



Board Summary Report

Date: August 12, 2019

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: **Bryan Weimer, Director, Public Works and Development**
Jan Yeckes, Planning Division Manager

From: **Caitlyn Cahill, Zoning and Animal Control Manager**

Subject: Zoning: Current Level of Service and 2020 Budget Request

Direction/Information:

Public Works and Development staff will be providing information to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) on the current allocation of limited Zoning resources.

Request and Recommendation:

The Department of Public Works and Development, Planning Division, Zoning Section is primarily providing information regarding the current level of services of the services provided in the Zoning section. Staff is requesting input and feedback as to the level of service currently provided by Zoning. While not a request with this study session, PWD has requested an additional FTE through the 2020 Budget process, of which will be highlighted in this report for background as it affects level of services.

Background:

In 2017, the Zoning Administrator and Animal Control Supervisor positions were merged into one position. This new position, the Zoning and Animal Control Manager, is responsible for the Zoning, Animal Control, and Weed Control programs. The merger of these work groups under one manager has created many opportunities for improved consistency and collaboration. The remaining FTE was reallocated to Current Planning to account for the increase in caseload that had been occurring in their section.

After merging the Zoning Administrator and Animal Control Supervisor positions, management began to evaluate and identify opportunities for procedural/process improvements. The workload of the Zoning Section has increased right along with Current Planning and the Building Division and has been consistently high for several years. Former Zoning staff were working a significant number of overtime hours, on a regular basis, to keep up with the workload. The extent of the workload challenges was not fully understood at the time of the most recent reorganization and other staff changes. This complicated the task of assessing an accurate level of staffing for the Zoning Section. Since the merging of the Zoning Administrator and Animal Control Supervisor positions, staff has worked on managing workload, work hours, streamlining

processes, and finding opportunities to improve efficiency; however, the imbalance between workload and available staff to respond to that workload has become more evident and requires intervention.

Discussion:

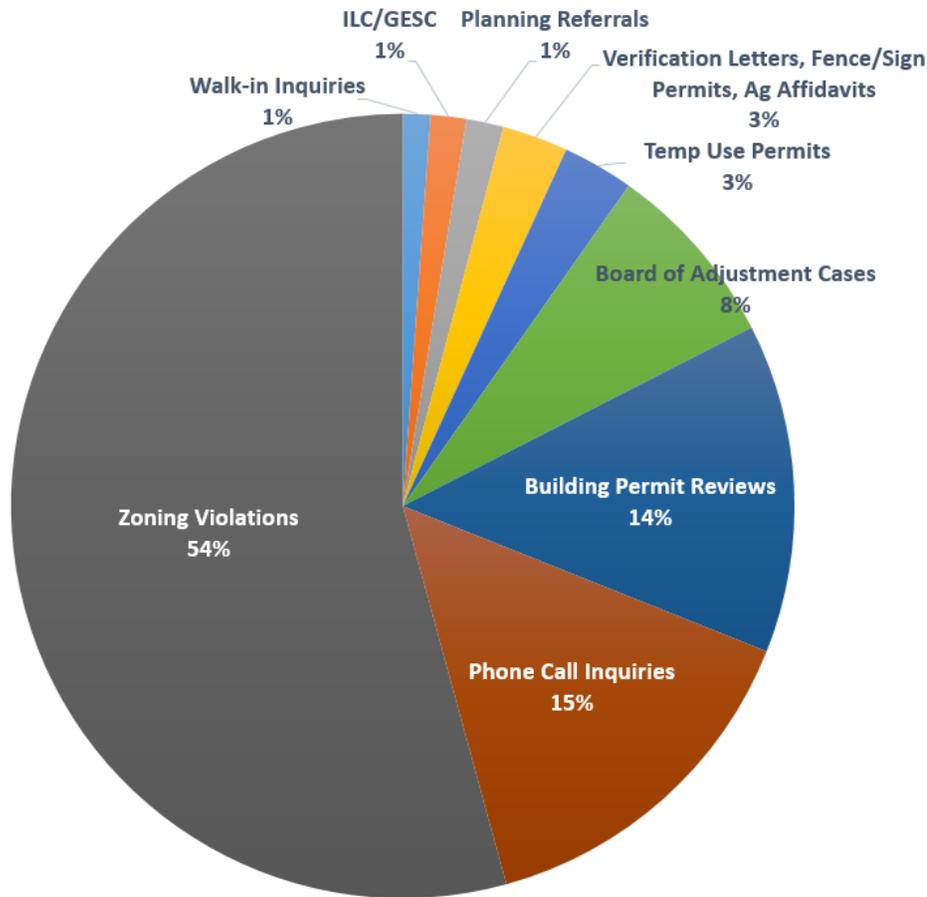
The current Zoning Section consists of two full-time Zoning Inspectors and the Zoning and Animal Control Manager. Currently, the two Zoning Inspectors work a standard 40-hour weekly schedule with occasional overtime. Staff has completed some cross-training efforts with other work groups to aid coverage on an intermittent basis. The services that Zoning personnel provides includes:

