

Land Development Services

Mission Land Development Services' (LDS) mission focuses on the safe and sustainable building of our communities. As such, LDS is committed to the protection of the environment, and the health, safety and welfare of all who live in, work in and visit Fairfax County. Through partnerships with stakeholders, LDS achieves excellence in service by balancing the needs, rights and interests of the community in the building and land development process.

Focus Land Development Services continues to help realize the Board's vision and community values for safe and sustainable communities, as codified in the regulations that guide building and land development design and construction. The agency accomplishes this through permitting, plan review, and inspection services. Moreover, LDS enforces environmental compliance through administration of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance, County and Federal floodplain regulations, erosion control and stormwater management code, and through the application of green building practices.

LDS provides technical training and outreach to homeowners, builders, engineers, and contractors to support compliance with land development and building code regulations. From large commercial projects, to smaller single-family homes, deck renovations, office tenant improvements, and more, LDS is the gateway to land and site development in the County. In concert with the County's Economic Success Strategic Plan (ESSP), LDS balances a focus to minimize the administrative burden for development projects with the increasing complexity of regulatory compliance. This difficult balance is further complicated by the continued development of smaller and environmentally complex project sites.

LDS continues to focus on the time it takes to bring a project to market – specifically, the time that it takes an applicant to secure the county permits necessary before construction can begin. As of March 2020, LDS has transitioned all permit/plan types to electronic submissions. Electronic submissions minimize processing inefficiencies including allowing concurrent and coordinated agency reviews in real-time. Additionally, LDS, in partnership with industry, has sought to improve the quality of plans and permit applications to ensure that high quality, ready-to-approve plans garner the majority of staff resources – not poor, substandard applications. To this end, the agency is working towards a “gateway” quality check and stronger peer review programs that precede dedicating staff resources for robust plan review. By expending only limited staff resources early in the permit review process, high quality, approval-ready plans do not languish in a queue filled with substandard applications. Since changing the agency culture from a focus on the number of submissions to a focus on the total time to market, performance metrics have revealed overall improvement year over year.

The agency's customer base ranges from the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) homeowner tackling a modest improvement project to developers building a complex, mixed-use, high-rise project valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars. At the same time, LDS faces challenges due to the changing economy and increasing complexity of building and site applications as well as new state and federal regulations, and high customer expectations. To successfully mitigate these challenges for all customers, LDS continues to simplify fee schedules and demystify the permitting and plan review process. Through targeted outreach, the agency engages with customers about their specific project needs.

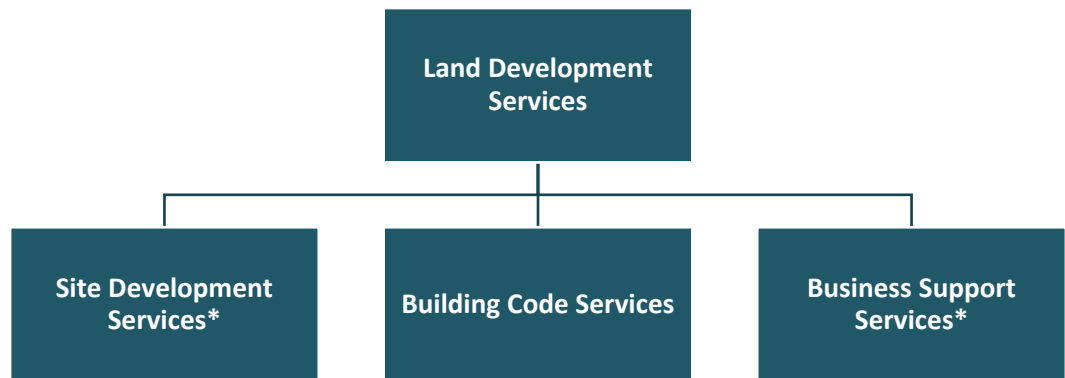
In FY 2021, LDS continues to support the County's economic development and revitalization goals, improve development process timelines, and address rising workload requirements to ensure that the capacity exists to meet customer expectations and development opportunities. This will require a dynamic approach to resourcing that supports the regular course of business but allows the agency to increase resources during surge demand times and to similarly decrease resource expenditures during lower demand times. The agency cost recovery model forms the basis of the fee schedule, revenue goals and budget expenditures. This allows the department to operate like a business, although without a profit incentive.

