

NOTHING TO SEE HERE

The mayor and City Council appear uninterested in knowing more about whether the police are targeting Eugene's homeless

According to *Eugene Weekly's* analysis of Municipal Court data, one out of every four people whom the Eugene Police Department (EPD) tickets or arrests for a non-driving charge is homeless, and more than one-third of all the charges brought in the city's municipal court are filed against people who lacked permanent addresses at some point last year. [See "Criminalizing Homelessness," in the June 1 issue.]

Homeless advocates have been asking the city and the police to make data regarding the homeless available for years — the police routinely make data and other reports available regarding calls for service and downtown safety.

EW asked the mayor and Eugene City Council if they would, in their oversight role for city government, ask EPD to release data about the department's interactions with the homeless.

Neither the mayor nor any member of the City Council agreed to do so.

We also asked the mayor and city council members if they could do one thing tomorrow to make the homeless situation better in Eugene, what would it be?



MAYOR LUCY VINIS

The important issue is that too many people are living without safe shelter. None of us believes that issuing citations is in any way a solution to that problem, and I support the message of advocates that we should find better and more humane ways of responding to this crisis.

This is the intention behind the city's investments in the Community Court and Community Outreach Response Team, CORT — to divert people who have frequently come into contact with the police and connect them to services with access to shelter, health care, job training and education. These programs also offer a pathway to participants to have their charges dismissed through performing community service.

EPD's contract with CAHOOTS, expanded last year, and the Parks Ambassador program are additional initiatives the city supports. Both offer alternative approaches to the traditional law enforcement and criminal justice system

to better work with people in our community who are experiencing homelessness.

In addition, as you know, the city is working with our partners on options for adding capacity to address the needs of homeless individuals, including the possibility of a public shelter, expanding the rest stop program and other measures.

The City Council has in the past considered whether to change the rules and laws regarding prohibited camping and decided against changes except for the addition of provisions to allow for permitted overnight sleeping through the rest stop, Dusk to Dawn and car camping programs.

We simply need more legal places for people to sleep so that police and others can direct homeless individuals to those locations.



EMILY SEMPLE, WARD 1

From my understanding, there is no simple Excel sheet with data about the homeless. It is impossible to accurately try and pull that out. I question if the homeless are being targeted or if it's just misfortune — if

you don't have a house to go to, you'll probably often find yourself in the wrong place at the wrong time, doing things that are legal inside but you have to do them outside because you have nowhere to go.

I don't think anyone can simply "ask" for data about the homeless to be public because I don't think it is at all that simple.

If I could do one thing tomorrow, I'd find that leprechaun hiding the pot of gold that we need to have more money and make some changes.

BETTY TAYLOR, WARD 2

Sorry — I can't ask the police. I will ask the city manager.

I don't think we could do one thing tomorrow. Long term — we need a homeless shelter and single room housing. And we need state or regional support. Eugene cannot take care of everyone who comes to town.

I think the records should be public.



ALAN ZELENKA, WARD 3

Did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

MIKE CLARK, WARD 5

Did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

GREG EVANS, WARD 6

In my opinion the one thing that can be done to improve the condition of the houseless is to provide emergency and more transition shelter.

The only way we can begin to provide any substantive relief is to work with our county, state and federal agency partners to find and dedicate more dollars and resources to this issue. As you already know we are all challenged to identify these resources due to the increasing disinvestment in the public sector as a whole.

CLAIRE SYRETT, WARD 7

Did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

CHRIS PRYOR, WARD 8

If I could do one thing tomorrow to help homelessness I would persuade the county to partner with the city to provide a low-barrier public shelter. The City Council has reaffirmed its vote to commit \$1 million to create a public shelter, contingent on the county stepping up to assist in operating it. The county is the federally recognized agency responsible for poverty and homelessness in Lane County, so their participation is essential.



JENNIFER YEH, WARD 4, was not given the questions as she became a member of the Eugene City Council after all other requests were made.

Responses have been edited for length and clarity.

This story was developed as part of the Catalyst Journalism Project at the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication. Catalyst brings together investigative reporting and solutions journalism to spark action and response to Oregon's most perplexing issues. To learn more visit journalism.uoregon.edu/catalyst or follow the project on Twitter @UO_catalyst.

LANE COUNTY AREA SPRAY INFORMATION

- **Seneca Jones Timber** is hiring Avel Salgado (541-520-5941) to ground spray 56.9 acres with imazapyr and triclopyr just north of Douglas Creek in west Lane County. Call Ted Reiss with questions (541-689-1011). Notification # 781-10167.
- **Giustina Land and Timber** (541-345-2301) is hiring Johnny Salgado (541-520-6215) to ground spray 79.6 acres just south of Marlow Road with mixture of imazapyr, glyphosate, triclopyr and metsulfuron methyl. Notification # 781-10124.
- **Giustina Resources** (541-485-1500) is hiring Craig Shimp, Sherwood, (503-467-1255) to ground spray roadsides on 84.4 acres just south of Lowell across Dexter Lake with glyphosate and triclopyr. Notification # 771-10079.
- **Giustina Land and Timber** forester Garrett Yarbrough adding glyphosate, aminopyralid, metsulfuron methyl and imazapyr to ground spray on multiple units in west Lane County. Notification # 781-02857.

POLLUTION UPDATE

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) sent **Tom Hunton** (president of **Huntons' Sure Crop Farm Service, Inc.**) a warning letter on July 18 for placing wastes in a location where they were likely to escape or be carried into waters of the state. DEQ sent the warning letter in follow up to a May site visit that was prompted by a complaint about Sure Crop's facility on Milliron Road in Junction City. During the site visit, DEQ observed wastes in a stormwater ditch next to Sure Crop, along with numerous hoses going to the ditch from a farm tank on the site. DEQ characterized the situation as posing "a significant risk of environmental harm" and indicated that it had "significant concerns" about the situation. DEQ stated in its letter that it would refrain from referring the matter for formal enforcement if various corrective actions were taken. — *Doug Quirke/Oregon Clean Water Action Project*