

Housing Solutions

How Cities are Tackling the Housing Shortage Through Local Strategies and Innovation



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
2021 LOC Annual Conference
DEI Committee Update
Using ARPA Funds for Cybersecurity



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ON THE COVER

16 Cities Tackle Housing Shortage Through Local Strategies and Innovation

Several city leaders shared with us how they are accomplishing their housing needs analyses and crafting strategies to provide more housing so that everyone in their communities has a place to call home.



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Local Focus



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From the Executive Director

Reinventing for the Future

In the lifetime of an organization, in order to remain relevant and valuable to its members, entities like the LOC need to look inward and outward and do a bit of reading of the tea leaves.

At its core, the role of the LOC remains unchanged. Some 96 years ago, a handful of Oregon cities recognized the strength and leverage of pooling resources to represent all cities in the state, large and small. Our mission then, as it is today, focuses on advocating for all 241 cities in Oregon as the authoritative voice in state politics. Advocacy remains the cornerstone of our work, but a lot has happened in the last century. The needs of cities have changed: budgets have tightened, politics have become complicated, and the type of support needed by our cities today is infinitely more complex and critical—now more than ever.

In response, the LOC, along with its board of directors, has evolved its mission and vision through the years to remain that pillar of support and be the one constant in a sea of change. At no time during its history has this ever been more evident than in just the past couple of years. Besieged with a series of disasters from the Coronavirus pandemic to wildfires, economic fallout to social unrest, we—both as Oregonians and the LOC—have weathered the storm and established ourselves as a leader, and a force in the state.

Now as we begin to close the chapter on another year in our history, we once again look forward, and not back.

Recognizing the tremendous pressures faced by our cities on all levels, from governance to simply providing services to our residents, the LOC is poised to respond. As city needs evolve, so too does the LOC. It's the art of reinvention with an eye on growing the impact of our advocacy efforts.

In a nutshell, we are growing our organizational scope and function to include more and critical support services that cities need now, and in the future. The LOC has already begun the exercise of visioning and imagining its purpose and function as we move forward into 2022. Under the leadership of LOC President and Sherwood Mayor Keith Mays, we have begun work on an overarching strategic plan for the organization looking introspectively and externally at trends, impacts and needs of our cities as we move forward.

This plan will be the basis of our execution model in the coming years. The incoming LOC President, Central Point Councilor Tanea Browning, will lead this effort.

Some things to look for from the LOC in the coming months:

- Enhanced staffing support;
- A robust communications and outreach program designed to improve access for all;
- A strong focus on issues of import and impact, including property tax reform;

- An expansion of our legal program to support even more regions of the state;
- The buildout of a more collaborative support hub, leveraging like-minded organizations to drive our strategic plan forward;
- A stronger, healthier Foundation—the 501(c)3 arm of the LOC—to support greater access to LOC-sponsored events and educational opportunities;
- Continued leverage of technology to amplify the provision of information and collaboration between cities and regions;
- An intense focus and return to in-person events and educational campaigns;



Mike Cully
LOC Executive Director

(continued on page 11)

What if?

What if we showed you how we're solving Oregon's greatest challenges by transforming intangible ideas into intelligent solutions for a more connected, sustainable world?

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LOC Membership Turns Out Virtually for Abbreviated Annual Conference

Although abbreviated, the half-day mini conference and member meeting on October 22 was well attended and effective for its purpose. This followed the very difficult decision made just after Labor Day to cancel the scheduled in-person event that would have been held at the Riverhouse in Bend.

For the abbreviated conference and business meeting, the morning started at 8 a.m. sharp, when the LOC made history by opening the day with the formal introductions of our affinity groups and caucuses. More than 100 participants showed-up for our brief introduction and breakout groups, a great indication of how important so many consider what the LOC is doing in this space.

The affinity group sessions were followed by a riveting session focused on policing and police reform led by the LOC's Scott Winkels which drew another 110 attendees from across the state. The final session, led by the LOC's Patty Mulvihill and attorneys from the law firm of Markowitz Herbold, addressed vaccines and requirements and their applications within the framework of cities. Another great attendance there topping 100-plus participants.

The annual business meeting went exceptionally well this year. Led by LOC President and Sherwood Mayor Keith Mays, the program went smoothly and efficiently, with the membership electing the 2022 LOC Board of Directors and adopting five key amendments to the LOC Constitution (*see page 12*).

The following are the city officials that were named to the LOC's governing board for the calendar year 2022. Officials new to the board or an officer position appear in bold text.

- President:** Tanea Browning, Councilor, Central Point
- Vice President:** Steve Callaway, Mayor, Hillsboro
- Treasurer:** **Dave Drotzmann, Mayor, Hermiston**
- Past President:** Keith Mays, Mayor, Sherwood

- Directors:** **Catherine Biscoe, Councilor, Philomath**
Arlene Burns, Mayor, Mosier
Candy Canga Picar, Councilor, Metolius
Jessica Engelke, Mayor, North Bend
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SAVE THE DATES! 

WELCOME TO HERMISTON

Local Government Spring Conference
April 21-22, 2022 | Hermiston

97th Annual LOC Conference
October 5-7, 2022 | Bend

LOC Board of Directors Holds Virtual Meeting

The LOC Board of Directors met virtually on Wednesday, October 20, 2021. The following actions were taken:

- The board approved its 2022 meeting schedule:
 - Friday, February 18;
 - Thursday, April 21;
 - Friday, June 17;
 - Tuesday, October 4; and
 - Friday, December 9.
- The board awarded the contract for strategic planning facilitation services to Corragio Group and authorized LOC Executive Director Mike Cully to execute a contract to provide these services.
- The board authorized Executive Director Cully to execute the agreements necessary to amend LOC's interest in the Local Government Center Trust to a full one-third share and to continue working with outside counsel to develop a Local Government Center governing agreement in the best interest of the LOC.
- Approved resolutions formalizing the LOC Bylaws Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.
- Authorized the executive director to spend \$15,000 of the funds budgeted in Special Projects Contract Services for polling on property tax reform.
- Authorized an amendment to the 2021-2022 Intergovernmental Agreement with Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities Association (OMEU).
- Authorized the executive director to serve on the Oregon Electrical Vehicle Collaborative (OEVC) and submit a declaration of cooperation to Oregon Solutions in support of the OEVC.

Municipal Information at Your Fingertips

Have you checked out the [Topics A-Z](#) section of the LOC website? Find resources, publications, samples and links to information on a range of topics from animal regulations to youth engagement.

Find it in the Resources tab, the Reference, at www.orcities.org.



Post Legislative Session Resources

Every year, the LOC's government relations team prepares post-session work for members. The following resources can be found on the [Legislative Advocacy](#) page of the LOC website: www.orcities.org.

- [Bills for City Review, Action & Awareness](#)
Overview of legislation with immediate impact and requiring cities to take action.
- [2021 Legislative Session Summary of Bills](#)
Comprehensive review of all bills the LOC tracked during session.
- [Session Recap Video](#)
LOC's Intergovernmental Relations team provides a video overview of important bills from the 2021 session.

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Get Involved – Apply to Join an LOC Policy Committee

Policy committees and special work groups are the foundation of the LOC's policy development process. Composed of city officials, these groups are charged with analyzing policy and technical issues and recommending positions and strategies for the LOC. In addition, League staff rely on the input and expertise of committee members as they advocate for city interests in the Legislature and with state and federal agencies. We have seven committees with seats available for the upcoming two-year cycle.

The LOC's seven policy committees will meet in the spring of 2022 to frame legislative priorities for the 2023 session. These meetings will be held using a combination of virtual and in-person formats. Given the improved technology, all meetings will be accessible on a virtual platform. Committee members serve a two-year term, advising the LOC on policy related issues during a full legislative cycle. Each committee crafts policies for a ballot that sets the LOC's priorities for long sessions (odd numbered years).

Policy Committee topics include the following:

- Community Development
- Energy & Environment
- Finance & Taxation
- General Government/Human Resources
- Telecom, Broadband & Cable
- Transportation
- Water & Wastewater

Apply online now at: bit.ly/3nFxsjV. The deadline for applications is November 15.

Contact: Jim McCauley, Legislative Director - jmccauley@orcities.org



Interim City Staff Registry

New LOC Service: Interim City Staff Registry

Do you need to fill an interim staff position in your city?
Are you a candidate seeking a temporary city staff position?

The new online LOC Interim City Staff Candidate Registry is free for both candidates and employers. Cities seeking to fill interim positions can easily search candidate bios by location, position type and by keyword.

View the Interim City Staff Registry on the LOC website: www.orcities.org

Michael Martin Joins LOC Advocacy Team



In September, the LOC welcomed Michael Martin to our lobby team. He replaces Tracy Rutten Rainey, who went to work for Clean Water Services after the 2021 legislative session. Michael has taken on the core issues related to water, and a mix of other issues that were within Tracy's portfolio. He comes to the LOC with several years of lobbying experience and public policy advocacy on behalf of a

range of clients, including local government, election reform advocates, economic development interests, and campaign management.

