

EUGENE, OREGON

# BUILDING A BETTER BETHEL



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## Bethel Economic Development Task Team Report

Welcome to the Bethel Economic Development Task Team Report-*Building a Better Bethel*.

Bethel is a great place to live, work, raise a family, open a business, and enjoy your favorite activities. Our community boasts excellent schools, vibrant businesses, inviting open spaces and recreation facilities as well as engaged and diverse neighborhoods and residents. We also know there are opportunities to make Bethel even better - supporting the creation of new jobs and educational opportunities, building better transportation connections, easing the path for redevelopment in key areas, and strengthening business connections.

It is an exciting time for the Bethel area and that's why it is an important time for us to take a deeper look at how we can build on our assets to encourage even greater vitality in our community. The goal of the Bethel Economic Development Task Team is to recognize what it will take to turn our many opportunities into thriving realities.

The Task Team group included community and business leaders who are passionate about making a difference in the place where they live, work, play, and call home. We sincerely appreciate the time and thoughtfulness they provided to this task. Eugene is a community with a vibrant history and a promising future, and we believe Building a Better Bethel provides the critical next steps in realizing that future vision. The goal isn't to score a touchdown in one big play - Building a Better Bethel is about realistic -doable-steps in the right direction. Steps that build on our successes, develop trust, and show progress. As we move forward, these actions will engage community members, inspire new ideas, and ultimately realize the potential of our community.

We are inviting you to join our team in this work, because it will take all of us. Identify how you can participate, how you can assist, how you can lend your hand in *Building a Better Bethel*.

Building a Better Bethel directly aligns with our city-wide goals to promote a safe community, encourage sustainable development and ensure accessible and thriving culture and recreation.

Building a Better Bethel also supports the Pillars of Envision Eugene, our community vision of how our city will grow over the next 20 years, and advances our regional economic prosperity goals.

### Envision Eugene Pillars

- Provide Ample Economic Opportunities for all Community Members
- Provide Housing Affordable to All Income Levels
- Protecting and Enhancing Neighborhoods

[www.envisioneugene.org](http://www.envisioneugene.org)

### Regional Prosperity Economic Development Plan

- Grow Local Opportunities
- Provide Basic Business Needs
- Identify as a Place to Thrive

[www.eugene-or.gov/prosperityplan](http://www.eugene-or.gov/prosperityplan)



