**MEMORANDUM**

TO: City Council;

Richard Meyers, City Manager;

Faye Stewart, Public Works Director

FROM: Eric Mongan, Planning

DATE: July 12, 2018

**SUBJECT: Program Proposal: Main Street Construction Mitigation Program**

INTRODUCTION – The City is currently in the process of putting together an application for the 2018 Better Utilization of Infrastructure for Local Development (BUILD) Grant. This US Department of Transportation Grant is an opportunity to put shovels into the ground toward the adopted Main Street Refinement Plan. This grant application also serves as a turning point for the City as we begin to seek funding to make the ideas, designs, and proposals of the Main Street Refinement Plan a reality. The proposal in this memo is part of the effort by Staff to address the concerns heard from local businesses regarding a prolonged construction project on Main Street and the potential for lost business/revenue. Staff believes there are tools the City can utilize in conjunction with other organizations to support our local economy during the phased demolition and reconstruction of Main St, Whiteaker, Washington, alleys, and cross streets within the historic downtown.

BACKGROUND – As stated above, the act of seeking funding to complete the Main Street Revitalization Project marks a turning point for the City. Therefore, moving forward, it is important that the City be prepared, with programs and contingencies, rather than waiting for a grant award(s)/funding to kick-start the process. If the City’s application for the 2018 BUILD Grant is approved it is expected that all planning, engineering, and permitting are completed by June 30, 2020 and that all project dollars will be spent by September 30, 2025. It is fair to say that this multi-million dollar phased construction project will likely take several years from the first excavation to the last bit of striping is complete. The burden that small businesses bare when major construction is at their doorstep is well-documented and there are many tools currently in use across the country to help alleviate the concerns of business owners. Currently the City of Bend is undertaking a 5.4 million dollar reconstruction of its Simpson Avenue Roundabout. As part of the City’s effort to reduce the strain on business, it has created an informational website for the use of businesses and customers. Businesses can obtain project updates, understand phases of the project, and find contact information for project supervisors. For customers, the website provides information on road closures and detours while emphasizing that access to area businesses is available. (<https://www.bendbulletin.com/exports/newsletters/main/6156229-151/business-continues-on-west-side-despite-construction>). This example from neighboring Bend is just one tool at the disposal of municipalities looking to ensure a smooth construction period for local businesses for the duration of a project.

Through its administrative function the City of Cottage Grove supports the efforts of local businesses to be successful contributors to the community through workforce employment and to be goods/services providers locally, regionally, and beyond. Therefore it is rational that the City serve a role during Main St reconstruction as an advocate for the local business community. The Public Works and Community Development Department serves the City in this function to support economic development, specifically through public/private partnerships, business recruitment, retention, and expansion (three-legged stool of economic development). City partners in economic development include Main Street Program, EBID, and CGCDC. Staff believes that with the support of our existing partners we can adopt and operate a meaningful construction mitigation program for the purpose of business retention during the construction phases of the Main Street Revitalization Project.

PROPOSAL – Staff proposes the City adopt a Main Street Construction Mitigation Program staffed by the City of Cottage Grove through its Main Street, community engagement, planning, and community development capacities. This proposed program would take a multi-pronged approach to lessoning the burden associated with a long multi-phase construction project.

* Public Outreach – The cornerstone of this program will be the City connecting with businesses to keep them in the loop regarding all aspects of the construction project. Through stakeholder identification and mobilization the goal is to create an atmosphere of mutual benefit. Public outreach efforts should begin between Staff and businesses at least one year prior to the beginning of any demolition/construction activities. (This one-year out approach will provide time for conflict de-escalation, education, and other preparation activities.)
  + Stakeholder Identification
  + Communication Strategies
  + PSA’s
  + Conflict de-escalation
  + Education
* Signage – Signage within the scope of this program relates to the following: banners, placards, signs. These signs, whether public or private, will be for the purpose of keeping patrons informed about access to businesses during construction phases. Staff recommends reviewing existing sign code to determine if any amendment to the code will be necessary.
  + “Businesses open during construction”
  + “This way to access…”
  + “Construction Hours”
  + “Hard-hat Happy Hour”
* Phasing – Phased construction will allow for businesses to adapt their operating hours based on access to their storefront/services. Demolition/construction schedules should reflect a concerted effort to maintain access to businesses when at all possible and to limit road/access closures to off peak or non-business hours.
  + Phased construction to provide access to businesses when possible and prudent
  + Closures out of peak hours
  + Posted calendars
* Project Liaison – The project liaison is both a person of contact and an information conduit between the City, businesses, and contractors. The liaison is positioned to address individual concerns and group concerns. As project/timeline changes occur, the liaison will maintain relationships and serve as advocate and conflict de-escalator.
* Website – The website will be serve as a centralized information portal for all parties to view project timelines, plans, and updates. Features of the website could include newsletter sign-up, request for contact, and complaint filing.
* Information portal
* Weekly project updates
* Site plans/renderings
* Newsletters
* Contact Request
* Access Facilitation

Within reason maintain access to all businesses via construction access wayfinding tools/maps, pedestrian walkways, access to parking, temporary bike racks, temporary boardwalks, and trench plates.

* Grant Making $500-1000

Businesses that demonstrate a decrease in revenue associated with construction may apply for a small grant payable to owner or entity for the explicit purpose of enhanced marketing, advertising, and customer incentive programs. Grant funding is subject to approval by the Cottage Grove City Council and will be dispersed through the Public Works and Development Department.

* + - $500 – 1 to 5 employees
    - $1000 – 6 plus employees
    - Details of grant application to be finalized along with funding source

COST – The cost of the grant making portion of the program is estimated to be between $10,000 and $20,000 to be determined by how many grants are awarded and by what amount. The cost of signage is estimated to be $1,000. There is no additional cost associated with hosting the website, liaison, and public outreach as those duties can come from staff time. The cost of maintaining access to businesses will be covered through the construction budget and construction phasing addressed by bid scheduling. Staff estimates that the total program cost will not exceed $25,000.

RECCOMENDATION – Staff recommends that Council adopt the proposed Main Street Construction Mitigation Program for the purpose of supporting and retaining existing businesses potentially effected by prolonged periods of phased construction during the Main Street Revitalization Project.