



Office of the
Saskatchewan Information
and Privacy Commissioner

REVIEW REPORT 058-2026

City of Saskatoon

October 13, 2026

Summary: The City of Saskatoon (City) provided the Applicant with a fee estimate in relation to their access to information request. The Applicant asked the Office of the Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the fee estimate.

The Commissioner found that the City's fee estimate was reasonable and recommended no further revision on the part of the City. If the Applicant pays the deposit, then the City is required to continue processing the Applicant's request.

I BACKGROUND

[1] On October 29, 2025, the Applicant submitted the following access to information request to the City of Saskatoon (City) for the date range "July 1, 2023 to present":¹

A copy of all records as that term is defined in the LAFOIP

...
as such record(s) may pertain to the Applicant, [their] home municipality as located above and or references [their] place of employment being a contractor with the reality company municipal referred to as [name of business]

and circulated, (distributed, spread, issued, disseminated, passed around or handed out, given out, sent out, made known or communicated to) member or members of the City Council, City Clerk, administration, management and or employees, and without limiting any of the foregoing any commissioner, consultant, delegate or advisor, **which references directly or indirectly, by**

¹ The use of square brackets in this Report are intended to preserve the identity of the Applicant.

name or inference the Applicant and more specifically, **any such record that speaks to the restriction, qualification and methodology to be considered, applied or implemented with any and all requests, verbal, in writing or by phone, wherein the Applicant is or has been seeking access to municipal records**, along with policy, directive, internal memo or record, formal or informal, written or verbal and noted, that would impinge (*impose, intrude interrupt invade, impact or effect*) the Applicant's "**Right to Know**" as that right is outline and defined by the **Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner [IOPC]**, and without limiting the foregoing the following...

[Emphasis in original]

- [2] On October 31, 2025, the City emailed the Applicant to ask if the following search parameters would clarify their request:

Part 1: Any records relating to you

Part 2: Any records that reference [name of business] that also relate to you

Part 3: Any records relating to [Applicant's home address]

- [3] The Applicant provided the City with a cheque for \$20 dated October 27, 2025. In the October 31, 2025 email, the City advised the Applicant that Parts 1 and 2 were requests for personal information, to which no application fee applies. Since Part 3 was a request for general information, the \$20.00 application fee was required. The City asked the Applicant to confirm the scope for it to proceed.

- [4] On November 2, 2025, the Applicant changed Part 3 to be "*Any records relating to my personal and family residence at [Applicant's address].*" The Applicant believed that this changed the request to be for personal information to eliminate the \$20.00 application fee.

- [5] On November 7, 2025, there were several communications between the Applicant and the City wherein the City established that it now considered the Applicant's request to be for "personal information" based on the Applicant's preferred wording. The City returned the \$20.00 cheque to the Applicant. The City also asked the Applicant to clarify if "emails sent/received by your email address" were required for the search. The City wished to confirm that the scope was to be as follows:

Part 1: Any records relating to [full name of Applicant]

Part 2: Any records that reference [name of business] that also relate to [full name of Applicant].

Part 3: Any records relating to [Applicant's address] that might identify [name of Applicant].

[6] The Applicant confirmed on November 8, 2025 that all emails sent or received and/or that included their email address should be included in the search for responsive records.

[7] On November 14, 2025, the City advised the Applicant that it had completed two cursory searches based on the agreed upon scope of the search:

First search items:

All City of Saskatoon **Outlook** accounts using the following keywords:

- “[full name of Applicant]”
- “[Applicant surname]” and “[name of business]”; or
- “[Applicant surname]” and [Applicant address]”
- “[Applicant first name]” AND “[Applicant address]”

Second search items:

All emails that were sent/received at the City of Saskatoon by [Applicant email address #1] and [Applicant email address #2]

[8] The City did not include the ***second search items*** in the fee estimate because it yielded 1,208 items that were likely duplicates or non-responsive records. The ***first search items*** consisted of email records from Outlook accounts, which yielded 5,442 potentially responsive items in its fee estimate.

