

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

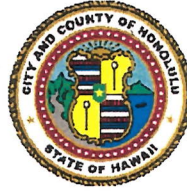
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March 2, 2022

The Honorable Carol A. Fukunaga, Chair  
Committee on Public Infrastructure and Technology  
and Councilmembers  
Honolulu City Council  
520 King Street, Room 202  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Fukunaga and Councilmembers:

Subject: Follow-Up Questions regarding Implementation of Ordinances 19-4 and 21-3 (Fire Safety Retrofits for High-rise Condominium/Co-operative Properties)

The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP), Building Division provides the following responses to questions posed in your letter dated February 22, 2022, regarding the implementation of Ordinances 19-4 and 21-3 (Fire Safety Retrofits and High-Rise Condominium/Co-Operative Properties):

- 1. What type of assistance/assurances will buildings get from Dept. of Planning and Permitting with respect to issuing building permits in a timely manner – assuming current deadlines are not extended? If deadlines are extended, what timetable recommendations does your department have regarding deadlines applicable to building permit processing?*

The timeframe for compliance given by Ordinance 21-3 is between 8-12 years from May 3, 2018 for common areas depending on the number of floors in the building. Full compliance throughout buildings must be completed within 12 years. In other words, compliance must be completed between May 3, 2026 to May 3, 2030, depending on the number of floors. There is more than adequate time remaining to obtain building permits for compliance. The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) is unable to provide any timetable recommendations for compliance as the requirements to install

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sprinkler systems per Ordinance 21-3 is under the purview of the Honolulu Fire Department and not the DPP.

2. *What is a typical timeline for financing and undertaking building improvements through city agencies (e.g., Dept. of Planning and Permitting, Honolulu Board of Water Supply, etc.)?*

It is difficult to provide an answer as the DPP has no control or influence over an applicant's financing. The DPP also has no control or influence over the Board of Water Supply or other review agencies. Once reviews begin, projects that are put together well and drawn clearly with proper information can possibly obtain the DPP approval within a few weeks with one review cycle. Projects where the plans are unclear, and show non-compliance with codes and ordinances can take a number of review cycles resulting in months of delays.

3. *Would special permit processing – e.g., a “fast-tracked permit process” – be needed to address the large number of older high-rise condo.co-op properties subject to the fire safety deadlines?*

*For example, during a 2018 Permitted-Interaction Group forum convened to respond to questions raised about the proposed laws, Honolulu Board of Water Supply reported 17 buildings in the Punchbowl, Makiki and Salt Lake areas were close to the water service limits of the Metro Low Service 180' water system (see attached January 17, 2018 response).*

*This water service limits issue is one reflection of the types of unique circumstances that may accompany the fast-tracked processing of building permit applications for a group of older high-rise residential properties, particularly in older urban neighborhoods.*

Because there is more than adequate time remaining to obtain permits for compliance, a “fast-tracked permit process” is not needed.

4. *If the answer to Question 3 is yes, what recommendations does your department have for processing roughly twice as many properties as were estimated when Ordinance 18-14 (Bill 69) was adopted?*

*At that time, Honolulu Fire Department estimated that roughly 150 high-rise properties out of approximately 378 high-rise properties would be subject to the fire sprinkler/alternative building fire prevention and fire safety systems requirements.*

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*However, in January 2022, while the total number of high-rise properties in Honolulu Fire Department's inventory of high-rise properties that must comply with the fire safety upgrades ordinances has decreased to 323 properties, the total number of individual units has increased to 38,747 units (instead of the 21,490 individual units estimated when Ordinance 18-14 was adopted).*

The DPP processes thousands of projects each year, adding a few hundred fire safety projects over the next 4-8 years is manageable.

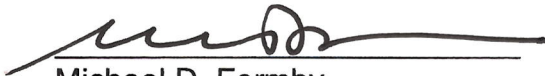
Should you have any questions, please contact me or Michael O. Silva, Chief of the Building Division, at (808) 768-8120.

Sincerely,



Eugene Takahashi, Deputy Director  
Department of Planning and Permitting

APPROVED:



Michael D. Formby  
Managing Director