

NEWSLETTER

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City Council updates goals, strategic plan every year

In January, our Mayor and City Council met with community members and staff for two days of strategic planning and goal-setting for our city government.

There was an amazing amount of preparation and participation. The Council sought input from all of its Boards, Commissions, Committees and Task Forces. Civic organizations contributed ideas, as well as residents. The Council identified more than 250 ideas and long-range issues to discuss and prioritize.

Strategic planning is critical to the long-term success of our community as it helps our elected officials answer important questions such as:

- Where should City government focus its priorities?
- What is our City government role in addressing the community's most pressing challenges?
- How well is our City government meeting those challenges?

Strategic planning helps answer these questions. The answers provide a framework for:

- Providing residents with ways to participate in creating a vision and direction for Grants Pass.
- Establishing a process for review of, and improvement in, services managed by City government.
- Establishing the foundation for budgeting resources for specific outcomes.

Strategic planning is not a static document or process – it must change to reflect our changing community so the Council reviews its goals every year. This year Councilors kept the same goals but put the “Keep citizens safe” goal at the top. Every goal is important, but the Council and Mayor want citizen safety to be the lead focus for creating a Work Plan. The adopted goals are:

- Keep citizens safe.
- Provide cooperative shared leadership involving Council, Staff and Community.



Councilors Dan DeYoung and Rick Riker get ready to add their “voting dots,” along with the other elected officials, to help prioritize goals and ideas.

- Encourage economic prosperity.
- Expand tourism and cultural opportunities.
- Promote healthy neighborhoods.
- Facilitate sustainable, manageable growth.
- Maintain, operate, and expand our infrastructure to meet community needs.
- Preserve and enjoy our natural resources.

A draft Work Plan will be created from the prioritized goals. The draft will be reviewed and adopted by the City Council.

The Work Plan is also the tool that is used to evaluate the progress of our City government during the next 18 months.

The final step in the strategic plan is the City's Operating and Capital Improvement budgets. The budget process allocates the City resources needed to implement the Council's strategies and Work Plan activities.

The Council will provide many more opportunities for community participation in the strategic planning and budgeting processes, and looks forward to the strength of the community making Grants Pass great.

Grants Pass by the Numbers

84

New structural permits issued by the Building and Safety Division – more than double the number issued in the previous year.

4,074

Calls for fire and paramedic services.

28,844

Calls for police service – plus 14,412 calls for crime prevention services.

6,057

Traffic stops, which resulted in 3,993 warnings and 1,921 citations.

53,830

Square yards of street overlays constructed.

5.5 million

Average daily gallons of drinking water produced.

2.1 billion

Gallons of wastewater treated last year.

32

Number of parks managed. (24 developed and 8 undeveloped.)

\$13.8 million

General Fund ending balance, up from \$12.8 million. In comparison, 41 percent of cities responding to a League of Oregon Cities survey reported their city's ending fund balance declined last year.

Financial report yields interesting information

The City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the 2013 Fiscal Year was released upon completion of the annual financial audit.

In the graphic on the left and below are some interesting facts from the CAFR:

- The population of Grants Pass has grown to an estimated 34,740 residents. Ten years ago, our population was 24,470.
- Grants Pass' assessed real estate value rose by 2.1 percent. About 1.4 percent was due to new construction.
- Asante Three Rivers Medical Center is the largest employer in Grants Pass with an estimated 975 employees.

For the last 30 years, the City has submitted its CAFR to the national Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The City has earned a "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting" every year. The certificate is a prestigious award recognizing compliance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government financial reports. The City will submit this year's CAFR to the GFOA for examination.

To see the entire financial report, please go online to www.grantspassoregon.gov/Index.aspx?page=1339

Learn how to help keep our community clean

The 5th annual Master Recycler program will take place in Grants Pass on Thursday evenings March 13 through May 17.

The Master Recycler program exists all over Oregon and is valuable for personal and business waste reduction. The class consists of 30 hours of lectures from local recycling and waste prevention experts and optional field trips. Sample topics include: "greening" your business; worms and organic waste; the culture of consumption; and where trash and recycling goes after it leaves the curb.

Participants are required to attend all the classes and complete 30 hours of volunteer service in activities that reduce waste or educate others about recycling, such as: assisting with recycling events, assisting at an informational table at the events, giving presentations to schools and businesses, and other projects volunteers come up with themselves.

The course is sponsored by Southern Oregon Sanita-



Master Recycler James Boyd helped participants recycle at Pottsville's annual "Early Day Gas Engine" event last June.

tion and Republic Services. The cost is \$50, which covers supplies and a countywide recycling manual. Scholarships are available. Class size is limited to 30 participants. Applications are due March 6. The class will be held Thursdays from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Southern Oregon Aspire's Training Center, 408C SE "G" St. To apply, go to www.jocomasterrecycler.org, or call 541-237-3010.

