

10 years in, Keizer's 2029 vision progress is middling

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Of the Keizertimes

Ten years ago this November, the city of Keizer embarked upon a 20-year visioning plan for the Iris Capital of the world.

The city hired consultants and formed a citizens advisory committee that steered the process as ideas and hopes for the future of Keizer were collected. Since this year marks the mid-way point, *Keizertimes*

thought we would take a look at how far we've come in living up to the expectations set forth in the study.

The final Keizer Compass Vision for 2029 report doesn't include specific benchmarks for anyone to measure progress by. Instead, it identifies seven themes that, by most measures, feel fairly generic.

They are as follows:

- A proud and engaged commu-

nity

This was described as a place that celebrates unique accomplishments, traditions and history; active citizens with pride and a spirit of volunteerism; opportunities for all ages; and easy access to information about and participation in local government.

- A thriving local economy

This theme was defined as a variety of clean, green, living-wage

jobs; a diversified economic base; industries invested in the community that connect to regional and global economies; a range of goods and services, a highly-qualified workforce; and becoming a destination spot for visitors.

- A clean, green environment

Sufficient land for outdoor recreation; an abundance of trees and greenery; clean water systems of all types and programs; and policies

that encourage recycling, reducing and reusing waste were all mentioned.

- Responsible growth and development

This theme includes having an adequate land supply for residential and commercial growth; development that preserves Keizer's small-town feel; and adequate infrastructure for current and future needs.

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The Goal:

A proud, engaged community

- Many new faces on city committees.
- But some of them are now on multiple committees at the same time.
- The Chamber took over the Festival of Lights parade.
- There have been major shortages of volunteers on big projects.
- Keizer city councilors are more engaged than ever.
- We now have community superheroes calling Keizer home.
- Only 18 percent of respondents to a recent resident survey said they volunteer in Keizer.
- Making Keizer Better and RIVERfair went the way of the dodo.
- Keizer Homegrown Theater joined the Keizer Heritage Center rounding out the cultural offerings outside of Keizer schools.



The Goal:

A thriving, local economy

- The healthcare industry is still expanding in Keizer.
- Aside from healthcare, most of the job creation has been on the lower end of the spectrum.
- The city remains constrained by available land for job creation.
- River Road is mostly unchanged from the time of the study, the result of an economic downturn and slow recovery.
- Keizer lost three grocery stores in the past 10 years and gained only one.
- While still the land of sub sandwiches and tacos, culinary options in Keizer are expanding.
- A new hotel in Keizer Station will provide additional funding for tourism/recreation efforts.



The Goal:

A clean, green environment

- Numerous improvements have been made at Keizer Rapids Park (KRP).
- The Claggett Creek Watershed Council is more involved than ever in preserving a major watershed.
- Rotary Club of Keizer recently completed planting a new arboretum at KRP.
- A major orchard in west Keizer was recently razed (but it was on its deathbed by all accounts).
- Keizer continues to reinvest in its water systems keeping quality water flowing and sewers from backing up.
- Insufficient available land means some of the city's largest green spaces have been or will be - in the case of the cow pasture - eaten up by development.



The Goal:

Responsible growth and development

- The urban growth boundary remains unchanged, forcing more infill development and limiting the supply of job-creating areas in the city. For example, a single neighborhood pool was shuttered and replaced with three houses.
- There are two efforts underway to create a new vision for development on River Road North and Cherry Avenue Northeast.
- The City of Keizer pulled the plug on the one committee tasked with economic development and turned the task over to the Keizer Chamber of Commerce.
- Most of the new commercial development has been in the form of food service and health-care. A few unique retailers have added to the mix, but few of those were new additions to the Salem-Keizer area.
- The city could finally have a cinema again by the end of this year.



The Goal:

Balanced transportation

- Keizer now has its own transit center.
- Two bike repair stations offering tools for quick fixes and free air for filling tires are in city limits.
- The addition of the roundabout at Chemawa Road North and Verda Lane Northeast has eased congestion and resulted in very few crashes.
- The Dearborn Avenue bridge is scheduled for replacement this year.
- The city's network of sidewalks remains incomplete with few options for funding aside from state and federal grants.
- Improving Wheatland Road North will be the focus of work by the Mid-Willamette Council of Governments' transportation efforts.
- Sidewalks were extended on Chemawa Road North to Keizer Rapids Park.
- Keizer roads, generally, are of a high quality.



The Goal:

Excellent public services

- New fees for police and public services are expanding opportunities for the city to bolster each department.
- After getting put through the wringer in an effort to pave the way for a Keizer Walmart, the Keizer City Council's efforts to engage different parts of the community are broader.
- Crime in Keizer is generally below average for a city of its size.
- The city development code has kept pace with emerging trends like food carts and accessory dwellings.
- Keizer schools remain attractive and attentive to student needs making a Keizer address a sought-after asset.

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