



Legislation Text

File #: 23-2157, **Version:** 1

Chief Administrative Office and the Planning and Building Department recommending the Board:

- 1) Conceptually approve the reassignment of Airports and Cemeteries from the Planning and Building Department to the Chief Administrative Office;
- 2) Direct staff to return to the Board with an organizational structure and staffing plan to reflect the reassignment of Airports and Cemeteries, that includes evaluating the Planning and Building Assistant Director and Deputy Director roles and responsibilities, with the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Recommended Budget;
- 3) Direct staff to explore alternative staffing and/or organizational structures for the Planning and Building Department's South Lake Tahoe Office, and return to the Board as soon as practical with recommendations;
- 4) Approve and authorize the Chair to sign Resolution **014-2024**, Planning and Building Department Process Improvements;
- 5) Conceptually approve the addition of a Deputy Director position under Planning and Building to implement improvements included in Resolution 014-2024, and direct staff to return to the Board with an updated job specification; and
- 6) Approve the discontinuation of the exploration of a new County Department of Community Services, and direct staff to return to the Board with a recommended internal reorganization of the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) that will allow for all HHS programs to remain in the Agency.

FUNDING: General Fund offset with fees for service and grant funding.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

Currently, Airports and Cemeteries reside in the Planning and Building Department. Due to resource constraints and reliance on the General Fund for operations, these programs have been moved to various County departments through the years in an effort to provide shared administrative support and supervision.

The most recent effort occurred on April 7, 2020 (Legistar item #20-0464) when the Board reassigned Airports and Cemeteries from the Chief Administrative Office to the Planning and Building Department and approved the addition of an Assistant Director of Planning and Building. The intent of the action was to provide a true second-in-command for the Planning and Building Department and additional management-level staff to oversee Airports, Cemeteries, the newly adopted Vacation Home Rental and Commercial Cannabis ordinances, and to implement Board direction to develop a more proactive approach to Code Enforcement. While progress has been made in the delivery of Code Enforcement services and the Cannabis program, the addition of Airports and Cemeteries has diverted resources from the primary functions of the Planning and Building Department and not resulted in the estimated benefits. In addition, the management of the VHR permitting program has since been assigned to the Deputy Director of the Tahoe Planning and Stormwater Division.

On July 19, 2022 (Legistar item #22-1275) the Board of Supervisors deliberated the need to reduce the scope of the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) and discussed the creation of a new

Department of Community Services to include Animal Services, Senior Services, Veteran Services, Housing and Homeless Services, Energy Assistance, and Parks, Trails and River Management. The Board directed staff to seek additional information from affected agencies and explore options for where each program would appropriately fit. Additionally, the Board voiced their desire to keep Parks, Trails and River Management under the Chief Administrative Office.

In support of this effort, the Board approved Agreement 7544 with Municipal Resource Group on April 11, 2023 (Legistar item #23-0688) to assess the challenges regarding the HHS organizational structure and programs. Following this initial assessment and the appointment of Olivia Byron-Cooper as the Health and Human Services Director, the Chief Administrative Office and HHS no longer see an immediate need for the establishment of a new department and instead recommend a reorganization within HHS, which may include the addition of staff to better support existing programs/operations and new mandates such as housing and homelessness, CalAIM and Care Court. HHS will work with Human Resources and the Chief Administrative Office to determine the recommended classifications and reorganization structure and return to the Board with a Resolution for final approval.

Recommendation:

It has been the philosophy and practice of the Chief Administrative Office to absorb developing, resource-constrained, or struggling programs and once the program is stabilized, move them out of the Chief Administrative Office. In addition to having the overall responsibility for the coordination of the County's operations and budget, the Chief Administrative Office is currently responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the Facilities Division, Central Admin/Finance Division, Procurement and Contracts Division, the Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience, the Emergency Medical Services Agency, and Parks, Trails and River Management. Due to the similarities with both the facilities and parks functions, the Cemeteries program is proposed to move to the Chief Administrative Office. The Airports program requires working with federal agencies, grant administration, and the maintenance of land and equipment, which are program components that are also performed by Chief Administrative Office for various functions. It is recommended that this program also be moved to the Chief Administrative Office.

Over the past 12 months, the Planning and Building Director and Management staff have evaluated the delivery of services and identified key areas for improvement including transparency of Department processes, ease of obtaining project status and information, maximizing existing technology including TRAKiT and predictable, consistent processes. The 2023 Grand Jury report further supported public interest in these improvements. Removing Airports and Cemeteries from the Planning and Building Department will allow the Department to focus on process improvements and the Department's primary functions of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement.

Staff has prepared a resolution for Board approval to provide support to make changes necessary to deliver exemplary customer service and modify development review process improvements. Broadly, the resolution directs the Department to assess the County's development review process, prepare a comprehensive report on this assessment, and prepare recommendations for process, policy, organizational, leadership, and cultural improvements necessary for better program delivery. Specifically, staff, in conjunction with the Chief Administrative Office, will develop a public information strategy to demystify the development review process, create a set of meaningful standards and performance measures, create a schedule to engage with staff throughout the organization for insight

into current department culture, and develop a robust department-wide program for performance management and employee development. The department has already begun to identify and implement improvements, including working closely with TRAKiT to fix a major inspection scheduling issue and an online planning project information map (Legistar Item 23-0622).

It is proposed that a Deputy Director position be added to Planning and Building, the cost of which would be offset by the deletion of a vacant Supervising Civil Engineer, to provide the Department with additional capacity for the defined process improvements. This position would confer with all divisions and related departments to map out current processes, be dedicated to improving the department's delivery of services to include the full and correct implementation of the TRAKiT system, oversee and improve the Planning and Building Liaison (previously referred to as the Department's Ombudsman) and provide more open communication between customers and the department in order to address ongoing customer service issues, oversee the Economic Development program, and prepare and implement a County Economic Development Strategy. This position would address one of the key challenges in implementing changes: allocating dedicated staff for implementing programmatic and policy level changes. A Deputy Director position provides a level of authority and decision-making necessary to implement such changes.

With Board approval, staff will return to the Board with the new class specification for the Deputy Director of Economic Development and Administration and a revised personnel resolution. The Chief Administrative Office and Planning and Building Department is recommending that organizational changes related to Airports and Cemeteries go into effect July 1, 2024, with the new fiscal year.

Staff will return to the Board as soon as practical with recommendations for staffing and organizational structures for HHSA and the Planning and Building Department's South Lake Tahoe Office.

ALTERNATIVES

Should the Board decline this recommendation, the existing organizational structure for the Chief Administrative Office, HHSA, and the Department of Planning and Building will remain unchanged.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

See discussion above.

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Planning and Building Department
Human Resources
Health and Human Services Agency

CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS

Approve as recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The new Deputy Director allocation would be offset by the deletion of the existing, vacant Supervising Civil Engineer position. The movement of Cemeteries and Airports may result in a financial impact, however, until the reorganization and staffing evaluation occur, the total effect is unknown at this time. Any changes will be evaluated in the Recommended Budget.

In HHSA, the financial impact of these changes is unknown until specific allocation changes are identified. Staff will return to the Board with a resolution for these changes and will include the cost at that time.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Good Governance

CONTACT

Jennifer Franich, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer