ODOT Signal And Pedestrian Upgrades

Construction on 6th and 7th streets are part of state’s All Roads Transportation Safety Program.

Local residents have witnessed a considerable amount of work occurring up and down Sixth and Seventh streets through the downtown corridor, as well as considerable construction surrounding I-5 offramps and bridges at the north end of town.

These projects are part of the Oregon Department of Transportation Grants Pass Signal and Pedestrian Upgrades. The upgrades are part of the state’s All Roads Transportation Safety (ARTS) program. Construction projects completed through the program are designed to improve driver and pedestrian traffic safety.

Some of the more visible work has included the creation of “bump-outs” at select non-signalized pedestrian crossings, such as those found on Sixth Street in front of the County Courthouse.

“It’s part of a systematic approach to enhance safety of pedestrian travel along state routes,” said Grants Pass Assistant Public Works Director Wade Elliott.

The state identified locations where there have been significant incidents of pedestrian injuries, and then considered potential options for reducing those incidents, including signals, beacons, and reduced crossing distances through use of bump-outs, Elliott said.

“It effectively decreases crossing distances, and increases the visibility of the pedestrian,” he said.

Additional efforts to improve safety include the installation of bliners along the concrete barriers where traffic comes off of I-5 and onto Sixth Street. The bliners reduce driver visibility in order to decrease unsafe turns, said Elliott.

“It should be completed very soon,” he said.

Additional aspects of 20-year transportation plan include intersection enhancements in the city’s downtown core, Elliott said.

The Southern Oregon Seismic Bridge Retrofit through Grants Pass comes as a result of ODOT’s evaluation of the state’s many bridges, and determination that several were not (See “UPGRADES” page 10)

Housing Crisis: A Community Problem

As chair of the city’s Housing Advisory Committee, Doug Walker is all too familiar with the housing challenges facing Grants Pass. Walker has served as the chair of the committee since its inception in 2017, and though he is proud of what the committee has accomplished thus far, he knows there is a lot more work to be done.

“We’ve moved this city to an understanding that we have to be proactive in addressing this problem,” said Walker.

The initial challenges of the committee involved understanding where it fit into the city’s “hierarchy” and “determining resources available to get things done,” he said.

“It took a little more than a year to figure that out,” Walker said.

One of the issues he believes to be a problem involves public relations and spreading the word about the committee’s actions and city programs designed to help ease a housing crisis that has loomed for (See “Housing” page 6)
A Fond Farewell: What It’s Like To Be Mayor

By Roy Lindsay
Mayor, 2018-2020
City Councilor, 2016-2018

The position of mayor is part ceremonial, part facilitator, and part a whole lot of other things. It has been my pleasure to serve as the Grants Pass mayor for the last two years.

Since arriving in Grants Pass more than 20 years ago, I have had the opportunity to serve on many committees and boards. The first one, the Rogue Valley Symphony, was for 14 years and included three years as its president.

With my many years of experience as a board member and my more recent experiences here in Grants Pass, including four years on the city council, I thought I was prepared to be mayor. It was an awakening surprise that I was not really that prepared to be mayor.

There was a huge learning curve to surmount. There were many new aspects to learn and processes to understand, as well as procedural legalities to comprehend. It was interesting for sure.

I quickly found that I was to be the “voice” of the council regarding policy matters. Invitations to speak at events started coming in. What to prepare for and what to talk about was always a big question. I learned to “just wing it” rather than spend a lot of time preparing. That proved to be a wise choice.

Facilitating the council meetings turned out to be much more difficult than I had expected. Herding into consensus a group of A+ individuals who have their own strong perceptions and ideas is a challenge. But one soon learns some techniques that may work from time to time.

I was part of the Ford Family Leadership Training programs that gave me valuable insight into leadership and working with other leaders.

Setting the agendas has been interesting. Along with Council President Tyler Flaming, and City Manager Aaron Cubic, we spent many hours poring over agenda items trying to determine the best mix for each council workshop and meeting.

Of course, there were moments when a hot item suddenly became extremely important and demanded immediate attention. Changing one’s schedule to respond to such needs required flexibility and quick action.

One would surmise that there were very few such sudden events. The last two years have proven otherwise. I may have spent more time than previous mayors, but I felt that I had to devote what was needed to the community.

Being mayor is definitely a part-time effort. Sometimes, I spent up to 100 hours per month, but when the virus struck, it definitely curtailed the time I could spend.

Instead, I had to adjust and realize that I could not do some of the things I would normally do. That was hard to accept.

The mayor does not have a vote but does have the responsibility to break a tie. I thought that I would not need to do that. However, there have been more instances than I thought possible.

After listening to all the information and absorbing the facts and getting a vote - only to realize that it ended in a tie, was a challenge of the moment. I had to quickly decide which way to go.

It is extremely difficult to suddenly be asked to make a quick decision without having precious time to evaluate the various aspects of the issue.

Being mayor is an honor and privilege very few people get to experience. I am honored to have been selected to represent the fine people of Grants Pass as both a councilor, and as mayor. One asset that I am very grateful for is knowledge of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. With those guiding documents, the responsibility of mayor is a bit easier. There is a foundational principle to rely upon and follow.

