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Article published Jun 1, 2005

## Cape impact fees top \$10,000

Council increases road surcharge 80 percent

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Cape Coral's road impact fee will increase by 80 percent on Sept. 1, adding \$1,199 to the cost of a new home and making the city's total impact fee the highest in Lee County.

The city council voted 8-0 Monday for the change, which is the first increase since 2003.

The increase pushed the total for impact fees on new homes in the city over the \$10,000 mark to \$10,670. The total includes a school impact fee collected for the Lee County School District.

It could be a daunting figure for some potential new home buyers.

"I think it would deter me," said Cape Coral resident Kathy LeClair, 41, who bought an existing home four years ago and was not required to pay impact fees. "It's a nice area, but it's getting so expensive."

Impact fees are one-time charges on new construction. Money raised by the fees is used to help pay for services required by growth. People who move into existing homes do not pay impact fees.

Officials will make future increases annually. Each Sept. 1, the fee will be adjusted for inflation. Every third year, officials will conduct a major review of the fee.

Leaders of the Cape Coral Construction Industry Association asked the council to delay

the increase until Oct. 1. They wanted more time to take another look at how the city calculated lane miles to come up with the new fee of \$2,698.

Lane miles is just one factor in a complicated formula used to calculate the fee.

### CAPE CORAL IMPACT FEES

- \$1,738 Sewers
- \$1,714 Water
- \$2,698 Roads (effective Sept. 1)
- \$1,115 Parks
- \$857 Irrigation water
- \$316.33 Fire and rescue
- \$2,232 Lee County schools
- Total: \$10,670.33

### IN OTHER BUSINESS

Also Monday, the Cape Coral City Council:

- Approved \$354,445 for a downtown traffic circulation study in the Community Redevelopment Agency area
- Set 5 p.m. Monday, June 6 for a public hearing on an ordinance to setting procedures for letting residents know where sexual predators and offenders live in the city.
- Set 5 p.m. Monday, June 13 for a public hearing to consider plans for the development of the Southwind Commerce Park at 2014 Pondella Road. The project will divide 17 acres into 30 lots.
- Adopted a resolution urging Lee County to start buying land to provide a 350-foot-wide path for the future of Burnt Store Road.

"Are the lane miles calculated accurately? That is the burning question," construction association President Mike McCartney said after the vote.

The association suggested it might challenge the fee in court over the lane calculation issue if the council did not delay the increase and reconsider the lane-mile calculation. But the decision to go to court hasn't been made yet, McCartney said.

The association sent details of the increase to a consultant in Tallahassee, who has not yet reported his conclusion to the association. The Memorial Day holiday contributed to the delay, he said.

"The methodology is court-tested. It should have no trouble standing up," said consultant Chris Swenson, who worked on the impact fee study for the city.

Council members did agree to delay the effective date one month until Sept. 1 and, with the association's request, to have the council, not the city manager, approve the annual adjustment.

"It takes the public out of the process. A constructive discussion ensures a better, more balanced outcome," McCartney said.

Councilwoman Dolores Bertolini said she'd rather have the indexing stay with the council.

"Debate should take place on this every time the updates come," she said.

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