

Proposed Methodology for Establishment of Mitigation Fee within Hillsborough County

Mitigation Fee Concept

The proposed methodology shall establish a framework for developing a Mitigation Fee in Hillsborough County to replace the current Concurrency Management System. The Mitigation Fee is based on the concept that projects will be assessed a fee based on the amount of vehicles miles traveled per trip on the transportation system. The initial concept was to develop one fee that would apply County-wide. After further consideration the approach should be to divide the County into Districts or Zones and apply the appropriate fee per District or Zone. The rationale for this method takes the following into consideration:

1. There are areas of the County that are primarily employment centers. They serve as attractors to all residents living in and outside of the County; they attract a significant amount of commute trips. Downtown Tampa, Westshore and the University Area are a few examples.
2. There are areas in the County that are primarily residential areas where very little employment is available. These areas produce commuters that may travel over 25 miles one way each day to reach their places of employment. They have a greater impact on the roadway system because they travel farther. Some examples are New Tampa, Fishhawk and DG Farms.
3. There are also areas in the County that are primarily built-out and provide a mix of both employment and residential areas. There are still developable properties within these areas as well as opportunities for redevelopment. Some examples include Town & Country, Brandon and Carrollwood.

Establishing the Mitigation Fee is only one step in the process of developing a new Concurrency Management System. The complete process will include the collection of fees, the distribution of the collected revenues and implementation of the identified improvements. The following is an outline of how staff proposes to conduct the study:

Step 1: Establishment of Fee

Step 1 will involve the creation of a technical committee of peers to develop and refine the calculations, model inputs and assumptions used in developing the Mitigation Fee. This committee should consist of representatives from Hillsborough County Transportation and Public Works Staffs, FDOT, CUTR and the MPO. Establishing the Fee will involve a three step process.

- a) Developing a cost per trip.
 - Required Input Data - FDOT Generalized Cost Tables
 - FDOT Generalized Capacity Tables

- Desired Result – An average cost per vehicle trip.
- b) Developing an average trip length by planning area.
- Required Input Data - Hillsborough County Planning Area Map
- Tampa Bay Regional Transportation Model
 - Desired Result – An average trip length by Planning Area.
- c) Developing a cost of vehicle mile of travel.
- Required Input Data - Average cost per vehicle trip.
- Average trip length by planning area.
 - Desired Result – An average cost per vehicle mile of travel.
(Mitigation Fee)

Step 2: Establishment of Policy Committee

Once the initial Mitigation Fee has been developed it will be presented to a Policy Committee consisting of members of Hillsborough County government, The Tampa Bay Builders Association, Citizen Representatives and MPO members. This group will have the first opportunity to review assumptions and ask questions and assess the feasibility of the fee. Based on recommendations from the Committee additional refinements may be required before the findings are presented to the BOCC and presented in public workshops.

Step 3: Distribution of the Mitigation Fees

The goal of the Mitigation Fee is to fund mobility improvements within Hillsborough County. Hillsborough County Government is responsible for the construction of roads, sidewalks and trails under the jurisdiction of Hillsborough County. HART is responsible for providing local transit service and all State Road improvements are under the jurisdiction of FDOT.

Based on the stated goal, a combination of improvements may be required to address mobility within the designated Planning areas. A one size fit all approach will not be applicable. The Policy Committee will have an active role in determining the strategies for distributing the revenues collected from the fee.

Step 4: Implementation of the Identified Improvements

Construction of improvements will significantly lag behind development because it will take time to collect sufficient funds to pay for an improvement; and, the County's construction process takes longer and is more expensive than having private developers constructing the same improvements. These projects would have to be prioritized with all other County road improvements. The lag could be greater than five years for significant improvements to begin. This is important to recognize because this will be a major shift in County Policy of having improvements concurrent with development.

Outstanding Issues

If the County does adopt a Mobility Fee there are still several issues that will have to be addressed such as the following:

1. Once the fee is adopted the County's Public Works Department and HART will be responsible for constructing the necessary capacity improvements. Public Works may not have the necessary man power to take on the responsibilities within a timely manner. A manpower assessment will be required by the Public Works Department to determine the resources needed to implement the additional improvements.
2. Will the funds be used only in the Planning Area where they are collected? If that's the case, construction of projects will take even longer.
3. The Mobility Fee would not address improvements required for site access and operational improvements needed for safety.
4. The implementation of the Mobility Fee may eliminate the option of long term Development Agreements and the certainty in the development process associated with vesting entitlements.
5. The Mobility Fee is designed only to address the impacts associated with new development. Funding of the backlog and roadway maintenance will need to come from other resources.