



Community Safety Initiative Q & A

1. The webinar mentioned adding CSO and a list of other professionals and administrative staff to address gaps, but it was unclear whether or not those positions would be within the jurisdiction of the EPD. You must distinguish between hiring social workers to work for the city or as independent consultants from hiring social workers within the EPD.

The positions identified in the webinar as potential strategies under Police Services are primarily positions that would be located in EPD. The exception is the position referred to as *social worker and support for homeless outreach*. It has not been determined at this time where that position would report in the organization.

2. I did not hear any mention of CAHOOTS as a possible recipient of CSI funding. IS CAHOOTS within the 10% for FIRE/EMS? Or is it within Preventative/Houseless services? CAHOOTS staff are undercompensated and the city should invest in expanding the program to handle ALL non-violent crisis response directly, not through the EPD.

CAHOOTS is funded within EPD's general fund budget not through CSI at this time. For more information on CAHOOTS funding go to <https://www.eugene-or.gov/4508/CAHOOTS>.

3. Can the public have access to full transparency of the EPD budget, including private funds? This would help us in decision-making regarding the overall safety initiative. Is there a tax form similar to what non-profits must submit that the public can access?

As an Oregon municipal corporation, the City of Eugene is not subject to the same tax filing requirements as non-profits. The best sources to obtain information on EPD's budget and spending are as follows:

- [FY21 adopted budget document](#).
- [City of Eugene online open budget tool](#).
- [City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report \(CAFR\)](#). FY20 CAFR will be posted on this site after it is presented to the Council on 12/14/20.

4. After viewing the YouTube presentation (twice), I'm unclear as to the role of the focus groups and how any feedback or conversation will be used or integrated into some process. So, what is the role and how will the information be processed?

The focus groups are just one part of a process designed to get community feedback into the Community Safety Initiative. City Council directed staff to provide opportunities for communities of color to provide input into how the CSI can best meet the community safety needs of their communities. The focus groups are the primary means of getting that feedback. Members of the LGBTQ+ and Jewish community have also been invited to participate in the focus group process due to their historic experience with hate and bias activity, policing and allyship. City Council was also interested in getting a sense if there was a shift in priorities among the general public regarding community safety. For that reason, there will also be a survey available in January open to anyone that lives and works in Eugene and a series of public meetings in January to get additional input. All the feedback received will be analyzed and presented to City Council for consideration at a work session in February.

5. **I believe I was encouraged to participate because I'm a member of/part of a community social justice organization. I watched patiently and then at around 22 minutes in, there was the first mention of the socio-cultural differences. Given the importance nationally of racial and social justice, is police accountability, training, awareness, etc. an important part of this, as it certainly has the appearance of being something of an afterthought?**

The Community Safety Initiative engagement process is intended to get feedback on the use of funds generated by the new payroll tax for new and/or expanded services related to community safety. City Council initiated a separate but concurrent process referred to as the Ad Hoc Police Policy Committee. You can learn more about that process [here](#). The Ad Hoc Committee is focused on reviewing police policy referencing best practices as outlined in 21st Century Policing and Campaign Zero. The Ad Hoc Committee is addressing the issues that you mention such as police accountability and training.

6. **What, if anything, prevents the city from using money in this fund to maintain permanent, stable public housing for the city's unhoused population?**

Ordinance #20616 establishing the payroll tax to fund community safety services establishes allowable uses for the payroll tax. It states Payroll tax revenue shall only be used to fund...*prevention and homeless services, including but not limited to, adding emergency shelters, a day center and funding after school programs at Title 1 schools...*Other than emergency shelter the ordinance does not explicitly allow or prohibit other types of housing serving persons that are homeless.

7. **Has the city re-assessed its need for additional jail beds in light of the passage of Measure 110?**

It is difficult to predict what impact Measure 110 will have on jail bed capacity. Currently, the Lane County District Attorney's Office handles misdemeanor cases that include a drug charge, even if there are other misdemeanor charges that would be processed through Municipal Court. The City Prosecutor only handles misdemeanor cases that do not involve a drug charge, or that the DA chooses to not pursue the drug charges on. It is not uncommon for an individual to face multiple misdemeanor charges in addition to a drug possession charge. As part of the Lane County government the DA has access to the full capacity of Lane County Adult Corrections for cases on its docket. The City of Eugene has access to only 15 of those beds at Lane County, as well as an additional 15 at the Springfield Jail. A likely outcome of Measure 110 is that cases previously handled by the DA will instead be prosecuted by the City Prosecutor's office since misdemeanor possession is no longer a crime. If that is the case there will be additional pressure on an existing strained system for jailing offenders. Additionally, property crime rates may, or may not, rise in Eugene due to Measure 110.

8. **Can funding be used under "Prevention & Homelessness" for non-carceral mechanisms that fulfill similar roles as Community Court and Mental Health Court expansions fulfill under "Municipal Court", to enable access to needed community and mental health services without requiring policing and the courts as gatekeeper?**

See response to question 6 above. While no such programs are currently being planned for use of the payroll tax funds the ordinance does not prohibit the type of programs you have described.

9. **Are community service officers, who the video states are not sworn police officers, armed? Do they have arresting power? If not, is it possible to house those positions outside of the police department?**

CSO's are non-sworn civilian positions that work to support officers in order to free them up to do tasks that require sworn officers to perform. They do not carry firearms. They write police reports and respond to some cold and/or non-criminal calls for service, perform traffic control duties, transport property and evidence, and other support functions. They do not have authority to make arrests. It would be difficult or impossible for them to perform all the necessary functions supporting patrol and investigations if they were not part of the police department, for example, writing police reports. They are valued members of the department and their duties enhance service to the community in their capacity - directly and indirectly by freeing officers from non-sworn required tasks.

