



## CHAPTER 19

Department of  
Planning and  
Permitting

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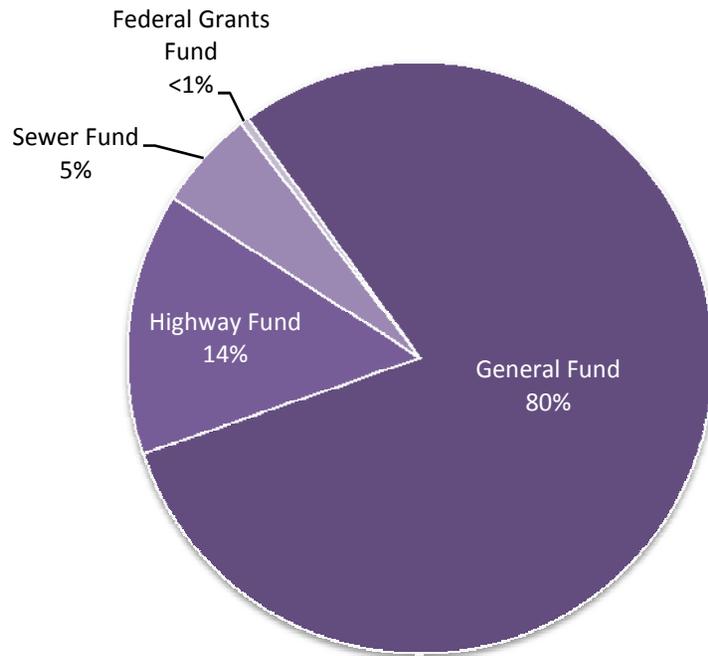
The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) is responsible for the city's long-range and community planning efforts. It administers and enforces various permits required for development, land use and codes pertaining to building construction, and city standards and regulations related to infrastructure requirements.

DPP's mission is to provide the public with efficient, timely service that is responsive and effective in guiding development to:

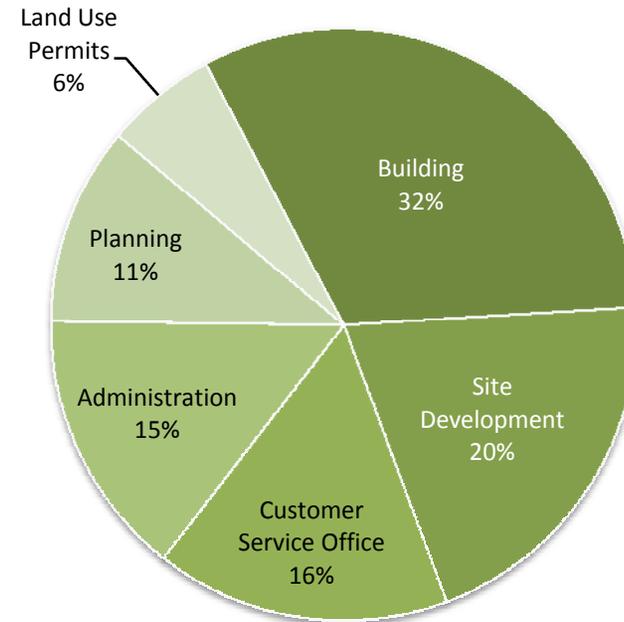
- Ensure the health and safety of its residents;
- Protect Honolulu's unique resources and environment;
- Provide visually pleasing and livable neighborhoods that are compatible with surrounding areas; and
- Provide a community that is responsive to the residents' social, economic, medical, cultural, and recreational needs.

To carry out its mission, the department operates six programs: Administration, Building, Customer Service Office, Land Use Permits, Planning, and Site Development.

