



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No: 25-221

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission
FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *AW*
DATE: October 30, 2025
SUBJECT: **City Manager's Six-Month Report (July - September 2025)**

Fiscal Year 2026 is off to a great start. As we launch the new programs and initiatives approved by the City Commission with the adoption of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget, I wanted to take a moment to highlight a few key accomplishments during the last three (3) months of Fiscal Year 2025. The following provides an update since the issuance of my 90-Day Report (Memorandum No. 25-106) on July 1, 2025.

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.

Fort Lauderdale Police Department

- Initiated a Cyber Attack Response and Mitigation program through the City's annual Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Grant Program appropriation.
- Secured a \$97,618 grant from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to conduct a pedestrian and bicycle safety public awareness and enforcement campaign.
- Participated (via our Marine Unit) in operation "Risky Business" with the United States Coast Guard's Fort Lauderdale Station to conduct recreational safety boardings on vessels operating as charters, which resulted in the terminations of nine (9) illegal charters and over sixty (60) Coast Guard violations issued.
- Achieved the prestigious Excelsior status accreditation from the Commission for Law Enforcement Accreditation for the fifth consecutive time.
- Hosted the annual National Night Out event to promote community and police partnerships.

Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue

- Received \$1.3 million through the Assistant to Firefighter Grant for high-rise training.
- Secured a \$1.1 million State of Florida Safehouse Grant, which will be used to design an enhanced emergency operations center.
- Awarded a \$403,278 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant, which will enhance regional preparedness, interoperability, and response coordination for large-scale emergencies.
- Obtained \$123,000 through the State of Florida Drone Replacement Grant, which will replace outdated drones and standardize all public safety drones in the City.
- Significantly progressed on the construction of Fire Stations 13 and 88 with the completion of the Design Criteria Package (DCP) and 30% drawings.
- Provided emergency services for several large events, ensuring safety and minimizing incidents.
- Partnered with Dolphin Carpet and Tile and WSVN to replace the carpet at the home of Werner Frickman, a 101-year-old veteran and neighbor.
- Proudly honored Lieutenant Bobby Glenn, a trailblazing Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue retiree, who was hired on September 20, 1970.

Commission Priority: Homeless 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.

- Utilizing funding under the Housing for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) grant program, the City has increased support for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance which provides short-term rent, mortgage, and utility assistance as well as permanent housing support to households that meet the HOPWA eligibility requirements.
- Added resources and realigned existing City services to create enhanced outreach and enforcement response to homelessness. This includes:
 - The addition of three (3) civilian positions (via position reclassifications) to the Homeless Outreach Team;

- Implementing an intensive outreach unit with the help of Fire Rescues' Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Unit and the Police Co-responder Unit; and
- Adding two (2) case workers (via position reclassifications) to the coordinated homelessness response effort to assist individuals in need of support and following-up with those referred to outside service providers.
- Sponsored substance abuse treatment beds provided by Fellowship Recovery Community Organization.
- Funded a safe overnight parking program that will allow a service provider to partner with the City to implement a pilot program to assess the effectiveness of the program.
- Restructured the Homeless Initiative Response within the Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) program to strengthen referral pathways, operational responses, and coordination with multiple City departments.
- Gained access to Broward Health patient documentation portal (Epic) for improved tracking and follow up.
- Implemented an automated daily report that identifies potential unhoused individuals encountered by EMS transporting crews, ensuring timely MIH follow-up.
- Established a formal EMS referral process allowing field crews to directly refer unhoused individuals to the MIH Team through the FLFR electronic patient care report (ImageTrend), enabling immediate follow-up and linkage to care.
- Developing an external referral process to align with the City's new FY 2026 organizational structure, supporting coordination between Fire, Police, and City outreach divisions.
- Hired an additional Community Health Coordinator (CHC) with a background as a Nurse Practitioner to enhance care coordination, assist with medical clearances, and strengthen follow-up for complex cases.
- Through a grant from the Broward Behavioral Health Coalition's Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) Network of Addiction Care Program and the Florida Department of Health's Overdose to Action (OD2A) partnership, the City leveraged funding to support substance use disorder treatment, outreach activities, and continued follow-up with individuals requiring recovery support.

