

City

Bridges

News to keep you connected to Albany City government

Winter 2004

This Issue

Police Station Too Small	2
Fire Station Problems	3
Your Opinion, Please	3
Parks Need Changes	3
Avoid Flood Hazards	4
Handling Runoff	4

Sidebar

Paying for Our Streets

The majority of people who attended the City's town hall meeting on October 1, 2003, said that repairing Albany's streets is a priority for them.

Background

In 1996, the Mayor's Task Force on Street Maintenance found that the City needed to spend about \$36.6 million to repair failing streets. At the time, the City had a \$1.7 million shortfall of the total needed to maintain streets, and ten miles of streets needed to be completely rebuilt.

The Task Force recommended two \$10 million General Obligation bonds to pay to rebuild the worst streets, as well as charging a fee to pay for routine maintenance. While the first bond measure was approved by voters in 1998, a second \$10 million bond was rejected in 2002, leaving the City with no funding currently authorized for major street work.

By 2001, the ten miles of streets needing reconstruction had grown to almost 24 miles, and the costs associated with repairing Albany's streets had more than doubled.

Funding Options

Most of those who participated in the town hall meeting said that money is needed to repair Albany's streets. The City has a few options. The most popular idea has been to present voters with another \$10 million General Obligation bond sometime in the next six years. The bond would pay for a few specific projects. Other options include a regional gas tax to fund road improvements or a monthly fee on homes and businesses.

Albany has no dedicated, reliable source of money to fund the maintenance and repair of our city streets. The Street Fund receives money from the state fuel tax, water and sewer charges, and system development charges. The Street Fund budget for 2003-2004 is \$10.2 million. In addition to maintaining and repairing street surfaces, this fund pays for other services including traffic signs and lights, culvert and ditch maintenance, bridge maintenance, and airport inspections.

As the population continues to grow and the number of miles of streets increase, funding for street repair as well as the streets themselves will likely continue to decline. The Public Works Department and Albany City Council face tough decisions on how to generate and spend revenue to maintain and improve our roads.

City Council Wants Your Help in Setting Priorities

Throughout this year, the Albany City Council has been studying City buildings and services to determine where changes should be made. The changes they are considering could shape Albany well into the future by rebuilding deteriorated streets, expanding the Main Library, replacing the police station and the downtown fire station, updating and improving aging City parks, and setting up systems to pay for ongoing street maintenance and management of stormwater runoff.

It's a long and costly list. The Council believes the costs will be even higher – not just in dollars, but in what it's like to live in Albany – if nothing is done. But how soon should any of these things be done and in what order? The Council is turning to you to help them list those priorities.

The Council has heard some public opinion in a series of community forums on these topics over the last year and a half. On October 1, 2003, they hosted a town hall meeting at West Albany High School to hear from Albany citizens. More

than 120 came to hear the Councilors offer their perspectives on each of the City's future service needs. A community attitude survey is now being conducted by mail. This issue of *City Bridges* is intended to help answer questions that may be raised



by the survey. A follow-up questionnaire will be mailed later.

Those who attended the town hall meeting participated in a brief survey, also. The highest percentage of positive responses was to a question related to the repair and improvement of Albany's streets. Ninety percent thought the City should ask voters again for a \$10 million General Obligation bond sometime in the next six years, with nearly half suggesting 2006.

Next, 75 percent responded positively toward another 2006 proposal to replace or renovate the downtown fire station and

build a new police station. The largest percentage of "strongly agree" marks (46 percent) were for the library General Obligation Bond and Operating Levy election in 2004 with an additional 18 percent rating it as "somewhat agree" for a total of 64 percent.

With regard to a future stormwater utility, 49 percent slightly agreed with the idea and 20 percent strongly agreed. And 67 percent of those surveyed agreed with the idea of a regional gas tax to support street maintenance, whereas only 52 percent liked the idea of a monthly fee-based transportation utility district.

Finally, respondents split 50/50 on the question of support for a parks and recreation levy to rectify a long list of deficiencies in our parks system.

For any of these initiatives to succeed, a great deal more needs to be done to communicate the issues to you and gauge your readiness to accept new financial obligations. We need to start somewhere, and this newsletter is that beginning.

