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STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Thursday, October 27, 2016 | Hugh Taylor Birch State Park

Good evening. Please stand for the Presentation of Colors by the City of Fort Lauderdale Police Department Honor Guard.

[HONOR GUARD MARCHES IN; TURNS; DIPS FLAG]

Please join me in welcoming 3 students from Mount Olivet Junior Academy, Morganne Bailey, Farrah Murray, and Lauren Murray, to perform our National Anthem. Please remove your hats.

[MOUNT OLIVET STUDENTS PERFORM NATIONAL ANTHEM]

It's an honor for me to welcome Reverend Ron Perkins, who will deliver tonight's Invocation.

[MINISTER DELIVERS THE INVOCATION]

Please retire the colors.

[HONOR GUARD MARCHES OUT AND CLEARS THE STAGE AREA]

Let me begin by thanking Gale Butler, Jim Ellis, Jennifer Roberts, Steve Dapuzzo, the Birch State Park staff, and the Friends of Birch State Park for all of their hard work and generosity in hosting tonight's event.

Birch State Park is one of our true community treasures. It offers outstanding recreation, education, and environmental programs for children and adults of all ages. I would encourage everyone to bring your families and friends back here for a visit to experience all the events and activities that make this Park so special.

Thanks to Randy Corinthian for providing the smooth jazz music during our reception, and thanks to the young ladies of Mount Olivet Junior Academy for the fabulous rendition of the National Anthem. They are here with their Principal Cynthia Murray and Music Teacher Gerald Murray.

Thank you, Ron Perkins, for your spiritual guidance and support, as well as your pastoral leadership throughout our community.

Thanks to our Fort Lauderdale Police Honor Guard for proudly presenting our colors and reminding us about the importance of patriotism and the selfless contributions of our service men and women. In

fact, thanks to all our police, fire-rescue, first responders, and public safety personnel for continuing to serve, protect, and safeguard our neighbors and our community.

It is a privilege and honor for me to recognize and thank the individuals who work for you every day to make this City great, my colleagues on the Fort Lauderdale City Commission: Vice Mayor Dean Trantalis, Commissioner Bruce Roberts, Commissioner Robert McKinzie, and Commissioner Romney Rogers.

Please recognize former City of Fort Lauderdale Mayor Rob Dressler (list of other VIPs to be provided).

I would also like to acknowledge City staff. Under the outstanding leadership of City Manager Lee Feldman, our staff does an exceptional job supporting our neighbors, meeting the needs of our community, and maintaining our exceptional quality of life.

Lee could not be here tonight because he is representing us at a national conference as part of his new duties as President of the International City/County Management Association. Lee's new position is certainly a well-deserved honor that reflects the outstanding job he is doing here in Fort Lauderdale and sets the standard for other communities to follow. Congratulations, Lee.

Tonight, we have Assistant City Managers Chris Lagerbloom and Stanley Hawthorne with us, both of whom do an outstanding job overseeing our operational and support departments. We also have our Charter Officers with us this evening. Please recognize City Auditor John Herbst, City Attorney Cynthia Everett, and City Clerk Jeff Modarelli.

As I've said many times, Fort Lauderdale is fortunate to have some of the hardest working, most talented and engaged citizens I've ever seen. I'd like to recognize and thank all of the members of our Advisory Boards and Committees. You are a dedicated group of volunteers who spend thousands of hours each year advising us on topics ranging from Budgets and Economic Development to Housing and Sustainability. Your expertise and recommendations help guide many of our most important decisions. Again, thank you for your outstanding leadership and service to our City.

Thank to all of our neighborhood, civic and homeowner association presidents and officers. You are the backbone of our City and we appreciate your hands-on leadership protecting our quality of life and enhancing our community.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge any Veterans who are with us this evening. Thank you for your service to our country and the many sacrifices you make to defend our liberty and preserve our freedom.

Tonight, I am pleased to report that the state of our City is strong and we continue to build upon our wave of success.

