

River Road-Santa Clara Neighborhood Plan Frequently Asked Questions

Updated January 2023

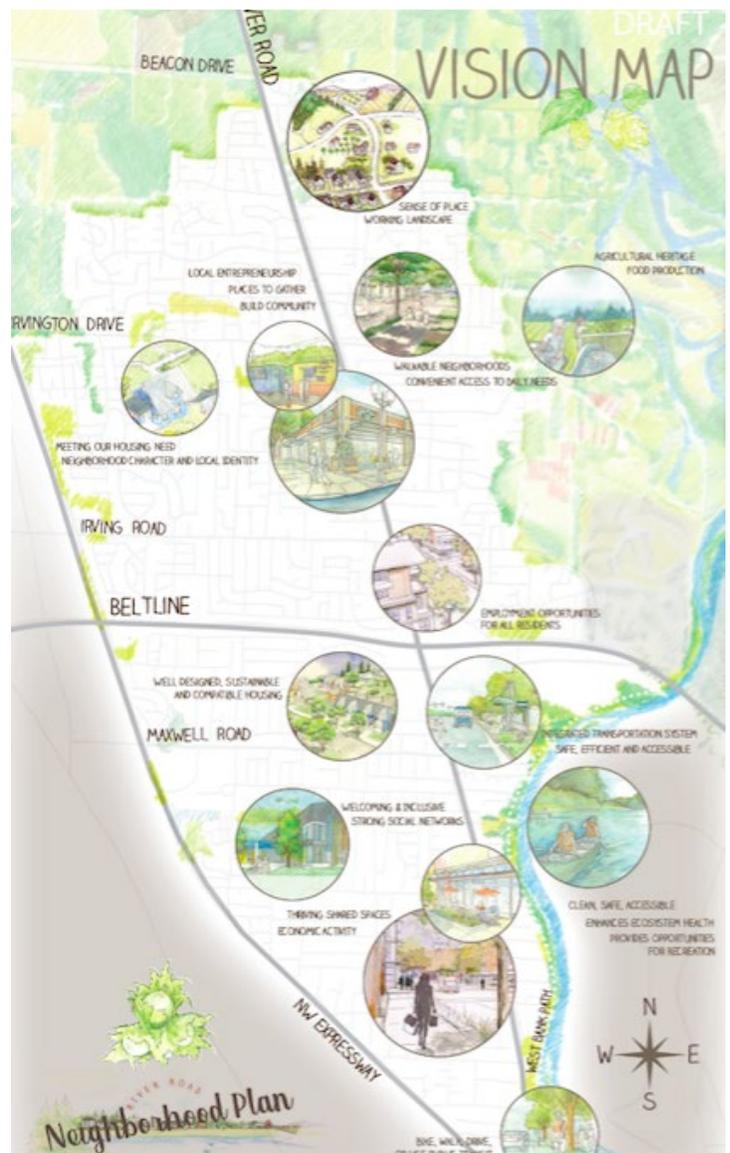
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What is the River Road-Santa Clara Neighborhood Plan?

The [River Road-Santa Clara Neighborhood Plan](#) captures the community vision for growth and development in a manner that respects the area's unique characteristics and opportunities. This plan will guide decision-making in River Road and Santa Clara for decades to come and focuses on the topic areas of **Economic Development, Transportation, Parks and Natural Resources, Land Use, and Community**. To reflect the community values, aspirations and priorities expressed during outreach, each topic area includes:

- **Vision statements** which are aspirational descriptions of the community's best outcome for how the neighborhood will look, feel and function 20 years and more into the future.
- **Goals** that translate the vision, describing hopes for the future on a particular idea.
- **Policies** that will be formally adopted by the City and County to provide a consistent course of action and move the community toward manifesting its goals.
- **Actions** which are possible strategies identified by the community, captured in the Action Plan, to implement the adopted policies over time. These will require ongoing advocacy and coordination between various partners.

