

Valley News Dispatch

Indiana, West Deer traffic impact fees plan gets OK

By George Guido
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INDIANA TOWNSHIP — Township planners from West Deer and Indiana took the final step on Monday by approving a plan to charge developers fees relating to transportation costs caused by new development.

The Joint Planning Committee forwarded a roster of traffic impact fees to their respective township supervisors.

If passed, developers in the western and central portions of West Deer would pay a \$336 per "trip" fee and a \$374 fee for the eastern sector of the township, which is located closest to the Pittsburgh Mills mall.

Indiana Township developers would pay \$1,140 per trip in all areas.

A "trip" is a unit of usage. For instance, if a developer wanted to open a gasoline station in Indiana Township and have 20 customers in what is projected as its peak hour, the developer would pay a one-time impact fee of \$22,800 to the township that would be placed in a fund.

The funds would be used to pay for transportation improvements caused by a development, such as a traffic signal or a turning lane.

After two years, the committee, which earlier forwarded its joint comprehensive plan to the supervisors, held a public hearing to approve the impact fees.

No members of the general public attended.

Each township would keep a separate bank account for the impact fees.

The committee has no further meetings planned, but could reconvene if township supervisors want to change the fee structure. That can be done once a year.

"Developers actually like this program, they liked one fixed cost," said Brad Elder of HRG Consultants of Cranberry, who developed the fee structure and comprehensive plan.

Elder said the comprehensive plans satisfy the requirements of state Act 209 of 1990, dealing with community planning and traffic impact fees in areas ripe for development.

Elder said the joint plan between Indiana and West Deer is the only one in the state that he is aware of. He estimated between 60 and 68 state municipalities have plans tailored to their communities.

Planning representatives from Indiana said only one Middle Road resident complained about the plan, while West Deer Manager Daniel Mator, who attended the meeting, said there were no complaints from residents in his township.

Indiana Township's supervisors are scheduled to vote on the comprehensive plan Sept. 14 and on the impact fee Oct. 12.

West Deer approved the comprehensive plan Aug. 18. Supervisors are expected to act on the impact fees Sept. 15.

If all of those approvals take place, both township solicitors will write an ordinance to institute the plans.

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