



## LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

**LTC No: 26-006**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission  
**FROM:** Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*  
**DATE:** January 9, 2026  
**SUBJECT: Strategic Plan 2025 Annual Progress Report**

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The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to present the inaugural annual progress report for the City's five (5)-year Strategic Plan, *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029*. The City Commission adopted *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029* on January 9, 2024, and since then, the City has used this plan to guide its services, operations, and resource allocation. The Strategic Plan 2025 Annual Progress Report (Attachment 1) covers the period beginning October 1, 2024, ending September 30, 2025.

The annual progress report, beginning with 2025, updates the City Commission and the community on the City's progress toward achieving the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. The report is organized around the Strategic Plan's five (5) Focus Areas; Public Safety, Housing, Infrastructure and Resilience, Public Places, and Business Growth and Support, along with the Guiding Principles of Customer Service, Fiscal Responsibility, Innovation, Technology Adaptation, and Inclusivity.

Each section of the progress report outlines the goals, related Fiscal Year 2026 Commission Priorities, and a summary of key accomplishments made over the past year to illustrate the City's work to become and remain, "*The City you never want to leave.*"

I am proud of what we achieved last year and look forward to the Prioritization Workshop on January 13, 2026, where we will discuss accomplishments and future goals aligned with the 2029 Strategic Plan.

Attachment:

1. Strategic Plan 2025 Annual Progress Report

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



**PRESS PLAY**  
**FORT LAUDERDALE**    
*2025 Annual Progress Report*

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# Vision Statement

## Vision Statement



### **WE ARE CONNECTED.**

We move seamlessly and easily through a safe transportation system where the pedestrian is first.



### **WE ARE READY.**

We are a resilient and safe coastal community.



### **WE ARE COMMUNITY.**

We are a neighborhood of neighborhoods.



### **WE ARE HERE.**

We are an urban center and a vacationland in the heart of South Florida.



### **WE ARE PROSPEROUS.**

We are a subtropical City, an urban laboratory for education and business.



### **WE ARE UNITED.**

We are a strong and vibrant kaleidoscope of multi-generational cultures, ethnicities, and community partners.

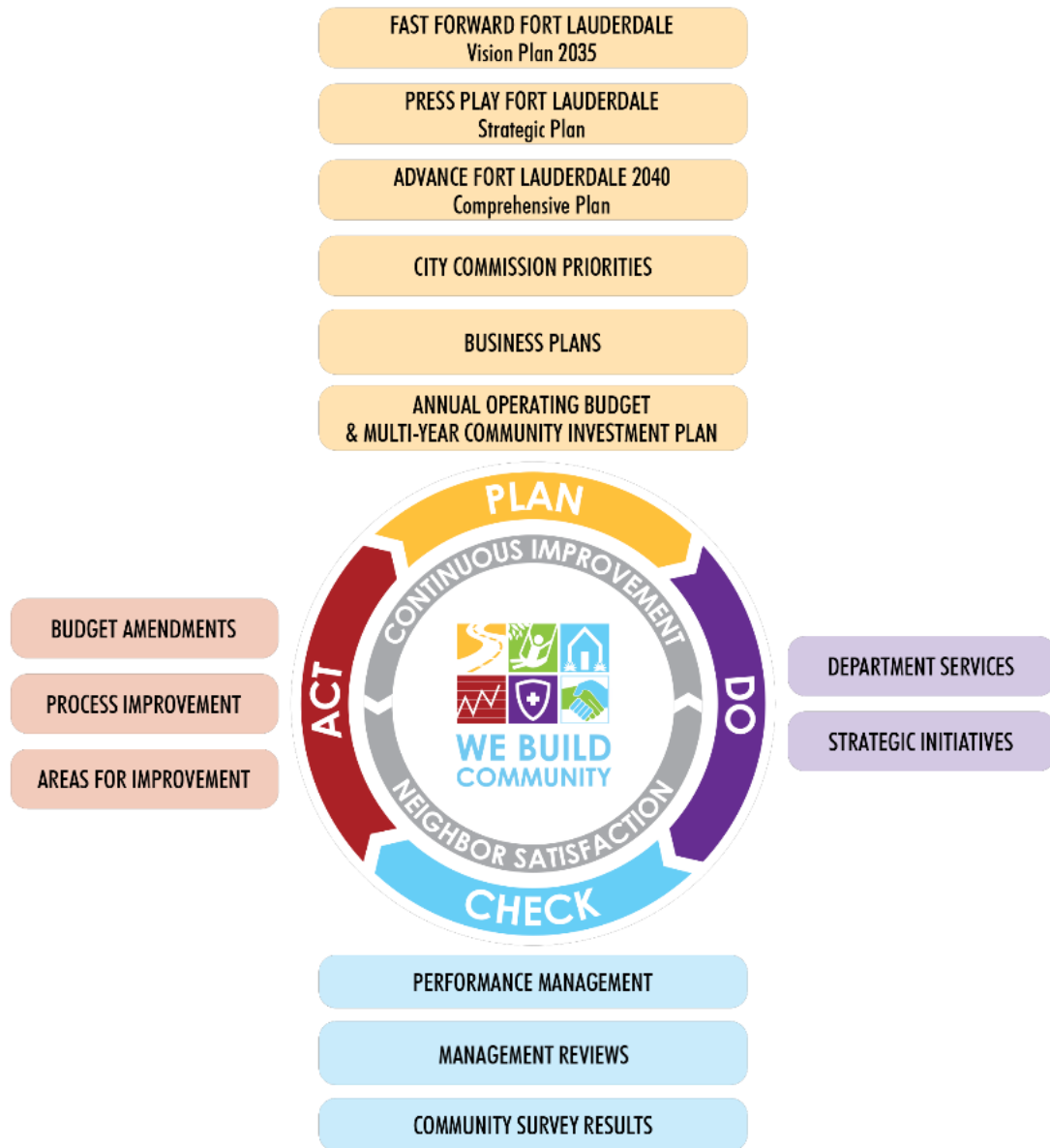
**We are Fort Lauderdale, a community of choice.**

