BerryDunn

City of Miami Beach

Recommendations for Improvement

Version 4.0

MIAMIBEACH

Submitted by:

BerryDunn
2211 Congress Street
Portland, ME 04102-1955
207.541.2200

Kevin Price, Principal
kprice@berrydunn.com

Keri Ouellette, Project Manager
kouellette@berrydunn.com

Submitted on:

October 11, 2023

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Table of Contents	i
1.0 Executive Summary	0
2.0 Introduction	2
2.1 Project Background	2
2.2 Work Performed	2
2.4 Common Terms and Abbreviations	3
2.5 Strengths of the Development Review Process	3
2.5.1 Customer Service	4
2.5.2 Public Information	4
2.5.3 External Stakeholder Training and Engagement	4
2.5.4 Culture of Continuous Improvement	5
2.6 Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement	5
3.0 Trends and Best Practices	12
3.1 Centralized One-Stop Shop for Development Review	12
3.2 CSS/Civic Access Portals and Decision Tree Navigation	12
3.4 Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreements and Certifications	13
3.5 Benchmarking	14
4.0 Recommendations for Improvement	18
4.1 Recommendations for Improvement Approach	18
4.2 Recommendations for Improvement	21
5.0 Next Steps	52
5.1 Upcoming Tasks and Deliverables	52
Appendix A: Current Environment Report and As-Is Process Diagrams	53

1.0 Executive Summary

As the City of Miami Beach (City) continues to experience investment and new development, there has been additional pressure on the City to continue to innovate and streamline the development review process. City staff have been challenged to coordinate processes across departments. The City has several unique features that make it a desirable place to live and visit but they also necessitate a complex regulatory framework to help ensure the safety of residents and visitors and support a more sustainable future for the community.

City staff include dedicated professionals with a range of expertise to address the development challenges of the community. In recent years, the City has moved forward with initiatives to modernize the departments (with the implementation of EnerGov/EPL and eReviews), to enhance information provided to the public on the development review process, and to improve customer service, including implementing customer service standards and establishing regular training and outreach opportunities for the public. Still, City staff face challenges in coordinating a complex review process across multiple City departments and external agencies and communicating policy, process, and state and local code changes to staff and the public. Department and division functions, as they relate to the development review process, have become siloed, making it challenging to implement cross-departmental change.

In February 2023, the City retained Berry Dunn McNeil & Parker, LLC (BerryDunn) to assist in a review of the City's regulations and processes relating to development review. BerryDunn was tasked with assessing the City's development review process, including all involved departments, and providing recommendations for process improvement.

The primary goals for this project as expressed by City leadership include improving customer service, communication with the public, and how the City is perceived by the public as it relates to development.

The following pages describe the work completed by BerryDunn, summarize the findings of the Current Environment Assessment Report, share best practices related to the City's development review challenges, and provide detailed guidance for 12 recommended initiatives to improve the City's development review process. Below are some key observations from interviews, background information, and focus group meetings that guided the development of the recommendations for improvement:

- There is a need for greater clarity and communication in navigating and understanding the City's complex regulations and processes.
- The City has made significant changes to streamline the review process and improve communication with external stakeholders.
- Updates on process improvements, new initiatives, and policy changes could be more effectively communicated to the public.

- Departments are not coordinated in the development review process, either in communication to the public or internally to manage or improve processes.
- Departments have not fully leveraged the tools and technology that are currently available to staff.

2.0 Introduction

This section of the report describes the background of the project, work performed, common terms and abbreviations, and a summary of challenges and opportunities identified in the Current Environment Assessment.

2.1 Project Background

The City has retained BerryDunn to assist in a review of the City's regulations and processes relating to development review. The focus of the project is to review, diagram, and evaluate the City's current business practices; prepare an analysis of the City's current environment; solicit feedback from the development community; and provide recommendations for service improvement.

2.2 Work Performed

In April 2023, BerryDunn conducted an initial project planning meeting with the City project team to clarify project goals and objectives, identify known project constraints, and refine project dates and tasks. Following the meeting, BerryDunn requested information from the City to become more familiar with the current environment.

In April 2023, BerryDunn administered a web survey to external stakeholders through the project website developed on Social Pinpoint. The City disseminated an information letter with a link to the Social Pinpoint website to a list with over 30,000 contacts. The purpose of this survey was to provide an understanding of the current challenges in the development review environment. In April 2023, BerryDunn also conducted virtual focus groups with external stakeholders. In May 2023, BerryDunn conducted a series of fact-finding meetings and as-is process diagramming meetings. During the fact-finding meetings, BerryDunn conducted on-site observations and interviews with external stakeholders in the development community, City staff, and City leadership. Current processes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement were also documented.

As follow-up to the fact-finding meetings, BerryDunn conducted an as-is diagramming process and documented the City's process steps in Microsoft Visio. The as-is diagramming helped to identify challenges and opportunities in the current environment. During this process, BerryDunn also used data collected from the survey and fact-finding meetings to identify challenges and opportunities for process improvements. These process diagrams are included in the Current Environment Assessment Report as Appendix A of this report.

In June 2023, BerryDunn compiled information from fact-finding meetings, diagramming sessions, and meetings with external stakeholders into the Current Environment Assessment Report. This report outlined current business processes, as well as strengths and challenges with the existing process. The report included primary challenges and opportunities for improvement, which is the basis for establishing recommendations for improvement. BerryDunn shared the report with City staff for review. The report was finalized in July 2023.

2.4 Common Terms and Abbreviations

The following table contains common terms and abbreviations used throughout the report, along with associated definitions and explanations.

Table 2.1: Common Terms and Abbreviations

Common Terms and Abbreviations	
Term	**Definition**
BerryDunn	Berry Dunn McNeil & Parker, LLC
BPI	Building Permit Initiation
CAPM	Certified Associate in Project Management
City	City of Miami Beach
County	Miami-Dade County
CPMP	Construction Parking Management Plan
CSS	Citizen Self-Service
EPL	Enterprise Permitting and Licensing (formerly EnerGov)
External Stakeholder	External stakeholders of the City of Miami Beach's development community that also may be previous, current, or future customers of the City
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
Issue	A point or matter in question or in dispute, or a point or matter that is not settled and is under discussion or over which there are opposing views or disagreements
IT	Information Technology
PIC	Process Improvement Committee
PMT	Project Management Team
ROW	Right-of-Way
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SME	Subject Matter Expert

2.5 Strengths of the Development Review Process

This project focused on identifying opportunities to improve process and service delivery; however, strengths were observed during BerryDunn's analysis. The primary strengths are summarized below.

2.5.1 Customer Service

During fact-finding interviews with staff members, it was evident that Miami Beach has staff members who are dedicated to what they do and believe in the City's ability to improve and be successful. Additionally, many external stakeholders discussed that the staff members care about what they do and are supportive and invested in helping them through the process. The City also has established Service Excellence standards, which guide the City's customer service model and outline expectations for City staff when interacting with the public through a variety of mediums.

The City conducts a yearly satisfaction survey. Results are published publicly. In addition, the Building Department has a customer service survey that is shared with all customers. Feedback from these surveys have resulted in changes to improve communication and provide more opportunities for stakeholders to communicate with staff.

2.5.2 Public Information

The City provides a significant number of resources on its website. The Building Department's interactive permit guide is an innovative tool that helps applicants visualize what renovations or remodels may require a permit. Customers can click through different renovation scenarios to determine if they need a permit and what permit they should apply for. Department websites contain detailed checklists, application forms, and frequently asked questions (FAQs) about individual department processes. The Building Department has also created a standard operating procedures (SOPs) document that is shared on the department website, outlining procedures for each step from permit intake to construction completion. The SOPs provide specific instructions and department policies related to different Building Department functions and processes (e.g., contractor requirements, electronic plan review, payments). Department websites contain information for applicants to navigate individual processes as they pertain to that specific department.

2.5.3 External Stakeholder Training and Engagement

Building Department staff host informational sessions about the development review process with members of the community on different topics, including building recertification, building code changes, and private provider training. The department also hosts monthly Citizen Self-Service (CSS) sessions to help customers navigate the permit application process. These sessions have helped applicants submit more complete applications and learn about the City's submission portal and processes. These sessions can help build trust between the City and community and help applicants work through any pain points that they are experiencing.

The Building Department also hosts quarterly industry meetings to gather feedback from stakeholders. These meetings were initiated in 2019 and provide opportunities for the development community to provide feedback to the City on the review process.

2.5.4 Culture of Continuous Improvement

Miami Beach has forward-thinking staff members who work on business process improvements to help their departments become more effective and efficient. This helps build a foundation for success in implementing recommendations and working through future challenges. Some examples of recent improvements to the development review process include streamlining the construction parking management plan (CPMP) review process for certain sub-permits and developing how-to guides and videos to assist applicants in the permitting process.

Based on data from the City's Building Department Dashboard, the average time that it took for an application to go through the process and become an issued permit was reduced from 137.5 days to 86.7 days from January 2022 to December 2022. The average amount of time that it took for an application to become finalized was reduced from 260.3 days to 109.8 days from January 2022 to December 2022.

2.6 Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement

BerryDunn identified 15 challenges as a result of the project planning, fact-finding, process diagramming, and external stakeholder outreach activities completed to date. The challenges identified in Table 2.2 present the overall or primary challenges and opportunities for improvement that BerryDunn identified as themes from key functional areas in the City.

Table 2.2: Current Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement

Current Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement		
No.	**Challenges**	**Opportunities**
1	**The development review process is layered and complex.** The City's unique geographical location and significant historic districts require specialized review by various boards, departments, and external government agencies. As a result, this process can be confusing for applicants. The City's website does not provide clear guidance on full requirements for the process. There is also some redundancy in reviews by City staff. For example, some sub-permits are required to be applied for separately, even if these items are reviewed during the review of the master permit application. This adds additional time for both the applicant and City staff.	The City should consider eliminating duplicate review processes where it is possible to do so without compromising safety or compliance. If greater responsibility is placed with the applicant to identify changes made when resubmitting plans, reviews by departments that have already approved a project could be eliminated in certain circumstances. Additionally, where applicants provide sufficient detail at the time of the initial building permit application, some sub-permits could be created, reviewed, and issued concurrently with the master permit.

Current Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement		
No.	**Challenges**	**Opportunities**
2	**Permit intake staff are not sufficiently trained to conduct a thorough completeness check at intake.** Plans are often approved for review with missing information or a scope of work that does not match the permit type or plans. Staff often use the first review as a completeness check to get the appropriate documentation from applicants.	The City should consider offering training for permit intake staff on how to read plans and what should be included in an application for a specific permit type. Increasing the ability of permit intake staff to conduct more thorough completeness checks can help ensure that reviews are routed to the correct review disciplines and help ensure that all required information is included in the application. This can increase the time that review staff have to review applications because the first review would not serve as a completeness check.
3	**Publicly available information on the development review process does not provide clear guidance on process requirements.** External stakeholders have noted that information on the City's website is not coordinated or presented in a way that provides clear guidance on the steps in the process or requirements for specific project types, including when certain permits, reviews, or public hearings are required.	The City detailed information about specific aspects of the development review process. Improvements to the organization of this information and coordinating information provided by all departments could help to improve the review process and the quality of plan and permit applications. The City should consider establishing a decision tree in CSS to help applicants navigate the permit process and determine which permit type they should apply for. The City should also consider creating a document that defines what types of projects would fall under a particular permit type to help applicants better understand what to apply for. The City should also consider housing all of the development review requirements for each department under one centralized location. Currently, requirements are listed on each department's webpage and can be hard for applicants to find information, especially when one project requires review by and/or separate permits from multiple departments or agencies. Application checklists and guides for various departments could be centralized in one location. The City should also consider providing flow charts for complex permit types to help applicants navigate the development review process.

