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March 10, 2026

Los Angeles City Council  
c/o Office of the City Clerk  
City Hall, Room 395  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:

**REPORT BACK ON NON-APPLICANT APPEAL FEE(S) (CF 09-0969-S4)**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Should City Council wish to decrease the General Fund subsidy to the non-applicant appeal fee, the City Council should, subject to the approval of the Mayor:

1. APPROVE an amendment to Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Chapter 1, Article 9, Section 19.01 B.1(b) and Chapter 1A, Article 15, Section 15.1.1.F.1.b. (Appeal by Aggrieved Person Other than Applicant) to update the non-applicant appeal fee(s) based on the various options provided by the Department of City Planning under either Option A or B, with City Council determining the cost recovery rate percentage.
  - a. OPTION A: Increase non-applicant appeal fee to either 3, 4, 5, 10, or 20 percent cost recovery rate; or
  - b. OPTION B:
    - i. Increase the non-applicant appeal fee filed by non-applicants within the noticing/mailing radius to either the 3, 4, 5, 10, or 20 percent cost recovery rate; and
    - ii. Increase the non-applicant appeal fee filed by non-applicants outside the noticing/mailing radius by either the 3, 4, 5, 10, or 20 percent cost recovery rate.
2. REQUEST the Office of the City Attorney to prepare and present an ordinance to amend LAMC Chapter 1, Article 9, Section 19.01 B.1(b) and Chapter 1A, Article 15, Section 15.1.1.F.1.b. (Appeal by Aggrieved Person Other than Applicant) in accordance with City Council's selected option and percentage of cost recovery rate.

3. AUTHORIZE the Department of City Planning to make technical changes as needed to implement Mayor and City Council intentions.

**BACKGROUND**

On October 14, 2025, the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee instructed the Department of City Planning and the City Administrative Officer (CAO) to report back on options for adjusting appeal fees to reduce General Fund subsidy. The Department is working collaboratively with the CAO and it is anticipated that the CAO will send any report or comments separately from this report.

Based on City Planning’s Comprehensive Fee Update approved by City Council on December 20, 2025, general appeals made by the applicant are charged equal to 85 percent of the total underlying fees or \$22,453 for first level appeal and additional appeals, whichever is less. The maximum appeal fee rate of \$22,453 is the full cost recovery rate for general appeals filed by an applicant and cannot be increased.

The full cost of an appeal filed by an aggrieved person other than the applicant (non-applicant) is \$22,894. On December 20, 2025, City Council approved a non-applicant appeal fee rate of \$229, representing a 1 percent cost recovery rate. This 1 percent cost recovery rate continued the identical cost recovery rate for non-applicant appeals under the prior Comprehensive Fee Update.

Per the instruction of the PLUM Committee, this report presents options to reduce the General Fund subsidy for non-applicant appeals while remaining within industry standards. Table 1 provides a regional comparison of non-applicant appeal fees for appeals heard by governing bodies comparable to a Planning Commission and/or City Council.

**Table 1: Regional Comparison of Non-Applicant Appeal Fees**

City/County	Current Fee
City of Los Angeles	\$229.00
Santa Monica	\$754.89 - \$759.36
San Francisco	\$787.00
Berkeley	\$800.00 - \$3,000.00
City of San Diego	\$1,000.00
County of San Diego	\$1,000.00
County of Los Angeles	\$1,059.00 - \$1,217.00
Long Beach	\$1,184.37
Burbank	\$1,221.00 - \$4,886.00
Glendale	\$2,066.00

The City of Los Angeles’ current non-applicant appeal fee of \$229 is significantly lower than any of the other jurisdictions listed in Table 1. The City’s rate is more than three times less than Santa Monica, which has the second lowest non-applicant appeal fee rate in this table after the

City of Los Angeles. The County of Los Angeles' appeal fees for non-applicants range from \$1,059 to \$1,217, depending on the type of appeal and the reviewing body. For example, appeals to the Board of Supervisors cost more than appeals to the Regional Planning Commission. Similar to the County of Los Angeles, Burbank's appeal fee range noted in Table 1 is based on whether the appeal will be heard at the Planning Commission level (\$1,221.26) or City Council level (\$4,886.00). The City of Santa Monica charges a coastal surcharge for appeals filed within the Coastal Zone, which accounts for their two different appeal rates listed in Table 1. The City of Long Beach charges non-applicants \$1,184.37 for appeals to the Planning Commission and/or City Council. However, for appeals to the City Council of 100% Affordable Housing Projects, Long Beach charges non-applicants the same rate as applicants at \$10,557.21.

