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City mulls fee to pay for street repairs

Council takes steps toward charges on new developments

BY CHRISTINA LENT
The Beaverton Valley Times, Jul 12, 2007

The city is considering a funding plan that would help pave the way for needed small transportation projects across Beaverton.

That plan could include implementing an additional street systems development charge for new projects.

Beaverton's City Council voted Monday night to spend up to \$19,500 to hire consultant Don Ganer of Don Ganer and Associates to develop a transportation SDC methodology report. The plan will include a recommended capital improvement program.

As part of his contract, Ganer will work with city staff and a task force to draft a plan that would include proposed SDC rates.

The team would also identify and recommend issues for consideration when identifying potential projects that could be eligible for funding.

From that information, the city will review its long list of transportation projects in need of safety and capacity improvements, set priorities and create a proposed SDC project list to present to the council and public for review.

Monday's council action was the first of many steps city leaders are considering to get projects funded and traffic moving.

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“We need long-range, dependable funding to meet our transportation needs,” said Council President Dennis Doyle.

Councilor Bruce Dalrymple agreed and said it was important for the city to look into its options for funding sources.

“I’m looking for a measured, balanced approach,” he said.

‘Woefully low’

Systems development charges are typically based on a measurement of the demand that a new development places on streets and the capital costs required to meet that demand, said Ganer.

“The charge is a one time fee collected when building permits are issued,” Ganer said. “It’s not like a tax paid every year.”

New development in Washington County already pays for a portion of the costs of county and city transportation improvements through a countywide transportation impact fee tax program approved by voters in 1990.

The TIF program collects taxes from new developments based on all or a portion of its impact on the nearby transportation system, primarily on the number of trips generated by the new development.

“Washington County’s TIF was not designed to collect 100 percent of growth-required transportation costs,” Ganer said. “It includes caps on the number of trips that may be used in determining the TIF assessment for some types of development projects.”

Those TIF funds also have limitations on what projects they can be used for. To be considered, projects must be on a county-approved list.

Cities must also spend at least 50 percent of the TIF revenue they receive on arterial roads, even if capacity improvements for collector streets are a higher priority, Ganer added.

“The transportation impact fee is woefully low from what our needs are,” said Mayor Rob Drake.

Paying its share

Adding a city street development charge would help collect up to 100 percent of growth-related costs while generating revenue that can support projects on the city’s priority list, he said.

Ganer most recently helped the city of Sherwood to adopt a street SDC. He is also working with the Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District on its SDC program.

In the coming months, Beaverton officials will consider joining them in adopting a SDC.

“It’s always difficult to increase any costs, but this cost is a direct correlation – new developments that bring additional traffic, will pay a higher fee,” Drake said. “The feedback we’ve received from folks supports the idea of development paying its share of the costs for growth.”

One drawback to be considered down the road will be the potential of creating transportation development fees in Beaverton that are higher than



those in comparable communities, Ganer said.

Adding a SDC in addition to the county's TIF "could potentially reduce attractiveness for businesses and residents for whom development fees are a primary concern," he added.

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