



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 25-138

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

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*
D'Wayne Spence, Interim City Attorney *DWS*

DATE: August 27, 2025

SUBJECT: Charter Revision Board Update

This memorandum is presented in collaboration between the offices of the Fort Lauderdale City Manager and the City Attorney to provide an update on the progress of the Charter Revision Board (CRB).

Divided into two parts, this memorandum provides a summary of activity and sections of the City of Fort Lauderdale Charter the CRB has reviewed and provided feedback on to the City Attorney's Office for drafted language to recommend to the City Commission. In addition, the memorandum provides a summary of the recommended public outreach plan developed by City staff with input from the CRB.

It is anticipated that a joint workshop with the City Commission will be scheduled once the CRB has finished its work on proposed recommendations and the language draft is finalized to be shared with the public.

CRB ACTIVITY AND CHARTER SECTIONS REVIEWED:

Since the City Commission's joint workshop with the CRB on September 17, 2024, the CRB experienced significant turnover of board members, with five (5) new members appointed, one (1) of the newer members having stepped down, and a new chair designated. These new board members have been engaged in becoming familiar with the background of the effort and issues that need to be addressed, the former Board's recommendations made to the City Commission in May 2024, and developing their own recommendations under the guidance of the City Attorney's Office and City staff. The following is a summary of the activity the CRB has completed as of the meeting held in August 2025.

NOTE: Strikes and underlines represent the revised title of the section as recommended by the CRB.

MARCH 6, 2025

Staff recapped previous efforts by the CRB for the benefit of the new board members. This included an overview of the CRB recommendations made to the City Commission in May 2024 that consisted of 14 charter sections, a general discussion related to previously recommended amendments as well as current CRB members' preferences related to those previous efforts, presentation of charter language by the City Attorney's Office, and discussions on the best method to move the work forward.

APRIL 3, 2025

The CRB was provided with an update from the Strategic Communications Division on proposed public outreach focused on a draft communications plan and proposed webpage language with the intent to effectively communicate charter revisions to the public. In addition, the CRB reviewed agenda items related to charter language revisions. The board also rescheduled the October 2, 2025 meeting to October 9, 2025.

Charter sections finalized for recommended amendments:

- Section 8.01 – Sale of personal property; ~~procedure; public notice.~~
- Section 8.21 – Disposing of ~~public~~ park property.

MAY 1, 2025

The CRB was provided with another update by the Strategic Communications Division on the public outreach effort so the board could provide feedback related to engaging directly with the members of the public. Members of the public attended to convey their thoughts regarding charter language related to the disposition of public lands. The remainder of the agenda related to charter language revisions.

Charter sections finalized for recommended amendments:

- Section 8.04. – Sale of real property to private parties ~~persons, firms or corporations.~~
- Section 8.09. – Leases, licenses, concessions, and use agreements for more than one year and note more than fifty years.

Note: A presentation was given to the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations by City staff on May 13, 2025 at the request of the CRB. This presentation provided information related to what the charter is, what the CRB is, what City departments are involved with this effort, how the charter is amended, and how members of the public can be involved.

JUNE 5, 2025

The CRB discussed the need to have additional meetings, and it was determined that full-day back-to-back meetings will be held in July 2025 in an effort to make more progress than can be accomplished during one (1) monthly evening meeting of the CRB. These meetings were set for Wednesday, July 9, 2025 and Thursday, July 10, 2025 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Ultimately, the CRB was able to complete the entire agenda on the first day (Wednesday, July 9, 2025). As a result, the meeting the following day was canceled. This meeting agenda included a review of multiple charter sections consistent with the comments and concerns raised by the public, direction and feedback provided by the City Commission, City staff requests for charter language revision considerations, and language identified by the City Attorney's Office to address revisions from a legal perspective for consistency with applicable law.

Charter sections finalized for recommended amendments:

- Section 3.04. – Judge of elections and qualifications of members. *
- Section 3.09. – Organizational meeting.
- Section 3.10. – Special meeting to seat a new member. *
- Section 3.12. – Special meetings – how called.
- Section 3.15. – Initiative and referendum; petition for proposed ordinance.
- Section 3.17. – Commission required to take action. *
- Section 3.20. – Referendum elections. *
- Section 7.16. – Election; tie vote; ~~primary election to fill one vacancy.~~
- Section 8.02. – Sale or lease of city ~~public lands and of public property~~ to public bodies.
- Section 8.09. – Leases, licenses, concessions, and use agreements for more than one year and not more than fifty years.

* Sections intended to be deleted due to redundancy or conflict with applicable law.

