



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No: 26-117

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission
FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*
DATE: April 23, 2026
SUBJECT: **Appointment – Chief Economic Development Officer**

The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to inform the City Commission of a key appointment within the City of Fort Lauderdale's Community Services Department leadership team.

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Maggie L. Gunther, as Chief Economic Development Officer, effective June 1, 2026. Ms. Gunther is a strategic leader with more than twenty (20) years of experience including the last thirteen (13) years with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance. Throughout her career, she has advanced economic development initiatives, supported corporate relocation and expansion, and strengthened Fort Lauderdale's regional visibility as a premier business destination.

The Chief Economic Development Officer position was approved in the Fiscal Year 2026 Personnel Complement to further the City's goal to be a leader in business attraction and retention, elevate the City's brand as a business destination, and further support our entrepreneurial and business community. Ms. Gunther's role aligns with the City's 2035 Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale Vision Plan aspiration of We are Prosperous, and the Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029 Strategic Plan's Business Growth and Support focus area.

Ms. Gunther joins the City of Fort Lauderdale following a distinguished tenure with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, where she served as Vice President of Marketing and Communications. In that capacity, she led strategy for Broward County's official economic development partnership, promoting growth in high-impact sectors such as technology, aviation, life sciences, and marine industries. Her expertise in bridging the public and private sectors as well as connecting key industries will be instrumental as we continue to drive investment and neighborhood revitalization within our city.

Prior to her work at the Alliance, Ms. Gunther served as a Community Relations Officer for Florida Atlantic University's Broward Campuses and as a Certified Business Analyst for its Small Business Development Center. Ms. Gunther's professional accolades and educational background include earning a Master of Business Administration (MBA) with a Marketing Concentration from Florida Atlantic University. She holds the Accredited in

Public Relations (APR) designation from the Public Relations Society of America and was recognized by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) as a 40 Under 40 award recipient. Ms. Gunther is also a Florida Economic Development Council (FEDC) Marketing Award winner.

Beyond her professional achievements, Ms. Gunther is deeply embedded in the Fort Lauderdale community. She currently serves as Board Chair for the Fort Lauderdale Tower Forum and is the President-elect for the Historic Stranahan House Museum Board of Directors. Her commitment to service is further evidenced by her roles in Leadership Florida and her past work with the U.S. Navy's USS Fort Lauderdale Commissioning Committee.

Please join me in welcoming Maggie Gunther to the City of Fort Lauderdale, and in congratulating her on her appointment as Chief Economic Development Officer of the Economic Development Division in the Community Services Department.

Attachment:

1. Maggie Gunther Resume

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

MAGGIE L. GUNTHER, MBA

Strategic leader with more than 20 years of experience advancing economic development initiatives, supporting corporate relocation and expansion, and strengthening Greater Fort Lauderdale's visibility as a premier business destination through targeted media relations and place marketing.

Core Expertise

Economic Development Strategy • Business Attraction & Expansion • Public-Private Partnerships
Industry Cluster Promotion • Corporate Relocation Support • Stakeholder Engagement
Regional Marketing & Investment Promotion • Strategic Communications • Board Governance

Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance (4/2013 - Present)

Vice President – Marketing & Communications; Director; Manager

Honors: Greater Pompano Beach Chamber "Economic Headwind" Honoree (2025); Historic Stranahan House Museum Pineapple Jam Pioneer Honoree (2023); IEDC 40 Under 40 Honoree (2019); SFBJ 40 Under 40 Honoree (2016); Leadership Broward Foundation Fun Lunch Honoree (2015) SFBW Up & Comers Honoree (2014); FEDC Marketing Awards (2014, 2017, 2025)

- Lead communications and marketing strategy for Broward County's official economic development partnership, promoting investment opportunities and growth sectors including technology, aviation, life sciences, marine and other targeted industries. Meets/exceeds annual earned media goals
- Serve as staff liaison and manage governance for 90+ member Board of Directors composed of CEOs, corporate, community, elected and municipal leaders
- Collaborate with corporate executives, municipal, county, and state leadership on announcements and events related to company relocations, expansions, and investment projects
- Editorial director of annual Economic Sourcebook, a 100+ page magazine-style economic development resource and marketing tool in partnership with the *South Florida Business Journal*
- Supervise communications staff and manage external vendors supporting marketing and public relations
- Accredited in Public Relations (APR) by the Public Relations Society of America beginning 2015
- Dale Carnegie Course graduate, 2017

Licensed Real Estate Sales Associate (2019-Present)

Florida Atlantic University Broward Campuses (1/2009-4/2013)

Community Relations Officer, Broward Campuses

- Managed media relations and community engagement for FAU's Broward campuses, strengthening partnerships with regional business and civic leaders
- Planned high-profile events including groundbreakings, advisory board meetings, and community engagement initiatives

City of Fort Lauderdale (12/2008-6/2014)

Auditorium Marketing Specialist, War Memorial Auditorium (Part-Time)

- Developed first logo/brand identity for Auditorium in its 60-year history, similar to version now in use by Panthers organization
- Originated the City of Fort Lauderdale's first-ever social media use; Originated the City's use of Constant Contact e-mail marketing system and grew list to 9,000 contacts

Florida Atlantic University Small Business Development Center (9/2003-7/2008)

Certified Business Analyst/Public Relations Coordinator/Training Coordinator

2007 Southeast Florida Employee of the Year

- Advised entrepreneurs and small businesses on business planning, marketing strategy, and growth opportunities across Southeast Florida
- Delivered business training seminars and supported regional small business development initiatives

EDUCATION

Florida Atlantic University (2010-2012)

Master of Business Administration with Marketing Concentration

University of Central Florida (1999-2003)

Bachelor of Arts with University Honors (Honors College member) in Journalism

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Florida Atlantic Research and Development Authority Board Member / FAU Research Park (2023-Present)
- Fort Lauderdale Tower Forum (2022-Present), Board Chair (2025-2026)
- Leadership Florida (2015-Present)
 - Leadership Florida Connect (Under 40 Leadership Class) Class 10 Chair (2019-2021)
 - Board of Directors (2019-2020); Statewide Leadership Team Member (2017-2019, 2023-2024)
 - Graduate, Leadership Florida Connect Class 6 (2015-2016)
- Historic Stranahan House Museum (2013-Present)
 - Board of Directors Chair/President 2025-2027
- United Way of Broward County Mayors' Gala Committee Member (2013-2026)
- U.S. Navy's USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28) Commissioning Committee, Grassroots Fundraising Chair (2022)
- Broward Center for the Performing Arts – Ghost Light Society (2014-Present)
 - Steering Committee (2015-2017), Chair 2016-2017
- Walk Like MADD Fort Lauderdale Steering Committee Member (2013-2026)
- Emerge Broward - Young Professionals Program 2009-2017 Member; 2018-Present Alumni Member and Founding Independent 501c3 Board Vice Chair, Chair (2023-2025)
 - 2014 Program Co-Chair; organization grew by 220+ members during tenure
 - Steering committee to establish organization as an independent 501c3
- Public Relations Society of America member (2015-Present)