



Medford City Council Newsletter

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Election Day got November off to a historic start, with Medford voters weighing in on Override and Debt Exclusion proposals for the first time in history. Voters rejected Question 6, which would have enabled funding for a new Fire Headquarters. Voters approved Questions 7 and 8, overrides in a combined amount of \$7.5M, to help fund Medford Public Schools and road and sidewalk repairs in the City.

While closures for Election Day and the Thanksgiving holiday constrain the City Council's November meeting schedule, the City Council is working to advance several projects before month's end. Read on for updates on general business and the work of specific Committees.

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Commemorations and Acknowledgements

- At our [October 29th meeting](#), we [thanked](#) two DPW staff members, Jeff Gangi and Anthony Pompeo, for returning a lost wallet to an 82-year-old disabled veteran.

General Business

- At the [November 12th meeting](#), the Council approved [four appropriations](#) from the Capital Stabilization Fund: for Engine 3 Pump Replacement; for Cemetery Soil Removal; for a Grant Match for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant for updating the 2019 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and developing an Urban Forest Master Plan; and for restoration of the City Hall Howard Alden Memorial Chambers Windows. The total of these four appropriation requests is \$518,743.24. After these appropriations, the Capital Stabilization Fund has a remaining balance of \$3,404,993.76.
- At the [November 12th meeting](#), we approved a [resolution](#) to adopt a new local option for municipalities known as the HERO Act. By adopting this measure,

property tax exemptions for veterans and other veteran-specific exemptions will automatically increase with the Consumer Price Index each year.

- At the [November 12th meeting](#), we approved [resolutions](#) to have the DPW give an update on the state of Medford's roads, and on how the \$500,000 approved in Question 7 to go towards an in-house road and sidewalk repair crew, will be deployed. We also [approved a resolution](#) to have the DPW Commissioner appear before the Council to discuss the possibility of a volunteer tree planting program in the City, as part of the effort to expand Medford's tree canopy.
- At the November 19th meeting, the Council voted to refer the proposed [Green Score Ordinance](#) (described below in updates from Planning & Permitting Committee) to the Community Development Board.
- At the [November 19th meeting](#), the Council voted to accept a [\\$198,853 grant award](#) from the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) for the Riverside Plaza Improvements Project. The Council is also being asked to vote on whether to appropri-

ate of \$144,250 in Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to contribute to the full funding of this project. The improvement project would include decking, tree canopy protection, hydration stations, shade infrastructure, seating, and lighting in Riverside Plaza.

- At the November 19th meeting, the Council voted to approve three Supplemental Appropriations to the Medford Public Schools and Department of Public Works, in accordance with the passage of Questions 7 and 8 approved by voters on Election Day.
 - The first Supplemental Appropriation would allocate \$3M to Medford Public Schools for FY25 funding and would replace \$1.75M in ARPA funding that was advanced as a one-time, stopgap funding measure to prevent further cuts at the beginning of FY25.
 - The second Supplemental Appropriation will allocate \$500,000 to the Department of Public Works for Highway Salaries and Expenses and related Insurance and Capital Expenses to enable additional staff for road and sidewalk infrastructure repair.
 - The third Supplemental Appropriation will allocate \$4M to Medford Public Schools to enable such purposes as described in Question 8, including: to create a high school schedule that increases access to arts and vocational programming, expands classroom instructional opportunities, and for classroom teacher and paraprofessional compensation.
 - More information is included in the Mayor's memorandum on these items.
 - Timely passage of these appropriations is required for the City to stay on schedule for setting the property tax rate for the coming calendar year.
- At the November 19th meeting, the Council voted to authorize a five-year contract with BlueBikes. (Any contract exceeding three years in duration must be approved by the City Council.) This is part of a coordinated effort with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to expand the regional bikeshare network.
- On November 20th, the Council met in Committee of the Whole to review the status of the Tree Ordinances and established next steps with City staff and advocates. The proposed policies to preserve and expand Medford's tree canopy were originally proposed in 2019. Since then, the proposals have been reviewed by multiple City Councils, in concert with resident advocates and City staff, and have gone through some necessary

formatting changes: namely, separating into separate Ordinances the proposals to establish a Tree Committee; regulate tree preservation on private property; and regulate tree preservation on public property.

Planning & Permitting Committee

- On October 23rd, the Planning and Permitting Committee reviewed and approved the zoning proposal for the newly-defined Mystic Avenue Corridor District; at the October 29th regular City Council meeting, the zoning proposal was referred to the Community Development Board for their review and recommendations.
- On November 13th, the Planning and Permitting Committee reviewed and approved the latest draft of the proposed Green Score Ordinance as part of its ongoing review and update of Medford's Zoning Ordinances. "Green Score" is a rubric that Cities use to provide developers with various incentives to meet environmental standards in their building projects. The Green Score Ordinance approved by the Committee, in collaboration with the Council's zoning consultant, Innes Associates, was crafted to enshrine many of the City's existing environmental standards for developers, and to incentivize developers to help Medford meet its enhanced environmental and climate goals that are laid out in the 2022 Climate Action and Adaption Plan. As with any proposed Zoning Ordinance, after this Ordinance is referred out of Committee to a regular meeting of the City Council, the City Council must refer it to the Community Development Board (CDB) for their recommendations, after which the ordinance will go through the standard three "readings" for approval and codification. For more information about the City Council's work on Zoning, please visit the zoning page on the city website. Minutes and video from recent meetings are in the section titled, "Phase 2 (In Progress)."

Resident Services & Public Engagement

- On October 22nd, this committee heard a brief update on the progress on an ordinance to update the Human Rights Commission.
- On November 19th, the Resident Services & Public Engagement Committee referred to the regular meeting a resolution to discuss tools to incentivize renting to veterans. This involves a partnership between Medford Veteran's Services and a program with Housing Families that will allow Medford to offer financial incentives to landlords who choose to rent to qualified veterans.

Thank you for reading, and be well.

Kit Collins
Council Vice President
Chair, Planning & Permitting