Michael can be reached at mmartin@orcities.org.

LOC Wall Calendars Coming Soon

The LOC's annual wall calendar will be mailed to cities in early January. As usual, this poster-sized calendar features a wide range of high-quality photographs submitted by our member cities. The calendar also contains information on key events and dates to remember in 2022. Cities can obtain additional copies by emailing loc@orcities.org.

Request Printed Copies of the *Local Focus*

The *Local Focus* magazine is distributed quarterly by email to city officials and local government partners. Printed copies are available by request. To opt-in to receive a printed copy in the mail, fill out the form at the link below.

[Opt-In for a Printed Copy \(bit.ly/3F22xSp\)](https://bit.ly/3F22xSp)

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** 2017 IPSOS Survey of HomeServe policyholders and non-policyholders



Annual City Directory Updates Coming Soon

Cities—the LOC is asking for your help.

At the end of every year, the League reaches out to its member cities to update the online LOC City Directory, which is used for communicating with members and for the public and government officials to connect with cities across the state.

LOC staff will be emailing a request to city recorders and/or chief administrative officers statewide, along with an Excel spreadsheet showing the current elected officials and staff in the LOC database. Cities will be asked to update their spreadsheet, with smaller cities (pop. 7,500 or less) providing all staff and elected officials, and larger cities (greater than 7,500) providing key staff and elected officials. Each city official in the updated spreadsheet will receive the weekly *LOC Bulletin* newsletter and our quarterly electronic magazine *Local Focus*—so the more information cities provide, the better informed their city team will be.

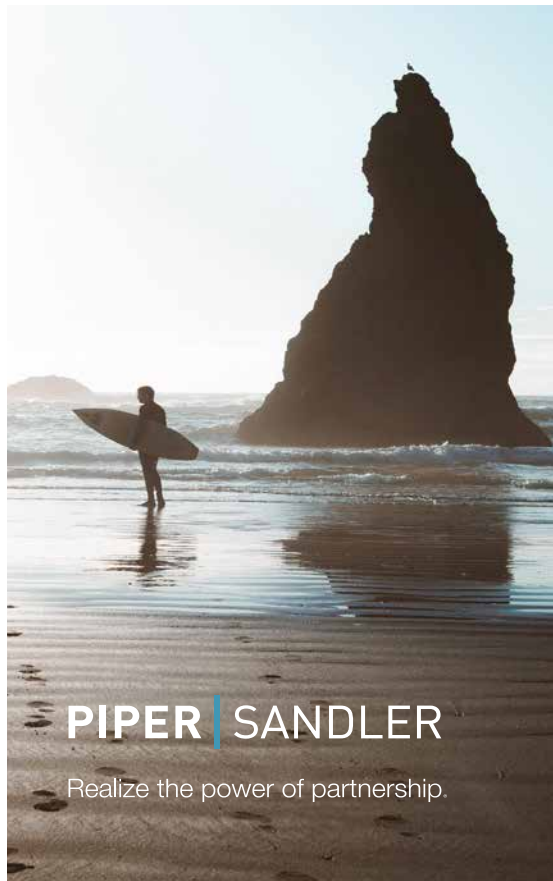
LOC member cities should see this request for updated city directory information arrive via email in December. We ask that your city complete and return the updated spreadsheet to us by the end of January.

The Importance of Unique Email Addresses

As the LOC works to update its internal database of locally elected and appointed officials, please be advised: the database does not allow the duplication of email addresses. More specifically, this means that the same email address cannot be used for multiple individuals in the same city.

Each individual city official in the LOC database is required to have their own unique email address. If you have questions about this requirement, please contact LOC directly using the contact information below.

In addition, regarding compliance with Oregon's Public Meetings Law, the LOC's recommended best practice is for all local government officials, regardless of whether they are elected or appointed, to utilize an official government email address whenever they conduct business on behalf of their city. For those cities which do not provide official government email addresses for their elected officials or city staff for the city directory, the LOC's recommended best practice is that those officials create a separate private email account that is only used for city business (their personal email communications should exist on a separate private account).



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Update from the LOC Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

Since its last update to the LOC Board of Directors in June, the LOC's Equity and Inclusion Committee, now known as the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee, has continued to meet monthly.

At their June meeting, the committee recommended that the LOC offer meet-and-greet sessions to potential LOC Board applicants. Two meet-and-greet sessions were scheduled on September 20, with LOC President-Elect Tanea Browning, Treasurer Steve Callaway, and Forest Grove Mayor Pete Truax sharing information about their service on the LOC Board. LOC Executive Director Mike Cully and Operations & Member Engagement Director Christy Wurster also attended, providing information about the LOC. The sessions were attended by three individuals interested in serving on the LOC Board.

During their July meeting, the DEI Committee received a presentation from the National League of Cities about the Race, Equity and Leadership (REAL) training program. The committee is awaiting a proposal from the NLC and will consider

this training program, along with others, to promote awareness of DEI issues for the LOC's membership, board, and staff.

In August, the committee received results of the voluntary demographic information survey for review. The committee also reviewed the LOC's newly created DEI webpage: www.orcities.org/about/who-we-are/equity-and-inclusion. In addition, the committee welcomed a new member, Cornelius City Councilor Angeles Godinez-Valencia, who will be the LOC Women's Caucus representative on the committee.

During its September meeting, the committee discussed their recommendations regarding the composition and structure of the committee as well as the next steps for proposed trainings for the LOC Board and member cities. The LOC Board will receive a one-hour training on accommodations at their meeting in December. Finally, the committee discussed that they would like to be recognized as the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *(continued from page 5)*

- Increased opportunities to leverage resources provided by the National League of Cities (NLC) through our affiliate member agreement for most Oregon cities;
- Maintaining an awareness and being proactive with our diversity, equity and inclusiveness work to create an organization that truly represents the interests of all cities in our state; and
- Enhanced legislative work and focus through the addition of expanded portfolios and staff.

These are high level focal points as we work collaboratively to reinvent and reimagine our purpose and goals.

As a primer legislatively, you'll note a nod to the expansion of our legislative staff to build on the needed support to all cities. With 2,750 bills dropped in the 2021 legislative session and with the LOC tracking 1,208 of those, it is evident that we need to continue to invest in our efforts in the Capitol. 2021, while challenging from all perspectives legislatively, led to the passage of seven high-impact bills which were victories for Oregon cities.

In the end, as cities demand more—more support legislatively and an on all fronts related to city management—the LOC is one step ahead. As we move into year 97 of this organization's history, consider the importance of your contribution to these efforts. We always welcome new leadership. We welcome visionaries, and we welcome you. Together, we will continue to move the needle for all cities in Oregon.

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Q: What Amendments to the LOC Constitution Were Recently Approved?

A: During the LOC's Annual Business Meeting on October 22, the membership voted to make the following five key amendments to the LOC Constitution:

1. Modifying the Governing Structure of the Board of Directors

Beginning with the 2022 board election, the leadership structure will begin to change, specifically as it relates to the position of LOC Treasurer.

This year, and in years past, the Treasurer was elected by the membership at large and would serve a one-year term. The Treasurer then automatically ascends to the position of Vice-President, serving a one-year term. The Vice-President automatically ascends to the position of President, serving a one-year term. The President then automatically becomes the Immediate Past-President, serving a one-year term. For each position held, the person occupying it must be an elected official of a member city.

However, with the new constitutional amendment, the Treasurer position is removed from the automatic line of ascension to the President, and instead will serve as a standalone two-year position. During the 2022 election, the membership will elect a Treasurer for a two-year term. However, it will not elect a Vice-President in 2022, as the 2022 Treasurer, Hermiston Mayor Dave Drotzmann, will automatically ascend to the position of Vice-President. The membership will vote on a Vice-President, for the first time, during calendar year 2023.

2. Creating Additional Non-Voting Board Members

The LOC has divided the state into 12 distinct regions. To allow for each region of the state to have a position on the Board, a new provision to the Constitution was added which allows the President and LOC Nominating Committee to appoint persons from member cities in unrepresented regions to serve in a non-voting capacity on the Board. LOC staff is presently working with the Board and Nominating Committee to comply with this new constitutional provision as Region 10 (south central Oregon) and Region 12 (eastern Oregon) are not predicted to have any representation on the board in calendar year 2022. The duration for these appointed terms will be one year.

3. Defining Who Constitutes an Appointed Official

The term "appointed" is now defined within the LOC Constitution to mean: "any person who has been appointed by a city council and holds the title of city manager or city administrator. If a member city does not have a position titled city manager or city administrator, the city recorder, provided they

are appointed to their position by the city council, also constitutes an appointed position."

By defining the word "appointed" in this manner, in forthcoming board elections, beginning in calendar year 2022, city recorders in cities which have no city manager or city administrator as an organization's chief executive officer, are eligible to serve in board positions reserved for appointed city officials.

4. Past Presidents Ability to Continue Serving on the Board

The amended LOC Constitution allows any Past President of the board to continue to serve on the board if they hold either an elected or appointed position with a member city.