July 9, 2025

The CRB focused on the remaining sections of the charter that are aligned with the direction from the City Commission, public comments, and those items indicated by the City Attorney's Office and City staff. In addition, the CRB discussed a potential communication to the City Commission to get direction on moving forward with additional work.

Charter sections finalized for recommended amendments:

- Section 3.08 – Forfeiture of office
- Section 8.01 – Sale of personal property; procedure; public notice

- Section 8.02 – Sale of public lands and of public property to public bodies
- Section 8.04 – Sale of real property to private persons, firms or corporations
- Section 8.05 – Leases for not more than one year
- Section 8.06 – Leases at Bahia-Mar
- Section 8.07 – Leases with governmental entities or agencies for governmental purposes
- Section 8.08 – Leases of parking spaces in parking facilities owned or operated by the city
- Section 8.09 – Leases for more than one year and not more than fifty years
- Section 8.12 – Leases of Shops in Central Business District Parking Garage
- Section 8.21 – Disposing of public property
- Section 10.03 – Public hearings and public notice

August 7, 2025

The CRB focused on the following sections. In addition, the CRB finalized the communications to the City Commission discussed at the July 9, 2025 meeting and requested the Clerk send them to the City Commission for the September 3, 2025 conference meeting to allow staff to be present in case of any discussion or questions.

Charter sections finalized for recommended amendments:

- Section 3.03 – Qualifications of members
- Section 3.08 – Forfeiture of office; absence
- Section 3.09 – Organizational meeting
- Section 3.12 – Special meetings – How called
- Section 7.16 – Election; tie vote; ~~primary election to fill one vacancy~~
- Section 8.04 – Sale of real property to private persons, firms or corporations

Note: City staff is proposing revisions to sections of the Charter related to Human Resources. At this time, the City Attorney's Office has not reviewed these sections for legal consistency and conflict with applicable law. The sections requested related to Human Resources are:

- Section 4.06 – Acting city manager upon resignation of or during absence or disability of city manager
- Section 6.04(c)(2) – Civil service board; created; composition
- Section 6.05 – Pay plan and personnel rules

Further, the conflict matrix provided by the City Attorney's Office, which indicates sections of the charter that are in conflict with existing Federal, State, or County regulations, included Section 4.07 – Assistants to the city manager, which has yet to be heard by the CRB.

The CRB is seeking guidance from the City Commission to move forward with these sections.

PUBLIC OUTREACH PLAN:

At the September 17, 2024, joint workshop between the City Commission and the CRB, the City Commission referred to the public outreach program by the Infrastructure Task Force/Reimagining City Hall campaign to be used as a blueprint for future outreach conducted by the CRB. To address this guidance, the Strategic Communications Division developed a robust public outreach campaign to educate the public, provide an opportunity to ask questions, and provide feedback on charter language and elements of the charter important to them.

This program includes the following:

- A dedicated webpage on Spotlightftl.com, similar to platforms used for past projects, to serve as the central information hub
- The use of flyers at City buildings with QR codes linking to the webpage
- News posts on the city website and social media campaigns, all directing traffic to the Spotlight FTL page
- Media outreach to local newspapers, TV, and radio stations
- Collaboration with civic associations, advisory boards, and committees
- Partnerships with stakeholders like the Riverwalk, Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown Development Authority
- The use of email distribution lists, including mayoral and commissioner newsletters
- The inclusion of information on the back of water bills
- The use of public outreach meetings, publicized through the aforementioned channel

The City, in coordination with the CRB, has launched the webpage dedicated to the ongoing charter review process that aligns with that previous successful outreach effort. The page is now live at:

[SpotlightFTL.com/CharterReview](https://spotlightftl.com/CharterReview)

This website provides our neighbors with clear and accessible information about the charter, why it matters, and how they can participate in the review process. In particular, the page includes a brief overview of the charter's role in City governance.

As part of this effort, a survey was developed and posted on-line. However, at this time the survey is inactive so that it can be refined with input from the City Commission prior to re-releasing to the public. Staff will present this survey to the City Commission for input at an upcoming conference meeting.

It is the intent of the CRB and staff to ensure the public has access to relevant information and can participate in the process. As any charter amendments must ultimately be approved by voters, this feedback may be helpful in ensuring that any proposed changes reflect the values, priorities, and evolving needs of our community.

If you have any questions, please contact Anthony Fajardo, Director, Development Services Department, at 954-828-5758 or via email at afajardo@fortlauderdale.gov.

c: David R. Soloman, City Clerk
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
City Manager's Office
Department Directors