Concert in the Park Next Friday; Latest City Council Decisions

River City Briefs

July 3, 2026

The city of Independence, Oregon | 555 S Main St, Independence, OR 97351 | 503 838-1212

Para La Versión En Español

Happy 4th of July!

There's no better place to celebrate Independence Day than right here in Independence, Oregon. We hope residents and visitors enjoy a day filled with fun activities for the whole family, time with friends and neighbors, and a chance to take in everything our community has to offer.

Wishing everyone a happy, safe, and memorable Fourth of July.

Celebrating 250 Years: A Note from Mayor Kate

Hello Community,

I hope you are able to take time this weekend to enjoy everything that makes the Fourth of July in Independence so much fun. Whether you're starting the day at the Polk County Fire District's Annual Pancake Feed, cheering on the Duck Derby, finding your favorite spot along the Monmouth-Independence Rotary Club Grand Parade route, enjoying your favorite food, taking in great entertainment, or ending the evening with fireworks, there's something for everyone.

This year is a special one as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation's independence, making our hometown traditions feel even more meaningful.

A sincere thank you to the **Friends of Community Parks** for taking on the tremendous job of organizing two days of Independence Days festivities. Events like these don't happen without dedicated volunteers and generous community sponsors, and we're fortunate to have so many people who make this celebration possible.

I hope you have a wonderful Fourth of July with family, friends, and neighbors. Have a safe holiday, enjoy the celebration, and take a moment to appreciate what makes this community—and this country—such a special place to call home.

In service to our community,
Mayor Kate

What Does the City's S&P Rating Mean?

Ever wonder what the city's S&P rating means? In this episode of We've Heard, Mayor Kate Schwarzler and City Manager Kenna West explain why it's similar to a personal credit score and why maintaining a strong rating helps the city save taxpayer dollars through lower borrowing costs, stronger financial practices, and greater transparency.

They also answer another question from the community: Are the River's Edge Summer Series concerts still happening? The answer is yes. Learn how the city continues to support this popular summer tradition and why it's an important investment for both the community and local businesses.

Have a question you'd like us to discuss in a future episode? Email mayor@ci.independence.or.us.

Watch Video Here

60-Second Council - June 23, 2026 Meeting

On Tuesday evening, the city council addressed several financial and policy matters before the urban renewal agency board convened later in the evening:

-Following testimony from community members, the council adopted Ordinance 1639, establishing the community services and parks fee. During the staff presentation, council heard that if a referendum petition receives enough certified signatures, the ordinance would be placed on hold pending an election and the fee could not be collected. Staff reported that without this revenue, the Museum and Parks would close promptly. Because state law requires a longer process for library closure, a notice regarding the Library will be published in the coming weeks, and additional discussion will be needed regarding the future of the Old Library building.

-The council adopted Resolution 26-1657, classifying the fee as an incurred charge.

-The council adopted Ordinance 1640, renaming Madrona Street East to I Street.

-The council met in executive session to discuss real property negotiations. Upon returning to open session, the council directed the city manager to continue negotiations related to the potential sale of the Museum building.

-The council adopted Resolution 26-1655, making a budget adjustment, held a public hearing on a supplemental budget, and adopted Resolution 26-1658.

-Following adjournment of the council meeting, the urban renewal agency board adopted Resolution 2026-02, making a budget adjustment.

For more information on these topics, visit the city of Independence website.

Watch Video Here

Concerts in the Park Kickoff Next Friday

Kick off the summer with an unforgettable night of live music at Riverview Park as the River's Edge Summer Series returns.

We're opening the season with Grand Royale, one of the nation's premier Beastie Boys tribute bands, with Surefire getting the party started with classic rock favorites.

Friday, July 10, 2026
Gates open: 5:00 p.m.
Opening band: 6:00 p.m.
Headliner: 8:00 p.m.

Tickets:
Pre-sale: $8
At the gate: $10

Bring your lawn chairs, grab some great food, and enjoy an evening of live music on the river with family and friends. There's no better way to kick off summer in Independence.

Get your pre-sale tickets and learn more by clicking the button below.

Learn More Here

Honoring a Champion for Safer Streets

Last week, city staff, Mayor Schwarzler, Councilor Corr, and close family gathered for an intimate memorial unveiling at the corner of Gun Club and

Hoffman Road in honor of Jamie Boe, a longtime Independence resident and tireless advocate for cyclist safety.

Jamie spent years speaking up for safer conditions along Hoffman Road, which he described as a “death trap.” His advocacy helped advance needed improvements, supported in part through an Oregon Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School grant secured through Polk County.

While Jamie passed away before the improvements were finished, his efforts will continue to be felt for years to come. The safer roadway conditions stand as part of his lasting impact on the cycling community and everyone who uses Hoffman Road.

Public Notice: Abolishing the City of Independence Library

PCIO26-327 PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE ABOLISHING THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE LIBRARY NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Independence will hold two public hearings pursuant to ORS 357.621 to hear comments regarding the proposed closure of the City of Independence Library.

