

Corvallis Community Development Department



ANNUAL REPORT FY 2010-2011

Greetings,

We are pleased to provide this report about the activities of the Corvallis Community Development Department during the fiscal year 2010-11. As you read on, you will find information about the variety of accomplishments and ongoing work of Community Development staff in the areas of community planning, construction permitting and inspection, code compliance, and affordable housing programs. Much of this work is done with the support of other City departments, local agencies and citizen volunteers. We thank you for your interest, guidance and assistance.

I would like to highlight several examples that illustrate our role and commitment to providing quality services to our community:

Enhanced Customer Service: Recent customer survey results have been positive. Nonetheless, we are using valuable feedback from our customers to continue to improve our services. An exciting effort currently underway is the Service Enhancement Package. Supported by stakeholders, this initiative is making major upgrades to the plan review and inspections services offered by the Development Services Division.

Increased Efficiency and Effectiveness: In the past year, the Planning Division far exceeded performance measure targets related to processing timelines for land use applications. In addition, amendments to the Land Development Code related to historic resource application review were put in place. These changes will result in a more streamlined review process for many historic projects.

Community Partnerships: Over the past year, the Housing Division has worked with more than twenty agencies in the delivery of housing and human service programs that serve the needs of low income and special needs community members. Many of these relationships have involved funding assistance from the City, but in addition, the spirit of multi-entity collaboration has been evident in our work with local partner agencies.

Like other agencies, budget pressures are impacting our programs. However, the Community Development Department is committed to providing exemplary service and achieving our mission of advancing the vision of the Corvallis community.

Thank you for taking time to read this report. If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to call me at (541) 766-6981 or e-mail ken.gibb@ci.corvallis.or.us

Sincerely,

Ken Gibb
Community Development Director

High Marks

Every 5 years Development Services is audited by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) through a program called Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS®). ISO's BCEGS® program assesses the building safety codes in effect and how the community enforces them through inspections, plan review and overall administration of the codes.

ISO assigns each municipality a Building Code Effectiveness Classification from 1 (exemplary commitment to building-code enforcement) to 10, for both commercial and residential construction. Each score is effective for 5 years until the next audit.

In its 2010 audit Corvallis scored a 2 in both Commercial and Residential categories. This high mark places Corvallis in the top 2% nationally out of 8,394 rated jurisdictions for residential and 9,454 for commercial.

Effective building code enforcement leads to safer buildings, less damage from catastrophes, and lower insured losses, benefitting both insurers and policy holders.

Service Enhancement Package

Development Services received approval from City Council in December 2010 to implement a 3-year service enhancement package. Prior to Council consideration the package received widespread support from both community and stakeholder groups.

The goal of the enhancement package is to make the development and permitting process quicker and more predictable while maintaining the highest level of code compliance.

*John Corliss and Spencer Patton
Photographer: Dan Carlson*

Features of the 3-year Service Enhancement Package include:

- **Project Manager** – A position to help shepherd projects and proactively navigate the process.
- **ePlans** – Deploy electronic plan review software.
- **Project Coordinators** – Combine inspector and plans examiner disciplines into Project Coordinators. Coordinators will review, inspect, and approve projects from start to finish.
- **Over-the-Counter Plans** – Currently 30% of plans are reviewed and approved within 1-day of receipt. The goal is to improve to 60%.
- **New Homes** – Implement a scheduling system for 1-day plan reviews.

Visit www.CorvallisPermits.com for more information.



Message from the Director



Project of the Year— SAMARITAN VILLAGE RE-ROOF

Since 1965 Samaritan Village has provided 83 units of affordable and high quality apartments for older low, very low and extremely low income members of the community. Although the property is very well managed, some of its physical components have needed repair or replacement over the nearly 50 years of its existence. One ongoing challenge has been a series of short-lived fixes for the flat roofs that cover the property's nine buildings.

