



Spotlight on Eugene Chamber Work: Homelessness & Public Safety

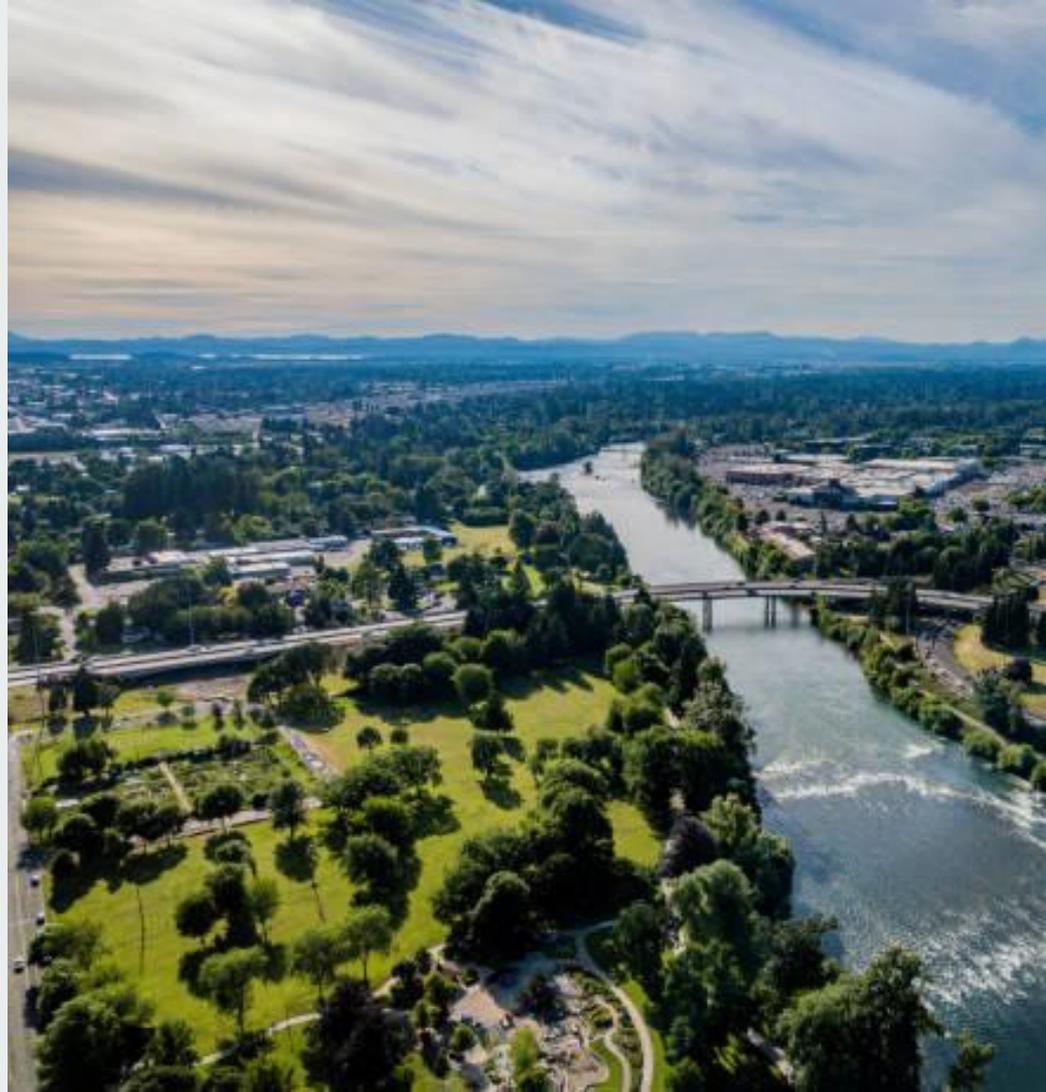
June 24, 2021



Our Vision...

Thriving local community where businesses can succeed and individuals can live happy health lives.

A community where homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.



What is the issue?

1. Growing number of individuals living on streets
 2. Growing crime near unsanctioned camps across the community
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Responding to members & community



- People feel hopeless
 - They don't think anything is being done
 - They don't know what is being done
 - They think whatever is being done, isn't working

- "Something needs to be done" with no specific ask is an option, but not worth much

What is the Chamber's Role?

1. Research current state of the issue
2. Organize & convene business community
3. Communicate & educate community
4. Innovate & collaborate with partners
5. Advocate for solutions

Research

In order to make meaningful recommendations, we have to understand the complexity of this issue. We needed to find out more about:

- *What does the data show about the issue in our community?*
- *What are the root causes?*
- *What challenges are keeping us from solving this issue?*

What have we done?

