

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 12, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #24: PERFORMANCE DATA FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION INSPECTIONS, PHONE CALL, AND COMPLAINT PROCESSING

This memo is in response to Councilman Wilson's question, "The Inspection of New Structures Activity within Code Administration anticipates that 30,000 inspections will be conducted in FY 2010, which is the same amount conducted in FY 2008. Given the predictions of new construction reflected elsewhere in the budget, how can this be?"

The FY 2010 projection for New Construction Inspections was based on new construction inspections performed in FY 2008 (30,598) with a 15% reduction to arrive at an estimated number of 26,008. In addition, an estimated 4,000 inspections for the proposed BRAC project were added to this figure (26,008) since it was expected to generate additional building and trade inspections performed by Code. Typically, information for BRAC and other special projects funded by outside revenues would not count toward General Fund numbers, and they should not have been included in this total. In regard to the BRAC office building project at Mark Center, subsequent to the presentation of the proposed budget, the Army decided to contract with the City only for fire protection systems inspections only.

In January 2009, 2,615 building and trade inspections were conducted by New Construction staff. While the majority of these inspections are on smaller projects which are less technical in nature and time consuming, the January numbers are indicative of about 30,000 inspections per year. However, if development continues to follow the economic downturn, inspections may continue to trend downward at even lower numbers than the 26,000 projected for inspections funded by the General Fund.

In addition, Code Administration wants to take this opportunity to provide clarification on phone call processing and complaint performance data. The FY 2010 projection for Phone Call Processing under "number of phone calls answered" is based on an estimate from Permit Center personnel of 125 phone calls per week or an estimated 6,500 calls per year. It is difficult to determine the number of complaint calls received as they come

from multiple points to include the Code Administration front office, inspectors' desk or cell phones, supervisors' desk or cell phones, and the City's 24-hour Nuisance Hotline, which is answered in Fire Communications.

With the current phone system, Code Administration is unable to capture the actual number of phone calls answered, cost per phone call answered, and percentage of phone calls dropped. However, when VOIP is implemented in Code offices, Code Administration will have the ability to track empirical data as it relates to phone calls.