

# 2023 Progress Report



**PRESS PLAY**  
**FORT LAUDERDALE**  
*Our City, Our Strategic Plan 2024*



## Fort Lauderdale City Commission



*Pictured from left to right: Commissioner Warren Sturman, District IV; Commissioner Steven Glassman, District II; Mayor Dean J. Trantalis; Vice Mayor/Commissioner Pamela Beasley-Pittman, District III; Commissioner John C. Herbst, District I*

**Dean J. Trantalis**  
Mayor

**John C. Herbst**  
Commissioner  
District I

**Steven Glassman**  
Commissioner  
District II

**Pamela Beasley-Pittman**  
Vice Mayor/  
Commissioner  
District III

**Warren Sturman**  
Commissioner  
District IV

The City Commission adopted Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2024 on October 15, 2019, by Resolution No. 19-207.

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## Message from the City Manager



I am pleased to present the fourth annual progress report for *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2024*, our City's five-year strategic plan. The City continues to move forward in achieving the five-year goals defined by the Strategic Plan, which was unanimously adopted by the City Commission in October 2019. Over the last year, critical improvements have been made and key milestones have been reached in support of the Strategic Plan. An integral part of our success has been a Citywide emphasis on accountability for our performance and remaining focused upon achieving our 2024 goals.

The progress that we've made and accomplishments of our strategic initiatives are outlined throughout this report to demonstrate the value that they bring to our community - now and into the future.

The FY 2024 Commission Priorities also advance the Strategic Plan as an important, annual component of our City's strategic management system. The six priorities, selected in January 2023, are referenced throughout the report.

The City remains committed to its mission, "We Build Community," by providing the highest quality of public services to our neighbors. I am encouraged by the work we have completed in the past year. The future is bright as we together continue to achieve a level of success that makes our City, "The City you never want to leave!"

Respectfully submitted,

  
Greg Chavarria (Mar 11, 2024 10:41 EDT)

Greg Chavarria  
City Manager



# Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale: Vision 2035

## VISION STATEMENT



*Our City, Our Vision 2035*



### **WE ARE CONNECTED.**

We move seamlessly and easily through a safe transportation system where the pedestrian is first.



### **WE ARE READY.**

We are a resilient and safe coastal community.



### **WE ARE COMMUNITY.**

We are a neighborhood of neighborhoods.



### **WE ARE HERE.**

We are an urban center and a vacationland in the heart of South Florida.



### **WE ARE PROSPEROUS.**

We are a subtropical City, an urban laboratory for education and business.



### **WE ARE UNITED.**

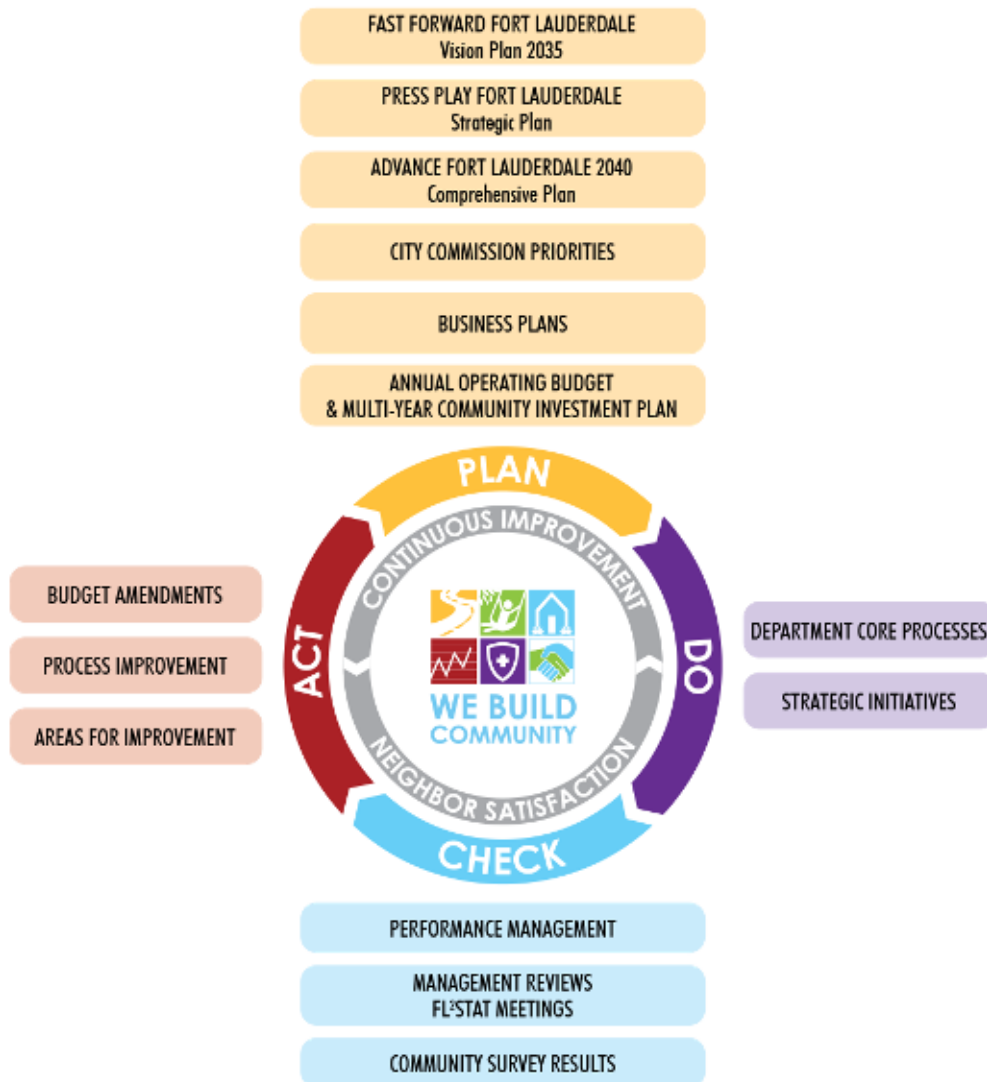
We are a strong and vibrant kaleidoscope of multi-generational cultures, ethnicities, and community partners.

