

**Charlotte County Board Of County Commissioners
Agenda Item Summary**

Item Number: G- 1

1 DEPARTMENT MAKING REQUEST

Community Development

2 MEETING DATE

7/22/2014 9:00:00 AM

3 REQUESTED MOTION/ACTION

Approve the addition of a total of seven (7) positions to the Community Development department to address increasing volumes of permits.

4 AGENDA

Consent

5 IS THIS ITEM BUDGETED (IF APPLICABLE) - No

Budget Action

Approve budget adjustment # BA-14-23 in the amount of \$96,131.

Financial Impact Summary Statement

Of the \$96,131 amount needed for the remainder of this year, \$11,338 is funded by the Genreal Fund and \$84,793 is funded by the Building Construction Services Fund. For FY15 the funding needed is \$490,057. Of this amount, \$67,463 is funded by the General Fund and \$428,594 is funded by the Building Construction Services Fund.

Detailed Analysis Attached -

Budget Officer-

6 BACKGROUND (Why is this Action Necessary, and What Action will be accomplished)

The Community Development department is seeing an increase in the number of permit applications received by the department. Staffing has not been increased to allow an acceptable response to this increase and therefore permitting service levels are falling below levels acceptable to the construction industry. As a result, the Building Industry Oversight Committee has worked with staff to develop a recommendation to add certain key positions to the department to alleviate service levels and position the department to handle future growth.

The creation of seven (7) additional positions within the building and zoning divisions of community development

ATTACHMENTS:

Name:	Description:	Type:
<input type="checkbox"/> Justification for building only - June 13 2014.docx	Cover memo	Cover Memo
<input type="checkbox"/> EIS - Additional staffing.docx	Economic Impact Statement	Backup Material
<input type="checkbox"/> Visio-proposed changes 6-20-2014.pdf	Proposed Organizational Chart	Backup Material
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional Positions Cost Breakdown - 6-20-2014.pdf	Cost Breakdown	Backup Material
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional Positions - 6-13-2014.pdf	Budget Amendments	Budget Amendment



MEMORANDUM

Date: 6/20/2014

To: Board of County Commissioners

Via: Kelly Shoemaker, Deputy County Administrator

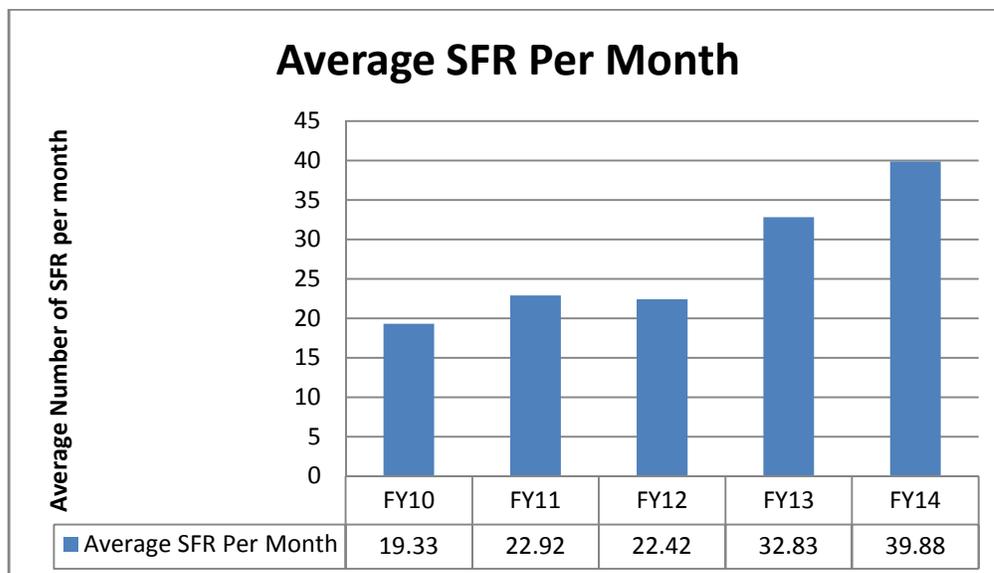
From: Ty Harris, Director, Community Development

Subject: Additional Positions

Honorable Commissioners,

The Community Development Department is facing some challenges relating to its staffing and service levels. The challenges are primarily as a result of steadily increasing permitting volumes and are detailed below:

- 1) Service levels in the building division and customer service areas of the department are impacted by increased activity in the construction industry. The figure below shows the average number of single family homes issued per month over the past five years.



