



Eugene City Council

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EUGENE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

June 15, 2026

5:30 p.m. CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

City Council meetings will continue to be held in hybrid format using in person and virtual meeting technology. Information about online or other options for access and participation will be available at <https://www.eugene-or.gov/3360/Webcasts-and-Meeting-Materials>

**Meeting of June 15, 2026;
Her Honor Mayor Kaarin Knudson Presiding**

Councilors

Lyndsie Leech, President
Jennifer Yeh
Mike Clark
Randy Groves

Eliza Kashinsky, Vice President
Alan Zelenka
Greg Evans
Matt Keating

5:30 p.m. CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

- 1. PUBLIC HEARING: Granting an Exemption from the Application of Section 6.200 of the Eugene Code, 1971, and Providing for a Sunset Date**
- 2. PUBLIC HEARING: An Ordinance Concerning Polystyrene and Single-Use Bag Regulations; Amending Sections 6.850, 6.855, 6.874 and 6.876 of the Eugene Code, 1971; Deleting Section 6.878 of the Eugene Code, 1971; and Providing an Effective Date**
- 3. PUBLIC HEARING: An Ordinance Concerning Housing Production Incentives and Adding Sections 2.950, 2.951 and 2.952 to the Eugene Code, 1971**

The Eugene City Council welcomes your interest in these agenda items. This meeting location is wheelchair-accessible. For the hearing impaired, an interpreter can be provided with 48 hours' notice prior to the meeting. Spanish-language interpretation will also be provided with 48 hours' notice. To arrange for these services, contact the receptionist at 541-682-5010. City Council meetings are telecast live on Metro Television, Comcast channel 21, and rebroadcast later in the week.

El consejo de la Ciudad de Eugene agradece su interés en estos asuntos de la agenda. El lugar de la reunión tiene acceso para sillas de ruedas. Se puede proveer a un intérprete para las personas con discapacidad auditiva si avisa con 48 horas de anticipación. También se puede proveer interpretación para español si avisa con 48 horas de anticipación. Para reservar estos servicios llame al 541-682-5010. Las reuniones del consejo de la ciudad se transmiten en vivo por Metro Television, Canal 21 de Comcast y son retransmitidas durante la semana.

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EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Public Hearing: Granting an Exemption from the Application of Section 6.200 of the Eugene Code, 1971, and Providing for a Sunset Date

Meeting Date: June 15, 2026
Department: Public Works
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: 1
Staff Contact: Paul Gordon
Phone: 541-510-8420

ISSUE STATEMENT

The purpose of this public hearing is to provide an opportunity for public input regarding a proposed ordinance to provide a five-year exception to the application of Eugene Code 6.200 (open burning) for prescribed burning by the Rivers to Ridges Partnership, including the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, The Nature Conservancy, and City of Eugene Public Works/Parks & Open Space for ecological enhancement, maintenance of native landscapes, and hazardous fuels reduction.

BACKGROUND

The application of fire in a controlled manner is a vital natural process for maintaining prairie and oak habitats, which have evolved with frequent, low-intensity burns. Since 1986, prescribed fires have been safely conducted in west Eugene under a City Council exemption to the open burning prohibition. The proposed ordinance would extend this exemption for an additional five years to allow this work to continue.

During this period, agencies managing protected natural areas in west Eugene plan to conduct ecological burns on up to a maximum of 300 acres within the city limits each year.

Experimental burns conducted in 1986, 1987, and 1991 in the Willow Creek natural area within habitat containing the Threatened and Endangered plant and animal species have resulted in expansion of populations in the burned areas. Controlled burns in 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2023, 2024, and 2025 on several sites have also been beneficial for enhancing and maintaining wetland and associated upland habitats.

Current research indicates that burning every three to five years best supports ecological goals in fire-adapted plant communities. As a result, many sites will be burned only once during the upcoming five-year period. Annual decisions about which areas to burn are based on site assessments, with priority given to high-quality native prairie remnants and restored sites under active protection.

In addition to the ecological benefits provided to our fire-adapted natural areas, prescribed burning also reduces excess fuels, lowering the risk of more intense and uncontrolled wildfires.

Council action on the proposed ordinance to provide a five-year exception to the application of Eugene Code 6.200 (open burning) for prescribed burning by the Rivers to Ridges Partnership, including the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, The Nature Conservancy, and City of Eugene Public Works/Parks & Open Space for ecological enhancement, maintenance of native landscapes, and hazardous fuels reduction is scheduled to occur June 22, 2026.

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RELATED CITY POLICIES

Prescribed burning has been previously supported by Council with the adoption or endorsement of several planning documents.

The West Eugene Wetlands Plan (the Plan), adopted by the City Council on May 20, 1992 and amended numerous times since, sets forth policies for preserving significant wetlands in West Eugene, allowing development of lower quality wetlands, and establishing a system for mitigation of filled wetlands. The Plan also includes goals and policies for protecting and expanding populations and habitats of rare, threatened, or endangered plants, including Bradshaw's lomatium (*Lomatium bradshawii* – delisted in February 2021), Willamette Valley daisy (*Erigeron decumbens* var. *decumbens*), and Kincaid's lupine (*Lupinus oreganus*), and policies for protecting and managing the native Willamette Valley wet prairie plant community. In addition, the Plan contains policies for managing the preserved wetlands in public ownership.

The Ridgeline Area Open Space Vision and Action Plan, published in February 2008, is based on the Rivers to Ridges Vision and Strategies document endorsed by City Council on March 12, 2003. This document establishes management principles for the safety of recreational users and the reduction of potential hazards inherent to the rural-urban interface found in Eugene's Ridgeline Area such as wildfire. The 2023 Rivers to Ridges Vision Refresh report also supports the use of ecological and cultural fire as a landscape management tool for oak and prairie habitats. In addition, the Ridgeline Area Open Space Vision and Action Plan recommends the implementation of prescribed fire (where feasible) to prevent woody vegetation from establishing in prairies and savannas and management of vegetation to help remove hazardous fuels to reduce the risk of wildfire spreading to adjacent properties.

Prescribed ecological burning is supported in the [City of Eugene Strategic Plan](#) by sustaining the Council Goal of Safe Community for Community Wellbeing and promotes the Council Outcome of "Improved resilience for natural and human caused disasters" when this action premitigates the risk of uncontrolled wildfires through the reduction of hazardous fuels. Prescribed burning also supports the Council Goal of Sustainable and Accountable Development by maintaining our "enhanced natural landscape and green infrastructure systems."

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Exceptions to the open burning ban for the management of wetlands and associated habitats in the West Eugene Wetlands Plan area have been previously granted by the City Council by:

- [August 13, 1986 - Ordinance No. 19403 enacted](#)
- [July 27, 1987 - Ordinance No. 19493 enacted](#)
- [September 11, 1989 - Ordinance No. 19634 enacted](#)
- [September 12, 1990 - Ordinance No. 19715 enacted](#)
- [September 12, 1994 - Ordinance No. 19983 enacted](#)
- [May 22, 1995 - Ordinance No. 20014 enacted](#)
- [June 25, 2001 - Ordinance No. 20231 enacted](#)
- [June 26, 2006 - Ordinance No. 20370 enacted](#)

June 13, 2011 Meeting

Councilor Taylor, seconded by Councilor Brown, moved to adopt Council Bill 5049, an ordinance granting an exception to the application of the Eugene Code, 1971, Section 6.200, for prescribed wetland management burning.

Passed 8:0

June 13, 2016 Meeting

Councilor Evans, seconded by Councilor Zelenka, moved to adopt Council Bill 5154, to provide a five-year exception to the application of Eugene Code 6.200 to provide for prescribed burning by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the Nature Conservancy, and the City of Eugene for wetland vegetation protection, management, and restoration.

Passed 6:2 (Councilors Taylor and Clark opposed)

May 24, 2021 Meeting

Councilor Yeh, seconded by Zelenka, moved to adopt the proposed ordinance in Attachment A, Granting an Exemption from the Application of Section 6.200 of the Eugene Code, 1971, and Providing a Sunset Date.

Passed 6:0

COUNCIL OPTIONS

This item is scheduled for public hearing only. Possible action is planned for the June 22, 2026 Council meeting.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

None.

SUGGESTED MOTION

None.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Proposed ordinance, including map of Areas Proposed for Prescribed Burning from 2026 through 2030.
- B. Map of Areas Burned within City Limits over the last five years (2021-2025)
- C. Eugene Code 6.200
- D. May 2011 TNC Report on Use of Controlled Ecological Burns in Willamette Valley Native Prairies.
- E. 2011 Research Paper on Comparison of Burning and Mowing Treatments in a Remnant Willamette Valley Wet Prairie, Oregon 2001-2007

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- Video produced by City of Eugene staff with more detail on the benefits and managed risks

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of controlled ecological burns, including interviews with local experts: <https://vimeo.com/529514426>

- The Eugene Parks and Open Space website has information on its ecological burning program: <https://www.eugene-or.gov/prescribedfire>
- The Rivers to Ridges website has information on the partnership program: <https://rivers2ridges.org/controlled-ecological-burn-program/>
- Use of Controlled Ecological Burns in Willamette Valley Native Prairies: <https://www.eugene-or.gov/DocumentCenter/View/61413/Alverson-Fire-Justification-White-Paper-20110504>
- Comparison of Burning and Mowing Treatments in a Remnant Willamette Valley Wet Prairie: <https://www.eugene-or.gov/DocumentCenter/View/61412/Nuckols-et-al-2011-Comparison-of-Mowing-and-Burning>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Staff Contact: Paul Gordon, Natural Systems Specialist

Phone: 541-510-8420

Staff E-Mail: PGordon@eugene-or.gov

ORDINANCE NO. _____**AN ORDINANCE GRANTING AN EXEMPTION FROM THE APPLICATION OF SECTION 6.200 OF THE EUGENE CODE, 1971 AND PROVIDING FOR A SUNSET DATE.****The City Council of the City of Eugene finds as follows:**

A. Section 6.200 of the Eugene Code, 1971 (EC) proscribes the practice of open burning within the City of Eugene with specified exceptions to this ban. This Ordinance, which makes a limited exception to EC 6.200, is a component of local measures designed to assure compliance with federal ambient air quality standards.

B. Maintenance and enhancement of air quality is critical to the health and welfare of metropolitan area residents, the area's ability to attract new businesses, and the avoidance of sanctions for noncompliance.

C. The West Eugene Wetlands Plan (the Plan), adopted by the City Council on May 20, 1992, and amended numerous times since, sets forth policies for preserving significant wetlands in West Eugene, allowing development of lower quality wetlands, and establishing a system for mitigation of filled wetlands. The Plan also includes goals and policies for protecting and expanding populations and habitats of rare, threatened, or endangered plants, including Bradshaw's lomatium (*Lomatium bradshawii* – delisted in February 2021), Willamette Valley daisy (*Erigeron decumbens* var. *decumbens*), and Kincaid's lupine (*Lupinus oreganus*), and policies for protecting and managing the native Willamette Valley wet prairie plant community. In addition, the Plan contains policies for managing the preserved wetlands in public ownership.

D. Experimental burns conducted in 1986, 1987, and 1991 in the Willow Creek natural area within habitat containing the above-mentioned plant species have resulted in expansion of populations of those plants in the areas burned. Controlled burns in 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2023, 2024 and 2025 on several sites have also been beneficial for enhancing and maintaining wetland and associated upland habitats.

E. The Ridgeline Area Open Space Vision and Action Plan, published in February 2008, is based on the Rivers to Ridges Vision and Strategies document endorsed by City Council on March 12, 2003. This document establishes management principles for the safety of recreational users and the reduction of potential hazards inherent to the rural-urban interface found in Eugene's Ridgeline Area such as wildfire. In addition, the Ridgeline Area Open Space Vision and Action Plan recommends the implementation of prescribed fire (where feasible) to prevent woody vegetation from establishing in prairies and savannas and management of vegetation to help reduce risk of wildfire spreading to adjacent properties, also known as fuels reduction.

F. Management of natural areas and preservation of fire-adapted native plant communities requires controlled open burning of vegetation for ecological purposes and to foster growth of native species in the areas noted on the map attached as Exhibit A hereto and incorporated herein by reference. Repeated burning of vegetation in these areas will enhance or maintain natural areas to sustain fire-adapted plant and animal communities.

G. A limited and special exception to the open burning ban in EC 6.200 is necessary for the purposes outlined above. This limited exception is based upon the high costs and limited practicability of alternative vegetation management and control methods, the limited nature of the expected burns, air pollution control strategies that will be employed to prevent significant degradation of local air quality, the special recognition given to regionally rare habitat types described in comprehensive planning documents, the City's direct responsibility under those plans for preservation of the natural resources in this area, and the general public benefit derived from the preservation of this habitat, the reduction of fuels that contribute to uncontrolled wildfires, and the ecosystem services provided to the community. This limited exception is unique and should not serve as precedent for future exceptions for other purposes or signal any relaxation of the City's commitment to preservation of air quality.

H. Exceptions to the open burning ban for the management of wetlands in the West Eugene Wetlands Plan area have been previously granted by the City Council by Ordinance No. 19403 enacted August 13, 1986, Ordinance No. 19493 enacted July 27, 1987, Ordinance No. 19634 enacted September 11, 1989, Ordinance No. 19715 enacted September 12, 1990, Ordinance No. 19983 enacted September 12, 1994, Ordinance No. 20014 enacted May 22, 1995, Ordinance No. 20231 enacted June 25, 2001, Ordinance No. 20370 enacted June 26, 2006, Ordinance No. 20476 enacted June 13, 2011, Ordinance No. 20565 enacted June 13, 2016 and Ordinance No. 20652, enacted May 24, 2021. An exception is again necessary to ensure the continued proper and effective management of this valuable natural resource area.

THE CITY OF EUGENE DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The findings set forth above are adopted.

Section 2. The City shall continue to use its regulation of outdoor burning as one method for maintaining and improving air quality of the metropolitan area.

Section 3. An exception to the application of EC 6.200 is hereby granted to the Bureau of Land Management, Eugene Public Works Department and The Nature Conservancy to conduct periodic "Prescribed Ecological Burns" for the purposes of scientific research, fuels reduction and to foster growth of native plant species in the "2026 – 2030 Prescribed Burn Areas," all of which are located inside the city limits of the City of Eugene, as shown on the map attached as Exhibit A hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 4. The exception granted in Section 3 is subject to the following conditions:

- a. Prior to commencement of any burn, the Bureau of Land Management, Eugene Public Works Department or The Nature Conservancy shall give notice to the Eugene Springfield Fire Marshal and the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency and shall obtain the approval of those agencies to conduct the burn in the time, place and manner proposed.
- b. No more than 300 acres of open burning shall be conducted within the City of Eugene in any one calendar year.
- c. Environmental protection and fire suppression strategies, personnel, equipment, and other parameters (including wind direction, relative humidity, vegetation type) shall be approved in advance by the Eugene Springfield Fire Marshal and Lane Regional Air Protection Agency. The Bureau of Land Management, Eugene Public Works

Department and The Nature Conservancy shall comply with all conditions imposed by those agencies.

- d. Burning shall only occur when wind and weather conditions are such that local air quality impacts are minimized and safety can be maintained.
- e. The Bureau of Land Management, Eugene Public Works Department and The Nature Conservancy assume responsibility for providing all equipment and personnel associated with the burn and for complying with all applicable federal, state and local laws.

Section 5. The exception granted by Sections 3 and 4 of this Ordinance, allowing periodic prescribed ecological burns under specific conditions, begins on the effective date of this Ordinance and ends on December 31, 2030.

Passed by the City Council this

___ day of _____, 2026

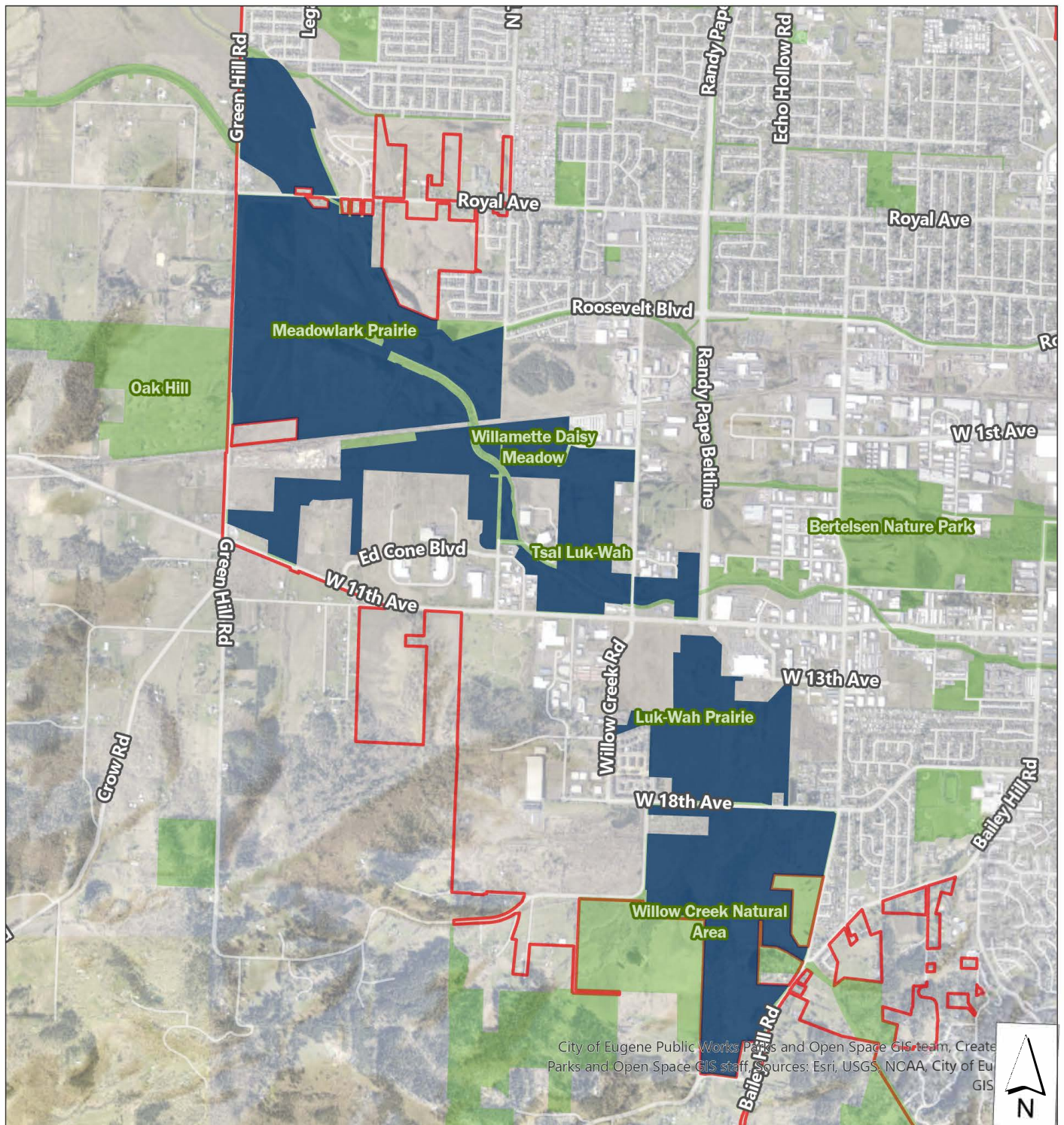
City Recorder

Approved by the Mayor this

___ day of _____, 2026

Mayor

Exhibit A: Areas Proposed for Prescribed Burning 2026-2030



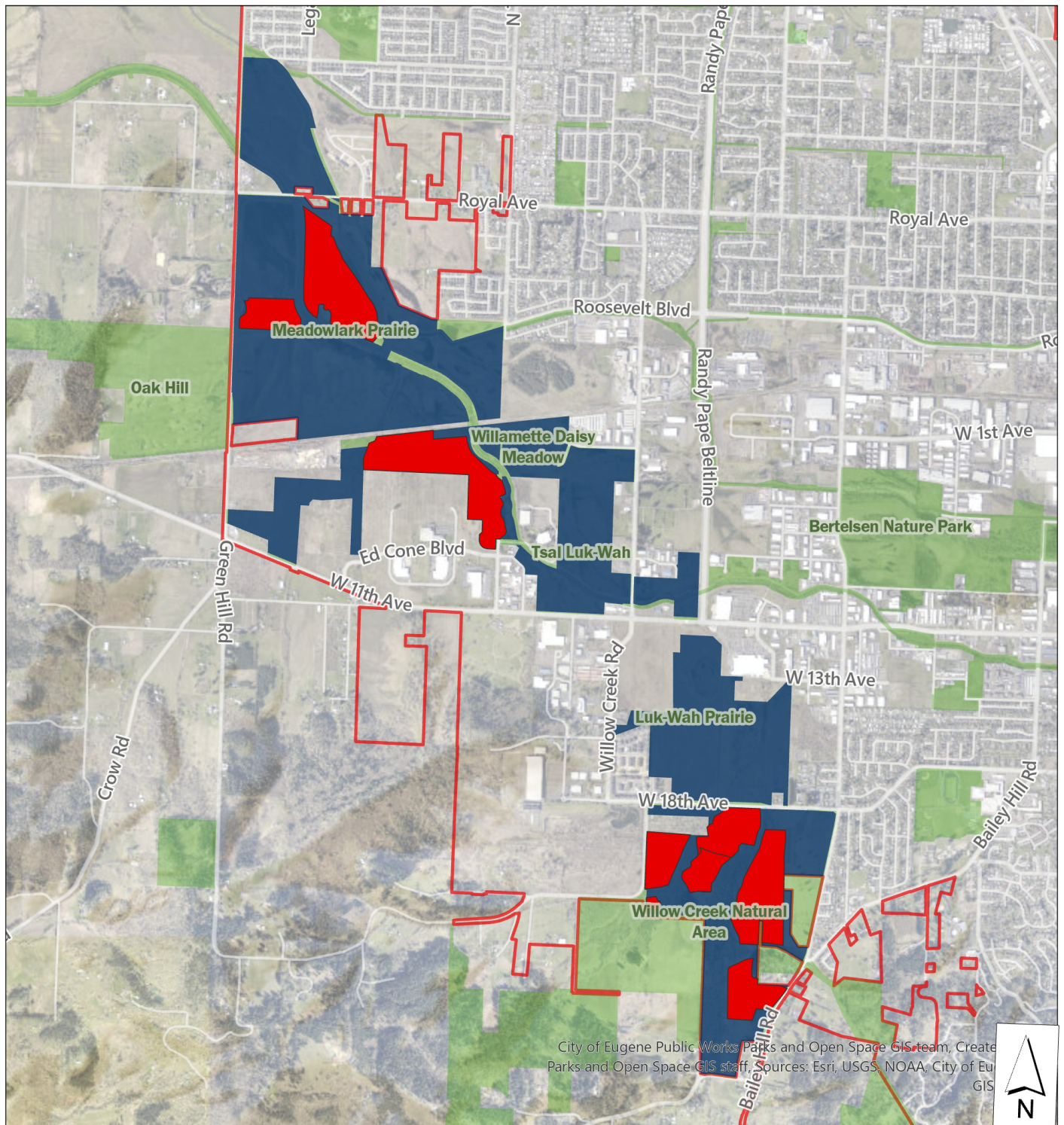
- 2026-2030 Prescribed Burn Areas
- Eugene City Limits

0 0.25 0.5
Miles
1:30,742



Map Date: 4/15/2026

Attachment B: Areas Burned 2021-2025 (145 acres)



- Areas Burned 2021-2025
- 2026-2030 Prescribed Burn Areas
- Eugene City Limits

0 0.25 0.5 Miles
1:30,742
Map Date: 4/15/2026



6.200 Outdoor Burning.

- (1) No person shall kindle, maintain or allow to be maintained, an outdoor fire, bonfire, rubbish fire or garbage fire; nor shall any person kindle, maintain or allow to be maintained a fire for the purpose of burning grass, hay or straw, tree limbs and trimmings; nor shall any person maintain or allow to be maintained a fire for land clearing operations, or commercial burning; nor shall any person kindle, maintain or allow to be maintained any other type of open burning with the following exceptions:
 - (a) Outdoor recreation fire used for cooking with the fire in a fireplace, barbecue set, or an outdoor fire used for cooking only.
 - (b) Recreation fire in an approved campsite in fire pits provided.
 - (c) Fires set and maintained for fire fighting training or training fire protection personnel.
 - (d) In cases of fire hazard that cannot in the judgment of the fire marshal be removed or disposed of in any other practical manner, a fire may be allowed by written permit only. Said permit is to be issued by the fire marshal.
- (2) No person shall accumulate or suffer or allow to accumulate material which in the judgment of the fire marshal constitute a fire hazard. Any such accumulation is a nuisance and subject to abatement as provided in this Code.

USE OF CONTROLLED ECOLOGICAL BURNS IN WILLAMETTE VALLEY NATIVE PRAIRIES

Edward R. Alverson
The Nature Conservancy
May 2011

Controlled ecological burning involves the controlled use of fire as a management tool in natural areas. Scientists have been using controlled burns throughout the Willamette Valley to meet natural area conservation objectives and habitat restoration goals. The purpose of this paper is to provide historical background and ecological information to better understand why controlled ecological burns are considered to be so essential to natural area management in the Willamette Valley.

