

October 7, 2009

Reno City Council
Reno Planning Commission
City of Reno

Dear Council Members and Commissioners:

The Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce, Northern Nevada's largest business organization, appreciates your efforts to hold a workshop in which our members and the building industry can sit down and have a discussion with you about our current economic difficulties and the future of our region. The Chamber and our partner organizations stand ready to work with you on our shared challenges.

The Chamber believes that a reasonable and fair impact fee on new construction is a transparent, equitable way to ensure that the public safety needs of our community are met. We believe that these fees, coupled with a stable, ongoing tax base paid by residents, are part of a sound public fiscal policy.

However, any imposition of impact fees should be based on a complete, thoroughly researched 10-year capital improvement plan (CIP). That plan should include realistic population and service levels that reflect the dramatic decrease in population growth that we have experienced the last few years and projections for the foreseeable future. The Chamber also believes that our members in the building community should be consulted when determining the projected cost of building police and fire facilities, as some believe the costs in the current proposed plan do not seem to reflect market realities.

The Chamber urges the Planning Commission and City Council to defer any decisions on the proposed CIP until the police and fire departments conduct a study of service levels and needs and until the concerns outlined above have been addressed. The business community is willing to work with you on an equitable solution, but we all must agree on a cohesive, 10-year CIP in order to be successful.

Additionally, the Chamber opposes using the exaction process while simultaneously imposing impact fees on project developers. Any impact fee proposal should apply to every builder equally and individual project developers should not be asked for additional fees to pay for such things as equipment and maintenance.

Slowing down this process, creating a complete, 10-year CIP, and eliminating exactions would ensure that current and future developers have a predictable, stable set of assumptions on which to base their decisions.

Finally, all of us should be aware that increasing impact fees in this current environment would not only make every new home more expensive for our residents, but will also not generate any significant revenue in this environment. We urge the Council and Commission to resist any fee increases during these unprecedented times.



Again, thank you for giving us the opportunity to address these issues in a public workshop and for your service to our city.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Kurkul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Doug" and last name "Kurkul" clearly distinguishable.

Douglas R. Kurkul
CEO