



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

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: May 5, 2026

TITLE: Resolution Establishing a Living Seawall Permit Fee Assistance Program – **(Commission District 1, 2, 3 and 4)**

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission approve a resolution to establish a Living Seawall Permit Fee Assistance Program, providing a one hundred percent (100%) discount on the City of Fort Lauderdale’s base building permit fees for qualifying living seawall installation projects.

Background

At the December 16, 2025, City Commission Conference Meeting, City staff presented a proposed permit fee assistance program to encourage the installation of living seawalls (CAM #25-1152). The City Commission supported the development of the program as living seawalls support environmental resilience by improving water quality, promoting biodiversity, creating habitat, reducing wave energy, and providing shelter for marine life.

The program proposes a one hundred percent (100%) discount on seawall building permit base fees. The building permit base fees are calculated at one and three quarters percent (1.75%) of the job cost value.

Staff recommends creating the program with an initial funding amount of \$50,000 allocated on a first-come, first-qualified, first-serve basis, with \$25,000 allocated for residential projects (single family residences); and \$25,000 allocated for commercial projects (including condominiums and townhomes). The maximum assistance per project is \$3,500 for residential projects and \$7,000 for commercial projects, as illustrated in the table below.

Proposed Living Seawall Permit Fee Assistance Program		
	Residential Properties	Commercial Properties
Base Permit Fee Assistance	100%	100%
Maximum Assistance Amount	\$3,500	\$7,000

The program qualification requirements include installing a living seawall as a vertical structure made of concrete, steel, vinyl or other material, designed as a rigid tidal barrier, with modifications on the waterward side such as modular retrofit panels or textured structural elements intended to support marine organism attachment. The modifications must contain habitat-enhancing components such as textured surfaces that may mimic natural habitats like mangrove roots or tidal pools to encourage aquatic life to attach and grow on the seawall. These modifications must be permanent in nature. The seawall must be at least fifty-one percent (51%) 'living' and raised to the latest North American Vertical Datum (NAVD) elevation as defined by the Unified Land Development Regulations of the City of Fort Lauderdale (ULDR) section 47-19.13.D.

Any property owner seeking to apply for the Living Seawall Permit Fee Assistance Program will need to complete an application that will be made available on the City's website. The application must be submitted as part of the seawall permit package to the Development Services Department. The Public Works Department, via the Chief Waterway Officer (or designee), will review the living seawall components to determine eligibility.

The program will be effective once approved, however City staff will conduct public outreach following approval and publish the application on the City's website on June 1, 2026. The assistance program is for new permit applications only.

Resource Impact

There is a fiscal impact to the City in the amount of \$50,000 for this action. Funds will be appropriated to the accounts below contingent upon the approval of the Consolidated Budget Amendment (CAM #26-0063) on the May 5, 2026 City Commission Regular Meeting agenda.

<i>Funds available as of April 20, 2026</i>					
ACCOUNT NUMBER	COST CENTER NAME (Program)	CHARACTER/ ACCOUNT NAME	AMENDED BUDGET (Character)	AVAILABLE BALANCE (Character)	AMOUNT
10-001-3011-515-40-4299-DSD055	Living Seawall Permit Fee Assistance Program	Other Operating Expenses/ Other Contributions	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
TOTAL AMOUNT ►					\$50,000

Strategic Connections

This item is a Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Commission Priority, advancing the Infrastructure and Resiliency initiative.

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

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

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

Related CAM
CAM# 26-0063

Attachment
Exhibit 1 – Resolution

Prepared by: Todd Hiteshew, Deputy Director – Public Works

Department Director: Brad Kaine, Public Works