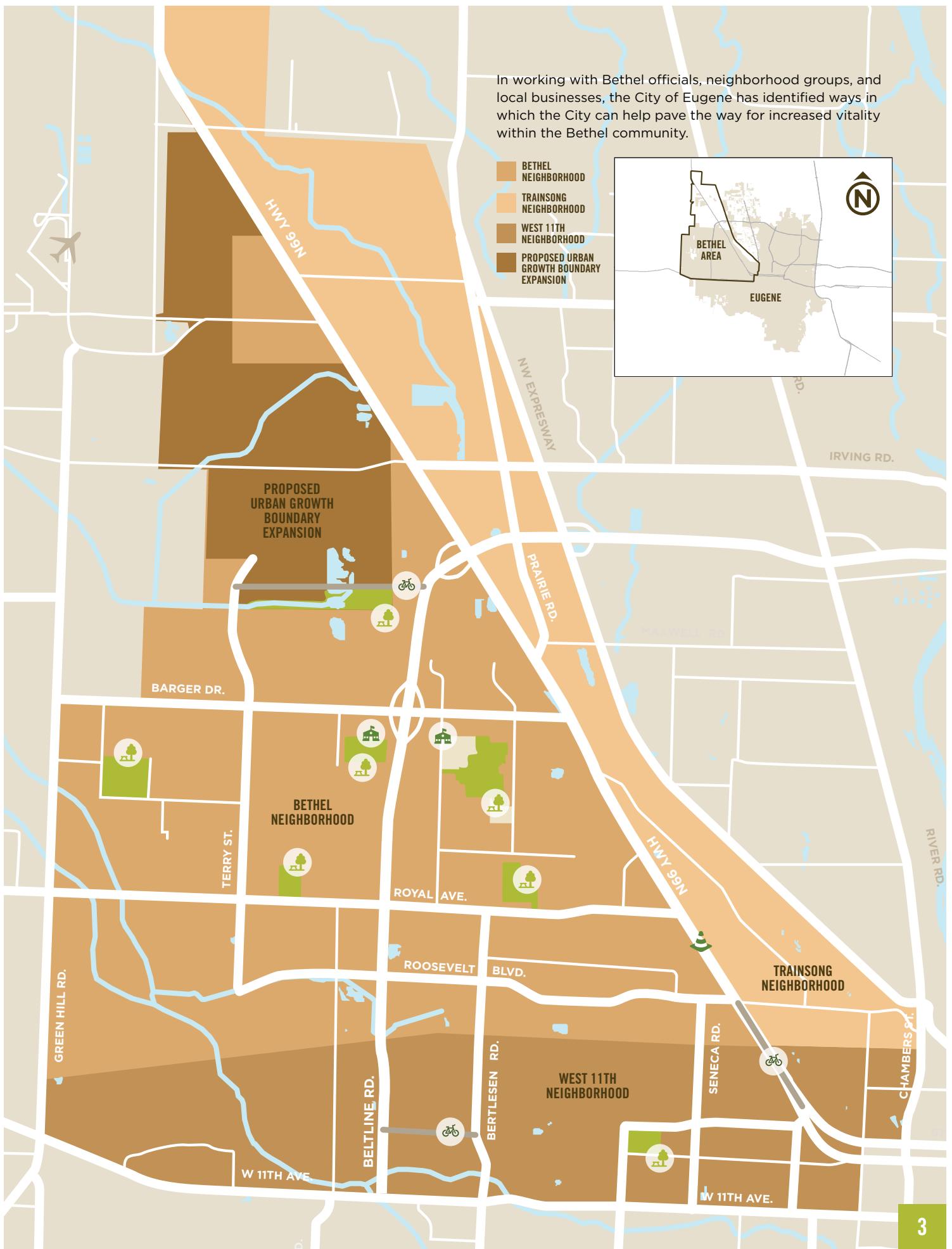
Councilor  
Greg Evans  
Ward 6



Councilor  
Claire Syrett  
Ward 7



Councilor  
Chris Pryor  
Ward 8



# INTRODUCTION

## Vision

The Bethel Economic Development Task Team (Task Team) project's vision is to support Bethel businesses, residents, and schools in their efforts to create an area that has 'everything right here', by identifying economic development related actions that can build a better Bethel.

## Study Area

The project study area encompasses the economic areas which serve the Bethel Area; the eastern boundary is the Highway 99 Corridor, the southern boundary is the West 11th business corridor, the western boundary is Green Hill Road, and the northern boundary includes Clear Lake Road to accommodate the proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) expansion.

## Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to identify actions that the City and its partners can implement within the next five years to build community assets and advance the vision of 'everything right here'. With the adoption of Envision Eugene and the Regional Economic Prosperity Plan, as well as the forthcoming update to the Transportation System Plan, the opportunity to direct public and private investments to support this vision is at hand.

As defined, Bethel is an area that will support the growth of jobs, housing, recreational opportunities, and multi-modal transit options for West Eugene. The expansion of the UGB as recommended within Envision Eugene supports the Regional Prosperity Plan's strategy of strengthening targeted industries and growing local opportunities, such as the food industry, which has been identified as a key industry in Bethel.

## Task Team Timeline

The Task Team met four times throughout the fall of 2014. Below is a summary of the meetings.

### 1 Meeting One-October 8

Introduction to the project and purpose, role of members as representatives for community, overview of Bethel conditions, discussion of Envision Eugene and Regional Prosperity Plan, and initial identification of redevelopment sites.

