



City of Blaine

City Council Workshop

April 7, 2025 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

AGENDA

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

In accordance with the provisions of Section 3.01 of the Blaine City Charter, a Council Workshop meeting is scheduled for the following purpose:

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. New Business**
 - 3.1.** 2025-65 Charter Review of City Governance
Sponsors: Tom Loonan, City Attorney
 - 3.2.** 2025-66 Legislative Update
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager
- 4. Other Business**
- 5. Adjournment**



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-65

Agenda Date	Status
April 7, 2025	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Tom Loonan, City Attorney

Agenda Item # 3.1

Charter Review of City Governance

Background

Attorney Loonan will provide a presentation regarding the City Charter, focused on the form of government and Charter provisions regarding the roles of the Council and Staff.

Staff Recommendation

N/A

Questions for Council

Attachment List

None



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New Business - Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

Agenda Item # 3.2

Legislative Update

Background

Staff members have discussed the city's legislative agendas at previous workshops. On April 4, staff will provide a brief summary regarding the following:

1. Status of federal funding requests
2. Status of city-proposed state legislation
3. Other miscellaneous legislative updates

Much of this information changes daily, so the most recent available information will be provided at the time of the workshop.

Staff Recommendation

Update - information only, no action required

Questions for Council

Attachment List

1. Legislative Priorities (State) 2025 Updated April

CITY OF BLAINE

STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2025

The following legislative priorities are of the highest importance to the City of Blaine. The City of Blaine and the lobbying team from Lockridge Grindal Nauen (LGN) will work with the legislature, and Blaine's legislative delegation to advocate for these initiatives.

2025 Focus Priorities:

1. Social District

This effort would involve the City of Blaine having authority to establish a social district, similar to the Cities of Shakopee, Anoka, and Stillwater. If authorized by the legislature, the city can designate specific areas within the city where open alcohol containers are permitted, based on requirements set forth in law. The sports entertainment district is the impetus for the request.

2025 Goals: LGN will work with our local delegation and other stakeholders at the legislature toward including Blaine in the existing social district law.

Update: Norris and West introduced:

[H. F. 388](#), A bill for an act relating to liquor; allowing the city of Blaine to issue a social district license; amending Laws 2022, chapter 86, article 2, section 5, as amended.

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce Finance and Policy.

Senator Kreun introduced--

[S.F. No. 2535](#): A bill for an act relating to liquor; allowing the city of Blaine to issue a social district license; amending Laws 2022, chapter 86, article 2, section 5, as amended.

Referred to the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection.

2. District Sales Tax (Sports Entertainment District)

There has been discussion about the ability to establish a limited-area sales tax in the Radisson & 105th redevelopment area.

2025 Goals: While there is currently a moratorium on any new sales tax initiatives, the 2025 effort would be to start working towards the city ability to establish such a sales tax for the district once the moratorium is lifted.

UPDATE: District Sales Tax (Sports Entertainment District)

A bill was drafted that would give the city authority to establish a special taxing district for the 105th redevelopment area. The bill authorizes up to a 3% tax on food, beverage, lodging and admissions within the district. The revenue can be used to pay debt from the issuance of bonds, for public safety and district maintenance expenses and capital improvements. Establishment of the tax would need action by the City Council. The tax must not be terminated before January 1, 2055. The geographic boundaries for the district generally include the 105th redevelopment area north of 105th Avenue.

2025 Goals: Present the bill and work with local legislators. Given the district won't be operational for several years, the intent was to introduce a bill this year and if it isn't approved, make another attempt in 2026.

Norris introduced:

[H. F. 387](#), A bill for an act relating to taxation; authorizing the city of Blaine to impose certain special taxes within the city.

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Taxes.

3. Transportation

Senator Kreun has indicated an interest in working with the city on a transportation project. Staff met with the Senator and his legislative aide and discussed potential projects. The Senator opted to submit a bill to the Senate Transportation Committee that would grant the city/county additional funding for TH65 mitigation to our local roadway system that would make several temporary intersection improvements and convert them to permanent.

