

ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 54 OF THE MIAMI BEACH CITY CODE, ENTITLED "FLOODS," BY AMENDING ARTICLE III, ENTITLED "RESILIENCY STANDARDS FOR TIDAL FLOOD PROTECTION," TO AMEND THE APPLICABILITY OF THIS ARTICLE, MODIFY DEFINITIONS, AND STRENGTHEN CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS FOR NEW AND EXISTING SEAWALLS AND OTHER TIDAL FLOOD BARRIERS TO STRENGTHEN COASTAL RESILIENCE AND MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF TIDAL FLOODING AND SEA LEVEL RISE; AND PROVIDING FOR REPEALER, SEVERABILITY, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**WHEREAS**, sea level rise, one of the most significant effects of climate change, is a result of different factors, including an increase in water volume resulting from melting land ice and the thermal expansion of sea water as it warms up; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2020, the Mayor and City Commission adopted Resolution No. 2020-31315, adopting the 2019 update of the Unified Sea Level Rise Projection, Southeast Florida and further directing the City of Miami Beach to utilize the updated regionally consistent sea level rise projections for planning, design and construction purposes. Sea level rise experts project an estimated increase in sea level of approximately 10 to 17 inches by 2040; 21 to 40 inches by 2070; and 40 to 92 inches by 2120; and

**WHEREAS**, seawalls and similar tidal flood barriers strengthen coastal resilience when constructed in a manner that is substantially impermeable, at a minimum height standard that effectively addresses existing tidal flooding and future sea level rise for the expected lifetime of the seawall or structure; and

**WHEREAS**, In 2016, the Mayor and City Commission adopted Resolution No. 2016-29454, which required that all new seawalls on private property, and seawalls constructed as part of public projects, have a minimum elevation of 5.7 feet NAVD88; however, applications for new or substantially rehabilitated seawalls not associated with new building construction or substantial improvements would be permitted at a minimum elevation of 4.0 feet NAVD88 if designed and constructed to accommodate a future minimum elevation of 5.7 feet NAVD88 (and not lower than the adjacent yard); and

**WHEREAS**, properties with low-lying seawalls can be the source of tidal waters flooding onto adjacent properties or public rights-of-way; and

**WHEREAS**, seawalls, bulkheads, living shorelines, and other shoreline protection structures need to be raised in a timely manner to reduce the impacts of tidal flooding on adjacent private properties and public rights-of-way; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2021, the City established new seawall requirements to prevent coastal erosion, drainage issues, and tidal flooding on rights-of-way and adjacent properties; and

**WHEREAS**, the City promotes and encourages the use of living shorelines to provide a natural alternative to "hard" shoreline stabilization methods, the benefits of which include nutrient pollution remediation, improving essential fish habitat structure, and buffering of shorelines from waves and storms; and

**WHEREAS**, the amendments set forth in this Ordinance will promote a more resilient waterfront.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA.**

**SECTION 1.** Article III of Chapter 54 of the City Code, amended "Resilience Standards for Tidal Flood Protection," is hereby amended as follows:

## **CHAPTER 54**

### **FLOODS**

\* \* \*

#### **ARTICLE III. Resilience Standards for Tidal Flood Protection**

##### **Sec. 54-59. Purpose and intent.**

The purpose of this article is to protect the public's health, welfare and safety by ~~setting~~ establishing minimum standards to be used in the design, construction and maintenance of waterfront structures. This article establishes a minimum elevation for new seawalls and requires failing and low seawalls, bulkheads, living shorelines, or other shoreline protection structures that cause tidal surface water flooding to adjacent properties to be properly maintained, repaired or, if necessary, replaced. The physical seawall improvements ensure new seawalls, bulkheads, living shorelines, or other shoreline protection structures are designed ~~with application of to meet~~ consistent standards that account for future tidal flood conditions and coastal water levels predicted with sea level rise, in accordance with current regional sea level rise projections, as updated and adopted by the City Commission.

##### **Sec. 54-60. Applicability.**

Mandatory compliance with the requirements of this Article shall be required for ~~all applicants with the following types of~~ building permit applications ~~that meet the following criteria:~~

1. All new waterfront construction and substantial improvements; ~~or~~
2. All new seawalls; and ~~or~~
3. Substantial improvements, including repair or rehabilitation, to existing shorelines and shoreline structures.

Each applicant shall submit an itemized breakdown of the cost of construction specific to the seawall work to allow City staff to evaluate compliance with the minimum elevation requirements.

