

Potholes

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of asphalt on top. More rock is required if ground conditions are poor.

Nicholas said Kenwood was originally a gravel road.

“And then somewhere along the way, the neighborhood got together and somebody paid a paver to put about four inches of asphalt down, a strip down the middle of the road, and that’s pretty much how it sat for years and years and years,” Nicholas said.

The pandemic may have accelerated the decline of the street.

With people shut in their homes, they had more products delivered. Now the large, heavy trucks from Amazon, UPS, DHL and FedEx vie with cars delivering food from Jimmy John’s, Door Dash and Uber Eats multiple times a day.

“There’s at least three different food trucks that drive up and down the street selling ice cream. One of them sells tamales,” Andrew Davis said.

Residents tell of large trucks with trailers regularly traveling the street to pick up workers or supplies.

None of that has helped the condition of the street.

Julie Stone, a medical assistant, moved to a house on the street two years ago. She figured she could live with the condition of the road. After all, how much worse could it get?

Stone cares for her mother, who lives with her. She’s afraid if a medical emergency befell her mother that she wouldn’t be able to get timely medical attention for her.

“If anything really bad was to happen, I don’t think I would want to call an ambulance to even come down my street,” she said. “I think I’d have better luck either meeting them halfway or taking her there myself.”

How bad is Kenwood Avenue, really?

When Christine Davis was looking to purchase a house on Kenwood Avenue in the early 2000s, her biggest concern was the nearby PictSweet Mushroom factory.

To say that it smelled bad is drastically underselling it. Located about a quarter-mile away, it perfumed the neighborhood – and every house within miles – with the smell of manure.

That closed for good in 2001 and was demolished in 2002.

Davis decided the house on Kenwood was worth it. The road, at that time, was bad. But it wasn’t that bad.

“It’s probably all right. I can probably deal with it,” she recalls thinking.

But now, four-wheel-drive trucks have problems navigating the street. A monster truck would struggle on it. Honda Accords stand no chance.

It’s impossible to determine how many potholes are on Kenwood. Many potholes grow until they consume other potholes.

Marion County Sheriffs who patrol that area of East Salem do so in Ford Explorers. The Dodge Chargers in the fleet would have a hard time getting down Kenwood.

“The bumps and potholes that are on Kenwood make it more like one of the rural roadways we would go to where we are accessing farm communities,” Marion County Sgt. Jeremy Landers said.

Oregon Department of Transportation classifies roads based on condition with “very poor” being the worst. It only ranks roads in state, county and city systems.

The worst stretch in the state is a five-mile span of Highway 255 in Curry County, according to ODOT spokesperson Angela Beers Sydel. But that’s passable, by any definition. Kenwood wouldn’t be considered passable by any objective measure.

Marion County reported 14 miles of road in poor condition to ODOT and Salem reported six miles.

Since Kenwood isn’t in the county system, it’s not included.

Some people say Elma Avenue – about a quarter-mile west – is worse.

The section of Elma between State Street and Hudson Avenue is gravel and has never been paved. But there are three houses on the street – a church and power substation make up most of the frontage – and those houses have entrances off other streets.

Kenwood, on the other hand, has over 30 residences, home to people who

have no other way to get in and out.

“I think ours is probably the worst I’ve seen in Salem,” Sean Smith said.

Is anything being done to fix Kenwood?

Matt Fipps has hcolllected birth-day parties for his children and holiday family get-togethers at his house.

“At first, it was kind of jokingly, natural speed bumps, but as it gets worse, it’s harder and harder,” Fipps said.

The residents recognize the potholes have won. For now.

Some residents started a crowdfunding campaign a few years ago. It raised about \$50.

“We got a quote for about \$22,000, and that was just to (pave) up halfway, just to the worst of it. And nobody wanted to put any money into it,” resident Dave Beane said.

A couple years ago Fipps talked with a company that lays asphalt. A coat of asphalt was quoted at about \$100,000.

“We looked up grants, trying to see if there was something,” he said. “We’d heard some rumors of it, but never could find anything on it to get help.”

According to Oregon law, money the state and county get from gas taxes can only be used to build and maintain roads.

But the county can only maintain roads that are in a county system. So money meant exclusively for roads can’t be used to fix Kenwood Avenue.

In the summer of 2020, Nicholas, the county public works director, approached the Marion County Commissioners and asked if they wanted him to put together a list of solutions for non-county roads in unincorporated East Salem like Kenwood.

Commissioners said yes. But after the wildfires in September 2020, the county’s attention went elsewhere. Nicholas was also in charge of public preparedness and emergency response.

When Marion County Commissioner Kevin Cameron lived in an unincorporated neighborhood in South Salem before being elected, he and neighbors had problems with similar non-county roads.

