



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Will Wright, Hon. AIA LA**

Director, Government & Public Affairs | American Institute of Architects, Los Angeles Chapter  
t: (213) 639-0764 | e: [will@aialosangeles.org](mailto:will@aialosangeles.org) | [www.aialosangeles.org](http://www.aialosangeles.org)

**Aaron Taxy**

Director of Government and Public Affairs | BOMA/GLA  
t: 213-332-4776 | e: [ataxy@bomagla.org](mailto:ataxy@bomagla.org) | [www.bomagla.org](http://www.bomagla.org)

**Clara Karger**

Director of Public Affairs | Central City Association  
t: 213.418.1672 | e: [ckarger@ccala.org](mailto:ckarger@ccala.org) | [www.ccala.org](http://www.ccala.org)

**LADBS Announces the launch of the Fast-Track Program for Office Tenant Improvements**

**(Los Angeles, CA – November 2, 2021)** On October 28th, Osama Younan, the General Manager of the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS), [announced](#)\* the launch of the Fast-Track Office Tenant Improvements Program. This innovative initiative, administered by LADBS via their [E-Plan portal](#),\*\* will **fast-track the permitting and approval process for tenant improvement projects.** (A URL for the E-Plan portal appears at the end of this release.)

This program has been developed in collaboration with the leadership of the Los Angeles Chapter of The American Institute of Architects (AIA LA), The Building Owners and Managers Association Greater of Los Angeles (BOMA/GLA), and the Central City Association (CCA).

This program will be available to all licensed architects and engineers who wish to participate.

**About the Fast-Track for Tenant Improvement Program**

During the height of the crisis of the pandemic, LADBS met with AIALA, BOMA/GLA, and CCA to identify a proactive approach to ensure that the private sector could more effectively and more expeditiously respond to urgent need to reconfigure, retrofit, and/or reprogram existing workplaces, retail sites, and commercial office buildings to adopt to new market conditions and demands for healthy, safer, and more equitable interior spaces. After analyzing and reviewing the self-certification programs of numerous municipalities such as New York City, Phoenix, and Austin, a consensus was reached that the most cost-neutral approach would be to implement a Fast-Track Office Tenant Improvement Program, with the goal to ensure that the City of Los Angeles will remain competitive with other world-class cities that need to urgently reconfigure their existing facilities with tenant improvements and upgrades.

“This program serves residents, visitors, and those whose livelihoods depend on safe and rapid re-opening of commercial spaces,” noted Wade Killefer, FAIA, President, AIA Los Angeles. Killefer’s experience realizing architecture for and in the City of Los Angeles dates back forty-six years. In the 1990s, Killefer and his firm, KFA, helped spark the resurgence of the historic core in downtown Los Angeles by spearheading the city’s Adaptive Reuse Ordinance. “As architects and designers, we are committed to the best possible practices to protect the health of Angelenos. Fast-tracking these

improvements means important and necessary adjustments can be benefited from more rapidly,” Killefer continued.

“Los Angeles’s new program isn’t just about fast-tracking permits – it’s about fast-tracking economic recovery. By streamlining the permit process for basic tenant improvements, building owners can quickly modify office spaces to address tenant needs, which have significantly evolved throughout the COVID-19 emergency. Now, businesses can return to their workplaces faster and bring much-needed life back to our commercial corridors with them,” said Michele Ware, President - BOMA Greater Los Angeles

“The Fast-Track for Tenant Improvement Program shows what we can achieve when we work together, across government, private industries and community-based organizations, to develop practical, creative solutions that foster economic recovery, save time and conserve city resources,” said Jessica Lall, President & CEO of Central City Association of Los Angeles. “This forward-looking program can free up the Department of Building and Safety team for more substantive reviews and enable building industry experts to more nimbly respond to changing workplace needs accelerated by the pandemic.”

