

Appendix B

WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES **BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION**

2023/2024 UNIFIED FEE SCHEDULE POLICY

The Unified Fee Schedule Policy is a supplemental extension of the Unified Fee Schedule (UFS) and shall be adopted by Whatcom County as an integral part of, and not separate from, the UFS. The UFS Policy is a practical mechanism intended to provide additional information and clarification regarding individual fees and any of their associated details and foundation.

DEFINITIONS:

Certificate of Occupancy – As defined and required per the current adopted editions of the International Building Code (IBC), Section 111 and the International Residential Code (IRC), Section R110.

Outside Plan Review – A discretionary program available through the Whatcom County Building Services Division, which allows an approved private service provider to perform the plan check/review phase of the permit application review process.

Pre-application Review – A program available to applicants with large and/or complicated project proposals. The program allows the applicant to submit approved preliminary information, which is then pre-reviewed by appropriate staff. The applicants and their consultants then attend a scheduled meeting where information related to their project and pending application submittal is exchanged and discussed.

Project Valuation – A square foot value established for a respective portion of a building according to its proposed use. See UFS Policy, Addendum A. All applicable values are tabulated to determine one total project valuation. The total project valuation is then used to determine the applicable Building Permit Fee according to UFS #8412 through #8420 and Plan Check Fee according to UFS #8243.

Repeat Plan – A set of plans for a specific building, which the applicant intends to build multiple times, with no or substantially minor changes, and under the same design criteria. The plans and related information are submitted for review and Repeat Plan File Setup prior to application for a permit to construct the specific building on a given site. See UFS Policy, Building Services Division, Repeat Plan Permit Applications, Addendum C.

Reuse Plan – A set of plans for a specific building for which the applicant has already received a building permit. Now the applicant intends to build the same building again, with no or substantially minor changes, and under the same design criteria. Clearly legible copies of the reviewed/approved plans and related information are submitted for application to build the same building on a new site. See UFS Policy, Building Services Division, Code Interpretation #2002-01, Addendum D.

Unified Fee Schedule (UFS) – The schedule format document approved by the governing authority of Whatcom County, which lists and categorizes all fees the County is authorized to charge for the services it is mandated to provide.

GENERAL POLICY:

The establishment and assessment of fees is per Whatcom County as the governing authority and per the code editions published by the International Code Council and currently adopted by Whatcom County, with particular reference to the code sections related to fees (example: 2021 IBC Section 109).

Fees shall be collected for any nonexempt work (IBC Section 105.2/IRC Section R105.2) commenced without first obtaining a permit and/or for work by Whatcom County staff related to a permit application or to a project, whether or not a permit is then or subsequently issued.

SPECIFIC POLICIES:

1. #8379 Building Permits Repeat Plan File Setup
Rate Basis: 65% of Building Permit (UFS #8412 through 8420).

Repeat Plan File Setup is a substantially similar process to typical plan submittal and plan check review. It involves all the same processes, which are intended to be compensated through the Plan Check Fee (UFS #8243). The Plan Check Fee is 65% of Building Permits (UFS #8412 through 8420), respective to project valuation. See UFS Policy, Building Services Division, Construction Fee Schedule, Addendum A (residential/accessory) or Square Foot Construction Costs, Addendum B (commercial) for project valuation and, Addendum C, Repeat Plan Permit Applications for a basic explanation of the repeat plan file setup program.

2. #8381 Building Permits: Commercial
Rate Basis: Per UFS Building Permit Fee, #8412 thru 8420 according to in-house calculation of valuation or approved bid documentation, and Plan Check Fee, #8243.

Project valuation to establish permit fees for commercial projects is derived from the Square Foot Construction Costs table, listed and updated

approximately biannually, in the Building Safety Journal published by the International Code Council. See UFS Policy, Building Services Division, Square Foot Construction Costs example, Addendum B. Applicants have complained on occasion that their projects don't fit the table and can be completed for less than the value established by the table. There is some case-by-case merit to this argument. The table is somewhat general and does not adequately address certain specific types of projects. IBC Section 108.3 allows the Building Official to accept detailed estimates to establish valuation. The estimate documentation must meet the approval of the Building Official. Final building permit valuation shall be set by the Building Official.

3. #8382 Building Permit: Reinstatement
Rate Basis: 50% of original Building Permit Fee (UFS #8412 thru 8420) within 12 months of expiration and no code change.

