

## Developers to pay higher fees: Queen Creek impact fees will increase May 18

*By Angela De Welles, Independent Newspapers*

Time is running out for those wanting to secure a building permit with the town's current development fees attached. As of May 18, those charges are set to increase.

According to Queen Creek Management Assistant Wendy Kaserman, development fees help municipalities cope with the demands of population increases. Also known as impact fees, the charges are not paid by existing residents. They are collected by the town at the time a building permit is issued and are charged based on a building's size and use. Typically development fees are paid by the builder and included in the price of a house.

"Development fees are designed to allow new residents to pay for their fair share," Ms. Kaserman said.

There is not a large amount of last-minute applications coming in, Ms. Kaserman said. But there are some making an effort to get their permits before the fees increase.

Queen Creek collects six different impact fees including: wastewater, parks and recreation, library, town facilities and equipment, public safety and transportation.

Until May 18, development fees for a typical Queen Creek single-family home total \$9,881. When the town's new fees go into effect, the cost will jump to \$13,503.

Development fees can only be used by the town toward capital costs, not maintenance or operation, Ms. Kaserman explained.

The process to determine development fees is an extensive one. Ms. Kaserman said members of a working group, appointed by the mayor, reviewed a study prepared by the fiscal consulting firm, TischlerBice, Inc.

Local business owners, residents and homebuilders were involved with the group and provided feedback. Town council members approved the rates that go into effect next week.

Christopher Cullinan, a consultant with TischlerBice, Inc., worked to determine the town's new rates.

Queen Creek's capital improvement plan was considered when deciding the development fees, Mr. Cullinan said. He also looked at population projections.

The increases reflect rising construction costs and Queen Creek's expected population increases, but are not unique to the town.

"We've been updating fees throughout the Valley and fees have gone up throughout those communities," Mr. Cullinan said.

Queen Creek resident Kevin Schafer understands the need for development fees.

"A fee to get things established ... I think is a good thing. I think the sustainability is something the City Council should be looking at," he said.

Mr. Schafer believes a fee for fire protection is needed. The town does not have a fire services development fee, but could in the future.

Whatever fees are charged, Mr. Schafer said the burden should not lie only with new residents.

“I’m all for the development fee on the new people, but I also realize there’s a responsibility on the existing residents,” he said. “They have to do their fair share and their fair part to assist with these citywide issues.”

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