



**TOWN OF LAUDERDALE-BY-THE-SEA
TOWN COMMISSION WORKSHOP**

**Jarvis Hall
4505 N. Ocean Drive
Tuesday, June 9, 2026
5:30 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER, MAYOR EDMUND MALKOON

Mayor Edmund Malkoon called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Also present were Vice Mayor Randy Strauss, Commissioner Richard DeNapoli, Commissioner John A. Graziano, Commissioner Theo Pouloupoulos, Town Manager Ken Rubach, Town Attorney Susan Trevarthen, Public Works Director Chris Lips, Finance Director Lucila Lang, Assistant Finance Director Edner Saint-Jean, Assistant Development Services Director David Lee, Assistant Director of Code Compliance Terry-Ann Boyd, Assistant to the Town Manager Courtney Easley, Events and Marketing Manager Katie Anderson, and Town Clerk Melissa Vasami.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Malkoon read opening remarks on tonight's workshop, stating that review of the Town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) establishes priorities for the Town's fiscal year (FY) 2026-2027 budget. He emphasized that discipline and thoughtful decisions are key to this process, and asserted that the Town's strong financial position is an important reason why the Commission should practice good fiscal discipline in the following manner:

- Fund necessities first
- Challenge every assumption
- Require every dollar to justify itself

He continued that the burden of proof lies with the Town's government to demonstrate why it must spend Town money. Before approving any capital projects, the Commission must ask if each project is necessary at the proposed scale, as well as whether or not it is the best use of taxpayer funds.

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At this time, Mayor Malkoon opened public comment.

Cathy Cather, resident, addressed a ballot question put forth for referendum by the Florida Legislature, which proposes an increase in the state's homestead exemption for property taxes, which would take effect in 2028. She asked if the Commission feels this proposed change in property taxes will have an impact on what should be considered for the FY 2026-2027 budget as well, as some of those projects and contracts will extend over multiple years.

Marc Furth, resident, addressed El Prado Park, stating that he felt it would be a mistake to make changes to the park that would no longer allow the use of tents for the Farmers Market and Town Events.

With no other individuals wishing to speak at this time, Mayor Malkoon closed public comment.

4. DISCUSSION ITEM

a. FY27 CIP

Town Manager Ken Rubach addressed the question raised during Public Comments regarding El Prado Park, explaining that Town Staff wishes to ensure that all current programming in that park will continue to function under any new design. Staff anticipates that the new design will allow more tents to be placed in the park for the Farmers Market.

Town Manager Rubach continued that the Town has received bids for the proposed work on El Prado Park, which came in higher than anticipated. Given the timeline of the current fiscal year, he recommended deferring the park project until FY 2027-2028. Funds carried forward from the current fiscal year will be used in the next fiscal year to fund CIP projects, with the exception of the potential public-private partnership (P3) project.

Town Manager Rubach reviewed the list of CIP expenses, noting that these include the personnel expenses allocated to each project. He reiterated that plans for El Prado Park would not disrupt the Farmers Market. This project would be re-bid in FY 2027-2028, with groundbreaking planned after July 4 and completion anticipated in time for the Christmas-By-The-Sea event in 2028.

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Staff recommends adoption of a facade improvement program, which would provide matching funds of up to \$10,000 per business for owners who wish to improve their buildings. Improved facades and/or signs must reflect the Miami Modern architectural style. Eligible activities include sign replacement, painting of buildings, and more.

The Town Manager and Mayor Malkoon have reached out to Nova Southeastern University (NSU) to discuss the possible reinstatement of a coral restoration program in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea.

FY 2026-2027 would be the third year of the Town's ongoing pavement improvement program. Streets will be selected by the Public Works Director. This item does not go out for bid each year; in order to realize economies of scale, the Town uses "piggyback" contracts from municipalities that have established significantly larger quantities.

The proposed P3 project is currently proposed with a top figure of \$2 million, although the Town Manager is working with Core Construction and expects the final number to be lower. Town Manager Rubach strongly emphasized that there are no hard numbers at this time. The Town Commission will establish the Town's maximum millage rate and Fire Assessment rate beginning in July 2026.

Town Manager Rubach reviewed the following estimated figures:

- \$2,075,000 from CIP carry-over from the current fiscal year
- Remaining funds not associated with the P3 project include \$220,000 from the General Fund's unencumbered funds
- \$2 million budgeted for the P3 project through the covenant to budget and appropriate (CB&A) process, which would be set aside annually from a dedicated funding source to pay for any iteration of the P3 the Commission may choose to approve

Town Manager Rubach concluded that the Town anticipates a potential CIP of \$4.2 million in FY 2026-2027.

Commissioners DeNapoli and Pouloupoulos indicated their support for moving the El Prado Park project to the following fiscal year as proposed. Town Manager Rubach further clarified that the Town had budgeted \$1.3 million toward this project; however, when bids were opened, the number came in at \$1.55 million. This number would not be held open until next year. The delay will provide more time to review the project's

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scope, make clarifications, and hopefully realize cost savings through value engineering.