Thank you for allowing me to represent this community and the fine people of Grants Pass. I shall treasure this experience knowing that I have fulfilled the requirements of the office of mayor to the best of my ability. It has been a pleasure.

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Councilor Joel King 541-761-7538
jking@grantspassoregon.gov

Contacting The Council
The Mayor and Councilors are volunteers and do not keep regular office hours. They can be contacted by:
Phone, Mayor and City Councilors’ email, or by regular mail at 101 NW A Street, Grants Pass, OR 97526.

The City Council appreciates hearing from citizens. Your questions are handled as follows:

Questions sent by email that are technical in nature will receive a direct response from staff.

Questions regarding policy decisions will be referred to Council for their consideration and response. The mayor and council members can be emailed collectively at: mayorcouncil@grantspassoregon.gov.

Council will only respond to emails with a disclosed name and address.

All emails become public record.

GP Now
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Typo Tally!
A wise old editor once said: “Typos are here for those who won’t be happy until they find one.”

Thousands of words composed of thousands of letters means we are bound to get a few out of place. Let us know when you find them!

Celia Allen pointed out our local ducks need to learn about using gerunds. In a sign posted about the perils of feeding local water fowl, the sentence should read: “Don’t worry about our getting enough food."

Can you find any typos in this January issue?

Email us to let us know, and we’ll thank you in print right here in the next issue!
ssabel@grantspassoregon.gov
King on the Council

City Councilor Joel King cares about the social cohesion between government and community.

Joel King decided to run for city council after he and his wife, Judy, experienced a bout of criminal activity around a business they used to own. King says he saw a need to address public safety issues that existed in the city, and what led him to want to make some changes.

“When government doesn’t work very well, there are consequences,” said King.

King spent 35 years as a federal government employee. The latter part of his career, he served as a district ranger throughout the region. When an open seat on the city council was apparently uncontested, he applied for the post.

“I had time to give, and I thought I could do some good,” he said.

Eventually the campaign became a three-way race, but King won the seat in November 2018.

Judy King was skeptical at first about her husband serving on the council, but Joel says she supports him in all that he does.

“She didn’t like it. She still doesn’t like it, but she gets caught up in it sometimes,” said King.

Ultimately, “she cares as well,” he said, citing the experience they had dealing with criminal elements in the past.

“She suffered through the same situation,” King said.

After being sworn into the position in January 2019, King said the hardest part of the job was “getting up to speed on all the issues in a timely manner.”

Tha’s important to “making sure you are hopefully serving your citizens well,” he said.

The biggest continuous challenge is “knowing when a decision is ripe for making,” said King.

“You don’t want to make a decision too early before having the full information. Sometimes you have to go slow to go fast.”

“You don’t want to make a decision too early before having the full information. Sometimes you have to go slow to go fast,” King said.

King said it is “also important to make a decision when it’s needed.”

“Sometimes you have to make a fast decision to ensure things are taken care of,” he said.

Another challenge of serving on the council King identifies is coming to terms with the knowledge that “not every decision benefits everybody.”

“Sometimes people get hurt, and you don’t want to do that frivolously or without thought to the consequences,” said King.

Fortunately, there are other people on the dais to work with, he said.

“One of the best aspects of our government system is that things are debated openly and then decisions are made. You’ve got other people up there with you, and it’s a collective effort. Your own flaws (See “KING” page 11)

Council Appoints Citizens to Budget Committee

The Grants Pass City Council appointed three local citizens to the city Budget Committee at their regular business meeting Wednesday, Dec. 16. Appointees to the eight-member committee serve staggered terms of three years.

Tripp Androy, Tom Bradbeer, and Gordon Langenbeck were each appointed to three-year terms.

The purpose of the Budget Committee is to receive and review the recommended budget and approve a budget for City Council’s consideration. The lay members of the committee are appointed according to Oregon Revised Statutes 294.

Androy is a financial planning and analysis manager for Dutch Bros. Coffee. He holds a master’s degree in business administration from Harvard Business School. He has served on the city’s Collaborative Economic Development Committee since 2017 and joined the board of directors of the Josephine County Educational Fund in January 2020.

Bradbeer is the current chair of the Budget Committee. This is his second three-year term. His experience includes serving as an assistant professor of economics at Eastern Oregon University, and director of Economic Development for Tillamook County.

Langenbeck has served on the Budget Committee in the past. His previous experience includes managing a crew of 2,000 people responsible for overhauling jet aircraft.

Additional members of the committee include Linda Barkley, Jason Javarone, Steve Haydon, Ferris Simpson, and Tom Brandes.

The committee generally meets beginning in May of each year. The eight city council members also participate in the meetings.

Council Community Connection

Local residents are invited to join members of the Grants Pass City Council for discussion and conversation at city parks and facilities during Council Community Connection events 10 to 11 a.m. every second and fourth Friday of each month.

Each Council Community Connection session will be held at a different City of Grants Pass park or facility featuring two city councilors who will be available to answer questions, receive comments, and exchange ideas with members of the public. Refreshments will be served.

For additional information, visit: https://bit.ly/2C8NRWh.

Think like a wise man, but communicate in the language of the people.
- William Butler Yeats
New Not-For-Profit Will Promote Tourism

The Grants Pass City Council has authorized City Manager Aaron Cubic to form a starter board of directors for an independent, not-for-profit destination marketing organization to eventually handle the city’s tourism promotion operations.