[9] In calculating its fee, the City reduced the number of items from 5,442 pages to 2,271 pages. This resulted in a fee estimate of \$2,730 and a required deposit of \$1,365.00. The City offered to work with the Applicant to further “narrow or redefine” the request by perhaps narrowing the search date range. The City confirmed that if the final fee was less than the estimate, the Applicant would be charged the lesser amount.

[10] Later that day, the Applicant rejected the City’s fee estimate. The Applicant believed the City had incorrectly interpreted “all records” to be “emails only”. The Applicant questioned why the City characterized the scope of their request as “broad” and questioned what the City meant by narrowing the request by date range. The Applicant also added two *new* search terms to the four already outlined by the City on November 14, 2025:

- “[Applicant’s first name only]”
- “[Applicant’s address only]”

[11] On November 17, 2025, the City explained that “reducing the broad scope” of the Applicant’s request referred to the fact that the Applicant now sought “all types of records, from all City divisions and departments, and from all years”. The City asked the Applicant to confirm that they would like to add the two new search terms, explaining that doing so would likely increase the fee estimate.

[12] On November 19, 2025, the Applicant instructed the City to include the two added terms because to do otherwise may not produce all the documents requested. The Applicant also confirmed that the initial access request date range of “July 1, 2023 to the present” was still in play. The Applicant requested that the City provide a “corrected proposed figure”. The Applicant was convinced that the City’s fee estimate of \$2,730.00 fee was “misstated and ballooned by [the City’s] error” in using an incorrect date range.

[13] On November 21, 2025, the City presented the Applicant with a revised estimate based on the two new additional terms and the corrected date range. The City cautioned that despite revising the date range, the addition of the two search terms still increased the number of potentially responsive pages.² Again, the City did not include the *second search items*, leaving only the *first search items* consisting of Outlook email records in its fee estimate. The revised estimate was then based on 9, 952 potential pages, which the City again cut in half to 4,980 potentially responsive pages. This resulted in a revised estimate of \$5,010.00 with a 50% deposit of \$2,505.00. The City directed the Applicant to the Office of the

² The City explained that searching for a standalone civic address could pull in records that are potentially not related to the Applicant but about the property itself.

Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) if there was dissatisfaction with the fee estimate.

[14] On November 25, 2025, the Applicant asked the City to again revise its estimate. The Applicant was convinced that the City's fee estimate did not comply with the requested date range. The Applicant also expressed concern that the City was apparently only defining records to include "Outlook email search results only", adding that the search was to capture records that would include, "management files/folders/diaries, inter-office/department communication, directives, letters, memos, recordings, 'marching orders', Et al...".

[15] In response on November 26, 2025, the City maintained that despite initially missing the Applicant's stated date range, the two added search terms nonetheless increased the fee estimate:

The City will not be preparing an adjusted calculation of fees to also include non-email records. Of note, doing so would only increase your fee estimate. The City believes that our fee estimate is reasonable and fair based on what you are seeking in your request.

As explained, the City has developed our fee estimate based off a search strategy that only includes estimating email records, not all records sought. Fee estimates are done before the full search and review of records is completed. It is a preliminary step towards completing the actual search.

If you pay the fee estimate deposit, our office will perform a full search for all types of records requested in your Access to Information request.

In the event the actual fees are less than the estimate, you will be charged the lesser amount. If the second half of the associated fees is required, a notice will be sent to you before the records can be released. You will never be charged more than the estimated fees.

The City's second fee estimate remains valid.

[Emphasis added]

[16] On December 22, 2025, the Applicant again asked the City to reconsider its fee estimate as they believed the fee estimate was miscalculated due to the City not using the requested

date range. The Applicant now asked the City *to not* include any emails they sent to or received from the City. Once again the Applicant listed the types of records to include in the search.

[17] On December 29, 2025, the City responded that its fee estimate of November 21, 2025, stood and that if the Applicant wished, they could request a review from OIPC, which the Applicant did on February 22, 2026.