**We are the City you never want to leave.**

## Strategic Management

Under the City's Strategic Plan, the City outlines a results-focused and neighbor-centric government culture, created through its quality management system. This robust management system connects planning, budgeting, and performance measurement, linking the City's long-term Vision Plan to its day-to-day operations.

Using the Plan-Do-Check-Act process model as a guide, the City continually plans for the future by tracking and monitoring performance, evaluating progress toward its goals, demonstrating its commitment to provide the highest quality of services, and continuously improving service delivery for neighbors.



# Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029

## Focus Areas and Goals

The Strategic Plan is categorized into five (5) focus areas designed to foster collaboration and innovation: Public Safety, Housing, Infrastructure and Resilience, Public Places, and Business Growth and Support. Within each of these areas, the plan contains six (6) goals to move the City forward over the next five (5) years.



### Public Safety

Goal 1: Be a safe community that is proactive and responsive to risks.



### Housing

Goal 2: Enable housing options for all income levels.



### Infrastructure and Resilience

Goal 3: Be a sustainable and resilient community.

Goal 4: Facilitate an efficient, multimodal transportation network.



### Public Places

Goal 5: Build a beautiful and welcoming community.



### Business Growth and Support

Goal 6: Build a diverse and attractive economy.

As the City works to achieve each of the goals articulated above, a series of guiding principles serve as the foundation for how the City considers its operations and processes.



### Guiding Principles

Customer Service

Fiscal Responsibility

Innovation

Technology Adaptation

Inclusivity



## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Goal 1: Be a safe community that is proactive and responsive to risks.**

### Related FY 2026 Commission Priority

➤ Public Safety

### Our Aim

The City is focused on improving its emergency response by leveraging technology, utilizing data analytics, and investing in critical infrastructure. This will further elevate the City's capability to prevent threats, respond to emergencies, and solve crimes.

### Significant Accomplishments

#### Implementation of Police Co-Responders

The City has taken an important step in addressing community mental health by hiring and staffing a dedicated co-responder who is deployed alongside a police officer during calls for service. This position ensures that a trained mental health professional is available in the field to assess, de-escalate, and connect individuals experiencing crises with the support and services they need. By combining law enforcement presence with clinical expertise, the City is strengthening its ability to respond with both safety and compassion.

In addition to accompanying officers, the co-responder plays a broader role in public safety by providing follow-up care coordination, connecting neighbors to long-term community resources,

and reducing the likelihood of repeat crisis calls. This model helps alleviate strain on police officers by allowing them to focus on law enforcement while ensuring neighbors in need receive specialized care. Ultimately, the co-responder program enhances public trust, reduces unnecessary arrests or hospitalizations, and builds a safer, healthier Fort Lauderdale.

### **Other Community Safety Initiatives**

The Police Department is working to advance community safety and is benefitting from grant funding where appropriate. For example, the City has initiated a Cyber Attack Response and Mitigation program funded through the City's annual Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Grant Program and secured a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to conduct a pedestrian and bicycle safety public awareness and enforcement campaign.

The City also participated in a joint operation, "Risky Business," with the United States Coast Guard to conduct recreational safety boardings on charter vessels, resulting in the termination of nine (9) illegal charters and issuance of over 60 Coast Guard violations.

The Police Department has also expanded its online incident reporting system which has modernized interaction with the Police Department by allowing neighbors to submit non-emergency reports, such as misdemeanor theft, vandalism, or civil matters, without requiring a physical police response. Reports are submitted in real time, and neighbors receive a free copy of their police report via email for their records. This innovation has improved service delivery by saving neighbors time and providing greater convenience, while also allowing sworn officers to focus on high-priority emergency calls. By embracing this technology, the City has not only streamlined reporting but also enhanced overall efficiency in law enforcement, reinforcing Fort Lauderdale's commitment to responsive, accessible, and effective public safety services.

### **Police Headquarters Construction**

The construction of the new Fort Lauderdale Police Headquarters has reached significant milestones, with the physical building largely completed and on track to open for operations in 2026. Once public safety personnel transition into the facility, the headquarters will provide a modern hub for law enforcement operations, designed to meet the needs of both officers and the growing community they serve.

By returning the headquarters to its original location downtown, the City is strategically positioning its law enforcement resources to strengthen community connections, improve accessibility for neighbors, and enhance coordination with neighboring jurisdictions. This investment demonstrates the City's commitment to public safety, ensuring officers have the tools and facilities they need to keep Fort Lauderdale safe well into the future.

