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City Council considers fee rollback for downtown businesses

February 16, 2010

By Warren Kagarise

City Council members could extend a break to merchants who open businesses in downtown Issaquah. The council will consider legislation Feb. 16 to exempt businesses from the city transportation impact fee for the first 10,000 square feet of floor area.

DownTown Issaquah Association Executive Director Greg Spranger said he welcomed the proposed extension. He said the fee rollback helps reduce the enormous overhead costs associated with opening a new business, like a restaurant. Furthermore, the break makes downtown spaces more attractive than they would have been otherwise, Spranger said.

Council Land & Shore Committee members considered the legislation Feb. 8. Spranger and Issaquah Chamber of Commerce CEO Matt Bott encouraged officials to delay the termination date.

The committee complied, and sent the measure to the full council for consideration. The council was expected to consider the legislation Feb. 16, after The Press' deadline.

City Planning Director Mark Hinthorne said committee members seemed enthusiastic about the measure.

Developers pay the fees to build new projects; the money offsets the additional cost the city pays to provide services to the development. If a tenant changes the use for a building, he or she also pays impact fees.

The council intended the fee rollback to be a temporary measure. Proponents said the measure helped make downtown attractive to businesses despite the economic downturn.

The rollback ends March 1, but the City Council will consider legislation to delay the termination date to March 1, 2011.

The city earmarked \$1.58 million set aside for the defunct Southeast Bypass project to offset the fee. About \$1.3 million remains available for continued assistance.



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Written by Warren Kagarise · Filed Under [Local News](#)

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