



# EXPEDITED PERMIT REVIEW SERVICES PROGRAM

Making Permitting Faster, Smarter, and More Efficient


Presented by Commissioner Castro







# ADDRESSING A REAL PROBLEM

- Permit delays are one of the **top complaints** from residents and contractors.
  - Staffing shortages and turnover have worsened backlogs.
  - Residents deserve options—especially when time is of the essence.
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# A SIMPLE, OPTIONAL SOLUTION

▶▶ A **voluntary** program for residential and commercial interior remodels.

▶▶ Offers faster turnaround times through a dedicated expedited queue.

▶▶ Powered by city-approved partner reviewers— **not** city employees.

▶▶ Funded by an **optional 15% fee** (on top of the regular permit fee).



A photograph of a historic building with a clock tower and an American flag. The building is made of light-colored stone or concrete and has a red-tiled roof. The clock tower has a clock face and a bell. An American flag is flying on a pole in front of the building. The sky is blue with some clouds.

# LET'S CLEAR UP THE MISCONCEPTIONS

▶ **Not political-it's policy-driven,**  
service-focused, and professionally  
vetted.

▶ Not mandatory.

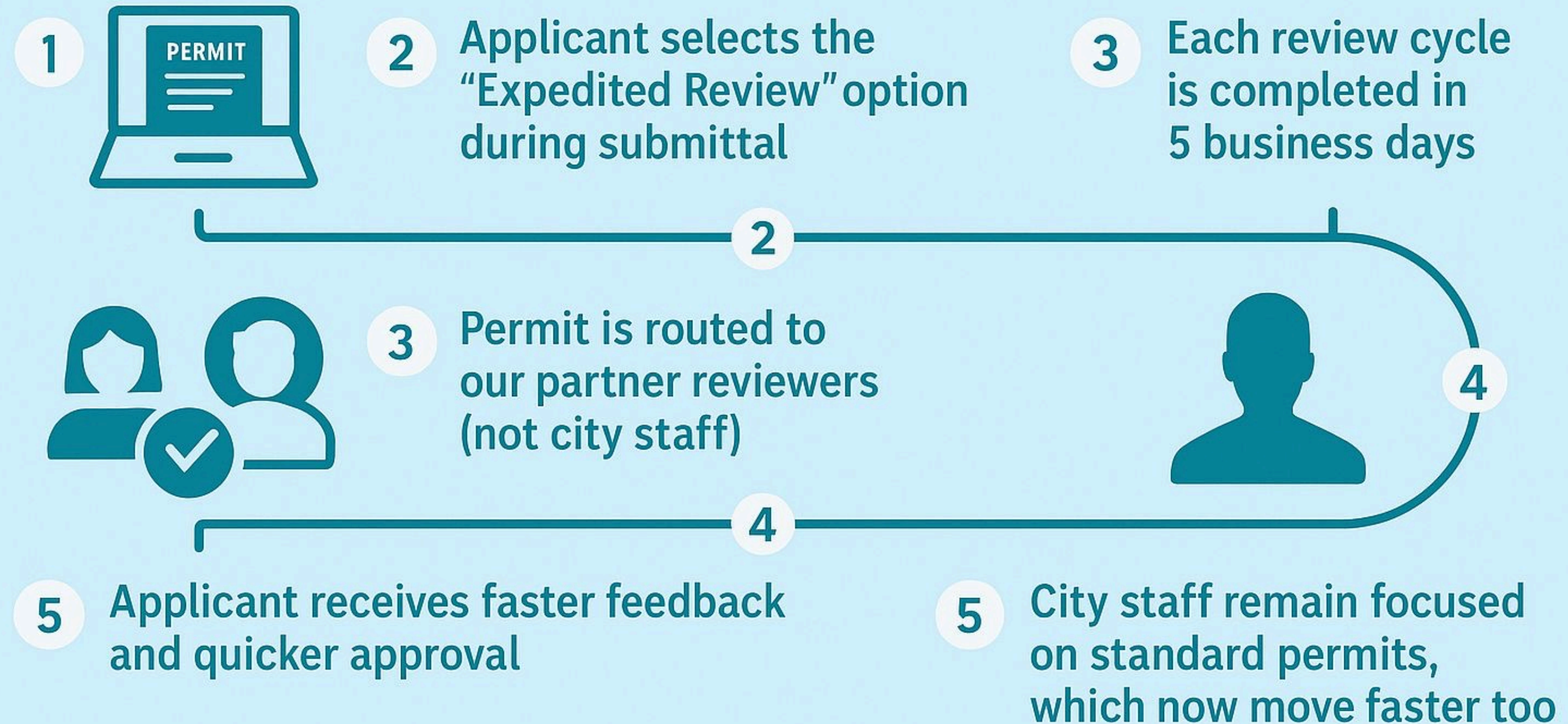
▶ Not a replacement for standard  
permitting.

