



City of Baltimore Fee Study Phase I

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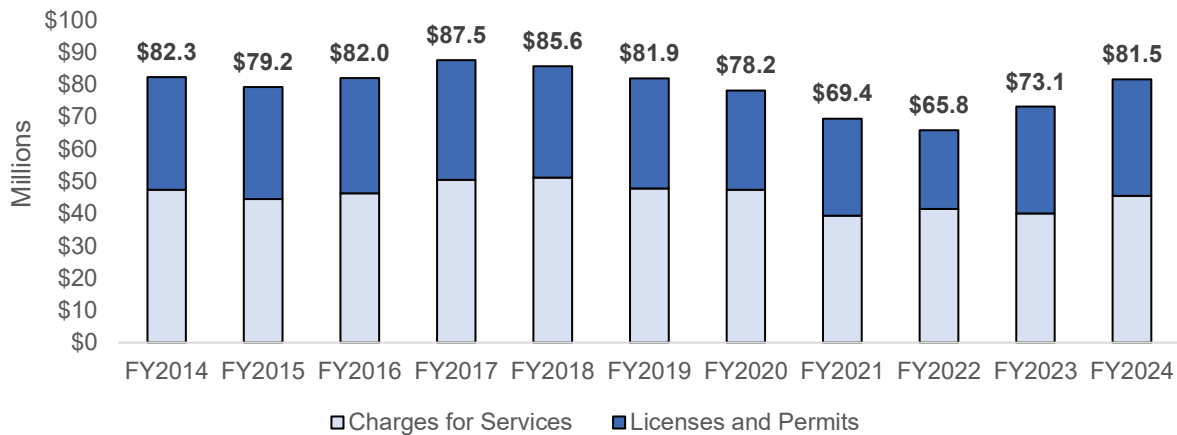


Executive Summary

Introduction

The City of Baltimore, like other local governments, levies fees to recover at least a portion of the cost of providing services. From FY2014 to FY2024, the City's overall fee revenue trend remained flat. Many of the City's fees have not been adjusted since the 2000s.

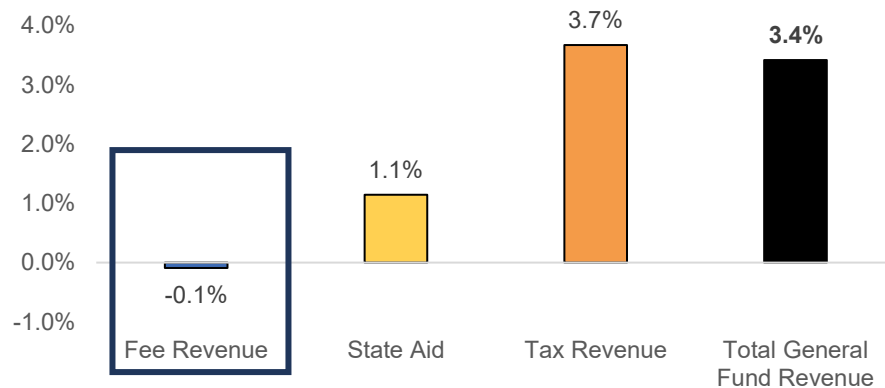
City of Baltimore Fee Revenue, FY2014 to FY2024



One key distinction between tax revenue and fee revenue is that taxes are generally levied across a broader base to fund general government services that are harder to quantify and assign to specific individuals. In contrast, service charges (or fees) are paid by the individuals or organizations that benefit most from the service.

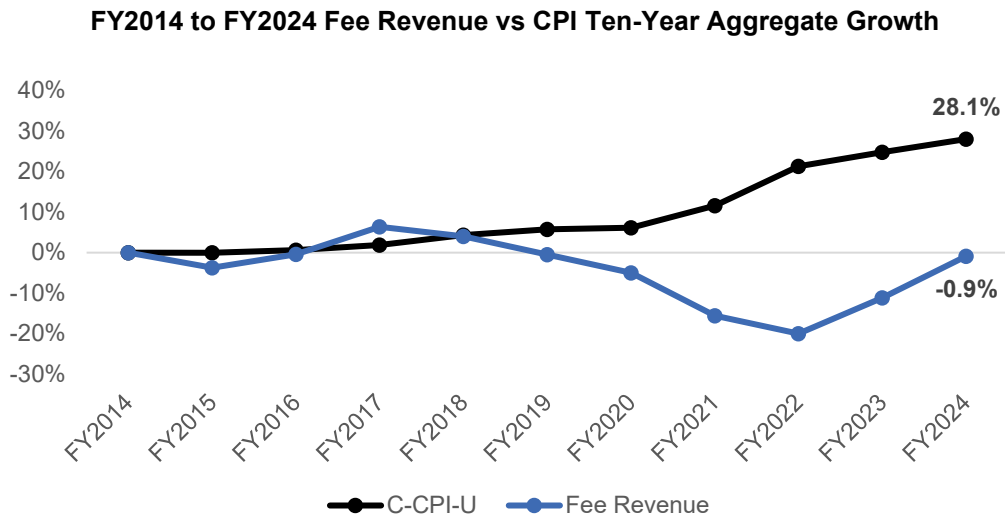
If the City does not make ongoing adjustments to fee levels over time, it will rely more heavily on tax revenues to fund the growing costs of providing services, as illustrated below.

FY2014 to FY2024 Average Annual Growth (Revenue)





To ensure that revenue growth keeps pace with the rising cost of providing services, City government must regularly adjust its fees. For that reason, the City adopted a User Fee Policy that requires periodic fee analysis and interim adjustments based on the Chained Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (C-CPI-U). However, because many of the City’s fees have not been adjusted periodically, fee revenue has declined since 2014 and trailed inflationary growth.¹



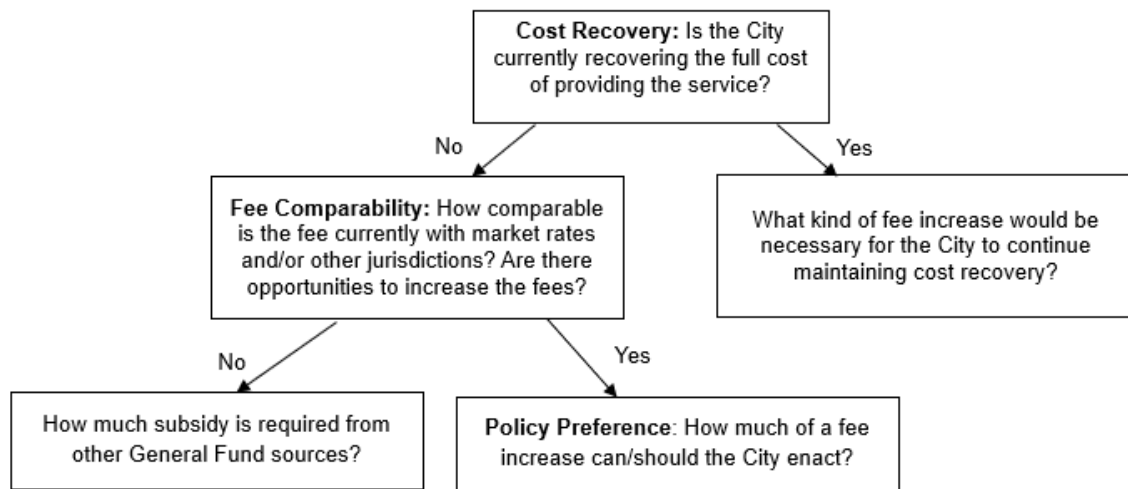
Generally, City government should review its fees regularly based on three perspectives:

- **Cost recovery:** Is the City collecting enough revenues to offset the cost of providing the service?
- **Fee comparability:** Is the fee comparable to rates set by other jurisdictions?
- **Policy preference:** Should the service be expected to “pay for itself” or should it be subsidized by tax revenues?

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Chained CPI-U for All Urban Consumers



A Framework for Fee Evaluation



To help the City update its fees and more fully recover its costs in a competitive manner, PFM was engaged to develop a Fee Study in 2025. In addition to providing recommendations to align with best practices, this Fee Study will also help the City meet the target of generating an additional \$6.3 million in revenue in FY2026.

Methodology

The fee study began with a kick-off meeting with the Bureau of Budget and Management Research (BBMR) in March 2025 to discuss project approach and timeline. During the meeting, PFM proposed two separate analyses to complete the study – a cost-of-service calculation and a benchmarking analysis.

Cost of Service Calculation

As part of this engagement, PFM developed a cost-of-service calculation model in Microsoft Excel to calculate the fully loaded cost of providing service, which includes the following:

- **Direct labor hours** for permit intake, plan reviews, inspections, letter drafting (if applicable), and the release of bond and permits. City staff estimated the minimum number of hours to complete plan reviews and inspections.
- **Indirect labor hours** related to paid time off, administration, and management. Cost of leave was estimated as a percentage of hours of paid leave taken relative to total hours (estimated at 12.0%). The calculation also included an allocation for administration and management time based on salaries of positions in managerial and administration roles.
- **Employee benefits** include health benefits, retiree benefits, and other benefits (e.g., Medicare and Social Security). The calculation accounted for benefits cost allocation of 46.2% of base salary based on the FY2026 budgeted payroll data.
- **Operating costs** (such as computer software and equipment, credit card fees, and supplies) and transportation costs (such as fuel and vehicle maintenance): To estimate the operating costs, the analysis included an operating cost allocation of 26.0% of total personnel costs based on the FY2026 budget. Additionally, vehicle-related costs are based on the estimated mileage based on discussions with City staff and the 2025 federal mileage reimbursement rate of \$0.70 per mile.



- **Indirect cost allocation** that accounts for central services such as budget, payroll, and human resources. The calculation included an indirect cost allocation equivalent to 18.2% of total personnel cost based on the FY2026 budget.

Cost-of-Service Calculation Example (Zoning Appeal)

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	1.00	\$41	\$7	\$48	\$12	\$6	\$67
Administrative/Legal Review	1.50	\$91	\$17	\$107	\$27	\$14	\$148
Provide Sign/Poster Information	0.50	\$20	\$4	\$24	\$6	\$3	\$33
Zoning Board Hearing	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$21	\$5	\$3	\$29
Post-Hearing Resolution	1.00	\$60	\$11	\$71	\$18	\$9	\$99
Case Closure	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$21	\$5	\$3	\$29
Total	4.50	\$247	\$45	\$292	\$75	\$38	\$404

Benchmarking Analysis

As part of this engagement, PFM performed a benchmarking analysis to compare the City's fees with those of Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County, Howard County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County (also known as the "Maryland Big Six"). PFM also included the District of Columbia (or Washington, D.C.) in the comparison group to provide an additional perspective.

Economic and Demographic Context – Primary Comparison Group²

	Population	Median Household Income	Median Earnings	Per Capita Income	Median Home Value	Poverty Rate
Baltimore City	565,239	\$59,579	\$56,887	\$38,534	\$241,900	20.2%
Anne Arundel County	594,582	\$117,650	\$77,738	\$56,852	\$460,600	5.7%
Baltimore County	844,703	\$87,056	\$65,960	\$46,901	\$345,900	9.7%
Howard County	336,001	\$141,159	\$92,871	\$64,401	\$603,400	5.0%
Montgomery County	1,058,474	\$125,371	\$83,987	\$64,527	\$636,200	7.0%
Prince George's County	947,430	\$98,027	\$65,279	\$45,463	\$422,300	11.0%
District of Columbia	678,972	\$108,210	\$100,747	\$78,479	\$715,500	14.0%
Median (excl. Baltimore City)	761,838	\$112,930	\$80,863	\$60,627	\$532,000	8.4%

This comparison group is used for the benchmarking analysis for most of the fee analysis. However, because some fees are more common among cities and less common among suburban counties (e.g., vacant property registration fee, minor privilege permits etc.), PFM included a secondary comparison group consisting of major cities as well as additional points of comparison (e.g., smaller Maryland cities and towns) to provide a better understanding of Baltimore City's fee levels.

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates



Economic and Demographic Context – Major Cities³

	Population	Median Household Income	Median Earnings	Per Capita Income	Median Home Value	Poverty Rate
Baltimore City, MD	565,239	\$59,579	\$56,887	\$38,534	\$241,900	20.2%
District of Columbia	678,972	\$108,210	\$100,747	\$78,479	\$715,500	14.0%
Chicago, IL	2,664,454	\$74,474	\$67,119	\$48,954	\$318,900	16.8%
Boston, MA	652,442	\$96,931	\$81,607	\$61,919	\$703,600	15.6%
Milwaukee, WI	561,369	\$52,992	\$50,402	\$29,800	\$183,700	22.1%
Philadelphia, PA	1,550,542	\$60,302	\$58,650	\$37,973	\$246,600	20.3%
Median (excl. Baltimore City)	678,972	\$74,474	\$67,119	\$48,954	\$318,900	16.8%

Fee Study Scope

Because of the vast number of fees the City levies (approximately 2,000 fees across multiple departments), PFM separated the Fee Study into multiple phases.

Phase I of the Fee Study includes 716 fees administered by the Fire Department (BCFD), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Public Works (DPW), the Health Department (BCHD), and Baltimore City Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA).

³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates



Fees Included in Phase I of the Fee Study

Account	Fee Category / Department	Revenue Category	Number of Fees	FY2024 Preliminary Revenues	% of Total FY2024 Fee Revenue
RC0076	BCFD	Fire Prevention - Fire Code	106	\$2,142,357	2.6%
RC0077	DHCD	Rental Property Registrations	2	\$4,893,842	6.0%
RC0079	Building Permits (DHCD)	Miscellaneous Building Inspection Revenue	24	\$184,810	0.2%
RC0080	Building Permits (DHCD)	Building Construction Permits	40	\$9,933,812	12.2%
RC0081	Building Permits (DHCD)	Electrical Installation Permits	37	\$246,382	0.3%
RC0082	Building Permits (DHCD)	Mechanical Equipment Permits	30	\$196,650	0.2%
RC0083	Building Permits (DHCD)	Plumbing Permits	20	\$92,750	0.1%
RC0084	Building Permits (DHCD)	Elevator Permits	12	\$0	0.0%
RC0085	Building Permits (DHCD)	Filing Fees - Building Permits	1	\$234,377	0.3%
RC0087	BCFD	Public Assembly Permits	33	\$3,560	0.0%
RC0089	DHCD	Vacant Structure Fee	1	\$83,166	0.1%
RC0092	BCHD	Dog Licenses and Kennel Permits	20	\$6,300	0.0%
RC0094	DHCD	Vacant Lot Registration Fees	1	\$29,904	0.0%
RC0095	DHCD	Trades Licenses	10	\$22,100	0.0%
RC0096	BCHD	Food Dealer Permits	16	\$1,619,695	2.0%
RC0098	BCHD/DPW	Solid Waste Collection Permits	2	\$262,719	1.2%
RC0099	DOT	Minor Privilege Permits	243	\$1,760,362	2.2%
RC0103	DOT	Street Cut Permits	5	\$978,242	1.2%
RC0104	DOT	Special Event Permits	32	406,045	0.5%
RC0151	DOT	Expressway Air Space Leases	1	\$21,800	0.0%
RC0160	DOT	Harbor Shoreline - Docking Fees	4	\$0	0.0%
RC0200	BMZA	Zoning Appeal Fees	9	\$52,795	0.1%
RC0233	BCHD	Misc. Environmental Fees	6	\$19,660	0.0%
RC0236	DOT	Street Cut Fees and Fines	11	\$800,050	1.0%
RC0237	BCHD	New Health Plan Review	3	\$0	0.0%
RC0238	BCHD	HAACP	2	\$0	0.0%
RC0244	DOT	Impounding Cars - Storage	4	\$2,979,997	3.7%
RC0245	DOT	Impounding Cars - Towing	2	\$651,408	0.8%
RC0247	DOT	General Revenue Highways	21	\$2,434,785	3.0%
RC0248	DOT	Traffic Engineering	2	\$408,657	0.5%
RC0249	DPW	Landfill Disposal Tipping Fees	1	\$10,697,169	13.1%
RC0251	BCHD/DPW	Solid Waste Surcharge	7	\$1,781,101	2.2%
RC0278	DHCD/DPW	Vacant Structure Boarding and Cleaning	8	\$2,055,336	2.5%
Total Fees Included in Phase I of the Fee Study			716	\$44,199,781	54.2%
Other Fees Not Included in Phase I			1,262	\$37,334,824	45.8%

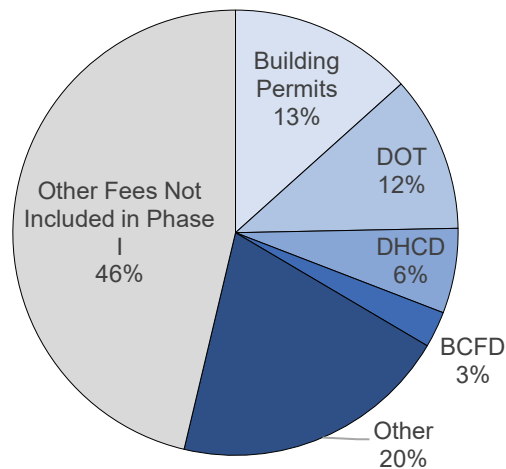
As shown above, the fees included in this analysis generated \$44.2 million in FY2024, 54.2% of the total FY2024 fee revenue. Fees authorized under the Building, Fire, and Related Codes (i.e., building permits) are



the largest revenue source (\$10.9 million, 13.3%) or of total fee revenue. Fees administered by DOT are the second largest revenue source, representing \$9.6 million (or 11.8%) of total FY2024 fee revenue.

Fees Revenue Breakdown by Fee Category / Department

Based on FY2024 Actual Revenues (\$81.5 Million)



□ Fees to be Included in Subsequent Phases ■ Fees Included in Phase I of the Fee Study

Key Findings and Recommendations

As mentioned, this study primarily compares Baltimore City's fee levels with that of other surrounding jurisdictions, including the Maryland "Big Six." Where applicable, this study included additional points of comparison to provide a better understanding of Baltimore City's relative fee levels, including national cities with similar demographic and economic factors.

In addition to enhancing the City's fee revenues, the goal of the recommendations is to adhere to best practices, improve cost recovery, and better align Baltimore City's fee levels with comparable jurisdictions.

Based on the findings of the cost-of-service analysis and benchmarking against peer jurisdictions, we recommend a series of targeted fee increases to improve cost recovery, align Baltimore City's fee levels with comparable jurisdictions, and adhere to best practices in municipal fee administration. These adjustments vary by fee category, with some set at moderate increases (e.g., 15 to 25%) to gradually close cost recovery gaps, while others—such as zoning appeals, vacant lot registration, solid waste surcharges, and landfill tipping fees—require more substantial adjustments to reflect true service costs and market comparisons. The projected revenue impacts shown below assume implementation of the revised fee schedule effective January 1, 2026.

The process for altering fee levels depends on how the fee is established in law. When the City Code specifies a specific dollar amount for a given fee, any adjustment requires **legislative action by the City Council**, since the ordinance must be amended. However, when the Code does not set a fixed dollar amount and authorizes the fee, the authority to set the rate rests with the **Board of Estimates**.



Fee Category	FY2024 Preliminary Revenues	Recommended Increase	Projected FY26 Revenue Increase (adjusted for 1/1/26 implementation)
RC0076 - Fire Prevention - Fire Code	\$2,142,357	20%	\$267,795
RC0077 - Rental Property Registrations	\$4,893,842	15%	\$367,038
RC0079 - Miscellaneous Building Inspection Revenue	\$184,810	20%	\$18,481
RC0080 - Building Construction Permits	\$9,933,812	20%	\$993,381
RC0081 - Electrical Installation Permits	\$246,382	20%	\$24,638
RC0082 - Mechanical Equipment Permits	\$196,650	20%	\$19,665
RC0083 - Plumbing Permits	\$92,750	20%	\$9,275
RC0084 - Elevator Permits	\$ -	20%	\$ -
RC0085 - Filing Fees - Building Permits	\$234,377	20%	\$23,438
RC0087 - Public Assembly Permits	\$3,560	25%	\$445
RC0094 - Vacant Lot Registration Fees	\$29,904	100%	\$14,952
RC0095 - Trades Licenses	\$22,100	5%	\$553
RC0103 - Street Cut Permits	\$978,242	25%	\$122,280
RC0104 - Special Event Permits	\$406,045	25%	\$50,756
RC0151 - Expressway Air Space Leases	\$21,800	0%	\$ -
RC0160 - Harbor Shoreline - Docking Fees	\$ -	0%	\$ -
RC0200 - Zoning Appeal Fees	\$52,795	100%	\$26,398
RC0244 - Impounding Cars - Storage	\$2,979,997	20%	\$298,000
RC0245 - Impounding Cars - Towing	\$651,408	20%	\$65,141
RC0247 - General Revenue Highways	\$2,434,785	25%	\$304,348
RC0248 - Traffic Engineering	\$408,657	20%	\$40,866
RC0099 - Minor Privilege Permits	\$1,760,362	15%	\$132,027
RC0278 - Vacant Structure Boarding and Cleaning	\$2,055,336	25%	\$256,917
RC0098 - Solid Waste Collection Permits	\$262,719	0%	\$ -
RC0251 - Solid Waste Surcharge	\$1,781,101	100%	\$890,551
RC0089 - Vacant Structure Fee	\$83,166	100%	\$41,583
RC0249 - Landfill Disposal Tipping Fees	\$10,697,169	100%	\$5,348,585
RC0092 - Dog Licenses and Kennel Permits	\$6,300	10%	\$315
RC0096 - Food Dealer Permits	\$1,619,695	10%	\$80,985
RC0233 - Miscellaneous Environmental Fees	\$19,660	15%	\$1,475
RC0238 - Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point Plan	\$ -	10%	\$ -
RC0237 - New Health Plan Review	\$ -	10%	\$ -
RC0236 - Street Cut Fees and Fines	\$800,050	25%	\$100,006
		Total	\$9,499,891



Fees Authorized by the Building, Fire, and Related Codes

According to the benchmarking analysis, Baltimore City's residential and commercial alteration fees are relatively in line with the comparison group average, but new construction fees trail.

New Construction Fee - Illustrative Example *Inclusive of All Application and Enhancement Fees*

Jurisdiction	Total Fee for New Residential Construction of 2,000 Sq. Ft.	Total Fee for New Commercial Construction of 10,000 Sq. Ft.
Baltimore City	\$285	\$1,750
Anne Arundel County	\$3,275	\$16,035
Baltimore County	\$231	\$1,700
Howard County	\$650	\$3,500
Montgomery County	\$1,540	\$12,900
Prince George's County	\$4,629	\$18,274
District of Columbia	\$532	\$2,662

The benchmarking analysis also indicates that Baltimore City's general plumbing fixture installation fee, water/sewer plumbing fees, occupancy permits, and re-inspection fees all trail the comparison group average. Residential accessory fees, residential demolition fees, and electrical permit fees, on the other hand, are more in line with other jurisdictions.

Based on the benchmarking and cost-of-service analysis, we suggest the following adjustments to the City's building permit fees.

- **Align fees with cost of service:** The City's current minimum fees for several major construction permit categories (residential and commercial construction, use and occupancy, special events, and demolition, all fall well below the minimum administrative cost of processing these permits. For example, the estimated cost to administer a residential construction permit is \$324, compared to minimum fees between \$50 and \$250. **To better recover costs while maintaining consistency with regional practices, we recommend targeted increases across fee categories ranging from 10% to 25%, along with the addition of a 10% technology fee to support the City use and expansion of digital permitting platforms.**
- **Enhancement fees:** Howard County, Prince George's County, and the District of Columbia add additional technology or enhancement fees to more fully recover the cost of providing services, especially since some building permit applications can be submitted and tracked online, which adds additional costs. The City maintains online platforms such as E-Permits and ProjectDox and should therefore consider building in some type of enhancement fee to recover the cost. Since February 2025, the City started incurring license costs and staff estimates \$500,000 each year on DHCD licensing fees plus additional staff time to maintain and manage those platforms. **Since Howard County, Prince George's County, and the District of Columbia all levy a 10% enhancement/technology fee, we suggest Baltimore City implement a 10% technology fee to recover the cost of digital permitting platforms.**
- **Create new tiers of fees where applicable:** Some jurisdictions have separate fees for residential and commercial permits. For example, Howard County and Montgomery County levy different fees for



commercial and residential elevator permits. Similarly, Howard County has separate residential/commercial mechanical and plumbing fees, Anne Arundel County has separate residential/commercial electrical permit fees, and Baltimore County has separate residential/commercial tank (mechanical) permit fees. For occupancy permits, Prince George's County and Montgomery County both have a separate commercial fee schedule, and the District of Columbia increases its occupancy permit fees as square footage increases. Where applicable, Baltimore should consider creating new tiers of fees to more fully recover its costs without overburdening residents, especially given the demographic profile of the City.

- **Fee consolidation:** For certain fees, Baltimore City has a more complex fee structure than the comparison group. For example, Baltimore currently levies 12 different types of elevator fees, compared to one or two among the comparison group. Based on agency and staff input, the City should consider consolidating fees where beneficial to reduce administrative burden on the City and its customers.
- **New construction fee adjustment:** As mentioned, the City's new construction fees trail that of comparable jurisdictions. While there is significant room to increase new construction fees given the gap between Baltimore City's fee levels and other comparable jurisdictions' fee levels, this is an area where the City should have further discussions regarding ways to better align the City's fee schedule with other surrounding jurisdictions while still creating the incentive for new construction and development in the City.
- **Other fee adjustments:** Several building permit fees (e.g., mechanical permits, plumbing fees, occupancy permits etc.) trail the comparison group average, which is expected given the comparison group's relative economic and demographic strengths. Instead of making drastic increases to the fee schedule, we suggest the City make small adjustments to the general fee level to keep up with the growing cost of providing services. The City should consider making target dollar or percentage adjustments such as increasing the preliminary project review fee from \$50 to \$60 or increasing the fee bands (e.g., increasing the electrical service wiring/equipment installation fee band from the current \$25 to \$200 to \$30 to \$240). From the benchmarking analysis, a 20% increase as illustrated should be well within the comparison group average, if not lower. This is also in line with the 20% increase by Prince George's County Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement (DPIE), effective March 2, 2025.

Prince George's County January 2025 Announcement for Fee increases

DPIE will implement fee changes beginning March 2, 2025, to help fund the issuance of permits and licenses. The new fees were scheduled to be implemented on February 17, 2025; we have extended the date to March 2, 2025. The new fees will apply to permits applied for on or after March 2. Fees for permits applied for before March 2, 2025, will be based on the previous fee structure. The County Council approved the updated fee schedule in November 2024 in CR-087-2024.

Under the new formula, fees will increase 20 percent, with a 10 percent technology fee. The increase means that an applicable fee which costs \$50 under the previous fee schedule will increase to \$60, plus a 10% technology fee. The new fees will be posted in the [2025 DPIE Fee Schedule](#). To view the legislation, visit the [Prince George's County Legislative/Zoning Information System \(LZIS\)](#), CR-087-2024.



Fees Administered by the Department of Transportation (DOT)

According to the analysis, many DOT fees are lower than those of the comparison group as well as the cost of providing service. For that reason, we suggest the following adjustments to DOT fees:

- **Fee Adjustments:** the Department of Transportation's current fee structure lags behind the cost of providing services across several fee categories. **To improve cost recovery and align with peer jurisdictions, we recommend increasing fee levels between 15% and 25% and applying a 10% technology fee.** A full breakdown of the estimated costs of service by fee, including recommended increases, can be found in Appendix B.
- **Standard towing rates:** Baltimore City charges flat towing rates of \$130 for standard vehicles towed west of Charles Street and \$140 east of Charles Street, trailing the comparison group, which ranges from \$185 to \$230. In addition to increasing fees, the City should also consider expanding the fee difference between west and east of Charles Street to accomplish any policy or cost-recovery goals, or simply combine the fees into one, single flat rate.
- **Oversized vehicle permit and escort fees:** Baltimore City's fee of \$60 (+ \$5 per ton above 45 tons) is comparable to the District of Columbia's flat \$85 fee. However, the District of Columbia's fee for dump/cement/trash trucks is much higher, at \$1,193, and Prince George's County's \$1,584 permit for oversized vehicles is even higher. Additionally, the City charges a flat fee of \$160 for oversized vehicle escorts (which include 2 staff for 3 hours). The City should consider updating the escort fee to reflect current staff salaries to increase cost recovery.
- **Impound storage fees:** Baltimore City's fee of \$50 for the first 48 hours (or \$25 per day) is lower than comparison jurisdictions (as high as \$90 per day). The City's reduced \$15 per day fee after 48 hours is also a contrast to other counties which increase costs over time. Therefore, in addition to increasing fees, the City should also consider changing the rate structure to incentivize retrieving impounded vehicles as well.
- **Docking fees:** Given Baltimore City's lower rates than Anne Arundel County (\$3.0 per foot) and the District of Columbia (\$3.75 per foot),⁴ the City should revise its fee schedule, consistent with the recommendation by the Management Research Report published by BBMR in 2013.
- **Right-of-way fees:** While the City's right-of-way fees are comparable to other jurisdictions, similar to building permits, the City should consider adding a technology fee, similar to Howard and Prince George's Counties' practices, to further improve cost recovery.

As noted in the benchmarking findings chapter, select minor privilege permits are higher than fees levied among national cities, but the City's fee levels are focused on cost-recovery given the complexity of permit review and approval process.

⁴ Anne Arundel County docking fees are charged by the City of Annapolis, and the District of Columbia Wharf Marina is owned by the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation, a government-owned corporation.



Fees Administered by the Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD)

According to the benchmarking analysis, several BCFD fees (e.g., hazardous storage and use fees, public assembly fees) are in line with comparable jurisdictions' fees, but others trail. However, the department's fees trail the cost of providing service across the board.

Based on the benchmarking and cost-of-service analyses, we suggest the following adjustments to BCFD fees.

- **Fee adjustments:** BCFD administers a range of inspections and permits that are critical to public safety, including plan reviews, system inspections, annual safety inspections, and event oversight. Across nearly every category reviewed, the administrative cost to provide service substantially exceeds current fee levels. Additionally, as detailed in the benchmarking findings chapter, certain fire fees trail the comparison group average. Hotel inspection fees, sprinkler fees, and special event fees are noticeably lower than other jurisdictions' fee levels. **To close these gaps, we recommend increasing most Fire Department fees by 25% and applying a 10% technology fee.**
- **Fee consolidation:** Baltimore City's hazardous storage fees are highly detailed, with separate charges for specific hazardous materials such as calcium carbide, cellulose nitrate, matches, etc. In contrast, many neighboring jurisdictions impose fees based on the overall hazard level, and apply fees uniformly for use, storage, or transportation, with corresponding documentation detailing what conditions constitute a hazard. We included some examples in this study for the City's consideration to determine whether consolidating its hazardous fee would be helpful in reducing the burden for both the City and for its customers.
- **Reinspection fees:** According to our discussions with BCFD, the Department does not currently charge reinspection or cancellation fees for fire safety inspections, which has contributed to a high volume of last-minute cancellations and repeat visits to buildings that are not adequately prepared for an inspection. The absence of penalties creates little incentive for compliance or readiness, straining staff resources and decreasing efficiency. Implementing reinspection fees (similar to DHCD's reinspection fee schedules) and cancellations fees would encourage better preparation from building owners and reduce unnecessary site visits and ultimately help the department recover a portion of the costs associated with repeat or cancelled inspections.



Trade License Fees

Baltimore City's trade license fees are comparable to other jurisdictions' fee levels. For example, on an annual basis, Baltimore's \$75 electrician license is comparable to Anne Arundel County (\$85), Baltimore County (\$80), the District of Columbia (\$60) and Prince George's County (\$79). However, for master gas fitter licenses, Baltimore City trails the comparison group on an annual basis. An annual master gas fitter license costs \$75 in Baltimore City, compared to \$85 in Anne Arundel County, \$112.50 in Baltimore County, \$72.50 in Montgomery and Prince George's County⁵, and \$60 in the District of Columbia.

The one notable difference between Baltimore City's trade license fees and other jurisdictions' fees is that the City's fees are all charged on an annual basis, while several comparison jurisdictions charge fees on a bi-annual basis. For example, Baltimore County, Prince George's County, WSSC Water (for plumbers and gas fitters in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties) and the District of Columbia levy bi-annual licensure fees.

Based on the benchmarking and cost-of-service analyses, we suggest the following adjustments to the City's trade license fees.

- **Fee adjustment:** The benchmarking analysis indicates that the City has room to increase its license costs while remaining comparable to other jurisdictions. For an electrician license, an increase from the current \$75 to \$80 would allow the City's fee to be comparable to Baltimore County's and lower than Anne Arundel County's. Based on agency and staff input, the City should also explore matching the gas fitter license fee level with the electrician license fee level. **When considering the results of the cost-of-service analysis, we recommend a modest adjustment of 5% to trade license fees.**
- **License length:** Since some other jurisdictions administer bi-annual renewal for trade licenses, the City should discuss the benefits and drawbacks of levying bi-annual fees. It is possible, for example, that administering bi-annual fees would have an impact on fee compliance and collection. Any proposed changes should be based on a cost-benefit analysis.

⁵ Water and sewer services (including plumbing/gas fitting licenses) are provided by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), a bi-county agency governed by Montgomery and Prince George's County



Fees Administered by the Baltimore City Board of Municipal Zoning and Appeals

Baltimore City's zoning and appeal fees generally trail other jurisdictions' fee levels. Based on the benchmarking and cost-of-service analyses and our discussion with BMZA, we suggest the following adjustments to the City's zoning fees.

- **Fee structuring:** Baltimore City's variance fees are among the lowest in the comparison group, with simple variance fees (involving two or fewer requests) costing \$100 and complex variances (for three or more requests) costing \$200. In comparison, other jurisdictions have higher fees and more tiered fee structures. For example, Howard County charges \$820 for a residential variance and \$2,375 for other uses, while Montgomery County charges \$880 for a single-family residence and up to \$3,300 for commercial and industrial uses.

Based on our discussion with BMZA, we recommend the City revise the fee structure so that fees are charged based on each variance or appeal application, instead of the current fee structure. Levying one fee for each application is also consistent with how other jurisdictions levy zoning fees. **In addition to restructuring the fees, we also recommend a 100% increase in the variance fee from \$100 to \$200 to better capture the cost of providing the service.**

- **Technology fee:** BMZA uses the City's electronic permitting system to receive, review, and manage most zoning fees (except the DOT alley and footway appeal, as explained more below). Given the use of the permitting software for the administration of BMZA fees, the City should consider adding a 10% technology fee to all BMZA fees, consistent with our recommendation for building permits.
- **Alley and Footway Appeal Fee:** The City currently does not assess any alley and footway appeal fees. Applicants currently file a paper application with BMZA. BMZA then goes through the administrative process of reviewing applications, scheduling a zoning hearing, and writing reports detailing the case, but the City does not charge a fee to recover the cost of administering such an appeal.

We recommend the City include the alley and footway appeal in its fee schedule and permitting process, including the filing of appeal through the City's electronic permitting system. This would allow applicants to file the appeal electronically and pay electronically. In addition to improving cost recovery, levying an alley and footway appeal fee may also help manage the agency's workload given that the higher opportunity cost.



Vacant Property and Rental Property Registration Fees

While the focus on the study is on Baltimore City's fee levels, we note that the comparability of Baltimore City's fees and the cost of providing service are not the only perspectives the City should consider when revising fees. Especially for the housing-related fees, we encourage the City to consider the impact on compliance and any resulting impact it might have on total revenue.

- **Vacant property fee adjustment:** Unlike some peer jurisdictions, Baltimore City does not scale vacancy fees to capture additional revenue for larger or long-vacant properties. While Baltimore City charges a flat fee for vacant properties, some other jurisdictions charge separate fees for commercial properties. Further, the City charges \$100 annually for the registration of vacant residential property, and \$250 for all others. This trails all of the jurisdictions in the national comparison group, except for Cleveland, Ohio, which charges \$70 annually. Most jurisdictions charge a vacancy registration fee of \$250 to \$300, while Chicago increases its fee to \$700 for bank/lender owned properties. **We recommend the City raise the vacant residential registration fee to \$250 (\$500 for all others) to be more in line with comparable jurisdictions and the cost of service.**
- **Rental registration fee adjustment:** Rental registration fees range between \$30 to \$35 annually when the same fees are generally higher among comparable jurisdictions. As an example, for annual single-family rentals, Baltimore City's fee is \$30 when Howard County charges \$46.75, Montgomery County charges \$130, Prince George's County charges \$76, and the District of Columbia charges \$99. **We recommend an increase of 15% in the fee level, which amounts to an increase of approximately \$5 per year.**
- **Vacant home boarding fee adjustment:** The City has multiple fees associated with boarding vacant homes, including lien processing, wood, glue, administrative overhead, personnel, and cooperating costs. The rates charged for labor and materials reflect the actual contracted costs of labor and supplies. The department updates these fees on a quarterly basis to ensure maximum cost recovery. **Further analysis is ongoing in coordination with the department to account for the unique structure of this fee and confirm the appropriate adjustment.**



Waste Disposal Fees

Based on the benchmarking and cost-of-service analyses, we suggest the following adjustments to the City's waste fees.

- **Waste Hauler permit fees:** Because the City's current fees are comparable to surrounding jurisdictions, our only recommendation regarding fee levels is to ensure compliance with the User Fee Policy and continue making periodic adjustments. However, the process for administering the small hauler permit may warrant changes. Currently, the permit is administered by the Health Department while DPW manages the disposal site, which can create confusion when customers without permits are turned away. The City should explore ways to streamline the process, including allowing customers to apply for the permit onsite.
- **Scavenger vehicle fees:** The current fee (\$29 to \$33 depending on whether it is in-state or out-of-state) is comparable to the District of Columbia (\$30) but lower than Anne Arundel County (\$50). **Since the current fee level is close to cost of providing service, we are not recommending any increases in fee level. However, the City should consider eliminating the distinction between in-state or out-of-state fees to ease administrative burden.**
- **Waste disposal fees:** Setting waste disposal fees depends not only on the cost of providing the service but on other factors such as tipping fees, market trends, and other industry factors. As shown below, the City's solid waste disposal fees trail the comparison group (which ranges from \$70 to \$200 per ton), and the City should review for fee increase accordingly, especially given the increase in solid waste disposal costs in recent years given the market and industry trends. **We recommend a doubling of waste disposal fees to better align with the comparison group and increase cost recovery levels.**

Solid Waste Disposal Fees Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	• Bresco ash: \$24.21 per ton • Construction materials: \$67.50 per ton • Solid waste (small haulers): \$20 per load + \$3.38 per 100 pounds > 7,000
Anne Arundel County	• Solid waste: \$100 per ton
Baltimore County	• Organics and brush: \$65 per ton • Solid waste: \$125 per ton (\$200 per ton for special handling)
Howard County	• Appliances w/ freon: \$10 each • Mattresses (clean): \$50 per ton • Organic debris: \$30 per ton • Oversized tires: \$220 per ton • Solid waste: \$160 per ton
Montgomery County	• Concrete, dirt, rubble: \$70 per ton • Construction debris: \$84 per ton • Organic waste: \$46 per ton (>500 lbs.) • Solid waste: \$70 per ton (>500 lbs.)
Prince George's County	• Metal: \$25 per ton • Solid waste: \$77 per ton (\$85 per ton 7/1/2025) • Tires: \$625 per ton • Wood: \$45 per ton
District of Columbia	• Solid waste: Minimum of \$13.38 per ton for transfer + minimum of \$2.0 per ton for disposal⁶

⁶ The District of Columbia solid waste ordinance indicates a minimum of \$13.38 per ton for transfer at District-owned solid waste facilities plus a minimum of \$2.0 per ton for the disposal. Actual fee levels may be significantly higher than the minimum.



Special Event Fees

Based on the research into the comparison group and, as highlighted later in the report, the cost of providing services, the City of Baltimore should adjust the structure of fees for special events to recover a greater share of service costs while continuing to offer reduced rates for local nonprofit organizations.

- **Tiered Temporary Assembly Fees:** Currently, short-term public assembly fees are charged based on event type (e.g., carnival, bazaar) size (per 10,000 sq. ft.) and length (by day or week). The City should simplify this structure in a way which improves cost recovery for large events while keeping fees affordable for community and non-profit gatherings.
 - Example structure:
 - **Tier 1: Community, neighborhood, and non-profit events**
 - *Examples:* Church picnics, fundraisers, school fairs of less than 250 attendees
 - *Public assembly fee:* \$50
 - *Application fee:* 75% discount when applying more than 10 weeks in advance, 50% discount otherwise
 - **Tier 2: Medium sized public events**
 - *Description:* Local festivals, concerts, parades of less than 2,500 attendees
 - *Public assembly fee:* \$100
 - *Application fee:* No discount
 - **Tier 3: Large public events**
 - *Description:* Ticketed festivals, corporate run events above 2,500 attendees
 - *Public assembly fee:* \$250
 - *Application fee:* No discount
- **Application Fees:** Applicants are charged between \$80 and \$250 for an application, depending on the timing of the application relative to the event. **Given the estimated gap in cost recovery, we recommend a 25% increase in application fees, while maintaining discounts for non-profit events.**
- **Service Fees:** The City should restructure service fees to reflect the actual personnel costs associated with staffing public events.
 - Example: For BCFD service at a public event, Baltimore City's fee of \$60 per hour per person (recently increased from \$45 per hour, per person) is the lowest among the comparison group. Other jurisdictions charge significantly more, with hourly rates ranging from \$65 per hour to \$100 per hour. Additionally, large events typically require supervisory staff, such as Battalion Chiefs, whose hourly rate significantly exceeds the \$60 per hour currently charged.
- **Equipment Rental:** The Department of Transportation offers a variety of equipment for rental during special events. These fees, which have not been adjusted since 2011, range from tents, stages, electrical connections, etc. **We recommend a 10% increase in the fee level to better recover the cost of providing service, while maintaining discounts/free equipment for non-profit events.**



- **Equipment Fees:** The Baltimore City Fire Department does not charge for the use of equipment such as trucks or other apparatus. However, this equipment has significant operational and maintenance costs. Incorporating equipment costs in the hourly fee would help improve cost recovery.

Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) Fees

Based on the benchmarking analysis, we suggest the following adjustments to the City's Health Department fees.

- **Fee revisions:** As discussed in the benchmarking findings chapter, many of the Health Department's fees are below its peers. At the minimum, the City should make some revisions to bring fees in line with comparable jurisdictions. For example, Baltimore City's high-risk food license fee of \$520 is at the low end of the scale relative to the comparison group. Montgomery County charges \$525, Baltimore County charges \$540, Anne Arundel County charges \$590, and Prince George's County charges \$845. For low-risk licenses, Baltimore City's \$65 fee is the lowest of the comparison group, where fees range from \$100 (Howard County) to \$449 (Prince George's County). Additionally, the cost-of-service analysis shows several fees (food facilities, pool licenses, tattoo establishments) trailing the minimum cost of providing service for several fees, which we recommend increasing by 10% to 15%. Well permits, on the other hand, significantly trail the cost of providing and are primarily for large construction projects—we recommend increasing well permits by 25%.
- **New late fees:** Based on information gathered from the Health Department, the City does not currently charge a late fee for tattoo permits and swimming pool permit, which results in late renewals and indirectly incentivizes customers to register later than the renewal date since the renewal date is effective immediately after expiration, regardless of when the permit is applied or when the fee is paid. The City should levy a late fee, which will help improve compliance and improve cost recovery.
- **Technology fee:** The Department currently uses an inspection software and database that tracks permitting and inspection progress. To improve cost recovery, the City should add a technology fee to health department fees that require an inspection to more fully recover the cost of providing service. Similar to our earlier recommendations, the City should start with a 10% technology fee.
- **Software upgrade and implementation:** Apart from food permits, which have an online application and payment option, all Health Department fees are currently processed in-person. Applicants typically apply for the permit and make the payment in-person and the Department issues a hard copy of the permit at the same time as the application and payments. The Department is currently aiming to transition to *Accelea*, an online permitting system, in the next several years, which would also provide an online application and payment option. The City should create a timeline for the software implementation given that the transition will not only create efficiencies in permitting process, but will also provide online application and payment options, which should improve compliance and reduce the Department's front desk workload. Such changes will also have a staffing ripple effect, all of which will help the City improve its overall cost recovery.



Summary of Recommendations

Based on the benchmarking analysis, PFM recommends the following broad revisions to the fee schedules:

- **Fee adjustments:** The benchmarking analysis indicates that many fees trail the comparison group's fee levels. The cost-of-service analysis indicates that the City has room to adjust the fee levels the majority of fees between 15% and 25%, with exceptions for fees which significantly trail or are on-par with the cost of providing service and comparison jurisdictions.
- **Technology fee:** Several jurisdictions in the comparison group jurisdictions add a 10% technology to recover the technology costs related to permit applications and tracking (e.g., Baltimore City is estimated to incur over \$600,000 in annual licensing costs related to the building permit technology system in FY26, not including additional software maintenance and management costs). PFM's recommendation is for the City of Baltimore to add a technology for any fee that uses an online permitting system to more fully recover costs.
- **Use of a tiered structure:** Where applicable and practical, PFM recommends the City create a separate fee structure for commercial permits to more fully recover the cost of providing services, especially since commercial permits are frequently more time-consuming.
- **Fee Structure:** Several fees – such as the elevator fees and the hazardous storage fees – are extremely detailed and complex. PFM's recommendation is to consolidate fees where applicable to reduce administrative burden and improve user experience.
- **Software implementation:** The fees that Baltimore City charges are ultimately tied to its costs. As the City continues to move forward in software implementation to improve fee administration and user experience, fee levels should be adjusted to reflect the additional costs of software licensing as well as any savings from improved efficiencies.

These recommendations are intended to help the City improve its cost recovery so that, as the cost of providing services grow, the City can continue to recover a portion of the cost from fees instead of having to rely even more heavily on tax revenues to fund them.



Benchmarking Findings

As part of the Fee Study, PFM performed a benchmarking analysis to compare the City's fees with those of Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County, Howard County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County (also known as the "Maryland Big Six"). PFM also included the District of Columbia (or Washington, D.C.) in the comparison group to provide an additional perspective.

Economic and Demographic Context – Primary Comparison Group⁷

	Population	Median Household Income	Median Earnings	Per Capita Income	Median Home Value	Poverty Rate
Baltimore City	565,239	\$59,579	\$56,887	\$38,534	\$241,900	20.2%
Anne Arundel County	594,582	\$117,650	\$77,738	\$56,852	\$460,600	5.7%
Baltimore County	844,703	\$87,056	\$65,960	\$46,901	\$345,900	9.7%
Howard County	336,001	\$141,159	\$92,871	\$64,401	\$603,400	5.0%
Montgomery County	1,058,474	\$125,371	\$83,987	\$64,527	\$636,200	7.0%
Prince George's County	947,430	\$98,027	\$65,279	\$45,463	\$422,300	11.0%
District of Columbia	678,972	\$108,210	\$100,747	\$78,479	\$715,500	14.0%
Median (excl. Baltimore City)	761,838	\$112,930	\$80,863	\$60,627	\$532,000	8.4%

This primary comparison group was used for the benchmarking analysis for most fees. However, because some fees are more common among cities (e.g., vacant property registration fee, minor privilege permits etc.), PFM included a secondary comparison group and additional points of comparison to provide a better understanding of Baltimore City's fee levels.

Economic and Demographic Context – Secondary Comparison Group⁸

	Population	Median Household Income	Median Earnings	Per Capita Income	Median Home Value	Poverty Rate
Baltimore City	565,239	\$59,579	\$56,887	\$38,534	\$241,900	20.2%
District of Columbia	678,972	\$108,210	\$100,747	\$78,479	\$715,500	14.0%
City of Chicago, IL	2,664,454	\$74,474	\$67,119	\$48,954	\$318,900	16.8%
City of Albany, NY	101,220	\$61,390	\$54,166	\$35,575	\$231,500	21.1%
City of Sacramento, CA	526,383	\$85,928	\$65,472	\$43,982	\$505,800	13.7%
City of Cleveland, OH	362,670	\$39,041	\$45,513	\$27,253	\$107,100	30.7%
Median (excl. Baltimore City)	526,383	\$74,474	\$65,472	\$43,982	\$318,900	16.8%

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates



This chapter summarizes our benchmarking findings for the following fee categories:

- Fees authorized by the City's Building, Fire and Related Codes (including building permits, electrical permits, mechanical permits, plumbing permits, elevator permits, and special event permits)
- Fees administered by Baltimore City Fire Department (includes fees such as sprinkler fees, hazardous storage fees, public assembly fees, and assisted living occupancy fees)
- Trade licenses (including electrician, gas fitter, and on-site utility contractor license fees)
- Fees administered by the Department of Transportation (includes right-of-way fees, minor privilege permits, street cuts, docking fees, traffic engineering, impounding/storing vehicles)
- Fees administered by Baltimore City Board of Municipal Zoning and Appeals (including nonconforming use fees, variance fees, and sign variance fees)
- Vacancy and rental property fees (including vacant structure and lot registration fees, rental registration fees, and vacant structure boarding and cleaning fees)
- Special event fees (including permits, equipment rental fees, and special event service charges)
- Fees administered by the Baltimore City Health Department (including food dealer permits and inspections, business permits, and waste hauler permits)
- Fees administered by the Department of Public Works (including waste disposal fees, fire hydrant use permits, and fees related to the boarding of vacant homes)

The following table summarizes the fee categories included in the benchmarking analysis.

Phase I Fee Study – Fee Categories

Fee Categories	Revenue Account Code	FY2024 Revenue	FY2024 Revenue as a % of Total Fee Revenue
Building, Fire and Related Code Fees	RC0079, RC0080, RC0081, RC0082, RC0083, RC0084, RC0085,	\$10,888,781	13.4%
Department of Transportation Fees	RC0099, RC0103, RC0151, RC0160, RC0244, RC0245, RC0247, RC0248,	\$9,235,251	11.3%
Vacancy and Rental Property fees	RC0077, RC0089, RC0094, RC0278	\$7,062,248	8.7%
Fire Protection/Prevention Fees	RC0076	\$2,142,357	2.6%
Waste Collection Fees	RC0251, RC0098	\$2,043,820	2.5%
Special Events Fees	RC0104, RC0087	\$409,605	0.5%
Zoning Fees	RC0200	\$52,795	0.1%
Trade Licenses	RC0095	\$22,100	0.0%

The rest of this chapter summarizes our benchmarking findings. For additional details regarding fee levels among comparison jurisdictions, please refer to the Appendix.



Fees Authorized by the Building, Fire, and Related Codes

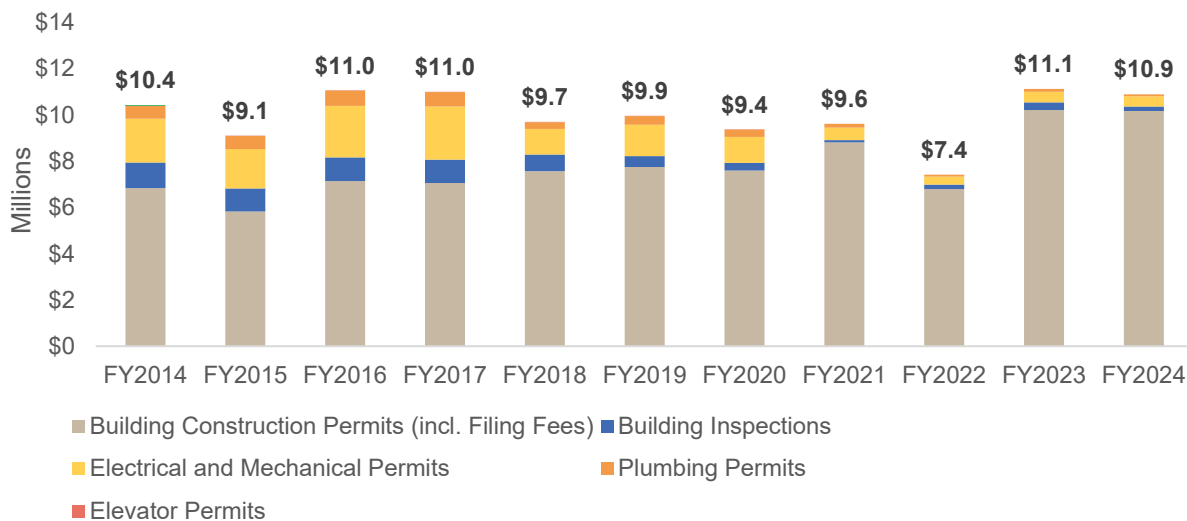
Baltimore City Ordinance 24-341 outlines the fee schedule authorized by the Building, Fire, and Related Codes. Revenues generated from these fees are included in the following general ledger accounts:

Fees Authorized by the Building, Fire, and Related Codes

Account	Revenue Category	Fees Included
RC0080 RC0085	Building Construction Permits Filing Fees – Building Permits	Commercial and residential construction, alterations, demolitions, use and occupancy permits, filing fees
RC0079	Misc. Building Inspection Revenues	Building inspections, administrative fees, plan review fees, permit extensions/revisions
RC0081	Electrical Installation Permits	Electrical permits
RC0082	Mechanical Equipment Permits	Mechanical permits
RC0083	Plumbing Permits	Plumbing fixtures and water/sewer permits
RC0084	Elevator Permits	Elevator permits

Revenue from fees authorized by the City's Building, Fire and Related Codes (or building permit fees) represent approximately 13% of the City's total fee revenues. As shown, these revenues averaged \$10 million over the past decade but varied from year to year. The most notable decline was in FY2022 when the City – as well as other jurisdictions in the region and across the country – experienced a significant drop in construction activity. The City's post-pandemic rebound in construction activity was also in line with national trends.

Building, Fire and Related Codes' Fee Revenue, FY2014 to FY2024



Below are the key findings from the benchmarking analysis of Building, Fire, and Related Code fees.

For more details related to benchmarking analysis of Building, Fire, and Related Code fees, please see Appendix page A-4.



Building Permit Application and Enhancement Fee

Baltimore City requires permit filing fees for all Building, Fire, and Related Code fees. The filing fee is tiered, based on the type of property and whether construction plans are required.

Baltimore City Permit Filing Fees

Application Type	Fees Plans Required	Fees Plans Not Required
Single/dual family	\$125	\$25
All other structures	\$150	\$50

Several comparable jurisdictions also require an application fee. Anne Arundel County requires an application fee of \$43, Howard County requires a \$50 application fee, and Prince George’s County requires an application of \$66. Several jurisdictions also require a technology or enhancement fee based on a percentage of the fee as well.

Filing Fees and Surcharges

	Application / Administration Fee	Other Surcharges
Baltimore City	\$50 to \$150	N/A
Anne Arundel County	\$43	N/A
Baltimore County	N/A	N/A
Howard County	\$50	10% Technology Fee
Montgomery County	N/A	N/A
Prince George’s County	\$66	10% Technology Fee
District of Columbia	N/A	10% Enhancement Fee

Building Permit Fee Level

Baltimore City’s Building, Fire, and Related Code fee levels generally lag the fees levied by jurisdictions in the full comparison group. When compared only with neighboring Baltimore County and Howard County as well as the District of Columbia, the results were mixed. Some fees, such as the new residential construction fee, continue to trail while others, such as the residential alteration fee, are more comparable.

Below are some examples that highlight Baltimore City’s relative fee levels.

Baltimore City’s new residential construction permit fee is the lowest among comparable jurisdictions. For a 2,000 square-foot single-family residential construction with eight-foot ceilings, required construction plans, and a construction cost of \$324,000 (based on a per-square foot construction cost of \$162⁹), Baltimore City’s fee is significantly lower than comparable jurisdictions.

⁹ According to data from the National Association of Home Builders 2024 survey, average cost of residential construction was \$162 per square foot.



New Residential (Single-Family) Construction Example

2,000 Square-Foot Construction with Eight-Foot-Ceilings and Construction Cost of \$324,000

Jurisdiction	Est. Base Fee	Est. Total Fee	Fee Schedule
Baltimore City	\$160	\$285	\$10 per 1,000 cu. ft., min of \$150 + \$125 filing fee
Anne Arundel County	\$3,232	\$3,275	\$242 + 1% of estimated cost above \$25,000 + application fee
Baltimore County	\$231	\$231	\$231 for single-family new construction/additions
Howard County	\$500	\$650	\$0.25 per sq. ft. + \$100 filing fee + 10% technology fee
Montgomery County	\$1,540	\$1,540	\$0.77 per sq. ft. + \$0.32 per sq. ft. of area > 5,000 sq. ft
Prince George's County	\$4,095	\$4,629	\$4,095 + \$1.30 per sq. ft. over 3,500 sq. ft. + additional fees
District of Columbia	\$484	\$532	\$0.03 per cubic feet of construction + \$0.002 per sq. ft. (Green Building Fee) + 10% enhancement fee

Residential alteration fees, on the other hand, are more in line with the comparison group average. For a 600-square-foot single-family residential construction with a construction cost of \$48,000 (based on a conservative per-square-foot alteration cost of \$80¹⁰) with construction plans, Baltimore City's total fee is \$305, higher than Baltimore County and Howard County but lower than the rest of the comparison group.

Residential (Single-Family) Alterations Example

600 Square-Foot Addition with a Construction Cost of \$48,000

Jurisdiction	Est. Base Fee	Est. Total Fee	Fee Schedule
Baltimore City	\$180	\$305	\$0.30 per sq. ft., min \$50, + \$125 filing fee
Anne Arundel County	\$472	\$515	\$242 + 1% of estimated cost above \$25,000 + application fee
Baltimore County	\$130	\$130	\$130
Howard County	\$100	\$135	\$100 + \$25 filing fee + 10% technology fee
Montgomery County	\$408	\$408	\$0.68 per sq. ft.
Prince George's County	\$480	\$652	\$220 or 1% of construction cost, whichever is greater + additional fees
District of Columbia	\$1,032	\$1,136	\$30 + 2% of construction value \$1,001 to \$1 million + 0.13% (Green Building Fee) + 10% enhancement fee

When comparing new commercial construction fees, Baltimore City's total fee is the second lowest among Baltimore County, Howard County, and the District of Columbia, and significantly lower than the rest of the comparison group.

¹⁰ According to data from the National Association of Home Builders 2024 survey, average cost of residential construction was \$162 per square foot.



Commercial Construction Example

10,000 Square-Foot Construction with Eight-Foot Ceilings and a Construction Cost of \$1.6 Million

Jurisdiction	Est. Base Fee	Est. Total Fee	Fee Schedule
Baltimore City	\$1,600	\$1,750	\$20 per 1,000 cu. ft., min \$250 + \$150 filing fee
Anne Arundel County	\$15,992	\$16,035	\$242 + 1% of estimated cost above \$25,000 + application fee
Baltimore County	\$1,700	\$1,700	\$0.17 per sq. ft (min \$366)
Howard County	\$3,000	\$3,500	\$0.30 per sq. ft. + \$200 filing fee + 10% technology fee
Montgomery County	\$12,900	\$12,900	\$1.29 per sq. ft.
Prince George's County	\$16,500	\$18,274	\$220 or \$1.65 per sq. ft., whichever is greater + additional fees
District of Columbia	\$2,420	\$2,662	\$0.03 per cu. ft. of construction + \$0.002 per sq. ft. of construction (Green Building Fee) + 10% enhancement fee

Similar to residential alterations, commercial alteration fees are more in line with the comparison group average. For a 5,000-square-foot alteration project with a per-square-foot cost of \$80, the total permit fee would be \$1,900 in Baltimore City, comparable to the fees levied by Howard County and higher than in Baltimore County. However, the same project would result in permit fees of at least \$4,000 in Anne Arundel County, Prince George's County, Montgomery County, and the District of Columbia.

Commercial Alteration Example

5,000 Square-Foot Alteration with a Construction Cost of \$400,000

Jurisdiction	Est. Base Fee	Est. Total Fee	Fee Schedule
Baltimore City	\$1,750	\$1,900	\$0.35 per sq. ft., min \$150 + \$150 filing fee
Anne Arundel County	\$3,992	\$4,035	\$242 + 1% of estimated cost above \$25,000 + application fee
Baltimore County	\$850	\$850	\$0.17 per sq. ft (min \$208)
Howard County	\$1,500	\$1,850	\$0.30 per sq. ft. + \$200 filing fee + 10% technology fee
Montgomery County	\$10,400	\$10,400	Cost of construction x \$0.026
Prince George's County	\$8,000	\$8,924	\$220 or 2% of verifiable construction cost, whichever is greater + additional fees
District of Columbia	\$8,530	\$9,383	\$30 + 2% of construction value \$1,001 - \$1 million + 0.13% (Green Building Fee) + 10% enhancement fee

Baltimore City's relative fee levels are mixed for other development fees. Residential demolition permits, electrical permits, and accessory fees are generally in line with the comparison group's fee levels, but mechanical permits and plumbing fees trail comparison group averages depending on the filing fee required for each project.

- Baltimore City's electrical permits generally start at \$25, comparable to Anne Arundel County, Howard County, and the District of Columbia, but lower than Baltimore County (\$34) and Prince George's County (\$50).
- Baltimore City's mechanical fees generally trail the comparison group. For example, residential HVAC permits are \$25, compared with \$34 to \$85 in Baltimore County, \$50 in Prince George's County, \$65



in Washington, D.C., \$40 to \$80 in Howard County, and \$121 in Anne Arundel County. Similarly, Baltimore City's tank permit is \$30, lower than other jurisdictions (\$29 for residential and \$45 commercial in Baltimore County, \$172 in Prince George's County, and \$46 in the District of Columbia).

- Baltimore City's general plumbing fixture installation fee is priced at \$5 per fixture, lower than the fees levied by comparable jurisdictions. Many jurisdictions also charge higher rates for the first fixture and lower rates for subsequent fixtures. For example, Anne Arundel County charges \$51 for the first fixture and \$8 for each additional fixture. Howard County charges \$25 for the first residential fixture and \$5 for each additional, plus a 10% technology fee.
- Baltimore City's water/sewer plumbing fees generally range between \$25 and \$50 when similar fees in other jurisdictions are higher. As an example, Baltimore City's residential water connections fee is \$25, lower than other jurisdictions' base fees (\$50 in Howard County, \$30 in Baltimore County, \$50 in Anne Arundel County).
- Baltimore City's occupancy permit is \$45 for each use in each part of a building, lower than most other comparable jurisdictions. Because some jurisdictions charge a higher fee for commercial buildings, Baltimore City's fee trails even further for non-residential use and occupancy.
- Baltimore City's re-inspection fees start at \$50 for the first re-inspection. This is the lowest minimum in the comparison group. Corresponding fees in the comparison group range between \$74 and \$100. However, Baltimore City's inclusion of overtime costs for inspectors potentially improves cost recovery, depending on how often this charge is applied.

Building Permit Fee Structure

For certain fees, Baltimore City has a more complex fee structure than the comparison group. For example, Baltimore currently levies 12 different types of elevator fees, compared to one or two among the comparison group. While the City's elevator fee schedule includes separate fees for *person dumbwaiters*, *orchestra elevators*, *worker hoists*, etc., the comparison group levies fees based on the construction or repair of elevators as a single category. Some jurisdictions (Howard County and Montgomery County) also levy a different fee for commercial and residential elevator permits.



Fees Administered by the Department of Transportation

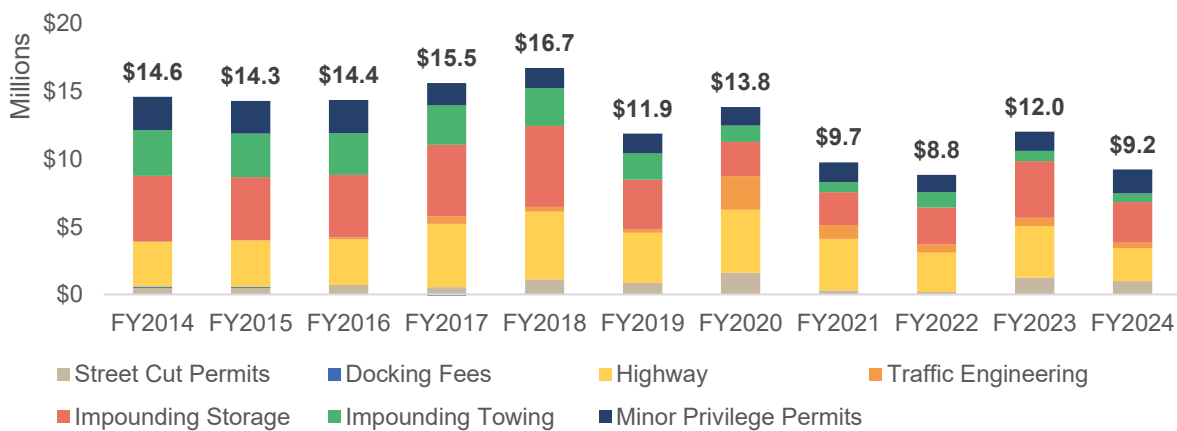
The Department of Transportation (DOT) administers several fees as part of its mission to maintain and improve the transportation infrastructure to produce a safe, reliable, accessible, and efficient system for everyone that provides multiple and sustainable modes of transportation for residents, businesses, and visitors. As part of this mission, the Department administers a mix of fees, which include docking fees, right-of-way permits, car towing storage, and traffic engineering. Revenues generated from these fees are included in the following general ledger accounts:

Fees Authorized by the Department of Transportation

Account	Revenue Category	Fees Included
RC0160	Public Docking	Harbor Shoreline Docking Fees ¹¹
RC0103	Street Cut Permits	Construction related right-of-way permit, Street-cut permit
RC0247	General Revenue – Highways	Right of way permits, Driveway, Footway and Alleys
RC0244	Impounding Cars – Storage	Daily storage, auction fees
RC0245	Impounding Cars - Towing	Towing Fees
RC0248	Traffic Engineering	Traffic Engineering reports, traffic maintenance
RC0099	Minor Privilege Permits	Minor Privilege Permits
N/A	Oversized Vehicles	Oversized Vehicles

DOT fees represented approximately 11.3% of the City's annual fee revenue in FY2024. These fees had a notable decline in FY2021 due to the suspension of certain fees during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹² Setting the pandemic-related decline aside, however, DOT fees still experienced a general decline of 4.5% annually over the last decade. Since FY2018, revenues have averaged \$10.9 million, compared to \$15.1 million from FY2014 to FY2018.

Department of Transportation Fee Revenue, FY2014 to FY2024



¹¹ The docking fee program was on hold since FY2016 and the City is expected to resume the program in FY2026. [confirm]

¹² Press Release: "Department of Transportation to Resume Daily Storage Fees for Impounded Vehicles Starting Thursday Jul 18th, 2024"



Below are the key findings from the benchmarking analysis of Department of Transportation fees.

For more details related to benchmarking analysis of Department of Transportation fees, please see Appendix page A-23.

DOT Fee Levels

Our benchmarking comparisons indicate that several DOT fees lag the fee levels among comparison group jurisdictions.

- Baltimore City charges flat towing rates of \$130 for standard vehicles towed west of Charles Street and \$140 east of Charles Street, trailing the comparison group. For example, Anne Arundel charges \$185, Baltimore County charges \$230, Howard County charges \$200, Montgomery County charges \$201, and Prince George's County charges \$175 to \$215 (depending on the origination of the tow). Only the District of Columbia charges less for standard tows, at \$100. That said, Baltimore City's towing fees for large vehicles, which range from \$305 to \$440, are comparable to the comparison group, where fees range from \$275 (District of Columbia) to \$834 (Montgomery County).
 - Additionally, Baltimore City does not impose several additional fees that are levied by the comparison group, particularly fees charged by Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, and Howard County. For example, Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, and Howard County charge between \$25 to \$30 for towed vehicles that are missing keys, while adding a 25% surcharge on tows during declared weather emergencies.
- Baltimore City's general oversized vehicle permit of \$60 (+ \$5 per ton above 45 tons) is comparable to the District of Columbia's flat \$85 fee. However, the District of Columbia's fee for dump/cement/trash trucks is much higher, at \$1,193, and Prince George's County's \$1,584 permit for oversized vehicles is even higher.
- Baltimore City's impound storage fees also trail the comparison group. Baltimore City's fee of \$50 for the first 48 hours (or \$25 per day) is lower than Howard County (\$90), Baltimore County (\$60), Prince George's County (\$50), Anne Arundel County (\$25 to \$50 depending on vehicle type), and Montgomery County (\$34). The only exception is the District of Columbia, which charges \$20 per day. Baltimore City's declining fee rate is also distinct from the comparison group. The City charges a reduced \$15 per day fee after 48 hours – a contrast to other counties which increase costs over time.
- Baltimore City's docking rates are generally lower than Anne Arundel County and the District of Columbia.¹³ For example, Baltimore City charges \$1.25 per foot on weekends for the daily docking of a 30-foot boat, while Anne Arundel charges \$3 per foot and the District of Columbia charges \$3.75 per foot (note: DC's weekly rate goes into effect after 4 hours).
- While direct comparisons for right-of-way fees are challenging due to the way fees are structured differently among jurisdictions, a high-level review indicates that Baltimore City's fee levels are comparable. That said, some other jurisdictions (e.g., Howard County, Prince George's County) apply a 10% technology fee, which helps improve cost recovery.

¹³ Anne Arundel County docking fees are charged by the City of Annapolis, and the District of Columbia Wharf Marina is owned by the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation, a government-owned corporation.



Minor Privilege Permit Program

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation (DOT) administers the Minor Privilege Permit Program, which regulates which private items can be placed in public rights-of-way. A minor privilege permit is required for items such as signs, awnings, tables and chairs, dumpsters, and other fixtures. In addition to minor privilege permits, some items may also require building permits or zoning approval. Fees are determined based on the type of item, its size, and zoning classification of the area. While certain minor privileges are charged flat one-time fees, others incur annual charges. In FY2023 and FY2022, the City issued 97 minor privilege permits of 120 applications received.

Summary of Minor Privilege Application			
FY	Received (Number)	Approved	
		(Number)	(Percentage)
2023	45	37	82
2022	75	60	80

Source: Auditors' analysis based on the data received from DOT's Access database on September 3, 2024.

Baltimore City's minor privilege fees are notable for the detailed, zone-based structure and, in most instances, the application of annual fees. While many cities regulate similar uses through zoning, licensing, or building permits, Baltimore's ongoing fee model is uncommon. For that reason, we compared Baltimore City's fees with national cities (including Boston, Milwaukee, and Philadelphia) to highlight alternative approaches to right-of-way permitting.

The below example details a minor privilege permit for a closed areaway, with annual fees ranging from \$4.20 per square foot in Zone C to \$8.80 per square foot in Zone A, plus a 20% inspection fee.

Department of Transportation – Areaway Minor Privilege Permit

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MINOR PRIVILEGE PERMITS
APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF ESTIMATES 1/21/15
Amended 10/25/2023
Penalty 50% of Annual Charge
Inspection Fee 20% of Annual Charge

<u>PRIVILEGE</u>	<u>COMPUTATION</u>	<u>ANNUAL CHARGE</u>
A = Zoned (B-4) (B- 5)	B = Zoned (B-2) (B-3)	C = All Others
<u>DISTRICT RATES</u>	<u>A</u> <u>B</u> <u>C</u>	
<u>AREAWAYS</u> -- Closed: per Sq. ft.	8.80 6.30 4.20	
Not to project more than 1/4 width of sidewalk, never to exceed 3 1/2 feet. Covered areaways shall be provided with an incombustible cover at sidewalk level. Where such cover is an open grating, the openings therein shall not be large enough to pass a 3/4-inch diameter ball. Means shall be provided to prevent persons falling into areaways while the covers are open. *If within area bounded by Paca, Fallsway, Pratt and Centre and not in "A" or "B" streets, to be charged at "B" rates. (Charges to be computed from exterior dimensions of walls, footing may be permitted to project not more than 6" beyond exterior of wall).		

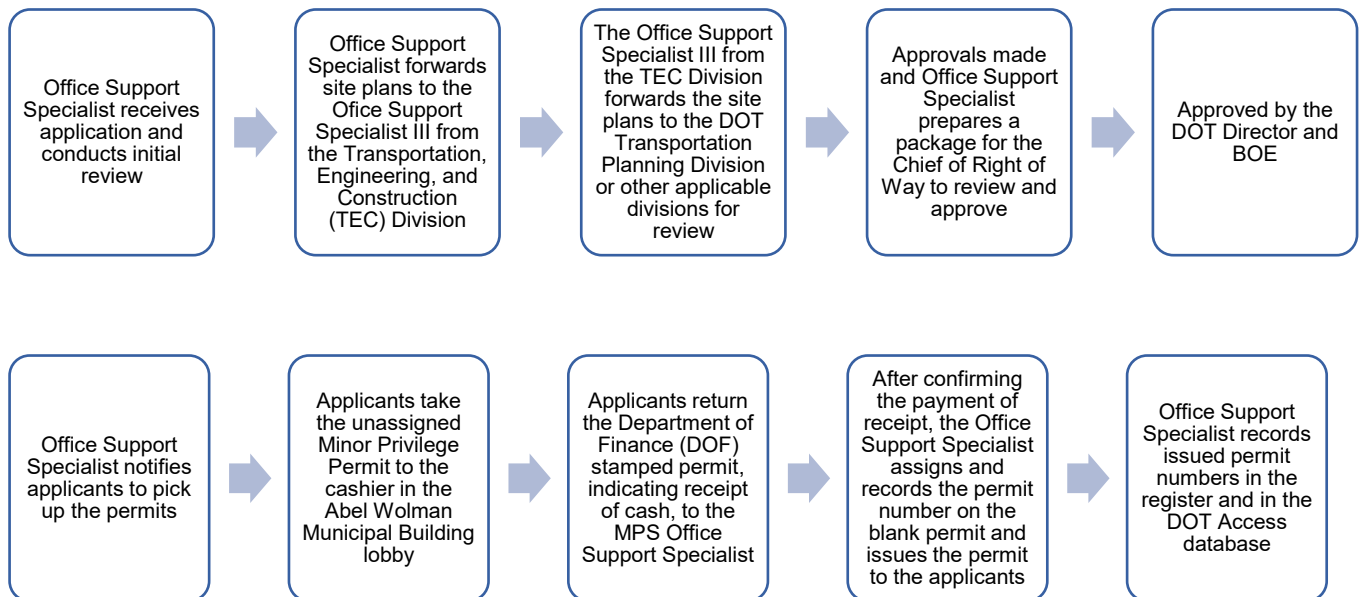


On a high-level basis, Baltimore City's minor privilege fees are comparable to – and at times higher than – fees levied by other national cities.

- Baltimore City's annual fixed commercial structure fees are more detailed, and in the case of sidewalk cafes, higher than the comparison group. Baltimore City charges an annual fee of \$337.50 plus \$14 per sq. ft above 80, compared to \$100 annually in Baltimore County, \$227 annually in the City of Philadelphia, and \$2 per square foot + \$100 annually in Milwaukee. The District of Columbia charges a one-time \$260 permit fee plus an annual \$5 to \$10 per sq. ft. fee annually.
- Baltimore City's minimum annual charge for an awning is \$210.90, compared to \$50 in Chicago and \$100 in Boston. Additionally, Baltimore City charges a minimum balcony fee between \$140.60 to \$281.30 (depending on location), compared to \$75 in Chicago and \$100 in Boston.
- For vaults, the City of Baltimore charges \$4.20 to \$8.80 per square foot per year, while the District of Columbia charges a one-time \$250 fee, Milwaukee levies a one-time fee of 1.6% of construction cost, and the City of Philadelphia charges \$5 to \$25 per front foot.

At the same time, Baltimore City's fee level adheres to the cost-of-recovery goal of levying fees. The minor privilege permit process includes acceptance, review and approval, collection of payment, issuance of permit, and recording issued permits in the DOT's database. The entire process can take at least 15 days.

Minor Privilege Permit Approval Process



Source: [Department of Transportation Effectiveness of the Minor Privilege Process](#), City Auditor, December 2, 2024

According to the FY2026 budget, an Office Support Specialist in DOT has an average salary of \$44,657 and benefit cost of \$20,011, totaling \$64,668. Including additional costs such as paid leave, central agency overhead, indirect cost, and operating cost, the hourly rate is at least \$55. For that reason, Baltimore City's minor privilege permits fee levels are appropriate from a cost-recovery perspective, even if selective fees are higher than some other national cities' fee levels.



Fees Administered by the Baltimore City Fire Department

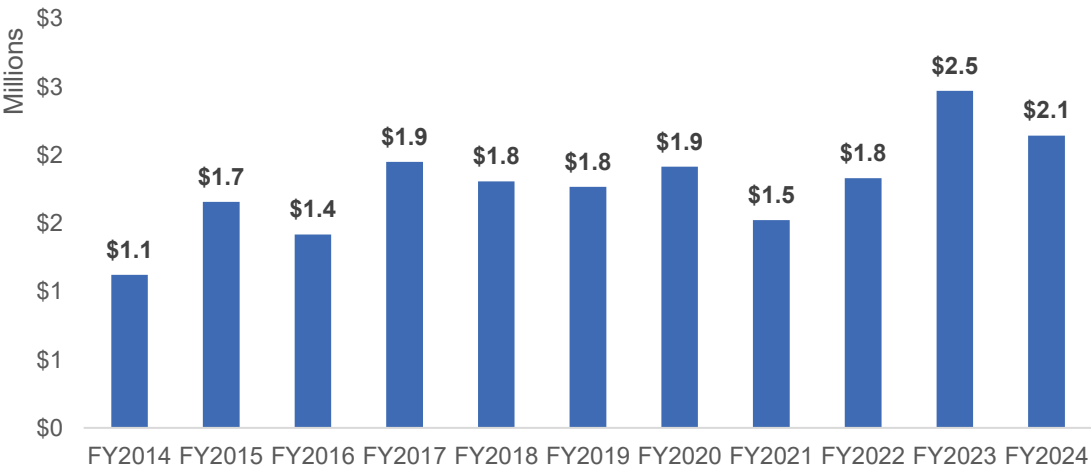
Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD) administers several fees as part of its mission to provide fire protection and prevention to City residents and businesses. Revenues generated from these fees are included in the following general ledger account:

Fees Authorized by the Fire Department

Account	Revenue Category	Fees Included
RC0076	Fire Prevention – Fire Code	Fire Protection, Hazardous Use, Hazardous Storage, Hazardous Building Use, Public Assembly, Special Events, Assisted Living, Commercial Occupancy, Burning

BCFD fees represent approximately 2.3% of the City’s annual fee revenue. These fees grew at an annual rate of 6.7% annually between FY2014 and FY2024 but had a notable decline in FY2021 when the City – as well as other jurisdictions in the region and across the country – experienced a drop in construction and social activities. The City’s rebound in revenues was also in line with national trends.

BCFD Fee Revenue, FY2014 to FY2024



Below are the key findings from the benchmarking analysis of BCFD fees.

For more details related to benchmarking analysis of BCFD fees, please see Appendix page A-36.

BCFD Fee Level

Several BCFD fees are comparable to other jurisdictions’ fees. For example:

- Hazardous storage and use fees are generally in line with other jurisdictions’ fees. For example, Baltimore City charges an annual \$150 permit for the general storage of combustible materials, comparable to the District of Columbia’s \$150 hazardous operations permit. That said, for larger facilities, Baltimore City’s fee likely trails jurisdictions that charge based on storage size (e.g., Howard County charges \$50 per acre and Prince George’s County charges \$60 per acre of combustible materials storage).
- Baltimore City’s base public assembly fees are generally in line with that of the comparison group. The City charges \$150 annually for spaces with a capacity of 50 to 249 people, the same as the District of



Columbia but higher than Howard County (\$100), Prince George's County (\$100), and Montgomery County (\$102.74).

Several BCFD fees, however, lag the fee levels among comparison group jurisdictions.

- Even though many BCFD hazardous material fees are in line with other jurisdictions' fee levels, welding and hot work fees trail. Baltimore City charges \$63, lower than \$102.74 in Montgomery County and \$150 in the District of Columbia.
- Nursery and day care center occupancy fees are \$81 per year, lower than Howard County (\$100), Montgomery County (\$120.74 annually), and Prince George's County (\$100).
- For board and care homes, Baltimore City charges \$113 annually, comparable to Montgomery County (\$102.74), but potentially lower than jurisdictions that charge fees based on the size of the facility. For example, Howard County's fee is \$100 plus \$2 per bed and Prince George's County's fee is \$120 plus \$2.50 per bed.
- Similarly, the City's annual hotel inspection fee also lags comparable jurisdictions. For example, for a hotel with 100 rooms, Baltimore City charges \$115 per year (based on the fee schedule of \$1.15 per bed), the second lowest among comparable jurisdictions. Only Montgomery County's annual \$102.74 fire compliance fee is lower than Baltimore City's.

Hotel Inspection Fee Example

(Hotel with 100 Rooms)

Jurisdiction	Est. Average Annual Fee	Fee Schedule
Baltimore City	\$115	\$1.15 per bed (annual)
Anne Arundel County	\$1,135	\$1,370 plus \$18 per room above 50 (two-year license)
Howard County	\$275	\$75 per building + \$2 per bed or apartment (annual)
Montgomery County	\$102.74	\$102.74 (annual)
Prince George's County	\$370	\$120 + \$2.50 per room (annual)
District of Columbia	\$422	\$619.00 + \$45.00 for every 10 units above 50 (two-year license)

- Baltimore City's sprinkler fees range from \$44 to \$63 depending on the number of sprinkler heads, which trails the comparison group fee levels. Assuming a 10-sprinkler apartment building with a construction cost of \$13,500¹⁴, Baltimore City's fee (\$44) is higher than the District of Columbia (\$33) but lower than all other jurisdictions in the comparison group.¹⁵

¹⁴ According to the Nation Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA), the average cost of residential sprinkler systems is \$1.35 per square foot of construction. The NFSA states that a NFPA 13R system is standard for low-rise residential occupancies.

¹⁵ There are other related mechanical fees authorized in the Building, Fire, and Related codes that are included in the corresponding summaries.



Sprinkler Permits Example

10-unit, 2-story Apartment Building and a Construction Cost of \$13,500 (NFPA 13R system)

Jurisdiction	Base Fee	Est. Fee	Fee Schedule
Baltimore City	\$44	\$44	\$44 (1 to 25 heads)
Anne Arundel County	\$215	\$258	\$164 building permit fee + \$51 residential fire suppression fee + \$43 application fee
Baltimore County	\$40	\$40	Pipe ≤ 2": \$40 + fire inspection fee
Howard County	\$75	\$133	\$75 (1 to 300 heads) + \$50 application fee + 10% technology fee
Montgomery County	\$76	\$76	\$7.57 per head
Prince George's County	\$220	\$308	\$220 (NFPA 13R) + \$66 admin fee + 10% technology fee
District of Columbia	\$30	\$33	\$3 per head (NFPA 13R) + 10% enhancement fee

- Baltimore City's \$50 bonfire fee is at the low end of the comparison group range of \$25 to \$150. Its commercial burning fee (\$63) also trails other jurisdictions, including Prince George's County and the District of Columbia, which charge \$124 (including additional administrative and technology fees) and \$150, respectively.

