

# EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



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### Work Session: Homeless Camping

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Meeting Date: June 26, 2013  
Department: Public Works  
[www.eugene-or.gov](http://www.eugene-or.gov)

Agenda Item Number: B  
Contact: Kurt Corey  
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#### **ISSUE STATEMENT**

This item is a follow-up work session on the topic of homeless camping. It is intended to provide additional information as requested subsequent to the May 20, 2013, work session on the same topic.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The City Council held work sessions on homeless camping in parks and open spaces on April 24, 2013, and May 20, 2013, and has previously been provided the following options to consider:

- (1) Eugene Code section 4.816(1) authorizes a business, religious institution or public entity to allow up to three vehicles at a time to use its parking lot for camping/sleeping (subject to certain requirements, including that the entity provide garbage disposal services, sanitary facilities and storage for personal items). The council has expanded “vehicles” to include tents and Conestoga huts. The council could direct the City Manager to bring back an ordinance to expand the number of vehicles (tents and Conestoga huts) from three to five or six.
- (2) The council could direct the City Manager to bring back an ordinance that would allow a religious institution or other non-profit to permit dusk-to-dawn camping at its facility for up to some number of campers (perhaps five) and to explore creating a network to allow individuals to easily identify places where they could camp.
- (3) The council could direct the City Manager to bring back an ordinance removing the sunset on the Conestoga hut ordinance, or alternatively, extending the sunset for two years.

On April 24, 2013, the City Council passed the following motion modifying the second option:

“Direct the City Manager to bring back an ordinance that would allow people to sleep undisturbed and camp overnight from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. on vacant City of Eugene owned lands, but not including improved park land or sensitive environment open spaces, with staff to bring back a specific list of allowable sites, and on religious institution, non-

profit organization, commercial and industrial properties if they allow it. This shall be a pilot program for 120 days and council shall then review the pilot program and assess whether or not to continue the ordinance.”

The attached draft ordinance (Attachment A) was included with the agenda item summary (AIS) materials for the May 20 work session and incorporates each of these options. The draft ordinance is annotated with comments that explain the ordinance’s provisions and how the provisions address the three options. At the most recent work session, the council offered a number of questions and comments including several modifications to the site criteria, the scope of work, liability, community partnerships, and other related issues. It is not clear where consensus lies with regard to any of the discussion topics; an attempt has been made to provide updated materials that best reflect the discussion to this point.

Sites – Attachment B is a refreshed list of potential homeless camping sites representing undeveloped City-owned properties and for which the criteria for inclusion on the updated list is more specifically described on the attachment. Note there are a total of 20 sites including 11 undeveloped parks and nine properties that are not part of the parks inventory. Attachments C thru F are maps that depict the sites graphically.

Scope of Work – There has been considerable discussion around various pilot programs but less clarity on the specific desired outcomes. Council guidance on a number of specific questions would assist with defining the actual scope of work. In particular, this conversation began with a suggestion to consider amending the camping ordinance to allow dusk-to-dawn camping in City parks. There has subsequently been discussion of the concept of “rest stops,” hosted semi-permanent facilities, and more substantial accommodations than initially contemplated. Some specific questions for council deliberation might include:

1. Should one or more sleep sites be established? If so, should these be in parks, other City properties, both, neither?
2. What are the site criteria?
3. Should the sites be hosted or otherwise managed and should tenants be screened for compatibility?
4. What amenities should be provided? Restrooms? Garbage collection? Storage lockers? Other?
5. How should neighborhoods be involved in siting decisions?
6. What are the desired outcomes in terms of number of campers per site, hours of operation, cleanup, behaviors, etc.?

Liability – Some of the councilors as well as the SLEEPS advocates have asked questions related to liability. The City Attorney suggests that many of the options that have been discussed might increase the potential liability of and risk to the City, but generally, there are ways to mitigate the risk so that the risk is no greater than for many of the City’s other programs. It is difficult to identify the potential risk for all of the different ways in which a program can be structured as the details could make a difference. The City Attorney’s office recommends that the council identify the specific programs or outcomes that – as a policy matter – it would like to pursue. The City

Attorney's office can provide the council with both an assessment of the risk for those specific proposals, and if the risk is significant, with possible options to reduce the risk.

Community Partnerships – Some councilors have mentioned a collaborative approach with the community in working the issue where the City would, for example, assume a support role to the non-profit and/or for-profit social services network. Attachment G is a current list maintained by Eugene Police of community social services agencies. There are 12 agencies listed as providing shelter which could provide the council a starting point for a gap analysis. This approach could also take advantage of the professional management services these agencies provide in addressing the homeless issues in Eugene.

## **RELATED CITY POLICIES**

Eugene Code 4.815 Prohibited Camping and Eugene Code 4.816 Permitted Camping.

## **COUNCIL OPTIONS**

The council options include:

1. Direct the City Manager to schedule a public hearing on the draft ordinance and the list of potential sites for the pilot program.
2. Pursue resolution through a collaborative effort with the local social services network.

## **CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

The City Manager recommends the City Council take the following actions:

1. Provide specific guidance as to the scope of work, problem statement, and desired outcomes.
2. To the extent council remains interested in accommodating overnight camping in City parks and other City property, direct the City Manager to schedule a public hearing on the draft ordinance and the list of potential sites for the pilot program.

## **SUGGESTED MOTION**

Move to direct the City Manager to schedule a public hearing on the draft ordinance and the list of potential sites for the pilot program.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Draft Ordinance
- B. List of Potential Properties
- C. Potential Camping Sites – Northeast Eugene
- D. Potential Camping Sites – Northwest Eugene
- E. Potential Camping Sites – Southeast Eugene
- F. Potential Camping Sites – Southwest Eugene
- G. Social Services Agencies Summary

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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