Busy Albany Libraries Bursting from Success

Albany's public libraries are setting records:

- Nearly 70 percent of Albany residents have active library cards.
- Nine hundred to 1,000 people come to the Library each of the six days a week that it's open.
- More than 533,000 books, magazines, music, DVDs, puppets, and other items were checked out last year.
- More than 16,000 children participated in year-round programs, such as story times, puppet shows, theater, art, games, contests, and plain old visiting.

The Main Library building is 30 years old, constructed when Albany had half its current population. In nearly every category of standards measured by the Oregon Library Association, Albany doesn't measure up. A building planned for 70,000 books now holds over 100,000.



LIBRARY USAGE EXPLODES AS POPULATION INCREASES:



To make room, the Library has removed seating for 20-30 patrons, removed several years of back issues of magazines, a large depository of government materials, and a popular genealogy collection. The children's department grows every year, forcing other parts of the Library's collections to relocate.

The City Council authorized a year-long study that concluded in November 2002. The study recommended that the Main Library be renovated and expanded at its present site, 1390 Waverly Drive SE. The structure is sound and the location continues to be prime.

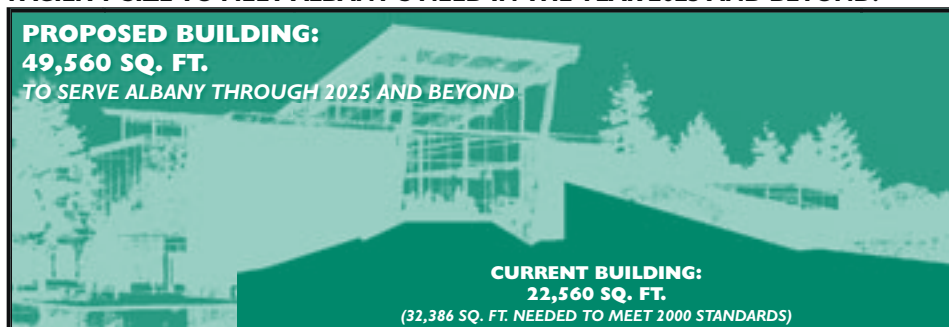


A bigger and better library would continue to meet Albany's needs by providing an additional 27,000 square feet, projected to be enough space to carry the Library through the year 2025 and beyond. The study recommended a children's program area four times larger than today; quiet space for reading and study; a larger community meeting room; four conference or tutoring rooms; a small technology center; more staff work area; an enlarged and updated collection of books and other materials; and more parking.

Construction costs for the expanded library are estimated at about \$11.7 million. A larger building could require a few more employees, may allow the Library to be open on Sundays, and would allow continuing additions to the collections. The estimated increase in annual operating costs of \$350,000 will accomplish all three.

In May 2003, the City Council asked City staff to prepare a ballot measure to submit to voters for bonds and an operating levy for the expanded library. Those measures are expected to be on the November 2004 General Election ballot.

FACILITY SIZE TO MEET ALBANY'S NEED IN THE YEAR 2025 AND BEYOND:



City of Albany Directory

- Mayor:**
 Chuck McLaran 928-3114
- Ward I Councilors:**
 Dick Olsen 926-7348
 Doug Killin 926-6829
- Ward II Councilors:**
 Sharon Konopa 928-3067
 Ralph Reid, Jr. 928-7382
- Ward III Councilors:**
 Bessie Johnson 791-2494
 Leonard Smith 791-9540
- City Manager:**
 Steve Bryant 917-7505

City Hall Phone Numbers

- General Information 917-7500
 Ambulance Billing 917-7710
 Building Inspection 917-7553
 City Council Message 917-7503
 City Manager 917-7501
 Downtown Carnegie Library 917-7585
 Engineering 917-7676
 Finance Office 917-7520
 Fire Department 917-7700
 Human Resources 917-7501
 Main Library 917-7580
 Mayor's Message 917-7502
 Municipal Court 917-7740
 Parks & Recreation 917-7777
 Planning and Zoning 917-7550
 Police Department 917-7680
 Public Information Office 917-7507
 Senior Citizens Center 917-7760
 Transit 917-7667
 Water and Sewer Billing 917-7547
 Water/Sewer/Streets 917-7600

Emergencies
 (Fire, Police, Ambulance)
Dial 911

City Bridges Info

City Bridges is published by an editorial team from the City of Albany. Questions and input about this newsletter should be directed to the City Manager's Office, 333 Broadalbin SW, P.O. Box 490, Albany, OR 97321-0144.

