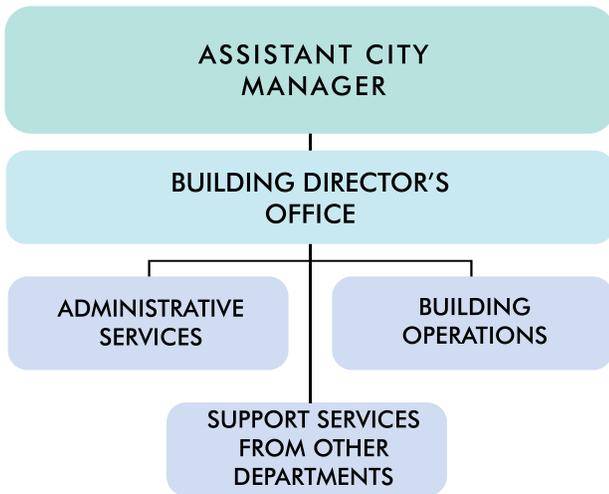


# BUILDING

## DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

We are dedicated to serving the public by the efficient and effective supervision and regulation of construction activities in Miami Beach. By enforcing the Florida Building Code and the City's Code of Ordinances in a fair and efficient manner, we encourage businesses and residents of Miami Beach to comply with the Florida Building Code, and in turn, safeguard the public health, safety, and general welfare of the City's residents and visitors.



## DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

The City of Miami Beach Building Department was established in 1925 and had its own Building Code until the 1950's when the City adopted the South Florida Building Code.

The State of Florida first mandated statewide building codes during the 1970's, at the beginning of the modern construction boom. The first law required all municipalities and counties to adopt and enforce one of the four state-recognized model codes known as the "state minimum building codes." During the early 1990's, a series of natural disasters, together with the increasing complexity of building construction regulation in vastly changed markets, led to a comprehensive review of the State building code system. The study revealed that building code adoption and enforcement was inconsistent throughout the State and those local codes thought to be the strongest proved inadequate when tested by major hurricane events. The consequences of the building code systems' failures were devastation to lives and economies, and a statewide property insurance crisis. The response was a reform of the State building construction regulatory system that placed emphasis on uniformity and accountability.

The 1998 Florida Legislature amended Chapter 553, Florida Statutes, entitled "Building Construction Standards," to create a single Statewide building code that is enforced by all local governments. As of March 1, 2002, the Florida Building Code supersedes all local building codes, and it is developed and maintained by the Florida Building Commission. The Florida Building Code is updated every three years and may be amended annually to incorporate interpretations and clarifications.

The Department is separated into two functional areas: Administrative Services and Operations.

The Administrative Services Section provides administrative support to the entire Department, including requisitioning goods and services, processing invoices for payables, creating invoices for receivables, maintaining all personnel files, processing payroll, budgeting, providing IT assistance, and managing special projects.

The Operations Section is responsible for administering the various provisions of the Florida Building Code, including accepting permit applications, reviewing and approving construction plans in accordance with the provisions of the Florida Building Code, inspecting construction to ensure compliance with the approved plans, and issuing violations for those projects where construction was done without or not in compliance with the approved permits.



# BUILDING

## FISCAL ENVIRONMENT

The Department collects building permit fees pursuant to the City of Miami Beach Code of Ordinances, which includes the Building Department fee structure and the Florida Building Code. Fees collected provide for the direct expenditures of the Building Department, including internal service charges and any other indirect overhead expenditures attributed to departments that provide support to the Building Department.

The Building Department's fee ordinance provides for an annual adjustment to reflect increase(s) or decrease(s) in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Consumers in the Southeast United States for all items. However, between 2017 – 2020, no adjustments had been made to Building Department fees for CPI. Beginning Fiscal Year 2021, CPI increases were applied to Building fees, as approved by City Ordinances. These are for fees not directly associated with job values.

The COVID-19 pandemic adversely impacted the Building department's revenue negatively by approximately 24% compared to the previous year (FY 2020 vs FY 2019).

The department was able to realize some savings in the midst of the pandemic due to the need to go fully online and electronic, which eliminated the need for a daily scanning vendor to scan the paper plans. All plans are now electronically submitted by the customer.

In an effort to improve fiscal transparency, the Building Fund transitioned out of the General Fund to a stand-alone Enterprise Fund.



## STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Main Vision Area:

### Neighborhoods

Management Objectives:



- **Prosperity**
  - Develop the Convention Center Campus
- **Neighborhoods**
  - Increase compliance with City Code
  - Proactively monitor the City for mosquito breeding grounds
- **Organizational Innovation**
  - Support all objectives to improve strategic decision making and financial stewardship, making the city more business friendly and user friendly, with an employee culture of problem solving and engagement
  - Implement the General Obligation Bond

Strategic Plan Actions:

- **MAKE** substantial progress on North Beach Town Center/ Byron Carlyle/Ocean Terrace
- **MAKE** electronic plans filing for permitting purposes within two years

Budget Enhancement Actions:

- Additional Full-Time Building Positions to Address New Legislative Mandates

Resilient305 Actions:

- **BUILD** an Inclusive Economy
- **IT'S** Electric
- **EXPAND** Renewable Energy
- **BUILDING** Efficiency 305

## BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The Department is based on a philosophy of public sector transparency and an open-door policy. The Building Department consistently pursues innovative strategies and continues to re-engineer existing procedures and processes with the goal of providing efficient and professional customer service in a safe environment, while contributing to the overall economic well-being and development of the City.

