

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

April 23, 2025
12:00 p.m.

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

Councilors Absent: Greg Evans and Jennifer Yeh

Mayor Knudson opened the April 23, 2025, Eugene City Council Work Session in a virtual format.

1. **WORK SESSION: Shopping Cart and Metal Theft and Stolen Scrap Sales**

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Public Works Director, Rich Hoey, and Eugene Police Chief, Chris Skinner, who presented information regarding shopping carts, with assistance from Parks and Open Space Director, Craig Carnagey, and Public Spaces Incident Commander, Michelle Parkins.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Groves – noted a desire for more collaboration between Parks and Police staff to address this issue; stated banning shopping carts from public spaces may remove individuals with problem behaviors from those spaces; believes stolen property should not be allowed in any parks or public spaces; noted the numerous shopping carts in the Amazon Canal; stated interest in finding new enforcement tools; believes starting with banning stolen property in parks is progress towards fixing the problem; is in support of using any existing policy to address the issues.
- Councilor Clark – asked staff if resources were available to increase enforcement of existing policies; asked staff if banning shopping carts in public spaces and limiting the ability to move camps would encourage individuals to seek out or accept assistance from available services; asked if the police department is required to index and store items inside a recovered stolen car.
- Councilor Leech – asked if businesses are considered victims of the stolen shopping carts; asked if the Oregon Statute referenced during the presentation requires businesses to take more responsibility for posting signage and collecting the stolen carts; asked if this would decrease the workload on the City; asked if other jurisdictions have had success holding businesses accountable; asked what areas may get less resources if the police department is prioritizing enforcement of stolen shopping carts.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked how many individual people are utilizing the referenced 1,900 stolen carts and if there are repeat offenders; asked if it is predominantly homeless individuals utilizing stolen shopping carts; does not see a need for a new law since possession of stolen goods is already a violation of park rules; stated this

matter is not on his enforcement priority list; stated prosecuting homeless people for stolen carts would not be an effective way to address homelessness; would support a focused coordinated effort between police and other departments; in favor of increasing effort to address homelessness.

- Councilor Keating – noted shopping carts block sidewalks and impede the flow of bicycles and wheelchairs; would like to know how many recovered shopping carts get repaired and are returned to use at stores; asked how many stores are using theft prevention methods on carts; supports adopting a rule that prohibits shopping carts outside of shopping places; stated concern for individuals who rely on using carts as a mobility aid; supports increased investments in services for vulnerable residents who need mobility aids; stated that this issue impacts the overall livability of the community; asked if it is reasonable to assume that all carts outside of stores are stolen.
- Mayor Knudson – asked if a return to this discussion in six months is possible to allow time to gather data for effectiveness of actions.
- Councilor Groves – supports using existing policy to enforce the ban of stolen goods in public spaces and reviewing in six months.

Investigations Captain, Jacob Burke, presented information on metal theft and stolen scraps sales.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Groves – stated metal theft has been prevalent in his ward; asked if progress on this issue will continue to be monitored; believes removing economic incentives to theft is the best way to enact change; would like a category in this area to be included in future law enforcement reporting to Council.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated there was a legislative change to prevent cash sales of scrap metal; asked if this issue is due to failure to adhere to the law by scrap yards; asked what actions the police department has taken to reduce the issue.
- Councilor Clark – noted hopefulness for an increase in new construction of new homes and multi-family units; noted concern that construction zones are target for metal and wire theft; asked staff if there are tools the police department does not have that would help to reduce the prevalence of stolen scrap metal sales.

2. WORK SESSION: Unlawful Transfer on Vehicular Portion of Right-of-Way

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Eugene Police Chief Chris Skinner, who presented information regarding unlawful transfer on vehicular portion of right-of-way.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Groves – stated this is a safety issue; noted in Oregon homelessness was 2.81 percent of the population in 2019; stated the Oregon Fatal Pedestrian Crash Report shows that in Portland 21 percent of pedestrians killed in motor vehicle accidents were unhoused; stated a public education campaign to get people to stop passing goods from a travel lane is needed; is not opposed to people pulling over to

a safe spot to pass items; is concerned about the safety and impediment of travel lanes.

- Councilor Clark – asked if there is a motion to consider at this work session; would support a motion to adopt something similar to Springfield’s Municipal Code 6.112; stated the City of Eugene spends millions of dollars in alignment Vision Zero Program to minimize conflict between pedestrians and vehicles; believes allowing pedestrians to enter traffic lanes contradicts this work; stated an ordinance to deter pedestrians from intentionally entering traffic lanes would align with the Vision Zero Program goals.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated concern for safety and support for decreasing pedestrian deaths; asked to clarify if the ordinance Council previously considered is constitutional; asked to clarify what behaviors were prohibited by the ordinance; believes Springfield has not issued citations on their ordinance due to concerns over inability to prosecute; does not support enacting a law that could be unenforceable; stated there are other ways to increase pedestrian safety.
- Councilor Kashinsky – asked to clarify how enforcement of this ordinance would be handled; stated concern about the disregard for existing traffic laws; stated concern about adding regulations when existing laws are not sufficiently enforced; would prefer to increase enforcement on existing laws before adding new rules.
- Councilor Keating – asked if there are existing laws that can penalize someone for throwing items, like cash, from a motor vehicle; noted that penalizing distracted drivers would be appropriate; asked if fines associated with a certain activity can be applied to specific resource accounts; noted there are new members on Council that were not a part of the previous consideration of this item in the past.

MOTION: Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to direct the City Manager to return to Council for discussion and further consideration with a mirrored version of Springfield Ordinance 6.112.

- Councilor Clark – stated support for how Chief Skinner would approach enforcing an ordinance like the one described.

VOTE: 4:2 PASSED

IN FAVOR: Keating, Clark, Groves, Leech

OPPOSED: Kashinsky and Zelenka

ABSENT: Evans and Yeh

- Councilor Zelenka – asked to clarify how the majority vote is handled when there are Councilors absent.
- Councilor Kashinsky – stated concern for where Council is asking staff to spend time and resources; noted this issue is not high enough on the priority list for her to support using staff time and resources to explore.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Katie LaSala', with a stylized, cursive script.

Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Sara McKinney)

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