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City Outgrows Police Station



The Albany Police station at 1117 Jackson Street SE was built in 1988 and was expected to be adequate to house the Police Department for 20 years. Within five years, however, the interior of the building was remodeled to create more usable work space.

The Police Department has grown since 1988, and the interior has been remodeled several more times to make the most of available space. Critical storage and meeting and training space has been replaced by office space. Employees are sharing lockers since the building does not have the room to provide one for each person. The parking area is limited and cannot be expanded.

Two years ago, the City Council authorized a study of the Police Department's needs in a building over the next 20 years. Berry Architects of Eugene, specialists in



police facilities planning, considered projected population growth, crime rates and patterns, required staffing based on activity levels and prevailing standards, common space standards for police facilities, special requirements for property and evidence storage, parking, and technology.

The architects concluded that the present site is too small to accommodate the Police Department's future needs. Berry recommended planning a facility to meet needs now through 2022 and provided information needed to appropriately plan for it.

The public safety serial levy that Albany voters approved in November 2002 allows the Police Department to hire nine additional staff to respond to growing service requirements, adding to the crowded conditions. A modular building was added to the south side of the current site this fall to temporarily provide more space until the Council establishes capital improvement priorities and a time line for construction.



The following information provides detail on the current site and facility, space needs for 2002 based on the Berry study, Berry's projection of space needed for 2022, population trends, and staffing. Projected cost figures are based on 2003 and do not include site purchase.

Current Facility

- Age: 15 years; construction completed in 1988 at a cost of \$1.05 million
 Building Size: Approximately 10,300 square feet
 Site Size: Approximately 74,000 square feet (1.6 acres)
 Modular Building: 1,176 square feet (development also adds nine parking spaces)

2002 Space Needs

- Building Size: 33,369 square feet
 Site Size: 146,962 square feet (3.37 acres)
 Projected Cost: \$5.7 million (convert existing building) to \$7.1 million (new construction)

Projected Space Needs for 2022

- Building Size: 39,096 square feet
 Site Size: 189,203 square feet (4.34 acres)
 Projected Cost: \$6.7 million (convert existing building) to \$8.4 million (new construction)

Population Projections

- Albany population at end of 2002: 42,280
 Growth since 1992: Average two percent per year
 Projected 2022 population: 62,827 (two percent average increase per year)

Staffing

The following figures show the average number of law enforcement employees per 1,000 population in the U.S., the western states region, the state of Oregon, and the city of Albany. The figures also show the average number of sworn police officers per 1,000 population.

	Average number of law enforcement employees	Average number of sworn police officers
National	3.5	2.3
Western States Region	2.4	1.7
Oregon	2.2	1.6
Albany (Based on a population of 42,280)		
Pre-levy	1.8	1.3
Post-levy	2.0	1.4

Study results on staffing

- 2002 total employees 77.25 (with levy = 86.25)
 2002 total employees needed 93 (ratio = 2.2)
 2022 total employees needed 142 (ratio = 2.3)
 2002 sworn police officers 55 (with levy = 59)
 2002 sworn police officers needed 64 (ratio = 1.5)
 2022 sworn police officers needed 101 (ratio = 1.6)
 (Projections are designed to reach Oregon average employee ratios.)



333 Broadalbin SW, Albany, OR 97321
 www.ci.albany.or.us

Downtown Fire Station Needs Upgrade

Albany's fire stations are located throughout the community in order to provide the quickest response to all areas served by the Albany Fire Department and to meet requirements set by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO). The ISO ratings directly affect your homeowner's and other fire insurance rates.

Albany's four fire stations are located in South Albany (Station 12) at 34th Avenue and Lyon Street; East Albany (Station 13) on Three Lakes Road, south of Spicer Drive; North Albany (Station 14) at Gibson Hill Road and Grandview Drive; and downtown (Station 11) at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Lyon Street.

Station 11, built in 1950 of poured-in-place concrete, is the oldest, largest, and considered to be Albany's main fire station. It has two stories and a partial basement totalling 14,800 square feet. The station is critical for emergency service coverage in the Central Albany area, although relocating it further south would improve response times. It houses up to six emergency services personnel 24 hours a day; six Fire Interns 12 hours a



erator in the basement. Major electrical problems were revealed when inspecting the building for a planned upgrade of the emergency generator, with estimates for repairs starting at \$200,000.

