



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

VISION · STRATEGY · ACTION

FY 2026 PRIORITIZATION WORKSHOP RESOURCE GUIDE



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

Agenda

Tuesday, January 21, 2025
9:00 am – 3:30 pm

Suite 1100 – 11th Floor Conference Room
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Tower 101
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

9:00 am	Mayor's Welcome
9:10 am	Introduction of City Commission Priorities
9:20 am	FY 2025 Commission Priorities Progress Update
9:50 am	City Landscape Review
10:10 am	Challenges & Opportunities for the Upcoming Year <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infrastructure Funding• Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights CRA• City Hall
12:00 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm	Challenges & Opportunities for the Upcoming Year, continued <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency Medical Services Taxing District• Transition Sanitation Services to the Tax Bill• Funding for Non-Profit Organizations
2:30 pm	Additional Input for FY 2026 Commission Priorities
3:30 pm	Adjourn Meeting

City staff will consolidate and distribute a report of the FY 2026 Commission Priorities and identified deliverables after the meeting.

Introduction

Purpose of City Commission Priorities

- Advance the Strategic Plan
- Adapt to evolving challenges and emerging opportunities
- Address the most pressing community needs

Governance and Roles

City Commission

- Set the goals, priorities, and policies for the City
- Approve funding to move the goals and priorities forward

City Staff

- Operationalize the goals and priorities through the annual budget
- Create plans and implement actions to achieve the goals and priorities

Implementation Timeline



Introduction

2029 Strategic Plan

Focus Areas & Goals

Public Safety

Goal 1: Be a safe community that is proactive and responsive to risks

Housing

Goal 2: Enable housing options for all income levels

Infrastructure & Resilience

Goal 3: Be a sustainable and resilient community

Goal 4: Facilitate an efficient, multimodal transportation network

Public Places

Goal 5: Build a beautiful and welcoming community

Business Growth & Support

Goal 6: Build a diverse and attractive economy



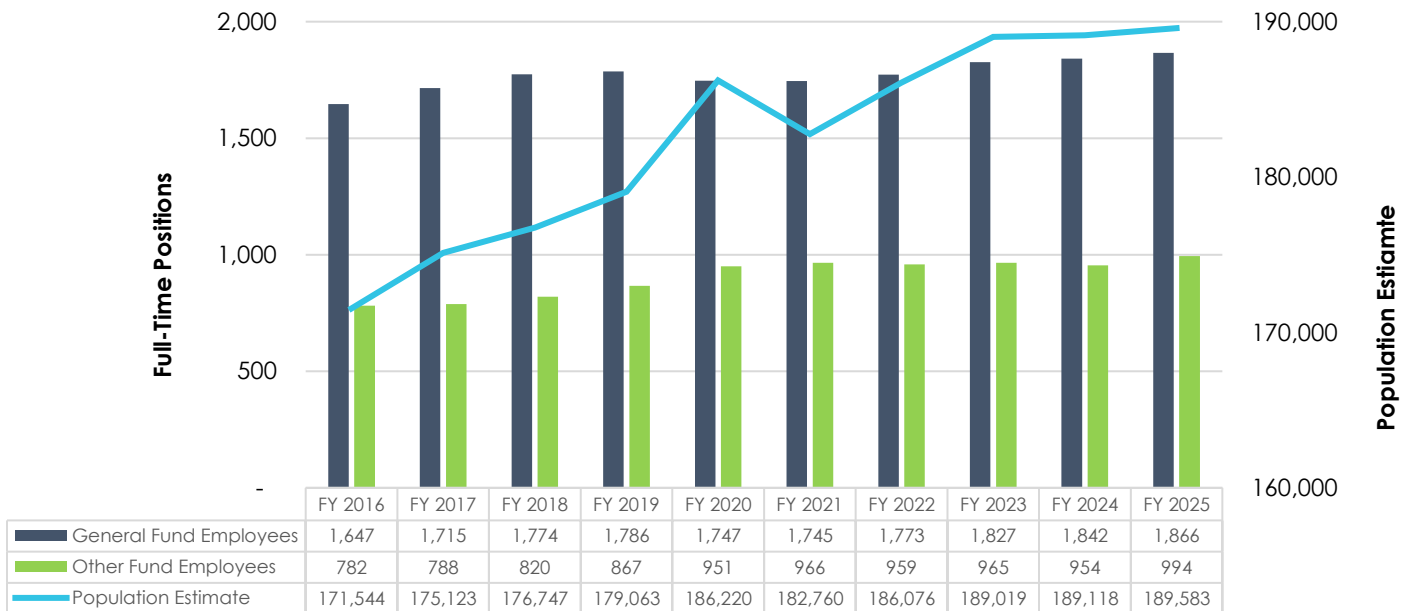
City Landscape Review

City Landscape Review

Taxable Value Increases

Calendar Tax Year	Net New Construction	Final Gross Taxable Value	Increase/Decrease from Prior Year	Operating Millage Rate
2024 - July	\$596,586,866	\$58,986,083,589	8.56%	4.1193
2023 - Final	\$1,131,926,110	\$54,333,485,464	11.33%	4.1193
2022 - Final	\$1,679,235,780	\$48,804,360,453	12.95%	4.1193
2021 - Final	\$1,141,870,340	\$43,209,678,707	5.73%	4.1193
2020 - Final	\$686,582,000	\$40,866,781,365	5.43%	4.1193
2019 - Final	\$1,139,083,000	\$38,762,628,574	7.36%	4.1193
2018 - Final	\$824,076,040	\$36,105,845,628	7.69%	4.1193
2017 - Final	\$340,929,480	\$33,528,048,467	8.27%	4.1193
2016 - Final	\$455,847,640	\$30,966,306,786	9.20%	4.1193
2015 - Final	\$329,982,320	\$28,357,575,422	9.09%	4.1193

Population and Full-Time Employee Growth



Data Source: University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research (Population)

City Landscape Review, continued

Financial Forecast

General Fund Anticipated Cash Flow Maintaining a 4.1193 Millage Rate

	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Millage Rate	4.1193	4.1193	4.1193	4.1193	4.1193	4.1193
Taxable Value Increase*	7.7%	6.5%	6.5%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%
Cash Flow Surplus (Deficit) (\$ millions)	\$ (4.64)	\$ (3.20)	\$ (33.56)	\$ (41.85)	\$ (55.56)	\$ (48.28)
End of Year Fund Balance (\$ millions)	\$ 120.8	\$ 117.6	\$ 84.0	\$ 42.2	\$ (13.4)	\$ (61.7)
Balance % of Expenses°	28.2%	25.6%	16.9%	7.9%	(2.4%)	(10.5%)

*Projected taxable value increase

°Target Balance - 25%; Minimum Fund Balance - 16.67%

Items of Note

- \$2.2M/year General Employee Retirement System Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) contribution through FY 2031
- \$1.0M Las Olas Marina revenue increase projected beginning in FY 2028
- \$4.6M increase in personnel expenses due to the expiration of the SAFER Grant in FY 2028
- \$16.8M Bahia Mar revenue increase projected for FY 2030

FY 2027 Highlights

- \$15.0M in the Community Investment Plan for five (5) planned bridge replacements
- \$6.5M Debt service for a new City Hall (General Fund portion)
- \$2.0M New EMS Substation staffing and operating costs

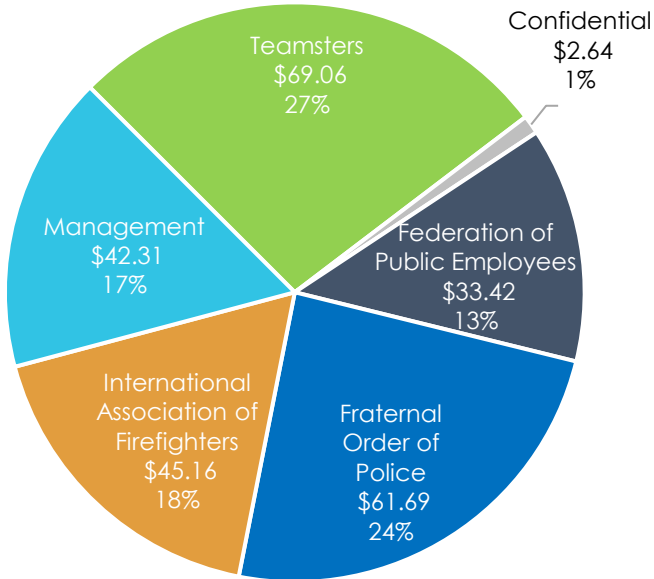
Planned Rate Increases

Fee	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Water and Sewer <i>Based on an average usage of 5,000 gallons/month</i>	\$107.15	\$116.75 9% Increase	\$124.58 6.7% Increase	\$130.85 5% Increase	\$137.37 5% Increase	\$144.24 5% Increase
Sanitation Fee <i>Monthly single-family residential rate</i>	\$49.99	\$52.49 5% Increase	\$55.11 5% Increase	\$57.87 5% Increase	\$60.76 5% Increase	\$63.80 5% Increase
Stormwater Fee <i>Annual assessment for single family residential</i>	\$276.67/unit + \$5.30/trip	\$318.17/unit + \$6.10/trip 15% Increase	\$365.90/unit + \$7.01/trip 15% Increase	\$420.78/unit + \$8.06/trip 15% Increase	\$483.90/unit + \$9.27/trip 15% Increase	\$556.48/unit + \$10.66/trip 15% Increase

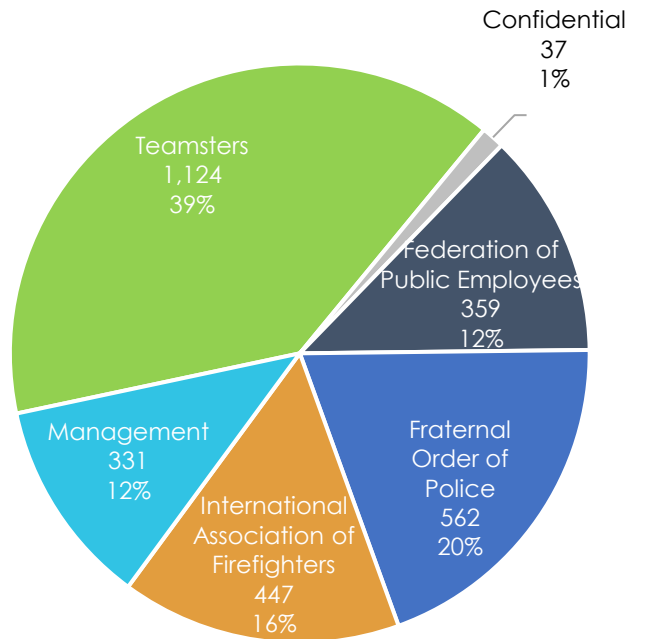
City Landscape Review, continued

Employees by Labor Group

Salary and Wage by Labor Group
Amount in Millions (\$)



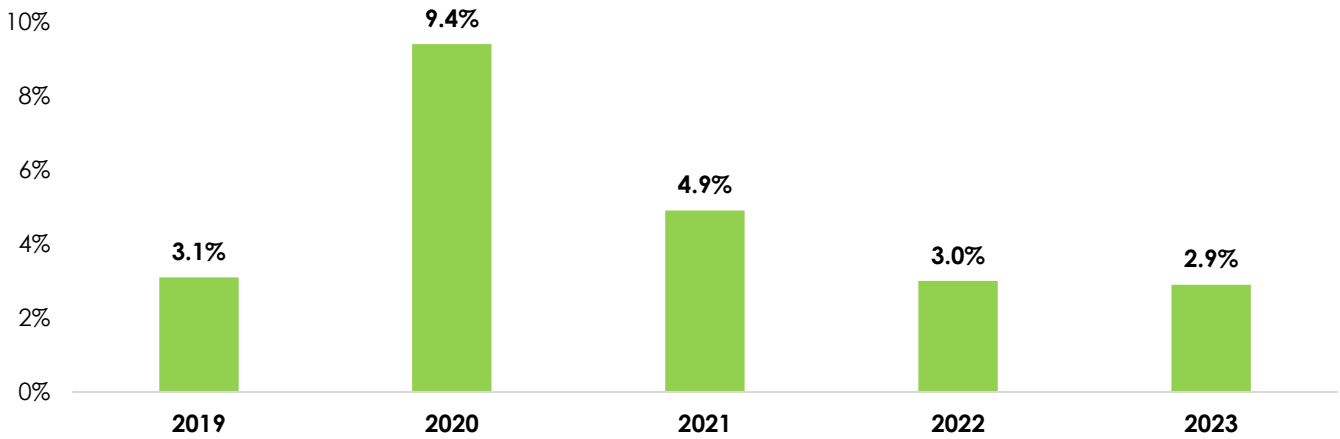
Positions by Labor Group



City Landscape Review, continued

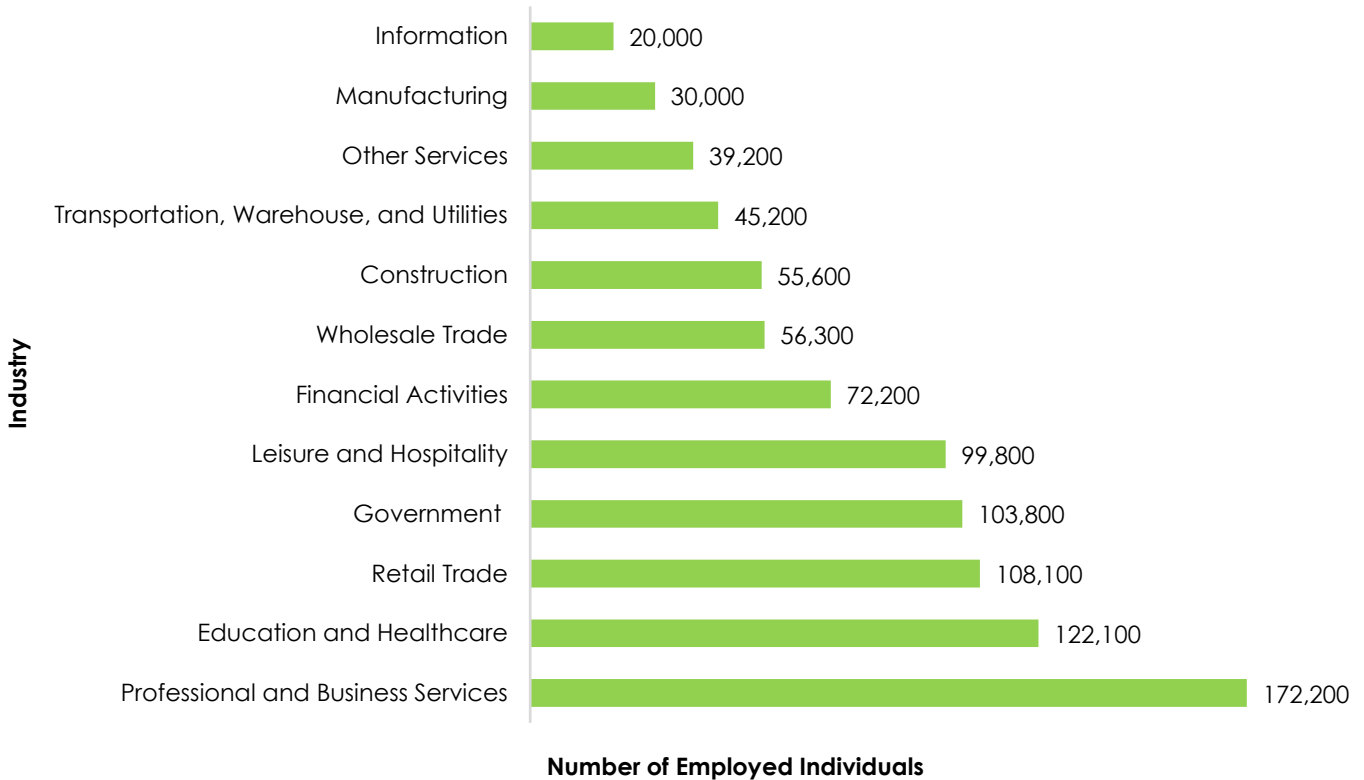
Workforce

Unemployment Rate (Fort Lauderdale – Pompano Beach – Deerfield Beach Area)



Data Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach-Deerfield Beach, FL

Occupation by Industry (Broward County)



Data Source: Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance Economic Source Book & Market Profile 2025

City Landscape Review, continued

Workforce, continued

Business Relocations and Expansions

Company	Jobs Created	Direct Capital Investment
Amazon (Distribution)	350	\$40,000,000
West Marine (Retail)	225	\$800,000
Shipmonk (Logistics)	200	\$14,000,000
ICON International (Trade)	100	\$600,000
CIG Financial/AutoNation (U.S. Automotive)	30	\$100,000
Future Tech Enterprise, Inc. (Technology)	25	\$100,000

Data Source: Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance Economic Source Book & Market Profile 2025

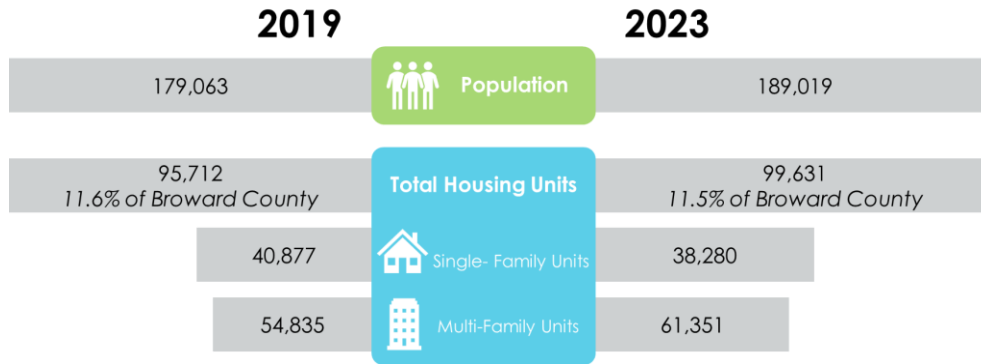
Median Household Income

	2019	2023	Percent Growth
Fort Lauderdale	\$67,750	\$80,539	18.9%
Broward County	\$61,502	\$74,531	21.2%

