

# City of Fort Lauderdale

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## Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 20, 2026

1:35 PM

Broward Center for the Performing Arts - Mary N. Porter Riverview  
Ballroom - 201 SW 5th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33312

## City Commission Conference Meeting

*FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION*

*DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor*

*JOHN C. HERBST Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District 1*

*STEVEN GLASSMAN Commissioner - District 2*

*PAM BEASLEY-PITTMAN Commissioner - District 3*

*BEN SORENSEN Commissioner - District 4*

*RICKELLE WILLIAMS, City Manager*

*DAVID R. SOLOMAN, City Clerk*

*SHARI L. McCARTNEY, City Attorney*

*PATRICK REILLY, City Auditor*

## CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trantalis called the meeting to order at 1:49 p.m.

## COMMISSION QUORUM ESTABLISHED

**Commission Members Present:** Vice Mayor John C. Herbst, Commissioner Steven Glassman, Commissioner Pamela Beasley-Pittman, Commissioner Ben Sorensen, and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

**Also Present:** City Manager Rickelle Williams, City Clerk David R. Soloman, City Attorney Shari L. McCartney, and City Auditor Patrick Reilly

## COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

**26-0121**

Communications to the City Commission - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Two or more members of the Infrastructure Task Force Advisory Committee may be present and participate in the discussion of this item at this meeting.

*Infrastructure Task Force Advisory Committee (ITFAC)  
January 5, 2026*

***A copy of the communication is attached to this Agenda item.***

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Williams explained that ITFAC has been reviewing infrastructure and other construction projects, citing examples.

Mayor Trantalis questioned whether it is appropriate to establish the task force as a permanent board and noted that the responsibilities described by staff appear broader and more ongoing than originally anticipated when the ITFAC was created.

City Manager Williams discussed staff's communications with Peter Partington, ITFAC Chair, about defining the scope and clarifying related responsibilities. She remarked on potential projects overlapping with other Advisory Boards and confirmed that the Commission would ultimately determine the scope and structure of a permanent

infrastructure board.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman discussed her support for formalizing the ITFAC as a permanent Advisory Board. Mayor Trantalis concurred and noted the ongoing need for technical expertise and recommendations for Commission consideration. Further comment and discussion ensued. There was consensus to move forward and establish the ITFAC as a formal Advisory Board.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, City Manager Williams noted that staff could present an ordinance establishing an Infrastructure Advisory Board on February 3, 2026.

Commissioner Sorensen suggested leveraging the Infrastructure Task Force as a strategic advisory group to assist in evaluating delivery strategies for major infrastructure initiatives and public-private partnership (P3) delivery options versus the traditional procurement methods for *Fortify Lauderdale* projects to accelerate implementation.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Peter Partington, ITFAC Chair. Chair Partington provided clarification on their communication and noted that because the board ordinance timeline is imminent, an ITFAC extension is unnecessary.

Chair Partington said the ITFAC will meet on February 2, 2026, to allow members to review the draft ordinance, provide input on the proposed scope, and offer feedback before second reading of the ordinance on February 17, 2026. Chair Partington said that an Infrastructure Advisory Board would remain a Commission-directed advisory body, engaging only in projects specifically tasked by the Commission versus a reviewer of all City initiatives.

Mayor Trantalis noted that the ITFAC transition to a permanent Advisory Board is already scheduled and that no immediate Commission action is required.

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question about the eligibility of current ITFAC members being appointed to a permanent Infrastructure Advisory Board, Mayor Trantalis said that eligibility will depend on existing rules restricting simultaneous service on multiple boards and committees. Staff will review memberships to confirm compliance before the Commission makes their appointments. In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, City Manager Williams explained the next steps in the process.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on the Infrastructure Task Force Advisory Committee's meeting minutes, noting attendees include many staff. City Manager Williams explained the large staff attendance is a result of the broad nature of inquiries, and to ensure subject-matter experts are available to respond to questions. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding narrowing the scope of responsibilities to be included in the draft ordinance.

Mayor Trantalis said that the ITFAC's permanent successor board should primarily focus on underground infrastructure with involvement in other projects only upon Commission request.

## PRESENTATIONS

### **PRES-126-0131**

School Board Members, Dr. Jeff Holness and Sarah Leonardi to give Academic and District Updates on Broward County School Districts 3 and 5 - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Two or more members of the School Board of Broward County may be present and participate in the discussion of this item at this meeting.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Sarah Leonardi, School Board of Broward County (School Board) Chair and Vice Chair Jeff Holness, School Board Vice Chair. Chair Leonardi and Vice Chair Holness narrated a presentation entitled *Academic & District Updates January 20, 2026*.

