Special City Commission Meeting
Monday, April 29, 2019
Commission Chambers 5:30 PM

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Presentation of the results of the Special Assessment Community Forums – Melissa Richard
3. Adjourn
Agenda

- Survey results
- Recommendation #1
- Questions
- Recommendation #2
- Questions
- Next steps
I would be willing to pay higher sales taxes to fund infrastructure projects instead of special assessments.

**Average Response**

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<td>Online Survey</td>
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<td>Overall</td>
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**Response Distribution**

Forum, Online, Overall

1. Strongly agree
2. 2
3. 3
4. 4
5. Strongly disagree
I would be willing to pay a higher lot price for a new home to fund the development’s infrastructure instead of special assessments.

Average Response

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My knowledge of special assessments has increased because of this event/presentation.

### Average Response

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### Response Distribution

![Response Distribution Chart]

- **Forum**
- **Online**
- **Overall**
I can easily find information about my property’s current special assessments.

### Average Response

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### Response Distribution

You can see the distribution of responses in the chart above. The chart compares the responses from Community Forum, Online Survey, and Overall. The y-axis represents the number of responses, and the x-axis represents the response scale from Strongly agree (1) to Strongly disagree (5). The data shows a moderate level of agreement with the statement.
I would be willing to have the City of West Fargo forego infrastructure projects, even if it means decreased services, to avoid special assessments.

### Average Response

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### Response Distribution

- **Forum**
- **Online**
- **Overall**
I understand how the City of West Fargo utilizes special assessments to fund infrastructure projects.

### Average Response

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### Response Distribution

- **Forum**
- **Online**
- **Overall**

![Graph showing response distribution](image-url)
As a property owner, I feel I have a responsibility to seek out information about future infrastructure projects that could result in special assessments for my property.

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<td>Overall</td>
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Response Distribution

- Forum
- Online
- Overall

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree
I would be willing to pay higher utility fees to fund infrastructure projects instead of special assessments.

Average Response

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Response Distribution

- Forum
- Online
- Overall
Generally, I feel like the City of West Fargo only completes infrastructure projects that are necessary.

Average Response

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Response Distribution
I understand how to file a protest against a special assessment.

**Average Response**

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**Response Distribution**

- **Forum**
- **Online**
- **Overall**

![Graph showing response distribution](image)
I can easily find information about my property’s pending special assessments.

### Average Response

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### Response Distribution

- **Forum**: Blue line
- **Online**: Orange line
- **Overall**: Green line

- **1**: Strongly agree
- **2**: Agree
- **3**: Neutral
- **4**: Disagree
- **5**: Strongly disagree
I feel my input regarding special assessments is valued because of this event/survey.

### Average Response

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### Response Distribution
I feel I benefit from the lower interest rate special assessment bonds receive.

**Average Response**

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**Response Distribution**

- **Forum**
- **Online**
- **Overall**

[Graph showing response distribution with categories ranging from Strongly agree (1) to Strongly disagree (5).]
I would be willing to pay higher property taxes to fund infrastructure projects instead of special assessments.

**Average Response**

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**Response Distribution**

- Forum
- Online Survey
- Overall
I would be willing to pay additional fees, such as street utility fees or impact fees, to fund infrastructure projects instead of special assessments.

### Average Response

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### Response Distribution

- Forum
- Online
- Overall

[Graph showing response distribution]
I feel the City of West Fargo is using special assessments appropriately to fund infrastructure projects.

**Average Response**

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**Response Distribution**

- Forum
- Online
- Overall
I feel special assessment districts are fairly created by the City of West Fargo.

### Average Response

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### Response Distribution

- **Community Forum**: 3.6
- **Online Survey**: 3.8
- **Overall**: 3.8
I feel the special assessment notification process used by the city is sufficient in getting information to property owners.

### Average Response

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### Response Distribution

- **Forum**: Blue line
- **Online**: Orange line
- **Overall**: Green line

- **X-axis**: Strongly agree to Strongly disagree
- **Y-axis**: Number of responses

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20
I can easily find information about future infrastructure projects that may result in special assessments to my property.

**Average Response**

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**Response Distribution**

- Forum: 3.7
- Online: 3.9
- Overall: 3.8
I feel like my concerns about special assessments are considered by the City of West Fargo.

**Average Response**

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**Response Distribution**
How would you prefer the City of West Fargo communicates with you regarding special assessments?

- Website: 200
- Social media: 150
- Email: 100
- Letter: 250
- Media: 150
- Text message: 50
- Public meetings: 100

(Community Forums: blue; Online Survey: yellow)
Small Group Feedback Themes

- Property owners don’t know when a special assessment is coming and when they have a chance to protest the assessment.
- Communication needs to be increased and improved.
- The city uses special assessments as a blank check and doesn’t properly plan for or fund projects.
- Developer should have to pay for more.
- Residents would like to see more sales tax collected for infrastructure projects.
Recommendations
Recommendation #1
Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

- City will reach built-out stage in the next five years, allowing the focus to switch to the ongoing maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure.
- Provides opportunity to further develop a managed growth policy to organize future growth, especially as we look to land development after the completion of the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion.
- Expanded policy would serve as a comprehensive guide to decisions about development and public investments and would be a partner to West Fargo 2.0, the city’s current comprehensive plan and capital improvement plan.
Recommendation #1

Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

WF 2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLE

● Fiscally responsible:
  ○ As a city dedicated to delivering excellent municipal services in a fiscally responsible manner that reduces the impacts of special assessments on the local population.

