



CITY OF DURHAM | DURHAM COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA



Date: December 2, 2013

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager

Through: Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager

From: Steven L. Medlin, AICP, Planning Director

Subject: Proposed FY14 Planning Department Work Program and Budget Adjustment

Executive Summary. The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the City and County for merged planning functions charges the Planning Director with preparing and submitting to the City and County Managers, Planning Commission and the Joint City-County Planning Committee (JCCPC) for recommendation a work program that must be forwarded to both governing bodies for final approval. The proposed work program is reflective of 35 full time employees (FTEs).

Recommendation. The staff recommends that the City Council approve the proposed FY14 Planning Department Work Program and to allocate additional funding in the amount \$53,578.00 to provide all necessary resources to execute the work program. The Planning Commission recommended approval, 11-0, at its regular meeting on May 14, 2013. The JCCPC recommended approval at their meetings of June 5, August 7 and November 6, 2013.

Background. The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the City and County for merged planning functions charges the Planning Director with preparing and submitting to the City and County Managers, Planning Commission and JCCPC a work program. Attached please find the proposed FY14 Planning Department Work Program. The attached work program constitutes a catalogue of the various processes and projects that the Department will work on over the coming fiscal year. They can be categorized as one of three types:

- Ongoing projects and processes that reflect legal requirements to respond to proposed site plans, zoning map changes, use permits, certificates of appropriateness, zoning enforcement actions, etc.
- Ongoing projects and processes that relate to City and County policies for providing timely public information support for boards and commissions, Department management, etc.
- Projects and process that are somewhat discretionary, reflecting City and County desire to engage in long range planning activities, such as the RTP North Design District, the Medical Center Compact Neighborhood design district, and various Unified Development Ordinance text amendments.

Please note that, based on comments from the Joint City-County Planning Committee, Planning Commission and the elected boards, the Planning Department work program now includes a commitment of time for Task 3.1.5, Housing Affordability Assessment and Plan.

Additional funding is required in order to fully fund the department to the adopted City budget amount of \$3,052,856 based on Durham County adopting a smaller budget allocation than originally program by \$84,758. The \$53,578 is reflective of the difference needed to fund the

department for the remainder of the fiscal year. The figure was developed by subtracting six months of salary and benefits equaling \$31,180, for a vacant Senior Planner position, from the budget reduction amount of \$84,758. In addition the needed funding will provide allow for the retention of a Planner in the Urban Design Section who would otherwise have to be terminated by a reduction in force action (RIF) after the first of the year.

The funding of the Senior Planner position would enable the Development Review work group to be fully staffed thereby improving the processing of site plan and subdivision applications. As the position would be totally funded by the City the employee would be assigned only City cases to work on thereby improving the turnaround time on City applications and potentially allowing for high priority cases as defined by the administration to be processed as expedited cases.

The funding of the Planner position in the Urban Design Section will allow the department to allocate staff resources to a number of Comprehensive/Strategic Planning initiatives including work program items 3.1.3 New Comprehensive Plan Scoping, 3.2.3 City Initiated Plan Amendments, 3.3.5 Riparian Buffer Standards, 3.4.2 Urban Open Space Plan, 3.8.1 Gateway Plan Implementation, 3.8.1 Medical Center Design District, and 5.2 Computer, GIS and Data Support.

Financial Impact Statement:

The total estimated cost of \$53,578.00 will fund a Senior Planner Position for approximately six months of fiscal year 2013-14. At year end, a reconciliation will be done to determine the exact amount of the shortfall and a budget amendment will be done accordingly. The funding source will be covered by excess fees (previously agreed upon by the County Manager), departmental and other City savings.

Attachments

Proposed Work Program, FY14, Part A, Programs

Proposed Work Program, FY14, Part B, Programs and Descriptions

Memo to Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
December 16, 2013