

AGENDA

1. CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION CALLED TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL: Blackledge, Greenberg, Parisian, Wagner, Mayor Sutton
3. DISCUSSION
 - A. Zoning Text Amendment: Electric Vehicle Charging and Solar Energy Systems
 - B. City Commission(s) Code of Respect and Ethics
4. STAFF UPDATES
 - A. Planning Updates: Blue Line Extension Cultural Placemaking and Anti-displacement Community Prosperity Program Board
 - B. Miscellaneous Items
5. COUNCIL UPDATES
6. ADJOURNMENT



TO: Mayor and City Council
PREPARED BY: Kayla Kirtz, Sustainability Coordinator
APPROVED BY: Tim Sandvik, City Manager
DATE: September 9, 2025
RE: Zoning Text Amendment: Electric Vehicle Charging and Solar Energy Systems

Background:

The City of Robbinsdale is a member of two federally-recognized sustainability programs, SolSmart and Charging Smart. These programs provide technical assistance to local governments to help accelerate the growth of affordable solar energy and accessible electric vehicle (EV) charging in their communities. Prompted by these programs, city staff have been conducting an evaluation of our current zoning code to identify any potential restrictions that may prohibit the growth of solar energy and EV charging in Robbinsdale. There is currently no language in the Robbinsdale zoning code about electric vehicles, and there is minimal language about solar energy systems. Staff are recommending amendments to Chapter 5 of the Robbinsdale zoning code that clearly define EVs, EV charging infrastructure, and solar energy systems, identify the uses of solar energy systems and EV charging stations in specific zoning districts, and set EV charging requirements for future high-density housing.

Staff have spent time analyzing zoning code and requirements for EV charging and solar energy systems from comparable neighboring communities such as Golden Valley, St. Louis Park, and Roseville. Much of the language put forth in the proposed zoning text amendment is modeled after our neighboring cities and their requirements. The language is also heavily influenced by industry standards and recommendations from SolSmart and Charging Smart. Cities across the metro and country are adopting similar requirements and standards. This zoning text amendment intends to anticipate the rapidly growing and evolving solar and EV industries, set clear standards and definitions, and maintain the notion that Robbinsdale is a city that prioritizes clean energy and clean transportation.

The proposed zoning text amendment was initially brought to the Planning Commission for their review on July 17, 2025. A public hearing was held, with proper public notice given, and there were no public comments received. The Commission and staff had a robust discussion about the draft text and although Commissioners generally voiced support for the draft ordinance, it was ultimately tabled via a unanimous vote. Staff conducted further research about requested items from the Commission, and received additional input on the draft from colleagues at Charging Smart and SolSmart, as well as the City's Building Official and Police Chief. Finally, staff brought the proposed zoning text amendments to the Planning Commission on August 21, 2025, where the Planning Commission unanimously voted to recommend approval to the City Council. Staff intend to bring this zoning text amendment to the September 16, 2025 City Council meeting for a first reading.

Analysis:

There are two main components to this zoning text amendment: electric vehicle charging

infrastructure and solar energy systems. The main sections of the ordinance are described below:

510.17. Off-street parking. Subd. 10. Electric Vehicles.

This section identifies EV charging stations as permitted accessory uses in all zoning districts. This section also requires that all new parking areas or existing parking areas undergoing significant reconstruction (expanding or improving by more than 25% of the parking area) must install a minimum number of electric vehicle charging stations, based on the property's total number of required parking spaces. This requirement is intended to anticipate the growing electric vehicle industry. In the same way that private businesses and residential complexes are required to provide a certain number of parking spaces, city staff want to ensure that those driving electric vehicles also have sufficient opportunities to park and charge their vehicles. These requirements are also consistent with what we are seeing in neighboring cities' zoning codes. This requirement is also anticipating an influx of high-density and mixed-use development along the Bottineau Boulevard and downtown corridors. This requirement would enable developers to proactively install electric vehicle charging stations, rather than doing so retroactively which could be more costly in the long run. This section outlines basic design standards to ensure reasonable aesthetic and quality construction of EV charging stations throughout the community. It is also important to note that these requirements may always be revised upward or downward by the City Council as part of a conditional use permit application.

515.01. R-1, single family residential district

This section permits solar energy systems as an accessory use in single-family residential districts. This section requires that solar energy systems comply with the height standards of said zoning district, and in the case of a ground-mounted system, they do not exceed 15 feet in height. This section also ensures that solar energy systems comply with the setback requirements of the R-1 district.

517.01. P, Public facilities district & 520.01. B-1, Neighborhood commercial district & 525.01. B-W, Business-warehouse District.

These sections permit solar energy systems as an accessory use in their respective districts, and ground-mounted systems as a conditional use in their respective districts. The height and setback requirements of each respective district apply accordingly.

Recommendation:

Discuss the proposed zoning text amendment.

Attachments:

1. Draft EV & Solar Ordinance - 09-09-2025

Member _____ moved and Member _____ seconded a motion that the following ordinance, which was given its first reading on _____, 2025, be given its second reading on this ____ day of _____ 2025, and that it be adopted.

ORDINANCE NO. 25-__

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 505, 510, 515, 517, 520, AND 525 OF THE ROBBINSDALE CITY CODE RELATING TO ELECTRIC VEHICLES, ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS, AND SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

- 1) Sections 505, 510, 515, 517, 520, and 525 of the City Code are hereby amended with the following language to be removed shown by ~~strikeout~~ and new language added shown in **bold and underlined**:

CHAPTER V PLANNING AND LAND USE REGULATION

505.09. Definitions.

“Accessible Electric Vehicle Charging Station” means an electric vehicle charging station where the battery charging station is located within accessible reach of a barrier-free access aisle and the electric vehicle and is installed and maintained in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements using U.S. Access Board Design Recommendations or other relevant state-level standards for guidance.