# BUILDING

## BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT CONT'D

The Department is responsive to the needs of homeowners, business owners, developers, contractors, architects, and engineers.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the business model of the department had to completely change. While there were plans to slowly transition into a completely electronic submission model, the pandemic delivered this prematurely.

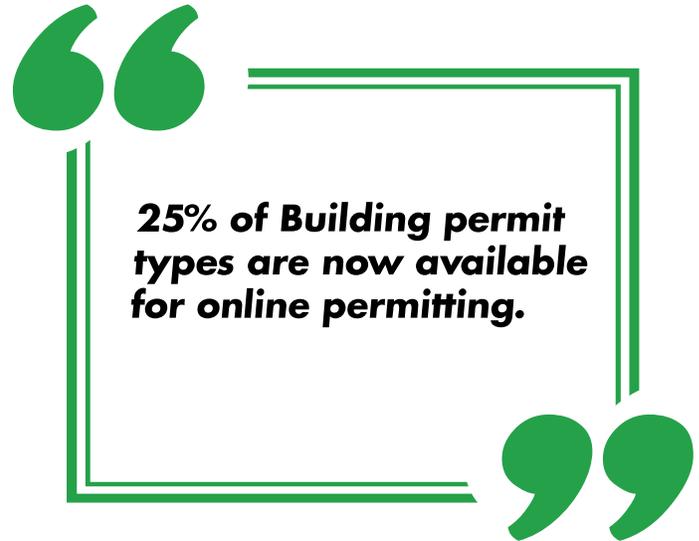
It is the Department's goal to continually evolve and find new ways to innovate its processes. The Department notes that the efficient issuance of permits, inspections, and Certificates of Occupancy or Completion, is critical in nurturing the local economy. Furthermore, by reducing bureaucracy within the Department and streamlining operations, greater compliance with the Florida Building Code will be achieved, making the City's structures safer for the community.

## SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Department has completed and/or begun the following projects/initiatives during the past fiscal year:

- In 2018, FEMA provided its results of the Miami Beach audit for the next 5-year Community Rating System (CRS) cycle and indicated that the ranking for the next 5-Year cycle, beginning May 1, 2019, is an improvement from Class 6 to Class 5, increasing the savings to flood insurance policyholders from 20% to 25%, estimated at \$8.3 million annually
- As of March 2020, through unexpected pressure and urgency to move completely online in order to serve the continued development in the community, the Building Department worked with the IT department to figure out the best way to make all applications for permitting available online. The Department continues to work with the IT department and the software developers to smooth out the online processes to make them as streamlined and smooth as possible
- Replaced 50% of vehicles in the Building Department fleet with hybrid and electric vehicles
- Recertified ISO 9001:2015 – Quality Management Systems in December 2020
- Worked with City Commissioners to extend the Building Permit Reprieve Ordinance. The Reprieve Program was extended through April 30, 2021. This program established a procedure to bring structures built without proper permits or built lacking mandatory inspections into compliance with the Building Code. It encompasses all work done without a permit as part of Single-Family Residence, Multi-Family, or Commercial projects
- Continued cross-training amongst the clerks through rotation and a new hire training program at the North Beach office to better prepare new hires for customer service in slower environment
- Renovated spaces on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floor of City Hall to streamline and modernize the department with a design that focuses on spaces that would foster safety, efficiency, and collaboration

## SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONT'D



## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Potential impacts to revenues as changes in the construction market occur
- Continued support from the IT Department necessary for the success of the Building Development Enterprise Resource System, online application, and electronic plans reviews
- Prompt filling of vacancies to meet increasing demands for timely service
- Coordinated approach with the Finance Department for invoicing fines, lien processing, and enforcement of Business Tax Receipt (BTR) application and Certificate of Use process
- Legal guidance and accompanying legislation from the City Attorney's Office to establish a local Unsafe Structures Board
- Collaboration and commitment from other City departments to follow-up and resolve service requests
- Prompt turnaround from other departments involved in the Building Development process reviewing plans, issuing permits, and conducting inspections

# BUILDING

## FUTURE OUTLOOK

It is the vision of the Building Department to provide excellent customer service by providing state of the art, cutting-edge technology that will enable this City to provide e-government services to its citizens and as a result become paperless. Online permit applications, electronic permits forms, electronic payments, concurrent electronic plan review, real-time inspection results, and inspection routes are made possible by the technological advances of our time. The Department recognizes the need to work toward that goal in the future.

Other important initiatives for the Department in the future include:

### Short Term 1-2 Years

- Upgrade Building's page of the City's website to make it more interactive and user-friendly
- Continue to improve online/electronic submissions
- Provide better access to the customer regarding inspection requests and other inspection-related information
- Hold annual meetings with the construction industry
- Provide cross-training for employee efficiencies
- Aggressively identify abandoned and unsafe structures throughout the City, and demolishing those structures that pose hazards to the community and its neighborhoods, which have been declared unsafe by an authorized body
- Increase floodplain compliance
- Replace remaining 50% of vehicles with electric and hybrid vehicles.

### Mid Term 3-5 Years

- Create a City Unsafe Board
- Expand the bicycle inspection program
- Cross-train inspectors and plan reviewers for efficiencies and succession planning

### Continuous

- Reorganizing the Department to offer more efficient customer service and delivery of service
- Standardizing licensing for all plan reviewers and inspectors so their services can be utilized interchangeably as needs arise

