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Miscellaneous Permit Fees [Ordinance 26-004](#) (ECAF 2026-0026)

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 @ 10:30 a.m.

Council Staff: Deb Bell

PDS Staff: Julie Mass

DPA: Christina Richmond

Click on exhibit number to view document

EXHIBIT	RECORD TYPE	DATE	RECEIVED FROM	EXHIBIT DESCRIPTION	# OF PAGES
3.1 ECAF and Materials					
3.1.001	ECAF	01/13/26	Executive/PDS	Transmitting Executive initiated Ordinance	2
3.1.002	Ordinance	01/13/26	Executive/PDS	Introduced Ordinance	8
3.1.003	Staff Report	01/13/26	Julie Mass, PDS	Miscellaneous Permit Fees Staff Report	6
3.1.004	Introduction	01/13/26	Councilmember Nate Nehring	Introduction Slip	1
3.2 Council Planning Committee Materials					
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Project Name Phase III Misc 30.86 Permit Fees

Part 1 - DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Exhibit #	Record Type	Date	Received From	Exhibit Description
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 (Staff report for 30.86 permit fee changes)
1.0004	Correspondence	9/30/2025	Staff	Email 9.30.25 to MBAKS (Thursday Meeting Prep)
1.0005	Correspondence	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	Project Administration	9/7/2021	Staff	Fee Project Summary
1.0011	Staff Research	9/7/2021	Staff	Cost of Service Model
1.0012	Staff Research	12/22/2025	Staff	Phase III List of Fee Changes - 30.86
1.0013	Legislative Documents	1/6/2026	Staff	26-0026 Ordinance-PA Signed Copy
1.0014	Legislative Documents	1/6/2026	Staff	26-0026 Ordinance
1.0015	Legislative Documents	1/6/2026	Staff	26-0026 Ordinance (WORD version)
1.0016	Legislative Documents	11/13/2025	Staff	26-0026 Staff Report
*Contact the Clerk of the Council for copies of Part 1 Exhibits - 425-388-3494 or contact.council@snoco.org				

Executive/Council Action Form (ECAF)

ITEM TITLE:

Ordinance 26-004, related to Miscellaneous Permit Fees Amending Chapter 30.86 SCC

DEPARTMENT: Planning and Development Services

ORIGINATOR: Julie Mass

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

PURPOSE: To update miscellaneous fees in SCC 30.86, as part of Phase III in updating permitting fees.

BACKGROUND: Chapter 30.86 SCC establishes the permit fees required to be paid by applicants to cover the cost of administering title 30 SCC. Periodically, PDS needs to adjust fees for a number of reasons: for inflation and the increased cost of doing business; to streamline the permitting process; or to better align fees with the cost of providing the services. This ordinance updates sign fees and EDDS Deviation fees, and adds new fees for specific services provided by PDS related to concurrency relief requests, exempt subdivisions, zoning verifications, and public notice.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

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

REVENUE: FUND, AGY, ORG, REV, SOURCE	CURRENT YR	2ND YR	1ST 6 YRS
Various Fund 193 revenue accounts	\$26,800	\$32,175	\$187,675
TOTAL	\$26,800	\$32,175	\$187,675

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. AATF: Christina Richmond

1 Adopted: _____, 2026
2 Effective: _____, 2026
3

4
5 SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
6 SNOHOMISH COUNTY, WASHINGTON
7

8 ORDINANCE NO. 26-004
9

10 RELATING TO MISCELLANEOUS PERMIT FEES; AMENDING CHAPTER 30.86 SCC
11

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

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

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

24 WHEREAS, PDS administers land development permits, approvals, and decisions
25 issued under title 30 SCC; and
26

27 WHEREAS, PDS’s costs of processing permits are higher than current and
28 projected revenue, and PDS is facing a budget deficit in its permitting division of \$2.17
29 million in 2025 and 2026 which will deplete PDS’s fund balance; and
30