“Battery Electric Vehicle” means any vehicle that operates exclusively on electrical energy from an off-board source that is stored in the vehicle’s batteries and produces zero tailpipe emissions or pollution when stationary or operating.

“Charging levels” means the standardized indicators of electrical force or voltage, at which an electric vehicle’s battery is recharged. The terms 1, 2, and Direct Current Fast Charging are the most common charging levels, and include the following specifications:

- a. **Level 1 is considered slow charging with 120-volt outlets.**
- b. **Level 2 is considered medium charging with 208/240-volt outlets.**
- c. **Direct Current Fast Charging is considered fast or rapid charging. Voltage is greater than 240.**

“Electric capacity” means at a minimum:

- a. **Panel capacity to accommodate a dedicated branch circuit and service capacity to install a 208/240V outlet per charger;**
- b. **Conduit from an electric panel to future electric vehicle charging station location(s).**

“Electric Vehicle” means a vehicle that uses electricity, either partially or exclusively, for propulsion. “Electric vehicle” includes:

- a. **Battery Electric Vehicle**
- b. **Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle**

“Electric Vehicle Charging Station (EVCS)” means a public or private parking space that is served by electric vehicle supply equipment that has as its primary purpose the transfer of electric energy (by conductive or inductive means) to a battery or other energy storage device in an electric vehicle.

“Electric Vehicle Infrastructure” means conduit/wiring, structures, machinery, and equipment necessary and integral to support an electric vehicle.

“Electric Vehicle Parking Space” means any marked parking space that identifies the use to be exclusively for the parking of an electric vehicle.

“Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment” means an electrical component assembly or cluster of component assemblies designed to specifically charge batteries within electric vehicles.

“Ground-mounted” means a solar energy system mounted on a rack or pole that is ballasted on, or is attached to, the ground. Ground-mounted systems can be either accessory or principal uses.

“Roof-mounted” means a solar energy system mounted on a rack that is ballasted on, or is attached to, the roof of a building or structure. Roof-mounted systems are accessory to the primary use.

“Solar carport” means a solar energy system of any size that is installed on a carport structure that is accessory to a parking area, and which may include electric vehicle supply equipment or energy storage facilities.”

“Solar energy system” means a device, array of devices, or structural design feature, the purpose of which is to provide for generation or storage of electricity from sunlight, or the collection, storage, and distribution of solar energy for space heating or cooling, daylight for interior lighting, or water heating.

“Solar photovoltaic system” means a solar energy system that converts solar energy directly into electricity, the primary components of which are solar panels, mounting devices, inverters, and wiring.

510.17. Off-street parking.

Subd. 10. Electric Vehicles.

- (a) **Permitted Locations. Level 1, Level 2, and Direct Current Fast Charging EVCS are permitted in every zoning district, when accessory to the primary permitted use.**
- (b) **Cords and other design elements extending from EVCS are not permitted in the right of way.**
- (c) **Minimum Number of Required Electric Vehicle Charging Stations**

- (1) All new parking areas, existing parking areas expanding by more than 25% additional parking spaces, and existing parking areas improving more than 25% of the parking area are subject to the standards of Table III.
- (2) For all calculations of required parking spaces based on percentages, any result less than one shall be rounded up to one and, above that, fractional results of at least one half shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number.
- (3) All EVCS, including parking spaces replaced with EVCS or other required design elements, count toward minimum parking requirements.
- (4) Table III.

| Table III. Minimum Number of Required Electric Vehicle Charging Stations | | |
|---|--|--|
| <u>Number of Spaces</u> | <u>New Parking Areas</u> | <u>Expansion or Improvement of Existing Parking Areas</u> |
| <u>< 50</u> | <u>Optional</u> | <u>Optional</u> |
| <u>50+</u> | <u>Multiple-unit residential (5 or more units) land uses:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>10% of required parking spaces, of which at least one shall be an accessible EVCS, as Level 1 or greater</u> • <u>One guest parking space as Level 2 or greater</u> | <u>EVCS shall be provided at the minimum quantities required for new parking areas, prorated to the number of parking spaces in the area of expansion or improvement.</u> |
| | <u>Non-residential land uses:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>5% of required parking spaces, of which at least one shall be an accessible EVCS, as Level 2 or greater</u> | |

- (d) Notwithstanding the requirements of subsections above, all new gasoline service stations as defined in Section 1130.11 shall be required to install at least one EVCS as Level 2 or greater.
- (e) In addition to the number of required EVCS, the following accommodations shall be required for the anticipated future growth in market demand for electric vehicles:
 - (1) New Non-Residential and Multiple-Unit Residential Land Uses (5 or more units): all new parking areas shall provide electrical capacity necessary to accommodate the future hardwire installation of EVCS as Level 2 or greater for a minimum of 10% of required parking spaces.
 - (2) Existing Non-Residential and Multiple-Unit Residential Land Uses (5 or more units): all existing parking areas that are expanded or improved by more than 25%, electrical capacity shall be provided according to the preceding standards required for new parking areas, prorated to the number of parking spaces in the area of expansion or improvement.

