



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No: 26-132

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission
FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*
DATE: May 4, 2026
SUBJECT: IPW 2026 - City of Fort Lauderdale Participation and Preparation

The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to provide the City Commission with an overview of the City's engagement and involvement with the United States (U.S.) Travel Association's IPW (formerly International Pow Wow) conference being held in the City of Fort Lauderdale. The Economic Development Division of the Community Services Department and the Strategic Communications Department, in partnership with the Beach Business Improvement District, are joining forces to create a memorable, Fort Lauderdale-focused experience for IPW attendees.

The Broward County Convention Center and the newly opened Omni Hotel will host the U.S. Travel Association's IPW conference, the travel industry's leading international marketplace, May 17–21, 2026. This high-profile event facilitates critical connections between hundreds of domestic travel organizations and thousands of global buyers and media representatives from over seventy (70) countries. By fostering these professional relationships, the conference serves as a primary economic driver, generating billions of dollars in future international travel to the United States.

The theme for IPW 2026, "[Bringing the World to America](#)," centers on reconnecting the global travel community and showcasing the United States as the premier destination for international visitors. Over the course of five (5) days, the event provides a high-energy platform for business and networking. IPW officially kicks off on Monday, May 18, 2026, with an opening party at Fort Lauderdale Beach Park. Throughout the conference, IPW will offer immersive "Destination Experiences" that allow attendees to explore Greater Fort Lauderdale's unique ecosystem and culture through curated tours and culinary adventures. Experiences offered in Fort Lauderdale include the IPW Press Brunch at The Fort, a tour of Bonnet House, NYC Center Stage at the Broward Center, the "Tasty Trail" Culinary Walking Adventure of Las Olas, Sea Rocket & Beachside Bites, The Ale Trail: Breweries & Bites at Tarpon River Brewing, and the Venice of America Waterfront Sites and Bites tour.

The core of the week, from Tuesday through Thursday, is dedicated to the marketplace, where thousands of participants engage in more than 40,000 intensive, pre-scheduled business appointments and media briefings at the Broward County Convention Center.

As part of the marketplace experience, the City of Fort Lauderdale will be well represented at a dedicated booth on the IPW Trade Show floor. Interspersed with these business sessions are high-profile luncheons and educational "Takeoff Talks" in the theater, while evening networking events provide opportunities to build lasting professional partnerships in a relaxed, coastal setting before the event concludes on Thursday, May 21, 2026.

City of Fort Lauderdale IPW Participation

The City, in partnership with Visit Lauderdale, has coordinated a multifaceted activation strategy to ensure Fort Lauderdale makes a lasting impression on the global stage. Below is a summary of the City's planned participation and activations during IPW 2026.

Press Brunch – Monday, May 18

The City will participate in IPW's exclusive Press Brunch on Monday, May 18 at The Fort pickleball complex. The event will feature a culinary experience hosted by The Florida Room and The Restaurant People, live performances by Mai-Kai as well as Alexander Star and the Golden People, water sports and pickleball supported by The Fort, and engaging activations from the Water Taxi, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Flamingo Gardens, the Florida Panthers, and more.

The Press Brunch offers a unique opportunity to engage directly with international travel journalists and media representatives, positioning Fort Lauderdale in front of storytellers who influence travel decisions for millions of consumers worldwide.

Activation Avenue
VL Photo Op
Candle Making
Spirit Airlines
Aha Tiki Basket Weaving
Hard Rock
Avi Ram Live Mural

Beachfront Boulevard
MAI KAI Performance
Water Sports Dock
2 Drums & Coconut Bar

Florida Room
Lovelee Bake Shop
Florida Room Bar

TRP Experience
TRP Restaurants

City Centre
War Memorial
Swimming Hall of Fame
City of Hollywood
Florida Panthers
Lauderdale by the Sea
City of Fort Lauderdale
Sawgrass Rec Park
Flamingo Gardens
Water Taxi

Hotel Highway
Riverside Hotel
OMNI Fort Lauderdale
Four Seasons
Hyatt
Marriott
Diplomat
Beach House

THE FORT

Opening Night Activation – Monday, May 18

Durning IPW's opening night festivities, hosted on the evening of May 18, the City of Fort Lauderdale and the Beach Business Improvement District (BBID) will deliver a vibrant destination activation at Fort Lauderdale Beach Park. This curated experience will immerse IPW attendees in the energy and culture of Fort Lauderdale's iconic beach corridor, showcasing local flavors, authentic hospitality, and coastal charm. As part of the experience, attendees will receive branded Fort Lauderdale flip-flops—a playful, experiential giveaway designed to encourage visitors to fully embrace the City's laid-back beach lifestyle throughout their stay. This memorable touch reinforces Fort Lauderdale's identity as a premier coastal destination.