Current Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement		
No.	**Challenges**	**Opportunities**
4	**Some process steps and functions happen manually, which is time consuming for staff and can result in delays due to human error or inconsistency due to lack of staff training.** Staff reported that there are several processes that happen manually, including the calculation of parking fees and assigning reviewers to an application. EnerGov automatically adds all review disciplines to a review, and permit intake staff must manually remove reviewers who are not required to review an application. Some statuses in EnerGov are manually changed by staff, and the change is often not reflected in CSS for the applicant. Staff are not easily able to access data on the removal of parking spaces.	The City should consider exploring additional functionality and workflows in EnerGov to eliminate manual processes. This can decrease the amount of time that staff are using to conduct manual tasks and reduce human error. The City should consider adding permanent parking space removal as a sub-permit or as an additional layer of review in the building permit process. Building out a workflow to track and review parking space removal will allow staff to be able to easily track the number of spaces removed, assess fees, and create reports.
5	**Coordination and communication among departments involved with the development review process is inconsistent.** With several departments and agencies involved in the review process, there are several points at which better internal communication could improve efficiency for both staff and the applicant. Staff have noted that changes requested by one reviewer/department can impact the review of another department, or one reviewer's comments may conflict with another reviewer's comments. Also, a certain project scope may require a sub-permit from another department (tree permit, ROW permit).	The City should consider establishing standards for internal communication and coordinate to help ensure consistent and efficient reviews. When internal communication improves, this will have a direct positive impact on external communication to customers and will increase transparency and predictability for applicants. The City should also consider establishing one point of contact for the applicant during their review. Currently, each reviewer leaves their contact information in their comments, and applicants often reach out with questions or lobby each reviewer for different responses. Establishing one point of contact for the project can streamline communication with the applicant.

Current Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement		
No.	**Challenges**	**Opportunities**
6	**There is a lack of consistency in communication and responsiveness across City departments.** While several external stakeholders noted that staff are responsive and helpful, it has also been reported that there is inconsistency in responsiveness from staff within and across departments.	The City has developed Service Excellence standards that should be followed to the greatest extent possible. Consider working with the City's customer service team on monitoring progress in complying to standards and identifying areas for improvement.
7	**The land use board review process is long.** It can take three to four months for a hearing to be held and if the applicant needs to reappear before a board, it can take an additional three to four months for that hearing to be scheduled.	The City should consider prioritizing current applications for land use board agendas to streamline the process and reduce the time between hearings, provided the applicant is able to submit the necessary information in the appropriate time frame. Other opportunities to streamline the board approval process can include board training and enhancements to staff report documents that can help to keep the board discussion focused on the codes and requirements of the applications. A consent agenda for a specified and limited number of application types may also provide the opportunity to delegate reviews to staff while also providing high-level board oversight. The City may also consider adding meeting dates during peak seasons of the year or establishing a policy for holding special meetings on a limited basis to accommodate more land use board applications when needed.

Current Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement		
No.	**Challenges**	**Opportunities**
8	**EnerGov is not being used consistently across departments and is not being used to its full capacity.** Staff knowledge of the system and its functionality varies among departments. There is no process for identifying and coordinating global system changes and no cross-departmental work group or other collaboration on addressing system issues or making system changes.	BerryDunn has noted several opportunities where improvements to system configuration could help to improve efficiency, reduce the chance of human error in data entry, improve communication and transparency, and streamline the review process. The City should consider reestablishing a change control/advisory group to help ensure that changes made to the system are implemented appropriately and done with consideration for all end-user groups. In coordination with the change control/advisory group, the City should consider establishing functional EnerGov leads for each department/division. The role of functional leads could be to facilitate communication among users across departments, coordinate with IT on configuration changes and updates, share system knowledge with internal department staff, and assist with developing system training and training manuals.
9	**County and State agency reviews can cause significant delays in the development review process.** When external approval is required, City staff are not able to approve projects until the applicants submit plans that are approved by the County or State. Several external stakeholders noted that county and state review processes can add one to two months to the building permit process.	Comprehensive guidance on process requirements, including county and state processes, could help ensure that applicants are aware of all required approvals when they begin the process. The City may also consider opportunities to coordinate messaging to the public with county and state agencies to help ensure consistency in information received by applicants.

Current Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement		
No.	**Challenges**	**Opportunities**
10	**External stakeholders call and email about the status of reviews as well as requests to take review permit applications out of order, taking up significant staff time.** Staff noted that they spend a significant amount of time responding to calls and emails from applicants and expediters asking about the status of their review or to review their application sooner. Often, customers are requesting information that can be obtained via the CSS portal. Time spent responding to emails and calls takes away from the time that reviewers can spend reviewing applications and meeting with applicants when reviews are necessary.	The City should consider establishing one point of contact for the applicant during their review. Currently, each reviewer leaves their contact information in their comments, and applicants often reach out with questions or lobby each reviewer for different responses. Establishing one point of contact for the project can streamline communication with the applicant.
11	**Some fees are added and calculated manually, and fees are added at different points in the process.** Fees are sometimes miscalculated based on incorrect information provided by the applicant, which requires manually changing the fee and, if paid, refunding the original fee amount. Applicants often miscalculate the valuation of their project or the square footage or do not understand how to correctly determine these numbers for fee calculation. Staff also noted that separate revision fees are assessed by each department, typically a per-page fee, which may result in the applicant receiving multiple invoices for revision fees at different points in the review process.	The City could consider system configuration changes that would allow for automatic calculation of fees. In addition, strategically timing the assessment and invoicing of fees would create consistency for the applicant. For example, if project valuation or square footage needs to be confirmed by a technical reviewer, the workflow could be adjusted to have fees assessed later in the process to reduce the number of manual fee changes and refunds that need to be processed.

Current Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement		
No.	**Challenges**	**Opportunities**
12	**Reviews may be assigned, and inspections and sub-permits added to permits where they are not required,** causing confusion for applicants and delays in the process. Staff noted that inspections are plan reviews are automatically added to a permit application based on the permit type. Since one permit type covers a variety of project scopes (e.g., residential alteration could be entirely interior or include exterior work) all inspections and reviews that could be required are added, resulting in inspections and reviews often being added when they are not required.	System configuration changes and additional training for permit clerks could help to streamline the review process and help ensure that permit applications are routed correctly. The City should consider having the reviewer from each department be responsible for confirming that their department's required inspections have been automatically added to the workflow.
13	**Applicants may apply for a sub-permit instead of a revision to the master permit, causing delays or inconsistencies between the master permit and sub-permits.** Exterior alterations, like windows or railings, require a revision to the master permit, unless the change is the same as the master permit. Applicants often apply for only a sub-permit, and projects are delayed until an additional application for a revision is submitted for review.	Clear and consistent language regarding the revision and sub-permit processes could help to reduce confusion by applicants. Additionally, the City should consider updating or adding descriptive language or questions on revision and sub-permit applications to better guide applicants to the correct process.
14	**Review comments can be unclear and inconsistent.** External stakeholders noted that review comments were often unclear and varied between reviewers. Each department has its own standards for providing review comments. This was confirmed through BerryDunn's review of a random sample of review comments.	The City should consider establishing standards for review comments, including required elements like links to external agencies, requiring a narrative of changes, and reviewer contact information. Some departments currently have standard comments that all reviewers use to respond to common changes. Each department should consider establishing "canned" review comments that reviewers can use. This list or library of comments should be reviewed regularly for consistency in language, tone, clarity, etc.

3.0 Trends and Best Practices

This section includes trends and best practice considerations for the City of Miami Beach based on BerryDunn's experience and research conducted in developing the recommendations contained in this report.

3.1 Centralized One-Stop Shop for Development Review

Some municipalities have consolidated development review information into a one-stop-shop. Having information on the development review process in one central location can help applicants better navigate the process and reduce the chance that applicants miss information that is housed on different departments' websites.

The City of Miami's Permitting Landing Page includes guides on the permitting process, how to submit a permit application, information on in-progress projects, and resources for various phases of the review cycle. The permit catalog page directs users to step-by-step instructions for different permit types and includes links to relevant forms, guidelines, ordinances, and websites for external approval agencies.

The City of Grand Prairie, TX has a permitting landing page that includes information on specific permit types, licenses, and contractor registration information. Under each permit or license type, an applicant can view the specific information needed to apply for that permit or license. The city shares review requirements, including the application for the permit type, and information on how to apply for a permit in the city's Customer Self-Service portal.

The City of Tampa, FL Construction Services Department's website has information on online permitting and inspections, information on different residential and commercial permit types, fee estimators, and design professional and contractor resources. Under residential and commercial permits, applicants can click on the over 70 permit types that the city has and get information on permit applications, fees, plan review, inspections, and project closeout.

By setting up a central online location for development review information, customers will be more likely to understand the full process and less likely to miss key information or requirements. For example, listing additional permits that may be required from other departments (Parking, Public Works) for a new construction project will improve awareness of these requirements and streamline the process. Additionally, laying out a clear, step-by-step process for the applicant will provide applicants with an understanding of the sequence of steps required and the timeline for review, which will help to set expectations for the process.

3.2 CSS/Civic Access Portals and Decision Tree Navigation

Several large municipalities with complex regulatory environments have updated their customer portals to implement current technology available through Civic Access (CSS). Integrating a well-organized municipal website with the CSS portal is a best practice for assisting customers in navigating a lot of complex information most efficiently.

In addition to a development review process landing page, the City of Overland Park, KS has a robust Civic Access portal that allows customers to submit permit applications, defines each permit type, shares daily inspections and routes, and includes a fee estimator.

The City of Boulder, CO has developed a user-friendly CSS landing page with cards (or links) to the most commonly requested information and services. When a user navigates to the “Apply” page, they are given an option to use the decision tree functionality to have the system assist the applicant in identifying the correct application type, rather than requiring applicants to scroll through a long list of application types.

The City of McKinney, TX has built a smart development guide (Development Navigation Assistant, or DNA) to allow applicants to instantly get answers to questions about their project and receive a custom, step-by-step guide to the development review process for their project. The program uses a smart rule engine to build logic behind the guide. After entering project information, including size, use, location, and answering a series of guided questions, the program will provide a customized guide with specific tasks to be completed by the applicant. Applicants can log into the system to review the list and track their own progress.

3.4 Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreements and Certifications

Indemnification and hold harmless agreements are contracts that protects one party from losses, damages, or other responsibilities caused by another party. By entering an agreement, the other party agrees to not hold the initial party liable for certain risks.

Several Florida communities use indemnification and hold harmless agreements to protect the municipality from liability related to construction and development activities. Some examples can be found from the City of Miami, the City of Tampa, and the City of Fort Lauderdale. The City of Miami requires applicants to submit an indemnification/hold harmless affidavit as part of the permitting application process. The City of Miami Beach requires an indemnification and hold harmless agreement for phased construction. By signing the affidavit, the applicant acknowledges potential risks associated with the issued permit for phased work and agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the City from any claims arising out of or in connection with the issued permit. A similar agreement or affidavit could be used during the plan review process to help ensure that applicants correctly document changes and to require that applicants take responsibility for any undocumented changes.

To address and streamline the plan review corrections process, the City of Chicago requires all building permit applications submitted through their standard review process to follow the Certified Plan Corrections program. This program is only applicable to building permit applications. If a design professional agrees and accepts all plan reviewer comments and does not have additional changes, the design professional may assume responsibility for compliance without needing additional plan review. The design professional(s) must address all plan reviewer comments, and all changes must be clouded, dated, and initialed. Along with a

summary sheet that lists each correction, outlines the changes, and list the sheet(s) were the changes were made, the design professional is required to submit a certified correction form that must be signed and sealed by the architect and engineer(s). The project team must respond to corrections or complete tasks within 120 days.

To help ensure that reviewer comments are addressed, the City of Miami Beach could consider including a similar affidavit or certification. Applicants could be required to document changes through a resubmittal cover letter or narrative as well as clearly clouding changes on plans. This would place greater responsibility on the applicants to address reviewer comments adequately and would facilitate the review of resubmittals. When the resubmittal is routed, reviewers would only need to review changes rather than the full permit application. Additionally, requiring design professionals to certify that no other changes have been made will help to ensure that plan changes impacting another department's approval are identified and reviewed.

Placing greater responsibility with the applicant and design professional would streamline the resubmittal process. Applicants would be responsible for addressing reviewer comments clearly and transparently, and City staff would have documentation of what changes were made.

3.5 Benchmarking

Peer comparisons, or benchmarking, can provide useful insights into how Miami Beach compares with other organizations' development review operations. The environment Miami Beach operates within is unique in many ways, including demographics, community characteristics, economic characteristics, geographic characteristics, and organizational and fiscal structure. The City also operates in a unique regulatory environment that differs from other municipalities. That said, the selection of peers for comparison attempts to reflect as closely as possible the attributes of Miami Beach, including population or volume of permits processed.

