



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No. 26-094

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission
FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*
DATE: April 2, 2026
SUBJECT: **Spring Break 2026 Recap**

The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to provide the City Commission with an overview of the successful Spring Break 2026 period including a summary of Citywide preparations, operations, and notable activity. City staff did a phenomenal job throughout the period with an enhanced level of service, planning, and execution.

Fort Lauderdale has long been and continues to be one of the nation's top destinations. The City remains committed to its residents, maintaining the quality of life they expect year-round, and to the safety and wellbeing of visitors present throughout the spring break season. Our theme this year was *Good Vibes, Clear Rules*, signaling to visitors that Fort Lauderdale is a place where fun and safety go hand in hand, and that both are taken seriously. This year, we welcomed students from over (30) colleges and universities locally and from throughout the country including, but not limited to:

- Auburn University
- Boston College
- Broward College
- Coast Carolina University
- Duquesne University
- Flagler College
- Florida Atlantic University
- Florida International University
- Florida State University
- Georgetown University
- Kansas State University
- Loyola University
- Nova Southeastern University
- Michigan State University
- Ohio State
- Rutgers University
- United States Naval Academy
- University of Central Florida
- University of Chicago
- University of Colorado
- University of Connecticut
- University of Dayton
- University of Florida
- University of Iowa
- University of Kansas
- University of Kentucky
- University of Maryland
- University of Miami
- University of North Carolina
- University of Notre Dame
- University of Texas
- University of Virginia
- University of West Virginia
- Villanova University

SPRING BREAK PREPARATIONS

City staff began preparing for the spring break period well ahead of the season. While there is no official start date, February 28 marks the point when the City traditionally begins to see a notable increase in visitor activity. Preparations included internal coordination meetings among City departments including Police, Fire, Community Services, Public Works, Transportation and Mobility (TAM), Parks and Recreation, Strategic Communications, Information Technology, Procurement, Finance, and Human Resources.

It is important to recognize that while forward-facing departments such as Police and Fire are at the forefront of the City's operations, success depends on the collective efforts of nearly every City department. This year's coordination efforts included ensuring radios were provided and operable, cameras were routinely cleaned to provide clear images of spring break areas, staff were strategically allocated and compensated appropriately, and necessary supplies such as nutrition and hydration were procured.

In addition to internal coordination, City staff shared information at the following public and stakeholder meetings to increase awareness of the City's preparations and plans as well as to answer questions and provide feedback.

- **February 3** – Presentation to City Commission
- **February 9** – Beach Business Improvement District Advisory Board
- **February 11** – Himmarshee area business owners, nearby hotels, and stakeholders
- **February 19** – Barrier Island hotels and security teams, restaurants, beach vendors, and Central Beach Alliance President
- **February 20** – Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce Beach Business Council
- **February 20** – City press conference at Las Olas Oceanside Park

As required by ordinance, Memorandum No. 26-001 was issued by the City Manager to the City Clerk on February 25, 2026, to implement the Spring Break High Impact Period and High Impact Zones (Attachment 1). With the City Commission's adoption of amendments to Section 8-55 of the City's Code of Ordinances, the City Manager identified a portion of the Barrier Island and, for the first time, a section of the Downtown, as high impact zones with associated prohibitive measures.

LTC No. 26-049, titled *Spring Break 2026 Preparations* (Attachment 2), was circulated on February 25, 2026, to provide the City Commission with an overview of the City's preparations, operational plan, and high impact zone measures. New enforcement tools such as underage and sidewalk café restrictions were made available.

DEPLOYMENT OF RESOURCES AND NOTABLE ACTIVITY

Police Department

The Police Department enhanced staffing levels and implemented targeted special operations throughout the spring break period. This included increased personnel stationed within high impact zones. Enforcement activities and law enforcement presence was supplemented by outside agency participation by the State of Florida Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco (ABT), Davie Police Department Mounted Unit, and Florida Highway Patrol.

During the operational period, a total of fifty-one (51) arrests were made for crimes related to battery, underage drinking, disorderly conduct, narcotics, and trespassing. Thirty-five (35) arrests were made on the Barrier Island high impact zone, and sixteen (16) arrests were within the Downtown high impact zone. Eleven (11) of those arrested were considered spring breakers based on their school affiliation and age. The Police Department also issued 1,205 citations for infractions related to vehicle for hire, speeding, and vehicle window tint.

