



City to consider a later due date for builder impact fee

Slow sales spur proposed change in ordinance

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Because of slow sales in a new housing development, the Santa Paula City Council will decide today whether to change a city ordinance to make developer impact fees due before properties are occupied instead of before they are built.

City staff members are recommending the change as a result of ongoing conversations with Comstock Homes, which has obtained building permits — and paid the impact fees — for 24 residences in the Ridgeview at Vista Glen project near Santa Paula Hospital. The developer has plans to construct 50 more homes.

"We want to see these homes constructed and sold," City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz said.

"Having a mix of housing remains an important issue in Santa Paula."

The proposed change would require developers to pay impact fees before the city issues certificates of occupancy.

Currently, developers must pay the fees much earlier — before the city will issue building permits. The change would allow developers to wait until a homebuyer is ready to move in.

"Not having the money until (occupancy) is a minimal impact on us, and it certainly will help them," Bobkiewicz said. "The city's still going to get its money."

The impact fees are used to pay for parks, streets and utility infrastructure, among other things.

City officials could not provide an exact figure Friday for how much fee money would be deferred, but Bobkiewicz said impact fees generally amount to several thousand dollars per housing unit.

The City Council's decision could affect how impact fees are collected in future housing developments at East Area One and Adams Canyon.

The Ridgeview project is the only housing development under construction in the city.



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