31 WHEREAS, periodic adjustments to fees are necessary to maintain financial self-
32 sufficiency in providing permitting services and keep pace with inflation, to align the fees
33 charged to applicants with the type and level of services provided, and to provide for
34 improved cost recovery, fee equity, and predictability; and
35

36 WHEREAS, as part of a multi-phase project beginning in 2020 (this being Phase III)
37 to examine and analyze permitting and land use fees, PDS has identified certain approvals
38 and decisions in title 30 SCC, identified in this ordinance, which have not been adjusted
39 for several years and for which either the cost of processing is significantly greater than
40 the fee charged or for which PDS has not charged a fee for services and the cost of that
41 service is significant enough to warrant the addition of a new type of fee; and
42

43 WHEREAS, on _____, 2026, the County Council held a public hearing after proper
44 notice, heard public testimony related to the proposed code amendments, and considered
45 the entire record; and

1
2 WHEREAS, following the public hearings, the County Council deliberated on the
3 proposed code amendments.

4
5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED:
6

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

9
10 Section 2. The County Council adopts the following additional findings in support of
11 this ordinance:

12
13 A. This ordinance will add two new sections to title 30 SCC as follows:

- 14 1. SCC 30.86.050 Administrative Fees.
- 15 2. SCC 30.86.520 Landslide Hazard Deviations, Channel Migration Reviews, and
16 Zero-Rise Analysis.

17
18
19
20 B. This ordinance will amend title 30 SCC as follows:

- 21 1. Amend SCC 30.86.450 to amend the fees related to permitting signs.
- 22 2. Amend SCC 30.86.710 to amend the fees related to EDDS deviations and
23 requests for relief under SCC 30.66B.810.

24
25
26
27 C. The code amendments in this ordinance will become effective on January 1, 2026.

28
29 D. More detail about the amendments proposed in this ordinance is described in the
30 accompanying PDS Staff Report.

31
32 E. Stakeholder feedback was solicited during the development of the proposed fee
33 changes. On July 23, 2025, proposed fee amendments were provided to the
34 representative for the Snohomish County Builders Council (SCBC) of the Master
35 Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties who did outreach to committee
36 members on the proposed fees and solicited member comment. A presentation was
37 given to SCBC on September 3, 2025, and additional meetings with SCBC
38 representatives were held on September 15, 2025, October 2, 2025, and November
39 12, 2025.

40
41 F. The proposed amendments are consistent with the record.

- 42 1. Amendments to chapter 30.86 SCC are necessary to establish fees to
43 implement the Snohomish County Code, keep up with inflation, and to better
44

1 recoup the permitting expenses of PDS.

- 2
- 3 2. County policy is to use permit fees to cover only the direct and indirect costs of
- 4 permitting as allowed by state law, and to reasonably and consistently allocate
- 5 PDS overhead costs among all programs, regardless of the type of revenue
- 6 source supporting them.
- 7
- 8 3. In 2008, PDS developed a cost of services model to estimate the cost of
- 9 providing permitting services at the present level of service and the fees
- 10 necessary to recover permitting costs.
- 11
- 12 4. The PDS cost of services model, which provides the analytical framework used
- 13 to recover permitting costs, was updated in 2017 with the adoption of fees
- 14 related to fire systems, was used again in the 2020 (Phase I) and 2021 (Phase
- 15 II) permit fee increases, and has again been updated based on PDS's 2025-
- 16 2026 biennial budget. The PDS cost of services model was used to update the
- 17 fees in the code amendments in this ordinance.
- 18
- 19 5. The PDS cost of services model consists of four main costs: labor expenses
- 20 (salary and benefits); direct (non-labor) expenses; department overhead/indirect
- 21 management costs; and county-wide overhead related to development review
- 22 and permits.
- 23
- 24 6. PDS performed an analysis to estimate the time it takes staff to perform the
- 25 related permit functions and applied the average labor rates for those positions.
- 26 The estimates were used to update the fees in the code amendments in this
- 27 ordinance.
- 28
- 29 7. Proposed updates to the fees are reasonable and will reimburse the County for
- 30 the staff time required to process permit applications.
- 31