5. Conducting Meetings Via Electronic Methods

The LOC Constitution was amended, in relevant part, to read as follows: "The Board may hold any meeting by, or through the use of, any means of communication allowing all participants to simultaneously hear and speak to one another."

For more information on the changes to the LOC Constitution, contact Ms. Mulvihill at pmulvihill@orcities.org.

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Lawmakers Invest in Oregon's Infrastructure; CIS Offers Builders' Risk Coverage

During Oregon's last legislative session, lawmakers funded building and water infrastructure projects with the help of Oregon's \$2.6 billion share of COVID-19 stimulus dollars. Of particular interest is \$275 million to help fund 48 drinking water and wastewater projects — and \$150 million for wildfire response.

With so many cities and counties preparing for construction projects, it's a good time to remind leaders about insuring buildings during construction or repair.

The CIS Builders' Risk Endorsement is designed to cover the property loss exposures related to construction. These projects often involve unique risks not usually contemplated by standard property coverage forms. Given these unique issues, the typical contract between an owner and a contractor will require that one of the parties secure Builders' Risk coverage.

CIS' coverage can insure the CIS member, contractor, and subcontractors. It also covers the building or structure being constructed, plus fixtures, materials, supplies, machinery, and equipment to be integrated into the completed structure. Building projects greater than \$25 million (or \$5 million for frame construction) need reinsurance approval, while smaller projects (less than \$1 million) are covered under the CIS Property Coverage Agreement. Coverage for projects less than \$1 million does not include extra coverage provided by the Builders' Risk Endorsement. Currently, CIS has a minimum of \$5,000 deductible that applies to the Builders' Risk coverage. The deductible is higher for larger projects, or if the member carries a higher property coverage deductible.

To learn more about CIS' Builders' Risk coverage, contact Tena Purdy at tpurdy@cisoregon.org.

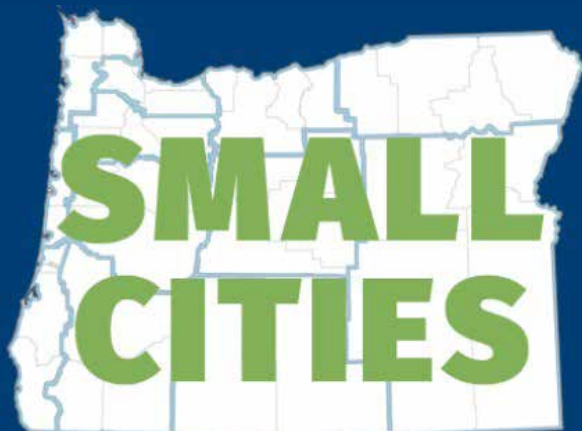
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Upcoming Small Cities Meetings

The Small Cities Network is a League program for cities with a population of 7,500 or less, with quarterly meetings to network and discuss common issues and solutions.

All meetings start at 11:00 a.m.

Upcoming 4th Quarter Meetings

South Willamette Valley (Region 4)
Virtual – November 12

South Coast (Region 6)
Virtual – November 16

Central Coast (Region 5)
Virtual – November 17

Southern Valley (Region 7)
Virtual – December 2

South Central Oregon (Region 10)
Virtual – December 3

Portland Metro (Region 2)
Virtual – December 15

Columbia Gorge (Region 8)
Virtual – December 16

Central Oregon (Region 9)
Virtual – December 17

On the Web: www.orcities.org/smallcities

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OMA Names Student Winners in “If I Were Mayor...” Contest

Each year, the Oregon Mayors Association (OMA) encourages participation of local mayors and students of their cities in the “If I Were Mayor...” student contest, which challenges students statewide to articulate what they would do as mayor of their city. Fourth and fifth grade students create posters, sixth through eighth grade students write essays and ninth through twelfth grade students create a digital presentation such as a movie or slide show.

The contest is first held locally, with one winner from each of the three categories moving on to the state level. Generous support from sponsor Pacific Power made this contest possible, and prizes were \$500 for first place, \$300 for second, and \$100 for third.

Congratulations to the following student winners for 2021, along with their respective mayors and cities:

Elementary Category – Posters

- 1st Place: Sweet Home: Madalyn Coleman, Grade 5, Enlighthium Academy, Mayor Greg Mahler
- 2nd Place: Hillsboro: Kaide Price, Grade 4, Imlay School, Mayor Steve Callaway
- 3rd Place: Forest Grove: Averi Gustafson, Grade 5, Tom McCall School, Mayor Pete Truax

Middle School Category – Essays

- 1st Place: Redmond: Harrison Swift, Grade 7, Redmond Proficiency Academy, Mayor George Endicott
- 2nd Place: West Linn: Hallie Jones, Grade 6, Rosemont Ridge School, Mayor Julianna Walters
- 3rd Place: Happy Valley: Lilyana Oien, Grade 6, Happy Valley Middle School, Mayor Tom Ellis

High School Category – Digital Presentations

- 1st Place: Redmond: Chaela Baker, Grade 12, Redmond Proficiency Academy, Mayor George Endicott
- 2nd Place: Cottage Grove: Kourtney Owens, Grade 12, Cottage Grove High School, Mayor Jeff Gowing
- 3rd Place: Prineville: Cecily Cooper, Grade 10, Crook County High School, Mayor Rodney Jason Beebe

There were many outstanding entries again this year, and those which rose to the top included thoughtful approaches and ideas of what each student would do as mayor.

The first-place winning students and their families were invited to attend the OMA Summer Conference in North Bend at the Mill Casino to have their prize presented July 31 at the OMA Awards Luncheon. The second and third-place prizes were sent

to the mayors of the winning students for local presentation.

All the students who made it to the state level did a fantastic job with their presentations, which were on display at the OMA Summer Conference. Links to the winning entries are displayed on the OMA webpage at www.oregonmayors.org.

The judging panel requested that this year’s judging date occur prior to the end of the school year, earlier than previous years. This would allow winning mayors time for a presentation at the school where the winners would be surrounded by their peers, hopefully increasing interest and participation in students for coming years.

The 2021-22 contest is underway, and can be conducted at any time during a school year. However, the local contest must be completed and local winning entries submitted to the LOC for the state-level contest before the deadline of **April 8, 2022**.

For details on how to participate in the 2021-22 OMA “If I Were Mayor...” Student Contest, please go to: www.oregonmayors.org and select Special Programs then Student Contest.

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Housing project in Medford by the Housing Authority of Jackson County, supported through the city's Community Development Block Grant program. *Photo courtesy of city of Medford.*

Cities Tackle Housing Shortage Through Local Strategies and Innovation

By Melody Finnemore

While Oregon's lack of affordable housing for people with little or no income consistently makes headlines, cities across the state also are dealing with a housing shortage that includes homes for people with moderate and upper-middle incomes.

The reasons for this range from a dearth of developable land and the infrastructure to support it, to parcels that are not attractive to developers and builders because they don't pencil out for a profit. Lengthy approvals and permitting processes, infrastructure costs, and other bureaucratic barriers play a role as well.

However, many cities are addressing their housing shortages in innovative ways, and several are doing so through grant funding for technical assistance provided by the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD).

Passage of HB 2003 in 2019 helped build momentum by requiring cities with more than 10,000 residents to study their future housing needs and develop a Housing Needs Analysis (HNA). HB 2003 requires cities within the Portland metro area to update their HNA every six years, and cities outside the metro area to update theirs every eight years.

The bill also requires each city to adopt a Housing Production Strategy (HPS) within a year of the HNA deadline. The strategy must include a list of actions a city will take, such as revising regulations or providing financial incentives, to promoting the development of all identified housing needs.

The DLCD will review and approve each city's HPS based on the adequacy of strategies to meet all identified housing needs, the appropriateness of strategies to facilitate the production of



Examples of middle housing developments in Hood River. The city received a technical assistance grant from the DLCDC and hired the consulting firm ECONorthwest to help develop its Affordable Housing Production Strategy. It formed an advisory community task force to provide input on potential strategies to include in a final report. *Photos courtesy of city of Hood River.*

needed housing, and how well the strategies, taken as a whole, will achieve fair and equitable housing outcomes. Cities must reflect and evaluate the progress and effectiveness of their HPS every three or four years, depending on the HNA schedule, and report on what strategies worked, which ones did not, and make note of any course corrections being made to ensure all housing needs are addressed.

Importantly, the Legislature in 2019 and 2021 included funding for local technical assistance grants at the DLCDC that make it possible for cities to meet the requirements of HB 2003 by hiring planning consultants. Several city leaders shared with *Local Focus* how they are accomplishing their analyses and crafting strategies to provide more housing so that everyone in their communities has a place to call home.

Lack of Housing a 'Liability'

Hood River has a population less than 10,000 and was not required to create a HPS under HB 2003, yet chose to develop one as part of its 2021 Work Plan to identify public policy tools and actions the city can use to encourage the production of affordable housing.

"Our goal is to provide a certain amount of all types of affordable and rental housing," said Dustin Nilsen, AICP, Hood River's director of planning and zoning. "The city's lack of housing is a big liability in terms of our ability to put roofs over people's heads."

