

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect.

Creating a Healthy Business Environment for Sustainable Island Growth

Here Are Selected Important Government of Guam Systems That Need Improvement and Issues That Need Attention

- ▶ The Government of Guam Development Permitting System
- ▶ Addressing Guam's Severe Housing Shortage
- ▶ Exploring Radical Transformation of the Chamorro Land Trust Program to benefit the overall island community.

The Development Permitting Systems

- ▶ Land Use Permitting
- ▶ Construction Permitting

The Purpose of a Sound Development Permitting System is to **Protect and Serve the Public.**

PROTECTION: provided by construction codes, policies, and practices.

SERVICE: provided by Government) Agencies that review and approve the building and occupancy permit applications.

The Land Use Permitting System

Includes:

- ▶ Department of Land Management
- ▶ GovGuam Agency Review Committee (ARC)
- ▶ Guam Land Use Commission (5-member GLUC)
- ▶ Governor of Guam (In cases of rezoning)

Typical process period: **6 to 8 months**

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The Land Use Permitting System

Current Condition of the Land Use Permitting System

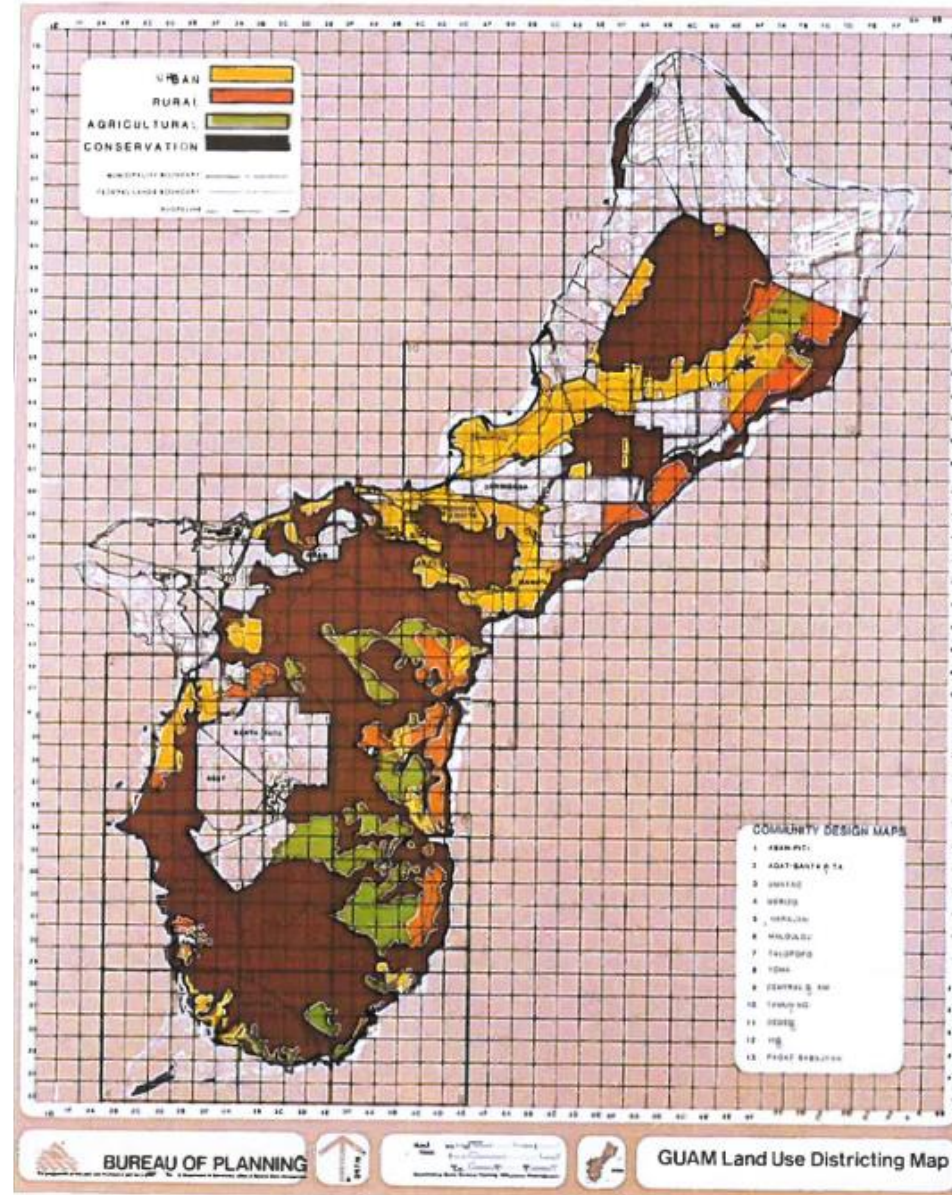
- ▶ Current Commission is business/development friendly
- ▶ Problems and issues include:
 - Lengthy time limit for submittal of ARC position statements
 - Quality of Position Statements
 - Exhaustive and exhausting public review process

