

City of Mosier and Mosier Fire District Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 513

Senate Committee on Business and General Government
31 January 2019

Intro

Chairman Riley and Members, my name is Mayor Burns and I'm here to ask for support in funding our new Mosier Center which is a combination Fire Station, City Hall & Community Center. With me are Fire Chief Mike Renault and Council Member and Fire volunteer Witt Anderson.

It's been a long time in planning, but it will have a significant impact on our town and on the surrounding area.

Mosier is a small rural town but we punch far above our weight class. Our motto is Small Enough to Make a Difference because we strive to do big things on a small scale that can be used as an example and template by larger communities.

One of the best examples of this is that despite our size we work to serve the region and protect the National Scenic Area as an equal and effective partner. Just in the past decade alone we hosted 4 regional emergencies:

- 2009 Microwave fire, evacuation, conflagration
- 2016 UPRR Crude Oil Train derailment and fire, evacuation, contamination
- 2017 Eagle Creek Fire, Mosier community housed evacuees and farm animals
- 2018 Memoloose 1 and Memoloose 2 fires, incident command in Mosier

Examples include:

- *our unique approach to the negotiations with UPRR during the oil train derailment*
- *regional Bike Hub initiative*
- *exploration of solutions to the co-mingling well water in our watershed*
- *dark sky certification*
- *environmental initiatives*

Specific Needs/Solutions

Yet our current resources are woefully under equipped to help at the level we do. This new building seeks to solve issues in three key areas: Fire Response, Tourism Support & Community Resources

Fire Response

- Regional Fire Support
 - Mosier sits between and supports the larger towns of The Dalles & Hood River as well as the other communities in the region via Mutual Aid agreements.
 - Current facilities are too small to park our vehicles.
 - Have to leave town to clean off equipment
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- Freeway EMT Support
 - Located along I84, Mosier Fire also regularly helps accidents and helps motorists in need along the freeway, at the rest stops and within Memaloose State Park.
 - The facility will provide much needed space for ongoing medical training
 - Will also help to recruit volunteers
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- Ability to serve as 'Incident Command' for Emergencies
 - Mosier Fire has hosted 4 conflagrations in the last decade and the fire danger is predicted to grow
 - The site location of the building is also a key communication and check point in our local emergency plans.

Tourism Support

- 2 million tourists travel through the Gorge each year and also expected to grow and nearly doubled in our town last summer due to the Eagle Creek Fire pushing additional hikers into our area.
- Mosier is located on the Historic Scenic Hwy, at the end of the Twin Tunnel Trails and poised to be a key part of the growing bike and hiking tourism.
- Yet we currently do not have public restrooms in our town.
- The new center will not only solve this but will provide information & focal point for our tourism organization Main Street Mosier.

Community Resources

- One of the things we are most excited about is a Community Gathering Space
 - Not only for the for 20+ community organizations including Main Street Mosier, Mosier Grange, Home Extension, Mosier Community School, Mosier Fruit Growers, 4H, the American Legion and more.
 - But also our County, State and Federal partners, including the CRGNSA, ODOT, Regional Solutions, MCCOG, MCEDC, Town Halls for State Elected Officials, etc.
- The building will include a commercial kitchen with flex space for economic development such as farm to table food products from our Agriculture community.
- It will also include a Food Pantry & Space for Emergency Shelter
 - Food insecurity is an issue in Gorge and 98% of the region's food is shipped in by truck.
 - These features provide public support in case I84 is closed off for an extended period.

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- There is also a lot of excitement around space for a Museum – a long sought after home for the Mosier Valley Historical Society's extensive collection of photos and artifacts of the area
- Finally, it will include a Public works garage bay and city office. Our current City Hall is only 10' x 22' so the new building will let us serve more than one person at a time

Overall, this new building allows us to better serve the region but is also designed to add vitality to our downtown area, drawing other businesses to join us along main street. Key strategic piece to our City's growth.

Our Process

We've done a lot of work and are well on our way

- Strategic work started 10 years ago on both community vision and property acquisition
 - 2009 Oregon Solutions Project Grant (Governor)
 - In 2011, the City received an EPA grant for Visioning for the UPRR property, which was determined through that public process to be the site for the new community center
 - In 2014/15 Negotiations with UPRR resulted in a Letter of Offer for the UPRR Property
 - 2014 PARC Resources Feasibility Study: (OIB grant) \$15,000
 - In 2016, the City was granted a TGM Quick Response grant for \$49,970 to fund an architectural feasibility assessment to determine square footage, programming and site feasibility and construction cost estimate for the new community center at the UPRR property
 - 2017 Added as key goal in City of Mosier 5 year Strategic Plan
 - In December 2017, the Team Mosier/UPRR derailment settlement awarded the city with the UPRR property valued at \$250K.
- Once site was awarded, City and Fire District formally signed an IGA to partner on design and construction of the building
 - In September 2017, the City completed a UPRR Site Facility Assessment completed September, 2017 by Hennebery Eddy Architects, with 4 building size options ranging from \$2.9 to \$3.9 Million (see attached)

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- Phase I & II Environmental Site Assessments of the UPRR Property on Hwy 30 – EPA grant funded to DEQ
- Alternative Site Comparison Study by Hennebery Eddy with cost/ socioeconomic performance criteria between 3rd Avenue Existing Site and UPRR Site
- Final site selected - UPRR donated land along HCRH 30, downtown Mosier
- Project Work Scope and Schedule
- Developed and sent out RFP for Architect/engineer firm

Fundraising

- Current funds:
 - Property acquisition via UPRR negotiations \$250K
 - State of Oregon Ways and Means Committee grant of \$500,000 awarded November 30, 2017
 - UPRR Team Mosier Settlement Award of \$500,000 for Joint Use Facility awarded December 31, 2017
- Process
 - Met with Maupin team
 - Ford Family Foundation Grant
 - Fundraising plan
 - Committee of experienced, connected and enthusiastic people

Next Steps

- Architect/engineer firm selected in April 2019
- 30% design by October
- Final design TBD in coordination with design team and general contractor
- Construction start Spring 2020