



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
INFRASTRUCTURE TASK FORCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TOWER 101 – SUITE 1100, 101 NE 3RD AVENUE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301
MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025 – 2:00 P.M. TO 4:00 P.M.**

<u>January-December 2025</u>		<u>Attendance</u>	
Peter Partington, Chair	A	7	2
Marta Reczko, Vice Chair	P	8	1
Gerald Angeli	P	7	2
Gregory Barnett	P	8	1
Shane Grabski	P	5	4
James LaBrie	P	9	0
Roosevelt Walters	P	9	0
Lindsey Way	P	5	2
Ralph Zeltman	P	9	0

As of this date, there are 9 appointed members to the Committee, which means 5 would constitute a quorum.

Staff

- Pauline Ricketts, Administrative Supervisor
- Semele Williams, Senior Administrative Assistant
- Shaelyn Mack, Senior Administrative Assistant
- Brandy Leighton, P.E., Division Manager, Public Works
- Todd Hiteshew, Deputy Director, Public Works
- Courtney Harris, Grants and Special Projects Coordinator, Public Works
- Garry Brandy, Utilities Distribution and Collection Manager, Utility Services
- Mark Roads, P.E., Project Manager II, Public Works
- Jill Prizlee, P.E., Chief Engineer, Public Works
- Deborah Cueva, P.E., Project Manager II, Public Works
- Rickelle Williams, City Manager
- Tiffany Bain, Director of Administration & Strategic Initiatives, City Manager’s Office
- J. Opperee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. Call to Order

- **Roll Call**

Vice Chair Reczko called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Mr. Walters, seconded by Mr. Zeltman, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

ii. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – September 8, 2025

Motion made by Mr. Walters, seconded by Mr. Barnett, to approve as written. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

2. Old Business

None.

3. New Business

i. Galt Ocean Mile Safety Improvements Project Letter of Support

ii. Triplex Pumping Station Letter of Support

Vice Chair Reczko advised that the Committee members were provided with copies of an email from City Staff requesting the Committee's support of two projects. Public Works Grants and Special Projects Coordinator Courtney Harris explained that both letters were requested for attachment to applications the Public Works Department has submitted for fiscal year (FY) 2026 state appropriations funding. Letters of support from the community, City Staff, and organizations such as the Committee can strengthen these applications by providing additional information on why certain improvements are needed and the positive impacts the projects would have on the City.

Mr. LaBrie stated that he did not believe this was within the Committee's purview. He felt letters of support from the community should come from neighborhood, civic, or homeowners' associations rather than City advisory entities. Ms. Harris confirmed that the Galt Mile Community Association has also provided a letter of support.

Mr. Zeltman commented that the project seemed more within the scope of a finance or budget committee. Ms. Harris advised that the City has discussed the issue of matching funds with its Finance Department during the pre-application process. Mr. Zeltman continued that while the Committee could offer insight into the need for actual infrastructure improvements, he was not certain they should become involved in the approval process for a funding application.

Vice Chair Reczko stated that she also felt the request did not fall within the Committee's purpose of making recommendations to the City Commission. She asked if the City's Legal Department has opined on whether the request was appropriate. Ms. Harris replied that she can reach out to that Department for clarification.

It was noted that the deadline for the application is October 24, 2025. Vice Chair Reczko asked if, should the City Attorney's Office determine the request is appropriate, the Committee would approve her signature of a letter of support.

Motion made by Mr. Barnett that if we do get tentative approval, that we do approve the letter.

Deputy Director of Public Works Todd Hiteshew suggested that if the City Attorney's Office determines the letter would not be appropriate, the Committee could send a communication to the City Commission indicating support of the proposed project and appropriations.

Mr. Walters asserted that discussion of the **motion** could not proceed unless the **motion** was seconded. Mr. Barnett **withdrew** his **motion** at this time.

Mr. LaBrie proposed making a recommendation in support of the project to the Mayor, City Commission, Public Works Department, and the Office of Management and Budget, with a copy of the recommendation to be attached to the application.

Mr. LaBrie asked if the Public Works Department has considered contacting the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations for their support. Ms. Harris confirmed that she would reach out to that entity.

Vice Chair Reczko recommended that the letter be addressed to the City Commission or to City Staff rather than to the state or governor. The letter could then be attached to the grant application package if that is Staff's desire.

Mr. Zeltman reiterated that he felt the Committee's purview was confined to City infrastructure projects, systems, and maintenance rather than requesting funds from the state. Mr. Barnett advised that he believed the Committee should also seek to assist the City as much as possible, and the projects fall under utilities concerns. He also agreed that the letter should be sent to the City Commission and the Public Works Department.

