



WEST LINN UPDATE

April 2019

A Moment With Mayor Russ Axelrod

On Thursday, February 28th I delivered my annual State of the City address at our Public Library – what I admiringly refer to as the living room of West Linn. It was a warm and appreciative crowd as we reflected on the many accomplishments we achieved together in 2018, and we looked ahead to opportunities in 2019 and beyond. From the passing of the 2018 General Obligation Bond, to the hiring of our new Police Chief Terry Kruger, or the countless number of community wide events and activities our Parks and Recreation Department put on, West Linn had another very successful year.

The past few years I've mentioned how our city is reaching out like never before to our neighboring cities and regional stakeholders, and how we have been building relationships and foundations for a more successful future. This approach not only strengthens our position and provides opportunities that serve our own needs, but it helps to create a better urban setting with our city neighbors that we increasingly share attributes with. The Portland Metro region is growing around us and we need to work with our neighboring cities and regional stakeholders to help influence projects that support our community goals and values. Our many interests are reflected in the broad 2019 Council Goals – you can view these goals on the following page.

Speaking of current goals and the future, in my speech I gave a broad overview of the latest developments and progress on our city's most exciting long-range project – our Waterfront Master Planning Project. As you might already know, in 2016-17 we initiated a long-range project to master plan the entire waterfront area between the Arch Bridge and the Historic Willamette Neighborhood upstream, including lands generally between the Willamette River and I-205. No sooner had we kicked things off when the West Linn Paper Company Mill suddenly closed and took with it our largest industrial employer. The Mill closure is an unfortunate milestone in our city's history, but change can also bring opportunity. PGE is the largest property owner in the waterfront area and during this period they've been assessing the changing landscape, their assets, and long-term interests around their historic Thomas W. Sullivan hydroelectric plant at Willamette Falls. In this process we discovered that we share many common goals and interests, and we are forging a unique partnership to address the future visioning and planning of our waterfront landscape.

Another exciting aspect of our waterfront planning is the new transportation network that is emerging for the area as we collaborate with ODOT to integrate system improvements with the I-205 and Highway 43 reconstruction projects. In the slowdown of master planning efforts following the Mill closure, we recognized the critical need to first redesign the transportation infrastructure in this area to support future access and function. A new transportation reconfiguration concept has been developed and, while there are still details to be refined, the planned changes will incorporate reconfigured roadways, roundabouts, and cycle-track designs connecting Highway 43 and Willamette Falls Drive. And I still haven't mentioned our important work in this area involving the Willamette Falls Locks – maybe next newsletter?

Thanks for reading, and I hope you all had safe travels over your spring break!



2019 City Council Goals

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #1: SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Citizen Engagement

1. Engage Citizen Advisory Groups, Neighborhood Associations, and the community to create and implement a robust disaster preparedness program for West Linn.
2. Build collaborative relationships with Citizen Advisory Group members by recognizing their skills and expertise and empower them to advise the Council and help carry out the goals of the City.
3. Investigate and implement ways to engage a broader swath of citizens in the business of the City. Make it easier for citizens to effectively participate in the business of the City.
4. Implement codes of conduct and ethical standards for City Council members.
5. Finalize restoration of Citizen Vision Goals to the Comprehensive Plan.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #2: LAND USE AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Planning and Community & Economic Development

6. Create a process that considers community input during construction plan review, before plans are released for construction.
7. Continue West Linn's Waterfront Planning Project with community and stakeholder engagement.
8. Actively pursue opportunities and funding options to create safe indoor spaces for active recreation, entertainment, and community gathering places consistent with the approved Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

Transportation

9. Actively pursue opportunities and funding options to create an intra-city shuttle system.
10. Implement high priority transportation/safety measures identified in the Transportation System Plan, supported by 2018 General Obligation Bond funds, to create safe routes to schools and enhance pedestrian safety.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #3: SUSTAINABILITY

Fiscal Sustainability

11. Establish and implement acceptable levels of service and/or additional revenues sources to create a balanced budget for Biennium 2020/21.
12. Expand the role of the citizen members of the Budget Committee to assist with oversight and reporting on 2018 General Obligation Bond project status and funding expenditures.
13. Define the City's legal services structure with the goal of optimizing quality and costs.

Environmental Sustainability

14. Incorporate environmentally sustainable practices in City activities and decision making, including reducing waste generation and energy consumption.

Utilities

15. Continue to engage Clackamas County Water & Environmental Services, and partner cities to address governance framework and to protect West Linn ratepayer interests for wastewater services.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #4: COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

16. Strengthen and support relationships with local community groups and regional, state, national, and global groups and organizations, and include this valuable input in Council decision making.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #5: CULTURAL DIVERSITY, EDUCATION, AND THE ARTS

17. Facilitate startup of new Arts and Culture Commission and explore ways to engage with citizens in developing an aesthetic identity, sense of culture, and artistic place for West Linn.
18. Promote Equity and Inclusion in City policies and procedures.



Welcome New Councilors

January brought two new Councilors to the City of West Linn. Councilor Bill Relyea and Councilor Jules Walters were both sworn in by reappointed Municipal Judge Rhett Bernstein on Monday, January 7th. This is the first term for both Councilors Relyea and Walters, and they have wasted no time educating themselves and jumping into the busy schedule of City business alongside veterans Mayor Russ Axelrod, Councilor Richard Sakelik, and newly appointed Council President Teri Cummings.