**The goals of the program are to:**

- Maintain high quality of enforcement of the California building code.
- Deploy human capital from the city’s building department where it is needed most.
- Expedite plan check approval for office tenant improvements in existing office buildings.
- Stimulate economic growth in the Los Angeles region.
- Prepare for the next regional crisis or pandemic.
- Match regulations with real risk.
- Promote the brand of Los Angeles as an innovative place for entrepreneurs to incubate business ideas, grow companies and to create jobs.

**WHY:**

- Allows the City of Los Angeles and LADBS to more quickly respond to the crisis caused by the pandemic.
- The pandemic exposed and accelerated a City of Los Angeles problem of securing building permits for simple tenant improvements of the interior of office fit out projects.
- City structures staffing to meet the requirements during fluctuating demands.
- Building and fire departments must bring back retired experienced people on a contract basis to deal with the increase of demand for their services during these times.
- This program is not meant to diminish the role of the city in the approval process or diminish any fire/life safety standards.
- This program is an attempt to support the city, the building, fire, planning departments and the disabled access division by relieving them of the burden of reviewing and checking low risk projects such as office tenant improvements.
- Regulation should fit the risk these types of projects create.

- The Fast-Track Tenant Improvement Program will be limited to projects that do not affect the existing occupancy, existing changes of use or existing changes to major ingress/egress routes.

#### **HOW:**

- Anyone wanting to participate in the Fast-Track Tenant Improvement Program must register with the building department official, demonstrate a level of competence in their field and prove good character.
- Licensed design professionals in good standing such as architects, engineers, certified interior designers, and licensed general contractors may participate.
- Plans and specifications will be prepared in accordance with all current California and Los Angeles City Building Department and fire codes including exiting requirements, energy requirements and the requirements described in the California Disabled Access codes.
- All plans and specifications will be prepared by a registered participant in this program and pay all the city fees, plan check and permit fees so there is no diminished revenue to the city.
- These projects will not affect changes of use, occupancy or major exits such as existing stairwells.
- These projects are to be limited in scope to basic tenant improvements of office fit outs of space only.
- If there is a change to use, occupancy or exiting, those plans and specifications will go through the existing plan check process that is in place.

#### **WHAT**

- Building permit application must be provided to the city before expedited plan check is to be granted.
- Participants of the program must pay all applicable fees.
- Risk is carried by the design professionals, the building owner's specialty consultants/contractors and the general contractor to perform the work in accordance with all codes as outlined above.

#### **Read the LADBS Announcement:**

<https://www.ladbs.org/our-organization/messaging/news/news-details/2021/10/29/new-fast-track-office-tenant-improvement-program>

**\*\*Need the URL for e-path portal? Use this:** <https://www.ladbsservices2.lacity.org/OnlineServices/>

#### **About AIA Los Angeles:**

Shelter—the most fundamental charge of the architect—is a powerful word, encompassing mental as well as physical attributes. Good design not only houses us, but has the capacity to nurture more healthful lives, increase the ease with which we function at work, home, or play—and uplift spirit. At the AIALA, we believe in the power of architecture to support the well-being of Angelenos and our region. Our mission is to take the power of design and architecture to people in every corner of Los Angeles. Our vision is a city that flourishes from thoughtfully designed buildings and the spaces in between.

**About BOMA/GLA:**

Since our founding in 1915, BOMA/GLA has made it our mission to enhance and protect the value of commercial real estate in the Greater Los Angeles market. Representing 135 million square feet of office and industrial space, and contributing \$3.5 billion to California's economy annually, we have a strong and effective voice when it comes to carrying out that mission. We are the commercial real estate industry's unfailing advocate, representing your interests in the community and at all levels of government.

**About Central City Association:**

Central City Association (CCA) is the premier advocacy organization in the Los Angeles region and leading visionary on the future of Downtown Los Angeles. Since its founding in 1924, we have produced meaningful results for our members and the Downtown community. We maximize our effectiveness by leading, convening and collaborating with stakeholders to form strong partnerships and coalitions. CCA represents the interests of over 300 businesses, nonprofits and trade associations from a broad range of industries.