



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUSINESS PLAN

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Approved By

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Director

March 10, 2026

Date

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1. Organizational Chart

Development Services Department

FY 2026 Adopted Budget Organizational Chart

Total FTEs - 199*

| URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT - 39 | ADMINISTRATION - 9 | BUILDING - 151 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Division Manager 1 | Director - Development Services 1 | Deputy Director - Development Services 1 |
| Chief Zoning Examiner 1 | Assistant Director 1 | Building Official 1 |
| Land Development Manager 2 | Administrative Supervisor 1 | Application Services Manager 1 |
| Administrative Assistant 4 | Assistant to the Director 1 | Chief Building Compliance Inspector 1 |
| Building Inspector 1 | Facilities Worker I 1 | Chief Building Inspector 1 |
| Engineering Inspector I 1 | Senior Accounting Clerk 1 | Chief Electrical Inspector 1 |
| Engineering Inspector II 1 | Senior Administrative Assistant 1 | Chief Mechanical Inspector 1 |
| Landscape Inspector 1 | Senior Management Analyst 1 | Chief Plumbing Inspector 1 |
| Landscape Plans Examiner 1 | Senior Technology Strategist 1 | Floodplain Manager 1 |
| Principal Planner 1 | | Administrative Aide 10 |
| Principal Urban Planner 3 | | Administrative Assistant 16 |
| Senior Administrative Assistant 5 | | Administrative Supervisor 2 |
| Senior Project Manager 1 | | Assistant Building Official 2 |
| Structural Plans Examiner 2 | | Building Inspector 13 |
| Urban Engineer II 3 | | Business Assistance Coordinator 3 |
| Urban Landscape Designer 1 | | Code Compliance Officer 4 |
| Urban Planner I 1 | | Electrical Inspector 3 |
| Urban Planner II 3 | | Electrical Plans Examiner 3 |
| Urban Planner III 3 | | Engineering Inspector I 1 |
| Zoning Administrator 1 | | Engineering Technician 1 |
| Zoning and Landscape Inspector 2 | | Financial Administrator 1 |
| | | Floodplain Development Review Specialist 7 |
| | | Geographic Information Systems Analyst 1 |
| | | Learning and Development Specialist 1 |
| | | Mechanical Inspector 4 |
| | | Mechanical Plans Examiner 3 |
| | | Permit Services Supervisor 2 |
| | | Permit Services Technician 13 |
| | | Plumbing Inspector 1 |
| | | Plumbing Plans Examiner 5 |
| | | Senior Accounting Clerk 1 |
| | | Senior Administrative Assistant 5 |
| | | Senior Building Inspector 11 |
| | | Senior Code Compliance Officer 1 |
| | | Senior Electrical Inspector 3 |
| | | Senior Mechanical Inspector 1 |
| | | Senior Permit Services Technician 3 |
| | | Senior Plumbing Inspector 5 |
| | | Senior Technical Support Analyst 1 |
| | | Senior Technology Strategist 1 |
| | | Structural Plans Examiner 8 |
| | | Technology Strategist 2 |
| | | Telecommunications Coordinator 2 |
| | | Urban Engineer II 2 |

2. Department Overview

Development Services Department Description

The Development Services Department (DSD) includes the Building Services, Urban Design and Planning, Engineering, and Zoning and Landscaping Divisions. DSD encourages and coordinates the City's orderly growth and promotes well-designed development through sound planning practices focused on livability, urban revitalization, growth management, and historic preservation. The Department verifies compliance with the Florida Building Code and enforces applicable local, state and federal regulations governing construction and land use. As part of this work, DSD conducts plan reviews, inspections, and issues building permits to support safe and high-quality construction throughout the community.

The Department has 199 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) and a budget of \$40,359,338.

Administration Division Description

The Administration Division provides all internal support services for the Department, including financial administration, budget management, human resources and organizational development, information technology, employee engagement, performance management, and facilities management. The Division supports the other divisions within the Department to meet operational objectives and intended outcomes.

The Division has nine (9) FTE's and a budget of \$2,907,153.

Building Division Description

The Building Division is responsible for all construction permitting services in the City. The Division provides records, issues permits, and performs building inspections. A major focus of the Division is to ensure that commercial and residential buildings and structures comply with the Florida Building Code (FBC) and all other applicable laws and ordinances. The Division also participates in emergency management and disaster recovery.

The Division has 151 FTE's and a budget of \$29,143,026.

