



## LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No. 26-096

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission  
**FROM:** Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*  
**DATE:** April 2, 2026  
**SUBJECT:** City Manager's Quarterly Update (January – March 2026)

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The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to provide the City Commission with an update on the progress and achievements made over the past quarter (January – March 2026). The middle of the fiscal year is an exciting time, as City staff have begun executing key initiatives for the current fiscal year while also beginning to plan for the next fiscal year.

**Today marks my one (1)-year anniversary serving as your City Manager. It has been a tremendous honor and privilege to serve under the guidance and with the support of the City Commission. I cherish the opportunity to lead and work alongside such a dedicated team of City staff, whose commitment to excellence and service continues to make a meaningful impact on our community. I am also grateful for the outpouring of support from our neighbors and stakeholders, whose engagement and partnership have been invaluable throughout this journey.**

An expanded summary of efforts and accomplishments over the last twelve (12) months will be provided to the City Commission in the coming weeks. The following provides an update since the issuance of the last quarterly report (LTC No. 26-028), dated January 30, 2026.

### **Commission Priority: Public Safety**

The focus of this priority is reducing crime and increasing the safety of our City by providing the necessary resources for our first responders and building community partnerships.

- Utilized an interdepartmental approach to successfully plan and manage Spring Break 2026, ensuring enhanced public safety visibility, efficient movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, strengthened code enforcement with twenty-four (24) hour/seven (7) days a week service, and improved public space cleaning and sanitation services.

- Received a \$1.0 million federal appropriation to support the City's Public Safety Training and Professional Development Complex. This project will create Fort Lauderdale's first comprehensive, state-of-the-art training facility for police, fire, and other first responders in the tri-county region. The complex is intended to provide "one-stop" academy, firearms, driving, tactical, and classroom training for both new recruits and experienced personnel, addressing the current shortage of adequate regional training space and reducing the need to rent outside facilities.
- Earned re-accreditation from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) - one of the most respected recognitions in the fire service - for a third-straight cycle. This reflects the City's ongoing commitment to evaluating performance, strengthening operations, and continually improving the services we provide to the residents and visitors of Fort Lauderdale.
- Launched the Whole Blood Program, marking a significant advancement in the City's emergency medical service capabilities and representing a lifesaving enhancement for residents and visitors experiencing severe traumatic injuries or life-threatening hemorrhaging.
- Received \$375,000 in grant funding to support efforts to combat the opioid crisis through the Coordinated Opioid Recovery Program with the Broward Behavioral Health Coalition.
- Celebrated the Apparatus Push-in Ceremony at Fire Station 53 for two (2) new trucks at the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport.
- Launched Tablet Command, a public safety software platform designed to provide real-time accountability and operational intelligence to incident commanders and field personnel.
- Completed four (4) new lifeguard towers featuring impressive designs that blend public safety and public art.
- Distributed Naloxone (Narcan) to businesses throughout the city including Water Taxi, Circuit, and several participating hotels to help combat drug overdoses ahead of Spring Break.
- Launched new aerial drone program to assist command decision-making during a variety of incidents across the city. These drones have already proven to be critical in helping to manage a house fire on Riverland Road.
- Successfully launched the Group Violence Intervention Project, aimed at leveraging community resources and expertise to prevent violence before it begins.
- Secured approval to repeal the ability to allow off-premises alcohol consumption and the sale of alcoholic beverages outdoors in Special Entertainment Overlay Districts.

- Secured approval of an ordinance to allow for the installation of speed detection systems in twelve (12) school zones due to a heightened safety risk that warrants additional enforcement measures.
  - Awarded the contract for the Automated School Zone Speed Detection Camera Program, a pivotal step toward significantly increasing safety through awareness and enforcement of speed limits within twelve (12) City of Fort Lauderdale school zones.
- Applied for and awarded a \$5,000 TJX Law Enforcement Grant to purchase camera equipment that will be used to create informational messaging related to traffic safety, personal safety and emergency preparedness.
- Applied for and awarded a \$78,000 Florida Department of Transportation Occupant Protection Grant to implement an occupant-protection safety campaign aimed at reducing the frequency of incidents in identified hot spots.
- Applied for and awarded a \$155,088 Enhanced Marine Law Enforcement Grant (EMLEG) to schedule marine unit officers for evening shifts at a reduced cost to the City.
- Applied for and awarded a \$51,000 grant from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for the Combating Aggressive Driving Program, supporting an aggressive driving campaign to reduce incidents in identified hot spots.
- Enhanced the High Impact Zones During High Impact Periods Ordinance, which, among other provisions, adds an age restriction for juveniles within designated areas without adult supervision and suspends the use of outdoor on-premises sales as a part of the sidewalk café permit suspension language.
- Received the Partial Certificate of Occupancy (PCO) for the new Police Department Headquarters and moved nearly all police personnel from the Cypress Creek temporary police department location into the new building. Demolition of the former Police Department Headquarters is nearing completion and the remaining site work is underway.

### **Commission Priority: Homeless Response**

The focus of this priority is to address homelessness in the City of Fort Lauderdale by creating pathways to housing and providing access to comprehensive services.

- Demonstrated a proactive presence throughout Fort Lauderdale's high-traffic corridors utilizing the Homeless Outreach Progressive Engagement (HOPE) team - an interdisciplinary team from various departments. This team made 910 individual contacts by prioritizing hot-zone saturation and rapid response to community complaints, maintaining a consistent operational tempo to ensure that street-level engagements were both frequent and strategically targeted to areas of highest need.

- Attracted 958 walk-ins, provided 629 service referrals, and celebrated fifteen (15) individuals graduating from the Community Court program.
- Hosted a Photo Identification Day in partnership with the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Access to photo identification is a critical step for the twenty-one (21) individuals served, as it enables access to housing, employment, healthcare, and other essential services.
- Hosted a Health and Wellness Day in partnership with various community organizations, serving seventy-one (71) individuals experiencing homelessness. Services included blood pressure screening, HIV testing, immunizations, oral health education, and mental health screenings as well as the distribution of hygiene supplies, shoes, and bagged lunches.

### **Commission Priority: Infrastructure and Resilience**

The focus of this priority is to identify and implement improvements that address infrastructure needs related to water, wastewater, stormwater, and the public right-of-way, as well as resilience needs relating to extreme weather events and sea level rise.

- Commenced the commissioning process for the Prospect Lake Clean Water Center by conducting major and high velocity flushing scenarios and hosting a successful staff kickoff onboarding and training meeting.
- Initiated the installation of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), a system that enables smart meters to transmit water-usage data in near real time. This technology enhances accuracy, efficiency, and customer control over water consumption. More than 3,000 AMI water meter replacements have occurred to date.
- Received \$1.2 million in federal appropriations to support the Las Olas Corridor Improvement Project. This investment will support Phase I of the Las Olas Safety Improvements, helping transform Las Olas Boulevard into a safer, more accessible "complete street" that serves pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and drivers. Improvements funded by this appropriation will upgrade outdated infrastructure and enhance the streetscape, landscaping, lighting, ADA access, and overall safety, supporting local businesses and sustaining the corridor's role as a major economic engine.
- Secured a permanent adjustment to the SE 17 Street Bridge (E. Clay Shaw, Jr. Bridge) schedule to improve weekday traffic flow by eliminating bridge openings at 7:30 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m., and 5:30 p.m.
- Provided a response letter to Broward County that shared an update on the City's progress toward gaining industry interest in the New River Crossing tunnel project, identifying key criteria to advance the project, and developing financial strategies to deliver the tunnel concept.