Mandatory compliance with the requirements of this Article shall be required for all ~~low~~ seawalls, bulkheads, living shorelines, or other shorelines protection structures that do not meet the minimum standards in this article, except as otherwise provided in this article; and any other existing condition that causes tidal surface water flooding ~~to~~ onto adjacent properties and/or public right of way.

This article is not applicable to oceanfront beaches or shorelines seaward of the Coastal Construction Control Line.

## Sec. 54-61. Definitions.

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

*Bulkhead*: A vertical or near-vertical, substantially impermeable structure erected along water or a waterway, designed and constructed in such manner as to be substantially impermeable and safely sustain any loads, both vertical and lateral, that may come upon it, such as earth fill, water, moving traffic, storage of materials alongside, and the like. coastal bulkheads are most often referred to as Seawalls; however, by definition, they are intended to act as a shoreline stabilization structure that primarily retains soil and provides minimal protection from waves.

*Green-grey infrastructure or materials* is a combination of engineered and natural features that provide environmental qualities and ecosystem value.

*Living Shoreline*: A green infrastructure technique using native vegetation alone or in combination with low sills (such as low elevation Seawalls or Bulkheads) to stabilize the shoreline as a natural alternative to "hard" shoreline stabilization methods like Riprap or Bulkheads. Living Shorelines may be more resilient than Bulkheads in protecting against the effects of hurricanes. A Living Shoreline may have its waterside face consist of plants and other natural elements that improve water quality, provide additional fish habitat, and fosters increased biodiversity. The landside interface may be located anywhere on an existing property fronting the Living Shoreline, as long as it is constructed in a manner and location that ensures any habitable structures on that property are protected from flooding from tidal waters and it prevents flooding of adjacent properties and the public right-of-way.

*NAVD88 or the North American Vertical Datum ("NAVD 88")* means the vertical control datum of orthometric height established for vertical control surveying in the United States of America based upon the General Adjustment of the North American Datum of 1988.

*Public nuisance* means injurious to the safety or health of the entire community or neighborhood, or any considerable number of persons, or unlawfully obstructs the free passage or use, in the customary manner, of any public right-of-way.

*Rip-rap* means a foundation of unconsolidated boulders, stone, rubble, concrete without protruding rebar or similar materials placed on or near a shoreline to mitigate wave impacts and prevent erosion.

*Seawall* means the vertical or near vertical (often interlocking) structures placed between an upland area and a waterway or waterbody for erosion control.

*Seawall cap* means the concrete beam (usually cast-in-place and reinforced) which connects seawall panels, piles and anchoring system (if present) together at the top of the seawall structure.

*Shoreline* means the tidally influenced area where land meets water.

*Substantial improvements (including repair or rehabilitation)* means any improvements and/or repairs to the existing seawall and/or its associated components with a cost of ~~\$300~~ \$500 or more per linear foot.

*Tidally-influenced areas* means a waterway with water level changes in response to the daily tide.

**Sec. 54-62. Minimum Elevations and Materials for New or Substantially Rehabilitated Coastal Infrastructure within Tidally-Influence Areas.**

- a) All new seawalls or existing seawalls that require substantial improvements ~~repairs~~; shall have a minimum elevation of 5.7 feet NAVD88. All existing seawalls that require improvements ~~repairs~~ ~~but the repairs that~~ are considered less than substantial improvements shall have a minimum elevation of 4.0 feet NAVD88, but only if designed and constructed to accommodate a future minimum elevation of 5.7 feet NAVD88. Notwithstanding the foregoing sentence, limited maintenance work, such as the installation of rip-rap, shall be exempt from the minimum elevation requirement in this section, provided that an engineering report is submitted that demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the City, that the seawall is structurally sound, and All existing seawalls that ~~fall~~ constructed at a height below an elevation that incurs ~~allows~~ allows flooding to ~~incur~~ incur onto the upland property, an adjacent property, and/or public right of way shall have a minimum elevation of 4.0 feet NAVD88 if designed and constructed to accommodate a minimum elevation of 5.7 feet NAVD88.
- b) To the extent practicable, seawalls shall be designed and constructed to adjoin immediately proximate seawalls to close gaps and prevent trespass of tidal surface water.
- c) Property owners are encouraged to consider approaches and materials that enhance the biological value of traditional (flat surface) seawalls with the incorporation of living shoreline features, the use of materials that encourage biodiversity, and the use of biological forms, where practicable.
- d) This section shall not be construed to require the installation of a seawall where other flood protection measures and living shorelines serve as an equally effective tidal flood barrier.

