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Final Innovation Gateway plan presented

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

A final concept plan for John Day's Innovation Gateway project was presented to a joint meeting of the city council, planning commission and two advisory committees Aug. 27.

Following a tour of the former Oregon Pine mill and other parts of the project site, Ken Pirie, an urban planner with Walker M a c y , recapped the project's history and presented the resulting plans.

Concept plan

The three main Innovation Gateway components were restoration of the John Day River, an integrated parks plan and extending Seventh Street from Bridge Street to Patterson Bridge Road, Pirie said.

Inter-Fluve of Hood River came up with the idea of modifying the channelized John Day River where it ran through historic gold mine dredge tailings into a meandering stream, Pirie said.

The Seventh Street extension would serve as an emergency route, an expansion of the city's street grid and as a parkway for recreational purposes, he said. The city applied for about \$15 million in federal grant funding to finance the Seventh Street extension and other road projects. City Manager Nick Green said the city could learn about the grant award in five to six months.

Green suggested an archway be placed over Highway 26 near Patterson Bridge Road but noted the Oregon Department of Transportation generally doesn't support permanent structures over state highways. A banner strung across the roadway was an alternative, he said.

Attendee Lisa Weigum noted that banners often get weathered and begin to look tacky. Following additional comments on the idea, Mayor Ron Lundbom suggested asking members of the local artist community for ideas.

Pirie said small wayfinding signs would be needed

around the city. Green said most visitors don't know the John Day River even flows through John Day. Several people warned about sign clutter, and Levi Manitsas suggested using a mobile phone app to help visitors find their way around.

The Innovation Gateway concept plan also includes a new hotel with 60-100 rooms to be built just west of the yellow sawmill building.

During discussion about overlay zoning for the project area and height restrictions, Weigum expressed sharp concerns about aesthetics being impacted by such a large building.

Weigum also objected when Green noted that larger setbacks would be needed along the river if the city sells lots in the project area. She noted that she served on the city council when it voted to purchase the Oregon Pine mill site and she believed the council intended to use the site for public land.

She said she was strongly opposed to zoning the project site so it could be sold in pieces. Green responded that protecting the land with some type of conservation measure could be very expensive.

Social benefits

Several committee members raised concerns about whether the Innovation Gateway project benefited everyone in the city equally.

Attendee Rob Raschio noted that the city's housing crisis was especially hard on lower income working families. The city needed improved housing stock and more affordable housing, he said, and a conversation about this issue needed to be started.

Weigum agreed, noting that the project focused on specific demographics and tourism. She approved of supporting the tourism industry, but she didn't want to see some city residents left behind.

Councilor Gregg Haberly said focus should be turned on the city's drug problem. He called for enforcing the laws and ending free handouts. He also suggested crime was more common in the city's high-density, low-income housing projects.

Lundbom suggested benefits from the Innovation Gateway project would trickle down to the rest of the city. Residents in mobile home parks and low income apartment complexes would eventually be able to buy their own homes, he said.

Raschio agreed that a systemic drug problem existed in John Day, but many residents who need better housing are not criminals. If the city wants to create a sustainable community, lower income residents need to be included.

Matt Hastie, a project manager with Angelo Planning Group who spoke on



The Eagle/Richard Hanners
John Day City Councilor Gregg Haberly, left, and city planning commissioner Tim Unterwegner at the city council meeting on Aug. 27.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

GUN OWNERS AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WORKING TOGETHER

A culturally sensitive way to talk about suicide

By Carol Cruzan Morton
For the Bend Bulletin

Suicide rates are rising, and the role of guns is stark, unavoidable and contentious. So it may be remarkable that some health professionals have taken the unusual step of partnering with gun owners in firearm-friendly strategies for saving lives.

In Central Oregon, researchers worked with a family doctor and rural firearm owners to develop a suicide prevention message that respects the cultural values and rights of gun owners.

The resulting brochure they developed and tested evokes national patriotism, with a bald eagle against a U.S. Constitution and flag.

"We believe firearms are an American way of life — a constitutional right and a necessity in order to protect ourselves and our families," says the text. "And with this RIGHT to bear arms comes RESPONSIBILITY."

The Oregon pamphlet lists warning signs of suicide and offers advice for friends and family to take action to protect their loved ones who are going through a "tough patch." The language, attitudes and action steps mimic the informal customs among gun owners, the researchers learned.