### **Additional Fire Rescue Resources**

Fort Lauderdale was awarded \$11.4 million through FEMA's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant, enabling the hiring of 28 new firefighters. These additional personnel have been deployed to expand three-person staffing to six (6) medical rescue units, aligning with national safety standards and enhancing the City's capacity to deliver timely, effective responses to both fire and medical emergencies.

This investment ensures that first responders can operate more efficiently, improving outcomes for neighbors in need. By leveraging federal support to build stronger fire-rescue capabilities, the City is advancing its strategic goal of protecting lives and property while strengthening community confidence in the reliability of its emergency services.

The City is also making substantial capital investments in public safety infrastructure. A total of \$7.1 million in Community Investment Plan (CIP) funds is being appropriated to complete construction of the new Downtown Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Substation #88 and Fire Station #117 (Heron Garage Full-Service Substation). These strategically located, full-service stations are expected to enhance response times in high-demand areas of the downtown corridor.

Additionally, \$3.7 million in CIP appropriations will support the completion of Fire Station 13, marking the final project in the City's Fire Rescue Bond program. Once complete, the modernized station will provide first responders with a resilient, state-of-the-art facility designed to meet current and future service needs, ensuring the community continues to receive the highest standard of emergency care and fire protection.

These investments address critical facility needs, ensuring that fire-rescue operations are equipped with modern, safe, and resilient facilities. By investing in essential infrastructure, the City is not only improving the working conditions for first responders but also strengthening its long-term public safety framework, helping to safeguard Fort Lauderdale's neighborhoods for generations to come.

### What's Next

Next year, the City will advance its public safety capabilities through cutting-edge technology, including enhanced digital forensics and investigative tools, to increase the success of criminal investigations. In the Fire Rescue Department, upgrades to the Tablet Command mobile operations platform will improve real-time data accuracy and location tracking, ensuring faster, more informed response during incidents. Neighbors will also benefit from the completion of the new Ocean Rescue Headquarters at the International Swimming Hall of Fame, bolstering safety along our waterfront.

### Key Performance Measures

Measure	FY 2023 Baseline	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2029 Target
Crime rate per 10,000 population <sup>1</sup>	832.4	648.8	≤707.7
Police response times	Priority 1: 4:40 Priorities 2-4: 6:22	Priority 1: 4:40 Priorities 2-4: 6:09	Priority 1: ≤4:38 Priorities 2-4: ≤6:20
Fire Rescue response times	Residential Fire: 14:17 Commercial Fire: 18:21 EMS <sup>2</sup> : 8:28	Residential Fire: 14:21 Commercial Fire: 13:56 EMS <sup>2</sup> : 8:20	Residential Fire: ≤ 10:20 Commercial Fire: ≤ 14:20 EMS <sup>2</sup> : ≤ 6:00

<sup>1</sup>Group A crime rate is based on data in the Police Department's records management system and is subject to change after the Florida Department of Law Enforcement validates and audits totals

<sup>2</sup>Emergency Medical Services (EMS) response time is representative of Effective Response Force (ERF) 2 response which measures the time of arrival for two (2) firefighters/paramedics



## HOUSING

**Goal 2: Enable housing options for all income levels.**

### Related FY 2026 Commission Priorities

- Homelessness Response
- Bolster Thriving Communities

### Our Aim

The City is committed to expanding housing opportunities that meet the needs of neighbors across all income levels, household types, and stages of life. In the coming years, it aims to increase the availability of diverse, attainable housing through strategic partnerships, redevelopment of key areas, and supportive policies. By doing so, Fort Lauderdale will remain an inclusive community where neighbors can find stable housing that fits their budget and supports long-term prosperity.

### Significant Accomplishments

#### Habitat for Humanity Homeownership Program

The City has made significant progress in addressing the need for affordable housing and expanding opportunities for neighbors at all stages of life. In partnership with the Habitat for Humanity Homeownership Program, the City completed the design and began construction of 20 single-family townhomes for low- and moderate-income families. This program goes beyond

simply providing housing—it equips future homeowners with long-term skills by having them actively contribute to the construction process; assist in other families' builds; help with administrative tasks or volunteer at Habitat ReStores; and participate in educational classes on home maintenance, finances, and disaster preparedness. By engaging directly in these activities, neighbors gain hands-on experience, a deeper sense of ownership, and practical skills that support long-term success, while also strengthening neighborhoods and fostering sustainable homeownership.

### **HOME-American Rescue Plan Grant and Senior Rental Housing**

To further expand affordable housing, the City issued a request for proposal and is in the process of selecting a vendor to construct non-congregate shelter units and rental housing paired with supportive services funded through the HOME-American Rescue Plan grant. This grant allows the City to provide not only safe and affordable housing but also wraparound services such as case management, employment support, and access to health resources, ensuring that neighbors can achieve long-term stability and self-sufficiency. Additionally, the City is loaning \$640,000 to the Pinnacle at Cypress Project for a new senior affordable housing development. This initiative emphasizes the City's commitment to enabling seniors to age in place with dignity and affordability. Together, these efforts reflect a proactive approach to meeting the needs of different populations—families, seniors, and those in need of supportive housing—while reinforcing the City's goal of building inclusive communities where all neighbors have access to safe and stable housing. Additionally, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) contributed \$640,000 to the Mount Hermon apartment project that was constructed this year. The newly constructed seven-story development provides 104 energy-efficient apartment units designed to serve low-income seniors.

