

Memorandum

City of Lawrence – Douglas County Planning & Development Services

TO: David L. Corliss, City Manager

FROM: Scott McCullough, Director

CC: Budget Team

Date: April 23, 2009

RE: 2010 Budget – transmittal letter

Introduction

2010 will see continued focus on implementing Matrix Report recommendations and providing the community and our customers the highest level of customer service by an ongoing commitment to evaluating our systems and programs. Several efficiencies to improve or maintain customer service have been implemented or are near completion despite reduced resources, including:

- Requiring certain staff (Long Range Planners, Historic Preservation Planner, GIS Planner, Assistant Director and the Director) to process Current Planning applications (site plans, text amendments, rezonings, variances, etc.). Redistributing these resources helps maintain service to one of our core missions of processing development applications, but reduces the adequacy of completing the duties and projects these positions were hired to otherwise perform such as:
 - a. completing needed text amendments in a swift manner,
 - b. completing GIS applications that aid staff and the development community in finding information,
 - c. completing long range planning efforts in shorter time periods,
 - d. providing greater outreach to residents for historic credit review and education,
 - e. etc.
- Implementing Web based packets for all of the commissions and committees that PDS staffs.
- Reorganizing Rental Registration procedures to make it more customer friendly.
- Processing many text amendments to continually improve the code to reflect the community's values.
- Posting submitted application materials to the PDS website to increase transparency in processing land use requests.
- Cross training administrative staff.

- Reorganizing the Plan Review division to help reach performance goals.
 - a. For the five month period, September, 2008 through January, 2009, 142 of 148 residential applications, 96%, were *reviewed* within five days; and 93 permits of 148 residential applications, 63%, were *issued* within five days.

Commercial Permits September 2008 to January 2009				
	No. of permits issued	No. Issued within 15 days	No. Reviewed within 15 days	% Reviewed within 15 days
September	8	5	6	75.00%
October	27	9	13	48.15%
November	15	10	13	86.67%
December	9	6	9	100.00%
January	3	1	3	100.00%
Total	62	31	44	71%
Residential Permits September 2008 to January 2009				
	No. of permits issued	No. Issued within 5 days	No. Reviewed within 5 days	% Reviewed within 5 days
September	54	38	52	96.30%
October	29	20	29	100.00%
November	27	16	27	100.00%
December	22	13	18	85.71%
January	16	6	16	100.00%
Total	148	93	142	96%

While the department will continue to seek efficiencies, major components of the Matrix study have been delayed due to reduced resources or shifting priorities. These include:

- Adding and maintaining key positions to increase customer service.
- Relocating the two divisions to one location to implement the One Stop Shop concept.
- Implementing a true One Stop Shop for development service related applications.
- Purchasing development software that would allow multiple departments to track different types of projects.

We recognize that there is a desire to more fully implement the Matrix recommendations, but that the current economic situation may delay achieving full success of the Matrix

recommendations. Given this, we will instead strive to maintain programs that we currently administer with the resources provided.

Functions and Staffing

The Planning and Development Services Department is responsible for processing applications and planning for growth related to the built environment. The Planning division processes both City of Lawrence and Douglas County land use applications. The Development Services division serves only the City of Lawrence. The following 2008 statistics are provided to inform the Commission on a portion of the workload of this highly visible citizen oriented public agency. Not all work is accounted for in these statistics. The number of positions currently providing the noted services is noted in parenthesis.

