



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Title: Code Compliance Assistance Grant Program

Preferred Agenda: February 13, 2024

Submitted By: Blair Larsen, Community & Economic Development Director

Reviewed By: Kelcey Young, City Manager

Type of Action: Resolution ____ Motion X Roll Call ____ Other ____

Relevant Code/Policy: SHMC Title 8

Towards Council Goal: N/A

Attachments: Policy and Rules for the Proposed Sweet Home Code Compliance Assistance Grant Program
Proposed Sweet Home Code Compliance Assistance Grant Application Form

Purpose of this RCA:

The purpose of this request for Council action is to obtain approval for a proposed Code Compliance Assistance Grant Program.

Background/Context:

During previous discussions between the City Council and Staff, Councilors have expressed interested in providing assistance to homeowners in their efforts to bring their properties into compliance with the Sweet Home Municipal Code.

Based on these conversations, Staff have developed the attached Policy and Rules document and application form for a proposed Sweet Home Code Compliance Assistance Grant Program.

The intent of the program is to provide help for low-income households with common code violations, such as open storage, accumulated trash and junk, tall grass and weeds, and junk vehicles. The grant is structured to be a reimbursement grant—that is, no payment will be issued until the violations are resolved, and the City receives proof of payment to a business or contractor for the work needed to resolve the violations. The grant program pays 50% of eligible costs, but awards are capped at \$500.

To be eligible, property owners must show proof of their low-income status and the violations present on their property. Applicants cannot be renting their property, and the grant cannot pay for demolition, modifications or repairs to structures, or removal and disposal of recreational vehicles or travel trailers. In addition, repeat grant awards are not permitted, and the violations must be stable—that is, the applicant cannot be causing or allowing the problem to grow larger.

The Challenge/Problem:

How does the City assist property owners with bringing their properties into compliance with the Sweet Home Municipal Code, and which property owners should it assist?

Stakeholders:

- Sweet Home Residents – Residents deserve to live, work and shop in, on and around clean, well-maintained properties.
- Sweet Home Property Owners – Property owners are responsible for maintaining their properties.
- Sweet Home City Council – Council members are the voice of the citizens they serve and represent and are responsible for ensuring members of the public are heard, especially when it has long term effects on their property.
- Sweet Home City Staff – Staff are tasked with enforcing City Code and using public funds responsibly.

Issues and Financial Impacts:

Financial impact is difficult to measure, as it is unclear how many property owners will apply. In addition, some property owners may not have the ability to wait for reimbursement of their costs. Funding is limited to what is available in the Code Abatement budget, which has been exhausted for this fiscal year.

Elements of a Stable Solution:

An ideal outcome would be set a City policy regarding how much help the City can give, and to which property owners, in order to bring more properties into compliance with the Sweet Home Municipal Code.

Options:

1. Do Nothing – Create no grant program, and provide no assistance for code compliance beyond the punitive measures already in place.
2. Approve the Sweet Home Code Compliance Assistance Grant Program as Proposed, and direct Staff to begin administering the program, as permitted by the Adopted Budget.
3. Approve the Sweet Home Code Compliance Assistance Grant Program with Specified Changes, and direct Staff to begin administering the program, as permitted by the Adopted Budget.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends option 2: Approve the Sweet Home Code Compliance Assistance Grant Program as Proposed, and direct Staff to begin administering the program, as permitted by the Adopted Budget.