



# NEWSLETTER

STRENGTH IN UNITY

Third Quarter 2021

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Thank you all for making this summer so unbelievably special to me. Our conference was incredible. I saw mayors of all persuasions exchanging ideas and building relationships.

Walls down. Bridges going up. This is what we need - now more than ever. I was overwhelmed by the positive feedback received by our conference planning committee and by the personal support I received from many of you, my colleagues and friends, before, during, and after the conference. Sometimes I wish I could slow down time. I would like more time to exchange ideas, network, build each other up, and share good work being done around our great state.

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# City Spotlight:

# UMATILLA



# CITY SPOTLIGHT:

## UMATILLA

*By Umatilla Mayor Mary Dedrick, City Manager David Stockdale  
and City Recorder Nanci Sandoval*

### Some History of Umatilla and our Local Economy

Umatilla is a small community of nearly 7,400 residents (including approximately 1,600 residents of Two Rivers Corrections Institution or “TRCI”) located at the confluence of the Umatilla and Columbia Rivers on a northern border of eastern Oregon and Washington. We are proud of our Umatilla High School Vikings and boast some of the highest student graduation rates throughout the state and an impressive robotics program and other educational programs (for some great entertainment, check out PBS’s *Big Dreams in Umatilla* that was featured earlier this year). Our town’s history is full of rich cultural and historical significances, with more than 10,000 years of aboriginal tribes thriving here, construction of nearby railroads that played a role in the trans-continental railroad and connecting lines which strongly influenced the Civil War, and the Petticoat Revolution in which seven women in 1916, recently empowered with the women’s right to vote in 1912, led secret campaigns (mostly against their husbands) to gain control of nearly all town offices. These dedicated women captured the mayorship and the majority of the council seats and went on to lead several reforms in the town that helped led to a rejuvenation in the town’s local economy. Umatilla has a long history as a close-knit community that enjoys public events and community gatherings, that embraces new technologies (i.e. Umatilla Landing, Columbia Plateau Railroad, and rich and diverse agriculture and ranching) and welcomes new and exciting commerce, and that fully utilizes the advantages of our geographic location in the state.

The early history of Umatilla enjoyed a relatively thriving local economy, mainly due to laying down agriculture roots and establishing itself as a main mercantile corridor for travelers on the tail-end of the 1849 San Francisco Gold Rush, or the Klondike Gold Rush that followed toward the end of the 19th Century. In 1948, Umatilla experienced debilitating flooding. By 1968, as a result of the construction of both the McNary Dam and the John Day Dam to



combat future floods as well as environmental goals, all residents and businesses of Umatilla were relocated to the town’s current location, approximately a half mile south and 35 feet higher in elevation than the original site for the city. Though the construction of McNary Dam created jobs and helped the City partially recover from the devastating floods, once construction was completed, the local economy suffered tremendously, with many of the town’s people leaving. For the next 30 years, Umatilla would frustratingly watch as surrounding communities would begin to grow and flourish while we pushed along.

Tides started to turn for Umatilla, however, at the beginning of the 2000s. Perhaps ironically, the Oregon Department of Corrections kicked off a new economic boom when they started construction on a new facility, Two Rivers Correctional Institution, in the mid-1990s and opened in 1999, sparking a population surge of new state workers (over 400) with living-wage jobs who needed housing and services. The facility required the City to complete major water system improvements in 1994 and an all-new wastewater treatment plant in 2000 to serve current and anticipated growth for the next 25 years.

With near-perfect timing in relation to Umatilla’s infrastructure plans, Amazon Web Services (AWS) showed interest in Umatilla in 2009, and by 2012, they cut the ribbon on their first building in Umatilla and Umatilla

County, 20-25 years since our last major infrastructure improvements. AWS could be viewed as the new-age pioneer in modern-technology: ushering in today's equivalent of the gold rush and railroad: data! And, just as our proud community has done for over 100 years, Umatilla stands ready to welcome and embrace the new technologies of our day and take full advantage of our recent good fortune, only this time, it comes with far more sophisticated and technical challenges and rewards.