### 2 Meeting Two-October 22

Identified criteria for evaluating redevelopment sites, discussed assessment process, provided overview of the Economic Development Tools available in area and discussed which ones are most appropriate to use in Bethel, overview of the Food Industry sector, and discussed future needs.

### 3 Meeting Three-November 19

In-depth review of redevelopment financial modeling for high priority sites, land use zoning and development code discussion that highlighted recent revisions, discussed final deliverables and visual presentation, and completed a visioning exercise.

### 4 Meeting Four-December 10

Staff presented draft outlines for technical report, map, and website information, discussed language emphasizing community leadership in implementing the actions, reviewed and approved the Action Items, and discussed next steps involving the Task Team and City Council.



## Approach

The Bethel Economic Development Task Team was a fast-paced, strategic effort to bring together key community stakeholders and utilize their expertise to identify action items that will advance the community vision. The model utilized for this project is a blend of a ‘Blue Ribbon Task Team’ approach and the development model utilized for Eugene’s successful downtown redevelopment efforts: Team, Strategy, and Toolbox.

### Team

City Councilor Greg Evans, with the support of City of Eugene (COE) and University of Oregon’s (UO) Community Planning Workshop (CPW) staff, assembled a Task Team to participate in targeted meetings and discuss economic development opportunities in the Bethel area. The team consisted of public and private partners, including: Eugene City Councilors Claire Syrett and Chris Pryor, Lane County Commissioner Pat Farr, community members, local businesses leaders, and real estate developers. Through focused meetings, the Team identified crucial action items for economic development in Bethel and will act as champions of the Strategy.

### Strategy

The Strategy provides the next steps that create the ‘everything right here’ vision for Bethel. The Strategy serves as a short-term (1-5 years) road map that outlines action items and includes responsible parties, milestones, and alignment with existing policy. This report serves as the Task Team’s deliverable to the City Council.

### Toolbox

The Toolbox includes all the possible economic development and redevelopment tools including funding and incentives that can be utilized to support the Strategy. The toolbox is a crucial component of the project, as financial assistance is critical to support the variety of desired projects, businesses, and outcomes. The Toolbox identifies funding, resources, and incentives to carry out land redevelopment and business development efforts.

## Deliverables

There are three main elements of the Task Team’s work. The first is this Task Team Report, which serves as the plan for future actions. The second is the Building a Better Bethel Map, which visually highlights the strengths and planned investments in the area. The third product is the [www.betterbethel.com](http://betterbethel.com) website serving as a living asset describing current and future projects in the Bethel area and providing a number of resources including:

- Meeting Agendas and Minutes
- Better Bethel Map and Task Team Report
- Redevelopment Site Analysis
- Development Tools Technical Memos
- Links to current planning projects for community involvement
- Links to maps and resource documents



# TEAM: ADVANCING A VISION

The Bethel Area is Eugene's largest neighborhood with over 12,000 households and already contains many vital elements that contribute to a strong, vibrant community. One of the primary points that came up within Task Team discussions was the perception of Bethel as a less desirable area of the Eugene community. Despite the significant community-building progress that has occurred within Bethel, these successes have not been communicated outside the Bethel neighborhood, and have done little to combat the misperception. Additionally, this perception is reinforced by factors such as the underutilization and underdevelopment of property along Highway 99, an important travel corridor for Eugene residents travelling through the Bethel area.

The economy, while recovering around the state and region, has been slow to pick-up in the Bethel area. While the retail-service industry has grown in Eugene overall, the Bethel area has not seen that same growth, despite housing a significant portion of Eugene residents. Additionally, despite a growing food sector (restaurants, food businesses, produce markets, etc) in the Eugene area, Bethel remains in short supply of these new elements.

