



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
CONFERENCE MEETING**

#26-0085

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: February 17, 2026

TITLE: Presentation – Proposed Certificate of Use Process – Development
Services Department – (**Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4**)

City staff will present a proposed Certificate of Use (CU) process as a tool to ensure businesses operate in accordance with the City's regulations and zoning requirements. Staff is seeking feedback from the City Commission on the proposed process and to proceed with additional public outreach, process creation, and implementation.

Background

A CU is a document that verifies compliance with specific zoning requirements of the City's Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) as well as a review of the Code of Ordinances and the Building Code. Many municipalities effectively use a CU as a proactive tool to assist new businesses, businesses with new ownership, and businesses that are relocating. Implementing a CU process will enable City staff to provide applicants with a detailed review of their proposed business and location, with the intent of offering the applicant as much information as possible so they can make an informed decision before signing a lease or hiring contractors to do building alterations for a use that may not be permitted at the subject location.

If approved, obtaining a CU will be a mandatory prerequisite before a new local Business Tax Receipt is issued, and applicants will be required to obtain a new CU upon any change in business ownership, location, or the fundamental nature of business operations. Implementation of a CU process will help to strengthen the City's business community and will create a more predictable regulatory environment that will improve the application review process for business owners.

Staff presented the proposed process enhancement to the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) on October 8, 2025, and November 12, 2025. Following these presentations, the EDAB recommended that staff proceed with implementation of the initiative. Staff also presented the proposed process and potential revenue impacts to the Budget Advisory Board (BAB) on January 21, 2026. The BAB also recommended moving forward with adoption of the initiative, with the recommendation that it be implemented as a one (1)-year pilot program.

If the Commission agrees with implementation with a one (1)-year pilot program, upon completion of the pilot period, staff will return to the City Commission with an update of the program's results. October 8, 2025, and November 12, 2025, Economic Development Advisory Board meeting minutes are attached as Exhibit 2. The January 21, 2026, Budget Advisory Board meeting minutes are attached as Exhibit 3.

If there is consensus by the City Commission to move forward, staff will perform community outreach and draft the ordinance for Commission consideration. Staff will also develop a user-friendly electronic application process.

Resource Impact

The proposed process would establish a fee based on the hourly rate of \$159.00 with a minimum of 1.5 hours, for a minimum of \$238.50 per application (.5 hours per discipline). Based on initial staff analysis, it is anticipated that about 1,700 applications would be affected by the new CU process (based on an average of new business tax and applicable building permit applications from 2022 – 2025). This action has the potential to result in an annual impact to the City in the amount of \$405,450 in General Fund revenue to provide full cost recovery for the services provided.

Strategic Connections

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029* Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- The Business Growth and Support Focus Area—Goal 6: Build a diverse and attractive economy

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035* Vision Plan:

- We Are Prosperous

This item supports the *Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040* Comprehensive Plan specifically advancing:

- The Business Development Focus Area

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Certificate of Use Presentation

Exhibit 2 – October 8, 2025, and November 12, 2025, EDAB Meeting Minutes

Exhibit 3 – January 21, 2026, BAB Meeting Minutes

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Director: Anthony Greg Fajardo, Director, Development Services