



February 13, 2024

Chairman Jama  
Senate Housing and Development Committee  
900 Court Se. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

## **RE: Testimony on SB 1530 and -3 Amendment**

The City of Eugene supports the proposed \$65 million investment for shelter provision included in Section 1(1) and seeks expansion of the eligibility for that investment to be inclusive of all the types of accommodations currently in use. Additionally, Eugene supports the addition of \$100 million for site-specific housing infrastructure projects included within Section 2(1).

### **Shelter Investment-\$65 million**

Currently, the nearly 1,000 shelter beds in Eugene are provided through a broad range of accommodations ranging from [Rest Stops](#) (Conestoga huts with central support structure) to more traditional emergency shelter such as the [River Avenue Navigation Center](#). All of these solutions are necessary to address the unhoused crisis in Eugene.

Eugene and Lane County have one of the [highest rates of homelessness](#) in the country, [increasing 78% since 2018](#). Eugene's per capita unhoused rate is higher than Portland, New York City, or Los Angeles. The current Point in Time Count (PIT) showed 2,800 people unhoused in the area, and the PIT is well known to undercount the actual figure, which we estimate is ~3,500 in the Eugene area. As the number of unhoused people continues to rise, Eugene is struggling to provide a range of shelter accommodations to meet people's needs, including our Rest Stop and RV Camping model. These two innovative solutions provide 20% of Eugene's beds, or 200 of the 1,000 beds that we are seeking state funding to support.

The proposed \$65 million investment is critical to keeping Eugene shelter beds open throughout the remainder of the biennium (see attached Unhoused Crisis Document). We look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature, OHCS, and Governor's office to ensure those funds meet the needs of cities at the front line in addressing this crisis.

### **Housing Infrastructure Investment-\$100 million**

The City of Eugene submitted five housing project requests for roughly \$2.2 million in state infrastructure assistance. Each of these projects is currently in the 'pipeline' for construction and a state investment would accelerate that schedule so that bids can be released before July 2025. Each of these projects carries significant city match funding from local and federal sources.

Eugene's investment in [Affordable Housing](#) has increased in recent years with the focus of the [Housing Implementation Pipeline](#) (HIP) being adopted by City Council in 2021. The attached map of Affordable Housing and Shelter Sites showcases the breadth of projects which Eugene has invested in across our community.

In the statewide effort to address the housing and unhoused crisis, establishing new Affordable Housing units requires a 'whole of government' approach, coordinating funding across federal, state, and local resources as well as new levels of inter and intra agency coordination and cooperation. Eugene supports this initial level of investment from the state, with the recognition that to meet Governor Kotek's 36,000 unit/year production goal, these levels of investment will need to continue for years to come.

Sincerely,

*-submitted electronically-*

Ethan Nelson  
Intergovernmental Relations Manager



# Unhoused Crisis

*Supporting Eugene's Response*

## A COMMUNITY IN CRISIS

Lane County's annual Point In Time count in 2023 reported 2,824 people who were unsheltered, in emergency shelter or in transitional housing. The Homeless By Name List (a more accurate count of individuals who have accessed homeless services) shows the monthly number of unhoused in Eugene continues to be around 3,500 in a city of 178,000. Even after two years of dedicated work by City staff and local service providers to add hundreds of shelter spaces, the total available is around 1,000, less than a third of what's needed. Safety and sanitation have been dire concerns.



## STRIVING TO FILL THE GAP

Continuum of Care funding focuses primarily on housing—not the serious deficit in emergency shelter—and does not address safety and sanitation in the community. Responding to this crisis, the City of Eugene has invested more than \$20 million in one-time funds for infrastructure and programs to create critical, lower-barrier emergency and alternative shelters and to address safety and sanitation community wide. This effort produced about 250 new spaces that meet the state requirements for non-congregate shelter: safe and secure places for people to sleep and connect with services.



## A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The homelessness crisis is community-wide. Eugene strategically partners with many local organizations to boost housing and personal stability and reduce homelessness. Eugene's shelter programs are part of the City's coordinated effort to facilitate more accessible dwellings across the housing spectrum: the Housing Implementation Pipeline.

