

**MEMORANDUM**

DISTRIBUTE TO: Members of the Economic Development Committee

FROM: Brendan T. O'Connell - Finance Director
Chris Huff - Assessor

DATE: August 12, 2018

SUBJECT: **Impact Fee - Questions and Answers from Finance Director & Assessor**

Several questions have been passed along from the Planning and Urban Development Department on behalf of residents and businesses in regards to impact fees, the existing tax levy and City budget, property valuation growth and the upcoming revaluation, and building permit fees and stormwater service charges. This memo is intended to summarize responses to many of the frequently asked questions ("FAQ").

Frequently Asked Impact Fee Questions for Finance and Assessors

1. I read the FY19 budget includes \$100M of new estimated valuation and I know property values continue to grow. Why are my impact fees necessary during a time when there is so much new value in the City of Portland? Isn't the existing growth enough to cover all City needs?
2. Will the upcoming revaluation help alleviate budget pressure and provide more tax dollars for City needs?
3. Building permit fees were increased recently. Wasn't this increase intended to fund some of the same things impact fees are intended to fund (i.e. growth related infrastructure)?
4. What about the Stormwater Service Charge? Was that created in response to growth-related infrastructure needs?

Question 1: I read the FY19 budget includes \$100M of new estimated valuation and I know property values continue to grow. Why are my impact fees necessary during a time when there is so much new value in the City of Portland? Isn't the existing growth enough to cover all City needs?

Property valuation has grown by \$100 million in the current year due to significant new projects breaking ground and continues our upward trajectory in overall valuation. This \$100 million of new property valuation creates an additional approximately \$1,133,000 in tax revenue for municipal use. While this may seem like a significant amount, it represents only a 0.128% overall increase to our FY18 valuation of approximately \$7.8 billion, and can only fund a fraction of the cost increases and budget challenges we face in FY19, many of which are outside of City control. These include the increases in Cumberland County tax (\$381k), increases in pension obligation bond debt service (\$872k and increasing by around \$1M annually through 2026), contractually obligated union compensation increases (approximately \$3.2M) and health insurance cost increases (\$2M). As you can see, the increase in valuation can only fund a fraction of the cost increases that are outside of City control.

Question 2: Will the upcoming revaluation help alleviate budget pressure and provide more tax dollars for the City needs?

Staff Response: No – the revaluation has no impact on total funds collected for the budget. Each year the City Manager will recommend a budget, calling for the required amount of tax dollars to be levied on property owners. The revaluation will have no impact on the dollar amount levied – the total amount of tax dollars required for City / School operations will be the same both before and after the revaluation. The revaluation will only impact how the dollars levied are split between City taxpayers. In general about 1/3 of the residents will pay more after the revaluation, 1/3 of the residents will pay the same amount, and 1/3 of the residents will pay less, but in total the amount of tax dollars collected will remain the same. When property values rise overall as a result of the revaluation, the mil rate will see a corresponding drop. For example, if total City property value increased 25% during the revaluation from \$8B to \$10B as a result of the revaluation (i.e. adjusting property values to their just values) the mil rate would then see a corresponding 25% percentage decrease.

EXAMPLE:

Pre-City Revaluation:

Total City Valuation: \$8,000,000,000

Mil Rate: \$20.00

*Total Tax Levy Needed for City/School Operations: \$160,000,000 (\$8,000,000,000 / 1000 * \$20.00)*

Post-City Revaluation:

Total City Valuation: \$10,000,000,000

Mil Rate: \$16.00 (drops because we still only need a tax levy of \$160,000,000)

*Total Tax Levy Needed for City/School Operations: \$160,000,000 (\$10,000,000,000 / 1000 * \$16.00)*

Question 3: Building permit fees were increased recently. Wasn't this increase intended to fund some of the same things impact fees are intended to fund (i.e. growth related infrastructure)?

Staff Response: In 2017 a separate Permitting & Inspections Department was created. The new Department was created in direct response to the 2016 City Council goal to create a more efficient permitting process, including online functionality. This new Department including significant levels new staff and a new Department Head, a new software system (EnerGov) and new policies and procedures, was funded by an increase in Building Permit fees. No part of the previous increase in building permit fees was intended to fund growth-related infrastructure. Additionally, there are no excess building permit revenues available to address growth-related infrastructure.

Question 4: What about the [Stormwater Service Charge](#)? Was that created in response to growth-related infrastructure needs?

Staff Response: No. The Stormwater Service Charge was created to fund and implement projects related to the Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP") mandate for combined sewer overflow requirements. Instituting a stormwater charge more fairly and equitably distributes costs among the users of the sewer and stormwater systems rather than putting the burden entirely on sewer users. Stormwater service charges will raise approximately \$7M towards the DEP mandate in FY19. The City estimates between \$20M and \$30M will be spent annually over the next 5-10 years to address the DEP mandate (revenues from both sewer fees and stormwater service charges will support this effort). There will be no excess of either Stormwater Service Charges or Sewer Fees to address growth related infrastructure needs.