

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director

JOHN STUFFLEBEAN, P.E.
Director

JAMES A. LANDGRAF
Deputy Director



DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
<http://www.maui-county.gov/water>

January 30, 2024

Honorable Richard T. Bissen, Jr.
Mayor, County of Maui
200 South High Street
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL

Richard T. Bissen, Jr. 1/30/24
Mayor Date

For Transmittal to:

Honorable Tom Cook, Chair
Water and Infrastructure Committee
Maui County Council
200 South High Street
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Dear Chair Cook:

SUBJECT: COUNTY PERMIT PROCESSING EFFICIENCIES (WAI-1(16))

In response to your letter dated January 16, 2024, Department of Water Supply provides the following comments:

1. What are the Department's overall comments on the benefits and challenges with Maui's Automated Planning and Permitting System (MAPPS)? Has MAPPS improved the Department's permit review process, and if so, how?

Response:

One benefit of the MAPPS system is the convenience that all required documents for the subject building permit application are centralized in one location. Further, the subject property's information such as zones and TMK maps are readily available upon opening the permit. Also, with the way that MAPPS is designed, it ensures that all reviewing agencies are reviewing and approving the same set of construction plans.

"By Water All Things Find Life"

One challenge that MAPPS presents is that permits can only be sorted through its application date, its due date, or its submittal version. Consequently, when public resubmittals occur through a new MAPPS version of the permit, these resubmittals do not come in at the top of the County reviewer's "Incomplete Reviews" queue. Rather, it is automatically sorted in-between other existing unreviewed permits by the original applied date or the original due date. This creates difficulty in tracking resubmittals.

With the benefits as mentioned above, MAPPS allows for a more efficient review of submitted permits through centralized and shared information.

2. For Fiscal Years ("FY") 2018 through 2023:
 - a. How many residential permit applications did the Department receive each fiscal year?

Response:

FY 2018: 681
FY 2019: 856
FY 2020: 856
FY 2021: 805
FY 2022: 860
FY 2023: 674

- b. How many residential permit applications did the Department process each fiscal year?

Response:

For this response, the interpretation of the term "process" means "approved". Further, these counts represent permits actually approved within that fiscal year, regardless of what year the review process actually started.

FY 2018: 458
FY 2019: 406
FY 2020: 603
FY 2021: 501
FY 2022: 546
FY 2023: 333

3. Of the Department's overall vacancy rate, what are the staffing levels for positions directly involved in the residential permit review process?

Response:

Currently, there is an Engineering Support Tech I (EST I) position open in the department. The EST I is directly involved with researching, reviewing, and approving new residential building permit applications. Also, the department currently employs two Land Use Permit Clerks (LUPCs) who are alternating on Temporary Assignment for the open EST I position in efforts to increase the permit review and approval efficiency.

4. If staffing levels were increased to improve the residential permit review process, how many of each type of position would be needed and to what programs would they be added?

Response:

The department is currently in the process of reallocating two other open division positions to EST I positions to aid in the residential permit review process. Further, the department has contracted out Miscellaneous Engineering Services to a private engineering company to aid in building permit reviews. This company provides two engineers, alternating daily, who are situated in the department's workplace.

5. What are the Department's top three challenges to processing residential permit applications? How is the Department resolving these issues?

Response:

Staffing is the biggest issue for the permit review process. Finding, training, and retaining qualified personnel is always a challenge that the department must contend with.

During the interview process, the department places a premium on vetting potential employees through detailed and thoughtful inquiries. Once hired, these employees are trained by multiple staff members who have years of experience in the permit review process. These staff members are also readily on-hand to provide continuous support. A positive and supportive working environment, which staff members embrace, is a key component for retention of qualified employees.

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6. For the FY 2025 Budget, would the goal and objective of increasing the Department's overall permit processing efficiency be a priority the Department could consider in its Key Activity Goals & Measures? If yes, what steps are being taken to effectuate this? If no, please explain why not.

Response:

As stated, the department has already taken steps to ensure that the permit process is as efficient and productive as it can be. Contracting the private engineering company, Temporary Assigning LUPC staff members into the open EST I position, continued work on reallocation of positions, and the recent hiring of two new engineers to assist the districts are all ongoing efforts to effectuate expeditious and efficient reviews for building permits.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments relating to this agenda item. If you have additional questions, please free to contact me.

Sincerely,



JOHN STUFFLEBEAN, P.E.
Director

JM:lk

WAI Committee

From: Michelle Santos <Michelle.Santos@co.maui.hi.us>
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 4:03 PM
To: WAI Committee
Cc: Cynthia Sasada; James Landgraf; John Stufflebean; Josiah Nishita; Keanu LauHee; Leo Caires; Linda Kimura; Louise Batoon; Pili Nahooikaika
Subject: MT#10479 County Permit Processing Efficiencies
Attachments: MT#10479-WAI Committee.pdf

NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT FORWARD MY EMAIL TO ANYONE OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI. YOU MAY CLICK ON THE ATTACHMENT ITSELF AND CREATE YOUR OWN EMAIL TO FORWARD THE DOCUMENT TO ANOTHER PERSON OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTY.

Michelle L. Santos

Office Operations Assistant

Office of the Mayor
County of Maui
200 S. High Street 9th Floor
Wailuku, HI 96793
phone: (808) 270-7855
fax: (808) 270-7870