

City plans to fix 'ugly' downtown problem

The Columbia Press

Fixing ugly isn't easy.

When Oregon Department of Transportation widened portions of Main Avenue and sidewalks were replaced, it left a problem: big ugly power poles in the street. And then a car hit one.

ODOT "fixed" the problem by putting curbs around the poles with white reflective posts.

"ODOT dropped the ball," City Commissioner Mark Baldwin said.

"What they presented to us didn't look anything like what we got," Mayor Pro Tem Rick Newton said.

"We got 'ugly,'" Commissioner Tom Dyer said, completing Newton's train of thought.

Bring in the small trees and shrubs.

Warrenton's Urban Renewal Agency is formulating projects that will beautify Warrenton, particularly downtown.

When the agency was formed a decade ago, its mission was to take tax money and make changes that would impact citizens' lives and improve the city's economic vitality.

The first decade brought massive and expensive changes to Warrenton Marina. This second decade will bring smaller practical changes that are hoped to have a high impact visually.

The Veterans Memorial Plaza – a gathering place with benches, trees, landscaping and pavers highlighting a new

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Dyer

Bottleneck intersection to be widened

BY CINDY YINGST
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Photos by Cindy Yingst

Above: A pickup squeezes past a bus at the intersection of Main Avenue and Ninth Street near Warrenton Grade School. **Below:** Two girls scurry across Ninth Street at the intersection that will be widened next summer.



Main Avenue at Ninth Street is one of the city's busiest intersections from 8:30 to 9 a.m.

Buses, children walking to Warrenton Grade School and parents dropping off their children all seem to converge at the bottleneck.

And when two big vehicles – a fire truck and a full-sized bus, for instance – meet, it can be an effort as awkward as a size 12 woman putting on size 8 pants.

The city took steps to ease the squeeze this week.

City Commissioners approved a \$160,000 plan to widen and round out the corners of the intersection.

"This is a project that we feel, at staff level, needs to be moved up in the prioritization chain," City Manager Linda Engbretson told commissioners Tuesday night.

Another road project in the city came in under budget, leaving nearly the entire amount the city engineer estimates is needed for the Ninth and Main project.

"It's a terrible intersection," Mayor Pro

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Italian restaurant planned at Shilo Inn site

Changes are in the works at several other Warrenton restaurants

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Owners of Jim's Place, a diner that will serve American and Italian food, hope to open by the end of next week in the restaurant building next to Shilo Inn in Warrenton.

"I just think, with Walmart going in, Warrenton is the next up and coming thing," said DeAnna Lounsbury, who will manage the restaurant for her son, Jim Raniero, who will do most of the cooking.

On Tuesday, the 40-seat restaurant won approval from the City Commission to obtain a liquor license from the state.

The large restaurant most recently was home to Dragon River and before that, Mulan. Earlier this year, a 24-hour diner had been proposed at the site, but plans for that fell through.

Jim's Place will serve breakfast, lunch and dinner and there will be

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The manager of Jim's Place said they expect to open next to Shilo Inn by the end of next week.