- (f) These requirements may be revised upward or downward by the City Council as part of an application for a conditional use permit or planned unit development based on verifiable information pertaining to parking.
- (g) Reductions to EVCS requirements: When the cost of installing EVCS required by this Subdivision would exceed 5% of the total project cost, the property owner or applicant may request a reduction in the EVCS requirements and submit cost estimates for city consideration. When City Council approval of the project is not required, the Community Development Director may administratively approve a reduction in the required amount of EVCS in order to limit the EVCS installation costs to not more than 5% of the total project cost.
- (h) General Requirements for Properties Comprised of Four or Fewer Housing Units
- (1) EVCS shall be located in a garage, or on the exterior wall of the home or garage adjacent to a parking space.
 - (2) EVCS shall comply with all relevant design criteria as outlined in each specific Zoning District unless specifically exempted.
 - (3) All new construction of single-family homes shall have electric capacity to support future EVCS installation.
- (i) General Requirements for Properties Comprised of Five or More Housing Units and Non-Residential Properties
- (1) Accessibility: An EVCS will be considered accessible if it is located adjacent to, and can serve, an accessible parking space as defined and required by the ADA. It is not necessary to designate the EVCS exclusively for the use of vehicles parked in the accessible parking space.
 - (2) EVCS for public use shall be subject to the following requirements:
 - i. EVCS shall be located in a manner that will be easily seen by the public for informational and security purposes.
 - ii. EVCS shall be located in desirable and convenient parking locations that will serve as an incentive for the use of electric vehicles.
 - iii. EVCS must be operational during the normal business hours of the use(s) that it serves. EVCS may be de-energized or otherwise restricted after normal business hours of the use(s) it serves.
 - (3) Lighting: Site lighting shall be provided where EVCS is installed, unless charging is for daytime purposes only.
 - (4) Equipment Design Standards:
 - i. Battery charging station outlets and connector devices shall be mounted to comply with state code and must comply with all relevant ADA requirements. EVCS mounted on pedestals, lighting posts, bollards, or other devices shall be designed and located as to not impede pedestrian travel or create trip hazards on sidewalks.

- ii. EVCS may be located adjacent to designated parking spaces in a garage or parking lot as long as the devices do not encroach into the required dimensions of the parking space (length, width, and height clearances).
 - iii. The design should be appropriate to the location and use. Facilities should be able to be readily identified by electric vehicle users and blend into the surrounding landscape/architecture for compatibility with the character and use of the site.
 - iv. EVCS pedestals shall be designed to minimize potential damage by accidents, vandalism, and to be safe for use in inclement weather.
- (5) Usage Fees: The property owner may collect a service fee for the use of EVCS.
- (6) Maintenance: EVCS shall be maintained in all respects, including the functioning of the equipment. A phone number or other contact information shall be provided on the equipment for reporting problems with the equipment or access to it.

515.01. R-1, single family residential district

Subd. 3. Permitted accessory uses. Permitted accessory uses in an R-1 district are:

(i) solar energy devices that are attached to principal or accessory structures or located in rear yards; (Amended, Ord. No. 23-08), provided that they meet the following performance standards:

(1) Height, Solar energy systems shall comply with the following height requirements:

(i) Roof mounted solar energy systems shall comply with the height standards of the applicable zoning district.

(ii) Ground mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed fifteen feet in height when orientated at maximum tilt.

(2) Setback. Solar energy systems shall comply with the following setback requirements:

(i) Roof mounted solar energy systems shall comply with the setback requirements for the applicable zoning district and structure type (principal or accessory) on which they are mounted.

(ii) Ground mounted solar energy systems shall comply with the principal front yard setback requirements of the abutting zoning district.

(3) Visibility. Solar energy systems shall be designed to blend into their surroundings or the architecture of the associated building provided mitigating for visual impacts will allow the system to function within expected industry standards.

The color of the solar collector is not required to be consistent with other roofing materials.

517.01. P, Public facilities district

Subd. 3. Permitted accessory uses. The following are accessory uses in P districts:

(b) **Roof mounted solar** Solar energy devices ~~as an integral part of the principal structure,~~ **provided that they meet the following performance standards:**

(1) Height. Roof mounted solar energy systems shall comply with the height standards of the applicable zoning district.

(2) Setback. Roof mounted solar energy systems shall comply with the setback requirements for the applicable zoning district.

(3) Visibility. Solar energy systems shall be designed to blend into their surroundings or the architecture of the associated building provided mitigating for visual impacts will allow the system to function within expected industry standards. The color of the solar collector is not required to be consistent with other roofing materials.

Subd. 4. Conditional uses. The following are uses permitted with a conditional use permit in P districts:

(e) **Ground mounted solar** Solar energy devices ~~NOT an integral part of the principal structure,~~ **provided that they meet the following performance standards:**

(1) Height. Ground mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed fifteen feet in height when oriented at maximum tilt.

(2) Setback. Ground mounted solar energy systems shall comply with the principal front yard setback requirements of the abutting zoning district.

(3) Visibility. Ground mounted solar energy systems shall be designed to blend into their surrounded provided mitigating for visual impacts will allow the system to function within expected industry standards.

520.01. B-1, Neighborhood commercial district

Subd. 3. Permitted accessory uses. Permitted accessory uses in a B-1 district are:

(f) **roof mounted** solar energy devices, **provided that they meet the following performance standards:**

(1) Height. Roof mounted solar energy systems shall comply with the height standards of the applicable zoning district.

(2) Setback. Roof mounted solar energy systems shall comply with the setback requirements for the applicable zoning district.

(3) Visibility. Solar energy systems shall be designed to blend into their surroundings or the architecture of the associated building provided mitigating for visual impacts will allow the system to function within expected industry standards. The color of the solar collector is not required to be consistent with other roofing materials.

Subd. 4. Conditional uses. The uses described in this subdivision require a conditional use permit based on procedures set forth in and regulated by subsection 535.01 of this code and are the following:

(k) **Ground mounted** solar energy devices, **provided that they meet the following performance standards:**

(1) Height. Ground mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed fifteen feet in height when oriented at maximum tilt.

(2) Setback. Ground mounted solar energy systems shall comply with the principal front yard setback requirements of the abutting zoning district.

(3) Visibility. Ground mounted solar energy systems shall be designed to blend into their surrounded provided mitigating for visual impacts will allow the system to function within expected industry standards.

525.01. B-W, Business-warehouse District.

Subd. 2 Permitted uses. Permitted uses in a B-W district are:

(r) ground mounted solar energy devices, provided that they meet the following performance standards:

(1) Height. Ground mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed fifteen feet in height when oriented at maximum tilt.