The rate amount is based on the language in the 1997 Uniform Building Code (UBC), Section 106.4.4, except that the Building Official has determined that the fee shall be one half (50%) of the original Building Permit Fee per the current UFS #8412 thru 8420. No changes shall have been made or will be made in the original plans and specification for such work, and provided that suspension or abandonment has not exceeded one year (12 months), and further provided that there has been no change in the applicable adopted code editions. The policy assumes all work to be inspected is accessible and includes an average of one reinspection per inspection category. Under the terms of the policy, as described herein, this includes the service through final inspection and issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

4. #8383 Building Permit: Work Started Without a Permit
Rate Basis: UFS Building Permit Fee (#8412 thru 8420) multiplied by two.

The rate amount is based on the language in the 1997 UBC, Section 107.5.2, except that the Building Official has determined that the investigation fee shall be equal to the amount of the Building Permit Fee, UFS #8412 thru 8420. The purpose and intent of the fee is to recover some of the miscellaneous extra staff costs related to the enforcement actions associated with such issues. The investigation fee, in addition to the permit fee, shall be collectable, whether or not a permit is then or subsequently issued. The payment of such investigation fee shall not exempt any person from compliance with all other provisions of the current adopted codes nor from any penalty prescribed by law.

5. #8384 Building Permit: Repeat/Reuse Application
Rate Basis: 50% less than the original Plan Check Fee, per UFS #8243.

The discounted rate applies to 1.) Applications made on projects that have completed the Repeat Plan File Setup process, see UFS Policy, item #1 previous, or 2.) Reuse applications that meet the criteria per Building Services Division, Code Interpretation #2002-01, included in this Policy as Addendum D. The intent of the discount is to more accurately reflect the cost of providing the service, including not charging applicants for work not performed. While some related administrative and follow-up staff time is required for such applications, little or no additional plan review is required.

6. #8388 Fire: Administrative/Miscellaneous Review -Residential
Rate Basis: \$60.00 per review

This fee is to more accurately reflect the cost of providing this service and recover Fire Marshal staff time not previously charged. The fee is for review of administrative, discretionary and similar types of applications, such as subdivision, conditional use, variances, cottage industries and the like.

7. A. #8366 Construction Permit: Pre-application Review
Rate Basis: \$500.00 base plus \$120.00 per hour after the first 1.5 hours.

In general, Pre-application Review meetings are limited to a maximum 1.5 hours (90 minutes) and are scheduled accordingly. Historically, this pattern has been sufficient with minor exceptions where individual staff members agree to follow up with applicants at a later time for issues which require additional research. On rare occasions, a complicated project or complicated issue related to a project warrants a longer meeting or extensive additional research by one or more staff members. Such issues may not have been anticipated by the applicant or may have been unanticipated by staff due to inaccurate or incomplete information. The inclusion of an hourly rate, in addition to the base fee, allows staff some flexibility in extending a meeting when conditions allow or to continue additional research. It provides a mechanism for recovering some service costs for such unanticipated additional work. Neither the base fee nor the hourly rate is intended to recover all such cost for this service.

- B. #8422 Construction Permit: Reduced Pre-application Review
Rate Basis: \$250.00 base plus \$120.00 per hour after the first 1.5 hours.

Pre-application meetings at a reduced rate basis are reserved for commercial projects and, to a lesser degree, residential and/or accessory projects that have chosen to or have been required to go through a discretionary permit review. Discretionary permit applications are generally expensive. They receive staff review and comment and usually include conditions of approval. However, the review, comments and conditions are typically general in nature, since the information provided for review is

typically preliminary in scope at the discretionary review phase. Through experience, staff has learned that certain types of projects benefit from additional and more detailed preliminary review typical of pre-application meetings, including the opportunity to ask and answer questions specific to the project. Such projects are often complicated in scope, involve inexperienced or volunteer applicants, involve multiple natural resource issues or combination of these and other factors. Because significant expense and review has already occurred, these meetings involve a reduced number of staff participants, thus the reduced rate basis.

8. #8373 Outside Plan Review

Rate Basis: Less 25% of Building Permit Plan Check Fee, UFS #8243, according to the conditions of the Unified Fee Schedule Policy.

Whatcom County's work load, as it relates to building permit applications, has historically been subject to fluctuations of undetermined duration due to uncontrollable forces, such as seasonal or weather related, economic, regulatory changes and the like. Such forces may occur simultaneously or overlap and may occasionally be severe. Whatcom County, like other jurisdictions, has limited resources and options to respond to such fluctuations in a timely manner. Workload backlogs occur as a result. Outside Plan Review has been successfully utilized by Whatcom County as one mechanism to respond to work load backlogs. However, because the private plans examiner who performs the outside plan review is paid by the applicant, there is potential for issues related to conflict-of-interest and the Public Service Inspector must be extra vigilant when performing inspections on these projects. In addition, the private plans examiner is not as accessible as County staff when problems or question arise. Therefore, it is recognized, potentially, as less than optimal.

