



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: November 13, 2025
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Meeting Date: December 9, 2025
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TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: City Clerk
SUBJECT: Amendments to *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* Bylaw No. 11451

Recommendations

THAT Council approve, in principle, a new application fee for non-personal information requests made under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* By-law No. 11451, generally as outlined in this report and in Appendix A;

FURTHER THAT Council instruct the Director of Legal Services to bring forward for enactment the necessary amendments to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* By-law, generally as set out in Appendix A.

Purpose and Executive Summary

This report proposes a new non-refundable application fee be added to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* By-law for non-personal information requests.

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

British Columbia's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)* grants individuals the right to access records held by public bodies.

The last update to *FIPPA* occurred in 2021 under Bill 22, introducing section 75(1)(a). This section enables public bodies to charge a non-refundable application fee for requests related to general (non-personal) information. Per section 13(2) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation* this fee is set at \$10. At that time, a fee was not implemented due to the administrative burden associated with managing the fee and the potential impact on equitable access.

However, in the current state, there is concern that the Freedom of Information (FOI) process is being misused in some cases, which has led to increased workload, resource strain and elevated risk for the city, such as not being able to meet legislative deadlines. An application fee is intended to cover some administrative costs and discourage excessive, repetitive, piecemeal, and/or overly broad requests. This fee is not intended to block access but to balance transparency with the resources required to process requests.

As of September 2025, applicants can now make FOI requests on ServiceNow, a centralized cloud-based application. This system also provides the ability to efficiently administer and manage fees.

Discussion

In recent months, the FOI Office has experienced a significant increase in access requests for general (non-personal) information (see table below). While citizens have a right to access information through the FOI process, substantive information is already made routinely available through other channels, such as proactive disclosures that are published monthly, quarterly, or annually, or through fee-for-service programs.

The table below summarizes the annual number of FOI requests received and processed by the City's FOI Office:

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of FOI requests processed	676	646	662	807	756	Predicting ~1000
% increase from previous year	-9%	-5%	3%	20%	-7%	32%

The significant surge in FOI requests may be partially attributed to the City's status as a public body that does not currently charge an administrative fee for general (non-personal) information requests.

Other public bodies that charge administrative fees include (but not limited to) the Province of BC, City of Burnaby, City of White Rock, Resort Municipality of Whistler, City of Chilliwack, District of Hope, City of Delta, and the Vancouver School Board.

Financial Implications

The rising volume of FOI requests has resulted in a significant increase in workload across the organization. Provincial data (2021) indicates that the average cost to government for processing a single FOI request is approximately \$3,000, with particularly large or complex requests often exceeding this amount.¹

¹ <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021CITZ0048-001990>

The \$10 application fee for FOI requests related to general (non-personal) information will assist with recovering some costs and potentially have an impact on overall organizational workload.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report's recommendations.

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APPENDIX A**DRAFT By-law to amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy By-law No. 11451 regarding the addition of an application fee**

Note: An amending by-law will be prepared generally in accordance with the provisions listed below, subject to change and refinement prior to posting.

1. This by-law amends the indicated provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy By-law No. 11451.
2. Council strikes out Schedule 1 and substitutes the following new Schedule 1:

“Schedule 1**Schedule of Fees**

Item	Description of Services	Management Fees
1	For applicants other than commercial applicants:	
	(a) for locating and retrieving a record	\$7.50 per 1/4 hour after the first 3 hours
	(b) for producing a record manually	\$7.50 per 1/4 hour
	(c) for producing a record from a machine readable record from a server or computer	\$7.50 per 1/4 hour for developing a computer program to produce the record
	(d) for preparing a record for disclosure and handling a record	\$7.50 per 1/4 hour
	(e) for shipping copies	actual costs of shipping method chosen by applicant
	(f) for copying records	
	(i) CDs and DVDs, recordable or rewritable	\$4 per disk
	(ii) microfiche or microfilm to paper duplication	\$0.50 per page (8.5" x 11")

		(iii) photographs	Digital file - \$17 per image
		(iv) ink jet, laser print or photocopy, black and white	\$0.25 per page (8.5" x 11", 8.5" x 14" or 11" x 17")
		(v) ink jet, laser print or photocopy, colour	\$1.65 per page (8.5" x 11", 8.5" x 14" or 11" x 17")
		(vi) scanned electronic copy of a paper record	\$0.10 per page
		(vii) slide duplication	Digital file - \$17 per image
2	For commercial applicants for each service listed in Item 1		the actual cost to the public body of providing that service
3	For all applicants, including commercial applicants, a non-refundable application fee		\$10

Note: In keeping with the City of Vancouver's Greenest City goals, the FOI office does not provide hard copies of responsive records unless there are exceptional circumstances. All responsive records are provided in electronic formats."

3. This by-law is to come into force and take effect upon enactment.

ENACTED by Council this _____ day of _____, 2025

Mayor

City Clerk