### Recent Local Housing Boom

With TRCI now well established in Umatilla and AWS having now completed two data center campuses (nearly 1 million sq. ft. each, nearly 300 new jobs) with two more currently under construction, an already strong need for local housing demand became an exponential need very quickly. Prior to 2012, Umatilla was building, on average, about 13 homes a year. In 2018, 66 homes were built, more than the previous five years combined, in 2019 that number grew to 72 new homes, and in 2020 even higher with 82 new homes, and we anticipate more than 100 new homes to be built by the end of 2021. Our studies show that we need housing at every economic level. While the local market is blazing, producing homes for mid-income households, the City is working with low-income and high-income developers to be sure to meet the overwhelming housing demand. If all of these efforts line up as hoped, we anticipate constructing housing at every economic level in 2022: from the construction of an all-new homeless facility in partnership with Hermiston, Umatilla County, and local nonprofits, to homes ranging from \$175k-\$350k, and to homes ranging from \$425k-\$900k. Something that has never occurred in our City's history and something we are proud to be working toward.

### The Need for Local Business Support and Quality of Life Improvements

With the uptick in several living wage jobs and many new residents of Umatilla, our other local businesses, like restaurants, our grocery store, and others started see-



ing significant growth in their operations. But, one thing that was noticeably lacking behind our recent booms, was the exceptionally apparent high number of vacancies in our downtown buildings. Beginning in 2018 and 2019, Umatilla's Mayor and City Council adopted new, direct, and ambitious goals to revitalize the downtown. We extended our already-existing Downtown Revitalization Grant, increasing the annual total program from \$20,000 to over \$125,000. Additionally, the 50/50 match requirement was revamped to just a 25% match requirement from the business owner and the maximum grant amount increased from \$10,000 to \$26,500! This, happening at the same time as an 8-year planning and financing process with ODOT to re-construct 6th Street (also Hwy 730) finally came to fruition. Umatilla now displays a beautiful new downtown with new streets that also include wide sidewalks and bike lanes, new ornamental lights, new

## City Spotlight: Umatilla *(continued from page 3)*

urban trees, and decorative flower baskets and banners. And, as a result of the change in the grant program and an all-new decorative and inviting downtown, more than a dozen downtown businesses have taken advantage of the grant, totaling more than \$500,000 in downtown façade improvements to go along with the more than \$8 million in road improvements. Those vacant buildings in the downtown... they are nearly all filled now.

In anticipation of our available commercial buildings filling up and due to our experiencing of high interest in locals wanting to start their own business, the City purchased the old post office just a block away from City Hall with the intent to renovate the building to support local businesses. We have been working closely with state legislators and grant programs as well as saving funds for the past three years to be able to provide the necessary grant match for the all-new Umatilla Business Center. This \$8.25 million project will house our local business incubator program, giving preference to minority business owners, that we hope will continue to grow our local businesses. These tenants of this facility will enjoy open and spacious commercial suites to grow and build their business. Their rent? A well-below market rate (just 25%) AND business-savvy “educational equity.” Tenants will be required to attend trainings by our local UEC Business Resource Center, Umatilla Chamber of Commerce, Umatilla Community Development Department, Oregon Workforce Partnership, and others. The three-year program hopes to yield new and exciting businesses that “graduate” to private facilities, making room for the new business behind them. The facility will also feature amazing community features like a Community Room that can host small events (up to 125 people) and trainings, house recreation programs, provide conference room space, and a reservable/rentable commercial kitchen. It can be opened to the adjacent Village Square Park to host community events like Saturday Market and block parties.

We also pride ourselves in investing in our parks and recreation programs. Last year we started more than a dozen new recreation programs and made significant



investments in our library programs. We installed new basketball courts and restrooms and have received more than \$250,000 in grant funds recently to build new trails. By next summer, residents and visitors alike will be able to enjoy our newly renovated Columbia River beach and swimming area (new dune sand provided through an expanding partnership with the City of Florence) as well as an on-water Water Park in the Swimming Bay. And, we’ve started the process in expanding our very popular Umatilla Marina & RV Park. By 2025, visitors will enjoy a completely replaced marina with covered berths with power and water. They can also enjoy more RV spaces and deluxe camping cabins. We are now the new owners of Big River Golf Course and are making big plans for a new Pro Shop and Club House that will be open to the public for events. Speaking of events... we are also making plans for an all-new multi-day festival to occur on the back-9 of the Golf Course beginning in October 2022.

We are very proud of the work that we are doing and are so very happy to welcome in our new residents to our friendly and dedicated community. We hope that anyone reading this will take some time to come and pay us a visit, enjoy our two rivers, catch a nice fish, kayak, swim, or take-in our breath-taking desert sunsets on the river. Enjoy our locally owned restaurants and be ready to start up a conversation with pretty much anyone else that is there. The future is bright for Umatilla, and we are so very excited to all that it has in store!