- Approved a design-build agreement for the construction of the Federal Courthouse Parking Garage, a crucial step in advancing the design and construction of a five (5)-story precast parking garage with capacity of no fewer than 284 spaces.
- Fortify Lauderdale:
  - Prepared legislation declaring the official intent of the City of Fort Lauderdale to reimburse itself from future bond proceeds of up to \$330 million to complete construction of Fortify Lauderdale Phase I projects and begin the design of Fortify Lauderdale Phase II projects.
  - Launched the Private Property Resilience Outreach Program, a structured, multiyear effort designed to increase awareness, preparedness, and action related to climate-related risks on private property, with an initial focus on flooding and a secondary focus on extreme heat. This program encourages homeowners and business owners to improve resilience through increasing public understanding and awareness of practical actions and available resources.
  - Negotiated an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the City of Lauderhill for maintenance and repair of an existing stormwater system beginning at the intersection of Kentucky Avenue and Broward Boulevard proceeding north along NW 35 Avenue and ending at the New River C-12 Canal. This agreement helps ensure the efficacy of the City's drainage system, which is designed to convey stormwater northward through the drainage system serviced by Lauderhill.
  - Memorialized the final prioritization of Phase II Fortify Lauderdale projects, communicating to neighbors the order in which these key projects will be addressed. The prioritization notes that projects may be designed and constructed concurrently based on factors such as funding availability, project scope, and project schedules.
  - Completed the Dorsey Riverbend Stormwater Improvement Project, which replaced the aging and undersized stormwater management infrastructure with a comprehensive stormwater system.
- Identified construction funding for the NW 9 Court Stormwater Improvement Project, which will help reduce recurring flooding that has affected roadway travel and property access in the area.
- Secured approval of an ordinance establishing an administrative application process for vehicle-for-hire permits, application and renewal fees, and defining vehicle-for-hire services and operating standards. The process reinforces regulations regarding music played from vehicles, signs and advertising on vehicles, and adherence to rates, fares, or voluntary compensation as identified in the application process.

- Advanced the City Hall project through continued negotiations with the vendor, as communicated in the presentation on the interim agreement term sheet.
- Formalized the creation of the Infrastructure Advisory Board, which will review existing City infrastructure - including but not limited to, roads, sidewalks, airports, seawalls, water and wastewater distribution and collection systems, treatment plants, well fields, parks, and other City facilities and structures - and examine their current condition.
- Began an educational campaign to help residents manage water bills through proactive measures and by providing insight into steps to address a high water bill.
- Obtained a \$1.0 million grant from the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) to replace approximately 1,700 linear feet of seawall along the New River in the Himmarshee Historic District.

### **Commission Priority: Public Enjoyment of the Waterways**

The focus of this priority is to foster inclusive and inviting recreational spaces, encourage responsible use, and safeguard the environment.

- Installed fifteen (15) additional life ring devices at strategically located parks and waterfront locations as a part of the Aden Perry Hero Life Ring Initiative. The City now has a total of twenty-five (25) life rings installed.
- Created a “Life Jacket Loaner Station” at Cooley’s Landing, supported by donations from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). The program allows recreational users of our waterways to borrow a life jacket at no cost.
- Worked with New River Middle School, the 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.
- Completed an educational campaign in the “Slow Speed – Minimum Wake” area between Sunrise Boulevard and Oakland Park Boulevard. Regular enforcement of violations commenced on March 13, 2026.
- Provided a letter of support for a grant application submitted by Nova Southeastern University for the Red Mangrove Metal & Phosphorus Uptake for South Florida Canal Mitigation Project. 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.

### **Commission Priority: Public Spaces and Cultural Initiatives**

The focus of this initiative is to improve landscaping, utilize empty spaces, expand parks and green areas, support arts and culture, and plan for a new City Hall.

- Completed the installation of the Manolo Valdés' sculpture *Cabeza con Mariposas* (Head with Butterflies) at Huizenga Park. The butterflies evoke metamorphosis and renewal, inviting viewers to reflect on the delicate relationship between the natural and built environments, and the ways culture can animate public space.
- Celebrated and collaborated on the grand reopening of the Downtown Development Authority's (DDA's) Huizenga Park, which was funded in part by a \$5.0 million contribution from the City of Fort Lauderdale.
- Secured approval of the Site Plan Level IV Development Permit for Hall of Fame Partners, LLC to redevelop the western portion of the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center peninsula. The project will include a new six (6)-story building containing event space, a museum, an aquarium, and a restaurant.
- Approved the conceptual design for the Las Olas Mobility Western Corridor Design Concept from Andrews Avenue to SE 17 Avenue.
- Began installation of the Holiday Park Activity Center mural, which will celebrate nature, inspire park visitors, and create a vibrant, family-friendly focal point for the community.
- Secured approval of an agreement for the design and construction of the Federal Courthouse Parking Garage, with Finrock Enterprises, LLC, in the amount of \$11.86 million.
- Closed on Phase 2A of the International Swimming Hall of Fame project, an important step in advancing the West building, which will include the ISHOF Museum and event center.
- Parks Bond Updates
  - Bal Harbour Park: Received a \$626,414 grant from the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) Parks and Open Space Florida Forever Program to support the acquisition of the park space. As part of the grant requirements, the City will install signage acknowledging FCT funding and provide educational signage highlighting the site's natural features and history.
  - Bass Park: Hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the new community center, pool restrooms, water playground, and outdoor fitness area.
  - Holiday Park Phase II: Awarded a construction contract to advance playground renovations, baseball dugout shade enhancements, wayfinding signage, a new dog park, landscaping, and trail improvements. A purchase

order and notice to proceed have been issued, with a groundbreaking ceremony anticipated in spring 2026.

- Joseph C. Carter Park: Accepted a \$2.18 million grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, through the Land and Water Conservation Fund/ Outdoor Recreation Legacy Program Partnership. Community outreach efforts have been conducted to provide opportunities to share feedback and learn more about the project.
- Mills Pond Park: A notice to proceed has been issued, effective March 31, for construction of the all-in-one concession, restroom, and office building in the softball field area.
- Sunrise Middle School Phase II: Received competitive bids within the approved budget for construction of the new pavilion, installation of artificial turf fields, and completion of drainage improvements. Staff are currently evaluating the proposals for responsiveness and responsibility and anticipate presenting a recommendation to the City Commission for contract award by April 2026.
- Warfield Park: The Department of Health (DOH) has approved the new splash pad, marking an important milestone toward project completion.

### **Commission Priority: Bolstering Thriving Communities**

The focus of this initiative is to expand internet access, support affordable housing, revitalize key districts, and invest in workforce development and youth scholarships.

- Launched FTL Community Talks, a structured community 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.
- Awarded \$375,000 in forgivable loans to The Art of Tea, LLC for the build-out of a commercial warehouse to consolidate retail, warehousing, and operational processes. The renovated facility will house experiential retail space, warehousing, and operational functions, creating a vital and versatile space for both the company and the local community, encouraging foot traffic and supporting the area's economic vitality.
- Coordinated the Summer Youth Employment Program with CareerSource Broward, which will provide a paid summer work experience program to sixty-three (63) Fort Lauderdale residents.
- Awarded a \$350,000 grant from the Florida Department of Education for the City's Education Enrichment Program. Offerings will include Promoting Lifetime Activities for Youth (PLAY) After-School Program, Teen Recreational Intramural Passport

(TRIP) Program, community summer camp academic enrichment, and summer job readiness and internships.

