



CITY OF EUGENE
DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR WALNUT STATION MIXED USE CENTER

PHASE I REPORT

May 2006

urbsworks

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Walnut Station Mixed Use Goals

*Key Findings from the Market Overview for Walnut Station
and Implications for Future Development*

1.0 Introduction

Over several months from early summer of 2005 through spring of 2006

area residents, business and property owners, the City of Eugene, and a team of consultants have developed a vision for the emerging Walnut Station Mixed Use Center. This document summarizes the work that led to the Emerging Vision and explains the design intent behind the major elements in the Emerging Vision. This vision will provide the foundation on which the Phase II process and, ultimately, the Walnut Station Mixed Use Development Plan will rest.



WALNUT STATION STUDY AREA

The Emerging Vision evolved out of design collaboration between city staff, planning commissioners, and the consultant team and incorporated input from organized stakeholder groups and the public. Public and stakeholder input has come through multiple sources throughout the Phase I visioning process, including numerous meetings with business owners, property owners, the Fairmount Neighborhood Association, the University of Oregon, and local utilities and service providers. Input to the project has also been provided through the five public workshops and open houses held in Phase I, and in meetings with Steering and Technical Advisory Committees. Information and input was also gathered through formal survey tools, separate stakeholder discussions, letters to City staff, and the Planning Commission.

Originally, the Phase I visioning process was intended to conclude with the selection of a “preferred alternative;” however, as the visioning process drew to a close, the Eugene Planning Commission indicated that until there was agreement on all of the design elements of the framework plan, that the term “preferred alternative” should not be used. Thus, the end product of Phase I of the project, relabeled as the “Emerging Vision,” presents a set of design elements on which there is considerable agreement, tempered with unresolved questions. The Phase II process will attempt to bring resolution to these questions, more clearly refine the design elements, and lay out a Development Plan for the public, the Planning Commission, and the City Council to consider.

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FRANKLIN BOULEVARD looking toward Judkins Point

2.0 Emerging Vision

Transportation

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The changing nature of the transportation network in the Walnut Station area is a key impetus for the development of the mixed-use development plan. Traffic volumes on Franklin near Walnut are projected to be in the range of 40,000 – 45,000 vehicles per day in the year 2025, which accounts for expected development and growth without major changes to currently adopted plans, policies, and approved projects. The implementation of the new bus rapid-transit “EmX” line beginning in December 2006 is expected to increase pedestrian movement throughout the area. Thus, a major challenge in the development of this project is finding ways to accommodate the increased vehicular traffic and to provide safer and more pleasant routes for pedestrians to travel to the station areas and to shops, parks, and their homes.



FRANKLIN BOULEVARD

One goal of this project is to increase the number of connections through and to the study area, primarily to provide more and safer paths for pedestrians and bicyclists to move through the area and to cross Franklin Boulevard safely, while maintaining or improving the functionality of Franklin as a major arterial with critical linkages to downtown Eugene and Springfield.

Franklin Boulevard

Currently, Franklin Boulevard mainly functions to conduct large volumes of traffic through the area and provides access to numerous businesses. It serves as one of the major connections between Eugene and Springfield and is a primary route to the University of Oregon. It also serves as a major entryway into Eugene for northbound travelers on I-5. In its current configuration, however, it is not a pedestrian-friendly street.

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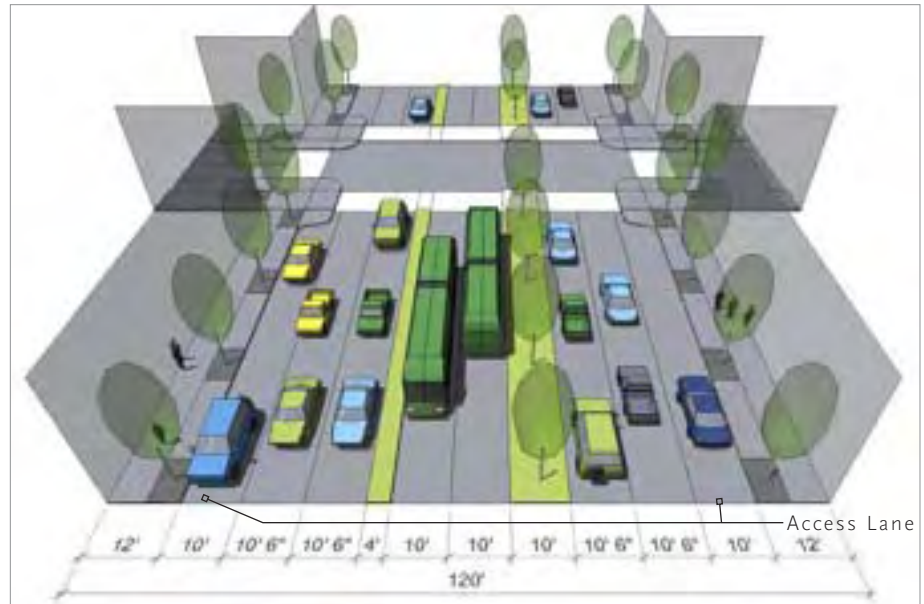
The ultimate design of Franklin Boulevard will follow one of two scenarios. The first option (Phased Expansion) would accommodate the growth of traffic on Franklin Boulevard in two stages, as described below. The second option (Multi-way Boulevard) would provide for the redesign of Franklin Boulevard in a way that would accommodate significant long-term traffic growth in the corridor through an expansion of right-of-way, as described below. If modeling during the Phase II process shows that traffic flow cannot be reasonably accommodated in either of these scenarios, or the resulting level of congestion is unacceptable, the possibility exists that improvements to pedestrian crossing times and the pedestrian environment along Franklin may be sacrificed.

Option 1 | Phased Transition Franklin Boulevard would be converted from a major arterial street with 6 lanes of through-traffic (three on each side of a 10' – 35' wide landscaped median) to a major arterial street with 2 lanes eastbound, 2 lanes westbound, on-street parking, bus rapid transit facilities within the median, and wider sidewalks with planting strips.

