

NEWSBERG



River Street is “the worst road in Newberg,” according to city officials. They presented design options to completely rebuild the street on March 9. (Branden Andersen / Newsberg)

Newberg Residents Raise Tree Removal, Property Concerns At River Street Open House

On March 9, the City of Newberg unveiled plans to completely rebuild River Street, raising questions about how that would impact the street’s frontage.

By Branden Andersen
Founding Editor

NEWBERG, Ore. — The City of Newberg held an open house March 9 detailing design options for the planned reconstruction of South River Street, drawing concerns about tree removal, property encroachments, and bicycle infrastructure as city engineers presented three preliminary design options for what officials describe as Newberg’s worst major road.

“We had a couple of really constructive remarks and questions,” said Newberg City Manager Will Worthey. “We also had a lot of people there who were in favor of not doing River Street at all because they want to preserve the frontage.”

The listening session was the first public airing of design concepts for the project, which would fully rebuild River Street from East Third Street south to 11th Street, replacing the roadway along with curbs, sidewalks, stormwater infrastructure, and water and wastewater lines. Each design would, at minimum, require removal of the street’s trees planted in planter strips.

A city council vote to formally proceed with street design is expected at the April 20 city council meeting.

Options 1 and 2 show a street width of 36 feet, including bike lanes. Option 1 features a traditional design with bike lanes on either side, while Option 2 includes two-way auto traffic lanes and a two-way cycle track separated by a three-foot barrier.

Option 1 would require the removal and relocation of high-voltage power lines, extending the project by several years due to required coordination with Portland General Electric, Worthey said.

Option 3 proposes two-way auto lanes, five feet of sidewalk on one side, and 11 feet of multi-use path on the other. Each design includes a 5.5- to 6-foot planter strip stormwater facility. The smallest design, Option 1, requires 46 feet, including side-

walks. The largest, Option 2, requires at least 53 feet.

City representatives said Option 3 was preferred among attendees as the least impactful. The current street width is 24 feet curb to curb, with five-foot sidewalks on either side.

Worthey said a fourth option — doing nothing — exists, but he believes it would result in greater long-term spending through repeated incremental repairs to the aging street.

“If we don’t do anything this year, we’re looking at spending \$400,000 to grind and inlay River Street at this year’s prices,” he said. “And then in another three years at that year’s prices, and then in another three years, so on and so forth forever and ever.”

Encroachment Into Properties

Residents raised concerns at the March 9 open house about apparent encroachments into the city’s right of way. Some property owners have installed landscaping, fencing, or driveways that extend beyond their property lines.

Staff said design work would seek to minimize those impacts but acknowledged some flexibility would be needed along the final corridor.

Under Oregon law, the city holds a public right-of-way easement along River Street, giving it authority to remove any structures, landscaping, or driveways residents have placed within that strip — even if those improvements have stood for years.

“To be clear, this is not property that actually belongs to the homeowners,” Worthey said. “It is in the public right of way already, and would reduce the apparent footprint that people have in front of their houses.”



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Newberg-Dundee Ranks 5th Safest City in Oregon, Report Finds

Annual SafeWise ranking places Yamhill County community ahead of larger metro areas on both violent and property crime measures.

By Branden Andersen
Founding Editor

NEWBERG, Ore. — Newberg-Dundee ranked fifth among Oregon’s safest cities in 2026, according to an annual report released by SafeWise, a national home security research organization. The combined community posted a violent crime rate of 1.22 per 1,000 residents and a property crime rate of 10.65 per 1,000 — figures that placed it well below the state’s more populous urban centers and well below national averages.

“We are incredibly grateful and humbled to learn that the Cities of Newberg and Dundee have been ranked as Oregon’s 5th safest city this year,” said Newberg-Dundee Police Chief Jeff Kosmicki. “While we are proud of this achievement, we want to be clear — this recognition does not belong to the police department alone. It belongs to our entire community: our residents, our businesses, our city government, and every stakeholder who plays a role in making Newberg and Dundee such special places to live and work.”

Kosmicki said partnerships with local government, businesses, and organizations helped the department achieve the ranking. Programs like Operation Safe Schools, where NDPD places a police officer at every school during morning drop-off, contribute to the high ranking and trust of the department, generally.



