

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

September 17, 2025
12:00 p.m.

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

Councilor Absent: Matt Keating (left the meeting before discussion started)

Mayor Knudson opened the September 17, 2025, Eugene City Council Work Session in a virtual format.

1. **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 Clark – stated support for sending the ordinance to a public hearing, but indicated his willingness to wait on a vote until every councilor was present; stated the transfer of goods from a public road presents a safety and traffic hazard; stated the City prioritized efforts to make roadways safer for bicyclists and pedestrians by creating separate travel lanes; noted this ordinance would make public roads safer by limiting pedestrians from accessing the travel lane to receive the exchange of goods or money.
- Councilor Groves – indicated his support to wait to vote on sending the ordinance to a public hearing until all councilors were present; stated the transfer of money and goods from a vehicle to a pedestrian in a travel lane is separate from the unhoused issue; believes allowing the behavior even for organizations like the Cancer Society presents safety concerns; noted that working in traffic lanes is equally dangerous for firefighters; noted the ordinance does not preclude anyone in a motor vehicle from donating money or goods out of the travel lane; stated he personally has witnessed dangerous situations from this behavior; suggested signage to inform the public on how to make donations through other avenues.
- Councilor Kashinsky – asked for estimates regarding the cost of advertising, production and installation of signs and educational materials; confirmed there is a cost to having signs produced; does not support moving this topic to a public hearing; acknowledged the safety component that this ordinance attempts to address; noted crash reports show fatal and serious injury crashes are primarily caused by speeding or driving while impaired; noted violations already exist which encompass stepping out or impeding traffic; stated preference for the enforcement

of current traffic laws instead of creating new ones; believes the intent is specifically to keep panhandlers off the street and not visible; stated resources should be allocated toward reducing homelessness in the community and also addressing safety concerns.

- Councilor Zelenka – noted the Community Survey results highlighted homelessness as a primary concern of the public; noted homelessness is a high priority for Council; requested clarification on whether there is a current ordinance prohibiting anyone from stepping into the traffic lanes; noted the vehicle owner would be breaking the law under this ordinance; believes this ordinance to be unconstitutional; asked how it could not be considered regulating free speech if a homeless person stopped a vehicle at a traffic light; stated interest in having a work session on promoting public safety in the homeless community; spoke about enacting the educational campaign now; stated officers could educate panhandlers about the dangers of stepping into the traffic lanes without the ordinance; asked if both the homeless person and the person in the vehicle would receive education if the ordinance passed; indicated his opposition to the ordinance.
- Councilor Yeh – asked who would enforce this ordinance; asked if it would be the officers on motorcycles or officers monitoring traffic; noted there are not enough officers currently to monitor drivers running red lights and stops signs, or driving at high speeds; stated speeding and running a red light are more dangerous than the transfer of goods from a vehicle; shared she would be open to engaging with Eugene Police Department (EPD) and discussing traffic safety; disclosed her personal experiences regarding the danger of walking on the sidewalk and almost being struck by a vehicle; stated this ordinance makes her uncomfortable because it seems centered on the unhoused population; stated the transferring of goods is not an enabling behavior and is misunderstood with that label.
- Councilor Clark – stated if matter is brought to a vote, he will make a motion to postpone; asked about Councilor Zelenka’s concern that the ordinance is unconstitutional; indicated the City Attorney has mentioned in the past that the ordinance is constitutional; requested clarification on the statute surrounding public meetings law; requested a copy of the statute be provided to him.
- Councilor Evans – asked about other municipalities such as the City of Springfield with a similar ordinance and if data exists regarding the effectiveness of reducing the behavior; asked if signs would be placed at traffic stops; asked if the public would be issued a warning and instructed to donate through different platforms; asked if officers currently engage in these conversations with the public; stated concerns regarding the traffic safety on Highway 99, specifically about individuals jaywalking and noted some instances of people being killed; noted in these situations there was no transfer of money or goods; indicated the possibility of people with mental health issues or substance abuse finding themselves in the middle of the street and in no relation to panhandling.

- Councilor Leech – asked for clarification surrounding the solution this ordinance will address; noted in April 2025 councilors requested statistics of the number of people injured due to the transfer of goods; spoke about personal experiences driving and witnessing dangerous activity by drivers; indicated it is rare that dangerous activity occurs due to the exchange of goods on a roadway; indicated her opinion to look further into implementing an ordinance that would assist with regulating the behavior of drivers; noted this matter is not going to a vote today and this conversation can be continued to another time.
- Councilor Yeh – spoke about the need to approach this conversation with compassion and empathy; stated the transfer of money to those experiencing homelessness is a way to support their immediate need; talked about research concerning panhandling and indicated the monies are typically used to address food and shelter needs; acknowledged a percentage of the homeless population is facing addiction, but noted it is not the majority; stated concerns for labeling the action of donating money or food as an enabling behavior; stated the data and research performed does not support the idea of providing help as an enabling behavior; indicated her concern about the increase of pedestrian deaths as a result of distracted drivers; stated her full support to have a conversation on finding solutions to reduce traffic fatalities; stated this ordinance appears more focused on removing the homeless population from the streets instead of a solution to traffic safety; will not support the ordinance at this time.
- Councilor Groves – indicated the proposed ordinance does not prohibit people from donating money and/or goods; the ordinance is specific to not allowing the transfer of goods in a travel lane; mentioned the exchange of goods or money can be done away from a travel lane and nothing in the ordinance prohibits that action; asked councilors to consider this piece when deciding their position on this ordinance.
- Mayor Knudson – noted a motion regarding this ordinance would be put forth in a future session where all councilors are present and further discussion on that motion can take place at that time.

2. **WORK SESSION: Wildfire Update**

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Eugene Springfield Fire Chief Mike Caven and Deputy Chief Travis Worthington, who provided an update on the 2025 fire season and the status of the Community Safety Payroll Tax (CSPT) funded wildfire fuels management program.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Groves – indicated he visited the University of Oregon’s Hazard’s Lab and was impressed by the technology; noted the reading material he receives from regional partners and mutual aid organizations highlight a concern of recruitment and retention of volunteers; asked if the decline may be due to the revised requirements to become a volunteer firefighter; asked if the decline of volunteers

affects the current support from mutual aid partners; asked if the area of dual coverage with Eugene Springfield Fire (ESF) and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) increased in size; asked for an update regarding the evacuation routes in the South Hills; suggested a single meeting where information can be disseminated to all interested parties at once; asked if the fire department is short on any resources; stated interest in another discussion on this topic.

- Councilor Zelenka – spoke about the increase of people per capita compared to staff per capita; indicated he attended a meeting with the CEO of Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E); learned about their camera system and its use in detecting public safety power shutoffs; asked if a similar camera system is used in the City and possible funding options; confirmed there is a current process in place that alerts PG&E of a current fire; stated appreciation for the fire maps shown in presentation, specifically the legend showing that fires are not isolated to one area; asked for clarification surrounding bark dust fires; followed up with questions about how those fires start; asked about the vegetational removal program and how the property owner gets this information; appreciated that fire departments work with Northwest Youth Corps to cut down trees due to lack of resources; asked if staff have investigated potentially obtaining electric(EV) fire trucks.
- Mayor Knudson – noted her meeting with the South Hills Neighborhood Association; stated their shared interest in hosting collective conversations and meetings about this topic; thanked ESF for the work they do and the distribution of information; shared information about the Lane Alerts App and noted it is directly tied to the system in Eugene.

Mayor Knudson adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Rosa Roach)

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