BCFD Fee Structure

While some of BCFD fees are comparable to other jurisdictions, the fees are scaled differently. The examples below highlight our findings of BCFD fee structures, which identify potential opportunities in the future for future review.

- Similar to our findings regarding the benchmarking comparison related to fees authorized by the Building, Fire, and Related Codes, the City has an opportunity to consolidate and simplify its fee levels. For example, Baltimore City's hazardous storage fees are highly detailed, with separate charges for specific hazardous materials such as calcium carbide, cellulose nitrate, matches, etc. In contrast, many neighboring jurisdictions impose fees based on the overall hazard level, and apply fees uniformly for use, storage, or transportation, with corresponding documentation detailing what conditions constitute a hazard.
 - Howard County, for instance, charges annual inspection fees on a five-tier hazard level for use, storage, or transportation.
 - Montgomery County charges annual fees based on the level of use (low to high).
 - The District of Columbia's fees are also less complex than Baltimore City, applying a flat \$150 annual fee for businesses with "hazardous conditions", which includes the use, production, or storage of hazardous materials.



District of Columbia Hazardous Conditions Requiring an Operational Permit¹⁶

The following hazardous conditions require an operational permit:			
1.	Aerosol Products	24.	Hot Work Operations
2.	Amusement Buildings	25.	Industrial Ovens
3.	Aviation Facilities	26.	Lumber Yard and Woodworking Plants
4.	Carnivals and Fairs	27.	Liquid or gas-fueled vehicles or equipment in assembly buildings
5.	Battery Systems	28.	LP Gas
6.	Cellulose Nitrate Film	29.	Magnesium
7.	Combustible Dust Producing Ops	30.	Misc. Combustible Storage
8.	Combustible Fibers	31.	Open Burning
9.	Compressed Gasses	32.	Open Flames and Candles
10.	Covered Mall Buildings	33.	Organic3 Coatings
11.	Cryogenic Fluids	34.	Places of Assembly
12.	Cutting and Welding	35.	Private Fire Hydrants
13.	Dry Cleaning Plants	36.	Pyrotechnic Special Effects Material
14.	Exhibits and Trade Shows	37.	Pyroxylin Plastics
15.	Explosives	38.	Refrigeration Equipment
16.	Fire Hydrants and Valves	39.	Repair Garages and Service Stations
17.	Flammable and Combustible Liquids	40.	Rooftop Heliports
18.	Floor Finishing	41.	Spraying or Dipping
19.	Fruit and Crop Ripening	42.	Storage of Scrap Tires and Tire Byproducts
20.	Fumigation and Insecticidal Fogging	43.	Temporary Membrane Structures, Tents and Canopies
21.	Hazardous Materials	44.	Tire Re-Building Plants
22.	Hazardous Production Materials (HPM) Facilities	45.	Waste Handling
23.	High Piled Storage	46.	Wood Products

¹⁶ District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department: *List of Hazardous Conditions Requiring Permit*, accessed 5/30/2025

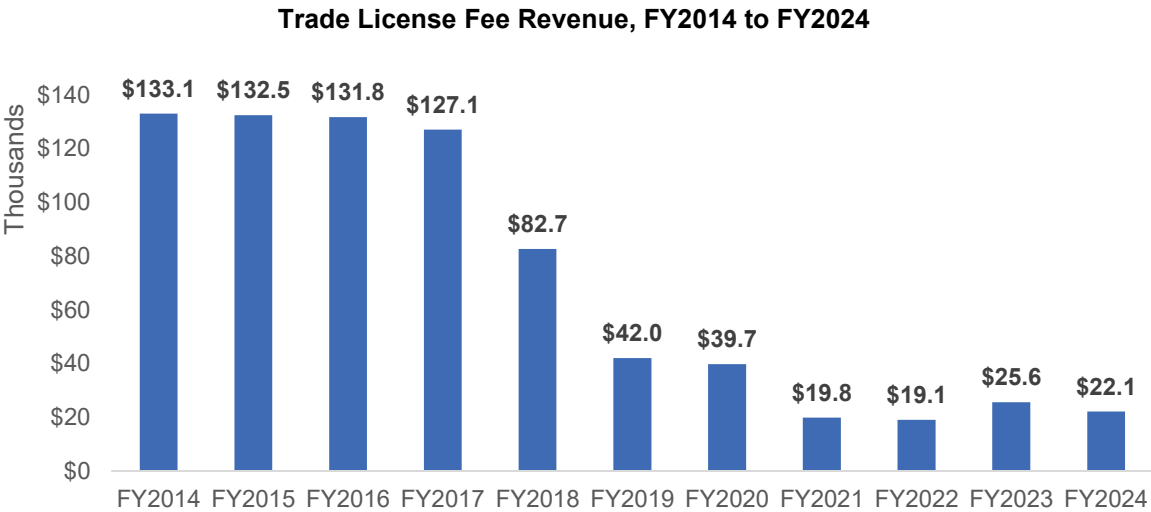


Trade License Fees

Trade licenses are permits which authorize individuals or businesses to perform specific skilled work within a jurisdiction. These licenses establish standards for qualifications (e.g., testing, professional experience, etc.) to ensure that work is performed safely and competently. Baltimore City levies an annual licensing fee for electricians, gas fitters, and utility contractors.

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) administers fees governing trade licenses – which include electricians, gas fitters, and on-site utility contractors – within Baltimore City. Revenues generated from these fees are included in the following general ledger account:

Fees Authorized by DHCD	
Account	Revenue Category
RC0095	Trade Licenses



The trade license fees included in this section represent a very small portion (approximately 0.03%) of the City’s annual fee revenue. The associated fee revenues have declined at an annual rate of 16.4% between FY2014 and FY2024, with notable declines since FY2017. This is due in part to the adoption of the Maryland Electricians Act¹⁷, which eliminated the authority of local governments to test and license electricians under their own standards but allows local governments to register and license state-certified electricians. Other Maryland jurisdictions also saw similar decline.

Below are the key findings from the benchmarking analysis of trade license fees.

For more details related to benchmarking analysis of trade license fees, please see Appendix page A-21.

¹⁷ [Senate Bill 762 - Maryland Electricians Act](#)



Trade License Fee Level

Baltimore City's trade license fees are comparable to other jurisdictions' fee levels. For example, on an annual basis, Baltimore's \$75 electrician license is comparable to Anne Arundel County (\$85), Baltimore County (\$80), the District of Columbia (\$60) and Prince George's County (\$79). An annual master gas fitter license costs \$75 in Baltimore City, compared to \$85 in Anne Arundel County, \$112.50 in Baltimore County, \$72.50 in Montgomery and Prince George's County¹⁸, and \$60 in the District of Columbia.

Trade License Length

The one notable difference between Baltimore City's trade license fees and other jurisdictions' fees is that the City's fees are all charged on an annual basis, while several comparison jurisdictions charge fees on a bi-annual basis. For example, Baltimore County, Prince George's County, WSSC Water (for plumbers and gas fitters in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties) and the District of Columbia levy bi-annual licensure fees.

Trade License Length Comparison

Jurisdiction	Trade Licenses
Baltimore City	1 year
Anne Arundel County	1 year
Baltimore County	2 years
Howard County	1 year
Montgomery County	1 year
Prince George's County	2 years
WSSC Water (Montgomery County and Prince George's)	2 years (4 years for examined)
District of Columbia	2 years

¹⁸ Water and sewer services (including plumbing/gas fitting licenses) are provided by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), a bi-county agency governed by Montgomery and Prince George's County



Fees Administered by the Baltimore City Board of Municipal Zoning and Appeals

The Baltimore City Board of Municipal Zoning and Appeals (BMZA) administers various fees to cover the administrative costs associated with processing zoning and land use applications. This includes fees for variances (requests to deviate from the established zoning code), conditional use permits (requests to allow for uses subject to specific conditions), and nonconforming use permits (for properties with uses that no longer conform with zoning regulations).

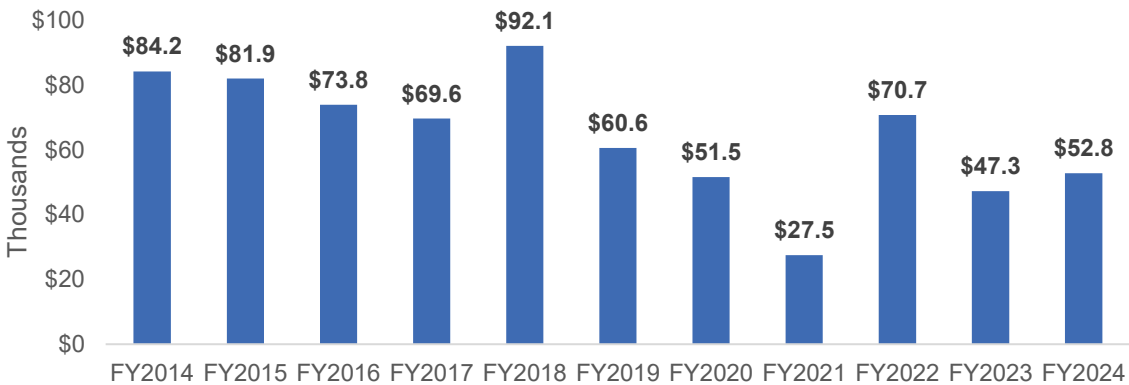
Revenue generated from these fees are recorded to the following general ledger account:

Fees Authorized by the BMZA

Account	Revenue Category	Fees Included
RC0200	RC0200 - Zoning Appeal Fees	Zoning Appeal Fees

BMZA fees represent a small amount (approximately 0.1%) of the City’s annual fee revenue. These fees have declined significantly over the last decade, notably during the pandemic as construction activity declined. While revenues have recovered since FY2021, FY2024 preliminary revenues still trail FY2014 by 37.3% in part because there were more appeals prior to the City updating the zoning code in 2016.

BMZA Fee Revenue, FY2014 to FY2024



Below are the key findings from the benchmarking analysis of BMZA fees.

For more details related to benchmarking analysis of BMZA fees, please see Appendix page A-50.

BMZA Fee Level

As illustrated in the benchmarking summaries included in the Appendix, BMZA fees generally trail other jurisdictions’ fee levels.

- For example, the sign variance fee in Baltimore City (\$200) when Baltimore County’s sign variance fees range from \$100 to \$500, depending on size/type. Howard County’s fee is even higher, at \$310.
- Nonconforming use fees in Baltimore City (\$300) are lower than Baltimore County (\$500), Howard County (\$500), and Montgomery County (\$416). The District of Columbia is an outlier and charges \$1,560 for a nonconforming use permit.



- Baltimore City's variance fees are among the lowest in the comparison group, with simple variance fees (involving two or fewer requests) costing \$100 and complex variances (involving three or more requests) costing \$200. In comparison, other jurisdictions have higher fees and more tiered fee structures. For example, Howard County charges \$820 for a residential variance and \$2,375 for other uses, while Montgomery County charges \$880 for a single-family residence and up to \$3,300 for commercial and industrial uses.



Vacant Property and Rental Property Registration Fees

In Baltimore City, rental properties are required to be registered, inspected, and licensed to ensure compliance with basic safety and maintenance requirements. Vacant properties, including lots and buildings, must be registered within 10 days from when the property becomes vacant or changes ownership.

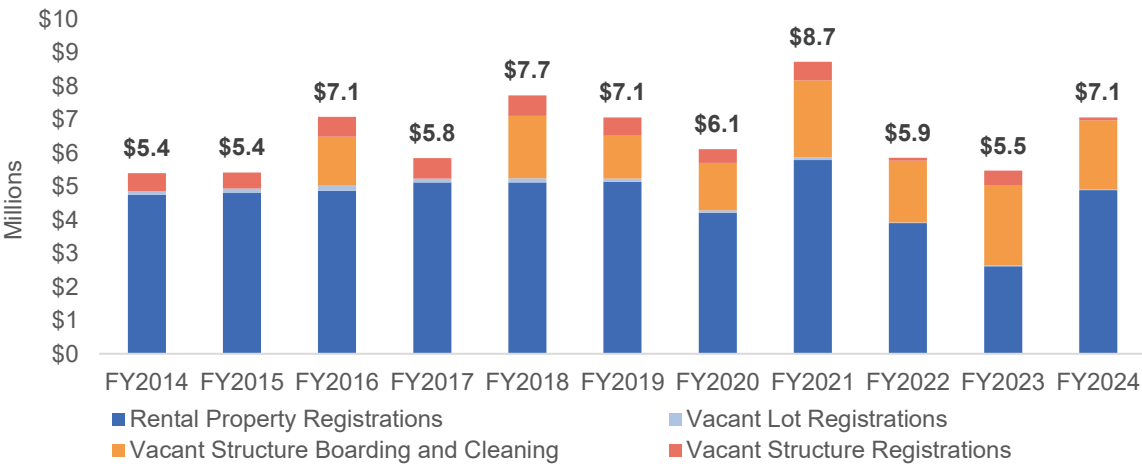
The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) administers fees governing the registration of vacant properties and rental properties, and the Department of Public Works (DPW) charges fees related to the costs of boarding and cleaning vacant properties.

Revenues generated from these fees are included in the following general ledger accounts:

Authorized Vacant Property and Rental Property Fees

Account	Revenue Category
RC0077	Rental Registration
RC0089	Vacant Structure Registration
RC0094	Vacant Lot Registration
RC0278	Vacant Structure Boarding and Cleaning

Vacant and Rental Property Fee Revenue, FY2014 to FY2024



In aggregate, these vacant and rental property fees represent 8.7% of the City’s FY2024 fee revenue. As shown, these fees have increased over the last decade, driven largely by additional vacant structure boarding and cleaning fees.

Below are the key findings from the benchmarking analysis of vacant and rental property fees.

For more details related to benchmarking analysis of vacant and rental property fees, please see Appendix page A-45.



Vacant and Rental Property Fee Level

Baltimore City's vacant and rental property registration fees generally fall below those of most peer jurisdictions.

- For example, the City charges \$100 annually for the registration of vacant residential property. This trails all of the jurisdictions in the national comparison group, except for Cleveland, Ohio, which charges \$70 annually. Most jurisdictions charge a vacancy registration fee of \$250 to \$300, while Chicago increases its fee to \$700 for bank/lender owned properties.
- Baltimore City's rental registration fees range between \$30 to \$35 annually when the same fees are generally higher among comparable jurisdictions. As an example, for annual single-family rentals, Baltimore City's fee is \$30 when Howard County charges \$46.75, Montgomery County charges \$130, Prince George's County charges \$76, and the District of Columbia charges \$99. That said, fees in Baltimore County (\$16 per year) and Anne Arundel County (\$15 per year) are generally lower.

Vacant and Rental Property Fee Structure

Unlike some peer jurisdictions, Baltimore City does not scale vacancy fees to capture additional revenue for larger or long-vacant properties. While Baltimore City charges a flat fee for vacant properties, other jurisdictions charge separate fees for commercial properties or, in the case of Chicago, charge a fee for vacant storefronts in otherwise occupied buildings.

Additionally, the City of Albany, NY implements a comprehensive tiered vacancy fee structure that escalates based on both property size and the duration of vacancy. For residential properties with 1 to 3 units, the annual vacancy fee starts at \$250 and increases to \$1,000 after three years. Larger properties follow a parallel pattern, with fees for buildings with seven or more units increasing from \$1,000 in the first year to \$4,000 beyond three years of vacancy. In comparison, Baltimore City's flat fee structure does not incorporate the escalating cost mechanisms seen in Albany.

City of Albany, New York Vacancy Fees

Property Type / Units	Year 1 of Vacancy	>3 Years of Vacancy
Residential: 1 to 3 units	\$250	\$1,000
Residential: 4 to 6 units	\$500	\$2,000
Residential: >7 units	\$1,000	\$4,000
Mixed-use: <4 units	\$500	\$2,000
Mixed-use: >4 units	\$1,000	\$4,000

At the same time, Baltimore City's fees for boarding of vacant homes – which is somewhat unique – allows for cost recovery from nuisance vacant properties.



Waste Disposal Fees

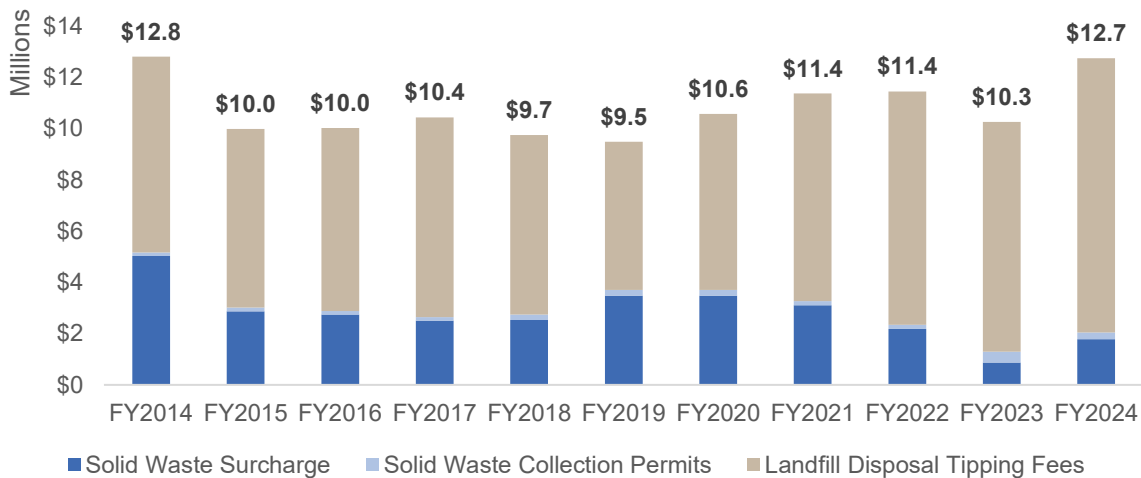
Baltimore City Health Department (BHCD) and Department of Public Works (DPW) collect fees related to waste collection and disposal. This includes annual registration and permit fees for waste haulers, as well as disposal fees at municipally owned facilities. Revenue generated from these fees are recorded to the following general ledger account:

Fees Authorized for Waste Haulers and Disposal

Account	Revenue Category
RC0251	Solid Waste Surcharge
RC0098	Solid Waste Collection Permits
RC0249	Landfill Disposal Tipping Fees

Solid waste fees represent 15.6% of the City's annual fee revenue. These fees declined at an annual rate of 0.05% between FY2014 and FY2024, from a high of \$12.8 million in FY2014 to \$12.7 million on a preliminary basis in FY2024.

Waste Fee Revenue, FY2014 to FY2024



The City of Baltimore issues annual licenses for businesses or individuals hauling waste in addition to disposal charges at municipal processing facilities. While waste hauler fees vary based on the vehicle type or the waste category, disposal fees are usage-based charges that vary by the type and volume of waste. Below are the key findings from the benchmarking analysis of waste disposal fees.

For more details related to benchmarking analysis of waste disposal fees, please see Appendix page A-48.

Waste Disposal Fee Levels

Baltimore City's hauler permit fees and liquid waste disposal fees are generally comparable to surrounding jurisdictions, but its scavenger vehicle license fee and solid disposal fees both trail the comparison group fee levels.



- Baltimore City's scavenger vehicle permit fees (\$29 to \$33 depending on whether it is in-state or out-of-state) are comparable to the District of Columbia (\$30) but trails Anne Arundel County (\$50) and WSSC (minimum of \$185).
- Baltimore City charges \$20 per load for small haulers and \$67.50 per ton for construction debris, which trails the comparison group. Baltimore County charges \$125 per ton of solid waste, while Howard County charges \$160, Prince George's County charges \$77 (increasing to \$85 on 7/1/25), and Montgomery County charges \$70 per ton above 500 lbs. The District of Columbia solid waste ordinance indicates a minimum of \$13.38 per ton for transfer at District-owned solid waste facilities plus a minimum of \$2.0 per ton for the disposal. Actual fee levels may be significantly higher than the minimum indicated in the ordinance.



Special Event and Public Assembly Fees

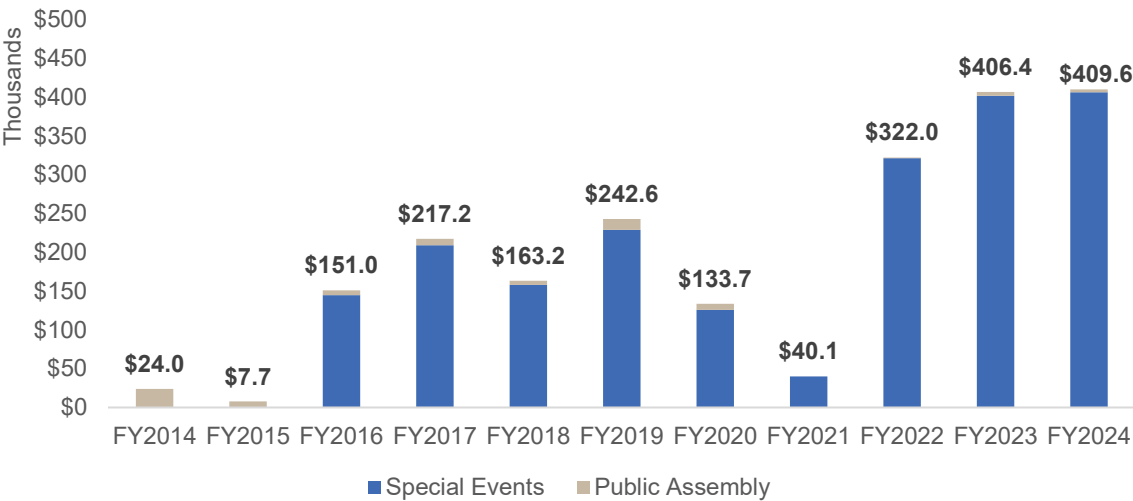
The City of Baltimore levies fees for special event permits, as well as services provided at special events and public assemblies, including rental equipment, employee time, and inspections. These fees are attributed to the following revenue accounts:

Fees Authorized by the Building, Fire, and Related Codes

Account	Revenue Category
RC0104	Special Event Permits
RC0087	Public Assembly Permits

Revenue from fees authorized for special events and public assembly represented approximately 0.5% of the City’s total fee revenues in FY2024. These revenues have grown significantly over the past decade, absent a notable decline during the pandemic, when many public events were cancelled or limited in capacity. The post-pandemic rebound mirrors the pattern seen in other pandemic-affected revenues.¹⁹

Special Event Fee Revenue, FY2014 to FY2024



As illustrated in the benchmarking summaries that follow, below are the key findings from this comparison exercise.

- Baltimore’s structure for special event fees differs from the comparison group in certain instances.
 - Baltimore City’s special event fee (short-term assembly) structure is detailed, with 14 separate event types—such as circuses, fairs, bazaars, and sporting events—each priced at one-day and one-week rates. This dual pricing structure creates 28 distinct fee options for temporary events. In contrast, peer jurisdictions like Montgomery and Howard counties apply more generalized fees based on event size or the timing of the application.

¹⁹ Fire Department revenues for special event service are attributed to the fire prevention revenue code and are reflected in the Fire Department benchmarking chapter.



- Several jurisdictions in the comparison group charge for the use of Fire and EMS apparatus, whereas Baltimore City does not currently impose these fees.
- Baltimore City's equipment rental fee schedule is comparable to the District of Columbia in its variety, though D.C., which is the site of many national events, includes a 50% surcharge for non-resident applicants. Baltimore City offers a 50% discount to 501 (c)(3)'s, which significantly reduces its fees.
- Baltimore City's fee for police officer service is comparable to other jurisdictions' fees included in the analysis.
 - Baltimore City's fee of \$65 per hour for police officers is comparable peer jurisdictions: the District of Columbia charges \$71.52 per hour, Anne Arundel charges \$60 per hour, and Howard County charges \$64.81 per county employee.
- Several special event fees, however, lag the fee levels among comparison group jurisdictions.
 - Baltimore City's minimum special event permit fees tend to be lower than those in surrounding counties. For example, a one-week carnival permit in Baltimore City starts at \$95, compared to \$177 in Baltimore County and \$363 or more in Prince George's County before additional fees. However, Baltimore City's \$80 to \$250 special event application fee (depending on the timing of the application) allows for additional cost recovery.
 - Baltimore City's traffic control fee of \$32.50 per hour (minimum of 4 hours) trails the District of Columbia, which charges \$50 per hour.
- The fireworks display fee is the one fee that Baltimore City charges at a noticeably higher rate than other jurisdictions. The City charges a \$600 standalone fee for a fireworks display, higher than Baltimore County (\$50 to \$100), Montgomery County (\$102.74), Prince George's County (\$250, plus \$50 per hour over four hours), and the District of Columbia (\$450). Note that Baltimore City's cost of providing the service is also likely higher due to its higher population density than the comparison counties.

Fire Apparatus Service Charges

The City of Baltimore does not currently charge for the use of Fire Department vehicles at special events. Instead, the City only assesses a \$60 per hour labor fee. This practice does not account for the costs associated with maintaining and operating specialized apparatus.

By comparison, the District of Columbia charges between \$200 for BLS/ALS ambulances and \$400 for fire apparatus. Additionally, Anne Arundel County includes fuel and maintenance costs based on FEMA reimbursement rates when assigning apparatus to special events.



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE CODE
PERMIT AND INSPECTION FEE SCHEDULE**



USE OF PERSONNEL (Service Request): For Special Event, Fire Watch, or Other ▪ Fire Inspector ▪ Fire Fighter ▪ Paramedic ▪ EMT	\$65.00 Per person, per hour for a minimum of four hours
USE OF FIRE AND EMS APPARATUS: For Parades, Festivals and other Special Events. Engine Company, Truck Company, Rescue squad, Rapid Hazardous Material Unit, or Fireboat Mass Casualty Unit Brush Unit Basic Life Support Ambulance Advanced Life Support Ambulance	\$400.00 per hour for a minimum of four hours \$400.00 per hour for a minimum of four hours \$400.00 per hour for a minimum of four hours \$200.00 per hour for a minimum of four hours \$200.00 per hour for a minimum of four hours



Fees Administered by the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD)

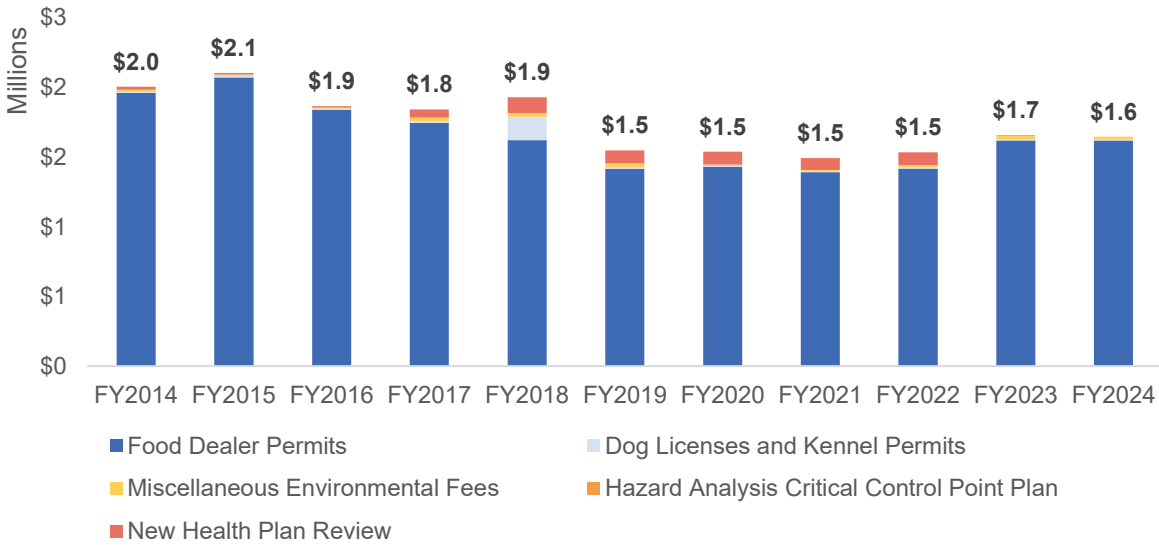
The Baltimore City Health Department levies fees for dog licensing and kennel permits, food dealers, Hazardous Analysis and Critical Control Point plans (HACCP), and other assorted health plan reviews and licensing.

Baltimore City Health Department Revenue Codes

Account	Revenue Category
RC0092	Dog Licenses and Kennel Permits
RC0096	Food Dealer Permits
RC0233	Misc. Environmental Fees
RC0238	HACCP
RC0237	New Health Plan Review

Revenue from these fees represented approximately 2.0% of the City’s total fee revenues in FY2024 and have declined at an average annual rate of 2.0% from FY2014 to FY2024, with a slight rebound in revenues observed following the pandemic.

Health Department Fee Revenue, FY2014 to FY2024



As illustrated in the benchmarking summaries in the Appendix, fees administered by the Health Department are generally below fees levied by comparable jurisdictions:

- While Baltimore City’s pet licensing fees are in line with surrounding counties, they are significantly lower than the District of Columbia. The fee for licensing an altered pet is \$10 in Baltimore City, compared to \$15 in the District, and \$30 in Baltimore City compared to \$50 in the District for unaltered pets. Additionally, the fee for a lost tag is \$1 in Baltimore City versus \$5 in the District.



- Animal boarding fees are daily fees charged for the care of impounded animals at a government shelter. Among the jurisdictions compared, Baltimore City's \$15 per day fee only applies only to animals impounded due to biting incidents, rather than all impoundments. Anne Arundel charges a flat \$5 daily fee, the District of Columbia charges a \$7 daily fee, and Montgomery County's fees range from \$5 to \$25 per day, depending on the type of animal and care requirements (such as medical care or behavioral reasons).
- Baltimore City's high-risk food license fee of \$520 is at the low end of the scale relative to the comparison group. Montgomery County charges \$525, Baltimore County charges \$540, Anne Arundel County charges \$590, and Prince George's County charges \$845. For low-risk licenses, Baltimore City's \$65 fee is the lowest of the comparison group, where fees range from \$100 (Howard County) to \$449 (Prince George's County).
- Baltimore City's \$50 temporary food license fee for festivals and special events is lower than the comparison group. Other than Baltimore County (which charges a \$35 per day fee), other jurisdictions in the comparison group charge significantly higher for temporary and provisional food permits, between \$72 (Howard County) and \$175 (Montgomery County).
- Baltimore City's food facility plan review fees are generally lower than the comparison group. For example, while Baltimore City charges \$100 for a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan review, the District of Columbia charges between \$75 and \$200, Anne Arundel charges \$750, and Howard County charges \$265.
- Baltimore City's reinspection fees are also lower than the comparison group. Baltimore City's \$50 reinspection fee trails Baltimore County (\$140), the District of Columbia (\$100), Anne Arundel (\$175), Howard County (\$95), and Prince George's County (\$120).
- Baltimore City's \$30 food service manager certification fee is the lowest of the comparison group, where fees range from \$35 (Baltimore County) to \$73 (Prince George's County).
- Baltimore City's \$80 well permit is also the lowest of the comparison group, excluding the District of Columbia, which charges \$10.31 to \$77.35 per well, with a maximum fee per lot of 10 wells.

Conclusion

As indicated in this chapter, many of Baltimore City's fees trail the fees levied by the comparison group. The next chapter details the cost-of-service analysis and fee collection processes for each department. The combination of the benchmarking analysis, cost-of-service analysis, and fee administration analysis will inform recommendations from this Fee Study.



Fee Administration

In addition to the financial trend analysis and benchmarking analysis, PFM developed a cost-of-service calculation and gathered information on fee collection processes which is used in conjunction with the benchmarking analysis to inform the recommendations made in this report.

To gather the information included in this chapter of the Study, PFM conducted multiple interviews with City agencies between May and August 2025. During these interviews, PFM focused on three main areas:

- The permitting or application process, the time it takes to administer fees, and the employees responsible for review and approval of permits and licenses.
- The current application and fee collection process, including why certain fees do not currently provide for an online payment option.
- An overview of the benchmarking findings and agency feedback for preliminary recommendations

The rest of this chapter details our findings on the cost-of-service calculation and fee collection processes.

Cost-of-Service Calculation

As part of this engagement, PFM developed a cost-of-service analysis to calculate the full cost of providing fee-related services, which include the following:

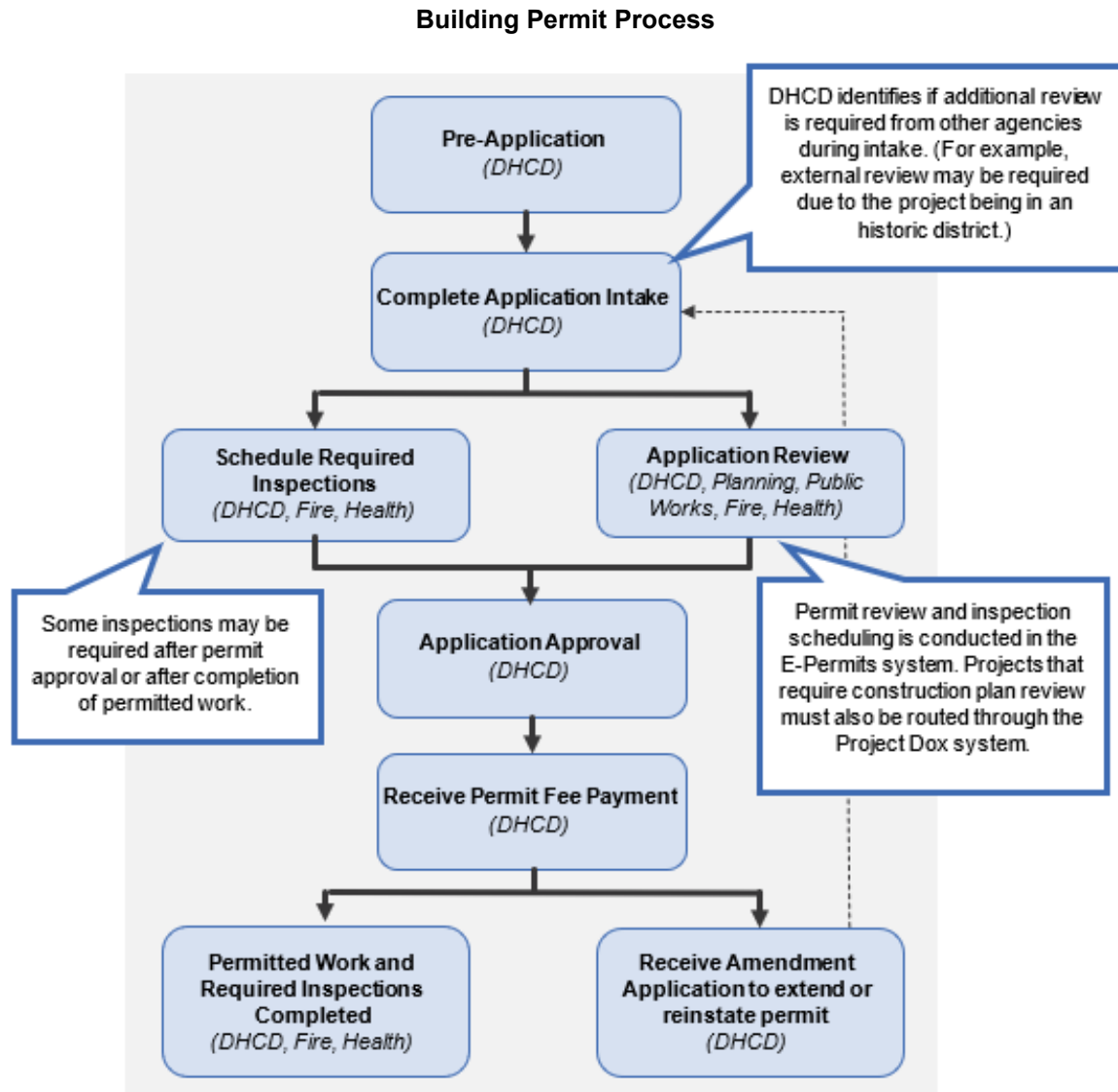
- **Direct labor hours** for permit intake, plan reviews, inspections, letter drafting (if applicable), and the release of bond and permits. City staff estimated the average number of hours to complete plan reviews and inspections.
- **Indirect labor hours** related to paid time off, administration, and management. Cost of leave was estimated as a percentage of hours of paid leave taken relative to total hours (estimated at 12.0%). The calculation also included an allocation for administration and management time based on salaries of positions in managerial and administration roles.
- **Employee benefits** including health benefits, retiree benefits, and other benefits (e.g., Medicare and Social Security). The calculation accounted for benefits cost allocation of 46.2% of base salary based on the FY2026 budgeted payroll data.
- **Operating costs** (such as computer software and equipment, credit card fees, and supplies) and transportation costs (such as fuel and vehicle maintenance): To estimate the operating costs, the analysis included an operating cost allocation of 26.0% of total personnel costs based on the FY2026 budget. Additionally, vehicle-related costs are based on the estimated mileage based on discussions with City staff and the 2025 federal mileage reimbursement rate of \$0.70 per mile.
- **Indirect cost allocation** that accounts for central services such as budget, payroll, and human resources. The calculation included an indirect cost allocation equivalent to 13.0% of total personnel cost based on the FY2026 budget.

These cost components are applied to the amount of time estimated to complete each step of the fee administration process based on information gathered through virtual interviews and correspondences with agency heads and/or agency fee administrators.



Fee Administration Process

Most permits follow the general process of permit intake, agency review, permit approval, and fee payment. That said, there are often additional compliance requirements that require additional agency review or inspections. As an example, the following flow chart illustrates the permitting process for building permits administered by the DHCD.



Cost-of-Service Findings

Using the information gathered from departmental interviews, PFM estimated the cost of providing services for each major category of fees and concluded that the current fee levels for the majority of fees are significantly lower than the cost of providing services. For example, for a simple variance fee (administered by the Baltimore City Board of Municipal Zoning and Appeals), based on the time for intake and application review (at least 1 hour), administrative/legal review (1.5 hours), sign information (0.5 hour), board hearing (at least 15 minutes), and post-hearing resolution drafting (1 hour), the minimum cost for administering a variance appeal would be over \$400, while the fee is only \$100.



Minimum Cost of Service for One BMZA Variance Appeal

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	1.00	\$41	\$7	\$48	\$12	\$6	\$67
Administrative/Legal Review	1.50	\$91	\$17	\$107	\$27	\$14	\$148
Provide Sign/Poster Information	0.50	\$20	\$4	\$24	\$6	\$3	\$33
Zoning Board Hearing	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$21	\$5	\$3	\$29
Post-Hearing Resolution	1.00	\$60	\$11	\$71	\$18	\$9	\$99
Case Closure	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$21	\$5	\$3	\$29
Total	4.50	\$247	\$45	\$292	\$75	\$38	\$404
Current Fee Level: Simple/misc.: \$100 Complex/sign: \$200 Combination: \$500							

Similarly, the Department of Health's food facility permit fees trail the cost of administration. Because the minimum administrative costs apply only to a very small subset of applicants, the department provided average cost estimates to more accurately reflect service delivery. On average, these licenses cost \$756 to administer across eight and half hours of staff time, exceeding the permit fees, which range from \$65 to \$520. This includes four and a half hours for inspections, and an average of one hour of travel.

Average Cost of Service for Food Facility Permits

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.50	\$23	\$4	\$27	\$7	\$3	\$37
Administrative Review	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$20	\$5	\$3	\$27
Permit/Plan Review	1.50	\$100	\$18	\$118	\$30	\$15	\$163
Plan Review Inspection	3.00	\$156	\$28	\$184	\$47	\$24	\$255
Inspection	1.50	\$78	\$14	\$92	\$24	\$12	\$128
Inspection Travel	1.00	\$52	\$9	\$61	\$21	\$8	\$90
Permit Approval	0.50	\$23	\$4	\$27	\$7	\$3	\$37
Permit Issuance	0.25	\$11	\$2	\$13	\$3	\$2	\$19
Total	8.50	\$458	\$84	\$542	\$144	\$70	\$756
Current Fee Level: Annual Food License: \$65 to \$520 Seasonal Food License: \$145 to \$350 Catering License: \$625							

While current fee levels are generally lower than the cost of providing services, this exercise also indicated that several fee categories are recovering most of their direct costs. For example, the minimum costs of administering scavenger vehicle permits, waste hauler permits, and minor privilege permits are closely in line with the minimum and average fees levied. However, these particular fees differ from others because they are associated with additional contractual or operational expenses not captured in the cost-of-service model.

For instance, beyond the employee-related costs included in the model, the Department of Public Works is expected to spend \$13.7 million on tipping fees at the Wheelabrator waste-to-energy facility. Similarly, although



the fees for scavenger vehicles cover the administrative cost of processing applications, DPW also incurs substantial cost for liquid waste treatment. In FY2026, this includes an estimated \$13.7 million for chemical supplies and \$21.5 million for “sludge heat drying” – an energy intensive process used to remove solids from liquid waste.

