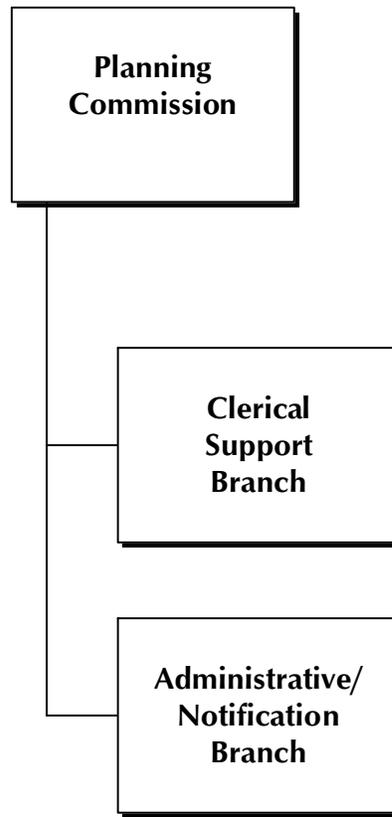


Planning Commission



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 citizens' reactions are obtained on County plans, ordinance amendments and land use applications by conducting public sessions weekly, eleven months a year, and forwarding recommendations on these matters to the Board in a timely fashion.

The Planning Commission, through its public hearing process, provides a forum for citizens 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 and 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 95 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 held since 1998, the Commission heard verbal statements from 3,101 citizens and also received in excess of 6,200 written position statements on various land use applications.

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The following major trends have been observed during this timeframe:

(1) Statistics indicate that the Board of Supervisors has consistently concurred with 98 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.

(2) Since the County is almost fully developed, the high percentage of remaining land available is infill. Such properties inherently have a large number of problems as well as active citizen neighbors. The resulting trend has been and continues to be an increase in time needed for in-depth negotiation between citizens, Commissioners and applicants, resulting in an ever-increasing number of deferrals of public hearings and/or decisions only. A short term deferral (to a date less than 30 days from the original hearing date) by the Planning Commission and/or the Board of Supervisors requires staff of the Commission Office to notify again abutting property owners of the new hearing date. Each short term deferral has an associated cost in staff processing time and postage. For longer-term deferrals, while the applicant bears the cost for re-notification by certified mail, the Commission Office still must verify the accuracy of all notifications. Given the growing complexity of cases due to infill development issues, it is expected that this trend will continue along with its subsequent impacts on the workload of the Commission staff.

(3) With its approximate 95 open meetings per year, citizens are provided many opportunities to address the Planning Commission. As noted, during its public hearings alone, the Commission heard verbal statements from 3,101 citizens and received in excess of 6,200 written position statements between 1998 and 2002. Committee meetings also provide a forum for input on policy issues during initial deliberations by the Commission and several hundred County residents have taken this opportunity during this same timeframe, particularly over such matters as the Residential Development Criteria changes, and the Chesapeake Bay Ordinance Amendments. Such input is highly valued by the Commission and assists greatly in forging needed compromises on issues at hand.

(4) While the number of Planning Commission regular meetings has remained fairly stable over this time period, the number of committee meetings continues to increase due to the interest of members in reaching out to other boards and commissions on related areas of interest. The Commission operates joint committees with the 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 transactions of normal business. The Commission also establishes ad-hoc committees, as needed, on special-interest issues that may arise, such as its recent Residential Development Criteria Committee, which focused on that needed revision. Such committees are established for specific study areas of a short-term nature that may require multiple meetings with County staff and relevant interested parties. While this results in many additional committee meetings for its members and administrative staff, the Commission has found that it can handle these areas of study where the Board of Supervisors desires Commission input much more productively by this operational method.

(5) Between November 2002 and November 2003, the eight-person administrative staff of the Commission experienced a turnover of 50 percent, or four positions, due to the retirement of three long-time staff members and the promotion of one staff member to another County office. This highly unusual turnover rate in several key positions in the office, including the Clerk to the Commission and Deputy Clerk positions, resulted in the Agency realigning duties among all staff members and upgrading one administrative position to better reflect current requirements and responsibilities for the office.

THINKING STRATEGICALLY

Strategic challenges for the Commission include:

- Continuing to provide a forum for public comment on policy issues involved in development problems;
- 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 citizens, Commissioners and applicants.

