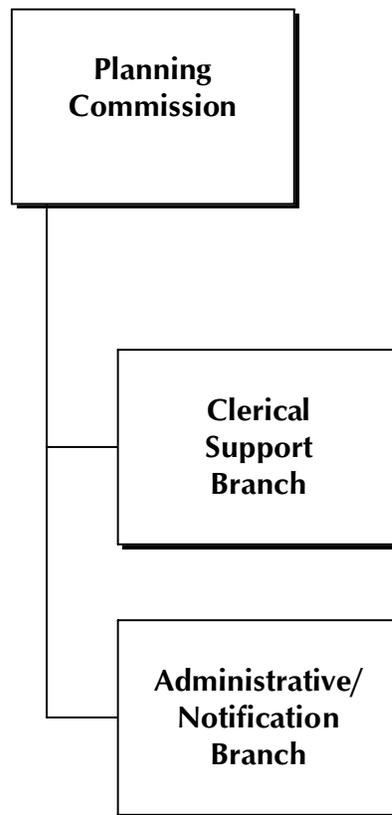


# Planning Commission



## 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.

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 76 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

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public hearings during this timeframe, the Commission heard verbal statements from 1,590 residents and also received more than 7,500 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 Website, such deferrals can 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 actual cost for re-notification by certified mail, Commission staff must still verify notification accuracy and re-advertising costs are 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 frequent deferral trend will continue, along with the 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 an average of 76 open meetings per year, residents are provided many opportunities to formally address the Planning Commission. During just its public hearings, the Commission heard verbal statements from 507 citizens and received 4,203 written position statements in FY 2006. Committee meetings and workshops over the past year have also continued to provide a forum for input on policy issues during early discussions by the Commission and several hundred County residents have taken the opportunity during this timeframe, particularly over such matters as minimum yard requirements, drainage divides, stream protection policies, and preliminary transit-oriented development deliberations on definition and principles. Such input is highly valued by the Commission and assists greatly in forging needed compromises on issues at hand.

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The number of Commission committee meetings has increased 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 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 Capital Improvement Program, the Commission has found that it can provide timely input to the Board of Supervisors much more productively.

## Budget and Staff Resources

Agency Summary		
Category	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Adopted Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years		
Regular	8/ 8	8/ 8
Expenditures:		
Personnel Services	\$439,532	\$541,363
Operating Expenses	206,297	209,863
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$645,829</b>	<b>\$751,226</b>

## SUMMARY OF ALL AGENCY LOBS (FY 2008 Adopted Budget Data)

<i>Number</i>	<i>LOB Title</i>	<i>Net LOB Cost</i>	<i>Number of Positions</i>	<i>LOB SYE</i>
36-01	Production of Planning Commission Actions	\$353,074	3	3.0
36-02	Production of Reports/Publications	\$88,646	1	1.0
36-03	Land Use Application Verification/Notification	\$66,648	1	1.0
36-04	Customer Support and Communications Services	\$242,858	3	3.0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$751,226</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8.0</b>

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## LOBS SUMMARY

### 36-01: Production of Planning Commission Actions

<i>Fund/Agency: 001/36</i>	<i>Planning Commission</i>
<i>LOB #: 36-01</i>	<i>Production of Planning Commission Actions</i>
Personnel Services	\$165,608
Operating Expenses	\$187,466
Recovered Costs	\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0
<b>Total LOB Cost:</b>	<b>\$353,074</b>
Federal Revenue	\$0
State Revenue	\$0
User Fee Revenue	\$0
Other Revenue	\$0
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Net LOB Cost:</b>	<b>\$353,074</b>
Positions/SYE involved in the delivery of this LOB	3 / 3.0

#### ► LOB Summary

The Planning Commission is responsible for holding public hearings on all land use applications except variances and special permits and, forwarding its actions to the Board of Supervisors and/or the Board of Zoning Appeals, as applicable, for subsequent public hearings. The Commission also holds various committee meetings, many with other Boards and Commissions, to jointly discuss issues of mutual concern.