***A copy of the presentation is part of the backup to this Agenda item.***

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's questions, Chair Leonardi explained the methodology behind school performance ratings and discussed related metrics. Vice Chair Holness discussed associated goals and achievements. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Dr. Valerie Wanza, Broward County Public Schools Division of Strategy and Innovation Chief Officer. Dr. Wanza presented on the *Redefining Our Schools* initiative, which addresses district wide enrollment declines and related financial impacts.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding how Broward County school performance statistics were achieved, Chair Leonardi and Vice Chair Holness attributed improved student performance to consistent

superintendent leadership, targeted intervention strategies for low-performing schools, coordinated district-wide reforms, focused academic support structures, and educator efforts.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's questions regarding ways to improve student engagement and whether the Education Advisory Board (EAB) includes a student representative, Susan Leon, Chief Education Officer, confirmed that it could be explored. She noted that the City operates a Teen Youth Council through the Parks and Recreation Department and explained related information. Mayor Trantalis confirmed his support for exploring improved student involvement to achieve educational goals and participate in local government. City Manager Williams confirmed staff would conduct related research and provide recommendations. Chair Leonardi highlighted multiple related School Board student engagement initiatives.

Commissioner Sorensen noted prior Commission discussions regarding the future use of Seagull High School (Seagull) and North Fork Elementary School (Northfork) sites and requested feedback from the School Board. Chair Leonardi confirmed active collaboration with City staff regarding potential use of those school sites and discussed related information.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's questions regarding Seagull, City Manager Williams provided an update on negotiations and planning efforts and outlined the next steps that include ongoing discussions with the School Board related to the Seagull site potentially being redeveloped as a regional public safety training facility. City Manager Williams explained this effort is viewed as a community partnership opportunity with the School Board aimed at broader public benefit, and staff will continue to advocate for use of the Seagull campus as a regional public safety training facility. City Manager Williams noted that final negotiations depend on upcoming School Board decisions and due diligence on the City's part regarding costs, timelines, and partnership terms. The project remains conceptual pending agreement on site access and financial structure.

Commissioner Sorensen expressed support for pursuing a long-term lease rather than purchasing the Seagull campus and expounded on his perspective. Chair Leonardi discussed the process and indicated that reuse options for Seagull cannot be negotiated until its formal closure is approved by the School Board. Chair Leonardi agreed to relay the City's leasing preference to the Board.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's questions regarding the future of Northfork and potential partnership opportunities, Vice Chair Holness explained the School Board is seeking the best overall proposal for the property following consolidation decisions and said that the School Board is open to partnership opportunities.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, City Manager Williams confirmed that staff and the School Board are actively collaborating to identify suitable graduation venues for Fort Lauderdale High School and other public high schools.

Chair Leonardi shared student feedback following a recent visit to Fort Lauderdale High School. Chair Leonardi confirmed that a graduation venue plan is in place at Dillard High School. In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question regarding the need to pursue alternative graduation venue options, Chair Leonardi said a strong graduation plan is already in place, but the School District remains open to other options and collaboration. Vice Chair Holness provided additional context regarding the selection of Dillard High School as a graduation venue and addressed community concerns about ceremony logistics and multiple graduation venues.

Dr. Wanza commented that logistical efficiency and resource management are key factors guiding graduation venue decisions. Dillard High School is a large, arena-style facility capable of hosting high-quality graduation ceremonies.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's questions regarding the outcome of her meeting with Fort Lauderdale High School students, Chair Leonardi explained that the student roundtable was originally intended to focus on technology opportunities, but graduation concerns became the primary topic. Students raised several concerns, including logistics surrounding the graduation venue and ADA accessibility accommodations. She noted that no subsequent meeting was scheduled. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's questions regarding an update on the issue of charter schools potentially using traditional public-school facilities, Chair Leonardi explained that remains unresolved pending State legislative action that could impact school consolidation plans and budgeting. Chair Leonardi confirmed that the Florida School Boards' Association is actively advocating to address unintended consequences associated with that policy, and related guidance is expected once the current legislative session concludes.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding whether the School Board's plans any educational programs or activities recognizing the upcoming 250th Anniversary of the United States and whether the City might partner with the School Board, Chair Leonardi responded that she is not aware of any initiatives planned, confirmed she would raise the issue at the upcoming School Board meeting, and would provide follow-up information to the Commission. Vice Chair Holness said the School District would likely consider appropriate recognition activities involving School District operational and academic planning.

