

Martin County school impact fees could be going up

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Originally published 04:36 p.m., August 21, 2007

Updated 04:36 p.m., August 21, 2007

STUART — Martin County's school impact fees could be among the state's highest, if a proposed increase is approved.

School impact fees are one-time charges on new construction used to pay for capital costs such as buses and new schools. The county's Comprehensive Plan requires the Martin County School Board to update impact fees every two years to keep up with inflation and the County Commission needs to approve any changes.

Tonight, the Martin County School Board will review proposed impact fees during a 6 p.m. workshop. The board could choose to approve the proposed fees at a board meeting that starts at 7 p.m. tonight. The workshop and meeting will be held at Martin County School District headquarters, located at 500 E. Ocean Blvd. in Stuart.

A county economic consultant, James Nicholas, has recommended increasing the school impact fees on a new 2,000 square foot house from \$4,555 to \$8,720. Impact fees also would go up on new stores and offices.

Currently, Osceola County has the state's highest school impact fees at \$9,981. The second highest rate belongs to Collier County.

St. Lucie, Indian River, Palm Beach counties are considering revising their fees, Nicholas' report states.

Nicholas has also recommended more than doubling the county's impact fees, which are fees local governments charge developers to pay for the cost of new roads, parks, schools and other facilities needed to accommodate growth.

The county's Impact Fee Review Committee, which consists of civic, business and local government leaders, has been discussing Nicholas's proposal.

The proposal is expected to go to the County Commission in October.



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