**We are Fort Lauderdale, a community of choice.  
We are the City you never want to leave.**

# Strategic Management

Under Press Play Fort Lauderdale, the City outlined a results-focused and neighbor-centric government culture by creating FL<sup>2</sup>STAT, the City's quality management system. This robust quality and strategy management system connects planning, budgeting, measuring, and continuous improvement, linking the City's long-term Vision Plan to day-to-day operations. This approach is illustrated in the model below.

Using the Plan - Do - Check - Act process model as a guide, the City continually plans for the future by tracking and monitoring performance, evaluating progress toward its goals, demonstrating its commitment to providing the highest quality of services, and continuously improving service delivery for its neighbors.



## Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2024 - Focus Areas and Goals



### Infrastructure

Goal 1: Build a sustainable and resilient community.

Goal 2: Build a multi-modal and pedestrian friendly community.



### Public Places

Goal 3: Build a healthy and engaging community.



### Neighborhood Enhancement

Goal 4: Build a thriving and inclusive community of neighborhoods.



### Business Development

Goal 5: Build an attractive global and local economic community marketplace.



### Public Safety

Goal 6: Build a safe and well-prepared community.



### Internal Support

Goal 7: Build a values-based organization dedicated to developing and retaining qualified employees.

Goal 8: Build a leading government organization that manages all resources wisely.

## Infrastructure

### Goal 1: Build a sustainable and resilient community

#### Objectives:

- Proactively maintain our water, wastewater, stormwater, road, and bridge infrastructure
- Secure our community's water supply and support water conservation measures
- Effectively manage solid waste
- Ensure climate change resiliency and implement local and regional strategies to reduce our carbon footprint
- Reduce flooding and adapt to sea level rise
- Actively monitor beach resiliency and support nourishment efforts
- Grow and enhance the urban forest
- Promote energy efficiency and the expansion of renewable energy sources



#### 2024 Commission Priority:

- Infrastructure and Resilience

The City's infrastructure is comprised of a vast network of roadways, sidewalks, bridges, pipes, and water and wastewater treatment facilities. Each of these systems is crucial to the City's quality of life and potential for growth into the future.



## Stormwater

In a year in which the City experienced unexpected historic flooding, the design and construction of improved stormwater infrastructure to handle these threats remains a top priority. Neighborhoods such as River Oaks, Edgewood, Durrs, Dorsey Riverbend, and Melrose Manors that received significant flooding are being prioritized in infrastructure efforts. Construction of new stormwater infrastructure in the River Oaks and Edgewood neighborhoods is nearing completion. This infrastructure will become fully operational once the River Oaks Pump Station Complex is completed in approximately one year. As an intermediary solution, temporary pumps are being used to mitigate flooding in these two neighborhoods. These projects are focused on fortifying the areas against future flooding and erosion by implementing a range of stormwater management solutions designed to better protect neighbors and their homes.



*Crews work to construct the River Oaks stormwater pump station*

The design has been completed for the Durrs and Dorsey Riverbend Neighborhood Stormwater Improvement Projects and both are expected to begin construction in early 2024. The design phase has also commenced for stormwater improvement projects in the Melrose Manors neighborhood. These projects are being carefully planned to bolster stormwater management and significantly reduce the risks of flooding in the area. To further accelerate resilience to stormwater risks, the City announced Fortify Lauderdale, a program to design and construct up to \$500 million in stormwater improvements in an additional 15 neighborhoods. Together, these comprehensive efforts represent a determined response to the April 2023 flood, prioritizing the safety and sustainability of these communities while working to avert similar disasters in the future.

## Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection Systems

In addition to stormwater systems, the City is improving its potable water distribution and wastewater collection systems. This effort is most notably led by approval of a Comprehensive Agreement and start of preconstruction activities for the new Prospect Lake Clean Water Center which will provide safe, clean drinking water for the region. This facility plays a vital role in treating and purifying drinking water to meet regulatory standards before it is distributed to consumers. The Public-Private Partnership will replace the aging Fiveash Water Treatment Plant and is expected to be completed in September 2026 at an estimated cost of \$666 million, inclusive of enabling works. Throughout construction and for the subsequent 30-year operational period, the City will retain ownership of the Prospect



*Rendering of the new Prospect Lake Clean Water Center*

Lake Clean Water Center. The project company will be responsible for on-site operational management, maintenance, and repairs, while City staff will operate the plant in collaboration with on-site technical and operational resources. Simultaneously, numerous enabling work projects are underway which will support the operation of the plant and transmission of treated water from the Prospect Lake Clean Water Center. A major milestone has been reached with the completion of a design-build contract worth \$45 million for the rehabilitation and replacement of an effluent force main that will carry treated wastewater from the George T. Lohmeyer (GTL) wastewater treatment plant to the deep injection wellsite designed to safely store and dispose of it. These projects collectively represent substantial investments in infrastructure to address critical environmental and resource management challenges.

### **Underground Utilities, Roadway, Sidewalks, and Bridges**

Several key infrastructure projects have been undertaken to enhance the quality and safety of public spaces. A safe pedestrian walkway along A1A is being established to provide secure pathways for



*Crews work to underground utility line in the Las Olas Neighborhood*

pedestrians. The Galt Ocean Mile beautification project is focused on repairing sidewalks, improving road surfaces, and replacing streetlights, thereby enhancing the overall aesthetics and functionality of the area. The South Ocean Drive Bridge is being replaced to ensure it remains structurally sound and safe for public use. In the Las Olas Neighborhood, there is also an ongoing project for the continued undergrounding of utility lines, contributing to both the visual appeal and the reliability of essential services in the area. These combined efforts aim to create safer, more attractive, and resilient public spaces for neighbors and visitors alike.

