

Coburg State of the City  
January 12, 2016

The short answer to the query of “What is the State of City of Coburg?” is “it’s doing better than it has in many a year.” Much has been accomplished this past year, but I’ll let Petra give you those details in a few minutes. I would like to spend few minutes talking about why I’m so optimistic about Coburg and the greater Coburg community.

Coburg is not just a place; it is its people, including its Council and staff, its residents, volunteers, school, and businesses. Coburg also includes the many that work in the industrial areas and those who live and work in the surrounding communities.

Council leadership and stewardship are essential for any thriving town. We have this. The Coburg City Council has repeatedly demonstrated the courage and determination to make the necessary tough decisions. Council is consistently prudent with your money and has shown the resolve to stay the course when needed.

It is difficult to overstress the importance of a strong city staff for a thriving city. We have one. It is staff that delivers essential city services, it is staff that executes Council goals and policies, it is staff that manages and safeguards your money. The Council has worked hard to build and retain a competent, dedicated—and frugal—city staff and will continue to make staff development and retention a priority.

Families are the backbone of any community and a quality school is a priority for every family and community. Coburg has one. The Coburg Community Charter School is growing and has been recognized for excellence.

City Hall has—and should have—constrained resources. Much of what we think of as Coburg is delivered by a cadre of engaged volunteers. Coburg’s are the best! Volunteers staff the city’s commissions and committees, the festivals, parades, and events. Volunteers are essential to the Food Bank, the Chamber of Commerce, the Grange, the IOOF, our school, churches, and in countless other ways. Volunteers truly make Coburg hum.

Every community needs a strong economic base. Coburg has one. More people work in Coburg than live in Coburg—at Coburg North, at Serenity Lane, along Roberts Road and Roberts Court, and in our downtown district. Many more people live and work in close proximity to Coburg, and in many ways consider themselves part of the Coburg community.

We have an effective Council, an excellent staff, an outstanding school, a strong spirit of volunteerism, and a thriving industrial sector. What’s next? We need to continue what we’re doing right: fiscal prudence and infrastructure development. For the long term, Coburg needs moderate growth in its residential base to ensure sufficient funds for essential services like water, sewer, and roads! Moderate growth is also essential to grow the customer necessary for downtown businesses to remain viable. Housing starts are up and there are still in-fill opportunities available. But this will not be enough. We’ve made great strides on our UGB expansion, but we still have a ways to go. We need to stay committed to this effort.

It's time now, particularly in anticipation of residential growth, to turn our attention to downtown. Council is looking to take the first steps towards launching a Main Street downtown vitality program. This would be a multi-year effort to strengthen our downtown business sector while preserve and developing the historic charm and character that is quintessentially Coburg. The goal is to make downtown a vibrant place to gather, work, play, and shop.

The Main Street team would partner closely with the Chamber of Commerce, with City Hall, and with the wider Coburg community, relying also on the guidance and support of the Oregon Main Street program. As it moves forward, and I fully expect it will, the effort will of necessity ramp slowly, but downtown Coburg's potential is very real. Stay tuned!

For a number of reasons, I must step down as Mayor next month, but I remain committed to Coburg and I'm excited about our future. What is the State of the City of Coburg? It's on the right track and it's in good hands.

Thank you.