

# ZONING

Citizen Centric Report



FY24



*"working to improve your quality of life"*

The Commonwealth Zoning Board was established by CNMI Public Law 6-32 to oversee, through its Zoning Office, a land use and zoning system that protects the interests of landowners and the general public as a whole. It is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors appointed by the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, subject to the confirmation of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation (SNILD).

## *Mission:*

The Zoning Office administers the mandates of the Board relative to the requirements of the Saipan Zoning Law of 2013 as Amended and the island's land use planning projects, inclusive of the Nuisance Abatement and Blighted Property Maintenance Act of 2018, to safeguard the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents of and visitors to the Commonwealth.

## BOARD

Henry S. Hofschneider  
CHAIRMAN

Michael N. Evangelista  
VICE-CHAIRMAN

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Stephen P. Sablan  
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MEMBER

Eleanor B. Alinas  
MEMBER

Steve K. Jang  
MEMBER

## STAFF

Therese T. Ogomoro  
ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Naomi T. Santos  
ADMIN OFFICER

Verna B. Diaz  
ADMIN ASSISTANT

## PERMITTING

Walter Zachrias,  
PERMITTING MANAGER

Julia A. Kapileo  
PERMIT OFFICER I

James B. Sasamoto  
PERMIT OFFICER I

Doris DLGuerrero  
PERMIT OFFICER I

## ENFORCEMENT

Yubert M. Alepuyo  
CHIEF ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

Christopher Borja  
SPECIAL PROJECTS  
COORDINATOR

Perry Borja  
ENFORCEMENT OFFICER I

Spencer Marchedesch  
ENFORCEMENT OFFICER I

## LEGAL COUNSELS

Charles Reyes, AAG  
Rellani Ogomoro, AAG

## PERMITTING

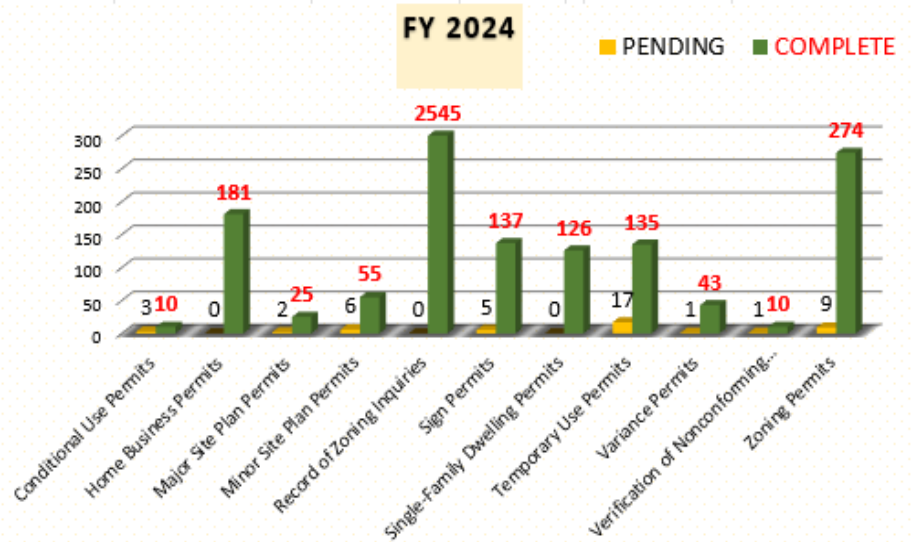
The Zoning Office continues to streamline its application processing to further improve issuance timeline for permits. In this fiscal year, the Zoning office processed a total of **3,585** zoning permits and clearances. The highest number of applications processed were zoning clearances at **2,545**, followed by zoning permits to operate businesses in existing structures at **274**, home business permits at **181**, sign permits at **137**, and temporary use permits at **135**.

The Zoning Board conducted a total of 10 Conditional Use public hearings, while 3 applications were postponed due to insufficient submission of requirements.

From the total 3,585 permits processed, 99% were completed by the end of the fiscal year, while the other 1% remained pending awaiting further requirements.



