



Dear North Bend Residents,

Our community has persevered through this whirlwind year. It's hard to believe we are entering the final quarter of 2020 – a year marked by snow, floods, a worldwide pandemic and recently, unprecedented western Washington wildfire smoke.

While this year has required us all to roll up our sleeves and push through in new ways, our town is very resilient. Your Councilmembers, City staff and I have been working to maintain a sense of normalcy by pursuing goals that align with our mission statement to create a highly livable community.

With that goal guiding our work, we were able to accomplish many positive things during the 3rd quarter of 2020 and we wanted to share some highlights with you.

Supporting Local Businesses and Managing COVID-related Budget Impacts

By the end of this month, the North Bend Rapid Relief Program will have provided emergency financial assistance grants to 45 small businesses and nonprofits impacted by the Covid-19 crisis. The City used just over \$180,000 in federal CARES Act funding to launch the program.

Our Finance Department has also addressed COVID-related challenges with dedication, ensuring CARES funding made it to those struggling local businesses and nonprofits; managing PPE costs and complex work schedules; keeping transactions moving; and tracking reimbursable COVID costs.

The city budget is significantly dependent upon sales tax revenue. With a future economic rebound unclear and pandemic-related revenue losses impacting local companies, government frugality is increasingly important. While lean staffing levels and spending reductions have provided some relief to our 2020 budget, we continue to tighten our belts, think outside the box and get creative to ensure that we meet residents' needs and expectations. On a positive note, sale tax revenue has bounced back some over the past few months.

New Legislation, Infrastructure Improvements

Over the summer the City Council adopted a Water Conservation Ordinance (WCO) as an effort to conserve a limited natural resource and protect the Snoqualmie River. Citizens' conservation efforts are apparent and appreciated by Council and City Staff.

Public Works crews have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic. While others can work from home, our crews have worked in-person to provide sewer, water, storm drainage and street/landscaping services.

Crews replaced 260 of the approximate 2,600 citywide water meters to improve water efficiency. The city also launched a downtown drainage feasibility study.

A pavement overlay project from Ballarat Way to the new Park Street Roundabout was recently completed. The new roundabout is awaiting undergrounding of utilities by PSE to officially be complete.

This new pavement, combined with the Park Street roundabout and street frontage median improvements near the new Phoenix Plaza, have improved traffic and the appearance of this section of North Bend Way.

The City was recently awarded a \$1.38 million grant to install another roundabout at the Mt. Si Blvd and Bendigo Blvd (SR 202) intersection and will soon enter the design phase. Upon completion, traffic flow in this busy area near I-90 is expected to improve.

A Pavement Condition Index (PCI) Study during the 3rd quarter, with good results compared to other King County cities. Permitting through King County to provide a new mitigation water source at the Cascade Golf Course well is underway.

Progress continues on the North Bend Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) upgrade project. Another 10% of Phase 1 work was completed this quarter, moving it to 75% complete. The WWTP also received the *2019 Outstanding Performance Award*, which marks the 3rd straight year receiving this honor from the Department of Ecology.

The City received an approval recommendation for its Water System Plan (WSP) update from the King County Utilities Technical Review Committee (UTRC). The UTRC also approved moving the National Guard's proposed Readiness Center project from the Sallal Water Service Area to the City of North Bend's Water Service Area. Grant work is being explored for a new pipe system to serve the commercial area on the eastern edge of the City.

City staff also continues to work with the Sallal Water Association to resolve water data sharing issues that will allow us to continue charging City sewer customers residing in the Sallal service area the most accurate and fair rates.

Community Projects

You may have noticed that clearing and grading work has begun on the future Snoqualmie Valley Athletic Complex located at the corner of NW 14th Street and SR 202. This project has been in the works for nearly 5 years and will provide needed field space in the Valley, as well as an economic boost to local businesses.

A collaboration with the Si View Parks District is constructing a missing Tanner Trail Connection between Cedar Falls Way and Maloney Grove Ave. This new paved trail section should be complete next month.

There will soon be an important addition to our new city hall. Through another collaborative effort - with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion - a Veteran's Garden Park was installed outside City Hall. A special commemorative Memorial Stone will soon be unveiled to the community.

Planning for Fiscal Stability

In September the Community and Economic Development (CED) Department received new leadership: Rebecca Deming was hired as the CED Director and Jesse Reynolds was promoted to Economic Development Manager. The CED Department is working on significantly updating the City's Economic Development Plan for Council consideration. This update is intended to guide commercial development and create long-term fiscal stability for the City.

Last week your City Council also began work to increase housing diversity. Often called The Missing Middle, the Council is examining potential ways to bring more housing options beyond high density apartments and expensive single-family homes to our City. The goal is to offer a variety of housing price

points and create more affordability. The Council will continue discussions on this topic in the coming weeks.

As you can tell, your City Council, myself and all City staff continue working to serve residents. For a small community, we are incredibly busy and optimistic about our future. We are extremely lucky to have a top-notch, dedicated staff and a very supportive and engaged City Council.

Sincerely,

Mayor Rob