

**City of Sweet Home**

Community and Economic Development Department- Planning Program

3225 Main Street, Sweet Home, OR 97386 541-367-8113

Staff Report Presented to the Planning Commission

REQUEST: The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to establish a private micro-farm school on the subject property. The proposal would begin with a preschool operated within the existing residence and would expand into the property's accessory buildings as the school grows.

Pursuant to SHMC Chapter 17.10.040(K), a conditional use permit is required for uses that are compatible with the intent of the zoning district and whose impacts do not exceed those of other conditionally permitted uses identified in Chapter 17.10.

The subject property, identified as Tax Lot 1500, is approximately 317,988 square feet (7.3 acres) and is located within the Residential Low-Density (R1) Zone.

APPLICANT AND**PROPERTY OWNER:** Barbara and Rex Dunn**FILE NUMBER:** CU26-02**PROPERTY LOCATION:** 4290 Airport Rd, Sweet Home, Oregon 97386; Identified on the Linn County Assessor's Map as 33A, Tax Lot 1500.**REVIEW AND****DECISION CRITERIA:** Sweet Home Municipal Code Section(s) 17.10.040(K), 17.104, 17.126**HEARING DATE & TIME:** September 3, 2026, at 6:30 PM**HEARING LOCATION:** City Hall Council Chambers at 3225 Main Street, Sweet Home, Oregon 97386**STAFF CONTACT:** Angela Clegg, Planning & Building Manager
Phone: (541) 818-8029; Email: aclegg@sweethomeor.gov**REPORT DATE:** August 27, 2026**I. PROJECT AND PROPERTY DESCRIPTION****ZONING AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATIONS:**

Property	Zoning Designation	Comprehensive Plan Designation
Subject Property	Residential Low Density (R-1)	Medium Density Residential
Property North	Commercial Highway (C-2)	Highway Commercial
Property East	Residential Low Density (R-1)	Medium Density Residential
Property South	Residential Low Density (R-1)	Medium Density Residential
Property West	Residential High Density (R-3) Commercial Highway (C-2)	High Density Residential Highway Commercial

Floodplain Based on a review of the FEMA flood insurance rate map; Panel 41043C0914G, dated September 29, 2010, the subject property is not in the Special Flood Hazard Area.

Wetlands: Based on a review of the Statewide Wetlands Inventory and a review of the National Wetlands Inventory Map, the subject property does not contain inventoried wetlands.

Access: The subject property has frontage on Airport Road.

Services: The subject property has access to City water and sewer services in Airport Road.

TIMELINES AND HEARING NOTICE:

Mailed/Emailed Notice: July 23, 2026

Notice Published in Newspaper: July 29, 2026

Planning Commission Public Hearing: August 20, 2026

120-Day Deadline: November 20, 2026

Notice was provided as required by SHMC 17.126.01

II. COMMENTS

Jaysen Cunningham Building Dept:

A change of occupancy will be required for the portion of the home being used as a Micro-Farm School. Other than that, no other comments at this time.

Matt Cook CEDD Engineering:

CEDD Engineering has no comment at this time. Property is tied into an 8" concrete sewer main on Airport/43rd Ave, with access to a 16" PVC water main in the same location.

Dominic Valloni & Balke Patterson Public Works Dept.

No comments from Public Works.

Public Comments: No comments as of the issuance of this Staff Report.

III. REVIEW AND DECISION CRITERIA

The review and decision criteria for a conditional use permit are listed below in bold. Staff findings and analysis are provided under each review and decision criterion.

17.104.050 DECISION CRITERIA

A Conditional Use shall be approved if the applicant provides supporting evidence that all the requirements of this Development Code relative to the proposed use are satisfied, and demonstrates that the proposed use also satisfies the following criteria:

A. The use is listed as a conditional use in the underlying district and complies with the development requirements of the underlying zone.

Applicants Comment: A Private School is listed as a conditional use in the underlying district and permits the addition of more children than we now qualified for as a preschool. As

stated in Chapter 17.10.040-F, Public and Private schools do require approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

Staff Findings: The subject property is located within the Residential Low Density (R-1) zone. Private schools are identified as a conditional use in the R-1 zone and must obtain approval through the Conditional Use Permit process, as outlined in Chapter 17.10.040(F).

The applicant's proposal to operate a private school meets this description and is consistent with the development requirements of the underlying zone.

B. The characteristics of the site are suitable for the proposed use considering size, shape, location, topography, and location of improvements and natural features.

