



## Introduction

With adoption of Eugene's urban growth boundary complete, City Council directed staff to begin neighborhood planning in the River Road and Santa Clara neighborhoods. With this direction, City staff began collaboration with County staff and the two Community Organizations to ensure all residents are able to get involved.

This project update offers background information, summarizes some of what we have heard during the initial *Reaching Out* phase – primarily from the first community event at North Eugene High School – and outlines where we are headed in the new year.

### Project description

The River Road and Santa Clara Community Organizations, in collaboration with residents, businesses, the City of Eugene and Lane County, have been reaching out to neighbors this fall to create a vision that will guide decision-making in River Road and Santa Clara for decades to come. The plan will focus on four major topics:

- *Land Use Planning:* What activities, like housing, shops or parks, do we want and where? How will the neighborhood feel and look?
- *Economic Development:* How will good jobs and services be supported?
- *Parks and Natural Resources:* What do we want to happen with outdoor spaces?
- *Transportation:* How will we get around?

The outcome of our work together will be a Neighborhood Plan adopted by the City of Eugene and Lane County to guide the future growth and development of the River Road and Santa Clara areas.

### Community collaboration

This is a collaborative effort among the River Road and Santa Clara Community Organizations, the City of Eugene, and Lane County. The community organizations came together several years ago to work on the SCRROL ([Santa Clara River Road Outreach and Learning, 2012](#)) and SCRRIPT (Santa Clara-River Road Implementation Planning Team) initiatives. The community organizations dedicated countless volunteer hours in reaching out to and engaging neighbors. The results have formed a foundation for the neighborhood plan.



# Process to date

## 'Reaching Out' phase

This summer the community organizations and staff began the *Reaching Out* phase of this 18-month project. Our *Reaching Out* efforts had three objectives:

1. We wanted to raise awareness about the project;
2. We wanted to get the word out about the October 17<sup>th</sup> community event at North Eugene High School; and
3. We wanted to create opportunities for people to provide input on the future of their community.

We began raising awareness about the project by meeting with neighbors where they were. We promoted the project at fun activities like Sunday Streets and the grand opening of the new River Road Elementary School and during routine errands at the grocery store. Volunteers from the community organizations canvassed their neighborhoods with informational flyers. There were stories in the regular community organization newsletters and we used social media to spread the information, too. In total, we attended more than 20 events in advance of the big October 17<sup>th</sup> event! This [video](#) contains footage of that outreach.

The community event at North Eugene High School was a huge success, with nearly **400 people** filling the Highlander gymnasium. We were thrilled with this result. However, we know that many in the community are unable to attend evening meetings, so we've made an extra effort to meet with them at more convenient times and places.



We formed partnerships with trusted organizations like Saint Vincent DePaul, Food for Lane County, and our local schools. These organizations have helped us to reach a broader swath of residents. In addition to the large community event, small group meetings were held with high school students, affordable housing residents, and Spanish speakers; a small group gathering of rural residents in Santa Clara will take place later this month. Most recently, a group of neighborhood volunteers and City and County staff did door-to-door canvassing of local businesses to gather their input on the neighborhood. [A summary of

those outreach efforts will be published early in 2018.] Our goal is to leave no stone unturned and give everyone the opportunity to provide input into the vision for their neighborhood.

## What we've heard

The River Road-Santa Clara Neighborhood Plan will be organized around 4 major topic areas that were previously identified by neighbors. The following summaries provide some high points for each topic. These summaries are based on what we've heard so far this Fall. If you wish to read more, an inventory of all comments received at the North Eugene High School community event on October 17<sup>th</sup>, as well as other small group activities, is [available online](#).



### Land Use

Many neighbors asked questions about balancing growth and change while preserving the unique neighborhood character. Agricultural land and large residential lot sizes were the most prominent responses when neighbors were asked what they value now, with one resident describing the neighborhood as the 'interface between downtown and rural.' Some of the most common comments regarding a vision for the future were preserving agricultural land,

properly planning residential infill, and keeping large lot sizes to allow for gardening. When discussing the future, some residents expressed concern over high-density developments not being matched with adequate infrastructure, such as parking spaces or traffic control.

### Transportation

Transportation was the most heavily-discussed topic throughout this phase of public outreach. When asked what they value now, the most common transportation-related answers related to biking, walking, and the bus. Safety was discussed in relation to every type of



transportation, such as neighbors saying that they value crosswalks or walking to school safely. The most common suggestions for the future were adding more bike paths and bike lanes, calming traffic on residential streets, reducing traffic on main roads, and improving pedestrian safety. Congestion, especially during rush hour at main intersections, was a prominent area of concern and neighbors provided solutions such as redesigning River Road or increasing public transit use.

## Parks & Natural Resources

Parks and Natural Resources was the category that received the second largest number of comments, after transportation. The riverfront path received much attention within this category, both in terms of being valued now and as an area for improvement. Neighbors especially value the bike path and habitat along the river, and many people had suggestions about cleaning it up or making it safer. Many neighbors also said that they currently value their local parks, and Emerald Park in particular was mentioned in people's responses. Other suggestions for the future were more and better maintained parks, preserving natural spaces, and building/creating facilities such as a dog park or pool within the neighborhood.

## Economic Development

When asked what type of services or shopping people value now, the most common answer was local markets, followed by small shops. Neighbors indicated that they value being near services and believe small shops make the neighborhood more friendly for walking and biking. The most common suggestions for the future were more restaurant and cafe options, local markets and farmer's markets, and small or locally-owned businesses. There was an especially common refrain that the

neighborhoods need a gathering space, such as a public plaza or a welcoming food store with a communal space. Other visions for the future included job training in the community and zoning changes to allow for more businesses.

## Other Topics

There were several common responses that do not fit into a specific category but reflect a widespread hope or concern. Many residents expressed a desire to build community with their neighbors, and a common vision for the future included establishing more community gardens. Addressing homelessness in the neighborhood was another priority among residents, and was discussed in reference to housing affordability, the river path, and overall public safety. Residents also provided many comments about the duplication of services between City of Eugene and Lane County providers. These comments ranged from concerns over emergency response times to support for special districts.



## Where we are headed in 2018

*Reaching Out* is winding down this month. In the coming weeks, this summary report will be accompanied by an online map displaying the values and ideas expressed by residents, and summaries of additional outreach efforts.

In 2018, we will move into the next phase of the project, crafting a *Community Vision* and an *Action Plan* to turn that vision into reality. Just as the *Reaching Out* phase was a collaborative effort, so too will be the Vision and Action Plan. To that end, the River Road and Santa Clara Community Organizations are in the process of nominating a Community Advisory Committee. In the new year, the Community Advisory Committee, along with Focus Groups – one for each topic area – of neighbors and local experts, and City and County staff will begin reviewing all these great ideas. These ideas will guide the creation of a *Community Vision* and *Action Plan*.

### Get Involved and stay informed!

If you received this project summary from a neighbor, consider [signing up for the project e-newsletter](#). The e-newsletter will keep you up to date with the neighborhood planning efforts, notify you of upcoming meetings, and alert you to volunteer opportunities.

Visit the project website!

[www.RiverRoad-SantaClaraPlan.org](http://www.RiverRoad-SantaClaraPlan.org)

Have questions or comments?

Let us know at [CEPDDRRSCPlan@ci.eugene.or.us](mailto:CEPDDRRSCPlan@ci.eugene.or.us) or 541.682.5485.