[18] OIPC tried unsuccessfully over several months to mediate a resolution between the Applicant and the City. Finally, on June 23, 2026 a notice of review was served on both parties and both were asked to provide a submission.

[19] On July 6, 2026, the City provided its submission with supporting documentation to OIPC. The City agreed the submission could be shared with the Applicant. OIPC did so on the same date, and the Applicant responded that the City had “ignored a couple things”. The Applicant was asked to provide a written response, which was submitted on August 4, 2026. This was in addition to other information the Applicant provided to OIPC throughout the review.

II RECORDS AT ISSUE

[20] As this is a review of a fee estimate, there is no record at issue.

III DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUES

1. Jurisdiction

[21] The City is a “local authority” under section 2(1)(f)(i) of *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (LA FOIP)*.³ As there are reviewable grounds, OIPC has jurisdiction to undertake this review under PART VI of *LA FOIP*.

³ [*The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*](#), SS 1990-91, c L-27.1, as amended.

2. The Applicant's Concerns Regarding the City's Search Strategy and Fee Estimate

[22] Prior to reviewing if the City's fee estimate was reasonable, it is necessary for us to address several issues raised by the Applicant to determine what bearing, if any, they have on the City's search strategy and resulting fee estimate. The Applicant outlined these concerns in communication with our office on June 22, 2026, as follows:

Please ensure the review gives due consideration to context and the factual underpinnings of my ATI request for records and documents as finalized To refresh your memory, from the material I submitted you will have the following facts:

- 1 The original ATI request went in with a specified search period stipulated and limited to the period dd/mm/yyyy pped and dd/mm/yyy pped.
- 2 The City came top back with a fee of \$5kkkk based on a fundamental error. The search period proposed/used, incorrectly, was open and unqualified as to time parameters stipulated for in the original request
- 3 The City stated having made that erroe went on to suggest that if I wanted to reduce the \$5kkkk cost one could reduce the reach (time) and breath of the request. One suggestion was to omit emails
- 4 I resubmitted the request which: a) pointed out their error as to reach in terms of time in the first instance , and b) limiting the scope to omit all the emails exchanges (as I had those)
- 5 The City came back with the same fee of \$5kkkkkm!!!! being the original fee imposed with respect to my original request which had been misconstrued as to time parameters.
- 6 At this point the time and scope parameters are very limited.
- 7 However, the fee of \$5xxx is unchanged. The original fee being imposed is unreasonable because it not applicable to the search requested.

The fee targets an imaginary or misconstrued request, not my restated request. Therefore to any right minded persons familiar with the English language the fee is blatantly unreasonable because it is blatantly inappropriate and therefore wrong when applied to the revised request with its limited reach and scope. It may be reasonable for a time unrestricted, unqualified document /record request- which my request clearly is not.

...

Also note that many if not all of the documented requests are s 91 municipal documents. I am prepared to attend City hall to inspect the documents that are s 91 documents and for which there is no fee. I note that in coming to the fee of \$5kkkk the City does not factor in s 91 as they were asked to do.

[Emphasis added]

[23] On August 4, 2026, the Applicant also raised the applicability of section 43 of *LA FOIP* as a remedy in further communication with this office.

[24] OIPC has limited the scope of this review to the following:

- (a) Did the City improperly limit the *scope* of records to emails only;
- (b) Did the City ignore direction as given by the Applicant in the calculation of the fee estimate;
- (c) Did the City limit the scope of the search to the Applicant's requested date range - "July 1, 2023 to present";
- (d) Is *The Cities Act*⁴ applicable to this review of the City's fee estimate⁵; and
- (e) Is section 43 of *LA FOIP* a remedy to search?

(a) Did the City improperly limit the scope of records to emails only?

[25] The City stated that it based its search strategy on Outlook email records as a logical first step "attempt at reducing or controlling the costs so as to provide a reasonable fee estimate" and not to "limit the scope of the request to email records only". The City acknowledged that the search was broad and would return both "email and non-email records", which is what drove its decision to include Outlook email records only in its estimate. As the City explained to the Applicant in its November 26, 2025, correspondence, limiting the search in this manner was simply a "preliminary step towards completing the actual search".

