



Eugene City Council

500 E 4th Ave., Suite 302
Eugene, OR 97401
541-682-5010 • 541-682-5414 Fax
www.eugene-or.gov

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

February 24, 2025

5:30 p.m. CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

City Council Monday work sessions are 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 February 24, 2025;
Her Honor Mayor Kaarin Knudson Presiding**

Councilors

Greg Evans, President
Mike Clark
Matt Keating
Jennifer Yeh

Lyndsie Leech, Vice President
Eliza Kashinsky
Randy Groves
Alan Zelenka

5:30 p.m. CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

1. WORK SESSION: Urgent Community Needs - Downtown and Public Spaces Update

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.

For more information, contact the Council Coordinator at 541-682-5010,
or visit us online at www.eugene-or.gov.

February 24, 2025 Work Session

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Work Session: Urgent Community Needs - Downtown and Public Spaces Update

Meeting Date: February 24, 2025

Agenda Item Number: 1

Department: Police; Planning and Development

Staff Contact: Michelle Parkins and Ray Brown

www.eugene-or.gov

Contact Telephone Number: 541-682-5480

ISSUE STATEMENT

At this work session, City Council will be provided with an update on the Downtown and Public Spaces work to increase vibrancy, economic vitality, and livability of downtown and the broader community while responding efficiently and effectively to the impacts of unsanctioned camping in public areas. No action is requested at this meeting.

BACKGROUND

In 2020, with the advent of the global COVID-19 pandemic and a local stay-in-place order, public-space camping became pervasive, ongoing, and highly visible. The community also experienced the formation of impromptu, and then City-managed, temporary camps in the community with some 300 occupants. There were also hundreds of vehicles occupying curbs beyond City regulations allowances that disrupted business and resident use of the public right-of-way. To support the community and respond to this crisis, the City stood up a Unified Command structure that aligned City resources (staff, money, objectives) from across all departments to create new shelters, access internal and external resources, and provide more efficient responses to community impacts. From the successes found within the Unified Command structure, the City developed a plan for addressing these community impacts.

As a result, the City's 2023-2025 Adopted Biennial Budget included funding (General, Stormwater and Road Funds, Community Safety Payroll Tax, and State Grant Funds) for staff and resources to refine support, shelter, and expand response operations to more effectively assist unhoused and housed community members. The budget included three Incident Commander positions to coordinate and support the City's response to the unhoused crisis in the areas of alternative response, downtown, and city-wide public spaces. Further, the budget also included the Neighborhood Services Officers program that supports the enforcement of code in the right-of-way, adds significant resources to help meet resident expectations to address storage-on-the-street and other vehicle violations, and address unsanctioned camping in the community. Investments in housing and homeless operations to support public and non-profit partnerships in the community, Rest Stop operations and mental health service in downtown Eugene were also included in the budget.

Downtown

To help improve the vibrancy, economic vitality, and livability downtown through public safety,

February 24, 2025 Work Session – Item 1

cleanliness and activation at a high level, the 2023-2025 Adopted Biennial Budget included funding for a Downtown Incident Commander. To address challenges in downtown Eugene, the Co-Responder Team, Downtown Watch program, enhanced Volunteers in Policing, and the Rapid Response Clean Team were established and adjustments to staffing were made to better meet the community demands. In addition to the implementation of specialty teams, procedures have been developed and adjusted while improving communication between City of Eugene departments and the community. Downtown staff involved in safety, cleanliness and activation meet on a weekly basis to improve communication, collaboration, and community outcomes.

The Co-Responder Team is comprised of a Eugene Police Officer and a Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP) from Lane County who work weekdays during business hours. Currently, the Co-responder Team focuses their response to calls for service downtown, where most of the calls deal with individuals experiencing symptoms from substance abuse or mental health disorders. In addition to addressing criminal activity, they perform significant outreach in the downtown area connecting people with local services and opportunities. The Co-Responder Team is currently in Phase 2 of the pilot project and in the process of hiring the second Co-Responder Team.

The Rapid Response Clean Team was established to immediately address cleanliness issues within downtown. This team's primary mission is to assist the Eugene Police Department with cleaning up debris and hazardous materials from unsanctioned camping or trespassing. This includes issues of trash, graffiti, biohazards or cleanliness investigations. In most cases the Clean Team is able to address work orders within an hour.

Improving communication and collaboration between City departments, business owners, property owners, and community members has had an equally important impact on positive downtown outcomes. Additionally, the online Downtown Watch reporting application enables community members and business owners to share concerns with City staff and have them addressed in the same day.

Addressing public safety and cleanliness issues creates an environment for activation of public spaces at a high level. Bringing Cultural Services, Planning and Development, Facilities, Eugene Police, and the Farmers Market Pavilion teams together to communicate on a regular basis improves the efficiency and outcomes for every department. As a result of these efforts, staff have seen improvement across all areas of concern, but there is more to accomplish.

Public Spaces Team

The City continues to prioritize enforcement of unsanctioned camping to address urgent community needs, working to mitigate the impacts of homelessness. The Public Spaces Team was created to implement this work, aligning resources from various City programs and engaging with community partners. The Public Spaces Team is a cross-departmental team that includes staff from Planning and Development (Neighborhood Services Officers, Homeless Services, and Business Outreach), Public Works (Maintenance Right-of-Way Clean-up, Parks and Open Space Park Ambassadors and Illicit Activities), Police (Housing Support Officers), Fire and various key support staff. The Public Spaces Team Incident Commander manages the Public Spaces Team and coordinates with the Downtown Incident Commander and the Alternative Response Planning

Chief. These three incident command positions are housed in the Planning and Development, Police, and Fire departments, respectively.

