

**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION MINUTES
Monday, May 19, 2025**

Mayor Graham called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Council Present: Mayor Graham, Councilors Bloom, Dahle, DuQuenne, Hansen, and Kaplan.

Council Absent: none

Staff Present:

Sabrina Cotta	City Manager
Alissa Kolodzinski	City Recorder
Johan Pietila	City Attorney
Brandon Goldman	Community Development Director
Derek Severson	Planning Manager
Marianne Berry	Finance Director

Request to add an item to the agenda to discuss the voting process for the Council vacancy.
The Item was added to the end of the agenda.

I. Public Input

A citizen spoke of their concern regarding the night lawn including the enforcement of rules, expulsions, dog control, and complimented the new judge and court staff.

II. Recology PI (Proposed Increase)

Eric Ahnmark, Community Affairs Manager, Robert Long, Assistant General Manager, and Chris Carey, General Manager with Recology provided a presentation (see agenda packet).

- The presentation included an overview of the organization, programs, and services.
- The proposed 5.75% rate increase will result in an increase of \$1.43 a month per bill (or ten cents more than Medford/Phoenix) which would provide for modernization and keep up with the increasing cost of personnel.
- Recology is looking to pilot a drop-off food composting program and is exploring composting units. Material would be processed at the Ashland Recycling Center or the Transfer Station depending on the unit that is acquired, with drop-off at each location.
- There is strong interest in curbside composting but that will require a regional facility large enough to handle the expected volume of waste, which is why the pilot comes first.
- There will be a waste characterization study from June 16-20, 2025, that will look at samples of the residential and commercial waste stream with volunteer help.
- The pricing structure is allocated across Recology's service area, as the same equipment is used throughout its three jurisdictions (Ashland, Talent, and County).

III. Walkable Design Standards (CFEC) Code Amendments

Goldman and Severson introduced the topic. The proposed code amendments support the City's livability goals through a grant from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to meet the State's Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) rules. These standards are a requirement of the CFEC rules and must be adopted before or in tandem with Transportation System Plan (TSP) updates. The goal is to gather feedback from Council before formal public hearings. Pauline Ruegg and Jamin Kimmell of Cascadia Partners, which were contracted for this project, provided a presentation (see agenda packet).

- This project is focused on auditing Ashland's zoning regulations for consistency with CFEC rules that require jurisdictions to regulate land use to "support compact, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use land use development patterns".
- Severson served on the technical advisory committee as Cascadia Partners assisted the DLCD to develop its Walkable Design Standards Guidebook and Model Code.
- Initial concepts, developed from the code audit, were presented to the Planning Commission in February. Feedback from that meeting, community and stakeholder engagement, and staff input have been incorporated in the draft code amendments.
- The Council requested a copy of the feedback from the groups that engaged the process.
- CFEC rules apply to all zones in the urban growth boundary, including within CFA's (Climate Friendly Areas), except areas of industrial and rural character.
- The draft ordinance in the packet includes the required changes needed to comply with State rules and proposed/optional changes to bring Ashland in line with the Model Code. Staff will return with an outline of the differences between what is required and what is proposed.
- Four walkable design code concepts were presented for consideration:
 1. Apply more design standards to single family/duplex use
 - Focus on sociable development patterns.
 - Code audit found Title 18 is missing standards requiring entrances to face or orient towards the street (must have).
 - Additional transparency standards (minimum windows - nice to have).

Council discussed the potential impacts of additional standards on development costs and how exemptions would be considered. Council directed staff not to add additional transparency standards.

2. Reduce visual prominence of garages
 - Apply design standards in residential zones that emphasize living spaces over vehicle serving areas and improve pedestrian safety.
 - Code audit found Title 18 is missing standards a) limiting the width of garages as a proportion of overall building façade, and b) requiring garages to be flush or setback from the front façade (must have).
 - Adding standards could require more than two contiguous garage entrances to be setback (nice to have).

Council discussed and directed staff to not to add the additional setback requirement for garages.

3. A minimum of 50% of dwelling units on the ground floor abutting a street lot line shall have a main entrance that is accessed from a public sidewalk, faces a courtyard, or opens onto a covered porch. Main entrances shall be set back at a minimum of five feet and a maximum of ten feet from the street lot line and provide at least two design treatments to provide a transition (nice to have).

- Exceptions for commercial-ready spaces in CFA overlay

Council discussed potential impacts on development costs compared to potential benefits and directed staff to bring back more information on costs if implemented.

4. Require more windows/weather protection for commercial uses (nice to have).
 - Code audit found the Title 18 transparency and weather protection standards could be enhanced (currently 20% is required for transparency, and weather protection is mostly about entry).
 - Increase requirements for non-residential uses in the Basic and/or Detailed Site Overlay to improved pedestrian orientation.
 - A minimum of 40-50% of the area of the ground-level, street-facing façade between 2 and 8 feet above sidewalk grade shall be transparent. Weather protection providing shelter from the rain or sun, shall be provided along 50% of the length of the ground level façade.

Council discussed potential impacts on development costs compared to potential benefits and directed staff to bring back more information on costs if implemented. Kimmell clarified these CFEC rules resulted from executive action of the Governor rather than from legislation.

Five-minute recess taken.

IV. Third Quarter Financial Update

Berry provided the presentation (see agenda packet).

- Discussion on the WIFIA loan - in final stages and expected to close mid-June. Six draws are expected in total with the first draw occurring in 2026. The bulk of draws are expected to occur in 2027-28. Actual draws on the loan will depend on other potential funding options. Debt service will not begin until after any draw has been taken and only on the interest of what is drawn.
- Clarification and discussion of the appropriate ways to draw from the Reserve Fund in accordance with Resolutions 2010-18, 2020-26, and 2020-09
- Discussion of options on how to alternatively appropriate funds for the Childcare Grants approved by the Citizen Budget Committee (CBC).
- Direction given to staff to reallocate \$35K from social service grants, \$100K from homeless services, and \$100K from the general fund (made available by the Parks fee) to the Childcare Grants for a total of \$235K.

- Council discussed tourism funds and directed staff to provide \$100K to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival for marketing this fiscal year.

V. Voting process for Council Vacancy

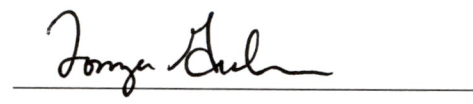
The council discussed various voting options to determine which applicant will fill the council vacancy. Options were narrowed down to either a ranked choice voting or an elimination process method. Councilors will provide staff with information on the two options to be included in the next Study Session packet for discussion.

Adjournment of Study Session

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.



City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski



Mayor Tonya Graham