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Building trade says it pays its share for development

The Desert Sun

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This is in response to Cindy Uken's June 8 column, "Developers have duty to help foot cities' bills."

When a developer has a project approved, he or she has donated many acres of land to the city for offsite streets, sidewalks, setbacks and other municipal uses. The developer has agreed to widen the streets adjoining the project and usually build median strips and bus stops to boot.

They will have agreed to install traffic signals in their area, underground electrical and other utilities. Within the actual project they "donate" land and build all the street infrastructure which they then give to the city. They install the water and sewer lines and then give them to the appropriate agency. They install the electric and phone lines and give them to the appropriate agency.

As to hard money, developers pay thousands to the school district in school fees, thousands to the water and sewer districts in backup facility charges, thousands to the Coachella Valley Association of Governments for Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fees, thousands in endangered species fees and of course usually millions to the city or county in various fees and charges required to take their plans through the process to approval. And then we get to mitigation fees.

Coachella has a construction tax which Ms. Uken forgot to note. The Building Industry Association has urged the city of Coachella for a couple of years to adopt mitigation fees and we constantly encourage all eligible fee collecting entities to update their fees every two years.

The industry has always said that we want to pay our way, but not correct past deficiencies that are the responsibility of the present citizenry. We only ask, as in the recent Indio fee increase, that the process be according to the law.

Every four years or so Desert Chapter undertakes a fee study of all cities and the county and we distribute that to everyone who might be interested.

Editor's Note: The column referred to in this Valley Voice was designed solely to address

impact fees and look comparatively at what cities across the valley are charging. It is evident from the research that in some communities developers are not paying their fair share when it comes to impact fees.