### **Homeless Initiatives and Safe Spaces**

In addition to creating new housing opportunities, the City has also worked to directly address homelessness and housing insecurity. Funding has been allocated in the FY 2026 budget to bolster homeless initiatives. The City also continues to expand shelter bed availability and is launching a pilot program to provide safe spaces for individuals who regularly sleep in their cars. Signage will also be installed in high-traffic areas known for panhandling, informing individuals that panhandling is prohibited. These signs will direct individuals to services such as mental health treatment, substance abuse programs, and housing navigation resources. Additionally, the City has strategically located Narcan distribution hubs in areas of the City identified as overdose hot spots, significantly expanding access to life-saving intervention of opioid-related emergencies.

The FY 2026 budget memorializes the creation of the Community Services Department which will align the City's affordable housing and homelessness programs under one department. By approaching housing and homelessness with both compassion and strategy, the City is creating pathways out of crisis and into stability. These actions not only support those most in need but also reduce strain on public spaces and public safety resources, creating a healthier and more welcoming environment for all. Through innovative programs, strategic partnerships, and targeted investments, the City is steadily moving toward its goal of ensuring every resident has access to safe, affordable, and sustainable housing.

## What's Next

The City will focus on expanding housing access and supportive services, starting with a new five-year consolidated plan to guide affordable housing initiatives and community development incentives. Enhanced service provider navigation and tracking procedures will better support vulnerable populations and monitor outcomes for participants in Community Court programs. These efforts aim to ensure that all neighbors have access to safe, stable housing options and resources to maintain long-term success in Fort Lauderdale.

## Key Performance Measures

Measure	FY 2023 Baseline	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2029 Target
Number of individuals experiencing homelessness	780	979	≤624
Number of homeless individuals housed and reunified	87	31	≥156
Number of individuals receiving housing benefits	1,023	2,719	≥1,550
Number of affordable dwelling units, built for those with very low to moderate income, that received City funding	N/A <sup>1</sup>	79	≥686



## INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESILIENCE

**Goal 3: Be a sustainable and resilient community.**

### Related FY 2026 Commission Priority

➤ Infrastructure and Resilience

### Our Aim

The City strives to protect its natural environment, modernize its infrastructure, and prepare for climate-related challenges by embedding sustainability and resilience into all operations. Over the next five (5) years, it will continue investing in innovative stormwater solutions, facility upgrades, and public amenities to create a stronger, greener, more adaptable city. This commitment ensures Fort Lauderdale can thrive today and into the future.

### Significant Accomplishments

#### Prospect Clean Water Center

The City continues to make significant progress toward its goal of strengthening infrastructure and ensuring long-term environmental resilience. The construction of the Prospect Lake Clean Water Center remains on schedule, with pre-commissioning activities such as the flushing of raw water through the piping system underway. Staff onboarding and final equipment installations are advancing smoothly, marking a key milestone in improving water quality Citywide. This initiative

operationalizes the City's commitment to bringing more resilient and efficient water production to Fort Lauderdale neighbors and customers.

### **Fortify Lauderdale**

The City has also made notable progress in the first phase of the Fortify Lauderdale Program - a comprehensive initiative designed to strengthen stormwater infrastructure, reduce flooding, and improve water management across multiple neighborhoods.

In Progreso Village, \$39 million has already been invested and construction has begun on more than 14,500 feet of new drainage piping, 78 drainage structures, and the addition of a stormwater pump station. In the Dorsey-Riverbend area, work to install a pump station and 90 drainage structures while laying 21,000 feet of pipe is now 80% complete. Meanwhile, design plans for stormwater upgrades in Melrose Manors are nearing completion, with construction scheduled to break ground next year. These improvements include drainage systems, water and sewer relocations, roadway and landscape restoration, and other vital components that will protect homes, businesses, and public spaces from flooding.

Fort Lauderdale continues to make bold strides toward a stronger, more resilient future. Phase II of the Fortify Lauderdale Program is already in conceptual design, spanning 17 neighborhoods where sequencing, expanded jet-vac fleets, new staffing, and a comprehensive inspection program will ensure the City's stormwater systems are ready for their next challenge. These efforts not only protect neighborhoods but also strengthen the City's eligibility for Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Community Rating System program—positioning the City to pursue an additional 10% discount in flood insurance premiums for neighbors.

At the same time, Fort Lauderdale has secured \$88 million in federal disaster recovery funding to repair homes, restore infrastructure, mitigate flood risks, and expand essential services. Together, these investments reflect Fort Lauderdale's unwavering commitment to prepare for tomorrow while delivering tangible benefits for the people who call this city home.

Fort Lauderdale's leadership in resilience and infrastructure innovation has also earned international attention. As part of the 2025 Municipal Engineering Foundation Victoria Overseas Study Tour, two (2) municipal leaders from Australia, visited Fort Lauderdale to study its strategies for managing aging infrastructure and preparing for climate-related challenges. During their visit, City staff showcased Fort Lauderdale's forward-thinking approach—using advanced mapping technology and predictive data models to identify vulnerabilities, pursuing diverse funding strategies through grants and partnerships, and tracking project outcomes to ensure continuous protection from flooding and severe weather. This global exchange not only highlights Fort Lauderdale's leadership on the world stage but also reinforces the City's role as a model for resilience, innovation, and sustainable infrastructure planning.

