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### Smaller fee hike pleases builders

#### Frisco: Council raises road, water and sewer levies on new homes

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By STELLA M. CHÁVEZ / The Dallas Morning News

FRISCO – Builders in Frisco soon will be paying more to put up new houses. But they won't be paying nearly as much as had been proposed.

On Tuesday night, the Frisco City Council approved an ordinance that increases road, water and sewer impact fees to 60 percent of the maximum allowed by the state. Municipalities collect these fees in order to help pay for new infrastructure.

As approved, thoroughfare fees will increase 7 percent over existing fees, while water and sewer fees will nearly triple in some cases.

The new fees will be assessed for final plats submitted after Aug. 4.

City officials say the increases are reasonable because they will help cover the cost of new infrastructure without overburdening new residents.

"It's about trying to do something that's fair for the citizens," said Mayor Pro Tem Maher Maso. "Overall, it accomplishes what we were supposed to accomplish and addresses the needs of the city."

The new ordinance gives council members the option of reviewing and raising the fees if necessary over the next two years. After a year, the fees could increase to 65 percent or higher of the maximum amount allowed. At two years, the fees could rise to 75 percent or more of the state maximum.

Under the new ordinance, thoroughfare impact fees for a new single-family home would range from \$1,968 to \$3,602, depending on where the house is built. The water and wastewater fees on that home would run \$3,464.

Last month, city staffers recommended setting higher fees, but builders and developers criticized those fees as too high, noting they would ultimately be passed on to new homeowners.

The fees will still be passed on to consumers, but some say the latest proposal is better.

"We are never happy to see fees go up," said David Siciliano, a member of the Frisco Developers Council board. "[But] the way it's being proposed is reasonable. When you look at the comparison of other places they look pretty fair to me. The way they're phasing them in, it gives builders time to adjust."

Bob Pavlis, president of the Home Builders Association of Greater Dallas, said he was in favor of the city's latest proposal but asked that the city review the fees over a four-year rather than a two-year period. The council did not adopt his suggestion.

No one from the association would comment after the meeting.

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