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## Offsetting the impact

Your April 15 editorial "Fee fear fo fum," regarding Raleigh's shamefully low impact fees, recognized that growth does not pay for itself, nor is it currently close to paying its fair share. That is true now and also under the increase proposal before the City Council.

Raising fees 72 percent may sound like a huge increase. However the current fee on each new house is only \$682 (less than one quarter that of Cary and one sixth of other municipalities our size nationwide). A 72 percent increase is a bargain -- for home-builders, that is.

Raleigh has authority to charge impact fees on new houses up to 50 percent of the level needed for infrastructure and parks to support such growth, or \$3,404 per new home according to the expert contracted by the city. The current proposal pays only 17 percent of the impact per new household, or \$1,173. Who picks up the balance? Senior citizens and many others who can least afford it. The Planning Commission was correct in denying this woefully inadequate proposal and so should the City Council.

We have a responsibility to taxpayers to craft a more adequate increase and appropriate yearly inflationary index, fair not only to the builders but also the average citizen and first-time home buyer. I invite my colleagues to join Mayor Charles Meeker, council member Russ Stephenson and myself in such a dialogue.

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