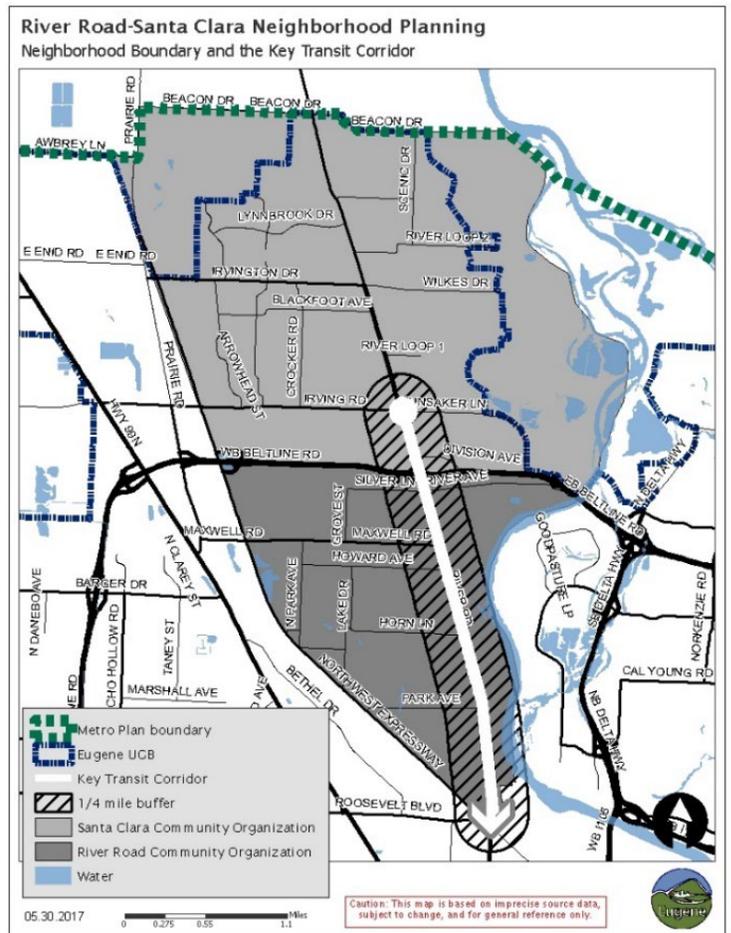


Why are we developing a neighborhood plan for the River Road and Santa Clara neighborhoods?

Since 1987, land use and development in the River Road and Santa Clara neighborhoods have been governed by the River Road-Santa Clara Urban Facilities Plan. After 35 years, the plan is ready to be updated to reflect current community visions, building upon years of work by grassroots community organizing and planning for their future. Additionally, River Road has been designated as a key corridor for focused long-term transit and land use development at state, regional, and local levels. City government plays an important role in helping community members design and plan for the future through neighborhood planning. This requires balancing neighborhood-level concerns and aspirations with City-wide goals and policies.

What will the Neighborhood Plan do?

As a formally adopted land use plan, the Neighborhood Plan will provide policy direction for City and County decision-makers as they consider future legislative actions. Some plan policies will guide City and County staff in formulating proposed changes to local land use codes and other regulatory documents, developing other work programs and long-range planning projects, and preparing budgets, funding strategies, and capital improvement programs. Other plan policies include aspirational calls for collaboration as well as continued advocacy and sweat equity from the River Road and Santa Clara Community Organizations and other community partners. The Neighborhood Plan considers the unique characteristics of these neighborhoods in the context of Envision Eugene, the community vision for future growth in Eugene’s urban growth boundary (UGB) in a way that protects and enhances quality of life and reflects shared community values.



Where will the Neighborhood Plan apply?

The Neighborhood Plan will apply within the boundaries of the River Road Community Organization and Santa Clara Community Organization, and includes properties located inside the Eugene city limits, properties located outside the Eugene city limits, and properties located outside Eugene’s UGB. The portion of River Road from Northwest Expressway up to the Santa Clara transit station at Hunsaker Lane was identified as a key transit corridor in the [Envision Eugene](#) Community Vision. The map shows the Neighborhood Plan boundary, the River Road key transit corridor, and the buffer area located within ¼ mile of the corridor, which was the focus of the River Road Corridor Study.

