



Collaboration leads to victory on county impact fee policy

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Real estate developers spent years wrangling with county officials about transportation impact fees but both sides hailed a new program that was finalized Thursday.

“This is probably the most complicated policy this board has dealt with in my five years,” said commission chairwoman Amy Lathen. “There is still work to be done.”

That work is to decide how much reimbursement from previously collected fees is due to six developers. County engineer André Brackin will meet with those six and decide how much is owed to each by Nov. 29.

“We’re going to have tofu instead of turkey on Thanksgiving so we don’t sleep,” said New Generation Homes president Mark Watson, who served on the committee that determined program details with county officials. “This needs to be resolved with the six groups but we’re very close.”

Developers are charged a fee to help pay for road improvements leading to new developments. But if developers improve a road beyond the requirement, they’ll earn credits in the new program that can be applied to future developments. They can also apply for a reimbursement, or sell or trade credits to other developers.

The new program offers payment options to developers, including various installment plans set up through Public Improvement Districts.

“This is a good solution,” Watson said. “This will be a model for other jurisdictions. It’s very creative.”

Victoria Chavez, the county’s principal transportation planner, said, “This program is literally unique across the country. Duncan and Associates, who do impact fees in a lot of states, said this is unique for two reasons — because of the PIDs (improvement districts) and that it was developed in a collaborative fashion.”

Assistant county attorney Lori Seago called the program “strong, legally sound.”

The county began collecting fees several years ago under the Small Area Traffic Report program for the Falcon area. That continued with several other areas until commissioners established a countywide interim fee of \$1,500 per single-family dwelling in 2010. They doubled that on Sept. 18.

The cost now is \$3,132, higher than the state average of \$2,557 and slightly lower than the national average of \$3,239.

That cost could increase with inflation or decrease as Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority projects are completed and fewer improvements are needed in certain areas, Brackin said.

Brackin said six groups have applied for reimbursements: Lorson Ranch Metropolitan District, Central Marksheffel District, Constitution Heights District, Woodmen Road Metropolitan District, Baptist Road RTA Developers and Falcon Area Developers.

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