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# Bellingham may raise transportation impact fee on developers

Increase would put tab at \$1,951 for new single-family house in 2010

JARED PABEN / THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

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BELLINGHAM - City leaders will consider a 14 percent increase in the fee developers pay to compensate for the transportation impacts of their projects.

The City Council on Monday, Nov. 23, will discuss approving a base rate for 2010 of \$1,932 per evening rush-hour trip generated by a new development.

Under city law, every year the council approves a new rate for the following year. City staff uses a complicated formula to determine the rate.

The formula involves looking at the amount of money the city has spent, and plans to spend, on transportation improvements for growth, as well as how much capacity has been assigned to growth. The idea is to require new development to pay a "proportionate fair share cost of transportation infrastructure to accommodate new growth and development."

Developers pass the fees along and they eventually increase the costs of homes for buyers.

The base rate is the amount that must be paid for each evening rush-hour trip generated by a project, but no type of development generates exactly one trip.

The closest is a new single-family house, which generates a little more than one. The charge for a new house would be \$1,951 next year, if the fee increase is approved.

Somebody building a four-apartment building, for example, would be charged \$4,800 total, or about \$1,198 per unit.

Other types of developments, including commercial and industrial ones, are charged by the square foot. A convenience market, for example, generates a lot of traffic (nearly 40 evening rush-hour trips per 1,000 square feet). If you were building a small, 2,000-square-foot market, for example, you'd be charged about \$155,000.

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**ATTEND THE MEETING**

What: Bellingham City Council considers a new transportation impact fee rate for 2010.

When: 2:25 p.m. Monday, Nov. 23, for committee discussion; 7 p.m. for council meeting.

Where: Council chambers, City Hall, 210 Lottie St.

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