



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE, MAYOR

MEMORANDUM

Office of the Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

FROM: Monica R. Lamboy, Executive Director

DATE: March 25, 2010

SUBJECT: Authorization to transfer \$44,000 in FY2010 funds for an organizational study of the Inspectional Services Division and \$5,226 for a Green Infrastructure Planner

The Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD) respectfully requests that you forward to the Board of Aldermen a request to transfer \$44,000 within the OSPCD budget to perform an organization study of the Inspectional Services Division and utilize \$5,226 to hire a Green Infrastructure Planner. Sufficient lag monies exist within OSPCD for these purposes.

BACKGROUND

During FY2010, OSPCD has had several vacancies that have generated lag monies including: ISD Inspector, Planning Director, Senior Transportation Planner, and Senior Sanitary Inspector. While the department has been quite successful in identifying qualified candidates, the vacancies will generate approximately \$66,000 in lag monies by the end of the fiscal year.

Division	Est. Lag	Explanation
Planning (2901)	\$33,000	Planning Director vacant 6 months ¹
Transp & Infra (1033)	\$11,000	Snr Transportation Planner Vacant 3 months
ISD (8010)	\$22,000	Bldg Inspector vacant 6 months; Sanitary Inspector currently vacant ²
TOTAL	\$66,000	

At the same time these lag monies exist, OSPCD has identified two priorities that are in need of funds during FY2011. These include an organizational study of ISD and a Green Infrastructure

¹ This figure takes into account the revised salary for the Planning Director authorized by the BOA

² The Senior Sanitary Inspector position is presently vacant. A contractor has been made available through the previous transfer of lag monies. Those funds are taken into account in this report.

Planner.

ISD Organizational Study

ISD operations are critical not only to the health and safety of the Somerville community, but also to the economic climate of the city. Persons interested in investing in their properties or starting new businesses in Somerville often first interact with the City through staff at ISD. In addition, developers of significant new buildings, such as IKEA, spend considerable time working with plan review staff to have their building plans reviewed and permits issued. Despite the many strengths the individuals working at ISD have, as an organization, ISD is not equipped to provide the type of high quality, high volume customer service that will be demanded in the future.

The organizational study will be performed by an outside consultant who will evaluate the division's current human resources (organizational structure, training, etc.), use of technology, processes, and facilities and benchmark those to other communities recognized for high quality customer service. The consultant will then make detailed recommendations on how to improve the customer service offered by the division. To gather this information, staff within ISD and in other City departments, community members, and customers will be interviewed in a confidential format to gather their insights. Available data such as number of permits processed will also be evaluated. The cost of this study is estimated at \$44,000.

Funding for this study is recommended from lag monies in the Planning Division (2901) in the amount of \$30,000 and ISD (8010) in the amount of \$14,000.

Green Infrastructure Planner

Last fall, OSPCD completed the City's first Tree Inventory through the use of an intern and an outside consultant. This inventory found that Somerville contained over 11,000 trees in the public right of way and that the value of each tree was estimated at \$1,400³ based upon their impact to property values, appearance, etc. A Forestry Management Plan was prepared by the consultant with specific recommendations on how the City can improve the care of its tree infrastructure. In order to implement this Forestry Management Plan and meet the Mayor and Board of Alderman's commitment to expanding Somerville's tree canopy, an additional position is needed in OSPCD. This position will also implement the new grant provided by the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET) for improvements at the Blessings of the Bay Boathouse and between Foss Park and the Mystic River.

It is recommended that the Green Infrastructure Planner position be funded 50% from CDBG and 50% from local funds. The CDBG funding allocation was appropriated by the BOA as part of the HUD Action Plan 2009-2010 and has been used to date to fund intern assistance. The position would be paid equivalent to other planner positions at a rate of \$45,468 per year. At present, OSPCD seeks to fill the Green Infrastructure Planner using existing CDBG funds and \$5,226 in existing lag monies available within the Transportation & Infrastructure Division (1033). This would allow the position to be filled some time in April.

³ This conservative valuation is based on a standard formula developed by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers and found in the Council's *Guide for Plant Appraisal (9th Edition)*.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of Aldermen authorize the following:

- Transfer of \$30,000 in lag monies from the Planning Division (2901) to the Inspectional Services Division (8010), professional services account.
- Transfer of \$14,000 in lag monies in the Inspectional Services Division (8010) to the professional services account.
- Authorization to hire a Green Infrastructure Planner with a salary of up to \$45,468 per year through 50% CDBG funding and 50% lag monies existing within the Transportation & Infrastructure Division for a maximum FY2010 cost of \$5,226 in local funds.