[26] Emails are one class of records identified by the Applicant. OIPC noted that the Applicant also identified "management files/folder/diaries, inter office/department communication, directives, memos, recordings whether recorded/taped on paper, electronically, in cursive or print" as possible files. It may be an understatement to categorize the scope of the search as requested by the Applicant as "mammoth".

⁴ [*The Cities Act*](#), SS 2002, c C-11.1, as amended.

⁵ This issue was raised by the Applicant in a June 22, 2026 email to OIPC.

[27] Based on what was submitted by the City, it is apparent that the City prepared its estimate based on Outlook email records *only* as a good faith measure to reduce costs for the Applicant. We understand that this in no way meant the City did not intend to search for all other classes of records once the required deposit fee is paid.

[28] Without a doubt, the final fee estimate, based on all the records as requested by the Applicant, will undoubtedly involve a much higher cost. OIPC is satisfied that it is the City's intent to search for all the types of records as stipulated by the Applicant, but the payment of the initial deposit fee is the main concern at this stage of the process.

(b) Did the City ignore direction as given by the Applicant in the calculation of the fee estimate?

[29] As noted above in paragraph [16], the Applicant suggested that the search could be circumscribed further:

A DO NOT INCLUDE

Do not search or review or include any email records either sent or received by me from or to the city and or its departments, personnel, mayor or councillor(s) et al

[30] Also noted above in paragraph [8], the City clearly stated on November 14, 2025 that it *did not include* the ***second search items*** in its fee estimate, owing to likely duplication and non-responsivity. The City confirmed this again on November 21, 2025 when it presented the revised fee estimate to the Applicant, see paragraph [13].

[31] The City has followed the Applicant's instructions with respect to this aspect of the fee estimate calculations.

(c) Did the City limit the scope of the search to the Applicant's requested date range - "July 1, 2023 to present"?

[32] The Applicant specified the date range for search to be "July 1, 2023 to present" in its initial access request of October 29, 2025. The City acknowledged that it erred on the date range

when presenting its initial fee estimate on November 14, 2025. Prior to revising its estimate, however, the Applicant added two search terms to the four already identified by the City. The City explained that even if it revised its search strategy based on the corrected date range, the additional terms would add to the cost estimate. The City explained that this was because a search of the Applicant's address on its own would potentially return records that pertained to the property in general, rather than to the Applicant. The City explained to OIPC:

As explained to the applicant in the November 21, 2025, correspondence, the City was particularly concerned that searching for a standalone civic address such as "[Applicant address]" could retrieve a significant number of records relating to the property generally, some of which may ultimately be determined not to be responsive to the applicant's request. However, those records would still require individual review to determine responsiveness and whether they contained personal information relating to the applicant.

[Emphasis added]

- [33] On November 2, 2025, the Applicant clearly signaled to the City that the access request should pertain only to their "personal and family residence". Since this constitutes "personal information" the Applicant requested a return of the \$20.00 application fee. The Applicant instructed that the access to information request:

...should now comply as a personal information request. Should you disagree, the payment can be receipted, processed and proceeded with as tweaked but the payment is made under protest and the Applicant reserves the right to seek out a Request for Review from the OIPC.

[Emphasis added]

- [34] The City agreed to follow the Applicant's instructions and to qualify the request as being for "personal information" alone. The City returned the Applicant's \$20.00 application fee as a sign of further good faith in accepting the Applicant's instructions.

- [35] A search based on a standalone civic address would undoubtedly produce a larger volume of non-responsive records that would need to be eliminated upon review. Many of these documents would not contain the Applicant's "personal information". This would mean

additional records to search and review for responsiveness. Regardless, the Applicant insisted on adding the standalone address as a search term.

[36] We further note that in adding the Applicant's first name as a stand alone search term likely also produced many duplicate records. This is because the City had already included the Applicant's first and last name in its combined search terms under the *first search items*.

