



Columbia City Council Work Session Minutes Tuesday, July 21, 2026

Call to Order

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, July 21, 2026 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, Mayor called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m. and the following members were present: The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr., The Honorable Tina N. Herbert, Mayor Pro-Tempore, The Honorable Peter M. Brown, The Honorable Tyler D. Bailey, and The Honorable Sam P. Johnson. The Honorable Will Brennan was absent. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore Hammond, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

Invocation

The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr. offered the invocation.

Adoption of the Agenda

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bailey and seconded by Ms. Herbert, Council voted unanimously to adopt the agenda as amended to include Boyd Plaza and Ordinance No.: 2026-039 - Amending the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 17, Article 7: Nonconformities, Sec. 17-7.2. Nonconforming Uses to **Item 2** (Receipt of legal advice relating to matters covered by attorney-client privilege pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)).

City Council Discussion

1. Taylor Street and Laurel Street Road Diet — Mr. Todd Martin, City Landscape Architect and Ms. Nicole Broner, Multimodal Transportation Coordinator / Planning and Development Services

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager noted that since the opening of Finlay Park, staff has been evaluating options for additional parking, road-diet adjustments, and traffic-calming measures. She stated that the park's strong attendance in the months following reopening has made advancing these improvements a priority. She emphasized the need to move the project forward to support continued safe and accessible park operations.

Mr. Todd Martin, City Landscape Architect introduced preliminary concepts for a road-diet project along Taylor and Laurel Streets designed to create a safer, more connected streetscape near Finlay Park. He explained that the wide roadway currently separates the park from surrounding neighborhoods and that the proposed changes would improve safety and add needed parking. He noted that staff has already held initial discussions with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and requested Council's feedback to help refine and advance the design.

Ms. Nicole Broner, Multimodal Transportation Coordinator / Planning and Development Services provided additional details on the preliminary road-diet concepts for Taylor and Laurel Streets, explaining that two configurations for Laurel Street are being evaluated depending on jurisdiction between the City and SCDOT. She noted that the plans include right-sizing lanes to 11 feet, extending sidewalks into shared-use paths, adding angled parking chutes, incorporating curb bump-outs for drainage and traffic-calming, and adding a flex zone with a transit shelter for both ride-shares and bus pickup and drop-off. She shared that these designs align with the City's Comprehensive and Walk Bike Master Plans and highlighted ongoing coordination with SCDOT as staff continues refining the concepts.

Mr. Henry Simons, Assistant City Manager for Operations, noted that increased use of nearby parking areas has led many park visitors to cross Laurel and Taylor Streets, prompting significant community feedback about the need to slow traffic. He added that staff has discussed these concerns with the Arsenal Hill and Governor's Hill neighborhoods. He noted the heavy vehicle and pedestrian activity coming from the parking garage and Lincoln Street Tunnel.

Mr. Todd Martin, City Landscape Architect shared the preliminary cost estimates, stating that improvements to both corridors are projected at approximately \$6 million: \$3.5 million for Taylor Street and \$2.5 million for Laurel Street. He explained that the next steps include refining the design based on today's comments and coordinating further with staff and SCDOT before holding the required public meeting. If that process goes well, the project would move into technical drawings, with a timeline of roughly six months.

There was discussion of these efforts seen in other municipalities; safety concerns related to mixed messaging for bicycle traffic and whether additional parking should be prioritized; cyclists not abiding by the law; an explanation of parking chutes; length of cycle tracks; whether the changes would reroute traffic to other streets; potential community pushback; the orientation of bike lanes; benefits of street painting; ongoing conversations with a nearby hotel regarding parking and valet operations; a public presentation; the number of additional parking spaces; angled parking and parking estimates; design features and a high-intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK) signal; wheel stop barriers and decorative barriers; incorporation of concept throughout downtown; one-way streets; sign production and consistency; cost negotiations; and long-term planning considerations for downtown, including traffic patterns and future pedestrianization.

Executive Session

Upon a motion made by Ms. Herbert and seconded by Mr. Bailey, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 2:00 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 2 and 3** as amended.

2. Receipt of legal advice relating to matters covered by attorney-client privilege pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)
 - *Repealing and Replacing Chapter 4 – Animals of the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia*
 - *Forest Acres Franchise Fee*
 - *Per-and Polyflouroalkyl Substances (PFAS)*
 - *Use of Artificial Intelligence in City Operations*
 - *Relocation of Municipal Court*

3. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements pursuant to S. C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)
 - *Busted Plug*
 - *Columbia-Richland 911 Communications*
 - *1112 Washington Square*

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, MMC, CPM
City Clerk