

LOB #9:

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Purpose

The County's growth strategy is to concentrate new development into mixed-use activity centers. This has a number of benefits, including increasing the county's tax base; the efficient delivery of public facilities and infrastructure; and, creating the kinds of places that have become most appealing to residents and workers. In addition, the County is investing in efforts to remain competitive as the location of choice for new development in the region. This LOB is oriented around achievement of those goals.

Description

OCR was established in 2007 as an entrepreneurial office under the County Executive to promote and facilitate development and investment in the older commercial areas of the County. The BOS, in establishing the office, recognized that the county was entering a period in which the vast majority of development was transitioning from new development to redevelopment, and that there are inherently more challenges to redevelop property as compared to developing Greenfield projects. Bringing redevelopment projects to fruition involves an increased level of partnership between public and private sector parties. In addition, concentrating development within designated activity centers is a key precept of the adopted Comprehensive Plan and consistent with regional growth strategies. Increasing land values through redevelopment supports the Board's objective of increasing the County's non-residential tax base and relieving the tax burden on residential tax payers.

The role of OCR has expanded since the inception of the office and remains flexible in responding to new tasks and responsibilities. The main components of the LOB fall primarily into the following programmatic areas:

- Facilitate redevelopment and investment opportunities within targeted areas of the county; this currently includes the seven revitalization districts/areas, Tyson and Reston;
- Work with community groups to develop and implement the community's vision and to improve the economic viability and competitiveness of their areas;
- Work with and function as a liaison to other County agencies, the community and the development community to promote timely and coordinated responses to development proposals. This includes process redesign efforts, developing standards that better reflect current development patterns and fostering a collaborative problem-solving culture; and,
- Foster public/private partnerships to develop county owned resources, to leverage public funds to assist private development and/or enhance the public realm; and partner with entities such as the Tysons Partnership and the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC) to promote revitalization.

Benefits

The LOB is uniquely situated to form a bridge among the community, the regulatory agencies and the development industry. In that position, it is able to assist in implementing the communities' vision for the future; in identifying and suggesting changes areas for process improvements; in identifying regulatory revisions to address emerging development patterns and challenges; in generating design solutions to add value and create unique and desirable places; and, in forming public/private partnerships to achieve mutual goals in the best interest of the community.

Office of the County Executive

Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

Trends and Challenges

Fairfax County is urbanizing. It is also experiencing increased competition from other area jurisdictions in regard to attracting development. The County's processes and regulations need to keep pace with these changes and to remain competitive. While Fairfax has long been a destination of choice for development, other places are catching up, and in some cases surpassing Fairfax. Recent economic conditions and trends are a result of fluctuating market factors, such as the significantly reduced demand for office use because of sequestration, changes to the ratio of square foot per employee, new concepts in office design, and the move from office parks to offices with metro-accessible locations. Other trends include changes in retailing with fewer brick and mortar stores thus shrinking retail space requirements and the increasing trend toward more experiential retail. Both office and retail trends have implications for creating mixed-use centers and activated street fronts. Some locations within the County places are more challenged than others in this regard.

Remaining the destination of choice in this environment is challenged by a number of factors, including: staffing resources needed to update regulations; changes to the development review processes that are difficult to achieve; the lack of available funds to ensure that our public infrastructure is an enticement to economic development, and that such investment is maintained so as not be to a disincentive; and, the fact that other jurisdictions have the ability to offer financial incentives to attract sought after development, particularly since redevelopment is typically more expense than greenfield development.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #9: Office of Community Revitalization			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$971,751	\$1,075,033	\$1,327,835
Operating Expenses	61,087	58,854	76,839
Total Expenditures	\$1,032,838	\$1,133,887	\$1,404,674
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$1,032,838	\$1,133,887	\$1,404,674
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	12 / 12	12 / 12	12 / 12
Total Positions	12 / 12	12 / 12	12 / 12

Office of the County Executive

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Square Feet of Development Entitled within Areas of Responsibility	23,318,717	12,867,789	6,246,560	16,430,095	26,830,574
Total Assessed Value within Areas of Responsibility (in billions)	\$30.03	\$31.30	\$32.51	\$33.48	\$34.49
Reports and Publications Related to Revitalization Areas Reports	4	8	8	11	9
Major Community Building Initiatives	6	7	7	6	6
Major Implementation Initiatives including Public/Private Partnerships	9	10	10	11	11

Metric 09-1:- Square Feet of Development Entitled within Areas of Responsibility

Metric 09-2:- Total Assessed Value within Areas of Responsibility

Metric 09-3:- Reports and Publications Related to Revitalization Areas

The primary goal of the LOB is to foster redevelopment and investment in specific activity centers within the county. Redevelopment is targeted to these areas to benefit to the county economically, as well as to build vibrant communities. How much land is being entitled for development and the resultant changes to assessed value are key desired outcomes of this LOB, as they not only increase the desirability of the county as a destination but also increase the County's real estate tax base. Redevelopment in activity centers has difficult challenges related to, among other things, the complexity of the land use process; increased expectations as to commitments on the part of developers; market conditions; working with ordinances that may not reflect current circumstances; economic feasibility (particularly when there are revenue producing businesses on the property); working with shallow, small and/or irregularly shaped lots and the inability to achieve larger parcel consolidations; fitting into the existing fabric of the area; balancing competing public interests; and, meeting community expectations. As such, redevelopment is often difficult even for experienced developers to navigate in a successful and timely manner. OCR's expertise and skill set is to assist in this navigation by facilitating resolution of issues, and in exercising flexibility and creativity in doing so.

OCR is distinguished from the other planning and development departments inasmuch that those other departments have specifically targeted areas of responsibility, such as ensuring that projects are compliant with the county's ordinances and regulations, whereas OCR is charged with taking an economic development and market feasibility perspective related to such development proposals. OCR produces a number of publications to track and/or assist in revitalization efforts. These include an annual report on development and development related issues in Tysons that has become well regarded as the resource manual for tracking such activity; annual reports on revitalization related activities for each of the seven revitalization districts/areas; and brochures on topical issues such as signage and drop boxes.

The trend is for increased entitlement and growth in assessments within the activity centers of emphasis. However, this is dependent upon external economic and market factors, as well as the county's development process and how competitive it remains within the regional environment.

Office of the County Executive

Metric 09-4: - Major Community Building Initiatives

Metric 09-5: - Major Implementation Initiatives including Public/Private Partnerships

OCR has a unique role in fostering community building and in facilitating development partnerships, based on its expertise in facilitating public visioning sessions, negotiating successful resolutions to difficult development issues, urban design, and bringing a realistic, market-based perspective to planning and development activities. This is a growing business resulting from the demand for such services to assist both internal and external clients. Examples are multi-faced and include such things as: community visioning open houses, such as the one held recently for the Tall Oaks Village Center in Reston in which OCR facilitated a session with over 150 participants to determine community preferences for the redevelopment of the area; Art under the Span, a visioning session to generate ideas on visually enhancing the area below the above-grade rail in Tysons and knitting together the areas separated by the overhead structure; and a charrette exercise to assist the residents of the Lake Anne Village Center in Reston to maximize the assets of Lake Anne to keep it viable in the context of newer adjacent development. OCR has had leadership of/participation in public/private partnerships to develop county owed property to foster revitalization, including the Crescent, North Hill and the Reston North County site; and, planning studies, such as Seven Corners and various site specific Plan amendments.

Recent years have demonstrated that there is an increasing need for this expertise and service. The limiting factor is staff resources and competing demands for staff services.