## Goal 2: Build a multi-modal and pedestrian friendly community

### Objectives:

- Improve transportation options and reduce congestion by working with partners
- Improve roads, sidewalks, and trails to prioritize a safe, more walkable and bikeable community



### 2024 Commission Priorities:

- Transportation and Traffic

### Public Transportation

A series of commendable accomplishments have been achieved in the City's efforts to enhance its transportation options and to improve accessibility. The implementation of additional transit options during special events will aim to relieve traffic congestion, offering attendees more convenient transportation alternatives. The expansion of additional LauderGO! transit options into additional neighborhoods signifies an upgrade of transportation services that will improve mobility within the impacted areas. Specifically, the City has expanded the Micro Mover pilot program, which has been a great success in Las Olas, Downtown, into Dorsey Riverbend in March 2023 and the Galt Mile in May 2023. The Micro Mover is a partnership with a private organization - Circuit - who is responsible for the operation of the service and their flagship application (app). The Circuit app allows anyone in Fort Lauderdale to request a ride on an electric passenger cart free of charge if the ride is within the designated service area like other popular ride share apps. The expansion of the Micro Mover signifies the City's continued commitment to offer convenient and desired public transportation options that also reduce the dependency on single occupancy fuel vehicles.



LauderGO! Micro Mover

These milestones collectively demonstrate the City's commitment to providing more efficient and accessible transportation options while easing traffic burdens during events.

## Roadway Design and Safety Improvements

The City has made significant strides in its efforts to improve roadway safety and traffic management. The design and implementation of a streetlight master plan is now underway, with the goal of enhancing the City's lighting infrastructure for both safety and aesthetics. Intersection improvements at Cordova Road and SE 15th Street have been successfully implemented, contributing to smoother traffic flow and enhanced safety in that area. Furthermore, the completion of designs for traffic calming projects at NE 16th Court and 4th Street represent a proactive approach to mitigating traffic-related issues and fostering a more pedestrian-friendly urban landscape. These achievements collectively reflect the City's commitment to creating safer, more efficient, and aesthetically pleasing transportation systems and urban spaces for its neighbors and visitors.



*Fort Lauderdale Police officer educates driver in traffic calming effort*

Fort Lauderdale was an active participant in the Prospect Road Complete Streets Project, a collaborative effort involving the Florida Department of Transportation, Broward County, Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Cities of Oakland Park and Tamarac. The project focuses on enhancing the Prospect Road Corridor. Key components include dedicated bicycle lanes, a reduction in lanes from six to four between Dixie Highway and Commercial Boulevard, and a lowered speed limit west of NW 10th Avenue. The project aims to mitigate speeding, enhance safety, and improve access and traffic signal timing, garnering recognition as a premier transportation initiative in South Florida.



Intersections to include important safety elements such as pedestrian pushbuttons, upgraded signs, curb extensions, and bright LED lighting

Enhanced and high visibility crosswalks create a safe space for pedestrian crossings at intersections

ADA Improvements – Curb ramps at intersections will be upgraded to meet ADA Standards to provide better facilities to people with disabilities

*Rendering of efforts taken on by Prospect Road Complete Streets Project*

Safer and more pedestrian-friendly streets foster increased foot traffic, support local businesses, elevate property values, and create cultural hubs that collectively contribute to a vibrant and thriving community.

## Public Places

### Goal 3: Build a healthy and engaging community

#### Objectives:

- Improve access to and enjoyment of our beach, waterways, parks, and open spaces for everyone
- Improve water quality and our natural environment
- Enhance the City's identity through public art, well-maintained green spaces, and streetscapes
- Offer a diverse range of recreational and educational programming



#### 2024 Commission Priorities:

- Public Places

### Waterways and Open Spaces

The successful completion of aeration waterway quality projects demonstrates a robust commitment to improving water quality and environmental conditions in the community's waterways. These projects involved the implementation of aeration systems, effectively enhancing oxygen levels in the water bodies.



*View of Fort Lauderdale intercoastal waterway*

This accomplishment reflects a high level of expertise and dedication to fostering healthier aquatic ecosystems and ensuring excellent water quality. It's a testament to the community's unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship and the preservation of its natural resources. On the sand, the City saw an incident and disturbance-free sea turtle nesting season which underscores the community's dedication to wildlife conservation. Whether ashore or on the water, the City remains committed to ensuring the quality of its natural resources that makes Fort Lauderdale a choice destination in the heart of South Florida.

## Public Spaces and The Parks Bond



*Rendering of DC Alexander Park*

D.C. Alexander Park, a recently established community space, signifies the City's commitment to creating public spaces throughout the City. The park's construction commenced in February and represents a promising addition to the City's recreational offerings.

The future of parks in Fort Lauderdale is bright as the City continues to carry out the \$200 million, voter-approved Parks Bond that will give neighbors and visitors alike beautiful spaces to enjoy. Additionally, Rivermont Park has recently opened, providing an additional green space for neighbors and visitors to enjoy. Finally, a secured donation for a new seashell public art installation at the Tunnel Top park will add a unique aesthetic to the City's public spaces, enhancing their visual appeal.

Moreover, the City also began construction on a project in 2023 to make critical improvements to Riverside Park within the scope of the Parks Bond. The project represents an investment of \$680,000 in Parks Bond funds that will go towards the installation of new lighting for basketball and tennis courts, upgrades to the community center, the addition of an outdoor exercise station, and the provision of new bike racks. Beyond the aesthetic improvements that this project will bring to Riverside Park, the improvements will also make the shared space more functional and accessible for those that want to use the space for a variety of purposes. The new and improved Riverside Park is expected to open to the public by November 2024.



