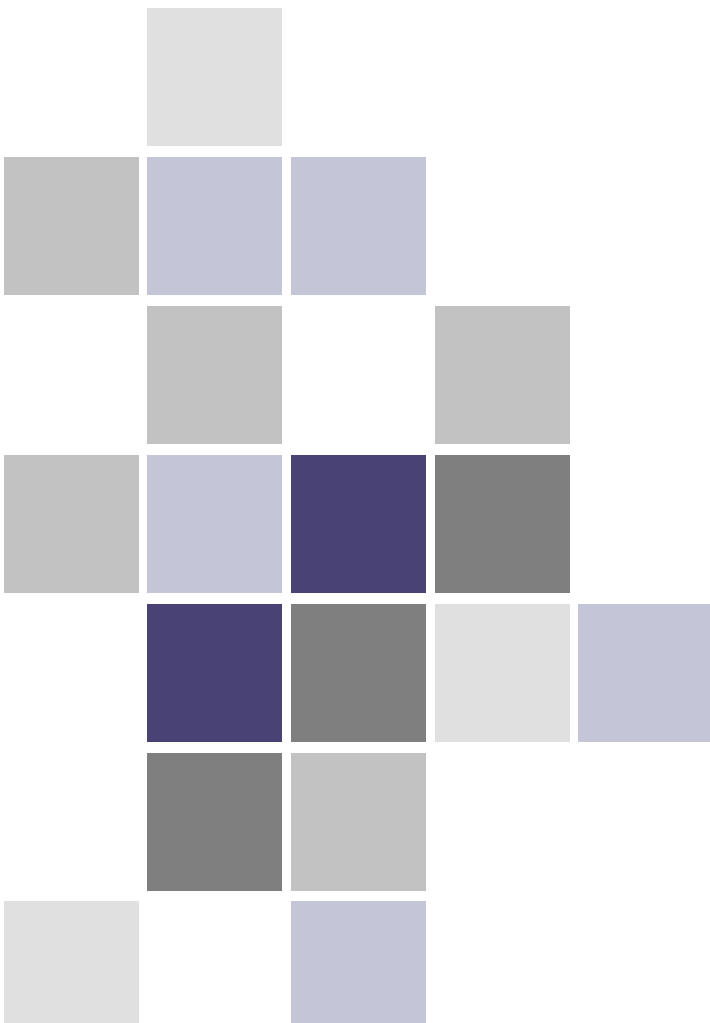




USER FEE STUDY  
PLAN AND STUDY FEES  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY CITY-COUNTY PLANNING  
COMMISSION, FLORIDA

**Final Report**  
September 2023



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## **SECTION I - BACKGROUND**

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The Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission (the Planning Commission) is the official local planning agency for all jurisdictions in Hillsborough County. It provides consolidated planning services and makes independent recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners, Plant City Commission, Tampa City Council, Temple Terrace City Council, and other agencies regarding long range comprehensive planning.

Led by ten citizen appointees from all four jurisdictions and two ex officio members representing MacDill Air Force Base and the Hillsborough County Public School District, the Planning Commission provides innovative leadership and long-range vision that contributes to the creation of a thriving, prosperous community that offers opportunity, fairness, and choice in how we live, move, learn, work, and play.

It is the Planning Commission's practice to periodically review its fees so that the Planning Commission may recover the costs associated with the services it provides to customers. The last fee study performed by the Planning Commission was approximately four years ago and focused solely on services provided to Unincorporated Hillsborough County. Not surprisingly, given the current economic environment and the rise in costs associated with both employee and non-employee expenditures, current prices do not recover the costs of providing its services. This leaves the County's general fund to subsidize the services provided to customers. The following report presents MGT's findings and recommendation.

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## SECTION 2 – ANALYSIS

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### A. STUDY SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this planning fee study are to:

- ❖ Develop a methodology to estimate the total cost of providing certain user fee services to customers.
- ❖ Identify the cost of each billed fee service for comparison to current prices.
- ❖ Provide recommendations on the appropriate cost recovery for the services studied.
- ❖ Compare current and recommended fees with similar Florida jurisdictions to obtain additional market research.

