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Development Permit Fees <a href="#">Ordinance 26-003</a> (ECAF 2026-0025)					
Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 @ 10:30 a.m.					
Council Staff: Deb Bell		PDS Staff: Julie Mass		DPA: Christina Richmond	
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<b>3.1 ECAF and Materials</b>					
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**Project Name      Phase III Title 13 Transportation Review Fees**

**Part 1 - DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

<b>Exhibit #</b>	<b>Record Type</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Received From</b>	<b>Exhibit Description</b>
1.0001	Correspondence		Staff	Parties of Record
1.0002	Correspondence	7/24/2025	Staff	Email 7.24.25 to MBAKS (Fee proposals)
1.0003	Correspondence	8/28/2025	Staff	Email 8.28.25 to MBAKS (Transportation Review Fee proposal)
1.0004	Correspondence	9/30/2025	Staff	Email 9.30.25 to MBAKS (Thursday Meeting Prep)
1.0005	Project Administration	10/2/2025	Natalie Reber	Email 10.2.25 from MBAKS (Re_External_RE_Thursday Meeting Prep)
1.0006	Correspondence	11/12/2025	Staff	Email 11.12.25 to MBAKS (updated spreadsheet)
1.0007	Correspondence	11/12/2025	Staff	Attachment to 11.12.25 email to MBAKS (Permit Fee List Phase III - 3 proposals 11.12.2025)
1.0008	Correspondence	12/8/2025	Staff	Email 12.8.25 to MBAKS (PDS proposed ordinances)
1.0009	Correspondence	1/6/2026	Staff	Email 1.6.26 to MBAKS (Ordinance corrections)
1.0010	Staff Research	9/7/2021	Staff	Fee Project Summary
1.0011	Staff Research	9/7/2021	Staff	Cost of Service Model
1.0012	Legislative Documents	12/22/2025	Staff	Phase III List of Fee Changes - 13.110
1.0013	Legislative Documents	1/6/2026	Staff	26-0025 Ordinance-PA Signed Copy
1.0014	Legislative Documents	1/6/2026	Staff	26-0025 Ordinance
1.0015	Legislative Documents	1/6/2026	Staff	26-0025 Ordinance (WORD version)
1.0016	Legislative Documents	11/13/2025	Staff	26-0025 Staff Report
<b>*Contact the Clerk of the Council for copies of Part 1 Exhibits - 425-388-3494 or contact.council@snoco.org</b>				

**Executive/Council Action Form (ECAF)**

**ITEM TITLE:**

Ordinance 26-003, relating to Development Permit Fees for Transportation Review; amending SCC 13.110.030

**DEPARTMENT:** Planning and Development Services

**ORIGINATOR:** Julie Mass

**EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:** Approved by Ken Klein 1/13/26

**PURPOSE:** To update transportation review fees in SCC 13.110.030 to adjust for inflation, as part of Phase III in updating permitting fees.

**BACKGROUND:** Development Permit Fees in SCC 13.110.030 for transportation reviews administered by PDS have not been updated in 35 years, since the fees were initially adopted in 1991. Periodic adjustments to fees are needed to maintain financial self-sufficiency in providing permitting services and keep pace with inflation. PDS is facing significant annual budget deficits. To help close the expected budget gap, PDS is proposing to amend the fees for transportation reviews where the updated cost model (established hourly rates for services) is applied to estimated time spent processing development permits with traffic impacts to establish a reasonable fee that provides for better cost recovery.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:**

EXPEND: FUND, AGY, ORG, ACTY, OBJ, AU	CURRENT YR	2ND YR	1ST 6 YRS
<b>TOTAL</b>			

REVENUE: FUND, AGY, ORG, REV, SOURCE	CURRENT YR	2ND YR	1ST 6 YRS
193-3055134588 Development Review	\$103,000	\$124,000	\$723,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$103,000	\$124,000	\$723,000

**DEPARTMENT FISCAL IMPACT NOTES:** There are no fiscal impacts to PDS expenditures as this ordinance only affects revenue.

**CONTRACT INFORMATION:**

ORIGINAL \_\_\_\_\_ CONTRACT# \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_  
 AMENDMENT \_\_\_\_\_ CONTRACT# \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_

**Contract Period**

ORIGINAL

START \_\_\_\_\_

END \_\_\_\_\_

AMENDMENT

START \_\_\_\_\_

END \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW/COMMENTS:** Reviewed/approved by Finance – Nathan Kennedy 1/12/26

1 Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_, 2026  
2 Effective: \_\_\_\_\_, 2026  
3

4  
5 SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL  
6 SNOHOMISH COUNTY, WASHINGTON  
7

8 ORDINANCE NO. 26-003  
9

10 RELATING TO DEVELOPMENT PERMIT FEES FOR TRANSPORTATION REVIEW;  
11 AMENDING SCC 13.110.030  
12

13 WHEREAS, the Snohomish County Council (“County Council”) and the Snohomish  
14 County Executive have identified regulation of development to ensure safe and quality  
15 construction as a high priority; and  
16

17 WHEREAS, under RCW 82.02.020, the county may collect reasonable fees from an  
18 applicant to cover the cost to the county of processing development applications,  
19 inspecting, and reviewing plans, or preparing detailed statements required by chapter  
20 43.21C RCW; and  
21

22 WHEREAS, chapter 30.86 SCC establishes fees required to be paid by an applicant  
23 to cover county costs of administering the Unified Development Code (title 30) SCC; and  
24

25 WHEREAS, chapter 13.110.030 SCC establishes development application review  
26 fees, which relate to construction activities associated with land development activities  
27 under title 30 SCC that may impact the number of vehicle trips on county roadways; and  
28

29 WHEREAS, PDS administers land development permits, approvals, and decisions  
30 issued under title 30 SCC, which includes reviewing applications for traffic impact  
31 (“transportation review”) pursuant to chapter 13.110.030 SCC; and  
32

33 WHEREAS, PDS’s costs of processing permits are higher than current and  
34 projected revenue, and PDS is facing a budget deficit in its permitting division of \$2.17  
35 million in 2025 and 2026 which will deplete PDS’s fund balance; and  
36

37 WHEREAS, periodic adjustments to fees are necessary to maintain financial self-  
38 sufficiency in providing permitting services and keep pace with inflation, to align the fees  
39 charged to applicants with the type and level of services provided, and to provide for  
40 improved cost recovery, fee equity, and predictability; and  
41

42 WHEREAS, as part of a multi-phase project beginning in 2022 (this ordinance being  
43 part of Phase III) to examine and analyze permitting and land use fees, PDS has identified  
44 certain permit application review fees in title 13 SCC, identified in this ordinance, which

1 have not been adjusted since 1991 and for which either the cost of processing is  
2 significantly greater than the fee charged or for which PDS has not charged a fee for  
3 services and for which the cost of that service is significant enough to warrant the addition  
4 of a new type of fee; and

5  
6 WHEREAS, on \_\_\_\_\_, 2026, the County Council held a public hearing after  
7 proper notice, heard public testimony related to the proposed code amendments, and  
8 considered the entire record; and

9  
10 WHEREAS, following the public hearings, the County Council deliberated on the  
11 proposed code amendments.

