

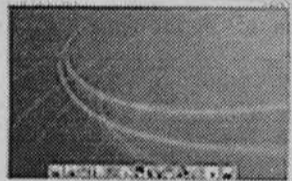
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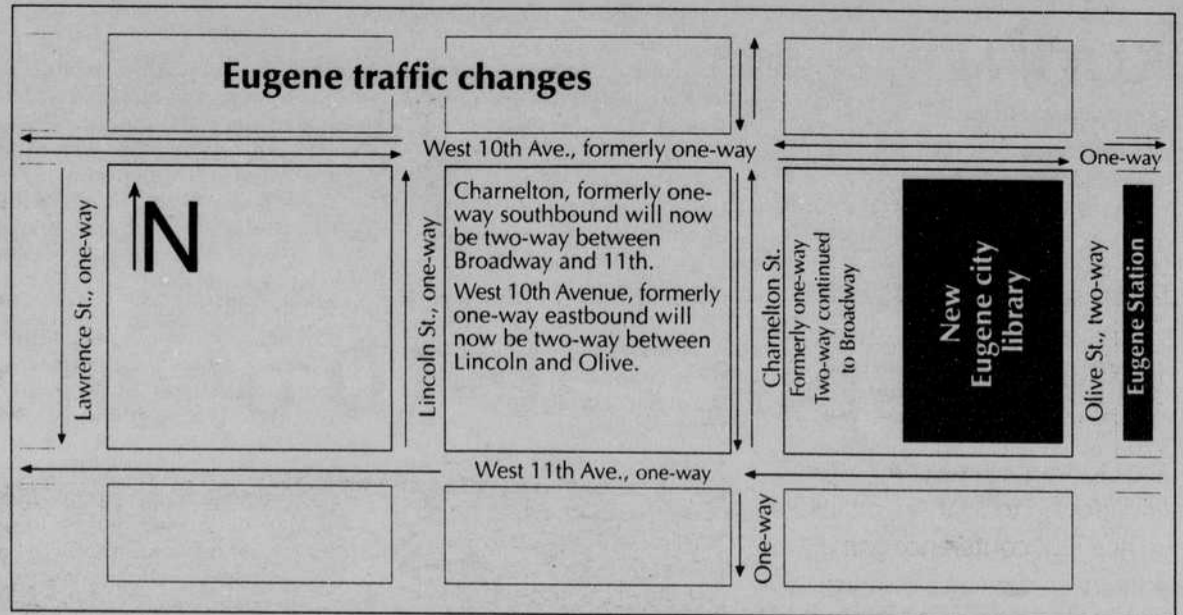
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Downtown streets get facelift for easier access

Conversions of one-way streets to two-way streets paves the way to the new downtown public library

Caron Alarab
Crime/Safety/Transportation Reporter

In a city where one-way streets reign supreme, a new vision is making way for a two-way comeback in Eugene.

In order to provide better accessibility around 100 W. 10th Ave., the location of the new Downtown Eugene Public Library, city workers on Dec. 20 finished converting portions of two streets from one-way to two-way operations. As a small part of a big plan known as the Downtown Vision, West 10th Avenue between Olive and Lincoln streets and Charnelton Street between Broadway and 11th Avenue are officially two-way, complete with new traffic signals and an east-bound bike lane along West 10th Avenue.

"This is a very hot idea in urban planning right now," Eugene City Traffic Engineer Tom Larsen said. "In our efforts to revive the downtown area, one-way streets are considered better for driving through it while two-way streets encourage movement around and within it."

The ultimate goal of the Downtown Vision is to make the area more user-friendly and comfortable,

he said. The plan incorporates the reopening of Broadway, some additional parking and the conversion of other high-traffic one-way streets to two-way.

In the past two years, portions of Pearl and Oak streets between Fifth and Sixth avenues were successfully converted to two-way traffic, he said. The need for better circulation around the new library was then considered during several public meetings before the library's Dec. 26 opening.

The changes made to 10th Avenue and to Charnelton Street spanned two weeks while workers planned around weather conditions and library contractors, Larsen said.

"It all took less than a day's work — sort of a creeping construction," he said.

"We are planning for more two-ways and other changes to be made wherever possible and practical."

Tom Larsen
Eugene City Traffic Engineer

Sip N-Surf Cybercafe owner Sandra Guzdek commutes along Charnelton Street and 10th Avenue every day. Located at 99 W. 10th

Ave., the local cafe sits adjacent to the new library on the corner of Olive Street and West 10th Avenue. Guzdek said the intersection, previously a four-way stop, has seen quite a bit of confusion since the street conversion began.

"People have become so used to just crossing the street," she said. "And now they come in saying 'I just kept walking along and I almost got hit.'"

Guzdek and her patrons watched the library process "from hole in the ground" to the brand new building, and business hasn't changed, she said.

Tim Gauger, an information desk employee at the new library, said he has received complaints from patrons accustomed to free parking, as provided at the West 13th Avenue library location, but has heard none concerning the two-way change.

Larsen said Lincoln and Lawrence streets will be the next to see a conversion, but a completion date is unknown because of funding and scheduling. The conversion of the entire length of Charnelton Street to two-way traffic is also on the horizon, he said.

"We are planning for more two-ways and other changes to be made wherever possible and practical," Larsen said.

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