

Corvallis Community Development

DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT FY 2008-2009



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

Message from the Director

Greetings,

We are pleased to provide this report to you about the activities of the Corvallis Community Development Department during the fiscal year 2008-09. You will find information about the variety of accomplishments, projects and ongoing work of Community Development staff in the areas of community planning, construction permitting and inspection, code compliance and 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 guidance and assistance.

Corvallis has a long-standing commitment to community livability. More recently, sustainability has been an important focus for city government and community members. Over the past year, the

Community Development Department has been engaged in a number of activities that address these goals including:

- Continued technology and process improvements that enhance customer service and reduce travel and time needed to conduct business. For example, online permitting services accounted for 21% of electrical and mechanical permits and saved 349 trips to City Hall in the past year.
- Dedicated major staff time to historic preservation, code enforcement and downtown issues, all of which contribute to community livability and sustainability.
- Worked with community partners to deliver \$2 million in local, state and federal funds in support of local housing and social service programs.

Many of these projects will continue in the year ahead along with new activities that are consistent with Community Development's mission of helping advance the vision of the Corvallis community.

Thank you for taking time to read this report. If you have any 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

Building Safety Week 2009

Development Services building inspection staff work with other members of the International Code Council (ICC) to develop and implement the highest quality construction codes, at both state and national levels, to protect the public in the buildings where we live, learn, work, and play. Building Safety Week, sponsored by the ICC and local Corvallis building inspection staff, offers various community activities to remind the public about the important role of building codes in addressing critical safety issues by preventing fires and accidents.

On May 2, to kick off Building Safety Week, Development Services Inspection staff volunteered their time to help kids construct free bird houses at the Corvallis Farmers Market. Once completed, the birdhouses were inspected, approved, and a Certificate of Occupancy was issued. One parent remarked as they left the booth, child and birdhouse in hand, "I cannot believe how patient these inspectors are with the kids."

Inspector John Corliss said, "This was really a fun way to reach out and share with folks a little bit about building safety and the importance of inspections. We were able to connect with younger people in a way that we normally don't get to, and we look forward to next year."



Rental Housing Program Changes Implemented

During 2009 the City Council implemented a few changes to the City's Rental Housing Code. The Code is an element of the Corvallis Rental Housing Program, which offers information, referrals and other assistance to landlords and tenants in Corvallis units.

The first set of Code changes added minimum standards for two types of housing issues which, if not met, may become the basis of a complaint to the City. The first set of standards requires that all rental units "be equipped with an approved and properly functioning smoke alarm or smoke detector installed and maintained in accordance with the State Building Code and applicable rules of the State Fire Marshal;" the second set of standards requires "working locks for all dwelling entrance doors and latches for all windows by which access may be had to that portion of the premises which the tenant is entitled to occupy to the exclusion of others." These standards were added to those already in the Code that address plumbing, heating, weatherization and building structural integrity.

The other change implemented by the Council in 2009 was an increase in the annual per-unit fee paid by owners of rental properties to underwrite the costs of the Rental Housing Program. Since the Program's inception in 2002 the fee has been maintained at \$8 per unit; after seven years at that level, the Council determined that in order to cover the costs of the Program going forward the fee should be increased to \$10 per unit. That increase will be reflected in the next fee payment invoices scheduled for mailing in September/October 2009.

For more information about the Corvallis Rental Housing Program and Code, contact the Housing Division at (541) 766-6944.

Code Enforcement

The Corvallis Code Enforcement Program was formally initiated by City Council in 2007 to address community livability and other issues particularly relating to nuisances. The program operates under a complaint basis model within the Development Services Division. Complaints are typically received from residents and other departments within the City organization. Each complaint is reviewed by the Code Enforcement Supervisor (CES) for consistency with the program parameters and for the appropriate prioritization level established by City Council in 2007.

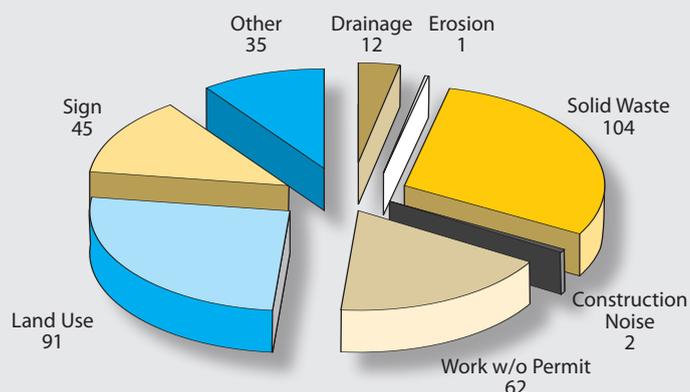
Various Development Services staff respond to citizen complaints including the CES, a part-time Code Enforcement Officer, a Land Use Inspector, and other inspection staff. Some complaints are investigated by other City departments, such as noise complaints which receive response from the Police Department's Community Services Division.