Applicants Comment: The characteristics of our property is very suitable for the proposed Private Farm school. We plan on starting with a Christian, Farm preschool using Montessori Method. As interest and funding grow, we plan on adding a small elementary and secondary school in our two existing shops, brought up to code of course, creating a Private Micro School. For a school of this caliber we feel Sweet Home, and our location specifically, is a perfect place to start. We have 7 acres of flat land, of which 2 acres are in yard, gardens and an orchard. About 5 acres are in pasture with a small barn attached. We are in a good location being inside the city limits, and our property is easily accessible and convenient for families dropping off a child for school close to home. Our home is a cozy single-story ranch style home with a covered patio for outside learning and play on wet days. We plan to create a children's garden for exploration of planting, growing and harvesting. As well, we will add small farm animals to our small flock of chickens. We would love to include a small farm stand near the fence to the right of our home and far back from the road for the children and parents to sell the produce we grow, encouraging entrepreneurship and a way for the community to be involved and support our children's education. The stand will only be open hours when school is not in session. Perhaps evenings and weekends.

Staff Findings: The R-1 zone establishes minimum dimensional standards for development, including a 7,000-square-foot lot area, a minimum lot width of 70 feet, required setbacks, and a maximum lot coverage of 40 percent. The subject property is approximately 317,988 square feet and is improved with a single-family dwelling and several accessory structures totaling 8,501 square feet of building footprint, resulting in a lot coverage of approximately 3 percent. The site therefore exceeds all minimum dimensional requirements of the underlying zone.

The applicant proposes to establish a private micro farm school on the property, beginning with a preschool within the existing dwelling and expanding into accessory structures as enrollment and programming grow. Only a portion of the dwelling would be used for classroom space, and any change of occupancy required under building code would be addressed through the appropriate permitting process.

Given the site's size, flat topography, existing improvements, and location within city limits, the property is well suited to accommodate the proposed private school use. Adequate space exists for outdoor learning areas, gardens, small-scale farm animal husbandry, and future expansion into existing accessory buildings. The site is easily accessible and provides appropriate space for student drop-off and pick-up.

Staff recommend a condition of approval requiring that any introduction of farm animals comply with the standards in SHMC Title 6 (Attachment C). Staff also recommend a

condition of approval that any farm stand or on-site sales of products adhere to SHMC Chapter 17.94 (Attachment D).

With these conditions, staff find that the size, shape, location, topography, and natural features of the subject property are adequate to accommodate the proposed use. Staff conclude that the application satisfies the applicable criteria.

C. The proposed development is timely, considering the adequacy of transportation systems, public facilities and services, existing or planned for the area affected by the use.

Applicants Comment: Our Private Farm School is extremely timely with the growth of Sweet Home, especially with relation to the homes in our neighborhood and with the current interest in alternative forms of education. We are ideally positioned in a neighborhood of family homes. With a substantial housing development nearby in process of being completed and having the basic infrastructure already in place. It seems we are well located to serve the families in this growing area of Sweet Home. And we intend on becoming an asset to our neighborhood and our city.

In order for there to be as little disruption to the flow of traffic in our neighborhood we would ask that the parents approach the school from Airport Road to the East and depart onto 43rd Street to the South of the school. School hours will be from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday which are some of the least busy hours of traffic in our area. Low traffic is due I believe, in part to Public School busses running earlier in the morning and neighbors getting home from work around 5, or later.

Staff Findings: The applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit to establish a private micro farm school on the subject property. The proposal would begin with a small preschool operating within the existing residence, with future expansion into accessory buildings as enrollment increases.

Any growth beyond the initial in-home preschool or expansion into accessory structures is likely to trigger Site Development Review. Staff recommend a condition of approval requiring that any increase in the number of students or any use of accessory buildings for school purposes be reviewed through the appropriate land use process prior to implementation.

The applicant has indicated that accessory structures may be utilized for future phases of the school. Staff have clarified that such use would require building permits and a change of occupancy classification. To ensure compliance and clarity as the school grows, staff recommend a condition of approval requiring that all future expansions be reviewed and permitted as necessary.

Regarding transportation and public services, preschools are not eligible for school zone designations. Traffic flow to and from the site, particularly at the intersection with Airport Road and 43rd Avenue, has not yet been fully addressed. The applicant has not indicated whether traffic control measures such as a stop sign or yield sign are proposed at the driveway entrance. Additional detail from the applicant may be necessary to evaluate potential traffic impacts associated with student drop-off and pick-up.

The applicant stated that parents would be directed to approach the site from Airport Road and exit onto 43rd Avenue, and that school hours (8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday) align with lower-traffic periods in the neighborhood. This circulation pattern may help minimize congestion and conflict with peak residential or school bus traffic.