*Mayor Dean Trantalis gives opening remarks as construction on Riverside Park breaks ground*

In addition, the City's efforts in the recently completed Aquatic Center have successfully revived swimming and diving championship events, bringing them back to the historic Swimming Hall of Fame. This is a significant accomplishment as it indicates that the City has successfully attracted high-level competitive events to the area, including regional, national, and international swimming and diving competitions. These events draw athletes, coaches, and spectators from around the world, contributing to the local economy and promoting Fort Lauderdale as a sports-friendly destination. These achievements create additional recreational opportunities for both neighbors and visitors while enriching community experiences.

### **LauderTrail**

Progress towards the construction of the LauderTrail, a large-scale project that will bring a 31-mile multi-use trail including bridges, boardwalks, and pocket parks, is well underway as 30% of the design has been completed. In a proactive step toward community involvement in this project, the City has conducted a survey that will gather feedback from neighbors on the various trail elements and which would best fit the needs and desires of the public. This inclusive approach ensures that the LauderTrail is not only well-designed from a structural standpoint but also reflective of the preferences and needs of the City. The LauderTrail will be an amenity of the City for decades to come and it is critical that the finished product is something that the community can be proud of as Fort Lauderdale remains committed to creating transportation options for pedestrians besides automobiles.

## Neighborhood Enhancement

### Goal 4: Build a thriving and inclusive community of neighborhoods

#### Objectives:

- Work with partners to reduce homelessness by promoting independence and self-worth through advocacy, housing, and comprehensive services
- Ensure a range of affordable housing options
- Create a continuum of education services and support



#### 2024 Commission Priorities:

- Housing Accessibility

The City is committed to creating a thriving community whereby neighbors can find affordable housing and contribute to the larger community. A key part of this is ensuring that services are offered to advance and support education for its youth to grow and become contributing Fort Lauderdale neighbors.

#### Homelessness

The City has taken significant steps to address homelessness and enhance community support services. City funding for the Hotspot Deployment Program to address homeless encampments indicates the City's proactive approach to improving the well-being of individuals experiencing homelessness. The program focuses the provision of services to areas within the City that have a high concentration of individuals facing homelessness. The City recognizes that to ensure that the long-term solution of permanent housing is probable, it is critical that individuals experiencing homelessness have access to support services.



Community Court session in former Fort Lauderdale Commission Chambers



Additionally, Fort Lauderdale continues to offer its Community Court Program that provides a vital resource for addressing legal issues faced by the homeless population. The Community Court Program focuses on addressing non-violent, low-level offenses with a holistic approach. It diverts individuals away from traditional courts, providing rehabilitation, social services, and community engagement to reduce recidivism and promote reintegration into society.

Furthermore, the City remains committed to adding a police presence to address individuals experiencing homelessness. This past year three patrol officers served on the Homeless Outreach Team; funding has also been included in the FY 2024 budget for three additional officers to expand the team. The Homeless Outreach Team helps combat homelessness by engaging with individuals living on the streets, assessing their needs, and providing access to essential services like shelter, medical care, housing assistance, and case management. Officers build trust and work closely with communities, aiming to address the root causes of homelessness and provide immediate and long-term support to improve the well-being of those experiencing homelessness and reduce homelessness in the area. These combined initiatives reflect the City's dedication to addressing homelessness with a multi-faceted approach that combines outreach, support, and legal services to create a positive impact in the community.

### **Affordable Housing**

Ensuring that neighbors can afford to house themselves and their families remains a high priority for the City Commission. This past year the City supported the Seven on Seventh initiative, a \$25 million project, that offers a mixed-use affordable residential community in downtown Fort Lauderdale, designed for low-income and formerly homeless individuals and families. With 72 units, ranging from studios to two-bedroom apartments, the development includes amenities like a fitness center, interactive library, and ground floor commercial spaces. Importantly, its proximity to the Central Homeless Assistance Center ensures access to comprehensive support services. This project will create a vibrant downtown community in a strategic location with access to robust public and private sector services.



*Photo of recently completed Seven on Seventh affordable housing project*

Beyond the Seven on Seventh project, the City Commission approved a resolution to create a tax reimbursement program for developers constructing affordable housing units in the City. Fort Lauderdale has experienced unprecedented levels of development in the last few years and the Commission has taken a proactive step with establishing this program to ensure it benefits the community as a whole. For development projects to become eligible for the tax reimbursement program, they must develop a structure in which 30% of the available units are considered affordable. Affordable units are restricted to households with incomes at or below one hundred and twenty percent (120%) of the median family income. The impact of this program is two-fold as it creates an important incentive for developers to

provide affordable housing that otherwise did not exist and gives neighbors the financial security they need to call the great City of Fort Lauderdale home.

### **Customer Call Center**

The City of Fort Lauderdale has consolidated its call centers to create unified and cohesive neighbor response in a strategic move that will streamline communication channels to and from the public. By centralizing multiple call centers for different departments in the City, neighbors will have one central customer service line to utilize when requesting service (954-828-8000). Internally, staff from the call center will have improved access to additional training and resources to respond to inquiries and requests more efficiently. Overall, this customer-centric approach will improve accessibility and responsiveness, contributing to an improved and more tailored service experience for the community.

## Business Development

### Goal 5: Build an attractive global and local economic community marketplace

#### Objectives:

- Create a responsive and proactive business climate to attract emerging industries
- Nurture and support existing local businesses
- Create educational pathways and partnerships for workforce development
- Provide best-in-class regional general aviation airport amenities and services

#### 2024 Commission Priorities:

- Economic Development

Business development serves a fundamental role in the growth of the City. New and growing businesses attract new workers which then spurs development. As an attractive tropical City connected to regional, national, and international markets through the Tri-Rail, Brightline, Amtrak, Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, and the City-owned and operated Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, Fort Lauderdale is well situated to attract emerging industries and businesses.