12  
13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED:

14  
15 Section 1. The foregoing recitals are incorporated herein as findings of fact and  
16 conclusions as if set forth in full.

17  
18 Section 2. The County Council adopts the following additional findings in support of  
19 this ordinance:

20  
21 A. This ordinance will amend title 13 SCC by amending the development application  
22 review fees in SCC 13.110.030.

23  
24 B. The code amendments in this ordinance will become effective on January 1, 2026.

25  
26 C. Stakeholder feedback was solicited during the development of the proposed fee  
27 changes. On July 23, 2025, proposed fee amendments were provided to the  
28 representative for the Snohomish County Builders Council (SCBC) of the Master  
29 Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties who did outreach to committee  
30 members on the proposed fees and solicited member comment. A presentation was  
31 given to SCBC on September 3, 2025, and additional meetings with SCBC  
32 representatives were held on September 15, 2025, October 2, 2025, and November  
33 12, 2025.

34  
35 D. The proposed amendments are consistent with the record.

36  
37 1. Amendments to SCC 13.110.030 for development application review fees, last  
38 updated on December 4, 2002, are necessary because the current development  
39 review fees do not provide for cost recovery based on inflation and an analysis  
40 of the amount of time it takes to perform transportation reviews.

41  
42 2. County policy is to use permit fees to cover only the direct and indirect costs of  
43 permitting as allowed by state law, and to reasonably and consistently allocate

1 PDS overhead costs among all programs, regardless of the type of revenue  
2 source supporting them.

- 3
- 4 3. In 2008, PDS developed a cost of services model to estimate the cost of  
5 providing permitting services at the present level of service and the fees  
6 necessary to recover permitting costs.
- 7
- 8 4. The PDS cost of services model, which provides the analytical framework used  
9 to recover permitting costs, was updated in 2017 with the adoption of fees  
10 related to fire systems, was used again in the 2020 (Phase I) and 2021 (Phase  
11 II) permit fee increases, and has again been updated based on PDS's 2025-  
12 2026 biennial budget. The PDS cost of services model was used to update the  
13 fees in the code amendments in this ordinance.
- 14
- 15 5. The PDS cost of services model consists of four main costs: labor expenses  
16 (salary and benefits); direct (non-labor) expenses; department overhead/indirect  
17 management costs; and county-wide overhead related to development review  
18 and permits.
- 19
- 20 6. PDS performed an analysis to estimate the time it takes staff to perform the  
21 related permit functions and applied the average labor rates for those positions.  
22 The estimates were used to update the fees in the code amendments in this  
23 ordinance.
- 24
- 25 7. Proposed updates to the fees are reasonable and will reimburse the County for  
26 the staff time required to process permit applications.
- 27

28 Section 3. The County Council makes the following conclusions:

- 29
- 30 A. The proposed fees set forth in this ordinance are calculated in accordance with RCW  
31 82.02.020 and provide for improved cost recovery, equity, and fee predictability and  
32 simplicity.
- 33
- 34 B. The proposed amendments are consistent with Washington state law and the SCC.
- 35
- 36 C. The County Council concludes that this ordinance is related solely to government  
37 procedures, not the Growth Management Act (chapter 36.70A RCW), and therefore  
38 does not adopt development regulations under SCC 30.10.080. Therefore, notice to  
39 the Washington State Department of Commerce of intent to adopt is not required  
40 pursuant to RCW 36.70A.106 and Snohomish County Planning Commission review is  
41 not required pursuant to SCC 30.73.040(2)(c).
- 42
- 43 D. Pursuant to SCC 30.61.020 and WAC 197-11-800(19), the proposed amendments in

1 this ordinance are categorically exempt from review under the State Environmental  
2 Policy Act (SEPA) as being related solely to government procedures containing no  
3 substantive standards respecting use or modification of the environment.  
4

- 5 E. The regulations proposed by this ordinance do not result in an unconstitutional taking  
6 of private property for public purpose. The Washington State Attorney General last  
7 issued an advisory memorandum, as required by RCW 36.70A.370, in October 2024,  
8 entitled "Advisory Memorandum and Recommended Process for Evaluating Proposed  
9 Regulatory or Administrative Actions to Avoid Unconstitutional Takings of Private  
10 Property" to help local governments avoid the unconstitutional taking of private  
11 property. The process outlined in the State Attorney General's 2024 advisory  
12 memorandum was used by Snohomish County in objectively evaluating the regulatory  
13 changes proposed by this ordinance.  
14
- 15 F. The proposed amendments are in the best interest of the county and promote the  
16 general public health, safety, and welfare.  
17

18 Section 4. The County Council bases its findings and conclusions on the entire  
19 record of the County Council, including all testimony and exhibits. Any finding, which  
20 should be deemed a conclusion, and any conclusion which should be deemed a finding, is  
21 hereby adopted as such.  
22

23 Section 5. Snohomish County Code Section 13.110.030, last amended by  
24 Amended Ordinance No. 02-077 on December 4, 2002, is amended to read:

25 **13.110.030 Development application fees.**

26 (1) Upon submittal of any development application or other land use approval requiring  
27 approval of Snohomish County, except for an application for a preapplication concurrency  
28 evaluation under SCC 30.66B.175, the developer shall pay ~~((a \$200.00 base review fee~~  
29 ~~plus \$5.00 per each new vehicle trip generated by the development. For purposes of~~  
30 ~~setting the review fee only, vehicle trips generated will be determined by the following~~  
31 ~~table:~~

32 ~~(a) Single-family residential 10 trips/unit~~

33 ~~(b) Multi-family residential 6 trips/unit~~

34 ~~(c) Office/office park/business park 12 trips/1,000 s.f.~~

1 ~~(d) Industrial/industrial park/ warehouse manufacturing/ other industrial-type uses 6~~  
2 ~~trips/1,000 s.f.~~

3 ~~(e) School 12 trips/1,000 s.f.~~

4 ~~(f) Church/day care 7 trips/1,000 s.f.~~

5 ~~(g) \*Commercial 5,000 s.f. or less 20 trips/1,000 s.f.~~

6 ~~(h) \*Commercial 5,001 s.f. through 25,000 s.f. 15 trips/1,000 s.f.~~

7 ~~(i) \*Commercial 25,000 s.f. or more 10 trips/1,000 s.f.~~

8 ~~\*Commercial use is any use not otherwise defined in this table.))~~for transportation  
9 review required under chapter 30.24 SCC and chapter 30.66B SCC based on the fee  
10 schedule below. Fees shall be paid at the time of application.

