

Date: September 19, 2025

To: Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Diana Mendez, Partner, Bilzin Sumberg 
Chairwoman, Special Task Force To Reduce Inefficiencies In Procurement (STRIP)

Subject: STRIP Task Force Interim Report

Pursuant to Resolution No. R-441-25, sponsored by Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on May 6, 2025, this Interim Report is being provided to the Board and contains the Special Task Force to Reduce Inefficiencies in Procurement (STRIP) preliminary findings and recommendations.

The first meeting of STRIP was held on June 25, 2025. It was primarily an organizational meeting wherein the Task Force members introduced themselves, the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson were elected (Diana Mendez and Willy Bermello, respectively). Voting procedures were confirmed, the Task Force mandate was reviewed, and presentations were received from the Commission on Ethics, the County Attorney's Office (CAO), and the Strategic Procurement Department (SPD). Subsequent STRIP meetings have focused on topics by phase in the procurement process. All types of contracts are being considered to include Architectural & Engineering (A&E) Services, Construction, and Goods and Services. This includes an overview of the County's online procurement system and preliminary discussion on the standardization of platforms.

The attached Interim Report to the Board has five sections: I) Introduction, II) Task Force Approach, III) Key Issues Identified, IV) Preliminary Recommendations, and V) Next Steps. Namita Uppal, SPD Director and Chief Procurement Officer, along with staff from SPD and the CAO, have participated in all meetings. SPD has presented at each meeting details of the procurement process, including identifying suggested changes and opportunities for efficiencies.

Pursuant to Rule 5.06(j) of the Board's Rules of Procedure, it is respectfully requested that this report be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda.

c: Honorable Daniella Levine Cava, County Mayor
Carladene Edwards, Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the Mayor
Namita Uppal, Director, SPD and Chief Procurement Officer
Yinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor
Basia Pruna, Director, Clerk of the Board
Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator
STRIP Taskforce Members
John Elizabeth Aleman, Client Account Manager, Jacobs
Willy Bermello, Chairman of the Board, Bermello Ajamil & Partners, Inc.
Jina Braynon, Managing Director, Accenture
Josenrique Cueto, VP Real Estate Development, Unicapital Asset Management Group
Miguel De Grandy, Partner, Holland & Knight
Al Dotson, Jr., Managing Partner, Bilzin Sumberg
Erin Hendrix, Partner, LSN Partners
Victor Herrera, Senior Vice President, BCC Engineering
Aldo M. Leiva, Shareholder, Baker Donelson
Rey Melendi, Chief Operating Officer, 13th Floor Investments
Kenneth Naylor, President, Development, Atlantic|Pacific Companies
Rudy Ortiz, Founder and CEO, CES Consultants
Maira Suarez, SVP of Strategic Partnerships, Lemartec Corporation
Carolina Vester, Assistant City Manager at City of Coral Gables

Interim Report

Special Task Force to Reduce Inefficiencies in Procurement (STRIP)

Date: September 5, 2025

I. INTRODUCTION

The Special Task Force to Reduce Inefficiencies in Procurement (STRIP) was established by the Board of County Commissioners (“Board”) to review existing laws, codes, and procedures relating to the County’s procurement and providing recommendations to the Board for needed changes or improvements to such laws, codes, or procedures. Since its formation, STRIP has met at least twice per month, engaging with staff members of the Strategic Procurement Department (“SPD”) and subject matter experts to identify pain points and propose actionable solutions.

This interim report summarizes the task force’s structured approach, key issues identified across the procurement lifecycle, and the Preliminary Recommendations adopted to date. The task force has focused on aligning its work with the phases of the procurement process, from pre-procurement planning through contract performance, with a focus on incorporating the mandates in Miami-Dade County Resolution R-441-25 (“Resolution”). Preliminary Recommendations adopted thus far address scope development, development of systems that will ensure accountability of each of the procurement stakeholders, enhancements to the small business certification process, procurement timelines, and the impact of recent state legislation on wage and hiring programs.

II. TASK FORCE APPROACH

At the outset, STRIP prioritized the development of a structured outline of the procurement process to guide its review. Meetings were organized to follow the procurement lifecycle, ensuring that each phase was examined in detail and that members had the opportunity to offer recommendations aligned with the scheduled topics. Additionally, several members submitted written reports containing individual recommendations, which will be discussed as part of the framework for deliberation.