A lack of affordable housing also causes economic impacts when companies cannot recruit and maintain the workers they need. "We had to take some forward steps to address that the issue

is becoming significant and it's having adverse impacts on the overall community," Nilsen said.

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Among the barriers Hood River faces in increasing its housing capacity is a limited land base surrounded by a national scenic area, the Columbia River, and high valley farmland that limits the city’s ability to expand its urban growth boundary. Identified early in the HNA was how to use limited real estate more efficiently while providing a diverse mix of housing types.

Nilsen said Hood River also faces the challenge of being among the top 10 most expensive small cities in the country, which fuels demand for high-income housing. The land that is available is highly parcelized, prohibiting large-scale development such as multifamily housing and providing only small lots in which the builder—and, ultimately, the homeowner—pays for the cost of infrastructure. In addition, the availability of construction materials and workforce to build homes is scarce.

The city received a technical assistance grant from the DLCD and hired the consulting firm ECONorthwest to help develop its Affordable Housing Production Strategy. It formed an advisory community task force to provide input on potential strategies to include in a final report.

The task force began meeting in mid-September and will be a sounding board for identifying and evaluating potential strategies

“As a small town, developers usually come to us for approvals. This is actually the city stepping out and becoming more assertive in addressing the issue.”

Dustin Nilsen, AICP, Hood River

for the city council’s consideration. The task force includes members of the real estate and services sectors as well as people who live in affordable housing and Latino residents.

“The city has been focused on bringing all voices to the table and not just those that have been commonly heard. That DEI lens has been really sharpened through this process,” Nilsen said.

He noted that the city already purchased seven acres that is designated for affordable housing production. “That is really unprecedented for the city to go out and assemble property and



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The city of La Grande recently approved a cottage home project for veterans. The homes are between 500-600 square foot each. *Image courtesy of city of La Grande.*

get it into production,” Nilsen said. “As a small town, developers usually come to us for approvals. This is actually the city stepping out and becoming more assertive in addressing the issue.”

Hood River also was among the first cities to borrow against its construction excise tax to generate a revenue stream to purchase property and acquire land for affordable housing, which the Legislature authorized in 2016.

“That’s really a signal of what cities are going to need to do. There’s no silver bullet strategy. You are going to have to put forward a portfolio of development because no one is providing that market,” Nilsen said.

More Private-Sector Leadership Needed

Michael Boquist, community development director for La Grande’s Planning Department, considers the city fortunate to be a recipient of the technical assistance grant from the DLCD that has paid for consultant assistance for its HNA and HPS as a pilot program established through HB 2003 and prior legislation.

This support made possible a critical update to an HNA that had not been revised since 2000, and the HPS is La Grande’s first. The city also has struggled to attract developers to build large-scale affordable housing in the rural community.

Traditionally, La Grande has attracted residents, including a retiree population and middle- to upper-income households, who hire smaller contractors to build custom, single-family homes. “That’s great for those who can afford that, but it doesn’t serve the working class or lower-income families we need to serve,” Boquist said.

Local contractors are generally not willing to assume the financial risk to build a subdivision and then sell the homes themselves because they often do not have the capital or ability to fund the risk. La Grande is striving to increase its inventory of affordable housing for the many residents who work in labor, retail and other low- and middle-income paying jobs.

Added to the challenge is the lack of engagement about housing issues within the community, Boquist said, noting the city promoted its HNA and HPS on its webpage and through local media announcements. When public meetings were scheduled in the evenings to accommodate residents’ work schedules, few showed up.

To ensure it did gather accurate and meaningful input for its HNA, the city recruited local specialists in the housing community, realtors, contractors and large employers that want to provide housing for workers they are trying to recruit.

As La Grande implements its HPS, one of its first steps is to create more affordable housing by changing land use codes to accommodate smaller lots, smaller homes and more multifamily development.

“I think that is very doable. Although, it doesn’t address the issue of who is going to proactively build these developments. So, for the near future we’ll still be relying on people to go out and get loans and hire local contractors to build the housing we need one dwelling at a time,” he said.

La Grande will measure its success by monitoring building permits and tracking whether vacant land is developed, and whether the housing constructed is consistent with the HNA. The challenge, however, is that the city is depending on developers to come forward to build that housing.

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“I’m not sure how we’re going to attack and address the need for lower-income home ownership and rental if the private sector does not come forward to build it for them,” Boquist said.

Providing Incentives to Attract Development

Like Hood River, the city of Madras voluntarily developed a Housing Action Plan that includes many of the new HSP requirements. “That was very intentional because we wanted a lot of latitude in the way we would potentially address our housing problems,” said Community Development Director Nicholas Snead, AICP.

In 2017, the Madras City Council began addressing housing issues formally by hiring ECONorthwest to help create its Housing Action Plan. The work began through interviews with developers, realtors, homebuilders and other stakeholders. Developers stated that the permitting process took too long, and regulations for infrastructure and design standards were too strict and costly.

“We also learned that, for market-rate housing, the profit margin was so small in Madras that they didn’t want to take the risk of building housing here,” Snead said. “They would have to hold a house for up to six months or longer before it actually sold, and that’s like a spec home. Developers won’t build those anymore. They prefer to build houses that sell within a month or two so they don’t have to pay additional interest to the bank.”

With the understanding that the profit margin was too low, the city looked at how its regulations impacted cost and took aggressive measures to address them. As an example, the city is partnering with developers to reduce the cost of needed infrastructure for housing developments by providing tax rebates through tax increment financing from a Housing Urban Renewal District (HURD) that was created in 2020.



The Yarrow Apartments in Madras, the first of three phases of development to construct 148 units of market rate apartments. They are the first market rate apartments to be constructed in over 10 years. *Photo courtesy of city of Madras.*

“The HURD has been immensely powerful and will continue to be powerful,” Snead said. “Once homebuilders understood the HURD, they commented on how amazing it is. For homebuilders who wouldn’t otherwise be interested in Madras, it changes the economics of their business and makes them take a second look. We’ve never had that interest before.”

Madras received a \$15,000 grant from the DLCD to pay for most of the cost to have ECONorthwest prepare its Housing Action Plan, which includes a five-year housing goal of building 32 homes a year. Last year, the city permitted the construction of 58 new dwellings and, by mid-October, had permitted 77 homes this year.

While progress is being made, Snead said, there is always room for improvement and the city council will identify additional measures.

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“We need to cultivate a new generation of developers to produce housing that is good and do it in a way that is profitable to them and that they can own and operate.”

Matt Brinkley, AICP CFM, Medford

Funding Helps Address Infrastructure Deficiencies

The city of Medford has been developing its housing capacity analysis and HPS over the last year and a half, with both due for completion by the end of 2023. Staff actually began the process in 2018 with a proposed amendment to the urban growth boundary.

When it became clear that expanding the boundary was not going to adequately address the city’s housing shortage, the Housing Advisory Commission and staff were charged with identifying barriers to development and crafting nearly 40 strategies to reduce them, said Medford Planning Director Matt Brinkley, AICP CFM.

Among those barriers are infrastructure deficiencies, including stormwater and sanitary sewer, in areas of the city that are undeveloped or underdeveloped. This includes land the city up-zoned

through the urban growth boundary expansion to provide more middle-density housing.

“That’s a very real infrastructure problem we’re trying to address,” Brinkley said, adding the city has targeted funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act and state and local improvement district funding to pay for infrastructure improvements on the front end so the cost is not passed on to developers.

Some of Medford’s land is highly parcelized, which is not attractive to developers who want to build on a large scale, including multifamily housing, and the city needs alternatives to single-family homes that cost around \$450,000, he noted.

“We need to cultivate a new generation of developers to produce housing that is good and do it in a way that is profitable to them and that they can own and operate,” Brinkley said. “We do not have supply for everyone else, even for moderate- to upper-middle incomes. We don’t have housing for nurses and teachers and others who have a good income. That’s an economic development problem and also a housing problem.”

He noted he has been “pleasantly surprised” by public participation in a series of webinars the city hosted during development of its HPS. The Housing Advisory Commission received valuable feedback from community housing groups, organizations that work on issues related to homelessness, realtors, developers and other stakeholders.

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With technical assistance grants, Medford worked with ECONorthwest to develop its HPS and has implemented many regulatory reforms and economic incentives that were included in its 37 strategies. Its Housing Advisory Commission advises the city council on how to use the construction excise tax to support the city's Housing Opportunities Fund, which fosters the creation of affordable housing through incentives.

"Given where we started out, it really enabled us to look at housing production strategies with stronger background experience, and helped us come up with strategies that are going to be meaningful and hopefully improve our housing market here," Brinkley said.

He added that he looks forward to additional economic incentives such as tax abatement programs, property tax exemptions and exemptions for affordable housing that are due to be implemented over the next year or so. On the regulatory side, the HPS calls for larger subdivisions that require a percentage of smaller, affordable units.