- The Planning divisions responded to approximately **25,000** public inquiries regarding land use, the equivalent of 13 requests per business hour. (10 Planning staff)
- The Planning divisions processed **112** site plan applications, **28** plats, and **25** text amendments. (3 to 4 Planning positions)
- Several long range planning efforts were completed or substantial progress was made toward their completion, including the K10 and Farmers Turnpike Sector Plan, the West of K-10 Plan, and Chapter 7 of *Horizon 2020*. (3 Planners)
- The Historic Resources Division reviewed over **130** projects under state and local preservation law. (1 Administrator, 1 part time intern)
- The Building Safety Division issued **2,179** building permits, performed **8,339** inspections and licensed **1,292** contractors. (1 Manager, 3 Inspectors, 2 Plan Reviewers, share 2 Administrative Support)
- The Code Enforcement Division performed **4,751** code inspections and **255** rental inspections. (1 Manager, 2 Environmental Inspectors, 1 Rental Inspector, share 2 Administrative Support)
- The Metropolitan Planning Organization was reorganized last year to include elected officials and efforts were taken to include the public in more transportation issues. (2 Transportation Planners – 80% federally funded)
- The Community Development Division completed **10** comprehensive rehabilitation projects and **43** weatherization projects utilizing **\$291,667** in federal grant money. (1 Manager, 2 Rehab Specialists, 1 Analyst – all 100% federally funded)

The table below provides historical data on the full time equivalent positions in PDS. By not filling vacant positions, the department operates at pre-2002 staffing levels despite significant community growth during the last decade.

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 anticipated
30.3	31	31	32	34.95	38	33.75	32 (30 filled)	30

The table below highlights many of the department's responsibilities. The department is quite varied in its functions and includes the following divisions with their funding source(s) noted.

Divisions	Funding Source(s)
Administration* (7 positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director • Assistant Directors • Administrative support 	General Fund with Director and Assistant Director of Development Services being funded in part by other federal sources.
Current Planning* (2 positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use applications and code revisions 	General Fund
Specialty Planning* (6 positions plus 1 intern) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Range Planning • Historic Resource Administration • GIS support 	General Fund. Historic Resources intern funded through grant.
Transportation Planning (2 positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staffing • Multi-modal transportation planning 	80% Federal, 20% General Fund
Building Safety (6 positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building permit review • Building inspections • Contractor licensing 	General Fund
Code Enforcement (4 positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental registration • Environmental and other code compliance 	General Fund
Community Development (4 positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDBG and HOME administration 	100% Federal (HUD)

*The County funds 1/6 of the budget for Planning-related divisions since we are a joint city-county planning agency.

The Planning and Development Services' adopted 2009 organizational chart is attached as Exhibit A. The chart demonstrates that currently 30 persons fill thirty-three (33) functional positions plus one (1) part-time intern position is assigned to Historic Resources. Not all of these positions are funded through the general fund, but these are the positions that provide the services rendered by the department. Through attrition (unfilled positions) and since late 2007, the Current Planning division has been reduced from 5 to 2 Current Planners.

The current staffing level, which already accounts for the reduction in permitting and other development activity, is sufficient to only maintain current programs. Expanding programs such as rental registration, contractor licensing, adding historic districts, etc. will be challenging without increasing resources. This staffing level makes it difficult to

show substantial progress and success in implementing Matrix concepts other than those already successfully implemented.

Items of interest in the 2010 budget request:

- The budget has been held to 2009 levels as mandated and also includes an alternative budget with a 5% reduction.
- Reductions in expenditures were taken from training budgets, fuel, publication expenditures, contractor licensing continuing education funding (used to purchase Johnson County training credits), and other various operational line items. Reducing training budgets will impact the ability to keep up with current life/safety practices and other trends to keep Lawrence on the cutting edge of planning and development.
- It is important to note that the department is not recommending that further reductions be taken from line items that support equipment (safety and otherwise), certifications (building inspectors, plan reviewers, planners and others that hold professional certifications), and other daily operational needs.
- Program improvements for the 2010 budget are difficult to forecast given the amount of further attrition the department may be asked to absorb compared to the additional programs the department may be asked to implement. These factors will affect the success of the department.

Program Improvements (in no ranking order)

PDS offers no program improvements for 2010 other than seeking continual internal improvements in our customer service with the resources provided.

Conclusion

The Department values the quality of life that citizens of Lawrence enjoy and each staff member takes pride in facilitating quality development and enforcing the above mentioned codes and ordinances to spur appropriate economic development and preserve the integrity of the neighborhoods in which we live.

Thank you for consideration of these requests.