In the case of minor privilege permits, while fees cover most of the cost of initial administration, they do not account for DOT ongoing right-of-way responsibilities of inspection and maintenance, as well as DHCD’s cost of inspecting minor privilege permits that require a building permit. These ongoing operating costs are not reflected in the upfront fees in the cost-of-service model.

The final recommendations for fee adjustments incorporate any relevant findings from the cost-of-service analysis to ensure that the City does not recover more than the cost of providing services. For the full cost-of-service calculation and analysis by City agency, please refer to Appendix B.



Fee Collection Processes

Baltimore City Departmental Application and Payment Options

Fee	Application Submission		Payment Option		
	Online	In-Person	Online	In-Person	Credit Card Option?
Department of Housing and Community Development					
Building Permits	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trade Licenses		✓		✓	
Property Registration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use and Occupancy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Department of Transportation					
Curb Cuts / Driveway Installation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harbormaster Docking Fees	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Minor Privileges		✓		✓	✓
Oversized Vehicles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Right-of-Way	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Special Events	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vehicle Towing / Storage		✓		✓	✓
Baltimore City Fire Department					
Open Burning	✓			✓	
Fire Inspections	✓			✓	
Fire Inspections (renewal)	✓		✓	✓	
Special Event Service	✓		✓		✓
Baltimore City Board of Municipal Zoning and Appeals					
Alley and Footway Appeal		✓			
Conditional Use	✓		✓		✓
Nonconforming Use	✓		✓		✓
Variance Fee	✓		✓		✓
Baltimore City Health Department					
Food Licenses		✓		✓	✓
Food Licenses (renewal)	✓		✓	✓	✓
Pet Impoundment		✓		✓	✓
Pet License	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Plan Review		✓		✓	✓
Swimming Pools/Spas		✓		✓	✓
Tattoo Establishments		✓		✓	✓
Waste Hauler Permits		✓		✓	✓
Well Tags		✓		✓	✓
Department of Public Works					
Boarding Vacant Homes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fire Hydrant Use		✓		✓	
Waste Disposal		✓		✓	✓



The City uses several application platforms for permit application. The most recently implemented platform is *Accelea*, which the City uses for all its building permit applications administered by DHCD. On the opposite end of the spectrum, some fees still require paper applications and in-person permit submission and fee payment.

The above table summarizes the application and fee payment option for each major fee category by City agency. For detailed summaries of application and fee collection options by fee and agency, please refer to Appendix C.

Understanding how the City administers permits and collects fees is a vital component of this analysis because processes can have a major impact of collection rates and revenue generated. A centralized, online permitting platform should result in a more streamlined administrative process, increased efficiency, and improved revenue collection rates. For that reason, we recommend the City **establish a concrete plan and timeline for a Citywide online permitting system, with periodic progress updates and checkpoints to ensure that implementation is on schedule.**

As shown in the table on the previous page, many permits in Baltimore City require in-person applications and non-electronic payments. Whether it is a tattoo establishment license, a waste hauler registration, or a minor privilege permit, residents must print forms and/or visit offices in person for manual processing.

One example of a paper-based permit application is for the temporary use of a fire hydrant. Residents and businesses in Baltimore City can apply for the temporary use of a fire hydrant for multiple purposes (e.g., filling a pool, cleaning a construction site, etc.). Applicants complete the form below and submit the application to the Bureau of Water and Wastewater. Fees, which are determined based on the number of hydrants and length of the permit, must be paid in person via check or money order.

Fire Hydrant Permit Application

PART IV OF: REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF WATER	Fire Hydrant Permit
<u>WATER SUPPLY FROM FIRE HYDRANTS:</u> The primary function of fire hydrants is to supply water for fire protection. Secondary use of fire hydrants requires Director of Public Works approvals. Any company or person utilizing a service or fire hydrant without a permit from the Department of Public Works is in violation of Article 24, Section 21-6 of the Baltimore City Code. Permits must be obtained from the Bureau of Water and Wastewater. Only those locations specified in the permit may be used by the applicant and only for the time specified. Before a permit can be issued, the following fees and deposits must be paid: FEES: Permit.....\$191.00 (for each location) USAGE:\$84.20 Baltimore City.....Rate Per Day **Excluding Sundays & Legal Holidays (for each location) ** The cost of repairing or replacing any damaged equipment may be billed to the permit holder. The following rules apply to permit holders. Failure to comply will be considered a violation: 1. Only the 2 1/2 inch nozzle outlet on fire hydrant is to be utilized. Connections to the 4 1/2 inch nozzle are not permitted of any fire hydrant. 2. Fire hydrants found to be defective in any way must be reported immediately to the Bureau of Water & Wastewater. 3. Since individual permits will be issued for each location, the permit must be displayed or present at the site of water procurement.	Name: _____ Company Name: _____ Company Address: _____ Company Telephone#: _____ Location of Fire Hydrant: _____ Date(s) Of Usage (90 days at a time): _____ Method of Payment: _____ Reason for Usage (be specific): _____ Is this an extension? Yes or NO (Circle One) Application Dept 8:30 am – 4:30 pm 410-396-5533



According to information gathered from agency interviews, the City is moving toward a Citywide online permitting system. The Health Department started to integrate into the City's Accela platform in 2021. This process was paused to prioritize DHCD's adoption of Accela. DHCD successfully launched their "E-Permit" system in early 2025. The Health Department expects to adopt Accela over the coming years.

While integrating existing processes into a centralized permitting system is a time-consuming and labor-intensive effort, we encourage the City to prioritize this initiative and take a structured approach to implementation. A centralized, digital permitting system will streamline operations, improve applicant experience, and strengthen the City's ability to manage and enforce permit requirements. To support this transition, we recommend the following actions:

- **Appoint a centralized project owner:** Designate a lead individual or team responsible for overseeing the implementation of the permitting system, ensuring accountability and cross-departmental coordination.
- **Develop a detailed implementation schedule:** Establish a clear timeline with defined milestones, including short-term and long-term goals, to track progress and maintain momentum.
- **Assign step-level ownership:** Identify responsible parties for each stage of the permitting process—from application intake to review, approval, and fee collection—to clarify roles and streamline execution.
- **Anticipate and manage system limitations:** Recognize that no online system is perfect. The City should prepare for interface challenges, technical bugs, and other roadblocks, with a plan for user support and system updates.
- **Centralize and modernize functionality:** Transitioning to an integrated platform will enable electronic application submission, more accessible payment options, and better user experience for applicants.
- **Strengthen data management and enforcement:** A centralized system will improve the City's ability to track permit activity, monitor compliance, and increase collection efficiency.

In the long term, this investment will pay dividends in operational efficiency, data transparency, and public service delivery.

Appendix A: Benchmarking Analysis

Benchmarking Analysis

As part of this engagement, PFM performed a benchmarking analysis to compare the City's fees with those of Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County, Howard County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County (also known as the "Maryland Big Six"). PFM also included the District of Columbia (or Washington, D.C.) in the comparison group to provide an additional perspective.

Economic and Demographic Context – Primary Comparison Group²⁰

	Population	Median Household Income	Median Earnings	Per Capita Income	Median Home Value	Poverty Rate
Baltimore City	565,239	\$59,579	\$56,887	\$38,534	\$241,900	20.2%
Anne Arundel County	594,582	\$117,650	\$77,738	\$56,852	\$460,600	5.7%
Baltimore County	844,703	\$87,056	\$65,960	\$46,901	\$345,900	9.7%
Howard County	336,001	\$141,159	\$92,871	\$64,401	\$603,400	5.0%
Montgomery County	1,058,474	\$125,371	\$83,987	\$64,527	\$636,200	7.0%
Prince George's County	947,430	\$98,027	\$65,279	\$45,463	\$422,300	11.0%
District of Columbia	678,972	\$108,210	\$100,747	\$78,479	\$715,500	14.0%
Median (excl. Baltimore City)	761,838	\$112,930	\$80,863	\$60,627	\$532,000	8.4%

This comparison group was used for the benchmarking analysis for most fees. However, because some fees are more common among cities (e.g., vacant property registration fee, minor privilege permits etc.), PFM included a secondary comparison group and additional points of comparison to provide an understanding of Baltimore City's fee levels.

Economic and Demographic Context – Secondary Comparison Group²¹

	Population	Median Household Income	Median Earnings	Per Capita Income	Median Home Value	Poverty Rate
Baltimore City, MD	565,239	\$59,579	\$56,887	\$38,534	\$241,900	20.2%
District of Columbia	678,972	\$108,210	\$100,747	\$78,479	\$715,500	14.0%
Chicago, IL	2,664,454	\$74,474	\$67,119	\$48,954	\$318,900	16.8%
Boston, MA	652,442	\$96,931	\$81,607	\$61,919	\$703,600	15.6%
Milwaukee, WI	561,369	\$52,992	\$50,402	\$29,800	\$183,700	22.1%
Philadelphia, PA	1,550,542	\$60,302	\$58,650	\$37,973	\$246,600	20.3%
Median (excl. Baltimore City)	678,972	\$74,474	\$67,119	\$48,954	\$318,900	16.8%

This Appendix details our benchmarking findings for the following fee categories:

- Fees authorized by the City's Building, Fire and Related Codes (includes building permits, electrical permits, mechanical permits, plumbing permits, and elevator permits)

²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates

²¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates



- Fees administered by the Department of Transportation (includes right-of-way fees, minor privilege permits, street cuts, docking fees, traffic engineering, impounding/storing vehicles)
- Fees administered by Baltimore City Fire Department (includes fees such as sprinkler fees, hazardous storage fees, public assembly fees, and assisted living occupancy fees)
- Trade licenses (including electrician, gas fitter, and on-site utility contractor license fees)
- Fees administered by Baltimore City Board of Municipal Zoning and Appeals (including nonconforming use fees, variance fees, and sign variance fees)
- Vacancy and rental property fees (including vacant structure and lot registration fees, rental registration fees, and vacant structure boarding and cleaning fees)
- Special event fees (including permits, equipment rental fees, and special event service charges)
- Fees administered by the Baltimore City Health Department (including food dealer permits and inspections, business permits, and waste hauler permits)
- Fees administered by the Department of Public Works (including waste disposal fees, fire hydrant use permits, and fees related to the boarding of vacant homes)

The following table summarizes the fee categories included in the benchmarking analysis.

Phase I Fee Study – Fee Categories

Fee Categories	Revenue Account Code	FY2024 Revenue	FY2024 Revenue as a % of Total Fee Revenue
Building, Fire and Related Code fees	RC0080, RC0085, RC0079, RC0081, RC0082, RC0083, RC0084	\$10,654,404	13.1%
Baltimore City Fire Department fees	RC0076	\$ 2,142,357	2.6%
Department of Transportation	RC0160, RC0103, RC0247, RC0244, RC0245, RC0248, RC0099	\$9,213,451	11.3%
Vacancy and rental property fees	RC0077, RC0089, RC0094, RC0278	\$7,062,248	8.7%
Waste fees	RC0098, RC0249, RC0251	\$12,740,989	15.6%
Zoning fees	RC0076	\$2,142,357	2.6%
Special Events	RC0087, RC0104	\$981,802	1.2%
Trade Licenses	RC0095	\$22,100	0.0%
Baltimore City Health Department	RC0092, RC0096, RC0233, RC0238, RC0237	\$1,645,655	2.0%



Abbreviations

The following table provides a summary of abbreviations used in the analysis:

Abbreviation	Definition
Min.	Minimum
Max.	Maximum
Sq. ft.	Square foot/feet
Cu. ft.	Cubic foot/feet
LF	Linear foot/feet
GFA	Gross floor area
M-NCPPC	Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
MBH	Thousands of British thermal units per hour
kW	Kilowatts
BTU	British thermal units
kVA	Kilo-volt-amperes
ADU	Accessory dwelling unit



Residential New Construction Permits

Benchmarking findings: Building construction fees are generally levied based on the size of the footprint (by square footage or cubic footage) or by the construction value (in dollar amount) of the project.

Baltimore City's overall residential new construction fee levels are lower than the comparison group. For example, a permit for a 2,000 square-foot single-family home with 8-foot ceilings with construction plans would cost \$285 in Baltimore City and over \$500 in the District of Columbia, once additional fees are included. The same project in Howard County, which charges on a per-square-foot basis, would cost \$650 after additional fees are included.

Residential New Construction Permit Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	<u>New Construction and Additions</u> - Single/dual-family dwellings: \$10 per 1,000 cu. ft., min of \$150 (new building), \$75 (additions) - Multi-family: \$20 per 1,000 cu. ft. min of \$250 (new building), \$150 (additions) - Structures accessory to a principal occupancy: \$25 (< 100 sq ft), \$50 (>100 sq. ft.)	Filing Fee: Single/Dual Family: \$25 (no plans), \$125 (w/ plans) All others: \$50 (no plans), \$150 (w/ plans)
Anne Arundel County	- Estimated value of <\$25,000: \$86 to \$242 (depending on cost) - Estimated value above \$25,000: \$242 + 1% of estimated cost above \$25,000	Application fee: \$43
Baltimore County	- New construction/additions (single/dual family): \$231 - New construction/additions (multi-family): \$119 - Additions/accessory structures: \$85 to \$130 (depending on size)	N/A
Howard County	- Single family: \$0.25 per new gross sq. ft. + \$100 filing fee - Multi-family/additions: \$0.30 per new gross sq. ft. + filing fee (\$50 addition)	Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	- Single/dual-family detached: \$0.77 per sq. ft. + \$0.32 per sq. ft. of area exceeding 5,000 sq. ft. - Single/dual-family attached: \$1,514.10 - Single/dual-family attached (MPDU): \$1,081.50 - Additions: \$0.77 per sq. ft.	N/A
Prince George's County	- Single family dwelling: \$4,095 + \$1.30 per sq. ft. > 3,500 sq. ft. - Other Additions: \$1.17 per sq. ft. + \$1.30/sq. ft. > 3500 sq. ft.	Administrative Fee: \$66 Grading Fee: \$53 M-NCPPC: \$5 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	- New constructions/additions permit fee: \$0.03 per cu. foot of construction - Green Building Fee: \$0.002 per sq. ft. of construction	Enhancement Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Building Permit Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Building Permit Fees](#), [Howard County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DP/E Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#)



Residential Alterations and Repairs

Benchmarking findings: Baltimore City charges a variable fee for alterations and repairs based on square footage. Montgomery County and Howard County also charge per square foot, while Anne Arundel County, Prince George's County, and the District of Columbia calculate fees based on construction value.

As an illustration, using a conservative alteration cost of \$80 per square foot,²² for a single-family detached residential alteration of 600 square feet with construction plans, the permit fee would be \$305 in Baltimore City (including filing fees), higher than the fees levied by Baltimore County and Howard County. However, the same project would result in permit fees of at least \$400 in Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and Anne Arundel County. In the District of Columbia, the fee would exceed \$1,000.

Residential Alterations and Repairs Permit Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	- Single/dual-family dwellings: \$0.30 per sq. ft., min \$50 - Exception: \$10 for each \$1,000 in estimated cost (min \$150) for exterior/installation of interior doors only - Multi-family: \$0.35 per sq. ft., min \$150 - Exception: \$12 for each \$1,000 in estimated cost, min \$150 for exterior/installation of interior doors, new-tenant demising wall, or new-tenant shell space	Filing Fee: Single/dual family: \$25 (no plans), \$125 (w/ plans) All others: \$50 (no plans), \$150 (w/ plans)
Anne Arundel County	- Estimated value of <\$25,000: \$86 to \$242 (depending on cost) - Estimated value above \$25,000: \$242 + 1% of estimated cost above \$25,000	Application fee: \$43
Baltimore County	- Rehab (multi-family): \$79 - Additions/accessory structures: \$85 to \$130 (depending on size)	N/A
Howard County	<i>Attached/Detached Family Dwellings</i> - Single/small room area (200 sq. ft. or less): \$50 + \$25 filing fee - More than single floor or area (over 200 sq. ft.): \$100 + \$25 filing fee <i>Manufactured Homes (Mobile Homes)</i> - Relocation/installation: \$50	Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	\$0.68 per sq. ft. (min \$286.60)	N/A
Prince George's County	- Alteration/repair - Interior: \$220 or 1% of construction cost, whichever is greater - Alteration/repair without U&O - Exterior: \$220 or 1% of construction cost, whichever is greater - Garage - attached and detached: \$1.17 per sq. ft.	Administrative Fee: \$66 Grading Fee: \$53 M-NCPPC: \$5 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	- Construction valued < \$500: \$33 - Construction valued \$500 to \$1,000: \$65 - Construction valued \$1,001 to \$1 million: \$30 + 2% of construction value \$1,001 to \$1 million - Construction valued > \$1 million: \$10,030 + 1% of total construction cost - Green Building Fee: 0.13% on value up to \$1 million, 0.0065% above \$1 million	Enhancement Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Building Permit Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Building Permit Fees](#), [Howard County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#)

²² According to data from the National Association of Home Builders 2024 survey, average cost of construction was \$162 per square foot.



Residential Demolition

Benchmarking findings: For demolitions, some jurisdictions use a variable fee structure whereas others use a flat fee structure. Notwithstanding the difference in fee structure, Baltimore City's fees are comparable to the fees charged by the comparison group. As an example, for a 2,000 square foot residential structure with eight-foot ceilings, the exterior demolition permit fee in Baltimore City inclusive of filing fee (\$505) is higher than in jurisdictions with fixed fees (e.g., Howard County and Montgomery County) but potentially lower than those that charge based on construction cost.

Residential Demolition Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	<i>Interior Only</i> - Single/dual-family dwellings: \$0.02 per sq. ft., min \$25 - Multi-family: \$0.02 per sq. ft., min \$100 <i>Other than interior only</i> - Single/dual-family dwellings: \$0.03 per cu. ft., min of \$300, max \$5,000 - Multi-family: \$0.075 per cu. ft., min \$600, max \$5,000 - Accessory structures: \$50 each	Filing Fee: \$25 (single/dual-family), \$50 (all others)
Anne Arundel County	- Estimated value of <\$25,000: \$86 to \$242 (depending on cost) - Estimated value above \$25,000: \$242 + 1% of estimated cost above \$25,000	Application fee: \$43
Baltimore County	- Accessory structure and residential razing: \$0.30 per 100 sq. ft., min \$12 - All others: \$0.50 per 100 sq. ft., min \$17	N/A
Howard County	Demolition: \$50 per structure	N/A
Montgomery County	Demolition: \$156.82	N/A
Prince George's County	- Demolition (not full raze): \$172 - Raze: \$396 or 1% of construction cost, whichever is greater	Administrative Fee: \$66 Grading Fee: \$53 M-NCPPC: \$5 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	- Demolition: \$30 + 2% of construction cost - Raze: \$0.02 per cu. ft.	Enhancement Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Building Permit Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Building Permit Fees](#), [Howard County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#)



Residential Accessories

Benchmarking findings: While the fee structure for residential accessories vary, Baltimore City's fee levels generally align with fees levied by comparable jurisdictions. These fees range between \$25 and \$250 (plus a \$25 to \$150 filing fee) in Baltimore City while, among jurisdictions that levy flat fees, they range from \$25 to \$314 before additional fees.

Residential Accessory Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	- Chimneys, stacks, towers: \$35 to \$75 (depending on height) - Fences: \$10 per 100 linear feet or fraction thereof - Paving or surfacing: \$25 to \$85 (depending on sq. ft.) - Retaining walls: \$10 for each 100 sq. ft. of area above footing - Sign: \$1 per sq. ft., min. \$13 - Swimming pools: \$50 (private residence), \$250 (all others) - Temporary structures: \$20 per year for each 500 sq. ft., min \$35, max \$800	Filing Fee: Single/dual family: \$25 (no plans), \$125 (w/ plans)
Anne Arundel County	- Estimated value of <\$25,000: \$86 to \$242 (depending on cost) - Estimated value above \$25,000: \$242 + 1% of estimated cost above \$25,000	Application fee: \$43
Baltimore County	- Deck: \$85 to \$119 (depending on sq. ft.) - Fence: \$25 - Foundation: \$135 - Piers, Pilings, and Solar Panels: \$79 - Retaining walls: \$14 - Satellite dish: \$27 - Swimming pool: \$34 to \$54 (depending on type)	N/A
Howard County	- Foundation: \$200 - Swimming pools: \$100 to \$250 (depending on type) - Miscellaneous structures (Decks, Chimneys, Fireplace, etc.): \$50	Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	- Accessory buildings: \$118.96 (200 sq. ft. or less), \$0.77 per sq. ft. (>200 sq. ft.) - Decks: \$194.67 (500 sq. ft. or less), \$0.77 per sq. ft. (>500 sq. ft.) - Fences: \$77.87 - Retaining walls: \$194.67 - Swimming pools: \$232.52 to \$313.64 (depending on type) - Solar panels: \$113.56 to \$227.12 (depending on type)	N/A
Prince George's County	- Carport: \$1.17 per sq. ft. plus \$1.30/sq. ft. over 3,500 sq. ft. - Deck/Pergola/Gazebo/Ramp: \$151 - Fence: \$145 - Retaining wall > 2 ft: \$120 - Shed: \$1.17 per sq. ft. - Swimming pools: \$132 to \$297 (depending on type)	Administrative Fee: \$66 Grading Fee: \$53 M-NCPPC: \$5 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	- Garage/shed: \$65 - Foundation: \$130 for <50,000 cu. ft; \$650 for >=50,000 cu. ft. - Retaining wall/tank/tower: \$46 for each \$1,000 in construction cost - Swimming pool: \$260 for up to 15,000 gallons + \$33 for each additional 1,000 gallons	Enhancement Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Building Permit Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Building Permit Fees](#), [Howard County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#)



Commercial New Construction Permits

Benchmarking findings: Like the District of Columbia, Baltimore City's commercial new construction fee is based on cubic feet, while other jurisdictions' fees are based either on a per-square-foot basis or construction value.

Notwithstanding the difference in fee structure, Baltimore City's fee level is significantly lower. As an illustration, using a construction cost of \$160 per square foot,²³ for a 10,000-square-foot construction with eight-foot ceilings that requires construction plans, Baltimore City's fee is estimated at \$1,750 (inclusive of filing fees), compared to \$1,700 in Baltimore County (for non-motel/hotel), \$3,500 in Howard County (including filing and technology fees), \$2,662 in the District of Columbia (including Green Building and enhancement fees), and significantly higher among the remaining jurisdictions.

Commercial New Construction Permit Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• \$20 per 1,000 cu. ft., min \$250 (new building), \$150 (additions)	Filing Fee: \$50 (no plans), \$150 (w/ plans)
Anne Arundel County	• Estimated value of <\$25,000: \$86 to \$242 (depending on cost) • Estimated value above \$25,000: \$242 + 1% of estimated cost above \$25,000	Application fee: \$43
Baltimore County	• Assembly, business, institutional: \$0.17 per sq. ft (min \$366) • Hotels and Motels: \$0.14 per sq. ft (min \$293)	N/A
Howard County	• \$0.30 per sq. ft. + \$200 filing fee	Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	• \$1.29 per sq. ft. for first 500,000 sq. ft. + \$0.65 per sq. ft. above 500,000 sq. ft. • Commercial dwelling unit (IBC) MPDU: \$1.23 per sq. ft.	N/A
Prince George's County	• \$220 or \$1.65 per sq. ft., whichever is greater	Administrative Fee: \$66 Grading Fee: \$53 M-NCPPC: \$5 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	• New constructions/additions permit fee: \$0.03 per cu. ft. of construction • Green Building Fee: \$0.002 per sq. ft. of construction	Enhancement Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Building Permit Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Building Permit Fees](#), [Howard County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#)

²³ According to data from the National Association of Home Builders 2024 survey, average cost of construction was \$162 per square foot.



Commercial Alterations and Repairs

Benchmarking findings: Baltimore City's commercial alteration and repair fees generally align with those in comparable jurisdictions.

As an illustration, using a conservative alteration cost of \$80 per square foot,²⁴ for a commercial alteration of 5,000 square feet, the permit fee would be \$1,900 in Baltimore City (inclusive of filing fees), comparable to the fees levied by Howard County and higher than those in Baltimore County. However, the same project would result in permit fees of at least \$4,000 in Anne Arundel County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County and the District of Columbia, once additional fees are included.

Commercial Alteration and Repair Permit Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	\$0.35 per sq. ft., min \$150 - Exception: \$12 for each \$1,000 in estimated cost, min \$150 for exterior/installation of interior doors, new-tenant demising wall, or new-tenant shell space	Filing Fee: \$50 (no plans), \$150 (w/ plans)
Anne Arundel County	- Estimated value of <\$25,000: \$86 to \$242 (depending on cost) - Estimated value above \$25,000: \$242 + 1% of estimated cost above \$25,000	Application Fee: \$43
Baltimore County	- Assembly, business, institutional: \$0.17 per sq. ft (min \$366) - Hotels and Motels: \$0.14 per sq. ft (min \$293)	N/A
Howard County	- Minor alteration to previously occupied spaces: \$200 - Other alteration to previously occupied spaces: \$0.30 per sq. ft. + \$200 filing fee	Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	Repairs, alterations, accessory structures: Cost of construction x \$0.026	N/A
Prince George's County	\$220 or 2% of verifiable construction cost, whichever is greater	Administrative Fee: \$66 Grading Fee: \$53 M-NCPPC: \$5 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	- Construction valued < \$500: \$33 - Construction valued \$500 to \$1,000: \$65 - Construction valued \$1,001 to \$1 million: \$30 + 2% of construction value \$1,001 - \$1 million - Construction valued > \$1 million: \$10,030 + 1% of total construction cost - Green Building Fee: 0.13% on value up to \$1 million, 0.0065% above \$1 million	Enhancement Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Building Permit Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Building Permit Fees](#), [Howard County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#)

²⁴ According to data from the National Association of Home Builders 2024 survey, average cost of construction was \$162 per square foot.



Commercial Demolition

Benchmarking findings: Jurisdictions in the comparison group vary in how they structure demolition permit fees. Some jurisdictions levy a flat fee, while others base the fee on project characteristics. Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and the District of Columbia levy fees that are based on the size of the structure being demolished, Howard County and Prince George's County levy flat fees, and Anne Arundel County's demolition permit fee is based on the cost of the demolition. Notwithstanding the difference in fee structure, Baltimore City's fees are higher than the fees charged by the comparison group.

As shown, Baltimore's interior commercial demolition is in line with other jurisdictions' fees, but exterior commercial demolition is higher based on the per cubic foot fee structure.

Commercial Demolition Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	<i>Interior Only</i> • Commercial: \$0.02 per sq. ft., min. \$100 <i>Other than interior only</i> • Commercial: \$0.075 per cu. ft., min. \$600, max. \$5,000	Filing Fee: \$50
Anne Arundel County	• Estimated value of <\$25,000: \$86 to \$242 (depending on cost) • Estimated value above \$25,000: \$242 + 1% of estimated cost above \$25,000	Application fee: \$43
Baltimore County	• Raze: \$0.50 per 100 sq. ft., min \$17	N/A
Howard County	• Demolition: \$100 per structure	N/A
Montgomery County	• Demolition: \$156.82	N/A
Prince George's County	• Demolition (not full raze): \$220 • Raze: \$990	Administrative Fee: \$66 Grading Fee: \$53 M-NCPPC: \$5 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	• Demolition: \$30 + 2% of construction cost • Raze: \$0.02 per cu. ft.	Enhancement Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Building Permit Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Building Permit Fees](#), [Howard County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#)



Electrical Permit Fees

Benchmarking findings: Electrical permit fees are generally levied based on unit value (e.g., amps, horsepower, devices etc.) across the comparable group. While a direct comparison is difficult given the different fee structures among comparable jurisdictions, a high-level review indicates that Baltimore City's fee levels are comparable once filing fees are included.

- Most Baltimore City's electrical permits start at \$25 (plus a \$25 to \$150 filing fee), comparable to Anne Arundel County (which also has a \$25 minimum fee plus application fee). In other jurisdictions, the minimum electrical fee is higher (e.g., \$34 in Baltimore County and \$50 in Prince George's County).
- Some jurisdictions (e.g., Baltimore County) levy varying fees for residential vs. commercial, new construction vs. additions/alterations etc., to better reflect the cost of providing services and the different market tolerances for fee increases.

Electrical Permit Comparison – New Construction and Alterations/Additions

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Installation/alteration: \$25 to \$200 (depending on amps) + \$100 for services >600 volts • Conduits/duct banks only: \$25 to \$100 (depending on length) • Sub feeders for additional meters: \$30 to \$200 (depending on amps) • Photovoltaic system: \$25 (1 to 25) panels; \$5 for each additional 10 • Fixtures or devices only: \$25 for 1 to 25 fixtures, \$5 for each additional or fraction of 25 • Electric wiring: \$6 for each circuit • Temporary electrical wiring: \$20 to \$25 (each 5 kW, permit is waived for non-profit orgs) • Low voltage/wiring: \$25 (1 to 25 devices) + 5 for each 10 devices • Power supply for integrated systems: \$150 + \$2 per additional 10kW over 50kW, max \$500 • Communication hotels (data center): \$10 per rack, max \$300 • Telecommunications antennas: \$25 for 1 to 5 antennas, \$5 per additional antenna • Grounding and bonding: \$25 • Fixtures or devices only: \$25 for 1 to 25 fixtures + \$5 for each fraction of 25 • Electrical transformer installation: \$25 to \$100 (depending on kVA) • Electric semiannual permits for maintenance work: \$50 to \$200 (depending on amps) • Electric work not otherwise classified: \$25	Filing Fee: Single/dual family: \$25 (no plans), \$125 (w/ plans) All others: \$50 (no plans), \$150 (w/ plans)
Anne Arundel County	<u>Residential</u> • Single/dual-family new construction: \$147 to \$259 <400 amps + \$69 per additional 100 amps over 400 • Multi-family new construction: \$117 to \$207 <400 amps + \$55 per additional amps over 400 • Residential alteration w/o service change of subpanel: \$95 • Residential alteration w/ service change or subpanel: \$147 to \$259 <400 amps + \$69 for each 100 amps over 400 <u>Commercial</u> • Commercial new construction: \$216 to \$328 <400 amps + \$103 per additional amps over 400 • Commercial alteration (with service change): \$216 to \$328 <400 amps + \$103 per additional amps over 400 • Commercial alteration (without service change): \$34 to \$103 <400 amps + \$17 per additional devices <u>Equipment, Appliances, and Devices</u> • Electrical appliance/motor: \$25 to \$43 (depending on number of appliances) • Other appliances: \$69 to \$346 (depending on service)	Application Fee: \$43



Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore County	<u>Residential</u> • Meter: \$34 • Appliance: \$40 to \$90 (depending on appliance) • New construction: \$34 to \$68 (depending on number of devices) • Alteration/addition: \$68 to \$74 (depending on devices) <u>Commercial</u> • Meter: \$68 • Appliance: \$40 to \$400 (depending on appliance) • Commercial devices: \$113 to \$394 (depending on number of devices) • Commercial equipment: \$34 + \$6 for each additional piece of equipment	N/A
Howard County	<u>Residential</u> • Single/dual-family new construction: \$150 to \$500 (depending on amps) • Multi-family new construction: \$100 per unit • Residential alteration/addition: \$50 per unit • Residential heavy up: \$50 <u>Commercial</u> • Commercial new construction: \$50 to \$200 <800 amps+ \$25 for each 100 amps over 800 • Commercial outlets: \$50 to \$150 + \$25 for each 100 outlets over 100 • Low voltage systems: \$20 for <50 devices, \$5 for each additional 25 devices • Panel feeders and subpanels: \$50 to \$100 (depending on amps) <u>Equipment, Appliances, and Devices:</u> • Commercial equipment/appliances: \$50 plus \$5 for each additional piece of equipment • Other appliances/equipment: \$20 to \$500 (depending on appliance)	Application Fee: \$50 Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	<u>Residential</u> • Residential (new construction): \$248.75 to \$486.67 (depending on amps) • Construction/alteration: Min fee of \$97.33 for residential • Heavy Up: \$41.10 to \$82.20 (depending on amps) <u>Commercial</u> • Commercial (new construction): \$648.90 to \$1,140.98 <400 amps + \$151.41 for each 100 amps over 400 • Construction/alteration: Min fee of \$162.22 • Existing commercial tenant fit ups, alterations: \$167.63 to \$562.38 (depending on sq. ft) • Lighting fixtures: \$14.06 for the first 20 + \$9.73 for every 10 units above 20 • Low voltage: \$35.69 for the first 20 devices + \$7.57 for every 10 units above 20 • Motors, heating, electric heating, HVAC: \$17.30 to \$56.24 (depending on horsepower) • Rough wiring: \$17.30 + \$7.57 for every 10 units above 20 • Service replacement or relocation: \$41.10 to \$82.20 (depending on amps) • Temporary permit for construction: \$82.20 • Other appliances: \$4.33 to \$118.96 (depending on equipment)	N/A
Prince George's County	• New home: \$198 to \$277 (depending on amps) • Service equipment/Heavy Up: \$90 to \$119 (depending on amps) • Subpanel: \$90 to \$119 (depending on amps) • Residential low voltage: \$198 • Rough wire outlets: \$50 per segment of 15 • Temporary wiring: \$162 • Other equipment: \$50 to \$368 (depending on the equipment)	Administration Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	• Service and meters: \$39 to \$124 for first (depending on amps) + \$16 to \$52 for each additional • Transformers: \$33 to \$117 for first (depending on kVA) + \$16 to \$52 for each additional • Motors/generators: \$20 to \$143 for first (depending on horsepower) + \$16 to \$65 for each additional • Appliances: \$8 to \$390 (depending on the equipment)	Enhancement Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Electrical Permit Fee Schedule](#), [District of Columbia Department of Buildings Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Electrical Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#)



Mechanical Permit Fees

Benchmarking findings: Baltimore City's mechanical fees generally trail the comparison group. For example, residential HVAC permits are \$25, compared with \$34 to \$85 in Baltimore County, \$50 in Prince George's County, \$65 in Washington, D.C., \$40 to \$80 in Howard County, and \$121 in Anne Arundel County. Similarly, Baltimore City's tank permit is \$30, lower than other jurisdictions (\$29 for residential and \$45 commercial in Baltimore County, \$172 in Prince George's County, and \$46 in the District of Columbia).

Mechanical Permit Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Baseboard radiation or piping installation: \$25 (residential); \$50 (commercial) • Distribution system installation: \$25 (single/dual-family dwelling); \$30-\$300 based on \$5 per cu. ft. per minute (all other) • Cooling towers: \$150 • Distribution system reconstruction: \$35 + \$50 per additional 100 diffusers over initial 25 • Exhaust systems: \$5 for each 1k cubic feet of air per minute • Fuel burning equipment/appliances: \$30 to \$300 (depending on BTU per hour) • Radiator/converter installation: \$5 each • Pumps and dispenser: \$10 each outlet • Tanks for liquids: \$30 + \$10 for each additional 5,000 gals over 10,000 • Unfired pressure vessels: \$50 • All other AC/refrigeration systems: \$5 per ton	Filing Fee: Single/dual family: \$25 (no plans), \$125 (w/ plans) All others: \$50 (no plans), \$150 (w/ plans)
Anne Arundel County	• Mechanical equipment: \$59 to \$129 (depending on value of equipment) + \$0.008 x the amount over value of \$11,000 • Heating and AC combined: \$121 • Heating system, AC, or ductwork: \$95 • Fuel burning equipment: \$69 to \$735 (depending on piping diameter)	Application Fee: \$43
Baltimore County	• Mechanical/HVAC system: \$34 to \$85 (depending on sq. ft) • Water cooled AC with tower: \$30 • Electric furnace: \$39 for the first; \$29 each up to 25 systems; and \$16 each for more than 25 • Tank: \$29 (residential); \$45 (commercial)	N/A
Howard County	• Commercial HVAC & refrigeration install/alteration: \$0.12 per sq ft of service area • Commercial HVAC replacement: \$80 • Equipment/appliances: \$50, then \$5 for each additional • Generators: \$50 (residential); \$100 to \$500 for commercial (depending on kw) • HVAC & refrigeration permit: \$40 to \$80 • Plumbing fixture (includes boilers, water heaters, pressure equipment): \$50	Application Fee: \$50 Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	• Base mechanical (except for single/dual-family dwellings): 1.72% of the cost difference between contract value and value of listed equipment • Min fee of \$70.30 to \$113.56 depending on dwelling type (applied in addition to equipment fees) • New or replacement equipment ◦ Heating equipment: \$24.87 per 100 MBH ◦ Cooling equipment: \$24.87 per each five-ton capacity ◦ Fuel or expansion tanks: \$56.25 per 50 gal	N/A
Prince George's County	• \$220 or 1.3% of mechanical construction cost (whichever is greater) • Electrical equipment (includes AC, Appliances, Generators, Heating): \$50 • Tanks: \$172 + \$53 grading fee + \$5 M-NCPPC fee • Dispenser with pump: \$90	Technology Fee: 10% Admin Fee: \$66
District of Columbia	• Air conditioning: \$78 to \$390 (depending on BTU) • Appliance: \$26, \$16 for each additional • Baseboard/space heater and unfired pressure vessel: \$10/kw, \$6 for each kw over 10 • Central AC: \$65, \$16 to \$65 for each additional (depending on size) • Electric furnace: \$39 • Fired object: \$46 • Furnace/unit heater: \$36, \$16 for each additional • Incinerator and boilers: \$33 to \$100 (depending on lbs. per hour or gals per hour) • Motors & generators: \$20 to \$143, \$16 to \$65 for each additional (depending on power) • Oil-fired furnace: \$26 to \$33 • Power boiler: \$33 to \$195 (depending on horsepower) • Tank or tower: \$46/\$1000 of cost	Technology Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [District of Columbia Department of Buildings Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#)



Elevator Permit Fees

Benchmarking findings: Elevator permit structures vary among comparable jurisdictions. Baltimore City has 12 different types of elevator/escalator permits, while other jurisdictions with permits specific to elevators/escalators (Baltimore County, the District of Columbia, and Howard County) have a simpler permit fee structure with fewer fees.

Some jurisdictions (e.g., Anne Arundel County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County) do not have permits specific to elevators/escalators but instead include those as part of the building/mechanical/equipment fee schedules.

Elevator Permit Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fees	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Alterations: \$50 • Automobile service lifts: \$20 • Escalators: \$60 • Hand dumbwaiters: \$30 • Hand or gravity escalators: \$35 • Installation passenger/power freight/parking: \$50 + \$5 per floor • Person lifts: \$50 • Power dumbwaiters: \$35 • Private residence elevators/inclined lifts: \$35 • Stage or orchestra console elevators: \$50 • Temporary material hoists and elevators: \$35 • Workers hoists: \$35	Filing Fee: \$50 (no plans), \$150 (w/ plans)
Anne Arundel County	• \$86 to \$242 (depending on project cost) for projects <\$25,000 • \$242 + \$0.01 x estimated cost above \$25,000	Application Fee: \$43
Baltimore County	• \$40 flat fee	N/A
Howard County	<u>Residential</u> • \$50 per elevator <u>Commercial</u> • Elevator: \$200; plus \$50 per each additional elevator • Elevator feeder: \$50; plus \$5 for each additional feeder	Technology Fee: 10% Application Fee: \$50
Montgomery County	• 1 to 2 unit residential: \$70.30 • All others: 1.72% of the cost difference between contract value and value of listed equipment, minimum of \$113.56	N/A
Prince George's County	• Elevator (misc. building permit)/ADA chairlift: \$220 or 2% of construction cost, whichever is greater	Technology Fee: 10% Admin Fee: \$66 M-NCPPC: \$5 Grading Fee: \$53
District of Columbia	• New elevator: \$85 • Elevator repair: 1% of construction cost	Enhancement Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore County Electrical Permit Fee Schedule](#), [District of Columbia Department of Buildings Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Electrical Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#)



Plumbing Permit Fees – Fixtures

Benchmarking findings: Plumbing permit fees are generally structured based on the type of installation (e.g., fixture, septic system, etc.) across the comparable jurisdictions. A high-level review indicates that Baltimore City's plumbing permit fees are notably lower compared to other jurisdictions.

- Baltimore City's general residential plumbing fixture installation fee is priced at \$5 per fixture. Many jurisdictions charge higher rates for the first fixture and lower rates for subsequent fixtures. For example, Anne Arundel County charges \$51 for the first fixture and \$8 for each additional fixture. Howard County charges \$25 for the first residential fixture and \$5 for each additional.
- Baltimore City's backflow prevention device fee (<2") is \$25, comparable to the District of Columbia (\$226) but lower than Baltimore County (\$40 to \$79).
- Montgomery and Prince George's Counties issue plumbing permits through the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), a bi-county agency responsible for inspections and services in both counties, which levies higher fees for both residential and commercial projects. Plumbing fixtures under WSSC's service area range from \$155 for the first residential fixture to \$285 for the first commercial fixture.

