

Building & Development Review Services Department Budget Analysis

Department Purpose

Building and Development Review Services (BDRS) is comprised of three major divisions.

- 1) Building Services evaluates development projects and construction plans, as well as performs inspections and/or enforcement for properties within unincorporated Pinellas County for consistency with the Florida Building Code. The division also provides municipal building services by contract for several local communities.
- 2) Development Review Services evaluates land development proposals and uses for alignment with Pinellas County’s codes, ordinance, and regulations.
- 3) Code Enforcement provides planning, coordination, prevention, and protective code enforcement services to ensure a safe and secure community, as well as providing managerial oversight and training for the Contractor Licensing Department’s investigators.

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the department and its service delivery model. Prior to COVID-19, customer interactions were largely in person. When the office closed to the public, applicants had to drop off their applications. This change led to increased call volumes and additional correspondence about revisions or corrections that increase the length of time needed to process each item. The department has also had impacts to service delivery resulting from mandatory quarantines, early retirements, and COVID-19 adjusted work assignments. These, and other factors, have necessitated the increased use of contract inspectors, temporary staffing, and overtime to meet both statutory timelines and customer expectations.

BDRS, in collaboration with other departments, is further improving communication with the public and reducing barriers, redundancies, and contradictions by revising the land development code. This, and other initiatives, are designed to streamline development and re-development opportunities, and assist property owners in returning properties back into contributing assets for the community. These goals are further being achieved through evaluation of foreclosure best practices, and implementation of the lien settlement and injunctive relief programs.

The Contractor Licensing investigation team is being incorporated with the Code Enforcement team to bring continuity to the County’s enforcement and investigations efforts and provide consistent management, evaluation, and customer service.

Department Staffing Summary

Division	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22
Building Services	56.6	56.6	57.1	56.6	56.8
Code Enforcement	21.0	21.0	21.0	21.3	21.2
Development Review Services	24.4	26.2	26.7	29.9	30.0
Total	102.0	103.8	104.8	104.8	108.0

- FY21: Three (3) Project Manager positions were added mid-year in FY21. See narrative below for more details.
- FY22: 0.2 FTE Rounding error corrected.

Building & Development Review Services Department Budget Analysis

Budget Summary Table

Development Review Services (General Fund)

	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21	FY22	Budget to Budget	Budget to Budget %
Revenues	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Estimate	Request	Change	Change
Licenses and Permits	425,959	437,898	338,064	409,450	403,280	380,250	-29,200	-7.1%
Charges for Services	669,805	680,773	635,443	764,020	626,530	628,900	-135,120	-17.7%
Revenues Total	1,095,764	1,118,671	973,507	1,173,470	1,029,810	1,009,150	-164,320	-14.0%
Expenditures								
Personal Services	1,981,107	2,134,899	2,147,919	2,355,750	2,467,690	2,727,670	371,920	15.8%
Operating Expenses	505,582	199,777	220,267	213,660	320,520	236,170	22,510	10.5%
Capital Outlay	2,700	5,533	8,352	15,790	12,500	4,000	-11,790	-74.7%
Expenditures Total	2,489,389	2,340,209	2,376,537	2,585,200	2,800,710	2,967,840	382,640	14.8%

Code Enforcement (General Fund)

	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21	FY22	Budget to Budget	Budget to Budget %
Revenues	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Estimate	Request	Change	Change
Licenses and Permits	164,600	139,800	84,800	117,040	107,920	132,150	15,110	12.9%
Charges for Services	468,892	512,588	458,540	508,110	553,880	478,500	-29,610	-5.8%
Fines and Forfeitures	335,133	523,024	553,364	304,500	399,990	521,920	217,420	71.4%
Other Miscellaneous Revenues	15,000	11,700	2,400	0	11,700	13,570	13,570	100.0%
Revenues Total	983,624	1,187,112	1,099,104	929,650	1,073,490	1,146,140	216,490	23.3%
Expenditures								
Personal Services	1,418,081	1,587,312	1,577,549	1,750,020	1,605,140	1,679,890	-70,130	-4.0%
Operating Expenses	285,023	294,142	313,928	400,630	360,680	403,260	2,630	0.7%
Capital Outlay	2,500	47,391	62,912	15,000	15,000	15,000	-	0.0%
Expenditures Total	1,705,605	1,928,845	1,954,389	2,165,650	1,980,820	2,098,150	-67,500	-3.1%