### **What's Next**

In the next year, key infrastructure projects will be prioritized including the rehabilitation of Bayview Drive bridge, replacement of the South Ocean Drive bridge, and the initiation of stormwater improvements in Victoria Park. Fort Lauderdale will also continue advancing its NetZero Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance environmental sustainability. These initiatives ensure a safer, more sustainable, and climate-ready community for generations to come.

### Key Performance Measures

Measure	FY 2023 Baseline	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2029 Target
Percent of days in compliance with primary drinking water standards	100%	100%	100%
Number of breaks per 100 miles of water distribution pipe	7.02	4.72	≤18.92
Number of failures per 100 miles of wastewater collection pipe	4.20	1.01	≤2.52
Percent of Citywide tree canopy coverage on public and private property	26.5%	25.3%	≥29.8%



## INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESILIENCE

**Goal 4: Facilitate an efficient, multimodal transportation network.**

### Related FY 2026 Commission Priority

➤ Infrastructure and Resilience

### Our Aim

The City seeks to create a transportation system that safely and efficiently moves people, improves connectivity, and supports alternatives to single-occupancy driving. In the next five (5) years, the City aims to expand multimodal options, enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety, and strengthen links between neighborhoods, transit hubs, schools, businesses, and regional networks. By building a more accessible and balanced transportation system, Fort Lauderdale will support mobility that is convenient, sustainable, and future-ready.

### Significant Accomplishments

#### Mobility Improvements

This year, the City advanced several major initiatives aimed at improving safety, mobility, and connectivity for all roadway users. Work began on the Riverside Park Neighborhood Mobility Plan, laying the groundwork for targeted safety upgrades that will make daily travel safer for children, seniors, and families. This plan is expected to serve as a model for future neighborhood-scale mobility improvements Citywide.

In partnership with the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, the City also initiated the design of the Southeast/Southwest 17th Street Mobility Hub—a transformative project that will integrate new bike lanes, enhanced crosswalks, upgraded lighting, expanded sidewalks, landscaping, and traffic-calming improvements. These upgrades will significantly improve one of the City's most heavily traveled corridors, creating safer, more intuitive routes for neighbors, employees, hospital visitors, and maritime industry workers who rely on this roadway daily. The project's guiding goals include delivering a community-supported conceptual design, improving pedestrian and cyclist safety, increasing accessibility and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, promoting daily non-motorized travel, strengthening connections to the proposed Broward Commuter Rail Station, and supporting broader placemaking and wayfinding initiatives.

To support more efficient traffic operations, the City partnered with the Florida Department of Transportation and the U.S. Coast Guard to implement temporary modifications to the Southeast 17th Street Bridge opening schedule during peak hours. This pilot is intended to demonstrate a reduction in traffic backups that routinely affect commuters, freight movement, and emergency response vehicles. The U.S. Coast Guard will use this period to evaluate whether a permanent schedule change could sustain these congestion-reducing benefits while preserving marine access.

Additional infrastructure and mobility improvements continued throughout the year. Design work began on the Shady Banks and Tarpon River mobility projects—funded through the Complete Streets and Other Localized Initiatives Program—which will add sidewalks and traffic-calming elements identified through neighborhood mobility master planning. These improvements will provide safer walking routes to parks, schools, and transit stops, directly improving quality of life for neighbors in both neighborhoods.

The City also launched operations of the LauderGo! Micro Mover in the Northwest Community, expanding access to local businesses, restaurants, and residences through convenient, affordable, on-demand micro-transit service. Early usage has shown that the service is helping close first-mile/last-mile gaps and providing neighbors with more reliable mobility options.

Finally, the City expanded the electric vehicle (EV) Charging Station Program in City-owned parking lots and garages, supporting sustainability goals and making it easier for neighbors, businesses, and visitors to adopt cleaner transportation choices. This expansion helps position Fort Lauderdale as a forward-thinking, climate-conscious city ready to meet the growing demand for EV infrastructure.

### **What's Next**

The City will continue improving traffic safety and mobility by installing traffic calming devices, including radar signs and speed cushions, throughout neighborhoods. Completion of the Citywide Sidewalk Master Plan and the start of priority sidewalk installations will increase walkability, accessibility, and safe connections for pedestrians. Together, these efforts will create a more connected, convenient, and multi-modal transportation network for neighbors and visitors.

### Key Performance Measures

Measure	FY 2023 Baseline	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2029 Target
Average number of riders per hour per route on the Community Shuttle	8.5	9.9	≥7.1
Average time spent on major corridors (seconds) <sup>1</sup>	517	674	≥500
Percent of neighbors that use public transportation to commute	3.0%	N/A <sup>2</sup>	≥3.0%
Installed linear feet of new bike lanes, sidewalks, and shared use paths	359,571	384,261	≥659,571

<sup>1</sup>The major corridors are defined as Davie Boulevard, Broward Boulevard, and Sunrise Boulevard

<sup>2</sup>Data not available at the time of publication due to a one-year reporting delay from the U.S Census Bureau's American Community Survey



## PUBLIC PLACES

### Goal 5: Build a beautiful and welcoming community.

#### Related FY 2026 Commission Priorities

- Public Enjoyment of Waterways

#### Our Aim

The City is dedicated to creating public spaces and neighborhoods that are attractive, vibrant, and reflective of Fort Lauderdale's unique character and coastal identity. Over the next five years, it aims to enhance parks, streetscapes, and civic facilities while supporting placemaking efforts that foster pride, inclusion, and a strong sense of community. These investments ensure the City remains inviting to neighbors and visitors alike and continues to elevate quality of life.