The new organization comes as a result of recommendations from DMOproz, the consulting firm the city contracted to complete a Performance Audit, Visioning & Enhancement Committee report on tourism promotion operations earlier this year.

The starter board of the new organization will consist of five members who will oversee the formation of the organization’s articles of incorporation and by-laws.

The original members will also appoint six additional members to serve on the full board of directors of 11 representatives from community tourism-based industries such as outdoor recreation, arts and culture, tourist attractions, and agri-tourism.

The starter board members will include hotel industry executives Doug Bradley and Tamara Bushnell, and Terry Hopkins of the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association. All three currently serve on the city’s Tourism Advisory Committee.

Rounding out the starter board are Travel Southern Oregon Executive Director Brad Niva and Grants Pass City Councilor Valerie Lovelace.

Additional potential board members have been recommended by the city’s Tourism Advisory Committee and Collaborative Economic Development Committee.

The goal of the new organization is to have a full board established by March 2021, followed by the hiring of a full-time executive director to facilitate the organization’s contract with the city to provide tourism promotion services.

Once the new organization is prepared to enter into a contract with the city, the city council will review and approve contract terms, including the contract budget, deliverables, metrics, and reporting requirements.

City staff will continue to manage tourism promotion operations until a contract with the new board is approved and a transition plan can be implemented.

The Josephine County Board of Commissioners has also expressed interest in participating in the new organization, and Cubic requested a letter of intent from them.

The commissioners have agreed to join in the effort, and an additional seat on the board of directors will be established for county representation.

Community Leaders Forge Plan to Continue Special Annual Events

A variety of community leaders and representatives of local community organizations met with city staff on Nov. 12 to discuss the future of annual special events in Grants Pass. The productive discussion resulted in several initial action plans for moving forward with signature community events once state-mandated restrictions are lifted on large gatherings.

The meeting was facilitated by City Manager Aaron Cubic, who explained how the city had come to assume presenting several signature community events after the dissolution of the Grants Pass Towne Center Association that used to facilitate many of the events discussed.

Absorbing those events into the city’s contract with Experience Grants Pass to provide tourism promotion “created a financial burden” for the city, said Cubic.

“Looking at our current financial obligations, the city cannot feasibly continue to present these community events,” he said.

Cubic called the members of the meeting together to determine “how the city can be a partner without taking the lead on these events,” Cubic said.

Cubic said the city taking a primary position in presenting the special events resulted in an unexpected side effect of the events losing some of the collaborative community spirit that was behind the original creation and tradition of the events.

“I wanted to bring you here today to determine your interest and potential partnerships that can be formed. Some of you are event experts because of the events you already present,” said Cubic.

Forming new partnerships with various community groups will return the community spirit to those events, he said.

Jill Hamm, president of the Fruittdale Grange, suggested there was a need to create a new merchants association to fill the void left by the TCA. She said the new organization needed to be a dues-based association with a paid position under the direction of a board of directors to facilitate operations.

Hamm offered the Grange as a site for future meetings to discuss the formation of such an organization and offered to take the lead in coordinating those meetings.

Tamra Martin, director of the Josephine County Fairgrounds, said the fairgrounds board of directors is interested in pursuing the idea of becoming the new presenting organization of the city’s annual Back to the Fifties Weekend.

Kathy Simmons and Jim Reynolds of the Rogue Valley Classic Cruisers said their club is still planning on presenting their annual classic car show in July 2021. They said the club (See “EVENTS” page 11)
New Councilors, Mayor Sworn in Jan. 4

Grants Pass City Hall welcomed three new city councilors and a new mayor at the City Council Workshop Monday, Jan. 4. Per city charter, the first workshop of the new year is when newly-elected officials take their oath of office to serve the city’s residents.

Representing Ward 1 are new councilors Brian DeLaGrange and Rob Pell. Representing Ward 4 is new councilor Vanessa Ogier. The new mayor is Sara Bristol.

Though councilors are elected from each of the city’s four wards, they are all elected by general vote and each serves the entire city. The mayor serves to facilitate meetings, fulfill ceremonial duties, and as a tie-breaking vote whenever necessary.

The new councilors join Valerie Lovelace and Rick Riker from Ward 2, Dwight Faszer, II, from Ward 3, and Joel King from Ward 4.

The council’s first general business meeting is 6 p.m. Jan. 6.

The council will participate in Strategic Planning sessions Jan. 14-16 (see subsequent story this page).

JCF Project SAFE Raises Fire Funds

The Josephine County Foundation (JCF) Project SAFE (Students Acquiring Firefighter Equipment) provides funds to 13 fire agencies in Josephine and Jackson counties for firefighting and medical equipment to help keep communities safe.

Recently, the JCF received a $10,000 donation for the project from the Pacific Power Foundation.

Because JCF has an anonymous donor who matches the first $100,000 raised each year for Project SAFE, the Pacific Power Foundation’s $10,000 donation is worth $20,000 to local fire departments.

“That equipment damaged or lost during the Slater, Alameda and South Obenchain fires in September, it is critical for our fire departments to acquire replacement equipment as quickly as possible to be prepared for any future fires,” said JCF Program Manager Misti King.

