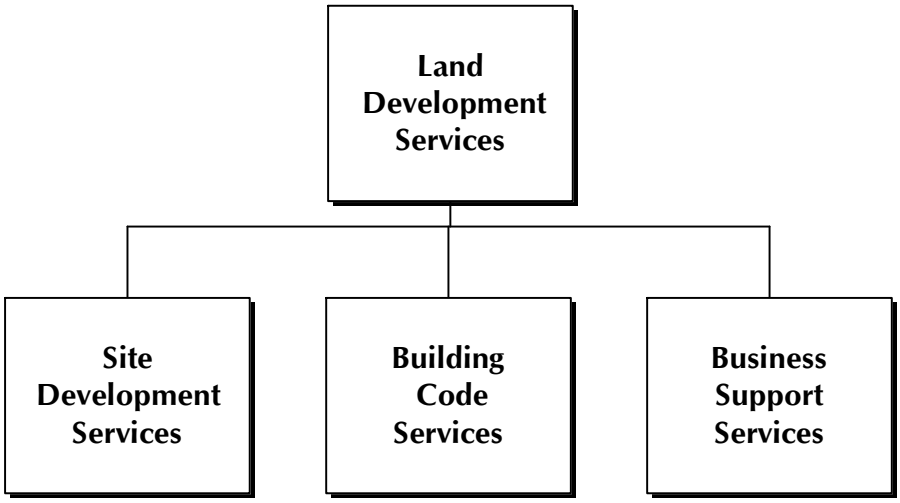
# Land Development Services




## Mission

Land Development Services (LDS) is committed to the protection of the environment, and the health, safety and welfare of all who live in, work in and visit Fairfax County. Through partnerships with all stakeholders, LDS achieves excellence in service by balancing the needs, rights and interests of the community in the building and land development process.

## Focus

Land Development Services (LDS) provides regulatory services to protect the health, safety, welfare, and the environment for those who live, work, or visit Fairfax County. This is accomplished through effectively regulating land development and building construction. LDS enforces environmental protection standards set forth in applicable codes for land development and building construction such as the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, the International Code Council's family of construction codes, Fairfax County ordinances, and the Public Facilities Manual. LDS is comprised of three cost centers: Site Development Services (SDS), included in the County's Community Development Program Area; Building Code Services (BCS), included in the County's Public Safety Program Area; and Business Support Services which manages for LDS the administrative responsibilities of Human Resources, Information Technology, and Financial Management. LDS reviews all site and subdivision plans, inspects site development, and is responsible for the plan review, permitting, and inspection of new and existing structures. The Urban Forestry Division within LDS is responsible for enforcing the County's applicable tree ordinances and instituting policies and projects to help the county achieve its tree cover goals and other targets established in the Fairfax County Tree Action Plan. The Code Analysis Branch helps to develop effective regulations to achieve the County's goals; and Code Enforcement takes action against non-compliant construction and land disturbing activities in the County. LDS also provides technical training and conducts customer outreach programs to help homeowners, builders, engineers and contractors comply with land development and building code regulations.

# Land Development Services

Land Development Services uses several economic indicators, including the quantity and types of plans and permits submitted for processing to predict future workload and resource needs. During the last few years, the number of site and subdivision submissions has gradually decreased; while the last year site and building inspections substantially decreased as a result of the poor economy. A shift in development towards more in-fill and redevelopment/revitalization of older communities and more complex sites (such as problem soils), and of more multi-use and multi-family types of buildings continues. The workload associated with regulating these types of developments has inherent complexities which strains resources in addition to shifting resources to address code enforcement, environmental regulatory actions and infill issues. For example, in-fill development and revitalization projects are more complex in nature due to stormwater management challenges, erosion and sedimentation issues, deficient infrastructure, and the need to minimize impacts on adjoining property owners. Additionally there has been a move towards large transit oriented developments and large mixed use developments such as Tyson's Corner Center Expansion with the approved Metrorail extension. These trends will require even more time and staff resources per project to review plans, process permits, and inspect construction. To address these issues, LDS continues to partner with the citizen representatives, the environmental community, the development community, and other stakeholders to review and formulate recommendations for making improvements to the land development processes.

## Challenge of FY 2010 Budget Reductions

Due to declining workload, in the spring of 2007 LDS began reducing expenses by ensuring its workforce was "right-sized" for the current workload by transferring positions and holding vacancies. Therefore, the focus of the FY 2010 process was ensuring that fees charged for plan review and inspection and permit services were aligned with the actual cost of the services provided. As a result, fees were adjusted to generate $5.5 million in increased revenues. The agency has retained its flexibility to react promptly to the economy by taking the above actions, reflecting an ongoing commitment to continually review workload and expenses as necessitated by the economy.

