

[back to article](#)



Printed on page B1

LAKELAND

Lakeland City Officials Likely To Slash Impact Fees

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LAKELAND | City officials Monday will almost certainly reduce transportation impact fees to the same level as Polk County's reduced fees.

City Manager Doug Thomas and other city officials met with city commissioners individually to discuss impact fees. On Friday during an agenda study session, Thomas said commissioners favored the county transportation impact fee level.

Commissioners did not comment during the meeting. Afterward, Commissioner Jim Verplanck, who as the city's former community development director started city impact fees 20 years ago, said the city is doing the right thing.

"This should help spur the construction industry and help the people of Lakeland, too," Verplanck said.

Polk County reduced its impact fees in March.

Commissioners had narrowed their choices to either going with the same reductions as Polk or adopting reductions that were 15 percent less than the county's reductions.

City Community Development Director Jim Studiale had pressed for the lower reductions.

Developers in recent weeks told commissioners that a builder would be stupid to build on the city side of a city-county borderline if they could build on the other side of the street for considerably cheaper.

No vote was taken during Friday's meeting. That will happen at Monday's regularly scheduled city meeting. But on Friday, no commissioner disputed the contention that the commission wanted to reduce the fees to the county's level.

Thomas said that when the economy improves, the reductions can be revisited.

The city has numerous categories and subcategories for transportation impact fees.

If the ordinance setting impact-fee reductions passes Monday, the following are some of the changes in transportation impact fees:

The single-family home fee will be reduced from \$6,247 to \$4,895.

Fees for an office of less than 10,000 square feet will be reduced from \$10,090 per 1,000 square feet to \$5,310 per 1,000 square feet.

Fees for a shopping center of less than 50,000 square feet will be reduced from \$11,674 per 1,000 square feet to \$7,961.

Fees for a warehouse will be reduced from \$2,263 per 1,000 square feet to \$1,353.

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This story appeared in print on page B1