Why is River Road a key transit corridor? How does this relate to Envision Eugene?

Key transit corridors, or key corridors, are streets that have, or are planned to have, frequent transit service (approximately every 15 minutes or less) and nearby amenities such as parks, commercial attractions or employment centers, and higher density housing that enable shorter trips and less reliance on the automobile. Promoting compact urban development and efficient transportation options is a shared community value and one of the Envision Eugene pillars. By redeveloping existing land and creating more well designed compact neighborhoods in the downtown, along key corridors and around core commercial areas, the need to expand Eugene’s UGB can be reduced, thus farm and forest land can be conserved and the community as a whole can be more resilient. The goal is to transform the downtown, key corridors and core commercial areas into mixed-use walkable neighborhoods that are connected by transit, walking, and biking infrastructure to improve access to employment, shops, parks and entertainment for people who live and work in these areas.

How does the Neighborhood Plan relate to MovingAhead?

MovingAhead is a partnership between the City of Eugene, Lane Transit District, and other regional partners that has explored what transportation investments are needed in key transit corridors, including River Road. In early 2022, local decision-makers approved the proposed MovingAhead recommendations, which includes a recommendation for EmX (bus rapid transit) on River Road. The next steps in that process involve refining designs for the project (which will include more community engagement), seeking funding, and completing environmental review processes.

Moving Ahead and the Neighborhood Plan are separate initiatives linked by the community's vision for improved active transportation options such as walking, bicycling, and transit. Continued coordination between land use and transportation planning along the corridor will help plan for transit-oriented development and guide future growth and redevelopment for properties along the River Road corridor.

To stay involved and up-to-date on next steps in the MovingAhead process, visit <https://www.movingahead.org/>

What is the Action Plan? How will it be implemented?

The [Action Plan](#) is critical to the long-term success of the River Road-Santa Clara Neighborhood Plan. The purpose of the Action Plan is to capture and catalogue community identified actions that are possible strategies to implement the policies of the River Road-Santa Clara Neighborhood Plan. The Action Plan helps direct efforts to move closer to the community's vision for its future. The Action Plan will guide implementation of the Neighborhood Plan incrementally over the long-term and will require continued coordination between the City, County, River Road and Santa Clara communities, and other community partners, as well as advocacy for additional resources. The Action Plan includes general budget, feasibility, and timeframe estimates to help inform continued advocacy for resources and City, County and other community partners' work plans and capital project development.

Items in the action plan vary in feasibility, timeline, and cost. Many actions align with ongoing City plans or projects, while others would require legislative action or outside funding resources. Actions fall into one or more of the following project types:

- A. **Land Use Code Amendments or Zone Changes:** Require City or County staff resources and are typically implemented through a legislative process with community input and adoption by local decision-makers.
- B. **Public Programs or Projects:** Require City or County staff resources and funds from budget processes, capital improvement programs, bond measures or grant funding opportunities.
- C. **Community Partnerships:** Requires community volunteers or partnerships between the community, City, County, or other partners.

What is the River Road Corridor Study? How does it connect to the Neighborhood Plan?

One desired outcome of the Neighborhood Plan is to improve the River Road corridor. The Neighborhood Plan vision supports active mixed-use neighborhood centers along the River Road corridor and a transportation system that is safe, accessible, affordable, environmentally responsible, and transitions to zero carbon. The [River Road Corridor Study](#) includes an in-depth analysis of the River Road corridor, from Northwest Expressway to Hunsaker Lane, funded by a Federal Transit Administration grant awarded to Lane Transit District and the City of Eugene. The Study included stakeholder interviews, public workshops, economic and demographic research, and conceptual design work.

To build on this work, the City of Eugene will advance a citywide effort to review and revise zoning, land use code standards, and development incentives for key corridors across the city, including River Road. This project will be integrated within citywide growth management planning during the next Urban Growth Boundary update (due in 2026). Corridor Code updates will consider the RRSC corridor goals and specific property rezones identified during the neighborhood planning process.

