

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

June 12, 2024
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the June 12, 2024, Eugene City Council Work Session in a virtual format.

1. **WORK SESSION: Tree Preservation & Solar Standards Overview**

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Senior Planners, Jeff Gepper and Reid Verner, who provided an overview of tree preservation and solar setback standards that apply within the City of Eugene.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – asked what the permit process is for work affecting neighborhood trees in setbacks or road easement areas; noted a company with a permit recently encroached private property in his ward and would have killed a tree if Public Works had not stopped the company; asked if there is a process to know when the City authorizes companies to dig in the right-of-way that may affect trees on private property.
- Councilor Semple – asked when shade point height and shade coverage are measured as it changes throughout the year; asked how special area zones differ from each other with solar setbacks; asked if solar setbacks apply to the Jefferson Westside Special Area Zone.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked why solar setbacks don't apply in special area zones; asked how tree preservation and middle housing impact each other; noted the Governor's Housing Development Task Force recommended eliminating all tree preservation codes; asked for a status update on the recommendation; noted his opposition to the provision; noted the tree canopy reduces the energy needed for cooling in the Urban Heating Zone; asked for a status report and update memo on the City's tree canopy coverage goal; asked how conflicts between tree preservation and solar standards are resolved.
- Councilor Keating – stated Eugene should oppose the removal of tree preservation standards; inquired about the last adjustment to the tree removal permit fee structure and the process for future adjustments; noted the fees may be ready for review; asked how tree removal fee revenue is used; asked if funds are used to increase and preserve the tree canopy; noted trees were removed in his neighborhood without notification; asked if for-profit partners have a

process to review applications and ensure correct steps are followed; asked what an enforcement officer's workload is; asked if improving public education on tree preservation standards and the proper permitting process is needed.

2. WORK SESSION: Franklin Boulevard Transformation Project Update

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Transportation Planning Manager, Rob Inerfeld, who provided an update on the final design concept for the Franklin Boulevard Transformation Project.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Evans – asked what data has been gathered from Springfield regarding roundabouts; noted Eugene should be analyzing data on Lane County roundabouts in addition to the National data to determine how the City moves forward with the project.
- Councilor Clark – asked when Council's final vote on the project details will be before construction begins; noted concern with the project's lack of community input; asked if adding another Emerald Express (EmX) lane widens the street and how many trees will be removed; asked if charter provisions are triggered and if a public vote is needed; asked why Springfield decided against certain roundabouts and why Eugene isn't considering the same choice; noted concern with heavy pedestrian traffic and increased confusion with the roundabouts.
- Councilor Groves – noted concern with roundabouts and supporting a project without all the information; expressed an interest in gathering more information from Springfield; noted desire for safe roadways in Eugene and to revisit the project once Council's questions are answered; noted he and Councilor Keating met with businesses and residents who expressed anxiety over the project; noted concern with the project's lack of community input.
- Councilor Semple – noted roundabouts reduce pollution from idling; noted more efficient EmX routes decrease the number of cars on the road; supports roundabouts and thinks roundabout education could be beneficial; asked how many trees will be planted; noted concern with public feedback and delaying the project as the City previously conducted community outreach; asked for the time estimation to redesign the project; asked if the roundabout and Orchard Street concerns are connected.
- Councilor Yeh – interested in the impact of increased street trees on pedestrians and bikers; noted interest in the project's phased approach; thinks roundabouts are safer and better for communities; noted interest in gathering more information from Springfield.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted Springfield's decision against its project was complex and not about roundabouts; thinks accounting for planted trees is important to get the project's net effect on street trees; noted the project is long-standing, has conducted community outreach, and has funding in place; noted the left turn onto Orchard Street from Franklin Boulevard is Lane Transit District's System's main conflict point; thinks the project will be safer for bikers and pedestrians while creating a better traffic flow; opposes delaying the project.

MOTION: Councilor Zelenka seconded by Councilor Evans moved to extend 10 minutes.

VOTE: 8:0 PASSED

Councilor Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – noted she advocated for the federal dollars on the United Front lobbying team; stated Council has had the opportunity to understand project direction; noted the City’s website has information on the design concept and proposed engineering; noted the Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation (BEST) non-profit is active in outreach and will provide Council information in July; noted the final design can address many concerns raised.
- Councilor Leech – thinks the project will benefit the corridor; hopes the project will not be delayed further.
- Councilor Evans – emphasized his desire to use Springfield’s data to evaluate its roundabouts’ impacts and how those could apply to the proposed roundabouts on Franklin Boulevard.
- Councilor Clark – noted concern for people’s expectations for crossing the street and potential confusion; stated addressing concerns raised in the early stages of a project is often delayed until there is no opportunity to address them later.
- Councilor Semple – noted the crosswalks for students do not go through the roundabouts as they are on the opposite sides of them; noted the roundabouts will have traffic control and the same number of students will use the crosswalks that are currently using them; recognizes community concerns; expressed interest in understanding how many people like the project.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Natalie Venhuda)

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