PLANNING & BUILDING

Planning & Building
The Planning and Building Department consists of the following budget units:

1100 262  Building Inspections  1100 277  Current Planning
1100 268  Cannabis Planning  1100 282  Advance Planning

**Mission**

The Humboldt County Planning and Building Department is responsible for protecting public health, safety, and welfare. The department achieves this through building permit review and inspections consistent with California model codes as well as planning and development review and approval consistent with the county's General Plan.

**Goals**

The Humboldt County Planning and Building Department will provide timely, accurate, objective and professional services to our customers in person, through digital or written correspondence, professional recommendations, decisions, and decision support to stakeholders.

1. Determine and implement organizational changes.
2. Develop operating instructions and procedures for new organizational structure.
3. Establish relevant performance metrics, defining targets and timelines.
4. Integrate and advance databases/geographic information system (GIS)/processing technology tools.

5. Attract, train/re-train/cross train, retain, and fairly compensate staff based on new organizational structure and goals.

Organizational Chart:
Purpose

The Building Inspection budget unit consists of the Building Inspection Division and Permit Assistance and is responsible for issuing building permits and performing inspections to verify compliance with mandated codes and standards. The Building Inspection Division has jurisdiction in all unincorporated areas of Humboldt County.

Proposed Budget

The proposed budget is $1,720,226, an increase of $255,573, or 15 percent from FY 2016-17. This change is primarily due to an anticipated increase in demand for building permitting services related to Cannabis development and a fixed asset request for new permitting software. The recommended budget includes a General Fund contribution of $231,369 or 13 percent of the total budget.

Funding of $134,382 (represents 50 percent of cost, as budget unit 277 and 268 will cover the remaining balance) in fixed assets is recommended for the acquisition of planning and permitting software. The fixed asset cost includes migrating current in-house “OnTrack system” to cloud based planning and permitting software. This will provide improved efficiencies and effectiveness to the Planning and Building permitting processes, while increasing public access and transparency to information and services. The first-year cost includes file and data migration, workflow process set up, integrating geospatial information system files, training, ADA compliance and other enhancements. These costs are partially offset by savings from retiring current on-site hardware, software licenses, and by reassigning 0.75 FTE from current OnTrack maintenance and development to other duties.

Additional Funding Requests

In addition, the department is requesting a supplemental General Fund allocation to provide overlap between a new Chief Building Official and the existing one in the amount of $52,026.
Although the request has merit, it is not recommended because it did not achieve a priority level that allowed it to be funded based upon available financial resources.

Proposed Personnel Allocation

The proposed personnel allocation for Building Inspection for FY 2017-18 is 14.0 FTE with no frozen positions. This is an increase of 2.0 FTE from the prior fiscal year.

Additions:
1.0 FTE Permit Specialist
1.0 FTE Senior Inspector

These positions include a Permit Specialist to provide better coverage at the counter and to provide more immediate responses to non-permit related inquiries. The second position is a Senior Inspector whose primary role will be to provide over the counter plan checks and serve as a backup inspector.

Program Discussion

The workload of the Building Inspection Division consists of four primary program areas: Inspections, Permit Processing, Plan Checking, and Public Information.

Inspections and Violations
A major function of the Building Inspection Division is field inspections. Building Inspectors perform all facets of new construction, addition and remodel inspections from the beginning to the end of the project. They interpret and enforce State of California Title 24 Codes and Standards and local ordinances.

Building Inspectors also perform site inspections for Current Planning and Cannabis Planning, investigate alleged violations for the Compliance Assistance Program and provide information in the field to owners, contractors and other professionals. With over 3,500 square miles in Humboldt County, inspectors average over 100 miles of driving and six inspections daily.

Permit Processing
Permit Specialists process building permit applications, interpret zoning regulations and verify completeness of applications. Permit Specialists meet with both the permit applicants and the general public to advise them of application requirements. Each Permit Specialist averages approximately 20 customer contacts per day including email, telephone and face-to-face encounters.

Plan Review
Plan Review ensures that construction plans for proposed construction conform to adopted building codes and other ordinances. The plan checker provides written correction information and is available to discuss any correction requirements with owners, applicants, contractors and other professionals.

This budget unit supports the Board’s Strategic Framework, Core Roles, by enforcing laws and regulations.
Purpose

The Cannabis Planning budget unit is a division of the Planning and Building Department that supports the permitting processes for projects associated with legal cannabis. This budget unit organizationally falls under Current Planning, but all cannabis projects are complete cost recovery and so the budget unit is identified separately.

This budget unit supports the Board’s Strategic Framework, Core Roles, by encouraging new local enterprise, streamlining county permit processes, and managing county resources to ensure sustainability of services.

Proposed Budget

The total proposed budget for Cannabis Planning is $2,036,460. This budget represents an increase of $911,483 or 45 percent from last fiscal year and is reflective of the increase in demand for permitting services. There is no General Fund contribution for this budget unit.

Funding of $65,000 (represents 25 percent of cost, as budget unit 262 and 277 will cover the remaining balance) in fixed assets is recommended for the acquisition of planning and permitting software. The fixed asset cost includes migrating current in-house “OnTrack system” to a cloud based Planning and Building software. This will provide improved efficiencies and effectiveness to the Planning and Building permitting processes, while increasing public access and transparency to information and services.