This is the third year of Project SAFE. In 2019, the project awarded $114,000 to fire departments and another $200,000 was granted in 2020.

The Pacific Power Foundation donation of $10,000 has put this year’s total at $30,000, which will equate to $60,000 with the match for the next grant cycle.

This year’s goal is to equal last year’s total of $200,000, said King.

“Our first responders need the community’s support to reach the $200,000 goal for much-needed equipment,” King said.

JCF is a student-led organization that provides leadership development training programs to students in Josephine and Jackson counties with a focus on community service.

Information: mistidawnking@gmail.com.

City Strategic Planning Will Occur Jan. 14-16

The Grants Pass City Council, city staff, and advisory committee chairs will participate in the city’s annual Strategic Planning process Jan. 14-16, at the city’s Public Safety Headquarters.

In January each year, the council sets the direction of the organization through the strategic planning process. This process involves gathering input from councilors, committee and commissions, citizens, community organizations, and staff.

A community forum held in December provided members of the public with an opportunity to share their comments and suggest priorities.

Each of the city’s advisory committees and commissions have also provided information about committee goals for the coming year. The mayor and councilors also submit a list of topics and issues they want to see covered.

“Strategic planning helps us determine our priorities, get organized, make big decisions, and realize our dreams. The act of merely setting a goal brings about positive change for many people. When setting goals, we are creating an exciting challenge for ourselves,” said City Manager Aaron Cubic.

Strategic planning establishes a process for the city to evaluate priorities and prioritize goals to be accomplished over a given period of time.

The strategic planning process occurs each year to include identifying the most important things to accomplish for the community, establishing organizational responsibility and reasonable time frames for achieving them, and allocating the resources necessary for programs and projects to implement them.

“Setting goals and priorities should drive the budget process, not follow it. This approach allows the city to better focus our organization-wide efforts and resources in ensuring that the most important, highest-priority objectives are accomplished, and that these high-priority objectives are communicated to the public,” said Cubic.

The Council’s strategic goals come under five key categories:

- Keep Citizens Safe
- Provide Cooperative, Shared Leadership Involving Council, Staff, and Community
- Encourage Economic Opportunities
- Facilitate Sustainable, Manageable Growth
- Maintain, Operate and Expand Infrastructure to Meet Community Needs

Through the process, the city will develop a work plan which defines performance expectations and provides the framework for how the city will achieve its organizational goals.

The work plan reflects the strategic planning process. This becomes a living document that will be updated as progress is made and/or as goals change throughout the year. To help achieve those goals and promote successes, the City of Grants Pass utilizes Specific, Measurable, and Achievable, Resource and Time-bound (SMART) objectives and actions.

Developing sound goals is critical to managing performance. Having a SMART Work Plan establishes direction for tasks and/or projects, clarifies expectations, clarifies resources required to meet objectives, identifies the results of efforts, achieves higher levels of performance, corrects performance deficiencies, and increases ability to take pride and satisfaction in achievements.

Specific: Objectives should be simplistically written and clearly define an outcome (What, Why, How).

Measurable: Objectives should be measurable so that there is tangible evidence the goal has been accomplished. Usually, the entire goal statement is a measure for the project, but there are usually several short-term or smaller measurements built into the goal. Measures should include numeric or descriptive measures that define quantity, quality, etc., as well as focus on elements such as observable actions, quantity, quality, cycle time, efficiency, and/or flexibility to measure outcomes not activities.

Achievable and Assignable: Objectives should be achievable and assignable, and within the department and staff member’s control or influence. Staff must possess the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to achieve the goal, as well as consider authority or control, influence, resources and work environment support to meet the goal.

Resources: Objectives should have a measure of resources required to complete tasks. This may include hard dollars, grant funds, in-kind services, staff time, etc.

(See “STRATEGIC” page 10)
In 2014, the city conducted a Housing Needs Analysis to determine the number of dwelling units needed over the next 30 years to provide for the estimated population growth of the city. Below is a table comparing the expected production vs actual production, from 2014 to 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Permits for: Grants Pass</th>
<th>Needed Building Permits for: Grants Pass</th>
<th>Percent (%) Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td>1128</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units in Single-Family Structures</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units in All Multi-Family Structures</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Helping people overcome their fears of increased taxes, higher traffic levels, and overcrowding is a part of the importance of public outreach, he said.

“The political reality we have to consider can be a challenge,” Walker said.

Regardless of the challenges, Walker said he has great faith in the HAC and its members.

“Our committee has high functionality. The people there are very professional, and they come together to work together,” he said.

The importance of the issue takes precedence over all else, Walker said.

“Part of that is that this is a serious enormous problem. We don’t have time to be petty or allow personal politics to get involved. There are a lot of people there with certain expertise or connections and other members of the group respect and acknowledge that,” said Walker.

A sense of urgency also prevails, he said, as the problem continues to grow with the population.

“It’s never going to go away as long as we have good weather and a good economy, people are going to come here and they need places to live,” Walker said.

Focusing jointly on building more housing, while also bringing better jobs to the community, is also essential he said.

“I think they both need to go on at the same time. We have the ability, skills, and mindset to do both at the same time. Housing development and job development don’t exclude one from the other. If we want to attract and retain high-quality people, we have to offer them all of those things,” said Walker.