**Funding Sources<sup>1</sup>**



**Funding Uses**

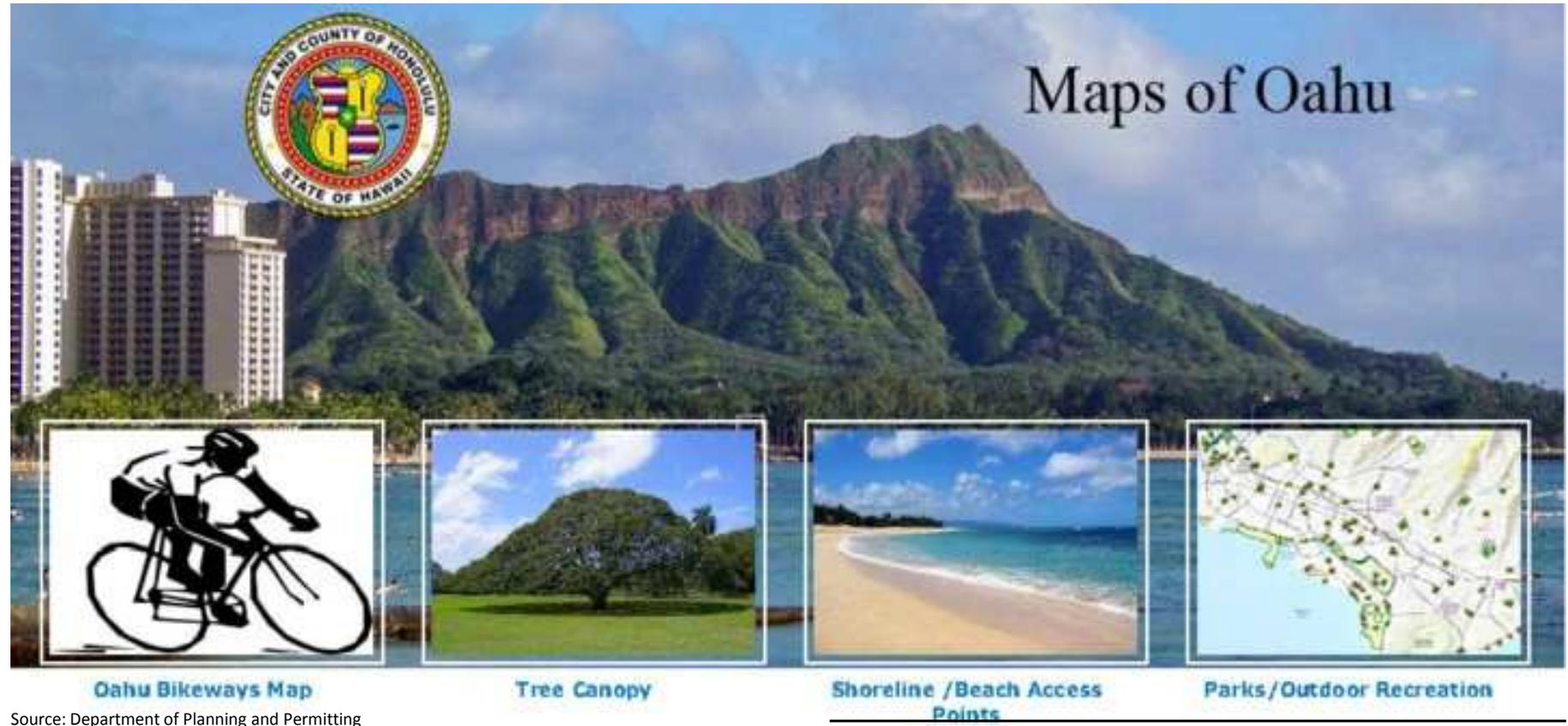


<sup>1</sup>Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.

