

Santa Barbara County Public Works Department

User Fee Study Report: Flood Control and Project Clean Water

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2251 Harvard Street, Suite 134 Sacramento, CA 95815

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

MGT Consulting Group (MGT) is pleased to present the Santa Barbara County Public Works Department (County) with this summary of user fee findings for the County's Flood Control and Project Clean Water fees.

The County is interested in knowing the current full cost of its various services and exploring options to modify fees to better reflect the Board of Supervisor's priorities. The County contracted with MGT to perform this review using fiscal year 2018/19 actual personnel, indirect costs and operational information. MGT was also tasked with recommending fee adjustments based on the resulting fully burdened cost of services and industry best-practices.

This report is the culmination of the extensive work between MGT and County management and staff. MGT would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all who participated on this project for their efforts and coordination. Their responsiveness and continued interest in the outcome of this study contributed greatly to the success of this study.

Study Scope and Objectives

This study included a review of fee-for-service activities within the following areas:

<u>Flood Control</u>: Flood Control is a program within the Water Resources division of Public Works Department funded by the County of Santa Barbara General Fund. The primary purpose of the Flood Control is to provide flood protection to residents and businesses and to conserve storm, flood and surface waters for beneficial public use.

<u>Project Clean Water</u>: Project Clean Water is a program within the Water Resources division of Public Works Department funded by the County of Santa Barbara General Fund. The mission of Project Clean Water is to provide leadership for compliance with the NPDES Municipal General Permit requirements and to advance sustainable stormwater practices that protect local water resources.

The study was performed under the general direction of the Public Works Administration division with the participation of representatives from the Water Resources division. The primary goals of the study were to:

Determine what it costs the County to provide various fee-related services within each program.



- Recommend fee adjustments based on full cost analysis and industry best practices.
- Develop revenue projections based on recommended increases (or decreases) to fees.
- Provide user fee models and templates to County staff enabling staff to update the study results in future years and incorporate new fees as they occur.

The information summarized in this report addresses each of these issues and provides County management with the tools necessary to make informed decisions about any proposed fee adjustments and the resulting impact on revenues.

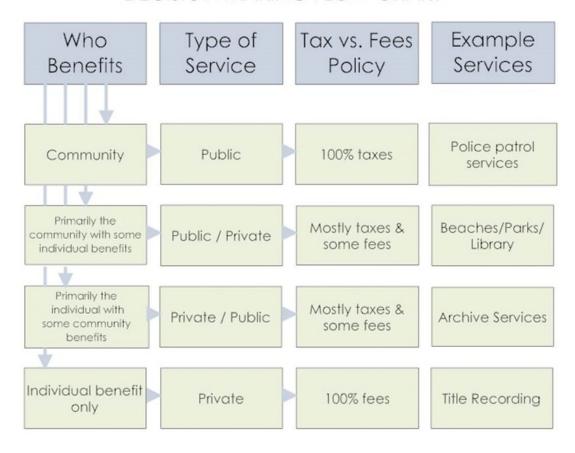
The following is a list of legal, economic and policy issues that governmental agencies typically take into consideration when determining cost recovery levels.

- ❖ State Law In California user fees are limited to the "estimated reasonable cost of providing a service" by Government Code section 66014(a) and other supplementary legislation. Proposition 26 was approved by California voters in November of 2010 and clarified which charges are considered user fees and which are considered taxes. The significance of this distinction is that user fees may be raised by Council action up to the limit of actual cost, whereas taxes may not be increased without a majority vote of the public. None of the fee adjustments recommended by MGT are considered taxes per Proposition 26 guidelines.
- **Economic barriers** It may be a desired policy to establish fees at a level that permits lower income groups to use services that they might not otherwise be able to afford.
- **Community benefit** If a user fee service benefits the community as a whole to some extent, it may be appropriate to subsidize a portion of the fee.
- Private benefit If a user fee primarily benefits the fee payer, the fee is typically set at, or close to 100% full cost recovery. Development-related fees generally fall into this category; however exceptions are sometimes made for services such as water heater permits, appeal fees or fees charged exclusively to small residential applicants.
- * Managing demand Elasticity of demand is a factor in pricing certain County services; increasing the price may result in a reduction of demand for those services, and vice versa. However, for most fees studied within the report, demand is highly inelastic.
- ❖ Incentives Fees can be set low to encourage participation in a service.
- Disincentives Penalties can be instituted to discourage undesirable behavior.