The Commission clerical branch of three provides the primary administrative support for all of these meetings and is responsible for the maintenance of all public records; preparation of summaries and verbatims from each regular Commission meeting; and preparation of minutes for each regular and committee meeting. In addition, senior staff, primarily the Executive Director and Management Analyst III, are responsible for attendance at all Commission and committee meetings, as well as preparation of all reports and memorandums to the Board of Supervisors on land use recommendations from the Commission, as well as any Committee/Commission special reports.

The strategic plan goal for this business area is to document all Commission actions in a timely manner, insuring that the Board of Supervisors receives all recommendations prior to scheduled hearing dates. An additional goal is to strengthen partnerships with other Boards and Commissions which is accomplished through the joint committee processes.

#### ► Method of Service Provision

Given the small size of the Commission staff, almost all employees (7 of 8) have primary or secondary responsibilities for execution of these related services. Each regular and committee meeting is staffed by a minimum of two employees, one from the clerical branch and a senior staff member. Given the total number of such meetings, the duties are divided among available staff.

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While all such meetings are held during evening hours, the associated processing of Commission actions is accomplished during “normal” working hours.

Although the staff size is small, the Commission Office is able to extend “normal” County operating hours through flexible staff schedules to provide additional citizen services. With such flexibility, the Commission Office generally maintains operations from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. daily, and through the completion of Commission meetings on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. With the website information posted, much information is also available on a 24/7 basis to computer users.

## ► Mandate Information

This LOB is state mandated. The percentage of this LOB’s resources utilized to satisfy the mandate is approximately 47 percent. See the January 2007 Mandate Study, reference page 41, for the specific state code and a brief description.

## 36-02: Production of Reports/Publications

<i>Fund/Agency: 001/36</i>	<i>Planning Commission</i>
<b>LOB #: 36-02</b>	<b>Production of Reports/Publications</b>
Personnel Services	\$81,180
Operating Expenses	\$7,466
Recovered Costs	\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0
<b>Total LOB Cost:</b>	<b>\$88,646</b>
Federal Revenue	\$0
State Revenue	\$0
User Fee Revenue	\$0
Other Revenue	\$0
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Net LOB Cost:</b>	<b>\$88,646</b>
Positions/SYE involved in the delivery of this LOB	1 / 1.0

## ► LOB Summary

This activity relates to production of various Commission publications ranging from our quarterly newsletter, Planning Commissioner’s Handbook, Annual Report, public hearing information for the *Weekly Agenda*, public outreach materials, and Commission website information to periodic items such as programs/invitations for PC Seminars and/or PC appreciation dinner functions.

## ► Method of Service Provision

Primary responsibility for this function rests with the Management Analyst III, with secondary assistance as necessary from the Executive Director, Management Analyst II, Administrative Assistant IV, and two Administrative Assistants III, depending on the project. These staff members compile necessary statistics, draft written text, and research other information for reports in camera-

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ready formats. Public hearing information is transmitted to the Office of Public Affairs for inclusion in the web-based *Weekly Agenda*, and also included on the Commission’s website, along with Commission action updates. Programs, invitations, etc. for Commission activities are also prepared in-house by staff on existing equipment.

A significant strategic initiative in this area has been the continuation of education and outreach activities to foster community participation in planning. This was initiated two years ago through collaboration with the Department of Systems Management and Administration through one of the “college” programs. This program focused on the land use process, with particular attention to the role of the Planning Commission and was deemed “highly successful” by participants. Workload and staff turnover has prevented a repeat program to date but it is planned again for this fiscal year.

Although the staff size is small, the Commission Office is able to extend “normal” County operating hours through flexible staff schedules to provide additional services. With such flexibility, the Commission Office generally maintains some portion of operations from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. daily, and through the completion of Commission meetings on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Due to the website information posted, much information is also available on a 24/7 basis to computer users.

## ► Mandate Information

This LOB is state mandated. The percentage of this LOB’s resources utilized to satisfy the mandate is approximately 12 percent. See the January 2007 Mandate Study, reference page 41, for the specific state code and a brief description.

