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Date: July 19, 2006

From: Rob Zako, Transportation Advocate

To: Oregon Transportation Commission

Cc: Eugene Mayor & City Council
Lane County Board of Commissioners
Lane Transit District Board of Directors
Metropolitan Policy Committee
Land Conservation and Development Commission

Re: Now what after the end of the West Eugene Parkway?

Dear Commissioners,

1000 Friends of Oregon *commends* the Oregon Department of Transportation for deciding to drop efforts to build the West Eugene Parkway.

As you know, the WEP has divided the greater Eugene community for decades. We hope ODOT's decision will provide the community an *opportunity* to move beyond past divisions and to develop an acceptable solution to traffic and other problems in west Eugene.

But there is little cause for *celebration*. The WEP project, which ODOT started in 1982 and which has cost close to \$16 million, represents a major failure and waste of taxpayer money.

Some will look to assign *blame* for this failure (and some already are). We urge you to join us in calling on the community to avoid finger pointing, which would serve only to undermine the present opportunity. Moreover, if a mudslinging contest were to ensue, many would find themselves with dirt on their hands, as there is plenty of blame to go around.

On the other hand, it is important for all involved to accept *responsibility* for the failure of the WEP and to learn from the mistakes of past in order to do better in the future. In particular, we believe that on some level ODOT understood years ago that the WEP was unlikely to get built and yet it continued to expend public resources on the project. ODOT should examine itself in the mirror and ask how it is that voices of concern from inside and outside were not heeded earlier. For example, in June 2001 at the West Eugene Transportation Charrette organized by ODOT, the 30 stakeholders involved concluded that ODOT should not build the WEP—the same decision ODOT has reached again, albeit five years and \$4.5 million later.

In the final analysis, the WEP was a proposed solution to the wrong problem, or at least to a problem that had changed and wasn't fully understood. In the early 1990s, Eugene and other jurisdictions began to recognize the value of wetlands and to take steps to preserve these. As you can see from the first of the two attached maps, there are now a many acres of wetlands in public ownership. Alas, to the best of our knowledge Eugene and its partners still have not adjusted their plans adequately in response. As you can see from the second of the two attached maps, there are wetlands in public ownership still zoned for industrial uses. Despite all the planning for the WEP, Eugene and its partners still have not fully planned for where industrial, commercial

and residential development is desired if not in the wetlands. (This failure to plan for growth is understandable, as there is more money available, for example, to update the Eugene-Springfield regional transportation plan than to update the Eugene-Springfield comprehensive plan.) Until the community knows where and how it wants to grow, it is premature for ODOT to partner with the community to build transportation facilities to support that growth. In brief, to paraphrase Boss Paul in the movie *Cool Hand Luke*, what we have here is... ***failure to integrate land use and transportation planning***.

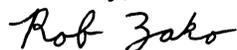
Looking forward, we hope the jurisdictions in the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area will collaborate to develop a ***vision*** for where and how the region wants to grow: in west Eugene and beyond in Veneta along Highway 126? toward Junction City along Highway 99? in the Chad Drive and Gateway areas along Belt Line Road? in downtown Eugene and downtown Springfield along Highway 99? around Land Community College near the Interstate-5/30th Avenue interchange? The decision on where and how to grow should drive the decision on where and how to expand the transportation system. One planned land uses are more clear, it makes sense to look at the transportation system to support those uses.

Finally, we recall the words of former Governor John Kitzhaber to the OTC in August 1995 about ODOT's responsibility for ***growth management***:

The cooperative development of a growth management vision—and particularly, the achievement of that vision—is the responsibility of every single state agency. It is not the responsibility of [the Land Conservation and Development Commission] alone. ODOT needs to become a leader in developing strategies to accomplish growth management and transportation goals, and a strong promoter of a larger growth management vision for the state. So, I guess what I am saying, in short, is that I think that ODOT needs to become a growth management agency, not just a transportation agency.

As the “Big Look” Task Force and others review Oregon’s land use planning system, it is likely that public investment will become a more important public policy tool for managing where and how communities grow, even as Measure 37 makes regulation a less important tool. Insofar as ODOT makes substantial public investments in the transportation system, its role in growth management should likewise be substantial.