Those estimates prompted questions about the wisdom of investing that much money in an emergency facility that is more than 50 years old and represents a number of obstacles — seismic instability, inadequate public access, inadequate storage for emergency equipment, and an infrastructure that doesn't meet current demands.

This fall, the City contracted with Degenkolb Structural Engineering of Portland to conduct seismic evaluations of Station 11 and Station 12, which was built in 1973, to determine what is needed to keep these stations standing through an earthquake when emergency services are needed most.

Preliminary indications by Degenkolb are that earthquake design forces have

increased approximately three times since the original construction of these stations. Based on deficiencies identified to this point and the changes expected in earthquake forces, these essential buildings would not meet the immediate occupancy or life safety performance objectives required.

Degenkolb has said that Station 11 will likely require extensive structural rehabilitation and Station 12 may require significant structural rehabilitation to meet the immediate occupancy or life safety performance objectives required for essential services structures.



day; and five Fire & Life Safety Division staff Monday through Friday, 10 hours a day. It is also used to store reserve emergency vehicles, emergency equipment, and daily medical supplies for the ambulance service.

At more than 50 years old, the future of Station 11 is uncertain. It is very likely that it would collapse in the event of a major earthquake, and it still relies on the original gasoline emergency gen-

Renovation or Replacement of Existing Park Facilities

The Albany Parks and Recreation Master Plan, revised and adopted in 2000, outlines new parks and facilities that should be established over the next 20 years to sustain the levels of service Albany residents currently enjoy. These planned additions to the parks system will be paid for over time through a combination of system development charges, grants, private contributions, and public resources. The projects called for in the plan will be accomplished as resources permit.

Beyond the need for improvements to keep pace with growth, the existing parks system needs ongoing care. Many facilities have far exceeded a reasonable life expectancy and will soon need to be replaced or removed, in order to avoid cost-prohibitive maintenance and public safety concerns. Several playgrounds, ball field lighting systems, irrigation systems, picnic shelters, and other basic park elements are more than 30 years old and no longer provide an acceptable level of service to our citizens. In addition, park roads and parking lots have either deteriorated over time or were never constructed to the same standards the City would require of others.

Albany Parks & Recreation staff has compiled a replacement list to reflect the growing need to renovate or replace worn-out or unsafe facilities. The total costs to address the complete list exceed \$2.5 million. If left unaddressed, this list will simply grow, resulting in a further decline in the quality of park services we have come to appreciate.

In addition to the work required on existing facilities, the Parks & Recreation Department has identified improvements or additions to existing parks that are needed to address currently underserved neighborhoods. This basic needs list includes park acquisition and basic park elements (parking, lighting, playgrounds, picnic facilities) for which funds are not currently available. The estimated costs from this list total more than \$1.7 million.

Neither the replacement list nor the basic needs list include items related to Albany's future growth but deal solely with the needs in the existing parks system. In addition to these improvements, the City Council is discussing various strategies to fund the continued operation of the Albany Community Pool.

These needs cannot be adequately addressed with current resources. The City must face the choice between removing or closing certain facilities or finding new funding to restore them to serviceable condition. The City Council is exploring the possibility of presenting a park improvements levy to the voters to address the replacement list.

Which project is most important to you?

I recommend: _____

I would like a personal response to my comments. (If you want a personal response, please provide your name and your mailing address, telephone number, or E-mail address below.)

Return to: City Bridges Editorial Team, City of Albany, P.O. Box 490, Albany, OR 97321.

Flooding and Storm Runoff

With the return of winter, we in Oregon often experience flooding. It may be as little as a pond that forms in a low spot in the road or a massive flood such as the one we remember from 1996.

For those who have flooding on their property every winter, the problem is very real. But even those who live on higher ground have a duty to deal with storm runoff. The pond that forms on lower-elevation property is partially the result of storm runoff from higher land. Dealing effectively with rainwater runoff is everyone's responsibility.

Flooding is a natural event that performs a useful service to land in a floodplain. Flooding along a river can deposit rich soil that creates fertile farm ground and helps replenish underground aquifers. For cities

built along a river, however, flooding can be devastating.

Storm runoff in Albany generally travels through storm sewer pipes or drainage ditches to local streams, eventually emptying into the Willamette River. When especially long or intense storms cause the Willamette to rise, water from the river may back up into our streams, making it harder to drain the water away from town.

Flooding affects everyone — by creating traffic problems, health concerns, or property damage. Unfortunately, the City of Albany has limited resources to deal with stormwater. No money in the City budget is dedicated to the stormwater system.

