



Engineering Division
Public Works Department

Planning and Community
Development Department

August 4, 2023

Dear Community Development Partners,

The Planning and Community Development Department and the Engineering Division of the Public Works Department presented development review fee changes to the City Commission at a first reading on Tuesday, August 1. After receiving public comment that requested more time to review the proposed changes, **the City Commission scheduled the public hearing for September 5th, rather than August 15th.** If approved on September 5th, these fee changes would be effective on October 5th, 2023. The City Commission agenda reports, which provide more detail on the proposed resolutions, is provided as an attachment to this letter.

City staff will host two open houses to discuss the proposed fee changes with members of the development community. The first will be held on August 11 at 9:00 am in the Planning and Community Development Conference Room (Room 112) of the Civic Center. The second will be held on August 15th at 11:00 am in the Planning and Community Development Conference Room. The open houses will provide an opportunity to discuss the proposed changes 1-on-1 with City staff. If you are unable to attend either of the scheduled times, we encourage you to reach out to the contacts listed at the end of this letter to schedule a time to sit down individually with staff to learn more on how these three resolutions may impact specific projects.

The fee proposals include the following resolutions:

RESOLUTION NO. 10521: A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA, TO AMEND PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LAND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION FEES IN THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS

RESOLUTION NO. 10522: A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA, TO RAISE PERMIT FEES FOR BUILDING, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL AND OTHER RELATED PERMIT PROCESSES EIGHT PERCENT (8%) IN THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS

RESOLUTION NO. 10519: A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA, TO ESTABLISH ENGINEERING DIVISION REVIEW FEES FOR DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS IMPLEMENTED BY THE PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AND THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Interested parties can provide public comment regarding the three resolutions the public hearing providing the opportunity for proponents and opponents to make comment before final decision by the City Commission.

The proposed new fee schedule outlined in Resolution 10521 is being proposed due to a shortfall in the Planning Division budget. Although Resolution 10521 proposes increases to land development fees, the Planning Division's budget will still rely on a \$376,932 infusion from the General Fund. At a recent City Commission Work Session on the proposed budget, the Commission acknowledged the need to increase user fees to alleviate pressure on the General Fund Budget. The proposed new fee schedule outlined in Resolution 10522, which raises Building Division fees by eight (8) percent, is being driven mainly by shortfalls in the Planning Division budget, in which the permit coordination work of planners will be paid for, in part, by the Building Division fees.

In addition, the Engineering Division of the Public Works Department, in collaboration with the Planning and Community Development Department, is changing the way that building permit applications, parking lot permit applications, private storm water management systems, and applications that include public infrastructure are reviewed for engineering compliance and how review fees are assessed. Currently, design review is being outsourced to a third party private sector engineering firm, and their review fees are billed passed through directly to the applicant. Starting October 5th, the Engineering Division will perform review of these applications in-house funded with fees paid by the applicant according to a fee schedule adopted by City Resolution. It is the City's intent to provide engineering review services in-house; however, the revised fee structure provides provisions for third party private sector engineering firm assistance during staff shortages or spikes in development activity.

Depending on proposed improvements, multiple Engineering Division fees may apply. Residential and commercial building permit applications, parking lot permit applications, and applications including private storm water management systems required by the City's Storm Drainage Design Manual and City Code, will have flat fees assessed for Engineering Division review as adopted by Resolution 10519. Applications containing public infrastructure to be owned by the City of Great Falls (such as streets, alleys, water mains, storm mains, and sewer mains), will have fees assessed as described in Resolution 10474, which was adopted in August of 2022. Detailed Engineering Division review fee guidance is included in the August 1, 2023, Commission Meeting Agenda Packet under the Resolution 10519 item.

For questions regarding Planning and Community Development Fees please contact:
Tom Micuda, Interim Director; Bruce Haman, Building Official; or Lonnie Hill, Planner III
406-455-8430

For questions regarding Engineering Division fees please contact:
Jesse Patton, City Engineer; or Mark Juras, Development Review Coordinator
406-771-1258