

# Many Sarasota County impact fees to drop

By [Carrie Wells](#)

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Fees paid by home and commercial developers for roads are likely to drop significantly next year.

The impact fee rates have been cut periodically throughout the recession by county commissioners, who thought it would help boost the struggling economy.

The county hired a consultant amid the building boom when the impact fees were not bringing in enough money to keep up with road building and resurfacing needs. The consultant's recommendations were supposed to take effect in increments over several years, but as the economy slowed, commissioners kept the fees at a rate that was only about two-thirds of the consultant's recommendation.

In early 2011, the fees were cut again, leaving them at about a third of the consultant's original recommendation.

But commissioners became concerned this year when they learned the data used to calculate the fees — current asphalt prices and other factors — had not been updated since the recession and thus the fees might still be higher than they wanted.

On Tuesday, the county's transportation manager said he had used more current data to update the fee rates and used the consultant's formula. Commissioners said they favored keeping them cut to a third in the near future and the matter will go to a public hearing soon for formal approval.

Under the new calculations, the fees for a 1,500- to 1,999-square-foot home would drop from the current \$2,585 to \$1,805, which represents a 30 percent decrease. For a sit-down restaurant, the fees would drop from \$6,257 per every 1,000 square feet to \$4,432, or a 29 percent decrease.

A handful of the fees will rise, including those for public golf courses. In that case, the fee will rise from \$830 per acre to \$938 per acre.