During FY 10-11, with \$100,000 in grant funding from the Housing Division's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, an innovative approach was used to address Samaritan Village's ongoing roofing issues. In a month-long project that began last September a thick, white vinyl membrane material was installed on each building's roof. Once laid, the membrane's seams and intersections were heat-sealed to prevent any chance of leakage and guarantee a long, trouble-free roof life. Because the membrane material is white, it's also reflective and will save on cooling costs throughout its life.

Describing Samaritan Village's roof situation, property manager Mark Kellenbeck says, "The replacement occurred just in time, as the roof tear-off revealed water leakage and damage far greater than expected. In short, the CDBG grant made possible a very much needed capital improvement years sooner than otherwise possible and without burdening residents with a significant rent increase."

Our thanks to Mark and his great on-site managers, Pat and June Curran, for their coordination during this project and for the consistently high quality work they do for the residents of Samaritan Village.



Before



After

Fair Housing Update

During March and April of this year the Fair Housing Council of Oregon (FHCO) conducted fair housing testing in Corvallis on the City's behalf. This testing was designed to help the Housing Division better understand discrimination in Corvallis, and in turn, to help us offer effective education programs to overcome that discrimination.

In our experience, the majority of Corvallis landlords understand and carry out their fair housing responsibilities very well. But there are exceptions, and certain types of discriminatory actions are more prevalent than others. The most frequent type of discrimination found in the FHCO's testing involved people with disabilities, and particularly people who have a need for a service animal. Many rental properties have a "no pets" policy, but some landlords don't know that such a policy cannot legally be extended to include service animals. Learning about that misunderstanding helped the City work with the FHCO to design and deliver a free, four-hour fair housing training event in June that was attended by 36 local landlords. Although the training touched on all aspects of fair housing, much attention was given to the laws that relate to service animals.

Look for additional City-sponsored fair housing training events in the near future. In the meantime, to learn more about the work of the Fair Housing Council of Oregon contact them at 503-223-8197 or visit their Web site at www.fhco.org.

Historic Preservation Program

Corvallis' Historic Preservation Program (HPP) is administered by the Planning Division. In addition to promoting historic preservation throughout the community, the HPP also reviews applications for additions, alterations, demolitions, and new construction for properties within Corvallis' three historic districts, or that are individually listed on the Local or National Register of Historic Places. All three of Corvallis' historic districts—Avery-Helm, College Hill West, and Oregon State University—are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The number of HPP applications received in FY 10-11 was 47, which was more than half of the 87 land use applications received by the Planning Division in that time period. In the prior fiscal year, 40 HPP applications were received (see the chart on the next page, "Number of Land Use Applications Received", for four-year trends in HPP and other permits).

In October 2010, the City Council adopted revisions to Land Development Code Chapter 2.9, which guides the City's HPP. These revisions streamline implementation of the HPP, among other goals. Staff and members of the Historic Resources Commission have already observed improvements to the historic preservation review process resulting from these code changes.

OSU Education Hall

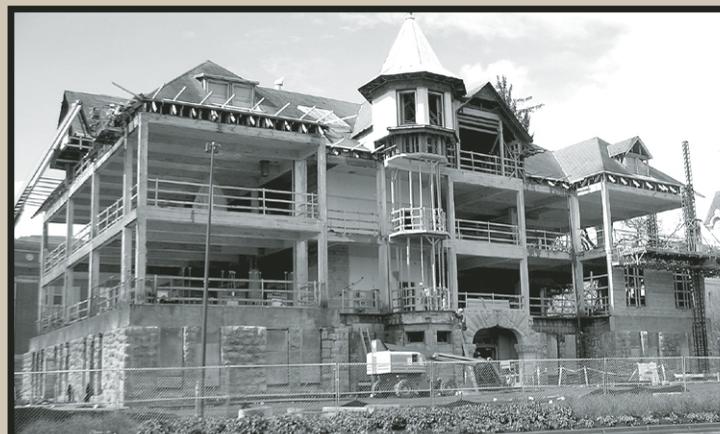
Community Partner Spotlight—Furniture Share

Each year in this space we write about one of our nonprofit partner agencies and the critical services they provide to the community. While each of our partners brings something valuable to Corvallis, this year's spotlight agency—Furniture Share—does it using a very unique approach.