Outside Plan Review (OSR) will be available to applicants as an option. However, the Building Official has discretion whether to maintain the availability of this option. The applicant must request OSR at the time of the application submittal. The application file will be "marked" OSR at that time. However, marking the file is no guarantee, implied or otherwise, that the specific project application or any given project application will be eligible for OSR. Marked application files will only be routed to OSR if the internal backlog for plan review exceeds the timeline goal of the Building Services Division. It is the goal of the Division to review each plan within a four week or less time frame, starting from the date that the application is determined to be complete and ready for plan review. The time frame goal may be subject to adjustment or modification according to work load, operation and/or management needs of the Building Services Division. The plan review phase is typically the last major review before the application is approved for permit issuance, usually followed only by final review. All other required reviews applicable to the project must be completed before an

application will be routed to OSR unless approved otherwise by the Building Official.

The intent of the discount is to more accurately reflect the cost of providing the service, including not charging applicants for work not performed. The OSR program requires more administrative and follow-up staff time than the Repeat/Reuse Application program, but there is still little or no additional plan review required.

- 9. #8349 Plumbing: Complex Systems and #9010 Mechanical Code: Complex Systems
Rate Basis: UFS Building Permit Fee (#8412 thru #8420) and Plan Check Fee (#8243)

The Building Services Division reserves the flexibility to base fees for complex plumbing and/or mechanical systems on the valuation of the project instead of the typical per-appliance provisions currently in the Unified Fee Schedule. It is increasingly common for new innovative solutions to residential, commercial and industrial plumbing and mechanical problems to involve complex, integrated systems utilizing multiple appliances. Two possible examples are an integrated solar and geothermal residential heating system or an industrial grade flash freezing system for a berry processing plant. Both systems are easily described as complex and do not fit the usual review and inspection mode. They typically require extensive plan review, communication with consultants, multiple site inspections and, in some cases, extensive testing protocols developed by licensed design professionals.

Reviewed and Approved:



Mark Personius, Director
Planning & Development Services

Dated: 8-2-22



Curtis Metz, Manager
Building Services Division

Dated: 8/2/22

UNIFIED FEE SCHEDULE POLICY
BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION
ADDENDUM A

CONSTRUCTION FEE SCHEDULE ADDENDUM

(Revised July, 2022 - Effective January 1, 2023)

TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION	VALUE PER SQUARE FOOT
SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE:	
Living Space - All Floors	\$115.00
Remodel/Renovation (whichever is less)	Or value per approved bid whichever is less \$58.00
Upper level unfinished spaces	\$50.00
Basement - open frame/unfinished	\$50.00
GARAGE:	
Attached or Detached with insulation & drywall	\$45.00
Detached, interior frame exposed	\$34.00
CARPORT Metal (channel) or Wood	\$25.00
COVERED PORCH/DECK	\$28.00
UNCOVERED PORCH/DECK	\$21.00
ACCESSORY/AGRICULTURAL STORAGE:	
Wood/Metal Frame/unfinished	\$34.00
Wood/Metal Frame/finished	\$39.00
Pole Type	\$25.00
GREENHOUSES: (for non-exempt)	
Commercial, soft skin	\$16.00
Commercial, hard skin	\$36.00
Residential, soft skin	\$16.00
Residential, hard skin	\$34.00
MISC. CONSTRUCTION/DOCKS, ETC:	
Floating Docks	\$45.00
Piling Supported Docks	\$45.00
Ramps	\$45.00
Individual Piles	\$500.00
MISC. CONSTRUCTION/ADDITIONS:	
Sun Room	\$68.00
Retaining Walls (per square foot)	\$28.00
Foundations (per linear foot)	\$113.00
MOBILE HOMES INSTALLATION:	
Mobile Home Plan Review Fee	\$120.00
Single Wide (in Mobile Park)	(per story) \$275.00
Single Wide (on Residential Lot)	(per story) \$385.00
Double Wide (in Mobile Park)	(per story) \$440.00
Double Wide (on Residential Lot)	(per story) \$550.00
Triple Wide (in Mobile Park)	(per story) \$550.00
Triple Wide (on Residential Lot)	(per story) \$660.00
Quadruple Wide (in Mobile Park)	(per story) \$660.00
Quadruple Wide (on Residential Lot)	(per story) \$770.00

