



Memorandum

Date: January 26, 2017
To: Mayor Lucy Vinis, Councilors, and City Manager
From: Sustainability Commission
Subject: Clear Lake UGB Expansion Resolution from the Sustainability Commission

Sustainability Commission Resolution on the Proposed Clear Lake UGB Expansion (adopted on January 18, 2017)

The Sustainability Commission endorses the draft zoning overlay for the proposed Clear Lake Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) Expansion. The Clear Lake UGB expansion proposal supports Eugene's economic future, provides a zoning overlay that will prevent the siting of incompatible commercial and industrial facilities, and addresses equity for current and future residents.

Triple Bottom Line Discussion

The Sustainability Commission participated in the ad hoc task force that was created for development of the draft zoning overlay and received multiple briefings from City staff on the Clear Lake proposal. We commend staff on their exhaustive attention to detail in developing this proposal, and on the inclusive process they used to address concerns of west Eugene residents.

The Commission has evaluated the Clear Lake proposal from a Triple-Bottom Line perspective. A concise summary of our discussions is presented below. A more in-depth TBL perspective is presented in Attachment 1 of this memorandum.

Summary

This proposal creates larger tracts of industrially zoned land and includes provisions to ensure that those large tracts remain available for the use intended. It also states intent to "build upon Eugene's competitive advantages and recognize the community's values around climate change, sustainability, local food systems, and natural resources," and prohibits specific industrial uses incompatible with these objectives. Through these provisions, the proposal serves Eugene's plans for Regional Economic Prosperity.

The Clear Lake Overlay Zone shows a commitment to environmental justice for residents of west Eugene that is unprecedented in Oregon land use planning. By prohibiting incompatible uses outright, by siting higher-impact uses away from residential or public use, by establishing rigorous performance standards, and by involving affected residents in the development of the plan, the overlay proposal makes major strides toward social equity in planning.

UGB expansion would result in the conversion of land containing prime agricultural soils—most of which are currently used for pasture and ryegrass cultivation. Current agricultural use would continue until specific development proposals are approved.

Existing wetlands could be affected, depending on the siting of specific developments. The City's Goal 5 Wetlands Analysis found that most of these wetlands are significantly degraded due to past agricultural use. All wetland impacts from proposed development will be subject to federal and state agency permits and mitigation, and the two major channels in the area would be regulated by Eugene's WQ Water Quality Overlay Zone.

We recognize a tension between (a) the Envision Eugene goals of compact growth along transit corridors and decreased reliance on automobiles and (b) the siting of job-oriented industrial growth at the edge of the Urban Growth Boundary. While we acknowledge the need to expand the UGB to provide large parcels for industrial development, we strongly recommend implementing the strategies outlined in Envision Eugene to accommodate residential and commercial growth within the current UGB. In addition, we urge a commitment to Transportation Demand Management strategies for all major developments in the new expansion area in order to mitigate their impact on major transportation facilities in the area.

Attachment 1

Sustainability Commission Triple-Bottom Line Perspective

This document provides a detailed discussion of the Triple-Bottom Line (TBL) issues that were identified by the Sustainability Commission during its evaluation of the proposed Clear Lake Urban Growth Boundary expansion.

Economic Prosperity

Positives

The Regional Prosperity Economic Development Plan finds that Eugene lacks large parcels of industrial land greater than 10 acres in size that are suitable for attracting new companies and allowing existing companies to expand to provide the jobs needed for current and future residents. The Clear Lake UGB Expansion and the proposed zoning overlay provides for large parcels of industrial land, and establishes, by ordinance, restrictions that require that the land be used only for job-creating large-site industrial use.

The Clear Lake Zone is relatively well suited for large-scale industrial uses. It is flat, is served by major transportation facilities (Highway 99, Clear Lake Road, and Belt Line), is near the airport, and is in close proximity to wastewater, water, and electricity infrastructure. Based on the analysis by City staff, additional transportation facilities that will be needed are relatively modest and could include extending Terry and Theona Streets.

The proposed zoning overlay will greatly restrict the types of manufacturing and industrial operations that would be allowed. The zoning overlay is intended to promote industries that have been identified as those best suited for Eugene (Clean Technology, Food and Beverage, Advanced Technology, Green Technology, Biotechnology, etc.). The surrounding farmland could support the development of a long-desired "Food Hub" for processing and distributing locally-grown agricultural products.

As industrial development occurs, there is an opportunity for small supporting businesses (restaurants, service providers, etc.) to serve those new developments. This could increase job opportunities in economically challenged neighborhoods.

Negatives

Neighboring cities (Springfield, Coburg, Veneta, and Junction City) are also identifying large parcels of land for industrial development. If these cities do not cooperate and coordinate efforts to site desirable industrial development, competition could become inefficient, unproductive, and expensive.