Representative Norris has submitted a companion bill in the House Transportation Committee requesting \$7m. Council will be updated as these bills are discussed and testimony given.

As a side note, Senator Kreun has also submitted a bill under Transportation, Employment, and Economic Development for \$5m to reimburse affected businesses that are impacted by the TH65 construction project.

2025 Goals:

LGN to support the city's work with Senator Kreun and the other members of our local delegation to pursue funding.

Update: Senator Kreun introduced legislation to fund local road improvements associated with the construction of TH65:

SF XXX language:

1.1 A bill for an act

1.2 relating to transportation; appropriating money for local road improvements in the

1.3 city of Blaine.

1.4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.5 Section 1. APPROPRIATION; CITY OF BLAINE.

1.6 \$7,000,000 in fiscal year 2026 is appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner

1.7 of transportation for one or more grants to the city of Blaine, Anoka County, or both for

1.8 local road improvements associated with the construction of intersection improvements

- 1.9 along marked Trunk Highway 65 in the city of Blaine, including temporary local road
- 1.10 improvements to mitigate construction-related traffic. This is a onetime appropriation and
- 1.11 is available until June 30, 2029.

Norris introduced:

[H. F. 2593](#), A bill for an act relating to transportation; appropriating money for local road improvements in the city of Blaine.

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Transportation Finance and Policy.

Continued legislative priorities from previous years:

1. Trunk Highway 65

Public safety improvements and easing congestion on Trunk Highway 65 (TH 65) are of great importance to the City of Blaine and its residents. The 2023 legislative session resulted in fully funding segment 2 of the project. For the 2025 session, Anoka County and other stakeholders will be taking the lead on segments 1 and 3. The City of Blaine will support their efforts to advance those portions of the project.

2025 Goals:

LGN will continue to monitor proposed legislation and meetings with partners who support Highway 65 funding including:

- The Highway 65 Corridor Coalition
- The Metro North Chamber of Commerce as requested
- Anoka County Board Meetings as requested
- LGN will continue to monitor and support remaining phases of Highway 65.
- LGN will work collaboratively with Anoka County on Highway 65 as requested where needed and directed by the city

Update: Senator Kreun submitted legislation in support of funding for improvements on TH65 at Bunker Lake Boulevard:

S.F. 1817[Kreun](#)

City of Ham Lake marked Trunk Highway 65 and Bunker Lake Boulevard Northeast interchange improvements bond issuance and appropriation

https://assets.senate.mn/committees/2025-2026/3132_Committee_on_Transportation/sc2875.pdf

2. Support Local Control

In matters before the legislature, in general the City of Blaine supports retaining local control by the elected Blaine City Council and the staff.

2025 Goals:

- Monitor legislative proposals and report to the city any that challenge local control; develop city position and share with local delegation and legislative leadership
- Work in conjunction/partnership with LMC and Metro Cities; assist City Staff with data gathering and letters of support when requested

3. Oppose Unfunded Mandates

The City of Blaine opposes passing unfunded mandates on to cities. We oppose efforts by the state to fund policy priorities through mandates on cities without state funding attached.

2025 Goals:

- Monitor legislative proposals and report to the city any that contain unfunded mandates; develop city position and share with local delegation and legislative leadership
- Work in conjunction/partnership with LMC and Metro Cities; assist City Staff with data gathering and letters of support when requested

4. Oppose Efforts to Mandate Reduction in Development and Building Fees

Housing First – Housing First MN has led efforts in previous legislative sessions to reduce development and building related costs that cities charge which, in their opinion, drives up the cost of housing. We believe our costs are justified and oppose changes this group is advocating for. The League of Minnesota Cities and Metro Cities represent cities opposing these changes.

