



MAYOR'S CORNER

BY: TUALATIN MAYOR LOU OGDEN

It's official!

The Nyberg Rivers shopping center is underway with the approval by the City Council of their Master Plan this month. Much interest has been piqued regarding the redevelopment of the old K-Mart site and the anticipated arrival of Cabelas. There is excitement around the arrival of the "world's foremost outfitter" as well as the other restaurants and stores which include New Seasons grocery, not to mention the departure of Jiggles. At the same time there has been concern over the potential traffic increases and the desire for a pedestrian-oriented, public-centric downtown core for Tualatin.



Regarding the "downtown core" there certainly will not be the same layout of city streets, mixed use development, public plazas or other amenities which were envisioned by several iterations of publicly developed downtown visions over the last decades. Those types of plans might have been possible had the Urban Renewal funding not been

opposed by various factions of our community. Instead, the gateway to Tualatin will continue to be a "shopping center". That said, I believe it will be a magnificent shopping center which will further bolster the quality of our community and offer another great shopping opportunity to our residents, as well as providing hundreds of new jobs. I think you will be pleased with the efforts the developer has made to make this "shopping center" inviting to folks and encourage them to get out of their cars and stroll the surroundings.

The traffic engineers from several sources tell us the I-5 interchange and Tualatin-Sherwood Rd/Nyberg St. will not be impeded when the improvements required by the development are built. However, all those same engineers acknowledge the continued congestion on Martinazzi Ave. between Nyberg St. and Boones Ferry Rd. near the library. That pinch point has been increasingly problematic over the

past many years and will only worsen as time goes on. The engineers all concur that the best long term solution is the rebuild of the T intersection of Seneca St. and Martinazzi Ave. expanding it into a cross street with Seneca St. extending east to the Nyberg Rivers shopping center. Of course, the "fly in the ointment" or perhaps the "monster in the operating room" is the existing City Council Chambers, which sits precisely in the way of the proposed street extension.

I personally don't know that all the alternatives for traffic have been exhausted, but as stated above, the traffic engineers from all sources seem to agree on that solution, though it may not yet be a fait accompli. Perhaps the greater questions are those of timing, funding sources, public support, etc. Though the City Council determined that the Seneca St. extension is a condition of the Master Plan approval, it isn't exactly certain as to when that project should be built; perhaps concurrent with the development, perhaps years into the future.

There are also various possibilities for funding the project. One option is bonding, similar to the way we typically pay for schools, parks, our police building, and other public facilities. Another is use of General Fund money, both current cash and long term financing. There is also a City transportation tax fund which could be tapped and there is a question of how much the developer is required to pay.

Then there is the issue of public approval. General Obligation bonds require a vote of the citizens of Tualatin. General fund expenditures do not require a direct vote. However, they may need to be approved by the Budget Committee, and the Council could refer that question to an advisory vote of the public. In any event, each of those options requires council deliberation and council action at an official regular meeting of the council, and all those events include an opportunity for public comment. That is where you come in. I urge you to follow these events and participate in the process. It's your town and your money. While you elected the council to make these decisions we depend upon your input and advice. Study the project and alternatives, draw your conclusions and provide your input.