The flow chart below helps illustrate the economic and policy considerations listed above.

DECISION-MAKING FLOW CHART



Methodology

The standard approach for analyzing the cost of providing fee-related services is commonly referred to as a "bottom up" approach. The bottom up approach was used to analyze all Flood Control and Project Clean Water fees. A general description of the "bottom up" approach is as follows:



1. Identify all direct staff time spent on the fee related activity or service

MGT conducted a series of meetings with staff from each program to identify every employee, by classification, who performs work directly in support of fee related services. Direct staff costs are incurred by employees who are "on the front line" and most visible to the customers (e.g. inspectors, plan reviewers, etc.). Once all direct staff were identified, subject matter experts for each program estimated how much time those employees spend, on average, performing each particular service.

Developing time estimates for fee related services can be challenging and each program should be commended for the time and effort they put into this. Although MGT provided templates and other tools to assist them in developing average or "typical" time estimates, these calculations were necessarily developed by the subject matter experts within each fee program area.

2. Calculate direct cost of the staff time for each fee using productive hourly rates

"Productive hours" means the time staff are in their office or in the field. A full-time County employee typically has 2,080 paid hours per year (40 hours x 52 weeks). However, cost studies reduce this number to account for non-productive hours (sick leave, vacation, holidays, training days, meetings, etc.). MGT calculates the productive hourly rate for each staff classification by dividing annual salary and benefits by annual productive hour figures. The average productive hours for the County's staff that provide these services is 1,720 per year.

3. Incorporate indirect or "overhead" costs

Staff within Flood Control and Project Clean Water receive support from the Public Works Administration division as well as departments external to Public Works (Human Resources, County Counsel, etc.). The County's Auditor-Controller's Office provided MGT with approved indirect cost rates that, once applied against program staff costs, reflect the fully burdened cost of providing services. Indirect rates applied for each program include:

Flood Control: indirect cost rate: 164.34%

Project Clean Water: indirect cost rate: 107.4%

4. Compare total costs to the current fee schedule.

Once all direct and indirect costs are calculated, MGT compared the total cost for each fee-related service to the fee currently charged to the public. In most cases we found the total cost of providing a service exceeded the fee charged. In these instances, the fee can be increased to recover these subsidies, up to the maximum allowed fee. However, there were several services for which the total calculated cost was less than



the fee charged. In these cases, the fee must be lowered to comply with State law.

5. Annual volume figures are incorporated.

Up to this point we have calculated fee costs and revenues on a per-unit basis. By incorporating annual volume figures into the analysis, we extrapolate the per-unit results into annual cost and annual revenue information. This annualization of results gives management an estimate of the fiscal impact of proposed fee adjustments.

Because annual volume will vary from one year to the next, these figures are projected estimates future demand. Actual revenue will depend on actual future demand and collection rates. Also, some of the proposed fees include a restructuring of existing fee categories. In these cases, management should be conservative with fiscal impact projections.

6. Maximum allowed fee levels.

MGT identifies the maximum fee that may be charged for each fee service based on full cost information and any State or Federal limitations. County staff may present alternative fee recommendations based on their knowledge of the community and historical practices. Ultimately The County's Board of Supervisors must decide what fee levels are appropriate.



Study Findings

The study's primary objective is to provide the County's decision-makers with the basic data needed to make informed pricing decisions. This report details the full cost of services within the Flood Control and Project Clean Water programs of Public Works and presents potential fee adjustments and their fiscal impact.