Motion made by Mr. LaBrie, seconded by Mr. Walters, that the Committee supports the City of Fort Lauderdale's request for the Fort Lauderdale Galt Mile Safety Improvements Project and the Committee supports the City of Fort Lauderdale's request for the Fort Lauderdale Triplex Pump Station rehabilitation project, addressed to the City Commission instead of the state of Florida, as written. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Reczko concluded that she would coordinate with Staff to provide a signature on the letters.

The following Item was taken out of order on the Agenda.

4. Public Works Update

i. CIP Financial Report

ii. Water & Sewer Breaks Report w/Mapping

Mr. Hiteshew reviewed water and sewer breaks from September 2025, which included an overflow of 600 gallons of treated effluent into the Intracoastal Waterway through an emergency outfall discharge point. This resulted in an advisory notice for the Intracoastal Waterway.

Mr. LaBrie asked if the City is fined when events involving fully treated effluent occur. Mr. Hiteshew replied that the Florida Department of environmental protection (FDEP) typically sends a single letter once per year listing minor violations of this nature and their associated fines.

Ms. Way asked if the City is required to re-test water following a spill. Mr. Hiteshew replied that once the water has been tested in the subject area and passes, no additional testing is required.

5. General Discussion and Comments

i. Committee Members

Mr. Barnett recalled that a portion of A1A near the Las Olas Marina was recently flooded due to high tides, and asked how this type of event is addressed. Mr. Hiteshew replied that service requests can be called into the City's 828-8000 number or entered through the FixItFTL mobile app. Because A1A is owned by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), complaints are referred to the FDOT District 4 Office. He noted that king tides occur from approximately October 5 to October 12, 2025.

Mr. Barnett also addressed the stormwater project in the Victoria Park neighborhood, requesting confirmation of when this project is expected to begin. Project Manager Deborah Cueva replied that Victoria Park is part of Phase 1 of the Fortify Lauderdale project. Full construction is expected to begin near the beginning of calendar year 2026. Crews may be in the neighborhood performing preliminary work before that date.

Mr. Barnett requested that Staff regularly update the Committee on this project. Ms. Ricketts advised that the City's website includes a link for updates on stormwater projects such as this one.

Mr. LaBrie asked if information is available regarding the ranking of neighborhoods in relation to Phase 2 of Fortify Lauderdale. Mr. Hiteshew replied that the City Commission has expressed interest in reviewing qualitative e criteria for Phase 2. Staff will make a presentation on the qualitative aspects of ranking at a November City Commission meeting.

Mr. LaBrie advised that he planned to resign from the Committee following the next meeting.

Vice Chair Reczko stated that she wished to further discuss the City's plans to address a new Consent Order related to water breaks at a future meeting. She requested a presentation on the status of all existing water and sewer Consent Orders, including possible deadline extensions, as an Agenda Item for the next meeting.

Mr. Zeltman reported that he recently visited the site of the new Fort Lauderdale Police Station. He expressed concern with a number of items, including:

- Loss of compression on the seal of the concrete roof overhang, resulting in cracking; however, project engineers feel additional support around cantilevers will be sufficient to address this problem
- Opening on the second floor of the parking garage which could allow intrusion and buildup of rainwater during severe rainfall events

Mr. Barnett recalled that certain milestones must be met for the new Police Station before an occupancy date can be estimated, and asked if the City is any closer to determining this estimate. Mr. Hiteshew replied that he would reach out to the City Manager's Office for this information.

iii. Introduction to the City Manager

City Manager Rickelle Williams introduced herself to the Committee at this time. She acknowledged that Fort Lauderdale faces challenges related to its infrastructure, including facilities, underground improvements, and challenges resulting from weather events. The FY 2026 budget places a strong emphasis on capital projects, including Fire Stations, bridge projects, completion of the new Police Station, and stormwater improvements.

Ms. Williams continued that the FY 2026 budget reflects reorganization of City personnel by reassigning them in terms of their skill sets and functional areas. A new Capital Projects Department is being established and currently includes the Parks Bond team, as well as a team formerly housed in the Transportation and Mobility Department which focuses on transportation-related projects. Phase 2 of the Capital Projects Department launch will include the addition of members of the Public Works team, who will consider the thresholds for various projects and seek to identify which projects should remain in Public Works and which should be moved to the Capital Projects Department. Assistant

City Manager Ben Rogers will lead this group through initial setup while its leadership infrastructure is developed.