Founded in 1998 and supported financially by the Housing Division's CDBG Human Services program since 2001, Furniture Share and its mission represent the essence of Corvallis: it's an agency that helps people with special needs, the homeless, and others with low incomes, and it's also an agency that cares about protecting the environment. Last year Furniture Share helped over 4,500 clients by providing them with used but still usable furniture and household items—nearly 260 tons of materials that likely would have ended up in the landfill if not for their efforts.

In light of the challenges many local families face today, it's not surprising that the number of people seeking Furniture Share's assistance continues to grow each year. According to Board President Kathleen Hutchinson, "During these tough economic times there has been a greater demand for our services than ever, and thanks to our donors, local business partners, and the City of Corvallis, we have been able to continue to fulfill our mission."

The City is thankful for yet another year of Furniture Share's service to the community. To learn more about this unique agency, call them at 541-754-9511 or visit their Web site at www.furnitureshare.org.



Current Planning Highlights

The Current Planning work group provides support to the City boards and commissions that review discretionary land use proposals, as well as reviewing and preparing staff-level decisions. The discretionary reviews range from Historic Preservation Permits to Conditional Development and Planned Development Permits. To complete these reviews, staff must coordinate with applicants, City departments, other public agencies, and the general public to arrive at recommendations to the appropriate boards or commissions. Recommendations are based on whether the applications adequately address review criteria that are intended to achieve the community's vision. Those recommendations are presented in written staff reports, and decisions on discretionary land use proposals are made by boards or commissions through a public hearing process.

On average 113 land use applications were received each year over the past four fiscal years. Over this time, the number of subdivision and planned development applications has generally declined, while the number of Historic Preservation Permits has increased. It is believed that the downturn in the economy and developers' caution are at least partly responsible for the decline in subdivision and planned development applications. Conversely, construction projects at Oregon State University (OSU), and the creation of the OSU Historic District in 2008, are at least partly responsible for the increase in historic preservation permits. Notable land use applications received within FY 10-11 include an annexation request for the 88-acre McFadden property (still in process), a historic preservation permit to reconstruct OSU's Education Hall, a historic preservation permit to build a Native American Cultural Center at OSU, and an application to construct a Surgery Center at the Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center.



Land Development Code Revisions

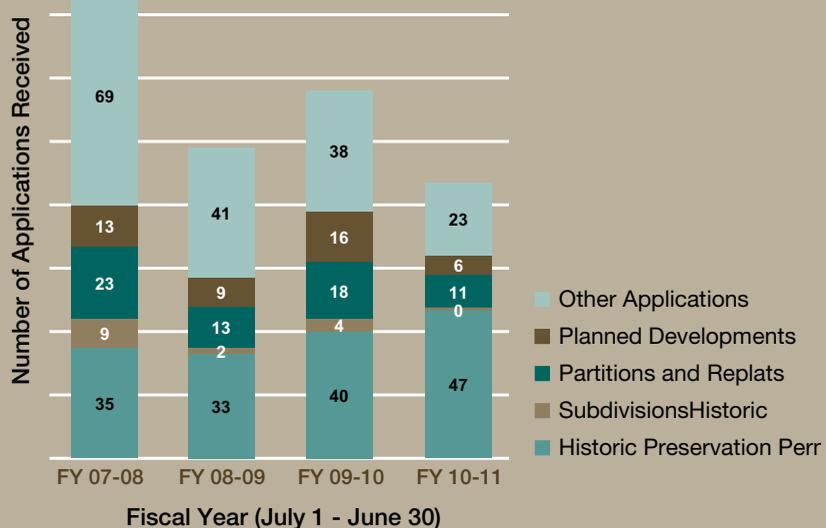
In FY 10-11 the Planning Division completed a number of needed amendments to the Land Development Code. Amendments to Chapter 2.9 were adopted (see article on page 2). This code amendment process began with two public workshops with the Historic Resources Commission in the summer of 2010, followed by Planning Commission review in September, and City Council adoption in October.

