

# CITY OF CORAL GABLES

## --MEMORANDUM--



**TO:** Peter J. Iglesias, P.E., City Manager; Joe Gomez, Deputy City Manager

**FROM:** Vince Lago, Mayor

**DATE:** April 16, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Building Permit Process – Feedback on Areas for Improvement

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The purpose of this memorandum is to identify opportunities to improve the City’s building permit process based on input from several experienced permit processors, including Mr. Mannix Fernandez, Mrs. Lucy Lopez, and Mr. Dayron Garcia. Collectively, these individuals have extensive, hands-on experience navigating the current system across a wide range of project types and are uniquely positioned to highlight recurring challenges.

The feedback focuses on practical issues affecting customer service, communication, system functions, and overall workflow efficiency. Many of the concerns identified relate to the capabilities and configuration of the City’s permitting software, EnerGov.

The recommendations outlined below are intended to address specific pain points, including delays, redundancies, and communication gaps, while also initiating a collaborative discussion around practical solutions. These efforts aim to streamline processes, reduce delays, and improve the overall permitting experience for both staff and applicants. A summary of their comments is provided below, and their full submittal is included as an attached exhibit

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**Issue:** Who are permits assigned to at the permit counter? In many other cities, this information is available. Currently, communications are often sent from a generic email address, so when follow-up is needed, the entire situation has to be explained again. If the staff member responsible for the permit, or the author of the email were identified, the parties could more easily pick up where they left off rather than having to recount the issue to a new person each time. Lack of ownership equals lack of accountability.

**Request:** Identify the staff member so that communications are more professional, personal, and efficient. Identifying the responsible individual would allow follow-ups to continue seamlessly, reduce the need to repeatedly explain issues, and improve overall customer service.

**Issue:** The phone system allows only a 10-second voicemail message, which is not enough time to leave a name, permit number and call back information.

**Request:** Can the voicemail length be extended to allow sufficient time for callers to provide all necessary details?

**Issue:** Limited guidance at intake leads to avoidable errors. For example, when selecting a permit category, it is not very clear which category should be selected based on the scope of work. If a wrong category is selected, it is not caught early in the review process causing additional time delays and an applicant having to start the process over from the beginning.

**Request:** Can category titles be more closely aligned with scope of work? Can additional information be added about which category should be selected based on scope of work?

**Issue:** Communication inefficiencies: email responses take several days, applicants are redirected several times before getting a response. There is no clear or efficient communication channel.

**Request:** Can staff training prioritize communication?

## **CONTACT MANAGEMENT**

**Issue:** The ability for users to add contacts was removed and now must be entered by staff. This process takes several days and in one case took 10 days.

**Request:** Can the ability for the user to add contacts be restored, while keeping removal of contacts under staff responsibility? The ability to timely add the project team is critical for coordination of the permit process.

**Issue:** Currently an email must be initiated from the homeowner in order to add a permit expeditor which places additional burden on the homeowner.

**Request:** Can an email which originated from a permit expeditor and the owner is copied on and replies with a confirmation be suitable?

## **SUB-RECORDS**

**Issue:** Sub-records are not automatically populated and must be added manually by City staff, which is very time-consuming.

**Request:** Is it possible to have sub-records automatically populated based on the scope of work? Automating this process would save both staff and project team time by providing a dedicated field from the outset to upload all required submittals or at least a minimum 'typical' sub-record set. Or can the project team have the ability to add sub-sets rather than rely solely on staff?

## **RESUBMITTALS**

**Issue:** Currently, when a correction is required the entire set of drawings, including voided sheets and the revised sheets must be resubmitted and re-reviewed by all trades, even if only one sheet was revised and

relates to only one trade, which is time-consuming, unnecessarily extends the permit issuance time and is inefficient. The bundled trade format required by Coral Gables creates significant coordination challenges because Miami-Dade County accepts individual PDFs. Architects and engineers must constantly adjust formatting depending on the jurisdiction. Furthermore, it increases the file size and page count of submittals. For example, if an original submittal is 5 sheets, but 3 sheets have corrections, the submittal grows to 8 sheets (5 original sheets + 3 revised sheets). On projects with hundreds or thousands of sheets this can become unmanageable and un-transmittable.

**Request:** Can the system be modified to accept individual pages, similar to the County's process? Allowing single-page submissions would streamline resubmittals, assist with file management and improve overall efficiency for both staff and project teams. Can minor and major resubmittals be treated differently, with streamlined requirements for minor revisions to improve efficiency?

