

MINUTES
Eugene City Council
Work Session
Eugene, Oregon 97401

February 18, 2026
12:00 p.m.

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

Councilors Absent: Greg Evans

Mayor Knudson opened the February 18, 2026 Eugene City Council Work Session in a virtual format.

1. WORK SESSION: City Council Operating Agreements, Continued

City Manager Pro Tem, Matt Rodrigues, introduced the topic as a continuation of the October 2025 discussion on Council Operating Agreements. The City Recorder, Katie LaSala, introduced the agenda, summarized prior administrative updates, and outlined decision points for potential Operating Agreements changes.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – asked for clarification if the Operating Agreements discussion required Council to make decisions now or later; asked whether each item would return as a future motion or if decisions were being made at this meeting.
- Councilor Groves – noted he had the same question as Councilor Clark.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated his preference to decide on changes now rather than debate again when they return in April.
- Mayor Knudson – explained that today’s decisions determine whether staff should prepare amendments for Council to review and approve later; noted the discussion today will guide staff work; stated Council will still have another chance to review changes when they return; noted that each Operating Agreements topic would require a motion and a second; stated Council will begin with Topic 1A.

Councilor Discussion: Topic 1A. Public Comment: Virtual Speakers

- Councilor Kashinsky – stated virtual comment raises control and time management concerns; noted support for the current approach with in-person public comment and virtual input by email.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that past virtual disruption was difficult to manage; stated support for the current practice.
- Councilor Groves – stated some residents feel intimidated speaking in person; stated he encourages the public to send emails if uncomfortable to provide comment;

noted disruptions during public comment when meetings were held in the Lane Community College (LCC) building.

- Councilor Keating – stated support for enabling virtual speakers to provide public comment; noted Council often meets virtually; stated preference to prioritize in-person speakers while still allowing virtual participation.
- Mayor Knudson – noted that although the Council was meeting virtually during this work session, public comment is only during regular meetings when the Council and Mayor are typically in person; stated virtual participation by Councilors is sometimes necessary; stated she wanted to offer this clarification for anyone listening.
- Councilor Yeh – stated preference for barrier free access; noted support for a trial period to allow virtual public comment again and adjust if needed.
- Councilor Clark – stated his support for providing varying opportunities for public comment; asked about legal risk if the chair cut off disturbing virtual comments.
- Councilor Keating – stated support for giving all community members accessible ways to participate; noted support for a hybrid model that includes both in-person and virtual public comment; stated in-person testimony should receive priority if the hybrid model is adopted.

MOTION: Councilor Leech, seconded by Councilor Kashinsky, moved to direct the City Manager to enable virtual speakers during public comment.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Keating – stated the hybrid model used in the state legislature demonstrates that virtual participation can work smoothly; noted if it is successful in Salem, it can also succeed in Eugene.
- Councilor Leech – asked for clarification that Council was still allowing virtual testimony for public hearings; noted no change to that policy was being proposed at this meeting; stated her opposition to the motion due to past experiences.

VOTE: 2:5 FAILED

IN FAVOR: Keating and Yeh

OPPOSED: Kashinsky, Zelenka, Clark, Leech and Groves

Councilor Discussion: Topic 1B. Public Comment: Prioritization of Boards, Commissions, Neighborhood Association Speakers

- Councilor Keating – stated support for continuing the practice; noted the value of volunteer contributions.
- Councilor Groves – stated support for the practice; noted if Council adopted a rule that moved repeat speakers in a single month to a second group, a similar approach

might be appropriate here; stated neighborhood association leaders often attend public comment period and repeat the same points; noted when frequent speakers take the initial slots, other new voices do not have an opportunity to speak.

