

# STUDY,

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Drive to McNary Estates Drive North on River Road North.

Keizer Senior Planner Shane Witham said the study is an attempt to update and bring into alignment previous development plans covering those areas.

"It might be a single plan for all three areas or a different plan for each one, but I'm expecting that we will end up with a package of text that changes how we implement regulations in the identified areas," Witham said.

Depending on how residents want the areas developed, it might mean substantial changes to how new developments are constructed — with residences on top of commercial spaces — to aesthetic changes like a wider palette of color options or increased attention to landscaping.

One key aspect of the study will be how the changes tie into the area's transportation systems. The study is being funded through an Oregon

Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) grant.

"Since it's a TGM-funded program, transportation is a piece of it as well as some traffic engineering, and we're hoping that can achieve a little greater density or development that could accommodate the growth needs the city has," Witham said. "We're not trying to meet all the (growth) needs, but we can look at creative design and capitalize on redevelopment that accommodate residences on top (of commercial development)."

While Witham and Community Development Director Nate Brown are just beginning a series of weekly meetings with Portland-based Otak consultants to come up with specific dates, two groups need to be assembled. One is a group of about 10 Keizer stakeholders who will advise on the overall scope of the study, the second is a handful of community members who will form a Community Advisory Committee and review the output of the study and make the final recommendation to the Keizer City Council to accept it.

In addition to those, group

time is being set aside for public meeting to gather additional input, but the dates are not yet certain. For those who are shy about speaking in public, other outlets are being planned as well.

"We also expect that we will be rolling out a project website to solicit comment," Witham said.

Given a city budget that is silo-ed and spoken for long before it ever reaches the desks of the city council, Witham is also hoping the visioning process includes talk about funding.

"I'm hoping there will be a candid conversation about how the needle gets moved financially and we discuss the tools and implementation strategies that are possible," Witham said.

The last substantial funding Keizer had available for economic development came from an urban renewal district that has since been disbanded. Still, the idea of creating a vision for River Road is hardly new.

"There is a lot of work that has gone into River Road over the past 20 years and it took

a lot to get it to this point, against a lot of opposition in some ways," Brown said.

The last major effort took place just after the turn of the millennium. It was known as River Road Renaissance and while the project made some strides in revitalizing River Road, the few lasting impacts were incorporating ideas like meandering sidewalks and stamped sidewalks across driveways into the development code. Other ideas like creating defined districts along River Road struggled to get off the ground and didn't stick after The Great Recession gutted the urban renewal budget.

Brown stressed that while the substance of the conversation will deal with the sometimes dull language of Keizer's development code, the changes made will come from communal vision.

"For this to have any meaning, people have to participate. The reality is that we intend to change the way Keizer does business along River Road," Brown said. "For that we have to have the community involvement."

# EIGHT: Keizer vet's kindness cited in recovery

(Continued from Page A1) another option and his next stop — Keizer's Willamette Valley Animal Hospital (WVAH). Laudon had called WVAH as well because he's taken other pets to the veterinarians there when he was a Keizer resident.

"I opened up the door and they asked, 'Are you Ryan?'" Laudon said.

Malibu ended up in the care of Dr. Sydney Lee at WVAH. *Keizertimes* reached out to Lee to talk about what happened next, but we were unable to connect by press time. Regardless, the damage was even worse than Laudon suspected.

Malibu had his right rear leg and part of his hip amputated — an operation Laudon suspects would have cost easily four figures — and the clinic charged only \$165, and included a full round of shots, neutering and pain medication to take home.

In the days after the

operation, Malibu was groggy but resting at the Laudon home where he's already learned to use a litter pan despite his injury.

"He's just really started getting to the point where he will lay on that side, but I told the vet he's never going outside again. He's been the best thing ever," Laudon said.

Malibu is confined to a corner right now in a makeshift corral, but he probably doesn't feel like moving much at any rate. He'll have limited space to explore for two weeks, but is expected to make a full recovery even though he'll have to figure out how to manage with only three legs.

"He is going to be treated like royalty around here, but (Dr. Lee) was so great to us. (The clinic) took a chance and let me contribute what I could without looking down on me. There isn't a rating system that goes high enough for what (Lee) did," Laudon said.

# CONVO,

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and open lines of communication. The Community Conversation will include information from the city on what has been done in the past, but there will be an emphasis on "open mic" time for attendees to offer ideas.

Thompson said that even within the Chamber there is a wide range of ideas regarding what to do about River Road.

"It runs the spectrum from some who want pedestrian malls to others who are willing to accept it as it is now," Thompson said. "The thing that folks seemed to gel around was facade and landscape improvements."

As recently as a decade ago, Keizer doled out matching grants for businesses along River Road to make such improvements using funds from

a now-defunct urban renewal district. Urban renewal districts are special taxing districts funded by incremental taxes. When a district is established property values within the boundary are frozen by the county assessor when the district starts. As property values increase, the difference between the frozen value and the new value goes to the district rather than the city or county.

The prior Keizer urban renewal district, which was used

to fund dramatic improvements along Cherry Avenue Northeast and put utility infrastructure underground along River Road North, fell victim to the Great Recession and later was used to bail out a developer at Keizer Station who defaulted on city-backed loans.

Thompson said the idea of a new Urban Renewal District was not out of the question in regard to a new River Road vision, but that it was important to have a vision in

place before figuring out how to fund it.

"We're pretty early in this process, but the relationship between the city and chamber is strengthening already. After the Community Conversation, we want to partner with city staff and figure out exactly what we hope to do and how to do it," Thompson said.

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