

County impact fees going up: Here's how high

By Larry Hannan

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Here come the impact fee increases.

Most recent attention has been focused on increases to road impact fees and school impact fees. But in the past few days Collier County has released a rough draft of proposed impact fee increases for government buildings and law enforcement.

Under the rough drafts, which must still be approved by the county commission before going into effect, both impact fees will increase by a significant margin. The fee amounts were recommended by the consulting firm Tindale-Oliver and Associates in two studies commissioned by the county.

Impact fees are one-time assessments on new construction intended to make growth pay for itself. They are assessed for each new home and business built in the county and paid by developers, who typically pass them on to consumers in the form of higher prices.

The current law enforcement impact fee charges \$83.05 for a home of less than 1,500 feet. For a home between 1,500 and 2,500 square feet, the cost is \$93.31, and a home of more than 2,500 square feet is assessed a fee of \$110.88.

Impact fees for an office of less than 50,000 square feet would be \$107.89, \$170.40 for a hospital and \$1,801.66 for a golf course.

According to the new study, the maximum allowable law enforcement impact fee for a single-family home of less than 1,500 square feet is \$201.11. The fee for a home of 1,500 to 2,500 square feet will be \$225.96, and for a home of more than 2,500 square feet it will be \$268.50.

The revised impact fee also would charge \$261.26 for an office 50,000 square feet or less, \$412.63 for a hospital and \$4,362.64 for a golf course.

With the existing government building impact fee, a residential home is charged \$141.22 for every 1,000 square feet.

An office of 50,000 square feet or less pays \$951.39, a hospital pays \$738.32 and a golf course has to pay \$8,651.71

Under the revised government building impact fee, a residential home of less than 1,500 square feet would pay \$715 in impact fees, a home between 1,500 and 2,500 square feet would pay \$796 in impact fees, and a home of 2,500 square feet or more would pay \$872.

An office building 50,000 square feet or less would pay \$971, a hospital would pay \$959 and a golf course would pay \$11,301.

Collier impact fee coordinator Amy Patterson said the impact fee amounts could see some slight revisions before they go to the commissioners. Staff plans to ask the commissioners to approve the new fees on May 23.

If the commissioners approve the fees, they will go into effect on June 30, Patterson said.

These impact fee studies follow on the heels of recent increases in the road and library impact fees. The Collier School Board also is mulling a proposed increase of school impact fees.

Collier now has 10 impact fees. The fees also are charged for parks, schools, fire departments, jail facilities and emergency medical services.

The cost of all the impact fees is now about \$15,000 for someone who owns a 2,000-square-foot single-family home.

Impact fees have been a source of tension between Collier County officials and the local building industry.

Building officials complain the county has too many impact fees, and those fees are too high.

“Soon the impact fees to build a house will be the same as a starting teacher’s salary,” said Brenda Talbert, executive director of the 1,500-member Collier Building Industry Association.

Talbert said CBIA has not looked closely at the government building impact fee or the law enforcement impact fee because it has focused on the transportation and school impact fees.

It will review the law enforcement and government building impact fee studies in the next few weeks, Talbert said.

CBIA has filed a lawsuit against Collier County over the original government building impact fee. The suit, which is pending, challenges the methodology that created it.

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