

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Work Session: West 11th Avenue Setbacks

Meeting Date: June 9, 2010
Department: Public Works
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: A
Staff Contact: Rob Inerfeld
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ISSUE STATEMENT

The purpose of this work session is to discuss the available options for encouraging development along West 11th Avenue, while at the same time preserving street frontage that may be needed for future improvement/widening of that street. This work session will be staff's opportunity to discuss with the council the current issues related to West 11th Avenue and to get the council's direction regarding how to proceed.

BACKGROUND

At recent council discussions related to West Eugene EmX and the West Eugene Collaborative, it was noted that recent development patterns on West 11th Avenue could pose conflicts with some of the future corridor needs. Specifically, some commercial development is being built very close to the existing street. It is likely that future improvements to West 11th Avenue will require expansion of the existing right of way. Thus, concern has been expressed that the current development pattern along West 11th Avenue could create additional challenges or barriers to potential long term solutions for that street. In particular, West 11th Avenue is one of the alignments under consideration as the next EmX corridor. West of Seneca Street, West 11th Avenue is the only alignment that is being considered. West 11th Avenue would need to be widened in order to accommodate EmX lanes.

West 11th Avenue between Garfield Street and Green Hill Road is classified as a Major Arterial. Generally, Major Arterial streets have right-of-way widths ranging from 100 to 120 feet and paving widths ranging from 68 feet to 94 feet. While the existing right-of-way along West 11th Avenue varies in width, it is generally 80 feet in width between Garfield Street and Bailey Hill Road. Based on discussions to this point, it is clear that additional right-of-way will be necessary to accommodate future transportation enhancements on West 11th Avenue, with or without the addition of an EmX route. It is estimated that an additional 30 feet of right-of-way, or 15 feet on each side is needed to accommodate EmX lanes and an enhanced pedestrian realm with street trees, for a total right-of-way of 110 feet.

One important tool used by the City in making long term transportation decisions is the Eugene Arterial & Collector Street Plan (ACSP). Among other things, this plan includes an adopted right-of-way map identifying future right-of-way needs for many of the city's arterial and collector streets. The ACSP currently identifies specific right-of-way needs for portions of West 11th Avenue, while other portions are yet to be specified. For example, the ACSP identifies a need for an 80-foot right-of-way for the area between Garfield and Bailey Hill, which generally represents the existing conditions. Given that this

map was adopted in 1999, many factors have changed along the West 11th Avenue corridor warranting reexamination of the future right-of-way needs identified on this map.

The land use code requires that new buildings be located between 0 and 15 feet of the front property line. The purpose behind this standard is to promote pedestrian connections between the sidewalk and buildings while discouraging strip commercial designs with large parking lots fronting the street. Given the relatively narrow right-of-way that currently exists on West 11th Avenue, this circumstance can pose conflicts with future corridor enhancements. Locating buildings at the back of the sidewalk is practical and desirable in downtown Eugene where there is generally a parking lane that serves as a buffer between traffic and pedestrians on the sidewalk, lower vehicle speeds, and wider sidewalks with street trees. However, this approach has created unintended consequences on a major arterial like West 11th Avenue where the sidewalk is curbside, there are few street trees, no on-street parking buffer, and considerably higher vehicle speeds.

Establishing a wider right-of-way for West 11th Avenue within the ACSP would address these current conflicts by ensuring that future development is set back from this newly defined right-of-way. The land use code provides the City the authority to require “special setbacks” from the approved right-of-way. No acquisition or purchase of private property is necessary under this approach. Rather, this tool enables the City to preserve its ability to purchase additional rights-of-way at some point in the future. If the council decides to proceed with the City Manager’s recommendation for increasing the right-of-way width on West 11th Avenue, staff would conduct outreach to affected property owners.

If the council decides to proceed with the City Manager’s recommendation for increasing the right-of-way width on West 11th Avenue and EmX ultimately does not end up on this street, the right-of-way could be narrowed by future council action, closer to the existing condition. However, staff recommends that at such point consideration should also be given to other transportation needs, such as the pedestrian realm and current lack of street trees on West 11th Avenue.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

From Eugene-Springfield Transportation System Plan (TransPlan):

TSI Transit Policy #2: Bus Rapid Transit

Establish a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system composed of frequent, fast transit service along major corridors and neighborhood feeder service that connects with the corridor service and with activity centers, if the system is shown to increase transit mode split along BRT corridors, if local governments demonstrate support, and if financing for the system is feasible.

TSI Pedestrian Policy #1: Pedestrian Environment

Provide for a pedestrian environment that is well integrated with adjacent land uses and is designed to enhance the safety, comfort and convenience of walking.

From Adopted Growth Management Policies:

Growth Management Policy 11

Increase the use of alternative modes of transportation by improving the capacity, design, safety, and convenience of the transit, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation systems.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

- A. Direct City Manager to move forward with amending the Street Right-of-Way Map (Figure 61) for West 11th Avenue to allow for future improvements to that street.
- B. Take no action.

CITY MANAGER’S RECOMMENDATION

Option A – direct City Manager to move forward with amending the Street Right-of-Way Map.

SUGGESTED MOTION

Move to direct the City Manager to proceed with Option A.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Conceptual Right-of-Way Illustration for West 11th with EmX

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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West 11th Avenue - Making Room for Bus Rapid Transit

Conceptual BRT-Compatible Cross Section

October 2009