- Partnered with Experience Aviation to provide structured paid on-the-job learning opportunities to twenty-three (23) youth residing in the City of Fort Lauderdale.
- Partnered with the Young Men's Christian Association of South Florida, Inc., to provide structured workforce and college and career training in the summer of 2026 that will include two (2) workshop sessions per month, with one (1) session dedicated to career exploration and the other focused on resume and essay writing, civic and community engagement, and the development of financial literacy and college readiness skills within the underserved community.
- Affordable Housing Initiatives
  - Hosted a Joint Workshop between the City Commission and the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) to discuss the City of Fort Lauderdale's Affordable Housing Incentive Report. Topics included:
    - A strategy to expedite development approvals for affordable housing permits;
    - Waiving affordable housing development fees and impact fees; and
    - Reducing parking requirements for affordable housing developments.
  - Awarded \$180,343 in State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) 2024-2025 Program Income Funds to CityHouse-Delray Beach, Inc. to rehabilitate two (2) properties to provide housing and supportive services for single women and their children who are at risk of homelessness.
- Entered into an Interlocal Agreement with the Housing Authority of the City of Fort Lauderdale to allow designated Housing Authority vehicles to obtain fuel at cost using City-owned fuel islands.
- Recognized the fourteenth (14<sup>th</sup>) graduating class of the Neighborhood Leadership Academy.

### **City Manager Initiative: Organizational and Operational Enhancements**

- Developed strategies and recommendations for revenue generation to the Budget Advisory Board (ongoing).
- Successfully negotiated a flat rate for the City's 2026 Cigna Dental Insurance premiums.

- Launched the Sworkit Health Application, a new total well-being solution for City staff that provides access to resources supporting employees' total well-being, including physical activity, mindfulness, meditation, nutrition, and musculoskeletal health.
- Partnered with Cigna Healthcare to provide City staff with access to Headspace, a guided self-care application that provides daily mental health support.
- Completed the Microsoft Copilot pilot program, which demonstrated strong adoption, high usability, and measurable productivity gains across participating departments. The citywide rollout is underway.
- Secured amendment to the Personnel Rules to add Juneteenth as a recognized City Holiday. Juneteenth, observed annually on June 19, commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans in the United States and has been recognized as a federal holiday since 2021.
- Kicked off the FY 2027 Budget Development Process, communicating to Department Directors the importance of fiscal prudence, resourcefulness, and innovation as we build a budget that weighs the needs of today with a deliberate focus on preparing for the unpredictability of tomorrow.
- Finalized Phase II of the creation of the Capital Projects Department as part of a strategic reorganization to centralize and strengthen the coordinated planning, design, and delivery of major capital construction initiatives citywide, in collaboration with operating departments.
- Hosted the City's first Management Retreat in seven years, bringing together exceptional leaders united by a common goal: enhancing the City of Fort Lauderdale. During this retreat, the team engaged in meaningful discussions on translating Commission priorities into daily operations and improving internal communication.
- Coordinated the FY 2027 Commission Prioritization Workshop, which serves as an important component of the City's planning process. Commission priorities drive internal planning and help to advance advocacy efforts and collaboration with other governmental entities such as the County and the State.
- Recognized Fort Lauderdale Schools' Teacher of the Year recipients.
- Reaffirmed the City's Financial Integrity Principles to incorporate current best practices, stakeholder feedback, and guidelines for the Emergency Reserve Fund. These principles support sound financial governance and long-term fiscal stability.
- City Awards:
  - 2026 Florida Association of Public Procurement Officials (FAPPO) Award of Excellence in Public Procurement, which recognizes procurement

agencies that meet or exceed rigorous benchmarks and nationally recognized best practices within the procurement profession.

- 2026 Florida Association of Public Procurement Officials (FAPPO) Best Practice Award for Cost Savings, which recognizes the City's efforts to strengthen the information quote process citywide as an exemplary procurement practice resulting in measurable cost savings through reduced product or service costs, lowered administrative expenses, or innovative approaches that enhance efficiency and overall economy within the procurement process.
- 42<sup>nd</sup> Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Budget, which is the highest form of recognition in government budgeting. The City's budget also received four (4) special recognitions for long-range operating financial plans, strategic goals and strategies, budget process, and capital programming.
- American Public Works Association (APWA) South Florida Branch Water/Wastewater Project of the Year Award for the forty-eight-inch (48") Water Transmission Main Project.
- Cigna's Healthy Workforce Gold Level Designation for 2025, which recognizes the City's commitment to nurturing a sustainable, healthy work culture through well-being strategies and initiatives.
- NatureScape Emerald Award from Broward County's Natural Resources Division for Riverside Park, recognizing the City's careful cultivation of landscaping that secured existing tree roots, added plants that provided additional cover and feeding for wildlife, and used smart irrigation systems to eliminate water waste and deliver operational savings.

### **City Manager Initiative: Representing the City**

The City Manager's role encompasses not only organizational leadership but also active participation in the community we serve. Accordingly, over the past quarter, I have had the privilege of representing the City at:

- United Day – YMCA MLK Day of Service
- City of Fort Lauderdale Martin Luther King Parade & Festival
- Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce Downtown Council Breakfast
- Downtown Development Association (DDA) Huizenga Park Grand Reopening
- Florida League of Cities Broward Days at the Florida State Legislature
- City of Fort Lauderdale – Fort Lauderdale Executive (FXE) Airport's ACE Awards

- IAFF Local 765 Firefighters Remembrance (Remember and Honor) Ceremony
- Birch Park Finger Streets Association's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- FLPD Group Violence Intervention (GVI) Project Community Meet and Greet
- Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce's 116<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting
- 20<sup>th</sup> Annual American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) South Florida Best Practices Conference – Panelist
- Sistrunk Parade & Festival – Parade Judge
- Sistrunk Community Talks
- FLPD Community Basketball Event for Group Violence Intervention (GVI) Program
- 2026 Stonewall Gala Standing on the Shoulders of Heroes
- City of Fort Lauderdale Aviation Advisory Board Meeting
- City of Fort Lauderdale Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Meeting
- City of Fort Lauderdale Budget Advisory Board Meetings
- City of Fort Lauderdale Economic Development Advisory Board Meeting
- Beach Business Improvement District (BBID) Advisory Committee Meeting
- Various civic associations, including, but not limited to, Harbor Beach Homeowners Association, Rio Vista Civic Association, Victoria Park Civic Association, Breakwater Surf Homes, Lofts of Palm Aire Village, Riverland Manors Homeowners Association, The Landings Residential Association, and the Sunrise Intracoastal Homeowners Association.

### **Looking Ahead**

The outlook for the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2026 is positive. Our team is fully engaged on the following initiatives, and so much more:

- Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations with International Association of Fire Fighters and Fraternal Order of Police
- Prospect Lake Clean Water Center functional and wet testing
- City Hall and Holiday Park Garage project advancement
- Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Development
- Advocacy (at the federal, state and local levels)

I want to thank the City Commission for the opportunity to lead this dynamic organization. I am truly inspired by the progress our dedicated public servants have achieved over the

past quarter. I look forward to the continued results the FTL Team will deliver for our neighbors, businesses, and visitors.

**Attachment:**

1. City Managers Quarterly Update October - December 2025 (Letter to the Commission No. 26-028)
- c: Shari McCartney, City Attorney  
David R. Soloman, City Clerk  
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor  
City Manager's Office  
Department Directors



## LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

**LTC No: 26-028**

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

**FROM:** Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*

**DATE:** January 30, 2026

**SUBJECT: City Manager's Quarterly Update (October - December 2025)**

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Fiscal Year 2026 is off to a productive start. As we continue or launch the programs and initiatives approved by the City Commission with the adoption of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget, I wanted to take a moment to highlight a few key accomplishments during the first quarter of FY 2026 (October – December 2025). The following provides an update since the issuance of my Six (6)-Month Report (LTC No. 25-221) on October 30, 2025, and my 90-Day Report (Memorandum No. 25-106) issued on July 1, 2025.