"One of the things we discovered was that firearm owners were having conversations about suicide prevention," said Elizabeth Marino, an anthropologist at Oregon State University-Cascades in Bend, who designed the studies. "All this time, this work was going on outside of the knowledge and collaboration with public health."

"They have people they're worried about," added Susan Keys, who retired from OSU-Cascades and is a public health program development consultant who helped lead the project.

"All we're after is keeping people safe," said Laura Pennavaria, a family doctor and chief medical officer of St. Charles Health System in Bend who helped develop the materials.

The Bend team is rolling out an online training course for Oregon doctors and other health care professionals that teaches health care professionals how to identify suicidal behavior. Similar efforts have emerged in states with high and rising suicide rates across the country, primarily as local responses to suicides. The Oregon program arose independently to help local doctors talk to patients at risk of suicide in rural communities.

Public health professionals in locations across the country have partnered with gun owners to develop safety training and suicide prevention messages targeted to gun shops, shooting ranges and citizens with concealed carry permits.

The partnerships are uneasy alliances between people who disagree about solutions to gun violence, such as legislation. However, those same people have a common goal: reduce suicides by reducing access to guns. In the United States, two out of every three deaths by firearm are suicide.

Involving firearms owners in developing suicide prevention messages and training may be flying largely under the radar, but proponents of the strategy dream of a day when the idea of friends keeping friends at risk of suicide away from guns has the same cultural resonance as friends not letting friends drive drunk.

For now, the Bend team knows its gun safety message sits well with rural Oregon gun owners.

BREAKING THE SILENCE

In April, newsrooms across the state launched an unprecedented collaboration to put a spotlight death by suicide.

The goal was to not only highlight a problem that claimed the lives of more than 800 people last year, but also examine research into how prevention can and does work and offer our readers, listeners and viewers resources to help if they — or those they know — are in crisis.

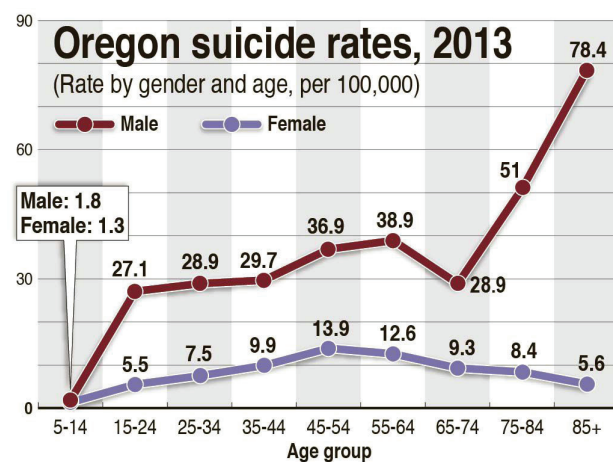


This September, during National Suicide Prevention Month, we are following up with more stories, as part of our "Breaking the Silence" media initiative.

This collaborative reporting project stemmed from an earlier conversation about media coverage of suicide, facilitated by Lines for Life, a regional nonprofit focused on suicide prevention.

The journalism of each newsroom has been independent, guided by local editors and best suited for their local communities.

Our hope, however, is that by working collaboratively and promoting one another's work, this group effort will allow us to shine a brighter light on this problem.



Pennavaria became involved when patients began talking to her about their suicidal thoughts after a student shot himself at Bend High School. She was struck by a study that reported 64% of people who die by suicide had contact with their primary care provider within a year of death and 45% had contact within one month. The study included Oregonians.

Most people who kill themselves with firearms have no major suicide risk factors in their medical records, such as mental health issues, substance abuse, or previous suicide attempts, found postdoctoral researcher Jennifer Boggs and her colleagues at the Institute for Health Research at Kaiser Permanente Colorado in Aurora.

Even for people at risk of suicide or who had attempted suicide in the past month, only one-third had notes in their medical records of firearm discussions with patients, Boggs and her colleagues found in a follow-up study.

Standard public health approaches to gun safety may backfire and alienate the people they intend to help.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Counseling Access to Lethal Means (CALM) training:** sprc.org/resources-programs/calm-counseling-access-lethal-means
- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and National Shoot-**

- ing Sports Foundation's Suicide Prevention Toolkit:** nssf.org/safety/suicide-prevention-toolkit
- **Harvard University's Means Matter program:** hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter

- **Central Oregon Suicide Prevention brochure:** oregonfirearmsafety.org
- **Utah Suicide Prevention Coalition PSA-Gun Range:** vimeo.com/175761640

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