

METHODOLOGY USED TO DETERMINE FEE SCHEDULE COSTS

(The City would like to thank Tammy Mueller, Public Records Analyst, at the City of Issaquah for sharing their cost study analysis and methodology template.)

RECORDS AVAILABLE AT NO COST

In Person Review: Appointments can be made with the City Clerk to review records at City Hall. Once the records being requested are located, City staff will contact the requestor to schedule an appointment. Appointments are between 30 minutes and 1 hour. If more than 1 hour is required, another appointment must be scheduled.

Records on the City's Website: The City has made many commonly requested records available online on its website. If records are requested that are available on the City's website, staff will provide direct links to those records at no charge.

Please Note: Records inspection does not include the cost of copies produced by the City. Some people find it helpful and cost effective to take pictures of records with their phone. The City can also provide an estimate for making photocopies, scanning, and providing electronic copies of records, as outlined below and in the fee schedule.

PAPER COPIES

STANDARD SIZED PAPER

8.5" x 11" (Letter), 8.5" x 14" (Legal), and 11" x 17" (Tabloid)

Current fee: \$.15 per one sided page.

Proposed fee: \$.30 per one sided page of standard sized paper for both black & white and color prints was determined by taking the existing fee and adding the time to copy records using the following methods (6.12 minutes):

- Exporting or downloading the files to be printed.
- Preparing the records for printing on the copier.
- Printing the records.
- Counting the number of pages printed to ensure they equal the total of the digital copies.
- Comparing the printed copies to the digital copies to ensure all pages were copied and are of good quality (no cut-off or skewed pages, no extra pages, no blurred pages, no erroneous ink marks or ink that is too light or dark to see, etc.).

Time to Print Per Page: The time of 6.12 minutes was divided by the number of pages printed (20) to determine the amount of time to print 1 page.

- $6.12 \text{ minutes} \div 20 \text{ pages} = 0.306 \text{ minutes per page}$

Actual Cost per Current Fee Schedule: The current fee schedule rate is \$1.12 per minute. Multiplying this wage by the time per page above yields:

- $\$1.12 \text{ staff cost per minute} \times 0.306 \text{ minutes per page} = \$0.34272 \text{ staff cost per page}$

Paper and Ink/Toner Costs: An average cost per sheet of paper was determined to be \$0.01. For ink/toner, the copier vendor charges \$.03 - \$.06 per page depending on the size of the paper and colors used. In addition, there are copy maintenance fees.

TOTAL TO PRODUCE COPIES PER PAGE: To determine this cost, the cost for staff to print per page from above is added to the cost of paper and ink/toner costs:

- \$0.34272 staff cost per page + \$0.01 per piece of paper + \$0.03 per side of paper of black ink = \$0.38272 per side of paper printed with black ink, or \$0.38 rounding.

The City has chosen to charge \$0.30 per page for copies.

PLOTTER PAPER

As-builts, Architectural Plans, Maps, etc. – 24" x 36" (Size D) and 36" x 48" (Size E)

Flat rate fees were determined for Size D and Size E paper copies regardless of ink/toner color. Since the bulk of time printing these records is in preparing the machine and format the records to print properly on the machine, the bulk of the cost is for the first page. Any subsequent pages printed take far less time and, therefore, cost less.

The flat cost fees are as follows and were rounded down. The methods used to calculate them follow:

- 24" x 36" (Size D): \$10.00 for the first page, \$1.50 for each additional page
- 36" x 48" (Size E): \$20.00 for the first page, \$3.00 for each additional page

Staff Actions: The following actions for actual cost determination to print Size D pages from an electronic file (*Note: making copies from a physical sheet requires scanning, then plotting, which requires additional time and costs – see Scanning below*):

- Opening or downloading the file to be printed.
- Preparing the record for printing on the plotter.
- Printing the record.
- Counting the number of pages printed to ensure they equal the total of the digital copy.
- Comparing the printed copies to the digital copies to ensure all pages were copied and are of good quality (no cut-off or skewed pages, no blurred pages, no erroneous ink marks or ink that is too light or dark to see, etc.).

Time: average 1.4 minutes per square foot for first page and .09 minutes per square foot on each additional page after the first.

Paper and Ink/Toner Costs: To determine resource costs of paper and ink/toner, an average cost per square foot was calculated. This resulted in the following costs, with calculations following below:

- 1 Square Foot of Paper: \$0.12
- 1 Square Foot of Printing in Black and White: \$0.04
- 1 Square Foot of Printing in Color: \$0.06

Paper: A roll of 36" x 300' paper is approximately \$111.69. To calculate the number of square feet in a 36" x 300' (or 3' x 300') roll of paper, we multiply the two dimensions then divide the price by the number of square feet:

- 3 feet x 300 feet = 900 square feet
- \$111.69 ÷ 900 = \$0.1241, or \$0.12 rounded.