**Option A**

To reduce the General Fund subsidy for non-applicant appeals, the City Council may increase the non-applicant cost recovery rate to be more comparable to other jurisdictions as follows:

**Table 2: Cost Recovery Options for Non-Applicant Appeals**

Cost Recovery Rate	Non-Applicant Appeal Fee Amount	Estimated Annual Fees Collected	General Fund Subsidy
1% (Current Fee)	\$229	\$33,892	\$3,354,420
3%	\$687	\$101,676	\$3,286,636
4%	\$916	\$135,568	\$3,252,744
5%	\$1,145	\$169,460	\$3,218,852
10%	\$2,289	\$338,772	\$3,049,540
20%	\$4,579	\$677,692	\$2,710,620

*\*Full cost recovery rate for appeals: \$22,894*

Increasing the non-applicant appeal fee to \$687 (representing a 3 percent cost recovery rate) will still keep the City's non-applicant appeal fee lower than any other jurisdiction listed in Table 1. The 4 and 5 percent recovery rate options (\$916 or \$1,145) are the closest non-applicant appeal fee rate compared to the majority of the jurisdictions listed in Table 1, including the County of Los Angeles. The 20 percent recovery rate (\$4,579) is similar to the non-applicant fee imposed by Burbank for appeals that are heard by City Council.

**Option B**

Option B provides an alternative approach to decrease General Fund subsidy for non-applicant appeals, by varying the level of subsidy based on whether the non-applicant is within or outside the noticing/ mailing radius. This model is used by the City of Berkeley, which offers a reduced fee (from their standard \$2,000 or \$3,000) to either \$800 or \$1,000 if the appeal is signed by persons who meet specific criteria for proximity and ownership/lease percentage within 300 feet of the project site. Should the City Council consider this option, we recommend a simplified version based on the residence/ownership records of the non-applicant only. The noticing/ mailing radius often is 500 feet but varies depending on the land use project and is subject to change based on new laws or policies so we recommend not specifying the distance. City Planning estimates that 30 percent of non-applicant appeals are filed by non-applicants within the noticing/ mailing radius, while the remaining 70 percent are filed by non-applicants

outside the noticing/ mailing radius. Table 3 provides the estimated annual General Fund subsidy based on whether the non-applicant resides within or outside the noticing/ mailing radius and the cost recovery percentage (1% - 20%) fee amount.

**Table 3: Selected Combinations of Non-Applicant Appeal Fees**

Cost Recovery Rate (Within Radius)	Non-Applicant Fee (Within)	Cost Recovery Rate (Outside Radius)	Non-Applicant Fee (Outside)	Total Est. Annual Fees Collected	Total General Fund Subsidy
1%	\$229	1%	\$229	\$33,892	\$3,354,420
	\$229	3%	\$687	\$81,341	\$3,306,971
	\$229	4%	\$916	\$105,065	\$3,283,247
	\$229	5%	\$1,145	\$128,790	\$3,259,522
	\$229	10%	\$2,289	\$247,308	\$3,141,004
	\$229	20%	\$4,579	\$484,552	\$2,903,760
3%	\$687	1%	\$229	\$54,227	\$3,334,085
	\$687	3%	\$687	\$101,676	\$3,286,636
	\$687	4%	\$916	\$125,400	\$3,262,912
	\$687	5%	\$1,145	\$149,125	\$3,239,187
	\$687	10%	\$2,289	\$267,643	\$3,120,669
	\$687	20%	\$4,579	\$504,887	\$2,883,425
4%	\$916	1%	\$229	\$64,395	\$3,323,917
	\$916	3%	\$687	\$111,844	\$3,276,468
	\$916	4%	\$916	\$135,568	\$3,252,744
	\$916	5%	\$1,145	\$159,292	\$3,229,020
	\$916	10%	\$2,289	\$277,811	\$3,110,501
	\$916	20%	\$4,579	\$515,055	\$2,873,257
5%	\$1,145	1%	\$229	\$74,562	\$3,313,750
	\$1,145	3%	\$687	\$122,011	\$3,266,301
	\$1,145	4%	\$916	\$145,736	\$3,242,576
	\$1,145	5%	\$1,145	\$169,460	\$3,218,852
	\$1,145	10%	\$2,289	\$287,978	\$3,100,334
	\$1,145	20%	\$4,579	\$525,222	\$2,863,090
10%	\$2,289	1%	\$229	\$125,356	\$3,262,956
	\$2,289	3%	\$687	\$172,805	\$3,215,507
	\$2,289	4%	\$916	\$196,529	\$3,191,783
	\$2,289	5%	\$1,145	\$220,254	\$3,168,058

Cost Recovery Rate (Within Radius)	Non-Applicant Fee (Within)	Cost Recovery Rate (Outside Radius)	Non-Applicant Fee (Outside)	Total Est. Annual Fees Collected	Total General Fund Subsidy
	\$2,289	10%	\$2,289	\$338,772	\$3,049,540
	\$2,289	20%	\$4,579	\$576,016	\$2,812,296
20%	\$4,579	1%	\$229	\$227,032	\$3,161,280
	\$4,579	3%	\$687	\$274,481	\$3,113,831
	\$4,579	4%	\$916	\$298,205	\$3,090,107
	\$4,579	5%	\$1,145	\$321,930	\$3,066,382
	\$4,579	10%	\$2,289	\$440,448	\$2,947,864
	\$4,579	20%	\$4,579	\$677,692	\$2,710,620

For any questions regarding this report, please contact Ly Lam of our department at [ly.t.lam@lacity.org](mailto:ly.t.lam@lacity.org).

Sincerely,

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
 Director of Planning

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