Complaint activity for 2008 continued to increase significantly over the 2006 baseline, as shown in the violation activity table below. Because the program is much more formal than prior to 2007, as these numbers indicate, there has been a major increase in violation resolutions that result in "case closed" activity.

	2006	2007	2008
Violations Received	229	401	375
Violations Closed	199	285	377

The complaint categories are grouped into eight general types. The following chart shows the number and types of citizen complaints received under the Code Enforcement Program in 2008.

2008 Complaints Received By Type



Questions regarding the City's Code Enforcement Program should be directed to Chris Westfall, Code Enforcement Supervisor at (541) 766-6929, or chris.westfall@ci.corvallis.or.us. Or visit our Web site at www.ci.corvallis.or.us (from the City's Home Page, select Departments, Community Development, Development Services Division, and Nuisance Complaints).

Residential Construction Activity Continues to Decline in 2008

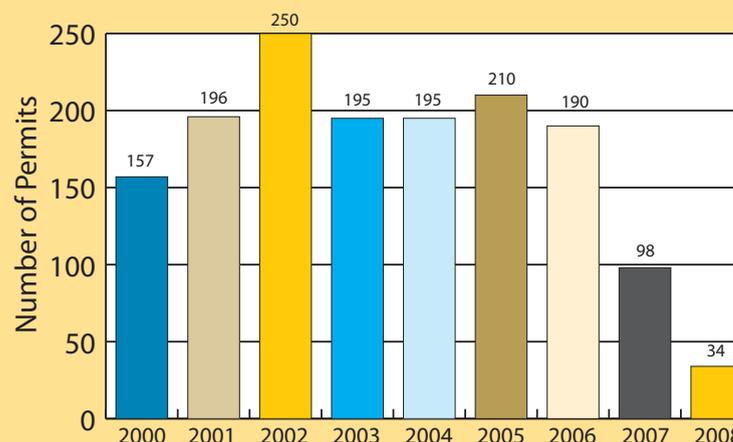
Toward the end of 2007, the number of permit requests for new homes saw a sharp decline, ending the year at 97 permits issued. This is roughly half of the normal level of activity. In 2008, this number continued to fall to levels not seen since the early 1980s, finishing the year at just 34 new home permits. It is anticipated that 2009 will see about the same number of new home permits issued as in 2008.

There are obviously a number of factors contributing to the decline, but the primary challenge is the difficult lending market for new construction. A very slow rebound is anticipated in 2009-2010, as loan funds once again become available.

The lack of construction permit activity and resulting loss of revenue has had significant impacts on the Development Services Division. As a result, expenditures have been reduced dramatically. Measures taken have included reductions in force through layoffs and not filling open positions. The Division has also initiated several process efficiencies to save time and money for customers. For example, staff have introduced new measures to process simple projects, which has resulted in approximately 20% of all plan reviews being completed on the same day that the plans are submitted.

As the Division continues to work through these challenging times it is believed that brighter days are ahead. As we work hard to maintain high levels of service, a continued emphasis will be placed on looking for efficiencies while still fulfilling the Division's mission and providing excellent customer service.

New Single Family Dwelling Permits Issued



Online Permits Saved 349 Trips to City Hall

In April of 2007 Corvallis began offering online permits to licensed contractors for basic mechanical and electrical permits. In 2008, 349 permits were issued online—which equates to saving 349 contractor trips to City Hall to obtain permits. Since Corvallis began participating in the statewide program, approximately 21% of electrical and mechanical permits have been issued online each month. The system is quick, easy and available anytime 24/7.

Local contractors appreciate the availability of this new service because it saves time, fuel, and allows instant, easy access to the most common electrical and mechanical permits.

Our Mission—To facilitate the development of approved construction projects.

Last year Development Services:

- Issued 3,385 construction permits. Of these, 34 were for new homes with a combined total of more than \$9.9 million in value.
- Provided 25 pre-development conferences with developers of new commercial construction projects at no charge.
- Conducted 16,450 inspections for compliance with building safety codes. All inspectors are professionally certified by the International Code Council (ICC) and participate in continuing education on code changes, the use of new materials, and sustainable methods of construction.



ThinkPermit
Protect your home. Protect your family.

Does my project need a permit?

To find out, visit www.CorvallisPermits.com

TIP—Your construction project can be tracked online through www.CorvallisPermits.com. You may search by address or permit number.