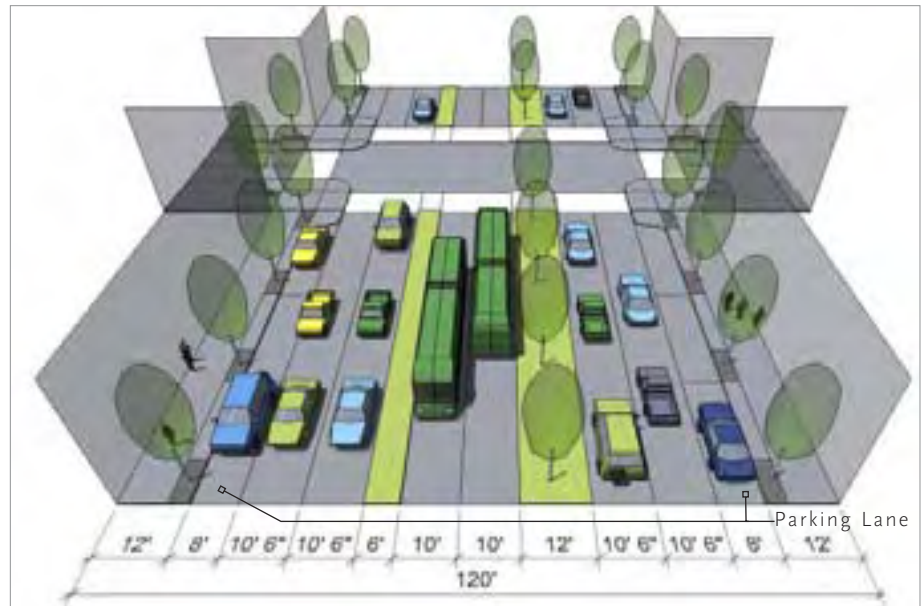
Short –Term Changes The outermost travel lane in each direction would be converted to on-street parking in two phases:

Phase I Construct curb extensions into the existing travel lane at each intersection to convert travel lane to a block-long access lane. The conversion would allow vehicles on Franklin Boulevard to continue to use existing driveways to access local businesses.

Phase II Convert the access lane, block-by-block, to on-street parking in conjunction with redevelopment of property and relocation of parking within that block. Off-street parking for redeveloped businesses would be accessed via alleys and a more limited number of curb cuts (driveways) on Franklin Boulevard.



FRANKLIN BOULEVARD PHASE ONE



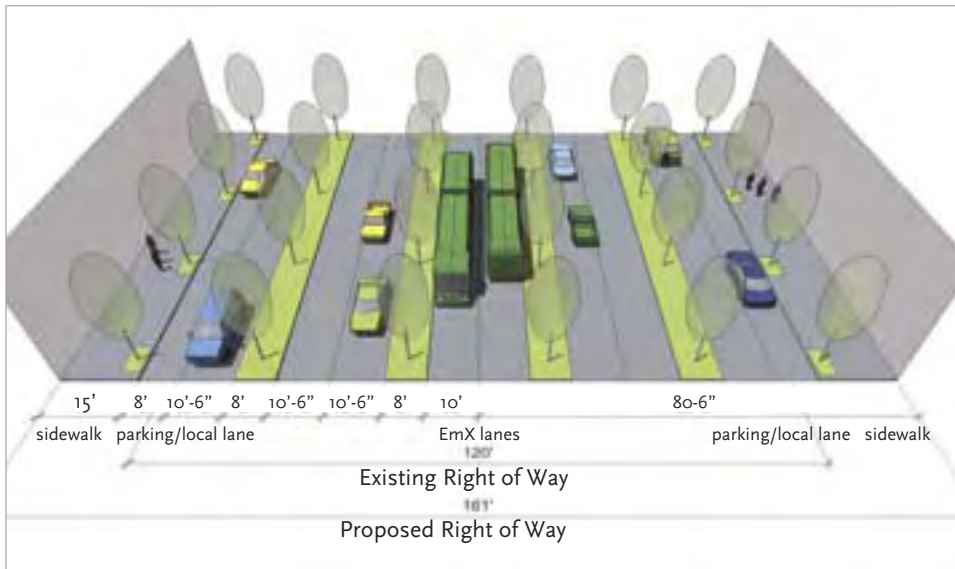
FRANKLIN BOULEVARD PHASE TWO

Long-Term Changes As traffic increases in this corridor over the next 20 years, provide for the conversion of Garden Avenue from a local street to a major street capable of carrying some portion of the Franklin Boulevard traffic through the area.

While this was not the most popular scenario discussed of all the Design Alternatives presented, many respondents to the Alternatives Evaluation believe that this design would best accommodate pedestrians, transit users, and new housing. A majority of respondents also indicated that they believe this option would best complement the Fairmount Neighborhood and existing businesses. This design also requires no additional right-of-way, which limits impacts to property owners; however, several commercial property owners have expressed disagreement with converting two travel lanes to parking lanes.

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Option 2 | Multiway Boulevard Franklin Boulevard would be converted from a major arterial street with 6 lanes of through-traffic (three on each side of a 10' – 35' wide landscaped median) to a major arterial street with 2 lanes eastbound, 2 lanes westbound for through traffic movements, and bus rapid transit facilities within the median. Another median planting strip on either side of the through lanes provides separation for a parallel local access lane on each side. The access lane would provide one lane of parallel parking, one through lane for slow-moving local traffic, and wide sidewalks separating the parking aisle from business frontages. This approach is likely to require additional right-of-way to implement.



FRANKLIN BOULEVARD AS A MULTIWAY BOULEVARD

Both the University of Oregon and the Fairmount Neighborhood Association (FNA) have expressed support for the multiway boulevard approach, though the FNA has expressed disagreement with the design specifics described in this particular scenario. Many business owners along Franklin, on the other hand, do not wish to lose any of their property to expanded right-of-way and are therefore opposed to this design. A large number of respondents to the Design Alternatives evaluation also expressed their dislike for a multiway boulevard.

Design Considerations

Street design City policies and national community design initiatives promoting smart growth encourage increasing alternative modes of transportation and developing walkable neighborhoods. These initiatives recognize that we cannot continue to design streets solely to accommodate the rapid movement of cars and disregard all other goals for our streets and communities. The City of Eugene has recently revised its street design standards to promote the creation of a “multi-modal” street system, designed to accommodate all modes of transportation including transit, bicycles, and walking. Making Franklin Boulevard—as well as all other streets in the study area—more pedestrian-friendly is a primary goal of the City’s Mixed Use Development program and of this project.

A question that arises in discussion about reducing the number of travel lanes on Franklin from six to four lanes is, “Why would we reduce the number of travel lanes if traffic volumes are going to increase?” The impetus behind such a change is to increase pedestrian safety and comfort by narrowing the crossing distance for pedestrians, allowing for a buffer of parked cars to separate and shield pedestrians from traffic, and moderately slowing traffic to a speed more appropriate for a walkable neighborhood. Preliminary investigation indicates that significant traffic flows could be maintained through signal-timing coordination and other design measures; however, for the sake of quality-of-life improvements for local residents, motorists may need to accept a greater level of congestion during peak hours than exists today. Franklin Boulevard cannot continue to function merely as a conduit to move traffic through the area if efforts to realize walkable, transit- and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods are to be realized.

On street parking On-street parking serves several critical needs on urban and neighborhood streets. It supports retail uses, increases pedestrian comfort by providing a buffer between the sidewalk and moving traffic and provides space for on-street loading and unloading of trucks. On-street parking signals to motorists driving through the area that they are entering an area of low or moderate travel speed. In addition, on-street parking supports local businesses by reducing the amount of on-site parking they may have to provide.