1. Natural History and Role of Fire in the Willamette Valley

The first explorers and settlers who arrived in the Willamette Valley in the early 1800's described the Willamette Valley as supporting extensive areas of prairie and oak savanna. Land surveys conducted by the General Land Office of the US Government in the 1850's documented that about 1 million acres of the Willamette Valley were prairie lands at that time (Christy and Alverson, in press). These native prairie and oak habitats have been greatly reduced in extent due to agriculture, grazing of domestic livestock, residential and urban development, and expansion of forest vegetation into former prairies. Only small remnants of high quality native prairie and savanna are known to currently exist in the Willamette Valley at present. The exact number of remaining acres has not been documented, but the reduction from the original extent has been estimated to be close to 98%.

The exact details of how the prairies and savannas originally became established are uncertain. The prairies may have become established during a time when the climate was warmer and drier than today (Hansen 1942, Walsh et al. 2010). At present, the climate of the Willamette Valley is sufficiently cool and moist to support forest vegetation on most sites in the absence of disturbance, but prairie or savanna may have been the "climax" vegetation at an earlier time when the climate was warmer and drier than today.

However, there is some evidence that the extensive prairies and savannas were maintained, if not actually created, by fires set by Native Americans. Studies documenting pollen deposits in the Willamette Valley since the end of the ice age has shown a positive correlation between increases in grass pollen and increases in charcoal contained in the sediments at certain times in the past (Walsh et al. 2010). This suggests the possibility that prairies and savannas may have been created or maintained by human-set fires, since the incidence of lightning-caused fires in the Willamette Valley is generally low. More studies are needed to provide greater understanding of how prairies and savannas came to dominate the Willamette Valley in prehistoric times, but many researchers today believe that fire played a significant role.

The Kalapuya Indians had abundant motivation to use fire in the landscape (Boyd, 1999).

Because of the falls on the Willamette River at Oregon City, the Willamette was not a major salmon stream, and the Kalapuya did not utilize salmon to the extent that tribes along the Columbia River did. Instead, the Kalapuya hunted game such as deer and elk, and gathered food plants from the native flora. The prairies provided the majority of their food plants, including camas (*Camassia* spp.) bulbs, yampah (*Perideridia* spp.) roots, and tarweed (*Madia* spp.) seeds. Though they were not farmers in the conventional sense, they used fire to maintain habitats for valued food plants just as a farmer tills and plants a field to produce a crop. In addition, they may have found fire useful in hunting game, by attracting animals to browse on the fresh green growth that emerges soon after a fire. During the millennia that the Kalapuya people (presumably) subjected the Willamette Valley to fires, a diverse flora and fauna evolved that had appropriate adaptations to avoid, withstand, or even become dependent on fire to maintain suitable habitats. In some cases, these were animal and plant species occurring nowhere else in the world except the Willamette Valley.

Thus it was a "natural" landscape shaped (most likely) by human-set fires that the first explorers and settlers encountered in the early 1800's (Habeck 1961, Johannessen et al. 1970, Towle 1974). Morris (1934), Johannessen (1971) and Boyd (1986) document this practice through reviews of the early explorers and missionaries journals (David Douglas-1826, John Work-1834, C. Wilkes-1845, B. Hines-1881, etc.). These records report that fires were set annually in late summer and early fall, and covered extensive portions of the Willamette Valley. The main difficulty with the historic record is that it does not clearly describe how often presettlement fires returned to any given location, and that is a pertinent question that cannot necessarily be determined from the historical record (Whitlock and Knox, 2002).

Drastic population declines resulting from introduced diseases, and ultimately, the removal of the Kalapuya Indians to the Grand Ronde Reservation halted wide scale burning in the Willamette Valley in the 1830's and 1840's. Without fire, wet prairies that have been left undisturbed have in many cases gradually changed into ash forests, while the drier prairies and savannas have succeded to oak woodlands and maple and Douglas-fir forests.

2. Fire Effects

Having established that fires likely were a significant feature of the presettlement landscape, scientists began developing hypotheses regarding the specific roles that fire plays in maintaining prairie habitats. Historical analyses of vegetation change at individual sites led to the development of a number of hypotheses, including:

- 1) Fires occurring at frequent intervals maintained open prairie habitats and prevented colonization of trees and shrubs on sites where they would be able to occur if fire was excluded;
- 2) Many herbaceous prairie species possess tolerance or even adaptation to fire as a frequent influence; and
- 3) Some non-native plant species, particularly those coming from regions where fires do not occur, are negatively affected by fire.

Thus, implementing controlled ecological burns could potentially reduce cover of invading woody plants, enhance the populations of native plant species, and help reduce the abundance of some undesirable non-native plants.

Experience with controlled burning in native prairies began in the 1970's at Finley National Wildlife Refuge, and continued in the 1980's on land at Fern Ridge Reservoir owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers, and at The Nature Conservancy's Willow Creek Natural Area. Ten controlled burns, typically covering 10 to 50 acres, have been conducted in the wet prairie habitats at Willow Creek, in 1986, 1987, 1991, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, and 2009. Over the past 15 years, additional controlled burns have occurred on BLM lands in 1996, 1998, 2000, 2005, and 2009, and on City of Eugene land in 2002, 2007, and 2008. In general, the results of the burns have supported the hypotheses listed above. Typically, new green growth begins to sprout within two weeks after the burn; species such as tufted hairgrass, the dominant native grass in wet prairies, grow more vigorously through the fall and winter than in unburned areas. The following year, and often the following two years, see increases in the flowering and seed production of many native prairie plants.

With increased flowering and seed production, the fire adapted species may gradually increase in population size. For example, a study of the State and Federal listed endangered Bradshaw's lomatium (*Lomatium bradshawii*) found that within two years of a fire the populations showed an increase in density of vegetative and reproductive plants (Pendergrass et al., 1999). At Willow Creek, monitoring data consistently show native species that were used as food plants by Kalapuya people such as camas (*Camassia quamash*), wild onion (*Allium amplexans*), and yampah (*Perideridia* spp.) increase in abundance in the year following woody vegetation removal or controlled burns (Jancaitis 2001). This is consistent with research at Fern Ridge Reservoir where camas (*Camassia quamash*), and tarweed (*Madia glomerata*), two species used by Kalapuya people, increased in abundance after repeated burning (Taylor 1999, Pendergrass 1995).

From 2001 to 2007, The Nature Conservancy collected data for an experiment designed to compare the response of wet prairie species to burning and mowing. Burn and mow treatments were implemented twice through the duration of the study, in 2001 and 2005. For both, burn and mow treatments, more "desirable" species responses (increases in a native species or decreases in non-native species) were recorded. However, 15 species showed a desirable treatment response from burning, while only 8 species showed a desirable treatment response from mowing. The higher level of desirable responses from the burn treatments suggests that fire is a critical management tool in wet prairie, at least in higher quality native remnants (Nuckols et al., in press).

While late summer mowing is a useful management treatment for holding back vegetative succession, we have observed stronger effects of fire on woody vegetation than from mowing. While most woody plants (except for conifers) readily sprout after mowing or burning, we have observed that controlled ecological burns are successful in killing a small percentage of trees and shrubs outright. After repeated controlled burns, tree stumps become sufficiently damaged that a

percentage are completely consumed by fire, resulting in an end to additional sprout production. In the last few years at Willow Creek, manual removal of woody plants has been implemented in conjunction with controlled burns, to help speed progress toward achieving site management goals.

Burning also appears to reduce the use of prairie habitats by meadow voles, which are small rodents that eat vegetation. During peak years of vole abundance (such as in 2001 and 2005), they can have substantial negative impacts on native prairie communities because of their herbivory (grazing) of native prairie plants.

We still have much to learn about fire effects in Willamette Valley prairies. The response of prairie species to management treatments such as fire or mowing are complex and may vary from year to year depending upon a variety of environmental factors, from fire behavior to precipitation patterns. As we continue to implement controlled burns, long term monitoring and data collection efforts will be a key to helping us improve our prairie management strategies as well as refine our restoration priorities.

3. Benefits and Potential Drawbacks to Controlled Ecological Burns

Reviewing the landscape history of the Willamette Valley provides the perspective that fire has been an important component of the "natural" ecosystem for thousands of years, and monitoring data for recent controlled burns supports the idea that many native prairie plants benefit from such fires. One of the reasons herbaceous prairie plants benefit from fire is because the fires that burn in these prairies are of low intensity and are of short duration. During a low intensity controlled burn, the dried leaf litter is consumed, but the meristems (growing points) of the plants are left unharmed, protected in the crown of the plant or buried underground. The precise reasons for the benefits of fire are not fully understood, but a variety of mechanisms have been proposed. For some species, seeds may lie dormant in the soil until the heat from a fire breaks the seed coat and stimulates germination. The burning of leaf litter that occurs during a fire releases nutrients and makes them available to plants when they otherwise would not be, providing a sort of fertilizer effect. When the leaf litter is burned, the bare soil that is left behind may be a better microenvironment for germination of seeds of native prairie plants, due to increased light and better contact with the soil. Other biological functions, such as soil microbial activity, may also be stimulated by fire.

Of course, fires can have negative effects as well. Most animals are able to move out of the way of typical prairie fires, and we have observed only a minor amount of vertebrate wildlife mortality (small numbers of dead garter snakes) in previous controlled burns in West Eugene. Invertebrates, especially those that are present in the leaf litter, may be more subject to mortality by controlled burns, but their populations can usually persist if some areas of habitat are always left unburned. Because of this possibility, The Nature Conservancy burns more no more than 1/3 of the habitat of the endangered Fender's blue butterfly at Willow Creek in any one year.

Controlled ecological burns will always need to be treated with caution because of the potential for fire to spread beyond the burn unit. Safety is always the paramount consideration, and it is

incumbent upon the burn boss to ensure that a controlled burn is conducted under appropriate conditions. Fire managers use computer models to predict fire behavior given certain site conditions, and under specific weather conditions. These models are used to determine the appropriate range of temperatures, humidity, and wind speed under which a burn can be safely conducted. For each controlled burn, a burn plan is prepared that states the conditions under which the controlled burn can be safely carried out, and if those conditions are not met, the burn is postponed until a later date. The burn plan also specifies the crew and equipment needed, and the pattern by which ignition will occur. Safety is also bolstered by providing appropriate fire breaks that are mowed or plowed around the burn unit to help contain the fire within the desired area

The main drawback of controlled ecological burns from the point of the general public is the smoke that is generated. While a controlled burn may resemble a grass field burn, the amount of smoke produced by a controlled burn in a native prairie is much less than a burn of an equal area of grass seed field. This is because the amount of fuel present in a grass seed field is 2 to 4 times greater per unit area than in a native prairie. Controlled burns in Eugene are only conducted when the prevailing wind blows the smoke away from the populated urban areas, and under atmospheric conditions that provide for the most efficient dispersal of smoke. Weather conditions are monitored continuously during a burn to ensure prevailing winds remain appropriate during the entire ignition period. Similarly, burn units are typically smaller than grass seed fields which mean that the actual length of time during which the burns occur is quite short and the amount of fuel burned during an event is generally less than typical grass seed field burns.

4. Alternatives to Controlled Ecological Burns

A number of alternatives to controlled ecological burning have been proposed, but none appear to provide all of the ecological benefits of fire. Mowing can inhibit the growth of woody plants and maintain the open prairie aspect. Mowing also may improve habitat for some of the rare prairie species, if it is done at the proper time of year. For example, the Bradshaw's lomatium population in Amazon Park has greatly increased in size over the past 15 years since the first mowing has been delayed until the plants have finished growth and the seeds have matured. At the plant community level, as noted above, mowing was found to provide ecological benefits in wet prairie, but not as extensive as the benefits of controlled burns.

However, mowing large acreages can be expensive, and wet prairies typically have a very irregular surface with numerous divots, hummocks, and ant mounds that make equipment operation difficult. Mowing may promote the growth of invasive non-native grasses such as tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*). Mowing also does not provide the nutrient cycling benefits or microhabitats suitable for seedling germination that fire provides.

Manual labor can be used to remove woody plants that have invaded prairie habitats. In fact, at Willow Creek we have determined that manual removal is necessary to achieve our management goals because the ash and pear trees are too well established to be removed by fires occurring on a 2 to 5 year interval. Removal of woody plants also reduces the amount of fuel that the fire

could consume, and reduces the smoke that is produced by controlled burns. However, once the woody plants are removed, fire plays a useful role by killing back any seedlings or stump sprouts that may emerge.

Using heavy equipment to remove woody plants is an undesirable option in native prairie remnants, because the soil disturbance would damage existing vegetation and likely allow invasive non-native species to increase. Using manual labor to remove woody vegetation causes less damage to the existing herbaceous cover, but is generally more expensive.

It may be possible to use tractor-mounted propane torches to achieve some of the ecological benefits of controlled burns in sites that are especially smoke-sensitive. However, the same problems with negotiating the divots, hummocks, and ant mounds mentioned above under mowing are pertinent here.

5. Summary and Conclusions

The Willamette Valley has an interesting history of interactions between human populations and the natural landscape, of which fire was a significant component. Controlled ecological burning is viewed by scientists and land managers as an important tool for ensuring that this natural legacy is passed on to future generations. Some type of active management of these native prairie sites is necessary to maintain open habitat conditions and keep out woody plants, and fire is the most natural means to achieve these ends. Without controlled burning, we will find it to be both more difficult and more expensive to maintain remaining high quality native prairie sites. Although controlled burns may result in some localized, short term inconveniences to the public, our experience as land managers indicates that the overall benefits, both to the general public and to the natural habitats, outweigh the inconveniences involved.

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Attachment E



Comparison of Burning and Mowing Treatments in a Remnant Willamette Valley Wet Prairie, Oregon, 2001–2007

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Comparison of Burning and Mowing Treatments in a Remnant Willamette Valley Wet Prairie, Oregon, 2001–2007

Abstract

Wet prairies dominated by the perennial bunchgrass *Deschampsia cespitosa* occurred extensively in the Willamette Valley at the time of Euro-American settlement. Historical evidence and recent habitat changes suggest that late summer fires set by Native Americans suppressed woody vegetation and promoted vegetative growth, seed production and seedling recruitment of herbaceous species. Using prescribed fire for prairie management is challenging; dry season mowing is often the preferred alternative in wet prairies. We initiated a seven year experiment to compare the effects of late summer/fall mowing and burning on native and non-native vascular plants in a remnant Willamette Valley wet prairie. We analyzed change in percent frequency from pre-treatment to the first two post-treatment years (and over all years) with ANOVA for a randomized complete block design. Twenty-five of 61 species or life stages showed treatment effects from burning or mowing. Ordination and MRBP tests indicated small treatment effects on overall species composition. With burning, the response of 15 species was desirable relative to management objectives (the increase of a native herbaceous or decrease of non-native or woody species) and eight showed undesirable effects. With mowing, eight and seven species exhibited desirable and undesirable treatment outcomes, respectively. While both fire and mowing appear to provide short term benefits to native wet prairie plants, more species benefitted from burning than mowing. While prescribed fire may be a preferred management tool where and when it can be implemented, the optimal management treatment will depend upon the suite of introduced species at a given site.

Introduction

Wet prairies were extensive in the Willamette Valley at the time of Euro-American settlement, occupying approximately 138,000 ha, or about 10% of the Willamette Valley ecoregion. Wet prairies occupied areas of seasonally wet or saturated soils, typically on valley terraces, within a larger landscape mosaic of over 670,000 ha dominated by wet prairie, upland prairie, and savanna (Christy and Alverson 2011). Since settlement, most of these plant communities have been lost to agriculture, urban development, invasive plant species, and ecological succession (Johannessen et al. 1971, Christy and Alverson 1994), and only small fragments, amounting to less than 2% of the original extent, still remain as remnant native-dominated prairie and savanna (E. Alverson, unpublished data).

Many ecologists conclude that fires, largely set by Native Americans, were an important ecological influence for maintaining the prairie-savanna mosaic on the Willamette Valley landscape (Johannessen et al. 1971, Boyd 1999). This conclusion is supported by anecdotal

historical evidence as well as modern observations of secondary succession occurring in extant prairies and savannas. Frequent fires effectively retard establishment of woody vegetation in prairies and savannas. This is accomplished by killing woody seedlings and some saplings (particularly conifers), and by top-killing broadleaf shrubs and tree saplings, though broadleaf woody plants often resprout from a protected root system. Fire also has other potential and differential effects on recruitment, vegetative growth, survival, distribution, and reproductive output of herbaceous plants in prairie and savanna habitats. Fire effects on abundance of both native and non-native herbaceous plants have been documented in Willamette Valley wet prairies (Pendergrass 1995, Streatfield and Frenkel 1997, Taylor 1999, Jancaitis 2001, Clark and Wilson 2001, Wilson 2002).

Prescribed fire has been used to manage Willamette Valley wet prairies since the 1970s. However, implementing controlled burns in small remnants within a larger context of agricultural and urban lands is logistically challenging (Hamman et al. 2011), prompting consideration of alternative methods of maintaining native prairies. Mowing vegetation during the dry

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season (late summer or early fall), at the same time that fires typically occur, is an alternative commonly employed by prairie managers in the region (Campbell 2004). Mowing is clearly effective at suppressing woody vegetation, at least for the short term, with little or no apparent damage to native herbaceous species that are largely dormant at this time of year. However, it is less clear whether mowing produces a beneficial response of native herbaceous plant species relative to introduced species. To investigate this question, we initiated a seven year experiment to compare the effects of late summer/fall mowing and burning on native and non-native vascular plants within a remnant Willamette Valley wet prairie. Our study is the first to compare species responses to fire and mowing in a high quality Willamette Valley wet prairie.

Methods

We designed a replicated field study in a wet prairie remnant at the Willow Creek Natural Area, a 210 ha preserve managed by The Nature Conservancy and located on the west side of Eugene, Lane County, Oregon (Figure 1). Though one of the best remaining examples of wet prairie in the Willamette Valley, Willow Creek is typical in that remnant habitat is surrounded by a land use mix that includes protected lands, urban development, agricultural lands, and rural residential lands. Prescribed fire has been used as a management treatment over about 20 ha of wet prairie at Willow Creek since 1986, with return intervals generally between 2 and 5 years. The study was implemented as a randomized complete block design in four macroplots (each 50 x 100 m) originally established for monitoring

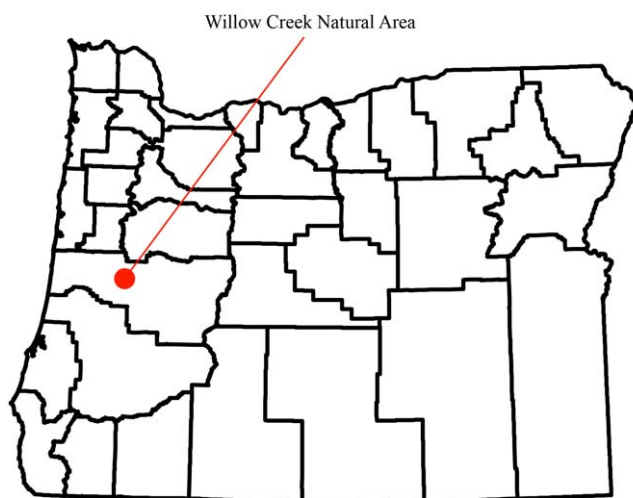


Figure 1. Location of the Willow Creek Natural Area, Lane County, Oregon.

the wet prairie community. Each macroplot served as an experimental block, with a third randomly assigned to a burn, mow, or control (no management) treatment. In the late summer of 2001, treatments were applied to three macroplots, and in 2005, treatments were applied to all four macroplots. No other treatments were applied in intervening years. The burns were completed October 2, 2001, and September 27, 2005. Both took place under similar conditions between 1100 and 1500 hrs PDT at temperatures ranging 24 to 30 °C, with relative humidity ranging from 30 - 40% and winds from 5-10 kph. Standard fire behavior calculations provide an output reference fine fuel moisture of approximately 6% for these conditions and a resulting flame length of 1-1.5 m. Mow treatments were applied the week before burn treatments using rotary style mowers set at heights of approximately 15 cm.

We measured vegetation response to treatments with nested frequency plots, the same method historically used for monitoring the plant community. We estimated percent frequency of plant species by noting presence in permanently located, nested quadrats of 1.0, 0.10, and 0.01 m² (48 per treatment unit) in mid- to late summer every year between 2001 and 2007. Nested quadrats provide a way of simultaneously estimating frequency at varying spatial scales for rare and common species (Elzinga et al. 1998). Plots were systematically located after a random start along nine transects in each macroplot. Quadrats were spaced at 2 m intervals along each transect for all macroplots, except 3 m intervals for macroplot 1. Presence in the smallest sized quadrat was noted for each species. Sampling of vascular plants involved a subset of all species that occurred with at least 10% frequency across all macroplots when comprehensive vegetation monitoring was initiated in 1993, though a few additional taxa were added in subsequent years prior to 2001 (Table 1). Taxonomy generally follows Cook and Sundberg (2011), with the exception of *Danthonia*, which follows Hitchcock (1950).

For each treatment period, we compared effects of burning and mowing on the change in percent frequency from pre-treatment to the first two post-treatment years (calculated as post-pretreatment) with ANOVA for a randomized complete block design ($\alpha = 0.1$). Treatment effects on change from 2001 to 2007 were also analyzed, resulting in five ANOVA models for each species. Macroplot 1 was excluded from analysis for 2001 and overall treatment effects because it did not receive the first round of treatments. Fisher's LSD was used for comparing treatment means. We analyzed data for 61 species or life stages (32 native herbaceous, 27

TABLE 1. List of species sampled for the Willow Creek wet prairie burn/mow experiment. Congeneric species pairs indicate taxa that were not distinguished in field data collection. An asterisk * denotes species for which data were analyzed. All guilds with more than one species were also analyzed for treatment effects.

Native Annual Forbs

Centaurium muhlenbergii
*Centunculus minimus**
Cicendia quadrangularis
Lotus unifoliolatus
Madia spp.*

Native Perennial Forbs

*Allium amplexens**
Apocynum cannabinum
Brodiaea coronaria or *B. elegans* ssp. *hooveri**
Camassia leichtlinii ssp. *suksdorfii*
Camassia quamash ssp. *maxima* [reprod]*
Camassia quamash ssp. *maxima* [veg.]*
Epilobium ciliatum s.l.
Erigeron decumbens var. *decumbens**
Eriophyllum lanatum var. *leucophyllum**
Fragaria virginiana var. *platyphylla**
*Grindelia integrifolia**
Horkelia congesta ssp. *congesta**
*Lomatium bradshawii**
*Lotus formosissimus**
Microseris laciniata ssp. *laciniata**
Perideridia montana or *P. oregana**
Potentilla gracilis var. *gracilis**
Prunella vulgaris var. *lanceolata**
*Pyrrocoma racemosa**
Ranunculus occidentalis var. *occidentalis*
Ranunculus orthorhynchus var. *orthorhynchus*
*Sericocarpus rigidus**
Sisyrinchium idahoense, *S. bellum*, or *S. hitchcockii**
*Symphyotrichum hallii**
*Toxicoscordion venenosum**
*Triteleia hyacinthina**
*Wyethia angustifolia**

Native Annual Graminoids

Juncus bufonius s.l.*

Native Perennial Graminoids

*Carex aurea**
Danthonia californica var. *americana**
Deschampsia cespitosa var. *cespitosa**
Dichanthelium acuminatum var. *fasciculatum**
Eleocharis acicularis var. *acicularis*
Juncus nevadensis var. *nevadensis**
Juncus occidentalis or *J. tenuis**
Luzula comosa s.l.*

Native Shrubs & Trees

Crataegus suksdorfii
*Fraxinus latifolia**
Spiraea douglasii var. *douglasii**
Toxicodendron diversilobum

Introduced Annual Forbs

Centaurium erythraea [reprod.]*
Centaurium erythraea [veg.]*
Galium divaricatum or *G. parisiense**
Geranium dissectum
*Linum bienne**
*Parentucellia viscosa**
*Trifolium dubium**
Vicia hirsuta or *V. tetrasperma**
Vicia sativa var. *angustifolia*

Introduced Biennial Forbs

Daucus carota [reprod.]*
Daucus carota [veg.]*
Leucanthemum vulgare [reprod.]*
Leucanthemum vulgare [veg.]*

Introduced Perennial Forbs

*Hypericum perforatum**
*Hypochaeris radicata**
Leontodon saxatilis ssp. *saxatilis**
*Mentha pulegium**
*Plantago lanceolata**
Senecio jacobea

Introduced Annual Graminoids

Aira caryophyllea or *A. elegans**
*Briza minor**
Bromus hordeaceus ssp. *hordeaceus*
Cynosurus echinatus

Introduced Perennial Graminoids

*Agrostis capillaris**
*Anthoxanthum odoratum**
Festuca rubra var. *commutata**
*Holcus lanatus**
*Juncus marginatus**
Phleum pratense
Poa compressa
*Schedonorus arundinaceus**

Introduced Shrubs & Trees

*Pyrus communis**
Rosa eglanteria or *R. nutkana* (invasive native shrub)*
*Rubus armeniacus**

introduced herbaceous, and 2 native woody invasive species). We limited data analysis to species with an average change of at least 10% absolute frequency in at least two treatment blocks, as well as some rare

species not meeting these criteria, and most woody species occurring in the wet prairie. Species omitted from analysis were generally at low frequency or not widely distributed within the wet prairie habitat. In

addition, we analyzed data for plant guilds (scored as present at the smallest scale containing a guild member for each quadrat) to compare treatment responses of the functional group and its component species.