An amendment to the Land Development Code's definition of "Agricultural Sales" was adopted, which expanded allowed uses under this definition to include the limited sale of agricultural food products. The practical effect of this change was to expand potential locations for the sale of agricultural food products within the City.

Lastly, in April, 2011 the City Council adopted revised regulations for development in 100-Year Floodplain areas (these are areas in our community in which there is a 1% chance of flooding in any given year). The need for this change was prompted by revised 100-Year Floodplain maps that were developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). At the same time, FEMA required revisions to the City's floodplain regulations in order for City residents to continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. This program provides much lower flood insurance rates for affected citizens within participating communities. One of the new elements of the City's floodplain protection program is the requirement for a property owner to obtain a Floodplain Development Permit prior to beginning development in a 100-Year Floodplain area.

Notice of the proposed code amendments was mailed to 1,313 owners of potentially affected properties in Corvallis. A public open house attended by more than 50 citizens was held in January, 2011 to provide information about the revised FEMA maps and the proposed code revisions. The process went very smoothly due in large part to the proactive public outreach and extensive information available to help property owners evaluate impacts in relation to specific properties. Planning Commission and City Council hearings followed with final Council approval in April, 2011.

Number of Land Use Applications Received
(by Fiscal Year)



No Thumbs Smashed

Building Safety Inspectors spent the month of May promoting Building Safety Month. One of our favorite ways was hosting a free birdhouse building event for kids at the Corvallis Farmer's Market.

For the fourth year in a row, Building Safety Inspectors helped kids construct nearly 100 birdhouses. This year, we added squirrel feeders for fun and variety. Kids were given a hard hat, safety goggles, a hammer and a kit. Inspectors cautiously held the nails while kids feverishly pounded them in place. Thankfully, Corvallis kids are all good at hammering and there were no inspector injuries.

One parent laughed and remarked to an inspector, "Boy, you sure are brave and patient."

Community Development Administration Division

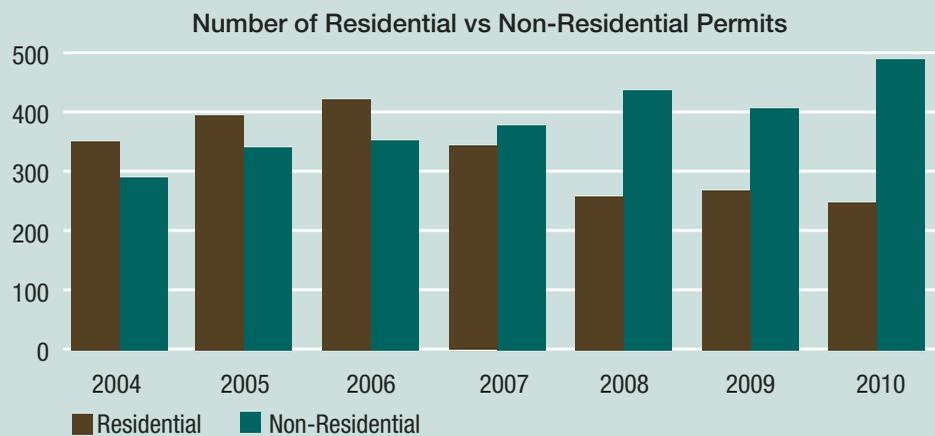
Social Services Allocations: Community Development staff manages a contract with United Way of Benton County to administer the allocation program for the City. In FY 10-11, the City distributed \$360,887 to 15 different agencies, 6.5% less than the projected amount due to budget cuts.