- Secured strategically located Narcan distribution hubs in areas identified as overdose hot spots, significantly expanding access to a life-saving intervention for opioid-related emergencies and reducing preventable deaths.

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.

- Finalized the planning stage of the City's \$105.5 million Public Safety and Infrastructure Improvement bonds, which will provide the funding needed to finalize the new Police Headquarters Project, advance repairs on all serious and failed roadways and sidewalks citywide, as well as funding general infrastructure improvements like seawalls and bridges. This Special Obligation Bond was assigned an "AAA" rating from S&P Global Ratings, the highest rating available, recognizing the City's strong fiscal and management practices.
- Hosted the New River Crossing Tunnel Industry Day to promote the tunnel project with industry experts, engage with Brightline and Florida East Coast Railway, evaluate grant opportunities, and develop financial strategies.
- Prospect Lake Clean Water Center – Construction on the new water plant is continuing as planned. Pre-commissioning activities, including the flushing of raw water through the piping, began in September 2025. Staff onboarding preparations are underway, and key construction elements have been completed.
- Advanced Phase I of the Fortify program which includes the bid opening for Victoria Park, started the 72" outfall pipe in Progresso, and advanced the design in Melrose Manors, and reached 80% completion of the remaining pump station in Dorsey-Riverbend.
- Breakers Avenue Streetscape – Fully-funded the Breakers Avenue Streetscape project by securing an additional \$3,000,000 from the Broward County Surtax Grant Match Program.

Commission Priority: Public Enjoyment of the Waterways

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

- Finalized the Regulation of Vessels Anchored in Public Waterways ordinance which makes it unlawful to anchor a vessel for more than thirty (30) days within a six (6)-month period.

- Pump-out Boat Grant – The City Commission approved a grant through the Clean Vessel Act from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for a sewage pump-out boat. Once implemented, the pump-out boat will provide free services to mitigate illegal sewage discharge into the waterways.
- Mangroves – The City planted one hundred (100) mangroves with fifty (50) additional mangroves scheduled to be planted.
- Derelict Vessel Emergency Response Procedures – To mitigate time delays with responding to derelict and sinking vessels, processes and procedures were updated to clearly define roles, responsibilities, and associated response timelines.

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.

- Parks Bond Updates
 - Completed improvements at multiple parks including:
 - Tarpon Cove Park: Installed site furnishings, landscaping, ADA improvements, and a kayak launch.
 - Jimmy Evert Tennis Center: Added new courts and facilities, lighting, drainage, court irrigation and other general improvements. A new stadium court was also constructed to support future tournament needs.
 - Hardy Park: Installed a new playground, updated fitness equipment, enhanced the walking trail, and made ADA improvements.
 - Annie Beck Park: Completed shoreline stabilization, added a new kayak launch, and made general improvements.
 - Progressed Signature Park efforts, including:
 - Lockhart Park: Finalized the settlement agreement and began initial negotiations with Miami Beckham United.
 - Holiday Park: Released the Phase II construction solicitation.
 - Carter Park: Finalized the funding and planning

- Tunnel Top Park: Completed the shade structure installation.
 - Approved construction agreements for Mills Pond Park and Bass Park improvements.
 - Opened Bal Harbour Park, a new park acquired through Parks Bond land acquisition funding.
 - Advanced funding for seven (7) parks to expedite the planning and design efforts.
- The Parks and Recreation Department was honored with the following four (4) prestigious awards from the Florida Recreation and Park Association:
 - 2025 Golden Shovel Award in honor of Susan Riestra's outstanding service to the field of parks and recreation.
 - Excellence in Sports Tourism Award for bringing cutting-edge sports venues to life, as well as ensuring athletes and visitors have unforgettable experiences.
 - Agency Excellence Award for programs and initiatives that strengthen our community.
 - Public Relations Electronic Media Award for our Digital Playbook newsletter.
- Finalized the Exclusive Children Play Area ordinance to establish regulations designating exclusive children's play areas within City parks.
 - Completed a street naming unveiling ceremony for Mr. Raymond G. Christie, one of the City's first licensed Black contractors whose work helped build homes and businesses, making a lasting impact on Fort Lauderdale.
 - Conducted a street naming unveiling ceremony for Mrs. Ada Bradley Moore, who served in the Parks and Recreation Department and coordinated programs for local youth and seniors for more than 30 years.
 - Finalized procurement efforts for the Las Olas Garage lighting facade which will attract attention to the building's aesthetics.