11 **Table 13.110.030(1) Transportation Review Fees**

12

<b><u>ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT, AND COMMERCIAL OR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT NOT SUBJECT TO SEPARATE LAND USE APPROVAL</u></b>		
	<u>Minor revision</u>	<u>\$330</u>
	<u>Base fee</u>	<u>\$500</u>
	<u>Additional fee for change in existing access from county right of way <sup>(1)</sup></u>	<u>\$830</u>
	<u>Additional fee for increase in traffic under 50 peak hour trips <sup>(1)</sup></u>	<u>\$1,325</u>
	<u>Additional fee for increase in traffic 50+ peak hour trips <sup>(1)</sup></u>	<u>\$2,650</u>
	<u>Additional fee for 20,000+ square feet <sup>(1)</sup></u>	<u>\$3,975</u>

<b><u>BINDING SITE PLAN, NEW OR MINOR REVISION</u></b>		<u>\$830</u>
<b><u>BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT</u></b>		
	<u>Base fee</u>	<u>\$500</u>
	<u>Additional fee for change in existing access from county right of way <sup>(1)</sup></u>	<u>\$830</u>
<b><u>SHORT SUBDIVISION <sup>(2)</sup></u></b>		
	<u>New preliminary short subdivision</u>	<u>\$2,300</u>
	<u>Minor revision after preliminary approval</u>	<u>\$550</u>
<b><u>SUBDIVISION <sup>(2) (3)</sup></u></b>		
	<u>New preliminary subdivision – 1 to 49 lots</u>	<u>\$2,500</u>
	<u>New preliminary subdivision – 50 to 99 lots</u>	<u>\$70 per lot</u>
	<u>New preliminary subdivision – 100 to 199 lots</u>	<u>\$60 per lot</u>
	<u>New preliminary subdivision – 200 or more lots</u>	<u>\$50 per lot</u>
	<u>Minor revision after preliminary approval</u>	<u>\$750</u>
<b><u>SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN</u></b>		
	<u>Administrative site plan for Single Family Detached Units (SFDU) and Cottage Housing</u>	<u>\$2,300</u>
	<u>Stand alone site plan for developments under chapter 30.31A SCC (BP, IP, PCB Zones) and chapter 30.31F (RB, RI, RFS, CRC Zones) except for townhouse or multifamily developments</u>	<u>\$3,000</u>

	<u>URDS<sup>(4)</sup> or other site plan<sup>(5)</sup> not submitted concurrently with subdivision application – under 50 units</u>	<u>\$3,000</u>
	<u>URDS<sup>(4)</sup> or other site plan<sup>(5)</sup> not submitted concurrently with subdivision application – 50 to 199 units</u>	<u>\$5,000</u>
	<u>URDS<sup>(4)</sup> or other site plan<sup>(5)</sup> not submitted concurrently with subdivision application – 200 or more units</u>	<u>\$8,300</u>
	<u>Minor revision – changes affecting access or traffic impacts</u>	<u>\$660</u>
<b><u>VARIANCE</u></b>		<b><u>\$180</u></b>
<b><u>MINOR REVISION <sup>(6)</sup></u></b>		<b><u>\$660</u></b>
<b><u>RESUBMITTAL FEE <sup>(7)</sup></u></b>		<b><u>\$500</u></b>

**Reference notes:**

- (1) This fee is charged in addition to the appropriate base fee.
- (2) Includes transportation review of site plan if submitted concurrently with short subdivision or subdivision.
- (3) When based on a previously approved site plan, the subdivision fee will be reduced by 50% of the amount paid for the site plan approval.
- (4) Pursuant to chapter 30.23A SCC (Urban Residential Design Standards).
- (5) Includes site plans for development under chapter 30.31G (Mixed Use Corridor) and chapter 30.34A (Urban Center), and multifamily or townhome development under chapter 30.31A SCC (BP, IP, PCB Zones) and chapter 30.31F (RB, RI, RFS, CRC Zones).
- (6) This fee applies to all minor revisions not listed in the table above where additional transportation review is required.
- (7) This fee applies to the resubmittal of plans and documents after a second review for which the applicant did not include corrections noted by the department, or the applicant

made revisions, which necessitate additional review and comments by the department.  
This fee is applicable to all projects subject to the development review fee as noted in the  
table above.

- 1
- 2 (2) In any case, the maximum fee for any individual development application in SCC  
3 13.110.030(1) shall not exceed ~~((\$5,000))~~\$25,000.
- 4 (3) The following development types are exempt from the development application review  
5 fee of SCC 13.110.030(1):
- 6 (a) ~~Rezoning~~~~((not requiring official site plans))~~.
- 7 (b) Lot width variances.
- 8 (c) Commercial building permits for portable classrooms.
- 9 (d) Commercial building permits for rockeries.
- 10 (e) Building permits for single-family residences on existing ~~((tax))~~lots.
- 11 (4) Commercial building permit applications that have undergone prior development  
12 review within twelve months of building permit application will pay only ~~((the \$200.00))~~a  
13 \$350.00 base fee.
- 14 (5) Upon submittal of an application for a preapplication concurrency evaluation for a  
15 proposed development under SCC 30.66B.175, the developer shall pay a ~~((base))~~fee of  
16 ~~((\$850.00 plus an additional \$400.00 for each arterial unit analyzed for future level-of-~~  
17 ~~service conditions))~~\$3,975. If, pursuant to SCC 30.66B.175(6), a developer submits  
18 revisions or alternative analyses or proposals in response to a decision that a proposed  
19 development cannot be deemed concurrent, then the developer shall pay ~~((only the base))~~  
20 a fee of ~~((\$850))~~\$860 upon submittal of ~~((the))~~each response. For other resubmittals of the  
21 same development, as in instances in which a preapplication concurrency approval has  
22 elapsed and a developer resubmits an updated traffic study for a new concurrency  
23 evaluation, the department ~~((of public works))~~performing the review may waive all or part

1 of the review fee if it determines that the amount paid in the ~~((initial review fee))~~fees  
2 collected previously will adequately cover the costs of application review.

