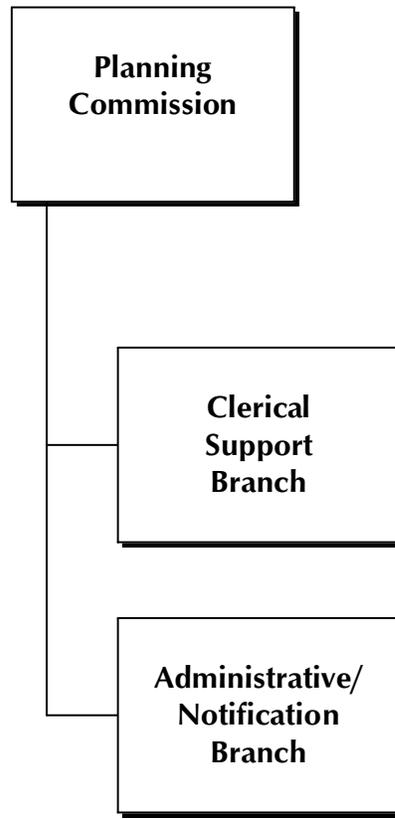


Planning Commission



Mission

To provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and/or the Board of Zoning Appeals on land use policies and plans that will result in orderly, balanced and equitable County growth, and to provide administrative support to the Planning Commission.

Focus

The agency provides staff support to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors in matters relating to the County's land use policy development. The agency also ensures that interested residents' reactions are obtained on County plans, ordinance amendments and land use applications by conducting public sessions weekly, eleven months per year, and forwarding recommendations on these matters to the Board of Supervisors in a timely fashion.



On average, the Planning Commission holds about 80 meetings annually to ensure that the public has ample opportunity to comment on land use matters affecting the greater Fairfax community.

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The Planning Commission, through its public hearing process, provides a forum for residents to make recommendations on the County's Comprehensive Plan, both in terms of policy and specific site requests, as well as other land use applications mandated by state and County codes. The Commission staff is further mandated by the Board of Supervisors to perform notifications and verifications for abutting and adjacent property owners in all land use cases heard before the Board of Supervisors as well as the Planning Commission.

Obtaining citizen input on pending land use applications and/or policy issues is a key driver for the Planning Commission and its staff. In the last three years, the Planning Commission has averaged 82 regular Commission and committee meetings annually to ensure that the public had ample opportunity to comment on land use matters affecting the greater Fairfax community. During public hearings during this timeframe, the Commission heard verbal statements from 1,595 residents and also received more than 7,800 written position statements on various land use applications.

The following major trends have been observed during this timeframe:

Statistics indicate that the Board of Supervisors has consistently concurred with 99 percent of the recommendations forwarded by the Planning Commission, and this trend has continued for the past decade. This high concurrence rate demonstrates the level of commitment undertaken by the Commission in ensuring that the majority of issues raised by applicants and surrounding neighborhoods are resolved prior to consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

Since the County is almost fully developed, the high percentage of remaining land available is infill. Such properties have a larger number of inherent problems as well as very interested and involved resident neighbors. The resulting trend has been and continues to be an increase in the time needed for in-depth negotiation between residents, Commissioners, staff, and applicants, resulting in the continuation of the trend of an ever-increasing number of deferrals of public hearings and/or decisions at both the Commission and Board of Supervisors level. The deferrals have also resulted in a larger number of cancelled meetings due to the lack of agenda items. While up-to-date information is maintained on the Commission's Web site, such deferrals often contribute to confusion among nearby residents due to the proliferation of required, and often multiple, deferral letters per application. Additional costs must be borne as well by both the County and applicants. A short-term deferral (to a date fewer than 30 days from the original hearing date) by either the Planning Commission and/or the Board of Supervisors requires that Commission staff re-notify abutting property owners of the rescheduled hearing date. Each short-term deferral has an associated cost in both staff processing time and postage. For longer-term deferrals, while the applicant bears the cost for re-notification by certified mail, Commission staff must still verify notification accuracy and re-advertising costs must be borne by the Department of Planning and Zoning. Given the anticipated continuation of a high level of complexity in infill development cases, it is expected that this deferral trend will continue, along with subsequent impacts.

