

# EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



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### Work Session: Downtown Solutions Forum Update

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Meeting Date: January 20, 2016  
Department: PDD, LRCS, EPD, CS  
[www.eugene-or.gov](http://www.eugene-or.gov)

Agenda Item: B  
Staff Contact: Sarah Medary  
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#### **ISSUE STATEMENT**

The Downtown Solutions Forum, initiated by a City Council sub-committee, was held on December 2, 2015. Over 150 participants worked in small groups to discuss their vision for downtown shared spaces and to identify the top actions they believe could help improve those areas. This work session will provide a review of the input collected at the event.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Eugene's downtown serves as a cultural, economic and civic center for the community. The City, public and private partners, and the community have all invested considerable time and resources into Eugene's downtown revitalization, which has resulted in significant changes including new businesses locating downtown, new downtown housing options and residents, more programmed activities, and the development and redevelopment of a number of key properties. All of these efforts, have brought increased activity and more people downtown. While this is certainly one of the desired effects of collective efforts to invigorate downtown, it has also added some pressure to downtown's shared public spaces and has highlighted some community concerns regarding their function, design, and use.

In the fall of 2015, Mayor Kitty Piercy initiated a community conversation on the use of downtown spaces and asked for community ideas that could help improve shared, public spaces. Shortly after, a council sub-committee which included Councilor Claire Syrett and Councilor Chris Pryor, was formed to help direct the effort to collect community input and determine potential next steps. One method of collecting community input was the Downtown Solutions Forum. Based on conversations with the sub-committee, the following goals were outlined for the event:

1. Strive to hold an event that sets a positive tone and welcomes participation by everyone.
2. Identify a shared vision for downtown spaces as well as a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with achieving the vision.
3. Build a common awareness about legal responsibilities, key partners and stakeholders.
4. Identify some (three to five) of the top actions that could help improve shared spaces in downtown.

The Forum was held on Wednesday, December 2, 2015, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at the Lane Community College Downtown Campus. Over 150 participants attended the event and were randomly assigned to tables for facilitated, small group discussions. The number of participants was higher than the room's capacity so additional small groups were accommodated in overflow space across the street in the Atrium Building. There were a total of 20 small groups of eight to 10 participants, each facilitated by a City staff member.

Assistant City Manager Sarah Medary and Mayor Piercy opened the meeting. Senior Planner Nan Laurence gave a brief presentation on recent changes in Eugene's downtown, future opportunities for downtown public spaces and the legal parameters for the public use of shared spaces. Facilitators worked with their groups to discuss participants' vision for downtown and to identify actions that would improve how space is shared downtown. Action items were noted by the facilitator, prioritized by the group, and reported back to the larger group at the end of the event. Councilor Syrett closed the event.

For those that could not attend the event, an online survey was available via the City's website at [www.eugene-or.gov/downtownsolutions](http://www.eugene-or.gov/downtownsolutions) to collect their input.

### *Results*

The full list of action items identified by the tables was transcribed (Attachment A). Twenty-two responses were collected via the online survey (also included in Attachment A).

The priority action items identified by the small groups at the event were reviewed and grouped into seven general categories with some sub-groups (Attachment B).

- Big Ideas/Picture
- Health
  - Restrooms
  - Sanitation
  - Smoke/Tobacco-Free
- Parks, Plazas and Facilities
  - Community Facility
  - Farmers' Market
  - Kesey Square
- Programming
- Public Safety & Behavior
  - Public Safety
  - Rules/Expectations
- Services
  - Alternatives to Panhandling
  - Mental Health Services
  - Outreach workers
  - Shelter/Day Center
- Welcoming Amenities & Fun
  - Amenities
  - Lighting

- Seating

These results were shared with participants who signed up for the interested parties list at the event and posted on the Downtown Solutions website.

The council sub-committee plans to continue meeting to review ideas generated from the forum as well as through other methods. The committee intends to examine how some of these ideas might align with current efforts or policy initiatives, if some require new or different community partnerships, and if there are some that may be piloted relatively soon to determine their effectiveness.

## **RELATED CITY POLICIES**

### *City Council Goals*

Safe Community - A community where all people are safe, valued and welcome.

- Greater sense of safety (especially downtown)

Sustainable Development - A community that meets its present environmental, economic and social needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- Increased downtown development

Accessible and Thriving Culture and Recreation - A community where arts and outdoors are integral to our social and economic well-being and are available to all.

- Preserve strength in arts and outdoors

Effective, Accountable Municipal Government - A government that works openly, collaboratively, and fairly with the community to achieve measurable and positive outcomes and provide effective, efficient services.

- Public engagement that involves the community broadly

### *Envision Eugene Pillars*

Pillar: Provide Ample Economic Opportunities for all Community Members

- Integrate new development and redevelopment in the downtown, on key transit corridors and in core commercial areas.

Pillar: 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.

### *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.

**COUNCIL OPTIONS**

This is an informational work session.

**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

This is an informational work session.

**SUGGESTED MOTION**

This is an informational work session.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Notes from Downtown Solutions Forum Tables and Online Survey Results
- B. Downtown Solutions Forum Identified Priorities by Category

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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