On-street parking can result in a 3 to 30 percent decrease in the capacity of the adjacent travel lane, depending on the number of travel lanes and frequency of parking maneuvers (Institute of Transportation Engineers, 2006). However,



EXAMPLE OF MAJOR THOROUGHFARE WITH ON-STREET PARKING



SIDEWALK DESIGN—FRANKLIN BOULEVARD TODAY

there are methods for minimizing the impact of parking maneuvers on traffic flow. For instance, marking on-street spaces to allow for extra maneuvering distance between them (8 feet is recommended) allows vehicles to drive forward into the parking space, thereby minimizing interruption to traffic flow.

Sidewalk design There are many factors that influence a person’s decision to walk, including distance, perceived safety and comfort, convenience and visual interest. The design and width of the sidewalk is a critical component in providing a sense of safety and comfort. The buffer provided by on-street parking, “setback” sidewalks, street trees and street furnishings all contribute to a sense of comfort. A sidewalk without these elements typically leaves pedestrians feeling exposed and vulnerable.

The sidewalk also serves visual, aesthetic and social purposes, by providing space for socializing and for commercial activities, including sidewalk cafes, plazas, seating areas and public art. The design of these elements can contribute to or strengthen the personality of a particular neighborhood. Sidewalks should have well-defined zones so that the pedestrian thoroughway or “through zone” is clearly demarcated.



SIDEWALK DESIGN—SHATTUCK AVENUE, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA
 a) frontage zone: canopy & merchandise display; b) through pedestrian zone; c) furnishings zone

Street-facing storefront businesses Street-facing storefront businesses provide a more attractive pedestrian environment than typical auto-oriented businesses, which tend to be set far back from the sidewalk and are typically oriented to a parking lot. They provide more of a “presence” on the street with widow displays and doors opening onto sidewalks along the street. They also help to provide a sense of enclosure—like walls enclosing a room.

Access management Access management is a comprehensive approach to the management and regulation of driveways, medians, median openings and traffic signals. The goal of access management is to limit and separate traffic conflict points, thereby reducing conflicts. Access management controls can result in improved safety for all modes of transportation and can significantly improve traffic operations. A key tool of access management efforts is elimination of curb cuts in select locations along major streets.

Eliminating curb cuts where possible reduces the number of potential pedestrian-vehicle conflicts, specifically, which can be especially important on a major arterial street. Fewer curb cuts result in fewer vehicles crossing the sidewalk to access parking and businesses. It also means there is a more continuous protected zone for street furnishings, street trees and the pedestrian “through zone,” all of which contribute to pedestrian comfort.

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Relocating parking Relocating parking to the sides or behind buildings can occur as individual properties are redeveloped. This helps to facilitate access management, development of street-facing storefronts, and well-designed sidewalks along the street. Access to reconfigured parking lots would move, preferably, to either side streets or to alleys and rear accessways. These lots can also share curb cuts with neighboring lots to reduce the number of potential pedestrian-vehicle conflicts on the sidewalk.

Additional right-of-way There may be a need to acquire additional right-of-way within the study area, either to support a redesigned street and/or to accommodate increased traffic volumes in the future. The multiway boulevard design, for example, could require significant acquisition of private land (up to 40 feet of additional right-of-way). Issues related to expanding the right-of-way include the costs of acquisition and the impacts on existing businesses and property owners. Accommodating increasing traffic volumes may also require redesigning Garden Avenue and Millrace Drive to function as a major street. It may be necessary to acquire some additional right-of-way along these alignments to ease turning movements. (This design element is further discussed below.)

Phase II Approach

The Eugene Planning Commission on March 20, 2006, asked that all three of the alternatives for Franklin Boulevard be kept on the table into the beginning of Phase II. Phase II will test the feasibility of on-street parking by modeling impacts and design alternatives for conversion of one travel lane in each direction to on-street parking. The results of the modeling may lead to rethinking the viability of on-street parking on major arterial streets and will test the limits of public acceptance of strategies to transform an environment almost completely dominated by automobiles to a walkable, pedestrian and transit-supportive environment.



PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED RETAIL FRONTAGE



AUTO-ORIENTED RETAIL FRONTAGE



RELOCATED PARKING Parking located to the side of auto-oriented retail

Garden Avenue

Garden Avenue provides the only other possibility for an east-west connection through the neighborhood to downtown. The specific design of this connection can follow two possible choices:

Option 1 | Improve as a local street Garden Avenue and Millrace Drive would be improved to carry local traffic and to provide improved access to and through the Riverfront Research Park (RRP). The potential alignment would follow the existing Garden Avenue and Millrace Drive rights-of-way. Full improvement of this alignment west of Agate Street ultimately depends upon UO implementation and construction of the proposed extension to Millrace Drive through the Riverfront Research Park.

Option 2 | Improve as a major street As future traffic growth increases demand on Franklin Boulevard, the city could construct street connection(s) through RRP to improve connections to the research park, the courthouse district, and downtown Eugene. In this option, Garden Avenue/Millrace Drive would be redesigned from a local street to a major street (collector or arterial standards). The street may need to be realigned in certain locations to eliminate sharp left- and right-hand turns. An extension or redesigned connection of Garden Avenue to Franklin Boulevard at the eastern and western ends of the study area will be studied in Phase II of the project.

Connection to downtown Either option presents the possibility of a connection to downtown through the Riverfront Research Park (RRP). This connection would likely follow the proposed alignment of Millrace Drive as specified in the RRP Master Plan and would continue west on either the Avenue "A" (Riverfront Parkway) or Avenue "B" (Millrace Drive) alignments described in the Riverfront Research Park Master Plan.



GARDEN AVENUE

Design Considerations

Garden Avenue, regardless of its future configuration, should function as more than another street dedicated to the exclusive use of automobiles. Wider sidewalks and well-landscaped planting strips should be part of future streetscaping for any future improvement of Garden Avenue implemented in conjunction with new mixed use development in the area. On-street parking should be provided on both sides of the street.

Phase II Approach

Phase II will model the impacts and design alternatives for Franklin Boulevard. The results of the modeling will bear directly on the types of improvements that will be needed on Garden Avenue. If the Phased Extension option were selected as the preferred approach to redesigning Franklin, ultimately Garden Avenue would need to be improved as a major street to carry some portion of the increasing volumes of traffic that would otherwise use Franklin Boulevard.

Local street connections

City policy supports improving connectivity of local streets throughout the city. Possible improvements to street connectivity in the Walnut Station study area include connecting north-south side streets across Franklin, specifically Orchard Street and Fairmount Boulevard. The intersection at Moss Street and Franklin Boulevard also should be realigned, either to align with the existing Moss Street north of Franklin or to align with Millrace Drive. The intersection at Villard Street and Franklin Boulevard has also been identified as a high-priority candidate for realignment given the awkward and poorly-designed configuration of the current intersection.

