

## City impact fee options revised

By CAMERON RASMUSSEN Staff writer | Posted: Thursday, December 29, 2011 10:00 am

SANDPOINT — In an exhaustive four-hour meeting, city officials spent half the time making final revisions to the revised impact fee system last Wednesday.

One of the biggest city projects to be completed before new council members are sworn in, the new impact fee system is based on extensive work by the impact fee advisory committee and the TischlerBise consulting agency.

The new fee structure breaks fees out more proportionally by home bedroom size, ensuring that larger developments contribute more substantially than more modest constructions. A new fee category supports multi-purpose trails, while broader categories address non-residential uses. Finally, the new plan fluctuates fees in urban renewal districts to address subsidies from the Sandpoint Urban Renewal Agency.

Council members first decided to trim the transportation projects to be funded through impact fees. They removed projects slated for Baldy Mountain Road, Woodland Drive, Larch Street and Ontario Avenue while retaining projects on Schweitzer Cutoff Road, Schweitzer Cutoff Road and Boyer Avenue, Pine Street and Division Avenue and Cedar Street and Boyer Avenue. The U.S. 2 extension or “Curve” project and a downtown two-way operation renovation also stayed on the list.

The round of project pruning lowered the impact fee-related transportation costs from a total \$4,304,243 to \$1,635,107.

By eliminating transportation projects in the northern renewal area, council members effectively removed the separate fee structure for the region.

Next, council members decided to keep the new section supporting trails and pathways in the system. They also passed the recommended standards for police, fire, parks acquisition and recreation facility impact fees without alteration.

City officials lowered the parkland improvement costs from \$103,073 per acre to \$75,000 per acre. As a result, the parks and recreation impact fee for an average single home will lower to \$2,018, a \$40.47 reduction.

Transportation impact fees will result in an average single family impact fee of \$1,305 outside the downtown urban renewal area and \$791 in the downtown urban renewal area. The average commercial development will cost \$2.75 per square foot outside the downtown urban renewal area and \$1.67 per square foot in the downtown urban renewal area.

Finally, the average single family home development will pay \$220 in police fees, \$567 in fire fees and \$369 in pathway fees, while the average commercial development will pay \$0.13 per square foot for

police, \$0.94 per square foot for fire and \$0.21 per square foot for pathways. Those numbers don't fluctuate based on location within the downtown urban renewal area.

Altogether, the average single family impact fees will total \$4,479 outside the downtown urban renewal area, a \$597 increase over the old impact fee model. Inside the downtown urban renewal area, the total fees will run \$3,965, an \$83 increase.

For commercial construction, the average development outside the downtown urban renewal area will cost \$4.04 per square foot, a \$1.70 increase. Inside the downtown urban renewal area, the fees add up to \$2.96 per square foot, a \$0.62 increase.

With no input from the public at last Wednesday's council meeting, council members will vote on the new impact fee structure's third reading this Thursday. If they pass the measure, it will go into effect Feb. 1.