The recommendations addressed in this report are preliminary. Upon completion of its review, the task force is expected to finalize recommendations by conducting a holistic assessment to consolidate them, ensure internal consistency, and identify broader reforms that may be necessary to streamline the procurement process. This includes clarifying how County procurement is organized, defining stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and updating relevant policies and legislation.

The topics of discussion are structured as follows:

1. *Procurement Organization*
 - a. Mayor’s Delegated Authority
 - b. Department Delegated Authority

2. *Phase I: Pre-Procurement Phase*
 - a. Request to Advertise and Scope Development
 - b. Local Preference and Small Business Measures
 - c. SBE certification programs (A&E, G&S, Construction)
 - d. Technical Certifications and Pre-Qualifications (A&E)
 - e. Wages and Hiring Programs (G&S, Construction, Leases)
3. *Phase II: Advertisement*
 - a. County's Online Procurement System
 - b. Standardization of System and Methods of Submittal
4. *Phase III: Evaluation*
 - a. Selection Committees
 - b. Responsiveness Opinions
 - c. Local preference and Small Business Measures
5. *Phase IV: Recommendation to Award*
 - a. Vendor Registration and Due-Diligence
 - b. Recommendation Memoranda
 - c. Negotiations
 - d. Appeals (Objections and Bid Protest Process)
 - e. Approval Process by Board of County Commissioners (Committee and Full Board)
6. *Phase V: Contract Performance*
7. *Additional Areas of Focus:*
 - a. Special issues Involving Procurement of Goods and Services (G&S), Concession Agreements (Concessions)
 - b. Special issues Involving Procurement of Infrastructure Facilities and Services:
 - i. Acquisition of Architectural and Engineering Professional Services (A&E) and Design-Build Services (DB)
 - ii. Construction Contracting, Including the Miscellaneous Construction Contracts Program (Construction)
 - iii. Public-Private Partnerships and Unsolicited Proposals (P3s)
 - iv. Leases and Development Agreements (Leases)
 - c. Technology and the Use of AI in Procurement

Following this structured approach, the Task Force is operating under an expedited timeline to complete its discussions and finalize recommendations by May 1, 2026, as approved by the Board during its September 3, 2025, meeting.

III. KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Throughout its deliberations, STRIP has identified a range of issues that hinder the County's ability to conduct timely and effective procurements. These concerns span operational inefficiencies, technological limitations, policy misalignments, and barriers to small business participation.

A. Procurement Organization

1. Mayor's Delegated Authority

The task force expressed optimism regarding the recent increase in the Mayor's delegated authority to award and reject bids or proposals for contracts related to public improvements, as well as the procurement of supplies, materials, and services (including professional services). The threshold has been raised from \$1 million to \$5 million, allowing such actions to proceed without requiring approval from the Board.

According to the staff report, this change is expected to significantly reduce the proposal lifecycle (from proposal due date to award) —from an average of 251 days to approximately 90 to 120 days for procurements up to \$5 million, and to 120 to 150 days for procurements exceeding \$5 million. Task force members found the revised RFP cycle times to be acceptable.

The task force is currently exploring increasing other thresholds such as increasing the Miscellaneous Construction Contracts ("MCC") cap from \$5 million to \$15 - \$20 million to expedite larger public works projects and account for inflation. Raising the threshold for formal sealed bids from \$250,000 to \$1 million is also being analyzed.

2. Department Delegated Authority

The task force reviewed the procurement authority that certain departments have over their capital improvements programs. The task force members concluded that because of the specialized nature of these projects, the delegation of authority was proper. Nevertheless, as discussed below, the task force identified concerns regarding the standardization of the bidding/proposal submittal platforms, as well as forms and processes.

B. Phase I: Pre-Procurement Phase

1. Scope of Work Development and Accountability

The task force determined that unclear or incomplete scopes of work are a recurring issue that often lead to bid protests and complications during procurement. Departments sometimes submit scopes to SPD that do not fully reflect the needs of the user department, and there is currently no clear accountability for ensuring scope accuracy. Additionally, there is no system in place to track the status of scope development or identify which party may be delaying progress. This lack of clarity discourages vendor participation, as businesses fear that poorly defined solicitations may be rejected or revised later in the process.

