



## M Street underpass project set to be completed July 2013

After many months of construction, the M St. SE project is set to open in July. To date, the contractor has completed the re-routing of the underground utility work required for the project, constructed the first of two BNSF railroad bridges, and is currently working on the construction of the second railroad bridge. It is expected the second bridge will be complete by the end of May and the road is expected to be open to through traffic by July.

The contractor has also been working on the excavation and re-grading of M St SE between 4th St SE and 6th St

SE to accommodate the lowering of the roadway. Crews have also continued work on the retaining walls, sidewalks, street lighting, traffic signal, and the storm water pump station required for the project.

Construction for this project began on February 21, 2012 and once completed the underpass will improve traffic flow and safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and bikes and help address projected traffic impacts from increased use of the BNSF Stampede Pass line. To accomplish this, the contractors are separating the roadway from the at-

grade rail crossing by lowering 'M' Street SE under the rail tracks. 'M' St. SE between 3rd St. SE and 8th St. SE will be widened to a 5-lane road with bike lanes and sidewalks (see illustration above). Construction will also replace the traffic signal at the intersection of 'M' St. SE and 4th St. SE as well as complete

utility relocations to accommodate the new lowered roadway.

The current total project cost is estimated to be approximately \$22.3 million. Funding for this project is provided from multiple sources including contributions from the Port of Seattle, Port of

Tacoma, BNSF Railway, the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), the Washington State Freight Mobility and Strategic Investment Board (FM-SIB), the Washington State Public Works Trust Fund Board, Federal Grants, King County Department of Natural Resource and Parks – Wastewater Treatment Division, and City transportation funds.

For more information about the project, please contact Ryan Vondrak PE, Senior Project Engineer, City of Auburn at 253-931-3086 or e-mail [rvondrak@auburnwa.gov](mailto:rvondrak@auburnwa.gov).

The underpass will improve traffic flow and safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and bikes.

## Valley Cities throws support to Puget Sound Gateway

The Valley Cities Association, which comprise the mayors and representatives of the cities of Algona, Auburn, Fife, Kent, Pacific, Puyallup, Renton, Sumner, and Tukwila are strongly supporting the Puget Sound Gateway projects, the completion of SR 167 and SR 509. These corridors serve as an economic engine to our cities and our region.

When the construction of SR 167 began in the 1960s the vision was to eventually complete the last six miles to connect the highway to the Port of Tacoma, I-5 and beyond. The nine Valley Cities have long been strong advocates of that vision. Thirty years later we are more convinced than ever that it is time to invest in the completion of one of Washington's key transportation corridors.

Our cities sit between two of the top 10 shipping ports in North America—the Ports of Tacoma and Seattle. Forty four percent of regional truck trips by the Ports of Tacoma and Seattle travel on SR 167 to distribution centers in our Valley Cities. SR 167 is a vital link to our ports' robust international supply network that serves local and global business. To the north, SR 509 is another missing link that serves the Port of Seattle and its Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

Recently the CEOs of the Port of Tacoma and the Port of Seattle visited with the Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce. Both John Wolfe of the Port of Tacoma and Tay Yoshitani of the Port of Seattle described the global competition that could impact the Puget Sound trade industry. Wolfe and Yoshitani pledged to modernize the inner workings of their ports to keep up with the competition, but stressed that the State needs to do its part by providing the infrastructure needed to move goods to and from market. Over the next two decades Washington state risks losing significant amounts of new public and private revenue to outside ports. If we do not take advantage of the opportunity to complete SR 167 and SR 509, businesses that depend on the vitality of our ports will be negatively impacted.

Our nine Valley Cities have worked in partnership with the Ports of Tacoma and Seattle. We have been joined by a larger coalition of businesses, labor groups, politicians and stakeholders all working together toward the goal of securing the future for our children and their children. The Puget Sound Gateway Project is not just a road project. It is recognized by this diverse group as the priority for our state's future.

