



[Return to story](#)

Culpeper weighing impact fees

May 20, 2008 12:15 am

BY DONNIE JOHNSTON
BY DONNIE JOHNSTON

If Culpeper County adopts a transportation impact fee ordinance as is being considered, everyone who builds a house--from developers to multi-generation landowners--could soon be paying as much as \$5,000 more for a building permit.

The Culpeper Transportation Impact Fee Committee yesterday heard from Stafford County Transportation Administrator Fulton deLamorton in an attempt to get some pointers in drafting such an ordinance.

Unlike Stafford, however, which has only two transportation-impact districts that make up less than half the county, Culpeper is looking at the possibility of including the entire county in either one or several districts.

"Anything that happens in one part of the county affects everybody in the county," said committee Chairman Larry Aylor, who also sits on the Board of Supervisors.

Culpeper, which has been designated as a high-growth county, has already been given permission by the state to adopt transportation impact fees. All that remains is for the county to develop a plan that supervisors will approve.

Aylor proposed impact fees when he first ran for the board three years ago and says he hopes they can be approved by the end of the year.

"The timing is perfect," said committee member John Coates, a retired Virginia Department of Transportation engineer and former chairman of the Board of Supervisors. "Growth has slowed and we need to come up with a plan and have it in place when the economy improves."

The proposed impact fees, which could be uniform countywide or vary from district to district, would be used to improve designated county roads that officials think would be impacted most by growth. These roads would be ones not included in VDOT's six-year plan.

The fees would be primarily aimed at developers, but if the ordinance is written as proposed, no one would be exempt--not even family land divisions.

By-right subdivisions would also be subject to the fees, which deLamorton said range as high as \$5,171 per single-family dwelling in Stafford's Southeast District.

Stafford has collected almost \$2.5 million in fees from its two districts, he said.

Loudoun and Fairfax counties are the only other counties with transportation impact fees. Spotsylvania is considering such a plan.

DeLamorton told the Culpeper committee that the only Stafford ordinance exception is for houses that burn and are rebuilt. Homes that are demolished and rebuilt are subject to fees.

Culpeper's ordinance, which should be developed by the Planning Department within the next several months, may or may not be that strict. Aylor acknowledged that a countywide version of Stafford's plan would make housing less affordable for lower- and middle-income families.

"That's something we've got to look at very closely," he said. "At this point, we haven't ruled out exemptions."

"To me, impact fees are here," said Frank Toomey, the committee's third member. "We need a draft ordinance."

Donnie Johnston:

Email: djohnston@freelancestar.com

IDENTIFY ROADS: Culpeper County Planner John Egerston and zoning technician John Cooley told the transportation impact fee committee that they plan to check before the next meeting June 16 to find the roads that growth will impact most. **FIGURE COSTS:** Then the planners will estimate how much upgrades will cost. These costs will determine the impact fees in each district. **DEVELOP PLAN:** After estimating costs, an ordinance will be drafted. Egerston proposed that the county be divided into two east-west districts using State Route 229 to U.S. 15 as a central boundary. Cooley also showed maps of three- and five-district plans.

Copyright 2008 The Free Lance-Star Publishing Company.