

**SUBJECT:** Planning and Building Fee reviews update memo – October 2025

**TO:** Pipeline to Permit Committee

**FROM:** Development and Growth Management  
Community Planning

Report Number: DGM-89-25

Wards Affected: All

Date to Committee: October 9, 2025

Date to Council: October 14, 2025

---

This memo is a companion to DGM-73-25, Planning and Building Fee Reviews Update for Committee of the Whole on October 6, 2025.

### **Memo Details**

Staff has prepared DGM-73-2025 to provide Council with an update on the Planning and Building Fee Reviews following the presentation by Watson and Associates at the September Pipeline to Permit Committee. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the presentation made by Watson and to identify the need for further data refinements and discussion with Council at a future workshop. It also recommends a minor modification to the Rates and Fees By-law changing the methodology for calculating fees.

On September 11, 2025, Watson and Associates presented to the [Pipeline to Permit Committee](#) explaining the Activity-Based Costing model and sharing initial findings on the costs to process building permits and planning applications as a part of the Building Permit and Planning Application Fee Reviews. Through discussion with Committee members, staff and Watson, it was identified that there was a need for transparency, benchmarking, and to revisit indirect cost allocations to ensure alignment with cost recovery objectives under the Planning Act and Building Code Act. The forthcoming regulations through Bill 17 may reduce processing effort and staff has acknowledged the need for further refinement to the models into the Fall.

Further staff acknowledge there is a need for Council to provide direction on desired levels of cost recovery, treatment of indirect/non-recoverable costs, and budget integration. Staff recommend convening a dedicated Council workshop in Q1 2026 to examine these issues holistically before embedding a revised cost recovery model into the City's budget. Staff propose that a future Council Workshop focuses on:

- Indirect and non-recoverable costs associated with the processing of planning applications and building permits;
- The percentage of cost recovery from application fees;
- Integration with future budget approval processes; and
- Providing clarity around the methodology and effort estimates which will be further refined into the fall.

In addition, through DGM-73-2025, staff are recommending an adjustment to the 2025 Rates and Fees By-law affecting the methodology for calculating fees for a planning application as outlined in Appendix A of DGM-73-2025. The current Rates and Fees By-law provides instructions on the calculation of fees for an application. This has the effect of defining the scope of an application. For example, an application consisting of a podium and two towers would be treated as two applications and each application would be subject to the payment of the base and variable fees for the related components. Staff propose the elimination of the instructions so that multiple towers in a comprehensive development on a single lot are treated as a single application and only one base fee would be charged, and the variable fee calculation would be commensurate with the scale of the development (number of units and non-residential gross floor area).

Staff anticipate completion of the fee review processes by Summer 2026 in advance of the 2027 Budget process.

**Author:**

Jenna Puletto  
Manager, Planning Implementation  
Jenna.Puletto@Burlington.ca

**Attachments:**

N/A

**Memo Approval:**

All memos are reviewed and approved by the Commissioner, Head of Corporate Affairs, Chief Financial Officer, and Commissioner of Legal and Legislative Services/City Solicitor.