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English 8

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### If I Were Mayor of Ashland

There are many good qualities about Ashland, but there is always room for improvement. Ashland seems like a small tourist town from the outside, but it is home to many people who live, work, and go to school there. Ashland needs to support its community and become a better place for everyone who lives there. If I were the mayor, there would be a few issues I would address. Confronting these challenges would make our city even better and create an improved environment for our community.

The first thing I would address is the well-known issue of homelessness in Ashland. Any person who has visited or lived in Ashland has probably seen people without homes on their way to school, work, or simply walking around town. It is a well-known issue our town has struggled with for a long time. When addressing homelessness, the most important thing to consider is that the goal should be to give them homes, jobs, and a steady income. Many people see the question of how to address homelessness as how to make our town and streets “look better”, but we need to focus on what will actually improve their livelihood. Homelessness is a complicated issue to tackle, so a good first step would be giving people the resources they need such as food, showers, clothes, and hygiene items like toothbrushes and soap. I would propose a shelter where people

can donate items, and homeless people can come and pick up what they need. This place would also give access to showers, and possibly hot meals on some days, similar to the Community Peace Meal. Especially in summer and winter, when temperatures are more extreme, homeless people need access to resources to make their lives more comfortable. The key to confronting homelessness is to help people rather than to get rid of them, so giving them access to the resources they need is just the bare minimum of supporting these members of our community.

The next challenge I would confront is wildfires. Wildfires are a big issue in the Rogue Valley, and Ashland is no exception. Considering the effects of the recent Alameda Fire in 2020, and wildfires affecting Los Angeles in 2025, we know the effects can be devastating and preventing these disasters is important. Wildfires also have an effect as a significant factor of air pollution in Ashland. Luckily, there are some ways to prevent wildfires that are relatively straightforward. One solution is to regulate campfires to make them safer by only allowing them in designated fire pits, making sure they are not left unattended, and prohibiting campfires in hot, dry, and windy weather. There are also ways that the city can prevent fire damage. Removing flammable and dry vegetation around homes and buildings, replacing flammable plants with fire resistant ones, and educating residents on fire safety can be a huge help. Ashland could be affected by wildfires at any time, so being prepared is important to ensure the safety of our town and community.

Another issue I would address is pollution. These issues are a big problem for our whole planet, but we can make a difference and start with our city. Aside from wildfires, another huge cause of air pollution is vehicle emissions. There are a couple of ways to avoid this problem, and one is reducing the use of vehicles. In Ashland, many people are walking distances from their school or workplace, so encouraging citizens to walk or bike can help reduce pollution caused by vehicles. Another way is to encourage the use of electric or hybrid vehicles. This can be done by

implementing more electric vehicle charging stations around the city, as well as educating citizens on the benefits of going electric. I believe this, along with wildfire prevention, can have a substantial impact on the air quality in our community, and help make a dent in the bigger issues affecting the world.

If I were the mayor of Ashland, I would tackle issues that our town has battled for a long time. I would address the homelessness issue, making sure all our citizens are safe and have the resources they need. I would help prevent the risk of wildfires impacting our town and provide safety for our citizens. I would try to address the issue of air pollution caused by vehicle emissions, by encouraging alternatives to vehicles that emit masses of carbon into our air. I would make Ashland a town that better contributes to its community, focusing on the support and safety of our citizens, as well as protecting our environment from pollution and fires. I believe we need to take a stand and battle the issues impacting Ashland. If I were mayor, I would do just that, making our town a better place for everyone who lives and visits here.