## President's Message

(continued from page 1)

Our host cities set up informative tours and some that were just... fun! How wonderful it was to see local residents line the streets to wave at a train of UTV-driving mayors on their way to the dunes and mayors posting selfies in front of various businesses and scenes around North Bend. Thank you so much to Mayor Engelke and Mayor Benetti for their contributions to the best conference ever and thank you to all of you for supporting the biggest fundraising auction ever! It is apparent we were all ready to gather in person.

I also wish I could slow down time in my personal life. My children are growing too fast. My friends (not me) are aging too quickly; and there is just never enough time. It seems we are quickly jumping from one season of activities to another. It's hard to believe that summer is coming to an end and it's time for my life to refocus on school, soccer, dance, and planning holiday festivities. As we all move into the fall and look at legislative activities, economic development, and infrastructure projects, I encourage you all to reach out to one another. If 2020 taught us anything, it's that you can't always know what we'll face - but we do not have to face anything alone. Learn about Toledo's Art & Oysters, Pendleton's Round Up, North Plains' Garlic Festival, Junction City's Scandinavian Celebration,

Baker City's Powder River Music, Dayton's Friday Nights, and all the events and celebrations in your region. Show up, support your colleagues, debrief after tough meetings, and conspire to make changes to improve the job for future leaders. Collaboration and commiseration can each be helpful in remembering that we have strength in unity.

After sessions on self-care, communication, and leadership, I hope we are all better equipped to tackle our future challenges. I know I look forward to brainstorming, designing and sharing solutions, laughing about shared struggles over a meal, and texting funny memes to cope with the really tough moments.

One thing I know from my involvement in the OMA is that I have constant opportunities to grow. Thank you for your examples, feedback, suggestions, and participation in this organization. Thank you for your work for Oregon and the care of your residents. As always, I am in awe of your commitment to public service as I seek to reflect that integrity and dignity in my own work.

Please feel free to reach out to discuss the OMA, leadership, local challenges, or just to chat.

Lead on,

*Beth Wytoski | Dayton Mayor | OMA President*



## Calendar of Events

**October 20**

**OMA Annual Membership Meeting, Virtual**

**October 22**

**LOC Annual Conference, Virtual**

**April 21-22, 2022**

**LOC Spring Conference, Hermiston**

**August 11-13, 2022**

**OMA Summer Conference, Newport**



## Trivia Question:

What is the name of Boring, Oregon's sister city in Scotland?

*Answer on back page.*

# The Right Conference for 2021

By Henry A Balensifer III, Mayor of Warrenton

I'll be honest, I don't typically attend conferences for the speakers or topics or tours. I go for the honest conversations that come from networking. For me, that means talking to peers who have "been there" and can offer advice on how to tackle challenges, or to commiserate and collaborate on tackling shared issues. Part of what made this year's conference so good was the fact we got to meet in person. It's a lot harder to have the real time side conversations when you're on Zoom. That said, this year's conference was truly one of the best I've been to.

We have all been through some rather rough times—taking the brunt of local concerns or outrage over the handling of the pandemic, surviving wildfires, or dealing with protests devolving into street brawls among other things. This conference was what I needed as a leader of my community to recharge and refresh. I'd like to cover some of the highlights.

The first day had the option of golfing at the famous Bandon Dunes or a dune buggy tour. I went with the dune tour. I wasn't sure what to expect. Perhaps Mad Max: Mayors Edition? The tour shattered my expectations and was a blast. Beyond awesome natural beauty and sheer scale of the dunes, I was touched by the reception we received as we drove through Lakeside's downtown

roads to see how ATV/UTVs have become part of the community. A swarm of residents on the sidewalks waved and cheered us on. This was a touching gesture for a community that had just been through a brutal ballot battle about ATV/UTVs in the city limits, but to welcome visiting mayors—they came out. I learned quite a bit about how natural landscapes can be integrated into a city's local and tourist economies.

During the rest of the conference, I made quite a few new acquaintances, friends and good memories. I also enjoyed the city tours. Coming from a north coast town, it was helpful to me to learn how Coos Bay and North Bend are using their urban renewal dollars, overcoming challenges to funding community amenities, and integrating their waterfronts to their cities. It broadened my view of waterfront redevelopment for a small town.

In all, I wish I had an extra day to just spend exploring Coos Bay and North Bend, and I know I'll be back on my own in short order. Thank you Mayors Engelke and Bennett for being such great hosts!





## 2021 Mayors Leadership Award & Award of Merit Recipients Recognized

The Mayors Leadership Award and the Award of Merit recognize the invaluable contributions made by Oregon mayors in their communities. Mayors who receive these awards generally show considerable involvement in their community affairs and intergovernmental relations, demonstrate exceptional skill in helping to facilitate productive relationships between their city council and city employees, and help other Oregon mayors reach their full potential as community leaders.