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“Single Family Homes” is an industry wide indicator to show activity levels in the construction industry. When Single Family Homes increase, there is typically a corresponding increase in all other types of permitting, which Charlotte County is seeing.

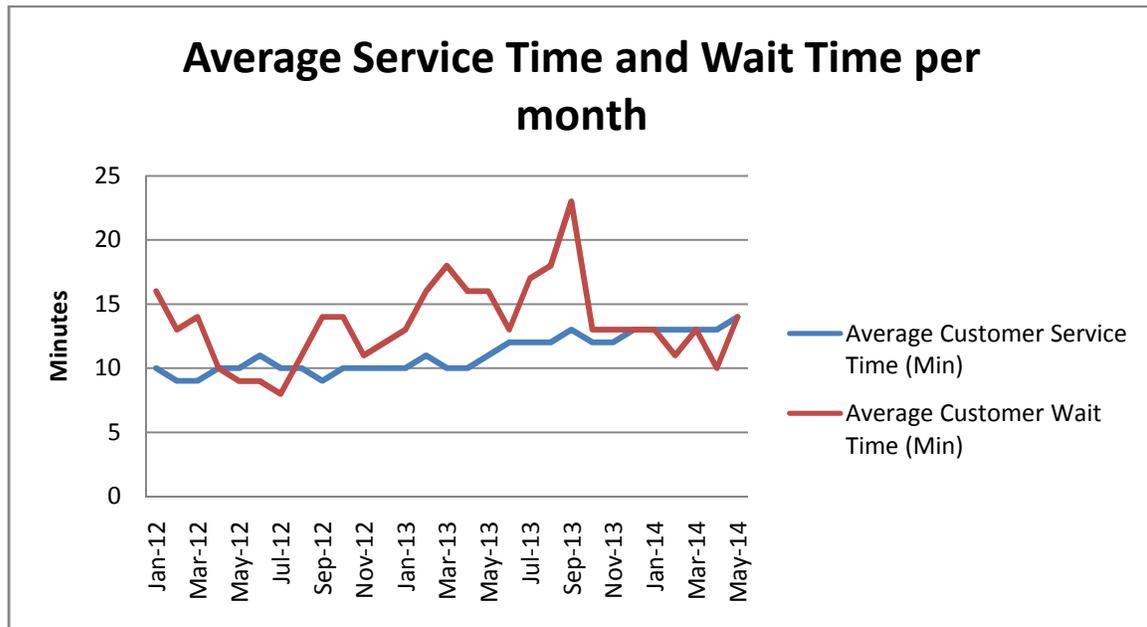
As illustrated by this chart, the average number of single family homes issued per month has increased in both FY13 and again in FY14 (YTD) and it is anticipated that this trend will continue to show a steady increase.

An increase in permitting impacts nearly all divisions of community development, therefore, any delay due to staffing levels in one area has a result of slowing down the process for the entire permit.

Specific issues include longer wait times for customers visiting the department, longer review times and longer waits for inspections.

- 2) Customers visiting the department are seeing not only longer wait times, but are also spending more time with the customer service employee. When new permitting increases there is a corresponding increase in the reactivation of expired permits, increased levels of unlicensed contracting and a larger number of code enforcement complaints relating to recently purchased homes. Many of these issues involve complex explanations and more time with each customer to help solve their specific issues.

