



City of Blaine

City Council Workshop

September 15, 2025 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

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

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 5:30PM.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Terra Fleming, Chris Ford, Leslie Larson, Chris Massoglia (arrived at 5:41PM), Tom Newland, and Jess Robertson.

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: Interim City Manager/Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; Assistant Community Development Director Sheila Sellman; Safety Services Director/Police Chief Brian Podany; Finance Director Jason Zimmerman; Director of Administrative Services Scott Johnson; Director of Engineering Dan Schluender; City Attorney Eric Larson; Accounting Manager Haley Chapman; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3. New Business

- 3.1.** 2025-209 Traffic Issues Update
Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

Director of Engineering Schluender provided an update on 2025 resident traffic issues that have been sent to city council and city staff. He reviewed the log summary that was created by staff and commented on the five different categories of resident concerns. He reported staff would continue to work with residents on Flowerfield Road.

Councilmember Fleming thanked staff for the comprehensive presentation on this topic and for hearing the concerns of the residents.

Councilmember Larson recommended staff look into the intersection of South Lake Boulevard/North Lake Boulevard as she has heard concerns about this intersection. He explained she would like to see this intersection become a four-way stop versus a two-way stop. In addition, she noted there were sight line concerns. Mr. Schluender stated this intersection has been brought up to him and noted a sight line review was completed for all the roads along Lakes Parkway. He indicated Mickman Brothers trimmed all the plants back at the intersections. He anticipated a four-way stop would not be installed at South Lake Boulevard/North Lake Boulevard but noted he would continue to monitor traffic counts.

Councilmember Robertson questioned who should be receiving the traffic complaints. Safety Services Director/Police Chief Podany recommended this information be passed along to Captain Rygg.

Councilmember Robertson indicated many of the complaints on the list from staff were repeated concerns such as the 119th Avenue corridor and questioned how the city could address these problematic areas. Mr. Schluender reported staff has tried many different things along 119th Avenue and indicated different striping techniques have been installed to assist with slowing traffic down, as well as mobile driver feedback signs. He stated this was a difficult corridor because it was built over several decades. He noted staff would continue to monitor this corridor.

Councilmember Newland reported he sends his traffic complaints to the city manager. Interim City Manager/Community Development Director Thorvig stated he forwards the complaints on to the proper departments.

Councilmember Robertson thanked staff for responding to her when she forwards a complaint as this allows her to respond to residents.

Councilmember Massoglia explained he appreciated the traffic safety awareness week because this serves as a good reminder to follow the laws on the local and state roadways. He suggested a local safety awareness week be held in order to bring awareness to the trouble spots in the community. Police Chief Podany commented on the traffic saturation events that have been held in the city as part of traffic safety awareness.

Mayor Sanders asked how traffic has been in the school zones the first couple of weeks of school. Police Chief Podany reported traffic has been good. He stated there are close to 20 schools in the city and staff has been working diligently to address traffic safety surrounding the schools. Mr. Schluender indicated the Anoka Hennepin School District has been very active in addressing their walking routes to schools and noted a new crosswalk was installed near Sunrise and Jefferson Schools. He stated staff met with the school district last week to discuss traffic flow in and out of the Blaine High School campus.

Mr. Thorvig explained the flashing yellow left turn signals at Lexington Avenue and other areas can be difficult to navigate as these intersections were county controlled and Anoka County was working to adjust these lights in order to improve safety.

3.2. 2025-210 2026-2030 Parks and Open Space Capital Improvement Plan (Continuation)
Sponsors: Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director

Finance Director Zimmerman stated the Park and Open Space CIP serves to establish an outline of the significant investments proposed in the city's park and recreation infrastructure. The intent is to provide a blueprint for the management, maintenance, and future enhancements of public park amenities to ensure they meet the expectations of residents and visitors. Projects are proposed based on staff assessment of facilities and infrastructure, the Parks Master Plan, and input from the community, City Council, Park Board, and Natural Resources Conservation Board. Staff provided further information to the council regarding the three categories and funds under which park projects can be classified:

- Neighborhood Park Improvements Fund – park and trail improvements
- Parks Development Fund – development of new parks and improvements to existing regional/community parks
- Open Space Fund – improvement and maintenance of the City's open spaces and trail system

Mr. Zimmerman asked what the desire was of the council to move forward with the BWS trail development project.

Councilmember Newland asked if the city had funding set aside for this project. Mr. Zimmerman indicated the city had \$1 million set aside for preliminary work on this project. He reported the current plan was economically viable, but would draw down the city's funds to a very low balance.

Councilmember Newland indicated his preference would be to let the fund replenish before moving this project forward. Mr. Schluender commented on how the project was broken into three segments in the first phase. He noted any combination of the segments could be completed, or the city could opt to complete only one segment.

Councilmember Newland stated if only segment one moved forward this would cost the city \$1.7 million. Mr. Zimmerman reported this was the case and discussed how there would be economies of scale if more than one segment were completed at a time.