## **DATES AND TIMING**

**Issue:** "Received Date" is misleading. It implies it is the date the permit was applied for, but it is the date that the review starts, which can be 4-5 days after the application was submitted.

**Request:** Can a field be added which shows the date of when the plans were uploaded and which version was last uploaded. Multiple versions of drawing files are common.

**Issue:** Sometimes two permit applications are submitted consecutively, but one will move to review immediately while the other waits several days, and others are taken ahead.

**Request:** Can permits be moved into review in order of receipt?

**Issue:** Missed timelines. Structural and City Architect reviews are frequently 7-10+ days behind. There is no clear prioritization or accountability when deadlines are missed.

**Request:** Can reviews with past due dates be prioritized to reduce additional time delays?

## **NARRATIVES**

**Issue:** Narratives are sometimes not necessary but are still required.

**Request:** The solution, per the permit counter, is to upload a blank piece of paper. Is there a better way?

**Issue:** Sometimes Narratives are requested seeking additional information, but the information has already been provided in another format/ location. This is redundant and time consuming.

**Request:** Rather than drafting an unnecessary and redundant narrative, can there be a location to provide an alternate response?

## **INVOICING & PERMIT ISSUANCE**

**Issue:** After final review it takes an additional 3-5 days (or longer) for an invoice to be generated.

**Request:** Can fees be calculated earlier in the process so once the permit is approved, payment can be issued immediately.

**Issue:** The link to pay on the invoice is not easily found or obvious to a homeowner.

**Request:** Can the link to pay be made larger or can the invoice be a hyperlink to the payment site?

**Issue:** After the permit is paid, there is another delay before the permit card and approved drawings are issued.

**Request:** Can permit card and approved drawings be made available immediately after payment is made?

**Issue:** When plans are finally issued some approved pages are missing from the final set and some sets include rejected pages. This often is not discovered until inspectors are on-site. It requires someone to go through the set page by page to determine which approved sheets are missing and which sheets have been rejected and should be removed.

**Request:** Can the system be modified to automatically bind approved sheets?

## **LINKING PERMITS**

**Issue:** In many cases, one permit will almost always require another permit. For example, a demo permit will not be approved until the plumbing cap off permit is closed. Tracking them separately is time consuming and adds time to the permit issuance. Currently a narrative must be submitted stating the plumbing cap off permit has been closed even though that information is available in the system. Another example is temporary fence permits. Temporary fence permits must be renewed every 6 months, even though there is a master permit for a new build or large renovation that will take years to complete.

**Request:** Can certain permits be linked, or a prompt created so workflow is automatic and seamless? In the case of the demo permit, once the plumbing cap off permit is closed, can the demo permit be updated automatically to reflect that this requirement has been met?

## **DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT**

**Issue:** Staff are unable to remove incorrectly uploaded documents, causing irrelevant files to remain in the record permanently, resulting in confusion and inefficiency.

**Request:** Can top administrators have the ability to remove files that have been uploaded in error?



# **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES PERMITTING IMPROVEMENTS**

FOR CITY OF CORAL GABLES

BY LUCY LOPEZ





**01**

Transparency

**02**

Subrecords

**03**

Reviews

**04**

Accuracy

**05**

Expirations

**06**

Narratives

**07**

Intake

**08**

Fees

**09**

Invoices

**10**

Phones

# TRANSPARENCY

- Need to create transparency for the city side as well. When permit are first submitted, who are they assigned to in this 4 - 5 day window; how can we get an update to inform the homeowners accurately. All other cities reveal this data.
- When permit goes into final QC, who is the permit assigned to? When permit goes into invoicing who is the permit assigned to?
- Recent change to add or remove contact was eliminated while perhaps while in agreeance with disabling the removal of a contact it has become quite cumbersome when trying to assist homeowners and they cannot quickly add me to a permit.
  - Process of adding me to the permit took a total of 10 days. See correspondence.

**From:** Lucy Lopez <lusetteclopez@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 9, 2026 11:37 AM  
**To:** DevelopmentServices <DevelopmentServices@coralgables.com>  
**Cc:** joshuaweintraub@miamisao.com; sionelc@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Re: POSP-26-05-0730 - POSP-25-05-0730

**CAUTION: External Sender. Please do not click on links or open attachments from senders you do not trust.**

Dear Development Services,  
Mr. Weintraub did send an email directly from his email advising you of the same to please add me. The email was sent 10 days ago on January 30th 1:51PM. I have sent a screenshot of his original email and he is copied in onto this email too. I need this urgently resolved as we are trying to get the owner to the finish line with his permit please. I you can kindly send confirmation once I have been added to the permit as per the owners request.