### **Commission Priority: Public Safety**

The focus of this priority is reducing crime and increasing the safety of our City by providing the necessary resources for our first responders and building community partnerships.

#### ***Fort Lauderdale Police Department***

- Accepted a \$650,000 grant from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for the Fort Lauderdale Violence Interruption Project focused on reducing violent crime through evidence-based, data-driven strategies.
- Accepted a \$195,192 Enhanced Marine Enforcement Grant from Broward County to continue “Operation Venice of America” by providing up to 3,696 hours of peak time waterway law enforcement patrols and marine law enforcement training.
- Began demolition of the former Police Headquarters project, which is a pivotal step toward occupying the new building and returning City Commission meetings to a City owned facility.

#### ***Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue***

- Entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Broward Health to implement a Whole Blood Exchange Program, an innovative initiative designed to enhance

pre-hospital emergency care by allowing personnel to administer whole blood to critically injured trauma patients in the field.

- Successfully managed public safety elements of the 2025 Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, ensuring medical readiness and effective emergency response throughout the event.
- Initiated the reaccreditation process for the City's Office of Emergency Management, reaffirming the City's commitment to maintaining a resilient, well-coordinated emergency management program prepared to plan, respond, and recover from hazards during routine operations and large-scale incidents.
- Conducted Operation Holiday Cheer, an annual partnership with Broward Health to entertain and lift the spirits of patients by rappelling down the side of the hospital building in holiday costumes.
- Finished installing two (2) replacement lifeguard towers constructed from aluminum and composite materials, making them more durable than their predecessors. The towers are also two (2) feet taller, providing a higher vantage point for lifeguards.
- Hosted the topping-off ceremony for the forthcoming Ocean Rescue Headquarters at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center.

### **Commission Priority: Homeless Response**

The focus of this priority is to address homelessness in the City of Fort Lauderdale by creating pathways to housing as well as by providing access to comprehensive services.

- Partnered with Hope South Florida to support the County-funded Safe Parking Program, a critical initiative launched on December 15, 2025, aimed at assisting residents living in their vehicles. Our collaboration is focused on establishing a strong exit strategy by granting participants direct access to City housing assistance programs.
- Engaged the City Attorney's Office to develop a revised ordinance with focus on setting appropriate separation distances between events, establishing a necessary residential buffer, and creating a limit on the frequency of large group feedings by the same organization in the Downtown area.
- Formally aligned Community Court coordination under the Housing and Community Development Division, which optimizes case tracking, coordination, and the linkage of participants directly to housing resources.
- Successfully hired a new park ranger who is embedded with the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT). Two (2) additional park ranger positions are in the recruitment process.

### **Commission Priority: Infrastructure and Resilience**

The focus of this priority is to identify and implement improvements that will address infrastructure needs relating to water, wastewater, stormwater, and the public right-of-way, as well as resilience needs relating to extreme weather events and sea level rise.

- Closed on Special Obligation Bond, Series 2025, which will provide financial support to finalize the Police Department Headquarters project and advance seawall and bridge replacement projects. The funds will also be used to address serious and failed roadways and sidewalks citywide.
- Created an ad-hoc committee to formulate a Program for Public Information (PPI) aimed at devising a community outreach strategy to reduce flooding impacts and improve the City's National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating Score (CRS).
- Commenced the initial deployment of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) in the Imperial Point neighborhood. Communication efforts are planned for the next phase of installations.
- Fortify Lauderdale:
  - The Dorsey-Riverbend Pump Station advanced through the construction phase and is scheduled to be substantially complete by the end of January 2026.
  - Entered into a \$32.2 million agreement for the Victoria Park Stormwater Improvements (Construction started in January 2026).
  - Presented Phase II recommendations to the City Commission and secured final rankings for the implementation prioritization for Phase II.
  - Entered into agreements with various contractors for \$14 million in general stormwater infrastructure construction.

### **Commission Priority: Public Enjoyment of the Waterways**

The focus of this priority is to foster inclusive and inviting recreational spaces, encouraging responsible use, and safeguarding the environment.

- Received approval from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to institute a speed zone change in the intracoastal waterway between Sunrise Boulevard and Oakland Park Boulevard.
- Accepted a \$152,192 grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for the purchase and operation of a sewage pumpout vessel. The solicitation process for the grant funded sewage pumpout vessel was also finalized.

- Presented the Living Seawall Permit Fee Rebate Program to the City Commission for consideration. The program is intended to incentivize living seawall adoption by private property owners.

### **Commission Priority: Public Spaces and Cultural Initiatives**

The focus of this initiative is to improve landscaping, utilizing empty spaces, expanding parks and green areas, supporting arts and culture, and planning for a new City Hall.

- Finalized the selection of a project partner for the new City Hall.
- Completed installation of Exclusive Play Area signage, the final step in operationalizing the new ordinance.
- Created a sense of community and holiday cheer by hosting family-friendly events, including Light Up Lauderdale, Light Up the Galt, Light Up the Beach, Light Up Sistrunk, Light Up Carter Park, the Menorah Lighting Celebration, and Kwanzaa Ujamaa.
- Parks Bond Updates
  - Abiaka Park: Officially opened as a quiet waterfront greenspace in the Riverside Park neighborhood.
  - Annie Beck Park: Substantially completed construction of the new kayak launch, shoreline stabilization, and walking trail.
  - Bayview Park: Reopened the tennis courts following the court resurfacing and the replacement of 480-linear-feet of windscreens that surround the tennis courts.
  - Florence C. Hardy Park: Substantially completed Phase I, which included LED field and court lighting improvements, and Phase II, which consisted of playground replacement, outdoor fitness station upgrades, walking trail improvements, railroad barrier fencing, and fitness station renovations
  - Jimmy Evert Tennis Center (Holiday Park Phase I): Construction was completed and the facility reopened to the public. A formal grand opening ceremony was held, hosted by the City in partnership with the Orange Bowl Committee, in conjunction with the Orange Bowl International Tennis Championship.
  - Sara Horn Greenway: Completed improvements consisting of new signage, site furnishings, and landscaping. Project completion was commemorated as part of the district scavenger hunt.
  - Sunrise Middle School Joint Use Park: Hosted the groundbreaking celebrating the start of improvements bringing enhanced recreational spaces and new opportunities for students and neighbors alike.

- Tarpon Cove Park: Completed enhancements including new site furnishings, signage, landscaping, and a kayak launch. Project completion was commemorated as part of the district scavenger hunt.
- Tunnel Top Plaza: Began installation of the shade structure.
- Concluded staff review and analysis of unsolicited proposals for the Holiday Park Parking Garage and presented to the City Commission.
- Conducted numerous outreach efforts to obtain community input on the Las Olas Mobility Western Corridor design.
- Served as the host location for Winter Training Camps for visiting schools, universities, and colleges at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center.
- Onboarded a vendor to complete the Sistrunk Boulevard Midblock Crosswalks project, which will install five (5) new crosswalks along Sistrunk Boulevard, from NW 3 Avenue to NW 18 Avenue. The goal of the project is to improve the safety and mobility of pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users of all ages and abilities by making American with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements and installing rectangular rapid flashing beacons, pavement markings, and signage.
- Entered into first amendment to the Comprehensive Agreement with Hall of Fame Partners, LLC. The amendment updates the agreement to reflect changes to the project scope and budget, allows grant funding to be used as an eligible funding source, and revises the revenue-sharing structure to better protect the City from potential financial risk. The amendment supports continued progress on the Hall of Fame redevelopment.
- Honored by the Florida Urban Forestry Council with the Outstanding Tree Ordinance Award.

