



**Contra
Costa
County**

To: Board of Supervisors

From: John Kopchik, Director, Conservation & Development Department

Date: November 3, 2015

Subject: Add Structural Engineers to the Department of Conservation and Development

RECOMMENDATION(S):

ADOPT Position Adjustment Resolution No. 21760 to add one (1) Principal Structural Engineer (NCHA) (represented) at salary level ZA5 1962 (\$7,766 - \$9,439), and two (2) Structural Engineer (NCSA) (represented) at salary level ZB5 1813 (\$6,700 - \$8,144), in the Department of Conservation and Development.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No impact to County General Fund. The combined annual cost for these three (3) new positions is approximately \$490,000, of which \$120,000 represents pension costs. These positions will be funded 100% by building permit fees.

BACKGROUND:

Due to the improved economy and increased construction activities, the Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) is experiencing a significant surge in building permit applications that require structural plan check reviews performed by structural engineers. DCD's current engineering staffing level is not sufficient to efficiently manage the increased workload. For DCD to meet its obligations under County ordinance, it is operationally necessary to add more structural engineers on staff to provide additional

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **11/03/2015** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

AYE: John Gioia, District I Supervisor
Candace Andersen, District II Supervisor
Mary N. Piepho, District III Supervisor
Karen Mitchoff, District IV Supervisor
Federal D. Glover, District V Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: November 3, 2015

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: Chris Heck, Deputy

Contact: Arnai Maxey (925)
674-7876

support in its structural plan check operations.

In FY 2006/07 - at the height of the real estate and construction boom - DCD recorded close to 15,000 building permits processed (including plan check reviews). During this same period, DCD had on staff anywhere between 10 -12 permanent structural engineers. Over time, the number of engineers on staff was allowed to decline to

BACKGROUND: (CONT'D)

reflect reduced permit activity, and currently DCD has only seven (7) permanent engineers on staff: two (2) Principal Structural Engineers and five (5) Senior Structural Engineers. One of the two (2) Principal Structural Engineers is assigned full-time in the Lafayette Satellite Office serving the Lamorinda area. The remaining six engineers make up the core engineering unit in DCD's Application and Permit Center in Martinez serving the entire county outside of Lamorinda.

The permit and plan checks numbers have been steadily rising beginning in FY 2010/11, and the last three (3) years saw permits surpassing the FY 2006/07 volume. DCD closed FY 2014/15 with permit and plan check numbers totaling 23,931, which is approximately 58% higher than the recorded number for FY 2006/07. The previous two fiscal years, DCD closed the year with 20,215 and 17,692 permits and plan check processed respectively for FY 13/14 and FY 12/13. With this increased trend in building permits and plan checks, it is operationally critical for DCD to add more engineers. This Board Order is requesting to add two (2) Structural Engineers (entry-level) and one (1) Principal Structural Engineer. The Principal Structural Engineer will provide the additional lead oversight to the team of structural engineers and will co-oversee coordination with the non-structural plan check operations to ensure timely and accurate plan check reviews. The addition of these three (3) positions will bring the engineer staffing level from seven (7) permanent staff to 10, which is consistent with the lower end of the staffing level in FY 2006/07.

CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Without the additional engineering staff, the Department of Conservation and Development cannot guarantee efficient, timely and accurate plan check service for our customers as required under the County Ordinance.

ATTACHMENTS

P300 21760 Add 3 Structural Engineers to DCD