Building Services Fund

	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21	FY22	Budget to Budget	Budget to Budget %
Revenues	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Estimate	Request	Change	Change
Licenses and Permits	6,926,417	6,625,122	7,278,686	6,465,590	7,036,120	7,276,470	810,880	12.5%
Charges for Services	16,233	17,906	28,253	19,000	27,880	55,250	36,250	190.8%
Interest Earnings	55,506	92,776	56,205	26,760	22,530	3,390	-23,370	-87.3%
Other Miscellaneous Revenues	16,508	18,193	21,343	13,770	9,390	18,600	4,830	35.1%
Revenues Total	7,014,665	6,753,997	7,384,487	6,525,120	7,095,920	7,353,710	828,590	12.7%
Expenditures								
Personal Services	4,410,016	4,596,761	4,947,105	5,351,280	5,084,630	5,517,400	166,120	3.1%
Operating Expenses	4,493,200	3,443,498	2,229,455	1,671,210	1,753,670	2,748,440	1,077,230	64.5%
Capital Outlay	57,548	-	7,816	17,970	17,970	-	(17,970)	-100.0%
Expenditures Total	8,998,274	8,040,259	7,184,376	7,040,460	6,856,270	8,265,840	1,225,380	17.4%

Building & Development Review Services Department Budget Analysis

Budget Analysis

Revenues

Development Review Services (General Fund)

- Division revenues are decreasing by \$164,320, or 14.0% from the FY21 Adopted Budget.
 - This decrease is driven by a reduction in the budgeting of Zoning Fee revenue to be more in line with historical actuals.
- One (1) current user fee is proposed to be changed within the FY22 Development Review Services User Fee Schedule.
 - The Credit Card Convenience fee is being updated to match the agreement with the payment processing vendor.

Code Enforcement (General Fund)

- Division revenues are increasing by \$216,490, or 23.3% from the FY21 Adopted Budget.
 - This increase is driven by a budgeted increase in revenue from the Special Magistrate process.
 - Code Enforcement passed a new ordinance incentivizing reinvestment and lien closures at a faster pace and higher volume.
- Four (4) new user fees are proposed within the FY22 Code Enforcement User Fee Schedule.
 - Lot Clearing – Secure Property (At-cost)
 - The intent of this fee is to recoup expenses that the county pays to secure a property. The county contracts at a rate of \$45/hour.
 - Lot Clearing – Secure Property – Materials (At-cost)
 - The intent of this fee is to recoup costs for materials used to secure a property.
 - The average amount for materials to secure each property is \$1,000.
 - Lot Clearing – Vehicle Towing, Transport and Storage Services (At-cost)
 - The intent of this fee is to recoup costs related to removing vehicles from private properties mandated by court order.
 - Credit Card Convenience Fee
 - This fee was added to Building Services and Development Review Services in FY21 and inadvertently left off Code Enforcement's fees.

Building Services Fund

- Division revenues are increasing by \$828,590, or 12.7% from the FY21 Adopted Budget.
 - This increase is driven by increased permitting activity along with an overhaul of the division's user fee schedule.
- Changes to the FY22 Building Services User Fee Schedule includes:
 - Ninety-eight (98) fees have been updated.
 - Twenty-four (24) fees have been added to the user fee schedule.

Building & Development Review Services Department Budget Analysis

- Seventy-nine (79) fees have been removed from the user fee schedule.
 - Many changes were made to simplify the complexity of the fees so customers can easily understand the costs.
 - This was a recommendation from the Inspector General's audit of Building Services, completed in FY20.
 - Many of the new fees are existing fees that are being clarified and, in some instances, combined with other fees to form composite fees.
- Changes to the fee schedule are estimated to equate to an 8.9% increase in revenue for Building Services in FY22.
 - See attached presentation for additional details.

