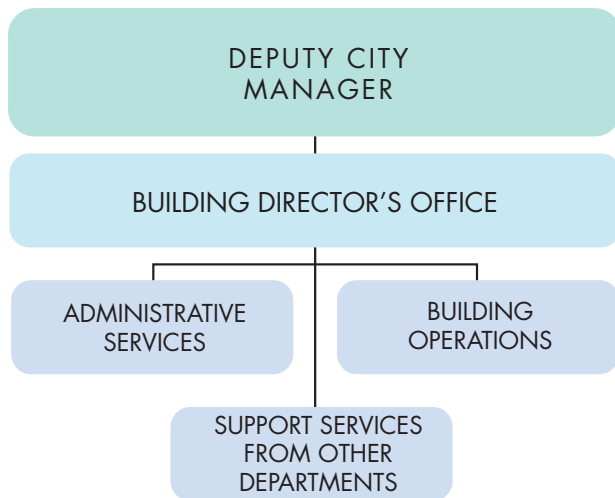


# BUILDING

## 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 our team to use a customer friendly approach as we work with 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 1970s, at the beginning of the modern construction boom. The first law required all municipalities and counties to adopt and enforce one of four state-recognized model codes known as the "state minimum building codes." During the early 1990s, a series of natural disasters, together with the increasing complexity of building construction regulations 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. Systemic failures of building codes brought financial and personal devastation as well as a statewide property insurance crisis. The response was a reform of the state building construction regulatory system that placed greater emphasis on uniformity and accountability.

The 1998 Florida Legislature amended Chapter 553, Florida Statutes, titled "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 As of March 1, 2002, the Florida Building Code superseded all local building codes. It was 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 Building Department is made up of 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.

Operations is responsible for administering the various provisions of the Florida Building Code, including accepting permit applications, reviewing and approving construction plans, inspecting construction work to ensure compliance with approved plans, and issuing violations for those projects where construction is not in compliance with 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 provide for the direct expenditures of the Building Department, including internal service charges and indirect overhead expenditures attributed to departments that provide support to the Building Department. In an effort to improve fiscal transparency, the Building Fund transitioned out of the General Fund into a stand-alone Enterprise Fund which means that revenues into the fund must cover the cost of the expenditures and are held separately to avoid commingling of dollars.

Florida law via Florida Statutes 553.80 governs the use of the fees collected in the Building department and is restricted to only be used for carrying out the local government's responsibilities in enforcing the Florida Building Code.

FY 2022 provided the Building Fund with a recovery to the funding shortfalls in FY 2020 and FY 2021 with higher than expected revenues and lower than expected expenditures due to various position vacancies and department efficiencies implemented.

The Building Department's expenditures are mainly personnel costs, which make up approximately 63% of the budget for FY 2024.

The revenues collected in the Building Department fluctuate with the market economy. Revenue projections for budgeting are based off prior year and quarterly trends.



## STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Main Vision Area:

### Neighborhoods

Management Objectives:



- **Neighborhoods**

- Increase compliance with City Code by creating more incentives for compliance vs. penalties, especially North Beach. Implement controls to prevent issues of unpermitted work or work exceeding permits on City projects.
- Work cooperatively with Miami-Dade County to reduce the possibility of disease outbreaks

- **Environment and Infrastructure**

- Improve our aging drinking water and sewer infrastructure to protect drinking water quality, public health and fire protection

- **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

Strategic Plan Actions:

- **INCREASE** compliance with the Building Code by streamlining the process and providing continued training to the public and applicants on the process
- **RECERTIFY** City-owned buildings, through cooperative efforts of Building and Facilities and Fleet Management Departments
- **CONTINUE** to streamline the permitting process and help applicants understand the process to prevent issues of unpermitted work citywide
- **PROACTIVELY** monitor the City for mosquito breeding grounds and work cooperatively with Miami-Dade County to reduce the possibility of mosquito-transmitted disease
- **REDUCE** environmental impacts by working with DERM – fats, oil and grease program and Class 1 and 2 permitting
- **CONDUCT** an independent consultant process improvement study for development processes
- **CONTINUE** the expedited plan review permitting program for technical and financial services

Budget Enhancement Actions:

- Full-Time Permit Ombudsman Position for Neighborhood Affairs Division (split-funded)

# BUILDING

## BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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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.

The department is improving responsiveness to the needs of homeowners, business owners, developers, contractors, architects and engineers by increasing the lines of communications and various training opportunities.

The department operates in a hybrid fashion in which customers may communicate and submit construction documents either in-person or online or through a combination of both throughout the permitting process.

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

## SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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The department has completed and/or began the following projects/initiatives over the past fiscal year:

- In 2022, the department sent out over 50 email communications regarding useful reminders and tips on the building permit process and hosted 10 training events for the public (in-person and virtual)
- Did a significant outreach effort to recruit inspectors to apply for various vacancies in inspector and plan review positions
- Flood and Building reviews have been combined to reduce our backlog and create a more efficient review process
- Replaced 100% of vehicles in the Building Department fleet with hybrid and electric vehicles



## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

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- Potential impacts to revenues as changes in the construction market occur
- Continued evolution of the software systems necessary for the success of the Building Development Enterprise Resource System, online application, and electronic plans reviews
- Recruiting and promptly filling of vacancies to meet increasing demands for timely service. It has become increasingly challenging to recruit qualified candidates.
- Continued unified efficiency improvements from all 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 offer excellent customer service through state-of-the-art, cutting-edge technology that will enable us to advance the experience for paperless services. Online permit applications, electronic permits forms, electronic payments, concurrent electronic plan review, real-time inspection results and inspection routes are enhanced by technological advances. The department recognizes the need to continuously evolve and improve without losing touch with the public.

Other important initiatives for the department in the future include:

### **Short Term 1-2 Years**

- Complete development process study with outside consultant
- Continue to refine the Building Department page on the City's website to become 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
- Hold quarterly training and feedback sessions with property owners
- Provide cross-training for employees to improve efficiency

### **Mid Term 3-5 Years**

- Cross-train inspectors and plan reviewers for greater efficiency and succession planning

### **Ongoing**

- Streamline and develop the department to offer more efficient customer service and delivery of service

