



## Legislation Text

File #: 17-611, Version: 1

Receive a report on the Department of Resource Management Planning Services Division 2017/2019 Work Plan

Published Notice Required? Yes ☐ No ☒  
Public Hearing Required? Yes ☐ No ☒

### **DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:**

The Department of Resource Management recommends that the Board of Supervisors receive an update on the Department of Resource Management Planning Services Division 2017/2019 Work Plan for planning related projects and reports.

### **SUMMARY:**

The proposed 2017/2019 Work Plan (Attached) for the Planning Services Division reflects various important policy initiatives that have emerged and evolved over the past few years. Included are a number of specific items from the 2008 General Plan implementation program, as well as, Board requested projects, and several State mandated planning program requirements to be addressed. These items are in addition to the ongoing planning activities of permit processing and public information. The Work Plan focuses on the efforts for FY2017/18 and FY2018/19 although it is anticipated that some projects will continue beyond FY2018/19. A projection of hours required and allocated to the various activities and projects in the Division and the staff resources necessary to carry them out is provided to assist in understanding the overall Division work flow and where there are capacities and constraints in taking on new tasks or adjusting the priority of tasks already underway.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The 2017/2019 Work Plan for activities and projects are funded entirely by the General Fund. The exceptions being application fees paid by the project applicants or, in the case of housing activities, through funds received from the State or Federal government. Several of the projects are State mandated. An example is the current effort to develop cannabis regulations. In fiscal year 2016/2017, the Planning Division received \$1.6 million in General Fund support. The remainder of the Planning Division budget is covered by fees and charges.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### Planning Services

Planning Services is one of eight operational divisions within the Department of Resource Management. The Division consists of seven (7) full time Planners. The Planning Services Division has specific responsibilities for overseeing land use administration over the unincorporated areas of the county that include:

- Oversee the County's General Plan for land use, implement policy planning activities including General Plan amendments and updates, specific plan and neighborhood plan preparation, and provide staff support to special projects and functions as County liaison to other planning efforts and organizations.

- Implement the functions associated with land use planning, including the application of zoning regulations, processing of subdivision maps, conducting environmental review of proposed projects, and facilitating the public review process.
- Provide technical support for various long-range and regional planning-related projects, including: The Housing Element, Solano Transportation Authority (STA) projects, the Decennial Census, and ABAG's Regional Housing Needs Allocation and FOCUS programs. FOCUS is a development and conservation strategy for the Bay area.
- Support the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission in developing land use policy and assisting in the decision-making process on land use matters.
- Provide technical and staff support to the Agriculture Advisory Committee, County Housing Authority, the Solano County Airport Land Use Commission, and Solano Open Space, formerly, Tri City - County Cooperative Planning Group.

### 2017/2019 Work Plan

Since the General Plan's adoption in 2008, the County has been systematically addressing implementation measures established as part of plan adoption and has coordinated and staffed the development of several specific plans called for in the 2008 General Plan. The Middle Green Valley Specific Plan, the Suisun Valley Strategic Plan and the Climate Action Plan are all examples of such that have been completed. The Work Plan for the next two fiscal years reflects a continuation of efforts to follow up on General Plan implementation measures, including the current effort to establish a regional park district.

In reviewing overall Division capacity to take on new projects and deliver these along with existing projects staff considers are factors in the range of responsibilities that are Planning Services Division's day to day responsibilities and are ongoing in nature. This is illustrated in the attached spreadsheet which breaks out the Division workload by Special/General Plan Implementation projects, Large Entitlement projects, and ongoing activities and responsibilities. The number of hours dedicated to ongoing efforts and activities is significant. The larger entitlement requests are broken out from the more routine application processing tasks as they often span more than one fiscal year and require significant time to bring to completion.

An example of a special project not specifically listed in the General Plan but essentially mandated by changes to State Law is the County's current effort to develop cannabis regulations. This effort has already required a significant commitment of staff hours over the past few years and will likely continue through this fiscal year and into FY2018/19 depending on the nature of regulations adopted, further changes to state law and what type of staff resources are necessary to implement.

Several of the General Plan implementation projects listed in the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 Work Plan are continued efforts from previous years and will continue into FY2017/18. One example is work staff has performed on a noise ordinance which has received significant public scrutiny at the Planning Commission level and is being re-evaluated by staff given the input we have received. It will likely be modified to focus on nuisances that generate noise issues in addition to other noise ordinance provisions and be completed in late FY2018/19.

An ordinance to address vacation rentals is an example of a project that emerged due to increased consumer interest in short term vacation homes, particularly in rural settings such as the Suisun and Middle Green Valley areas, which have generated complaints and concerns. The draft ordinance received considerable public scrutiny at the Planning Commission level and is being re-evaluated. The range of public input received included requests for prohibiting short term rentals to allowing by right without regulatory provisions. Given trends and interests in vacation rentals, staff will re-evaluate standards to ensure rental units do not erode neighborhood character and facilitate the County's ability to collect transient occupancy tax for such units.

Significant land use permit activity and entitlement requests influence the Divisions capacity to address projects and ordinances. Examples include the Woodcreek69 development proposal, a large dairy expansion proposal and a proposed expansion of the Hay Road Landfill. These all involve significant environmental review and staff time. Several specific plans including Middle Green Valley are now entering the implementation phase including county service area formation The implementation phase includes work to form a County Service area and process initial tentative maps and development proposals within the specific plan boundaries in the next two years.

Examples of Planning Services Division responsibilities in the On-going category include the provision of services to the public and applicants seeking development entitlements or general information. To that end the work plan contains staff time allocation and reflect a continued emphasis on improving the development permit process. These include, among others: testing an “over-the-counter” building permit for minor building projects, enhancing customer service training, maintaining and improving a case management approach to development review permitting, improving intra- and inter-departmental coordination on permit reviews, improving communication and noticing to the public through the County web site and informational materials, and conducting periodic updates of the zoning regulations. Also included in this ongoing category of work is time allocated to support regional planning commitments of the County including Priority Conservation Areas, monitoring mitigation for wind turbine projects, inspection of mines under the State Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) program, etc.

For Board consideration in this Work Plan are additional projects/initiatives that have emerged over the last year either through development projects at public hearing, through a Board committee or Board discussion. This includes work to assist in the preparation of a plan to address agriculture sustainability in the Cache Slough area of the County and the formation of a countywide park district. Work on the Parks District effort is being conducted jointly with staff from the Parks Division.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

The Board of Supervisors could choose to not accept or amend the 2017/2019 Planning Services Work Plan. Such actions are not recommended as the proposed work plan reflects prior Board direction and realistic achievable levels of production given staff resources that are available and budgeted.

#### **OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

The County Counsel's office has reviewed this item and concurs with the recommendation.

#### **CAO RECOMMENDATION:**

**APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION**