

Commissioners to discuss impact fees on Wednesday

[By Emma Perez-Trevino, The Brownsville Herald](#)

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The City Commission will hold a public hearing Wednesday to discuss possible increasing impact fees, which are used to recoup the cost of extending water and sewer service to new development.

A decision as to whether to adopt an increase could also be made later that day.

The present \$280 fee charged developers per lot has been in place since 1990.

Studies that have been conducted by the city and BPUB show that the maximum fee should be from \$3,090 to \$3,486 per lot.

"I think it is time that you take action," Lupita Torres with Valley Interfaith told the commission at a workshop last week to discuss the fee.

The commission's special session Wednesday starts at 6 p.m. at City Hall, 1001 E. Elizabeth St.

There also will be a public hearing and possible action on adopting the revised land use assumptions within the Brownsville Public Utilities Board and the utility provider's revised capital improvement plan. Both issues are tied to the formulation of an impact fee.

Developers Neal Simmons and Renato Cardenas also went before the commission at last week's workshop.

Simmons pointed out that developers were doing quite well, "until about a year ago. Today, it's another picture."

Simmons said that studies project a 2 percent growth, which would mean the construction of 1,000 houses per year.

"We are doing about 400 a year in Brownsville. This projection (of 1,000) is 60 percent overstated," Simmons told the commission.

Simmons also said that banks are not lending him money and that he builds everything with his own funds.

Unlike what people might think, Simmons said that he does not have limitless credit.

"Ray Cardenas and myself are not going to give it (projected revenues from impact fees) to you because we don't have the market," Simmons said.