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

- 33
- 34 A. The proposed fees set forth in this ordinance are calculated in accordance with RCW
- 35 82.02.020 and provide for improved cost recovery, equity, and fee predictability and
- 36 simplicity.
- 37
- 38 B. The proposed amendments are consistent with Washington state law, chapter 19.27
- 39 RCW, and the SCC.
- 40
- 41 C. The County Council concludes that this ordinance is related solely to government
- 42 procedures, not the Growth Management Act (chapter 36.70A RCW), and therefore
- 43 does not adopt development regulations under SCC 30.10.080. Therefore, notice to
- 44 the Washington State Department of Commerce of intent to adopt is not required

1 pursuant to RCW 36.70A.106 and Snohomish County Planning Commission review is
2 not required pursuant to SCC 30.73.040(2)(c).

- 3
- 4 D. Pursuant to SCC 30.61.020 and WAC 197-11-800(19), the proposed amendments in
5 this ordinance are categorically exempt from review under the State Environmental
6 Policy Act (SEPA) as being related solely to government procedures containing no
7 substantive standards respecting use or modification of the environment.
- 8
- 9 E. The regulations proposed by this ordinance do not result in an unconstitutional taking
10 of private property for public purpose. The Washington State Attorney General last
11 issued an advisory memorandum, as required by RCW 36.70A.370, in October 2024,
12 entitled “Advisory Memorandum and Recommended Process for Evaluating Proposed
13 Regulatory or Administrative Actions to Avoid Unconstitutional Takings of Private
14 Property” to help local governments avoid the unconstitutional taking of private
15 property. The process outlined in the State Attorney General’s 2024 advisory
16 memorandum was used by Snohomish County in objectively evaluating the regulatory
17 changes proposed by this ordinance.
- 18
- 19 F. The proposed amendments are in the best interest of the county and promote the
20 general public health, safety, and welfare.
- 21

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

26

27 Section 5. A new section is added to chapter 30.86 of the Snohomish County Code
28 to read:

29

30 **30.86.050 Administrative fees.**

31 **Table 30.86.050 Administrative Fees**

Notice of application fee ⁽¹⁾	\$350
Notice of open record public hearing fee ⁽²⁾	\$300
Exempt Subdivision	\$575
Zoning verification letter	\$245

(1) This fee will be collected at the time of application and applies to all permit or land use applications for which public notice is required under SCC Table 30.70.050(5), with the exception of Flood Hazard Permits. This fee covers the department costs of notice pursuant to SCC 30.70.045 including signage, publishing and mailing costs.

(2) This fee applies to all open record public hearings for Type 2 applications for which public notice is required under SCC 30.72.030. This fee covers the department costs of notice pursuant to SCC 30.70.045 including signage, publishing and mailing costs. This fee will be collected prior to scheduling the hearing. This fee will be collected prior to the scheduling of a Type 2 open record public hearing pursuant to SCC 30.72.025 and SCC 30.72.030.

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Section 6. Snohomish County Code Section 30.86.450, last amended by Amended Ordinance No. 21-048 on Sept. 29, 2021, is amended to read:

30.86.450 Sign fees.

Table 30.86.450 Sign Fees⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

<u>BASE FEE</u>	<u>\$250</u>
<u>PLAN REVIEW FEE</u>	<u>85% of permit fee</u>
<u>PERMIT FEE (per sign)</u>	
WALL SIGN	\$250
POLE, MONUMENT OR ROOF SIGN	\$350
BILLBOARD (DIGITAL AND NON-DIGITAL)	\$850
Reference notes:	

(1) A permit is not required for signs four square feet or less in area.

(2) A SEPA threshold determination may be required.