### B. KEY FINDINGS

#### I. COST OF SERVICE

MGT was requested to identify the total cost of service for specific user fees during the project, these services are listed out in Table 1 below. The Planning Commission is currently not recovering its costs associated with all the services included in this study.

**Table 1 – Total Cost of Service**

Service Name	Current Price	Cost of Service	Price minus Cost
Comp. Plan Amendments – Plant City & Tampa (500 acres or more)	\$3,000	\$7,965.34	(\$4,965.34)
Comp. Plan Amendments – Plant City & Tampa (less than 500 acres)	\$1,000	\$7,587.05	(\$6,587.05)
Comp. Plan Amendments – Temple Terrace (50 acres or more)	\$1,500	\$7,417.69	(\$5,917.69)
Comp. Plan Amendments – Temple Terrace (less than 50 acres)	\$750	\$7,054.98	(\$6,304.98)
Rezoning Fee – Plant City, Tampa, Temple Terrace	\$150	\$2,297.20	(\$2,147.20)
Port Permit Reviews – Tampa	\$200	\$1,236.76	(\$1,036.76)
Continuance of a Plan Amendment – Plant City, Tampa, Temple Terrace (new fee)	N/A – New fee	\$439.45	N/A – New fee

The table above represents the total cost of providing services to one customer. As an example, for the average comprehensive plan amendment for Temple Terrace that is less than 50 acres, the general fund is subsidizing the customer by approximately \$6,300.

While these subsidies are significant, this is not an uncommon finding for entities that have not performed a study such as this in recent years.

## 2. FEE SCHEDULE STRUCTURE – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

As part of the study MGT requested transaction data for fiscal year 2022. This data indicated that the Planning Commission did not have any large comprehensive plan amendments during that period. Large comprehensive plan amendments are for 500 acres or 50 acres or more for Plant City/Tampa or Temple Terrace, respectively. In discussions with Planning Commission management, these large-scale plan amendments are few and far between with most of these plan amendments coming in the form of smaller scale, less than 500 acres and less than 50 acres for Plant City/Tampa and Temple Terrace, respectively. Planning Commission management requested reviewing the potential of changing from two fees for each jurisdiction to just one fee to simplify its fee schedule.

Planning Commission management requested MGT to provide the cost of service as an average of the two larger scale and smaller scale fees. Table 2 below represents this analysis.

**Table 2 – Average Cost of Service**

Service Name	Average Cost of Service
Comp. Plan Amendment – Plant City and Tampa	\$7,776.20
Comp. Plan Amendment – Temple Terrace	\$7,236.33

The above average cost would consider both the large- and small-scale amendments happening equally throughout the year. As discussed above, that is not the case for the Planning Commission as there were no large-scale amendments in the prior year.

If the Planning Commission would like to simplify its fee schedule by removing the distinction between a large- and small-scale comprehensive plan amendment, then MGT would recommend the Planning Commission adopt the fee of \$7,500 for Plant City and Tampa and \$7,000 for Temple Terrace. This is due to the frequency of large-scale amendments expected in the future to be few and far between and adopting the average found in the table above would have the Planning Commission over charging for majority, if not all, the plan amendments it performs.

## 3. FEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning Commission has requested MGT to provide its recommendations for changes in the price of its services. As discussed in the first section of this report, the general fund is subsidizing most of the cost for services studied as the customers do not have to pay the full amount it costs the Planning Commission to provide the service. It would be MGT’s recommendation for the Planning Commission to adjust its fees to reflect 100% cost recovery for its services. Those price changes are shown in Table 3 below. As mentioned in the prior section, should the Planning Commission want to simplify its fee schedule and not distinguish between large and small scale studies, MGT would recommend the Planning Commission set its fee to \$7,500 for Plant City and Tampa and \$7,000 for Temple Terrace.

