



Date: May 5, 2025

To: Claudia Hager, County Manager
Through: Maurice Jones, Deputy County Manager
From: Sara M. Young, AICP, Planning Director
Subject: Proposed City-County Planning Department FY26 Work Program

Summary

The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the City and County for merged planning functions charges the Planning Director with preparing and submitting to the Joint City-County Planning Committee, the Planning Commission, and both Managers a work program and annual budget that must be forwarded to both governing bodies for approval. The Planning Commission reviewed the draft Work Program at their March 11, 2025 meeting and voted unanimously to recommend approval. The Joint City-County Planning Committee also recommended approval of the Work Program unanimously at their April 2, 2025 meeting.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board review and provide comment on the proposed FY26 Work Program in preparation for its approval at a regular business meeting.

Background

The Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the City and County for merged planning functions charges the Planning Director with preparing and submitting to the Joint City-County Planning Committee, the Planning Commission, and both Managers a work program and annual budget that must be forwarded to both governing bodies for approval.

Attached is a draft of the proposed FY26 Planning Department Work Program. The work program constitutes a catalogue of the various processes and projects that the Department will work on over the coming fiscal year. They can be categorized as one of three types:

- Ongoing projects and processes that reflect legal requirements to respond to proposed site plans, zoning map changes, use permits, certificates of appropriateness, zoning enforcement actions, etc.
- Ongoing projects and processes that relate to City and County policies for providing timely public information support for boards and commissions, and Department management, etc.

- Projects and processes that are somewhat discretionary reflecting City and County desire to engage in long range planning activities, such as plans, studies, and Ordinance text amendments.

Issues

Since a large portion of the Planning Department's work is dictated by state or local law, the main area of variability in the work program is in the Community Planning and Strategic Initiatives areas. For the coming fiscal year, the main policy planning emphasis and resource allocation will be focused on small area planning priorities and completion of Comprehensive Plan action items. The largest of those projects, the new Unified Development Ordinance will remain on the work program as it is anticipated to be completed during FY26. In addition, the following new work items have been added for next year:

- 1.3.1 Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Assessment Report
- 1.4.1 Lakewood Park Small Area Plan
- 1.4.2 Greater Bragtown Small Area Plan
- 1.4.3 Hillside/Oak Ridge Small Area Plan
- 1.5.2 Durham County Open Space Plan (pending budget approval for consultant funds)
- 1.6.4 Multimodal Traffic Impact Analysis (pending budget approval for consultant funds)
- 1.7.7 Emorywood Estates National Register Nomination
- 1.7.9 Local Historic Districts Inventory Update

The proposed work program is structured on the Department receiving sufficient resources including funding for consultants to work on the two projects noted above. Staff resources have been fully allocated for the tasks reflected in the proposed work program. Modifications to the work program may impact the department's ability to complete the proposed tasks, resulting in changes to expected outcomes and/or timelines or needing to secure additional resources.

Attachments

Attachment A, Draft Work Program, FY26