

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Work Session: Downtown Improvements – Park Blocks and Open Space

Meeting Date: May 9, 2016
Department: Planning & Development
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Agenda Item: B
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ISSUE STATEMENT

This work session is a continuation of the council's discussion from March 14 on funding options for downtown improvements and will be an opportunity for the council to discuss the Park Blocks and Open Space improvements project and funding options in more detail.

BACKGROUND

On December 14, 2015, the 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, the council discussed the two projects and gave feedback on the scope to inform the January 20 work session on funding mechanisms.

At the January 20 work session, the council discussed a variety of funding options and requested follow-up information that was provided at the January 27 work session. On February 8, the council provided direction to the City Manager to present to the Agency Board for its review, a proposed amendment to the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan that would increase the spending limit to pay for:

- creation of a high-speed fiber network downtown,
- Park Blocks/open space improvements,
- a permanent, improved space for a possible year-round Farmers' Market, and
- redevelopment of the old LCC building at 1059 Willamette Street.

The council also requested a recommended alternative to the Downtown Urban Renewal funding option.

The Urban Renewal Agency Board reviewed a draft amendment and alternative funding option on March 14 and "moved to forward to the City, including the Planning Commission, as well as to the overlapping taxing districts, and request that the City Manager schedule a public hearing on proposed amendments to the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan, consistent with the draft plan and report included in Attachments H and I. In addition, individual work sessions shall be scheduled after council break on each of the four types of projects including alternative funding strategies."

This work session is on the Park Blocks and Open Space improvements. See Attachment A for summary information on the project. Attachment B is a table of the potential funding sources for Park Blocks and Open Space improvements. Attachment C is a list of downtown redevelopment tools that have been used in the past.

A work session on the Farmers Market is also on the agenda for May 9. The work session on high-speed fiber was on April 13, and a work session on the LCC Old Building is on the agenda for May 18.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

Park Blocks and Open Space 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

- Build upon downtown's role as the center for government, commerce, education and culture in the city and the region.
- 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.
- Promote adjacent park and open space areas as a valuable complement to downtown's urban places. Improve connections between downtown and nearby nature areas.

- 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 for discussion; no action is requested so no options have been identified.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

No recommendation at this time.

SUGGESTED MOTION

No motion necessary at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Project Summary
- B. Funding Options
- C. Downtown Redevelopment Tools

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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