Peer communities were based on proximity to Miami Beach, total population, and/or similar number of building permits processed. Data comes from U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permit and Inspection Utilization Reports, and information on an organization's website.

Table 3.1: Peer Community Benchmarking

City	Population	Building permits		Inspections		Permit and inspections staff (FTE)
		Annual applications submitted	Annual permits issued/ approved	Annual inspection requested	Annual inspections conducted	
Miami Beach	80,671	14,692 (Includes revisions. Does not include Fire permits.)	11,847	58,846	58,846	70*
Miami	439,890	24,953	27,790	176,534	148,429	231

City	Population	Building permits		Inspections		Permit and inspections staff (FTE)
		Annual applications submitted	Annual permits issued/ approved	Annual inspection requested	Annual inspections conducted	
Coral Gables (2019)	48,375	10,639	10,006	37,121	32,435	15
Boca Raton (2020-2021)	95,787	12,446	12,670	99,627	99,627	65
Daytona Beach	74,437	7,164	7,115	33,803	33,803	23
St. Petersburg	258,201	24,468	36,814	77,777	72,078	85.5
Clearwater	116,674	12,169	11,821	26,253	24,640	28.2

*Approximately 70 employees are dedicated to the permitting and inspections process in Miami Beach, though the Building Permit and Inspection Utilization Report lists 90 in FY22. Per the City's Building Department, the 90 FTE includes staff that are not directly involved with processing permits and conducting inspections.

Data in Table 3.1 comes from each municipality's Building Permit and Inspection Utilization Report. The data give a comparison of the number of applications and inspections conducted by each organization compared to their total population. All data is from FY22 unless noted in the table. Permitting and Inspection staff (FTE) data comes from data listed in each municipality's Building Permit and Inspection Utilization Report in FY22. Data comes from the row titled "Number of personnel dedicated by the local government to enforce the Florida Building Code, issue permits and conduct inspections."

Compared to communities of similar populations, like Daytona Beach, Miami Beach receives and reviews a significantly greater number of permit applications. Clearwater and Boca Raton have similar coastal geographies and are both located in a larger metropolitan area, like Miami Beach's proximity to Miami. Though both Clearwater (26.1 sq. mi.) and Boca Raton (29.2 sq. mi.) have larger populations and larger geographic areas, Miami Beach (7.6 sq. mi.) processed more permits. Miami and St. Petersburg are larger cities that process roughly 10,000 more permits per year than Miami Beach but have larger populations and land areas.

It is considered a best practice to share the average time or target time that it takes to review a permit on a municipality's website or public-facing document. Miami Beach shares this information publicly through the Building Department Dashboard. Miami Beach staff also share the review timelines with applicants once their applications have been submitted. The form and availability of review time frames varies between jurisdictions, and it can be difficult to find consistent data and metrics in comparable jurisdictions. The information summarized below

includes the publicly available information from jurisdictions of similar geography, size, or permits processed per year to Miami Beach.

The City of Miami shared that first round of plan review typically takes 14 days. Special permits (requiring special planning and/or zoning review) can take up to 35 days.

The City of Fort Lauderdale shared that “approval times vary based on complexity and workload but we generally attempt to review permit applications within 30 working days.”

The City of Fort Meyers shared more specific information on the average plan review time frame based on permit type:

- Single-Family New/Remodel
    - Average Days for Intake: 3 Days
    - Average Days in Plan Review: 7 Days
    - Average Days for Processing After Plan Review: 2 Days
    - Average Total Days: 12 Days
- Commercial New/Remodel
    - Average Days for Intake: 3 Days
    - Average Days in Plan Review: 17 Days
    - Average Days for Processing After Plan Review: 2 Days
    - Average Total Days: 22 Days
- Multi-Family New/Remodel
    - Average Days for Intake: 3 Days
    - Average Days in Plan Review: 13 Days
    - Average Days for Processing After Plan Review: 2 Days
    - Average Total Days: 18 Days

The City of Clearwater shared target review time frames based on plan type:

- Residential: 4 business days
- FEMA Non-Substantial Residential: 10 business days
- Small Commercial: 7 business days
- Small Interior Build-Outs: 7 business days
- Large Commercial projects with Site Work: 12 business days
- Plans Resubmitted to Address Staff Comments: 3 business days

Other comparable communities, including Boca Raton, Daytona Beach, St. Petersburg, Tampa, and Coral Gables, do not have average or target plan review time frames publicly listed.

The City of Miami Beach's average review timelines are listed below:

- Single-Family Residential New/ Remodel
  - Average intake 2 days
  - Average Plan Review 12 days (all departments)
  - Average Processing After Plan Review 2 days
  - Average Total 16 days
- Commercial New/Remodel
  - Average intake 2 days
  - Average Plan Review 15 days (all departments)
  - Average Processing After Plan Review 2 days
  - Average Total 19 days
- Multi-family New/Remodel
  - Average intake 2 days
  - Average Plan Review 15 days (all departments)
  - Average Processing After Plan Review 2 days
  - Average Total 19 days
- Work force housing & Commercial (new Business)
  - Average intake 1 day
  - Average Plan Review 7 days (all departments)
  - Average Processing After Plan Review 2 days
  - Average Total 10 days

The City of Miami Beach's review times are generally in line with other Florida communities and are shorter than many large cities (with similar development review complexity as Miami Beach) which typically have turnaround times anywhere from 10 business days to more than 30 business days.

Largely missing from comparable community timelines is the average number of days that it takes to go from application to permit issuance, which Miami Beach publicly shares. Specific time frames for City review are helpful in establishing when applicants should receive comments from staff or approval. It can also be helpful to share the average number of reviews and/or the average time to go from application submittal to issuance or final status. Having target review time frames and the average timeline for permit issuance can help clarify for applicants on how long it can take to receive a permit and incentivize them to submit complete applications and respond to comments in a timely manner to keep the review time frame shorter.

4.0 Recommendations for Improvement

This section identifies opportunities for improvement based on review of the Current Environment Assessment, fact-finding, and interviews with business partners. This section will include prioritized recommended improvements, including current environment challenges to be addressed.

4.1 Recommendations for Improvement Approach

As a result of fact-finding, external stakeholder focus group meetings, survey results, information provided by the City, and best practice research, BerryDunn has identified and recommended projects and initiatives to support the City's development review process and address challenges identified in Section 2.0 of this report and in the Current Environment Assessment Report. Using the following four prioritization categories below, BerryDunn developed a sequential list of projects and initiatives:

- **Priority Rank:** The overall prioritization based on the recommended timeline for implementation.
- **Relative Benefit:** The anticipated overall benefit to the City upon completion of the particular recommendation.
- **Ease of Implementation:** The anticipated ease of implementing the recommendation. Considerations for this category include anticipated resources needed for the project or initiative and the scope of the project or initiative.
- **Best Practice:** The established procedures to emerging trends will be identified for the recommendation.

Table 4.1.1: Prioritization Categories

Prioritization Categories			
Priority Rank	**Relative Benefit**	**Ease of Implementation**	**Best Practice**
High	High	Difficult	Bleeding Edge
Medium	Medium	Medium	Leading Edge

Prioritization Categories			
Priority Rank	**Relative Benefit**	**Ease of Implementation**	**Best Practice**
 Low	 Low	 Easy	 Established

Based upon the application of the prioritization categories, BerryDunn developed the following 12 projects and initiatives, listed in sequential order. Each project or initiative has an associated table with a description, source information, related issues and challenges, prioritization category rankings, anticipated benefits, potential risks, action items to implement the project or initiative, and recommended timeline.

Table 4.1.2: Prioritized List of Projects and Initiatives

Prioritized List of Projects and Initiatives	
No.	**Project/Initiative Name**
1	Establish development review process guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs)
2	Improve consistency in the use of EnerGov
3	Improve efficiency of the plan review process
4	Improve EnerGov workflows
5	Develop a more efficient and robust permit intake process
6	Streamline the permit review process
7	Streamline the land use board process
8	Centralize all development review application information
9	Establish a process for the adoption and communication of City development regulatory changes
10	Improve consistency and responsiveness in external communication
11	Improve use of CSS
12	Centralize process improvement and establish a governance process

BerryDunn has organized each project and initiative based on the template below:

Table 4.1.3: Recommendation for Improvement Template

Recommendation Name			
Description			
Description: *This section of the template will contain a description of the challenges and recommendation.*			
Related Issue(s)			
This section of the template will identify the challenges related to this recommendation.			
Prioritization Category Rankings			
Priority Rank	**Relative Benefit**	**Ease of Implementation**	**Best Practices**
Rating of Recommendation (High, Medium, Low)	*Rating of the Relative Benefit (High, Medium, Low)*	*Rating of the Ease of Implementation (Easy, Medium, Difficult)*	*Rating Best Practices (Established, Leading Edge, Bleeding Edge)*
Action Items to Implement			
This section of the template will contain a list of the action items that are needed to implement the recommendation.			
Anticipated Benefits			
This section of the template will contain a list of the anticipated benefits of the recommendation.			
Risks			
This section of the template will describe potential risks during implementation or if the initiative is not implemented.			
Implementation Timeline			
This section of the template will provide guidance on when the initiative should be implemented and dependency on other initiatives.			
Best Practice Considerations			
This section of the template will contain a description of best practices related to this recommendation.			

4.2 Recommendations for Improvement

Table 4.2.1: Establish development review process guidelines and SOPs

Establish development review process guidelines and SOPs	
Description	
	**Description:** The City should leverage the existing SOPs and process guidance documents to enhance coordination of departments in the development review process. The updated SOP should encompass all department requirements and processes related to the development review process and provide a sequential list of tasks and requirements from project initiation through construction completion. The City can build upon existing documentation to coordinate and consolidate information into a complete document of all development review procedures. Using SOPs to internally coordinate the development review process can also help to embed consistency and quality control in the process. Departments can build upon the existing Building Department SOPs to include standards to be incorporated across departments for cross-departmental tasks such as electronic plan review, closing out permits, and assessing fees. Clear and consistent standards for communication will help to increase clarity and predictability for applicants, which can help with planning project schedules and resources. Guidelines can help illustrate the sequencing of steps in the development review process and the hand-offs between departments and agencies. Guidelines can also clarify when County, State, and other external agency review may be required and at what point in the process these agencies should be engaged. Guidelines should be developed for project types and should incorporate and coordinate existing documentation, such as permit checklists, forms, and guidance on review by external agencies. Expanding the SOPs and guidelines to be consistent and inclusive of all departments and divisions in the development review process will help to communicate clear expectations to internal staff and customers and will help ensure that there is consistency in managing and processing applications. The SOPs and guidelines can also be supplemented with the use of visual aids, such as workflow diagrams. The City's interactive guides can be leveraged to help illustrate the required steps in the process.
Related Issue(s)	
• Coordination and communication among departments involved with the development review process is inconsistent. • Publicly available information on the development review process does not provide clear guidance on the sequencing of steps in the development review process.	
Prioritization Category Rankings	

Priority Rank	Relative Benefit	Ease of Implementation	Best Practices

Establish development review process guidelines and SOPs			
			

Action Items to Implement

- ☑ **Task 1: Identify subject matter experts (SMEs) from each department in the development review process.** Staff members will participate in the updates to the existing SOP and guidelines and development of new documents. They will help coordinate department feedback on the development and updates to the documents.
- ☑ **Task 2: Review existing SOP and guidance documents and identify any gaps as they relate to the development review process.** SMEs will work together to review each document and identify department processes and tasks that should be added or clarified (e.g., elevator review, CPMP requirements). The current Building Department SOP provides clear guidance for Building Department processes. Other department's procedures that are part of the development review process should be identified and included in the revised SOP.
- ☑ **Task 3: Develop an updated internal SOP document that includes all policies and procedures related to the development review process.** Department SMEs should work together to incorporate all tasks and policies into one internal SOP document. This development review SOP document should be organized sequentially and should also clearly indicate which department maintains responsibility for each policy or task (e.g., color-coding). A standard format for policies and procedures should be used throughout the document to make it easy to navigate and to facilitate updates to the document. New procedures identified to be included in the SOP could follow the same format as the current SOP document.
- ☑ **Task 4: Identify the most common development review processes.** The City SME team should identify which permit or project types are most common to begin developing external guidance documents for (e.g., commercial alteration, single-family home). The guidance documents will pull together existing information (building permit checklists, land use board instructions, CPMP application form, etc.) to make the process and requirements easier to understand for applicants follow.
- ☑ **Task 5: A universal guideline template should be used to create consistency in format among guidelines.** Before creating guidelines, develop a uniform template for all guideline documents. This can help make the process easier to navigate from one process to the next for staff and applicants and will facilitate the development of new guidelines.
- ☑ **Task 6: Develop process guidelines that incorporate tasks across all relevant departments and agencies.** The staff members from the respective departments should be involved in developing new public-facing guidelines using the templates. Leverage the knowledge and experience of SMEs in each development review process to help ensure requirements and policies are accurately captured. Guidelines should be developed for use by applicants and should clearly illustrate the sequencing of steps and requirements in the development review process. Guidelines should include (or direct applicants to) more detailed information such as the building permit submission checklists, contact information for external review agencies, or how-to guides and videos. Each process guideline (e.g., new commercial building) will serve as the central point of information for the entire review process and link to or incorporate the City's