The surrounding area has adequate existing infrastructure, and improvements are already in place to support development in this part of Sweet Home. Based on available information, the proposed use appears timely and compatible with the existing transportation network and public services, provided the recommended conditions are met.

With the listed conditions of approval, staff conclude that the application complies with the applicable criterion regarding timeliness and adequacy of transportation systems, public facilities, and services.

D. The proposed use will not alter the character of the surrounding area in a manner which substantially limits, impairs, or precludes the use of surrounding properties for the primary uses listed in the underlying zone.

Staff Findings: The proposed private micro farm school would operate within an existing residence on a large, 7-acre property located in the R-1 zone. The surrounding area is characterized primarily by single-family residential uses. The initial scale of the preschool, limited to a portion of the existing dwelling, is compatible with the residential character of the neighborhood and does not introduce activities that would substantially limit or impair surrounding properties' ability to continue functioning as single-family homes.

Future expansions into existing accessory buildings or increases in student enrollment will be subject to additional review to ensure ongoing compatibility with the neighborhood.

Recommended conditions of approval require that any expansion beyond the initial in-home preschool be reviewed through the appropriate land use process, ensuring that impacts remain consistent with residential expectations and do not alter the fundamental character of the area.

The proposed use does not involve new construction, significant exterior modifications, or changes to the site that would visually or functionally conflict with surrounding residential properties. Outdoor learning activities, small-scale gardening, and limited farm animal husbandry are consistent with low-density residential uses, particularly given the property's size and existing layout. Conditions regarding animal compliance (SHMC Title 6) and farm stand operations (SHMC Chapter 17.94) further ensure that such activities remain small-scale and compatible with nearby homes.

Traffic associated with the proposed preschool is expected to remain modest and occur during off-peak hours. The applicant intends to direct parent circulation in a manner that minimizes conflicts with neighborhood traffic patterns. While additional information may be needed regarding driveway control measures, the anticipated level of activity at the scale proposed is not expected to impede neighboring residential uses.

Based on the size of the property, the nature of the proposed use, and the recommended conditions of approval, staff finds that the private micro farm school will not alter the character of the surrounding residential area in a manner that substantially limits, impairs, or precludes the use of adjacent properties for permitted residential uses. Staff conclude that the application complies with these criteria.

E. Any negative impacts of the proposed use on adjacent properties and on the public can be mitigated through application of other code standards, or other reasonable conditions of approval that include but are not limited to those listed in this chapter.

Applicants Comment: The only negative impacts of a Private Farm School in our location that I could foresee would be an increase in the number of parents with children walking or bicycling to our school. We may need a crosswalk or a bike lane to the South down 43rd Street. And a school zone would be a nice addition also, although we are on a corner and driving speed must necessarily slow near our home/school.

Staff Findings: The proposed private micro farm school is expected to operate at a modest scale within an existing residence on a large residential property. Based on the nature of the proposed use and the characteristics of the site, staff have not identified negative impacts to adjacent properties or to the public. The project does not involve new construction, significant exterior alterations, or activities that would generate noise, traffic, or visual impacts beyond what is common within a low-density residential neighborhood.

The applicant has suggested that future improvements such as a crosswalk or bike lane along 43rd Avenue, as well as a school zone designation, may benefit safety and accessibility. This requested conditional use is not eligible for school zone dedications under current standards. Additionally, installation of public infrastructure, such as crosswalks or bike lanes, would require separate review, engineering feasibility, and City approval, and cannot be imposed through this land-use decision. Staff note that the applicant's desired traffic safety measures may be revisited in the future if the school grows or transitions into an eligible educational use.

To ensure continued compatibility and compliance, staff have included several conditions of approval. These include requirements that any future increase in student enrollment or use of accessory buildings be subject to appropriate land use review; that the introduction of farm animals comply with SHMC Title 6; and that any farm stand or on-site sales meet the standards in SHMC Chapter 17.94. These conditions provide mechanisms to prevent or mitigate any potential impacts as the school develops.

Traffic associated with the proposed preschool is expected to remain modest. The applicant intends to direct parents to approach from Airport Road and exit via 43rd Avenue, which may reduce congestion and conflicts with peak neighborhood traffic. Any additional mitigation needed in the future can be addressed through subsequent review processes tied to expansion.

With these mitigation measures and conditions in place, staff find that any potential negative impacts associated with the proposed use can be adequately addressed through existing code standards or reasonable conditions of approval. Staff conclude that the application satisfies Criterion E.

17.104.060 CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

In approving a conditional use permit application, the Planning Commission may impose, in addition to those standards and requirements expressly specified by this chapter, additional conditions determined to be necessary to assure that the proposed development meets the decision criteria as well as the best interests of the surrounding properties, the neighborhood, and The City as a whole.

