“Spring is the time for projects and plans.”
- Leo Tolstoy

The Organization Development Office (ODO) established a work plan, in coordination with the Planning and Community Development (PCD) Department, to introduce a multi-phase project to examine our alignment of services to the needs of our customers. In July 2015, a survey was distributed to PCD members to determine our alignment using seven elements: strategy, structure, systems, shared values, skills, style and staff. The basis was derived from a theory that alignment of these elements produces effective and efficient performance.

The survey results were presented in October 2015. One of the immediate findings was the need to improve the work environment where employees work and interact with our customers. Leadership recognized the importance and consulted with an architectural firm under contract with Public Works/Facilities Management to analyze PCD’s office space and provide their observation and suggestions. At the same time, Barry Frankenfield, PCD Director, worked to obtain input from division heads and various staff members. As a result, planning is underway to transform the first floor space in Building 2.

The improvements will be phased in and provide a professional and consistent appearance with clear and attractive signage to direct customers to an improved counter space, conference room, and office spaces. The initial focus will be on the first floor hallway with the creation of an open central reception and customer service area.

Leadership support for the renovations is evident based on the $350,000 included in the proposed Operating Budget. City Council is scheduled to adopt the FY 16/17 budget on May 10. With Council’s support funds will be available July 1. PCD members will be involved throughout the process with continuous updates as various phases move forward.
MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The first quarter of 2016 brings good news regarding the FY 16/17 proposed budget. This budget proposal is one of the most positive proposals presented in years. Thanks to the cost savings recognized by the hiring freeze, the State lowered our required VRS contributions, decreased fuel costs, increased real estate assessments, and our employee’s hard work handling additional tasks during the hiring freeze.

For eligible full-time employees, the budget proposal provides a 2.34 percent increase along with a 1 percent merit increase, something we haven’t seen in eight years! For details regarding the proposed FY 16/17 employee compensation, visit beachnet and view OnPoint with Dave, March 22 issue.

The Planning & Community Development (PCD) budget proposal brings forward change. The basis is the Organization Development Office (ODO) survey results and job audits which support recommendations for aligning staff and resources so we can achieve the goal to make PCD the most “efficient, collaborative and transparent” planning organization in the region.

The survey findings and follow-up meetings indicated high support for change. We have responded to the survey recommendations by engaging in establishing process improvement teams, planning and budgeting for workspace improvements, conducting job audits to align skillsets, committing to cross-training (with an emphasis on customer service), and reviewing all systems and structure to guide reorganization to improve customer service.

As we move forward I am honored to be part of the PCD team. We have made great strides, and the following PCD’s division highlights are a testament to our commitment to meet our goals.

This is the third of many updates. We hope you enjoy it and find something of interest. Please let me know how we’re doing!

Barry Frankenfield
Director of Planning & Community Development

Welcome New Members

Pam Sandloop, Executive Assistant Director’s Office

Linda Stephenson, Administrative Specialist Director’s Office

Christina Caputo, Planning Tech I - Director’s Office - Management & Support

Pat Burns, Intake Technician - DSC
Comprehensive Planning

It’s Our Future: A Choice City
Comprehensive Plan - Public Involvement Update

300 citizens responded to Comprehensive Plan outreach - In January, City staff hit the road to reach citizens who don’t usually get involved in the Comprehensive Plan. We reached them where they are - at recreation centers, at a local college, online and in traditional community meetings.

More than 300 citizens responded. About 100 stopped at kiosks at the three recreation centers. They chatted about various concerns, including roads, parks, the environment and light rail. Another 75 came to a community meeting in Seatack. Ninety came to three open-house meetings throughout the City. Two dozen stopped to talk at Tidewater Community College.

And more came to our new SpeakUp! VB app, which received 160 comments. We also got 70 written comments and ratings from citizens on information brochures and comment cards.

In all, it was a mixed success. The numbers weren’t as large as we had hoped. But we did reach many people who don’t ordinarily give up their evenings for traditional meetings - and we educated a lot who had never heard of the Comprehensive Plan. On that level, the outreach was a success.

