


2022 State of the City

Hello I'm Ray Smith. For over 5 years, I have had the honor of serving as the Mayor of Coburg.

It is my privilege to present to you the 2022 Coburg State of the City Address.

The City of Coburg government is very fortunate to be led by an amazing group of City Councilors with broad and diverse backgrounds. These citizens have courageously stepped into leadership roles and together have created a solid, knowledgeable team that has guided Coburg through many tough issues. Our Council convened 20 meetings in 2021. Each of these meetings requires about 2 hours of reading and study prior to attending these meetings. We are so grateful to our Councilors for all of the volunteer hours they commit to our city, and especially for the courage to step up and make tough decisions that affects our city now, and into the future. Councilors, Thank You for your continued dedication and service.

2021 is a year that will be remembered by many as the exhausting continuation of the COVID 19 Pandemic.

Coburg has not been immune to the consequences of this pandemic. However, we have been fortunate to maintain a high livability standard while dealing with the era of Social Distancing and political discord at every level of society.

Coburg is a small city of about 1,300 residents with 85 licensed businesses. We straddle I-5 just north of the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area. The small town feel with quick access to the metro area is one of the many appealing perks of living and working in Coburg.

The City of Coburg has 20 employees, and contracts for City Attorney, City Engineer, Municipal Judge, and City Planner. We provide land use planning, development, water, sewer, street, park, and police services.

We are a small city with big ambitions. Our working capacity is severely limited by our number of employees. In spite of this, our small staff accomplishes an amazing amount of high quality work. Rest assured, the residents and businesses are getting great value for their tax dollars. We should be very proud of the Coburg staff's accomplishments.

Our properties continue to hold high value and the city continues to expand its livability and cultural experiences. Coburg continues to be fiscally sound and well positioned for possible economic downturns and potential disasters.

Our water and sewer departments are financially stable and well maintained. The water system is in the process of modernization and expansion. Water and sewer departments are self-supporting through the fees charged to users. We do not use tax dollars to support these services. With good planning and aggressive maintenance, we have been able to keep our fees stable while still providing expanded services and system upgrades.

Transportation issues in Coburg affect every aspect of governance and living in Coburg. Growth of population and business have affected Coburg tremendously. Increased traffic has elevated safety concerns and access issues within our city. One of the most significant issues regarding the increased traffic lies outside of Coburg and Coburg's ability to control and respond to the problems. Growth of cities and businesses to the northwest of Coburg have been generating larger numbers of commuter and commercial traffic through our town. This traffic travels on Willamette and Pearl streets to access Interstate 5 and the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area. Although these streets are within our city limits, they actually belong to Lane County. Another jurisdictional issue is the I-5 overpass which is owned by the Oregon Department of Transportation. This structure effectively divides our city with an outdated and unsafe bridge that is the only access to all residents and businesses on the east side of I-5 at Coburg.

These jurisdictional overlaps have created a significant workload for our city planning while trying to deal with community safety and development issues.

Staff and elected officials have diligently worked to increase communication and knowledge regarding these transportation concerns. Emergency response for our police and fire has become a greater concern as we deal with shortcomings in our local transportation infrastructure. These are issues that the City of Coburg has little to no control over, but we are communicating and working with the controlling jurisdictions. We have developed good working relationships with representatives from many agencies including, Lane County, Oregon Department of Transportation, Department of Land Conservation and Development, and the Oregon Regional Solutions Team. In addition, we have built stronger relationships with our local business leaders to share knowledge that helps us improve zoning and development codes, and create a better city response to issues that arise within Coburg.

A citizen committee was appointed by the City Council to study and present possible recommendations for updating our downtown commercial zoning ordinance. We were very fortunate to have a very knowledgeable group of citizens work on this project. After months of meetings, the committee has returned with substantial recommendations that will help us retain our small town charm and livability in our downtown area. The recommendation is complex and is currently being worked into a draft proposal for City Council consideration.

The City of Coburg is committed to providing recreational opportunities to our residents and visitors. Our Parks and Tree Committee worked with staff to create a new park, and improve our existing parks. We have a new bicycle hub in Pavilion Park, and the City is very close to completing an expansion of that park. The new Johnny Diamond Park is a testament to the energy and creativity of our citizens in creating a unique open space in our new residential neighborhood. The City has also acquired two new pieces of land for future parks. The Parks committee and our Heritage committee will be working together to plan for a Heritage park that will help display and memorialize our agricultural heritage.

The Heritage Committee has revitalized our commitment to our Historic District and the wonderful old buildings, in addition to the previously mentioned work on sharing our agricultural heritage.

The City of Coburg is supporting the formation of a non-profit agency called Coburg Main Street. The goal of this endeavor is to create a resource for coordination of knowledge and information for our residents, businesses and visitors. This non-profit will apply for and direct grant monies within our community. A key element is to have a paid staff member that can provide continuity and much of the

leg work to coordinate and help produce our many festivals and community events. They would also be a primary community access point for information on businesses, events, history and local news.

Coburg Main Street already has a handful of committees that have volunteers working on projects like; Coburg Branding and Marketing, rehabilitation and community utilization of the International Order of Odd Fellows hall, a City Hall façade update, Community Murals and cultural projects, and First Responders Recognition and Support. This organization will be a key player in the future livability of Coburg.

Coburg is such a great place to live. I have said this many times, and I mean it! But why is it a city that and so many of us love? Is it because it's a small town? Is it because we are surrounded by beautiful farmland and natural open spaces? Is it the moderate climate? Yes, to all of these. But most importantly, it is the people. People that really do love where they live. People that put work into making Coburg a place to love. People that respect each other, work together and celebrate together. People that share.

Coburg has so many talented people. The key to our success is what these people share. From artists to accountants, architects to machinists, farmers to builders. We share in the hard times, and we struggle together. We share in the good times, and we celebrate together. We share because we know it makes a difference for everybody.

We share our time, our knowledge and our prospective, all to make Coburg a place to love. We share because we care.

From elected Councilors, Mayor, and Board Members, to volunteer committee members, firefighter/EMTs, reserve police officers, and all of the other volunteers, we all give because we care about Coburg.

Coburg will remain strong and stable and a town that is easy to love because the people care!

Thank you for being Coburg, Thank you for caring.

Mayor Ray Smith

* Professional Video