

Arizona Daily Star®

www.dailystar.com® www.azstarnet.com®

Published: 06.12.2007

City to make impact-fee-expansion case

Hearing will push addition of police, fire, public facilities

By Rob O'Dell

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Tucson has long had a mantra of making growth pay for itself.

The Tucson City Council will try to add police, fire and public facilities to the list of impact fees growth will pay for at a public hearing tonight. New housing and commercial construction already pays fees totaling \$7,016 on a new 2,000-square-foot home for water, roads and parks.

The proposed fees are \$1,589 per single-family home and would generate \$6.26 million a year for new police and fire substations or other types of government buildings, such as new offices and maintenance yards, and for equipment. They could not be used for salaries.

There would also be commercial impact fees totaling \$1,227 per 1,000 square feet.

Although numerous cities and towns around Arizona charge fees for those services, Tucson would be the first community in Pima County to charge them.

Since approving a notice of intent to adopt the fees in March, six meetings have been held with development interests and other concerned parties, resulting in the proposed fees being lowered slightly and implementation of the commercial impact fees being delayed 18 months. The residential fees will go into effect six months after final approval.

Even with the new fees, Oro Valley and Marana still would be charging higher impact fees for new development, while Pima County and Sahuarita's fees would remain lower than Tucson's.

Impact fees are assessed on new construction based on the size or type of development, and generally apply to both homes and businesses. City Manager Mike Hein said the fees are needed to make growth pay for itself because police and fire equipment and facilities are so expensive.

While impact fees for roads and parks can be used only for improvements in the same area as the development that is paying the fee, money from the water fee can be used anywhere within the city, which is what is being considered for the public-safety-impact fees, said Nicole Ewing Gavin, the city's impact-fee coordinator.

Councilwoman Shirley Scott said she wants to change the proposal to make sure the impact fees are used in the area where they are generated.

State law limits the amount of an impact fee to the actual cost of providing that service to each new home or business. The council is considering adding \$643 for police, \$469 for fire and \$477 for public facilities on a single-family home.

The fee will be charged per home, not on a per-square-foot basis, a positive in the eyes of Lori Lustig, government liaison with the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association.

The commercial impact fees, however, would be based on square footage, costing \$699 per 1,000 square feet for police, \$269 per 1,000 square feet for fire and \$259 per 1,000 square feet for public facilities.

While SAHBA disagrees with some of the methodologies used by the city to calculate the fee, Lustig said SAHBA supports police and fire, and will not oppose the impact fees.

"We're on board," Lustig said. "It is what it is."

IF YOU GO . . .

The Tucson City Council will hold a public hearing on the proposed development impact fees for public safety and public

IF YOU GO . . .

The Tucson City Council will hold a public hearing on the proposed development impact fees for public safety and public buildings today.

The session will begin at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, 255 W. Alameda St.

buildings today.

The session will begin at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, 255 W. Alameda St.

- *Contact reporter Rob O'Dell at 573-4240 or rodell@azstarnet.com.*

All content copyright © 1999-2006 AzStarNet, Arizona Daily Star and its wire services and suppliers and may not be republished without permission. All rights reserved. Any copying, redistribution, or retransmission of any of the contents of this service without the expressed written consent of Arizona Daily Star or AzStarNet is prohibited.