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S. Burlington council considers impact-fee changes

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SOUTH BURLINGTON -- The cost to build in South Burlington may be going up, depending on how much the City Council decides to raise impact fees.

Total impact fees for a single-family residence are \$6,485 and \$4,300 for each unit of a multi-family unit. Commercial fees vary by size, value and traffic generated, but to give a sense, the last Pizzagalli office building paid a total of \$36,700.

Consultant Mike Munson has undertaken a study of impact fees and will recommend a total of \$9,332 for a single-family home and \$6,928 for a multi-family, South Burlington Planning and Zoning Director Juli Beth Hinds said by e-mail. The figures take into account all projects in the city's capital plan, projected growth, and the value of the grand list.

Numbers for commercial proposals weren't immediately available. The numbers vary greatly from project to project, and commercial projects typically have much higher road impact fees than residential projects. Examples will be presented in the fall.

Impact fees are charged for certain areas of municipal projects, assessed using a complex formula that charges developers for the impact their project will have on roads, recreation, fire, wastewater, water and schools. Commercial properties do not pay school and recreation impact fees.

Strict laws govern how impact fees can be spent, such as recreation impact fees may pay only for recreation projects, and those projects must be included in the capital plan. Impact fees can be used in conjunction with other funding sources and used for grant matches.

The city also uses a formula to give credits to ensure that any given building isn't paying double for a project in impact fees and property taxes.

Council members will study the information and decide how to raise impact fees at a later meeting. After a member of the audience raised concerns about the burden to affordable housing, the council asked Munson to work up figures that allowed discounted impact fees for affordable housing projects.