

LIVERMORE

Fees reduced to lure businesses

City hopes to stimulate growth in 'green' and high-tech industries

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LIVERMORE — Hoping to keep businesses from leaving town and to spur creation of new, high-tech ones, Livermore leaders are moving forward with a plan to temporarily reduce the costs of city fees.

The program, approved Monday by the City Council, will target high-tech and high-wage companies, as well as businesses displaced by new development.

Included under the high-tech umbrella are for-profit groups that are developing or using advanced science, technology or manufacturing processes.

"These are the types of projects that, with just a little help from the council, will go from being an idea to something that is (actually) hap-

pening here," said Community Development Director Marc Roberts. The proposed fee breaks are just the sort of things businesses say are needed when city officials ask them how they can retain them, Roberts added.

Council members directed city staff to draft the necessary ordinances for the changes, for which a public hearing will be held at a later date.

"I think this is an important step for us to take," Mayor Marshall Kamena said of the plan, which would also streamline Livermore's development review process, making it faster for industrial uses involving so-called "green" technology to set up shop.

The new program would essentially codify similar accommodations the city has made for recent developments, Kamena added.

For high-tech, high-wage and displaced companies that are building new facilities within city limits, conditional-use permit fees

would be reduced by two-thirds, while traffic impact fees would be reduced by one-third. Impact fees are the developer-paid fees used to fund roadway and other improvements that are needed to support new development.

For high-tech and displaced companies moving into existing buildings in Livermore, traffic impact fees would be reduced by half. Conditional-use permit fees would be reduced by two-thirds.

In an effort to get residential developers to finish planned projects, the program also would reduce by one-third the affordable housing "in-lieu" fee for new housing projects. That fee is charged to residential developers who opt to pay a set amount of money to the city instead of actually building the required affordable housing on site.

In order to qualify for any fee reductions, developments would have to be under construction within two years of the city's adoption of the program.

West County Times

06/30/11 Vol 100 # 30