

5/25/2013 2:14:00 PM

Cottonwood contracts for impact fee analysis



Jon Hutchinson
Staff Reporter



COTTONWOOD - The City of Cottonwood has contracted with a consultant, Pat Walker, to prepare the analysis for renewed impact fees.

Cost of the work is expected to top \$50,000.

Unlike many municipalities, Cottonwood only charges new home builders for water and wastewater services, but not for libraries, police fire, parks,

streets or storm water. The Legislature, responding to the misuse of the tax on new construction in some Arizona jurisdictions, adopted new rules that are complex. A new law requires exhaustive analysis to show that impact fees for services only tax for new services in the area that receives the service.

VVN/Jon Hutchinson

The City of Cottonwood contracted with Pat Walker for legislatively mandated impact fee analysis.

Walker says a lot of work is required and the project needs a one-year lead time. The project takes about 12 to 15 months and the plan must be adopted by May 18, 2014.

There are a lot of "musts" in the legislation.

A municipality must develop an infrastructure improvement plan; must take into account outstanding debt; must adopt a 43-page model ordinance drafted by the Arizona League of Arizona Cities and Towns; must show nexus between service and development; must conform to the city's general plan; must be updated every five years; must use a professional consultant; and must have an audit every two years and include a stakeholder advisory

Cottonwood Councilman Tim Elinski, himself a home re-modeler, says "the big builders will pass on the fees, but the smaller developers can not."

Mayor Diane Joens was livid, calling the legislative requirement "an unfunded mandate." She said, "the Legislature has created a convoluted one-size fits all process that is unnecessary in my opinion."

Administrative Manager Rudy Rodriguez says the study should also look at the impact of new growth on roads.