



# City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Department Source: Community Development - Planning

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: August 18, 2025

Re: Unified Development Code Fee Schedule Revisions (Case # 282-2025)

## Executive Summary

If approved, the Unified Development Code Fee Schedule would be revised to include a \$50 fee for the purpose of defraying the costs of mailed public notice and posting of properties associated with Board of Adjustment and Planning and Zoning Commission matters. The revisions will assist in defraying actual costs incurred by increases in postal service delivery of mailed notifications and revisions implemented with Community Development Department's mandatory on-site property notification banner program. The revised fees are intended to become effective on October 1, 2025 coinciding with the beginning of the FY 2026 Budget cycle. This amendment, if approved, would be the first fee increase relating to UDC case types since 2019 and implemented with the adoption of the FY2020 Budget.

## Discussion

The Community Development Department is required by the Unified Development Code to distribute formal public hearing notification letters on all actions that involve a public hearing before the Board of Adjustment and the Planning and Zoning Commission. The actions included within this mandate are appeals, conditional use permits, design adjustments, optional development standards, planned developments, rezoning, and variances. Additionally, "early notification" postcards are distributed for all subdivision actions (preliminary and final) and any matter requiring a public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission.

The fees established within Sec. 29-6.3(a)(5) of the UDC were last amended in 2019 for the FY 2020 Budget year. The revisions made adjusted fees for "zoning verification letters" and addressed fees charges for services not previously codified within the UDC. It should be noted that no fees have every been collected, with the exception of Board of Adjustment fees, specifically allocated to mailed public notice. The fees shown within the UDC are solely intended to cover the costs of public advertising in the Columbia Tribune as "mandated" by State Law. Applicants should be paying the cost associated with their action.

The attached amendment seeks Council authorization to address this deficiency by implementing a \$50 fee, per case type, to cover the incurred costs of public notice distribution which is estimated annually at \$11,354. This expenditure is inclusive of notices sent to both property owners and tenants within the current 185-foot notification radius. This expenditure is more than double what was previously incurred when mailed notice was distributed to property owners only. The change in notification protocol was identified in early FY 25 following reevaluation of the notice procedures within the UDC and a desire to be more inclusive in notice distribution.



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The case volume within the Community Development Department has more than doubled from 92 cases in 2009 to 225 cases in 2024, excluding zoning verification requests. In 2025, the Department has processed 196 cases, excluding zoning verification requests, and there remains 1 month in the report year. If the \$50.00 public notice fee were implemented for this fiscal year, revenue collected would have been estimated at \$9,700. While not covering fully all incurred expenses, it is worth noting that no fees charged by the Department with respect to the Board of Adjustment or the Planning Commission cases are 100% expense neutral.

It should be noted, "concept review" cases which account for approximately 30% of annual case volume the Department processes are a service offered "free of charge", but require public notice. The proposed fee implementation does not seek to change this current practice to ensure the mutual benefit of discussing pending actions prior to a formal application are not diminished. However, by excluding this case type from the proposed fee implementation, revenues received would be decreased to \$6,700 or approximately 59% of the estimated annual printing and postal costs for sending public notice out.

Given the above analysis and the possible short-fall in revenue received to off-set expenditures incurred, the proposed \$50 fee could be increased. Doing so would require a public notice fee of approximately \$85 per case type that requires public notification. Based on the current FY 25 case volume, the \$85.00 was calculated using 134 cases. While this increase is an option, it would be a significant increase in fees for projects reviewed and processed by the Department. This fee has historically been absorbed by the Department as part of its mission to communicate with and service the city's residents.

An alternative to a one-time fee increase would be to increase the fee over a two-year period whereby in FY 2026 the new \$50 fee would be implemented and the remaining fee of \$35 could be considered for adoption in FY 2027. This staggered approach would permit additional analysis on the costs for public notification and also allow the Council to consider changes to the current public notice procedures contained within the UDC which have been requested to be analyzed.

The attached amendment as prepared is believed to be the appropriate initial step to close the gap between expenses incurred with the distribution of public notice and the long-term impacts that distribution of public notice has on the City's General Fund. The opportunity for additional analysis of subsequent fee amendments will remain open and can be considered as additional information on the notification process is more clearly identified.

## Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: Estimated increase in General Fund revenue of \$6,700 within year one and potential General Fund revenue of \$11,390 in year two. Revenue increases would be off-set by corresponding expenditures associated with payment of incurred costs for public notification services. Current services offered are not off-set by any collected revenue.



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Long-Term Impact: Limited and associated with the periodic evaluation of Departmental expenses associated to public notification distribution. Such expenses would be typically incorporated into the annual Departmental budgeting process.

## Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Inclusive and Equitable Community, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Not Applicable, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

## Legislative History

Date	Action
09-16-2019	Approved amendment to Sec. 29-6.3(a)(5) amending UDC Fee Schedule

## Suggested Council Action

Approve the attached amendment to the UDC Fee Schedule authorizing the assessment of a \$50 fee, per application type, to cover the cost of mailed public notification on all material presented to the Board of Adjustment and/or the Planning and Zoning Commission to become effective October 1, 2025.