	Staffing					
	Total Operating Expenditures (\$ million)	Revenues (\$ million)	Total Authorized FTE	Total Vacant FTE	Cost Per FTE <sup>2</sup>	Total Overtime Expenditures <sup>3</sup>
FY 2009	\$18.6	\$14.0	337.5	66.5	\$55,258	\$158,963
FY 2010	\$17.9	\$13.7	336.0	79.0	\$53,266	\$54,002
FY 2011	\$15.9	\$12.9	330.0	78.0	\$48,140	\$59,778
FY 2012	\$16.6	\$13.8	333.0	91.0	\$49,783	\$97,815
FY 2013	\$15.5	\$15.8	332.0	76.0	\$46,744	\$146,768
Change over last year	-7%	14%	-0.3%	-16%	-6%	50%
Change over last 5 years	-17%	13%	-2%	14%	-15%	-8%

Source: Executive Operating Program and Budget (FY 2011-FY 2015), Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, and Department of Planning and Permitting. <sup>2</sup>Cost per FTE = Operating Expenditures/Total Authorized FTE.

<sup>3</sup>Overtime pay is established by bargaining unit agreement, as applicable.



Source: Department of Planning and Permitting

Total operating expenditures declined 17% from FY 2009 (\$18.6 million) to FY 2013 (\$15.5 million). According to DPP, the decrease was due to Transit Oriented Development (TOD) funds being cut from its budget and moved over to HART in FY 2011. DPP noted that for the FY 2012 appropriations, the council decided to keep the TOD function in DPP, but at a lower funding. DPP added that total appropriations available to the department during the same period decreased 25% from FY 2009 (\$21.5 million) to FY 2013 (\$16.1 million).

In the 2013 National Citizen Survey, 50% of Honolulu residents rated the overall appearance of Honolulu as *excellent* or *good*, a decreased of 4% from the prior year.

The National Citizen Survey (% <i>Excellent</i> or <i>Good</i> )				
	2010	2011	2012	2013
Overall Appearance of Honolulu	52%	53%	54%	50%
Comparison to National Benchmark	↓↓	↓↓	↓↓	↓

Source: The National Citizen Survey, Trends over Time, Honolulu, HI, 2013

Legend:

- ↑↑ Much higher than national benchmark
- ↑ Higher than national benchmark
- ↔ Similar to national benchmark
- ↓ Lower than national benchmark
- ↓↓ Much lower than national benchmark

Administration plans, directs, and coordinates department activities including personnel management, budget preparation and fiscal management. It is also responsible for administering the Honolulu Land Information System (HoLIS) and the city’s Geographic Information System (GIS). These programs relate to DPP’s goals to: 1) provide a comprehensive and integrated information source of geographic information systems, and 2) improve the city’s operational services.

HoLIS manages the GIS and oversees the operations that maintain, protect, store, and utilize geospatial data related to citywide programs and projects. It also maintains, edits, and updates the city’s multipurpose cadastre<sup>1</sup> and land records base maps. DPP reports that the HoLIS budget was \$1.3 million in FY 2013 a decrease of 30% over the past five years. In FY 2013, the city’s GIS website added new features and advance capabilities. Maps such as bike routes, road repavement, and others were added to the web site.

HoLIS maintains HonLINE, the city’s web-based permitting program that enables users to apply, pay, and print city building permits for

single family, solar, electrical, plumbing, air conditioning, photovoltaic, and fence work entirely online. During FY 2013, the HonLINE program tripled the number of permits issued and now accounts for more than 50% of all building permits issued. According to DPP, revenues from HonLINE soared to over \$1.3 million. Internet (HonLINE) permits issued significantly increased from 6,419 in FY 2012 to 16,737 in FY 2013. Administration explained that this was due to the large increase in the number of photovoltaic solar installation permits that were issued.

Total GIS work orders completed increased 65% from FY 2012 to FY 2013. According to administration, it was due to increased demand for GIS and permitting systems enhancements, and support services requests.

Total maps and exhibits prepared decreased 67% from FY 2012 to FY 2013. Administration noted that it was due to reduced demand for traditional hard copy maps, and that information can be obtained using newly published GIS website programs and online maps.

<sup>1</sup>Cadastre is defined as an official register of the quantity, value, and ownership of real estate used in apportioning taxes.

