

Response to Questions on the FY 2016 Budget

Request By: Supervisor McKay

Question: Please discuss the proposed reduction in DPZ positions as it relates to the planning and development process.

Response: The proposed reduction of \$300,000 will result in the elimination of four planner positions in DPZ. The agency has tried to minimize the impact of this reduction on any one program area by eliminating one planner position in the Zoning Evaluation Division, one in Zoning Administration and two positions in the Planning Division. These staff reductions will affect a range of current activities and negatively impact the ability of the department to execute the adopted planning work program, known as Fairfax Forward. It will also impact the agency's ability to take on any new initiatives such as those outlined in the Draft Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County as well as any new planning studies associated with incorporating the recommendations of the Route 1 Multimodal Study into the Comprehensive Plan. While DPZ has been allocated three new planner positions as part of the Land Development Services and Fire Prevention Division (Fire Marshall) fees to more efficiently process development applications, these positions will be targeted to activities that will have the greatest impact on the processing of site plans and responding to questions related to zoning compliance and proffer interpretations. As a result, these new positions will not offset the impact of the proposed elimination of four planner positions.

An alternative to elimination of the positions is to eliminate the funding but leave the positions in place. Staff can then be directed to manage filling the positions only when funding is available for specific studies. For example, available Transportation resources can be accessed for portions of the Route 1 Multimodal Study. In addition, retirements in the next several years are anticipated to result in flexibility for salaries that is not currently available. In this way the capacity of the agency to deal with these study requirements is maintained.