Planning Commission

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

 Building Livable Spaces	Recent Success	FY 2005 Initiative	Cost Center
<p>Averaging 95 Commission and Committee meetings over the last three years, the Commission has been, and continues to be, able to work with County citizens to help create desirable places to live and work through ongoing review of land use applications, implementation of the County's Comprehensive Plan and review of policy issues through its committee structure.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agencywide
 Connecting People and Places	Recent Success	FY 2005 Initiative	Cost Center
<p>As part of its land development review, including both pending land use applications and Area Plan Review 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.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agencywide
 Practicing Environmental Stewardship	Recent Success	FY 2005 Initiative	Cost Center
<p>The Commission has advised the Board of Supervisors on a broad spectrum of environmental concerns relating especially to the Chesapeake Bay and the Occoquan watersheds; impacts of noise and light pollution; and provision of sidewalks and trails which protect and enhance the environment and open space areas in the County and make the best use of existing resources.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agencywide
 Creating a Culture of Engagement	Recent Success	FY 2005 Initiative	Cost Center
<p>The Commission uses Channel 16 to inform, interact informally with and otherwise engage the public in its activities. The monthly "PC Roundtable" series explores various planning topics in a timely manner and offers the opportunity for the public to ask questions through a "mailbag" feature. In FY 2005, staff will initiate an outreach program with the County Schools and citizen associations to educate them on the land use process.</p> <p>Channel 16 also broadcasts a three-part video on the land use process focusing on the Comprehensive Plan, its amendment process and general land use review process in laymen's terms for County residents with limited knowledge of the County's land use system.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agencywide

Planning Commission

 Corporate Stewardship	Recent Success	FY 2005 Initiative	Cost Center
Continuing the long term commitment to customer service, staff will provide notification instructions for land use applications and Area Plan Review nominations will be redesigned to allow accessibility through website and e-mail. In addition, training will be developed on all notification processes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agencywide

Budget and Staff Resources

Agency Summary					
Category	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2004 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2005 Advertised Budget Plan	FY 2005 Adopted Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years					
Regular	8/ 8	8/ 8	8/ 8	8/ 8	8/ 8
Expenditures:					
Personnel Services	\$428,293	\$462,382	\$462,382	\$478,074	\$478,074
Operating Expenses	203,003	207,099	207,099	206,976	206,976
Capital Equipment	6,495	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditures	\$637,791	\$669,481	\$669,481	\$685,050	\$685,050

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

FY 2005 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2004 Revised Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2005 program:

- ◆ **Employee Compensation** **\$15,692**
An increase of \$15,692 associated with salary adjustments necessary to support the County's compensation program.

Board of Supervisors' Adjustments

The following funding adjustments reflect all changes to the FY 2005 Advertised Budget Plan, as approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 26, 2004:

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

Planning Commission

Changes to FY 2004 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2004 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2004 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2003 Carryover Review and all other approved changes through December 31, 2003:

- ◆ There have been no revisions to this agency since approval of the FY 2004 Adopted Budget Plan.

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes to the FY 2004 Revised Budget Plan from January 1, 2004 through April 19, 2004. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2004 Third Quarter Review:

- ◆ 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 the 99 percent Planning Commission recommendations approved by the Board of Supervisors.
- ◆ To continue legal notification processing on pending land use cases by maintaining the percent of notifications verified at 90 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 3 working days and meeting minutes within one month of hearing date.
- ◆ To maintain customer satisfaction with telephone service at 98 percent.
- ◆ To maintain customer satisfaction with web site service at its attained current level of 95 percent.

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Estimate/Actual	FY 2004	FY 2005
Output:					
Public sessions held	71	65	70 / 58	65	65
Committee meetings held	31	37	25 / 22	30	25
Notifications verified for Planning Commission (PC)	325	201	210 / 204	210	210
Notifications verified for Board of Supervisors (BOS)	144	100	110 / 141	110	140
Area Plans Review Notifications verified	119	79	NA / 72	110	75