Commissioner Sorensen asked Commissioner Glassman for his perspective regarding whether the staff should continue exploring alternative graduation venue options for Fort Lauderdale High School. Commissioner Glassman remarked on related feedback from students and community members who have expressed concerns. Commissioner Glassman noted that although Chair Leonardi's comments suggest students may feel more comfortable with the current plan, uncertainty remains. Commissioner Glassman confirmed his support for staff to continue to explore alternative high school graduation venue options and present them to the School Board for consideration and expounded on his viewpoint. Further comment and discussion ensued. City Manager Williams confirmed staff would continue evaluating venue options.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman recognized that while alternative graduation venues may still be explored, the current Dillard High School plan is a strong, workable option and expounded on her perspective.

## **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

### **BUS-1 26-0050**

Las Olas Mobility Western Corridor (Downtown, Retail Shops, Colee Hammock) Design Update - (Commission District 4)

City Manager Williams provided an overview of this Agenda item.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Milos Majstorovic, Transportation and Mobility Department Director. Mr. Majstorovic narrated a presentation entitled *LAS OLAS BOULEVARD (WESTERN CORRIDOR) Preliminary Design* (Project).

***A copy of the presentation is part of the backup to this Agenda item.***

Mayor Trantalis recognized Catherine Prince, WSP USA, Inc. (WSP). Ms. Prince noted the presence of other WSP team members: Alec

Bogdanoff, Brizaga, Inc.; and Brian Voelker, Chen Moore and Associates; and noted additional Project team members. Ms. Prince narrated WSP's portion of the presentation.

Commissioner Sorensen remarked on input from constituents. In response to Commissioner Sorensen's request for clarification regarding visual illustrations of design options for the downtown segment of the Project, Ms. Prince discussed the landscape dimensions along and outside of Huizenga Park (Park). Further comment and discussion ensued regarding design intent. Mayor Trantalis remarked on his understanding that the illustration adds additional trees and a median. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding the total number of trees in this Project segment, Ms. Prince explained the Project proposes one hundred twenty-two (122) total trees, between Andrews Avenue and the Henry E. Kinney Tunnel (Tunnel) resulting in a net increase of approximately fifty-seven (57) trees. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the City's long-term urban tree canopy expansion strategy.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Prince confirmed that the number of trees and types of trees included on page seven (7) of the presentation and expounded on related information.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Prince confirmed that the trees and infrastructure for the raised midblock pedestrian crossing between Andrews Avenue and SE 1st Avenue are included in Project costs.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Prince said Alternative One for the Shops segment does not include a median but has ten-foot (10') wide sidewalks on both the north and south side of Las Olas Boulevard. Alternative Two (2) includes a median and seven-foot (7') sidewalks on both the north and south side of Las Olas Boulevard.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding the trees providing adequate shade canopy, Ms. Prince clarified that the Alternative 2 slide illustrating the Shops portion of the Project is incorrect and should include a new median with trees.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Brian Voelker, 500 Cypress Creek Road, Chen Moore and Associates, WSP Team. In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, Mr. Voelker explained concerns related to limited

root space that were addressed through updated design methods and use of engineered structural soil to allow roots to grow beneath paved areas, improving long-term survivability and stability.

Mayor Trantalis and Commissioner Glassman pointed out concerns related to the number of trees illustrated in Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 Shops segment and the lack of shade along the north and south sidewalks. Further comment and discussion ensued. Mr. Majstorovic confirmed the ability to add pedestrian shade trees.

In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's questions regarding uninterrupted storefront visibility, which was a previously established design objective, Commissioner Glassman explained his recollection of the Las Olas Working Group's prior consensus for pedestrian comfort and sidewalk tree canopy shading. Mr. Majstorovic confirmed staff would address design concerns discussed by Commission Members.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's questions regarding the types of trees to be planted within the Shops segment and anticipated radius of trees, Mr. Voelker explained that the design proposes a diverse mix of native and climate-appropriate tree species, with a large tree canopy radius buffering pedestrians along sidewalks and smaller species planted where space is limited. Tree placement and species selection are determined by available planting width and root spacing to ensure long-term tree health and corridor resilience. Further comment and discussion ensued. Laura Tooley concurred with Mr. Voelker's comments.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's questions, Ms. Prince explained the distance from the curb to storefronts in Alternative 1, and Alternative 2. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding canopy radiuses and the canopy envisioned for the corridor. Mr. Voelker confirmed that both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 design options are intended to deliver continuous pedestrian shade through large canopy trees, with mature tree coverage extending across sidewalks and adjacent roadway areas. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's questions about whether certain proposed tree species would effectively provide continuous shade throughout the year, Mr. Voelker discussed the recommended types of large canopy trees that would provide continuous shade and discussed related maintenance requirements. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding appropriate tree species for the area.

