



ROBERT G. CASSILLY

Harford County Executive

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Harford Executive Cassilly Proposes Higher Impact Fees on New Home Developers to Help Expand School Capacity

BEL AIR, Md., (Sept. 16, 2024) - Harford County Executive Bob Cassilly has sent proposed legislation to the County Council increasing the county's existing impact fees on developers of new homes. Revenue from impact fees must be used to help expand public school capacity.

Harford's current impact fees are unchanged from 2005 despite a nearly 300% increase in the cost of school construction over the same period.

Last year Harford County's existing impact fees generated \$2.7M while the actual cost of school capacity projects that year was \$6.8M. The difference of \$4M was funded by general county revenue, which comes from taxpayers.

In response to decades of such shortfalls, County Executive Cassilly in February convened a workgroup and hired a consulting firm experienced in analyzing impact fees for counties in Maryland and nationally. The work group included the council president and representatives from the school system, county government, the business community and concerned citizens.

The consultant, TischlerBise, studied the cost of expanding school capacity to serve the student yield expected from different types of residential housing and made recommendations based on that data. Specifically, the report recommended raising the fees paid by developers of single-family homes, townhouses, apartments and other multi-family homes, and mobile homes. Even

with the increases, Harford’s impact fees remain lower than similar Maryland jurisdictions, including Frederick and Anne Arundel counties.

The TischlerBise report is available online at

<https://www.harfordcountymd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/26695/Harford-County-School-Impact-Fee-Study-91024>.

The work group supported the increases as recommended. However, a \$10K per unit cap on impact fees set for Harford by state law will limit the fees to that amount for single-family homes and townhouses until such time as the General Assembly lifts the cap. Accordingly, the legislation sets the new fee schedule as follows:

| | Existing | New |
|------------------------|----------|----------|
| Single-family detached | \$6,000 | \$10,000 |
| Townhouse/duplex | \$4,200 | \$10,000 |
| All other residential | \$1,200 | \$7,989 |

The legislation also raises the county’s impact fees annually based on increases in the cost of school construction established by the Maryland Interagency Commission on School Construction.

Per state law, Harford’s impact fees can only contribute to the cost of additional school capacity. Capacity projects may be in the form of new schools or renovations that add capacity to existing schools.

If adopted, the increased fee revenue would help fund school capacity projects underway or planned for Harford County public schools, including the new Homestead-Wakefield Elementary School and a new elementary school that will be combined with the Harford Academy. Land will also need to be purchased for a new elementary school to be constructed in Aberdeen to handle growth that has been approved by that municipality.

“For too long Harford’s impact fees have failed to reflect the true cost of expanding school capacity, unfairly adding to the burden on taxpayers. With this legislation, new home developers will begin to pay more of their fair share,” County Executive Cassilly said. “I would like to thank

TischlerBise and our workgroup members for their efforts and I encourage the County Council to introduce the bill and move it forward in a responsible and timely manner.”

A copy of the bill is online at

<https://www.harfordcountymd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/26694/Impact-Fee---Proposed-Legislation->.

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