The results of the study identified that overall, most fee areas generate less revenue than the actual cost of providing services. It is not unusual to find that costs have outpaced revenues over a period of years. Often this is the result of a) increased service-level demands by the general public for improved technology or response times or b) additional inspections and standards mandated by the State.

The exhibit on the following page displays the summary of costs and revenues for each fee area:

County of Santa Barbara User Fee Revenue Analysis

		Current	Forecasted					
	Costs, User	ts, User Current		Recommended	Potential Increased			
Department/Division	Fee Services (A)	Revenue (B)	Subsidy (C)	Revenue (D)	Revenue (E)			
Flood Control	\$121,313	\$112,971 93%	\$8,342	\$121,313 100%	\$8,342			
Project Clean Water	\$42,354	\$23,332 55%	\$19,022	\$42,354 100%	\$19,022			
Total	\$163,667	\$136,303 83%	\$27,364	\$163,667 100%	\$27,364			

Column A, Costs of Fee Services – The full cost of providing flood control and clean water services to the public in FY 2018/19 was \$163,667. These figures were derived by multiplying 2018/19 annual volume against per-unit costs for each fee schedule category. Deposit charges were incorporated as well, but at fully burdened rates.

Column B, Current Revenue - Based on current individual fee schedules, the County generates user fee related revenue of \$136,303 for these two programs and is experiencing an 83% cost recovery level. This recovery rate means these two divisions offset most, but not all of their costs via fees charged to the public. Several of the fees analyzed are presently set above actual cost. These fees must be reduced to comply with State law. The analyses of individual fees are presented in subsequent sections of this report.



Column C, Subsidy – Current fee levels recover 83% of full cost, leaving 17% or \$27,364 to be funded by other funding sources. This represents a "window of opportunity" for the County to increase fees and revenues, with a corresponding decrease in the subsidization of services.

Column D, Recommended Revenue – At the recommended recovery levels annual revenue generated would be \$163,667. This would bring the overall cost recovery level up 100% of fee-related operating costs.

Column E, Potential Increased – Increasing fees to the recommended recovery level would generate approximately \$167,667 in additional revenue. This represents a 20% increase over revenue currently being collected for these activities by the County of an annual basis.

Department Summary Charts

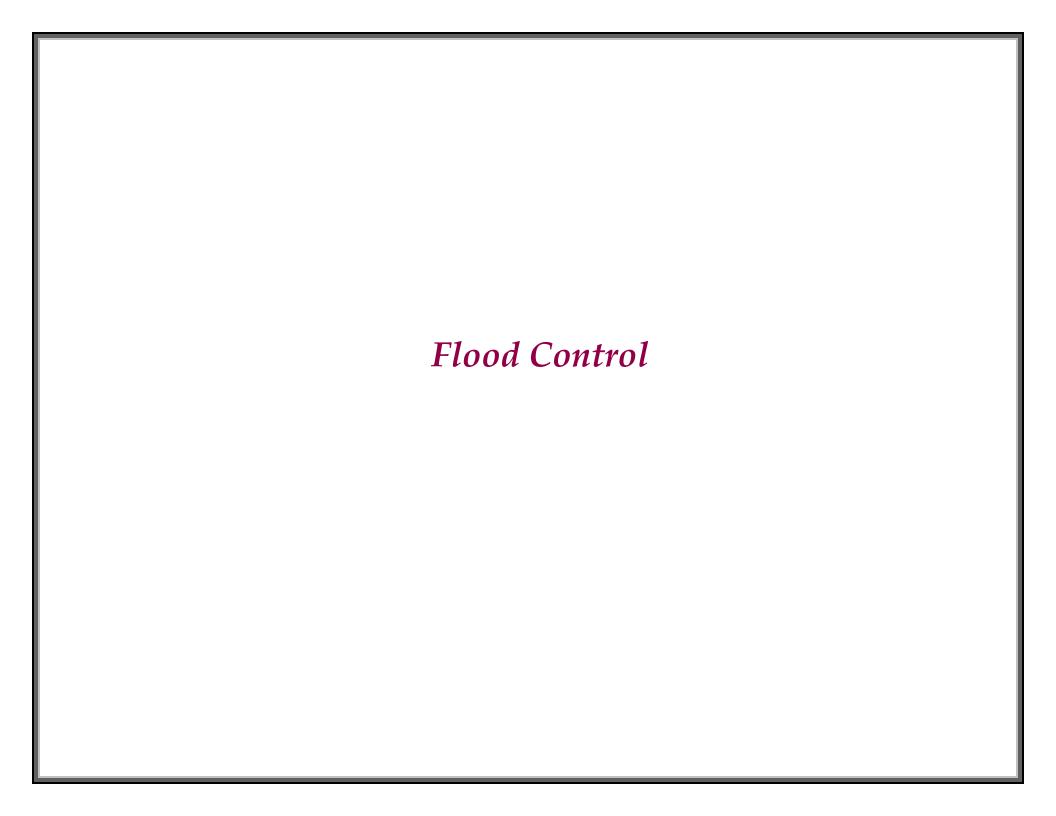
The subsequent pages display the results of our individual fee analysis. For each section the current charge, total cost and recommended fee are listed for each fee-related service.

