

MEMORANDUM
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
COUNTY OF PLACER

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors
FROM: Thomas M. Miller, County Executive Officer
DATE: January 12, 2010
SUBJECT: Reorganization of the Community Development/Resource Agency

Request

It is requested that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve a conceptual plan for the reorganization of the Community Development Resource Agency;
2. Direct staff to return to the Board with actions to implement this reorganization as presented, including;
 - a. Preparation of revisions to County Code and the allocation ordinance,
 - b. Modification and creation of classification specifications, and
 - c. Establishment of salaries for new or modified classifications specifications

Background

On March 29, 2005, your Board approved the creation of the Placer County Community Development/Resource Agency (CDRA). During that time, the County was experiencing unprecedented growth with development trending towards large, more complex projects that required establishment of an organizational structure that facilitated integrated systems for service delivery.

The agency concept was implemented to: (1) provide more centralized leadership for multiple departments under one umbrella, (2) improve processes and functions related to land development, and (3) provide resourcing to address growth and processing for large projects. Department head positions were designated for areas of major functional responsibility to provide the required autonomy. Under this model, decision making and negotiating authority, budget responsibility and hiring decisions provided as a department head were critical in responding to the volume and size of several very large development applications underway. These positions included the planning director, the chief building official and the director of engineering and surveying reporting to the director of the community development resource agency.

Over the past four years and as discussed in more detail in the CDRA Audit item heard by your Board today, CDRA under the consolidated structure has implemented numerous systems for improved effectiveness and efficiency. Consolidation of functional areas within the agency has proven to be beneficial for land development service delivery.

The rapid rise in land development, followed by the sharp downturn in the economy in the last two years has resulted in land development activity declining to levels not seen in decades.

Applications are dramatically down and many large projects that have been entitled are on hold pending a change in market condition. Consistent with reduced applications and permits, revenues have precipitously declined. Organizationally, CDRA has been reduced in size through staff layoffs, retirements and other attrition. Positions that become vacant are not refilled. Workloads and assignments remaining are assigned to other existing staff. In addition, programs including reassignment and contracting staff services to other departments, as appropriate, have been utilized to support the workload in other departments as well as to mitigate the impacts of the downturn on the CDRA.

Consistent with the staffing patterns that have evolved, reduced workloads and the critical need to curtail expenditures for the current and future fiscal years, the County Executive Office is proposing to realign the existing organizational structure. With the contraction of the organization, recent retirement of the chief building official and the combination of the planning director's role with the CDRA director position, there is opportunity to streamline the existing structure. Doing so maintains the functional relationships and the increased coordination realized with consolidation but provides a management structure appropriate to current staffing and workload demands.

Summary of the proposed reorganization

The proposed structure (Exhibit A) accommodates changes in service models that may typically occur with fluctuations in workload and economic circumstances. Further, this structure is more consistent with working models in other County departments and provides more direct oversight of administrative and financial functions. Substantive changes as a result of the reorganization include:

- Planning and building are divisions of CDRA.
- The chief building official and deputy director of planning are designated as division heads that both report directly to the CDRA director.
- The CDRA director job specification is modified to denote the legislated authorities of a planning director, as well as those granted in the current planning director specification. The position allocation for the planning director will be deleted.
- A new classification and position (unclassified) of assistant director of CDRA is created. Notwithstanding generalized broader duties, the assistant director provides direct supervision for the Geographical Information System and Information Technology function, administrative and fiscal operations, and the environmental coordinator. This position also assumes full responsibilities of the department in the absence of the CDRA director. While this is a newly created classification, no new net allocation is provided to CDRA. It is staff's intention to fill this position internally and to leave the resulting vacated position unfilled.
- The chief building official specification is amended to remove the appointing authority reserved for a department director, and the salary range is modified accordingly. The appointing authority function will be fulfilled by the CDRA director.

- The environmental coordinator classification was originally created with the consolidation of the CDRA in August 2005 and currently reports to the CDRA director. This position, which is currently vacant, was created to develop the environmental coordination program and support CDRA to direct, manage and administer all phases of the environmental review process and approval activities for the County and related process improvement and project management efforts. The environmental coordinator position is currently designated as management in the unclassified service category.

The environmental coordinator position was instrumental in identifying and restructuring the environmental review process to meet development service needs by: (1) implementing consistency in environmental review and the recommendations of a process improvement team and stakeholder groups, and (2) enhancing CDRA project management efforts. With those process improvement activities, this position regularly exercised independent judgment and decision-making authority in achieving CDRA priorities and objectives. Since the environmental review process is now established and not expected to require significant changes that require high level direction or management, the scope of work is now functioning at a reduced level of oversight and coordination.

With the reorganization, the position specification would be amended to align the knowledge, skills, abilities, supervisory, and reporting requirements to the more appropriate supervising planner level. The environmental coordinator classification is moved from the unclassified to the classified service, and the salary range is modified accordingly. This position reports directly to the assistant director.

The Engineering and Surveying Department would remain a department within CDRA. After reviewing the operations of the Engineering and Surveying Department, it was concluded that at this time, it is appropriate to maintain this function as an independent department, with its own department head, under the CDRA umbrella. Given the functionality of the Engineering and Surveying Department and the existing collegial relationship with CDRA, it was concluded that changes to the organizational structure of the Engineering and Surveying Department were not needed at this time.

It is anticipated that at some time in the future, staff may return to your board as further refinements may be necessary once this reorganization is implemented.

Fiscal Impact:

Implementation of this reorganization will result in General Fund cost savings of approximately \$125,000 FY 09/10, as well as savings in subsequent years. The cost savings result from reduction of salary grades for two classifications and leaving a position vacant. These savings are net of funding provided for the new position of CDRA assistant director. It should be noted that while these new savings are expected as a direct result of the reorganization, since 2006, collectively CDRA net expenditure budgets have reduced by about \$2M.

Conclusion

Consistent with the reduced workloads and the critical need to curtail expenditures for the current and future fiscal years, the County Executive Office is proposing to realign the existing CDRA organizational structure to reflect current conditions. The resulting CDRA structure will support and enhance centralized management with reduced staffing.

Recommendation

Staff requests that the Board approve this conceptual plan and direct staff return to the next available meeting to implement this reorganization plan.

Attachments

Exhibit A – January 12, 2010 Proposed CDRA Organizational Chart

Community Development/Resource Agency