Section 7. A new section is added to chapter 30.86 of the Snohomish County Code to read:

30.86.520 Landslide hazard deviations, channel migration reviews, and zero-rise analysis fees.

Table 30.86.520 Landslide Hazard Deviation, Channel Migration and Zero-Rise Analysis Fees

Landslide hazard deviation requests pursuant to SCC 30.62B.340	\$1,750
Channel migration reviews pursuant to SCC 30.62B.330	\$750
Zero-rise analysis review pursuant to SCC 30.63B.120	\$750

Section 8. Snohomish County Code Section 30.86.710, last amended by Ordinance No. 15-103 on Jan. 11, 2016, is amended to read:

30.86.710 Engineering, Design and Development Standards (EDDS) deviations and requests for relief under SCC 30.66B.810.

Table 30.86.710 Engineering, Design and Development Standards (EDDS) Deviation and Request for Relief from Mitigation or Concurrency Requirements of Chapter 30.66B SCC Fees

((Activity	Fee))
Application for deviation from Engineering, Design and Development Standards (EDDS) <u>Chapters 2-4</u> ⁽¹⁾	(((\$1,350)) <u>\$1,750</u>

<u>Application for deviation from Engineering, Design and Development Standards (EDDS) – Chapters 6-10 ⁽¹⁾</u>	<u>\$1,075</u>
<u>Requests for relief from mitigation or concurrency requirements pursuant to SCC 30.66B.810</u>	<u>\$1,075</u>
(1) Modifications and waivers of the stormwater-applicable requirements of the EDDS are authorized under SCC 30.63A.170. The fee for a modification or waiver is established in SCC 30.86.515. Deviations from the stormwater-applicable requirements of the EDDS are not authorized.	

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Section 9. Effective date.

This ordinance shall take effect March 1, 2026.

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

PASSED THIS ____ day of _____, 2026.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL

Snohomish County, Washington

Chairperson

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ATTEST:

Clerk of the Council

- APPROVED
- EMERGENCY
- VETOED

Date: _____, 2026

ATTEST:

County Executive

Approved as to form only:

Christa Richmond 01/06/26

 Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

**Planning & Development Services
Staff Report
Proposed Amendment to PDS Permit Fees: Phase III
Miscellaneous Fees**

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. 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 balance¹ that carries over from year to year is maintained.² 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.

¹ 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.

² 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 million³. 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, a change in state law made in 2023 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, via the Local Project Review Guidebook dated June 11, 2025, 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.