## THE CITY'S STRATEGIC PARTNERS

- Lane County
- St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County
- Everyone Village
- Carry It Forward
- SquareOne Villages
- Community Supported Shelters
- White Bird Clinic
- The Alliance
- Equitable Social Solutions
- Trillium Community Health Plan
- Eugene Water and Electric Board
- Laurel Hill Center
- ShelterCare
- Hope and Safety Alliance
- Looking Glass
- 15th Night
- Catholic Community Services
- Homes for Good



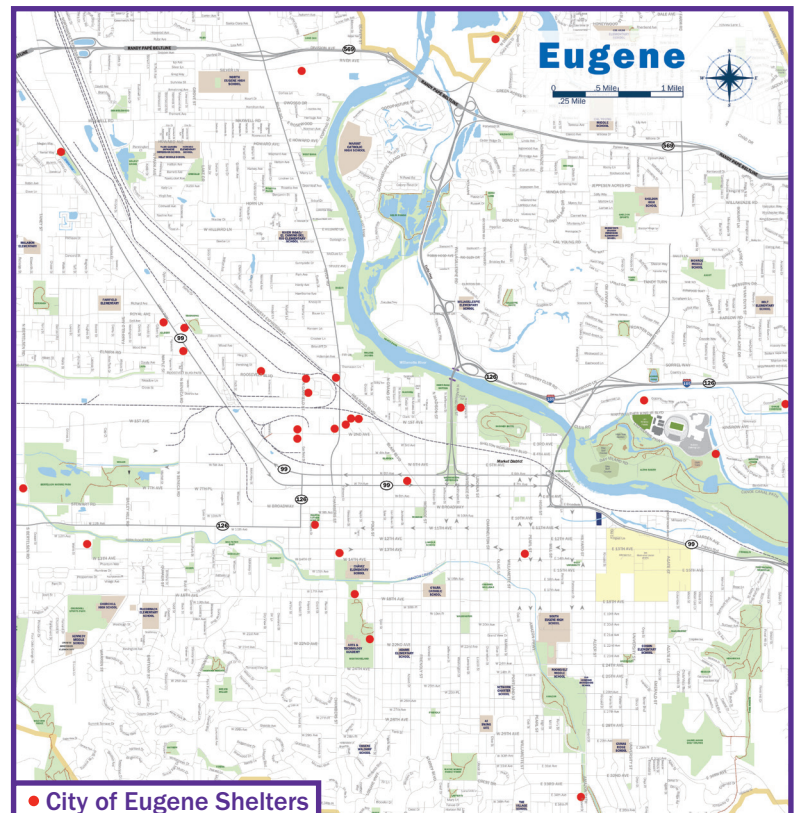
## ADDRESSING HEALTH AND SAFETY

The spike in the number of unsheltered people in the community in recent years has created serious health and safety effects from unsanctioned camping. The City spent \$7.75 million in FY22 and FY23 in response to debris, unsafe and unsanitary conditions, trespassing, misuses of public spaces, obstacles to right-of-way access, and impediments to the safe operation of schools, businesses, shelters and residential neighborhoods. Extra staffing and clean-up costs have been supported by one-time funds, and the City has had to set aside other infrastructure demands to address the homelessness crisis.



