

Development Review Program – Proposed Fee Changes for 2024 and 2025

Appendix 2 – Comparison of Fees to Other Municipalities

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1. INTRODUCTION

In consideration of the proposed fee adjustments by the City of Saskatoon (City) to development permits and other development applications, under the “Development Review Program”, for 2024 and 2025, a municipal scan was completed, which gathered information on development application fees for other comparable municipalities across Canada.

In total, the development application fees for 12 different municipalities were gathered and, where possible, compared to the City's proposed 2024 - 2025 Development Review Program fees. The fee information collected from other municipalities is current for 2023 and was accessible through their public-facing websites. The 12 municipalities selected included three western-Canadian municipalities of Winnipeg, Regina and Edmonton, and nine municipalities of similar population size, based on 2021 population data. The following table summarizes the 12 municipalities considered in this review, in descending order of population. For reference, the 2021 population of Saskatoon was 266,141.

Table 1.1 – Comparable Municipalities (by 2021 Population)

Municipality	2021 Municipality Population¹
Edmonton, AB	1,010,899
Winnipeg, MB	749,607
Halifax, NS	439,819
London, ON	422,324
Markham, ON	338,503
Vaughan, ON	323,103
Gatineau (Ottawa), ON	291,041
Saskatoon, SK	266,141
Kitchener, ON	256,885
Burnaby, BC	249,125
Windsor, ON	229,660
Regina, SK	226,404
Oakville, ON	213,759

This review aimed to compare the City's proposed 2024 – 2025 Development Review Program fees with those in these neighbouring/similarly-sized Canadian municipalities, for similar development application types.

2. COMPARISON OF FEES

There are approximately 30 different development application types and associated fees in the City's Development Review Program. When gathering information on development applications and related fees from other municipalities, it is apparent there is no standardized or common list of development applications, as the application types (including names) and their intent can vary from municipality to municipality.

¹ <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-x/2021001/98-200-x2021001-eng.cfm>

There appears to be more consistency between application types when comparing municipalities in the same province, as many provinces have established provincial laws and regulations, such as Acts, which govern planning and development in that province (e.g., Saskatchewan's *Planning and Development Act, 2007*; Ontario's *Planning Act, 1990*; etc.). Therefore, a comparison was not performed on all development application types.

Instead, a comparison was made where application types appeared similar, based on name and/or intent. The comparison was limited to the four different development application types: subdivisions; condominiums; amendments to zoning bylaws; and text or map amendments to Official Community Plans (OCP). These four application types for Saskatoon include some of the most significant proposed fee increases (i.e., 15% to 30% increase) by the City in the 2024 – 2025 proposed fees.

It is critical to consider the following key points when evaluating the comparisons by these four application types:

1. It is difficult to make an accurate comparison between development application types and fees between municipalities, as it is not 100% clear what charges are or are not included in the application fee, as well as potential impact of each municipality's governing policies/bylaws on the fees set. For example, one municipality may include cost of internal engineering services/review in the application fee, whereas another municipality may not. Another example could be one municipality setting their fees based on a 100% cost recovery mandate from their city council, whereas another municipality may set fees based on a lower cost recovery percentage mandate.
2. The comparisons are between the proposed 2024 fees for the City and the current 2023 fees of comparable municipalities. These other municipalities may also increase their development application fees in 2024, thus impacting the relative comparison. Finally, a comparison was not made on the proposed 2025 fees by the City, which only increase marginally above fees being proposed for 2024 (i.e., year-over-year increase by an average of approximately 2.5%, which is in line with typical inflationary increases).
3. Some municipalities provide a range of fees for certain development application types; therefore, an average was calculated to complete the comparisons. Also, some municipalities have a fixed component for the base fee of a specific development application type, such as Oakville's Official Plan Amendment Base Fee (2023) of \$29,110, plus a variable component which is added to the base fee, such as Oakville's Official Plan Amendment Variable Rate Based on Site Area of \$27/100m² site area. Therefore, since the variable rate cannot be calculated for the comparison, as it is specific to each application/project, only the base fees were used in the comparison. If the municipality listed a maximum fee for the base plus variable component of the fee, then this maximum was used as the high value for the range.
4. Not all municipalities reviewed had fees listed for these four development application types.
5. Based on the situations described in items #3 and #4 above, an average of the fee, across all comparable municipalities for each of the four development application types, was calculated and compared to the City's proposed 2024 fee.

