



CITY OF JOHN DAY

Newsletter – March 2021

Dear Residents –

We have now surpassed the one-year anniversary of the global COVID-19 pandemic. As we begin the long road to recovery, I wanted to use this newsletter to reflect on the state of the city and share a few of the strategies and plans we're using to help everyone get back to normal.

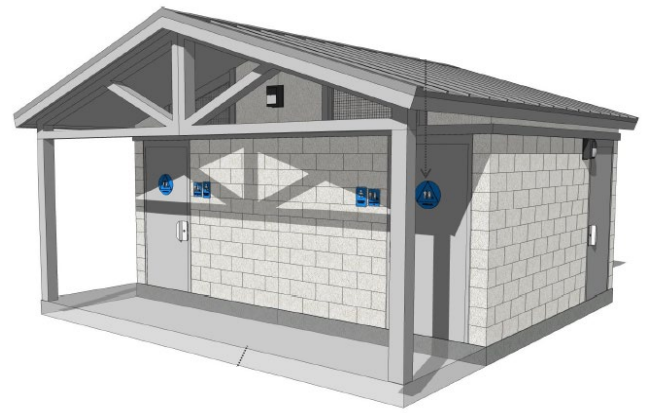
This past year has been extraordinarily difficult for all of us. The city council has spent many hours wrestling with the negative impacts of the virus on our community and how best to help our struggling small businesses and residents get back on their feet again.

The virus exposed a lot of our community's weaknesses. Most of us were caught unprepared and we've had to learn to adapt to the constantly shifting rules and regulations. We've had to adjust our policies and practices to continue performing basic activities at home, at work and in our personal lives.

The response to the pandemic has also created several opportunities. State and federal agencies have started moving money toward economic recovery and infrastructure investments in new ways, and with a little bit of luck and a lot of hard work, we may be positioned to take advantage of some of these new programs. We've already benefitted from a few of them, which I'll highlight here.

Recreation & Tourism Amenities

Earlier this month the City received a \$35,000 grant from Travel Oregon to create new restrooms downtown (pictured top right) at the former Wright Chevrolet parking lot on SW Canton Street. This was a competitive grant that was awarded with no local funding required. With it, we will be able to install our first ADA-accessible public restrooms on Main Street in downtown. The restrooms will include storage space for events that could be held at that location, including the John Day Farmer's Market and community block parties.



This is a placemaking opportunity in a location that will welcome visitors as well as local residents and encourage them to meet, listen to music in a relaxed atmosphere, and get to know each other better. Kiosks at the site will feature local events and service/volunteer opportunities to encourage civic engagement.

It will also serve as a local trailhead to the City's riverfront trail system and integrated park system. Eventually, it will include parking stations for cyclists and a place for backpackers hiking the new Blue Mountains Trail (<https://www.hellscanyon.org/blue-mountains-trail>) to store their gear and equipment while visiting our area's destination attractions.

Trail signage and waypoints funded by the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) and Grant County Chamber of Commerce will guide visitors to local area attractions as well as downtown shopping. We are also exploring opportunities to create cultural displays, culinary experiences and public art displays at this site and throughout the city to beautify our community. The City is also applying for up to \$100,000 in additional funding for our parks and downtown to bring other amenities, including the purchase of more signs and waypoints, park benches, and trail kiosks, as well as much-needed doggie stations!



The Dollar General (top left), Meredith House (bottom left), OTEC electric vehicle parking (center), Len's Drug expansion (top right) and design for the new Hill Family Park Bridge (bottom right)

Commercial and Public Improvements Coming Soon!

Local construction projects are proceeding in spite of brief weather delays due to snow and rain. OTEC has already opened the new electric vehicle charging station for public use. The Meredith House is on track for completion in early June. The Len's Drug renovation and expansion is scheduled for completion by early summer, and the Dollar General has a planned construction end date of July 12, with the grand opening to follow shortly thereafter. The new bike/ped bridge over the John Day River at the Hill Family Park is also scheduled to be installed around the same time. It's exciting to see these projects coming together!

Additional Small Business Funding

We're working with Business Oregon's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) office to craft an application that would result in \$500,000 for use as grants to local small businesses. These funds can help offset operating costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. If awarded, funds will be available this summer for expenditure. Stay tuned. If this is awarded, we'll provide an update on the city website and via a newsletter and the radio on who to contact for more information.

Broadband Update

We have requested \$2 million in funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to complete our local fiber optic network. Their investment review committee will meet again on April 2nd to make a recommendation on whether to fund this endeavor. Grant County Digital has been working diligently over the past four years to make sure every premise in John Day has access to high speed internet. We'll keep you posted as this project develops.

Volunteers Needed

We are planning a Spring Fling for these projects to help kick off our summer events. We are looking for volunteers who want to contribute, either as members of a city advisory committee or as volunteers for local non-profit organizations that are working with the City to help envision, plan and implement these projects. If you are interested in participating as a volunteer, please complete the form on the city website, www.cityofjohnday.com under "Latest News."

Thank you for your continued support as we work through these challenging times.

Nick Green, City Manager