



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

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: March 3, 2026

TITLE: Second Reading – Ordinance Amending Chapter 27 of the Code of Ordinances to Establish an Administrative Application Process, Associated Fees, and Define Vehicle for Hire Services and Operating Standards - **(Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)**

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission adopt an ordinance amending Chapter 27 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Fort Lauderdale (Code of Ordinances) to establish an administrative application process for vehicle for hire permits, application and renewal fees, and to define vehicle for hire services and operating standards.

Background

As currently defined in Chapter 27 of the Code of Ordinances, vehicles for hire include, but are not limited to, taxicabs, private limousine services, sightseeing vehicles, courtesy car, rental cars with chauffeur, and non-emergency transportation services. However, low-speed vehicles providing private shuttle services (i.e. golf cart types of vehicles), are not currently defined in the Code of Ordinances.

Chapter 27 of the Code of Ordinances requires all vehicle for hire applicants to seek approval from the City Commission at a public hearing for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to obtain permits to operate a vehicle for hire business within the city limits. Chapter 27 also defines types of vehicles permitted to operate under this chapter and the rules, regulations, and general standards associated with operating a vehicle for hire service.

At the June 18, 2024, City Commission Meeting, the City Commission requested that City staff review and address low-speed vehicles and operational standards for vehicle for hire services. Specifically, the City Commission identified the following concerns:

- The observance of traffic rules and regulations;
- Loud music originating from low-speed vehicles;

- Regulation of advertisements, words, and images on low-speed vehicles operating as vehicles for hire;
- Regulation of the vehicles for hire that operate for gratuity or voluntary compensation; and
- Limiting the number of permitted low-speed vehicles operating within the City limits.

At the December 17, 2024, City Commission Meeting, the City Commission requested that City staff consider revising the vehicle for hire permitting process so that applications are reviewed and approved administratively by City staff, rather than requiring City Commission consideration. Subsequently, City staff researched policies of local and coastal municipalities to confirm best practices for regulating the operation of vehicle for hire services and low-speed vehicles.

On March 22, 2024, the State of Florida adopted Section 320.0603, Florida Statutes, regarding vehicle for hire licenses or permits to establish reciprocity of vehicle for hire permits issued by any county or municipality within the State. According to Section 320.0603, a county or local municipality is prohibited from requiring a vehicle for hire service to obtain additional permits or licenses to operate if the business or individual already holds valid vehicle for hire permits from another county or municipality.

To align with State of Florida regulations, the proposed ordinance amendment includes the removal of Article II – Taxicabs and Article III – Motel or Hotel Courtesy Cars, as well as the permit requirements for luxury transportation vehicles and non-emergency medical transport vehicles, as these vehicle for hire services are regulated by Broward County. Additionally, staff are proposing to remove Article IV – Rental Cars as this type of service is not considered a vehicle for hire service as defined in Chapter 27. The removal of Article IV – Rental Cars should not be confused with rental cars with chauffeur services which remains in Chapter 27.

The proposed amendment adds definitions for additional vehicle service types, specifically low-speed vehicles and redefines vehicle for hire to include those operating for monetary compensation in the form of rates, fares, or voluntary compensation (such as tips or gratuity).

The proposed ordinance establishes an administrative application process that eliminates the need for a public hearing for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to obtain permits and establishes a fee for rental cars with chauffeurs (including low-speed vehicles), of \$151.00 for new permit applications and \$100.00 for annual renewals.

On May 9, 2025, staff solicited feedback from the permit holders with respect to the proposed modifications. Many of the concerns raised were related to businesses operating vehicle for hire services without proper permits, insurance requirements, and price gouging during high-volume periods and special events. Business owners were

largely supportive of the considerations for establishing permit capacity for vehicle for hire permits. However, the feedback included concerns related to advertising restrictions, which permit holders noted the City should consider permitting the use of advertisement on such vehicle for hire businesses as the additional revenue generated through advertising supports their business during slower tourist seasons. Permit holders were also supportive of the program requiring an administrative application approval process.

Over the last few years, the City issued three (3) permits in Fiscal Year 2024, fourteen (14) permits in Fiscal Year 2025, and two (2) permits in Fiscal Year 2026 to date for vehicle types that would be considered low-speed vehicles under the proposed ordinance.

To better understand the current number of low-speed vehicles operating within the City, the Transportation and Mobility Department partnered with the Fort Lauderdale Police Department to conduct a series of observations over the last few months during different times of the day and days of the week, mostly within the area of Las Olas Boulevard from Andrews Avenue to State Road A1A. As part of this exercise, staff identified a total of 177 low-speed vehicles operating in the area during the observation period:

- Ten (10) were observed to have been an active permit holder between Fiscal Year 2025 and Fiscal Year 2026;
- Forty-two (42) were registered to businesses and/or confirmed to be operating as a vehicle for hire service through observed business identification signs, and are not current permit holders;
- Ninety-three (93) were found to be registered to individual owners. These vehicles did not have any business identification signs to indicate they were operating as vehicle for hire, and are not current permit holders; and
- Thirty-two (32) could not be verified through the Florida Department of Highway and Motor Vehicles (FLDHMV) due to out-of-state tags, or other unknown factors. These vehicles did not have any business identification signs to indicate they were operating as vehicle for hire, and are not current permit holders.

