



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Public Works
Department No.: 054
For Agenda Of: May 20, 2025
Placement: Administrative – Set
Hearing (May 20,
2025); Departmental
(June 10, 2025: First
Reading);
Administrative (June 24,
2025: Second Reading)
Estimated Time: 20 Minutes on June 10,
2025
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director: Chris Sneddon, Public Works Director, 568-3010
Contact Info: Mostafa Estaji, Deputy Director, Transportation, 568-3064
SUBJECT: **Proposed Fee Ordinance for the Public Works Transportation Division's
Development Review and Plan Check Review; All Supervisorial Districts**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors consider the following recommended actions:

On May 20, 2025:

Set a hearing on the Departmental Agenda of June 10, 2025 to consider recommendations regarding the adoption of a proposed Fee Ordinance for Public Works Department services, as follows:

- a) Approve the introduction (First Reading) of an Ordinance updating fees for the Santa Barbara County Public Works Department, pertaining to the Transportation Division's review of subdivision maps and other documents related to development review and plan check review; and
- b) Read the title of the Ordinance into the record and waive further reading of the Ordinance in full; and
- c) Set a hearing for the Administrative Agenda of June 24, 2025 to consider the adoption (Second Reading) of an Ordinance, as follows:
 - i) Adopt the Ordinance (Second Reading) updating fees for the Santa Barbara County Public Works Department, pertaining to Transportation Division's review of subdivision maps and other documents related to development review and plan check review; and

- ii) Find that the proposed actions are administrative activities of the County approving charges that are for the purpose of meeting operating expenses, which will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment, and are therefore not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15273(a)(1) and not a "project" as defined for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378(b)(4) and (b)(5).

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda to update the Land Development Fees for the Public Works Department Transportation Division and establish the fees by ordinance. The Development Review staff for the Transportation Division provides development and plan check review services for the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County, and this fee schedule is intended to aid cost recovery of staff's permit processing efforts.

The Public Works Department is recommending adoption of fee schedules with 100% cost recovery to satisfy the Board's policy of full cost recovery. The proposed fee schedule also considers a broader scope of work and combines similar fee categories in an effort to better align with the fee schedules adopted by the Planning and Development Department in 2017.

Background:

Fees should be reviewed and updated to reflect the impact of inflation, other cost increases, and changes to service structure. The Development Review Fees for Public Works Transportation Division have not been modified since 2006, costs have increased, and new development requirements have been established by the State. Because of this, Public Works staff has comprehensively reviewed the respective service fees. The goal of this review was to analyze all costs to determine whether they are being appropriately recovered. The fee review used data from average annual case volumes and estimated staff time requirements to determine a reasonable rate for each specific permit type. The fee increase is supported by a fee study conducted by the Public Works Department (Attachment C). The study uses 4 years of case volume data between 2021 and 2024 that estimates the number of hours required for each project type.

The County has authority to adopt and has adopted land development fees pursuant to the Mitigation Fee Act, Government Code section 66000, *et seq.* Public Works collects fees to defray the cost of providing required input into ministerial development, discretionary development, and Coastal Development Permits that are issued by Planning and Development. The proposed Ordinance would rescind County Resolution 06-354, which was adopted for the collection of fees for the County Transportation Division's review of subdivision maps and other documents. The corresponding updated fees would be applicable to projects submitted after the effective date of this Ordinance. Fees for projects submitted prior to the effective date of this Ordinance shall remain under the jurisdiction of County Resolution 06-354.

The proposed Ordinance covers two types of fees: fixed fees and deposit-based fees. The proposed development review fees are mostly comprised of fixed fees. Fixed fees are assigned to fee categories that typically require a consistent level of effort, such as lot splits, new residential or commercial structures and development plans. Deposit-based fees are charged when development review requires a varying level of effort and ensures fairness in a fee's application such as tract maps, General Plan amendments and plan check reviews. Deposit-based fees are assessed an initial security deposit and then billed based on actual costs. The cost structure for these deposit-based projects are the hourly rates of the applicable staff performing the work. After closure of the project, the applicant will receive a refund of any remaining

project deposit balance. Projects vary in scope, size, multi-jurisdiction coordination, modifications and/or revisions to the project description or plans which cause variability in an application's processing time. The current hourly rates for each job classification are referenced in the respective Proposed Fee Ordinance. Annual changes to these fees will be in accordance with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), also provided in the Ordinance.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes

Fiscal Analysis:

If the Ordinance is adopted on June 24, 2025, the new fees will become effective 60 days thereafter on August 23, 2025. The Public Works Department currently recovers \$66,209 from Land Development Fees. The proposed adjusted fees comply with the Board Policy of full cost recovery. For FY 2025-26, the Department estimates that it will recover \$296,025 from this fee increase.

There are no facilities impacts.

Special Instructions:

After the May 20, 2025 set hearing, direct the Clerk of the Board to publish the attached Notice of Public Hearing (Attachment A) pursuant to Section 25124 of the Government Code in the Santa Barbara Independent, Santa Maria Times, and Lompoc Record five (5) days prior to the First Reading.

After the June 24, 2025 hearing, direct the Clerk to:

1. Send copies of the adopted Ordinance and copies of the minute order to Ashley Kruzel, Public Works Transportation, 123 E. Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara x83094 and to County Counsel.
2. Publish a copy of the adopted Ordinance or summary of with names of the members of the Board of Supervisors voting for or against the Ordinances in the Santa Barbara Independent, Lompoc Record, and Santa Maria Times 15 days after the adoption of the Ordinance

Attachments:

Attachment A: Notice to the Public

Attachment B: Proposed Fee Ordinance

Attachment C: Fee Study

Authored by:

William Robertson, Public Works Department, 805-803-8785

cc: Julie Hagen, C.P.A., Public Works Deputy Director, Finance and Administration