A. These conditions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. ***Requiring larger setback areas, lot area, and/or lot depth or width;***
2. ***Limiting the hours, days, place and/or manner of operation;***
3. ***Requiring site or architectural design features that minimize environmental impacts such as noise, vibration, exhaust/emissions, light, glare, erosion, odor or dust;***
4. ***Limiting the building height, size or lot coverage, or location on the site;***
5. ***Designating the size, number, locations and/or design of vehicle access points, parking areas, or loading areas;***
6. ***Increasing the number of required parking spaces;***
7. ***Requiring street rights-of-way to be dedicated and streets, sidewalks, curbs, planting strips, pathways or trails to be improved, so long as findings in the development approval indicate how the dedication and/or improvements, if not voluntarily accepted by the applicant, are roughly proportional to the impact of the proposed development;***
8. ***Limiting the number, size, location, height and lighting of signs;***
9. ***Limiting or setting standards for the location, design, and/or intensity of outdoor lighting;***
10. ***Requiring fencing, screening, landscaping, berms, drainage, water quality facilities or other facilities to protect adjacent or nearby property, and the establishment of standards for their installation and maintenance;***
11. ***Designating sites for open space or outdoor recreation areas;***
12. ***Requiring the protection and preservation of existing trees, soils, vegetation, watercourses, habitat areas, drainage areas, and historic or cultural resources;***
13. ***Requiring ongoing maintenance of buildings and grounds;***
14. ***Setting a time limit for which the conditional use is approved.***

B. Uses existing prior to the effective date of this Chapter and classified in Title 17 as a conditional use shall meet the criteria for modification of approved plans and developments.

C. The Planning Commission may require the applicant of an approved conditional use permit to enter into an agreement with The City for public facility improvements.

Staff Findings: This provision of the SHMC allows the Planning Commission to impose conditions of approval. This is an opportunity for the Planning Commission to determine if conditions are needed to ensure compliance with the "decision criteria as well as the best interests of the surrounding properties, the neighborhood, and the city as a whole. To ensure compliance with the standards listed in the SHMC, staff has included proposed conditions of approval listed in Section IV of this report. These conditions are primarily a customized list of existing local, state, and federal standards that apply to the application.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

If the Planning Commission approves this application, staff recommend that the conditions of approval listed below be required in order to ensure that the application is consistent with the findings in the Review and Decision Criteria (Section III) and as required by the Sweet Home Municipal Code and other provisions of law. Appeals to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) may only be based on Review and Decision Criteria contained in Section III.

Recommended Conditions of Approval for CU26-02:

1. Any introduction of farm animals shall comply with the standards in SHMC Title 6.

2. Any farm stand or on-site sales of products shall comply with SHMC Chapter 17.94.
3. A change of occupancy shall be obtained for the portion of the residence designated for Micro-Farm School use prior to opening the school.
4. Any increase in student capacity, addition of grade levels beyond preschool, or use of accessory buildings for school activities must undergo review through the appropriate land-use process before the change is implemented.

V. PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

In acting on a Conditional Use permit application, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing at which it may either approve or deny the application. If the application is denied, the action must be based on the applicable review and decision criteria. If approved, the Planning Commission may impose conditions of approval. Staff's recommended conditions are included in Section IV.

Appeal Period: Pursuant to ORS 227.175, the Planning Commission may establish an appeal period of not less than 12 days from the date the written notice of the Planning Commission's decision is mailed. Staff's recommendation is that the Planning Commission's decision on this matter be subject to a **12-day appeal period** from the date that the notice of decision is mailed.

Order: After the Planning Commission decides, staff recommend that the Planning Commission direct staff to prepare an order that is signed by the Chairperson of the Planning Commission. The Order would memorialize the decision and provide the official list of conditions (if any) that apply to the approval if the application is approved.

Motion: After opening the public hearing and receiving testimony, the Planning Commission's options include the following:

1. Move to approve application CU26-02; which includes adopting the findings of fact listed in the staff report and the conditions of approval listed in Section IV of the staff report, the setting of a 12-day appeal period from the date of the mailing of the decision, and hereby direct staff to prepare an order to be signed by the Chair to memorialize this decision.
2. Move to deny application CU26-02; which includes adopting the findings of fact (specify), including the setting of a 12-day appeal period from the date of mailing of the decision, and hereby direct staff to prepare an order to be signed by the Chair to memorialize this decision.
3. Move to continue the public hearing to a date and time certain (specify); or
4. Other.

VI. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Subject Property Map
- B. Site Plans
- C. SHMC Title 6
- D. SHMC Chapter 17.94
- E. Application Narrative