The chart below shows how the average service time has increased, along with the corresponding wait times for each customer interaction since January 2012



As represented in the chart, the average service time has been increasing steadily through the report period. The average wait time is a little less consistent and actually shows a significant improvement in September of 2013. This is due to a process improvement made in the department to help improve the times. Unfortunately, the department still sees an average wait of 12 to 13 minutes per customer. The peak wait times are typically seen over the lunchtime periods when waits can be as long as an hour. This is due to two factors: reduced staffing as staff leave for lunch and increased volumes as more customers come in to the department during the lunchtime period.

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Although all efforts are made to minimize this impact through scheduling, there is no way to eliminate higher volumes during the lunchtime, but service levels will be improved by adding additional staff.

- 3) Customers with smaller permits are waiting longer to get their permits. This is again due to the sheer volume of applications. In 2010, the department placed a plans examiner directly at the front counter with the aim of providing a “while you wait” service for some permit types that require a single building plans review. Due to the volumes, this has turned into a one to two day wait for these permits and is not providing the desired level of service. In addition, staff is still seeing a large number of rejections due to incomplete or incorrect paperwork.

Customer Service staff are able to ensure that all of the required documents are submitted but are not qualified to review the technical specifications laid out in those documents to highlight potential issues prior to application – this is done by a licensed plans reviewer.

- 4) During the downturn in the economy, the department eliminated many of its managerial staff. In particular, the Deputy Building Official, the Inspections Manager and the Plans Review Manager positions were all eliminated, leaving the Building Official as the only technical manager in the Building division. As volumes have started to increase, the Building Official is being drawn into the day to day activities of the department (plans review and inspections) which pulls him away from the duties he should be performing as the Building Official. There is no back up for the Building Official and with the volume that the department is seeing, along with the complex issues relating to expired permits, department staff recommend the addition of an Assistant Building Official. The department will not only be able to utilize this position to assist the Building Official in his duties, but will also be able to utilize their multiple licenses to cover gaps in the technical licenses due to annual leave etc.

The department, in conjunction with the Building Industry Oversight Committee (BIOC) and the Permitting Process Steering Group (a sub-committee of the BIOC) has developed recommendations to attempt to alleviate these issues and position the department to be able to quickly react to additional activity.

This was discussed at the Building Industry Oversight Committee meeting on May 23 2014 at which point, the Committee made a formal recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. The formal recommendation is a combination of needs identified by the Permitting Process Steering Group; staff identified needs and additional needs identified by the BIOC members. The formal recommendation for additional staffing from the BIOC is as follows:

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Position	Need	Identified by
Customer Service Specialist	Fill immediately	This position was identified as critical by the Permit Process Steering Group to reduce customer wait times for both walk-in customers and phone calls.
2 x Plans Examiner	Fill one immediately and hold one until need justified	1) This first position was identified by the Permitting Process Steering Group as critical and will work closely with the Customer Service Staff to triage applications at a greater level of detail. The aim of this is to reduce rejections and speed up the process. 2) The second position was recommended by the BIOC to be filled when the activity levels are sufficient to justify the position.
Deputy Building Official	Fill immediately	Staff identified this as a need to provide technical assistance to the Building Official and additional supervision and support to both the Plans Examiners and the Inspectors.
Zoning Technician	Hold until need justified	This position was recommended by the BIOC – although this is a general fund position and not technically in the purview of the BIOC, it is a critical piece of the permitting process. This would be filled when the activity levels are sufficient to justify the position.
2 x Inspector	Hold until need justified	These positions were recommended by the BIOC. Both positions would be filled when the activity levels are sufficient to justify the position. The positions created are non-trade specific – this would also be determined at the time the positions are to be filled.

Funding for the positions comes primarily from the Building Special Revenue Fund which is fully funded by permit fees. Permit fee revenue has been steadily increasing over the past two years and is projected to be 15% higher than anticipated in this budget year. This, coupled with an anticipated reduction in overtime as a result of increased staffing, is sufficient to cover the added cost of the new positions. Two of the positions will be partially or wholly funded by the general fund (30% of the Customer Service Specialist, and 100% of the Zoning Technician) which again, is supplemented (although not fully funded) by fees.