Economic Development Policy Update: Community Development staff worked with the Administrative Services Committee on major revisions to the City's Economic Development Policy. These revisions included an ordinance establishing the Economic Development Commission to advise the Council on all matters pertaining to Economic Development.

Economic Development Commission: The Economic Development Commission consists of nine volunteer members appointed by the Mayor. The Commission is developing an Economic Development Strategy which is expected to be presented to the City Council in late 2011.

Airport Industrial Park Master Plan: Community Development staff worked with the Public Works Department and a special committee to update the Airport Industrial Park (AIP) Master Plan. This is a 2009-10 City Council goal intended to enhance the AIP as a location for predominantly industrial development activities. A final product is expected by late 2011.

Downtown Commission: The Downtown Commission, in the past year, worked on developing a package of Land Development Code amendments that address downtown issues and opportunities. The Commission also reviewed a request to allow food carts in the downtown area on a year-round basis. After carefully considering the matter and conducting public outreach, the Commission recommended the City Council approve the request with conditions.



(Includes all remodels, additions and new structures)

Corvallis Planning-Related On-line Services

Community Development Department.....	www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd
Planning Division Home Page	www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/planning
Archived Documents.....	http://archive.ci.corvallis.or.us
Building Permit Info	www.corvallispermits.com
Comprehensive Plan	www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/compplan
Current Land Use Staff Reports	www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/staffreports
Historic Preservation Information	www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/historic
Interactive Maps & GIS	www.corvallismaps.com
Published Maps & Documents	www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/publications
Zoning—Land Development Code	www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cd/zoning

Community Development Boards & Commissions

Board of Appeals:

Hears appeals of decisions made by the Building Official on construction-related issues and on rental housing code issues.

Committee for Citizen Involvement:

Facilitates citizen involvement in all phases of land use planning.

Downtown Commission

Provides policy guidance and recommendations to the City Council in the following areas: Implementation of community plans for the downtown area; public infrastructure activities; redevelopment efforts; land use matters; and public parking policies and projects.

Economic Development Commission

Advises the City Council in all matters pertaining to Economic Development, ensuring that Economic Development is a civic priority.

Historic Resources Commission:

Conducts public hearings and takes action on Historic Preservation Permit applications; coordinates Historic Preservation outreach and education activities.

Housing and Community Development Commission:

Recommends policies on affordable housing and community revitalization.

Planning Commission:

Conducts public hearings and takes action on land development proposals, makes recommendations regarding the Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, and other land use plans.

Meeting dates, times and location are listed on the City's Web calendar at

<http://www.ci.corvallis.or.us/calendar>. To confirm any meeting, call the Community Development Department at 541-766-6981.

Administration

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Bob Loewen, *Housing Program Specialist*

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Kelly Potter, *Senior Planner*

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Jason Yaich, *Associate Planner*

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Development Services Manager

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Permit & Plan Review Services

www.corvallispermits.com

Mike Fegles, *Project Manager*

Phyllis Doolittle, *Administrative Specialist*

Tenille Holroyd, *Permit Coordinator*

Lora Sauermann, *Permit Technician II*

Bill Clemens, *Project Coordinator II*

Michael O'Connor, *Project Coordinator II*

Kevin Russell, *Land Use Supervisor*

Jared Voice, *Associate Planner*

Shannen Chapman, *Land Use Inspector*

Lisa Franklin, *Civil Engineer I*

Inspection Services

24-Hour Inspection Request Line:

541-766-6745

Greg Hall, *Specialty Inspection Supervisor*

John Cortliss, *Building Inspector II*

Norm Domagala, *Building Inspector II*

David Hensley, *Plumbing Inspector*

Frank DeWilde, *Electrical Inspector*

Chris Westfall, *Code Enforcement Supervisor*