



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No: 26-016

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission
FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*
DATE: January 20, 2026
SUBJECT: Update on PDHQ – Demolition of the Former PDHQ and Access to the Community Room, and the Phase I and Phase II Engineering Report

The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to provide the City Commission with an update on the Police Department Headquarters (PDHQ) project including the status of the schedule of demolition of the former Police Department building, access to the Community Room for public meetings, and the Phase I and Phase II Engineering Report.

The PDHQ project is within its final stage of development leading to a Partial Certificate of Occupancy (PCO) which will allow the Police Department to begin the process of moving into the new building, including the Community Room.

Demolition of the Former Police Department Headquarters

Demolition of the former PDHQ officially began on January 13, 2026, and it is expected that this phase will take between six to twelve (6-12) weeks depending on the complexity of the demolition work. Once demolition is completed, the remaining site work will start, which includes drainage, landscaping, and the installation of the guest parking area. It is expected that the site work will be completed in mid-July 2026.

Access to the PDHQ Community Room

At the January 6, 2026, City Commission meeting staff was asked about the use of the Community Room for public meetings, including City Commission meetings. There was interest in targeting March 2026 to have access to the Community Room and staff indicated that March may be a possibility but there are multiple factors that will likely result in a date that is further into the future. In addition to the need to complete the demolition of the former PDHQ building, so that emergency egress from the Community Room can be achieved as required and designed, the guest parking that is part of the final stage of site work is critical to providing public access to the Community Room. There is secured parking onsite, but it is a significant distance away from the Community Room, with several access-limited points of entry. While that is the most significant factor, the Community Room also needs to be furnished and equipped to function as needed for City Commission

meetings. Staff will also need to be mindful of the time needed to sufficiently provide notice to the public of the change of location of City Commission meetings. Based primarily on the construction schedule but also other minor factors such as furnishings and public notice requirements, staff anticipate the Community Room being available for City Commission meetings in late May to early June 2026.

Phase I and II Report Status

Following the identification of a deflection issue with the (PDHQ) that is currently under construction, the City of Fort Lauderdale sought a third-party engineering consultant to validate and assess the original repairs. It was then determined that an additional peer review should be performed to validate the enhancements related to corrective measures as well as an analysis of the remaining portions of the building outside of the original deflection area. Wiss, Janey, Elstner Associates, Inc (WJE) completed its peer review in two (2) phases. Phase I focused on the deflection area analysis and subsequent recommendations to resolve the issue. Phase II focused on an analysis of the remainder of the building by providing findings and recommendations for addressing the findings and additional testing of structural connection points. Phase I has been completed and all structural enhancement implemented.

The two (2) remaining items from the Phase II report are the installation of a larger slide bearing where the main PDHQ and the Community Center connection is located, and the determination if structural enhancement is needed to address the structural load connections within the building's shear wall. The slide-bearing installation is in progress and should be completed within three to four (3-4) weeks. Load testing of the structural connection anchoring components was completed on December 19, 2025.

The engineer of record, Thornton Tomasetti (TT), has submitted an initial report as of January 9, 2026. WJE has provided a response to the TT report outlining various questions related to methodology used, data points provided, additional information needed, and clarification of various components of the report. WJE is drafting its own report, which will be based on the agreed methodology and testing results from December 19, 2025. WJE anticipates their report should be completed on or about the beginning of February 2026. Once the testing results are verified by the reports from WJE and TT, a final report will be issued that will confirm if any additional enhancement work will be required or if the structural loads achieved by the design components meet the minimal structural requirements of a category 5 hurricane rated building as designed.

Once the two (2) items outlined above are addressed, all other items within WJE's Phase II report will be fully rectified and closed.

For additional information, please contact Anthony Fajardo, Development Services Department Director, at afajardo@fortlauderdale.gov or 352-828-5758.

c: Shari McCartney, City Attorney
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