Medford's City Council is setting a goal of supporting the production of at least 200 units that are affordable to lower- and moderate-income households over the next two years, a measure of the HPS's success. The city will continue to track its progress through annual reporting.

More 'Middle' Housing in Development

Tualatin's HPS was an organic progression of an HNA presented to the city council as part of a larger effort to address housing issues called Tualatin 2040.

"It was fresh in the minds of everyone and the findings of the housing needs analysis showed different opportunities and, obviously, some deficiencies," said Steve Koper, AICP, assistant community development director with the city's planning division. "Essentially, it came to some great conclusions, but we still have work to do."

Koper said Tualatin has had to look for creative solutions to address its housing needs because not much vacant land is available, and its residential areas are mostly built out with single-family homes. Some larger areas offer market-rate multifamily housing, but not many diverse, affordable options, or "middle" housing, exists. He said the city hopes to increase the number of townhomes and other stock available for purchase to widen its sales market for people with moderate income levels.

In addition, Tualatin is seeking to increase its housing inventory for low-income residents and people who work in the city but cannot afford to live there. "Most of the people who come to work here don't live in the city, so we're trying to figure out that jobs/housing imbalance," Koper said.

With COVID-19 limiting opportunities for public participation, Tualatin utilized its website and infographics to keep people informed. Staff presentations to the city council are based on core information to increase familiarity with the issues, while also updating it during regular check-ins so the council can see progress.

Koper said members of the Planning Commission serve as a Citizen Advisory Committee that is building on the work done

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The city of Tualatin's housing production strategy culminated in 12 goals, each of which is supported by a series of strategic actions. Some examples include evaluating development codes to identify barriers, and reviewing fees to identify which should be prioritized and which could be waived. *Photo courtesy of city of Tualatin.*

for the HNA. A Community Advisory Committee that met pre-COVID included a cross section of people working in the affordable housing sector, residents from diverse backgrounds, and members of the Planning Commission.

"We had a pretty good idea of what Tualatin's goals were, and the opportunities and weaknesses we had," he said.

When HB 2003 offered a chance to obtain grant funding for consultant assistance with housing production strategies, Tualatin was among the first to pursue it.

"We jumped at the opportunity to be a pilot program for that legislation because we had so recently done our housing needs analysis," Koper said. "We felt like we were in a really great spot to be one of those test cases or pilots."

Tualatin's City Council has adopted the HPS and city staff are now implementing it. The city has received two additional grants from the state to fund further analysis. One grant will pay for a consultant to help the city evaluate opportunities to rezone land for greater density and mixed use. The other will fund Tualatin's Equitable Strategic Finance Plan, which explores financial strategies to increase housing equity and, in particular, affordable housing for lower-income tiers.

Koper explained that Tualatin's housing production strategy culminated in 12 goals, each of which is supported by a series of strategic actions. Some examples include evaluating development

“Most of the people who come to work here don't live in the city, so we're trying to figure out that jobs/housing imbalance”

Steve Koper, AICP, Tualatin

codes to identify barriers, and reviewing fees to identify which should be prioritized and which could be waived. Along with measuring progress using its own metrics, Tualatin will report outcomes to the state periodically and with a comprehensive report in 2027.

3D Printed Houses Among Innovations

In addition to the HPS efforts funded through HB 2003, many cities are pursuing innovative housing strategies to spur development of needed housing. John Day, Burns and Lakeview are among the first cities in Oregon to pioneer the construction of 3D printed homes to address their housing needs. They have partnered with Alquist 3D with the goal of building 100 homes

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The first 3D printed homes in Oregon will be The Ridge in John Day, a master-planned development overlooking the John Day River. The Ridge will provide veteran's preference housing at a target rental rate of \$850 per month. *Photo courtesy of Town of Lakeview.*

in each community over the next five years. The first build in John Day is planned for The Ridge, a master-planned development overlooking the John Day River. This will provide veteran's preference housing at a target rental rate of \$850 a month.

"We've put programs in place to incentivize development," said City Manager Nick Green. "We're going to be announcing a grant award to do the first 3D home printing in the state of Oregon, and that will be one way we can build at-scale without having to increase the number of general contractors in our area right out of the gate."

John Day, which received the grant funding from the DLCD, already offers a New Home Incentive Program that provides a 7% cash rebate on new home construction, based on the increase in the property's assessed value. Its Existing Home Remodel Incentive Program offers a 15% cash rebate on substantial improvements to home façades, structural repairs, major remodels and new additions.

In Central Point, city leaders expanded the urban growth boundary to accommodate growth for the next 50 years. The city council is exploring how to use American Rescue Plan Act funds to develop affordable housing on a vacant site that was formerly slated for a Walmart.

Forest Grove, Hillsboro and Cornelius are all adding more affordable housing, thanks to a 2018 bond measure. Construction of the \$13.5 million project in Forest Grove, called The Valfre

at Avenida 26, began in early September and will add 36 units and is slated to open in fall 2022. Of the 36 units, 30 are two- and three-bedroom apartments for families, the *Portland Tribune* reported.

"Growing up in this community, I've seen how the lack of affordable housing can impact families. I am thrilled that we're seeing some momentum build locally around much-needed affordable units as our region grows," Metro Councilor Juan Carlos González said.

The project, named after Adolph "Val" Valfre, a U.S. Air Force veteran and former Forest Grove city councilor and executive director of the Housing Authority of Washington County, is made possible by a \$653 million affordable housing bond approved by Metro voters in November 2018.

Komi Kalevor, who now holds Valfre's former position as head of the Housing Authority of Washington County, said \$3.7 million of the \$13.5 million development cost is being covered by the bond.

"The bond is the game-changer. Affordable housing is not easy to finance. The market rate charges the highest rent possible and leverages that to get a bank loan plus private equity investment," Kalevor said. "Affordable housing rents are not enough to incentivize development, but here, the Metro bond fills the void, and housing that would get left on the shelf is built."



Construction of the \$13.5 million project called The Valfre at Avenida 26 in Forest Grove, began in early September and will add 36 units and is slated to open in fall 2022. Of the 36 units, 30 are two- and three-bedroom apartments for families. The project is made possible by a \$653 million affordable housing bond approved by Metro voters in November 2018. *Photos courtesy of Washington County.*

In addition to the bond, the project is funded by a \$4.1 million tax credit, a \$500,000 grant from Washington County and a \$4.6 million bank loan.

Similar bond revenue is funding a 113-unit affordable housing complex in neighboring Cornelius, as well as a 150-unit affordable housing complex in Hillsboro, which are both expected to break ground early next year, according to the *Portland Tribune*.

“The development is a step in the right direction,” said Erica Calderon, director of housing for Bienestar, a nonprofit managing tenant outreach and leasing for all three projects. “COVID

has highlighted the need for affordable housing. As we’ve been proactive about leasing and finding tenants, we are meeting more and more families who are no longer able to afford market rates.”

Calderon added, “We’re going to be able to catch some families and individuals who are falling into the same cycle of struggle and homelessness created by the fact that there is not enough affordable housing.” ■

Ms. Finnemore is a Portland-area freelance writer. Contact her at precisionpdx@comcast.net.



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Engaging Gen Z in Local Land Use Planning

By Kirsten Wyatt, *Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL)*

Sophie McGinley, Assistant Planner for the city of Eugene, and Cody Kleinsmith, Climate Resiliency Analyst with Lane County, joined ELGL's GovLove podcast to discuss how local governments can engage their entire community on complex land use decision making. Sophie and Cody shared how they engaged on the topic of middle housing for Eugene, and how local governments can engage underrepresented populations in their community and especially the Gen Z population. Excerpts from the episode are included below; listen to the full episode at [ELGL.org/govlove](https://elgl.org/govlove).

What are some easy ways that cities can begin to engage Gen Z in local government decision making?

Sophie McGinley - We were pleased to hire Cody Kleinsmith as an intern in our department to specifically engage Gen Z in Eugene. One project he worked on was to create a Gen Z story map. A story map is a type of GIS tool that is able to combine

a really technical mapping component with a narrative; we specifically wrote the map for a Gen Z audience. We also engage the community on Facebook Live Events. These events connect planning projects with larger things that we knew that people already cared about: land use zoning and climate, social justice, economics, transportation, and Gen Z. Eugene also has used Reddit AMAs all about the middle housing project. We then documented how to use Reddit into how-to guides so that people like myself could continue this awesome Gen Z work.

What were some of the tactics Eugene used to engage Gen Z?