- Councilor Zelenka – stated prioritizing volunteers shows respect for their time; stated Council should respect the volunteer work done by boards, commissions, and neighborhood association leaders; noted this work requires significant time and effort, and allowing these volunteers to speak early in the queue acknowledges their service; stated support for keeping the rule and formalizing it.
- Councilor Clark – asked how to differentiate when individuals represent multiple groups; noted some individuals may be paid to appear before Council in one capacity but also serve on a board or commission; stated which role their comments represent may decide whether they are prioritized in the speaking order.
- Councilor Leech – stated she supports prioritizing volunteers and representatives from boards and commissions; noted she would like to hear more frequent updates from these groups; noted Topics 1B and 1C could work together; noted two separate ideas raised: prioritizing certain speakers and addressing the frequency with which some individuals speak; stated both issues relate to making sure everyone has a fair chance to participate.
- Councilor Kashinsky – stated support for the item; noted if Council chose to prioritize new speakers, that approach should also apply to members of boards, commissions, and neighborhood associations; suggested these volunteers could be placed first within the group of new speakers or within the group of returning speakers, depending on the situation; asked for clarification concerning the order of prioritization as a representative and if a speaker must be delivering a message on behalf of that body rather than speaking only as an individual.
- Councilor Yeh – noted support for the item; stated that boards, commissions, and neighborhood groups contribute significant work and recognizing their effort is reasonable; noted while some individuals may attend more often than others, the number of people who receive priority because of an affiliation is small; stated this practice is a meaningful way to show respect for community volunteers.

MOTION: Councilor Leech, seconded by Councilor Kashinsky, moved to add to Section 1.05 of the Operating Agreements: “Official representatives of Boards, Commissions, and Neighborhood Associations will be prioritized for speaking during Public Comment ahead of other randomized speakers.”

VOTE: 7:0 PASSED

IN FAVOR: Kashinsky, Keating, Zelenka, Yeh, Clark, Leech and Groves

OPPOSED: None

Councilor Discussion: Topic 1C. Public Comment: Prioritization of New Speakers

- Councilor Groves – stated support for ensuring new speakers can participate.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted the value in hearing different perspectives; noted he proposed a similar approach years ago when randomization was introduced; noted Council now has a better way to identify repeat speakers and how to elevate new or infrequent speakers; stated hearing a range of viewpoints supports councilors in their thinking and deliberation; noted that while hearing repeat comments is acceptable, new perspectives are especially valuable; state support for moving forward and implementing the practice.
- Councilor Keating – asked whether staff had the capacity to manage and enforce the proposed process fairly; stated concern this responsibility could add to staff workload during meetings; noted there may be ways for speakers to work around the system; stated community members return repeatedly seeking action from Council and hearing from them multiple times does not make their message less relevant; stated his opposition to the motion; noted preference for continuing the current practice.

MOTION: Councilor Leech, seconded by Councilor Kashinsky, moved to make the following changes to Section 1.05 of the Operating Agreements to prioritize new speakers: “Request-to-Speak forms will be shuffled so that speakers are called in random order, with persons who did not speak at the previous Public Comment prioritized ahead of persons who did speak at the previous Public Comment.”

VOTE: 6:1 PASSED

IN FAVOR: Kashinsky, Zelenka, Yeh, Clark, Leech and Groves

OPPOSED: Keating

Councilor Discussion: Topic 2: Placement of Action Items on Agenda

- Councilor Kashinsky – asked for confirmation that adopting the change maintains current agenda order.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked how priority goal actions differ from regular actions; asked for clarification about the meaning of a “priority goal;” asked whether an item becomes a priority goal action item when it is time sensitive and already scheduled on the agenda; asked if the action items are heard after the public comment period could delay these agenda items and potentially push them past the ten o’clock cutoff.
- Councilor Clark – asked whether a vote in favor of the motion would reflect support for keeping the current structure in which Council conducts business first and hears public comment afterward.

MOTION: Councilor Leech, seconded by Councilor Kashinsky, moved to make the following change to Section 3.06 of the Operating Agreements: “In general, action on

ordinances and councilor-introduced resolutions or motions shall be placed on regular City Council meeting agendas and shall be scheduled before Public Comment..."

