

# Corvallis Community Development

DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT FY 2004-2005



The Community Development Department has four divisions: Administration, Housing, Planning and Development Services

## Message from the Director

We are pleased to report on the activities of the Corvallis Community Development Department during fiscal year 2004-05.

Here are some highlights:

Development activity continued to increase. Construction values of approved permits exceeded \$180 Million while the Development Services Division conducted nearly 20,000 building safety inspections.

In addition to processing 75 land use applications, the Planning Division led the effort to complete two major planning projects.

- The Oregon State Campus Master Plan update was completed and unanimously approved by the City Council. The Plan sets the stage for the long term development of the OSU campus.
- The Natural Features project, including Phase III of the Land Development Code Update was also recently completed and

approved by the City Council. The project which included more than 70 public meetings, resulted in a policy and code framework for balancing the protection of significant natural features with the community's development needs.

The various programs offered by the Housing Division assisted in meeting the housing needs of many community members. More than \$275,000 was provided directly to low income residents to purchase or repair homes. Other projects included financing to assist Samaritan Village, Corvallis Neighborhood Housing Services and the Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence in serving their clients.

Community Development also is responsible for programs that allocate funds to economic development organizations and social service agencies. The economic development program funds assisted in supporting 10 organizations, e.g., the Downtown Corvallis Association and daVinci Days. The social service program, which is administered by United Way, provided funds to 18 organizations delivering 31 programs to meet the social service needs of our community (such as senior meals and emergency housing).

The Community Development work program for the upcoming year remains busy and includes:

- A continued high level of development activity. Development Services will offer several service enhancements designed to provide excellent customer service to both small and large development projects.
- Continued work on partnership opportunities. The Housing Division is working with several community agencies on several projects, such as development of a transitional housing project for homeless families.
- Forward progress on several planning projects. This includes completion of a major overhaul of the historic preservation code provisions.

The Community Development Department remains committed to providing the best possible service in helping Corvallis citizens achieve community goals. We appreciate the continuing support of our many volunteers and community agency partners.

— Ken Gibb

## The Natural Features Project and the Land Development Code Update



The City recently completed Phase III of the Land Development Code Update Project (also known as the Natural Features Project). This project created new Development Code standards intended to balance the protection of significant natural features and the community's housing and economic development needs. The full project involved an inventory of natural features within the Corvallis Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), identification of which of these features were significant enough to be protected, and development of standards to accomplish this protection in a manner that still provided for the state-mandated 20-year land supply. The LDC Update Project also incorporates information from and implements elements of two other recently completed projects — the Stormwater Master Plan and the Salmon Response Plan, aimed at addressing the requirements related to listing of Willamette River Salmon under the Endangered Species Act. Using this information and an outreach effort that included more than 70 public meetings, the community revised the City's policies and implementing documents and related maps.

On December 13, 2004, the City Council approved the policies and documents associated with the Natural Features project. The new standards address protection of riparian

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Phase III

# Oregon State University Campus Master Plan Update



● ● ● Reser Stadium

The update to the Oregon State University Campus Master Plan (CMP) was processed during the 2004-2005 Fiscal Year. OSU had been operating under a master plan that had been in place since 1986, and most OSU projects required significant review by the Planning Commission for approval. The proposed plan was intended to more accurately reflect the planning and development needs of both the University and the City. As the CMP went through the Planning Commission and City Council public hearings, OSU was able to address traffic, parking, and compatibility issues associated with campus development in a manner that met these needs. This was the result of many public meetings and a number of compromises both before and during the review process. The success of this effort is apparent from the City Council's unanimous approval of the new Land Development Code standards. Major components of the plan include:

- ▶ Establishment of nine development sectors on campus;
- ▶ Maximum development allocations for each sector;
- ▶ Minimum open space allocations for each sector ranging from 20 percent to 79 percent;
- ▶ Establishment of a 50 percent open space requirement for the campus as a whole;
- ▶ Establishment of a parking improvement program tied to capacity and a Transportation Improvement Program tied to levels of development with funding mechanisms to address future construction needs;

- ▶ Establishment of buffering and building height standards designed to be compatible with adjacent neighborhoods;
- ▶ Establishment of the Neighborhood Parking and Traffic Task Force, composed of residents and business owners from adjacent neighborhoods and University and City staff, which is intended to address traffic and parking issues resulting from ongoing and proposed OSU development.

The standards for OSU development are contained in Land Development Code Chapter 3.36 - OSU (Oregon State University) District. For further information on the CMP, contact Senior Planner Fred Towne at 766-6908.