Establish development review process guidelines and SOPs
existing informational resources, including permit checklists, fee schedules, ordinances, and other relevant documents and resources. For example, a new commercial construction guidance document would begin with necessary land use board approvals (including steps to apply and reference to documents and department contacts) and also include the building permit application process (with reference to the existing building permit application checklist), other sub-permits that may be required, external agency approvals that may be required, required inspections, and requirements to obtain a certificate of occupancy. ☑ **Task 7: Use visual aids to help supplement the SOP and guidelines.** Using visual aids such as workflow diagrams and expanding the interactive permit guides can provide applicants and staff with visual navigation for the development review process. The interactive permit guides could direct users to guidelines, where appropriate, in addition to the existing checklists. Workflow diagrams should include each step of the development review process for each respective department. Workflow diagrams can also include narratives that describe the required documents for submittal, what happens during plan review, how fees are assessed, and what to expect during an inspection. The City also has innovative interactive guides and how-to videos that can be leveraged to help provide a visual connection with requirements in the process. ☑ **Task 8: Share updated and new SOP and guidelines with departments and external agencies for feedback before finalizing.** Departments should provide feedback on new and updated documents to help ensure that there are no gaps. This step can also be a beta test to help ensure that documents can be easily followed and understood by the public. The Building Department has used the monthly training sessions as an opportunity to share new information or beta test new processes. Using these sessions to obtain feedback on draft documents could help ensure that applicants can easily understand documents. ☑ **Task 9: Finalize SOP and guidelines. When these documents are finalized, all documents should be stored in a central location, digitally.** This catalog should be centrally located and accessible to City staff. The internal SOP should be a living document that is revisited annually, or as needed, to be updated as processes and policies change. Public-facing guidelines should be easily accessible and centrally located on the City website and linked to from the customer portal.
Anticipated Benefits
• Increased efficiency and consistency in how permit applications are processed and managed by City staff • Increased communication and coordination among departments as there are identified hand-off points and documented next steps
Risks
No Action • Continued lack of consistency, clarity, and predictability in the development review process, which can create further frustration for applicants and loss of productivity and efficiency for City staff **During Implementation**

Establish development review process guidelines and SOPs
• Staff would need to prioritize developing and updating SOPs and uniform guidelines. This may cause a shift or a reprioritization with other department initiatives in the development review process.
Implementation Timeline
This initiative should be started immediately. This initiative should take a total of nine months to complete. Tasks 1 and 2 should be completed by the end of Month 2. Tasks 3 and 4 should be completed by the end of Month 4. Tasks 5, 6, and 7 should be completed by the end of Month 7 and Task 8 and 9 should be completed by the end of Month 9. Completion of this initiative will support the implementation of other initiatives in this report and will help to improve internal and external customer service.
Best Practice Considerations
Although creating and maintaining SOPs and guidelines is a best practice, organizations are challenged to maintain documents over time as process and technology changes are implemented. The City of Wilmington, Delaware has developed a development review process manual that lists all steps and necessary permit and approvals required in the residential development process. The process begins with due diligence tasks to be completed prior to submitting a planning application, such as determining zoning and status of utility service to a site and provides guidance through construction completion and submission of as-built drawings. The manual also provides an overview of fees required and references other approvals that may be required depending on project scope and site conditions. The City of Denver, Colorado's Commercial Building Permit Guide provide step-by-step instructions for the permit process and also explain other reviews and approvals that may be required prior to or in conjunction with applying for a building permit.

Table 4.2.2: Improve consistency in the use of EnerGov

Improve consistency in the use of EnerGov	
Description	
	**Description:** Departments are not currently maximizing the functionality of EnerGov (now Enterprise Permitting and Licensing, or EPL) in the development review process. Departments should work with IT to establish an EnerGov work group to be responsible for coordinating EnerGov use and communication on system changes to departments. The advisory group should serve as the change control board to identify system updates that are needed and help to ensure that changes made to the system are implemented appropriately with consideration of all end users. Currently, individual users or department/division heads reach out IT to make configuration changes, which may impact other departments' use of the system. Developing a process for discussing workflow challenges with the work group and identifying system configuration or operational changes that best address the issue will improve communication to all staff users and change management.

Improve consistency in the use of EnerGov	
	All departments with EnerGov end users should be represented in the work group. Members should serve as functional EnerGov leads for the department/division that they represent. They should be provided with more advanced system training to understand basic configuration and system functionality to better support their departments' needs, share system knowledge, and assist in the development of system training and training manuals.

Related Issue(s)

- EnerGov is not being used consistently across departments and is not being used to its full capacity.
- Some process steps and functions happen manually, which is time consuming for staff and can result in delays due to human error or inconsistencies due to lack of training.

Prioritization Category Rankings

Priority Rank	Relative Benefit	Ease of Implementation	Best Practices
			

Action Items to Implement

☑ **Task 1: Establish an EnerGov advisory group.** This group should be cross-functional and consist of representatives from all departments and divisions that use EnerGov. The advisory group should also function as the change control board for system changes. Members should be familiar with their department/division's use of EnerGov to support development review, and membership should include representatives from all departments that use the system.

☑ **Task 2: Create a process for staff to identify issues or suggest system changes.** The advisory group should determine how issues are identified and addressed by the group. This process should be clearly articulated to staff and should be transparent.

☑ **Task 3: Create a standard for reviewing, evaluating, approving or rejecting, prioritizing, and implementing changes.** This process should consider impacts to all end users and alignment with the City's goals.

☑ **Task 4: Implement a system for documenting change requests, decisions, and the changes implemented.** Updates on changes requested and implemented should be shared with end users to keep staff informed about changes and their impacts.

☑ **Task 5: Key staff should be identified to lead the change implementation process in coordination with the IT Department.** Staff leads should work with IT to test and validate changes and monitor the implementation process for any issues.

☑ **Task 6: The advisory group should work with department and City leadership to identify and develop a standard approach to reporting.** The leadership team should identify key performance metrics. The advisory group should work with IT to develop reports or advanced searches that will provide standardized reporting and comparable metrics. The advisory group should support department end users in using the system's advanced search function to track key

Improve consistency in the use of EnerGov
metrics that are specific to their functional area and to monitor areas of concern. Tracking days to begin initial review and days to complete initial review by review type and number of review rounds by permit type could help to identify staffing needs and areas where clarification of public information could help to streamline the process. ☑ **Task 7: Continue to develop and implement EnerGov training materials that are specifically tailored to staff needs.** Materials should include documentation and/or video training on basic system navigation, workflow processes, and specialized training for functional leads. Training materials should be updated to reflect new processes. These materials should be maintained on an employee portal for all staff to access, with guidance provided on which trainings are required or recommended for different roles or departments.
Anticipated Benefits
• Greater awareness of system changes across departments • Improved coordination of system changes to consider and communicate potential impacts to all end users • A thorough change review process to help ensure that a system change has the intended impact and addresses the challenge identified by staff
Risks
No Action • Lack of coordination and communication on EnerGov changes will continue to create challenges for users and may result in a decline in use of EnerGov. **During Implementation** • This initiative requires consistent dedicated staff time and coordination of all involved departments.
Implementation Timeline
This initiative should start immediately, with Task 1 occurring in Month 1. Tasks 2 – 5 should be completed in Month 2. Tasks 6 and 7 should begin in Month 3, and efforts should be ongoing.
Best Practice Considerations
The City and County of San Francisco Human Resources Department maintains an online employee training portal. The portal identifies trainings that are required for certain positions. Training materials consist of guidance documents (PDFs), links to additional resources, and web-based training through the training portal. Once established, this is an effective and efficient way to deploy training to a large number of staff.

Table 4.2.3: Improve efficiency of the plan review process

Improve efficiency of the plan review process	
Description	
	**Description:** Applicants have noted challenges with inefficiencies and inconsistencies in the plan review process. There is currently no standard across departments for marking up plans or drafting plan review comments. While all comments are logged in EnerGov to be viewed by the applicant via the CSS portal, this is not the most effective way for applicants to review comments. City staff are not currently using the full functionality of Bluebeam Revu (Bluebeam) to conduct reviews, mark up plans, coordinate reviews, or provide comments to applicants. The City should develop a consistent approach to plan review, using the tools available, to conduct reviews as efficiently as possible for staff and applicants. The City should communicate clear and consistent expectations for applicants in the review process. Clearly stating and requiring documents in a standard format will allow reviewers to use the tools available through Bluebeam to conduct reviews more efficiently. In addition, standardizing responses to some of the most common application issues that occur during the development review process could help to ensure that there is a consistent and clear message from the City. Standardizing staff responses to topics can help to streamline the process for the applicant and make it more efficient for the City. The City should seek opportunities to strengthen coordination with external agencies to help ensure there is a clear understanding of agency requirements, which will help to better prepare City applicants who need agency approvals.
Related Issue(s)	
• Coordination and communication among departments involved with the development review process is inconsistent. • Review comments can be unclear and inconsistent.	
Prioritization Category Rankings	

Priority Rank	Relative Benefit	Ease of Implementation	Best Practices
			

Action Items to Implement
☑ **Task 1: Conduct an assessment of hardware for all end users.** The assessment should identify gaps between current hardware and recommended hardware for system operations including the use of Bluebeam Revu for marking up and reviewing plans.

Improve efficiency of the plan review process
☑ **Task 2: Acquire necessary hardware.** The City should acquire new hardware for users whose current hardware does not meet the basic standards for system operation. Each department should establish a long-term plan for updating equipment on a rotating basis.
☑ **Task 3: Develop a procedure for internal plan review and markup of plans using Bluebeam.** This should contain the following and should be included in the development review process SOP: • Graphic standards for using common markup tools • Guidelines for adding text comments, hyperlinks, images, etc. • Process for creating a comment summary report in Bluebeam • Guidelines for accepting and reviewing resubmittals (including file naming standards, submitting a complete drawing set, cover letters, requirements for applicants to document corrections, etc.) Using standard markup tools and symbology and providing the drawing file and markup summary will make it easier for the design professional to review and understand the City's comments, especially for larger projects with multiple comments and several different reviewers. The comment summary report should be provided to applicants as a PDF to allow applicants to view a list of comments and view comments within the context of the plans, making it easier to understand and respond.
☑ **Task 4: Establish requirements and enforce for plan submittal and resubmittal.** The City should provide clear requirements and guidelines for plan submission, including naming conventions, cover letters, requiring bookmarks on PDFs of a certain size, requiring resubmittals to include the full set of plans and in the same order as the original submission, and requiring applicants and design professionals to complete a certification of corrections or hold harmless and indemnification agreement for resubmittals. A similar hold harmless agreement or affidavit of compliance as the Building Department currently uses for phased construction could be used to help ensure compliance for resubmittals. Some of these requirements have been documented and are noted on the Building Department's website; however, not all departments and staff are enforcing these requirements consistently, and applicants are often not following the standards when submitting applications. These requirements can be verified at intake, and incomplete or incorrectly submitted documents should not be accepted. Standardization of plan submittal will allow reviewers to use the electronic review tools more effectively and will streamline the review process.
☑ **Task 5: Expand the library of standard review comments in EnerGov.** This library can be organized by functional area with comments categorized by specific topic area (e.g., Fire Prevention – Suppression Systems) and added to and updated as new standard comments are identified and as ordinances change. Functional leads for each review group should be identified to manage the library of review comments for their group. Functional leads should work with department leadership to identify code and ordinance changes that may impact review comments and work with staff to add new standard comments, when appropriate. Establishing standard review comment language will help increase consistency in the plan review process and will streamline the review process by allowing reviewers to access code language without having to refer back to a code book or document.

