

## MINUTES

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

July 10, 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 July 10, 2024, work session of the Eugene City Council in a virtual format.

- 1. WORK SESSION: Results of Engagement and Strategies for Building Decarbonization**  
City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Climate Policy Analyst, Danielle Klinkebiel, who presented the strategies that emerged from community engagement on building decarbonization.

#### Councilor Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – supports the 16 strategies that align with Council’s adopted policies; thinks the Incentive Navigator Service is a strong starting place.
- Councilor Yeh – surprised there are 500 homes in Eugene with oil heat; asked how many people are using wood or pellet stoves in Eugene; noted air conditioning is a necessity due to heat and wildfires; asked how many renters and homeowners use window units; asked what other funding options are available besides the impact and franchise fees.
- Councilor Groves – interested in Councilor Zelenka’s insights from his position with the State; interested in listening to various opinions on building decarbonization; asked for the average difference in cost between a geothermal and an air-to-air heat pump; thinks the City’s overall strategy should be reducing energy consumption; asked if the City has discussed with Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) placing solar farms on top of its reservoirs; concerned with placing solar panels on bare land when there is a shortage of bare land for housing; asked if there has been progress on putting a solar farm near the airport.
- Councilor Keating – noted he and Councilor Groves toured the airport; interested in the ability for a solar farm and collaborating with Lane Transit District (LTD) for increased ridership to and from the airport; supports the community solar project; interested in exploring incentives for businesses to lend their rooftop space for community solar projects; interested in exploring a franchise fee or supplier tax to fund an energy efficient awareness program or incentive navigator service; interested in ways to reduce low-income households’ energy burden, meet the City’s climate goals, increase energy efficiency, and equitably electrify; interested in exploring the fossil fuel reduction strategies of other cities as well as carbon or climate impact fees; interested in the business community’s response.

- Councilor Leech – interested in exploring the presented strategies; asked what strategies can move forward without a dedicated funding source; asked if direction is needed to move forward with the work plan; supports moving forward with the gas supply tax; interested in discussing a climate impact fee and learning more about the building decarbonization and other disincentives for buildings with gas.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted solar panels are limited near airports due to their glare and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) rules; supports the presented ideas; noted 60 percent of Northwest Natural customers have low to moderate income, so Council must be careful about having a franchise fee that could increase their rate; asked if researching incentives is in the work plan.
- Councilor Evans – asked for the implementation costs of the presented strategies and what cost will be passed on to residential and commercial customers to fill the funding gap; asked how the City can bridge the funding gap with in-kind strategies and services in collaboration with EWEB and Northwest Natural; noted concern in Europe over the cost of decarbonization; noted lower-income homes may not have the cash to support additional costs.
- Councilor Semple – thinks it's past time to increase the franchise fee but is concerned with the impact to renters; noted concern with incentives for those who already have gas power.
- Councilor Clark – interested in the City leveraging a bond authority for a loan fund to support the community's initial transition costs; noted EWEB previously did a study on its long-term capacities; interested in ongoing capacity information.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted the Biden Administration is giving Oregon funding for weatherization, solar, and heat pumps; thinks the Navigator position should be a priority for the City as it helps Eugene access those funds; thinks more climate impact fee research is needed; thinks Council needs to prioritize equity to prevent further impacting energy burdened community members; asked for the plan for developing the work plan's details and timeline; asked if the 16 strategies become the high priority work plan items related to CAP 2.0.
- Councilor Groves – concerned with how a fee will impact low-income residents and employers; interested in raising funds with minimal impact; noted concern for employers with overhead doors using electricity due to the heat associated with it.
- Councilor Yeh – asked if the City will need to pursue more than one solution and revenue source; thinks there is still an opportunity to mitigate climate change by creating additional foundation to put people in a better place moving forward; noted there is a large cost of doing nothing or not enough.
- Councilor Evans – asked how much community comparison the City doing; asked if the City can learn from coastal cities using wave technology to supply energy; asked what can be learned from the challenges Europe is facing with its decarbonization strategies.
- Councilor Zelenka – thinks the City needs to move forward on multiple solutions; noted the costs of climate change are incorrectly compared to zero cost; noted climate change has large, indirect costs in the form of natural disasters; noted

adapting to climate change is significantly more expensive than mitigating it; thinks Council prioritizing the strategies will be helpful.

- Mayor Vinis – noted the City is obligated to create the infrastructure, housing, parks, and community that people live in, even with its actions towards climate change; noted it is the City’s fundamental work to improve the quality of life of low-income renters through energy efficient appliances and weatherized apartments; noted many Eugene businesses are required to comply with the State Building Performance Standards and the City needs to support them in doing so.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katie LaSala".

Katie LaSala  
City Recorder

*(Recorded by Natalie Venhuda)*

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