



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 25-106

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*

DATE: July 1, 2025

SUBJECT: City Manager's 90-Day Report

Today, July 1, marks my 91st day serving as Fort Lauderdale's City Manager. With so much to absorb and implement, I have been diligent and deliberate about listening, learning, observing and engaging with you (elected officials), staff, neighbors and the larger community. Your support, guidance, and trust have been tremendous, and I appreciate your commitment to ensuring a smooth onboarding and transition process.

During my initial months, I prioritized setting expectations, improving workplace culture, and promoting excellence across the city. These fundamentals create a framework for the continued success of our organization and support the advancement of Fiscal Year 2025 and 2026 Commission priorities, the City's Vision Plan and Strategic Plan.

The City Commission priorities include public safety, homelessness response, infrastructure and resilience, public enjoyment of waterways, public spaces and cultural initiatives, and bolstering thriving communities. I am committed to advancing these priorities and pleased to provide a selection of key initiatives and accomplishments over my first 90 days as City Manager.

Commission Priority: Public Safety

The focus of this priority is reducing crime and increasing the safety of our City by providing the necessary resources to our first responders and building community partnerships.

- The Police Department increased motor unit visibility in high traffic areas within the City and successfully partnered with the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) to conduct an operation targeting violent crime offenders.
- The Fire Rescue Department welcomed the largest recruitment class since 1999, which included 35 new firefighters making 14 of our rescues 3-person rescues. The FY 2026 budget includes enhanced professional development funding to

provide the support needed to retain these new team members and support the growth of the department.

- The School Zone Speed Cameras initiative identified 12 schools for the first phase. The City conducted speed and volume studies in May 2025 and re-released the solicitation.
- Instituted a monthly overtime review with the Police Department's command staff to ensure that we are strategic and fiscally responsible in the way that we manage our public safety personnel.
- Procurement efforts for the Radio Infrastructure Modernization Project have concluded, representing a major milestone in modernizing the City's emergency radio systems.
- Celebrated the graduation of 11 participants of the Fort Lauderdale Police Explorer Program which builds relationships with the community by providing high school students with hands-on training from police officers.

Commission Priority: Homelessness Response

The focus of this priority is to address homelessness in the City of Fort Lauderdale by creating pathways to housing as well as by providing access to comprehensive services.

- As part of the proposed FY 2026 budget, I recommended the restructuring of staffing focused on the homelessness response to increase synergy with the City's Housing and Community Development Division.
- Staff began planning efforts on a safe parking pilot program to deliver a new and innovative way to provide safety, resources, and a pathway to stable housing.
- Finalized the Community Court space lease to solidify program stability and continuity.
- Executed an agreement to provide \$700,000 in State Home Initiative Partnership (SHIP) program funds to provide gap financing for the construction of seven (7) affordable housing units for low- to moderate-income families.

Commission Priority: Infrastructure and Resilience

The focus of this priority is to identify and implement improvements that will address infrastructure needs relating to water, wastewater, stormwater, and the public right-of-way as well as resilience needs relating to extreme weather events and sea level rise.

- Progress continues on the Fortify Lauderdale initiative including the start of the Progresso Village Neighborhood Stormwater Improvements Project as well as determining prioritization factors for Phase II projects.

- The City is taking decisive steps to achieve its Net Zero goals including incorporating in the FY 2026 Budget the installation of solar panels on City facilities and incorporating electric charging stations in parking facilities.
- The City's annual paving program successfully completed milling and resurfacing on Bayshore Drive and South Gordon Road.
- As hurricane season was quickly approaching, I focused on providing proactive emergency response activities to ensure we are prepared. I expedited the City's numerous Emergency Management training sessions, to be completed in May 2025, including a citywide tabletop exercise to ensure the City is well positioned to address extreme weather events and any other emergencies that arise.
- The Parks and Recreation Department has streamlined the sandbag distribution process to make it easier for our neighbors to tap into this valuable resource and our Fire and Police Departments took an active role in the Eye of the Storm event at the Museum of Discovery and Science.

Commission Priority: Public Enjoyment of Waterways

The focus of this priority is to foster inclusive and inviting recreational spaces, encouraging responsible use, and safeguarding the environment.

- On April 27, 2025, I appointed Marco Aguilera as the City's first Chief Waterway Officer, acting as an advisor and liaison between City departments and boards, external agencies, stakeholder groups, and local, state, and federal governments on water quality and marine issues, policies and appropriations related to City waterways.
- Facilitated a public meeting to address the concerns of long-term anchoring across waterways in Fort Lauderdale. The public meeting highlighted potential options including anchoring limitation areas and the ability to enact a local ordinance through the passage of House Bill 486. City staff are drafting a local ordinance for City Commission consideration.
- To prioritize waterway efforts and increase collaboration, on May 1, 2025, I coordinated for the City Manager's Office to present at the Marine Advisory Board (MAB) meeting. The presentation focused on the role of the City Manager's Office, the importance of waterway issues, and ways staff can support MAB priorities and goals.
- The FY 2026 Proposed Budget introduced a new Marina Facilities Fund dedicated to ensuring that neighbors have access to clean, well-maintained public boat ramps and marinas.

Commission Priority: Public Spaces and Cultural Initiatives

The focus of this initiative is to improve landscaping, using empty spaces, expanding parks and green areas, supporting arts and culture, and planning for a new City Hall.