2025 Goals include:

- Monitor legislative proposals and report to the city any that contain mandated fee reductions; develop city position and share with local delegation and legislative leadership
- Work in conjunction/partnership with LMC and Metro Cities; assist City Staff with data gathering and letters of support when requested

5. Monitor Proposed MPCA Fee Increase for MS4 Permits

MPCA previously recommended a fee increase from \$80 per year (collected as \$400 at every five-year renewal) to \$5,000-8,000 annually. The City of Blaine is opposed to any fee increase unless MPCA can explain the services provided and the rationale for said increase. The MPCA is

not currently actively proposing a fee increase, however, this is a topic that should be closely monitored.

2025 Goals:

- Monitor and assist the city of Blaine in opposing the significant fee increase proposed by the MPCA for the MS4 Permits.
- Gather information from MPCA and/or other reliable sources as to the status of the proposed fee increase and the rationale for the increase.

7. Law Enforcement-Related Legislation

The Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) annually develops a legislative agenda. Chief Podany may request Council direction as to whether or not to support, monitor, or oppose specific legislation. He may also request Council's support to is he is asked to testify on certain legislation. Staff will coordinate with City Council, and update the legislative priorities as appropriate.

2025 Goals:

- Monitor legislative proposals and coordinate with Chief Podany to develop proposed city positions; once council approved, share city positions with local delegation and legislative leadership

8. Limits on Park Dedication Fees

Historically there have been proposals to cap Park Dedication fees at a maximum of \$5,000. This is another specific example of a limit on local control. We believe our costs, which are annually reviewed by City Council, are justified.

2025 Goals:

- Monitor legislative proposals and report to the city any that contain attempts to cap these fees; develop city position and share with local delegation and legislative leadership
- Work in conjunction/partnership with LMC and Metro Cities; assist City Staff with data gathering and letters of support when requested

9. Other Potential Matters for Discussion

- Support NSC requests for capital funding
- Regional Emergency Base for Fire/Hazmat, etc., Station 5/PD Base - As we look at a new Station 5, we are exploring the possibility that the proposed station be a regional asset for things like HAZMAT/Chemical Team, DNR Wildland firefighting, various other options., and that it also include parking and storage capabilities.

- Lift Moratorium on Cities Increasing Sales Taxes for Parks and Trails – as a matter of local control, continue to have a process which allows individual cities to determine whether to pursue local sales tax for parks and trails or other purposes
- Digital Media Fee to Support Local Community Television – Continue to monitor LMC and MACTA activities related to modernization of revenue streams for community television and updated forms of franchise fees for broadband and streaming services.
- Funding for Non-Municipal State Aid City Streets
- Official State Mapping Responsibility
- Authority to implement Infrastructure Fees
- MN Plumbing Board (DLI) Storm Sewer Requirements Ruling

Formal Reports to Council:

The lobbying team will report to City Council regularly via e-mail and check in calls with the Mayor and City Manager. The team will formally report to City Council as a whole at workshops as needed.

City Positions on Legislation

Staff is sometimes asked by the LMC or Metro Cities to submit letter of support or opposition regarding proposed legislation. Other times, staff becomes aware of proposed legislation that is of interest or concern. If clearly consistent with legislative priorities, the City Manager or designee will prepare a letter outlining the city's position and share it with the lobbying team and/or local delegation. If it is not, the City Manager or designee will send out an email to Council to see if there are any concerns with the city sending such a letter. These are usually on a very quick turn-around schedule; if time allows, these requests will be discussed at a workshop, otherwise, by e-mail.

Staff is sometimes asked to testify on various matters at the legislature.

If the request is related to something already on the city's legislative priorities list, we will advise Council that the employee will be testifying via e-mail, Council Update, or at a workshop (depending on timing)

If regarding something that is NOT on our legislative priorities, we will provide Council with notice that the employee would like to testify the topic. Staff will ask if there are any concerns to let us know. If we do not hear back, we will proceed.

We may from to time ask for a city position on proposed legislation. Generally, we would like to follow this format:

Actively Opposed

Oppose (if asked)

Monitor

Support (If asked)

Actively Support

When we take this action, we will amend it to our legislative priorities document.