

## **Proposal for an Additional Planner**

### **Summary**

It's time to add an additional planner on staff. We now have the workload that justifies hiring a Planner I or II.

We have part of the revenue stream to pay for the position. Staff proposes to use our fund balance to pay the balance until new revenue streams cover the position. Staff proposes to evaluate each year, but give it three years to build the revenue streams.

### **Background**

Staff recommends moving forward with recruitment of an additional Planner position for the Planning and Development Division of the CVPDC. Kelly Hitchcock and Matt Perkins currently staff that division. Current and anticipated requests for services are expected to be more than these two staff members can handle.

We did not fill a position when former Deputy Director Bob White retired. (Bob spent part of his time in both the Planning Division and the Transportation Division). With today's workload and the expected workload, we need additional hands.

Areas of work for the new Planner position include

- Environmental Planning
- Alternative Transportation Planning
- Ride Solutions marketing
- Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Response Planning
- Housing and Community Development

For the first few years, we will use our fund reserves to pay the portions of the position not covered by contracts. Over time the position can and will develop new revenue streams of projects and services, such as the DEQ WIP III contract. It is recommended that we be prepared to use our reserves for up to three years to pay for the position. Each year we would evaluate revenues and services to localities generated by the new position. During the third year we would evaluate whether to keep the position or not.

A Planner I position with a salary of \$50,000 - \$53,000 has a total cost of \$72,000-\$75,000 for the first year. An additional \$4,500 per year will be needed for travel, professional development and equipment. We could possibly draw as much as \$60,000 from our reserves for the first year.

We have adequate reserves for this investment and for a three year commitment.

If approved in March, it is not expected that the position would start before June, and more likely July. Therefore staff recommends that the position be built into the FY 19-20 budget. If we start in June then we would overspend the salary line item for the current

year. A June starting date for this new position would not cause the 2018-2019 overall budget to be overspent.

**Recommended Action**

Staff asks the Executive Committee to recommend authorization to move forward with the recruitment and hiring of a new Planner position.

**Additional staffing under consideration**

We are also examining the staffing levels in the Transportation Planning Division. Over the past ten years our overhead rate has dropped from 54% to 24%. That's good for our customers, but challenging for staff to bill out the additional hours needed to earn the same amount of money from our VDOT and VDRPT contracts.

We're not ready with any proposals, but I add this as a placeholder to let you know that we're looking into this area, too.