

DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Mission

Our objective is to make the City of Clearwater the best place to work, live and play by encouraging neighborhood involvement, empowerment and revitalization, and by guiding the future growth, development, and redevelopment of the City. We are committed to providing prompt, accurate, consistent and fair service in a friendly manner.

Further, we strive to consistently, fairly and impartially regulate established community standards and quality of life issues as set forth by the City's Code of Ordinances, with an emphasis on achieving voluntary code compliance through education, communication and cooperation.

Department Description

The Department of Development and Neighborhood Services currently consists of six areas of responsibility: Administration and Support Services, Community Response Team, Permitting/Business Tax Receipts, Building Inspections, Plans Review, and Neighborhood Services. Neighborhood Services was added to the department in January 2002. The main programs are described below.

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY					
	Actual 2005/06	Actual 2006/07	Budget 2007/08	Budget 2008/09	% Change
Development Services	3,619,492	3,726,959	3,959,240	3,819,850	-4%
Neighborhood Services	290,451	314,769	336,700	289,870	-14%
Total Dev/Nbrhd Services	3,909,943	4,041,728	4,295,940	4,109,720	-4%

DEPARTMENT FULL TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS				
	Actual 2005/06	Actual 2006/07	Budget 2007/08	Budget 2008/09
Development Services	53.5	50.5	49.5	48.5
Neighborhood Services	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0
Total Dev/Nbrhd Services	57.5	54.5	53.5	51.5

Program Description

The major operations within the Development Services Program consist of the following:

Administration and Support Division - This operation provides for the administrative and support services for the entire department. Work includes the policies and procedures, direction and support of personnel, resources and other related activities. Budgetary decisions and business plans are formulated and approved at the administrative level.

Community Response Team - The following areas of responsibility are involved in this program.

Community Standards Enforcement - The Community Response Team is the code enforcement/compliance arm of the City of Clearwater. The team is responsible for handling a myriad of issues pertaining to the zoning and development regulations contained within the Community Development Code and more general property nuisance and prohibited property related activities as defined in the Clearwater City Code. Code issue examples might include concerns such as landscaping, debris, overgrowth, illegal yard parking, graffiti and signage violations. Inspectors also investigate and enforce on zoning and land development/use issues as well as Business Tax Receipts and permits. The Community Response Team also conducts neighborhood code "sweeps" in various areas annually to identify code violations. The goal of our compliance action is to achieve voluntary compliance through educational processes. Absent voluntary compliance, code enforcement inspectors initiate other legal actions including presentation of cases to the Municipal Code Enforcement Board or to Pinellas County's local ordinance violations (LOV) court.

The Team is also annually involved in volunteer community activities such as the Paint Your Heart Out and Carefest.

Sign Inspection and Enforcement - Since 1987, the City of Clearwater has targeted sign blight throughout the City. The continuing goal is to enforce illegal signage, non-permitted signage and snipe/roadside signage in order to maintain the aesthetic appearance of the City's business, residential and vehicular corridors.

Business Tax Receipts - The Business Tax Receipt Inspectors enforce the business tax receipt for businesses as allowed by Florida State Statutes and required by City ordinance. Annually, there are approximately 10,000 business tax receipts and registrations within the City. In addition to annual renewal periods, the license inspectors conduct grid sweeps throughout the City to locate and notify unlicensed businesses without business tax receipts of the City requirements to obtain the necessary permits and licenses.

In March 2002, the City adopted a residential rental compliance ordinance that requires licensing of residential rental units, including single-family residences.

Water Enforcement - The Community Response Team inspectors enforce the various water usage codes by providing "eyes on" enforcement of codes designed to make the best use of our valuable water resources.

Building Permits - This operation involves the intake of building plans and issuance of building permits in the City. It also works hand-in-hand with the Community Response Team on the issuance of business tax receipts and includes the maintenance and mandatory retention of records for all areas of the department.

Building Plans Review and Inspections - This operation involves the review and inspection functions for building construction services. The following major programs are included in this operation.

Unsafe Building Abatement and Housing Code - This operation involves the enforcement of the Unsafe Building Abatement Ordinance and the Minimum Housing Codes. These codes protect citizens and business owners by ensuring that residential and commercial buildings meet minimum safety and housing requirements. This operation enhances neighborhoods by improving the housing stock and thereby appreciating property values.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Program Description

Building Plans Review - This operation involves the technical review of architectural and engineering plans for construction of buildings and structures in accordance with the building code.