Ink/Toner – Black and White: A cartridge of ink for black and white printing is approximately \$109.88. To calculate the number of square feet able to be printed per cartridge, we must determine how many square feet each cartridge can print on average. This requires some conversion of measurements since the page yield is calculated per ISO requirements with uses A4 size paper, which is 210 mm x 297 mm, or 8.26772" x 11.6929" converted. Dividing each converted measurement of inches by 12 produces the measurements in feet, and then multiplying them together produces the square feet:

- $8.26772 \text{ inches} \div 12 = 0.68897667 \text{ feet}$
- $11.6929 \text{ inches} \div 12 = 0.97440833 \text{ feet}$
- $0.68897667 \text{ feet} \times 0.97440833 \text{ feet} = 0.67134461 \text{ square feet}$

According to the manufacturer's specifications, the cartridge can print 4,000 pages. Since we have converted the size of a page into square feet, we multiply the two:

- $4,000 \text{ page yield} \times 0.67134461 \text{ square feet} = 2,685.37844 \text{ square feet of black and white printing per cartridge}$

To calculate the price per square foot, we divide the price by the number of square feet able to be printed per cartridge:

- $\$109.88 \div 2,685.37844 \text{ square feet} = \$0.04091788, \text{ or } \0.04 rounded.

Ink/Toner – Color: A cartridge of ink for color printing is approximately \$77.645.

Please see the calculations above for the Black and White printing for converting an A4 size of paper into 0.67134461 square feet. The page yield of the color cartridges is 2,000. Therefore:

- $2,000 \times 0.67134461 \text{ square feet} = 1,342.68922 \text{ square feet of color printing per cartridge}$

To calculate the price per square foot, we divide the average price by the number of square feet able to be printed per cartridge:

- $\$77.645 \text{ average cost} \div 1,342.68922 \text{ square feet} = \$0.05782798, \text{ or } \0.06 rounded.

Average Cost of Staff to Print Per Square Foot: The average per minute wage (including benefits) of staff who print on the plotter machine for 2023 is \$1.36. Multiplying this wage by the time per square foot for the first page and additional pages after the first yields:

- First page:
 - $\$1.12 \times 1.4 \text{ minutes per square foot for the first page} = \$1.568 \text{ per square foot}$
- Additional pages:
 - $\$1.12 \times 0.09166667 \text{ minutes per square foot} = \$0.102666667 \text{ per square foot}$

TOTAL COST TO PRINT BLACK AND WHITE COPIES PER SQUARE FOOT: To calculate the total cost per square foot, we add the calculated costs per square foot of the paper, black ink/toner, and staff costs from above:

- First Page:
 - $\$0.12 \text{ sq ft paper} + \$0.04 \text{ sq ft black ink} + \$1.568 \text{ sq ft staff cost} = \$1.728, \text{ or } \$1.73 \text{ rounded}$
- Additional Pages:
 - $\$0.12 \text{ sq ft paper} + \$0.04 \text{ sq ft black ink} + \$0.102666667 \text{ sq ft staff cost} = \$0.262666667, \text{ or } \0.26 rounded

TOTAL COST TO PRINT COLOR COPIES PER SQUARE FOOT: To calculate the total cost per square foot, we add the calculated costs per square foot of the paper, color ink/toner, and staff costs from above:

- First Page:
 - $\$0.12 \text{ sq ft paper} + \$0.06 \text{ sq ft color ink} + \$1.568 \text{ sq ft staff cost} = \$1.748, \text{ or } \$1.74 \text{ rounded}$
- Additional Pages:
 - $\$0.12 \text{ sq ft paper} + \$0.06 \text{ sq ft color ink} + \$0.102666667 \text{ sq ft staff cost} = \$0.282666667, \text{ or } \0.28 rounded

Using these, the costs for standard ARCH size D and E prints were calculated:

- Size D – 24" x 36" (6 square feet) – Black and White Ink
 - First Page: \$1.73 x 6 square feet = \$10.38
 - Add'l Pages: \$0.26 x 6 square feet = \$1.56
- Size D – 24" x 36" (6 square feet) – Color Ink
 - First Page: \$1.74 x 6 square feet = \$10.44
 - Add'l Pages: \$0.28 x 6 square feet = \$1.68
- Size E – 36" x 48" (12 square feet) – Black and White Ink
 - First Page: \$1.73 x 12 square feet = \$20.76
 - Add'l Pages: \$0.26 x 12 square feet = \$3.12
- Size E – 36" x 48" (12 square feet) – Color Ink
 - First Page: \$1.74 x 12 square feet = \$20.88
 - Add'l Pages: \$0.28 x 12 square feet = \$3.36

