PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
FY19 Annual Report
I am pleased to submit the FY19 Annual Report for the Planning & Development divisions of Community Development with Mr. Matthew Arcieri, Division Manager for Planning and Zoning, Mr. Eric Lowe, Division Manager for Development Services and the entire Planning & Development team. These Community Development divisions are responsible for guiding the City’s growth and development pursuant to the policies and ordinances adopted by the Manassas City Council.

While the divisions were kept busy with daily tasks related to land use applications, building and site review, the major achievements in FY19 were the team’s work on the Manassas 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the development of key economic development projects including both the Landings at Cannon Branch and the expansion at Micron Technology.

Starting in January 2019, staff and the Planning Commission worked together to synthesize the results of the biannual Citizen’s Survey with two years of Community Conversations to begin developing the update of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. State code requires the Planning Commission to review the Comprehensive Plan every five years.

Reviewing and updating the plan ensures that it remains a living document that reflects the community’s vision for the future and provides actionable implementation measures. The plan update was featured on a Comcast Newsmakers segment and in several other online, print, and video stories. The draft goals and objectives of the plan were presented at an open, community Vision Summit at the end of FY19 in June at the Boys and Girls Club. FY20 will see the team working with the Planning Commission and the City Council to update the plan by early spring.

The team continues to support the $3 billion expansion of Micron Technology Inc.’s semiconductor plant with plan reviews and inspections to keep the project on track and on schedule. The Manassas team meets biweekly with the Micron team that is both in Manassas and Portland, Oregon. Skype meetings enable the team to share computer screens to review site and building plans. To date, there have been 135 plan submissions including those for the foundation, interiors, plumbing, electric and other utilities. The 40-acre Landing at Cannon Branch site includes not only the 270 residential units but also a new 20,000 square foot multi-use office building and a Tru by Hilton hotel.

This year I would like to thank the many citizens that participated in the team’s Community Conversations and Let’s Talk Manassas engagement sessions around the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Manassas community is engaged and committed to participating in achieving their vision of what Manassas can be, a historically minded City with a modern beating heart.

Elizabeth Via-Gossman
Director, Department of Community Development

Citizens and Planning Commission members participated in a Community Appearance session during the Community Conversations initiative.
The Planning and Zoning Division is responsible for articulating the community’s long-range vision for land use and implementing that vision through policies and ordinances, planning studies, capital project planning, and development review. The division is dedicated to improving the quality of life for city residents through appropriate land use policies and regulations while fostering a competitive business environment.

The focus of the Planning & Zoning Division, in partnership with the Planning Commission, was completion of significant work on the draft Manassas 2040 Comprehensive Plan update.

In FY19, the division completed a second round of Community Conversations, which included topic and area-specific discussions on all elements of the City’s built environment including land use, transportation, parks, and community facilities. Through focus group discussions, pop-up events at farmers markets and other venues, and an online engagement portal, Manassas Community Conversations engaged over 1,300 community members in meaningful and forward-thinking dialogue about the future of Manassas.

The City of Manassas was named a Top Performer in Resident Involvement by Governing Magazine. The magazine described what has been the department’s practice in its Community Conversations initiative: “A resident-involved city engages all populations in the community, incorporates their feedback into decision-making and is transparent about how input is used.”

Matt Arcieri
Planning & Zoning Manager

A former resident had this to say about participating in a Community Conversations event:

I fondly remember the conversation I had and very much enjoyed participating in it. I learned a great deal from the group of folks who were in attendance and sincerely hope that Manassas is made better as a result of having the conversations. Democracy is about the free exchange of ideas (good ones and bad ones) and the community conversations were a fine example of just that. It is because of dedicated citizens coupled with unbridled tenacity that truly propel a community forward.

--James Barnes

Thousands attend Manassas African-American Heritage Festival
Aug 6, 2018

Scroll down to see a photo gallery from the event

The 28th Annual Manassas African-American Heritage Festival brought large crowds to Metz Middle School on Aug. 4 for art, music, history, crafts and food, and a broad array of community organizations offering resources to area residents.

Curtis Porter, vice chairman of the Manassas African-American Heritage Festival, has been involved with the festival from the beginning and is pleased at its continued popularity. “It started with a group of friends to celebrate heritage and history, and it’s grown every year,” Porter said.

