



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**MEETING MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
INFRASTRUCTURE TASK FORCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
TOWER 101 – SUITE 1100, 101 NE 3<sup>RD</sup> AVENUE  
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301  
MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2025 – 2:00 P.M. TO 4:00 P.M.**

**January-December 2025**

**Attendance**

Marilyn Mammano, Chair	P	1	0
Peter Partington, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Gerald Angeli	A	0	1
Gregory Barnett	P	1	0
Shane Grabski	P	1	0
James LaBrie	P	1	0
Michael Lambrechts	A	0	1
Marta Reczko	P	1	0
Roosevelt Walters	P	1	0
Ralph Zeltman	P	1	0

As of this date, there are 10 appointed members to the Committee, which means 6 would constitute a quorum.

**Staff**

- Vickie Beauvais, Senior Administrative Assistant
- Alan Dodd, Public Works Director
- Omar Castellon, Assistant Public Works Director -- Engineering
- Dr. Nancy Gassman, Assistant Public Works Director – Sustainability
- Jill Prizlee, Chief Engineer
- Mark Hagerty, Flood Plain Manager
- J. Opperee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Communication to the City Commission**

None.

**1. Call to Order**

**i. Roll Call**

Chair Mammano called the meeting to order at 2:09 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

**ii. Approval of Agenda**

**Motion** made by Mr. Walters, seconded by Vice Chair Partington, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

**iii. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – December 2, 2024**

**Motion** made by Mr. Walters to approve with or without corrections.

Mr. Zeltman requested changes to p.2, paragraph 7:

- Change “observed” to “indicated”
- Replace “went through a number of changes” with “was changed”
- Change “named” to “renamed”

Vice Chair Partington **seconded** the **motion**. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

**2. Old Business**

**i. Follow Up on City Communication**

Chair Mammano reported that she had attended the City Commission meeting at which the Committee’s communication from their December 5, 2024 meeting was presented. The Commissioners had asked a number of questions, including whether or not the Committee was active. She had replied that the Committee is consistently active and has never failed to reach a quorum.

Chair Mammano continued that the overall sentiment of the City Commission was that the Committee is doing a good job and continues to be available to the Commission to advise them and make recommendations. She concluded that the Commission had determined to extend the life of the Committee for one year.

Mr. Walters stated that he had understood the Committee’s life to be extended for two years, although he had pointed out that some current members have only one year of service remaining after February 18, 2025. Chair Mammano noted that the Commission will issue a Resolution clarifying the length of the extension. She expressed concern, however, that if several Committee members are termed out at the same time, the Committee will lose significant institutional memory. She had emailed the Acting City Manager with this concern, suggesting that the name of the Committee be changed once again, in which case terms may reset and the Commissioners have the option of reappointing members.

Chair Mammano concluded that she felt the extension of the Committee’s life for one year was insufficient, as it would be difficult to get any work done over such a brief horizon. Mr. LaBrie observed that when the Commissioners appoint members to the Committee, the time frame for that term of appointment is typically two years.

Chair Mammano stated that there are three key issues:

- The expense of the Committee
- The terming out of current longtime members
- The long-term nature of the Committee's mission

She continued that these may be resolved in a number of ways, such as making the Infrastructure Task Force Advisory Committee (ITFAC) a standing subcommittee of the City's Budget Advisory Board (BAB). While the BAB would address the City's operating budget, the Committee could focus on the capital improvement budget.

Chair Mammano also suggested that changing the Committee to a board would serve to alleviate some issues. This would both re-start the life of the renamed ITFAC and reset the terms of its members so changes in membership are made gradually.

Chair Mammano continued that she understood a recent change to City policy to clarify that no individual may serve on more than one advisory entity at a time, irrespective of whether that entity is a committee or a board. This would represent a change from previous policy, which allowed an individual to serve on only one board but on multiple committees. The Chair requested further clarification of this policy.