3 (6) Whenever a development is deemed concurrent under SCC 30.66B.135 on the basis  
4 of a valid preapplication concurrency approval, then the development review fee under  
5 subsection (1) above shall be reduced by thirty-three percent (33%)~~((of the development's~~  
6 ~~review fee under sub-section (1) above shall be refunded))~~.

7 Section 6. Effective date.

8  
9 This ordinance shall take effect March 1, 2026.

10  
11 Section 7. Severability and Savings. If any section, sentence, clause or phrase of  
12 this ordinance shall be held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent  
13 jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity or  
14 constitutionality of any other section, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance.  
15 Provided, however, that if any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance is held  
16 to be invalid by the court of competent jurisdiction, then the section, sentence, clause or  
17 phrase in effect prior to the effective date of this ordinance shall be in full force and effect  
18 for that individual section, sentence, clause or phrase as if this ordinance had never been  
19 adopted.

20  
21  
22 PASSED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

23  
24  
25 SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL

26  
27 Snohomish County, Washington

28  
29  
30 \_\_\_\_\_  
31 Chairperson

32  
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37 ATTEST:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of the Council

- APPROVED
- EMERGENCY
- VETOED

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2026

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Executive

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved as to form only:

*Christa Richmond* 1/06/26

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

**Planning & Development Services**  
**Staff Report**  
**Proposed Amendment to PDS Permit Fees: Phase III**  
**Development Review Fees (Transportation Review)**

Snohomish County Department of Planning and Development Services charges a variety of application and permit fees to recover its costs of regulating development. Most of these fees are currently listed in Chapter 30.86 of the Snohomish County Code (SCC). Other fees charged by PDS are found in SCC Chapter 13. The nature of land development and building permits is cyclical and can change dramatically based on the national, state, and local economies, supply and demand, cost of materials, political issues, etc. In addition, it can take years for new development to go through the review, approval, and building process. It is important for the county to set permit and land use fees to ensure that Planning and Development Services can remain fiscally sound, support the needs of the building industry and their efforts to provide greatly-needed affordable housing, and be able to sustain the impacts of an always-changing and sometimes volatile industry.

In 2020, PDS began a multi-phase effort called the "PDS Fee Alignment Project" to examine and update permit fees. Phase I was completed in 2020, through Ord. No. 20-039, when PDS updated the fees in the Building Permit Fee Table in SCC 30.86.400(7), which had not been updated since 1997. Phase II, adopted in 2021 through Am. Ord. No. 21-048, examined miscellaneous permit fees that were simple to analyze, had not been updated in decades, and for which PDS did not achieve cost recovery.

The proposed ordinance is part of Phase III and addresses reviews for which PDS does not currently charge a fee as well as the more complex land use fees. Phase IV will address fire-related fees and other fees which need an adjustment due to the higher costs of doing business. Below is a discussion of the factors that PDS took into consideration as it developed the proposed changes in permit fees in SCC Chapter 30.86. The fees that the County will collect to process permits is reasonable and will reimburse the County for the staff time required to process applications.

## **Fiscal Framework**

The permitting divisions within the Department of Planning and Development Services (PDS) operate as a special revenue fund, which means that (a) there is no revenue from taxes or the County's General Fund, and (b) a separate fund balance<sup>1</sup> that carries over from year to year is maintained.<sup>2</sup> The basis for this "self-funded" model is found in RCW 82.02.020, which states that the county may collect reasonable fees for processing development applications, reviewing plans and performing inspections. Most of the permitting division's funding comes from monies paid for permits, approvals, and inspections, and these revenues can only be used for these purposes pursuant to RCW 82.02.020 and established case law. Therefore, PDS must generate enough revenues from fees for land use approvals, building permits and miscellaneous related permits to meet expenses and manage an ongoing fund balance in such a way that is fiscally prudent.

---

<sup>1</sup> The fund balance provides a level of stability for the department in that it increases in the years when there are numerous permit applications and falls in years when development activity slows down. PDS strives to adjust staffing levels to meet demand but must maintain the necessary and consistent professional expertise regardless of the up-and-down swings in development.

<sup>2</sup> The discussion in this report is limited to the special revenue fund for PDS's permitting divisions (known as Fund 193). PDS has other divisions that do receive funding from the County's General Fund, such as the Long Range Planning, Code Enforcement, and the Fire Marshal's Office investigation divisions. PDS accounts for the activities and expenses of those divisions separately from the special revenue fund for PDS's permitting divisions.

In the 2025-2026 biennium, PDS expects to recover 84% of permitting costs (\$40.5 million) from charges for services and permit fees at their current levels (\$33.9 million) and 11% from non-permit revenue (\$4.5 million). The budgeted gap between revenue and expense (net loss) is \$2.17 million<sup>3</sup>. Thus far into 2025, PDS is on track with these projections. In addition, the number of new permit applications is down significantly from prior years which will impact PDS's revenue in the coming months.

Additionally, state law now mandates certain permit review time frames (Senate Bill 5290). During a 2023 audit by the Washington State Auditor's Office, it was determined that PDS met the state's 120-day time frames 24% of the time for land use decisions and 40% of the time for civil permits. One of recommendations from the State Auditor was that PDS "assess whether their current staffing levels are sufficient to meet the 120-day requirement" rather than focus on balancing its annual budget. As such, PDS requested six additional staff in the 2025-2026 biennial budget to handle the backlog and ongoing permit and land use applications. The state has also issued guidance to all jurisdictions subject to the mandatory time frames encouraging them to conduct a fee analysis that examines the direct labor and overhead for each type of permit to ensure that cost recovery is achieved, so that they can maintain staffing levels sufficient to meet upward swings in demand.