We are a City that sees diversity in our community and we applaud it.

Indeed, showing the world that the people of Fort Lauderdale can live, work, play and worship in one peaceful place is leadership by example.

Let us continue to pray and act in a spirit of community and in a spirit of cooperation regardless of political affiliations, regardless of nationality, and regardless of race, age, gender or preferences. We are a City of justice; we are a City that respects the law; and we are a City that respects one another.

As many of you know, the City of Fort Lauderdale has been a strong proponent of the Sister Cities International program. I believe the mission of Sister Cities has grown, developed, and evolved into something much more than a cultural exchange program.

In August, I had the opportunity to visit and share ideas with our Sister City of Medellin, Colombia. Our meetings provided stimulating opportunities to discuss our environment, sustainability initiatives, trade, and how we can work together to enhance the global economy.

We know that many other cities around the world share similar goals and similar values with us. We want to make our world safer; promote healthy living; preserve the environment; and provide education, jobs, and career opportunities so that we can leave our children and future generations with a better, more prosperous world.

These are the same values that have helped us build Fort Lauderdale into the successful, diverse, internationally recognized community in which we live.

Let's start with our economy. We added 26,300 private-sector jobs in the past year. Our unemployment rate is 4.6%, which is down from 5.4% a year ago.

The sectors with the largest year-over-year job growth are trade, transportation, and utilities with 6,500 new jobs; professional and business services with 5,100 new jobs; and leisure and hospitality with 4,700 new jobs.

Job demand in Fort Lauderdale was once again ranked 4th highest in the state with almost 25,000 job openings.

We also welcomed high profile companies including Uniform Advantage, JetSmarter, Hotwire, and Sato Global Solutions. These corporations bring high-paying jobs to our community and help position our City as a preferred choice for corporate headquarters, business expansion and investment.

Earlier this year, Biz2Credit ranked us as the #4 Best Small Business City in America. We garnered high marks for our construction boom, record-breaking tourism growth, high average credit score, small-business development programs, and strategic location as an economic hub to Latin and South America.

National publications are taking note of our economic resurgence and building boom. The Wall Street Journal profiled our City in a report highlighting the array of upscale hotels, resorts, and residential developments along our world class beachfront.

Experts lauded Fort Lauderdale for projects like the Wurzak Hotel, Four Seasons, Paramount, and Auberge, which strengthen our reputation as an upscale destination and help us attract a record number of visitors and investors from all over the world.

As Jake Wurzak said recently, “Every great city has a hotel woven into the fabric of its identity and cultural experience.” In Fort Lauderdale, we are truly blessed to have record investment taking place in downtown Fort Lauderdale and on the beach.

As development and investment continue to flourish, we continue to capitalize on the opportunity to elevate the image of our downtown to new and exciting levels. For many years, developers thought if you were going to build a hotel in Fort Lauderdale, you had to put it on the beach.

That is no longer the case as evidenced by the growing number of projects coming to our downtown. And, like the historic Riverside Hotel on Las Olas, each new project will reflect its own unique character, style and amenities.

Among the new downtown hotel projects are the 137-room Courtyard by Marriott that is being developed as part of a mixed-use real estate project along the 700 block of North Federal Highway; a 108-room Fairfield Inn & Suites on South Federal Highway, and a condo-hotel project slated for 100 E. Las Olas Boulevard.

All told, these projects would add 1,400 hotel rooms and further underscore the strength of our economy and the vibrancy of our downtown.

I believe that more and more people are coming to appreciate downtown Fort Lauderdale’s unique urban lifestyle which offers outstanding dining, entertainment, and cultural amenities all within walking distance of work and home. This unbeatable combination has resulted in solid growth.

Consider the success of Flagler Village. New rental and condo developments are proliferating. Now, with the Brightline/All Aboard Florida railway station nearing completion, the City is well-positioned to build upon the success of Flagler Village and see it expand into the Sistrunk Boulevard area.

