

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Work Session: South Willamette Concept Plan Update

Meeting Date: June 19, 2013
Department: Planning & Development
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: B
Staff Contact: Patricia Thomas
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ISSUE STATEMENT

This work session is an opportunity to receive an update and discuss the South Willamette Concept Plan in the context of implementing Envision Eugene.

BACKGROUND

One of the primary goals set forth in the City Manager's March 2012 Envision Eugene recommendation is to accommodate all of Eugene's 20-year multi-family housing and commercial job needs inside the existing Urban Growth Boundary. Area planning has been identified as a means of promoting compact urban development along key transit corridors and in core commercial centers in a way that enhances the livability and unique identity of each area.

The South Willamette Concept Plan began in 2011 as a pilot for the area planning strategy, encompassing the South Willamette Street area from 23rd to 32nd avenues and from Amazon Park to the base of College Hill. This vital district is already valued as a place to live, work, shop and enjoy leisure activities. In addition, according to research conducted by the Envision Eugene Technical Resource Group, South Willamette is one of four districts city-wide that may be closer to showing market potential for change over the next 20 years. These characteristics, along with public support through a partnership with the Friendly Area Neighborhood and Southtown Business Association, pointed to South Willamette as a good candidate to begin exploring the tools of area planning.

The draft South Willamette Concept Plan describes a vision for the district that integrates land use, transportation, public parks and green space. The vision emerged from numerous community conversations, including over 600 people who actively participated through public workshops, focus groups, questionnaires and email updates. Based on these conversations, the plan strikes a balance toward a moderate level of change and intensity that is sensitive to the scale and character of existing development. Key elements of the vision include:

- A well-connected, healthy, and walkable district
- Opportunities for more commercial jobs and residential density, including a greater diversity of housing types
- Guidelines for the physical form and scale of commercial and mixed-use development
- Concepts for active, successful streets and public realm

- Principles for transitions and compatible building design

The Concept Plan itself is not a regulatory document, but aims to summarize the community's intent and inform the many actions required to realize the vision. In keeping with the action-oriented principles of Envision Eugene, the South Willamette Concept Plan includes a clear strategy for implementation (see page 54). Actions fall into three main categories:

- Regulatory changes such as code and plan amendments
- Community investments supporting redevelopment
- Public improvements

In addition to many community partners, the Eugene Planning Commission has also played an active role in developing the plan, including periodic discussions, participation in public events, and co-hosting a recent open house. On April 15, the Planning Commission unanimously accepted the concept plan with a list of final recommendations (Attachment C).

Next Steps

In preparation for local adoption of Envision Eugene, staff will begin work with the Planning Commission to prepare draft code amendments for Council discussion. Code amendments will likely include a Special Area Plan and a hybrid form-based code for the district based closely on the South Willamette Concept Plan as well as additional public participation.

Additional coordination with the grant-funded South Willamette Street Improvement Plan will continue through the summer as a vision for the long-term street-side character as Willamette Street develops. Council will have future opportunities to hear the result of this work as well as discuss and provide direction on options.

Finally, the Concept Plan sets forth recommendations for community investments in the South Willamette district. Staff will continue working with Council on community investments at a broader scale, for example through the in-progress MUPTC program discussions.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

The South Willamette Concept Plan implements all of the Envision Eugene pillars, with emphasis on the following pillars and strategies (for a complete list, see Appendix A of the South Willamette Concept Plan, p. 64):

Envision Eugene Pillars

Provide Housing Affordable to All Income Levels

- Plan for a higher proportion of new housing stock to be multi-family...intended to expand the variety of housing types and prices available.
- ...programs and actions will be put in place to increase the number of multi-family homes that are constructed in the downtown, along key transit corridors, and in core commercial areas.
- Expand housing variety and choice by facilitating the building of smaller, clustered and attached housing

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Plan for Climate Change and Energy Resiliency

- Plan for growth so that an increasing proportion of residents live in 20-minute neighborhoods where residents can meet most of their daily needs near their homes without the use of an automobile.

Promote Compact Urban Development and Efficient Transportation Options

- Facilitate the transformation of downtown, key transit corridors and core commercial areas as mixed-use neighborhoods that foster active, walkable, community living by providing a mix of residential, commercial, retail and public uses in proximity to one another.
- Use urban design to integrate a mix of commercial and residential uses, transportation, parking, parks and open space, and historical and cultural resources.
- Make compact urban development easier in the downtown, on key transit corridors and in core commercial areas.

Protect, Repair and Enhance Neighborhood Livability

- Future actions (such as land use code changes or plan amendments) that impact allowable density in neighborhoods will only be undertaken through a public process (such as area planning or neighborhood planning) that integrates the compatibility goals of the Infill Compatibility Standards and/or Opportunity Siting projects.
- Implement the Opportunity Siting (OS) goal to facilitate higher density residential development on sites that are compatible with and have the support of nearby residents.

Provide for Adaptable, Flexible and Collaborative Implementation

- Develop a range of implementation tools to realize the community vision of Envision Eugene. The range of existing and new tools may include:
 - Design based tools such as area planning, form-based codes, design review and design standards.
 - Removal of code barriers
 - Capital improvements that increase the value of an area and attract private investment
 - Partnerships and collaboration with neighbors, public agencies and institutions and private developers,
 - Financial tools such as tax relief, fee reduction or restructuring, loans and other market interventions.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

This is an informational work session; no action is required at this time.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

No action is required on this item.

SUGGESTED MOTION

No action is required on this item.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. South Willamette Concept Plan Link to [South Willamette Concept Plan, May 2013](#)
A copy for viewing is available at the City Manager's Office
- B. Project Background: www.eugene-or.gov/SWillamette
Includes project history, interim plans and workshop presentations.
See "Community Input" page for links to reports and workshop results.
- C. Eugene Planning Commission Recommendation

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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