



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No: 26-075

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission
FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *AW*
DATE: March 17, 2026
SUBJECT: Police Department Headquarters Update – Phase I & II Validation Completed

The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to provide an update on the status of the new Police Department Headquarters (PDHQ) and to inform the City Commission that the validation of the deflection area (Phase I), and the review and validation of the remaining building (Phase II) has been completed by Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE). The result of the Phase I and Phase II review and validation is that no further structural enhancements to PDHQ are needed.

In March of 2024, construction on the north, third floor portion of the PDHQ building was halted due to deflection of the roof structure as indicated by window glazing that would no longer fit in the designed openings. This was identified as being a result of a change in material from steel to concrete in the building design and a miscalculation of the change in weight of these materials. To address this, a stop work order was issued by the City's Building Official, and temporary shoring was placed in the area to stop further deflection. Consistent monitoring was started and a third-party engineering firm, Lakdas/Yohalem Engineering (LYE), was engaged to start co-developing structural enhancements to address the deflection in conjunction with the Engineer of Record (EOR) on the project, Thornton Tomasetti (TT) and the Architect of Record (AOR) on the project (AECOM). At that time, the resulting enhancements were focused on the roof, the third floor, and ground floor areas on the north side of the building.

Enhancements on the roof and third floor included recommendations for epoxy injection into cracks that were formed by the deflection, upturned beams on the roof to further support the weight of the roof, and haunches added to specific columns to reduce the cantilevered distance of the roof and further support the weight. In addition, foundation and column work was identified on the ground floor north portion of the building. These enhancements were reviewed and approved by the City's Building Services Division of the Development Services Department (DSD) and implemented by the contractor on the project (Moss) as approved.

After making a presentation to the City Commission on the status of the work being done to address the deflection issue, the City Commission directed staff to find another

engineering firm to validate the design and installation of the structural enhancements in the deflection area, and perform an assessment on the remaining areas of the structure to ensure that the building will perform as specified as a category five (5) hurricane rated structure (wind speeds up to 185 mph). To accomplish this, the assessment was split into two (2) phases. Phase I focused on the deflection area and ancillary impacted areas, which included the roof, the third floor, and the ground floor areas on the north side of the building. Phase II focused on the remaining building to ensure there were no other issues that needed to be addressed.

Phase I – While WJE did confirm some of the enhancements met the structural load requirements, the Phase I report identified the need to do additional work in additional areas on the roof, the third floor, and the ground floor. These enhancements consisted of additional upturned beams on the roof to align with the remaining structural support members and fiber reinforced enhancements to the support beams and columns on the third floor. In addition, micro piles and caps were installed on the ground floor of the building, along with additional rebar and cement into the foundation. The ground floor enhancements also included column jackets to provide additional structural support at key locations. All enhancements were co-developed by WJE, with the EOR (TT) and the AOR (AECOM), as well as reviewed and approved by the City's Building Services Division. Structural enhancements were implemented by Moss as approved and have been fully completed.

Phase II – Phase II of the analysis focused on the remaining square footage of the building. The analysis identified sixteen (16) areas under three (3) topics that needed to be addressed. These consisted of the following:

1. Life Safety
 - a. Shear Wall Capacities
 - b. Foundation Capacities at Shear Walls
 - c. Foundation Capacities at Columns
 - d. Slide Bearing Capacity
 - e. Structural Integrity
 - f. Column Axial-Flexural Capacities
 - g. Column Shear Capacities
 - h. Roof Beam Capacities

2. Serviceability
 - a. Community Room and Lobby Area
 - b. Building Period
 - c. Cover Depth

3. Documentation
 - a. Column Schedule
 - b. Loads
 - c. Mechanical Equipment
 - d. Masonry Walls

e. Column Flexural Stiffness Modifiers

While the Phase II analysis identified several issues that needed to be addressed, most of them were corrected through clarification of design details (i.e. corrections to design plans, additional documentation, validated calculations, etc.), which resulted in most of the items being fully addressed with no additional structural work needed. However, two (2) items remained to be addressed: (1) the slide bearing was identified as not having the required minimum load capacity needed, and (2) the structural connections between the roof, floors, and walls required validation in order to determine if they would support wind loads of up to 185 mph.

The slide bearing, located near the deflection area in the northwest area of the building, but not tied to the deflection issue, needed to be upgraded to the correct capacity. To accomplish this, the beam had to be exposed and raised up to allow the proper sized bearing to be installed. This was designed and approved collaboratively with WJE, TT, AECOM, and the City's Building Services Division. It was successfully implemented by Moss, and all associated restoration work has been completed.

The structural connections required additional testing of the design to determine if they would meet the wind load specifications. This was accomplished by engaging engineering firm NV5, a leading provider of tech-enabled engineering, testing, inspection, and consulting solutions. At the NV5 facility (located in North Miami Beach), and under the supervision of WJE, TT, and City staff, twelve (12) mockups of the structural walls and connections representative of the constructed facility were built to perform the testing including six (6) designed to TT's specifications and six (6) designed to WJE's specifications. Physical testing of the designs was completed on December 19, 2025. Since that time TT has provided its preliminary report showing that the test results support that the connections between the roof, floors, and walls will support the design specifications for a category five (5) rated building. However, WJE determined that their model would need some additional time to validate. On March 5, 2026, WJE sent an email to TT and City staff making the following statement:

"Thank you for sending the updated drawings and the calculation package over. It has taken us some time to do our own evaluation of things, but we are at the point where we are comfortable that there exists a set of interior CMU walls that in conjunction with the reinforced concrete shear walls will provide sufficient strength to resist the full design wind speed (185 mph)."

The email goes on to request some additional documentation and that an affidavit attesting to the calculations by TT will be needed by WJE prior to issuing their final report. Once the information is provided and the final report is received from WJE, staff anticipate providing the City Commission with a presentation to provide a detailed explanation of the results of the report and recap all efforts up to that point. However, because of this outcome, it should be noted that no further structural enhancements are needed.

As a general overview of the project, the new PDHQ received a Partial Certificate of Occupancy (PCO) in January 2026 (occupancy of the building can take place except for the Community Center). The PCO has allowed nearly all police personnel to move from the Cypress Creek temporary police department location into the new building. Demolition of the former PDHQ is nearing completion and the remaining site work (guest drive entrance and parking, lighting, landscaping, drainage, etc.) is underway. Moss has reported that they are slightly ahead of schedule and feel that the project may be completed on or before the current estimated completion schedule of July 2026. Once key elements of the remaining work have been completed, a more precise date will be identified and reported to the City Commission.

It should be noted that use of the Community Center as a temporary location for City Commission meetings, and any other board or committee meetings, cannot occur until the remaining site work is completed. This is primarily due to the fire egress points needing a safe pedestrian path, which is work included with the remaining site work on the west side of the building where the former PDHQ was located. Work is also needed to complete the guest parking and drive access to be able to accommodate people attending the meetings to be held in the Community Center. As stated above, this work is likely to be completed on or before July 2026.

If you have any questions, please contact Anthony Fajardo, Director of Development Services, at afajardo@fortlauderdale.gov or (954) 828-5758.

c: Shari McCartney, City Attorney
David R. Soloman, City Clerk
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