Ashland Downtown Plan – Process Update

Due to the large turnout and diverse interests of community members at the downtown visioning meetings earlier this year, the City of Ashland is modifying the downtown plan process to better meet the needs and desires of the community.

The City is preparing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a team to assist in the development of the Downtown Plan. The goal is to form a team that will be multi-disciplinary, with expertise in design, downtown economies, pedestrian issues, transportation, arts and culture, etc.

(See Ashland Downtown Plan – Process Update, Page 2)

Economic Sustainability Committee

The Economic Sustainability Committee (ESC) is comprised of representatives of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce, the Ashland business community, Southern Oregon Economic Development Inc., the Mayor and a city councilor and city staff.

The mission of the ESC is to enhance the quality of life in the City of Ashland by coordinating and supporting City and Chamber economic development initiatives, which will diversify the economy, increase the average wage and preserve the natural environment. The ESC works to attract and retain quality jobs; solicit new business compatible with the assets and values of Ashland; promote Ashland’s business image; assist in the expansion of existing companies; and enhance Ashland’s overall quality of life.

The Economic Sustainability Committee works to define and implement programs to promote business retention and expansion in (See Economic Sustainability Committee, Page 2)

A Wildlife Watchers Landscape

Wildlife biologist and author Russell Link will be coming to Ashland to kick off North Mountain Park’s 2nd Annual Garden Tour, Saturday, June 25, with a special presentation. This is a unique opportunity to hear this Seattle-based author share his knowledge of landscaping and wildlife. Link is the author of two popular books: Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest and Living with Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest.

This FREE presentation will be held on Thursday, June 23 at 7 p.m. at the Ashland Community Center, 59 Winburn Way.

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Ashland Downtown Plan – Process Update

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It is expected that a Downtown Plan consultant team will be chosen by the end of August, with work on the Plan continuing in September, 2005. The contract for the consultant would be approved by the City Council. One of the consultant team’s first priorities will be to work with the City Council and Staff on outlining a specific work program for the Downtown Plan.

All comments and efforts from the first two public meetings will be carried forward and incorporated in the work of the team and City staff.

In the intervening months before re-starting the Downtown Plan process, the staff will be gathering information from the various boards and commissions of the City. The Council and Planning Commission are also providing valuable guidance regarding the elements of the plan, and the structure of the public involvement strategy and role of a committee to assist in the preparation of the plan.

If you wish to make comments regarding any facet of the Downtown Plan, please feel free to send an email to: downtown@ashland.or.us. Or, call the Planning Department at 488-5305.

Economic Sustainability Committee

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the City and works in partnership with the City of Ashland through the inclusion of members on the committee.

The committee met over a series of many months to create a mission statement and to define the goals and objectives to achieve the mission and identified the key values, assets, strengths and weaknesses that they would focus on to develop future projects.

The goals of the ESC are:

- To define the values and assets of Ashland for the purpose of economic sustainability.
- To learn from the City how to be a conduit for success in the community development process with businesses looking to expand or relocate.
- To learn from community partners of existing locations, properties, conditions, availability and other factors required in assisting decision makers.
- To build, maintain and make available a database of businesses.

How Fast is Ashland Growing?

Growth in Ashland has been expressed as one of the biggest challenges facing the community. The population in 2000 was 19,522 and as of July of 2004 it was 20,590 — a 4.76% increase or 980 more people in five years. The City’s Comprehensive Plan projects that an average of 87 single-family homes and 71 apartment units will be constructed each year. These figures serve as benchmarks for planning purposes. The following chart gives a picture of growth in Ashland between 2000 - 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>19,610</td>
<td>19,770</td>
<td>20,130</td>
<td>20,430</td>
<td>20,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-family permits</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family permits</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16 (52 units)</td>
<td>23 (34 units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Permits/Valuation*</td>
<td>14/$3,504,820</td>
<td>25/$13,938,481</td>
<td>61/$12,773,057</td>
<td>154/$35,817,729</td>
<td>36/$7,871,530</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on cost per construction foot. Commercial permits include those issued for new construction as well as improvements to existing properties.
companies, properties, owners, developers, and architects.
❑ To establish a process that will facilitate successful community development processes in the City of Ashland through education, notification and support.
❑ To expand the network of community member volunteers that can serve as volunteers for the Rapid Response Team.

When businesses who are interested in possibly locating in Ashland or who currently exist in Ashland but wish to expand their business contact the Chamber of Commerce seeking information, a group of volunteers known as a Rapid Response Team is pulled together to meet with those business.

