



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No: 26-059

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission
FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*
DATE: March 5, 2026
SUBJECT: Key Personnel Update

The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to inform the City Commission that Chief Waterways Officer, Marco Aguilera, will be relocating to northern Florida and transitioning from the City effective March 13, 2026. As the inaugural Chief Waterways Officer, Mr. Aguilera has provided significant leadership toward advancing various waterway initiatives and policies. We are grateful for Mr. Aguilera's contributions and will continue to push waterway initiatives forward.

In the coming days, City staff will advertise the position and expedite the recruitment process to onboard a new Chief Waterways Officer. In the interim, Todd Hiteshew, Public Works Deputy Director, will oversee the responsibilities of the Chief Waterways Officer. Mr. Hiteshew will work closely with Mr. Aguilera on the transition plan and subsequently with the Fort Lauderdale Police Department Marine Unit, the Public Works Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Division, and the Community Services Department Community Enhancement and Compliance Division, to ensure continuity of waterway operations and special initiatives.

Advancing the City's commitment to waterway health and resilience remains a top priority. City staff will continue to participate and engage with advisory boards, civic associations, and partner agencies. The monthly waterway LTC will continue to be distributed to keep the City Commission informed of waterway initiatives and progress. As we navigate this transition, I would like to reaffirm the importance of several ongoing initiatives that are nearing completion.

The Living Seawall Assistance Program

City staff presented at the December 16, 2025, City Commission Conference Meeting on a proposed Living Seawall Assistance Program. The City Commission provided feedback to advance the initiative to provide one hundred percent (100%) base permit fee assistance for both residential and commercial properties, offering up to \$3,500 for residential projects and up to \$7,000 for commercial projects. City staff are conducting additional stakeholder outreach, drafting a resolution to define the program policies, and

preparing a budget amendment to allocate \$50,000 for the program. City staff anticipate bringing these items for City Commission consideration in May 2026.

The Adopt-A-Shore Program

City staff are establishing a pilot program that encourages community involvement by empowering residents and organizations to take an active role in maintaining our waterways. The pilot program plans to offer resources to assist organized clean-ups and stewardship activities to improve the health and aesthetics of our waterways. City staff are finalizing the program structure and will officially launch the program by the end of April 2026.

Sewage Pump Out Vessel

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) grant to purchase a sewage pump out vessel is a vital initiative supporting waterway cleanliness and public health. The City Commission approved the vessel purchase on February 17, 2026. City staff are currently working with the boat vendor to facilitate acquisition and delivery as well as starting efforts to prepare for boat operations.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Mr. Aguilera for his dedicated service to our community and extend best wishes to the Aguilera family as they embark on their new adventure.

If you have any questions regarding the transition, please contact Brad Kaine, Public Works Director, at bkaine@fortlauderdale.gov or (954) 828-5806.

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