Three mayors were presented the Mayors Leadership Award and three additional mayors were presented the Award of Merit during the closing banquet of the Oregon Mayors Association Summer Conference, held July 29-31 in North Bend, Oregon. Awards in both categories were provided to mayors representing small, medium, and large cities.

### Mayors Leadership Award

In the Small City Category, the award was presented to **Beth Wytoski**, the Mayor of Dayton and the 2021 OMA President. Mayor Wytoski was presented the Mayor Leadership Award because she cares deeply for her city and its citizens, is a tenacious worker, communicates openly and transparently with all she interacts with, and leads her community with strength and character. Highlights of Mayor Wytoski's accomplishments over the last year include: coordinated several COVID-19 vaccination sites; lobbied the state for guidance that would keep people healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic, but would reduce harm to city's businesses; and created a parade of musical acts on flatbed trailers in place of a community-wide festival.



Left to right: Dayton Mayor Beth Wytoski, Former Falls City Mayor Jeremy Gordon, Toledo Mayor Rod Cross, and Milwaukie Mayor Mark Gamba are presented their awards at the 2021 OMA Summer Conference.

For the Medium City Category, the award was presented to **Rod Cross**, the Mayor of Toledo. Ten different people nominated Mayor Cross for this award, all of whom applauded the Mayor for his unwavering commitment to the city of Toledo, his ability to effectively find common ground on all issues, and his kind and welcoming demeanor. Highlights of Mayor Cross's achievements over the last year include: leading and championing the Arts Revitalization of Toledo Initiative; making sure all council members are heard and their time, including personal time with family, is respected; opening his city's doors to those communities impacted by the Echo Fire; and helping local businesses find solutions that allowed them to grow and expand in a manner which respects the needs of the city of Toledo.

In the Large City Category, the award was presented to **Lucy Vinis**, the Mayor of Eugene. Mayor Vinis has been the Mayor of Eugene since 2016, but she has been consistently engaged in her community from chairing the Metropolitan Policy Organization to serving on the Oregon Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network. Highlights

of Mayor Vinis's triumphs over the last year include: bringing calm and comfort to the citizens of Eugene during the COVID-19 pandemic by participating in more than 30 community-wide videos; chairing Eugene's Ad Hoc Committee on the Protection of Individuals and Groups; and, serving on the Executive Committee of the Lane County Poverty and Homelessness Board.

### Award of Merit

In the Small City Category, the award was presented to **Jeremy Gordon**, the former Mayor of Falls City. Mayor Gordon was appointed a Polk County Commissioner in June, but prior to that appointment, he served as the Mayor of Falls City, consistently volunteering his own personal time for numerous city projects. Highlights of Mayor Gordon's accomplishments over the last year include: helping to restore an old doctor's clinic so it could be turned into a business incubation space; donating hundreds of hours to community clean ups; providing food and water to Falls City residents during the winter ice storm; and working to create lasting relationships and regional partners.

For the Medium City Category, the award was presented to **Derek Clevenger**, the Mayor of Aumsville. Mayor Clevenger exemplifies the phrase, "leading from the front." Highlights of the Mayor's achievements over the last year include: making shopping trips for the most vulnerable members of his community during the COVID-19 pandemic so those community members did not go without essential goods; coordinating a donation center at a local church during the 2020 wildfires, which resulted in an estimated \$250,000 worth of goods; and opening the Aumsville Community Center during the 2021 winter ice storm so that community members could stay warm, charge their electronic devices, and have a hot meal.

In the Large City Category, the award was presented to **Mark Gamba**, the Mayor of Milwaukie. Mayor Gamba was nominated for the award by his entire city council, all of whom agreed that Mayor Gamba has a strong drive to create a better tomorrow for the residents and business owners of Milwaukie. Highlights of Mayor Gamba's triumphs include: led the city of Milwaukie through a thoughtful and robust visioning process that saw more than 216 unique community viewpoints; championed the city's recently revised comprehensive plan; and consistently displaying a tenacious support for city staff and city services.



