

COBURG CITY COUNCIL MONTHLY REPORTS



TOPIC: American Rescue Plan

Meeting Date: April 13, 2021

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REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION:

Staff direction

CITY COUNCIL GOAL

Responsible Fiscal Stewardship

BACKGROUND

On March 11, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan. The Plan, also referred to as the Covid-19 Stimulus Package was a 1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill intended to speed up the United States' recovery from the economic and health effects of Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing recession. Specifically, the bill provides funding for a wide range of programs directed at a state, local and private employment level. One important part of the bill provides that funds be directly issued to local government agencies in every state.

In late March, Governor Kate Brown released a 10-point Economic Recovery Plan which provided for action items for which stimulus dollars could be spent. However, in some cases, there is more information and clarification needed regarding what would qualify under these 10 points.

10 POINT RECOVERY PLAN

The following were listed as part of the 10-point plan:

1. Investing in Oregon's hardest hit workers (unemployed and underemployed)
2. Reinventing in Innovative Housing
3. Supporting Resilient Rural Communities
4. Supporting Oregon's Workforce
5. Creating Opportunities for Workforce Development
6. Getting Small Business Back on its Feet
7. Investing in Oregon's Infrastructure
8. Oregonians Investing in Oregon
9. Safely Opening Oregon's Economy

10. Innovation in Manufacturing.

Attached is an informational article regarding the American Rescue Plan

COBURG ECONOMIC NEEDS

Each community in Oregon is vastly different and the needs of those communities are unique to the economic make-up and industry which provides employment. Also unique to communities is housing availability and needs, as well as infrastructure and utility investments.

When considering which of these points Coburg should and could consider for spending the stimulus dollars the following are good fits for Coburg to consider:

1. Reinvesting in Innovative Housing

- a) Coburg has available properties where unique and innovative housing could be built. This could reduce the footprint on transportation and urban sprawl by encouraging multi-family or cottage style developments that provide for walking and multi-modal transportation. The City could participate in some form of Private/Public partnerships for the planning and design of this form of housing. There is a severe housing shortage in our region and state as a whole.

2. Community Economic Development - Getting Main Street/Small Business Back on its Feet

- a) Providing for **additional business relief**, and funding strategies related to Main Streets and downtown revitalization.
- b) Providing for the **loss of revenues for the Chamber**. All Chamber events were cancelled in 2020 which left them with no revenues to continue their work in festival and events while continuing to have expenses throughout the year. \$10,000-\$15,000 would provide them the revenues to restart events such as the concerts in the park, antique faire, block party, and other community events.
- c) Funding could be utilized for some of the **Main Street Projects** that are currently in the works including murals, public spaces, IOOF hall lease and updates, and marketing of Coburg.

3. Investing in Oregon's Infrastructure

- a) Entering into Private/Public Partnerships to expand the **broadband capabilities** in Coburg. Funds could be utilized as a local match for larger broadband grants that will begin becoming available to local communities.
- b) Funds could be utilized for purchasing **emergency response** and community resilience equipment/infrastructure such as solar panels on City Hall and/or the sewer plant, or an emergency fueling stations. In addition, small items identified by our Emergency Manager for the Emergency Response Trailer could be purchased.

- c) Funds can possibly be utilized for the design aspect of the public works shop which could get a shovel ready project plan completed. This could serve as a local match for a grant or loan for construction. **It is unclear at this time if this would be an approved project for the funding.**
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RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Council consider the following:

- The City partner with the Chamber to hold listening sessions with local businesses in order to gain clarity as to how they are doing and if they have specific needs. This would help to answer the question as to whether there is need to provide funding specific to small business.
 - The Council consider whether assisting the Chamber is in the best interest of the whole community in order to provide normalcy to the community summer season
 - If housing is a priority of the Council, the City should engage in conversation with property owners of lots that could be developed into multi-family or innovative housing to see if there is an interest, need and the possibility of a private/public partnership for this kind of an investment of funds.
 - Broadband is a crucial need for our community in the downtown business district and in residential neighborhoods. Consider investing in public/private partnership and utilize some of the funding for match for larger grants that would make this work possible.
 - Investing in the design stage of the public works shop would provide for a shovel ready project for which match funds could be utilized to gain funding of grants or loans.
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City Council does not need to decide on one project to fund. There could be multiple projects funded that would make a big difference to the community as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, it will be up to the City Council to decide the most urgent and useful application of these funds. Leveraging the funds as local matches for larger funding opportunities seems to be a reasonable use. Council should discuss and share with staff any further information that they might need in order to make a decision.

Staff will be budgeting the funds in the General Fund at this time and they may be moved to appropriate funds (possibly before the budget is passed) when the Council makes their decision as to where they wish the funds to be utilized