#### Business Attraction

According to the 2024 Greater Fort Lauderdale Sourcebook, Fort Lauderdale has witnessed several key business relocations and expansions, leading to the creation of hundreds of jobs and a significant boost to the local economy. These relocations and expansions include Amazon, CIG Financial, Future Tech



*Photo of West Marine's new corporate headquarters in the heart of downtown Fort Lauderdale*

Enterprise, ICON International, Reeneer, Shipmonk, and West Marine. With relocations come investments into the area, and the relocations identified above this past year were accompanied by over \$56 million in direct capital investment into the City. Business relocations and expansions are vital for Fort Lauderdale, creating jobs, fostering economic growth, diversifying industries, and improving the City's overall quality of life. These successes are mirrored by an increase in property values throughout the City and another year of increasing development activity throughout Fort Lauderdale indicating a growing and thriving community.

Additionally, an economic impact study focused on cultural arts was completed that shed light on the contributions of the arts sector to the broader economy. This study will prove beneficial for the City as it quantifies the sector's economic contributions, supports funding requests, and highlights the cultural arts' role in job creation, community identity, and quality of life.

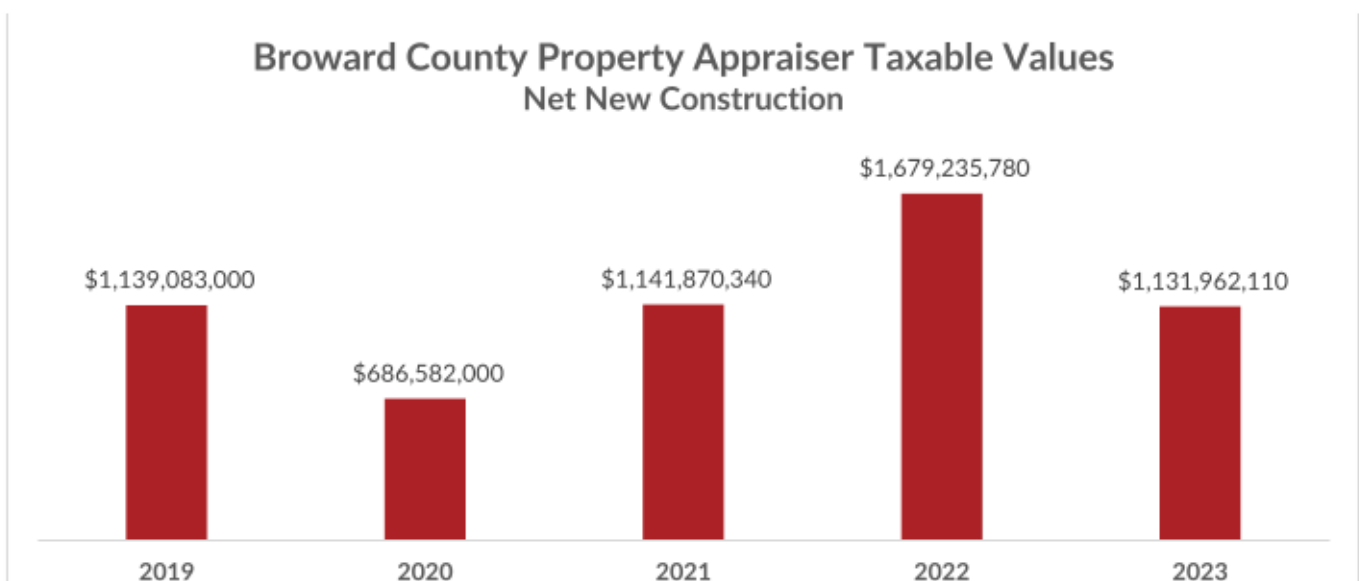
### Community Redevelopment Agency

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) serves to reduce slum and blight and improve the economic health of targeted areas throughout the City. As a strategy to accomplish this goal, the CRA encourages public and private investments through incentives which give developers the flexibility they need to build new establishments from which the community will benefit. Just this past year, the CRA approved over \$8 million in incentives and forgivable loans. This reflects the agency's desire to empower neighbors by investing in their small businesses and ensuring the economic health and stability of all Fort Lauderdale neighborhoods.

### Positive Economic Revitalization and Development Outcomes

This past year, the City experienced a positive increase in ad valorem (property) taxes which is the source of approximately 46.75% of ongoing General Fund revenues. The Broward County Property Appraiser's 2023 estimate indicated an increase of 12% of the City's taxable property value, or an increase of \$6 billion.

Of this increase, \$1.1 billion is associated with new construction, which is a positive outcome of the City's ongoing focus on economic revitalization and development. Overall, this increase is expected to yield approximately \$21.8 million in additional revenue that the City will use for strategic service enhancements to serve current and new neighbors and to fund the City's increasing expenses associated with wages and inflation. Due to this astounding growth in taxable value, the City Commission was able to unanimously adopt a structurally balanced budget that maintained its current low millage rate of 4.1193 for the 17<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.



## Public Safety

### Goal 6: Build a safe and well-prepared community

#### Objectives:

- Prevent and solve crime in all neighborhoods
- Provide quick and exceptional fire, medical, and emergency response
- Be the leading model in domestic preparedness
- Educate stakeholders on community risk reduction, homeland security, and domestic preparedness



#### 2024 Commission Priorities:

- Community Response and Safety

Public safety is a major function of local governance. To maintain the high level of service and response that neighbors and visitors expect, the City continues investments in public safety facilities and programs.