Public Meeting Schedule

- Planning Commission Public Hearing for Adoption and Recommendation to City Council: Wednesday, April 13, 2016 at noon, City Council Chamber
- City Council Public Hearing for Adoption: Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at 6 p.m., City Council Chamber

Comprehensive Planning provides staff support to various City Council appointed Boards, Commissions and Committees

- The Historic Preservation Commission has announced a Research Grant Program that is designed to encourage scholarship on persons, places and events in Virginia Beach, Princess Anne County and local “prehistoric” history.
- Information on the program and applications forms may be found under Related Documents at www.vbgov.com/historicpreservation.
- Grant awards will range from $500 to $2,500.
- Applications are due April 27, 2016.
- The commission is especially interested in projects that will result in the placement of local or state historic markers in the City.
Current Planning and Zoning Administration provides staffing support for the Planning Commission, the Board of Zoning appeals, and planning items that are brought to City Council. Current planning members work with applicants on each phase of the process that ensures land use compliance with ordinances and plans. The zoning staff is responsible for interpretation and enforcement of the City’s zoning ordinances.

First Quarter Current Planning/Zoning Division Accomplishments:

Planning Commission Agenda Items: Worked with applicants, reviewed and wrote 43 agenda applications for rezonings, conditional use permits, alternatives compliance and street closures

Agenda request forms and presentations were also prepared for City Council on 39 Planning items

Board of Zoning Appeals: Worked with applicants, reviewed and wrote 21 variance requests

Performed 1,797 zoning inspections throughout the City

Removed 3,302 illegal signs from the public right-of-way

Civic League Meetings Scheduled to Discuss Event Homes

The Zoning Administrator has been working with the Deputy City Attorney on the Event Homes issue. Staff met with the Sandbridge Civic League on January 18, with the Northend Civic League on February 11 and with the Bayfront Advisory Commission on February 18. Several Bayfront Civic Leagues were represented. The Croatan Civic League concluded that they are not impacted by Event Home rentals and elected not to meet with staff on this issue. Although all of the civic leagues that staff met with are concerned about the issue, none appear to be impacted by event rental use and short - term rental to the degree that is found in the Sandbridge community. Staff from Planning and the City Attorney’s Office will meet with the Sandbridge Civic League subcommittee on April 22 to continue working on possible solutions.
Development Services Center (DSC) reviews, approves and permits development projects and subdivision plats to ensure public safety while promoting quality development throughout the city consistent with City Council’s Vision of “A Community for a Lifetime.” We do this by applying City Code and policies to all development projects in a fair and impartial manner. Establishing partnerships between the development community and the City helps to assure reasonable timeframes and quality results for our community.

### First Quarter Highlights

- **634 Total Submittals**
- 48 project meetings with consultants and developers including pre-submittal meetings and predesign meetings and meetings to resolve review issues
- 70 Right of Way Permits and Land Disturbing/Stormwater Permits, and currently holding/managing $34,000,000 in sureties

### Notable Projects Permitted for Site Work

- **Taco Bell** at Northampton Blvd. and Norwich Ave.
- **Dunkin Donuts** and retail units on Northampton Blvd. north of Baker Rd.
- **Honeybee Village**, 22 single family condominiums, at Independence Blvd. and Round Hill Rd.
- **ABNB Retail Center at Virginia Beach Blvd. and Groveland Rd.**
- **Dominion Power Lynnhaven Substation** on Ansol Lane next to grace Bible Church
- **7-Eleven** at Virginia Beach Blvd. and First Colonial Rd.
- **Sandbridge Marketplace** retail development on Princess Anne Rd. behind Food Lion
- **Taco Bell** at Elson Green Avenue and Upton Blvd.
- **Retail Development** at 2904 Atlantic Ave.

*Look what the Easter Bunny brought!*

**Connor Jesse Cobb, born March 27.**

**Congratulations Ricky (DSC) & Jennifer Smith Cobb (Zoning)!**
Building Permits and Inspections administers the uniform statewide building code and associated laws and ordinances, issues permits for, and performs inspections of, building construction, plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems installation and alteration.

Permit Totals

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Number of Active Development Sites: 1,761
Acreage: 2,787.057
Projects of Interest: Nordstrom Rack, Virginia Beach Blvd. - C/O Issued 3/2/16
Crescent Square Apartment. Diamond Springs Rd. - C/O Issued 3/1/16

Serving Our Customers at the PCD Counter

Zoning inspectors working at the public counter during the month of March answered 1,539 zoning related phone calls and e-mails and assisted 527 customers. A total of 490 business license applications were reviewed for zoning compliance and the counter staff also advised 275 customers about Board of Zoning Appeals applications and Accident Potential Zone 1 regulations. Our Commercial Building Plans Examiners also assist both our internal and external customers by answering calls, meeting with co-workers, citizens and designers concerning construction and permitting procedures, as well assisting with issuing building permits, as needed.
Environment and Sustainability Office (ESO) oversees implementation of the City’s Sustainability Plan and advocates stewardship of the City’s natural resources. ESO provides staffing support for the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Board and the Wetlands Board and is responsible for the interpretation and enforcement of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area, Southern Rivers Watershed Management and Floodplain Ordinances, waterfront construction, dredging permits, and shorelines inspection coordination. ESO also serves as staff liaison to the Council appointed Bayfront Advisory Commission and Green Ribbon Committee.

