

Citywide automated water meter upgrade completed

On March 2, the city utility crew replaced the city's final mechanical water meter with a new automated meter. The new automated water meters are meant to reduce operating costs, alerting customers of potential waterline leaks and breaks, and allowing the utility crew to focus on making repairs and upgrades to other city infrastructure. The project replaced 4,037 meters and took approximately 14 months to complete. The automated water meters send water usage totals every 15 minutes

to the city utility billing clerk's computer. In the past, two utility crew members would physically read each meter in the city, which took about seven days on average to complete. Now, the information is sent electronically to the Finance Department allowing monthly water usage statements to be calculated each month on the same day. The automated meters are programmed to send alarm notices to the utility billing clerk when water usage is out of an account's normal range. For example, water use



The city's mechanical water meters (left) have been completely replaced by new, automated meters.

that stays at a constant rate for a 24-hour period and conflicts with past usage trends would notify the clerk.

The clerk reviews the account and notifies the property owner of the usage and the possibility of a water leak. In recent months, the clerk has called customers regarding potential leaks, successfully identifying problems before they cause potential damage and/or higher water bills. In December 2020, there were 12 calls made, in January 2021, 16 calls and in February 2021, 15 calls. By working with customers directly, most of the issues are resolved quickly, reducing the number of leak checks requiring a technician to perform a service request. In a three-month period (December through February), call-out requests were reduced by 27. The utility billing clerk anticipates the number of technician-required leak checks to continue to decrease as the city is able to make efficient use of the reports, alerts and information that the system is providing.

Lane County Bicycle Master Plan launches open house

Lane County is asking residents to mark their calendars and participate in the upcoming online Lane County Bicycle Master Plan Open House now through the March 22. The county is seeking to understand bicyclists' experiences using Lane County's rural roads and paved paths through the project's online interactive mapping tool. Lane County is developing its first ever Bicycle Master Plan with the vision to make bicycling a viable regional transportation option throughout Lane County for people of all ages and abilities, link communities to destinations and services and connect where people live, work, and play.

This effort focuses on Lane County's rural roads and its paved paths outside of the Eugene-Springfield urban area. As an amendment to the Lane County Transportation System Plan, the Bicycle Master Plan will go before the Lane County Board of Commissioners for adoption with recommendations to improve:

- Safety and comfort for people who bike and all roadway users
- Connectivity of regional bicycling between rural communities and the urban area
- Equity of access to convenient, safe, and affordable means of transportation
- Economic development opportunities for bicycle tourism related businesses
- Public health benefits

from expanded active transportation. A live session with the planners is available on March 16, from 4 to 6 p.m. Those interested can visit the "Events" page at lanecountybmp.com to join the live conversation. To learn more about the planning process, schedule, review the bilingual fact sheet and sign up for e-updates, visit Lane County Bicycle Master Plan or contact the Bicycle Master Plan Project Manager, Becky Taylor, at becky.taylor@lanecountyor.gov or call 541-255-5761.

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