

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, 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 and Beach Plan Administration
- ❖ Comprehensive Plan Update
- ❖ Conducting Small Area Plans for Selected Areas

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.

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.
- ❖ Inspecting sites for landscape compliance prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy Permit, and re-inspecting sites for continued compliance.

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY					
	Actual 2004/05	Actual 2005/06	Budget 2006/07	Budget 2007/08	% Change
Personnel	921,718	1,076,750	1,199,580	1,200,310	0%
Operating	161,799	68,528	103,920	64,360	-38%
Internal Services	111,525	111,399	141,880	150,080	6%
Total Planning	1,195,042	1,256,677	1,445,380	1,414,750	-2%

DEPARTMENT FULL TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS				
	Actual 2004/05	Actual 2005/06	Budget 2006/07	Budget 2007/08
Planning	16.0	18.5	18.5	17.0
Total Planning	16.0	18.5	18.5	17.0

Program Highlights

- ❖ The Planning Department is supported by 17 full time equivalent (FTE) positions, a reduction of 1.5 FTE from the 2006/07 budget. A .5 FTE Staff Assistant position has been eliminated. In addition, a position of Planner has been transferred to the Economic Development Department. These changes result in basically the same level of funding for personnel services costs as the 2006/07 budget.
- ❖ Operating costs reflect a 38% decrease primarily due to a decrease of \$40,000 in professional services for outside consulting services.
- ❖ There have been no other significant changes in the Planning Department. The Budget for this Department reflects a decrease of 2% from the 2006/07 budget.