## FROM THE DESK OF PETER B. LEWIS, MAYOR

This just in...another of the few remaining catalyst blocks in the downtown core will soon be developed. We have been told the developers are in the process of negotiating a purchase. Get ready for some exciting times in Auburn. Speaking of excitement, Emerald Downs opened its 2013 season on April 19th and we're very proud that the state's premier horse racing track is located here in Auburn. Emerald Downs will hold the first annual EMD3on3 extravaganza August 10-11. We expect that it will grow to rival Spokane's Hoopfest, bringing thousands of basketball enthusiasts to Auburn.

Other good news: we are now just a few months away from the M Street Underpass being completed and the reopening of the road; building permits last year were the highest we've seen since 2004 and year to date we've seen those figures almost double over last year; there's a new Italian Restaurant coming to downtown as six Auburn business people bought Auguri's and are remodeling it now. On the north end off of 15th Street NW the new Puget Sound region hospital laundry facility is underway which will provide several hundred family wage jobs; just down the street, Orion Industries is under construction for its new building that will add about same amount of new jobs. Up on Lea Hill, Green River Community College is moving to build its new Trades Building which also results in a brand new park paid for by the College and will be owned by the city.

Speaking of Parks we made some trades and swaps and bought a lake for West Hill, bought 'the beach' on the Green River on the road out to the golf course, and we are working with the state of Washington on another addition to our city parks. The Parks Department will get new trails along the Green River which will eventually go all the way to our northern borders as a result of a levee set-back project that will save our citizens further concern during winter storms. The parks are being prepped for the summer season and there are new toys for our children to play on and new features for all to enjoy.

Our Public Safety numbers reflect that crime is down in the City. The work to transfer the court and jail to the new system is already paying off with reduced cost of court and a savings of a million dollars every year in jail costs.

This is a great time to be in Auburn and we look forward to the summer to come!

## Deputy Mayor Nancy Backus



I've had the opportunity to meet with many people lately, and two questions seem to be popular - what does the Deputy Mayor do and what is the role

of a council member?

In Auburn, the Deputy Mayor is elected every two years by a majority vote of the Council. As Deputy Mayor, my responsibilities include: Assisting new council members in their training; Supporting cooperative interaction and positive relationships between council members and the Mayor; Working with administration to prepare agendas for our Committee of the Whole meetings and Council Workshops and Retreats; Chairing the Council Operations Committee - comprised of the three senior council members; Chairing the Auburn Tourism Board; Serving as the Chair of the City's Emergency Management Compensation Board; Acting in the absence of the Mayor as requested or required.

The seven council members are elected "at large," representing the entire city - not just our own neighborhoods. Each has 1/7th voice on issues that we vote on, but none of us have individual powers. The council is the legislative body of the City of Auburn. The mayor is the executive body. We are governed by the state laws put in place to protect our citizens.

Your councilmembers are all independent thinkers with many different opinions but per state law, we are not allowed to have private discussions prior to our vote (RCW 42.30.010). We come to consensus after much discussion at the committee level - six committees in all - each with a chair, vice chair and a member. All items that are brought to the council for vote are first brought through these committees. Hours of discussion may take place on an issue. Revisions are often made to the original ordinance or resolution before the council votes on the issue.

I believe in the transparency of government - as do my fellow council members. We are elected to serve you - not our own interests.

## Mixed-use building planned for old Cavanaugh Block



Conceptualized architect rendering of Promenade Lofts

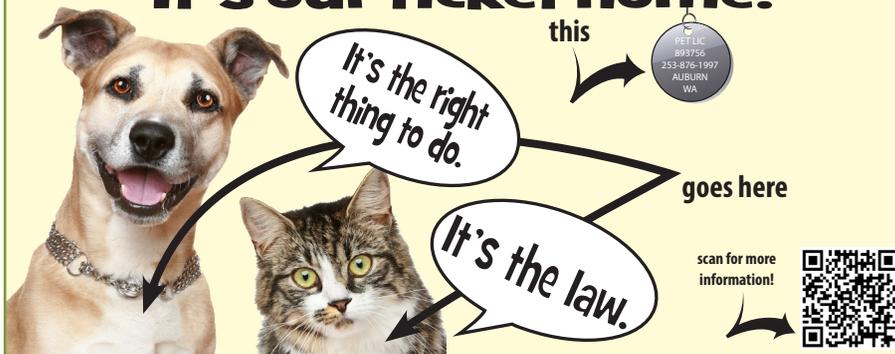
On March 11, 2013, Landmark Development and John W. McKenna, Jr. became the official owners of the property formerly known as the Cavanaugh block. McKenna plans to build a five story mixed use retail/residential building on the block, the first of four developments proposed for the Auburn Junction Promenade in the downtown core.