#### Fort Lauderdale Police Headquarters

In June 2023, the City was able to celebrate the groundbreaking of its new Police Headquarters located at 1300 W Broward Boulevard which will replace the current facility that has serviced the Department since the 1950's. The 191,000 square foot, three-story facility will be a beacon of public safety and crime prevention for years to come as it will house over 700 sworn and non-sworn personnel. The grand headquarters will give the Department the necessary space to accommodate personnel and facilities, including the evidence warehouse and firearm training sites. A police headquarters is critical in promoting public safety as it serves as a central command hub, facilitates community policing, supports criminal



*Rendering of new FLPD headquarters*

investigations, and provides detention facilities. Additionally, it offers training and emergency response coordination, deploys advanced technology for data management, and delivers various public services to ensure a safer and more secure environment for the community. The headquarters is expected to be completed by FY 2025.

## Preventing and Solving Crime

Significant accomplishments have been achieved within the City's strategic objective of preventing and solving crime throughout Fort Lauderdale. The City has successfully expanded License Plate Recognition (LPR) systems to cover the primary entry and exit points, reinforcing security and surveillance measures. LPR systems play a vital role in crime prevention and resolution. They act as a deterrent by tracking and identifying vehicles associated with criminal activities, provide real-time alerts to law enforcement, aid in solving cold cases, and contribute to community safety by deterring criminal behavior and enabling quick response to incidents.

Another successful expansion of policing technologies that is helping advance the strategic goals of the City is the inclusion of a new geographic area in the ShotSpotter Program which has improved gunshot detection and response capabilities. ShotSpotter is a gunshot detection system that uses acoustic sensors to identify and locate gunshots in real time. It provides precise location information, sends real-time alerts to law enforcement, and records audio data for evidence. By reducing response times and aiding investigations, ShotSpotter enhances public safety and acts as a deterrent to gun violence. Gun shots that otherwise would have gone unidentified in the City are now identified through ShotSpotter technology which is often paramount in identifying suspects in violent crimes.

Lastly, the City funded the addition of 14 new police officers to the patrol force in FY 2024 which will bolster law enforcement's presence around the City's streets. The Police Department is making an intentional effort to place 11 of these new officers within the road patrol unit where they are needed and are most visible to the City's neighbors and visitors; the other three officers will support the Homeless Outreach Team.



*Photo of newly sworn FLPD officers in October 2023*

## EMS Response

The City continued to make significant investments into its Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) response mechanisms, starting with Fort Lauderdale's Ocean Rescue Unit. A new Ocean Rescue headquarters, which will be located at the City's Aquatic Center near Fort Lauderdale Beach, will significantly expedite EMS response by providing proximity to the beach, facilitating coordinated emergency responses, and ensuring that lifeguards and EMS personnel have quick access to essential resources and training. Its strategic location and effective communication systems will improve public safety and response times, ultimately enhancing the well-being of beachgoers and neighbors.



*Ocean Rescue Lifeguard communicates current beach conditions*

Additionally, the Fire Department has seen notable expansion, with the addition of nine new fire lieutenants and a Public Information Specialist in the FY 2024 budget. These additions will enhance EMS response by providing increased personnel, leadership, and specialized training for medical emergencies. This expansion seeks faster response times, more efficient resource allocation, backup support, and ongoing professional development, ultimately improving the overall quality of care provided in medical emergencies. These investments and personnel increases reflect a commitment to public safety and emergency response in the community.

## Internal Support

### Goal 7: Build a values-based organization dedicated to developing and retaining qualified employees

#### Objectives:

- Establish an organizational culture that fosters rewarding, professional careers
- Improve employee safety and wellness
- Provide effective internal communication and encourage employee feedback
- Continuously improve service delivery to achieve excellence through innovation
- Be a diverse and inclusive organization

The City is actively fostering a healthy organizational culture that prioritizes open and effective communication between employees and stakeholders. By implementing transparent communication channels, the City aims to ensure that information flows seamlessly across all levels, promoting a collaborative environment. This year that effort took shape when a new tagline was introduced, *WeAreFTL*, encapsulating a sense of community identity and unity. A cohesive and recognizable city tagline serves as a representation of identity that can foster community pride and enhance marketing efforts. Internally, the City Manager's Office has begun hosting employee town halls on a regular cadence that gives leadership a chance to communicate important updates and celebrate department successes and allows employees to ask any questions they have. Two-way channels of internal communication are a crucial component of any organization that has the goal of developing and retaining the best public servants.



*City Staff share new the WeAreFTL tagline at the annual Fly Pink Event at FXE Airport*

#### City Recruitment and Employee Wellness

This year, the City of Fort Lauderdale hosted a Citywide Career Fair, featuring a multitude of job opportunities within the City organization. This event was a platform for neighbors and job seekers to explore a wide array of career prospects with the City. The fair not only supported local economic development but also emphasized the City's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce. It has significantly contributed to enhancing community well-being by connecting neighbors with employment opportunities that directly benefit the City and their fellow neighbors.

Additionally, the revised recruitment scoring for paramedic/firefighter positions demonstrates a commitment to fostering diversity and inclusivity within the Fire Department. By creating a more inclusive hiring process, the City ensures a broader and more representative pool of candidates, ultimately strengthening the Department's ability to serve a diverse community.



The City once again hosted its Health Wellness Fair. This annual event brought together vendors, community partners, and non-profit organizations to promote the physical, financial, and mental wellbeing of its workforce. Employees attended the event to learn more about the available resources the City offers to keep them healthier throughout the year. Offering these resources and connecting employees to vendors not only empowers the employee to live a healthier life but also ensures financial stability of the City's health funds by proactively addressing health issues that may lead to increased number of claims throughout the fiscal year.

### **Public Safety Union Negotiations**

City staff were able successfully negotiate and ratify new contracts with public safety unions International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF Local 765) and the Fraternal Order of Police. Successfully completing negotiations with public safety labor groups in Fort Lauderdale is vital for retaining top talent, ensuring fair compensation and positive working conditions, and fostering a collaborative relationship that will make the City an employer of choice in the public safety industry.

