



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
CONFERENCE MEETING

#16-0515

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

FROM: Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM, City Manager

DATE: May 3, 2016

TITLE: Seawall Ordinance Modification (ULDR Sec. 47-19.3)

At the October 6, 2015 Conference meeting, the Commission discussed concerns related to seawalls and King Tide impacts of late September and early October. Staff provided a review of the topic at the November 3, 2015 Conference meeting. At that time, the Commission requested that the City revise the seawall ordinance (ULDR Sec. 47-19.3) to require a minimum seawall elevation. A presentation will be provided (Exhibit 1) to review the status of the process, highlight the key changes in the proposed ordinance, and discuss stakeholder feedback received to date.

Under the City's existing seawall ordinance, the majority of new seawalls are being built to the allowable maximum height (5.5 ft NGVD29 which is equivalent to 3.9 feet NAVD88). This seawall elevation provides freeboard to address King tides and the projected sea level rise (an additional 11-23 inches by 2060) through the expected functional life of the seawall (approximately 30-50 years). However, the extreme King Tides in September/October 2015 suggested that this maximum height may not be adequate.

As sea level continues to rise, higher seawalls have the potential to improve community resilience and substantially alleviate short term flooding caused by extreme high tides and reduce impacts from storm surge. To be effective in preventing neighborhood-specific flooding in lower lying coastal areas, all the public and private seawalls in a given location would need to be raised at a cost to both private property owners and the City.

A team including Public Works, Sustainable Development, and the City Attorney's Office reviewed the major issues surrounding seawalls. These included:

- Seawalls and similar structures contribute to coastal resilience when constructed in a manner that is substantially impermeable and meet a minimum height standard that effectively addresses existing tidal flooding and future sea level rise for the expected lifetime of the seawall or structure;

- Seawall elevation requirements need to be set and the structures built in a manner that does not create drainage issues on the adjacent properties;
- Currently, major repairs of the seawall may result in a significant investment without a resulting elevation in height;
- The new standard minimum and maximum standard for seawall construction should be set to prevent a substantial visual discontinuity with their neighbors;
- Seawalls with defects need to be repaired in a timely manner to reduce tidal flooding impacts on adjacent properties and public Rights-of-Way; and
- A minimum seawall elevation mandated throughout the City by a specific date will support the resilient City vision described in Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035.

The team has developed a public discussion draft of the ordinance (Exhibit 2). Key modifications are:

1. Adds definitions for seawall and for North American Vertical Datum (NAVD88);
2. Sets a minimum seawall elevation (4.6 feet NAVD88);
3. Sets an allowable maximum height of the seawall based on a property's base flood elevation (e.g. if a property has a base flood elevation of six (6) feet NAVD88, the maximum allowable height of a new seawall would be six (6) feet NAVD88);
4. Requires seawall reconstruction to the minimum elevation if substantial repair threshold is triggered;
5. Requires maintaining seawalls in good repair;
6. Addresses fixed and floating docks; and
7. Sets a date (March 1, 2035) by which all seawalls must meet the minimum elevation requirement

The public discussion draft has been reviewed by a variety of stakeholders including:

April 7	Marine Advisory Board
April 14	Idlewyld Board of Directors
April 17	Las Olas Isles Homeowners Association
April 25	Council of Civic Association Executive Board
May 3	Commission Conference
May 10	Council of Civic Association Regular Meeting
May 18	Planning and Zoning Board – Public Hearing
May 23	Sustainability Advisory Board

Strategic Connections

This item is a *Commission Annual Action Plan* priority related to the Stormwater Management Plan.

This item is a *Press Play Fort Lauderdale Strategic Plan 2018* initiative, included within the Neighborhood Enhancement Cylinder of Excellence, specifically advancing:

- Goal 2: Be a sustainable and resilient community.
- Objective 2: Reduce flooding and adapt to sea level rise.

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

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Seawall Ordinance Modification Presentation

Exhibit 2 – Public Discussion Draft Seawall Ordinance (ULDR Sec. 47-19.3)

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