



According to the US Census Bureau, the City of New Braunfels is continuing to increase in size as one of the top 10 fastest growing cities in America; on par with Georgetown and San Marcos. The quality of life in the community, as well as new industry/jobs, are attracting the new residents. This requires rapid new subdivision layout, new home construction and new commercial services.

The development process is more than just a simple permit issuance upon payment of a fee. Complex drawings prepared by registered architects and licensed engineers must be submitted. Packets of materials to distribute to various reviewing entities (some outside of and separate from the City) must accompany the drawings. These plans must first be reviewed for application completeness at intake. Then they must be reviewed against all adopted codes and ordinances, including the International Building and Fire Codes, the platting ordinance, the sign ordinance, and/or the zoning ordinance. As the plans are reviewed, any inconsistencies with adopted codes must be addressed by the applicants before the plans can be approved. Depending on the project, some plans require approval by boards, commissions and/or City Council, while others can be approved administratively.

This is a labor-intensive and time-consuming undertaking for all municipalities who must conduct the same or similar processes. The costs to manage and staff this operation should not be borne by local taxpayers alone; development should pay for itself. Development-related fees in New Braunfels have not maintained pace with the costs of doing business. Therefore, staff is recommending changes in the fees (see attached). These changes will allow for:

- Technological enhancements and continued maintenance of the permitting and plan review software;
- Third-party plan review;
- After a review of efficiencies gained with third-party contractual services and technological enhancements, additional staff may be added if needed;
- Staff focus on other core projects such as code amendments, public projects, neighborhood or master plans, and continuous improvements.

**ADDRESSES A NEED/ISSUE IN A CITY PLAN OR COUNCIL PRIORITY:**

Yes	<b>City Plan/Council Priority:</b> 2017/2018 to 2021/2022 5-year Financial Forecast <i>Pros and Cons Based on Policies Plan</i>	<b>Pros:</b> Strategic Issues for Growth and Development • Adjusting Development Application Fees to Market Rates • Process Improvements • Technology Enhancements <b>Cons:</b> None.
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**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The proposed fee changes will provide the resources to hire adequate staff and fund any necessary contractual services to provide technical review of development applications. These added resources will facilitate an expedient and predictable development review process reducing time and, in turn, costs for the developer and builder. The charges will also reduce the present burden on the local taxpayer to pay for the costs of development.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

At their regular meeting on February 6, 2018, the Planning Commission postponed their first consideration of this item. At their regular meeting on March 6, 2018, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposal with the following conditions:

1. Eliminate the proposed fee for pre-development meetings;

2. Implement an initial 6-month evaluation of efficiency gains; and
3. Establish turnaround/cycle time metrics for applications/permits.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the proposed application and development-related fee changes. They are aligned with adopted Strategic Issues noted in the table above, and will result in faster permit/plan review cycle time, saving customers time and money.

*Attachments:*

Spreadsheet of draft fee changes

Draft ordinance