

**Agenda Action Report**  
Prepared for the  
**Cascade County Commission**

**ITEM:** **Public Hearing to change the *Cascade County Planning & GIS Department Fee Schedule***

**PRESENTED BY:** Charity N. Yonker, Planning Director

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Planning Department is requesting the Commissioners adopt an adjusted Cascade County Planning & GIS Fee Schedule. The Department's budget relies on revenue generated from fees. The Fee Schedule has not been updated in years. With the rising costs of inflation and time since fees have been update to reflect current administrative costs, a fee adjustment is needed.

The proposed Fee Schedule was developed by assessing costs of public hearings, administrative project reviews, operating costs, etc. A permit application differs in the amount of time based on the type of permit application. Every permit application involves significant time between staff and the applicant to get an application sufficiently completed and on-going correspondence throughout the permitting process. For example, a Location/Conformance Permit Application can be processed relatively fast and requires little technical review compared to a Floodplain Permit Application.

Any permit application submitted "after the fact" has come to us as a self report or through the complaint-driven process. These permit applications are more likely to require variances or go through an appeal process. The Code Compliance Officer is typically involved in these "after the fact" applications beforehand to investigate the alleged violations. This includes conducting site visits (county vehicle, mileage, camera), writing formal violation letters, developing Compliance Plans, following up site visits and letters, etc. before an application is even submitted to the Department for a Planner to process in the ordinary course. This is the reason why there is a difference in fee amount for "after the fact" permit applications.

For processes requiring a public hearing, the fee is proposed to be adjusted to \$500 to reflect the costs of running required notices, postage, preparation of Board packets, and time spend by staff to process and generate written reports and materials. There are also many operating costs associated such as, printer contracts, paper, toner, envelopes, etc.

Subdivision processes and regulatory amendments are put in front of both the Planning Board and the Commission resulting in more than one public hearing and in some cases the Boards may need to meet more than once before a recommendation or decision is made. These processes involve much more staff time to prepare, review, and synthesize information from both applicants and the public at large.

The Department has been doing Determination Requests since 2020 free of charge. The Planner will write a formal response letter addressing all questions that are relevant to land use regulations and ordinances. These responses take staff time averaging at a minimum of a half hour and sometimes involves detailed research of roads, plats, surveys, floodplain panels, and/or a full permit research of a parcel and nonconforming use determination (historical review of the property required). With the capabilities of the County website having all land use regulations available and the GIS platform for checking zoning and floodplain, many citizens are able to obtain property specific information on their own.

The Department conducts survey review where a draft Plat, Amended Plat or Certificate of Survey is reviewed for compliance with the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act. That Act requires compliance with zoning for certain subdivision exemptions. Under statute, the Commissioners may charge up to \$200 for this review. We are proposing a \$100 fee for the Planning Department. The Clerk & Records (review for legal descriptions, closures, monumentation, etc.) and the City-County Health Department (reviews for proper use of sanitation exemptions) also take part in this review committee and currently do not charge a fee for this service.

**Motions for Consideration:**

“I move the Cascade County Board of Commission **disapprove** Resolution #22-46 to change the Cascade County Planning & GIS Department’s Fee Schedule finding the fees to be unreasonable and/or not related to the cost of providing land use services.

or

“I move the Cascade County Board of Commission **approve** Resolution #22-46 to change the Cascade County Planning & GIS Department’s Fee Schedule finding the fees to be reasonable and related to the cost of providing land use services.

Attachment(s):            *Cascade County Planning & GIS Department Fee Schedule*  
                                     *Comparative Cost Analysis*  
                                     *Resolution #22-46*