10. It is stated that police are unable to respond to 1 out of 3 non-emergency calls per service. Can you provide data quantifying the types of calls that are included in this statistic as non-emergency calls?

Calls for service, which are processed and triaged for an EPD response often hold until officers are available to respond and if no officers are ultimately available, these calls are cleared from the screen. This would include calls that are not an immediate life/safety emergency (cold call regarding a fraud), information about illegal drugs, beat information (such as calls about lower level neighborhood problems such as loud noise), animal welfare log calls (non-emergency), non-injury motor vehicle crashes, quality of life issues such as continuing graffiti in a neighborhood, etc.

However, almost any call by nature, can be assigned any priority, dependent upon circumstances. For something like "Criminal Trespass" two calls can come in at the same time: one call may be listed at priority 5 (response time depends on resources) and another may be Priority 1 (immediate response required) it all depends on the specific situation.

11. Please explain why the tax is structured the way it is. Why not just tax all workers based on income? Why are employers taxed at a lower rate than employees? Why are there different rates based on number of employees?

In September 2018, the City Council gave direction to immediately begin work on long-term funding strategies to address critical community safety needs and a Community Safety Revenue Team (CSRT) was formed to develop a recommendation to the City Manager. The CSRT consisted of three City Councilors and five citizen members including four current or former Budget Committee members and a member of the Police Commission. The CSRT met between November 2018 and January 2019 and recommended a payroll tax on employers and employees using a simple tax structure:

"The Community Safety Revenue Team recommends implementing a payroll tax to provide funding to support \$22 million in community safety services on an annual basis with an option to be phased in over a six-year timeframe.

The Revenue Team recommends the payroll tax on employers and employees be structured very simply without exemptions or carve outs.... By creating a simple tax structure that applies to all employers/employees the City can legally tax, the new taxes will be easier to communicate to the community, easier to implement, and will be less costly to administer as the more complex the tax structure the more costly to administer/maintain.

The Revenue Team recommends developing a "hybrid" approach of a tax on both employees and employers which could either be a flat percentage for both taxes or structured at different tiers for each tax to achieve the desired revenue yield."

Subsequently, the City Council held two work sessions to discuss the Community Safety Revenue Team recommendation of a payroll tax. During this time, the City received community feedback on the payroll tax proposal that taxing City residents via a personal income tax would be more equitable and would take the tax burden away from business that will face higher state gross receipt taxes due to legislation passed in 2019. In April 2019, the Community Safety Revenue Team met again to discuss the River Road/Santa Clara Annexation Analysis and further consideration of a personal income tax. As noted in the CSRT discussion notes (link below), the CSRT did not recommend a personal income tax as a funding mechanism:

"Revenue Team noted that a City personal income tax would have many of the same shortcomings as the City payroll tax. It also does not capture revenues from people who use Eugene public safety services but do not reside in the community. A personal income tax will likely have much higher implementation and administration costs is more variable during the economic downturn than a payroll tax and would also take longer to implement. Team also discussed that the community has previously rejected the idea of a City personal income tax.

Revenue Team also discussed impact of the payroll tax on low-wage employees and whether exempting employees below certain wage level may address some of the concerns. It was noted

that doing so would significantly increase the cost of payroll tax administration. The team also discussed the advantages of sharing the tax burden broadly across the people of different income levels.

Revenue Team noted that community concerns about the payroll tax proposal may be addressed by structuring payroll tax in a way that reduces the tax burden on the employers. The team agreed that while they do not endorse the personal income tax option, they are open to the idea of modifying the payroll tax proposal in order to address concerns that have been raised.

Revenue Team concluded its discussion by reaffirming its recommendation to the City Manager to pursue a City payroll tax as the Community Safety revenue source.”

The City Council held an additional work session on May 8th where the Council reviewed three rate structures that would achieve the annual revenues needed and directed the City Manager to prepare an ordinance for a payroll tax rate of 0.0040 on employees and 0.0020 on employers and to hold a Public Hearing to receive public input on the proposed ordinance. The Public Hearing was held on May 28, 2019.

At their June 10, 2019 work session, the City Council considered an ordinance at the payroll tax rate of 0.0040 on employees and 0.0020 on employers that incorporated community feedback. Several Councilors expressed concern about the impact of the tax on lower-wage earners in the community. Councilor Syrett asked for information about the rate change for other categories if minimum wage earners were excluded and those making less than \$15 per hour had a lower rate to achieve the desired annual revenue yield of \$23.6M annually. Councilor Syrett then moved to amend the original ordinance, with the amendment passing:

- Increase the overall employee tax rate from 0.0040 to 0.0044
- Add a new section: the tax rate imposed on every non-minimum wage employee making \$15.00 or less working at an employer located in the city is 0.0030 of the employee’s wages
- Make the rate 0.0000 for minimum wage employees

Councilor Zelenka then made a motion to further amend the ordinance:

- Increase the overall employer tax rate from 0.0020 to 0.0021
- Add a section: the tax rate imposed on the first \$100,000 of wages paid by an employer with two or less employees are 0.0015

Councilor Zelenka stated the intent of the amendment was to address community concerns about sole proprietors/small businesses by giving them a discount but not an exemption.

The amendment passed with the final tax structure enacted:

Employee Payroll Tax Rates:

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| a. Minimum Wage Employees: | 0.0000 |
| b. Employees earning \$12.01 - \$15.00: | 0.0030 |
| c. Employees earning over \$15.00: | 0.0044 |

Employer Payroll Tax Rates:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| d. With 2 or less employees* | 0.0015 |
| e. With more than 2 employees | 0.0021 |

*An employer with 2 or less employees will receive a reduced rate of 0.0015 on the first \$100,000 of payroll.