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## Impact Fee Waiver Sought by Lake Hamilton to Aid Growth

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The Ledger

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LAKE HAMILTON | The Town Council in Lake Hamilton unanimously approved an agreement Tuesday with Polk County aimed at attracting new business to the town.

If also approved by the Polk County Commission, the agreement would create a "core improvement area" on 133 acres fronting both sides of U.S. 27 from Kokomo Road south to the town limit, which runs just north of the Kitto Lane intersection.

That would allow the council to waive local and county impact fees, except water and sewer fees, for new companies building in that area, said Town Planner Doug Leonard.

Any waiver would not affect the town, since it levies only a \$2,079 water impact fee on a new residence, Leonard said. New businesses would pay multiples of that amount, depending upon square footage.

The big savings would come in waiving county impact fees for transportation, parks and recreation and other areas.

"Transportation fees on commercial properties specifically are substantial," Leonard said.

The Florida Department of Community Affairs, the state agency responsible for growth management, told the town it could not approve new commercial development without providing sewer services, Leonard said. But the city has no sewer lines and would have to rely on Dundee to extend its lines up U.S. 27.

But before any of that can occur, the town must have a "a business in hand that's ready to provide jobs," he said. The waiver of impact fees would be a key element in getting such a commitment from a private company.

The agreement goes to the Polk County Planning Department, which normally takes one to two months to review it and make a recommendation to the county commission, Leonard said. The commission has approved similar agreements with many other Polk municipalities.

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