We chose to analyze absolute change in frequency because this provides the simplest interpretation of treatment effects for management applications. An alternative approach would have been to analyze post-treatment frequency with the pre-treatment abundance as a covariate in ANCOVA. While ANCOVA has greater power at larger sample sizes, it may have less power for small studies such as ours because it uses an extra degree of freedom for estimating the effect of the covariate. The problem of low power extends to testing the assumption of equal slopes among treatments. A simple interpretation of treatment effects is not possible when slopes are unequal, and this condition may also lead to a low power test for the main effect (Engqvist 2005). Finally, it is inappropriate to use ANCOVA to adjust for initial differences of the covariate (i.e., pre-treatment abundance) between treatments (Quinn and Keough 2002). Although baseline abundance was similar across treatments for most species, this was not true for some of the non-native species and guilds.

Data for the quadrat size exhibiting the largest average temporal change were typically used for each species or guild (usually 1 m²). We examined residual plots and max/min variance (of change) ratios to identify severe violations from the assumption of homogeneous variances (> 5). ANOVA on balanced designs is very robust to departures from normality, but not to heterogeneous variances (Quinn and Keough 2002). Percentage data outside the midrange of 30-70% are known to be more problematic for ANOVA, because the variance of binomial data is a quadratic function of the mean (Zar 1996, Warton and Hui 2011). The arcsine square-root transformation is a commonly recommended remedy, although Zar (1996) states that a transformation is not warranted for balanced designs. Our analysis revealed a few cases where the arcsine transformation reduced treatment variance ratios and detected small treatment effects (usually $< 10\%$ absolute change in frequency) that were not significant for raw data. However, these cases were typically introduced upland species uncharacteristic of native wet prairie, and the transformation produced larger variance ratios and non-significant results for other species with larger treatment differences. Because of these discrepancies and the difficulty interpreting results (i.e., change in the arcsine scale), we report results only for untransformed data. Although logistic regression may be the

most suitable analysis for binomial data, it can result in inflated Type I error rates and lower power for very small sample sizes (Warton and Hui 2011). SAS 9.2 and Systat 13 were used for univariate analysis and graphing time trends for species and guilds.

We characterized treatment effects as desirable or undesirable according to species origin. We considered a desirable treatment effect to be one that indicates success in attaining our management objectives (Wilson and Clark 2001). For example, a desirable treatment effect is an increase in frequency of a native herbaceous species, or a decrease in an introduced (or any woody) species. An undesirable treatment effect is a decrease in frequency of a native species or an increase in an introduced species. Only treatments significantly different from the control were counted. For example, if frequency of a native species increased significantly more in burn than mow but neither treatment was different from control, it was not scored as a desirable effect for burn or undesirable effect for mow. Plot data were collected separately for vegetative and reproductive life stages for four taxa, (one native and three introduced) because we anticipated different responses in their vegetative and reproductive life stages (Table 1). The different life stages are therefore treated as separate "species" for this analysis.

To illustrate annual changes in species composition for each macroplot and treatment, we used non-metric multi-dimensional scaling (NMS) in PC-ORD (v. 5.32). Data were relativized by species maxima to equalize the importance of common and rare species (McCune and Grace 2002). The autopilot mode of NMS was used with the Sorensen (Bray-Curtis) distance measure, the maximum thoroughness setting and randomization tests; the best configuration was re-run to apply the varimax rotation to increase orthogonality among axes. Separate ordinations were done for the years of 2001-2003 (excluding macroplot 1) and 2005-2007 (using all four macroplots). Successional vectors were used to illustrate the rate and direction of changes in species composition for each macroplot; vectors were also translated to the origin to highlight treatment differences (McCune and Grace 2002). We report Kendall's tau (a rank correlation coefficient) instead of Pearson's r to examine correlations of species abundance with ordination axes, because the former does not assume linearity.

We used the Blocked Multi-Response Permutation Procedure (MRBP) in PC-ORD to test for differences in species composition among treatments in each year (McCune and Grace 2002). This procedure compares the observed average distances within treatments with

those expected by chance. A measure of effect size, the chance-corrected within-group agreement (A) is reported along with P -values. $A = 0$ if within-group differences are equal to the random expectation, is < 0 when group members more dissimilar than expected, and $= 1$ if all plots within groups are identical. Values for ecological data are commonly < 0.1 even when groups are significantly different (McCune and Grace 2002). Data were relativized by species maxima to reflect ordination results. We used the default Euclidean distance measure and median alignment of blocks to emphasize differences among treatments within blocks for MRBP tests, setting $\alpha = 0.1$ for all comparisons. To determine whether treatment effects on composition were being driven by only larger changes of more abundant species, we also ran MRBP on data relativized by species totals, giving equal weight to common and rare species (McCune and Grace 2002). Only species analyzed for treatment effects with ANOVA were included in the multivariate analyses.

Results

Of the 61 species or life stages (all hereafter called species) included in the analysis, 25 responded at least once to mowing, prescribed fire, or both treatments. Fourteen of these were native herbaceous species, 10 were introduced herbaceous species, and one an invasive native woody species. In addition, one native guild and four introduced guilds were impacted by treatments (Tables 2 and 3).

The magnitude and persistence of treatment effects varied considerably across species and over time. Statistically significant effects were often of short duration and not consistent for both treatment periods. Fourteen species had a significant response to a given treatment in only one comparison, while 11 responded to a given treatment in more than one comparison. There was no indication of cumulative treatment effects even for the latter group.

The importance of prescribed fire as a management treatment was highlighted by a simple tally of species with a significant response in any one of the five pre-post treatment comparisons. These comparisons included both the first and second years following the 2001 and 2005 treatments, as well as a comparison of the final year of the study (2007) and the pre-treatment conditions (Table 4). Fifteen species showed a significant desirable response to fire, while eight responded in a desirable direction to mowing. Fewer species responded in an undesirable direction, and the burn and mow treatments were more equal in this regard (eight

for fire and seven for mowing). Thus, nearly twice as many species exhibited a desirable response to fire compared to mowing, and exhibited a more favorable ratio of desirable to undesirable outcomes.

With native guilds, the only treatment effect that was undesirable was for perennial forbs from 2005 to 2006 for both burn and mow treatments (Table 2). This effect was the result of a greater increase from 2005 to 2006 in the control than in either treatment.

For introduced guilds, we documented treatment effects for biennial forbs, perennial forbs, and annual graminoids. Burning temporarily suppressed introduced biennial forbs in 2006, but delivered persistent, unfavorable management responses in introduced annual graminoids in each two year post-treatment period. Introduced perennial forbs were the only guild that showed contradictory results, with a desirable treatment effect in the first year after the 2005 burn, but an undesirable treatment effect in the second year after the 2001 burn. An undesirable treatment effect for this guild was also recorded in the mow treatment in the second year after the 2001 burn (Table 3).

Recording frequency of different life stages allowed us to distinguish different responses to the two management treatments (Tables 2 and 3). For *Leucanthemum vulgare*, fire was beneficial in reducing vegetative plants relative to the control, but no burn treatment effect was observed for the flowering life stage. In contrast, an undesirable response to mowing was detected as the flowering life stage increased in the first year after both the 2001 and 2005 treatments. Flowering *Cassia quamash* increased significantly relative to the control in the first year following the 2001 burn, but not significantly in the second year, while vegetative *C. quamash* increased significantly in the second year but not significantly in the first (Figure 2 and Table 2). The significant second year increase in the vegetative plants may have resulted from seed produced in the first year after the burn, but we did not distinguish first year seedlings from older vegetative plants.

The direction of treatment effect was consistent for the ten species with significant responses to the same treatment in more than one pre-post comparison. Only one species exhibited inconsistent treatment effects. *Linum bienne*, an introduced annual forb, decreased in abundance relative to control after the 2001 prescribed burn but showed a relative increase from 2001 to 2007 (Table 3). One possible explanation for this result is the timing of the burns relative to seedling germination triggered by fall precipitation. Local weather data from the Eugene airport are consistent with the hypothesis

that more seed was left to germinate after the 2005 burn. Measuring from August 1 of each year, more rain and more days with measurable precipitation occurred prior to the 2001 burn (2.7 cm over 13 days before October 2) compared to the 2005 burn (1.6 cm over 6 days before September 27). Furthermore, the magnitude of the desirable treatment effect (3.5) was much smaller than that of the undesirable one (22.9). We interpret these results as representing variation in response reflecting the subtle interplay between the phenology of each plant species and the specific unique conditions of the vegetation at the time of treatment application.

Time vectors from NMS ordinations showed that most of the variation in composition was due to spatial (macroplot) differences and temporal changes common across treatments (Figures 3 and 4). Many of the species more highly correlated with ordination axes were unaffected by treatments (Table 5).

However, we did document treatment effects on composition (Table 6). Treated plots within the same macroplot varied in the rate (vector length) or direction of compositional change, especially in the first post-treatment year (Figures 3b and 4b, Table 6a). Treatment effects were smaller and inconsistent in 2002-03, with $A < 0.1$ even for significant P -values. The burn-mow difference in 2002 was driven largely by trends in Macroplot 3, which also contributed largely to the burn effect in 2003 (Figure 3b). Effects were larger after the second set of treatments in 2006, when composition varied among all three treatment levels (Figure 4b). This is likely due to the greater power from an additional macroplot. The 2007 difference between control and burn was largely due to Macroplots 1 and 7 (Figure 4b). MRBP results for data relativized by species totals are similar to those from the relativization by maxima, suggesting that real changes in composition (and not just abundance) contributed to these differences (Table 6b).

Discussion

The results of our study can be viewed both as a broad measure of the value of implementing management treatments in wet prairie and as a focused appraisal of individual species responses to a limited number of treatment events. However, interpretation of our results is somewhat complicated by variation in abiotic and biotic environmental parameters during the course of the study. In particular, the years 2001 and 2005 were marked by both extremely low precipitation and by high population numbers of voles (*Microtus* sp.). Vole herbivory appeared to be selective, with a disproportionate impact on certain species of herbaceous plants, both

native and introduced. The effect of low precipitation and high vole abundance in 2005 is particularly illustrated by the graph of time trends for *Camassia quamash* (Figure 2). Because the 2001 and 2005 vegetation data represent both the pre-treatment vegetation condition and the high impact of vole herbivory, treatment effects on individual species (and on species composition) are inevitably confounded with influences of these other factors. Large changes in frequency of some species were observed in control plots, sometimes larger than the changes observed in the treatment plots. As a result, ordination analysis revealed that treatment effects on composition were small relative to the natural temporal variation observed across all plots (Figures 3–4).

The greater ratio of desirable to undesirable treatment responses (particularly the 1.9:1 ratio for the burn treatment), highlights the importance and value of management in Willamette Valley wet prairies. Furthermore, only 13 of the 61 species analyzed (seven native and six introduced) exhibited an undesirable response to either management treatment for any year to year comparison. In the absence of natural and historic anthropomorphic disturbance regimes (primarily fire), active management is needed to prevent conversion of prairie to forest and halt the increase of introduced herbaceous species at the expense of declining native species. The challenge is identifying the set of management approaches that most favor native over non-native (or native invasive) species appropriate for a given site.

In our study more species/life stages responded favorably to fire than mowing (15 vs. 8). Of particular management importance is the desirable response to fire by seven of ten native perennial forbs showing significant treatment effects, five “species” of which (*Brodiaea coronaria/ elegans*, *Camassia quamash*/reproductive, *Camassia quamash*/vegetative, *Toxicoscordion venenosum*, and *Triteleia hyacinthina*) were geophytes growing from underground bulbs or corms.

However, both treatments promoted favorable responses for several native species. The perennial forb *Potentilla gracilis* and the perennial graminoids *Deschampsia cespitosa* and *Juncus occidentalis* all responded in a desirable direction to both treatments. Two introduced annual forbs, *Centaureum erythraea* (the reproductive life stage) and *Galium divaricatum* or *G. parisiense*, showed beneficial responses to either treatment as well. Suppressing establishment of woody vegetation in wet prairie is another goal of our management, and we found both burning and mowing effective at reducing the invasive native woody plant *Fraxinus latifolia* in the second year after the 2005 treatments.

TABLE 2. Significant treatment effects of the Mow/Burn experiment for native guilds and herbaceous species at the Willow Creek Preserve, 2001–2007. Change in % frequency from pre- to two post treatment years (and from 2001 to 2007) is reported for Control. Treatment effects are calculated as the difference between the change in % frequency between each treatment and Control, e.g., Δ Burn - Δ Control. Results are for 1 m² unless noted otherwise. Significant treatment effects at the 0.1 level (Fisher's LSD) are in bold text; a positive number in bold represents a desirable treatment effect, and negative number in bold represents an undesirable treatment effect.

Guild/Species	2001 Treatments: Change from 2001 to (n = 3)						2005 Treatments: Change from 2005 to (n = 4)									
	2002			2003			2007			2007						
	Treatment effect		Δ Control	Treatment effect		Δ Control	Treatment effect		Δ Control	Treatment effect		Δ Control				
	Δ Burn -	Δ Mow -		Δ Burn -	Δ Mow -		Δ Burn -	Δ Mow -		Δ Burn -	Δ Mow -					
	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	
Perennial Native Forbs (0.01 m²) <i>Brodiaea coronaria</i> or <i>B. elegans</i> <i>Camassia quamash</i> ssp. <i>maxima</i> [reprod] <i>Camassia quamash</i> ssp. <i>maxima</i> [veg.] (0.1 m2) <i>Grindelia integrifolia</i> <i>Horkelia congesta</i> ssp. <i>congesta</i> <i>Lotus formosissimus</i> <i>Microseris laciniata</i> ssp. <i>laciniata</i> (0.1 m²) <i>Potentilla gracilis</i> var. <i>gracilis</i> <i>Toxicoscordion venenosum</i> <i>Triteleia hyacinthina</i>	7.6	7.6	2.8	9.7	-0.7	-1.4	15.3	-4.2	0.7	10.4	-8.8	-8.3	7.8	4.2	1.0	
	1.4	-4.2	-3.5	2.1	14.6	0.0	0.0	9.0	8.4	-6.2	2.6	3.1	0.0	10.9	11.5	-4.1
	11.8	25.7	4.9	35.4	11.8	-28.5	34.7	27.1	0.0	25.0	11.5	4.2	53.1	20.3	1.6	
	13.9	9.0	0.0	13.9	13.2	-11.8	20.1	12.5	-6.2	28.6	-3.1	-2.6	31.8	2.6	-6.3	
	0.0	-2.1	4.2	6.9	-6.2	6.3	16.0	-12.5	8.3	1.0	-2.6	4.7	1.6	1.5	8.8	
	0.0	-2.1	2.1	0.0	-2.1	0.7	0.0	-1.4	0.7	0.0	0.5	-0.5	0.0	0.5	-0.5	
	-7.6	0.0	1.4	-8.3	1.4	2.1	-13.2	-7.6	6.3	5.2	-5.2	-6.3	2.1	-12.5	-2.6	
	2.8	11.8	2.8	-0.7	9.7	4.2	-2.8	1.4	3.5	6.8	0.5	-2.6	1.6	-0.5	0.0	
	-2.8	-2.1	3.5	-3.5	0.0	8.4	-3.5	5.6	14.6	1.0	1.6	2.1	-4.7	7.3	6.8	
	2.1	2.8	0.0	2.1	0.7	0.0	5.6	2.7	9.0	1.6	17.2	0.5	5.7	0.6	9.9	
2.1	1.4	0.0	1.4	17.4	-0.7	1.4	2.1	0.0	-0.5	2.6	0.5	0.5	2.6	0.5		
Native Annual Graminoids <i>Juncus bufonius</i> s.l.	0.7	11.1	1.4	6.3	-2.8	-1.4	0.7	3.5	0.7	15.6	2.1	-13.5	1.6	1.0	-1.0	
Native Perennial Graminoids (0.01 m²) <i>Danthonia californica</i> var. <i>americana</i> (0.1 m2) <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> var. <i>cespitosa</i> (0.01 m2) <i>Juncus occidentalis</i> or <i>J. tenuis</i>	-3.5	0.0	2.1	-3.5	1.4	4.9	-14.6	6.2	6.9	-2.1	3.6	4.7	3.1	4.7	2.6	
	4.2	-20.1	-4.2	4.2	-15.3	-1.4	2.1	-3.5	0.7	-6.3	0.0	5.2	-3.1	1.0	1.0	
	-4.9	11.1	9.0	-9.0	9.0	11.1	-14.6	1.4	2.8	-5.2	0.5	7.3	4.2	-2.6	3.6	
	-16.7	11.1	7.0	-16.7	9.7	0.0	6.9	-9.7	-1.4	31.8	-2.6	2.6	30.7	-5.2	6.3	

TABLE 3. Significant treatment effects of the Mow/Burn experiment for introduced guilds herbaceous species, and native woody species at the Willow Creek Preserve, 2001-2007. Change in % frequency from pre- to two post treatment years (and from 2001 to 2007) is reported for Control. Treatment effects are calculated as the difference between the change in % frequency between each treatment and Control, e.g., Δ Burn - Δ Control. Results are for 1 m² unless noted otherwise. Significant treatment effects at the 0.1 level (Fisher's LSD) are in bold text; a negative number in bold represents a desirable treatment effect, and a positive number in bold represents an undesirable treatment effect.

Guild/Species	2001 Treatments: Change from 2001 to (n = 3)						2005 Treatments: Change from 2005 to (n = 4)								
	2002			2003			2007			2006			2007		
	Treatment effect		Δ Control	Treatment effect		Δ Control	Treatment effect		Δ Control	Treatment effect		Δ Control	Treatment effect		Δ Control
Δ Burn -	Δ Mow -	Δ Burn -		Δ Mow -	Δ Burn -		Δ Mow -	Δ Burn -		Δ Mow -					
	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	Δ Control	
Introduced Annual Forbs (0.1 m²)	-2.1	-6.2	4.2	-11.1	-9.7	9.7	-31.9	0.0	-2.1	-8.9	-9.3	8.9	-39.6	-4.7	-5.7
<i>Centaurium erythraea</i> [reprod.]	-1.4	-43.0	6.3	0.0	-36.8	7.6	-19.4	-28.5	-13.2	-14.6	-68.2	0.5	-44.8	-27.1	-16.7
<i>Centaurium erythraea</i> [veg.]	-23.6	-34.7	14.6	-65.3	2.8	5.6	-55.6	-1.4	-11.1	-54.2	-9.9	8.3	-65.1	-2.1	-10.9
<i>Galium divaricatum</i> or <i>G. parisiense</i>	-2.1	0.7	-11.1	-6.9	-4.2	-21.6	-17.4	-2.7	-24.3	21.9	-27.1	-11.0	-28.1	-6.8	-19.8
<i>Linum bienne</i>	1.4	-3.5	2.1	4.9	2.1	2.1	1.4	22.9	0.7	12.0	1.0	5.2	2.6	9.4	-4.2
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	5.6	-1.4	-1.4	4.9	-4.9	-3.5	-1.4	-0.7	-6.9	0.0	5.2	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.5
Introduced Biennial Forbs	-16.7	-2.1	8.3	-11.1	-6.9	-1.4	-0.7	-5.6	-4.2	3.1	-14.0	1.1	1.6	-6.8	-2.6
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> [reprod.]	-7.6	3.4	36.8	15.3	-15.3	6.9	21.5	-6.9	3.5	-22.9	12.5	24.5	6.3	-2.6	-7.3
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> [veg.]	-17.4	-4.2	6.9	-27.1	1.4	13.2	-1.4	-8.3	-8.3	-1.0	-11.0	4.6	-1.0	-6.3	-3.6
Introduced Perennial Forbs (0.1 m²)	-10.4	3.5	6.9	-29.9	21.6	24.3	9.0	5.6	0.0	7.8	-11.4	4.2	0.0	-4.7	2.1
<i>Mentha pulegium</i>	-5.6	2.1	8.4	-2.8	3.5	10.4	22.9	-7.6	5.6	2.6	-8.9	-3.1	3.6	-2.6	-3.1
Introduced Annual Graminoids (0.1 m²)	0.7	33.3	-9.0	3.5	29.1	-6.3	-0.7	19.4	-15.3	16.1	16.7	2.7	4.2	16.1	-9.9
<i>Aira caryophyllea</i> or <i>A. elegans</i>	-20.8	9.0	3.5	-11.1	9.0	9.7	-3.5	16.0	2.8	3.6	-2.1	-0.5	-0.5	10.4	-1.1
<i>Briza minor</i>	1.4	39.6	6.2	6.9	29.9	1.4	2.1	19.4	-11.8	36.5	13.0	-13.1	15.6	16.2	-19.8
Introduced Perennial Graminoids	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7	1.4	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.0
Native Trees - <i>Fraxinus latifolia</i>	0.0	-3.5	-0.7	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.7	-1.4	0.0	4.2	-3.6	-2.6	5.2	-6.8	-4.2

TABLE 4. Vascular plant species showing significant treatment effects of the Mow/Burn experiment at the Willow Creek Preserve, for at least one year-to-year comparison for the period 2001-2007. Treatments showing significant effects are indicated with an asterisk (*). Results are for the 1 m² quadrat size unless noted otherwise.

Species responses in any year to year comparison				
Species	Positive Response		Negative Response	
	Burn +	Mow +	Burn -	Mow -
Native Perennial Forbs				
<i>Brodiaea coronaria</i> or <i>B. elegans</i>	*			
<i>Camassia quamash</i> ssp. <i>maxima</i> [veg.] (0.1 m ²)	*			*
<i>Camassia quamash</i> ssp. <i>maxima</i> [reprod]	*			*
<i>Grindelia integrifolia</i>		*	*	
<i>Horkelia congesta</i> ssp. <i>congesta</i>			*	
<i>Lotus formosissimus</i>			*	
<i>Microseris laciniata</i> ssp. <i>laciniata</i> (0.1 m ²)	*			
<i>Potentilla gracilis</i> var. <i>gracilis</i>	*	*		
<i>Toxicoscordion venenosum</i>	*			
<i>Triteleia hyacinthina</i>	*			
Native Annual Graminoids				
<i>Juncus bufonius</i> s.l.				*
Native Perennial Graminoids				
<i>Danthonia californica</i> var. <i>americana</i> (0.1 m ²)			*	
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> var. <i>cespitosa</i> (0.01 m ²)	*	*		
<i>Juncus occidentalis</i> or <i>J. tenuis</i>	*	*		
Introduced Annual and Biennial Forbs				
<i>Centaureum erythraea</i> [veg.]	*			
<i>Centaureum erythraea</i> [reprod.]	*	*		
<i>Galium divaricatum</i> or <i>G. parisiense</i>	*	*		
<i>Linum bienne</i>	*		*	*
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>			*	*
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> [veg.]	*			
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> [reprod.]				*
Introduced Perennial Forbs				
<i>Mentha pulegium</i>			*	
Introduced Annual Graminoids				
<i>Aira caryophyllea</i> or <i>A. elegans</i>			*	
<i>Briza minor</i>		*		*
Native Woody Species				
<i>Fraxinus latifolia</i>	*	*		
Overall number of significant responses per treatment category:	15	8	8	7

Results that contradict our management goals are of equal interest. Both treatments were generally ineffective at suppressing introduced grasses (Table 3). Fire produced relatively large and consistent increases in *Briza minor* after both treatment periods, while mowing appeared to suppress it in 2006-2007 (Table 3). Fire

also increased *A. caryophyllea/elegans* after the 2005 treatment. However, both species are small statured annuals, which are likely to benefit from a short term removal of thatch and litter after a burn, and do not appear to suppress associated native species. Both species tend to decline to pre-burn abundance a few years after

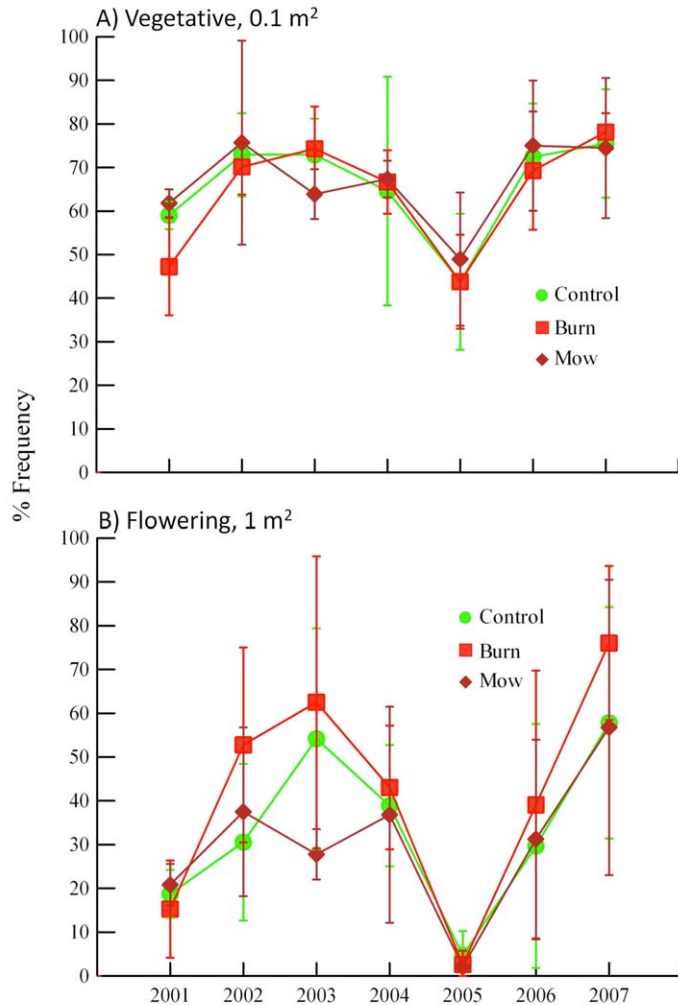


Figure 2. Mean ($\pm$ SD) percent frequency by treatment and year for vegetative and flowering *Camassia quamash*. n = 3 for 2001-2004; n = 4 for 2005-2007.

the burn (there was no significant treatment effect for either species in the 2001 to 2007 comparison), so provided burns are not conducted on short rotation they are unlikely to be highly problematic in Willamette Valley most wet prairies.

