



## LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

**LTC No: 26-019**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission  
**FROM:** Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*  
**DATE:** January 22, 2026  
**SUBJECT:** **FTL Community Talks Series**

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The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to inform the City Commission of the launch of FTL Community Talks, a community engagement series provided by the City of Fort Lauderdale and led by the Economic Development Division of the Community Services Department. This LTC will highlight how this initiative advances the City's Economic Development framework through coordinated, resident-centered economic development efforts.

On July 19, 2025, the City of Fort Lauderdale hosted the Sistrunk Empowerment Summit. The primary objective of the event was to engage stakeholders directly to address community concerns and gather feedback on local needs. By focusing on workforce development, increased access to capital for small businesses, and the identification of growth resources, the City aimed to collaborate with the community to establish a robust, long-term pathway for economic prosperity.

The City of Fort Lauderdale's Economic Development Division has since developed FTL Community Talks, a structured engagement series focused on connecting community voices to strategy, programs, and measurable impact. The series emphasizes civic participation, small business engagement, workforce alignment, and policy transparency as core components of economic development.

This initiative builds on recent place-based engagement efforts in the Sistrunk Boulevard corridor, including the Sistrunk Empowerment Summit, and is designed to create a repeatable model that can be scaled citywide. The goal of FTL Community Talks is to strengthen resident and small business engagement, improve trust and transparency, and ensure that economic development strategies are informed by lived community experience. FTL Community Talks will provide a unifying framework for aligning economic development initiatives under a shared vision that emphasizes coordination, clarity, and community impact.

FTL Community Talk #1, titled Civic & Community Engagement, will be delivered on January 24, 2026, as a special launch activation embedded within the Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Gospel Explosion at Carter Park. This session will be conducted in collaboration with the City of Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation Department and Neighbor Support Division, demonstrating cross-departmental coordination.

This activation format applies only to FTL Community Talk #1. Beginning with FTL Community Talk #2, scheduled for February 24, 2026, all subsequent sessions will follow the standard FTL Community Talks format, including facilitated dialogue, partner participation, and topic-specific discussions.

#### COMMUNITY TALKS SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

- January 24, 2026 – FTL Community Talk #1: *Civic & Community Engagement*  
MLK Gospel Explosion – Carter Park
- February 24, 2026 – FTL Community Talk #2: *Government & Policy*
- March 2026 – FTL Community Talk #3: *Entrepreneurship & Small Business Support*
- March 2026 – FTL Community Talk #4: *Workforce & Talent Pathways*
- April 2026 – FTL Community Talk #5: *Community Priorities Review & Next Steps*

#### KEY METRICS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The FTL Community Talks series is designed to produce measurable engagement and economic development outcomes, including:

- Engagement of 150–250 residents across the full series;
- Identification of thirty (30) to fifty (50) business-connected participants;
- Collection of three (3) to five (5) recurring economic development themes to inform future strategy development;
- Growth of an opt-in community and business engagement list to support future outreach;
- Achievement of at least twenty-five percent (25%) repeat participation across sessions; and
- Post-session engagement satisfaction of eighty percent (80%) or higher.

Insights gathered through the FTL Community Talks series will inform future programming, support interdepartmental coordination, and strengthen alignment with economic development priorities.

Following the January 24, 2026, launch, the City of Fort Lauderdale will continue implementation of the FTL Community Talks series and integrate engagement insights into ongoing economic development initiatives. A summary of outcomes and lessons learned will be shared as the series progresses.

FTL Community Talks reinforces the City's commitment to inclusive growth, transparency, and coordinated service delivery.

If you have any questions, please contact Porshia L. Garcia, Director, Community Services Department at [PGarcia@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:PGarcia@fortlauderdale.gov).

c: Shari L. McCartney, City Attorney  
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