VOTE: 7:0 PASSED

IN FAVOR: Kashinsky, Keating, Zelenka, Yeh, Clark, Leech and Groves

OPPOSED: None

Councilor Discussion: Topic 3: Postponing Agenda Items due to Councilor Absence

- Councilor Clark – asked how chair authority interacts with postponement requests; noted the chair has the authority to determine what items are recognized on the agenda; asked whether a council vote could override the chair's judgment on whether a motion is in order; asked whether the mayor's authority to decide what is on the agenda would change if Council adopted the proposed revisions; stated his intent to make a motion concerning proceeding without all councilors present; asked whether adopting the motion would affect the chair's existing authority.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated postponing items is uncommon and typically used when a councilor cannot attend; noted Council's practice is to receive written notice if a councilor wants an item delayed; stated taking a vote during the meeting is problematic because the absent councilor cannot participate; stated a motion to table or postpone is always allowed during a meeting; noted the City Manager and Mayor should ensure time-sensitive items are not delayed; stated postponement should not be used as a blocking tactic and delays should be reserved for situations where it is appropriate and respectful of Council's workload.
- Councilor Kashinsky – stated the current language says a request to postpone "shall be honored" unless a majority of councilors decide the item should proceed; noted this vote serves as confirmation that the majority supports postponing; noted the current practice creates a situation where a single request could delay action even when most councilors prefer to move forward.
- Councilor Keating – stated the current practice allows a councilor to request a delay when they cannot be present; noted his opposition to changing the current practice; indicated a majority could override the request if desired; noted action items are typically delayed so all councilors can participate.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated the second part of the current operating agreement is meant to prevent a delay request from being used to block action on items with deadlines; stated if a councilor requests a delay, it should generally be honored, but it should not be used to block a vote; stated in support of not changing the operating agreements and the motion should reflect maintaining the current practice.

2. WORK SESSION: An Ordinance Concerning Unlawful Transfer on Vehicular Portion of Right-of Way, Adding Section 5.170 to the Eugene Code, 1971, and Amending Section 5.990 of that Code.

City Manager Pro Tem, Matt Rodrigues, introduced the item, noting no formal presentation and that staff were available for questions.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – stated if a motion were made, he would introduce an amendment or motion asking Council to delay a decision on the item until all councilors were present.
- Councilor Kashinsky – stated the earlier motion directing a discussion on this topic occurred at a meeting where councilors were absent and without advance notice; noted this topic may not be in front of Council now if the initial motion was made when all councilors were present; noted a previous postponement due to an absent councilor; noted the significant time and staff resources devoted to preparing for these discussions; stated continuing to postpone the item was not an effective use of those resources; stated support for the conclusion of this discussion today.
- Councilor Yeh – noted Council has discussed this topic many times; stated two primary goals: to keep people from unsafe locations, and to connect individuals with services so they have other options; noted a secondary goal of improving data collection to better understand who is engaging in the activity; asked whether laws already exist that prevent individuals from standing in areas such as medians or curbside areas; stated preventing people from being in unsafe places is a shared goal; asked whether the peer navigators could be contacted when Eugene Police officers observe someone engaged in this activity.
- Councilor Groves – stated the vote to move the item to a public hearing had been a four-to-four split, with the mayor breaking the tie; stated the issue is serious and deserves attention, and that other communities have taken similar actions for similar reasons; noted police officers and firefighters who work directly with the issue support the approach; stated the decision will have a significant impact on the community and all eight councilors should be present for action.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated traffic safety concerns raised at a recent large community meeting did not include the issue under discussion; stated there is no data showing it to be a safety problem; stated police time is better spent addressing serious criminal activity; noted agreement that education about available services is essential and the navigator program is a good tool for that; stated his position on the proposal as a free speech issue; stated the measure appears to target people who are unhoused and functions as an anti-panhandling action rather than a safety action; stated he would encourage councilors to vote no.
- Councilor Leech – stated her position on the ordinance has not changed; noted if the measure concerned public safety, the City would also be addressing recent deaths involving people riding bicycles in the right-of-way; stated lack of broader safety

focus suggests the issue is not as significant as presented; stated that more time should be invested in understanding overall safety needs; stated she supported addressing the ordinance now so Council can shift attention to those larger safety concerns.

