



City of
PORTLAND, OREGON
Bureau of Development Services
Budget Advisory Committee



FY 2017-18 Budget Advisory Committee Report

Bureau of Development Services January 29, 2017

The Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) of the Bureau of Development Services (BDS) thanks Commissioners Dan Saltzman and Chloe Eudaly and the City Council for the opportunity to work with BDS on the development of its FY 2017-18 Requested Budget. The BDS BAC is composed of representatives from the Development Review Advisory Committee, community groups, the development industry, and BDS employees.

We met with BDS managers and staff three times from November 2016 – January 2017 to discuss BDS's finances, staffing, workload, programs and services, and budget needs. We also reviewed budget guidance from the Mayor and projections for City and bureau revenues in the coming year.

In light of these discussions, we are making the following budget and policy recommendations for FY 2017-18:

- 1. We support BDS's plan to accomplish the required 5% cut in General Fund support by reducing the budget for nuisance abatements. We also recommend that this cut be restored.** BDS receives General Fund support for its Neighborhood Inspections and Land Use Services Programs. The bureau is complying with the Mayor's requirement for a 5% cut in General Fund support by reducing the budget for nuisance abatements. We support this plan, since it does not require cutting any permanent staff positions.

However, we recognize that a reduction in nuisance abatements will negatively impact neighborhood livability, safety, and public health, particularly during the warm months of the year. While BDS has been able to absorb 5% General Fund cuts the last couple budget cycles by backfilling with program reserves, this is not a sustainable long-term approach to fund these important services. We therefore recommend that these funds be restored from the General Fund.

- 2. We support BDS's decision to place its request for permit fee-supported positions in the 2017 Spring Budget Monitoring Process (BMP), rather than in the Requested Budget.** As they have done for the previous two budget cycles, BDS intends to add a modest number of permit fee-supported positions (12-15) through the Spring BMP in order to fill the positions quickly. These positions will address significant workload needs and allow BDS to meet gaps in service levels. We support BDS's approach as a practical way to quickly meet these needs.

3. We support the bureau's employee budget idea development process.

BDS offered its employees opportunities to share their ideas regarding the budget through multiple open "drop-in sessions". Employees submitted 65 different ideas through the drop-in sessions and voted for the ideas they felt were most important for the bureau to pursue. Suggestions included the restoration of Residential Permit Night to improve access to the bureau's services, and the prioritization of outreach, mentoring, and workforce development for current staff. BDS management indicated that they will explore all the suggested ideas, which we support. We are also encouraged that BDS is implementing a number of employee ideas that were submitted in last year's budget process, such as enhancing the ability to answer technical questions over the phone and improving professional development and mentoring resources for bureau staff.

4. We applaud the City Council's decision to activate the City's foreclosure program.

In last year's FY 2016-17 BAC report, we recommended that the City implement the foreclosure process to address the relatively small number of properties that accounted for a significant portion of the unpaid liens held by BDS.

The Council's decision to move forward with the City's foreclosure list has allowed BDS's Neighborhood Inspections Program to begin to address unmaintained, primarily vacant properties that present ongoing health and safety hazards to Portland neighborhoods. Neighborhood Inspections has also begun to recover some of the outstanding liens as part of this process.

We are grateful for the opportunity to add our support to BDS's FY 2017-18 Requested Budget.

BDS Budget Advisory Committee Members

Stakeholders / Community Members

Andre Baugh, Group AGB, Ltd.
Claire Carder, Development Review Advisory Committee
Barrett Karnes, REACH CDC
Cristina Palacios, Community Alliance of Tenants
Joe Schneider, Development Review Advisory Committee
Susan Steward, Building Owners & Managers Association

BDS Employees

Charles Myrick, Represented Staff (DCTU) / Neighborhood Inspections
Raul Torres, Non-Represented Staff / Business Operations
Kim Tallant, Management / Land Use Services
Rachel Whiteside, Represented Staff (COPPEA) / Information Technology Advancement Project