## **Need for Fee Increases**

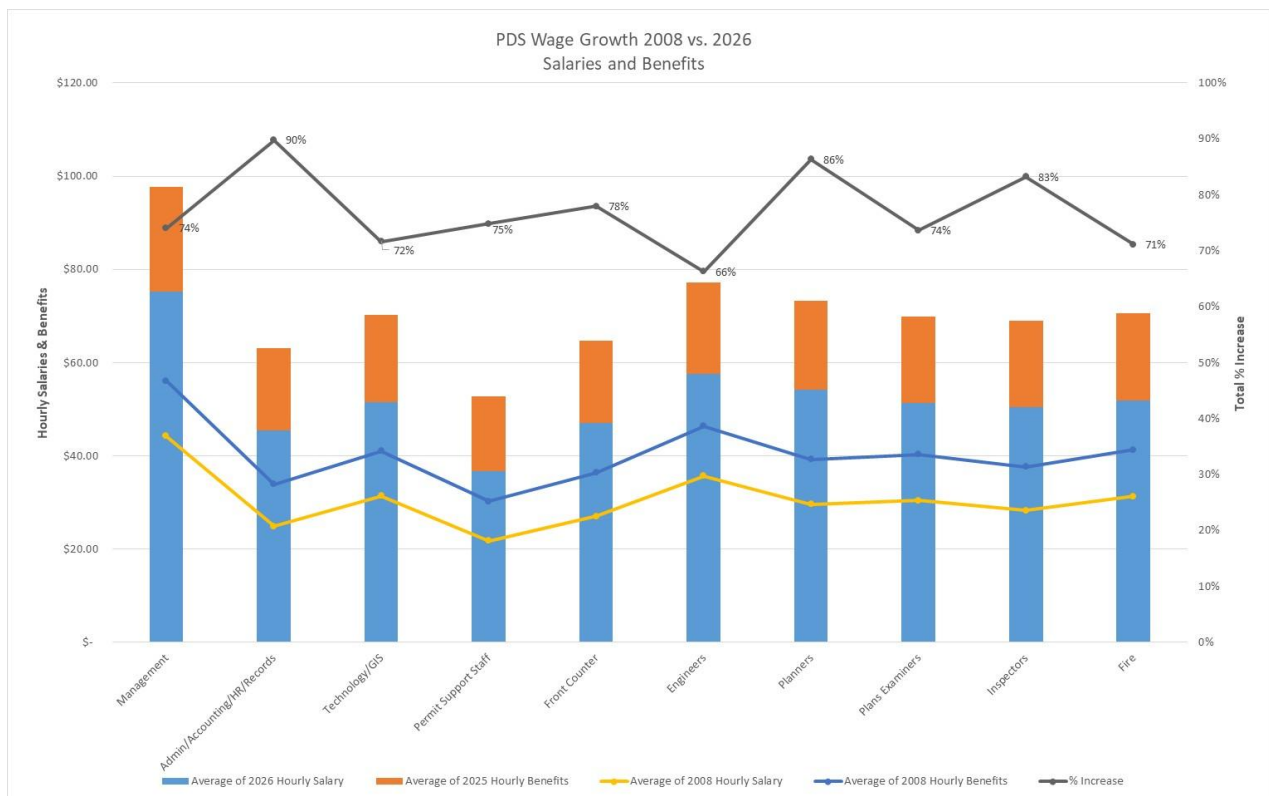
There are several reasons why PDS Fund 193<sup>4</sup> is facing a budget deficit of \$2.17 million per year, including inflation and the higher costs of doing business, the increasing complexity of permit regulations, and new types of housing.

1. Fewer Permits; Less Revenue. Over the last decade, as the number of building permits has declined, so has the number of related miscellaneous permits and land use decisions. However, department overhead for core staffing and administration cannot be proportionately reduced. PDS must maintain a certain level of core staff, management, technology and support services. Reducing staff is one way to help balance the budget, but PDS can only cut support staff so far without impacting mandatory core functions. There are fixed costs associated with a county department that PDS must pay for, regardless of permit volume. Also, as noted in the previous section, PDS must maintain a certain level of professional and technical staff to be able to handle the variable work load and meet state-mandated review time frames.
2. Inflation and the Cost of Doing Business. The transportation review fees in this ordinance have not changed since they were first implemented in 1991. The 2026 cost of salaries and benefits for the Traffic Engineers are far greater than the revenue generated by the 1991 fees. Periodic adjustments to fees are necessary to keep up with inflation. Staffing costs, which make up 77% of PDS's permitting budget, have risen approximately 83% since 2008. Salaries have increased 80% and benefits have risen 96%. PDS is projecting a budget deficit for its permitting divisions' special revenue fund of \$2.17 million in 2025-2026 and similar deficits in the years to come. The gap between revenue and expenses is growing at an unsustainable rate, and without some actions to close that gap, PDS will eventually run out of fund balance.

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<sup>3</sup> Excludes the Technology Reserve Fund revenue and expenses which is a separate, restricted fund.

<sup>4</sup> Permitting divisions, not including technology reserve fund.



3. Complexity of permits. In recent years, there have been increased requirements for building and land use regulations (critical areas, stormwater, energy codes and public notice). Easily developed land has become scarcer and much of the remaining undeveloped land presents challenges for builders. Accordingly, there has been a corresponding increase in the amount of time and effort required to review and inspect building projects due to constraints on the land and the complexity of new codes. The increased complexity also affects transportation review of proposed development.

### Fee Calculation Methodology – Cost Recovery Model

Changes to the fees proposed in this ordinance are needed to better recoup the labor and non-labor expenses related to fully processing those permits. The new fees were established in consideration of the staff time required to fully process the respective permits.

The cost of service model is a methodology developed to determine the costs of the various development and regulatory services provided by PDS to users of its services. Included in the methodology are direct, indirect and overhead costs.

Direct costs are those costs which can be identified specifically with a particular project/application and which can be directly assigned to such activities, relatively easily, and with a high degree of accuracy.

Indirect costs are costs incurred in support of multiple permitting processes or application types, and which cannot be tracked in a cost-effective manner at the level of individual application or permit.

Overhead costs are the costs necessary for the continued functioning of the department, are incurred in support of a range of permit services, but are not uniquely attributable to an individual service.

Direct, indirect and overhead costs are applied through a series of cost layers. There are four main cost layers:

- Labor expenses – this includes the direct costs of salary and benefits adjusted for paid time off, direct time spent on individual permits, indirect time spent on general permit activities, and indirect time spent on general overhead activities
- Direct (non-labor) expenses – this layer includes division operating costs allocated to each employee within that division (translated to an hourly rate)
- Department overhead/indirect management costs – this layer includes an allocation of PDS administration, business process technology, and support staff that cannot be allocated to individual permits
- County-wide overhead – this layer includes an allocation of overhead imposed on PDS by the county for central services such as risk management, space rent, security, IT, executive, public records, HR, training, etc. Additionally, hearing examiner costs have not previously been factored into the costs for land use decisions but were considered during the present Phase III analysis.