#### Significant Accomplishments

##### Parks Bond Progress

The FY 2026 budget has created a new Capital Projects Department to better address how the City plans and executes major infrastructure projects, including the Parks Bond. This operational change will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to focus on the operations and maintenance of the City's current park and public spaces inventory.

This past year, the City of Fort Lauderdale made remarkable progress in delivering upon the promises of the Parks Bond, transforming public spaces into vibrant destinations that promote recreation, accessibility, and community connection. Improvements were completed across several neighborhood parks, including Tarpon Cove Park, where new landscaping, ADA upgrades, and the addition of a kayak launch have enhanced waterfront access and inclusivity.

The City also celebrated the opening of Bal Harbour Park, a brand-new green space made possible through Parks Bond land acquisition funding. This addition expands recreational opportunities and ensures that more neighbors have a park within walking distance of their home.

Major park renovations continue to reflect the City's dedication to maintaining high-quality public spaces for all neighbors. The Jimmy Evert Tennis Center saw significant upgrades, including new courts, improved lighting, drainage, and irrigation systems, as well as the construction of a new stadium court to attract future tournaments and elevate Fort Lauderdale's presence as a destination for athletic excellence. The Sara Horn Greenway was upgraded this year to include new signage, site furnishings, and landscaping improvements that will ensure the beauty of the greenway for years to come. Hardy Park now features a new playground, upgraded fitness equipment, and an enhanced walking trail, encouraging healthy living and family activity. At Annie Beck Park, shoreline stabilization efforts were completed alongside new kayak access and general site improvements, preserving the park's natural beauty for future generations. In addition, the City is moving forward with major improvements at Mills Pond Park, with a focus on the renovation of the administration and concessions buildings in the next year. Together, these projects demonstrate the City's unwavering commitment to building a resilient, active, and inclusive community through thoughtfully designed public spaces.

Building on the momentum of this year's completed parks projects, the City has made substantial progress on several signature park initiatives, moving key improvements from planning and design into actionable development. At Lockhart Park, the City finalized a settlement agreement with Miami Beckham United which allows for the City to move forward with an ambitious plan for redevelopment. The proposed project will feature an artificial turf multipurpose field, fitness area, dog park, pickleball courts, community center, and interconnected trails that weave these amenities together. At Holiday Park, the City released the Phase II construction solicitation to begin the design and construction of key improvements, including a new parking garage, upgraded lighting, splash pads and water features, enhanced landscaping, additional shade structures, and renovations to the activity center — ensuring that Holiday Park continues to serve as one of the City's most vibrant recreational hubs. Additional funding for Joseph C. Carter Park was also allocated this year, setting the stage for transformative upgrades. The project will deliver a new community center, expanded shade structures, modern playground, new athletic fields, aquatic complex renovations, and upgraded site lighting to better accommodate neighbors and visitors. Finally, the substantial completion of a shade structure at Tunnel Top Park has created a more comfortable and inviting environment for visitors along the Las Olas corridor. Together, these projects reflect the City's commitment to creating inclusive, sustainable, and accessible spaces that enhance recreation and foster community connection.

### **City Hall**

There are few public places more recognizable than a city hall, and the City is moving forward, following the demolition and site preparation of the old building last year. This project represents one of the most ambitious civic investments in recent memory, designed to create a modern, accessible, and sustainable hub for government operations and public engagement. Staff received and reviewed an unsolicited proposal to design, finance, construct, operate, and maintain the new facility, which led to a competitive solicitation process in accordance with Florida state statute. Ultimately, FTL City Hall Partners was selected as the highest ranked proposer with Balfour Beatty ranked second.

Beyond creating a central location for City operations, the new City Hall will serve as a welcoming space for neighbors, businesses, and stakeholders, integrating technology, green building

practices, and community-focused amenities. This project demonstrates the City's commitment to thoughtful urban planning, long-term sustainability, and enhanced civic engagement. By investing in a facility built to meet the needs of the next generation, Fort Lauderdale is not only improving day-to-day government operations but also creating a landmark destination that reflects the City's vision, resilience, and growth.

### Waterway Quality

As the "Venice of America," maintaining and protecting this asset is critical to the City's iconic image and recreational offerings. As such, the City has finalized regulations which make it unlawful to anchor a vessel for more than 30 days within a single six-month period. Additionally, through a grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the City will provide free sewage pump-out services to mitigate illegal sewage discharge from entering the City's waterways. Finally, the City planted 100 mangroves with another 50 scheduled. Mangroves act as natural filters that improve water quality and protect shorelines from erosion.

### Historic Preservation

As the City continues to advance plans for the future, it is critical to honor the history of the past. The City has secured funding for a grant from the Florida Department of State's Division of Historical Resources to support architectural resource surveys of the Edgewood and River Oaks neighborhoods. Additionally, the City completed the installation of interpretive signs for the Sailboat Bend Historic District to offer interactive storytelling of the Sailboat Bend neighborhood.