With assistance from ABT, twenty-nine (29) arrests were made for underage drinking, service to an underage individual, and the sale of hemp to underage persons. Ninety-nine (99) fake identification cards being used to assume an age of twenty-one (21) or older were confiscated.

Fire Rescue Department

The Fire Rescue Department initiated a Level three (3) activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in a monitoring status to support citywide operations. This included additional Ocean Rescue staff and the placement of medical response carts and units on the Barrier Island and overnight coverage downtown to improve rapid response times in high-traffic areas.

Fire Rescue also launched the Coordinated Opioid Recovery and Education (CORE) FTL program to expand access to Narcan by making it readily available in hotels, bars, and restaurants. During spring break, no notable drug-related trends were identified in the high impact zones, and no overdose deaths were reported.

The Fire Prevention Division conducted routine inspections to ensure that bars and entertainment venues were safe and not over occupied. This included on-site inspections during times of high occupancy, guidance for establishments on best practices for counting occupants and maintaining safe occupancy levels, review of venue count accuracy, and monitoring pedestrian flow from the street into venues.

Community Services Department

For the first time during spring break, the Community Enhancement and Compliance Division provided inspection services twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week. This level of services is an enhancement to the normal inspection schedule of

Monday – Wednesday from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Thursday – Sunday from 6:00 a.m. to 3 a.m.

During this period, 303 spring break related inspections were conducted and 278 violations were identified. The majority of violations found were for vacation rentals operating without registering with the City (eighty-nine (89)) and noise levels exceeding what is permitted (seventy-seven (77)). Most violations were reported and found during overnight hours and calls for service increased on Friday and Saturday.

Public Works Sanitation

The Public Works Sanitation Division was responsible for the removal of trash and debris including street sweeping in the high impact zones. Throughout spring break, the operational hours for the sanitation and street sweeping crews were extended from their normal operations to ensure that high impact zones remained free from overflowing trash receptacles, debris in the street was removed, sidewalks were cleaned, and facilities maintained. Over the spring break period, over 1,000 cubic yards of trash, equivalent to twenty-five (25) tons, was removed from the Barrier Island and Downtown high impact zones. Additionally, street sweeping covered a total of 984 miles and removed 187,160 pounds, equivalent to ninety (90) tons of debris from roadways within the high impact zones.

Transportation and Mobility

TAM placed into action enhanced operational measures to manage peak travel demand on the barrier island and between high impact zones. This included the use of the LauderGo! services provided by Community Shuttle and the Water Trolley as well as leveraging the City's partnership with Circuit to provide free and efficient transportation to spring break visitors. TAM also coordinated with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and other parties to minimize road closures, ensuring efficient movement of traffic.

For spring break, the City's transit network collectively served approximately 52,000 riders.

- Community Shuttle: 18,400 riders
- Circuit Microtransit: 19,800 riders
- Water Trolley: 12,900 riders

During spring break, TAM worked closely with the Police Department who initiated the education of vehicle for hire operators regarding the City's newly adopted vehicle for hire regulations. This included the issuance of warnings and citations for traffic related non-compliance.

Notable Events

The City Commission's actions ahead of the spring break period related to the prohibition of open containers and the addition of the ability for the City Manager to identify high impact zones outside of the barrier island made a significant impact on the behavior of visitors to the high impact zones and the ability for public safety personnel to manage

large crowds. The ability to restrict those under the age of eighteen (18) within the high impact zones may have contributed to a lower number of underage individuals consuming and purchasing alcoholic beverages and assisted with crowd control in the Downtown high impact zone.

On March 17, 2026, St. Patrick's Day, high school students from throughout Broward County descended onto Fort Lauderdale Beach. The large influx of people on an already crowded Barrier Island could have created a scenario that might have gotten out of control. Fortunately, the Police Department was aware of the potential event ahead of time and implemented an operational plan to meet the requirements of the event. Staff were deployed to the area, and the crowds were managed to the point that they naturally dispersed. The City Manager's Office and Police Department coordinated throughout the event to ensure operations ran smoothly.

The City's social media played a role in sharing information about spring break. The City's theme of Good Vibes, Clear Rules and related messaging was widely received with 139,000 views on Instagram, 58,000 views on Facebook, 6,000 visits to the City's Spring Break website, and garnered one (1) million-page profile impressions throughout the period. The City's public safety social media messages were spread by City staff and social media influencers.

