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\$500,000 in transportation impact fees during March

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VIERA — During the initial months of Brevard County's transportation impact fee moratorium, the economic-stimulus effects have been hardly stimulating.

In early March, the county commission enacted the two-year freeze, which was designed to entice developers to break ground on new construction. Citing "a deep economic recession," commissioners hoped the moratorium would create and preserve jobs.

But, so far, Assistant County Manager Mel Scott said the fee suspension is not sparking new growth.

"We are not seeing projects come through the process at this point that weren't already in it," Scott told the Space Coast Growth Management Coalition on Monday afternoon.

According to estimates — which still are being compiled — the county waived more than \$500,000 in transportation impact fees in March, Scott said. The bulk of these developers already had received building permits prior to the moratorium's enactment, he said.

However, Scott said "the jury's still out" on the moratorium's ultimate effectiveness.

He said the freeze's first six to 12 months will be key. And the credit market remains largely frozen, he said, hampering developers.

The commission unanimously suspended transportation impact fees for commercial and residential construction until March 1, 2011.

These impact fees generated \$5.8 million for road projects during the last fiscal year. Fees are collected when a builder receives a certificate of occupancy.

Construction activity has stagnated across the Space Coast during the downturn.

In January 2005, the county issued 2,037 building permits, records show. That number dropped to

689 this January, a 66 percent decline.

As the impact fee freeze progresses, planning officials will compile monthly database reports for commissioners that track construction activity.

“We want to be able to identify the stimulating nature of the moratorium,” Scott told coalition members.

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