

Bend would need a plan for ADA parking

Many things the Bend City Council does escape attention. The talk of eliminating minimum parking requirements has not.

What a topic parking is. Personal. Political. Environmental. Unimportant compared to so many things. So very important in other ways.

The best public presentation we have heard about the idea was at a recent online forum courtesy of City Club of Central Oregon. It raised a key issue that will need to get some serious discussion: When you get rid of parking minimums, what happens to parking for the disabled?

First, an overview. There is no official plan that lays out where parking minimums will be eliminated. It's just talk for now. It seems like it would be for new construction, possibly renovation. Removing parking minimums doesn't mean businesses, apartments and homes would have no parking. Would you buy a home without any off-street parking? Would you rent an apartment without any off-street parking? Would you go to a supermarket with no off-street parking? Some would. Some would not.

When we have talked to businesses and builders, they aren't going to not build parking. When similar changes have been implemented elsewhere, it doesn't mean no more parking is built. There is just more choice.

Parking minimums mean less space for housing. Look at two cars parked next to each other at the supermarket. You could put a small apartment in that space. Maybe it wouldn't be an apartment that you would want, but still, you get the idea.

Russ Grayson, Bend's community development director, gave an excellent example during the City Club forum. You have seen those homes along the Arizona/Colorado couplet in Bend, near The Box Factory. Developers have wanted to turn some of the single family homes into 3-story mixed use developments. Commercial space on the bottom. Offices, maybe in the middle. Perhaps housing on top. If you try to pack that on one of those lots with the city's current parking requirements, you would

need 5-6 parking spaces on the lot. It doesn't work. The developer walks away.

More parking requirements mean less intense development and less infill, meaning less room for housing. Housing prices are already crazy.

Now if we are going to have less parking at buildings, Bend also needs to be smarter about parking or there are going to be problems. Technology can help. Bend is not there. More transit can help. Bend is not there. More safe routes for bikers and pedestrians can help. Bend is not there.

Cascades East Transit has good plans for better transit. The city's GO bond will help with the bike and pedestrian routes. Will the decline of parking be matched by a perfect crescendo of transit, bike paths and people ditching their cars? Probably not. But Bend can't just be like Bend has been. State law insists on and enforces more infill. Wouldn't it be better to try to find a smart way to adjust to those constraints? We'll let you answer that one.

Any change in parking requirements must take into consideration the disabled. Bend's development code currently provides the requirements for the total number of parking spaces for a development. It also dictates the number of required ADA spaces. There are charts in the code with ratios. If parking minimums are absolutely eliminated for new construction or even renovations, there would technically be no requirements for ADA spaces, the city told us.

We can't imagine that would happen. Or at least it better not. So what then should the requirements be for ADA spaces? What's the right number for a business, an apartment building? Should housing developments be required to have some homes with off-street parking? If you have some ideas about that or about the parking plans, send them along to Bend City Councilors at council@bendoregon.gov.

What road or bike project should Bend build next?

Remember the \$190 million transportation bond Bend voters approved in November?

Now decisions are being made about how that money will be spent. The city is not pulling a switcheroo and spending it differently than promised. But decisions are being made about what gets done when — metrics for prioritizing projects, project scheduling and sequencing.

The Transportation Bond Oversight Committee will be making recommendations. The committee is a new kind of thing for Bend. Other

communities in Central Oregon have already used them. It should provide more transparency and accountability over how the bond money is spent.

The goal is the committee will pick "good-better-best" projects to go first based on safety, reducing pollution, equity, mobility improvement, construction fatigue, project readiness and more. If you are interested, the committee meets on Tuesday by Zoom. More information is available here www.bendoregon.gov/government/committees/bond-oversight-committee.

Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.

NCAA President Mark Emmert Finally Agrees Athletes Should Be Paid



My Nickel's Worth

Library vision

I remember when they first talked about building the new hospital "way out of town," and many people were upset that it was too far from the center of town. Look at it now; it is the center of the east side of Bend. Homes and businesses have grown up around it.

The same thing will happen to the location of the new library. Already, there is a school nearby, and homes are expanding all the way out O.B. Riley Road. Businesses are set to move in across the highway, and more growth is projected. Yes, the highways and roads will need to be reconfigured, but the state is already working on plans for that. There will be growing pains.

But, we voted for this new facility, and I urge people to trust the vision of the library board and administration. You will still be able to walk to the downtown library or the East Bend Branch.

As a former staff member of the East Bend Library, it pleases me that so many people have supported it and requested that it become a bigger and better branch. The citizens of Bend support libraries.

— Sue Fountain, Bend

Protect public lands

On a recent weekend, I was honored to join the Central Oregon Landcruisers and Central Oregon Off-Highway Vehicle Association for a China Hat cleanup. These groups teamed up with neighborhood volunteers to fill two huge dumpsters and make countless trips to the landfill. To mitigate wildfire risk, they scouted out abandoned vehicles, secured funding, organized machinery and tow trucks

and worked with local officials to get approval for removal.

