
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

GOVERNMENTAL CENTER



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95060
(408) 454-2580 FAX (408) 454-2131 TDD (408) 454.2123

June 2, 1998

AGENDA DATE: June 16, 1998

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**RE: AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS IN PAYMENT FOR
CERTAIN PERMIT FEES**

Members of the Board:

The Planning Department proposes to allow applicants to fax or phone in over-the-counter building permits for which a face to face meeting is not required. This would be expanded to include taking applications over the Internet when that capability is in place. The applicant would pay by credit card and have the permit mailed or sent to them via Federal Express.

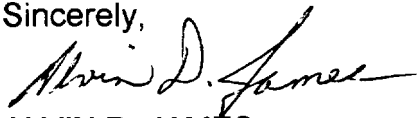
The Department views this as an important customer service issue; staff are often asked why we do not accept credit cards. In addition, it is expected that the fax, phone and Internet options will reduce the number of trips to both the Government Center and the Felton Permit Center. This will compliment the County's Trip Reduction Ordinance (TRO) program objectives, help alleviate the parking problem at the Government Center and forms part of the basis of a grant the Department received from the Monterey Bay Air Pollution Control District.

The Department proposes to contract for credit card services with NOVA Information Services through Bank of the West as representative for VISA and Mastercard. These credit card companies will not allow a merchant to pass on the merchant discount fee, but will permit the imposition of a convenience fee if the service being provided is sufficiently different from other types of purchases to qualify. In the Department's case, a convenience fee could be levied because 1.) the applicant would not have to appear in person to apply for the permit, and 2.) the applicant would be unable to pay for the permit by other means if the application is faxed, phoned in or submitted over the Internet. The Department proposes to add a convenience fee of \$5.00 to each permit to cover postage and handling. If the applicant wanted Federal Express overnight delivery then an additional premium convenience fee of \$10.00 would apply.

In order to put this program in place your Board needs to authorize the Department to accept credit cards in payment for certain services. The Auditor-Controller has agreed to open an account with Bank of the West to handle the credit card transactions using NOVA Information Services, Inc. as the intermediary with the credit card companies. NOVA Information Services, Inc. is the company that handles the credit card transactions for POSCS. Planning would be added as an additional account. Attached for your information is the fee schedule proposed for Planning.

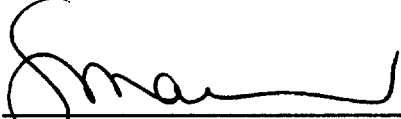
It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board approve the acceptance of credit cards for building permit applications submitted by FAX, over the phone or via the Internet.

Sincerely,



ALVIN D. JAMES
Planning Director

RECOMMENDED:



SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

Attachments: 1.) Rate schedule from NOVA Information Services, Inc.

cc: Auditor-Controller

crcard .wpd



NOVA Information Systems 305
 c/o Bank of the West
 2287 Second Street
 Livermore, California 94550

Merchant Services Proposal: Santa Cruz Planning Department

DISCOUNT RATE PROPOSAL:

Based on the credit card activity information provided the proposed discount rate for Santa Cruz Planning Department is **2.17% and .20 cent per item ***. This rate is subject to change based on any changes to account activity (i.e. average ticket, annual volume, method of processing, etc.) and any changes in processing costs implemented by VISA and Mastercard.

*Qualified Mail/Phone Transaction Rate:

- One electronic authorization request per transaction
- Authorization request message must include Address Verification (AVS)
- Final transaction amount matches authorization amount
- Purchase date matches **shipping** date and is within 7 days of authorization date
- Deposit data includes customer service telephone number and order number
- Transaction electronically deposited within 1 day after purchase/shipping date

Transactions that do not **qualify** under the above-referenced conditions will incur a surcharge as applicable in addition to the discount rate. The surcharges are as follows:

Partially-Qualified Mail/Phone Transaction Surcharge: **.50% + \$.10** per item

- One or more of the Qualified conditions are not met **OR**
- Transaction is electronically deposited greater than 1 day, but less than 3 days from purchase / shipping date.

Non-Qualified Transaction Surcharge: **.1.20% + \$.10**

- Transaction electronically deposited 3 or more days **from** purchase/shipping date **OR**
- Transaction deposited via paper **draft OR**
- Transaction was forced **without** an authorization

ADDITIONAL CHARGES:

Application Fee	\$95.00
Min. Mo. Discount Fee	\$30.00
Terminal Rental Fee	\$30.00
Statement Fee	\$5.00