Design Considerations

Increasing local street connections helps to improve pedestrian and bicycle movements through the neighborhood. There is less of an impact on automobile movements through the study area. More connections also provide more potential retail frontage. The realignment of intersections is particularly important—properly aligned intersections would increase pedestrian safety when crossing Franklin Boulevard.



POSSIBLE CONNECTIONS TO DOWNTOWN



POSSIBLE LOCAL STREET CONNECTIONS AND RE-ALIGNED, IMPROVED INTERSECTIONS



POSSIBLE MID-BLOCK CONNECTION AT 14TH AVENUE

Phase II Approach

Potential connections and alignments will be further studied in Phase II—specifically to assess the benefits of proposed connections as well as the impacts of extended connections on the Fairmount neighborhood to the south. Designs that increase cut-through traffic in the Fairmount residential area should be modified or eliminated from further consideration.

“14th Avenue” mid-block connection

The “visioning” phase of this project promoted a reduction in the size of south-side super-blocks, located between Villard Street and the eastern project boundary, to provide for improved access to redevelopment sites through the creation of a multi-functional accessway or “street” running east-west between Franklin Boulevard and 15th Avenue. As conceived, the accessway would provide for east-west bicycle/pedestrian circulation through the study area in a linear park or plaza-type design, service access for retail and (potentially) residential uses, and possible automobile circulation to parking structures or areas. The design character and function of the accessway will be evaluated in Phase II of the project before decisions are made as to whether it should be included in the final plan.

Design Considerations

Superblocks provide inherent challenges to the movement of pedestrians and bicycles. Their large size creates barriers to movement through the neighborhood. They also tend to promote development types that are not as suitable for a mixed use, pedestrian-oriented district, such as big box retail or apartment campuses. Providing a connection through these superblocks would help to create a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environment. As mentioned above, improved connectivity could provide access to parking for new developments on the interior of the block. The connection could also help to dissuade some of the bigger “big box” retailers from locating along Franklin Boulevard.

Phase II approach

Phase II will test whether the midblock connection will work to resolve the movement barriers discussed above and how it will affect the layout of a full service grocery or any other proposed development. The design or design guidelines will be determined thereafter, if the mid-block connection is retained as a design component of the final plan.

Bicycle circulation

Bicycle circulation is an important element in the multi-modal transportation system being designed for the Walnut Station area. Preliminary proposals for this system include providing east-west bicycle routes adjacent to Franklin Boulevard as well as along the Millrace and along the Willamette River. While it has only been touched upon in Phase I, complete design of a bicycle circulation system will occur in Phase II.

Phase II approach

Phase II will seek alternatives to on-street bike lanes along Franklin Boulevard through other parallel routes. Lanes on Franklin Boulevard would require an additional 12 feet of space within the Franklin right-of-way and introduce potential conflicts with on-street parking, transit operations, and vehicle movements.

EmX Lanes

The EmX bus rapid-transit system currently occupies one lane through much of the median of Franklin Boulevard with a passing lane provided in one location and at the station areas. Lane Transit District would like to preserve the option for expanding the EmX to two lanes to improve service as ridership grows. The design options presented during Phase I all looked at expanding the EmX to two lanes, as proposed by LTD. Other proposals put forward by stakeholders suggest eliminating the second future EmX lane in favor of employing that right-of-way for other uses.



AREA BLOCK PATTERN indicates superblock pattern prevalent in study area



AREA BUILDING PATTERN

Design considerations

Increasing the EmX to two lanes would eliminate conflicts between buses approaching from either direction at the same time; however, it may be worth keeping EmX at one lane to achieve other design goals.

Phase II approach

Phase II will look to resolve conflicts between the Lane Transit District's proposed design and the Fairmount Neighborhood Association's request to keep the EmX at one lane only. The design evaluation and preliminary decision on the EmX lanes will occur in conjunction with decisions on the Franklin Boulevard design.

Parks and Open Space Overview

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There is an increasing need for more parks and open space throughout the area, and this need will only increase as more residents move into the area. There are currently no programmed neighborhood parks on the north side of Franklin within the Study Area, although the Millrace recreation trail to the west of Millrace Drive and Franklin Park open space do provide a substantial, if incomplete, contribution to the neighborhood. Fairmount Park currently provides the only significant developed park space on the south side of Franklin, adjacent to the study area. Respondents to the Alternatives Evaluation and other stakeholders strongly supported an increase in parks and open spaces in conjunction with new development. Some stakeholders have also asked for the identification of opportunities for pocket parks as part of any new residential development. In addition to neighborhood parks, providing greater access to the Willamette River and connecting the neighborhood to the river are design goals that received wide support in discussions with area stakeholders. Improvements to the Millrace corridor, both ecological and recreational, are also important.

River connections

Several possible connections from the Fairmount Neighborhood and the Study Area to the Willamette River were explored, and the most-preferred connection, recorded through the Alternatives evaluation survey, followed Villard Street north to the river and is known as the “End-of-Villard Park”. While this seems like a viable future connection to the river it is currently opposed by the owner of that property. An extension of the riverfront trail could run through a linear park between Riverfront Drive and a future railroad underpass at the end of Villard. Continuing the riverfront trail further east to Franklin Park would be difficult due to the narrow bank width between the river and the railroad. Another possible future connection could lie to the north or east of Fairmount Boulevard through Franklin Park.

The Willamette River itself is not visible due to the area’s topography. However there are views of the tall cottonwoods and other trees that line the river’s edge. These visual connections could be maintained along Orchard and Walnut Streets



CONNECTION VIA VILLARD TO RIVER AND NEW PARK

by restricting building heights at the north end of these streets. Alternatively, the Fairmount Neighborhood Association has recommended a “step-down” approach in building heights to maintain visual connections to the river. Phase II will test designs for developing visual connections.

Parks

Survey respondents and the Fairmount Neighborhood Association indicated support for an urban neighborhood park located at the north end of Villard Street at Garden Avenue. This would provide centrally located, programmed open space for new medium- to high-intensity developments north of Franklin Boulevard, and it would mark the entrance to the riverfront and Millrace recreation trails. This park could span the Millrace, having a more urban character on the southern bank and a more natural character on the northern bank. Phase II will explore the size requirements for this park in more detail.

Franklin Park is currently undeveloped and contains riparian habitat as well as the Millrace headwaters. The Metro Plan designates this area as Open Space, and this designation should remain. Connections to a Millrace recreation trail, and perhaps to the Willamette and the Knickerbocker Bridge, are possible through this park. Phase II will explore possible design options for Franklin Park.



