade infrastructure in a neighborhood that experiences flooding during rain events. The public purpose request includes the following:

Table 1 – Public Purpose Request

ULDR Section	Development Standard	Required (RS-8)	Proposed
47-5.11	Use	Not Permitted	Public Utility (Stormwater Pump Station)
47-25.3.A.d.i	Landscape Buffer	10 Feet	2 Feet, 6 Inches
47-5.31	Minimum Lot Size	6,000 Square Feet	5,650 Square Feet

Pursuant to ULDR, Section 47-18.26.F, the City Commission may approve or approve with conditions the application for public purpose use or structure based on the following criteria:

1. There is a need for the use or structure to be located where proposed.

There is a need for the stormwater pump station at the proposed location because the Dorsey Riverbend Neighborhood experiences flooding during heavy rain events. The proposed site is in a low point of the neighborhood which allows stormwater to flow by gravity to the pump station where it than needs to be pumped via force main to the North Fork New River outfall.

2. The use meets a valid municipal purpose.

The proposed use meets a valid municipal purpose since it will be a public works owned pump station that will reduce flooding in the Dorsey Riverbend neighborhood.

3. The location of the use or structure is not in conflict with the city comprehensive plan.

The location of the use is not in conflict with the City's Comprehensive Plan. The proposed pump station is part of the effort to provide a resilient and sustainable stormwater management plan to the neighborhood. In addition, it is necessary because the low elevations make the neighborhood vulnerable to flooding during storm events. A gravity storm sewer system is not sufficient to manage the flooding. The neighborhood is primarily residential therefore the space for a stormwater pump station is limited. The proposed site is currently vacant and owned by the City of Fort Lauderdale which will facilitate the construction of the stormwater pump station.

4. Off-site or on-site conditions exist which reduce any impact of permitting the public use or structure.

There are no off-site or on-site conditions that reduce any impact of permitting the public use 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.

On-site improvements have been incorporated to the site plan, which minimize any adverse impacts as a result of permitting the public use or structure. These improvements include Florida native landscaping, stormwater drains, and aesthetic architectural features.

6. Alternative locations have been identified and reviewed or it has been determined that no feasible alternative locations are available.

Alternative locations were evaluated during the preliminary design and the proposed site is the only feasible alternative that is available and located in a central low point that needs a stormwater pump station to reduce flooding.

7. The proposed site is found to be the most feasible for location of the public use or structure.

The proposed site is found to be the most feasible for location of the public use structure. Hydraulic modeling of rain events was evaluated to identify areas that require the most stormwater improvements to relieve flooding. The pump station site is in a low point of the neighborhood that requires a pump station to pump the stormwater to the North Fork New River outfall.

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 public purpose to be met by the location of the use of the public stormwater pump station outweighs the application of the zoning regulation. The stormwater improvements will benefit the Dorsey Riverbend Neighborhood, making the area more resilient and sustainable, while reducing the negative impacts of stormwater flood events. The pump station is part of the City's efforts to provide proactive stormwater infrastructure that is critically needed.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY

The neighborhood compatibility criteria of ULDR Section 47-25.3 include performance standards requiring all developments to be “compatible with and preserve the character and integrity of adjacent neighborhoods... 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 proposed stormwater pumpstation site is in a residential neighborhood with existing homes surrounding the subject site. Although the project is a stormwater pumpstation, it has been designed to appear as a residential house that blends with the adjacent residential neighborhood. The building was designed with a Spanish colonial architecture, which includes faux doors and windows, decorative brackets below the fascia, residential-style light fixtures and a terracotta pitched roof. In addition, decorative stairs and railings were added in front of the electrical building.

The site is midblock and can be accessed via NW 15th Avenue. There is a proposed 6-foot vinyl fence that will run along the perimeter of the property, which will provide additional buffer and reduce noise to the adjacent homes. In addition, the emergency generator will have a sound attenuation enclosure and the submersible pumps will be located underground, further minimizing noise.

The project was reviewed by the Development Review Committee (DRC) on February 14, 2023. All comments have been addressed and are available on file with the Development Services Department (DSD). The DRC Case Comment Report with Applicant’s Responses is attached as Exhibit 3.

The Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) reviewed the application on March 20, 2024, and recommended approval by a vote of 8-0 subject to conditions. The March 20, 2024, PZB Meeting Minutes are attached as Exhibit 4. The March 20, 2024, PZB Staff Report, which contains a detailed analysis of the project, is attached as Exhibit 5.

Resource Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

Strategic Connections

This item is a 2024 *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 5: Be a sustainable and resilient community.

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

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

- The Infrastructure Focus Area
- Sanitary Sewer, Water, and Stormwater Element
- Goal 6: Ensure that adequate stormwater management is provided.
- Conservation Element
- Goal 1: Protect and monitor water resources to improve water quality and quantity.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Location Map

Exhibit 2 – Application, Project Narratives, and Plan Set

Exhibit 3 – DRC Case Comment Report with Applicant's Responses

Exhibit 4 – March 20, 2024, PZB Meeting Minutes

Exhibit 5 – March 20, 2024, PZB Staff Report

Exhibit 6 – Ordinance

Prepared by: Michael P. Ferrera, Urban Planner II, Development Services Department

Department Director: Christopher Cooper, AICP, Development Services Department