Planning Commission

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Estimate/Actual	FY 2004	FY 2005
Verbatim pages completed	820	780	800 / 650	800	700
Minute pages completed	623	933	825 / 645	825	725
Summaries completed	NA	65	70 / 231	65	65
Information requests processed	18,210	18,522	17,000 / 16,800	18,000	16,000
Efficiency:					
Average cost per public session/committee meeting	\$1,860	\$1,856	\$2,033 / \$2,414	\$2,033	\$2,146
Average cost per notification processed for PC/BOS hearings	\$72	\$75	\$78 / \$72	\$80	\$76
Average cost per Area Plan review verification	\$131	\$91	NA / \$168	\$110	\$161
Average hours required for complete meeting summary and verbatim pages	20	17	16 / 23	33	29
Average hours required for completion of set of minutes	32	26	26 / 36	28	26
Average time (in minutes) spent per website inquiry	NA	12	10 / 8	8	8
Average time (in minutes) spent per telephone or in-person inquiry	NA	10	8 / 5	5	5
Service Quality:					
Area Plans Review Submissions reviewed within 15 working days	119	79	NA / 72	110	110
Verifications processed within 17 days prior to hearing dates for PC/BOS public hearings	422	252	272 / 265	270	270
Average backlog of sets of minutes (regular and committee) to date	20	32	20 / 35	10	10
Percent of committee minutes completed within one month of meeting date	NA	68%	75% / 80%	80%	80%
Percent of regular sets of minutes completed within one month of meeting date	NA	17%	50% / 62%	50%	50%
Information requests processed within one day or less	NA	18,390	15,300 / 16,516	16,500	15,700
Information requests processed within two days	481	481	1,700 / 284	1,500	300

Planning Commission

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Estimate/Actual	FY 2004	FY 2005
Outcome:					
Percent of Planning Commission actions approved by BOS	99%	98%	98% / 99%	99%	99%
Percent of notifications verified within 17 days of PC/BOS hearing deadlines	90%	84%	85% / 100%	90%	90%
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	NA	90%	95% / 96%	98%	98%
Percent of customers satisfied with service response provided by website	NA	85%	90% / 95%	95%	95%

Performance Measurement Results

The Planning Commission held a total of 80 Commission and committee meetings in FY 2003, a surprising 21.6 percent drop from its FY 2002 meeting schedule, to ensure public input on land use matters affecting their communities. The decrease was primarily attributable to inclement weather which forced the cancellation of several planned meetings, the increased number of deferrals of complicated land use matters which resulted in other meeting cancellations and the completion of work on the Residential Density Criteria, one of the Commission's ad hoc committees. Despite the cancellations, the Commission continued its high concurrence rate of 99 percent with the Board of Supervisors' on land use actions and anticipates the same in both FY 2004 and FY 2005.

The Commission's Clerical Branch had a 4.1 percent decrease in the number of summaries and verbatim pages produced due to the lower number of regular meetings held. There was also a drop in total minute pages completed over previous fiscal year totals due to both the number and length of meetings. The administrative staff managed a 45 percentage point increase over FY 2002 toward its goal of completing regular minutes within one month, even surpassing the agency estimate by 12 percentage points. While the administrative staff will strive to maintain this pace, it may be difficult given the 75 percent turnover in branch staff due to retirements in FY 2004.

At the same time, the Commission's Administrative/Notifications Branch saw a 14.6 percent increase in the number of total notifications verified (345) for the Board and Commission public hearings due primarily to the increase in the number of applications advancing to the Board of Supervisors for public hearings. Yet even with that increase, 100 percent of verifications were accomplished within the stated goal of 17 days before scheduled hearing dates. Continuing its review of submissions in a timely fashion, this Branch managed to prevent any deferrals due to notification problems for either Commission or Board public hearings. Also the Branch reviewed a total of 72 Area Plan Review nominations ensuring that appropriate submission requirements for notification had been met. It is anticipated that the FY 2005 amounts for verifications/notifications and APR submissions should fairly parallel actual figures from FY 2003.

The Commission staff continues to maintain its excellent customer service efforts, and as measured by its FY 2003 surveys, has achieved a favorable response rate of greater than 96 percent from its customers through telephone and direct contacts. Also, staff realized a 95 percent satisfaction rate on website responses, as well as a 100 percent rating for courteous service to the public. It should be noted that the number of hours spent by staff on updating website agenda-related information is expected to increase in FY 2004 and FY 2005 since staff has been asked for more frequent updates, as well as posting of additional materials.