	Operating Expenditures (\$ million)		Honolulu Land Information System (HoLIS)					Total Visits to GIS Website (thousands)
	Administration	Honolulu Land Information System	Total GIS Work Orders Completed	Total GIS Data Maintenance Jobs	Total Maps and Exhibits Prepared	Total New POSSE Permit Jobs Created	Internet (HonLINE) Permits Issued	
FY 2009	\$2.8	\$1.8	474	689	537	84,198	4,218	159.5
FY 2010	\$2.3	\$1.4	371	333	553	79,420	3,209	238.6
FY 2011	\$2.2	\$1.3	368	1,295	290	83,652	3,702	313.4
FY 2012	\$2.4	\$1.2	365	1,667	394	102,815	6,419	362.5
FY 2013	\$2.3	\$1.3	601	1,572	129	135,090	16,737	395.2
Change over last year	-4%	8%	65%	-6%	-67%	31%	161%	9%
Change over last 5 years	-18%	-28%	27%	128%	-76%	60%	297%	148%

Source: Executive Operating Program and Budget (FY 2011-FY 2015), Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, Department of Planning and Permitting.

## Building

The Building Division is responsible for administering and enforcing building, electrical, plumbing, building energy efficiency, and housing codes. The division also reviews permit applications; plans; and specifications for building, relocation, and sign permits. Additionally, it inspects buildings, structures, sidewalks, and driveways under construction for compliance with approved plans and pertinent codes.

Total building and mechanical code inspections exhibited a downward trend since FY 2009, while total electrical code inspections increased in FY 2013. The building division explained that this was due to the increase of photovoltaic permits processed requiring electrical inspections. The division added that the decrease in building inspections were due to increase responsibilities for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) inspections and the emphasis on increased quality inspections.

Total building and sign permit applications reviewed increased 40% from FY 2012 to FY 2013. According to the building division, this was due to the increased number of photovoltaic permit applications.

Total building code complaints serviced exhibited a downward trend since FY 2009 or 32% over the last five years. The building division noted that it is difficult to explain why it's receiving and performing less complaint investigations. The building division explained that it's making a more conscious effort during an inspection to proactively address any deficiencies prior to their occurrence, and it has gotten more efficient in the use of its resources. The building division added that if another state or city agency has the authority to address the complaint, it's referred directly to these agencies rather than using the building division inspectors as a complaints clearinghouse.

	Operating Expenditures (\$ million)	Total Building Code Complaints Serviced	Total Building Code Inspections Conducted	Total Building Code Violation Notices Issued	Total Electrical Code Inspections Conducted	Total City Photovoltaic Inspections	Total Third Party Photovoltaic Inspections <sup>1</sup>	Total Mechanical Code Inspections Conducted	Total Building/Sign Permit Applications Reviewed
FY 2009	\$5.5	4,474	76,166	524	31,041	474	-	30,267	5,917
FY 2010	\$5.5	3,970	75,071	643	31,033	1,064	-	30,209	5,699
FY 2011	\$4.8	3,821	66,788	582	28,535	2,544	-	30,209	5,343
FY 2012	\$5.0	3,620	65,400	480	33,355	6,312	-	27,955	6,286
FY 2013	\$4.9	3,054	63,090	429	38,232	14,790	394	23,629	8,831
Change over last year	-1%	-16%	-4%	-11%	15%	134%	-	-15%	40%
Change over last 5 years	-10%	-32%	-17%	-18%	23%	3020%	-	-22%	49%

Source: Executive Operating Program and Budget (FY 2011-FY 2015), Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, and Department of Planning and Permitting.

<sup>1</sup> Third Party Photovoltaic inspections began with the adoption of Ordinance 12-38 on December 12, 2012

The Customer Service Office (CSO) operates the consolidated permit counter, which handles customer inquiries, processes minor permits, receives permit applications, and collects permit fees. CSO also maintains the department’s various historical and current property and permit records. Additionally, it processes complaints and inspects existing buildings, structures, vacant lots, and sidewalks to address unsafe and substandard conditions.