## 36-03: Land Use Application Verification/Notification

<b>Fund/Agency: 001/36</b>	<b>Planning Commission</b>
<b>LOB #: 36-03</b>	<b>Land Use Application Verification/Notification</b>
Personnel Services	\$59,182
Operating Expenses	\$7,466
Recovered Costs	\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0
<b>Total LOB Cost:</b>	<b>\$66,648</b>
Federal Revenue	\$0
State Revenue	\$0
User Fee Revenue	\$0
Other Revenue	\$0
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Net LOB Cost:</b>	<b>\$66,648</b>
Positions/SYE involved in the delivery of this LOB	1 / 1.0

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## ► LOB Summary

Verification and notification on pending land use applications before both the Commission and the Board of Supervisors must be accomplished to enable scheduled hearings to proceed before both bodies.

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 first class mail by Commission staff; and, (3) notice of deferred hearings mailed first class by Commission staff.

As part of the verification process, staff 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, Commission staff mails first class letters to those previously noticed to inform them of subsequent changes.

Notice is also required for Out-of-Turn Plan Amendments (OTPA) and regular cycle Comprehensive Plan amendments. Under OTPAs, Commission staff is responsible for notifying subject property owners of public hearings and verifying that abutting property and civic associations have received appropriate notice.

Under the regular Area Plan Review process, verification is done of subject property owner notification when applications are filed; a review is undertaken of all submissions to insure applications are complete; and, letters are sent throughout the process to keep nominators informed of the various stages of the process as nominations progress through Commission public hearings/markup and possibly onto the Board of Supervisors for final action.

Strategic goals for this business area include meeting or exceeding established deadlines for notification processing and developing a public education program on the notification process.

## ► Method of Service Provision

One Commission staff member, the Planning Technician I, has the primary responsibility for notification and verification processing for all land use applications scheduled for public hearings before both the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

For the Area Plans Review nomination process, depending on the number of submissions, notification review generally also requires the assistance of both the Management Analysts II and III to complete review within the designated time period to insure that items can be processed in a very expeditious fashion and disseminated to appropriate parties.

Although the staff size is small, the Commission Office is able to extend “normal” County operating hours through flexible staff schedules which enhances citizen services. With such flexibility, the Commission Office generally maintains this portion of operations from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. daily.

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Due to the website information posted, much information is also available on a 24/7 basis to computer users.

## ► Mandate Information

This LOB is state mandated. The percentage of this LOB's resources utilized to satisfy the mandate is approximately nine percent. See the January 2007 Mandate Study, reference page 41 for the specific state code and a brief description.

## 36-04: Customer Support and Communications Services

<i>Fund/Agency: 001/36</i>	<i>Planning Commission</i>
<b>LOB #: 36-04</b>	<b>Customer Support and Communications Services</b>
Personnel Services	\$235,393
Operating Expenses	\$7,465
Recovered Costs	\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0
<b>Total LOB Cost:</b>	<b>\$242,858</b>
Federal Revenue	\$0
State Revenue	\$0
User Fee Revenue	\$0
Other Revenue	\$0
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Net LOB Cost:</b>	<b>\$242,858</b>
Positions/SYE involved in the delivery of this LOB	3 / 3.0

## ► LOB Summary

This Customer Support and Communications Services LOB encompasses all necessary administrative support to Commission members and staff as well as questions/requests for information on the Planning Commission and land development that are funneled through this office whether by telephone, mail, walk-ins, or website inquiries. Requests for information come in routinely from Board offices, Commission members, County staff, the development community, and County citizens, and vary in difficulty level from simple requests on Commission operations to more extensive requests into archived Commission records dating back to 1938.

These services encompass such items as: (1) updating the Commission website with pertinent Commission actions in an accurate and timely fashion; (2) coordinating scheduling of all land use applications heard by the Planning Commission and insuring that the website calendar reflects this information accurately; (3) scheduling all Commission Committee meetings held and reflecting this information on the website; (4) coordinating program schedules and providing technical oversight for the PC Roundtable program on Channel 16; (5) preparation of the annual budget and related updates; (6) preparation of all requested management/personnel/statistical reports; (7) implementation of agency responsibilities for FAMIS, iCASPS, and PRISM systems; (8) preparation of all correspondence/reports, as requested, for all Commission members; (9) providing training for

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new Planning Commission members; and (10) coordinating and conducting public outreach programs on the work of the Commission.

