

Editorial: Collier County Commission ... impact-fee enticement worth more discussion

By Staff Reports

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Collier County commissioners eye a stimulus plan of their own, with impact-fee breaks for new businesses that move into space now sitting empty.

County staff members are proposing a two-year test period for waiving fees above and beyond the base level of growth mitigation charged to developers before they know whether tenants will be medical, insurance, accounting or real estate offices, for example. Each generates its own amount of traffic and pays accordingly.

For a medical office of 1,500 square feet, the savings would come to \$41,000, county officials say.

Higher impact fees for demand-driven water and sewer service would remain in effect.

The proposal coming to commissioners today is aimed at absorbing some of the vacant inventory while perhaps helping businesses to decide to go ahead and invest in our community and stimulate our economy. If a business prefers to start its own project from scratch, that would be done at the going impact-fee rate. Either way, no business would get a free ride.

The concept sounds promising — certainly worthy of a thorough public airing — and consistent with commissioners' approach to impact fees these days that acknowledges we are all in this together. Creative thinking is required and is coming forward.

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