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Appreciation is in order for Mayor-President Kip Holden and his chief administrative officer, Walter Monsour, for their decision to impose traffic-impact fees after the Greater Baton Rouge Association of Realtors and Capital Region Builders Association failed to offer any meaningful alternatives (“Mayor to set impact fees,” The Advocate, Aug. 22).

These organizations were offered the opportunity to have input on developing these fees as a way to help offset some of the traffic concerns additional development will create.

The executive director of the Realtor organization, Herb Gomez, stated in an e-mail to Mr. Monsour that they would voice the organization’s opposition privately with council members, apparently in an effort to exert personal influence as opposed to working constructively with the city-parish to help control our spiraling traffic woes. No reasoning behind the Realtor organization’s decision was offered.

Letter: Traffic-impact fee plan praised

Roy Domangue Jr., with the Capital Region Builders Association, states that development may be driven out of Baton Rouge and that the increase in fees will price hundreds of people out of the market. This is just so much bluster.

I must concur with Mr. Monsour’s assessment that a few hundred dollars are not going to prevent anyone from buying.

Furthermore, the real housing problem for buyers in the Baton Rouge market is the fact that there are so few affordable homes for young buyers available but a glut of living options with price tags of \$200,000 and up. The builders keep building high-end housing, and realty agents prefer the higher-priced stuff for obvious reasons.

If a decent home goes on the market for under \$200,000 it sells in a New York minute, and not a single buyer would bat an eye at a \$600-\$700 fee, especially if goes toward improving our difficult traffic situation.

Commercial development is going to go where the people are, and after spending hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions, they are not going to be deterred by a one time \$1,000-\$2,000 fee. This amount is petty, even minuscule, in

relation to the overall investment.

The days of growth for growth's sake are over. Smart growth is what today's reality calls for, and this fee plan is an excellent example of it.

It's time for people in the Greater Baton Rouge Association of Realtors and the Capital Region Builders Association to pull their heads out of the sand, stop trying to play backroom politics and get with the program.

Thank you again, Mayor-President Holden and staff, for showing us what needs to be done and for keeping our community's interest at heart.

Bob Williamson
retired businessman
Baton Rouge

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