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Tuesday, August 16, 2005  
**City, developers to discuss fees**

By MIGUEL GONZALEZ/Staff Writer

VICTORVILLE — City Council members and representatives of the business community are scheduled to discuss today an increment in development impact fees.

While all sides involved have agreed that increasing fees is necessary to help the city render services to a growing population, the question is how to implement the fees.

Residential builders and business developers are asking the city to protect the investments of projects that have been in the works for a while now. City officials understand the perspective, but have not yet made a compromise as to which



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businesses will be subjected to the new fees.

If the City Council approves the plan, current developmental fees for single family homes would raise from \$4,481 to \$9,595. For commercial real estate cost per square foot would raise from \$1.78 to \$6.28.

The plan would generate more than \$400 million for the city over 15 years and it would help funding for roads, parks, recreation programs and improvement of quality of life for locals, according to a report commissioned by the city.

"Our director of finance (Adair Most) has indicated to us that we (as a city) are already behind in our capital improvements," Victorville Mayor Mike Rothschild said Monday. "We want to give a fair and balanced agreement to the business, but we have to meet our obligations with the community on the building of parks and other services."

Officials have said road construction would be a priority under the new plan to raise fees and the plan would include \$51 million for the planned Nisqualli/La Mesa interchange.

Local developer Ira Norris said that increasing fees from \$4,481 to \$9,595 could affect many developers who have already been approved to start building and suggested that city consider a grandfather clause.

"There should be a phase-in period for developers that have tentative maps and investors lined up in the projects," Norris said.

Victorville Chamber of Commerce Vice President for Economic Development Rob Kurth said that for too long the city has offered low development fees.

"I am fully in favor of the increase, but I would also ask for consideration because an increase of fees like the one we are facing can impact small commercial developers," said Kurth, a vice president with the real estate firm of Lee Associates-Victorville.

Rothschild said the City Council will consider every situation before adopting the fees and that might include a year-to-year graduation in imposing the new fees.

"It might be that we adopt a graduation of 60 percent in the first year and 40 percent the next year. I am not hard-nosed about it and of course you don't want to lose the construction going on," Rothschild said.

Miguel Gonzalez may be reached at miguel\_gonzalez@link.freedom.com or 951-6232.



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