

2theadvocate.com

# TODAY'S NEWS



< PRODUCED BY >

WBZ-TV  
**News 2**  
LOUISIANA

Advertisements

- News
- Sports
- Weather
- Traffic
- Features
- Entertainment
- Classifieds
- WBZ-TV
- The Advocate
- Obituaries

Apr 10, 2006

Advertisements

2theadvocate.com  
presents  
**CELEBRATIONS**

Wedding and  
Engagement  
Announcements  
ONLINE

**Find Out  
FIRST!**

2theadvocate.com  
**BUSINESS TODAY**  
An exclusive from the Advocate Business Section

Headlines for Thursday, 4/6/06

- State foreclosures and business
- \$1 billion renovation at Rice Center

Advertisement

Click to subscribe to  
Business Today.

SUPPORT THE  
PASSAGE OF A  
FEDERAL SHIELD LAW

[www.rcfp.org/shield](http://www.rcfp.org/shield)

#### Most Emailed

- [Students drawing on the pain of hurricanes](#)
- [Evacuees miss N. O., find BR's own flavor, soul](#)
- [Aging is no accident](#)
- [SU chief doesn't waste time](#)
- [Sheriff cut red tape after Katrina](#)

### Hot Topics



[Mental Health and Katrina's Children](#)

[Life After 50](#)

[More Hot Topics](#)

### Advocate Info

- [Subscribe](#)
- [Posters](#)
- [Reprints](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Opinions](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Contact Info](#)

### Louisiana Headlines

- [Charges dropped against man beaten by New Orleans police](#)
- [Early voting for Orleans election starts with buses of refugees](#)
- [Inspectors General: Katrina contracts fraught with waste](#)
- [Students collecting prom dresses for hurricane victims](#)

### National Headlines

- [U.S. immigrants rally by the thousands](#)
- [Bush calls Iran talk 'wild speculation'](#)
- [Skilling tells Enron jury he's 'innocent'](#)
- [Polls say Italian race too close to call](#)
- [Bowing to pressure, Chirac replaces law](#)

## Revisions set for Ascension impact fee

By **DAVID J. MITCHELL**

River parishes bureau

Published: Apr 9, 2006

Stuck in neutral for the past several months, a proposed Ascension Parish impact fee plan is headed for revisions, parish officials and consultants said.

Projected to generate \$2.5 million per year for road improvements tied to new growth, the development impact fees were the result of a year of work in 2005.

Administration officials had hopes they could be in effect by the start of 2006, but concerns raised by the Parish Council, the building industry and residents have put the brakes on the plan.

The fees are part of Parish President Ronnie Hughes' broad proposal to pay for infrastructure upgrades, including a 1/2-cent parishwide sales tax for roads.

The impact fee plan sets up a fee schedule to be paid by categories of land use. As proposed, the fees would be charged only on new development. Fee revenues would be generally tied to three proposed impact fee districts. Fees can only cover traffic impacts from new growth. The sales tax will deal with traffic from existing development.

Council Chairman Jerry Savoy said the administration has been given a list of concerns and now it is up to the consultants to make changes.

Among the possible changes are concessions for affordable housing, an exception for family property partitions and a look at the cost of commercial impact fees. Others have questioned a provision that allows one impact fee district to borrow funds from another.

Faced with those issues, a leading Parish Council proponent of the plan has said all of them will be addressed and brought back to the council in a revised plan that strikes a balance.

Councilman Kent Schexnyadre said late last month in a council committee meeting that the impact fees should be structured in such a way that newcomers are welcome in the parish but still pay their fair share of growth-related costs.

A plan could be ready in 30 days.

Finding enough council support remains the key for the plan's political viability.

Unlike a sales tax, which must go to a public vote, the fee plan only needs council approval, but Savoy and a parish legal opinion confirm that the plan will need eight votes on the 11-member council, not a simple majority.

One council opponent, Todd Lambert, said the changes under way won't be enough. He said he supports putting a road sales tax on the ballot. If enough support is found, it may have to face some builder opposition.

Hugh Bond, who recently finished his term as president of the Capital Region Builders Association and is an Ascension Parish builder, said the proposed changes won't change his position. He said the plan would hurt first-time homebuyers with passed-on costs but wouldn't generate enough revenue to be worth it.

"I'm against it for this parish, absolutely. It just will not do anything good. I think it is an attempt by politicians to say they did something," Bond said.

Some key groups outside the council who could influence the outcome of the debate over the fees also have remained on the sidelines. The Ascension Chamber of Commerce is studying the issue, while the Ascension Economic Development Corp. has decided to remain neutral on the whole Hughes plan.



But the development corporation's chief executive officer and president, Tommy Kurtz, offered suggestions at the council's request about how the fee plan could be changed to better aid economic development. Though in rough form, what is being discussed is the creation of an economic development fund in parish government that could be used to pay all or part of major projects' impact fees.

Kurtz said projects could qualify under special job-creation-oriented criteria that, while not developed, might be similar to the state's Quality Jobs Program. That program offers selected industry clusters — such as manufacturing — sales tax rebates in exchange for new jobs.

Jim Duncan, one of two primary parish consultants who developed the fee plan, said he didn't hear any concerns that he thought couldn't be worked out, including the family partition issue. Duncan has previously warned about building in plan exemptions.

In Ascension Parish, family partitions are used to allow families to subdivide their land and donate it to their children.

But the process has been abused in the past to make rump subdivisions that get around stricter parish development laws. Parish officials have in recent years tried to tighten the process.

Savoy said the consultants must find a solution.

"I got major concern on family partitions, OK. Are they willing to compromise? They can get my vote. Right now I will not support it if you leave family partitions in (under the fee schedule). I will not support it," he said.

Single-family housing fees would likely affect family partitions.

Duncan, whose firm did the traffic study that established the impact fee schedule, said the fees can be lowered because they represent only the maximum that can be charged.

That might help allay commercial concerns.

The fees are based on the idea that every land use pays its contribution to the traffic load. However, the fees would have to be lowered across the board, not in solitary categories.

"That's shifting burden from one land use to another, which violates the proportionate fair share," Duncan said.

He recommended against lowering the fees by any more than 50 percent of the current maximum.

---

## Fee categories

Listed below are certain fee categories in a development impact fee schedule initially proposed by Ascension Parish but now under review. The fees represent the maximum that can be charged and are based on expected traffic impact. Some fees are charged by square-footage, some by unit, some through a mix of unit and square-footage criteria.

### Per unit/room charge

Single family: \$1,489 to \$2,169 depending on square-footage

Multi-family: \$1,141

Hotel/motel: \$975

### Per 1,000 square feet

Shopping center: \$2,317

Bank: \$8,912

Fast-food restaurant: \$4,669

Quality restaurant :\$2,837

General office: \$2,737

Industrial park: \$1,578

Warehouse: \$862

Mini-warehouse: \$290





Advertisements

HEALING PLACE CHURCH

---

**EASTER**  
AT THE RIVER CENTER



**SUNDAY**  
APRIL 16 @ 10AM



[www.healingplacechurch.org](http://www.healingplacechurch.org)

Mike  
**FRANCIS**  
[francis06.com](http://francis06.com)



**Secretary  
of State**  
paid for by Mike Francis

Copyright © 1992-2006, 2theadvocate.com, WBRZ, Louisiana Broadcasting LLC and The Advocate, Capital City Press LLC, All Rights Reserved. Click here to send comments or questions about 2theadvocate.com.