### **External Communication**

In 2023, the City launched its own biannual magazine to neighbors entitled *FTL Connect*. This magazine is a multifaceted communication tool that not only informs neighbors about the City's developments and upcoming events but also serves as a key channel for updating them on the progress the City has made regarding the priorities set by the City Commission. Furthermore, the City has remained committed to project transparency through the addition of a public website updating users on the status of City projects. The introduction of a dedicated website will inform neighbors about current and upcoming major projects and Public-Private Partnership (P3) initiatives.

## Goal 8: Build a leading government organization that manages all resources wisely and sustainably

### Objectives:

- Maintain financial integrity through sound budgeting practices, prudent fiscal management, cost effective operations, and long-term financial planning
- Achieve excellent procurement services through technological advancements, improved procedures, and outreach programs
- Provide a reliable and progressive technology infrastructure
- Provide safe, well-maintained, and efficient facilities and capital assets
- Integrate sustainability and resiliency into daily operations

The City is committed to managing its resources economically, efficiently, and equitably. To achieve this, sound fiscal management and the integration of sustainability principles into operations and planning are paramount.

### City Response to Historic Floods

The City's robust response to an unprecedented 1,000-year flood that occurred in April demonstrated Fort Lauderdale's resilience and dedication to the well-being of its neighbors. This historic and unexpected rainstorm dumped well over 20 inches of rain over a 12-hour period. One of the guiding principles of emergency management is to be prepared to respond to all possible threats at any given time and the City exemplified that in April and in its recovery months after the storm. The City's multifaceted response, which included staff relocation, rescue operations, debris removal, stormwater management, the establishment of comfort stations, and advocacy for federal assistance, highlights its unwavering commitment to safeguard the community during times of crisis. Fort Lauderdale is prepared to effectively manage a wide range of natural disasters/emergencies at a moment's notice.



*Fort Lauderdale Public Safety personnel and Florida Wildlife Commission officers help neighbors safely evacuate flood waters in April 2023*

## **Financial Stability**

Standard & Poor's (S&P) assigned a 'AAA' rating to both the City's special obligation refunding bonds and general obligation (GO) bonds. S&P attributed the City's ratings to a very strong economy, budgetary flexibility, management, and liquidity. In a similar move, Moody's Investors Service assigned 'Aa2' ratings and a positive outlook to the City's 2020 special obligation refunding bonds. Moody's also affirmed the Aa1 rating on the City's outstanding general obligation unlimited tax (GOULT) debt.

The ratings and opinions of Wall Street's leading credit rating institutions signal strong confidence in the financial management of the City of Fort Lauderdale. High bond ratings enable the City to borrow and repay money at much lower interest rates, which translates into millions of dollars in savings for taxpayers and ratepayers. The City's fiscal discipline and vigilance have been instrumental in building a strong financial foundation and positioning Fort Lauderdale for a bright future. This success does not happen by chance – it is the direct result of innovation, long-term strategic and financial planning, dedication, and continuous process improvement.

## **Sustainable Operations**

The City received the U.S Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (USGBC LEED) Gold Cities Certification, a notable achievement recognizing the City's commitment to sustainable and eco-friendly urban development. LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a certification that assesses and promotes environmentally sustainable and energy-efficient building and community design. This certification underscores Fort Lauderdale's dedication to environmental stewardship and responsible city planning. Additionally, the installation of seven new electric vehicle (EV) chargers at City facilities demonstrates the City's support for green transportation and the reduction of carbon emissions, contributing to a more sustainable and eco-conscious community.

## Awards

As a leading government organization, the City has achieved several awards in recognition of the high-quality services it provides, both internally and to neighbors. The awards listed below highlight service areas where the City is a leader among its peers in pursuit of becoming the "City you never want to leave."

- USGBC LEED Gold Cities Certification - U.S. Green Building Council
- Finalist in 2023 Smart Cities North America Awards - International Data Corporation (IDC)
- 2023 All-America City Hall of Fame Inductee - National Civic League
- Top 10 Greenest Mid-Sized Cities - MyLife.com
- Top Ranked City for Hispanic Entrepreneurship Rate - WalletHub
- Top 100 Best Cities to Start a Business - WalletHub
- Best Places for Business and Careers - Forbes Magazine
- Top 10 Best Places to Retire - Money Magazine
- Most Diverse City in Florida - WalletHub
- Best Neighborhood Program in the U.S. - Neighborhoods USA
- Best of the Web Award - Center for Digital Government
- Climate Leader Award - Southeast Florida Regional Climate Compact
- Top 25 Beach in the United States - TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Awards
- Top 10 City for Real Estate Investment - Forbes, Inc.
- #1 Single-Family Housing Market in the United States - Ten-X



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE**

## Performance Measures

Strategic planning is a dynamic, future-oriented process of assessment, goal-setting, decision-making, and reassessment that maps the path between the present and the goals and vision of the City. The City uses performance measures to assess the successes of the City's programs and to ensure that we stay agile when implementing new initiatives that support and advance the multi-year view of the City's goals and vision. Below are the key performance measures used to evaluate the progress of the Strategic Plan.