In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's questions regarding the timeframe to achieve sufficient shade canopy, Mr. Voelker explained the intent is to plant seventy-five percent (75%) urban, mature trees with expected functional shade development within five (5) to eight (8) years.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's questions, Mr. Voelker explained issues associated with the existing black olive trees. The proposed new design includes engineered soil systems that allow roots to expand safely beneath the roadway, supporting healthier trees while reducing curb and sidewalk damage over time. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's questions regarding whether roadway improvements could occur without damaging existing trees, Mr. Voelker explained existing black olive trees have a confined and surface-level root system that damages infrastructure and would likely be severely compromised by roadway reconstruction. He also noted that cutting into critical root zones to preserve the current trees while rebuilding the corridor may not be feasible. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question regarding how new tree root systems would behave differently under the proposed design, Mr. Voelker explained that the proposed Project redesign relies on engineered soils to allow newly planted trees to develop healthier root systems without damaging pavement or curbs. Ms. Tooley concurred with Mr. Voelker's remarks, noting they are sound urban forestry practices and expounded on related information. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question regarding the black olive trees removed a number of years ago along State Road A1A, from Oakland Park Boulevard southward, Ms. Tooley said she was not employed with the City at the time and did not have information regarding the specific technical reasons for their removal. Commissioner Glassman sought insight into why those trees were removed and noted it could serve as a lesson for the current Las Olas decision. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Mr. Voelker explained that the findings of the existing risk assessment were based on current conditions of the trees.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding the risk assessment

of trees along Las Olas Boulevard, Mr. Voelker explained the risk assessment evaluates whole-tree failure under normal weather conditions and clarified it does not include extreme weather conditions such as hurricanes. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding the life span of urban trees, Mr. Voelker said it is approximately thirty (30) years. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis identified three (3) specific decision items: longevity of the existing trees, appropriate sidewalk width, and number of travel lanes on Las Olas Boulevard.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding how roadway improvements would affect the longevity of the existing black olive trees, Mr. Voelker reiterated that planned roadway improvements would further shorten their remaining life due to root impacts.

Mayor Trantalis discussed Alternative 1 illustrating no median and removal of one (1) travel lane. Ms. Prince confirmed and discussed the options of on-street parking during specified hours of the day or permanent parking. Mayor Trantalis questioned the rationale behind converting flexible parking into permanent parking.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding the purpose of curb extensions (bulb-outs), Ms. Prince explained it improves pedestrian safety and provides parking. Mr. Majstorovic explained the genesis of that option. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis discussed his recollection that the Commission did not intend to permanently eliminate a second travel lane, but maintain the existing second and flexible travel lane, and widen sidewalks. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding other aspects of Alternative 1's bulb-outs and tree placement, Mr. Majstorovic said that the Commission retains the flexibility to modify designs, including removing curb extensions, adjusting tree placement, and retaining flexible parking operations with two (2) travel lanes.

Ms. Prince presented the Colee Hammock portion, noting that the design adheres to the 2021 Mobility Master Plan and expounded on related information. Mayor Trantalis raised questions and concerns regarding the bicycle lane design for this segment, noting that it appears to create fragmented bicycle lanes along the corridor. Mr. Majstorovic explained staff's design reasoning and the use of widened sidewalks.

Mayor Trantalis emphasized that the purpose of widening the sidewalks was to support pedestrian circulation and outdoor dining activity, not bicycle travel. He directed staff to reevaluate bicycle accommodations to ensure a continuous, logical, and safe network prior to advancing final design decisions.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question regarding why the Colee Hammock segment has significantly higher costs, Greg Corning, WSP, said that project costs are largely quantity-driven, noting that roadway widening and added landscape elements increase total construction costs even when visual differences between project segments appear minimal. Commissioner Glassman acknowledged Mr. Corning's explanation but noted proportional cost differences between project segments. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Anne Hilmer, 621 Idlewyld Drive, on behalf of the Idlewyld Improvement Association and Lauderdale Tomorrow. Ms. Hilmer read into the record a prepared statement from Lauderdale Tomorrow.