The hearings will be held at the Independence City Hall, located at 555 S Main St., Independence, OR 97351, at 6:30 p.m., on the 11th day of August 2026 and at 6:30 p.m., on the 10th day of November 2026. 07/01/26, 07/08/26.

***This notice originally published in the July 1, 2026 edition of the Polk County Itemizer-Observer.**

Infill Housing City Council Hearing

At the meeting of July 14, 2026, the Independence City Council will hold a public hearing on a draft set of revisions to the Independence Development Code that would promote infill development in existing neighborhoods in a manner that respects the character of the neighborhoods. The public hearing will be held at the Independence Civic Center and start shortly after 6:30 pm.

What is the Problem?
The City of Independence is projected to need around 2,000 new homes over the next 20 years. In early 2025, the city completed a Housing Production Strategy that outlined ways to help achieve this growth. Among the goals included strategies to:
1. Allow a wider range of middle housing types in the Low Density Residential (RS) and Medium Density Residential (RM) Zones.
2. Allow cottage cluster housing.
3. Allow for small lot detached homes in the Medium Density Residential (RM) and High Density Residential (RH) Zones.
4. Improve standards and review processes for small infill housing projects.

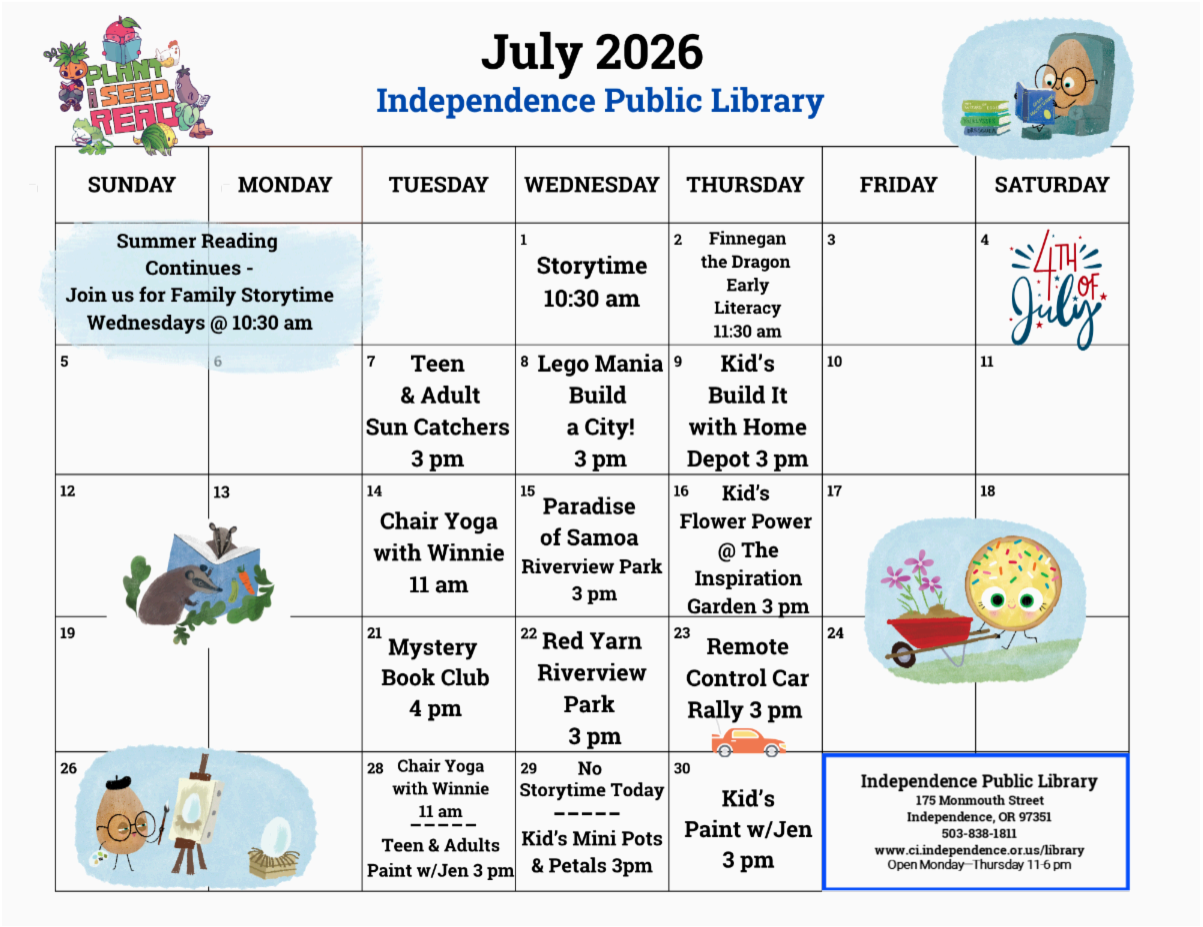
What is Proposed?
This project would help achieve these goals through a series of changes to the Independence Development Code. The amendments would:
1. Expand the allowed housing types permitted in residential zones.
2. Slightly reduce the minimum lot size required.
3. Tweak the residential design standards to ensure the standards adequately address the additional types of uses that may be constructed.

Learn More Here

2C1C July Edition

Read Here

Independence Library July Calendar



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