Despite these challenges, there are a number of opportunities the Task Team identified that will play a positive role in the coming years. Residents are committed to improving the area's vitality and committed to making changes to improve their livelihoods. Bethel School District is one of the strongest districts in the state, leading the area in graduate rates and test scores. In 2014, Willamette High School was named a 2014 Green Ribbon School, one of only 52 in the U.S. The Active Bethel Citizens group strives to make grassroots changes for the community, and the City of Eugene's Petersen Barn is an activity hub for residents of all ages. Community events such as "We are Bethel" demonstrate the strong sense of identity found among Bethel residents. There are a number of recreation facilities and parks in the Bethel Area, with future improvements of the Golden Gardens Park and a new west Eugene YMCA proposed for the area. Engaging this energy is key to making long-term successful changes and improving the livelihoods of Bethel residents.



# VISIONING

Team members were asked for three words for their vision for Bethel

Fine Dining **Transportation** Flowers **Vibrant** Convenient  
**Partnerships** Expanding Activity **Opportunities** **Exciting** Clean  
**Everything Right Here** Dynamic **Comfortable** Manufacturing Real Small Steps  
Healthy Food Accessible **Connected** Incorporated **Places to Gather**  
**Celebrate Diversity** Community **Community Pride** **Kids on Bikes** Equity  
Infrastructure Refinement **Welcoming** Strong Employment

## WHAT'S MISSING IN BETHEL?

Based on vision words, Team was asked 'What is missing in Bethel?'

Basic amenities nearby • Infrastructure refinement • Sense of connection  
Building up Bethel residents so all their needs are met in the community  
Strong employment base • Activity and recreational opportunities  
Natural area destinations • Entertainment • Excitement

## BETHEL TASK TEAM

Greg Evans	Resident and City Councilor-Ward 6
Claire Syrett	Resident and City Councilor-Ward 7
Chris Pryor	Resident and City Councilor-Ward 8
Larry Newby	Resident and Retired Real Estate Professional
Joanne Gross	Resident and Co-chair Active Bethel Citizens
Colt Gill	Superintendent, Bethel School District
Sarah Case	Development Officer, Lane County
Keith Miller	Resident
Scott Bales	Resident Business Owner: Royal Refuse and McKenzie Recycling
Debi Farr	Resident and Member, Bethel School Board
Pat Farr	Resident and Lane County Board of Commissioner-District 4
Corey Dingman, MAI	Partner, Duncan and Brown Real Estate Analysts
Dennis Boeger, PE	Resident and Owner, Boeger & Associates, LLC
Clayton Walker, CCIM	Principle Broker, C.W. Walker and Associates
Alan Turanski	Resident Business Owner: President, Glory Bee Foods
Leigh Anne Hogue	Director, Economic Development, Eugene Chamber of Commerce

# STRATEGY: ACTION PLAN

The Task Team identified 12 key action items as vital to promoting economic development in the Bethel area. The action items are organized into two time frames; short term tasks for completion within the next 3 years and medium term tasks for completion within the next 5 years. Icons and color coding indicate whether the action item is a Targeted Public Investment, such as transportation improvements; or an action that will Support Private Investments, such as expanding the UGB for increased employment in the area. In recognition of the community-wide level of involvement needed to complete the tasks, the responsible parties are identified.

Task #	Task	City of Eugene (COE)	Eugene City Council	Lane County Government
<b>Short Term (up to 3 years)</b>				
1	Develop criteria and process for fast track permitting	X		
2	Enact Zone Changes and Code Amendments	X	X	
3	Create Bethel Business Alliance			
4	Review Enterprise Zone Criteria and Expand to match UGB	X	X	X
5	Expand UGB - Clear Lake Road	X	X	X
6	Create and implement a Targeted Business Assistance Strategy including 'Gold Zone'	X		X
7	Engage in rebranding of Bethel area to align with positive trajectory			
<b>Medium Term (up to 5 years)</b>				
8	Create support position to aid in permitting process	X		
9	Complete site predevelopment to attract business expansion, prioritizing key industries	X		X
10	Expand workforce development partnerships		X	
11	Expand recreation facilities to increase sports based activities and tourism.		X	
12	Help retain and grow the food sector industry in West Eugene	X		X