Data Source: American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates

City Landscape Review, continued

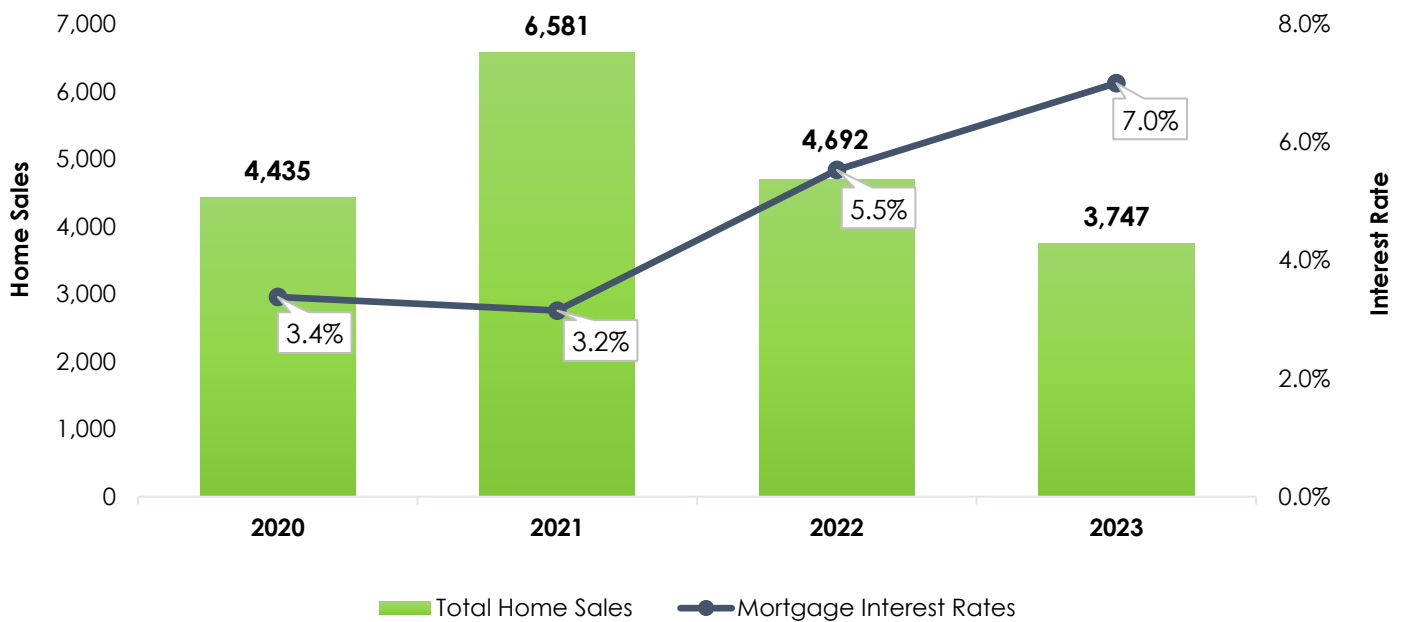
Development



Data Source: University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research (Population); American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates (Housing Units)

Housing Market

City of Fort Lauderdale Total Home Sales & Mortgage Interest Rates

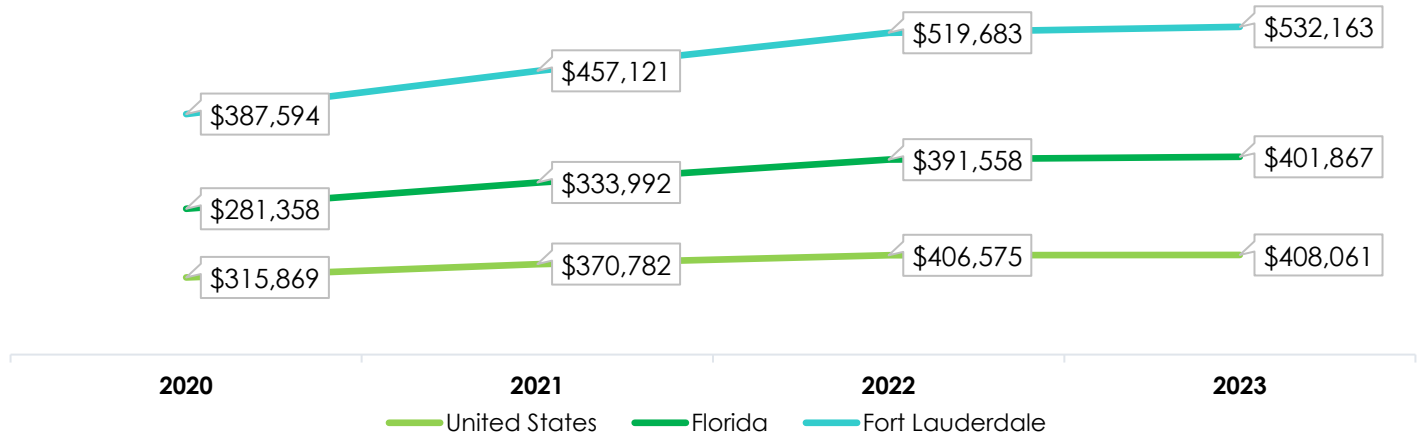


Data Sources: Redfin (Home Sales); Bankrate (Mortgage Interest Rates)

City Landscape Review, continued

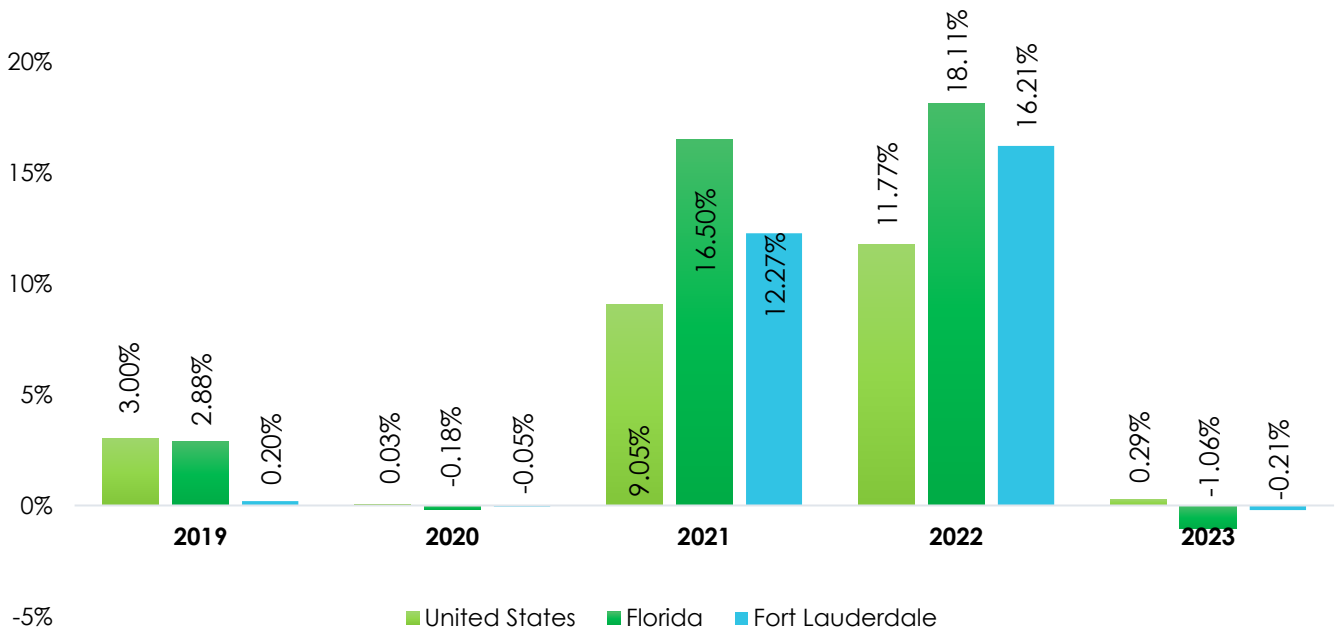
Housing Market, continued

Median Price of Sold Homes



Data Source: Redfin

Rental Price Growth Rate

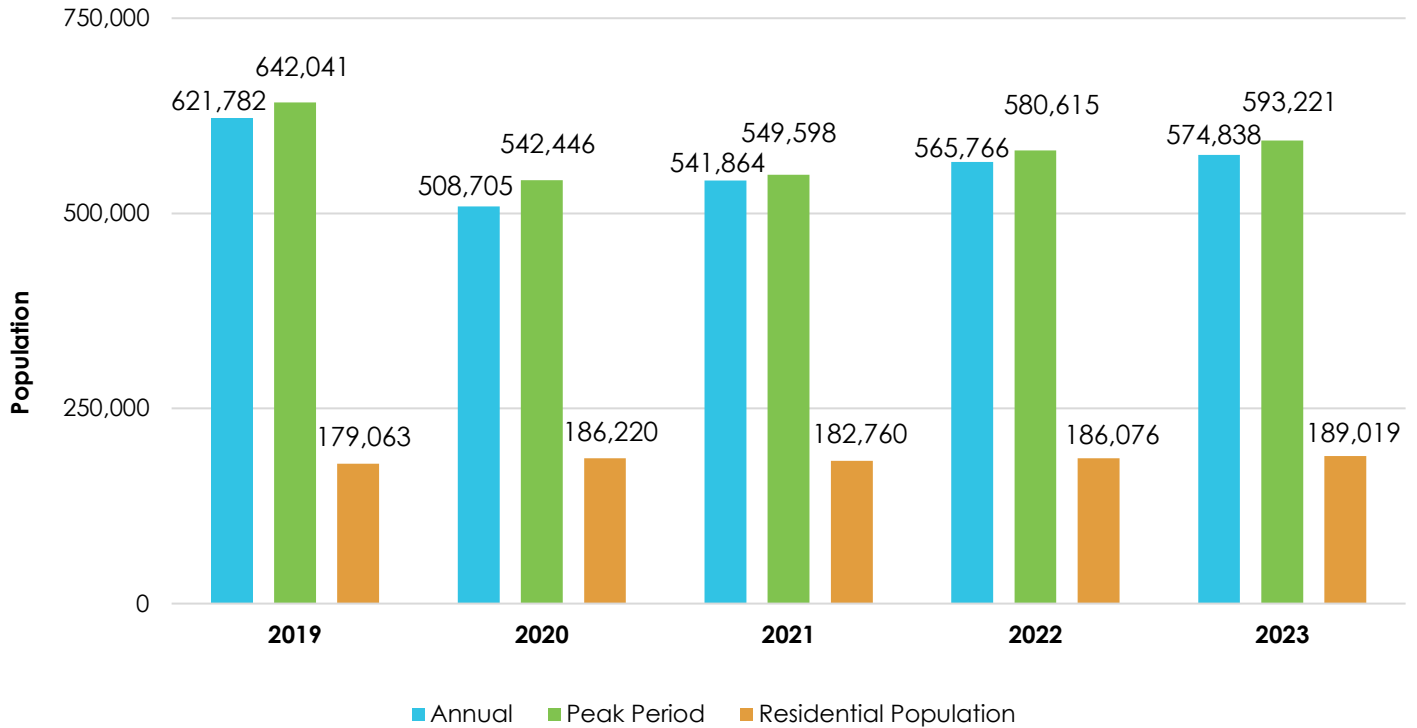


Data Source: RentData.org

City Landscape Review, continued

Tourism

Average Daily Population



Data Sources: University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research (Population); Placer.ai (Annual and Peak Period Population)

*Annual and Peak Period populations include residents, visitors, and workers and represent the number of mobile devices with location services turned on. Peak Period is defined as January – April and November – December.

Contribution to Broward County

- **45.4%** of the total Broward County tourism tax was generated by Fort Lauderdale in 2023; this represents a contribution of \$57.0 million towards the Broward County total of \$125.6 million in revenue.

Community Survey Results

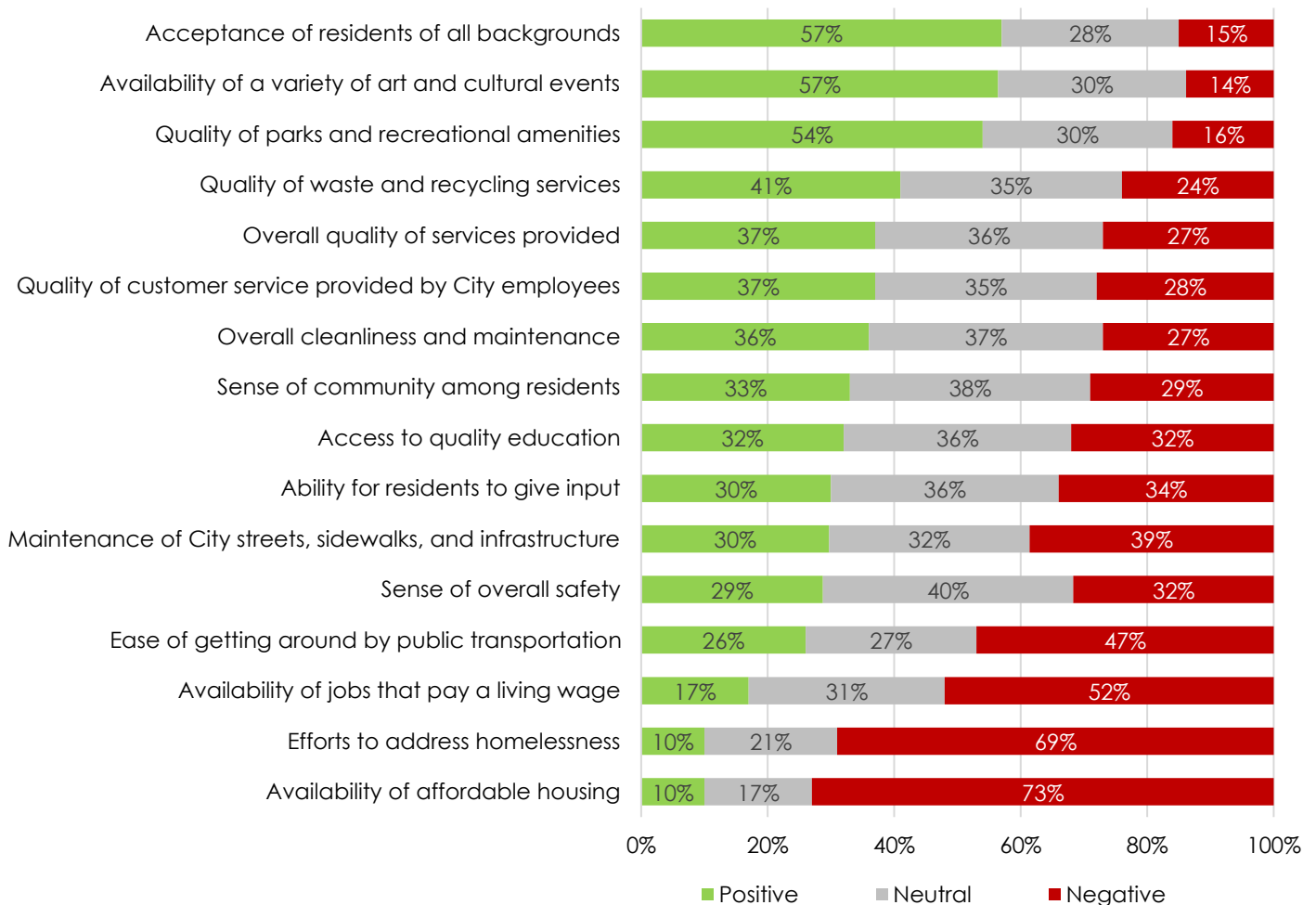
The Community Survey is inclusive of both the Neighbor and Business Surveys. The surveys were administered online by Zencity. The information collected informs City officials and staff about neighbor and business satisfaction with City services and alerts the City where to focus attention and resources, while also validating targeted improvements. The complete reports are available in Appendix B.

Neighbor Survey

During the reporting period of July – September 2024, 606 neighbors were surveyed.

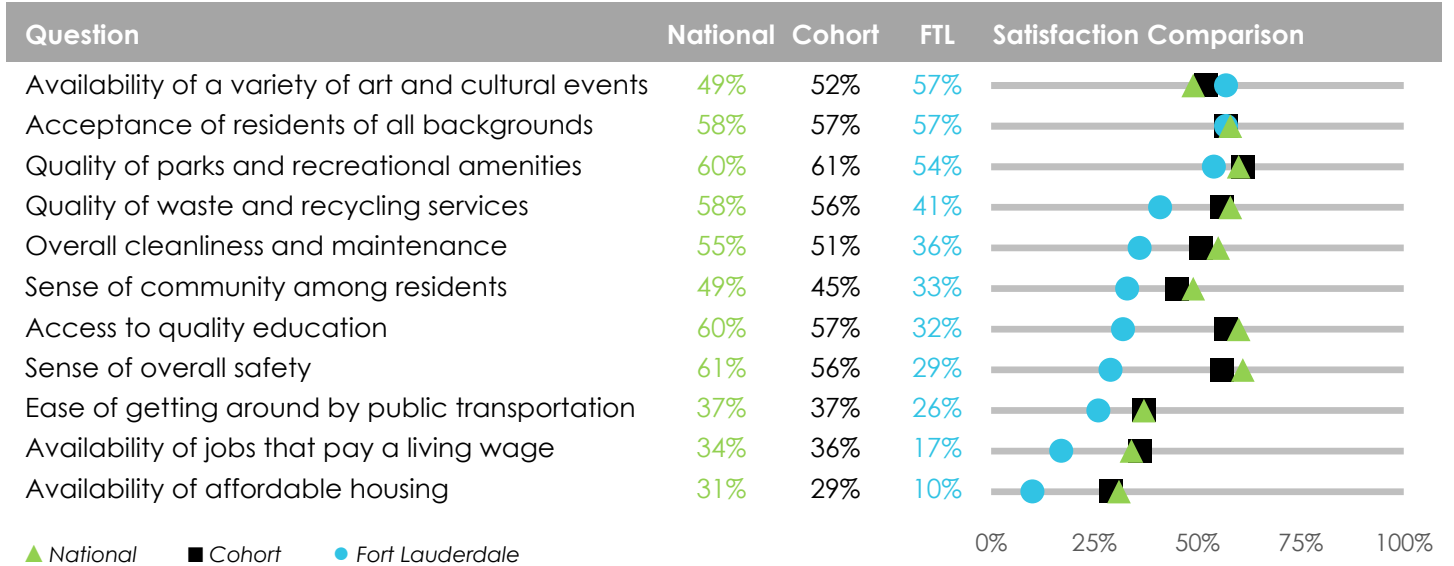
- 55% rated the overall quality of life as “excellent” or “good”
- 46% are likely to recommend Fort Lauderdale as a place to live
- 51% are likely to be living in Fort Lauderdale 5 years from now
- 72% feel that they have a quality public park or recreational offering near their home

Response to Community Characteristics



Community Survey Results, continued

Benchmarks

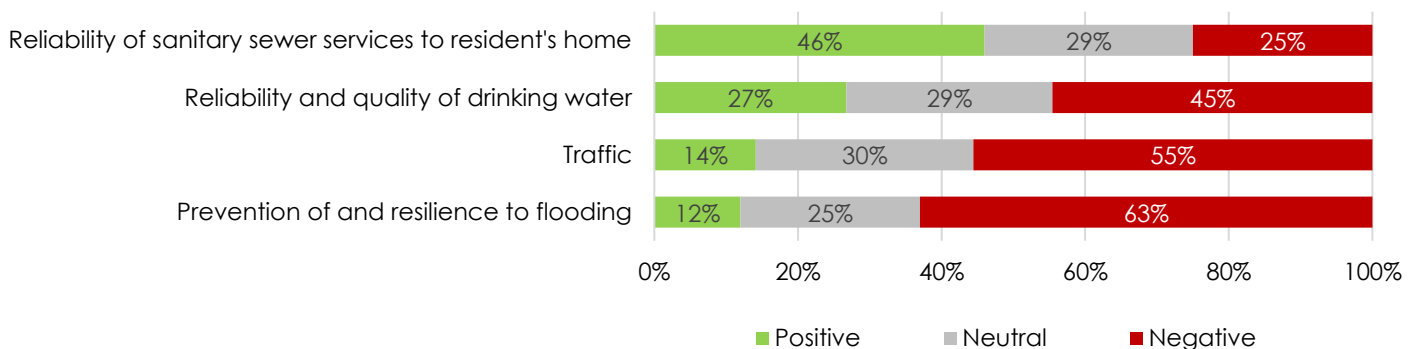


Focus Area: Sense of overall safety

Respondents who answered negatively were asked about the most important thing Fort Lauderdale can do to improve their sense of overall safety.

