

Land Development Services

31-04-Building Inspections

Fund/Agency: 001/31	Land Development Services	
Personnel Services	\$4,829,789	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>CAPS Percentage of Agency Total</p> <p>A pie chart titled 'CAPS Percentage of Agency Total' is positioned to the right of the table. It is divided into two segments: a blue segment representing 'Building Inspections' at 31.2% and a yellow segment representing 'All Other Agency CAPS' at 68.8%. A legend below the chart identifies the colors: a blue square for 'Building Inspections' and a yellow square for 'All Other Agency CAPS'.</p> </div>
Operating Expenses	\$1,055,940	
Recovered Costs	\$0	
Capital Equipment	\$0	
Total CAPS Cost:	\$5,885,729	
Federal Revenue	\$0	
State Revenue	\$0	
User Fee Revenue	\$8,699,811	
Other Revenue	\$0	
Total Revenue:	\$8,699,811	
Net CAPS Cost:	(\$2,814,082)	
Positions/SYE involved in the delivery of this CAPS	95/98	

► CAPS Summary

This CAPS is a combination of two divisions within the Office of Building Code Services, itself a part of Land Development Services. Both the Residential and Commercial Inspections Divisions protect the health and safety of County citizens and the environment by providing field inspections of all new building construction in the County to ensure compliance with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC), approved plans and permit conditions. The Building Inspections CAPS also conducts as-required inspections of existing structures to ensure they are maintained in accordance with Part III of the VUSBC, "Maintenance of Existing Structures." This activity ensures the functionality and integrity of structural elements of buildings, as well as their infrastructure systems (fire protection, plumbing, mechanical and electrical). Enforcement of mandated design criteria for building accessibility is also a function of this CAPS.

Land Development Services

In conjunction with the Board of Supervisors' agreement with the Virginia Occupational Health and Safety Administration (VOSH), staff from both inspections divisions collaborate with VOSH personnel in identification of construction site safety hazards. When minor hazards are encountered at construction sites (unshored ditches, unprotected openings, lack of required scaffolding, etc.), staff is able to obtain voluntary compliance to eliminate the hazard; monthly reports are forwarded to VOSH. For construction site accidents where severe injury or death has occurred, VOSH is immediately notified so they can dispatch staff to take appropriate action.

In addition, as prescribed by State laws and County code, this CAPS oversees the recurring safety inspections of all in-service elevators, escalators, and other vertical transportation equipment within the County; and conducts recurring inspections of cross connection protection features that safeguard public potable water supplies within the County.

Customers include:

- Homeowners
- Builders
- Developers
- Engineers
- Architects
- Contractors

Funding sources

Under State law, fees may be charged to defray the costs of enforcing the VUSBC. Pursuant to Board of Supervisors' policy, at least 80 percent of the costs of this CAPS are recovered from such fees, as they are incorporated into Chapter 61 of the County Code.

Key Accomplishments

There have been several noteworthy service improvement initiatives within this agency over the past four years:

- Conversion of inspectors' hand-held computer terminals to laptop technology.

Similar to office staff who have converted from CRTs (dumb terminals) to personal computers, field inspectors have transitioned from mere data collection in the field to being able to perform structural engineering calculations for simple beams 'on the spot' and electronically connect to our customers via e-mail.

Land Development Services

- Expansion of access to technical resources for staff.

Inspectors now have fingertip access to various codes, standards and design tools. In the field, inspectors' laptops are loaded with most of the codes that they enforce, as well as detailed construction brochures. In the office, inspectors are able to plug into the agency's Local Area Network at their workstations and access most Code-referenced standards. The agency's most recent purchase of a Web-Based subscription service allows instant purchase of standards not currently in the agency's technical library but required for enforcement purposes. This technical access has been provided to other areas of DPWES as well as outside agencies like Fire and Rescue.

- Institution of the Master Inspector Program whereby inspectors are cross-certified in trades outside their primary field. Not only does this increase the ability of inspectors to perform multiple inspections during a single site visit, it also allows staff from the different trades to pinch hit for their colleagues in other areas as the workload fluctuates.
- Extension of inspection hours.

The ability to work four 10-hour days in lieu of the standard five 8-hour days has allowed residential and commercial inspectors to extend the hours during which inspections are available, particularly for homeowners who request inspections before or after their own workday begins. Especially in summer, this allows greater utilization of the longer daylight hours.

- Implementation of various streamlining initiatives for which the agency was awarded several 2000 "Streamlining Achievement Awards" by the National Conference of States on Building Codes and Standards, Inc. under their "Streamlining the Nation's Building Regulatory Process" Program. Awards were granted, among other things, for effective use of computers and holding pre-construction meetings.
- Facilitation of revitalization projects through participation in pre-submission conferences and team meetings and inspections to identify code requirements to renovate existing buildings.

