



City Manager's Office

November 29, 2011

City of Eugene
777 Pearl St, Rm 105
Eugene OR 97401-2793
(541) 682-5010
(541) 682-5414 FAX

Liane Richardson
Lane County General Counsel
125 E. 8th Ave.
Eugene, OR 97401

Ms. Richardson,

The Lane County Farmers' Market is one of the most beloved and iconic institutions downtown. The location on the edge of the Butterfly Parking Lot at 8th and Oak attracts thousands of people in all kinds of weather. The market is important to the identity and activity of downtown, and is a key piece of our area's efforts to support local healthy food for a sustainable, prosperous community.

Over the last year, City staff and the market have been working to determine what improvements are needed for continued success and vitality in the heart of downtown. The number one need is for more booth space. The Saturday Market has found creative ways to make the historically important space work, and to capitalize on its synergy by locating booths down Oak and Park, while maintaining a primary presence in front of the Butterfly Lot. However, the configuration of the space and the limited depth alongside the parking structure is an ongoing challenge as the market continues to grow. In addition, market representatives have expressed concern for pedestrian safety and accessibility for all community members.

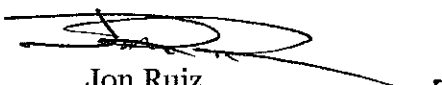
One potential solution introduced last year is the closing 8th Street on Saturdays. While this might provide an interim solution for the Farmer's Market, it raised significant concerns with the Saturday Market, which expressed a need to keep 8th open for vehicle traffic. A street closure would also not allow for additional permanent improvements that have been discussed over the years.

Another solution that we would like to explore with the County is the space adjacent to the market known as the Butterfly Lot. Both markets and many individual community members consider expansion into that block as the best possible outcome. The concept of including all four areas of the original Park Blocks is also supported by our Downtown Plan, which envisions this area as the ceremonial center of the City.

I recognize that the Butterfly Lot is an important asset for Lane County and that this is not a new conversation; however, I believe the time is right for us to work together to find a mutually beneficial solution. I have asked Sarah Medary, Assistant City Manager and Interim Director of Planning and Development, to lead this important work that will shape the future of downtown.

The City and the County have an enormous commitment to making our downtown the active, safe and inviting place we all envision. I appreciate working with you on these critical issues.

Sincerely,



Jon Ruiz
City Manager