FRANKLIN PARK, FAIRMOUNT PARK AND POSSIBLE CONNECTION

Pocket parks

Pocket parks are small parks, typically no larger than a standard lot within a neighborhood, that provide recreation space for neighborhood residents and their children. Pocket parks can be “inserted” into existing neighborhoods when a vacant lot is available, and they do not require the city to acquire and assemble large amounts of land. Pocket parks are a good complement to larger, more city- and region-serving parks. A handful of pocket parks and/or small urban plazas could be located throughout the study area. It is possible that these parks would be developed in conjunction with new development in the area, through city acquisition of strategic properties, or both. While it is too early to determine locations or size, the Phase II process will look at finding possible locations for such small-scale parks, plazas, and open spaces.

Recreation trails

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The beginnings of a recreation trail network exist along the edges of the Study Area. Respondents to the Alternatives Evaluation indicate support for extending the Willamette River Southbank Trail from the Autzen Foot Bridge east through the study area. It should connect, at the least, to the proposed railroad underpass at Villard Street. It would be ideal if the trail could extend east past this connection to the Knickerbocker Bike Bridge, as many residents have requested; however, the close proximity of the railroad to the river and the resulting narrow riverbank width may prevent the further extension of this trail.

Recreation trails along the Millrace could also be expanded eastward and could provide an alternative to the east-west link of the Willamette River trail. Design options for recreational trails will be examined further in Phase II.



MILLRACE

Millrace

Design of the Millrace has been a somewhat controversial issue. Two approaches to improving the Millrace will be evaluated during Phase II. One concept, recommended by the design consultants and City staff, involves designing the north side of the Millrace, between the waterway and the railroad tracks, as a riparian edge while designing the south side as a linear, park-like urban amenity with full public access along the full length of the Millrace. The other approach, supported by the majority of respondents who filled out the Alternatives Evaluation survey, is to design both sides of the Millrace as a riparian edge. Both approaches would include an east-west bicycle path along either the north or south side, depending on the design of the riparian zone. The Fairmount Neighborhood Association would like to see a wide Millrace open space with “a minimum setback provision [at one point suggested to be 150 feet] that retains vital riparian functions”. Public comments indicated high support for a natural Millrace that provides habitat for fish and wildlife. The current code establishes a minimum building setback of 40 feet from the Millrace.



EXAMPLE OF A RIPARIAN-EDGED STREAM



SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, RIVER WALK, AN “URBAN-EDGED” WATERFRONT PARKWAY. The river is narrow, one level below the grade of the rest of the city, and lined with well-designed walkways.

Design considerations

Even though the design of a natural, riparian Millrace received the broadest public support in the Alternatives Evaluation, the consultants and staff believe that a mixed urban-riparian design should also be more fully evaluated before selecting a final approach. An “urban edge” along the southern edge of the Millrace could be an attractive, public recreational space and a substantial amenity for new development in the Study Area. Rather than treating the Millrace as left-over or “backyard” space with buildings’ private sides facing the water, another option is to think of it as

a different type of public edge, with buildings fronting onto it. This “edge” need not be thought of as a solid, concrete edge stretching from housing to the Millrace and running along the entire southern length. Rather, it could have a more urban character blended into a riparian landscape bordering the Millrace—there could be substantial stretches of riparian edge punctuated by occasional, “hard-edged” direct access to the Millrace. The northern edge would still remain a natural riparian edge, and the combination could still provide good habitat for fish and other wildlife.

The riparian approach, with both sides designed as riparian habitat, would limit direct public access to the Millrace in order to protect habitat area. This would be necessary to protect the vegetation and waterway to ensure quality habitat. This environment may not be as recreationally attractive, as the Millrace would be farther away from the trail and possibly more difficult to see; however, it would likely provide good quality riparian edge habitat and may provide good fish habitat, if other habitat deficiencies are addressed.

Other considerations to factor into the Millrace design include the existing 40-foot building setback currently in place in city code. Phase II will explore the design implications of the existing setback provisions. Restoration of the Millrace and land on either side of the waterway would involve acquisition of some land currently in private ownership although a significant portion of the affected land is in public ownership. Providing effective habitat for fish also requires providing access for fish to enter the Millrace from the river and to exit again. The Millrace would also need a greater infusion of water from the Willamette to improve water quality for fish. This would likely benefit other wildlife—and possibly the public’s perceptions of the Millrace—as well, but it could prove to be costly. There could also be flooding concerns, but that remains to be determined.

Phase II approach

Phase II will include an early-stage work session with Parks and Open Space planners, bike system planners, natural resource planners, biologists, and resource ecologists to delve more deeply into the opportunities and constraints offered by the Millrace. Findings and conclusions from that work will be brought back to the public and the Planning Commission for discussion and feedback before recommendations for a final design approach are decided.

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Development and Redevelopment

Housing

The Walnut Station Study Area has a high market potential for new multifamily housing. According to market research conducted in Phase I of the project, the estimated potential demand for new apartments, condominiums, and rowhouses within the Study Area ranges from about 1,000 to 1,400 new units by 2025. These numbers result not only from a high demand for housing throughout the city and rising single-family home prices, but also from the area's proximity to the University and the Fairmount neighborhood—considered a desirable residential area—the fact that the area serves as one of the main gateways to Eugene, and the new EmX which will facilitate connections between the Walnut Station area and other parts of the city.

Retail

Demand for retail space derives from many of the same factors—prime location along Franklin Boulevard, proximity to the University and Fairmount, the new EmX stations, and high traffic volume. Retail rents and commercial land prices in Eugene also have increased during the past few years, driven in part by the limited amount of vacant commercial land available for development. Many of the commercial lots on Franklin Boulevard are underutilized or include buildings that are nearing the end of their life cycle and/or offer outdated retail formats. These buildings offer excellent opportunities for redevelopment.



GUADALUPE RIVER IN SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, “URBAN-EDGED” WATERFRONT
Other “Urban-edged” waterfronts can be found along the South Platte River in Denver, Colorado, in Providence, Rhode Island, and in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Access to the water, integrated habitat, recreation opportunities, community gathering and festival spaces are common design themes.

The Study Area is well positioned to benefit from demand for retail and services from a variety of market segments, including area residents, students, area employees, visitors staying in area lodging facilities, and commuters. Retail could include two clusters of mixed-use development near each of the EmX stations at Agate and Walnut. Generally, the Walnut Station cluster (able to support between 75,000 and 200,000 square feet of retail) would be oriented toward residents of the Fairmount neighborhood, and the Agate Station cluster (able to support between 50,000 to 100,000 square feet of retail) would be oriented toward the university, research park employees, and visitors staying at area lodging.

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Over time, some of the commercial sites along Franklin could be redeveloped with residential or mixed use residential with retail. Due to the high amount of traffic along the corridor, there is also a potential for some large format stores that serve the greater community (e.g., electronics, general merchandise or home furnishings), however this would require consolidation of parcels for development.

