

**RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER**

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STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

PRESENTED: June 7, 2022
FROM: Building Department
SUBJECT: BUILDING AND PLUMBING REGULATION BYLAW FEE UPDATE

REPORT: 22-083
FILE: 3900-20-1617

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

That the recommendation of the General Manager of Infrastructure Services be endorsed.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council direct staff to prepare an amendment to the Building and Plumbing Regulation Bylaw No. 1617 specifically to increase Building and Plumbing Permit Fees.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report aims to provide Council with information sufficient to allow it to provide clear direction to staff to draft an amendment to the Building and Plumbing Regulation Bylaw No. 1617 (Bylaw 1617) to increase building and plumbing permit fees.

☐ Information Report ☒ Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

DISCUSSION

Background

The Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) building regulatory service operates on a cost recovery basis. Fees charged for building and plumbing inspection are collected to offset the cost of providing plan checking and inspection services to the community.

The last amendment to the Bylaw 1617, Schedule B - Building and Plumbing Permit Fees occurred in 2012, and since this date permit fees have remained static. The permitting process and required supporting resources have changed significantly within the RMOW over this time period and there have been no adjustments in the fees to account for this.

The current method for calculating building permit fees is also not in line with other comparison communities in the local area, with RMOW permit fees being significantly lower than the average. An amendment to the fees will adjust for this disparity and make it more equitable.

The types of permit applications received have become significantly more complex over the years, and more time is required for reviewing and regulating both the BC *Building Code* and RMOW zoning

bylaws. This has increased the required resources within the Building department to review and regulate each permit. An analysis of permit fees and the changes required needs to be conducted in order to continue to support the addition in resources and staff time required to continue providing an appropriate level of service to the community. Also, fees have not been adjusted to account for increases in inflation, wages, equipment and vehicle resources for the past ten years.

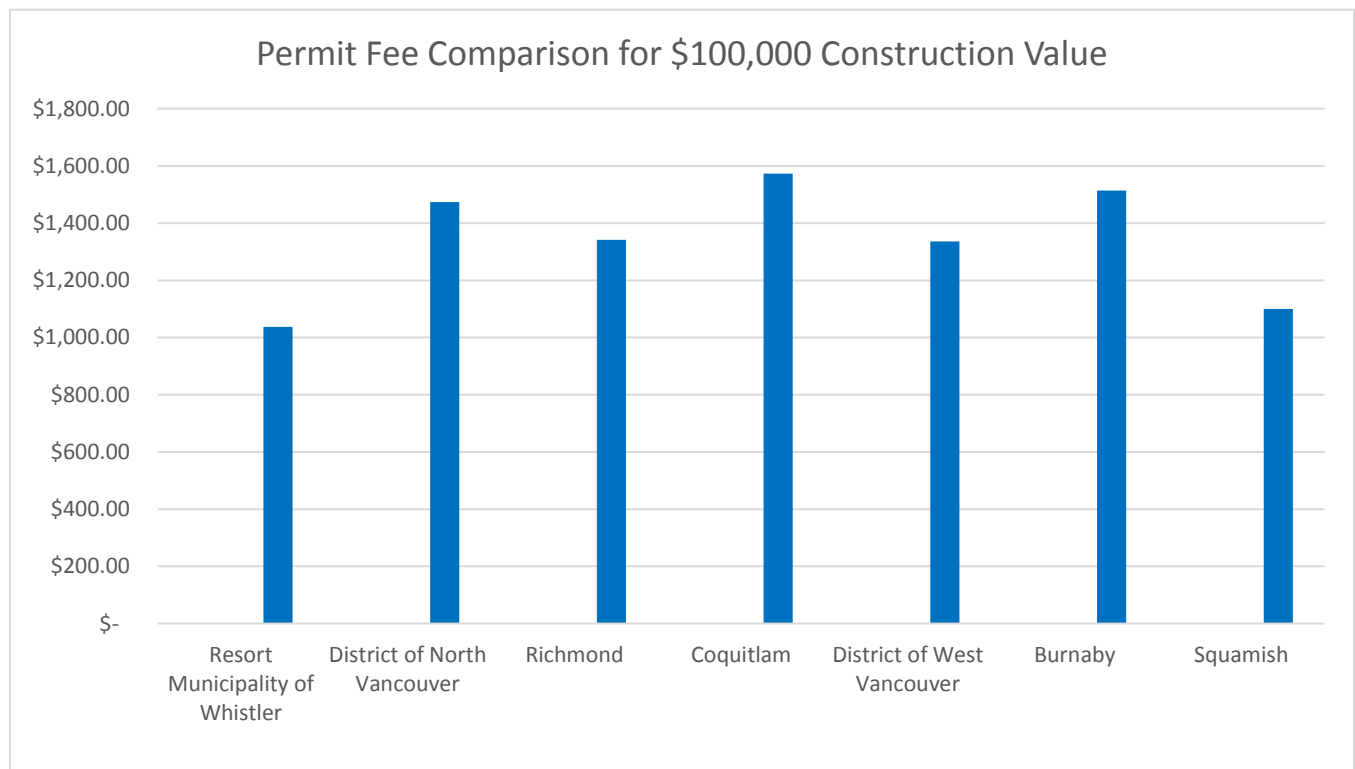
Analysis

The RMOW compared permit fees from the following six local communities;

- District of North Vancouver
- District of Squamish
- City of Burnaby
- City of Richmond
- District of West Vancouver
- City of Coquitlam

An example for the Building Permit fee discrepancy is shown below in Graph 1.