Mr. Barnett advised that since his appointment to the Committee, he has not communicated with the City Commissioner who appointed him. Chair Mammano replied that traditionally, the members have not communicated regularly with their appointing Commissioners, as they do not wish to give the impression that the members are representing any individual Commissioners' interests.

Mr. Barnett continued that his intent was for the Committee to continue to be of value to the City's residents and Staff. He felt they can act as a mechanism to convey information to the City Commission. Chair Mammano recalled that in the past, the Committee has made recommendations in support of specific budget items or projects.

Vice Chair Partington pointed out that the City remains under a Consent Order, and the Committee plays a role in monitoring the City's progress. Omar Castellon, Assistant Director of Public Works (Engineering), advised that the City will be under a new Consent Order in relation to inflow and infiltration (I&I) issues. The original Consent Order, which was issued in relation to sewer breaks, is scheduled to sunset in September 2026.

Chair Mammano recalled that the City is also under a separate Consent Order with respect to water only. Mr. Castellon stated that this Consent Order has been completed. Chair Mammano requested an update on the status of all Consent Orders at the February 2025 meeting. Mr. Castellon clarified that this will include the existing water/sewer Consent Order scheduled for completion in 2026 as well as the Consent Order for water only. The new water/sewer Consent Order has not yet been issued.

Chair Mammano concluded that the Commission is prepared to extend the life of the Committee for one year at their second January 2025 meeting. She suggested that the Committee may reach out to the Commission at this time and request an additional year, or they may use the coming year to continue to make recommendations to the Commission and demonstrate the Committee's value.

Mr. LaBrie requested clarification of the ITFAC's original purpose. Chair Mammano read from the original Resolution which established the advisory body, which stated its purpose was to review existing City infrastructure, as well as to review and identify repairs or replacements, funding sources, and financing alternatives for infrastructure projects. It was originally established in response to a sewer break in the Las Olas area in 2017.

Chair Mammano requested that this issue be listed on future Agendas under Old Business so the Committee can have a continuing discussion with the intent of requesting a workshop or joint meeting with the City Commission to discuss their future. Mr. LaBrie also recommended that there be further discussion of staggering members' terms in order to better preserve institutional memory.

### **3. New Business**

#### **i. Flood Zones and the new FEMA Maps**

Flood Plain Manager Mark Hagerty showed a PowerPoint presentation on the new maps recently issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). He clarified that the National Flood Insurance Program does not directly affect existing infrastructure, but is aimed at addressing overall City flood elevations with respect to new construction, which means new infrastructure must meet Class 4 flood plain regulations. Class 4 requires new construction, including infrastructure for critical facilities, to be raised an additional foot above general regulations.

Over 23,000 communities across the United States participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by enforcing flood plain management ordinances and regulations intended to reduce flood damage. In exchange, the federal government makes flood insurance available to owners and renters in these participating communities. Federal funds are also available for grants and disaster assistance. It is important that the City remain compliant with the NFIP in order to receive federal dollars to fund infrastructure programs.

FEMA generally updates its maps every 10 years. The City's previous map was issued in 2014 and the most recent map took effect on July 31, 2024. This data collection process alone can take up to five years. Once FEMA receives the data from its consultants, they review it and create a preliminary map.

When the preliminary map is complete, FEMA begins the community outreach process. Mr. Hagerty recalled that Fort Lauderdale's preliminary maps were created in 2019, after which time FEMA held five outreach programs throughout Broward County during that year. The maps are issued on a County-wide basis. The outreach meetings are heavily promoted to the public.

Chair Mammano asked if flood plain maps are based on the projected amount of rain or on historical flood data. Mr. Hagerty advised that both are taken into consideration in addition to engineering and other forms of data. They rely heavily on hydrology and hydraulics, including how much water can be held by the soil, as this will affect development.