About a month ago, Wanderlust Tours organized a China Hat cleanup, as well, which included sandblasting graffiti from the walls of our lava caves.

China Hat Road is the nearest access point to the Deschutes National Forest for those of us in southeast Bend, and it is heavily used by a diverse group of people.

I am so grateful for these truly heroic efforts to keep this public land clean and protected.

— Sara Moss, Bend

The houseless on Emerson

The clearing of the homeless from Emerson Avenue described in the recent Bulletin is disheartening. Local government is abdicating its responsibilities to not only the homeless but to the residents of south Bend, who will now be asked to bear the burden of risk created by uncontrolled encampments up China Hat Road.

The forests are a tinder box in this year's drought. Three fires were caused by or associated with RVs on public land only yesterday, and the solution by Bend City government is to move people into the forest. This problem has become the responsibility of an undermanned Deschutes National Forest department who are asked to enforce the laws, clean up the mess and fight fires. For residents of south Bend, we are asked to bear the brunt of increased fire risk.

Isn't it time for local government to create safe campsites for those who are living on the streets? Providing sanitation, safety, support and decent living conditions for these people until they are able fill the myriad of un-

filled positions now advertised? The very block on Emerson could be leveled and services provided there.

Simply moving the homeless into the forest does not make them go away, it only makes them less visible and puts all of us in danger.

— William Cosgrove, Bend

Please get vaccinated

According to the stats on COVID recently provided by The Bulletin, we are doing pretty well in Oregon, and locally.

In Oregon, one person has died out of every 75 people who have had COVID-19. In our tri-county area, one person out of 95 with the disease has died. In Deschutes County alone, one person has died out of 123 who had or have the disease.

It is much worse in other areas of our country and the world. We must be doing something right, and getting vaccinated might be the key. The availability, and turnout, at the county fairgrounds has been well received and applauded.

The goal is to have 70% of the people in the United States vaccinated by the end of July. Sadly, there are areas where people are not convinced, and they are staying away in droves.

I'm not trying to downplay the seriousness of COVID, but many disease states have a worse mortality. My grandfather died in the flu epidemic of 1918, and at least 20 million died worldwide, and some reports say it was two or three times that number.

So don't despair, get your vaccination! They are saying that most of the people dying now were not vaccinated, and this new variant is adding fuel to the fire.

— Dr. H. D. Kelley, Bend

Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words and must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred.

Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

Write: My Nickel's Worth/Guest Column
P.O. Box 6020
Bend, OR 97708

Fax: 541-385-5804

Library board is moving county libraries in the right direction

BY RON PARADIS

A recent piece on the editorial page of The Bulletin may have misled readers into thinking the Deschutes Library Board is moving in a direction counter to what is the best interest of the public. The writer, Louis Capozzi, seems to think he knows more than the collective community.

In November — just seven months ago — 84% of registered voters cast ballots, and a majority supported what the library board had proposed to the county residents. More than 63,000 said "yes," we want a new central library and upgrades to other library facilities throughout the county. The measure

passed, giving direction to the board to move forward and begin to fulfill the will of the people.

However, Mr. Capozzi says he speaks on behalf of "older adults in Central Oregon" and thinks the will of voters should be overturned. Seriously? He thinks his personal belief is more important than what the voters have mandated?

Additionally, this writer made a false statement to help solidify his claims. About the East Bend Library, he said, "You have made no commitment to keeping the facility open past the end of the lease." Had he asked anyone involved with the library, he would have known the board recently signed a new five-year



Paradis

GUEST COLUMN

lease on the East Bend Library, solidifying its commitment to operating that branch. Additionally, there are dedicated funds in the bond to improve the East Bend Library's layout and infrastructure.

He also says the library is making facilities "well out of practical reach for many older residents." Let's remember, there are branches in downtown Bend, east Bend, Redmond, Sunriver and La Pine. As for access to the new central library — the library staff is working with the Oregon Department of Transportation and Cascades East Transit to assure it will be easy to get to and right on a bus line in this growing part of the county. Ad-

ditionally, the library will continue to work with partners in the community who serve senior and other-able communities as it has always done.

I was included with about 40 community leaders who served in an advisory capacity to help plan future libraries. I was impressed with the depth of the library's reach into our communities and the visionary thinking that went into planning the next 50 years of library service in Deschutes County.

In my career and my volunteer experiences, I have worked on several bond measures over the past 30 years. When you are involved — in favor or against — you often wonder what the voters were thinking when they cast their ballots. However, what matters in a democracy is this: Whatever the

majority of voters say is what will — and needs to — happen.

The writer of last week's piece apparently thinks differently. "You are asking the residents of Deschutes County to pay a 60% increase in their library taxes," he wrote as part of why he wants the plans stalled or even halted. He's right — that was the question that was asked — and answered — last year: residents VOTED to pay for new and upgraded facilities.

No, the library board should not ignore or overrule the voters. It's time to move on and provide enhanced library services throughout the county.

■ Ron Paradis is a member of The Bulletin's community editorial board. He retired as the communications director for Central Oregon Community College and has been involved in the community for 30 years.