



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 24-059

Date: April 8, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners

From: Greg Chavarria, City Manager *Susan Grant*

Re: Demolition of City Hall - Update

The City of Fort Lauderdale (City) sustained significant damage during the April 12-14, 2023, flash floods that impacted Broward County. This memo provides an update on the actions being taken to move forward with the demolition of City Hall.

On April 12, 2023, as the City experienced a 26-inch rain event, Mayor Trantalis issued an emergency declaration pursuant to Section 16-51 and 2-274 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Fort Lauderdale allowing the City to take actions necessary to protect life and property, including performing emergency activities at City Hall. On April 18, 2023, the City Commission approved a 7-day extension of the declaration via Resolution 23-81. On April 28, 2023, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. approved a major disaster declaration for Broward County (Florida Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding DR-4709-FL), which allows the City to pursue reimbursement through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the Stafford Act. The City is applying for reimbursement for all eligible expenses not covered by insurance, with an expected reimbursement of 75% through the Federal Government and an additional 12.5% through the State of Florida.

City Hall was critically damaged as a result of the April flash flood and was deemed irreparable upon inspection. As part of the FEMA reimbursement process, the City has applied for funding through Section 428, Public Assistance Alternative Procedures, which included the demolition of City Hall in the funding request. Upon review and approval by FEMA, the City would be eligible for reimbursement of the City Hall demolition costs, minus the net insurance proceeds and normal cost shares. On February 6, 2024, in anticipation of FEMA's approval, the City Commission approved a budget amendment (CAM #24-0035) allowing for the appropriation of \$13,000,000 for the demolition of City Hall, of which \$11,375,000 is reimbursable. The City is now awaiting FEMA's approval of Section 428 request to initiate the building demolition.

A number of activities have been completed to prepare the site for demolition, including a Hazardous Material Review, scheduling and removal of the FPL electrical vault and related infrastructure located in the City Hall basement, root pruning of the 9-11 legacy lignum vitae tree to be relocated to the Fire Museum, removal and storage of all artifacts

within City Hall as well as on the grounds, full utility site survey and location marking and removal of a time capsule originally installed on June 25, 1968.

WSP, the City's Disaster and Recovery engineering consultant, developed the overall scope for the demolition plan. Demolition will be completed through the City's existing emergency services contract with AshBritt serving as prime contractor. AshBritt will be providing overall management of the demolition project and self-performing portions of the work, while a demolition subcontractor will be used for reduction of the building. In accordance with their contract, AshBritt secured four proposals for demolition. Alpha Wrecking was determined to be fully qualified, meeting all requirements of the demolition plan with a robust plan to provide public safety, and determined to have the overall lowest cost. Thompson Consulting, the City's Disaster Cost Recovery Grant Manager, served as the City representative and performed an independent comparison of the four quotes using standard construction costs and further technical review. The total estimated cost for the project is projected to be between \$10,611,422, with a not to exceed cost of \$13,650,000.

The next steps include re-energizing the City Hall structure to allow for removal of asbestos, lead, freon and mercury containing equipment, and remediation and disposal of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) which must be done before demolition can begin. Staff is mindful of expediting the timeline for demolition, particularly in light of this week's release of the 2024 [Colorado State University 2024 Atlantic Hurricane Forecast](#), which represents the highest prediction for named storms that Colorado State University has ever issued.

The City's demolition plan calls for a methodical and timely approach to demolition, with an expectation that all demolition activities will be concluded as early as mid-August 2024. Demolition will begin with the removal of chillers and mechanical equipment from the roof of the building. Followed by removal of the concrete exterior wall panels and placing fireproofing around the exterior of the building. After wall panels have been removed, the building would be taken down utilizing a top-to-bottom floor approach, to mitigate any disturbances or impacts to surrounding buildings and structures. Removal of the basement level will require significant dewatering efforts and will occur at the end of the project.

If you would like to discuss further or for more information, please contact Alan Dodd, Director – Public Works at adodd@fortlauderdale.gov or call 954-828-5806.

c: Anthony G. Fajardo, Assistant City Manager
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Department Directors
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