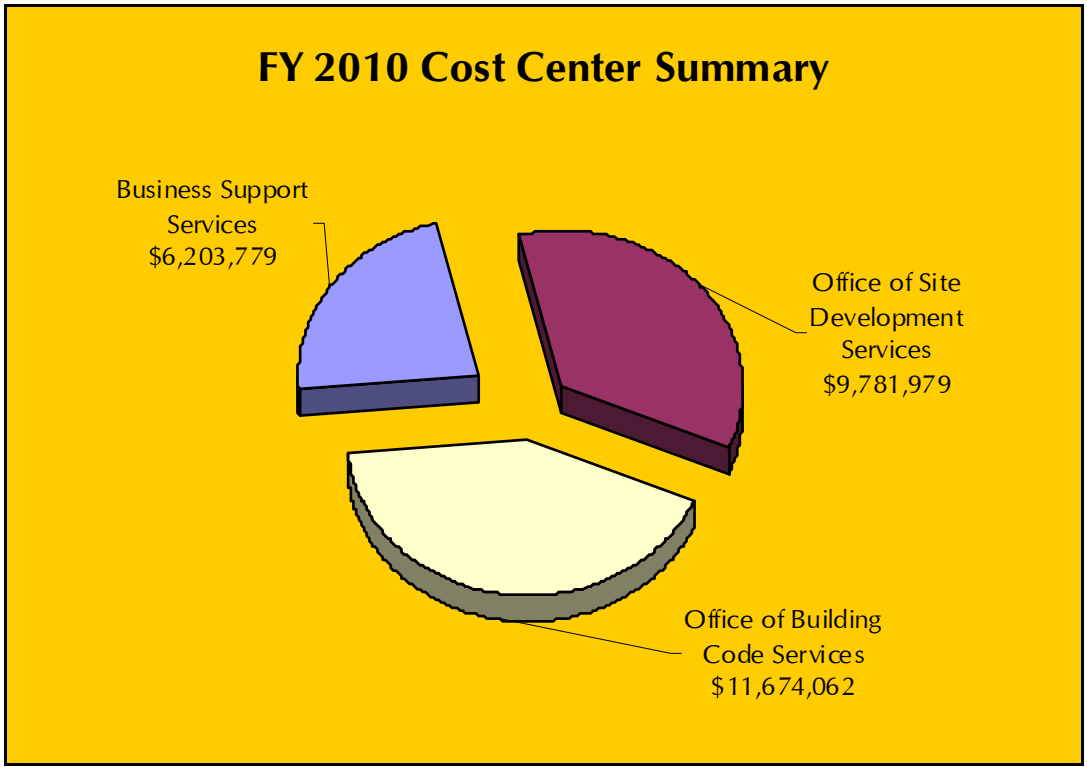
## Budget and Staff Resources

| Agency Summary | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Category | FY 2008 Actual | FY 2009 Adopted Budget Plan | FY 2009 Revised Budget Plan | FY 2010 Advertised Budget Plan | FY 2010 Adopted Budget Plan |
| Authorized Positions/Staff Years | | | | | |
| Regular | 331/ 331 | 338/ 338 | 334/ 334 | 334/ 334 | 334/ 334 |
| Expenditures: | | | | | |
| Personnel Services | $20,553,814 | $23,037,668 | $21,972,640 | $23,210,063 | $23,210,063 |
| Operating Expenses | 4,927,007 | 5,189,308 | 5,967,518 | 4,725,884 | 4,650,884 |
| Capital Equipment | 62,137 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Subtotal** | **$25,542,958** | **$28,226,976** | **$27,940,158** | **$27,935,947** | **$27,860,947** |
| Less: | | | | | |
| Recovered Costs | ($184,111) | ($192,431) | ($192,431) | ($201,127) | ($201,127) |
| **Total Expenditures** | **$25,358,847** | **$28,034,545** | **$27,747,727** | **$27,734,820** | **$27,659,820** |
| Income: | | | | | |
| Permits/Plan Fees | $8,134,294 | $9,539,163 | $6,914,150 | $9,105,908 | $9,105,908 |
| Permits/Inspection Fees | 12,349,823 | 11,447,291 | 10,518,549 | 13,826,791 | 13,826,791 |
| **Total Income** | **$20,484,117** | **$20,986,454** | **$17,432,699** | **$22,932,699** | **$22,932,699** |
| **Net Cost to the County** | **$4,874,730** | **$7,048,091** | **$10,315,028** | **$4,802,121** | **$4,727,121** |