Attached is a breakdown of the amounts needed from both the building fund and the general fund for these positions. The breakdown shows projected expenses if the positions to be filled immediately are filled by August 2014 and includes any capital expenditure needed for items such as vehicles. A budget amendment is also attached to make the adjustments needed in this fiscal year.

To illustrate the impact on the department's organization, a chart is attached showing where the new positions would be placed within the organization.

The department is not simply relying on additional staffing as a way to improve service levels. The following initiatives have either been implemented or are under review to help improve service levels:

- 1) Daily tracking and communication with applicants if a permit is with the department longer than 5 business days – this has been in place for several months and is not only keeping applicants updated, it is providing a mechanism to quickly handle permits that have been routed incorrectly.
- 2) Development of Electronic Document Review for permits to enable concurrent reviews and streamline processes.
- 3) Proposed development of an App to allow our contractors to schedule inspections and pay fees from their smart phones.
- 4) Proposed development of an App to allow our citizens to check the status of a contractor with the County.
- 5) Streamlining in the lobby to reduce wait times including multi-skilling employees to work with both permitting and zoning customers – this has been implemented and has resulted in a reduced wait time.
- 6) Working on publishing permitting data via an open source platform to improve online reporting capabilities and present our data in a consumable format for external app developers.

The local construction industry is vital to the economy of Charlotte County and time is money – any delay in permitting can have a significant impact on our local developers and it is imperative that we do all we can to minimize this impact. Therefore, I would respectfully request that the Board of County Commissioners, acting on the recommendation of the Building Industry Oversight Committee, approve the creation of the seven (7) additional positions, three (3) of which will be posted immediately with the remaining four (4) positions held until such time the permitting activity levels warrant them being filled. I am confident that this approach, coupled with the other changes the department has made, or is in the process of making, will allow it to manage the increased volumes we are already seeing along with positioning the department to act quickly should the activity level rise at a quicker than expected rate.

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ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

PURPOSE: Analyze what the ordinance is designed to accomplish. Describe the present situation and the effect the ordinance will have thereon.

The local construction industry is very important to the economic success of the County. We have entered a period of recovery and are seeing permitting levels rebound – although not to what they were in the 2005-2007 period - they are showing steady improvement over prior years.

A critical part of any construction project is ensuring the project is fully compliant with all local, state and federal regulations that may apply to the project. In Charlotte County, the Community Development Department is the regulatory agency responsible for ensuring compliance.

Prior to the issuance of a building permit, various checks are performed to ensure that all applicable local, state and federal regulations are addressed or approvals have been obtained from the appropriate external agencies. After issuance of the building permit, periodic inspections are completed to ensure that what is being constructed matches the approved plans and remains in compliance. This is done primarily to protect the life safety, health and welfare of the citizens of Charlotte County.

The department is seeing a trend of increasing permitting levels and has reached a point where current staffing levels is not sufficient to maintain service levels. Service levels are dropping, permits are taking longer and our customers are being negatively impacted by the delays. Some delays are being minimized by the use of overtime but this is expensive and not a sustainable solution in the long term.

IMPACT: Consider costs and benefits, both monetary and non-monetary for the private sector (non-governmental entities) and the public sector (governmental entities). In discussing costs and benefits, distinguish between those which are social (borne by society as a whole) and those which are private (accrue to certain individuals or groups). Identify the specific groups which will be impacted.

Adding the additional staff as recommended by the Building Industry Oversight Committee will improve service levels and decrease expenditure for overtime. This will in turn reduce the turnaround time for the applicants from the time they sign a contract to the time they start work – this decreases their costs, helps with planning and gets projects completed for owners in an expeditious manner. In terms of commercial permits – any reduction in time helps get businesses open quicker, hiring faster and contributing to the local economy sooner which is a benefit to the County as a whole.

A. Cost of Implementation:

The costs of adding these positions are detailed in the attached back-up material.

B. Source of Funds/Ultimate Burden of Costs:

The source of funds is primarily the building fund which is entirely comprised of building permit fees – therefore, for this portion; the ultimate burden is the applicants (contractors, owners and developers) who apply for permits.