Some of the advancements he views as beneficial to the cause include moving forward with the rezoning of the Urban Growth Boundary, the development of a housing incentive program, and the city’s sale of surplus property to encourage development and provide funds.
From Pre-existing Structures To New Builds And Garage Conversions, ADUs Help To Ease The Housing Shortage

John and Athena K. of Grants Pass have owned their home since 2002. Built in the 1970s, their home rests on a property that came with two Auxiliary Dwelling Units already built. One of the units is approximately 22’ x 15’ in size. The other unit is approximately 20’ x 15’ in size. Both units have bathrooms with a shower and small kitchenettes with no stove.

Throughout their years on the property, John and Athena have had approximately eight different tenants, who they say have mostly used the ADUs as transitional housing. One of their current tenants has been with them for three years. The other has been with them for only six months.

“It’s been a landing pad,” said Athena.

In 18 years, they say they have never had a problem with a tenant. Proper vetting of tenants has been the key to that, they said. Setting proper parameters with tenants about aspects of use of common areas such as laundry services and specific needs that come up from time to time is also important, said Athena.

“We’re not on call all the time,” she said.

Sometimes, they don’t even see their tenants for days at a time, they said.

John said they don’t use their ADUs as a money-making venture, but that the need for housing in the community is so great, that homeowners who wish to build an ADU as a stream of revenue could do well.

“There’s such a need, that you could get your investment back,” he said.

“But it just feels good to be able to provide space for people,” said John.

***

DJ Faszer is a second-generation building developer. His company has built multiple ADUs for their clients, and DJ is himself the owner of a home with an ADU.

He believes some of the city’s programs regarding ADUs have progressively increased the feasibility and ease of building ADUs for a variety of property owners. One particular location is a lot that contains a main structure, as well as one attached and one detached ADU (see photo on Page One), creating three separate dwelling units.

DJ also points to the new flexibility lenders are allowing when it comes to underwriting loans to build ADUs, by providing lenders to use projected rental income towards qualifying for the loan.

“That extra income can make the difference to put someone in the qualifying category,” he said.

The city’s pre-approved ADU building plans also help reduce the initial cost of building an ADU by eliminating the need to invest in the design and plan generation process. By using the pre-approved plans, builders need only add their site plan to their permit application.

***

When Natalie G. bought her house, it came with a large detached garage that had already been drywalled inside. She hired a contractor to convert two-thirds of the space into a one-bedroom apartment as an ADU.

“This process was entirely new to me, so I made a lot of trips to the Planning office to gather all the necessary information. The most challenging aspect of the process was being completely blind as to how the process worked and what type of questions to ask,” said Natalie.

“Thankfully, the Planning Department was very patient

(See “ADUs” page 12)
Sending Clean Water To Your Home

Adam Smith said he has “been trying to get to Grants Pass for a while now.”

The new superintendent of the city’s Water Treatment Plant came to the plant in July as the graveyard shift operator before being tapped to serve as superintendent in September.

“Having the opportunity to work as an operator directly with the crew and under Jason (Canady) was a great advantage,” said Smith.

“Communicating the value of natural resources is really difficult. People expect it. They take it for granted.”

Canady is the city’s director of Public Works and spent 20 years working with the WTP.

Born and raised in Oregon, Smith is originally from Brookings and spent some of his later life in Jewell. After graduating from Oregon State University, his early career was in fisheries and with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

“I’ve always been into water and natural resources,” Smith said.

His time with ODFW was spent mostly in “stream work” and habitat surveys.

“It was a lot of hiking up creeks chasing dead salmon,” he said.

While visiting relatives in Hawaii, Smith learned about an opening at the water treatment plant for Maui County and he applied for the job. He spent nine years there, working his way up to a grade four operator, and later assistant supervisor.

Living on an island is not what it is cracked up to be, said Smith. Married with two daughters, ages 4 and 8, he and his wife decided it was time to move back to Oregon.

“There weren’t a lot of options for our girls in Hawaii. My wife and I both grew up in Oregon,” Smith said.

In 2017, he accepted a position as the director of the water plant and distribution in nearby Gold Hill. That didn’t last long.

“I was looking for a professional home and Gold Hill was not it,” said Smith.

A short stint in the private sector served the interlude between Gold Hill and Grants Pass.

Since first starting at the Grants Pass WTP, Smith said his goal has been to learn as much about the plant and plant operations as possible.

“It’s really important to me to contribute at a high-level right off the bat, so for me it was important to get up to speed quickly,” said Smith.

He admits that his first tour of the plant was “intimidating,” but says it is also rewarding at the same time in the challenges and learning opportunities it represents.

“The plant is complicated. What we do with our pump stations is complicated,” he said.

Those details can be difficult to get across to the consumer, Smith said.

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“There weren’t a lot of options for our girls in Hawaii. My wife and I both grew up in Oregon,” Smith said.

In 2017, he accepted a position as the director of the water plant and distribution in nearby Gold Hill. That didn’t last long.

“I was looking for a professional home and Gold Hill was not it,” said Smith.

A short stint in the private sector served the interlude between Gold Hill and Grants Pass.