(2) Setback. Ground mounted solar energy systems shall comply with the principal front yard setback requirements of the abutting zoning district.

(3) Visibility. Ground mounted solar energy systems shall be designed to blend into their surrounded provided mitigating for visual impacts will allow the system to function within expected industry standards.

- 2) The following summary clearly informs the public of the intent and effect of the ordinance and is approved for publication:
 - a. To facilitate and encourage the use of electric vehicles, to expedite the establishment of convenient, cost-effective electric vehicle infrastructure, and establish minimum requirements for such infrastructure to serve both short and long-term parking needs.

- b. To allow for and regulate the location, placement, design, and maintenance of active and passive solar energy systems to ensure such equipment are appropriately located and are used in a safe and effective manner.

3) This ordinance shall be effective immediately upon its passage and publication.

First Reading: YEAS:

NAYS:

Second Reading: YEAS:

NAYS:

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON THIS ___ DAY OF ___, 2025.

Bradley Sutton, Mayor

ATTEST:

Chase Peterson-Em, City Clerk

(SEAL)



TO: Mayor and City Council
PREPARED BY: Tim Sandvik, City Manager
APPROVED BY: Tim Sandvik, City Manager
DATE: September 9, 2025
RE: City Commission(s) Code of Respect and Ethics

Background:

In January, staff presented considerations for Council regarding Code/policy updates for Commissions and Committees. At that time, Council had new enough members that there was no immediate desire to conduct updates.

Analysis:

This summer, staff was made aware that our neighbors in Brooklyn Center were considering a "City Commission Code of Ethics" - this was presented to Council at the August 12 Work Session. Following discussion, staff said they would bring to individual Commissions and Committees — feedback is below. *Note, Charter Commission has not met in the last month.

Planning Commission (Ms. Rand) - The Planning Commissioners were asked to provide some general feedback at their Aug 21 regular meeting. Four of them were in attendance. We had included the Brooklyn Center City Commission Code of Respect & Ethics as background information in their meeting packet and it appeared that they had read/scanned it.

In sum, the feedback was that a Code of Conduct or Code of Respect & Ethics for Robbinsdale City Commission and Committee members would be wise, and they were unanimously supportive. They suggested that at a minimum the chair, if not the whole planning commission, should likely get some kind of “parliamentary procedure/Roberts Rules” type training once a year from city staff or other expert to reinforce need for chair to maintain order in the meetings and keep discussion focused on agenda and ensure comments and questions are focused on meeting agenda item decision, rather than off track or personal comments about someone. Having people not talk over each other or monopolize conversation at meetings, and to be respectful in comments the planning commission felt, was very important to demand.

The commissioners did note that the Brooklyn Center Commission example Section B, Commissioner Conduct With City Staff, Item 2. Limited City Staff Contact, was the only part of that document that did not mesh well with the City of Robbinsdale planning commissioners. They point out that they have need from time to time to, on a limited basis, contact the Community Development Director and/or City Planner to ask for clarification on agenda item or additional information that, if possible, can be located prior to meeting. They point out that they do not contact city manager or city attorney directly for this type of information, prior to a meeting, and they understand requests for information need to be reasonable and limited.

Human Rights Commission (Ms. Brookes) - HRC offered some grammatical suggestions, and edits to language - see attachment.

Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Commission, AND Senior Commission (Mr. Bazyk) - PRFC was a little surprised that these were needed, but understood the benefit. No large suggestions or changes from anyone. The discussion basically circled around the code outlining what one Commissioner described as "being a decent person." A second countered with "being a decent person is subjective." Not really a ton to report but everyone was on board with something like this being instituted.

Senior Commission hasn't had a meeting since you sent these out. They canceled their meeting this month since they will be attending the Meet and Greet.

Sustainability Committee (Ms. Kirtz) - Tim, I've received comments from two members of the Sustainability Committee. Here is their feedback:

"The only thing I was wondering about was when it discussed in section C (2) (b) about personal comments, I think the sentiment is good but "personal comments" is very ambiguous. What it's getting at is people shouldn't talk smack about each other basically so I understand that language (mine) can't be used, but maybe something like, "In all conversations, public and private, commissioners will maintain collegial discourse about fellow commissioners, framing disagreements constructively and refraining from personalized comments."

AND

City council members have repeatedly expressed a desire for more resident input into city policymaking, including at the city council meeting on September 2, 2025. I agree with them. A lot of people I speak with do not feel listened to or respected by Robbinsdale city employees. As a city, Robbinsdale has a long ways to go to be what I would call welcoming of input, let alone constructive criticism.

Recently, the city manager had a copy of Brooklyn Center's "City Commission Code of Respect and Ethics" policy added to commission and committee packets, with the insinuation that the policy could be adopted more or less as-is. We were asked for feedback.

The code of ethics for Brooklyn Center council members went into effect in December 2024. Last year's city council election resulted in a new council member. The new 2025 version of the Brooklyn Center city council was seated in January and they rescinded the city councilor code of ethics that same month. In its place they implemented a code of ethics specifically targeted at commissioners.

There were good articles about this in the Sun Post and other outlets.

Brooklyn Center Mayor Graves stated that multiple Council Members, "had a conflict of interest because they have both been the subject of complaints. I'm frustrated that they repealed it [the city council policy], but I'm not extremely surprised," she said.

According to Brooklyn center Mayor Graves, the code of conduct was first drafted because city staff repeatedly came to her desk with complaints about city council members and commissioners. She said the complaint against the a new city council member was filed when she was a member of the finance commission and before she was elected to the council.

That is textbook retaliation. Robbinsdale should not do the same. Using city government resources to retaliate against whistleblowers is not only an unethical abuse of power, but it is illegal under state and federal law.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects our fundamental rights to express ourselves, to gather with other people, and to protest our government, among other rights.

