

Eugene to Have Improved Walk and Bike Paths

Motion Approved for New City-Wide Infrastructure and Transportation Safety Projects

By Emma Wright-Cloutier, Register Guard

Eugene City Councilors voted 7-1 at a work session for projects funded by money from the street repair bond that voters approved in November 2022. The street repair bond measure gave the city a five-year bond of \$61.2 million to repair 42 street projects throughout Eugene as well as \$15 million towards transportation safety improvement projects. The projects being voted on regarded \$5 million towards walking paths, \$3 million towards biking paths, \$3 million towards safety improvements, and \$2 million towards street trees that would improve the city's overall infrastructure. These proposed projects would create more safety and availability in transportation as well as create opportunities for more recreation and connection throughout Eugene.

"We have a lot of transportation need out there," said Reed Dunbar, senior transportation planner for the City of Eugene. "Folks would be doing more recreationally. They'd be walking their kids to school more often, they'd be potentially using the bus to get to work if they felt safe making that connection and so eliminating barriers by providing better pedestrian crossings and making the existing bikeway network safer so that people feel comfortable riding with their children is really critical to a lot of our goals and I think this is going to get us a long way toward meeting them."

The project titled "Move Eug" is being led by the City's Transportation Planning Team. Their goal is to provide additional transportation options for the nearly 30% of community members who do not drive. They also hope this project will cut greenhouse gas emissions in Eugene and keep roadways in good condition for longer as street repairs have been accounting for about \$12 million every year.

The funding for these projects would cost the average homeowner about 63 cents per \$1000 of assessed property value but will save taxpayers money on future street repair and other infrastructure upkeep. The bonds for projects in public transportation and safety infrastructure have increased from 5% in 2008 to almost 30% in 2023. The allocated money from the bonds is to implement plans such as placing overhead street lighting at more intersections acting as pedestrian street crossings in River Road, North Danebo Avenue, Bailey Hill Road, and the Roosevelt shared-use path as well as [extending pedestrian sidewalks and bike paths](#) around other parts of the city.

"The more people we get on bikes because it is safer or there are more paths, the better the whole community is," said Emily Semple, Eugene city councilor, Ward 1.

In order to address critical needs in the city's transportation system, the City's Transportation Planning Team gathered citizen input through robust public outreach. They collected this input at 32 in-person events, through 23,000 postcards, 1,300 responses on Wikimapia, and 300 responses from an online programs survey. They are also factoring in geographic distribution, condition of shared paths, Eugene's social, environmental, and economic goals, Eugene's 2035

transportation system plan, vision zero action plan, and climate action plan 2.0 when assessing critical needs and how these projects can solve those needs.

In addition to transportation and safety projects, another project approved was for the planting, establishment, and upkeep of street trees. The City's Transportation Planning Team will be prioritizing areas for these trees by assessing the need for canopy coverage as well as equity indicators such as average temperatures of locations, household incomes, vulnerable populations, and the CDC health index. They will not only be planting trees, but also removing stumps and hazardous trees, preparing soil, and creating alterations to potential planting sites.

In the absence of Mayor Lucy Vinis, the City Council President, Randy Groves, stood in as speaker of the meeting. The next City Council Work Session will be on October 25th at noon.