Since first starting at the Grants Pass WTP, Smith said his goal has been to learn as much about the plant and plant operations as possible.

“It’s really important to me to contribute at a high-level right off the bat, so for me it was important to get up to speed quickly,” said Smith.

He admits that his first tour of the plant was “intimidating,” but says it is also rewarding at the same time in the challenges and learning opportunities it represents.

“The plant is complicated. What we do with our pump stations is complicated,” he said.

Those details can be difficult to get across to the consumer, Smith said.

“Communicating the value of natural resources is really difficult. People expect it. They take it for granted,” he said.

While visiting relatives in Hawaii, Smith learned about an opening at the water treatment plant for Maui County and he applied for the job. He spent nine years there, working his way up to a grade four operator, and later assistant supervisor.

Living on an island is not what it is cracked up to be, said Smith. Married with two daughters, ages 4 and 8, he and his wife decided it was time to move back to Oregon.
Help Wanted: Water Treatment Plant Replacement Project Offers Local Opportunities

By Lisa Beutler
Special to GP Now

Construction for the Grants Pass replacement Water Treatment Plant will begin in earnest in 2021 and the city is encouraging local firms to get involved. One particular focus area will be on the use of local workforce and materials vendors.

The city plans to use a process called design-build to construct the plant. Design-build is a method of project delivery in which one firm works under a single contract to provide design and construction services. This company, in turn, is responsible for hiring labor and purchasing materials. The idea is to ensure a unified flow of work from initial concept through completion.

The city will emphasize the importance of hiring and buying local as they issue a request for proposals to design-build firms. The design-builders will be encouraged to identify and use local resources throughout the project.

The goal is to distribute and amplify the benefits of major construction activities across the community.

Investment in water infrastructure has long been recognized as an economic engine for local economies.

The goal is to distribute and amplify the benefits of major construction activities across the community.

In addition to the immediate benefit of a paycheck for a Grants Pass resident, or the sale of materials by a local retailer, it eventually leads to the spending of that check or profit on a new vehicle at a local car dealership, meals at a local restaurant, or home improvement supplies at the local hardware store.

The spending of each dollar multiplies its impact in improving the city’s economy.

The impact of infrastructure investment on the local economy is part of a much larger national discussion. Like Grants Pass, much of the country has a need to replace aging water infrastructure.

The decision to invest is sometimes difficult for a community. It is much easier to understand the need for other types of infrastructure, such as roads, that are highly visible to the users, unlike water infrastructure that often goes unnoticed.

During their most recent annual assessment, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) determined the nation is chronically underinvesting in water infrastructure. Its most recent report card gave the nation’s Drinking Water Infrastructure the grade of “D.”

More recently, the benefits to local economies of investment in water infrastructure has been studied extensively as part of economic recovery discussions related to the ongoing pandemic.


Of these new jobs, 61 percent would be in construction and professional services stimulated by the boost in infrastructure spending.

Increased reliability and water quality would also increase productivity and efficiency in other sectors such as manufacturing, leading to more job gains.

Wages would also rise with US workers earning more than $2.8 trillion in additional disposable income.

(See “LOCAL” page 10)

Direct, Indirect, & Induced Impacts of Local Water Infrastructure Investment

An ASCE study outlined the economic benefits of local water infrastructure investment:

• **DIRECT**- economic implications for companies directly involved in designing, engineering, and constructing water infrastructure.

• **INDIRECT** - additional economic implications created by the actions of firms directly involved in water infrastructure. Business to business purchases of goods and services, like machinery for construction of a water infrastructure project, is an indirect impact.

• **INDUCED** - purchases in retail, medical, leisure, and other sectors dependent on the income earned by workers in all sectors of the economy that are affected by infrastructure investments.
Upgrades... (from page 1)

The state is systematically upgrading those bridges in each region. There are 12 such bridges within Region Three, which encompasses Grants Pass.

The bridges over Sixth, Seventh, and Hillcrest Drive affect Grants Pass, said Elliott.

The retrofit work will involve excavating down to the footings and foundations of the bridges to expand them, while installing new piling down to the bedrock, Elliott said.

That work will begin this spring. To help facilitate the work, the city had to move a major water line.

“First a redundant line had to be installed in order to continue to feed water to those areas while the original pipe gets moved,” said Elliott.

For the final process, the state has proposed a temporary closure of a segment of Hillcrest Drive. Those details are being worked out between the state and the city, Elliott said.

Above the work on I-5, the traffic won’t be interrupted.

“People on the interstate probably won’t even know what’s going on,” he said.

For additional information about street closures due to engineering projects, residents can visit the city’s website: https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/278/street-closures.

Smith... (from page 8)

Smith... (from page 8) pairs, works within its limits and capacities,” he said.

Working with the existing crew is also a benefit, he said, comparing the current staff of veterans and new employees to the best of an NFL draft season.

“To work with this crew is very exciting,” said Smith.

“What gets you is the passion people develop for doing this job of providing safe, clean drinking water,” he said.

Another advantage comes through working with local suppliers, local contractors and firms whenever possible, said Smith.

“It’s a local culture that has been ingrained in the crew. It’s also something that’s really important to me,” Smith said.

