



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
REGULAR MEETING

#26-0452

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

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: May 19, 2026

TITLE: First Reading – Ordinance Amending Chapter 11 – Code Enforcement, Section 11-25, Chart of Civil Penalties, to Establish Civil Penalties for Improper Solid Waste Container Placement as defined in Section 24-27(b) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Fort Lauderdale – **(Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)**

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission approve an ordinance amending Section 11-25, Chart of Civil Penalties, of the City of Fort Lauderdale Code of Ordinances to establish civil penalties for improper solid waste container placement, as defined in Section 24-27(b) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Background

Section 24-27(b) of the City of Fort Lauderdale Code of Ordinances requires that solid waste containers be removed from the roadside by the day after collection. Containers must be stored behind the street facing building line or screened from public view and containers may not be left at the roadside overnight. The City's ordinance currently directs Staff to relocate containers that remain roadside or forward of the building line beyond the day of collection and to assess a five-dollar (\$5.00) fee.

While Section 24-7(b) establishes clear standards for container placement, the five-dollar (\$5.00) fee is minimal, difficult to collect because it cannot be added to a utility bill, and the cost to pursue lien-based collection would exceed the five-dollar (\$5.00) fee. As a result, the fee does not provide a meaningful deterrent, leading to repeated violations and continued City intervention.

Improper trash cart placement is one of the most frequent quality-of-life concerns reported citywide and currently ranks as the fifth highest violation cited by Code Enforcement (Exhibit 1). Given the frequency and recurring nature of this violation, the City's current enforcement framework does not provide a sufficient deterrent to promote sustained compliance. As a result, staff is proposing to align improper trash cart placement with the City's existing civil citation structure in Chapter 11 – Code Enforcement of the Code.

To implement this enforcement structure, this ordinance will amend the Chart of Civil Penalties set forth in Section 11-25 of the Code to add improper solid waste container placement, as defined in Section 24-27(b), with corresponding penalty amounts. The proposed amendment to Chapter 11 will create a process for Community Enhancement to issue civil penalties for solid waste containers that are stored improperly, which is consistent with enforcement procedures for other violations of the Code. The civil penalty will follow a graduated scale designed to encourage voluntary compliance while penalizing repeat offenders more strictly.

Under the proposed framework, the first violation would result in a written warning with no civil penalty. A second violation would result in a civil penalty in the amount of fifty dollars (\$50), a third violation would result in a civil penalty in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100), and a fourth or subsequent violation would result in a civil penalty in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150). If a penalty is contested and the City prevails, the total amount due would include the applicable citation amount plus a seventy-five dollar (\$75) administrative fee, consistent with existing Chapter 11 enforcement procedures.

This approach provides a progressive enforcement structure that emphasizes education and compliance for initial violations while establishing escalating penalties for repeated noncompliance.

Commission Agenda Memo (CAM) #26-0102 is related to this action. If approved, it will remove the Code requirement for City staff to relocate a property owner's trash cart and allow for the improper placement of solid waste containers to be addressed through a civil penalty under Chapter 11 of the Code of Ordinances.

Community Outreach

Following City Commission approval, City staff will implement a sixty (60)-day community outreach and education period prior to full enforcement of the amended ordinance. Outreach efforts will focus on informing residents of the updated enforcement approach, proper solid waste container placement requirements, and compliance expectations.

The outreach strategy will include coordination with the Strategic Communications Department to develop and disseminate clear, consistent messaging through social media, attendance at homeowner association (HOA) and civic association meetings, and written correspondence distributed to HOA and civic association presidents and community leaders. Staff will also coordinate with the Customer Support Division to ensure consistent messaging across all public-facing channels. This proactive outreach period is intended to promote awareness, encourage voluntary compliance, and provide residents with sufficient notice before citation-based enforcement begins.

Resource Impact

There is an anticipated positive fiscal impact to the City associated with this item. The actual impact is contingent on the number of civil citations issued.

Strategic Connections

This item is a 2026 Commission Priority, advancing the Public Safety and Community Initiatives.

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

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

- The Neighborhood Enhancement Focus Area
- The Housing Element
- Goal 2: Be a community of strong, beautiful, and healthy neighborhoods.

Related CAM

CAM #26-0102

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Community Enhancement Compliance FY25 Top Violations Report

Exhibit 2 – Business Impact Estimate

Exhibit 3 – Ordinance

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