***A copy of the document is attached to these Meeting Minutes.***

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Hilmer discussed Lauderdale Tomorrow's opposition to permanent bulb-outs that would prevent having two (2) travel lanes in each direction when needed and cited examples.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question regarding evacuation route designations, Mr. Majstorovic explained current Broward County evacuation maps designate Las Olas Boulevard as an evacuation route from the beach through downtown to Third Avenue. Staff consulted Broward County Emergency Management and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to evaluate whether SE 15th Avenue may function more efficiently as an evacuation route due to recent improvements, expounded on related information, and said FDOT feedback is pending.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, Mr. Majstorovic said that the Commission adopted Vision Plan did not include a recommendation to shift the evacuation route designation from Las Olas Boulevard to SE 15th Avenue.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Bill Ott, 411 N. New River Drive, on behalf of the Downtown Fort Lauderdale Civic Association. Mr. Ott spoke in

support of keeping the median with trees, replacing the trees as needed, eliminating on-street parking, extending the sidewalks, and discussed recommendations for the bike lane. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, Mr. Majstorovic clarified Las Olas Boulevard parking capacity and cited examples. In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Mr. Majstorovic explained removing bulb-outs would not increase parking capacity due to FDOT engineering safety standards.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Ted Inserra, 901 SW 19th Street, River Oaks Civic Association President. Mr. Inserra discussed his viewpoint regarding this Agenda item.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Steve Hudson, 1799 SE 9th Street. Mr. Hudson discussed his support of Alternative 1 and expounded on his viewpoint.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Robert Lochrie, Esq., Lochrie and Chakas, P.A., on behalf of Shops segment business owners. Mr. Lochrie spoke in support of Alternative 1 and expounded on his viewpoint.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Mike Weymouth, The Las Olas Company President. Mr. Weymouth discussed his opposition to maintaining a median and expounded on his viewpoint.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Diana Gagne, 520 SE 5th Street. Ms. Gagne spoke in support of maintaining the median and expounded on her viewpoint.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Maggie Hunt, 1307 SW 4th Court. Ms. Hunt spoke in support of Alternative 2 with modifications and expounded on her viewpoint. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding area parking, sidewalk widths, and tree canopy density.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Jenni Morejon, Fort Lauderdale Downtown Development Authority (DDA) President and Chief Executive Officer. Ms. Morejon discussed the downtown and Shops segment and confirmed the DDA's support of Alternative 1 with on-street parking and discussed related details.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Ms. Morejon confirmed permanent on-street parking is feasible without bulb-outs, but

they are recommended for pedestrian safety and visibility benefits. She noted that the DDA has not yet taken a position on removing bulb-outs.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Charles Ladd, 442 NE 7th Avenue, DDA Member. Mr. Ladd commented on the technical aspects of the median, noting that the six-foot-wide median cannot be replanted with canopy trees under current code. He emphasized the need for experienced professionals in the design process, supported flexible curb bulb-out designs to maintain emergency access, and cautioned that traffic volumes along the corridor are likely to increase.

Commissioner Glassman discussed Mr. Ladd's development experience and participation in the Las Olas Working Group, cited examples, and emphasized the importance of streetscape expertise and required investment as design advances. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's questions, Mr. Ladd said that there is no need for another traffic study and explained his viewpoint. Mr. Ladd expounded on details related to his tree canopy recommendation to use large oak trees along sidewalks and discussed related information. Mr. Ladd discussed his support of bulb-outs for pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures.

Vice Mayor Herbst read a statement submitted by former Commissioner Dr. Warren Sturman on this topic into the record.

***A copy of the statement is attached to these Meeting Minutes.***

Mayor Trantalis recessed the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

Mayor Trantalis reconvened the meeting at 5:22 p.m.

Commissioner Sorensen commented on his perspective regarding ways to achieve key priorities of the Las Olas redesign, emphasizing the importance of pedestrian safety, accessibility, sidewalk width, on-street parking, traffic operations, overall corridor character, and business vitality. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding ways to achieve those priorities within the existing right-of-way constraints. Commissioner Sorensen expressed his preference to remove the median, allowing for wider sidewalks to enhance the pedestrian experience and safety, and supports retaining one (1) lane of on-street parking to maintain business access and help calm traffic.

