



# Memorandum

**Meeting Details:** May 28, 2025 – Board of Commissioners Workshop  
**Prepared For:** Honorable Mayor Brooks and the Board of Commissioners  
**Staff Contact:** Community Development Department  
**Subject:** Building Permit Process

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## **Background**

The purpose of this discussion item is to review the City's current building permit process and highlight the complexity and challenges involved in reviewing applications specifically for new construction and elevating single-family homes.

## **Discussion**

The review of building permits for new or substantially improved (elevated) homes involves multiple layers of review across disciplines. Madeira Beach is entirely within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA); therefore, all projects are subject to detailed scrutiny under the Florida Building Code (FBC), floodplain regulations (NFIP and local ordinances), and Madeira Beach Land Development Regulations (LDRs). The need to coordinate multiple regulatory frameworks, while ensuring structural safety, flood compliance, and neighborhood compatibility, creates both technical and administrative challenges for staff, contractors, and applicants.

Staff encounters several recurring challenges such as incomplete or non-compliant submittals, discrepancies between architectural and structural plans, and misunderstanding and/or interpretation of city LDRs and floodplain regulations.

When the permit reviewer is examining a new permit application the first review and round of comments always takes the longest. This is when the reviewer is getting familiar with the project and each project comes with its own complexities. Once the first round of comments is provided and the applicant submits a revision, the revision is moved back in the "to do" queue. The city receives many untimely responses to revision requests. Those permits are listed as "info needed" on the stats list. Currently 40.9% of applications in review are waiting for revisions. City staff are proactively getting homeowner contact information, so they are included in the plan review process. Many submissions list the owner email as the same as applicant/contractor and there is no way to flag these on the city's end. Major contributing factors to the time "suckage" includes too many meetings, open office hours, emails from owner builders/contractors/design professionals asking for code/installation/interpretation questions, emails/calls from realtors/potential buyers wanting SD determinations and zoning information for properties (i.e. what's the highest use of the property).

## **Fiscal Impact**

Additional contracted permit reviewers are about \$110 an hour.

## **Recommendation(s)**

Staff recommends adding additional hours for contracted permit reviewers (building and planning).