



City Administrator's Report

Adam Hanks, Interim City Administrator

AUGUST 18

The City Administrator's Report showcases current events facing the City externally and internally since the last Council meeting, while highlighting City accomplishments.

COUNCIL TESTIMONY

Tonight we will start using Zoom Webinar, which allows members of the public to view the meeting through Zoom. This also allows for the public to participate at a meeting as will be done during the Public Hearing tonight.

Since this technology has now been implemented, Council can decide if they would like to open up oral testimony for all items, keep the written testimony for all items except for Public Hearings, or take a hybrid approach. The hybrid approach would allow the public to still submit comments in writing to public-testimony@ashland.or.us by the deadline, but would also allow for those who submit written testimony a chance for them to present it orally at the Council meeting.

I would like to get your thoughts on this subject and direction to staff on how to proceed for the next Study Session and Business Meeting.

CITY AND REGIONAL UTILITY ASSISTANCE

The **Ashland Low Income Energy Assistance Program (ALIEAP)**, which assists low income residents with their electric bills during the cold winter months will be available starting October 1 through Utility Billing. Eligible Ashland residents include those whose income is at or below 65 percent of Oregon's median income. These levels are based on household income and household size. Qualified recipients will receive a credit on their electric utility charges. Credits of up to 50 percent will be given to seniors and disabled persons for up to six months and credits of 50 percent to other qualified residents for up to three months. The maximum allowed credit is \$300 for either group.

There is also additional regional funding to help with utility payments. ACCESS has funding available to cover rental and utility payments for those affected by COVID-19 and who are at or below 80 percent of the area median income.

For ACCESS rental assistance, visit accesshelps.org/rentalassistance or call (541) 414-0308. For ACCESS energy assistance, visit accesshelps.org/energy-assistance or call (541) 779-9020.

United Way was awarded funding from Jackson County to provide payments for rent, utilities, and other qualifying expenses to residents and small businesses in Jackson County. Individuals and families can receive up to \$1,500 and small businesses can receive up to \$3,000 in assistance paid directly to landlords and utilities. For more information and the applications, go to www.unitedwayofjacksoncounty.org/covid-19-fund/.

Both assistance options are only available until the funds are expended.

The City has established an **Account Payment Deferral Program** that allows for utility accounts with delinquent amounts to have those charges deferred based on either a six-month or twelve-month repayment plan option. Features of the deferment plans include:

- The negotiated portion of the deferred amount will be due and payable by the normal utility bill due date each month along with the current month's charges.
- To continue the deferment program for the full length of the six- or twelve-month period, customers must pay the deferred amount each month or risk being removed from the program.
- Any account older than three months that has a deposit on file can choose to apply that deposit directly towards the utility account balance.

Those in need can apply at ashland.or.us/deferralapp.

With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing, many residents are having difficulty paying their basic monthly utility services. The City of Ashland's **Round Up program** allows Ashland utility customers to voluntarily round up their utility bills to the nearest dollar. This is a voluntary program which residents can opt-in for.

Regular donations to assist with those who need help with their utility bills are also accepted through Utility Billing.



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EVACUATION STUDY

Stakeholders met with KLD Engineering on July 20. KLD completed an on-site road survey of Ashland and the surrounding area. This included looking at access impaired neighborhoods and development of evacuation zones. At this time the City is divided into 10 evacuations zones. The demographic survey (those things not contained in U.S. Census Bureau data) has been finalized and will be going out to the community this week. Staff continues to provide KLD with other data as needed.

The study will allow us to calculate evacuation times for either the entire city or evacuation zones within the city, given such variables as time of day, day of week, which season we are in, current weather conditions, etc. A timeline is provided below, however we expect to finish sooner.

Description	Completion Date
Road Survey	7/19/2020
Kick-off Meeting	7/20/2020
Review Existing Plans	7/20/2020
Finalize Study Area	7/30/2020
Create Link-Node Analysis Network	8/8/2020
Identify Regions and Scenarios	8/15/2020
Demographic Survey	8/20/2020
Data Gathering	9/10/2020
Access Impaired Neighborhoods	10/3/2020
Deliver Project Assumptions Memo	10/3/2020
Progress Meeting	10/14/2020
Compute ETE	10/21/2020
Impacts on ETE	11/6/2020
Technical Report - Draft	11/27/2020
Final Meeting	12/16/2020
Final Technical Report and Project Completion	12/30/2020

AIR PURIFIERS DISTRIBUTED TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Our Fire Department ordered 500 air purifiers to distribute free of charge to households with vulnerable populations.

Partners within the community helped distribute the application to those listed as potentially benefitting from an air purifier. Those partners included Ashland Senior Center, Ashland School District, Ashland At Home, Asante, The Food Bank, YMCA Maslow Project, OHRA, Several Preschools,

Rebuilding Together Rogue Valley, and SOU Student and Family Housing.

Applications were accepted from June 29 to July 17 and 722 applicants were received. Of the 722, 634 applicants qualified and then ranked to determine their need. Noteworthy statistics include 47% of applicants who qualified had at least one child in the household and 43% of applicants had at least one person older than 65. Both of these populations were the target of the outreach and the program.

The Fire Department had three distribution days on July 23, July 28, and August 8 where the 500 selected were notified via email when and where they could pick up their air purifier. The distribution was designed with COVID-19 protocols in mind. Residents were told to stay in their car while gloved and masked volunteers loaded the purifiers into their vehicles. Some purifiers were also delivered to residents who did not have access to a vehicle to pick up the purifier. The program was a great success with many thanks to our Fire Department and Smokewise Division as well as the community partners who helped spread the word and those involved in Smokewise Ashland.

LOOKING AHEAD

This is a draft of the next Council meetings agenda and is subject to change.

August 31 Study Session

- Strategic Planning Process

September 1 Business Meeting

- Annual Presentation by the Climate Policy Commission
- Proclamation for Home Inventory Week -
- Appointment of SDC Committee members for the Storm Drain Master Plan
- National League of Cities Service Line Warranty Program-Marketing Agreement for Water and Wastewater Service Lines
- Resolution 2020-15 Social Equity and Racial Justice Council Discussion and Action Identification
- Adoption of the Airport Master Plan
- Contract Approval IBEW Clerical/Technical
- Contract Approval IBEW Electrical

For the full look ahead and more details on the above items, go to ashland.or.us/lookahead.