



Print this Page

[Return to story](#)

Culpeper moves on traffic impact fee

October 6, 2010 12:35 am

BY DONNIE JOHNSTON
BY DONNIE JOHNSTON

The Culpeper County Board of Supervisors took the first step last night toward becoming the first jurisdiction in Virginia to adopt a transportation impact fee ordinance since the General Assembly gave counties that option in 2008.

Following an hourlong presentation by county planner John Egerston, the board voted to ask the Planning Commission to add an amendment to the recently created comprehensive plan that would permit an impact fee service area.

That area would include the entire county as well as the town of Culpeper.

The board also authorized county officials to advertise a public hearing on the matter once the comprehensive plan is amended.

"We need some way to fund our roads," said Supervisor Sue Hansohn, noting that localities are getting fewer state and federal transportation dollars these days. "I think we should hear what the public has to say on this."

Chairman Bradley Rosenberger uttered, "Thank the Lord!" after the 6-1 vote was taken. Supervisor Steve Nixon voted in opposition.

"Impact fees have been the concern of the people of this county for some time," Rosenberger said. "They want to place the financial burden where it belongs. It's either this or raise real-estate taxes to pay for the roads."

Under the proposed ordinance that would apply to new construction, any commercial, industrial or residential unit would be charged a one-time fee of \$563.13 for every 10 vehicle trips it generates each day.

The number of trips are determined in information provided by the state.

The one-time fee would be paid when the building permit for the construction is obtained.

That figure is far below the \$2,136 per service unit fee that was recommended when the board rejected a similar proposal in December 2008.

Only a few exceptions were noted to the current plan. They included churches, schools, emergency service structures and family partitions.

Egerston estimated that had these transportation impact fees been in place during the recent building boom, they

would have generated about \$5.2 million between 2004 and 2009.

By state code, any impact fees collected must be designated to some particular transportation project, and Egerston suggested that if the ordinance is adopted, the money generated should go to the Western Outer Loop, the Nalles Mill Road realignment (near Route 666) and the town's Inner Loop.

The transportation impact fees would be assessed on by-right development and would not affect proffers which might be gained in rezoning cases.

Any proffers volunteered would offset traffic impact fees.

Nixon said that he was against the fees because small businesses are having a hard enough time as it is.

"I don't want to be the one who pushes those businesses out the door," he said.

Supervisor Larry Aylor, who chaired the five-person committee that created last night's proposal, said he did not think the fees were excessive enough to deter businesses from locating in Culpeper.

"[Businesses] really are not discouraged by it," Aylor said. "To them it is just another fee. We've worked diligently to have a fee that is reasonable."

Donnie Johnston:

Email: djohnston@freelancestar.com

Copyright 2010 The Free Lance-Star Publishing Company.