### What's Next

Next year, the City will enhance public spaces through expanded landscaping and signature tree installations at key medians and entryways, reinforcing Fort Lauderdale's identity as a vibrant and welcoming city. The installation of floating docks at Esplanade Park will improve water access, support recreational opportunities, and stimulate economic activity. Additionally, the City is moving forward with plans for a new living seawall permit fee assistance program which will encourage the use of living seawalls instead of traditional concrete seawalls. Living seawalls offer environmental benefits include improved water quality, enhanced marine habitat, and increased biodiversity.

### Key Performance Measures

Measure	FY 2023 Baseline	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2029 Target
Percent of neighbors that live within a 10-minute walk of a park	83.7%	82.5%	≥87.5%
Number of new streetlights installed	0	0	≥300



## BUSINESS GROWTH AND SUPPORT

### Goal 6: Build a diverse and attractive economy.

#### Related FY 2026 Commission Priorities

- Bolster Thriving Communities

#### Our Aim

The City aims to cultivate a dynamic economy supported by thriving local businesses, strong workforce development opportunities, and strategic redevelopment that attracts investment. In the years ahead, it plans to expand entrepreneurial support, strengthen key industry sectors, and create pathways for neighbors to access high-quality jobs. Through these efforts, Fort Lauderdale will continue to grow as a competitive, innovative, and resilient economic hub.

#### Significant Accomplishments

##### StartUp FTL

The City of Fort Lauderdale made significant strides this year toward building a thriving and inclusive business ecosystem through its StartUp FTL program, which continues to empower entrepreneurs at every stage of their business journey. The program, based on the nationally recognized Kauffman FastTrac model, offers a dynamic 10-week course designed to help emerging entrepreneurs refine their ideas, understand their markets, strengthen financial management, and prepare for long-term resilience. Through group discussions, personalized coaching, and practical exercises, participants gain the confidence and knowledge to launch or expand successful ventures right here in Fort Lauderdale.

Building on that success, the City expanded its entrepreneurial ecosystem with the creation of the Grow Cohort, the second track of the StartUp FTL program. This free, six-week course targets business owners in the early years of operation who are ready to scale their enterprises. Participants engage in 12 hybrid workshops on topics ranging from operational efficiency and customer retention to financial sustainability and digital transformation. Local business leaders provide mentorship, while one-on-one technical assistance helps participants put new ideas into action immediately. The program concludes with a pitch competition and matchmaking event, awarding five (5) businesses \$1,000 each to invest back into their growth. Similarly, the City launched the Ideation Cohort, a six-week accelerator tailored for neighbors with a promising business idea but limited experience. This track helps aspiring entrepreneurs take their first tangible steps toward ownership—turning creativity and ambition into sustainable small businesses that enrich the local economy.

### **Sistrunk Empowerment Summit**

The City hosted the Sistrunk Empowerment Summit, a first of its kind event, bringing together residents, business leaders, and City officials to explore practical solutions for stimulating economic growth, expand opportunities for entrepreneurs, and provide stronger support for small businesses and job creators. The summit included a series of panel discussions which were dedicated to creating a comprehensive economic revitalization plan, strengthening the local workforce, expanding access to capital for small businesses, and establishing a path for sustainable growth in the Sistrunk Corridor.

### **Community Redevelopment Agency Incentive Projects**

The City's Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRA) also made measurable progress this year by funding projects that support job creation, business revitalization, and community reinvestment. In the Northwest-Progresso-Flagler Heights CRA, several transformative projects were completed, including Robert Bethel American Legion Post 220, Mount Hermon Housing, Blue Diamond Fitness, Boys and Girls Club of Broward, Provident Market 1937, LLC, Fat Village for the Gallery, and multiple commercial improvements along Sistrunk Boulevard. Collectively, these investments—totaling several million dollars—are bringing new energy and opportunity to the area. Likewise, in the Central City CRA, the City awarded forgivable loans to Call to Africa Realty, Inc. to rehabilitate an existing property, transforming it into new retail and service-oriented spaces while improving surrounding streetscapes. These projects not only support small business expansion but also strengthen neighborhood identity, attract visitors, and stimulate sustainable economic growth.

### **Education**

In addition to entrepreneurship and business revitalization, the City prioritized workforce and educational advancement to sustain its long-term economic vitality. To meet a growing regional demand for skilled aviation professionals, the City commissioned a feasibility study through Broward College's Center for Applied Research (CFAR). The study revealed a significant shortage of aviation technicians, presenting both a challenge and an opportunity for Fort Lauderdale to become a leader in technical workforce development. In response, the City is funding efforts to establish an Airport Workforce Training Program at the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport in partnership with the Barrington Irving Technical Training School (BITTS). This program will offer hands-on training, certification opportunities, and career pathways in aviation maintenance, repair, and overhaul—laying the foundation for Fort Lauderdale to emerge as a regional hub for aerospace education and high-skill employment.

To further strengthen its educational ecosystem, the City implemented a Teachers of the Year recognition program to honor and retain exceptional educators within its schools. Additionally, the City approved a scholarship fund agreement with the Broward Education Foundation to provide 12 annual scholarships for students attending Fort Lauderdale's six (6) public high schools. These initiatives reflect the City's belief that investing in people—entrepreneurs, business owners, workers, and students alike—is the cornerstone of a prosperous, resilient community.