Cody Kleinsmith - A top priority was removing barriers and making city things more accessible to younger people. When we were applying House Bill 2001 to lot sizes we thought about student perspective. For example, if we were talking about lot sizes like 5,000 square feet, 7,000 square feet... we didn't know



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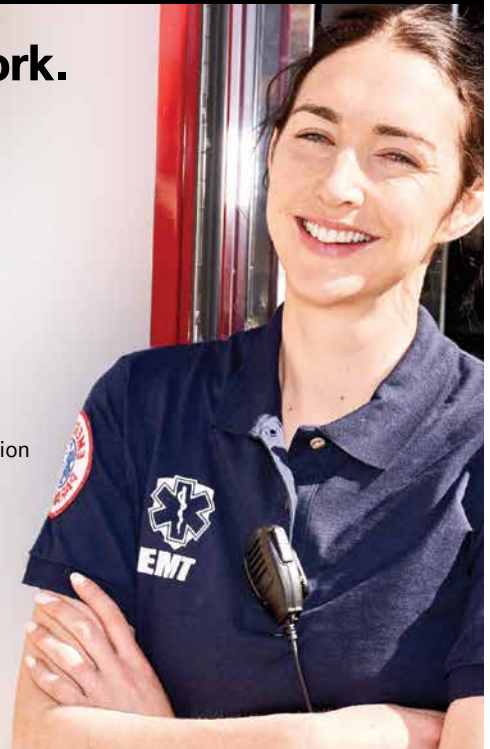
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Engaging the Entire Community



Sophie McGinley
City of Eugene, OR



Cody Kleinsmith
Lane County, OR

what that meant to students. And we assumed that many other members of Gen Z wouldn't know what those numbers meant. So we tried to compare them to different rooms or buildings on campus, that students have been in, to be able to get a grasp of the lot changes in the bill. Students could begin to picture, "okay, I could have two living units on a lot the size of this room, or three on one the size of that room...", and that sort of thing.

Why is it important to engage the whole community in land use planning?

Sophie McGinley - Planning affects everyone, it doesn't just affect homeowners, people of certain ages, or people of certain backgrounds. Especially housing types like middle housing—this housing type benefits renters and younger folks. In Eugene, we wanted to hear from a variety of voices. We were also really focused on equity and looking back at why certain policies existed. With a history of single-family zoning, and who it has disproportionately harmed in the past, it was really important to involve folks who were renters, involve folks who had various incomes, various educational attainment, to involve BIPOC and really center their voices and to expand the public process so that we created policies that didn't disproportionately impact anybody. And it really was like a form of redress, I hope, with the way that we were approaching our public involvement.

And, why is it important to engage younger people in planning processes?

Cody Kleinsmith - As a young person in Eugene, I've learned a very scary statistic about the scarce vacancy rate for rental units in Eugene. It's a reminder that housing topics and issues are important to Gen Z members of the community because every college student has to deal with that kind of scramble for housing. When we talk about getting student voices we need to show them that these are important topics for them. It's also about centering voices of BIPOC individuals and other

individuals who aren't typically part of the engagement process. If you don't get those voices in the room, they're never going to help plan our neighborhoods.

Listen to the full episode at ELGL.org/govlove to learn more about Eugene's work to engage the entire community on land use issues. ■



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ARPA Funds May Help Cities with Cybersecurity Issues

Cyberattacks continue to be costly and debilitating for public agencies. Some Oregon cities and counties have learned firsthand how disruptive they can be. For CIS members with cybersecurity issues, the [American Rescue Plan Act](#) (ARPA) may provide help. An estimated \$2.6 billion in federal funds are earmarked for Oregon—and some of those dollars may be used to address computer software and hardware issues that make public entities vulnerable.

Reviewing ARPA Sections 602(c)(1)(C) and 603(c)(1)(C) suggests that federal funds may be available for cybersecurity. According to [U.S. Treasury guidance](#), government agencies can use ARPA funds for broadband investments such as programs related to cybersecurity or digital literacy training. Recipients may also use funds to protect critical infrastructure, and “as part of provision of government services up to the amount of revenue lost due to the public health emergency.”



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To get started, cities should work with their IT manager or service provider to determine security risks. Once security issues are identified, creating a scope of work is the next step. Selecting an IT consultant comes next. The consultant can review and assess your current system and provide recommendations on how to correct issues.

Currently, ARPA funds can be used for cybersecurity in three of the main spending categories. Cities will have the most flexibility in terms of allowed cybersecurity uses under the revenue replacement category. The U.S. Treasury specifically calls out “modernization of cybersecurity, including hardware, software, and protection of critical infrastructure” as an allowed use of those funds, but only up to the dollar amount for which a city or county can demonstrate a revenue loss since the start of the pandemic. Allowed uses could include:

- Investing in IT consulting services to identify current system/network weaknesses and implementing any software and hardware improvements that the assessment recommends;
- Implementing data encryption on all portable devices and media, including laptops;
- Transitioning to operating systems and other applications that are fully supported by the software provider;
- Implementing a multi-factor authentication system for all internet-connected use of municipal devices and systems;
- Completing Compliance with Payment Card Industry (PCI) Security Standards (where credit cards are accepted for payment);
- Implementing end-point detection and response software; and
- Improving disaster recovery efforts, such as moving to the cloud for network applications.

Other spending categories are more restricted in terms of allowed cybersecurity uses, but unrestricted in the amount of the investment. Under the infrastructure category, funds may be used for cybersecurity needs to protect water or sewer infrastructure, consistent with eligibility under the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) or Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF). Under the assistance to households facing negative economic impacts category, funds may be used for digital literacy training.

Once the IT work has been completed, public agencies will have protections in place that will serve their community well. To learn more, visit the LOC’s American Rescue Plan Resource Hub: www.orcities.org/resources/reference/arp. CIS is also investigating free cybersecurity services offered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security made available to local government.

CIS’ Coverage for Cyber

Because of targeted ransomware on local governments, insurers are making it increasingly difficult to place coverage. Currently, CIS offers excess cyber coverage over the \$50,000 bundled through its liability policy. However, CIS’ excess carrier has said that this will be the last year that they’ll offer it. Therefore, it is more important than ever for public agencies to take advantage of the new ARPA funds. CIS is investigating excess cyber insurance alternatives for our members.

Currently, CIS partners with Reflare to help members with cybersecurity. CIS’ Senior Risk Management Consultant Lisa Masters’ article (www.cisoregon.org/dl/0a83KSry) provides more information. CIS is committed to supporting members by providing resources to reduce cybersecurity threats. For more information, contact a CIS Risk Management Consultant. ■

Disclaimer: *The ARPA information provided above may be subject to change based on updates from the U.S. Department of the Treasury, and the state of Oregon. All potential recipients should confirm that they are eligible to receive federal ARPA funds before moving IT projects forward. ARPA fund recipients will be required to submit one interim report and thereafter quarterly Project and Expenditure reports through the end of the award period on Dec. 31, 2026.*



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Worst Drought in Oregon Hits Water Systems

By Dennis Lyon

The Western United States is experiencing a slow-moving crisis: drought.

In fact, drought has impacted more people globally over the past 40 years than any other type of natural disaster, and it is the second-most costly natural disaster in the United States, resulting in crop losses, wildfires and water shortages. Scientists have opined that the drought which impacted parts of the western United States may be the region's worst in 1,200 years, impacting 70 million people.

More than 70% of Oregon has been suffering under drought conditions for two years—the worst on record—and below average precipitation for four years, resulting in a strain on the state's groundwater and water reservoir resources. Even worse, the extended drought has made the state less resilient to drought overall, and the rainy, snowy autumn needed to recharge water supplies doesn't appear to be on the horizon.

Impacts of Droughts Linger


Droughts have many long-term impacts that negatively affect public health, many of which involve water quality and water

shortages. Drought-related wildfires can send ash, charcoal and debris into water sources, decreasing water quality and killing aquatic life, as well as forcing water systems to add more chemicals to treat the water. Droughts reduce stream and river flows, increasing the concentration of pollutants, viruses and bacteria. Drought can also affect air quality, wildlife and flora, and increase the likelihood of surface runoff and the contamination of food crops.

Drought can reduce the size of water resources, possibly causing stagnation and algae blooms and providing breeding grounds for the mosquitos responsible for the West Nile virus. Additionally, during droughts, people may collect water for outdoor uses, such as watering gardens, in rain barrels, which can be mosquito habitats, if not installed properly with a screen.

Drought Drains Water Systems

Drought can be worsened by increased demand on supplies, because of population increases and agricultural use. Additionally, when water sources dwindle, there is increased demand on pumping water from aquifers, which can take years to replenish



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and pull contaminants into the aquifers. A study showed an increase of water consumption over 50 years increased North American drought frequency by 25%.

In a drought, many water systems will implement conservation methods, which may be voluntary or mandatory, but this can also cause unintended public health complications. Especially during the current Coronavirus pandemic, it is important to have water available for personal hygiene, handwashing and washing fruits and vegetables. Handwashing can help prevent respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses.

Innovations Supply Solutions

Water conservation and good hygiene can both be achieved with low-flow aerators and showerheads. Furthermore, encouraging the purchase and installation of water-efficient fixtures and appliances and xeriscaping can have a big impact—it's estimated that these measures can reduce water use by up to 60 percent.

Retrofit on resale codes require those either selling or buying older homes with water-gobbling fixtures to install new, water-conserving fixtures. Popular in water-stressed California, these ordinances require fixtures to meet a set standard or be replaced—and homes are inspected to be sure the requirements are met.