Environmental Health

Positives

The proposed Clear Lake Zoning Overlay would prohibit industries that are incompatible with nearby residential areas and schools. This area of Eugene already bears the burden of having a disproportionate share of industrial facilities located nearby.

One of the goals of the proposed zoning overlay is to minimize emissions of hazardous air pollutants by restricting the types of industrial operations that would be allowed to locate in the proposed UGB expansion area. The zoning overlay also requires manufacturing operations near residential or public

use to occur indoors and/or at least 1,000 feet from the property line, and prohibits noise and vibration that could impact residences and schools. Neighborhood and public engagement will be a critical element as part of the decision-making on future siting of industry in the proposed UGB expansion area.

The proposed Clear Lake UGB expansion, if adopted, would unavoidably impact land that contains prime farmland soils but the vast majority of that farmland is currently used for pasture and ryegrass fields. The proposed zoning overlay would allow continued use of the area for agriculture until it is converted to other allowable uses within the Zone. The extent and timing of impact on farmland will be dependent on future development projects

The proposed UGB expansion will impact wetlands--but not all of the expansion area will be developed. For instance, the Bethel School site contains nearly twice as much acreage as is actually needed for schools, in order to avoid impacting wetlands on the property. The two main drainage ways within the area will be subject to the Water Quality (WQ) overlay, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Oregon state regulatory agencies will determine wetland mitigation requirements for remaining wetlands in the area. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and state agencies will likely subject to public comment and public hearings conduct any modification to existing wetlands.

Initial studies indicate that many existing wetland areas are of low quality and have been degraded due to extensive modification from agricultural activities. The cost of wetland mitigation will be borne by the private sector.

Negatives

This UGB expansion, like any such expansion, will convert farm and undeveloped land to industrial and urban uses. The proposed expansion area includes Class 1 soils and some active agricultural uses, as described above. The vast majority of farmland in the area is currently used for pasture and ryegrass fields. While one existing small organic farm (Beezups) could eventually be displaced as development occurs, though City staff has tried to accommodate this family's interests.

While the cost of wetland mitigation is borne by the private sector, Eugene has a long and proud record of wetlands enhancement in West Eugene. The City could choose to incorporate Clear Lake wetlands into its wetland management plan—but if so, should recognize that this would involve an up-front investment as well as long-term operation and management costs.

It is likely that new stormwater conveyance and retention/detention systems will be required for those portions of the expansion area that will be developed. The extent and cost of new stormwater infrastructure are not known at this time.

Development in the proposed expansion area will increase motor vehicle traffic to the area, and since it is located on the outskirts of the City, travel to the site will generally involve longer commutes that will likely be almost exclusively by motor vehicle. As development occurs, the City should implement Transportation Demand Management strategies, and encourage Lane Transit District to extend transit service to the area.

Social Equity

Positives

The proposed zoning overlay restricts the types of industrial activities that will be allowed and includes strong performance standards for emissions, odors, vibrations, and noise that could affect neighborhoods near the site. This proposed zoning overlay is the first time that the City of Eugene

has proposed requirements that comprehensively address environmental justice. In fact, this type of environmental justice provision is unprecedented in Oregon land use planning.

The process of developing the Clear Lake UGB Zoning Overlay proposal was inclusive and made significant effort to incorporate the interests of citizens and groups that are typically underrepresented in public processes such as land use decisions.

The proposed expansion provides a major community park in a location that has been identified as underserved by Parks and Recreation staff. It also allows the Bethel School District room to plan for the future needs of its growing population, which includes a high percentage of low-income and minority students.

While the jobs resulting from the industrial development in Clear Lake will presumably be filled by workers from throughout the region rather than specifically from west Eugene, there are likely to be spin-off benefits and more jobs in existing small businesses, and a better business environment to support the types of restaurants, entertainment facilities, and other services that are currently lacking in the Bethel area.

Negatives

West Eugene residents already suffer significant health problems and quality of life issues, including very high childhood asthma rates, soil/water contamination, noxious industrial odors, and industry-generated noise. Any additional industrial development, no matter how well-managed and controlled, could incrementally increase this burden.

Successful development in the Clear Lake area could dramatically increase the amount of traffic in West Eugene, both from commuters and freight. Congestion is likely to increase on major arterials, including Belt Line, Highway 99, and Clear Lake/Irving, and the extension of Terry Street could filter additional traffic into residential neighborhoods south of the Zone.

Additional vehicular and truck traffic could create additional safety hazards for people walking, bicycling or using transit, in an area in which many families already consider it unsafe for children to walk or ride bikes to school due to high traffic speeds, driver inattention/impairment and insufficient sidewalks and crosswalks.

Conclusion

In summary, from a Triple Bottom Line perspective, the Clear Lake Urban Growth Boundary Expansion proposal results in benefits that outweigh the costs, and workable strategies exist for mitigating any negative impacts. The Sustainability Commission endorses the Clear Lake Overlay for the UGB Expansion proposal.