- Reduce homelessness (30%)
- Develop or improve crime prevention initiatives (24%)
- Put more officers on patrol (13%)
- Other (10%)
- Reform police department practices (9%)
- Increase the number of streetlights (7%)
- Improved response times from the Police Department (6%)
- Improved response times from the Fire Rescue Department (0%)

Additional Characteristics Related to FY 2025 Commission Priorities



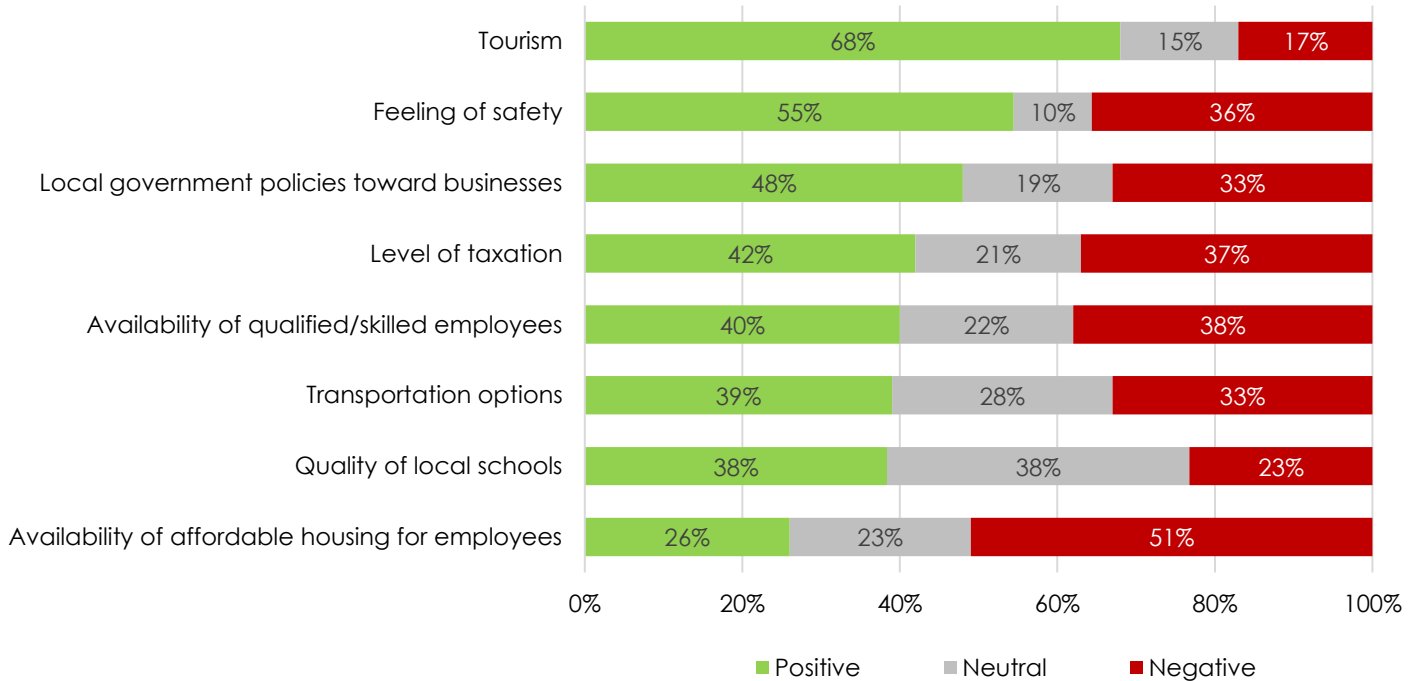
Community Survey Results, continued

Business Survey

During the reporting period of July – November 2024, 77 businesses were surveyed. Although not enough responses were collected to provide a statistically valid and representative sample, it does provide context and insights into businesses' experiences and perceptions.

- 71% were satisfied with the City as a place to do business
- 76% were satisfied with the City as a place to work
- 36% were satisfied with the City's business-related support services
 - The most commonly reported needs were for improved responsiveness and better communication from the City
 - Financial support (including tax breaks) was also commonly mentioned

Satisfaction with City Services



Of the services listed above, local government policies toward businesses, level of taxation, and tourism were rated as the top three most important factors for keeping businesses in Fort Lauderdale.



Challenges & Opportunities

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Challenges & Opportunities

Infrastructure Funding

Background

- In January 2024, City Staff presented the Renew Lauderdale initiative, aimed at creating a plan to address General Fund supporting infrastructure needs. Renew Lauderdale outlines the need to invest in roads, sidewalks, and seawalls, making neighborhoods into more walkable, drivable, and livable communities. In 2024, staff conducted revised assessments of roads, sidewalks, and seawalls to focus on these priority infrastructure needs.

Impact

The following list highlights needed funding and improvements in each area. In total, funding is needed in the amount of \$392 million; Community Investment Plan funding is planned in the amount of \$41.0 million over the next five years.

- Roads: \$97 million
 - 550 miles of roadway within the City's jurisdiction (includes 21 miles of privately owned roads)
 - About 168 miles of roads are rated lower than satisfactory based on the most recent (2024) Pavement Condition Index (PCI)
- Sidewalks: \$150 million
 - Reduce potential liability claims
 - Sidewalk connectivity in need of improvement - 437 miles of sidewalks are missing
 - Repair or replace all damaged sidewalks
- Seawalls and Tidal Valves: \$145 million
 - 71 seawalls in need of replacement

Options

5-Year Funding Amount	Annual Impact	Roads	Sidewalks	Seawalls & Tidal Valves
A. Continue Cash Funded Investments through the CIP				
\$41.0M	\$13M-\$25M	\$14.0M	\$18.5M	\$8.5M
B. Issue a Revenue Bond to Expand Funding Capacity				
\$100.0M	\$6.3M	\$40.0M	\$30.0M	\$30.0M
C. Seek Voter Approval for a General Obligation Bond to Expand Funding Capacity				
\$100.0M	\$6.3M	\$40.0M	\$30.0M	\$30.0M
\$200.0M	\$12.6M	\$60.0M	\$73.0M	\$67.0M
\$300.0M	\$19.0M	\$80.0M	\$125.0M	\$95.0M

Challenges & Opportunities

Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights CRA

Background

- The Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) was created in November 1995 and is scheduled to sunset in November 2025.
- The taxable value in the area has grown from \$208.2 million to \$2.9 billion, a 1,313% increase.

Five Year History: Tax Increment Funding (TIF) Contributions by Partner

Fiscal Year	Broward County	Hospital District	Children's Services Council	Fort Lauderdale	Total
2020	\$ 6,331,849	\$ 1,193,521	\$ 564,391	\$ 4,756,754	\$ 12,846,515
2021	\$ 7,556,399	\$ 1,578,628	\$ 671,973	\$ 5,663,675	\$ 15,470,675
2022	\$ 8,656,719	\$ 2,008,314	\$ 739,003	\$ 6,472,032	\$ 17,876,068
2023	\$ 11,239,096	\$ 3,262,089	\$ 915,803	\$ 8,371,100	\$ 23,788,088
2024	\$ 12,902,124	\$ 3,330,872	\$ 1,047,664	\$ 9,577,546	\$ 26,858,206
2025 Budget	\$ 14,270,894	\$ 3,684,020	\$ 1,158,740	\$ 10,593,615	\$ 29,707,269

Options

Options	Considerations	Annual Financial Impact
A. Time Extension Allow the CRA to sunset with a request for time to complete current projects/incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows existing projects to finalized • Allows the CRA to receive repayments from existing development agreements 	More than \$10.6M maintained in the General Fund to sustain current service levels
B. Boundary Changes Change the boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the portions of the existing CRA that no longer require targeted focus to encourage redevelopment 	Dependent upon boundaries selected
C. Continue City Tax Increment Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are still opportunities to improve within the current area • Limited flexibility on how and where the City can utilize the funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% TIF - \$10.6M • 50% TIF - \$ 5.3M • 25% TIF - \$ 2.7M
D. Economic Development and Affordable Housing Allocation Dedicate a portion of current CRA funding to support efforts Citywide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would allow the Commission to target areas throughout the City for redevelopment (e.g., Uptown, South Regional Activity Center) • Allows flexibility to adjust the allocated funding annually 	Target to be identified by Commission Example: \$2M annually

Additional Considerations

- The City's financial projection relies on the CRA sunseting to meet upcoming financial obligations.
- Currently, most funding is prioritized to support incentives to attract development to the area.
- Increased growth in the CRA area has led to the need for additional general government services (i.e., police, fire rescue, parks, and other services) which cannot currently be supported by revenue generated through the taxable value growth in these areas.
- Contributing partners are unlikely to support funding an extension.
- CRA rules limit flexibility of how and where the City can use the funds.

Challenges & Opportunities

Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights CRA, continued

Current Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights Projects and Incentives

Vendor Name	Total Award	Balance of Non-Dispersed Funds	Status Summary <i>(As of December 2, 2024)</i>
Robert Bethel American Legion Post 220	\$ 846,100	\$ 104,815	Construction 100% complete
Rhythm 2.0	\$ 350,000	\$ 199,217	Construction 50% complete and pending permit – completion estimated for February 2025
V & R Enterprises	\$ 750,000	\$ 291,719	Construction 45% complete – completion estimated for October 2025
Dales Wheels & Tires	\$ 727,500	\$ 727,500	Agreement signed and mortgage recorded with drawings pending Development Review Committee approval – completion estimated for December 2025
Optimal Pharmacy	\$ 293,000	\$ 159,549	Construction 65% complete – completion estimated for January 2025
Food and Friends Catering, LLC	\$ 1,125,000	\$ 1,125,000	Pending development agreement/executive letter of intent and land transfer to owner – completion estimated for December 2025
Cravemadness - Jamaican Jerk Restaurant	\$ 592,220	\$ 592,220	Construction has begun – completion estimated for December 2025
Molly Maguire/Irish Hospitality	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	Plans approved and coordinating with landlord for construction – completion estimated for January 2025
Mount Hermon Housing	\$ 640,000	\$ 640,000	Construction 100% complete
West Village - The Adderley	\$ 12,000,000	\$ 4,497,051	Construction 90% complete – completion estimated for September 2025
Omegas Broward	\$ 585,000	\$ 412,625	Drawings complete, project 30% complete, and pending service water permit – construction estimated to begin January 2025

Challenges & Opportunities

Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights CRA, continued

Current Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights Projects and Incentives, continued

Vendor Name	Total Award	Balance of Non-Dispersed Funds	Status Summary <i>(As of December 2, 2024)</i>
Wright Dynasty LLC	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000	Pending Florida Housing Finance Corp funding with demolition of site, development review, and plans completed – completion estimated for November 2025
GreenMills Holding	\$ 640,000	\$ 320,000	Project in design phase and pending approval of vendor's tax credit application – estimated completion to be determined
FatVillage, LLC for the Gallery	\$ 1,900,000	\$ -	Project under construction - completion estimated for December 2025
Provident Market 1937, LLC	\$ 223,500	\$ 131,436	Under construction – completion estimated for April 2025
825 Progresso Drive, LLC	\$ 309,960	\$ 309,960	Under construction – Completion estimated for June 2025
New Hope	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	In development review – completion estimated for November 2025
Blue Diamond Fitness, LLC	\$ 74,325	\$ 33,350	Construction 100% complete
Regal Development, Inc	\$ 180,000	\$ 102,458	Construction 40% complete – completion estimated for December 2025
Arcadian - Sunshine Shipyard	\$ 6,000,000	\$ 3,105,861	Parking garage construction 50% complete – completion estimated for April 2025
Pleasant Image Distributing	\$ 98,100	\$ 22,749	Purchase order received – completion estimated for April 2025
Boys and Girls Club of Broward	\$ 307,663	\$ 307,663	Construction 100% complete
Art Exchange	\$ 6,000,000	\$ 6,000,000	Approved for funding – completion estimated for November 2025
West Sistrunk Plaze, LLC for Ponderosa Plaza	\$ 800,000	\$ 800,000	Approved for funding – completion estimated for November 2025
Arcadian - Sunshine Shipyard	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 1,495,585	Construction 50% complete – completion estimated for April 2025

Challenges & Opportunities

Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights CRA, continued

Current Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights Projects and Incentives, continued

Vendor Name	Total Award	Balance of Non-Dispersed Funds	Status Summary <i>(As of December 2, 2024)</i>
The Aldridge and The Laramore - Mixed Use	\$ 8,000,000	\$ 8,000,000	Development agreement is complete and approved; project is in development review – completion estimated for August 2025
Victory Entertainment Complex - Increase TIF	\$ 2,450,000	\$ 2,450,000	Agreement executed and development review completed – completion estimated for October 2025
Sistrunk View LLC	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000	Pending the drafting and execution of the development agreement and beginning of the predevelopment process – completion estimated for November 2025
Total	\$ 61,392,368	\$ 44,328,758	

Challenges & Opportunities

City Hall

Background

- The former City Hall was approximately 100,000 sq ft with 61,800 sq ft of office space and housed about 310 employees. Additional administrative offices were located at 101 NE 3rd Avenue and 1 E Broward Boulevard (i.e., City Attorney's Office, City Auditor's Office, City Clerk's Office, Strategic Communications within the City Manager's Office, Office of Management and Budget, and divisions of the Public Works Department).
- The City has issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to select an Owner's Representative to act as the City's advocate throughout the planning, design, and construction project phases. This process is anticipated for completion in Spring 2025.
- Pending Commission direction, the solicitation for the design criteria package is expected to begin in early 2025, with an award anticipated for Summer 2025.

Impact

- In lieu of a City Hall, the City currently budgets \$3.6 million for the rent of office space at 101 NE 3rd Avenue, 1 E Broward Boulevard, and 1901 W Cypress Creek Road. The leases at 101 NE 3rd Avenue and 1 E Broward Boulevard are contracted to expire in FY 2028, while the lease for 1901 W Cypress Creek Road will expire in FY 2027.
- Funding in the amount of \$9.9 million is available through the CIP to support the initial costs associated with replacing City Hall.

Considerations

- The City conducted significant public outreach with the Infrastructure Task Force (ITF) to understand the public's needs and desires for a future City Hall facility. Additionally, the City received input from the Urban Land Institute, Downtown Development Authority, and Economic Advisory Board. Through those engagements, two potential options for site selection emerged:
 - Existing site
 - Broader downtown area
- Additionally, the ITF provided the following list of principles to guide the design of the future facility and recommended it be:
 - Welcoming and engaging
 - Accessible and secure
 - Amenable for the public and staff
 - A showcase of history, art, and civic engagement
 - Cost effective
 - Functional and efficient
 - Resilient and innovative
- The development of a new City Hall must consider parking for both employees and the public. The cost for a new parking garage is approximately \$35,000 per space.

Challenges & Opportunities

City Hall, continued

Proposal

Staff recommends a City Hall building that includes the following space, features, and amenities:

- Consolidate all elected officials and office-based staff into the future City Hall, ensuring all employees previously located in City Hall return to the new facility; additionally, centralize portions of the Development Services, Parks and Recreation, Transportation and Mobility, and Public Works Departments which were not previously housed in City Hall, to the future City Hall
- Maintain field-based staff at their existing sites
 - Development Services – Code Enforcement, Inspections
 - Transportation and Mobility – Parking Services
 - Parks and Recreation – Facilities, Sanitation, Marine, Parks, Recreation Programs, Cemeteries
- Staff at the following sites will continue to occupy their current space as those services are dependent on specific infrastructure and/or locations:
 - Public Works – Treatment, Distribution and Collections, Sanitation, Roadway Maintenance, Fleet
 - Executive Airport
 - Police
 - Fire Rescue
- Commission chambers suitable for joint workshops, conference meetings, and regular meetings
- Space and resources that benefit both the public and staff:
 - Employee wellness center (currently housed off site at 4750 N Federal Highway)
 - Public meeting spaces
 - Flexible space for events, public art and cultural displays, large meeting groups
 - Café
 - Undefined space for future needs and expansion (e.g., employee growth, leasable space, employee daycare center)

Options

Site Selection:

- A. Develop the existing site.
 - City-owned
 - Allows a potential height 160 ft
 - Parcel is approximately 88,200 sq ft
 - Has existing community acceptance
- B. Purchase a move-in ready building and renovate it to meet City operations and specifications (e.g., Federal Courthouse).
- C. Purchase a new site for development.
- D. Pursue a land swap to acquire a new site in exchange for an existing City property.
- E. Pursue long-term rental opportunities.

Project Delivery Methods:

- A. Design-Bid-Build
- B. Construction Manager at Risk
- C. Public-Private Partnership (P3)
- D. Unsolicited Proposal

Challenges & Opportunities

Emergency Medical Services Taxing District

Background

- On May 7, 2024, the Fire Rescue Advisory Board recommended that the City Commission “consider an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) taxing district to meet funding needs for Fire Rescue services as is being done in other municipalities.” Other examples of Fire Rescue and EMS Services special districts include Pompano Beach, Miami-Dade County, and Pinellas County.
- At the October 1, 2024, Conference Meeting, City staff presented an overview of the process for establishing a dependent, special taxing district in the City of Fort Lauderdale dedicated to EMS. In response, the City Commission directed staff to conduct a study evaluating the feasibility and financial implications of implementing an EMS Special District.
- The Fire Rescue Budget is broken into three categories: Fire, EMS, and Ocean Rescue Services. The City currently aims for a full cost of service allocation to pay for fire related expenses through the fire assessment and recovery of a small portion of EMS services.

Impact

- The estimated net cost of EMS services, based on the FY 2025 budget, would be \$52.9 million.
- As an ad valorem tax model, charges to neighbors and businesses would be based upon taxable values. Based upon the average taxable value of a single-family home in Fort Lauderdale of \$590,000, the annual impact of moving to full cost recovery for EMS and Ocean Rescue services would be approximately **\$455 per year**.

Considerations

- The dependent district's ad valorem millage must be added to the combined total millage and must not exceed the millage cap set for the City (10 Mills) on ad valorem taxes.

Ad-Valorem Tax	Current Mills	EMS Rate Addition Mills
City Operating	4.1193	4.1193
Sunrise Key – Millage Cap*	2.0000	2.0000
EMS District	N/A	0.7742
Total	6.1193	6.8935

*Sunrise Key currently has a millage rate of 1.0 mills but is authorized to increase their millage up to a maximum of 2.0 mills.

Options

- Do not move forward with the creation of an EMS Taxing District.
- Move forward with the creation of an EMS Taxing District at full cost recovery.
 - March 1, 2025: Provide adopted special district ordinance to Broward County Property Appraiser
 - Spring 2025: Complete a public education campaign
 - July 2025: City Commission sets the maximum millage rate
- Move forward with the phased in implementation to full cost recovery.
 - Year 1 (25% recovery):** \$101.64
 - Year 2 (50% recovery):** \$208.57
 - Year 3 (75% recovery):** \$322.67
 - Year 4 (100% recovery):** \$454.83

Challenges & Opportunities

Transition Sanitation Services to the Tax Bill

Background

- The City currently collects solid waste revenue monthly through Utility Billing Collections, with the charges appearing as a line item on residents' utility bills. The City could transition to a non-ad valorem assessment for these services.
- A non-ad valorem assessment is a fixed charge on a property for a special benefit to that property. The assessment is not based on the property's value, but rather is a flat rate set by the City Commission.
- Other cities that collect solid waste revenue through utility billing collections include Davie, Coral Springs, and Homestead.