Mayor Trantalis noted that achieving both wider sidewalks and on-street parking would require reconsideration of the existing roadway configuration. He remarked on the need for consensus on establishing sidewalk widening as a guiding policy objective.

Commissioner Glassman confirmed his support for a design without a median and with bulb-outs for pedestrian safety. Commissioner Glassman said the removal of the median aligns with recommendations previously developed by the Las Olas Mobility Working Group and emphasized that the redesign should be guided by future needs and represent long-term planning, prioritizing long-term economic health, walkability, and visitor experience.

In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's question regarding operational impacts of roadway configurations, including how median or no-median designs may affect fire apparatus access and emergency response operations, Fire-Rescue Department Chief Stephen Gollan said that Fire-Rescue would support a no-median configuration, explaining that the existing median limits maneuverability for fire apparatus, particularly within the commercial corridor east of the tunnel. Removal of the median would allow vehicles to bypass emergency units, improve access for ladder truck deployment, provide additional operational space during fire and medical emergencies, enhance response efficiency and improve overall public safety outcomes.

Vice Mayor Herbst emphasized that preserving a strong tree canopy is essential to maintaining Las Olas Boulevard's character and identity. He expressed support for wider sidewalks to enhance pedestrian mobility, outdoor dining, and ADA accessibility, while also supporting on-street parking to sustain business visibility and economic activity. He noted that public safety considerations favor removal of the median and confirmed support for bulb-outs to improve pedestrian safety.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman expressed her support for Alternative 1 and acknowledged the cultural and community significance of Las Olas Boulevard. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding funding opportunities for the Shops segment of the Project.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, staff advised that maintaining the median during phased reconstruction could create conflicts with roadway harmonization and root systems once roadway improvements begin. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding advancing design plans to sixty percent (60%), next steps in the process, and the expected construction timeline.

City Manager Williams confirmed that based on today's feedback, staff will prepare a formal agenda item on this topic for Commission action.

**EXECUTIVE CLOSED DOOR SESSION - 4:30 P.M. OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS POSSIBLE**

**26-0144** The City Commission shall meet privately to discuss pending litigation, pursuant to Section 286.011(8), Florida Statutes, concerning the following matter(s):

Jada Servance v. City of Fort Lauderdale, et al. Case No.:  
0:23-cv-60555-JB

Mayor Trantalis announced the commencement of the Executive Closed-Door Session at 5:50 p.m. The City Commission shall meet privately to conduct discussions between the City Manager, the City Attorney, and the City Commission relative to pending litigation pursuant to Section 286.011(8), Florida Statutes, in connection with the following matter(s):

Jada Servance v. City of Fort Lauderdale, *et al.*  
Case No.: 0:23-cv-60555-JB

Present at the attorney-client session will be:

Mayor Dean J. Trantalis  
Vice Mayor/Commissioner John C. Herbst  
Commissioner Steven Glassman  
Commissioner Pamela Beasley-Pittman  
Commissioner Ben Sorensen  
City Manager Rickelle Williams  
City Attorney Shari L. McCartney  
Assistant City Attorney Robert M. Oldershaw  
Outside Counsel Scott Alexander, Esq., Johnson, Anselmo, *et al.*, and  
Certified Court Reporter from Bailey-Entin Court Reporting

The estimated length of this session will be approximately 30 minutes.

Mayor Trantalis announced the ending of the Executive Closed-Door Session at 6:38 p.m.

Mayor Trantalis recessed the Conference Meeting at 6:39 p.m.

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED**

**BUS-2 26-0128**

Presentation of the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport's (FXE) History, Economic Impact, Revenue, Capital Improvement Plan, and Leasing Policy - (Commission District 1)

Mayor Trantalis reconvened the Conference Meeting at 7:01 p.m.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Rufus James, Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport Director. Mr. James narrated a presentation entitled *FXE Airport Overview*.

***A copy of the presentation is part of the backup to this Agenda item.***

In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's question regarding how other regional airports calculate the four percent (4%) lease transaction fee while meeting Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) compliance standards, Mr. James explained that fee differences among tenants are typically not arbitrary but are based on capital investment levels made by individual tenants or developers. Large investments may justify different lease terms or fee structures. Smaller investments may receive shorter lease terms or different financial arrangements. Fees are effectively tiered according to investment scale rather than tenant identity. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor Herbst expressed concern regarding the lack of adequate comparative data to evaluate the proposed lease transaction fee structure and noted the need for clearer benchmarking and leasing information from peer airports before making an informed policy decision. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mr. James acknowledged the difficulty in obtaining detailed information from peer airports, noting that some airports were reluctant to share specifics despite the information being publicly accessible. He noted that FAA compliance does not require identical lease terms but requires that agreements not provide unfair competitive advantages between similarly situated tenants. Mr. James discussed the use of outside counsel to ensure FAA compliance. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question, Mr. James confirmed the transaction fee applies to both aviation and non-aviation leases. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's questions regarding whether the proposed lease transaction fee is consistent with broader City leasing

practices, City Manager Williams noted that lease transaction fees have been applied in some recent City agreements, citing the New River Trading Post.