[37] The City warned the Applicant that adding the two search terms would increase the fee estimate. The City also advised the Applicant on two occasions that the revised fee estimate *was* based on the requested date range. Based on the foregoing, this office is satisfied that it was the two added search terms that increased the cost estimate and that the City used the date range specified by the Applicant for the fee estimate under review.

(d) Is The Cities Act applicable to the review of the City's fee estimate?

[38] The Applicant was adamant that section 91 of *The Cities Act* was applicable to the access request:

The law presently provides that a document or record is available for inspection without charge if it is a municipal record under section 117 [of *The Municipalities Act*] or section 91. The record is to be produced upon presentation of the request to inspect at the municipal office. There is no search fee for municipal records. In a hypothetical situation if any one – they do not appear to have to be a ratepayer, taxpayer or resident, can present to the municipal office and request a section 117 or section 91 record there is no search fee. There is no requirement to give prior notice of the request. It is courteous and respectful of everyone's time to provide the request in a timely fashion such as two or three business days ahead of attending at the municipal office to inspect the requested records. This would allow anyone to attend with their portable scanner to inspect the records requested and make their own digital copies. This would be without charge.

[Emphasis in original]

[39] Section 91 of *The Cities Act* allows for the inspection of city documents. Section 91(1) of *The Cities Act* describes the types of documents that qualify as "municipal documents":

Inspection of municipal documents

91(1) Any person is entitled at any time during regular business hours to inspect and obtain copies of:

- (a) any contract approved by the council, any bylaw or resolution and any account paid by the council relating to the city;
- (a.1) the official oaths or affirmations taken by members of council pursuant to section 68;
- (b) the statements maintained by the clerk in accordance with section 116⁶ and the securities register;
- (b.1) the city's financial statements and auditor's report prepared in accordance with section 155⁷;
- (b.2) the financial statements of any controlled corporation prepared in accordance with section 158⁸ and an auditor's report prepared in accordance with subsection 160(1)⁹;
- (c) any report of any consultant engaged by or of any employee of the city, or of any committee or other body established by a council, after the report has been submitted to the council, except any opinion or report of a lawyer;
- (d) the minutes of the council after they have been approved by the council;
- (e) any other reports and records authorized to be inspected by the council; and
- (f) any other prescribed report or document.

[40] The types of documents available for inspection pursuant to section 91 of *The Cities Act* do not include the personal information of any resident of a community.¹⁰ The Applicant requested that the City narrow the access request to “personal information” only and not to

⁶ Public disclosure documents of elected council members.

⁷ City's annual financial statements, which are to be publicized.

⁸ Financial information in relation to a corporation of a City.

⁹ Auditor's report of a City's financial statements.

¹⁰ [Publicly Available Records | City of Saskatoon](#)

the types of documents enumerated at section 91 of *The Cities Act*. Section 91(1) of *The Cities Act* has no applicability to the review of the City's fee estimate.

(e) Is section 43 of LA FOIP a remedy to search and the City's fee estimate?

[41] On August 4, 2026, the Applicant stated that:

The OIPC does have some bite/flail, but seems hesitant to exercise the same. In the *LA FOIP* there is provision that failing a proper response OIPC can access the records physically to search out and fulfill the requested for documents: Section 43.

A search under section 43 on the OIPC website indicates that there has been no consideration of section 43. In other words the OIPC has not done or made any move to exercise its prerogative under section 43: *enter and inspect any premises occupied by a local authority* and do the records search. I suspect most municipalities would be perhaps more responsive to OIPC if they knew that the OIPC would in the future, unhesitatingly, would exercise its prerogative under s 43 in advancing the case for the TAR Principles¹¹?

[Emphasis in original]

[42] Section 43 of *LA FOIP* provides powers that mirror somewhat search and seizure powers in the *Criminal Code*¹²:

Powers of commissioner

43(1) Notwithstanding any other Act or any privilege available at law, the commissioner may, in a review:

(a) require to be produced and examine any record that is in the possession or under the control of a local authority; and

(b) enter and inspect any premises occupied by a local authority.

