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St. Petersburg Times
tampabay.com

August 10, 2010

Schrader pitches plan to suspend Pasco impact fees

By Jodie Tillman, Times Staff Writer

A commissioner says it will spur construction.

DADE CITY - Commissioner Ted Schrader says he hears it from developers at least once a week: What's the county going to do about the high impact fees?

On Tuesday, Schrader put forth one idea: Suspend for a year the impact fees developers pay for the construction of parks, libraries and fire stations.

That amounts to about \$1,400 out of the roughly \$21,000 per home paid in total fees. A good chunk of that total \$21,000 is for transportation improvements, which Schrader wants to leave alone.

Schrader said he based his proposal on this fact: Though the county can muster enough impact fee money to build parks and libraries and fire stations, it doesn't have the general revenue funds to operate them.

So, he said, why continue to collect the impact fees and sit on the money? "Philosophically, I have a difficult time continuing to take their money," he said.

Pasco would be following in the footsteps of several other counties that suspended impact fees in an effort to spur building. Schrader acknowledged, though, that "the jury is still out" on whether that would work.

Chairwoman Pat Mulieri wondered if a \$1,400 savings per home was significant enough to get developers moving again.

"Do you think that will make a difference to the builder?" she said.

Commissioner Jack Mariano said he wouldn't support a suspension of the fees. "It takes a long time to build up that money," he said.

Schrader said he'd like to see the commission consider the suspension before it passes the 2010-11 budget in September. Commissioners will discuss the proposal in further detail at the next budget workshop.

Meanwhile, county staffers are planning major changes to the way developers pay for their impacts on transportation. Officials are considering "mobility fees," which would charge developers based on geography: Build in parts of the county where concentrated future growth is wanted - the west and south areas - and the fees are lower than elsewhere in the county. That plan is expected to come before commissioners in the next month or so.

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St. Petersburg Times

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