While the Spring Break 2026 period was a success, there are always operational lessons to be learned. City staff will apply those lessons to improve future responses to similar high impact events. Planning for Spring Break 2027 is already underway, and the community can be assured that the City will be prepared to ensure the safety and quality of life of all.

For additional information, please contact Christopher Cooper, Deputy City Manager, at (954) 828-5980, CCooper@fortlauderdale.gov

Attachments:

1. Memorandum No. 26-001 High Impact Period – Spring Break 2026 High Impact Zones and Prohibitive Measures
2. LTC No. 26-049 Spring Break 2026 Preparations

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



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 26-001

Date: February 23, 2026

To: David R. Soloman, City Clerk

From: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*

Re: High Impact Period – Spring Break 2026 High Impact Zones and Prohibitive Measures

It has been determined that February 28, 2026, through March 31, 2026, will be a High Impact Period for Spring Break 2026. Pursuant to Section 8-55.5 of the City of Fort Lauderdale Code of Ordinances (the Code), I hereby establish two (2) High Impact Zones.

Barrier Island High Impact Zone

Boundaries: The Barrier Island High Impact Zone is bounded by Sunrise Boulevard to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, Holiday Drive to the south, and the westernmost bank of the intracoastal waterway to the west.

Prohibitive Measures: The following prohibitive measures shall be imposed during the 2026 Spring Break High Impact Period for the Barrier Island High Impact Zone and shall be enforced pursuant to Section 8-55.5(d) of the Code, as amended:

- Prohibition of coolers on beach property;
- Prohibition of inflatable devices on beach property from the 900 Block of Seabreeze north to Sunrise Boulevard;
- Prohibition of tents, tables, and similar structures on beach property from the 900 block of Seabreeze north to Sunrise Boulevard;
- Limitation of live or amplified music on beach property from the 900 block of Seabreeze north to Sunrise Boulevard; and
- Prohibition of possessing or consuming alcohol on the beach property from the 900 block of Seabreeze north to Sunrise Boulevard. Consumption of alcohol is permitted on beach properties within areas licensed by the City in accordance with Section 8-55.4 of the Code, as amended.

Possible Prohibitive Measures: The following measures may be imposed during the 2026 Spring Break High Impact Period to mitigate potential negative impacts to the

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Barrier Island High Impact Zone and is enforceable pursuant section 8-55.5(d) of the Code, as amended:

- Implementation of an age limitation that restricts juveniles under the age of eighteen (18) years from accessing specific area(s) at or near a high impact event, as designated by the City Manager or designee, without the supervision of a parent or guardian over the age of eighteen (18) years old;
- Suspension of sidewalk café permits and the removal of associated café equipment with notice to the permittee pursuant to Section 25-190 of the Code; and
- Modification of operating hours for parks and City facilities.

Downtown High Impact Zone

Boundaries: The downtown high impact zone is bounded by Broward Boulevard to the north, Andrews Avenue to the east, the northernmost bank of the New River to the south, and Southwest 7 Avenue to the west.

Prohibitive Measures: The following prohibitive measures shall be imposed during the 2026 Spring Break High Impact Period for the Downtown High Impact Zone and shall be enforced pursuant to section 8-55.5(d) of the Code, as amended:

- Prohibition of coolers anywhere within the high impact zone, and
- Implementation of an age limitation that restricts juveniles under the age of eighteen (18) years from accessing specific area(s) at or near a high impact event between the hours of 10:00 pm and 5:00 am, as designated by the city manager or designee, without the supervision of a parent or guardian over the age of eighteen (18) years old.

Possible Prohibitive Measures: The following measures may be imposed during the 2026 Spring Break High Impact Period to mitigate potential negative impacts to the Downtown High Impact Zone and is enforceable pursuant section 8-55.5(d) of the Code, as amended:

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- Modification of operating hours for parks and City facilities.