Urban Design and Development Division Description

The Urban Design and Development Division is made up of planning, engineering, zoning and landscape professionals who encourage and coordinate orderly growth and promote quality development, including presentations and recommendations before advisory boards, committees, and the City Commission. The Division collaboratively shapes the City's built environment by integrating policy, design, infrastructure, and regulatory compliance to ensure developments align with community goals, while providing a predictable and timely process for applicants. The Division's services also include historic preservation and long-range planning efforts which help to implement goals and objectives of the City's Comprehensive Plan and Vision Plan, the City's long-term strategic plans for future growth.





The Division has thirty-nine (39) FTE's and a budget of \$8,309,159.

3. Performance Measures

| Strategic Goal | Performance Measure | FY 2024 Actual | FY 2025 Actual | FY 2026 Projected | FY 2026 Target | FY 2027 Target |
|--|--|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Goal 6: Build a diverse and attractive economy | Percentage of new commercial applications issued within 180 days of creation | 66% | 78% | 80% | ≥80% | ≥80% |
| | Percentage of all permit applications that pass initial intake review | 84% | 85% | 85% | ≥85% | ≥85% |
| | Percentage of engineering reviews completed below average review time thresholds | 81% | 80% | 81% | ≥81% | ≥81% |

4. SWOT Matrix

The table below identifies the Department’s most significant strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) that affect service delivery for the key interested parties.

| HELPFUL | | HARMFUL | |
|---------|---|---------|---|
| Rank |  <p>Strengths (Internal Factors)</p> | Rank |  <p>Weaknesses (Internal Factors)</p> |
| 1 | Ability to apply innovative solutions and actions supported by technology to ensure continuity of business operations during challenging situations | 1 | Loss of long-tenured employees with high levels of institutional knowledge and versed in the Department’s processes |
| 2 | Maintaining an adequate number of skilled employees to meet operational demand and consequently sustaining a high level of customer service | 2 | Job classification compression, where pay differences between job levels are minimal or nonexistent, undermines employee morale and hinders effective succession planning |
| 3 | Ability to adhere to rules and regulations as well as maintain compliance with state laws, City ordinances, and financial regulations | 3 | Business processing delays due to roadblocks, lack of timely response, and inability to identify key staff involved in the process within other Departments |
| 4 | High level of institutional knowledge held by employees | 4 | Staff growth has outpaced the current facility and parking available |
| 5 | Strong commitment to providing professional development training to all employees | | |
| Rank |  <p>Opportunities (External Factors)</p> | Rank |  <p>Threats (External Factors)</p> |
| 1 | Collaborate with Human Resources to create an efficient recruitment strategy and enhance the hiring process | 1 | Externally mandated regulations that impact budget and staffing capacity |
| 2 | Upgrade existing software and implement new virtual solutions to enhance customer experience | 2 | Lack of affordable housing |
| 3 | Collaborate with other departments, external organizations, agencies, and businesses to enhance business operations | 3 | Conflicting priorities between stakeholders when handling major internal and external projects |
| | | 4 | Lack of flexibility and resources to compete with external job markets and attract qualified candidates |

4.1 SWOT Resolution Strategies (“What Keeps You Up At Night?”)

Loss of long-tenured employees with high levels of institutional knowledge and versed in the Department’s processes

The inability to transfer institutional knowledge from long-tenured employees could result in a steady decrease in the quality of the services provided, leaving the Department vulnerable to costly inefficiencies in an industry that demands technical, tool-based capabilities and competencies to maintain a high level of efficiency.

Action: Mitigate the risk

The Department mitigates the loss of long-tenured employees by identifying and developing internal leadership talent and finalizing a succession plan to create clear internal pathways for promotion. It also recognizes employee contributions through a fair and equitable pay process. In addition, the Department continues to develop and maintain standardized operating procedures (SOPs) to document and retain institutional knowledge, as well as an onboarding partner program that pairs new employees with experienced staff members to support smooth transitions and effective knowledge transfer.

Job classification compression, where pay differences between job levels are minimal or nonexistent

Job compression is a Departmental weakness because it makes employees feel that additional responsibilities, skills and experience are not appropriately recognized or rewarded. This can lower morale, decrease motivation, and increase turnover among high-performing staff. Additionally, it limits the Department’s ability to develop internal leadership and maintain organizational continuity.

Action: Mitigate the risk

The Department can mitigate job classification compression by clearly distinguishing responsibilities and required competencies between levels. It can collaborate with Human Resources to establish pay differentials that reflect experience and skill sets, as well as use merit-based pay to reward increased responsibility when reclassification is not immediately feasible. Transparent communication about compensation decisions and future plans can also help maintain employee trust.