2.1 Subdivision Fee Comparison

The City proposes a fee increase from \$3,495 (2023) to \$4,250 (2024) for subdivision applications. This represents an estimated 22% increase. Compared to data gathered from comparable municipalities, the average fee in 2023 for subdivision applications was \$25,879, which is approximately 609% or 6.1 times higher than the 2024 fee proposed by the City. The highest comparable average 2023 subdivision fee was \$80,145 (Gatineau/Ottawa), whereas the lowest was \$1,395 (Halifax). The following bar graph shows the average 2023 subdivision application fee available for each municipality (grey bars), and the line graph shows the average 2023 subdivision application fee across all comparable municipalities (grey line) and the proposed 2024 subdivision application fee from the City (green line).

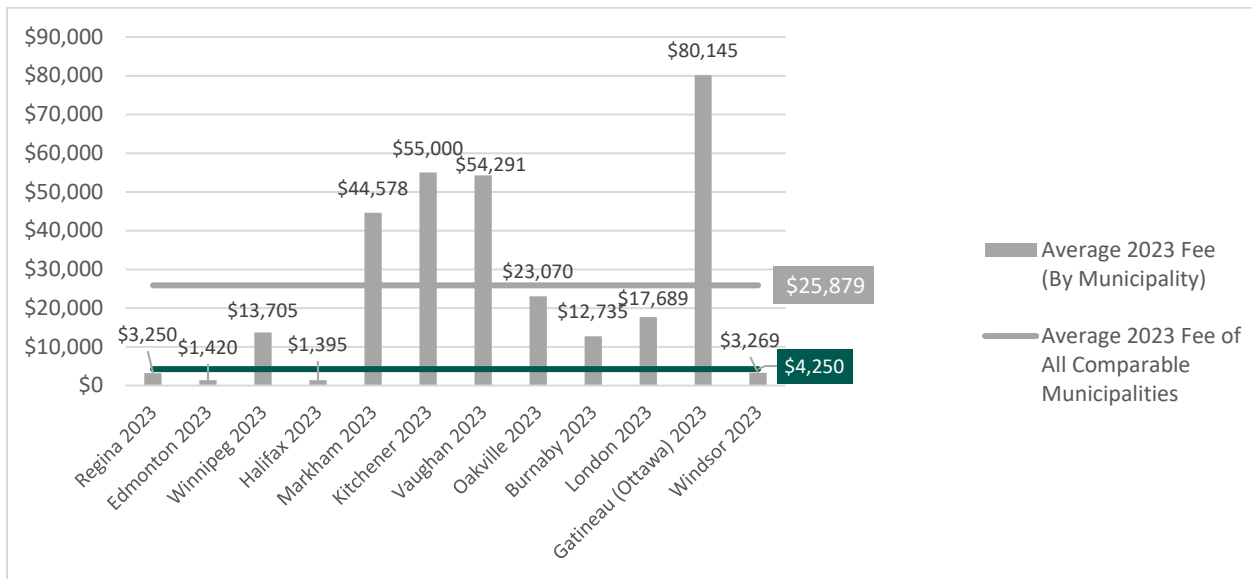


Figure 2.1 – Subdivision Fee Comparison

Compared to Saskatchewan’s other major/similar-sized city, The City of Regina’s (Regina) average 2023 subdivision application fee was \$3,250. This is approximately 24% lower than the 2024 subdivision application fee of \$4,250 being proposed by Saskatoon. As noted earlier, the City is proposing roughly a 22% increase from the 2023 fee for the proposed 2024 fee, and it is unknown if Regina will be increasing their fees for 2024. The City’s current (2023) subdivision Application fee of \$3,495 is roughly 7.5% higher than Regina’s average 2023 fee of \$3,250 (Note: Regina’s 2023 subdivision fee ranges from a minimum of \$1,500 to a maximum of \$5,000).

