

Sprawl Envisioned

More traffic for Crest, big boxes out 30th?

The Eugene city manager and his staff are pushing for urban sprawl that could pump thousands of cars through the Crest Drive neighborhood, bill families for wider streets and explode 30th and I-5 into a massive, Gateway-style interchange that would subsidize sprawl at taxpayer expense.

City planners told the council that they were leaning toward expanding the urban growth boundary (UGB) by up to 360 acres in the south Eugene hills and next to the 30th and I-5 interchange as part of their "Envision Eugene" plan.

Staff have sent letters to land speculators and other property owners who could see huge profits from expanding the UGB, but have not sent letters to families who could suffer the traffic impact and have to pay to widen roads.

City planner Alissa Hansen identified a 480-acre area of forestland and meadows above Crest Drive as a more likely area that the city could expand its UGB. "We're going to be focusing more attention on this area," she said.

Developers could potentially build thousands of homes in the area producing possible big traffic increases on narrow neighborhood roads such as Crest Drive and Lorane Highway where neighbors are already complaining about traffic. The hilly area is not served by transit or stores and already lacks adequate sidewalks and bike lanes.

City staff also targeted a similar, smaller 135-acre area off Bailey Hill and Gimpl Hill roads as more likely for sprawl, although they said it would be more difficult to pipe water and sewage into and out of the hilly area and it could add traffic to crowded West 11th and pump cars through the West 18th neighborhood.

Staff also identified a 110-acre area near the I-5 and 30th interchange (the Russel Creek basin) as more likely for sprawl. The isolated area would be served by a massive new freeway interchange that the city is planning. The area could be zoned as single family homes initially, but that could be possibly changed to big box commercial development once the land is inside the UGB.

That's what happened near the I-5 Gateway interchange where ODOT has spent almost a quarter billion dollars to subsidize sprawl.

Numerous studies have shown that citizens pay huge amounts to subsidize sewer, water, transit, roads, police and fire services to increase profits for developers. The costs lead to increased taxes and/or reduced services.

The city of Eugene also has a policy that could charge families tens of thousands of dollars each to pay for wider roads in front of their homes to subsidize increased traffic from urban sprawl.

Residents of Crest Drive and Loraine Highway have bitterly fought such charges for increased traffic in the past. But this time, the city doesn't appear to plan on notifying the residents by mail of the possible street bills and traffic impacts it has planned for them.

It's also unclear how the city plans to pay for all the new roads to serve the expansion. The city already has an estimated street repair deficit of \$170 million and a deficit of hundreds of millions in funding road expansions already inside the UGB. City staff have proposed increasing property taxes again to cover part of the road repair deficit.

City staff are pushing for expanding the UGB despite falling land and home prices which indicate a current housing and land oversupply. Staff argue that state law requires the expansion to accommodate 20 years of growth. But state law also encourages cities to save money, the environment and livability by redeveloping existing underused areas and/or growing more densely.

'We don't need a UGB expansion' - City Councilor Betty Taylor

A previous city study used to justify the sprawl (ECLA) exaggerated land need by a factor of more than two largely by failing to account for existing trends and city plans for more infill, density and redevelopment, according to a study commissioned by the citizen group Friends of Eugene.

Among the planned infill ignored by the city are thousands of units of new apartments in UO dorms, along Franklin Boulevard, on EWEB's vacant riverfront land, mixed-use development on West 11th and downtown redevelopment. The plan also assumes the largely abandoned hospital and clinic buildings downtown, a huge sewage treatment tree plantation, the massive and largely unused rail yard and the Hynix factory will never be reused or redeveloped. The city's expansion plan also flies in the face of much of the city's planning efforts over the past two decades to control sprawl, reduce climate pollution and promote alternative transportation.

"We don't need a UGB expansion," City Councilor Betty Taylor said. But Taylor may be alone on the council with that view. Most of the council's Envision Eugene meetings are dominated by Councilor Mike Clark, a Republican political consultant who has worked for developers, pushing for even more sprawl.

There appears to be little standing in the way of sprawl. The leading anti-sprawl watchdog group in the state, 1000 Friends of Oregon, used to sue against sprawl but hired a new outside director who is focused on collaboration, *The Oregonian* reported this month. The group recently praised the city's Envision Eugene process and appears to back the staff's sprawl proposal.

City Manager Jon Ruiz plans to formally announce his Envision Eugene proposal Dec. 14 with final council action expected in February.

ew

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Big All-Beef Frank.....	\$4.50
Polish Kielbasa	\$5.25
Sicilian Sausage.....	\$5.25
Cajun Hot Links	\$5.25
Mediterranean Chicken Sausage.....	\$5.25
Oktoberfest Sausage.....	\$5.25
Jalapeno Cheddar Frank	\$5.25
Chili Dog Supreme.....	\$5.50
Giant German Beer Sausage.....	\$5.25
British Pub Sausage	\$5.25
NY Coney Island Dog	\$5.50
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TUES: Hungarian Garlic Sausage..	\$5.25
WED: Cheddar Frank.....	\$5.25
THUR: Bavarian Bratwurst	\$5.25
FRI: Andouille Sausage.....	\$5.25
SAT: Black Forest Beef Sausage....	\$4.75

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