Pandemic Response and Impact

LDS processes approximately 70,000 permits each year. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency processed 55 percent of the permits online and 45 percent as paper submissions. Since March 2020, LDS shifted to 100 percent all electronic submission for permits and plans including online payment processing. Prior to the pandemic, 2,000 people visited the agency's Customer and Technical Support Center and the Customer Information Center in the Herrity Building monthly to ask questions and conduct in-person transactions. Since in-person transactions ended in March 2020, the number of phone calls staff has fielded has increased exponentially. Similarly, the agency's reliance on the website and third-party software platforms has dramatically increased.

As the County and the economy begin to re-open, LDS will remain 100 percent electronic for all permits and most building inspections. This aligns with the long-term goals of the agency. Currently, 80 percent of LDS staff telework. Building inspectors have leveraged video conferencing technology to conduct their work remotely. Site inspectors continue to perform field inspections using safety gear and practicing safety protocols.

Organizational Chart



*Community Development Program Area of Land Development Services

Budget and Staff Resources

Category	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Adopted	FY 2020 Revised	FY 2021 Advertised	FY 2021 Adopted
FUNDING					
Expenditures:					
Personnel Services	\$24,343,197	\$23,710,782	\$24,854,246	\$25,593,325	\$23,710,782
Operating Expenses	5,956,858	5,406,535	6,047,846	5,406,535	5,406,535
Subtotal	\$30,300,055	\$29,117,317	\$30,902,092	\$30,999,860	\$29,117,317
Less:					
Recovered Costs	(\$475,064)	(\$353,732)	(\$353,732)	(\$353,732)	(\$353,732)
Total Expenditures	\$29,824,991	\$28,763,585	\$30,548,360	\$30,646,128	\$28,763,585
Income:					
Permits/Plan Fees	\$10,778,530	\$12,648,915	\$12,648,915	\$12,648,915	\$11,384,025
Permits/Inspection Fees, Miscellaneous	31,814,611	27,822,423	29,752,120	29,067,830	26,163,732
Total Income	\$42,593,141	\$40,471,338	\$42,401,035	\$41,716,745	\$37,547,757
NET COST TO THE COUNTY¹	(\$12,768,150)	(\$11,707,753)	(\$11,852,675)	(\$11,070,617)	(\$8,784,172)
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)					
Regular	286 / 286	283 / 283	298 / 298	294 / 294	298 / 298

¹ Does not reflect Fringe Benefit costs, which are shown in Agency 89, Employee Benefits, as well as indirect costs and other operational costs such as space and utilities.

Community Development Program Area Summary

Category	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Adopted	FY 2020 Revised	FY 2021 Advertised	FY 2021 Adopted
FUNDING					
Expenditures:					
Personnel Services	\$13,368,373	\$13,420,488	\$14,461,568	\$13,667,143	\$12,167,268
Operating Expenses	3,105,134	3,062,491	3,410,599	3,287,504	3,287,504
Subtotal	\$16,473,507	\$16,482,979	\$17,872,167	\$16,954,647	\$15,454,772
Less:					
Recovered Costs	(\$475,064)	(\$353,732)	(\$353,732)	(\$353,732)	(\$353,732)
Total Expenditures	\$15,998,443	\$16,129,247	\$17,518,435	\$16,600,915	\$15,101,040
Income:					
Permits/Plan Fees	\$10,778,530	\$12,648,915	\$12,648,915	\$12,648,915	\$11,384,025
Total Income	\$10,778,530	\$12,648,915	\$12,648,915	\$12,648,915	\$11,384,025
NET COST TO THE COUNTY¹	\$5,219,913	\$3,480,332	\$4,869,520	\$3,952,000	\$3,717,015
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)					
Regular	185 / 185	182 / 182	192 / 192	189 / 189	192 / 192

¹ Does not reflect Fringe Benefit costs, which are shown in Agency 89, Employee Benefits, as well as indirect costs and other operational costs such as space and utilities.

