

MINUTES
Eugene City Council
Work Session
Eugene, Oregon 97401

May 18, 2026
05:30 p.m.

Councilors Present: Eliza Kashinsky, Matt Keating, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Mike Clark, Greg Evans, Lyndsie Leech, and Randy Groves

Mayor Knudson opened the May 18, 2026, Eugene City Council Work Session in a hybrid in-person and virtual format at 500 E. 4th Avenue, North Building, Eugene, OR 97401.

1. WORK SESSION: Urban Growth Strategies Adoption Package Update

City Manager Jenny Haruyama introduced the topic and Rebecca Gershow, Principal Planner and Leah Rausch and Heather O'Donnell of Planning & Development who offered brief background information and noted the proposed amendments related to state-required planning work.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Evans – asked about concerns related to increasing maximum building heights in low-density residential areas; asked about residential areas with restrictions of 30 feet height limits; noted neighbors in long-established areas fear the loss of privacy when taller structures allow views directly into their yards or homes; asked how staff determines whether a proposed building is appropriate for the character of an R1 neighborhood; stated encouraging cottage cluster housing may reduce conflicts compared to taller multi-unit buildings; noted he's had extensive conversations with neighbors who worry the proposal will not fit the existing neighborhood.
- Councilor Kashinsky – asked whether height increases in low-density residential zones would also apply in special area zones; stated she was interested in reviewing special area zones to understand fairness across neighborhoods; noted concern about applying new height rules citywide based only on whether an area happens to have a special designation; asked about Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing, including why the definition requires units to be rented rather than owned; asked why a SRO cannot be added to a site that already has an existing dwelling, and whether that restriction comes from state law; stated she appreciated the inclusion of community education efforts and believed these would help small-scale developers navigate the process more easily.
- Councilor Groves – noted Council had previously approved University of Oregon buildings reaching 75 to 85 feet adjacent to residential neighborhoods; stated

neighborhood pushback is understandable; noted concerns about discrepancies and fairness across neighborhoods, including differences related to Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) developments; noted positive experiences with earlier village-style communities and their success in supporting residents transitioning from homelessness; asked how wetland-mitigation challenges are affecting proposed expansion areas where 75-100 additional micro-units are desired; noted much of the land in Eugene is designated as wetland, which increases service-delivery costs for infrastructure such as streets, utilities, and emergency-response routes; stated support for single-room occupancy housing.

- Councilor Leech – stated concern regarding the overall construction quality of recently built housing units; noted constituent reports of materials degrading quickly; asked whether future code or policy tools could strengthen expectations for build quality.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated recent Council actions allowing significantly greater building heights in the Fairmont neighborhood suggested broader implications for neighborhood stability; noted interest in understanding what enabling factors now allow micro-village units to meet building-code requirements; asked if heating and lighting are a requirement for these units.
- Councilor Keating – asked whether increased height allowances could be concentrated along transportation routes rather than within neighborhoods; stated interest in encouraging taller mixed-use housing along major transit routes to reduce impacts on residential areas.
- Councilor Yeh – stated support for evaluating special-area zone (SROs) standards to ensure they are consistent; noted appreciation for proposed expansion of day-care homes and residential treatment facilities.
- Councilor Evans – asked what mitigation strategies exist in residential zones when sight-line conflicts occur between newly built structures and existing homes; noted the importance of accounting for unique characteristics of individual neighborhoods as they evolve.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted allowing significant height increases in some areas while restricting them in others raises questions of fairness.
- Mayor Knudson – stated appreciation for the update; noted Council’s ongoing discussions around climate-related planning, economic development, and housing affordability will require sustained attention; stated that although the conversation centers on structures and land-use regulations, the underlying purpose is to support young professionals, empty-nesters, small families, renters, and prospective homeowners who need long-term housing stability and options.

2. WORK SESSION: Vision Zero Update

City Manager Jenny Haruyama introduced the topic and stated the session is a continuation of Council’s April discussion on traffic safety and recent trends in serious and fatal crashes. Logan Tellis, the Associate Transportation Planner provided brief background on Vision Zero and noted the discussion would focus on Council questions.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Evans – noted longstanding concerns about inadequate lighting in neighborhoods feeding into Highway 99 and West 11th; asked what approaches exist to improve residential street lighting to enhance safety for people walking, driving, and biking.
- Councilor Groves – asked how non-motorists illegally entering travel lanes relate to failure-to-yield crash categories; stated concern that individuals entering active roadways create significant safety risks; asked how the City prioritizes infrastructure projects that separate pedestrians from vehicle traffic.
- Councilor Keating – asked how staff classify individuals positioned within medians or travel lanes and whether such behaviors align with crash-cause categories; stated interest in improved lane-visibility treatments and greater use of pavement markings to help cyclists and drivers navigate shared areas safely.
- Councilor Kashinsky – noted that recent fatal crashes involved pedestrians lawfully crossing in marked crosswalks where drivers failed to yield; asked how such incidents are represented within action-plan crash data and how the City prioritizes treatment at intersections identified as dangerous by constituents.
- Councilor Yeh – stated drug and alcohol involvement appears to be a leading factor in fatal crashes; asked whether the City is observing increases or decreases in impaired-driving-related fatalities and how enforcement and design improvements interact to reduce such incidents.
- Mayor Knudson – asked how the community might be effectively engaged in conversations about short-term traffic-safety interventions, including quick-build projects, and how such efforts could be integrated with longer-range infrastructure investments.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Rosa Roach)

Link to the webcast of this City Council meeting [here](#).