

NEWSLETTER

Issue 204 • August 2014

Council sends proposed annexation to voters

In July, the Grants Pass City Council approved the annexation of approximately 320 acres of land into the city. This fall, voters will be asked to approve that annexation.

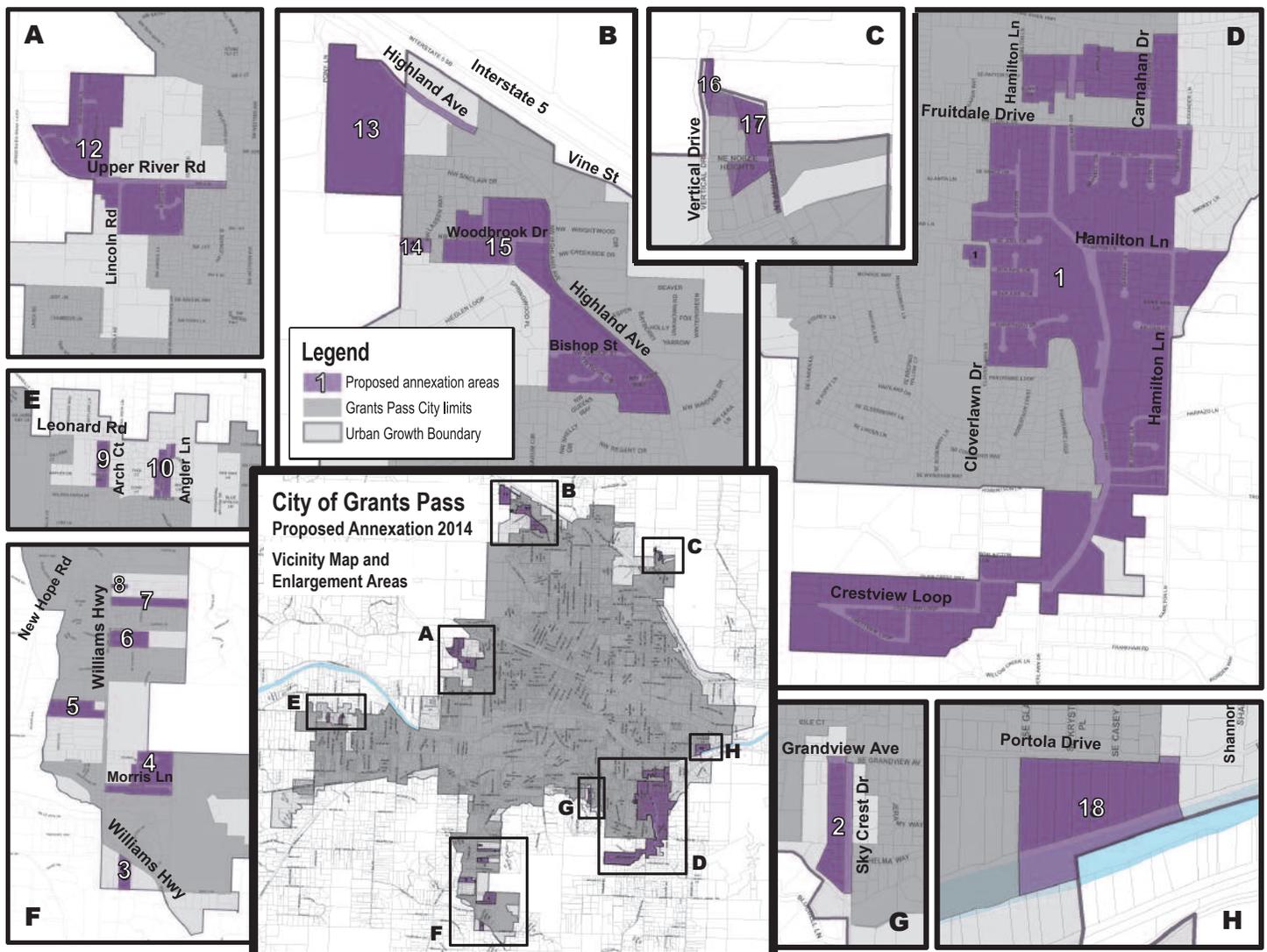
The Council's No. 1 goal is Public Safety. This year, councilors chose annexation as the No. 1 task to support this goal because they want to be able to provide urban services such as water, wastewater, police and fire service in the most effective manner possible.

Councilors also want a logical city boundary that helps police and fire services be more efficient. Property in the

17 areas to be annexed were developed in a “checker-board” pattern, with some properties inside city limits and some outside. This is not an efficient way to provide public safety and utility services.

The land to be annexed is located in the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The annexations were formed around areas where properties have been developed, and/or connected to services, and/or have a signed Service & Annexation Agreement. Properties in seven of the areas

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New Jail Services Utility Fee will help keep us safe

The City Council's No. 1 goal is to "Keep Citizens Safe."

