

Planning for the future of Santa Clara and River Road in Eugene

by Tom Adams | Friday, November 10th 2017



EUGENE, Ore. -- Santa Clara is not a city - but if it were, Jerry Finigan would probably be the mayor.

"This place I'm standing at right here was nothing but cherry orchards when we moved here."

That was in 1978. Finigan has seen a lot of changes, and he says more are coming in the form of growth.

"We like our area the way it is and we like to keep the character as much as we can, the way it is," says Finigan, a member of the Santa Clara Community Organization.

"Big changes are coming, both in terms of development and population, and we really want to be thoughtful about how we accommodate that growth and change," says Eugene City Councilor Chris Pryor.

Work is just getting started for a new plan for River road/Santa Clara. It looks at future housing, traffic and transportation, parks, economic development and more.

"It will set up guidelines for all the planning in the area for at least the next 20 years," says Finigan.

And if you think planning is boring, check this out - Finigan says a packed house of 400 attended the kickoff meeting for the plan last month.

With traffic congestion ever growing, Pryor agrees doing nothing is not an option: "Even if people say, 'Yeah, it's crowded, but it's not that crowded,' in 10 or 15 years it will be much more, and we've got to have the infrastructure designed and in place."

For Jerry Finigan, the goal is clear. How do you draw up the right road map for growth and not lose the character of River Road/Santa Clara?

He says he sees a the vision potentially bright, "and if there's a plan to guide that, then it will be done the right way."