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OTHER HEADLINES

Newberg’s Camellia Festival Returns with Full Program April 11

Pet of the Month: Ghost

PCC Faculty and Staff Strike as Contract Talks Stall

These Oregon State Parks Will Have Parking Fees by the End of the Month

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Support

From Newberg to Nepal: The TotaChair's 15-Year Mission to Put Dentistry Within Reach

A portable dental chair born in a Newberg garage has traveled to mission sites on multiple continents — and the volunteers building it are just getting started.

By Branden Andersen
Founding Editor




NEWBERG, Ore. — On Thursday mornings, a group of about eight or nine volunteers gathers in a workspace at Austin Industries in Newberg. They run belt sanders over hardwood planks, assemble hinges, and bolt together a three-piece dental chair designed to fold flat, check as airline baggage, and set up fast enough that a dentist in Nepal or Guatemala can focus on patients rather than equipment.

The chair is called the TotaChair — a nod to “tote-a-chair.” It weighs 25 pounds, something project lead Daniel Burns demonstrates by lifting the chair easily from the assembly table to the inspection table with ease.

The project traces back to 2009, when the late Ken Austin, co-founder of A-dec, the largest dental equipment company in North America, wanted to create a lightweight mission chair that would give patients and providers more comfort than other options on the market. Austin understood the problem intimately: field dentistry

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in remote locations demands equipment that can survive rough travel and still function reliably once it gets there.

He designed the chair himself, later transferring ownership rights of the design to the Rotary Club of Newberg Early Birds.

“It was his gift to the Rotary Club, to our club — Rotary clubs around the world,” said Burns. “This is our unique project.”

Burns traces the hands-on work back to around 2009, when a small group began building chairs in Austin’s home shop. By 2011, the club had a website and logged buyers.

“One of the very first projects — a big project — 60 chairs went out for a big event,” Burns said. “That was before our online store went live. There was a real need out there.”

Since then, the club has sold more than 500 chairs. Gross receipts over the life of the project approach a quarter of a million dollars, Burns said. All proceeds flow to the Newberg Early Birds Foundation, which

funds local and international brick-and-mortar projects, supports community initiatives, and has helped maintain a sister club relationship with a Rotary club in La Plata, Colombia.

The chair currently sells for \$650 per unit, including a carrying bag.

The Supply Chain Behind the Chair

The TotaChair may look simple — three sections, a folding frame, and a handful of brackets — but building it draws on a network of local businesses and institutions that donate materials and labor.

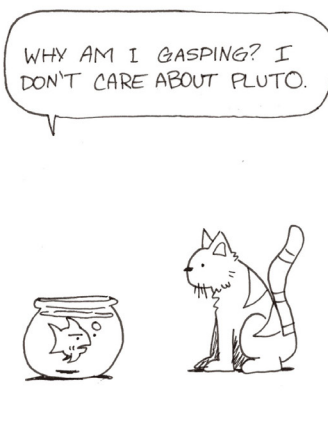
Recently, Newberg High School’s Tiger Manufacturing was brought into the supply chain as they were awarded a \$20,000 grant from the Newberg Early Birds Rotary to help purchase additional equipment.



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Melon Collie Ep. 79

Created by Joseph Hampton



UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

MARCH 17

7 p.m. — St. Patrick's Day a Different Way
Chehalem Cultural Center, 415 E Sheridan Street

7 p.m. — Newberg High School Orchestra Concert
Drea Furgeson Auditorium (NHS), 2400 Douglas Ave.

MARCH 18

6 p.m. — Habitat for Humanity Homeownership Info Session
Chehalem Senior Center, 101 W Foothills Drive

MARCH 19

7 p.m. — Newberg High School Band Concert
Drea Furgeson Auditorium (NHS), 2400 Douglas Ave.

MARCH 20



10 a.m. — Coppola Movie Night: Rocky
Domaine Lumineux, 115 N Washington Street

MARCH 21

1 p.m. — Run/Walk Your First 5k Workshop
Chehalem Valley Chamber of Commerce, 112 N Garfield St

6 p.m. — Murder Mystery
Dobbles Family Winery, 240 SE 5th St, Dundee

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NEWBERG'S FAVORITES 2026