

**Town of Century**  
**Fee Review and Recommendations Report**  
**Prepared for the Town Council**  
**October 21, 2025 - DRAFT**

### **Introduction**

The Town of Century is evaluating its Plans Review Fee Schedule, most recently adopted in July 2014 (Attachment A). The fee schedule sets rates for planning actions such as development certificates, sign review, and comprehensive plan amendments.

While the Town of Century does not issue building permits, its Land Use Certificates serve as a local land use clearance before applicants submit for building permits through Escambia County. Under Florida law, municipalities are restricted from setting fees that exceed the reasonable costs associated with the service provided.

This report also recommends the elimination of rebate provisions contained in the 2014 schedule. To our knowledge, no applicant has ever returned to claim a rebate, and maintaining such provisions adds unnecessary administrative work without benefit.

The purpose of this fee review is to:

- Ensure that the Town's fees recover staff and administrative costs associated with reviewing applications and issuing Land Use Certificates.
- Align the Town's fee structure with comparable fees charged by Escambia County, which provides the most appropriate benchmark.
- Simplify the fee schedule to make it clear, consistent, and easy to administer.
- Eliminate rebate provisions that are no longer used or needed.

### **Cost Review**

The Town's land use review process involves both Town administrative staff and the Emerald Coast Regional Council (ECRC), which provides technical planning support. Because these services are regulatory in nature rather than discretionary, fees should be based on the actual cost of staff time, administrative coordination, and overhead required to process applications. Costs arise from direct staff time, administrative handling, and coordination with Escambia County.

### **Cost Components**

- **Application Intake:** Town staff respond to initial inquiries, explain requirements, direct applicants to ECRC if necessary, and collect fees.

- **Processing:** ECRC staff review applications for zoning and land use consistency, prepare documentation, and issue Land Use Certificates. ECRC staff respond to applicant questions, request missing information, and coordinate with County personnel as necessary.
- **Recordkeeping:** ECRC staff maintain digital copies of applications and produce reports for the Town Council of development review activity.
- **Public Notices:** For rezonings and amendments, costs include advertising, mailed notices, and meeting materials.

### Time Estimates

Review time varies widely based on the application type and completeness:

- **Routine Residential Reviews:** Typically 15–30 minutes.
- **Incomplete Applications:** Require additional coordination and repeated review.
- **Complex Applications:** One to several hours.
- **Comprehensive Plan Map Modifications:** Extensive coordination, report writing, material preparation, and two public hearings at least 5–10 hours.

### Recommended Fee Adjustments

#### Simplification

The 2014 schedule includes multiple small categories (fences, sheds, signs, demolitions, etc.) that all require similar levels of review and processing. To simplify administration and improve clarity, these are combined into a Residential Development category.

#### Recommended Simplified Fee Schedule

Category	Current Fee (2014)	Proposed Fee
Residential Development (including site development, fencing, land disturbance, signage, temporary use, home based business, and demolition)	\$25-\$50	\$60
Commercial Development (including site development, fencing, land disturbance, signage, temporary use, and demolition)	\$50	\$110
Variance Application	\$25	\$250
Comprehensive Plan Amendment	Small \$500 / Large \$750	Small \$1,000 / Large \$1,500

Rezoning Application	\$500	\$1,000
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**Elimination of Rebate Provisions**

The Town’s 2014 fee schedule includes rebates designed to encourage applicants to return after receiving County building permits. In practice to ECRC’s knowledge, no rebates have been claimed, and tracking such refunds may create unnecessary administrative burden.

It is recommended that all rebate provisions be repealed and replaced with flat, non-refundable fees that directly reflect the Town’s review and processing costs.

**Comparison to Escambia County**

Escambia County provides the most appropriate benchmark for Century. The County’s land use and zoning clearance fees, which are the most comparable to the Town’s review process are \$95 for residential or commercial site renovations, \$110 for new residential or commercial site development, and \$255 for land disturbance activities. Fees for rezoning and variance applications in Escambia County are \$1,530 and \$515. The higher costs reflect the additional staff time, noticing, and public hearing requirements associated with those reviews.

**Conclusion and Next Steps**

The Town’s 2014 fee schedule no longer reflects the administrative costs or procedural realities of issuing Land Use Certificates and related planning actions. Updating the schedule will ensure cost recovery for Town and ECRC staff, simplify the process, and align the Town’s practices with Escambia County. The revised fees are intended solely to recover the Town’s reasonable administrative and staff costs, consistent with Section 166.021, Florida Statutes, and related case law.