2.2 Condominium Fee Comparison

The City proposes a fee increase from \$845 (2023) to \$975 (2024) for condominium applications. This represents an estimated 15% increase. Compared to data gathered from comparable municipalities, the average fee in 2023 for condominium applications was \$16,007, which is approximately 1,642% or 16.4 times higher than the City’s proposed 2024 fee. The highest comparable average 2023 condominium fee was \$45,315 (Markham), whereas the lowest was \$1,420 (Edmonton).

The following bar graph shows the average 2023 condominium application fee available for each municipality (grey bars), and the line graph shows the average 2023 Condo application fee across all comparable municipalities (grey line) and the proposed 2024 condominium application fee from the City (green line).

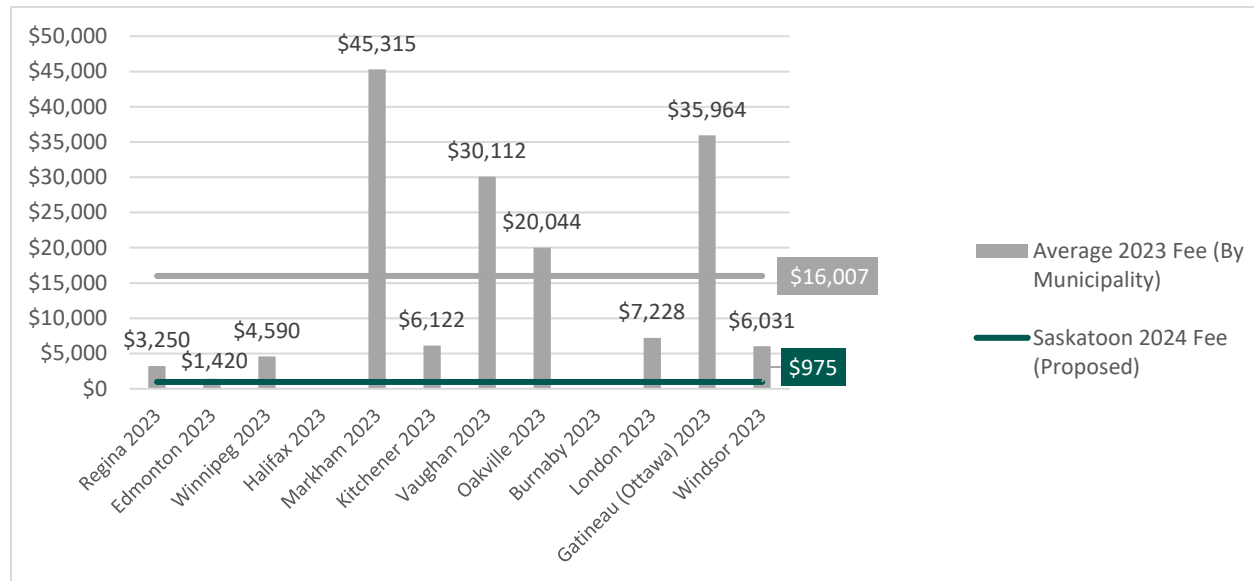


Figure 2.2 – Condominium Fee Comparison

Regina’s average 2023 condominium application fee of \$3,250 is approximately 333% or 3.3 times higher than the 2024 condominium application fee of \$975 proposed by the City, which, as stated earlier, represents an increase of 15% over the current (2023) condominium application fee charged by the City.

2.3 Zoning Bylaw Amendment Fee Comparison

The City is proposing a fee increase from \$5,100 (2023) to \$6,630 (2024) for amendments to Bylaw No. 8770, the Zoning Bylaw, 2009 (Zoning Bylaw), text amendments. This represents an approximate 30% increase. Compared to data gathered from comparable municipalities, the average fee in 2023 for zoning bylaw amendments was \$15,544, which is approximately 234% or 2.3 times higher than the 2024 fee proposed by the City. The highest comparable average 2023 zoning bylaw amendment fee was \$43,542 (Markham), whereas the lowest was \$4,450 (Regina). The following bar graph shows the average 2023 zoning bylaw amendment fee available for each municipality (grey bars), and the line graph shows the average 2023 zoning bylaw amendment fee across all comparable municipalities (grey line) and the proposed 2024 zoning bylaw amendment fee from the City (green line).