Furthermore, the task force identified persistent delays in the development of scopes of work by departments, which are intended to be completed within a 60-day timeframe—a target that is rarely met. As outlined in the recommendations section of this report, the task force advocates for the establishment of clear milestone expectations and the systematic tracking of actual durations, with the establishment of a formal hand off of the scope by the departments to SPD. This approach aims to identify bottlenecks, enhance accountability, and improve overall efficiency.

2. Q&A Publication and Response Timing

Vendors face uncertainty regarding the publication of Q&A responses during solicitations. In many cases, insufficient time is provided for vendors to respond after answers are released. Moreover, concerns have been raised about the completeness and clarity of the County's responses to vendor questions, which can lead to confusion and disputes later in the procurement cycle.

3. Industry Input and the Cone of Silence

Once the Cone of Silence is triggered, opportunities for industry input are significantly limited. While pre-proposal conferences serve as useful networking events, they offer little opportunity for substantive feedback or dialogue between vendors and County staff. This limits the County's ability to incorporate industry expertise into the development of solicitations.

4. Small Business Certification

The task force found that the Small Business Enterprise (SBE) certification process is widely considered too complex for small businesses, many of which lack the administrative resources to navigate it effectively.

Compared to larger agencies, the County's certification process is uniquely burdensome. Other jurisdictions often rely on streamlined, self-certification models, making the County's approach less competitive and more difficult for businesses operating across multiple regions.

The task force reviewed procedural bottlenecks that County staff identified that if addressed could each reduce processing time by approximately five days:

- Review of personal net worth requirements
- Notarization of documents
- Submission of corporate documents
- Virtual site visits

The task force also reviewed issues involving decertified firms submitting non-compliant or incomplete applications, clogging the system and diverting staff resources.

5. *Wage and Hiring Programs*

The task force reviewed updates to Florida law, primarily:

- HB 705: Prohibiting hiring requirements on County-funded construction contracts as of July 1, 2024, with an exemption for contracts funded via the Surtax.
- HB 433: Effective September 30, 2026, the law prohibits the County from maintaining a minimum wage different from the state or federal minimum wage. A legal opinion is pending on whether surtax-funded contracts and leases are exempt.

Hiring programs such as the Residents First Training and Employment Program (“RFTE”), as well as the Employ Miami-Dade Program, are applicable only if the minimum wages are applicable. Therefore, if HB 433 applies to surtax-funded programs and leases, the only remaining hiring program would be the Community Workforce Program (“CWP”). The First Source Hiring Referral Program, which applies to all contracts (except if CWP applies), has had minimal impact—referring only two to three hires per year. Vendors have expressed difficulty enforcing the program, leading task force members to question whether the costs of maintaining these programs outweigh their benefits.

Furthermore, the task force identified concerns about the administrative burden of applying different wage rates across construction projects. This creates disparities that influence worker preferences and complicate subcontractor participation. Additional concerns were raised about the applicability of living wage requirements to contracts awarded before September 30, 2026, and whether those requirements should persist until contract completion.

While there is agreement on the challenges created by the new law, some members expressed concern about the broader policy and financial implications of eliminating wage and hiring programs, which may affect County programs that fall outside the scope of the task force.

C. Phase II: Advertisement

Seven to eight departments currently manage their own capital improvements solicitations. While decentralization may be appropriate in some cases, the lack of standardization in technology platforms (e.g., use of InForms vs. eBuilder) creates confusion for vendors and inefficiencies for staff. The task force discussed the need for consistent practices and tools across departments to improve coordination and vendor experience. Members welcomed the update from staff that eBuilder was being implemented across departments for construction projects.

IV. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

STRIP has preliminarily adopted, either unanimously or by majority vote, several recommendations aimed at addressing these issues. These are grouped below by theme and include the date of adoption and any notable votes. These recommendations are preliminary as the Task Force has yet to review the changes to policies and legislation that will be required to

adopt these recommendations as well as examine additional topics that may be related to these preliminary recommendations.