(2) For the purposes of conducting a review, the commissioner may summon and enforce the appearance of persons before the commissioner and compel them:

¹¹ What the Applicant refers to as "Supporters of transparency, accountability and recourse...".

¹² See section 487 of the [Criminal Code](#), RSC 1985, c. C-46, as amended. And even with the powers pursuant to this statute, the party applying for the search warrant must first convince a Justice that there are "reasonable grounds" for a peace officer to enter and search.

(a) to give oral or written evidence on oath or affirmation; and

(b) to produce any documents or things;

that the commissioner considers necessary for a full review, in the same manner and to the same extent as the court.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (2), the commissioner may administer an oath or affirmation.

[43] The facts as relayed in the background section of this Report reveals that there was considerable communication between the City and the Applicant in an effort to narrow and clarify the scope of the access request. The Applicant's dissatisfaction resulted in this review of the City's fee estimate. OIPC has provided notice to each party and we are now at the stage in the process where the parties have submitted all the relevant documentation required for a thorough analysis of the fee estimate.

[44] Entering and searching a local authority's premises on a procedural review of a fee estimate is intensely invasive and perhaps constitutionally problematic. This power is reserved for reviews where a local authority is resoundingly uncooperative with OIPC. The local authority in this matter has been co-operative from the beginning. There is no cause at this point to engage such a drastic measure.

[45] An Applicant should refrain from dictating the course of a review or an investigation. This applies to the powers outlined in section 43 of *LA FOIP* or any other provision of the legislation.

3. The Reasonableness of the City's Fee Estimate

[46] Finally, we come to the focal point of this Report. Sections 9(1) and (2) of *LA FOIP* imbue a local authority with the ability to issue a fee estimate as follows:

Fee

9(1) An applicant who is given notice pursuant to clause 7(2)(a) is entitled to obtain access to the record on payment of the prescribed fee.

(2) Where the amount of fees to be paid by an applicant for access to records is greater than a prescribed amount, the head shall give the applicant a reasonable estimate of the amount, and the applicant shall not be required to pay an amount greater than the estimated amount.

[47] When read together, section 9(2) of *LA FOIP* and section 6(1) of *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulations (LA FOIP Regulations)*¹³, require a local authority to provide a fee estimate if the cost for providing access will exceed \$100.00. Fees should not present an unreasonable barrier to access for applicants in Saskatchewan. Fees should be reasonable, fair, and at a level that does not discourage a resident from exercising access rights.

[48] A reasonable fee estimate is one that is proportionate to the work required by the local authority and that allows the local authority to respond effectively and efficiently. A fee estimate is equitable when it is fair and even-handed and supports the principle that applicants should bear a reasonable portion of the costs to produce the sought-after records. Applicants should not bear costs arising from administrative inefficiencies or poor records management.¹⁴ The fee regime should also promote and encourage applicants to be reasonable and to cooperate with local authorities in defining and streamlining their access requests.¹⁵

[49] Since we have concluded that none of the Applicant's questions or issues have any bearing on the City's search strategy and associated fee estimate, we turn to assessing the City's fee estimate based on what was presented to the Applicant on November 21, 2025:

	Type of Fee	Calculation of Fees	Total Amount of Fees
1	Time required to search for records	2 hours x \$15.00/half hour (the bulk of our time will be dedicated to identifying responsive email records)	\$60.00

¹³ [*The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulations*](#), RRS c L-27.1 Reg 1, (July 1, 1993), as amended.

¹⁴ OIPC [Review Report 346-2025](#) at paragraphs [33] and [34].

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

2	Time required to prepare records for disclosure	166 hours x \$15.00/half hour (4,980 items x 2 minutes divided by 60 minutes, rounded down)	\$4,980.00
3	USB Stick	0 x \$10 USB Stick	\$0.00
4	LESS:	1 hour free x \$15.00/half hour	(\$30.00)
Total (excludes USB)			\$5,010.00
50% of fees are required to process access request			\$2,505.00

[50] The two types of fees under review are: (1) fees for searching; and (2) fees for preparing the records for disclosure. The City is not charging for the USB drive since it is the main source of reproduction.