### **Commission Priority: Bolstering Thriving Communities**

The focus of this initiative is to expand internet access, support affordable housing, revitalize key districts, and invest in workforce development and youth scholarships.

- Launched the Municipal Services Affordability Program, which provides direct financial assistance to financially burdened households facing challenges paying for water, sewer, and sanitation services.
- Finalized the Northwest-Progresso-Flagler Heights Community Redevelopment Agency (NPF CRA) Amended and Restated Community Redevelopment Plan (Amended Plan), which reinforces the City's commitment to revitalizing the NPF CRA. The plan identifies five (5) redevelopment goals to guide future investment in Economic Development; Housing and Residential Life; Public Improvements and Infrastructure; Transportation, Mobility, and Parking; and Redevelopment Support.

- Hosted an outreach meeting for property owners and their representatives to provide an overview of the Himmarshee Village Historic District Architectural Resource Survey.
- Advanced the New River Crossing Tunnel Initiative by obtaining thirteen responses to the Request for Information (RFI), intended to engage qualified firms to share feedback on project delivery methods, innovative technologies, financing mechanisms, and timelines to aid in developing future procurement strategies.
- Concluded the National League of Cities Advancing Economic Mobility Rapid Grant Program, which supported Startup FTL's Ideation and Grow cohorts by providing entrepreneurs with training and mentorship that culminated in a pitch competition on December 12, 2025.
- Coordinated a Caribbean Relief Drive in partnership with Food for the Poor (FFTP) to support Jamaica and other communities affected by Hurricane Melissa. With the help of our neighbors, twelve (12) pallets of essential supplies - including food, hygiene products, baby items, flashlights, and tarps - were collected.
- Hosted the StartUp FTL Pitch Competition, where entrepreneurs shared their business concepts before a panel of judges and community leaders. The objective was to build confidence, learn new skills, and provide the foundation necessary to move from concept to reality.
- Recognized twelve (12) high school students receiving scholarships from the City in partnership with the Broward Education Foundation.
- Continued the student recognition program, with this quarter highlighting students from the Dillard Innovation Zone who exemplify the eight (8) essential core character traits.
- Affordable Housing Initiatives
  - Hosted the groundbreaking ceremony for the New Hope Affordable Housing Project in conjunction with the New Hope Church. This six (6)-story development will bring thirty (30) modern workforce housing units to our community.
  - Executed a Development Incentive Program (DIP) forgivable loan to 312 NW 7th Street, LLC to support an eight (8)-story mixed-use, mixed-income, multi-family development containing 422 residential rental units, 1,600 square feet of retail, and 580 parking spaces consisting of 559 spaces within seven (7) levels of structured parking and twenty-one (21) on-street parking spaces. The project includes forty-three (43) income-restricted to affordable housing units (ten percent (10%) of all units).
  - Awarded \$750,000 to Sistrunk Apartments, LLC under the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) and the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) for two (2) apartment buildings, known as the Aldridge and the

Laramore. Each apartment building will contain thirty-six (36) housing units which will all be set aside for households earning at or below sixty percent (60%) of the Area Median Income (AMI). The project will also include approximately 4,400 square feet of commercial/retail space.

### **City Manager Initiative: Organizational and Operational Enhancements**

- Developed strategies and recommendations for revenue generation to the Budget Advisory Board (ongoing).
- Launched a public facing Event Explorer and Impact Dashboard intended to centralize information and provide a transparent tool to inform the public, particularly impacted neighborhoods, about upcoming event opportunities.
- Launched a generative artificial intelligence (AI) pilot program with fifty (50) Microsoft Co-Pilot licenses shared across all City departments. This project is aimed at improving organizational efficiency.
- Initiated exit interview requirement for departing City staff aimed at obtaining crucial feedback and enhanced internal communication channels to foster a more transparent work environment.
- Brought forward an amendment to the Code of Ordinances to establish a prohibition against an employee directly reporting to a relative or a relative's direct supervisor, providing a mechanism to align the Code with the current practices of the organization.
- Hosted the City's first holiday Employee Appreciation Event to foster a positive organizational culture by making employees feel valued, recognized, and connected to the organization's mission, ultimately leading to higher productivity and loyalty.
- Hosted the City's Annual Employee Health and Wellness fair to provide employees with actionable information and resources to make healthier choices, leading to better physical and mental health and reducing healthcare costs.

### **City Manager Initiative: Representing the City**

The role of the City Manager extends beyond the leadership of staff, to becoming part of the community that we serve. To that end, over the past ninety (90) days I have had the pleasure to represent the City at:

- 12<sup>th</sup> annual Global Business Luncheon at the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show
- Broward City & County Manager's Association
- Fire Chiefs Association of Broward County 2025 Award Ceremony

- Florida Redevelopment Association Awards Ceremony
- International City/County Manager's Association (ICMA) National Conference
- Links Incorporated Emerald Luncheon
- National Forum of Black Public Administrators Quarterly Meeting & South Florida Leadership Exchange – Panelist
- New Hope Baptist Church's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Services
- YMCA Holiday Park groundbreaking ceremony
- Various civic or neighborhood association meetings including:
  - Dillard Park Homeowners Association
  - Edgewood Civic Association
  - Sunset Civic Association
  - Central Beach Alliance

I also had an opportunity to visit Tallahassee in December 2025 to establish and foster relationships, advocate for our legislative priorities and appropriation requests.

### **Looking Ahead**

The outlook for the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2026 is positive. Our team is fully engaged in the following initiatives, and so much more:

- Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations with International Association of Fire Fighters and Fraternal Order of Police
- Prospect Lake Clean Water Center staff onboarding and training
- City Hall and Holiday Park Garage project advancement
- Spring Break operational planning
- Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Development
- Advocacy (at the federal, state and local levels)

I want to thank the City Commission for allowing me to lead this dynamic organization. I am extremely motivated by the progress our team of committed public servants has made over the past quarter. I look forward to seeing the results the FTL Team delivers for our neighbors, businesses, and visitors.

### **Attachments:**

1. 90-Day Report (Commission Memorandum No. 25-106)
2. Six-Month Report (Letter to the Commission No. 25-221)

c: Shari McCartney, City Attorney  
David R. Soloman, City Clerk  
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor

LTC No. 26-028  
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City Manager's Office  
Department Directors



## Memorandum

**Memorandum No: 25-106**

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

**FROM:** Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*

**DATE:** July 1, 2025

**SUBJECT: City Manager's 90-Day Report**

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Today, July 1, marks my 91<sup>st</sup> day serving as Fort Lauderdale's City Manager. With so much to absorb and implement, I have been diligent and deliberate about listening, learning, observing and engaging with you (elected officials), staff, neighbors and the larger community. Your support, guidance, and trust have been tremendous, and I appreciate your commitment to ensuring a smooth onboarding and transition process.

During my initial months, I prioritized setting expectations, improving workplace culture, and promoting excellence across the city. These fundamentals create a framework for the continued success of our organization and support the advancement of Fiscal Year 2025 and 2026 Commission priorities, the City's Vision Plan and Strategic Plan.

The City Commission priorities include public safety, homelessness response, infrastructure and resilience, public enjoyment of waterways, public spaces and cultural initiatives, and bolstering thriving communities. I am committed to advancing these priorities and pleased to provide a selection of key initiatives and accomplishments over my first 90 days as City Manager.

### Commission Priority: Public Safety

The focus of this priority is reducing crime and increasing the safety of our City by providing the necessary resources to our first responders and building community partnerships.

- The Police Department increased motor unit visibility in high traffic areas within the City and successfully partnered with the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) to conduct an operation targeting violent crime offenders.
- The Fire Rescue Department welcomed the largest recruitment class since 1999, which included 35 new firefighters making 14 of our rescues 3-person rescues. The FY 2026 budget includes enhanced professional development funding to

provide the support needed to retain these new team members and support the growth of the department.

- The School Zone Speed Cameras initiative identified 12 schools for the first phase. The City conducted speed and volume studies in May 2025 and re-released the solicitation.
- Instituted a monthly overtime review with the Police Department's command staff to ensure that we are strategic and fiscally responsible in the way that we manage our public safety personnel.
- Procurement efforts for the Radio Infrastructure Modernization Project have concluded, representing a major milestone in modernizing the City's emergency radio systems.
- Celebrated the graduation of 11 participants of the Fort Lauderdale Police Explorer Program which builds relationships with the community by providing high school students with hands-on training from police officers.

#### Commission Priority: Homelessness Response

The focus of this priority is to address homelessness in the City of Fort Lauderdale by creating pathways to housing as well as by providing access to comprehensive services.

- As part of the proposed FY 2026 budget, I recommended the restructuring of staffing focused on the homelessness response to increase synergy with the City's Housing and Community Development Division.
- Staff began planning efforts on a safe parking pilot program to deliver a new and innovative way to provide safety, resources, and a pathway to stable housing.
- Finalized the Community Court space lease to solidify program stability and continuity.
- Executed an agreement to provide \$700,000 in State Home Initiative Partnership (SHIP) program funds to provide gap financing for the construction of seven (7) affordable housing units for low- to moderate-income families.

#### Commission Priority: Infrastructure and Resilience

The focus of this priority is to identify and implement improvements that will address infrastructure needs relating to water, wastewater, stormwater, and the public right-of-way as well as resilience needs relating to extreme weather events and sea level rise.

- Progress continues on the Fortify Lauderdale initiative including the start of the Progresso Village Neighborhood Stormwater Improvements Project as well as determining prioritization factors for Phase II projects.

- The City is taking decisive steps to achieve its Net Zero goals including incorporating in the FY 2026 Budget the installation of solar panels on City facilities and incorporating electric charging stations in parking facilities.
- The City's annual paving program successfully completed milling and resurfacing on Bayshore Drive and South Gordon Road.
- As hurricane season was quickly approaching, I focused on providing proactive emergency response activities to ensure we are prepared. I expedited the City's numerous Emergency Management training sessions, to be completed in May 2025, including a citywide tabletop exercise to ensure the City is well positioned to address extreme weather events and any other emergencies that arise.
- The Parks and Recreation Department has streamlined the sandbag distribution process to make it easier for our neighbors to tap into this valuable resource and our Fire and Police Departments took an active role in the Eye of the Storm event at the Museum of Discovery and Science.

#### Commission Priority: Public Enjoyment of Waterways

The focus of this priority is to foster inclusive and inviting recreational spaces, encouraging responsible use, and safeguarding the environment.

- On April 27, 2025, I appointed Marco Aguilera as the City's first Chief Waterway Officer, acting as an advisor and liaison between City departments and boards, external agencies, stakeholder groups, and local, state, and federal governments on water quality and marine issues, policies and appropriations related to City waterways.
- Facilitated a public meeting to address the concerns of long-term anchoring across waterways in Fort Lauderdale. The public meeting highlighted potential options including anchoring limitation areas and the ability to enact a local ordinance through the passage of House Bill 486. City staff are drafting a local ordinance for City Commission consideration.
- To prioritize waterway efforts and increase collaboration, on May 1, 2025, I coordinated for the City Manager's Office to present at the Marine Advisory Board (MAB) meeting. The presentation focused on the role of the City Manager's Office, the importance of waterway issues, and ways staff can support MAB priorities and goals.
- The FY 2026 Proposed Budget introduced a new Marina Facilities Fund dedicated to ensuring that neighbors have access to clean, well-maintained public boat ramps and marinas.

### Commission Priority: Public Spaces and Cultural Initiatives

The focus of this initiative is to improve landscaping, using empty spaces, expanding parks and green areas, supporting arts and culture, and planning for a new City Hall.

- The City Hall project has continued to advance with the recommendation for an Owners' Representative and the acceptance of an unsolicited proposal. The Design Criteria Package solicitation is scheduled to be released in July 2025.
- The City hosted the Fleet Week welcome reception on April 23, 2025. The event honored service men and women with welcoming words from City and Navy officials, a dinner, and an amateur hockey game.
- The Florida Panthers Championship Celebration was hosted in Fort Lauderdale which provided international recognition and local economic impacts while promoting public safety and fiscal responsibility.
- Advanced key agreements and budget amendments to solidify the partnership with the YMCA to expand the offerings at Holiday Park.
- Honored Juneteenth through a presentation at the City Commission meeting and established the City's first Juneteenth celebration event at Carter Park.

### Commission Priority: Bolster Thriving Communities

The focus of this initiative is to expand internet access, supporting affordable housing, revitalizing key districts, and investing in workforce development and youth scholarships.

- Began developing the framework for the City's new Economic Development Division which will ultimately be led by the City's new Chief Economic Development Officer in FY 2026.
- Finalized the interlocal agreement with Broward County to extend the Northwest Progresso Flagler Height Community Redevelopment Area for 10 years at 50% of the City's annual Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- Collaborated with the Broward Education Foundation to select 12 students to receive one-year scholarships under the City's new partnership and finalizing plans to publicly recognize and present the scholarships during an upcoming City Commission Meeting.
- Applied for and awarded the \$20,000 National League of Cities Advancing Economic Mobility Grant. The City will expand the StartUp FTL Program and offer microgrants to small businesses with this funding.

- The City hosted the Building Business with Impact Pitch Competition providing a testing ground for entrepreneurs to refine their business pitches in a dynamic format.
- The City secured \$3.75 million this Legislative Session for Local Funding Initiative Requests:
  - Las Olas Boulevard Safety Improvements - \$1,000,000
  - Roadway Resurfacing - \$750,000
  - Violence Interruption Program - \$650,000
  - Galt Mile Street Safety Improvements - \$500,000
  - SE 13th Street Bridge Replacement - \$500,000
  - Education Enrichment Program - \$350,000

Commission Priority: Transportation and Traffic

The focus of this initiative is to expand multi-modal accommodations, enhance microtransit services, mitigate traffic congestion, complete a sidewalk assessment, and advance the New River Crossing initiative.

- The City Commission adopted Resolution No. 25-71 on April 15, 2025 to advance the New River Crossing tunnel efforts. City staff have promoted the project at conferences, established working meetings with Broward County, and initiated strategic financial discussions.
- The City secured a temporary deviation for the bridge opening schedule for the SE 17 Street Causeway. The temporary deviation period is June 2, 2025, through November 28, 2025. The deviation eliminates two bridge openings during the morning peak period and two bridge openings during the evening peak period.
- Issued key Parking Division solicitations for the Las Olas Garage façade lighting and for a mobile payment vendor.
- The Northwest Community MicroMover service experienced exponential growth since April, more than tripling in ridership. The service received Commission support at the June 17 meeting when presented as one of the Net Zero Plan next steps.
- Coordinated pedestrian safety improvement commitments with the Florida Department of Transportation and Broward County. Improvements include multiple new crosswalks along US-1 and Andrews Avenue as well as traffic signal improvements on NE 3 Avenue.
- The City Commission approved the proposed third amendment to the Transportation System Surtax Interlocal Agreement providing FY 2026 funding in

the amount of \$3,841,408. The proposed FY 2026 budget allocates additional surtax funding for the City's MicroMover service (Circuit).

