



Council Study Session Meeting Agenda

ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION AGENDA

Monday, April 6, 2026

Council Chambers, 1175 E Main Street

Live stream via RVTV Prime at rvtv.sou.edu or broadcast on Spectrum 180.

Public comment is welcome on agenda items.

To **speak electronically** during the meeting or to submit **written comments** in advance, please complete the online [Public Comment Form](#) by 10 a.m. the day of the meeting.

5:30 p.m. Study Session

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

- a. Status Update on the Madrone Ridge Acquisition Project
- b. Councilor-led Discussion on the Food and Beverage Tax

III. ADJOURNMENT

If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Alissa Kolodzinski at recorder@ashlandoregon.gov or 541.488.5307 (TTY phone number 1.800.735.2900). Notification at least three business days before the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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Council Study Session

Date: April 6, 2026

Agenda Item	Status Update on the Madrone Ridge Acquisition Project
Department	City Manager's Office
From	Jordan Rooklyn

TIME ESTIMATE

30 minutes

CATEGORY

Informational - this is to inform the body on a particular topic. No motion or direction needed.

SUMMARY

Status update on the Madrone Ridge Property Acquisition project

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

Wildfire mitigation; expanded recreation access

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Western Rivers Conservancy and Madrone Ridge Property

The Madrone Ridge property is 1,974 acres that sits along the western edge of the City of Ashland, west of downtown. The property is the largest private property between the UGB and more than 50,000 acres of National Forest land, providing an important wildfire mitigation location, and approximately 270 acres of the property are within the Ashland Creek watershed, which is the City's primary drinking water source.

Western River Conservancy is a conservation non-profit whose model is to purchase private property and transfer those lands to a permanent conservation steward. WRC has entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement for the Madrone Ridge property from the current landowners, with the goal of the City of Ashland ultimately acquiring the property and serving as the long-term owner and steward. The closure of the purchase must occur on or before September 30, 2027.

Consulting Agreement with Western Rivers Conservancy

In February 2025, the City of Ashland entered into a consulting agreement with Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC). WRC is providing due diligence investigations, identifying funding sources, preparing messaging materials, and preparing acquisition documents. In exchange, the City is paying Western Rivers Conservancy \$75,000 over three years. This agreement expires at the date of acquisition or on September 30, 2027, whichever occurs earlier.

Funding Status

The total cost of the Madrone Ridge property is \$7,415,000. WRC has secured 75% of acquisition funding (\$5.560 million) through the US Forest Legacy Program and is currently applying for grants to secure the remaining 25% non-federal match (\$1.855 million).

Due Diligence Findings

The property had been identified as a potential opportunity to provide trail connectivity, expanded recreational activities, wildfire protection and forest management, and evacuation access for the Ashland Mine Road community. City staff and WRC will be present at the Council meeting to share their due diligence in assessing what opportunities exist for the use of the property within those categories.

Next Steps

The following decision points are expected to come before Council over the next year.





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- May 2026: Council will determine if they would like to move forward with developing a Master Plan and Management Plan for the use of the property.
- Summer/Fall 2026: Review and acceptance of the grant agreement for the US Forest Legacy Program.
- February 2027: If full funding is not secured, City Council will determine if they would like the City to fund remaining acquisition costs.
- September 2027: End of established purchase period.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Not applicable

SUGGESTED ACTIONS, AND/OR OPTIONS

None required

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

None





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Date: April 6, 2026

Agenda Item	Councilor-led Discussion on the Food and Beverage Tax
Department	Mayor and Council
From	Gina DuQunne

TIME ESTIMATE

30 minutes

CATEGORY

Informational - this is to inform the body on a particular topic. No motion or direction needed.

SUMMARY

Councilmembers DuQuenne and Bloom have requested a discussion on the Food and Beverage Tax.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Food and Beverage Tax Summary

The Food and Beverage (F&B) Tax was approved by voters in 1993, and extended by voters in 2009. It applies a 5-percent tax to prepared foods and non-alcoholic beverages sold at restaurants, grocery store delis, caterers and coffee shops in Ashland. Businesses retain 5-percent of the tax revenues collected to cover accounting costs. Of the remaining revenues, 73-percent is used for street improvements, 25-percent is used for the development and rehabilitation of parks and open spaces, and 2-percent is to cover the cost of tax administration. The tax's sunset date is December 31, 2030. An extension of the sunset date or a change in how tax revenues are used will require a vote by the public.

Food and Beverage Tax Role in the Street Fund

The Street Fund is a special revenue fund that tracks proceeds that are earmarked for transportation capital improvement projects and street operational staff. The Street Fund typically receives roughly \$5.8 million in revenues per year, excluding debt revenue. Of that revenue, the F&B tax contributes approximately 40%, the Street Fee approximately 30%, and the State Gas Tax approximately 30%. Significant capital projects are paid for by borrowing money and then paying that the debt back over time. The following Street Fund debt service has already been secured by anticipated F&B tax revenues through 2030.

- North Mountain Avenue Rehabilitation (Phase 1) Debt Service: \$7,662,963
- Ashland Street Rehabilitation Debt Service: \$4,839,751

As of the end of February, the ending fund balance for the Street Fund is \$3,860,365.

Council Discussion

Please see attached information provided by Councilor DuQuenne for City Council's discussion.

FISCAL IMPACTS

TBD

SUGGESTED ACTIONS, AND/OR OPTIONS

None

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS





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1. Food and Beverage Tax Council Report from Councilor DuQuenne



30 Minutes

Background:

This 5% food and beverage tax applies to prepared foods and nonalcoholic beverages sold at restaurants, grocery store delis, caterers and coffee shops in Ashland, including takeout and delivery orders. The city collects roughly **\$3 million** in F&B tax per year.

Notably, 25% of the money goes directly to the Parks & Recreation Department to support the development and rehabilitation of local parks and open spaces, and 75% goes toward maintaining and repairing our streets.

Food and beverage tax history:

The F&B tax was originally approved by voters in 1993 to help acquire additional land for Parks & Recreation. In 2009, voters redirected 80% of the tax revenue to pay down the debt on the city's wastewater treatment plant, leaving 20% for parks.

In 2016, voters adjusted the allocation again, increasing parks share to 25%. The remaining 75% continued to fund wastewater debt, with any excess revenues not needed for that purpose redirected to the street fund. The wastewater treatment plant paid its last debt service in 2022.

In 2023, a measure to amend the ordinance to allow funds to be used for Parks & Recreation operations and extend the sunset date to Dec. 31, 2040, failed.

Today, 75% of the F&B tax is used to fund streets and 25% is used for the city parks. The tax is scheduled to sunset in December 2030.

Summary:

Part of this proposal is to show the actual dollar amounts that go to each fund based on 3 million dollars per year from the F&B.

Parks 25% of \$3,000,000 is \$750,000
Street Fund 75% of \$3,000,000 is \$2,250,000

The question is how can this tax better work for the rate payers in Ashland. The food and beverage tax paid for the wastewater treatment plant, let it pay for the water treatment plant and take this progressive cost off of the residents.

Suggestions / Discussion:

Reallocate the food and beverage tax.

- Scenario 1) 25% Parks and Rec
- 10% Streets
- 10% Infrastructure
- 55% Water Treatment Plant

- Scenario 2) 25% Parks
- 10% Streets
- 65% Water Treatment Plant

Fiscal Impact:

There are no fiscal impacts currently.

Next Steps:

Having a continuous conversation with our constituents, and getting their input. Bring this back to council in August 2026.