Improve efficiency of the plan review process
☑ **Task 6: The SOP team should investigate conducting a collaborative review process with the applicant through Bluebeam Sessions.** Creating a Bluebeam session and inviting the applicant/architect/engineer to join the session allows for real-time collaboration. This could decrease review time and the number of review rounds needed, if implemented effectively. Internally, collaboration among City reviewers from different departments could help to improve communication and understanding of different roles of reviewers in other departments. For example, if a building reviewer sees comments from the fire plans reviewer, they will gain a better understanding of what building plan changes may impact Fire Department review.
Anticipated Benefits
• Improve efficiency in the review process through the use of available technology • Improve communication and information sharing among departments/divisions by allowing reviewers to more easily view comments from other reviewers • Provide comments to applicants in a more user-friendly format
Risks
No Action • The plan review process and communication with applicants will continue to be inefficient and inconsistent. **During Implementation** • Success of this initiative requires all reviewers to embrace the use of new technology, which may take time for some staff to become familiar with.
Implementation Timeline
Tasks 1 and 2 should occur in Month 1. Tasks 3 and 4 should occur in Month 4. Task 5 should be started in Month 6 and will be an ongoing initiative. Task 6 should be started once Tasks 1 – 4 have been completed and successfully implemented.
Best Practice Considerations
Within Bluebeam Revu, a reviewer can generate a markup summary of all markups and plan review comments. The summary is a way to publish a report of all markups, making it much simpler to communicate information. The summary can be created as a PDF and attached to the drawing file, allowing for each markup to be linked to the specific sheet in the plan set, making it easier to navigate between the summary and the plan set. The City and County of San Francisco uses Bluebeam for review and provides the option for applicants to join and participate in the Bluebeam session. This allows applicants to view and respond to comments and questions from reviewers in real-time. The City/County provides a user guide for applicants who wish to participate in the Bluebeam session. This process would be most effective for larger projects in which reviewers may have multiple comments or questions that can easily be answered by the project's design professional(s). Allowing the design professional to quickly respond to comments would facilitate the review process without requiring a full round of review and resubmittal to respond to a simple question.

Improve efficiency of the plan review process
The City of Miami has an indemnification/hold harmless affidavit for construction activities. In order to issue a building permit, the affidavit must be completed by the applicant. Some of the terms agreed to by the undersigned include, paying all permit costs and regulatory fees; acknowledging the City may impose conditions on approval; and indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the City from any claims arising out of or in connection with the issued permit. The City of Chicago, IL has clear requirements for submitting plan review corrections and requires design professionals to submit a certification of corrections form to certify compliance with reviewer comments.

Table 4.2.4: Improve EnerGov workflows

Improve EnerGov workflows	
Description	
	**Description:** Through interviews with staff and review of background information, BerryDunn identified several instances where the full functionality of the current system (EnerGov) is not being used effectively. Department end users should work with their identified functional lead (EnerGov work group) and IT to identify challenges in the workflow process and opportunities for improvement through configuration changes that could eliminate manual steps in the process, where possible. Configuration changes can help with accuracy by decreasing the likelihood of human error. Improving accuracy in the process can decrease the likelihood of delays due to time spent on corrective measures. Opportunities to add workflows can help to ensure that all steps and requirements are considered in the review process, which can help create more predictable outcomes for staff and applicants. Implementing automations and notifications for staff can help to improve communication in the process and reduce the opportunity for human error. Additionally, there is not consistency in how EnerGov is used across departments. Improving consistency in workflow setup, automations, and configuration of other functionality will help to improve efficiency and increase use of EnerGov. Greater consistency will make it easier for new employees to learn the system and will help end users to understand workflow processes of other functional areas. Since configuration changes have been made to the system on an ad hoc basis, current configuration of applications, workflows, and automations should be reviewed. The City should identify where improvements could be made to simplify the process or increase consistency.
Related Issue(s)	
• Some process steps and functions happen manually, which is time consuming for staff and can result in delays due to human error or inconsistencies due to lack of staff training. • Reviews may be assigned, or inspections and sub-permits added to permits where they are not required.	
Prioritization Category Rankings	

Improve EnerGov workflows			
Priority Rank	**Relative Benefit**	**Ease of Implementation**	**Best Practices**
			

Action Items to Implement

- ☑ **Task 1: Compile a list of currently configured notifications and automations.** The EnerGov work group should coordinate with the department/division functional leads and IT to identify current notifications and automations. This list should be reviewed for consistency by the EnerGov work group.
- ☑ **Task 2: Review current application types and work classes and associated workflows.** Workflows should be reviewed with staff involved in each process to identify where tasks are redundant or are happening manually. If there are different reviews or tasks triggered by conditions for different permit types and work classes, this should be noted to identify how routing can be automated (e.g., windows being replaced for a residential alteration requires Planning review).
- ☑ **Task 3: Identify where additional defining information is needed for various application types (e.g., elevators).** Additional information collected through custom fields could help to automatically assign, route, or generate workflow. Recommendations to add or update fields should be noted and reviewed by the work group.
- ☑ **Task 4: Identify where automations and notifications should be modified or added to improve workflow.** Based on the information collected in Tasks 1 and 2, potential configuration changes should be noted and reviewed by the work group. Configuration changes should be implemented in a way that is consistent across departments and following the process established by the EnerGov work group.
- ☑ **Task 5: The work group should notify all users of changes before they are implemented and provide training to end uses.** An update email with a summary of all changes including anticipated benefits for staff should be sent to all users prior to the changes being made in the system. In addition, the work group should periodically facilitate system training sessions to help ensure that all users are familiar with recent configuration and process changes.

Anticipated Benefits

- Improve efficiency by automating some tasks
- Improve cross-departmental communication and understanding by establishing standards for system use
- Save staff time by reducing the number of reviews that are assigned incorrectly

Risks

No Action

- No action on workflow and automation improvements will continue to cause delays in the development review process.

During Implementation

Improve EnerGov workflows
• If an appropriate change management structure is not established prior to implementing this item, there may continue to be challenges in communication and consistency in system use.
Implementation Timeline
This initiative should begin in Month 3, once the EnerGov advisory group has been established. Task 1 should occur in Month 3, Tasks 2 – 4 should occur in Month 4, and Task 5 should be ongoing as changes are implemented.
Best Practice Considerations
Tyler Technologies' Tyler Community offers a variety of training tools including short videos, webinars, and manuals. These tools can be reviewed by the advisory group and select tools can be compiled and included in the City's training library for EnerGov users. Recently, Tyler Technologies has modified their implementation approach for EnerGov implementations to use a requirements collection tool referred to as an Atlas document. This document provides a format for capturing workflow details that may also serve as a useful tool to assist the EnerGov advisory group. The City should request an Atlas template from the Tyler Technologies Account Representative.

Table 4.2.5: Develop a more efficient and robust permit intake process

Develop a more efficient and robust permit intake process	
Description	
	**Description:** Reinforce the permit intake process and establish a more thorough completeness check process at the intake stage by establishing a training and development program for intake staff. Proper training will give the staff skills and knowledge to conduct more thorough application reviews. This will help ensure that basic application requirements are met before applications are transmitted to technical staff. Conducting a more thorough review of submitted materials at the intake stage will reduce the amount of time that technical staff spend reviewing incomplete applications. In addition, doing a more thorough check at intake will save more time for applicants, as they will not have to wait until a technical staff member validates that their application questions have been adequately filled out and for a status to be determined. This will help streamline the permit process and make it more efficient. This process should be coordinated with departments in the permitting process. Each department should help ensure that there are application checklists with basic requirements that the permit intake staff can use to determine if key minimum application requirements are met. More technical checklists should be reviewed during the technical review stage after intake.
Related Issue(s)	
• The development review process is layered and complex. • Permit intake staff are not sufficiently trained to conduct a thorough completeness check at intake.	

Develop a more efficient and robust permit intake process
• Some process steps and functions happen manually, which is time consuming for staff and can result in delays due to human error or inconsistency due to lack of staff training. • EnerGov is not being used consistently across departments and is not being used to its full capacity. • External stakeholders call and email about the status of reviews as well as requests to take review permit applications out of order, taking up significant staff time. • Applicants may apply for a sub-permit instead of a revision to the master permit, causing delays or inconsistencies between the master permit and sub-permit.

Prioritization Category Rankings			
Priority Rank	**Relative Benefit**	**Ease of Implementation**	**Best Practices**
			

Action Items to Implement

☑ **Task 1: Consider revising the application form process to eliminate duplicate entry of information by applicants.** In lieu of submitting a PDF form as well as an online form with the same information, the Building Department could require that the applicant sign the form generated in EnerGov and returned to the applicant, to eliminate the issue of conflicting information on different forms. After a review of application information submitted online, the system generates a form to automatically be emailed to the applicant to sign and return (to be uploaded with plans and other supporting documents). To address the concern of applicants needing additional time to obtain signatures, the verification of signatures could be done prior to permit issuance, without holding up the review process.

☑ **Task 2: Automate the assignment of reviews.** Some reviews/reviewers are assigned manually at intake for new applications and resubmittals, including removing reviewers based on the project scope or prior approval by a department. The EnerGov advisory group should coordinate with permit clerks and review staff to identify, review, and implement changes to further automate the routing of applications. This could include creating new fields in the system to initiate different reviews (e.g., elevator review to be added when a project scope includes an elevator).

☑ **Task 3: Establish clear parameters for the scope of work that each permit type encompasses.** This information should be clearly outlined in a document to be referred to by intake staff (and shared with the public) and should be enforced. For example, the document should outline and provide examples of what type of plan change would be considered a revision and what change in scope of work would require a new permit. Descriptions should include such information as if exterior work is allowed under the permit type (e.g., interior alteration does not cover window replacement) and if the permit type does not include work that should be covered by a sub-permit (e.g., a separate roofing permit is required).

☑ **Task 4: Provide application checklists and guidance documents across all departments to assist intake staff in review of initial application submissions.** As guidance documents are developed, they should be shared and reviewed with permit intake staff across departments to

Develop a more efficient and robust permit intake process
assist with intake and initial application review. Current application checklists should be revised as needed and any updates should be clearly communicated to intake staff. Permit intake staff should use the information provided in the recommended training to confirm that the key required documentation and information has been provided. ☑ **Task 5: Continue to conduct regular trainings for permit clerks.** The Building Department currently conducts ongoing weekly training for permit clerks. Additional permit clerk training should highlight the key minimum requirements for each application and be accessible for City staff as an ongoing training resource**.** This should create more consistency at this stage of review and improve the quality of applications in the future. Plan review staff across departments should be involved in facilitating trainings to support permit clerks in building a foundation of knowledge of the plan review process and application requirements. For example, a training session on when a survey is required could help to streamline the initial completeness review. This will help to improve coordination and communication among intake and review staff. Trainings should focus on basic concepts first and move to more detailed aspects of permit applications. Through this process, plan review staff will also be better informed about common challenges that permit clerks regularly address with applicants at intake.
Anticipated Benefits
• Improved efficiency and reduced human error through eliminating manual entry • Consistency in permit intake process through application completeness checks
Risks
No Action • Continued loss of productivity and efficiency of City staff to address external stakeholder requests that disrupt the development review process timeline • Introduction of more human error due to lack of training and manual entry • Continued submittals of incomplete or incorrect permit applications **During Implementation** • Refreshing an existing process and developing new training material will limit City staff time for all other routine work
Implementation Timeline
This initiative should be started in Month 3 in coordination with the initiative to develop SOPs. Tasks 1 – 3 should occur in Month 3, Tasks 4 and 5 should begin in Month 4 and be ongoing.
Best Practice Considerations
The City of Tampa, FL Construction Services Division provides online permit guides for various permit types. These guides include an explanation of the permit type and the scope of work that would be covered under the permit, a list of required plans and documents, and inspections that may be required. The plan review requirements include the type of plan and details required on the plans (e.g., floor plans should show smoke detectors, emergency escape, ventilation, etc.).