As one of three members of our local criminal justice system, the City must rely on Josephine County and the State to provide certain services. The County's role is to operate the Adult Jail, Juvenile Justice program, and District Attorney's office.

Since 2012, the County hasn't had enough money to fully fund all of these services. As a result, many offenders were not being jailed. In 2013, the City Council took a bold step and rented up to 30 jail beds in the Adult Jail for exclusive use by city police. The Council used some one-time funds and one-time project cuts to pay for this temporary contract, which expired on June 30, 2014.

Ballot measures to restore criminal justice services in Josephine County in May 2014 and May 2013 failed.



The new fee allows City police to put more offenders in the Josephine County Jail.

However, city voters had favored both measures by almost 60 percent. Considering this support, the City Council created a new Jail Services Utility Fee to provide continued funding for the jail bed contract.

The Council had examined the impact the contract had on crime and safety in our community. They found that renting the jail beds was very successful in reducing crime and increasing and livability.

Beginning in August, utility customers will see a monthly charge on

each utility bill. Most residential accounts will have a monthly Jail Services Utility Fee of \$3.74 or less. The fee for commercial and industrial businesses is based on the type and size of the business and the traffic it generates. The fee has an expiration date of June 30, 2015.

The Council's decision to restore this small – but critical – part of our community's criminal justice system will help police tremendously as they work to "Keep Citizens Safe" in Grants Pass.

Annexation

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have a "triple majority," and these seven areas also make up the majority of the land to be annexed.

Annexation will bring another change: All of the 682 tax lots will pay city property taxes. In Grants Pass, all City property taxes are used to fund Public Safety.

Most properties in the UGB that were developed after 2001 already pay a fee equal to the city property tax rate. They currently receive, or are entitled to receive, city water, sewer, police and fire services.

Almost all of the properties have been designated for annexation for more than 15 years – most over 30 years.

If approved on Nov. 4, the annexation would take effect in December. Annexation will add properties with an estimated value of \$98,869,110 to city tax rolls. Owners of annexed properties will pay same tax rate paid by all properties in the city: \$6.3092 per \$1,000 assessed value.

More information about the annexation is available on the City's web site at www.grantspassoregon.gov, including answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and common myths about annexation. From the home page, select "Annexation 2014" from the "I am looking for..." drop-down menu.

Anyone can help fight crime

Criminals use similar methods and tactics. Some work under the cover of darkness, avoiding areas of high traffic and lighting. Others work in daylight, taking routes not frequently traveled.

Someone calling about a suspicious person or incident have been key to a successful criminal case, or the opportunity to stop a crime. You can help make our Grants Pass safer by reporting activities such as:

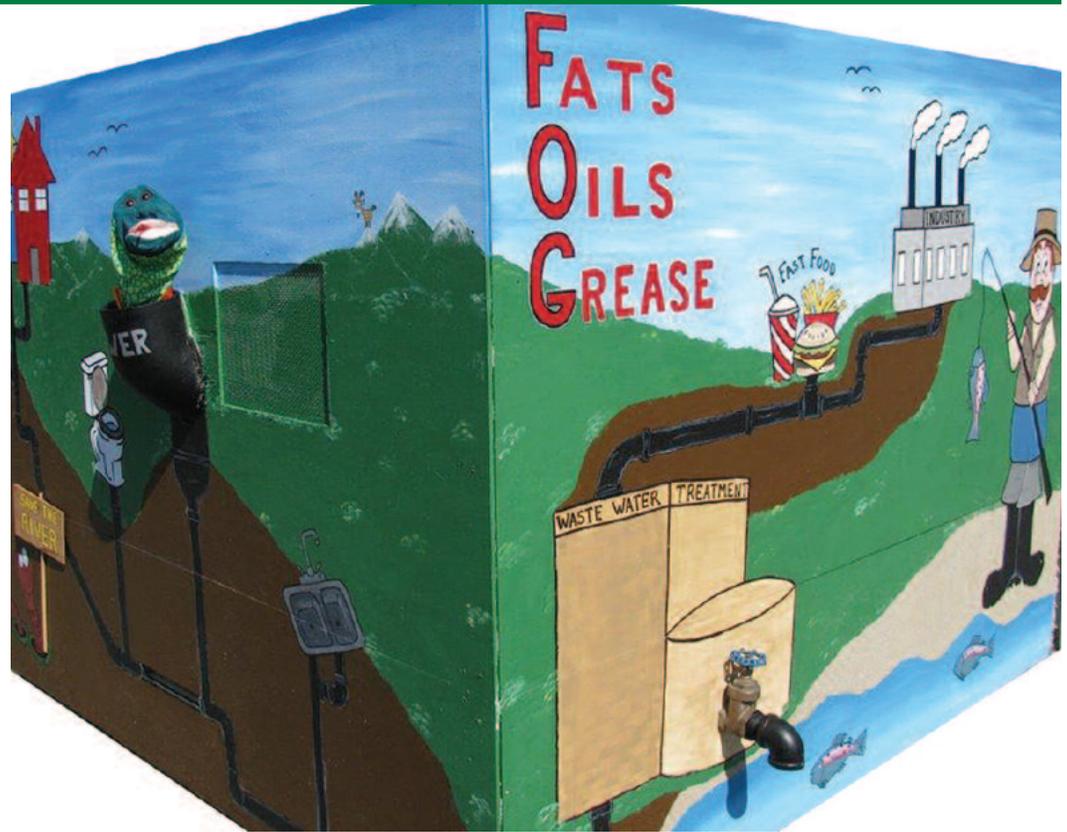
- **Strangers in your neighborhood** walking around unoccupied homes or unattended vehicles. If you see a stranger around a neighbor's home or checking car doors to see if they are unlocked, please call police immediately.
- **A group of people** in an isolated area where you think they shouldn't be. If you call police, an officer will contact them to find out what they are doing.