Several native species also exhibited undesirable responses to burning. *Danthonia californica* var. *americana* was suppressed by the 2001 fire. This may be of little consequence from a community perspective, since *D. californica* var. *americana* is among the most abundant native herbaceous species in the wet prairie at Willow Creek. The fire effect did not persist to the 2001-2007 comparison and was not generated by the second round of treatments. *Lotus formosissimus* is a relatively uncommon native perennial forb in the Willamette Valley, and concern for this species is more about its substantial decline from 2001 to 2007 across all treatments than about the negative impact of the 2005 burn.

Horkelia congesta ssp. *congesta* declined in the second year after the 2001 burn relative to the control, though the treatment effect in this study was perhaps too small to be considered biologically important. This is a globally at-risk taxon restricted to a small number of prairie remnants throughout its global range of the Willamette and Umpqua Valleys as a consequence of habitat loss, invasive species, and grazing (U.S Fish and Wildlife Service 2010). However, this species is also monitored at Willow Creek with more intensive census plots. Unburned subpopulations of *H. congesta* located outside of the treated macroplots declined after 2001 even more strongly

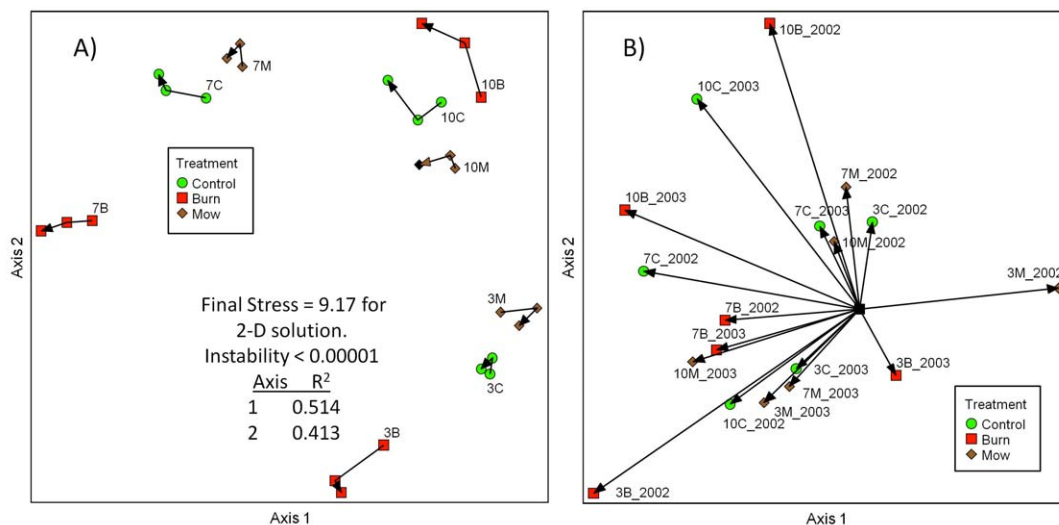


Figure 3. A) Time vectors (2001-2003) for treatment plots from NMS ordination with arrow indicating the direction of time vector (last point is 2003). B) Vectors translated to the origin. Data relativized by species maxima.

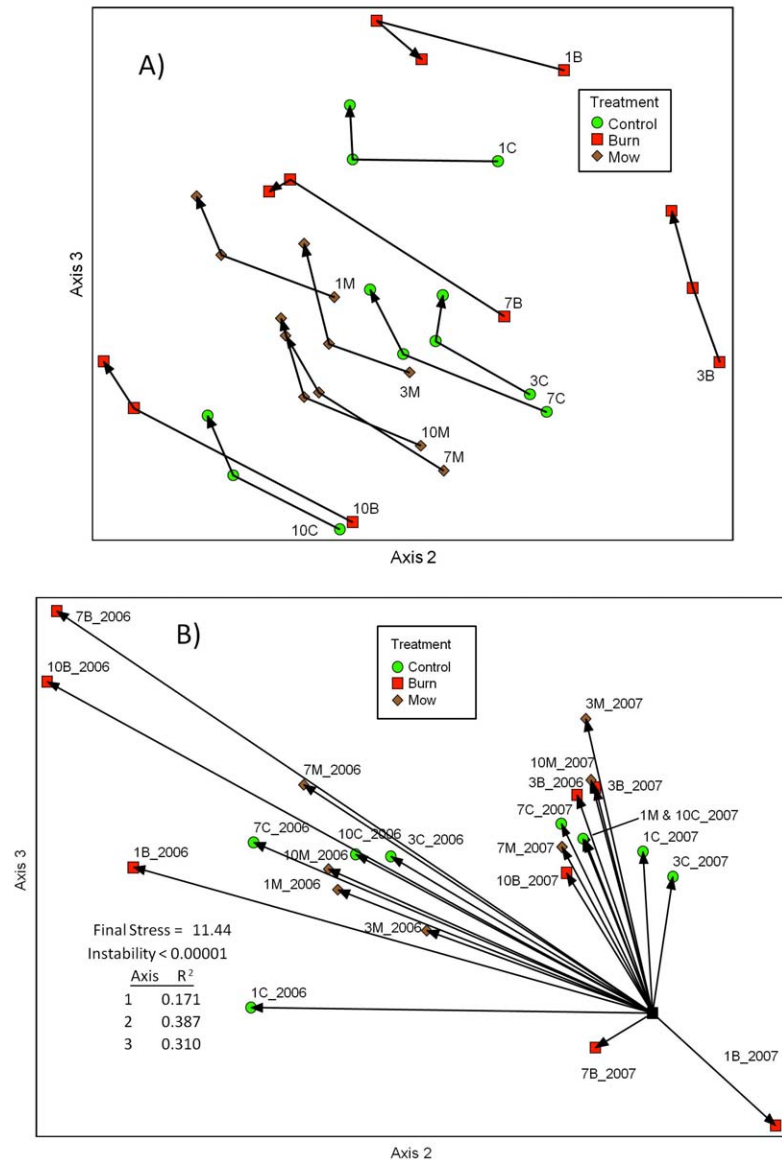


Figure 4. A) Time vectors (2005-2007) for treatment plots from NMS with arrow indicating the direction of time vector (last point is 2007). B) Vectors translated to the origin. Data relativized by species maxima.

than in the burn treatments. This focused monitoring allows managers to track population trends more precisely and make specific modifications to management treatments (such as exclude areas of occupied habitat from future burn units) if warranted.

Grindelia integrifolia was the only native species that increased with mowing while decreasing after burning. Its response to mowing was consistent for both the 2001 and 2005 mow treatments, but the negative response to fire was only observed in the first post-treatment period. This is a relatively weedy native species and fluctuations in its abundance are not especially problematic from a management perspective.

Because some non-native plant species in Willamette Valley wet prairies may be adapted to fire or mowing, decisions about management treatments may differ depending upon the suite of introduced species that occur at a given site. In the case of Willow Creek, we feel that the fire-adapted species (particularly non-native annual grasses) are not especially problematic given our likely burn regime. In fact, fire is the preferred treatment for non-native species of greater management concern than introduced grasses, such as the forbs *Leucanthemum vulgare* and *Mentha pulegium*. Both species increased in response to mowing, and the former decreased after burning (in its vegetative life stage). At other sites, fire-adapted non-natives not present at Willow Creek may call for an emphasis on mowing over fire.

Our results are similar in many ways to results of previous studies of management treatments, particularly fire, in Willamette Valley wet prairies (Streatfield 1995, Pendergrass 1995, Taylor 1999, Jancaitis 2001, Clark and Wilson 2001, Wilson 2002). These studies documented desirable responses to a burn treatment relative to the control for native species such as *Camassia quamash*, *Microseris laciniata*, *Potentilla gracilis*, and *Toxicoscordium venenosum*, as well as negative responses of the abundant native grass *Danthonia californica*.

Results presented here also share some similarities to studies of fire in a broader range of habitats across the larger Willamette Valley-Puget Trough-Georgia Basin ecoregion as well. For example, Dunwiddie (2002) observed an increase in cover of annual species in upland prairie on Yellow Island, San Juan County, Washington, for the first three years following a 1987 burn, after which cover of annuals returned to pre-burn levels. In our study, a similar fire effect was observed particularly with non-native annual grasses. While the burn treatment exhibited a greater frequency change (increase) over the course of our study (2001-2007) as compared to the change in the control, the difference between the two comparisons was not statistically significant.

Our results also suggest that controlled burns produce beneficial treatment effects that are not duplicated by mowing alone. However, given the logistical constraints

TABLE 5. Kendall's tau rank correlation coefficients with NMS ordination axes for each treatment period. Species listed have a coefficient of at least ± 0.40 for one axis. Statistics for 2005-2007 are provided only for axes 2 and 3, which explained 70% of the variance in that data matrix. * indicates species responding to one or both treatments (Tables 2-3).

Species	Axis			
	2001-2003		2005-2007	
	1	2	2	3
<i>Aira caryophyllea/elegans</i> *	0.04	0.60	-0.55	-0.50
<i>Allium amplexans</i>	-0.49	0.24	-0.21	0.58
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	0.08	-0.51	0.21	0.21
<i>Brodiaea coronaria</i> or <i>B. elegans</i> *	-0.50	0.07	-0.23	0.34
<i>Briza minor</i> *	0.01	0.27	-0.51	-0.12
<i>Carex aurea</i>	0.11	-0.44	-0.04	0.45
<i>Centaurium erythraea</i> [reprod.]*	0.44	-0.09	0.26	-0.32
<i>Centunculus minimus</i>	-0.10	-0.41	0.20	0.07
<i>Danthonia californica</i> var. <i>americana</i> *	-0.02	0.38	-0.41	-0.31
<i>Daucus carota</i> [reprod.]	0.55	-0.18	-0.23	-0.08
<i>Daucus carota</i> [veg.]	0.71	-0.24	-0.07	-0.15
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> var. <i>cespitosa</i> *	-0.40	0.53	-0.47	-0.09
<i>Erigeron decumbens</i> var. <i>decumbens</i>	-0.42	0.43	-0.38	-0.08
<i>Eriophyllum lanatum</i> var. <i>leucophyllum</i>	0.07	0.61	-0.48	-0.38
<i>Festuca rubra</i> var. <i>commutata</i>	0.40	0.15	-0.40	-0.26
<i>Fraxinus latifolia</i> *	0.76	-0.20	-0.07	0.12
<i>Fragaria virginiana</i> var. <i>platyphylla</i>	0.55	-0.29	-0.10	-0.08
<i>Galium divaricatum</i> or <i>G. parisiense</i> *	0.14	0.42	-0.04	-0.60
<i>Grindelia integrifolia</i> *	-0.36	0.56	-0.28	-0.35
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	-0.09	0.56	-0.41	-0.30
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	0.34	-0.21	0.45	-0.19
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	0.58	-0.29	-0.56	0.15
<i>Juncus marginatus</i>	0.30	-0.58	0.16	0.48
<i>Juncus nevadensis</i> var. <i>nevadensis</i>	-0.55	-0.10	0.05	0.36
<i>Juncus occidentalis</i> or <i>J. tenuis</i> *	-0.18	0.49	-0.45	-0.15
<i>Leontodon saxatilis</i> ssp. <i>saxatilis</i>	0.27	-0.19	-0.50	-0.11
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> [veg.]*	0.66	-0.23	-0.26	-0.35
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> [reprod.]*	0.65	-0.14	-0.31	-0.25
<i>Linum bienne</i> *	0.50	-0.02	-0.38	-0.33
<i>Lomatium bradshawii</i>	0.03	-0.44	-0.15	0.47
<i>Lotus formosissimus</i> *	-0.52	-0.05	0.37	0.34
<i>Luzula comosa</i> s.l.	0.19	0.24	-0.51	0.15
<i>Madia</i> spp.	0.19	0.17	-0.42	-0.38
<i>Microseris laciniata</i> ssp. <i>laciniata</i> *	-0.52	0.33	-0.46	-0.05
<i>Parentucellia viscosa</i>	0.54	-0.26	0.16	-0.41
<i>Perideridia montana</i> or <i>P. oregana</i>	-0.11	0.41	-0.39	-0.29
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	0.42	0.29	-0.50	-0.25
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i> var. <i>lanceolata</i>	0.28	0.22	-0.48	-0.31
<i>Pyrrocoma racemosa</i>	0.52	-0.49	-0.05	0.41
<i>Rubus armeniacus</i>	0.25	-0.66	0.04	0.50
<i>Schedonorus arundinaceus</i>	0.22	-0.56	0.38	0.18
<i>Sericocarpus rigidus</i>	-0.03	-0.49	0.12	0.68
<i>Sisyrinchium bellum</i> , <i>S. hitchcockii</i> or <i>S. idahoense</i>	-0.53	0.27	-0.37	-0.06
<i>Spiraea douglasii</i> var. <i>douglasii</i>	0.37	-0.66	0.33	0.07
<i>Symphotrichum hallii</i>	0.40	0.28	-0.53	-0.06
<i>Trifolium dubium</i> *	0.66	-0.40	0.05	-0.04
<i>Vicia hirsuta</i> /or <i>V. tetrasperma</i>	0.40	-0.23	0.08	-0.24
<i>Wyethia angustifolia</i>	0.48	-0.23	-0.13	0.21

TABLE 6. Summary of MRBP tests for differences in species composition among treatments for data relativized by A) species maxima and B) species totals. Statistics for pairwise comparison are provided where the treatment effect is significant at the 0.1 level. The chance-corrected within-group agreement (*A*) is a measure of within-treatment heterogeneity compared to that expected by chance.

A) Year	Treatment		Control vs. Burn		Control vs. Mow		Burn vs. Mow	
	<i>A</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>P</i>
2001	-0.00976	0.6391	----	----	----	----	----	----
2002	0.03553	0.0937	0.00282	0.5258	0.04903	0.1555	0.01781	0.0698
2003	0.04533	0.0902	0.07217	0.0760	-0.02056	0.5539	0.05107	0.1565
2005	0.04775	0.0844	0.03980	0.1457	0.02702	0.2667	0.08068	0.1337
2006	0.12432	0.0019	0.12857	0.0299	0.12174	0.0355	0.14549	0.0402
2007	0.05059	0.0816	0.06107	0.0453	0.01044	0.3354	0.05779	0.2019

B) Year	Treatment		Control vs. Burn		Control vs. Mow		Burn vs. Mow	
	<i>A</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>P</i>
2001	0.01647	0.2731	----	----	----	----	----	----
2002	0.03553	0.0937	0.00282	0.5258	0.04903	0.1555	0.01781	0.0698
2003	0.07715	0.0707	0.10458	0.0907	0.01667	0.4180	0.04849	0.2667
2005	0.02984	0.0437	0.02236	0.1548	0.02430	0.2130	0.03589	0.1673
2006	0.08069	0.0024	0.04449	0.0483	0.10646	0.0327	0.07494	0.0426
2007	0.04602	0.0932	0.04654	0.0596	0.04646	0.0492	0.05033	0.2154

to implementing controlled burns and their undesirable effects on some species, an integrated program of fire and mowing may provide the optimal mix for promoting native biodiversity while reducing the risk or magnitude of undesirable ecological responses. Remnant Willamette Valley wet prairies, like upland prairies, savannas, and oak woodlands, therefore require an integrated management approach to achieve biodiversity conservation objectives. Fire and mowing are best viewed as parts of an integrated management regime that includes other activities such as herbicide applications to manage noxious weeds, manual or mechanical removal of woody vegetation, and seeding and planting of native grasses and forbs. Other studies of combined treatments have shown more desirable results can be achieved, especially when enhancing lower quality prairie remnants, if treatments are scheduled with a specific sequence and timing. In this context, the value of burning over mowing as a management tool comes not just from the greater number of desirable effects observed in this study, but also from its potential to create a window for additional restoration treatments such as seeding or herbicide application (Stanley et al. 2011).

Decisions about where, when, and how often to implement fire or mowing treatments are largely made based on context; some factors to consider will inevitably be site specific, but other factors may be common for a class or classes of sites. Based upon the findings of our study and others, there are two situations where the use of fire is especially appropriate. The first is in high

quality prairies, where the abundance of native herbaceous plants compared to non-native species makes an overall positive response most likely. In such sites, even where certain native species experience a decline, there is a higher probability that the openings thus created will be colonized by another native species, compared to the response in a low quality prairies. Second, fire is a preferred management tool over mowing in lower quality prairies where individual non-native species that exhibit a desirable response to fire are specific management targets. *Leucanthemum vulgare*, which is abundant in many prairie remnants, is an example of a non-native species that exhibited a desirable response to fire in our study in the vegetative stage, while the effect of mowing on the reproductive stage produced an undesirable effect. Thus our study provides additional insights to support managers' decision-making processes when considering and prioritizing potential prairie management treatments.

Acknowledgments

We thank Gilbert Voss, Jean Jancaitis, and Matt Benotsch for their work in the field collecting plot data and implementing management treatments, and two anonymous *Northwest Science* reviewers for helpful comments on earlier drafts of the text. We also thank the West Eugene Wetlands Partnership, particularly the Bureau of Land Management, for continued support of the prescribed fire program. Partial funding for this work was provided by the Bonneville Power Administration, Wildlife Mitigation Program.

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EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Public Hearing: An Ordinance Concerning Polystyrene and Single-Use Bag Regulations; Amending Sections 6.850, 6.855, 6.874 and 6.876 of the Eugene Code, 1971; Deleting Section 6.878 of the Eugene Code, 1971; and Providing an Effective Date

Meeting Date: June 15, 2026
Department: Planning & Development
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: 2
Staff Contact: Donny Addison
Phone: 541-682-5463

ISSUE STATEMENT

This public hearing is an opportunity to hear from the community on proposed updates to Chapter 6 of the Eugene Code to align the City's regulations with recent changes in state law related to polystyrene foam food containers and packaging peanuts, and single-use checkout bags.

BACKGROUND

The City of Eugene is an early leader in addressing the local impact of polystyrene foam food and drink containers and single-use checkout bags. Recently, the Oregon Legislature adopted or amended changes to state law governing food containers and single-use checkout bags. The proposed code updates that are the subject to this public hearing are intended to align City Code with recent changes in state law and further advance the City of Eugene's Climate Action Plan 2.0 through waste prevention and reuse.

Polystyrene Foam Food and Drink Containers

In 2019, the Eugene City Council passed an ordinance prohibiting food service providers from distributing prepared food and drink in containers made from polystyrene foam. ([Ordinance No. 20623](#)). During the 2023 legislative Session, the Oregon Legislature adopted Senate Bill 543 (SB 543), which became effective January 1, 2025. SB 543 prohibits the following:

- Food vendors from using polystyrene foam containers for prepared food.
- The sale or distribution of polystyrene foam foodware containers or polystyrene foam packaging peanuts.
- The sale or distribution of foodware containers containing intentionally added perfluoroalkyl or polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

The ordinance provided in Attachment A updates the City Code to align with the definitions and provisions contained in SB 543.

Single-Use Checkout Bags

In 2012, the Eugene City Council passed an ordinance encouraging the use of reusable bags, banning single-use plastic carryout bags, and requiring businesses to charge a five-cent fee for each recyclable carryout bag ([Ordinance No. 20498](#)).

Subsequently, in June 2019, the Oregon Legislature adopted House Bill 2509 (HB 2509). Like Eugene's Code, HB 2509 prohibited retail establishments from providing single-use bags made of plastic. In addition, HB 2509 prohibited the distribution of single-use bags made of non-recycled paper or any other material. In November 2019, Eugene City Council adopted an ordinance that updated City Code to comply with the new state law.

In 2025, the Oregon Legislature adopted Senate Bill 551 which made several adjustments to existing state law on single-use checkout bags to further promote reusable and recyclable alternatives. The bill requires:

- Retail establishments must provide paper checkout bags that are made from 40 percent recycled and/or renewable content.
- Restaurants may not provide single-use check-out bags to customers but may provide recycled paper checkout bags for free.

The proposed ordinance provided in Attachment A would update the City Code to align with the provisions contained in SB 551. Because the changes to statewide regulation of single-use checkout bags do not become operative until January 1, 2027, the ordinance includes a delayed effective date of January 1, 2027, for the amendments to the City's single-use checkout bag regulations.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

These ordinances support [Climate Action Plan 2.0](#) by reducing upstream emissions from materials used in Eugene. The polystyrene ordinance limits reliance on nonrenewable, hard-to-recycle products. The single-use ordinance promotes recyclable, recycled-content paper bags and encourages reusable bags to reduce waste.

The polystyrene ordinance supports the [City's Stormwater Management Plan](#) by reducing a non-biodegradable material that persists in the environment, harms wildlife, and increases cleanup challenges. Cutting polystyrene in the waste stream helps protect local ecosystems and strengthens community resilience.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

[November 25, 2019 Meeting](#)

Councilor Taylor, seconded by Councilor Semple, moved to adopt an Ordinance Concerning Restrictions on the Use of Polystyrene Containers and Adding Sections 6.874, 6.876, and 6.878 to the Eugene Code, 1971.

Passed 8:0

[November 25, 2019 Meeting](#)

Councilor Taylor, seconded by Councilor Semple, moved to adopt an Ordinance Concerning Single-Use Checkout Bags, Amending Sections 6.850 and 6.855 of the Eugene Code, 1971, and Repealing Sections 6.860 and 6.865 of that Code.

Passed 8:0

COUNCIL OPTIONS

This item is scheduled for public hearing only. No action is required at this time.

June 15, 2026 Public Hearing – Item 2

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

None.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS

None.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. An Ordinance Concerning Polystyrene and Single-Use Bag Regulations; Amending Sections 6.850, 6.855, 6.874 and 6.876 of the Eugene Code, 1971; Deleting Section 6.878 of the Eugene Code, 1971; and Providing an Effective Date.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Staff Contact: Donny Addison, Waste Prevention Program Manager

Phone: 541-682-5463

Staff E-Mail: daddison@eugene-or.gov

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE CONCERNING POLYSTYRENE AND SINGLE-USE BAG REGULATIONS; AMENDING SECTIONS 6.850, 6.855, 6.874 AND 6.876 OF THE EUGENE CODE, 1971; DELETING SECTION 6.878 OF THE EUGENE CODE, 1971; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

THE CITY OF EUGENE DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Section 6.850 of the Eugene Code, 1971, is amended by adding the definition for “Nonwood renewable fiber,” deleting the definitions for “Reusable fabric checkout bag” and “Reusable plastic checkout bag” and amending the definitions of “Recycled paper checkout bag” and “Single-use checkout bag” to provide as follows:

6.850 Single-Use Checkout Bag – Definitions.

For purposes of sections 6.850 to 6.865 of this code, the following words and phrases mean:

Garment bag. Means a large bag that incorporates a hanger on which garments may be hung to prevent wrinkling during travel or storage.

Nonwood renewable fiber. Means plant-based fiber other than fiber derived from a tree.

Recycled paper checkout bag. Means a paper bag that contains:

(a) ~~A~~ at least 40 percent post-consumer recycled fiber

(b) At least 40 nonwood renewable fiber; or

(c) A combination of post-consumer recycled fiber and nonwood renewable fiber that totals at least 40 percent.