Develop a more efficient and robust permit intake process
The City of Prescott, AZ provides a breakdown of permit types and subtypes and includes guidance on when each type/subtype should be used.

Table 4.2.6: Streamline the permit review process

Streamline the permit review process	
Description	
	**Description:** The City should explore opportunities to expedite resubmittal rounds, reduce process redundancies, and run concurrent steps in the process. For applications that demonstrate substantial progress in meeting application requirements, the City could consider shortening the application resubmittal rounds so that applicants do not have to wait until the end of a full review cycle for a permit approval. This will help to streamline the process and incentivize applicants to submit higher-quality plans that are responsive to City requirements. Also, duplicative or unnecessary review steps should be eliminated where doing such does not compromise safety and compliance. For example, the threshold for requiring a CPMP could be reevaluated and revised to more precisely encompass projects where parking should be addressed. Building in more accountability in the process on the applicant's side can help to eliminate the need to have duplicative steps in the process. The City could also explore opportunities to run steps concurrently in the review process. For example, where applicants provide sufficient detail at the time of the initial building permit application, some sub-permits, such as window permits, could be created, reviewed, and issued concurrently with the master permit. In some instances, applicants are not aware that a separate sub-permit is required. Resubmitting information that was previously reviewed under the master permit is time consuming for both the applicant and staff.
Related Issue(s)	
• The development review process is layered and complex. • External stakeholders call and email about the status of reviews as well as requests to review permit applications out of order, taking up significant staff time. • Reviews may be assigned, and inspections and sub-permits added to permits where they are not required. • Some fees are added and calculated manually, and fees are added at different points in the process.	
Prioritization Category Rankings	
Priority Rank	**Relative Benefit**
	

Ease of Implementation	Best Practices
	

Streamline the permit review process
Action Items to Implement
☑ **Task 1: Eliminate unnecessary or duplicate reviews.** Thresholds for requiring certain reviews should be assessed to identify opportunities to eliminate some reviews or permits that may not be required (e.g., requirements for separate sub-permits). The City has done this for some Parking reviews by creating a parking plan form that allows the parking review requirement to be waived if the master permit already has a CPMP. Additional opportunities to eliminate duplicate reviews could be considered for some sub-permits such as windows, doors, or fences, where these items are clearly detailed and reviewed during review of the master building permit. When the appropriate information is provided to review for a sub-permit, the reviewer should clearly note in EnerGov that the sub-permit is approved and add the fee. The permit could be added and issued with the building permit.
☑ **Task 2: Where applicants provide sufficient detail at the time of the initial building permit application, create, review, and issue sub-permits (e.g., window permit) concurrently with the master permit.** This should provide a signal to the applicant that a sub-permit is required earlier in the process and abbreviate the development review process timeline. This may incentivize other applicants to provide adequate detail in their initial applications.
☑ **Task 3: Capture and assess final fees in a single invoice for each permit application and communicate any additional fees to the applicant.** Applications fees typically are assessed in three parts by the Building Department: during the Building Process Initiation (which is later credited to the permit invoice), after City staff has generated the proper permit application (20 percent of the permit fee), and in the final permit invoice (the balance of the permit fee). After the initial permit fee (20 percent) is paid, all other fees associated with the permit should be included on one invoice to the applicant once the permit review is complete. If the permit review requires additional approvals from other departments, this may not always be known to the applicant, and additional fees may be assessed. To address this, all fees should be captured and assessed in a timely manner and then communicated to the applicant and all fees should be clearly itemized on one invoice to the applicant prior to permit issuance.
☑ **Task 4: Revise the review process to have plan reviewers confirm that required inspections and fees are correct rather than relying on permit clerks to make adjustments when there is an error.** Since reviewers are more familiar with the project scope and their own functional areas, they should confirm that the inspections listed for their trade or department are correct and add or remove inspections as appropriate. Similarly, plan reviewers should confirm certain fields input by the applicant are correct, including fields that are used to calculate fees, such as cost of construction or area of work. For example, in the case of updating the square footage of a project, plan reviewers should update the permit application. Any associated fees would be updated and reflected in the final permit invoice, similar to how construction costs or valuation changes are already captured in final invoices.
☑ **Task 5: Include within the online permit dashboard the average review time for specific permit types as a mechanism to provide applicants visibility into the average timeline for review.** There is a need for greater transparency into the timeline for City review. Establishing an online dashboard with average review times for each review cycle can help communicate expectations for review time. For example, noting that certain sub-permits (mechanical, electrical,

Streamline the permit review process
plumbing) do not require plan review and are typically issued within one business day is helpful for contractors in project planning. ☑ **Task 6: Implement a shorter review cycle for resubmittals.** Establishing a shorter review cycle by prioritizing resubmittals should shorten the development review process, improve customer relations, and condense the permit closeout timeline. This will also reduce the time for reviewers between the initial review and review of a resubmittal, which may help with maintaining familiarity with a project. This functionality is not yet available in EnerGov but is in the development process. The EnerGov work group should continue to follow with Tyler Technologies on this issue.
Anticipated Benefits
• Increased efficiency and productivity of City staff through eliminating duplicative processes • Higher-quality permit applications • Incentivize applicants to submit complete applications
Risks
No Action • Continued process redundancies and duplicative reviews that impact City staff efficiency and extend the timeline of the permit review process • Lost efficiency in the development review process where there are opportunities for steps to run concurrently **During Implementation** • Creating and testing a new workflow to run steps concurrently would increase additional staff workload, impacting regular business tasks
Implementation Timeline
Tasks 1 – 3 should begin in Month 3 in coordination with the development of SOPs. Tasks 4 and 5 should occur in Month 6 once review process changes have been implemented. Task 6 is dependent on availability of functionality in EnerGov and should be implemented once this is available.
Best Practice Considerations
The City of Portland, OR has developed an online dashboard using Tableau. This interactive dashboard displays metrics for permit activity at each stage of the development review process for different submittal types. It allows customers to view permitting statistics by permit type. This includes turnaround time for review with a breakdown of days for City staff review and number of days for the applicant to provide a response to City staff comments. Sharing the review timeline can help set expectations for review time with customers and allow customers insight into the number of applications that City staff review. The City of Coral Gables, FL has an electronic submittal guide that outlines naming conventions and how to upload corrections. The City should implement naming conventions and highlight existing documentation for corrections so that it is clear to City staff and applicants that the permit application type is correct and being routed to the appropriate process.

Table 4.2.7: Streamline the land use board process

Streamline the land use board process	
Description	
	**Description:** Process improvements can help to streamline the land use approval process. Prioritizing current applications for land use board agendas will help to streamline the process and reduce the time between hearings, provided the applicant is able to submit the necessary information in the appropriate period. Consideration should also be given to adding meeting dates or establishing a policy for holding special meetings to accommodate more land use board applications when needed. A consent agenda can also be added to land use board meetings for routine, simple application approvals. The City should determine if there are common issues that frequently cause applicants to have to reappear before a board or commission and explore opportunities for improvement that can reduce reappearances.
Related Issue(s)	
• The land use board review process is long. • Publicly available information on the development review process does not provide clear guidance on process requirements.	
Prioritization Category Rankings	
Priority Rank	**Relative Benefit**
	
Ease of Implementation	**Best Practices**
	
Action Items to Implement	
☑ **Task 1: Develop a policy to prioritize current applications for land use board agendas to streamline the process and reduce the time between hearings.** Provided the applicant can meet the requirements of the application and submit the necessary information in the appropriate period, this action can help to expedite the approval process, which will improve customer service. ☑ **Task 2: Implement features in staff reports for board meetings that can help focus board discussions and deliberations during application reviews.** Techniques can help to focus discussions, which could expedite the review process during board meetings. Adding a brief executive summary on the first page can provide the board with key insights and a high-level summary about the application. Also, a “Board Review” box in the beginning of the report can be used to briefly describe the board’s purview on the application with key issues and applicable regulations regarding the application. These improvements can also help make preparation time for meetings easier for members. When implementing changes to the format of staff reports, consider having a brief orientation to format changes during a board meeting to orient board members and to describe the benefits.	

Streamline the land use board process
☑ **Task 3: Develop a consent agenda for a specified and limited number of application types.** A consent agenda can help to streamline board meetings and can expedite the review process for the applicants. The staff would also save on time dedicated to staff reporting on these items. A consent agenda will still provide for high-level oversight, as the board will still be aware of items that are being approved through the consent agenda process. ☑ **Task 4: Consider adding a limited number of land use board meetings or developing a policy for conducting special meetings to help expedite application reviews that require board approval.** Including additional meetings on the annual meeting schedule on a minimum basis can help to provide additional opportunities for applicants to bring their projects before the board. This can shorten the length of time to receive an approval from the board. Consider including additional meetings on a gradual basis. For instance, if there are peak times of the year when application loads tend to be very high, consider starting off with adding board meetings to the schedule during these peak times only. Also consider developing a special meeting policy to permit special meetings under specific circumstances. When special meetings are planned, consider also coordinating these meetings with other related items to help make effective use of the board meeting time.
Anticipated Benefits
• Improve customer service by implementing strategies that can help streamline the land use board approval process and make it more efficient
Risks
No Action • No action may result in adverse impacts to customer service as applicants may continue to experience lengthy wait times during the land use approval process. This can also strain relationship-building efforts between the City and the development community. **During Implementation** • Developing processes and policies for implementing these improvements may take staff time away from competing priorities. However, implementing improvements will save staff time in the future. The full implementation of Tasks 3 and 4 is also dependent upon buy-in and support from board members. Consensus-building to achieve full implementation of these tasks may take additional time.
Implementation Timeline
This initiative should start in Month 3. Tasks 1 and 2 should occur in Month 3 and Tasks 3 and 4 should begin in Month 4 with discussions with the board with a goal of implementing these initiatives by Month 9.
Best Practice Considerations
The City of Fort Collins, CO has an online development review center where all land use and development information is maintained, including codes, applications, board and meeting information, current development proposals, and recent decisions. The City has also created a development review

Streamline the land use board process
flow chart, clearly laying out the phases and steps in the review process from conceptual design to construction completion. The City of San Rafael, CA has guiding principles on developing staff reports, such as including executive summaries.

Table 4.2.8: Centralize all development review application information

Centralize all development review application information	
Description	
	**Description:** Departments in the development review process should conduct an audit of all existing applications, guidelines, and resources currently available on the City website. Information provided to the public should be clear, easy to navigate, and should avoid redundant documentation and information overload. City documents should be reorganized under a centralized one-stop-shop location on the City website to help build cohesion between departments and steps involved in the development review process. This can help to orient customers and make the process more user-friendly. Flow charts or graphics should also be included to illustrate how to navigate through the process for each permit category (e.g., new commercial construction). This should include which permit types are or may be required and what department issues each permit, which inspections will be needed, and other agencies that may require review and approval. Clearly communicating this information at project initiation can help the applicant to plan the project timeline and resources. Developing decision tree functionality on the City's website (as described in initiative 11 in Table 4.2.11), could help applicants navigate the process, determine which permit type to apply for, and understand the reviews and approvals required for their scope of work.
Related Issue(s)	
• The development review process is layered and complex. • Publicly available information on the development review process does not provide clear guidance on process requirements. • There is a lack of consistency in communication and responsiveness across City departments. • County and State agency reviews can cause significant delays in the development review process.	
Prioritization Category Rankings	
Priority Rank	**Relative Benefit**
	