He said they formed a local improvement district. In that, Cameron and his

neighbors agreed to pay for improvements to their street with increases in their property taxes. The street was paved and adopted into the county’s roads system.

“Those LID’s are the way to go, and then the county still has a responsibility after that,” Cameron said. “It would have been in the cost of the house to begin with if the contractor built it, so those people got a discount at some point in time.”

A simple repaving is likely not enough to save Kenwood. It might have to be dug up and the proper 12 inches of aggregate put down. Then it would be paved in accordance with Marion County standards. But it probably needs curbs, sidewalks and storm drains, too.

That isn’t going to be cheap.

Nicholas said if a local improvement district is formed, the county can use road funds to pay up-front costs, and property owners pay that back as an assessment on their property taxes.

“The end goal is it has to result in the road being adopted into the county road system,” Nicholas said.

For a local improvement district to be formed, half of the property owners must agree on it.

Some of the residents are fine with that. It would allow them to pay for the improvements to Kenwood Avenue over a period of 10 or years or so.

“I know for a fact that we’ve got some low-income people on this street, and I’m concerned,” Christine Davis said.

It could take a while, too.

The Marion County Commissioners want to have a work session with homeowners along the street.

In the meantime, Darrell Sharp’s 87-year-old father hasn’t been able to visit him in five years. Friends of many residents won’t visit them.

The residents want to see their friends and loved ones again.

“I’m restoring a couple trucks and one of them I’m going to sell when I get done and buy a tractor so I can fix my street. That’s my plan,” Sharp said. “A tractor and a box drag, it would be golden.”

Bill Poehler covers Marion County for the Statesman Journal. You can contact him at bpoehler@StatesmanJournal.com or [Twitter.com/bpoehler](https://twitter.com/bpoehler)

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NOTICE OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

A public meeting of the Budget Committee of the Drakes Crossing RFPD, Marion, State of Oregon, to discuss the budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, will be held at 19364 Powers Creek Loop Rd NE, Silverton, OR 97381. The meeting will take place on April 21, 2022 at 6:30 am x pm

The purpose of the meeting is to receive the budget message and to receive comment from the public on the budget.

This is a public meeting where deliberation of the Budget Committee will take place. Any person may appear at the meeting and discuss the proposed programs with the Budget Committee.

A copy of the budget document may be inspected or obtained on or after April 15, 2022 at Drakes Crossing RFPD, between the hours of 4:00 am x pm and 7:00 am x pm.

Budget Committee meeting information will be posted on the Drakes Crossing RFPD website: www.drakescrossingfire.com. 150-504-073-1 (Rev 12-13)

OR-0000400305

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Review Body: Planning Commission
Hearing Date & Time: April 12, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

Hearing Location: Silverton High School Library 1456 Pine Street with a Teleconference option via Zoom with a telephone call in number. Masks may be required in the Library and occupancy may be limited.

The instructions to listen to or virtually attend the meeting will be included in the Planning Commission meeting agenda which will be posted on the City’s website and outside of City Hall, 306 S Water Street, on April 5, 2022. This will include a hyperlink to the meeting and a call in number to participate by telephone.

Agenda Item #1: File Number PD-22-01. Planned Development Application at 429, 433 & 435 North Water Street with a Land Division for 4 Single-Family Detached/Commercial Lots, a Design Review for Parking Facilities Associated with Lot 1, Land Division and Design Review for 6 Single-Family Attached Dwellings, and Design Review for Access and Common Open Space Amenities within Tract ‘A’. The application will be reviewed following the criteria found in Silverton Development Code section 4.5.150 & 180.

Agenda Item #2: File Number DR-22-01. Design Review Performance Option application for a Legacy Silverton Medical Center expansion at 342 Fairview Street for an approximately 20,500 square foot expansion of the existing facility and a 12,000 square foot interior remodel. The project also includes site improvements to relocate the existing helipad, add more parking spaces and reconfigure the existing parking lots and drive aisles on the main hospital site and the in the west parking lot across Fairview Street. The application will be reviewed following the criteria found in Silverton Development Code section 4.2.510 & 600.

Failure of an issue to be raised in a hearing, in person or by letter, or failure to provide enough detail to afford the decision maker an opportunity to respond precludes appeal to LUBA based on that issue. Additional information and/or review of this application, including all documents and evidence submitted, may be obtained at Silverton City Hall, 306 South Water Street by telephoning Jason Gottgetreu at (503) 874-2212. Copies of the staff report will be available seven (7) days prior to the public hearing and are available for review at no cost at City Hall by appointment, a copy can be provided on request at a reasonable cost.

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