The government cannot restrict your speech simply because they don't like what you have to say. The First Amendment prohibits government agencies from censoring, discriminating against, or applying rules inconsistently to private speech based on its viewpoint. This principle is called "viewpoint neutrality," and it means that local and federal government agencies can't allow expression on a given subject from Viewpoint A — but not from Viewpoint B. For example, the government can't protect city employee criticism of commissioners while banning commissioner criticism of city employees.

The First Amendment protects your right to express yourself and to testify before, petition, and protest the many branches and agencies of the local and federal government. If, for example, you want to picket your local police station to protest police misconduct, or criticize city employees, the First Amendment protects your right to do so.

The First Amendment also prohibits all local government agencies, including municipalities, from discriminating against speech based on its viewpoint. The same way that the Supreme Court has long recognized that public school students do not "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.", Robbinsdale commissioners do not shed our constitutional rights because we volunteer.

The League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) ethical guidelines for city employees include adherence to key ethical principles, including:

- Maintaining integrity, honesty, and fairness.
- Prioritizing community engagement.
- Working to create equitable policies and practices.

When reading through this policy, the vast majority of the items in this policy are subjective, include heavy use of tone policing, and prioritize the comfort of the majority over marginalized groups and people.

Some of the more ill-conceived clauses include:

- "Commissioners agree to refrain from making personal comments about other Commissioners."

Saying that I appreciate Nick's suggestions is a personal comment about a commissioner that would violate this policy.

- "Limited City Staff Contact. Questions for City staff and/or requests for additional background information should be directed to the City Manager or City Attorney. Commissioners agree to copy the City Manager on or keep the City Manager informed of any request."

Since the city manager states commissioners are considered staff, this policy would require every request of commissioners be sent to the city manager or inform the city manager. For example, when I had the idea for a public event I named Shelley Day where people could come learn about racially restrictive deeds and renounce them, I made various requests from people considered staff.

The city manager would be a single point of failure and their inbox would likely become overwhelmed with emails that the city manager has no need to know about.

Further, having a question for city staff is so vague that it would cover such mundane queries as, "Can you send me that slide deck."

- "Staff Criticism. Commissioners should not publicly criticize an individual employee. Commissioners agree to express concerns about the performance of a City employee directly to the City Manager through private correspondence or conversation. Commissioners will refrain from expressing concerns in public, to the employee directly, or to the employee's manager."

What are residents and stakeholders supposed to do when the city manager is made aware of concerning employee actions, inactions, or behavior, but does not take it seriously? This is yet another clause that seeks to put commissioners under the authority of the city manager. For example, asking for common sense things like the timely posting of meeting minutes can -- and has been -- labeled as criticism or personal attacks.

- "Personal Comments. Commissioners agree to refrain from making personal comments about other Commissioners to constituents."

This would ban comments such as, "I think that Erin and Sadie did a great job at the compost pickup." That is a personal comment that would be banned under this policy.

As I'm sure you can see, the proposed policy would have a chilling effect on free speech. This policy appears intended to silence dissent and whistleblowers, dissuade residents from participating in public policy, and intimidate residents from pointing out areas of opportunity for improvement, needed reforms, etc. It would also violate the Equity clause to the city charter, and likely violate the law.

This is not a policy a city who welcomes resident comments, questions, or concerns would pass. Even floating this policy is a big red flag, since this is policy is clearly meant to target volunteers.

City council should carefully consider the intent, the effects, how this would be perceived, the legality, the risks, and the timing. Why is this policy being proposed now?"

Recommendation:

Attachments:

1. City_Commission_Code_of_Respect_HRC Edits

Robbinsdale City Commission Code of Respect and Ethics

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Robbinsdale City Commission Code of Respect and Ethics

A. Commissioner Conduct with One Another

City Commissions are composed of individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds, personalities, values, opinions, and goals. Despite this diversity, all have chosen to serve the community. In all cases, this common goal should be acknowledged even as Commissioners may "agree to disagree" on contentious issues.

1. In Public Meetings

- (a) **Commissioner Interaction.** Commissioners agree to practice civility, professionalism and decorum in discussions and debate. Difficult questions, tough challenges to a particular point of view, and criticism of ideas and information are legitimate elements of a free democracy in action. Commissioners must promote camaraderie and collaboration in all public meetings. Personal arguments/attacks are forbidden, including, but not limited to the following:
- a Abusive/disparaging language.
 - b Shouting or refusing to allow another to speak.
 - c Threats either verbal or physical.
- (b) Commissioners should make every effort to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times, including listening actively during Commission meetings.
- (c) If a Commissioner is personally attacked by the comments of another Commissioner, the offended Commissioner will make notes of the actual words used and may call for a "point of order" to challenge the other Commissioner to justify or apologize for the language used. The Chair or Co-Chair will maintain control of this discussion.
- (d) **Deference to Order.** Commissioners agree to honor the roles of Commission leadership including the Chair and Co-Chair in maintaining order by deferring to their direction and guidance. It is the responsibility of the Chair and/or Co-Chair to keep the Commission meetings on track during meetings. Commissioners agree to honor efforts by the Chair or Co-Chair to focus discussion on current agenda items. If there is disagreement about the agenda or Chair or Co-Chair's actions, those objections should be voiced politely and with reason, following procedures outlined in parliamentary procedure.
- (e) **Setting a Positive Example.** One prominent goal of every commission meeting should be to demonstrate a positive example of decorum and respect for constituents at publicly accessible meetings. To accomplish that goal, Commissioners agree to follow the guidelines in items (a) through (c) above.

