

**Bend City Council Transportation Fee Listening Session
February 26, 2024**

The Transportation Fee Listening Session was called to order at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, February 26, 2024, at the City Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall Street, and online.

1. **Call to order:** Mayor Melanie Kebler, Pro Tem Megan Perkins, Councilor Anthony Broadman, Councilor Barb Campbell, Councilor Mike Riley, Councilor Ariel Méndez, and Councilor Megan Norris
2. **Short staff presentation responding to most commonly asked questions**

City Manager Eric King, Finance Director Samantha Nelson, Senior Management Analyst Sarah Hutson and Mayor Melanie Kebler gave a brief presentation.

Slides included:

Transportation Fee Listening Session

Paving the Way to Bend's Transportation Future (video)

Bend's Transportation Funding Story

Preferred Transportation Funding Strategies

Why does the Streets & Operations Fund need the Transportation Fee to maintain current services?

Why are expenses outpacing resources and growth?

Why can't the General Fund continue to subsidize the Street & Operations Fund as it has in the past?

Next Steps

Transportation Values

More information available on city website

3. **Public Comment (in person and virtually via Zoom)**

The following individuals commented on the Transportation Fee.

- Mike Walker opposed the fee because he believes the city has sufficient funding through other funding sources. He suggested implementing the \$5 million per year fee to complete the nine intended projects, and to take steps to increase accuracy and transparency.
- Rich (no last name provided) opposed the fee because he believes it to be a tax that should go to voters for approval.
- James Montemagnu supported the fee and maintaining city roads. He expressed concerns regarding the fee methodology, the importance of equity based on impact to the transportation system, how the money will be used over time and a lack of clarity on which projects would be funded with this revenue.
- Robin Vora opposed the fee because it would be tacked on to utility bills which is unrelated to transportation, because utility bills are already too high, and because the City should consider internal efficiencies before charging another fee. He suggested a gas tax or studded tire tax is fairer.

- Pat Mullen opposed the fee because of the negative financial impact on small businesses and expressed concerns about the fairness of the methodology for businesses that cause minimal impact on the transportation system.
- George Fox, declined to comment.
- Dell Squire opposed the fee because he does not believe the City needs the revenue, the fee methodology does not address vehicle weight, and he believes the fee to be a tax that should go to the voters for approval.
- Bill Gregoricus opposed the fee because he believes the decision should go to the voters for approval. He suggested a temporary implementation where the City could collect the fees and demonstrate how the transportation funds are used, then go back to the voters for a permanent fee structure.
- Rick Johns opposed the fee because of the negative financial impact to business owners and expressed concerns about funding bike infrastructure that the majority of residents will not use.
- David Green supported the fee, supported the methodology and phasing in along with discounts for those on utility billing assistance programs. He expressed concerns about the transportation system being unsustainable because the City builds roads that are too wide, which increase maintenance costs.
- Charles Thiel opposed the fee because of the negative financial impacts to business owners, although he supports the idea of improving the transportation system.

City Manager Eric King summarized themes that arose from the comments and provided clarifying information. Councilors made themselves available for one-on-one discussion with attendees for the remainder of the meeting.

4. Adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Morgen Fry
Deputy City Recorder