Ms. Williams stated that one challenge facing the City is its dependence upon consultants. She hoped to ensure that the City's administrators are empowered to advocate for the City as well as to take ownership of their decisions and recommendations. This will require promotion of identified leaders and bringing on new staff to help manage projects.

The City plans to bring on a new Utility Services Director. This new Department is the result of moving utility services from Public Works and establishing a separate Department. Ms. Williams advised that this will help bring management responsibilities to a more manageable level while also improving accountability and visibility.

Another initiative is improving communication related to infrastructure issues. There have been recent urgent situations in which the City experienced difficulty in sharing information both internally and externally. Staff is taking both major and minor steps to improve these processes.

The City's stormwater program, Fortify Lauderdale, is currently prioritizing its Phase 2 projects and will soon enter the design phase. Phase 1 remains underway as well. Ms. Williams expressed confidence in both Staff and consultant partners. Consent Order projects are also in process.

Other ongoing priorities include the City Hall project. Ms. Williams advised that this project will be discussed at the October 7, 2025 City Commission meeting, as six firms have made proposals related to this facility and the Commission is prepared to identify a shortlist. The next phase will include due diligence and evaluation of proposals, including a financing plan, cost estimates, and scheduling. She anticipated that this project may be awarded in December 2025.

Ms. Williams continued that she plans to serve as a fierce advocate for the City, and asks the entire Staff team to take all efforts seriously and focus on details in order to achieve Fort Lauderdale's best interests. The City Commission has been open to many of the changes she has proposed. She noted that the FY 2026 budget includes a new emergency reserve fund including roughly \$4.8 million, which can be used to assist with weather-related emergencies, infrastructure challenges, and more. She emphasized the importance of celebrating the City's wins.

Mr. LaBrie requested additional information on how the Utility Services Department will differ from the Public Works Department. Ms. Williams explained that the Utility Services Department will focus on water and wastewater treatment, collection, and distribution, while Public Works will continue to focus on stormwater, addressing leaks, and certain lower-tier projects which would not be covered by the Capital Projects Department. The Departments are expected to continue to work closely together.

Vice Chair Reczko requested clarification of the role of engineering personnel in these Departments. Ms. Williams replied that the FY 2026 budget brings back the position of City Engineer, which will fall under the auspices of the Public Works Department. The Capital Projects Department will have other City Departments, including Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Transportation and Mobility, as their clients.

Mr. LaBrie also asked if projects may begin by being managed by one Department and then shift to the Capital Projects Department, or vice-versa. Ms. Williams explained that projects' design and engineering aspects will begin in Public Works and may be bridged to other Departments as responsibilities evolve. She cited the City Hall project as an example of this: a team is negotiating an agreement and specifications, but the Capital Projects Department will ultimately have oversight of the contractors or developers involved in executing the project.

Mr. LaBrie asked if the City has added or subtracted new full-time equivalents (FTEs) or plans to retain the same number of staff. Ms. Williams stated that Staff has been reassigned or reallocated in many circumstances, with a net increase of six positions in the FY 2026 General Fund. The City has also received a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant to fund 28 new Firefighters within the FY 2026 budget.

The City was also contractually obligated to hire 18 new employees for the new Clean Water Center project. These employees will be brought onto Staff in FY 2026. The cost will be reflected within that Enterprise Fund rather than in the General Fund.

Vice Chair Reczko requested clarification of who provides recommendations related to the Capital Projects Department. Ms. Williams explained that the City's five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is funded with \$2 billion; the projects in this Plan are already in the works, and their programming has been determined over the next five years.

Mr. Barnett asked if the Public Works and Utility Services Departments will continue to have their own project managers. Ms. Williams explained that the separation of these two Departments is very new, and noted that there are multiple tiers of project management positions. Mr. Barnett advised that his intent was to ensure there is a project manager who is aware of every aspect of a given project that affects a particular neighborhood, such as Victoria Park. Mr. Hiteshew stated that Public Works currently provides this coordination.

Ms. Williams briefly reviewed upcoming items of interest for the October 7, 2025 City Commission meeting, including:

- A budget amendment with significant impact on capital projects, which will be funded from the General Fund
- Discussion with the Broward County School Board regarding a possible partnership to obtain access to, own, or lease sites that may be for sale

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) disaster relief program which will provide the City with roughly \$88 million as a result of impacts from the April 2023 flood event

ii. Public Comments

None.

6. Adjournment – NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE: Monday, November 3, 2025

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 3:41 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]