With close proximity to downtown and Flagler Village, there are clearly prime opportunities and excellent incentives for investing in the Sistrunk Boulevard corridor.

Our Northwest CRA is leading the charge with new and exciting initiatives for the area.

Together, we continue to create excitement by hosting and participating in an array of signature downtown events, including the Sunday Jazz Brunch, Starlight Musicals, Orange Bowl New Year’s Eve Downtown Countdown, St. Patrick’s Parade and Festival, Christmas on Las Olas, the FAT Village monthly ArtWalks, and the Food in Motion events. We are also proud to be home to one of the top spectator events in the entire world, the Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest Boat Parade.

We have initiated a new concert and movie series called “Rock’n and Reel’n” in the heart of Sistrunk Boulevard at Provident Park, and we continue to co-sponsor numerous downtown runs, walks, bike events, street fairs, and festivals.

Our restaurants and entertainment venues have also stepped up to the plate offering outstanding food, service and amenities. The world-class Broward Center for Performing Arts, nationally recognized Museum of Discovery and Science, Nova Southeastern University Art Museum, and Fort Lauderdale History Center complete the renaissance of downtown.

Together, we stand at the pinnacle of success with a downtown destination like no other.

To give you an idea of the level of the City's robust growth, our Department of Sustainable Development provided some exciting statistics to share with you.

In the review process, we currently have:

- 3,950 Residential Units
- Over 129,000 square feet of retail space
- Over 16,000 square feet of office space
- 750 hotel rooms.

We have approved plans for an additional:

- 3,294 Residential Units
- Over 77,000 square feet of retail space
- Over 360,000 square feet of office space
- 560 hotel rooms

With one look around our City, you can easily spot over a dozen construction cranes, which are working on:

- 871 Residential Units
- Over 74,000 square feet of retail space
- 768,000 square feet of office space
- 108 hotel units

Clearly our vision for a thriving downtown is quickly coming to fruition. An impressive level of private investment is sending a clear signal of strength and confidence about Fort Lauderdale's future.

We have received more than 70 national rankings, including:

- All-America City
- Top 10 Best Downtowns
- Top 10 Best Cities for Millennial Job Seekers in Florida
- Top 10 Greenest Mid-Sized Cities
- Top 10 Best U.S. Cities for Small Businesses;
- Lowest Travel Taxes among the Top 50 U.S. Travel Destinations;

And, earlier this week, we were named the #1 Single-Family Housing Market in the United States.

Our Sustainable Development Department is embarking on a blueprint for orderly, sustainable, and smart growth over the next decade and beyond.

The City's Building Division has filled vacancies and is launching new software solutions to enhance and improve the review process. We are already seeing positive results with more than 60% of permits now being issued in 30 days or less.

The City is amending neighborhood zoning criteria to allow for a proposed fast-tracked approach which would enable homeowners to redevelop their properties in a more compatible manner, while adding value and benefit to entire neighborhoods.

Fort Lauderdale has been successfully building community by creating safer, more desirable neighborhoods and stimulating public and private investment.

Every City department plays a key role in sustaining our wave of success.

The Fort Lauderdale Police Department continues to play a major role in proactively engaging our community, reaching out to children and families to build trusting, caring relationships.

The department implemented an enhanced 21st Century Policing Centric In-Service Curriculum. This enhanced police training program incorporates a Fair and Impartial Policing course, a Crisis Intervention course, a Procedural Justice course, a Community Policing course, and scenario based practical exercises which include de-escalation training. The new program aims to enhance our police officers' knowledge, skills, and abilities to safely and successfully address the critical incidents they encounter on a daily basis.

FLPD successfully implemented an action plan to combat the dangerous drug Flakka. Weekly drug investigations show that Flakka is no longer readily available on the streets of Fort Lauderdale and the number of deaths has been dramatically reduced.

The police department activated a new Real Time Crime Center that functions as a central location to combine local, state and national criminal justice databases; citywide security cameras, license plate reader alerts, high priority calls for service, and other resources to assist responding officers and investigators at active crime scenes. The center is also utilized for special event management and critical incident command.

