

Community Development Fee Schedule Update Proposal: Land Use Review and Wetland & Habitat Review programs

Development Engineering Advisory Board
October 2, 2025

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Fee Schedule Update Proposal

Purpose

Receive DEAB feedback on proposed new fees and updates to existing fees for the Land Use Review and Wetland and Habitat Review programs

Agenda

- Background
- General Fund Support – historical and forecasted
- Fee Update Proposals for 2026
- Next Steps



Background

Current cost recovery framework

- RCW 82.02.020: Allows reasonable fees from an applicant to cover the cost of processing applications, inspecting and reviewing plans
- CCC 6.100.020 (Application and service fee policy)
 - ...adopt application and service fees at the level necessary to cover the costs of conducting the review or providing the service
 - General fund support for key activities will be identified where necessary



Background (continued)

Revenue sources

- The Department of Community Development is mostly funded by fees. Best practices, and county code, dictate that the fees our department charges should cover the cost of providing the service. This includes not only the salaries and benefits of staff providing the services, but also indirect costs like office rent and copier maintenance, and department overhead allocated to the programs
- Those costs which cannot be tied to processing the applications, or are not subsidized by Council, must be covered by other funding sources. In the case of Community Development, we have two small grants, with the major alternate funding source being General Fund dollars



Background (continued)

Main drivers of this General Fund support

- Sporadic fee updates in past years
 - Costs of service increase each year, but fees have not been updated to match those cost increases
- Intentional subsidization of program costs by previous councils
 - General Fund support for fee work, also known as “public share”
 - Allocation of General Fund dollars for non-fee supported activities
 - Examples:
 - Customer service to applicants – ‘planner of the day’, extra assistance to one-time applicants
 - Clark Conservation District - works with land owners to maintain exempt status and avoid violations



Background (continued)

- One way to lessen our department's reliance on General Fund dollars is to ensure that the fees we charge reflect the current costs of providing the services
- In 2024, a major update to the Land Use Review and Wetland & Habitat Review fees was approved by Council, with the new fees going live on January 15, 2025. The previous update was done back in 2009/2010
- The fee model used was reviewed and approved by the County Finance Team
- The result is that fees in those programs now reflect what it costs *currently* to provide the services, rather than what the costs were in 2009/2010, and the General Fund request for 2025 is projected to be **27% less** than for 2024



General Fund Support – Historical and Forecasted

Year	Program	
	Land Use Review	Wetland/Habitat Review
2019	\$ 823,152	\$ 251,203
2020	\$ 691,135	\$ 264,133
2021	\$ 764,678	\$ 386,615
2022	\$ 926,458	\$ 395,832
2023	\$ 1,173,183	\$ 384,234
2024	\$ 1,225,472	\$ 327,101
	\$ 5,604,078	\$ 2,009,118
		Total General Fund Support (2019-2024)
	\$ 935,920	\$ 193,393
		Projected General Fund Support (2025)
	\$ (289,552)	\$ (133,708)
		Increase (Decrease) in General Fund Support



Fee Update Proposals for 2026

- If the fees for 2026 are adopted as proposed, following are the estimated results:
 - Land Use Review
 - Average fee increase: 2%
 - Estimated increase in fee revenue: \$30,000
 - Wetland and Habitat Review
 - Average fee increase: 3%
 - Estimated increase in fee revenue: \$19,000



Fee Update Proposals for 2026 (Continued)

- The Department of Community Development held a work session with the Clark County Council on August 13, 2025
- Feedback from Council about the proposed fees was minimal, with one question about why the proposed fee increases appear to be lower than cost increases generally seen countywide:
 - In 2025, the methodology used to calculate department overhead to be allocated to its various programs was updated to reflect guidance provided by the State Auditor's Office
 - This resulted in lower amounts of overhead being allocated to both programs in 2025, which partially offset increases to staff wages driven by the 'Me Too' grievance outcome as well as other payroll related costs



Next Steps

- Present proposed fee schedule updates to DEAB and obtain feedback
- Return to Council for public hearing to adopt new and updated fees (October 14, 2025)
- Import approved fee updates into CC-LMS permitting system, conduct testing to ensure correct calculations, with the goal of implementing new fees as soon as possible



Thank you!

Community Development

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