#### City Manager Initiative: Employee Engagement

It has been my honor to meet with City staff across the organization to applaud their contributions, hear their concerns, and assess the changes needed to ensure the City is well positioned to address the ever-changing needs of our community. Below are a few initiatives that directly impact the valued members of our team:

- The City has opened bargaining discussions with the Teamsters and the Federation of Public Employees bargaining groups
- The Human Resources Department has held and planned for catch-up employee recognition events to address the two-year delay in recognizing milestone anniversaries for employees
- The City implemented a Unified Communications Plan to centralize internal and external communication efforts

#### City Manager Initiative: Organizational and Operational Enhancements

The focus of this initiative is to further acknowledge the importance of ensuring our City remains mindful of our valuable assets as well as our public image. The following were implemented to aid in advancing this initiative:

- Initiated a citywide internal control review to identify vulnerabilities to fraud, either external or internal to the organization
- Launched a comprehensive, in-person cybersecurity training initiative across the City to empower employees with hands-on knowledge and personalized services to identify risks, follow cybersecurity best practices, and safeguard organizational data.
- Elevated the Commission Meeting experience including a speaker backdrop, streamlined Commission and staff hospitality, and new camera angles with the support of the City Clerk's Office.
- Established a Dress Code Policy, which provided clarity and consistency of expectations for City staff to further promote and enhance the City's professional image and public perception.

#### City Manager Initiative: Representing the City

The role of the City Manager extends beyond the leadership of staff, to becoming part of the community that we serve. To that end, over the last 90 days I have had the pleasure to represent the City at:

- Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce
- Bilzin Sumberg Development Conference
- Broward County City Manager's Association
- Broward League of Cities
- Downtown Development Authority
- Budget Advisory Board
- Marine Advisory Board
- Various civic association meetings including, but not limited to, Colee Hammock, Council of Civic Associations, Downtown Fort Lauderdale, Flagler Village, Lake Ridge, Melrose Park, Tarpon River and community organizations like the NAACP.

I am extremely proud of our team of dedicated public servants. None of these highlighted accomplishments could be completed without their support.

Thanks again for the confidence and trust placed on me to push Fort Lauderdale forward.

C: D'Wayne Spence, Interim City Attorney  
David R. Soloman, City Clerk  
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor  
City Manager's Office  
Department Directors



## LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

**LTC No: 25-221**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission  
**FROM:** Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*  
**DATE:** October 30, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** **City Manager's Six-Month Report (July - September 2025)**

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Fiscal Year 2026 is off to a great start. As we launch the new programs and initiatives approved by the City Commission with the adoption of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget, I wanted to take a moment to highlight a few key accomplishments during the last three (3) months of Fiscal Year 2025. The following provides an update since the issuance of my 90-Day Report (Memorandum No. 25-106) on July 1, 2025.

### **Commission Priority: Public Safety**

The focus of this priority is reducing crime and increasing the safety of our City by providing the necessary resources to our first responders and building community partnerships.

#### ***Fort Lauderdale Police Department***

- Initiated a Cyber Attack Response and Mitigation program through the City's annual Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Grant Program appropriation.
- Secured a \$97,618 grant from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to conduct a pedestrian and bicycle safety public awareness and enforcement campaign.
- Participated (via our Marine Unit) in operation "Risky Business" with the United States Coast Guard's Fort Lauderdale Station to conduct recreational safety boardings on vessels operating as charters, which resulted in the terminations of nine (9) illegal charters and over sixty (60) Coast Guard violations issued.
- Achieved the prestigious Excelsior status accreditation from the Commission for Law Enforcement Accreditation for the fifth consecutive time.
- Hosted the annual National Night Out event to promote community and police partnerships.

### ***Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue***

- Received \$1.3 million through the Assistant to Firefighter Grant for high-rise training.
- Secured a \$1.1 million State of Florida Safehouse Grant, which will be used to design an enhanced emergency operations center.
- Awarded a \$403,278 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant, which will enhance regional preparedness, interoperability, and response coordination for large-scale emergencies.
- Obtained \$123,000 through the State of Florida Drone Replacement Grant, which will replace outdated drones and standardize all public safety drones in the City.
- Significantly progressed on the construction of Fire Stations 13 and 88 with the completion of the Design Criteria Package (DCP) and 30% drawings.
- Provided emergency services for several large events, ensuring safety and minimizing incidents.
- Partnered with Dolphin Carpet and Tile and WSVN to replace the carpet at the home of Werner Frickman, a 101-year-old veteran and neighbor.
- Proudly honored Lieutenant Bobby Glenn, a trailblazing Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue retiree, who was hired on September 20, 1970.

### **Commission Priority: Homeless Response**

The focus of this priority is to address homelessness in the City of Fort Lauderdale by creating pathways to housing as well as by providing access to comprehensive services.

- Utilizing funding under the Housing for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) grant program, the City has increased support for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance which provides short-term rent, mortgage, and utility assistance as well as permanent housing support to households that meet the HOPWA eligibility requirements.
- Added resources and realigned existing City services to create enhanced outreach and enforcement response to homelessness. This includes:
  - The addition of three (3) civilian positions (via position reclassifications) to the Homeless Outreach Team;

- Implementing an intensive outreach unit with the help of Fire Rescues' Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Unit and the Police Co-responder Unit; and
  - Adding two (2) case workers (via position reclassifications) to the coordinated homelessness response effort to assist individuals in need of support and following-up with those referred to outside service providers.
- Sponsored substance abuse treatment beds provided by Fellowship Recovery Community Organization.
- Funded a safe overnight parking program that will allow a service provider to partner with the City to implement a pilot program to assess the effectiveness of the program.
- Restructured the Homeless Initiative Response within the Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) program to strengthen referral pathways, operational responses, and coordination with multiple City departments.
- Gained access to Broward Health patient documentation portal (Epic) for improved tracking and follow up.
- Implemented an automated daily report that identifies potential unhoused individuals encountered by EMS transporting crews, ensuring timely MIH follow-up.
- Established a formal EMS referral process allowing field crews to directly refer unhoused individuals to the MIH Team through the FLFR electronic patient care report (ImageTrend), enabling immediate follow-up and linkage to care.
- Developing an external referral process to align with the City's new FY 2026 organizational structure, supporting coordination between Fire, Police, and City outreach divisions.
- Hired an additional Community Health Coordinator (CHC) with a background as a Nurse Practitioner to enhance care coordination, assist with medical clearances, and strengthen follow-up for complex cases.
- Through a grant from the Broward Behavioral Health Coalition's Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) Network of Addiction Care Program and the Florida Department of Health's Overdose to Action (OD2A) partnership, the City leveraged funding to support substance use disorder treatment, outreach activities, and continued follow-up with individuals requiring recovery support.

- Secured strategically located Narcan distribution hubs in areas identified as overdose hot spots, significantly expanding access to a life-saving intervention for opioid-related emergencies and reducing preventable deaths.

### **Commission Priority: Infrastructure and Resilience**

The focus of this priority is to identify and implement improvements that will address infrastructure needs relating to water, wastewater, stormwater, and the public right-of-way as well as resilience needs relating to extreme weather events and sea level rise.

- Finalized the planning stage of the City's \$105.5 million Public Safety and Infrastructure Improvement bonds, which will provide the funding needed to finalize the new Police Headquarters Project, advance repairs on all serious and failed roadways and sidewalks citywide, as well as funding general infrastructure improvements like seawalls and bridges. This Special Obligation Bond was assigned an "AAA" rating from S&P Global Ratings, the highest rating available, recognizing the City's strong fiscal and management practices.
- Hosted the New River Crossing Tunnel Industry Day to promote the tunnel project with industry experts, engage with Brightline and Florida East Coast Railway, evaluate grant opportunities, and develop financial strategies.
- Prospect Lake Clean Water Center – Construction on the new water plant is continuing as planned. Pre-commissioning activities, including the flushing of raw water through the piping, began in September 2025. Staff onboarding preparations are underway, and key construction elements have been completed.
- Advanced Phase I of the Fortify program which includes the bid opening for Victoria Park, started the 72" outfall pipe in Progresso, and advanced the design in Melrose Manors, and reached 80% completion of the remaining pump station in Dorsey-Riverbend.
- Breakers Avenue Streetscape – Fully-funded the Breakers Avenue Streetscape project by securing an additional \$3,000,000 from the Broward County Surtax Grant Match Program.