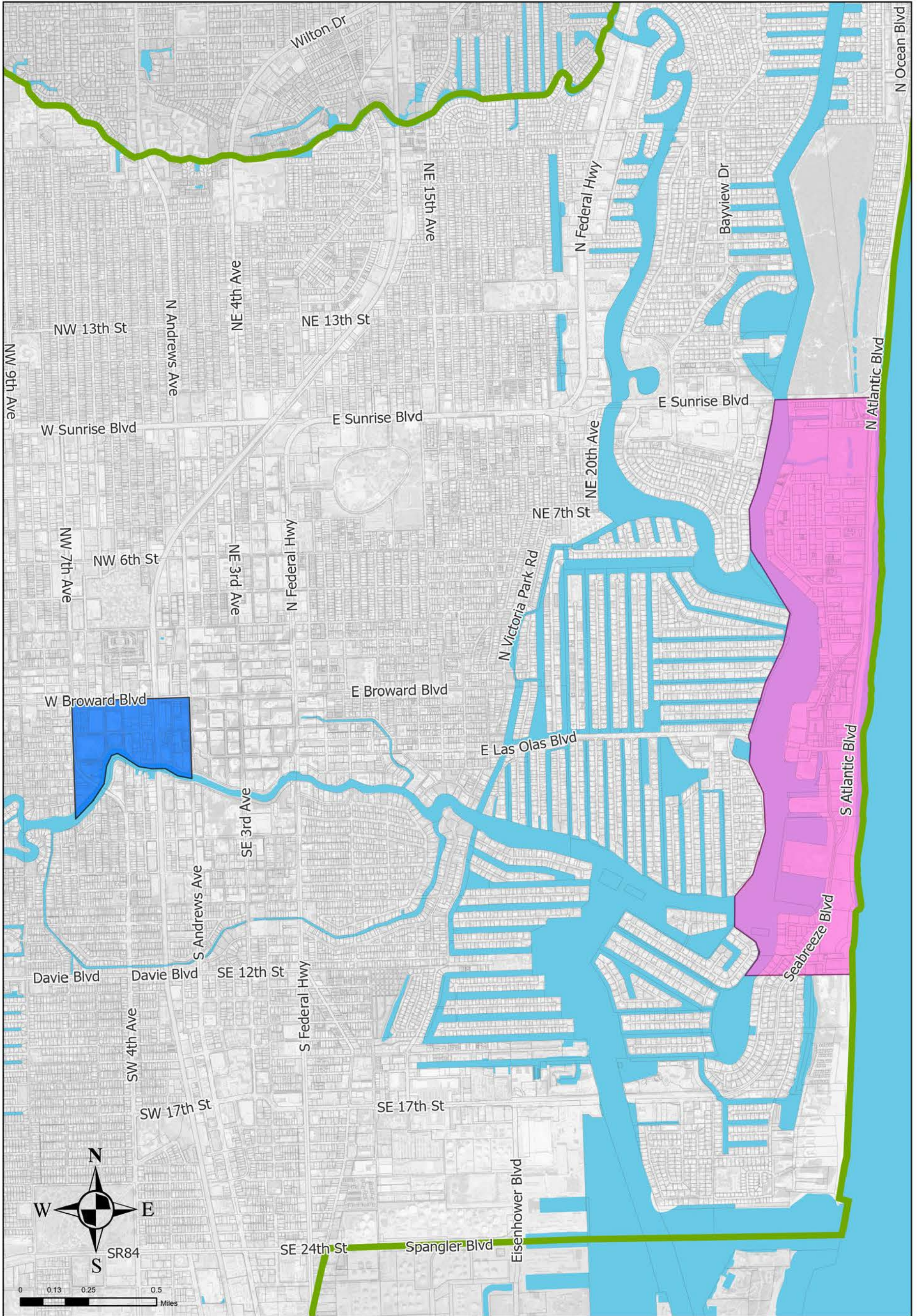
This notification shall be filed with the City Clerk and delivered to all appropriate City and local media outlets.

Attachment:

1. Map of High Impact Zones

Memorandum No. 26-001
Page 3 of 3

c: Shari McCartney, City Attorney
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
City Manager's Office
Department Directors



High Impact Period - Spring Break 2026 High Impact Zones

- Legend**
- High Impact Zones
 - Barrier Island Zone
 - Downtown Zone



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No: 26-049

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission
FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*
DATE: February 25, 2026
SUBJECT: **Spring Break 2026 Preparations**

The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to provide an overview of the coordinated multi-departmental operational strategy underway in preparation for Spring Break 2026.