**Table 3 – Recommended Prices**

Service Name	Current Price	Cost of Service	Recommended Price
Comp. Plan Amendments – Plant City & Tampa (500 acres or more)	\$3,000	\$7,965.34	\$7,900
Comp. Plan Amendments – Plant City & Tampa (less than 500 acres)	\$1,000	\$7,587.05	\$7,500
Comp. Plan Amendments – Temple Terrace (50 acres or more)	\$1,500	\$7,417.69	\$7,400
Comp. Plan Amendments – Temple Terrace (less than 50 acres)	\$750	\$7,054.98	\$7,000
Rezoning Fee – Plant City, Tampa, Temple Terrace	\$150	\$2,297.20	\$2,200
Port Permit Reviews – Tampa	\$200	\$1,236.76	\$1,200
Continuance of a Plan Amendment – Plant City, Tampa, Temple Terrace (new fee)	N/A – New fee	\$439.45	\$400

An option the Planning Commission may explore is progressively increasing the fees year over year to not have the “sticker shock” of increasing its fees a significant amount at one time. This is a practice jurisdiction have used previously but is mostly seen in fees that would have a significant impact on individual citizens or price conscious consumers and not contractors or large businesses that would likely be associated with these services. However, should the Planning Commission elect to progressively increase fees, MGT would recommend increasing the fees either over a 2- or 3-year period in even increments, 50% and 33%, respectively, to the full cost recovery prices recommended in the table above.

MGT would not recommend the Planning Commission consider changing its fees to less than 100% cost recovery, such as 90% or 80%. Ultimately, you are wanting the customer to pay for the service they are requesting the Planning Commission to perform for them. Recovering less than 100% would ask the public to subsidize part of the service for the customer. While this may be a normal practice for certain areas in government, such as parks and recreation services, this is not a standard practice for development fees and services. Also, if there is concern about the 100% cost recovery amount potentially leading the Planning Commission to overcharge for its services overall, keep in mind that this study is based on averages. Actual employee effort will differ from the time estimates provided during the study, typically not by a material amount, but these differences will average out over time.

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Should the Planning Commission decide to remove the price distinction between large and small scale plans, MGT would recommend the Planning Commission also write into its policy that the Planning Commission reserves the right to charge more based on the scale and scope of the amendments. The policy should provide clear guidelines for this additional charge to ensure consistent implementation. This would allow the Planning Commission to charge for any excess time related to an abnormally large or complex amendment.

While MGT's recommendations are shown above, this change is ultimately a policy decision, and the Planning Commission must come to its own conclusion on what would be best for its stakeholders.

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## **SECTION 3**

### **STUDY PROCESS**

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#### **I. MODEL DESIGN PHASE**

Before MGT began constructing the user fee model, we coordinated with Planning Commission management to gain an understanding of the fees management wanted study, management's expectations for the project, and the relevant financial and activity data that would be made available for the project.

At this stage management indicated it wanted the fees associated with the following plans and studies reviewed:

- ❖ Comprehensive Plan Amendments – Plant City & Tampa – 500 acres or more
- ❖ Comprehensive Plan Amendments – Plant City & Tampa – Less than 500 acres
- ❖ Comprehensive Plan Amendments – Temple Terrace – 50 acres or more
- ❖ Comprehensive Plan Amendments – Temple Terrace – Less than 50 acres
- ❖ Rezoning Fee – Plant City, Tampa, & Temple Terrace
- ❖ Port Permit Reviews – Tampa
- ❖ Continuance of a Plan Amendment – Plant City, Tampa, & Temple Terrace

The last service in the listing above is a service the Planning Commission has provided to its citizens but has not been charging a fee to perform. Management has requested MGT to include this service in the study to calculate a reasonable fee to charge. The Planning Commission does have other services on its fee schedule; however, management has indicated the services listed above are the only fees they wish to include in the study.

Management's expectations for the projects were to gain an understanding of the true costs of the services listed above and to use this information to determine if an adjustment to the current fee charged would be necessary to recover the Planning Commission's costs. All fees included in the study are charged as fixed rate fees and the design of the model will continue this by providing management with a fixed cost of services based on financial and activity data provided.

The financial and activity data provided for the model is the fiscal year 2023 budgeted salaries and expenditures while the total volume, or number of customers, data would be based on the fiscal year 2022 activity data.

