



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No: 26-163

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission
FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*
DATE: May 26, 2026
SUBJECT: **Opportunity to Create a Dryland Diving Training Program at the Morton Activity Center located at 2980 SW 8 Avenue**

The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to inform the City Commission of an opportunity to establish a temporary dryland diving training facility at the Morton Activity Center located at 2980 SW 8 Avenue, adjacent to Floyd Hull Stadium.

The City's diving program at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center (Aquatic Center) continues to thrive by supporting current champions and developing the next generation of elite athletes. The City recently entered into an agreement with John Wingfield, U.S. National Team Diving Coach, who now serves as the City's High-Performance Director for the diving program.

While the planned International Swimming Hall of Fame (ISHOF) improvements will include a permanent on-site dryland training space, it is not anticipated to be completed until the end of 2028. City staff understand that this critical training component is needed immediately to support ongoing program growth and athlete development.

The City has identified a unique opportunity at the underutilized Morton Activity Center, located in the Edgewood neighborhood. The existing uses of Morton Activity Center include storage of special events equipment. The temporary activation and use of the Morton Activity Center as a dryland training facility will provide a vital off-deck training environment that complements aquatic training at the Aquatic Center. The dryland training facility opportunity does not impact the planned Parks Bond improvements.

To support this initiative, the City is preparing a Non-Exclusive Facility Use Agreement with Indiana Diving Academy, Inc. (Academy) for consideration by the City Commission before the summer recess. Under the proposed agreement, the Academy, led by John Wingfield, will equip the facility using privately provided equipment, while the City provides the space. Academy will operate and staff the facility, train local athletes, and offer programming opportunities including clinics, camps, and training that will generate revenue opportunities for the City.

The creation and implementation of a temporary dryland facility is especially important as the City prepares its diving program and hosts elite-level athletes in advance of the 2028 Olympic Trials and the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, California. Unlike previous Olympic venues, the Los Angeles diving facility will be outdoors, which is expected to increase demand for training at the Aquatic Center over the next eighteen to twenty-four (18–24) months. Providing a nearby, purpose-built dryland training facility will enhance Fort Lauderdale's ability to support high-performance athletes, attract national and international training camps, expand community programming, and reinforce the City's reputation as a premier destination for aquatic sports. City staff met with the Edgewood Civic Association regarding this opportunity and received general support.

The key terms of the proposed agreement include:

- Limited term through August 31, 2028, with early termination if the planned Parks Bond improvements begin to be constructed prior to this date;
- Approximately \$150,000 in privately provided equipment, obtained by Indiana Diving Academy, supporting the facility for its temporary essential use;
- Community programming including clinics, camps, and training that could generate revenue to be shared with City; and
- Continued compatibility with existing City uses.

Please contact Carl Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation, via email at cwilliams@fortlauderdale.gov, or at (954) 828-5804 with any questions or concerns.

c: Shari L. McCartney, City Attorney
David R. Soloman, City Clerk
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
City Manager's Office
Department Directors