



Construction Advisory Case Studies

Do we need to upgrade our elevators?

A hi-rise beachfront condo was having problems with the operation of their elevators on windy days. How do we fix this? An elevator maintenance company suggested expensive upgrades that would fix the problem. A construction advisor suggested a much simpler solution. He suspected that the wind entering the shaft on the roof and the parking deck was creating excess pressure that restricted the doors from closing. He tested his theory with the help of the maintenance staff by temporarily placing plywood barriers to block the wind, which immediately solved the problem. It turned out the best solution was wind barriers, not an expensive elevator upgrade.



Elevator shaft subject to wind issues

Do we need a new roof now?

A hi-rise condo had been experiencing intermittent roof leaks for over three years. Every time one was fixed, another emerged. Ultimately, their manager consulted a roofing contractor that explained that the roof had reached the end of its life. A new roof costing about \$80,000 was recommended. Before moving forward, a construction advisor was consulted to advise the board. After a brief inspection of the roof and some basic leak testing, the construction advisor isolated the issues and supervised a contractor who repaired the roof, resulting in a project cost of under \$3,000. The condo board did not need a new roof or an \$80,000 special assessment.

Do we need to spend \$3 million to fix our lakeshore issues?

A large Homeowners Association was cited by the county for code violations related to their lakes. The slope in several lakes was not compliant due to shoreline erosion over the years. An engineer recommended a comprehensive solution that would address the code violation and help prevent future problems. The challenge was the price tag, almost \$3 million, which was going to be a real strain on a community already struggling with collection problems. Another Expert was called in to review the specifications. Alternative solutions were identified that were smaller in scope, yet still addressed the immediate code violation. The board ultimately decided to pursue a solution that was about 1/2 the price of the initial proposal.



Failing Patch Repair on Roof

Should we repair, restore or replace our roofs?

A thirty year old condominium complex with more than twenty buildings was struggling with roof leaks in many of their buildings. Their reserve schedule had not planned for a replacement until more than five years later. The Association was planning on hiring a roofing contractor to restore the roofs on a phased basis over a multi-year period. The proposal by the roofing contractor highlighted significant savings as compared to replacing the roofs and the cost was spread over multiple years, helping the association avoid the need for a special assessment. A construction advisor was called in to review the proposal and provide advice. Upon further analysis, it was determined that the total cost of restoring the existing roofs was going to be 50% more expensive than the cost of a full roof replacement. It was also determined that with an aggressive, targeted maintenance and repair plan, the full roof replacement could likely be delayed three to five years.

Do we need to fix our handrails to be ADA compliant?

A beachfront condominium needed to plan and budget for a project to update their handrails. Florida statutes (FS 718.1085) require that handrails in common areas stairwells in high-rise buildings (75 feet or greater) must be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Fire Code (NFPA) and Florida Building Code (FBC) Standards before the end of 2014. A construction advisor was called in to define the detailed requirements for the board and determine the required specifications required. After determining that a retrofit was not feasible and that a full replacement would be required, the advisor defined the specifications, identified possible suppliers and participated in the review of proposals. Despite clear specifications, the proposals included very different solutions that varied greatly in cost. The advisor worked with each vendor to refine their proposals so that they could be easily compared and evaluated. Without the help of the construction advisor, the board faced the risk of implementing a solution that was potentially not compliant, ineffective, or excessive in cost.



Example of compliant handrail at top riser