For the permits contained in this ordinance, we came up with an estimated time spent by PDS and applied the cost layers as outlined above. Estimates were based on an analysis of data obtained from time keeping data, the permit tracking database, and interviews with staff who work on the permits.

## **Proposed Fee Amendments – Development application fees**

### **Transportation review fees - SCC 13.110.030(1)**

#### ***Development Applications***

As part of the review process for development applications, PDS transportation reviewers<sup>5</sup> review the applications for impacts to county roads. The current fee structure, developed in 1991, establishes a base fee of \$200 plus \$5 for each new vehicle trip generated by the development. It is unknown how this fee structure was derived, but the list of the types of development and associated trips seem to come from the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) Manual. PDS looked at updating the fees using this model. However, the model is outdated and, because it has not been updated in 34 years, does not provide for cost recovery. Trip generation information is not captured and stored in the permit tracking system, and it is not clear how trip generation correlates with the time spent on the review. PDS developed a new model that achieves an equitable allocation of fees to the different types of development applications that PDS reviews for transportation issues and road impacts. The new fees are set out in a table in SCC 13.110.030(1). The fees are grouped similarly to how the types of development are listed in Chapter 30.86 SCC. The groupings and fees were determined according to what the data for the different types of developments showed. The main focus of the analysis was to determine which factors drive the amount of time spent, and what correlations in the data could be made to the actual time spent on the reviews. PDS looked at three and half years' worth of projects reviewed and completed by PDS. The conclusion reached was that the current fees are so low and the model is so outdated, that the revenue is covering only a fraction of the cost of PDS transportation reviewers. PDS has three engineers dedicated to transportation review which cost the department approximately \$560,000 per year. Annual revenue that is directly tied to their work was approximately \$185,000 for a deficit of \$375,000 annually. The fees proposed in this ordinance should help close that gap and provide better cost recovery.

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<sup>5</sup> The staff performing this work are engineers in PDS, under authority delegated to PDS by Public Works.

For some types of developments, road access and/or the number of trips generated impacted the amount of time spent. For example, the transportation reviews for administrative conditional use permits, conditional use permits, and commercial/industrial development not subject to a separate land use approval were all similar and the time spent was impacted by whether there is a change in existing access or peak hour trips. The groupings were based on the project information and time spent data, the average time spent for each group was determined, then the Cost Recovery Model (described in previous section) was used to determine the fees which would be a base fee of \$500 (3 hours) plus additional fees of \$830 (5 hours), \$1,325 (8 hours), \$2,650 (16 hours) or \$3,975 (24 hours) depending on the access and traffic impacts. The fee for minor revisions for these development types would be \$330 (2 hours).

The fees for binding site plans, boundary line adjustments, new preliminary short subdivisions, and new final short subdivisions were calculated based on the average time spent for these as there was no distinctions or natural groupings within these types of reviews. The fees and estimated average time for these types are as follows:

- Binding site plan - \$830 (5 hours)
- Boundary line adjustment – \$500 (3 hours min.) with additional \$830 if changing access (5 hours)
- Preliminary short subdivision – \$2,300 (14 hours)
- Minor revisions to short subdivision - \$550 (3.3 hours)

PDS proposes that the fees for subdivisions be based on the number of lots. The number of lots seemed to be a predictable indicator of how much time is spent on the transportation review. For subdivisions under 50 lots, PDS proposes a flat fee of \$2,500. Larger developments were grouped based on size and the fees would be an amount per lot on a sliding scale. The fees proposed are \$70 per lot for 50-99 lots; \$60 per lot for 100-199 lots; and \$50 per lot for 200 or more lots (for these larger developments, there is no base fee, just a “per lot” fee). The per-lot fee structure provides a more equitable set of fees that more accurately covers PDS’s costs of providing the review services. The estimated time spent varies which is why the fees are also variable based on the size of the development. Fees for minor revisions of subdivisions would be \$750 (4.5 hours). This model will provide better cost recovery for PDS. The current 1991 fee structure has generated very little revenue to cover the costs of transportation reviews, especially on subdivisions. Of 68 subdivisions in the data analyzed from 2022 to present, the total fees collected were \$78,490. However, the cost of staff to perform the reviews was around \$350,000. Under the new fee structure, the development review fee for 100 lot subdivision would be \$6,000 whereas under the current fee model it might range between \$1,500 and \$4,900. Any subdivision under 50 lots would be a flat fee of \$2,500 which equates to 15 hours of review time; under the current fee structure, the fees for those have ranged between \$400 and \$2,550.

PDS is proposing that the fees for reviews of site development plans be flat fees based on the type of site plan being reviewed, categorized into several groups. There seemed to be no distinction in the data beyond the identified groupings. Below is a summary of each group along with the proposed fee and estimated time spent:

- Administrative site plan for single family detached units (SFDU) and cottage housing - \$2,300 (14 hours)
- Stand alone site plans for developments under Chapter 30.31A SCC and Chapter 30.31F SCC except townhomes and multifamily developments<sup>6</sup> - \$3,000 (18 hours)
- Urban Residential Design Standards (URDS) site plans under Chapter 30.23A SCC or other site plans under Chapters 30.34A and 30.31G SCC not submitted concurrently

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<sup>6</sup> Townhomes and multifamily development typically require an URDS or other type of site plan approval (e.g., URDS, Urban Center or other) and will fall within those groups.

with a subdivision application, and multifamily or townhome development under chapter 30.31A SCC (BP, IP, PCB Zones) and chapter 30.31F (RB, RI, RFS, CRC Zones).

- less than 50 units - \$3,000 (18 hours)
- 50-199 units - \$5,000 (30 hours)
- 200+ units - \$8,300 (50 hours)
- Minor revisions to site development plans - \$660 (4 hours)

Flat fees for variances, minor revisions and resubmittals are proposed to be based on an average time spent for each of these.

