



## Neighborhood Resiliency Projects Advisory Committee

### Committee Members

Clare McCord, Chair  
Curt Dyer, Vice Chair  
Ronald Starkman  
Karin Matos  
Julie Basner  
Barbara Montero  
Seth Cohen

**TO: Members of the Neighborhood Resiliency Projects Advisory Committee**

**DATE: November 18, 2025**

**SUBJECT: Minutes of the Neighborhood Resiliency Projects Advisory Committee on September 9, 2025, Meeting**

**Present:** Curt Dyer, Karin Matos, Clare McCord, Julie Basner, Seth Cohen

**Absent:** Barbara Montero, Ron Starkman

**City Staff:** Amy Knowles, Sabrina Batlle, Samantha Sliger, Kevin Pulido, Heather Leslie, Lauren Firtel

**Additional Attendees:** Heather Leslie - HML Public Outreach, Aurora Gonzalez - HML Public Outreach

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### **CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME**

C. McCord calls meeting to order.

### **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

#### **Approval of Minutes**

C. McCord moved to approve June 17, 2025, minutes. C. Dyer seconds. Approved unanimously.

### **PUBLIC WORKS RAINY SEASON/ STORM PREPARATION**

C. McCord expressed enthusiasm about the day's meeting, noting the opportunity to engage with a Public Information Officer (PIO). She then transitioned the discussion to K. Pulido.

K. Pulido introduced himself as the Director of the Neighborhood Affairs Division. He explained that his division oversees the Public Information Officer (PIO) function, which manages public communication for construction projects. These firms bring experience specializing in construction-related public outreach. K. Pulido then introduced Heather Leslie, Principal of HML Public Outreach.

C. McCord thanked K. Pulido and H. Leslie for attending. She shared that the committee was interested in learning more about their work, including key highlights such as harmonization agreements and a general overview of their roles. She noted that questions would be asked throughout the discussion.

H. Leslie thanked the committee and introduced herself as the Principal of HML Public Outreach, noting her 15 years of experience with the City of Miami Beach and prior work with FDOT on projects like Alton Road and Collins Avenue. She highlighted her involvement in the Indian Creek and West Avenue projects, describing West Avenue as a unique design-build effort that allows design and construction to move forward simultaneously. On West Avenue Phase 2, she leads daily construction coordination while A. Gonzalez manages harmonization agreements.

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H. Leslie explained that nearly all properties along the corridor require harmonization. She emphasized the persistence required to keep all parties engaged and responsive.

A brief discussion followed between H. Leslie and committee members, touching on how she manages her role, the evolving scope of her responsibilities, and the continued development of her team.

C. Dyer then inquired about the contents of a harmonization agreement packet and if homeowners have encountered any issues with homeowners' insurance policies due to the harmonization agreements.

H. Leslie explained that the harmonization agreement packet includes property details, a legal agreement with perpetual access language, a warranty clause, an engineering plan sheet, and a plain-language narrative from the contractor. Stated that no issues with insurance companies have been reported to date.

C. McCord asked whether all harmonization agreements for the West Avenue project have been completed.

H. Leslie stated that not all harmonization agreements for West Avenue are complete. She explained that the 132 properties are divided into nine segments to allow for a phased construction approach. She noted that all agreements in Segment 2 are complete, and only two remain pending in Segment 3.

J. Basner shared that her area is expected to be affected in the coming years. She asked what outreach, or communication occurs ahead of construction. She also inquired about opportunities for residents to learn what to expect before work begins and how communication is maintained throughout the process.

H. Leslie responded that outreach begins before construction starts, with the goal of ensuring every resident and business is informed and prepared. She described various engagement tools and emphasized the importance of identifying stakeholders early.

K. Matos asked whether H. Leslie could recall a situation where a property owner refused to sign a harmonization agreement.

K. Pulido recalled a past instance where a property owner refused to sign a harmonization agreement. As a result, the City proceeded with construction around the property. The owner, who had two driveways, lost access to one for several years until an agreement was eventually reached.

C. McCord shared that one of the committee's goals is to explore ways to elevate communication with residents. She noted H. Leslie's role in sharing information among stakeholders and asked whether there are additional strategies that residents could adopt to help improve outreach and awareness.

H. Leslie shared that her team is exploring new tools to improve communication. Additional efforts include improved signage to support businesses, office hours, and encouraging residents to use project websites to stay informed. She emphasized the importance of feedback as it helps refine messaging.

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C. McCord noted that during periods of limited activity, residents can become anxious or confused due to rumors or misinformation. She shared an example from the First Street area, where concerns circulate despite no active construction. She asked whether there could be a way to proactively communicate during these “lull” periods to reassure residents and clarify the project status.

K. Pulido reflected on the difficulty of sustaining momentum and public awareness throughout the phases of a project. He noted that during early stages, there was strong engagement following public meetings, with expectations that construction would begin quickly. However, unexpected delays created periods of inactivity during which new residents moved in and were unaware of the project’s status.

J. Basner suggested implementing a text message notification system to help keep residents informed about project updates and construction activity.

K. Pulido agreed that a text message system is a strong idea and shared that the team has been exploring similar tools. He mentioned the possibility of using a system which allows one-way communication without group discussion. He also highlighted the need to ensure compliance with public records laws when using these platforms.

A brief conversation ensued among committee members regarding potential communication tools, including considerations around accessibility and compliance with public records requirements.

H. Leslie stated that the feedback was appreciated. She thanked those encouraging neighbors to get involved and emphasized the importance of visiting the website to learn about planned improvements.

The committee expressed their sincere appreciation to H. Leslie for her thoughtful contributions and engagement during the discussion. Following her remarks, the committee extended their thanks once more.

### **FUTURE MEETING DATES/TOPICS**

The committee discussed potential topics for upcoming meetings. It was agreed that the next meeting would focus on the Private Property Adaptation Program (PPA). Members proposed future discussions on storm drain operations and maintenance and general update on rain preparedness.

The committee discussed scheduling and confirmed that the next meeting will be held on November 18th.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- No public comment.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

C. McCord makes a motion to adjourn. K. Matos seconds.