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Clay Considers Cutting Impact Fees

By

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Clay County Commissioners say they hope to stimulate the local economy, possibly by cutting at least one of their impact fees.

Clay County Government is working with a budget that's several million dollars in the hole.

"The next fiscal year which is 2009-2010, will probably be as bad as we've seen and possibly worse," says Commissioner Travis Cummings, who warns that some county services may be cut in the coming fiscal year.

But in a 5-0 vote, Cummings and the other members of the Clay County Commission are in favor of cutting the transportation impact fee - saying it will give residents more money to put back into the local economy, through home building and home buying.

"My biggest concern is on the commercial side," Cummings added. "I think that anything we can do to stimulate and attract any type of commercial growth during these times is very important."

Cummings says the transportation impact fee was enacted in January and not too many funds have been collected so far. And with construction at a lull, he doesn't foresee spending too many more dollars on roads in the near future.

There was only a small number of critics among the roomful of supporters for striking down the impact fee. Those against the commission's decision say it won't bring enough revenue back into the county and officials would end up raising fees or taxes again anyway.

County Commissioners say new fees or taxes can't be ruled out as they begin budget talks within the coming months.

Cummings says he's only in favor of keeping the transportation impact fee temporarily suspended, and the commissioners agreed to a two-year suspension. The planning commission will also rule on the decision, and it will go back to the commission for final approval in late April.

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Maybe it's time to take another look at Clay County.

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