A small portion of this request comes from the general fund but it is supplemented by permitting fees for other aspects of permitting outside the enforcement of the Florida Building Code. In this case the burden is split between the permit applicants and the Charlotte County tax payers.

C. Effect on Competition and the Employment Market:

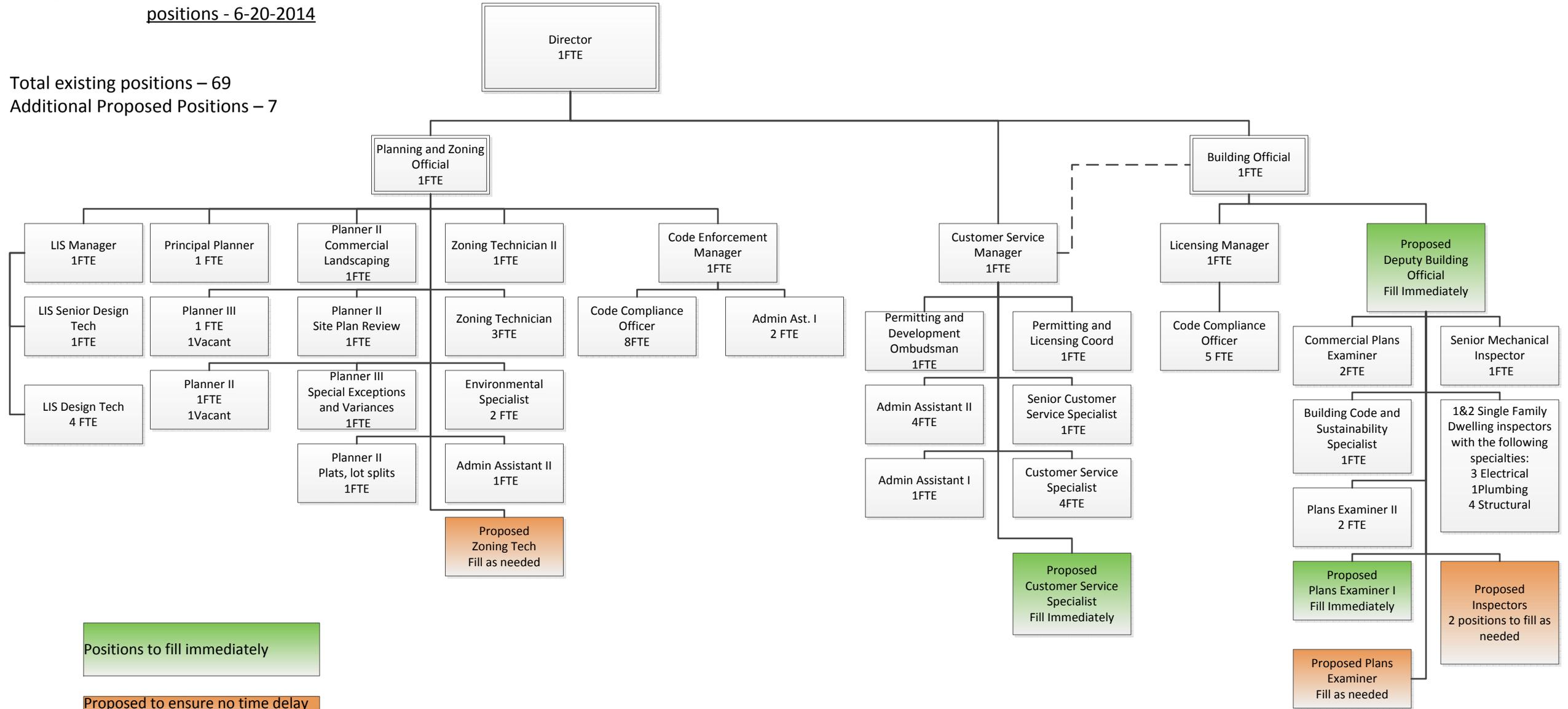
An efficient and effective permitting department is a draw to potential investors; conversely a jurisdiction that has a reputation for slowness can be a deterrent. This action puts the department in a situation to be pro-active rather than reactive and demonstrate that we are cognizant of, and prepared for, the changing market conditions

D. Benefits on Implementation:

This will increase staffing in areas that are critical to the service levels offered by the department. In addition, the positions will allow the department to be pro-active and in a position to quickly act to the changeable construction industry.