Plumbing Permit Fee Comparison – Fixtures

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Install/replace/reconstruct plumbing fixtures: \$5 each • Remove fixtures: \$20 • Private disposal systems: \$100 plus \$5 per fixture • Electric water heaters: \$20 each • Backflow prevention devices: \$25 for devices < 2"; \$100 for devices >= 2"	Filing Fee: Single/dual family: \$25 (no plans), \$125 (w/ plans) All others: \$50 (no plans), \$150 (w/ plans)
Anne Arundel County	• New construction for all fixtures and appurtenances: \$86 to \$173 • First plumbing fixture: \$51 + \$8 for each additional	Application Fee: \$43
Baltimore County	• Plumbing fixture: \$30 + \$6 for each additional fixture • Backflow prevention device: \$40 (residential) to \$79 (commercial)	N/A
Howard County	• Residential: Minimum charge (includes 1st fixture): \$25 + \$5 for each additional fixture • Commercial: Minimum charge (includes 1st fixture/appliance): \$50 + \$5 for each additional fixture	Application Fee: \$50 Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County & Prince George's County*	• New single-family dwelling: \$1,485 • Other residential plumbing fixture: \$155 + \$80 for each additional • Commercial plumbing fixtures: \$285 + \$80 for each additional	N/A
District of Columbia**	• Plumbing fixture: \$26 + \$20 for each additional fixture	Enhancement Fee: 10%

*Water and sewer services are provided by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), a bi-county agency governed by Montgomery and Prince George's County

** Plumbing fixtures according to the District's fee schedule includes backflow preventers, basins, bathtubs, bidets, dishwashers, downspouts, drains, drinking fountains, and garbage disposals.

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Plumbing Inspection Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Plumbing Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel Fee Schedule](#), [WSSC-Water Permit Services Fees & Charges](#)



Plumbing Permit Fees – Water/Sewer

Benchmarking findings: Water and sewer plumbing permit fees are generally structured as a flat fee based on the type of installation (e.g., water lines, septic systems, etc.).

Baltimore City's water/sewer plumbing fees generally range between \$25 and \$50 when similar fees in other jurisdictions are higher. As an example, Baltimore City's residential water connection fee is \$25, lower than other jurisdictions' base fees (\$50 in Howard County, \$30 in Baltimore County, \$50 in Anne Arundel County). When additional filing and technology fees are included, the gap narrows.

Plumbing Permit Fee Comparison – Other Water/Sewer

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Water/sanitary/storm connection (single/dual-family): \$25 (new or replacement) • Water/sanitary/storm connection (all other): \$50 (new or replacement) • Reconstruct lines on premises: \$20 per utility • Cap off water/sanitary/storm lines and on-site utilities for new or reconstruction: \$50 per utility • Annual testing: \$30 • Grease interceptors and lawn irrigation system: \$25 each • Private pool connected to water/sewer: \$30	Filing Fee: Single/dual family: \$25 (no plans), \$125 (w/ plans) All others: \$50 (no plans), \$150 (w/ plans)
Anne Arundel County	• Septic tank: \$350 • Drain field or drywell: \$475 • Pump pit, septic piping, holding tank, septic distribution box (installation/repair): \$225 • Nitrogen-reducing system: \$750 • Advanced pretreatment unit and combined system components: \$600 • Grease trap: \$1,730 • Commercial shell groundwork (flat fee): \$51 • Water/wastewater connection fee: \$51	Application Fee: \$43
Baltimore County	• On-site water/sanitary sewer/storm drain: \$79 + \$14 per lateral • Water service connection/renew/well pump & line: \$30 each • Storm drain connection: \$51 • Sewer ejector: \$79 • Inspections (1st fixture): \$30 + \$6 each additional • Line-related items (e.g., relay, cap, hot water heater): \$30 each • On-site flow meters (water/sewer): \$38 • Miscellaneous systems (re-inspection fee, oil interceptor, AC tower, laundry pump, swimming pool, sand filter, sub-soil drainage): \$30 to \$79	N/A
Howard County	• \$100 for first 200 feet of storm, gas, water, and sanitary piping + \$25 per additional 100 feet • Connection fee (water/sewer): \$50 • Cap off (gas, water, storm, sanitary): \$50 each	Application Fee: \$50 Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County & Prince George's County*	<u>Residential</u> • Water, well, sewer, or septic hook-up: \$155 • Water hook-up (converting from well): \$310 • Sub-meter hook-up: \$115 • Meter yoke inspection: \$115 <u>Commercial / Non-Residential</u> • Water, well, sewer, or septic hook-up: \$285 • Meter installation charge: \$220 • Sub-meter installation charge: \$260 to \$525	N/A
District of Columbia**	• Line cap and line cut: \$26 each + 10% enhancement fee • Water connection fee: \$215 to \$955 depending on pipe size • Reconnection fee: \$50 (residential); \$100 (commercial) • Grease trap: \$0.077 per gallon	N/A

*Water and sewer services are provided by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), a bi-county agency governed by Montgomery and Prince George's County

**The District of Columbia's water services are provided by DC Water.

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Plumbing Inspection Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Plumbing Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Water Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel utility fees](#), [WSSC-Water Permit Services Fees & Charges](#)



Use & Occupancy Permits

Benchmarking findings: Fees for use and occupancy permits vary across the comparison group. While some jurisdictions differentiate fees based on building type (e.g. residential and commercial), others differentiate based on unit area (e.g. on a per-square-foot basis).

Baltimore City's residential occupancy permit is \$45 for each use, higher than Baltimore County (\$20), comparable to the District of Columbia (\$42), but lower than others (\$102 in Montgomery County and \$112 in Prince George's County). That said, some of the variance is offset by the City's application fee (\$25).

Commercial occupancy permit fees, however, trail the comparison group. Montgomery County and Prince George's County charge significantly higher fees for commercial use, and the District of Columbia occupancy permit fees increases beyond the minimum of \$42 based on square footage.

Use & Occupancy Permit Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	Occupancy permit: \$45 for each use in each building or part of a building	Filing Fee: Single/dual-family: \$25 All others: \$50
Baltimore County	- Use and occupancy: \$20 per 5,000 sq. ft., min \$12 - Change of occupancy: \$57	N/A
Montgomery County, MD	- Residential U&O certificate: \$101.66 - Commercial U&O certificate: \$383.93 to \$1,341.06 (depending on sq. ft.) - U&O certificate for lots or parcels without buildings/structures on them: \$621.86 - Capacity certificate: \$124.37 per assembly room	N/A
Prince George's County	- Single and dual-family: \$112 - Temporary residential: \$200 - Commercial U&O: \$172 to \$264, depending on type - Temporary commercial: \$250 - Temporary construction trailer: \$264 - Temporary office trailer/special event structure: \$198 - U&O verification letter: \$300	Administrative Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10% (Note: if part of new construction or alteration, these additional fees are included only once)
District of Columbia	<u>Certificate of Occupancy</u> \$42 to \$471 (depending on sq. ft.) + \$0.0013 per sq. ft above 100,000 + \$33 filing fee <u>Certificate of Use</u> - Certificate of use: \$260 - Sidewalk cafe: \$260 + \$0.03 per cu. ft. (enclosed cafes)	10% enhanced fee

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Codes](#), [DC Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DPIC Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#)



Plan Review Fees

Benchmarking findings: Plan review fees are calculated depending on review time (e.g. dollars per hour) or plan size (per square-foot). Some jurisdictions differentiate further based on the type of review being conducted. The District of Columbia, for example, charges different fees for commercial design reviews and building capacity reviews.

Among the jurisdictions that levy review fees on an hourly basis, Baltimore City's rate of \$50 per half hour is comparable to Baltimore County's \$54 per half hour.

Plan Review Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	• Preliminary project review: \$50 per half hour • Application fee (projects that require a plan review): \$125 (single/dual-family dwellings), \$150 (all others)
Baltimore County	• Preliminary project review: \$54 per half hour
Howard County	• Commercial (expedited): \$0.3 per sq. ft. (2,500 sq. ft. increments)
Montgomery County	• Residential new construction/addition plan review: \$0.77 per sq. ft. • Residential alteration/repair plan review: \$0.68 per sq. ft.
District of Columbia	• Capacity review: \$20 per hour • Commercial design review: \$130 to \$217 an hour (depending on sq. ft.)

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Codes](#), [DC Fire Code Fees](#), [Howard County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#)



Building Inspection Fees

Benchmarking findings: Building inspection fees are assessed based on the number of inspections conducted or the type of inspection performed. Baltimore City, Howard County, and Montgomery County levy fees based on the number of re-inspections, whereas the remaining jurisdictions charge flat rates. Baltimore City has lower reinspection fees than other cities in the comparison group.

Baltimore City's re-inspection fees start at \$50 for the first re-inspection. This is the lowest minimum among the comparison group. Corresponding fees in the comparison group range between \$74 and \$100. However, Baltimore City's inclusion of overtime costs for inspectors potentially improves cost recovery, depending on how often this charge is applied.

Building Inspection Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	<u>Inspection Fees</u> • Overtime: \$50 an hour per inspector, min of \$200 per inspector • 1 reinspection: \$50 • 2 reinspection: \$100 • 3+ reinspection: \$125	N/A
Anne Arundel County	• Re-inspection (all work): \$150	N/A
Baltimore County	<u>Electrical Permits</u> • Re-inspection (commercial and residential): \$74 <u>Plumbing Permits</u> • Re-inspection: \$79	N/A
Howard County	<u>Building/Electrical/Plumbing/Rental</u> • 2 failures of the same inspection: \$100 • 3 failures of the same inspection: \$125 • 4 or more failures of the same inspection: \$175 • Overtime: \$125 for the first hour, \$100 for each additional hour	N/A
Montgomery County	<u>Building/Zoning</u> • Initial inspection of sites working without a permit: \$162.22 • Re-inspection (residential or commercial) after two disapprovals: \$104.91 • Applicant requested partial inspection (residential): \$104.91	N/A
Prince George's County	<u>Building Inspection</u> • Re-inspection: \$73	Technology Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Electrical Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Baltimore County Plumbing Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County Fire Inspection Fees](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#)



Permit Extension and Revisions

Benchmarking findings: Baltimore City levies a wide variety of miscellaneous permit fees, ranging from partial permits to photocopy charges, whereas schedules across the comparison group are more succinct. For example, Baltimore City levies three separate duplication fees that vary depending on the type of photocopy made and the length of each proposal, while duplication/photocopy fees are often included as part of the permit fees in the rest of the comparison group.

Although Baltimore City's fee structure is more complex, its permit amendment fees are generally comparable to the comparison group. For example, base permit amendment fees range from \$25 to \$500 (depending on sq. ft.) in Baltimore City, compared to \$21 to \$664 in Baltimore County, \$50 to \$200 in Howard County (plus a 10% technology fee), \$53 to \$725 in Montgomery County, and \$99 to \$660 in Prince George's County, plus additional fees.

Permit Extension and/or Revision Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	<u>Duplicates/Photocopies</u> - Duplicates of permits/certificates/other documents: \$1 for 1st page + \$0.50 for each additional page - Approved plans: \$10 per duplicate issued - Copies/duplicates of approved plans: \$10 per sheet + any reproduction charge <u>Permit Extensions</u> - Within 30 days of expiration: \$25 - Between 30 and 60 days after expiration: 50% of original permit fee <u>Permit Amendments</u> - Revised drawings: \$10 for each sheet submitted, min \$25 - Work in area not originally applied for: \$50 (single/dual-family dwellings), \$75 (all others) - Work within area originally applied for: \$25 (single/dual-family dwellings), \$75 to \$500 (depending on sq. ft., all others)	N/A
Baltimore County	<u>Permit Amendments</u> - Address change: 10% of original fee, \$6 to \$23 - Change of owner/contractor: \$29 - Revisions without drawings: 10% of original fee, min \$21 - Revisions with drawings (no site plans): 25% of original fee, min \$34 (residential) to \$68 (commercial) - Revisions with site plans: 5% of original fee, min \$17 - Max revision fee: \$664	N/A
Howard County	<u>Permit Amendments</u> - Residential: \$50 per revision/amendment - Commercial: \$200 per revision/amendment	Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	<u>Permits Extensions</u> - Application extension: 15% of filing fee - Permit extension: 15% of permit fee <u>Permit Amendments</u> - Application revisions: \$52.99 - Commercial plan revisions: \$724.60 or \$1.29 per sq. ft. of revised area, whichever is greater	N/A
Prince George's County	- Residential application/renewal/extension: \$132 - Commercial modification/revision (after issuance): \$660 - Commercial modification/revision (prior to issuance): \$198 - Commercial revision after issuance (no changes to plans): \$99 - Commercial permit extension: \$264 - Commercial permit renewal: \$264	Administrative Fee: \$66 Grading Fee: \$53 M-NCPPC: \$5 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	<u>Permits Amendments:</u> Permit renewal/change of permit ownership: \$33	Enhancement Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Building Permit Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Building Permit Fees](#), [Howard County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#)



Trade License Fees

Benchmarking findings: Trade licenses are permits which authorize individuals or businesses to perform specific skilled work within a jurisdiction. These licenses establish standards for qualifications (e.g., testing, professional experience, etc.) to ensure that work is performed safely and competently. Baltimore City levies an annual licensing fee for electricians, gas fitters, and utility contractors.

Some jurisdictions make further distinctions by level of experience. For example, Prince George's County levies different fees for master electricians and limited licenses. The frequency of these fees varies across the comparison group. Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, Howard County, and Montgomery County levy annual fees, whereas Baltimore County, Prince George's County, and the District of Columbia levy bi-annual fees.

Baltimore City's trade license fees are comparable to other jurisdictions' fee levels. For example, on an annual basis, Baltimore's \$75 electrician license is comparable to Anne Arundel (\$85), Baltimore County (\$80), the District of Columbia (\$60) and Prince George's County (\$79). For master gas fitter licenses, Baltimore City trails the comparison group on an annual basis. An annual master gas fitter license costs \$75 in Baltimore City, compared to \$85 in Anne Arundel County, \$112.50 in Baltimore County, \$72.50 in Montgomery and Prince George's County, and \$60 in D.C.

Trade Licenses

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Licensure Period	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	<u>License Fees</u> <i>Electrician</i> - New/renewal/reciprocal (Master/Restricted): \$75 - New/renewal/reciprocal maintenance: \$50 - Transfer license: \$35 <i>Gas Fitter</i> - Master: \$75 - Journeyman: \$25 - On-site utilities contractor: \$150	1 year	N/A
Anne Arundel County	<u>License Fees</u> <i>Electrician</i> - Electrician: \$85 (\$60 renewal) <i>Plumber</i> - Master: \$85 (\$60 renewal) - Journeyman: \$50 (\$25 renewal) <i>Gas Fitter</i> - Master: \$85 (\$60 renewal) - Journeyman: \$50 (\$25 renewal) <i>Dual-License</i> - Plumber/Gas fitter – Master: \$115 (\$90 renewal) - Plumber/Gas fitter – Journeyman: \$115 (\$90 renewal) <i>HVAC</i> - Journeyman: \$50 (\$25 renewal) - Master: \$85 (\$60 renewal) <i>Misc.</i> - Utility contractor/disposal systems contractor: \$85 - Water conditioner installer: \$0 <u>Other</u> - Inactive license renewals: \$10 - Late fees: \$25	1 year	Application Fee: \$25



Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Licensure Period	Additional Fees
Baltimore County	<u>License Fees</u> <i>Electrician</i> • Master: \$160 (\$120 renewal) • Restricted: \$130 (\$95 renewal) <i>Plumber/Gas Fitter</i> • Master: \$225 (renewal/reciprocal) • Journeyman: \$120 (renewal/reciprocal) <i>Other Licenses</i> • Onsite utility contractor: \$200 • Drain and sewer cleaner: \$200 <u>Other</u> • Late fee – Master electrician: \$80 • Late fee – Restricted electrician: \$65	2 years	N/A
Howard County	• Utility Contractor: \$77	1 year	N/A
Prince George's County	<u>License Fees</u> <i>Electricians</i> • Limited license: \$264 (new/renewal) • Master: \$158 (new/renewal) <i>Building Contractor</i> • New: \$158 • Renewal: \$99 <u>Other</u> • Late Renewal (30 days) – Master electrician: \$198 • Late Renewal (60 days) – Master electrician: \$264	2 years	Technology Fee: 5%
WSSC Water (Montgomery County and Prince George's)	<u>License Fees</u> <i>Plumber/Gas Fitter</i> • Master (reciprocal): \$145 (\$120 renewal) • Master (examined): \$155 (\$155 renewal) ◦ Cross connection technician: \$40 ◦ Sewer and drain: \$65 • Journeyman: \$50 (\$50 renewal) <u>Other</u> - Change of name/owner: \$30 - Late renewal fee: \$30 to \$70, depending on license	2 years (4 years for examined)	N/A
District of Columbia	<u>License Fees</u> <i>Electricians, Plumber, Gas Fitters, Refrigeration and A/C Mechanics, Operating Engineers</i> • Apprentice/Journeyman: \$110 (new/renewal) • Master: \$120 (\$155 renewal) • Contractor: \$120 (\$180 renewal) <i>Other Licenses</i> • Elevator contractor/Mechanic/Inspector: \$260	2 years	Application Fee: \$65

Sources: [Baltimore City Code, Article 13](#), [Baltimore County Licensing and Certification Fees \(Electrical\)](#), [District of Columbia Board of Industrial Trades](#), [Howard County Licensing Fees](#), [Montgomery County Building Codes](#), [Anne Arundel County Trade Licenses](#), [Prince George's County Code, Subtitle II, Division 14B](#)



Towing Permit Fees

Benchmarking findings: Towing fees are levied by jurisdictions to cover the cost of transporting vehicles in response to accidents, illegal parking, and abandoned vehicles.²⁵ Towing fees vary across the region by vehicle weight, type of incident (e.g., police impound, accident), and supplemental charges such as winching and mileage. Most jurisdictions in the comparison group levy tiered rates based on vehicle size, with additional charges for extended mileage, missing keys, and tows that occur during weather emergencies. Baltimore City's fees are among the lowest in the region for standard vehicle towing, and comparable for large vehicles.

Baltimore City charges flat towing rates of \$130 for standard vehicles towed west of Charles Street and \$140 east of Charles Street, trailing the comparison group. For example, for standard vehicles below 10,000 pounds, Anne Arundel charges \$185, Baltimore County charges \$230, Howard County charges \$200, Montgomery County charges \$201, and Prince George's County charges \$175 to \$215 (depending on the origination of the tow). Only the District of Columbia charges less for standard tows, at \$100.

Baltimore City does not impose several additional fees that are levied by the comparison group, particularly fees charged by Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, and Howard County. For example, Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, and Howard County charge between \$25 to \$30 for towed vehicles that are missing keys, while adding a 25% surcharge on tows during declared weather emergencies.

That said, Baltimore City's towing fees for large vehicles, which range from \$305 to \$440, are comparable to the comparison group, where fees range from \$275 (District of Columbia) to \$834 (Montgomery County).

Towing Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	• Standard vehicle (west of Charles Street): \$130 • Standard vehicle (east of Charles Street): \$140 • 6 to 9 wheels: \$305 • >10 wheels: \$440
Anne Arundel County	<i>Towing</i> • ≤10,000 lbs.: \$185 • 10,001 to 19,500 lbs.: \$270 • >19,500 lbs.: \$800 • Cancellation/road service fee: \$50 • Declared emergency surcharge: +25% • Extra person \$25 base + \$5 per ¼ hour • Extra truck: 50% of tow fee • Extraordinary recovery: market rate • Key fee: \$25 • Mileage fee: \$4 per mile above 95 • Waiting time: \$15 (≤10,000 lbs.) to \$25 (>10,000 lbs.) per ¼ hour • Winching: \$50 to \$75 setup + \$40 to \$60 per ¼ hour; (market rate >19,500 lbs.)
Baltimore County	• Towing (<10,000 lbs.): \$230 • Towing management fee: \$31 • Debris cleanup: \$35 per ¼ hour after 15 mins • Declared emergency surcharge: +25% • Extra person: \$35 flat + \$3.75 per ¼ hour • Extra truck: \$85 • Key fee: \$30 • Mileage: \$6 per mile (beyond storage lot) • Winching: \$150 per hour (¼ hour increments)

²⁵ Jurisdictions often use licensed third-party towing companies for transport to impound/storage lots



Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Howard County	<i>Towing</i> • ≤10,000 lbs.: \$200 • >10,000 lbs.: \$475 to \$600, depending on vehicle type (includes winching) • Seized vehicles: \$275 • Winching: \$65 per half hour • Extra truck: \$85 (≤10,000 lbs.) to \$160 (>10,000 lbs.) • Extra person: \$25 • Declared emergency surcharge: +25% of towing fee • Key fee: \$25 • Mileage fee (>30): \$10 per mile
Montgomery County	<i>Regular Tow</i> • ≤ 10,000 lbs.: \$201 • 10,001 to 20,000 lbs.: \$352 • > 20,000 lbs.: \$552 <i>Fatal/Serious Accident Tow</i> • ≤ 10,000 lbs.: \$270 • 10,001 to 20,000 lbs.: \$358 • > 20,000 lbs.: \$834 <i>Abandoned/Stolen Car Tow</i> • ≤ 10,000 lbs.: \$138 • 10,001 to 20,000 lbs.: \$278 • > 20,000 lbs.: \$413 <i>Winching (30 minute minimum)</i> • <10,001 lbs.: \$98 per hour • 10,001 to 20,000 lbs.: \$152 per hour • >20,000 lbs.: \$197 per hour (pro-rated) • Incomplete tow: 50% of completed tow fee • Mileage charges: \$6 to \$8 per mile
Prince George's County	<i>Revenue Authority Tow</i> • ≤10,000 lbs.: \$175 • 10,001 – 26,000 lbs.: \$300 • >26,000 lbs.: \$750 <i>Police Tow</i> • Tow: \$215 • Drop fee: \$50 to \$350
District of Columbia	• Standard vehicle tow: \$100 • Oversized vehicle tow: \$275 • Booted vehicle: \$75

Sources: [Baltimore City Department of Transportation](#), [Baltimore County Towing Fees](#), [District of Columbia Booted/Towed Vehicle Fees](#), [Howard County Resolution No. 75](#), [Montgomery County Department of Police](#), [Anne Arundel County Towing Rates](#), [Prince George's County Towing Fee](#)



Impound Storage and Administrative Fees

Benchmarking findings: Impound storage and administrative fees vary across jurisdictions and are assessed in addition to towing charges. These fees cover the cost of storing towed vehicles, administrative processing costs, the taping of towed vehicles, and auction fees. Baltimore City charges \$50 for the first 48 hours of storage, followed by \$15 per day, plus an administrative fee of \$50.

Baltimore City's begins charging a storage fee immediately, whereas Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, Howard County, Prince George's County, and D.C., start charging storage fees the following calendar day, or after a grace period.

Setting this difference aside, Baltimore City's fee of \$50 for the first 48 hours (or \$25 per day) is lower than Howard County (\$90), Baltimore County (\$60), Prince George's County (\$50), Anne Arundel County (\$25 to \$50 depending on vehicle type), and Montgomery County (\$34). The only exception is the District of Columbia, which charges \$20 per day.

Baltimore City's declining fee rate is also distinct from the comparison group. The City charges a reduced \$15 per day fee after 48 hours – a contrast to other counties which increase costs over time. For example, Baltimore County and Howard County's \$80 and \$50 administrative fees only apply after three days of storage.

Storage and Administration Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	- Auction fee: 4.5% of sale - Storage: \$50 (first 48 hours or any portion), then \$15 per day	Administrative Fee: \$40
Anne Arundel County	- Evidence impound fee: \$185 - Storage fees: \$25 (light-duty) to \$50 (heavy-duty or >20 ft) per day (day after tow) - Window taping: \$10 per window, max \$50	Administrative Fee: \$25
Baltimore County	- Storage: \$60 per day (day after tow) - Window taping: \$10 (front/rear), \$5 (side)	Administrative Fee (>3 days): \$80
Howard County	- Advertising fee per claimed property item: \$70 - Release during non-business hours: \$50 - Storage (seized vehicles): \$275 - Storage (towed vehicles): \$90 per day (day after tow) - Window taping: \$10	Administrative Fee (>3 days): \$50
Montgomery County	<i>Storage Fees</i> - Abandoned vehicle lot: \$34 per day - Tow lot: \$76 per day, max five days	N/A
Prince George's County	Storage: \$50 per day (after 18 hours)	N/A
District of Columbia	Storage: \$20 per day (after 24 hours)	N/A

Sources: [Baltimore City Department of Transportation Towing Fees](#), [Baltimore County Towing Fees](#), [District of Columbia Booted/Towed Vehicle Fees](#), [Howard County Resolution No. 75](#), [Montgomery County Department of Police](#), [Anne Arundel County Towing Rates](#), [Prince George's County Towing Fee](#)



Public Docking Fees

Benchmarking findings: Public docking fees are levied for the docking or mooring of privately owned boating vessels. These fees vary significantly across the region in both structure and price, often depending on boat size, duration, and amenities.

In 2013, a [management research report](#) evaluated the operations and revenue generation potential of the Inner Harbor Dockmaster. This report made recommendations which were adopted by the Inner Harbor Dockmaster, including an update to the fee schedule to charge vessels based on length, expanding payment options, and extending hours of operations during the peak season. Baltimore City maintains a tiered fee schedule based on the day of the week, boat size, and the length of stay.

Montgomery County and WSSC's docking fees are not directly comparable, as they are limited to small, electric or manually powered recreational boats. Montgomery County and WSSC's fees are flat, seasonal fees that do not reflect the urban docking rates of Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, and the District of Columbia. While WSSC's service area includes Montgomery County, fees in Montgomery County are applicable to County-managed facilities, while WSSC's fees apply to WSSC-managed reservoirs.

Baltimore City's docking rates are generally lower than Anne Arundel County and the District of Columbia.²⁶ For example, Baltimore City charges \$1.25 per foot on weekends for the daily docking of a 30-foot boat, while Anne Arundel charges \$3 per foot and the District of Columbia charges \$3.75 per foot (note: DC's weekly rate goes into effect after 4 hours).

Public Docking Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	<i>Hourly Docking (5-hour max., 30' minimum charge applies)</i> - Monday through Thursday: \$1.25 per LF - Friday through Sunday: \$1.50 per LF >80 ft.: \$2.50 per LF (all days) <i>Daily Docking (after 5 hours)</i> - Monday through Thursday: \$1.00 per LF - Friday through Sunday: \$1.25 per LF <i>Holidays & Special Events (subject to 1-day min. on weekends)</i> ≤80 feet: \$3.00 per LF >80 feet: \$3.50 per LF <i>Dock and Dine (with restaurant receipt, 3-hour limit)</i> - Monday through Thursday: \$18 - Friday through Sunday: \$20 <i>Small Watercraft (up to 12' length, 5-hour limit)</i> - Monday through Thursday: \$7 - Friday through Sunday: \$10 <i>Monthly Docking (1-month min., prorated)</i> 1-month: \$20 per ft.

²⁶ Anne Arundel County docking fees are charged by the City of Annapolis, and the District of Columbia Wharf Marina is owned by the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation, a government-owned corporation.



Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Anne Arundel County	<i>Public Docking Fees</i> • Non-reserved docking: \$10 per hour (≤50 ft.), \$15 per hour (>50 ft.), includes electricity • Reserved or overnight docking: \$3 per ft. per night, min. \$40 • Winter docking (November through April): \$8 per ft., plus electricity • Premium surcharge: + \$1.00 per ft. on select weekends/holidays • Charter dock: \$2.50 per ft. + \$0.25 per ft. per hour beyond 90 mins <i>Electricity (day/month)</i> • 20 AMP: \$5/\$75 • 30 AMP: \$8/\$120 • 50 AMP: \$15/\$225
Montgomery County	<i>Public Docking (no gasoline power, max. length of 18 ft.)</i> • Docking (March 1 to December 15): \$75 • Mooring (March 1 to December 15): \$50
WSSC (Montgomery and Prince George's County)	<i>Public Docking (no gasoline power, max. length of 14 ft.)</i> • Mooring (March 15 to November 30): \$80 • Mooring (December 1 to March 14): \$
District of Columbia	<i>Hourly Docking (4-hour max.)</i> • Monday through Thursday: \$30 (≤40') to \$40 (>40') • Friday through Sunday: \$40 (≤40') to \$50 (>40') <i>Weekly Docking</i> • ≤60': \$3.75 per ft., per night • >60': \$4.75 per ft., per night <i>Electricity (daily)</i> • Single 30 amp: \$10 • Double 30 amp or single 50 amp: \$20 • Double 50 amp: \$40 • 100 amp: \$50

Sources: [Baltimore City Municipal Docking Rates](#), [Annapolis Docking Fee](#), [WSSC Code - Boat Mooring](#), [WSSC Watershed Fees](#), [Montgomery County Private Boat Regulations](#), [Montgomery County Boat Fees](#), [DC Wharf Boat Fees](#)



Oversized Vehicle Permit Fees

Benchmarking findings: Oversized and overweight vehicle permit fees apply when a vehicle exceeds certain dimensions or weight allowed on public roads, while escort fees apply to the escort of loads which pose a traffic safety risk.

Baltimore City's general oversized vehicle permit of \$60 (+\$5 per ton above 45) is comparable to the District of Columbia's flat \$85 fee. However, the District of Columbia's fee for dump/cement/trash trucks is much higher, at \$1,193, and Prince George's County levies an even higher fee of \$1,584 permit for oversized vehicles. Baltimore County does not charge an annual fee, but instead requires that oversized vehicles register with the County and detail which bridges they plan to utilize during operations. Applicants must receive written approval from the County before being able to drive their oversized vehicle on County bridges.

Baltimore City's oversized vehicle escort fee is distinct from the District of Columbia. Baltimore City charges a flat fee of \$160, which includes two personnel for three hours.

Oversized Vehicle Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Oversized vehicle permit (up to 45 tons): \$60 + \$5 per extra ton • Escort: \$160 (2 staff, 3 hours of labor)	N/A
Prince George's County	• Permit (oversized/haul road/logging): \$1,584 • Extension: \$330 (oversized) to \$396 (haul road/logging) • Revision: \$132 • Haul road/logging grading fee: \$120 • Letter of responsibility: \$152	Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	• Escort: \$30 (one-way), \$50 (roundtrip) • Oversized vehicle permit: \$85 • Dump/cement/trash truck: \$1,193	N/A

Sources: [Baltimore City Department of Transportation](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [DC DOT - Overweight Vehicles](#), [Baltimore County Bridge Overload Permit](#)



Department of Transportation Right-of-Way Fees

Benchmarking findings: Right-of-way construction fees are charged by jurisdictions to regulate and recover the cost of permitting, monitoring, and repairing construction related disruptions to public rights-of-way, including streets, sidewalks, alleys, and other public infrastructure. These fees are typically applied to street and sidewalk closures, utility cuts, driveway installations, temporary occupancy (dumpsters, scaffolding), and installation of equipment on poles. The majority of these fees are flat rates or per-foot charges, while several fees are scaled based on project cost or the length of right-of-way disruption.

While direct comparisons are challenging due to the way fees are structured differently among jurisdictions, a high-level review indicates that Baltimore City's fee levels are comparable. For driveways, Baltimore City charges \$20 plus \$15 per LF, which would be equivalent to \$320 for a standard 20-foot driveway. In comparison, Baltimore County charges \$115 in Baltimore County, Montgomery County charges \$162 plus 15.84% of project cost, Prince George's County charges \$224 to \$446 depending on driveway type, and the District charges \$75 to \$135.

For dumpsters, the City charges \$65 per week (or \$260 per month) while the District of Columbia charges plus \$75 to \$200 per month plus parking revenue loss charge between \$0.02 and \$0.06 per sq. ft. Baltimore County, on the other hand, only charges \$100 per 30 days. Note that both Howard County and Prince George's County charge a 10% technology fee in addition to the base fee listed below.

Department of Transportation Fee Comparison – Right-of-Way

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Bracing and sheathing: \$1.80 per sq. ft. (\$117.20 min.) (annual Minor Privilege Permit) • Driveway / curb cut: \$20 + \$15 per LF • Dumpster, filming, curb lane, alley closure: \$65 per week • Dumpster: \$14 per sq. ft. (annual Minor Privilege Permit) • Footway repair: \$55 per week + \$20 • Sidewalk closure: \$55 per week • Street closure: \$85 per week • Street cut / test pit: \$65 per week + \$100 per cut • Temporary fencing: \$55 per week + \$10 per week per 25 LF above 25	N/A
Anne Arundel County²⁷	• Grassy area bore or trench: \$70 per 500 LF (bore) to 750 LF (trench) • Individual permit: \$61 • Maintenance: \$17 + \$12 activity permit • Road crossing: \$70 • Street cut (emergency): \$209 • Small Wireless Facilities: \$1,762 to \$4782 depending on whether it is a replacement, modification or new	N/A
Baltimore County	• Dumpster: \$100 • Driveway / curb cut: \$115 • Street cut <500 ft.: \$125 • Street cut >500 ft.: \$0.25 per ft. • Test pit / boring: \$60 • Small wireless facilities (existing pole: \$100; new pole: \$200)	N/A
Howard County	• Driveway: free unless changes are made to the driveway footprint • Utility trench: \$100 + \$50 per 500 ft. above 500	Technology Fee: 10%

²⁷ According to Anne Arundel County's fee schedule, the fees provided shall increase each July first based on the consumer price index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) for the previous January. All maintenance activity that makes no material change to the footprint of an existing facility or structure, makes no material change to the surface or sub-surface of a right-of-way, and does not disrupt or impede traffic are free.



Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Montgomery County	• Driveway: \$162.22 + 15.84% of project cost • Special use and roadway occupancy (dumpsters, crane etc.): \$232.52 • Utility permits (below): \$0.83816 per LF (min. \$838.16) • Utility roadway work (above or aerial): \$0.45964 per LF (min. \$459.64)	N/A
Prince George's County	• Driveway apron: \$224 to \$446, depending on type • Driveway parking pad: \$125 + \$53 grading fee • Road construction permit: 11% of cost • Small wireless facilities (right-of-way): \$0.36 to \$3.12 per LF (one-time) + \$480 filing fee • Small wireless facility installation: \$15.60 (moratorium road), \$27.60 (aerial) or \$225 (roadway) <i>Utilities</i> • Utility (above roadway): \$0.60 per LF • Utility (aerial) \$0.24 per LF + \$21 inspection fee • Utility (under roadway): \$2.40 per LF • Utility curb cut: \$173 • Utility impact fee (moratorium road): \$12 per LF	Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	• Alley (central business district): \$0.02 per sq. ft. per day (max. \$2,250) • Alley (outside central business district): \$0.015 per sq. ft. per day (max. \$2,250) • Driveway (commercial or circular residential): \$135 • Driveway (residential): \$75 • Excavation (minor): \$20 to \$135 • Excavation (major): \$85 to \$135 • General temporary occupancy: \$50 per month • Manhole access: \$85 for each occurrence • Misc. sidewalk construction: \$75 to \$135 • Moving (trucks, containers): \$50 • Overhead wire installations: \$50 + \$20 per additional 300 LF above 500 • Receptacles for construction debris (e.g., dumpsters) placed in public space: \$75 to \$200 per month + parking revenue loss charge between \$0.02 and \$0.06 per sq. ft. • Resurface roadway: \$75 • Right-of-way (abutting a business): \$139 • Right-of-way inspection (paving, repair, alteration): \$50 per hour • Sidewalk (central business district): \$0.03 per sq. ft. per day (max. \$3,000) • Sidewalk (outside central business district): \$0.02 per sq. ft. per day (max. \$3,000) • Travel lane (central business district): \$0.04 (first lane) to \$0.06 per sq. ft. per day (max \$2,250) • Travel lane (outside central business district): \$0.035 (first lane) to \$0.045 per sq. ft. per day (max \$2,250)	Application Fee: \$50

Sources: [Baltimore City Department of Transportation](#), [Anne Arundel County, Right of Way Permitting](#), [Baltimore County Utility Cut Permits](#), [Baltimore County Residential Access Permits](#), [Howard County fees](#), [Montgomery County Land Development Fee](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [District of Columbia Public Space Permit Fees](#).



Minor Privileges Fees – Building Attached Structures and Fixtures

Benchmarking Findings: Minor privilege attached structure and projection permits are annual charges imposed for private structures or projections – such as awnings, balconies, bay windows – that are attached to buildings and extend into the public right-of-way. Because these fees are not generally levied by surrounding counties, we only included Boston and Chicago in this comparison exercise. Baltimore City's annual fees are more expensive, and, in some cases, higher than the comparison group.

For example, Baltimore City's minimum charge for an awning is \$210.90, compared to \$50 in Chicago and \$100 in Boston. Additionally, Baltimore City charges a minimum balcony fee between \$140.60 to \$281.30 (depending on location), compared to \$75 in Chicago and \$100 in Boston. The District of Columbia charges a one-time \$135 for any right-of-way projection which requires an exception.

Minor Privileges Fee Comparison – Building Attached Structures and Fixtures

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Awnings (folding): \$10.50 to \$21 per LF (\$210.90 minimum charge) • Awnings (stationary): \$4.20 to \$8.40 per sq. ft. (\$210.90 minimum charge) • Balconies: \$3.50 to \$7.00 per sq. ft. (\$140.60 to \$281.30 minimum charge) • Bridgeway: \$8.80 to \$15.80 per sq. ft. + \$4.20 per sq. ft. for additional stories • Canopies (cloth, pipe): \$175.80 to \$351.60 each • Canopies (metal): \$1.40 to \$2.80 per sq. ft. (\$47 minimum) • Cornices: \$8.40 to \$16.80 per sq. ft. (\$21.90 minimum charge) • Facing and veneers: \$70.30 (<200 sq. ft.) + \$70.30 per story • Fire escapes: \$141 (one-time) • Marquee: \$2.80 to \$5.60 per sq. ft. (\$70.30 minimum) • Stairways: \$234.40 • Storm door enclosure: \$14.10 to \$28.10 per sq. ft. (\$70.30 minimum charge) • Vent/exhaust stacks: \$70.30 each (unclear) • Windows (bay): \$1,406 flat fee • Windows (bow and show): \$14.10 to \$28.10 per sq. ft. (second floor 50% of fee, third and above \$2.40 per sq. ft.) • Windows (oriel): \$42.30 to \$84.30 (second floor 50% of fee, third and above \$2.40 per sq. ft.)	Initial Inspection Fee: 20%
District of Columbia	• Window well: \$75 (one-time) • Window (bay): \$75 (one-time) • Other projections requiring exception: \$135 (one-time)	Application Fee: \$50
City of Chicago, IL	• Awning, marquee, canopy: \$50 for first 25 ft. + \$1.00/additional ft. • Balcony: \$75 • Bay window: \$75 • Fire escape: \$400 each • Light fixture (first fixture): \$75 + \$5 for each additional fixture	Application Fee: \$50
City of Boston, MA	• Projection (no sign: awning, canopy, marquee): \$100 • Projection (with sign: awning, canopy, marquee): \$140 • Projection additional area fee: \$8 per 100 sq. ft. (or part) • Projection (retractable awning): \$20 per establishment	N/A

Sources: [City of Baltimore Minor Privilege Permits](#), [City of Chicago Public Way Use Permit Fees](#), [City of Boston Projection Codes](#), [District of Columbia Right of Way Permits](#)



Minor Privileges Fees – Fixtures

Benchmarking Findings: Jurisdictions in the below comparison group charge annual fees for the presence of signs, banners, or other projections in the public right-of-way. Baltimore City imposes the most detailed set of fees, with charges that range based on the location of the projection.

For a standard sign, Baltimore City charges \$158.60 for a 20 sq. ft. bracketed sign, compared to \$100 in Chicago, \$54 in Boston, \$50 in Milwaukee, and a one-time \$135 fee in D.C.

Minor Privileges Fee Comparison – Fixtures

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	- Banners: \$1.40 per sq. ft. (\$70.30 minimum charge) (one-time) - Reflectors (fluorescent tubes): \$105.60 to \$210.90 (one-time) - Reflectors (lamps or spot): \$25 (one-time) <i>Signs (one-time)</i> - Bracket: \$158.60 - A Frame: \$52.80 - Cloth: \$1.10 to \$2.10 per sq. ft. (\$70.30 minimum) - Cornice, non-illuminated: \$210.90 + \$5.25 to \$10.50 per sq. ft. above 50 - Electric: \$10.50 to \$21 per sq. ft. (\$105.60 B/C min. to \$210.90 A min.) - Flat single-faced: \$4.20 to \$8.40 per sq. ft. (\$70.30 minimum) - Glass: \$17.60 to \$35.20 each - Globe: \$52.70 to \$105.50 each	Initial Inspection Fee: 20%
District of Columbia	- Canopy sockets: \$75 (one-time) - Sign: \$135 (one-time)	Application Fee: \$50
City of Boston, MA	- Projection (awning, canopy, marquee): \$4 per 10 sq. ft. (or part) - Sign, advertising, clock, or similar (initial): \$50 per structure - Sign (additional face area fee): \$2 per 10 sq. ft. (or part) - Renewal: \$20	N/A
City of Chicago, IL	- Banner: \$75 each - Sign (<25 sq. ft.): \$100.00 - Sign (25 sq. ft. or greater): \$300	Application Fee: \$50
City of Milwaukee, WI	- Projecting signs into the public right-of-way: \$50 - Free standing sign encroaching into public right-of-way: \$33 - Off premises signs <100 sq. ft. (first display area): \$75 + \$50 for each additional - Off premises signs 100 to 300 sq. ft. (first display area): \$100 + \$50 for each additional	N/A
City of Philadelphia, PA	- Sign (accessory): \$253 (one-time) - Sign (non-accessory): \$398 (one-time)	N/A

Sources: [City of Baltimore Minor Privilege Permits](#), [City of Chicago Public Way Use Permit Fees](#), [Milwaukee Fee Schedule](#), [City of Milwaukee Sidewalk Dining](#), [City of Milwaukee Chapter 81 Permit Fees](#), [City of Boston Projection Codes](#), [District of Columbia Right of Way Permits](#), [Philadelphia Sign Permit](#)



Minor Privileges Fees – Fixed Commercial Structures

Benchmarking Findings: The annual fees assessed for cities for the use of public rights-of-way for commercial structures – such as sidewalk cafes, ticket booths, or newspaper racks– are intended to regulate the private use of public rights of way.

