

MONTHLY REPORT TO COUNCIL



Meeting Date: April 2, 2025
Prepared by: Jacob A. Graichen, AICP, City Planner
Department: Planning
Division: Community Development
Reporting Period: March 2025
CC: City Administrator John Walsh / Planning Commission

1. General Operations

- Community Development Project Manager and I assisted a property owner with wall placement on the 300 block of N. 12th Street. The Oregon DHS funded an 8' wall to prevent a child with hyperactivity and impulsiveness from harming themselves. Unfortunately, the wall was installed without city input and the city was only contacted when the state needed the city's ko to pay the contractor. The fence was installed under power lines and unquestionably within the right-of-way. We helped to remedy the issue, so the city is happy, contractor paid, and the State gets the full ok from the city.
- Submitted three annexations to Oregon DOR for preliminary approval of map and legal descriptions. One is a consent from last year and the other are older. The oldest goes back to 2000 for a property on Fir Street. A consent to annex from 2009 is for the former Bing's property, which is finally adjacent to city limits. This is the step before scheduling public hearings, so some annexations are coming up for review later this year.
- Worked with a property owner in the UGB to update a recorded redevelopment plan that will work better for a home proposed. The property is an undeveloped parcel adjacent to 34985 Achilles Road.
- **Updated Dalton Lake Nature Preserve Map** – Request to modify map by Parks Commission member with new kiosks and benches.
- **Notable administrative Planning Department permitting:**
 - Revised building permit plans submitted for a mixed-use building on the corner of Columbia Boulevard and N. 6th Street. Reviewed plans and provided comments. Land use entitlement was granted in March of '23. The initial set of building permit plans was submitted on February 24, 2025.
- **Pre-application / early assistance meetings:**
 - A Columbia County LDS pre-application meeting scheduled, but the meeting is after the time this report is due, so more on that next month.
- **Planning Commission had their normally scheduled monthly meeting on March 11.**

Outcome:

 - The Commission held a public hearing for the remand of an appeal for a Conditional Use Permit and Variances to allow a triplex on a lot at the NE corner of Wyeth Street and N 5th Street. Consistent with the Council deliberations at a previous hearing, the Commission rejected the triplex proposal but did grant a Variance for zero off-street parking and a reduced yard (setback) along Wyeth for a duplex.

- The Commission held a public hearing for adoption of the Economic Opportunities Analysis and the water, storm water and wastewater utility plans. Commission recommends approval to the Council.
- **Planning Commission had their normally scheduled quarterly joint meeting with the City Council on March 12.** Outcome:
 - The discussion focused on the Commission’s proactive items, with the bulk of the conversation pertaining to Architectural Standards. It was my hope to guide the Commission to take baby steps on this item. Vacant storefront discussed a bit and it seems generally agreed that The Plaza effort should be delayed until ownership of the rights-of-way around the Plaza and some other city – county issues are resolved.
- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS).**
 - Annual software updates for Planning and Engineering’s GIS this month. Given a transition from ArcGIS Desktop to ArcGIS Pro (both are currently in affect, but a year from now the older ArcGIS Desktop will be retired), it was a bit more involved this year.
 - Finished digitizing redevelopment plans for land divisions in city limits and the UGB for the city’s GIS data. I had this mostly complete in the last couple years and just had a few files to look through. This goes back to 2006, which is the earliest year I am aware of they were recorded in the County Clerk deed records.

2. Staffing & Personnel

- The new Community Development Administrative Assistant starts March 31. This position has been vacant since December and our Assistant Planner / Community Development Project Manager has been covering all Planning Department secretarial duties which include file creation, notice mailings, planning commission packets/minutes, annual reporting, and planning file tracking systems. With a joint meeting this month and URA next month, secretarial duties were more than usual.
- Staff attended the virtual government public meeting law workshop hosted by Beery, Elsner & Hammond LLP.

3. Projects & Initiatives

A. Ongoing Key Projects

- Worked with Parks Commission Jacobson on the **Parks Commission’s woodland reserve** effort to help define boundaries. This will be a good item for the next quarterly Council – Planning Commission joint meeting to fine tune boundaries.
- **Riverwalk Project (OPRD Grants x2)** – Masonry work on cantilever is nearly complete. Landscaping is about 90% done. Final concrete pour is expected on March 24/25. Contract is approximately 90% expended. Submitted & received our first LWCF grant disbursement of approximately 750k and our first LGGP reimbursement request for 304,650. Submitted both quarterly grant reports which were due on April 1. Coordinated with Communications on E-newsletter content and timing of drone footage. Reviewing/tracking submittals and RFIs. Attending bi-weekly check-ins with contractor and design team.

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): Sanitary Sewer Improvement Project** – \$2.5 million grant award to fund design/engineering/permitting for 3 sanitary sewer basins identified as deficient in the adopted Wastewater Master Plan. Reviewed 60% design package. Approximately 54% expended of the grant. Preparing to submit Disbursement No 4.
- **DLCD Technical Assistance Program** – 60k funding a new Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA). Prepared staff report and noticing requirements. Adoption PH held in March for PC and April for CC.
- **ODOT Community Paths Program: St. Helens Scappoose Trail Refinement Project** – 405k to study a trail route refinement project (30% design) from St. Helens to Scappoose. RFP closed on 1/9 for consultants to submit proposals! Scored and reviewed proposals on the selection committee with a selection meeting scheduled in early February. This project is likely to kickoff in April!
- **2024 Travel Oregon Grant Program: Riverwalk Project** - 100k grant for Riverwalk Project. Preparing to submit final reporting and disbursement request for remaining 50k. Deadline is April 30 for disbursement.
- **ODOT TGM Program: Transportation Systems Plan** – Consultant selection is in motion for April review and selection! This project has been stalled due to delayed contract review by the state, so it is good to finally see movement.
- **Business Oregon – Infrastructure Finance Authority** – Low-interest loan for Streets & Utilities Project and Riverwalk improvements. Loan amendment coordinated and approved by Council on 11/20. Submitted final Disbursement Request #5, putting us at 100% expended for the loan. Remaining budget to come from budgeted URA funding. Working with finance to ensure remaining expenses are documented correctly and that we remain within approved budget. Working with state loan officer on a loan amendment that would extend our timeline to match the June 30, 2025 anticipated completion date for the Streets & Utilities Project and to document the City’s additional cash contributions which cover expenses not covered by the loan. Reviewed regular Waterfront E-newsletter content regarding construction updates, closures, progress, etc. Follow the [City’s Waterfront E-newsletter](#) for timely updates.

B. Upcoming Projects

- Based on the direction provided by the Council at the Feb. 5th regular session to pursue the 1771 Columbia Boulevard site for the new police station, I have initiated the zone change process with much initial effort in March. Hearings to take place in April and May before the Planning Commission and City Council.
- Updated the Planning Department’s part of the upcoming 2024-2026 Strategic Plan list for proposed 2025-2027 Strategic Plan in advance of a TBD meeting.
- Provided initial budget numbers for the upcoming budget cycle.

4. Upcoming Events & Important Dates

- April 2 Urban Renewal Agency meeting. This month staff has prepared for and created packets for this meeting for a FY 24-25 budget amendment
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Attachments

- No attachments for this report.