

Town officials split on issue of raising road impact fees

Road impact fees came back before the Windsor Town Board last Monday night and incited a good deal of controversy on the board before the issued was tabled.

"I'll tell you now, I'm going to vote against any kind of fee increase," Windsor Mayor John Vazquez said.

In 2001, the Town of Windsor initiated a road impact fee program that began requiring new developments to pay fees to help fund a portion of the improvements for the major roadway systems within the town.

The benefit area road system, where the fees are collected from and spent in, includes the Windsor growth management area, arterial and collector roads, existing and planned roads, state highways and also the Interstate 25/Colorado Highway 392 interchange and railroad crossings.

The town also built a cost escalator into the road impact fee structure in an effort to accommodate the fluctuating costs of building materials. The escalator is based on the two-year average of the Colorado Construction Cost Index, or CCCI.

"The last two times, in 2010 and 2011, the CCCI projected decreases of 12.3 and 4.3 percent, so we decreased our road impact

fees accordingly," Windsor Planning Director Joe Plummer said. "This year, we're seeing an increase of 7.1 percent."

Plummer laid out four options for the board to consider: They could adopt the 7.1 percent fee increase immediately, adopt the fee increase to go into effect Jan. 1, postpone the issue until a work session had been held or not adopt any fee changes at all.

"This increase isn't enough to bring our fees back to where they were during 2008, so we're still behind," Plummer said.

The philosophy behind road impact fees, according to Windsor Town Manager Kelly Arnold, is to maintain the integrity of the town's roadway system.

"Developers are reimbursed from this fund, and major roadway improvements could be funded from here," Arnold said.

Board member Kristie Melendez saw the increase as a danger to the town's

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economy.

“In this economy, why are we talking about raising fees?” she asked.

Board member Don Shanfelt was more concerned with the fund falling behind.

“We’ve lowered fees when it’s called for, and I don’t want to see this get behind,” he said. “I’d bring it forward to go into effect Jan. 1.”

The board will hold a work session on the topic in the first quarter of 2012.

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