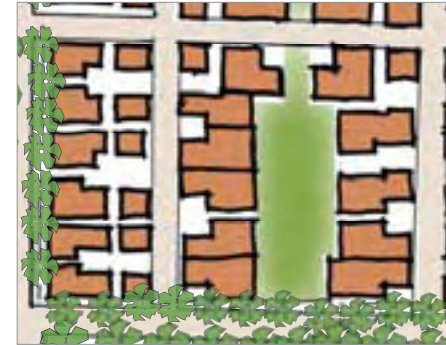
Intensity of development

Nomenclature The consultants and city staff have been using a terminology called “intensity,” rather than speaking only of “density,” to help determine patterns of land use, development, and approximate building heights. This led to some confusion in Phase I of the project as participants attempted to equate “intensity” with “density” as defined by Eugene’s current zoning code. The following summarizes and provides an overview of “development intensities” as used in Phase I discussions.

Low-medium intensity residential

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- 1-3 Stories
- Detached and attached housing: duplexes, cottage clusters, ownership and rental housing
- 12-24 dwelling units/acre (While the term “low” intensity is used for this category, residential densities resulting from this type would extend across a range of medium- and high-density development types.)



LOW TO MEDIUM INTENSITY DEVELOPMENT

- 1** Semi-detached houses with shared green and parking; condominium-type ownership
- 2** Same as above
- 3** Cottage housing with shared green and parking; small lots for ownership
- 4** Same as above

Medium intensity residential/mixed-use

- 1-4 Stories
- Attached housing: rowhouses, flats, live/work, ownership and rental housing
- Retail allowed at ground floor.
- 24-40 dwelling units/acre (The term “medium intensity” falls within the development density range defined as “high density” within the Eugene code.)



LOW TO MEDIUM INTENSITY DEVELOPMENT

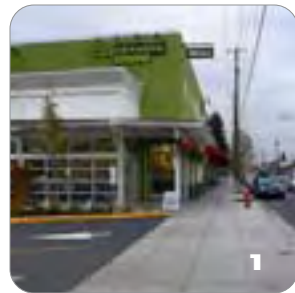
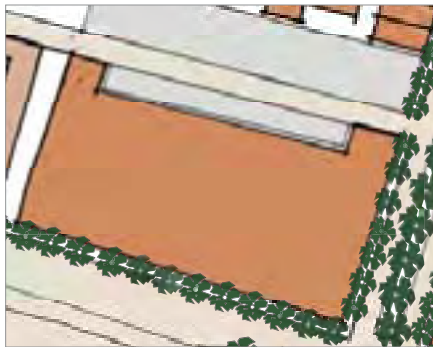
- 1** Rowhouses with alley parking
- 2** Live/work rowhouses with alley parking

LOW TO MEDIUM INTENSITY DEVELOPMENT continued

- 3** Rental flats (apartments)
- 4** Live/work rowhouses with alley parking



Medium to high intensity auto-oriented retail



MEDIUM TO HIGH INTENSITY DEVELOPMENT

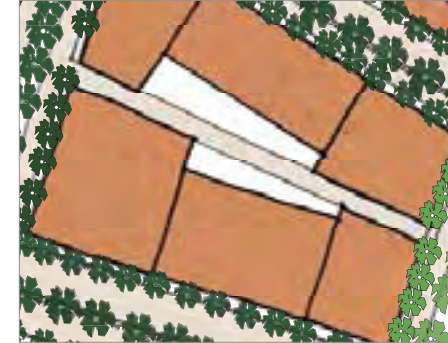
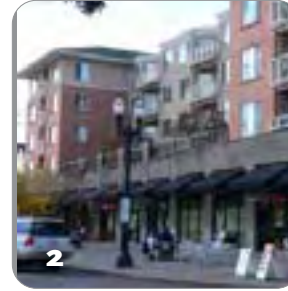
- 1** Reconfigured auto oriented retail: grocery store (30,000 sf) with parking at side
- 2** Reconfigured auto oriented retail: restaurant with mid-block parking behind

- 1-5 Stories
- Parking to the side or rear of building
- Storefront design and entrances oriented toward important streets

Medium to high intensity residential/mixed-use

22]

- 3-5 Stories
- Retail allowed at the ground floor
- 40-60 dwelling units/acre (The term “medium –to high intensity residential” falls within the development density range defined as “high density” within the Eugene code.)



MEDIUM TO HIGH INTENSITY DEVELOPMENT

- 1** Rental flats (apartments) with retail at street level
- 2** Ownership flats (condominiums) with retail at street level

High intensity residential/mixed-use

- 5-7 Stories
- Retail allowed at the ground floor; required within station areas
- 60-120 dwelling units/acre (The term “high intensity” falls at the upper end of the development density range defined as “high density” within the Eugene code.)



MEDIUM TO HIGH INTENSITY DEVELOPMENT



- 1** Ownership flats (condominiums) with retail at street level
- 2** Rental flats (apartments) with retail at street level
- 3** Garden courtyard
- 4** Ownership flats (condominiums) with retail at street level

Development overview

Transit Centers

Development focused at the transit centers could be high intensity residential and mixed use with retail frontage around the EmX stations. The retail frontage would be the most significant element here; the new retail space that the market report envisions should be focused around the transit stations—at all four corners of Walnut Station and the two northern corners at Agate Station. It can be inferred from survey data that there is general public support, or at least little opposition, to focusing development around transit centers, as evidenced from the rejection of the “Base Case” scenario. However, it should be noted that the Fairmount Neighborhood Association “does not support ‘higher intensity residential/mixed-use’ allowed at 5-7 stories...around the Walnut Station as proposed” because it does not support their “goal of a step down land use approach.” (Excerpt from FNA letter to Planning Commission dated 3/14/06.)

[23

North of Franklin Boulevard

Development north of Franklin Boulevard could be medium to high intensity residential/mixed-use with some areas of high intensity residential/mixed use adjacent to station areas. As proposed by staff, reconfigured auto-oriented mixed-use would be limited to areas along Franklin away from the station areas. The Fairmount Neighborhood Association supports “a mix of uses that includes a ‘stepped-down’ approach with a maximum of 5 stories of allowed auto-oriented mixed uses along Franklin Boulevard and as development approaches ...the Millrace, the buildings step down in type of use, density and height ...to address compatibility concerns with the existing land uses ...and with the transition to the Millrace riparian edge to the north.” (Excerpt from FNA letter to Planning Commission dated 3/14/06.)

South of Franklin Boulevard

Development south of Franklin Boulevard is proposed to be medium to high-intensity residential/mixed-use with reconfigured auto-oriented mixed-use along Franklin and away from the station areas. Intensity would “step down” to medium intensity residential development towards the Fairmount neighborhood. The exact level of intensity will be further explored in Phase II of the project.

