

# Department of Planning and Development

**Mission** To promote livable communities which enhance the quality of life for the present and the future by providing services, advice and assistance on land use planning, zoning, revitalization, design and development review to citizens, businesses, and decision-makers in Fairfax County and to facilitate strategic redevelopment and reinvestment opportunities within targeted areas that align with the community's vision and improve the economic vitality, appearance, and function of those areas.

**Focus** The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) is composed of five major work units: Administration; the Zoning Administration Division; the Zoning Evaluation Division; the Planning Division; and the Community Revitalization/Urban Centers Section. The primary purpose of the department is to provide proposals, advice, and assistance on land use, development, revitalization, urban design and zoning issues to the community and decision-makers in Fairfax County.

DPD is undertaking several initiatives designed to improve service delivery to support the County's economic development and revitalization goals, improve development process timelines, and address rising workload requirements to ensure that the capacity exists to meet customer expectations and to respond to development opportunities. Service delivery improvement is a multiagency initiative that includes each of the County's land development agencies working to improve the speed, consistency, and predictability of the land development process, as well as providing improved customer service, community engagement and reporting. DPD is focused on implementing projects that will support economic development and revitalization opportunities and enhance service delivery, as described below:

The County recognizes the importance of focusing growth on its mixed-use centers. The department has allocated significant resources toward planning, zoning, revitalization, and urban design activities to ensure that the County continues to manage growth in a way that is attractive and effective, respects the environment and the integrity of existing development, and provides for the future needs of the community. Examples include planning studies for Fairfax Center (Phase III), ongoing Lorton Visioning, staff support for the Reston study, and support for South County Site-Specific Plan Amendment (SSPA) task forces. DPD staff led, or provided support, to community task forces for each of these studies during FY 2021.

The Board adopted eight plan amendments in FY 2021. This included conclusion of two multi-year studies: the McLean Community Business Center Study and the West Fall Church Transit Station Area study (late July 2021); plan amendments at Fair Oaks Mall and the North Gateway Community Business Center, a Policy Plan update to the Housing Element and Workforce Dwelling Unit Policy, and adoption of the Wellington at River Farm Historic Overlay District. The SSPA process for South County continued in FY 2021 with approval of expedited plan amendments and ongoing work with three community task forces for the remaining nominations.

The Planning Division supports and offers staff liaison to several Board-appointed groups. Heritage Resources staff supports the Architectural Review Board (ARB) and History Commission. The Environmental staff provides support to the Wetlands Board, Airport Advisory Council, and the Agricultural and Forestal District Advisory Committee (AFDAC). Staff provide input and analysis on plan amendments, land use studies, zoning applications, and federal reviews.

The Planning Division also leads the department-wide One Fairfax effort by, among other things, annually updating and implementing the department's Equity Impact Plan. In 2021, an equity education team was established that developed and conducted training sessions and book club discussions for staff throughout the department, and staff continues to assist and advise on project specific equity discussions, such as those in support of on-going planning studies in Reston and

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Lorton. In addition, DPD has been reviewing hiring practices and continues to use trained employee representatives who serve on interview panels as objective observers of the interview process to ensure interviews are handled equitably and conducted consistently. In the next fiscal year, DPD will broaden its equity implementation efforts with the addition of a dedicated staff person to function as the department's equity lead, to, among other things, develop a framework for implementation of the DPD Equity Impact Plan.

A multi-year effort to modernize the Zoning Ordinance, known as zMOD, was recently completed and resulted in the adoption of a new Zoning Ordinance effective July 1, 2021. The new streamlined Ordinance is half the size of the previous Ordinance, accomplished through elimination of repetition and use of easy-to-understand language, graphics, and figures. In addition to being easier to understand, the Ordinance is now hosted on a user-friendly online platform, enCodePlus, which enables those who are not familiar with zoning regulations to access the appropriate regulations. Training and outreach on the new Zoning Ordinance is ongoing and includes a series of lunch and learn sessions that are recorded and posted on the zMOD web page. In addition, staff will conduct ongoing monitoring and review of the revised standards and will recommend changes as appropriate to address changing needs and policies impacting the County.

