

Dale McDowell digs in to big building projects

Seaside resident brings about 40 years of construction experience to Public Works position

By Katherine Lacaze
Seaside Signal

Seaside's new Public Works Director Dale McDowell foresees no major changes to the department under his leadership but plans to continue supporting staff and serving community residents as they tackle new projects.

McDowell, a 12-year Seaside resident, started working as Public Works Director Nov. 9. He is filling the role formerly held by Neal Wallace, who retired in June. Wallace served the city for about 17 years.

McDowell brings to the job about 40 years of experience in the construction industry. Most recently, he worked for TFT Construction, a full-service contractor based in Scappoose. Prior to that, he worked for a contractor based in Astoria. He has experience and training working on buildings; roads;

wastewater and storm systems; water lines; and water treatment and sewer treatment plants. He has built relationships with governmental agencies including the Oregon Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Quality, Army Corps of Engineers and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

McDowell sought to become Public Works Director in anticipation of "a little change."

"It's the only facet that I haven't really been involved in construction," he said. "I thought it would be interesting."

As a director, he has more managerial responsibilities, including "a lot of paperwork" which he said he doesn't mind.

McDowell oversees a staff of 19 from the engineering, water, sewer and streets and parks departments. He also works with the Seaside building and planning departments on several projects.

When he accepted the position as Public Works Director, McDowell served on the Transportation Advisory



Dale McDowell started as Seaside's new Public Works Director on Nov. 9.

Commission, the Budget Committee and the City Tree Board. He had to resign from the budget committee; he will continue serving on the City Tree Board and the Transportation Advisory Commission but as the staff representative, a position he also will take on the Airport Committee and Parks Advisory Committee.

Additionally, in the past, McDowell volunteered to help install playground equipment at Cartwright Park. He said he believes it is important to volunteer.

"You have to give back to your community," McDow-

ell said. "Sometimes when you're younger, you don't really realize that, and as you get older, you really realize it. You want to do those things."

In particular, he liked serving on the city's Budget Committee, where he could see how the city was spending its tax revenue.

As Public Works Director, McDowell hopes to bring to the table more learning opportunities for employees.

"A lot of it is training the staff from the construction end of it, to show them some of the new techniques that are out there," he said. "There's quite a bit of difference when you're maintaining something and when you're building it from scratch to start with."

He wants his staff to be adept at both.

McDowell also plans on bringing more projects to the table and writing grants to get funds to do so.

"We have a long, long list of projects," he said. The city has to decide which "ones to take on at a time because of funding."

Besides the North Holladay Drive improvement

'You have to give back to your community. Sometimes when you're younger, you don't really realize that, and as you get older, you really realize it.'

Dale McDowell

Additionally, he said, the city would like to put all the utilities throughout the city underground, "but unfortunately everything comes down to funding."

The city does some small project and many repairs in-house. They have to send certain projects out to public bid based on the city's charter and state laws.

McDowell does not anticipate there will be any major changes to the department under his leadership. He would like to get more city employees involved in each project "so everyone gets a say or at least an opinion on it," he said.

"Any time you have a change in administration, there is always some changes that go on, too. But a lot of what was being done will continue," McDowell said. "Like I've told all the staff, I'm not here to change what they're doing. I'm here to support them. And along the way, we'll probably make some changes, but for the time being, we still have to provide for the city and the residents, and that's our most important focus."

McDowell seeks team effort on Holladay project

Holladay from Page 1A

City Engineer Geoff Liljenwall, project engineer Al Hardwood and McDowell will oversee the project and handle the final inspection, but McDowell hopes other city departments join in.

"It's a citywide project and I want everyone involved on it," McDowell said, adding when people can offer their opinions on a project, they become invested and "take a little ownership in it."

