

Prepared for Mayor and Councilors. Please contact Steve Powers, City Manager, for additional information.

### ***Emergency Declaration***

On City Council's May 24 meeting agenda will be a resolution to extend the declaration of emergency related to COVID-19 through December 2021 and rescind camping in Cascades Gateway Park and Wallace Marine Park. The reduction of camping in the two parks will be a gradual process that is operationally sustainable over an extended period. The City's humanitarian approach to encouraging persons to move to appropriate locations will include connection with services and shelter providers. The City-sanctioned camping will end June 1, 2021.

Salem has a higher than the state average of chronically homeless population. More individuals experience significant barriers to accessing shelter and services. For months, the City and homeless organizations have been working with park campers to help persons understand that the camping is a temporary use of the parks and would be ending. Specific notice has been provided regarding the tentative June 1 date.

The City and non-profit service providers are working on near-term sheltering needs. Active plans are underway to site shelters, including continuing existing managed shelters. What else is the City doing now to help the community through this shelter crisis?

- The Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance, a new, federally recognized organization for Marion and Polk County, has been established to help manage and track local needs. Local homelessness advocate groups have really stepped up to offer more assistance to our unsheltered neighbors. For example, Church at the Park is currently helping the City manage multiple shelter locations across Salem—adding more than 100 new places for people to sleep safely since the start of the pandemic.
- We have awarded more than \$400,000 each year to provide emergency assistance and essential services to Salem residents and families in need.
- City Council approved re-designing overnight parking policies to allow for an innovative Safe Vehicle Parking Program, permitting people who are homeless to safely park and sleep in their vehicles in designated parking spaces in our area.
- We are meeting with Oregon leadership including the Governor—gaining momentum for a navigation center, mobile crisis response and for our urgent needs. Already, the operations for our navigation center have been funded by the State.
- The City is focused on connecting people to services and on cleaning abandoned campsites, garbage, and hazardous gear such as sharp metal, soiled furniture, unusable cookware, discarded needles, fragmented bicycles, and broken equipment that may present an environmental danger.

## ***American Rescue Plan Act***

In the final allocation from the US Treasury Department, the City will be receiving \$34.1 million, over \$1 million more than the tentative amount used during the Budget Committee deliberations. The federal guidelines focus on doing more to help those who were hurt most by COVID. Homeless is one group mentioned, qualified (household income) census tracts is another group, or a group that can be shown was impacted more than others.

The Recommended FY 2022 Budget will increase the Future Project reserve by \$1.2 million due to the increased final ARPA award from \$32.9M to \$34.1M for City Council's consideration on June 14 and June 28 as City Council adopts the budget.

(millions \$)	ORIGINAL \$32.9M ARPA			FINAL \$34.1M ARPA			
	PROPOSED	BUDGET COMMITTEE	REVISED	REVISED	COUNCIL REQUEST	REVISED	
Lost Revenue	19.3	-1.5	17.8	17.8		17.8	52%
Covid Reimbursements	5.6		5.6	5.6		5.6	16%
Future Project Reserve (Trust and Agency fund)	8.0	1.5	9.5	9.5	1.2	10.7	31%
	32.9		32.9	32.9		34.1	100%

Staff are preparing a recommendation for use of over \$3 million for sheltering.

## ***Budget***

We will have exhausted the Fiscal Year 2021 (current year) General Fund contingency for the most part with a final request this year for Fire Department overtime.

## ***Climate Action***

Data-driven cost-benefit analysis is underway by the consultants for the ten strategies that will be most impactful and relevant for the City's Climate Action Plan. The work is being guided by the three councilors from the Climate Action Task Force.

## ***Community Development***

With two months remaining in the reporting year, the number of new housing permits is only two behind the total for the entire previous reporting year. April 2020 had the most single-family permits of any April since 2008. Multi-family permits are the highest, with the greatest number of units, of any year since 2011-12, when the permit report started. New commercial/industrial permits are down significantly from last year.

## ***Council Follow-up***

After the October work session regarding trees, staff from Public Works, Community Development, and the City Attorney's Office developed a large number of potential amendments to SRC 86 (Trees on City-owned Property), its associated Administrative Rule 109-500-002, and Administrative Rule 109-100-1 (Enforcement on Public Works Regulations). All the various proposals have been consolidated but we still have a few remaining issues to reconcile between departments before the potential amendments are ready for City Council consideration this summer.