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## 2. CONSTRUCTING THE MODEL

**Financial and Activity Data** – MGT was provided with the fiscal year 2023 budgeted salaries and expenditures, fiscal year 2022 activity data, and fiscal year 2022 timesheets pulled from the Planning Commission’s Dovico software. The timesheet data was summarized and entered into the user fee model to be used as the initial effort estimates by staff for each fee.

**Interviews and Edits** - MGT spent substantial time discussing with management how much effort applies to each service in the study. That was followed by an interactive editing process to answer management’s questions and enable management to approve the numbers for use in the report.

**Reporting** – Once the numbers were settled, MGT provided management with this written report to aid in the policy making process. MGT staff have also made themselves available for in-person and virtual meetings to discuss the study’s findings.

**Managing of Model** – Planning Commission management has requested that it have a copy of the model and be trained to use it. This task has been completed, and the Planning Commission is able to make minor updates. Should the Planning Commission wish to undertake a more ambitious redesign of fee categories, it may need our firm’s technical support. That can be arranged, should the need arise.

## 3. OTHER TOPICS COVERED

### A. PLANT CITY, TEMPLE TERRACE, & TAMPA USER FEE MODELS

While most of the process in reviewing or processing comprehensive plan amendments is performed by the Planning Commission, it also recognizes that each local government also spends time and resources reviewing these amendments. This part of the study provides an analysis for the local governments’ costs associated with these plan amendments.

Like the process discussed above, MGT developed user fee models for a few fees for each of the three cities the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission works with. The fees reviewed in these models were as follows:

- ❖ Comprehensive Plan Amendments – Large Scale
- ❖ Comprehensive Plan Amendments – Small Scale
- ❖ Continuance of a Plan Amendment

MGT requested data from each of the three cities, including personnel data, fiscal year 2023 budgeted expenditures, time estimates for each fee, and any revenue generate for each fee. A summary of the models can be found in tables 4 through 6 below. MGT received information for Plant City’s and Temple Terrace’s planning department specifically, while Tampa provided information for the city, which included all employees that have a function during the comprehensive plan amendment process.

According to Plant City management, the Planning Commission will send a \$1,000 and \$500 check to the city based on the size of the comprehensive plan amendment. Temple Terrace collects \$1,000 and \$750 based on its fee schedule. However, Tampa management noted that the city does not receive any revenue from the Planning Commission related to the comprehensive plan amendments. Overall, the cost of



service for Plant City and Temple Terrace are comparable to the current prices. Both could justify increases in the amount of revenue needed to recover their costs associated with the smaller amendments and both could justify decreases for the large amendments. Due to Tampa’s model including all departments, the cost of service is significantly higher than the other two cities and this is reflected in the total effort which was obtained from Tampa management.

**Table 4 – Plant City Planning Cost of Service**

Service Name	Current Price	Cost of Service	Total Effort
Comp. Plan Amendments – Large Scale	\$1,000	\$885.31	13 hours
Comp. Plan Amendments – Small Scale	\$500	\$768.71	11 hours
Continuance of a Plan Amendment (new fee)	N/A – New fee	\$116.60	2 hours

**Table 5 – Temple Terrace Planning Cost of Service**

Service Name	Current Price	Cost of Service	Total Effort
Comp. Plan Amendments – Temple Terrace (50 acres or more)	\$1,000	\$701.95	10 hours
Comp. Plan Amendments – Temple Terrace (less than 50 acres)	\$750	\$701.95	10 hours
Continuance of a Plan Amendment (new fee)	N/A – New fee	\$70.19	1 hour

**Table 6 – Tampa City Wide Cost of Service**

Service Name	Current Price	Cost of Service	Total Effort
Comp. Plan Amendments –Tampa (500 acres or more)	\$0	\$6,911.41	64 hours
Comp. Plan Amendments –Tampa (less than 500 acres)	\$0	\$4,292.27	41 hours
Continuance of a Plan Amendment (new fee)	N/A – New fee	\$978.14	9 hours

Planning Commission management has been provided with copies of the user fee models which support

the cost-of-service data listed in the tables above.

