



## ob·fus·ca·tion

/ äbfə'skāSH(ə)n/ noun

1. the action of making something obscure, unclear, or unintelligible.
2. Ex. "when confronted with sharp questions they resort to obfuscation"

Perhaps the most perplexing example of the city staff's double-dipping efforts is what we have named, "*the confusion play*". A pretty straightforward play that is **often employed by politicians** who don't want to answer a question, confusing the situation so much that the listener gives up (and just dies a little inside). Here's how the city staff is trying to employ the tactic here with these impact fees:

A simple enough equation governs this whole question of what fee is needed?

**Estimated total infrastructure need in \$**

-----divided by-----

**Estimated number of total units expected to be built**

On the surface, this could produce a fair dollar-per-new household number that allows the decision-makers to act and govern. However, through the use of a \$300,000+ consultant and an extremely complex report that can't be completely explained in detail, the city can obfuscate the results. Are they really trying to just get what they need? No, their goals are to run the city as profitably as they can - even if it works to the detriment of the citizen's pocketbooks. Here is how they are using this equation to obfuscate the truth to the city council members and the population by making a few adjustments to the above equation. Over-estimating total infrastructure needs by adding old debt, including developer-covered roads, and more (inflated numbers) divided by an under-estimated number of total units that will be built over the next 10 years(an extremely small number). This alters the equation and adds money to the city coffers.

## **Example:**

Let's say the real need is \$20,000,000 and the real # of units to be developed is 10,000. Then the actual potential Max Impact Fee should be  
 $\$20,000,000/10,000=\$2,000/\text{unit}$

But, if we add in a bunch of fake needs and say the need is \$50,000,000 and then we act real pessimistic on the growth and say only 5,000 units will be built, then the number is radically different. Under this obfuscated scenario the Max Impact Fee would be  $\$50,000,000/5,000=\$10,000$  per unit. This DRIVES the percentage number that results in far higher fee demands on developers and it feeds poor information to city-council members. Ultimately, the city will take a larger payday out of developers, business owners, and eventually out of the citizens of College Station.

*REMEMBER - The citizens are already paying for this anyway.  
The City is double-dipping and then they keep dipping.*



### **DIP ONE:**

All the citizens pay property taxes and sales tax to the city, and you've probably noticed that we have a beautiful city with many new city buildings. Our property taxes are sufficient to keep us thriving. (Even if you rent, you pay property taxes because it is factored into your rent-- and your rent will go up from Impact Fees.)

### **DIP TWO:**

Calculating the Max Impact Fee includes over \$30,000,000 in projects the citizens are already paying for in the current tax rate. The law allows them to include "old debt" that is still being paid out of the current tax rate. So, unless they lower the tax rate, then we are paying for it twice.

### **DIP THREE:**

Calculating the Max Impact Fee includes a massive amount of infrastructure the city knows it will never build. Up to 60% of the infrastructure included in their cost estimate will be built and paid for by the developer. This is simply factored into the price of the lot or home - the city NEVER pays for it, so they are making the citizens pay for it a third time.

### **DIP FOUR:**

When calculating the Max Impact Fees, a hyper-inflated amount of potential infrastructure is used for the costs and a grossly understated amount of growth is used to divide it by. This creates the impression of greatly over-stated needs. The result? A government surplus that can be used for whatever they desire. And the citizens are paying for it a fourth time.

### **DIP FIVE:**

Finally, new Impact Fees make prices go up significantly AND everyone's taxable values increases, therefore the city gets more revenue AGAIN! The citizens pay for it a fifth time!

Our City Hall is about to make a big mess. The City Council needs to be notified of this going on and make moves to stop it. It's up to us, the Citizen of College Station, to make sure they get the message loud and clear: 'stop double-dipping me!'

Let your City Council members know:

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**Sample Script for phone or email:**

*Good afternoon City Council Member - I am a citizen of College Station and I care about growth, small businesses, and keeping College Station affordable for all of us. Would you please commit to stopping the Impact Fees? Stop double-dipping me!*  
*Sincerely -*