Organizational chart showing proposed additional positions - 6-20-2014

Total existing positions – 69
 Additional Proposed Positions – 7



Positions to fill immediately

Proposed to ensure no time delay on adding positions needed in the future

GENERAL FUND EXPENSES

Position Name	FY14 cost (assuming 2 months) - includes cost of equipment	FY15 Cost (full year cost)
Customer Service Specialist - Grade 8	\$ 2,616.45	\$ 15,568.39
Zoning Tech - Grade 8	\$ 8,721.49	\$ 51,894.65
Totals	\$ 11,337.94	\$ 67,463.04

BCS FUND EXPENSES

Position Name	FY14 cost (assuming 2 months) - includes cost of equipment	FY15 Cost (full year cost)
Customer Service Specialist - Grade 8	\$ 6,105.04	\$ 36,326.25
Plans Examiner - Grade 16 (1)	\$ 11,325.64	\$ 68,746.58
Plans Examiner - Grade 16 (2)	\$ 11,325.64	\$ 68,746.58
Deputy Building Official - Grade 24	\$ 20,975.25	\$ 99,851.44
Building Inspector - Grade 16 (1)	\$ 17,530.70	\$ 77,461.82
Building Inspector - Grade 16 (2)	\$ 17,530.70	\$ 77,461.82
Totals	\$ 84,792.97	\$ 428,594.49

**CHARLOTTE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Transfer #: BA-14-23

Description: Transfer of funding for creation of SEVEN (7) new positions affecting remaining 2 months of FY14 (August-September)

Department Name: ROW/Code/Building

Fund Name: General Fund/BCS

Project Name	Project	Task	Phase	Details	Amount	Beginning Balance	Adjusted Balance	Account Name	Fund	Org.	TFA	State	Local	Amount	Beginning Balance	Adjusted Balance
								Salaries	0001	152011	515	12	0001	4,416.00	1,039,205.00	1,043,621.00
								Accrued Comp Absences	0001	152011	515	18	0001	58.73	13,803.00	13,861.73
								Fica	0001	152011	515	21	0001	337.82	74,000.00	74,337.82
								Retirement	0001	152011	515	22	0001	306.91	69,384.00	69,690.91
								Life & Health Insurance	0001	152011	515	23	0001	3,040.10	271,108.00	274,148.10
								Worker's Compensation	0001	152011	515	24	0001	11.92	5,692.00	5,703.92
								Office Supplies	0001	152011	515	51	0001	50.00	4,980.00	5,030.00
								Equipment under \$1,000 each	0001	152011	515	51	0002	500.00	-	500.00
								Salaries	0001	252008	538	12	0001	220.80	362,484.00	362,704.80
								Accrued Comp Absences	0001	252008	538	18	0001	2.94	6,405.00	6,407.94
								Fica	0001	252008	538	21	0001	16.89	25,446.00	25,462.89
								Retirement	0001	252008	538	22	0001	15.35	24,514.00	24,529.35
								Life & Health Insurance	0001	252008	538	23	0001	152.01	91,764.00	91,916.01
								Worker's Compensation	0001	252008	538	24	0001	0.60	5,357.00	5,357.60
								Office Supplies	0001	252008	538	51	0001	2.50	520.00	522.50
								Equipment under \$1,000 each	0001	252008	538	51	0002	25.00	720.00	745.00
								Salaries	0001	252019	524	12	0001	1,104.00	928,847.00	929,951.00
								Accrued Comp Absences	0001	252019	524	18	0001	14.68	11,204.00	11,218.68
								Fica	0001	252019	524	21	0001	84.46	66,314.00	66,398.46
								Retirement	0001	252019	524	22	0001	76.73	61,495.00	61,571.73
								Life & Health Insurance	0001	252019	524	23	0001	760.03	238,111.00	238,871.03
								Worker's Compensation	0001	252019	524	24	0001	2.98	21,497.00	21,499.98
																-
Total Project Adjustment:						-	Total General Ledger Adjustment:						11,200.44			