"With my 30 years of development experience I have been totally impressed with the way the City of Auburn has stepped up to assist in bringing the Promenade Lofts project to downtown Auburn," said Developer John McKenna. "I especially want to thank Deputy Mayor Nancy Backus for her leadership as Chair of the City's Planning and Community Development Committee. The creativity and cooperative culture she and the committee have developed really have created a buzz in the development community."

The project, known as Promenade Lofts (see conceptual rendering above), will include a combined total of 12,000 sq. ft. of retail on the first floor and 128 market rate apartment units above. The second floor Plaza Level will feature a central courtyard with barbeque areas, entertainment space, garden landscaping and a community kitchen for general use of all tenants. The project will be developed by Plan A Development, LLC and designed by Studio Meng Strazzara Architects.

"John's project will not only revitalize an area that has been vacant for a very long time," said Deputy Mayor Nancy Backus, "The project will bring residential opportunities for families, working couples and individuals who want to take advantage of the close proximity to commuter rail and bus. It's sure to bring more business to downtown businesses as well."

## Why license your pet? It's our ticket home!



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253-876-1997

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MORE THAN YOU IMAGINED

## Vote Now for Auburn's Cutest Dog & Cat

Five cats and five dogs have been chosen as finalists for Auburn's first "Top Cat and Big Dog" pet model contest. To enter the contest the cats and dogs had to be Auburn residents, have an up-to-date rabies shot and must have a current Auburn pet license. The top cat and dog will win a photo shoot and help promote the city's pet licensing program. The winners will be selected by popular online votes and announced on the main stage at Petpalooza on May 17, 2013. Vote for Auburn's Top Cat and Big Dog at [auburnwa.gov/pets](http://auburnwa.gov/pets). The deadline to cast your ballot is May 12, 2013.

## Council Highlights

- Authorized the mayor to enter into a cooperative purchase agreement with the University of Washington for IT general supplies and equipment
- Proclaimed Victoria Knight, Miss Auburn 2013 and Amanda Enz, Miss Auburn's Outstanding Teen 2013, as "Goodwill ambassadors for the City of Auburn"
- Honored and recognized Diane Rupert for her work with the City of Auburn's 2012 Tree of Giving Program
- Passed an ordinance providing for the issuance of one or more series of utility system revenue bonds not to exceed \$13,000,000
- Approved the zoning requests of the Auburn School District to change parcels from residential to institutional
- Amended Auburn City Code related to deferral of payment of impact fees and system development charges
- Accepted federal grants for the West Valley Highway System Preservation Project and for the 37th Street and B Street NW Pre-Signal Project
- Accepted a \$12,500 grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce to fund administrative activities within the Urban Center for Innovation Partnerships, Innovation Partnership Zone
- Accepted a \$20,000 grant from the King Conservation District to be used for the Auburn International Farmer's Market
- Accepted a federal grant in the amount of \$502,275 to finance the construction phase of the Citywide Guardrail Improvements project
- Authorized the City to apply for and, if awarded, to accept grant funds in the amount of \$300,000 from the Federal Aviation Administration and the Washington State Department of Transportation, Aviation Division, to seal coat airport apron areas, runway and taxiway surfaces for the Auburn Municipal Airport
- Authorized the City to apply for, and if awarded, to accept grant funds in the amount of \$70,000 from the Federal Aviation Administration and the Washington State Department of Transportation, Aviation Division, to prepare an airport wildlife hazard assessment for the Auburn Municipal Airport

**City of Auburn**  
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**Auburn City Council**  
Nancy Backus, Deputy Mayor  
John Holman  
Wayne Osborne  
John Partridge  
Bill Pelozza  
Rich Wagner  
Largo Wales