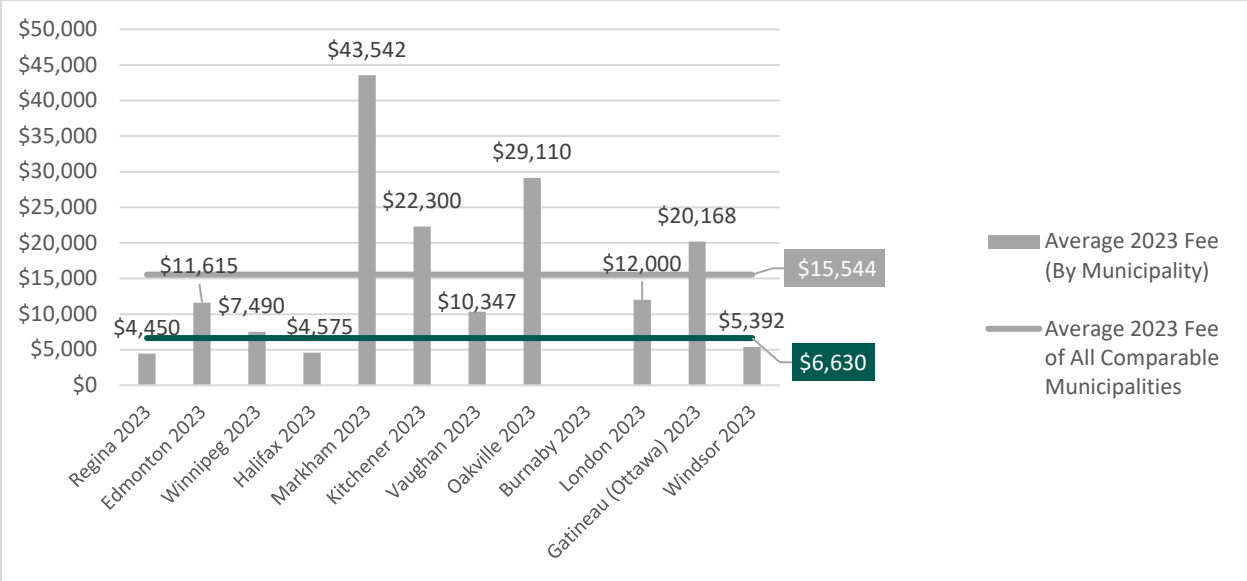


Figure 2.3 – Zoning Bylaw Amendment Fee Comparison

Regina’s average 2023 zoning bylaw amendment fee of \$4,450 is approximately 33% lower than the 2024 Zoning Bylaw amendment fee of \$6,630 proposed by the City of Saskatoon, which is an increase of 30% over the Zoning Bylaw amendment fee charged by the City in 2023. It is unknown if Regina will be increasing their fees for 2024. The City’s 2023 Zoning Bylaw amendment fee of \$5,100 is roughly 15% higher than Regina’s average 2023 fee of \$4,450 (Note: Regina’s 2023 zoning bylaw amendment fee ranges from \$3,500 for minor amendments to \$5,400 for major amendments).

2.4 Official Community Plan (OCP) Amendment Fee Comparison

The City is proposing a fee increase from \$1,875 (2023) to \$2,400 (2024) for OCP text or map amendments. This represents an estimated 28% increase. Compared to data gathered from comparable municipalities, the average fee in 2023 for OCP amendments was \$23,410, which is approximately 975% or 9.8 times higher than the 2024 fee proposed by the City. The highest comparable average 2023 OCP amendment fee was \$56,995 (Markham), whereas the lowest was \$4,450 (Regina). The following bar graph shows the average 2023 OCP amendment fee available for each municipality (grey bars), and the line graph shows the average 2023 OCP amendment fee across all comparable municipalities (grey line) and the proposed 2024 OCP amendment fee from the City (green line).

