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Road Impact Fee Hike Urged

Increases would be for new-home, industrial and retail construction.

By [Bill Rufty](#)

The Ledger

LAKELAND -- Polk commissioners were asked by their impact fee committee Wednesday to consider raising the county's road and transportation impact fee to as much as \$7,447 for a new single-family home.

Increases in impact fees for industrial and retail construction also are proposed.

The current county transportation impact fee for a single-family home is \$2,705. It is charged to new homes countywide to try to cover the cost of growth.

The Polk County Impact Fees Advisory Committee voted unanimously to send an impact fee study with recommended new fees to county commissioners for a final decision. Nine of the 11 committee members were present at Wednesday's meeting.

The study was prepared by a consultant, Tindale, Oliver and Associates Inc.

While it recommends a maximum fee of \$7,447 for a new single-family home, it suggests a lesser fee -- \$5,218 -- if the county also adopts a property tax increase to help pay for roads.

Polk commissioners are considering increasing the countywide property tax by \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, with the money to go to road improvements. For a \$100,000 home with the \$25,000 homestead exemption, that would be an additional \$75 a year in property tax.

The proposed impact fees also make a distinction between county roads and state roads. The recommended maximum fee of \$7,447 for a single-family home is broken down to \$3,510 for county roads and \$3,937 for state roads.

Some members of the advisory committee say state roads shouldn't be included in the impact fee collections.

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But member Larry Glenn said that in the end all the committee members, even representatives from the construction industry, agreed it should be the County Commission that makes the final decision.

"Everyone is concerned with the future investment in the infrastructure," said Glenn, who helped initiate the advisory committee and is a member of the county Planning Commission. "Developers don't want to be building in a county that has a moratorium."

Advisory committee member George Lindsey, vice president of Highland Homes and a member of the Polk County Builders Association, argued for a lower fee for state roads.

"The case made by staff and consultants was that often seed money from local governments accelerates state road projects. I felt that reducing the fee for state roads by 50 percent would have been enough for mere seed money," he said.

"My motion was defeated. But it is for the commission to decide the components, so I voted for the full study being sent to commissioners," he said.

Lindsey said most members of the building community accept the need for a county road impact fee, but there is great disagreement on charging for state roads.



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