Restaurant. Means an establishment where the primary business is the preparation of food or drink:

(a) For consumption by the public;

(b) In a form or quantity that is consumable then and there, whether or not it is consumed within the confines of the place where prepared; or

(c) In consumable form for consumption outside the place where prepared.

Retail establishment. Means a store that sells or offers for sale goods at retail and that is not a restaurant.

~~Reusable fabric checkout bag. Means a bag with handles that is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse and is made of cloth or other machine washable fabric.~~

~~Reusable plastic checkout bag. Means a bag with handles that is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse and is made of durable plastic that is at least four mils thick.~~

Single-use checkout bag. Means a bag made of paper, plastic or any other material that is provided by a retail establishment or restaurant to a customer at the time of checkout, and that is not a recycled paper checkout bag, ~~a reusable fabric checkout bag or a reusable plastic checkout bag.~~

Single-use checkout bag. Does not mean:

- (a) A bag that is provided by a retail establishment to a customer at a time other than the time of checkout, including but not limited to bags provided to:
 - 1. Package bulk items such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, greeting cards or small hardware items, including nails, bolts or screws;
 - 2. Contain or wrap frozen food, meat, fish, flowers, a potted plant or another item for the purpose of addressing dampness or sanitation;
 - 3. Contain unwrapped prepared food or a bakery good; or
 - 4. Contain a prescription drug;
- (b) A newspaper bag, door hanger bag, garment bag, laundry bag or dry cleaning bag; or
- (c) A bag sold in a package containing multiple bags for uses such as food storage, garbage containment or pet waste collection.

Section 2. Section 6.855 of the Eugene Code, 1971, is amended to provide as follows:

6.855 Single-Use Checkout Bag – Regulations and Exemptions.

(1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, a retail establishment may not provide:

- (a) Single-use checkout bags to customers.
- (b) Recycled paper checkout bags, ~~reusable fabric checkout bags or reusable plastic checkout bags~~ to customers unless the retail establishment charges not less than five cents for each recycled paper checkout bag, ~~reusable fabric checkout bag or reusable plastic checkout bag.~~

(2) A retail establishment may provide recycled paper checkout bags at no cost to customers who:

- ~~(a) Reusable fabric checkout bags at no cost to customers as a promotion on 12 or fewer days in a calendar year.~~

~~(b) Recycled paper checkout bags or reusable plastic checkout bags at no cost to customers who:~~

~~1.(a)~~ Use a voucher issued under the Women, Infants and Children Program established under ORS 413.500.

~~2.(b)~~ Use an electronic benefits transfer card issued by the Department of Human Services.

(3) A restaurant may not provide single-use checkout bags to customers. Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, a restaurant may not provide:

~~(a) Single-use checkout bags to customers.~~

~~(b) Reusable plastic checkout bags to customers unless the restaurant charges not less than five cents for each reusable plastic checkout bag.~~

(4) A restaurant may provide:

~~(a) R~~ecycled paper checkout bags at no cost to customers.

~~(b) Reusable plastic checkout bags at no cost to customers who use an electronic benefits transfer card issued by the Department of Human Services.~~

Section 3. Section 6.874 of the Eugene Code, 1971, is amended to provide as follows:

6.874 Polystyrene Foam Container Use and Polystyrene Foam Packaging Peanuts Use – Definitions.

For purposes of sections 6.874 to 6.878 of this code, the following words and phrases mean:

City sponsored event. Any event organized or sponsored by the city or any department of the city.

Food vendor. A business, organization or other person that sells prepared food or offers prepared food for sale to the public, including, but not limited to, a store, shop or other sales outlet, a restaurant, a delicatessen or a cart, truck or other vehicle from which the business, organization or other person sells prepared food or offers prepared food for sale.

Foodware container. Bowls, plates, cups, lids, clamshells, other containers, or any other items used for serving or containing prepared food, including takeout food and leftovers from partially consumed meals prepared by food vendors.

Perfluoroalkyl or polyfluoroalkyl substance. A substance included in a class of fluorinated organic chemicals containing at least one fully fluorinated carbon atom.

~~*Polystyrene foam container.* A container that is made, in whole or in part, of a thermoplastic polymer, including, but not limited to, a solid polystyrene plastic or a polystyrene plastic foam, made for the purpose of and ordinarily used once for the purpose of serving, containing, preserving or consuming prepared food before being discarded. Types of polystyrene~~

~~containers include, but are not limited to cups, bowls, plates, trays, and clamshell containers. Polystyrene containers do not include:~~

(a) A cooler or foodware container that is:

1. Made of polystyrene plastic foam;
2. Made for the purpose of serving, containing, preserving or consuming prepared food; and
3. Ordinarily used once for serving, containing, preserving or consuming prepared food before being discarded.

(b) The following are not polystyrene foam containers:

- ~~(a)~~1. A cooler or other container that is made of a polystyrene foam, that is intended for more than one use and that is enclosed by a solid ~~plastic~~ shell;
- ~~(b)~~2. A tray or container used solely to store, ship or otherwise transport an ingredient or food product that is not prepared food; or
- ~~(c)~~3. Polystyrene plastic material, other than polystyrene foam packaging peanuts, that is used solely for packing or protecting other items ~~other than prepared food~~ during storage, shipping or other transportation.

Polystyrene foam packaging peanuts. Loose fill material made of polystyrene foam used to protect items during shipping or other transportation.

Prepared food.

(a) Prepared food means food or a beverage that:

1. A food vendor prepares on the food vendor's premises or that another person prepares and provides to the food vendor for sale to the public; and
2. An individual may consume immediately or without the need for further or additional preparation.

(b) Prepared food does not include meat, fish, eggs, or produce, if the meat, fish, eggs or produce are raw and have not been prepared for immediate consumption. ~~Food or a beverage that a retail food and beverage establishment prepares on their premises or that another person prepares and provides to the retail food and beverage establishment for sale to the public and that a person may consume immediately or without the need for additional preparation. Prepared food does not include raw meat, fish, or eggs that have not been prepared for immediate consumption.~~

~~Retail food and beverage establishment. Full service restaurants, limited service restaurants, fast food restaurants, food carts, bars, coffee and tea shops, grocery stores, convenience stores, hotels and motels, caterers, and food service contractors.~~

~~Undue hardship. Circumstances or situations unique to the retail food and beverage establishment, such that there are no reasonable alternatives to polystyrene containers.~~

Section 4. Section 6.876 of the Eugene Code, 1971, is amended to provide as follows:

6.876 Polystyrene Foam Container Use and Polystyrene Foam Packaging Peanuts Use – Regulations.

~~Except as exempted in section 6.878 of this code:~~

~~(a) Retail food and beverage establishments shall not use, provide, or make polystyrene containers available to members of the public in the course of selling, offering for sale, serving, or dispensing prepared food to members of the public.~~

(a) A food vendor may not use a polystyrene foam container in selling, offering for sale, serving or dispensing prepared food to a consumer.

(b) A person may not sell, offer for sale, or distribute polystyrene foam containers or polystyrene foam packaging peanuts in or into the City of Eugene.

(c) A person may not sell, offer for sale, or distribute a foodware container containing intentionally added perfluoroalkyl or polyfluoroalkyl substances in or into the City of Eugene.

~~(d)~~ No person shall sell, offer for sale, serve, or dispense prepared food in a polystyrene foam container at any city facility, city sponsored event, or city permitted event.

~~(e)~~ City departments may not purchase, acquire, or use polystyrene foam containers for prepared food.

~~(f)~~ ~~Retail food and beverage establishments~~ Food vendors under contract with the city may not use polystyrene foam containers for prepared food in city facilities and while performing under a city contract.

Section 5. Section 6.878 of the Eugene Code, 1971, is deleted.

~~**6.878 Polystyrene Container Use – Exemptions.**~~

~~Notwithstanding section 6.876 this code, the city manager or designee may exempt a retail food and beverage establishment from the requirements set forth in section 6.876 of this code for a period of not more than one year upon the retail food and beverage establishment showing, in writing, that this code would create an undue hardship or practical difficulty not generally applicable to other persons in similar circumstances. Requests for exemptions will not be accepted after December 31, 2020. The decision to grant or deny an exemption shall be in writing, and the city manager's or designee's decision shall be final.~~

Section 6. The City Recorder, at the request of, or with the consent of the City Attorney, is authorized to administratively correct any reference errors contained herein, or in other provisions of the Eugene Code, 1971, to the provisions added, amended or repealed herein.

Section 7. The amendments to Sections 6.850 and 6.855 of the Eugene Code 1971, as shown in Sections 1 and 2 of this Ordinance, shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

Section 8. The amendments to Sections 6.874, 6.876 and 6.878 of the Eugene Code, 1971, as shown in Sections 3, 4 and 5 of this Ordinance, shall take effect pursuant to Section 32 of the Eugene Charter of 2002.

Passed by the City Council this

___ day of _____, 2026

City Recorder

Approved by the Mayor this

___ day of _____, 2026

Mayor

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Public Hearing: An Ordinance Concerning Housing Production Incentives and Adding Sections 2.950, 2.951 and 2.952 to the Eugene Code, 1971

Meeting Date: June 15, 2026
Department: Planning and Development
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: 3
Staff Contact: Amanda D'Souza
Phone: 541-682-5540

ISSUE STATEMENT

This public hearing is an opportunity to hear from the community about the proposal to create two new housing production incentives aimed at supporting: 1) the production of moderate-income housing along transit corridors across the City; and 2) the creation of housing in commercial centers. City Council discussed the proposed programs on February 11, 2026, and directed the City Manager to prepare a draft ordinance to implement the programs and to schedule a public hearing on the ordinance. The draft ordinance is included in Attachment A. A summary of the proposed tax exemption programs is in Attachment B.

BACKGROUND

As part of Urban Growth Strategies (UGS), Eugene will advance specific actions to address housing and job needs for the next 20 years. Eugene needs more than 26,000 new homes over the next 20 years, according to the 2026 Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (see Attachment C). For years, staff have worked across the City organization to identify opportunities for new or expanded financial incentives to increase capacity for housing development. At the November 12, 2025, work session on UGS, staff briefly previewed the Housing Production Incentives as priority housing actions.

At the February 11, 2026, work session, staff provided an overview on three proposed housing production incentive programs, based on research and community feedback, for Council consideration. At the work session, Council directed staff to prepare an ordinance implementing the three proposed programs: 1) a Tax Exemption for Moderate Income Housing, 2) a Tax Exemption for Housing in Commercial Centers, and 3) a Moderate-Income Revolving Loan Fund. This public hearing is an opportunity for the public to provide comments on the two proposed tax exemption programs. The public will have an opportunity to provide comments on the third proposed program, a Moderate-Income Revolving Loan fund, at a future public hearing. The two new proposed tax exemption programs are enabled by a state law that encourages transit supportive multi-unit housing, the same law that enables the City's current Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPTEx) program in the downtown.

Proposed Tax Exemption for Moderate Income Housing

The first proposed program is designed to fill a gap in the City's existing housing incentive programs, as none of the City's current tax incentive programs are geared specifically toward moderate income housing (affordable to households earning between 60 and 120 percent of Area Median Income). The proposed program would offer ten-year tax exemptions on the assessed value

June 15, 2026 Public Hearing – Item 3

of new moderate income housing construction that meets the eligibility criteria. Similar to the existing Low Income Rental Housing Property Tax Exemption (LIRHPTE) and MUPTE programs, this program would support housing development by reducing operating costs in the early years of a housing development so that it becomes more financially feasible. The proposed program is described in detail in Attachment B.

Proposed Tax Exemption for Housing in Commercial Centers

The second proposed program is designed to respond to the City's need for continued development of new housing, especially in commercial centers, which generally provide easy access to transit and feature a range of commercial services, community services, and employment opportunities. Commercial centers support higher-intensity development and serve both the needs of surrounding residents and the needs of individuals from across the city. Despite these attributes, the city has seen a minimal amount of residential development in commercial centers in recent years. The proposed program would provide ten-year tax exemptions of the assessed value of new housing (including new market-rate housing) in commercial centers. This program would support housing development by reducing operating costs in the early years of a housing development so that it becomes more financially feasible. The proposed program is described in detail in Attachment B.

Both of these proposed incentives align with new compact development and housing goals policies proposed for inclusion in the Envision Eugene Comprehensive Plan, including encouraging more housing in centers and along key corridors with access to transit and other essential goods and services. In addition, the City will benefit from increased property tax revenue when the exemptions expire after 10 years.

Next Steps

Following this public hearing, Council will deliberate and consider taking action on the two proposed tax exemption programs. Council will also have a public hearing and follow-up work session on the Moderate-Income Revolving Loan Fund.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

[Housing Implementation Pipeline](#) (HIP)

The HIP describes the need for more housing, especially housing in transportation-efficient locations, and housing affordable to a wide variety of household incomes, connecting these goals with other benefits related to climate recovery and resiliency, compact development transportation efficiency, downtown vibrancy, and fiscal sustainability. Overall housing five-year goal 0-5.1 is to issue permits for the construction of 6,000 new housing units. The HIP also identified Tax Exemption Exploration as a program to be pursued during the HIP time period.

[Climate Action Plan \(CAP\) 2.0](#)

CAP 2.0 includes multiple strategies that support the development of higher density housing particularly along transportation corridors. Smaller homes tend to have a smaller carbon footprint during construction and use, and housing units built close to transit, jobs, and other amenities allow residents to access the community using fewer trips.

[Envision Eugene Pillars](#)

- Provide ample economic opportunities for all community members.

- Promote compact urban development and efficient transportation options.
- Protect, repair, and enhance neighborhood livability.
- Provide for adaptable, flexible, and collaborative implementation.

Strategic Plan Goals: Urgent Community Needs

- Strategic Goal: Stabilize the cost of housing.
 - High-Impact Action: Support efforts to preserve and construct Affordable Housing units (rental and homeownership), Permanent Supportive Housing units, and Moderate-Income Housing units; includes developing local funding strategies.
 - High-Impact Actions: Develop Affordable Housing units with innovative funding strategies that specifically support protected classes' access to housing.
- Strategic Goal: Advance climate action and community resilience to natural and human-caused disasters.
 - High-Impact Action: Decrease transportation-related emissions and make the transportation network diverse and adaptable through continued implementation of the Eugene 2035 Transportation System Plan and related compact development actions in Envision Eugene.
 - High-Impact Action: Continue to implement strategies from the Climate Action Plan 2.0 to improve and enhance efficiency and resilience of buildings in Eugene, including City-owned facilities.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

February 11, 2026 Work Session

Councilor Leech, seconded by Councilor Kashinsky, moved to direct the City Manager to schedule a public hearing on an ordinance implementing the proposed production incentives and move to direct the City Manager to schedule a work session following the public hearing.

Passed 8:0

COUNCIL OPTIONS

This item is scheduled for public hearing only. No action is required at this time.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

None.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS

None.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. An Ordinance Concerning Housing Production Incentives and Adding Sections 2.950, 2.951

June 15, 2026 Public Hearing – Item 3

And 2.952 to the Eugene Code, 1971.

B. Housing Production Incentives: Tax Exemption Programs

C. Supplemental Information and Key Questions

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ORDINANCE NO. _____**AN ORDINANCE CONCERNING HOUSING PRODUCTION INCENTIVES AND
ADDING SECTIONS 2.950, 2.951 AND 2.952 TO THE EUGENE CODE, 1971.****The City Council of the City of Eugene finds as follows:**

A. The provisions of ORS 307.600 to ORS 307.637 enable the city to grant local property tax exemptions to encourage multiple-unit housing located in core areas and transit-oriented areas designated by the city.

B. The City Council finds that the commercial centers shown on the overview map and map tiles that together comprise Map 2.951(2)(d)2. Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Commercial Centers, attached as Exhibits A-1 through A-5 to this Ordinance, are core areas of the city that are eligible for the property tax exemption enabled by ORS 307.600 to ORS 307.637. Specifically, the City Council finds that the commercial centers shown on Map 2.951(2)(d)2. Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Commercial Centers, including the city’s downtown, function as core areas of the city because they support higher-intensity development and serve both the needs of surrounding residents and the needs of individuals from across the city. The City Council further finds that commercial centers generally provide easy access to transit and feature a range of commercial services, community services, employment opportunities, public facilities, and housing options. Finally, the City Council finds that there is a need and demand for housing in commercial centers and that the housing that is needed is not likely to be produced without the incentive of a property tax exemption.

C. The City Council finds that the properties identified on the overview map and map tiles that together comprise Map 2.951(2)(e)2. Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas, attached to this Ordinance as Exhibits B-1 through B-5 to this Ordinance, are transit-oriented areas eligible for the property tax exemption enabled by ORS 307.600 to ORS 307.637. Specifically, the City Council finds that a “transit-oriented area” is an area located within one-quarter mile of a fixed-route transit service. The City Council further finds that a “fixed-route” service is a bus service that operates on a specific schedule and along a consistent route. An alternative to fixed-route service would be demand-responsive service where routing and scheduling are created daily based upon the individual needs of riders. The City Council finds that the transit-oriented areas identified on Map 2.951(2)(e)2. Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas, are within one-quarter mile of the streets identified as Key Corridors in Appendix E to the Eugene 2035 Transportation System Plan, the city’s adopted and acknowledged local transportation plan, and that Key Corridors support frequent and reliable transit service. The City Council finds that the properties identified on Map 2.951(2)(e)2. Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas, are located within one-quarter mile of a fixed-route transit service. Finally, the City Council finds that there is a need and demand for moderate income housing located near transit and affordable to households earning 60-120% of the area median income. The City Council finds that moderate income housing located near transit is not likely to be produced without the incentive of a property tax exemption.

THE CITY OF EUGENE DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The following sections 2.950, 2.951 and 2.952 are added to the Eugene Code, 1971.

2.950 Property Tax Exemption – Housing Production Incentive.

(1) The provisions of ORS 307.600 to 307.637 enable the city to grant local property tax exemptions for multiple-unit housing located in core areas and transit-oriented areas designated by the city.

(2) The city council has designated the commercial centers shown on the overview map and map tiles that together comprise Map 2.951(2)(d)2. Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Commercial Centers, as core areas of the city that are eligible for the property tax exemption authorized by EC 2.950 through 2.952. There is a need and demand for housing in commercial centers and that housing is not likely to be produced without the incentive of the property tax exemption authorized by EC 2.950 through 2.952. The provisions of ORS 307.600 to 307.637 are hereby adopted as the city's property tax exemption program for multiple-unit housing located in commercial centers.

(3) The city council has designated the properties shown on the overview map and map tiles that together comprise Map 2.951(2)(e)2. Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas, as transit-oriented areas eligible for the property tax exemption authorized by EC 2.950 through 2.952. There is a need and demand for housing located in transit-oriented areas and affordable to households earning 60-120% of the area median income. That housing is not likely to be produced without the incentive of the property tax exemption authorized by EC 2.950 through 2.952. The provisions of ORS 307.600 to 307.637 are hereby adopted as the city's property tax exemption program for multiple-unit moderate income housing located in transit-oriented areas.

(4) The incentives described in subsections (2) and (3) are intended to:

(a) Stimulate the construction of multiple-unit housing in the city's commercial centers and designated transit-oriented areas to improve the balance between the residential and commercial nature of those areas, and to ensure full-time use of the areas as places where members of the community have an opportunity to live as well as work;

(b) Encourage the development of vacant or under-utilized sites in commercial centers and designated transit-oriented areas, rather than sites where sound or rehabilitable multiple-unit housing exists;

(c) Encourage the development of multiple-unit housing, with or without parking, in structures that may include ground-level commercial space;

(d) Encourage the development of multiple-unit housing, with or without parking, on sites with existing single-story commercial structures;

(e) Encourage the development of multiple-unit housing, with or without parking, on existing surface parking lots; and

(f) Preserve existing publicly assisted housing that is affordable to low-income persons by providing the incentives authorized in ORS 307.600 to 307.637 to existing multiple-unit housing that is subject to a low-income housing assistance contract with an agency or subdivision of this state or the United States.

(3) *Application Requirements.*

(a) Applications for property tax exemption hereunder shall be filed with the city manager and shall be accompanied by an application fee. The application shall contain the information required by, and be processed in accordance with, administrative rules adopted by the city manager in the manner described in section 2.019 of this code. The application shall clearly state whether the applicant elects to have the application evaluated under the Commercial Centers criteria in EC 2.951(2)(d) or the Transit-Oriented criteria in EC 2.951(2)(e).

(b) Whether the applicant elects to proceed under either the Commercial Centers criteria in EC 2.951(2)(d) or the Transit-Oriented criteria in EC 2.951(2)(e), prior to filing the application, the applicant, including at least one of the applicant's principals, must have arranged for and attended one public engagement opportunity with residents in the neighborhood, including the board of any city-recognized affected neighborhood association, and then included in the application copies of comments received from the meeting or documentation of the applicant's attempt to solicit comments.

(4) *Application Review and City Manager Recommendation.* No later than 135 days following receipt of a complete application, the city manager shall provide the council with the city manager's recommendation on the application.

(5) *Council Consideration.*

(a) Upon receipt of the city manager's written recommendation on an application, the council shall consider the application, the city manager's written recommendation, and any written comments submitted on the application.

(b) If, within 180 days from the date of the city's receipt of a complete application, the council fails to act on an application, the application shall be deemed approved and processed thereafter in accordance with subsection (6)(b) of this section.

(c) At the meeting at which the city manager's recommendation on an application is considered, or at a subsequent meeting, the council shall adopt a resolution approving the application and granting the property tax exemption or adopt a resolution disapproving the application and denying the property tax exemption.

(d) The council shall approve an application if the council determines that the applicable criteria described in section 2.951(2) of this code have been met. The resolution approving the exemption shall set forth any specific conditions of approval. The exemption may not include the land or any improvements not a part of the multiple-unit housing. The exemption may include parking constructed as part of the multiple-unit housing construction, addition or conversion, and commercial property to the extent that the commercial property is a required design or public benefit element of a multiple-unit housing construction, addition or conversion approved by the city. In the case of a structure to which stories or other improvements are added or a structure that is converted

in whole or in part from other use to dwelling units, only the increase in value attributable to the addition or conversion may be exempt from taxation.

(e) If the council determines that one or more of the applicable criteria in section 2.951(2) of this code are not met, the council shall deny the application. The resolution denying an application shall set forth the specific reasons for denial.

(6) *Resolution Filing.*

(a) The city manager shall forward to the applicant a copy of the resolution adopted by the council within 10 days following the date the council acts on the application. In addition, on or before the April 1st next following the approval, the city manager shall file with the county assessor a copy of the resolution approving an application.

(b) With respect to an application deemed approved through inaction of the council under subsection (5)(b) of this section, on or before the April 1st next following the expiration of the period for council action identified in subsection (5)(b), the city manager shall file with the county assessor an administrative order containing the same findings and information as required to be set forth in a resolution approving an application and forward a copy thereof to the applicant.

(7) Notwithstanding subsection (8) of section 2.952 of this code, if multiple-unit housing granted an exemption pursuant to subsection (5) of this section is or becomes subject to a low income rental assistance contract with an agency of this state or the United States, the city may extend the exemption through June 30 of the tax year during which the expiration date of the contract falls.

2.951 Multiple-Unit Housing – Threshold Criteria and Public Benefits.

(1) *Boundaries.* Sections 2.950 through 2.952 of this code shall apply only to the properties located in the commercial centers depicted on Map 2.951(2)(d)2. Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Commercial Centers, and the properties located in the transit-oriented areas depicted on Map 2.951(2)(e)2 Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas.

(2) *Criteria for Approval.* No exemption may be approved under subsection (5) of section 2.950 of this code unless the application complies with the approval criteria in EC 2.951(2)(a) through 2.951(2)(c) and either all of the Commercial Centers approval criteria in EC 2.951(2)(d), or all of the Transit-Oriented approval criteria in EC 2.951(2)(e).

(a) *Project Completion.* In the case of the construction of, or the addition or conversion to, multiple-unit housing, the construction, addition, or conversion will be completed on or before January 1, 2032.

(b) *Multiple Unit Housing Subject to a Low-Income Assistance Contract.* In the case of multiple-unit housing subject to a low-income housing assistance contract with an agency or subdivision of this state or the United States:

1. The application for exemption was made on or before January 1, 2032;

2. It is important to the community to preserve the housing as low-income housing and it is probable that the housing would not be produced as or remain low-income housing without the exemption being granted.

(c) *No Transient Accommodations.* The multiple-unit housing is not designed for, and will not be used as, transient accommodations.

(d) *Commercial Centers Approval Criteria.*

1. *Required Number of Units.* The project will provide multiple-unit housing of four or more new units through new construction, an addition to an existing structure, or a conversion of a structure from another use to dwelling units.

2. *Property Location.*

a. The project must be located within the commercial centers depicted on the overview map and map tiles that together comprise Map 2.951(2)(d)2. Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Commercial Centers; and

b. The project must be located within the city limits.

3. *Compact Urban Development.* Except in the case of the conversion of a building or portion of a building from another use to housing, the project must result in a minimum residential density of 25 units per acre.

4. *Eligible Project Types.* No exemption may be granted for a project designed for the leasing of individual rooms or beds, rather than entire apartment units, or a project otherwise designed primarily for individuals attending college.