The Spring Break period in Fort Lauderdale is identified as February 28 through March 31, 2026, with the peak visitation anticipated between March 8 and March 22. During this period, the City will enhance operations within Spring Break high impact areas to maintain public safety, support local businesses and protect neighborhood quality of life.

Consistent with prior years, the City Manager will implement a designated High Impact Period within established High Impact Event Zones on the Barrier Island and in Downtown Fort Lauderdale, with intensified operational measures concentrated during the peak weeks of March 8 through March 22.

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- Modification of operating hours for parks and City facilities.

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- Modification of operating hours for parks and City facilities.

Outlined below is a summary of departmental preparations:

Police Department

The Police Department will enhance staffing levels and implement targeted special operations throughout the Spring Break period. Increased personnel within designated High Impact Zones will be supplemented with outside agency support.

Officers will actively enforce newly adopted High Impact ordinances, including the prohibition of open containers in designated areas and enhanced juvenile enforcement measures in the downtown district. Additional strategies include continued implementation of the Bar Watch Program and direct public messaging to visitors regarding City regulations and behavioral expectations.

Fire Rescue Department

Fire Rescue will initiate a Level 3 activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in monitoring status to support citywide operations throughout the Spring Break period. Preparations include enhanced staffing of Ocean Rescue and Emergency Medical Services (EMS), with additional lifeguards deployed along the beachfront and strategic placement of medical response carts to improve rapid response times in high-traffic areas.

Fire Prevention personnel will conduct proactive occupancy checks and life-safety inspections at entertainment venues and other high-capacity establishments to ensure compliance with fire code requirements and maintain safe operating conditions.

The department has also launched the C.O.R.E. FTL program, expanding access to Narcan and making it readily available at participating hotels, bars and restaurants throughout the city. This initiative strengthens overdose prevention efforts and reinforces the City's commitment to public health and safety during high-impact periods.

Transportation and Mobility

Transportation and Mobility will implement enhanced operational measures to manage peak travel demand and maintain safe, orderly circulation throughout the Spring Break period. The Department will operate the free "LauderGO" Micro Mover to assist with off-island dispersal during high-volume periods and enhance parking enforcement.

A temporary Barrier Island roadway and right-of-way construction moratorium will be in effect for non-emergency work to reduce congestion and preserve emergency access. Staff will coordinate closely with FDOT to minimize roadway disruptions and monitor real-time conditions in partnership with other agencies.

Rideshare and vehicles-for-hire activity will be managed through geofencing, designated operational controls and targeted outreach to maintain traffic flow and public safety.

Community Enhancement and Compliance

Code Compliance will maintain 24-hour operations throughout the Spring Break period with continuous field deployment focused on noise violations, vacation rental compliance and regulated business activity. Inspectors will conduct proactive patrols and respond to complaints in real time to address quality of life matters. Code officers will coordinate with Police and partner departments to support immediate response, reinforce compliance and maintain consistent enforcement presence across high-traffic areas.

Parks and Recreation

Barrier Island parks will operate with modified hours during the designated High Impact Period and staff will implement adjustments as needed to support public safety and manage crowd volumes in high-use areas. Parks staff oversees the South Beach restroom custodial vendor to maintain enhanced cleaning standards throughout the period. Staff have conducted proactive outreach with the City's beach chair vendor to reinforce requirements.

Public Works – Sanitation

Public Works will implement enhanced sanitation operations throughout the period, with additional staffing deployed to support high-traffic areas.

Beach cleanings will occur each afternoon to maintain shoreline conditions. The department will increase the frequency of litter collection, deploy additional solid waste receptacles in high-volume areas and conduct enhanced pressure washing in heavily utilized areas.

These efforts are designed to maintain cleanliness and protect public health and preserve the appearance of the City's beach and downtown areas during peak activity.

Strategic Communications

Strategic Communications will implement a coordinated outreach strategy to ensure clear and consistent messaging regarding public safety and behavioral expectations. Information will be shared across multiple channels including direct outreach, social media, earned media and partner platforms.

Staff conducted stakeholder meetings with the Beach Business Improvement District, Himmarshee business owners and hotels, Barrier Island operators and community partners to reinforce expectations and align messaging.

