



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No: 25-242

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission
FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*
DATE: December 2, 2025
SUBJECT: Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center Programming

The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to provide the City Commission with the information requested at the October 23, 2025, City Commission Conference Meeting regarding programming at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center (FLAC). This LTC includes information related to programming of the 27-meter dive tower and swim classes held at the community pools (Attachment 1).

FLAC Overview

FLAC was built as a swimming and diving facility, meeting international standards for training and competitions. Both functions are important aspects of the facility programming. The dive tower is programmed for training use by our local springboard/platform dive team, local high dive team, diving lessons, open diving, deep water aerobics, and local schools and college diving teams. The local Swim and Dive Team program attendance is approximately 40,000 visits annually. This training has resulted in the development of local international diving champions such as James Lichtenstein, who was recognized at the October 23, 2025, City Commission Regular Meeting.

Dive Tower Programming and FLAC Events

Each December through February, FLAC hosts Winter Training Camps for visiting schools, universities, and colleges. During the 2025-2026 Winter Training Camp, forty-one (41) national entities will use the facility to train over 1,500 athletes including 190 divers from across the country. The Winter Training Camps generate an estimated \$158,000 in revenue. Royal Caribbean also uses the dive facility for rehearsing on-board cruise ship entertainment, generating additional facility revenue.

In 2026, City staff anticipate hosting three (3) major diving competitions that include:

1. American Cup
2. High Diving World Cup
3. Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) National Diving Championships

In addition, City staff anticipate hosting a variety of swimming events for the upcoming year. For example, the USA National Team Trials for Artistic Swimming are tentatively scheduled to take place at FLAC from January 17-19, 2026.

The City actively promotes its own events at FLAC through the City's existing network. However, in the past, marketing of private events was performed primarily by the promoter. To increase the visibility of FLAC, the City is now actively promoting more of the City-produced and City-partnered events.

FLAC Challenges for Scheduling Events

The City is collaborating with its partners to improve the peninsula by adding a new Ocean Rescue Facility and amenities for the International Swimming Hall of Fame (ISHOF). During the construction period, many competition event organizers may seek alternative venues due to potential distractions for athletes and limited facility use caused by potential venue impacts. FLAC also takes into consideration large beach events (the boat Show, festivals, road races, marathons, air show, etc.) when scheduling competitions to avoid parking and traffic conflicts on the barrier island. For instance, the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show frequently coincides with district, regional, and state high school swimming competitions, so FLAC rarely hosts these events during that time period. Additionally, as a top-tier outdoor facility, weather conditions also influence the scheduling and hosting of events.

FLAC Financial Overview

Prior to the FLAC renovations initiated in April 2019, the venue cost recovery averaged 29% (Table 1a). Following the reconstruction of the FLAC (Table 1b), revenues for partial operations in 2023 represented 21% of cost recovery. As programming was re-established in the newly renovated facility, revenues increased to 28% of the expenditures. As we enter Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, revenues are expected to decline due to the construction of the Ocean Rescue facility directly south of the dive tower, the new seawall, and ISHOF buildings. Staff are currently reviewing the fee schedule for the facility to explore revenue generating opportunities.

Table 1a. Fiscal Years Leading Up to FLAC Renovation

Cost recovery averaged 29% prior to the FLAC renovation which started in 2019.

Financial Impact General Fund	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual
Revenues (\$)	\$528,350	\$536,053	\$672,969	\$505,976
Expenditures (\$)	\$1,909,536	\$1,897,428	\$2,057,269	\$1,944,401
Cost Recovery	28%	28%	33%	26%

Table 1b. Fiscal Years Following FLAC Renovation

Cost recovery in 2023 represents only a partial year. The FLAC partially re-opened in September 2022 and had a grand opening in January 2023. For the past two (2) fiscal years, cost recovery has been 28%. Construction on the peninsula is expected to reduce FY 2026 revenues.