- Councilor Keating – stated he attended the public safety forum where two hundred fifty community members participated; asked how an education component would work if the ordinance were adopted; asked whether outreach could be pursued through partnerships with the chamber or other community groups; noted interest in ensuring that community members understand where their donations have the greatest impact; stated roadway, sidewalk, and bike lane safety is important, and that discouraging distracted driving is beneficial; noted other cities have used educational signage effectively and expressed support for involving nonprofit partners if the ordinance passes.
- Councilor Groves – stated his comments about safety were not about the unhoused population; stated he has seen well-intentioned community members step into busy travel lanes while collecting donations for charitable causes, which he views as dangerous and preventable; stated the proposal is meant to keep everyone out of active travel lanes and does not prevent people from pulling out of traffic to make voluntary exchanges; stated such situations create risks beyond pedestrian safety, including rearend crashes; noted data on these situations is incomplete because incidents involving panhandling are recorded simply as pedestrian collisions; stated these types of incidents should be taken seriously.
- Councilor Kashinsky – stated her reference to a prior vote concerned the April 23, 2025 work session when some councilors were absent; noted Council should invest resources where they will have the greatest impact; noted ordinances do not change behavior and the real cost of implementation is unknown; stated the City knows what is causing most traffic-related deaths and it's not this issue; stated her preference to direct resources toward strategies that reduce homelessness and improve traffic safety; noted appreciation for the Chamber's willingness to support an educational campaign; stated an ordinance is not needed to pursue that work.
- Mayor Knudson – stated at a recently attended safety forum strong concerns about bicycle and pedestrian safety, the reach and equity of those networks, and unsafe driving were highlighted; stated police resources are stretched across many duties and expects transportation safety to be a focus in the coming year; noted the importance of protecting people who bike and walk and emphasized that system design affects how people travel; stated the City is also rebuilding parts of the social safety net and the goal is to gather information and connect people to the right resources across the community; stated the City will learn a great deal over the next 12 to 18 months; reiterated that resources should be prioritized toward actions that meaningfully improve safety in the transportation network.
- Councilor Yeh – stated that everyone wants movement toward meaningful improvements; stated the ordinance alone may not achieve the desired changes; stated investing in peer navigators would allow the City to learn what is happening

at specific locations and to understand how best to help people and change behaviors; stated police do not have the capacity to conduct regular enforcement under the ordinance and issue warnings; reiterated her support for directing resources toward meaningful outreach efforts.

- Councilor Keating – noted ordinances have changed behavior; provided an example of the community’s fireworks ban ordinance which reduced unsafe activity; asked about public education when the fireworks ordinance was adopted; noted some people comply with laws because a behavior becomes unlawful; asked about safety conditions at the intersection of 30th Avenue and Hillyard Street; described a recent crash in which a vehicle jumped a median; stated his preference for a full Council present for the action; stated appreciation for discussion and for community partners willing to contribute to public education.

MOTION: Councilor Zelenka, seconded by Councilor Leech, moved to continue for 10 minutes.

VOTE: 7:0 PASSED

IN FAVOR: Kashinsky, Keating, Zelenka, Yeh, Clark, Leech and Groves

OPPOSED: None.

MOTION: Councilor Leech, seconded by Councilor Kashinsky, moved to adopt An Ordinance Concerning Unlawful Transfer on Vehicular Portion of Right-of -Way, Adding Section 5.170 to the Eugene Code, 1971, and Amending Section 5.990 of that Code.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – asked for clarification concerning a motion he intends to put before council for a vote.

MOTION TO POSTPONE: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Clark, moved to postpone action to a date certain until all councilors are present.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Yeh – indicated her support to postpone the decision if an absent councilor requested it; asked whether Councilor Evans had requested the vote be delayed; stated that without that request, delaying the vote did not seem necessary.
- Councilor Keating – stated Council should be cautious about taking action without all members present, especially if a councilor might be unable to request a delay for health or emergency reasons; noted Council previously honored his own request to postpone action when he was attempting to participate remotely.
- Councilor Leech – stated appreciation for the desire to have full participation from councilors; noted Councilor Keating had personally requested a delay, while Councilor Evans had not; stated the topic has been before Council many times; stated she does not support a delay.

- Councilor Clark – stated he did not receive a response from Councilor Evans; stated the lack of response should be considered.

VOTE ON MOTION TO POSTPONE: 3:4 FAILED

IN FAVOR: Keating, Clark and Groves

OPPOSED: Kashinsky, Zelenka, Yeh, and Leech

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: 2:5 FAILED

IN FAVOR: Keating and Groves

OPPOSED: Kashinsky, Zelenka, Yeh, Clark and Leech

City Manager Pro Tem, Matt Rodrigues, stated in light of recent tragedies involving transportation safety, staff are preparing a work session to provide an update on the Vision Zero transportation safety program; stated this will include new work underway and efforts being developed in response to community concerns.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katie LaSala".

Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Rosa Roach)

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