**Joshua Weintraub**  
Weintraub Pool RE  
POSP-26-05-0730  
To: DevelopmentServices,  
Cc: Lusette Lopez,  
sionelc@gmail.com,  
Andi Weintraub, Antonio L

Dear Developmental Services,  
Ms. Lucy Lopez is absolutely authorized to act on my behalf to complete this pool permit process. In fact, she's authorized to discuss any of the current permits associated with the work we're doing on the house.

Thank you.  
Josh

**From:** DevelopmentServices <DevelopmentServices@coralgables.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 9, 2026 11:22 AM  
**To:** Lucy Lopez <lusetteclopez@gmail.com>; DevelopmentServices <DevelopmentServices@coralgables.com>; Joshua Weintraub <joshuaweintraub@miamisao.com>; sionelc@gmail.com  
**Subject:** RE: POSP-26-05-0730 - POSP-25-05-0730

Good morning,  
Please make the Contractor to send us an email from the account registered in the CSS portal (Dream Pools of South FI, ROBERTO ESPINO-SALES@dreampoolsfl.com) or directly from the owner's account.

Regards,  
Permit Counter  
Development Services  
427 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL 33134 / 305-460-5245 ext\*  
developmentservices@coralgables.com or contractors@coralgables.com

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

-----Original Message-----  
**From:** Lucy Lopez <lusetteclopez@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 30, 2026 1:05 PM  
**To:** DevelopmentServices <DevelopmentServices@coralgables.com>; joshuaweintraub@miamisao.com; sionelc@gmail.com  
**Subject:** POSP-26-05-0730

**CAUTION: External Sender. Please do not click on links or open attachments from senders you do not trust.**

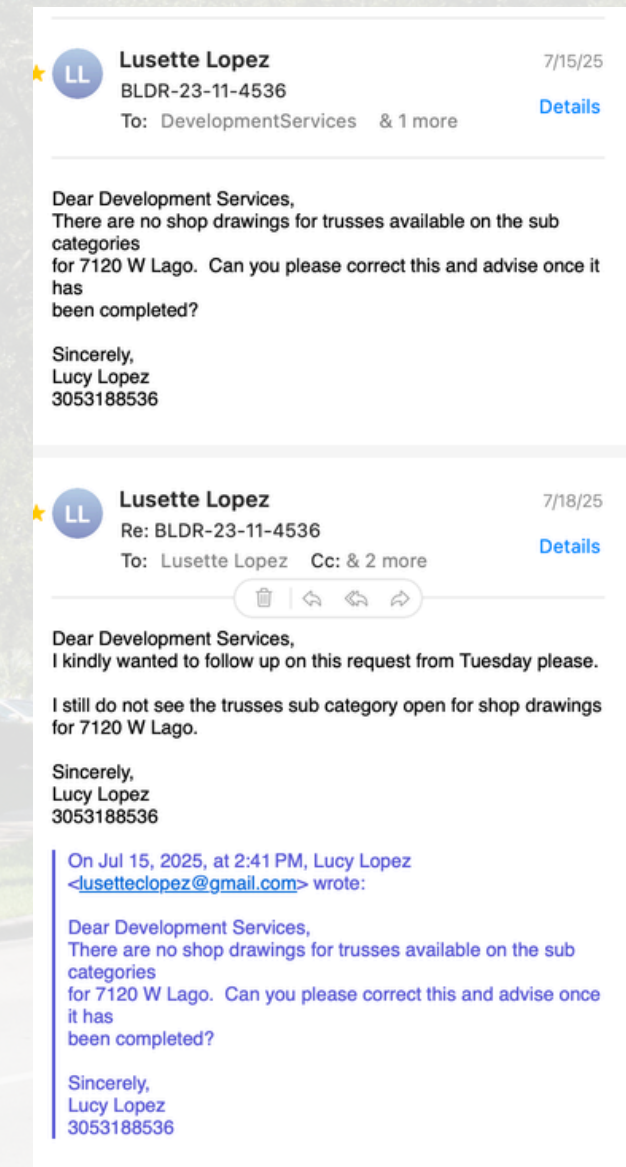
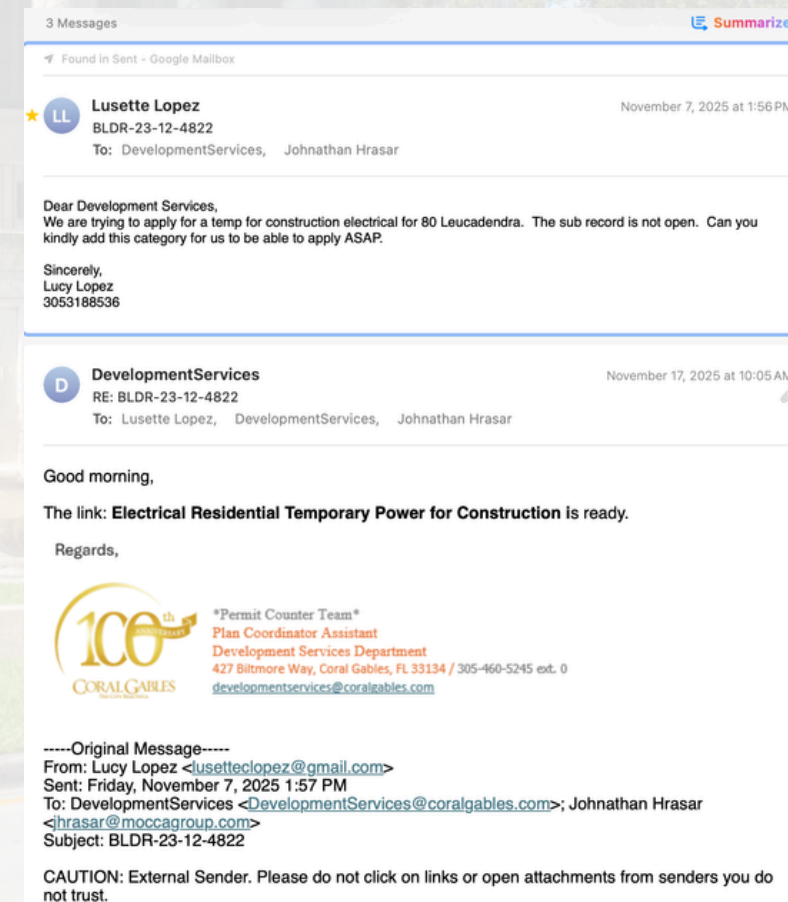
Dear Development Services,  
I was writing to you on behalf of Mr. Weintraub. He is authorizing me to be added as an additional contact to his permit.