Impact

- The overall rates as approved by the City Commission in September 2024 (CAM 24-0700) would remain unchanged.
- Benefits of transitioning solid waste collections to the tax bill:
 - Stable Revenue Stream: Assessments ensure a higher revenue collection rate – compared with monthly utility bills – since assessments are enforceable by property lien.
 - Administrative Efficiency: Lower the City's administrative burden since the payment would no longer be collected monthly and would be administered by the Broward County Tax Collector's Office.
 - Residential Savings Opportunity: Residents would be eligible to receive a 4% discount on their overall sanitation costs if they pre-pay their tax bill before March 31st.
- Disadvantages of transitioning solid waste collections to the tax bill:
 - Collection Fees: The City may be required to pay a portion of the total revenue generated to the tax collector for their services for handling the revenue collection.

Considerations

- Broward County is moving towards a non-ad valorem assessment for their Solid Waste Authority.
- The revenue generated through the assessment process would be restricted to services directly related to collections. Other sanitation activities, such as beach trash pick-up and graffiti removal, would be transitioned to the General Fund. These services would continue to be supported by Sanitation Franchise Fee revenue collected in the General Fund.

Options

- A. Do not move forward with transitioning solid waste revenue collection to a non-ad valorem assessment.
- B. Move forward with creating a new solid waste non-ad valorem assessment for FY 2027.
 - Summer 2025: Complete a public education campaign.
 - Fall 2025: The City will need to advertise in the Sun Sentinel about the possibility of a new non-ad valorem assessment for four consecutive weeks leading up to the Commission hearing.
 - Winter 2025/2026: The City Commission would be required to adopt an intent resolution per Florida Statute 197.3632. The resolution must state the need for the levy and include a legal description of the boundaries of the properties subject to the levy. The Commission would also be required to amend the underlying ordinance that governs the billing.
 - July 2026: Adopt a preliminary rate resolution that initiates the annual imposition process.

Challenges & Opportunities

Funding for Non-Profit Organizations

Background

As a part of the annual budget process, the City provides external organizations with funding to support key community services that align with the City's Strategic Plan, annual Commission Priorities, and operational needs. This funding allows the Commission to allocate resources to key initiatives without the lead time that would be required if the City were to provide the services internally and provides flexibility to address different priorities each year without a long-term financial commitment. Non-profit organizations that receive grant funding are required to execute a Participation Agreement which stipulates the funding amount, public purpose, scope of service, financial reporting, term length, and performance standards.

Impact

Total funding in the FY 2025 budget to support external organizations totals \$2.6 million.

- Non-profit Grants: \$1,137,542
- Interlocal Agreements: \$814,285
- Contracts and Sponsorships: \$661,000

Information regarding the specific organizations and funding are detailed on the following page.

Considerations and Past Efforts

- Current practice is for the City Manager to recommend funding as a part of the annual budget for organizations that have historically received funding and align with current strategic priorities.
- As a part of the FY 2022 Budget's development, the City accepted applications for funding with the Budget Advisory Board (BAB) reviewing and providing recommendations for funding. Feedback on the process identified concerns with the City Commission's inability to weigh in on recommendations until after the BAB's recommendations were made available. The BAB also expressed concerns with the time commitment associated with the process.
- In an August 2024 communication to the City Commission, the BAB recommended putting a placeholder of \$1.1 million in the FY 2026 budget for non-profit funding whereby the BAB and staff would develop allocation parameters for funding non-profits.

Options

- A. Continue with current practice whereby the City Manager includes a recommended list of non-profit organizations and funding amounts in the proposed budget to allow for public feedback and Commission guidance.
- B. Set aside an allocation of funds to be distributed to non-profit organizations through a formal recommendation process.
 - Existing organizations would be grandfathered out of the existing practice and would need to go through a newly established recommendation process in order to receive funding.

Challenges & Opportunities

Funding for Non-Profit Organizations, continued

Non-Profit Grant Funding

Non-Profit Organization	FY 2025 Funding	Public Purpose
Areawide Council on Aging of Broward County, Inc.	\$127,842	Support meal and transportation services and resources to City of Fort Lauderdale seniors and adults with disabilities.
Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.	\$100,000	Provide subsidized childcare for approximately 2,500 Fort Lauderdale children of eligible low-income families.
First Call for Help of Broward, Inc. dba 211-Broward, Inc.	\$25,000	Provide supportive listening, crisis intervention, and information and referrals that help residents to access social program services.
Junior Achievement of South Florida, Inc.	\$33,900	Provide 5th and 8th grade public school students in Fort Lauderdale with financial and entrepreneurial learning, served annually through JA BizTown and JA Finance Park.
Museum of Discovery and Science, Inc.	\$214,800	Provide kindergarten through 5th grade public elementary school students in Fort Lauderdale with Museum and school instruction to improve long-term academic success in the critical STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) disciplines.
Nova Southeastern University, Inc. for NSU Art Museum	\$500,000	Provide innovative art exhibitions and cultural, educational and enrichment programs to stimulate tourism in Fort Lauderdale as well as provide complimentary admission for City residents.
The Mobile School Pantry Inc. South Florida	\$36,000	Provide monthly mobile markets in Sistrunk and supply vouchers to be used by food-insecure families within the Fort Lauderdale community.
The Stranahan House, Inc.*	\$100,000	Provide funding for a Welcome Center, open to the public, at the Stranahan House which educates residents and visitors of Fort Lauderdale about the region's history, thus furthering the social, cultural, and historic viability of the community.
Subtotal Grant Funding	\$1,137,542	

*The final installment will be provided in FY 2025

Challenges & Opportunities

Funding for Non-Profit Organizations, continued

Interlocal Agreement Funding

Non-Profit Organization	FY 2025 Funding	Public Purpose
Downtown Development Authority of the City of Fort Lauderdale	\$714,285	Redevelop Huizenga Park to add amenities and ensure that the location remains a public park in perpetuity accessible to all residents and visitors. This is the third payment of the City's \$5 million total commitment.
	\$100,000	Operation, maintenance, and programming support for Huizenga Park.
Subtotal Interlocal Agreement Funding	\$814,285	

Contracts and Sponsorships Funding

Non-Profit Organization	FY 2025 Funding	Public Purpose
Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, Inc.	\$85,000	Contribute toward the educational, cultural, and historical life of Fort Lauderdale to serve as a historic tourist destination within the Riverwalk Arts and Entertainment District.
Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale - Go Riverwalk Magazine	\$50,400	Provide space in the monthly <i>Go Riverwalk</i> magazine to communicate City information.
Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale - Riverwalk Activation	\$300,600	Provide for the programming, beautification, lighting enhancements, and revitalization of Riverwalk Park and special events such as the annual Light Up Lauderdale and the Day of the Dead celebration.
Summer Youth Employment Program	\$150,000	Provide Fort Lauderdale's youth with summer-long employment with the City, including lessons about how to obtain and maintain a job and how to turn any job into an investment of time and effort for the future.
Winterfest, Inc.	\$75,000	Sponsor the Annual Boat Parade and build a festival and full complement of events around the Greater Fort Lauderdale area.
Subtotal Contracts and Sponsorship Funding	\$661,000	
Grand Total Funding	\$2,612,827	

FY 2026 Priority Development

Over the course of the next year, considering that resources are finite, where should we focus our efforts?

Where should we focus our efforts and resources?

What should we reprioritize?



Appendix A

FY 2025 City Commission Priority Outcomes

Public Safety	34
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Public Safety

The focus of this initiative is to reduce crime and increase the safety of the City by providing necessary resources to first responders and building community partnerships.

City Commission Funded Items (★ Newly funded initiatives)

- ★ The Police Department budget includes \$158,516 to support a new recruitment and retention incentive program, which will provide financial incentives for the hiring of new police officers, as well as funding to lease a new police recruitment office
- ★ The Police Department budget includes funding to establish a School Zone Speed Enforcement Camera Program which will install automated speed detection systems in school zones for four schools; this enhancement is expected to be cost neutral due to additional enforcement revenues
- ★ A Police Department focused public safety survey is funded in the amount of approximately \$48,300 to better understand the perception and satisfaction with the City's police and public safety efforts
- The CIP includes \$49.6 million of available funding for the completion of the Police Headquarters Replacement Project
- The Police Department budget includes approximately \$714,000 for the replacement of police equipment such as ballistic vests and license plate readers
- The Police Department budget continues to fund the staffing of the Real Time Crime Center in the amount of approximately \$396,000
- The Police Department budget includes \$344,000 for the continuation and expansion of the ShotSpotter Program
- The Fleet Services budget includes \$9.0 million for the replacement of 86 Public Safety vehicles, per the vehicle replacement schedule, including six Fire Rescue apparatuses
- The Fire Rescue Department budget includes approximately \$803,000 for the replacement of equipment such as extrication equipment and bunker gear
- The CIP includes approximately \$239,000 of available funding for a temporary trailer to serve as the Ocean Rescue Headquarters
- The CIP includes approximately \$196,000 for the replacement of lifeguard towers



Public Safety, continued

Performance-Based Outcomes

- Transformed the former Rapid Offender Control Unit into the Gun Intelligence Unit to focus on reducing gun violence through advanced technology
- Awarded a \$11.4 million Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant for 28 new firefighters; this enhancement will increase capacity and provide additional third-person staffing for six (6) medical rescue units
- Awarded a \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program that will help to fund six (6) new police officers; this enhancement will expand community policing efforts and improve response for individuals with mental health needs
- Completed the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative which identified two strategies for improving the perception of public safety: implementing a co-responding mental health clinician program and offering real-time status updates for police responses
- Implemented a statistically valid and representative survey focused on public safety and police efforts to better understand and improve community perceptions
- Constructed and operated a new full-service police sub-station in the YMCA of South Florida's retail space to improve service delivery and community relations
- Launched an online incident reporting system which allows the public to submit police reports that do not require a physical police response
- Launched the Data for Good program to share gunfire data with community providers and other non-law enforcement entities that service gunfire impacted areas; this allows law enforcement to pivot to a holistic community-based approach to violence prevention, outreach, and community engagement
- Increased the ShotSpotter gunshot detection coverage areas by 2.26 miles
- Deployed a new state-of-the-art Mobile Crime Scene Vehicle which serves as an asset when responding to large scale and intricate crimes scenes by combining forensic technology, mobile dispatch abilities, and integrating an onboard interview room
- Expanded camera coverage in the area along the downtown entertainment districts to monitor special events and allow for the timely recovery of evidence



Homelessness Initiatives

The focus of this initiative is to address homelessness by creating pathways to housing as well as providing access to comprehensive services.

City Commission Funded Items (★ Newly funded initiatives)

- ★ The City Manager's Office budget includes \$330,000 for Shelter Bed Access Program which would provide temporary shelter for neighbors experiencing homelessness for a period of up to 60 days
- The Neighbor Support Division budget includes approximately \$315,260 to continue the Housing Navigation Program in partnership with the Taskforce For Ending Homelessness
- The Neighbor Support Division budget includes \$203,382 for the continuation of the Community Court Program which includes one (1) position and helps individuals receive services tailored to their needs, and links participants to restitution projects and onsite social services and treatment providers
- The Police Department continues its efforts toward homeless support in the amount of approximately \$1.1 million through the General Fund for the Homeless Outreach Unit and Reunification Travel Voucher Program
- The Homeless Intervention Administrator position continues to be funded by the City Manager's Office in the amount of approximately \$133,022
- The Fire Rescue Department Budget includes \$309,332 to continue the Mobile Integrated Health Program – Homeless Action Team which connects high utilizers (911 callers with three or more calls logged annually) to public and private resources
- Entitlement grant funding will continue to support homelessness initiatives and is managed by the Housing and Community Development Division:
 - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding will provide approximately \$226,000 to support local organizations' homelessness assistance and prevention programs
 - State Housing Initiative Partnership funding will provide \$1.4 million to be used in part to assist those experiencing homelessness and prevent homelessness

Performance-Based Outcomes

- Assigned a new Acting Assistant City Manager to lead efforts toward addressing homelessness, with a focus on developing and implementing comprehensive strategies
- Adopted an ordinance and created options for the public to report camping in response to newly adopted State Statute 125.0231 (formerly House Bill 1365)
- Launched an internal dashboard to support City management and provide real-time tracking capabilities to the efforts of the Homeless Outreach Team; the dashboard reports on the property checks completed across the City and provides information on the number of homeless individuals encountered, reunifications, and Notices to Appear (NTA) issued
- Secured 20 new emergency shelter beds for individuals experiencing homelessness
- Continued the Community Court program; this past year the program saw a significant increase with a 163% increase in visits from FY 2023 (1,130) to FY 2024 (2,970)
- Expanded the Housing Navigation Program to include a Hotspot Deployment Team to reduce the number of calls for services at identified intersections

Affordable Housing and Economic Development

The focus of this initiative is to create additional housing options for all income levels and align efforts with equitable economic development.

City Commission Funded Items (★ Newly funded initiatives)

- Entitlement grant funding will continue to support housing opportunity initiatives and is managed by the Housing and Community Development Division:
 - HOME Investment Partnerships funding will provide approximately \$202,000 to be used in part to support affordable housing initiatives
 - Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) funding will provide \$7.6 million to assist with facility-based housing, various rent programs, mortgage assistance, and utilities
- ★ The Development Services Department budget includes \$100,000 for the South Regional Activity Center Code Update; these land use and zoning amendments will increase the potential affordable and workforce housing in the area
- The Community Redevelopment Agency budgets include approximately \$19.1 million to fund incentive programs to attract new businesses and encourage economic development; another \$70,000 is included to advertise and promote the incentive programs
- The Public Affairs Division of the City Manager's Office is funded in the amount of approximately \$1.6 million, which includes funding to attract new and support existing businesses including Economic Development Incentives
- The CIP includes \$9.9 million in available funding to support the initial costs associated with the replacement of City Hall

Performance-Based Outcomes

- Completed 10 rehabilitation projects for low-income homeowners, addressing critical repairs that allow neighbors to safely stay in their homes
- Funded the acquisition of three duplexes, which are being converted into affordable housing units for homeless seniors with mental disabilities
- Provided rental assistance to 937 neighbors, helping them retain their housing
- Created an affordable housing annual affidavit monitoring system
- Integrated affordable housing incentives into the City's online mapping program to help applicants and members of the public visualize policies and development incentives
- Provided funding for the completion of 79 dwelling units for those with very low to moderate incomes
- Established Startup FTL which provides free resources, including bookkeeping and business planning support, and invites successful local entrepreneurs to share their insights on navigating business success in Fort Lauderdale
- Bolstered the City's reputation as a premier filming location with production investments from film permits surpassing \$80 million in 2024
- Completed nine (9) incentive projects through the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA); these investments ensure the economic health and stability of the CRA area
- Completed significant outreach to understand the needs and desires of the public in a new City Hall

Transportation and Traffic

The focus of this initiative is to develop programs and implement strategies to improve traffic flow and evaluate new solutions that will alleviate congestion within the City.

City Commission Funded Items (★ Newly funded initiatives)

- The CIP includes \$3.5 million for the repair and maintenance of asphalt, roadways, and sidewalks, in addition to \$870 thousand to expand sidewalk access
- ★ The Transportation and Mobility Department budget includes \$45,000 to improve safety at the intersection of Las Olas Boulevard and SE 2nd Avenue with the implementation of signs and markings
- ★ The Transportation and Mobility budget appropriates \$200,000 for the addition of 40 new speed cushions throughout the City to minimize speeding in residential neighborhoods; this represents a \$100,000 expansion of the Traffic Calming Program
- ★ The Transportation and Mobility Department budget includes approximately \$376,000 to provide for a security presence at the Performing Arts Center Parking Garage as well as to complete a structural assessment
- ★ The operating budget includes \$676,000 to serve as a match for a US Department of Transportation Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant; this grant will support an effort to retain the Quiet Zone (no train horns) by providing additional safety elements to the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway corridor
- ★ The operating budget includes \$375,000 to serve as a match for a US Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Grant; this grant will support the planning efforts to create underpasses on major roadways at the FEC tracks
- ★ The Transportation and Mobility Department budget includes funding to enhance parking enforcement, specifically in the Flagler Village area; this enhancement is expected to be cost neutral due to additional parking revenues
- The CIP includes \$6.0 million of available funding to continue the implementation of the Las Olas Mobility Plan
- The Transportation and Mobility Department budget includes \$1.7 million in ongoing funding to enhance the City's Microtransit Program
- The CIP includes approximately \$92,827 of available funding for traffic flow improvements as well as \$80,000 for the Riverside Park Traffic Calming Project
- Transportation and Mobility Department General Fund budget includes \$5,000 for the Bluetooth Sensor Program to collect traffic data for analysis
- The Transportation and Mobility Department General Fund budget includes \$10,000 to continue the Speed Radar Program to collect traffic data for potential synchronization improvements



Transportation and Traffic, continued

Performance-Based Outcomes

- Completed a Sidewalk Master Plan Gap Assessment to proactively identify existing gaps in the sidewalk network and create a prioritization strategy for filling those gaps
- Secured additional funding to improve sidewalk connections along Breakers Avenue and in the Lauderdale Manors neighborhood
- Completed a comprehensive condition analysis and inspection of the City's roadways, alleyways, and sidewalks to provide data regarding the condition of the infrastructure enabling more informed decision making for future maintenance and improvements
- Continued the design of five (5) segments of the LauderTrail Master Plan, including Flagler Greenway to Holiday Park, Mobility Hub North, and Mobility Hub to Carter Park segments
- Completed a neighborhood-wide assessment of pavement markings and signage in several neighborhoods as a part of overall safety efforts
- Completed the design of traffic calming for NE 16th Court in Middle River Terrace and Riverland Road
- Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) awarded \$5 million in grant funding from the Department of Transportation to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on roadways; through this funding, four (4) areas located within and/or impactful to Fort Lauderdale will be included:
 - Northwest 31st Avenue
 - Sistrunk Boulevard
 - East Broward Boulevard
 - US 441/State Route 7
- Completed the conceptual development and received funding to complete the design and construction of the SE/SW 17th Street Mobility Hub Project in partnership with the Broward MPO
- Awarded a Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant to update the City's Vision Zero Plan and conduct several safety studies of high crash corridors
- Awarded construction funding through the Broward County Surtax Grant Program for the NE 26th Street Mobility Project between Federal Highway and Bayview Drive
- Partnered with the Broward MPO for a grant received through the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program to implement additional safety measures at six (6) locations along portions of the Florida East Coast Railway to maintain Quiet Zones
- Expanded service routes for the LauderGO! Micro Mover to address first and last mile transit connections and provide additional transit options within the Galt Mile area
- Expanded Community Shuttle service hours for the Beach Link, Las Olas Link, and Downtown Link routes
- Deployed an additional Community Shuttle bus to improve service along the Neighborhood Link route

Infrastructure and Resilience

The focus of this initiative is to identify and implement improvements that will address infrastructure needs relating to water, wastewater, stormwater, and the public right-of-way as well as resilience needs relating to extreme weather events and sea level rise.