## Planning Division Highlights for FY 04-05

In FY 04-05, Planning Division staff received and processed applications involving approximately 75 land use actions, with many requiring a public hearing before the Planning Commission and some requiring a public hearing before the Land Development Hearings Board. Two Planning Commission decisions were appealed to the City Council. One City Council decision was appealed to the State Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) and LUBA heard the appeal and upheld the City Council's decision during the fiscal year.

**Some of the more significant land use projects approved or in process during the year included:**

- ▶ Completion of the Natural Features Project, which included Phase III of the Land Development Code Update
- ▶ Oregon State University Campus Master Plan Update and related revisions to the Land Development Code Standards
- ▶ Renaissance on the Riverfront
- ▶ Videx Manufacturing Building
- ▶ Kings-Walnut Professional Center (2 buildings)

- ▶ Meadowridge - Phase II
- ▶ Timberhill Meadows Apartments
- ▶ MRI and Chemotherapy Additions and Ambulatory Surgical Center at the Samaritan Hospital - Corvallis Clinic Regional Health Facility.

Although received during FY 03-04, two annexations were processed during FY 04-05 and received voter approval in November 2004. These were the Sparrow Hill and Witham Oaks Annexations. Two additional annexations (for possible placement on the November 2005 ballot) are in process — Boeder, and Kliever-Forest Park Annexations (as of the writing of this report). This year the division also facilitated the review of one health hazard annexation.

The Department is required by the State to process all land use applications within 120 days from the date that an application is deemed complete, including appeal processes. The Department met this standard for all applications during FY 04-05. The Department also achieved its goal of keeping its long range planning projects on schedule during FY 04-05.

## Natural Features Project and Land Development Code Update

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corridors and wetlands, significant vegetation (primarily associated with oaks, oak savannah, and upland prairie), and slopes. To accommodate the City's 20-year land use needs and minimize "takings" issues, provisions also were developed to allow at least the minimum level of development identified in the Comprehensive Plan in all cases.

These provisions were submitted to the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) for its consideration and approval. Final implementation is dependent upon such approval, which may take several months. The City's Land Development Code provisions apply only within the city limits. For further information, contact Associate Planner Kathy Gager or Senior Planner Fred Towne at 766-6908.

## Historic Preservation

### Yearly Activities and Upcoming Program Changes

Corvallis has a well-established historic preservation program. Properties within the community may be designated as "historic" either on an individual basis and/or as part of one of the City's two National Register Historic Districts. Certain proposed exterior changes to such properties are reviewed for consistency with the Historic Preservation Provisions (Chapter 2.9) of the Land Development Code. In FY 2004-2005, staff processed 28 such permit requests. Many of these permits were reviewed by the City's Historic Preservation Advisory Board (HPAB). The HPAB usually meets on the second Monday of each month at 5:15 PM to review permit applications and to conduct other business. For more information about these HPAB meetings, please contact Associate Planner Bob Richardson at 766-6908.

This year, the City also is in the process of considering some revisions to its historic preservation regulations. This project is referred to as the "Chapter 2.9 Update." This effort has been identified as a high priority for the Department by the City Council. The end result should be more clear and objective standards that will provide a more efficient review process for owners of historic resources and properties in historic districts. For information about this effort, please contact Associate Planner Kathy Seeburger at 766-6908.

## Corvallis Rental Housing Code and Program Helpful to Many

In July of 2002 the City Council passed an ordinance implementing a Rental Housing Code for Corvallis. The Code was created under the direction of a Council sub-committee, local landlords, tenants, and others with an interest in the physical conditions of Corvallis' rental housing stock. The Code supplements an existing Rental Housing Program, created in 1999 to provide information and referral services to landlords, tenants and others — typically neighbors or parents of student tenants.

Since the Code's inception three years ago the City's Housing Division, which oversees operation of both the Rental Housing Program and Code, has received calls regarding a total of 2,004 rental housing issues, 646 of which involved habitability conditions in residential

rental units. The other 1,358 issues dealt with things other than habitability (like lease terms, deposits and evictions). Of the 646 habitability issues reported, over half were subject to the Rental Housing Code (heating, plumbing, weather proofing, and structural integrity). By far the most common Code issue has been a lack of adequate plumbing (135), followed by inadequate weather proofing (99), faulty heating systems (58) and building structural integrity (42).

As hoped for when the Rental Housing Code was designed, there have been very few cases in which a renter's complaint has gone all the way to an enforcement proceeding conducted by the City. During Code design it became clear that the biggest stumbling block to resolving habitability issues was a

lack of communication about problems — real or perceived — between a tenant and their landlord. Thus the Code requires written communication between a tenant and their landlord, clearly stating the issue and requesting resolution, before the City will begin an investigation which might lead to enforcement action. In all, the City has had to enforce action on the part of landlords only four times in three years — a great sign of improved communication as well as improving housing conditions!

