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Monday, August 27, 2007

Taxation, whether you're for it or against it, is bringing together Alachua County once again. Tomorrow night the County Commission will be voting on whether to increase the transportation impact fee. If passed, the money will offset the growing cost of road improvements, which the Department of Transportation has said can cost upwards of 3 million dollars per lane to build one mile of road. Alachua County Impact Fees Administrator Jonathan Paul did a comparative analysis of impact fees in similar Floridian counties and found even with the proposed increase, Alachua county's combined fees will still be lower than the comparable counties. Paul doesn't recommend this being the county commission's focus tomorrow night however. Paul says partisan debate continues to follow the issue with various environmental and pro-growth groups backing the impact fees and others like the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Builders Association of North Central Florida being staunchly opposed to such an increase. Opponents claim the comparison to other counties is irrelevant to what they see in Alachua county's forecast. However, supporters see the new money as going to maintain current levels of service in the community while constructing new roadways, adding turn lanes and traffic signals, and ultimately relieving congestion along Newberry and Archer Road. Tomorrow night's county commission meeting will be held at the County Administration Building in downtown Gainesville at 5 p.m. A vote is scheduled to happen which will determine the fate of transportation impact fees. The public is highly encouraged to come.

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