Can you kindly confirm once this has been completed.

Sincerely,  
Lucy Lopez  
3053188336  
Please Note: Florida has a very broad Public Records Law. Most written communications to or from State and Local Officials regarding State or Local business are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your email communications may therefore be subject to public disclosure.

# SUBRECORDS

- Subrecords are not added to master permit immediately or efficiently. Required categories are requested from development services consistently in person and via email because the subpermits capability to apply is not auto populated once the permit is issued.
- Same instance for Shop Drawings.
- Most permits only have one or two shop drawing sub categories created at best.
- Specific examples are 80 Leucadendra and 7120 W Lago.
  - BLDR-23-12-4822 and BLDR-23-11-4536.
- This issue occurs often.



# PLAN REVIEW AND GROUPED PLANS

- Because plans are grouped, once you obtain approvals from trades such as city architect, building, and zoning; if there is one minor comment for public works affecting the site plan the entire set has to now go back into review to all pertinent trades affecting the architecture bundle.
- This creates more of a lead time for permits to be issued and more work for reviewers to re-review the same plans that have already been approved. Subsequently more home owner frustration.
  - 165 Solano Prado BLDR-25-07-7792

## FBC Residential - New Construction

Submittal Status	Received Date	Due Date	Completed Date
Requires Re-submit	01/22/2026	02/02/2026	02/11/2026

❗ Public Works • Disapproved • Muñoz - Public Works Emily • Completed : 02/04/2026

✅ Zoning • Approved • Tejera - Zoning Erick • Completed : 02/03/2026

✅ Structural • Approved • Guth - Structural Paul • Completed : 02/11/2026

✅ Residential Landscape Review • Approved • Hernandez Victor • Completed : 01/30/2026

✅ Plumbing • Approved • Perez - Plumbing Rudy • Completed : 01/30/2026

✅ City Architect • Approved • Lopez Elisa • Completed : 02/03/2026

✅ Building • Approved • Lopez - Building Manuel • Completed : 01/28/2026

## **ACCURATE DATE CONVENTIONS**

- Received date does not reflect the date that the permit was applied for. It reflect the date that the permit starts review which is about four to five days after the permit is applied for.
- This needs to be displayed more clearly as homeowners are lead to believe that their permit was applied for at a much later date than the reality.
- This is an issue that applicants are experiencing over all.
- Users cannot see dates that their plans were uploaded or which plans were the latest uploads.