NMC Student Center

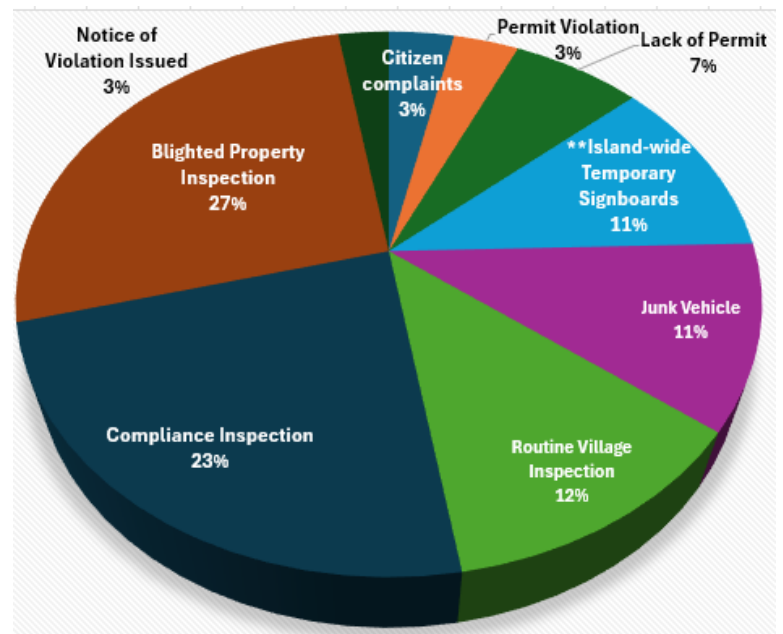


### Permit Issuance Timeline

Home Businesses	Same day application received
Business License Renewals	Same day application received
Single Family Dwellings	1 to 3 days
Zoning / Minor Site Plan	3 to 8 days
Major Site Plan	10 to 30 days
Conditional Use	30 to 45 days
Signs	1 to 3 days
Temporary Uses	1 to 3 days

## ENFORCEMENT

The Zoning Office conducted a total of **909** inspections for compliance with Zoning requirements during this fiscal year. These inspections included **241** on blighted properties, **213** for compliance on permit conditions, **100** on ground signboards, and **99** on junk vehicles. From the total inspections conducted, **109** resulted from the staff's routine village inspections.



# FINANCIAL:



The Zoning Board and Office received and allocated the following funding for its personnel and operations:

- **\$184,948.00** from the General Fund to cover the salaries of 6 personnel at **\$183,065.00**, with Utilities and Public Auditor fees at **\$1,883.00**. This was the major source of funding for Zoning's personnel.
- **\$75,000** was received from the 23rd Saipan & Northern Islands Legislative Delegation (SNILD) which also greatly assisted to cover the expenses for 2 Enforcement personnel and office operational supplies.



Completed residential structure



Commercial Building (before)



...after clearance of overgrown vegetation



Ongoing enforcement on public nuisance



...after clearance of dilapidated fence

# CHALLENGES:



The Zoning Office continuously complied with this Administration's measures to minimize costs and cut expenses on supplies and operations. While acknowledging these measures, staff continues its efforts to ensure that its operations to provide efficient and effective services to the public is not disrupted. We aim to achieve the following tasks soon for the needed improvements to the permitting and enforcement operations, pending financial support from funding opportunities we intend to secure.

- Hire additional enforcement and permitting staff to support upcoming projects.  
The current number of 4 permitting staff cannot sustain the increased load of permit intakes and assessments which has averaged close to 300 applications processed per month. Likewise, the enforcement section is in need of additional staff to cover the increasing inspections for compliance with the requirements of the Zoning Law, as well as the Nuisance Abatement and Blighted Property Maintenance Act of 2018.
- Secure additional vehicles to be included with our current inventory of 3 to support outfield inspections and enforcement activities.

# FUTURE OUTLOOK:



The following are projects and tasks which the Zoning Office aims to continue to address or to accomplish throughout the next fiscal

- To aggressively implement the Nuisance Abatement and Blighted Property Maintenance Act of 2018 to address public nuisance around the island, beginning with the areas of priority which include properties within 300 ft distance from a school, daycare, or playground, properties within view of tourist areas, and properties on main thoroughfares.
- To activate the implementation of an online platform to promote active collaboration among regulatory agencies in properly addressing public nuisance and environmental concerns. This system will allow real time monitoring and tracking of agency activities to ensure that issues are reviewed and resolved in a timely basis.
- To implement a Parking Improvement Plan as addressed in Article 9 Section 906 of the Law. This plan shall address the parking shortages and issues which have negatively impacted many areas throughout the island's zoning districts. It also aims to implement reasonable parking requirements in areas densely populated with non-conforming structures which have less sufficient or zero parking spaces. It additionally seeks to ensure that districts with sufficient spaces be required to accommodate off-street parking spaces at its minimum to prevent traffic congestions and ensure pedestrian and vehicular traffic safety.
- To propose the needed changes to the text of the Zoning Law of 2013 to the Commonwealth Zoning Board for its adoption prior to being presented to the general public for comments. The Board's approval of amendments to the texts shall be transmitted to the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation (SNILD) and Governor for further adoption and approval. The Office plans to publish a new Zoning Law after then.
- To continue meeting with agencies to promote better coordination with developers and residential owners on allowable uses within zoning districts for better understanding of the requirements of the Zoning Law prior to commencement of any development (*ex: signing of lease agreements or land designation documents*).
- Continue implementing Zoning Board Resolution 2023-12-04 which intends to clear intersections on major and secondary roadways from signboards to ensure safety of the general public and promote aesthetically pleasing surroundings.
- To conduct a series of public outreach meetings and presentations within villages throughout the year to connect with landowners, businesses, contractors, and developers to further promote public awareness and understanding of the Saipan Zoning Law and the Nuisance Abatement and Blighted Property Maintenance Act of 2018.