Effective July 1, the format for most of the staff reports that City Council sees will change so that the Summary section will be placed immediately after the Ward/Councilor/Neighborhood/Result Area section. The Summary section will also now appear on the agenda. These changes will allow the reader to quickly have a better understanding of a proposed action by either reading the first page of the staff report or just reading through the agenda. This change may increase the length of the agendas considerably, so no better time to go paperless. You will start to see the new template for the July meetings.

The Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has created a sub-committee that will be preparing a report on park usage and permitting that was requested by City Council. The report is scheduled to be ready for City Council in August or September. The sub-committee will review the City's existing policies and review policies and practices from other Oregon cities. The work will include meeting with the Human Rights Commission. There will be opportunities for public comments during the process.

An information report, as requested by City Council, on closing Union and Winter streets on Saturdays during the Saturday Market will be on the June 28 council meeting agenda.

Changes have been made to the Madison and Capitol intersection traffic signal and the size of the stop signs at Madison and 17<sup>th</sup> will be increased to improve visibility.

## **COVID-19**

How has the City helped downtown Restaurants this past year as they struggle with the impacts of COVID-19? The City has offered three months forbearance in rental relief for our tenants. We also applied for Business Oregon grants on behalf of our tenants with outstanding amounts owed. To date, the City has committed \$570,000 to 158 small businesses and 501.c3 nonprofits, including \$100,000 in grant funding from Business Oregon.

The staff team responsible for monitoring the ever-changing county, state, and federal health guidelines and rules will be reviewing the state workplace guidance and rules. We will be nimble, as much as a 1300-person organization can be, in safely reopening in-person services. Governor Kate Brown announced vaccination targets to more fully reopen Oregon's economy, setting a 70% statewide goal to reach Oregonians 16 and older with a first dose to lift most Risk Level restrictions.

As of April 29, there are 312 City utility accounts with a total outstanding balance of \$85,000 eligible for referral to collections. Over 1,000 residential accounts have received assistance totaling \$182,000 through City or non-profit funds. Over \$430,000 remains available for assistance. There are 139 accounts that have been shut off for non-payment.

From the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis,

*Economic growth is surging as the pandemic wanes. Thanks to federal fiscal policy, consumers have higher incomes today than before COVID-19 hit. Now they are increasingly allowed to and feel comfortable resuming pandemic-restricted activities like*

*going out to eat, on vacations, getting haircuts and the like. The outlook for near-term economic growth is the strongest in decades, if not generations.*

*Oregon's labor market is expected to return to full health during the upcoming 2021-23 biennium. With the strong near-term outlook for consumer spending, job growth is front-loaded such that the largest employment gains will occur this summer and fall. Total employment in Oregon will surpass pre-pandemic levels in late 2022 with the unemployment rate returning to near 4 percent in 2023.*

*While a jobs hole remains in the labor market, the same cannot be said for household incomes. Currently incomes in Oregon are 20 percent higher than before COVID-19 hit, thanks in larger part due to the temporary federal measures put in place. Excluding the direct federal aid, incomes are back to pre-pandemic levels and expected to grow 6-7% this year and next.*

### **Federal**

The City has submitted funding requests to Senator Wyden and Senator Merkley for McGilchrist Street SE, Pringle Creek trail, and mobile crisis response pilot program.

McGilchrist Street Improvement Project – East End Phase: requested \$3.5 million; total cost of this phase is \$5 million.

Pringle Creek Path: requested \$4 million; total cost is \$5.3 million.

Mobile Crisis Response requested \$684,500. Funding would be spent on robust and comprehensive care for a broad range of non-criminal crises, including homelessness, intoxication, disorientation, substance abuse and mental illness problems, and dispute resolution. One van will operate 11 hours per day at highest need times Monday-Saturday with two staff per shift – one crisis worker and one Basic Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

### **Housing**

We have resolved the issue that was delaying the environmental review for the Yaquina Hall supportive housing project.

### **Natural Environment Stewardship**

I have signed an agreement providing \$100,000 to the North Santiam Watershed Council for riverbank stabilization and restoration. The Council is a long-standing, valuable partner with the City in our efforts to protect our drinking water.

