



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No: 26-057

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

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*

DATE: March 4, 2026

SUBJECT: **Waterways Update – February 2026**

The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to provide the City Commission with an update on the waterway initiatives in the City of Fort Lauderdale.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewage Pumpout Vessel: An Invitation to Bid (ITB) for a pumpout vessel was issued on November 14, 2025. The solicitation closed on December 1, 2025. On February 17, 2026, the City Commission passed a motion for the purchase of a sewage pumpout vessel to Pump Out USA. Staff are engaging with the vendor to facilitate the purchase and delivery. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living Seawall Permit Fee Assistance Program: City staff presented at the December 16, 2025, City Commission Conference meeting. Staff attended the Marine Advisory Board on February 5, 2026, and the Sustainability Advisory Board on February 23, 2026, to gather additional feedback. City staff anticipate presenting a resolution for City Commission consideration in May 2026. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intracoastal Waterway Speed Change: The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has completed the installation of the updated signage (Attachment 1) between Sunrise Boulevard and Oakland Park Boulevard. Vessels will now be required to maintain a “Slow Speed – Minimum Wake” while navigating in that area. The Fort Lauderdale Police Department is working with FWC on a thirty (30)-day educational period that will result in warnings to violators in lieu of citations. The thirty (30)-day educational period is in effect from February 10 – March 12, 2026. Regular enforcement of violations will commence on March 13, 2026. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canal Cleaning Vendor: Aquatic Control Group, the City’s canal cleaning vendor, reported that they picked up and disposed of 209 tons of debris from our waterways in calendar year 2025. This is equivalent to seventeen (17) full-sized school buses. |

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Third Mangrove Planting: Staff are working with FWC, New River Middle School, Coastal Conservation Association, and the Urban Farming Institute to coordinate a third mangrove planting. FWC installed mangrove planter boxes in the New River directly behind New River Middle School. Seventy-five (75) mangroves were planted in the planter boxes on Saturday, February 28, 2026.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waterway Monitoring: The City expanded its contract with Miami Water Keeper, adding five (5) additional weekly monitoring sites for a total of fifteen (15) sites now being sampled. Also, monthly microbial source tracking (MST) has begun at five (5) sites that fail to meet water quality standards the most. The MST will allow the City to better understand the source(s) of bacteria (human, bird, and canine) in our waterways.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter of Support: The City provided a letter of support for a grant application to Nova Southeastern University for the <i>Red Mangrove Metal & Phosphorous Uptake for South Florida Canal Mitigation Project</i>. This project aligns with the City's work to protect, manage, and enhance local waterways and builds on the City's recent and upcoming mangrove plantings. This study will generate data on the ability of juvenile red mangroves to absorb and sequester heavy metals and phosphorus in canal environments. The grant is being offered through the Community Foundation of Broward.

For further information, please contact Marco Aguilera, Chief Waterways Officer, at 954-828-4564 or maquilera@fortlauderdale.gov or Todd Hiteshew, Deputy Director, Public Works, at 954-828-5609 or thiteshew@fortlauderdale.gov.

Attachment:

1. Updated Signage in the Intracoastal Waterway

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

