

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Ordinance 42-2017, **Version:** 2

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Agenda Date: 01/16/2018

**Subject:**

An ordinance on second reading amending Ordinance No. 23, series of 2017, known as the Annual Appropriation Bill

Presented By: Jocelyn Mills, Community Development Director
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**POLICY QUESTION:**

Does city council support an amendment to the 2018 annual appropriation adding 0.5 FTE in the community development department?

**BACKGROUND:**

The Community Development Department's Planning and Neighborhood Resources Division proposes adding 0.5 FTE position (Full Time Equivalent) to the existing vacant 0.5 FTE in the department, to establish a full-time Planner II position. The request is to meet the demand for planning and development review services.

Building and development in Littleton is taking place at an all-time high. Planning project applications submitted and reviewed between 2010 and 2016 increased 233%. As the city is mostly built out, the development projects today are more complex (as shown with the increase in total building construction valuation from \$80K to \$207K during the same timeframe), which adds significantly to the workload.

It appears the demand for planning and development review services will continue to match pace with numbers seen in 2016. For 2017, the city is on track to exceed the 2016 number of planning applications processed. There is a four week time frame for scheduling development pre-submittal meetings, and six to eight weeks for development review on submitted applications.

Planning staff is at maximum capacity. Adding 0.5 FTE to establish a new Planner II for the planning and development review process will ensure there is adequate professional and technical capacity to support quality service delivery and timely development review services.

**STAFF ANALYSIS:**

Amending the annual appropriation bill is a common process that can occur throughout the year as budget needs arise.

**OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES:**

There are basically two options; approve the increase in funding and create the full-time employee as presented or contract with a private sector professional firm(s) for additional staffing. The 2018 budget had anticipated the 0.5 FTE and the hiring of private sector professional staff to manage the development workload.

Over the past several months, staff has been in contact with multiple private consulting firms trying to find qualified resources that can commit to a specific number of hours per week. Unfortunately, this has proven to be unsuccessful, even with the firms the city has currently under contract. The development and construction growth in the Denver/Boulder metropolitan area has created difficult market conditions in attracting and retaining experience professional staff. This is true not only for the public sector, but with the private sector as well.

This request of moving a position from half-time to full-time may not be able to overcome the recruiting challenges; however, staff does believe the creation of a full-time position may be seen as a more long-term, stable employment opportunity and therefore more attractive in the market place.

Without adequate resources in place for development review, the city risks extended delays in the review process. This can translate into a frustrating experience for the development community and our citizens.

**FISCAL IMPACTS:**

The total salary for a Planner II (using 2017 mid-point plus 5% possible increase for 2018) is \$86,430. The existing 0.5 FTE is budgeted at \$52,620 in 2018. The requested 0.5 FTE for a Planner II is an additional \$33,810. It is anticipated there will be savings in the professional and consulting services line item to offset this funding request.

Also included in the 2018 Budget was an increase in the development review fees. This included multiple application processes for both the Community Development Department and the Public Works Department. This increase was projected to generate an additional \$242,000 just within the Community Development Department over what was estimated for 2017. This additional revenue was not allocated for any specific service or program.

Even though this request could likely see a reduction within the 2018 budget for professional services, the additional development fees could also be used to fund such a request. Staff intends to update the council in the spring of 2018 with an updated forecast for the General Fund and will report on the status of the development fee projections.

The 2018 budget appropriation is recommended to increase by \$33,810.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the ordinance on second reading.

**PROPOSED MOTION:**

I move to approve the ordinance amending Ordinance No. 23 Series of 2017, known as the Annual Appropriation Bill, for all municipal purposes for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2018 and ending December 31, 2018.