City staff used the data to develop a proposed annual permit capacity of one hundred (100) permits to be issued for operating a rental car with chauffeur, which under the proposed ordinance includes low-speed vehicles and sightseeing services. The permit capacity may be modified upon approval by the City Commission through a public hearing and adoption of a resolution. It is worth noting that the City has not received applications or permitted any sightseeing services in the last five (5) years.

The proposed application process also reinforces operational requirements for permitted businesses to operate under Chapter 27, such as, but not limited to, parking, stopping, and standing in public right of way in accordance with Chapter 26 of the Code of Ordinances.

Furthermore, the proposed application process reinforces regulations regarding the operation of music from vehicles, signs and advertisement on vehicles, and upholding rates, fares or voluntary compensation as identified in the application process.

The first reading of the ordinance was approved by the City Commission on December 16, 2025 (CAM #25-1160).

The second reading of the ordinance was considered by the City Commission on January 6, 2026 (CAM #25-1208). During the second reading, the public expressed concerns related to:

- The future enforcement of permit and operational requirements;
- Signage and advertisement and insurance requirements;
- Chauffeur registration requirements; and
- Limiting the signs and markings on vehicles to just owner or business identification signs, noting that many businesses subsidize their income during off-season periods through advertisements posted on their vehicles.

The City Commission expressed support to allow advertisements in the form of signs or markings to be displayed on vehicle for hire businesses before requesting that the second reading be deferred to March 3, 2026, and for additional outreach to be conducted.

Additional outreach was conducted on January 28, 2026 (in-person) and January 29, 2026 (virtually). Approximately twenty-seven (27) attendees participated in both meetings combined including the current and prospective permit holders as well as members of the public.

The outreach meetings included discussions regarding the impacts of Section 320.0603, Florida Statutes on enforcement, the ability to post advertisements on vehicles, vehicle for hire service rates and operating for tips or gratuity, insurance requirements, and changes to the vehicle for hire application process, including the requirement for the chauffeur registration.

Overall, the feedback received from the participants was supportive of the proposed modifications. Participants noted concerns with other vehicle for hire businesses from other counties or municipalities operating within the City (related to reciprocity of vehicle for hire permits issued by any county or municipality within the State). Staff explained that per Section 320.0603, Florida Statutes, such businesses are still required to carry a valid vehicle for hire permit while operating through the State of Florida, which can be enforced.

While none of the businesses were opposed to the proposed permit capacity in the proposed ordinance modifications, they shared concerns that the permit limit may not be as effective under the current provisions of the Florida Statutes.

The stakeholders noted concerns with price gouging and flexibility to allow prices to be adjusted during peak hours or special events. The proposed amendment includes language requiring all vehicle for hire permit holders to provide their proposed rates or fare schedule as part of the application process in addition to requiring those same rates or fares to be posted in each vehicle, which also applies for proposed gratuitous operations and special events.

During the stakeholder outreach meetings staff explained that aside from possessing a driver's license, the chauffeur registration requires drivers to:

- Pass a criminal and driving record background check;
- Have the ability to speak, read, and write in English; and
- Have the mental, emotional, and physical ability to safely carry out the duties in operating a motor vehicle for hire.

Following discussion, the business owners did not express opposition to this requirement and staff recommend maintaining the chauffeur registration requirement for drivers in the interest of public safety.

While the industry shared concerns with insurance requirements, staff conducted additional research including best practices and insurance requirements from other municipalities and counties within the State of Florida. Staff found that the types of vehicles and transportation services warrant proposed insurance levels and recommend that proposed insurance requirements (as outlined in Exhibit 1) not be modified and stay as approved at the first reading of the ordinance in the interest of public safety and welfare.

Based on the feedback received after the first reading, the following changes were incorporated into the March 3, 2026, proposed ordinance amendments:

- Expanded the definitions of nonmotorized vehicle for hire and pedicab/rickshaws to note some vehicles may use a combination of human power and electric helper motors;
- Provided a definition for voluntary compensation;
- Clarified a public transportation station according to Section 27-31; and
- Added additional clarification on the operational requirements, noting that all rates and fares must be properly displayed and readily available to the public at all times,

and that all drivers and passengers must adhere to all traffic safety regulations such as, but not limited to, the proper wearing of seat belts, and obeying all traffic laws and rules;

- Modified the penalties provision from a civil citation process to a criminal citation process, enforceable through the Fort Lauderdale Police Department; and
- Revised language regarding signs and markings on vehicles to allow businesses to advertise on vehicles in addition to having owner-identification signage.

If the proposed ordinance amendment is approved, City staff will implement an educational period of up to ninety (90) days prior to commencing any enforcement actions.

Resource Impact

The proposed amendment adopts a cost recovery permit fee for each applicant, resulting in a positive fiscal impact that will be reflected in the account listed below. The fiscal impact will be based on the number of permit applications submitted to and approved by the City.

| Funds available as of February 6, 2026 | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| ACCOUNT NUMBER | COST CENTER NAME (Program) | CHARACTER/ACCOUNT NAME | AMENDED BUDGET (Character) | Amount Received (Character) | AMOUNT |
| 10-001-8041-541-369-900 | Transportation Traffic | Revenue/Other Miscellaneous Revenues | \$4,593 | \$149,630 | \$500 |
| TOTAL AMOUNT ► | | | | | \$500 |

Strategic Connections

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029* Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- The Infrastructure and Resilience Focus Area, Goal 4: facilitate an efficient, multimodal transportation network.

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

Attachment

Exhibit 1 – Ordinance

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