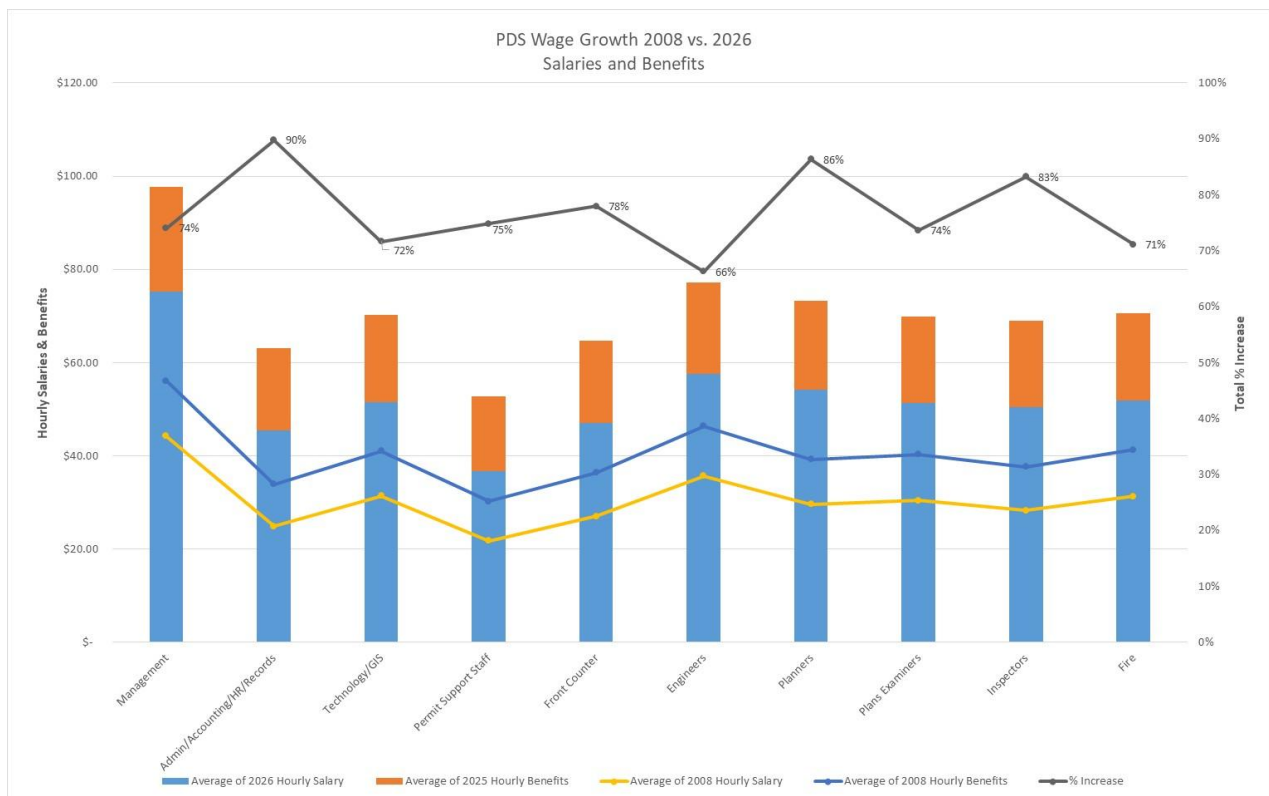
Need for Fee Increases

There are several reasons why PDS Fund 193⁴ 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. Most of the permit fees included in this ordinance have not changed since 2008. Permitting expenses have risen faster than revenue. 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.

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

⁴ 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.
4. Uncompensated work. There are several tasks and permit application reviews that PDS staff perform with no fee charged to the applicant. An example is work PDS does to meet the Notice requirements set forth in county code. Some of the fees in this ordinance address the work that PDS performs free of charge. PDS believes that applicants should pay for the work that PDS is required to perform for each type of development application, in order to achieve either full or partial cost recovery.

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. 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. The cost layers as outlined below were then applied to the time estimates.

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.

Proposed Fee Amendments

A. ADMINISTRATIVE FEES (New Section SCC 30.86.050)

Public Notice Fees

Currently PDS has no fee for the cost of notice on Type 2 applications. There are three notice requirements under which PDS and the customer interact. PDS proposes streamlining the notice process to the extent possible under the code.

- Signage: PDS currently pays the costs of the signage provided to applicants and the staff time to prepare the signage. The applicant is required to post notice at the project site. PDS proposes charging a \$50 fee to cover the cost of purchasing and preparing the two sign boards. The applicant's responsibility will not change.
- Postcard Mailing: PDS also pays for the postcard mailing which average \$150 per mailing. PDS proposes charging a \$150 fee to cover this cost.
- Publishing Notice: Currently, the applicant pays for publishing notice in the Everett Herald newspaper. Sound Publishing (parent company of the Everett Herald) provides PDS an affidavit of publishing to confirm the notice is published. However, the affidavit is not provided until the applicant pays for publishing. This has been a challenge and has caused delays in scheduling and/or conducting hearings when the applicant fails to pay Sound Publishing. To streamline the permit review process (required under Senate Bill 5290), PDS proposes handling the publication in the newspaper and charging the customer for the cost of that publication which is \$150.