Ease of Implementation	**Best Practices**
	

Centralize all development review application information
Action Items to Implement
☑ **Task 1: Develop a review team to audit all existing applications, guidelines, and resources currently available on the City website.** The review team should consist of representatives from each relevant department. This team should review existing development process review documentation for outdated/new information, policy and regulation changes, and accuracy across all departments. This audit should also capture any gaps in the current development process and where the documentation is currently located. ☑ **Task 2: Organize all existing applications, guidelines, and resources to be available from one central location.** The review team should update existing documentation to align with City policies and county and state regulations. Through cross-departmental coordination, any redundancies in information on the City's website should be removed, and all development review resources should be located in one central webpage. There are currently several different paths to get to application and permit review information from various department websites. While some paths appear to direct applicants to the same information, in other instances, different information is available in various locations. For example, construction plan review checklists on the Fire Prevention webpage are different than the checklists found through the Building Department webpage. Additionally, permit process information is included in a variety of places on the website including the Online Permitting Resource Center page, the Permits page, and through FAQs and How-to Guides. ☑ **Task 3: Link information to the SOP and guidelines for different project types or group of application types.** The guidelines developed in the first initiative (table 4.2.1) should include links to forms, documents, regulations, and other approval agencies (Department of Environmental Resources Management, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and other external agencies) as appropriate for each step. Links to information on other approvals that may be required (e.g., sub-permit application forms) depending on certain project conditions or scope should also be included. ☑ **Task 3: House updated documentation in one centralized location on the City website.** The review team should determine one central location for all development review application information. The City could establish a general development review process landing page that includes links to departments involved in the development process, process guidelines, permit types, land use board applications, FAQs, links to permit workflow diagrams, and other available resources. The review team should work with IT to establish the landing page with updated permit documentation and remove content from elsewhere on the City website. Having documentation in one location will simplify updating documents when processes or policies change. ☑ **Task 4: Link step-by-step guides to the CSS portal.** Once the portal has been reconfigured to be more user-friendly, the portal landing page should direct users to the one-stop-shop page or to a specific step-by-step process guideline, as appropriate.
Anticipated Benefits
• Central location for all development review process documentation • User-friendly applications, guidelines, and resources that improve the quality of permit applications

Centralize all development review application information
• Facilitate updating process and policy documents
Risks
No Action • Continued difficulty for customers on how to find and understand department-specific development review information • Lack of cohesion of development review information and materials across departments **During Implementation** • Ensuring that all development review process documentation is updated and pulled from non-centralized locations requires input across departments, creating additional staff workload
Implementation Timeline
This initiative should be started in Month 3 and completed by Month 6. Task 1 should occur in Month 3, Task 2 should begin in Month 4, Task 3 should begin in Month 5, and Task 4 should begin in Month 5.
Best Practice Considerations
Hollywood, FL has an ePermit plan review webpage that has checklists and application instructions for ePermit types. After the City's review team has audited and updated available resources, a general permit landing page could be established as a central location for this information. Houston, TX has a permitting center webpage that combines the majority of the City of Houston's permitting and licensing into one central location. This webpage includes project statuses, a fee calculator, and the ability to schedule appointments. After the City's website is more user-friendly, these resources can be added to the permit landing page.

Table 4.2.9: Establish a process for the adoption and communication of ordinance changes

Establish a process for the adoption and communication of City development regulatory changes	
Description	
	**Description:** A regulatory and policy coordination team, consisting of staff members from the City's development review departments should be created to review proposed amendments to development regulations prior to adoption. This team can help to minimize areas of regulatory conflicts and to help ensure the successful integration of new regulations in the review process. These regulatory amendments can be changes proposed by any of the City's development services departments or changes required by the State. A schedule of proposed regulatory amendments should be developed to plan for upcoming changes. Regulatory changes should be grouped together where possible to streamline the adoption process and increase efficiency. A communication strategy should be developed to inform the public of upcoming and adopted changes and how the changes impact the review process. This can help applicants to prepare and adjust upcoming project plans to react to regulatory changes.

Establish a process for the adoption and communication of City development regulatory changes			
Related Issue(s)			
• Coordination and communication among departments involved with the development review process is inconsistent. • Review comments can be unclear and inconsistent. • External stakeholders reported that City ordinances change frequently.			
Prioritization Category Rankings			
Priority Rank	**Relative Benefit**	**Ease of Implementation**	**Best Practices**
			
Action Items to Implement			
☑ **Task 1: Develop a regulatory and policy coordination team.** The members of this team should consist of a cross-section of representatives from different departments in the development review process. This team will facilitate the review of proposed regulatory and policy changes and will help departments evaluate the impacts of proposed changes. This team can also help departments address potential conflicts of new changes with existing regulations in advance of adoption. ☑ **Task 2: The team should develop a collective schedule of proposed regulatory and policy changes that would impact the development review process.** The schedule should be prioritized with the most urgent or time-sensitive changes first in the schedule. This schedule should also be shared internally with departments in the development review process so City staff members that participate in the development review process will be aware of potential changes to the process. ☑ **Task 3: This schedule should also be communicated to boards and commissions in the development review process.** Sharing information early in the process will allow boards and commissions to be aware of and prepare for any proposed changes that may impact a board or commission decision in the future. ☑ **Task 4: A communication strategy should be developed to create a consistent and coordinated process to share new and upcoming regulatory and policy changes with the development community.** This can help the development community to prepare project plans and schedules more effectively, as they will be able to anticipate potential regulatory changes that can impact their projects. Where appropriate, the City can notify and solicit feedback from the development community on proposed changes.			
Anticipated Benefits			
• This action can save time and make the development review process more efficient, as staff and applicants will be better prepared to plan for potential regulatory and policy changes. • This action will improve internal and external customer service.			

Establish a process for the adoption and communication of City development regulatory changes
• More effective communication will help to build relationships internally and with the development community.
Risks
No Action • Inconsistent internal and external communication in the development review process will continue to lead to process inefficiencies. • No action can adversely impact internal and external customer service. **During Implementation** • Developing a new team may take staff time away from other competing priorities; however, developing this team will help to build in future efficiency and communication improvements.
Implementation Timeline
This initiative should be implemented from Month 6 to Month 9. Once initial implementation of these action steps occurs, this initiative should continue to be ongoing.
Best Practice Considerations
Granby, NY has a Zoning Ordinance Review Team with membership that contains a cross-representation of different land use-related disciplines in the municipality including the town planner, land use attorney, engineer staff, and a Planning Board member, residents, and the zoning/planning staff. This committee reviews proposed ordinances prior to adoption and examines problems with existing regulations. Aurora, IL issues a monthly newsletter to contractors, design professionals, developers, and repeat customers to communicate ordinance changes, department policy changes, changes in state and federal laws, and updates to key department metrics.

Table 4.2.10: Improve consistency and responsiveness in external communication

Improve consistency and responsiveness in external communication	
Description	
	**Description:** The City has developed Service Excellence standards that should be followed to the greatest extent possible. Continue working with the City's customer service team on monitoring progress with internal compliance, such as the customer satisfaction survey. Identify challenging areas in achieving survey compliance and work with the City's team on an action plan to improve compliance.
Related Issue(s)	
• There is a lack of consistency in communication and responsiveness across City departments.	
Prioritization Category Rankings	

Improve consistency and responsiveness in external communication			
Priority Rank	**Relative Benefit**	**Ease of Implementation**	**Best Practices**
			

Action Items to Implement

- ☑ **Task 1: Establish a review team to examine the City's current Service Excellence standards.** The review team should meet with staff to review challenges in meeting the City's current Service Excellence standards and work collaboratively to identify solutions to help meet existing standards or modify standards. The City continues to actively work to improve customer service, following the existing Service Excellence standards. Working across departments to identify common concerns in the process related to customer communication will help to address issues before they escalate.
- ☑ **Task 2: Coordinate across departments to review common requests that the City receives and establish standard staff comments to use in response.** The Building Department currently has standard responses and information to quickly assist customers. These responses could be reviewed and coordinated across departments to help ensure consistency in communication. Creating standard responses can improve response consistency among reviewers and create less confusion among applicants.
- ☑ **Task 3: Continue to provide opportunities for internal and external stakeholders to provide feedback on communication pain points.** The Building Department currently hosts quarterly industry meetings to gather feedback from external stakeholders. Including other departments in these meetings, where appropriate, could help to improve cross-departmental communication and improve stakeholders' understanding of the process. An additional two to three-question survey directly asking about response time and customer service could provide an avenue for external stakeholders to provide feedback specifically on communication and customer service, in addition to the customer satisfaction survey on the City's website. The City should also establish a mechanism for internal staff to provide feedback on current processes and timelines and offer recommendations to improve customer service.
- ☑ **Task 4: The City should include customer service data and feedback on the City dashboard to publicize current satisfaction with the process.** Data shared on the dashboard could include number of calls received as well as average response time. In addition, sharing current customer satisfaction, City goals related to satisfaction, and changes over time can help improve transparency and share overall customer satisfaction during the development review process.

Anticipated Benefits

- Improved communication fosters relationship-building between the City and the public.
- Actions under this initiative can decrease the occurrences of negative feedback received from customers.
- Positive customer service experiences can boost staff morale and build momentum to make additional customer service improvements.

Improve consistency and responsiveness in external communication
Risks
No Action • Customer service may decline, resulting in tension between the City and the public. This can have an adverse impact on City accountability and credibility and may result in public distrust. **During Implementation** • Establishing a framework and implementing improvements will require significant staff time and resources. However, there is more to gain in creating quality customer service by implementing improvements.
Implementation Timeline
This initiative should start in Month 6. Tasks 1 – 3 should be completed by Month 9. Task 4 should be ongoing.
Best Practice Considerations
Many organizations have adopted portions of a customer service framework; however, a central framework has not been broadly adopted. Waukesha County, Wisconsin has a customer service-focused webpage with a survey and data displaying customer satisfaction results. Although the County Executive's Office runs this program, a similar survey and real-time reporting tool could be established specific to the City's development review. San Diego County, California has a customer service survey on the Auditor and Controller's website that allows ratings specific to target area (helpfulness, expertise, attentiveness, respect, and timeliness). Miami Beach could adopt a similar survey that allows specific customer service target areas to be evaluated.

Table 4.2.11: Improve use of CSS

Improve use of CSS	
Description	
	**Description:** City staff and external stakeholders noted challenges in communication between City staff and applicants during the development review process. While the implementation of the CSS customer portal (now Civic Access) has helped to provide information to applicants, navigating the portal can be confusing and applicants often need clarification about the information provided. There is a need for a portal that is easier to navigate and that is linked to the centralized development review information maintained on the City's website, as recommended in this report. The City should make improvements to how and what information is displayed through CSS, including providing more instructional information, improving the aesthetics of the CSS portal to be more user-friendly, and working to ensure that information available on CSS is accurate to the greatest extent possible. In addition, the one-stop development review process webpage on the City's website (per the recommendation

Improve use of CSS	
	in this report) could directly link to specific applications, forms, and information on CSS to better direct applicants to the information that they need.

Related Issue(s)

- Publicly available information on the development review process does not provide clear guidance on process requirements.
- External stakeholders call and email about the status of reviews as well as requests to review permit applications out of order, taking up significant staff time.
- There is a lack of consistency in communication and responsiveness across City departments.

Prioritization Category Rankings

Priority Rank	Relative Benefit	Ease of Implementation	Best Practices
			

Action Items to Implement

☑ **Task 1: Department leadership should collaborate with key staff to identify information that is most critical to share with the public.** This assessment may include a review of common questions from applicants and inquiries to reviewers. In response to external stakeholder feedback, the Building Department currently provides periodic tips to users via emails to customers to help guide users through the application process. This information should also be compiled and catalogued on the development review webpage for easy access.

☑ **Task 2: The main page of the CSS portal should be designed to highlight the most common service areas.** A breakdown of functions (e.g., pay, apply, search) should be implemented to help guide users to the appropriate location to find information quickly. Broad categories of application types (e.g., commercial, residential, sub-permits, licenses) could be used to narrow down the list of application types to make it easier for applicants to identify the correct application type and reduce the chance of a user selecting incorrectly from a long list. This page should include information about fees, payments, inspection scheduling, finding the status of a permit, applying for a permit, scheduling a meeting, and any other critical information. Configuring this page to call out key processes and services will help to improve efficiency. For example, offering an opportunity to schedule a meeting with staff or request a virtual inspection will encourage customers to take advantage of these services. In addition, CSS features such as a fee estimator or dashboard of review times could help to clarify the process for applicants and reduce the number of phone calls to staff.

☑ **Task 3: The portal should be linked to the guidelines and information on the City's website.** In coordination with the recommendation in this report to centralize development review information, the one-stop-shop webpage should be coordinated and linked to the CSS portal. Similarly, the portal should guide users to specific guides and forms on the one-stop-shop webpage, as needed.