Suggested Improvements to the Land Use Permitting System:

- Implement shorter “default to approval” time limits
- Reduce the number of public hearings required
- Enact legislation to make these changes

Guam Land Use Plan (circa 1980)

Note: **Predominant Land Use is
Designated Conservation**



The Construction Permitting System

Includes:

- Department of Public Works
- GovGuam Agencies
 - DPW, DPR, GEPA
 - GPA, GWA
- One Stop Building Permit Center (housed at DPW)

The Construction Permitting System

Condition of the Construction Permitting System

Needs Significant Improvement. Criticisms of the construction/building permit application and review process include:

- The permit review process is slow and unresponsive
- The review process appears to be linear and not simultaneous
- Agency comments stray outside their lines of authority
- Certain agencies notoriously take much longer to review permits and to sign off on occupancy permits
- Contractors/Permit Applicants seem to know someone at various review agencies that they lobby to expedite permit issuance

Adverse Impacts to the our Island Economy

- Economically beneficial projects are delayed and end up costing more than originally budgeted
- Constructed improvements become a target for robbers and vandals while sitting idle awaiting occupancy
- The economic, physical, personal and spiritual enjoyment provided by completed projects are delayed
- Government receipts of revenues and taxes that can be generated by completed projects are delayed
- Developers abort their projects

What Can Be Done Immediately to Improve the System

1. Establish, Publish and Adhere to Written Standards of Performance for Permit Reviews and Issuance Applicable to All Agencies
2. Establish a procedure for dealing with “problematic” applications.
3. Implement digital tracking system
4. Provide quick feedback to permit Applicants
5. Quickly communicate problems with Applicants
6. Hire a qualified “Building Official” to oversee the construction permitting process

Addressing Guam's Severe Housing Shortage

- Statistics show that **Guam's housing shortage currently numbers over 9,000 units.**
- Recently enacted laws aim to address solutions to the shortage in various ways
- Pending legislation to facilitate solutions to the housing crisis
- Introduce Legislation to promote housing development

Addressing Guam's Severe Housing Shortage

Examples of recent enabling legislation that have become law include:

- **Public Law 37-105** authorizes the use of a nitrate-reducing sewage treatment/disposal system called a Type 4 system which permits the construction of a single family residence on a ¼ acre Parental Subdivision or Decedent Estate lots using this system in unsewered areas over the Groundwater Protection Zone (GPZ).
- **Public Law 38-7** permits the regulated design and construction of **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)** within developed single family lots which creates value, provides rental income, and offers dignified, independent living spaces for families.

Recommendation: The Mayor of each municipality within the GPZ should inform his/her community of the existence of these new laws.

Addressing Guam's Severe Housing Shortage

Pending legislation that will facilitate solutions to the shortage:

- **Bill 240-38** will authorize **temporary workforce housing a permitted use in an M-1 zone** thus eliminating the 6 to 12 month Conditional Use application process.

Recommendation: **Contact all senators and provide written support for the passage of this bill**

Introduce Legislation to promote housing development:

- Legislation to amend PL 37-105 to **include all ¼ acre lots in unsewered areas over the GPZ.**

Recommendation: **Lobby senators to amend PL 37-105**

Explore Radical Changes to the Chamorro Land Trust Program

Suggested Changes:

- Authorize the Chamorro Land Trust Commission (CLTC) to **sell land to Developers for the development of single and multi-family residential housing.** Fair compensation could include a combination of money and developed housing for disposition by the Commission.
- **Lease CLTC properties at fair (albeit subsidized) value to qualified recipients** with appropriate provisions to eventually transfer ownership of the property to the leaseholders.
- The ultimate goal of any **changes to the CLT program should be for the overall benefit our island economy.**