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# NEWS

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## Paying for progress Twin Falls still unsure about impact fees

By Jared S. Hopkins  
Times-News writer

The results of a \$44,500 study of whether impact fees are needed in Twin Falls are in, but officials said the findings aren't endorsed by the city.

The study, which is legally required before impact fees - costs for growth assessed to developers and builders - can even be considered, includes maximum fees for builders such as \$4,910 for a single-family home. It also recommends a long-range capital improvement plan.

Last week, the city released the six-month study prepared by BBC Research & Consulting of Denver. It identified how impact fees could be created and implemented. Some Twin Falls City Council members already support the idea of charging fees. Land use experts consider the fees to be beneficial to a community over time because they generate money to pay for growth, make growth more orderly, help developers predict costs and promote job growth.

The city is considering the fees for streets, public safety uses such as fire and police and parks. Under state law, they can't be assessed for schools.

Local builders and other opponents of the fees say they will slow building, increase starter homes.

Taking into account expected growth patterns, the research group found that the streets and parks - would bring the city \$36.11 million in added revenue through

Fees would vary by the type of development. Retail buildings would be assessed \$4.51 per square-foot. A big-box store developer, for example,

The four kinds of fees are tied to capital improvement plans that include expenses:

- **Police:** To maintain the current level of 1.6 police officers per 1,000 people, the city would need about \$1.7 million eligible for impact fees. Much of the capital improvement cost is \$8.9 million, that is already needed.

"We already have a police station that is busting at the seams," said Community Development Director. "We already need a police station - today."

- **Fire department:** Improvements to the fire department, meanwhile, are almost \$7.4 million in capital improvements over the next decade, with about half that amount

- **Parks:** The city plans to add 108 acres of parks. Future parks and recreation projects worth \$7.2 million would be eligible for impact fees. A big chunk of the capital budget for the city is planning for a \$3.6 million growth-related community park.

- **Streets:** All improvement projects in this area are growth-related. Future capital improvements worth \$3.6 million would be impact fee eligible. Most projects are on Filer and Falls avenues.



ASHLEY  
A member of the city council recently announced plans for a \$36.11 million amount

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Kimberly Road to Blue Lakes Boulevard. The plan includes eight traffic signals.

All told, the city must invest \$32 million over 10 years to keep pace with expect discretionary projects.

The study is based on growth estimates done for the 2007 Comprehensive Pla houses and apartments will increase by about 25 percent over the next decade

Humble predicted that the city will likely adopt impact fees, but is not likely to le

"We should've been looking at impact fees years before," he said, adding that t Falls.

Officials don't expect to take action until 2008. The law requires them to form a the exact fee structure to the council. The same committee will recommend the and zoning commission, which then makes a recommendation to the City Cour

In addition to calculating the potential range of impact fees, the study also expl raising taxes, passing bonds or having developers and the city negotiate fees c

Tony Hughes, president of the Magic Valley Builders Association, said his grou unlikely that the maximum fees would be levied.

"We're really not sure what the course is going to be," he said. "It seems every about."

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