



PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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CITY OF BELLINGHAM CHANGES TO SCHOOL IMPACT FEE RATES EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 29, 2015

Since 1992, the City of Bellingham and the Bellingham School District have collected school impact fees with the construction of new housing. The impact fees are intended to require new development to pay a proportionate share of the cost of new school facilities needed to serve our growing population.

The School District is responsible for setting the school impact fee rate and for using the fees to construct growth related school improvement projects.

The Bellingham City Council, at the request of the Bellingham School District, recently approved the District's new 2015-2021 Capital Facilities Plan and changes to the school impact fee rates applied to new residential development.

All building permit applications for new single and multi-family dwelling units declared complete on or after December 29, 2015 will be subject to the following new school impact fee rates:

- 1) \$2,242.00 per each new single family unit. For purposes of this program, the School District classifies detached and attached single family dwelling units and each duplex unit as single family.
- 2) \$229.00 per each new multi-family unit. This includes buildings with three or more dwelling units.

The fees must be paid prior to the issuance of a building permit.

A fee adjustment and appeal process is available for development projects meeting specific criteria. The process and criteria are explained on the back of this sheet. Requests to adjust or waive school impact fees must be filed within 21 days of acceptance by the City or your building permit application.

The following summary from BMC Section 16.100.080 explains the impact fee adjustment criteria and procedure if you believe school impact fees have been incorrectly applied to your development proposal:

School Impact Fee Adjustment/Waiver Process

1. An applicant for building permit or the School District may, within 21 days of acceptance by the City of a building permit application, submit a letter to the Planning and Community Development Director, requesting that the school impact fees be adjusted or waived. The letter must specify how the proposed development meets the following criteria and is therefore eligible for an adjustment. The Director (or designee) may adjust the amount or waive the entire fee, in consideration of studies and data submitted by the applicant, if one or more of the following circumstances exists.

School Impact Fee Adjustment Criteria

- a. It can be demonstrated that the school impact fee assessment was incorrectly calculated;
 - b. Unusual circumstances of the development activity demonstrate that application of the school impact fee to the development would be unfair or unjust. (For example, unusual circumstances could include certified senior housing, which would have little or no impact on school facilities.);
 - c. A credit is warranted for contributions by the developer of land or buildings for schools, as provided for under BMC 16.100.060.
 - d. The proposed development will result in the construction of “affordable housing” as defined by the City of Bellingham. Fees reduced or waived in this circumstance must be replaced with other public funds.
2. To avoid delay pending resolution of a request for adjustment or appeal, school impact fees may be paid under protest in order to obtain permit approval.

Appeals

The Director’s final impact fee determination can be appealed to the Hearings Examiner. The appeal must be filed on forms provided by the Planning Department within 10 days of the Planning Director’s written decision. The Hearings Examiner will schedule a public hearing to review the appeal. The fee for an appeal hearing is \$550.

To get a complete copy of the school impact fee ordinance, or if you have questions about the school impact fee program or adjustment/appeal process, go to the Permit Center, 1st Floor, City Hall, 210 Lottie Street, or call 360-778-8300.