

## County caves on builder impact fee increases

Letter to the editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 06.29.23

System development, or impact fees, are charges imposed on new developments to help fund the necessary infrastructure and services required to accommodate the impacts of growth. They serve to ensure that the costs associated with development are fairly distributed among developers and alleviate the burden on existing residents and taxpayers.

In NC, water, sewer, roads, schools, drainage, parks, open space and greenways are funded, in part, by builder development fees. It's no secret that Brunswick County is again the [fastest-growing county](#) in NC. It's also no secret that we will need to upgrade and expand this infrastructure to support this growth. And, of course, it's no secret that we're seeing more traffic, more demand on all our resources.

But, what IS a secret is that the County Commissioners were considering tripling our System Development Fees. Our current fees range from \$1,000 - \$3,000 per unit and are in line with neighboring states. This increase would have generated much-needed revenue to ease the taxpayer burden on current and future infrastructure projects. Even an adjustment for inflation of 5-7% would not have provided enough revenue to keep up with our rapid growth.

The Brunswick County Association of Realtors (BCAR) joined forces with the Business Alliance for a Sound Economy (BASE) to lobby the County Commissioners and beat back ANY increase in system development fees. Boasting on their website, ([ncbase.org](#)): "At their FY2024 budget workshop on June 5, the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners and management were clear that they are NOT recommending changes to the System development fees as previously proposed. Without our involvement, "excessive" fee increases would have gone into effect July 1. "

BCAR CEO Cynthia Walsh emailed member realtors praising BASE's lobbying efforts. "Thank you to Jim DeMay for drafting the Business Alliance for a Sound Economy's (BASE) formal comments on this issue." The developers' lobbying efforts paid off. The builders were taken care of, and the taxpayers taken to the cleaners.

Why the lack of transparency on impact fees and who do the County Commissioners represent?

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