Example: Permit Fees for \$100,000 construction value renovation;



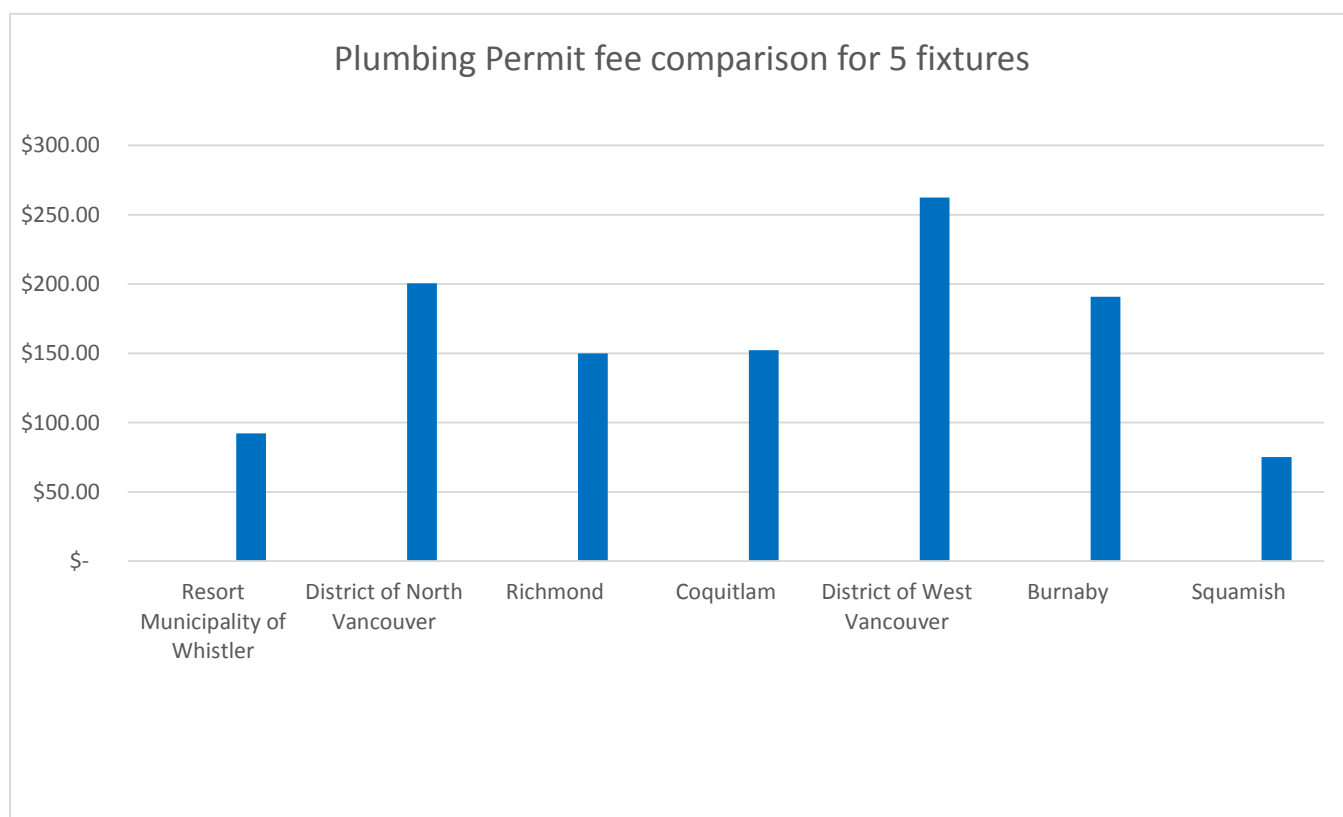
Graph 1

For a construction value of \$100,000 Table 1 shows the variance values of the RMOW Building permit fees in comparison to the sample group of local communities being considered that have similar construction demographics to Whistler.

Municipality	Building Permit Fee	Differential in Permit Fees	% above current RMOW Permit Fees
Resort Municipality of Whistler	\$ 1,037.39		
City of North Vancouver (2019 data)	\$ 1,115.74	\$ 78.35	8%
District of North Vancouver	\$ 1,473.09	\$ 435.70	42%
Richmond	\$ 1,341.99	\$ 304.60	29%
Coquitlam	\$ 1,573.54	\$ 536.15	52%
District of West Vancouver	\$ 1,336.49	\$ 299.10	29%
Burnaby	\$ 1,513.69	\$ 476.30	46%
Squamish	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 62.61	6%

Table 1

Example for the Plumbing Permit fee discrepancy is show below in Graph 2.



