



## Memorandum

**Memorandum No: 22-102**

**Date:** September 23, 2022

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Commissioners

**From:** Greg Chavarria, City Manager 

**Re:** 2022 City Commission Priorities – Quarterly Progress Report (September 2022)

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The annual City Commission Priorities are an important short-term component of the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Vision Plan*, *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2024 Strategic Plan*, and the annual budget process as we ensure that funding is in place to advance the priorities.

In January 2022, the City Commission met to identify and articulate the organization's highest priorities for 2022. Four (4) Top Priorities and six (6) Priorities were identified. Updates to the Top Priority initiatives are provided monthly to the City Commission and the community through the LauderTrac newsletters (accessible online at <https://bit.ly/3QIQCgd>). This memo provides the third quarterly update for the six Priorities which include Community Response and Safety, Economic Diversification, Historic Preservation, Smart Growth, Waterway Quality, and Workforce Training and Education.

### **Community Response and Safety**

The focus of Community Response and Safety initiative is to improve the City's response to community health and safety issues. As a part of this initiative, the City is emphasizing the enforcement of code compliance and noise concerns. Over the last several years, the community's demand and need for after-hours code enforcement has increased, especially regarding noise, vacation rentals, commercial vehicles parked overnight in residential neighborhoods, and sea turtle nesting lighting compliance. With the adoption of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Budget, which will take effect on October 1, 2022, the City has added four new Code Officer positions which will improve the availability of response to complaints, provide for more consistent enforcement, and reduce the demand for police officers to respond to code enforcement calls. The FY 2023 budget also includes \$128,000 to study and address noise in our community.

The Community Response and Safety initiative also includes the construction of the new Police Headquarters. To date, permitting for the new facility is in the final stages. The General Contractor for the project, Moss Construction, has also developed final pricing for the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) Agreement. This agreement sets the

maximum price the City would pay for the project. City staff is currently reviewing the proposed price with the assistance of a consultant with expertise in this area. The City anticipates breaking ground in December 2022.

### **Economic Diversification**

The City is looking to leverage its continued investment in infrastructure as it promotes itself as an economic hub to attract unique industries. Staff is researching private-public partnership opportunities, most notably the possibility of Fort Lauderdale as a Global Fund Hub, to attract more financial institutions that have tended to reside in Boca Raton and West Palm Beach. Negotiations also continue with Nova Southeastern University (NSU) for a long-term partnership to spur entrepreneurship and promote alternate career paths in low- to moderate- income areas of the City. NSU has already proven to be a strategic resource in attracting businesses in the aerospace and aviation industry to Fort Lauderdale through their Space and Innovation Days.

The City is also rebranding its economic development efforts using the tagline “Live. Work. Play. Invest.” This message will be marketed in publications such as Riverwalk Magazine and the South Florida Business Journal to be seen by residents, visitors, and businesses.

Additionally, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has supported the City Commission’s priority of diversifying the economy by developing blighted areas and funding the adaptive re-use of older buildings for practical modern uses. The CRA is undergoing a master plan implementation study to gather information from civic organizations, homeowner’s associations, and churches to inform how resources should be used to build the Arts and Culture District along Sistrunk Boulevard.

### **Historic Preservation**

Through this initiative, the City has reemphasized its commitment to preserving the history of Fort Lauderdale. On August 1, 2022, the Historic Preservation Board reviewed and supported the proposed amendment to the Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) to include an option for designating Thematic Historic Districts. The amendment is now scheduled for review by the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) on October 19, 2022. Following review by the PZB, this item will be presented to the City Commission for consideration.

In addition, a draft of the Strategic Historic Preservation Plan is currently under review by the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources. Once comments have been received from the State, the final version of the Plan will be shared with the community, the Historic Preservation Board, and the City Commission.

Furthermore, staff has advertised an Invitation to Bid to secure a qualified professional to perform an Architectural Resource Survey of select neighborhoods. These surveys are a continuation of a Citywide effort and serve as an important planning tool in documenting

the City's history and contributing data into a repository of historical information. This survey is funded by a grant through the State of Florida.

### **Smart Growth**

To ensure growth and development is sustainable, one of the concentrations of the Smart Growth initiative is to enhance the City's tidal flood barriers and revise the related Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) ordinances. The ordinances proposed for amendment include:

- ULDR Section 47-19.3 Boat slips, docks, boat davits, hoists and similar mooring structures;
- ULDR Section 47-19.13 Resiliency Standards for Tidal Flood Protection; and
- ULDR Section 47-39.A.1.b General provisions.