The City has chosen to only utilize the black and white ink pricing and to round down to the following:

- Size D – 24" x 36" (6 square feet)
 - **First Page: \$10.00**
 - **Add'l Pages: \$1.50**
- Size E – 36" x 48" (12 square feet)
 - **First Page: \$20.00**
 - **Add'l Pages: \$3.00**
- All Other Sizes – **Outsourced.**
 - Actual cost of vendor's fees

SCANNING

Using the actual cost from the current Fee Schedule, \$67.57 per hour or \$1.12 per minute. For jobs estimated to take more than 2 hours or where the City does not have appropriate equipment, the City will outsource the work to a scanning vendor and the fee will be the actual vendor's fee.

For scanning jobs estimated to take 2 hours or less, prior to starting the digitization process, the staff member will start a timer and calculate the time it takes to do the following:

- Remove the physical record from its original location (excluding any time spent locating the record).
- Remove paper clips, binder clips, staples, binding (if able/necessary), etc.
- Count the number of pages of each original record.
- Determine the sizing of the papers and whether they are 1-sided or 2-sided, then setting the printer to scan accordingly.
- Repair any torn or damaged pages for scanning.
- Remove any post-it notes or other types of attachments to the pages that would jam the printer.
- Make the scans using agency equipment.
- Compare the digital scanned copy to the original copy and ensure all pages were scanned in both quantity and quality.
- Rename the scanned files as necessary.
- Organize the digital files to mimic the organization of the original paper records (if necessary – split or merge digitized records, put digitized record files into folders, etc.)
- Return the original paper records to their proper location (includes re-attaching any post-its or other attachments and re-clipping, re-binding, and/or re-stapling the records.

Cost is determined by multiplying the per minute cost of \$1.12 by the decimal form of the minutes and seconds it took to scan the records as defined above.

Example: If it takes 15 minutes to complete all steps above for a scanning project - 15 minutes x \$1.12 per minute staff cost = \$16.80.

COPYING ELECTRONIC RECORDS

ELECTRONIC RECORDS TRANSMISSION

Use of a cloud-based data storage and processing service.

RCW 42.56.070 provides that agencies may recover the actual cost of the electronic production or file transfer of the record and the use of any cloud-based data storage and processing service. For the year 2023, the City's electronic records transmission was through Next Request. In 2024, the City's electronic records transmission will be through Laserfiche. Staff are not proposing to adopt this fee at this time.

However, to calculate this in future years, the cost of the base cost of the processing service is divided by the number of public records requests from the previous year where copies of electronic records were transmitted to customers. For example:

- $\$11,863.28 \text{ base cost of public records portal} \div 720 \text{ records requests} = \16.476 , or \$16.48 rounded.

The City is not proposing to adopt this fee. However, if this fee is adopted in the future, under this example, the City would round down and charge \$16.00 per request.

ELECTRONIC FILE FLAT RATE

A flat rate fee of \$0.25 per record was determined by using the following methods and then rounding down:

Timed Tests: The following steps to copy 10 records to the portal and ready them for disclosure to a customer (2.31 minutes):

- Exporting or downloading files from their original locations.
- Uploading the files into the portal.
- Confirming that all files were successfully uploaded.
- Renaming and labeling records if necessary.
- Making the files accessible to the customer.
- Providing instructions to the customer for how to access their record copies.

Time to Copy Per Record: The time of 2.31 minutes was divided by the number of files copied (10) to determine the amount of time to copy 1 file:

- $2.31 \text{ minutes} \div 10 \text{ files copied} = 0.231 \text{ minutes}$

Actual Cost per Current Fee Schedule: Using the rate from the existing fee schedule of \$67.57 or \$1.12 per minute, multiplied by the time per record above yields:

- $\$1.12 \text{ staff cost per minute} \times 0.231 \text{ minutes per record} = \$0.25872 \text{ staff cost per record}$, or \$0.26 rounded

The City has chosen to round down to \$0.25 per record and provide the first 10 records at no cost. Each record beyond the 10th will be \$0.25 each.

GIGABYTE FEE

The flat rate per gigabyte (GB) of files transmitted electronically is \$0.10.

The City has 2TB of cloud-based storage with its current provider. In the event a large request exceeds 1 gigabyte in storage, it is necessary to pass along excess storage fees. Pursuant to RCW 42.56.120(2)(b), *An agency need not calculate the actual costs it charges for providing public records if it has rules or regulations declaring the reasons doing so would be unduly burdensome...*

The City has established that it is unduly burdensome to determine the per gigabyte fee for excess data storage costs per request. Therefore, the City is electing to use the statutory default rate established by RCW 42.56.120(2)(b)(iv) of \$0.10 per gigabyte.