- Investigation of Zoning complaints
- Zoning violation resolution/compliance
- Permit processing
- Building Permit Review
- Board of Adjustment (Special Exception Use and Variance requests)
- Citizen Inquiries and administrative research

It should be noted that current zoning enforcement is based on a complaint basis only, as staff does not proactively identify and enforce on zoning violations.

Based on the above duties, the two FTE Zoning Inspectors allocation of time for the duties is as follows (*statistics are pulled from 2018. The 2019 workload statistics are on track to meet or surpass most of the 2018 statistics.*):

- Administrative duties: phone calls (380 average/month) and walk-in inquiries
 - **63 hours/month**
- Investigate and seek compliance on all zoning violations reported (179 violations, 1045 inspections)
 - **298 hours/month**
- Review/send external referrals: building permits and related engineering reviews (2166)
 - **62.5 hours/month**
- Zoning Verification Letters (38); Agricultural Affidavits (27); Fence and Sign Permits (195)
 - **10.5 hours/month**
- Complete review and referrals on current Planning (land development) cases (137)
 - **5.8 hours/month**
- Process all temporary use permits (17)
 - **12 hours/month**
- Board of Adjustment Cases: Variance and Special Exception Use requests (10)
 - **34 hours/month**



*** The chart above is a representation of the workload of Zoning staff broken down by category.*

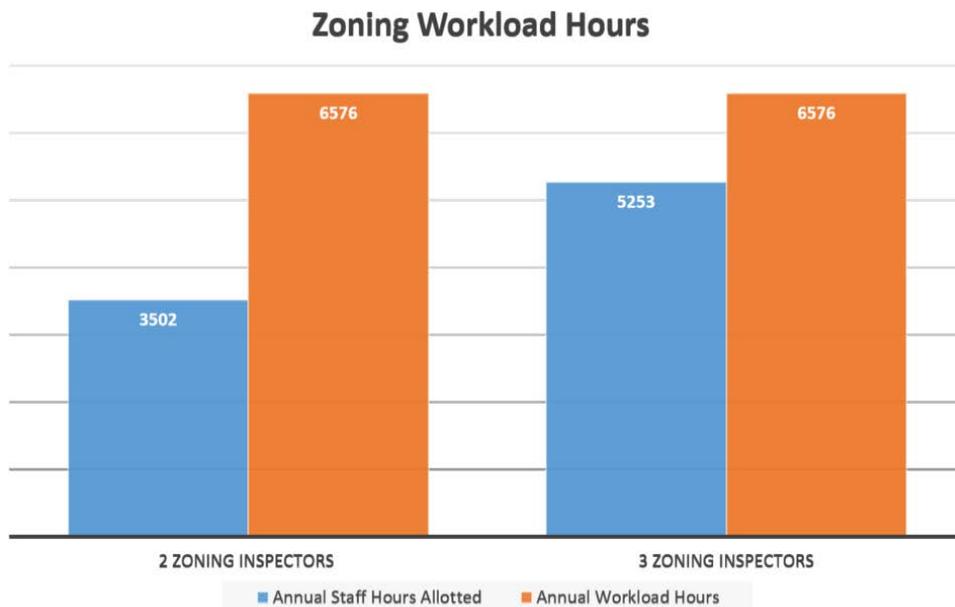
The Zoning and Animal Control Manager has been assisting the Zoning Inspectors to keep up with the existing workload. The constant competing demands on time has made it difficult for management to complete much-needed changes such as Animal Control Resolution amendments, Zoning/Planning code amendments, and other needed process improvements. The workload has also made it challenging to effectively manage the personnel needs of the Zoning, Animal Control, and Weed Control sections.