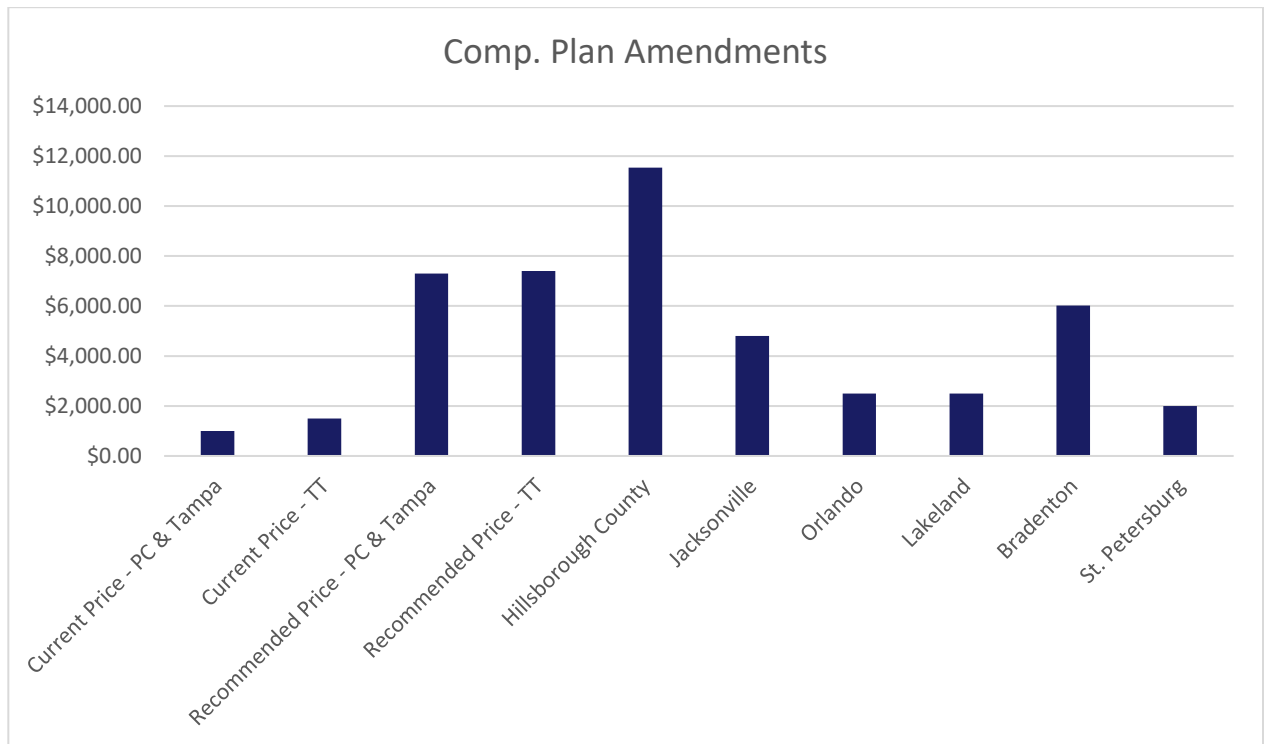
## B. PEER COMPARISON STUDY

The Planning Commission requested MGT perform a comparison study for the smaller comprehensive plan amendments and rezoning fees which were studied during user fee section of this project. The fees were agreed to by Planning Commission management and are compared to peer jurisdictions in the region as selected by Planning Commission management. The peers selected for comparison were:

- ❖ Hillsborough County
- ❖ City of Jacksonville
- ❖ City of Orlando
- ❖ City of Lakeland
- ❖ City of Bradenton
- ❖ City of St. Petersburg

Below is Chart 1 that displays the comparative data for small scale comprehensive plan amendments.

**Chart 1 – Comprehensive Plan Amendments – Small Scale**



When comparing the selected peers with the Planning Commission’s current fees, the Planning Commission is significantly less than its peers for comprehensive plan amendments, approximately \$4,000 less than its peers on average. When comparing the peer group to MGT’s recommended fees, the Planning Commission’s fees would be approximately \$2,500 higher than its peers for comprehensive plan

amendments. Bear in mind that many jurisdictions across the country have not performed a study such as this one in many years and their current fees may not reflect their true cost of service.

