

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

October 30, 2024
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the October 30, 2024, Eugene City Council Work Session in a virtual format.

1. **WORK SESSION: Voluntary Annexations**

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Planning Director, Alissa Hunter, who provided an overview of voluntary annexations.

2. **WORK SESSION: River Road / Santa Clara On-Street Parking Issues**

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Curbside and Administrative Services Director, Jeff Petry, who provided an overview of parking issues in the River Road/Santa Clara area.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – noted interest in a motion to direct staff to act on incentives for voluntary annexation; noted there are 22,000 residents living in the River Road and Santa Clara area that are not part of the City of Eugene and do not have voting rights or access to City services despite being served by the Eugene Springfield Fire Department (ESF); noted interest in incentivizing annexation to grow the City's tax base and reduce costs already incurred by the City.
- Councilor Leech – noted constituents reach out to her regarding the challenges residents face living on City property versus County property, including disparities in services, laws, and emergency response; noted interest in considering more incentives; noted the neighborhood planning process shifted due to Middle Housing, Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities, and the Coronavirus pandemic; noted the River Road area has lots with development potential; noted the need to address increased demand on street parking and for parking minimums as more housing is developed; noted interest in solutions to improve parking issues on County and unimproved streets.
- Councilor Groves – noted the need for parking solutions on narrow, unimproved streets with deep drainage ditches and no sidewalks; noted concern with increased construction density without sufficient off-street parking; noted interest in addressing parking issues throughout Eugene; noted interest in Councilor Clark's potential motion; noted ESF responds to calls in the River Road and Santa Clara area regardless of city limits.

- Councilor Clark – noted the call volume for Fire and EMS has largely risen since the 1980s, partly due to the increased population in the River Road and Santa Clara area; noted City decisions impact residents living in the River Road and Santa Clara area despite not voting in the City; noted the value of annexation incentives to make the transition more feasible for residents; noted his potential motion would direct staff to explore options for incentivizing voluntary annexation.
- Councilor Yeh – asked for a realistic timeline for staff to return with updates; asked about the possibility of maintaining the 2025 timeline, with the option to address some items earlier if feasible; noted support for discussing timelines and adjustments at the 2025 meeting.
- Councilor Leech – noted interest in continuing the conversation in conjunction with housing strategies; noted concern with the River Road area’s park district shrinking and its funding being compromised as residents annex out; asked for options for managing the district’s funding structure, given the district’s strong community support; noted interest in Councilor Clark’s potential motion.
- Mayor Vinis – noted interest in the tax gap between taxes raised and the cost of services; noted there is pressure to both expand housing and address the financial gap; noted interest in receiving information on the budget implications of additional incentives.
- Councilor Clark – noted the need for adequate support and a transition plan if annexation proceeds in the park district; noted a renewal of the state legislation that Senator Edwards helped pass is needed to facilitate annexation for non-contiguous properties.

MOTION: Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to direct the City Manager to come back to Council in the late winter of 2025 with a plan for voluntary annexation that would include financial incentives, impact on previously existing districts and the City’s responsibility or plan for dealing with that and other needed changes of ordinance or changes of state law to accomplish this.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – noted the motion is for a plan of action, not for immediate implementation; made a friendly amendment to remove the time consideration (*friendly accepted*).
- Councilor Leech – noted interest in the next step being an information session focused on a financial analysis of current fire and service costs in the area, the financial implications, and a deeper dive into potential incentives; noted opposition for the current motion; noted support for a motion for an information session that includes a financial analysis and more details on potential incentives.
- Councilor Groves – noted he seconded the motion to move the discussion forward; noted there would be no significant savings from reducing fire response to the unincorporated area, as staffing and facilities remain the same.

- Councilor Leech – noted her interest is in having a better understanding of current spending, not stopping services; noted having more information on the challenge of aligning tax benefits with service costs would be valuable for decision-making.
- Councilor Yeh – asked if the planned meeting in early 2025 would include a discussion of the different incentive options; noted the need for clarity on the options and the opportunity for Council to review and provide feedback on incentive options before making a decision.
- Mayor Vinis – noted the next step may be a work session with a refined focus and a more open-ended timeline.
- Councilor Clark – noted the motion’s focus should be specifically on voluntary annexation, separate from the broader housing timeline issue; noted openness to adjust the motion to include a future work session if it included potential incentives, financial implications, and the impact of continuing with disjointed development; noted concern with waiting until the end of 2025, but is open to staff feedback feasible timelines.

MOTION WITHDRAWN: Councilor Clark withdrew his motion. Councilor Groves accepted the withdrawal.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Groves – noted the need for action as the issue has occurred for too long and should not be delayed further.
- Councilor Clark – noted the issue of voluntary annexation should remain separate from the larger housing discussion.
- Councilor Leech – asked if the motion could include more information regarding street parking.
- Councilor Keating – asked if there were plans for a 2025 follow-up work session on voluntary annexation; asked if the current motion is for a work session poll with action items focusing on how the City will provide incentives and pathways for voluntary annexation; noted the amended motion does not include language about Salem’s role or how the City encourages potential changes to state law; asked if the language needs to be articulated more clearly; noted support for the late 2025 timeline; asked what a reasonable timeline is for receiving the requested information if Council passes the amended motion.

MOTION: Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Keating, moved to hold a follow up work session to today's work session to discuss incentives for encouraging voluntary annexations and the financial implications of the incentives and the annexations.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – noted support for the motion; noted the topic has been an issue since he joined Council; noted support for incentives to help alleviate some confusion regarding the River Road Santa Clara area.

VOTE: 7:0 PASSED

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Leech – noted interest in a motion to bring back information for a deeper dive into ways to address parking issues, including the Hatton Avenue solution and neighborhood officers and partners.

MOTION: Councilor Leech, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to direct the City Manager to provide the Council with a memorandum that outlines the potential steps for addressing parking issues within the incorporated and unincorporated areas.

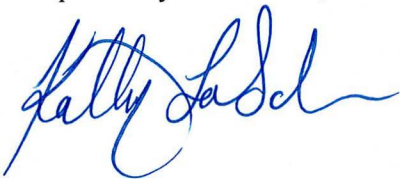
Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Keating – asked if the memorandum could include mechanisms to curb predatory towing, which may become a growing problem in Eugene as parking spaces decrease and more homes are built.
- Councilor Leech – declined to include mechanisms to curb predatory towing in the memorandum; noted she requested a separate session on vehicular camping and towing; noted desire to focus the memorandum on the River Road and Santa Clara County-City divide.
- Councilor Keating – noted interest in working with Councilors Leech and Groves offline to further address predatory towing issues.

VOTE: 7:0 PASSED

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Natalie Venhuda)

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