



Subject: Update Respecting Planning Fees

Report to: Thorold City Council

Recommendations

1. That Council **APPROVE** of the recommended adjustments to the tariff of fees for planning matters as outlined in Report DS 6-2025.
2. That Council **DIRECT** staff to prepare a by-law, amending By-law No. 113-2015, for Council's consideration at a future meeting.

Key Facts

- The Planning Act permits municipalities to impose fees through by-law for the processing of planning applications
- The City of Thorold's Planning Tariff of Fees are established through By-law 113-2015 and have not been reviewed since 2015.
- Recovering costs through application fees minimizes taxpayer dollars subsidizing private development applications.
- It is recommended that Council approve the adjustments to planning application fees outlined in this report.

Budgetary Status

Approval of the recommended fee adjustments will improve cost recovery for processing various planning applications and reduce the impact on municipal property taxes.

Analysis

The Planning Act permits municipalities to impose fees through by-law for the processing of planning applications. Section 69 of the Act states that such fees must be designed to meet only the anticipated cost of processing each type of application. This provision ensures that municipalities recover their costs while maintaining fairness and transparency in fee assessments.

The purpose of this report is to recommend adjustments in fees associated with planning matters to ensure cost recovery and compliance with Section 69 of the

Planning Act. The City of Thorold's Planning Tariff of Fees are established through By-law 113-2015 and have not been reviewed since 2015. An updated fee structure is necessary to reflect the actual costs incurred in processing planning applications.

An internal review of staff time, resources, and costs associated with processing planning applications has been performed accounting for:

- Direct operating costs (e.g., staff time and resources)
- Indirect support costs (e.g., administrative and overhead expenses)

An analysis of processing costs indicates that the City's current fees do not adequately cover the actual expenses incurred in reviewing and processing most planning applications. Some application types require large fee increases to achieve cost recovery due to the length of time since the last fee review and the associated rising expenses over that time. However, some application types require smaller increases or, in some cases, a reduction. Given that many of the recommended fees result in large increases, it is recommended that the fee adjustments not take effect until May 1, 2025, to allow for adequate public notice.

Rationale for adjusting the application fees as outlined in Appendix 1 includes:

1. Compliance with the Planning Act – Ensuring that fees reflect the actual cost of processing applications and aligns with legislative requirements.
2. Financial Sustainability – Recovering costs minimizes taxpayer dollars subsidizing private development applications.
3. Efficiency and Service Improvement – Increased fees may support investment in technology and staffing to improve application processing times and service delivery.
4. Fair and Transparent Cost Recovery – Adjusting fees based on actual processing effort ensures fairness for applicants and the City.

New fee categories have also been introduced into the recommended fee structure to recover costs for work currently being performed at no cost to the applicant. The new fee categories are:

- Fee for pre-consultation meetings
- Fee for resubmissions exceeding two
- Fee per phase for plans of subdivision in which approval is sought in phases

- Fee for amendments to subdivision agreements following signing of the initial agreement
- Fee for requests to extend development approvals beyond lapse dates
- Fee for modification or revisions to approved development plans
- Fee for quarry applications
- Fee for model home agreements
- Fee for requesting a street name change
- Fee for requesting a municipal address change
- Fee for requesting staff to research

Pre-consultation meetings require significant staff time and resources to prepare for and provide accurate information regarding potential future development applications. Pre-consultation meetings can no longer be mandated by municipalities however they can offer a great deal of benefit to applicants of future developments and also assist staff when they result in complete applications being submitted by an informed applicant. It is recommended that an equivalent amount to the pre-consultation fee be deducted from an application fee once the formal application has been received. This process will allow for cost recovery during the pre-consultation process without adding additional costs onto applicants that follow through with a formal application.

Given that the City's Planning Tariff of Fees has not been reviewed since 2015, it is recommended that Council approve the adjustments to planning application fees, shown in Appendix 1, to align fees closer with the actual cost of service delivery. Should Council approve the recommendations of this report, a subsequent by-law will be brought before Council at a future meeting to amend By-law 113-2015.

Impact on the Environment, Climate Change

There are no known environmental or climate change related impacts to this Report.

Alternatives Reviewed

None.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

- Sustainability
 - Financial Sustainability

Other Pertinent Reports

N/A

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Recommended Tariff of Fees for Planning Matters