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Government

County's 'Mobility Fee' Stalls in New Port Richey

The city council unanimously rejects an innovative proposal to implement a regionalized impact-fee system because, right now, it doesn't assess any transportation-related levies.

By [John Haughey](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 23, 2011 [Print](#)

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Pasco County's proposed "[mobility fee](#)" program will get nowhere in New Port Richey.

The city council on Tuesday unanimously rejected the county's proposal to adopt a regionalized mobility fee program to replace transportation impact fees developers pay for road improvements.

The county now assesses new homes \$10,320 in transportation impact fees. Under the mobility fee system, that fee would be reduced to \$1,425 for each new home in areas designated as "**town centers**," such as New Port Richey.

Problem is, New Port Richey doesn't assess a transportation impact fee and, as council members said Tuesday, it doesn't make sense to impose any new fees in a moribund housing market.

When it comes to transportation impact fees, regardless of what it is called, the city has a "competitive advantage – we don't have one," [Deputy Mayor Rob Marlowe](#) said.

"I don't see how it would be beneficial for the city in any way," Councilwoman **Ginny Miller** said. "The city has been successful in annexing properties because it does not have a transportation (impact) fee."

The county mobility fee system would only be implemented in unincorporated areas, but cities have been encouraged to join in on a voluntary basis. Pasco County Chief Assistant Attorney **David Goldstein** presented the proposal to the council April 20.

Pasco County Commissioners tentatively endorsed the program on Tuesday and are expected to formally approve it July 12 when they meet in Dade City.

Rather than assess all new homes in the county the same one-time levy to improve growth-stressed roads as transportation impact fees do, the mobility fee system divides the county into five "market areas" and bases fees on vehicle miles traveled.

Those miles – or VMT – measure the level of travel roads in the five market areas using a complex formula to determine mobility fees.

Fees collected in each market area are earmarked for improvement projects in that particular zone and provide incentives for infill development rather than sprawl because levies are lower in areas with the infrastructure to support growth.

Which means mobility fees in the county's more developed south and west areas – which includes New Port Richey – would have lower fees than those elsewhere.

The program also exempts "employment land uses," specifically industrial and office development, in the county's south and west areas from paying any mobility fees. It does not exempt retail because these land uses generally do not generate the family wage jobs industrial and professional occupations do.

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