5. *Project Need.*

a. Projects must demonstrate financial need by showing that, without the multiple-unit property tax exemption, either:

(1) Total project cost exceeds project value at stabilization; or

(2) The yield on cost at stabilization (net operating income divided by the total project cost) is less than 6.0%.

b. Total project cost may include imputed land cost and may include developer fees totaling up to 5% of hard costs, including land.

c. Project value is based on pro forma stabilized net operating income and current capitalization rate for multi-unit property in the region.

d. Stabilization is the period that the project is projected to be fully leased.

6. *Historic Resources.* The project complies with requirements in administrative rules adopted by the city manager related to proximity to historic resources.

7. *Displacement.* If the project will cause existing dwelling units to become uninhabitable (for example, because the existing units are demolished or converted to another use) the project must result in a number of dwelling units that is at least 150% of the original number of dwelling units that were located on the site. (For example, if a building containing 10 housing units is demolished, in order for the new units to comply with the Commercial Centers approval criteria, the project must include at least 15 dwelling units.)

8. *Project Design and Compatibility.*

a. The applicant has included a detailed description of the proposed project and graphic information including site plans and elevations containing sufficient detail to demonstrate that the project addresses a set of basic design principles in the context of the project location. The city manager shall adopt as part of the administrative rules to implement these sections a more detailed description of the required design principles, including the scale, form, and quality of the building; the mix of project elements; and the relationship to the street and surrounding uses.

b. Compliance with the project design elements that were reviewed at the time of council approval is a condition of approval of the exemption, except that the city manager may approve a deviation from those design elements if the city manager determines in writing that the deviations provide the same or greater degree of adherence to the design principles.

9. *Green Building.*

a. Green building requirements apply only to the residential occupancy areas and common areas such as hallways, stairwells, centralized HVAC or hot water heating, and laundry facilities. The requirements do not apply to the commercial areas or ancillary amenities such as parking garage, swimming pools, and recreation centers.

b. The project will perform at least 10% more efficiently than the performance established in the Oregon Energy Efficiency Specialty Code (OEESC).

(1) Green building requirements for one to three story multiple-family buildings are as follows:

(A) Obtain LEED v4 Homes Design and Construction certification, LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C Multifamily Homes certification, or LEED v5 for BD+C Homes certification, and modeled at least 10% above current OEESC; or

(B) Obtain Earth Advantage Silver certification or higher and provide a commissioning report.

(2) Green building requirements for four stories and above multiple-family buildings are as follows:

(A) Obtain LEED v.4 for Homes Design and Construction certification, LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C Multifamily Homes certification, or LEED v5 for BD+C Homes certification, and modeled at 10% above current OEESC; or

(B) Obtain Earth Advantage Silver certification or higher; or

(C) City review of the project demonstrates that:

i. Model building energy performance shows that the building will perform 10% above current OEESC performance;

ii. The building is constructed to modeled plans;

iii. Commissioning report will be provided within 18 months following issuance of certificate of occupancy; and

iv. Applicant commits to working with city to report multiple-unit occupancy energy use data to city for the tax-exempt period.

(D) Projects that will provide onsite parking are required to install conduit for future electric vehicle charging stations.

10. *Local Economic Impact Plan.*

a. The applicant must provide a plan that provides for more than 50% of the dollar volume of the combined professional services and construction contracts to include local firms. "Local firm" means a business that is based in Lane County.

b. The applicant must ensure that qualified minority and women business enterprises have an equitable opportunity to compete for contracts and subcontracts.

c. The city manager shall include in the administrative rules adopted to implement sections 2.950 through 2.952 of this code provisions that:

(1) Identify additional requirements for the local economic impact plan, including definitions and exceptions such as when trades are not available locally;

(2) Enable qualified minority and women business enterprises to have an equitable opportunity to compete; and

(3) Ensure that the developer and its contractors and subcontractors comply with wage, tax and licensing laws in the development of the project and posts information about the city's rights assistance program.

11. *Moderate Income Housing Contribution.*

a. The owner of the property shall comply with either subparagraph (1), or subparagraph (2), below.

(1) The owner of the property shall pay to the city an amount equal to 10% of the total property tax exemption and all such payments shall be dedicated to the facilitation or creation of moderate income housing; or

(2) The owner of the property shall ensure that, during the exemption period, at least 30% of the housing units subject to the exemption comply with the affordability requirements in EC 2.951(2)(e)4.

b. The city manager shall include provisions in the administrative rules adopted to implement sections 2.950 through 2.952 of this code that further define the term “moderate income housing” for purposes of the fee described in subparagraph (a)(1), above, and that set out the process for payment of the fee.

(e) *Transit-Oriented Approval Criteria*

1. *Required Number of Units.* The project will provide multiple-unit housing of four or more new units through new construction, an addition to an existing structure, or a conversion of a structure from another use to dwelling units.

2. *Property Location.*

a. The project must be located within one of the transit-oriented areas depicted on the overview map and map tiles that together comprise Map 2.951(2)(e)2. Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas; and

b. The project must be located within the city limits.

3. *Compact Urban Development.* Except in the case of the conversion of a building or portion of a building from another use to housing, the project must result in a minimum residential density of 25 units per acre.

4. *Affordability.*

a. During the exemption period, any units subject to the exemption and offered for rent must be offered at rental rates that are affordable to households earning 120% or less of area median income (AMI).

b. During the exemption period, any units subject to the exemption and offered for sale must be offered at a sales price affordable to households earning 120% or less of area median income (AMI).

c. The city manager may include in the additional requirements necessary to administer and enforce the affordability requirements of this subsection in the administrative rules adopted to implement sections 2.950 through 2.952 of this code; including, but not limited to, application requirements, a requirement for a recorded covenant, and procedures for staff review and enforcement.

5. *Project Need.* The applicant must demonstrate that the project would not be financially feasible without the exemption. The city manager may include additional

requirements related to demonstration of project need in the administrative rules adopted to implement sections 2.950 through 2.952 of this code.

6. *Historic Resources.* The proposed development does not cause destruction of historic properties (as defined in section 9.0500 of this code), except:

- a. Where development has proceeded according to historic property moving and demolition procedures as set forth in sections 9.8160, 9.8180 and 9.8185 of this code, or
- b. The property is granted an exception by the council.

7. *No Displacement.* The proposed development does not cause the displacement of low-income persons.

(3) *Additional and On-Going Obligations of Project Approved for Exemption.*

(a) Following approval of an exemption under section 2.950(5) of this code, the city manager shall monitor the development of the project to ensure that the project complies with the requirements of sections 2.950 through 2.952 of this code, the administrative rules adopted pursuant to this code, and any other conditions of approval of the exemption.

(b) If the applicant has elected to proceed under the Commercial Centers criteria in EC 2.951(2)(d), during the developer's design process and before the final design drawings are completed, the developer shall hold at least one neighborhood engagement opportunity to allow members of that neighborhood to provide comments on the proposal. At least one of the applicant's principals must attend that meeting. In addition, once the final design is completed and before it is submitted for permits, the developer shall allow the neighborhood an opportunity to review and comment on that final design.

2.952 Multiple-Unit Housing – Termination of Approval, Review.

(1) Except as provided in subsection (8) of this section, after a resolution approving an application has been filed, if the city manager becomes aware of any of the circumstances listed in subsection (3), the city manager shall notify the council; the owner of the property, at the owner's last known address; and any known lender, at the lender's last known address, of the manager's intention to recommend to the council that the exemption be terminated.

(2) The notice required by subsection (1) shall clearly state the reasons for the proposed termination, and shall require the owner to appear before the council, at a time specified in the notice, which shall not be less than 20 days from the date the notice was mailed, to show cause, if any exists, why the exemption should not be terminated.

(3) The city manager shall provide the notice required by subsection (1) in the event of any of the following:

- (a) Construction of the multiple-unit housing was not completed within the time specified in the resolution, and no extensions as provided in subsection (5) of this section have been granted, or

- (b) The applicant, developer, or owner of the project has failed to comply with the provisions of ORS 307.600 to 307.637 or the provisions of this code or applicable administrative rules, or
 - (c) The applicant, developer, or owner of the project has failed to comply with any conditions imposed in the resolution approving the application and the city manager has not determined in writing that project design deviations provide the same or greater degree of adherence to the design principles that council approved for the project, or
 - (d) Construction of multiple-unit housing was not completed on or before January 1, 2032, or
 - (e) In the event units within the development are sold individually, a unit owner fails to comply with applicable requirements described in subparagraphs (b) or (c) of this subsection (3).
- (4) If the owner fails to appear and show cause why the exemption should not be terminated, the city shall further notify every known lender of the owner's failure to appear and shall allow the lender a period of not less than 30 days, beginning with the date that the notice of failure to appear and show cause is mailed to the lender, to cure any noncompliance or to provide adequate assurance that the noncompliance will be remedied.
- (5) If the owner fails to appear before the council at the time specified in the notice, or if the owner appears and fails to show cause why the exemption should not be terminated, and a lender fails to cure or give adequate assurance that any noncompliance will be cured, the council shall adopt a resolution terminating the exemption, which shall contain its findings in support thereof. Copies of the resolution shall be filed with the county assessor and mailed to the property owner, at the owner's last known address, and to any lender at the lender's last-known address, within 10 days from the date the resolution is adopted. If a determination is made that the exemption should continue as previously granted, the council shall make written findings in support of the continued exemption and shall forward a copy thereof to the property owner and to any lender within 10 days from the date of adoption of the written findings.
- (6) All reviews of council action in denying, approving, or terminating an application shall be governed by the procedures set forth in ORS 34.010 to 34.100, and correction of assessments and tax rolls and the evaluation of the property shall be in conformity with ORS 307.687. The council's action on an exemption shall not be a land use decision for purposes of administrative review.
- (7) If construction, addition, or conversion of multiple-unit housing is not completed by January 1, 2032, upon receipt of a request from the property owner, the council may, by resolution, extend the deadline for completion of construction of multiple-unit housing for a period not to exceed 12 consecutive months, if it finds the failure to complete construction by the time specified in the resolution was due to circumstances beyond the control of the owner, and that the owner had been and could reasonably be expected to act in good faith and with due diligence.
- (8) In any event, no property may be granted more than one of the exemptions authorized by EC 2.945 through 2.952 and no multiple-unit housing granted an exemption by the council may be exempt from ad valorem taxation for more than 10 successive years. The first year of exemption is the assessment year beginning January 1 immediately following the calendar year

in which construction, addition or conversion is completed, determined by that stage in the construction process when, pursuant to ORS 307.330 the improvement would have gone on the tax rolls in the absence of the exemption. The exemption may not include the land, nor any improvements located thereon that are not a part of the multiple-unit housing but may include commercial use of a portion of the structure and parking constructed as part of the multiple-unit housing construction, addition or conversion, and is in addition to any other exemption provided by law. However, no property may be exempt beyond 100 percent of its real market value.

(9) Any exemption granted by the council shall terminate immediately, without right of notice or appeal, in the event the county assessor determines that a change of use to other than residential or residential with commercial uses of a portion of the structure, or housing has occurred for the multiple-use housing, or portion thereof, or if a low income housing assistance contract with an agency or subdivision of this state or the United States is breached or terminated prematurely, or a declaration as defined in ORS 100.005(12) is presented to the county assessor or tax collector for approval in connection therewith. Termination shall be in accordance with the provisions of ORS 307.627.

(10) Notwithstanding subsections (1) through (7) of this section, if applicant, developer or other owner of the project has failed to comply with the requirements of ORS 307.600 through 307.637, sections 2.950 through 2.952 of this code or the administrative rules adopted thereunder, or a resolution adopted pursuant subsection (5)(d) of section 2.950 of this code, in lieu of subsections (1) through (7) of this section, the city manager may impose penalties as set forth in section 2.1995 of this code. Each day in which a violation is caused or permitted to exist constitutes a separate violation. Failure to pay an administrative penalty authorized by this subsection shall be grounds for terminating the exemption under subsections (1) through (3) of this section.

Section 2. Recitals A-C are hereby incorporated into this Ordinance and adopted by the City Council in support of this Ordinance.

Section 3. Map 2.951(2)(d)2. Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Commercial Centers, which is composed of an overview map and four map tiles, and is attached hereto as Exhibits A-1 through A-5, shall be numerically incorporated in Chapter 2 of the Eugene Code, 1971.

Section 4. Map 2.951(2)(e)2. Property Tax Exemption – Housing Incentives for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas, which is composed of an overview map and four map tiles, and is attached hereto as Exhibits B-1 through B-5, shall be numerically incorporated in Chapter 2 of the Eugene Code, 1971.

Section 5. On or before January 1, 2029, the City Council shall be provided with data related to performance metrics for the tax exemption programs authorized by this Ordinance.

Section 6. This Ordinance shall sunset and be repealed on January 1, 2032, unless extended or made permanent by future Council action.

Section 7. The City Recorder, at the request of, or with the consent of the City Attorney, is authorized to administratively correct any reference errors contained herein, or in other provisions of the Eugene Code, 1971, to the provisions added, amended or repealed herein.

Section 8. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions hereof.

Passed by the City Council this

___ day of _____, 2026

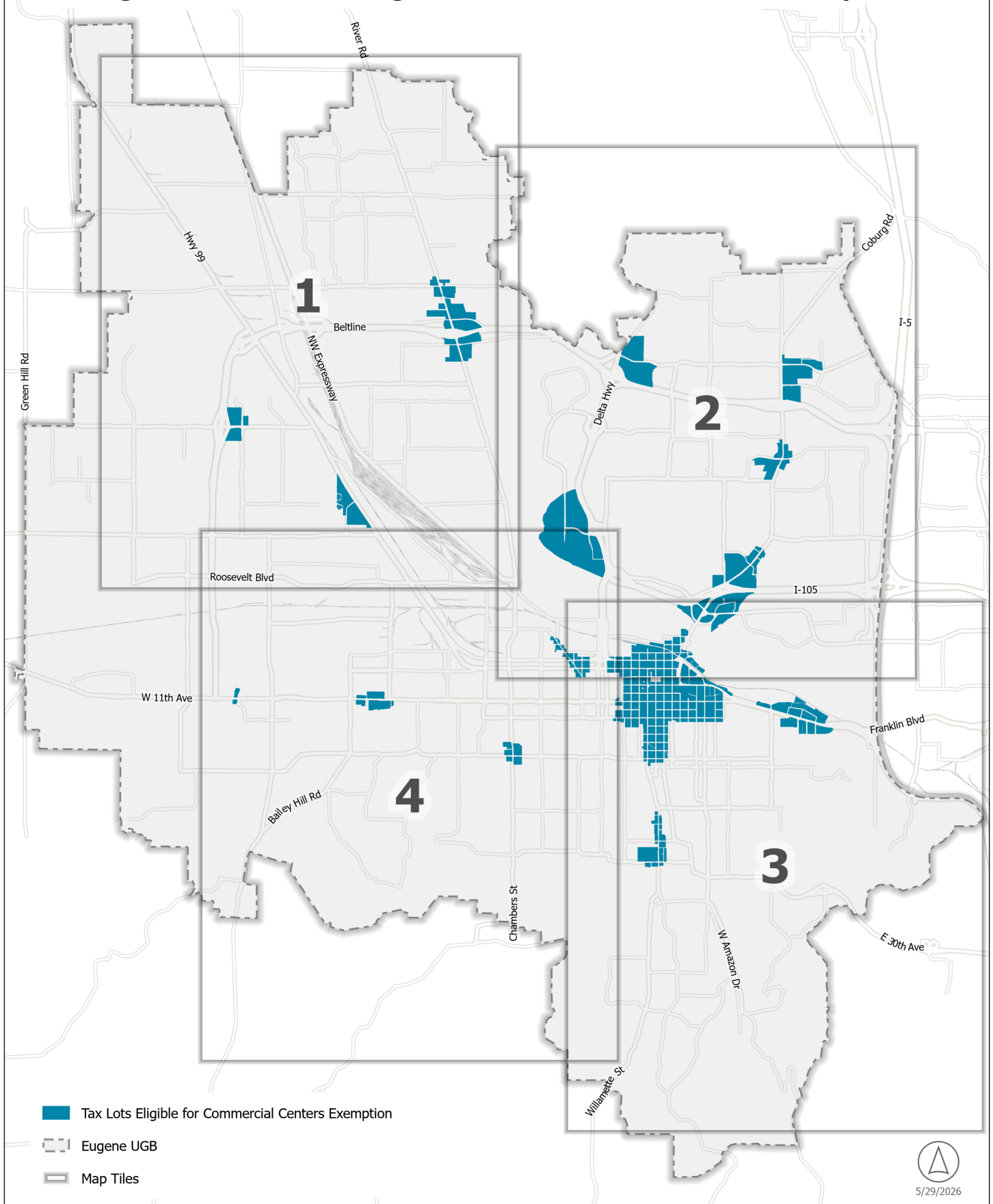
Approved by the Mayor this

___ day of _____, 2026

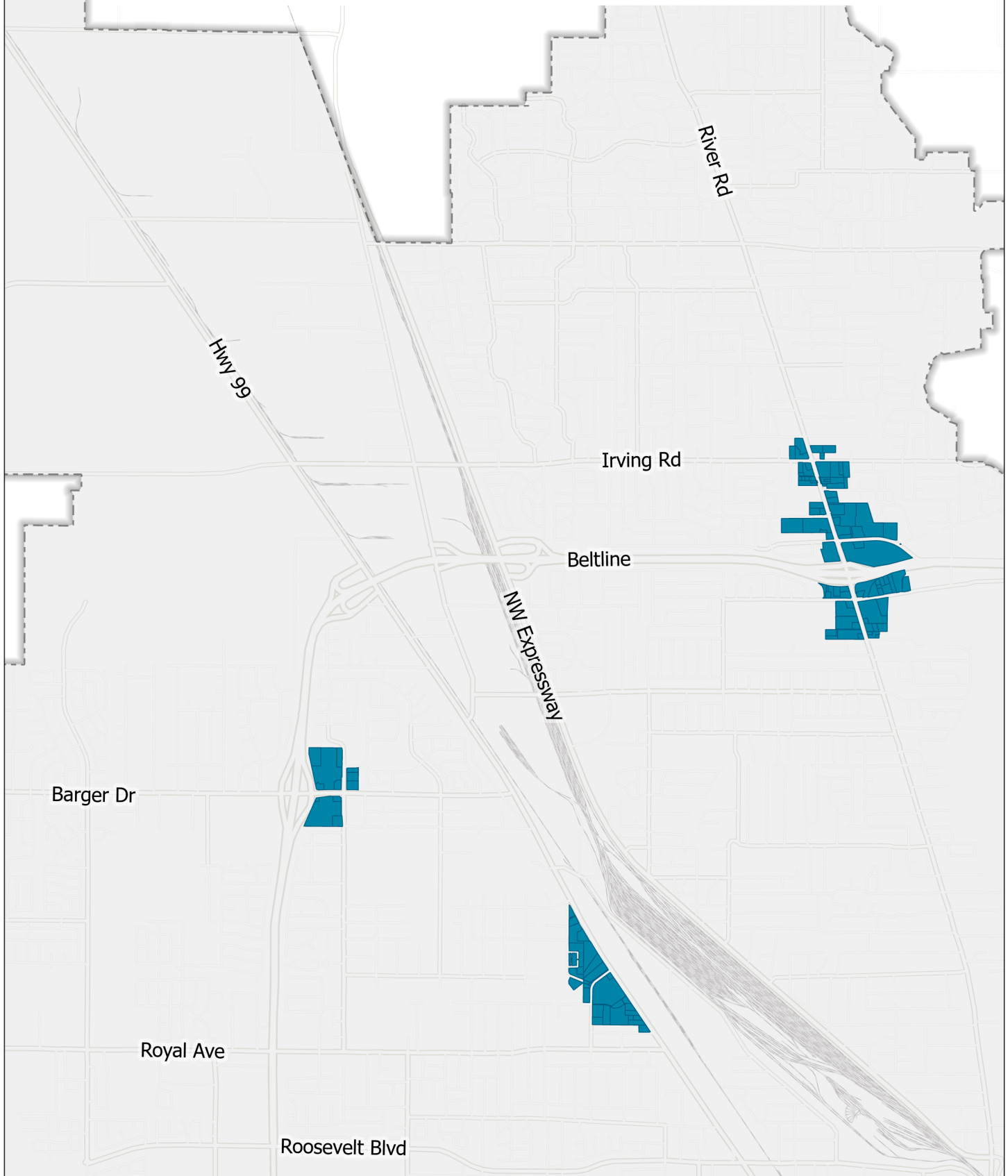
City Recorder

Mayor

Map 2.951(2)(d)2 Property Tax Exemption - Housing Incentives for Housing in Commercial Centers: Overview Map



Map 2.951(2)(d)2 Property Tax Exemption - Housing Incentives for Housing in Commercial Centers: Map Tile 1



 Tax Lots Eligible for Commercial Centers Exemption

 Eugene UGB

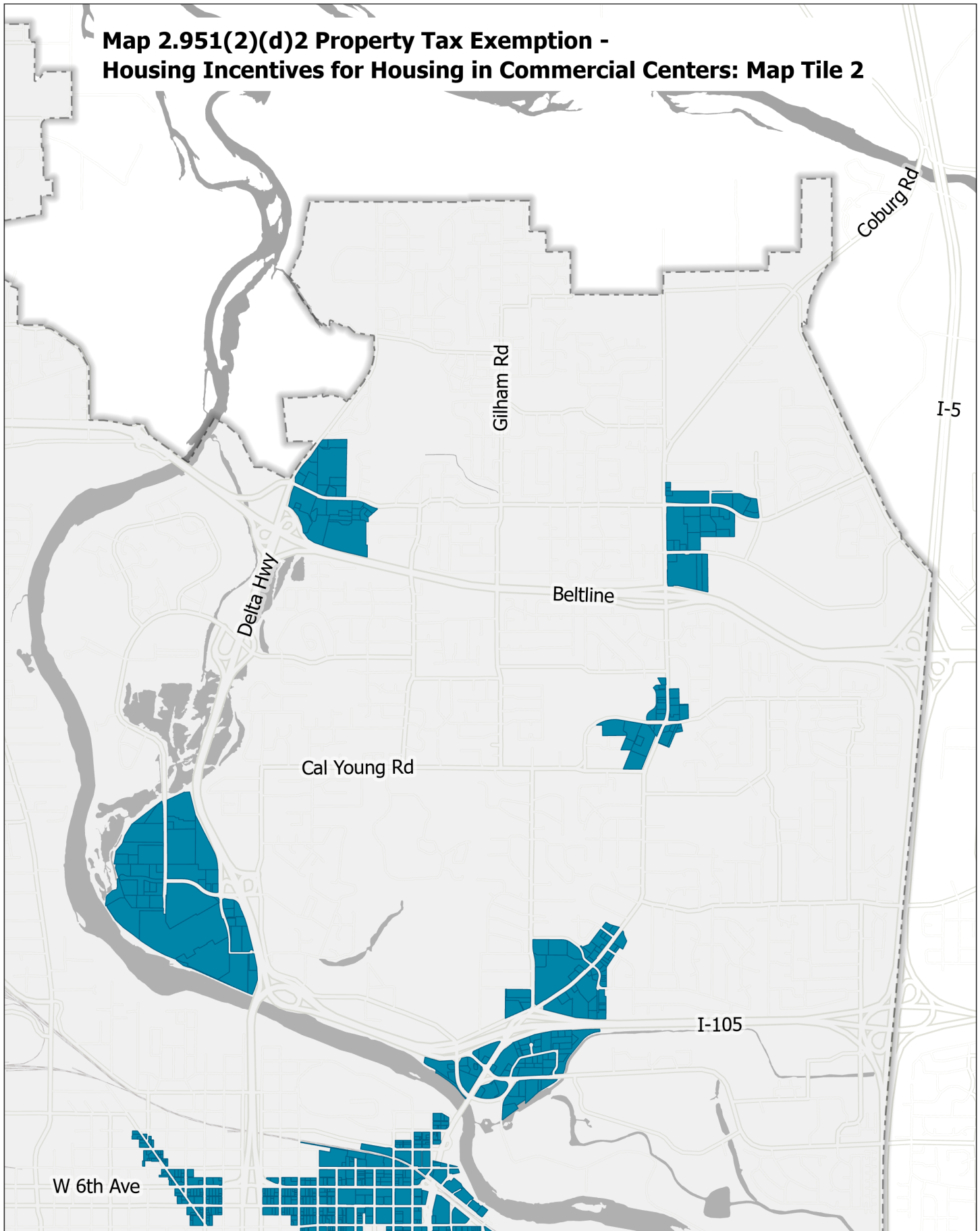
*Tax Lots as of May 2026

Map Date
5/29/2026



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Map 2.951(2)(d)2 Property Tax Exemption - Housing Incentives for Housing in Commercial Centers: Map Tile 2



