



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of December 10, 2005**

DATE: November 21, 2005

SUBJECT: Allocation of contingent funds for a program performance audit of the Site Plan Review, Approval, Implementation and Monitoring Processes (“Site Plan Process”).

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Allocate \$120,000 from the General Fund General Contingent (001.713) to the Department of Management and Finance (001.031) for a program performance audit of the Site Plan Process.

ISSUES: None.

SUMMARY: The Committee on Program Performance, a strategic initiative of the County Board in FY 2006, desires to conduct a program performance audit of the County Site Plan Processes. This audit should provide recommendations to strengthen or enhance existing processes, improve customer satisfaction, determine appropriate financial and human resource requirements, and evaluate the effectiveness of the County’s monitoring of site plan conditions. Additional funding above the \$100,000 FY 2006 appropriation is requested.

BACKGROUND: The Site Plan process begins with the preliminary submittal of a site plan for review and approval, the filing of permits and construction, and ends with inspections, the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, and monitoring of site plan conditions. The overall site plan process is well documented in Administrative Regulation 4.1 governing the submittal of site plans in Arlington County (revised April 2004). The regulation provides comprehensive instructions, checklists and forms required for the site plan review process. The process is very complex, and involves several interdepartmental reviews, community meetings and public hearings. The review and approval process can take six months or more under optimal circumstances. When permitting, construction, inspections, issuing of Certificates of Occupancy and monitoring of site plan conditions are added, the entire process can take years.

Over the past several years, Arlington has experienced a significant increase in high-density, residential, mixed use, and townhouse development. The increased rate of construction coupled with increased compliance requirements have resulted in backlogs and increased cycle times. While ambitious in its scope, a program performance audit of the entire process may provide new insights that would strengthen or enhance existing processes, improve customer satisfaction, and help determine appropriate financial and human resource requirements, given the increased

County Manager: _____

Staff: Barbara P. Liechti, Department of Management and Finance

workload. Concurrently, the performance audit should specifically determine the effectiveness of the County's mechanism for the monitoring of site plan conditions, to assure citizens that agreed-upon conditions are being fulfilled.

FISCAL IMPACT: The FY 2006 budget included \$100,000 for program performance audits. The current Medical Care for Inmates audit being conducted by Criminal Justice Institute, Inc. will cost \$63,980. Since there will not be sufficient funds to conduct a program performance audit of the Site Plan Process, funds are being requested from the general contingent to do so. The General Contingent balance is currently \$891,558. If this allocation is approved, the balance would be \$771,558.