

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Work Session: West Eugene Collaborative Recommendations

Meeting Date: August 12, 2009
Department: Public Works
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: B
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ISSUE STATEMENT

This past March, the West Eugene Collaborative (WEC) finalized its recommendations for addressing land use, transportation and environmental issues in west Eugene and west of Eugene. The City of Eugene played an essential funding, membership and staffing role in the project. WEC members presented key findings from their final report at a council workshop on April, 27 2009. At that workshop, the council requested that staff return at a future date to discuss and plan for potential implementation of the WEC recommendations.

BACKGROUND

There are a number of ongoing and upcoming City initiatives that will in some way address the WEC land use, environmental and transportation recommendations:

- West Eugene EmX Extension
 - The City has been working closely with LTD to extend the EmX system to west Eugene.
- Eugene Transportation System Plan Update including Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan
 - Eugene's upcoming Transportation System Plan (TSP) update will present an opportunity to analyze and consider the WEC's transportation recommendations in the context of the larger regional transportation system.
 - The City was recently notified by the Department of Land Conservation and Development that they have approved a Transportation and Growth Management grant of approximately \$157,000 for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan element of the TSP Update. This will provide an opportunity to consider the WEC's recommendations that relate to pedestrian and bicycle issues.
- West 11th Avenue Transportation Corridor Study
 - This study, which is in the final draft phase, considers how to make West 11th Avenue work better between Chambers Street and Green Hill Road. The study addresses a number of issues related to the WEC recommendations including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, access management, and traffic signal timing. Staff plan to return to the council this fall to presents the results of the West 11th study.

- TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Grant Application
 - City staff are working with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to develop an application to the USDOT TIGER grant program that is providing \$1.5 billion nationally for transportation projects. The draft project proposal entails reconstructing Highway 99 between Garfield and Roosevelt to urban standards including sidewalks, access management, and stormwater facilities, adding a second left-turn lane to Highway 99 at Roosevelt, upgrading 5th Avenue between Highway 99 and Bailey Hill road with a new street surface and sidewalks, and replacing the four-way stop at 5th and Seneca with a roundabout sized for large trucks.

- Eugene Comprehensive Lands Assessment (ECLA)
 - In January 2008, the council directed staff to conduct an assessment of residential, industrial and commercial lands, as well as non-employment lands (e.g., parks, open space). This expanded study includes an inventory of buildable lands within the City's UGB, an estimate of need for land for residential uses, an estimate of need for land for non-residential uses (primarily commercial and industrial, but also public), and a determination of whether the City has sufficient land within the UGB to meet the estimated residential and non-residential needs.

- Quick Response Grant
 - The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) Quick Response program provides design assistance to help understand how private property can be developed to meet different community goals. City staff are working with LTD to identify a property owner on West 11th Avenue who is interested in redeveloping the property to a less auto-oriented design. The ideal property will back up to the Amazon Channel which will present the opportunity to consider how the property could be redeveloped with EmX on West 11th or along the channel; it may also be possible to consider how the property would be redeveloped with a multiway boulevard on 11th.

- Access Management Policy
 - The proposed access management regulations are intended to balance the need for a safe and efficient roadway system against the need to provide ingress and egress to developed land adjacent to the street; limit the number of conflict points and separate basic conflict areas by managing the number, spacing, location and design of access connections; preserve intersection influence areas to allow drivers to focus on traffic operational tasks; and reduce interference with through movement, caused by slower vehicles exiting, entering or turning across the roadway, by providing turning lanes or tapers and restricting certain movements. Access management regulations will particularly benefit traffic flow and safety on major arterials like West 11th Avenue. The proposed regulations will come before the council this fall.

- Metro Waterways
 - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in partnership with the cities of Eugene and Springfield, Eugene Water & Electric Board, and Lane County, is conducting a multi-year study for identifying and evaluating problem areas and opportunities related to the function and health of our local waterways. The study examines issues related to flood protection and drainage

management, conservation of wildlife and aquatic habitat, water quality, open spaces, and recreational and educational opportunities. The eventual goal of the Metro Waterways study is to identify and select specific enhancement projects designed to fix problems and improve overall conditions of our waterways. The draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Metro Waterways Study identifies over \$90 million worth of habitat enhancements in 14 different reaches of Amazon Creek. The Army Corps of Engineers has allocated \$400,000 in ARRA funds towards completing the Metro Waterways feasibility study.