Tax Lots Eligible for Commercial Centers Exemption

Eugene UGB

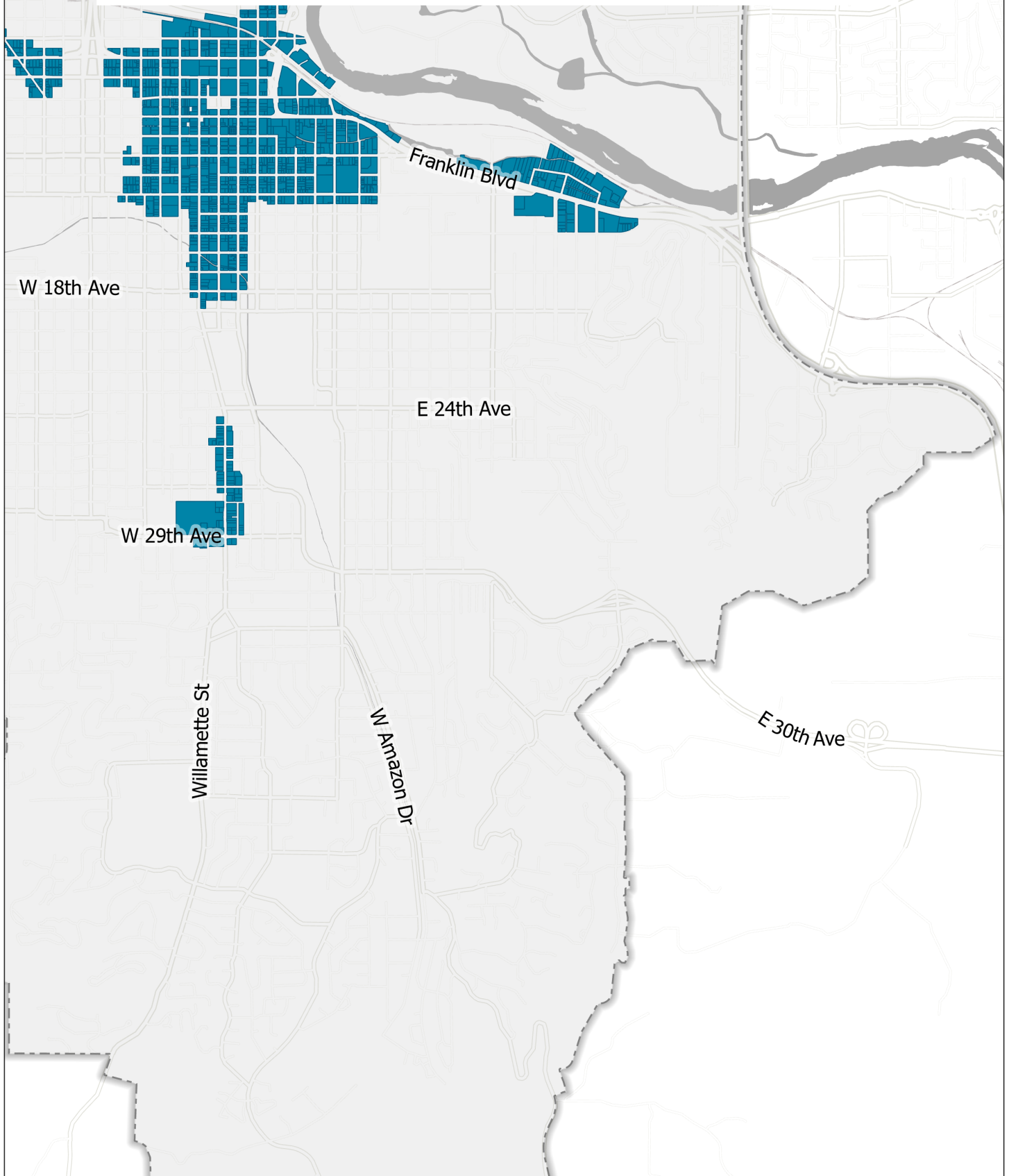
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Map Date
5/29/2026



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Map 2.951(2)(d)2 Property Tax Exemption - Housing Incentives for Housing in Commercial Centers: Map Tile 3



Tax Lots Eligible for Commercial Centers Exemption

Eugene UGB

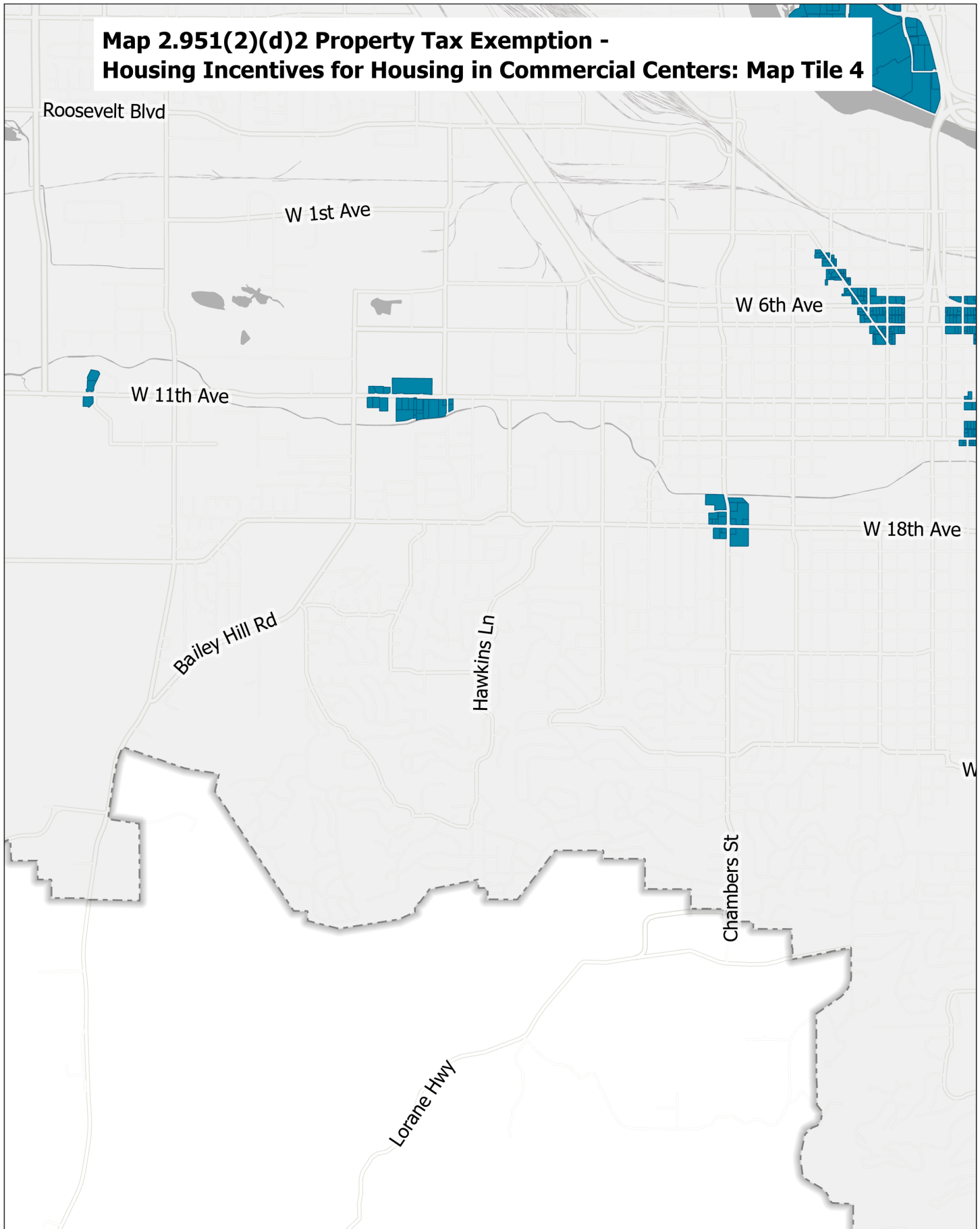
*Tax Lots as of May 2026

Map Date
5/29/2026



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Map 2.951(2)(d)2 Property Tax Exemption - Housing Incentives for Housing in Commercial Centers: Map Tile 4



 Tax Lots Eligible for Commercial Centers Exemption

 Eugene UGB

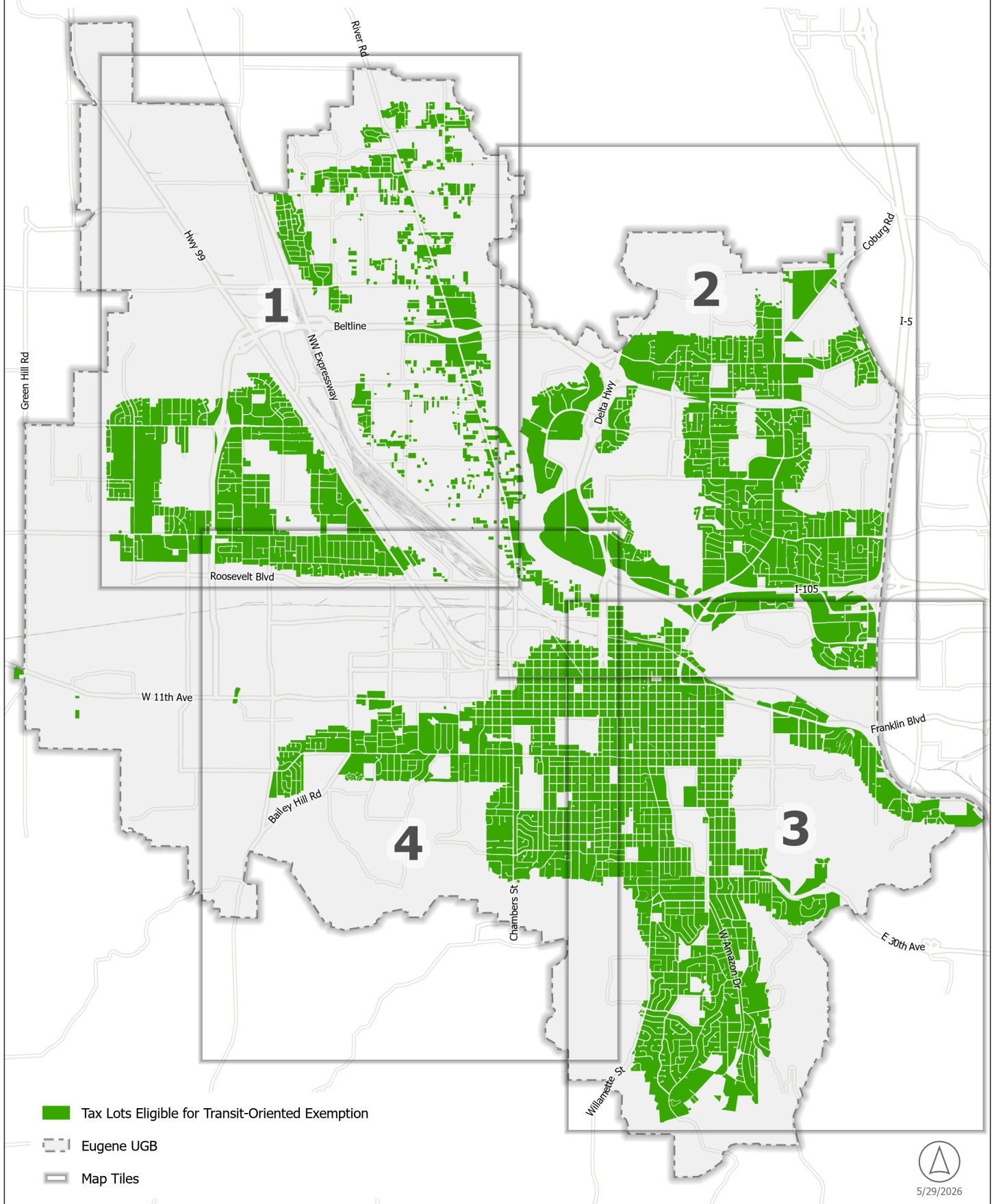
*Tax Lots as of May 2026

Map Date
5/29/2026

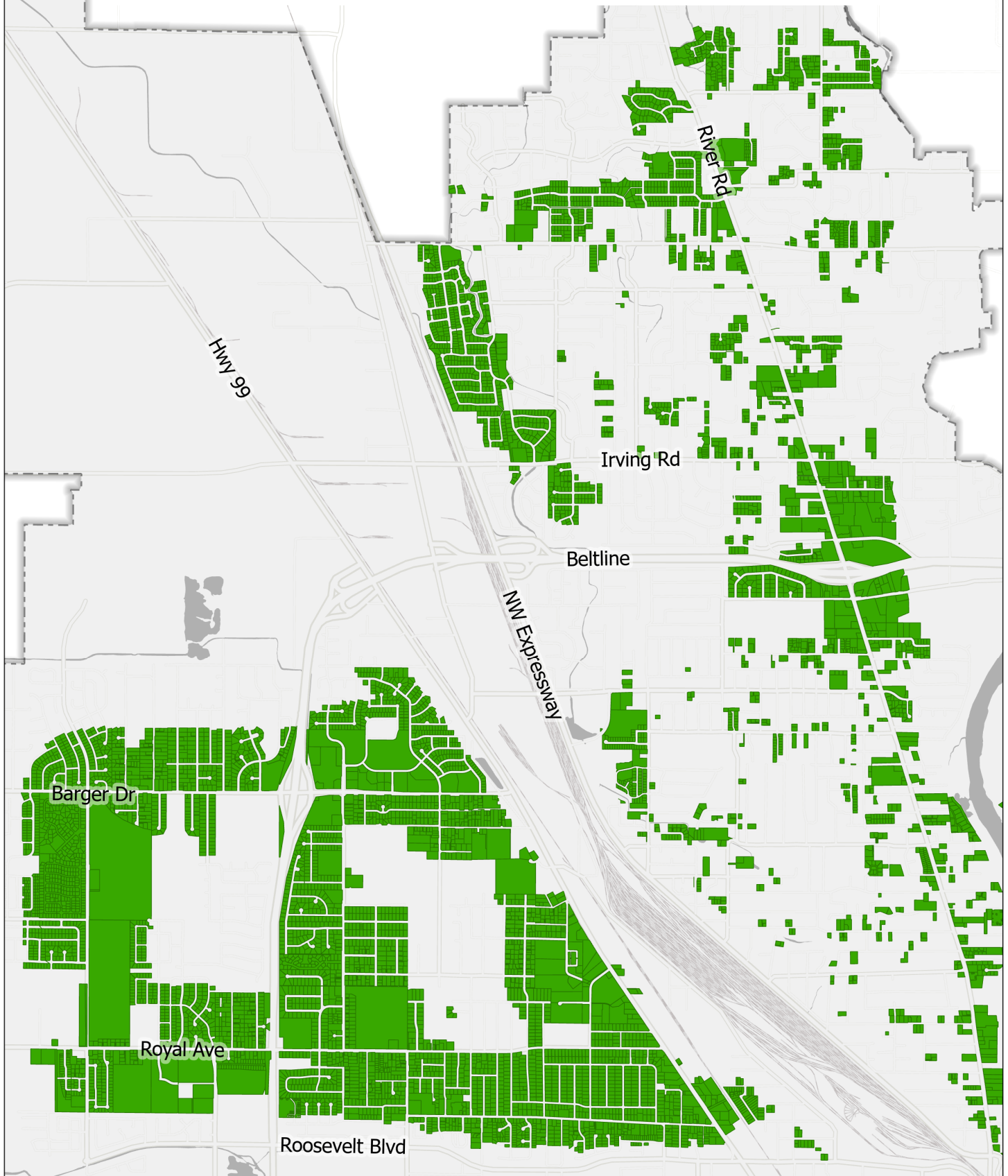


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Map 2.951(2)(e)2 Property Tax Exemption - Housing Incentives for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas: Overview Map



Map 2.951(2)(e)2 Property Tax Exemption - Housing Incentives for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas: Map Tile 1



■ Tax Lots Eligible for Transit-Oriented Exemption

Eugene UGB

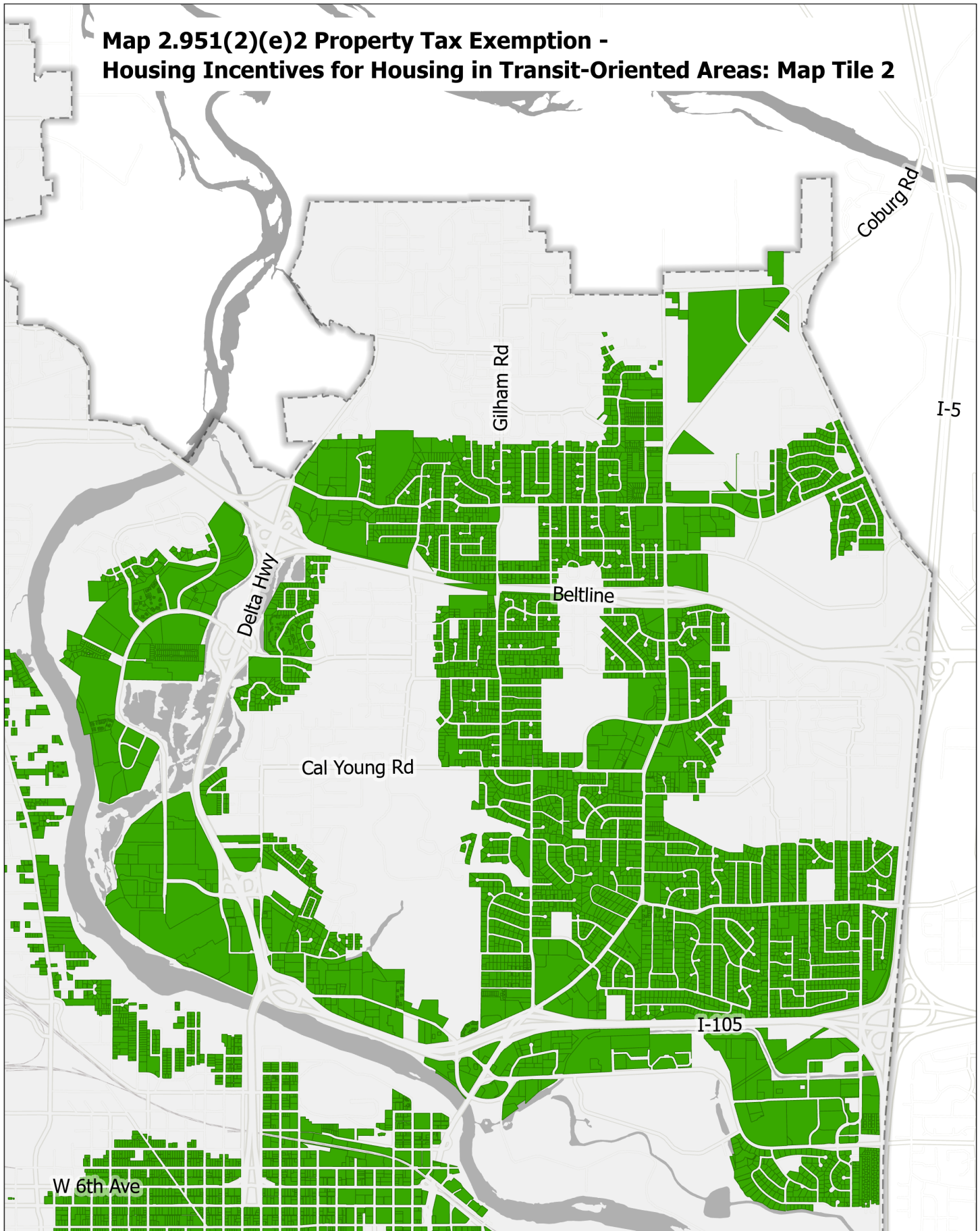
*Tax Lots as of May 2026

Map Date
5/29/2026



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Map 2.951(2)(e)2 Property Tax Exemption - Housing Incentives for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas: Map Tile 2



Tax Lots Eligible for Transit-Oriented Exemption

Eugene UGB

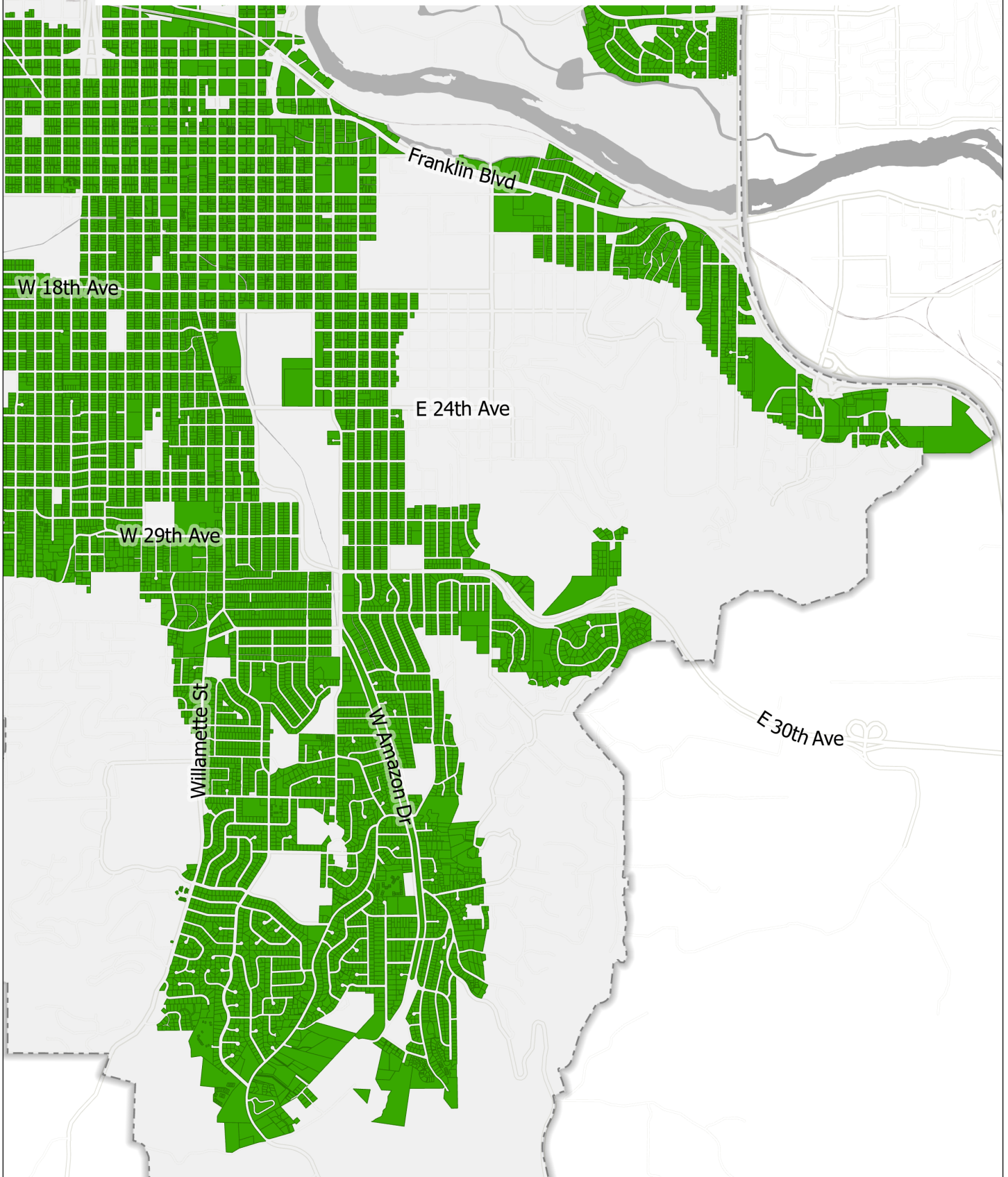
*Tax Lots as of May 2026

Map Date
5/29/2026



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**Map 2.951(2)(e)2 Property Tax Exemption -
Housing Incentives for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas: Map Tile 3**



Tax Lots Eligible for Transit-Oriented Exemption

Eugene UGB

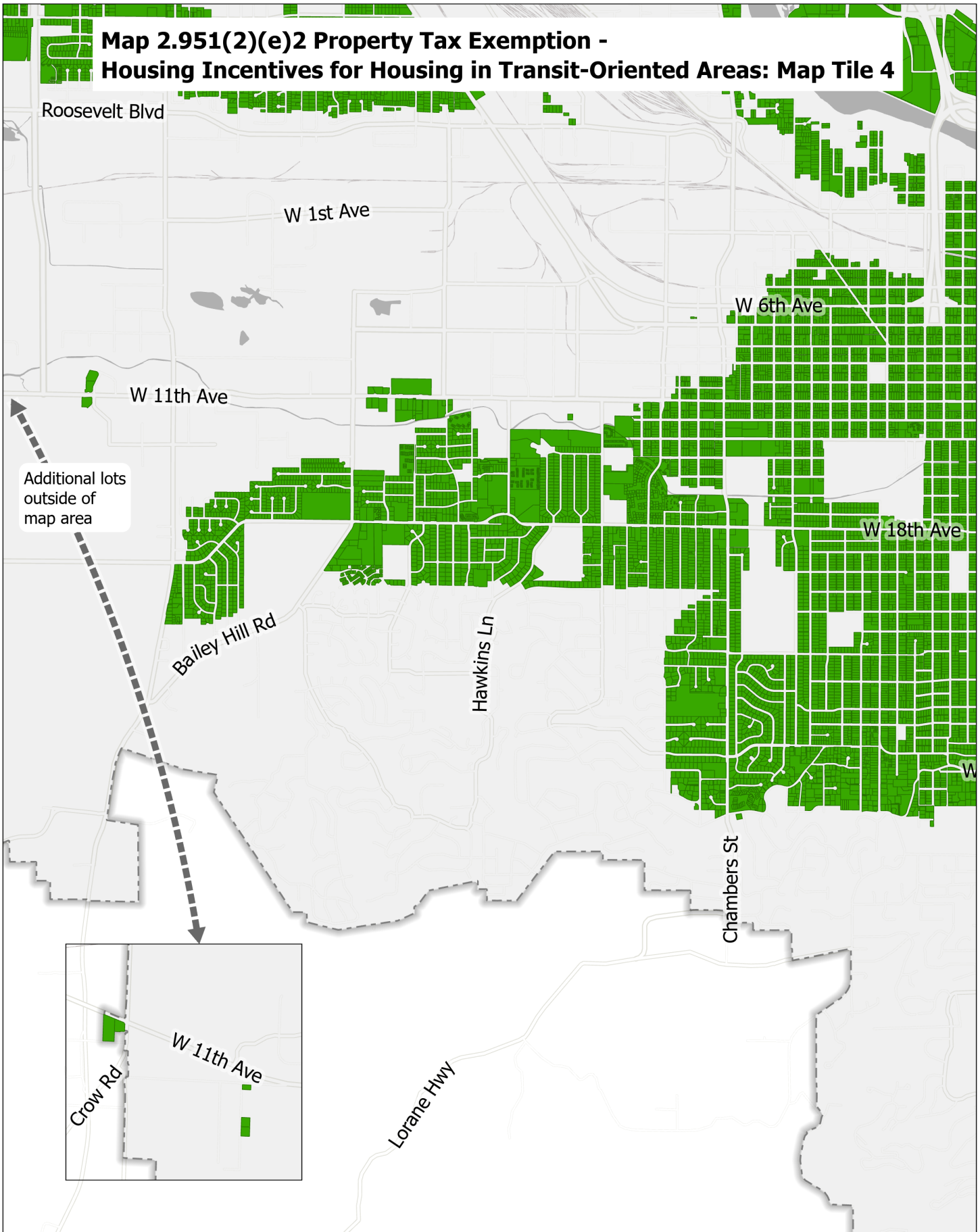
*Tax Lots as of May 2026

Map Date
5/29/2026



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Map 2.951(2)(e)2 Property Tax Exemption - Housing Incentives for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas: Map Tile 4



Tax Lots Eligible for Transit-Oriented Exemption

Eugene UGB

*Tax Lots as of May 2026

Map Date
5/29/2026



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Housing Production Incentives: Tax Exemption Programs

This attachment provides an overview of two proposed Housing Production Incentives. Both incentives are enabled by a state law (ORS 307.600-637) that encourages transit-supportive multi-unit housing; the same law that enables the City's current Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPTe) program in downtown. The proposed programs would provide an up-to-10-year tax exemption on the assessed value of new housing construction, with one incentive focused on supporting moderate income housing near transit, and the second supporting housing (including market-rate) in commercial centers.

