

TO: EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

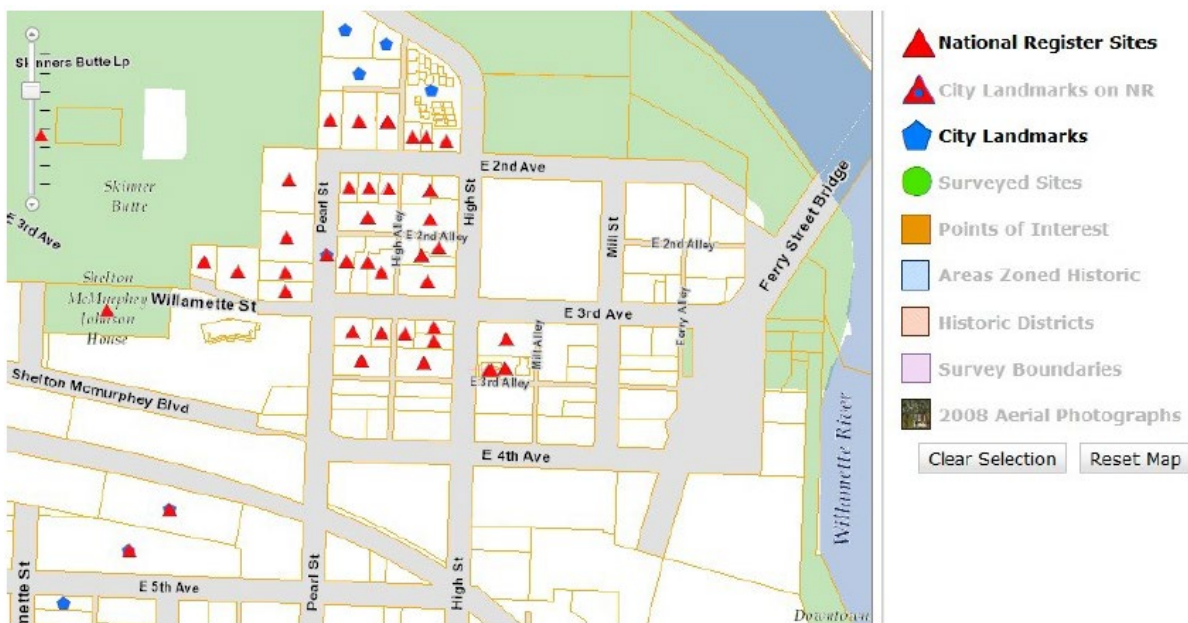
FROM: EUGENE HISTORIC REVIEW BOARD

SUBJECT: DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT PLAN (CA 19-01), AREA WEST OF COBURG ROAD/FERRY STREET BRIDGE

DATE: June 24, 2019

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL:

The Historic Review Board (HRB) has reviewed the application and the materials provided by Planning staff regarding possible designs and the proposed rezoning for the area around 4th Avenue, west of the Ferry Street Bridge. While we are very supportive of the objectives for reconnecting downtown Eugene to the Willamette River and the redevelopment of the EWEB/cannery site, the HRB would like to submit recommendations about the rezoning and design standards - specifically for the area west of the Ferry Street Bridge and north of 4th Avenue.



The area mentioned above contains several historic structures listed as City Landmarks and on the National Register of Historic Places or, in some cases, both. This area also sits on the east edge of the East Skinner Butte Landmark Area and just north of the 5th Avenue Market district, which are integral to the history of Eugene and Lane County. As a board, we believe it is our responsibility to advocate for maintaining the historic character that the area currently possesses. To be more specific, this area to the west of the Ferry Street Bridge is much different than the main body of the Downtown Riverfront project. It is not an empty site. Instead, it is part of an urban context and part of a mixed-use neighborhood that includes many residences. It is also part of the fabric of historic structures in and near downtown Eugene. From a planning and design point of view it should be treated differently than the development of the site that is east of the Ferry Street Bridge. The physical design criteria described so far in the rezoning of the 4 parcels north of 4th Ave has mostly been limited to setbacks and building height. We believe more can and should be done in order to better address the issues associated with integrating new development into the existing neighborhood and its historic context.

For example, we hope that the designs would ensure street level activities and building entryways that orient themselves to the sidewalks, streets, and other public spaces. We also hope that buildings that front major public assets would have active uses on the ground floor. Furthermore, we hope that building edges might have some variety and transition spaces not unlike the porches of many of the existing structures in the neighborhood.

We realize that our comments come late in this process, but we know that the City Manager and Planning staff will continue to work with the developer during the design of the proposed buildings. We respectfully request that the Council ask the City Manager and Planning staff to further examine these issues of integration and encourage a higher level of detailed design work oriented toward the existing neighborhood, specifically the historic context of that neighborhood.

As a City Commission interested in and responsible for preservation and enhancement of historic City resources, we make ourselves available to review or assist in any relevant way during this process. Please ask the City Manager or Planning staff to call on us. We would love to help make this portion of the Riverfront Project even better.

Respectfully submitted by the Eugene Historic Review Board