Extensive community outreach is also being done by our Neighbor Support Division.

The Neighbor Support Division coordinates citywide volunteer initiatives that include Fort Lauderdale Cares Day and Make A Difference Day, which will be taking place this Saturday, October 29th. In addition, the Division oversees Neighbor Support Night and the Show Up - Step Out Youth Leadership Program, which garnered top honors as the Best Neighborhood Program in the country at this year's Neighborhood USA Conference.

Over the past year, the Neighbor Support Division has coordinated projects and initiatives that have resulted in our neighbors donating more than 92,000 hours of volunteer work to the City.

Our Fire Rescue Department responded to more than 54,300 incidents over the past year.

According to Firehouse Magazine, Fort Lauderdale's Firehouse #2, located on NW 2nd Street, was the busiest fire station the United States. During the past year, there were 33,270 fire unit responses from that one, single fire station. This was more than any firehouse in the nation including those in the cities of New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Chicago, just to name a few.

The Fire Rescue Department recently took delivery of eleven (11) new medical transport rescue vehicles and three (3) new fire engines. These new vehicles are smaller and more fuel efficient than the vehicles they replaced and will enhance our response to fires and medical emergencies.

In order to maintain the outstanding service our Fire Department provides to our neighbors and millions of annual visitors, we approved the first daily minimum staffing increase in over two decades. Eighteen (18) new positions for firefighters and paramedics are included in the current budget to help reduce response times and save lives and property.

I am proud to report that the Fire Department applied for and was awarded a Port Security Grant through the Department of Homeland Security for the purchase of a new state-of-the-art, 40-foot Fire Boat. The grant award was over \$874,000, saving the Fort Lauderdale taxpayers a significant amount of money.

The new aluminum hulled fire boat will be equipped with twin diesel motors and a closed cabin which will enable firefighters to treat patients on the go and transport them quickly and safely. The vessel will have a suppression foam system; underwater search and dive rescue equipment; and technologically advanced features such as "Forward Looking Infrared" to navigate and search in darkness; as well as monitors that can detect chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive detection equipment.

This new addition to the fire department fleet will enhance boater safety, water recreational activities, and fire suppression capabilities for businesses and marinas throughout the City.

And speaking of boating, Fort Lauderdale is a City that is fueled by the marine industry and we are proud to be home to the largest and most recognized Boat Show in the world, which sails into town a week from today.

When it comes to economic impact, the Boat Show has no equal. The most recent study released in July revealed that the Boat Show's total economic output is an astonishing \$857 million, which is greater than any other event in Florida, including the Super Bowl.

The event generates \$508 million in total sales by Florida corporations, \$240 million by businesses in the tri-county area, and \$131 million by companies in greater Fort Lauderdale. The Boat Show produces \$304 million in statewide personal income and economic activity, along with \$51 million in sales and excise taxes, nearly \$17 million of which are in Broward County. Plus, our local businesses benefit greatly from an additional \$30 million in expenditures pumped into our economy by visitors who come into our City for this mega event.

As we prepare to celebrate the 57th year of the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, we remain committed to preserving, supporting, and enhancing this amazing event that symbolizes the spirit and character of our great City.

It is fitting that earlier this evening we cut the ribbon to officially celebrate the completion of the new and improved A1A because it represents the tremendous investments we are making in transportation and mobility.

The overarching goal of our Transportation and Mobility Department is to create a pedestrian-friendly, multi-modal city -- a connected community where the single occupancy vehicle is not the only choice, where our neighbors are able to walk, bike, and use transit to get to and from their many destinations.

The City Commission adopted Vision Zero Fort Lauderdale, a citywide community action plan that promotes safety on our streets through the five E's -- education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement, and evaluation, all in an effort to ultimately achieve fatality-free roadways.

Fort Lauderdale is the first and only Vision Zero city in Florida and in the entire Southeastern United States.