The City will begin our water conservation messaging in anticipation of drought and low-water conditions in the Mt. Jefferson watershed and Detroit Reservoir. The City is monitoring water levels and is in close communication with the Army Corps of Engineers, the agency responsible for managing Detroit Reservoir water levels.

### **Permits**

We are proceeding with the resumption of permits for park and street use before Memorial Day. For public events, permittees will be required to submit a COVID safety plan. The plan must include what steps will be taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-

19 and to meet the mandates and requirements from state and county health authorities. Ironman's plan is setting the gold standard.

We have been allowing organized sporting events to take place in parks. Our practice is consistent with Oregon Health Authority guidance. None of these events have ancillary activities such as celebrations or vendors associated with them, and all have submitted a Covid-19 plan for our review.

### ***Parks***

The splash pads will be turned on at the conclusion of the school year and when the warm days are consistent, hopefully around mid-June. That timeframe is with the caveat that the COVID risk categories and guidance allow use of the splash pads.

### ***Projects***

I have signed an amendment for the Public Works Operations Building to include the Engineering Division. This change authorizes the design build team to provide detailed programming for the Engineering Division's space in the new building. The work includes analysis of the Engineering Division's current space, spatial needs assessment and analysis of feedback from the Division, and workshops with Engineering stakeholders to complete the analysis and compilation of spatial needs for incorporation into the overall building design.

### ***Population Forecasting***

Portland State University will be preparing a revised population forecast for Salem. Significant concerns with PSU's preliminary estimates were raised by the City, counties, and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments.

### ***Sheltering***

Last week the City posted "This Part of the Park Closed for Maintenance" signs on Monday Salem Police, teamed with HRAP and ARCHES, and were able to relocate the campers in the Fir Grove area of Wallace Marine Park. We had a large, enthusiastic, hard-working Service Master/Gliss Day-Labor Services crew and we were able to clean the Fir Grove by mid-morning. Parks staff immediately came in and mowed the lawn area and the Signs and Markings crew posted permanent "Recreational Day Use Only – No Camping" signs in the Fir Grove. Meanwhile, we moved the Service Master crew to areas outside the berm and cleaned abandoned campsites until the garbage truck was overloaded with well over 60 cubic yards of garbage and over 10 yards of metals for recycling in a separate truck. Salem Police and Park Ranger provided a presence and no confrontations occurred the entire day. Park patrons were thanking us for our efforts.

Another successful day in our efforts to both relocate unsheltered campers from improved areas of Wallace Marine Park and to clean areas and abandoned campsites. We posted signs on Monday, May 17, 2021, and Salem Police and social service/housing partners worked the next two days to relocate the campers out of the areas that was cleaned on May 20. We were able to clean the old boat launch parking lot area, underneath all the westside bridges (a gift from the City to ODOT), underneath all the Union Street Railroad Bridge trestle, along the pedestrian path to Wallace Road NW and

a large garbage dump deep in the woods. Our large 12-person crew of Service Master/Gliss Day Labor Services workers coupled with staff from Parks Operations, Utility Operations, and Streets Maintenance worked to remove 72 cubic yards of garbage (equal to 6 heavy dump truck loads) and 12 yards of metals for recycling.



The City has spent \$270,000 in park clean-up costs so far (\$110,000 for contractors and \$160,000 for staff and materials).

The \$3+ million shelter recommendation that will be coming to City Council on June 14 will be for managed sites to assist unsheltered residents. The recommendation will likely include a contribution toward a hotel acquisition, funds for operations of an indoor shelter for one year, and acquisition of outdoor shelter units and operational costs for an outdoor managed camp site.

City staff are coordinating with ODOT to address the camping at Market St NE, and at other larger camps on ODOT right-of-way in Salem. The City's approach will be the same humanitarian and operational coordination that we use for City properties.

### ***Upcoming Issues***

A council work session is planned for June 21 to discuss state requirements for middle housing. HB 2001 from the 2019 legislative session created a new statewide law requiring cities to allow middle housing such as duplexes, triplexes, and cottage clusters to be built in areas traditionally zoned for single-family homes—and to explore ways to encourage middle housing development and reduce regulatory barriers. The

requirements created for cities include considering incentives. On June 1, the Planning Commission will be having a work session on proposed code changes to allow middle housing more broadly.

Thanks for reading,  
Steve