Revised May 2024

SCHOOL DEVELOPER FEES

Information & Instructions

**For:** Building Permit Applicants

**From:** The Sequoia Union High School District (SUHSD)

**CC:** SUHSD’s Feeder Elementary School Districts (Belmont-Redwood Shores, Las Lomitas, Menlo Park City, Portola Valley, Ravenswood, Redwood City, San Carlos, and Woodside Elementary School Districts.

**Subject:** School Developer Fees: Rate Increase - Effective May 5, 2024

The following information is intended for applicants to better understand the statutory provisions regarding developer fees and the process and procedures for obtaining a building permit from the respective cities, counties and school districts.

Section 17620 (b) of the California Education Code provides that “a city or county, whether general law or chartered, the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development shall not issue a building permit for any residential or commercial/industrialprojects absent certification by the appropriate school district that any fee levied by the governing board of that school district has been complied with, or of the district’s determination that the fee does not apply to the project.” The school district shall issue the certification receipt to the applicant immediately upon compliance with the fee.

**What Are School Developer Fees and why do we need to pay them?**

FAQ:

* Education Code Sections 17620, et seq., authorizes a school district to levy a fee, charge or dedication for all additions, remodels, renovations and new construction projects **only** when there is an increase or decrease to the original square footage of structures within its boundaries for the sole purpose of funding the construction or reconstruction of school facilities;
* The continued growth of our community and additional students generated from new development will further strain the capacity of the District’s school facilities and this increase will exacerbate the District’s already existing capacity shortfall if new capacity is not added;
* Overcrowding in the classrooms will impair the normal functioning and the quality of educational programs;
* The districts’ facilities do not have adequate capacity at reasonable standards for present enrollment; in fact, two of SUHSD’s four comprehensive schools have enrollments above their reasonable capacity;
* SUHSD shares developer fees with its feeder elementary school districts. The developer fee sharing arrangement between the districts currently is, 40% of fees go to the high school district (SUHSD) and 60% go to the elementary feeder school districts;

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* The Districts periodically conduct a developer fee justification study for all schools based on, among other factors, current and projected enrollment within the school districts. This study determines the impact and effect such enrollment will have on the community.
* As of May 5, 2024, developer fee rates increased for residential construction to $5.17 per square foot and for commercial/industrial construction to $0.84 per square foot.

**How Are Fees Calculated?**

* A customized computer program was specifically designed and developed with CAD equipment where a wand is placed from point to point of outside wall perimeters. Once this step is completed, the rate is entered and the computer automatically calculates the fee for each school district. (Note: If you feel there is a discrepancy with our calculations or if you just want us to go over the calculations with you, please let us know and we will be more than happy to go over our calculations with you.)

**What if my plans change?**

* If you make any changes to the original floor plans that were previously submitted, calculated and paid for, you must re-submit the revised plans for re-calculation. If there is additional square footage added to your plans, you must pay the difference. If there is a decrease in square footage you will receive a refund for the overpayment. (Please allow 2 – 3 weeks)

**How to proceed and where do I go?**

* You are required to submit one (1) copy of the original full size floor plans that are to scale to the SUHSD Maintenance and Operations department, located at 1090 Mills Way in Redwood City.

Our office hours are: Monday – Friday, 7:30 am to 4:00 pm.

* **Please Note: We are no longer accepting floor plans by email.**
* If a project falls under 500 square feet of new construction, the applicant must still submit floor plans to the SUHSD Maintenance and Operations department for verification of the total square footage. Once this has been verified, the SUHSD will note on the “verification of payment” receipt that there is no fee due. The applicant must present this receipt to the city or town building department “before” the department issues a building permit.
* If you are completely demolishing an existing structure(s), you are required to obtain a “unit appraisal record or hard copy,” from the County Assessor’s Office and submit it with your floor plans to our office. This document shows the history of the property and the total “base area” square footage to be demolished. Then, we use this figure as a credit and deduct it from the total new square footage. The fees are then calculated based on the difference. They are located at 555 County Center, 1st Floor in Redwood City. Their phone number is (650) 363-4500.
* Please allow 2 - 3 business day’s turnaround time for calculation the calculation of fees. Turnaround time may vary due to unexpected circumstances or excessive applications. Our office will provide you with an accurate estimation of the turnaround time available when submitting your plans. However, should a situation arise causing delay with the calculation process, you will be notified of any delay.

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* When returning to submit payment for your fees, please bring (2) checks with you. (We cannot accept cash or credit cards for payment) One check is payable to the Sequoia Union High School District (SUHSD), and the second check is payable to the Elementary School District.

**Are fees refundable?**

* Yes. If your project has been cancelled or abandoned or for whatever reason and the fees were already paidand you paid your fees already, then you will need to go to the building department and have them write a letter on their stationary stating the details of the project and why the project was cancelled and submit it to our office for processing. **(Please allow 2-3 weeks)**

**Exclusions and Exemptions:**

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* Covered but not enclosed space, such as, patios and walkways
* Garages and Carports
* Barns and Green Houses

**Exemptions:**

* Modification or expansion of existing residential housing if the purpose of such modification is to increase access for a severely and permanently disabled person. (Ed. Code 17620, subd.(a)(l)(C)(i).)
* Reconstruction of a structure damaged by fire, earthquake, landslide, mudslide, flood, tidal wave, etc., where the replacement structure is equivalent to the original structure. **However, the district may charge fees for any net increase in square footage that arises from the new construction. (Ed. Code 17626.)**
* Facilities used **exclusively** for religious purposes that are thereby exempt from property taxes. (Gov. Code 65995, subd. (d).)
* Facilities used **exclusively** as a private full-time day school (including only grades between K-12). (Gov. Code 65995, subd. (d).)
* Facilities owned and occupied by any federal, state or local government agency. (Gov. Code 65995, subd. (d).)
* State-owned housing for migrant farm workers, which is subject to a contract ensuring compliance with Section 50710, **et seq**. of the Health and Safety Code.

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