

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, handles planning data management, demographic, and land-use information. Development Review and Design is responsible for the administration of the Plan of Development (POD) and Subdivision applications and detailed review of architectural plans, landscape, lighting and fence plans, transfers of approval, and building permit applications. Zoning Administration enforces subdivision and zoning ordinances of the Henrico County Code. The Planning Systems Division provides information technology and GIS support to the entire department. Administrative Support provides budget, personnel, and clerical support for the operation of the office.

OBJECTIVES

- To improve the efficiency of staff in the implementation of the existing zoning ordinance as it pertains to the public, Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and other agencies and to encourage public use of planning information through the automation of the office.
- To review and recommend reasonable changes to the comprehensive plan and its implementation tools, the zoning ordinance, and subdivision regulations to better provide for changing development trends and to promote good urban design.
- To accurately, and in a timely manner, prepare all correspondence and minutes associated with Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Board of Supervisors, and Department of Planning activities.
- To facilitate the issuance of building permits, occupancy permits, and business licenses.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUMMARY

Annual Fiscal Plan

Description	FY23	FY24	FY25	Change
	Actual	Original	Approved	24 to 25
Personnel	\$ 4,164,697	\$ 4,843,783	\$ 5,039,081	4.0%
Operation	360,211	505,664	505,664	0.0%
Capital	1,277	8,000	8,000	0.0%
Total	<u>4,526,185</u>	<u>5,357,447</u>	<u>5,552,745</u>	<u>3.6%</u>

Personnel Complement 44 43 * 43 0

*The complement was reduced by one position moved to Rec & Parks.

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PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Change 24 to 25
Workload Measures				
Reviews Completed by Dev. Review & Design	306	335	325	(10)
Zoning Petitions & Provisional Use Permits	50	60	60	-
Variance and Use Permits Processed	65	75	75	-
Maps Prepared	963	950	950	-

OBJECTIVES (CONTINUED)

- To improve on the preparation of maps, charts, and other documents necessary for the proper presentation and understanding of various planning requirements.
- To prepare “careful and comprehensive survey studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants” as indicated in the Code of Virginia.
- To coordinate and improve public and private planning efforts through the development of data, maps, technology support, and studies to ensure consistency for planning and programming.
- To develop specific management controls and incentives for the protection and preservation of historical sites, buildings and structures from encroaching development and objectionable land uses.
- To improve past efforts and enhance existing programs that minimize the impact on environmentally sensitive areas and to improve water quality standards through development as mandated by the Chesapeake Bay Act.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Department of Planning’s budget for FY25 is \$5,552,745, an increase of \$195,298, or 3.6% over FY24. This increase is reflected in the personnel component and is the result of payroll and benefit changes offset by moving one position to Recreation & Parks. The operating and capital components of the budget will remain flat from the prior year approved budget.

There are two components to the budget: Administration, which includes five divisions, and the Boards and Commissions, which includes the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals. The Boards and Commissions budget totals \$170,089 in FY25. The Administration budget totals \$5,382,656 in FY25.

DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

The department’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. The department manages land use policy and planning to provide the framework for the county’s physical, social, and economic growth. A large part of planning’s role is to provide professional advice and information to the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, citizens, businesses, and

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the development community, as well as local, state, and federal agencies to achieve the long-term vision of the county while enhancing its quality of life, now and in the future.

Over the last few years, the department has embarked on several large and multi-year projects, requiring significant time and staff participation. New zoning and subdivision ordinances were adopted, and the 2045 Comprehensive Plan update is anticipated to be completed in 2024. Staff have participated in over 25 community events and meetings and have received over 300 comments through the HenricoNext website and interactive mapping tool. The next phase will be the development of growth scenarios and recommended land use and modeling to set the county's vision, requiring meticulous detail and community engagement. Completing these important tools will help the county adapt to changing housing trends, economic markets, environmental challenges, and the complexity of development applications.

The department continues to prepare for changes in technology and required skill sets to respond and deliver the best customer service. After several years in design and testing, the department launched the POSSE planning module, the county's new enterprise land management system, in November 2023. The module replaces Tidemark and allows electronic submittal and review of all land use applications through its Build Henrico customer portal and ePlan technology and will improve and automate workflows. In its preparation, staff held training workshops with over 70 customers in the development community and internal staff. The department also provides several videos and documents to help guide users in the new system and workflows.

The department's functions go beyond reviewing development to ensure compliance with zoning and subdivision ordinances and require several areas of expertise to understand the needs of a growing population and how this impacts the county's wide range of services and infrastructure. The Planning department provides a range of professional support in drafting white papers, land use legislation and policy, and assists in long-range plans for schools and other public facilities. Staff also continue to provide support in running and monitoring live streaming platforms for all public hearings.

The department also produces maps and provides geographic, statistical, and demographic data for certain GIS layers used by nearly every department within the county. The County Attorney's and County Manager's offices, Real Property, Community Revitalization, Permit Center, and Media Services often receive mapping support from Planning. Staff also provided design assistance for General Services, Public Works, Community Revitalization, and informal plans discussed with Board members and Planning Commissioners. Beyond the department, the knowledge base of staff supports many regional and local groups, including the PlanRVA (formerly Richmond Region Planning District), Transportation Planning Organization, Urban Land Institute, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, special committees for the General Assembly, Virginia Commonwealth University, Sports Backers, and Capital Region Collaborative. The department also organizes and participates in numerous community meetings to keep citizens aware of land use and other issues affecting the public.