The rezoning comparative data is more complex and does not fit the chart format well. Also, it must be noted that the fee that the Planning Commission is charging is on top of the different jurisdictions' (Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City) fees. Below are two tables, Table 7 displays the different rezoning fees Tampa, Temple Terrace and Plant City have, and Table 8 displays the different rezoning fees the peer jurisdictions have.

**Table 7 – Planning Commission’s Rezoning Fees**

<b>Hillsborough Planning Commission</b>		
Current Fee	\$	150.00
Recommended Fee	\$	2,200.00
<b>Tampa</b>		
Application-Zoning		
Site Plan District	\$	2,642.00
Site Plan District Additional Acre Fee	\$	111.00
Euclidean District	\$	1,073.00
Euclidean District Additional Acre Fe	\$	111.00
Substantial Change Review (Admin)	\$	555.50
PD-A Incremental Plan Review	\$	1,669.00
PD-A Incremental Plan Review Additional Acre Fee	\$	83.00
Re-Submittal (all phases after 2 <sup>nd</sup> submittal)		25% of original fee
<b>Plant City</b>		
Rezoning *Includes adv fee and up to 100 mailings		
Non-PD less than or equal to 2 acres	\$	1,410.00
PD less than or equal to 2 acres	\$	1,720.00
Non-PD 20.1-10 acres	\$	1,720.00
PD 2.01 – 10 acres	\$	2,005.00
All 10.01 – 100 acres	\$	2,290.00
All 100.01 – 500 acres	\$	2,850.00
All greater than 500 acres	\$	3,960.00
PD minor modification (Admin review)	\$	275.00
<b>Temple Terrace</b>		
Rezoning Reclassification		
Rezone SF Residential to SF Residential	\$	500.00
Rezone Reclassification (Text and Map Amendments)	\$	1,200.00
PD Rezone/Modification of less than 5 acres	\$	2,200.00
PD Rezone/Modification of 5 to 10 acres	\$	3,000.00
PD Rezone/Modification of 10 acres or greater	\$	4,200.00
Petition for Reconsideration	\$	350.00

**Table 8 – Peer Jurisdictions’ Rezoning Fees**

<b>Hillsborough County</b>		
	Planned Development	\$ 9,643.80
	Revised Resubmittal	\$ 1,876.30
	Standard District	\$ 5,333.98
	Revised Resubmittal	\$ 275.00
<b>City of Jacksonville</b>		
Conventional Rezoning:	Per acre charge	\$ 10.00
	Flat fee	\$ 2,000.00
Planned Unit Development:	Per acre charge	\$ 10.00
	Flat fee	\$ 2,269.00
	Minor Modification	\$ 1,338.00
<b>City of Orlando</b>		
	Less than 1 acre	\$ 1,500.00
	1 acre or more	\$ 3,000.00
<b>City of Lakeland</b>		
Zoning Change:	0 to .99 acres	\$ 1,200.00
	1 - 9.99 acres	\$ 1,700.00
	10 - 199.99 acres	\$ 2,900.00
	200+ acres	\$ 5,800.00
Planned Unit Development:	0 to .99 acres	\$ 1,780.00
	1 - 9.99 acres	\$ 2,280.00
	10 - 199.9 acres	\$ 3,480.00
	200+ acres	\$ 6,380.00
<b>City of Bradenton</b>		
	Text Amendment (Rezoning)	\$ 3,520.00
	Map Amendment (Rezoning)	\$ 5,520.00
<b>City of St. Petersburg</b>		
	Future Land Use (Countywide FLUM) & Rezoning	\$ 2,400.00
	Future Land Use (City FLUM) & Rezoning	\$ 2,000.00
	Rezoning Only	\$ 2,000.00
	Mod. Or Removal of condition related to an ord. of rezoning	\$ 2,000.00

Given the information provided above, it is difficult to draw a conclusion as each jurisdiction, even between Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City, has different types of rezoning fees and categories for charging them. The data collected has been provided to Planning Commission management for its review.