- The City Hall project has continued to advance with the recommendation for an Owners' Representative and the acceptance of an unsolicited proposal. The Design Criteria Package solicitation is scheduled to be released in July 2025.
- The City hosted the Fleet Week welcome reception on April 23, 2025. The event honored service men and women with welcoming words from City and Navy officials, a dinner, and an amateur hockey game.
- The Florida Panthers Championship Celebration was hosted in Fort Lauderdale which provided international recognition and local economic impacts while promoting public safety and fiscal responsibility.
- Advanced key agreements and budget amendments to solidify the partnership with the YMCA to expand the offerings at Holiday Park.
- Honored Juneteenth through a presentation at the City Commission meeting and established the City's first Juneteenth celebration event at Carter Park.

Commission Priority: Bolster Thriving Communities

The focus of this initiative is to expand internet access, supporting affordable housing, revitalizing key districts, and investing in workforce development and youth scholarships.

- Began developing the framework for the City's new Economic Development Division which will ultimately be led by the City's new Chief Economic Development Officer in FY 2026.
- Finalized the interlocal agreement with Broward County to extend the Northwest Progresso Flagler Height Community Redevelopment Area for 10 years at 50% of the City's annual Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- Collaborated with the Broward Education Foundation to select 12 students to receive one-year scholarships under the City's new partnership and finalizing plans to publicly recognize and present the scholarships during an upcoming City Commission Meeting.
- Applied for and awarded the \$20,000 National League of Cities Advancing Economic Mobility Grant. The City will expand the StartUp FTL Program and offer microgrants to small businesses with this funding.

- The City hosted the Building Business with Impact Pitch Competition providing a testing ground for entrepreneurs to refine their business pitches in a dynamic format.
- The City secured \$3.75 million this Legislative Session for Local Funding Initiative Requests:
 - Las Olas Boulevard Safety Improvements - \$1,000,000
 - Roadway Resurfacing - \$750,000
 - Violence Interruption Program - \$650,000
 - Galt Mile Street Safety Improvements - \$500,000
 - SE 13th Street Bridge Replacement - \$500,000
 - Education Enrichment Program - \$350,000

Commission Priority: Transportation and Traffic

The focus of this initiative is to expand multi-modal accommodations, enhance microtransit services, mitigate traffic congestion, complete a sidewalk assessment, and advance the New River Crossing initiative.

- The City Commission adopted Resolution No. 25-71 on April 15, 2025 to advance the New River Crossing tunnel efforts. City staff have promoted the project at conferences, established working meetings with Broward County, and initiated strategic financial discussions.
- The City secured a temporary deviation for the bridge opening schedule for the SE 17 Street Causeway. The temporary deviation period is June 2, 2025, through November 28, 2025. The deviation eliminates two bridge openings during the morning peak period and two bridge openings during the evening peak period.
- Issued key Parking Division solicitations for the Las Olas Garage façade lighting and for a mobile payment vendor.
- The Northwest Community MicroMover service experienced exponential growth since April, more than tripling in ridership. The service received Commission support at the June 17 meeting when presented as one of the Net Zero Plan next steps.
- Coordinated pedestrian safety improvement commitments with the Florida Department of Transportation and Broward County. Improvements include multiple new crosswalks along US-1 and Andrews Avenue as well as traffic signal improvements on NE 3 Avenue.
- The City Commission approved the proposed third amendment to the Transportation System Surtax Interlocal Agreement providing FY 2026 funding in

the amount of \$3,841,408. The proposed FY 2026 budget allocates additional surtax funding for the City's MicroMover service (Circuit).

City Manager Initiative: Employee Engagement

It has been my honor to meet with City staff across the organization to applaud their contributions, hear their concerns, and assess the changes needed to ensure the City is well positioned to address the ever-changing needs of our community. Below are a few initiatives that directly impact the valued members of our team:

- The City has opened bargaining discussions with the Teamsters and the Federation of Public Employees bargaining groups
- The Human Resources Department has held and planned for catch-up employee recognition events to address the two-year delay in recognizing milestone anniversaries for employees
- The City implemented a Unified Communications Plan to centralize internal and external communication efforts

City Manager Initiative: Organizational and Operational Enhancements

The focus of this initiative is to further acknowledge the importance of ensuring our City remains mindful of our valuable assets as well as our public image. The following were implemented to aid in advancing this initiative:

- Initiated a citywide internal control review to identify vulnerabilities to fraud, either external or internal to the organization
- Launched a comprehensive, in-person cybersecurity training initiative across the City to empower employees with hands-on knowledge and personalized services to identify risks, follow cybersecurity best practices, and safeguard organizational data.
- Elevated the Commission Meeting experience including a speaker backdrop, streamlined Commission and staff hospitality, and new camera angles with the support of the City Clerk's Office.
- Established a Dress Code Policy, which provided clarity and consistency of expectations for City staff to further promote and enhance the City's professional image and public perception.

City Manager Initiative: Representing the City

The role of the City Manager extends beyond the leadership of staff, to becoming part of the community that we serve. To that end, over the last 90 days I have had the pleasure to represent the City at:

- Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce
- Bilzin Sumberg Development Conference
- Broward County City Manager's Association
- Broward League of Cities
- Downtown Development Authority
- Budget Advisory Board
- Marine Advisory Board
- Various civic association meetings including, but not limited to, Colee Hammock, Council of Civic Associations, Downtown Fort Lauderdale, Flagler Village, Lake Ridge, Melrose Park, Tarpon River and community organizations like the NAACP.

I am extremely proud of our team of dedicated public servants. None of these highlighted accomplishments could be completed without their support.

Thanks again for the confidence and trust placed on me to push Fort Lauderdale forward.

C: D'Wayne Spence, Interim City Attorney
David R. Soloman, City Clerk
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
City Manager's Office
Department Directors