# Coral Gables - The City Beautiful

## PERMIT EXPIRATIONS

- Temp fence permits expire and need to be renewed manually every single time. There needs to be a way to correctly link the master permits efficiently.
- Saving the applicants time as well as permit counter staff.
  - 480 Casuarina under TMPR-24-08-0390.

DevelopmentServices August 28, 2025 at 10:04 AM  
RE: TMPR-24-08-0390  
To: Lusette Lopez & 1 more [Details](#)

Good morning,  
The permit was extended yesterday to reflect the master expiration date: 02/09/2026.  
Regards,


 \*Permit Counter Team\*  
Plan Coordinator Assistant  
Development Services Department  
427 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL 33134 / 305-460-5245 ext. 0  
[developmentervices@coralgables.com](mailto:developmentervices@coralgables.com)

-----Original Message-----  
From: Lucy Lopez <[lusettelopez@gmail.com](mailto:lusettelopez@gmail.com)>  
Sent: Wednesday, August 27, 2025 8:01 AM  
To: DevelopmentServices <[DevelopmentServices@coralgables.com](mailto:DevelopmentServices@coralgables.com)>  
Subject: TMPR-24-08-0390

CAUTION: External Sender. Please do not click on links or open attachments from senders you do not trust.  
[See More from Lusette Lopez](#)

Please Note: Florida has a very broad Public Records Law. Most written communications to or from State and Local Officials regarding State or Local business are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your email communications may therefore be subject to public disclosure.

Found in Sent - Google Mailbox

 Lusette Lopez  
Re: TMPR-24-08-0390  
To: DevelopmentServices  
January 20, 2026 at 2:57 PM

Dear Development Services,  
This temp fence permit looks like it is going to expire once more. Can you kindly update this?

Sincerely,  
Lucy Lopez  
3053188536

# Coral Gables - The City Beautiful

## NARRATIVES

- Narratives are being requested, sometimes even simply a blank sheet to kick start a review. This creates more work for everyone. When a simple visit to development services should be able to solve.
- Simple items such as qualifiers updating their license or notice that owner builder was approved my Mr. Lopez should not require a narrative from the homeowner to be uploaded to the permit.
- Because these departments are all located within the development service building; a short walk, phone call or email should be able to resolve these items internally and efficiently. The current process creates more counterintuitive work for everyone. Resulting in permits taking even longer to issue once at the tail end of the process.
  - 4040 Palmarito under ZONR-25-08-2921
- Narratives are also required for issuance of demo permits once plumbing cap off permits are closed off. Because demo permits require plumbing cap of permits to first be closed out, there is no simple or automatic way for the demo permit to be approved. This creates a large lag time between plumbing cap of being closed and demo permit being issued. An example of this can be seen within 5600 Kerwood under PLUR-25-11-4082 plumbing cap off, BLDR-25-11-8503 demo. Same instance will occur prior to master being issued because of the demo will need to be closed out prior to master. The system should automatically recognize that these requirements have been fulfilled.

★ LL **Lusette Lopez** 1/5/26  
Re: ZONR-25-08-2921  
To: DevelopmentServices

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Dear Development Services,  
Following up on this request. The narrative was submitted. File name is 4040.

Sincerely,  
Lucy Lopez  
3053188536

[See More from DevelopmentServices](#)

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D **DevelopmentServices** 1/7/26  
RE: ZONR-25-08-2921  
To: Lusette Lopez

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Good morning,

Please upload a narrative explaining that owner builder was approved.

Let us know if you have any question.

Permit Counter Team  
Plan Coordinator Assistant  
Development Services Department  
427 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL 33134 / 305-460-5245 ext. 0  
[developmentservices@coralgables.com](mailto:developmentservices@coralgables.com)

-----Original Message-----  
From: Lucy Lopez <[lusetteclopez@gmail.com](mailto:lusetteclopez@gmail.com)>  
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 3:07 PM  
To: DevelopmentServices  
<[DevelopmentServices@coralgables.com](mailto:DevelopmentServices@coralgables.com)>  
Subject: Re: ZONR-25-08-2921

CAUTION: External Sender. Please do not click on links or open attachments from senders you do not trust.

