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West University Task Force aims to improve livability

Housing standards, paved alleyways and increased lighting are all suggestions for improving the area

By A. Sho Ikeda
Senior News Reporter

Residents of the West University neighborhood want to improve living conditions and safety in the area, and the West University Task Force had a public meeting on Thursday to discuss how the neighborhood can be improved.

Ward 3 City Councilor David Kelly, who recently moved to the West University area, said introducing housing standards in the vicinity may be one step. Currently, Eugene does not have a housing code.

"Housing standards are something that have been on and off

again in Eugene," Kelly said.

Kelly said the task force believes changes to residences in the neighborhood are necessary to improve livability and conditions in the area.

The task force's progress report also suggests improving the alleys in the neighborhood. Unpaved and poorly maintained alleys were consistently brought up as a problem at public hearings regarding the area. Kelly said there also seemed to be a correlation between crime and the condition of an alley.

City engineer Mark Schoening said many of the neighborhood's 4.5 miles of alleys had potholes or were only paved with gravel. He said the cost to improve an alley would be determined by adjacent property and the one-time charge would be placed on those property owners.

Kelly said the price of improving an alley would be payable over 10 years. One elderly resident, who

wished to remain unnamed, said she did not want to pay for improvements because it would cost too much and encourage speeding in alleyways.

"I don't want it paved because people will speed, and my cats will get killed," she said. "Even students I've talked to have said that paving the alleys won't stop riots."

A public hearing concerning the alley upgrades will be held on Nov. 24.

Residents at the meeting were also troubled about the behavior of younger residents, including students, who lived in the neighborhood. Some complained about drug activity and noise from parties.

Police Commission Coordinator Jeannine Parisi said the task force was looking at the student conduct codes of other Pacific-10 Conference schools.

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SAFERIDE

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ridden Saferide multiple times during her four years at the University. She said that while she was disappointed to see the end of Saferide, she was excited about the advance toward gender equality.

"I think it's important to have a shuttle system other than (Designated Driver Shuttle)," she said. "It's also important to realize men can have just as big of a need for an assault prevention shuttle as women."

University sophomore Aaron Sabin agreed, saying that he was happy to see Saferide shut down because he felt it was discriminatory and hindered the goal of gender equality.

"If women want to be on the same playing field as men, they need to be equal in all ways," he said. Saferide has tried to solve the gender equality issue many times, said Jennifer

Creighton, ASUO accounting coordinator. Creighton said that while the change will not be easy, student reaction has been positive so far.

"Everyone is dealing with the loss of Saferide," she said. "The most important thing for students right now is to have some sort of safety prevention shuttle."

Wells said that students who are uncomfortable riding with other people in a shuttle can request their own personal shuttle. She added that the formation of the Assault Prevention Shuttle is, in part, a leap in favor of feminism.

"APS shares a more progressive view of feminism that states women are equal to men," she said. "It's more of a feminism movement now because men and women are working together."

Both Saferide and Night Ride will be running under the original names until the merge becomes official.

"We wanted returning students to be

able to use the programs they were used to until we could tell them about the name change," Night Ride co-Director Diana Erskine said in a statement.

The Assault Prevention Shuttle will have a total of five vans and 16 dispatchers at its disposal, although there will be only four on duty per night. It will run the same hours as Saferide and Night Ride, but ASUO spokeswoman Taraneh Foster said that Assault Prevention Shuttle officials hope to expand its hours winter term. For now it will be running 6 p.m. to 12 a.m. Sunday through Thursday, and 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday.

"Logistically, the organization will be the same," Wells said. "The only thing that's changed is that it will be gender-neutral."

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