

# MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 10, 2005 (updated April 6, 2005)

**To:** Neighborhood Associations and other stakeholders

**From:** Allen Lowe, Eugene Planning Division

**Subject:** Neighborhood Input on Mixed-Use Centers

**I. The Big Picture (Background on Mixed-Use Centers and Mixed-Use Development)** During the past 10 years, the citizens of Eugene have participated in two major planning efforts that addressed key questions about the City's future: *Eugene Growth Management Study*, and *Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan* (TransPlan).

The *Growth Management Study* confirmed the community's commitment to a future scenario in which growth would be accommodated in a way that would extend the life of the existing urban growth boundary. This scenario, known as "Recycle Eugene," represented the following policy direction:

- Maintain the current urban growth boundary as long as possible;
- Increase densities of new development;
- Encourage "nodal" (mixed use) development;
- Provide incentives for higher density development;
- Improve the design of new buildings;
- Provide incentives for affordable housing;
- Make bicycling, walking and bus use more convenient and less expensive;
- Improve alternative transportation systems; and
- Extend new streets, sewers, water lines, etc. only to specific predetermined areas to direct growth where it is desired and discourage it where it is not desired.

TransPlan similarly emphasized the importance of a "transportation-efficient" development pattern. TransPlan contains a map labeled "Potential Nodal Development Areas." This map shows areas that would support higher-density, higher intensity, pedestrian- and transit-friendly mixed use development, based on a range of criteria (see Attachment 1). The map was renamed "Potential Mixed-Use Centers" for Eugene's implementation process.

For additional background information about **Growth Management , TransPlan, and Nodal Area Identification Methodology** see the list of Related Resources in the right hand column of this page.

## **II. Implementation of Mixed-Use Development**

Mixed-use development, as that term is used in Eugene, includes the following:

- a **pedestrian-friendly environment** that encourages and supports transit use, walking, and bicycling, that promotes a sense of community, and that improves livability;

- a **transit stop** within walking distance (1/4 mile) of anywhere in the mixed use center;
- a **mix of land uses** within easy walking or biking distance of most homes or businesses in the area;
- **public spaces** that can be reached without driving; and
- a **mix of housing types and residential densities** with overall net density of at least 12 dwelling units per acre.

The mixed-use development concept is at the heart of Eugene’s transportation and growth management strategies. The City has aggressively pursued the implementation of the concept, providing specific area plans, zoning, or Metro Plan designations for seven mixed use development areas.

Early implementation efforts were focused on specific area planning in the West Royal, Chase Gardens and Chambers nodes. While these efforts were comprehensive, they were also very expensive and lengthy. With the encouragement of the State of Oregon, the City tried a different implementation approach in 2001 with the introduction of the /ND Nodal Development overlay zone process. That process was unsuccessful, resulting in widespread community opposition to a “one-size-fits-all” approach to nodal development implementation.

The City is now developing another approach to develop the basic tools necessary for long-term implementation of the program. The two year work program includes the following elements:

- Program Adjustment
- Smart Growth Education and Marketing
- Overlay Zone Amendments
- Potential Mixed-Use Development Status Report
- Chambers Infill and Redevelopment Standards
- Mixed Use Zoning
- New Tools

Work on several of the elements is occurring simultaneously. In May, the Planning Commission renamed the program “Mixed-Use Development.” The Commission also made changes to the Potential Mixed-Use Development map and to the boundaries of several of the areas identified. City staff has developed several educational brochures, a short video, and several Powerpoint presentations on the mixed use concept and revamped the City’s Mixed-Use Development website. Staff has secured funding for printed educational materials that will support a major community outreach effort. Work is also occurring within the Chambers mixed-use development area to develop compatibility standards and guidelines for new residential and commercial projects.

For more information on the Nodal Development work program or to see the “Frequently Asked Questions” and “Design Principles” brochures, visit the City of Eugene **Mixed-Use Development** website.

### **Potential Mixed Use Development Status Report**

A key activity in the two year work program is an evaluation of the areas previously identified on the Potential Nodal Development Areas map. A companion to the initial map, a report entitled Summary Descriptions of Proposed Nodal Development Areas, provided a preliminary assessment of necessary

Metro Plan designation changes and conditions of various street (bike, transit, pedestrian, alleys) and park facilities likely in need of improvement. A map and summary description of the mixed use centers by neighborhood area is located on the Mixed Use Development website under “**Potential Mixed Use Centers by Neighborhood.**”

In the nine years since that map and Summary document were created, land use changes have not been routinely monitored within the identified areas. Several areas have developed in a manner inconsistent with mixed use development principles; initial boundaries have changed in others. Many areas have seen new multi-family or commercial construction within that time. Little has been done to educate residents and property owners within and around proposed mixed use centers about the meaning of the mixed use designation.

Between January and June, 2005, City staff will meet with various neighborhood and civic groups to discuss the mixed-use program and evaluate individual mixed use development sites. The evaluation will result in a Status Report and recommendations to be presented to the Eugene Planning Commission in the fall of 2005.

The primary objective of the Status Report is to update key information on the development characteristics of each potential mixed-use center. This information will enable City staff, the Planning Commission, area residents and property owners to identify actions needed to create or enhance the desired mixed-use character. A second important objective is to create a dialogue with area residents and property owners that will result in a general understanding about the need to create a higher-density, mixed-use, transit-oriented development pattern within areas designated as “Potential Mixed-Use Centers”. The project is intended to stimulate early neighborhood involvement in implementation efforts.

### **III. Neighborhood Input**

A series of neighborhood meetings will be scheduled between January and June of 2005. These meetings will include a presentation and discussion on the Mixed-Use Development Concept. Residents will be asked to focus on four questions:

1. Are the boundaries of the various mixed use centers in the neighborhood correct? Should the boundaries be moved? If so, where and why? Keep the ¼ mile “walkability” criterion in mind.
2. How viable is each of the potential mixed use centers? Which areas should have a priority in terms of planning activities?
3. The proposed designations vary for each of the proposed Mixed Use Centers in this area. Do you think that the designations are the right ones for each of these areas or should the designation be changed to “commercial” or “employment” in one or both?
4. What issues should be addressed in future planning efforts for each of these areas? What concerns do you have that have not been raised in previous discussions about the area?

#### **For More Information Contact:**

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