The following is a list of community values and assets identified by the Economic Sustainability Committee as focal points in business development:

**Community Values**
- living wage jobs
- family-friendly
- environmentally friendly
- cultural diversity
- non-pollutant
- quality education from cradle to grave
- clean industry
- low traffic generating
- community-minded
- local employers
- sustainable businesses

**Community Assets**
- opportunities for community involvement
- AFN
- Interstate 5 location
- railroad access
- regional airport
- local airport
- Southern Oregon University
- Ashland Community Hospital
- air quality
- Ski Ashland
- educated-stable-qualified workforce
- strong public school system
- great weather
- world-class amenities
- artistic excellence
- safe community
- recreational opportunities
- small town
- defined downtown core
- parks-trails-open spaces
- strong tourism
- numerous community organizations
- diverse faiths
- museums
- exceptional Oregon Shakespeare Festival
- active retired population
- creative environment for innovation.

The ESC committee then defined the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities to guide the direction of any future efforts.

**Community Strengths**
- desirability of living & working in Ashland
- the draw for home-based businesses
- the growing strength of health care

**Community Weaknesses**
- the perception in Southern Oregon that Ashland has a negative attitude towards business. By

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Economic Sustainability Committee

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growth and economic development of any kind
❑ profitable housing market that competes with the development market for business
❑ high development fees
❑ high costs of rents
❑ utilities
❑ the number of families living in Ashland are declining
❑ areas for growth are not serviced yet
❑ out-of-state owners of property
❑ the cost of SDC's
❑ water availability and costs
❑ retail perceived as being for visitors not locals

Community Opportunities
❑ the future potential development of the old Croman Lumber site
❑ the railroad property
❑ airport property
❑ mixed use development
❑ the willingness of the City to work with the Chamber in helping businesses succeed.

After reviewing the goals, objectives, assets, values, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, the ESC committee began implementing an expansion of some internal programs and the development of new projects.

After research, review and consultation with others who have conducted similar programs, the ESC committee decided to conduct an extensive Business Expansion and Retention Visitation (BR&E) program for the City of Ashland. A model, which was originally researched and developed through the University of Minnesota, is being adapted for Ashland.

The goals of the Business Expansion and Retention Program are a healthy economy and a strong business climate. The program promotes job retention and growth by helping communities identify the concerns and barriers to survival and growth facing local businesses. For more information call Sandra Slattery, executive director Ashland Chamber of Commerce, at 482-3486.

News Notes

2nd Annual “Naturescaping” Garden Tour
Don’t miss this wonderful benefit event for the North Mountain Park Nature Center! Learn how to create wildlife-friendly habitat in your own back yard! Tour six fabulous gardens on Saturday, June 25, between 9 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. in the Ashland and Talent areas. Garden docents and light refreshments will be available at each garden. Tickets cost $10 for the tour and will go on sale on June 6 at the Nature Center, the Northwest Nature Shop in Ashland, Wild Birds Unlimited in Medford, and the Downtowne Coffee House in Talent. A location map for each garden will be included on your ticket for the event. Volunteers are needed as garden docents and greeters. Please call the Nature Center at 488-6606 for more information.

City Calendar

June 2 Charter Review Committee 7:00 p.m.
June 7 Airport Commission 9:30 a.m.
June 7 City Council 7:00 p.m.
June 8 Forest Lands Commission 4:30 p.m.
June 8 Historic Commission 7:00 p.m.
June 9 Tree Commission 7:00 p.m.
June 9 Charter Review Committee 7:00 p.m.
June 14 Planning Commission 7:00 p.m.
June 16 Bike & Ped Commission 5:15 p.m.
June 16 Charter Review Committee 7:00 p.m.
June 17 Public Arts Commission 8:15 a.m.
June 21 City Council 7:00 p.m.
June 22 Housing Commission 4:00 p.m.
June 22 Conservation Commission 7:00 p.m.
June 23 Traffic Safety Commission 7:00 p.m.
June 27 Parks & Recreation Commission 7:00 p.m.
July 6 Town Hall (RVT - Channel 9) 6:00 p.m.
July 6 Historic Commission 7:00 p.m.
July 7 Tree Commission 7:00 p.m.
July 12 Planning Commission 7:00 p.m.

◆ Many of the above meetings are cablecast live on channel 9 and replayed on channel 30.◆ Meetings are held at Council Chambers, 1175 East Main or at 51 Winburn Way.◆ For information about all City meetings please call City Administration at 488-6602.◆ Back issues of the City Source are posted under “Documents” on the City’s Website, www.ashland.or.us.◆ TTY 1-800-735-2900