



Permitting Round Table Meeting

2:00 pm, Friday, August 8, 2025

St. Petersburg College – Downtown Center

Key Takeaways

1. Permit Review Backlog Status

- Residential permits, especially ADUs and pools, have improved from severe backlog levels (e.g., 700 in queue reduced significantly).
- Some residential reviews still take ~95 days; goal is 30 days.
- Commercial permits are mostly within their 3-week goal, with commercial staff assisting residential reviews.

2. Operational Adjustments

- Private provider companies engaged to assist with residential review workload.
- Cross-training inspectors/reviewers to expand trade coverage and flexibility.
- Multi-vendor award approach for post-storm contractor capacity, reducing reliance on a single provider.

3. Process Improvements

- Conditional approvals used for commercial projects being considered for residential new homes and ADUs; minor issues can be conditionally approved, but major structural items still require full clearance before proceeding.
- Mandatory meetings after two failed review cycles to resolve breakdowns.
- Expanded use of pre-application planning meetings to resolve design issues before submission.
- Lobby triage system to prevent wasted wait time for incomplete applications.
- Discussion of allowing combined submission of multiple permits to streamline processes.

4. Policy and Legislative Impacts

- House Bill 683 allows flood-damaged homeowners to bypass burdensome damage documentation, enabling faster internal evaluation and fewer rejections for TDD permits.
- Localized flooding map (SWFWMD & city) being used beyond intended internal planning purpose, now delaying projects and adding substantial costs. No clear resolution path yet, but 20% of the city could be affected.

5. Stakeholder Engagement

- Ongoing meetings with neighborhood associations, chambers, and other groups to address concerns and improve communication.
- Contractors (especially out-of-state ones in state programs) will require proactive education on St. Pete processes and expectations. City and partners are considering hosting workshops.



6. Technology Upgrades

- Tyler permitting system upgrade planned for mid-next year with improved plan uploads, auto-versioning, and workflow.
- AI and advanced analytics opportunities discussed for future process improvement, including partnerships with local corporate tech teams.

7. Resource Management

- Saturday overtime and commercial staff loaned to residential backlog reduction.
- Preparing for future flood elevation permit surge from state programs by establishing dedicated review teams and streamlined review pathways.

Action Items

1. Residential Backlog Reduction

- Maintain overtime and cross-departmental assistance.
- Expand private provider usage for residential reviews.

2. Conditional Approval Policy

- Finalize guidelines for applying conditional approvals to residential new homes/ADUs, limiting to minor scope issues.

3. Contractor Education

- Identify assigned state program contractors early.
- Develop and host contractor workshops on St. Pete's permitting process.
- Provide clear documentation and expectations to out-of-state contractors.

4. Public Communication Enhancements

- Release updated checklists and "how-to" videos on permit submission, inspection requests, and drawing uploads.
- Clarify distinction between "days in queue" vs. total permit cycle time in all public-facing timelines.

5. Technology & Process Integration

- Prepare staff and public resources for Tyler upgrade.
- Explore AI-assisted review and administrative tools with local corporate partners.

6. Flood Map Issue Resolution

- Engage SWFWMD and city administration to clarify intended use and avoid unnecessary jurisdictional delays.
- Develop policy guidance to prevent the map from being used in unintended ways.

7. Future Program Surge Preparedness

- Create process for separating elevation work from interior work to avoid project stalls.
- Establish dedicated review teams for elevation permits under state programs.