Two new initiatives that will extend into FY 2023 include: 1) a comprehensive review and evaluation of parking requirements using consultant services and in partnership with Land Development Services; and 2) Phase 2 of the Sign Ordinance update which will review the Comprehensive Sign Plan approval process and address sign issues associated with mixed use projects. Both initiatives will entail extensive community and stakeholder outreach. The Zoning Administration Division (ZAD) will continue to use innovative approaches to reach a broader and diverse audience and engage more frequently with stakeholders.

Urban design is a focus for the department and work continues on the production of Urban Design Guidelines for revitalization districts/areas. An all-encompassing Volume I: Urban Design Guidelines for Fairfax County's Revitalization Districts and Areas was endorsed by the Board of Supervisors in late 2018. It contains the best practices in urban design that are applicable to all the revitalization districts and areas. The Board has also endorsed the District Design Guidelines for the Richmond Highway Area. Work is currently underway to update the District Design Guidelines for Annandale and McLean.

In FY 2022, the Zoning Evaluation Division worked on many critical cases to help implement the County's planning and development goals. Major cases such as Autumn Willow in Springfield, and the Aventon in Mt. Vernon, helped further implementation of both design and affordable housing goals. A renovation of Valo Park in Tysons supported County development goals and showcased how older, single use office developments can be retrofitted to add more mixed uses, while a complete renovation of three office buildings in Skyline illustrate how existing offices could be transformed into innovative housing opportunities.

Community engagement on land use issues is a priority and new strategies are required to ensure that the quality of life and the opinions of the County's growing and increasingly diverse population are considered and that all residents have an opportunity to participate in planning and zoning activities. Several mechanisms exist and new ones are being developed to encourage additional and more diverse public participation in response to the recommendations of the 2017 Community Council on Land Use Engagement.

Community meetings, including charrettes, are held in areas of the County considering land use proposals; new webpages are created for all Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendments; and, as Comprehensive Plan amendments and Zoning Ordinance amendments move

through the review, authorization, and adoption processes, information is posted on Facebook and Nextdoor, and shared through Listserv announcements. In addition, DPD has offered opportunities for community members to engage in planning studies and public meetings remotely by streaming meetings live on social media. Community and task force meetings transitioned completely to virtual during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The use of online meeting platforms will continue to be used when in-person/hybrid meetings are not an option due to COVID. Other outreach tools include increased use of social media, surveys, collaboration with the Fairfax County local access channel to create public service announcements, online tutorials, informative videos, and podcasts to provide robust avenues of input, education, and convenient learning opportunities for community residents and other stakeholders.

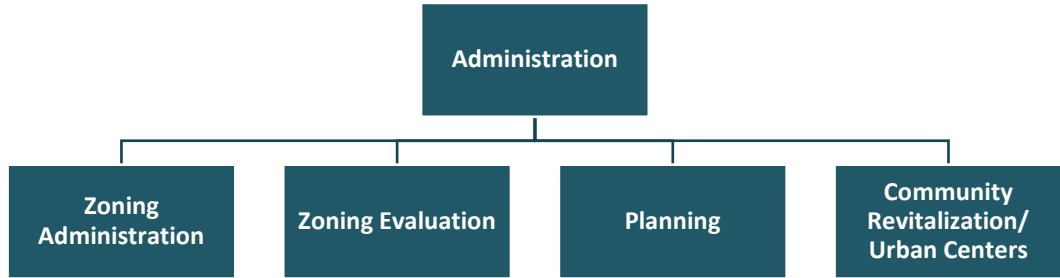
The Planning and Land Use Systems (PLUS) modernization initiative and associated projects seek to implement the best-fit information technology solution to meet the overall objectives for business functionality, customer service, and technology needs of County departments involved in the regulatory, land use and development processes, and modernize the County's land use business, by leveraging current technology. By staying current with advancements in software and communication tools, the department can perform analysis and provide responses tailored to the needs of residents and businesses. The PLUS Project is well on its way to completion, with Release 3 occurring on January 31, 2022, and the last release – Release 4 is anticipated to occur at the end of October 2022. PLUS automates many DPD records enhancing the online services and experience of customers. As PLUS was developed, the department replicated current community engagement initiatives such as including an electronic distribution list function that automatically emails a weekly report to stakeholders listing cases that have been received and accepted for review. This allows citizens or other interested parties to be more aware of zoning cases in areas of interest earlier in the process. A similar report provides information on cases that have been filed but not yet accepted. Both of these reports were built directly into the PLUS platform, along with other reports, so that citizens will have ease of access with all such reports located in one place.