## SUPPORTING PRIVATE INVESTMENTS



- Ease of Entry
- Targeted Business Assistance
- Bethel Business Alliance
- UGB

## TARGETED PUBLIC INVESTMENTS



- Transportation
- Schools and Workforce
- Parks and Recreation
- Property Redevelopment



		X						COE Planning and Development Department
		X		X	X			COE Planning Division, COE Planning Commission
X		X	X	X	X			Clayton Walker, Colt Gill, Chamber of Commerce
		X	X					COE Community Development Division
X	X				X			COE Planning Division, COE Planning Commission
X		X						Community Development Division; Include LCOG and LCC
X			X	X				Councilor Evans, Bethel Business Alliance, Bethel Community

		X						COE Planning and Development Department
			X					COE Community Development Division
X				X				Colt Gill, Brian Kelly (LCC), coordinate with Bethel Business Alliance
			X		X			Councilor Evans, Sports Commission, Art Farley (Eugene Parks)
	X	X	X					Lane County Economic Development Program, Community Development Division

## Near-Term Actions (*within next 3 years*)



### DEVELOP CRITERIA AND PROCESS FOR FAST-TRACK PERMITTING

The City of Eugene to improve the process flow and increase efficiency within the development permit review process. Currently, this is the Building and Permit Services priority project entitled the 'PIC Plan'.



### ENACT ZONE CHANGES AND CODE AMENDMENTS

On-going efforts to adjust the land use code for more flexibility within zoning designations to help with site redevelopment. Recent examples include the revisions of the I-2, I-3, E-1, and E-2 zones for broader use.



