



Anderson County Planning Commission hears impact fees proposal

By Heidi Cenac

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ANDERSON COUNTY — The Anderson County Planning Commission got a first look Tuesday at how much impact fees would cost residents and how the money would be used.

Impact fees would be charged to new homes and developments as a way to help cover the cost of infrastructure improvements related to growth, according to information presented at a planning commission meeting. The fee is different from a tax in that revenue generated by a fee could only be used for new infrastructure, said Dwayne Pierce of TischlerBise, the firm Anderson County hired to study the issue.

Using population, housing and job growth projections, TischlerBise figured that Anderson County would need to improve eight intersections a year for a cost of about \$12 million to maintain the existing standard in unincorporated areas of the county.

To cover that costs, the firm is projecting fees of \$1,266 per detached house and \$775 per attached home. Non-residential buildings would be charged per square foot with fees ranging from 18 cents per square-foot for mini-warehouses to \$2.57 for commercial businesses and shopping centers.

Nursing homes would be charged \$175 per bed. Schools would pay \$62 per student, and hotels would pay \$416 per room, according to the TischlerBise report.

The fee is based on vehicle miles traveled per development unit.

County council members Ron Wilson and Michael Thompson were at the meeting Tuesday night and said they actually expected the proposed fees to be higher.

County and South Carolina Department of Transportation engineers have compiled a list of 38 intersections they believe should be priorities for improvements as Anderson County grows.

The intersections are prioritized by County Council district, since that's how fees likely would be collected and spent. The money would have to be used within three years of collection. Improvements paid for by impact fees must be useful for at 5 years and cost \$100,000 or more, according to state law.

Some of the intersections currently rated as top priorities include: Midway Road and Crestview Road in County Council District 1; Old Williamston Road and Snow Road in District 2; S.C. 20 and S.C. 282 in District 3; Concord Road and Harris Bridge Road in District 4; Whitehall Road and Dixon Road in District 5; S.C. 81 and Circle Road in District 6; and U.S. 29 and Old Williamston Road in District 7.

Like most of the proposal, the intersection priority list is subject to change. Mr. Pierce also suggested

Tuesday that the commission consider combining County Council districts in southern Anderson County, where there is less growth and similar traffic patterns, for the purposes of collecting and spending impact fees to avoid collecting more money than needed.

Commissioners also questioned whether it would be possible to divide the impact fee by square footage for residences.

Planning commission members have been asked to review the TischlerBise proposal and send suggested changes to County Planning Director Jeff Ricketson before the commission's Dec. 11 meeting. The commission likely will conduct a public hearing on Dec. 11 and decide what to recommend to County Council.

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