

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

November 13, 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 November 13, 2024, Eugene City Council Work Session in a virtual format.

1. **WORK SESSION and POSSIBLE ACTION: Climate-Friendly Areas**

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Senior Planner, Leah Rausch, who provided an overview of areas to designate as state-required Climate-Friendly Areas (CFA).

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – asked if Option 2 is more expensive on a local basis than Option 1; asked if staff anticipate the transportation gap analysis for lower Coburg Road to reflect a large amount of work needed to be done by the City; asked if Option 1 fully complies with the State mandate.
- Councilor Groves – noted concern with overextending resources and going beyond the minimum requirements; noted preference for Option 1 and starting with the minimum requirements.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked if the initiative comes from a state mandate and is not a City initiative; asked if Council must choose one of the options and cannot “do nothing”; asked if there are other incentives besides Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemptions (MUPTE); noted MUPTE is currently only in the downtown core and Option 1 would expand it to the Coburg Road area; noted Option 2 and Option 3 would require a larger expansion of the MUPTE; noted the costs are the opportunity costs of MUPTE and the transportation system developments that will occur; noted previous public opposition to rezoning in the South Willamette area; noted preference for Option 1 and expanding slowly.
- Councilor Evans – noted the Lane Transit District recently received a mobility management grant from the Federal Transit Administration; asked how the grant and mobility management work with how the City moves forward with CFA plans; noted interest in integrating the grant into the CFA framework to enhance transportation access and gain insight into how mobility management interfaces with the fixed route system and supports climate action goals.
- Councilor Leech – noted support for creating a more walkable and bikeable City; noted concern with the workload involved and balancing staff capacity and

priorities; noted support for Option 1; asked when the next option is to choose designated areas; noted the potential for redevelopment in the Valley River Center; asked how the City can require essential services to create walkable neighborhoods with the program.

- Councilor Yeh – noted the importance of access to local services; noted opposition to Option 3; noted support for Option 1 with the option to revisit and expand the program; noted interest in evaluating progress before the eight-year mark.
- Councilor Keating – noted support for a cautious approach due to the expenses from the local implementation of previous housing policy reform; cautioned against advancing incentives for non-tier-one transit corridors without Emerald Express lines; asked for how much the City has spent responding to challenges to its housing policy reforms exceeding State minimum standards; noted support for Option 1.
- Mayor Vinis – asked if there are disadvantages to not designating more areas or not selecting Option 2 as recommended by the Planning Commission and staff.

MOTION: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to initiate land use code and plan amendments and to direct the City Manager to prepare a package of code and plan amendments designating as Climate-Friendly Areas those areas identified in Option 1, as described in the AIS.

VOTE: 8:0 PASSED

2. WORK SESSION: Eugene Youth Opportunities and Challenges

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Library, Recreation, and Cultural Services (LRCS) Director, Joshua Bates, who provided an overview of the critical challenges impacting youth and information on youth outcomes locally and nationally.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – asked if 22 percent and 16 percent of the budget is allocated to the Fire Department and LRCS respectively; noted interest in the City focusing on its core functions rather than expanding into areas typically overseen by County and State agencies, such as health and mental health; asked if the City is interacting with the County and School Districts in the best way possible to address the mental health concerns.
- Councilor Leech – noted her career has been focused on children’s behavioral health in the local area; noted the importance of supporting parents’ mental health as a foundation for children’s well-being; noted challenges parents currently face raising children in a technology-driven world; noted the need for tools and resources to support families; noted support for preventive measures to reduce long-term costs related to enforcement, crime, and other social issues.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted concern with the mental health and substance abuse rates; noted the significant impact of mental health challenges on the community; noted concern with future funding at the federal level; noted interest in how the City

can help address the mental health issues; noted concern with only prioritizing services like police and fire; asked where the City can do more.

- Councilor Groves – noted the societal responsibility to prepare the next generation and acknowledged the value of youth programs; noted concern with overextending fiscal resources, noting the City's financial constraints and the need for balance; noted the library has grown much more than the fire department; noted interest in how the City can work with the County for mental health work; noted the City's role is to provide sports, recreational facilities, and non-profit partnerships to assist with the mental health issues in youth.
- Councilor Evans – noted the deep impact of inadequate mental health services on individuals close to his family; noted the urgency of addressing mental health issues in the community, particularly in collaboration with the county, school districts, and other partners; noted the need for more resources to support those struggling with mental health; noted the need for more comprehensive support in the community.
- Councilor Yeh – noted the importance of investing in youth as they are the future leaders and contributors to the community; noted the need to provide the tools and environments for youth to thrive, as this impacts the entire community; asked how the City can provide further support; asked how the City gathers feedback from younger generations.
- Councilor Clark – asked how Council can help leverage partnerships with other municipalities and jurisdictions for better outcomes; noted interest in how the City can work more effectively with the County and other partners in addressing mental health issues; noted concern with emails from the Eugene Library Foundation regarding zero general fund dollars being allocated to the library; asked for clarification on the library's budget.
- Councilor Leech – noted interest in focusing on preventative work like community- and connection-building to reduce isolation; noted the City has a unique capacity to do City level work as it is tasked with the safety of its people; noted the youth are not safe; mental health is not solely tied to the availability of therapists but also to creating safe, supportive environments for individuals; noted interest in further using community centers and spaces to host programs that foster connection and support, while considering ways to work within the city's budget and seek additional partners.

MOTION: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Clark, moved to extend the meeting by ten minutes.

VOTE: 8:0 PASSED

- Councilor Evans – asked how the City is ensuring increased access to mental health and community services for marginalized youth, particularly youth of color and LGBTQIA+ youth; noted concern with aberrant behaviors in schools and the

challenges these marginalized youth face; asked how existing resources are being enhanced and expanded, despite budget constraints.

- Councilor Keating – expressed appreciation for a recent presentation at a Eugene Public Library Foundation event; noted the importance of addressing the high rates of suicide among youth, as it is the second leading cause of death for ages 5 to 18; noted support for policies around firearm safety, including safe storage, background checks, and firearm-free public spaces; noted 25 percent of adults are realizing mental health distress; noted mental health work is important with the current social and political climate; asked if addressing mental health concerns is the City’s role alone; noted support for strengthening partnerships with local organizations and non-profits, to address mental health concerns across generations; noted support for society to destigmatize mental health support.
- Mayor Vinis – noted the public values the library as shown by the successful renewal of the library levy; noted former Fire Chief Zaludek linked literacy and survival in emergencies like fires; noted a student from the Youth Advisory Council expressed hope that adults were paying attention to the struggles of youth after Bates’ presentation; noted a short term funding crisis should not determine the long term solution of investing in the youth.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Natalie Venhuda)

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