- (f) **Collaborative Problem Solving.** Another goal of the commission meeting is to demonstrate effective problem-solving approaches. Commissioners have a responsibility to show how individuals with disparate points of view can find common ground and seek a compromise that benefits the community as a whole.
- (g) **Timeliness.** To ensure smooth and timely execution of each commission meeting, Commissioners agree to make best efforts to be punctual and keep comments relative to topics discussed. ~~Every Commissioner has made a commitment to attend meetings and participate in discussions. Therefore, it is important that Commissioners be punctual and that meetings start on time.~~ It is equally important that discussions on issues be relative to the topic at hand to allow adequate time to fully discuss scheduled issues.
- (h) **Endorsement of Candidates.** It is inappropriate to mention endorsements of political candidates during commission meetings or other official City meetings or functions.
- (i) **Professional Courtesy.** Commissioners endeavor to avoid putting colleagues in awkward or disadvantageous positions in an effort to capitalize on another colleagues' vulnerability or to embarrass them publicly. Commissioners agree to make every attempt to submit questions or concerns to the Staff Liaison prior to formal meetings to avoid surprising Commissioners, Council Liaisons, or Staff at said meetings.
- (j) ~~**Personal Attacks.** Commissioners shall not personally attack, under any circumstance, another member of a Commission. Commissioners acknowledge that cultural differences, body language, tone of voice, as well as the words they use, could be experienced as intimidating, off-putting, or aggressive to the message recipient.~~

Commented [PN1]: Saying the same thing three times.

Commented [PN2]: This was already said in (a) through © above.

2. In Private Encounters

- (a) **Respectful private interactions.** Commissioners agree to continue to model respectful behavior in private. The same level of respect and consideration of differing points of view that is deemed appropriate for public discussions should be maintained in private conversations.
- (b) **Data Practices.** Commissioners recognize that written notes, voicemail messages, social media and email may be public information. Technology allows words written or said without much forethought to be distributed wide and far. Commissioners agree to consider the following:
- a How they, their family and/or friends would feel if this voicemail message was played on a speaker phone in a full office? Or broadcast on the nightly news;
 - b What could the consequences be if this email message was forwarded to others? Commissioners agree that written notes, voicemail messages and email should be treated as potentially "public" communication.
 - c Social media postings attacking other commissioners are to be avoided completely, as they already are public forums and do not give other commissioners a chance to discuss the allegations.

- (c) **Public-Private Considerations.** Even private conversations can have a public presence. City officials are always on display – their actions, mannerisms, and language are monitored by people around them that they may not know. Lunch table conversations could be overheard, parking lot debates may be watched, and casual comments between individuals before and after public meetings noted.
- (d) **Personal Comments.** Commissioners agree to refrain from making personal comments about other Commissioners. It is acceptable to publicly disagree about an issue, but it is unacceptable to make derogatory comments about other Commissioners, their opinions and actions.

B. Commissioner Conduct with City Staff

Governance of the City is a cooperative effort, including elected officials, appointed officials, and staff. Therefore, every effort should be made to be cooperative and show mutual respect for the contributions made by each individual for the good of the community.

1. Respectful Workplace Values. Commissioners agree to treat all staff as professionals. Commissioners agree to engage in clear, honest communication that respects the abilities, experience, expertise, and dignity of each individual. Berating, personal, impertinent, slanderous, threatening, abusive, or disparaging comments toward staff are not acceptable and are automatic grounds for a Code of **Respect** violation.
2. Limited City Staff Contact. Questions for City staff and/or requests for additional background information should be directed to the City Manager or City Attorney. Commissioners agree to copy the City Manager on or keep the City Manager informed of any request. Except in extraordinary circumstances, Commissioners agree to avoid disrupting City staff while they are in meetings, on the phone, or engrossed in performing their job functions.
3. Staff Criticism. Commissioners should not publicly criticize an individual employee. Commissioners agree to express concerns about the performance of a City employee directly to the City Manager through private correspondence or conversation. Commissioners will refrain from expressing concerns in public, to the employee directly, or to the employee’s manager.
4. Political Solicitation. Commissioners will not solicit any type of political support (financial contributions, display of posters or lawn signs, name on support list, etc.) from City staff.
5. Personal Comments about other Commissioners. Commissioners agree to refrain from speaking ill of other Commissioners to staff. This puts staff in an uncomfortable and compromising position because staff have the responsibility to treat all Commissioners equally and with respect.
6. Personal Attacks. Commissioners shall not personally attack, under any circumstance, a member **of** city staff. Commissioners acknowledge that cultural differences, body language, tone of voice, as well as the

Commented [PN3]: Should be ‘Respect’

Commented [PN4]: Should be ‘of’ not ‘if’

words they use, could be experienced as intimidating, off-putting, or aggressive to the message recipient.

C. Commissioner Conduct with the Public

1. In Public Meetings (For Commissions with Public Hearings)

- (a) **Create a Welcoming Environment.** Making the public feel welcome is an important part of the democratic process. No signs of partiality, prejudice or disrespect should be evident on the part of individual Commissioners toward an individual participating in a public forum. Every effort should be made to be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony.
- (b) **Speaking Time.** The Commission as a body agrees to be fair and equitable in allocating public hearing time to individual speakers. The Commission Chair or Co-Chair will determine and announce limits on speakers at the start of the public hearing process and ensuring those with Robbinsdale addresses have an opportunity to speak. Generally, each speaker will be allocated four minutes to speak. Applicants or their designated representatives may be allowed more time. If many speakers are anticipated, the Chair or Co-Chair may shorten the time limit and/or ask speakers to limit themselves to new information and points of view not already covered by previous speakers.
- (c) **Public Hearing Speakers.** No speaker will be turned away unless the speaker exhibits inappropriate behavior. Each speaker may only speak once during the public hearing unless the Commission requests additional clarification later in the process. After the close of the public hearing, no more public testimony will be accepted unless agreed upon by the Commission.
- (d) **Avoid Public Debate.** Commissioners agree to avoid debate and argument with the public. Only the Chair or Co-Chair – not individual Commissioners – can interrupt a speaker during a presentation. However, a Commissioner can ask the Chair or Co-Chair for a point of order if the speaker is off the topic or exhibiting behavior or language the Commissioner finds disturbing. Commissioners may request that the Chair or Co-Chair seek clarification from the speaker.
- (e) **Commission Chair to Focus Discussion.** If speakers become flustered or defensive by Commissioner questions, it is the responsibility of the Chair or Co-Chair to calm and focus the speaker and to maintain the order and decorum of the meeting. Questions by Commissioners to members of the public testifying should seek to clarify or expand information. It is never appropriate to belligerently challenge or belittle the speaker. Commissioners agree to refrain from providing personal opinions or revealing inclinations about upcoming votes until after the public hearing is closed.
- (f) **Personal Attacks.** Commissioners shall not personally attack, under any circumstance, a member/members of the public. Commissioners acknowledge that cultural differences, body language, tone of voice, as well as the words they use, could be experienced as intimidating, off-putting, or aggressive to the message recipient.

