

# State of the City from Mayor Rachel King - January 2024

Happy New Year Amity! As we kick off 2024, the City of Amity is doing well and continues to make progress towards community goals with a stable outlook. The past year has flown by. We have again seen our fair share of changes and Council and staff turnover, yet much has been accomplished and there is much to look forward to.

Councilors McArthur, Bojorquez, and Shields continued their terms through 2023 along with Councilor Dyche, who again served as Council President. Councilor Thompson was sworn in in February. In May, Councilor Saucier resigned, leaving a vacancy on Council that has yet to be filled.

Greg Binks joined City Staff in February taking on the position of Public Works Superintendent. The next month Mike Thomas brought his resignation to Council. Mike was Amity's City Administrator for 3 years and served our city incredibly well. Council spent much time and energy, and many hours in meetings during the recruitment and hiring process to fill this position. We were fortunate to have Rob Daykin serve as part time Interim Administrator through the end of June when Nathan Frarck was hired permanently for the position. Nathan has been a great addition!

2023 was a year of advancements in relation to our larger infrastructure projects. With USDA funding the water treatment plant improvements have continued and are nearing completion. A new building, treatment system upgrades, piping to the river, and intake mechanics have, and will continue to, improve water quality and security throughout the city. Sidewalk construction near the elementary school is now engineered and that project is currently out for bid. ODOT completed the construction of the new Salt Creek Bridge in early November with Amity upgraded water transmission line securely attached and functioning well. This was a long-awaited reopening and a big win for our community!

Major projects slated for 2024 include the Goucher street and reservoir to Merlot/Rice Lane water main replacement projects. These projects will be paid for with \$2 million in grant funds from our State Legislature. Due to many factors, the city applied for and was granted a time extension for this work. I am excited to see construction move forward in the coming year. The city received a \$75,000 grant and will soon begin work to improve the walking path in the City Park. Additionally, thanks to a \$63,000 grant award from the Department of Land Conservation and Development the City will start the undertaking of periodic review and updates to our long outdated Comprehensive Plan. This update project requires a lot of community outreach and engagement for best results. Please look out for upcoming opportunities to be a part of this long-range planning process.

With the Council priority of citizen engagement and participation in mind, I am glad to share that there has been an increase in community participation, attendance at meetings and events, and volunteerism city-wide. This past year there was sufficient interest to reactivate the tourism committee and form an Amity Day planning committee. It's encouraging to see the enthusiasm and willingness of so many community members to share their time and talents to make Amity a better place for all. Local government truly is "of the people, for the people, by the people" and it is my honor to work for and with you all.

As with anywhere, Amity will face challenges ahead. Limited revenue, rising costs, mandated requirements, and limitations of staffing and resources are not new hurdles to our city. As we face these constraints head on and together, I am confident that the City of Amity will persist in a positive direction and carry on toward improvement and progress.

In closing, the state of our city is good! Amity is financially stable, investing in long term infrastructure needs, prioritizing livability and community connections; and there are plans to keep moving ahead towards collective goals. I look forward to another productive year ahead, and as always, I am grateful to be serving such a wonderful community.