



TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: March 3, 2026

TITLE: Quasi-Judicial Resolution Approving a Site Plan Level IV Central Beach Development Permit for a Six (6)-Story, 203,907 Square-Foot Multipurpose Building with 25,182 Square Feet of Event Space, 24,440 Square Feet of Museum, 17,052 Square Feet of Aquarium, and 7,027 Square Feet of Restaurant Use and Associated Parking Reduction - Case No. UDP-S25010 – 501 Seabreeze Blvd - (**Commission District 2**)

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission adopt a resolution approving a Site Plan Level IV Development Permit for a six (6)-story, 203,907 square foot multipurpose building with 25,182 square feet of event space, 24,440 square feet of museum, 17,052 square feet of aquarium, and 7,027 square feet of restaurant use and associated parking reduction.

Background

The applicant, Hall of Fame Partners, LLC. (“HOFP”), is proposing to redevelop the western portion of the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center peninsula, located at 501 Seabreeze Boulevard, with a new six (6)-story building containing approximately 25,182 square feet of event space, a 24,440 square-foot museum, a 17,052 square-foot aquarium and 7,027 square feet of restaurant use with an associated parking reduction request. The subject property contains an existing aquatic facility featuring training, competition and recreational pools with spectator grandstands, event space, and administrative offices.

On September 14, 2020, the City of Fort Lauderdale received an unsolicited proposal from HOFP for a public-private partnership qualified project to demolish existing buildings and to design and build facilities to replace the east and west buildings at the International Swimming Hall of Fame (ISHOF) Complex. Subsequently, the City Commission approved an Interim Agreement with HOFP on October 21, 2021, and on September 19, 2023, the City Commission approved a Comprehensive Agreement with HOFP. The Comprehensive Agreement, divided the project into four (4) phases:

- Phase I – construction of the Ocean Rescue building and the construction of a seawall;

- Phase II – the subject of this Resolution which is the development of the West building that includes ISHOF Museum, event space, an aquarium, restaurant, and parking;
- Phase III – east building to include the ISHOF welcome center and related uses; and
- Phase IV – tenant improvements, signage, landscaping, and dock space for the Water Taxi.

On March 4, 2025, HOFP presented the overall project concept to the City Commission. At that time, the design featured a west building footprint providing unobstructed views to the Intracoastal Waterway from Seabreeze Boulevard due to a smaller footprint along the north portion of the building as well as architectural cutouts. In addition, the original project concept incorporated several respite areas above the first floor with open grass areas, and shading devices to accommodate pedestrians which provided views from the south and west. Through successive design changes, the proposed plans include a larger overall west building footprint which reduced the overall height to provide line of sight of the dive tower and to address City Commission and stakeholder feedback.

In addition, following the March 4, 2025, presentation to the City Commission, the applicant held several public participation meetings with the community and received feedback on the overall project which included lowering the overall height to allow for visibility of the adjacent dive tower from multiple vantage points, adjust location of parking spaces on the east side to ensure patrons are not viewing diving activity and events via their vehicles, and increase ground floor clearance to accommodate maneuvering of large items and equipment to and from the Aquatic Center.

Stakeholder meetings following the March 4, 2025, City Commission Conference presentation include:

Meeting Date	Stakeholder Groups
May 17, 2025	SWIM/DIVE Community, Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center staff, and Venetian Condominium
June 20, 2025	Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce Beach Council
July 14, 2025	Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce Real Estate and Construction Council
September 18, 2025	Central Beach Alliance General Membership
October 4, 2025	Master Swim and Dive Team and Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center staff
October 18, 2025	Master Swim and Dive Team and Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center staff
October 20, 2025	Public participation meeting including property owners within 300 feet of the project

A location map is provided as Exhibit 1. The application, site plan set and applicant's narrative responses to criteria are provided as Exhibit 2. The Comprehensive Agreement is provided as Exhibit 3.

The proposed project was reviewed by the Development Review Committee (DRC) on April 22, 2025. The April 22, 2025, DRC comment report with applicants' responses is attached as Exhibit 4. On November 19, 2025, the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) reviewed the project and recommended approval (7-0). The November 19, 2025, PZB Staff Report and Meeting Minutes are attached as Exhibit 5 and Exhibit 6, respectively.