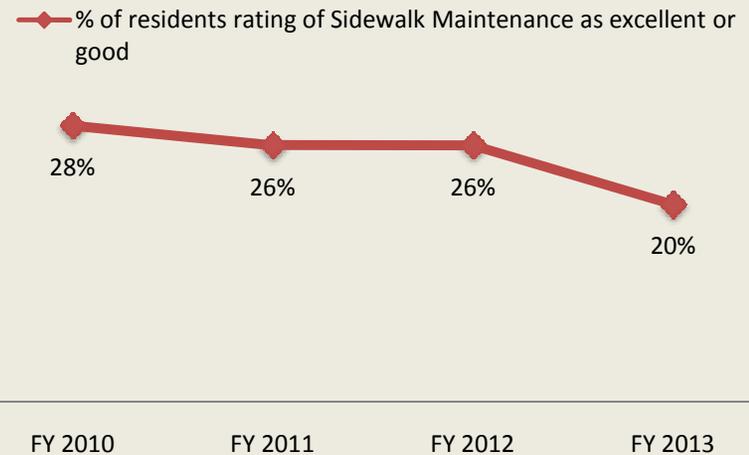
In FY 2013, total sidewalks inspected increased 19% from FY 2012 and 44% from FY 2009. According to CSO, this was due to increased responses to complaints received during each fiscal year. CSO also noted that inspectors conduct independent, self-initiated sidewalk inspections when their workload permits.



Photo Courtesy of Department of Planning and Permitting

Customer Service Office's Permit Issuance Branch issued 30,882 building permits in FY 2013 with a total construction value of \$2.3 billion. The branch also issued 2,991 permits authorizing solar product installation.

### The National Citizen Survey



Source: 2013 National Citizen Survey (Honolulu)

In FY 2013, total vacant lots inspected increased 13% from FY 2012 and 17% from FY 2009. CSO explained that this, too, was due to increased response to complaints received during each fiscal year.

	Operating Expenditures (\$ million)	Total Sidewalks Inspected	Total Vacant Lots Inspected	Total Housing Units with Housing Code Deficiencies Found	Total Building Permits Issued	Total Solar Permits Issued
FY 2009	\$3.1	2,600	145	330	15,146	4,332
FY 2010	\$3.1	2,600	145	235	14,248	3,305
FY 2011	\$2.6	3,747	170	280	15,631	3,186
FY 2012	\$2.6	3,140	151	239	21,947	3,166
FY 2013	\$2.5	3,747	170	369	30,882	2,991
Change over last year	-3%	19%	13%	54%	41%	-6%
Change over last 5 years	-20%	44%	17%	12%	104%	-31%

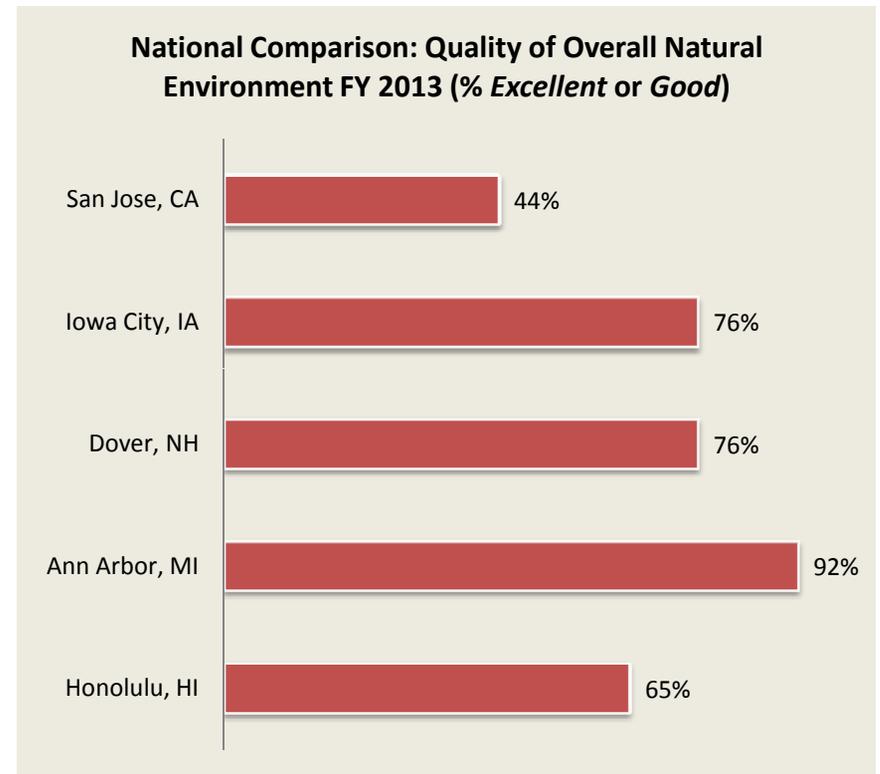
Source: Executive Operating Program and Budget (FY 2011-FY 2015), Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, and Department of Planning and Permitting.

