

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

March 10, 2021
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the March 10, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council.

1. **WORK SESSION: Housing Tools and Strategies – Moving Upstream**

Economic Development Manager Anne Fifield, Development Investment Liaison Allie Camp, and Town Square Analyst Josh Berman provided an update on the Housing Tools and Strategies project and identified next steps for organization-wide coordination towards progress on increasing housing affordability in Eugene.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Evans – asked the classification standard for mobile homes and mobile home parks; inquired how this affects System Development Charges (SDCs) and development of future projects; stated he thinks mobile homes on wheels should be included in the inventory.
- Councilor Clark – suggested each housing type has an effect on the whole; asked staff why they chose to use 2018 numbers for development costs and stated he would like to see the most up-to-date information possible used going forward; suggested staff could look further into why single family home starts have dropped over the past decade or more.
- Councilor Syrett – expressed kudos to staff for the agenda materials prepared for this topic; stated she likes the plan to implement a coordinated strategy, and the Housing Implementation Pipeline (HIP) feels like the right evolution for the Housing Tools and Strategies project.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated he would like metrics to be an integral part of the HIP; stated the most important metric for him is the number of affordable housing units year over year being built.
- Councilor Groves – complimented staff on the presentation; asked staff about current programs for first-time homebuyers; stated that soft costs and SDCs per ADU are much higher than other housing types and hopes staff are looking into ways to redistribute costs; inquired into the percentage of new homes purchased that are by people migrating into the community from inflated housing markets.
- Councilor Keating – asked how many people per month staff and service providers are lifting out of houselessness, and where in the implementation plan it illustrates how many people are being placed in housing given that 138 individuals are slipping into houselessness each month; inquired into the use of American Rescue plan dollars and if a FEMA-style shelter will be one of those uses.
- Councilor Yeh – stated this type of coordinated strategy across departments is the most effective way to go; asked if economic prosperity efforts and renter protections are part of the HIP; agreed that metrics are important and would like to see reporting of trends, such as units created, building costs, rents, and housing prices, and especially in relation to incomes.
- Councilor Semple – complimented staff on the agenda materials prepared for this topic; expressed interest in exploring something similar to the Metro HomeShare program; stated that SDCs seem to have become a slush fund and she will be watching them closely.

- Mayor Vinis – reminded Council that affordable housing built with public funds are known and that metric will be certain; stated though this work session is on housing and not just homelessness, it is important to remember the continuum begins with the person in the tent.
- Councilor Clark – shared that active listings of homes for sale are decreasing drastically, housing prices increased 13 percent over the one-year period between November 2019 and 2020, and the eviction moratoriums and mortgage forbearances will be ending this year; urged Council to find actions to take quickly.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated most of the time and energy spent has been toward universal policies, and though intended to lower the builder’s cost, he is not sure that means the purchase price is lower; stated he feels the numbers show the City has gotten off track and that more time is being spent on policies than getting units built; shared he plans to propose a work session on a bond or levy for housing and for climate change action because money is needed for action.
- Councilor Groves – asked staff to elaborate on plans for 6th and 7th Avenues which he feels are ripe for redevelopment; stated that wage stagnation and economic development is part of the housing problem and can’t lose sight of that; suggested the Live-Work housing model may make more sense now considering the current pandemic and the fact that offices are downsizing, and encouraged staff to look into it.
- Councilor Syrett – shared information about the land bank model proposed by SquareOne Villages for its Peace Village project; stated there are other entities besides the City that can do this work and provide affordable housing, including multi-family housing, without requiring on-going public subsidies for residents; agreed with Councilor Clark that it is important to keep this work moving quickly; stated she would not want to see Bethel or other neighborhoods who are already waiting their turn for a neighborhood plan to be bypassed by the 6th and 7th Avenues corridor.
- Councilor Keating – stated that society would need less Affordable Housing stock if investments were made more intentionally in housing affordability strategies and he sees the HIP ultimately doing this; asked staff how the Engage Eugene survey informs the work of the HIP; suggested West 11th is an existing transportation corridor with potential for mixed economy and a mixed commercial/residential hybrid.
- Mayor Vinis – stated there is an opportunity before the final report is done to continue to try and learn new things with the Coronavirus Relief Funds.
- Councilor Clark – stated Eugene is seeing growth at nearly double the rate planned for through the Envision Eugene process; stated metrics will be the key all along the way to see how the City are doing compared to its goals.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated he is encouraged that the Housing Policy Board Renters Protections Committee has reconvened and asked staff when the committee will be sending a report to Council; stated he is particularly interested in learning more from the committee about Portland’s Fair Access in Renting Ordinance.

The meeting adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Forrest

Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Jessica Gebb)

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