Our commitment to Vision Zero resulted in Fort Lauderdale being named one of only 10 Vision Zero Focus cities in the entire nation. This designation will allow us to work collaboratively with our peers to develop innovative strategies, utilize the latest technologies, and share best practices all in an effort to eliminate crashes and save lives.

Our leadership role in this effort is already being acknowledged by leading organizations. Bike Florida and the Florida Bicycle Association just selected us as the recipient of their 2016 Share The Road Leadership Award in recognition of our work on the Vision Zero initiative. The award will be presented tomorrow at the organization's annual Share The Road Celebration of Cycling event in Gainesville.

Our efforts in transportation also include establishing an innovative program to develop comprehensive Neighborhood Mobility Master Plans to integrate traffic calming strategies to address speeding and safety issues for all transportation modes.

Over the past year, plans have been completed for Lake Ridge, Coral Ridge Country Club Estates, Palm Aire Village West and Twin Lakes North. The Tarpon River and Shady Banks neighborhoods are in the final stage of completing their mobility plans. These plans serve as a roadmap for our neighborhoods to address mobility and connectivity on their streets.

The City is working on several other projects aimed at providing safer options for all road users. These include:

NE 1st Street, which has a high level of pedestrian activity, has been transformed from a straight street to a street with a meandering design to slow vehicles. High visibility crosswalks were added, among other Complete Streets components.

We recently launched the NE 13th Street Complete Streets Project. This project will add bike lanes, on-street parking, additional landscaping, stormwater drainage improvements, and additional street lighting.

Construction is expected to begin in January on the Dixie Highway Complete Streets project which will include bike lanes, traffic calming, sidewalks and new crosswalks from NE 13th Street to the Middle River.

The NW 9th Street Complete Streets Project includes a new sidewalk, bicycle facilities, a pedestrian crossing, improved drainage and landscaping.

Just north of us, reconstruction is underway on A1A from Oakland Park Boulevard to Flamingo Boulevard, with improvements that include bike lanes, additional landscaping, sidewalk enhancements, and a new crosswalk.

Our Parks & Recreation Department continues to receive national recognition for outstanding, well-maintained facilities and innovative recreational programs.

The Department is building community by providing a wide range of programming for our children and youth. Providing basketball courts, ball fields, playgrounds, community pools and fun educational programming goes a long way toward preventing undesirable behavior in unsupervised settings.

The City now operates seven fully licensed afterschool sites. With funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, the Parks & Recreation Department now provides healthy and nutritional snacks for our children and youth throughout the school year through our after school program.

The department also provides an array of adult fitness and wellness programs. Club 55+ classes have expanded to 11 park locations.

As a result of this comprehensive programming, the City has earned national accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).

The National League of Cities has awarded the City of Fort Lauderdale five gold medals and ranks us first in the nation for our efforts in the "Let's Move! Cities, Towns and Counties" initiative.

The Parks Department continues to coordinate with our Public Works Department and Broward County on the Segment II Beach Nourishment Project, placing 550,000 cubic yards of sand on approximately 3.54 miles of Fort Lauderdale Beach.

Studies have shown that crime rates are lower in clean and graffiti-free public spaces. We can thank our Sanitation Services Division for their diligent removal of trash, cleaning of bus shelters, the beach, canals, streets, parking lots, maintenance of public places and mitigation of code violations.

The division also provides bulk trash collection services to the entire City.

Our Public Works Department operates 24/7 to provide water to 170,000 residents and businesses, millions of visitors and six neighboring municipalities. It also manages and operates a wastewater system that collects and treats an average of 38 million gallons of wastewater per day.

The department is also leading the way toward improving our City's resilience to flooding and sea level rise. Led by Dr. Nancy Gassman, our nationally recognized experts in the City's Sustainability Division successfully focused public awareness on the need for the timely adoption of revisions to our Seawall Ordinance. The amended ordinance provides guidelines for new height requirements for greater protection from tidal flooding and sea level rise.