THINKING STRATEGICALLY

Strategic issues for the department include:

- Continuing to provide a forum for public comment on various policy issues related to development;
- Providing recommendations that are reasonable and logical, and that result in Board concurrence; and
- Continuing to provide the opportunity and the arena for in-depth negotiation between residents, Commissioners, staff and applicants.

With the previously-noted average of 82 open meetings over the last three fiscal years, residents are provided many opportunities to formally address the Planning Commission. During its public hearings in FY 2007 alone, the Commission heard verbal statements from 320 citizens and received 602 written position statements. Committee meetings over the past year have also continued as a forum for input on policy issues and several hundred County residents have taken advantage of this opportunity, particularly over such matters as transit-oriented development deliberations on definition and principles, air quality and green building policies, and workforce housing and high-rise affordability policies. Such input is highly valued and utilized by the Commission and assists greatly in forging needed compromises on those policies that are ultimately recommended to the Board of Supervisors.

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The number of Commission committee meetings (39) spiked in FY 2007, exceeding the previous year by 56 percent, primarily due to the outreach conducted as part of the deliberations on the transit-oriented development policies. The Commission also operates joint committees with the Fairfax County School Board, Park Authority Board, Redevelopment and Housing Authority Board, Transportation Advisory Commission and the Environmental Quality Advisory Commission, who meet on a regular basis, as well as other ongoing committees established to ease the transaction of routine business. Through these joint sessions, along with such regular committees as Policy and Procedures and the Capitol Improvement Program, the Commission has found that it can provide timely input to the Board of Supervisors on various policy issues as they arise.

New Initiatives and Recent Accomplishments in Support of the Fairfax County Vision

 Building Livable Spaces	Recent Success	FY 2009 Initiative
<p>Continue to work with County residents to create desirable places to live and work through ongoing review of land use applications, implementing the County's Comprehensive Plan, and review of policy issues through its committee structure. There was an average of 82 Commission/Committee meetings annually over the last three years.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 Connecting People and Places	Recent Success	FY 2009 Initiative
<p>Continue land development review, including both pending land use applications and Area Plan Review (APR) nominations. The Commission carefully considers the adequacy and safety of the existing and/or planned road network, and works with developers, through the proffer system, to amend or provide enhancements as appropriate. Public hearings will be held in FY 2009 for North County APR nominations as well as submissions for the newly created BRAC-related APR process.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 Practicing Environmental Stewardship	Recent Success	FY 2009 Initiative
<p>Continue to advise the Board of Supervisors on a broad spectrum of environmental concerns relating to the Chesapeake Bay and the Occoquan watersheds, air quality, green building practices, and stream protection which protect and enhance the environment, as well as enable the best use of existing resources in the County.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Planning Commission

 Creating a Culture of Engagement	Recent Success	FY 2009 Initiative
Continue use of Channel 16 to inform, interact informally with, and otherwise engage the public in its activities. In addition to its regularly-televised public hearings, the Commission continues its monthly "PC Roundtable" series that explores various planning topics in a timely manner. Due to public demand, Channel 16 included a Commission workshop on proposed policy changes for air quality and green building practices on its Video-on-Demand list. It is anticipated that the Commission will place future meetings on the list to allow public viewing at their convenience.	✓	✓
Continue a collaborative effort with the Department of Systems Management for Human Services to facilitate a public outreach program focused on citizen participation in the land use process within the already-established Neighborhood College program. Plans are underway for a new collaboration with the Department of Planning and Zoning focusing on educating citizens, including designated APR task force appointees, on the general APR process, as well as the newly-created BRAC APR process.	✓	✓
 Exercising Corporate Stewardship	Recent Success	FY 2009 Initiative
Continue a long-term commitment to customer service, collaborating with Department of Planning and Zoning and Department of Information Technology staff to redesign notification instructions for both land use applications and APR submissions to allow, as an option, verification submission via email.	✓	✓