City Commission Funded Items (★ Newly funded initiatives)

- The CIP includes \$41.2 million in cash funded Stormwater Fund capital projects
- ★ The Public Works Department budget includes \$2.8 million to enhance maintenance of stormwater infrastructure following the addition of new stormwater assets
- ★ The Public Works Department budget includes approximately \$678,000 for an additional six (6) positions to manage the construction of new stormwater infrastructure
- ★ The Public Works Department budget includes approximately \$168,000 for a Resilience Outreach Coordinator
- ★ The City Manager's Office budget includes approximately \$242,000 for the addition of a Chief Waterways Officer
- The CIP appropriates an additional \$484,100 in funding for the restoration and replacement of seawalls to enhance the \$2.0 million of available funding
- The Public Works Department will address water quality through the following initiatives:
 - The Public Works Department Water & Sewer Fund budget includes \$136,452 in funding for the Waterway Quality Monitoring Program
 - The Public Works Department budget includes \$398,000 for the Canal Cleaning Program
- The Water/Sewer Revenue Bond was issued in FY 2018 in the amount of \$200.0 million to fund priority projects; another \$200.0 million was issued in FY 2024 for consent order and other priority water and sewer infrastructure projects (many of these projects have a multi-year implementation cycle and are ongoing)
- The CIP Water/Sewer Master Plan includes \$30.9 million in new cash funded capital projects in addition to approximately \$76.9 million in unspent project balances; the Central Region Wastewater budget includes \$19.9 million in new cash funded capital projects prioritized based upon a renewal and replacement study in addition to over \$63.3 million in unspent project balances
- The CIP includes \$140.6 million in available funding for an owner's representative for the new Prospect Lake Water Treatment Plant; it is anticipated that after the owner's representative completes their work, the City will issue debt to support required site work and other obligations under the Comprehensive Agreement
- The Fortify Lauderdale Program continues to make great strides toward the completion of the first tranche of Stormwater improvements in the original eight (8) neighborhoods; there is an issuance of a Stormwater Bond to support the next phase of activity planned for FY 2026
- The CIP appropriates an additional \$3.8 million for a condition assessment of the City's Watershed Asset Management Plan (WAMP) to enhance the \$3.8 million of available funding; additionally, the Public Works Department Stormwater Operations budget includes \$1.3 million to support asset inventory improvements and implementation of the WAMP
- Approximately \$158,000 is included in the Public Works Department budget for a senior project manager to manage the construction of the new Prospect Lake Water Treatment Plant

Infrastructure and Resilience, continued

City Commission Funded Items (★ Newly funded initiatives), continued

- ★ The Public Works Department budget includes \$3.0 million to develop an updated Comprehensive Water and Sewer Masterplan
- The CIP appropriates an additional \$8.4 million for the repair and replacement of bridges to enhance the \$3.5 million of available funding

Performance-Based Outcomes

- Launched the Fortify Lauderdale Program, which builds upon the existing Stormwater Master Plan to address and safeguard an additional 17 neighborhoods most vulnerable to flooding and climate change
- Invested over \$10 million in improvements for the River Oaks, Edgewood, Durrs, and Dorsey Riverbend neighborhoods
- Developed a Citywide Vulnerability Assessment using the Resilient Florida Grant
- Began the implementation of a Condition Assessment Plan for critical stormwater infrastructure
- Completed construction of four (4) projects aimed at improving stormwater infrastructure:
 - Edgewood stormwater improvements
 - 1544 Argyle Drive stormwater improvements
 - SE 5th Avenue – Andrews Avenue tidal valve replacements
 - River Oaks stormwater pumpstations
- Completed replacement of the Merle Fogg, SE 10th Street, and Las Olas seawalls
- Launched the “Save Our Swale” program aimed at rehabilitating swales fronting residential properties to enhance stormwater drainage
- Broke ground on the Prospect Lake Clean Water Facility, completed excavating and backfilling the site, and laid most of the necessary pipes and electrical conduits
- Created a Chief Waterways Officer position, responsible for advancing policy, seeking grant opportunities, and coordinating with external agencies to ensure the quality of the City’s waterways
- Increased the level of service for waterway trash removal with the award of a new contract
- Substantially completed the Las Olas Isles Utility Undergrounding Project for electrical, cable, and telephone infrastructure
- Increased the Florida Department of Environmental Protection permitted capacity for the George T. Lohmeyer Wastewater Treatment Plant



Public Spaces and Community Initiatives

The focus of this initiative is to ensure the City continues to develop and enhance public places and will additionally explore opportunities for community driven improvements and historic preservation.

City Commission Funded Items (★ Newly funded initiatives)

- The Development Services Department budget includes approximately \$267,000 for planning and administration of the Historic Preservation Program funded by the General Fund
- ★ Non-profit organization funding will continue to support the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, Inc. in the amount of \$85,000 which contributes to the City's historical life and serves as a resource within the Riverwalk Arts and Entertainment District; additionally, \$100,000 has been included for improvements to the building being used by the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, Inc.
- The Development Services Department budget includes approximately \$5.6 million for the enforcement of code concerns, including vacation rental regulations
- Entitlement grant funding, in the amount of approximately \$907,000, will be used in part to proliferate access to internet in low-income neighborhoods
- ★ The City continues to fund a Chief Education Officer to improve education within the City in the amount of approximately \$139,000; additionally, \$15,000 is being included for a Teachers of the Year commemoration
- The CIP includes approximately \$2.7 million in available funding for the Galt Ocean Mile beautification project
- The CIP appropriates \$2.0 million for the repair and maintenance of City-owned facilities to enhance the \$2.7 million of available funding
- The Parks and Recreation Department budget includes \$24.3 million for the maintenance of parks and medians and Citywide tree services

Performance-Based Outcomes

- Completed and opened DC Alexander Park and Tunnel Top Park and began construction of improvements at Warfield Park, Bayview Park, and Riverside Park
- Implemented public art initiatives at Tunnel Top Park with the installation of a Marc Quinn seashell sculpture and a new mural at Mills Pond Park
- Prepared amendments to the Historic Preservation sections of the Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) to update the Sailboat Bend Historic District Material and Design Guidelines
- Prepared amendments to the Historic Districts Ordinance to update review criteria and allowable use
- Conducted an Architectural Resource Survey of Dorsey Riverbend and South Middle River
- Digitized records, conducted oral histories, and created an exhibition to tell the story of the Sailboat Bend Historic District which is funded by the State of Florida Division on Historical Resources Grant
- Researched and planned a project to identify opportunities to enhance and revitalize Himmarshee Street and the Himmarshee (H - 1) Historic District through updates to the existing code, implementation of a more integrated streetscape, and creation of design criteria to harmonize this existing district with surrounding new development while maintaining and respecting the historic character of the area
- Improved the City's response and customer's ability to receive real-time assistance for vacation rental complaints by implementing a 24/7 hotline for filing complaints relating to short-term rentals



Appendix B

FY 2024 Community Surveys

Neighbor Survey	44
Business Survey	79



Fort Lauderdale, FL Community Survey

July - September 2024

Powered by  Zencity



Survey Methodology

The current cycle of the web-based Community Survey collected survey data between July - September 2024. Respondents were digitally recruited (e.g., over social media, mobile apps, websites, and survey panels). These ads are targeted to residents, and responses are only included in the data when a local valid zipcode is provided.

Respondents who self-reported being under 18, who declined to provide any demographic information, or those who provided an invalid zipcode are excluded from the results.

606 valid respondents participated in the web-based Community Survey during this cycle.

Representation

Zencity ensures broad demographic representation in several ways:

Before data collection, Zencity employs national statistical data to establish response targets. These targets are defined based on race/ethnicity, age, and gender.

During data collection, we track the demographic composition of the survey responses in real time, comparing them to the predetermined targets. We fine-tune our distribution and advertising strategies as needed to target all demographic groups.

After data collection, Zencity employs an industry-standard statistical technique called raking. This assigns a unique weight to each respondent based on their demographic characteristics. This method ensures that the distribution of these characteristics in the final weighted sample aligns with the community's overall demographics.

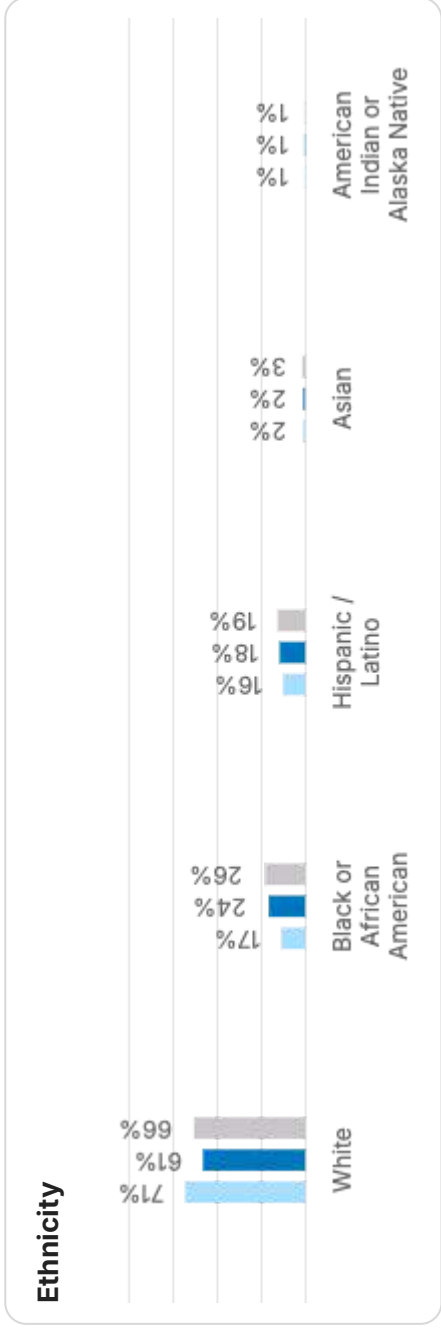
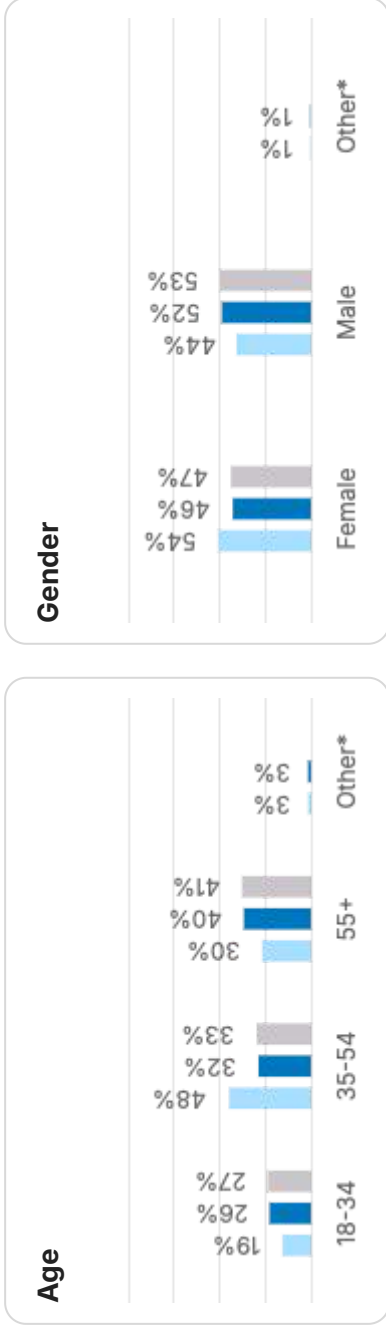
Sample Composition

606 valid respondents

Key

- **Unweighted demographics** - What we collected, without adjustments
- **Weighted demographics** - Our sample, adjusted to be representative of the population
- **Population demographics** - The demographics of the 18+ population

* The "Other" category includes missing data, people who selected "prefer not to say", and other groups not defined in the census.



Overall Quality of Life

Residents' quality of life is a key metric for local government leaders. Here, we present how Fort Lauderdale residents are feeling about their quality of life, looking at how this changes by demographic group and geography.

We will show the percent of valid respondents who reported either a 4 or a 5 on the 1-5 scale, weighted by age, gender, and race/ethnicity (see page 3 for details).

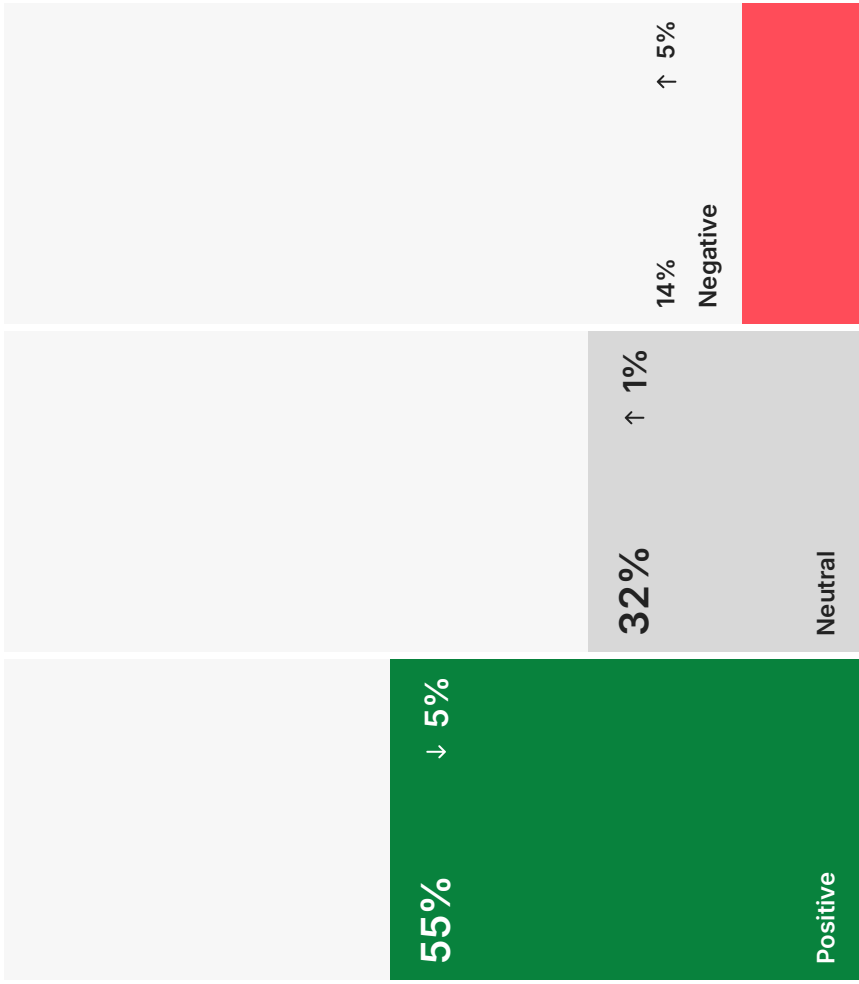
Scores will be shown only for groups (e.g., for a geographic area or for a demographic group) with at least 30 responses. For groups between 30 and 49 respondents, we highlight the small sample size using an (!). Use these scores with caution.

How is the overall quality of life in Fort Lauderdale?

55%

of 606 surveyed residents are satisfied with the overall quality of life in Fort Lauderdale

↓ 5% vs. previous cycle



How is the overall quality of life in Fort Lauderdale? | Geographic Breakdown



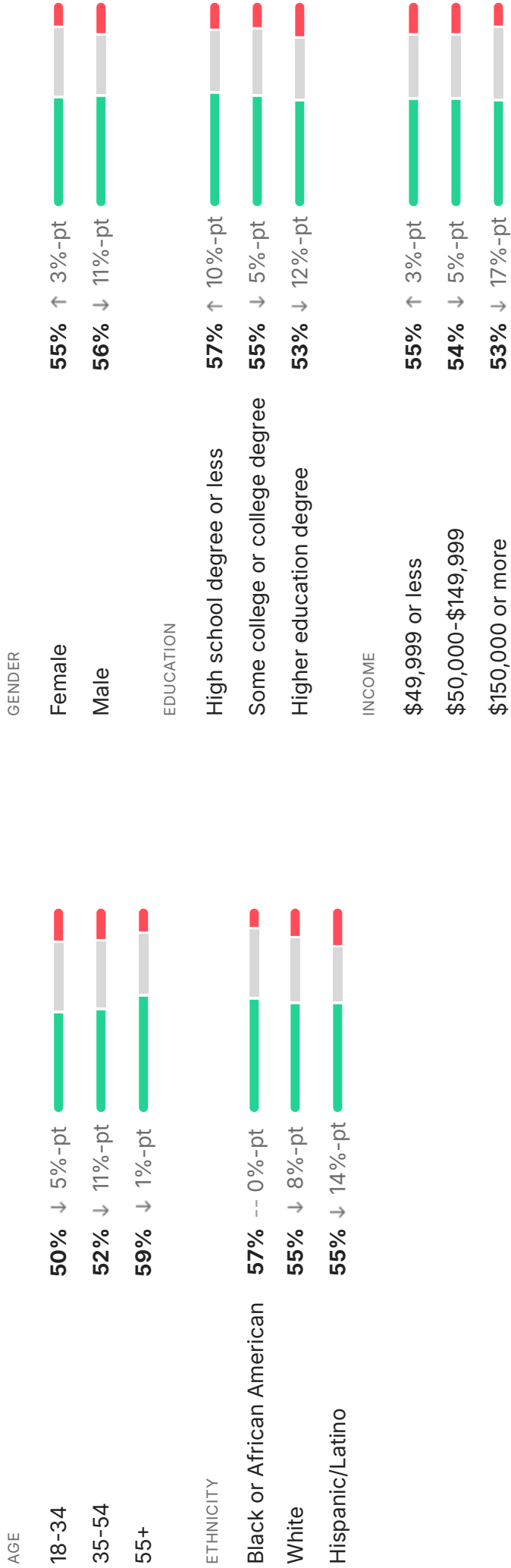
AREA	RESIDENT SATISFACTION
District 1	61% • ↑ 1%
District 2	52% • ↓ 15%
District 3	49% • ↓ 3%
District 4	53% • ↓ 4%

Zencity Community Survey

Fort Lauderdale, FL
July - September 2024

Powered by
Zencity

How is the overall quality of life in Fort Lauderdale? | Demographic Breakdown



Other measures of satisfaction with life in Fort Lauderdale

How likely are you to recommend Fort Lauderdale as a place to live?

46%

Positive

↓ **9%** vs. previous cycle



Neutral

28% • ↓ 1%

Negative

26% • ↑ 9%

How likely are you to be living in Fort Lauderdale 5 years from now?

51%

Positive

↓ **6%** vs. previous cycle



Neutral

20% • ↓ 2%

Negative

29% • ↑ 7%

Community Characteristics

Respondents were asked to rate how satisfied they were with a range of community characteristics on a scale from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent).

Zencity Community Survey

Fort Lauderdale, FL
July - September 2024

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COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTIC	SATISFACTION SCORE		CHANGE
Availability of a variety of art and cultural events	57%	30%	↓ 8% ↑ 4%
Acceptance of residents of all backgrounds	57%	28%	↓ 4% ↑ 1%
Quality of parks and recreational amenities	54%	30%	↓ 7% ↑ 2%
Quality of waste and recycling services	41%	35%	↓ 4% ↑ 1%
Quality of customer service provided by City employees	37%	35%	↓ 5% ↑ 4%
Overall quality of services provided by Fort Lauderdale	37%	36%	↓ 5% ↑ 3%
Overall cleanliness and maintenance	36%	37%	↓ 1% ↓ 1%
Sense of community among residents	33%	38%	↓ 2% ↑ 2%

KEY

- POSITIVE
- NEUTRAL
- NEGATIVE
- NON-SUBSTANTIATIVE

- ↑ CHANGE IN POSITIVE SCORE
- ↓ CHANGE IN NEGATIVE SCORE

The 'Change' column shows the percentage point changes in positive and negative scores from the previous cycle. In addition, questions with the largest changes above 5% are highlighted.