Explanation for the specific needed transfer:

Increase in permit activity has resulted in excessive overtime - creation of Zoning Tech, Customer Service Rep, Plans Examiners, Building Inspectors and Deputy Building Official will alleviate this.

Reason why requested account did not have necessary funds causing the need for this transfer:

Creation of new positions - these amounts are for the remaining 2 months of FY14 (August-Sept).

Reason why excess funds are available for transfer from the account being reduced:

Both funds have sufficient reserves

**CHARLOTTE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Transfer #: BA-14-23

Department Name: ROW/Code/Building

Description: Transfer of funding for creation of SEVEN (7) new positions affecting remaining 2 months of FY14 (August-September)

Fund Name: General Fund/BCS

Project Name	Project	Task	Phase	Details	Amount	Beginning Balance	Adjusted Balance	Account Name	Fund	Org.	TFA	State	Local	Amount	Beginning Balance	Adjusted Balance													
								Travel	0001	252019	524	40	0001	-	4,750.00	4,750.00													
								Telephone	0001	252019	524	41	0003	-	3,678.00	3,678.00													
								R/M Vehicles	0001	252019	524	46	0035	-	9,823.00	9,823.00													
								Office Supplies	0001	252019	524	51	0001	12.50	5,000.00	5,012.50													
								Equipment under \$1,000 each	0001	252019	524	51	0002	125.00	100.00	225.00													
								Gas/Oil	0001	252019	524	52	0008	-	26,000.00	26,000.00													
								Educational Expenses	0001	252019	524	55	0002	-	3,600.00	3,600.00													
								Interfund Trf - Vehicle Repl	0001	252019	581	91	1038	-	9,465.00	9,465.00													
								Rsv-Contingency-Gen	0001	999999	599	98	0001	(11,337.94)	11,331,138.00	11,319,800.06													
								Salaries	1030	252003	524	12	0001	38,841.60	1,128,633.00	1,167,474.60													
								Accrued Comp Absences	1030	252003	524	18	0001	516.59	12,807.00	13,323.59													
								Fica	1030	252003	524	21	0001	2,971.38	82,206.00	85,177.38													
								Retirement	1030	252003	524	22	0001	2,699.49	69,506.00	72,205.49													
								Life & Health Insurance	1030	252003	524	23	0001	17,328.57	280,427.00	297,755.57													
								Worker's Compensation	1030	252003	524	24	0001	444.33	16,550.00	16,994.33													
								Travel	1030	252003	524	40	0001	416.67	8,000.00	8,416.67													
								Telephone	1030	252003	524	41	0003	306.00	29,647.00	29,953.00													
								R/M Vehicles	1030	252003	524	46	0035	250.00	12,583.00	12,833.00													
								Office Supplies	1030	252003	524	51	0001	285.00	15,750.00	16,035.00													
								Equipment under \$1,000 each	1030	252003	524	51	0002	4,650.00	4,500.00	9,150.00													
								Gas/Oil	1030	252003	524	52	0008	750.00	46,500.00	47,250.00													
								Educational Expenses	1030	252003	524	55	0002	333.33	14,000.00	14,333.33													
								Interfund Trf - Vehicle Repl	1030	252003	581	91	1038	15,000.00	25,365.00	40,365.00													
								Rsv-Building Dept	1030	252003	589	98	0030	(84,792.97)	335,610.00	250,817.03													
Total Project Adjustment:														-	Total General Ledger Adjustment:														-

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Reason why excess funds are available for transfer from the account being reduced:

Both funds have sufficient reserves