MINUTES

Eugene City Council
Work Session
Eugene, Oregon 97401

February 12, 2025
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Knudson opened the February 12, 2025, Eugene City Council Work Session in a virtual format.

1. WORK SESSION: Urban Growth Strategies Project Update

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Principal Planner, Terry Harding, who was joined by Senior Planner, Leah Rausch. Together they presented updates on urban growth strategies, new rules for housing planning in Oregon, and actions to meet Eugene's housing needs.

<u>Councilor Discussion:</u>
- Councilor Clark – stated the City has a lot of work ahead to build more housing; asked about the plan to analyze and provide to Council the scope of work needed to transition current land supply into development-ready land; noted part of his ward lies outside of the urban growth boundary (UGB) but is development-ready; interested in bringing the referenced land into the UGB; asked if the land referenced is included in the urban reserves.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked how pending budget cuts will impact the planned land analysis; asked if budget or staffing cuts would delay this work; asked if a housing analysis will include tools for how to increase the number of affordable housing units; stated that without incentives for building affordable housing, the goals outlined cannot be met.
- Councilor Kashinsky – stated the importance of progress on this work; asked if the State has funds to help municipalities to accomplish the goals they require the City to meet; asked if the target goals would be attainable if Eugene takes an incremental approach to various housing types; asked staff if the City will use an incremental approach to the housing goals.
- Councilor Leech – asked what will happen if the City cannot meet the target goals; stated that more affordable housing is needed in Eugene; stated that the target goals for affordable housing appear to be unrealistic; asked how many projected units are in the urban renewal plan for the Downtown and Riverfront Districts; asked if there has been an increase in development permit applications since the middle housing code amendment was approved; asked if the planned analysis includes an

infrastructure impact analysis; asked staff to confirm that roads would be a part of future meetings regarding growth strategies; wants a plan for the unannexed islands in the River Road area to have a pathway to annexation if desired.

- Councilor Evans – asked staff to discuss job growth and development and how it relates to Council's legislative agenda regarding development in the Clear Lake area; asked how land in the Lane Community College basin and in Northwest Eugene will be upgraded to developable land given the infrastructure limitations; asked about wetland mitigation plans; asked about funding from the legislature to invest in the Clear Lake area and the timeline to get the land ready for business development.
- Councilor Groves – stated that Eugene has struggled with a shortage of buildable lands for years; asked how many industrial 100-acre parcels are currently available for development; stated there are businesses with living wage jobs interested in developing in West Eugene but they cannot find enough developable land; noted land on Royal Avenue that the Army Corps of Engineers has stated would be a ten year process to get it ready to develop; stated that the old sand and gravel property has similar restraints in development; asked if there is any work that can be done on the wetlands inside the UGB; noted the significant cost impact of building around the wetlands that are also not generating any tax revenue; asked if the wetlands bank within the City is at or near capacity.
- Councilor Yeh – noted the importance of conducting a needs assessment; is concerned about the feasibility of the initial goals; asked staff to clarify how much time cities will be given to meet the mandated goals before being referred into the acceleration program; asked staff to recap the last few years of total permit applications and to show the increase since Middle Housing amendment; stated that collective progress of each program helps to move the City in a positive direction.
- Mayor Knudson – asked staff if the Oregon Needs Assessment projection of 27,000 housing units is a realistic or an underestimated number; asked staff if they have innovative ideas and incentives for meeting median income, workforce housing needs; asked if there is existing funding for building incentives; asked if the annual $500,000 Council allocation to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund is among the proposed budget cuts being considered.
- Councilor Clark – believes the projected number by Oregon Needs Assessment is an underrepresentation of the actual need for housing; stated the City is halfway through the 20-year plan that was adopted with the Urban Growth Boundary; does not believe that the City is halfway to the set goal of 15,000 new units; stated that a good goal is a vacancy rate of five percent and Eugene's vacancy rate is 1.6 percent; asked staff if Oregon Needs Assessment addresses achieving a five percent vacancy rate; is in favor of pushing for a five percent vacancy rate; stated that Eugene has disproportionately grown in renters versus home owners; does not support rental home units being incentivized over home ownership.
- Councilor Evans – asked how the City plans to accommodate Career Technical Education areas in manufacturing and technology for living wage careers; stated that he previously worked with Yogi Tea to develop Career Technical Education at

Willamette High School for students to transition from school into a living wage job; stated that 80 percent of the local high school students will not go on to college and will need to enter the workforce with living wages.

Mayor Knudson adjourned the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Sara McKinney)
Link to the webcast of this City Council meeting here.