One of the big attractions at the festival is also its foundation of providing connections to city and county services, as well as local charitable organizations. Community service organizations were offered free spaces to connect with residents for counseling, free screenings and education about local services. Again this year, festival organizers had piles of school supplies they were handing out to Manassas area students.

Organizers estimated more than 4,000 people attended the day-long event and said they ran out of space for vendors. Porter places the popularity on a simple concept: “Getting together, communicating, and having a great time.”
Starting in January 2019, staff and the Planning Commission worked together to synthesize the qualitative Community Conversations feedback and technical studies into a draft Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan Committee met 13 times in FY19 with work culminating in a community vision summit in June 2019.

Staff worked with consultants to produce a Housing Plan that is part of the Comprehensive Plan update. The Housing Plan takes stock of existing residential conditions in the city’s unique and diverse neighborhoods, considers trends in local demographics and regional economic activity, and offers recommendations for ways in which Manassas can plan for and promote a housing stock that anchors high quality of life in each of the city’s neighborhoods.

Staff met the community at a variety of venues such as the Latino Festival (top right), with neighborhood HOAs, and at area schools to gather input for the Comprehensive Plan Update. The Plan Update was featured on a Comcast Newsmakers segment with Planning & Zoning Manager Matt Arcieri (bottom left) and in several other online, print, and video stories.

Those who attended the Comprehensive Plan Update Vision Summit (top) watched a video that summarized work on the Plan. Participants in Land Use pop-up sessions were asked for one word or phrase that describes Manassas in the future. The relative size of each word (right) indicates its frequency.
Land Use Cases

Development review of rezonings and special use permits showed no significant change, reflecting current market conditions and ongoing efforts to update existing property’s zoning in conformance with the city’s new zoning ordinance.

The Planning Commission met in seven regular meetings and one worksession to act on land use cases including a height modification for Micron Technology and Jefferson Square, a 105-unit townhouse and single-family detached development on Prince William Street.

The Planning Commission also acted on a number of other minor projects including:
- A height modification to the telecommunications tower at Stonewall Park
- A new telecommunication tower on Dean Drive
- A motor vehicle repair use in the Wellington Station shopping center (withdrawn)
- A medical care facility for sedation dentistry
- A comprehensive sign package at All Saints Catholic Church
- Proffer amendments to remove restrictions on two properties on Redoubt Road
- Zoning text amendments to allow height modifications by special use permit in the I-1 and to make technical corrections and ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations

In FY19, there were no cases before the Board of Zoning Appeals.
The division continued its strong emphasis on transportation planning by completing the City's first Transportation Master Plan, a document that seeks to improve mobility far into the future.

The Master Plan helped identify future City projects for roadway, bike and pedestrian facilities that will be essential to update the local, regional, and state plans and programs for planning consistency and for future funding eligibility.

In addition to long-range transportation planning, the division worked to implement new transportation projects including four state and local transportation grants totaling 1.3 million dollars. Notable among these grants, Transportation Planner Chloe Delhomme worked with the City’s consultant and VDOT to secure over $700,000 in unspent City transportation dollars for use on the City’s traffic signal upgrades and coordination project. This project is consistently ranked as a top priority for the community and City Council.

The purchase of new bicycle lockers at the Downtown parking garage and the train station's shelter and bike rack was funded with a $55,000 Virginia Transportation Commission grant financed by toll revenue from Interstate 66. Citizen reaction was positive, as two Facebook posts on the shelter garnered 655 engagements and favorable comments.

The 2nd annual Car Free Day featured a bike tour aimed at gathering feedback on bike facilities for the Transportation Master Plan. An OmniRide bus was also on hand to promote commuting by bus. This year Bike to Work Day became Bike to Work Month as Transportation Planner Chloe Delhomme partnered with George Mason University, Prince William County, and OmniRide to offer more events to bring awareness to bike commuting. City employees also participated by riding to work in groups.

Working with Public Works and the City’s street paving program, four miles of on-street bike facilities were added including new lanes on Cloverhill Road and Euclid Avenue (pictured).
Property Code Enforcement (PCE) staff is responsible for enforcing the City’s nuisance codes, including tall grass and trash ordinances, the Virginia Property Maintenance Code, the Building Code for work without permits, and the Zoning Ordinance. This type of complaint-based and proactive code enforcement is critical to our city’s neighborhood preservation and revitalization efforts.

