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Palmetto weighs tripling impact fees on new construction

By DALE WHITE
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PALMETTO -- The cost of building a typical house in Palmetto may soon go up about \$3,700.

The City Commission is considering tripling impact fees on new construction. The extra charge would put a greater share of the city's costs for new or expanded roads, parks and other government facilities onto new homeowners.

Palmetto now charges \$1,600 in water and sewer impact fees for a typical new house. If the proposed fees are adopted, that total impact fee bill will rise to \$5,300.

The Jacksonville consulting firm Burton & Associates recently completed a study suggesting what rates could be justified.

For a single-family home, the additional fees could total \$3,699.87 -- including \$1,945.63 for parks, \$1,325.63 for roads and \$428.60 for government facilities such as city offices or a police station.

The new fees would be lower for smaller homes: \$3,147.16 for a duplex, apartment or condo and \$2,076.33 for a mobile home.

The new fees would be the highest for non-residential construction -- \$5,516.83 for a 1,000-square-foot store, for example. Because a commercial or industrial enterprise would generate more traffic than a home, the bulk of its new impact fees -- \$5,302.52 -- would be for roads. It would not be charged a parks impact fee.

Steven McDonald, vice-president of Burton & Associates, said he will slightly adjust the numbers before the city puts them in a proposed impact fee ordinance.

The city commissioners asked that projected costs for police cars and

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equipment be deducted from the proposed general government fee and presented as a separate law enforcement impact fee.

Currently, Palmetto has about 13,400 residents. The city is expected to grow to about 16,000 by 2009.

During that time, the number of homes under construction within the city limits could increase from 130 to 290 per year, according to Burton & Associates' analysis.

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