California has also been experimenting with reclaimed, or recycled water, which is treated wastewater. Polls show that 49% of Americans are willing to reuse water, and that figure increases for those who are educated about the treatment process.

Recycled grey water can be used for: irrigation, cooling processes, and recharging ground water; in homes for flushing toilets; and even, when processed to EPA standards, as potable water. Some utilities, such as the Orange County Water District, have replicated grey water recycling across an entire water system.

Another area of innovation is the harvesting of stormwater for irrigation, by capturing and storing stormwater that would otherwise flow into a municipality's grey water system. In addition, harvesting rainwater with cisterns for non-potable purposes is as old as civilization itself.

Municipal officials can encourage water recovery by establishing quality standards and guidelines for recycled water and ensuring that current codes, particularly plumbing codes, do not prevent water recycling or place an onerous burden on those trying to build or retrofit homes to recycle water.

Aging Infrastructure Adds to the Problem

Aging water infrastructure also exacerbates drought conditions, as water is lost to crumbling infrastructure before it even reaches the meter. In fact, 2.1 trillion gallons of treated water are lost in the U.S. each year. Water systems throughout the country are struggling with maintenance and upgrades because the money—and often the political will to increase water rates—isn't there. In fact, the federal government's share of water infrastructure investments has fallen from 63% of total capital spending to less than 10% over the past 40 years.

Water isn't only wasted on the utilities' side—a leaky faucet in a home can waste up to 100 gallons a year. On the private side, leaky faucets, interior plumbing and water service lines are wasting uncounted gallons of treated water during drought conditions. However, this is part of the water system to which utilities don't have access.

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Dennis Lyon currently serves as Regional Account Director for the Service Line Warranty Program. He is responsible for working with municipalities/utilities to educate and develop the best program options for their residents.

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Preparing Your Lawn Now for Next Summer

Fall has returned to the Pacific Northwest (PNW), along with rain in the central valley and, hopefully soon, snow in the mountains. While we're thankful for the rain and snow, it also means many people will forget that Oregon, along with most of the PNW, is still in a multi-year drought. So, what can the average person do to help reduce their water usage now in preparation for next summer's dry weather? Have you considered reducing or eliminating your lawn?

There are many benefits to reducing the size of your lawn:

- It saves time, money, and energy that you're no longer spending mowing, fertilizing, and watering. Just think... no need to store a lawnmower anymore!
- It reduces your overall water consumption, saving you money on your water bill.
- It creates a reduction in noise and air pollution. According to the EPA, lawns cover 20 million acres of residential land in the United States alone, and gas lawnmowers account for 5% of the air pollution. A 3.5hp lawnmower pollutes as much in one hour as a vehicle driving 350 miles.
- Eliminating or reducing your lawn also offers more biodiversity when you replace your lawn with a variety of plants that attract bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, etc.



Sheet mulched gardens look a bit trashy at first. *Photo by fishermansdaughter*

- It can also enhance the value of your home. Low maintenance yards are becoming more attractive to home buyers.

Below are a few do-it-yourself options for replacing your lawn, and fall is the perfect time in Oregon to begin such a project:

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Left: New path with Blue Star Creeper blooming. *Photo by libraryrachel.* Right: Xeriscape by Jeremy Levine Design. *Photo by Jeremy Levine Design.*

Sheet Composting

This is the easiest method but be aware, the entire process takes four-to-six months. The benefit is that it's inexpensive and helps build your soil through the decomposition of cardboard and compost. This method also requires large amounts of compostable material.

- Step 1. Mow your grass on the lowest setting possible.
- Step 2. Stop watering your lawn (you can begin this process anytime during the summer but be aware the neighbors may ask questions about why your lawn is dying!).
- Step 3. Cover the existing lawn with layers of organic material such as cardboard (remove all tape, labels, etc.) or 10 sheets thick of black and white only newspaper. Make sure to overlap the pieces. Water this layer thoroughly.
- Step 4. Layer over the top a weed free mulch such as leaves, sawdust, manure, finished compost, shredded garden trimmings, wood chips, or straw (be sure to use clean straw and do not use hay as it contains seeds which will create a bigger issue!).
- Step 5. Sit back and let nature do its thing. Once the process is complete, your soil will be in much better shape and ready for a variety of plants.

Sod Cutting

If you just want to reduce the size of your lawn but not eliminate all of it, you can utilize sod cutting. The top layer of sod can be sliced off with a spade or for larger areas you can rent a sod cutter at your local hardware store. The sod which has been removed can be stacked and covered with a sheet of black plastic. In about 6 months, the grass and roots will break down leaving you with valuable soil for your garden, shrubs, and flowers beds. In the area where you removed the sod, you can either hard-scape with gravel or pebbles, or plant native shrubs, flowers, etc.

Consider a Lawn Alternative

Still want a green look to your lawn but don't want water intensive grass that you have to mow? Consider replacing your lawn with groundcover. These are plants that spread across the ground but do not grow tall, so no mowing is needed. These plants also require little maintenance. They can even enhance the soil health by acting as a mulch as some groundcovers are nitrogen fixing.

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Micro clover, creeping thyme, blue star creeper, and native strawberries can make great lawn replacements. There are also several drought tolerant groundcovers including ice plants, dianthus, and mountain sandwort. Your local nursery can recommend the right groundcover for your soil and maintenance needs.

Hardscaping

Hardscape includes replacing areas of your landscaping with non-living elements such as concrete, tile, pebbles, recycled tumbled glass, or gravel. With gravel and pebbles, you can use contrasting colors to create different designs and incorporate paving stones for walking paths. The example below is for replacing your lawn with gravel and is one of several methods you can utilize.

- Start with Steps 1-3 of the “Sheet Composting” method described above.
- Step 4. Unroll black landscape fabric over the top of the newspaper or cardboard. Adjust the fabric so it overlaps the edge of the lawn area. Place a brick or large rock every few feet along the edges of the fabric to weigh it down.

- Step 5. Add a few inches of mulch over top of the landscape fabric. Use a rake to spread the mulch over the area as evenly as possible. Allow this to sit for one or two weeks.
- Step 6. Remove the bricks/rocks from the landscape fabric. Pour gravel (or whatever hardscape material you choose) on top of the layer of mulch at a rate of one cubic foot per square inch of area.
- Step 7. Spread the gravel evenly with a rake. Trim any excess fabric from the edges of the area with scissors.
- Step 8. Be sure to check the area after a few weeks for any signs of settling. Add additional gravel as necessary.

Not only can you save precious water, money, and time by undertaking one of these do-it-yourself projects, but you also get to enjoy a beautiful new landscape.

For questions related to Oregon Water Resources Department’s water conservation programs, please contact Kerri Cope at Kerri.H.Cope@oregon.gov or 503-979-9544. ■

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Around the State

Stories from across Oregon

Good things our cities have been doing all across the state.

TOLEDO

New Murals to Brighten City

The streets of Toledo will become more colorful over the next year thanks to \$35,000 in grant funding the city received to commission murals throughout town as part of its Arts Toledo project.

The city received \$23,500 in funding from T-Mobile's Hometown Grant program, which has given out \$5 million in grants to cities across the U.S. for similar improvement projects. The remaining \$11,500 comes from multiple sources, including Travel Oregon, the Roundhouse Foundation, the Oregon Coast Visitors Association and the Cascades West Economic Development District, the *Newport News Times* reported.

The Toledo Art Committee has been working with the PDX Street Art Alliance to contact 47 different Oregon artists who have submitted examples of their work. The project includes plans to commission three large murals on blank walls in the city as well as several smaller "transportable" murals that will be put on movable plywood canvases and showcased in different locations around Toledo.

The PDX Street Art Alliance will be doing one of the large murals itself, while another will be an open call for any artists who want to apply. For the third mural, the goal is to find an artist who has experience creating "community guided" artwork,



as the artist will be expected to work with the community as much as possible to develop the artwork.

The Toledo City Council and the arts committee worked together to select the artists, some of whom live in the Portland metro area and others who live in rural areas. Themes for the mural art include history, culture, industry and the city's unique character. Selected projects were to be assigned based on the artists' price points and availability, according to the *News Times*.

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NORTH POWDER

Playground Set to Open

Residents in North Powder will have a new playground to enjoy this fall in the city park, the result of a strong volunteer effort and grants and donations that totaled about \$70,000.

City Recorder Beth Wendt commended the “phenomenal bunch of volunteers” who helped erect the playground, adding all of the labor was donated. Local community member George Marston spent many hours applying for grants, getting donations and organizing the project.

The volunteer group was led by four people from the Oregon Recreation and Park Association. The La Grande Parks and Recreation department helped prepare for the construction as well as inspections. Representatives from EDPA Renewables Wind Farms assisted with playground construction.



The North Powder playground before construction.