Design considerations

24] *The mixed use development concept is a land use strategy used locally to encourage the development of blended neighborhoods that are developed around a commercial core and are located on a transit route. Mixed use development emphasizes higher densities, mixed land uses, human-scaled design, transportation options, neighborhood cohesiveness and convenience, and livability. Mixed use centers concentrate population and jobs in locations with good transit service and promote a mix of diverse and compatible activities. The strategy encourages development of walkable neighborhoods and design of pedestrian-friendly public and private improvements. The essential characteristics of mixed use developments are:*

- *Design elements that support pedestrian-friendly environments and encourage transit use, walking, and bicycling, that promote a sense of community and that improve livability;*
- *A transit stop which is within walking distance (generally 1/4 mile) of anywhere in the development;*
- *Mixed land uses that offer a variety of services, activities and destinations within easy, comfortable walking and biking distance of most homes;*
- *Public spaces such as parks, public and private open space, and public facilities that can be reached without driving; and*
- *A mix of housing types and residential densities that achieve an overall net density of at least 12 dwelling units per net acre.*

Phase II approach

Phase II will analyze and evaluate the effect of building mass and development intensities, and based on these evaluations, develop a regulatory framework for review in Phase II.

Appendix

Recommended Reading

Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities. Institute of Transportation Engineers, 2006.

Dittmar, Hank and Gloria Ohland, eds. *The New Transit Town: Best Practices in Transit-oriented Development.* Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2004.

Jacobs, Allan B., et al. *The Boulevard Book.* Cambridge, MA; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001.

Main Street... when a highway runs through it: A Handbook for Oregon Communities. Nov. 1999.

Pulleyblank, Sarah, James Corless, et al. *Civilizing Downtown Highways: Putting New Urbanism to Work on California's Highways.* Congress for the New Urbanism, 2002.

Walnut Station Mixed Use Development Goals

The following goals were used to develop the Alternatives in Phase I, and will be used to evaluate design elements in Phase II. These goals were developed during Phase I with input from the Steering Committee, property and business owners, and members of the public.

- Meet existing City of Eugene design principles for Mixed-use development planning and design, including:
 - Illustrate a Mixed-use strategy of blended neighborhoods organized around a commercial core.
 - Illustrate design elements that support pedestrian-friendly environments and encourage transit use;
 - Provide a transit stop within walking distance of the entire development;
 - Provide a pedestrian-oriented mix of uses organized around the bus rapid transit station areas;
 - Provide a mix of land uses that offer a variety of services, activities, and destinations;
 - Provide a range of public spaces, such as parks, public and private open space, and public facilities that can be reached without driving; and
 - Provide a mix of housing types and residential densities.
- Recognize the place of the Walnut Station neighborhood in the larger context of the City of Eugene. An example of a design option includes:
 - Maximize connections beyond the study area boundaries, through improved and extended streets.
- Make the Walnut Station area a gateway to the City and the University.
- Connect the neighborhood to the Willamette River. Examples of design options include:
 - Improve existing connections at points west and east of the study area, or
 - Illustrate new intermediate sub-grade crossings (similar to the Agate Street underpass).
- Create a land use, street and block pattern that fosters a blend of jobs, housing, institutional and recreational uses that are mutually supportive.

- Identify catalyst sites with the greatest development/ redevelopment potential.
- Help existing and future businesses and employment centers thrive and contribute to new mixed-use development.
- Minimize the effect of Franklin Boulevard as a barrier.
- Make it easier to cross Franklin Boulevard.
- Maintain Franklin's traffic function as a primary street serving through traffic.
- Make the Millrace a feature of the neighborhood. Illustrate alternative designs that restore the Millrace as a neighborhood and City amenity. Examples of design options include:
 - Side channel habitat for fish
 - recreational amenity (canoe, kayak, and pedestrians and bicycles)
 - A focus for neighborhood development
- Create a network of pedestrian and bicycle paths through the area.

Key Findings from the Market Overview for Walnut Station and Implications for Future Development

Following is a summary of findings regarding the market for various land uses in the Walnut Station area, with a focus on implications for redevelopment in the Study Area. The findings are based on analysis of real estate market and demographic data, as well as interviews with local experts.

MARKET FINDINGS

Excellent Location with Good Market Potential

From a market perspective, the Walnut Station Study Area benefits from its proximity to the University and the Fairmount neighborhood, as well as the fact that it serves as one of the main gateways to Eugene. Franklin Boulevard carries a considerable amount of drive-by traffic, and the new BRT line will also facilitate connections between the Walnut Station area and other parts of the city. The Fairmount neighborhood is considered a desirable residential area. A significant cluster of lodging uses is located along Franklin Boulevard, and there is potential for a new arena that will draw additional visitors to the area.

Demand for Higher-Density Housing

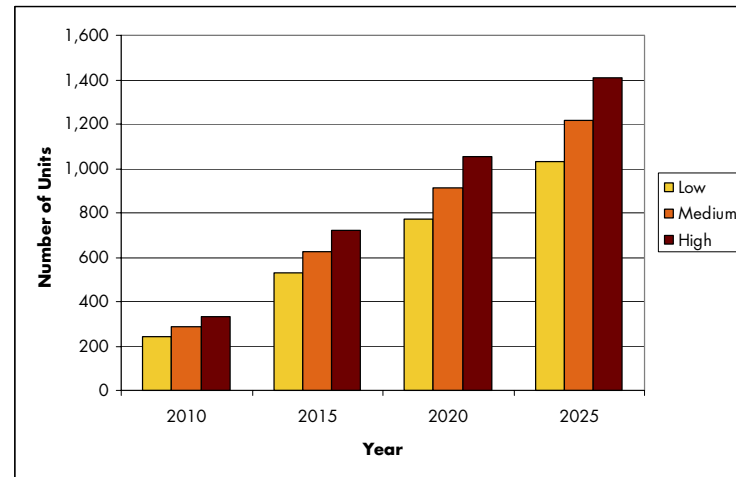
Apartment vacancy levels are currently very low and rents are rising. According to the Fall 2005 Duncan and Brown Apartment Report, the vacancy rate for the metropolitan area is approximately 1.2 percent. Vacancy rates are especially low in the campus market, driven in part by high University enrollment.

After a period of little new apartment development beginning in the late 1990's, renewed interest in multifamily construction is leading to some infill development. Developers are showing increased interest in higher density for-sale housing development in Eugene, including rowhouses and condominium projects. This is being driven in part by rising single-family house prices, which grown substantially during the past 2 years. While the market for condominiums currently remains untested, several "pioneering" projects are underway in various parts of the City, including the Fairmount Rowhouses project at the edge of the Study Area.

The demographics of the Walnut Station area supports development of apartments and condos, with higher concentrations of non-family households and renters. Demand for units will come from students, faculty, or other area residents who wish to live near the Fairmount neighborhood or the University. The area will also offer good access to the BRT stations at Walnut and Franklin and Agate and Franklin. Demand for housing will increase as the study area redevelops, when the neighborhood is able to offer more shops and services within walking distance, and once the BRT transit connection is established.