The summaries are presented in the following order:

Flood Control

Project Clean Water





County of Santa Barbara Flood Control

2018/19 Actuals

				Current							Recommendations					
					Per Unit			Annual		Per U	Jnit	Annual				
Ord	Service Name	Fee Description	Annual Volume	Current Fee	Full Cost	Current Recovery %	nual Cost	Annual Revenue	Annual Subsidy	Recovery Level	Fee @ Policy Level	Annual Revenue2	Increased Revenue	Recommen ded Subsidy		
•	plication Review - Ministerial Permits Land Use and Coastal Development															
	rmits (LUPs and CDPs)	_	_			4										
2	Addition to Agricultural Structure	Fee	4	\$142	\$367	39% \$	1,468			100%		. ,				
3	New Agricultural Structures	Fee	7	\$142	\$489	29% \$	3,426	•		100%	•			•		
4	Commercial/Industrial New/Addition to Existing Structure	Fee	3	\$469	\$839	56% \$	2,517			100%						
5	Accessory Structures	Fee	3	\$142	\$367	39% \$	1,101	•		100%	•	. , .	•	•		
6	Addition to Residential Structures	Fee	7	\$142	\$489	29% \$	3,426			100%						
7	Fences, Walls, Pools, Spas, Etc.	Fee	3	\$142	\$367	39% \$	1,101	•		100%	•	. ,	•	•		
8	New Residential Structure or Residential 2nd Unit	Fee	7		\$489	29% \$	3,426		. , .	100%						
9	Development with Special Constraints or Zoning Clearance	NEW	25	\$0	\$1,049	0% \$	26,222	•	\$ 26,222	100%			. ,	•		
10	Revision - Coastal Development Permit/Land Use Permit	Fee	3	\$0	\$297	0% \$	892		\$ 892	100%						
11	Demolition	Fee	1	\$0	\$489	0% \$	489	•	\$ 489	100%	•	•	•	•		
12	Change of Use	Fee	4	\$0	\$542	0% \$	2,168	\$ -	\$ 2,168	100%	\$ 542	\$ 2,168	\$ 2,168	Ş -		
	Application Review - Discretionary Permits															
14	Coastal Development Permit with Hearing	Fee	40	\$1,194	\$542	220% \$	21,677		. , , ,							
15	Conditional Use Permit Amendment - Director Review	Fee	1		\$989	0% \$	989	•	\$ 989	100%	•			•		
16	Conditional Use Permit - Major (New or Revised)	Fee	6	\$1,228	\$787	156% \$	4,720									
17	Conditional Use Permit - Minor	Fee	3	\$1,117	\$629	177% \$	1,888	. ,	, ,		•		, ,			
18	Conditional Use Permit - Minor for Residential 2nd Unit in Ag Zone	Fee	2	\$1,117	\$629	177% \$	1,259		. , ,				. ,			
19	Development Plan Amendment - Director Review	Fee	1	\$1,117	\$989	113% \$	989		. ,		•	•	. ,	•		
20	Development Plan - Director (New or Revised - Final After Prelim)	Fee	3		\$734	152% \$	2,203		, ,							
21	Development Plan - Planning Commission (New or Revised)	Fee	3	\$2,386	\$734	325% \$	2,203		, ,		•		, ,			
22	Development Plan - Zoning Administrator (New or Revised)	Fee	3		\$734	325% \$	2,203					. ,	,			
23	Recorded Map Modification - Planning Commission	Fee	1	\$398	\$699	57% \$	699	•	•	100%	•	•	•	•		
24	Recorded Map Modification - Zoning Administrator	Fee	1		\$699	57% \$	699			100%						
25	Tentative Parcel Map Plann Comm (less than 5 lots)	Fee	2	\$1,050	\$664	158% \$	1,329		. ,		•					
26	Tentative Parcel Map Zoning Administrator (less than 5 lots)	Fee	3		\$664	158% \$	1,993									
27	*Tract Map (5-49 lots) - Flood Control requires fee +\$111/lot	Fee	3	\$1,804	\$699	258% \$	2,098	,	,		•	, , , , , , ,	, ,			
28	*Tract Map (50+ lots) - Flood Control requires fee +\$111/lot	Fee	3	\$1,804	\$699	258% \$	2,098	/					,			
29	Oil & Gas Production/Exploration Plans	Fee	1	\$0	\$245	0% \$	245	\$ -	\$ 245	100%	\$ 245	\$ 245	\$ 245	\$ -		
	an Check Deposit															
31 I	Plan Check Project Deposit	Deposit	-	\$0	\$2,129	0% \$	18,121	\$ 10,355	\$ 7,766	100%	\$ 2,500	\$ 18,121	\$ 7,766	\$ -		
33 St	aff Hourly Rates															
34 (Civil Engineer III	Fee	-	\$149	\$195	77% \$		\$ -	\$ -	100%	•	•	\$ -	\$ -		
	Civil Engineer II	Fee	-	\$124	\$185	67% \$		\$ -	\$ -	100%			\$ -	\$ -		
36 I	Engineering Tech Specialist	Fee	-	\$149	\$146	102% \$	-	\$ -	\$ -	100%	\$ 146	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		

