

## Army Corps of Engineers proposes flood wall to fortify Miami-Dade coastline



**MIAMI** – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is [studying how to fortify Miami-Dade County's coastline](#) from the reality of rising seas and, as part of a more than \$4 billion plan, has proposed a flood wall running parallel to Miami's waterfront.

"There's a huge detrimental economic and environmental impact to downtown," said Neil Schafers, senior manager of planning, resilience and transportation at the Miami Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

According to Schafers, it's an ominous eye soar threatening property values, quality of life, the tourism industry and the environment.



“This is a tremendous opportunity to try and mitigate issues like coast storm surge and sea-level rise, so we don’t want to miss out on this opportunity,” he said.

The DDA created their own renderings, showing alternative nature-based solutions, like living shorelines.

The city of Miami also passed a related resolution sponsored by Commissioner Manolo Reyes.

“This replica of the Berlin wall they want to build around Biscayne Boulevard and Brickell Avenue -- that will not be acceptable,” Reyes said.

Holly Carpenter and Susan Layton of the Army Corp of Engineers' district overseeing the study say they are reviewing public comments, including those coming from Miami-Dade County, their non-federal sponsor, and other community stakeholders from elected officials, to members of the business community, to environmental advocates like Miami Waterkeeper.

Here is what those from Miami Waterkeeper had to say about the project:

[https://www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/miami\\_waterkeeper\\_weighs\\_in\\_on\\_army\\_corps\\_resiliency\\_projects](https://www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/miami_waterkeeper_weighs_in_on_army_corps_resiliency_projects)

[https://www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/usace\\_replies\\_to\\_miami\\_waterkeeper\\_and\\_partners\\_comments\\_on\\_back\\_bay\\_study](https://www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/usace_replies_to_miami_waterkeeper_and_partners_comments_on_back_bay_study)

[https://www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/usace\\_back\\_bay\\_study\\_action\\_alert](https://www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/usace_back_bay_study_action_alert)

[https://www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/back\\_bay](https://www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/back_bay)



“The point that we are in the study is really to determine what the best path forward is,” Layton said.

“The natural and nature-based features, even if we could suggest many of those, they cannot provide the same level of coastal protection that a wall and storm surge barriers are. So we understand the impacts that occur with these large structural features, but they also provide a level of protection against large storm events that the natural features just cannot provide.”

The study is still underway, so we are quite some time away from a final proposal or design concept.

After that point, the project would still need congressional approval.

Officials from the city of Miami have decided that they want to explore hiring a lobbyist to represent the city on the federal level on this.

A final report is planned for the spring, with the three-year study concluding next fall.

“The design phase could be initiated following the study’s conclusion and approval, if additional federal funds are allocated and a nonfederal sponsor signs a cost-sharing agreement for the design phase,” a USACE spokesperson said in a statement. “In order for a federal coastal storm risk management project to be implemented, construction must be separately authorized, (meaning congressional approval for construction), federal appropriations, (or funding), must be made available and an eligible, cost-sharing nonfederal sponsor must participate. The exact location of structural alignments currently recommended will continue to evolve through the Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) Phase, when additional field surveying and sampling can be used in the detailed design.”



According to the spokesperson, the draft plan's total first project costs are estimated to be more than \$4.5 billion, "which includes both structural, nonstructural and natural features."

Besides the flood wall, those funds also cover several large structural features to include two storm surge barriers, related pump stations, natural features and critical infrastructure.

In a letter on behalf of the county to Layton, Deputy Mayor Jack Osterholt requested that the USACE "assess flood risk more completely before recommending structural measures which could negatively impact the existing Central and Southern Florida Flood Control System" and said "the proposed structural measures should be well aligned with and integrated with other local, state, and federal projects."

[Click here for more information on the Miami-Dade Back Bay Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study.](#)