Budget and Staff Resources

Agency Summary				
Category	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2008 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2009 Advertised Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years				
Regular	8/ 8	8/ 8	8/ 8	8/ 8
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	\$439,532	\$541,363	\$541,363	\$558,761
Operating Expenses	206,297	209,863	209,863	209,863
Capital Equipment	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditures	\$645,829	\$751,226	\$751,226	\$768,624

Position Summary	
1 Executive Director	1 Planning Technician I
1 Management Analyst III	1 Administrative Assistant V
1 Communications Specialist II	1 Administrative Assistant IV
	2 Administrative Assistants III
TOTAL POSITIONS	
8 Positions / 8.0 Staff Years	

Planning Commission

FY 2009 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2008 Revised Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2009 program:

- ◆ **Employee Compensation** **\$17,398**
 An increase of \$17,398 associated with salary adjustments necessary to support the County's compensation program. As a result of budget constraints, compensation adjustments for County employees have been reduced. For FY 2009, employee increases as part of the pay for performance system have been discounted by 50 percent and the impact of the lower pay for performance funding is reflected above.

Changes to FY 2008 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2008 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2008 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2007 Carryover Review and all other approved changes through December 31, 2007:

- ◆ The Board of Supervisors made no adjustments to this agency.

Key Performance Measures

Goal

To provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and/or the Board of Zoning Appeals on land use policies and plans that will result in orderly, balanced and equitable County growth, and to provide administrative support to the Planning Commission.

Objectives

- ◆ To ensure that citizens' reactions and input are obtained on all land use-related applications by conducting weekly public sessions, 11 months per year; holding committee sessions as deemed necessary by the Planning Commission membership; and maintaining Planning Commission recommendations approved by the Board of Supervisors at 99 percent.
- ◆ To continue legal notification processing on pending land use cases by maintaining the percent of notifications verified at 100 percent within 17 days prior to the scheduled hearing date for hearings scheduled before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.
- ◆ To continue to produce Planning Commission actions for the public record by preparing 100 percent of summaries and verbatim transcripts within three working days and meeting minutes within one month of hearing date.
- ◆ To maintain customer satisfaction with service provided over the telephone at 100 percent.
- ◆ To maintain customer satisfaction with web site service at its current level of 98 percent.

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Actual	FY 2007 Estimate/Actual	FY 2008	FY 2009
Output:					
Public sessions held	53	54	60 / 55	57	60
Committee meetings held	25	19	25 / 39	25	25
Notifications verified for Planning Commission (PC)	168	172	175 / 164	175	170

Planning Commission

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Actual	FY 2007 Estimate/Actual	FY 2008	FY 2009
Output:					
Notifications verified for Board of Supervisors (BOS)	99	72	110 / 67	100	75
Area Plans Review Notifications verified	23	145	NA / NA	90	110
Verbatim pages completed	528	597	600 / 583	600	650
Minute pages completed	672	696	675 / 751	700	750
Summaries completed	53	54	60 / 55	57	60
Information requests processed	15,327	10,280	13,000 / 12,674	10,000	13,000
Summary pages completed	201	211	220 / 219	220	230
Efficiency:					
Average cost per public session/committee meeting	\$2,363	\$2,532	\$2,213 / \$2,000	\$2,254	\$2,226
Average cost per notification processed for PC/BOS hearings	\$131	\$137	\$145 / \$219	\$176	\$170
Average cost per Area Plan review verification	\$141	\$96	NA / NA	\$138	\$95
Average hours required for complete meeting summary and verbatim pages	16	5	8 / 6	6	6
Average hours required for completion of set of minutes	12	9	12 / 24	10	16
Average time (in minutes) spent per website inquiry	4	3	3 / 3	3	3
Average time (in minutes) spent per telephone or in-person inquiry	3	4	3 / 2	3	2
Service Quality:					
Area Plans Review Submissions reviewed within 15 working days	0	145	NA / NA	90	110
Verifications processed within 17 days prior to hearing dates for PC/BOS public hearings	267	244	275 / 231	275	245
Average backlog of sets of minutes (regular and committee) to date	0	2	0 / 0	0	0
Percent of committee minutes completed within one month of meeting date	50%	89%	85% / 66%	90%	90%
Percent of regular sets of minutes completed within one month of meeting date	100%	86%	100% / 74%	90%	85%
Information requests processed within one day or less	15,254	10,240	11,925 / 12,674	9,970	13,000
Information requests processed within two days	73	40	75 / 0	0	0