▶ Not privatization or outsourcing.



# HOW IT WORKS-STEP-BY-STEP

## EXPEDITED PERMIT PATH





# EVERYONE WNS

## Expedited Permit Review Helps All Residents



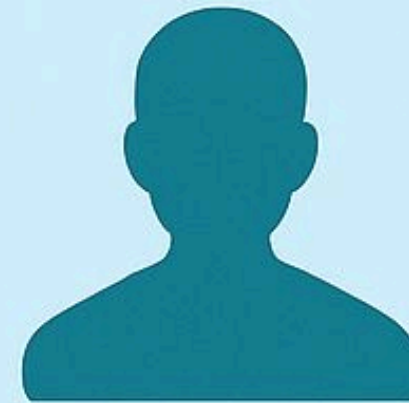
Residents who  
choose expedited  
review:

Get permits faster  
so projects can  
start sooner



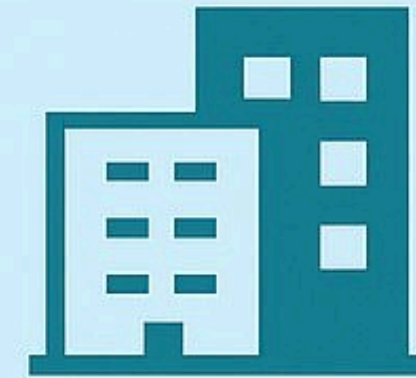
Residents who  
stick with standard  
review:

Benefit from shorter  
wait times since  
expedited permits  
go to a separate team



City staff:

Have fewer  
permits to handle,  
so they can focus  
and provide  
better service



The City overall:

Gets more  
efficient without  
hiring more staff  
or increasing taxes

Bottom line: This program helps everyone—not just those who opt in.





# BUILT WITH SAFEGUARDS

▶ Partner reviewers are pre-approved professionals already working with the city.

▶ Same codes, same standards, same quality as internal city reviews.

▶ I voluntarily stopped doing permitting work in Coral Gables a little less than a year ago—not because I had to, but because I chose to avoid even the appearance of conflict.





# WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN APPROVED



**The pilot program was  
approved by Commission  
on 02/11/25**



**The fee schedule (15%)  
is the final step for  
implementation.**



**The program is ready to  
launch once the fee  
schedule is approved.**





# WHAT YOU MAY HAVE HEARD VS. THE FACTS


Misconceptions	The TRUTH
"This program doesn't exist."	The Commission already approved the pilot. It's only awaiting the fee schedule.
"It forces residents to pay more."	It's 100% optional. Standard permitting remains unchanged and available.
"It benefits a few at the expense of others."	It actually improves turnaround times for everyone by offloading work.
"It's a private company takeover."	It's a city-managed partnership using professionals already contracted.
"Commissioner Castro profits from this."	I haven't done business in Coral Gables for nearly a year-by choice.
"This is political, not policy."	This is a resident-focused solution created to fix a broken process and restore trust in city services.





# WE PROMISED TO LISTEN- NOW WE MUST DELIVER

*Real Voices from Across Coral Gables:*

- 💬 "Please make it easier!!!!!" – Michael Register, 1133 Mariana Ave
  - 💬 "Appalled that you're trying to recall the new permit process... what are you thinking???" – Brenda Bly
  - 💬 "There are no downsides to this program. I hope all commissioners support it." – Jane W. Moscowitz
  - 💬 "As an elderly resident... I am horrified by the inefficiency of the current system." – Valerie Howell, 1150 Madruga Ave
  - 💬 "One of the best citizen-centric ideas the city has had in years." – Stephen Dull, 5133 Riviera Dr
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# WE PROMISED TO LISTEN— NOW WE MUST DELIVER

*Real Voices from Across Coral Gables:*

💬 "This is not politics. This is about helping residents."— Concerned  
Resident Letter

💬 "I cannot think of one reason why Mayor Lago would want to block this."  
— Diana Arellano

💬 "We need a better system. Make the expedited permit program a  
reality."  
— Memo Saucedo, Coral Gables resident since 1997

💬 "I built my house over 30 years ago—permitting was broken then and it's  
worse now." — Joseph M. Wehby, Esq.





# THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW



This program doesn't take anything away from residents—it adds a faster, optional path for those who need it.



It's designed to ease the burden on city staff and speed up processing for everyone.



Delaying or rescinding it means going back to the same broken system—one that frustrates residents and strains staff.



Coral Gables is known for innovation and excellence—this is our chance to lead by example.

Let's approve the fee schedule and launch the solution our residents have been waiting for.

This program **didn't** come from politics.  
It came from listening to residents—and they've made it clear:  
**Do not rescind the program.** Let it launch. Let it work. Let it help.