Initiatives

- In cooperation with neighboring jurisdictions, initiation of a "regional approach" to construction quality control to provide consistent and comprehensive inspections regardless of the jurisdiction within which they occur.
- Collaboration with OSDS staff to address environmental issues such as erosion and sedimentation controls by attending training which enables OBCS inspectors to recognize environmental deficiencies during field inspections and notify their OSDS counterparts to investigate.
- Augmentation of the required training provided by the agency's state-accredited Training Academy by :
 - -Initiating comprehensive, technical training for staff on new codes to be adopted in Virginia early next year.

Land Development Services

- Continuing its tradition of providing trainers to the State's Code Academy by not only maintaining the appropriate level of technical expertise but also by enhancing their skills through attendance at "Train the Trainer" classes sponsored by the State.
- Developing and implementing various comprehensive training programs for both inspectors and industry personnel to address other areas of concern, such as environmental control measures.

These initiatives will facilitate the successful transition from the current regional codes to the international model building codes anticipated for adoption in FY 2002 and will enable staff to address increasingly complex development issues (environmental concerns, soils, engineered fills, steep slopes, in-fill construction, design, etc.)

- Obtaining certification from the Federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration to teach courses in Construction Site Safety in furtherance of the Board of Supervisors' continuing agreement with the VOSH. Other initiatives have been undertaken to help those who help us with "third party inspections:"
- With Fairfax County in the lead, a simplified, standardized form for residential certification reporting has been developed for use by all regional jurisdictions.
- Inspections staff have partnered with WACEL to help upgrade the qualification standards and certification of materials testing technicians throughout the region.

Trends

During the last three years, Fairfax County has been experiencing a very high level of commercial construction. This is expected to level off; however, inspections of alterations to existing commercial buildings are expected to remain at a high level.

- Build-out will force more construction on in-fill properties throughout the County, causing inspectors to travel more miles per inspection.
- Construction will increase on sites that require more engineered designs, for example, sites with poor soils/critical slopes. Such sites will require more staff efforts to ensure safety.

Future Initiatives

- Continuation of the technological evolution so that laptops will utilize wireless connections to the County mainframe and the Internet and have printing capabilities. Eventually, this technology will allow instantaneous updates and on-site printing of inspection results. The former will allow instant inspection data uploads to the County's mainframe; the latter will permit approval and rejection reports, as well as stop work orders, to be issued directly in the field, as appropriate.
- Extension of the Construction Site Safety training to the rest of the Inspections personnel.

Land Development Services

► Method of Service Provision

Regular County employees within this activity conduct most building inspections.

Supplemental inspections by professional engineers and architects are accepted and/or required in specialized areas, such as foundations and critical structural components.

Periodic inspections of elevators, escalators and other vertical transportation equipment are provided by County contract.

The hours of operations are: 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with inspectors working until 5:30 p.m.

► Performance/Workload Related Data

Title	FY 1997 Actual	FY 1998 Actual	FY 1999 Actual	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Estimate
Building Inspections	267,184	242,493	257,713	292,259*	275,022	280,000
Inspections Completed per Inspector	5,056	4,042	4,140	4,236*	3,986	4,058
% of Inspections completed on requested day	96.4%	98%	95%	97%	96%	96%

*Data differs from that published in 2002 Adopted Budget because agency now captures cross connection inspection data which, in previous years, was not included in inspection totals.

► Mandate Information

This CAPS is Federally or State mandated. The percentage of this CAPS' resources utilized to satisfy the mandate is 76 - 100%. The specific Federal or State code and a brief description of the code follows:

- Code of Virginia, Section 36, which empowers the promulgation of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. This agency is mandated to enforce this code which prescribed mandatory building construction regulations. (See below.)
- VUSBC. This Code requires local Building Officials to inspect all construction for compliance with all applicable standards including the BOCA National Building Code, the International Plumbing and Mechanical Codes, the National Electrical Code, the CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code, etc. Localities must respond to inspection requests promptly. Localities must retain certain official records.
- Code of Virginia Section 36-105: Localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia are mandated to enforce the VUSBC by reviewing plans, issuing permits and inspecting construction.
- Code of Virginia Section 36-98.3: Localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia are mandated to enforce the VUSBC by inspecting amusement devices.

Land Development Services

- VADR: This Code requires localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia to inspect amusement devices for compliance with all applicable standards promulgated by the State Board of Housing and Community Development.
- Code of Virginia Section 42.1-76. Localities must comply with regulations issued by the State Library Board to inventory, schedule, and retain official building records.
- Code of Virginia Section 2.1-340.1. Local governments must comply with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act by providing ready public access to records in the custody of public officials.
- Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2024. Localities may, by ordinance, require that each building display a number (address) that is easily readable from the right-of-way.