Strategic Economics estimated a range of potential demand for multifamily housing units (including apartments, condominiums and rowhouses) in the Walnut Station area from 2005 to 2025 (Figure 1). As shown, the estimated potential demand for new apartments, condominiums and rowhouses ranges from about 1,000 to 1,400 units by 2025.

Figure 1
Potential Demand for New Multifamily Housing Units
Walnut Station Study Area, 2005 - 2025



Source: Strategic Economics

Underserved Retail Markets

Retail rents and commercial land prices in Eugene have increased during the past few years, driven in part by the limited amount of vacant commercial land available for development. Many of the commercial lots on Franklin Boulevard are underutilized or include buildings that are nearing the end of their life cycle and/or offer outdated retail formats. These buildings offer excellent opportunities for redevelopment.

The Study Area is well positioned to benefit demand for retail and services from a variety of market segments, including:

- **Residents of the study area and the Fairmount neighborhood.** Area residents currently help to support area businesses such as the Market of Choice, the Hiron, restaurants and other businesses in the study area. New pedestrian-oriented retail and stores in a mixed-use environment will expand neighborhood-serving retail opportunities, including additional services, specialty stores, convenience stores and restaurants.
- **Students attending the University.** There is potential for stores located near the University that cater to the student market, including restaurants and cafes, a bookstore and clothing stores.
- **Area employees, including University faculty and staff, as well as workers at the research park.** These employees will primarily help to support restaurants and cafes in the Study Area, especially those within easy walking distance of the University.
- **Visitors staying in area lodging facilities or elsewhere and visiting the University.** This market segment will primarily patronize area restaurants and gift stores. The area will receive additional visitor traffic if the new University arena is built.

- **People traveling through the area on the way in or out of Eugene.** Much of this traffic consists of commuters who travel west on Franklin Boulevard in the morning, and east in the evening. Given this pattern, certain stores will be advantaged by locating on either the north or south side of Franklin Boulevard, particularly if the freeway interchange brings increased traffic into the area. Businesses that sell coffee, breakfast foods and gasoline will prefer to locate on the north side of the street, and grocery stores, convenience stores, and possibly some restaurants and bars will prefer to locate on the south side of the street (based on the direction of traffic).

Retail could include two clusters of mixed-use development near each of the BRT stations at Agate and Walnut. Generally, the Walnut Station cluster would be oriented toward residents of the Fairmount neighborhood, and the Agate Station cluster would be oriented toward the university, research park employees, and visitors staying at area lodging.

The potential size of these retail clusters would be determined in part by whether the I-5 interchange is developed, as shown in **Table 1**. The Walnut Station cluster would build on the presence of existing businesses, including the Market of Choice and the Hirons, which might continue to operate in their current buildings, or be relocated to new buildings in the same area. In all, this cluster could include anywhere from about 75,000 to about 125,000 square feet of retail, restaurants and services that would primarily target the Fairmount neighborhood, but also benefit from proximity to the University and traffic passing by on Franklin Boulevard. If the freeway interchange were to be developed, the area could support additional retail that includes some larger-floorplate stores such as a Barnes and Noble or Bed and Bath.

Table 1
Potential Size of Retail Clusters Centered at Station Areas¹
(in Square Feet)

	Agate Station	Walnut Station
No Interchange	50,000 to 75,000	75,000 to 125,000
Interchange	50,000 to 100,000	100,000 to 200,000

¹Numbers shown are rough estimates based on typical sizes of retail clusters.

Source: Strategic Economics

The Agate Station area also has potential for a mixed-use development that includes retail and other businesses that serve students, area employees and visitors. The stores are more likely to be successful if owned or master-leased to allow for a single property manager. It would also benefit the retail to be brought on line around the same time (rather than phased over time). The fact that the University is a major property owner could help to facilitate this.

Over time, some of the commercial sites along Franklin could be redeveloped with residential or mixed-use residential with retail. Due to the high amount of traffic along the corridor, there is also a potential for some large format stores that serve the greater community (e.g., electronics, general merchandise or home furnishings), however this would require consolidation of parcels for development.

Limited Demand for Office

While some offices are located in the Study Area and the adjacent research park, the potential for new office development in the area is limited. In general, most office users would prefer to locate either in a

suburban office location or in the downtown. Furthermore, high office vacancy rates and relatively low rents suggest that this use is unlikely to drive redevelopment in the near future.

Possibility of Additional Lodging in the Future

The Study Area includes one of the largest clusters of lodging in the Eugene-Springfield area. The Eugene lodging market is growing, with two new hotels planned in the Gateway area and the downtown Hilton considering an 80-room expansion. One of the motel owners on Franklin Boulevard is planning to upgrade their property into a new Holiday Inn Express. Given the number of new rooms planned, it seems unlikely that another new hotel would be built in the Study Area in the near future. However, if a new I-5 interchange were to connect Franklin Boulevard to the interstate, the Study Area could be a prime location for future hotel development.

A new hotel would be more likely to be successful if it were associated with a University conference center. However, the University has no plans for a conference center at this time. Furthermore, to the extent that it is a goal to promote usage of the BRT within the Study Area, lodging is one of the least likely to promote transit ridership.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE STUDY AREA

The analysis points to several conclusions about the potential for redevelopment in the study area:

- The combination of rising land values and higher commercial rents is increasing the potential for redevelopment in the Study Area. Many existing businesses along Franklin Boulevard have low improvement-to-land value ratios and include old buildings or outdated retail formats, indicating that they are likely to be redeveloped.
- The planned new BRT stations on Franklin Boulevard at Walnut and Agate streets could serve as ideal locations for mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly uses including retail and services. Retail and services located in the Walnut Station area could be oriented toward the local neighborhood, while the uses at Agate Station could target students, area employees and visitors. Depending on the success of these areas and whether the freeway interchange is built, additional new retail might locate along Franklin Boulevard on the ground floor of mixed-use buildings. There is also demand for existing or new stores that cater (either exclusively or in part) to people traveling through the area by auto.
- The most obvious sites for redevelopment are the Romania and ODOT sites. The Romania site is a good site for mixed-use development with housing over retail. This would build off of the retail area that includes the Market of Choice between Orchard and Walnut. Retail development could occur along a street that is perpendicular to Franklin. The Market of Choice and the Hirons (as well as other businesses) could either remain in their current location or move to a new building. The availability of land for development could allow these existing businesses to stay in their current location until their new space is developed. The ODOT site offers good potential for residential development, and could function as an extension of the Fairmount neighborhood, with development of condominiums or apartments.
- A new arena is unlikely to act as a significant catalyst for new development, however it could help to support a few restaurants and some nightlife. This could be part of a cluster of retail and restaurants located near the Agate Station and oriented toward the University and hotel guests.
- Redevelopment of the area north of Franklin, which includes many small lots with fragmented ownership, will be facilitated by fact that it is located in an Urban Renewal District.