The department has laid the foundation for digital application processing and plan review through the pilot for ePlans, an online land development plan review and markup system. The expertise gained from this pilot is being used to facilitate implementation of the integrated digital plan review markup solution for PLUS. Additionally, the digitization of current and historic residential and commercial property files as well as zoning case files is a significant long-term project that will further streamline and enhance service delivery. Converting paper files to digital files will make zoning and other property information used daily by staff, residents and the development industry for permit review and property research far more accessible and convenient for use. It is intended that this information will be integrated into PLUS for easier and quicker processing of land use requests.

The department is committed to developing reliable qualitative performance measures to establish benchmarks and targets to assist in identifying areas for process improvement that will better serve customers and that align with the Countywide Strategic Plan.

The department will continue to meet staffing challenges presented by loss of experienced managers, planners, and other staff. The department has increased its emphasis on staff training and development and fully supports the Joint Training Academy, which provides staff with a comprehensive baseline overview of the land development process in Fairfax County.

## Organizational Chart



## Budget and Staff Resources

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Adopted	FY 2022 Revised	FY 2023 Advertised
<b>FUNDING</b>				
<b>Expenditures:</b>				
Personnel Services	\$11,628,083	\$12,991,399	\$13,123,899	\$14,159,002
Operating Expenses	1,021,366	736,496	1,801,991	989,607
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$12,649,449</b>	<b>\$13,727,895</b>	<b>\$14,925,890</b>	<b>\$15,148,609</b>
<b>Income:</b>				
Zoning/Miscellaneous Fees	\$2,304,957	\$2,877,403	\$2,308,355	\$2,423,774
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$2,304,957</b>	<b>\$2,877,403</b>	<b>\$2,308,355</b>	<b>\$2,423,774</b>
<b>NET COST TO THE COUNTY</b>	<b>\$10,344,492</b>	<b>\$10,850,492</b>	<b>\$12,617,535</b>	<b>\$12,724,835</b>
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>				
Regular	154 / 154	154 / 154	155 / 155	157 / 157

## FY 2023 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2022 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2023 program:

**Employee Compensation \$1,043,686**

An increase of \$1,043,686 in Personnel Services includes \$520,955 for a 4.01 percent market rate adjustment (MRA) for all employees and \$208,767 for performance-based and longevity increases for non-uniformed merit employees, both effective July 2022. The remaining increase of \$313,964 is included for employee pay increases for specific job classes identified in the County's benchmark class survey of comparator jurisdictions.

**Workload Resources \$125,917**

An increase of \$125,917 includes \$15,155 in Personnel Services, associated with 2/2.0 FTE new positions to address workload requirements. The remaining increase of \$110,762, including \$108,762 in Personnel Services and \$2,000 in Operating Expenses, is included to fully fund an equity lead position redirected by the County Executive during FY 2022 as part of the County-wide efforts to implement the One Fairfax policy.

**Comprehensive Plan Amendment Workload \$250,000**

An increase of \$250,000 is included in Operating Expenses to support implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program adopted by the Board of Supervisors. This will enable planning, urban design and historical preservation consulting services to support the program.

