



Fiscal Affairs Advisory Commission
Report to the County Board

FY 2024 Proposed Budget

Budget Area:	Community Planning, Housing, and Development
FAAC Reviewers:	Blake H. Barnhill & Scott E. Pedowitz
Date of FAAC Action:	11 April 2023

FAAC Opinion

FAAC Recommendation #1			
FAAC recommends that the County Board not eliminate a Comprehensive Planning FTE, as proposed by the County Manager, but otherwise recommends that the County Board adopt the remainder of the County Manager’s proposed budget for Community Planning, Housing, and Development. FAAC is concerned that CHPD planning services will be reduced to an unacceptable level if an FTE is eliminated.			
Vote	Yes: 8	No: 2	Abstain: 0
Comments	Losing this position (which could be staffed at a lower organizational level) will reduce CPHD’s capacity for its work plan, distributing work on project managers and other staff throughout the division and increasing the time required to complete projects. We do not believe that the capacity that this position would provide would be completely made up through efficiencies in the division.		

FAAC Recommendation #2			
FAAC recommends that the Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development develop its performance metrics to estimate how its activities impact the delivery of development projects, including a measure of customer service, and ultimately impact Arlington County’s future tax receipts.			
Vote	Yes: 10	No: 0	Abstain: 0
Comments	We recognize that CPHD’s activities are necessary, but not sufficient, to securing project delivery. As such, metrics detailing the relationship between CPHD’s work and project deliveries will be estimates. Notwithstanding, having these estimates will help the community to evaluate the value it receives from these activities and the appropriate level of resources for CPHD in future budgets.		

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Future Considerations

1. Efficiencies in CPHD's processes can have three positive impacts on the community: increasing the return on public resources committed, reducing the time for project approvals for applicants, and streamlining opportunities for community participation. CPHD should continue to investigate ways to make processes more efficient to achieve all three of these benefits.
2. As applicants, the public, and staff are all stakeholders in CPHD's processes, CPHD should evaluate its processes through all three lenses to maximize efficiency for all involved. Identifying approaches that benefit one or two of these groups at the expense of the other(s) may indicate opportunities for improvement.
3. FAAC is concerned that the permit review process has not had adequate resources to be efficient and effective and that the problems in permit review will become worse as the staff faces novel issues in reviewing permits for Expanded Housing Options. CPHD should consider increasing permit review resources, if necessary.