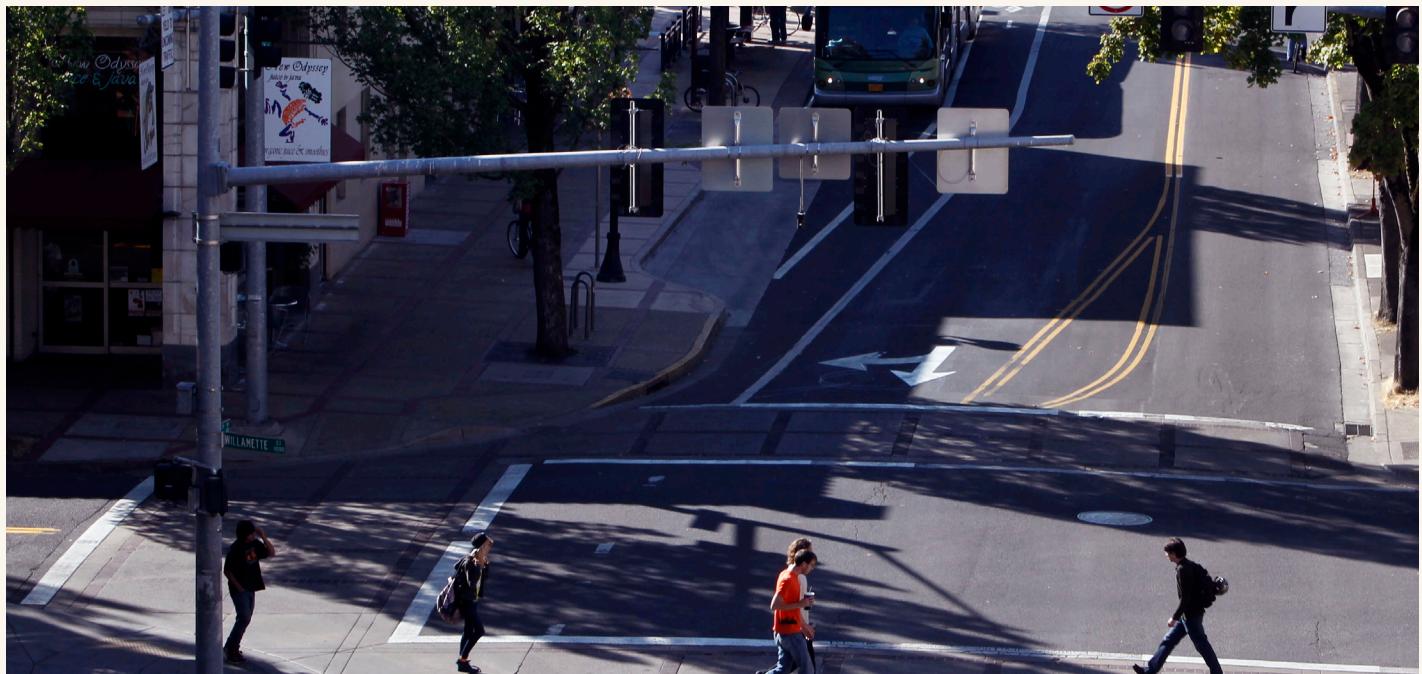
### CREATE BETHEL BUSINESS ALLIANCE

Establishment a group of local business leaders who will advocate on behalf of the Bethel community.



### RENEW, REVIEW, AND EXPAND THE ENTERPRISE ZONE.

This is currently within the work program of the City's Planning and Development Department, with the Task Team recommendation to evaluate the eligibility criteria and expand to match the new UGB boundary.





## EXPAND UGB AT CLEAR LAKE ROAD

The Eugene City Council is in the process of reviewing a proposed expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary to include 650 more acres designated for employment use. This expansion has been proposed to accommodate future employment growth projected by Envision Eugene.



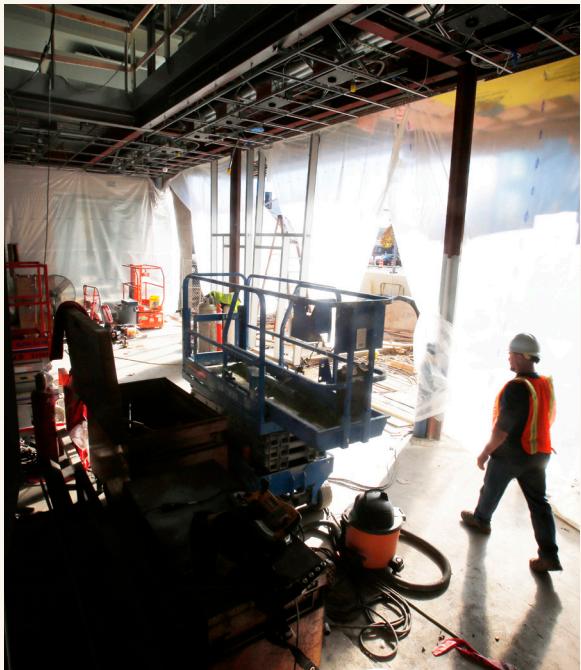
## TARGETED BUSINESS ASSISTANCE STRATEGY

The City's Community Development Division is creating a targeted business assistance strategy that includes a variety of business loans and incentive opportunities to engage Bethel businesses, ideally collaborating with the Bethel Business Alliance.



## REBRAND BETHEL AREA TO ALIGN WITH POSITIVE TRAJECTORY

Shifting the perception of Bethel is key to attracting residents and businesses to the area. This will include highlighting Bethel as a “great place to live and to do business,” by promoting the exceptional schools, recreation amenities, quality housing, and strong community character.



## Medium-Term Actions (3-5 years)



### CREATE SUPPORT POSITION TO AID IN PERMITTING PROCESS

The City of Eugene is committed to creating a dedicated staff position to guide businesses through the development permitting process.



### COMPLETE SITE PREDEVELOPMENT TO ATTRACT BUSINESS EXPANSION

Development of “shovel-ready” sites to quickly accommodate new industries and businesses. Predevelopment would focus on preparing sites for targeted industries outlined within the Regional Prosperity Plan.