<b>GOAL 1</b> Build a sustainable and resilient community.	<b>2018</b> BASELINE	<b>2023</b> ACTUAL	<b>2024</b> TARGET
CIP funds spent	\$89,404,212 28.1%	\$111,189,125 14.6% <sup>1</sup>	25.0%
Utilities maintenance budget as a percent of overall utilities asset value	9.31%	10.53% <sup>1</sup>	Monitor Trend
Percent of citywide tree canopy coverage on public and private property	25.9%	26.5%	27.4%
Percent of households participating in waste diversion programs	N/A <sup>2</sup>	N/A <sup>2</sup>	75%
Aerial square footage of dune system	N/A <sup>2</sup>	448,761	370,822
Percent of catch basins proactively inspected	37% <sup>3</sup>	76%	100%
<b>GOAL 2</b> Build a multi-modal and pedestrian friendly community.	<b>2018</b> BASELINE	<b>2023</b> ACTUAL	<b>2024</b> TARGET
Satisfaction with the overall flow of traffic	18%	18% <sup>4</sup>	47%
Percent of neighbors that drive to work alone <sup>5</sup>	78%	60%	<78%
Percent of neighbors that use public transportation to commute <sup>5</sup>	3.3%	2.6%	>3.3%
Installed linear feet of bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and shared use paths	206,135	359,571	456,135

<b>GOAL 3</b> Build a healthy and engaging community.	<b>2018</b> BASELINE	<b>2023</b> ACTUAL	<b>2024</b> TARGET
Percent of neighbors that live within a 10-minute walk of a park	89%	84%	90%
Percent of neighbors that perceive the overall appearance of the City as excellent or good	59%	N/A <sup>6</sup>	69%
Satisfaction with the quality of Parks and Recreation programs and facilities	71%	N/A <sup>6</sup>	75%
Percent of 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade students meeting or exceeding English Language Arts (ELA) grade level proficiency	47.6%	N/A <sup>2</sup>	>47.6%
<b>GOAL 4</b> Build a thriving and inclusive community of neighborhoods.	<b>2018</b> BASELINE	<b>2023</b> ACTUAL	<b>2024</b> TARGET
Number of homeless	459	780	250
Percent of households spending 30% or more of income on housing <sup>5</sup>	44%	43%	<44%
Percent of students entering kindergarten "kindergarten ready"	43%	43%	>43%
Students enrolled in public schools	19,329	18,327	>19,329
<b>GOAL 5</b> Build an attractive global and local economic community marketplace.	<b>2018</b> BASELINE	<b>2023</b> ACTUAL	<b>2024</b> TARGET
Unemployment rate	3.4%	N/A <sup>2</sup>	3.4%
Percent of Broward County tourism tax generated by Fort Lauderdale <sup>7</sup>	45.4%	45.2%	50%
Number of jobs committed by contract created through Qualified Target Industries (QTI) projects	180	57	500
Number of active retail/restaurant properties	925	973	1,000
Percent of neighbors aged 18-44 with an associate degree or higher <sup>5</sup>	38.4%	48.6%	>38.4%
<b>GOAL 6</b> Build a safe and well-prepared community.	<b>2018</b> BASELINE	<b>2023</b> ACTUAL	<b>2024</b> TARGET
Crime rate per 1,000 neighbors	55.0	N/A <sup>2</sup>	53.3
Emergency Medical Services (EMS) total time for first unit arrival (minutes)	7:50	8:28	6:00
Percent of City employees trained in National Incident Management System (NIMS) certification requirements	44%	89%	95%

<b>GOAL 7</b> Build a values-based organization dedicated to developing and retaining qualified employees.	<b>2018 BASELINE</b>	<b>2023 ACTUAL</b>	<b>2024 TARGET</b>
Employee turnover rate	6%	8%	5%
Average hours of training per employee	29	57	36
Neighbor satisfaction with the quality of customer service from City employees	57%	42% <sup>4</sup>	61%
<b>GOAL 8</b> Build a leading government organization that manages all resources wisely and sustainably.	<b>2018 BASELINE</b>	<b>2023 ACTUAL</b>	<b>2024 TARGET</b>
Property values (billions)	\$36.1 <sup>8</sup>	\$48.8	\$44.1
Bond rating evaluation by Standard & Poor's national bond rating agency: general obligation	AA	AAA	AAA
Bond rating evaluation by Standard & Poor's national bond rating agency: revenue	AA	AA	AA
Percent of General Fund balance available for use at or above requirements	24.6% <sup>9</sup>	30.6% <sup>1</sup>	25.0%
Total fleet fuel consumption (gallons)	1,320,885	1,282,516	<1,188,797

<sup>1</sup>The FY 2023 reported actual value is an estimate as FY 2023 year-end financial data is being finalized as a part of the year-end audit process.

<sup>2</sup> The abbreviation N/A stands for "not available;" data for this period is not available at the time of publication.

<sup>3</sup>The 2018 Baseline data was developed from FY 2017 year-end data; the reported baseline figure has been updated to reflect FY 2018 year-end data for consistent trending.

<sup>4</sup>Survey methodology was modified in 2023 due to a vendor change for survey administration.

<sup>5</sup>Data is reported for the prior year as reporting for the American Census Survey is delayed.

<sup>6</sup>Survey methodology was modified in 2023 due to a vendor change for survey administration. As a part of this transition, this question was not included in the 2023 survey.

<sup>7</sup>Data is reported for the prior year as reporting for the Broward County Taxes and Treasury Division is delayed.

<sup>8</sup>The gross taxable value has been updated and finalized from the estimate according to the Broward County Property Appraiser's certification of taxable value.

<sup>9</sup>Data has been updated and finalized as a part of the year-end audit process.

**For historical data, supporting information, and data visualizations  
visit our City's Strategic Plan Dashboard.**

[www.fortlauderdale.gov/pressplay](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/pressplay)

## Looking Forward

At the end of each year, the City “pauses” to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year and evaluate its progress before it again “presses play” toward the remaining work left in the 5-year strategic plan.

Some of the initiatives to look forward to over the course of the new year include the completion of D.C. Alexander Park, assessing opportunities for a new City Hall, and completion of the brand-new Las Olas Marina, as well as continuing projects that will address the City’s resilience to flooding. The best is yet to come!



# 2023 Strategic Plan Progress Report

Final Audit Report

2024-03-11

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