Vice Mayor Strauss agreed with this proposal as well due to the higher bids received. He observed that the Town's budget is likely to be curtailed by the results of the November 2026 ballot referendum, which could reduce taxes paid on homesteaded properties. The Town has several upcoming fiscal responsibilities, which he felt took precedence over the proposed park project.

Commissioner Graziano also agreed with postponing the El Prado Park project for at least one year, to be reconsidered at a future meeting. Commissioner DeNapoli pointed out that it may be possible to realize cost savings through modifying the project's design, including the removal of the proposed water feature and/or other changes.

Town Manager Rubach confirmed that should subsequent bids on this project also come in higher than expected, the Commission may further defer the project or value-engineer it. CIP carry-over funds consist of money unused from the prior fiscal year. If approved during the budget process, the El Prado Park project would come back before the Commission once more for additional deliberation and approval or denial.

Mayor Malkoon addressed the proposed facade improvement program, stating that while this may be a worthwhile initiative, the Town anticipates a significant decrease in its budget if the Florida property tax referendum is passed. He characterized the proposed program as a discretionary enhancement rather than an essential governmental obligation and recommended giving precedence to true necessities.

Commissioner Pouloupoulos asked if Staff has engaged with the Town's business community to gauge interest in the facade program. Town Manager Rubach explained that the proposal was for a pilot program that would allow businesses to make enhancements to their properties. He recalled that there is typically interest from businesses in communities where this type of program is suggested, noting that the program would provide another way for the Town to provide its businesses with the assistance they need.

Commissioner Graziano commented that he has seen dramatic improvements in the Town's business district in recent years. He did not oppose outreach to the Town's businesses to gauge their interest but indicated that he was not in favor of the suggested \$50,000 budget for the program at this time.

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Vice Mayor Strauss suggested replacing the matching grant program with an alternative program that provided incentives for businesses that wish to improve their properties, such as credits for the required permits. Town Manager Rubach explained that while this could be explored as an alternative, the Town outsources much of its permitting, which would cost more money.

Commissioner Graziano addressed roadway paving, noting that residents have asked him about potential economies of scale for these projects. He was in favor of a piggybacked contract as proposed.

Mayor Malkoon referred to the coral restoration project, recalling that the Town previously partnered with NSU for this type of project. He and Town Manager Rubach met with a representative of the university who provided an update on this program, which was monitored over winter 2025-2026. While this proposal is budgeted at an estimated \$25,000, it was the Mayor's understanding that the Town's financial participation would be closer to \$60,000 over a five-year period. Town Manager Rubach confirmed that while the proposed budget for the first year is estimated at \$25,000, the five-year CIP would be closer to the rate cited by the Mayor. He noted that these figures would be reviewed for accuracy.

Commissioner Pouloupoulos addressed personnel expenses associated with the CIP, asking how these would be decreased if the El Prado Park project is deferred. Town Manager Rubach replied that while this time would be reallocated to another General Fund account, it would still be paid. The personnel cost shows where the Town chooses to invest its time.

Mayor Malkoon requested clarification of the number of roadways for which repaving is proposed. Town Manager Rubach replied that this is typically determined after the budget is approved. He noted that some funds remained in the current fiscal year's allocation and will be used toward patching or other smaller projects. He confirmed that if it is the Commission's wish, Staff can identify these roadways before the budget is finalized and seek to obtain estimates close to that budget.

Mayor Malkoon moved on to the P3, which is the largest item in the CIP budget. He recalled that when the Town's advisors evaluated this initiative, they considered the full municipal campus as an overall concept, with two separate phases to address public safety and the remainder of the Town Hall campus. He noted that the analysis of this project should reflect the likely changes coming to Florida's financial environment and

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consider the project as two separate policy decisions for a public safety building and a broader municipal campus.

Mayor Malkoon continued that while the public safety phase may be necessary, the Town should not commit to an entire municipal campus or appropriate funds based on a larger overall concept that has not been independently justified and approved. He felt a \$2 million appropriation is not necessary in the absence of an overall municipal campus concept.

Mayor Malkoon advised that every phase of a proposed project deserves its own analysis, justification, and determination that it is in the best interests of the Town in light of current fiscal realities.

Town Manager Rubach noted again that the proposed \$2 million represents the high end of the scale for purposes of discussion. Staff is not promoting that proposal as the only option. Before the Town enters into any comprehensive agreement, plans for the first phase, the public safety building, would be presented to the Commission separately from any plans for the second phase or overall concept.

Vice Mayor Strauss requested clarification that Staff is still negotiating and working on the proposed P3, including how much work would be done and over what time frame. Town Manager Rubach replied that in July, before the Commission is asked to establish a maximum millage rate, Staff will present options for the public safety building alone as well as for a full campus, including annual costs for both alternatives. This would allow the Commission to debate the merits of both proposals.