2. In Unofficial Settings

- (a) **No Promises.** Commissioners may not make promises on behalf of the Commission. Commissioners may be asked to explain a Commission policy or recommendation or to give their opinion about an issue as they meet and talk with constituents in the community. It is appropriate to give a brief overview of City policy and to refer to City staff for further information. It is inappropriate to overtly or implicitly promise Commission or Council action, or to promise City staff will do something specific (fix a pothole, plow a specific street, plant new flowers in the median, etc.).
- (b) **Personal Comments.** Commissioners agree to refrain from making personal comments about other Commissioners to constituents. It is acceptable to publicly disagree about an issue, but it is unacceptable to make derogatory comments about other Commissioners, their opinions and actions.
- (c) **Public-Private Considerations.** Commissioners may be observed by the community as they serve the city in their capacity as commissioners. Commissioner behaviors and comments serve as models for proper conduct in the City of Robbinsdale. Commissioners agree to reflect honesty and respect for the dignity of each individual in every word, communication, (whether in social media or otherwise), and action taken by Commissioners, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is a serious and continuous responsibility.

D. Commissioner Conduct with Other Public Agencies

Commissioners will be as clear as possible when representing City or personal interests. If a Commissioner appears before another governmental agency or organization to give a statement on an issue, the Commissioner must clearly state:

- 1. If his or her statement reflects personal opinion or is the official stance of the City;
- 2. Whether this is the majority or minority opinion of the Commission. Even if the Commissioner represents his/her/their own personal opinions, the Commissioner must remember that the comments may reflect upon the City as an organization.

Commented [PN5]: Let's keep all references to commissioners as gender neutral.

If the Commissioner is representing the City, the Commissioner must support and advocate the official City position on an issue, not a personal viewpoint.

E. Poor Conduct and Accountability Measures

1. Conduct

- (a) **Violations.** Commissioners who violate the Code of Respect will be subject to accountability measures. Any violations that potentially constitute criminal conduct shall be handled by the criminal justice system.
- (b) **Factors.** Factors that will be considered in determining the appropriate restorative measure or sanction include but are not limited to the following: seriousness of the violation and number of preceding violations.

2. Types of Accountability Measures

(a) Restorative Measures

Commissioners agree to engage in restorative measures prior to initiating sanctions for violations of the Code of Respect. Restorative measures include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Private meeting Commissioner and City Manager
- (ii) Informal Mediation between involved parties and Mediator
- (iii) Mediator issues recommendations (i.e. training, public apology, meeting suspension, etc.)
- (iv) Commissioner / Involved Parties to follow recommendations
- (v) If Commissioner refuses to follow recommendations, then the process moves to sanctions:

(b) Sanction

Commissioners may face commission removal for failing to engage in restorative measures or for continued violations of the Code of Respect.

3. Process

(a) Complaint / Reporting a Code of Respect Violation

- (i) A Commissioner may report a potential Code of Respect violation by another Commissioner by bringing the matter to the attention of the official of their choice, Mayor, or the City Manager.
- (ii) A Robbinsdale staff member may report a potential Code of Respect violation by a City Commissioner by bringing the matter to the attention of the City Manager or Human Resources Manager.
- (iii) If the potential violation involves the Mayor, it should be brought to the attention of the Mayor Pro Tem, City Manager, or City Attorney.
- (iv) A community member may report potential Code of Respect violations by a member of a City Commission to the Mayor, City Manager or any member of the City Council.

(b) Investigation

- (i) Triage. The Mayor and City Manager will gather initial information, consult with the City Attorney if necessary and decide how to move forward.
- (ii) Fact Finding. If necessary, the matter will be referred to the criminal justice system. The Mayor and City Manager will determine whether to pursue independent fact-finding or internal fact-finding.
- (iii) Possible Outcomes. After an investigation, the City Manager, in consultation with proper staff, will determine if the complaint is substantiated or unsubstantiated. A restorative solution will be sought prior to moving to a sanction.
 - (1) If Substantiated: The Commissioner will have a consultation with the City Manager, if that is unsuccessful, then the parties move to a graduated resolution process:

- Informal mediation with harmed individuals and City designee (Mediator);
- Mediator issues recommendations
- Commissioner / Involved Parties to follow recommendations
- If Commissioner refuses to follow recommendations, then the process moves to sanction.

(2) Sanction: (Last Resort)

- City Manager compiles redacted report for Council review (names, commission, other identifying information will be removed from the report)
- After review of the circumstances and recommendation, Council will use a standard form provided by the Administration to communicate their vote
- Administration will provide Council forms to Mayor
- Mayor will state Council vote on the record
- If Commissioner is removed from service, Commissioner will receive a letter of removal from the Council
- Commission Removal results in automatic bar from Commission Appointment for 2 years

(3) If Unsubstantiated: City Manager to work with City Attorney to determine resolution compliant with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act

4. Conduct During Meetings

- (a) **Inappropriate Statements.** For inappropriate statements or conduct by Commissioners occurring during a Commission meeting, a verbal correction by the Commission Chair will normally be the first step to address the matter, either during or after the meeting.
- (b) **Further Incidents.** Further incidents at the same meeting may be addressed by subsequent verbal corrections accompanied Repeated incidents can give rise to Chair not recognizing the offending Commissioner to speak. A Commissioner can request that the Chair take any of these actions against an offending Commissioner if the Chair has not done so on her/his/their own.