Nuisance Intervention Team patrols downtown, parks

Two years ago, complaints to police about nuisance-type offenses spiked. The complaints came from many residents, including downtown business owners.

Most of the complaints involved the public consumption of alcohol, trespassing and disorderly conduct. The Grants Pass Department of Public Safety (GPDPS) looked into the complaints by sending plain-clothed police officers downtown to observe and take enforcement action.

During enforcement operations, the officers surveyed the individuals they contacted. The information from the surveys was used to identify individuals who needed assistance, and those who were not interested in assistance.

Police partnered with downtown merchants by conducting several forums to provide updates on enforcement and to reach out for ideas. To date, there have been three merchant forums, which have been attended by many local service providers, not just police.

In response to the problem, the GPDPS formed a Nuisance Intervention Team (NIT). The team consists of



Breaking up transient camps like this one in a city Park is one of the actions taken by the police Nuisance Intervention Team.

hand-picked officers who conduct operations on a random schedule. The team targets offenses and behaviors of individuals rather than the individuals themselves.

The frequency of police operations varies with the known activity levels in the affected areas. NIT officers patrol downtown and City parks.

Since the team was officially created last July, 291 individuals

have been contacted, resulting in 22 arrests, 84 warnings, and 163 citations. Police have received positive feedback from downtown merchants, who say the nuisance offenses have significantly decreased.

When NIT was started, officers did not have the ability to lodge offenders in the Josephine County Jail. The City Council's rental of jail beds from Josephine County has allowed officers to lodge offenders creating nuisances downtown and in parks. The ability to jail offenders has been a major asset to the team's success.

City making web site interactive

Over the past few years, the City has added more features to its web site to allow residents and businesses to do more of their business electronically, such as:

- Sign up for utility e-billing or automatic utility bill payment;
- Get application forms for committees and boards, planning permits, sign permits, special events, placement of public art, Citizen's Public Safety Academy, police reports, and found property claims;
- Submit a job or building inspection application;
- Download hundreds of documents, such as Council meeting minutes and requests for proposals.

You also can receive the City Newsletter and other alerts by email by clicking the "Subscribe to eNotices" button on the homepage (www.grantspassoregon.gov). Notices include: Community Development News, Crime Prevention and Neighborhood Watch, Festivals and Events, Tourism News, Job Postings, Municipal Code Revisions, Parks and Recreation, Press Releases, Public Notices, Public Safety Press Releases, Requests for Pro-



posals, Street Closures, and Tree Programs.

Over the next two years, the City hopes to install new software to make your customer experience with the City even more easy and convenient.

Proposed soccer complex now in design stage

In January, the City Council's Allen Creek Soccer Task Force began reviewing proposals to design a soccer complex next to Allen Dale Elementary School.

The project would include multiple soccer fields on properties owned by School District 7 and the city's Allen Creek Reserve property.

Community Development Director Michael Black expects permits to be issued in June 2015 if funding is available. Construction will take about a year.

Task Force member Dick Matti also is a member of the Council's Parks Advisory Board, which completed a 20-year parks plan adopted by the City Council in 2010. This spring, Matti will begin his 30th year coaching youth soccer.

"Grants Pass has needed soccer fields for 20 years," Matti said. The number of youths playing soccer far exceeds the number of fields available."

An estimated 1,500 youths participate in soccer, plus another 200-300 kids on high school teams. An estimated 300 men and women also play league soccer. "Teams now practice on fields not made for soccer," Matti said, "and 3 to 4 teams often practice on a single field, when the maximum should be 2 teams at once."

The Parks Board found that the top recreational activities in Grants Pass include walking, exercising, bicycling, dog walking, swimming, playing soccer, and watching wildlife.



The Allen Creek Soccer Task Force is working to expand opportunities for local youths and adults who play soccer.

"The soccer complex can be used for other sports, such as flag football, lacrosse and rugby," Matti said. "As the community grows, we are going to need more open fields for all sports, not just soccer," he added.

Grants Pass also has no fields close to each other so that parents with more than one child playing soccer can attend more than one game.

"This forces parents to choose which child to watch," Matti explained. "In addition, none of the fields have adjacent playgrounds for children to play on while their parents play soccer."

This is a need for all sports, as the number of people who attend sports events is No. 8 on the list of recreation participation in Grants Pass. (Playing soccer is No. 6 on the list.)



Your Grants Pass City Government

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City Council meetings begin at 6 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month at the Council Chambers, 101 NW "A" Street. The meetings are televised on Cable Channel 21 and posted online at www.grantspassoregon.gov. City Councilors and staff talk about local issues on radio station KAJO (1270 AM) at 9:30 a.m. on the 1st and 2nd Tuesday of every month.