

Wednesday, Nov 30 2011 11:01 PM

[OUR VIEW: Traffic impact fees are high but necessary](#)

Bakersfield leaders are right to oppose the idea suggested by local homebuilders to temporarily suspend the traffic impact fee in order to spur new home sales. The \$12,870 transportation impact fee developers have to pay for each new home is high, but for a reason. For years, the fee was much lower and, as a result, inadequate to build infrastructure to keep up with the pace of growth. The growth may have stalled but the need for infrastructure still exists and it's a hole the city will have to dig itself out of for years to come. Now is not the time to relent on the fees.

We are sympathetic to homebuilders whose companies face stiff challenges in today's market. But we find it hard to buy into the notion that removing the traffic impact fee will rescue the industry. There are too many other market forces at work to say with certainty that one fee is responsible for low demand.

The good news is, demand is gradually rebounding on its own. Sales of newly built, single-family homes inched up again in October, according to the U.S. Commerce Department -- the best pace of new-home sales activity since May. With that sales activity -- sure to eventually trickle down to Bakersfield -- will come the need for new infrastructure. Tinkering with the impact fees could invite lawsuits and jeopardize matching funds for the Thomas Roads Improvement Program -- both risks the city can't afford.

While we hope the city's newly created homebuilding task force can generate ideas to help the industry, removing the traffic impact fee should not be one of them. Homebuilders, and by extension homebuyers, must pay for roads, traffic signals and other infrastructure necessitated by the very development they've helped create.

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