

# **Building A Sustainable Eugene Economy – Creating Good Jobs And New Opportunities**

By  
Mayor Kitty Piercy  
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**Executive Summary**

## **A Policy Paper On Shaping Our Economic Future**

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## **A Message From Mayor Kitty Piercy:**

*What will Eugene look like in 50 years? Will tomorrow's residents enjoy living in a well-managed city that cherishes and nurtures its irreplaceable green spaces? Will there be stable and well-paying jobs, an adequate supply of affordable housing, strong neighborhoods, and a healthy economy anchored by environmentally responsible industry?*

*The answers to these questions and many others depend a great deal on how we respond to today's challenges. We want to be sure we are making the right decisions – decisions that will enhance Eugene's well-established reputation as one of the country's most livable cities.*

*Livability means a transparent, inclusive government that listens to every voice. It means compassionate, comprehensive social services and a well-maintained transportation network that serves all modes and abilities. It means rich and diverse cultural offerings, plenty of parks and open spaces, and excellent educational opportunities. It means accessible buildings, sidewalks and streets and a welcoming, supportive business environment. It means great neighborhoods, north and south, east and west. Ultimately, livability means ensuring that Eugene is a safe and wonderful place, full of opportunity for our children.*

*I am confident that Eugene will continue to be a state and national leader in livability.*

With these words I opened my 2007 State of the City Report. They define the core values that have guided my actions in the last three and one-half years as your mayor.

This Policy Paper On Shaping Our Economic Future outlines some of the challenges we face in maintaining our city's livability in the years ahead. More importantly, it presents some impressive success stories of Eugene businesses, government and non-profit organizations, and residents who are engaged in building a sustainable economy—a key element in creating a healthy future for our children. It also proposes additional steps we can take to continue our progress toward sustainability.

I hope you find some inspiring examples here, and maybe some ideas you can take action on in your own home, school, or workplace.

I look forward to continuing to work with you and to serve as your mayor.

Sincerely,

**Kitty Piercy**

# Executive Summary

Eugene, like cities across the U.S., is facing a future with significant challenges. Surging oil and energy costs, the threat of climate change caused by global warming, the need to develop new clean energy sources, growing income disparity and shifts in job markets, and our ability to compete in a global economy—these and other challenges require vision and leadership. They require that we develop innovative, sustainable businesses that provide good jobs and contribute to a strong local and regional economy. They require that we work together and bring all stakeholders to the table if we are to build a healthy and secure future for our children and our community.

Fortunately, Eugene is well positioned to meet these challenges, and has already achieved important successes. Some of our natural and organic foods businesses, for example, are national brand leaders, while our wood products industry supplies an increasing array of sustainable green building materials. The University of Oregon and Lane Community College are nationally recognized for their sustainable business and architecture, green chemistry, environmental sciences, and energy management and efficiency programs.

Eugene's leadership is best summarized by several recent studies. National Geographic's *Green Guide* which recently named Eugene "America's number one Green City"—noting our city is a "powerhouse of green industry"; is focused on sustainable business development, and is enviable for our parks and open spaces, relatively clean environment, and livability.

And, *Fortune Small Business* put Eugene on its 2008 list of "100 Best Places to Live and Launch a Small Business", while *Forbes* ranked Eugene among the "200 Best Places for Business and Careers."

As mayor, my goal is to help Eugene maintain this national leadership, so that we can shape our own future and meet the challenges ahead. This Policy Paper on Eugene's Sustainable Economy does three things:

- 1) I outline the key economic and environmental challenges we face, and show how cities across the U.S.—including Eugene—are taking action to meet these.
- 2) I present an overview of key strengths and successes of Eugene businesses, government and nonprofit organizations, and individuals who are leaders in building a sustainable economy and livable city.
- 3) I present twelve Policy Proposals and Action Items to help us continue to build our sustainable economy in four areas: Creating Sustainable Businesses and Good Jobs; Transportation and Infrastructure Initiatives; City Government Initiatives; Social Equity Initiatives. These are summarized below.

## Policy Proposals And Action Items

- 1. Continue Sustainable Business Initiative Process.** Identify additional specific strategies to support local business sustainability, and continue to recruit new sustainable businesses.
- 2. Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs Initiative.** Use incentives and standards to promote investment in clean energy and energy efficient homes and buildings—making home ownership costs more affordable and creating local "green" jobs.

3. **Growing Our Green Building Sector.** Implement tax, fee, and planning incentives to encourage green buildings—reducing utility costs, improving the environment, and creating business and job opportunities.
4. **Prioritize Downtown Revitalization.** Continue to develop and improve our downtown core for a healthy city, providing new housing, business opportunities, cultural amenities, and a transit and pedestrian friendly place to live, work, or play.
5. **Comprehensive Approach to Land-Use Planning and Urban Growth Boundary.** Ensure citizen participation, implementation of our growth management policies, and protection of valuable farm, forest and resource lands with an intentional, long-term approach in land use decisions.
6. **Initiatives to Increase Alternative Transportation Use.** Work with our congressional and state delegations to fast-track new LTD EMX rapid bus service lines, and implement recommendations of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategic Plan.
7. **Implement West Eugene Traffic and Transportation Solutions.** Support a successful, collaborative process that results in adoption of West Eugene Collaborative solutions for improving roads, access, transit use, and transportation planning in West Eugene.
8. **Implement Long-Term Solution to Street Maintenance and Potholes.** Continue city council proposal for increased spending on maintenance; adopt additional voter-approved, sustainable funding mechanism to address the backlog of street repairs; consider one-time funding boost that does not damage other city services and programs; work with governor on statewide support for a fair, balanced approach.
9. **City of Eugene as Model for Best Sustainability Practices.** Develop an index of sustainability “best practices” for evaluating performance and possible implementation.
10. **City “Sustainable Eugene” Web Pages as the Go-To Resource.** Significantly expand the city’s web resources to make them the leading local source for sustainability information, serving business, non-profits, and the larger community.
11. **Expand Use of LTD Group Bus Program.** Provide information and incentives to increase business and employee use of low-cost group pass program, promoting personal health, air quality, and reducing traffic congestion.
12. **Implement Blue Ribbon Committee on Homelessness Recommendations.** Reduce chronic homelessness, reduce home losses by existing homeowners, and increase affordable housing opportunities with coordinated strategies by public, private, and non-profit sectors.

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