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Fees OK'd for substation

Western El Dorado County's new developments will bear cost of new sheriff's facility.

By Cathy Locke - Bee Staff Writer

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With the need for new public facilities outstripping funding, new development will have to chip in for a sheriff's substation to serve western El Dorado County communities.

The Board of Supervisors last week unanimously approved a public safety impact fee program to cover new development's share of the cost for the planned facility.

Laura Gill, county chief administrative officer, said the program is expected to generate about \$2.3 million over the next 18 years. The fees, payable with the building permit application, will be assessed for residential and nonresidential development in El Dorado Hills, Latrobe, Rescue, Cameron Park and Shingle Springs.

The 15,000-square-foot substation, to be built north of Highway 50 off Bass Lake Road, is expected to cost about \$6.5 million, with the remaining money coming from other county sources.

Gill said \$1.6 million currently is included in the county's capital improvement plan for the project.

Adoption of the fee, which becomes effective April 30, followed a Public Safety Facilities Impact Fee Study prepared by the MuniFinancial consulting firm. The study was conducted to determine new development's fair share of the capital costs associated with growth.

A one-time fee of \$215 will be charged per new single-family home, and \$198 per multifamily unit. For nonresidential construction, the fee per 1,000 square feet is \$44 for offices, \$32 for commercial construction and \$17 for industrial development.

"We will assess the fee until we have money available to build the substation," Gill said.

John Thomson, president of the Bass Lake Action Committee, said the group supported the fee.

"The people already living there are paying the greatest part of the cost (of a substation) from property taxes," he said. "We don't mind. We'd like to have something closer than Placerville."

Auditor-Controller Joe Harn said he had worked with Sheriff Jeff Neves to pursue the fee study, which cost about \$12,000.

Harn urged the board to approve the fee program, arguing that the county has great need for new facilities and capital improvements but limited funds.

He and Neves said they had discussed the fees with representatives of the development community and the Building Industry Association.

"It's generally widely supported by the building industry and developers, because they see (the substation) as a benefit," Neves said.

Supervisor Rusty Dupray, whose district includes portions El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park, said the dollar amount for the public safety impact fee is minor compared with other impact fees the county has levied on new development.

The traffic impact mitigation fee for a new home is \$28,870 in El Dorado Hills and \$37,000 in the Cameron Park-Rescue area.

Supervisor Ron Briggs said he considered a fee for local law enforcement facilities a great investment, adding that he would like to see a similar program for new development in the Georgetown Divide area.

Though developers voiced no opposition to the new fee, Shingle Springs resident Art Marinaccio said the accumulation of fees makes it increasingly difficult to provide affordable, work force housing in the county.

"You need to be much more reluctant than I'm sensing (you are) to keep piling fees on new construction," he said.

Gill said the fees will be re-evaluated annually and adjusted for inflation based on the California Construction Cost Index.

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