Stimulus Funding for Housing Activities

As fiscal year 2008-09 came to an end the City received notice from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that a supplemental allocation of Community Development Block Grant funding would be coming our way. This additional funding, known as "CDBG-R," is being distributed to cities and counties around the country under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

The intent of ARRA is to reinvigorate the American economy by putting people back to work or retaining existing jobs, as well as to invest in energy conservation and the public infrastructure that sustains our communities. The \$145,487 in CDBG-R funding the City of Corvallis will receive will be invested in capital projects to rehabilitate housing and community facilities as follows:

Facility Rehabilitation

Community Outreach Shelter	\$15,000
Center Against Rape & Domestic Violence Facility	\$10,000

Housing Rehabilitation

Home Life group home	\$30,408
Arc of Benton County independent living apartments	\$14,000
Single family energy conservation/rehab projects	\$61,589



Community Outreach Shelter

These capital investments are expected to create 1.26 full time equivalent construction jobs; because non-profit agency budgets will be spared these critical rehabilitation expenses, another 1.16 full time equivalent jobs in those agencies will be retained.

If you have questions about the City's CDBG-R projects or would like more information about affordable housing

assistance in Corvallis please contact the Housing Division at (541) 766-6944, or visit our Web site at www.ci.corvallis.or.us/cdbg-r.

Community Partner Spotlight: Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence

Since its formation in 1981 the Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence (CARDV) has played a role vital to Corvallis and Benton County's network of community safety services. And since that year a direct relationship of mutual support has grown between CARDV and the City of Corvallis. In order to help CARDV acquire its first confidential shelter facility, the City received a 1981 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to purchase land and a large home on SW Philomath Boulevard which, although no longer a confidential facility, still provides needed housing and a facility for offices and supportive service delivery.

In the years since that first cooperative project the City has relied on and supported CARDV as our community's first line of emergency and long-term housing and assistance for survivors of rape and domestic violence. In addition to annual operating funding, the City has provided small grants for housing and facility rehabilitation work, as well as a 2003 grant of \$225,000 to acquire and rehabilitate another existing Corvallis property to serve as a confidential shelter and services facility.

Looking forward, CARDV and City Housing Division staff have been working on plans for two upcoming projects. The first will be another small rehab project at the Philomath Boulevard facility utilizing CDBG funding the City will receive as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The second, much larger project is being coordinated by another important community partner, Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services. Utilizing funding from the City's HOME Investment Partnerships Program, this project will build ten new permanent supportive rental housing units for survivors of domestic violence at a site on South Third Street near Lincoln School. In reflecting on these projects and her agency's long-term partnership with the City of Corvallis, CARDV Executive Director Nancy O'Mara notes, "The City of Corvallis-CARDV partnership is a wonderful example of our community's commitment to safety, stability, and success for all. I am thankful for what we have achieved and for the work that continues, in partnership with the City and WNHS, to create additional ways for survivors of domestic and sexual violence to sustain healthy, safe homes for themselves and their children."

The City is equally thankful for CARDV and the important mission it carries out every day. To learn more about the valuable work this agency is doing in the community, contact them by phone at (541) 758-0219, or visit their Web site at www.cardv.peak.org.

Housing Division Project Highlight: Samaritan Village Lift and Generator Installation

In addition to supporting single family housing rehabilitation, first time home buyer assistance, non-profit agency operations and microbusiness development efforts, the City typically allocates annual funding from its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) programs to support activities being undertaken by the owners or developers of Corvallis affordable housing and community facility projects. During the City's FY 08-09 a CDBG grant of \$122,649 was extended to assist the elderly residents of the 82-unit Samaritan Village senior affordable housing complex.

The project consisted of two elements. The first was the installation of a lift to allow residents with mobility impairments to enjoy full use of the Village's community building, including the basement where exercise equipment, classes, and group activities are frequently held. The second project element added a propane-fueled backup generator system to maintain the availability of the Village's essential services during power outages. Now, in the event of an outage, residents who are reliant on electronic oxygenators will no longer be at risk, and everyone at the village will have a safe, warm and well-lighted building in which to gather while electric service is being restored.

Samaritan Village and the housing assets it provides for the Corvallis community are both unique and of critical value. The City is proud to be a supporter of this housing that will surely continue offering its community value well into the future.