# THANK YOU

## 2021 OMA SUMMER CONFERENCE

## CONFERENCE SPONSORS

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## Recognizing the 2020/21 *If I Were Mayor* Contest

Each year, the OMA partners with interested Oregon cities to sponsor the *If I Were Mayor* Contest. The contest provides an opportunity for students in grades 4 through 12, including those students who are home-schooled, an opportunity to share their creative ideas about what they would do as mayor of their city. Students in grades 4 and 5 are asked to submit a poster identifying what they would do if they were mayor. For students in grades 6 through 8, an essay of what they would do if they were mayor is submitted. High school students who participate in the contest must create a digital media presentation which explains what they would do as mayor.

Students who place first, second and third are awarded financial prizes. First place winners receive \$500.00, second place winner receive \$300.00, and third place winners receive \$100.00. In addition to the cash prize, first place winners, and their families, are invited to attend the Oregon Mayors Association (OMA) Summer Conference wherein they can be presented their award and applauded by Oregon's mayors for their efforts and contributions.

First place winners of this year's contest were presented their awards during a luncheon banquet conducted during the OMA Summer Conference, held July 29-31 in North Bend, Oregon.

For this year's elementary school category, nine students submitted posters describing what they would do as mayor. The elementary school winner is Madalyn Coleman from Elightium Academy in Sweet Home, Oregon. Second place went to Kaide Price of Imlay Elementary School in Hillsboro and third place went to Aven Gustafson from



Left to right: Contest Sponsor Pacific Power's Sam Carter presents awards to Chaela Baker, high school winner from Redmond Proficiency Academy, with Redmond Mayor George Endicott, and Madalyn Coleman, elementary school winner from Elightium Academy, with Hillsboro Mayor Steve Callaway.

Tom McCall Elementary School in Forest Grove.

The middle school category saw 10 students submit essays explaining what they would do as mayor. Harrison Swift from the Redmond Proficiency Academy is this year's winner in the middle school category. Second place went to Hallie Jones from Rosemont Ridge in West Linn and third place went to Lilyana Oien from Happy Valley Middle School.

In the high school category, seven students submitted digital media presentations identifying what they would do as mayor. The high school winner is Chaela Baker from the Redmond Proficiency Academy. Second place went to Kourtney Owens of Cottage Grove High School and third place went to Cecily Cooper of Crook County High School.



## OMA Silent Auction a Record-Breaking Success!

Oregon's Mayors, the cities of North Bend and Coos Bay, and the Mill Casino outdid themselves in putting together this year's Taste of the Coast Reception and Annual Silent Auction as part of the OMA Summer Conference in North Bend. In addition to the 47 baskets (which is a new OMA record) donated by cities from across Oregon, vendors from the North Bend and Coos Bay region provided samples of their finest foods and drinks.

After the last auction table closed, a total of \$6,310 was raised. The amount of money raised this year is almost double the amount raised during previous years. Thank you to the generous mayors and their communities who provided some amazing baskets this year. And a giant thank you to the bidders who purchased baskets!

One hundred percent of the funds from the Silent Auction will go towards the OMA Conference Scholarship Fund. The fund helps mayors attend educational events and programs. Seven mayors were provided full or partial scholarships to attend this year's Annual Conference.

## An Invocation with Meaning; One That Continues to Resonate Months Later

During the 2021 OMA Summer Conference in North Bend, Laurabeth Barton, a member of the Coquille Indian Tribe, was kind enough to give the invocation during the opening ceremonies. The invocation was meaningful, and one that continues to resonate with those in attendance these many months later. For those who could not attend the OMA Summer Conference, and for those who wish to revisit the invocation, you'll find it below.

*Mah Nee Yas (Ancestors), Grandmother, Grandfather*

*K'yele, thank you, for this wonderful day. K'yele, thank you, for guiding all safely to this place of meeting and for the opportunity for members of this Oregon Mayors Association to greet each other, to exchange information and ideas, to share knowledge and concerns, and to solve problems that confront all.*

*K'yele for the desire to work together toward a common goal. K'yele for understanding that not all will agree on the same path to take. K'yele for encouraging soft and respectful engagement as all here strive to do what is best for the future of all.*

*K'yele for your guiding hand while working together, to increase the knowledge and ability in making decisions for the good of Oregon's towns and cities and the well-being of their citizens.*

*K'yele for this Conference that allows so many individual Mayors to come together as one to present a unified voice on issues of importance to all.*

*K'yele for keeping all safe as local sites and activities are explored and enjoyed.*

*And for your solace as we all struggle with the problems we face at home, at work, and in our hearts, K'yele.*

*Tsu Tse wass, Gael de lu'we (that is all, my heart is happy)*

# Tigard's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Journey

*By Jason Snider, Mayor of Tigard*

During my time as a city councilor in Tigard, it became clear to me that our city was interested in building a more inclusive community. However, it often takes a significant moment or event to transform an issue from mere interest into top priority.