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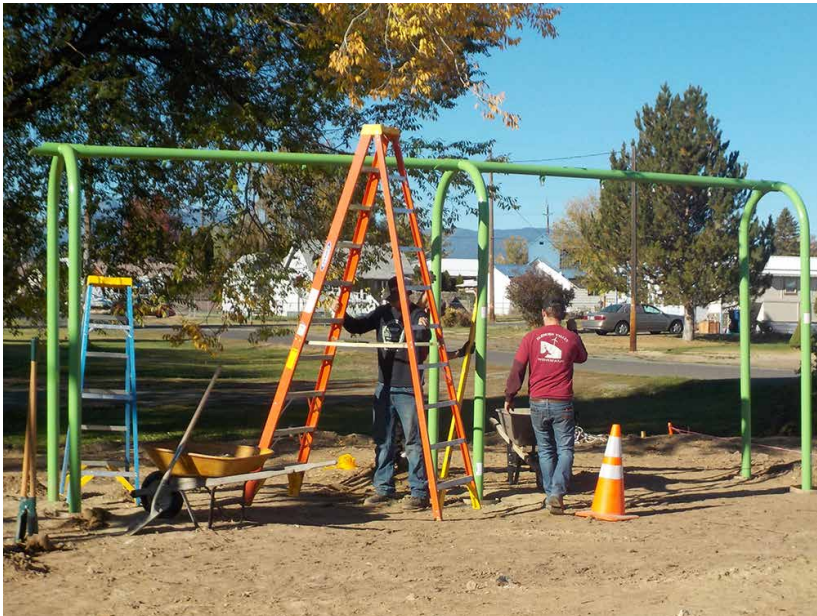
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The North Powder playground during construction.

“Other community members helped with whatever was needed, from construction to providing meals and running errands,” Wendt said.

As of mid-October, the city still had a few finishing touches, such as assuring that all bolts were tightened, the ADA ramp

was installed, the merry-go-round was bolted into place, and the ground cover was laid to complete the playground. City leaders hope to have the final inspection done and the playground open for use by early November.

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MOLALLA

Bear Creek Foot Bridge Opens

Molalla's new foot bridge over Bear Creek now allows people to walk or ride safely between Highway 211/Main Street and Toliver Road. City Manager Dan Huff told the *Molalla Pioneer* the project has been a work in progress.

"Our community has been discussing the need for bike/pedestrian improvements in this part of town since before I arrived," he said.

The city completed the first phase, annexing the land, in 2014. Then it had to wait for the Oregon Department of Transportation to begin the bike and pedestrian path work on Highway 211. The foot bridge's completion marked the third phase.

Phase four of the plan is the development of a park just north of the bridge. The city recently started that process through its new Park Community Program Committee, co-chaired by Councilors Jody Newland and Crystal Robles, the *Pioneer* reported.



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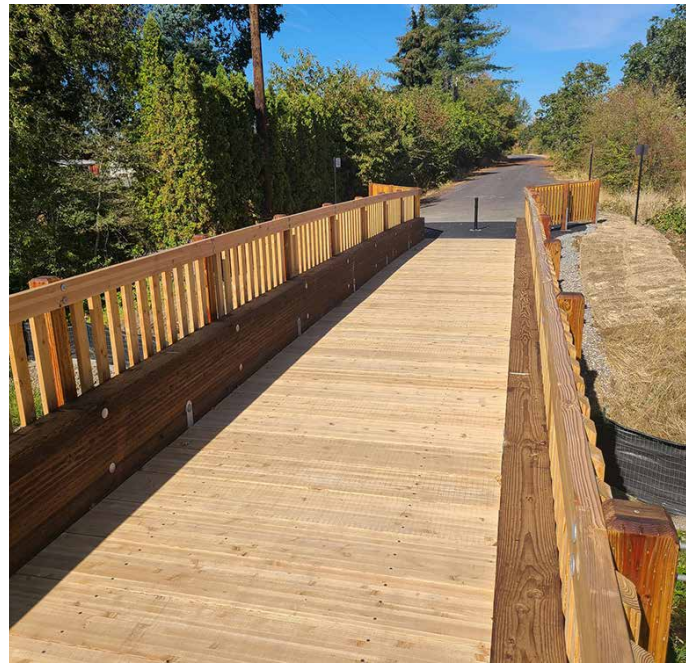
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“This beautiful new bridge is the first of many projects coming to Molalla,” Newland said, adding the parks committee began meeting in October and has many projects to discuss.

“We have funding identified and are ready to get going,” she said. “Molalla deserves great things, and we are excited to see existing parks get much-needed repairs and new parks coming to our town.”

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HINES

City, Tribe Partner on Water Project

The city of Hines has activated its new water tank and is working with the Burns Paiute Tribe on mitigation solutions, as archeological material was found recently in a few areas. The city has been working with the Tribe to protect and respect those areas, including following standard mitigation procedures outlined by the state's Historical Preservation Office (SHPO).

Of the recommendations proposed by SHPO, the Tribe would support interpretive panels, a donation to its cultural department, ethnography of the Hines area, planting native vegetation and a National Register listing, according to meeting minutes from the Hines Common Council and Budget Committee that were published by the *Burns Times-Herald*.

The city completed the tank and filled it to test its structural integrity over the summer, then sanitized it and conducted water-quality testing. The tank became operational in September. The city expects to finish installing waterlines and complete the installation and testing of software for meter reading by the end of the year. The upgraded meter reading system reads every 15 minutes, according to Hines City Administrator Kirby Letham.

The water system improvements project was estimated at a cost of \$7.2 million. The city chose to pursue a loan and grant from the state's Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund. It obtained a loan for \$6,449,000 with an annual interest rate of 1% on a



30-year term, and a grant for \$750,000. It was estimated that the debt service cost each year to repay the loan would be \$250,000.

Knowing the rates needed to be raised eventually, the council voted to raise rates gradually. Starting in January 2018, residential rates increased about \$4 each billing cycle until the final base rate of \$91.84 was reached in October 2019. Hines used American Rescue Plan Act funding for a lift station and pumps that need to be replaced. The city also plans to create a wastewater treatment plant.

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BEAVERTON, TIGARD & HILLSBORO

Main Street Awards

Beaverton, Tigard and Hillsboro have recently been recognized with Excellence on Main Street awards for revitalizing their downtown areas. The cities, members of the Oregon Main Street program, received the accolades from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, the *Beaverton Valley Times* reported.

Both Beaverton City Hall and the Beaverton Downtown Association received an Outstanding Public Private Partnership Award, given in part for their work during the pandemic, providing flexibility for restaurants to use on-street parking spaces and private parking lots for expansion of dining areas.

In addition, the award recognized the city for awarding the Beaverton Downtown Association a \$10,000 grant that allowed the association to provide funding for two new wall murals, six new sidewalk murals and nine new potted planters for the Dining Commons.

Tigard was honored with an Outstanding Special Project award for its "Building Our New Landscape." Tigard provided funds for a large paint-by-numbers-type mural, which was created



The city of Beaverton and the Beaverton Downtown Association received an award for accommodating outside dining areas.

last spring on the front of Main Street Stamp and Stationery. The Tigard Downtown Alliance partnered with Emily Lux, a Beaverton High School art teacher, to create the mural.



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The city of Tigard was honored for providing funds for a large paint-by-numbers-type mural in downtown.



One of the city of Hillsboro's two awards was for the Literary Pollinator Garden project.

Hillsboro won both an Outstanding Special Projects award and a Volunteers on Main award. The first award went to the Literary Pollinator Garden project, designed and implemented by Lazar Isakharov, a Glencoe High School junior, with help from the Hillsboro Downtown Partnership.

Kipperlyn Sinclair, who has served on the Hillsboro Downtown Partnership board and a variety of committees, received the Volunteers on Main award. Sinclair also created the Wishing Tree, which informed residents about opportunities to build engagement across the city's diverse communities, according to the *Valley Times*.

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COOS BAY

Parking, Fourth Street Improvements

The city of Coos Bay has implemented a series of improvements to Fourth Street, spanning from Commercial Avenue to Donnelly Avenue. These include the installation of several new traffic signals, and replacing older existing lights at the intersection of Fourth Street and Commercial Avenue as well as Fourth Street and Anderson Avenue. The new traffic lights have signals specific to the left-hand turn lanes.

In addition, parking in Coos Bay also is about to become easier. The city is using an empty lot on Central Avenue and South Third Street for a parking lot that will include 14 spaces and bike racks. The goal is to ease strained parking availability downtown, especially on days when there is a festival or the farmers market is open.



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City Manager Rodger Craddock explained that it won't be just a standard parking lot. "It's considered a green parking lot in that it is environmentally friendly with permeable pavers, so all the water that falls on the lot will stay on the lot."

Plans for the project, which is funded by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, are being finalized and the city will go out for construction bids by the end of the year. ■



Before



After



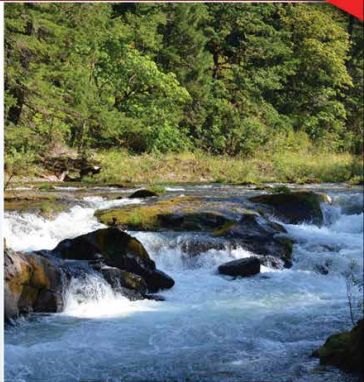
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