

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE — May 13, 2020

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

At Your Service

National Library Week was April 19-25 and the Library did some really great work around the theme "Find the library at your place." The Library has expanded virtual programs and access to materials. Teens are engaging with the Quaranteens book club, younger children happy to be sharing Salem Storytime with their grandparents in Chicago. Many are grateful for the Library's e-content in Cloud Library and Overdrive and Kanopy.

Community

As call volume allows, and as there are opportunities, Police and Fire have been joining in socially-distant neighborhood celebrations and parades supporting hospital workers, teachers, front-line workers, and neighbors.

The City has launched a Spanish-language Facebook page. With no publicity, there are 90 followers. The language is Spanish with a Mexican dialect. Promotion of the page will be occurring over the next week.

There will be no July 4th City fireworks this year. The fireworks contractor was informed so the City would not incur a non-refundable deposit or penalty. Governor Kate Brown's Reopening Oregon framework has large gatherings (>50 people or even >250 people) allowed the earliest in phase 3, or as late as September 30th. Other major cities in Oregon that hold Independence Day events have canceled. Fireworks were funded by TOT, so there will be one less expense for that fund. The City could not manage the thousands of people that come to Riverfront Park, Wallace Marine Park, and the downtown parking garages in a manner that would promote social distancing.

Development

April 2020 building permits did not drop significantly compared to the first nine months of the reporting year (July 2019-June 2020) and compared to Aprils in past years.

Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing on May 19 for the North Campus at 2575 Center Street. The Planning Commission will be considering a comprehensive plan amendment and zone change from Community Services Health to mixed use. The zoning action will be one step toward the City proceeding with the park and Yaquina Hall affordable housing.

Partnerships

Staff have helped neighborhood associations with virtual meeting technology and will continue to help.

2020 Census update:

- Oregon has 18th highest response rate.
- Oregon, like many states, had wanted to see a delay in the counting to ensure a complete count. New questions arise that information will not be collected in time to enact redistricting. Oregon's Secretary of State and Governor's Office are working on this concern.
- Salem remains focused on assisting "hard-to-count" communities to respond so that everyone is represented.

Organization

During Stay Home, Save Lives lots of cooperation has been occurring between departments. Library staff have helped departments with research for projects and on best practices from other cities. Human Resources and Finance staff are working together on file maintenance projects. Sharing of work will continue as we spend more time preparing for reopening.

Policy Agenda

Work on Our Salem continues virtually. We heard a lot of input on the different options - or scenarios - for how Salem could grow in the future. Frequently asked questions on scenarios is at [webpage](#) Staff are continuing to collect feedback through an online survey, virtual meetings, emails, and phone calls. Residents should feel free to email [Eunice Kim](#) or call her at 503-540-2308 with any questions or additional input. The June work session has been rescheduled for Wednesday September 23rd. As before, we want this to be a joint session with City Council and Planning Commission. The material planned for the June meeting will be shared in 1:1 conversation with any interested councilors and planning commissioners. Eunice has or will be contacting you. The September 23rd meeting will unveil the draft vision for the comprehensive plan. The draft will take the four scenarios down to a single scenario that reflects everyone's feedback, City goals, and our best practices.

Projects

We are moving to a public portal to handle all public records requests. The online portal will be more user friendly and allow customers to pay online. There will be a link to the City's public records webpage. The go-live date for GovQA (our online public records request portal) is scheduled for June 1. The portal, among other things, will allow people to access records and pay fees online, with no need to come to City Hall.

The police station is on schedule for occupancy at the end of October. Furniture and equipment move in will begin early August. Public tours will be the week of October 3.

On May 15, Deputy Chief Steve Bellshaw will be providing the City Club with a report on the police station via Zoom. Deputy Chief Bellshaw will offer an insider tour of the facility's construction, provide an update, some anecdotes and answer some questions during the free webinar at noon on Friday, May 15th.

For the Geren Island Water Treatment ozone project, we are at 90 percent for the design for the guaranteed maximum price, with a commitment to complete the project in April 2021. The City's consulting engineers, Carollo, reviewed the 90 percent design and determined the contractor's estimate is fair and reasonable. The total project cost at 90 percent design is \$38.3 million.

With extensive stakeholder and public input, the City will be developing cultural landscape plans for Bush's Pasture Park and Deepwood Museum. The planning process will focus on public and stakeholder engagement and outreach to develop long-range management plans for the two properties. The plans will provide specific guidelines to address current and future park operations, visitor education, cultural resources, natural resources, and site vulnerabilities. The outcome will be a vision and management plan that addresses the properties' cultural resources holistically and coherently. Invited stakeholders will include the three Tribes with cultural connections to the sites, SPRAB, SCAN, and the Historic Landmarks Commission. In addition, there will be online surveys and open houses. The project is scheduled to be completed by March 31, 2021.

At the Willow Lake Wastewater Treatment plant, one of the tricking filter arms has failed. The arms are 60 years old and are scheduled for repair. One arm failed a bit sooner than planned. We sought proposals from qualified manufacturers and suppliers to provide new rotary distributors (arms) for four 225-foot diameter trickling filters. The selected proposal is \$1,642,651.

Upcoming Issues

Our current plan is to locate the center at 2640 Portland Road NE. The building is currently leased by the Urban Renewal Agency to MERIT, an organization that provides economic and business development services to disadvantaged populations. MERIT is unable to make lease payments, has gone through leadership changes, and wishes to terminate the lease effective August 31. ARCHES would have a couple of months to get the building ready for use before winter. The shelter use is limited by DEQ rules to no more than 18 months. Opening this winter would allow use for two winters. By then, the

building discussed in executive session would be ready. This all predicated on the state funding for navigation centers.

The Salem Housing Authority has applied for \$1,467,603 in HUD funding. HUD has offered \$100 million for all housing authorities. SHA moved rapidly to pull together an application.

The SHA anticipates an increase in its voucher program per-unit-costs due to: 1) client loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and 2) contract rent increases effective June 1, 2020, at Orchard Park, a large housing complex that currently houses nearly 100 voucher households. Because of these two circumstances, SHA has prepared an application for the 2020 calendar year to offset the potential impact and allow us to continue to house the maximum number of families. Additionally, the application requests consideration for funds due to increased voucher portability and veteran's assistance leasing costs, the amounts for both of which (if SHA is determined eligible) will be calculated by HUD. The HUD funding will help ensure the housing authority can continue to make Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) on behalf of participating households. SHA has seen a sharp increase in rental assistance from voucher households with income losses due to reduced working hours or job loss. A worst-case scenario, where most voucher households with wages lose their earnings and receive unemployment benefits, is a monthly increase in Housing Assistance Payments of approximately \$173,000 a month.

The contract rent increases at Orchard Park are significant. Because Orchard Park is funded in part with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, rent increases at the complex are not limited by Oregon laws. Prior to the increases taking effect, rents were charged at a below-market rate. Because the requested rental amounts are closer to market, the increases will impact monthly rental assistance spending by approximately \$12,000 monthly, beginning in June.

Thanks for reading,
Steve