Vice Mayor Herbst expressed concern that implementing lease transaction fees for City-owned properties should be established as a formal Commission policy rather than an administrative action. He requested clearer policy direction and broader Commission discussion to ensure consistency, transparency, and proper authorization before applying such fees to City tenants. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the need for agenda backup materials to clearly identify proposed lease transaction fees for Commission review and direction. Vice Mayor Herbst urged the Commission to treat lease transaction fees as a citywide policy question rather than being isolated to airport leasing.

Mayor Trantalis noted his support for revenue-generation. Vice Mayor Herbst emphasized that this approach should be adopted uniformly, transparently, and through formal Commission policy direction to ensure fairness and consistency. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's questions, Mr. James explained that the lease transaction fee originated as an administratively developed lease provision based on FAA guidance and explained staff involvement. In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's question, Mr. James confirmed that the Airport Advisory Board (AAB) was not involved with lease transaction fees.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's questions regarding peer airports imposing additional controls or limitations on transaction fees, Mr. James said that no airports reported implementing caps on transaction fee amounts and no tiered fee systems were identified or disclosed. Mr. James explained details of lease negotiations and cited examples. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, Mr. James noted that the City may be forgoing significant potential revenue by not implementing a lease transaction fee and provided additional details.

Mr. James remarked on future aviation-related grant funding opportunities and associated State legislation focused on vertiport activities. Commissioner Glassman remarked on House Bill (HB) 1093 and Senate Bill (SB) 1362 being beneficial to the Holiday Park vertiport and expounded on his viewpoint. Further comment and discussion

ensued regarding related benefits to the City.

In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's questions regarding legal concern whether the lease transaction fees comply with State law governing regulatory fees, noting it does not appear to be tied to cost recovery, City Attorney McCartney said she would research and advise the Commission.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Robert Lettman, Zeley Aviation. Mr. Lettman spoke in opposition to imposing a lease transaction fee, explaining that existing leases provide market-aligned revenue increases and cited examples.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Williams explained triggering events for imposing the lease transaction fee and cited examples. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Mr. James remarked on examples related to refinancing that were diverted from investment in FXE and explained related information. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis recommended referring this matter to the AAB for its review and recommendations. Mr. James commented on information related to lease revisions.

Commissioner Sorensen recommended that this presentation and the range of policy options discussed be referred to the AAB for broader review. He suggested evaluating airport revenue strategies holistically and recommended the AAB provide feedback on best practices, business models, and future funding opportunities before the Commission takes further action. Mayor Trantalis concurred.

Vice Mayor Herbst reiterated his request that staff provide detailed airport revenue projections and documented financial needs to the Commission and the AAB to ensure any proposed fees or revenue measures are supported by demonstrated operational or capital funding requirements. City Manager Williams confirmed.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman requested that City Auditor Patrick Reilly participate in review of that information, including comparisons of capped versus percentage-based models, as well as a clear evaluation of how resulting revenues would be calculated and used prior to further Commission consideration.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Don Campion, Banyan Air Service/Sheltair. Mr. Campion spoke in opposition of imposing a lease transaction fee, expounding on the importance of a stakeholder review process and related information.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Todd Anderson, Sheltair Aviation Chief Operating Officer. Mr. Anderson spoke in opposition to the lease transaction fee.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Marcos R. Marchena, Esq., on behalf of Sheltair Aviation. Mr. Marchena spoke in opposition to the lease transaction fee, clarifying financial information included in the presentation.