# Land Development Services

| Community Development Program Area Summary | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Category | FY 2008 Actual | FY 2009 Adopted Budget Plan | FY 2009 Revised Budget Plan | FY 2010 Advertised Budget Plan | FY 2010 Adopted Budget Plan |
| Authorized Positions/Staff Years | | | | | |
| Regular | 183/ 183 | 183/ 183 | 189/ 189 | 189/ 189 | 189/ 189 |
| Expenditures: | | | | | |
| Personnel Services | $11,684,445 | $12,867,015 | $12,452,429 | $13,113,005 | $13,113,005 |
| Operating Expenses | 2,967,455 | 3,162,304 | 4,051,919 | 3,148,880 | 3,073,880 |
| Capital Equipment | 45,637 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Subtotal** | **$14,697,537** | **$16,029,319** | **$16,504,348** | **$16,261,885** | **$16,186,885** |
| Less: | | | | | |
| Recovered Costs | ($184,111) | ($192,431) | ($192,431) | ($201,127) | ($201,127) |
| **Total Expenditures** | **$14,513,426** | **$15,836,888** | **$16,311,917** | **$16,060,758** | **$15,985,758** |
| Income: | | | | | |
| Permits/Plan Fees | $8,134,294 | $9,539,163 | $6,914,150 | $9,105,908 | $9,105,908 |
| **Total Income** | **$8,134,294** | **$9,539,163** | **$6,914,150** | **$9,105,908** | **$9,105,908** |
| **Net Cost to the County** | **$6,379,132** | **$6,297,725** | **$9,397,767** | **$6,954,850** | **$6,879,850** |

## Cost Centers



## Position Summary

**Land Development Svcs Admin**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | DPWES Deputy Director |
| 1 | Asst. Director of Public Works |
| 1 | Engineer V |
| 3 | Engineers IV |
| 1 | Engineer III |
| 1 | Code Enforcement Svcs. Mgr. |
| 1 | Master Combination Inspector |
| 1 | Management Analyst III |
| 1 | Management Analyst II |
| 1 | Management Analyst I |
| 2 | Administrative Assistants IV |
| 2 | Administrative Assistants III |
| 1 | Safety Analyst |

**Code Services**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Director, Review/Compliance |
| 1 | Business Analyst III |
| 1 | Engineer V |
| 1 | Engineer III |
| 3 | Administrative Assistants III |
| 1 | Code Enforcement Chief |
| 1 | Code Specialist III |
| 2 | Code Specialists II |
| 2 | Sr. Engineering Inspectors |
| 3 | Master Combination Inspectors |
| 1 | Engineering Technician III |
| 6 | Engineering Technicians II |

**Environmental and Facilities Inspections**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Director, Review/Compliance |
| 2 | Senior Engineers III |
| 1 | Management Analyst III |
| 2 | Management Analysts II |
| 2 | Engineering Technicians III |
| 6 | Engineering Technicians II |
| 6 | Supervising Engineering Inspectors |
| 5 | Asst. Super. Engineering Inspectors |
| 34 | Sr. Engineering Inspectors |
| 2 | Code Specialists III |
| 1 | Administrative Assistant III |
| 1 | Administrative Assistant II |

**Environmental and Site Review**

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 | Directors, Review/Compliance |
| 2 | Engineers IV |
| 6 | Senior Engineers III |
| 23 | Engineers III |
| 1 | Administrative Assistant IV |
| 2 | Administrative Assistants II |
| 1 | Urban Forestry Director |
| 2 | Urban Foresters III |
| 8 | Urban Foresters II |
| 1 | Code Specialist II |

**Human Resources Branch**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Management Analyst IV |
| 3 | Management Analysts II |
| 3 | Training Specialists III |
| 1 | Training Specialist II |
| 3 | Engineers I |
| 2 | Administrative Assistants IV |

**Information Technology Branch**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Business Analyst IV |
| 1 | Info Tech. Program Manager II |
| 1 | Info Tech. Program Manager I |
| 1 | Internet/Intranet Architect III |
| 1 | Programmer Analyst IV |
| 1 | Programmer Analyst III |
| 2 | Programmer Analysts II |
| 1 | Network/Telecom Analyst III |
| 1 | Network/Telecom Analyst II |
| 1 | Data Analyst II |

**Financial Management Branch**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Management Analyst IV |
| 1 | Management Analyst III |
| 3 | Management Analysts II |
| 2 | Administrative Assistants V |
| 6 | Administrative Assistants III |

