

Naples Daily News

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Road impact fees could be next to go up in Lee County

By CHARLIE WHITEHEAD ckwhitehead@naplesnews.com

July 30, 2005

When consultants updated the calculations for school impact fees in Lee County, the main factors driving the recommended 95 percent increase were construction and land costs.

Those same consultants are set to begin an update of the county's road impact fee. The main factors in calculating road impact fees are construction and land costs.

"I expect road impact fees will be higher," said Dave Loveland, chief transportation planner for the county. "I don't know if it's 20 percent, 40 percent, 50 percent or higher."

The road impact fee currently is \$2,971. The cost of the county road budget spiked by \$84 million this year. Loveland said several projects are going to bid later this year, and those prices will enter into the new fee calculations.

"The capital improvement program is updated in March, and our three-year window is in May," he said. "Based on those new bids there may be some even bigger increases."

County ordinance requires impact fee updates every three years. The county last updated the road fees in 2003, boosting them by 22 percent from \$2,436 to \$2,971.

Road impact fees recently rose in the city of Bonita Springs. That 132 percent leap was so dramatic the City Council voted to phase it

in, raising the fee from \$2,436 to \$4,041.50 in October and raising it again to \$5,647 in April.

Michael Reitmann, director of the Lee Building Industry Association, said he wouldn't be surprised to see the fees double.

"If the way they've done in the past and what they did in Bonita Springs is any precursor, I think they're going to jump dramatically," he said.

On Tuesday county commissioners will be asked to hire Duncan Associates, which does the county's impact fee work, to do the road update. The update will cost just under \$65,000.

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