

Hanford Sentinel

City fee cuts could provide business boost

By Eiji Yamashita eyamashita@HanfordSentinel.com | Posted: Monday, June 20, 2011 11:38 am

Hanford city leaders are expected to take action on Tuesday to adopt an economic stimulus option that would temporarily reduce impact fees for new construction.

Impact fees help offset the infrastructure expansion costs that new development brings, such as police, fire and utilities. But officials worry that the fees - which cost nearly \$11,500 per single family residential home and \$1.4 million per shopping center in Hanford - can also be a turnoff for businesses.

The consensus among city council members has been to reduce the impact fees by 30 percent for 18 months. But the council will also be considering 10 percent and 20 percent reduction options as well.

Fiscal impacts of each option according to a staff report:

1 \$462,000 at 90 percent recovery

1 \$924,000 at 80 percent recovery

1 \$1.39 million at 70 percent recovery

In addition to lowering the impact fee, the council is also looking to approve the deferral of impact fees for multi-family residential projects as well as a sales tax incentive program for developers.

The council will also review and discuss proposed redistricting plans at Tuesday's meeting.

As a result of the 2010 Census data, the city is having to redraw the existing electoral boundaries for Hanford's five districts to equalize the population among all districts. But unlike 10 years ago, there is no citizen's advisory committee driving the process.

The City Council in April put the city attorney in charge of the key task, saying it would simplify the process and cut costs. The city attorney has estimated it would cost \$10,000-\$15,000.

Officials say the city attorney has since reviewed the data and hired Greg Gatzka, director of the Kings County Community Development Agency, to draw proposed maps for the council.

Three alternative maps are being presented to the council Tuesday, but no formal action will be taken.

The city is required by statute to hold at least two public hearings on the proposed maps, but the council has decided to hold three hearings, two to receive public input and one to vote on the approval of a map. The first hearing will be on July 5, the second on July 19 and the final hearing on Aug. 2, when the council is expected to take a vote.

In other business, the council will consider:

1 Approving a request for an annual procession permit for Momentum Racing for California for the first annual Central California Criterium Road Race on Aug. 21.

1 Authorization to use Edward Byrne Memorial JAG grant funds for the purchase of equipment for the Hanford Police Department.

The Hanford City Council meets every first and third Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Civic Auditorium, 400 N. Douty St.

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