Mr. Walters asked how the funds received by communities participating in the NFIP are used to help residents in flood zones. Mr. Hagerty clarified that City government does not receive money; instead, the Public Works Department is eligible to receive grant funds for infrastructure funding, such as the construction of pump stations and drainage. Other funds available to these communities include disaster assistance, which will affect more than only those residents who live in flood zones.

Mr. Zeltman asked if FEMA also considers factors such as rising groundwater levels and increased tides, which make existing percolation drainage systems less effective. Mr. Hagerty confirmed that this is included in hydrology studies.

Mr. Hagerty continued that the first FEMA community outreach meeting begins the appeal period. Appeals must be filed within 90 days of that first meeting and must be accompanied by technical data supporting the dispute. This can include Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data or other technical studies which clarify elevations.

Most of the participants that challenge or appeal a preliminary map are counties or private developers. Mr. Hagerty explained that because the elevations affect developers' bottom lines, developers are often willing to spend significant funds to prove that certain areas in the maps are not correct. This is one reason the appeals process may take up to five years' time.

A high-risk flood zone is known as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). If a resident lives in one of these areas, they have a 25% chance of experiencing flooding over a 30-year mortgage period. SFHAs are defined as having a 1% chance of flooding in any given 12-month period. Anything less than 1% is considered low risk. Mr. Hagerty further clarified that this does not mean an area will only experience one flood event in a year, pointing out that Fort Lauderdale has experienced three such events in the past two years.

If a property falls within an SFHA and has a 1% chance of annual flooding, that property owner is required to have flood insurance on their property if they have a

mortgage. If a resident has been recently re-mapped into an SFHA, they will receive a letter from their mortgage company informing them of the requirement.

The determination that flood insurance is required for a specific building may be appealed by an individual if they can provide an elevation certificate for the property which shows that the lowest adjacent grade, which is the lowest point of the soil touching the building, is above the base flood elevation. The base flood elevation in Fort Lauderdale may reach as high as 13 ft. or as low as 5 ft.

Mr. LaBrie requested clarification of the average price of flood insurance. Mr. Hagerty replied that this depends on several different factors, including risk and elevation. The highest amount currently allowed by law is \$12,900 annually. Single-family homes and condominiums are also considered differently: the maximum payout available for a single-family home is \$250,000, while a Residential Condominium Building Policy (RCBP) can receive up to \$500,000.

Mr. Hagerty showed graphics of SFHAs in 2014 and 2024, which show considerable expansion of these zones throughout Fort Lauderdale. The City's total acreage is 22,239.5. In 2014, 11,311 acres were within Special Flood Hazard Areas; in 2024, this acreage increased to 14,800. This represents an increase of nearly 3500 acres. 13,853 structures are now included in these areas. The percentage of SFHAs in the City increased from 48.7% to 63.7%, which is a change of 15%.

Vice Chair Partington asked why the elevation at which a 1% risk is calculated varies significantly across the City. Mr. Hagerty advised that he could not answer this, as LiDAR and elevations are outside his area of expertise. Public Works Director Alan Dodd noted that flood insurance studies break the City into sub-basins, which is related to proximity to the flooding source.

The community rating system (CRS), unlike the NFIP, is voluntary. This program gives discounts on flood insurance policies and requires that communities follow more than the minimum requirements to mitigate flooding. In exchange for this participation, residents and business owners receive additional discounts. The CRS program has three goals:

- Reduce flooding to avoid damage to insurable property
- Strengthen and support insurance aspects of the program
- Foster comprehensive flood plain management

Fort Lauderdale is currently considered Class 7, which provides a 15% discount in flood insurance. The CRS program also recommends additional outreach to citizens and advisory entities to educate the public. The City is also in the process of designing a program for public information (PPI) in order to further increase its discount. Fort Lauderdale, however, would not be able to increase the discount sufficiently to reach Class 1 designation, which would be a 45% discount, due to its density. A Class 3 or

Class 2 rating would require the implementation of very strict building regulations which would significantly affect the economic engine of the City.