What is the River Road-Santa Clara Special Area Zone? How has the approach to implementing a corridor code shifted?

To support implementation of the community vision along the corridor, part of the neighborhood planning process included the development of a draft River Road-Santa Clara Special Area Zone and draft Proposed Zoning Map. The draft Special Area Zone (SAZ) focused on neighborhood centers and key commercial areas near future transportation improvements along the River Road corridor. It included commercial zoned areas and key large church properties beyond the corridor to support potential future redevelopment.

Given a myriad of challenges and changes over the last few years, including a global pandemic, City staff have developed a proposed path that shifts the approach and timing of the corridor code and zoning changes to recognize current realities, including statewide climate, housing, and equity mandates, as well as available City resources. The City of Eugene will advance a citywide effort to review and revise zoning, land use code standards, and development incentives for key corridors across the city, including River Road. This project will be integrated within citywide growth management planning during the next Urban Growth Boundary update (due in 2026). Corridor Code updates will consider the RRSC corridor goals and specific property rezones identified during the neighborhood planning process.

Additionally, the City of Eugene is in the process of integrating clear and objective standards within the Willamette River Greenway Code. The goals of the Greenway Code process and Neighborhood Plan process overlap. As the Greenway Code process is already underway, it offers an opportunity to incorporate neighborhood planning outcomes as part of this code amendment process.

What changes might affect the River Road and Santa Clara neighborhoods?

Both the Neighborhood Plan and Action Plan will apply to the entirety of the River Road and Santa Clara neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Plan will provide the adopted policy direction to guide future City and County decision-making while the Action Plan will guide implementation of the community vision. The Neighborhood Plan and Action Plan contain policies and actions related to transportation improvements, parks projects, natural resources protection, community volunteer projects, and a range of other topics that are important to and will impact all of River Road and Santa Clara. Implementation will occur over time with continued coordination between the City, County, River Road and Santa Clara communities, and other community partners. The Action Plan in particular is meant to be iterative to reflect changes over time as work is completed and new community priorities are identified.

How does House Bill 2001 impact River Road and Santa Clara?

House Bill (HB) 2001 is a law passed by the Oregon Legislature in 2019 that requires large cities in Oregon, including Eugene, to allow middle housing (duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, rowhouses, and cottage clusters) to be built in all neighborhoods. This legislation is intended to increase our housing supply and allow for more housing types of all shapes and sizes in more places. On [May 24, 2022](#), the City Council unanimously adopted [Ordinance 20667](#) (Middle Housing Code Amendments) to implement HB 2001.

The Middle Housing Code Amendments apply to residentially zoned areas within the city limits that currently allow single-family homes. In River Road and Santa Clara, this includes the R-1 Low Density Residential and R-2 Medium Density Residential zones that are currently within the city limits. Land that is outside of the city limits (not annexed) is not affected by HB 2001 but will be as property owners choose to annex. The implications of HB 2001 were incorporated into the neighborhood planning process. For more information, visit the [project website at eugene-or.gov/4244/Middle-Housing](http://project.website.at.eugene-or.gov/4244/Middle-Housing).

Will the Neighborhood Plan impact annexation?

No. The River Road and Santa Clara Community Organizations, as well as City and County planning staff, have agreed that annexation is best addressed after the Neighborhood Plan is complete. This agreement is captured in the [project charter](#).

See the [Annexation FAQ](#) to learn more about when annexations take place and what decisions trigger annexation.

How will the Neighborhood Plan impact traffic? What transportation improvements are planned?

Traffic is a concern that frequently arises in discussions surrounding the Neighborhood Plan. Improving safety and efficiency for people who walk, bike, drive and use transit is a community priority and involves many partners at the city, county, and state level. The Neighborhood Plan addresses traffic and transportation by envisioning the development of new bicycle and pedestrian routes and connections, improving Beltline, and increasing transit service to the River Road and Santa Clara neighborhoods (also see 'How does this Neighborhood Plan relate to MovingAhead?'). This is consistent with Eugene's 2035 Transportation System Plan, which has a goal to triple the percentage of trips made on foot, by bike and

transit in the next twenty years. The City of Eugene also passed the Climate Recovery Ordinance, which includes community wide goals that aim to reduce carbon emissions by the year 2030 by reducing fossil fuel dependence by 50% compared to 2010 usage.