Whether you're a landlord or a renter, a neighbor, a parent or a friend, if you have questions about rental housing conditions or the rights and responsibilities of the parties to a rental agreement, please contact the City's Housing Division at 766-6944.

## Loan Programs Help Families During Rising Housing Market

Many in Corvallis — and especially those with lower than average incomes — feel that the quickly rising costs of homes here means they'll have to keep waiting to make the move to home ownership. And while there's no disputing the fact that housing prices have increased quickly and significantly in recent years, it's also true that Corvallis' market experience is typical of what much of the country, and especially the West, have seen recently. A more important truth for people in Corvallis is that just because housing prices have increased here doesn't mean that lower-income buyers are automatically being priced out of the market!

The City's Housing Division offers two loan programs — the First Time Home Buyer (FTB) program and the *NewHome* Buyer Assistance (NHB) program — to help lower-income buyers reduce their costs of purchasing a home in Corvallis. Both programs offer funding for down

payments and closing costs: the FTB program helps first time buyers who have very little savings but can qualify for a mortgage, or who need to "buy down" the amount of their mortgage in order to qualify; the NHB program operates similarly, but anticipates that buyers will bring more down payment from the sale of a previously-owned home. In both cases loan terms are lenient in order to encourage long term affordability for borrowers, but buyers must bring a minimum amount of their own funds to make a purchase possible. Loans through the FTB program are typically limited to \$6,000, while NHB loans go as high as \$7,500. Both programs have mechanisms in place to provide additional loan funding as circumstances warrant.

To learn more about the City's down payment assistance loan programs, and how you can participate in home ownership in Corvallis, contact the Housing Division at 766-6944.

## Partnership Highlights - the Arc of Benton County

The City has a history of supporting the operations of the Arc of Benton County. In recent years it has also become a funder of the systematic housing rehabilitation efforts being undertaken by the Arc, a critical provider of group homes in Corvallis for adults with developmental disabilities. Since 2002 the City has provided the Arc with grants totaling \$100,000 to carry out substantial rehabilitation projects at two group homes, making both much more accessible, comfortable, and safe for residents. In the coming year the City will grant another \$25,000 to the Arc so that they can make similar improvements in yet another Corvallis group home. The City supports and thanks the Arc of Benton County for the important work they do in the community.

## Fair Housing Who to Call for Help

It's sometimes unclear who you should call in Corvallis if you feel you have been discriminated against when it comes to your fair housing rights. Recent changes within the City organization have been implemented to improve local response to fair housing issues, and help continues to exist at the state and federal levels. The following resources are available to anyone who feels they have been subjected to housing discrimination:

- Community Alliance for Diversity (541) 738-6293
- Fair Housing Council of Oregon (800) 424-3247
- Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) (541) 686-7623
- HUD Fair Housing Complaint Line (800) 877-0246

And as always, if you're uncertain who to call for help with any housing issue, you can contact the City's Housing Division at 766-6944.

## Housing Project Highlights for FY 2004-05

In the past year a number of Corvallis housing projects involving resources from the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) or HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) programs have gotten underway or been completed:

■ **Samaritan Village Common Building Rehabilitation:** \$40,000 CDBG grant to replace windows and heating/air conditioning system in the common building of this 84-unit low income/elderly apartment complex.

■ **Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence (CARDV):** \$225,000 CDBG grant for the acquisition and rehabilitation of a home in Corvallis for use as a confidential shelter facility for victims of domestic violence.

■ **Corvallis Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc. (CNHS):** Two HOME grants totaling \$890,000 for the purchase and rehabilitation of 20 units in two properties called South Corvallis Townhouses I and II. Fifteen of the units will be occupied by very low



● ● ● South Corvallis Townhomes

income households for at least the next 30 years.

■ **City-operated Housing Rehab and Purchase Assistance Loans:** The City's Housing Division offers rehabilitation and down payment assistance loans for low income home owners or owners-to-be. Over the last year 21 households received assistance loans totaling just over \$275,000 to help them acquire or maintain a safe, affordable home.

## Permits Protect

When making home improvements, protect the safety and value of your home and family by getting the necessary permits and using licenced contractors and craftsmen.

*Permits Protect* is a statewide public safety outreach effort aimed at encouraging property owners to hire licenced contractors and obtain permits for construction projects. Highlights:

- ▶ Hiring licensed contractors and having work professionally inspected ensures projects are completed correctly, the first time. Increased quality and value is often the result, especially if using a Certified Master Builder.

▶ Inspectors and Plans Examiners from Development Services are knowledgeable in the latest construction practices and work to ensure that your project meets minimum safety standards. These staff are professionally certified through the International Code Council.

▶ When selling your home, disclosure laws require you to inform potential buyers if work was performed with a permit. Obtaining permits avoids embarrassing & costly disclosures.