Councilmember Newland stated it appears the city cannot afford to complete the BWS trails at this time. He supported waiting until funding was in place before beginning this project. Mr. Zimmerman stated if the council does not believe it is feasible to move forward with these segments, outreach would have to be done with the public.

Mr. Thorvig reported resident feedback was received on this project. He discussed how the neighborhood to the north of 109th Avenue where trail segment 1 was proposed was because this neighborhood was isolated. He noted if segments 1, 2 and 3 were completed, this neighborhood would be able to get to other parts of the community.

Councilmember Robertson indicated she attended the open house and understood the isolation mindset, however, she believed the council's responsibility was to be fiscally responsible with the city's finances. She explained she did not like residents being frustrated by delayed projects but believed this was the right thing to do at this time because the city did not have adequate funding in place for the BWS trail segments. She supported this project being put on pause for this time.

Councilmember Ford agreed, noting while the BWS trail segments were a great project, he did not support moving this project forward at this time.

Councilmember Massoglia recommended the trail segments be paused until the city wetland credit sales in place to adequately fund the project. He stated he supported the project being completed in the future but would need more clarity on the balance of the wetland credits.

Councilmember Larson agreed, stating the council would have to consider the price of the trail segments along with the future maintenance of these trails.

Mr. Schluender inquired if the council would support moving forward with a portion of the project in order to keep a proper balance in the wetland credit fund.

Councilmember Massoglia indicated he would support having a conversation about this further, but would like to know more about the wetland credit situation from staff.

Councilmember Robertson reported there was still instability in the park dedication fund and she would like to know more about this as well. She reiterated that the council believes this is a good project, but now was not the time to complete the project.

Mr. Zimmerman stated staff would have to further investigate what it would take to unlock future wetland credits, noting this may take some level of investment from the city. Mr. Thorvig explained wetland credits would be further discussed at the November 17 workshop meeting.

Mr. Zimmerman reported staff would postpone this project for one year and bring it back for further discussion in 2026. The council supported this action.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he recalled the council did not support doing the BWS restrooms/structure. He explained \$750,000 would not be enough for this project. He stated the only project on the proposed list that he could support was the new park west of Lexington Avenue and Main Street.

Councilmember Robertson reported she did not have a problem with the BWS restroom/structure noting this project had been postponed to 2030 and anticipated this project may be delayed further. It was her hope the wetland credit fund would become more stable going forward and the city would have funding in place for this project. She anticipated the cost for the BWS restroom structure would be higher than \$750,000 and adjustments should be made to the plan. She noted the projected cost for the new park west of Lexington and Main Street was alarming, but she understood this was the cost to build a new park. She supported the council having a conversation about how to fund the

long-term maintenance of the city's 60+ parks. She commented on the tremendous investments that have been made to Jim Peterson Park and indicated she was not very supportive of the skate park. She recommended the city pursue a community partner for this project.

Councilmember Newland stated he agreed with these comments. He explained Councilmember Massoglia was correct that the council did not support moving forward with the BWS structure. He indicated after all the trails are built out, the council could revisit this topic. He stated he supported the new park west of Lexington/Main Street and recommended the skate park be put on hold long term.

Councilmember Fleming questioned if the city had a plan to maintain its numerous parks. Mr. Zimmerman reported the capital plan does not include maintenance. He discussed how public works maintains the city's parks and he did not foresee any significant investments in the parks to provide anything more from a maintenance perspective. Mr. Thorvig stated the city could look at maintaining less of the areas within the park that were not being used. He indicated staff could take another look at how each of the city's parks are being used.

Mr. Zimmerman asked if the BWS structure should be put on hold or be removed from the plan.

Councilmember Robertson supported the BWS structure remaining in the five-year plan with the understanding the project may not be completed until 2032 or further down the road. Mr. Thorvig stated staff would prioritize the BWS trail plan and the structure would be delayed further.

Councilmember Larson indicated the city had a portable restroom available at the parking lot for residents to use.

Councilmember Robertson commented the NRCB had plans to make the BWS structure a learning center which would require additional planning and finances.

Councilmember Massoglia recommended the transfer to the open space fund not be completed since the BWS trail segments would not be moving forward. Mr. Zimmerman noted the numbers will not remain as presented based on the feedback that has been received from the council.

Mr. Thorvig discussed how alternative revenue sources could be used by the council to assist with funding future parks projects.

Council consensus was to postpone the BWS trail development project and restroom/structure at this time, to review other funding sources, to consider possible segment construction alternatives, to support the proposed new park west of Lexington/125th Avenue, and to remove the proposed wheel park.

4. Other Business

Mr. Thorvig reported the council would be holding a special workshop meeting on September 29

to discuss utility and refuse funds.

Mayor Sanders shared that Council will be adding Item 4.2 to approve the appointment of the city manager.

5. Adjournment

The workshop was adjourned at 6:49PM.



Signed by

Tim Sanders, Mayor

Signed by

Catherine M. Sorensen, City Clerk