Proposed Personnel Allocation

The proposed personnel allocation for Cannabis Planning for FY 2017-18 is 5.0 FTE, which represents no net change from the prior fiscal year. In addition to the permanent 5.0 FTE positions, the department currently has 4.0 FTE extra help positions and has a need for an additional 5.0 FTE extra help positions in order to form a third team. These teams have been formed to expedite the permit process.
Additions:
1.0 FTE Senior Planner
Deletions:
1.0 FTE Supervising Planner

Cannabis Planning continues to process the approximately 2,169 applications that have not yet reached the status of complete application. Thus, the recommended extra help position allocation for FY 2017-18 is 9.0 FTE. The total personnel allocation for this unit is 14.0 FTE.

Program Discussion

The department currently has 125 complete applications, which should be complete by early fall, FY 2017-18.

Additional applications are being deemed complete on a daily basis. Increased staffing levels allows the department to process the applications that are complete as of July 2017 to a decision by December 2017. Increased staffing levels also support the significant workload heading into calendar year 2018.

The budget unit supports the Board’s Strategic Framework Core Roles by managing resources to ensure the sustainability of services.
Purpose

The Current Planning Division processes land use permit applications based on the policies of the General Plan, Community Plans, County Codes and ordinances, as well as state and federal regulations. State planning law is codified within Government Code Section 65000. The division also implements other state and federally mandated programs including flood hazard protection, geologic and/or seismic safety, timber production zoning, administration of Williamson Act contracts, and coastal planning and permitting authority.

This budget unit supports the Board’s Strategic Framework, Core Roles, by providing community-appropriate levels of service.

Proposed Budget

The proposed budget is $1,995,454, an increase of $25,674, or 1 percent from FY 2016-17, and this change is primarily due to negotiated salary and benefit increases.

Proposed Personnel Allocation

The proposed personnel allocation for Current Planning for FY 2017-18 is 17.0 FTE with no frozen positions. There is no net change from the prior year.

Additions:
2.0 FTE Planner I/II

Deletions:
2.0 FTE Senior Planner
Program Discussion

The Current Planning budget unit presently consists of three service divisions: Current Planning, Development Assistance, and Central Administration. Part of this budget includes a proposal to reorganize the department. This budget unit would include Current Planning and Administrative Services. The Development Assistance program is being absorbed by this unit and Building Inspection.

Current Planning
Current Planning’s principal work is processing land use permit applications for subdivisions, lot line adjustments, coastal development permits, special permits and use permits. The division also processes applicant-initiated amendments to the General Plan and zoning text and maps.

A primary function of Current Planning is support of the Planning Commission and zoning administrator. Current Planning also provides staff support to the Forestry Review Committee and the Williamson Act Advisory Committee.

In addition, Current Planning provides public information and reviews building applications. Service requests continue to increase from year to year. Service requests include but are not limited to application assistance, information requests, burn down letters, and tree removal requests.

Administrative Services
Administrative Services provides business, organizational and administrative support to the Planning and Building Department. The reorganization will place all of administrative services in Current Planning to create a flexible team.

Consolidation of the business and finance functions of the department will also be housed in Current Planning. In addition, a new production tools team (information technology, GIS, mapping) will be located in this unit to provide support to the entire department.

This budget unit supports the Board’s Strategic Framework Core Roles by managing resources to ensure the sustainability of services.
Purpose

The Advance Planning budget unit consists of the Advance Planning Division and the Grant and Housing Program. Advance Planning updates and maintains the land use related ordinance and policy documents for the county. This involves updating and implementing the General Plan including the Housing Element, community plans, local coastal plan, and zoning ordinances. The Grants and Housing Program identifies and secures grant funding to support the implementation of the General Plan, including the Housing Element. This is the only division that does not collect application fees. Instead the division is funded by the General Fund, a small set-aside from general plan user fees, and grants.

Proposed Budget

The proposed budget for Advance Planning is $3,753,417, an increase of $624,224 or 17 percent from FY 2016-17. The recommended budget includes a General Fund contribution of $813,982, an increase of $515,368 from FY 2016-17. This includes $498,980 from projected Measure S revenue to pay for the work on the update of the Cannabis Cultivation ordinance and associated environmental impact report (EIR) expenses. The budget also includes funds to complete the General Plan EIR and to prepare an EIR for the Multiple Family Rezone. Much of the work for the Humboldt Bay Area Plan is funded by grant money. It is important to note in this budget unit approximately $2,400,000 is grant funding.

Proposed Personnel Allocation

The proposed personnel allocation for Advance Planning for FY 2017-18 is 6.0 FTE with no frozen positions. The total FTE represents no change from the prior fiscal year. This budget unit also includes 1.5 FTE extra help positions that are grant funded to work on housing programs and ordinances, update of the...
Humboldt Bay Area Plan and the Coastal Dependent Industrial Ordinance Update.

Program Discussion

The following are the major objectives to be accomplished in the coming year:

Long Range Planning

1. Completion of the General Plan Update
2. Commercial Cannabis Land Use Ordinance and EIR
3. Update Humboldt Bay Area Plan
4. Housing Element Implementation
5. Multiple Family Rezone and EIR
6. General Plan Implementation

GIS and Technical Support

The GIS program provides services to the department, other county departments, and the general public.

This program also manages first-time homebuyer and owner-occupied rehabilitation programs. In addition, staff manages State of California Housing and Community Development grants and actively seeks funding for implementation of the Housing Element and General Plan.

The Advance Planning budget unit supports the Board’s Strategic Framework Core Roles by managing resources to ensure the sustainability of services.