- Variance - \$180 (1 hour)
- Minor revisions not otherwise identified - \$660 (4 hours)
- Resubmittals - \$500 (3 hours)

### **Maximum review fees - SCC 13.110.030(2)**

The maximum fee charged for transportation review is currently set at \$5,000 which has not changed since it was established in 1991. The maximum fee at present covers the cost of 30 hours of a PDS traffic engineer which does not cover the time for the larger lot developments. PDS traffic engineers have spent hundreds of hours on the most complex projects, and cost of that work has not been recovered. PDS proposed a new maximum fee of \$25,000 (an applicant would reach this maximum if they have 500 or more lots in a subdivision). PDS expects it will be very rare situation where a developer would reach the new proposed maximum.

### **Exemptions from fees - SCC 13.110.030(3)**

There are no changes proposed to the list of the types of developments which are exempt from the development application transportation review fee.

### **Commercial building permit applications with prior review - SCC 13.110.030(4)**

PDS proposes changing the fee for transportation review of commercial building permit applications that have undergone prior development review from \$200 to \$350 which equates to approximately two hours of staff time.

### **Preapplication concurrency evaluation fees - SCC 13.110.030(5)**

PDS proposed a change to the application fee for a preapplication concurrency evaluation for a proposed development under SCC 30.66B.175. The existing fee is \$850 plus \$400 for each arterial until analyzed. The proposed fee is a flat fee of \$3,975. Additional review requests would be \$860 each. There have only been five of these in the past 10 years, so data was limited. PDS estimates it should take 24 hours of staff time (which involves both transportation review and public notice of the proposal), and 5 hours for additional reviews.

### **Reduction of development review fees when there is a prior concurrency determination - SCC 13.110.030(6)**

The changes to this subsection are wordsmithing changes only.

## **Permit Fees Charged by Other Jurisdictions**

Because the permit fee analysis was based on the cost to provide the related service, a thorough comparison of other jurisdictions was not conducted. In addition, it is not appropriate under state law to use comparative jurisdiction data as the basis for setting permit fees under the cost recovery method. PDS attempted to examine what several

jurisdictions charge for transportation review; however, each jurisdiction is so unique in how and under which department transportation review is conducted that it is difficult to compare them to PDS.

## **Summary**

PDS needs to update its transportation review fees to improve its recovery of the costs of processing, reviewing, issuing and inspecting various types of permits handled by PDS, while simultaneously ensuring that the fees are equitable and reasonable. Most of the fees in this ordinance have not been updated in 34 years, and a fee increase is long overdue. The proposed changes are a fiscally-prudent step toward closing the budget deficit gap for PDS and will help PDS maintain fiscal solvency into the future.





# Planning and Community Development

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL

Deb Bell

Council Initiated:

Yes

No

EXHIBIT # 3.2.001

FILE ORD 26-003

**Subject:** Amending Snohomish County Code Chapter 13.110.030.

**Scope:** The proposed amendments to Title 13 of the Snohomish County Code (SCC) would update land development permits, approvals, and decisions issued under Title 30 SCC, which includes reviewing applications for traffic impact (transportation review). Included in the ordinance is the ability to recover the county's permit processing and execution costs. These permit fees have not been adjusted since 1991.

**Duration:** NA

**Fiscal Impact:**  Current Year  Multi-Year  N/A

**Authority Granted:** The County Council adopts the recitals as findings of fact and conclusions as set forth in Ordinance 26-003, under Snohomish County Charter 2.110.

**Background:** In 2020, PDS began a multi-phased effort, known as the PDS Fee Alignment Project, to examine and if necessary, update existing permit fees. Phase I was completed in 2020, with [Ordinance 20-039](#), which updated the Building Permit Fee Table (last updated 1997). Phase II was also completed in 2020, with Amended [Ordinance 21-048](#), which examined miscellaneous permit fees that did not have cost recovery.

In 2023, the Washington State Auditor's Office determined that PDS met the state's 120-day permit review time frame ([SB 5290](#)) only 24% of the time for land use decisions and only 40% of the time for civil permits. One of the recommendations from the State Auditor's Office was to "assess whether current PDS staffing levels are sufficient to meet the 120-day requirement." As a result, PDS hired six additional staff to assist with the backlog of work for ongoing permit and land use application reviews. Another recommendation was to encourage a fee analysis that examines the direct labor and overhead of each permit to ensure cost recovery. Guidance was issued to all jurisdictions subject to the mandatory time frames.

The proposed ordinance is part of Phase III, which includes those reviews with currently no fee, and those with a more complex land use review, for which their fees have not been recalculated since 1991. Most proposed fee adjustments are for an increase to the base fee or the per lot fee for review, with an incentive for a valid preapplication concurrency approval, allowing for a 33% reduction to the development review fee.

**Action Requested:** For Council to move Ordinance 26-003 to GLS on Wednesday February 4, 2026, to set time and date for a Public Hearing, with the suggested date and time of February 25th, 2026, at 10:30 am.

ECAF: 2026-0025  
Ordinance: 26-003

**Type:**

- Contract
- Board Appt.
- Code Amendment
- Budget Action
- Other

**Requested Handling:**

- Normal
- Expedite
- Urgent

**Fund Source:**

- General Fund
- Other
- N/A

**Executive Rec:**

- Approve
- Do Not Approve
- N/A

**Approved as to**

**Form:**

- Yes
- No
- N/A

Exhibit 3.2.002

Planning and Community Development Committee – 02/03/26

[Video](#)



**Snohomish County Council**  
**Planning and Community Development Committee**  
**Agenda**

Nate Nehring, Committee Chair  
Strom Peterson, Committee Vice-Chair  
Committee Members: Sam Low, Megan Dunn, Jared Mead

Deb Bell, Legislative Analyst  
Russell Wiita, Legislative Aide  
Lisa Hickey, Assistant Clerk of the Council

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**Tuesday, February 3, 2026**                      **11:00 AM**                      **Jackson Board Room - 8th Floor**  
**Robert J. Drewel Building**  
**& Remote Meeting**

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**Webinar Link: <https://zoom.us/j/94846850772>**

Attend in person at 3000 Rockefeller Ave, Jackson Board Room, 8th Floor, Everett, WA  
Join remotely using the Zoom link above or call 1-253-215-8782 or 1-206-337-9723  
and enter Meeting ID 948-4685 0772

**CALL TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**ACTION ITEMS**

1. Ordinance 26-002, relating to Growth Management; concerning the Regulation of Uses in Commercial and Industrial Zones; amending Chapters 30.31a and 30.31b and Sections 30.21.025, 30.22.100, 30.23.010, 30.70.025, 30.70.050, 30.70.140, 30.70.300, and 30.86.200 of the Snohomish County Code [2026-0173](#)

