

April 21, 2016

FAN presentation: South Willamette

- Introduction

Good evening, I am Terri Harding, and I lead the City's long range planning team. I am glad to have the opportunity to introduce myself to you, the Friendly Area Neighbors. I have lived in Eugene for 20 years, since moving here to attend Planning school at the University of Oregon in 1995. I have rented a duplex and a single family home in the Jefferson Westside Neighborhood, owned my first home in the Far West Neighborhood, and have owned my current home in the Southwest Hills Neighborhood (SHiNA) since 2007. I love this community and am raising my 8-year old daughters here with my husband.

I started my job with the City of Eugene in 2006. I was excited to be working as a public sector planner in the city I had grown to love. I am motivated to come to work each day to help our community move toward the most livable, sustainable, and prosperous Eugene imaginable. I value fairness, collaboration, responsible stewardship of resources, and shared learning in pursuit of that future Eugene. All of Eugene's planners share these or similar values, and work every day to facilitate our community's vision around growth management, as expressed through our City Council's direction.

Sometimes, we make mistakes. The South Willamette Special Area zone is one of those times. There are numerous lessons we have learned and are still learning as the process unfolds. One thing we are so sorry to have done poorly was to communicate from the beginning of the project what problem we are trying to solve and the consequences of doing nothing. We failed to articulate the process in a way that led to clear understanding on the part of interested community members. And, we failed to consistently highlight the impacts of different solutions suggested to solve the problem. These are serious mistakes that need to be fixed, and I personally and the Planning Team as a whole, are committed to fixing them.

I do not believe all hope is lost, however. I agree with the recent Register Guard editorial that "many of the concerns of neighbors and others can be taken into account without abandoning the goals of the zone. A common interest in preserving neighborhood livability of the area can be acknowledged, as can the fact that the neighborhood will change even if the current zoning is retained."

We planners are committed to help the community create a fair process for moving forward, and stand ready to support that work to the best of our professional ability. We have much to offer, once we have earned your trust back. I realize I don't have your trust right now, and you may not have reason to believe what I am saying. But I am asking you to give me the opportunity to earn it for the first time, or earn it back. It is so important to me and to my colleagues, that we find ways to work together toward our common goals. Otherwise, we will not reach that future Eugene I described earlier, a place where my children's grandchildren can choose to live and work here, enjoy clean air and water, and the same high level of livability that we enjoy today. There are many ways to address the problems we face; but it is critical that we do address them, and not ignore them.

Where we are in the process

The Oregon Consensus Report proposes one possible way to go forward with a collaborative process. Our planning staff and leadership are considering these recommendations, but no council discussion is scheduled at this point. We do want to know what you think. I am aware of letters sent to the City Council by South Willamette Neighbors, and the Walkable Eugene Citizens Advisory Network, as well as

several individuals. From my perspective, I see an opportunity for our planners to support a future process, but I will not be advocating for a particular process structure or outcome. We may be asked to offer potential options, each of which would have to be fair and consider the full range of perspectives on this very important issue. The most powerful way I can think of influencing the structure of a future process, is for community groups to talk to each other about what they would be willing to support and participate in as far as a future collaboration.

Role and responsibilities in the planning process

Land use processes can be long and unfamiliar to people not in the business of doing this work every day, so I'd like to explain briefly, some of the roles of the various participants in a process.

City planners: strive to serve the public good through a fair, equitable, and technically sound planning process; articulate the problem the project is attempting to solve; describe the consequences of doing nothing; provide technical, analytical, and design production support; test ideas and solicit input from community members; consider that input; describe impacts of alternative solutions; provide analysis of various solutions' ability to implement city council direction; analyze consistency with other policies, rules, and laws; communicate on an ongoing basis with various publics about the project.

Community members: critical to the success of any planning process, you participate in different ways as you are able, ask questions if things are unclear, submit ideas, describe impacts, share expertise and perspective; spread the word.

Planning Commission: act as Citizen Involvement Committee for the City of Eugene; participate in the early phases of the project to shape the outreach approach as well as the technical approach; help at outreach events; hold public work sessions and hearings; consider public input; analyze plans for consistency with policies, laws and community values; make recommendation to City Council.

City Council: provide policy direction; hold public work sessions and hearings; consider public input; consider Planning Commission recommendation; make decisions on legislative land use matters, like adopting a new zone.