

Planning Commission

LOB #83:

CUSTOMER SERVICE INFORMATION RESPONSES

Purpose

The purpose of the Customer Service Information Responses LOB is to reply to information requests promptly and efficiently, while maintaining customer satisfaction in all service delivery methods.

This includes all staff members, in varying degrees, who provide 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.

Description

The Customer Support and Communications Services sections encompass all necessary administrative support to Commission members and staff as well as questions/requests for information on the PC and land development. 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.

Benefits

Customer Service Information Responses' primary function is to provide outstanding customer service in all areas of service delivery, create a culture of engagement by encouraging participation and opportunities for public input in the land use and planning processes for Fairfax County.

- Update the Commission website with pertinent Commission actions in an accurate and timely manner. This allows users 24/7 access to the Commission's monthly schedule, meeting agendas, verbatim transcripts, meeting and committee minutes, staff reports, and various land use and planning records, resources, and maps online.
- Coordinate the schedule of all land use applications heard by the PC. This ensures the website calendar reflects accurate information and timely recommendations to the BOS and communication to the public that encourages public participation and input on land use and planning decisions.
- Coordinate program schedules and provide technical oversight for the PC Roundtable program on Channel 16. This allows the Commission to inform and educate the public on land use, planning challenges and accomplishments.
- Prepare the annual budget and manage related updates to maintain fiscal accountability and exercise corporate stewardship of County resources and assets.
- Prepare all requested management/personnel/statistical reports which provide important statistical data to the County Executive and BOS as it relates to land use planning and growth for Fairfax County.
- Manage financial and human resources functions within FOCUS while maintaining a minimal operating budget to best meet the demands of the PC.
- Manage the administrative functions and preparation of all correspondence/reports for all Commission members.
- Provide training for new PC members and staff. Training is essential for the learning of complex land use terminology and processes, and to ensure public meetings are held free of distractions.

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- Coordinate and conduct public outreach programs to educate the public on the land use planning process to encourage public participation and seek valuable input to best understand and address the communities' needs and possible opportunities.

Mandates

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.”

Trends and Challenges

- The Planning Commission Office will continue to adapt its processes and outreach in a way that informs the public of the activities of the Planning Commission and encourages maximum participation in land use decisions.
- New Planning Commission members and staff will continue to participate in the Virginia Planning Commissioner Certification Program.
- Increasingly complex development proposals in recent years have led to more involved negotiations between residents, Commissioners, staff, and applicants; contributing to frequent deferrals of both public hearings and decisions at the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.
- Maintaining a minimal operating budget while continuing to provide the high level of service expected by the Board of Supervisors and the citizens of Fairfax County will always be a challenge. However, the Planning Commission Office staff and Commission members are committed to exercising corporate stewardship of both financial resources and staffing allocations.

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Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
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FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$79,046	\$12,640	\$58,551
Operating Expenses	4,931	7,440	5,832
Total Expenditures	\$83,977	\$20,080	\$64,383
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$83,977	\$20,080	\$64,383
POSITIONS			
<i>Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)</i>			
<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
Information requests processed within one day or less	13,742	13,037	6,451	6,000	6,000
Average time (in minutes) spent per website inquiry	2	2	2	2	2
Average time (in minutes) spent per telephone or in-person inquiry	6	5	6	6	6
Information requests processed within one day or less	13,742	13,037	6,451	6,000	6,000
Number of Regular meetings scheduled	55	70	70	70	70
Number of Committee meetings scheduled	30	39	46	50	55

This LOB takes great pride in providing outstanding customer service to citizens, Board members, Commission members, County staff, and the development community with accurate and timely responses to their requests. In FY 2015 the PC responded to all requests for information within one day or less. Freedom of Information Act requests and requests for documents maintained by the County archivist were promptly processed within the guidelines established.

In FY 2015, the PC website was redesigned to afford a more user friendly approach to locating information. As such, telephone and in person requests for information were reduced significantly while the complexity of the requests has increased.