

## Chandler


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## Opinion: Time to start rewriting capital-project funding

by **Southeast Valley editorial board** - Aug. 1, 2011 09:32 AM

Our View

One thing on which cities agree: New rules for impact-fee collection and use will be wide-reaching. But how, exactly, will cities operate under the law? That remains to be seen. Chandler is concerned that Senate Bill 1525 may force it to cancel or delay needed road and park improvements and is hiring a consultant to help it weed through ambiguous wording.

Gilbert doesn't expect the law to vastly impact water- or sewer-line construction but also is scratching its head over how to build parks. It is seeking a consultant for its parks master plan that can suggest creative financing methods.

**Bottom line:** Though the law went into effect last week, cities have until January to comply. That may seem like a long time, but roughly five months is a flash, given that cities basically have to reinvent capital-project financing.

### Mayors must be in mix

Another effort to expedite: Meetings with lawmakers about the upcoming session. Mayors complained that they were blindsided by SB 1525 last year. But they shouldn't have been: Impact-fee reform had been percolating for years, and lawmakers had met months before with homebuilders to discuss solutions. Cities were noticeably missing from the table.

**Bottom line:** Even if the session doesn't start until January, key pieces of legislation begin to take shape months beforehand. This is one case where mayors can't be too proactive.

## More hopefuls, more split votes

Three candidates are challenging Sen. Russell Pearce, R-Mesa, in a Nov. 8 recall. It's good to see such eagerness. But the more that run, the more the vote will be split - and the harder it will be to accomplish what 10,365 registered District 18 voters wanted when they signed recall petitions.

**Bottom line:** It's not surprising independent candidates are ignoring bipartisan calls to have only one challenger in this race. West Mesa always has had a rebellious side. But, ironically, the candidates who aim to unseat Pearce could very well be what keep him in office.

## Chandler office space filling up

Chandler's office-vacancy rate dropped to 8 percent at the end of June from 20.6 percent at the same time last year. Companies such as Safelite and PayPal have filled a million square feet of office space. Mayor Jay Tibshraeny notes that it is less expensive to move into existing space than to build new. Interest in city real estate also picked up when Intel announced expansion plans earlier this year.

**Bottom line:** Credit goes to Chandler's economic-development team, which made it a mission last year to fill as much office space as possible. The city is seeing the fruits of its labor.

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