COPYING ELECTRONIC RECORDS TO A STORAGE DEVICE

The actual cost of the storage device will be charged to the customer along with the actual cost per the current fee schedule of \$1.12 per minute for the time it takes to copy the records to the storage device. **Please note:** Records are available via cloud-based platform at a significant cost savings over storage devices.

The following steps will be performed for copying records to a storage device:

- Exporting or downloading files from their original locations.
- Formatting the storage device (if needed).
- Uploading the files onto the storage device.
- Confirming that all files were successfully copied.
- Renaming and organizing records if necessary.
- Labeling the storage device with the request number, customer name, installment number, etc.
- Providing instructions to the customer for when and how to purchase and pick up the storage device with their record copies.

Records will be provided on a storage device if the file size of the records would be unduly burdensome to upload to the cloud (and would likely be even more burdensome to download by the customer), or upon request by the customer.

To prevent viruses or corrupt files from entering the City's networks, customer-provided storage devices are not permitted to be connected to City computers or networks under any circumstance. Should a storage device be needed, the City will purchase the most cost-effective option available at that time. The customer will reimburse the actual cost of the device, including tax and shipping (if applicable).

When records are provided in installments, a new storage device will be required for each installment. Records will not be broken into smaller installments to accommodate using multiple, smaller/less expensive storage devices. If the size of the files exceeds the limit of the largest flash drive available, or if it would be more cost-effective to do so, an external hard drive will be used.

ADDITIONAL RECORDS FEES

MAILING RECORDS

Due to the inconsistent characteristics of what records might be requested to be mailed to a customer, it is not possible to determine a flat rate for mailing. Instead, the City will charge the actual cost per the current fee schedule of \$1.12 per minute to perform the below-listed actions, plus the actual cost of the envelope, box, or container the records will be shipped in, the postage cost and any other delivery-related fees, and any applicable taxes:

- Prepare the envelope or package (address the envelope, tape a box, etc.).
- Weigh the envelope or parcel.
- Calculate the postage.
- Deliver the envelope or parcel to a post office if special handling is required beyond what the City's postage machine and/or mail services can accommodate.

DIGITAL RECORDS STORAGE DEVICE

USB drive/zip drive/thumb drive, external hard drive, etc.

The actual cost of the digital records storage device, including tax and shipping (if applicable), will be charged to the customer. Please see "Copying Records to a Storage Device" above for full costs for providing records via a storage device.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

To prepare data compilations or provide customized access to data or records.

Though rare, if technical expertise is necessary to copy records or data for a request, and these records or data are not used by the City for any City-related purpose, City staff will identify to the best of their ability an internal staff member or vendor who can create a custom report, query, script, program, etc. to export or copy the requested record or data from the system or device it is stored in.

The actual cost per minute wage (including benefits) of an internal staff member's time will be charged, or the actual cost of the vendor's services will be charged to the customer.

CREDIT CARD SURCHARGE

Pass through cost charged to City from credit card company.

Actual cost of surcharge added to any request paid by credit or debit card.

POLICE DEPARTMENT RECORDS FEES

POLICE REPORTS OR COLLISION REPORTS

Police reports may include the case report with narrative or CAD notes if there is no narrative. *(Note: If a requester asks for dispatch calls, they will receive the police report with narrative or CAD notes if there is no narrative.)*

The cost per police or collision report was determined to be \$5.00. This fee only applies to customers not directly involved with the incident the report is related to. No Charge for electronic copy to parties directly involved in the incident; paper copy charges apply. Additionally, charges for electronic copies will not be assessed to the involved customer's insurance company or legal representation. However,

the city must be put on notice that the law firm is representing that customer (notice of appearance preferred) in order for the fee to be waived.

Calculation: Actual cost per the current fee schedule of \$67.57 per hour or \$1.12 per minute multiplied by the average time it takes for a staff member to export a report from their Police database and records system, prepare the report for the customer, and then provide it to the customer. It was found to take 5 minutes on average to disclose a police report or collision report.

- 5 minutes x \$1.12 staff cost per minute = \$5.60 in fees.

The City has chosen to round this down to \$5.00 per report.

CLEARANCE LETTER

Clearance letters (sometimes called Visa letters) will cost \$15.00 each regardless of the number of pages of the letter. If the letter is mailed, the actual cost of mailing as described above will also apply.

Calculation: Police Records staff estimated it takes 15 minutes on average to perform necessary research for the letter and then writing the letter, sending to management for review, notarization, and then provide to the customer or the agency they specify the letter be sent to.

Using the Customized Service Actual Cost per the current fee schedule of \$67.57 per hour or \$1.12 per minute x 15 minutes = \$16.80 total cost per letter.

The City has chosen to round this down to \$15.00 per Clearance Letter.