

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

**DATE:** April 26, 2017

**SUBJECT:** April 27<sup>th</sup> City Commission Meeting  
Sea Level Rise Committee Quarterly  
Appearance (DI.1)

**FROM:** Wayne Pathman  
Chair, Sea Level Rise Committee  
Managing Partner, Pathman Lewis,  
LLP

**ENCLOSURES:** March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 Memo from  
Greenberg Traurig to Miami-Dade  
County re: NFIP Reauthorization

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On April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the City of Miami Sea Level Rise Committee (Committee) will appear before the Miami City Commission for its second scheduled quarterly discussion item for the year. Since its last quarterly appearance in January, the Committee sent you all a follow up memo dated February 24, 2017 summarizing our findings and recommendations to the Commission. The SLR Committee has also held three regular monthly meetings and one workshop focused on planning and zoning issues since January. This memo will highlight some of the critical findings from these recent hearings and encourage the City to urgently appropriate funds for addressing the associated recommendations contained herein.

However, before addressing these findings and recommendations, it would be remiss of this Committee not to recognize some of the positive steps the City has been making towards assessing its resilience to sea level rise (SLR) including the City Manager authorizing:

- Retaining consulting services from the South Florida Regional Planning Council to assist the Office of Resilience & Sustainability (ORS) in developing decision-making GIS mapping tools, to better understand the City's increased flooding risks associated with SLR
- Piggy-backing on a Miami-Dade County contract with Hazen & Sawyer for developing a Rapid Action Plan to address the vulnerability of the County's most critical infrastructure to increasing flood risks exacerbated by SLR
- Development of an RFQ to update the City's Stormwater Master Plan taking SLR into account and fully digitizing the City's stormwater infrastructure so that future modeling scenarios will become easier.

The Committee supports these actions as an initial step to help the City better understand the vulnerability of its assets and communities to SLR. However, as you are well aware, the City is already subject to significant flooding impacts and risks due to King Tides and extreme storm events. While these actions represent a start, the Committee believes they must be quickly augmented with Economic/Insurance Risk modeling to better understand the economic risks of inaction vs. the potential risk-adjusted economic value of adaptation investments and Engineering/Planning support to evaluate potential enhancements to Miami21 to prevent or reduce the impact of development in highly vulnerable areas.

In our memo to the City Commission dated February 24, 2017 – the Sea Level Rise Committee requested a budget which included a proposed \$300,000 to conduct vulnerability analyses around sea level rise. To date, the Committee has received no response on its request from either the City Commission or Administration. Considering the urgency of SLR, the Committee again respectfully asks that the City considers and approves this budget request. Per the findings of our recent hearings, the Committee is requesting the City appropriate funding to contract with outside professional services for the following:

#### **1. Economic Risk Modeling for Sea Level Rise**

During the last appearance before the City Commission, the Committee discussed the urgency of understanding and preparing for potential economic impacts from sea level rise. Along with analyzing physical and social vulnerability, this

Committee believes it is just as urgent (if not more so) to begin the process to comprehensively study Miami's economic vulnerability to sea level rise, and to retain the appropriate expertise for doing so, especially with changes to the prevailing insurance landscape looming.

As a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy and extensive flooding in recent years, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), on which many Floridians rely, is almost \$25 billion in debt. NFIP is set to expire on September 30, 2017, and Congress has indicated its intent to renew the program prior to this date. However, there remains much debate and uncertainty around how long the program may be renewed for and what form it will ultimately take. Much of the debate centers on: accelerating the development of a private flood insurance market and competing private-sector insurance products; what authority states will have over private flood insurance; and, a move towards a more risk-based formula for pricing. These changes will have significant effects on our local insurance landscape, rate stability, and economy as a whole. Therefore, it is critical that the City begins to fully understand its economic risk from SLR and take the needed actions to reduce it.

The Sea Level Rise Committee strongly recommends that the City considers retaining professional services for economic and catastrophe risk modeling as an urgent priority – to quantify and model the economic risks Miami faces from sea level rise including; insured and uninsured risk, business and service interruption risk, and more. Furthermore, we ask that the City Commission direct the City Manager to: task ORS to work closely with the Sea Level Rise Committee on developing a scope of services for retaining a qualified provider for said services; and, identify and appropriate the funding necessary.

## **2. Analyzing Possible Changes to the Miami 21 Zoning Code for Sea Level Rise**

During the last appearance before the City Commission, the Committee also discussed the urgent need for the City to identify opportunities for strengthening Miami 21 and other applicable building and land-use development plans/documents, to increase resilience to sea level rise. In addition, the Committee believes it is critical that changes to the Code ultimately provide a framework that encourages more cooperation between the City and the private development sector for increasing SLR resilience. With limited staff capacity in the Planning & Zoning, Building and other applicable departments to conduct a comprehensive gap-analysis in this regard, the Sea Level Rise Committee strongly recommends that the City considers retaining professional services for these purposes; and that the City Commission direct the City Manager to: task ORS, the Planning & Zoning, Building and other applicable departments to develop a scope of services for retaining a qualified provider for said services; and, identify and appropriate the funding necessary.

On behalf of the entire Sea Level Rise Committee, I wish to thank you for this opportunity to present this information, and look forward to continuing working closely with the City on strengthening our resilience to sea level rise and ensuring a prosperous future for all of Miami.



Wayne Pathman  
Managing Partner, Pathman Lewis, LLP  
Chairperson, on behalf of the Sea Level Rise Committee as a whole

Cc: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission

Daniel J. Alfonso, City Manager

Todd B. Hannon, City Clerk

Dr. Nzeribe Ihekwaba, Assistant City Manager

Jane Gilbert, Chief Resilience Officer

Members of the Sea Level Rise Committee

Xavier Alban, Assistant City Attorney

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