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**NEWS BRIEF**

**Council directs upgrades for West University area**

The Eugene City Council on Monday ordered plans aimed at improving alleys in the West University neighborhood and approved funding to install more lighting in the area.

The Council told the city engineer to begin designing upgrades to West University area alleys, which is an estimated \$1.6 million project. The improvements will be paid for largely with property taxes.

Ward 2 Councilor Betty Taylor was the only one to vote no, saying she could not approve mandatory assessments on property owners who might not want the improvements.

Ward 3 Councilor David Kelly, who represents the University area, said in response that city staff plans to involve the community thoroughly in planning.

"All this does is initiate a design process," he said.

The Council also unanimously approved funding to install additional pedestrian-level lighting in the West University neighborhood. The funding was approved in spring 2003, but the

leftover \$17,779 from the original \$42,250 project needed to be re-approved for use in 2004. The money came from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Both improvements were among the major goals set by the West University Task Force to improve the safety and livability of the area.

The task force, comprised of neighborhood residents, business owners, students and University staff, was created by the city and the University in response to the September 2002 riots in the area.

— Nika Carlson

**EAST**

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She added that while the University has no projects planned for the area right now, it wants to pre-plan for expansion to make the design process smooth.

The University estimates that it will need up to 600,000 square feet of new space in the next 20 years, according to the University's East Campus Development Policy.

The policy, which the University began revising in January 2002, sparked the negotiations among the University, Fairmount residents and the city.

University officials attended 20 public meetings and events to get community input during the 18-month revision, hearing concerns about the impact of increased traffic, the effect University

buildings would have on the neighborhood's character and the possibility of eliminating student family housing.

"We want to maintain the neighborhood we love while allowing for density," said Fairmount Neighbors Association Co-Chairwoman Kristen Taylor.

These concerns resulted in city-led mediations between the University and the Fairmount Neighbors. This process was a first for the city, which normally holds a public meeting for land use applications that gives the public limited input into the process, Eugene Senior Planner Allen Lowe said.

The mediation, however, gave equal weight to the concerns of all three parties.

"We thought there was an opportunity to avoid a fair amount of controversy and nastiness, so we decided to sit down and talk it out," Lowe said.

He added that there were 45 areas of disagreement going into the mediations and only three coming out of it.

Lowe said the neighborhood

association requested most of the final policies, including a plan for improving Agate Street and for studying how to reduce traffic problems in the area.

"From the point of the city, it went great," he said.

Taylor agreed that it has been a positive process overall, though she said she would have liked more interaction with planning commission members and a neutral mediator to lead the negotiations.

While City Council approval for most of the policy changes is expected, Taylor and Lowe each questioned whether the city would be able to fund the projects.

"We really have to make a plea to City Council to make this a priority," Taylor said.

The Eugene City Council is scheduled to hold a public meeting about the East Campus plan on January 26 at 7 p.m. at City Hall, located at 777 Pearl Street.

Contact the city/state politics reporter at nikacarlson@dailyemerald.com.

**PROTEST**

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outrage over the provision they said is a violation of the U.S. Bill of Rights.

"I was astounded and astonished by the ordinance, which in effect denies the constitutional right of freedom of assembly," Karl Sorg, 81, told the council. "The ordinance is unconstitutional, I have no doubt.

Ward 5 City Councilor Gary Papé,

who voted for the ordinance, said he based his decision in part on the advice of local business leaders, who he said feel that it is important to have a provision limiting large gatherings downtown.

Only Ward 2 Councilor Betty Taylor and Ward 3 Councilor David Kelly, who represents the University area, voted against the ordinance.

Contact the city/state politics reporter at nikacarlson@dailyemerald.com.

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