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Impact fees set for hearing

By Nate Delesline

Some two years after first considering the idea, the Board of Supervisors next month is expected to decide if the county should implement transportation impact fees.

The supervisors will also hear what residents have to say about the idea at a public hearing on Dec. 7 at 7 p.m., the evening session of the board's regular monthly meeting. The board is not obligated to vote on the matter that night and has the option to delay a decision.

The planning commission last week referred the impact fee idea to the supervisors with a recommendation for approval, according to county planning director John Egertson, along with a recommendation to amend the county's comprehensive plan to reflect a few changes. The money would go towards funding three projects — the outer loop road, a realignment of Nalles Mill Road to accommodate the loop road project and an inner loop road in town.

The planning commission supported the motion to amend the comprehensive plan 7-1. A motion by member Laura Rogers stating that the commission did not support implementing impact fees "at this time" failed 3-4, with one member abstaining from that vote.

"The board will look at the fee schedule and the ordinance and they'll consider it all at one big package," Egertson said Tuesday.

The county considered the impact fee idea in 2008, but rejected it, saying the \$2,176 fee for single family residential units was too high. The fee has since been reduced to \$563. Fees for commercial development, like banks and big box stores, are substantially higher. They also vary based on how many vehicle trips the project is expected to generate.

"I think the people who are creating the development — and the reason they're creating it — is the market's there, so they developed that land, and they should be the ones to pay it," Supervisor Larry Aylor said.

Aylor led the committee that first introduced the idea to the county and has supported the idea since the beginning. The supervisors last month voted 6-1 to move forward and Egertson told the board in November that town officials are on board as well. The fees would apply countywide and in town.

"For a community to thrive and grow, it has to have good schools, it has to have a good hospital, it's got to have a low crime rate and it's got to have good infrastructure — water and sewer and roads," Aylor continued. "If we get this passed, I know we'll look back and say, 'We're glad we did this.' I would rather have it and not need it. It's just good business to be ready."

Transportation impact fees

The county is moving towards the implementation of transportation impact fees. The idea is to link development and transportation funding. Fees are calculated based on a service unit, which in turn is based on the calculation that one single family dwelling creates 10 vehicle trips per day.

Commercial fees are calculated based on the type of business. Here's a look at the fees that would apply to various types of businesses:

- Drive-thru bank, per lane: \$12,271
- Hotel or motel, per room: \$276
- Medical office building, per 1,000 square feet: \$1,220
- Fast food restaurant with drive-thru, per 1,000 square feet: \$14,108
- Service station per fueling station: \$3,986
- Shopping center per 1,000 feet of gross leasable area: \$1,595

Source: Culpeper County Transportation Impact Fee schedule

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