


## City Manager's Update — August 6, 2020

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

### ***At Your Service***

We recently discovered a branch in a City tree that endangered our house. My first contact at Public Works was with Kody Johns. He was very courteous and helpful, providing me a service request number and assuring me that the issue would be addressed. I awoke this morning to find a three-man crew, Jake, Joe and Cezar standing in my driveway developing a game plan. All three were very courteous and helpful. They immediately got to work. While here, they also took the initiative to address several other dead branches and limbs overhanging our property. They explained the efficiency of taking care of problems while there, rather than having to return to fix something that could have been fixed before. Loved that common sense. They worked efficiently and with a great attitude. After chipping the branches and cleaning up, they asked if there was anything else that needed their attention. I couldn't have been more pleased with this contact. The entire experience was an excellent example of coordinated customer service. I can only guess that, like most municipalities, you are probably overworked and understaffed. Given that, it's even more impressive to get the level of service we received today. The exemplified the City's motto, "At your Service"

This summer parks program is running so well this year. My kids come home happy, creative, connected to others. I can't tell you how much it means to our family to have this in place . Thank you so so so much for working so hard to make this much needed camp(s) happen for this deserving generation of kids.

### ***Community Development***

Building inspection work is steady and volume is largely consistent with month-to-month trends. In July there were 2,374 inspections, or 17 per day per inspector. Some inspections are being done virtually. Development review is steady. Virtual public testimony will be added to the Planning Commission and Historic Landmark Commission meetings.

Although the permit application center is closed to the public, a few staff remain at the office and help one or two visitors to city hall per day. So, the in-person need still exists and is being safely covered.

*Our Salem* is progressing, with staff working on the modeling of a recommended growth scenario. Staff are holding meetings with property owners all month leading into the joint City Council and Planning Commission work session on Wednesday, September 23.

Blight to Bright has a designated staff person doing great work on stubborn blight cases. Property owners are getting a level of gentle-yet-persistent attention. Focus is in on long-time cases.

In recent weeks the code compliance officers have returned to the field for regular assignment, but still limiting contact for health and safety reasons. Most contact is done via phone, email, and notices. The caseloads have built up while inspections were suspended due to COVID and while Code Enforcement was helping in Parks.

The multifamily program is unable to do interior inspections on apartments, but exterior inspections are being followed up on to ensure repairs are moving forward.

In Youth Development, 16 teens have completed 60 hours of service and leadership training with the majority earning a 0.5 community service elective credit on their transcripts, a letter of recommendation from the City, and a signed certificate of completion from the Mayor.

## **Library**

The attached graphic summarizes Library activity. The Library has added 952 new cardholders. We're growing our customer base! Meanwhile, programs like Summer Reading are seeing better-than-expected engagement in their virtual format. We were hoping for 1,500 signups and we got 2,673.

## **Park Ranger**

Park Ranger Mike Zieker has been doing excellent work in Wallace Marine, Riverfront, and Minto Brown parks. This month he conducted possibly the first ever socially distanced junior ranger camp with the help of the City's recreation staff. The new junior rangers learned about the natural world around them and how to enjoy it responsibly. This activities-based educational camp also introduced them to the many hats park rangers wear while ensuring the safety and enjoyment of all our recreationists. The junior campers met some turtles and learned how to catch and release fish.

## **Policing**

City Council's Monday, September 21 work session will be on policing, specifically City Council's request for information and opportunity for discussion of the Police Department's resources and responses to non-criminal behaviors.

Staff are working on an update on the City's review of body cameras. Chief Moore has initiated a review of the department's previous analysis of body cameras. A recommendation will be provided to City Council.

## Upcoming Issues

Upcoming community conversations:

*Our Salem* outreach on the draft vision and preferred growth and development scenario kicks off with the City Council/Planning Commission work Session September 23 for six to eight weeks.

Salem's Strategic Plan Update will get going this fall, with City Council adoption in February 2021.

Climate Action Plan began this month with stakeholder and community engagement prior to completion by December 2021.

Parks master plans underway include Geer, Woodmansee, and Bush's Pasture Park, with engagement opportunities each month through March 2021.

Community policing audit should be underway by late September.

Library Strategic Plan could be underway as early as October/November.

On the August 10 City Council agenda is extension of the emergency declaration that authorized the camping in undeveloped areas of Wallace Marine and Cascades Gateway. I will be coming back to City Council with an information report and likely a budget request that addresses park impact and sustainability of the camping.

The August 10 agenda also includes an update on the management of delinquent utility accounts. Of the City's 50,000 accounts, 2,238 are delinquent with a current total of \$697,000. The recommendation is to continue the utility assistance program through June 30, 2021 and authorize staff to notify delinquent customers that account management and enforcement practices will resume October 1, 2020. Delinquent customers will be encouraged to consider the utility assistance programs.

The Salem Public Art Commission is working with the artist on wording for a plaque for the art piece at the Police Station. The Salem Public Art Commission is responsible for the City's art collection, current and future pieces.

The land and facility use agreement between the City and Salem Keizer School District is no longer in effect. The school district desired control over school properties. The biggest initial issue for the City is schools used for neighborhood association meetings. The neighborhood associations will be charged by the school district.

ELNA – Swegle E.S.

Grant – Grant E.S.

NOLA – Scott E.S.

South Gateway – Battle Creek E.S.

SWAN – Salem Heights E.S.

Faye-Wright – Wright E.S.

Lansing – Waldo M.S.

SCAN – South Salem H.S.

Sunnyslope – Schirle E.S.

Staff are preparing information on the budget impact. Half of the neighborhood association are now hosting Zoom meetings while the other half are meeting in person in an open space, practicing social distancing rules and wearing masks.

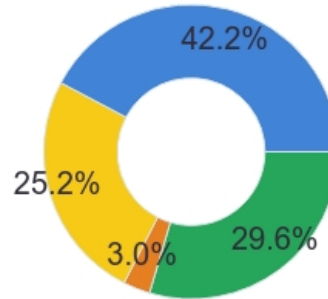
Thanks for reading,  
Steve

# April-July 2020 Customer Service Dashboard



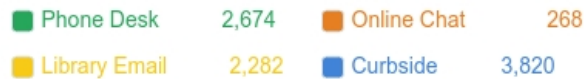
Salem  
Public  
Library

4  
Customer  
Service  
Points of Contact



8,976

Customer  
Interactions



952

New  
Cardholders



8,657

Curbside  
Checkouts



103,749

Ebooks  
Checkouts



25,172

Social Media  
Interactions



1,348

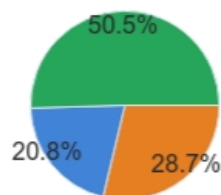
Virtual Programs  
Live Attendees



2,673

Summer Reading  
Signups

## Summer Reading Signups



200

Take & Make Kits  
Distribution