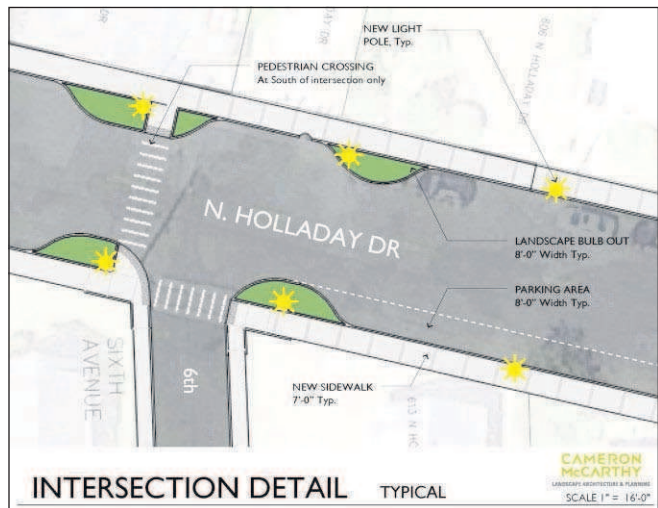
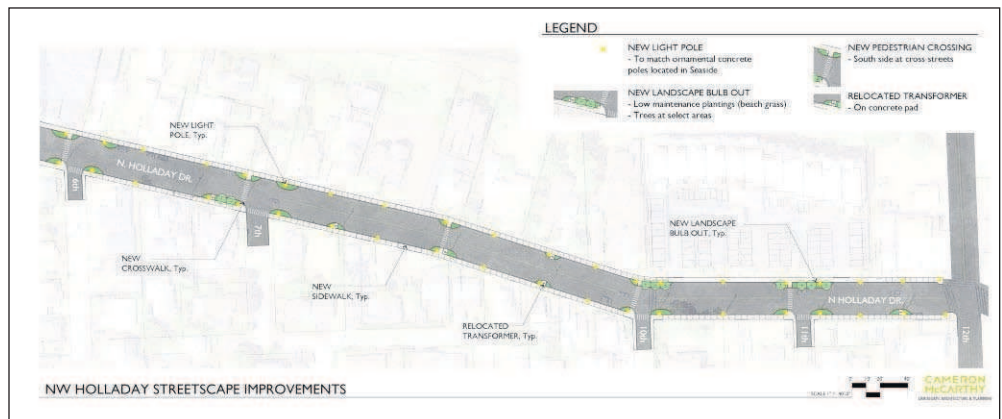
CenturyLink and Charter Communications delivered plans later than expected, delaying the project. Some in-house engineering and design plans also took longer than expected.

While city officials had hoped to have all work finished by Memorial Day, they are now asking the general contractor to achieve "substantial completion" by that time.

May 27 is the "key paving date," when all the asphalt and curbs need to be laid — ahead of Memorial Day — "so that the road could be opened and used," McDowell said.

The project is scheduled to continue for about 30 days afterward, for the contractor to put in the rest of the sidewalks, landscaping and electrical hook-ups, he said.

The city will replace the existing sewer main, water



main, force main and storm drainage along North Holladay and connect existing sewer and water service to the new water and sewer main. The project details installation of underground vaults and conduits for conversion of the existing overhead utilities — electrical, telephone and cable — to

underground utilities.

New pavement and sidewalks will complete the project.

Utility providers include Pacific Power, CenturyLink and Charter Communications. Water and sewer are public utilities.

The estimated cost of the project ranges from \$2.8

million to \$3.2 million. The cost of a bond for a project so expensive may prohibit some smaller, local contractors from bidding on the project, McDowell said. However, the city will supply local companies with information about the general contractors bidding on the project. That "gives local contractors the opportunity to know who to contact" about subcontracting opportunities, he said, which is better than waiting until the job is awarded and then trying to "get in" as a subcontractor.

"The only way they can really work on the project is to get a subcontracting opportunity, so that's why it's key they contact the general contractors," McDowell said. "Everything is public record. We just have to make sure they're looking at the public record."

Dougherty 'commanded respect' due to his work ethic

Dougherty from Page 1A

Beach Elementary School before being hired to replace former superintendent Harold Riggan in 1998.

Phillips, who was on the board when it hired Dougherty, said he "absolutely" has achieved everything the board hoped for and expected when it made the decision. Phillips described Dougherty as "the epitome of the opposite" of Riggan, a tall, athletic man who commanded respect and attention with his physical presence.

"Dougherty has commanded respect because of the work ethic and the knowledge he has," Phillips said, adding he provides the board with background information and research to help members make every decision regarding the district.

Dougherty's retirement is coming "quicker than a lot

of us anticipated," Phillips said, but "obviously we support Doug."

"He's been a personal hero to a lot of us," Phillips said.

In the past, Dougherty has served on the board of directors for the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, the board of directors for the Oregon Association of School Executives, the superintendent advisor to the Oregon State Board and the advisor to the Oregon Department of Education State Assessment Committee.

Presently, Dougherty is involved with the Vision and Policy Coalition of the Oregon Association of School Executives, the Oregon Office of Emergency Management: Planning Team for the Cascadia Rising 2016 Statewide Functional Exercise, the Ore-

gon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission and the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute's School Earthquake Safety Initiative Subcommittee.

Dougherty stated in his letter he is grateful to parents and community mem-

bers for their support and amazing generosity.

"I also want to thank the current and past administrators, teachers and staff for tirelessly creating collaborative learning environments as they develop our community's greatest asset — its children," he wrote.

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