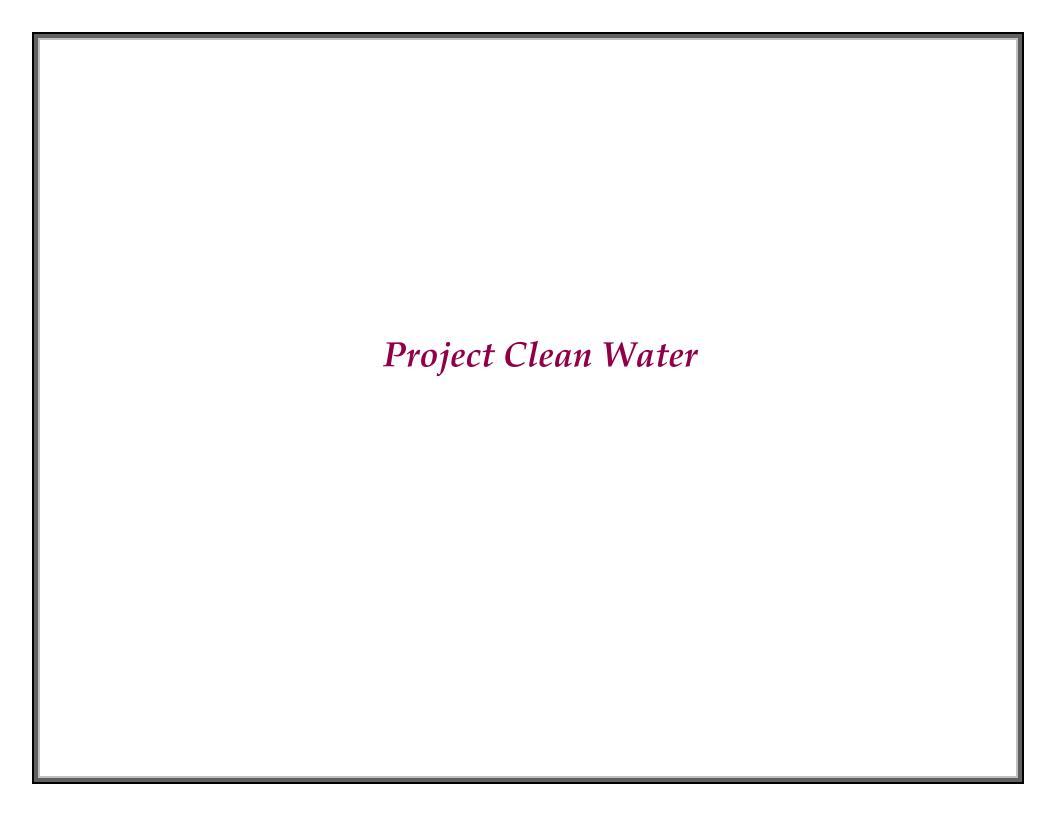
County of Santa Barbara

Flood Control 2018/19 Actuals

				Current						Recommendations				
				Per Unit			Annual			Per Unit		Annual		
Ord	Service Name	Fee Description	Annual Volume	Current Fee	Full Cost	Current Recovery %	Annual Cost	Annual Revenue	Annual Subsidy	Recovery Level	Fee @ Policy Level	Annual Revenue2		Recommen ded Subsidy
37 (Other Services/Permits													
38	Flood Hazard Inquiry	Fee	11	\$40	\$40	99%	\$ 442	\$ 440	\$ 2	100%	\$ 40	\$ 442	\$ 2	\$ -
39	Tempoary Entry Permit	Fee	-	\$245	\$0	0%	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	100%	\$ 245	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
40	Building Permit (no land use component)	Fee	35	\$0	\$253	0%	\$ 8,872	\$ -	\$ 8,872	100%	\$ 253	\$ 8,872	\$ 8,872	\$ -
41	Building - Electrical Permit (no land use component)	Fee	2	\$0	\$175	0%	\$ 350	\$ -	\$ 350	100%	\$ 175	\$ 350	\$ 350	\$ -
42 (Consultation										charge based o	on staff hourly ra	tes	
1	Total User Fees						\$121,313	\$112,971	\$8,342			\$121,313	\$8,342	2 \$0
9	6 of Full Cost							93%	7%			100%	7%	6 0%

Footnotes

Fee #39 Temporary Entry Permit: Proposition 26 allows governmental agencies to charge market rates for use of pubic property. Accordingly, the cost of this permit has not been analyzed. The fee is recommended to remain at \$245.