Sincerely,



Rob Zako

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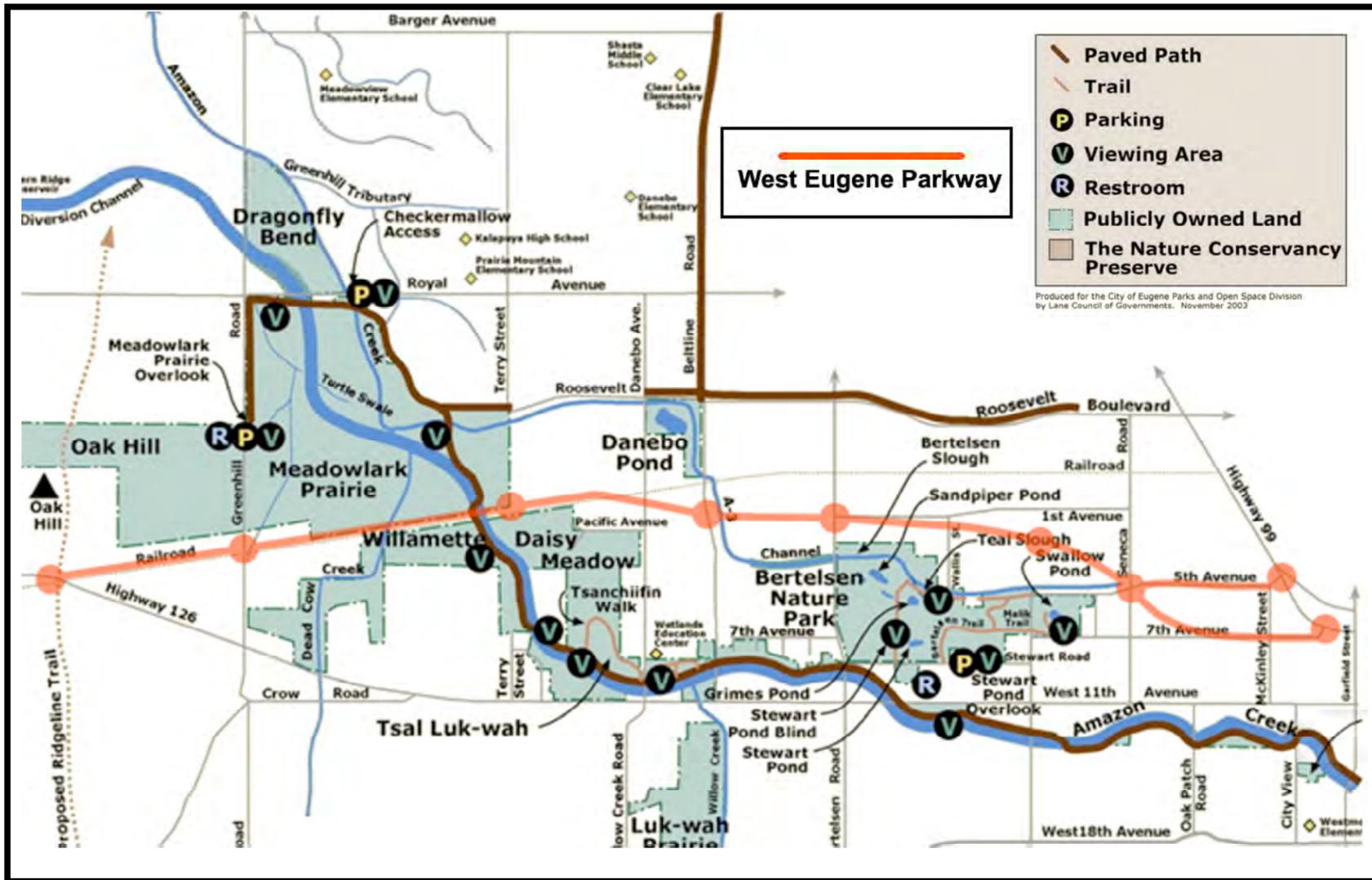
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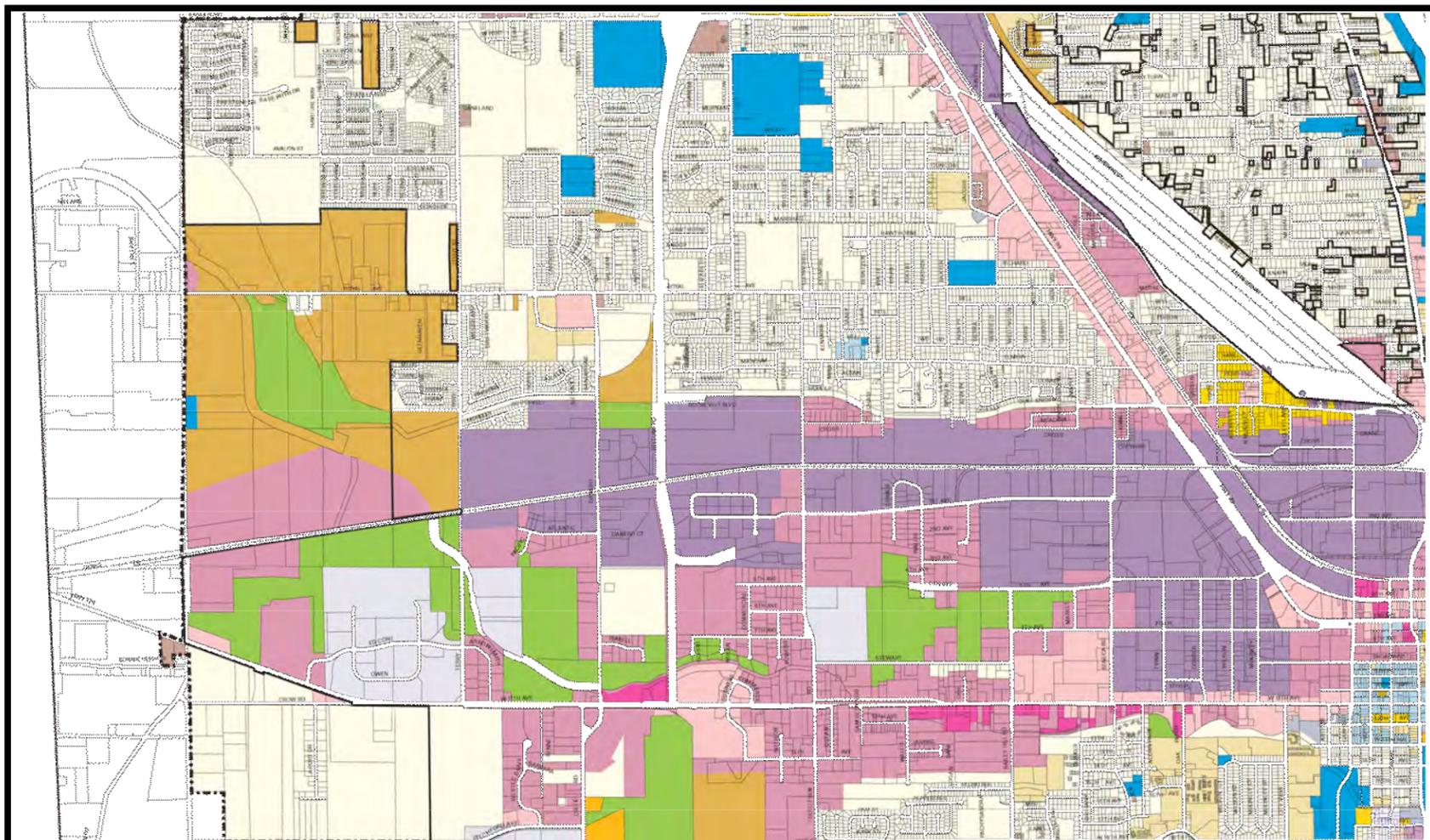
Attachments:

- Combined map of the West Eugene Parkway and the West Eugene Wetlands
- Eugene zoning map

West Eugene Parkway, West Eugene Wetlands, and Eugene Zoning



West Eugene Parkway (Source: Oregon Department of Transportation, October 2005)
 West Eugene Wetlands (Source: City of Eugene, November 2003)



Eugene Zoning

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| AG Agricultural | PL Public Land | R-1 Low-Density Residential | PRO Park, Recreation & Open Space
NOT yet applied to any property |
| C-1 Neighborhood Commercial | I-1 Campus Industrial | R-1.5 Rowhouse | NR Natural Resource |
| C-2 Community Commercial | I-2 Light-Medium Industrial | R-2 Medium-Density Residential | S Special Area |
| C-3 Major Commercial | I-3 Heavy Industrial | R-3 Limited High-Density Residential | S-H Historic |
| C-4 Commercial/Industrial | | R-4 High-Density Residential | |
| GO General Office | | | |

Eugene Zoning (Source: City of Eugene, June 2006)