UNIFIED FEE SCHEDULE POLICY BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION

ADDENDUM B (SAMPLE TABLE)

Square Foot Construction Costs ^{a, b, c}

Group (2021 International Building Code)	IA	IB	IIA	IIB	IIIA	IIIB	IV	VA	VB
A-1 Assembly, theaters, with stage	309.06	298.66	291.64	280.58	263.98	255.82	272.02	244.80	237.02
A-1 Assembly, theaters, without stage	282.85	272.45	265.42	254.37	237.77	229.61	245.81	218.59	210.80
A-2 Assembly, nightclubs	237.31	230.23	224.56	215.36	202.99	197.40	207.69	183.68	177.40
A-2 Assembly, restaurants, bars, banquet halls	236.31	229.23	222.56	214.36	200.99	196.40	206.69	181.68	176.40
A-3 Assembly, churches	286.90	276.49	269.47	258.42	242.23	234.07	249.86	223.05	215.26
A-3 Assembly, general, community halls, libraries, museums	244.77	234.37	226.34	216.29	198.94	191.79	207.73	179.77	172.98
A-4 Assembly, arenas	281.85	271.45	263.42	253.37	235.77	228.61	244.81	216.59	209.80
B Business	240.90	232.07	223.51	214.08	194.91	187.36	205.68	172.02	164.34
E Educational	257.70	248.89	242.35	231.90	216.47	205.54	223.92	189.21	183.31
F-1 Factory and industrial, moderate hazard	144.93	138.11	130.39	125.40	112.49	107.10	120.02	92.69	86.88
F-2 Factory and industrial, low hazard	143.93	137.11	130.39	124.40	112.49	106.10	119.02	92.69	85.88
H-1 High Hazard, explosives	135.29	128.47	121.75	115.76	104.14	97.75	110.39	84.34	N.P.
H234 High Hazard	135.29	128.47	121.75	115.76	104.14	97.75	110.39	84.34	77.53
H-5 HPM	240.90	232.07	223.51	214.08	194.91	187.36	205.68	172.02	164.34
I-1 Institutional, supervised environment	244.45	236.08	229.06	219.82	202.16	196.58	220.10	181.25	175.81
I-2 Institutional, hospitals	401.22	392.40	383.83	374.40	354.29	N.P.	366.00	331.40	N.P.
I-2 Institutional, nursing homes	279.15	270.32	261.76	252.33	234.64	N.P.	243.93	211.75	N.P.
I-3 Institutional, restrained	273.40	264.57	256.00	246.57	229.13	220.58	238.17	206.24	196.56
I-4 Institutional, day care facilities	244.45	236.08	229.06	219.82	202.16	196.58	220.10	181.25	175.81
M Mercantile	177.02	169.94	163.27	155.07	142.48	137.88	147.40	123.17	117.89
R-1 Residential, hotels	246.94	238.56	231.54	222.30	204.35	198.77	222.58	183.44	178.00
R-2 Residential, multiple family	206.81	198.43	191.41	182.17	165.41	159.83	182.46	144.50	139.06
R-3 Residential, one- and two-family ^d	192.58	187.37	182.53	178.04	172.85	166.59	175.01	160.35	150.87
R-4 Residential, care/assisted living facilities	244.45	236.08	229.06	219.82	202.16	196.58	220.10	181.25	175.81
S-1 Storage, moderate hazard	134.29	127.47	119.75	114.76	102.14	96.75	109.39	82.34	76.53
S-2 Storage, low hazard	133.29	126.47	119.75	113.76	102.14	95.75	108.39	82.34	75.53
U Utility, miscellaneous	104.98	99.04	93.31	89.21	80.44	74.45	85.33	63.42	60.43

- a. Private Garages use Utility, miscellaneous
- b. For shell only buildings deduct 20 percent
- c. N.P. = not permitted
- d. Unfinished basements (Group R-3) = \$23.20 per sq. ft.