A. Procurement Organization

1. Recommendation No. 1: Time-Sensitive Driven Policies

Recommend the adoption of the goals provided by staff for procurement timelines from advertisement to the filing of the recommendation with the Clerk's Office, where for procurements under \$5 million, the goal is that those procurements take under 90 to 120 days, and for procurements over \$5 million, under 120 to 150 days. Further recommend that as this task force makes recommendations on procurement policies, the task force measure or consider the impacts on these goals. Additionally, recommend that when the Board of County Commissioners makes policy changes or takes action on ongoing procurements, the Board, as part of their policy or resolution, also consider whether the procurement timelines are being extended or shortened. *Unanimously adopted on Jul. 15, 2025.*

B. Phase I: Pre-Procurement

1. Recommendation No. 2: Procurement Workflows.

Recommend creating at least three procurement workflows—one for Construction, one for Architecture & Engineering (A&E), and one for Goods and Services—providing the steps in the procurement process, from pre-procurement to award. These must be finalized during the term of the task force to include in the task force's final recommendations and be published online. A subcommittee will work alongside staff to develop each workflow. *Unanimously adopted on Jul. 15, 2025.*

2. Recommendation No. 3: Task Management System to Enhance Scope Development.

Recommend identifying and adopting a task management system, including systems or software that may already be in use by the County that will establish roles and scopes for various participants in the procurement process and effectuate the workflow. This will be a deliverable from developing the scope until recommendation to award and will track, manage, and escalate as necessary to the executive and managers with the goal of keeping timeframes and create a formal hand off of the scope from the departments to SPD. *Unanimously adopted on Jul. 15, 2025.*

3. Recommendation No. 4: Industry Input Prior to Advertisement.

Recommend extending the time for the publication for industry comment for future solicitations to four weeks and identify a way to have the system automatically remove the future solicitation when the solicitation is advertised to avoid Cone of Silence issues. *Unanimously adopted on Jul. 15, 2025.*

4. *Recommendation No. 5: Allow Enough Time To Submit Proposals After Receipts Of Questions.*

Recommend adopting a standard operating procedure where, if questions submitted by respondents to a solicitation are answered by the County less than 10 business days before the submittal deadline, an automatic extension is triggered with the extended deadline falling 10 business days from the date that the County publishes the answers. *Unanimously adopted on Jul. 15, 2025.*

5. *Recommendation No. 6: Scope Development Training*

Recommend training for departments to improve development of scope. *Unanimously adopted on Jul. 15, 2025.*

6. *Recommendation No. 7: Self-Certification Process for SBEs*

Recommend simplifying the SBE Certification process by following a self-certification process, similar to the process followed by the Florida Department of Transportation, and provide a robust system of audits. *Unanimously adopted on Aug. 5, 2025.*

7. *Recommendation No. 8: Enhancements to the Technical Certifications and Prequalification Process.*

Recommend adopting the enhancements suggested by staff, which include:

- a. Rename the review committee to review team.
- b. Eliminate in-person review meetings.
- c. Eliminate notarization of the certification application.
- d. Integrate PQC/TC registration portal with INFORMS to eliminate the need for screenshots.
- e. Modernize MS Access-based certification audit log.

Unanimously adopted on Aug. 5, 2025.

8. *Recommendation No. 9: Eliminate all wage and hiring programs effective September 30, 2026, to ensure uniformity with state law requirements.*

Recommend the elimination of all the wage and hiring programs effective on the date when the majority are being eliminated under HB 705 and HB 433, given that the legislation from the state has created disruptions in the application of the local wages. Adopted 11-2 on Jul. 15, 2025, with two nay votes by Mr. Al Dorson, Jr. and Chairwoman Diana Mendez to allow the Board to examine impacts on other county programs outside the purview of the task force.

C. Phase II: Advertisement

1. *Recommendation No. 10: Standardization of offer (bid/proposals) submittal methods*

Recommend standardizing the methods to submit a response to a solicitation, including bidding software/applications. *Unanimously adopted on Jul. 15, 2025.*

V. NEXT STEPS

STRIP will continue to meet at least twice monthly to examine the remaining phases of the procurement process. These include evaluations, recommendations for award, and other procurement-specific topics such as the acquisition of architectural and engineering services, construction programs, leases, and public-private partnerships.

In parallel, STRIP will refine and finalize its recommendations, collaborate with County departments to develop and test proposed workflows, and gather additional feedback from stakeholders—particularly representatives from user departments—to ensure practical applicability and broad support.

The Task Force anticipates that the final report will include detailed implementation strategies, such as proposed legislative changes, success metrics, mechanisms for ongoing review, and any additional recommendations that emerge from continued discussions. We remain fully committed to supporting the Board in its efforts to modernize and improve procurement practices across the County.