Want to learn about ongoing transportation projects in River Road-Santa Clara, and how they relate to the Neighborhood Plan? [Check out this factsheet of transportation projects!](#) Also see the [Existing and Future](#) transportation maps to see City, County, and private streets and infrastructure.

How will Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) impact parking requirements?

Eugene is beginning a multi-year effort to advance City climate action, housing production, and transportation goals through a state-directed program called [Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities](#), or CFEC.

In March of 2020, Governor Kate Brown issued an executive order directing state agencies to take actions to reduce and regulate greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change while also centering the needs of Oregon's most vulnerable communities. In response, the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission developed new requirements for cities to help meet these goals through changes to local transportation and land use systems.

Through CFEC, Eugene and Springfield, among other metro areas across the state, will make changes to provide more climate-friendly housing choices and transportation options, reduce pollution, and center the voices of underserved populations.

One of the first elements of CFEC implementation is parking reform. Eugene will follow a state-required approach to reduce or remove minimum parking requirements for desired types of development, such as smaller housing types, small businesses, childcare facilities, multi-family housing, and historic buildings. The City must completely remove minimum parking requirements within one-half mile walking distance of frequent transit access, including River Road, and certain areas where parking demand is lower. Eugene will also select one of three options to reform parking requirements city-wide.

As of December 31, 2022, the City can not require minimum on-site parking requirements within ½ mile walking distance of frequent transit corridors, including River Road. That doesn't mean that developers can't build parking, just that the City doesn't require them to. Most developers will continue to provide some parking, but it will be based on what the market demands.

Additional parking changes will be part of upcoming Eugene City Council discussions and citywide code changes that will go through a formal adoption process with opportunities for public input. While most of the parking changes must be adopted locally by December 31, 2023, depending on the path selected, a few requirements are due after this date and a few become effective earlier. Some of the parking changes also apply Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) wide and will require Lane County participation.

Outside of parking reform, there are several other CFEC projects that will be implemented through 2026. The City will update Eugene's long-range plans and land use code so we can invest in more climate-friendly housing and transportation options for current and future residents and reduce pollution. This project will also work to center the voices of underserved populations or those who have been historically harmed through past land use and transportation decisions.

What parks are planned in River Road-Santa Clara?

Parks and Natural Resources is one of the five Topic Areas that the Neighborhood Plan and Action Plan focuses on. Access to parks was a community value heard repeatedly during neighborhood outreach and many neighbors provided valuable input on ways to expand or improve recreation opportunities. A common question was about the future of undeveloped park land, specifically land that the City of Eugene has purchased in recent years. Planned park development is laid out in the City's Parks and Recreation System Plan which lays out the vision and guiding principles of the 30-year strategic plan and provides a clear path forward with a 10-year implementation plan. The plan includes a [Planning District Summary for River Road-Santa Clara](#) that provides detailed information on specific proposed parks projects. Want to learn about ongoing parks projects in River Road-Santa Clara?

- View [Parks and Recreation Bond Projects](#) in River Road and Santa Clara.
- Get involved in active projects such as the [Santa Clara Community Park](#) and the [East Santa Clara Waterway](#).
- Volunteer for [Lane County Parks Projects](#) at Hileman Park and Whitely Landing.

Who maintains the riverfront? How can I submit a maintenance request or report illegal activity?

Most of the River Road portion of the riverfront, south of Beltline, is part of the West Bank park, stretching from Maurie Jacobs Park to the Owosso Bike Bridge. This park land is managed by the [City's Parks and Open Space Division](#) meaning City park rules apply. For concerns about illegal activity in this area, [contact the City's Park Watch program](#). The Park Watch website provides statistics on incidents within parks, such as illegal camping and incidents requiring a police response. For maintenance requests on City park land, contact the City's Public Works Maintenance department.

The Santa Clara portion of the riverfront is outside Eugene's UGB. A key long-range vision of acquiring additional land along the Willamette River, north of Beltline, is contingent in large part on land acquisition from sand and gravel companies (See the [Willamette River Open Space Vision and Action Plan](#)). North-south connectivity along the edge of the UGB can be explored in the meantime.

What current regulations guide development along the Willamette River? What about other local waterways and natural resources?

The riverfront in River Road and Santa Clara is an important community asset. It is part of the larger Willamette River Greenway that runs from Eugene to Portland, which was established by Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 15 to protect, conserve, enhance, and maintain the natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, economic, and recreational qualities of lands along the Willamette River, while still allowing for development. The Willamette River Greenway is a corridor of water and land in which development is planned and built with recognition of the unique qualities of the Willamette River. To implement Goal 15, cities and counties were required to adopt a Greenway section in their comprehensive plan, create a Greenway Boundary, and establish standards for new development, new uses, and intensification of uses within the boundary area. The standards were intended to maintain physical and visual access to the river, preserve habitat and vegetation near the river, and to direct development away from the river.

Directing development away from the river does not mean development is prohibited. It means that the site design needs to provide open space and access as appropriate in a case by case analysis. The River

Road portion of the Willamette River Greenway is within Eugene’s UGB and subject to the Eugene Code while the Santa Clara portion is outside the UGB and subject to the Lane Code.

In addition, the City of Eugene and Lane County have both adopted a Water Resources Conservation Overlay Zone which implements waterway setback regulations associated with Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 5 to protect significant natural resources. These regulations apply to the Willamette River, as well as other waterways in the River Road-Santa Clara neighborhoods. The City of Eugene has also implemented the Water Quality Overlay Zone which applies waterway setback regulations associated with Statewide Planning Goal 6 to protect water quality. These regulations apply to certain waterways with significant natural resource or water quality functions and values. To view how both of these overlay zones apply to River Road-Santa Clara, view [Eugene’s Zoning Map](#).

For more information about waterways and natural resources in River Road-Santa Clara, check out the [Parks and Natural Resources Map](#) and [Stormwater handout](#).

What changes are being proposed in the Citywide Willamette River Greenway Code Amendments?

The proposed citywide Willamette River Greenway Code Amendments are intended to provide a clear and objective set of approval criteria and standards for the review and approval of proposed housing development within the Willamette River Greenway, consistent with legal requirements. The amendments include:

- Greenway Setbacks
- Limits on Maximum Length of Building Facades
- Limitations on Walls and Fencing
- Pedestrian Access Standards
- Native Landscape Buffering Standards
- Greenway Specific Tree Preservation Standards

If the proposed amendments are adopted, an applicant proposing to develop housing within the Greenway will be able to choose to proceed under a set of new clear and objective standards, or choose to proceed using the existing discretionary criteria under sections 9.8800-9.8825 of the Eugene Code. The proposed code amendments will not change the adopted Willamette Greenway boundary.

To learn more, check out the [Willamette River Greenway FAQs](#) or visit <https://www.eugene-or.gov/764/Land-Use-Code-Amendments>.

Do River Road and Santa Clara residents have access to a library?

City residents (with proof of residence) can get a Eugene library card at no cost by visiting any City of Eugene public library location. The closest library for many residents is the Bethel Branch Library. County residents are also able to get a card to Eugene public libraries but must pay a fee. As of July 2021, the fee is \$11/month per household. Residents and non-residents pay approximately the same amount, one through taxes and the other through the non-resident fee. Both City and County residents can attend events and classes at the Eugene public libraries, regardless of whether they hold a library card. For more information, visit the [City of Eugene Library website](#). Additionally, both City and County residents are welcome to check out books at the [River Road-Santa Clara Volunteer Library](#).

One of the Neighborhood Plan policies captures the community's desire to have library and cultural services in the River Road and Santa Clara neighborhoods.