Attached are a timeline that shows when these different initiatives are expected to be started and completed and a staff response to the WEC recommendations that provides additional information about these projects. The concept of converting sections of West 11th Avenue to a multiway boulevard is the primary WEC recommendation that is not explicitly addressed through any of these projects. The large investment in converting West 11th to a multiway boulevard may make sense if it is in support of a larger vision to encourage compact mixed use development along West 11th.

Some of the initiatives described above such as the West 11th Transportation Corridor Study present an opportunity to look at how to make our transportation system work more efficiently for all modes of travel. Others, such as the TSP Update and ECLA present an opportunity to have a community-wide dialogue about how we want to develop as a city including where we should encourage more density and what kind of infrastructure we need to support that development.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

The WEC recommendations are consistent with many of the Adopted Growth Management Policies.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

None, this is an information item only.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

None, this is an information item only.

SUGGESTED MOTION

None, this is an information item only.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Response to WEC Recommendations
- B. Timeline

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Response to WEC Recommendations

Transportation

- An “inner” alternative route connecting from Highway 99 near the Big Y, east and west along 5th and 7th, and via Bailey Hill to West 11th Avenue.
 - The City is applying for a USDOT ARRA-funded TIGER grant to facilitate east-west flow along 5th Avenue between Hwy 99 and West 11th.
 - The City could request modeling assistance from LCOG to forecast the potential for whether the alternative routes would shift any trips off of W. 11th. It may be possible to incorporate this step into the TSP Update.
- An “outer” alternative route connecting from Highway 99, east and west along Roosevelt Boulevard, and via Beltline to West 11th Avenue.
 - ODOT incorporated an additional left-turn on Hwy 99 at Roosevelt into their Hwy 99 project which was shelved due to lack of funding. The City is partnering with ODOT on a TIGER grant application to rebuild Hwy 99 from Garfield to Roosevelt including the additional left-turn lane.
- Develop and implement a community design process to test the multiway boulevard vision for west Eugene.
 - A multiway boulevard would be a major public investment with significant property and business impacts. It only makes sense to pursue a multiway boulevard if it is in support of mixed use or other high density development along West 11th Avenue. The Eugene Comprehensive Lands Assessment may lead to community dialogue about where additional density should be located and this may present an opportunity to investigate the potential for mixed use development along W. 11th.
- Complete a Highway 126 safety and mobility study (as proposed by Senator Prozanski and Representative Holvey).
 - The City has advocated for state and federal funding for this study; however, the study has yet to be funded.
- Enhance public transit service.
 - The City is working closely with LTD to extend EmX service to west Eugene.
- Improve traffic signalization.
 - This will be addressed in the West 11th Transportation Corridor Study which will be completed this fall.
- Construct safety improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle paths throughout the corridor with particular focus on safe connections and improved signage to and from the Fern Ridge Path.
 - These issues will also be addressed in the West 11th Study and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update.
- Add striped bicycle lanes along 5th Avenue and 7th Place as part of alternative route development.

- This will be considered in the development of the TIGER grant application and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update.
- TransPlan calls for striping bike lanes on 7th Place.
- Construct significant crossing improvements at Oak Patch and City View on the Fern Ridge Path such as bicycle underpasses or other appropriate improvements.
 - In recent years, the City has installed pedestrian refuges where the Fern Ridge Path intersects with Bailey Hill Road, Oak Patch Road, and City View Street.
 - Opportunities to make additional improvements to Fern Ridge Path street crossings will be considered through the EmX and Metro Waterways projects and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update.
- Increase the number of bikes that LTD vehicles.
 - LTD is converting many of their buses from bike racks that carry two bikes to racks that carry three bikes.

