



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
REGULAR MEETING

#26-0045

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

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: January 20, 2026

TITLE: First Reading – Ordinance Amending Section 8-55.5 of the Code of Ordinances, Titled “High Impact Events on Beach Property” by renaming Section 8-55.5 to “High Impact Zones During High Impact Periods” to Authorize the City Manager to Designate High Impact Zones within the City and Impose Additional Immediate Temporary Measures During High Impact Periods - (**Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4**)

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission approve an ordinance amending Section 8-55.5 of the City of Fort Lauderdale Code of Ordinances (Code of Ordinances), titled “High Impact Events on Beach Property” by renaming Section 8-55.5 to “High Impact Zones during High Impact Periods” to authorize the City Manager to designate High Impact Zones within the City and impose additional immediate temporary measures during High Impact Periods.

Background

Section 8-55.5 of the Code of Ordinances currently addresses regulations regarding high impact events on beach property and grants the City Manager the authority to impose immediate measures for high impact events on the barrier island. The Code of Ordinances defines the criteria and process for when and how the City Manager may declare a high impact event. Previously declared high impact events include Spring Break, Tortuga Music Festival, Florida Panthers Stanley Cup Celebration Parade, Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, and the Fort Lauderdale Air Show, among others.

City staff identified areas in the existing Code of Ordinances that require modification to ensure consistency with current City operations, to improve enforceability, and/or to ensure public welfare. The high impact ordinance provides the City with additional ways to respond to public intoxication, loitering, crowd control, and public disturbances that warrant public safety intervention. The proposed amendment will provide the City, specifically the Police Department, with flexibility to enforce rules and regulations for enhanced safety measures during high impact event periods.

On August 27, 2025, City staff presented a draft ordinance to the Parks, Recreation, and Beaches Advisory Board (PRBAB) which received unanimous support. The PRBAB passed a motion to approve the proposed ordinance language by a vote of 8 – 0. On December 8, 2025, and January 12, 2026, City staff presented the draft ordinance to the Beach Business Improvement District (BBID) to share and receive feedback on the proposed modifications.

City staff incorporated the feedback from the PRBAB, and BBID into the ordinance amendment that was presented on first reading to the City Commission on January 6, 2026 (CAM #25-0730). The ordinance amendment passed on first reading by a vote of 4 – 1.

Subsequently, City staff were considering proposing a second high impact ordinance to impose additional immediate temporary measures during high impact events at locations outside of the barrier island. During the drafting process, it was determined that the proposed language could be incorporated in a single ordinance amendment. The proposed ordinance language was modified to incorporate the additional considerations and as such, the ordinance amendment is being presented again as a first reading. If approved, the second reading will be scheduled for the February 3, 2026, City Commission Regular Meeting.

The proposed amendment includes the recommendations that were presented to the City Commission on January 6, 2026, including:

- The addition of “observed holiday” as high impact periods;
- The addition of a curfew that restricts juveniles under the age of eighteen (18) years from accessing specific area(s), as designated by the city manager or designee, without the supervision of a parent or guardian eighteen (18) years of age or older;
- The addition of language to suspend sidewalk café permits and order the removal of associated café equipment with notice to the permittee pursuant to section 25-190 of the Code; and
- The addition of language to modify operating hours for parks and city facilities.

Section 25-189 (6) of the Code of Ordinances addresses regulations regarding sidewalk cafes and allows the City to remove or relocate all or parts of the sidewalk café in emergency situations for the protection of the health, safety and welfare of the public. For consistency, this language is being added to Section 8-55.5 of the Code of Ordinances.

Section 8-55.4 (f) of the Code of Ordinances addresses the temporary or emergency suspension of food or alcohol beverage service on any portion of the city’s public beaches. The city may temporarily suspend licensee's services on any portion of the

public beach that is approved for use in conjunction with a city approved special event, or for city to perform maintenance or repairs, or during periods of prohibitive measures pursuant to Section 8-55.5 of the City Code. For consistency, this language is being added to Section 8-55.5 of the Code of Ordinances.

In addition to the initial recommended changes (as presented on January 6, 2026), the proposed ordinance provides the City Manager with the ability to declare a high impact period, define the high impact zone or zones that are impacted during the event period, and determine the measures for each of the high impact zones. The January 6, 2026, version was updated to include these two (2) additional prohibitive measures:

- Prohibit any sale, distribution, or consumption of alcohol on public property including, but not limited to, any public road, street, alley, park, canal or beach. The existing ordinance language only restricts the consumption of alcohol on the beach property.
- Suspension of outdoor on-premises sales as part of the sidewalk café permit suspension language. The existing ordinance language is silent on outdoor on-premises sales when a sidewalk café permit is suspended.

In order to declare a high impact period within a high impact zone in the City of Fort Lauderdale one (1) or more of the following must occur:

- a. An event, activity, or period of time within a high impact zone for which no city issued outdoor event permit has been granted, that generates a significant spike in social media conversations, increasing audience impressions, and attention on the city, and either (i) in the prior calendar year, generated attendance of more than five thousand (5,000) people; or (ii) is expected to generate attendance by more than five thousand (5,000) people within a high impact zone, as determined by city manager, in his or her reasonable discretion;
- b. City parking lots and garages in an area within a fifteen (15)-block radius of an event that is held within a high impact zone pursuant to an outdoor event permit, or otherwise, are at full capacity;
- c. An event is held pursuant to an outdoor event permit which is expected to result in attendance by more than twenty-five thousand (25,000) people within a high impact zone, as determined by city manager, in his or her reasonable discretion;
- d. A maintenance of traffic (MOT) plan would be required, or is required (e.g., including, but not limited to, street closures, lane closures, shuttle service) within a high impact zone, or pursuant to an outdoor event permit;

- e. Hotel occupancy levels are anticipated to be greater than eighty-five (85) percent in the city; or
- f. Law enforcement mutual aid or other assistance from outside law enforcement agencies is required to provide for the safety and well-being of residents within a high impact zone; or
- g. A period of time that includes an observed holiday for which during the prior calendar year the City expected an increase congregation of people in a high impact zone.

Resource Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

Strategic Connections

This is a FY 2026 Commission Priority, advancing Public Spaces and Cultural Initiatives.

This item supports the 2029 Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- The Public Places Focus Area, Goal 5: Build a beautiful and welcoming community.

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

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

- The Public Places Focus Area
- The Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces Element
- Goal 1: Be a community where persons of all ages are able to partake in a fun and healthy lifestyle.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Ordinance

Exhibit 2 – August 27, 2025, Parks Recreation and Beaches Board Minutes

Exhibit 3 – Commission Agenda Memorandum #25-0730

Exhibit 4 – Business Impact Estimate (BIE)

Prepared by: Ben Rogers, Assistant City Manager

Charter Officer: Rickelle Williams, City Manager