Baltimore City's annual fixed commercial structure fees are more detailed, and in the case of sidewalk cafes, higher than the comparison group. Baltimore City charges an annual fee of \$337.50 plus \$14 per sq. ft above 80, compared to \$100 in Baltimore County, \$232.50 in Montgomery County, \$227 in the City of Philadelphia, and \$2 per square foot + \$100 in Milwaukee. The District of Columbia charges a one-time \$260 permit fee plus an annual \$5 to \$10 per sq. ft. fee annually.

Minor Privileges Fee Comparison – Fixed Commercial Structures

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	- Cases: \$70 to \$140 - Flowers: \$14 per day - Newspaper rack: \$23.40 each - Sidewalk cafe: \$337.50 plus \$14 per sq. ft. over 80 sq. ft. - Ticket booths: \$14.10 to \$28.10 per sq. ft.	Initial Inspection Fee: 20%
Baltimore County	Sidewalk cafe: \$100	N/A
District of Columbia	- Sidewalk vending: \$150 (biannual) - Sidewalk cafe permit: \$260 (one-time) - Sidewalk cafe (enclosed): \$5 per sq. ft. - Sidewalk cafe (unenclosed): \$10 per sq. ft.	Enhancement Fee: 10%
Montgomery County, MD	Misc. right-of-way (sidewalk cafe, newsstand, etc.) \$232.52	N/A
Prince George's County	Sidewalk café: variable U&O permit	N/A
City of Chicago, IL	Newsstand: \$50 (one-time)	N/A
City of Milwaukee, WI	Sidewalk cafe: \$2 per sq. ft + \$100 application fee	N/A
City of Philadelphia, PA	- Newsstand license: \$379 - Sidewalk cafe: \$227	N/A

Sources: [City of Baltimore Minor Privilege Permits](#), [City of Philadelphia Sidewalk Cafes](#), [Milwaukee Fee Schedule](#), [City of Milwaukee Chapter 81 Permit Fees](#), [City of Boston Projection Codes](#), [Baltimore County: Confirmed via Phone](#), [Chicago DOT 2025 Permit Fees](#), [Montgomery County Confirmed via Phone](#), [City of Philadelphia Newsstand License](#), [District of Columbia Right of Way Permits](#)



Minor Privileges Fees – Ground Level Fixtures

Benchmarking Findings: Annual fees for ground level encroachments into the public right-of-way, such as fences, poles, planters, and other small structures, serve to regulate the private use of public space and recover costs related to administration and enforcement. Baltimore City applies an extensive and itemized fee schedule, with charges based on the size of the fixtures, and the location in the City.

Baltimore City's fees vary in comparability – for example, Baltimore City charges \$35.20 to \$70.30 (depending on location) for a barber pole, compared to only \$10 in Chicago and \$10 in Boston. On the other hand, Baltimore City charges a \$70.30 minimum charge for trash bins, compared to \$75 in Chicago and \$10 in Boston. Additionally, while the District of Columbia levies fees for similar items in the public right-of-way, these fees are levied one-time, and not on an annual basis. When comparable, Baltimore City's fees are mixed relative to D.C. For example, Baltimore's one-time fee for steps ranges from \$35.20 for a residential property and \$210.90 for a commercial property, compared to a flat one-time fee of \$75 in the District of Columbia.

Minor Privileges Fees Comparison – Ground Level Fixtures

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Areaways (closed): \$4.20 to \$8.80 per sq. ft. • Areaways (open): \$14.10 to \$56.30 per sq. ft. • Bins: \$3.50 per sq. ft. (\$70.30 minimum charge) • Cellar doors: \$11.70 to \$35.20 per sq. ft. • Fences (commercial): \$1.75 per sq. ft. (\$70.00 minimum charge) • Fences (residential): \$0.35 per sq. ft. (\$35.00 minimum charge) • Footings: \$2.35 per LF (\$70.30 minimum charge) • Lanterns (ornamental): \$17.6 to \$35.2 each • Planters: \$3.50 to \$7 per sq. ft. (\$35.20 minimum) • Pole (barber): \$35.20 to \$70.30 each • Pole (flag): \$7 each • Bicycle rack: \$25 (one-time) • Snow melting system: \$70.30 • Steps (commercial): \$210.90 (one-time) • Steps (residential): \$35.20 (one-time)	Initial Inspection Fee: 20%
District of Columbia	• Bicycle rack: \$135 (one-time) • Fence (with brick piers): \$75 (one-time) • Fence/wall (over height): \$135 (one-time) • Fence/wall repair (over-height): \$50 (one-time) • Fence: \$75 (one-time) • Other misc. fixtures: \$75 to \$135 (one-time) • Pay phone: \$75 (one-time) • Planter box (in parking): \$75 (one-time) • Planter box (sidewalk): \$135 (one-time) • Porch: \$75 (one-time) • Retaining wall: \$75 (one-time) • Steps: \$75 (one-time) • Street furniture: \$135 (one-time)	Application Fee: \$50 (public utilities exempt)
City of Chicago, IL	• Barber pole: \$10 • Bench (w/ ad): \$8.79 (per month) • Clock: \$400 • Other fixtures: (flagpole, bin, bench, etc.): \$75	Application fee: \$50
City of Boston, MA	• Parkway/street occupancy permit for lamp, meat hook, or small non-advertising structure: \$10 + additional fee (TBD by Dept.)	N/A
City of Milwaukee, WI	• Fence installation encroaching on public right-of-way: \$143 (one-time)	N/A

Sources: [City of Baltimore Minor Privilege Permits](#), [City of Chicago Public Way Use Permit Fees](#), [Milwaukee Fee Schedule](#), [City of Milwaukee Chapter 81 Permit Fees](#), [City of Boston Projection Codes](#), [District of Columbia Right of Way Permits](#)



Minor Privileges Fees – Other

Benchmarking Findings: Baltimore City charges annual fees for underground and surface utility infrastructure located within the public right-of-way. These fees apply to a range of installations, including conduits, pipelines, monitoring wells, tanks, tunnels, and sidewalk values, and are calculated based on dimensions. By contrast, comparison jurisdictions assess one-time fees related to the construction or installation of the referenced items, which range from flat, size-based, or percentage-based fees.

For vaults, the City of Baltimore charges \$4.20 to \$8.80 per square foot per year, while the District of Columbia charges a one-time \$250 fee, Milwaukee levies a one-time fee of 1.6% of construction cost, and the City of Philadelphia charges \$5 to \$25 per front foot.

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	<u>Underground Utilities & Structures</u> • Clearwater connection: \$70.30 (one-time) • Conduit service connection: \$3.50 to \$7 per LF • Conduits: \$3.50 to \$7 per LF • Monitoring wells: \$70 each • Pipelines: \$3.50 to \$7 per LF (\$70.30 min.) • Tanks (under footway) \$70.30 to \$140.60 for first 50 gal. + \$9.40 to \$18.80 for each additional barrel • Tunnels: \$1.40 to \$4.20 per cubic ft • Vaults: \$4.20 to \$8.80 per sq. ft. <u>Surface & Overhead Utilities & Transportation Infrastructure</u> • Cabinets (trunk amplifier): \$50.6 per sq. ft. (under one sq. ft. charge \$46.90 minimum) • Cables (electric): \$3.50 to \$7 per LF • Electric distribution box: \$14.10 to \$28.10 per sq. ft. (\$70.30 min.)	Initial Inspection Fee: 20%
District of Columbia	<u>Underground Utilities & Structures</u> • Conduit (relocation): \$50 up to 10 LF (one-time) • Monitoring wells: \$135 + \$20 for each additional (one-time) • Transformer vault (including manhole and conduit): \$250 (one-time) • Water connection (>4 inch): \$135	Application Fee: \$500
City of Milwaukee, WI	<u>Underground Utilities & Structures</u> • Conduit or main: \$89 + \$64 inspection fee (one-time) • Tanks: 1.6% of the cost + 1.6% IT surcharge (min. \$150, one-time) • Vault: 1.6% of the cost (min. \$75, one-time)	Processing Fee: \$10
City of Philadelphia, PA	<u>Underground Utilities & Structures</u> • Vault: \$5 to \$25 per front foot, depending on distance from curb (one-time)	N/A

Sources: [City of Baltimore Minor Privilege Permits](#), [District of Columbia Right of Way Permits](#), [City of Milwaukee Development Fees](#), [City of Philadelphia Code 11-608 Excavation and Construction In and Under Sidewalks](#)



Fire Department Hazardous Material Use and Storage Fees

Benchmarking findings: Baltimore City's fees for the use and storage of hazardous materials are the most granular of the comparison group. Other jurisdictions, like Howard County, group hazardous materials into larger categories based on the nature of the materials. Howard County, Montgomery County, and the District of Columbia have similar structures – charging annual permits for the use, storage, transportation or generation of hazardous materials on a tiered system structure plus additional fees for specific uses (e.g., outside storage of flammable solids).

The City's hazardous material use and storage fees are generally comparable to other jurisdictions. For example, Baltimore City charges an annual \$150 permit for the general storage of combustible materials, comparable to the District's \$150 hazardous operations permit. That said, for larger facilities, Baltimore City's fee likely trails jurisdictions that charge based on facility size (e.g., Howard County charges \$50 per acre and Prince George's County charges \$60 per acre).

Fire Department Hazardous Material Use Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit		Additional Fees
Baltimore City	<u>Hazardous Material Use</u> • Acetylene generator (>5 lbs.): \$50 (annual) • Application of flammable liquids: \$150 (annual) • Cryogenic liquids: \$75 • Crop ripening or coloring: \$219 (annual) • Flammable liquids: \$19 to 219 (annual, depending on class and volume) • Flammable solids: \$157 (annual) • Fumigation and thermal insecticidal fogging: \$250 (annual) • Highly toxic materials: \$157 • Magnesium: \$157 • Materials and chemicals: \$157 (annual) • Organic Coating: \$219 (annual)	<u>Hazardous Material Storage</u> • Acetylene generators: \$63 (annual) • Aerosols: \$157 • Calcium carbide (>200 lbs.): \$63 (annual) • Cellulose nitrate: \$50 • Combustible fibers (>100 cu. ft.): \$125 • Combustible materials: \$150 • Compressed gas storage (>2,000 cu. ft.): \$63 • Cylinder storage (welding and cutting): \$63 • Explosives: \$300 (annual) • Matches: \$125 (annual) • Magnesium: \$157	N/A
Anne Arundel County	<u>Hazardous Material Storage</u> <i>Permit fee based on estimated value of work:</i> • <\$25,000: \$86 to \$242 • >\$25,000: \$242 + 1% of amount over \$25,000		Application Fee: \$43
Howard County	<u>Hazardous Material Use, Storage, Transportation Permits (annual)</u> • Type 1: \$1,000 • Type 2: \$400 • Type 3: \$250 • Type 4 and 5: \$100	<u>Hazardous Material Storage (annual)</u> • Low or ordinary hazard: \$75 per 5,000 sq. ft. • High hazard: \$100 per 5,000 sq. ft. • Combustible solids (outside storage): \$50 per acre • Combustible liquids/gases (outside storage): \$100 per 5,000 sq. ft.	N/A
Montgomery County	<u>Hazardous Material Use, Storage, Transportation Permits (annual)</u> • Light use: \$100 • General use: \$250 • High use: \$400 • Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) Use: \$1,000 • Pools: Varies	<u>Hazardous Material use or Storage (specific items)</u> • Store or use >100 cu. ft. of combustible fibers: \$102.74 (annual) • Blasting permit: \$102.74 (monthly) • Floor resurfacing: \$102.74 (monthly) • Application of flammable liquids: \$102.74 (annual) • Bulk storage: \$102.74 (annual)	N/A
Prince George's County	<u>Hazardous Material Storage (annual)</u> Combustible materials: \$60 (per acre) Flammable liquids/gases, tanks: \$120 (per 5,000 sq. ft. or portion thereof)		N/A
District of Columbia	<u>Hazardous Material Use or Storage (depending on length of business license)</u> • Propane: <200 lbs. \$150, then \$.50 per lb. • Fuel storage tank reviews: \$100 (removal) to \$250 (installation) • Fuel storage tanks: \$100 Hazardous operations: \$150		N/A

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Government Fire Inspections](#), [DC FEMS Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel County Fire Prevention Code](#), [Howard County Legislation CR75-2022 Final](#), [Prince George's County Fire Inspection Fees](#), [Montgomery County Fire Prevention Code Fee Schedule](#) [Montgomery County HAZMAT](#)



Fire Department Hazardous Building Use Fees

Benchmarking findings: Baltimore City levies a detailed range of fees for specific industrial and hazardous operations (e.g., grain mills, lumber yards, liquid petroleum gas), with permit costs ranging from \$38 to \$375 for one-time and annual permits. While Baltimore City and the District both levy flat fees, other jurisdictions base fees on the square footage of a facility and the level of hazard, making direct comparisons difficult. Where comparisons are possible, Baltimore City's fees are mixed when compared to other jurisdictions.

For example, Baltimore City charges \$157 for facilities that produce hazardous materials, higher than \$100 in Howard County and \$102.74 annually in Montgomery County. For welding and hot work, however, Baltimore City charges \$63, lower than Montgomery County (\$102.74 annually) and the District of Columbia (\$150 upon business license renewal).

Fire Department Hazardous Building Use Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	<u>Hazardous Building Use</u> • Airports, heliports, helistops: \$219 (annual) • Grain elevator/mill/pulverizing plant/tire recycling: \$375 • Flammable liquid processing plant: \$219 (annual) • Hazardous production materials facilities: \$157 • Health hazard materials facilities (irritants, sensitive, etc.): \$157 • Liquid petroleum gas: \$157 • Lumber yards and woodworking plans: \$150 • Oil/gas/well operations: \$188 (annual) • Open plants: organic coating \$219 (annual) • Plants: \$125 (annual) • Service and/or repair motor vehicles: \$38 • Tire building plants: \$157 • Vehicle wrecking/junk yards and waste handling: \$125 (annual) • Welding and cutting: \$63
Anne Arundel County	N/A
Baltimore County	<u>Hazardous Building Use</u> • Construction/alteration of high hazard building: \$0.11 per sq. ft. (minimum \$208) • Annual fire inspection (required for all buildings): information requested
Howard County	<u>Hazardous Building Use (annual)</u> • Tires: \$150 to \$500 • Low or ordinary hazard: \$75 per 5,000 sq. ft. • High hazard: \$100 per 5,000 sq. ft.
Montgomery County	<u>Hazardous Building Use (annual)</u> \$102.74 annual fee includes the following activities: ○ Solids: tire capping, lumber yards, commercial rubbish handling ○ Hot work ○ Motor vehicle refueling or repair facility
Prince George's County	<u>Hazardous Building Use</u> • Industrial - Low or ordinary hazard: \$120 per 5,000 sq. ft. • Industrial - High hazard: \$200 per 5,000 sq. ft.
District of Columbia	• Hot work: \$150 (depending on length of business license) • Hazardous operations: \$150 (depending on length of business license)

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Government Fire Inspections](#), [DC FEMS Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel County Fire Prevention Code](#), [Howard County Legislation CR75-2022 Final](#), [Prince George's County Fire Inspection Fees](#), [Montgomery County Fire Prevention Code Fee Schedule](#)



Fire Department Public Assembly Fees

Benchmarking findings: Public assembly fees are charged by fire departments to cover the cost of inspections that ensure fire code compliance in spaces where people gather, such as theatres, schools, religious facilities, or event venues. Baltimore City's fee schedule is similar to that of the comparison group, with general assembly fees tied to the level of occupancy and fees based on specific use type.

Baltimore City's base public assembly fees are generally in line with that of the comparison group. The City charges \$150 annually for spaces with a capacity of 50 to 249 people, the same as the District of Columbia but higher than Howard County (\$100), Prince George's County (\$100), and Montgomery County (\$102.74).

Of note, Baltimore City's fees continue to increase as assembly capacity grows while other jurisdictions cap the fee at a lower amount. For example, Baltimore City's maximum general assembly fee is \$3,150 (versus \$300 in Howard County and Prince George's County).

Fire Department Public Assembly Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	<u>General Assembly Fee (annual)</u> <u>Capacity</u> • 50 to 249: \$150 • 250 to 499: \$300 • 500 to 999: \$450 • 1,000 to 2,499: \$675 • 2,500 to 4,999: \$1,575 • >5,000: \$3,150 <u>Building Specific Assembly Fees (annual)</u> • Churches: \$63 • Educational facility: \$113
Baltimore County	<u>General Assembly Fee (annual)</u> • Fire Inspection Fee: Unspecified/Variable (managed by 3rd party organization)
Howard County	<u>General Assembly Fee (annual)</u> <u>Capacity</u> • 50 to 300: \$100 • 301 to 1,000: \$200 • >1,001: \$300
Montgomery County	<u>General Assembly Fee (annual)</u> • Fire code compliance permit: \$102.74 <u>Building Specific Assembly Fees (annual)</u> • Private educational facility: \$102.74
Prince George's County	<u>General Assembly Fee (annual)</u> <u>Capacity</u> • 50 to 300: \$100 • 301 to 1,000: \$200 • >1,001: \$300 <u>Building Specific Assembly Fees (annual)</u> • Educational facility: \$120 to \$180 (depending on type of school)
District of Columbia	<u>General Assembly Fee (depending on length of commercial license)</u> • Assembly operational permit fee: \$150

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Government Fire Inspections](#), [DC FEMS Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel County Fire Prevention Code](#), [Howard County Legislation CR75-2022 Final](#), [Prince George's County Fire Inspection Fees](#), [Montgomery County Fire Prevention Code Fee Schedule](#)



Fire Department Assisted Living Occupancy Fees

Benchmarking findings: Assisted living fees support fire safety inspections of permitted occupancies to ensure code compliance in spaces where people live on a temporary or permanent basis. A high-level review indicates that Baltimore City's assisted living fees are slightly lower than other jurisdictions once the scale of facilities are considered. *Note: the below fees are charged annually, unless specified.*

- For nursery and day care centers, Baltimore City charges \$81 per year, lower than Howard County (\$100), Montgomery County (\$102.74 annually), and Prince George's County (\$100).
- For board and care homes, Baltimore City charges \$113 annually, comparable to Montgomery County (\$102.74), but potentially lower than jurisdictions that charge fees based on the size of the facility. For example, Howard County's fee is \$100 plus \$2 per bed and Prince George's County's fee is \$120 plus \$2.50 per bed.

Assisted Living Fees Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	• Family day care home: \$20 to 30 (bi-annual depending on number of residents) • Foster care board/care homes: \$56 to \$113 depending on number of residents • Foster care (single/dual-family dwellings): \$37 • Hospitals/nursing homes (per 300 beds or fraction thereof): \$2 per bed • Nursery/day care centers (>12 Residents): \$81
Baltimore County	• Fire Inspection Fee: Unspecified/Variable (managed by 3rd party organization)
Howard County	• Ambulatory healthcare center: \$150 per building + \$2 per bed • Board & care home: \$100 per building + \$2 per bed • Day care (nursery): \$100 • Hospitals/nursing homes: \$100 per building + \$2 per bed • Family or group daycare home: \$75
Montgomery County	• Board & care home: \$102.74 • Healthcare center: \$102.74 • Day care centers: \$205 (2-year license)
Prince George's County	• Ambulatory healthcare center: \$100 • Board and care home: \$120 per building + \$2.50 per bed • Day care/nursery center: \$100 • Family or group day care homes: \$75 (\$50 renewal) • Foster care: \$75 • Hospital/nursing home: \$120 per building + \$2.50 per bed

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Government Fire Inspections](#), [DC FEMS Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Lodging Business Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Fire Prevention Code](#), [Howard County Legislation CR75-2022 Final](#), [Prince George's County Fire Inspection Fees](#), [Montgomery County Fire Prevention Code Fee Schedule](#)



Fire Department Commercial Occupancy Fees

Benchmarking findings: Commercial occupancy fees support fire safety inspections of permitted occupancies to ensure code compliance in spaces where people regularly gather. A high-level review indicates that Baltimore City's commercial occupancy fees (specifically hotel and halfway/rooming services) are lower than in other jurisdictions. *Note: the below fees are charged annually, unless specified.*

- At \$1.15 per bed, Baltimore City's hotel inspection fee trails the comparison group. For example, for a hotel with 100 rooms, Baltimore City charges \$115 per year (\$1.15 per bed), the second lowest among the included jurisdictions. Only Montgomery County's annual \$102.74 fee is lower than Baltimore City's.

Fire Department Commercial Occupancy Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	- General inspection required by other agencies: \$100 (per inspection) - Halfway, lodging or rooming services: \$70 - Hotels: \$1.15 per bed
Anne Arundel County	<i>Hotels (two-year license)</i> 1 to 4: \$30 per unit 5 to 50: \$120 plus \$25 per unit >51: \$1,370 plus \$18 per unit
Baltimore County	Fire Inspection Fee: Unspecified/Variable (managed by 3rd party organization)
Howard County	- Business occupancy: \$75 per 3,000 sq. ft. - Mercantile occupancy: \$75 to \$100, depending on sq. ft. - Hotel/motels, dorms, lodging: \$75 per building + \$2 per bed or apartment
Montgomery County	- Private educational facility: \$102.74 - Other licensed facilities: \$102.74
Prince George's County	- Hotel/motels, dorms, lodging: \$120 per building + \$2.50 per guest room - Mercantile occupancy: \$100 to \$300, depending on sq. ft.
District of Columbia	<i>Bed and Breakfast, Boarding House & Rooming House (renewed with business license)</i> 1 to 4 Units: \$104.50 5 to 10 Units: \$333.30 11+ Units: \$208.00 + \$45.00 for every 10 units or fraction thereof <i>Hotel (renewed with business license)</i> 1 to 29 Units: \$313.50 30 to 50 Units: \$785.40 >50 Units: \$619.00 + \$45.00 for every 10 units or fraction thereof <i>Inn and Motel (renewed with business license)</i> 1 to 29 Units: \$154.00 30 to 50 Units: \$556.60 >50 Units: \$411.00 + \$45.00 for every 10 units or fraction thereof

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Government Fire Inspections](#), [DC FEMS Permit Fee Schedule](#), [DC Lodging Business Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Fire Prevention Code](#), [Howard County Legislation CR75-2022 Final](#), [Prince George's County Fire Inspection Fees](#), [Montgomery County Fire Prevention Code Fee Schedule](#)



Fire Protection Permit Fees – Sprinklers

Benchmarking findings: Sprinkler permit fees vary significantly across jurisdictions depending on how the systems are categorized (e.g., by type, number of heads/devices, or total value of the work). While a direct comparison is complicated by differing fee structures, a high-level review shows that Baltimore City's fees are generally lower, especially for small to mid-sized installations.

- Assuming a 10-sprinkler apartment building with a construction cost of \$13,500²⁸, Baltimore City's fee (\$44) is higher than the District of Columbia (\$33) but lower than all other jurisdictions in the comparison group.

In addition to these core fees, several jurisdictions impose additional charges that can increase total permit costs. For example, Howard County includes a \$50 application fee and a 10% technology fee on top of its permit costs, while Prince George's County adds administrative and technology surcharges.

Fire Protection Permit Comparison – Sprinkler Systems

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City²⁹	1 to 25 heads: \$44 per job 26 to 100 heads: \$63 per job >100 heads: \$63 + \$63 for each additional 100 heads (or fraction thereof)	N/A
Anne Arundel County	<i>Permit fee based on estimated value of work:</i> <\$25,000: \$86 to \$242 >\$25,000: \$242 + 1% of amount over \$25,000 - Residential suppression system: \$51	Application Fee: \$43
Baltimore County	- Pipe ≤ 2": \$40 + fire inspection fee (information requested) - Pipe > 2": \$93 + fire inspection fee (information requested)	N/A
Howard County	1 to 300 heads: \$75 to \$300 >300 heads: \$1 per head - Single/dual-family dwellings (including townhouses): \$75 per dwelling - Miscellaneous sprinkler equipment (valve replacements, PRVs, etc.): \$100 - Standpipe system: \$50 per riser - Other systems: \$75	Application Fee: \$50 Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	Sprinkler system: \$7.57 per head	N/A
Prince George's County	- Residential sprinkler: \$152 to \$220, depending on type - Commercial sprinkler: \$220 to \$231, depending on type	Admin Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	- NFPA 13 system: \$4 per head + \$2 per head over 50 - NFPA 13R or 13D system (up to 20 heads): \$3 per head	Enhancement fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [District of Columbia Department of Buildings Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Fire Protection Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fire Alarm and Protection Fee](#), [Anne Arundel Fire Protection System Permits](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#)

²⁸ According to the National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA), the average cost of residential sprinkler systems is \$1.35 per square foot of construction. The NFSA states that a NFPA 13R system is standard for low-rise residential occupancies.

²⁹ There are other related mechanical fees authorized in the Building, Fire, and Related codes that are included in the corresponding summaries.



Fire Protection Permit Fees – Fire Alarms

Benchmarking findings: Baltimore City levies a fire alarm fee based on the height of the building, charging \$63 per zone in standard buildings and \$94 per zone in high-rise structures. For smaller projects, Baltimore City is likely to trail the comparison group given the structure of charging per floor and/or zone. However, since Baltimore charges by floor or zone, these fees may exceed the comparison group for larger buildings with many floors and/or zones.

- Baltimore City's fire alarm system fees resemble those of Baltimore County, Montgomery County, and the District of Columbia, which all levy scalable fees. While Baltimore County charges based on the number of devices, Montgomery County imposes a \$167.63 base fee plus \$33.53 per device, and the District of Columbia charges \$20 per 10 devices, plus a 10% enhancement fee.
- The remaining jurisdictions charge flat-rate fees for fire alarm systems, regardless of the size or complexity. These fees vary significantly from \$75 in Howard County to \$346 in Anne Arundel County for a new system (plus a \$43 application fee).

Fire Protection Permit Comparison – Fire Alarms

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Fire alarm system: \$63 to \$94 per floor or zone, depending on height of building	N/A
Anne Arundel County	• New fire alarm system: \$346 • Fire alarm system + low voltage devices: \$69	Application Fee: \$43
Baltimore County	• New residential fire alarm: \$34 to \$68, depending on the number of devices • Rehab/addition fire alarm: \$68 to \$74, depending on the number of devices • Commercial fire alarm: \$113 to \$394, depending on the number of devices	N/A
Howard County	• Fire alarm system: \$75	Application Fee: \$50 Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	• Fire alarm/protection filing fee: \$167.63 • Fire alarm system: \$33.53 per device	N/A
Prince George's County	• Fire alarm system: \$264	Admin Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	• Fire/smoke alarm system: \$20 per 10 devices or fraction thereof	Enhancement fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Electrical Permit Fee Schedule](#), [District of Columbia Department of Buildings Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Fire Protection Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fire Alarm and Protection Fee](#), [Anne Arundel Fire Protection System Permits](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#)



Fire Protection Permit Fees – Fire Suppression

Benchmarking findings: Fire suppression permit fees vary by jurisdiction, with several jurisdictions charging fees based on the type of suppression system. Baltimore City's suppression system fees are similarly itemized and range from \$63 to \$140 per installation depending on the type of suppression system.

Among the comparison group jurisdictions, Montgomery County most closely mirrors Baltimore City's itemized structure, but its fee levels are significantly higher than Baltimore City's. For example, Montgomery County charges \$821.94 for a CO2 system and \$502.90 for a chemical extinguishing system, while Baltimore City charges \$70 and \$140, respectively.

Fire Protection Permit Comparison – Suppression Systems

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Halon systems (FM 200, Inert, F-200 Series): \$140 per installation • Halon inter-gasket: \$70 per installation • Dry chemical / wet chemical / foam systems: \$140 per job • CO2 system: \$70 per job • Water spray systems: \$63 per job • Fire extinguisher license: \$63 initial, \$35 renewal	N/A
Anne Arundel County	• Residential suppression system: \$51 <i>All other suppression permit fees based on estimated value of work:</i> • <\$25,000: \$86 to \$242 • >\$25,000: \$242 + 1% of amount over \$25,000	Application Fee: \$43
Baltimore County	• Suppression tank: \$180	N/A
Howard County	• Non-flammable medical gas systems: \$100	Application Fee: \$50 Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	• CO2/clean agent: \$821.94 • Chemical extinguishing: \$502.90 • Fire pump: \$648.90 • Hose valve on standpipe: \$383.93 per hose • Standpipe systems: \$567.79 per rider	N/A
Prince George's County	Suppression hood: \$231	Admin Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	Hoods and Ducts – 1 to 50 nozzles: \$6 each, \$3 for each additional	Enhancement fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Building Permit Fee Schedule](#), [District of Columbia Department of Buildings Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Fire Protection Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fire Alarm and Protection Fee](#), [Anne Arundel Fire Protection System Permits](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#)



Burning Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Burning permit fees across peer jurisdictions vary from modest flat charges for commercial operations to waived fees for small recreational or cooking fires. Baltimore City's \$50 bonfire fee is at the low end of the comparison range of \$25 to \$150. For commercial burning, Baltimore City's \$63 flat commercial burning fee trails other jurisdictions, including Prince George's County and the District of Columbia, who charge \$124 (including additional administrative and technology fees) and \$150, respectively.

Burning Fees Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	- Commercial burning: \$63 - Commercial portable heaters: \$63 - Bonfires: \$50	N/A
Anne Arundel County	No fees	N/A
Baltimore County	Bonfire (outside of beltway): \$25	N/A
Howard County	Agricultural burning: \$27.50	N/A
Montgomery County	- Agricultural burning: \$10 to \$20 per acre, depending on property type - Other burning: \$25 to \$50, depending on cu. yds.	N/A
Prince George's County	Bonfire or agricultural burning: \$53	Admin Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	- Open burning permit (e.g., bonfires): \$150 - Open flame permit (per performance): \$150	N/A

Sources: [Anne Arundel Open Fire Guidance](#), Baltimore County confirmed via phone, [Howard County Open spec Information \(fee confirmed via phone\)](#), [Montgomery County Schedule of Permit Fees for Open fires](#), [Prince George's County Fire Inspection Fees](#), [DC FEMS Fire Fee Schedule](#)



Vacant Housing Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Baltimore City's vacancy registration fees trail the comparison group. For vacant single/dual-family residences, Baltimore's \$100 fee trails all of the comparison jurisdictions except for Cleveland, Ohio, which charges a \$70 annual fee, and Boston, Massachusetts, which also charges \$100. Most jurisdictions charge a vacancy registration fee of \$250 to \$300, while Chicago increases its fee to \$700 for bank/lender owned properties. Baltimore City's vacant lot fee (\$25) also trails the comparison group, where fees range between \$70 and \$250 annually.

Of note, Baltimore City charges a flat vacancy registration fee by structure type while some other jurisdictions use a tiered approach based on the length of vacancy. Below is the vacant property registration and inspection process used in the City of Albany.

Vacant Property Registration Case Study: The City of Albany

The City of Albany requires the registration and inspection of all vacant properties within the City. Within seven days of registration, vacant properties are subject to inspection by the Department of Buildings and Regulatory Compliance to assess the presence of safety hazards for public safety personnel. Following an inspection, the Fire Department posts a placard on the building indicating the interior structural conditions. The City of Albany (NY) implements a comprehensive tiered vacancy fee structure that escalates based on both property size and the duration of vacancy. For residential properties with one to three units, the annual fee rises from \$250 to \$1,000 after three years of vacancy. Larger properties follow a similar pattern, with fees for buildings with seven or more units increasing from \$1,000 in the first year to \$4,000 beyond three years of vacancy. In comparison, Baltimore City's flat and itemized system does not incorporate the escalating cost mechanisms seen in Albany or the higher flat fees applied in jurisdictions like Chicago and Cleveland.

Vacancy Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	<u>Vacancy Registration</u> - Residential structures: \$100 - All other structures: \$250 - Lot: \$25 per lot (maximum of \$5,000) <u>Boarding Vacant Homes (DPW)</u> - Lien processing fee: \$50 - Plywood: \$45.73 per piece 2x4 wood: \$8.99 per 2x4 - Glue: \$2.74 - Rat bait: \$0.49 - Administrative overhead fee: 17.5% (field labor + other personnel costs + material + lien processing fee + other operating fees) - Other personnel costs (boarding crew): 40% of the total field labor costs - Other operating costs: 30% of (field labor + other personnel costs + material) - Water vacancy fee (no usage): \$170
District of Columbia	<u>Vacancy Registration (annual)</u> Property: \$250 (annual)
City of Chicago, IL	<u>Vacancy Registration (6-month renewal)</u> - Property (resident owned): \$300 (doubled if result of City violation) - Property (bank/lender owned): \$700 (\$300 6-month renewal) - Storefront: \$100
City of Boston, MA	<u>Vacancy Registration (annual)</u> Property (vacant/foreclosing): \$100



Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
City of Milwaukee, WI	<u>Vacancy Registration (6-month)</u> • Property: \$253.50 • Renewal: \$253.50 • Renewal (not maintained): \$507 (1st renewal) to \$1,014 (3rd renewal) • Vacant property boarding: \$125
City of Philadelphia, PA	<u>Vacancy Registration (annual)</u> • Vacant residential/commercial property license (new/renewal): \$202 + \$20 Application
City of Albany, NY	<u>Vacancy Registration (annual)</u> • 1 to 3 units: \$250 (year 1) to \$1,000 (>3 years) • 4 to 6 units: \$500 (year 1) to \$2,000 (>3 years) • 7 or more units: \$1,000 (year 1) to \$4,000 (>3 years) • Commercial with 2 to 3 residential units: \$500 (year 1) to \$2,000 (>3 years) • Commercial with >4 residential units: \$1,000 (year 1) to \$4,000 (>3 years) • Non-residential: \$1,000 (year 1) to \$4,000 (>3 years) or \$0.05 per sq. ft. (year 1) to \$0.20 per sq. ft (>3 years), whichever is great
Fairmount Heights, MD	<u>Vacancy Registration (bi-annual)</u> • Lot: \$250 (\$500 after 3 years)
Forest Heights, MD	<u>Vacancy Registration (annual)</u> • Lot: \$75 (annual) • Single Family: \$250 (renewal 50% of initial fee) • Non-Single-Family: \$500 (renewal 50% of initial fee) <u>Boarding Vacant Homes (annual)</u> • Single Family: \$200 (renewal 50% of initial fee) • Non-Single-Family: \$400 (renewal 50% of initial fee)
City of Sacramento, CA	<u>Vacancy Registration (annual)</u> • Lot: \$70
City of Seat Pleasant, MD	<u>Vacancy Registration (annual)</u> • Lot: \$75 • Single-Family: \$300 • Commercial: \$600
City of Cleveland, OH	<u>Vacancy Registration (annual)</u> • 1 to 3 Units: \$70 • Commercial & Residential (>4 Units): \$1,000

Sources: [Baltimore City Property Registration](#), [D.C. Vacant Building FAQs](#), [Chicago Code: 13-12-125 Vacant Buildings](#), [Albany NY Building Registration](#), [Albany City Code, Article XIa - Vacant Building Registry](#), [Fairmount Heights Registration](#), [Forest Heights Registration](#), [Sacramento CA Vacant Lot Program](#), [Seat Pleasant MD Vacant Property Registration](#), [Cleveland OH Vacant Properties](#), [Boston Code 16-52.3 Registration of Vacant and/or Foreclosing Residential Properties](#), [Philadelphia Vacant Residential Property License Application](#), [Philadelphia Vacant Commercial Property License Application](#), [City of Milwaukee Vacant Building Registration](#).



Rental Registration Fees

Benchmarking findings: Rental registration fees vary based on the size and type of rental property. Baltimore City levies a registration fee for non-owner-occupied dwellings and multi-family dwellings, with registrations varying in length from 1 to 3 years, depending on whether violations were found during the initial licensing period. If a property owner fails to address violations in a timely manner, an additional \$15 is charged per dwelling or rooming unit annually, and the \$15 surcharge is deposited into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

- All jurisdictions in the comparison group levy rental registration fees on a per unit basis, with several jurisdictions making further classifications based on building type. Baltimore City's rental registration fees (which range between \$30 to \$35 annually) are generally lower than the comparison group. In contrast, rental registration fees range from \$15 to \$130 on an annual basis among comparable jurisdictions. As an example, for annual single-family rentals, Howard County charges \$46.75, Montgomery County charges \$130, Prince George's County charges \$76, and the District of Columbia charges \$99. On the other hand, fees in Baltimore County (\$16 per year) and Anne Arundel County (\$15 per year) are generally lower.

Rental Registration Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Licensure Period	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	<i>Non-Owner-Occupied Dwellings (per year)</i> • Single-family: \$30 per dwelling, max \$5,000 • Multi-family: \$35 per dwelling unit + \$25 per rooming unit (if applicable) • Non-compliance charge: \$15 per dwelling or rooming unit, per year	1 to 3 years	N/A
Anne Arundel County	• 1 to 4 Units: \$30 per unit • 5 to 50 Units: \$120 + \$25 per unit • >51 units: \$1,370 + \$18 per unit	2 years	N/A
Baltimore County	<i>Owner-occupied</i> • 1 or 2 tenants: \$48 per unit • 3 to 6 tenants: \$60 per unit <i>Non-owner-occupied</i> • 1 to 6 tenants: \$60 per unit • >6 tenants: \$100 per complex + \$60 per unit (if unregistered)	3 years	N/A
Howard County	• Single/dual family, apartments: \$93.50 per unit • All others (Assisted living, group homes, hotels, etc.): \$55 per sleeping room	2 years	Technology Fee: 10% (included in cost)
Montgomery County	• 1 to 4 units: \$130 per unit • Apartment complex: \$76 per unit • Accessory dwelling unit: \$52 per unit • All others: \$73 per unit	1 year	N/A
Prince George's County	• Single-family: \$152 • Multi-family rental license fee: \$99 per unit • Multi-family expired rental license fee: \$600	2 years	Admin Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	<i>Single/Dual-Family</i> • Single-family: \$198.00 • Dual-family: \$283.80 • Apartments (3 to 6 units): \$453.30 to \$663.30 • Apartments (>6 Units): \$663.30 + \$55 per unit	2 years	N/A

Sources: [Baltimore City Code, Article 13 Division II, subsection 4](#), [Baltimore County Rental Housing Registration](#), [District of Columbia Rental Housing Business](#), [Howard County Rental Housing License Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Rental Housing License and Registration Fees](#), [Anne Arundel Rental Housing Laws](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#)



Waste Hauler / Vehicle Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Baltimore City's hauler permit fees are generally comparable to surrounding jurisdictions.

- For small commercial haulers to dispose of trash in Baltimore City, they need a small hauler license (\$35 annually). For large commercial haulers that use vehicles over 7,000 pounds, they are required to register for a waste hauler permit for \$100.
- The fee trails Prince George's County (\$150 Class I vehicle and collector's permit), but is comparable to Howard County (\$30), Baltimore County (\$40), and Montgomery County (\$25 license plus \$5 per vehicle). Baltimore City's small hauler license fee trails the District of Columbia's; the waste hauler permit is comparable (the District charges \$50 per collector and \$50 vehicle).

Baltimore City's scavenger vehicle license fee is comparable to the District but lower than other comparable jurisdictions:

- The Scavenger Vehicle Permit Tag is required for commercial waste haulers to discharge wastewater at the Septage Receiving Station located at the Back River Wastewater Treatment Plant (or other discharge points as designated by DPW.)
- Baltimore City's fees (\$29 to \$33 depending on whether it is in-state or out-of-state) is comparable to the District of Columbia (\$30) but trails Anne Arundel County (\$50) and WSSC (minimum of \$185).

Waste Hauler / Vehicle Fees Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	- Scavenger vehicle (out-of-state): \$33 - Scavenger vehicle (in-state): \$29 - Small haulers: \$35 (or \$8.75 per quarter) - Large haulers: \$100 (or \$25 per quarter)
Anne Arundel County	Liquid waste hauler permit: \$50
Baltimore County	Hauler permit: \$40 per truck
Howard County	Commercial disposal permit: \$30
Montgomery County	Hauler license permit: \$25 + \$5 per vehicle
Prince George's County	- Collector's license: \$50 - Class I collection vehicle: \$100 - Class II collection vehicle: \$275 - Class III collection vehicle: \$350
WSSC (Montgomery County and Prince George's County)	<i>Liquid Waste Hauler (per vehicle)</i> 1 to 49 gallons: \$255 50 to 799 gallons: \$8,170 800 to 2,999 gallons: \$23,295 >3,000 gallons \$42,050 - Zero discharge: \$185
District of Columbia	- Hauler permit: \$50 per solid waste collector and \$50 per solid waste collection vehicle - Scavenger vehicle: \$30 per vehicle

Sources: [Baltimore County Solid Waste Collection Permit Application](#), [Anne Arundel Solid Waste Collection](#), [Anne Arundel Hauler License Code](#), [District of Columbia Solid Waste Collector Registration Guide](#), [District of Columbia Solid Waste Code](#), [DC Water Waste Hauler Charges](#), [Howard County Landfill Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George County Collection Licensing](#), [Montgomery County Waste Hauler Code](#), [WSSC Water Waste Hauler Permit Application](#)



Waste Disposal Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Baltimore City's solid and liquid disposal fees trail the comparison group, but its liquid waste disposal fees are comparable:

- Baltimore City charges \$20 per load for small haulers and \$67.50 per ton for construction debris, which trails the comparison group. Baltimore County charges \$125 per ton of solid waste, while Howard County charges \$160, Prince George's County charges \$77 (increasing to \$85 on 7/1/25), and Montgomery County charges \$70 per ton above 500 lbs. The District of Columbia solid waste ordinance indicates a minimum of \$13.38 per ton for transfer at District-owned solid waste facilities plus a minimum of \$2.0 per ton for the disposal. Actual fee levels may be significantly higher than the minimum indicated in the ordinance.
- For liquid waste disposal, Baltimore City's rate of \$0.07 per gallon is comparable with WSSC Water's rate of \$0.05 per gallon and the District of Columbia's rates, which range from \$0.03 to \$0.07 per gallon.