## Land Use Permits

Land Use Permits Division (LUPD) administers the Land Use Ordinances (LUO) and all regulations pertaining to land use within the City and County of Honolulu. The division reviews and prepares amendments to the LUO and processes all LUO regulated land use permits. It also administers the Special Management Area and Shoreline Setback Ordinances and processes all required Special Management Area Permits, including setback variances and permits for minor shoreline structures.

Total special design district applications reviewed exhibited a downward trend since FY 2009, but increased 25% in FY 2013 from the prior year. According to LUPD, this was due to increasing private-sector investment in the development/redevelopment of Waikiki (the majority – about 90% of special district permits are for the Waikiki Special District).

Number of waivers granted exhibited a downward trend since FY 2009, but increased 40% in FY 2013 from the prior year. LUPD noted that this was due to cyclical industry upgrades to existing cellular and wireless telecommunications installations, and emergence of new photovoltaic solar farm installations on O`ahu.



Source: 2013 National Citizen Survey for the City of San Jose, CA; City of Iowa City, IA; City of Dover, NH; City of Ann Arbor, MI; and City & County of Honolulu, HI.

### The National Citizen Survey (% Excellent or Good)

	Operating Expenditures (\$ million)	Total Special Design District Applications Reviewed	Total Zoning Variances Reviewed	Total Environmental Assessments/ Impact Statements Revised	Number of Waivers Granted	Number of Conditional Use Permits (Minor/Major)		Quality of Overall Natural Environment in Honolulu	Preservation of Natural Areas
FY 2009	\$1.2	100	55	25	80	120	FY 2009	-	-
FY 2010	\$1.3	98	36	25	75	101	FY 2010	67%	39%
FY 2011	\$1.1	86	31	21	65	96	FY 2011	67%	49%
FY 2012	\$1.1	85	35	20	55	102	FY 2012	71%	39%
FY 2013	\$1.0	106	30	8	77	121	FY 2013	65%	31%
Change from last year	-9%	25%	-14%	-60%	40%	19%	Change from last year	-6%	-8%
Change over last 5 years	-17%	6%	-45%	-68%	-4%	1%	Change over last 4 years	-2%	-8%

Source: Executive Operating Program and Budget (FY 2011-FY 2015), Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, Department of Planning and Permitting, and 2013 National Citizen Survey (Honolulu)

Planning is responsible for preparing, evaluating, and revising the O`ahu General Plan and nine long-range regional development plans. The division is responsible for developing transit-oriented development plans, which support the DPP and the mayor’s transportation priorities. It also processes applications for public infrastructure map amendments, zone changes and state special use permits; and monitors compliance with unilateral agreement conditions associated with zone changes, including affordable housing requirements.

A \$2.3 million U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant is funding an affordable housing strategy for the rail transit corridor. According to Planning, the majority of the HUD funds will be used to develop a revolving loan fund to aid in constructing, preserving and supporting affordable housing in the transit corridor.