F. Ethics

1. Open Meeting Law

- (a) With certain exceptions, meetings of Council Commissions must be open **to** the public. A meeting is a gathering of a majority of Commissioners at which City business is discussed. It is not necessary that action be taken for a gathering to constitute a “meeting.”
- (b) A meeting does not include chance social gatherings as long as public business is not discussed.

- (c) A majority of Commissioners should not communicate with each other by phone, email, in-person, or otherwise, to discuss City business.
- (d) Use of social media does not violate the open meeting law as long as social media use is accessible to all Members of the public.

See Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13D, for further information regarding the Open Meeting Law.

2. Gift Law

A City Commissioner cannot accept a gift from someone who has an interest in any matter involving the City. A “gift” includes money, property, a service, a loan, forgiveness of a loan, or a promise of future employment. A “gift” does not include:

- Campaign contributions;
- Items costing less than \$5;
- Items given to members of a group; the majority of whose members are not local officials;
- Gifts given by family members; or
- Food or beverages given at a reception, meal or meeting at which a Council Member is making a speech or answering questions as part of a program

See Minnesota Statutes, Section 471.895 City Charter, Section 14.04(A), and Section II, 2.95 of the Robbinsdale Code of Policies for further information regarding the Gift Law and procedure.

3. Conflict of interest

- (a) Commissioners cannot have a personal financial interest in a sale, lease, or contract with the City.
- (b) Commissioners cannot participate in matters in which the Commissioner’s own personal interest, financial or otherwise, is so distinct from the public interest that the Commissioners cannot be expected to fairly represent the public’s interest when voting on the matter.

See Minnesota Statutes Section 471.87, and Section II, 2.95 of the Robbinsdale Code of Policies of further information about Conflicts of Interest involving Public Officers.



TO: Mayor and City Council
PREPARED BY: Heather Rand, Community Development Director
APPROVED BY: Tim Sandvik, City Manager
DATE: September 9, 2025
RE: Planning Updates: Blue Line Extension Cultural Placemaking and Anti-displacement Community Prosperity Program Board

Background:

Analysis:

BLE Cultural Placemaking RFP's For Stations Meetings

Since June, the Met Transit Blue Line Extension (BLE) Project Planning Office has been holding public meetings the last Wednesday of the month from 5-7:30 PM at Elim Lutheran in Robbinsdale to discuss and gather input on the topic of cultural peacemaking that could occur at the proposed transit stations in Northside Mpls, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park. More specifically, the BLE project office hired consultants to facilitate securing community input on what cultural elements could be represented in the design and public art at each BLE transit station so that they best reflect the unique history, values, and other cultural themes of each city.

Robbinsdale and the BLE Project Office promoted public attendance at the meetings, but it has been noted that very few residents from Robbinsdale and Crystal have attended. Staff reached out specifically to the Robbinsdale Historical Society, but to date very little participation has occurred. There are now three remaining meetings left to secure public input and consensus in this process before it concludes, namely Wednesday, Sept 24, Wed, Oct 22 and Wednesday, Nov 19 (to avoid Thanksgiving Week), starting at 5 PM, located at Elim Lutheran Church Gymnasium. The outcome is to secure enough input from each city to develop unique, theme-based cultural peacemaking objectives. The RFP themes for each station (Robbinsdale has Lowry Station and the Downtown Station) will then be used in RFP's to be issued in late 2026 to artists to develop proposals.

City staff request that city councilors attempt to attend a meeting and/or encourage others from Robbinsdale to attend and provide input and feedback. Members of city commissions will also be encouraged to attend. As city staff, Heather Rand, Community Development Director, has been representing the city at every meeting to date, and she welcomes the participation by others in Robbinsdale.

Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program (ACPP) Board Activity

This board was created by the Minnesota Legislature and \$10 million was provided to Hennepin County as the ACPP Board staff and fiscal agent, to grant make to address concerns regarding anti-displacement along the Blue Line route. In the last year, this board with membership from each BLE city (Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, Minneapolis -Northside), and the Met Council, Hennepin County, and various community non-profits and foundations have been meeting monthly, and have developed by-laws, established a work plan with goals and

objectives, and working committees all with the purpose of both proactively and retroactively issuing funding to negate harmful anti-displacement that can occur along light rail due to gentrification and other redevelopment pressures.

In July, an RFP was developed that would fund NGO's (can have private sector and/or government partners) land acquisition for affordable housing, workforce preparedness for changes, and small business support. The board voted that as a pilot, up to \$2 million of the \$10 million in funds be made available before year-end. A process for evaluating the proposals and determining financial parameters the county will need as fiscal agent is being finalized, with hopes that a pilot program RFP can be issued this fall.

Recommendation:

Attachments:

None



TO: Mayor and City Council
PREPARED BY: Tim Sandvik, City Manager
APPROVED BY: Tim Sandvik, City Manager
DATE: September 9, 2025
RE: Miscellaneous Items

Background:

Staff will provide some updates for future items.

Analysis:

Domestic Animal License - Quails — Recently, a resident inquired about the keeping of Quails as a Domestic Animal. Currently, City Code (915.37) does not explicitly include Quails under permitted animals to be kept; however, barring Council opposition, staff will research and present materials in October or November for potential updates to City Code.

Resolution Supporting PW Facility Funding Request - Staff have submitted funding requests at the State and Federal Level for 2026 funding for the PW facility. To show support of the efforts, staff intends to bring a resolution to an upcoming Council meeting for consideration.

Recommendation:

Attachments:

None