**Sec. 54-63. Coastal Infrastructure Maintenance Requirements within Tidally-Influenced Areas.**

- a) All property owners must maintain their seawalls, bulkheads, living shorelines, or other shoreline protection structures or elements in good repair. A shoreline protection structure is presumed to be in disrepair if it allows for upland erosion, transfer of material through the barrier/wall or allows tidal waters to flow unimpeded through and/or over the top of the barrier/wall to the upland property, adjacent properties, or public right-of-way. Property owners with seawalls, bulkheads, living shorelines, or other shoreline protection structures or elements below the minimum required finished elevation, with permeable erosion barriers such as riprap, or land/water interface of another nature, are prohibited from allowing tidal waters to entering their property or to flow onto an adjacent properties property or public rights-of-way. Failure to maintain flood mitigation infrastructure shall be a citable offense. The notice of violation shall require the property owner to initiate the seawall repair or improvement process and be able to demonstrate progress toward addressing the cited concern within sixty (60) days of the issuance of the notice of violation. A demonstration of progress may include, but is not limited to, obtaining written proposals from seawall contractors, securing financing, and/or applying for permits. Within six (6) months of the issuance of the notice of violation, the property owner shall submit a permit application to the City of Miami Beach Building Department and Miami-Dade County RER (DERM) for the necessary seawall repairs or improvements. The owner of the seawall shall demonstrate progress towards repairing the cited defect within sixty (60) days of receiving a citation. If the required repair meets the substantial ~~repair~~ improvements threshold, the property owner must design, obtain permits, and cause to be constructed seawall improvements that meet the minimum elevation and design requirements within seven hundred and thirty days (730) days of receipt of the citation.



- b) Property owners with seawalls below the minimum elevation set forth in section 54-62(a), or property owners with permeable erosion barriers such as riprap, living shorelines, or a land/water interface of another nature, shall not allow tidal waters to entering their property, to impact adjacent properties, or public rights-of-way. Property owners failing to prevent tidal waters from flowing overland onto the upland property and/or leaving their subject property and entering an adjacent property or right-of-way may be ~~cited~~ issued a notice of violation. The notice of violation shall require the property owner to initiate the seawall repair or improvement process and be able to demonstrate progress toward addressing the cited concern within sixty (60) days of the issuance of the notice of violation. A demonstration of progress may include, but is not limited to, obtaining written proposals from seawall contractors, securing financing, and/or applying for permits. Within six (6) months of the issuance of the notice of violation, the property owner shall submit a permit application to the City of Miami Beach Building Department and Miami-Dade County RER (DERM) for the necessary seawall repairs or improvements. The property owner shall complete the proposed remedy within seven hundred and thirty days (730) days of citation. ~~The owner of the property is required to initiate a process including, but not limited to, hiring a contractor or submitting a building permit, and be able to demonstrate progress toward addressing the cited concern within sixty (60) days of receiving a citation from the city and must complete the proposed remedy within seven hundred and thirty days (730) days of citation.~~

**Sec. 54-64. As-built Requirements and Resilience Standard Certification.**

- a) Property owners are required to submit to the Building Department and Public Works Department an as-built survey that is prepared by a professional surveyor to show elevation of seawall (NAVD88) at the commencement of construction.
- b) Property owners are required to submit to the Building Department and Public Works Department certification by a professional engineer stating that shoreline protection structures have been designed and constructed in accordance with this Article and Miami Beach's Resilience Standards for Tidal Flood Protection ordinance.

**Sec. 54-65. Enforcement; Warnings; Civil Penalties.**

- (a) Failure to maintain flood mitigation infrastructure as set forth in Section 54-63(a) or to prevent tidal waters from flowing overland onto the upland property and/or leaving their subject property and entering an adjacent property or right-of-way as set forth in Section 54-63(b) shall be enforced by a floodplain administrator or designee, a code compliance officer, or a police officer ("enforcement officer") in accordance with the procedures and penalties set forth in Section 54-65(b) through (j).
- (b) *Warning.* ~~An~~ The first notice of violation issued by an enforcement officer shall first issue serve as a written warning to remedy the violation prior to issuing a subsequent notice of violation unless one written warning has been issued in the 12 months preceding the date of violation. The written warning shall require the property owner to initiate the seawall repair or improvement process and be able to demonstrate progress toward addressing the cited concern within sixty (60) days of ~~receiving notice from the city~~ issuance of the written warning. A demonstration of progress may include, but is not limited to, obtaining written proposals from seawall contractors, securing financing, and/or applying for permits. Within six (6) months of the issuance of the written warning, the property owner shall submit a permit application to the City of Miami Beach Building Department and Miami-Dade County RER (DERM) for the necessary seawall repairs or improvements. The property owner shall complete the proposed remedy within seven hundred and thirty days (730) days of citation