Vice Mayor Herbst expressed concerns regarding potential discrepancies in information presented about comparable airport transaction fees and cited an example. Vice Mayor Herbst requested City Attorney McCartney meet with relevant parties to verify the accuracy of the information and confirm the underlying facts. Vice Mayor Herbst emphasized that resolving these issues is necessary before any further discussion occurs or before the matter proceeds to the AAB. City Attorney McCartney confirmed.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Steven Wherry, Esq., on behalf of W Aviation. Mr. Wherry spoke in opposition to the lease transaction fee. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the need for sustainable airport funding and equitable participation by the City, including whether the City should share in increased leasehold value resulting from market conditions and public investment, and the importance of applying policy uniformly.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Ignacio Martinez, W Aviation. Mr. Martinez discussed his opposition to the lease transaction fee and expounded on W Aviation's planned investments.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on the need for additional research, collaboration, and analysis to be presented to the AAB and the Commission, in order to develop a transparent, equitable, and sustainable airport lease policy framework.

Mayor Trantalis recessed the Conference Meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Mayor Trantalis reconvened the Conference Meeting at 12:09 a.m.

## CITY COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

***Commission Members announced recent and upcoming community events and expounded on related information.***

Commissioner Sorensen discussed the newly launched *Rotary Connect Bus*, which provides transportation for individuals experiencing homelessness and connecting them with essential service providers. Commissioner Sorensen requested City Manager Williams to investigate possible funding. City Manager Williams confirmed. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Sorensen remarked on the proposal received to purchase the 101 NE 3rd Avenue Office Building for City Hall. Mayor Trantalis and Commissioner Glassman noted that the Commission had selected an unsolicited proposal for constructing a new City Hall. Further comment and discussion ensued. Commissioner Beasley-Pittman suggested Commission consideration of the proposal. Mayor Trantalis discussed his opposition. Further comment and discussion ensued. Commissioner Glassman confirmed his opposition. Commissioner Sorensen clarified that the City is in early negotiations with the selected proposer and the City is not precluded from considering this alternative. Vice Mayor Herbst confirmed his support to consider the proposal, noting the savings, and expounded on his viewpoint.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Williams confirmed the price of the Office Building is \$86,000,000. Further comment and discussion ensued. Commissioner Sorensen reiterated his viewpoint that this opportunity should be considered.

## MAYOR'S REPORT

***Mayor Trantalis announced recent and upcoming community events and expounded on related information.***

Mayor Trantalis announced the following employee retirements and thanked them for their service to the City:

Edward Wenger, Police Department Sergeant - 33 years of service;  
Richard Tolotti, Police Department Public Safety Aid - 30 years of service;  
Edward Stewart, Police Department Sergeant - 32 years of service; Lisa Janes, Police Department Supply Supervisor - 25 years of service;  
Gregory Fautas, Police Department Officer - 33 years of service; and  
Jason Bohan, Fire-Rescue Department Battalion Chief - 26 years of

service.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding the status of the Community Center at the new Police Department Headquarters, Anthony Fajardo, Development Services Department Director, provided an update on the progress and ongoing demolition and site work. Mr. Fajardo noted a projected occupancy date of June 1, 2026. Further comment and discussion ensued.

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

#### **MGR-1 26-0089**

City Commission Follow-up Action Items and Letters to the Commission (LTC) - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

City Manager Williams announced the YMCA's recent recognition of Jorg Hruschka, Chief Service Officer, for his community contributions.

### **CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

City Attorney McCartney requested an Executive Closed-Door Session at the February 3, 2026, Commission Meeting at 4:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible to discuss pending litigation, pursuant to Section 286.011(8), Florida Statutes, concerning the following matter(s):

City of Fort Lauderdale v. Florida Department of Transportation  
Florida Fourth District Court of Appeal  
Case No.: 4D2025-2783

City of Fort Lauderdale v. Florida Department of Transportation  
Florida Division of Administrative Hearings  
Case No.: 25-004856RU

City of Fort Lauderdale v. Florida Department of Transportation  
Florida Fourth District Court of Appeal  
Case No.: 4D2026-0271

Present at the attorney-client sessions will be:

Mayor Dean J. Trantalis  
Vice Mayor/Commissioner John C. Herbst  
Commissioner Steven Glassman  
Commissioner Pamela Beasley-Pittman  
Commissioner Ben Sorensen  
City Manager Rickelle Williams  
City Attorney Shari L. McCartney

Assistant City Attorney Shaun N. Amarnani  
Outside Counsel Howard D. DuBosar, Esq., Weiss Serota, et al.,  
Outside Counsel Jeremy S. Rosner, Esq., Weiss Serota, et al., and  
Certified Court Reporter from Bailey-Entin Court Reporting

The estimated length of this session will be approximately 15 minutes for a cumulative length of 45 minutes.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 12:20 a.m.