2018 Robert Moore Award

Congratulations to David Kleinke, recipient of the 2018 Robert Moore Award! David began volunteering in West Linn five years ago pulling blackberry and ivy at Mary S. Young Park. He later stepped up to oversee SOLVE volunteer events and expanded the services provided and number of participating volunteers. Thanks to David's efforts, a typical first Saturday event at Mary S. Young Park has anywhere from 30-50 volunteers, rain or shine. He has also been active in promoting our new pollinator gardens and the important roll they play in our environment, especially working with West Linn elementary and high school students. We thank you for your service and all you've done and continue to do for our community!



From the City Manager:

Budget Outlook for Biennium 2020-2021

As of this writing, we are putting the finishing touches on the Proposed City Budget for the 2020-2021 Biennium. The budget is balanced at \$116.4 million. It enables the City to continue existing service levels and meet the City Council's goals presented by Mayor Axelrod in his 2019 State of the City address. But, it also keeps an eye towards future challenges and uncertainties related to public employee pension funding and health care costs.

Earlier this year, the Council was presented with a preliminary biennial budget showing a projected budget deficit of approximately \$1,250,000 in general government programs (General, Public Safety, Library, Parks & Recreation, Building, and Planning Funds). As a result of offering a voluntary attrition program to employees, decreases in capital spending, and having more data to project the end of this fiscal year, we were able to balance the budget. However, the City continues to face challenges with rising costs and is facing a projected \$2.3 million deficit in required reserves in general government programs at the end of the next biennium (fiscal year 2023), of which \$1.2 million is in the General Fund.

Given that the City is predominantly a service provider, labor costs naturally drive a large portion of the budget. The proposed budget includes 130.98 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. The City of West Linn continues to operate with a lean organization. While the city's population has grown, the number of employees has declined. West Linn operates with just over 5 FTE per 1,000 population, the lowest FTE per capita of similar sized cities in the region. This is both a point of pride and concern.

Until we get past the full impact of higher retirement costs, we will need to continue to look for service efficiencies, refine assumptions in the projections, and take every measure to achieve our fiscal sustainability goals, including consideration of new revenue sources. This will require continued diligence and sacrifice. It will also take thoughtful work by our Citizens Budget Committee, whose help in examining the budget, asking hard questions, evaluating options and making tough choices is greatly appreciated.

General Obligation Bond Updates

Improvement of the athletic fields at Willamette Park is the first 2018 General Obligation Bond project to be completed! Work included the replacement of dirt infields with artificial turf on Fields 2 and 3, as well as soil conditioning on Field 1. All fields received enhancements to drainage for extended season playability. The work was finished November 27, 2018, well-ahead of the spring 2019 sports season completion goal.

Altogether, with in-kind contributions from the West Linn Softball Association, the cost was \$75,000 under the initial estimate of \$300,000. Even the surplus soil will be put to use at other project locations for additional overall cost savings. Remaining Bond athletic field renovations include replacement of the infields at Fields Bridge Park, a new drainage system at Mary S. Young Park to increase seasonal playability, and Hammerle Park will see a new backstop on Field 2 in addition to storm drainage and drinking fountain improvements behind Field 1.

On deck next are much needed improvements to Sunset and Sahallie Illahee Parks. Sunset's layout will include a new restroom, two brand new shelters, ADA parking and pathways, and a new nature playscape that includes an interactive water feature. Sahallie Illahee Park will have better ADA access, a new nature based playground, and re-construction of the Horton Road basketball court. For real time financial information, project details, and documents for the 2018 General Obligation Bond visit www.westlinnoregon.gov/go-bond.



Neighborhood News

Not sure which Neighborhood Association you live in? Visit WestLinnOregon.gov!

Rosemont Summit Neighborhood Association

Meets the first Thursday of each month at 7pm at the Adult Community Center. Rosemont Summit Neighborhood Association has some exciting projects lined up for 2019! These projects include:

- Continued renovation of Sahallie Illahee Playground.
- "Map My Neighborhood" initiative to help prepare for when disasters strike.
- City University 101 where residents learn from City departments how the City delivers services and how we can get involved.
- Picnics and potlucks where you can meet your neighbors!

Savanna Oaks Neighborhood Association

Meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7pm at the Willamette Fire Station. Savanna Oaks Neighborhood Association accomplished the following during the fourth quarter of 2018:

- Renewed our Fire Wise Certification.
- Elected Savanna Oaks Neighborhood Association Officers.
- Established a White Oak Savanna Park Committee with six members volunteering to serve.
- Met with the West Linn Planning Department to discuss possible uses for the former Albertson's Market property.

Go Paperless with eBills

Did you know you can pay your City bills online? We encourage you to enroll in our paperless e-Billing services to receive, and pay, your bill online. Schedule your payments to be made automatically, or login and make payments each month - it's that easy! Go green and help the City reach our environmental goals, while improving efficiency in your life by enrolling in eBilling at WestLinnOregon.gov today!



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