WF 2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLE

● Proactive:
  ○ Plans for the future success rather than react to today’s concerns.
Recommendation #1
Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

WF 2.0 BIG IDEAS

- Promote transportation and choice mobility
- Recommendations:
  - Improve network design

WF 2.0 BIG IDEAS

- Provide reliable services and municipal transparency
- Recommendations:
  - Formally adopt an infrastructure investment strategy and capital improvements plan following adoption of comprehensive plan
  - Formally adopt a policy that categorizes infrastructure saving and spending dollars in the city
Recommendation #1
Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

WF 2.0 BIG IDEAS

- Strengthen neighborhoods and expand housing choice
- Recommendation :
  - Explore ways to improve design while keeping infrastructure and housing costs down

WF 2.0 BIG IDEAS

- Provide reliable services and municipal transparency
- Recommendations :
  - Formally adopt an infrastructure investment strategy and capital improvements plan following adoption of comprehensive plan
  - Formally adopt a policy that categorizes infrastructure saving and spending dollars in the city
**Recommendation #1**

*Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth*

- Infrastructure planning policies:
  - Infrastructure growth plan for new development that dictates location and timing of the city’s infrastructure network
  - City to adopt a transportation plan for developed and undeveloped areas, to include future collector and arterial roadways and other important or efficient transportation connections
  - Capital improvements plan coupled with economic development goals to better identify areas of growth
Recommendation #1
Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

- Funding policies:
  - Infrastructure investment strategy that identifies funding amounts from special assessments, city funds, sales tax, state and federal funds for categories of projects.
  - Setting utility rates at levels that will allow the city to create reserves for repair and replacements
Recommendation #1
Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

● Special assessment policies
  ○ New development will be paid by special assessments according to city standards
    ■ Any infrastructure beyond city standards will be paid for by developer
  ○ City-ran redevelopment has a policy for sales tax, water and sewer revenues and Prairie Dog funding to help bring cost down, but special assessments could still be used
  ○ Developer-ran redevelopments follow the special assessment guidelines for new development
    ■ Redevelopment over $5 million would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine if additional investment would benefit the greater community
  ○ Developer requested improvements that don’t require more than $500,000 worth of work cannot be funded through special assessments
Recommendation #1
Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

- New development policies:
  - Requirement of master planning for new developments, covering preliminary engineering for all public infrastructure that adheres to the infrastructure growth plan
  - Design standards that have the potential to reduce the overall tax burden for property owners – particularly that of special assessments.
  - Developers must adhere to city’s adopted transportation plan
Recommendation #1
Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

- A well-developed capital improvement plan is key to the success of the City of West Fargo's future managed growth, financial forecasting and transparent communication with the property owners.
- City staff recommends investing in resources to strengthen the process of planning and managing the capital improvement plan so it can become a public resource.
Recommendation #1
Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

- City staff recommends the development of a staff committee to create infrastructure financing best practices.
- This committee would research, implement and monitor the funding policies of the managed growth plan, as well as explore new best management practices for the City.
- Some of these practices could include:
  - Requiring developers to fund all or more of new development
  - Increasing rate of sales tax
  - Developing new economic tools to increase sales tax collected
  - Annual subsidies for income-based special assessment breaks, similar to the City of Fargo's Special Assessment Assistance Program.
Questions
Recommendation #2
Implement a comprehensive communication process

WF 2.0 BIG IDEAS

- Provide reliable services and municipal transparency
- Recommendation:
  - Become a ‘Digital City’ and provide greater access to information and analysis via the internet
Recommendation #2
Implement a comprehensive communication process

- Survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they would like the City of West Fargo to broaden its current notification process, which currently follows the requirements of the North Dakota Century Code.
- Although survey responses were directly tied to special assessments, specials are a part of the complex system of infrastructure construction and maintenance.
- Further diving into the survey results demonstrates that a comprehensive communication process needs to include the broad scope of infrastructure construction and maintenance.
Recommendation #2
Implement a comprehensive communication process

- Staff recommends increasing communication to property owners to deliver information regarding future, pending and current infrastructure projects – from the identification of the project to final notice for payment of the specials

- This campaign needs to be an ongoing system that:
  - Increases information about the use, process and procedures related to special assessments
  - Build awareness of City of West Fargo infrastructure planning and execution
  - Easily presents capital improvement plan to property owners
  - Delivers information regarding pending and current special assessments; as well as the opportunity to pay special assessments
Recommendations

- Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth
  - Infrastructure planning policies
  - Funding policies
  - Special assessment policies
  - New development policies
  - Capital improvement plan investment
  - Infrastructure financing best practices committee

- Implement a comprehensive communication process
  - Increasing communication to property owners
  - Invest in tools and resources to easily deliver information