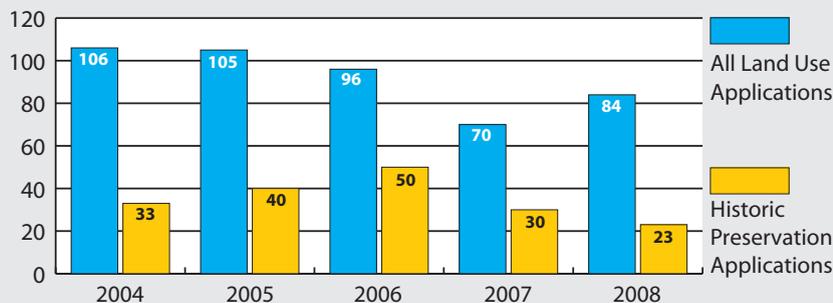
Riding the new lift on ribbon-cutting day.

Planning Highlights

The Current Planning work group provides staff support to the City boards and commissions that review land use proposals. These discretionary reviews range from Historic Preservation Permits to Conditional Development or 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 board or

commission that adequately address review criteria. The criteria are intended to achieve the community's vision. Those recommendations are presented in written staff reports, and decisions are made through a public hearing process that has many requirements based on State statutes. Between 2000 and 2008, the average number of land use applications processed each year by the work group was 97, ranging from 68 in 2001 to 128 in 2003. In 2008, 84 applications were processed. Historic Preservation permit reviews accounted for 23 of those. Among the reviews completed in 2008 were Conditional Development and Historic Preservation approval for the First Presbyterian Church and Planned Development approval of the Seavey Meadows Subdivision aimed at providing affordable housing.

Corvallis Land Use Applications



2008 Historic Preservation Program Report

In June 2008, a significant portion of the Oregon State University Campus became the third National Register of Historic Places Historic District in Corvallis. The District encompasses the area generally west of 11th Street, south of Monroe and Orchard Avenues, east of 30th Street (with some exceptions), and north of Washington Way (with the exception of Gill Coliseum). Within the District there are many contributing historic buildings and landscaped areas. The architecture of contributing buildings within the District varies widely in style and includes examples of Neo-Classical, Mediterranean Revival, Queen Anne, International, Modern, and other styles.



Other Designated Historic Resources in Corvallis include commercial and residential buildings, two neighborhoods listed in the National Register of Historic Places, as well as certain trees and objects, such as the train engine in Avery Park. All Designated Historic Resources are protected through provisions in the Corvallis Land Development Code to ensure that proposed changes to historic buildings and sites are historically compatible. In 2008, 23 historic preservation permit applications were processed for individuals interested in making historically appropriate updates to the historic resource in their care. Most permit applications were required to be reviewed by the Historic Resources Commission, the body appointed by the City Council to review and decide on historic preservation permits and to advise the City Council, Planning Commission, and Community Development Director on matters pertaining to historic and cultural resource preservation.

Questions regarding City of Corvallis Historic Preservation activities should be directed to Bob Richardson, Associate Planner at (541) 766-6908 or robert.richardson@ci.corvallis.or.us.

Corvallis Planning-Related On-line Services

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| 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 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.
- 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.
- 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 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.

Meeting dates, times and location are listed on the City's Web calendar at www.ci.corvallis.or.us/calendar/calendar.php. To confirm any meeting, call the Community Development Department at 766-6981.

Administration

- Ken Gibb, Department Director**
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 email: community.development@ci.corvallis.or.us

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Bob Loewen, Housing Programs Specialist
Lauren Sechrist, Grant Programs Specialist
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 email: housing@ci.corvallis.or.us

Planning

- Fred Towne, Planning Manager**
Sharon Crowell, Sr. Administrative Specialist
Joan Extrom, Administrative Specialist
Sarah Johnson, Associate Planner
Brian Latta, Assistant Planner
Kelly Potter, Senior Planner
Bob Richardson, Associate Planner
Jason Yaich, Associate Planner
Kevin Young, Senior Planner
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 email: planning@ci.corvallis.or.us

Development Services

- Dan Carlson, Development Services Manager**
Susan Hilaire, Sr. Administrative Specialist

Permit & Plan Review Services

- Mike Fegles, Assistant Building Official**
Phyllis Doolittle, Administrative Specialist
Tenille Holroyd, Permit Technician
Bill Clemens, Commercial Plans Examiner
Paul Vinje, Commercial Plans Examiner
Kevin Russell, Senior Planner
Shannen Chapman, Land Use Inspector
Lisa Franklin, Civil Engineer I

Inspection Services

- Greg Hall, Inspection Services Manager**
John Corliss, Building Inspector
Norm Domagala, Building Inspector
Suzanne Larson, Building Inspector
David Hensley, Plumbing Inspector
Frank DeWilde, Electrical Inspector
Michael Louie, Engineering Technician III
Chris Westfall, Code Enforcement Supervisor
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