When he isn’t at the plant, Smith said he spends as much time as possible with his young family. He said the outdoor recreation opportunities are more diverse in Oregon than in Hawaii, touting his love for hunting, fishing, and camping.

“And we try to get on the water as much as possible,” said Smith.

Local... (from page 9)

possession of another result (i.e., dependent variables) are relative to the achievement of milestones, or time frames that incorporate specific dates, calendar milestones, or time frames that are relative to the achievement of another result (i.e., dependencies and linkages to other projects).

“To achieve our goals, we have to define specific areas of focus and activities through objectives and actions,” said Cubic.

Once the 2021 Work Plan has been established, it will be posted at the city’s website so that community members can be aware of the city’s goals and plans for achieving those goals. For additional information, visit: https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/313/Mission-Strategic-Plan.

Strategic... (from page 5)

Time-bound: Objectives should identify a definite target date for completion and/or frequencies for specific action steps that are important for achieving the goal. How often should the staff member work on this assignment? By when should this goal be accomplished? Staff should incorporate specific dates, calendar milestones, or time frames that are relative to the achievement of another result (i.e., dependencies and linkages to other projects).

“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.”

— Abraham Lincoln

HAC... (from page 6)

for incentives.

He points to the city’s sale and approval of senior housing at Ramsey and Nebraska as a “successful milestone.”

“We need those apartments. The notion that we can do that and move forward, and that the council sees the value of committing resources to that is a big plus,” said Walker.

“All we’re talking about is apartments that someone can afford.”

Walker believes people may be misinformed or misunderstand the exact nature of affordable housing.

“There seems to be a little bit of aversion to the term,” he said.

“All we’re talking about is apartments that someone can afford,” said Walker.

He compares affordable housing to affordable dining or an affordable car, neither of which imply something “less than par.”

“Affordable housing doesn’t imply substandard and doesn’t imply the renters are going to be undesirable,” he said.

He said he wants the community to understand that the housing crisis is a community problem.

For some people, it may mean building an Accessory Dwelling Unit on their property (see subsequent story this issue), he said.

“For some it may mean making some minor sacrifices or inconveniences, such as apartments in the neighborhood, a little extra traffic, or kids playing in the neighborhood so you have to slow down now,” Walker said.

“We’re all in this together and we’re going to have to solve this problem together,” said Walker.
Events... (from page 4)

hoped to be able to return to Riverside Park if COVID restrictions have been lifted by then.

Cubic agreed that Riverside Park was an ideal location for the car show if the city is allowed to help facilitate gatherings by next summer.

Josie Molloy, executive director of the Grants Pass & Josephine County Chamber of Commerce, said her board of directors is interested in assisting the city with downtown promotions and the potential of forming what she called a “Main Street Alliance” to assist the Chamber with presenting the annual Christmas parade.

Randy Fisher of the Grants Pass Active Club, known for presenting the annual Boat-nik event drawing thousands of people to Grants Pass every year, said his organization was discussing the potential of handling annual Fourth of July festivities.

“We’ve done it before. It’s something we’ll bring up to the club and we’ll get back to you,” said Fisher.

Cubic said the city would still be able to help support events through in-kind services, site reservations, and potential sponsorship dollars to help promote the events.

“We have always been active partners with regards to that,” said Cubic.

The group determined further discussion needed to be had with regards to the annual Art Along the Rogue festival, which was first established as a city-sponsored event. Initial discussion suggested that a new downtown association might assume the event.

Bob Crouse of Fort Vannoy Farms offered private partnership collaboration. Jeff Voigt, who served with the TCA for years to present many of the signature events discussed, offered his expertise and experience to the members of the group as a resource.

The meeting concluded with plans for Hamm to coordinate a future meeting of the principal attendees, and follow-up discussions to be had between city staff and those organizations expressing interest in specific events.

“Our community is great because of individuals like yourselves,” said Cubic.

Did You Know? Each Public Safety Fire Station has a dedicated first out full-sized engine that carries all the specialty tools and equipment to make them essential rolling toolboxes for addressing the full menu of needed specialty services.

Firefighters take these units everywhere they go so they are ready at a moment’s notice to respond when needed to deliver services without the need to return to the station or wait for the equipment in order to respond.

King... (from page 3)

don’t carry the day,” King said.

Juggling the time spent between his “circles” is another challenge of the office, said King, who tries to maintain a balance between his public and private life.

A grandfather to seven children, King said he doesn’t want his city circle to overtake his other circles, such as his family circle.

Maintaining that balance can be difficult, but it also comes with rewards, he said.

“It warms your heart when you can be a part of government response to citizens’ needs,” said King.

One of those moments came recently when the council approved more than $700,000 to be used for local grants to assist businesses with offsetting the impacts of state-mandated closures due to COVID-19, he said.

The grants helped maintain “social cohesion between our government and our business community,” said King.

“Those relationships we have with one another supersede everything else we do. If those relationships are healthy and respectful, it will show in our decisions,” King said.

Moving forward, King said his biggest concerns for the city is the need for a new water treatment plant.

“We need to get the water treatment plant started. I know it’s not the most popular, but for the good of the city, we need to get that going,” he said.

King admits that details surrounding the construction of a new plant have been somewhat controversial, but he sees that as potentially positive in the long run.

“Controversy is a sign of vitality,” said King.