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**Department of Vehicle Services Charges** **\$1,111**  
 An increase of \$1,111 in Department of Vehicle Services Charges is based on anticipated billings for maintenance and operating-related charges.

## Changes to FY 2022 Adopted Budget Plan

*The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2022 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2022 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2021 Carryover Review, FY 2022 Mid-Year Review, and all other approved changes through December 31, 2021:*

**Carryover Adjustments** **\$1,197,995**  
 As part of the FY 2021 Carryover Review, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$1,197,995, including \$132,500 in Personnel Services for a one-time compensation adjustment of \$1,000 for merit employees and \$500 for non-merit employees paid in November 2021. The remaining amount of \$1,065,495 is due to encumbered carryover in Operating Expenses for consulting services supporting the Zoning Ordinance Modernization (zMOD) project.

**Equity Impact Plan Support** **\$0**  
 In order to broaden DPD's equity efforts and develop a framework for implementation of the department's Equity Impact Plan, the County Executive redirected 1/1.0 FTE position to establish a position to function as DPD's equity lead.

## Cost Centers

The five divisions in the Department of Planning and Development are Administration; Zoning Administration; Zoning Evaluation; Planning; and Community Revitalization/Urban Centers Section. These distinct divisions work to fulfill the mission and carry out the key initiatives of the department.

### Administration

Administration is primarily responsible for human resources, payroll, procurement, financial management and information technology. The Administration group also provides network support services; coordinates the digitization of current and historic residential and commercial property files; and provides technical resources by supporting several business computer systems and web and GIS applications. These systems include PLUS, legacy systems such as Fairfax Inspections Database Online system (FIDO), the LDSnet system and the Zoning and Planning System (ZAPS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS); custom web applications; and all DPD website land and public hearing information services. In addition, this group provides the strategic alignment of GIS, web, and core business systems technology to the department's current and future business needs, many included in the PLUS project and other modernization initiatives.

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Adopted	FY 2022 Revised	FY 2023 Advertised
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Total Expenditures	\$2,777,281	\$2,016,886	\$2,078,294	\$2,264,207
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>				
Regular	20 / 20	20 / 20	24 / 24	25 / 25

## Zoning Administration

The Zoning Administration Division maintains and administers the Fairfax County Zoning and Noise Ordinances including the following activities: analyzing and drafting of requested amendments as identified on the Zoning Ordinance Work Program; providing interpretations; responding to appeals of determinations; reviewing or processing permit applications including Building Permits, NonResidential Use Permits, Sign Permits, as well as Home Based Business, Accessory Living Units, Short Term Lodging and Administrative Temporary Permits. In addition, Zoning Administration is responsible for conducting property related research and limited field inspections on an as needed basis to ensure compliance with the Zoning and Noise Ordinances.

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Adopted	FY 2022 Revised	FY 2023 Advertised
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Total Expenditures	\$2,695,662	\$3,164,226	\$4,145,008	\$3,418,240
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>				
Regular	39 / 39	39 / 39	39 / 39	39 / 39

## Zoning Evaluation

The Zoning Evaluation Division is charged with evaluating and processing all zoning applications – from pre- application and submission, through public hearings and decisions, to subsequent interpretations of approved proffers and development conditions. As part of that process, the Zoning Evaluation analyzes applications for conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and compliance with the Zoning Ordinance; formulates recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA); negotiates proffers and development conditions; and completes all public hearing legal notice requirements. In addition, Zoning Evaluation maintains the Zoning and Planning System (ZAPS) component of the LDSnet system (which is being phased out) and maintains the Zoning Evaluation records in PLUS; provides litigation support to the County Attorney; and supports citizen participation in the zoning process by attending community meetings to address both specific zoning applications and the land use process in general, often at the request of elected and appointed officials.

