



MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Member Greenberg, Member Parisian, Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge, Member Wagner, Mayor Sutton

Absent: None

Staff: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Chase Peterson-Etem, City Clerk/Assistant to City Manager; Richard McCoy, Public Works Director/City Engineer; Rachel Leen, Communications Coordinator

DISCUSSION

A. 2026 - 2035 Capital Improvement Plan DRAFT

Sandvik explained that staff were present to review the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), answer questions, and walk through the projects scheduled over the next several years. The CIP can be viewed in segments such as the 10-year streets and utilities plan, the 10-year parks and buildings plan, and 10-year major projects. He highlighted that Sanborn Park will now be completed in multiple phases due to financial considerations. Different funding sources will be used across departments, including internal funds, assessments, and bonding. Staff currently recommend avoiding a bond issuance in 2026 to reduce debt servicing.

Two projects staff recommend keeping in the 2026 CIP are the Public Works Facility and the Sanborn Park building, with the intention to fund them using a Local Option Sales Tax (LOST). LOST would require legislative approval and a voter referendum once the 2026 moratorium lifts. Member Greenberg asked whether a LOST would capture revenue from visitors as well as residents. Staff explained that because residents pay for the general levy entirely, a LOST would bring in additional revenue from nonresidents, provided the City demonstrates regional benefit to the legislature.

McCoy presented a diagram showing the cost of each Sanborn component—playground, building, hockey rink, tennis courts, dog park—and a map outlining phases. The plan currently schedules items such as the playground and tennis courts in Phase 1, with other elements in later phases. The building and parking lot are not included in the phased CIP because they may be funded separately through a LOST. Staff and Council discussed options and pricing for the hockey rink, including concrete versus seasonal boards and grass. McCoy noted that phasing was designed from west to east to reduce duplication in construction efforts.

McCoy shared a rendering of the proposed Public Works Facility. He explained that although the building appears large, it would consolidate vehicles currently spread across multiple sites. Member Wagner asked about opportunities to reduce impervious surface and incorporate stormwater features. McCoy replied that staff are working on options to include those elements if feasible.

McCoy also presented the 10-year Parks and Buildings map and the 10-year Streets and Utilities map, noting that 40% of city streets had been reconstructed before 2024. He explained that Robbinsdale skipped significant street reconstruction in the 1990s, making current efforts especially important. He added that upcoming light rail construction requires careful coordination and is one reason certain areas, such as 42nd and downtown, receive particular emphasis. More reconstruction reduces emergency repairs, which are costly.

Staff and Council discussed the uncertainty surrounding light rail scheduling and future funding. McCoy stated that the street plan keeps the City in good shape regardless of whether light rail proceeds. Member Wagner asked about recent water main failures and whether long-term fixes are planned. McCoy said repair clamps are used for immediate issues, and areas with repeated breaks are already scheduled for reconstruction.

Mayor Sutton asked where project trimming may be possible and whether items like bike paths or pickleball courts could be removed to reduce costs. McCoy explained that multimodal features are included because they align with Council-approved policy about pedestrian infrastructure. If Council wishes to change those priorities, staff can adjust future plans.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge asked whether some street projects should be moved forward to prevent repeated water main failures. McCoy said the CIP is flexible and can be updated if certain issues become chronic. Corrugated metal pipe failures were one example of significant unexpected costs this year.

Member Parisian asked about the Lee Park fields, originally funded with support from a community organization, and whether the City plans to revisit that partnership. Sandvik said state funding may be available, and McCoy noted staff have not yet discussed costs with the organization. He added that the turf may last longer than initially expected. Member Greenberg asked whether vehicles could similarly have their life cycles extended. McCoy said staff already adjust timelines where possible; for example, patrol cars rotate more quickly than administrative vehicles. The goal is the lowest cost of ownership while maintaining reliable service, and the City has few spare vehicles.

Member Wagner asked about the number of speed trailers in the CIP and whether adding more would help with speeding concerns. Chief Foley shared that they are most effective when first placed in an area but become less effective over time as drivers get used to them. He added that it is difficult to determine how many are truly needed. Mayor Sutton asked about the \$500,000 projected for patrol vehicles. Chief Foley said the amount reflects expiring leases and the need to reset the vehicle replacement cycle.

Member Wagner asked about Water Tower 2 and whether the project remains on schedule. McCoy said attorneys and the hospital are still discussing land acquisition, after which planning can continue. Staff anticipate construction beginning next year. Sandvik added that bonding will be required for construction, which is an important consideration if the City avoids bonding in 2026, as the upcoming year would then be used primarily for planning. Mayor Sutton asked about the future of the existing downtown water tower. McCoy said that decision will be up to Council and the community.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge asked about previous crosswalk placement discussions and whether future street reconstruction projects would incorporate new crosswalks. McCoy said crosswalks are typically covered through small works funding or can be budgeted if they require a long lead time.

Member Greenberg asked about bonding and how deferring bonding to 2026 would impact the City. Sandvik said delaying bonding allows the levy to grow more gradually. He explained that removing projects from the CIP would slow progress and provide short-term relief, but longer term, some existing bonding and TIF commitments will age out and create room for new bonding. He added that staff sense that bonding in 2026 is not advisable based on Council direction in current budget discussions. However, completing the listed projects would require bonding in 2026, even though it may not be recommended at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge adjourned the meeting at 6:59 PM.

Signed by:

Rachel Leen

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Rachel Leen, Communications Coordinator

Signed by:

Raymond Blackledge

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Raymond Blackledge, Mayor Pro Tem