The Public Spaces Team works collaboratively to prioritize response for the most serious impacts to public safety, sanitation and access to public spaces. The actions taken and the timelines for movement are all done in accordance with City Code and State law. The team's goal is to encourage unhoused community members to enroll in Lane County homeless services and to seek local shelter programs. Otherwise, action in the field encourages regular movement of vehicles and people in compliance with City Code and State law, in ways that reduce the accumulation of debris and the growth of unsafe or unhealthy activity.

As noted above, the 2023-2025 Adopted Budget established the Neighborhood Services Officers (NSOs), who are dedicated to seeking compliance in the right-of-way, and in the City's public spaces, across the community. The budget funds four regular NSO positions and four 2-year limited duration positions, with seven of the eight positions currently filled. The NSO positions operate six days per week and enforce code across the city. The adopted budget also included the development of the Public Work Right of Way (PWM ROW) Clean-up team of five regular maintenance workers positions and a supervisor. The PWM ROW Clean-up focuses on keeping the public right of way safe and clean for community transportation access and environmental needs.

The cumulative effect of these additional focused resources has increased capacity for, and speed of, response to address the impacts of unsanctioned camping. However, many community members still experience ongoing serious impacts to public safety, sanitation, access, business operations, livability and community perception. Most of the public concern centers on recurring experiences with unintended uses of public spaces, and accumulated debris. Despite aggressive local, county and state programs to increase shelter and housing, thousands of community members remain unsheltered and the community experiences predictable effects in its public spaces.

The Public Spaces Team is seeing a small decrease in community requests; however, an increase in staff response. This reflects in the increase in resources (staffing, codes, and administrative orders) allowing for proactivity vs being reactive to public safety concerns. The goal is to continue to be proactive while maintaining empathy and compassion for the community. As staff continue assessing conditions in the City's ongoing response, it is expected that staff will continue identifying areas for possible improvement and engaging City Council for awareness and guidance.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

City of Eugene [Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#) – The Public Space and Downtown work aligns with the following areas of the City's strategic plan:

Urgent Community Needs

- Increase sense of safety
- Mitigate the impacts of homelessness on unhoused individuals and the community.
- Increase the vibrancy, economic vitality, and livability of downtown.
- Improve support for local businesses and the business environment.

February 24, 2025 Work Session – Item 1

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

[April 12, 2021 Work Session](#)

City staff provided an overview of the current homelessness crises and the exacerbating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and identified needs and next steps for addressing the growing number of unhoused community members and related community impacts.

[April 26, 2021 Work Session](#)

Staff presented a plan to address vehicle camping in commercial/industrial and proposed code amendments for parking and storage of vehicles on streets.

[June 14, 2021 Public Hearing](#)

The City Council heard public testimony on the ordinance that would amend City code regarding parking and storage of vehicles on streets.

[June 21, 2021 City Council Meeting](#)

The City Council approved an ordinance that amended City code regarding parking and storage of vehicles on streets.

[November 8, 2023 Work Session](#)

The proposed traffic code amendments related to parking were presented at the November 8, 2023 City Council Work Session

Councilor Groves, seconded by Councilor Keating, move to direct the City Manager to prepare an ordinance amending EC 5.225 and EC 5.265 as described in this AIS and schedule a public hearing on the ordinance.

Passed 8:0

[February 20, 2024 Public Hearing](#)

A public hearing was held on February 20, 2024 on the proposed traffic code amendments and one person testified in support of the proposed ordinance.

[March 11, 2024 Meeting](#)

On March 11, 2024 Council directed the City Manager to schedule a work session for discussion and potential revisions to the proposed ordinances.

Councilor Leech, seconded by Councilor Zelenka, moved to (1) discuss the proposed ordinance tonight but take no action; and, (2) direct the City Manager to schedule a work session for Council discussion of, and potential revisions to, the proposed ordinance.

Passed 7:1 (Opposed by Councilor Clark)

[April 17, 2024 Work Session](#)

City Council provided direction to staff to identify regulatory gaps to address repeat parking violators. The proposed ordinance passed 5-3.

Councilor Leech, seconded by Councilor Keating moved to direct the City Manager to schedule a work session on: (1) further discussion of the proposed persistent parking violator code

February 24, 2025 Work Session – Item 1

amendments; and (2) a proposal to a program that provides resources in addition to, or in lieu of, parking citations to individuals living in their vehicles, including but not limited to vehicle repair.

Passed 8:0

Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Groves moved to adopt an Ordinance amending sections 5.225, 5.265, 5.335, 5.990, and 5.995 of the Eugene Code, 1971 as set forth in Attachment A to this AIS.

Passed 5:3 (Opposed by Councilors Zelenka, Yeh, and Leech)

COUNCIL OPTIONS

Information only.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

None.

SUGGESTED MOTION

None.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Staff Contact: Michelle Parkins, Public Spaces Team Incident Commander
Telephone 541-682-5480
Staff E-Mail: MParkins@eugene-or.gov

Staff Contact: Ray Brown, Downtown Incident Commander
Telephone 541-682-5107
Staff E-Mail: RBrown@eugene-or.gov