Graph 2

Table 2 shows the variance values of the RMOW Plumbing permit fees in comparison to the sample group of local communities being considered that have similar construction demographics to Whistler.

Municipality	Plumbing Permit Fee	Differential in Permit Fees	% above current RMOW Permit Fees
Resort Municipality of Whistler	\$ 92.25		
City of North Vancouver (2019 data)	\$ 112.50	\$ 20.25	22%
District of North Vancouver	\$ 200.50	\$ 108.25	117%
Richmond	\$ 150.00	\$ 57.75	63%
Coquitlam	\$ 152.20	\$ 59.95	65%
District of West Vancouver	\$ 262.50	\$ 170.25	185%
Burnaby	\$ 190.75	\$ 98.50	107%
Squamish	\$ 75.00	\$ (17.25)	-19%

Table 2

Recommendations:

Staff are recommending a review of the permit fees to support an improved service to the community, which will include;

- Decreased permit processing times
- Pre-application and interpretation services
- Digital application process

By aligning building permit fees with current costs and the required resources, additional revenue will support improvements and maintenance of improved service levels and ensure the Building Department continues to be funded on a user pay basis for building permits. Support for additional resources in the Building Department for the future will include;

- Additional Building Official personnel resources.
- Additional support to compliment the enforcement of the building and zoning bylaws in the community.
- Future consideration for an energy advisor to ensure step code building compliance as the community focuses on the 2020 Climate Action Big Moves Strategy

Staff anticipate that changes to fees detailed in the current Schedule B could be in the range of a 25%-40% increase in order to align with comparable local communities and provide enough additional funding resources to support improved service to the community.

Another consideration is to simplify and change the way in which some permit fees are structured in Schedule B to reflect the increased resources and time required for specific processes more accurately within the fees. Considerations around enforcement of Bylaw 1617 will also be evaluated and reflected within the updated fees.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions

[Building and Plumbing Regulation Bylaw No.1617](#)

Corporate Plan

The RMOW Corporate Plan is updated annually and articulates strategic direction for the organization. This section identifies how this report links to the plan.

Council Focus Areas

☒ Community Balance

*Effectively **balance resort and community needs** through deliberate planning, partnerships and investment*

☐ Climate Action

*Provide leadership to **accelerate climate action and environmental performance** across the community*

☐ Housing

*Advance strategic and innovative initiatives to enable and **deliver additional employee housing***

☐ Pandemic Recovery

*Leadership and support for **community and tourism recovery and sustainability** – priority focuses are where recovery needs intersect with other Council focus areas*

☐ Not Applicable

Corporate Goals

☐ Community character and mountain culture is reflected in municipal initiatives

☐ Municipal decision-making supports the effective stewardship of natural assets and ecological function

☐ Corporate policies and operations ensure continuous excellence in infrastructure, facility and program management

☐ A high level of accountability, transparency and community engagement is maintained

☒ Corporate financial health is optimized to ensure long-term community success

☒ A vibrant local economy and safe, resilient resort community is effectively reinforced by organizational activities

☐ Pandemic recovery

Community Vision and Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan (OCP) is the RMOW's most important guiding document that sets the community vision and long-term community direction. This section identifies how this report applies to the OCP.

Amending the building permit fee structure supports the following OCP goals, objectives, and policies:

Goal 6.4. of the OCP is to reduce reliance on property taxes. Amending the building permit fee structure aligns with Policy 6.4.1.1. Support the user-pay approach to municipal services while taking into consideration affordability measures and the policies of this OCP.

Goal 6.6 is to support a vibrant, growing and successful local business community. Using increased building permit fees to improve the service level of the department supports Policy 6.6.1.1. Develop a municipal culture that seeks to deliver municipal services in a manner that supports local businesses.

Objective 8.6.1. is to implement leading practices for good governance. Updating the building permit fees will support Policy 8.6.1.3. The budgeting process supports the achievement of the Community Vision and OCP goals and Policy 8.6.1.5. Ensure the municipality effectively and efficiently balances its costs and expenditures.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

There are no budget considerations at this time, but budget implications will be detailed when an amendment to Bylaw 1617 is brought back for Council consideration.

LIL'WAT NATION & SQUAMISH NATION CONSIDERATIONS

The RMOW is committed to working with the Lil'wat People, known in their language as *L'il'wat7úl* and the Squamish People, known in their language as the *Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* to: create an enduring relationship; establish collaborative processes for Crown land planning; achieve mutual objectives; and enable participation in Whistler's resort economy.

There are no specific considerations to include in this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

☐ Inform ☒ Consult ☐ Involve ☐ Collaborate ☐ Empower

Comment(s):

Initial high-level consultation within the construction industry has indicated that a fee increase would be supported to improve processing times and the level of service.

Additional community engagement will be conducted to solicit feedback on the proposed increases to the building permit fees. The focus group for this engagement will include the local construction industry.

REFERENCES

N/A

SUMMARY

The RMOW's building and plumbing permit fees have not been updated since 2012. Staff seek Council direction to proceed with preparing an amendment to update permit fees in Bylaw 1617 and bring this amendment forward for future council consideration.

SIGN-OFFS

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