



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
REGULAR MEETING

#25-0654

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: June 17, 2025

TITLE: Second Reading – Ordinance Amending the City of Fort Lauderdale Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR); Section 47-22.8, “Special Sign Districts”, Adding Section 47-22.8.2 Entitled “Broward County Convention Center Special Sign District”, Creating Regulations for the Broward County Convention Center Special Sign District - Case No. UDP-T24011 – **(Commission District 4)**

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission consider an ordinance amending Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) Section 47-22.8, Special Sign Districts, to add section 47-22.8.2, entitled “Broward County Convention Center Special Sign District”, thereby creating a special sign district and regulations for the Broward County Convention Center.

Background

Pursuant to ULDR Section 47-22.8, Special Sign Districts, property owners may propose a special sign district for a designated area, subject to criteria developed for the special sign district. For a special sign district to be formed, 60% or more of the merchants occupying the street frontage of properties on both sides of the street may petition the City for the formation of a special sign district.

As required by the ULDR, a special sign district committee must be formed comprised of property owners or those with rights of possession within the special sign district area. The special sign district committee acts as the governing body of the sign district and establishes criteria for signs in the district. The role of this committee is to establish criteria, which shall be no less restrictive than the terms and conditions established by the ULDR. The Broward County Board of County Commissioners, as the sole owner and merchant of the property and street frontage, established the special sign district committee. A letter from Broward County appointing the sign district committee, comprised of three members is attached as Exhibit 1.

The Broward County Convention Center expansion project, new Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau office building, and hotel serving the convention center is nearing completion. Final occupancy of the hotel is contingent on substantial completion

of the Port Everglades bypass road which is anticipated in October 2025.

The intent of the special sign district is to recognize the unique role of the Broward County Convention Center as a prominent public venue that requires adaptable signage to effectively communicate events and information. By establishing the special sign district, the proposed message center sign will be seamlessly incorporated into the architectural design of the Broward County Convention Center, resulting in a more aesthetically pleasing and functional solution than what would be permitted under the existing code for a standard pylon sign. As proposed, the Broward County Convention Center Special Sign District is located south of SE 17th Street, east of Eisenhower Boulevard, north of SE 20th Street and west of the Intracoastal Waterway.

The proposed special sign district ordinance will permit the installation of a message center sign that extends from the new Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau building's north façade to its west façade. The message center sign is proposed to be 29 feet and 7 inches on the north elevation and 28 feet and 10 inches on the west elevation. The purpose of the message center sign is to provide information about current and upcoming events at the Broward County Convention Center. The message center sign will also be required to meet all the display characteristics for message center signs related to the type of lighting and display rate of alternating messages.

The Broward County Convention Center meets the City of Fort Lauderdale's ULDR requirements for the types of facilities that are entitled to message center signs. Pursuant to ULDR Section 47-22.3.1, Message Center Signs, a new proposed message center sign will be designed in a manner that will further the governmental interest of promoting significant events and will be reviewed in association with buildings or facilities used primarily for public assembly for presentation of cultural, social, artistic, educational events, to hold public expositions, fairs and conventions, with exception of the dimensional and location requirements. Specifically, the ULDR requires a property that includes a facility with a minimum capacity of 12,000 people and is at least 200,000 square feet in area. The redeveloped Broward County Convention Center exceeds the ULDR requirement with capacity for 23,730 people, not including the main exhibit hall, and is 1,145,581 square feet in size.

Previously, the Broward County Convention Center was served by a stand-alone message center sign along SE 17th Street. The new Broward County Convention Center Hotel and Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau building will benefit from the special sign district to ensure new signage is cohesive with the architecture of the redeveloped Broward County Convention Center and provides visibility for convention center events and programs.

A location map illustrating the boundaries of the proposed special sign district is attached as Exhibit 2. The special sign district application, letters, and narratives provided by Lochrie and Chakas, P.A. representing the property owner within the Broward County Convention Center Special Sign District, are attached as Exhibit 3.

The special sign district ordinance was presented to the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) on April 16, 2025, and was recommended for approval (9-0) to the City Commission. The April 16, 2025, PZB Meeting Minutes and April 16, 2025, PZB Staff Report are attached as Exhibit 4 and Exhibit 5, respectively.

The first reading of the ordinance was held on June 3, 2025. The City Commission approved the ordinance without modifications.

Resource Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

Strategic Connections

This item is a FY 2025 *Commission Priority*, advancing Economic Development.

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029 Strategic Plan*, specifically advancing:

- The Business Development Growth and Support Focus Area
- Goal 6: Build a diverse and attractive economy.

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Vision Plan: We Are United*

This item supports the Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040 Comprehensive Plan specifically advancing:

- The Business Development Focus Area
- Economic Development
- Goal 1: Enhance Fort Lauderdale's stature as a global, business friendly destination through the development of a business identity, enhanced marketing, branding, and support for enhanced local activities and tourism development.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Letter from Broward County Appointing Special Sign District Committee

Exhibit 2 – Proposed Special Sign District Boundary Map

Exhibit 3 – Application, Letters and Narratives

Exhibit 4 – April 16, 2025, PZB Meeting Minutes

Exhibit 5 – April 16, 2025, PZB Staff Report

Exhibit 6 – Business Impact Estimate

Exhibit 7 – Ordinance

Prepared by: Michael P. Ferrera, Urban Planner II, Development Services Department

Acting Department Director: Porshia L. Garcia, Development Services Department