



# MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # **138-2012**

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LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: May 17, 2012

SUBJECT: **QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH BUILDING DEVELOPMENT PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS FROM WATSON RICE STUDY AS REQUESTED BY THE FINANCE AND CITYWIDE PROJECTS COMMITTEE**

On August 13, 2008, the City entered into a contractual agreement with TCBA Watson Rice to conduct a Building Department Organizational and Operational Review. The consultants presented their final report and recommendations to the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee on May 5, 2009. The Finance and Citywide Projects Committee accepted the consultant recommendations and asked the Administration to provide a written quarterly update in the form of a Letter to Commission (LTC) and an annual presentation to the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee.

Attached is the quarterly report, outlining the progress made to date on the remaining initiatives recommended by the consultant, following along with the presentation made at the April 19, 2012 Finance and Citywide Projects Committee. At that meeting, the Committee asked that the implementation dates for all recommendations that have been implemented to date be included in the status report. Staff is still researching implementation dates, and will include those in the next quarterly report.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Attachment

JMG/UGG/SS/KT

**CITY OF MIAMI BEACH BUILDING DEVELOPMENT PROCESS  
RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS  
FROM WATSON RICE STUDY**

**STATUS REPORT AS OF MAY 2012**

The previous Status Reports reported several recommendations with a status of "Implemented" or "Implemented and Ongoing". To simplify these quarterly reports, those items will no longer be reported again unless there is a change in status in any of those items.

The following recommendations have status updates or are still underway:

**2. Separate the duties of fee assessment and receipt of fee payments.**

**Status: In progress**

The Building Department has allocated one position to the Finance Department to handle these responsibilities. Finance has filled this position. The staff person has been trained on the EDEN financial system, and has trained in the Building Department cashiering process. In addition, the Building Department is in the process of procuring two payment kiosks that will handle all transactions being paid by credit card or check. All cash payment transactions will be handled by the Finance Cashier located on the first floor of City Hall. We expect that the full transfer of responsibilities and implementation of the kiosks will be completed within the first half of 2012.

**16. Consider outsourcing the Permit Counter and Records Management Service areas.**

**A) Permit Counter:**

**Status: On hold - Review completed, subject to Union Collective Bargaining Agreement, September 2012**

The recommendation to evaluate outsourcing of the permit counter was adopted in the FY 09/10 budget. The department outlined the scope of services for the privatization request for proposal as part of the FY 10/11 budget process. However, pursuant to negotiations between the City and the Communications Workers of America (CWA), the union that represents the Permit Clerk classifications, no employees were to be laid off for the FY 10/11 budget year. The City has shelved the idea of outsourcing the permit counter at this time. However, the department continues to evaluate the productivity and cost effectiveness of the permit counter as it is currently configured.

## **B) Records Management Service:**

### **Status: Implemented**

The Department has moved expeditiously to digitize most of the City's Building records thus reducing departmental personnel to a minimum level, and thereby pre-empting the need to privatize the service.

## **22. Complete the process of developing plans review and inspection checklists.**

### **Status: In Progress**

The implementation of the plan review checklist is being performed concurrently with the implementation of the electronic plan review system, as this is one of the system requirements to ensure uniform review and standards. The plan review checklists are incorporated into the electronic plan review process and are being implemented concurrently with the system.

The implementation of the inspection checklist will be completed with the implementation of the new permitting system (Accela Automation), as the current system does not support the ability to have checklists that are targeted to a specific inspection type.

## **24. Perform a comprehensive review and analysis of the Permits Plus system.**

### **Status: In progress**

Based on the review of the existing system, it was determined that the best course of action was to completely replace the system.

The permitting system replacement will include permitting, inspections, code enforcement, the business tax receipt process, the Special Event permit process, and the special master process. Approximately one half of City departments utilize the current permitting system. The new system will significantly increase operating efficiencies, provide extensive auditing and security capabilities, contain internal and external automated notification mechanisms to streamline operations and enrich the customers' overall experience with the Building Department.

The City received ten (10) proposals from various vendors throughout North America, however the information technology advisory group recommended to the selection committee that all of the proposals should be disqualified because they did not meet the City technical standard. All proposals were rejected. A new RFP was issued and the City received eight (8) proposals.

The evaluation committee short-listed four (4) vendors for further evaluation. Demonstrations by each of the four (4) vendors were provided. Working Teams comprised of key users throughout the City evaluated each system and provided their recommendations to the evaluation committee.

On February 9, 2011, the City Commission authorized the Administration to enter into negotiations with Accela for their Accela Automation product. Negotiations were successfully completed and contracts executed.

Project Kick-Off took place in July 2011. Accela and its partner consultant, Kings Canyon Technologies, have finished conducting their system configuration analysis for almost all work processes to be included in the system. This phase entailed holding multiple sessions with all the affected departments to learn each department's business processes. The consultants will finish the remaining work processes and then take that information back and begin configuring the system based on the City's processes, which will then be reviewed by the appropriate staff. It is expected that the new system will be operational by approximately December 2012.

The following initiatives have been implemented, or are implemented and ongoing, and will no longer be reported on again unless there is a change in status:

- 4. Develop and implement a simplified permit fee structure and calculation methodology.**
- 10. Provide adequate physical space for Building Department operations.**
- 17. Analyze the effectiveness of the Department's technology solutions to providing customer support; and**
- 18. Increase operating efficiency through the effective use of technology.**
- 21. Develop a formal policies and procedures manual for all building/development process disciplines.**
- 24. Perform a comprehensive review and analysis of the Permits Plus system.**