The proposed changes include modifying existing definitions for tidal flood barriers; establishing terms, phrases, and words for definition and interpretation purposes; and removing language in the ordinances that does not apply to newly proposed requirements. A key proposal is for the ULDR to define seawalls as a subset of tidal barriers. Any new structure at the interface between the tidal water and the upland would be considered a 'tidal barrier.' Additionally, all new or substantially repaired tidal barriers (including seawalls) would be required to be built to the National American Vertical Datum (NAVD88) minimum elevation of five (5) feet. On September 21, the ordinance was reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) who did not support adoption at this time. They recommended additional public outreach before taking up another vote in support of the proposed modifications. Upon PZB's approval, the ULDR amendments will be presented to the City Commission for consideration.

On City-owned properties, Isle of Palm and Cordova Road seawalls have already been elevated to five feet NAVD88 to meet the proposed minimum elevation. Additionally, a new seawall is currently being installed at the Isle of Hendrix. The vendor for the Las Olas Boulevard seawalls and SE 10<sup>th</sup> Street seawall in Rio Vista has been selected and will begin improvement activities before the end of calendar year 2022.

### **Waterway Quality**

One of the key actions to improve the City's waterway quality is the installation of aeration devices that promote circulation and increase oxygen concentrations in the waterways. Aerators support the decomposition of suspended materials that would otherwise reduce the oxygen available to fish and other wildlife. They can also reduce the "rotten egg" smell that comes from waterways with low oxygen. Additionally, aeration helps to address bacterial pollution. One aeration device, called a 'bubble curtain,' is currently being installed at the mouth of Citrus Isle. This device will create a continuous string of bubbles on the water surface forming a curtain/barrier; the bubble curtain should limit waterway pollution from entering the canal.

The City will be monitoring the benefits of the aeration systems over time. Since August 2022, aerators have been installed and are operating at Tarpon River (between SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street and SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue near the Sara Horn Greenway). Aeration systems at Cliff Lake, Himmarshee Canal (between SE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SE 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue), Lake Melva, and Citrus Isle are all in some phase of installation and will be operating within the next couple of months.

In addition, the Tarpon River Restoration and Remediation Project was completed in August 2022. Over the last four months, approximately 2,000 cubic yards of sediment along 800 feet of the River was removed from either side of the SE 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge. The project is expected to contribute to the improving water quality trends in oxygen level increases and bacterial count reductions that have been occurring since mid-2020. Similar sediment removal was completed in George English Lake in August 2021 with dredging set to begin in the Himmarshee Canal in the next few months.

### **Workforce Training and Education**

For the second consecutive year, the City of Fort Lauderdale implemented the Summer Enrichment Program. Funded through the CARES Act, the Summer Enrichment program was designed to address the learning loss that resulted from limited in-person instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Academic support was delivered through the City of Fort Lauderdale's Parks and Recreation summer camps and in coordination with nonprofit partners.

Over 700 campers in the City-operated summer camps benefited from daily instruction by certified teachers and engaged in project-based learning activities that culminated in a capstone presentation. On average, campers mastered three or more skills in reading and math over the summer. Additionally, 100% of parents surveyed indicated the importance of the academic components and 92% reported improvement in their child's academic performance.

The Summer Enrichment Program also included the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Bridge2Life as nonprofit partners. Funding provided academic enrichment to 50 children enrolled in the YMCA summer camp at the new L.A. Lee YMCA/Mizell Community Center. Children engaged in 60 minutes of reading daily along with weekly art literacy and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) activities. During the summer, campers expanded their word recognition with 68% improving and 32% maintaining on the reading agility assessment. Funding for Bridge2Life provided one-on-one college and career counseling for over 200 Fort Lauderdale high school students. College and career counseling services covered a broad range of needs, including financial aid applications, scholarship identification, and college application completion among other college and career readiness activities.

The start of the new school year presents exciting opportunities for the City of Fort Lauderdale to advance our education goals. The City has a unique role to play in

education. In the 2022-2023 school year, the City is focused on (1) aligning resources to improve educational outcomes, (2) bolstering community engagement to capture neighbors' education priorities, and (3) championing educational improvements.

The next quarterly progress report will be provided in December 2022 to share key successes in addition to the monthly Top Priority LauderTrac newsletters. Please contact me for any further information regarding progress.

c: Susan Grant, Assistant City Manager  
Anthony G. Fajardo, Assistant City Manager  
Alain E. Boileau, City Attorney  
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