

# Jackson will pay for fee study

## Developers would be charged to fund infrastructure

By Merritt Melancon | [merritt.melancon@onlineathens.com](mailto:merritt.melancon@onlineathens.com) | Story updated at 10:54 PM on Tuesday, November 20, 2007

JEFFERSON - The Jackson County Commission voted to spend up to \$69,000 next year to investigate whether the county government should charge impact fees on future development to help pay for infrastructure.

Commissioners agreed Monday to hire Ross & Associates, an Atlanta consulting firm that focuses on long-term public planning projects, to complete a multi-phased impact fee study.

If commissioners find that impact fees won't work in Jackson County, they can complete only the first or second phase of the study and only pay for that consulting work.

Barrow and Oconee counties also hired Ross & Associates to study the feasibility of imposing impact fees in those counties. The cities of Jefferson and Braselton already have implemented an impact fee schedule.

Also at Monday's meeting, commissioners postponed a decision on a study that would define how much the local government spends on services in different parts of the county.

The Cost of County Services Report, which would be produced by Dorfman Consulting, would cost \$12,500.

Money wasn't included in the county's 2008 budget to pay for either study.

Commissioner Tom Crow, speaking about the Cost of County Services study, said that the local government has money to pay for the study even though commissioners hadn't planned for the expense.

But Commissioner Jody Thompson worried that \$12,500 for the study would come out of the county's 2008 contingency fund. During the 2007 fiscal year, county officials nearly drained the contingency by the end of September.

"Last year, the contingency fund was nickel-and-dimed to death," Thompson said. "I don't think there was anything left and that's not a very comfortable feeling."

Although the money for the impact fee study also may end up coming from the county's 2008 contingency fund, commissioners approved the contract unanimously.

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I think that was stupid. It was a souvenir. Heck there are probably butcher knives in some of the dorm rooms that people use. It's not like he was doing anything with it.

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