- We have had more than 125 interviews since March 1st w/ businesses, city and county staff, service providers, neighborhoods, advocates, experts in other cities
- Researched best practices from across the country

What does the data show about the issue in our community?



In 2020 there were 9,107 “actively homeless” individuals in our county; in May of 2021 there were 3,245 actively homeless in Lane County, of those 2,474 were in Eugene.

As a county we have 1,527 beds available in emergency, transitional, permanent-supportive and rapid reentry housing in 2020.

Prior to COVID we had 636 emergency shelter beds available, now we have about 438 (not including Washington/ Jefferson or 13th Street temporary sites)

Currently, we have 75 people in the 14th & Chambers site and 230 in Washington/ Jefferson Park

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Status of our Shelter Landscape

- 80% of people unhoused in Eugene live in places not meant for human habitation
- Dawn to Dawn- 125 Beds, Low Barrier, Drop-in for vacant beds, Minimal Case management
- Car Camping- 85 Capacity, some allow daytime access and some do not
- Rest Stops & Micro Sites- 80 > 170 Beds, Community Supported Shelters, Nightingale, SquareOne
- Eugene Mission- 24 Low-Barrier Beds, 14 day stay, Entry point for services, 66 women’s shelter beds
- New navigation center- 75-100 beds, targeting River Ave site, not open
- Safe Sleep Sites- Goal is for 200 Car Camping and 300 Tent sites

What are the root causes?



- **CRIME**

- Lack of police resources
- Court system w/ judge not prosecuting or hearing minor crimes
- Not enough jail space

- **HOMELESSNESS**

- Inadequate mental health resources and support (deinstitutionalism)
- Inadequate addiction services
- Federal funding system & regulations (focus on shelter, not resources)
- Housing crisis (NIMBY, Codes, Labor, Land, etc)

What challenges are keeping us from solving this issue?



- **Regulatory Environment**
 - COVID Regulations
 - Boise vs. Martin, threats of lawsuits
 - Ineffective codes, loopholes
- **Good efforts, but misaligned and not coordinated**
 - Lack of coordination between city & county
 - Multiple layers of groups working in duplicative areas
- **Inadequate Financial & Staffing resources**
 - Service providers maxed out, can't support new camps
 - Federal funding has many strings attached
 - Lack of police resources, business stop reporting
- **Lack of political will or disagreements**
 - Public Pressure to reduce police funding
 - Some leaders not willing to take risks or disagree on direction
- **Need more spaces for people to be**
 - Not enough Housing or shelter spaces

So where do we go
from here?

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Bringing Back Hope.



- **We have put a man on the moon and developed a vaccine for a highly contagious virus in under a year, we can solve this homeless crisis**
- **Government and nonprofits can not do this alone, the entire community including business needs to be a part of the conversation**

Research

In order to make meaningful recommendations, we have to understand the complexity of this issue.

What's next?

- Survey to businesses to understand the financial impact this issue is having
- Commission an Economic Impact/ Cost Analysis study for Lane County
- Continue outreach to other communities
- Publish report summarizing our research with recommendations for action

Communicate + Educate

Businesses need to understand the full scope and complexity of this issue and the community needs to know how it's impacting businesses.

What is next?

- Establish formal communication strategy in partnership with local agencies
 - Hire filmmaker/ photographer to document current state
 - Collect local stories of businesses and homeless individuals
- Continue informational presentations to community groups
- Website/ dashboard for metrics
- Encourage continued reporting of crime

Innovate + Collaborate

We need to bring the private sector, service providers, faith community and government together to find real, innovative solutions.

What is next?

- Host homeless solution summit
- Find private sector sites
- Create nonprofit “needs” list
- Tours of sanctioned sites & shelter solutions
- Explore programs in other cities that are working
- Consider community funding options

Advocate

We need to keep pushing for action at city, county, state and federal levels of government

What is next?

- Continue to mobilize businesses, building out contact list
- Advocate for incentives and policy or rules changes
- Keep pushing on crime enforcement and develop advocacy strategy to ensure CSI does not decrease funding for police
- Dive in to budget, make recommendations
- Recruit business friendly candidates to run for elected office

How can you help?

- **Join coalition & share information**
 - Email brittanyw@eugenechamber.com if you want to be included in communication on this topic
 - Share webinar, survey and research report
- **Take Business Impact Survey**
- **Advocate for Solutions**
 - Consider joining group to find shelter sites
 - Show up at city council to share your experiences

Questions?

