



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
REGULAR MEETING

#26-0716

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

FROM: Christopher Cooper, Acting City Manager

DATE: August 18, 2026

TITLE: First Reading – Ordinance Amending City of Fort Lauderdale Code of Ordinances – Chapter 9, Buildings and Construction including Article II, Permits and Inspections, to Revise Private Provider Permit Fees and Fee Reductions in Compliance with State Legislation – (**Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4**)

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission approve an ordinance amending the City of Fort Lauderdale's Code of Ordinances – Chapter 9, Buildings and Construction. Proposed amendments are to Article II, Permits and Inspections, to revise private provider permit fees and fee reductions in compliance with State of Florida legislation.

Background

During the 2026 Legislative Session, the Florida Legislature adopted House Bill (HB) 803 (Exhibit 1), Building Permits and Inspections, which became effective July 1, 2026. HB 803 amended Florida Statutes governing the use of private providers for building permit plan review and inspection services. A private provider is a licensed professional or firm contracted by the property owner or permit applicant to perform building permit plan review or building inspection services for the structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing trades, in place of City staff for those specific services. Private provider services are not permitted for zoning, landscape, or engineering plan reviews or inspections and the City retains responsibility for these functions.

Under the amended law, a local government may charge only for the work it continues to perform on a private provider application, and the fee must be based on the direct and indirect costs incurred to receive, review, process, and maintain the application, including applicable personnel, clerical, and supervisory support. For commercial construction projects, HB 803 also requires a minimum twenty-five percent (25%) reduction to the portion of the permit fee attributable to inspection services when performed by a private provider, and a minimum fifty percent (50%) reduction when the private provider performs both services. These reductions are greater than the five percent (5%) and ten percent (10%) reductions currently provided in the City's Code of Ordinances.

Prior to the effective date of HB 803, the City's private provider permit fees were calculated as 1.75% of the construction value of the work. To comply with the new statutory requirements, the Development Services Department calculated flat fees based on the City's costs to review applications for completeness, verify required private provider documentation, process applications, maintain records, and provide necessary staff and supervisory support. The resulting fee is \$273 per applicable discipline when the private provider performs inspection services and \$446 per applicable discipline when the private provider performs both inspection and plan review services. For commercial projects, the required reductions result in inspection review fees of \$205 per applicable discipline after the twenty-five percent (25%) reduction and \$223 in inspection and plan review fees per applicable discipline after the fifty percent (50%) reduction. Single-trade permits, which use a private provider for inspection services only, will be charged the current minimum permit fee of \$131 due to the lower level of administrative review and staff involvement required to process these permits. Applicable disciplines include structural, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing, with each discipline charged separately. Other reviews not performed by a private provider, such as zoning, landscape, and engineering, remain subject to the full applicable City fees.

On June 30, 2026, Letter to the Commission (LTC) No. 26-211 (Exhibit 2) was distributed to notify the City Commission of the legislation, the initially proposed cost-based fee structure, and the increased commercial fee reductions before the changes became operationally effective. Following distribution of the LTC, the Development Services Department identified additional efficiencies in the private provider review process that reduced the administrative staff time and associated costs required to process these permits. The proposed ordinance amendment formally ratifies and codifies in Chapter 9 of the City's Code of Ordinances the revised private provider rates and applicable reduction percentage.

Private providers represented approximately 1.49% of all plan reviews and 1.6% of all inspections during Fiscal Year 2025. Although private provider applications constitute a relatively small portion of the Development Services Department's overall workload, the transition from construction-value-based fees to flat cost-recovery fees, together with the increased reductions required for commercial projects, is expected to reduce overall building permit revenue. The amount of the revenue reduction cannot be accurately projected because it will depend on future private provider permit activity and the number of applicable disciplines associated with each application.

Related to the City's response to HB 803, the Development Services Department is currently working with a third-party consultant to review all other development permit fees in response to HB 399 (Exhibit 3), Land Use and Development Regulations, which requires all development permit and application fees to reasonably relate to the actual costs incurred by the City beginning January 1, 2027. The private provider fees proposed in this ordinance may be revised again, along with other building permit fees, upon completion of the fee study and presentation of final recommendations to the City Commission prior to the effective date of HB 399.

Resource Impact

There will be a potential reduction in building permit revenues in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 and FY2027.

Strategic Connections

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

- The Business Growth and Support Area, Goal 6: Build a diverse and attractive economy
- Guiding Principle: Fiscal Responsibility

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035* Vision Plan: We Are Community.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – House Bill 803

Exhibit 2 – LTC No. 26-211

Exhibit 3 – House Bill 399

Exhibit 4 – Business Impact Estimate

Exhibit 5 – Ordinance

Prepared by: Juan Rodriguez, Assistant Director, Development Services Department

Department Director: Anthony G. Fajardo, Development Services Department