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County studies fees for Crown Pointe

Project could be twice size of Georgetown

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Can Georgetown County afford that 5,000-plus unit development known as Crown Pointe?

It could hinge on the county's ability to impose the right amount of impact fees to defray the costs of building new roads and parks.

Otherwise, residents would have to pick up the tab for providing the services to the 4,252-acre development 30 minutes outside the city of Georgetown.

Georgetown County Planning Director Boyd Johnson and County Administrator Tommy Edwards were still crunching numbers Monday to determine what the services might cost the county.

And it may be six months to a year before the Master Transportation Study and Parks and Recreation study needed to impose the impact fees are completed.

Neither number is expected to be available for tonight's County Council meeting.

The board is expected to vote whether to approve the conceptual plan for Crown Pointe, which includes six residential villages, a village center and commercial center.

The owners, Copper Station Holdings, have also donated land to the school, YMCA, parks and fire department and set aside land for a hospital.

When completed, it may be double the size of the city of Georgetown, which has about 2,500 homes, Johnson said.

Georgetown County Councilman Jerry Oakley has no doubt the county will be able to afford public services for Crown Pointe, which will take about 15 years to build out.

"The development will come as close to paying for itself as is comfortable," said Oakley. "The cost to taxpayers is not going to be significant. In fact, I think it's going to be self-supporting. It's gotta pay for itself."

Both the road and park impact fee studies commissioned by the county will determine how much the county can charge developers to help pay for capital improvement projects to help meet the needs of new residents. The study will give the county a maximum amount to charge, but the county would have to impose a fee to be collected at the time the building permit is granted on all new homes and structures.

Deciding the right fee may get political for developers who may balk at a price that is too high, even though it is allowed under law.

If the County Council lowers the maximum too much, residents will wind up subsidizing new growth.

"We are going to need to have the right amount of political will and the support of our residents," Oakley said.

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