Building Inspections - This operation provides for inspections of actual building construction. Inspections are done in accordance with the building codes, as required by Florida State Statutes including building, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical trades.

PROGRAM SUMMARY					
	Actual 2005/06	Actual 2006/07	Budget 2007/08	Budget 2008/09	% Change
Personnel	2,820,480	2,786,546	3,023,250	2,904,440	-4%
Operating	321,470	426,167	311,230	300,460	-3%
Internal Services	461,685	498,440	531,780	554,720	4%
Capital	1,574	5,224	5,000	-	-100%
Debt Service	14,283	10,582	87,980	60,230	-32%
Total Development Services	3,619,492	3,726,959	3,959,240	3,819,850	-4%

DEPARTMENT FULL TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS				
	Actual 2005/06	Actual 2006/07	Budget 2007/08	Budget 2008/09
Development Services	53.5	50.5	49.5	48.5
Total Development Services	53.5	50.5	49.5	48.5

Program Highlights

- ❖ The Development Services program is supported by 48.5 full time equivalent positions, a reduction of one position from the 2007/08 budget. A Development Review Technician has been eliminated. As a result of this change, personnel services costs reflect a 4% decrease from the 2007/08 budget.
- ❖ Other operating costs reflect a decrease of 3% or \$10,770. This is primarily related to the City Manager mandated 20% reduction in travel, training, memberships and subscriptions.
- ❖ Internal Services reflect an increase of 4%, which is primarily based on a 22%, or \$22,190 increase in garage services charges.
- ❖ Debt Service decrease 32% in this budget due to anticipated debt costs associated with the Tidemark capital improvement project.
- ❖ There have been no other significant changes in the Development Services program. The budget for this program reflects a decrease of 4% from the 2007/08 budget.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Program Description

This program was initially established in fiscal year 2000 as part of the Planning Department. During the first year of operation, a manager and one neighborhood coordinator were hired. A second neighborhood services coordinator position was approved for this program in fiscal year 2001. In fiscal year 2002, this position was changed to a Neighborhood Services Specialist in order to add other work functions, such as Geographical Information System mapping responsibilities. In 2003, Neighborhood Services became a program of the Development Services Department. Through the FY 2009 budgetary process, Neighborhood Services has eliminated one Neighborhood Services Specialist, leaving three full-time positions in this program.

The program strives to recognize the unique quality of the City's residential neighborhoods, to provide associations with the tools to improve their neighborhoods, and to gain a reputation as a diverse, safe and enjoyable place to live, work and play. Efforts include co-hosting an annual neighborhood conference, coordinating "Clearwater Celebrates Neighborhoods Day and Week", and managing the neighborhoods recognition programs that include the home and neighborhood of each quarter and year. In 2006, the Business Beautification Recognition Program was created in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce. Other programs include neighborhood strategic plans, and a neighborhoods grant/awards program to assist neighborhoods with identification and improvements. Through partnership with Clearwater Neighborhoods Coalition, University of South Florida and Clearwater Chamber of Commerce, staff developed the Resident Engagement Program that included a 30-minute educational video and an interactive workbook for residents to use in order to make more effective presentations to the City Council and advisory boards.

PROGRAM SUMMARY					
	Actual 2005/06	Actual 2006/07	Budget 2007/08	Budget 2008/09	% Change
Personnel	213,502	227,526	234,560	190,800	-19%
Operating	23,373	21,547	37,750	32,060	-15%
Internal Services	24,371	36,491	35,180	38,860	10%
Debt Service	4,205	4,205	4,210	3,150	-25%
Transfers	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	0%
Total Neighborhood Services	290,451	314,769	336,700	289,870	-14%

PROGRAM FULL TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS				
	Actual 2005/06	Actual 2006/07	Budget 2007/08	Budget 2008/09
Neighborhood Services	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0
Total Neighborhood Services	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Program Highlights

- ❖ The Neighborhood Services program is supported by three full time equivalent positions, a reduction of one position from the 2007/08 budget. One position of Neighborhood Services Specialist has been eliminated in this budget. This change results in a 19% decrease in personnel service costs for 2008/09.
- ❖ Operating costs reflect a \$5,690, or 15% decrease primarily due to the City Manager mandated 20% reduction in travel, training, memberships and subscriptions.
- ❖ Transfers of \$25,000 represent funding for the Neighborhood Beautifications Grant/Awards program. This is the same level of funding as the 2007/08 budget.
- ❖ There have been no other significant changes in the Neighborhood Services program. The budget for this program reflects a 14% decrease from the 2007/08 budget.