

Good morning.

I want to start by thanking all of you for taking the time today to come to this workshop.

Land development has been a historical factor in the economic growth in this community, and it is an industry that because of zoning and planning laws has always been tied to governmental regulation.

From the time Mayor Gimenez took office, our administration has simplified the regulatory framework in the County to enable economic development and streamline the processes so they can make more common sense.

We created the Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources, or RER, in 2012 as part of a larger County reorganization. This was a deliberate effort to consolidate a fragmented regulatory landscape that had been created over many years.

We took DERM, Building, Planning and Zoning, Consumer Services and 4 other offices, and put them all under the RER roof.

Putting all of these county's regulatory and economic resources under one unified leadership was the first step in streamlining processes in Miami-Dade County, without sacrificing public and environmental protections, ultimately facilitating continued economic development in this community.

We now have a single director who is responsible and accountable for the expeditious delivery of all of the service elements involved in permitting and land development.

With the help of the development community, we have also put forward several code changes that our Commission has adopted that have simplified the regulatory process...

and this is very important, we have reduced the time needed to obtain approvals.

We have implemented administrative processes for environmental permitting while not sacrificing important public protections for our important natural resources...

We've passed ordinances compressing review time frames for CDMP and zoning activities by several months...

and we've made other changes that have been significant for small businesses, such as the ordinance which exempted certain costly sewer connections.

All of these changes minimize time and cost for both our smallest and largest of customers.

We still have a long way to go, and we're here today to talk about the next step in this process.

To further improve the development review process, RER's Development Services Division has been working on the introduction of a pre-application process intended to facilitate enhanced collaboration between the development community and County staff.

The proposed pre-application process would ultimately allow the development community or any zoning hearing applicant with an opportunity to meet with staff from all County reviewing agencies simultaneously in a pre-application meeting.

At this meeting, the applicant would be provided with initial agency feedback and with information relevant to the submittal of a complete application.

Among other things, this process is designed to familiarize all reviewing staff with applications prior to their formal filing, to reduce the number of resubmittals after the initial filing, and to centralize the development review process.

Pre-application meetings are a common practice among municipalities and other land development regulatory agencies across the country, and have proven to reduce the development review time while improving the quality of the review by professional staff.

With your input and cooperation, we are hoping to pilot these meetings during the month of September. If successful, appropriate legislation will be forwarded for the Commission to codify the program.

Working together, these efforts will further optimize the economic benefits to this County associated with land development activities.

This is why we need your feedback to ensure that the improvements we make work as they are intended.

And this process is not the end of our efforts. Our work to improve our regulatory processes will continue as we develop new strategies. Thank you again for being here.