

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

WORKSHOP AGENDA

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Mark McCauley, Interim County Administrator

FROM: Brent Alfred Butler, Director, Community Development

DATE: January 10, 2022

SUBJECT: 2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Cycle

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

At the December 6, 2021 Lots of Record workshop, the Department of Community Development (“DCD”) shared with the Board of County Commissioners (“BoCC”) several options to address a shortage of staffing capacity arising from a record number of permits and an accelerated schedule of several high-profile and complex projects. One of these options included cancelling the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Cycle.

ANALYSIS

In the last month, DCD’s capacity concerns have only worsened for several reasons. First, in late December and again in early January, the Planning Division accepted the resignation of an Associate Planner and an Assistant Planner respectively. This exacerbates the Department’s staffing shortage. Second, no one applied for the competitive recruitment for appointment as Jefferson County’s next Planning Manager, a position which had been filled temporarily until the end of 2021. Moreover, these staffing issues occurred just as DCD is preparing to return to the BoCC to request acceptance of three Department of Ecology (DOE) grants, the first competitive DOE grant awards that the department has received in more than a decade. Finally, two exceedingly complex projects are moving forward, a site-specific 2021 comprehensive plan amendment to expand mining operations and the redevelopment of commercial forest lands to accommodate a new large-scale production facility. These critically important projects argue for the review and refinement of the County’s fee structure in the first quarter of 2022, driven largely by the County’s need to avoid a repeat of a recent billing dispute which left Jefferson County owed approximately \$200,000 by one applicant.

Under the Jefferson County Code (“JCC”), Chapter 18.45.060 (a), DCD must consider *‘the availability of sufficient staff to substantively review the suggested amendments and manage the public review process with available staff.’* Given the staffing resignations, recently approved grants, and interim controls in place for Lots of Record and Homeless Housing Facilities, not to mention the complex projects moving forward, DCD would recommend limiting the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Cycle to those necessary comprehensive plan or zoning amendments that advance home/houseless and affordable housing options or cancelling the 2022 Cycle altogether.

FISCAL IMPACT/COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS:

Comprehensive plan amendments may require substantial resources that necessitate the hiring of additional staff or contracting with outside consultants.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Community Development recommends the BOCC limit the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Cycle to projects that advance the community's need for affordable and/or homeless housing.

REVIEWED BY:


Mark McCauley, Interim County Administrator

1/5/22
Date