## ► Method of Service Provision

Primary responsibility for this LOB rests with the Executive Director, Management Analyst II and Administrative Assistant III. However, all eight staff members are responsible, in varying degrees, for providing administrative assistance and information on Commission actions and responses to information requests, whether through office visits, telephone, mail, or web requests. The difficulty level of the information request, or individual knowledge of the staff member, determines, in large part, who responds to various customer service information requests.

Most requests are by telephone or e-mail, with the majority now received through the Commission's website. The site, available since 2001, has garnered increased interest, with the number of requests increasing via this method, but also allowing an easier and more convenient vehicle to gather continuing updates on Commission actions and other relevant information.

Although the staff size is small, the Commission Office is able to extend "normal" County operating hours through flexible staff schedules to enhance provision of citizen services. With such flexibility, the Commission Office generally maintains some portion of operations from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. daily, and through the completion of Commission meetings on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Due to the website information posted, much information is also available on a 24/7 basis to computer users.

## ► Mandate Information

This LOB is state mandated. The percentage of this LOB's resources utilized to satisfy the mandate is approximately 32 percent. See the January 2007 Mandate Study, reference page 41, for the specific state code and a brief description.

## **AGENCY PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

### 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.

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- 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	LOB Reference Number
	FY 2006 Actual	FY 2007 Estimate/Actual	FY 2008	FY 2009	
<b>Output:</b>					
Public sessions held	54	60 / 55	57	60	36-01
Committee meetings held	19	25 / 39	25	25	36-01
Notifications verified for Planning Commission (PC)	172	175 / 164	175	170	36-03
Notifications verified for Board of Supervisors (BOS)	72	110 / 67	100	75	36-03
Area Plans Review Notifications verified	145	NA / NA	90	110	36-03
Verbatim pages completed	597	600 / 583	600	650	36-01
Minute pages completed	696	675 / 751	700	750	36-01
Summaries completed	54	60 / 55	57	60	36-01
Information requests processed	10,280	13,000 / 12,674	10,000	13,000	36-04
Summary pages completed	211	220 / 219	220	230	36-01
<b>Efficiency:</b>					
Average cost per public session/committee meeting	\$2,532	\$2,213 / \$2,000	\$2,254	\$2,226	36-01
Average cost per notification processed for PC/BOS hearings	\$137	\$145 / \$219	\$176	\$170	36-02
Average cost per Area Plan review verification	\$96	NA / NA	\$138	\$95	36-02
Average hours required for complete meeting summary and verbatim pages	5	8 / 6	6	6	36-01
Average hours required for completion of set of minutes	9	12 / 24	10	16	36-01
Average time (in minutes) spent per website inquiry	3	3 / 3	3	3	36-04
Average time (in minutes) spent per telephone or in-person inquiry	4	3 / 2	3	2	36-04

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Indicator	Prior Year Actuals		Current Estimate	Future Estimate	LOB Reference Number
	FY 2006 Actual	FY 2007 Estimate/Actual	FY 2008	FY 2009	
<b>Service Quality:</b>					
Area Plans Review Submissions reviewed within 15 working days	145	NA / NA	90	110	36-02
Verifications processed within 17 days prior to hearing dates for PC/BOS public hearings	244	275 / 231	275	245	36-02
Average backlog of sets of minutes (regular and committee) to date	2	0 / 0	0	0	36-01
Percent of committee minutes completed within one month of meeting date	89%	85% / 66%	90%	90%	36-01
Percent of regular sets of minutes completed within one month of meeting date	86%	100% / 74%	90%	85%	36-01
Information requests processed within one day or less	10,240	11,925 / 12,674	9,970	13,000	36-04
Information requests processed within two days	40	75 / 0	0	0	36-04
<b>Outcome:</b>					
Percent of Planning Commission actions approved by BOS	99%	99% / 99%	99%	99%	36-01
Percent of notifications verified within 17 days of PC/BOS hearing deadlines	100%	95% / 100%	100%	100%	36-02
Percent of summaries and verbatim pages completed within three working days	100%	100% / 100%	100%	100%	36-01
Percent of customers satisfied with service provided via phone or direct contact	99%	98% / 100%	100%	100%	36-04
Percent of customers satisfied with service response provided by website	99%	98% / 100%	98%	98%	36-04