Expenditures

Development Review Services

- Division expenditures are increasing by \$382,640 or 14.8% from the FY21 Adopted Budget.
 - This increase is driven by the addition of three (3) Project Manager positions (\$332,990 in FY22) that were added in FY21.
 - These three (3) positions are part of the implementation of the Development Review Project Management Pilot Program which is designed to guide customers through the land development process from beginning to end, increase communication with customers, improve coordination and communication across multi-disciplinary County review team, and reduce processing/review time.
 - The addition of these positions will likely necessitate a Budget Amendment in FY21.
 - The department hired a consultant to prepare a high-level overview of the current development review process and associated system dynamics and make recommendations for efficiencies and improvements. Metrics were developed to record the progress made throughout the project. In April 2020, the average number of calendar days to process site plans (first review) was 44.0 days with a goal of 25.0 days. In March 2021 this decreased to 39.4 calendar days. There have been no complex site plans during this period. The average number of calendar days to process expedited site plans decreased from 30.0 days in April 2020 to 20.0 days in September 2020.

Code Enforcement

- Division expenditures are decreasing by \$67,500, or 3.1% from the FY21 Adopted Budget.

Building & Development Review Services Department Budget Analysis

- This decrease is driven by Code Enforcement providing a new service to the Contractor Licensing Department for the management and oversight of the Contractor Licensing investigation team. The cost for this service is budgeted at \$115,000. This service model is a result of the Palm Harbor Pilot Project which explored combining the two departments' enforcement and investigations efforts with no increase to FTE count.
- Additionally, the decrease is also due to an increase in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for the Lealman Code Enforcement officer's position, from \$60,000 in FY21 to the full position cost of \$80,730 in FY22.
- Operating expenditures are increasing by \$2,630, or 0.7%.
 - Professional Services is increasing by \$4,700, or 8.5%, due to an increase in the contract with Special Magistrate services from \$175/hr. to \$190/hr.
- The average number of days to respond to Code Enforcement violations (first inspection) has steadily decreased from an average of 12 days in FY17 to 2 days in FY20.

Building Services

- Division expenditures are increasing by \$1,225,380, or 17.4% from the FY21 Adopted Budget.
 - Personal Services costs are increasing by \$166,120, or 3.1%.
 - Operating cost increases to Building Services are largely driven by increases through the Cost Allocation Plans.
 - Allocated Information Technology costs are increasing by \$613,880, or 131.4%.
 - This increase reflects approximately \$507,000 in Accela licensing costs.
 - Other Contractual Services are increasing by \$65,000, or 26.0%.
 - The contracted inspector budget for FY22 is \$300,000. This is an increase from FY21's budget of \$120,000 based on higher utilization and the anticipated increased hourly cost when the current contract ends in February 2022.
 - FY21 hourly rate of \$54/hr.
 - A new hourly amount ranging from \$75/hr. to \$95/hr. is based on market research.

Potential threats to the department

Building Services

- Inspector Turnover
 - Continued high usage of contracted inspectors.
- The new contract for contractual inspectors is anticipated to be higher than the current amount.
- House Bill 1059 passed, and if signed by the Governor, will impose a 10.0% discount on certain applications/transactions that do not meet deadlines.

Building & Development Review Services Department Budget Analysis

Code Enforcement

- Senate Bill 0060 passed, and if signed by the Governor, will disallow processing anonymous complaints.
 - This could cause a decrease in case volume.

Development Review Services

- The Project Management Pilot Program could cause disruptions in processes and customer services for a short time, but the sustainable benefits are expected to outweigh the short-term change impacts.
- House Bill 1059 passed, and if signed by the Governor, will require electronic plan reviews.
 - Implementation of this has been in process, but sudden enactment could stress staff capacity and capability.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 – Building Services User Fee Schedule Presentation
- Attachment 2 – Building Services User Fee Schedule
- Attachment 3 – Development Review Services User Fee Schedule
- Attachment 4 – Building Services Fund Forecast
- Attachment 5 – Building & Development Review Services Performance Dashboard
- Attachment 6 – Building & Development Review Services Org Chart