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Adopted	FY 2022 Revised	FY 2023 Advertised
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Total Expenditures	\$3,256,677	\$3,809,992	\$3,849,924	\$4,104,559
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>				
Regular	42 / 42	42 / 42	42 / 42	43 / 43

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## Planning

The Planning Division is responsible for the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Its duties include maintaining and updating the Comprehensive Plan; working closely with task forces, land use committees, and other community groups to review amendments to the Plan; evaluating land use and development proposals for conformity with the Comprehensive Plan; quantifying development potential in the Comprehensive Plan, measuring environmental impacts and public facility needs associated with development applications; preparing planning and policy studies related to land development, land use, environmental and public facility issues; offering recommendations on managing future growth and redevelopment; evaluating and protecting historic resources; and assisting in the development of the County's Capital Improvement Program. Planning Division staff also support regional planning efforts with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Staff in the Planning Division is also currently responsible for leading development and implementation of the department wide equity impact plan.

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Adopted	FY 2022 Revised	FY 2023 Advertised
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Total Expenditures	\$2,647,740	\$3,387,335	\$3,492,630	\$3,906,309
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>				
Regular	37 / 37	37 / 37	37 / 37	37 / 37

## Community Revitalization/Urban Centers

The Community Revitalization/Urban Centers Section facilitates development opportunities within the eight designated Revitalization Districts/Areas, as well as Urban Centers such as Tysons and the Transit Station Areas in Reston. Working closely with local community organizations and property owners, this work unit assists in developing and implementing mixed use areas which improve economic viability and competitiveness. Community engagement mechanisms such as "pop-up" events in vacant shopping center spaces are used to engage the community and test placemaking concepts. Staff also work on special studies, plan amendments, zoning applications and design guidelines to foster the desired character and sense of place in these areas and function as liaisons with other agencies to accomplish projects in a timely and coordinated manner. Staff lead the development of urban design guidelines for the Community Revitalization Districts/Areas and Urban Centers to address the urbanizing character of these parts of the County.

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Adopted	FY 2022 Revised	FY 2023 Advertised
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Total Expenditures	\$1,272,089	\$1,349,456	\$1,360,034	\$1,455,294
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>				
Regular	16 / 16	16 / 16	13 / 13	13 / 13





conditions) were issued within 30 working days, falling short of the target. The number of interpretations increased from 98 to 109 since 2020, partially stemming from COVID relief requests. In addition, one position was held open for most of the year, reducing the staff dedicated to answering written responses by 33 percent. To provide more timely responses to common interpretation questions, one planner position is dedicated to answering site plan compliance questions from the Department of Land Development Services (LDS). The second position which is supposed to serve in that role is currently reallocated to the PLUS project. This process improvement has allowed these types of queries to be handled more quickly and more consistently, eliminating the need for formal written interpretations, and has helped to identify issues early in the process, saving applicants time and allowing DPD to focus resources on the formal written interpretations to the more complex and iterative requests. It should be noted that this metric only reflects written responses and with this new process, fewer 'simple' interpretation letters are necessary. The remaining formal written interpretations are more complex, but over 30 percent of the requests were answered within 35 business days with fewer than 15 percent of requests taking more than 60 business days to respond. In addition, the interpretations staff responded to three appeals and nine requests for additional time based on a temporary state action.

Approximately 46 percent of zoning applications were reviewed for submission compliance within 10 working days. During the majority of FY 2021, one position in this review branch was held open due to budgetary constraints, but since the position was filled in February 2021, compliance has rebounded, with over 95 percent of the zoning applications being reviewed within 10 days in May and June 2021. For applications within Commercial Revitalization areas, 100 percent were reviewed within 10 working days in FY 2021, consistent with FY 2018 and FY 2019. For comparison purposes, initial review of cases in Commercial Revitalization areas has been reported using the same time frame as all cases. It should be noted, however, that the department policy is to review submissions in Commercial Revitalization areas on a faster time frame, to essentially move these submissions to the 'head of the line.'