## IMPROVING LIVES

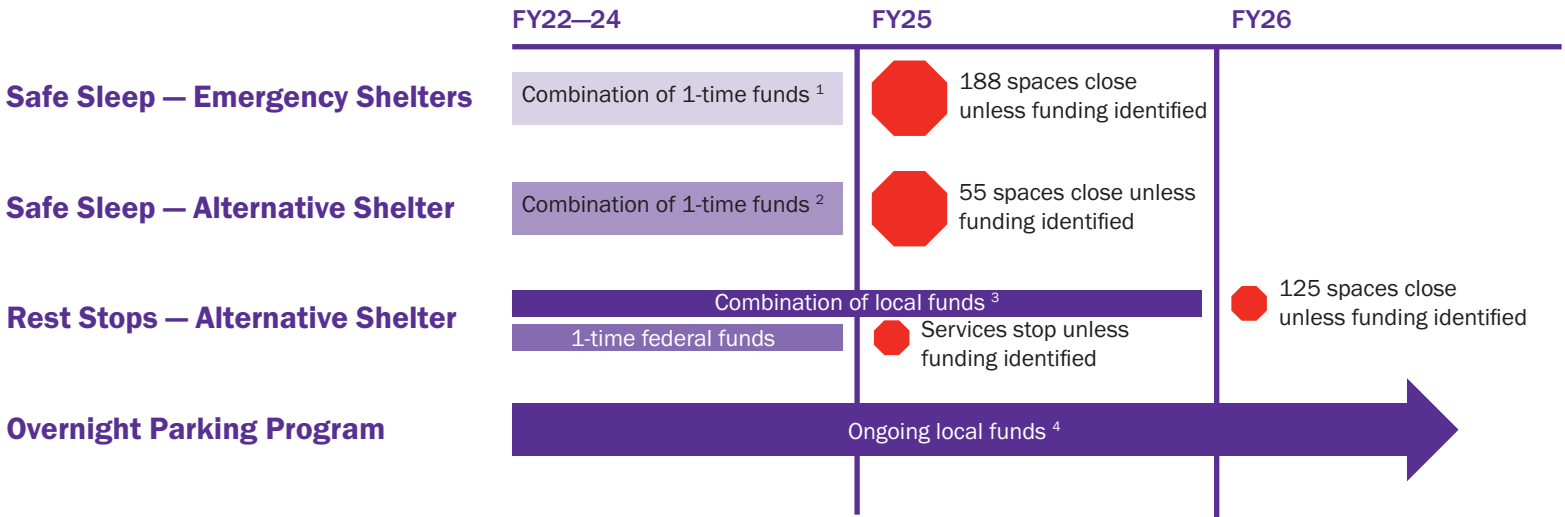
City shelters have been developed with the input of both service providers and people with lived experience to provide places where people can recover safely from the stresses and risks of living on the street. They provide a chance for people to stay and develop healthy relationships with staff, fellow occupants and local service providers as they stabilize and access Continuum of Care services. Occupants of the City's shelter programs show the capacity and will to move to transitional housing and other stable outcomes, but more affordable and supportive housing options are needed, as well as more case management and homeless services staffing to help unhoused residents progress. The City conducted focus groups and interviews with residents at three new shelter sites. The near-unanimous feedback was that residents love the dignity, privacy and sense of community at the sites, that they vastly prefer the City's new shelters to congregate shelters, and that they want to use the sites as a launchpad for stability and recovery efforts. The sites are in high demand with Eugene's unhoused community, with reported requests around 10 times the number of available spaces.



## THE FINANCIAL GAP

The City of Eugene is requesting \$4.5 million in state funds for the 2025 fiscal year to support continuation of five existing shelters including the Safe Sleep sites and navigation services at the City’s Rest Stop shelter program.

(If Lane County needs funding to bridge a gap, the City would also request \$1 million for the River Avenue Navigation Center.)



1. City general fund enabled by ARPA and state funds

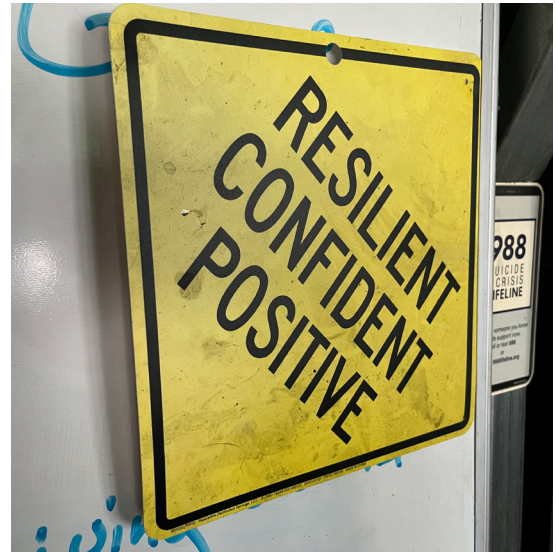
2. City general fund enabled by ARPA and pass-through ARPA from Lane County

3. Community Safety Payroll Tax small amount of ongoing funding, one-time City general fund enabled by ARPA, and one-time City general fund

4. Community Safety Payroll Tax and City general fund

## AN ONGOING CRITICAL NEED

Eugene is spending more than \$7 million annually on unhoused support. The infusion of \$2.4 million in state All In funds in 2023, and previous state funding, have been a lifeline to keep programs running. Yet cities like Eugene need more. All In funds past or future cannot apply to vehicle programs, alternative shelter, or safety and sanitation efforts. Distribution of those funds is out of the control of cities to ensure application to working programs, and funding for the next fiscal year, as well as into the future, is uncertain. Eugene needs at least \$4.5 million per year to fund its shelter and service programs through the biennium. It also needs funding to support community clean-up and a long-term solution to secure operation of successful shelters and services in years to come.



