



Development  
Services  
Department

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Cochise County Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Daniel Coxworth, Development Services Director  
**THRU:** Richard Karwaczka, County Administrator  
**SUBJECT:** Proposed Building Fee Schedule  
**DATE:** June 21, 2022

### Introduction and Background:

State Statute 11-321 requires a building permit for any construction of a building or addition exceeding a cost of \$1,000. The current Development Services Fee Schedule was last amended by the Board of Supervisors in October 2019. The Owner-Builder Permit fee has not changed since the program was implemented in 2006.

Periodically reviewing and adjusting the building permit fees is necessary to assess the degree of development and resources required for building plan review and inspection services provided to the development community and the public. Services include:

- **Building Division** services include building permit plan review and inspection services to ensure safe and sanitary housing in the County.
- **Planning Division** services include long and short-range planning to support the orderly growth of residential and commercial development.
- **Code Compliance Division** enforces the zoning regulations to encourage investment, protect property values, and keep our County beautiful.

The Board of Supervisors' goal is to keep taxes as low as possible for all County residents. The Development Services Department supports this goal by recouping the cost of services mentioned above by charging appropriate fees for development. By recouping costs, subsidies from the County's general fund to the Department are minimized.

The Department anticipates the current Fiscal Year (FY22) revenue to fall between 65% – 70% of the Department's budget.

**Proposed Fee Schedule Changes:**

**1. Rural Residential Owner/Builder Permit, No Inspection – No Plan Review Option (opt-out)**

- **An increase from \$157 to \$350.** Includes a single-family home and one accessory structure.
- **An increase from \$325 to \$850** for the Limited Inspection and Plan Review Option.

**Justification:** The Rural Residential Owner/Builder Permit fee has not changed since the program was implemented in 2006. The processing and issuance of opt-out permits can be more time-consuming than expected, and the fee does not currently recoup Department resources to support the program. Therefore, fees from non-opt-out permits and the general fund subsidize the program.

The opt-out is specific to Cochise County and a unique permit in Arizona, which generates a large volume of inquiries and requests. Although staff is proposing more than double the current permit fee, the fee is still substantially lower than a single-family residential (SFR) permit with a full plan review and up to 15 or more inspections. Opt-out permits require two or more inspections, including zoning (setbacks, height), progress inspections, and a final building inspection. The county right-of-way and floodplain staff also require the review of opt-out permits.

In summary, increasing the cost to \$350 will recoup the cost of staff time in processing, reviewing, and inspecting opt-out permits. The table below indicates that for the first six months of 2021, Opt-Out permits for SFRs were almost 43% of the SFR permit issued and less than 5% of the fees collected.

*Table 1: 2021 Single-Family Residential Family Permits*

| <b>SFRs Total</b> | <b>275</b> | <b>\$417,293.88 (Total Fees)</b> | <b>Share of SFR Permits</b> | <b>Share of SFR Fees</b> |
|-------------------|------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Opt-Out SFRs      | 118        | \$19,214.45                      | 42.91%                      | 4.60%                    |
| Non Opt-Out SFRs  | 157        | \$398,079.43                     | 57.09%                      | 95.40%                   |

Note: A permit fee for an SFR is between 1%-2% of the building valuation.

**2. Temporary RV Permits**

- An increase from \$30 to \$75

**Justification:** A temporary RV Permit is required for the following:

- Temporary occupancy of one RV in conjunction with permitted principal use for up to six months in a calendar year with a required Temporary Use Permit; stays of 15-consecutive days or less do not require a permit.

- Temporary occupancy of RVs in conjunction with the construction of a residential or non-residential permitted principal use. Such occupancy shall be limited to the length of the building permit with a required Temporary Use Permit.

Increasing the fee for a temporary RV permit to \$75 is consistent with the current Temporary Use permit fee for all other temporary uses.

### 3. Multi-Use Plan

- o An increase from \$50 to 10% of the permit fee

**Justification:** A Multi-Use Plan (MUP) is a model building plan for a single-family home, most commonly used by a builder that reuses the plan to sell the same home on multiple lots. Most submittals of MUPs are in substantial conformance to the original approved plan but not the same, thereby requiring a minor building plan review of the changes for conformance with the building code. Increasing the fee to 10% of the permit will recoup the cost of reviewing MUPs.

### 4. Modification of a Special Use Permit

- o Clarify in the Fee Schedule that an administrative modification is \$150 and a modification of an existing Special Use that requires approval by the Planning & Zoning Commission is \$500 + \$20 an acre, the same as the current fee for a new Special Use Permit request.

**Justification:** The modification of an existing Special Use Permit that requires approval by the Planning & Zoning Commission essentially requires the same amount of work and resources as a new Special Use Permit request. Legal public notification requirements such as mailing to surrounding property owners, posting a legal ad in the paper, posting the property, staff analysis of the request, and presentation to the Planning & Zoning Commission are the same as a new request for a Special Use Permit.

### 5. Accessory Living Quarters

- o No current fee. Add a planning review fee of \$100 to the fee schedule, separate from the building permit fee.

**Justification:** Recent changes to the Zoning Regulations made obtaining a permit for an Accessory Living Quarters (ALQ) without public notification or a Special Use Permit.

### 6. Official Zoning Compliance Letter

- o No current fee. Add a planning review fee of \$50.

**Justification:** Review the application, research as necessary, correspondence with the applicant, and an official zoning compliance letter on County letterhead, primarily for commercial properties. Most zoning information is available online for all other zoning requests, and staff

will continue to provide general information as requested over the phone or via email without a fee.

#### **7. Agriculture Exemption Request**

- No current fee. Add a planning review fee of \$50

**Justification:** Review the application, research as necessary, correspondence with the applicant, and an official letter from staff.

#### **8. Special Event Permit**

- No current fee. Add a planning review fee of \$150

**Justification:** Special events are activities on private property that invite the public. Events range in size and require notification and review by several County Departments and outside agencies before issuing a Special Event Permit.

#### **9. Home Occupation Permit**

- No current fee. Add a planning review fee of \$25

**Justification:** Review the application, research as necessary, correspondence with the applicant, and a permit issued by staff.

#### **10. Miscellaneous deletions**

- Miscellaneous deletions in the fee schedule result from either moving the fees to another approved fee schedule by the Board for another Department or general updates or changes due to permit processes, implementation of new technology, or simplifying the fee schedule.

### **Attachments**

Proposed Fee Schedule with updated proposed changes.