## **INITIAL PERMIT INTAKE**

- Permits need to be processed in the order that they were received. Often times, two permits are submitted on the same day yet one goes into review quicker while the other remain at a submitted online status for several days.
- This needs to be fair across the board for all homeowners - not contingent upon the particular intake of the staff member that it was assigned to.


# FEES

- Fees are calculated at the tail end of the permit when the homeowners are desperate to receive their permit, they need to wait an additional 3-4 business days to receive the fees to then wait an addition 24 hours after the fees have been paid for their permit to be issued.
- Automation of fees will hopefully resolve this and errors.
- Because homeowners now have transparency and are desperate to pull their permits, fees are being paid immediately. In this particular instance, without review. There was an invoicing error and prior to me bringing this up to the homeowner they already paid for the invoice. This refund should have been issued immediately.
  - 550 Arvida under BLDR-25-10-8339.

Dear Maddie, Development Services and Amanda,  
 I was contacting you regarding the roofing permit fees for 550 Arvida. The client has already paid the fees however the fees seemed very high for a roofing permit. I believe this is an error in calculating fees by Development Services as there are Impact Fees included and even a Parks fee included which is higher than the cost of the actual permit fees. We visited in person today and attached please find the fees in question. Can you kindly please correct the fees that are due and please refund the owner the additional fees.

**INVOICE (INV-00058340)  
FOR CITY OF CORAL GABLES**

**BILLING CONTACT**  
 Lucy Lopez  
 Double L Consulting LLC  
 5005 Orduna Drive  
 Coral Gables, FL 33146



INVOICE NUMBER	INVOICE DATE	INVOICE DUE DATE	INVOICE STATUS	INVOICE DESCRIPTION
INV-00058340	01/13/2026	02/12/2026	Paid In Full	NONE


REFERENCE NUMBER	FEE NAME	TOTAL
BLDR-25-10-8339	Admin Charge Impact Fee	\$88.00
	BCAIB	\$54.00
	Board of Architect Fee	\$480.00
	Bond Fee	\$1,200.00
	Code Compliance Fee	\$108.00
	Dept of Business and Professional Regulation	\$36.00
	Document preservation fee (\$1.45 per page)	\$79.75
	FBC Residential Permit Fee	\$3,400.00
	Fire Impact Fee	\$305.00
	Fire Impact Fee	\$5.00
	Lien Law	\$1,640.00
	Mobility Impact Fee	\$924.00
	Municipal Impact Fee	\$55.00
	Ordinance 2006-27 Filing Fee (\$1 per page)	\$7,260.00
Parks & Recreation Impact Fee	\$270.00	
Police Impact Fee	\$200.00	
Residential Upfront Fee	\$200.00	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>		<b>\$16,105.35</b>

550 Arvida Pkwy Coral Gables, FL 33156-2321

<b>REMITTANCE INFORMATION</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$16,105.35</b>
City of Coral Gables 427 Biltmore Way Coral Gables, FL 33134		

# INVOICES

- Payment for Invoices needs to be more user friendly. The #1 question received is, “How do I pay?”.
- The link displayed is minimal, unless they read the fine print on top of the image, they will not see where to pay.
- Perhaps have the invoice be a hyper link so homeowners can click it.

 **Patricia C. del Carpio** March 4, 2026 at 2:18 PM  
FW: Open Invoice INV-00060456  
To: Lusette Lopez


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Hi Lucy,

What can we expect after we make this payment? Will there be more fees? Can you send me a link to make the payment? I don't know where to go. Best,

Patty

**Patricia del Carpio**  
*(she/her/hers)*  
Program Coordinator, Executive MBA - Miami  
Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University  
95 Merrick Way | Suite 100 | Coral Gables, FL 33134

 **noreply@epmail.tylerapp.com** Yesterday at 6:46 AM  
Open Invoice INV-00060504  
To: Lusette Lopez

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\*\*\*\*\*  
Please do not reply to this message. It was sent from an unmonitored email address that cannot accept incoming e-mail.  
\*\*\*\*\*

Greetings,  
You have a pending invoice with the City of Coral Gables that is ready to be paid. Please see attached Invoice.  
If your invoice includes a bond, please be advised that the City of Coral Gables' Development Services Department will refund bonds only to the original payee. If a third party pays the fee on behalf of the property owner, the property owner must recover the funds from that third party. The bond refund needs to be requested within 1 year of closing the permit.  
[Click here to pay your invoice online.](#)