### **Commission Priority: Public Enjoyment of the Waterways**

The focus of this priority is to foster inclusive and inviting recreational spaces, encouraging responsible use, and safeguarding the environment.

- Finalized the Regulation of Vessels Anchored in Public Waterways ordinance which makes it unlawful to anchor a vessel for more than thirty (30) days within a six (6)-month period.

- Pump-out Boat Grant – The City Commission approved a grant through the Clean Vessel Act from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for a sewage pump-out boat. Once implemented, the pump-out boat will provide free services to mitigate illegal sewage discharge into the waterways.
- Mangroves – The City planted one hundred (100) mangroves with fifty (50) additional mangroves scheduled to be planted.
- Derelict Vessel Emergency Response Procedures – To mitigate time delays with responding to derelict and sinking vessels, processes and procedures were updated to clearly define roles, responsibilities, and associated response timelines.

### **Commission Priority: Public Spaces and Cultural Initiatives**

The focus of this initiative is to improve landscaping, using empty spaces, expanding parks and green areas, supporting arts and culture, and planning for a new City Hall.

- Parks Bond Updates
  - Completed improvements at multiple parks including:
    - Tarpon Cove Park: Installed site furnishings, landscaping, ADA improvements, and a kayak launch.
    - Jimmy Evert Tennis Center: Added new courts and facilities, lighting, drainage, court irrigation and other general improvements. A new stadium court was also constructed to support future tournament needs.
    - Hardy Park: Installed a new playground, updated fitness equipment, enhanced the walking trail, and made ADA improvements.
    - Annie Beck Park: Completed shoreline stabilization, added a new kayak launch, and made general improvements.
  - Progressed Signature Park efforts, including:
    - Lockhart Park: Finalized the settlement agreement and began initial negotiations with Miami Beckham United.
    - Holiday Park: Released the Phase II construction solicitation.
    - Carter Park: Finalized the funding and planning

- Tunnel Top Park: Completed the shade structure installation.
  - Approved construction agreements for Mills Pond Park and Bass Park improvements.
  - Opened Bal Harbour Park, a new park acquired through Parks Bond land acquisition funding.
  - Advanced funding for seven (7) parks to expedite the planning and design efforts.
- The Parks and Recreation Department was honored with the following four (4) prestigious awards from the Florida Recreation and Park Association:
    - 2025 Golden Shovel Award in honor of Susan Riestra's outstanding service to the field of parks and recreation.
    - Excellence in Sports Tourism Award for bringing cutting-edge sports venues to life, as well as ensuring athletes and visitors have unforgettable experiences.
    - Agency Excellence Award for programs and initiatives that strengthen our community.
    - Public Relations Electronic Media Award for our Digital Playbook newsletter.
  - Finalized the Exclusive Children Play Area ordinance to establish regulations designating exclusive children's play areas within City parks.
  - Completed a street naming unveiling ceremony for Mr. Raymond G. Christie, one of the City's first licensed Black contractors whose work helped build homes and businesses, making a lasting impact on Fort Lauderdale.
  - Conducted a street naming unveiling ceremony for Mrs. Ada Bradley Moore, who served in the Parks and Recreation Department and coordinated programs for local youth and seniors for more than 30 years.
  - Finalized procurement efforts for the Las Olas Garage lighting facade which will attract attention to the building's aesthetics.

### **Commission Priority: Bolstering Thriving Communities**

The focus of this initiative is to expand internet access, supporting affordable housing, revitalizing key districts, and investing in workforce development and youth scholarships.

- Successfully completed public outreach efforts associated with the \$88 million Community Development Block Grants – Disaster Recovery funding.
- Secured a \$50,000 grant from the Florida Department of State's Division of Historical Resources to support architectural resource surveys of the Edgewood and River Oaks neighborhoods.
- Completed the Sailboat Bend Historic District interpretive signs and walking tour project which will offer interactive storytelling that brings the history of Sailboat bend to life.
- Launched the Cyber Smart FTL Program which provides hands-on training to empower our community to build a more resilient digital future.
- Hosted the Sistrunk Empowerment Summit via our Intergovernmental Affairs Division (formerly Public Affairs Division) to explore ways to expand opportunity, strengthen neighborhoods, and build the economic future for the Sistrunk Corridor.
- Hosted a lunch and learn roundtable session with Broward County Public Schools principals in Fort Lauderdale to provide opportunities for collaboration to align events, support, and initiatives.
- Launched water distribution licensure preparation course in partnership with Broward County Schools, for City employees. Eleven (11) employees successfully completed the course, with seven (7) submitting documentation to sit for State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) license exam.
- Adopted a new vacation rental fee structure to ensure full cost recovery of the program, securing a funding source for the City's continued efforts to ensure that vacation rental properties meet minimum housing and life safety standards.

### **City Manager Initiative: Organizational and Operational Enhancements**

- Finalized the development and adoption of the FY 2026 Operating Budget and Five-Year Community Investment Plan.

- Finalized collective bargaining agreements with the Teamsters and Federation before the end date of the existing contracts.
- Appointed the Directors of the Utilities Services, Public Works, and Information Technology Services Departments as well as several internal senior leadership appointments.
- The Development Services Department was named the Overall Winners at the 2025 Team Showcase during the 33rd Annual Sterling Leadership Conference which is a representation of the City's ongoing commitment to innovation, continuous improvement, and excellence in public service.
- Hosted Let's Connect, Team FTL, an in-person and virtual townhall discussion with staff about our core values, organizational updates, and the proposed budget.
- Implemented a new personnel performance evaluation framework to ensure alignment between senior leadership's fiscal year objectives and overarching organizational goals.

#### **City Manager Initiative: Representing the City**

The role of the City Manager extends beyond the leadership of staff, to becoming part of the community that we serve. To that end, over the last ninety (90) days I have had the pleasure to represent the City at:

- Black Chief Officers Committee Conference
- Broward County City Manager's Association
- Broward League of Cities
- Broward Workshop Urban Corridor Committee
- Budget Advisory Board
- Central City Redevelopment Advisory Board
- Fort Lauderdale Principal Roundtable
- Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance
- Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce
- Infrastructure Task Force Advisory Committee
- Marine Advisory Board
- National Night Out
- Sistrunk Empowerment Summit
- Tourist Development Council
- Urban League of Broward County

- Various civic or neighborhood association meetings including:
  - Beverly Heights
  - Coral Ridge Country Club Estates
  - Coral Ridge Isles
  - Croissant Park
  - Dorsey Riverbend
  - Golden Heights
  - Imperial Point
  - Lauderdale Manors
  - Melrose Manors
  - Poinciana Park
  - Progresso Village
  - River Oaks
  - Riverside Park

I want to thank the City Commission for trusting me to lead this dynamic organization. I am extremely pleased with the progress our team of committed public servants has made over the past six (6) months. I look forward to seeing the results the FTL Team delivers for our neighbors, businesses, and visitors.

c: D'Wayne M. Spence, Interim City Attorney  
David R. Soloman, City Clerk  
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor  
City Manager's Office  
Department Directors