

**River Road Community Organization (RRCO) General Meeting
June 17, 2009; 7:00 p.m.**

Board Members Present:

Carleen Reilly, Jolene Siemsen, Jan Spencer, Eileen Nittler, Becky Riley, Beth Parsons, Marilyn Mohr

Board Members Absent:

Kate Kelly

Other attendees:

Pat Reilly, Lawrence Rainwater, Jerry Finigan (SCCO), Sue Averill, John Averill, Dove McKee, Bob Coleman, Malba Stephens, Phil DeLong, Jean Nelson, Anne Montgomery, Asha Jenny Ulrich, Bill Sokol, Carolyn Keener, Gerry Keener, Wendell Hoyman, Ray Rankin, Nicole Chabert, Nicholas Chase, Chuck Sowards, Mark Evans, Pete Barron, Irene Ferguson, Holly Arrow, Bruce PH Rogers, Sara Palmer, Monty Riddle, Carl O. Roach, Kylas Nagaarjuna, Mark Smith, Stefan Ostrach, Ray Neff, Julie Schaum, Celeste Horner, Austin Horner, Brad Averill, Melinda Vanderhaar, Joan Connolly, Joan Bradley, Rick Meisser, Barb Reed, Karen Lally, Steve Shapiro, Julie Hulme, Rick Lachance, Dee Lachance, Dawn West, Anastasia Sandow, Dennis Sandow, Julie Fischer, Gerry Stolp, Heidi Stolp, Elise Campbell, Dan Campbell, Candace Nelson, Majeska Seese-Green, Brian Julian, Mary Archer (LTD) Glen Mandzak, Ken Guzowski (City of Eugene)

Jolene called the meeting to order. Citizens who had participated in the Rasor MUC Citizens Advisory Committee introduced themselves.

Public Presentation:

Ken Guzowski, City of Eugene Planner, presented the final draft of the Lower River Road Concept Plan (previously called the Rasor Park Mixed-Use Center).

- Plans for the Rasor MUC started in 2002. This draft will go to the City Planning Commission for approval on Monday, June 22, 2009, 11:30 at the Sloat Room, 99 W. 10th (Atrium). It is contingent upon property owner “buy-in” for actual redevelopment of private property to be done.
- It is a 10-30 year plan, with incremental changes.
- It is a response to urban growth, the need to promote sustainability, and to reduce car miles driven.
- The draft is on the city website: www.eugene-or.gov/rasorpark

Questions and discussion included:

- Why does one map show three, and the other four, new stop lights on River Road?
 - KG: A signal at Fir Lane was initially considered in the Concept Plan, but has been removed. Fir Lane residents voiced opposition, and city traffic engineers said it was too close to the Chambers intersection to be safe.
- Would EMX service widen River Road further?
 - KG: I don't know. Jolene: Many people share this concern.
- Why do we need EMX?
 - Jolene: There are advantages of Bus Rapid Transit over regular bus service. This is a bigger discussion than we have time for now. May's meeting was on this subject.
- This was originally an ODOT grant to reduce vehicle miles driven. Seems this is no longer part of the plan.

- KG: An effective bus system, improved connectivity to the bike path and greater density all promote alternate transportation.
- Can we lower the speed on River Road, and/or have more stop lights?
 - KG: The city has been encouraged to put a stoplight at Knoop, but it costs \$400,000. Tom Larsen, with the city transportation department, recommends that the more people state they would like a light, the better. The speed limit is set by ODOT.
 - Jolene: ODOT has named River Road a “major arterial,” hence the higher speed. [This may have been said, but I don’t think it is true (and I don’t think Ken said it, either). We have talked about this at various past meetings, and in the MUC process. The City sets the speed limit on (in-City portions of) River Road. They do supposedly follow national traffic engineering standards and state guidelines, but they have discretion to change speed limits outside the guidelines if they choose (except in cases such as school zones). Also, River Road and all other Eugene streets are classified by the City under criteria and methodology adopted by the City Council as part of the City’s **Arterial** and **Collector** Street Plan. River Road is classified as a major arterial under the City’s system. If this stands in the minutes, I would vote for an *ex post facto* clarifying note in brackets, such as those used in the City Council’s or LRAPA’s minutes when something was stated incorrectly. Or, better yet, delete the part attributed to Ken—honestly, I don’t think he said it—and use editorial discretion to delete all reference to ODOT and say instead: “Jolene: Over the years, RRCO has heard from many in the community supporting a reduced speed limit on River Road. We do plan to pursue this with the relevant agencies.” which I think she also said, and which is more responsive to the question, and does not propagate incorrect info.]
- Highway 99 near Corvallis has flashing lights over its pedestrian crossings.
- The city traffic engineer doesn’t like the River Road pedestrian crossings. Special one-time grant funds were used to build them, and there appears to be little interest in improving them.
- It seems parts of the MUC project have to happen together to succeed—would it be possible to assess systems development fees to help pay for improved pedestrian crossings, on the grounds that such improvements will help promote shopping?
 - KG: The city has required developers to pay for some road improvements in the past, but if money becomes available to the city, road improvements can come ahead of private re-development.
- Have studies been done on the destination of SC residents driving down RR? Downtown? West Eugene? Can we divert traffic to reduce vehicles on RR?
 - KG: 92% of RR traffic passes through the neighborhood for work.
- When I drive to the UO for work, I’d prefer to use the Beltline, but RR is faster.
- When we started this project, the economy was good. It isn’t anymore. In the southernmost part of the MUC plan, homelessness is a concern. How does this plan address homelessness, home vacancies and poverty?
 - KG: We hope to help with ending the recession by having apartments and affordable housing, as well as providing jobs. There is no specific chapter on homelessness.
- I moved to RR thinking it was rural, but Eugene is invading. We can lower the speed limit, put in center islands. Fifteen units per acre are too many.
- We live in a dynamic world. This kind of redevelopment could help facilitate a new future with different jobs and high gas prices. This is more localized.
- Some people want smaller homes and yards, to be closer to town, bus routes and the bike path. Compact living works for some people.

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- Why only the lower half of RR? A small vocal minority (people who returned the needs assessment survey) is trying to ram change down our throats.
 - Jolene: The city designated lower RR because of the big lots and underutilized commercial areas. Corner of Maxwell and North Park is potential MUC, as is Riviera. KG: Lower RR is first. Jolene: RRCO invites all kinds of programs regarding the neighborhood, and meetings are the third Monday of every month.
- I don't stop at pedestrian crossing anymore. Let's get EMX in two lanes of RR, and - limit cars to two lanes, forcing traffic to use the NW Expressway.
- Stakeholders are upset and all feel that they are being slighted. Everyone needs to come together and talk.

The meeting concluded with participants able to peruse the maps and written information, network, socialize and ask questions about the project.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40

Minutes submitted by Eileen Nittler