Public Safety Program Area Summary

Category	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Adopted	FY 2020 Revised	FY 2021 Advertised	FY 2021 Adopted
FUNDING¹					
Expenditures:					
Personnel Services	\$10,974,824	\$10,290,294	\$10,392,678	\$11,926,182	\$11,543,514
Operating Expenses	2,851,724	2,344,044	2,637,247	2,119,031	2,119,031
Total Expenditures	\$13,826,548	\$12,634,338	\$13,029,925	\$14,045,213	\$13,662,545
Income:					
Permits/Inspection Fees, Miscellaneous	\$31,814,611	\$27,822,423	\$29,752,120	\$29,067,830	\$26,163,732
Total Income	\$31,814,611	\$27,822,423	\$29,752,120	\$29,067,830	\$26,163,732
NET COST TO THE COUNTY²	(\$17,988,063)	(\$15,188,085)	(\$16,722,195)	(\$15,022,617)	(\$12,501,187)
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)					
Regular	101 / 101	101 / 101	106 / 106	105 / 105	106 / 106

¹ Does not reflect Fringe Benefit costs, which are shown in Agency 89, Employee Benefits, as well as indirect costs and other operational costs such as space and utilities.

**FY 2021
Funding
Adjustments**

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2020 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2021 program. Included are all adjustments recommended by the County Executive that were approved by the Board of Supervisors, as well as any additional Board of Supervisors' actions, as approved in the adoption of the Budget on May 12, 2020.

FY 2021 funding remains at the same level as the FY 2020 Adopted Budget Plan.

**Changes to
FY 2020
Adopted
Budget Plan**

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2020 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2020 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2019 Carryover Review, FY 2020 Third Quarter Review, and all other approved changes through April 30, 2020.

Carryover Adjustments **\$135,311**

As part of the FY 2019 Carryover Review, the Board of Supervisors approved encumbered funding of \$135,311 in Operating Expenses.

Development Process Workload Demands **\$1,000,000**

As part of the FY 2019 Carryover Review, the Board of Supervisors approved \$1,000,000 in Personnel Services to continue to meet workload demands associated with increasing site plan and building permit activity. An increase of \$250,000 was also included in Agency 89, Employee Benefits. A commensurate revenue increase completely offset expenditures, with no net funding impact to the General Fund.

Reclassification of Non-Merit Benefits Eligible Positions to Merit **\$0**

As part of an ongoing Board-directed review of the County's use of limited-term staffing, 11/11.0 FTE new merit positions are included due to the reclassification of non-merit benefits-eligible positions to merit status. These are part of a total of 235 positions that were identified in the *FY 2019 Carryover Review* across all County agencies as candidates for possible conversion based on the tasks performed by each position and the hours worked by incumbents. No additional funding has been included as the work hours of these positions are expected to remain largely unchanged.

Third Quarter Adjustments **\$649,464**

As part of the *FY 2020 Third Quarter Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$649,464 to address development regulation workload requirements. This includes funding of \$229,464 and 4/4.0 FTE new positions to address building permit inspection workload, to perform quality control on infill plan submissions, to provide business integration and support for users of the new Planning Land Use System (PLUS) solution, to provide dedicated enforcement of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance and support for the Chesapeake Bay Exceptions Review Committee. Additionally, funding of \$420,000 in Operating Expenses was approved to support contracted elevator safety compliance. An increase of \$34,826 was also included in Agency 89, Employee Benefits. A commensurate revenue increase completely offset expenditures, with not net funding impact to the General Fund.