We continue to implement aggressive measures to combat high tides, including the installation of more than 116 tidal valves, ongoing maintenance of storm drains and catch basins, removing standing water from our streets, monitoring pump stations, and deploying temporary sand berms and dams all in an effort to minimize potential flooding.

The City has identified 16 Adaptation Action Areas and funding for 38 projects in the Community Investment Plan, and Public Works has completed 17 stormwater improvement projects from Phase I of the Stormwater Master Plan. In fact, over the past six years, the City has invested more than \$39 million in stormwater improvements.

In addition, we continue to install a blend of permeable pavers, bioswales, and exfiltration trenches to maximize water retention and the capacity of the stormdrain system to minimize localized flooding.

The Public Works Department is expediting the construction of several water and sewer infrastructure replacement projects along the Las Olas Boulevard corridor to reduce the risk of sewer main breakages and potential overflows into the City's waterways.

If you drive over the Las Olas Bridge you will notice construction workers installing a new water main and sewage main, submerged deep under the Intracoastal Waterway.

In terms of recognitions, I want to congratulate our Public Works Fleet Division for earning the distinction of being named the 26th Best Fleet in America. The Fleet Division has made safety, fuel efficiency, energy conservation and maintenance top priorities.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has recognized the City of Fort Lauderdale as the nation's top local government for "outstanding leadership in waste prevention and diversion." Factors considered in the awards program included waste diversion, source reduction, leadership, innovation, education and outreach.

Fort Lauderdale's long-term sustainability is inherently linked to our environment and I want to congratulate our Sustainability Division for this prestigious achievement.

In addition, the City's Environmental and Sustainability Management System (ESMS) received certification from the International Organization for Standardization for two City sites, the Fleet Fenceline and George T. Lohmeyer Wastewater Treatment Plant. Our City is one of the few municipalities in the United States to achieve this certification for multiple operations.

Compliance with City codes is vital to public health, safety, property values and our overall quality of life.

Our Code Enforcement Division works seven days a week to help property owners meet their obligations. Code Enforcement is successfully handling hundreds of cases every month, protecting you, your property, and your neighborhood.

Thanks in part to Code Enforcement, as well as all of our neighbors' and neighborhood associations' collaborative efforts to protect and build our community, property values are up. Property values spiked 9.8% over last year, marking the 5th consecutive year of growth. In addition to the gains in property valuation, Fort Lauderdale saw more than \$455 million added taxable value.

For the past 10 years, our City Commission has made it a top priority to keep our millage rate unchanged while continuing to deliver quality, cost effective services to our neighbors. According to

the latest data, Fort Lauderdale's current millage rate of 4.1193 now ranks as the lowest among the 25 largest cities in Florida.

As a result of our conservative fiscal management, lean process improvements, and operational efficiencies, we are projecting an almost \$67.5 million reserve fund balance which is above our adopted policy and exceeds the national standard for municipal governments.

Fort Lauderdale's strong fund balance, along with our low debt load, enhances our bond ratings, saving residents and businesses millions of dollars in interest costs and strengthening our long-term financial stability.

As many of you know, on the November 8th ballot there are two one-half cent sales surtax questions. One half-cent sales surtax is proposed to fund countywide transportation projects and the other half-cent sales surtax is proposed to fund municipal infrastructure projects.

During the Great Recession, funding for infrastructure projects was not adequate to prepare for the future. If voters approve the two surtax questions, funding will be available to expedite many of the projects in the City's Infrastructure Tax Ten Year Spending Plan.

For more information, I encourage you to visit our website at fortlauderdale.gov or visit apennyatwork.com.

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you – our neighbors – for helping us create the wave of success that is lifting our entire City, moving us forward, and strengthening our commitment to build community.

My thanks and gratitude to each and every one of you for your compassionate service and your dedication to improving our quality of life now and for generations to come.

Thank you. God Bless you, and God bless our great City of Fort Lauderdale.