For more information contact:

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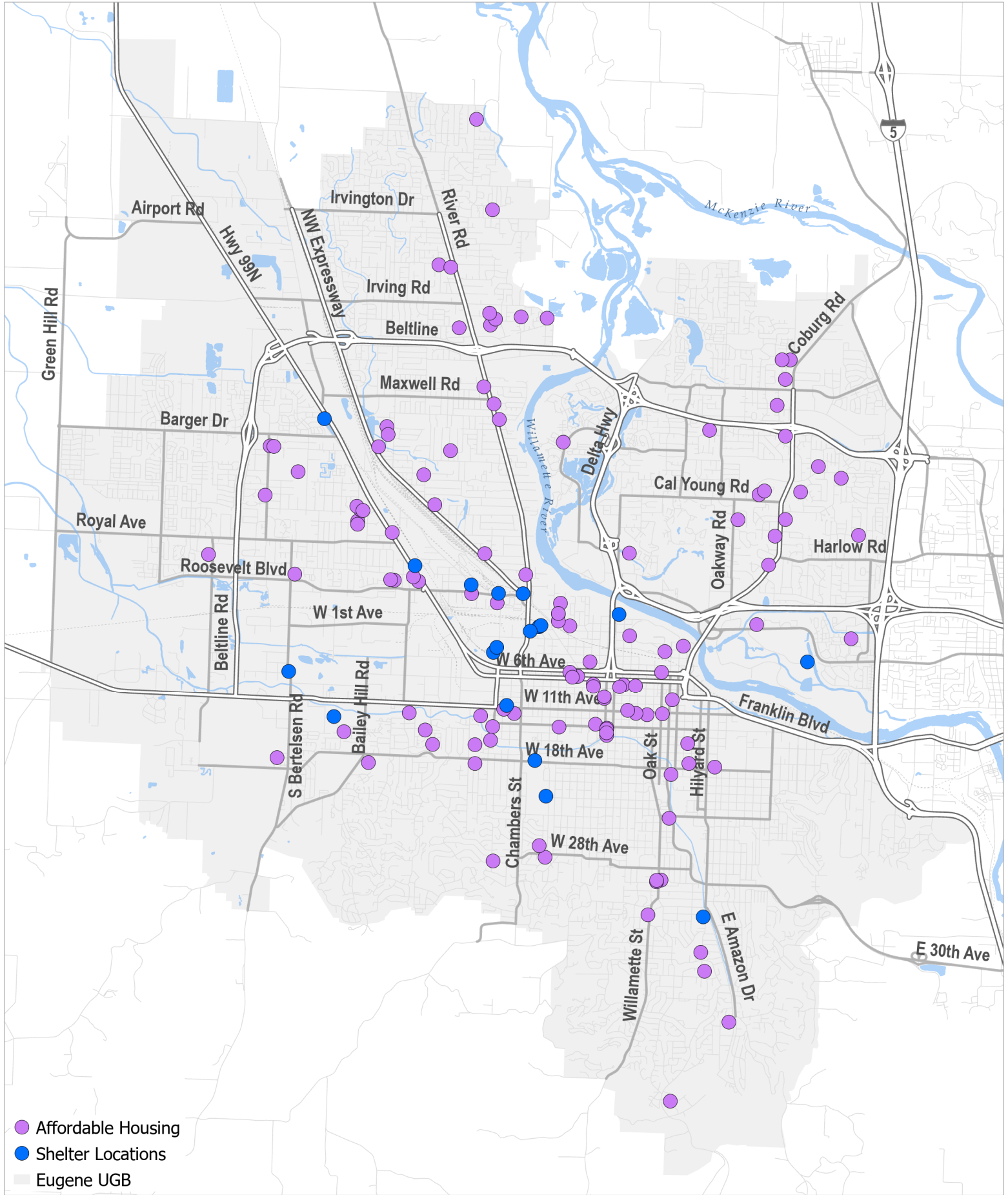
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# City of Eugene Affordable Housing and Shelter Locations



- Affordable Housing
- Shelter Locations
- Eugene UGB