Vice Mayor Strauss asked if the project could also be undertaken in a component style that would accommodate Fire and Police needs, Public Works, and a Town Hall facility. Town Manager Rubach replied that all proposals are currently conceptual, with only renderings and square footage estimates rather than architectural plans. The Commission may consider further options, including leaving Town Hall in its current condition while still including Public Works in the new public safety building.

Vice Mayor Strauss asserted that the Town needs a new public safety building to house Police and Fire services, as the current facility is insufficient. Town Manager Rubach confirmed this, explaining that the existing building does not meet current standards for Fire Departments; in addition, the Town's potential providers of Fire Rescue services have indicated that they would not be willing to serve the Town from the existing

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building. He noted that should the Town choose to create its own Fire Department, this issue would still exist.

Vice Mayor Strauss requested clarification of how the existing building's configuration fails to meet current standards. Town Manager Rubach advised that modern Fire Stations are built with the intent of ensuring proper care of equipment as well as significant separation between living quarters and storage of apparatus and Fire gear. There is currently no such separation in the Town's public safety facility, as these issues were not fully understood when it was constructed.

Should the Town not build a new public safety facility, there is no mechanism by which they could force a provider such as Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue or Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) Fire Rescue to serve Lauderdale-By-The-Sea. Town Attorney Susan Trevarthen observed that there would be major consequences to a municipality that cannot provide Fire Rescue services, including significant increases in property insurance and possible decreases in property values.

Town Manager Rubach continued that if the Town chooses to move its Public Works Department along with Fire and Police services to a new public safety facility, it may be possible to realize greater economies of scale. He pointed out that more costs could be incurred over the long term due to inflation, and interest rates could also be subject to change.

Vice Mayor Strauss requested clarification of arguments against moving the Public Works Department to a new public safety facility. Town Manager Rubach replied that these would include increased costs, including the amount the Commission may wish to budget from the Parking Fund toward the new facility. He estimated that this may require an additional investment of another 30%.

Vice Mayor Strauss concluded that the Commission should consider whether it is better to invest in a full municipal campus now or wait until the Town has a clearer idea of how property taxes may change, with the understanding that costs may increase significantly over time. While a Public Works facility might be characterized as a desire rather than a need, it could be beneficial to invest in the Town's future by including it with the public safety building.

Town Manager Rubach further clarified that of the two conceptual designs of the public safety building and the municipal campus, the campus design allows for greater

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flexibility in where services would be placed, as well as better maintenance, security, and routing of vehicles. He concluded that this is the policy decision that will ultimately come back to the Commission.

Commissioner Pouloupoulos stated that he did not see the proposed public safety building as a discretionary item that could be postponed, and it will be necessary to ensure its proper function for the individuals who will serve the Town from it. He was not certain, however, how much input from prospective vendors will be needed for the building. Town Manager Rubach advised that the only major change if the Town elected to pursue in-house Fire Rescue services would be the need for more bays for reserve equipment, which would add costs to the project.

Commissioner Graziano asked if the Town should select a Fire Rescue contractor before making a decision on the P3 project. Town Manager Rubach replied that this would not be necessary as long as the building meets current standards.

Commissioner Graziano also asked if the Town would sell the other two properties if they chose to upgrade the current Fire Station. Town Manager Rubach stated that this would be a policy decision for the Commission, noting that the sale of additional properties could be used to defray some costs. He estimated that this could bring in between \$3 million and \$5 million and reduce the amount the Town would need to borrow.

Mayor Malkoon stated that while the best public safety will mean the construction of a new Fire Station, it does not necessarily mean that both a Fire and Police Station must be constructed. He was not in favor of a \$42 million campus for which payments could substantially increase after 30 years, which could damage the Town's credit rating and put taxpayers at risk. He again emphasized the importance of fiscal responsibility.

Commissioner DeNapoli asked what potential Fire Rescue providers Fort Lauderdale and BSO have said with respect to a new public safety building. Town Manager Rubach again advised that both providers have indicated the existing building does not meet current standards and they would not serve the Town from that facility.

Commissioner DeNapoli recommended preparing a list of options for the new facility and presenting it to the providers for review and comment. He suggested there could be a variety of options, ranging from a Fire Station only to a full municipal campus. He also noted that the Town has discussed the need for a new public safety facility for several

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years, and the current Fire Rescue service provider has elected not to renew its contract with the Town.

Town Manager Rubach emphasized that the Town has not yet signed a comprehensive agreement or committed to a concept thus far. Next steps will be based on the two proposed concepts and will give the Commission a clearer idea of what costs will look like, the potential scope of the project, and how the Town should budget for the future. He reiterated that the \$2 million allocation cited in the CIP backup materials was included for discussion purposes.

5. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to come before the Commission at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.



Mayor Edmund Malkoon

ATTEST:



Melissa Vasami, Town Clerk

7/16/2026 | 1:19 PM EDT

Date