



The TUMF Whisperer – The Truth about Impact Fees

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Impact fees are good. Impact fees are bad. Somewhere in between lies the truth. Programs that are well conceived, managed and implemented can be effective at delivering timely infrastructure and provide predictable financial assumptions. Ill-conceived or incomplete programs are inefficient and ineffective.

In Riverside County, California, the Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) program was created to address cumulative impacts of growth. TUMF originated in the Coachella Valley but has been adapted in a separate but similar program for western Riverside County. These are examples of good and effective programs. They're good, not perfect.

Although some view impact fee programs for their revenue potential, the legislative intent is to provide mitigation in a timely and equitable manner. Reconciling the legal and physical environment with the needs of developers, transportation planners, and the travelling public is a balancing act.

Mitigation impact fee programs are required to undergo periodic reviews. Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) has been conducting a multi-year comprehensive review and expects to prepare final recommends by mid-2015. The WRCOG TUMF was last updated in 2009 and has not had inflationary adjustments since then. Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) has just kicked off their update with proposed changes to be considered in 2016. Each version of the program has a different set of assumptions, rules, governing bodies, and purpose profile to address their respective regional needs.

During the coming months, I will track progress of program updates, highlight successes, and identify challenges. Information will be presented in a fair and balanced manner. Although TUMF is the primary focus of this column, I will delve into other impact fee and infrastructure funding programs from time to time.

About the Author

Paul Rodriguez advises public and private clients regarding transportation planning and funding strategies as a Principal at Rodriguez Consulting Group. Mr. Rodriguez brings unique perspective to a variety of issues as a consultant, elected official, and former regional agency staffer. Comments, questions or suggestions for future topics can be sent to Paul@RodConGrp.com.