



**BEACH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BBID)**

August 11, 2025

1:30 PM

Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce

512 NE 3rd Avenue

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

**Cumulative Attendance
September 2024- August 2025**

Organization/Hotel	P/A	Regular		Special	
		P	A	P	A
Marriott Courtyard, PHF Oceanfront (Vacant) Steve Zunt, Alternate	A	8	2	0	1
The “W” Hotel, Capri Hotel, LLC Cody Bertone Alex Caceres, Alternate	P	6	4	1	0
Ritz Carlton Hotel Jose Torres Samuel Fuerstman, Alternate	P	7	3	1	0
Greater FTL Lauderdale Chamber Ina Lee	P	10	0	0	1
The Westin Ft Lauderdale Beach Laurie Johnson Michael Berry, Alternate	P	10	0	1	0
B Ocean Fort Lauderdale Sabrina Graves Alternate (vacant)	P	10	0	1	0
Sonesta Hotel (Vacant) Jeff Peterson, Alternate	A	9	1	1	0
Conrad Robert Lacle Veronica Milanova	A		2	1	0
Maren Hotel Stuart Levy Nesli Loren, Alternate (arr. 1:34pm)	P	2	0	0	0

COMMUNICATION TO THE CITY COMMISSION

none

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City of Fort Lauderdale

Judy Erickson, Program Manager Barrier Island and BBID

Consultant or Vendor Representative

Tasha Cunningham, The Brand Advocates
K, Cruitt, Recording Secretary, Prototype Inc.

Guests/Visitors

Sharon Howell, General Manager, Oceanside Courtyard Fort Lauderdale Beach
Bill Brown, Central Beach Alliance
Ramola Motwani

I. Call to Order/ Roll Call/ Quorum- Chair Lisa Namour

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Chair Namour. It was noted a quorum was present.

II. Reapprove June 9 Regular Meeting and June 19 Special Meeting Minutes

Reapproval of June 9, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Jose Torres, seconded by Cody Bertone, to reapprove the June 9, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Reapproval of June 19, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes

Motion by Ina Lee, seconded by Cody Bertone, to reapprove the June 19, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

III. Approval of July 14, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Cody Bertone, seconded by Jose Torres, to approve the July 14, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

IV. BBID Marketing Updates - Summer, Fall, and Holiday Marketing Overview
Tasha Cunningham, Brand Advocates

Ms. Cunningham presented a winter campaign framed as a hyper-local holiday initiative highlighting culinary tie-ins, supported by funds available in her cost allowance budget. She noted this was a first phase to quickly launch, with a timeline included, and said she would circulate a link within 1 day for BBID Committee members to provide feedback and begin developing an umbrella theme.

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Discussion

- Ms. Lee said the proposal did not fully meet committee objectives, stressing it must drive extended overnight stays and attract out-of-market visitors during the holiday/winter season, not just local participation or short visits. She questioned leading with culinary, recommending that campaign stay tied to Visit Lauderdale's Dine Out program, and emphasized alignment of the Holiday/Winter Campaign with Visit Lauderdale's new "Water-Oriented" campaign. She noted state restrictions on terms in marketing and added that receiving campaign materials the day before the meeting did not allow sufficient review; materials must be provided at least one week in advance.
- Chair Namour reinforced the campaign must position Fort Lauderdale Beach as a recognized holiday destination, comparable to New York, St. Augustine, and St. Pete, with a clear, compelling draw for visitation. She highlighted existing holiday assets such as LOOP Light Up the Beach, Winter Wonderland, WinterFest Boat Parade, and A1A/Las Olas holiday lighting and décor, encouraging building on these traditions year over year. She also asked how the campaign would be promoted; Ms. Cunningham said streaming, out-of-home, PR, and digital were included.
- Mr. Bertone asked about follow-up phases; Ms. Cunningham said this was one phase to get the campaign off the ground.
- Ms. Johnson raised the impact of AI, noting consultants report digital advertising shifts and a 32% decline in Google search use. She stressed the need for an AI strategy. Ms. Cunningham responded digital remains viable, though Ms. Johnson reiterated a proactive AI approach is required. Ms. Cunningham indicated she is working on this.
- Ms. Lee proposed the winter season campaign be positioned under one umbrella from the Boat Show through January (Diwali, Light Up the Beach, WinterFest, Food & Wine Festival). She said integrating these events would extend stays, as visitors may come for one event but stay longer if packaged.
- Ms. Erickson offered clarification on media expenditures, confirming that because Ms. Cunningham's \$25K annual contractual allowance covers both media and other costs and she is near the threshold, the BBID committee must approve a media plan and budget, which can then be taken to the City Commission for approval to avoid procurement delays; looking ahead to FY26, when the BBID anticipates spending more on media beyond this allowance, an approved plan and budget will also provide the committee with greater agility and flexibility.
- Ms. Loren asked about a call to action and AI chatbot on the website, suggesting it would be simple and not costly to implement. She also requested a funnel to track ROI and linking to the BBID hotels and businesses. Ms. Cunningham said UTMs are in place but acknowledged limits in tracking completed bookings. Ms. Johnson asked if this work was being done for BBID, and Ms. Cunningham confirmed yes.