*Proposed Action: Move to General Legislative Session February 4th to set time and date for a public hearing.*

2. Ordinance 26-003, relating to Development Permit Fees for [2026-0025](#)  
Transportation Review; amending SCC 13.110.030

***Proposed Action: Move to General Legislative Session February 4th to set time and date for a public hearing.***

3. Ordinance 26-004, related to Miscellaneous Permit Fees Amending [2026-0026](#)  
Chapter 30.86 SCC

***Proposed Action: Move to General Legislative Session February 4th to set time and date for a public hearing.***

4. Ordinance 26-005, relating to Development Permit Fees for [2026-0024](#)  
Townhouses; amending Chapter 30.86 SCC

***Proposed Action: Move to General Legislative Session February 4th to set time and date for a public hearing.***

5. Motion 26-041, authorizing the County Executive to execute a [2026-0152](#)  
formal Task Assignment to the Public Works On-Call Agreement  
for professional services with Haley & Aldrich for environmental  
due diligence at Snohomish County Airport

***Proposed Action: Move to General Legislative Session February 11th for consideration.***

6. Motion 26-047, authorizing the Snohomish County Executive to [2026-0185](#)  
sign contract Amendment 3 with Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson,  
P.S. for environmental legal services for the Snohomish County  
Airport

***Proposed Action: Move to General Legislative Session February 11th for consideration.***

7. Motion 26-048, authorizing the Snohomish County Executive to [2026-0188](#)  
sign contract Amendment 4 with Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson,  
P.S. for environmental legal services for the Snohomish County  
Airport

***Proposed Action: Move to General Legislative Session February 11th for consideration.***

8. Motion 26-046, authorizing the Snohomish County Executive to sign contract Amendment 7 with Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson, P.S. for environmental legal services for the Snohomish County Airport [2026-0191](#)

*Proposed Action: Move to General Legislative Session February 11th for consideration.*

9. Motion 26-058, approving Amendment 15 with Puget Sound Energy for the Weatherization Program [2026-0276](#)

*Proposed Action: Move to General Legislative Session February 11th for consideration.*

10. Motion 26-050, approving 2026 Contract Amendment 16 with Puget Sound Energy for the Weatherization Program [2026-0193](#)

*Proposed Action: Move to General Legislative Session February 11th for consideration.*



**Snohomish County Council**  
**Planning and Community Development Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Nate Nehring, Committee Chair  
Strom Peterson, Committee Vice-Chair  
Committee Members: Sam Low, Megan Dunn, Jared Mead

Deb Bell, Legislative Analyst  
Russell Wiita, Legislative Aide  
Lisa Hickey, Assistant Clerk of the Council

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**Tuesday, February 3, 2026**

**11:00 AM**

**Jackson Board Room - 8th Floor  
Robert J. Drewel Building  
& Remote Meeting**

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**PRESENT:**

Committee Chair Nehring  
Committee Vice-Chair Peterson (*not present*)  
Committee Member Low (*remote*)  
Committee Member Dunn  
Committee Member Mead  
Deb Bell, Council Staff  
Michael Saponaro, Planning and Development Services  
Lisa Hickey, Assistant Clerk of the Council

**CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Nehring called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The clerk called the roll and stated that four members were present.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no persons present wishing to provide public comment.

## ACTION ITEMS

Deb Bell, Sr. Legislative Analyst, provided a staff report for the following items:

1. Ordinance 26-002, relating to Growth Management; concerning the Regulation of Uses in Commercial and Industrial Zones; amending Chapters 30.31a and 30.31b and Sections 30.21.025, 30.22.100, 30.23.010, 30.70.025, 30.70.050, 30.70.140, 30.70.300, and 30.86.200 of the Snohomish County Code [2026-0173](#)

Michael Saponaro, Planning and Development Services, provided a PowerPoint Presentation and responded to questions.

**ACTION:** Move to Regular Agenda, General Legislative Session February 4th to set time and date for a public hearing.

2. Ordinance 26-003, relating to Development Permit Fees for Transportation Review; amending SCC 13.110.030 [2026-0025](#)

**ACTION:** Move to Regular Agenda, General Legislative Session February 4th to set time and date for a public hearing.

3. Ordinance 26-004, related to Miscellaneous Permit Fees Amending Chapter 30.86 SCC [2026-0026](#)

**ACTION:** Move to Regular Agenda, General Legislative Session February 4th to set time and date for a public hearing.

4. Ordinance 26-005, relating to Development Permit Fees for Townhouses; amending Chapter 30.86 SCC [2026-0024](#)

**ACTION:** Move to Regular Agenda, General Legislative Session February 4th to set time and date for a public hearing.

Cynthia Foley, Legislative Analyst, provided a staff report for the following items:

5. Motion 26-041, authorizing the County Executive to execute a formal Task Assignment to the Public Works On-Call Agreement for professional services with Haley & Aldrich for environmental due diligence at Snohomish County Airport [2026-0152](#)

**ACTION:** Move to Consent Agenda, General Legislative Session February 11th for consideration.

6. Motion 26-047, authorizing the Snohomish County Executive to sign contract Amendment 3 with Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson, P.S. for environmental legal services for the Snohomish County Airport [2026-0185](#)

**ACTION:** Move to Consent Agenda, General Legislative Session February 11th for consideration.

7. Motion 26-048, authorizing the Snohomish County Executive to sign contract Amendment 4 with Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson, P.S. for environmental legal services for the Snohomish County Airport [2026-0188](#)

**ACTION:** Move to Consent Agenda, General Legislative Session February 11th for consideration.

8. Motion 26-046, authorizing the Snohomish County Executive to sign contract Amendment 7 with Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson, P.S. for environmental legal services for the Snohomish County Airport [2026-0191](#)

**ACTION:** Move to Consent Agenda, General Legislative Session February 11th for consideration.

Nicole Gorle, Sr. Legislative Analyst, provided a staff report for the following items:

9. Motion 26-058, approving Amendment 15 with Puget Sound Energy for the Weatherization Program [2026-0276](#)

**ACTION:** Move to Consent Agenda, General Legislative Session February 11th for consideration.

10. Motion 26-050, approving 2026 Contract Amendment 16 with Puget Sound Energy for the Weatherization Program [2026-0193](#)

**ACTION:** Move to Consent Agenda, General Legislative Session February 11th for consideration.

Committee Chair Nehring adjourned the Council for the day at 11:24 a.m.