

SURFING FLORIDA MUSEUM

A PROPOSAL FROM THE SURFING FLORIDA MUSEUM

A New Destination Attraction for Lake Worth Beach.

The Surfing Florida Museum proposes a new home on the Casino Building's second floor, bringing Lake Worth Beach's rich surfing culture to life and giving residents and visitors a new reason to discover the city.

PREPARED FOR
City of Lake Worth Beach

PREPARED BY
Surfing Florida Museum

DATE
November 2026

"The Ship," Singer Island, 1966 · Photo: M.E. Gruber

01 / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A landmark destination. A lasting public benefit.

An opportunity to turn long-vacant space into an enduring cultural asset for Lake Worth Beach.

The Surfing Florida Museum, a nonprofit organization, proposes establishing its primary, long-term home on the second floor of the city-owned Lake Worth Beach Casino Building. The museum seeks to explore a 15-year lease that would provide the stability needed to invest in exhibits, fundraising, programming and visitor experiences.

The opportunity is to transform space that has remained vacant for approximately 12 years into a vibrant, public-facing attraction celebrating Florida's surfing history and coastal culture.

This is a concept proposal, an invitation to collaborate, not a representation that the space is currently code-ready or available for immediate occupancy.

What we are proposing

- Explore a 15-year lease for the Casino Building's second floor
- Establish the Surfing Florida Museum's principal home in Lake Worth Beach
- Coordinate feasibility, approvals and a phased buildout
- Create a year-round Destination Attraction for residents and visitors

15 years

Proposed lease term

Since 2008

Roots in the Palm Beach County Surfing History Project

70%

Of Florida visitors go to a museum during their stay



Built on Florida’s rich surfing heritage.

A collection and community with a story worth sharing.

The Surfing Florida Museum, a nonprofit organization, preserves and features the people, surfboards, photographs, films and stories that shaped Florida’s surfing culture. Its roots extend to the Palm Beach County Surfing History Project, established in 2008.

Lake Worth Beach has been a historic surfing destination for more than seventy years. Nowhere in South Florida has a richer surfing history. The Surfing Florida Museum organizers and supporters include numerous local inductees into the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame, world-class photographers, environmentalists, historians, elected officials and business professionals.

Why this museum belongs here long-term

- The Lake Worth Beach Casino location is the perfect place to provide an educational experience for students and adults to learn “ocean awareness.”
- Museum visitors will provide additional income for all businesses in the Casino building.
- Seventy percent of visitors to Florida go to a museum during their stay.

Give the unfinished second floor a new purpose.

Turn an underused asset into an active destination.

Location

Second floor of the Lake Worth Beach Casino Building at the Municipal Beach Complex. Exact area, access and floor plan to be confirmed with the city.

Vacancy

The city has been attempting to locate a restaurant or other business upstairs in the north side of the Casino building for 12 years, without success.

Assessment alignment

The city’s 2026 Existing Conditions Assessment expressly recommends formalizing use of the unfinished second-floor space and evaluating second-floor accessibility.

A complimentary consideration

The assessment also discusses potential meeting, banquet and catering uses for the second floor. The museum proposes exploring how a permanent cultural use could add local authenticity adjacent to the ballroom to compliment events.

Due diligence before a lease

Confirm:

- Available square footage
- Structural capacity and exhibit loads
- Accessible routes and restrooms
- Elevator and egress requirements
- Fire/life safety
- HVAC and humidity controls
- Water intrusion
- Utilities
- Insurance
- Permitted use
- Required public approvals
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04 / THE VISION

A destination worth making the trip for.

Permanent galleries, changing experiences and a cultural gathering place.

Permanent exhibits

Historic surfboards, photography, artifacts and stories tracing Florida’s surfing heritage and the people who shaped it.

Rotating exhibitions

Fresh reasons to return, from regional surfing history to photographers, board builders and contemporary coastal culture.

Events & visitor experience

Film screenings, intimate talks and special programs where appropriate and permitted; thoughtfully curated retail could support operations.

Education & community

School visits, talks, oral histories, workshops and collaborations with local educators, artists and cultural organizations. In addition, regular beach cleanups, summer camps and surfing lessons, with scholarships available when needed. Over the past 15 years, the Surfing Florida Museum has also become a hub for environmental groups, hosting lectures, meetings and events.