To report these and other suspicious activities, please call the police at **541-450-6260**.

The Grants Pass Department of Public Safety thanks everyone who reports suspicious activity. Thank you for your help in making our city safer.

Only you can prevent FOG

in Grants Pass



No, we're not talking about the fog we know so well during winter. We're talking about Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) going into our sewer system.

In June, Water Restoration Plant staff presented a puppet show about FOG to Riverside Elementary School students who were visiting the plant during Public Works Week. The star of the puppet show was "Stanley the Sewer Snake," admirably performed by Treatment Plant Specialist Bill Hickerson.

Stanley gave a humorous, educational presentation about FOG and the problems it creates for sewer lines, the plant, and the environment.

Stanley explained to the students that FOG can be found in meat, salad dressing, gravy, sauces, fryer oil, butter and other dairy products. When these are poured down the kitchen sink, they build up inside sewer pipes. There they mix with other solids, eventually clogging sewer lines and potentially causing sewage backup in homes and businesses. In addition to endangering your health, sewage backup results in costly repairs.

As Stanley told the students, the damage from sewage backup is costly. Owners must repair their homes and businesses, and all customers (their parents) pay for the cost of cleaning and repairing sewer lines.

But everyone can save money by properly disposing of their FOG.

What you can do to prevent FOG

- Wipe down greasy pots and pans with a dry paper towel and dispose of the grease in the garbage.
- Pour cooled oil, fats and grease into a lidded container and place in the garbage.
- Use strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids and dispose of the scraps in the garbage.
- Do NOT pour FOG down your garbage disposal or sink.
- Do NOT use hot water to wash grease down the drain.



A friendly reminder from Stanley the Sewer Snake:
"Fats, Oils and Grease aren't just bad for arteries and waistlines; they're bad for sewers as well."

There is nothing like a tree for shade, beauty, value

Imagine Grants Pass without trees. Pretty hot and ugly, huh? Trees have lots of benefits. They cool your house in summer without running up the electric bill, clean the air of pollutants, and add value to your home and beauty to our city.

Since 1988, the volunteers of the Urban Tree Advisory Committee have been working to keep our urban forest healthy. Their mission is to promote “interest in the value of urban trees through community education, scheduling arbor events and encouraging tree planting and care.”

In addition to events, the Tree Committee has a fall Tree Canopy program. For \$50, you can get a 1½-inch caliper tree planted in your front yard. The trees offered through the program do well in our climate and along streets.

“It’s important to plant the right tree in the right place because trees grow to the size they are genetically programmed to grow,” said Cynthia Charat, a Tree Committee member since 1991. “You don’t want to plant an 80-foot tree under power lines or right next to your house.”

The Tree Committee needs two more members. “You don’t need to be a tree expert – just an interest in trees and our community,” Charat said. She joined the committee to learn about trees and to help educate people about them.

Applications are available on the City web site (under the City Council tab), or by calling 541-450-6000.



A dogwood tree at Croxton Memorial Park.

Committee Programs

For information or applications, please go online, or call 541-450-6000 and ask for the Parks Supervisor.

Significant Tree Certificates

An award is given to owners of trees with stateliness, beauty, rarity, historical link, or a good structure. The trees are listed on a Significant Tree Registry.

Memorial Trees

For \$100, you can honor a loved one by having a tree planted in a park and have a ceremony during Arbor week.

Tree Canopy

Property owners may purchase a high-quality tree for low cost. City staff plant the tree in winter.

Events

Arbor Day

Held on the first Monday in April, the event is part of the national “Tree City USA” program.

Fall Tree Walk

Held on the 3rd Sunday in October. Take a guided walk in Riverside or Rienhart parks (location alternates).

Spring Tree Walk

Held in May. Meet at a park and take a guided walk around the neighborhood.

Street Tree Standards

Specifications for planting, pruning and removing trees in public areas and the right-of-way, which requires a permit.



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 183 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.