Zencity Community Survey

Fort Lauderdale, FL
July - September 2024

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COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTIC	SATISFACTION SCORE		CHANGE
Access to quality education	32%	36%	↓ 1% ↓ 1%
Ability for residents to give input to the City of Fort Lauderdale	30%	36%	↓ 1% ↓ 2%
Maintenance of City streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure	30%	32%	↓ 4% ↑ 2%
Sense of overall safety	29%	40%	↓ 7% ↑ 3%
Ease of getting around by public transportation	26%	27%	↓ 6% ↑ 4%
Availability of jobs that pay a living wage	17%	31%	↓ 5% ↑ 7%
Availability of affordable housing	10%	17%	↓ 4% ↑ 6%
Efforts to address homelessness	10%	21%	↓ 6% ↑ 5%

KEY

- POSITIVE
- NEUTRAL
- NEGATIVE
- NON-SUBSTANTIATIVE

- ↑ CHANGE IN POSITIVE SCORE
- ↓ CHANGE IN NEGATIVE SCORE

The 'Change' column shows the percentage point changes in positive and negative scores from the previous cycle. In addition, questions with the largest changes above 5% are highlighted.

Focus Areas

Respondents were asked follow-up questions for selected community characteristics to provide valuable insights into focus areas for Fort Lauderdale. Each follow-up question is only asked if the respondent answered negatively (i.e., a 1 or 2). These actionable insights can help improve strategic planning.

Sense of overall safety

29%

Positive

↓ 7% vs. previous cycle



Neutral

40% • ↑ 5%

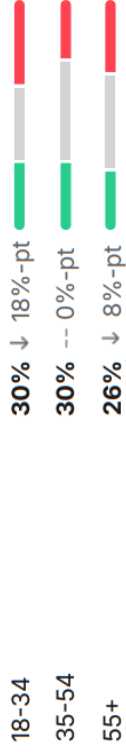
Negative

32% • ↑ 3%

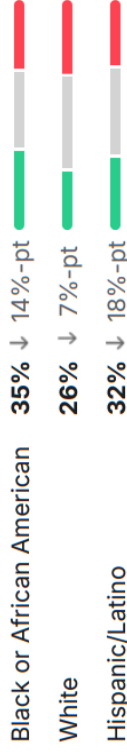
AREA



AGE



ETHNICITY



GENDER



Sense of overall safety

29%

Positive

↓ 7% vs. previous cycle



Neutral

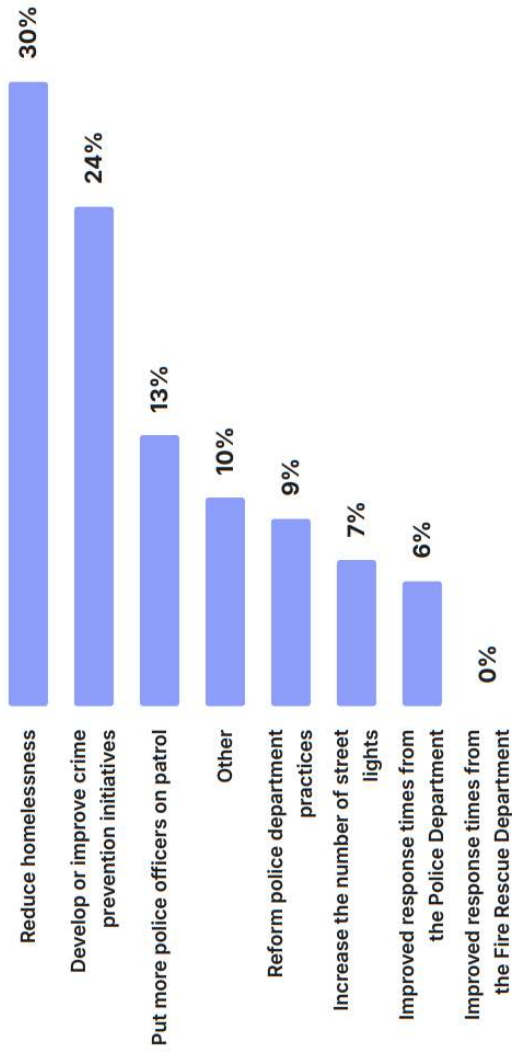
40% • ↑ 5%

Negative

32% • ↑ 3%

What is the most important thing you think Fort Lauderdale can do to improve your sense of overall safety?

187 respondents answered this question



Community Benchmark

We aim to help Zencity clients understand their results and put them into context. To that end, we will compare Fort Lauderdale's results to the United States as a whole and against communities with similar characteristics such as size, population density, and region (their "cohort").

These cohorts help to distinguish patterns unique to each client from those that are common in similar communities.

How we compare Fort Lauderdale to other similar communities

Creating the cohorts

First, all cities, towns, and counties in the US--not just Zencity clients--are put into cohorts based on geography and demographics using a method known as cluster analysis. This method balances a range of different characteristics to put communities into cohorts that are statistically similar to one another. The result of this step is one set of cohorts for cities and towns and a second set for counties.

We chose this method to create objectively similar groups of communities with respect to characteristics that are likely to be correlated with answers to the survey questions. By creating cohorts of larger sets of communities we have found that our benchmark baselines tend to be more reliable than they would be if we had direct comparisons of a small number of communities. See our Help Site for more information on cohorts, including the full list of communities in your cohort.

Creating cohort scores and national benchmark scores

The Zencity National Benchmark Survey is conducted semiannually, collecting about 5000 responses across the country. The cohort scores are the weighted average of scores for respondents in each cohort. These weights are calculated to match the client's own demographics, to make them directly comparable to the clients' scores. National scores are calculated in a similar manner.

Your Cohort

Fort Lauderdale is in the South and Central Small/Medium Cities cohort. The table below shows some demographics of your community and general makeup of cities in your cohort. Note that all age percentages are the percent of the 18 and over population.

See our [Help Site](#) for the full list of communities included in your cohort. Because we are creating a cohort from the National Benchmark Survey data instead of running representative surveys of selected communities, most cohort scores are generated from a few responses from each community.

	18+ Pop.	% age 18-34	% age 55+	% White	% Black	% Hispanic	Median income
Fort Lauderdale, FL	151,762	26%	41%	55%	29%	20%	\$75,376
	Median 18+ Pop.	Avg. % 18-34	Avg. % age 55+	Avg. % White	Avg. % Black	Avg. % Hispanic	Avg. Median Income
South and Central Small/Medium Cities	111,877	34%	34%	59%	21%	21%	\$73,482

Community Benchmark

Fort Lauderdale, FL
July - September 2024

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The overall quality of life in Fort Lauderdale is lower than its cohort.

55% Fort Lauderdale
59% Cohort
61% National



- Fort Lauderdale
- Cohort
- ▲ National

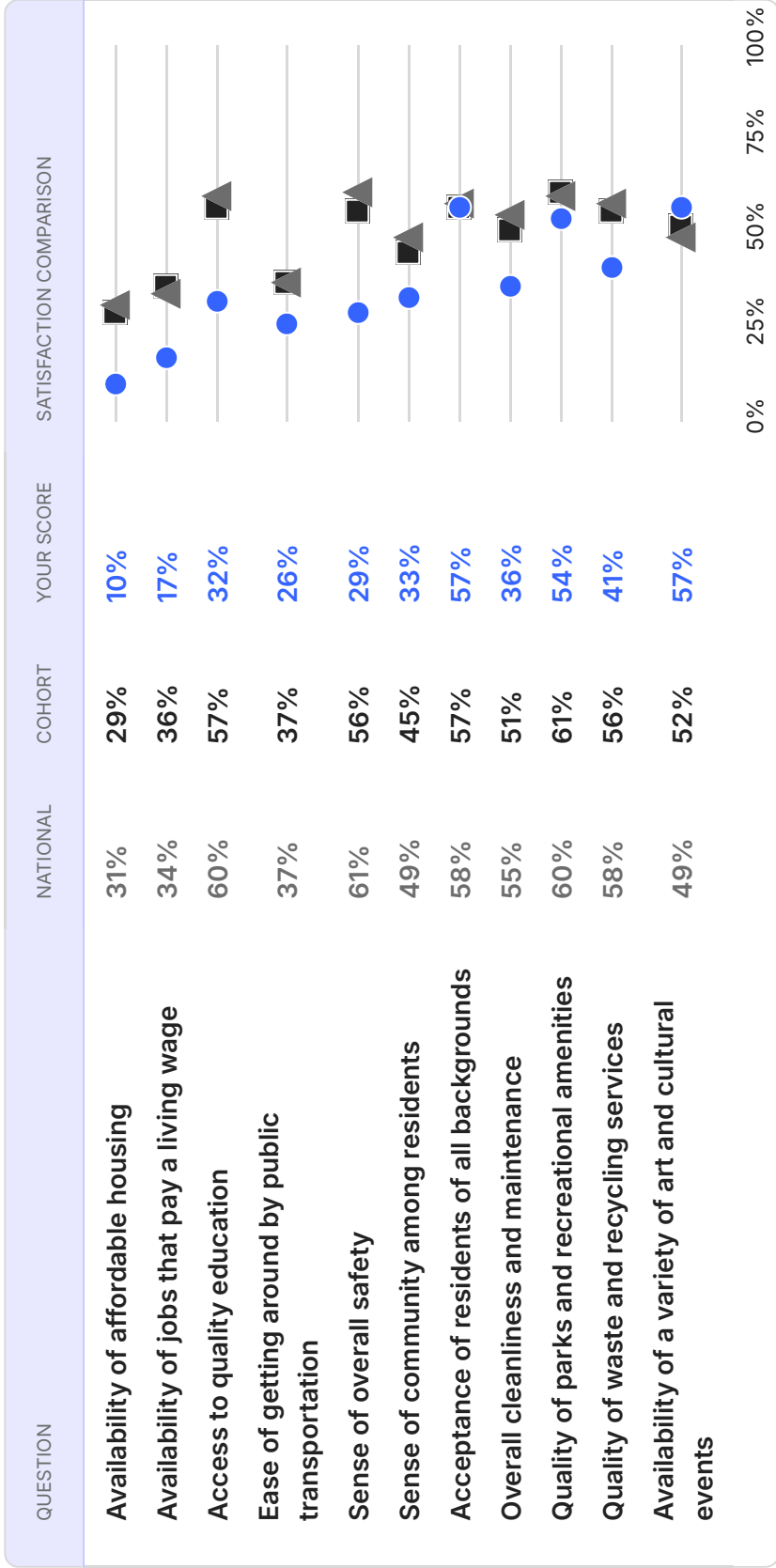
Community Benchmark

Fort Lauderdale, FL
July - September 2024

Powered by
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Satisfaction with Life in Fort Lauderdale

Breakdown by characteristic



● Fort Lauderdale

■ Cohort

▲ National

Free-Text Responses

Respondents were asked open-ended questions about what Fort Lauderdale government does well and how Fort Lauderdale could improve its services.

This section presents the main themes from both questions. Using our proprietary AI algorithm, responses are analyzed and categorized into

unique topics and subtopics for Fort Lauderdale, with multiple labels assigned to responses when relevant.

To ensure comprehensive information, responses that have been flagged as invalid (e.g., under 18, missing demographic data, or invalid zip codes

but claiming residency in Fort Lauderdale) are analyzed in the free-text responses but excluded from the quantitative results.



What residents love

Question: What is the #1 thing you think the Fort Lauderdale government does well?



What residents want changed

Question: What is the #1 thing you think the Fort Lauderdale government could do to improve its services?

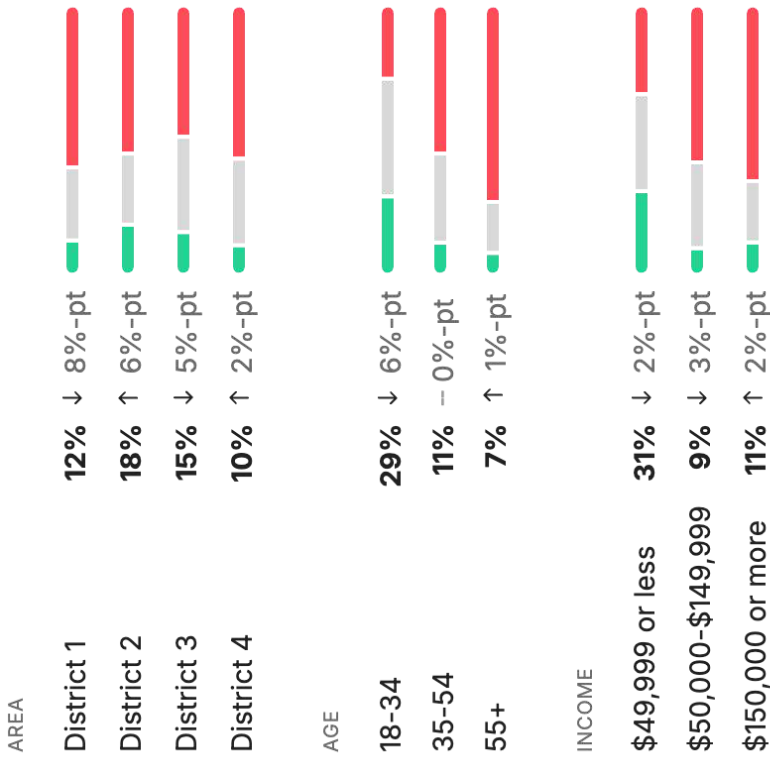
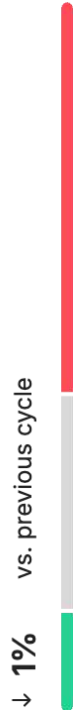


Rotating Survey Section

The rotating survey section focuses on areas of interest each cycle and can be updated as new areas of interest emerge.

How would you rate traffic in Fort Lauderdale?

14% Positive



How would you rate the reliability and quality of drinking water in Fort Lauderdale?

27%

Positive

↓ 2% vs. previous cycle



Neutral

29% • ↓ 2%

Negative

45% • ↑ 4%

AREA

District 1

27% ↓ 5%-pt



District 2

31% ↑ 5%-pt



District 3

21% ↓ 8%-pt



District 4

21% ↓ 3%-pt



AGE

18-34

39% ↓ 5%-pt



35-54

22% ↑ 1%-pt



55+

22% ↓ 3%-pt



INCOME

\$49,999 or less

34% ↓ 4%-pt



\$50,000-\$149,999

29% ↑ 3%-pt



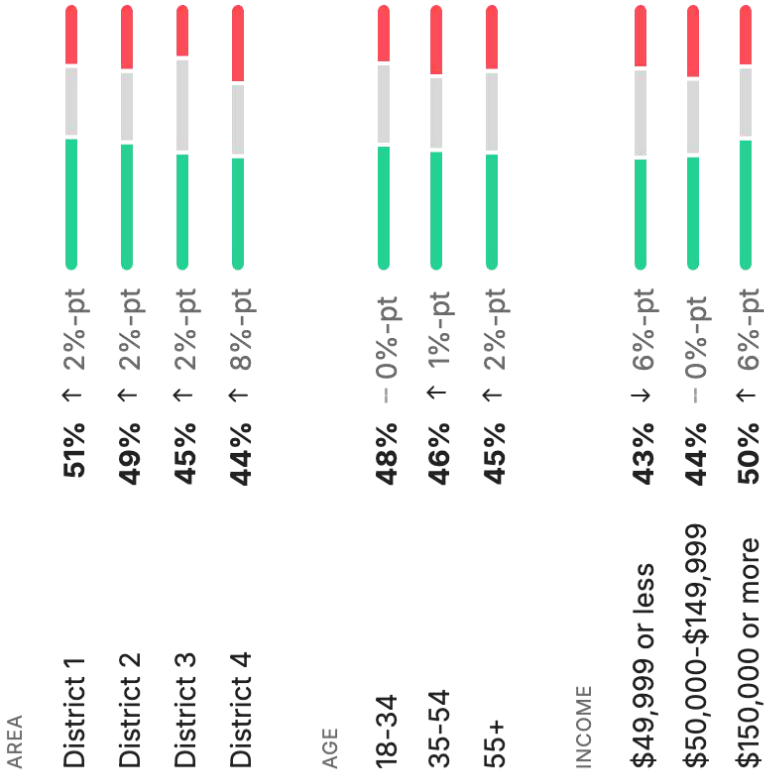
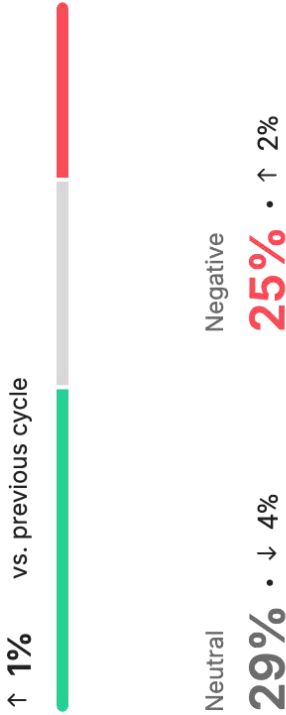
\$150,000 or more

23% ↓ 1%-pt



How would you rate the reliability of sanitary sewer services to your home?

46% Positive



How would you rate Fort Lauderdale's prevention of and resilience to flooding?

12%

Positive

↓ 7% vs. previous cycle



Neutral

25% • ↓ 3%

Negative

63% • ↑ 11%

AREA

District 1

16% ↓ 11%-pt



District 2

13% ↑ 1%-pt



District 3

5% ↓ 15%-pt



District 4

8% ↓ 6%-pt



AGE

18-34

21% ↓ 15%-pt



35-54

11% ↓ 4%-pt



55+

8% ↓ 3%-pt



INCOME

\$49,999 or less

23% ↓ 17%-pt



\$50,000-\$149,999

12% ↓ 4%-pt



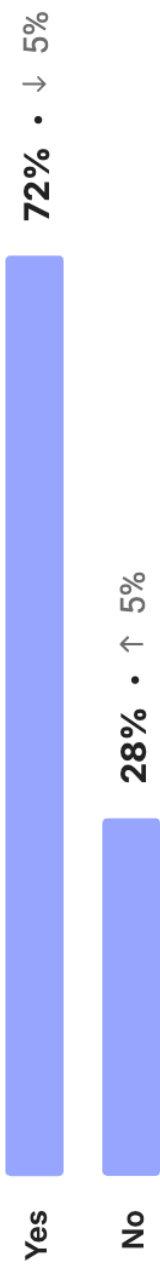
\$150,000 or more

7% ↓ 4%-pt



Do you feel that you have a quality public park or recreational offering near your home?