BEACH DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

ULDR Section 47-12.6.A provides that "[n]o person shall carry out any development nor shall any person use any parcel of land for any purpose in the Central Beach area without first obtaining a beach development permit from the city in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the ULDR. All development within the Central Beach Area zoning districts shall be subject to all of the provisions of the ULDR and development permits shall be issued in accordance with Section 47-24 and Section 47-12 of the ULDR. The reviewing authority shall determine if the proposed development is consistent with the development standards for the proposed development under the provisions of the zoning district in which the development is located. In addition to the criteria for review provided in Section 47-24 and Section 47-12, applications for development in the Central Beach Area zoning districts shall be subject to the design and community compatibility criteria provided in Section 47-25.3.

The design and community compatibility criteria of ULDR Section 47-25.3 provide for certain guidelines to ensure compatibility with neighboring developments as it relates to overall size and scale, setbacks, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and landscaping. The project proposes a height that is compatible with the immediate vicinity and the development team has worked with City staff to ensure the project's overall design responds appropriately to its waterfront setting and blends seamlessly with the surrounding context and therefore, meets the requirements of ULDR Section 47-25.3.

ADEQUACY AND NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY

The adequacy criteria of ULDR Section 47-25.2 are used to evaluate the demand created on public services and facilities by a proposed development. Water and wastewater are serviced by the City of Fort Lauderdale. A capacity letter was issued by the City's Public Works Department on August 27, 2025, which states that no system improvements are required at this time. The August 27, 2025, water and sewer capacity letter is attached as Exhibit 7.

The neighborhood compatibility criteria of ULDR Section 47-25.3 include performance standards requiring all developments to be "compatible with, and preserve the character and integrity of adjacent neighborhoods... the development shall include improvements or modifications either on-site or within the public rights-of-way to mitigate adverse impacts, such as traffic, noise, odors, shadow, scale, visual nuisances, or other similar adverse effects to adjacent neighborhoods. These improvements or modifications may

include, but shall not be limited to, the placement or orientation of buildings and entryways, parking areas, bufferyards, alteration of building mass, and the addition of landscaping, walls, or both, to ameliorate such impacts”.

The property is zoned South Beach Marina and Hotel Area (SBMHA) District which permits a range of commercial recreation, food and beverage sales and service, retail sales, office and other tourist accommodations and uses. The properties surrounding the site are zoned South Beach Marina and Hotel Area (SBMHA), Parks Recreation and Open Space (P), Planned Development District (PDD), and A-1-A Beachfront Area Districts (ABA), and have similar zoning requirements as the subject property.

Building heights in the immediate vicinity of the subject site range from one (1) to fifteen (15) stories. Directly north of the proposed development is a fifteen (15)-story multi-family residential building, while the property to the northeast is occupied by a thirteen (13)-story Courtyard Marriott Hotel. To the southeast lies the existing Maren Hotel, also thirteen (13) stories in height, with the western edge of the site bounded by a waterway. The proposed building height of six (6) stories has been designed to be compatible with the surrounding built environment and context.

The proposed building incorporates a variety of high-quality materials and design elements intended to enhance the architectural character and visual interest of the development. Staff collaborated closely with the applicant to ensure the project’s overall design responds appropriately to its waterfront setting and blends seamlessly with the surrounding context. The exterior treatment includes scored stucco, open polymer mesh garage screening, shadowbox glazing bands, and louvered mechanical screening. The ground floor, which will house an aquarium, is designed with durable stucco incorporating patterns that mimic movement of water, adding to the maritime identity of the site. The polymer mesh system utilized for garage screening integrates a wave-like pattern that complements the existing nautical features throughout the complex, while glazing strategically wraps the north, south, and west elevations to maximize natural light and capture views of the Intracoastal Waterway.

The site is uniquely situated on a peninsula primarily surrounded by the Intracoastal Waterway, with existing surface parking areas located on the northeast and southeast corners. The proposed development incorporates several improvements intended to enhance the public realm and strengthen the pedestrian experience throughout the site. As part of the project, the existing surface parking area on the northern portion of the property will be resurfaced and improved with new landscaping to provide a more attractive and cohesive appearance. Significant enhancements are also proposed along the north, south, and west portions of the site through the creation of a new pedestrian promenade. This promenade will measure approximately twenty (20) feet in width between the property line and the building façade, and will include a twelve (12)-foot sidewalk, pedestrian-scale lighting, and perimeter landscaping to promote comfort, safety, and visual appeal. The new sidewalk will establish a direct pedestrian connection between the existing surface parking area, the public dock, and the water taxi service, while also providing convenient access to the main building entrance, thereby improving overall site circulation and waterfront connectivity.

PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION:

The Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center site currently contains 106 surface parking spaces that serve the existing Aquatic Center and Ocean Rescue operations. The west building is proposed to be constructed at a location that currently contains twenty-seven (27) metered spaces, resulting in a total of seventy-nine (79) existing parking spaces remaining to support the existing uses. The proposed uses for the site require 405 parking spaces, however the site plan only provides 259 parking spaces. A breakdown of parking requirements is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Parking Summary

USE	Square Footage	PARKING RATIO	REQUIRED
Aquatic Center			
Public/Private Recreation (Pools)	33,212	1 space/200 Square Feet	166 Spaces
Ocean Rescue Building			
Office	4,989	1 space/500 Square Feet	10 Spaces
Total Parking Spaces Required (Aquatic Center and Ocean Rescue)			176 Spaces
West Building			
Museum	24,440	1 space/400 Square Feet	61 Spaces
Aquarium	17,052	1 space/400 Square Feet	43 Spaces
Event Space	25,182	1 space/400 Square Feet	63 Spaces
Restaurant	7,027	1 space/114 Square Feet	62 Spaces
Total Parking Spaces Required for West Building			229 spaces
Total Parking Spaces Required for the Site			405 Spaces
Provided			259 spaces

The development is deficient 146 parking spaces, therefore the applicant is seeking a parking reduction. Section 47-20.3.A.5. provides that the applicant must show that the request for a parking reduction meets the criteria of that subsection. The applicant submitted a Parking Analysis Study, dated February 5, 2026, prepared by Bowman Consulting Group, Ltd., which concludes that parking for the proposed project will be accommodated by utilizing onsite parking as well as available parking at the City of Fort Lauderdale’s Las Olas Garage. The February 5, 2026, Parking Analysis Study is attached as Exhibit 8. The study demonstrates that the request meets the adequacy requirement, as provided in Section 47-25.2 and that the use, site, structure or any combination of same, evidences characteristics which support a determination that the need for parking for the development is less than that required by the ULDR for similar uses. Additionally, subsection 47-20.3.A.5.i provides that any alternative parking arrangement proposed will be adequate to meet the needs of the use the parking will serve and that reducing the required parking will be compatible with and not adversely impact the character and integrity of surrounding properties.

The executed Comprehensive Agreement, dated October 24, 2023, contemplates the consideration of a separate parking agreement providing for the reservation of the necessary parking spaces in the Las Olas Parking Garage. However, via the parking

reduction proposed, a separate parking agreement would not be required. The development will result in the removal of twenty-seven (27) metered onsite parking spaces, which is proposed to be addressed through a parking mitigation payment to the City.

Vehicular access to the site will be from existing ingress and egress along Seabreeze Boulevard. In addition, there is an existing drive aisle on the southern portion of the property which will be utilized as an exit onto Seabreeze Boulevard. Pursuant to the ULDR, a comprehensive traffic impact study is required when a proposed project generates more than 1,000 net new vehicle trips per day or if less than 1,000 trips are generated, more than twenty percent (20%) are anticipated to arrive or depart, or both within one-half (1/2) hour. Additionally, in accordance with Section 47-12.8.D.1.a of the ULDR, beach development permits within the CBA but outside of the PRD require a finding of adequacy that traffic capacity is adequate to support the proposed development. The applicant has submitted a Trip Generation Statement, dated November 5, 2025, prepared by the applicant's consultant, Bowman Consulting Group, Ltd., identifying that the project will generate 951 daily trips, eighty-five (85) AM peak hour trips, seventy-five (75) PM peak hour trips. Based on the trip generation being less than 1,000 trips and twenty percent (20%) of the daily trips are not expected to arrive or depart or both within one-half (1/2) hour, the project does not need to complete a comprehensive traffic impact study. Traffic capacity is adequate to support the proposed development. The November 5, 2025, Trip Generation Statement is attached as Exhibit 9.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY

The City's Future Land Use Map indicates that the subject site has a Central Beach Regional Activity Center (RAC) Land Use Designation. More specifically, the Central Beach RAC Land Use Designation serves as a local and regional destination and is a center for tourist activity, in addition to serving existing and future residential, hotel and commercial uses. The intent of this designation is to encourage a mix of uses, promote a strong local economy, integrated with residential, hotel, commercial and recreational uses, a strong waterfront and marina experience, complemented by a world-class pedestrian environment and open space.

The proposed use is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives and Policies, including the Future Land Use Element, Goal 1, Objective 1.1, Policy 1.1.1, which states that density and intensity standards are utilized to control the intensity or density of all uses within the City in order to ensure compliance with the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Plan, and Urban Design Element, Goal 2, which encourages urban design that responds to the climate and character of Fort Lauderdale, is pedestrian friendly, human-scaled, and contains the infrastructure and amenities to create a vibrant public realm; and Goal 4, which aims to enhance the existing built environment and elements unique to Fort Lauderdale, including waterways, bridges, tunnels, and other traversable features.

The Comprehensive Plan requires that the City track development in the Central Beach RAC and monitor the number of residential units and vehicular trips allocated to individual projects. As proposed, the project will result in seventy-five (75) net new PM peak-hour

trips. If the proposed project is approved, 197 trips will remain in the Central Beach RAC for allocation to future development applications. Table 2 provides a summary of the vehicular trips allocated in the Central Beach RAC to date.

Table 2 – Beach RAC Development Tracking Summary

Vehicle Trip Summary	
Total Peak Hour Trips Permitted	3,220
Built and Approved Trips ⁽¹⁾	3,073
Demolition Credits ⁽²⁾	50
Allocation for ISHOF – West Building	75
Number of Trips Available if Proposed ISHOF – West Building is Approved	197

(1) Includes existing 3,050 units as of July 1998, built, approved not yet built, and pending litigation.

(2) Demolition credits for properties where structures were demolished after 1989 and did not receive new approvals.

Public Participation:

This application is subject to public sign notification requirements established in ULDR Section 47-27.2. One (1) sign was posted on the property facing Seabreeze Boulevard.

Conditions of Approval

Should the City Commission approve the development, the following conditions apply:

1. Prior to City Commission approval, the applicant shall revise Vehicular Access Maneuvering Diagram and corresponding plans to demonstrate how this project accommodates a standard, intermediate-sized semi-trailer vehicle (AASHTO "WB-40" design vehicle) to provide access to and from the required minimum twelve (12) feet by forty-five (45) feet "Type II" off-street loading zone, per ULDR Section 47-20.6.
2. Prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy, and in order to satisfy the remaining parking requirement in accordance with the executed Comprehensive Agreement, dated October 24, 2023, the applicant shall enter into a separate parking agreement with the City to reserve the agreed upon parking spaces within the Las Olas Parking Garage for use by the proposed development and related events.

Resource Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

Strategic Connections

This item is a Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Commission Priority, advancing the Public Spaces

and Cultural Initiatives.

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029* Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- The Public Spaces Focus Area, Goal 5: Build a beautiful and welcoming community
- The Business Growth and Support Focus Area, Goal 6: Build a diverse and attractive economy

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035* Vision Plan: We Are Prosperous

This item supports the *Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040 Comprehensive Plan* specifically advancing:

- The Neighborhood Enhancement Focus Area
- The Urban Design Element
 - Goal 2: Encourage urban design which responds to the climate and character of Fort Lauderdale, is pedestrian friendly, human-scaled and contains the infrastructure and amenities to create a vibrant public realm.
 - Goal 4: Enhance the existing built environment and elements unique to Fort Lauderdale, including waterways, bridges, tunnels and other traversable features.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Location Map

Exhibit 2 – Application, Applicant’s Narrative Responses to Criteria and Site Plan Set

Exhibit 3 – Comprehensive Agreement

Exhibit 4 – April 22, 2025, DRC Comment Report with Applicant’s Responses

Exhibit 5 – November 19, 2025, PZB Staff Report

Exhibit 6 – November 19, 2025, PZB Meeting Minutes

Exhibit 7 – August 27, 2025, Water and Sewer Capacity Letter

Exhibit 8 – February 5, 2026, Parking Analysis Study

Exhibit 9 – November 5, 2025, Trip Generation Statement

Exhibit 10 – Resolution Approving

Exhibit 11 – Resolution Denying

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