**INVOICE (INV-00060504)  
FOR CITY OF CORAL GABLES**

**BILLING CONTACT**  
Lucy Lopez  
Double L Consulting LLC  
5005 Orduna Drive  
Coral Gables, FL 33146

INVOICE NUMBER	INVOICE DATE	INVOICE DUE DATE	INVOICE STATUS	INVOICE DESCRIPTION
INV-00060504	03/05/2026	04/04/2026	Due	NONE

REFERENCE NUMBER	FEE NAME	TOTAL
BLDR-25-11-8503	BCAIB	\$5.40
	Bond Fee	\$400.00
	Code Compliance Fee	\$10.80
	Dept of Business and Professional Regulation	\$3.60
	Document preservation fee (\$1.45 per page)	\$73.95
	Lien Law	\$5.00
	Ordinance 2006-27 Filing Fee (\$1 per page)	\$51.00
5600 Kerwood Oaks Dr Coral Gables, FL 33156-2114		<b>SUBTOTAL</b>
		<b>\$549.75</b>

**REMITTANCE INFORMATION**

City of Coral Gables 427 Biltmore Way Coral Gables, FL 33134	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>\$549.75</b>
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## PHONE SYSTEM

- Currently homeowners can record a message for a reviewer that is no longer than approximately 10 seconds long before the line cuts off.
- Development services phone lines should be open until 4 PM until the department closes.

# *Coral Gables - The City Beautiful*

**Thank you for listening  
and allowing us to provide  
feedback.**



**Mannix Fernandez**

**Dolphin Expediting Services**

I wanted to share some feedback regarding several permitting challenges that I frequently encounter when processing projects through the City of Coral Gables. My intention is simply to highlight areas where the process can sometimes create delays so that, if possible, improvements can be considered.

Below are a few of the recurring issues I have experienced:

### **1. Contact Management in System**

Previously, the system allowed users to add contacts through the contacts tab. Since this option was removed, we now have to request City staff to add architects, engineers, and owners to the project. While I understand the reason for tighter controls, the inability to add legitimate project contacts creates delays since we often have to wait several days for them to be added. For those of us managing projects honestly and transparently, the ability to add key project participants is extremely important. I don't need access to remove, I can always add for permission on that and rather I need to have the ability to add contacts.

### **2. Uploading Large Plan Sets**

Uploading large-scale plan sets often causes the system to freeze or fail. In many cases I have had to involve IT to try to resolve the issue, and even then it does not always work. This becomes particularly challenging on larger projects where hundreds of pages must be uploaded.

### **3. Time Required to Generate Fees**

After months of working through reviews and finally reaching permit approval, we often must wait an additional 3–5 days (or sometimes longer) for fees to be generated so the invoice can be paid. This delay becomes very noticeable at the final stage of the process.

### **4. Permit Issuance After Fees Are Paid**

Similarly, once fees are paid, there is typically another delay before the permit card and

approved drawings are issued. On large projects, permit fees can be extremely substantial, and clients often pay immediately. It can be difficult to explain to a client that a permit costing hundreds of thousands of dollars has been paid but we must wait an additional day before the permit card becomes available.

### **5. Missing Approval Pages in Issued Plan Sets**

Occasionally, when plans are finally issued, some approval pages are missing from the final set. When this happens, we have to go through the entire plan set page by page to identify which sheets were omitted so they can be added back to the approved documents. This usually occurs in the field when the inspectors go out to the jobsite.

### **6. Resubmittal Requirements and Bundled Trades**

The bundled trade format required by Coral Gables creates a significant coordination challenge because Miami-Dade County requires plans to be submitted as individual PDFs. Architects and engineers therefore have to constantly adjust formatting depending on the jurisdiction.

The difficulty becomes even greater during resubmittals. For example, if an architectural plan set originally contains five sheets and three sheets require revision, the corrected resubmittal must include both the voided and revised versions of those sheets. This increases the number of pages in the bundle and quickly multiplies when dealing with hundreds or thousands of sheets. As the bundles grow larger, the system often struggles to process uploads.

### **7. Re-Activation of Previously Approved Trades**

Another issue occurs when a single department requires a correction late in the review process. Because the entire bundled set must be resubmitted, the system sometimes reactivates other trades that were already approved simply because the bundle has changed. This can lead to unnecessary additional reviews even though those trades had previously cleared comments.