Environmental Regulatory Work - First Quarter

Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area (CBPA) Board - generally projects located in first 100 feet seaward portion of buffer: 17 submittals, 16 approvals, 1 deferral

Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area (CBPA) Administrative - generally projects located in the landward portion of buffer: 49 submittals, 13 Approvals

Wetlands Board - shoreline projects located in tidal wetlands and coastal primary sand dunes: 16 submittals, 7 approvals, 2 deferrals

Waterfront - generally all shoreline projects alongside City waterways not involving tidal wetlands and coastal primary sand dunes: 55 submittals, 35 approvals

ESO Highlights

Shorelines Process Improvement Strategy - completed the first draft that proposes merging Waterfront Operations, Wetlands Board and CBPA Board staff effort into one integrated team with cross-training and alignment; future review will address addition of inspections and enforcement functions.

Surveying Wetlands Board/Waterfront Operations/CBPA Developers/Contractors/Agents - to evaluate overall shorelines process and identify areas for improvement.

ESO Member Highlight - Meet Ammie Pascua, full-time temporary Planning Technician. She is a native of Virginia Beach and graduated from the College of William and Mary with a major in Geology. Ammie’s responsibilities include ESO records management, preparation of board presentations, GIS work for ESO, Accela records input for the CBPA, Wetlands Board and Waterfront functions of ESO, and assists with special projects as needed.

Ammie Pascua, Planning Technician - ESO
Transportation and Transit Planning Division (T & T) is comprised of two staff members and operates out of the Strategic Growth Areas Office. This division coordinates with several other departments and regional and state agencies to plan the City’s transportation and transit network. All of the public transportation services in our City are coordinated by this division through Hampton Roads Transit (HRT).

The Tide Light Rail Extension to Town Center

On April 5, 2016, City Council voted 9-2 to approve an ordinance that seeks to address each of the items requested by the Commonwealth Transportation Board, the state body responsible for authorizing Virginia’s Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP) and related projects, to ensure the State’s $155 million is available for the project. The five actions approved were:

1. Authorize the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the project partners of the City, state and Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) and the parameters of the project.
2. Authorize HRT to make the grant application to the state for three light rail vehicles for the project.
3. Authorize the signing of a binding agreement for the local cost share of the light rail vehicles between the City and State.
4. Authorization of the issuance of a notice to proceed for the acquisition of the light rail vehicles to allow light rail service to Town Center to commence December 2019.
5. Authorize City issuance of design-build project requests for proposals by December 31, 2016.

The next step for the projects is for HRT to have its consultants finish 30 percent design documents by October 1, 2016.

Atlantic Avenue Trolleys

All 14 vintage trolleys have arrived from Wisconsin for service beginning in May. The City has also funded having an HRT supervisor for peak congestion periods to make sure the Atlantic Avenue Trolley (Route 30) operation runs on schedule. The total cost for the vehicles was $6.1 million with 55 percent funded by the State and 45 percent by the City.
The Director's Office includes a Management and Support team that exists to provide centralized coordination of activities throughout the department. The essential functions fall into three broad categories: customer service, technical services and financial systems and controls.

**Boards and Commissions Support**

Management and Support Function Highlights:

- **Intake** - create Accela records and GIS polygons and ensure necessary documents are maintained for Planning Commission (PC), Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) and the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area (CBPA); update the PCD Zoning Layer after City Council (CC) action.
- **Notification** - assure compliance with State code notification requirements by coordinating legal notices in the Beacon, notifying adjacent property owners and distributing signs for posting.
- **Cashiering** - accept, process and reconcile fees.
- **Clerking for Public Hearings** - Coordinate the voting and the summary or verbatim minutes.
- **Customer Service** - Initial contact for answering customer questions pertaining to intake, processes, application status, historical information and property research.

**What’s New in Accela?**

Are you working in Accela? Notice the City Map link on the left under Quicklinks. The City Map has a new layer that shows BZA Actions, CBPA Actions, Historic Review Board Actions, and Wetland Permits in addition to the DSC, Planning Commission and City Council Actions.