

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Work Session: Downtown Improvements – Funding Options

Meeting Date: January 20, 2016
Department: Planning & Development
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item: A
Staff Contact: Sarah Medary
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ISSUE STATEMENT

This work session follows-up on council direction and will specifically focus on funding options for downtown high-speed fiber internet and improvements to the park blocks. It will be an opportunity for council to discuss and provide input about specific funding options related to the proposed downtown projects in advance of your next work session.

BACKGROUND

On December 14, 2015, council directed the City Manager to schedule a work session to inform the council on the downtown high-speed fiber project and improved park blocks and all the mechanisms for funding these projects. On January 11, 2016, council discussed the two projects and gave feedback on the scope to inform this work session on funding mechanisms. Both projects are related to larger efforts on economic prosperity. Park blocks improvements is part of a larger effort to enhance and connect downtown open space. The overarching goal is to foster a vibrant downtown while boosting the local economy.

Downtown High-Speed Fiber

On January 11, council asked questions about the fiber implementation plan and expressed general support for a public investment in high-speed fiber. Attachment A provides information on the project and the funding options, which include federal and state grants/loans, general fund, telecom registration/licensing fund, urban renewal, general obligation (GO) bond, and private sources.

Park Block Improvements

On January 11, council discussed a range of possibilities for approaching park block improvements from a comprehensive, inclusive overview of key downtown public spaces to a more limited scope of needed changes. Councilors discussed the need for public engagement and a needs assessment process to identify improvements that would a) simultaneously serve the emerging downtown neighborhood and the entire community and b) address deficiencies in accessibility and design to make the Park Blocks more welcoming, inviting and connected, as well as to include more green space. Attachment B provides information on possible city actions and funding options. Funding options range from federal grants and general funds to borrowing mechanisms such as GO bonds, local option levies, and downtown urban renewal.

Attachment C includes a memorandum on the Downtown Urban Renewal District's status.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

High-speed fiber and Park Block improvements address many goals for Eugene and downtown, including:

Envision Eugene Pillars

- Provide ample economic opportunities for all community members.
- Promote compact urban development and efficient transportation options.
- Protect, repair and enhance neighborhood livability.
- Provide for adaptable, flexible and collaborative implementation.

Regional Prosperity Economic Development Plan

- Strategy 5: Identify as a Place to Thrive - Priority Next Step - Urban Vitality
 - As we foster a creative economy, dynamic urban centers are an important asset. Eugene, Springfield and many of the smaller communities in the region recognize the importance of supporting and enhancing vitality in their city centers. Building downtowns as places to live, work and play will support the retention and expansion of the existing business community and be a significant asset to attract new investment. The Cities of Eugene and Springfield will continue to enhance their efforts to promote downtown vitality through development and redevelopment.

City Council Goal of Sustainable Development

- Increased downtown development

Eugene Downtown Plan

- Downtown development shall support the urban qualities of density, vitality, livability and diversity to create a downtown, urban environment.
- Emphasize Broadway, Willamette Street, 5th and 8th Avenues as Great Streets through public improvements and development guidelines. Include portions of these streets as follows:
 - 8th Avenue between Willamette Street and the Willamette River.
- Enhance public places throughout downtown through the careful design of civic buildings, streetscapes, parks and plazas. Include public art and other elements to create special places for all ages.
- Connect special places downtown with enhanced street designs, public art, directional signs, transit routes and historic markers to create an inviting and memorable route through downtown.
- Support public safety activities that increase visibility, access actual and perceived safety for individuals and property downtown.
- Enhance functional designs for streets, sidewalks and related public improvements with carefully chosen design elements, including materials, alignments, plantings and streetscape elements.
- Use downtown development tools and incentives to encourage development that provides character and density downtown.
- Actively pursue public/private development opportunities to achieve the vision for an active, vital, growing downtown.

Climate Recovery Ordinance

An active, inviting, well-designed public open space downtown enhances walkability and livability, supports downtown as a 20-minute neighborhood, and reduces reliance on fossil fuels.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

This work session is an opportunity to get feedback from council on funding options. No action is requested; therefore, no options have been identified.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

This work session is information only; no recommendation at this time.

SUGGESTED MOTION

No motion necessary at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. High-Speed Fiber – *project & funding options*
- B. Park Block Improvements – *potential City actions & funding options*
- C. Memorandum Regarding the Downtown Urban Renewal District

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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