

Mission

To provide programs, services and direction that create private and public sector investments that lead to the best possible environment for Clearwater's citizens and businesses to live, work, and play. These programs and services will be delivered in a customer friendly and professional manner that is characterized by prompt, accurate, consistent and fair service.

Department Description

The Planning Department establishes the City's long range plans in concert with the City's overall goals. The Department is responsible for creation and administration of the City's Comprehensive Plan, the 20-year plan for the entire city, as well as detailed neighborhood and area plans. The Department also implements the City's redevelopment goals through site plan reviews of public and private projects.

The Planning Department is organized into two operational divisions: Long Range Planning and Development Review.

Long Range Planning Division

The Long Range Planning Division creates and administers the City's long-range planning programs that establish the City's goals for the future and insures consistency between these long-range goals and City policy and financial decisions. This Division is responsible for all City long-range planning programs: comprehensive planning, downtown redevelopment, transportation planning, annexation, historic preservation, special area plans/projects and general research. The Division worked on the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan Downtown Design Guidelines, which was adopted by the City Council on November 4, 2004 and became effective after approval by the Countywide Planning Authority. The Division also prepared an amendment to Beach by Design and prepared a new Flood Plain Management Plan.

The Division devotes time to coordinating programs with other City departments and participating in policy development with other agencies such as the Pinellas Planning Council, Metropolitan Planning Organization, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and the Florida Legislature. The Planners assigned to special projects must also work with interested parties on these projects including citizens, City boards, neighborhood groups and/or special interest groups. Approximately 60 percent of the division's work is devoted to special projects.

Current Work Projects

- ❖ Comprehensive Plan & Beach Plan Administration
- ❖ Old Florida District Study
- ❖ Processing Site Plan Applications in Downtown

Development Review Division

The Development Review Division reviews all new and redevelopment site plans at three levels: Permit issuance, Development Review Committee (City staff), and Community Development Board (public hearing board). Its primary responsibilities are to provide information and training on the Community Development Code to citizens, neighborhood associations, realtors, and professional designers. The Division administers the Code and reviews and determines compliance of applications for development approval. This includes all types of applications such as plats, building permits and lot divisions. Landscape, site design, and sign alternatives for private sector projects are discussed in great detail.

Development Review Division (continued)

The Division is also responsible for tree removal permit review, tree protection during construction, landscaping, and site plan compliance after plan approval, which is administered through on-site inspections. This Division is assigned special projects such as corridor plans and landscape design. The Community Development Code requires all of the recurring responsibilities of the Development Review Division.

Current Work Projects

- ❖ Streamlining the process by which applications are reviewed.
- ❖ Processing applications for Flexible Standard Development, Flexible Development, Sign Permit and Comprehensive Sign Program applications including the Days Inn redevelopment and Pelican Walk Parking Garage projects.
- ❖ Inspecting sites for landscape compliance prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy Permit, and reinspecting sites for continued compliance.

	<i>Actual 2002/03</i>	<i>Actual 2003/04</i>	<i>Budget 2004/05</i>	<i>Budget 2005/06</i>	<i>% Change</i>
Personnel	827,730	921,849	1,000,540	1,228,480	22.8%
Operating	61,121	55,237	122,550	138,580	13.1%
Internal Services	120,556	108,724	121,560	117,270	-3.5%
Capital	8,252	-	-	-	n/a
Transfers	65,000	-	-	-	n/a
Total	1,082,659	1,085,810	1,244,650	1,484,330	19.3%
Program Full-Time Equivalent Positions	17.0	16.0	16.0	18.5	

Performance Measures

<u>Measure</u>	<u>2005</u>
Annexations Completed	43
Increase in tax base due to annexations	\$6,754,300
Site plans applications presented to Development review Council	197
Building Constructions permits reviewed and processed	1,875
Other Permits issues (i.e. tree removal, occupational, signs, etc.)	4,996

Program Highlights

- ❖ The Planning program is supported by 18.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, an increase of 2.5 FTE's from the 2004/05 budget. On 3/3/2005, the Council approved the addition of a registered architect, and on 6/2/2005 an additional Planner III was approved. This will improve the Department's ability to process and analyze complicated cases and improve customer service. New for fiscal 2005/06 is the addition of a 0.5 FTE part-time Staff Assistant. Personnel Services reflect a 22.8% increase due to the additional positions.
- ❖ Operating expenditures reflect a 13.1% increase primarily due to a \$25,000 increase in budgeted professional services for consultants for Downtown and beach redevelopment, architectural reviews and the enclave annexation program.
- ❖ The department has reduced its number of personal computers, resulting in a decrease in information technology charges and a 3.5% decrease in internal service charges.
- ❖ There have been no other significant changes in the Planning Department in this fiscal year. The 2005/06 budget for this office reflects an increase of 19.3% over the previous year's budget, due to the addition of an Architect, a Planner and .5 FTE Staff Assistant, and increased consulting services.