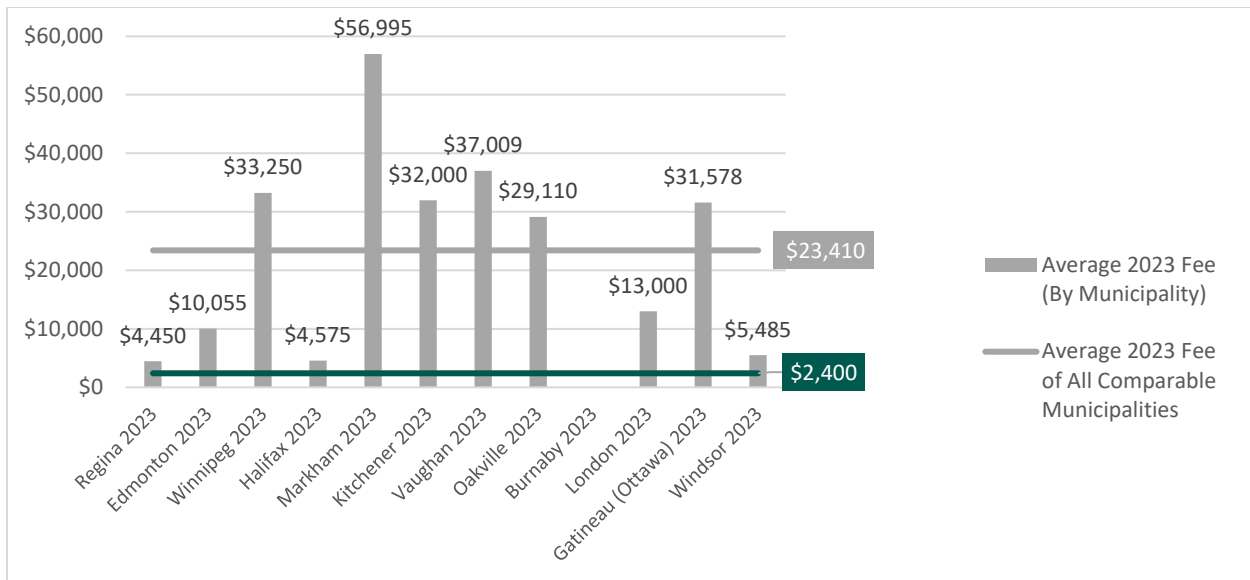


Figure 2.4 – Official Community Plan (OCP) Amendment Fee Comparison

Regina’s average 2023 OCP amendment fee of \$4,450 is approximately 185% higher than the 2024 OCP amendment fee of \$2,400 proposed by Saskatoon, which, as stated earlier, represents an increase of approximately 28% over the OCP amendment fee charged by the City in 2023.

2.5 Concept Plan Fee Comparison

As previously stated, it is difficult to find data and compare municipalities for many different development application types, especially when comparing against municipalities from other provinces. This includes applications for Concept Plans and Concept Plan amendments. Since Regina and Saskatoon are two similar-sized cities in the same province, and thus are governed by the same provincial regulations, a more direct comparison could be made for Concept Plan fees between these two municipalities. The following Figure compares Regina's 2023 Concept Plan (New) and Concept Plan amendment (Major and Minor) application fees, against the 2024 proposed fees by Saskatoon for the same applications. It should be noted the City is proposing adding a new application type and corresponding fee for “Intermediate Concept Plan Amendment” applications; Regina does not have such an application type/fee. The addition of an Intermediate Concept Plan Amendment application by the City will provide an opportunity to refine the classification of a developer’s project and/or application, ensuring the most appropriate fee is charged.

