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County posts big rise in impact fees in 2006

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BROOKSVILLE — A decrease in impact fees is being blamed for delays in completing improvements to Elgin Boulevard, Deltona Boulevard and other key roads throughout Hernando County.

But, according to information supplied by the county clerk's office, impact fees across the board in every road district showed marked increases from 2005 to 2006. In some cases, revenue generated from the fees more than doubled.

In fact, the county collected \$14 million in transportation impact fees, a record.

— In District 1, the county collected \$1.4 million in road impact fees in the year ending Sept. 30, 2005. The number shot up to \$3.6 million for fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2006. District 1 encompasses the northwest part of Hernando County — heading north from the U.S. 19 and State Road 50 intersection and including Glen Lakes.

— District 2 impact fees were \$221,953 in 2005 and rose to \$464,856 in 2006. The district encompasses a wide swath of land northeast of S.R. 50 and east of U.S. 98. It includes Lake Lindsey and Croom roads.

— District 3 road impact fees in 2005 were \$232,860, compared to \$374,931 in 2006. The boundaries are U.S. 41 on the east and SR. 50 on the north, taking in the Spring Lake area.

— District 4 was the big money-maker for the county because of its large population and development. Impact fees in 2005 were \$5.8 million, compared to \$8.5 million in 2006. This area encompasses the heart of Spring Hill and includes Elgin and Deltona boulevards.

County Engineer Charles Mixson attributed the delay in widening Elgin Boulevard to a lack of impact fee money.

The Barclay Road expansion from Powell Road north to S.R. 50 and the widening of Deltona Boulevard from Forest Oaks to Spring Hill Drive are also on the shelf for now but are scheduled to be revived when the economy picks up.

The county only has a partial tally of impact fees for the current 2007 fiscal year. However, as of June 29 — with only three months remaining in the fiscal year — the numbers are down in road, parks and other impact fee categories.

But many of the road projects already slated for improvement — including Barclay Avenue, Elgin and Deltona boulevards and Sunshine Grove Road — were already budgeted and in the capital improvement plan prior to the downturn in the housing industry and the resulting impact fee falloff.

The drop in impact fees is getting blamed for more than road project delays. Park improvements are also on the shelf indefinitely.

County Parks Director Pat Fagan said it was the projected decrease in current year impact fee levels that prompted him to put a halt to all park improvements — except for Bayport Park — until growth and development in Hernando County picks up.

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