I understand that permitting large and complex projects is challenging for everyone involved, and I truly appreciate that the Mayor's Office want to help implement change to the process. My goal in sharing this feedback is simply to highlight some of the areas where the system can create additional delays or complications during the permitting process. I

truly appreciate that my voice can be heard, because all of the things I mentioned above cause significant delays in the process and severely impact construction schedules for all of my clients.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these items further and will plan to follow up with you tomorrow.

# Coral Gables Permitting Process: Recommendations

## **Purpose**

Provide direct feedback on permitting challenges to support ongoing improvements identified in the City's operational assessment.

## **Opening Context**

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback. The City's assessment accurately identifies key issues around predictability, systems, and staffing.

What we are sharing reflects real project experiences where time is lost, where confusion occurs, and where operational improvements can have immediate impact.

## **Key Issues Observed**

### 1. Intake & Issuance Delays

- Slow intake with incorrect or incomplete routing of permits
- Delays at final issuance even after all approvals are complete
- Lack of ownership by staff at the beginning and end of the permit process

### 2. Missed Review Timelines & Lack of Accountability

- Posted review timelines are not consistently met
- Structural and City Architect reviews frequently 7–10+ days behind
- No clear escalation or accountability when deadlines are missed

### 3. Incorrect Permit Routing

- Permit types often trigger unnecessary department reviews
- No correction during intake or early review stages
- Applicants are left to resolve internal routing issues

### 4. Resubmittal Inefficiency

- Minor corrections trigger full re-review by all departments
- Previously approved reviewers are unnecessarily re-engaged
- No distinction between minor vs. major revisions

#### 5. System & Workflow Issues (EnerGov / Bluebeam)

- Review cycles delayed due to system and workflow limitations
- Starting and closing review cycles creates avoidable downtime
- Technology gaps are increasing processing time

#### 6. Reviewer Inconsistency & Scope Creep

- New or excessive comments introduced in later cycles
- Requests sometimes fall outside reviewer scope
- Inconsistent standards across departments

#### 7. Front-End Staff & Customer Service Gaps

- Limited guidance at intake leads to avoidable errors
- Over-reliance on reviewers to resolve basic issues
- Noticeable decline in customer service compared to past standards

***Even experienced professionals face difficulty navigating the process. For first-time applicants, the system is significantly more challenging.***

#### 8. Communication Inefficiencies

- General inbox responses take several days
- Applicants are redirected multiple times before getting answers
- No clear or efficient communication channel

#### 9. Administrative Burden on Applicants

- Applicants required to upload documents to trigger responses
- Response narratives required for administrative updates
- System limitations shift internal responsibilities onto applicants

#### 10. Document Control & Approved Set Issues

- Approved sets include rejected plans and incorrect submissions
- Creates confusion for inspectors, contractors, and owners
- No clear separation between approved and rejected documents

#### 11. Document Management Limitations

- Staff cannot remove incorrectly uploaded documents
- Errors remain permanently in the record
- Contributes to confusion and inefficiency

#### 12. Cost Impact – Document Preservation Fees

- Applicants charged for storage of irrelevant documents
- Fees can reach hundreds of dollars on larger projects
- Costs do not reflect usable documentation

#### 13. QC (Quality Control) Delays

- Additional QC layer adds several days to approval
- Dependent on limited staff availability
- Delays occur even after technical reviews are complete

#### 14. Post-Issuance Gaps

- Sub-permits and shop drawings not consistently identified
- Applicants must follow up to correct omissions
- Lack of coordination between review, QC, and issuance

#### 15. Sub-Permit Delays

- Intake, review, and fee processing delays
- Even simple sub-permits exceed one week
- Process inefficiency disproportionate to scope

#### **What This Means**

- Unpredictable and extended project timelines
- Increased costs for owners and stakeholders
- Confusion in the field due to unclear approved documents
- Time spent navigating process instead of advancing projects

### **Key Opportunities for Improvement**

- Enforce review timelines with accountability
- Correct permit routing at intake
- Separate minor vs. major resubmittals
- Improve interdepartmental coordination
- Streamline QC process
- Improve document control practices
- Enhance system usability
- Strengthen staff training and customer service
- Establish clear communication channels

### **Closing**

The City's assessment identifies the right areas. These field observations confirm that the issues are consistent and systemic. Addressing them at the process level will significantly improve efficiency, predictability, and overall experience.