Exempt Subdivisions and Zoning Verification Letters

County code provides landowners with exemptions for the creation of subdivisions in SCC 30.41A.020 and SCC 30.41B.020. Applicants seeking an exemption do not pay a fee but must receive approval and acknowledgement of the exempt subdivision by PDS. PDS spends an average of 3 staff hours reviewing the exempt subdivision application and preparing the necessary documents (either approving or denying the request). PDS proposes implementing a fee of \$575 to cover the cost of this work.

In addition, PDS prepares zoning verification letters upon request, but currently does not charge a fee for this service. PDS proposes implementing a modest fee of \$245 to cover the cost of this work.

B. SIGN FEES (SCC 30.86.450)

Signs permits are considered to be a type of commercial building permit. As such, they have been charged the commercial base fee in SCC 30.86.400(5) and commercial plan check fee in SCC 30.86.400(6) (85% of the permit fee). SCC 30.86.450 is being updated to make clear the interpretation and practice that has been in place for many years. First, fees for sign permits are being updated to clarify that there is a base fee associated with these permits. PDS currently charges the \$350 commercial base fee but is lowering it to \$250 which is the same as plumbing and mechanical base fees. Second, the 85% plan check fee currently charged is being added to SCC 30.86.450 for clarification.

C. ENGINEERING-RELATED FEES

Landslide Hazard Deviations, Channel Migration Reviews, And Zero-Rise Analysis Fees (New Section SCC 30.86.050)

Certain projects require special technical review and/or deviations under Snohomish County Code. PDS engineers spend time performing work related to issues related to SCC 30.62B.340 (landslide hazard deviations), SCC 30.62B.330 (channel migration), and SCC 30.63B.12 (zero-rise analysis). PDS currently does not charge a fee for this work. In order to ensure that permitting fees are covering the cost of the work performed by PDS staff, new fees are proposed in SCC 30.86.520 to charge for the cost of the time spent by PDS engineers on these complicated analyses. The following fees are proposed based on an analysis of the time spent on the three different types of reviews:

- \$1,750 for Landslide hazard deviation requests pursuant to SCC 30.62B.340
- \$750 for Channel migration reviews pursuant to SCC 30.62B.330
- \$750 for Zero-rise analysis review pursuant to SCC 30.63B.120

Engineering, Design and Development Standards (EDDS) deviations and requests for relief under SCC 30.66B.810 (SCC 30.86.710)

PDS engineers review requests for deviations to the EDDS standards. PDS currently charges a fee of \$1,350 for all the different types of deviations. There are seven chapters in the EDDS under which PDS can approve deviations. After an analysis of the time spent by PDS staff, it has been determined that the cost of reviewing Chapters 2-4 takes more time than the current fee covers, and the cost of reviewing Chapters 6-10 require less time than the current fee. Therefore, PDS proposes adjusting the fees to cover the actual estimated cost of the reviews. The fee for reviewing Chapters 2-4 would increase to \$1,750 and the fee for reviewing Chapters 6-10 would decrease to \$1,075. A fee for requests for review from mitigation or concurrency requirements pursuant to SCC 30.66B.810 would also be \$1,075.

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.

Summary

PDS needs to update the fees noted in this ordinance 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. 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 26-004

Subject: Amending Snohomish County Code Chapter 30.86.

Scope: The proposed amendments to Title 30 of the Snohomish County Code (SCC) would update established fees required to be paid by an applicant to cover county costs of administering the Unified Development Code. Included in the ordinance is the ability to recover the county's permit processing and execution costs.

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 26-004, 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 functions with currently no fee. This includes the cost for noticing Type 2 applications: signage, postcard mailings and publishing notices (which would also streamline this process). Others include exempt subdivision and zoning verification letters, sign fees, and certain engineering related fees.

Action Requested: For Council to move Ordinance 26-004 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: 2026-0026
Ordinance: 26-004

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

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

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

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

11:00 AM

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

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.