Such a moment came in 2019, when I — by then the mayor of Tigard — received the following email:

*Why are you recruiting for bilingual Spanish speaking person [sic]? Why would you give a job to non-speaking English person [sic] instead of a citizen who needs a job and speaks English? Why not move city offices to Mexico?*

I considered ignoring the email and moving on, but I didn't. I knew the questions, and sentiment, were shared by others in the community. I had to respond publicly for two reasons: first, to be perfectly clear that we are a community for everyone; and, second, to stand up to hurtful speech and reinforce our efforts to attract a workforce reflective of our community's diversity.

Our DEI efforts did not stop with my response to that email. To support future actions, we revamped our strategic vision: "to be an equitable community that is walkable, healthy, and accessible for everyone."

We led internally with an Anti-Racism Action Plan, to identify concrete ways to address racism and bias in our operations. Externally, the Council empaneled the Public Safety Advisory Board to review public safety practices.

As a city, and as citizens, we are not perfect. We are learning and growing by taking action and being willing to fail. Based on our experiences, I would like to suggest five low-cost actions to advance DEI in an organization. I share these with one caveat, though: your community and workforce should "follow the funds" to understand city priorities. Any long-term, sustainable DEI work must be resourced in the same way that other city priorities are.

## 1. Start with a guiding statement.

Tigard is guided by its strategic vision. Palo Alto, California, seeks to create a respectful, fair, and professional workplace and city. Fort Collins, Colorado, has a guiding principle of "equity for all, leading with race. We acknowl-

edge the role of local government in helping create systems of oppression and racism and commit to dismantling those same systems in pursuit of racial justice."

Your statement shouldn't be crafted in a vacuum. You should involve city leaders and staff, and most importantly, leaders from community groups that represent your underserved and under-represented populations.

## 2. Share the racial demographics of your city's public employees.

Every three months, Tigard publishes the racial demographics of our team and how they compare to those of the entire community. We share the data, whether or not it paints us in a positive light, on the city's website and via social media.

Portland takes a similar approach with a demographic dashboard showing the racial/ethnic breakdown of public employees by each city bureau and job category.

Your community has a right to know how the racial demographics of the city's public workforce compare to those of your community. Showing the data, and setting goals, is all about transparency — revealing where you're at as well as where you hope to be.

## 3. Communicate, communicate, communicate — internally and externally.

Tigard's DEI Team publishes a monthly employee newsletter to highlight five resources for learning about DEI. The city's *Talking Tigard* podcast has an ongoing series of interviews about DEI, ranging from a father and son sharing some of the challenges of being Black in Tigard to the founder of the Oregon Black Pioneers sharing the impact of African Americans on the state's history.

Eugene, Oregon, features an "Anti-Racism Topic of the Month" to build understanding and awareness of the history of racism in transportation planning.

You should consistently communicate (once a month or more) with public employees and the broader community about the work currently being done and the future work that still needs to be done.

#### 4. Overhaul your recruitment process, from A to Z.

From job postings to interviews, a commitment to attracting a diverse workforce is essential throughout the recruitment process. Tigard implemented several equity strategies to remove barriers and improve the selection process of city employees. We post jobs with groups like Partners in Diversity and Centro Cultural, and then screen applicants via a blind process that eliminates personally identifiable information. Candidates who advance are interviewed by a diverse panel of city teammates who ask at least one DEI-related question.

Springfield, Oregon, is upfront about its commitment in each job advertisement.

*Studies have shown that women and people of color are less likely to apply for jobs unless they believe they are able to perform every task in the job description. We are most interested in finding the best candidate for the job, and that candidate may be one who comes from a less traditional background.*

People want to work for organizations whose missions and values they share. As you recruit city employees, be purposeful in showing your commitment to DEI.

#### 5. Look to the library.

Libraries can amplify a commitment to DEI and help educate the community about its importance through suggested reading lists, programming, and speakers.

The Tigard Library compiled a Black Lives Matter reading list with books by Black authors. It also hosted a Racial Justice Book Club, to provide a forum in which to discuss current events and find ways to work toward eliminating racism in our community.

I urge you to act now. Your community shouldn't wait for another national news event about racial injustice to act. Take this moment to transform DEI work from an area of interest to a clear city priority.

