



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

Department Name:  
Department No.:  
For Agenda Of: January 19, 2016  
Placement: Administrative  
Estimated Time: N/A  
Continued Item: No  
If Yes, date from:  
Vote Required: Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Dr. Glenn Russell, PhD, Director, (805) 568-2085  
Director  
Contact Info: Steve Mason, Planning and Development (805) 568-2070  
**SUBJECT:** Addition of a Civil Engineer and Building Permit Technician

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Human Resources

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: N/a

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Adopt a Resolution (Attachment A) effective February 1, 2016 to add one Civil Engineer and one Building Permit Technician I/II position to Planning and Development.
- b. Determine pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guideline 15378(b)(5) that the above action is not a project subject to CEQA review because it is an administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. (Attachment B).

**Summary Text:**

The recommended action would increase staff by two positions in the Building and Safety Division of Planning and Development. Both positions are represented by Engineers and Technicians Association (ETA). Funding for these positions will come from building permit revenues, and no general funds are requested.

**Background:**

The department requests the addition of two FTE, a Civil Engineer and a Building Permit Technician, to address increased workload. The engineer position will perform plan review for building permits and the permit technician will assist customers at the counter and facilitate the processing and issuance of permits.

Planning and Development has experienced an increase in our building permitting workload over the past several years. The number of building applications submitted during FY 2012-13 totaled 3,250. Current trends indicate we will receive approximately 3,850 applications this fiscal year. The increase in workload has impacted our ability to provide timely service to our customers. Recent state legislation requiring expedited permitting for select solar projects has also affected staff's ability to adhere to existing performance standards for plan check review.

Current staffing levels are not adequate to meet performance standards for building permit review and issuance. In FY 2013-14 the department restored five inspection positions in response to increased workload. These additional staff allowed the department to maintain performance standards for completing timely inspections. There has not been an increase in plan review or permitting positions in response to workload increases. Building supervisors and the Division Manager have been pulled from their supervisory and managerial duties to assist in plan check review as a stop gap measure. The division has also executed contracts with outside plan review firms to assist in managing workload. Use of consultants is often not cost effective as the total costs for plan review and permitting often exceed permit fees. The addition of a Civil Engineer will help relieve the pressure of these stop gap measures, allowing supervisors and the Division Manager to return to supervisory and managerial functions and reducing the need for costly external plan check services.

The increase in building permit volume has also impacted the length of time it takes to issue a permit following plan check approval. This has traditionally taken two working days but has increased to approximately nine working days due to increased workload. Customers have expressed strong support for the division to take steps to decrease permit processing time. The addition of a Building Permit Tech will allow the Division to clear and issue a permit within two working days following plan check approval.

The addition of these two positions will allow staff to meet workload demands and implement key customer service enhancements such as electronic plan check services, over the counter plan check reviews, and other efforts designed to facilitate and improve the permitting process.

**Performance Measure:**

1. Clear and issue building permits within two working days following plan check approval (Target = 100%).
2. Complete plan check review on medium to large projects within 30 days of application submittal or re-submittal (Target = 100%).
3. Complete plan check review on small projects within 10 working days of application submittal or re-submittal (Target = 100%).
4. Complete plan check review on small rooftop residential solar energy systems within 10 working days of application submittal (Target = 100%).

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

The cost of these positions for the last quarter of Fiscal Year 2015-16 is approximately \$63,534 (civil engineer, \$40,967, and permit technician, \$22,567), which will be fully funded by permit revenues. A reduction in contract plan review costs will offset increased salary costs for the remainder of the fiscal year. Costs for these two positions in Fiscal Year 2016-17 are approximately \$254,000 and funded by

permit revenues. Budget information for the Permitting budget program is on page D-289 of the adopted FY 2015-17 budget.

**Key Contract Risks:**

N/A

**Staffing Impacts:**

**Legal Positions:**  
2

**FTEs:**  
2

**Special Instructions:**

Forward the signed resolution to Human Resources to the attention of Position Control.

**Attachments:**

- A. Resolution adding positions to Planning and Development
- B. CEQA Exemption

**Authored by:**

Steve Mason, 568-2070

**cc:**