Commission Priority: Bolstering 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.

- Successfully completed public outreach efforts associated with the \$88 million Community Development Block Grants – Disaster Recovery funding.
- Secured a \$50,000 grant from the Florida Department of State's Division of Historical Resources to support architectural resource surveys of the Edgewood and River Oaks neighborhoods.
- Completed the Sailboat Bend Historic District interpretive signs and walking tour project which will offer interactive storytelling that brings the history of Sailboat bend to life.
- Launched the Cyber Smart FTL Program which provides hands-on training to empower our community to build a more resilient digital future.
- Hosted the Sistrunk Empowerment Summit via our Intergovernmental Affairs Division (formerly Public Affairs Division) to explore ways to expand opportunity, strengthen neighborhoods, and build the economic future for the Sistrunk Corridor.
- Hosted a lunch and learn roundtable session with Broward County Public Schools principals in Fort Lauderdale to provide opportunities for collaboration to align events, support, and initiatives.
- Launched water distribution licensure preparation course in partnership with Broward County Schools, for City employees. Eleven (11) employees successfully completed the course, with seven (7) submitting documentation to sit for State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) license exam.
- Adopted a new vacation rental fee structure to ensure full cost recovery of the program, securing a funding source for the City's continued efforts to ensure that vacation rental properties meet minimum housing and life safety standards.

City Manager Initiative: Organizational and Operational Enhancements

- Finalized the development and adoption of the FY 2026 Operating Budget and Five-Year Community Investment Plan.

- Finalized collective bargaining agreements with the Teamsters and Federation before the end date of the existing contracts.
- Appointed the Directors of the Utilities Services, Public Works, and Information Technology Services Departments as well as several internal senior leadership appointments.
- The Development Services Department was named the Overall Winner at the 2025 Team Showcase during the 33rd Annual Sterling Leadership Conference which is a representation of the City's ongoing commitment to innovation, continuous improvement, and excellence in public service.
- Hosted Let's Connect, Team FTL, an in-person and virtual townhall discussion with staff about our core values, organizational updates, and the proposed budget.
- Implemented a new personnel performance evaluation framework to ensure alignment between senior leadership's fiscal year objectives and overarching organizational goals.

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 ninety (90) days I have had the pleasure to represent the City at:

- Black Chief Officers Committee Conference
- Broward County City Manager's Association
- Broward League of Cities
- Broward Workshop Urban Corridor Committee
- Budget Advisory Board
- Central City Redevelopment Advisory Board
- Fort Lauderdale Principal Roundtable
- Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance
- Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce
- Infrastructure Task Force Advisory Committee
- Marine Advisory Board
- National Night Out
- Sistrunk Empowerment Summit
- Tourist Development Council
- Urban League of Broward County

- Various civic or neighborhood association meetings including:
 - Beverly Heights
 - Coral Ridge Country Club Estates
 - Coral Ridge Isles
 - Croissant Park
 - Dorsey Riverbend
 - Golden Heights
 - Imperial Point
 - Lauderdale Manors
 - Melrose Manors
 - Poinciana Park
 - Progresso Village
 - River Oaks
 - Riverside Park

I want to thank the City Commission for trusting me to lead this dynamic organization. I am extremely pleased with the progress our team of committed public servants has made over the past six (6) months. I look forward to seeing the results the FTL Team delivers for our neighbors, businesses, and visitors.

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