## Engage Your Students in Your Community!

### Participate in the 2021-2022 "If I Were Mayor..." Student Contest

The "If I Were Mayor..." Student Contest has started! Each mayor is encouraged to promote a local contest by the same name over the course of the school year so that local entries can be submitted to the statewide competition in April. The OMA Board of Directors encourages you to speak with your local school district and youth to encourage students to submit entries in three different categories:

- **Elementary School** (grades 4-5). Students in these grades are encouraged to submit posters detailing what they would do as mayor.
- **Middle School** (grades 6-8). Students in these grades are encouraged to submit essays detailing what they would do as mayor.
- **High School** (grades 9-12). Students in these grades are encouraged to submit a digital media presentation (formats allowed include: MP4, Visme, Pitcherific, and VideoScribe) detailing what they would do as mayor.

Submissions to the statewide competition are due April 8, 2022. Only one submission in each of the three categories is allowed per city.

Mayors should have received a packet of information on how to participate via email. To assist students in creating their entries, the OMA Board of Directors created educational materials outlining the role of a mayor and listing the services typically provided by cities in Oregon. These materials, along with an entry form for use in local contest, can be found on the OMA website at [www.oregonmayors.org](http://www.oregonmayors.org).

Judging for the statewide competition will take place in June. First-place winners will be invited to attend the awards luncheon held during the OMA Annual Conference in Newport, August 11-13, 2022, where they will receive their prizes.

For more information and examples of previous entries, please visit [www.oregonmayors.org](http://www.oregonmayors.org). Questions about the contest can be directed to Debi Higgins at (503)588-6550 or [dhiggins@orcities.org](mailto:dhiggins@orcities.org).

# OMA Board of Directors Recommends Amending the OMA Constitution

During this year's annual membership meeting, scheduled for October 20, via Zoom, the OMA Board of Directors is recommending the membership amend the current OMA Constitution. Two amendments are proposed for the membership's consideration, one which the Board hopes will better secure the OMA as a leader in Oregon and the second which the Board hopes will better ensure the Board is representative of the entire state. Amending the OMA Constitution requires the affirmative two-thirds vote of the active members of the OMA present at a membership meeting.

*Amendment 1 – Providing the OMA Board, and its Officers, the power to take positions on state and federal legislative or administrative actions.*

To better secure the OMA as a leader in Oregon, and as a reputable and effective voice for Oregon's mayors, and their 241 communities, the OMA Board wishes to amend the Constitution to provide the Board, and its Officers, the power to take positions on state and federal legislative or administrative actions. The Board recognizes and respects the nonpartisan nature of the OMA. Because the OMA is nonpartisan, the proposed amendment establishes clear guidelines and boundaries by which the Board, and its Officers, must operate within when making statements on behalf of the OMA.

The proposed amendment recommends creating a new Article VIII in the Constitution, entitled Foundations of Home Rule and Civic Responsibility. The new Article will have four sections.

Section 1. This section restates the purpose of the OMA and provides the Board, or its Officers, the power to take proactive and defensive positions on legislative or administrative matters that impact the foundations of home rule or civic responsibility and engagement with the Governor's office, State legislature and Oregon's federal delegation.

Section 2. This section defines the Foundations of Home Rule, of which there are three.

- Local Control;
- Fiscal Stability; and
- Funding Opportunities.

Section 3. This section stipulates the OMA is committed to supporting initiatives that encourage civic engagement and education for citizens of all ages so that each person understands how the democratic process works.

Section 4. The final section provides the Officers, at their sole discretion, the authority to take positions on a proposed state or federal piece of legislation, administrative rule, or policy, provided that the position taken is:

- Nonpartisan in nature; and
- Consistent with protecting and preserving the foundations of home rule; and/or
- Promotes the important of civic responsibility an engagement.

*Amendment 2 – Expanding the membership of the OMA Nominating Committee by two persons*

The makeup of the OMA Nominating Committee, the body responsible for presenting a slate of candidates for open Board positions, to the Board and membership, is dictated by Article VII, Section 1 of the Constitution. That Section states that the Committee shall "consist of the immediate past president as chair, regardless of elected capacity, and two past presidents who are still serving as mayor." The membership requirements on the Nominating Committee inherently limit the persons eligible to serve on the Committee.

This year's OMA Board interpreted this Constitutional provision as the minimum membership for the Nominating Committee, adding two additional persons to serve on the Committee as a way to better ensure statewide



## Constitutional Amendments Worthy of Your Support

By Beth Wytoski, Mayor of Dayton and 2021 OMA President

“Democracy is not a fragile flower, but it still needs cultivating” - Ronald Reagan

Early this Spring, the OMA Board of Directors was asked to support legislation that would require civics education to earn an Oregon diploma. Being a civics teacher myself and seeing daily social media posts proving the education is needed, this seemed like a good start.