The City will maintain a unified command structure and adjust operations in real time to protect public safety and neighborhood quality of life. Please contact the City Manager's Office if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Attachments:

1. Memorandum No. 26-001 (REVISED) High Impact Period - Spring Break 2026
High Impact Zones and Prohibitive Measures

2. Map of High Impact Zones

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



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 26-001 (REVISED)

Date: February 25, 2026
To: David R. Soloman, City Clerk
From: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*
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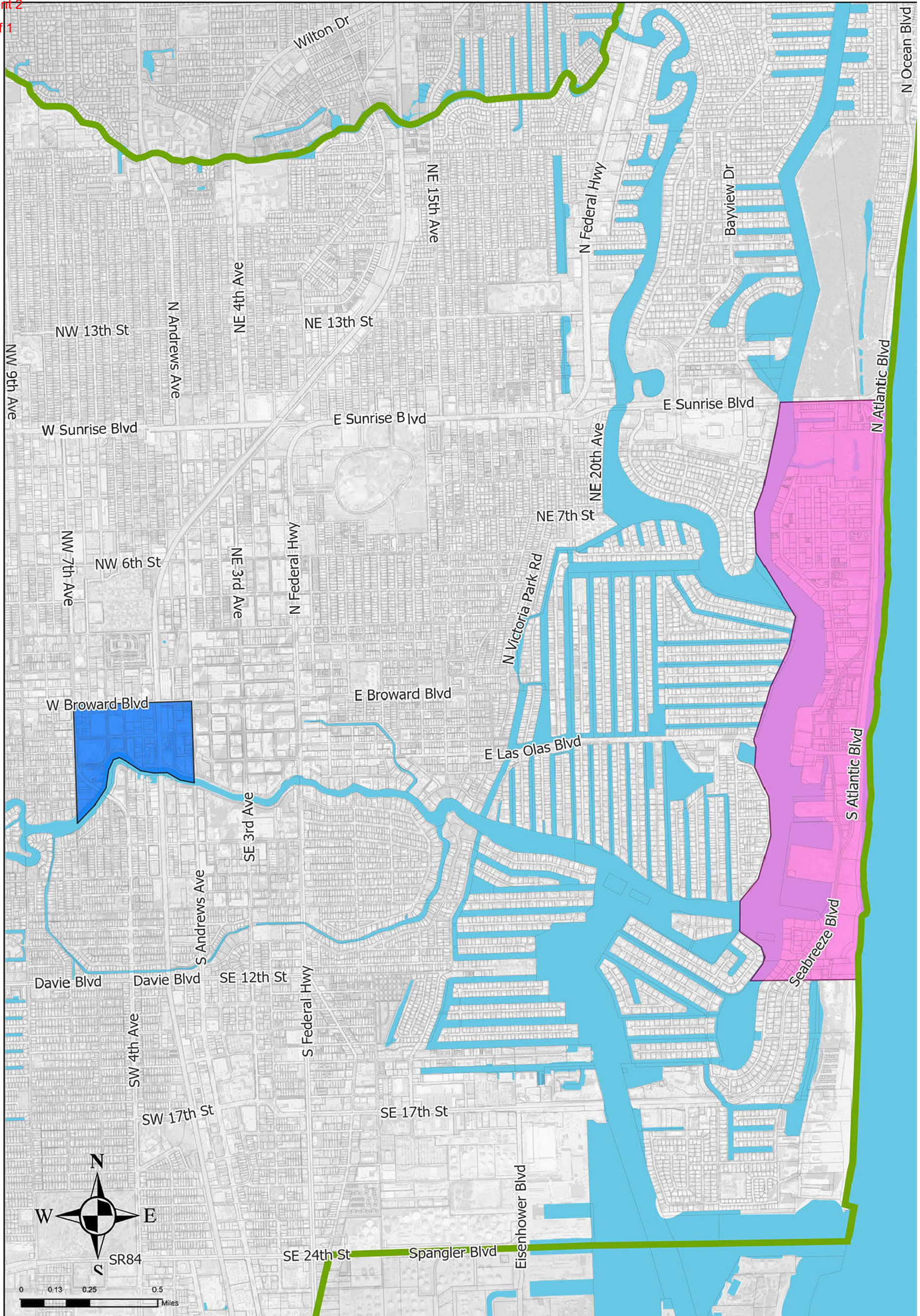
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Attachment:

1. Map of High Impact Zones



Legend

- High Impact Zones
- Barrier Island Zone
- Downtown Zone

High Impact Period - Spring Break 2026 High Impact Zones