Carlos Perez
Property Code Enforcement Supervisor

PCE maintains an aggressive goal that within 45-business days a case:
• Should be abated;
• Should be under an abatement plan; or
• Transferred to the City Attorney or Public Works for court action or clean-up.

In FY19, 96% of cases were abated within the 45-day goal, up from 91% in the previous two years. An even more stringent measure—a 15 day disposition of Civil Penalty Cases (including vehicle violations and junkyard citations) rose 65% over last year. Approximately 74% of new cases are proactive, or initiated by code inspectors, and focus on areas of concern (like tall grass and inoperable vehicles) indicated in the City’s Citizen Survey.

PCE continued efforts to educate property owners and tenants in English and Spanish about the many tools and resources available to assist in cleaning up and maintaining their homes.

Staff-initiated additional proactive enforcement “sweeps” of neighborhoods, based on citizen and community requests, continued. Staff also began testing a new geographical survey tool on their tablets that helps pinpoint the type and location of inspections.

Property Code Enforcement

Total Cases

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<th></th>
<th>FY17</th>
<th>FY18</th>
<th>FY19</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cases Closed</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>997</td>
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<tr>
<td>91%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>96%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cases Opened</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>999</td>
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96% of cases were closed within 45 days

Reminders like this Spring Cleaning graphic and inoperable vehicle reminder appeared in the City’s newsletter, distributed to all utility customers, and are used as informational flyers.
Additional emphasis on proactive enforcement and community priorities identified in the City’s biannual Citizen Survey resulted in an increase in inspections driven by new tall grass and vehicle violations (e.g. inoperable vehicle and vehicles parked on grass).

PCE continued to actively remove unpermitted roadside signs, and collected 1,038 in FY19.

New Cases by Type

This property on Liberty Street was part of PCE’s proactive blight abatement efforts. The property is shown before improvements (at top) and after improvements (at bottom). Staff worked with the owners to secure permits and correct conditions.
Eric Lowe
Development Services Manager

Building plan submission increased by 40% in FY19, due in large part to three major development projects still underway.

At the 40-acre Landing at Cannon Branch site, construction of a new 20,000 square foot multi-use office building is underway, in addition to construction of the Tru by Hilton hotel, a modern, 98-room mid-scale property slated to open in early Fall 2020. Construction of over 270 new townhomes and condominiums is ongoing.

With 94 apartments and almost 3,000 square feet of commercial or office space available on the ground floor, the Messenger Place construction project on Center Street was completed in FY19.

The division continues to support the $3 billion expansion of Micron Technology Inc.’s semiconductor plant with plan reviews and inspections that help keep the project on track. The expansion includes a global research and development center and a clean-room manufacturing expansion where the company expects to increase production by the spring of 2020. The unprecedented scope of the project means that staff continually collaborates with on-call plan reviewers and other city departments to ensure the project’s safety and code compliance.

Despite the demands of these major projects, the division saw a 3% increase in the number of building plans that are reviewed in two and a half weeks to 97%. In FY19 twelve applicants took advantage of the expedited plan review program for second generation commercial projects that meet certain parameters. The program allows our first review cycle of 2.5 weeks to be reduced to less than one week.

The division also continued to provide 99% of inspections on the day they were requested, and enabled many homeowners and businesses to get permits issued for projects of limited scope during Walk-Through Wednesdays.
FY19 Development Projects

MESSENGER PLACE
9009 Church Street
• Construction complete on 94 multi-family dwellings and 3,500 square foot retail space on first floor.

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
9750 Wellington Road
• 11,644 square foot single story addition on 8 acre site with storage building

GODDARD SCHOOL
10405 Dumfries Road
• 10,000 square foot preschool and daycare

BATTLE STREET BISTRO
9402 Battle Street
• Conversion of office space to restaurant, including future roof top dining

MICRON
9600 Godwin Drive
• Construction on the 600,000 square foot manufacturing facility began in December, 2018 and is continuing.

NOVANT HOSPITAL
8700 Sudley Road
• New mammography imaging center
• Renovation of Cath lab and associated equipment rooms.
FY19 Development Projects

THE LANDING AT CANNON BRANCH
10509 Ratcliffe Trail
- Residential Component: ongoing construction of 274 Stanley Martin Homes with 114 condos and 160 townhomes.

