



CITY OF SWEET HOME CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

January 28, 2025, 5:00 PM
Sweet Home City Hall, 3225 Main Street
Sweet Home, OR 97386

Mission Statement

The City of Sweet Home will work to build an economically strong community with an efficient and effective local government that will provide infrastructure and essential services to the citizens we serve. As efficient stewards of the valuable assets available, we will be responsive to the community while planning and preparing for the future.

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

Roll Call

PRESENT

Mayor Susan Coleman
President Pro Tem Josh Thorstad
Councilor Chelsea Augsburger
Councilor Ken Bronson
Councilor Aaron Hegge
Councilor Angelita Sanchez

ABSENT

Councilor Dylan Richards

PLANNING COMMISSION

Vice Chair Jamie Melcher
Commissioner Joe Graybill (5:17 PM)
Commissioner Eva Jurney
Commissioner Nancy White

STAFF

Jason Ogden, City Manager Pro Tem / Chief of Police
Cecily Hope Pretty, Assistant City Manager Pro Tem
Blair Larsen, City Attorney
Angela Clegg, Planning & Building Manager
Adam Leisinger, Special Projects Manager
Greg Springman, Public Works Director

MEDIA

Sarah Brown, The New Era

GUESTS

Garth Appanaitis, PE, Project Manager, DKS Associates

Joint Work Session with Planning Commission - Transportation System Plan

a) Transportation System Plan

Garth Appanaitis stated he would provide an update on the Transportation System Plan (TSP) and North Sweet Home Area Plan (NSHA). He provided an overview of the two projects and their purposes. He stated that a key component of the plans was to identify project opportunities.

Mr. Appanaitis reviewed three potential options for the NSHA: commercial/employment mix, employment south/residential north, and riverfront hospitality. He noted that common elements between the three options were related to transportation, neighborhood design, and parks and trails. He stated that flexibility in the area for uses was a priority based on public input. He reviewed maps showing the boundaries of each potential option and different scenarios for transportation connectivity from east to west.

Mr. Appanaitis provided an overview of the TSP and that projects were identified based on intersection capacity; safety; pedestrian, bike, and Safe Routes to School; and rail crossing improvements. He discussed options for funding transportation projects including System Development Charges (SDCs), grants, and state gas tax. He reviewed maps of potential projects in the following categories: bicycle/multimodal, pedestrian, rail, vehicle capacity, and safety. He noted that the TSP did not focus on residential streets but that those projects could also be a priority for the City. He highlighted that the intersection at Pleasant Valley Road and Main Street currently did not meet vehicle capacity standards.

Mr. Appanaitis reiterated that the City's two consistent funding sources for transportation projects were the state gas tax and transportation SDCs. He noted that the majority of state gas tax was needed for operations and maintenance costs with little remaining for capital improvements. He stated that operations and maintenance costs increased year over year. He noted that additional potential revenue sources included a local gas tax or a street utility fee, which were utilized by some neighboring communities. He stated that revenues from a local gas tax would vary based on the amount of fuel sold and the tax rate. He noted that a local gas tax would require voter approval. He stated that a street utility fee was typically added to residents' monthly utility bills. He noted that such fees were typically designated for maintenance and repair of the street system, freeing up state gas tax funds for capital improvements.

Mayor Coleman asked how long the City and DKS Associates had been working on the TSP. Mr. Appanaitis replied that it had been approximately two years. Mayor Coleman asked how the process had been initiated. Mr. Appanaitis replied that the City was awarded a planning grant through TGM to update the TSP and develop the NSHA.

Councilor Bronson expressed concern with the limited revenues available to complete the potential projects. Mr. Appanaitis stated that it was a common issue statewide and that the City would be constrained to approximately \$3.1 million in projects over the 20-year plan if no other revenue streams, including grants, were pursued.

President Pro Tem Thorstad asked how other cities across Oregon were generating revenues besides new taxes. Mr. Appanaitis replied that aside from a local gas tax or utility fee, some cities utilized local bond programs. He noted that it was important to identify projects that are high priority for the community in order to gain public support. He added that Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) were also an option. He stated that grants have increased in popularity as a primary way to obtain funding. President Pro Tem Thorstad asked of real estate development to generate revenue. Mr. Appanaitis stated that opportunities to increase the tax base or bring new jobs, such as could be supported by the NHSA, may provide additional revenue.

Vice Chair Melcher asked if the NHSA had been considered for an Urban Renewal District. Mr. Appanaitis stated that the current constraints on access to the NSHA posed a challenge but could be thoughtfully considered.

Councilor Sanchez asked Mr. Appanaitis to define operations and maintenance. Mr. Appanaitis replied that it was typically for personnel, general materials, and minor maintenance. Councilor Sanchez asked of the different mechanisms for local gas taxes, utility fees, and SDCs. Mr. Appanaitis stated that SDCs were designed to cover the costs to install and maintain new infrastructure to support new development. He added that SDCs were limited to expansion of the existing system. He stated that a local gas tax was subject to voter approval and would be collected at the pump, then reimbursed to the City. He stated that a utility fee would be subject to City Council approval. Councilor Sanchez asked if the property owners in the proposed NSHA provided feedback. Mr. Appanaitis replied that they had and that they desired flexibility to embrace different opportunities and to react to market forces. Councilor Sanchez stated the importance of a plan to set a vision for the future and remain competitive for grants, but it was not prescriptive in that the City would be limited only to what is in the final plan.

Councilor Hegge asked if SDCs scaled based on the type of development. Mr. Appanaitis stated that there was a rate schedule based on the type of use and transportation SDCs were based on how much traffic the development was anticipated to generate.

Councilor Augsburger noted that the potential project at Pleasant Valley Road and Highway 20 was marked as a capacity project but there were significant safety concerns. Mr. Appanaitis stated that they had received significant feedback from the community regarding those concerns and that the capacity categorization would not be an issue for future opportunities. He added that it was a project with multiple merits that could be considered for various opportunities and would require significant coordination with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) for approval.

Councilor Sanchez asked of the likelihood of successfully coordinating with ODOT for Pleasant Valley Road and Highway 20 improvements. Mr. Appanaitis stated that a formal process for analysis and design would be required, as well as appearing before the Mobility Advisory Committee. He added that any additional vehicular crashes may elevate the project for consideration, but timelines were variable depending on the conditions at any given time. He recommended that the City continue to coordinate with ODOT following the adoption of the TSP.

City Attorney Larsen asked if working with the Area Commission on Transportation would improve the chances of a successful project. Mr. Appanaitis replied that it would be a helpful platform. He recommended coordinating with Linn County due to Pleasant Valley Road's connection north of the river.

City Manager Ogden asked of the timing requirement to adopt the TSP. Mr. Appanaitis stated that this current process was part of a time-limited grant through the TGM and the consultant contract for the process would be expiring in March.

Mr. Appanaitis requested feedback on the proposed plans for the NSHA.

Mayor Coleman expressed support for the riverfront hospitality option.

Councilor Sanchez expressed support for what had been proposed to date for the TSP and for any option that was most favorable to the property owners in the NSHA.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:16 PM.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Manager Pro Tem – Ex Officio City Recorder