Externally mandated regulations that impact budget and staffing capacity

Externally mandated regulations, such as Florida Statutes that impose private provider and development review timeframe requirements, may exceed a department’s existing financial and human resources. These mandates can limit operational flexibility, require the reallocation of funds from priority programs, and increase workload without corresponding increases in staffing or funding. As a result, the Department may face challenges maintaining service levels and sustaining employee morale while ensuring compliance with regulatory obligations. Compliance with these mandates often requires specialized knowledge and intensive monitoring and auditing, which can strain budgets and divert staff from core duties. In addition, the statutes mandate strict timelines for development orders, while limiting the ability of the department to address certain local regulations, placing high demands on staff for oversight, turnaround, and compliance.

Action: Mitigate the risk

The Department can mitigate the threat of externally mandated regulations by proactively monitoring regulatory developments, engaging with oversight and legislative bodies. Conducting impact assessment, prioritizing core functions, and seeking efficiencies through process improvement can also help absorb new requirements. Clear communication with stakeholders and timely requests for additional resources to further support compliance.

5. FY 2026 Major Anticipated Accomplishments

Administration Division:

- Finalize and implement a succession planning policy to guide the Department on creating pathways for internal promotion and retention of historical knowledge
- Establish a process improvement working group by leveraging graduates of the Process Improvement Academy to identify, prioritize, and implement continuous improvement initiatives within the Department
- Create a streamlined process for Department divisions to submit requests for technological improvements or enhancements, allowing collaboration with the Acceleration Team and other Information Technology professionals to address departmental needs effectively
- Develop an onboarding partner program that pairs new employees with experienced staff members to facilitate a smooth transition into the Department and City, fostering connections and enhancing the onboarding experience
- Develop an inventory control system for all Department supplies and materials to ensure proper management of City resources

Building Division:

- Perform efficiency studies and streamline processes to improve service delivery, reduce bureaucratic hurdles and ensure compliance with federal, state, and county regulations
- Implement technology enhancements at the DSD Building to support meeting requirements and streamline operational improvements
- Continue implementing enhancements, such as a public information program and a substantial damage management plan, to improve the City's Community Rating System (CRS) rating, which will provide a greater discount to Fort Lauderdale neighbors on their flood insurance premiums
- Implement the usage of two (2) high water clearance vehicles to allow for timely, safe and effective post-storm Flood Damage Assessment once clearance is granted by first responders

Urban Design and Development Division:

- Update code amendments and illustrative documents for mixed-use development along major corridors
- Conduct public outreach and conduct a Vision Plan for the South Regional Activity Center (RAC) to inform future code amendments in cooperation with Broward Health and neighborhood associations
- Conduct outreach for land use plan amendment that aligns with the Community Redevelopment Plan for the Central City Community Redevelopment Area (CRA)
- Conduct an architectural resource survey of the Edgewood and River Oaks neighborhoods which is funded by a State of Florida Division of Historical Resources grant
- Integrate the issuance of Development Review Committee comment reports into LauderBuild to implement a more seamless application process
- Update Development Review Committee application specifications to improve the efficiency of plan reviews
- Continue to update the City's Unified Land Development Regulations to conform to new State Statutes and to address City policy concerns
- Amend the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space zoning designation to permit community facilities and utilities to limit the impact on available park space
- Evaluate the Comprehensive Plan in coordination with City departments using an interactive platform to determine the success of implementation and identify amendments to achieve the City's strategic plans goals

- Develop a Streetscape Master Plan for the Sailboat Bend Historic District to address challenges identified with the previous vision plan and that will influence future hardscape projects to promote a more pedestrian-friendly, safe, and attractive environment
- Develop a “tactical urbanism” design and streetscape beautification plan for the Himmarshee Historic District to identify longer-term solutions to the challenges within the area; the plan will inform a final hardscape project to promote a more pedestrian-friendly, safe, and attractive environment

6. FY 2027 Key Strategic Plan and Commission Priority Initiatives

6.1 South Regional Activity Center Vision Plan (Phase II) – Master Plan Update and Adoption on Form-Based Regulations

The City is currently analyzing the South Regional Activity Center (SRAC) to create a plan for future growth. Staff is working on Phase I of this project, the creation of a Community Vision Plan, with a goal of gaining consensus on the direction of development in the area based on community feedback. The Community Vision Plan will then be used to guide Phase II, which involves updating the South Andrews Master Plan and adopting form-based development regulations.

This initiative supports the Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029 Strategic Plan, specifically advancing the Public Places Focus Area, Goal 5: build a beautiful and welcoming community.

| Funding | |
|--|---|
| This initiative will require additional funding in FY 2027 to advance: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

| Milestones | Anticipated Completion |
|--|------------------------|
| Prepare a scope of work for Phase II | November 2026 |
| Procure a consultant team | January 2027 |
| Conduct initial public outreach | April 2027 |
| Prepare updates to the master plan | July 2027 |
| Conduct a community open house meeting | August 2027 |