City crews from street maintenance and wastewater collection must maintain the culvert and storm drain systems in addition to their regularly assigned duties.

Because of this lack of dedicated money and manpower, stormwater pipes and ditches get minimum maintenance during the dry season. The result is a stormwater system that often does not respond adequately when heavy winter storms hit. When localized flooding occurs, City crews must deal with that crisis, taking time and resources away from streets and wastewater collections.

Runoff from urban areas is receiving increased attention by federal agencies,



including the Environmental Protection Agency and those responsible for protecting endangered fish. Cities across the country are required to treat stormwater runoff before it reaches streams, and it is likely that Albany will be required to develop a more stringent stormwater management plan within the foreseeable future. The threat of increased regulation encourages us to put together a stormwater plan so that we can deal with new laws when they are applied.

City officials are weighing options to generate dedicated stormwater funds to help address water quality in stormwater runoff and to help alleviate winter flooding. At the recent Town Hall meeting, 69 percent of those who participated agreed with the concept of a stormwater utility for Albany.

How much funding a stormwater program would require, and how to obtain that money fairly are questions Albany must answer. The City does not have any funding methodology for stormwater, but



it is possible to reap big rewards from a small investment. Municipalities across Oregon, such as Corvallis, Eugene, Salem, Canby, and many others, charge their residents a fee for stormwater services. A fee of \$5 per household per month, for example, along with an appropriate charge for businesses, could generate over \$700,000 each year. That \$5 investment would pay for an update to the City's 1988 Stormwater Management Plan, help cut back on local flooding, provide money for maintenance of storm sewers and ditches, and help improve the water quality of local streams.

How to Avoid Flood Hazards

The 1996 floods were the highest in recent memory, but this area has seen far worse. Without flood control dams, the 1964 flood would have been the highest on record. Many of us were not here to learn the lessons from that flood. However, if you are in the floodplain, the odds are that some day your property will be damaged. If you don't live in a floodplain, knowing what to do and not do in a flood can be lifesaving.

The Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) Homeowner's Guide to Retrofitting: Six Ways to Protect Your House from Flooding is on FEMA's website at http://www.fema.gov/mit/tsd/dl_rfit.htm.

City flood services: Flood maps and flood protection references are available at the Albany Public Library. You can also visit the Community Development Department on the second floor of City Hall. They can help you estimate the flood hazard in your area, find ways to reduce or prevent flood damage to your property, or select a contractor to repair flood damage. These services are free.

Property protection: Do not dump or throw anything in the ditches, creeks, or drains. Dumping is a violation of the Albany Municipal Code. Even grass

clippings and branches can accumulate and plug channels. If you see dumping of debris in ditches, creeks, or drains, contact the Public Works Department at 917-7676.

Always check with the Building Division before you build on, alter, regrade, or place fill on your property. A permit may be needed to ensure that projects do not cause problems on other properties. If you see construction work without a building permit posted, contact the Building Division at 917-7553.

You can protect a building from flood damage by regrading the lot or building an earthen berm to keep water away, but this is only effective if flooding is not too deep. Where floodwaters would be deeper, you can raise a house above flood levels for less than \$10,000 if you do some of the work.

Flood insurance: If you don't have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Homeowner's insurance does not cover flood damage and disaster relief funds cover only a small portion. You can purchase a separate flood insurance policy because Albany is a member of the National Flood Insurance Program. Those premiums are discounted because Albany is a partner in the Community Rating System. At last count, less than half of all

homes in the floodplain were covered by flood insurance.

FEMA has the latest information at <http://www.fema.gov/nfip/cost1.htm> and at <http://www.fema.gov/nfip/fiprobyr.htm>. FEMA's answers to questions about the National Flood Insurance Program are at <http://www.fema.gov/nfip/qanda.htm>.

Flood safety:

- Do not walk through flowing water. Drowning is the No. 1 cause of flood deaths. Currents can be deceptive; six inches of water can knock you off your feet.
- Do not drive through a flooded area. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Again, currents can be deceptive.
- Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. The No. 2 flood killer after drowning is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water.
- Listen for flood warnings. Stay tuned to local radio stations for weather news and flood forecasts. For flooding along the Willamette River, you will receive evacuation information in advance.
- If you know your home will be flooded, you should turn off the gas and electricity and move valuable contents upstairs or place them as high off the floor as possible.

