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Local

Prince William considering Virginia's highest impact fees

Dan Genz, The Examiner

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(File photo)

Board of Supervisors Chairman Corey Stewart says the fees would force developers to pay their fair share and is hoping election season pressure will buoy the plan.

Washington DC -

Prince William County Supervisors will consider imposing the state's highest impact fees on developers Tuesday night under a plan to substantially boost local road and school funding.

Supervisors delayed raising the fees 36 percent from \$37,719 per home to \$51,113 per home in the summer and decided to revisit the debate after analyzing the real estate slide for several months.

At the time, county budget analysts were expecting a 2 percent decline in real estate values this year, not the 14 percent tumble that has occurred.

Local governments across the state impose the fees on developers to help fund the road expansion, school construction and other services required to accommodate new residents.

Loudoun County currently has the state's highest impact fees at \$47,000, and Spotsylvania County is considering an increase to \$46,514.

"The price of land and construction of public buildings has gone up dramatically," said Steve Griffin, Prince William County director of planning. "School construction, fire station construction, park construction, and land acquisition all cost much more."

Homebuilders say the increase would discourage new development and hit them at the worst possible time.

They warn that last year's increase from about \$23,000 per home to the current rate is cutting into their profit margins and is partly responsible for the dearth of new development proposals.

"With the \$38,000 impact fee now, it wouldn't make sense to bring a project to the market," said Jason Dalley, vice president for the Prince William chapter of the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association. "Going to the \$51,000 impact fee is just unexplainable."

Board of Supervisors Chairman Corey Stewart said the fees would force developers to pay their fair share and is hoping election season pressure will buoy the plan.

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