County Santa Barbara Project Clean Water FY2018/2019 Actuals

					Curre		Recommendations							
					Per Unit			Annual		Per Unit	t		Annual	
Ord	Service Name	Fee Description	Annual Volume	Current Fee	Full Cost	Current Recovery %	Annual Cost	Annual Revenue	Annual Subsidy	Recovery Level Fe	ee @ Policy Level	Annual Revenue2	Increased Revenue	Recommended Subsidy
	Application Review - Ministerial Permits Land Use and Coastal Development Permits	nits												
	(LUPs and CDPs)	F	4.00	. 26	ć 70	F00/ /	. 72	. 26	ć 26	4000/ 6	70	ć 72	. 26	A
	Addition to Agricultural Structure	Fee	1.00	\$ 36	\$ 72	50% \$	72	\$ 36	\$ 36	100% \$	72	\$ 72	\$ 36	\$ -
3	,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,													
4		F	2.00	*	ć 70	00/	4.45	*	ć 445	4000/ 6	70	^ 44F	ć 445	*
5		Fee	2.00	•	\$ 72			•	•	·	72	•		
6	Commercial/Industrial New/Addition to Existing Structure	Fee	1.00	•	•			•			36			
7	Accessory Structures	Fee	2.00	•	•			•	•	•	72	•	•	•
8	Addition to Residential Structures	Fee	1.00								72			\$ -
9	New Residential Structure or Residential 2nd Unit	Fee	1.00	•	•			•	•	·	72	•	•	
10	Residential Development with Special Constraints or Zoning Clearance	Fee	1.00	\$ 109	\$ 72	151% \$	72	\$ 109	\$ (37)	100% \$	72	\$ 72	\$ (37)	\$ -
	Application Review - Discretionary Permits													
12	Coastal Development Permit	F	2.00	ć 14F	ć	00/		ć 425	ć /42F	1000/ 6		<u></u>	\$ (435)	
12.1	Existing Fee	Fee	3.00	•	•	0% \$		•			-	•		
12.2	Proposed Fee	Fee	28.00	•		0% \$		•		•	59			
13	Conditional Use Permit Amendment - Director Review	Fee	2.00	•	•	31% \$			•	·	116		•	
14	Conditional Use Permit - Major (New or Revised)	Fee	3.00	•	•	209% \$					174	•		
15	Conditional Use Permit - Minor	Fee	3.00	•		223% \$				·	65			
16	Conditional Use Permit - Minor for Residential 2nd Unit in Ag Zone	Fee	3.00	•		223% \$					65	•		
17	Development Plan Amendment - Director Review	Fee	2.00	•	•	31% \$		•	•	·	116	•	•	
18	Development Plan - Director (New or Revised - Final After Prelim)	Fee	4.00	•	•	15% \$		•	•		246	•		
19	Development Plan - Planning Commission (New or Revised)	Fee	4.00		•	55% \$			•	·	246	•	•	•
20	Development Plan - Zoning Administrator (New or Revised)	Fee -	4.00	•	•						246	•		
21	Tentative Parcel Map Plann Comm (less than 5 lots)	Fee	2.00	•	•	0% \$		•	•	•	58	•	•	•
22	Tentative Parcel Map Zoning Administrator (less than 5 lots)	Fee -	2.00	•	•						58	•		
23	*Tract Map (5-49 lots) - Flood Control requires fee +\$111/lot	Fee	1.00	•	•	148%		•			246	•		
	*Tract Map (50+ lots) - Flood Control requires fee +\$111/lot	Fee	1.00	\$ 363	\$ 246	148% \$	246	\$ 363	\$ (117)	100% \$	246	\$ 246	\$ (117)	\$ -
	Plan Check Deposit													
	Plan Check : Project Deposit	Deposit	-	\$ -	\$ 1,446	0% \$	35,030	\$ 17,636	\$ 17,394	100% \$	2,000	\$ 35,030	\$ 17,394	\$ -
	Staff Hourly Rates													
	Project Clean Water Manager	Hourly Rate		\$ -	\$ 165	0% \$			\$ -	100% \$	165		\$ -	\$ -
	Civil Engineer III	Hourly Rate	-	•	\$ 155	0% \$			\$ -	100% \$	155	•	\$ -	\$ -
	Civil Engineer II	Hourly Rate		\$ -	\$ 127	0% \$			\$ -	100% \$	127	•	\$ -	\$ -
	Engineering Tech Specialist	Hourly Rate		\$ -	\$ 132	0% \$		-	\$ -	100% \$	132	•	\$ -	\$ -
	Storm Drain Markers	At Cost		\$ -	\$ -	0% \$	-	\$ -	\$ -	100% \$			\$ -	\$ -
35	Consultation	New	-							ch	arge based o	n staff hourly r	ates	
	Total User Fees						\$42,354	\$23,332	\$19,022	•		¢42.254	¢10.022	\$0
	i otal User Fees % of Full Cost						34Z,354	\$23,332 55%	\$19,022 45%			\$42,354 100%	\$19,022 82%	
	70 UI FUII CUSL							55%	45%	•		100%	82%	0%