

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
June 9, 2009

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Planning and Community Development Department

Subject: Report Back – Department Process For Increasing Staffing When Development Applications Increase To A Critical Level

Supervisorial
District: All

Contact: Tanya Brown, Administrative Services Officer III, 875-4892
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BACKGROUND

During the Budget Workshop on May 15, 2009, the Board directed staff to identify the process or indicators used to determine when Application Processing staffing levels should be increased to meet the critical levels of development applications. Additionally, the Board questioned how quickly the department could react in the event there was a significant increase in application filings.

DISCUSSION

The department evaluates a variety of reporting tools to determine if the level of workload is appropriate for the staffing. Over the past year, the department has seen a sharp decline in the number of applications, and complexity type being submitted. When the regional economy improves, it is anticipated the number of applications will increase. In order for the department to identify a continuous growth trend and not react to a seasonal spike or other anomaly, the department will monitor reports that will assist management to determine when it is appropriate to increase staffing levels. Those reports are Performance Measure, Monthly Summary of Applications, Quarterly Report, and Revenue reports, including Application Fees and Plan Check Fees.

The department monitors workload based on established Performance Measures. The Application Processing Performance Measure is: Timely processing of development applications measured by the percentage of staff reports completed within 60 days of Department of Environment Review and Assessment release. The target is 70%, less over a sustained period could indicate additional staffing is needed to meet the additional workload.

The Monthly Summary of Applications and Quarterly Report reflect the number of applications received. These reports provide the trends of upcoming pending workload. Under the current economic environment the department has been receiving about 10 applications per month of lesser complexity. An indicator of anticipated increase in workload has been established. Once

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a sustained increase of five additional applications is submitted monthly, for over four months, the need for additional staffing will be evaluated. The bulk of planning staff time on development applications takes place six to nine months after application is submitted. This lag provides sufficient time for the department to react to the upcoming increase in workload when it arrives.

The department develops a monthly revenue report on the application fees received less those refunded. Currently the department is achieving an average of \$60,000 monthly (not including Posting and Design Review fees). One Planner Level I/II position at the salary and benefits rate costs the department approximately \$100,000/year (or \$8,333/month). In order to ensure sufficient sustained funding for a position, an indicator of \$10,000/month in net applications fees for over four months has been established. Revenue will be closely monitored for a sustained increase during the new fiscal year.

Another revenue indicator is monthly report on the amount of Plan Check fees received. Currently, Plan Check fees are averaging \$29,500/monthly. In Fiscal Year 2007-08 the department averaged \$38,600/monthly in fees. An increase would indicate an increase in new construction activity in the region. Once it reached and maintained \$10,000/month over four months, and longer wait times at the counter the need for additional staffing will be evaluated.

The department monitors the number of business license applications submitted to determine if there is a growth trend in the marketplace for new businesses. Increases in the number of business licenses will provide an indication of improved economic conditions. The number of building permits issued is also reviewed, which provides an indicator of increased building activity. Additionally, the department assesses general regional economic conditions for improvement and growth.

The department continues to evaluate applications submitted and revenue as well as general economic conditions for improvement. Once the department experiences sustained growth in application numbers and revenue to support additional positions as well as any decline in meeting the performance measure, the department will evaluate to determine if additional staffing is needed. At that point, the department will follow the reinstatement procedures to fill the positions as quickly as possible. Evaluating the reports and economic indicator combined with the lag time after the submittal of applications before the staff report is prepared will provide us sufficient time to react to make staffing adjustments in a timely manner.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT SHERRY, DIRECTOR
Planning and Community Development
Department