

Planning Commission

LOB #82:

LAND USE APPLICATION VERIFICATION / NOTIFICATION

Purpose

The Land Use Application Verification and Notification LOB performs verifications and notifications on pending land use applications before both the PC and the BOS that must be accomplished to enable scheduled hearings to proceed before both bodies.

Description

There are three different types of application “processing”: (1) notice of hearings sent by applicants via certified mail that are verified by Commission staff; (2) notice of hearings mailed by Commission staff; and, (3) notice of deferred hearings mailed by Commission staff.

As part of the verification process, this LOB certifies that notification has properly occurred and hearings may proceed. Commission staff detects and corrects errors made, when filed timely, thereby avoiding the need for improper notification deferrals which are costly in terms of time and money.

For applications that are not concurrently scheduled for Commission and Board hearings, the verification process must be undertaken twice for each application. Also each time the Commission and Board defer an application, this LOB mails first class letters to those previously noticed to inform them of subsequent changes.

Benefits

This LOB specifically supports the County’s Economic Success Strategic Initiative by allowing the land use process to proceed as quickly as possible with regard to state-mandated requirements.

Mandates

The Land Use Application Verification/Notification involves state-mandated requirements for the notification of surrounding property owners in land use applications. Errors in this process cause the delay of public hearings on such applications, which in turn delay the development process in Fairfax County.

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 15.2-2200, localities are encouraged to “improve the public health, safety, convenience, and welfare of their citizens and to plan for the future development of communities to the end that transportation systems be carefully planned; that new community centers be developed with adequate highway, utility, health, educational, and recreational facilities; that the need for mineral resources and the needs of agriculture, industry, and business be recognized in future growth; that the concerns of military installations be recognized and taken into account in consideration of future development of areas immediately surrounding installations and that where practical, installation commanders shall be consulted on such matters by local officials; that residential areas be provided with healthy surroundings for family life; that agricultural and forestal land be preserved; and that the growth of the community be consonant with the efficient and economical use of public funds.”

Specifically, Virginia Code § 15.2-2204, Advertisement of plans, ordinances, etc.; joint public hearings; written notice of certain amendments; and Virginia Code § 15.2-2225, Notice and hearing on plan; recommendation by local planning commission to governing body; posting of plan on website.

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Trends and Challenges

As the County becomes increasingly urbanized, the notification process is affected by the establishment of higher density development. The notification process becomes more complex and costly when the areas that are abutting and adjacent to a subject application include multiple family dwellings, higher density commercial development, or a mix of uses. The PC continues to work closely with the Department of Information Technology GIS staff to ensure appropriate notification in these highly complex projects.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #82: Land Use Application Verification / Notification			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$60,509	\$62,646	\$75,303
Operating Expenses	4,930	7,440	5,833
Total Expenditures	\$65,439	\$70,086	\$81,136
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$65,439	\$70,086	\$81,136
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	1 / 1	1 / 1	1 / 1
Total Positions	1 / 1	1 / 1	1 / 1

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Notifications verified for PC & BOS	171	183	276	358	465
Average cost per notification processed for PC/BOS hearings	\$391	\$391	\$256	\$256	\$256
Verifications processed within 17 days prior to hearing dates for PC/BOS public hearings	\$171	\$183	\$276	\$358	\$465
Percent of notifications verified within 17 days of PC/BOS hearing	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

As required by regulation of the Code of Virginia and the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance, this LOB continues to verify the accuracy of public notices for public hearings by the PC and the BOS. As in previous years, staff continue to process 100 percent of verifications within the regulated time frame and with a high level of diligence so that there are no deferrals for public hearings due solely to notification problems. In FY 2015, notifications for the PC and BOS increased 51 percent; however, efficient processes have allowed the Commission to reduce the actual cost per notification by 34 percent.