Reasonableness of the Fees for Searching

[51] Section 5(3) of *LA FOIP Regulations* states:

Fees

5(3) Where time in excess of one hour is spent in searching for a record requested by an applicant or in preparing it for disclosure, a fee of \$15 for each half-hour or portion of a half-hour of that excess time is payable at the time when access is given.

[52] OIPC provides the following guidance when respect to calculating search time, as applicable:¹⁶

Fees for search time consist of every half hour of manual search time required to locate and identify responsive records. For example:

- Staff time involved in searching.
- Examining file indices.
- Pulling paper files.
- Reading through files for responsiveness.

Search time *does not* include:

- Time spent copying.
- Time spent going from office to office or offsite to look for records.
- Having someone review the results of a search.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, at paragraph [41].

[53] The OIPC general standards for search time include:¹⁷

- It should take an experienced employee one minute to visually scan 12 pages of paper or electronic records for responsiveness.
- It should take an experienced employee five minutes to search one file drawer.
- It should take three minutes to search one active email account and to transfer the results to a separate folder.

[54] The City calculated it would take two hours to search for a total search fee of \$60.00, which it said was largely based on reviewing records for “false positives” or records that are non-responsive. Based on the Applicant’s requested search parameters, the City identified that it was likely 9,959 records would be located, and only 4,980 or about half would be “potentially” responsive.

[55] Since it should take one minute to visually scan 12 pages of electronic records, it would take 830 minutes for the City to sift through 9,959 pages and review them for responsiveness, or approximately 14 hours. Fourteen hours of search would have come to \$415.00, so the City’s search estimate of \$60.00 was more than reasonable.

Reasonableness of the Fees for Preparation

[56] As we stated earlier, section 5(3) of *LA FOIP Regulations* allows \$15.00 per half hour of preparation time, or \$30.00 per hour. Preparation time includes time spent physically severing exempted information from a record. Preparation time does not include time spent on factors such as deciding whether to claim an exemption, identifying records requiring severing, assembling information and proofing data or preparing an index of records. OIPC has set out the following general standards for calculating time for preparation:¹⁸

¹⁷ *Ibid*, at paragraph [42].

¹⁸ *Ibid*, at paragraphs [53] and [54].

- It should take an experienced employee two minutes per page to physically sever records.
- If two minutes per page does not reflect the circumstances, such as the record is complex, then the local authority should test a representative sample and extrapolate the results to the entire record.

[57] The City applied the OIPC guideline of two minutes per page to its estimated 4,980 responsive pages. Severing 4,980 pages at two minutes per page would take 9,960 minutes, or 166 hours. At \$15.00 per half hour, or \$30 per hour, the cost would be \$4,980.00, which is what the City quoted. The City's preparation fee was reasonable.

Total Fee

[58] The OIPC total calculated fee estimate is $\$415.00 + \$4,980.00 = \$5,395.00$. Accounting for the fact that there can be no charge for the first hour, we subtract \$30.00, which leaves \$5,365.00. The City's total fee estimate came to \$5,010.00. This is \$355.00 less than the OIPC estimate and so its reasonableness is self-evident.

[59] If the Applicant pays the 50% deposit of \$5,010.00 (\$2,505.00), then the City is required to continue processing the Applicant's access request of October 29, 2025.

IV FINDINGS

[60] OIPC has jurisdiction and is undertaking this review pursuant to PART VI of *LA FOIP*.

[61] The City's fee estimate of \$5,010.00 is reasonable.

V RECOMMENDATION

[62] I recommend that the City adopt its current fee estimate. If the Applicant pays the 50% deposit of \$2,505.00, the City is required to continue processing the Applicant's access request.

Dated at Regina, in the Province of Saskatchewan, this 13th day of October, 2026.

Grace Hession David
Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner