

## Local News

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### Impact fee reduction seen as a positive step

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POSTED: June 16, 2011

The Lee County Commission vote to lower road impact fees across the board Tuesday night during a public hearing in Fort Myers has been greeted as a positive step by officials and industry leaders alike.

The proposed ordinance reduced road impact fees from about 14 percent to about 46 percent depending on the category, consolidated medical office into the general office category and created a category for high-cube warehouse.

It also extended unexpired and future road impact fee credits from 10 to 20 years to align with a proposed 20-year timeframe in which to expend funds.

The vote was unanimous. Commissioner Tammy Hall was absent.

Lee County Commissioner John Manning has said at least 20 counties in the state have suspended or reduced impact fees to help spur economic growth.

Earlier this year, he proposed the same, but got no support from his peers.

On Thursday, Manning said he was very pleased with Tuesday's vote.

"I was hoping that the study would come back and reveal some different amount in terms of reductions, but it's something," he added.

In December, commissioners asked for a study to update the road impact fee schedule. The study recommended an average fee decrease of about 27 percent based on the reduced demands and lower road construction costs.

"These times are tough and the economy needs to be stimulated," Manning said. "If we can do our part, all the better."

The study, which was completed in April, cost the county \$50,000.

Hall, who was unable to attend the public hearing, was not surprised by the vote. She said the board had agreed at a prior management planning meeting to accept the recommendations in the study for the impact fee reductions.

"I'm glad that the board did support the report. I think it's the right thing to do," Hall said. "I did let them know that I supported the recommendation."

At the hearing, commissioners also directed county staff to look at other impact fees, including the parks and recreation fees and school fees.

"I think we need to look at everything," Hall said. "Our job is to really make doing business in Lee County as efficient as possible."

One supporter of the impact fee reductions has been the Cape Coral Construction Industry Association.

"While we are very happy that Lee County decided to lower the road impact fees by 27 percent - that reduction will keep us somewhat competitive with surrounding areas - we have, however, challenged

#### Fact Box

##### Reductions to road impact fees schedule

- \* Single-family residence: \$8,976 to \$6,701 (per dwelling unit)
- \* Multiple-family building, duplex, townhouse, two-family attached: \$6,297 to \$4,659 (per dwelling unit)
- \* Mobile home/RV park: \$4,686 to \$3,499 (per pad/park site)
- \* Elderly/disabled housing: \$3,261 to \$2,435 (per dwelling unit)
- \* Adult Congregate Living facility: \$2,025 to \$1,512 (per dwelling unit)
- \* Hotel/motel or timeshare: \$5,172 to \$3,861 (per room/unit)
- \* Shopping center: \$10,983 to \$7,933 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Bank: \$25,134 to \$17,187 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Car wash, self-service: \$5,262 to \$3,800 (per stall)
- \* Convenience store with gas sales: \$40,305 to \$29,116 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Golf course (open to public): \$2,697 to \$1,907 (per acre)
- \* Movie theater: \$23,220 to \$16,769 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Restaurant, standard: \$20,337 to \$14,688 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Restaurant, fast food: \$44,337 to \$32,028 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Office: \$7,305 to \$5,355 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Hospital: \$11,736 to \$7,576 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Nursing home: \$4,071 to \$3,481 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Church: \$4,575 to \$3,851 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Day care center: \$12,840 to \$10,705 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Elementary/secondary school (private): \$2,223 to \$1,897 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Industrial park or general industrial: \$6,195 to \$4,626 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Warehouse: \$4,416 to \$2,366 (per 1,000 square feet)

the county commission to put a moratorium on impact fees," Heather Mazurkiewicz, CCCIA executive director, said.

She added that other funding sources for infrastructure are needed.

"I think it's a waste of taxpayers' money to go and perform studies to reduce (additional) impact fees," Mazurkiewicz said. "We have got to find a reliable funding source for the infrastructure."

Manning is planning to attend the Florida Association of Counties conference next week. He said he intends to speak to those other counties that have cut or temporarily suspended various impact fees to find out how they are doing.

"What I'm trying to do is see how it's working to help spur construction," Manning said. "I'm going to try to get as much information from the other counties as I can. I want to get a handle on how the counties are reacting."

- \* Warehouse, high-cube (new proposed category): \$956 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Mini-warehouse: \$1,587 to \$1,125 (per 1,000 square feet)
- \* Mine: 4 cents to a 2.6 cents (per cubic yard)

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