Operating expenditures (Planning) exhibited a downward trend since FY 2009. In FY 2013, it decreased 26% from the prior year and 32% over the last five years. According to Planning, this was due to TOD transit funds being cut from its budget,



and the funds moved over to HART for FY 2012 appropriations. Planning noted that during the period FY 2009 to FY 2011 the transit funds were expended on consultant services to conduct informational meetings and gather feedback from the communities along the proposed rail line. Planning added that the council kept the function in DPP for FY 2012, but at a lower funding level.

Total zone change applications reviewed increased significantly in FY 2013 to 11 from 4 in FY 2012. Planning explained that this was due to a recovery from a relatively weak construction economy.

					The National Citizen Survey (% Excellent or Good)		
	Operating Expenditures (\$ million)	Total Zone Change Applications Reviewed	Total Environmental Assessments/ Impact Statements Reviewed	Total Unilateral Agreement Permit Reviewed		Quality of New Development in Honolulu	Land Use, Planning, and Zoning
FY 2009	\$2.5	10	32	200	FY 2009	-	-
FY 2010	\$2.4	8	41	251	FY 2010	39%	21%
FY 2011	\$2.3	6	21	268	FY 2011	39%	29%
FY 2012	\$2.3	4	25	278	FY 2012	40%	24%
FY 2013	\$1.7	11	31	306	FY 2013	29%	16%
Change from last year	-26%	175%	24%	10%	Change from last year	-11%	-8%
Change over last 5 years	-32%	10%	-3%	53%	Change over last 4 years	-10%	-5%

Source: Executive Operating Program and Budget (FY 2011-FY 2015), Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, Department of Planning and Permitting, and 2013 National Citizen Survey (Honolulu)

## Site Development

Site Development administers and enforces subdivision and grading ordinances, and drainage regulations. The division sets standards and regulates the infrastructure required for site development. Additionally, the division processes subdivision applications, reviews subdivision construction plans, and conducts site inspections to ensure compliance with city guidelines.

Over the past five years, Site Development's operating expenditures decreased 11% from FY 2009 to FY 2013. According to Site Development, the reduction was due to employee furloughs and retirement of higher paid employees.

In FY 2013, the number of construction plans reviewed (1,347) declined 6% compared to FY 2009 (1,435). Site Development noted that the decrease was due to the lingering effects of poor economic conditions.

Over the past five years, the number of non-permit related major complaints declined nearly 30%. Total grading permit inspections increased 15.5% over last year. Site Development explained that the reduced number of complaints was due to better permit regulation via more frequent inspections.

Over the past five years, sewer adequacy studies have increased nearly 18%, and increased nearly 20% compared to last year. According to Site Development, the increases are due to an increase in housing developments, as previously anticipated. From FY 2009 to FY 2013, the number of sewer connection permits increased nearly 36%. Site Development noted that the increase in permits was also due to an increase in housing developments, as previously anticipated. Site Development explained that sewer adequacy studies and sewer connection permits typically are early lead items that occur before developers and property owners submit construction plans.

	Operating Expenditures (\$ million)	Total Construction Plans Reviewed	Total Grading Permits Issued	Total Grading Permit Inspections Conducted	Major Complaints Investigated/ Reports Prepared Non-Permit Related <sup>1</sup>	Total Sewer Adequacy Studies Conducted	Total Sewer Connection Permits Issued
FY 2009	\$3.5	1,435	777	24,860	1,974	792	385
FY 2010	\$3.4	1,372	697	19,439	2,431	533	533
FY 2011	\$3.0	1,381	687	19,468	1,633	741	443
FY 2012	\$3.2	1,452	664	21,234	1,543	780	544
FY 2013	\$3.1	1,347	628	24,516	1,387	934	523
Change from last year	-3%	-7%	-5%	15%	-10%	20%	-4%
Change over last 5 years	-11%	-6%	-19%	-1%	-30%	18%	36%

Source: Executive Operating Program and Budget (FY 2011-FY 2015), Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, and Department of Planning and Permitting. <sup>1</sup>Non-Permit related major complaints investigated commonly include technical matters relating to issues between private parties.