### EXPAND REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

The expansion of existing work force development programs with area educational institutions is critical for a thriving economy that retains existing businesses as they grow and attracts new businesses. Task Team members will develop and maintain partnerships to offer training opportunities aligned with targeted industries.



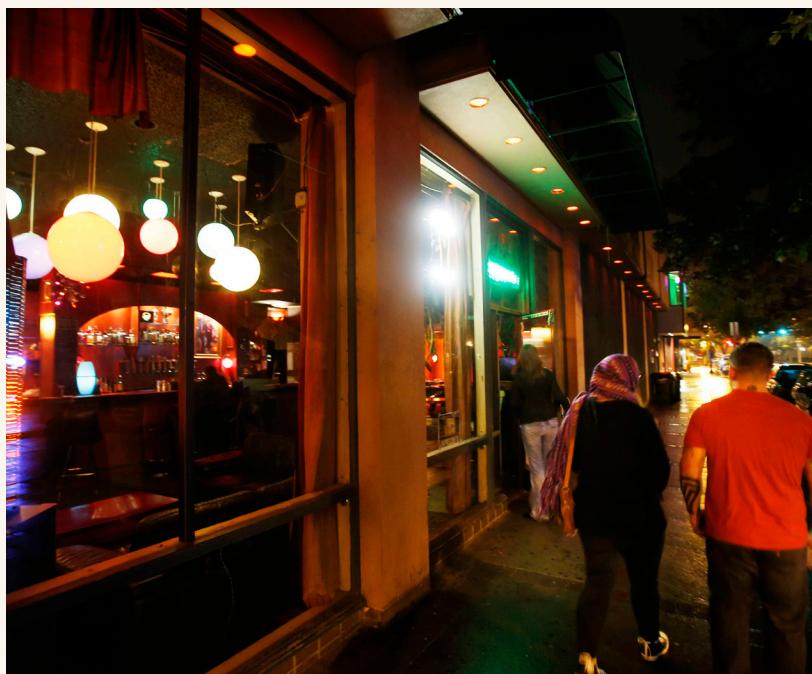
### EXPAND REC. FACILITIES TO INCREASE SPORTING ACTIVITIES AND TOURISM

Bethel’s parks and recreation facilities can support community activities and regional sport tourism boosting local businesses. Future developments include the Golden Garden’s Master Plan, the west Eugene YMCA, and the Eugene Parks and Recreation System Plan Update.



### HELP RETAIN AND GROW THE FOOD SECTOR INDUSTRY IN WEST EUGENE

Given the land quality, parcel size, zoning, proximity to major transportation routes, and existing food industry, the area is prime for pursuing further development of the food industry.



# TOOLBOX

## Redevelopment Site Analysis

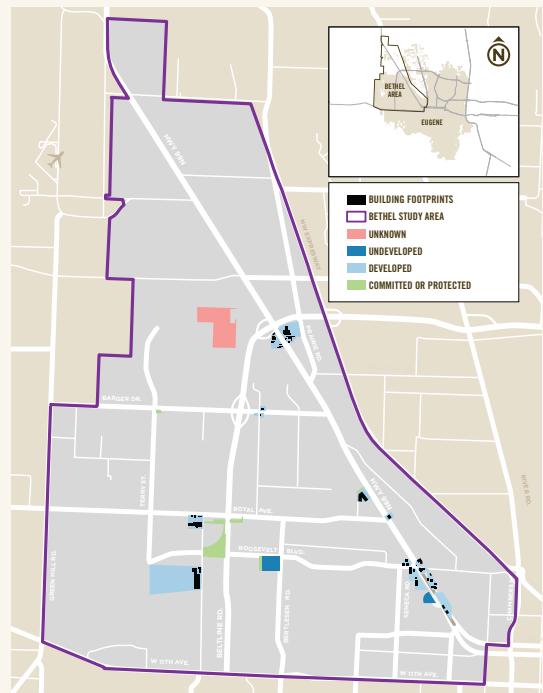
A core undertaking of the Task Team was to identify and evaluate potential sites for redevelopment as part of the larger resource set. The primary focus for these efforts was identifying parcels with the greatest redevelopment potential along transportation corridors, with a secondary focus on areas outside these corridors but which hold strong real estate opportunities.

