

MINUTES
Eugene City Council
Work Session
Eugene, Oregon 97401

April 25, 2022
5:30 p.m.

Councilors Present: Emily Semple, Matt Keating, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Mike Clark, Greg Evans, Claire Syrett, Randy Groves

Mayor Vinis opened the April 25, 2022, work session of the Eugene City Council in a hybrid in-person and virtual format.

1. WORK SESSION: 2022 General Obligation Bond for Street Repairs

City Manager Sarah Medary gave background and introduced the topic. City Engineer Jenifer Willer and Finance Director Twylla Miller gave a presentation on the topic.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark - asked what the current backlog is on unimproved streets; commented on the overlay program and unimproved streets in north Eugene needing improvement; asked if it is too late to add a question to the poll; stated the maintenance overlay program could be the way to go.
- Councilor Evans - said the issue of lighting is a concern to him; asked if a lighting audit has been done to assess the quality of lighting on the streets to determine what the needs are and what the dollar amount would be; said dark streets create the potential for auto, pedestrian, and bicycle accidents; supported being more specific about lighting and other amenities that need to be addressed with another bond.
- Councilor Groves - commented he has been getting more knowledgeable about street lighting, traffic calming and signage; said he is interested in hearing more about unimproved streets; asked if the 94 percent construction rate was a conservative number; asked why neighborhood associations were not included in the proposed outreach.
- Councilor Zelenka - commented it is essential to keep the accountability mechanisms in place as means of building trust with the community and following through; asked what the current bond rate is and if the bond rate is the same amount for each household; asked for clarification on the bond rate dollar amounts and the backlog; asked how much is spent on traffic calming and what the backlog is for traffic calming requests; asked for details on the Vision Zero projects.
- Councilor Keating - commented on the last three road bond votes and shared facts about bonds that failed in past mid-term elections; commented that traffic calming might poll well; asked if one of the polling questions is about supporting a bond that increases property owners' taxes.
- Councilor Syrett - commented it will be up to Council to decide if the polling results are enough to put the bond on the ballot; asked when the first project would go out to bid if the voters support the bond; stated that social equity needs to be a consideration and would like a similar GIS evaluation of sidewalk lighting; discussed the potential advantage with Vision Zero identified projects and the City's competitive advantage

when staff apply for state and federal funding; shared her concerns about bicycle and pedestrian safety on the streets.

- Councilor Yeh – said she likes the idea of tying this to other Council priorities; said she felt adding sidewalk infill and streetlights to the bond will make residents more supportive; stated she is not inclined to support a higher tax.
- Councilor Semple - asked what is included in the annual dollar amount; noted the bond does not address sidewalks because sidewalk repair is the property owner’s responsibility; said she would be interested in making traffic calming a higher priority.
- Councilor Evans - asked how many miles of street that are scheduled for rebuild are on the verge of collapse; gave some examples of roads in poor condition; asked if there are other measures Council can take that will marginally reduce the amount of backlog.
- Councilor Zelenka - asked how much the backlog will increase with the bond renewed or if the gap will still be \$3 million; asked if an assessment was done on what one dollar per garbage can would bring in.
- Councilor Keating - stated that adding one cent to the rate seems reasonable and he would like to see the polling on adding a two-cent increase to the gas tax; said he is curious about what the polling questions are and what the process is; asked if it is typical procedure to conduct a poll without Council’s feedback on content; stated he would like to see a frank question asking if voters would support a property tax increase, and include in that question how much and what services the increase will pay for.
- Councilor Clark - stated he would have liked to see the questions for the poll and felt a question regarding unimproved streets would have been valuable; said there are two categories: 1) enhancing the unimproved roadways all over Eugene regarding the maintenance overlay and 2) the money spent on traffic calming; said he would like more information before making a decision.
- Councilor Syrett - stated she feels the polling is important and would like a threshold to ensure the bond measure does not fail; asked if staff used the same polling firm as in the past.
- Councilor Groves - said he would like Council to be consulted on the front end of polling questions with fiscal implications; stated lighting, signage and traffic calming are important to constituents.
- Councilor Keating - stated he would like to explore including traffic noise in the polling questions and asked if there is a way to capture auditory infractions.
- Councilor Zelenka - commented that the backlog means the road system is not getting worse or better for voters; said that adding the items that are important to voters will help increase the chances a bond measure will pass.
- Mayor Vinis - stated that traffic calming and lighting are Vision Zero goals and are closely related to active transportation in terms of biking and walking.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brooke Freed
Deputy City Recorder

(Recorded by Niyah Ross)

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