**Steel stud rental storage bldgs./steel strg containers, S-1 occupancy, Type 11-B construction: \$90.25 x 0.5685=\$51.31

- a. Private Garages use Utility, miscellaneous
- b. Unfinished basements (all use groups) = \$45.00 per sq. ft.
- c. For shell only buildings deduct 20 percent
- d. N.P. = not permitted

(Note: Building Safety Journal Square Foot Construction Costs table in effect at time of submittal in August of 2022 and including an internally adjusted fee for S-1, Type II-B, steel frame or steel stud rental storage buildings, steel storage container structures and unfinished basements. The most current available table will be referenced)

UNIFIED FEE SCHEDULE POLICY
BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION

ADDENDUM C

REPEAT PLAN PERMIT APPLICATIONS

Thank you for participating in our Repeat Plan Permit program. The intent of this program is to substantially reduce the time necessary to obtain a building permit by eliminating the waiting period in plan review. Since your plans are “pre-approved”, they will not be required to go through the normal plan review process (they’re already approved!). To help expedite your permit you will need to supply sufficient information for all departments to perform their reviews.

INITIAL REPEAT PLAN APPLICATION

1. Make appointment with a Plans Examiner to submit Repeat Plans per the current accepted practices.
2. Submit a complete set of plans including floor plans and elevations, energy compliance forms and engineering (if required) to Whatcom County electronic application portal.
3. A file will be set up for your Repeat Permit. Every effort will be made to review repeat plans and related information within two weeks of the date submitted.
4. You will be notified by a Plans Examiner when the repeat plans are ready to be used. The fee for Repeat Plan file set up and review will be paid at this time.
5. The fee for Repeat File set up shall be per UFS #8379, which is 65% of the calculated building fee. See UFS Appendix B, PDS Policy #1
6. You will receive an electronic set of approved plans, energy compliance forms, and engineering (if required). You will also receive electronically, a partially completed permit application form, which is part of your repeat permit documents.

PULLING PERMIT APPLICATIONS OFF REPEAT PLANS

When you are ready to pull a permit from your pre-approved repeat plans, you will need to submit the following information to the Whatcom County application portal:

1. PDF Copy of your partially completed repeat permit application form. You will need to fill in the site-specific information at the top of the application (parcel number, site address, etc.) and sign the bottom of the application.
2. Complete electronic copies of your pre-approved repeat plan with all plan review comments and corrections.
3. Complete electronic copies of your pre-approved energy compliance forms and engineering calculations (if required).
4. Other applicable documents normally required to apply for a building permit. (See the checklist of required information in the Residential Structures application packet.)

All other departmental reviews such as zoning, land disturbance, and Health Dept. will be completed prior to permit issuance.

Your construction plans are valid for sites meeting design criteria indicated on plans (i.e. 25 psf snow load region, 1500 psf assumed soil bearing capacity, etc.). If your proposed site conditions do not meet design criteria indicated on plans, plans will not be valid and additional review by this department will be required. Fees are required for additional review.

Your repeat plans are valid until the next applicable code changes. At that time, if you wish to re-instate your repeat permit, a supplementary plan review and additional fees (\$120.00 minimum) will be required.

UNIFIED FEE SCHEDULE POLICY
BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION

ADDENDUM D

CODE INTERPRETATIONS

WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION

NUMBER: 2002-01
EFFECTIVE DATE: 2/15/02
REVISION DATE: 11/1/07

SUBJECT: Conditions of discounted plan review fee for Reuse Plans.

CODE: Current adopted edition of the International Residential Code (IRC), Sections R106 & R108

SUBMITTED BY: Wain Harrison

APPROVED BY: J.E. "Sam" Ryan

STATEMENT OF INTERPRETATION:

Whatcom County Building Services Division will discount 50% of the plan review fee for specific individual permit applications on a case-by-case basis, subject to the Building Official's discretion. A review fee discount will apply for reuse residential plans, based on the current adopted Unified Fee Schedule, subject to the following conditions:

1. The plan in question must have been previously reviewed by Building Services within one year of the date of the current application for the reuse plan submittal.
2. The applicant must provide the most recent previous permit number associated with the reuse plan; submit two clear, legible copies of the previously reviewed plan drawings with all the Plan Examiner notes, conditions and labels visible; provide copies of all relevant documents, such as engineer calculations, energy code forms, truss layout/engineering and the like.

3. The current application for the reuse plan submittal shall have no more than minor nonstructural changes with no alterations or expansion of the original building footprint. All changes must be clearly indicated on the plan drawings.
4. Engineered reuse plans must be accompanied by a letter from the engineer of record approving the use of the engineering for the specific plans at the new proposed building site. Any proposed changes to the plan drawings, minor or otherwise, must be reviewed and approved in writing by the engineer of record. The written documentation must be stamped and signed by the engineer.

Any applications submitted, which do not meet all of the above applicable conditions, will not be considered a reuse plan submittal. The application will be subject to the full plan review fee, based on the current adopted Unified Fee Schedule.