TRU HOTEL
The Landing at Cannon Branch
- Site plan for approved for 98-room, four floor, 45,058 square foot Tru Hotel.

OFFICE/RETAIL BUILDING
The Landing at Cannon Branch
- Building plans approved and permit issued for 20,000 square foot retail/office building.

LOVELESS PORTER ARCHITECTS
9000 Center Street
- Office Building renovation

NOVA TECH AIRSOFT
9506 Center Street
- Tactical Airsoft Arena
- Building Area 15,600 Square Feet, 2 story

RESIDENTIAL INFILL LOTS
9918, 9920, 9922 Wellington Road
FY19 Development Projects

RESIDENTIAL RENOVATION
9512, 9514 Liberty Street
• Houses are undergoing renovation

CROSSROADS TABLETOP TAVERN
9412 Main Street
• Change of ownership for new restaurant with focus on table top games

GALAXY CLOUD
9108 Church Street—Post Office Building
• business on 2nd floor of post office

OLDE TOWNE ANTIQUES STORE
9213 Center Street
• Change of use to mercantile.

LIBERIA RESTROOM
8601 Portner Avenue
• New Restrooms
• Accessible lift installation

FIRE STATION #21
Dumfries Road
• Site Plan approved
• Building Plans under review

SOUTHERN RAILWAY DEPOT
9431 West Street
• Bicycle shelter & rack
• New LED light fixtures
Building Plan Measures

- **Number of Building Plans Accepted for Review**
  - FY17: 537
  - FY18: 535
  - FY19: 752

- **% First Review of Building Plans Completed in 2.5 Weeks**
  - FY17: 90%
  - FY18: 94%
  - FY19: 97%

- **Number of Priority-Processed Building Plans**
  - FY17: 10
  - FY18: 12
  - FY19: 19

Site Plan Measures

- **Number of Site & Subdivision Plans Accepted for Review**
  - FY18: 28
  - FY19: 41

- **Number of Priority-Processed Site & Subdivision Plans**
  - FY18: 5
  - FY19: 13

- **% First Review of Site/Subdivision Plans Completed in 4 Weeks**
  - FY19: 51%

Inspections

- **Number of Building Inspections**
  - FY17: 1,184
  - FY18: 4,934
  - FY19: 4,840

- **% Inspections Performed on the Day Requested**
  - FY17: 99%
  - FY18: 99%
  - FY19: 99%

*Data for prior years is not available due to a software system upgrade*
What Do Our Customers Say?

An ongoing Development Services Survey began in August 2015 to tell us how we can improve our processes and make things better for our customers. The survey is available on paper and online. Here's what some of our customers had to say:

Very friendly and helpful staff. Keep it up!

The Team was great! Thanks for all the great help!

Gary Williams is exceptional. He was extremely helpful and professional.

The website was down for a bit but that’s all (that could be done better).

Carlos Perez is SO helpful.

Always good smiley staff. Thank you.

Staff is always working to improve the web site, update forms, answer questions promptly and improve the customer experience. Satisfaction with the web site increased 20% over last year while satisfaction with customer service efforts increased 19%.

(Question: Did staff’s partnership approach help you meet your critical path deadlines?) Answer: Deadline-No-didn’t meet, but they did everything they could.
Planning & Zoning Manager Matt Arcieri (above at center) graduated from the Metropolitan Council of Governments (MCOG) Institute for Regional Excellence. The competitive 12-month program partners with George Washington University and focuses on leadership and management training. It culminates in a certified Public Manager’s designation, a nationally recognized credential for careers in public service.

Permit Technician Chris Hogan (second from left) was presented with the 2018 Above and Beyond Award. She was one of two recipients who received the city’s top award based on exemplary service, and was nominated by her peers.

Property Code Inspector Margaret Flores (at right) was awarded a Making a Difference Award from City Manager Pat Pate for her extra efforts in resolving a code case. Property Code Supervisor Carlos Perez is at left.

Community Development Director Elizabeth Via-Gossman and Senior Planner Kelly Davis (at center above) presented a workshop at the 2018 Virginia American Planning Association annual conference on the department’s Community Conversations initiative.

Senior Planner Kelly Davis (at right) was part of the Leadership Prince William (LPW) Class of 2019. LPW’s 10 month-long program seeks to inspire and engage adult and youth leaders who want to make a difference in the Greater Prince William Area.