606 respondents answered this question

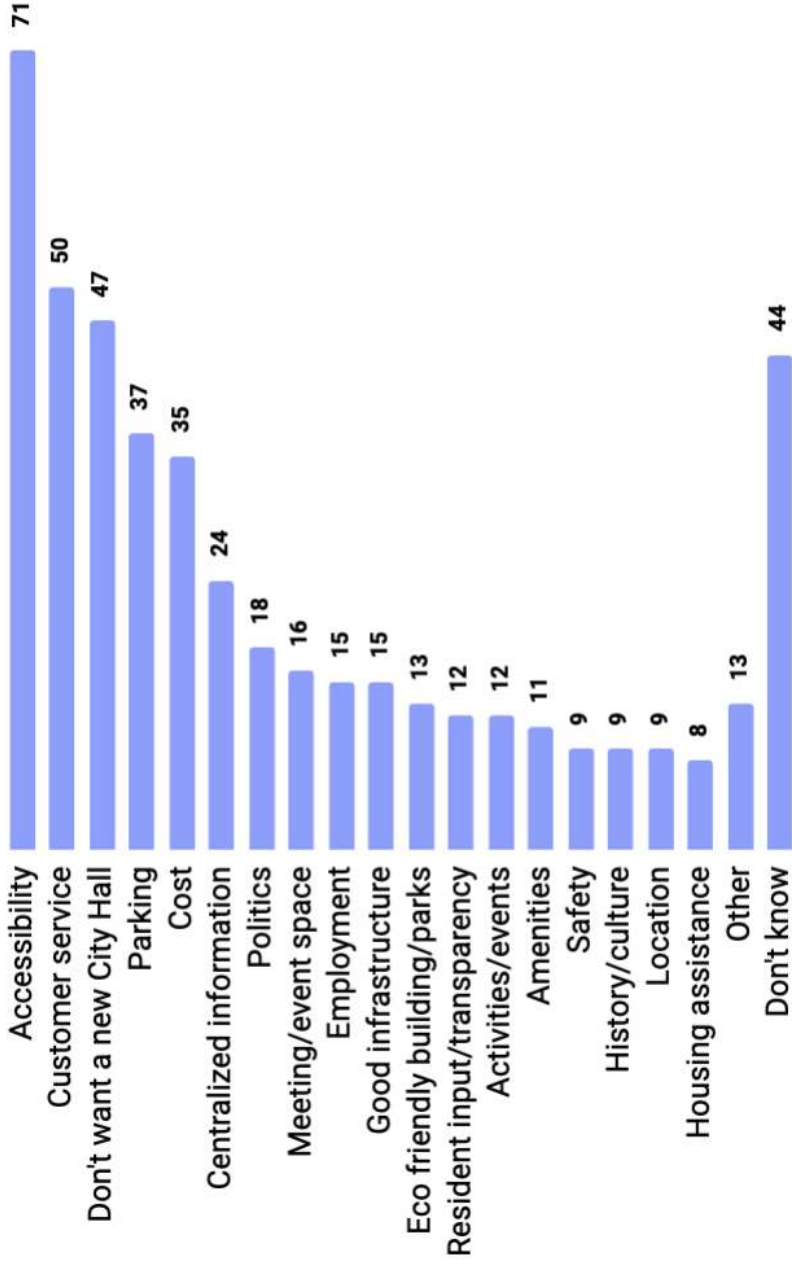


Zencity Community Survey

Fort Lauderdale, FL
July - September 2024

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What would you find most important in a new City Hall facility?
[open text; n=443]



The Questionnaire

QUESTIONS	CHOICES
How is the overall quality of life in Fort Lauderdale? *	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
How likely are you to recommend Fort Lauderdale as a place to live? *	1 - 5 Scale (Very unlikely - Very likely)
How likely are you to be living in Fort Lauderdale 5 years from now? *	1 - 5 Scale (Very unlikely - Very likely)
Sense of community among residents	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Acceptance of residents of all backgrounds	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Ability for residents to give input to the City of Fort Lauderdale	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Overall quality of services provided by Fort Lauderdale	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Quality of customer service provided by City employees *	Scale (Poor - Excellent)

QUESTIONS	CHOICES
Availability of affordable housing	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Availability of jobs that pay a living wage	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Efforts to address homelessness *	Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Access to quality education	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Availability of a variety of art and cultural events	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Quality of parks and recreational amenities	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Ease of getting around by public transportation	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Sense of overall safety	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)

QUESTIONS	CHOICES
Overall cleanliness and maintenance	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Maintenance of City streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure *	Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Quality of waste and recycling services	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
What is your favorite thing about living in Fort Lauderdale?	Open Ended
What is the thing you would most want to change about life in Fort Lauderdale?	Open Ended
How would you rate traffic in Fort Lauderdale? *	Scale (Poor - Excellent)
How would you rate the reliability and quality of drinking water in Fort Lauderdale? *	Scale (Poor - Excellent)
How would you rate the reliability of sanitary sewer services to your home? *	Scale (Poor - Excellent)

QUESTIONS	CHOICES
How would you rate Fort Lauderdale's prevention of and resilience to flooding? *	Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Do you feel that you have a quality public park or recreational offering near your home? *	Yes / No
Have you been the victim of a crime in the past year?	Yes / No
Did you report that crime?	Yes / No
In what year were you born? *	Open Ended
Which of the following do you identify as? *	Male / Female / Prefer to self-describe
Please state the gender you identify as.	Open Ended
Which one of these statements best describes your current situation? *	Full-time employed / Part-time employed / Unemployed / Student / Apprentice/intern / In retirement or early retirement / Permanently disabled / Fulfilling domestic tasks or looking after children/family / Prefer not to say / Other

QUESTIONS

CHOICES

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin? *

Yes / No / Prefer not to say

What is your race? *

White / Black or African American / American Indian or Alaska Native / Asian / Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, or other Pacific Islander / Prefer not to say / Other

Is your home: *

Owned by you or someone in your household, with or without a mortgage or loan? / Rented? / Occupied without payment of rent? / Prefer not to say

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received? *

Less than a high school diploma / High school graduate or GED / Some college but no degree / Associate degree in college / Bachelor's degree (For example: BA, AB, BS) / Master's degree (for example: MA, MS, MBA) / Professional School Degree (for example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD) / Doctorate degree (for example: PhD, EdD) / Prefer not to say

Do any children under the age of 18 live in your household at least half of the time? *

Yes / No / Prefer not to say

Were you born in the United States? *

Yes, born in the United States / No, born outside the United States / Prefer not to say

Which category best represents your household's total income over the past year? *

\$14,999 or less / \$15,000 to \$24,999 / \$25,000 to \$34,999 / \$35,000 to \$49,999 / \$50,000 to \$74,999 / \$75,000 to \$99,999 / \$100,000 to \$149,999 / \$150,000 to \$199,999 / \$200,000 to \$299,999 / \$300,000 or more / Prefer not to say

What is the primary language spoken in your home? *

English / Spanish / Creole / Other



Published on October 11th, 2024 by Zencity

support@zencity.io

Fort Lauderdale, FL

Business Survey Report
November 2024



Executive Summary

- Overall, businesses surveyed in this report were largely satisfied with Fort Lauderdale as both a place to do business and a place to work, with 71% expressing satisfaction with the city as a business location and 76% as a workplace.
- The survey revealed that tourism and the feeling of safety were the areas businesses felt most positively about, while affordable housing availability for employees was rated the lowest.
- Local government policies and level of taxation were identified as the most important factors for businesses considering whether to stay in Fort Lauderdale.
- 42% of respondents were dissatisfied with the local government's business-related support services. Respondents indicated a strong desire for improved communication and responsiveness from the city, as well as additional support in the form of finance and tax workshops.

Methodology

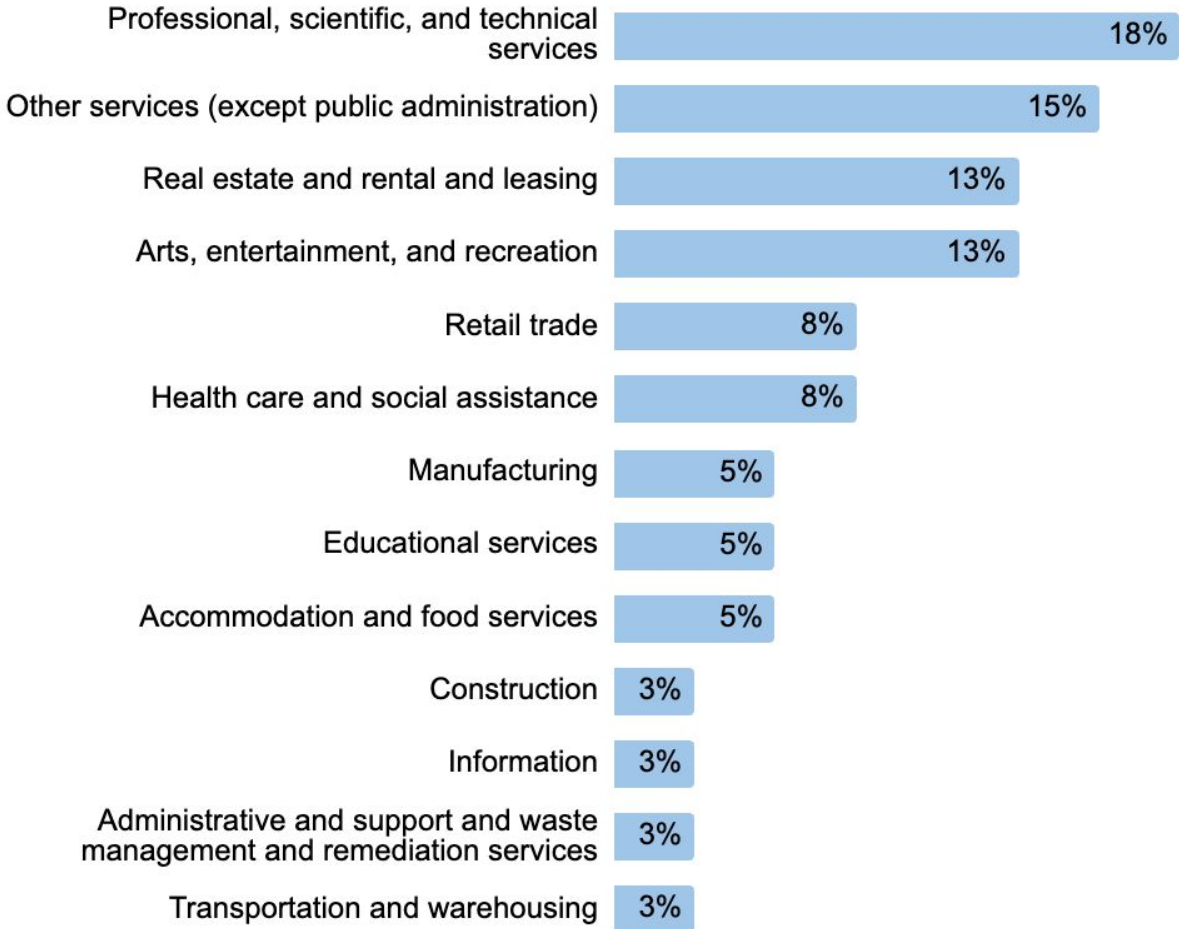
- The survey presented in this report was a business survey that was live from July to November 2024. It included eight topic questions, of which two were open ended, in addition to 14 demographic questions. See the questionnaire [here](#), which was developed in partnership with Fort Lauderdale.
- Responses from 77 businesses in Fort Lauderdale were collected through this online survey, and were included in the analysis presented in this report. Of these responses, 45 were partial responses that answered a minimum of five questions, and were therefore included in this analysis. See next page for a full breakdown of the included sample.
- Each question presented in this report reflects the breakdown of the valid responses and excludes missing data (due to partials or the respondent skipping the question).
- All duplicate responses were removed from the data. Unique fingerprint IDs were used to identify which responses were duplicates.

Sample Breakdown

The large majority (80%) of those that responded to the survey were owners or executives of the business. The industry of the businesses that were mentioned varied greatly, however they were most commonly professional, scientific, and technical services related businesses.



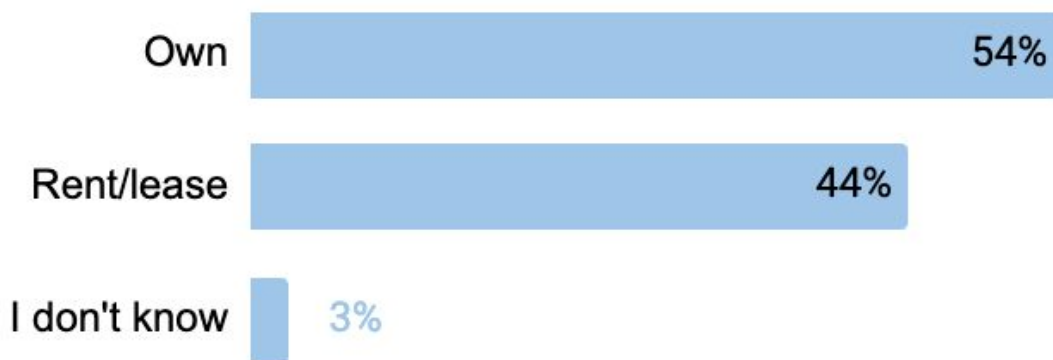
Business' industry



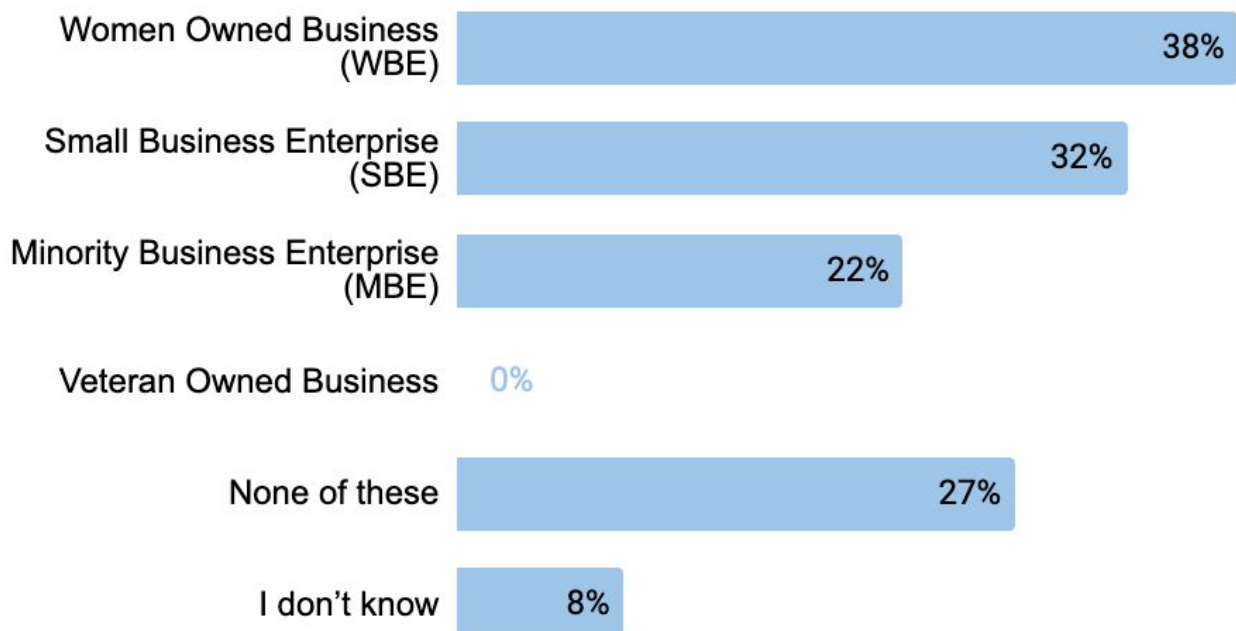
Sample Breakdown

Over half (54%) of the surveyed businesses own their facilities, as compared to 44% who rent or lease them. They were also most commonly categorized as women owned businesses (38%) or small business enterprises (32%).

Business facility



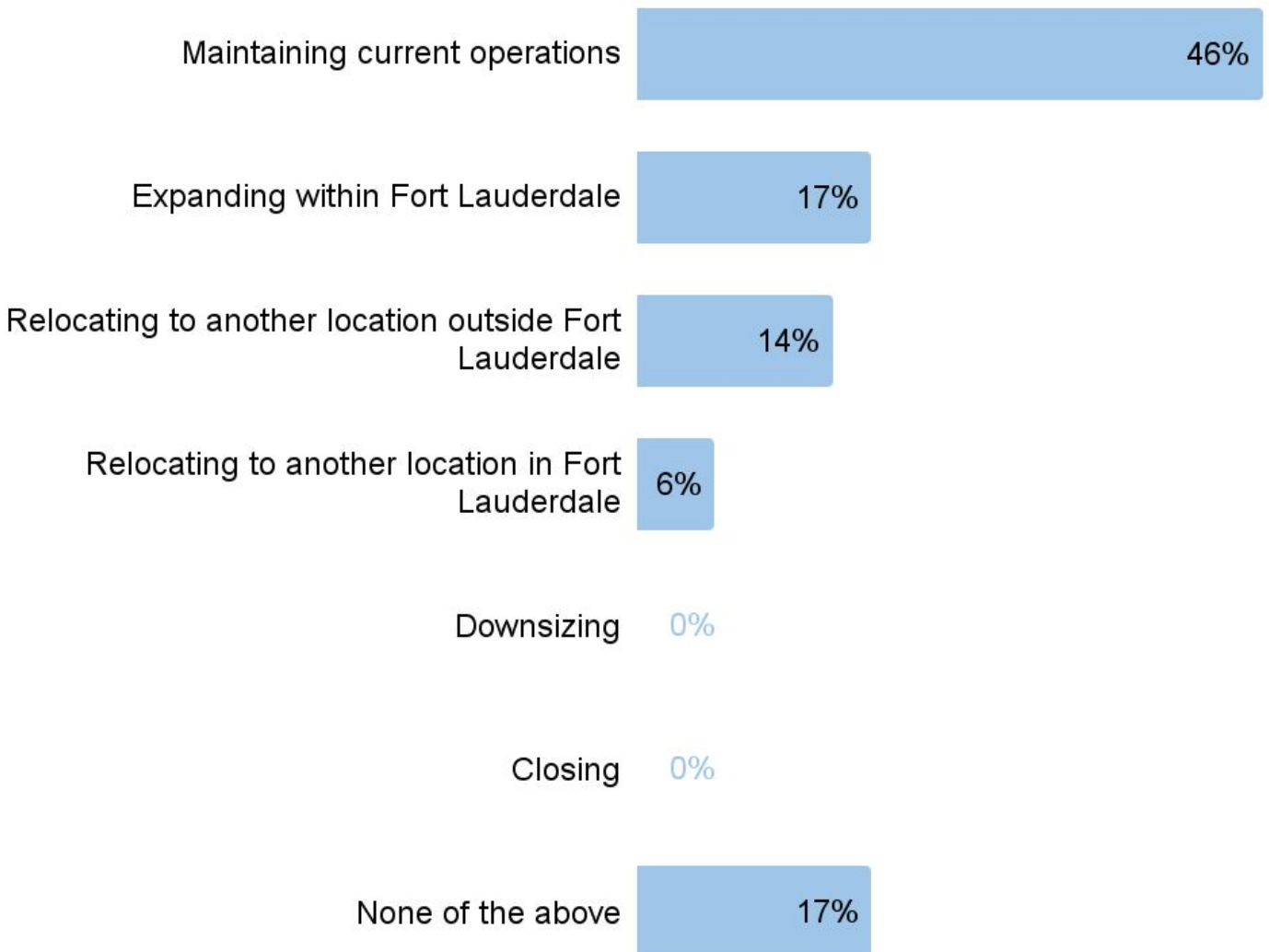
Business facility



Sample Breakdown

46% of the surveyed businesses reported that they plan to maintain current operations in the next year. However, 17% reported that they are planning to expand within Fort Lauderdale and 14% reported that they are planning to relocate to a location outside of Fort Lauderdale.