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Conclusion

The committee agreed the proposal was too limited in scope and not sufficiently focused on hotel demand. Ms. Cunningham was instructed to rework the campaign to:

- Focus on extended overnight visitation and out-of-market travelers.
- Align with Visit Lauderdale's "Water-Oriented" theme.
- Package the entire winter season under one umbrella with a distinct name and integrated calendar.
- Highlight signature holiday assets and events as destination drivers.
- Provide phased promotion plans with stronger tracking, AI integration, and deeper ROI metrics.
- Deliver campaign materials requiring BBID committee review and approval at least one week before meetings.

Motion by Cody Bertone, seconded by Jose Torres, to add \$18,000 to the marketing budget for Q4 (2025). The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

V. **Action Item: BBID Reimbursable Event Grant Applications**

Judy Erickson, Program Manager

Chair Namour introduced the topic of reimbursable event grant applications, noting the Conrad has not yet send the revised application for NYE fireworks. Ms. Graves proposed reopening discussion on an event grant application submitted by Marina Village to attract visitors to the south side of the beach during the holiday season. The proposed Christmas Tree would serve as an additional amenity to draw foot traffic to hotels and businesses. Members discussed the need to fill large event gaps between mid-November and December with more programming and decorations, particularly in South Beach area of Fort Lauderdale, to complement existing events like Light Up the Beach and the Diwali celebration.

Motion made by Ms. Graves, seconded by Ms. Loren, to reopen the Marina Village "Biggest Christmas Tree in Broward County" funding application and approve funding of \$25,000. The motion passed by voice vote.

- FTL Margarita Festival

Ms. Erickson informed the committee of a FY26 application for the inaugural Fort Lauderdale Margarita Festival, scheduled for October 11 at the LOOP. The committee agreed to observe the event this year and consider it for future funding. No funding was awarded for FY26.

VI. **Mid-Year Strategic Marketing Session** – Chair Lisa Namour

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The Chair began by outlining the purpose of the mid-year update following the January 2025 Strategic Planning Workshop: (1) reflect on progress to date, (2) identify momentum and gaps, and (3) align on Q4 2025 and 2026 priorities.

She recapped the January 2025 priorities: increase demand during need periods; strengthen marketing, PR, and destination visibility; improve infrastructure, public space, and visitor experience; leverage events for economic impact; and support group and convention business.

Key Assessment:

- Increase demand during need periods: Committee agreed this has not yet been achieved.
- Marketing, PR, and visibility: Progress beginning with a marketing/PR solicitation in development.
- Infrastructure & visitor experience: Sidewalk and construction impact improvements noted; better understanding of construction utility locate markings, more work in progress.
- Leverage events: Strong performance amplifying anchor events and leveraging event marketing platforms to extend reach and drive hotel demand.
- Group & convention business: Limited progress due to convention center not fully open, Omni not open yet; benefits expected once operational.

Strategic Follow-Ups Since January

The Chair invited committee members to share updates on progress on follow-ups since the January 2025 workshop.

- Ms. Lee convened stakeholders in May for the Beach 2030 Reprise to advance the long-term vision for Fort Lauderdale Beach, reporting strong alignment with residents, no major pushback, and useful updates on progress.
- Ms. Graves led BBID coordination to identify shared need periods, provided data to Tasha and the committee for marketing purposes, and anticipates greater opportunity to apply this data in the coming year. Chair Namour asked Tasha to resend the information to BBID members for the benefit of new members.
- Chair Namour launched the Infrastructure Improvement Work Group with an April walk/ride audit, which gave helpful perspective from a sidewalk view and the visitor experiences and conditions; feedback was shared with city departments for action. Ms. Erickson will provide an update at the October meeting.
- Ms. Johnson worked with the Visit Lauderdale Convention Center Sales Team to align BBID with citywide group business priorities, noting broad interest. Ina raised concerns over leadership changes at Visit Lauderdale with the \$1.2 billion project opening. Ms. Graves indicated she believes groups are being turned away due to

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limited rooms, and Ms. Loren added that unless groups exceed 2,500 attendees, the beach is unlikely to see compression, with communication gaps persisting. Ms. Johnson and Mr. Torres confirmed they receive leads but face challenges with low rates and limited food and beverage contributions. Chair Namour asked Ms. Johnson to follow up with Visit Lauderdale, and Ms. Lee requested TDC member Ms. Ramola Motwani, present at this meeting, convey concerns about convention sales. Ms. Motwani underscored the need for stronger holiday programming from Boat Show through the Food & Wine Festival, suggesting banners along A1A to showcase seasonal events and expanding on holiday offerings, activities and events.

- Mr. Torres will provide and update on event research and strategy to identify high-impact events and help guide funding decisions.