the written warning. The written warning shall be substantially in the same form as a notice of violation as identified in section 54-65(c). Failure to either demonstrate progress towards addressing the cited concern within (60) days of receiving notice from the City or upon failing to complete the proposed remedy within seven hundred and thirty days (730) days of citation shall result in subsequent violations set forth in this subsection. Each day such violation continues shall be considered a separate offense.

- (c) *Penalties*. If, subsequent to the initial written warning, an enforcement officer finds a violation, the officer shall issue a notice of violation to the violator as provided in chapter 30. The notice shall inform the violator of the nature of the violation, amount of fine for which the violator may be liable, instructions and due date for paying the fine, notice that the violation may be appealed by requesting an administrative hearing within ten days after service of the notice of violation, and that failure to do so shall constitute an admission of the violation and waiver of the right to a hearing.
- (d) A violator who has been served with a notice of violation shall elect either to:
  - (1) Pay the civil-fine as follows for violations of sections 54-63(a) and/or (b):
    - i. First offense .....\$250.00;
    - ii. Second and subsequent offenses .....\$500.00.
  - or
  - (2) Request an administrative hearing within ten days before a special master appointed as provided in article II of chapter 30 to appeal the decision of the enforcement officer which resulted in the issuance of the notice of violation.
- (e) If the named violator, after notice of violation, fails to pay the civil fine or fails to timely request an administrative hearing before a special master, the special master shall be informed of such failure by report from the enforcement officer. Failure of the named violator to appeal the decisions of the enforcement officer within the prescribed time period shall constitute a waiver of the violator's right to administrative hearing before the special master. A waiver of the right or an administrative hearing shall be treated as an admission of the violation and penalties may be assessed accordingly. The special master shall be prohibited from hearing the merits of the notice of violation or consideration of the timeliness of the request for an administrative hearing if the violator has failed to request an administrative hearing within ten days of the issuance of the notice of violation.
- (f) A certified copy of an order imposing a fine may be recorded in the public records, and thereafter shall constitute a lien upon any real or personal property owned by the violator, which may be enforced in the same manner as a court judgment by the sheriffs of this state, including levy against the violator's real or personal property, but shall not be deemed to be a court judgment except for enforcement purposes.
- (g) Any party aggrieved by the decision of the special master may appeal the decision in accordance with law.
- (h) The city may institute proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction to compel payment of civil fines.
- (i) A certified copy of an order imposing a civil fine may be recorded in the public records and thereafter shall constitute a lien upon any other real or personal property owned by the violator and it may be enforced in the same manner as a court judgment by the sheriffs of this state, including levy against the personal property, but shall not be deemed to be a court judgment except for enforcement purposes. After two months from the filing of any such lien which remains unpaid, the city may foreclose or otherwise execute upon the lien.



- (j) The procedures for appeal of the notice of violation by administrative hearing shall be as set forth in sections 30-72 and 30-73.
- (k) In the event that tidal flooding entering the upland property, adjacent property, or a public right-of-way is not mitigated by a property owner in a timely manner, the City shall be authorized to install a temporary flooding barrier on the upland property, adjacent property, or public right-of-way, at the expense of the owner.

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## **SECTION 2. REPEALER.**

All ordinances or parts of ordinances and all sections and parts of sections in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

## **SECTION 3. CODIFICATION.**

It is the intention of the City Commission, and it is hereby ordained that the provisions of this ordinance shall become and be made part of the Code of the City of Miami Beach as amended; that the sections of this ordinance may be renumbered or relettered to accomplish such intention; and that the word "ordinance" may be changed to "section" or other appropriate word.

## **SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY.**

If any section, subsection, clause or provision of this Ordinance is held invalid, the remainder shall not be affected by such invalidity.

## **SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Ordinance shall take effect ten days following adoption.

This Ordinance shall take effect on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steven Meiner, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rafael E. Granado, City Clerk

Underline denotes additions  
~~Strikethrough~~ denotes deletions

(Sponsored by Commissioner Alex J. Fernandez)  
(Sponsored by Commissioner Laura Dominguez)

APPROVED AS TO  
FORM & LANGUAGE  
& FOR EXECUTION

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Attorney

6/20/2025  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date