



City of Coos Bay

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PRESS RELEASE

The City recently learned that its planned expansion of the parking area at the Eastside Boat Ramp will have to wait until next season. The City had hoped that with the work of Stuntzner Engineering, the approval of the Port of Coos Bay (property owner), the approval of the Coos Bay Urban Renewal District, and an approved variance from the Coos Bay Planning Commission that implementation of Phase I of the project, a gravel overflow parking area for vehicles with boat trailers, could be completed before the upcoming salmon derby. Prior to commencing the work, City staff submitted the project plans to the U.S. Corp of Engineers for their review and approval of the proposed project without having to undergo the full permitting process. While a small amount of wetlands had been identified in the project area, the City had hoped that by avoiding the wetland area it would prevent us from having to go through a full project permitting process. The City was notified today that because "the identified wetlands lie in unreasonably close proximity to a Section 10 waterway" (Isthmus Slough), the project will need to a permit from the U.S. Corps of Engineers and approval from the Oregon Department of State Lands prior starting the project.

As the permitting process can take up several months to complete, the project has been placed onto next year's calendar. The City will take this opportunity to obtain the necessary permits for the entire project which will add an overflow lot for vehicles with boat trailers and a lot for automobiles. City staff will also submit grant applications to help fund this project as well as adding a much needed fish cleaning station and for some needed maintenance of the existing parking lot.

Background: The City of Coos Bay currently manages two ramp facilities within the city limits, one in the Eastside District and the other in the Empire District. The Eastside boat ramp is heavily used during the fishing season; and in fact, the use has exceeded the parking capacity at that location. This is both good and bad. Good that public provided service is being fully utilized; and bad as those who can't find a parking spot in the parking lot sometimes migrate in to the nearby residential area which has caused conflicts in the past. Reports are being circulated about a larger than usual salmon run this year which will no doubt intensify the use of the boat ramp and the adjacent parking lot. Both the City and the Port have been approach about creating additional parking areas in the area around the boat ramp.

The Eastside boat ramp became a reality through a partnership between the City and the Port, along with financial assistance from the Marine Board. The Port owned and still owns the property where the boat ramp and parking lot is sited. In 1996, the City entered into a 20 year IGA with the Port which obligated the City to seek funding, develop the property, and maintain the newly created infrastructure. The property surrounding the boat ramp is also owned by the Port.

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