FY2025 Accomplishments included:

- \$685,000 invested in destination events generating \$54M+ in economic impact (with Tortuga contributing \$40M+ alone)
- Launch of the Infrastructure Work Group to enhance visitor experience through sidewalk, landscaping, and public space improvements
- Partnering with the City to issue a Marketing RFP to evolve Fort Lauderdale Beach's brand identity focusing on creating a signature identity highlighting world-class hotels, resort-style amenities, Michelin rated restaurants, and a walkable, water-driven lifestyle with access to Las Olas, Riverwalk, downtown and cultural hubs
 - Ms. Lee stressed the need for BBID Advisory Committee participation in the selection process, noting the BBID's unique needs differ from standard City procurement. Ms. Erickson confirmed the City's procurement director will attend the October BBID meeting to hear committee concerns and discuss the possibilities. Ms. Lee further emphasized that all BBID marketing must tie back to water, in alignment with Visit Lauderdale's agency presentation by SPARK, and directed Tasha to incorporate this focus in future campaigns.
- Strengthening engagement with the Mayor, District 2 & 4 Commissioners, and the City Manager
- Launch of the "Roadtrippers" campaign on May 23, which ran across BBID channels, partner networks, and Roadtrippers.com, delivering +48% engagement, 5M+ impressions, and boosting regional visibility during peak summer travel.

Committee Member Johnson emphasized that the BBID's procurement and funding processes need to be nimble, suggesting a contingency line for unexpected opportunities such as the Panther Parade or other pop-up events. The discussion included exploring partnerships with the convention center to offer incentives or support for events that meet specific economic impact criteria. Ms. Johnson added that prior initiatives, like incentive

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programs for single properties when the convention center was under construction, could serve as a model for leveraging funding effectively.

Marketing and branding were a central focus of the conversation. Chair Namour emphasized a water-driven campaign theme to highlight Fort Lauderdale's beaches, Intracoastal Waterway, yacht lifestyle, and luxury experiential offerings. She noted that while the Road trippers campaign delivered impressions, more direct focus on high-value source markets—particularly the Northeast—was needed to drive actual visitation. The group discussed balancing media advertising with experiential activations, using curated events and luxury experiences to attract visitors. Ideas included signature holiday events, high-end shopping tours, and other seasonal programming that could serve as springboards for future campaigns. Mr. Torres highlighted the importance of strategic alignment with hotel sales and marketing teams, ensuring that campaigns and events are clearly tied to economic impact for the BBID hotels and the surrounding destination. The group reflected on past successful campaigns, such as the Visit Lauderdale coordinated New York PR activations by luxury hotels, as a model for boosting out of market awareness and positioning Fort Lauderdale as a premier luxury, experiential destination.

Dr. Ted's (VP Visit Lauderdale) visitor insights were reviewed, showing that most visitors stay overnight, are younger, high-spending, and prioritize dining, entertainment, and cultural experiences, reinforcing the need to target these demographics and plan campaigns around their behavior.

Looking ahead, the group agreed on several key next steps. Feedback on the new RFP needs to be finalized so it can be incorporated, and a coordinated marketing and PR plan should be developed to articulate a clear story for the BBID hotels.

Chair Namour suggested a November workshop with hotel sales and marketing teams to refine messaging, strategy, and experiential activations, ensuring alignment across the BBID and hotel partners. Committee Member Loren offered to draft a preliminary marketing plan that could be reviewed by the group prior to the October meeting. She committed to provide the draft plan two weeks prior to the October 13, meeting for BBID Advisory Committee review. Overall, the discussion underscored the need to align events, advertising, and PR with measurable goals, focusing on need periods, driving hotel demand, and reinforcing Fort Lauderdale's identity as a world-class, water-focused, experiential luxury destination.

VIII. Program Manager Updates – Judy Erickson, BBID Program Manager

Ms. Erickson reminded Committee Members of the City Commission meeting on August 19, where Carl Williams will present on the proposed special event outdoor event ordinance proposed changes. Ms. Lee inquired about Mr. Bill Brown, CBA insight, who explained that Miami Beach has restricted product brand marketing events such as the

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Igloo event that took place a few weeks ago. He noted that Fort Lauderdale Police have successfully managed event traffic on large events like the Panther Parade, noting zero complaints from beach residents. He emphasized that CBA recognizes the need for tourism driving events to support the hotels.

Ms. Lee emphasized the need for legislative support and a clearer understanding of State of Florida SB 2502s impact on BBID event grant funding. She noted that DEI, LGBTQ-related events cannot currently be funded with public tax dollars and requested clarification from the City Attorney's Office on whether BBID funding, which is not public dollars, may continue to support such events, including FlockFest. Mr. Brown added that this should be addressed proactively through the legislative agenda.

Ms. Lee raised concerns about opposition to the Tourist Development Tax, the primary source of funding for marketing, beach nourishment, and arts/culture initiatives.

Ms. Erickson noted that BBID does not meet in September and that the next meeting in October will include procurement discussions with the City's procurement director to address funding and solicitation challenges.

X. Adjournment – Chair Lisa Namour

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by J. Burnham, Prototype, Inc.]