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Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Actual	FY 2007 Estimate/Actual	FY 2008	FY 2009
Outcome:					
Percent of Planning Commission actions approved by BOS	99%	99%	99% / 99%	99%	99%
Percent of notifications verified within 17 days of PC/BOS hearing deadlines	100%	100%	95% / 100%	100%	100%
Percent of summaries and verbatim pages completed within three working days	100%	100%	100% / 100%	100%	100%
Percent of customers satisfied with service provided via phone or direct contact	98%	99%	98% / 100%	100%	100%
Percent of customers satisfied with service response provided by website	98%	99%	98% / 100%	98%	98%

Performance Measurement Results

The Planning Commission held a total of 94 Commission and committee meetings in FY 2007 to ensure public input on land use matters affecting their communities. This 29 percent increase over the FY 2006 meeting schedule was primarily attributable to the large increase in the number of committee meetings, particularly those held by the Transit-Oriented Development Committee. The Commission also continued its high concurrence rate of 99 percent with the Board of Supervisors on land use actions and anticipates that will remain the same in both FY 2008 and FY 2009.

With a 2 percent increase in the number of regular meetings held in FY 2007, as compared with FY 2006, the Commission's Clerical Branch also experienced an increase in the total number of summary (3.8 percent) pages produced as compared to the previous year, as well as an increase (7.9 percent) in the total number of minute pages produced compared to the previous fiscal year. Yet, there was a 2.3 percent decrease in the total number of verbatim pages produced. The increases are primarily attributed to the slight increase in the number of meetings with the resultant increase in page counts in summaries and minutes. The Clerical Branch also underwent major changes in personnel, with 1/3 of the branch changing twice during the fiscal year. As a result of these changes and the subsequent training necessitated, the efficiency level for completing minutes saw a major increase. It is anticipated that since the Branch is now fully-staffed, the completion rates for all Commission documentation will return to established goals.

Concurrently, the Commission's Administrative/Notifications Branch saw a slight decrease of 4.7 percent in the number of Planning Commission notifications verified along with 6.9 percent decrease in the total notifications verified for the Board of Supervisors public hearings due to the increased number of application deferrals by both hearing bodies. As in the previous fiscal year, 100 percent of verifications were again accomplished within the stated goal of 17 days before scheduled hearing dates. The Planning Commission staff continued to review all submissions in a timely fashion, and there were no deferrals for either Commission or Board public hearings solely due to notification problems as result of maintaining this high level of diligence.

The Commission staff continues to offer excellent customer service, and as measured by ongoing surveys, has achieved a favorable response rate of 100 percent from its customers through telephone and direct contacts. Staff also realized a 100 percent satisfaction rate on Web site responses, with particular emphasis on speed and accuracy. It should be again noted that the number of hours spent on updating Web agenda-related information increased as staff strove to provide additional updates as they occur, particularly calendar changes, and continues to post new materials on a frequent basis. As a result of the "customer-friendly" data posted on the site, the Agency has experienced a drop in the number of telephone calls received daily, but a 23 percent increase in online information requests.