Solid and Liquid Waste Disposal Fees Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	- Bresco ash: \$24.21 per ton - Construction materials: \$67.50 per ton - Dumpster permit: \$25 per dumpster (annual) - Liquid waste: \$0.07 per gallon - Solid waste (small haulers): \$20 per load + \$3.38 per 100 pounds > 7,000
Anne Arundel County	- Solid waste: \$100 per ton - Liquid waste: \$0.078 per gallon
Baltimore County	- Organics and brush: \$65 per ton - Solid waste (special handling): \$200 per ton - Solid waste: \$125 per ton
Howard County	- Appliances w/ freon: \$10 each - Liquid waste: \$700 deposit - Mattresses (clean): \$50 per ton - Organic debris: \$30 per ton - Oversized tires: \$220 per ton - Solid waste: \$160 per ton
Montgomery County	- Concrete, dirt, rubble: \$70 per ton - Construction debris: \$84 per ton - Organic waste: \$46 per ton (>500 lbs.) - Solid waste: \$70 per ton (>500 lbs.)
Prince George's County	- Metal: \$25 per ton - Solid waste: \$77 per ton (\$85 per ton 7/1/2025) - Tires: \$625 per ton - Wood: \$45 per ton
WSSC (Montgomery County and Prince George's County)	- Liquid waste (industrial): \$0.40 per gallon - Liquid waste (hailed waste): \$0.05 per gallon
District of Columbia	- Liquid waste: \$0.03 to \$0.07 per gallon - Solid waste: Minimum of \$13.38 per ton for transfer + minimum of \$2.0 per ton for disposal³⁰

Sources: [Baltimore City Solid Waste Drop Off](#), [Baltimore County Solid Waste Drop Off](#), [District of Columbia Solid Waste Code](#), [Anne Arundel Solid Waste Collection](#), [Anne Arundel County Code: Rates for Disposal of Liquid Waste](#), [Howard County Landfill Fee Schedule](#), [Prince George's County Tipping Fees](#), [Montgomery County Transfer Station Fees](#)

³⁰ The District of Columbia solid waste ordinance indicates a minimum of \$13.38 per ton for transfer at District-owned solid waste facilities plus a minimum of \$2.0 per ton for the disposal. Actual fee levels may be significantly higher than the minimum.



Baltimore City Board of Municipal Zoning and Appeals (BMZA) Variance Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Variance fees are charged by local zoning boards to cover the administrative costs associated with processing land use applications. A variance is a legal exception that allows a property owner to deviate from established zoning uses.

Baltimore City's variance fees are among the lowest in the comparison group, with simple variance fees (involving two or less requests) costing \$100 and complex variances and sign variances costing \$200. In comparison, other jurisdictions have higher and more tiered fee structures. For example, Howard County charges \$820 for a residential variance and \$2,375 for other uses, while Montgomery County charges \$880 for a single-family residence and up to \$3,300 for commercial and industrial uses.

Other jurisdictions, including Baltimore County, Howard County, and Montgomery County charge separate fees for sign variances, which range from \$100 to \$600. Baltimore City's sign variance fee (\$200) is comparable to Baltimore County's (\$100 to \$500) but trails Howard County's (\$310) and Montgomery County's (\$643).

Variance Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	• Simple: \$100 • Complex: \$200 • Combination: \$500 • Sign variance: \$200 • Misc. appeal: \$100
Anne Arundel County	• Single-family/ADU: \$180 • Others: \$480 • Misc. appeal: \$250
Baltimore County	<i>Building Variance</i> • Individual residential lot: \$75 per lot • All others: \$500 • Misc. appeal: \$300 <i>Sign variance</i> • Temporary: \$100 • Permanent: \$100 to \$500, depending on size/type of sign • Inside window electric sign: < 3 sq. ft.: \$50 (annual) • Changeable copy: \$500
Howard County	• Residential: \$820 • All others: \$2,375 • Sign variance: \$310
Montgomery County	• Single-family: \$880 • Multi-family: \$2,750 • Commercial/Industrial: \$3,300 • Dwelling >20 years old: \$220 • Sign variance: \$643.49 • Misc. appeal: \$220
Prince George's County	• Existing single-family: \$200 • New single-family: \$500 • All others: \$1,500
District of Columbia	• Single-family: \$325 • All others: \$1,040

Sources: [BMZA Appeal Fees](#), [District of Columbia BZA FAQ](#), [Anne Arundel Variance](#), [Baltimore County Zoning Appeal Fees Schedule](#), [Howard County Land Development and Zoning Fees](#), [Montgomery County Zoning Fees](#), [Montgomery County Variance Application](#), [Prince George's County Zoning Fees](#)



BMZA Conditional and Nonconforming Use Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Zoning boards charge fees for conditional use and nonconforming use applications to recover the administrative costs associated with reviewing and approving requests. A conditional use (also referred to as a “special exemption”) allows certain uses within a zoning district subject to specific conditions and public review (e.g., a daycare in a single-family). A nonconforming use permit/certificate is essentially a “grandfathered” permit for properties that do not comply with current zoning regulations but are allowed to continue because it was compliant at the time of construction.

Baltimore City charges a flat fee of \$300 for both conditional use and nonconforming use applications, placing it at the lower end of the fee range among the comparison group. For nonconforming use fees, Baltimore City’s \$300 fee is more closely aligned with the comparison group, where fees range from \$250 in Anne Arundel to \$1,560 in the District of Columbia. Conditional use fees have a wider range in fees among the comparison group. The lowest fee in the comparison group is Prince George’s County’s conditional use fee for daycares (\$100), while the highest fee in the comparison group is in Montgomery County, at \$22,687 for various commercial uses.

Conditional and Nonconforming Use Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	• Conditional use: \$300 • Nonconforming use: \$300
Anne Arundel County	• Conditional use (special exemption): \$1,200 (any use besides solid waste), \$3,500 (solid waste) • Nonconforming use: \$250
Baltimore County	• Nonconforming use (special exemption): \$500
Howard County	• Conditional use: \$2,500 • Nonconforming use: \$500
Montgomery County	• Conditional use: \$275 to \$22,687, depending on use • Conditional use enforcement: \$264.97 (annual) • Nonconforming use certificate: \$416.38
Prince George’s County	<i>Conditional use (special exemption)</i> • Mobile home: \$200 • Daycare: \$100 • All others: \$2,500 to \$5,500 + \$50 per acre above 50, depending on the property type <i>Nonconforming Use Certificate</i> • Dual-family/mobile home: \$100 • All others: \$1,000
District of Columbia	Nonconforming use (special exemption): \$1,560

Sources: [BMZA Appeal Fees](#), [District of Columbia BZA FAQ](#), [Anne Arundel Variance](#), Baltimore County Zoning Appeal Fees Schedule, [Howard County Land Development and Zoning Fees](#), [Montgomery County Zoning Fees](#), [Montgomery County Board of Appeals Fee Schedule](#) [Prince George’s County Zoning Fees](#)



Special Event Permit Fees

Benchmarking findings: Baltimore City maintains a highly detailed fee schedule with multiple categories for event types and square footage, while many peer counties have more streamlined and consolidated approaches.

- Baltimore City's fee structure is detailed, with 14 separate event types—such as circuses, fairs, bazaars, and sporting events—each priced at one-day and one-week rates. This dual pricing structure creates 28 distinct fee options for temporary events. In contrast, peer jurisdictions like Montgomery and Howard counties apply more generalized fees based on event size or the timing of the application.
- Baltimore City's minimum fees also tend to be lower than those in surrounding counties. For example, a one-week carnival permit in Baltimore City starts at \$95, compared to \$177 in Baltimore County and \$363 or more in Prince George's County before additional fees. However, Baltimore City's \$80 to \$250 special event application fee (depending on the timing of the application) allows for additional cost recovery.

Baltimore City Special Event Permit Fee Schedule

Permit Type	Fee: Per 10,000 sq. ft (Day, Week)
Bazaars	\$20, \$60
Carnivals	\$35, \$95
Circuses	\$60, \$200
Dances	\$30, \$70
Displays	\$20, \$50
Exhibitions	\$20, \$50
Fairs	\$35, \$85
Lectures	\$20, \$50
Movies or Videos	\$20, \$60
Other Assemblies	\$20, \$50
Plays	\$20, \$50
Rummage Sales	\$20, \$50
Sporting Events	\$35, \$85
Suppers	\$20, \$50



Special Events Permit Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	<u>Specific Special Event Permits: Per 10,000 sq. ft.</u> • Circuses: \$60 to \$200 (depending on length) • Carnivals/fairs: \$35 to \$95 (depending on length) • Sporting events: \$35 to \$85 (depending on length) • Dances: \$30 to \$70 (depending on length) • Other events: \$20 to \$60 (depending on length) • Amusement devices: \$30	Special Event Application Fee: 8 to 6 weeks: \$250 10 to 8 weeks: \$125 >10 weeks: \$80
Anne Arundel County	• Carnivals: \$100 to \$400 (based on concessions) (per week) • Circuses: \$250 per day up to \$1,000 • Special events permit (500 people or more) late fee: \$100	N/A
Baltimore County	• Carnival and circus: \$177 • Casino event: \$140 • Parade: \$80 • Boxing match or movie exhibition: \$702 • Temporary event: \$177	N/A
Howard County	• Special event/concert permit fee: \$64.81 x the estimated county labor hours (non-profits pay 50% of amount that exceeds \$1,500)	Special Event Application Fee: \$50 Concert Application Fee: \$200
Montgomery County	• Carnival or circus license (per week): \$25 • Park special event: \$85 or \$185 (depending on timing of application) • Public dancing (for-profit) - one time event: \$100	N/A
Prince George's County	<u>Special Events Structures</u> • Special event structures: \$198, then \$26 for each structure over 10 • Special event expedited review fee: \$275 to \$1,000 + cost of county overtime/inspection • Special event U&O fee: \$143 or \$238 (depending on filing date) <u>Benefit Performances</u> • Bingo, dinner, silent auction, bazaar: \$99 • Carnival permit: \$363 for the first week (\$198 for each additional) plus \$33 per ride • Charitable gaming event: \$297 + \$99 per device <u>Other</u> • Public dance license: \$1,980	Admin Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	• Special events: \$205 per day, late fees \$100 (4 weeks) to \$200 (2 weeks)	Application Fee: \$70 Endorsement Fee: \$25 Technology Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Miscellaneous Permit Applications](#), [District of Columbia Special Events Unit](#), [Anne Arundel County Code Library](#), [Howard County Legislation CR190-2022 Final](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County Parks Special Event Permit](#)



Special Event Fees – Equipment

Benchmarking Findings: Several jurisdictions in the comparison group offer equipment for special events to members of the community. Baltimore City offers a wide range of event equipment rental options, including multiple stage options, trash receptacles, and other accessories like risers and PA systems.

Baltimore City's fee schedule is comparable to the District of Columbia in its variety, though DC, which is the site of many national events, includes a 50% surcharge for non-resident applicants. Baltimore City offers a 50% discount to qualified 501(c)(3)'s. Prince George's County has a similar policy by offering a \$1,400 reduced fee for rentals of a bandwagon stage at non-profit organized events. That said, Prince George's County's base fees are also significantly higher than Baltimore's, as shown below.

Special Event Equipment Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Mayor's Stage: \$600 • Mayor's Stage Delivery, Set-Up, Security: \$75 per hour • 8x8 stage: \$250 • 12x12 stage: \$250 • Wooden 16x16 stage: \$325 • Wooden 18x24 stage: \$400 • Steel 30x40 stage: \$4,000 • Upright panels (4x8): \$50 each • Risers (4x8x6 high): \$50 each • Tent: \$50 for each tent above 10 • Trash receptacles (1 to 20): \$200 • Additional trash receptacles (per can): \$5 • Variable sign: \$200 • Dumpsters: \$400 • Roll-offs: \$700 • Recycling bins: Free (only for large events with DPW staff present)	Equipment Request Fee: \$50 to \$80, depending on timing of application 50% discount for qualified 501 (c)(3)
Baltimore County	• Wenger showmobile: \$275 • Wenger showmobile with expandable staging: \$450 • Mobile stage: \$175	N/A
Prince George's County	• Bandwagon stage (non-profit): \$1,400 • Bandwagon stage (other): \$2,500	N/A
District of Columbia	• Large PA system (resident): \$150 • Large showmobile: \$750 • Medium showmobile (resident): \$500 • Miscellaneous equipment: \$25 each • Platform (resident): \$35 • Podium (resident): \$35 • Small PA system (resident): \$100 • Small showmobile (resident): \$400 • Variable sign: \$90	Non-resident surcharge: 50%

Sources: [Baltimore City Event Services Application](#), [Baltimore County Stage Use Policy](#), [District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation Fee Schedule](#), [District of Columbia Special Events Planning Guide](#), [District of Columbia FY24 Fee Schedule](#), [District of Columbia Special Events Code](#), [Anne Arundel County Special Events Resource Matrix](#), [Prince George County Rental Permits & Policies](#)



Special Event Fees – Service Charges

Benchmarking Findings: Service charges represent the hourly rate charged to organizers of events for the use county staff. Baltimore City offers a detailed schedule of these charges, ranging from \$32 an hour for a street sweeping crew to \$75 an hour for an electrician.

Baltimore City's charge of \$65 per hour for police officers is comparable to peer jurisdictions: the District of Columbia charges \$71.52 per hour, Anne Arundel charges \$60 per hour, and Howard County charges \$64.81 per county employee. In contrast, Baltimore City's traffic control charge of \$32.50 per hour (minimum of 4 hours) trails the District of Columbia, which charges \$50 per hour.

Special Event Service Charge Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	• Cleaning crew: \$71.75 per hour • Electrical connection: \$75 per hour (min. of 4 hours) • Mayor's stage delivery/set-up: \$75 per person, per hour • Firefighters: \$60 per hour • Officer (security): \$65 per person, per hour (min.) • Police vehicle: \$65 per vehicle • Street sweeper: \$32 per person per hour • Traffic officer: \$32.50 per person per hour (min. 4 hours) • Traffic set-up and materials (parade/race): \$1,000 • Traffic set-up and materials (park event): \$250 • Waste crew: \$85 per person per hour
Anne Arundel County	• Officer: \$60 per hour (min. 3 hours) • Sergeant: \$90 per hour (min. 3 hours) • Lieutenant/Captain: \$105 per hour (min. 3 hours)
Baltimore County	• Employee overtime (set-up): \$30 per hour • Officer: information requested
Howard County	• Per county employee: \$64.81 per hour (non-profits pay 50% of amount that exceeds \$1,500)
District of Columbia	• Flag installation and removal: \$57 per person per hour • Officer: \$71.52 per person per hour • Traffic control officer: \$50 per person per hour • Traffic supervisor: \$66 per hour • Health and safety employees: \$54.35 per person, per hour (min. 4 hours) • Waste crew: \$32 per person per hour • Towing service (1 truck): \$581.64 (min. 4 hours) • Towing service (additional): \$83.22 per truck per hour + \$37.59 per person per hour

Sources: [Baltimore City Event Services Application](#), [Baltimore County Stage Use Policy](#), [District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation Fee Schedule](#), [District of Columbia Special Events Permit Process](#), [District of Columbia Special Events Planning Guide](#), [District of Columbia FY24 Fee Schedule](#), [District of Columbia Special Events Code](#), [Anne Arundel County Special Events Resource Matrix](#), [Howard County Special Events Fee Resolution](#),



Fire Department Special Event Fees

Benchmarking findings: Across the comparison group jurisdictions, fire departments typically charge per hour for the presence of fire department officials at special events. Additionally, most of the comparison jurisdictions have fees for fireworks or pyrotechnic displays.

- For BCFD service at a public event, Baltimore City's fee of \$60 per hour per person is the lowest among the comparison group. Other jurisdictions charge significantly more, with hourly rates ranging from \$65 per hour to \$100 per hour. Additionally, several jurisdictions charge for the use of Fire and EMS apparatus, while Baltimore City does not.
- Of note, Baltimore City charges a \$600 standalone fee for a fireworks display. While this exceeds the fees charges in Baltimore County (\$50 to \$100), Montgomery County (\$102.74), and Prince George's County (\$250, plus \$50 per hour over four hours), it is more comparable to the District of Columbia (\$450). Baltimore City's cost of providing the service is also likely higher due to its higher population density than the comparison counties.

Fire Department Special Event Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Event Support	Fireworks Display
Baltimore City	• Fire Department service: \$60 per hour per person, minimum of 4 hours • Special event review and inspection: \$60	• Fireworks Display: \$600
Anne Arundel County	• BLS unit (two staff): \$140 per hour • ALS unit (two staff): \$200 per hour • EMS supervisor: \$90 per hour • Battalion Chief: \$100 per hour • Use of fire and EMS apparatus: \$130 to \$400 per hour, depending on equipment	• No fees (requires approval from State Fire Marshal)
Baltimore County	• Fire Inspection Fee: Unspecified	• Public Fireworks Display: \$50-\$100, depending on timing of application
Howard County	• Deputy Fire Marshal/Fire Safety Inspector: \$75 per hour • Fire Protection Engineer: \$100 per hour	N/A
Montgomery County	N/A	• Amusement & entertainment event (including fireworks, public events, shows involving fire): \$102.74
Prince George's County	• Fire inspection: \$240 to \$480, depending on # of structures • Fire Department service: \$75 per hour	• Fireworks shoot: \$250 minimum, + \$50 per hour over four hours
District of Columbia	• Fire Department services: \$65 per hour per person (min. 4 hours) • Use of fire apparatus: \$400 per hour (min. 4 hours) • Ambulance: \$200 per hour (min. 4 hours)	• Fireworks Permit: \$450 • Special effect/pyrotechnics display: \$250

Sources: [Baltimore City Building, Fire, and Related Codes](#), [Baltimore County Government Fire Inspections](#), [DC FEMS Permit Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel County Fire Prevention Code](#), [Howard County Legislation CR75-2022 Final](#), [Prince George's County Fire Inspection Fees](#), [Montgomery County Fire Prevention Code Fee Schedule](#)



Pet Licensing Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Pet licensing fees are charged for the annual registration of pets. Baltimore City's pet licensing fees are required for cats and dogs, with the option of a \$100 lifetime license for altered and microchipped pets, which is unique in the comparison group. Annual fees are \$10 for altered (spayed/neutered) pets and \$30 for unaltered pets, with a 50% discount available to senior citizens. Baltimore City's animal licensing fees are near the median of the comparison group.

While Baltimore City's pet licensing fees are in line with surrounding counties, they are significantly lower than the District of Columbia. The fee for licensing an altered pet is \$10 in Baltimore City, compared to \$15 in the District, and \$30 in Baltimore City compared to \$50 in the District for unaltered pets. Additionally, the fee for a lost tag is \$1 in Baltimore City versus \$5 in the District.

Pet Licensing Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	• Cat or dog (altered): \$10 (annual) • Cat or dog (unaltered): \$30 (annual) • Pet license (altered and microchipped): \$100 (lifetime) • Wild and exotic animals: \$80 (one-time) • Lost tag: \$1 <i>*50% discount for senior citizens</i>
Anne Arundel County	• Altered \$2 (1-year), \$5 (3-year) • Unaltered: \$15 (1-year), \$40 (3-year) • Kennel (spayed/neutered): \$4 (1-year or 3-year) • Kennel (unspayed/unneutered): \$10 (1-year or 3-year) <i>*Altered animal licenses are free to senior citizens and a 50% discount for unaltered animals</i>
Baltimore County	• Altered: \$7 (annual) • Unaltered: \$17 (annual) • Unaltered (owner over 60): \$11 (annual) • Lost tag: \$5
Howard County	• Altered animal \$6 (annual) • Unaltered animal: \$24 (annual) • Animal fancier (>3 animals) \$50 (annual) • Altered multi-animal (>3): \$12 (annual) • Replacement license tag: \$1 <i>*50% discount for citizens aged 62 and older</i>
Montgomery County	• Altered: \$12 (1-year), \$24 (2-year), \$32 (3-year) • Unaltered: \$25 (1-year), \$50 (2-year), \$75 (3-year) • Public assistance pet: \$6 (1-year), \$12 (2-year), \$16 (3-year) • Lost tag: \$1
Prince George's County	• Altered dog, cat, or ferret: \$10 (annual) • Unaltered dog, cat, or ferret: \$25 (annual)
District of Columbia	• Dog license (sterilized): \$15 (annual) • Dog license (unsterilized): \$50 (annual) • Lost dog tag: \$5 • Pigeon coop: \$200 (annual) • Hobby permit: \$20 (annual)

Sources: [Baltimore City Pet License Fees](#), [Baltimore City Wild Exotic Hybrid Animal Regulations](#), [Baltimore County Animal License](#), [District of Columbia Animal Fees](#), [District of Columbia Dog Licensing](#), [Anne Arundel County Dog and Cat Licenses](#), [Anne Arundel County Code](#), [Prince George's County Animal Licensing](#), [Montgomery County Adoption Fees](#), [Montgomery County Licensing Fees](#)



Pet Adoption Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Pet adoption fees are charged when residents take ownership of an animal from a county-run animal shelter. Baltimore City imposes a simple fee schedule, ranging from \$75 to \$110, and includes a range of services, including alteration, microchipping, vaccination, an annual license, and for the higher tier, a collar and carrier.

Baltimore City's pet adoption fees, which range from \$75 to \$100, are generally in line with other jurisdictions' fee schedules.

Pet Adoption Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	• Adoption: \$75 (includes alteration, microchip, vaccinations, license) • Adoption: \$110 (includes alteration, microchip, vaccinations, license, leash, collar, carrier)
Anne Arundel County	• Dog: \$17 (includes 1-year license) • Dog: \$20 (includes 3-year license) • Cat: \$14 (includes 1-year license) • Cat: \$17 (includes 3-year license) <i>*Includes all tests, vaccines, microchip and license</i>
Baltimore County	• Dog: \$50 • Cat: \$40 <i>*Includes all tests, vaccines, microchip, and license</i>
Howard County	• Dog (male): \$226 max. • Dog (female): \$361 max. • Cat (male): \$166 max. • Cat (female): \$204 max. • Rabbit: \$30 • Ferret (male): \$97 • Ferret (female): \$92 <i>*Includes all tests, vaccines, microchip and license</i>
Montgomery County	• Dog (<6 months): \$150 • Dog (>7 months): \$100 • Dog (>7 years): \$75 • Dog (bonded pairs >6 months): \$150 • Cat (<6 months): \$100 • Cat (>7 months): \$50 • Cat (bonded pairs <6 months): \$150 • Cat (bonded Pairs >6 months): \$75 • Small mammals: \$5 to \$75, depending on type • Birds: \$10 to \$100, depending on type • Reptiles: \$5 to \$40, depending on type
Prince George's County	• Dog (0 to 20 lbs.): \$230 • Dog (21 to 40 lbs.): \$184 • Dog (41 to 60 lbs.): \$138 • Dog (61 to 80 lbs.): \$92 • Dog (>81 lbs.): \$0 <i>*Includes vaccinations & microchip</i>
District of Columbia	• Adoption fee: \$10 per animal, plus veterinarian costs

Sources: [Baltimore BARCS Adoption](#), [District of Columbia Animal Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Pet Adoption](#), [Howard County Adoption Process](#), [Baltimore County Adoption Resources](#), [Prince George's County Pet Adoption](#), [Montgomery County Adoption Fees](#)



Animal Impoundment Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Impoundment fees are fees levied against pet owners to redeem animals at a shelter facility. Baltimore City levies an escalating fee structure based on the number of offenses, while other jurisdictions incorporate distinctions for altered/unaltered animals.

Baltimore City's impoundment fees start at \$50 for the first offense, increasing to \$80 by the third offense, with the animal becoming property of the City after the 3rd impoundment. Unlike Prince George's County, Anne Arundel County, and the District of Columbia, Baltimore City does not differentiate penalties based on the animal's sterilization status. For example, a sterilized dog impounded as a first offense would cost \$50 to retrieve in Baltimore City, compared to \$25 in Anne Arundel, \$15 in Prince George's County, \$25 in Montgomery County, and \$15 in the District of Columbia.

Impoundment Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	• 1st offense: \$50 • 2nd offense: \$70 • 3rd offense: \$80 • 4th offense: animal becomes property of the city
Anne Arundel County	• Impoundment fee: \$25 to \$200, depending if animal is altered and previously impounded
Prince George's County	• 1st impoundment (altered animal): \$15 • 1st impoundment (unaltered animal): \$60 • Subsequent Impoundments within 12 months (any animal): \$100
Montgomery County	• 1st offense: \$25 • 2nd offense: \$50 • 3rd offense and thereafter: \$75
District of Columbia	• Sterilized animal: \$15 per impound • Dog (unsterilized): \$98 per impound • Other animals (unsterilized): \$50 per impound

Sources: [Montgomery County Animal Shelter Information](#), [Prince George's County Animal Services](#), [District of Columbia Animal Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Animal Control FAQ](#)



Animal Boarding Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Animal boarding fees are daily fees charged for the care of impounded animals at a government shelter. Among the jurisdictions compared, Baltimore City's \$15 per day fee only applies only to animals impounded due to biting incidents, rather than all impoundments. Anne Arundel charges a flat \$5 daily fee, which is slightly lower than the District of Columbia's \$7 daily fee. Montgomery County offers the most detailed structure, with fees ranging from \$5 to \$25 per day, depending on the type of animal and care requirements (such as medical care or behavioral reasons).

Boarding Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	<u>Boarding Fees</u> • Boarding fee for biting animal: \$15 per day <u>Deceased Animal Removal Fees</u> • Removal of dead animal: \$0.50 per pound
Anne Arundel County	• Daily board fee: \$5 per day
Montgomery County	• Cats: \$5 per day • Dogs: \$10 per day • Other small mammals, reptiles, and domestic birds: \$5 per day • Small livestock and poultry: \$15 per day, per 5 • Large livestock and horses over 150 lbs.: \$25 per day • Special needs/quarantine (Cats): \$10 per day • Special needs/quarantine (Dogs): \$15 per day <i>*(Special needs/quarantine include animals requiring specialized care for medical or behavior reasons.)</i>
District of Columbia	• Daily board fee: \$7 per day

Sources: [Montgomery County Animal Shelter Information](#), [Prince George's County Animal Services](#), [District of Columbia Animal Fees](#), [Anne Arundel County Animal Control FAQ](#)



Food Facility Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Food facility licenses fees are annual licenses held by establishments to operate legally within a given jurisdiction. In the comparison group, these fees are based on the risk level of the facility (low to high). Baltimore City's food licensing fees levels are competitive relative to the comparison jurisdictions.

For example, Baltimore City's high-risk food license fee of \$520 is at the low end of the scale relative to the comparison group. Montgomery County charges \$525, Baltimore County charges \$540, Anne Arundel County charges \$590, and Prince George's County charges \$845. For low-risk licenses, Baltimore City's \$65 fee is the lowest of the comparison group, where fees range from \$100 (Howard County) to \$449 (Prince George's County).

Food Facility Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• High-risk food license: \$520 • Moderate-risk food license: \$285 • Low-risk food license: \$65 • Catering: \$625 • High-priority seasonal: \$350 • Moderate-priority seasonal: \$145 • Late fees: \$5 to \$30 per day, up to annual permit amount	N/A
Anne Arundel County	• High-priority facility (permanent): \$590 • High-priority facility (<4 months): \$395 • Moderate-priority facility (permanent): \$395 • Moderate-priority facility (<6 months): \$195 • Low-priority facility: \$195	N/A
Baltimore County	• High-priority facility: \$540 • Medium-priority facility: \$340 • Low-priority facility: \$135 • Farmer's market: \$175 • On-farm food service facility: \$85 • Food permit late fee: \$14 per day	N/A
Howard County	• High-priority facility: \$415 • Medium-priority facility: \$325 • Low-priority facility: \$100 • Mobile food vendor: \$173	Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	• High-priority facility: \$525 • Moderate-priority facility: \$375 • Low-priority facility: \$200 • Non-profit facility: \$100 • Others: \$130	N/A
Prince George's County	• High HACCP priority: \$845 • Moderate HACCP priority: \$660 • Low HACCP priority: \$449 • Vending machine: \$264	Administrative Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	• Bakery: \$517.00 • Grocery store/candy manufacturer/marine food: \$422.40 • Caterer: \$348.70 • Delicatessen: \$599.50 • Food Products: \$544.50 • Food Vending Machine: \$127.60 (<i>Varies per unit number</i>) • Ice Cream Manufacturer: \$3,107.50 • Marine Food Product (<i>Wholesale</i>): \$1,332.10 • Mobile Delicatessen: \$485.10 • Restaurant: \$599.50 to \$968, depending on number of seats	N/A

Sources: [Baltimore County Health Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel County Permit Fees](#), [District of Columbia Department of Health Food Safety Information](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Schedule of Fees](#), [Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Fee Schedule](#), [D.C. Food Service Business License](#)



Temporary and Provisional Food Permits

Benchmarking Findings: Temporary and provisional food permits are required for food vendors operating for a limited time, such as during public events, farmers markets, or seasonal events. Baltimore City's \$50 temporary food license fee for festivals and special events is lower than the comparison group. Other than Baltimore County (which charges a \$35 per day fee), other jurisdictions in the comparison group charge significantly higher for temporary and provisional food permits, between \$72 (Howard County) and \$175 (Montgomery County).

Temporary and Provisional Permit Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Festival/Special Event: \$50 (per event, may last up to a month) • Temporary: \$50 • Provisional: \$100 (1-year)	N/A
Anne Arundel County	• High/moderate priority facility (temporary): \$114 • Temporary-low priority facility (temporary): \$35	N/A
Baltimore County	• Temporary: \$35 per day	N/A
Howard County	• Temporary: \$72	10% Technology Fee
Montgomery County	• Seasonal/temporary food license (Type F Facility, 14 to 89 Days): \$175	N/A
Prince George's County	• Temporary event: \$165 • Temporary event (gov't sponsored): \$99	Administrative Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore County Health Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel County Permit Fees](#), [District of Columbia Department of Health Food Safety Information](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Schedule of Fees](#), [Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Fee Schedule](#)



Food Facility Inspection and Plan Reviews

Benchmarking Findings: Food facility plan review and inspection fees are levied by jurisdictions to evaluate the safety and compliance of prospective food establishments during the remodeling or opening of a facility. In the comparison group, these fees vary by the size, risk level, or type of facility requiring a review. Reinspection fees are imposed when a facility fails an inspection that requires additional follow-up visits.

Baltimore City's food facility plan review fees are generally lower than the comparison group. For example, while Baltimore City charges \$100 for a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan review, the District of Columbia charges between \$75 and \$200, Anne Arundel charges \$750, and Howard County charges \$265.

Baltimore City's reinspection fees are also lower than the comparison group. Baltimore City's \$50 reinspection fee trails Baltimore County (\$140), the District of Columbia (\$100), Anne Arundel (\$175), Howard County (\$95), and Prince George's County (\$120).

Food Facility Inspection and Plan Review Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	- HACCP plan review: \$100 (per plan submission) - New plans review (plan submission only): \$75 - Plan review initial inspection: \$150 (includes 1 reinspection) - Plan review additional re-inspection: \$50	N/A
Anne Arundel County	- High/moderate priority facility (structural): \$750 - High/moderate priority facility (HACCP): \$750 - Low-priority facility (structural): \$500 - Reinspection fee: \$175	N/A
Baltimore County	- Re-inspection (normal hours): \$140 - Re-inspection for closure - after hours): \$210 - New plan review (high-priority facility): \$350 - New plan review (medium-priority facility): \$245 - New plan review (low-priority facility): \$140 - Remodel plan review (high-priority facility): \$210 - Remodel plan review (medium-priority facility): \$140 - Remodel plan review (low-priority facility): \$70	N/A
Howard County	- Re-inspection fee: \$95 - Plan review (high priority): \$485 - Plan review (medium priority): \$320 - Plan review (low priority): \$177 - Plan review (single item change): \$122 - HACCP plan review (full): \$265 - HACCP plan review (partial): \$183	Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	- Plan review (Type A facility – low priority): \$240 - Plan review (Type B facility – moderate priority): \$330 - Plan review (Type C facility – high priority): \$600	N/A
Prince George's County	- Food facility closure reinspection (non-office hours): \$210 - Food facility closure reinspection (office hours): \$120	Administrative Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	- HACCP plan review (mobile vending): \$75 - HACCP plan review (food establishment): \$125 - HACCP plan review (food processors): \$200 - Compliance re-inspection (normal hours): \$100 - Compliance re-inspection (after hours): \$400 - Food establishment plan review (Type A: ≤25 capacity or ≤3,000 sq ft): \$100 - Food establishment plan review (Type B: 26 to 75 capacity or 3,001–10,000 sq ft): \$200 - Food establishment plan review (Type C: ≥76 capacity or >10,000 sq ft): \$300	N/A

Sources: [Baltimore County Health Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel County Permit Fees](#), [District of Columbia Department of Health Food Safety Information](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Schedule of Fees](#), [Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Fee Schedule](#)



Food Dealer Certifications

Benchmarking Findings: Food establishments are required to have certified food service managers to ensure compliance with health regulations. Food service managers are required to maintain 3-year certifications, which are administered locally.

Baltimore City's \$30 food service manager certification fee is the lowest of the comparison group, where fees range from \$35 (Baltimore County) to \$73 (Prince George's County).

Certifications Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Food service manager certification: \$30	N/A
Baltimore County	• Food service manager: \$35	N/A
Howard County	• Food service manager certification: \$37	Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	• Food service manager certification: \$50	N/A
Prince George's County	• Manager card: \$73 • Food service manager training class: \$59 • Food service manager recertification: \$33	Administrative Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10%

Sources: [Baltimore County Food Service Manager](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Howard County Schedule of Fees](#), [Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Fee Schedule](#)



Swimming Pool License Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Jurisdictions in the comparison group levy a range of annual fees for the operations of public or semi-public pools, often based on the size of the pool or seasonal duration. Baltimore City charges a flat \$455 annual fee, which is in line with Baltimore and Howard Counties but lower than Anne Arundel County (\$725) and Montgomery County (\$550 to \$760).

In addition, several other jurisdictions levy fees which range based on the size of the pool being licensed. For example, Baltimore County fees range from \$200 to \$700, while Montgomery County's fees range from \$650 to \$760. Anne Arundel charges \$350 for a seasonal pool and \$725 for a pool open year-round, while Howard County charges a flat \$430 fee, which is similar to Baltimore City.

Swimming Pool License Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Swimming pool license: \$455 (annual)	N/A
Anne Arundel County	• Public/semi-public pool or spa permit (6+ months operation): \$725 • Public/semi-public pool or spa permit (<6 months operation): \$350	N/A
Baltimore County	• Pool license (0 to 49,000 gallons): \$200 (annual) • Pool license (50,000 to 99,000 gallons): \$400 (annual) • Pool license (100,000+ Gallons): \$700 (annual) *Renew at same rate; if late 50% increase	N/A
Howard County	• Swimming pool or spa license: \$430 (annual) • Re-inspection fee: \$45	Technology Fee: 10%
Montgomery County	• Pool license: \$650 (annual) • Pool license (>100,000 gallons): \$760 (annual) • Reinspection fee (normal hours): \$100 • Reinspection fee (after business hours): \$150	N/A

Sources: [Baltimore County Health Fee Schedule](#), [Anne Arundel County Permit Fees](#), [Howard County Schedule of Fees](#), [Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Fee Schedule](#)



Fire Hydrant Use

Benchmarking Findings: Fire hydrant fees are assessed when hydrants are used for purposes other than firefighting, including landscaping, controlling dust, washing construction sites, and filling swimming pools. All of the jurisdictions in the benchmarking group charge fees for such uses.

In Baltimore City, the Department of Public Works' Customer Support and Services Division (CSSD) administers fire hydrant permits, charging a fixed fee of \$191 plus a flat \$84.20 daily water usage fee. This structure varies from the comparison group, where jurisdictions charge usage fees, deposits, and rental rates based on the length of the permit.

Fire Hydrant Use Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit
Baltimore City	• Fire hydrant use permit: \$191 • Water usage: \$84.20 per day
Anne Arundel County	• Fire hydrant use permit: \$25 • Rental/service charge: \$15/day or \$150 per quarter
Baltimore County	• Water usage: \$3 per 1,000 gallons • 3/4": \$250 deposit + \$2 per day or \$40 per quarter • 1": \$425 deposit + \$2.50 per day or \$48 per quarter • 2": \$1325 deposit + \$5 per day or \$56 per quarter • 3": \$1350 deposit + \$64 per quarter
Howard County	• Water usage: current rate • 1": \$400 deposit + \$50 per month • 3": \$1,500 deposit + \$50 per month
WSSC (Montgomery County and Prince George's County)	• Water usage: \$10.20 per 1,000 gallons (min. \$40/\$240) • 3/4": \$410 deposit + \$115 per two weeks or \$190 per six months • 3": \$2,420 deposit + \$130 per two weeks or \$175 per six months
District of Columbia	• Fire hydrant use permit: \$75 • Water usage (1,122 gallons): \$2.125 (non-construction) to \$6.375 per day (construction) • 5/8": \$950 deposit + \$10 per day or \$115 above 15 days • 3" (no backflow preventer): \$1,750 deposit + \$10 per day or \$130 above 15 days • 3" (w/ backflow preventer): \$2,750 deposit + \$15 per day or \$195 above 15 days

Sources: [Baltimore City DPW Fees](#), [Anne Arundel Code 13-5-904 Fire Hydrant Fees](#), [Baltimore County Fire Hydrant Permit Program](#), [Howard County Fire Hydrant Use](#), [Howard County Fire Hydrant Use Agreement](#), [WSSC Fire Hydrant Permit](#), [DC Water Fire Hydrant Use Permit](#)



Misc. Environmental Fees

Benchmarking Findings: Well permits are levied for the construction or ongoing operations of a well for drinking or geothermal uses. Baltimore City's \$65 well permit is the lowest of the comparison group, excluding the District of Columbia, which charges \$10.31 to \$77.35 per well, with a maximum fee per lot of 10 wells.

Additionally, the Baltimore City Health Department levies a \$100 annual registration fee for Tattoo establishments, which is unique among the comparison group.

Misc. Environmental Fee Comparison

Jurisdiction	Fee or Permit	Additional Fees
Baltimore City	• Tattoo establishment: \$100 • Well permit: \$65	N/A
Anne Arundel County	• New well: \$630 • Replacement well: \$315 • Geothermal/monitoring well permit: \$160	N/A
Howard County	• Well permit: \$160	N/A
Montgomery County	• Well permit: \$160	N/A
Prince George's County	• Well permit: \$158	Administrative Fee: \$66 Technology Fee: 10%
District of Columbia	• Well permit review (max. fee of 10 wells): \$10.31 to \$77.35 per well, depending on type • Renewal/change in ownership: \$25.78 per lot	N/A

Sources: [Anne Arundel County Health Department Fees](#), [Howard County Health Department Fees](#), [Prince George's County DPIE Fee Schedule](#), [Montgomery County MD Land Development Fees](#), [D.C. Dept of Energy and Environment Fees](#)



Appendix B: Cost-of-Service Calculation

This appendix presents the cost-of-service analysis for fees included in Phase 1 of the fee study. The analysis estimates the minimum cost to the City of administering each permit or license, compared to the minimum fee.

Information was gathered through a mix of departmental interviews and survey responses conducted by PFM. For each permit or fee, departments provided step-by-step descriptions of the application and approval processes (e.g., application intake, legal review), along with the title of the staff responsible for each task. PFM used payroll records provided by the City of Baltimore to calculate the direct labor cost for each step, including salary and benefits. This analysis also accounts for indirect labor costs (administration, management, etc.), operating costs (e.g., computer software, rental equipment, etc.), and central services (e.g., Finance, HR). The breakdown of costs is as follows:

- **Direct labor hours** for permit intake, plan reviews, inspections, letter drafting (if applicable), and the release of bond and permits. City staff estimated the average number of hours to complete plan reviews and inspections.
- **Indirect labor hours** related to paid time off, administration, and management. Cost of leave was estimated as a percentage of hours of paid leave taken relative to total hours (estimated at 12.0%). The calculation also included an allocation for administration and management time based on salaries of positions in managerial and administration roles.
- **Employee benefits** include health benefits, retiree benefits, and other benefits (e.g., Medicare and Social Security). The calculation accounted for a benefits cost allocation of 46.2% of base salary based on the FY2026 budgeted payroll data.
- **Operating costs** (such as computer software and equipment, credit card fees, and supplies) and transportation costs (such as fuel and vehicle maintenance): To estimate the operating costs, the analysis included an operating cost allocation of 26.0% of total personnel costs based on the FY2026 budget. Additionally, vehicle-related costs are based on the estimated mileage based on discussions with City staff and the 2025 federal mileage reimbursement rate of \$0.70 per mile.
- **Indirect cost allocation** that accounts for central services such as budget, payroll, and human resources. The calculation included an indirect cost allocation equivalent to 13.0% of total personnel cost based on the FY2026 budget.