Position Detail

The *FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan* includes the following positions:

LAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AREA) – 192 Positions			
Administration			
1	Director, LDS	1	Constr./Mnt. Project Manager II
2	Division Directors, LDS	1	Information Officer III
1	Project Coordinator	1	Training Specialist III
1	Engineer IV	1	Human Resources Generalist III
2	Planners IV	1	Human Resources Generalist II
1	Code Specialist III	1	Human Resources Generalist I
1	Management Analyst III	1	Safety Analyst
2	Management Analysts II	3	Administrative Assistants IV
Information Technology Branch			
1	IT Program Manager II	1	Network/Telecom. Analyst III
1	IT Program Manager I	1	Network/Telecom. Analyst I
1	IT Systems Architect	1	Internet/Intranet Architect III
1	Business Analyst IV	2	Internet/Intranet Architects II
2	Business Analysts III	1	Geog. Info. Spatial Analyst III
1	Programmer Analyst IV	1	Data Analyst II
1	Programmer Analyst III	1	IT Technician III
1	Programmer Analyst II		
Financial Management Branch			
1	Management Analyst IV	2	Administrative Assistants V
2	Financial Specialists III	2	Administrative Assistants IV
1	Financial Specialist II	5	Administrative Assistants III
1	Financial Specialist I		
Code Development and Compliance			
1	Division Director, LDS	1	Project Coordinator
1	Engineer V	2	Code Specialists IV
3	Engineers IV	3	Code Specialists III
4	Engineering Technicians III	3	Code Specialists II
1	Management Analyst I	1	Administrative Assistant III

Customer and Technical Support Center					
1	Engineer IV		14	Engineering Technicians III	
2	Code Specialists III		12	Engineering Technicians II	
4	Code Specialists II		1	Administrative Assistant IV	
2	Management Analysts II		4	Administrative Assistants III	
1	Management Analyst I		6	Administrative Assistants II	
1	Combination Inspector				
Code Academy					
1	Program and Procedures Coord.		1	Administrative Assistant II	
2	Training Specialists III				
Site Development and Inspections					
1	Division Director, LDS		3	Supervising Eng. Inspectors	
4	Engineers V		4	Asst. Sup. Engineering Inspectors	
5	Engineers IV		22	Senior Eng. Inspectors	
9	Senior Engineers III		2	Administrative Assistants III	
16	Engineers III		1	Administrative Assistant II	
1	Code Specialist II				
LAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (PUBLIC SAFETY PROGRAM AREA) – 106 Positions					
1	Division Director, LDS		2	Engineering Aides	
1	Chief Building Inspector		1	Code Specialist IV	
2	Engineers V		9	Code Specialists II	
7	Engineers IV		7	Supervising Combination Inspectors	
22	Engineers III		38	Master Combination Inspectors	
5	Engineering Technicians III		4	Combination Inspectors	
4	Engineering Technicians II		1	Administrative Assistant III	
1	Engineering Technician I		1	Administrative Assistant II	

Performance Measurement Results

In FY 2019, LDS met most of the goals for key performance measures. The percent of projects in irresolvable default that must be completed by the County remained at 0 percent, thereby surpassing the goal of 3 percent. The number of construction projects required to cease as a result of deficiencies identifiable on the plan also remained at 0.

In FY 2019, the percent of buildings experiencing catastrophic system failure as a result of building design met the goal of 0 percent. In FY 2019, 70 percent of permits were issued on the day of application, which indicates a slight dip compared to FY 2018, largely based on the types of permits processed during the fiscal year. As LDS continues to refine processes and move more transactions online, the goal for FY 2020 is 80 percent processed on the day of application, with an increase to 82 percent in FY 2021.

Indicator	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Estimate/Actual	FY 2020 Estimate	FY 2021 Estimate
Site Development Services					
Percent of projects in irresolvable default which must be completed by the County	0%	0%	3% / 0%	3%	3%
Construction projects required to cease as a result of deficiencies identifiable on the plan	0	0	0 / 0	0	0
Building Code Services					
Percent of buildings experiencing catastrophic system failures as a result of building design	0%	1%	0% / 0%	0%	0%
Percent of permits issued on day of application	74%	74%	76% / 70%	80%	82%

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2021-adopted-performance-measures-pm>