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Posted on Sun, Jan. 29, 2006

### Remodeling couple must pay road fee

**The homeowners are converting a guesthouse to live in while they renovate their main house; the county says the work is subject to the \$6,702 fee**

By Bob Cuddy  
The Tribune

For the second time in three months, the county Board of Supervisors has made homeowners pay a road fee for a project that generates no additional traffic.

Don West, an architect for Jens and Barbara Pohl, told supervisors last week that they want to convert their 30-year-old guesthouse in Nipomo to a secondary residence and live there while remodeling the main house. When they applied for a building permit, the county imposed the standard \$6,702 road use fee.

West said there was little change taking place in the secondary home. He planned to add 20 square feet and complete some other work, including adding a kitchen.

The county's theory is that any new development will place an added burden on the roads.

County development services engineer Richard Marshall said the kitchen was the tipping point. That makes the home a secondary residence and subject to the road fee, he said.

West argued that the Pohls are merely moving temporarily to another residence on the property and won't be generating new traffic. But Marshall said someone else could move in later. Supervisors agreed with Marshall, on a 4-1 vote, with Katcho Achadjian siding with the homeowners.

The county received criticism last year when an Arroyo Grande man, in a case similar to the Pohls', sought to build a "granny unit" for his daughter and son-in-law, a veteran of the Iraq war. The younger couple was living in the main house at the time.

Despite pleas that the move would not increase traffic, the county forced him to pay the road improvement fee.

Over 16 years, the county has collected \$11.1 million from road fees in South County, according to Marshall.

Eighteen appeals have been filed. Four commercial projects and one church have received fee adjustments. Twelve of the 13 single-family homeowners who appealed were turned down; the 13th had his fee adjusted because he didn't receive a timely notice.

To read a county staff report on road fees for the Nipomo project:  
<http://www.sanluisobispo.com/multimedia/sanluisobispo/archive/RoadFee.pdf>.

<<http://www.sanluisobispo.com/multimedia/sanluisobispo/archive/RoadFee.pdf>>

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