Beginning in FY 2021, the division began tracking data related to environmental, land use and historic preservation reviews on all assigned zoning applications, plan amendments and studies, interjurisdictional review requests, interdepartmental review requests, and state and federal reviews. In the first year with new metrics, the division met one of its two performance goals with historic preservation reviews exceeding the target of 95 percent by completing historic reviews within established deadlines 99 percent of the time. The environmental team review target of 95 percent was not met at 66 percent; however, during this first year of tracking there has been turnover in leadership, staff vacancies, and an increase in assignments. The FY 2023 estimate is adjusted to 80 percent and will be monitored as the team continues to fill vacant positions.

The Community Revitalization and Urban Centers Sections met all target outcomes in FY 2021. The Community Revitalization and Urban Centers Sections worked on all plan amendments, zoning applications and site plans in revitalization districts/areas and Tysons and Reston; updated the Volume II: District Design Guidelines for Annandale; provided design studies and analysis to assist in the evaluation of zoning applications and plan amendments; submitted final designs for further engineering of a permanent park space in central Annandale in collaboration with the Park Authority; finalized the designs for a gateway signage system for Springfield; continued to advance the Community Revitalization District maintenance program and associated capital projects; and established the Economic Incentive Program to encourage economic development in specific areas of the County. The Community Revitalization Section participates on the Embark Core Team and assisted with the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station design and branding efforts.

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The Urban Centers Section participates on the Tysons and Reston Core Teams and supports the community task force recommending updates to the Reston Comprehensive Plan. The Urban Centers Section supports the Tysons Partnership, initiated a design workgroup for further implementation of a recreational trail loop in Tysons and oversees the implementation of planned public facilities in Tysons. The Urban Centers section manages development data for monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Plans for Tysons and Reston.

Indicator	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Estimate	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
<b>Zoning Administration (ZAD)</b>						
Percent of inspections completed within 15 calendar days of request <sup>1</sup>	82%	77%	80%	NA	80%	80%
Percent of Zoning Ordinance Amendments processed within established timeframe	74%	53%	50%	78%	50%	50%
Percent of zoning compliance letters processed within 30 calendar days	66%	89%	95%	98%	95%	95%
<b>Zoning Evaluation (ZED)</b>						
Percent of written responses (development condition/proffer interpretations) within 30 working days	33%	38%	30%	28%	30%	30%
Percent of Re-Zoning applications scheduled within 9 months	90%	100%	80%	95%	80%	80%
Percent of Special Exception applications scheduled within 8 months	91%	100%	75%	100%	75%	75%
Percent of zoning applications received for submission compliance reviewed within 10 working days	99%	91%	80%	46%	80%	80%
Percent of Commercial Revitalization District applications reviewed within 10 days	100%	100%	75%	100%	75%	75%
<b>Planning</b>						
Percentage of environmental and land use reviews completed by established deadlines (deadlines vary) <sup>2</sup>	NA	NA	NA	66%	95%	80%
Percentage of historic preservation reviews completed by established deadlines (deadlines vary) <sup>2</sup>	NA	NA	NA	99%	95%	95%
<b>Community Revitalization/Urban Centers</b>						
Percentage of the seven revitalization districts/areas where sessions were conducted on revitalization efforts, initiatives and other issues	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percent of zoning, applications, plan amendments, special studies, and other planning/urban design studies worked on in revitalization efforts, initiatives and other related issues	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

<sup>1</sup> During FY 2021, no inspections were conducted due to COVID. Therefore, no values were reported for FY 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Beginning with FY 2021, the Planning Division began tracking data related to environmental, land use and historic preservation reviews on all assigned zoning applications, plan amendments and studies, interjurisdictional review requests, interdepartmental review requests, and state and federal reviews. The goal is to complete reviews for 95 percent of applications within established timeline (deadlines vary).

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2023-advertised-performance-measures-pm>