

# PLANNING

## Description

The Department of Planning provides staff support to the Planning Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Board of Supervisors relating to land development activities in the County. The department is organized into five divisions: Comprehensive Planning; Development Review and Design; Zoning Administration; Planning Systems; and Administrative.

Comprehensive Planning prepares long-range plans, evaluates rezoning requests, and handles planning data management, demographic and land-use information. Development Review and Design is responsible for the review of development plans. Zoning Administration enforces subdivision and zoning ordinances of the Henrico County Code. The Planning Systems Division provides information technology support to the entire department. Administrative Support provides budget, personnel, and clerical support of the operation of the office.

## Objectives

- To provide a comprehensive planning program with an emphasis on urban design in order to provide both public and private decision makers with a more informed basis for land use decisions and growth management.
- To continue an enforcement program that obtains compliance with the code for new development as well as correcting zoning and subdivision violations.
- To provide timely services to the public, other agencies, and technical and administrative support to the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Zoning Appeals in matters relating to the Comprehensive Plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances, building permits, plans of development, subdivisions, use permits, variances, rezoning and enforcement of zoning regulations.
- To encourage the continued economic development of the county by continuing to work with the Economic Development Authority, developers, their representatives, and the general public to facilitate and expedite their requests for development approval or general planning assistance.
- To improve and protect the health, safety, and welfare of Henrico citizens consistent with the Code of Virginia, policies, ordinances, and resolutions adopted by the Board of Supervisors with good land use planning and zoning practices.
- To inspire and encourage the protection and enhancement of natural, historical, and cultural resources through the preservation of those sites, buildings, features, and structures identified as important to Henrico County's heritage.

Description	FY11 Actual	FY12 Original	FY13 Approved	Change 12 to 13
Personnel	\$ 3,387,888	\$ 3,514,616	\$ 3,457,661	(1.6%)
Operation	231,909	370,890	306,652	(17.3%)
Capital	2,633	8,000	8,000	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,622,430</b>	<b>\$ 3,893,506</b>	<b>\$ 3,772,313</b>	<b>(3.1%)</b>

Personnel Complement 49 46 43 \* (3)

\*Three vacant positions were removed from the complement.

**Performance Measures**

	<b>FY11</b>	<b>FY12</b>	<b>FY13</b>	<b>Change 12 to 13</b>
<b>Workload Measures</b>				
Reviews Completed by Dev. Review & Design	300	270	300	30
Zoning Petitions & Provisional Use Permits	51	56	56	0
Variance and Use Permits Processed	36	37	37	0
Maps Prepared	1,036	819	1,000	181

- To continue to maintain effective and efficient procedures for meeting legal requirements that set forth maximum time periods within which activities must be accomplished.
- To implement decisions of the Board of Supervisors and the policies of the County Manager related to Department of Planning responsibilities.

**Budget Highlights**

The Department of Planning’s approved budget for FY2012-13 is \$3,772,313, which represents an overall decrease of \$121,193 or 3.1 percent from the previous approved budget. Personnel expenditures decreased by a net difference of \$56,955 or 1.6 percent. This decrease was driven by the removal of three vacant positions from the complement and the increase in departmental vacancy savings. The decrease in personnel was offset by the rising VRS, VRS life insurance, and health care expenditures for remaining personnel.

The operating component decreased by \$64,238 or 17.3 percent from the previous approved budget. These reductions were made as a result of the department’s budget reduction strategy to reduce expenditures by streamlining services and increase efficiencies. In addition, this decrease also reflects the County-wide adjustment in technology replacement.

The capital component remains flat for FY2012-13 and is forecasted at a total cost of \$8,000. This funding will provide for replacement of various types of small computer equipment and office chairs.

The Department of Planning’s mission “Provide the professional planning leadership to accomplish excellent management of the valued resources, which

create our coveted quality of life” involves a wide spectrum of goals, functions, and accountability. It goes beyond the construction indicators shown in the department’s land use applications, which have declined with the economy. The department has many continuous functions and responsibilities.

The department manages land use policy and planning to provide the framework for the physical, social, and economic growth of the county. The implementation and required updates to the county’s Comprehensive Plan are mandated by the Code of Virginia. These are necessary and on-going responsibilities of the Planning department staff, which also provides a gamut of expertise in drafting white papers, monitoring land use legislation and policy at the state and federal levels, conducting small area studies, and site analysis. Planning is often called upon to review and assist in long range plans for the airport, Richmond International Raceway, and other major economic generators for the county.

County development standards and regulations, such as zoning ordinance revisions for statutory and land use policy changes at the federal, state, and local levels, are a department priority. This also includes an annual review of the General Assembly actions as well as revisions in response to the county’s changing growth patterns, and needs of the development community and residents. Three new ordinances are pending and the department is about to undergo a complete assessment of the zoning and subdivision ordinances. These will have a significant impact on work flow.

Planning provides geographic and demographic management for certain GIS layers and statistical data used by most departments within the county, a recent high profile project being redistricting. The County Attorney’s and County Manager’s offices, Community Revitalization, Permit Center, and Media Services often receive mapping support through

*Planning (cont'd)*

Planning's office.

The knowledge base of staff supports many regional and local groups including the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (RRPDC), Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Urban Land Institute (ULI), special committees for the General Assembly, and VCU. The department assists in reviewing impacts of adjacent development such as the approved Goochland landfill; examining best practices with nearby localities; and review of adjacent localities' comprehensive plans to determine impact on county residents and businesses. The department also organizes, as needed, and participates, as requested, in numerous community meetings to keep citizens aware of land use and other issues affecting the public.

Staff routinely provides internal consulting for county departments. This includes design assistance for General Services, Public Works, Community Revitalization, and informal plans discussed with Board members and Planning Commissioners. The department was recently instrumental in the county's success in acquiring and relocating a historical resource, the Springfield School, which was otherwise marked for demolition. The department spends countless hours in providing zoning code interpretations and research ancillary to applications for variances, rezoning, and provisional use permits, which can often be the laborious cases.

Unprecedented forfeitures of financial guarantees posted by developers and others in lieu of infrastructure requirements are being experienced. As a result, staff is being placed in the position of responsibility for completion of public improvements for subdivisions under construction. Staff is working diligently with the departments of Public Works and Public Utilities to develop punch lists and cost

estimates to complete the subdivision work so improvements can be accepted into the public system for maintenance. During the past year, the department directly managed fourteen such projects, three of which have been finalized.

The Development Review and Design Division's work indicators showed an increase in the categories of office and industrial/warehouse development from last year's levels, and a decrease in retail approvals. Residential development for single-family approvals again reflected a decrease in conditional approvals and recordation of new lots, and was substantially lower than the record high levels at the beginning of the last five year period. Multifamily development, however, increased significantly in conditional and final subdivision approvals for townhouse development. There were also increases in POD approvals for single family zero-lot line, townhouse, and apartment units from last year's very low levels.

The Department of Planning continues to receive NACO awards, which total eighteen since 1998. The Innsbrook Area Study won a 2011 achievement award as a redevelopment strategy for an area that saw prosperity in the '80s and '90s, but has struggled throughout the current economic downturn. The study promotes a mixed use development and strategies positioning the area for redevelopment over the next fifty years. This project involved a significant number of staff hours dedicated to development and implementation and the results were well worth the investment.

The Department collects certain fees to help offset the expenses depicted in this budget. These include zoning application fees and fees paid for the sale of GIS maps. These two revenue sources are budgeted for \$150,000 in FY2012-13. This accounts for 4.0 percent of the department's total budget.