The process to identify potential sites included a number of steps. First, during Task Team Meeting 1, the group identified candidate sites. Second, these sites were plotted by UO CPW and UO Infographics Lab teams, then run through an initial site assessment to evaluate the redevelopment suitability for each site. Third, a subgroup of real estate professionals provided additional sites and comments on the initial candidate sites. Fourth, all of the sites were overlaid with the existing State of Oregon Brownfields sites to determine where City Brownfields funding could be utilized. Fifth, the top priority sites were run through a redevelopment pro-forma tool that was designed by a subgroup of the Envision Eugene Technical Resource Group, which included public and private members representing policy, real estate, development, and land conservation.

The outcome of this process was presented to the Task Team at Meeting 3, where candidate sites market redevelopment potential were evaluated. In every instance, the type of project that is currently financially feasible was single-story retail/commercial developments. All other types of project (mixed use, housing, non-strip retail, etc) require large amounts of public financial assistance to be financially viable.

Scenarios were run utilizing the impacts of MUPTE: Multiple Unit Property Tax Exemption (lower operating costs), City of Eugene Affordable Housing programs (lower capital requirements), and potential market improvements (increased cash flow) showing that depending on the site and type of development at least one or all of these incentives or conditions would be required for a successful project.

Due to the sensitivity of assessing non-vacant sites for redevelopment, there were only a handful of these sites included in the initial assessment. The Task Team noted this and recommended re-examining this as there may be reasons, such as existing brownfields, impacting the marketability of vacant sites. All scenarios and maps can be found on the project website.





## Development Tools

The Task Team evaluated the variety of existing policy and financial tools that are available for business development and property redevelopment activities in west Eugene. These include incentives, grants, and loans from the City of Eugene, Lane County, or through the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG). During the Team's second meeting, the group evaluated the feasibility of the various incentives and identified the highest priority tools to recommend. The completed Development Tool Memos are hosted on the project website.

The Task Team was supportive of the following actions/recommendations related to tools and incentives:

- The continued use of City of Eugene Affordable Housing program funds for new housing units and renovation of existing units within the Bethel Area is key to provide housing, create quality development, and support retail businesses.
- The MUPTE property tax incentive is a critical element for the success of any market-rate multi-family housing development, including the housing component of mixed-use projects.
- One of the greatest tools the City can provide is to improve internal process to better support new redevelopment projects, as is outlined with the 'Strategy' section of this report.
- Continued support for Lane County Economic Development financial and marketing assistance to food related businesses has a positive impact on jobs within the Area.
- Proposed expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) for Industrial Lands is critical to meeting the needs of new businesses and the expansion of existing businesses.
- Engagement with the Bethel Business Community on use of existing business loan and grant packages, including 'micro-loans' is critical.
- Use of System Development Charge (SDC) financing should continue as a means to lower the initial cost of projects.
- Evaluate the criteria of the existing West Eugene Enterprise Zone for greater flexibility and use, as well as expand it to cover the proposed UGB expansion.
- Capitalize on the previous federal Brownfields Grants to apply for and acquire additional funding for site clean-up as a stimulus for increased private investment.
- Advocating for the Better Bethel community redevelopment vision to show support, increase interest, and attract investment.

The Task Team's endorsement of these tools and actions does not automatically make them happen, but they show support for investment in the community, which in turn helps to direct work planning, approve decisions, and expand the scope of existing programs.

[www.betterbethel.com](http://www.betterbethel.com)



# Working together, we can all build an even better Bethel.

Supporting Bethel area residents, businesses, and schools to create a place that has 'everything right here'.