Land Use

- Undertake the City of Eugene's Comprehensive Lands Assessment (ECLA).
 - ECLA is underway and is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.
- Complete land redevelopment to multi-story mixed-use along West 11th Avenue multiway boulevard.
 - The follow-up to ECLA may present an opportunity to engage the community in dialogue about how we want to grow as a city and where we should encourage more density. Encouraging denser mixed use development in the West 11th Ave. corridor can be part of this community conversation.

Environment

- Rezone publicly owned and private conservation areas, such as those lands owned by the Nature Conservancy, to a natural resources designation.
 - Through implementing policies in the West Eugene Wetlands Plan and the conditions of the approval order issued by the Oregon Department of State Lands in 2002, the City rezoned all the parcels owned by the City, BLM, and The Nature Conservancy that were designated as "Protect" in the West Eugene Wetlands Plan to the Natural Resources Zone in 2003. This 2003 rezoning process did not include other parcels owned by these three entities in west Eugene that were not designated as "Protect" under the West Eugene Wetlands Plan. Since 2003, these organizations have purchased additional acreage in west Eugene, and these acres have not been rezoned to the Natural Resources.
- Implement currently-planned Metro Waterways enhancements to Amazon Creek.
 - The draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Metro Waterways Study identifies over \$90 million worth of habitat enhancements in 14 different reaches of Amazon Creek. Once the EA is finalized and approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps), the City of Eugene will work with the Army Corps to seek federal funds, which can fund up to 65% of the project cost, to implement the highest priority habitat enhancement projects. In addition, the City will seek non-federal funds to

- help contribute to the City's portion of the habitat enhancement project cost share (35%).
- Undertake an assessment of west Eugene habitat connections needed by wildlife moving between wetlands, wet prairie, oak savannah and/or forest.
 - Over the past 15 years, the West Eugene Wetlands Partnership has acquired about 3000 acres of land in west Eugene that is comprised of wetlands and associated upland habitats. A key element of the Partnership's acquisition strategy was to purchase properties that provide hydrologic and ecological connectivity. Connectivity is important for a variety of reasons, including to allow wildlife to move within and among the various habitat types. With this protected system in place, the Partnership has undertaken several studies to assess the ability of certain wildlife species to move within and among the habitat types. In particular, several studies have been conducted on Western pond turtle and Fender's blue butterfly. Apart from these two species, there have not been any specific assessments of habitat connections needed to move in the west Eugene area.
 - Support the construction and operation of the Environmental Education Center.
 - The City of Eugene is a partner in the effort to construct and operate an Environmental Education Center in west Eugene. As recently as January 29, 2009, Parks and Open Space Director Johnny Medlin provided an update to City Council on the status of this effort with a memo to Mayor Piercy and the City Council.
 - Act to improve Amazon Creek water quality.
 - Improving water quality in Amazon Creek is a key goal of the City's storm water program. Since storm water from 65% of Eugene's land base drains into Amazon Creek, achieving this goal requires effective implementation of a very large suite of actions, including actions that can only be implemented by individual land owners. Having said that, there are specific actions that Public Works is taking to improve water quality in Amazon Creek. For example, the Parks and Open Space Division has been actively planting trees along the banks of Amazon Creek to improve shading of the creek, which helps reduce water temperature. In addition, multiple habitat restoration projects along Amazon Creek have occurred over the past decade, which have helped improve water quality, expand flood storage capacity, and improve habitat for a broad suite of native plant and animal communities. In the future, the City will be implementing planned capital improvement projects identified in the Metro Waterways Study, which will continue the trend of improving water quality, flood storage capacity, and habitat in the Amazon Creek system.
 - Undertake a feasibility study of re-establishing cutthroat trout passage between Amazon Creek and Coyote Creek. It is suggested that a collaborative partnership be used to implement this study that includes the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Land Management, the City of Eugene, and Lane County.
 - There is currently no action underway related to this recommendation.

Eugene Planning Initiatives Related to West Eugene Collaborative

ATTACHMENT B

2009

1st Quarter

2009

2nd Quarter

2009

3rd Quarter

2009

4th Quarter

2010

2011

2012