### What's Next

Fort Lauderdale will continue to advance economic growth with funding to create a comprehensive strategy to revitalize underperforming commercial corridors and support local businesses. Hiring a Chief Economic Development Officer will strengthen the City's ability to retain businesses, address commercial needs, and drive investment across the community. These actions aim to cultivate a thriving, resilient economy that attracts talent, entrepreneurs, and investment to the City.

### Key Performance Measures

Measure	FY 2023 Baseline	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2029 Target
Assessed valuation for commercial properties	\$17,079,228,230	\$18,725,817,300	≥\$19,579,228,230
Percent of tourism tax generated by Fort Lauderdale	45.3%	46.3%	≥50.0%
Number of active retail properties (retail and restaurants)	1,810	N/A <sup>1</sup>	≥1,870

<sup>1</sup>Data not available at the time of publication



## Guiding Principles

### Customer Service

The City continues to strengthen its commitment to delivering exceptional customer service through FixIt FTL – the City's mobile application for documenting and reporting areas of the City that require servicing. FixIt FTL continues to evolve as a reliable, accessible tool for neighbors to report service needs throughout the City. Over the past year, staff have created new outreach materials to encourage public use and developed performance dashboards to help City leaders make data-driven decisions that improve response times and resource allocation. The application also has a more concise listing of service requests from which neighbors can choose, improving the routing of inquiries to the appropriate City staff for a timely response.

The Customer Support Center is enhancing the quality of service by establishing new standard operating procedures to promote cross-training, improve one-call resolutions, and ensure staff are equipped to handle concerns with accuracy and care. Additionally, the City has allocated funding in FY 2026 to implement a post-call survey to better meet the expectations of its neighbors. At the Utility Billing desk, the average call queue time dropped by an impressive 73% over the fiscal year, demonstrating how strategic process improvements directly elevate the service experience for neighbors. Together, these efforts reflect a service-oriented culture that prioritizes communication, transparency, and efficiency.

## **Fiscal Responsibility**

The City continued its long-standing commitment to prudent financial stewardship with the adoption of the FY 2026 budget, which includes strategic departmental reorganizations designed to streamline operations and establish clear points of accountability across functional areas. For the 19<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, the City maintained the same low millage rate, reflecting disciplined budgeting practices and a strong fiscal foundation. Continued growth in taxable value further reinforces the City's long-term revenue stability, ensuring that essential services and future investments can be sustained without increasing the tax burden on residents.

## **Innovation**

The City also advanced a modern culture of innovation, launching its first-ever Innovation Blueprint to guide staff toward creative problem-solving and more effective service delivery. Employees from departments across the organization participated in hands-on training, learning new tools and best practices that they can apply directly to their roles. Innovations from City staff have already produced meaningful results, such as streamlining the Business Tax application process to eliminate unnecessary delays, improving the customer experience and reducing turnaround times for both new applications and renewals. By fostering a spirit of experimentation and continuous improvement, the City is building an organization that is not only responsive to today's challenges but prepared to innovate for tomorrow's needs.

## **Technology Adaptation**

To strengthen resilience in an increasingly digital world, the City launched CyberSmart FTL, a community-focused cybersecurity education initiative led by the Information Technology Services Department. This program brings cybersecurity training directly into neighborhoods, offering accessible workshops in parks, libraries, and community spaces to help neighbors recognize phishing attempts, secure their personal information, and navigate the digital landscape with confidence. CyberSmart FTL also builds trust by promoting digital literacy, fostering open dialogue between government and community, and making cybersecurity knowledge approachable rather than intimidating. The program extends internally as well—equipping City employees with the tools needed to protect sensitive data and maintain secure operations to ensure uninterrupted service delivery. Additionally, the City advanced digital equity through its broadband initiative by selecting a vendor to launch a wireless broadband pilot in the Durrs neighborhood. This project represents an important step toward ensuring that all neighbors, regardless of income or location, have access to reliable internet connectivity and the opportunities it enables.

## **Inclusivity**

This year, the City made meaningful progress in strengthening an inclusive, supportive, and stable workplace culture. The turnover rate decreased to 5.3% and the vacancy rate dropped to 6.6%—both the lowest levels in the past five years—demonstrating that employees are choosing to grow and stay with the organization. Community sentiment also remains strong, with 63% of neighbors in the latest survey expressing confidence that the City embraces people of all backgrounds. To continue fostering an environment where employees can succeed in an inclusive environment, the City revamped its supervisory training program, offering quarterly sessions tailored to newly promoted or newly hired supervisors and managers, ensuring they are well-equipped to lead diverse teams effectively.

## Conclusion

Over the past year, the City has demonstrated its unwavering dedication to advancing the City Commission's Priorities and Strategic Plan goals by enhancing services and investing in infrastructure improvements. Through neighbor-focused initiatives like the Police Co-Responder Program, StartUp FTL, FixIt FTL customer service application, and CyberSmart FTL, the City is making significant strides in improving the quality of life. These comprehensive efforts underscore a commitment to building a responsive, efficient, and inclusive community that is well-prepared to meet current and future challenges with both resilience and creativity.