Zoning violation inspections and compliance has decreased as the office workload has been prioritized over inspections to ensure turn-around times of permit applications are not adversely affected, as well as not adversely affect the performance of internal customers (i.e. Building Division). This has negatively impacted thorough investigation and timely resolution of Zoning violations. Additionally, in order to strengthen zoning violation cases, that have been escalated due to lack of compliance, the County Attorney’s Office (CAO) has expressed the need for Zoning staff to follow up on zoning violation cases more consistently before sending them to the CAO for action. In order to meet these expectations, staff will need to devote more time to existing violations, follow-up inspections, and compliance efforts.

Another in office workload effort that takes away from inspections and is done to improve customer service and internal communication, is Zoning staff frequently participate in Planning land use pre-submittal meetings that often occur as a result of zoning violations or zoning research. This service helps streamline the application process as the applicant is provided necessary information on all facets of the process from zoning, planning, engineering, and building is provided at one time. Administrative responsibilities, combined with building permit turnaround time expectations, leaves very little time for Zoning Inspectors to complete field inspections. This impact is shown in the statistics above.

A large number of historical Zoning violations, after receiving new complaints, have been identified as unresolved following the initial complaint several years ago. Research on these cases identified that resources were limited and continued pursuit of resolving the violations was not done. Staff members are now working on this backlog of unresolved cases.

It should be noted that as an efficiency measure, staff has recently implemented a GIS mapping solution of violations tied with data on the violations giving the opportunity to link trips for inspections and status. Another opportunity that is being investigated after the previous study session on property maintenance is the possibility to issue tickets with a monetary component that could escalate over times as the issue is not brought into compliance. While valuable, these efficiency measures cannot bridge the gap between workload hours required and staffing hours allotted. An additional FTE is still needed to keep up with existing demands.



***The chart above represents annual workload hours compared to annual staffing hours allotted. The chart does not account for 0.5 FTE (875.5 hours) of the Zoning and Animal Control Manager position. The addition of a third Zoning Inspector FTE will get the Section closer to covering the full workload, with the difference expected to be covered through efficiency initiatives, occasional overtime, and deferring projects/tasks, when needed, based on levels of service requirements/priorities.*

Links to Align Arapahoe:

Service First and Quality of Life: Zoning is committed to, and responsible for, ensuring that quality, timely, reliable, and efficient services are provided to citizens. Due to the exceptionally high workload, Zoning continues to prioritize services and enforcement efforts based on public safety needs rather than focusing on all regulations, as set forth in the Land Development Code (LDC), equally. An additional Zoning Inspector FTE would ensure that the land use regulations, adopted by the BoCC, are being upheld and that issues are resolved in a timely manner, for the benefit of all citizens.

The primary functions of the Zoning Section are to ensure that building and development are completed in compliance with the standards set forth by the LDC and any documents that aid as an extension of the Code. Citizens should have a reasonable expectation that regulations in the LDC can be addressed in a timely and efficient manner. However, due to the increased workload, the inability to follow through sufficiently on zoning violation cases negatively impacts the quality of life of residents.

Alternatives:

No reasonable alternatives have been identified to eliminate the need for an additional FTE within the Zoning Section.

If additional staff resources are unavailable, staff will continue to ensure that the administrative/permit workload takes priority over zoning violation inspections, unless directed to alter priorities. If a FTE is provided, we project the benefits to be significant. Zoning Inspectors would be able to maintaining and potentially improve permit turnaround time for all aspects of Zoning permit review, consistently follow through of zoning violation cases and inspections (potentially resulting quicker time to compliance), and continued high level of service pertaining to ongoing administrative inquiries. Additionally, the FTE would allow management the time to focus on efficiency opportunities pertaining to process improvement, County regulation updates, and personnel development and matters for the different work groups.

Fiscal Impact:

If approved, an additional FTE within the Zoning Section of the Planning Division, would have a fiscal impact of approximately \$80,700.00.

Reviewed By:

- Bryan Weimer, Director – Public Works and Development
- Jan Yeckes, Division Manager – Planning
- Robert Hill, Assistant County Attorney – County Attorney’s Office
- Keith Ashby, Purchasing Manager – Finance Department
- Todd Weaver, Budget Manager – Finance Department