Improve use of CSS
☑ **Task 4: Key staff should work with IT to build decision tree functionality in CSS.** By clearly guiding applicants to the correct application type, there will be less of a need for the building permit initiation (BPI) application process, which is inefficient. This functionality would allow users to select from multiple options (e.g., commercial construction, residential construction) to guide the applicant to the correct application type(s) based on the option selected. Once this functionality is fully built out in CSS, the City may no longer need to use the BPI process and could streamline the submittal process by allowing applicants to directly apply for permits using the decision tree engine to help ensure that applicants apply for the correct permit type.
Anticipated Benefits
• Fewer phone calls and emails to City staff regarding the development review process
Risks
No Action • Continued high volume of phone calls and emails to clarify processes and to help direct users to information on the website and portal • Inefficient intake process with most applications using the BPI process, requiring duplicative review and greater workload for permit clerks **During Implementation** • Changes to the system's CSS portal should be done in coordination with the EnerGov work group to help ensure that changes are consistent and that users are aware of upcoming changes.
Implementation Timeline
This initiative should be started once initiatives 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 have been completed. Task 1 should occur in Month 6, Tasks 2 and 3 should occur in Month 8, and Task 4 should occur in Month 9.
Best Practice Considerations
The City of Boulder, Colorado uses the decision tree functionality of EnerGov to help guide applicants to the correct application or service. This tool narrows down the options through a series of questions/prompts (e.g., Residential Construction, Commercial Construction) and reduces the likelihood of an applicant selecting an incorrect permit type. Users are also given an option to bypass the decision tree tool if they know what permit type or application is needed. Selection options based on the prompts are also tied to the City's information library contained on the municipal website, directing applicants to the website for forms, instructions, regulations, or other information that is needed, prior to submitting an application.

Table 4.2.12: Centralize Process Improvement and Establish a Governance Process

Centralize Process Improvement and Establish a Governance Process	
Description	
	**Description:** The City should have a standard process for submitting, evaluating, and implementing process improvements. Some divisions and departments are working on business process improvements but may not be coordinated with efforts of other

Centralize Process Improvement and Establish a Governance Process	
	groups involved in the review process. Staff reported process challenges are discussed internally within departments; however, staff stated challenges and changes are not always communicated to others involved in the process. This centralized process should include improvements to EnerGov and other software tools. The City should establish a process improvement governance committee. This committee would coordinate closely with the EnerGov work group and may have some overlap in membership, but the process improvement governance committee should focus on the broader citywide goals to continue to provide excellent customer service and improve efficiency in the development review process.

Related Issue(s)

- The development review process is layered and complex.
- Coordination and communication among departments involved with the development review process is inconsistent.

Prioritization Category Rankings

Priority Rank	Relative Benefit	Ease of Implementation	Best Practices
			

Action Items to Implement

- ☑ **Task 1: The City should establish a process improvement committee (PIC).** Department leadership should lead the PIC, which should be cross-functional, consisting of representatives from all departments and divisions involved in the development review process.
- ☑ **Task 2: The PIC should inventory all process improvements and develop an organized structure that states the process improvement, its purpose, responsible staff members, and the status of the improvement.** This inventory should be centrally and electronically located where the PIC will have access to it.
- ☑ **Task 3: The PIC should prioritize the improvements on the inventory, giving greater weight to items that can yield the greater returns in improved customer service, quality of life in the workplace, and job performance.**
- ☑ **Task 4: If possible, use a central, electronic communication tool to help with group coordination**. A Teams Channel on Microsoft 365 is an effective tool that can allow real-time communication, updates, assignment of tasks, and file-sharing.
- ☑ **Task 5: The PIC should be a committee that not only tracks the progress of improvements but also operates as a think tank.** This committee should meet monthly. Participants should update the group on the progress of the improvements they are developing. In addition, the committee should provide an opportunity for staff to bring ideas to the PIC for thoughts on how to work through challenges in process improvement.

Centralize Process Improvement and Establish a Governance Process
☑ **Task 6: The PIC should develop a communication plan for the rollout of finalized process improvements.** This communication plan should include how each improvement will be rolled out to staff members. PIC members should also function as ambassadors who can reinforce the importance and purpose of the improvements with their divisions/sections and as liaisons who can provide support with implementing the improvements. ☑ **Task 7: The PIC should develop an education and awareness plan for each improvement.** The plan should include a process for educating staff members on the new improvement. In this part of the process, staff members responsible for direct implementation of the improvement should be educated and trained. Secondarily, staff members who may be indirectly involved in the process improvement should be educated on the improvement from the standpoint of providing general awareness. Awareness of the improvement can help inform how staff approach work assignments or how the improvement changes process or job duties for colleagues. Communicating awareness can be implemented through email or staff meetings. ☑ **Task 8: Foster a culture of continuous process improvement.** To foster a culture of continuous process improvement and team building, the PIC should develop a system that would allow City staff to make suggestions for process improvements. This could occur through a comment box on a department webpage or through a common email address that is solely for the purpose of continuous process improvement recommendations. A representative from the PIC should monitor the suggestions submitted and bring them to the PIC for discussion. ☑ **Task 10: Coordinate a quarterly cross-departmental newsletter with the EnerGov advisory group that communicates updates from the two committees.**
Anticipated Benefits
• A centralized structure for process improvements will help keep staff focused on completing items that will yield the greatest benefit for the departments and customers. • This governance process will help ensure that in-progress initiatives are completed and evaluate the resource impacts of taking on new initiatives. • The committee will provide a framework for evaluating the success of initiatives to help PIC and City leadership make decisions on future process changes.
Risks
No Action: • Process improvements will continue to lack structure. This could lead to stalled process improvements or a lack of prioritization of improvements. • Department initiatives for process improvement will continue to lack coordination, which could lead to a duplication of efforts and lack of consistency in the process for staff and applicants. **During Implementation** • Process improvements can take time to develop and implement. This may have an impact on available staff time. Development of a process improvement structure may also require a change in staff work priorities, as the improvements will require a schedule for implementation. • Coordination and commitment of PIC members is critical for the success of this initiative and in establishing a culture of continuous improvement.

Centralize Process Improvement and Establish a Governance Process
Implementation Timeline
This initiative should start in Month 9, after the other initiatives in this report have been completed or are in monitoring/evaluation phases.
Best Practice Considerations
Governance processes for evaluating and deploying process and system improvements are broadly adopted. The Project Management Institute® has resources specific to project governance and establishing change control boards that will be helpful for the City to reference. The PIC may even consider having one or more members obtain their Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) certification.

5.0 Next Steps

This section describes the future activities of the project.

5.1 Upcoming Tasks and Deliverables

The next steps of the project are summarized in Table 5.1, below.

Table 5.1: Upcoming Tasks and Deliverables

Upcoming Tasks and Deliverables	
Phase 2: Recommendations for Improvement	
Update Draft Report to Final	August 31, 2023
Deliverable 6 – Recommendations for Improvement Report	**August 31, 2023**
Develop Recommendations for Improvement Presentation	September 9, 2023
Deliver Presentation to City Commission	September 13, 2023
Deliverable 7 – Recommendations for Improvement Presentation	**September 13, 2023**

Appendix A: Current Environment Report and As-Is Process Diagrams

This appendix includes the Current Environment Assessment Report and As-Is Process Diagrams.

Please refer to the PDF titled Miami Beach Current Environment Assessment Report_v3.

Appendix B: System Recommendations

This appendix includes a list of recommended EnerGov (EPL) configuration changes and improvements to the use of technology for development review.

The EnerGov system allows for the configuration of workflows which the City has configured specifically for each permit type and work class. In addition to the workflow functionality, intelligent objects (IOs) can be configured to automate tasks and notifications to internal and external uses and are designed to run anytime the data is changed to trigger the action. Intelligent Object Automation Agents (IOAAs) run nightly, so as not to interfere with the system backup. GeoRules are automations that run from the GIS server and are linked to data in the layers within the City's GIS system.

While the City has automated most processes in EnerGov using these tools, there are some areas where additional automation or use of new technology could improve efficiency in the development review process. Table B.1 identifies several opportunities for system improvement.

Table B.1: Opportunities for System Improvement

Opportunities for System Improvement		
No.	**Challenges**	**Opportunities**
1	Some reviewers are assigned manually depending on the specific details of the project scope.	While most of the workflow is automatically created, some instances require manually adding reviews or notifying applicants of required steps that happen externally. Additional automation could be built into the workflow by adding questions and/or custom fields to be completed at the time of application submission. For example, including questions about whether an elevator is included in the project, or if a new curb cut is required could help to further direct projects to the appropriate reviewers. Reviewers could verify these items and update fields as needed. An IO could be linked to the custom field to add a review and/or notify staff. Custom fields (e.g., check box, drop down) for certain requirements could also be useful for tracking projects with these features.
2	Some fees are added and calculated manually, and fees are added and may be updated at different points in the process.	An IO could be created that will calculate fees when any change occurs. For example, if the cost of work changes, the fee will recalculate when the new amount is entered and saved. BerryDunn recommends invoicing all fees that are assessed during the review process at one time (on one invoice) prior to permit issuance to simplify the payment process for applicants and reduce the number of total transactions.

Opportunities for System Improvement		
No.	**Challenges**	**Opportunities**
3	Inspections may be automatically added when they are not required.	The EnerGov work group should first review the required reviews and inspections that are associated (and automatically added) for each permit type and make any necessary updates to align with current processes. Review staff should be given permissions to edit workflows to remove inspections from the workflow if they are deemed unnecessary.
4	The review process may be delayed due to external reviews.	Adding generic actions to the workflow could help to improve communication and transparency regarding required external reviews by the county and state. In addition, an IO could be created to notify the applicant when the action is added to the workflow. Adding a required external review as a generic action in the workflow will allow other City reviewers and the applicant to easily see that the review is required and see the status (completed or not completed). While City staff typically include this information in plan review comments, adding this to the workflow and providing notification separately will help to clarify the process for applicants.
5	There is no standard process across departments for marking up plans or drafting plan review comments.	Bluebeam allows reviewers to conduct reviews, mark up plans, and coordinate reviews internally. Providing comments to the applicant as markups on the drawing set facilitates the revision process for the applicant and reviewers. Within Bluebeam, the City can establish a standard set of markup tools and define how they are used (e.g., a blue cloud and comment box is used to note a building code discrepancy). When issuing comments to the applicant, the review coordinator (or other staff) should be responsible for generating a markup summary in Bluebeam, which can be automatically attached to the drawing file. This file can then be shared through EnerGov with the applicant with the comment list (markup summary) and each comment hyperlinked to the associated drawing sheet. Additional coordination and standardization, such as defining markup colors for each department, can help to improve consistency in review comments.

Opportunities for System Improvement		
No.	**Challenges**	**Opportunities**
6	The initial submission and intake process is not streamlined.	Due to the complexity of the City's regulatory environment and the large number of permit types, the City has developed a pre-submittal process (building permit initiation or BPI) to guide applicants to the correct permit application type. While this process has resolved the issue of applicants applying for permits incorrectly, it is time consuming for staff and applicants. Implementing decision engine technology in the Civic Access portal could help to reduce or eliminate the need for the BPI process. The decision engine application guides users through a series of questions and dynamically adjusts based on the applicant's responses. In addition to guiding applicants to the correct application, this application can also help guide applicants to relevant regulations and other process documentation, based on the features of their specific project.
7	Interdepartmental communication could be improved to facilitate the review process.	EnerGov allows for notifications to be used to share information with other internal users and for tasks to be assigned within the workflow. Notifications can be set up globally to improve communication throughout the review process. For example, a reviewer could be notified anytime a new file is submitted for a project they are assigned to. Additionally, notifications can be used to stay informed of a specific project or property. For example, a manager may want to be aware of the status of a particularly controversial or political project. A notification can be set up to alert the user whenever the status of the project changes, when a review is completed, or other changes to the record. Additionally, tasks can be assigned to other users to complete rather than relying on email or phone calls to communicate information. Tasks could be useful for tracking items that typically happen outside of the system such as requesting a permit fee to be changed. Tasks allow these requests to be documented in the system and allow users to easily track and follow up on tasks that are assigned to them. While too many notifications can be cumbersome for users, they are useful tool for communicating across departments and divisions, especially in larger organizations with a high volume of permit activity.