

Fee Review and Program Changes for Development Review

Why Are We Reviewing Fees?

1. We've heard requests for a number of improvements on how we do development review and permitting business from a number of sectors - building and development industry, non-profits, business owners and residents.
2. We've engaged with key stakeholders on discussions about process improvements, problems in our system, and identifying issues from the development industry's perspective.
3. This has included items like faster, timelier reviews, improved service and communications during the review process, assistance with problem-solving and alternative solutions, dedicated file managers to make a single point of contact, and other ideas.
4. In addition to these requests, the levels and volume of applications continue to come in, and even in times of slow growth, service demands are still high and need to be met.
5. Our service level has been set at the below average level of applications, and we haven't had a change in our technology in years. These factors have affected our ability to respond to requests and to implement changes that we want and that industry wants.
6. Where we want to be is in a position to be providing a service that is fast and consistent, with the ability to make changes to our internal processes and technology on an on-going basis. As we work through changes, we have to balance the needs of citizens, the interest of businesses and the legislated requirements that the City must abide by.
7. Technology and expectations are changing faster now than in the past and we want to be able to act on changes.

How Do the Fees Relate to Program Improvements?

1. In order to move these changes from idea to action, we need changes in our processes, our technology and our staffing levels, and this means changes to our fees to support the resources required.
2. Working with Building Standards, and the other Divisions performing review of development proposals, we had a third party operational review conducted and created a project team to move forward on implementation.
3. Increasing staffing levels will let us work through process changes, and technology changes, as we maintain day to day service.

4. Improved customer service for applicants is a key goal – streamlining requests during the review process and improving communications to applicants through the process are two key elements we want to deliver on.
5. Over time, as improvements are made to move us towards being leaders in permit processing and application processing, we will continue to look for opportunities to improve. We fully expect that as technology and industry changes, we will need to as well. We need to set up for that now.
6. We also know that getting the right information out, at the right time, helps the process. We're reviewing our public information, notifications and engagement methods to simplify the overall process.