**TOTAL POSITIONS**
**189 Positions / 189.0 Staff Years**

## FY 2010 Funding Adjustments

*The following funding adjustments from the FY 2009 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2010 program. Included are all adjustments recommended by the County Executive that were approved by the Board of Supervisors, as well as any additional Board of Supervisors' actions, as approved in the adoption of the budget on April 27, 2009.*

- **Employee Compensation** **$413,699**
  A net increase of $413,699 includes $422,395 reflecting the full-year impact of salary increases awarded during FY 2009, partially offset by an increase of $8,696 in Recovered Costs. It should be noted that no funding is included for pay for performance or merit awards in FY 2010.

- **Department of Vehicle Services Charges** **($88,424)**
  A decrease of $88,424 for Department of Vehicle Services' charges is based on anticipated costs for fuel, vehicle replacement and maintenance costs.

- **Carryover-Related Adjustment** **($700,000)**
  A decrease of $700,000, including $250,000 in Personnel Services and $450,000 in Operating Expenses reflects the transfer to other agencies of a portion of the funding originally included in the FY 2009 Adopted Budget Plan in Land Development Services (LDS) for the Code Enforcement Strike Team. As part of the *FY 2008 Carryover Review*, an amount of $700,000 of the $1.25 million budgeted for strike team-related requirements was moved out of LDS, while the remaining $550,000 was left to support the 4/4.0 SYE new positions being established in LDS, as well as related personnel, operating, and vehicle expenses for the three strike teams. It should be noted that this action has no net fiscal impact on the County's code enforcement efforts.

## Changes to FY 2009 Adopted Budget Plan

*The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2009 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2009 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2008 Carryover Review, FY 2009 Third Quarter Review, and all other approved changes through April 20, 2009.*

- **Carryover Adjustments** **$628,210**
  As part of the *FY 2008 Carryover Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved encumbered funding of $1,328,210 in Operating Expenses. This increase is partially offset by a decrease of $700,000 reflecting the transfer of a portion of the funding included in the LDS budget for the Code Enforcement Strike Team. In the FY 2009 Adopted Budget Plan, $1.25 million was budgeted in LDS pending the completion of a final determination of the position requirements needed for the third strike team. These actions result in $700,000 of the $1.25 million budgeted for strike team-related requirements being moved out of LDS. An amount of $550,000 will remain to support the 4/4.0 SYE new positions being established in LDS, as well as related personnel, operating, and vehicle expenses for the three strike teams. These funds will also support the recently created vacancy, foreclosure, and abandoned property team.

- **Third Quarter Adjustments** **($915,028)**
  As part of the *FY 2009 Third Quarter Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved a net reduction of $915,028, including $687,969 based on additional Personnel Services reductions, $77,059 based on the mandatory January 2, 2009 furlough day, $50,000 based on the cancellation of all non-essential and non-certification training and travel, $50,000 based on lower than anticipated fuel prices, and $50,000 based on the acceleration of FY 2010 reductions in order to address the FY 2009 revenue shortfall.

## Key Performance Measures

### Goal

The goal of Site Development Services (SDS) cost center is to land development, including public and private facilities, are designed and constructed to protect the integrity of public infrastructure, the control of erosion, drainage of stormwater, the conservations of trees, zoning compliance and the protection of public waters by:

- Reviewing and inspecting engineered land development plans and projects for conformance with federal, state and local ordinances as well as Board of Supervisors' policies;

- Providing financial protection to the County taxpayers by ensuring satisfactory completion of site improvements on private land development projects through the process of bonds and agreements;

- Investigating and assisting in the prosecution of building code and erosion and sediment control and Chesapeake Bay Ordinance violations, non-permitted work, grass ordinance violations, unlicensed contractors and illegal dumping issues;

- Providing leadership, coordination and support to the SDS divisions to ensure consistent and expeditious service to the development community; and

- Identifying and coordinating amendments to the Fairfax County Code and Public Facilities Manual (PFM) and responding to code and PFM interpretation requests.

### Objectives

- To resolve default situations so that no more than three percent of defaults are deemed developer irresolvable and must be completed by the County.

- To review site and subdivision-related plans within target timeframes, while continuing to identify potential deficiencies in proposed development projects so that none of the development projects cease construction as a result of these deficiencies.

# Land Development Services

| Indicator | Prior Year Actuals FY 2006 Actual | FY 2007 Actual | FY 2008 Estimate/Actual | Current Estimate FY 2009 | Future Estimate FY 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Output:** | | | | | |
| Bonded projects at year-end | 1,292 | 1,188 | 1,188 / 1,046 | 1,046 | 1,000 |
| Site and subdivision reviews processed | 372 | 313 | 313 / 273 | 270 | 200 |
| Minor plans and special studies processed | 2,591 | 1,828 | 1,828 / 1,536 | 1,500 | 1,300 |
| **Efficiency:** | | | | | |
| Bonded projects per staff | 129 | 99 | 99 / 95 | 95 | 91 |
| Plan reviews completed per reviewer | 165 | 119 | 119 / 95 | 93 | 79 |
| **Service Quality:** | | | | | |
| Average days to review a major plan | 55 | 60 | 50 / 65 | 50 | 60 |
| **Outcome:** | | | | | |
| Percent of projects in irresolvable default which must be completed by the County | 1% | 2% | 3% / 3% | 3% | 3% |
| Construction projects required to cease as a result of deficiencies identifiable on the plan | 0 | 0 | 0 / 0 | 0 | 0 |

## Performance Measurement Results

In FY 2008, the new commercial and residential housing market continued a downward trend. The downward trend is attributed to sub-prime lending practices and the current global economic crisis. In FY 2008, Site Development Services cost center experienced a 15.5 percent drop in site and subdivision and minor plans and special studies submitted for review and approval from FY 2007. The number of bonded projects at the FY 2008 year end dropped 12 percent from the previous fiscal year. This is to be expected as the number of new public improvement, site and subdivision plan submissions declined. Over the past three years it is more of a challenge to meet the mandated processing days due to staffing constraints, complex infill grading plans, development and redevelopment projects, and new environmental mandates. The impact of infill lot development can potentially come with environmental as well as other complex issues (i.e. stormwater runoff due to imperious surface and loss of tree canopy), which can contribute to the challenge of meeting the 60 day processing time. Similarly, site inspection's workload will remain steady in response to almost 1,100 bonded and 1,500 non-bonded projects already under construction and because of high-density development. In FY 2008, Environmental and Facilities Inspections Division met its goal of not exceeding the 3 percent default project completion objective. However, due to the housing slump and its economic impact on developers, the number of projects which must be completed by the County is expected to increase. Therefore, the objective to resolve defaults such that no more than 3 percent that must be completed by the County is retained for FY 2010.

## Objectives

- To provide inspection service on the day requested 97 percent of the time, while ensuring that 0 percent of buildings experience catastrophic failure as a result of faulty design.

- To issue 60 percent or more of building permits on the day of application, while ensuring that 0 percent of buildings experience catastrophic failure as a result of faulty design.

# Land Development Services

| Indicator | Prior Year Actuals FY 2006 Actual | FY 2007 Actual | FY 2008 Estimate/Actual | Current Estimate FY 2009 | Future Estimate FY 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Output:** | | | | | |
| Building inspections | 218,631 | 180,471 | 180,471 / 144,388 | 144,000 | 144,000 |
| Permits issued (1) | 82,029 | 73,719 | 73,710 / 59,662 | 59,000 | 59,000 |
| **Efficiency:** | | | | | |
| Inspections completed per inspector | 3,416 | 2,986 | 2,986 / 2,447 | 2,440 | 2,440 |
| Permits issued per technician (1) | 7,457 | 6,143 | 6,143 / 5,966 | 4,917 | 5,364 |
| **Service Quality:** | | | | | |
| Percent of inspections completed on requested day | 94% | 98% | 96% / 97% | 97% | 97% |
| **Outcome:** | | | | | |
| Percent of buildings experiencing catastrophic system failures as a result of building design | 0% | 0% | 0% / 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Percent of permits issued on day of application | 60% | 60% | 60% / 64% | 60% | 60% |

[1] Data previously shown for FY 2007 and FY 2008 was found to include some duplication. The measures have been corrected.

## Performance Measurement Results

In FY 2008, Fairfax County did not experience catastrophic structural failures resulting from inadequate building designs, plan reviews or field compliance inspections. The slowdown in the new commercial and residential housing market impacts building plan review and structural inspections. Workload indicators for numbers of permits issued and field inspections conducted are down for the third consecutive year.

While the workload indicators show a decrease in the number of building permits issued and inspections performed, the slowdown afforded staff the additional time to reach the outcome goal of processing 60 percent or more building permits on the day of application and to exceed the percent of inspections completed on requested day. In addition, building inspectors are able to spend adequate time at the construction site thereby diminishing the possibility that construction defects with the potential for disastrous consequences would go undetected.