Mr. Walters asked if there is a difference afforded to higher rather than wider development. Mr. Hagerty confirmed that higher development would allow for more open space, which is the key to achieving a higher class designation. Other activities that can improve a community's class designation include increased public outreach, building elevation regulations, and elevations of critical facilities, among others.

Mr. Hagerty noted that the City is currently making a budget request to bring in a consultant to help them work toward a better CRS rating, such as Class 5 or Class 4. It is part of the City Commission's Consent Agenda and is expected to be approved. Chair Mammano requested that the Committee members be provided with the scope of services for this consultant contract.

Vice Chair Partington noted that the City's top seawall elevation may not exceed the base flood elevation shown for a property on the FEMA map, or 6 ft., whichever is lower. Dr. Gassman advised that the lowest elevation of the seawall is intended to prevent ocean water from flooding the property, while the highest elevation is intended to prevent water from rain events from flooding the building.

Vice Chair Partington asserted that the greater long-term risk seemed to come from rising sea level. Dr. Gassman clarified that the greater risk from rising seas is that the groundwater table is forced to a higher level.

Mr. Hagerty stated that the City is currently developing a Watershed Master Plan, with Florida Atlantic University (FAU) acting as contractor for this task. This Plan will consider the interaction between the entire City and its watershed, as well as how other local watersheds interact with Fort Lauderdale. This Plan is in its final stages and will be submitted to FEMA for credit toward a higher class designation and additional discounts. It will also go before the City Commission for acceptance once all City Departments have signed off on it.

Mr. Hagerty reviewed the following flood insurance statistics:

- Total number of policies: 34,764 structures are covered
- Total annual premiums: \$16 million
- CRS discount: \$2.5 million is currently being saved at the 15% discount
- Average policy discount: \$72 per policy annually
- Cost of property being protected by flood insurance: \$9 billion annually
- Total claims: 5002 claims have been paid for \$166 million since the City joined the NFIP in the late 1990s (this statistic does not include the April 2023 flood)

Mr. Hagerty advised that the NFIP was created in 1968 and has undergone only minor changes since that time. He emphasized that major changes are needed, as the

program is \$28.5 billion in debt at the federal level. This debt increases with every emergency event, as 90% of all federally declared disasters include flooding.

Mr. Walters requested clarification of what might happen if the City implements stricter building regulations in order to achieve a higher discount. Mr. Hagerty reiterated that while imposing more severe restrictions would result in better CRS ratings, the restrictions would also negatively affect the City's economic engines. He emphasized the need to remain prudent in how changes are implemented, noting that there are other steps the City can take to improve its rating. He was confident that the City can achieve a Class 5 rating.

Chair Mammano asked if the City's front, rear, and side yard setback requirements count toward the open space that can help the City improve its rating. Mr. Hagerty explained that these do not count toward open space: only open space that will never be developed can be counted. In order to be counted toward open space, private property would have to have a deed restriction. If buildings and other development are added to the City's park space, this would reduce the amount of open space that can be counted toward credit.

Vice Chair Partington asked if most of the City's flooding comes from water in its canals or from the coast. Dr. Gassman replied that while she did not have an answer to this, FEMA's actuarial rates are calculated with consideration of the distance of a property from a potential water source. Mr. Hagerty added that flood insurance studies, which are used to determine rates, list the flooding source for properties in SFHAs. This information is available on FEMA's website.

#### **4. Public Works Update**

##### **i. CIP Financial Report**

It was clarified that a report on water breaks will be provided at the February meeting.

#### **5. General Discussion and Comments**

##### **i. Committee Members**

Ms. Beauvais clarified that City Clerk David Solomon had responded to the Committee's questions regarding whether or not individuals may serve on multiple advisory committees by advising that the City Commission will discuss this matter further at its next Conference Agenda meeting. No decision has been made thus far.

##### **ii. Public Comments**

None.

**6. Adjournment – NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE: Monday, February 3, 2025**

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 3:44 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]