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Supes expected to approve fees for road improvements

By *DAWN WITHERS*
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A plan to have developers help pay for road improvements in Monterey County is heading toward its final round of approvals.

The Monterey County Board of Supervisors is set to approve the Regional Development Impact Fee program Tuesday, a necessary step before the county can start collecting money by August.

Supervisor Fernando Armenta said he expects the board to approve the program, calling it a much-needed solution for the county's traffic woes.

"If we have less efficiency on the roads, we will all be tied up and stuck in traffic," Armenta said.

The impact fee program, designed by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, is part of the county's and its cities' effort to raise more than \$1 billion to catch up, over the next 25 years, with decades of deferred road improvements.

The fee, if approved by at least eight out of 11 city councils and the supervisors, will bring in \$328 million over its quarter-century lifespan. A half-cent sales tax going before voters in November, if approved, would raise another \$980 million over 25 years.

Mike Zeller, a TAMC transportation planner, said the city councils for King City, Monterey and Pacific Grove have already approved the regional impact fee program, with the remaining cities expected to consider it this month.

The program would go into effect 60 days after the last of the required approvals is obtained, Zeller said.

There are four zones in which developers will pay fees: Salinas, north county, south county and the Monterey Peninsula.

The program's per-unit development fees in Salinas would be about \$3,600, or \$200 less than in a previous three-zone scheme, while fees in north county would jump from \$3,800 per development unit to \$5,400.