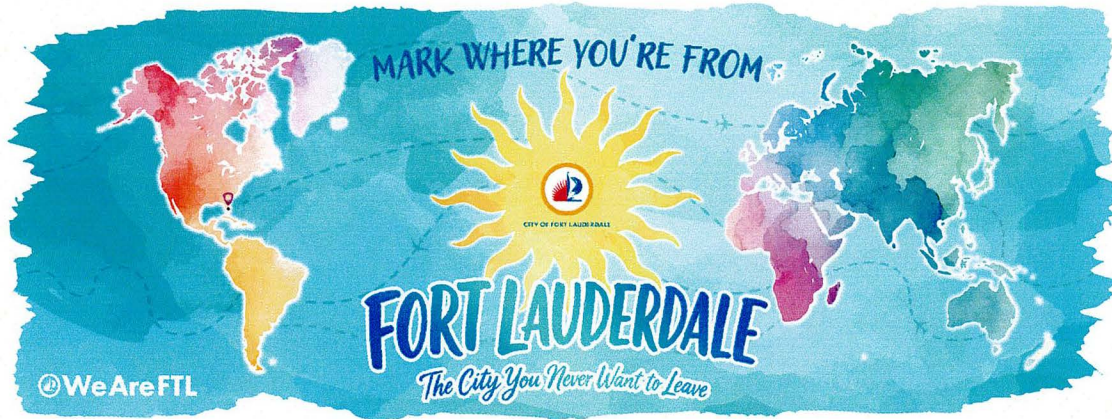
Additionally, the BBID will operate an information kiosk along the sidewalk at E Las Olas Boulevard and State Road A1A, directly across from the Las Olas Oceanside Park. Staffed by knowledgeable BBID members, the kiosk will serve as a welcoming hub where attendees can ask questions, discover current specials and entertainment offerings, and receive personalized recommendations to nearby businesses. Light background music will create an inviting, energetic atmosphere that embodies the spirit of Fort Lauderdale's beachfront community.

Together, these activations will provide IPW attendees with an unforgettable introduction to Fort Lauderdale's vibrant beach culture and world-class hospitality.

Convention Center Plaza Activation – Tuesday, May 19

The City of Fort Lauderdale will host a dynamic plaza activation at the Convention Center on Tuesday, May 19, creating an immersive brand experience for IPW attendees. The activation will feature two (2) signature interactive components designed to engage visitors and showcase Fort Lauderdale's welcoming, global appeal.

- **FTL Connect Magazine Cover Display:** This eye-catching acrylic stand will allow attendees to step into the spotlight and become the cover model for the City's community magazine. A professional photographer will be on-site to capture each guest's moment and create a personalized digital postcard, providing attendees with a shareable keepsake that extends Fort Lauderdale's brand reach across their social networks.
- **Bringing the World to Fort Lauderdale:** A twenty-foot by seven-foot (20' x 7') step-and-repeat backdrop featuring Fort Lauderdale's signature branding and an interactive world map will encourage attendees to mark their home cities on the map while posing for photos against the branded backdrop. This dual-purpose installation creates shareable social media moments while visually demonstrating Fort Lauderdale's international reach and appeal. The display reinforces our message that Fort Lauderdale is a vibrant, inclusive destination that welcomes visitors from across the globe.



Together, these elements will create an engaging, memorable experience that positions Fort Lauderdale as a world-class destination on the international stage.

Closing Night Fair – Thursday, May 21

The City will participate in the IPW Closing Night Fair, providing game prizes and additional Fort Lauderdale-branded items to leave international delegates with a lasting, positive impression of Fort Lauderdale as a travel and business destination.

Trade Show Booth – Monday, May 18 – Thursday, May 21

The City of Fort Lauderdale will have a dedicated presence on the IPW Trade Show floor. The appointment-only style opportunity will serve as a destination showcase, connecting serious international travel buyers with direct conversations and digital materials highlighting Fort Lauderdale's tourism assets, business climate, and quality of life that makes Fort Lauderdale the City you Never Want to Leave.

Show Your Badge Initiative

In partnership with Visit Lauderdale, the City will encourage local businesses to participate in the "Show Your Badge" initiative offering exclusive discounts and special experiences to IPW badge holders throughout the event period. This program directly connects international travel buyers and journalists with Fort Lauderdale's business community, driving foot traffic while fostering authentic destination experiences.

Light Pole Banners

Ahead of IPW, the City will install branded light pole banners throughout key corridors to welcome IPW delegates and create a sense of arrival and celebration citywide. Banner themes will include:

- IPW Welcome to Fort Lauderdale Banners – welcoming international attendees and showcasing Fort Lauderdale as a premier travel destination.
- America 250 Celebration Banners – commemorating the United States' 250th Anniversary, tying the City's welcome to this historic national milestone.



IPW Preparation and Operations During the Event

The City of Fort Lauderdale's participation in IPW 2026 represents a significant opportunity to elevate the destination's global profile, strengthen relationships with international travel partners, and drive long-term economic benefit for our community. In preparation for IPW and throughout the event, the City, through its operational departments, is taking steps to ensure that the IPW attendee experience is safe and inviting – making a positive impression to be shared with their network.

- Parks & Recreation and Public Works Departments:
 - Increased sanitation including sidewalk cleaning, street sweeping, beach and park facility maintenance, and service of City trash receptacles.
 - Advance regular maintenance and upkeep of key areas expected to be a focus of IPW attendees such as Riverwalk, Fort Lauderdale Beach Park, and Las Olas Oceanside Park.
- Transportation & Mobility Department:
 - Strategic use of microtransit by Circuit and coordination with Broward County Transit and IPW contracted transit services.
- Fort Lauderdale Police Department:
 - Coordinated law enforcement presence at IPW off-site events to provide public safety services as well as a visual presence by utilizing the mounted unit and police community outreach units.

If you have any questions, please contact Porshia L. Garcia, Director, Community Services Department at PGarcia@fortlauderdale.gov.

c: Shari L. McCartney, City Attorney
David R. Soloman, City Clerk

Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
City Manager's Office
Department Directors