

**Editorial: Times are tough for builders but fees must be maintained**

By Daily News staff

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The timing is horrible. With the region's construction industry in a prolonged downturn, few people take any pleasure in even thinking about raising impact fees on new construction to pay for roads, utilities, libraries, parks, etc.

Though price alone is not driving the real estate market woes, and impact fees are not solely to blame for housing prices soaring beyond reach, a systematic adjustment on impact fees is a smart move in the long run.

It is estimated that a study authorized by Collier County commissioners would justify an overall impact fee increase of almost \$5,000 per 2,000-square-foot home, to nearly \$36,000.

Consider the options:

- Let infrastructure needs get ahead of us, as we have done in the past.
- Or let impact fees sit idle for a few years and then give everybody sticker shock when the fees are brought up to speed.

The latter is what usually happens, prompting industry and public outcries for a more systematic approach.

Which is where we are today.

The need may soften for the moment but will not go away for additional and better infrastructure. What will not go down are the per capita impacts and their costs.

For that reason, we need to stay the course in impact fees — through thick and thin. The cost of not doing so is much more painful.

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