Design principle

Respect the Casino Building’s historic character while creating an accessible, professionally operated museum. Final programming and capacities would be shaped by the approved space and code review.

05 / IMPLEMENTATION

A practical path from concept to opening.

A phased process with city coordination and clear decision points.

Confirm mutual interest

Meet with city leadership. Assess code, accessibility, engineering and environmental requirements; evaluate capital needs, operating costs, attendance assumptions and funding sources.

Negotiate a 15-year lease

Set the lease area, rent, capital responsibilities, periodic reports, insurance, maintenance, public access, renewal options and required city approvals.

Fund, build and open

Launch a capital campaign, complete permitted improvements, install exhibits, recruit volunteers and staff and open in stages if appropriate.

A 15-year commitment to long-term value.

The museum seeks a durable lease structure—not a short-term activation.

Term	Proposed direction	Status
Premises	Defined portion of the Casino Building second floor	To survey
Lease duration	15 years, with renewal and opt-out options.	Requested
Rent	Determine a sustainable cultural/nonprofit lease structure, with the Surfing Florida Museum providing a destination attraction in lieu of rent.	To negotiate
Improvements	Discuss this to clarify responsibilities for building improvements and museum-specific fit-out	To assess
Operations	Museum-led exhibits, staffing, programming and fundraising	Proposed
Public benefit	Educational access, cultural programming and extensive Lake Worth Beach historical components added to the exhibit, in conjunction with the Lake Worth Beach Historical Society and the Palm Beach County Cultural Council.	To define

Why 15 years?

A longer lease supports fundraising, donor confidence, capital investment, professional exhibit planning and continuity for the city and the Proposer. It also gives existing tenants and the Surfing Florida Museum the opportunity to become enduring staples of the Lake Worth Beach community, sharing this landmark location for more than a dozen years. Financial terms, any rent concessions and capital obligations must be evaluated and approved with the appropriate city authorities.

Bring culture to the beach. Connect new visitors to the City.

The museum would give people a compelling reason to visit Lake Worth Beach—and a starting point for exploring more of it.

New visitor draw

Attract ocean-enthusiasts, families, students, cultural tourists and regional visitors who may not otherwise make a dedicated trip. “Legacy Tourism” is booming.

Local spending

Enable visitors to explore nearby dining, shopping and other destinations. Economic benefits should be estimated through a later feasibility study, not assumed.

Year-round activity

Exhibitions and programs can add reasons to visit outside peak beach periods, subject to operating hours and event approvals.

Civic identity

Celebrate Florida’s coastal heritage while reinforcing Lake Worth Beach as a place where local culture is visible and valued.

How success could be measured

- Annual attendance
- Local vs. out-of-town visitors
- School participation
- Program participation
- Visitor satisfaction
- Partnerships
- Earned and donated revenue
- Voluntary visitor-spending surveys

Targets would be set after feasibility and operating-plan development.

More than a museum. A destination attraction for the City.

A 15-year partnership could turn an inactive space into a recognizable, publicly accessible cultural anchor.

Activate a signature address

Give the Casino Building’s second floor a sustained purpose that celebrates the coast, respects the setting and enhances activity at the Municipal Beach Complex.

Welcome new audiences

Invite school groups, families, local residents, history enthusiasts and visitors for a value added experience.

Extend the visitor journey

Connect the museum experience with local dining, retail and other attractions through visitor information kiosk and partnerships. Economic outcomes would be measured, not presumed.

Build something that lasts

Establish a flagship home for Florida’s surfing history, with a lease horizon that can support fundraising, exhibit investment and multigenerational cultural programming, adding to the fifteen-year track record of the Surfing Florida Museum.

09 / STEWARDSHIP

A museum with a long-term mission.

Local knowledge, volunteer commitment and a solid network of partners.

The Surfing Florida Museum's leadership and supporters bring deep connections to Florida surfing history, archival material and the wider surfing community. A flagship home would enable the museum to formalize a sustainable operating model around stewardship, visitor service, programming and fundraising.

Before executing a lease, the museum would develop an operating plan, fundraising strategy, insurance plan, maintenance responsibilities and a realistic capital budget.

Commitments to develop

- Collection care and professional exhibit standards
- Accessible, welcoming public programming
- Transparent annual reporting to the city
- Responsible operations and financial sustainability
- Collaboration and partnering with neighboring Casino Building tenants

10 / NEXT STEPS

Let's create Lake Worth Beach's next cultural landmark.