



CANYON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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FY25 DSD Fee Schedule Update Summary

Staff: Jay Gibbons – Interim Director

Request:

BOCC signature on the **proposed FY25 DSD Fee Schedule**.

Project Background:

The Development Services Fee Schedule for applications and County services was last updated in 2022. DSD's review of the current fee schedule in early 2024 identified that application fees were out of touch with the level of effort department staff provides in processing applications, many of our processes had no associated fees for service and did not provide flexibility in recapturing actual costs incurred. DSD conducted a review of staff time spent on different types of administrative and hearing-level applications to find an average. No two applications are the same, some are much simpler and straight forward than others, so fees need to be based on a fair average. Much of the review was accomplished prior to budget setting activities in the spring/summer. The Board of County Commissioners were appraised of the department's findings and progress at several points along the way. In August, September and October, DSD leadership provided the proposed fee schedule to the BOCC for review and input, and revised accordingly. In the end, the proposed fee increases exceeded the 5 percent threshold for change and a public hearing for adoption is required. The January 30, 2025 public hearing was properly noticed and the final fee schedule is before the Board for discussion and potential adoption.

Approach:

We reviewed each type of application to ascertain the average time spent, and we modified (down) for the expected efficiency time of what it should take with trained planners, and the operational changes we made, staff report changes, FCO changes etc.

Assumption is the average salary loaded to benefit rate (this is what we should adjust for each year)

With the new cola and increased benefit rates, PERSI increases assumed adoption for FY25, we reviewed again to insure they lined up with a projected COLA increase percentage. These numbers were calculated in April and May of 2024.

For Code Enforcement or Building Inspectors an average federal mileage rate as part of the fees was assumed. For inspections, etc.

Planning:

- Conducted an in-depth review of our services and actions across all divisions for any "fees" missing for services we provide that are directly related to a permit, application, or individual property supported functions by state law and our code.
- We then also reviewed other agencies for what services and fees they charge both for what we may be missing, the approach, and fee costs. Included other counties and cities, but cities format really was often not the same because they have lot of in-house engineering related to their own facilities, etc. however we did a comparison to Nampa, Caldwell and Middleton.

- Canyon County, with our growth being a bit different, tried to compare mostly to Ada, Kootenai and Bannock. Also called and talked to those Directors, Ada knows their fees are low and need an update and just haven't had the directly/will to update.
- Provided the BOCC the county comparison, but there is not a lot of comparability with what the actual work is.
- Then each Division Supervisor worked with their teams to review an average amount of time for each type of work or application. Took all those numbers, averaged them, did the sniff test, then in PE, did a reduction of a bit to accommodate for training, efficiencies and process of where we believe we SHOULD and WILL be. Didn't feel we can charge an applicant for the time that we need to be quicker with.
- Once adopted, over the next year, we have already started tracking time for representative application to continue to "check" our examples and confident estimates so each year we will know if we are meeting the "shall not exceed actual" cost as well as not undershooting so we can adjust if needed, and adjust for increased personnel costs.
- We did not in this round try to capture indirect costs, supplies or overhead that wasn't direct.
- We also captured fees for process or service changes made with the BOCC over the past year.

Building Division:

- Most of the fee are very formulaic based on a national process with the ICC (International Code Council) steps
- But there are some services/processes, unique to a county, or to us that we need to make sure we are capturing if it is directly tied to a permit/application
- Review the ones missing

Overall:

- Approach is not to try to capture all costs in a single dollar figure since each application really is different and I think we have been under capturing. Went more with the Ada County model of an ala cart structure, basic application fee, noticing fees, engineering/survey fees. The total application fee would be cumulative of all required process steps.
- For the fees missing, or added, added a remand fee, fixed flood plain development permit and ag permit to capture there are building inspections required, completeness review after 2.
- Parcel Inquiry was changed to two levels \$75 and \$150 and will require the title report info for the Entitlement Status, plus potential surveyor direct fees if it requires deed interpretation past our planners levels.
- Also past Big problem of engineering fees not really captured, and the 2022 fee schedule seemed to assume there was an after the fact billing for the engineering services, but there was not a system set up for that, so it appears at least what we can find historically that the one "application" fee is all that was ever charged.
- There was not a clear delineation as well of the planning time going into the processing and review then the separate TECHNICAL assessment of engineering. We separated these. Some of the engineering fees appear lower, but we are also capturing better cost efficiency of our own engineer for these reviews, loaded rate of the \$75-\$100 an hour versus \$175/\$200 an hour. That is passed on to the applicants as savings. BUT there are the still planning base and process fees.
- Also capturing the noticing fees separate which is a big change. These are direct costs and depends on how many hearings/public and agency notices. We took a confident average of costs. These include the newspaper notification if applicable and signs. Separating them allows us to recoup noticing charges for remanded applications or additional noticing charges for prolonged delays between hearings due to lack of response from the applicant.
- GIS costs are separate as a base requirement. Each hearing level application requires case maps to be generated for use in staff analysis and presenting cases to the presiding parties.
- Frontline staff will be trained and upon adoption, we will have explanatory materials on our website and up front to explain how it works and an easy PDF or excel chart.

Costs are up substantially about 100% but they are the right approach to meet the direction we were given and are defensible, and relatively comparable.

- Administrative decision level applications: clearly in 2 categories based on time and complexity. \$425 and \$775 listed as Type A and B. Administrative applications were \$330 and \$600, \$575, \$925. Recategorizing simplified these.
 - Now plus the \$100 case noticing (if required) and case maps of \$50.
- Example of a rezone:
 - Was \$1400 includes a DA.= almost 71% increase, assuming the Engineering should have been included.
 - Now \$1250 app, plus \$600 for two notices, plus a case mapping fee \$50, plus DA \$500: \$2,400
- Prelim plat: \$1550, plus \$20 lot fee if over 29 lots: should have been also charging back the engineering fee, uncertain.
 - Now, be \$1550 Planning, plus \$50 case map, plus \$600 noticing, plus \$1100 engineering: \$3300. 100% increase

Recommendation:

The Fee Schedule update has been vetted on the record with the BOCC over the course of the fall of 2024 and is presented for public input and adoption. Staff recommends the BOCC adopt these fees and direct DSD staff to implement them.