

## MINUTES

### Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

September 21, 2022  
12:00 p.m.

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

**Councilors Absent:** Greg Evans

Mayor Vinis opened the September 21, 2022, work session of the Eugene City Council in a hybrid format at 101 W 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene OR 97401.

#### 1. **WORK SESSION: Community Survey Results**

Assistant City Manager, Kristie Hammitt introduced Policy Analyst, Jason Dedrick and Acting Communications Director, Cambra Ward-Jacobson, who presented the results of the community survey.

##### Council Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – stated her appreciation for the work done to complete this survey and for the many residents who took the time to complete it; noted that she is interested to see how these survey results compare to future surveys.
- Councilor Keating – noted his appreciation for residents and staff for the time dedicated to completing this survey.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that there appears to be a disconnect between respondents' satisfaction in their quality of life and their satisfaction with the state of the city; noted that some survey responses reflect societal anxiety; stated that the City is not telling its story well; stated that there is a disconnect between what the City is doing and what people perceive.
- Councilor Yeh – extended thanks to residents for completing the survey; stated that it is encouraging that so many people took the time to complete the survey and share their opinions with the City; asked if there will be other engagement that will add onto this survey; noted that as a stand-alone survey, this does not feel equitable; suggested that more community engagement is needed with more equitable methods; noted that the data from this survey is important and could influence future discussions.
- Councilor Clark – stated that the disconnect between people's satisfaction with their lives and with the City is not an unexpected finding; noted that people see the City as a separate organization from themselves; stated that the disconnect exists because the City's decisions and actions do not feel relevant to their own priorities; stated that communicating the intent of the City's actions is unlikely to change the disconnection people feel between their own lives and the City; stated that he is looking forward to the Strategic Planning Workshops on September 23 and 24, 2022.
- Councilor Groves – thanked community members for their involvement; stated that people want to know how City Council chooses some topics because it does not match

the community's top priorities; noted that main concerns he hears about are unhoused challenges and behavioral problems; noted that the City needs to find a better way to communicate with the public; stated that many people did not know about the survey; requested that council get more time to review the questions on future surveys.

- Councilor Semple – stated that she was not surprised by the results of the survey; requested that the City be more conscious of the timing of big surveys; asked if they will have data from the open-ended survey questions prior to the Strategic Planning Workshops on September 23 and 24, 2022; stressed the importance of respondents' concerns about education; stated her interest in engaging and educating the public on the activities of the City Council.
- Councilor Syrett – stated that she is not surprised by the responses; stated that many of the concerns reflected in the survey responses are topics that council is working on; acknowledged that there is more work to be done on these important topics; noted that the City Staff approval rating was higher than that of City Council; noted that council was asked by staff to help spread awareness of the survey; noted that she is not in favor of council having input on survey questions; noted that her household was one of the random households that received the survey.
- Mayor Vinis – noted that part of the strategic planning process is to review past council priorities and actions to inform future topics; noted that a future topic might be how the City communicates with the public; noted the open-ended questions about housing concerns reflect how it feels to live or work on someone's particular street.
- Councilor Zelenka – discussed the wide gap between people's satisfaction with their lives and with the state of the city; noted that respondents' urgent concerns for the next five years are not surprising and that council is already working on or has plans to work on those concerns; called attention to the responses that the government is trying but not making enough progress on homelessness; stated that the council should prioritize communication with the public with funding and full time support staff; stated that the City should perform another survey on how people receive communications and create a plan to address those responses.
- Councilor Keating – stated he would be in favor of having support staff; noted his frustration about communication, outreach, and educational challenges; stated that there should be a budget for individual and broad council communications to residents.
- Councilor Clark – stated that he does not think the survey results are issues of communication; noted he would support some of council's suggestions for communication with the public; stated that constituents are aware of council's actions to address common issues but don't see the results of those actions; noted he disagrees with the direction council has taken on addressing several issues; stated that he thinks the survey results show that most people disagree with the actions council has taken.
- Councilor Groves – noted that these surveys do need baseline questions that can demonstrate trends over time; clarified that he would like to see a separate section on surveys to evaluate current council topics; noted that people expect engagement from their councilors and that is not feasible as a part-time volunteer job; noted his desire to figure out better ways to communicate with the public.
- Mayor Vinis – asked if the City has previously done a survey about how people get their information; noted that the results of such a survey have probably changed dramatically; noted her desire to find out how to reach the public through multiple types of communication that do not solely rely on people navigating the City website.

- Councilor Zelenka – stated that council should have at least two full-time staff members to send councilor newsletters and notify the public about town halls; stated that there was an earlier survey about communication preferences and it should be redone; expressed his concern with the significant portion of respondents who said they didn't know how the City was addressing particular issues; stated that the underlying causes of homelessness are lack of affordable housing, mental health services, and substance abuse services; stated the importance of communicating reasonable expectations of council's actions to the public.
- Councilor Clark – stated that suggestions the public makes to address issues may be practical, even if all councilors do not support them; noted that council should be willing to admit when they're wrong and be willing to try other solutions; reminded council of the motion he put forward to adopt a similar ordinance that passed in the City of Springfield that makes it a violation to hand items out of cars; noted that the City of Springfield does not have the number of panhandlers that the City of Eugene does.
- Councilor Yeh – stated her confusion over whether an ordinance banning panhandling will solve homelessness; asked for clarification on the City of Springfield's ordinance and whether it has ever been used.
- Councilor Syrett – stated that council rejected the proposal to ban people from handing things of value out of their car because council felt it was not the right thing to do; noted that panhandling is constitutionally protected and that the ordinance that the City of Springfield passed narrowly avoids that constitutional protection.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that the City is doing many things to address homelessness, but it is not enough; stated that he believes the ordinance passed by the City of Springfield is unconstitutional and he does not support that the council take the same course of action.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala  
City Recorder

*(Recorded by Olivia Clark)*

Webcast of meeting available [here](#).