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Boca imposes new impact fees on home renovations, new construction

By Luis F. Perez
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Boca Raton · Homeowners planning big renovations and single-family homebuilders are facing a new impact fee dedicated to parks and recreation.

The change came about due to a modification in the way Boca Raton calculates the fee.

Developers of multi-family housing have been paying an impact fee for years based on the property's value. Under the new fee structure, which is based on square footage, a new home or renovations of more than 600 square feet would incur a \$2,700 impact fee.

That number jumps to \$4,680 on home construction of more than 3,600 square feet.

The change makes the impact fee more equitable, city officials said. If someone were to challenge the current fee structure in court, the city would have a tough time defending it, they said.

"What we're doing now wouldn't hold up in court," said Buddy Parks, city's deputy recreation services director.

Additionally, everyone who built a multi-family unit in the past six or seven years has paid the maximum of about \$2,800, he said. The money is used to build and maintain parks.

The new fee structure provides credits for replacing existing homes with larger residential buildings with the owner paying for the difference in size between the old dwelling and the new one. For example, if a homeowner knocks down a 2,000-square-foot home and builds a 2,800-square-foot replacement house, the fee would be based on the 800-



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City officials did an analysis that showed they could charge more than \$8,000 for residential construction of 800 square feet and larger. However, they decided to keep the fee closer to the current level.

Councilwoman Susan Whelchel objected to the original proposal that levied the fee on renovations as small as 400 square feet. More young families are moving into the city and many build onto their homes, she said.

"We're hurting the very people who are least able to pay these impact fees," she said.

Her council colleagues agreed with her and changed the threshold to 600 square feet.

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