

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)
Planning, Permitting and Environmental Assessment Fees Policy/Guideline 2009

A provincial Omnibus Bill was passed in January 1996 which empowered conservation authorities (CA) to collect fees for services approved by the Minister of Natural Resources (MNR). Conservation authorities are entitled to set rates, charge and collect fees for services rendered. The document entitled Policies and Procedures for the Charging of Conservation Authority Fees (June 1997, updated March 1999), included in the MNR Procedural Manual sets guidelines for fee collection. The document states that CA fee structures should be designed to recover, but not exceed, the costs associated with administering and delivering the services on a program basis. The manual also states that setting fees are dependent on the complexity of applications and the level of effort required to administer the application.

The following guidelines form the foundation of a policy for the administration and preparation of fee schedules for TRCA:

Administration of Fees

1. Administration of Fees for Planning, Permitting and Environmental Assessment services is under management of the Planning and Development Division of TRCA.
2. General inquiries and negotiation of fees will be directed through area manager and Director, Planning and Development on issues of interpretation and scoping of work requirements.
3. Technical requirements and engineering/ecological terms of reference will be guided by and approved by the managers and/or Director, Ecology.
4. The fee schedule is revised and updated every two years.
5. Fee adjustments will be recommended by the Director, Planning and Development to Directors Committee as part of the annual budgeting process, and will be submitted to the Authority for approval.

Methodology for Calculating Fees and Increases

Reporting on the administration of fees and consultation will include analysis of the following issues and data, where relevant:

- Analysis of trends in workload changes, shifts in market and types of applications.
- Consultation with developers/municipalities about work effort, new planning/legislative requirements and streamlining.
- General overview of status of cost recovery.
- Statistics of numbers of applications and annual changes, where required.
- Level of service/review turn-around timing.
- Areas of improvement of level of service/staffing demands.
- Cost cutting measures as required.
- Identification of specific/specialized municipal requirements e.g. MESP's.

- Status of OMB, Mining and Lands appeals – trends in legal costs (no detailed backup of staff time allocations, and file costs will be included).

Cost Recovery

TRCA administers its fee program to achieve a 55% to 60% cost recovery to date for the plan review function. TRCA will work toward full cost recovery as demand requires and municipalities direct over time.

Consultation With Development Industry and Municipal Partners

1. TRCA will consult every two years as proposed fees, and supporting analysis, are prepared prior to going to the Authority for approval.
2. TRCA will need to determine its technical requirements and capabilities for new planning assignments and consult with involved landowners and municipalities about fee implications.
3. No guarantees are provided for requested cost adjustments in the consultation process. Fees are necessary to finance TRCA's plan review function in the absence of other provincial or municipal funding.

Appeal Process for Fees

Any dispute about fee calculation, can be appealed through the Budget/Audit Advisory Board and/or the Authority. Delegation format with justification of appeal request is recommended.