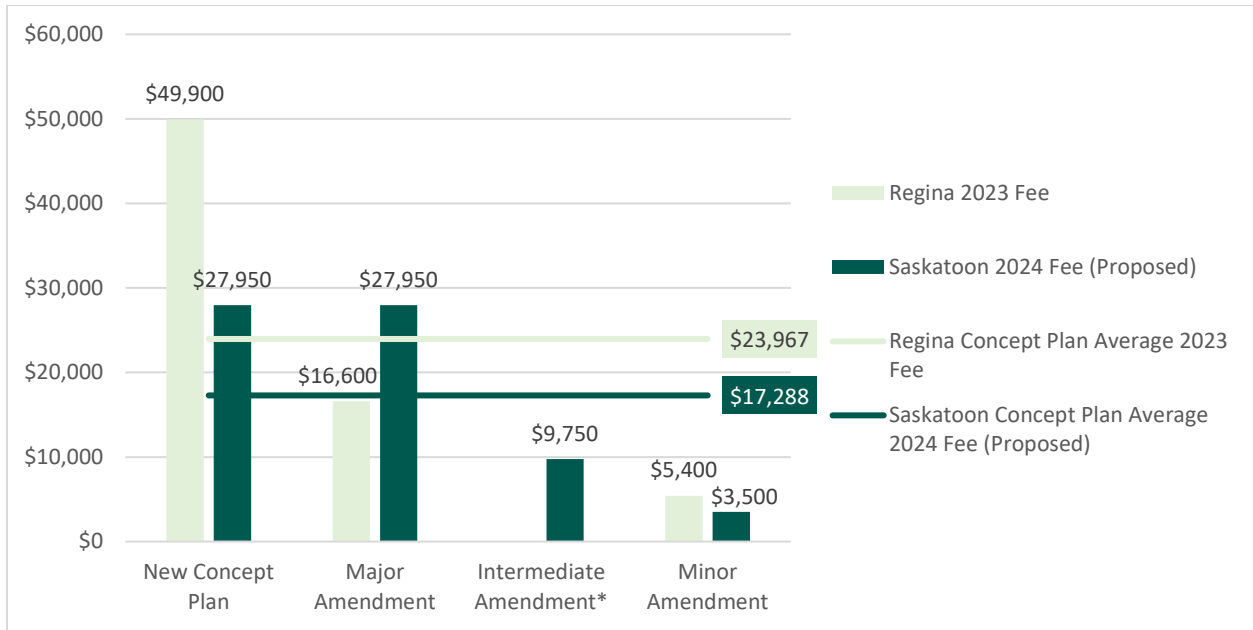


Figure 2.5 – Concept Plan Fee Comparison

Comparing Concept Plan application fees, Regina’s 2023 fees for new Concept Plans and minor Concept Plan amendments are higher than the City of Saskatoon’s 2024 proposed fees for the same, by about \$21,950 (179%) and \$1,900 (154%), respectively. The City’s 2024 proposed fee for a major Concept Plan amendment is approximately \$11,350 (168%) higher than Regina’s 2023 fee. For reference, the City’s 2023 fee for a major Concept Plan amendment (\$21,500) is roughly 30% higher than Regina’s 2023 fee (\$16,600).

When comparing the average of all Concept Plan and Concept Plan amendment fees between Regina and Saskatoon, Regina’s 2023 average fee of \$23,967 is 139%, or 1.4 times, higher than the City’s average proposed 2024 fee of \$17,288, even after increasing the City’s 2023 fees by approximately 30% to arrive at these newly proposed 2024 fees.

3. SUMMARY

Comparing the City’s proposed 2024 fees for the four application types: subdivisions, condominiums, zoning bylaw amendments, and OCP bylaw and map amendments, it is apparent the fees proposed by the City are lower than similar-sized Canadian municipalities. These fees range from about 43% of the average fees charged in 2023, for zoning bylaw amendments, to 6% of the average fees charged in 2023 for condo applications. The following table summarizes the comparison of the 2024 proposed fees by the City against the average 2023 fees charged by the comparable municipalities (12 in total), for each of the four development application types. From this comparison, the City remains a cost-competitive municipality for the development industry in Canada.