Financial Impact General Fund	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actuals	FY 2026 Adopted
Revenues (\$)	\$550,445	\$833,688	\$860,433	\$787,249
Expenditures (\$)	\$2,609,259	\$3,021,118	\$3,022,243	\$3,238,805
Cost Recovery	21%	28%	28%	24%

City Recognition and Community Benefits

FLAC creates many benefits for the community beyond the physical facility and its revenues. With nearly a century of swimming history, Fort Lauderdale is renowned as a leader and pioneer among the top aquatic centers. Since building the first Olympic-size swimming pool in the State of Florida in 1928, the City has celebrated thirteen (13) world records, and hosted countless sports heroes, champions, events, and achievements at every level throughout the years. FLAC is a signature tourist destination, providing guided “*Top of the Tower*” tours every week, highlighting the only 27-meter permanent dive tower in the western hemisphere.

In 2023, college team sports tourism at FLAC generated an estimated \$3 million in economic impact over 8,000 total visitor days and 2,500 room nights. From April 2024 to April 2025, Visit Lauderdale reported over \$20 million in economic impact and 18,969 room nights were generated by just a portion of the overall event programming at FLAC (including only the twelve (12) events supported by Visit Lauderdale). This represents 5.2% of the entire sports tourism market for Broward County.

The recent TYR Pro Swim Series Fort Lauderdale swimming event (April 28 - May 3, 2025) attracted over 10,000 participants and spectators. The event hosted new world records by Katie Ledecky in the 800M freestyle and by Gretchen Walsh in 100M Butterfly and generated 2,158 room nights and over \$2.5 million in economic benefit as reported by Visit Lauderdale.

Future Outlook of the Aquatic Center

The City diving and swimming team programs across all ages are growing. The diving lesson program is thriving, helping to create the champions of the future. As part of the ISHOF build-out, an indoor diving training facility (known as Dryland Training) is planned. This facility is an essential component for the growth of the diving team, hosting sports competitions, and strengthening the overall diving program. At this time, the City is seeking to contract a new high-performance director for the diving team program to replace Coach Dave Burgering, who retired in September 2025.

The diving platform for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games is outdoors, making the FLAC attractive for athletes training for the international games. In addition to the diving program, the swimming program, and the Fort Lauderdale swimming teams remain a foundation of membership and support for FLAC. National governing bodies such as USA Artistic Swimming have expressed interest in expanding its relationship with FLAC, adding diversity and depth to our current programming opportunities.

Citywide Swim Programs at Community Pools

While FLAC was designed and built to meet World Aquatics international competitive standards for aquatic sports programming and events, swimming lessons are also provided at FLAC for more advanced swimmers.

The Parks and Recreation Department community pools are resources to the community to learn the fundamentals of swimming. The City facilities include Bass Park Pool, Carter Park Pool, Croissant Park Pool, Lauderdale Manors Park Pool, Riverland Park Pool, and Sunrise Middle School Pool. The City participates in the Broward County Water Smart Safety Program, in which Broward County residents receive vouchers that offset the cost of swim lessons, and with the Swim Central Program, which allows elementary school students to participate in swimming lessons during school hours.

Additionally, as part of the City's Summer Camp Program, swim lessons are incorporated into the camp curriculum for participants. Collectively, through these programs, from parent and toddler classes to adult swim lessons, the Community Pools program has provided instruction to more than 1,300 individuals in FY 2025.

Through a \$2,000,000 City contribution to the Young Men's Christian Association of South Florida (YMCA) Facility at Holiday Park (CAM #25-0501), a new pool complex will be added to provide additional assets and resources for swimming instruction.

If you have additional questions, please contact Carl Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation, at cwilliams@fortlauderdale.gov or (954) 828-5804.

