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Someone has to pay for all the water and sewer connections, along with roads, curbs and gutters in Dickinson's new housing developments. During the last oil boom, the city covered much of the cost and got burned when the boom went bust and people moved away. This time around, the city isn't taking a big financial risk.

The city commission has approved an impact fee program that also minimizes how much property developers will pay for those services. Much of the cost will fall on homeowners. That means special assessments of up to \$46,000 per property owner. It's one thing if it's all part of the price of a new home. But it comes as an absolute outrage to those who already live there.

"It aggravates me. It aggravates me. I mean, my husband has been in business here for 40 years. I mean, we've been a stable person in this community and now they're gonna do this double whammy on us," says Cherie Steffan, a homeowner.

Although property owners along 22nd Street are being charged this special assessment to provide the infrastructure improvements, the city says they will see their property values increase as a result.

"Some of the properties on that side of the road don't have any services at all, and because they're going to benefit from the road, the sewer, and the water, that means they'll be assessed special assessments or impact fees because their property benefits," says Shawn Kessel, City Administrator.

The city says those who want to avoid the assessments can sell their property and pass the bill along to the buyer. But homeowners say with that kind of bill hanging over their heads, they doubt they could sell their homes for what they're actually worth.

The amount that is charged to the homeowners can vary depending on which type of assessment the city chooses to use. It can be based on equal assessment of all owners, square footage or linear footage.

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