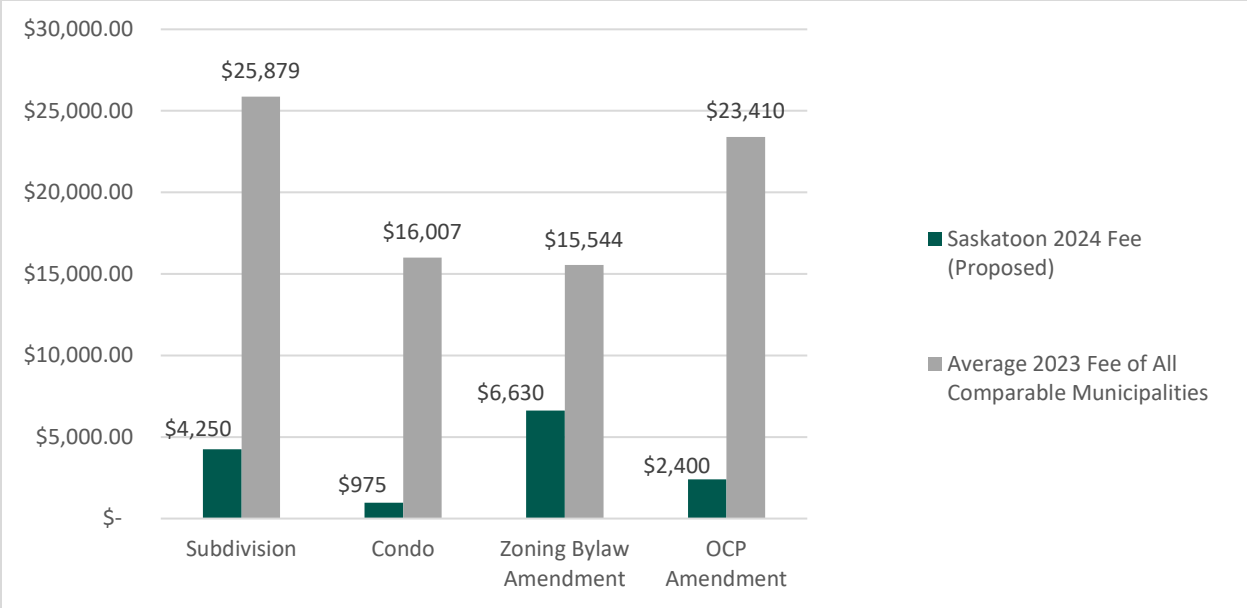


Figure 3.1 – Fee Comparison Summary (1)

The most comparable municipality for these four application types is Regina, Saskatchewan, which is logical, as Regina is of similar population size to Saskatoon (i.e., 226,404 versus 266,141 in 2021, respectively), and Regina and Saskatoon are both governed by the same provincial legislation, such as *the Planning and Development Act, 2007*. While Regina’s 2023 fee for subdivisions and zoning bylaw amendments were lower than the City’s 2024 proposed fee for the same applications (i.e., \$3,250 and \$4,450, versus \$4,250 and \$6,630, respectively), the City’s 2024 proposed fee was lower than Regina’s 2023 fee for condominium applications and OCP amendments (i.e., \$975 and \$2,400, versus \$3,250 and \$4,450, respectively). Across all four application types, on average, the City’s proposed 2024 application fee is approximately 8% lower than the average 2023 fees charged by Regina (i.e., \$3,564 versus \$3,850). The average of all comparable municipalities, across these four application types, is over \$20,000, or 5.6 times higher than the City. This comparison is summarized in the following graph.

