

# Grant money will pay for dev. studies

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
Of the Keizertimes

The City of Keizer will be dusting off some older economic development studies in hope of finding a new vision for the future of the Iris Capital's business districts.

Keizer was recently awarded a \$165,000 Transportation Growth Management Plan grant from the Oregon Department of Transportation to update studies revolving around three business corridors – River Road North, Inland Shores and Cherry Avenue Northeast.

“The grant will pay for consultants, public outreach, analysis and transportation studies,”

said Nate Brown, Keizer's community development director. “We'll be looking at how we can encourage economic development in all three areas.”

The new studies will fall under the umbrella of the Keizer Revitalization Action Plan.

The last study of River Road North was called the River Road Renaissance (RRR) plan and it was conducted in 2003. Consultants met with city staff and residents to create a more cohesive vision of what River Road might become.

RRR tackled challenges from making River Road more pedestrian friendly by assigning “zones” in which local businesses were supposed to take leadership in revitalizing.

Much of the verve and vigor the plan hoped to ignite fizzled when the economy collapsed in 2008. Then the plan lost a major funding stream when an urban renewal district was sunsetted, but there have been some lasting impacts. Several points of interest were identified

and commemorated with plaques and monuments, meandering sidewalks were installed in some sections of River Road and some storefronts were refurbished with the assistance of city-funded grants – Keizer's Economic Development Committee (KEDC) is currently hoping to reinstitute a comparable grant program. Even the city's public arts program, which is now handled by its own commission, was an offshoot of the original RRR endeavor.

Other aspects of the plan went unrealized. Some of the most prominent ones include a call for quarterly festivals attracting visitors to River Road; an increase in workforce housing (building vertical) as properties were redeveloped; more pedestrian crossings; and even potentially relocating a civic building, such as the post office or a library, to a more central space on the corridor.

At the time it was adopted by council “none of the ac-

tions appeared to be beyond reach,” but a slow economic recovery has vastly changed the landscape. As recently as a few weeks ago, Mayor Cathy Clark presented her vision of a redeveloped River Road that included vertical development with housing on top of retail spaces, but another member of the committee suggested that price tag would be well beyond the city's means.

The Cherry Avenue plan focused on providing infrastructure for future development and was completed. With grant funding, the city will look at the best options for growth and what obstacles exist for further economic development.

The last time the city detailed a plan for the Inland Shores area was 1991.

The studies funded by the grant will look at ways to develop thriving neighborhoods that meet the forecasted housing needs of the city with an emphasis on convenient transportation.

## GRASSROOTS GOVERNMENT

The Keizer Public Arts Commission (KPAC) held its monthly meeting Tuesday, Aug. 23. Here is what was discussed:

- Deputy City Recorder Debbie Lockhart reported that the owners of the property at 4378 River Road North (Ace Cash Express) are interested in coordinating with KPAC for the placement of public art on their site. “Wouldn't it be great to get a young artist to do street art on their wall?” opined Commissioner Lore Christopher.

The idea has been met with reticence by city staff who are concerned it would be seen as special treatment.

- Commissioners planned to present a proposal to the Keizer City Council on September 6 for a preferred vendor program. The goal would be to streamline the process for accepting art to display in the Keizer Civic Center. Currently, all artists and organizations hoping to exhibit work must submit their pieces for approval. A preferred vendor program would allow those with a track record with the city to sidestep some of that process.

- Rasmussen Spray Service recently treated the tree stumps on the northwest corner of the civic center campus for pest infestation. Rasmussen donated the supplies and labor for the treatment. The stumps are being preserved with the hope of turning them into story poles.

- Commissioners also opted to continue with a Holiday Art Contest. In 2015, the commission accepted submissions to the city's annual holiday card for the first time. Only two submissions were received and a better response is hoped for this time around. Details and submission deadlines have yet to be established.

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## Filing deadline Aug. 30

The Keizer mayor's chair and three seats on the city council will be up for election in November, and interested candidates can register now through Aug. 30.

Mayor Cathy Clark's first two-year term is expiring, as are the four-year terms of councilors Dennis Koho, Kim Freeman and Marlene Parsons.

Mark Caillier is currently serving out the remainder of Koho's term. Koho resigned in July for health reasons.

To run for the mayor or city council, candidates must be a qualified elector under the state constitution and a registered voter within city limits who has resided in Keizer for the 12 months prior to the date of the election, Nov. 8.

For additional information, or to request an election information packet, contact Keizer City Recorder Tracy Davis at 503-856-3412 at [davist@keizer.org](mailto:davist@keizer.org).

Applications are due Tuesday, Aug. 30, by 5 p.m.

## City volunteers still needed

The City of Keizer is seeking volunteers for numerous roles on city commissions and committees.

Openings include:

- Two vacancies on the Keizer Points of Interest Committee.

- One vacancy on the Public Arts Commission.

- Two vacancies on the Stormwater Advisory Committee.

- Youth councilor/page/liaison openings on various committees.

More information on each committee, as well as meeting times and days, is available at [keizer.org](http://keizer.org).

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