

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Action: An Ordinance Extending the Sunset Dates of the Rest Stop and Dusk To Dawn Pilot Programs; and Providing for an Immediate Effective Date

Meeting Date: March 14, 2016
Department: City Manager's Office
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: 5
Contact: Mia Cariaga
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ISSUE STATEMENT

The current rest stop and Dusk to Dawn permitted overnight sleeping pilot programs are set to sunset on March 31, 2016. Council is asked to take action on an ordinance with an immediate effective date that would extend the current programs to March 31, 2017. A public hearing on this ordinance was held on February 16, 2016.

BACKGROUND

Rest Stops

The rest stop program was initiated by the council in September 2013 by Ordinance 20517 with a one-year sunset date. The ordinance has been extended three times and is scheduled to sunset on March 31, 2016. The program currently supports five rest stops, three of which are managed by Community Supported Shelters (CSS) and two by Nightingale Health Sanctuary (NHS), and allows up to 15 individuals to stay at a stop. An expansion of up to 20 persons may be provided at the City Manager's discretion for an operator with a proven track record of successfully managing a rest stop for at least six months.

CSS manages one stop at Roosevelt and Garfield, one at the Eugene Mission dedicated to veterans, and one at Northwest Expressway and Chambers. Previous Council action for the site at Northwest Expressway and Chambers permits up to two rest stop sites, CSS may reopen a second site there. The Roosevelt and Garfield stop was the first to open in December 2013. On June 10, 2015, the council approved a stop at the Eugene Mission that is managed by CSS.

Nightingale Health Sanctuary manages two adjacent stops on land leased from the county on the Lane County Behavioral Health Campus at 2411 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. These stops were established in December 2014, and intended to provide a temporary winter sheltering option. The lease was recently extended to August 2016, to provide more time to find other housing options for the current residents. The site will be closed and restored to its original condition prior to the first University of Oregon football game in September. Lane County has a contract for use of that site for event parking.

The program has been effective at providing a low-cost, safe, emergency sheltering option. Managing non-profits have been responsible for the costs of setting up and operating the stops. Preliminary results of a University of Oregon-sponsored program evaluation by students indicates that neighboring businesses and residents support the program and report little to no negative impacts from being located near a stop. The evaluation also indicates that stops provide the safety and stability that is critical for homeless people to begin connecting with resources and support services they need to begin providing for themselves. Managers are reporting individuals accessing employment, health services and more permanent housing once stabilized at a stop. Full results of the evaluation will be distributed once complete.

Dusk to Dawn Permitted Overnight Sleeping

In order to provide an additional resource to the community, the council initiated another pilot program called “Dusk to Dawn” in November 2015. Modeled after the original rest stop concept, the Dusk to Dawn ordinance allows for council-approved sites to be used between the hours of 4:30 p.m. and 7:30 a.m. as sanctioned places to sleep. Sites cannot be in residential areas or close to schools and must be on property owned or leased by the City of Eugene. The City is responsible for site operation either directly or by contract.

This concept was discussed at the Poverty and Homelessness Board Winter Strategies Subcommittee and is one of a few ideas developed by that group. Mayor Kitty Piercy introduced the concept at a press conference in which she announced a resolution calling for State attention to the issue of homelessness. She also called on landowners willing to offer an eligible Dusk to Dawn site to come forward. The City continues to work on establishing a site(s) for this use.

On February 16, 2016, the council held a public hearing on the extension of these programs. Three people testified in favor of the program extensions, none in opposition. Interest was expressed by some councilors in an ordinance amendment to address the hours of operation permitted by the Dusk to Dawn program. The request was to have the City Manager consider, among other things, sunset as a factor.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

Eugene Code 4.816 Permitted Overnight Sleeping.

Council goal for a safe community: A community where all people are safe, valued and welcome, including desired outcomes for decreased property crime, a greater sense of safety, visible and accessible police presence, and better police/community relations.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

Based on Council comments after the public hearing, staff have included two ordinances for consideration. Both versions include an amendment to the titles and language of the previous version to include an immediate effective date.

1. Ordinance Version 1: The first version extends the ordinance in its current form to March 31, 2017, with an immediate effective date.

2. Ordinance Version 2: The second version extends the ordinance to March 31, 2017, with an immediate effective date and amends the Dusk to Dawn language to include the City Manager's consideration of seasonal sunset when determining the hours permitted by the program.

Council may choose to extend the sunset dates of the Rest Stop and Dusk to Dawn pilot programs or allow them to sunset on March 31, 2016.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

The City Manager recommends adopting Version 2 of the ordinance.

SUGGESTED MOTION

Move to adopt Version 2 of an ordinance extending the Rest Stop and Dusk to Dawn pilot programs with an immediate effective date.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Versions 1 and 2 of Proposed Ordinance

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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