The cost-of-service analysis includes the following departments:

- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Department of Transportation
- Baltimore City Fire Department
- Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals
- Baltimore City Health Department

Overall, the cost-of-service analysis found a consistent gap between the cost of providing services and the fees being charged. Excluding the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD), the cost-of-service estimates shown in this report detail the minimum costs of providing service -- i.e., applications which do not require additional submissions on behalf of an applicant, limited traffic for travel estimates, no violations upon inspections, etc. The gap in costs highlighted under ideal scenarios has led to the recommendations included in this report.



While the cost-of-service analysis identifies the minimum administrative cost to providing service, pursuing full cost recovery is not always the optimal policy choice. Fees that significantly exceed prevailing local rates can create barriers to compliance, discourage investment, or shift activity to neighboring jurisdictions with lower fees. When making fee level decisions, governments must balance cost recovery with broader policy objectives, such as supporting housing affordability, encouraging economic development, or maintaining parity within a local market. These recommendations seek to maintain this balance, ensuring that fees improve cost recovery while avoiding unintended consequences.



Department of Housing and Community Development

The Department of Housing and Community Development administers fees related to construction within the City of Baltimore, including construction permits, electrical installation, mechanical equipment, plumbing, and elevators.

Our review of fees indicates that Baltimore City's construction permits are below the cost of administering the fees.

- **Residential Construction Permits:** The administrative cost to process a residential construction permit is estimated at a minimum of \$324. This significantly exceeds the current minimum permit fees, which range from \$25 to \$250 depending on project type – including \$150 for single/dual-family construction, \$75 for additions, \$250 for multifamily construction, \$150 for multifamily additions, and \$25 to \$50 for accessory structures.
 - **Recommendation:** 20% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
- **Commercial Construction Permits:** Processing a commercial construction permit requires a minimum of 2.75 hours, including intake, plan review, inspections, and issuance. The associated minimum administrative cost of \$468, nearly double the minimum fee of \$250 currently charged.
 - **Recommendation:** 20% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
- **Trade Licenses:** A trade license costs \$26 at a minimum to administer, exceeding the minimum \$15 license examination fee. This minimum cost of service assumes that an applicant submits all required documentation initially, with no follow-up required from the applicant. Many applications require the submission of additional documentation missing from initial applications.
 - **Recommendation:** 5% fee increase, plus 10% technology fee
- **Use and Occupancy Permits:** The minimum administrative cost to issue a Use and Occupancy permit (covering a single use or section) is \$118, compared to the \$45 fee charged per use or section. Additional sections increase both the fee and the administrative cost, with required inspection time rising by 15 minutes per floor for residential properties and 20 minutes per floor for commercial properties.
 - **Recommendation:** 25% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
- **Temporary Events Permits:** The estimated minimum cost to administer a temporary event permit is \$128, assuming a single temporary structure of up to 500 square feet. Additional temporary structures incur a \$20 fee and increase the amount of time needed for an inspection, raising the administrative costs beyond the costs recovered.
 - **Recommendation:** 15% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
- **Demolition and Razing Permits:** The minimum administrative cost for demolition permits is approximately \$208. This substantially exceeds the minimum fees currently charged -- \$25 for interior demolitions of single/dual-family homes and \$100 for other structures.
 - **Recommendation:** 10% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee



- **Vacant Property Registration:** For vacant property registration, the department completes several steps to verify vacancy status and maintain compliance. First, a housing inspector or senior housing inspector conducts an initial site visit to determine whether a property is vacant, including reviewing gas, electric, and water service status, as well as confirming other visual indicators of vacancy. At a minimum, this takes 40 minutes of staff time for a residential inspection and approximately an hour for non-residential, including travel. Following the inspection, staff issue a vacancy notice and contact City utilities and attempt to contact the property owner to confirm the observations of the inspection. Once vacancy is confirmed, an OSS I/I documents the property in DHCD's system. Properties are reinspected quarterly, with Failure to Abate (FTA) notices issued to 73 percent of properties. Based on these conservative assumptions, the estimated cost to the City to process and monitor a vacant residential property registration is approximately \$412 and \$530 for non-residential properties (commercial, industrial, etc.), which is significantly higher than the current fee.
 - **Recommendation:** 100% (all other) to 150% (residential) increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee

Minimum Cost of Service for Residential Construction Permit

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.17	\$7	\$1	\$8	\$2	\$1	\$11
Administrative Review	0.12	\$8	\$1	\$9	\$2	\$1	\$13
Permit/Plan Review	0.50	\$33	\$6	\$39	\$10	\$5	\$54
Inspection	1.50	\$77	\$14	\$91	\$23	\$12	\$127
Inspection Travel (Hourly + Transportation)	0.75	\$39	\$7	\$46	\$27	\$6	\$79
Permit approval	0.10	\$5	\$1	\$6	\$2	\$1	\$8
Permit issuance	0.08	\$3	\$1	\$4	\$1	\$1	\$5
Troubleshooting	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$20	\$5	\$3	\$27
Total	2.75	\$188	\$34	\$223	\$73	\$29	\$324
Current Fee Level: • Single/dual-family dwellings: \$10 per 1,000 cu. ft., min of \$150 (new building), \$75 (additions) • Multi-family: \$20 per 1,000 cu. ft, min of \$250 (new building), \$150 (additions) • Structures accessory to a principal occupancy: \$25 (< 100 sq ft), \$50 (>100 sq. ft.)							

Minimum Cost of Service for Commercial Construction Permit

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.17	\$7	\$1	\$8	\$2	\$1	\$11
Administrative Review	0.12	\$8	\$1	\$9	\$2	\$1	\$13
Permit/Plan Review	0.50	\$65	\$12	\$77	\$20	\$10	\$107
Inspection	2.50	\$129	\$24	\$152	\$39	\$20	\$211
Inspection Travel (Hourly + Transportation)	0.75	\$39	\$7	\$46	\$27	\$6	\$79
Permit approval	0.10	\$9	\$2	\$10	\$3	\$1	\$14
Permit issuance	0.08	\$3	\$1	\$4	\$1	\$1	\$5
Troubleshooting	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$20	\$5	\$3	\$27
Total	4.50	\$276	\$50	\$326	\$99	\$42	\$468
Current Fee Level: \$20 per 1,000 cu. ft., min \$250							



Minimum Cost of Service for Trade Licenses

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.20	\$8	\$1	\$9	\$2	\$1	\$13
License Issuance	0.08	\$3	\$1	\$4	\$1	\$1	\$5
Troubleshooting	0.08	\$5	\$1	\$6	\$1	\$1	\$8
Total	0.36	\$16	\$3	\$19	\$5	\$2	\$26
Current Fee Level: \$15 to \$150							

Minimum Cost of Service for Use and Occupancy Permit

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.08	\$3	\$1	\$4	\$1	\$1	\$5
Inspection	0.25	\$13	\$2	\$15	\$4	\$2	\$21
Inspection Travel (Hourly + Transportation)	0.75	\$39	\$7	\$46	\$27	\$6	\$79
Certificate of Occupancy Issuance	0.08	\$3	\$1	\$4	\$1	\$1	\$5
Troubleshooting	0.08	\$4	\$1	\$5	\$1	\$1	\$7
Total	1.25	\$62	\$11	\$74	\$35	\$10	\$118
Current Fee Level: \$45 for each use in each building or part of a building							

Minimum Cost of Service for Temporary Event Permits

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.08	\$3	\$1	\$4	\$1	\$1	\$5
Permit/Plan Review	0.08	\$4	\$1	\$5	\$1	\$1	\$7
Inspection (temp. structures)	0.33	\$17	\$3	\$20	\$5	\$3	\$28
Inspection Travel (Hourly + Transportation)	0.75	\$39	\$7	\$46	\$27	\$6	\$79
Permit Approval	0.08	\$4	\$1	\$5	\$1	\$1	\$7
Troubleshooting	0.08	\$1	\$0	\$1	\$0	\$0	\$1
Total	2.17	\$68	\$12	\$81	\$36	\$10	\$128
Current Fee Level: \$20 per year for each 500 sq. ft. min \$35, max \$800 (per structure)							



Minimum Cost of Service for Demolition and Razing

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.08	\$4	\$1	\$5	\$1	\$1	\$7
Permit/Plan Review	0.08	\$5	\$1	\$6	\$2	\$1	\$8
Inspection	0.33	\$52	\$9	\$61	\$16	\$8	\$84
Inspection Travel (Hourly + Transportation)	0.75	\$39	\$7	\$46	\$27	\$6	\$79
Permit Approval	0.08	\$4	\$1	\$5	\$1	\$1	\$7
Permit Issuance	0.08	\$4	\$1	\$4	\$1	\$1	\$6
Troubleshooting	0.17	\$10	\$2	\$12	\$3	\$2	\$16
Total	2.33	\$117	\$21	\$139	\$51	\$18	\$208
Current Fee Level: Interior Only: \$0.02 per sq. ft., min \$25 (single/dual-family) to \$100 (all others) Other than interior only: \$0.03 per cu. ft., min of \$300, max \$5,000 (single/dual-family) \$0.075 per cu. ft., min \$600, max \$5,000 (all others) Accessory structures: \$50 each							

Minimum Cost of Service for Vacant Property Registration (Residential)

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.17	\$7	\$1	\$8	\$2	\$1	\$12
Inspection	1.67	\$92	\$17	\$108	\$28	\$14	\$150
Call to confirm	0.50	\$27	\$5	\$32	\$8	\$4	\$45
Final Input	0.25	\$11	\$2	\$13	\$3	\$2	\$18
Inspection Travel (Hourly + Transportation)	1.67	\$92	\$17	\$108	\$63	\$14	\$185
FTA	0.25	\$14	\$2	\$16	\$4	\$2	\$22
Total	4.50	\$242	\$44	\$286	\$108	\$37	\$431
Current Fee Level: Residential: \$100 All other: \$250							



Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation administers several fees as part of its mission to maintain and improve the transportation infrastructure to produce a safe, reliable, accessible, and efficient system for everyone that provides multiple and sustainable modes of transportation for residents, businesses, and visitors. As part of this mission, the Department administers a mix of fees, which include right-of-way permits, special event permits, and minor privilege permits. Our review of DOT fees indicates that the fee schedule trails the cost of providing service.

- **Minor Privilege Permits:** The minimum administrative cost to process a minor privilege permit is approximately \$92. This exceeds the \$35 minimum fee charged for residential fences and is above the more common minimum fee of \$70.30 applied to many other types of minor privilege permits. Additionally, minor privilege permits often require inspections as part of a building permit. DHCD inspection costs, which are not reflected in the cost-of-service model, further the gap in cost recovery.
 - **Recommendation:** 15% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
- **Special Event Permits:** The estimated minimum cost to administer a special event permit is approximately \$175. This is more than double the current \$80 application fee for events submitted more than 10 weeks in advance, highlighting a significant gap in cost recovery.
 - **Recommendation:** 25% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
- **Special Event Equipment Rental:** The Department of Transportation offers a variety of equipment for rental during special events. This ranges from tents, stages, electrical connections, etc. The cost-of-service model details the cost of a basic rental: one 18x24 stage, which costs \$400 to rent. The delivery, set up and breakdown of an 18x24 stage utilizes, at a minimum, one CDL driver (1.5 hours) and two laborers (2 hours each). At a minimum, this process costs the department \$739.
 - **Recommendation:** 10% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
- **Right-of-Way Permits:** The minimum cost to administer a right-of-way permit is estimated at \$88. This exceeds the \$55 fee charged for a one-week sidewalk closure, indicating a gap in cost recovery.
 - **Recommendation:** 25% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
- **Oversized Vehicles (Permit and Escort):** The minimum cost to administer an oversized vehicle permit and escort is \$475. This includes a half hour of time for application intake, plus 6 hours of labor for escorting oversized vehicles.
 - **Recommendation:** Charge actual hourly rates for employees assigned to escorts
- **Towing:** The minimum cost to tow a standard vehicle is estimated at \$163, which exceeds the cost of towing by \$23 to \$33 (depending on the location of the tow). However, the department indicated that the minimum costs highlighted in the cost-of-service model are rare. For example, many tows occur during peak traffic hours, greatly increasing the time required to locate and tow a vehicle to an impound lot, which increases the cost of service.
 - **Recommendation:** 20% increase in towing fees, plus a flat daily rate for storage



Minimum Cost of Service for Minor Privilege Permit

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.33	\$15	\$3	\$18	\$5	\$2	\$25
Administrative Review	0.17	\$8	\$1	\$9	\$2	\$1	\$13
Permit/Plan Review	0.25	\$18	\$3	\$21	\$5	\$3	\$30
Permit Approval	0.25	\$11	\$2	\$14	\$3	\$2	\$19
Permit Issuance	0.08	\$4	\$1	\$5	\$1	\$1	\$6
Total	1.08	\$56	\$10	\$67	\$17	\$9	\$92
Current Fee Level: Variable (most permits have a minimum \$70.30 fee)							

Minimum Cost of Service for Special Event Permits

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.25	\$11	\$2	\$13	\$3	\$2	\$18
Administrative Review	0.33	\$15	\$3	\$18	\$5	\$2	\$25
Permit/Plan Review	0.17	\$11	\$2	\$13	\$3	\$2	\$18
Permit Approval	1.00	\$69	\$13	\$82	\$21	\$11	\$114
Total	1.75	\$107	\$19	\$126	\$32	\$16	\$175
Current Fee Level: Special Event Application Fee: (> 10 weeks, \$80), (10-8 weeks \$125), (8-6 weeks, \$250)							

Minimum Cost of Service for Right-of-Way Permits

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.25	\$11	\$2	\$13	\$3	\$2	\$19
Inspection	0.08	\$35	\$6	\$41	\$10	\$5	\$57
Permit Approval	0.17	\$8	\$1	\$9	\$2	\$1	\$13
Total	1.00	\$54	\$10	\$64	\$16	\$8	\$88
Current Fee Level: Driveway / curb cut: \$20 + \$15 per LF Right-of-way obstructions: \$55 to \$85 per week							

Minimum Cost of Service for Oversized Vehicle Permit and Escorts

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	30 mins	\$35	\$6	\$41	\$11	\$5	\$57
Escort 1	3 hours	\$87	\$16	\$103	\$26	\$13	\$143
Escort 2	3 hours	\$168	\$31	\$199	\$51	\$26	\$276
Total	6.5	\$290	\$53	\$343	\$88	\$45	\$475
Current Fee Level: Oversized vehicle permit (up to 45 tons): \$60 + \$5 per extra ton Escort: \$160 (2 staff, 3 hours of labor)							



Minimum Cost of Service for Towing

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non- Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.17	\$8	\$1	\$9	\$2	\$1	\$12
Towing (incl. travel)	0.75	\$31	\$6	\$37	\$25	\$5	\$67
Vehicle Processing	0.33	\$10	\$2	\$12	\$3	\$2	\$17
Transport to Yard	0.25	\$10	\$2	\$12	\$3	\$2	\$17
Additional Processing	0.50	\$15	\$3	\$18	\$5	\$2	\$25
Release	0.33	\$15	\$3	\$18	\$5	\$2	\$25
Total	2.33	\$90	\$16	\$107	\$43	\$14	\$163
Current Fee Level: • Towing: standard vehicle (west of Charles Street): \$130 • Towing: standard vehicle (east of Charles Street): \$140 • Towing: 6 to 9 wheels: \$305 • Towing: >10 wheels: \$440 plus • Storage: \$50 (first 48 hours or any portion), then \$15 per day							



Baltimore City Fire Department

The Baltimore City Fire Department administers fees as part of its mission to provide fire prevention and protection services to the residents of Baltimore City. These fees include inspections for fire prevention, fire suppression, hazardous materials, and open burning. The department has three categories of fees: construction permits, operational permits, and permits for activities such as special events, firework displays, or open burning.

Our review of fees indicates that Baltimore City Fire Department's fees trail the cost of providing service.

- Safety inspections are conducted by the Fire Department during the alteration or construction of a property. As part of this process, the department conducts a plan review, at no charge, which require a minimum of one hour of staff labor. Fire Department leadership indicated that approximately 75% of plan reviews require multiple re-reviews, which increases labor demands on the department.
 - **Sprinkler and Suppression Systems:** Fire suppression system inspections—including sprinklers and automated chemical suppression systems—require a plan review, inspection, and issuance of a permit.
 - **Sprinkler systems cost the department, at a minimum, \$929 to conduct.** This cost is higher than other suppression systems due to the requirement of 3 inspections. Since the launch of the Acela system, the average fee charged has been \$69.
 - **Suppression systems cost the department, at a minimum, \$377 to conduct.** Since the launch of the Acella system, the average fees charged for suppression systems have been \$50 for chemical systems and \$88 for standpipe risers.
 - **Recommendation:** 25% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
 - **Fire Alarm Systems:** The Fire Department conducts an inspection of newly installed fire alarm systems or the alteration of existing systems. This includes a plan review, inspection, and issuance of a permit. A Fire Alarm permit costs the department, at a minimum, \$392 to conduct, greatly exceeding the fees of \$63 to \$94 per floor currently levied.
 - **Recommendation:** 25% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
 - **Use and Occupancy Permits:** Prior to the occupancy of a newly constructed property, the Fire Department must conduct a final inspection to ensure compliance with the City's fire safety requirements. A Use and Occupancy certification costs the department, at a minimum, \$319 to conduct, greatly exceeding the \$45 fee charged.
 - **Recommendation:** 25% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
- Operational safety inspections are required for buildings of specific uses, including buildings used for “assisted living” (day cares, hotels, etc.), public assembly (bars, nightclubs, arenas, etc.), and for properties which store or use hazardous materials.
 - **Assisted Living:** Assisted living inspections take, at a minimum, an hour to inspect with approximately 45 minutes of travel time. If applicable, violations are issued, at a minimum labor requirement of 30 minutes. At a minimum (i.e., an hour-long inspection with no violations), an



annual assisted living inspection costs the department \$354, exceeding the variable permit fees, which range from \$37 to \$113.

- **Recommendation:** 25% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
- **Public Assembly:** Public assembly inspections take, at a minimum, an hour to inspect with approximately 45 minutes of travel time. If applicable, violations are issued, at a minimum labor requirement of 30 minutes. At a minimum (i.e., an hour-long inspection with no violations), an annual public assembly inspection costs the department \$354, exceeding the permit cost of all venues with capacities of 500 or less.
 - **Recommendation:** 25% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
- **Hazardous Material Use and Storage:** The Fire Department conducts initial and annual inspections of properties which use or store hazardous materials. These inspections take, at a minimum, one hour to complete. At a minimum (i.e., an hour-long inspection with no violations), an annual hazardous materials inspection costs the department \$354, exceeding even the highest permit cost of \$300 for explosive materials.
 - **Recommendation:** 25% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
- Event permits require inspections of the activities being permitted, but ongoing service from the department.
 - **Special Events:** The Fire Department inspects and provides service to large public events to ensure the safety of the public in attendance. This requires a minimum review time of one hour, plus a minimum one-hour inspection of the premises. The department charges \$60 per hour per employee in attendance at special events (minimum of four hours per employee), as well as a \$45 tent inspection fee, which trails the cost of providing service, particularly for large events which require the attendance of Captains and Battalion Chiefs (note: since service demands greatly fluctuate by event, they are excluded from this analysis). At a minimum (i.e., excluding hourly service costs), a special event costs the department \$330 to conduct, exceeding the cost of providing service by \$285.
 - **Recommendation:** 25% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
 - **Pyrotechnic Displays:** The Fire Department inspects and, if necessary, provides service to events holding fireworks or other pyrotechnic displays. These events require a packet review of the event's plan for safety compliance, permit issuance time, as well as staffing when applicable. At a minimum, pyrotechnic displays cost the department \$764, compared to the \$600 permit fee charged for a fireworks display.
 - **Recommendation:** 10% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee
 - **Open Burning:** BCFD issues permits open burning, which allows a person or organization to burn materials after meeting specific safety requirements. Burning permits require a review of the planned burning activity and permit issuance. At a minimum, issuing an opening burning permits costs the department \$223, exceeding the permit cost by \$160.



- **Recommendation:** 25% increase in fee level, plus a 10% technology fee

Minimum Cost of Service for New Construction: Sprinklers Systems

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.08	\$9	\$2	\$10	\$3	\$1	\$14
Plan Review	1.00	\$45	\$8	\$53	\$13	\$7	\$73
Inspection (3, incl. travel)	5.25	\$463	\$84	\$547	\$187	\$71	\$806
Permit Issuance	0.50	\$22	\$4	\$26	\$7	\$3	\$37
Total	6.83	\$539	\$98	\$637	\$210	\$83	\$929
Current Fee Level:							
Sprinklers: 1 to 25 heads: \$44, 26 to 100 heads: \$63, >100 heads: \$63 per 100 or additional fraction thereof							

Minimum Cost of Service for New Construction: Suppression Systems

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.08	\$9	\$2	\$10	\$3	\$1	\$14
Plan Review	1.00	\$45	\$8	\$53	\$13	\$7	\$73
Inspection (3, incl. travel)	1.75	\$154	\$28	\$182	\$47	\$24	\$253
Permit Issuance	0.50	\$22	\$4	\$26	\$7	\$3	\$37
Total	3.33	\$230	\$42	\$272	\$69	\$35	\$377
Current Fee Level:							
Suppression: \$63 to \$140 per installation, depending on type							

Minimum Cost of Service for New Construction: Fire Alarm Systems

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.08	\$8.66	\$2	\$10	\$3	\$1	\$14
Plan Review	1.00	\$45	\$8	\$53	\$13	\$7	\$73
Inspection (3, incl. travel)	1.50	\$154	\$28	\$182	\$62	\$24	\$269
Permit Issuance	0.50	\$22	\$4	\$26	\$7	\$3	\$37
Total	3.08	\$230	\$42	\$272	\$85	\$35	\$392
Current Fee Level:							
Fire alarm system: \$63 to \$94 per floor or zone, depending on height of building							



Minimum Cost of Service for Operational Permits (Assisted Living, Public Assembly)

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.08	\$52	\$9	\$61	\$16	\$8	\$85
Inspection (including travel)	1.75	\$154	\$28	\$182	\$62	\$24	\$269
Total	1.83	\$206	\$38	\$244	\$78	\$32	\$354
Current Fee Level: <u>Assisted Living</u> • Family day care home: \$20 to 30 (bi-annual depending on number of residents) • Foster care (single/dual-family dwellings): \$37 • Foster care board/care homes: \$56 to \$113 depending on number of residents • General inspection required by other agencies: \$100 (per inspection) • Halfway, lodging or rooming services: \$70 • Hospitals/nursing homes (per 300 beds or fraction thereof): \$2 per bed • Hotels: \$1.15 per bed • Nursery/day care centers (>12 Residents): \$81				Current Fee Level: <u>General Assembly Fee (annual)</u> • 50 to 249: \$150 • 250 to 499: \$300 • 500 to 999: \$450 • 1,000 to 2,499: \$675 • 2,500 to 4,999: \$1,575 • >5,000: \$3,150 <u>Building Specific Assembly Fees (annual)</u> • Churches: \$63 • Educational facility: \$113			

Minimum Cost of Service for Use and Occupancy Permits

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.08	\$9	\$2	\$10	\$3	\$1	\$14
Inspection (incl. travel)	1.75	\$154	\$28	\$182	\$62	\$24	\$269
Permit Issuance	0.50	\$22	\$4	\$26	\$7	\$3	\$37
Total	2.33	\$185	\$34	\$219	\$72	\$28	\$319
Current Fee Level: \$45 per use or zone							

Minimum Cost of Service for Hazardous Material Inspections

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.08	\$52	\$9	\$61	\$16	\$8	\$85
Inspection (including travel)	1.75	\$154	\$28	\$182	\$62	\$24	\$269
Total	1.83	\$206	\$38	\$244	\$78	\$32	\$354
Current Fee Level: \$38 to \$300, depending on use							



Minimum Cost of Service for Pyrotechnic Displays

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Review	1.00	\$104	\$19	\$123	\$31	\$16	\$170
Service (incl. travel)	4.75	\$353	\$64	\$417	\$122	\$54	\$594
Total	5.75	\$457	\$83	\$540	\$154	\$70	\$764
Current Fee Level: \$600, plus \$60 per hour of service (min. 4 hours)							

Minimum Cost of Service for Special Events (excluding labor)

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Review	1.00	\$104	\$19	\$123	\$31	\$16	\$170
Inspection (incl. travel)	1.75	\$88	\$16	\$104	\$42	\$14	\$160
Total	2.75	\$192	\$35	\$227	\$74	\$29	\$330
Current Fee Level: \$45 per event							

Minimum Cost of Service for Open Burning Permit

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Review	1.00	\$104	\$19	\$123	\$31	\$16	\$170
Permit Issuance	0.50	\$22	\$4	\$26	\$22	\$3	\$52
Total	1.50	\$126	\$23	\$149	\$54	\$19	\$223
Current Fee Level: \$63							



Baltimore City Health Department

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) administers a wide array of fees related to waste hauler licenses, dog and kennel permits, food facility licenses, and various health-related reviews and inspections. Although the department last updated its fee schedule in 2012, our analysis indicates that many current fees remain below the actual cost of service.

Because the minimum administrative costs apply only to a very small subset of applicants, the department provided average cost estimates to more accurately reflect service delivery. Key findings include:

- **Food Facility Permits:** The average cost to administer a food facility permit is \$756, significantly exceeding the permit fees across all priority levels. A significant portion of costs are driven by plan reviews and inspections, which take, on average, 7 hours when including travel.
 - **Recommendation:** 10% fee increase, plus 10% technology fee
- **Waste Hauler Licenses:** While the average cost to administer a waste hauler license is \$37 under ideal conditions, many applicants require substantial staff assistance to complete their applications, pushing administrative costs beyond the \$35 fee currently charged. Additionally, as mentioned previously, the City incurs significant disposal fees not reflected in the cost-of-service model, pushing actual costs above the levied license fee.
 - **Recommendation:** 10% technology fee, and transfer administration of fee to DPW
- **Pool Licenses:** The average cost to administer a pool license fee is \$533, which exceeds the current fee level of \$455. Each pool license requires an inspection by an environmental sanitarian, which takes approximately 2 hours, including travel. However, many applications require a reinspection (at no additional fee). The cost-of-service model assumes that half of applications require a reinspection.
 - **Recommendation:** 10% fee increase, plus 10% technology fee
- **Tattoo Establishments:** The average administrative cost to process a tattoo establishment license is \$322 compared to \$100 charged to applicants, indicating a shortfall in cost recovery.
 - **Recommendation:** 15% fee increase, plus 10% technology fee
- **Well Tag:** The \$65 fee for a well tag falls short of the \$189 average cost to administer. The majority of the costs associated with administering a well tag derive from the approximate 1.5 hours required to review application plans.
 - **Recommendation:** 25% fee increase, plus 10% technology fee
- **Animal Fees:** Baltimore's animal boarding and licensing fees are administered by *Baltimore Animal Care and Rescue Center* (BARCS), a 501(c)3 organization which operates the City's open animal shelters. BARCS funding comes from a mix of public and philanthropic dollars and operates as an independent organization using a mix of paid and volunteer staff. This structure is distinct from the City and makes incorporating into the cost-of-service model difficult.
 - However, on average, a boarded animal requires a minimum of one hour of staff time per day, at a cost of \$15 if ownership of the animal is established. Currently, BARCS positions start at



\$16 an hour (adoption counselor) – meaning that excluding overhead costs, the current fee levels trail the cost of providing service.

- **Recommendation:** 10% fee increase

Average Cost of Service for Food Facility Permits

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.50	\$23	\$4	\$27	\$7	\$3	\$37
Administrative Review	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$20	\$5	\$3	\$27
Permit/Plan Review	1.50	\$100	\$18	\$118	\$30	\$15	\$163
Plan Review Inspection	3.00	\$156	\$28	\$184	\$47	\$24	\$255
Inspection	1.50	\$78	\$14	\$92	\$24	\$12	\$128
Inspection Travel	1.00	\$52	\$9	\$61	\$21	\$8	\$90
Permit Approval	0.50	\$23	\$4	\$27	\$7	\$3	\$37
Permit Issuance	0.25	\$11	\$2	\$13	\$3	\$2	\$19
Total	8.5	\$458	\$84	\$542	\$144	\$70	\$756
Current Fee Level: Annual Food License: \$65 to \$520 Seasonal Food License: \$145 to \$350 Catering License: \$625							

Average Cost of Service for Waste Hauler Permit

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.5	\$22	\$4	\$26	\$7	\$3	\$37
Total	0.50	\$22	\$4	\$26	\$7	\$3	\$37
Current Fee Level: Small Haulers: \$35 Large Haulers: \$100							

Average Cost of Service for Pool Licenses

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.50	\$23	\$4	\$27	\$7	\$3	\$37
Administrative Review	0.50	\$33	\$6	\$39	\$10	\$5	\$54
Permit/Plan Review	1.00	\$66	\$12	\$79	\$20	\$10	\$109
Inspection	1.50	\$78	\$14	\$92	\$24	\$12	\$128
Inspection Travel	1.50	\$78	\$14	\$92	\$55	\$12	\$159
Permit Approval	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$20	\$5	\$3	\$27
Permit Issuance	0.25	\$11	\$2	\$13	\$3	\$2	\$19
Total	5.50	\$306	\$56	\$362	\$124	\$47	\$533
Current Fee Level: \$455							



Average Cost of Service for Tattoo Establishment Permit

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non- Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.25	\$11	\$2	\$13	\$3	\$2	\$19
Administrative Review	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$20	\$5	\$3	\$27
Permit/Plan Review	0.75	\$50	\$9	\$59	\$15	\$8	\$82
Inspection	0.50	\$26	\$5	\$31	\$8	\$4	\$43
Inspection Travel	1.00	\$52	\$9	\$61	\$37	\$8	\$106
Permit Approval	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$20	\$5	\$3	\$27
Permit Issuance	0.25	\$11	\$2	\$13	\$3	\$2	\$19
Total	3.25	\$184	\$33	\$217	\$76	\$28	\$322
Current Fee Level: \$100							

Average Cost of Service for Well Tag Permit

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non- Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	0.25	\$11	\$2	\$13	\$3	\$2	\$19
Administrative Review	1.50	\$78	\$14	\$92	\$24	\$12	\$128
Permit Approval	0.25	\$13	\$2	\$15	\$4	\$2	\$21
Permit Issuance	0.25	\$13	\$2	\$15	\$4	\$2	\$21
Total	2.25	\$115	\$21	\$136	\$35	\$18	\$189
Current Fee Level: \$65							



Baltimore City Municipal Zoning and Appeals (BMZA)

The Baltimore City Board of Municipal Zoning and Appeals (BMZA) administers various fees as part of its mission to determine land use with the goal of promoting the health, security, and general welfare of the community.

Our review of BMZA fees indicates that the current fee schedule is significantly below the cost of providing services. For variance fees, for example, the entire review process from application intake to post-hearing resolution drafting takes at the minimum 4.5 hours and costs, at the minimum, \$400. At the same time, the City only charges \$100 for a simple variance fee for reviewing and providing resolution to up to two variance appeals.

- **Recommendation:** 100% increase to the simple/misc. fee, with charges being applied per requested variance/appeal

Minimum Cost of Service for One Variance Appeal

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake	1.00	\$41	\$7	\$48	\$12	\$6	\$67
Administrative/Legal Review	1.50	\$91	\$17	\$107	\$27	\$14	\$148
Provide Sign/Poster Information	0.50	\$20	\$4	\$24	\$6	\$3	\$33
Zoning Board Hearing	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$21	\$5	\$3	\$29
Post-Hearing Resolution	1.00	\$60	\$11	\$71	\$18	\$9	\$99
Case Closure	0.25	\$17	\$3	\$21	\$5	\$3	\$29
Total	4.50	\$247	\$45	\$292	\$75	\$38	\$404
Current Fee Level: Simple/misc.: \$100 Complex/sign: \$200 Combination: \$500							

The agency also noted that, while the fee increases for complex variance appeals, which is \$200 for three or more variance appeals, the cost of providing those services increases significantly because of the increased complexity of those cases. It is common, for example, for the administrative and legal review step of the process to take an average of three hours or more, which would cost \$553 based on the same cost-of service calculation.



Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works collects fees related to waste disposal, disposal, and the boarding of vacant property. Waste disposal fees are charged by the ton, and the boarding of vacant properties are charged by the number of labor hours and the costs of supplies. Scavenger vehicle permit approvals, on the other hand, require oversight from a DPW fee administrator.

- **Boarding of Vacant Homes:** For the boarding of vacant homes, DHCD invoices property owners based on DPW's actual costs, including supplies, field labor, a processing fee, and other applicable operating expenses. This fee structure is particularly effective for cost recovery: supply costs are updated quarterly to reflect current city contract prices, and field labor is billed according to the salary of the specific employee performing the work. By directly tying fees to real supply and labor costs, this model ensures accuracy and fairness, and it can serve as a strong example for other agencies seeking to align fees with actual service delivery expenses. **Further analysis is ongoing in coordination with the department to account for the unique structure of this fee and confirm the appropriate adjustment.**
- **Scavenger Vehicles:** At a minimum, the approval process for a scavenger permit takes fifteen minutes, at a cost of \$35. The minimum permit fee of \$29 for an in-state scavenger vehicle trails the estimated minimum cost.

- **Recommendation:** No changes

Minimum Cost of Service for Scavenger Vehicle Permit

	Hour Estimates	Labor Costs (including fringe benefits)	Mgmt. and Admin Allocation	Total Personnel Costs	Non-Personnel Cost Allocation	Indirect Cost Allocation	Total Cost Estimate
Application Intake/Approval	0.25	\$22	\$4	\$26	\$6	\$3	\$35
Current Fee Level: \$29 (in-state) to \$33 (out-of-state)							



Appendix C: Fee Collection Process

This appendix provides an overview of the City of Baltimore's current permit and licensing application and fee collection processes across multiple departments. This appendix is intended to illustrate the variances across the City's permitting procedures – from initial application to payment – and to highlight areas where modernization could improve efficiency and the customer experience.

To compile the information included in this appendix, PFM conducted departmental interviews and document reviews between May and July of 2025. Interviews focused on the cost of providing services, application methods, and payment processing workflows. Additional details were gathered through a review of City websites and permit applications to understand the user experience.

The fee collection overview includes the following departments:

- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Department of Transportation
- Baltimore City Fire Department
- Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals
- Baltimore City Health Department
- Department of Public Works

A summary of each department's fee collection process can be found in the rest of this Appendix.



Baltimore City Departmental Application and Payment Options

Fee	Application Submission		Payment Option		
	Online	In-Person	Online	In-Person	Credit Card Option?
Department of Housing and Community Development					
Building Permits	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trade Licenses		✓		✓	
Property Registration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use and Occupancy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Department of Transportation					
Curb Cuts / Driveway Installation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harbormaster Docking Fees	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Minor Privileges		✓		✓	✓
Oversized Vehicles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Right-of-Way	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Special Events	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vehicle Towing / Storage		✓		✓	✓
Baltimore City Fire Department					
Open Burning	✓			✓	
Fire Inspections	✓			✓	
Fire Inspections (renewal)	✓		✓	✓	
Special Event Service	✓		✓		✓
Baltimore City Board of Municipal Zoning and Appeals					
Alley and Footway Appeal		✓			
Conditional Use	✓		✓		✓
Nonconforming Use	✓		✓		✓
Variance Fee	✓		✓		✓
Baltimore City Health Department					
Food Licenses		✓		✓	✓
Food Licenses (renewal)	✓		✓	✓	✓
Pet Impoundment		✓		✓	✓
Pet License	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Plan Review		✓		✓	✓
Swimming Pools/Spas		✓		✓	✓
Tattoo Establishments		✓		✓	✓
Waste Hauler Permits		✓		✓	✓
Well Tags		✓		✓	✓
Department of Public Works					
Boarding Vacant Homes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fire Hydrant Use		✓		✓	
Waste Disposal		✓		✓	✓



Department of Housing and Community Development

DHCD administers building construction permits (including construction, plumbing, electrical, mechanical permits and property registrations through the Accela e-permit system. Applicants can pay the associated fees electronically (ACH or credit card) or in person at the One-Stop Shop using cash or check. In contrast, trade license applications are processed via a paper application, with annual licensing fees payable via check.

Permit Type	Application	Payment Options
Building Permits	Accela	ACH, credit card, cash or check
Trade Licenses	Paper	Check or money order
Property Registration	Accela	ACH, credit card, cash or check

Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation administers the Minor Privilege Permit Program, which permits permanent right-of-way obstructions by homeowners or businesses. Initial applications are submitted via a paper application, with fees paid in-person. Annual permit renewal fees can be paid online via ACH, credit card, or IPN.

The Department of Transportation administers permits for the temporary use of public rights of way, for reasons such as curb repairs, scaffolding, moving trucks, etc. Applications are accepted and processed via the OpenGov system.

The Harbormaster charges fees for the docking of boats in Baltimore City's harbor. Currently, applicants pay docking fees upon arrival, with cash and credit card options available. The Harbormaster will soon be introducing an app which will allow customers to reserve space and pay fees on their phone.

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation's Towing Division is responsible for managing vehicles towed from City property, including roads, alleyways, etc. Vehicle owners are charged a flat rate for towing, plus an administrative fee and fees for daily storage. These fees can only be paid in-person, via a credit card.

Permit Type	Application	Payment Options
Minor Privilege Permits	Paper	Cash, check, money order, credit card
Right-of-Way	Open.gov	ACH, credit card, IPN
Harbormaster Docking Fees	In-person	Cash, credit card
Vehicle Towing and Storage	N/A	Credit card

Baltimore City Fire Department

The Baltimore City Fire Department supports several permit types involving inspections and fee collection. Use and occupancy and burning permit applications are submitted through Accela, with fees made payable by check or money order. Annual inspections are invoiced automatically, and can be paid online via ACH, or by mail via check. Special event permits, on the other hand, are processed through Open.gov, with the Fire Department providing cost estimates based on staffing needs. Invoices are issued and paid online via ACH, credit card, or IPN.



Permit Type	Application	Payment Options
Fire Inspection – Use and Occupancy	Accela	Check or money order
Fire Inspection – Annual Renewal	Automatic	ACH, check
Special Events	Open.gov	ACH, credit cards, IPN
Open Burning	Accela	Check or money order

Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals

The Board of Municipal and Zoning appeals charges 7 fees related to zoning appeals, including variances, nonconforming uses, and others. Permits are submitted through the Accela e-permit system, where applicants can pay via ACH, credit card, or instant payment notification (IPN) systems such as Venmo or Google Pay.

The BMZA also processes Alley and Footway appeals, which are submitted via a paper application. The department currently does not levy fees for these appeals.

Permit Type	Application	Payment Options
Zoning Appeals	Accela	ACH, credit card, IPN
Alley and Footway Appeals	Paper	No BMZA fee

Baltimore City Health Department

Baltimore City requires that owners of cats and dogs register their pets with the City on an annual basis. Owners can register their pets through PetData.com, or in-person at a Baltimore Animal Rescue & Care Shelter (BARCS) location. PetData.com accepts credit cards as the only form of payment, while applicants can also pay via check, money order, or cash at a BARC location.

The Baltimore City Health Department administers the annual permitting process for food facilities. Initial applications are submitted via paper application, with associated fees paid via check or money order. Annual renewals of food licenses are processed online via Accela, which offers ACH, credit card, and IPN payments. In addition to online electronic payment methods, the Department offers in-person payment options at certain Walmart locations and on location in the Abel Wolman Municipal Building.

The Baltimore City Health Department requires annual licensure of tattoo establishments and swimming pools to ensure compliance with the City's health code. Applications for licenses are submitted via paper application, with associated fees paid via check, money order, or credit card. Unlike food licenses, tattoo establishment license renewals are also completed in person. This fee will be processed online following the department's full integration into the Accela system.

The Health Department also issues waste hauler permits, with applications initiated in person. Applicants complete a paper form at the Health Department's office, which staff then enter into an internal system. While many departments have moved to online permitting, BCHD has found this applicant group often lacks digital access and applies on short notice, limiting the urgency of incorporating this permit into an online system.

Permit Type	Application	Payment Options
Animal Licensing	Online or in-person	Check, money order, credit card, cash



Food Licensing	Paper	Check, money order, credit card, ACH, cash
Tattoo Establishment License	Paper	Check, money order, credit card
Swimming Pool Licenses	Paper	Check, money order, credit card
Waste Hauler Permit	Paper	Check, credit card

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works processes vary by fee. Tonnage-based fees for waste collection are collected at city-operated landfills, with waste haulers paying in person by cash or credit card after their load is weighed. For the boarding of vacant homes, property owners are invoiced by DHCD based on DPW's costs of supplies, field labor, a processing fee, and any other applicable operating costs. Invoices can be paid online, including via ACH, credit card, or IPN.

Residents and businesses in Baltimore City can apply for the temporary use of a fire hydrant for multiple purposes (e.g., filling a pool, cleaning a construction site, etc.). Applicants complete a paper form which is submitted to the Bureau of Water and Wastewater. Fees are determined based on the number of hydrants and length of the permit and must be paid in-person via check or money order.

Permit Type	Application	Payment Options
Waste Collection	In-person	Cash, credit card
Boarding of Vacant Homes	N/A	ACH, credit card, IPN
Fire Hydrant Use	Paper	Check, money order