The proposed application processes, described for each incentive below, are modeled after the application processes for the City's two primary existing housing incentives, the MUPTe and the Low-Income Rental Housing Property Tax Exemption (LIRHPTE), both summarized here:

- **MUPTe:** The MUPTe offers a 10-year property tax exemption for new market-rate housing in Downtown Eugene. In 2024, City Council approved an Accelerated version of the MUPTe focused on incentivizing new housing in the downtown core, by offering a faster application process.
- **LIRHPTE:** The LIRHPTE offers a 20-year property tax exemption for low-income rental housing. Units must be affordable to households earning up to 60% of Area Median Income. The tax exemption is offered City-wide and is renewable if the housing remains designated for low-income households.

The ordinance in Attachment A would implement the two Housing Production Incentives described below, aiming to incentivize housing development. They are proposed to fill gaps in the City's housing programs, as no existing tax incentive programs are available for moderate income housing or for housing near transit throughout the City. This public hearing on the draft ordinance in Attachment A is an opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the proposed housing production incentives as described in detail below prior to Council's follow-up discussion on the proposed programs.

Tax Exemption for Moderate Income Housing

This program is referred to as "Housing Incentive for Housing in Transit-Oriented Areas" in the draft ordinance.

Eligible housing: *Rental or homeownership.*

Both rental and homeownership units are needed to address Eugene's housing shortage. The need for both rental and homeownership housing units is included within the Oregon Housing Needs Assessment (OHNA) and development of new rental and homeownership housing units is outlined as a goal in the Housing Implementation Pipeline (HIP). This exemption program would not change the type of housing permitted to be built on a specific property or change any zoning regulations.

Affordability: *Households earning 60-120% of Area Median Income (AMI).*

- If units are rentals, projects must offer rents affordable to households earning no more than 120% of AMI for the 10-year tax exemption period (monitored by staff), based on rent limits published annually by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). See Attachment C for current rent and income limits.
- If units are owner-occupied, during the 10-year tax exemption period, home sales prices must remain affordable to households earning no more than 120% of AMI (a covenant will be recorded on the property).

The 2026 OHNA estimates that of the 26,000 housing units needed in Eugene over the next 20 years, 6,980 are needed for moderate income households. The City currently has few tools to support the development of housing to meet this need. Moderate income housing does not qualify for typical Affordable Housing tools, which are limited to households earning up to 60% of AMI. Additionally, households earning between 60% and 120% of AMI would be ineligible for Eugene's existing Affordable Housing developments (typically for households earning up to 60% of AMI), yet many are housing cost-burdened (i.e., they spend more than one-third of their income on housing). See Attachment C for more information.

Project size: *Minimum of four units and 25 units per acre density.*

State statute allows local jurisdictions to determine eligible project size. Four units and 25 units per acre is consistent with the Accelerated MUPTE program. Project eligibility requirements do not preempt density standards required by code.

Geographic boundary: *Properties within one-quarter mile of transit as shown on Map 2.951(2)(e)2 in Attachment A.*

The state statute that enables the 10-year tax exemption aims to incentivize transit-oriented development. The proposed geographic area of all properties located within one-quarter mile of a fixed route transit service is the largest geography that is allowed by the statute. Council could choose to adjust this boundary to reduce the applicable geography. See Attachment C, Question 5 for more information on the methodology used to identify eligible properties.

Locating housing near transit provides a wide range of benefits to both residents and the broader community, including but not limited to:

- Transportation cost savings. Transportation is typically a household's second largest expense after housing. People who live in areas with convenient access to transit and other amenities can reduce their car dependence, reduce expenses, and have improved access to jobs, education, and services.
- Reduce traffic, congestion, and emissions. Emissions from transportation account for 53% of Eugene's local emissions. The Climate Action Plan 2.0 prioritizes compact development, including strategies to make development easier on key transit corridors to alleviate reliance on cars and reduce congestion and emissions.

- Improve transit use and frequency. Transit-oriented development increases the number of households near transit, which is likely to boost public transit use. More riders can support improved service frequency and sustainability of transit systems.

Additional Requirements:

- Projects cannot result in the displacement of low-income persons or destruction of historic properties.
- Housing units designed or built for vacation use are ineligible.
- Commercial space may be eligible for the tax exemption, if City Council determines it is a community benefit.

Pilot period: The state statute that enables this tax exemption requires projects be completed by January 1, 2032. Staff are proposing this program as a pilot and recommend using this date as the end of the pilot period, with an update to Council by January 1, 2029.

Project application process: Staff propose that the process used to review and evaluate applications for the Tax Exemption for Moderate Income Housing applications include the following (some of which are similar to processes utilized for LIRHPTE applications):

- Council decision on an application is targeted for within 60 days of the date a complete application is received by the City. (State statutes require a decision within 180 days.)
- Application considered as Council priority action agenda item.

Tax Exemption for Housing in Commercial Centers

Affordability: No restrictions (market-rate).

The OHNA estimates that Eugene needs approximately 26,000 new homes added to its housing stock over the next 20 years. Of those homes, 7,196 should be accessible to those making 120%+ of AMI, which is the income threshold typically associated with market-rate housing. Increasing the number of market-rate housing units contributes to the overall housing supply in the city and can help to ease pressure on Eugene's constrained housing market. The only significant financial incentives the City of Eugene has to support market-rate housing are the Standard and Accelerated MUPTE, which are only available in the downtown area.

Eligible Housing: Rental or homeownership.

Both rental and homeownership units are needed to address Eugene's housing shortage. Both rental housing and housing for homeownership are identified as needed by the OHNA and the development of both rental and homeownership housing is outlined as a goal in the Housing Implementation Pipeline (HIP). This exemption program would not change the type of housing permitted to be built on a specific property or change any zoning regulations.

Project size: *Minimum of four units or 25 units per acre density.*

State statute allows local jurisdictions to determine eligible project size. Four units or 25 units per acre is consistent with the Accelerated MUPTE program. Project eligibility requirements do not preempt density standards required by code.

Geographic boundary: *Properties located within Core Commercial Centers and the Downtown Center (collectively, Commercial Centers), as shown on Map 2.951(2)(d)2 in Attachment A.*

If adopted by Council, the code sections authorizing the incentive would include a map showing the geographic boundaries of the areas within which the incentive would be available. The centers identified in the ordinance are intended to generally align with the centers concept discussed in new chapters of the Envision Eugene Comprehensive Plan, proposed for adoption in late 2026. The City of Eugene is planning for future growth and development in downtown, core commercial centers, and along key corridors. This approach is established through the Envision Eugene Community Vision, which was informed by years of community engagement and planning, as well as ongoing policy development and actions to support housing and compact development through Urban Growth Strategies. *Core Commercial Centers* are typically located near transit and provide convenient access to people's daily needs, such as housing, jobs, groceries, schools, and services. The *Downtown Center* encompasses the Downtown core, Riverfront, midtown, and other high-density residential and commercial areas nearby. The Downtown core and Downtown Riverfront currently have access to the MUPTE program. This proposed incentive would expand the geographic area eligible for tax exemption through all of the Downtown Center. Offering the incentive in Core Commercial Centers and the Downtown Center would support the creation of mixed-use centers. See Attachment C, Question 5 for more information on Commercial Centers and the methodology used to identify eligible properties.

Pilot period: *The state statute that enables this tax exemption requires projects be completed by January 1, 2032. Staff are proposing this program as a pilot project and recommend using this date as the end of the pilot period, with an update to Council by January 1, 2029.*

Project requirements and application process: *Staff propose that the project requirements and application process for Tax Exemption for Housing in Commercial Centers program be adapted from the Accelerated MUPTE program approved by City Council in 2024. This includes:*

- *Council decision on an application is targeted for within 60 days of the date a complete application is received by the City. (State statutes require a decision within 180 days.)*
- *Council action considered as priority action agenda item.*

- *An exemption requires compliance with seven public benefit criteria (Compact Urban Development, Green Building, Local Economic Impact, Historic Resources, Displacement, Moderate Income Housing Contribution, Project Need, Project Design and Compatibility).*
- *Staff review of application.*
- *Housing units designed for students or vacation use are ineligible.*
- *Commercial uses may be eligible if City Council determines it is a community benefit.*

Supplemental Information and Key Questions

This attachment provides supplemental information for the Housing Production Incentives material. It provides data and policy background on the proposed Housing Production Incentives described in the Agenda Item Summary and Attachments A and B.

1. What is the current housing need in Eugene?

As part of House Bill 2021 (2023), the State allocates a 20-year housing need to each local government. According to the [2026 Oregon Housing Needs Analysis](#) (OHNA), Eugene needs 26,000 new homes in the next 20 years to accommodate expected growth and fulfill the current shortage of housing. See Figure 1 for an overview of what the need is by household income.

Figure 1. Eugene 20-Year Housing Need, by Area Median Income (AMI) level

Willamette Valley Region	0-30% AMI	30-60% AMI	60-80% AMI	80-120% AMI	>120% AMI	20-Year Total Needed Units
Eugene UGB (2026)	6,764	5,003	2,729	4,251	7,196	25,944

Source: Oregon Housing Needs Analysis, January 2026

2. How will property tax exemptions help with building more housing?

Property tax exemptions are an important tool the City utilizes to promote development of housing that serves community interest. The intent of a tax exemption is to lower the operating costs in the early years of a housing development so it becomes financially feasible, without the direct allocation of funds. The City has limited funding available to support income-qualified Affordable Housing.

In a housing market like Eugene, market rents are lower than in larger metropolitan areas, but the cost of construction is as high. This makes these projects less feasible. This is also particularly true for housing offered to moderate or low-income households, which generate even less rental income.

Currently, housing developers can apply for a Low-Income Rental Housing Property Tax Exemption (LIRHPT), which is authorized by the State to create Affordable Housing for residents earning up to 60% of Area Median Income (AMI). In the downtown area, developers can apply for a Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPTE), a state-enabled program that helps make multi-unit market-rate housing projects in the urban core financially feasible.

In 2024, the consulting firm EConorthwest conducted a [redemption analysis](#) of Eugene's key corridors and centers, and found that a 10-year property tax exemption offered more broadly for market-rate multi-unit development could increase the feasibility of higher-density, multi-unit development in some areas.¹ The viability of the tax exemption depended greatly on current land values and possible market-rate rents.

¹ Redevelopment Analysis for Eugene Urban Growth Strategies. (2025, May). EConorthwest.

3. Why focus on moderate income housing?

Eugene is a severely rent-burdened city. The population of Eugene (based on 2023 data) is around 177,000 people. There are over 38,000 renter households and 12,000 of those renter households are living as severely rent burdened, i.e., spending more than 50% of their income on housing costs.² This means roughly a third of the Eugene renter population spends over half their income on housing costs. Overall, 62% of Eugene renters experience some level of rent cost-burden (spending at least 30% of their income on rental costs).³ With a rental vacancy rate (3%) far below the national average (5.5%), this shortage drives up costs and disproportionately impacts low- and moderate income families.⁴

As described in Question 1, Eugene needs to increase annual housing production by about 70% and add approximately 26,000 housing units over the next 10 years to accommodate population growth, address decades of underproduction, as well as meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness. Of those, **6,980 housing units are needed for moderate income households** (those earning between 60-120% of AMI).

Households with moderate incomes are ineligible for typical Affordable Housing developments, which usually are only available to households earning no more than 60% of AMI, yet many are housing cost-burdened, which means a household spends more than a third of their income on housing. High housing costs limit spending on essentials such as food, childcare, healthcare, and education. This also reduces disposable income for local goods and services, impacting Eugene's economy. Moderate income housing also supports workforce stability for those in moderate income careers (for example teachers, healthcare workers, and service employees) which are critical to Eugene's economy but struggle to find affordable housing locally. Without intervention, these workers face long commutes or relocation, weakening community resilience. Furthermore, stable housing reduces stress, improves educational outcomes, and strengthens neighborhoods. Finally, cost burden disproportionately affects communities of color, deepening economic inequities.

4. Why incentivize market-rate housing?

Eugene needs approximately 26,000 new homes added to the housing stock over the next 20 years. Of those homes, **7,196 should be accessible to those making 120%+ AMI** which is the income threshold typically associated with market-rate housing. Increasing market-rate housing developments contributes to the overall housing supply and can help to ease pressure on Eugene's constrained housing market.

To achieve 26,000 new homes in 20 years, Eugene needs to see an increase of approximately 1,600 new housing units per year. Right now, Eugene is averaging about 965 new units per year. The next few years are expected to bring a more challenging market environment – with rising costs, interest rates, and shifting demands – which makes this an even steeper hill to climb. Eugene needs new housing units across all income levels, and

² 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B25070 and PSU Certified Population Estimates as of July 1, 2024.

³ U.S. Census American Community Survey 1 Year Estimates, Tables B25070, B25091, B25064.

⁴ United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 5-year estimates.

the market on its own is not going to deliver the supply needed without assistance helping to overcome those market challenges. The proposed Tax Exemption for Housing in Core Commercial Centers aims to specifically spur the production of dense, transit-oriented market-rate housing developments that will help make progress toward Eugene's housing goals, while achieving other community goals.

5. What methodology was used to determine the eligible properties for each tax exemption program?

Tax Exemption for Moderate Income Housing

In order to be eligible for the moderate income housing incentive, properties must be located within ¼-mile of a fixed route transit line, the largest geography allowed by the state statutes that enable these programs. Fixed route transit lines are considered to be current Lane Transit District routes that have regular service (at least one an hour). At least 80% of a property's geographic area must be within the ¼-mile buffer for the property to be identified as eligible for the incentive.

Tax Exemption for Housing in Commercial Centers

In order to be eligible for the Housing in Commercial Centers program, properties must meet the following criteria:

- Must be located in the ¼-mile of transit buffer of a fixed route transit line.
- Be located in the Core Commercial Centers or Downtown Center, described in Question 7 below.
- In the Core Commercial Centers, only properties zoned GO (General Office), C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial), C-2 (Community Commercial), S-WS (Walnut Station Special Area), or S-HB (Blair Boulevard Historic Commercial Area) are identified as eligible. All properties located in the Downtown Center are eligible for the exemption.
- C-2 properties that are immediately adjacent to Commercial Centers and meet the other criteria presented below are identified as eligible (only a few properties adjacent to the River Road Commercial Center met this criteria).

Other Criteria Applicable to Both Proposed Programs

In addition to the criteria used above, the following criteria were used to determine eligibility for both proposed programs:

- In order to avoid incentivizing the development of housing near industrial uses, properties that are located within 300 feet of properties zoned E-2 (Mixed Use Employment) or I-2 (Light-Medium Industrial) or located within 500 feet of properties zoned I-3 (Heavy Industrial) are not identified as eligible for either exemption. New housing could still be developed within those areas if zoning allows, but it would not be eligible for these incentive programs.

- Properties that are located within the Urban Growth Boundary but are not currently located within City limits and are identified as eligible for an exemption on the maps attached to the proposed ordinance will become eligible for the exemption (if they met all other criteria) upon annexation into the City.

6. Why incentivize housing development near transit?

Co-locating housing near transit has a wide range of benefits to both residents and the broader community, including but not limited to:

- Transportation cost savings. Transportation is typically a household's second largest expense after housing. People who live in areas with convenient access to transit and other amenities can reduce their car dependence, reduce costs, and improve access to jobs, education, and services.
- Reduce traffic, congestion, and emissions. Emissions from transportation account for 53% of Eugene's local emissions. The [Climate Action Plan 2.0](#) prioritizes compact development, including strategies to make development easier on key transit corridors to alleviate reliance on cars and reduce congestion and emissions.
- Improve transit use and frequency. Transit-oriented development increases the number of households near transit, boosting public transit use. More riders can support improved service frequency and sustainability of transit systems.

7. Why focus the market-rate tax exemption specifically in Core Commercial and Downtown Centers?

The City of Eugene is planning for future growth and development in downtown, core commercial centers, and along key corridors. This approach is established through the Envision Eugene Community Vision, which was informed by years of community engagement and planning, as well as ongoing policy development and actions to support housing and compact development through Urban Growth Strategies.

Centers are typically located near transit and provide convenient access to people's daily needs, like housing, jobs, groceries, schools, and services. Centers play a crucial role in reducing people's dependence on cars - by keeping goods and services close together.

Building more housing in and near Centers:

- Supports economic resilience, boosting foot traffic for shops and services.
- Encourages compact, efficient development.

Staff have identified draft centers that are proposed for City Council adoption in 2026. A [draft centers map is available here](#).

Core Commercial Centers are primarily zoned C-2 Community Commercial. C-2 is one of the most flexible zones for multi-unit housing development but today is rarely used outside of student-oriented housing and Affordable Housing.

The **Downtown Center** encompasses the Downtown core, Riverfront, midtown, and other high-density residential and commercial areas nearby. The Downtown core and Downtown Riverfront currently have access to MUPTE tax exemption programs. This proposed incentive would expand the geographic area eligible for tax exemption through all of the Downtown Center.

The previously mentioned redevelopment analysis (in Question 2) considered a number of areas within the Downtown Center and Core Commercial Centers. Notably, the Commercial Centers near Lower Coburg Road, Valley River Center, West 11th Avenue, and Greater Downtown have “high” housing development potential if additional incentives (such as a 10-year property tax exemption) are implemented in those areas. The Midtown Center could also see a large impact from a new tax exemption in this area. The housing development potential of Midtown could increase from a “very low” up to “moderate”. Midtown is a desirable location for higher-density housing and walkable commercial development but would benefit from incentives because the existing property values are relatively high, and properties are small.

8. Why focus on building housing in C-2?

C-2 (Community Commercial) is a mixed-use zone that is located primarily on transit corridors and centers. It is a flexible zone and can accommodate significant multi-unit development. It is not regulated by residential density, and allows for taller, denser buildings.

Building housing in commercial centers creates vibrant, mixed-use areas where people can live, shop, and access services in one place. This approach aligns with Oregon’s statewide planning goals and reflects priorities expressed by Eugene residents during community outreach for Urban Growth Strategies.

There has been very little housing development in C-2 zones in recent years, especially 2020 to 2024. A review of multi-unit housing development in C-2 over a 12-year period (2013-2024), revealed that, outside of current MUPTE boundary (and not including student-oriented housing and subsidized Affordable Housing), multi-unit housing development in C-2 has been minimal, averaging only 24.5 units per year. Typical market-rate housing has not yet been broadly successful in one of Eugene’s most flexible and permissive zones, highlighting the need for housing development incentives.

9. Why include the Downtown Center?

Building housing downtown has all the benefits of building in a core commercial center but with the increased cost of building in an already compact area. Limited space makes downtown projects significantly more expensive than in less compact areas of the city. Providing a tax incentive to build in this area can help to offset the increased cost of development caused by higher land prices, elevated construction costs, and construction-logistics complexities. Currently, the Standard MUPTE is available in the greater Downtown area and the Accelerated (MUPTE is available in the Downtown core.

10. How will the City continue to encourage investment and building in Downtown if it is incentivizing housing outside of Downtown?

Eugene's full housing need will not be met just by building more housing downtown. More housing will need to be built throughout the City. The proposed Housing Production Incentives aim to build on the existing housing tools the City has to help move the dial.

The draft Downtown Center geography identified in [Question 5](#) includes the geographic boundaries of the existing Standard and Accelerated MUPTE programs and expands beyond those boundaries. Additionally, in order to continue encouraging more downtown housing development, the City and its Urban Renewal Agency offer other tools that would not be available outside the Urban Renewal Districts. This includes [Downtown Fee Assistance](#) (payment of development-related government-imposed fees, such as systems development charges and permits) and land acquisition/disposition.

11. What would be considered moderate income housing?

The federal U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides annual updates of income levels and allowed rents for HUD programs for different household sizes. Figure 2 below shows the current income limits for 60% and 120% of Area Median Income (the low and high ends of what is considered moderate income). Households who pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. The maximum rents calculated below are based on spending no more than 30% of a household income on rent.

Figure 2. HUD Income and Rent Limits, 2026

FY26 HUD Income Limits		# of Persons in Household			
		1	2	3	4
60% AMI	Income Limit	\$41,340	\$47,280	\$53,160	\$59,040
	Maximum Rent	\$1,033	\$1,182	\$1,329	\$1,476
120% AMI	Income Limit	\$82,680	\$94,560	\$106,320	\$118,080
	Maximum Rent	\$2,067	\$2,364	\$2,658	\$2,952

12. Will these programs result in the displacement of current residents?

In the currently proposed programs, the following criteria apply:

- For the proposed Tax Exemption for Moderate Income Housing, projects cannot result in the displacement of current residents.

- For the proposed Tax Exemption for Housing in Commercial Centers, if a project would result in existing housing becoming uninhabitable (because the existing units would be demolished or converted), the project must result in a number of residential units that is at least 150% of the original number of units that were on the site. For example, if a building containing 10 housing units is demolished, in order for the new units to comply with the Commercial Centers approval criteria, the project must include at least 15 dwelling units.

13. What are the public benefits would projects be required to meet to qualify for the Tax Exemption for Housing in Commercial Centers?

The primary public benefit offered by projects that successfully apply for either proposed program is the creation of more housing, helping to address Eugene's housing need. Projects that apply for the Tax Exemption for Housing in Commercial Centers are required to meet the following public benefit criteria (also required as part of the Accelerated MUPTE program):

- Compact Urban Development
- Green Building Features (*ensuring building energy performance is 10% above code*)
- Local Economic Impact Plan (*including support for local businesses, minority and women business enterprises, and ensuring compliance with laws*)
- Moderate Income Housing Contribution (*either paying a fee equal to 10% of the total tax exemption or allocating 30% of units to be moderate income housing*)
- Project Design and Compatibility (*including scale, form, and quality of the building; mixture of project elements; relationship to the street and surrounding uses; and parking and circulation*)
- Historic Resources
- Project Need