Attachment:

1. FLAC Fall 2025 Hours Flyer

c: D'Wayne M. Spence, Interim City Attorney
David R. Soloman, City Clerk
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
City Manager's Office
Department Directors

FORT LAUDERDALE AQUATIC CENTER

FALL 2025

501 Seabreeze Blvd, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316

NOTE: Please pardon our dust. Construction has resumed. We are currently in Phase 1 of the International Swimming Hall of Fame Project. Periodic and unexpected modifications to our services and programs may occur.

FALL HOURS * AUGUST 12 - DECEMBER 8

LAP SWIM

Sunday

8 AM - 1 PM

Monday

6:30 AM - 1 PM | 6:30 - 7:30 PM

Tuesday

8 AM - 1 PM | 6:30 - 7:30 PM

Wednesday

6:30 AM - 1 PM | 5 - 7:30 PM

Thursday

8 AM - 1 PM | 6:30 - 7:30 PM

Friday

6:30 AM - 1 PM | 5 - 7:30 PM

Saturday

9 AM - 1 PM

SPRINGBOARD DIVING

Sunday

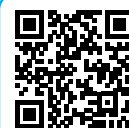
11 AM - 1 PM

FALL EVENTS, CLOSURES, & MODIFIED HOURS *

- **September 12**
ISHOF Corporate Relay Challenge, Reception, & Dive Show
- **September 12-14**
ISHOF 60th Anniversary Aquatic Festival & ASCA Clinic
- **September 20-21**
ISHOF Fitter & Faster Clinic
- **October 10**
SFTL Masters Swim Across America
Morning Lap Swim may be available. Call to confirm.
- **October 15-20 (REDUCED HOURS)**
Lap Swim Only 8 AM - 1 PM & 6:30-7:30 PM
No early entry on Monday/Wednesday/Friday
- **October 27 - November 1**
Arena Photo Shoot
- **October 29 - November 2**
Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show
- **October 27 - November 2**
Lap Swim 8 AM - 12 PM
- **November 6 (POOL CLOSED)**
FHSAA Class 3A, Region 4 Swimming & Diving Championships
- **November 6-9 (POOL CLOSED)**
SFTL Masters Fall Classic
- **November 11 (REDUCED HOURS VETERANS DAY)**
Lap Swim 8 AM - 12 PM
- **November 27 (CLOSED THANKSGIVING DAY)**
- **November 28 (REDUCED HOURS)**
Lap Swim 8 AM - 12 PM

* Hours subject to change. Please check our website or call (954) 828-4580 for updates on operating hours.

CALL (954) 828-4580 | VISIT parks.fortlauderdale.gov/flac



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FALL 2025

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ADMISSION

- Resident: \$5 Adult | \$4 Child/Student/Military/Senior **
- Non-Resident: \$6 Adult | \$5 Child/Student/Military/Senior **
- Multi-day passes available.
- Credit cards and mobile device payments accepted. No cash.
- Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult/guardian age 18 or older.
- Free admission for children age five and under.

** Plus applicable sales tax.

PARKING

PAY BY PHONE APP

Resident \$1.50/hour

Non-Resident \$4.50/hour

Additional parking at Las Olas Garage,
200 E. Las Olas Circle.

SCAN CODE OR VISIT

ftlcity.info/residentparking



PROGRAMS

Please call (954) 828-4580
for information.

LIFEGUARD CERTIFICATION

September 20-21

SWIM LESSONS

Level 3 Session

September 7 - October 1

Sunday, 10-10:45 AM

Wednesday, 6:30-7:15 PM

Level 4-5 Session

September 7 - October 1

Sunday, 11-11:45 AM

Wednesday, 5:30-6:15 PM

TEAM PROGRAMS

Swimming, Diving, Masters

Monday - Saturday

WATER FITNESS

Deep Water Fitness

Tuesday & Thursday, 9-10 AM

Shallow Water Fitness

Wednesday, 9-10 AM

TOP OF THE TOWER TOURS

Friday at 11 AM & 12 PM

\$10 per person