Civic education empowers the public to be well-informed, active citizens and lays out the path to changing the world around us. It is a vital part of any democracy, which we all know must be learned by each generation. Certainly protecting access to participation in our republic is a shared goal and responsibility. While this request was well in line with the priorities and mission of the Oregon Mayors Association, we had no authority to take a position on this, or any other matter. This question led to the recent constitutional changes requested by our Board.

The OMA is a nonpartisan organization and I believe maintaining that is critical to its success and inclusion of the entire state. Nonpartisan but not apolitical. We do have

political goals. We have shared goals. We want to protect home rule. We oppose state overreach and advocate for local control. We need funding opportunities to care for our residents. We support efforts to inform, involve, and include our citizenry. To protect the nonpartisan nature of the OMA, the proposed amendment establishes clear guidelines and boundaries by which the Board and its Officers must operate.

The OMA belongs at the table when decisions are being made that affect our cities, our families, and our neighbors. To better secure the OMA as a leader of the state of Oregon and as a reputable voice for Oregon's mayors and their communities, the amendment to the Constitution would provide the opportunity for Officers of the Board to take positions on legislative or administrative issues. The OMA, collectively, represents the vast majority of Oregonians, and we have a big voice. We are frontline leaders, working directly with our downtown businesses, schools, and utilities - we know the needs - and we deserve to be heard... but we first need the authority to speak.

As we encourage civic engagement, let's also model it.

### OMA Constitutional Amendments *(continued from page 14)*

representation on the Committee responsible for building a slate of candidates for the 2022 open Board positions. The Board wishes to solidify its interpretation of the Nominating Committee's makeup – believing that a greater diversity of voices on the Nominating Committee is more likely than not to ensure a better statewide voice on one of the foundational committees of the OMA.

The proposed amendment will firmly establish the Nominating Committee as a five-member Committee, comprised of the following:

- Immediate past president, regardless of elected capacity, serving as chair;

- Two past presidents who are still serving as mayor; and
- Two OMA members who are currently serving as mayor and who are not members of the OMA Board or past presidents of the OMA Board.

If you have questions about either amendment, or the process by which the amendments will be voted on during the membership meeting, please contact OMA's current Staff Liaison, Patty Mulvihill at [pmulvihill@orcities.org](mailto:pmulvihill@orcities.org).

## Applications for 2022 OMA Committee Positions Being Accepted

The OMA Board of Directors is soliciting OMA members who are willing to serve on an OMA Committee in 2022. Committees perform vital functions for the OMA, from planning its annual conference to selecting recipients for the prestigious Mayor Leadership Award, OMA committees are what ensures the OMA is successful and meaningful.

OMA has five committees, four of which are standing committees and active each year. The fifth committee, OMA's Constitution and Bylaws Committee, is ad hoc in nature, and only meets when needed. Each of the four standing committees is briefly described below.

- **Conference Planning Committee.** The Conference Planning Committee plans the OMA's Annual Summer conference. In addition to planning the content of the conference, the Conference Planning Committee also determines scholarship recipients to attend the conference. This Committee typically meets three to five times, electronically, between the months of March and June.
- **Mayors Leadership Award Committee.** The Mayors Leadership Award Committee is responsible for selecting the recipients of the prestigious Mayors Leadership Award, an award which recognizes the valuable contributions made by mayors throughout Oregon. This Committee typically meets once or twice, electronically, in May and June.

- **Nominating Committee.** The Nominating Committee is responsible for selecting a slate of candidates for the following year's open Board positions. This Committee typically meets one to two times, electronically, between the months of August and October.
- **Student Contest Selection Committee.** The Student Contest Selection Committee is responsible for reviewing the submissions for the *If I Were Mayor* Contest, and selecting its winners. The Committee typically meets, in person, during the month of either May or June. If you wish to participate on this Committee, but live a great distance from Salem, please know that the Board is willing to consider providing Committee members with reasonable travel reimbursement expenses to ensure all interested mayors are eligible to serve on this Committee.

If you are interested in serving on a committee you can access the application from the OMA website at [www.oregonmayors.org](http://www.oregonmayors.org). You can also contact Patty Mulvihill at [pmulvihill@orcities.org](mailto:pmulvihill@orcities.org) and Patty will email you a copy of the application.

Please know that the Board will make 2022 committee appointments during their annual retreat, scheduled to be held in either January or February of 2022.

### Trivia Question Answer:

Dull





STRENGTH IN UNITY

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