That comes when controversy is used “to marginalize any segment of the community. We must practice listening and respect,” he said.

The city’s economic stability is also important to King.

“I’d like to see the city in as good financial shape as it was when I got here,” King said.

“People want their basic services. They want adequate fire and police, maintain infrastructure such as parks, and water and sewer to work properly. We need to always consider that when we are addressing the community’s needs,” he said.

He hopes that his service on the dais will set an example for that.

“Relationships precede substance. If we don’t model that, then the other circles in our life suffer from that,” he said.

King said positive outlook is also important.

“I think it’s important the council projects a reality that doesn’t focus on scarcity but focuses on the richness of our community. If you focus on scarcity, you make it happen. If we focus on richness, we make that happen and that is a very noble thing,” said King.
City Offers Pre-Approved Plans For Accessory Dwelling Unit Construction

The City of Grants Pass Community Development Department has developed pre-approved building plans for the construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) within the city. Full plans, truss calculations, and building permit applications are now accessible at the city’s website: https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/1396/Accessory-Dwelling-Unit-ADU-Building-Pla.

Applicants wishing to add ADUs to their property can submit for a building permit by providing the Community Development Department with three complete sets of to-scale building plans from the city’s website printed at 24 x 36 inches, three copies of a to-scale site plan, and a completed and signed application.

If the proposed site property is located within a hazard area such as a flood or steep slope, additional requirements may apply. Development in Special Flood Hazard Areas requires flood insurance purchase.

Accessory Dwelling Units must meet applicable zoning district setbacks for front, rear, and side yards. Accessory Dwelling Units cannot exceed either 75% of the size of the main house, or 1,000 square feet, whichever is less.

The building plans at the city’s website are for an ADU of 728 square feet.

https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/1396/Accessory-Dwelling-Unit-ADU-Building-Pla

Housing Resources Are Available

The Fair Housing Council of Oregon (FHCO) is a nonprofit civil rights organization driven to eliminate illegal housing discrimination through enforcement and education across Oregon. Phone: (503)223-8197 Ext 2. Email: information@fhco.org

The Josephine Housing and Community Development Council is the local housing authority in Josephine County. Our agency provides rental assistance to low-income families in the county through HUD’s Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program.

The Housing Council also owns Harbeck Village, a 48-unit tax credit project. Harbeck Village is located at 1760 Harbeck Road and has two-, three-, and four-bedroom units. Phone: (541)479-5529. Email: front-desk@jhcdc.net

Options for Southern Oregon offers innovative programs and services for low-income individuals and people with psychiatric disabilities to inspire hope while supporting their participation as respected members of the community.

Additionally, Options provides consulting services to nonprofit agencies and county programs in the areas of grant writing, supported employment, affordable housing production grant writing and organizational development.

The Southern Oregon Housing Resource Center (SOHRC) is a one-stop clearing house for a variety of housing related programs offered in Jackson and Josephine counties.

Housing counseling services include the “ABCs of Home Buying,” a state certified pre-purchase education course, one-on-one pre-purchase counseling, foreclosure prevention, rental counseling and reverse mortgage counseling. The SOHRC also administers down payment and closing cost assistance programs in Jackson and Josephine counties.

Phone: (541)779-6691. Email: info@accesshelps.org

UCAN - Josephine County Service Center provides energy assistance and education, volunteer programs, administrative services, weatherization, housing and homeless services, and health services.

Phone: (541)956-4050.

City Council Meetings
1st & 3rd Wednesdays at 6 pm
in the City Council Chambers, 101 NW A Street

City Council Workshops
typically held Mondays at 11:45 am
(Holidays will alter this schedule)

Any televised meetings are on Charter Cable Channel 183 and stream live on our website

Listen live to City Councilors & staff on KAJO (1270 AM) the 1st and 2nd Tuesdays each month at 9:30 am

Some ADUs offer a full bath with tub and shower. Others offer a shower only without a tub.

ADUs... (from page 7)

with me,” she said.

She has the unit listed at Airbnb and Vrbo as a short-term rental unit. The revenue generated by the unit is used to pay the contractor.

“We target primarily stays of around three months. It’s usually rented to professionals who need short-term housing because they’re only working in the area for a few months. The summer months are geared more towards vacationers coming in for the weekend,” Natalie said.

She said her experiences with tenants have been positive and respectful.

“All the tenants we’ve had so far have taken very good care of the space. The tenants have also been very respectful of our space, as we have of theirs, since we are in close proximity to each other,” said Natalie.

“The apartment has its own entrance and parking space, which makes it very private,” she said.

For general maintenance and upkeep, she said she hires a local housekeeping company.

“At first, I thought I would clean it myself, but then decided I better leave it to a professional because they do a much better job and are more efficient with their time,” Natalie said.

The average cost for a professional housekeeper is $25 per hour.

Overall, she says it has been a good investment.

“We are very pleased with the outcome of the ADU, and are glad we did it,” she said.

Her advice to other property owners considering construction of an ADU includes hiring a general contractor to bid the entire job to provide a clear estimate of the full costs. She also advises to plan for the project to take longer than expected.

“Originally, we thought the project would be completed in a month, but in total it took about three months. But it was well worth it,” said Natalie.