For more information on obtaining permits go to [www.CorvallisPermits.com](http://www.CorvallisPermits.com) or [www.PermitsProtect.Info](http://www.PermitsProtect.Info). For information on hiring a licensed contractor or Certified Master Builder, please visit the Willamette Valley Homebuilders Association at [www.wvhba.com](http://www.wvhba.com) or 928-5159.

## Construction Pollution

Since reaching a population base of 50,000, the City of Corvallis has adopted an Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control (EPSC) program. The program protects our rivers, streams, and City storm drainage system by reducing sediment and pollution runoff from construction sites. Highlights of this program include:

- ▶ Requires an EPSC permit for ground disturbing activities 2,000 square feet or greater.
- ▶ Regional Awards — Partners with more than 30 surrounding jurisdictions. Recognizes contractors who embrace the EPSC program by providing exemplary protection measures to their construction sites. The 2004 award winners from Corvallis were John Faulconer Construction Inc., and Good Samaritan Hospital.
- ▶ Free on-line EPSC manual available at [www.CorvallisPermits.com](http://www.CorvallisPermits.com). This manual provides guidance for the design, installation and maintenance of EPSC measures.
- ▶ Provides staffing for plan reviews, inspections, citizen complaint resolution and community outreach.
- ▶ The EPSC program keeps the City in compliance with a number of Federal and State requirements relating to maintaining clean water discharges and the protection of endangered species.



● ● ● Kings Crossing

## Inspection Activity Soars

Development Services inspectors completed 19,865 building safety inspections this past year, an increase over last year's 17,433 inspections. The overall project value being inspected also increased from \$170 million to \$180 million. Several large projects have contributed to this increase including: **Reser Stadium Expansion; OSU Parking Garage; OSU Kelly Engineering Center; Corvallis High School.**

The Development Services mission is to facilitate the development of approved construction projects. We do so by getting involved in projects early on and provide free pre-development and pre-construction meetings with City staff. We also provide many other services such as same-day inspections to keep projects moving. Ensuring building and consumer safety is our number one objective and we strive to do so in a customer friendly manner. Inspections help to insure that construction is being completed as required by adopted codes related to structural safety, fire safety, energy conservation, disabled access, plumbing and mechanical systems, electrical safety, and connection to the City's infrastructure.

## Service Enhancements Approved

Development Services received unanimous City Council approval and the endorsement of the Willamette Valley Homebuilders Association for a service enhancement and fee increase package. A few of the service enhancements that will occur in the coming year are:

- ▶ Provide over-the-counter permits for small construction projects.
- ▶ Provide a dedicated inspector/plans examiner for the Erosion Prevention & Sediment Control program.
- ▶ Provide electronic hand-held field inspection devices to improve inspector consistency and provide customers with instant inspection results with a referenced code section.

The fee increases needed to support the expanded services include:

- ▶ 5% building permit fee increase effective July 1, 2005.
- ▶ New fee structure for the Erosion Prevention & Sediment Control program, effective September 1, 2005, which bases a permit fee on the quantity of disturbed soil. This fee structure is intended to recover costs of the EPSC program and will encourage developers to keep ground disturbed areas to a minimum.

## Community Development Boards & Commissions

### ■ Board of Appeals:

Hears appeals of decisions made by building official on construction-related issues and on rental housing standards code.

### ■ Committee for Citizen Involvement:

Facilitates citizen involvement in all phases of land use planning.

### ■ Historic Preservation Advisory Board:

Makes recommendations regarding historic and cultural resource preservation; reviews proposed alterations to historic structures.

### ■ Housing and Community Development Commission:

Recommends policies on housing and community revitalization, affordable housing.

### ■ 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.

To confirm any meeting date, time and/or location, call the Department at 766-6981.

## Administration

■ Ken Gibb, Department Director

■ Judith Somes, Management Assistant

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## Housing

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## Development Services

■ Dan Carlson, Development Services Manager

■ Phyllis Heil, Support Staff

■ Susan Hilaire, Support Staff

### Permit & Plan Review Services

■ Mike Fegles, Assistant Building Official

■ Vicki Druliner, Permit Technician

■ Tenille Holroyd, Permit Technician

■ Laurie Sheriff, Permit Coordinator

■ Bill Clemens, Commercial Plans Examiner

■ Paul Vinje, Plans Examiner

■ Jason Yaich, Associate Planner

■ Matthew Bolduc, Civil Engineer

### Inspection Services

■ Greg Hall, Inspection Services Manager

■ Norm Domagala, Building Inspector

■ Steve Freilinger, Building Inspector

■ Suzanne Larson, Building Inspector

■ Dave Hensley, Plumbing Inspector

■ Craig Perkins, Electrical Inspector

■ Troy Skinner, Building Inspector

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