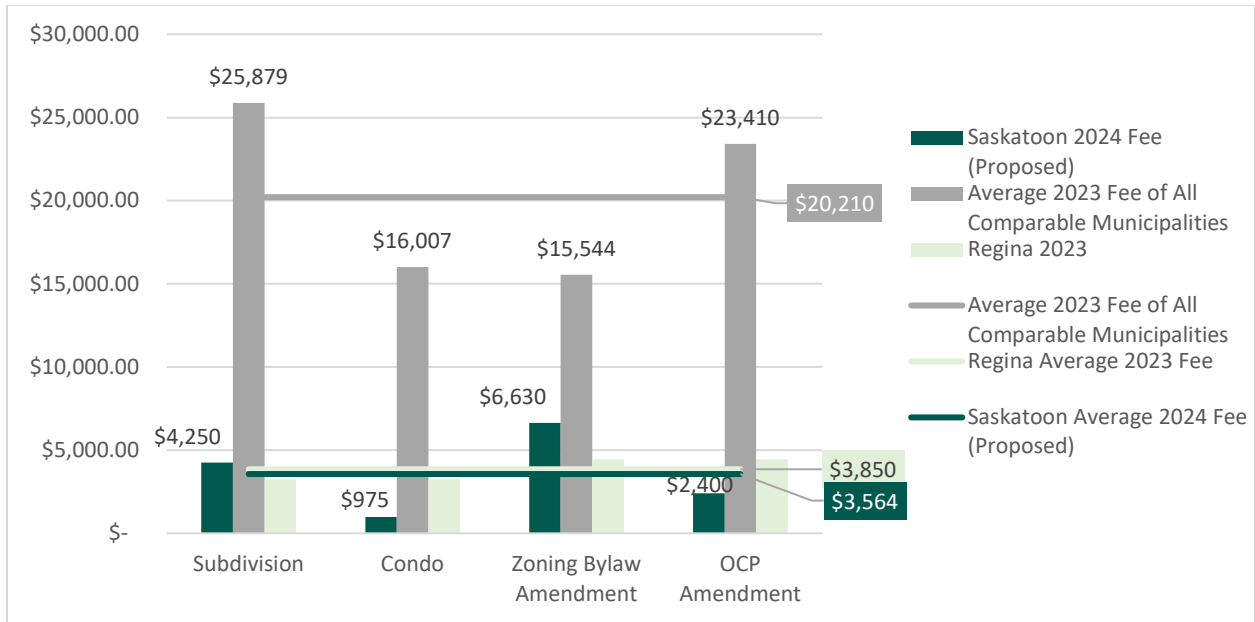


Figure 3.2 – Fee Comparison Summary (2)

The City is committed to balancing requirements of meeting cost recovery objectives established by City Council and maintaining competitive fees which promote development, and the City has taken this into account when determining the proposed Development Review Program fee adjustments for 2024 – 2025.

4. REFERENCES

Population Data: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-x/2021001/98-200-x2021001-eng.cfm>

2023 Development Application Fees:

- Edmonton: <https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/2023-Planning-and-Development-Fee-Schedules.pdf?cb=1680081904>
- Winnipeg: <https://legacy.winnipeg.ca/ppd/fees/pdf/planning-development-and-building-fees-and-charges.pdf>
- Halifax: <https://www.halifax.ca/business/planning-development/planning-subdivision-applications/planning-subdivision-application>
- London: <https://london.ca/sites/default/files/2022-12/A-58%20Schedule%201%202023.pdf>
- Markham: https://www.markham.ca/wps/wcm/connect/markham/4645ee5b-de3c-4dcf-99c2-1782a0985e8d/Bylaw+211.83+amended+2022.17.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_2QD4H901OGV160QC8BLCRJ1001-4645ee5b-de3c-4dcf-99c2-1782a0985e8d-om8GhDB
- Vaughan: https://www.vaughan.ca/sites/default/files/2023-04/2023%20Fees%20and%20Tarrifs_0.pdf
- Gatineau (Ottawa): <https://ottawa.ca/en/planning-development-and-construction/residential-property-regulations/development-application-review-process/development-application-submission/fees-and-funding-programs/development-application-fees>
- Kitchener: https://www.kitchener.ca/en/resourcesGeneral/Documents/DSD_PLAN_2023_User_Fees.pdf
- Burnaby: <https://www.burnaby.ca/sites/default/files/acquiadam/2023-02/2023-Planning-Department-Fees.pdf>
- Windsor: <https://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/planning/Land-Development/Development-Applications/Documents/Application%20Form%20Official%20Plan%20Amendment%20-%20July%2027%202023.pdf>
- Regina: <https://www.regina.ca/business-development/land-property-development/land-development/>
- Oakville: <https://www.oakville.ca/getmedia/f2d9d337-e3be-4b0a-8233-328facd9707b/budget-rates-fees-planning-services.pdf>