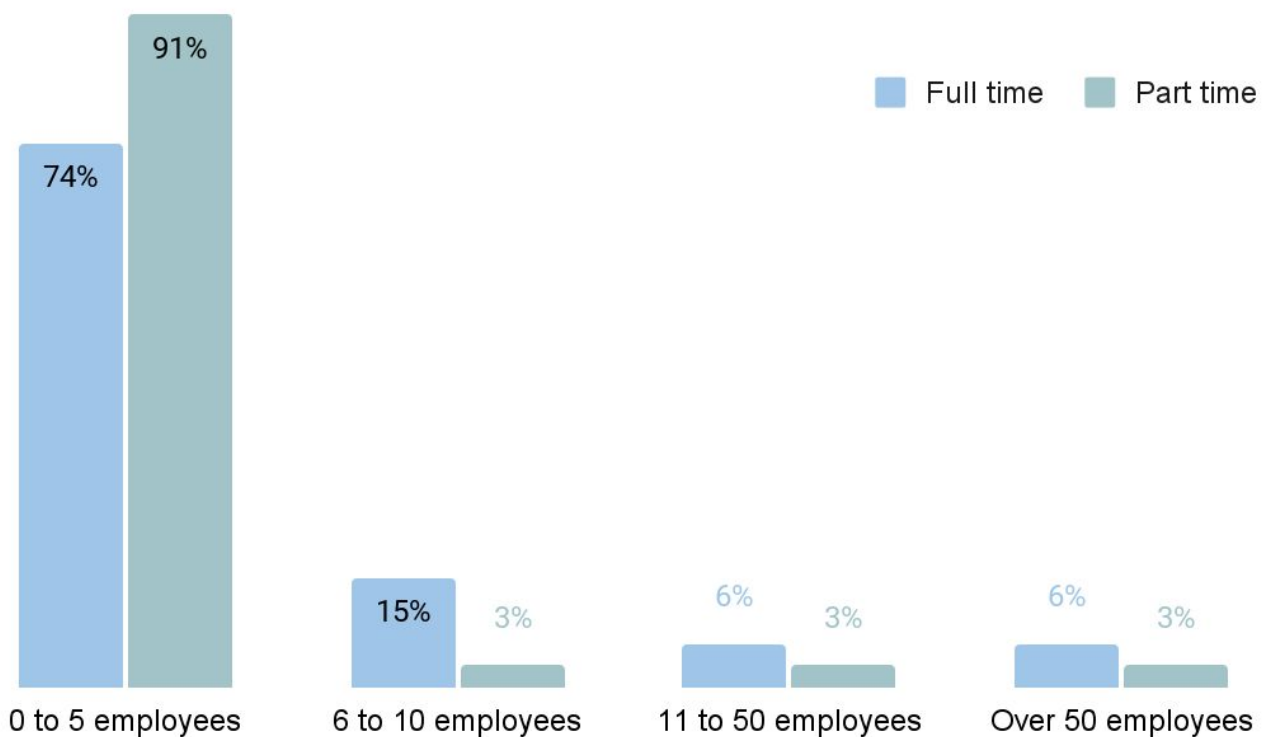
Plans for next year



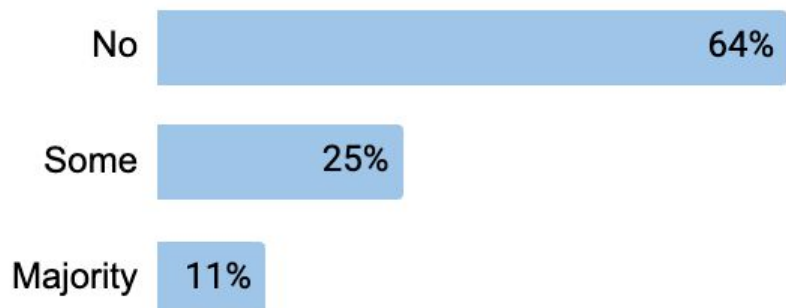
Sample Breakdown

The businesses that were surveyed most commonly reported having between 0 to 5 full time or part time employees. The majority of them (64%) also reported that their employees do not telecommute.

Number of employees



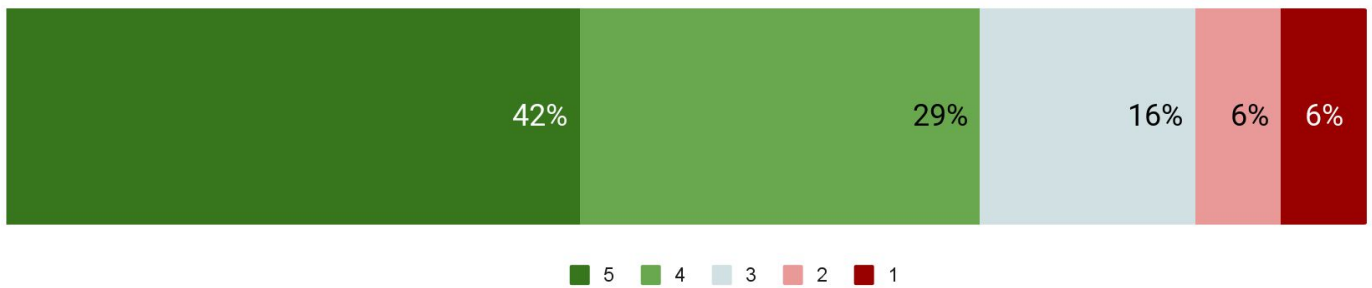
Do employees telecommute



How would you rate the City as a place to do business?

Scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)

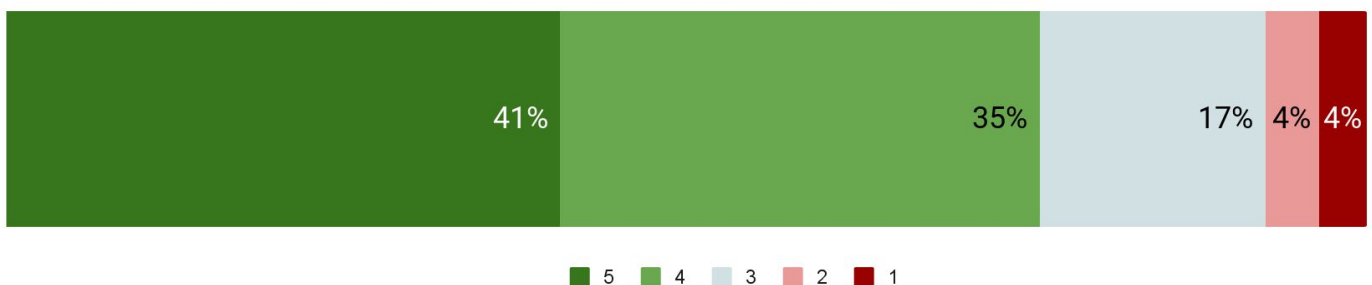
The majority of surveyed businesses (**71%**) were satisfied (4 or 5 on scale) with the City as a place to do business. In comparison, only **12%** were dissatisfied with the City as a place to do business (1 or 2 on the scale), and **16%** were neutral (3 on the scale).



How would you rate the City as a place to work?

Scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)

The large majority of surveyed businesses (**76%**) were satisfied (4 or 5 on scale) with the City as a place to work. In comparison, only **8%** of respondents were dissatisfied with the City as a place to work (1 or 2 on the scale), and **17%** were neutral (3 on the scale).

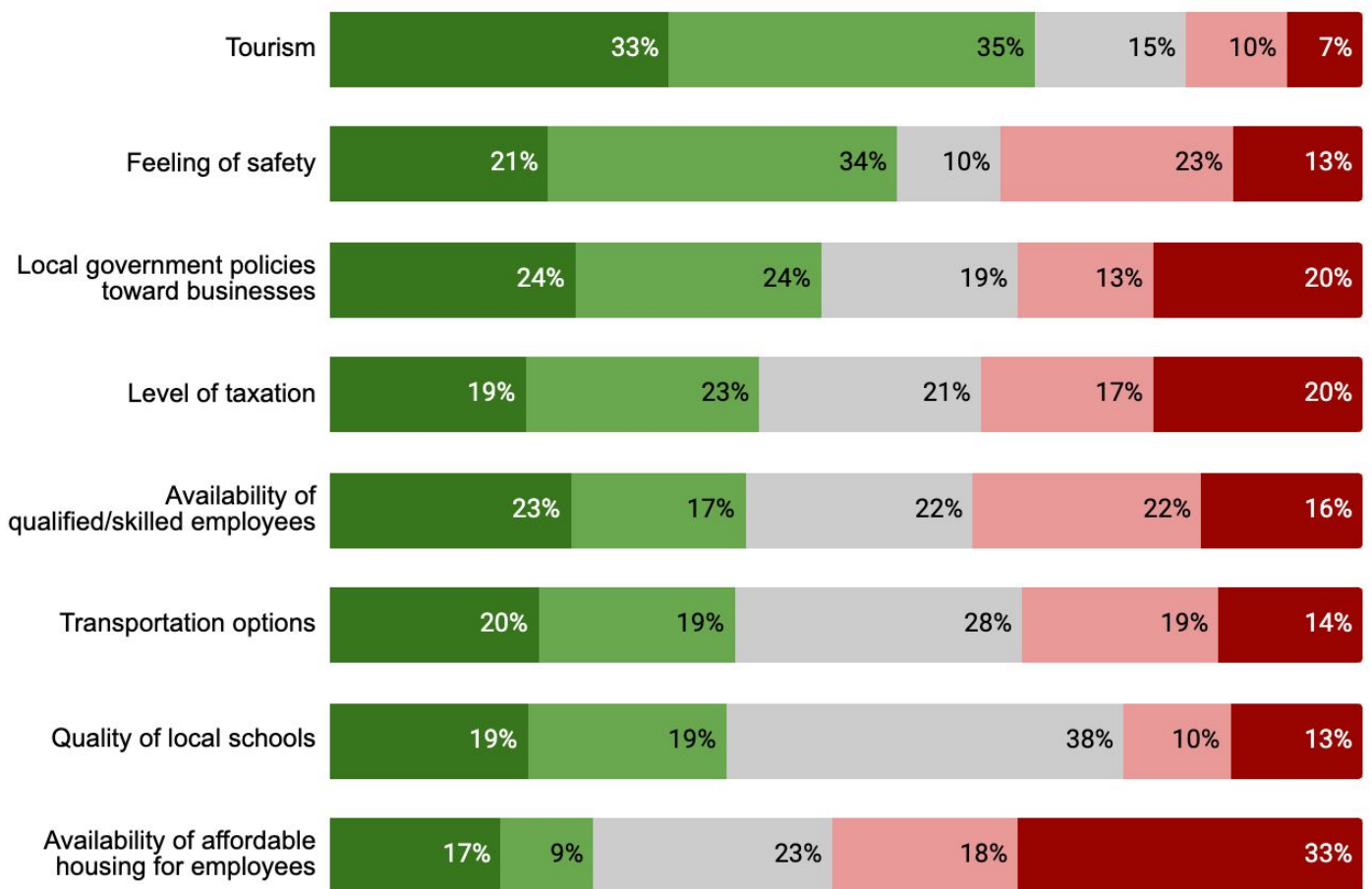


How satisfied are you with each of the following?

Scale from Completely satisfied to Completely unsatisfied

Of the surveyed businesses, **satisfaction was found to be highest regarding tourism**, for which 33% reported being completely satisfied and 35% reported being somewhat satisfied. Additionally, over half of the surveyed businesses were also satisfied with the feeling of safety.

Conversely, **satisfaction was found to be lowest for availability of affordable housing for employees**, with 33% reporting being completely unsatisfied and only 26% reporting being completely or somewhat satisfied.

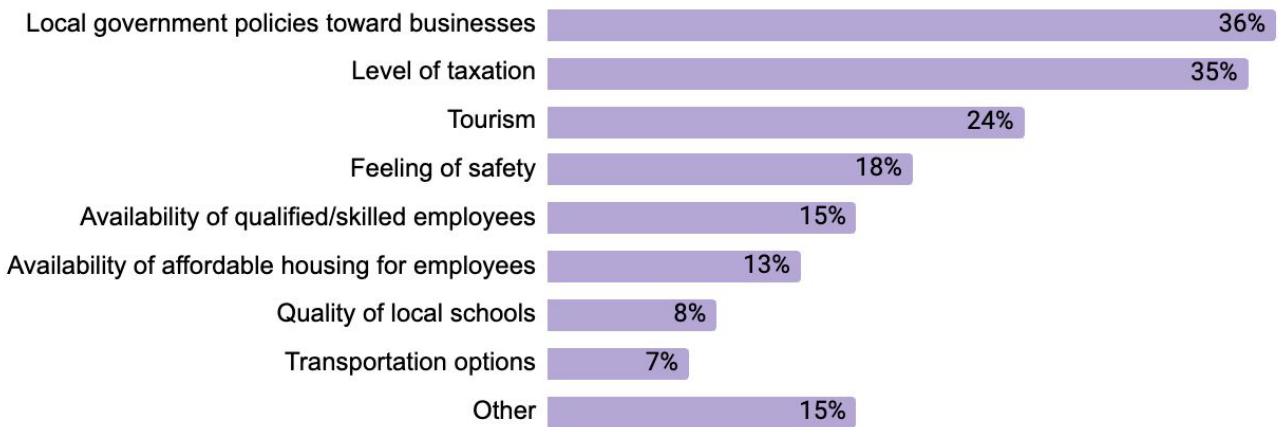


■ Completely satisfied
 ■ Somewhat satisfied
 ■ Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied
 ■ Somewhat unsatisfied
 ■ Completely unsatisfied

Which of the following are most important to keeping your business in Fort Lauderdale?

Choose up to 3 options

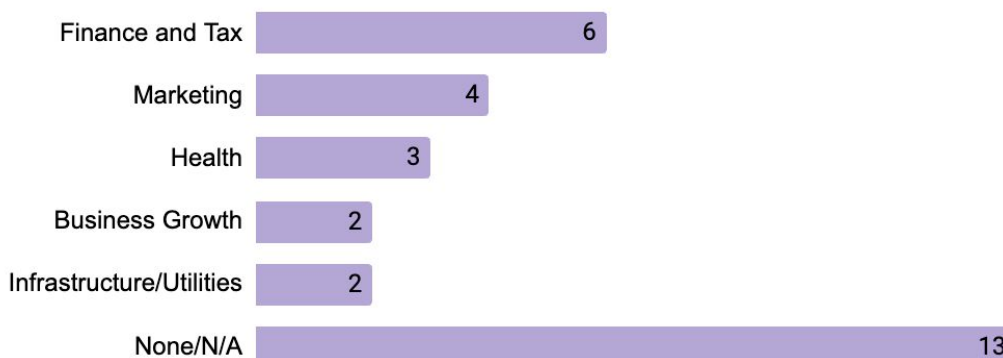
Local government policies towards businesses was most commonly selected as an important factor for keeping businesses in Fort Lauderdale (selected by 36% of surveyed businesses). **Level of taxation** was also commonly selected (35%). Conversely, **quality of local schools** and **transportation options** were least commonly selected (8% and 7%, respectively).



What types of business development workshops would you be interested in attending?

Open text

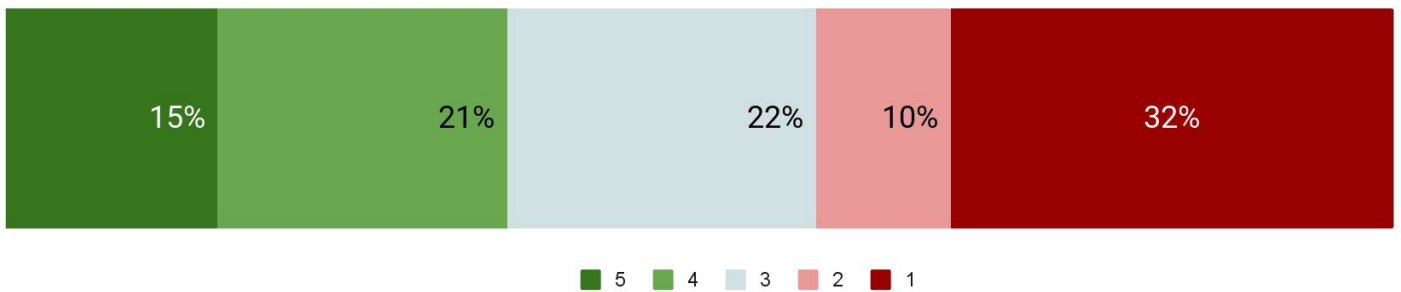
Finance and tax workshops were the workshops that respondents most commonly mentioned being interested in. Many respondents mentioned **not being interested in any workshops**.



How satisfied are you with the local government's business-related support services?

Scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)

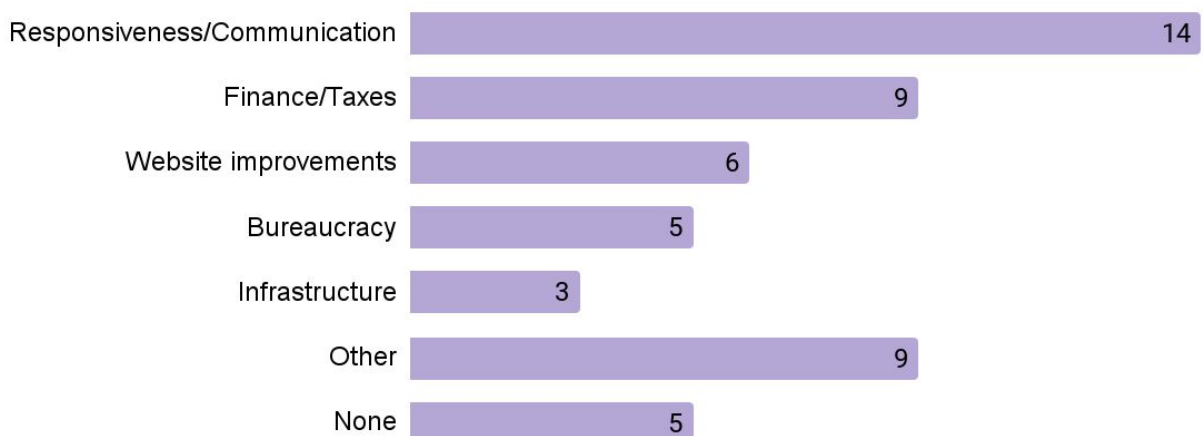
36% of the surveyed businesses **were satisfied** (4 or 5 on scale) with the local government's business-related support services. In comparison, **42% were dissatisfied** (1 or 2 on the scale), and **22% were neutral** (3 on the scale).



What support is needed?

Open text

Improved responsiveness and better communication from the City was the support respondents most commonly reported needing. **Financial support** (including tax breaks), was all also commonly mentioned. Some of the 'other' responses included more support in general, such as workshops and webinars.





Conclusion and Takeaways

- Overall, the businesses analyzed in this report were found to be largely satisfied with Fort Lauderdale as a place to do business and a place to work.
- The surveyed businesses demonstrated a favorable view of Fort Lauderdale's business climate, highlighting strengths in tourism and safety.
- Key areas for improvement include affordable housing for employees, business-related support services, and infrastructure enhancements.
- Strengthening communication between city authorities and businesses is crucial, with respondents emphasizing the need for clearer and more proactive engagement.