BURNS CITY COUNCIL
October 14, 2026

The Burns City Council met in regular session on October 14, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. Members present were as follows:

Mayor:	Jen Hoke
Councilor President:	
Councilors:	Susan Lowe
	Shane Brockmann
	Bryan Garo
	Chase Patterson
	Andrew Roy
	Tod Gahley

Also, in attendance were City Manager Brenda Engebretson, Public Works Director Ty Richardson, Police Chief Robby Tiller, and Fire Chief Scott Williamson. Also present Via Zoon was Sharlene Walker a property owner of 433/441 North Broadway Ave.

SUMMARY

The City Council meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call, followed by public comments from Lindsay Wilcox (517 North Fairview Ave.), the new Interim Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, and Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive), who raised concerns about the deficiency of recorded minutes. The Council approved the agenda with amendments as well as the special meeting minutes from September 29th with a date correction. A public hearing was held on development code amendments, which included tiered parking and landscaping requirements and provisions to lot size requirements, which would make easier for dividing existing buildings in the downtown core; the Council approved these amendments and Ordinance 26-909. Jim Pex provided a water project update, stating the project was approximately 82% complete and tracking slightly under budget, while addressing concerns about trench patching and paving. The Council discussed the burden of preparing minutes and reached a consensus for Tiffany to trial a simplified format. A motion was passed to direct staff to prepare and present monthly financial reports to the Council. The meeting also included a City Manager report covering the SRE building progress, wastewater improvement funding scenarios. There was also a detailed presentation on the URA's financial health and its role in funding projects like the B Street extension. The conversation ended with brief committee reports and a discussion on the November meeting schedule.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lindsey Wilcox (517 North Fairview Ave.) introduced herself and the Interim Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce. She informed the council and community that the new office hours will be Monday-Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) raised concerns about the city's compliance with ORS192.650 regarding meeting minutes and announced plans to file a complaint about the recorded minutes' inefficiency.

AGENDA APPROVAL AND ADDED ITEMS

Mayor Hoke moved Jim Pex with the water project update to #1 of the new business and postponed the regular meeting minutes for September 23, 2026, until the next meeting. She also removed Richard Roy – Warranty Deed – Pocket Park from new business.

Councilor Gahley made a motion to approve the agenda with the changes. Councilor Garo seconded the motion. All Ayes. (7/0)

CONSENT AGENDA

Regular Meeting Minutes September 23, 2026 – Postponed until the next City Council meeting

City Council Special Meeting Minutes – September 29, 2026 -

Councilor Brockmann identified an error on page 4 of the September 29, 2026, minutes. The censure end date was listed as March 31, 2026, but should have been March 31, 2027.

Councilor Garo made a motion to approve the consent agenda with the changes. Councilor Patterson seconded the motion. All Ayes. (7/0)

PUBLIC HEARING – DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENTS

Mayor Hoke opened the Public Hearing at 6:40 p.m.

Land Use Planner Jay Harland read the admonishment and gave the staff report explaining the changes that were made.

CITY COUNCIL REPORT
Development Code Amendments
Planning File No. LAPF-001-2026

APPLICANT: City of Burns
PLANNING FILE: LAPF-001-2026
NATURE OF APPLICATION: Legislative amendments to the City of Burns Development Code.

BACKGROUND: The City Council adopted an entirely new Development Code on September 27, 2023, through Ordinance No. 887, and subsequent amendments were adopted on May 8, 2024, through Ordinance No. 24-900. The amendments now being proposed would revise the parking lot and landscaping standards, sign regulations, and the minimum lot width standard within the Downtown Commercial Core overlay zone, along with a mix of primarily minor "housekeeping" edits to make corrections and improvements to areas where staff has identified such changes would be beneficial in terms of making the code text clearer. These amendments also stem from errors staff have recognized over time with use, as well as areas of the code that staff has received feedback from multiple applicants on.

The proposed Development Code amendments were presented to the Planning Commission at a public hearing on September 2, 2026, as outlined in the attached Planning Commission Staff Report dated July 29, 2026. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Planning Commission adopted a unanimous motion to recommend that the City Council adopt the proposed amendments. In the time since the Planning Commission hearing, staff has added proposed amendments to the sign regulations as well as a reduced minimum lot width standard that would apply only within the Downtown Commercial Core overlay zone, as recommended by the Planning Commission during

the hearing on September 2, 2026.

FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS: The criteria that apply to legislative amendments to the Development Code are in Section 18.20.720 of the City of Burns Development Code. The criteria are rendered below in italics, with the findings and conclusions in roman type.

18.20.720 Legislative Amendment Criteria
The City Council may approve legislative amendments to the Comprehensive Plan or Land Use Regulations. Amendments will address the criteria in subsections 1 through 5 below:

1. Appropriateness of the Type V planning process that was undertaken for the planning project in terms of scale, scope, and content.

Findings

The City's Development Code has now been in effect for approximately three years and staff have had multiple opportunities to work with and apply the new regulations to various planning applications. During the processing of these applications, staff received feedback from applicants concerning the existing regulations related to parking, landscaping, signage, and the minimum lot width for commercially zoned properties, specifically those located within the Downtown Commercial Core overlay zone and which have been developed with buildings that occupy all or most of the existing lot. In addition, staff have identified minor typographical errors and omissions in the code text, along with areas where text revisions would enhance clarity and readability. The proposed amendments were presented to the Planning Commission at a public hearing where the Commission voted unanimously to recommend Council approval, and the amendments are now before the Council at a properly noticed public hearing.

Conclusions

The proposed amendments have been processed in accordance with the Type V legislative amendment procedures in Section 18.20.035 of the Development Code, and there has been adequate opportunity for public participation in the process. Therefore, this Criterion 1 is found to be satisfied.

2. Consistency with the balance of the City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulations.

Findings

The proposed amendments are consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Use regulations in the following ways:

Comprehensive Plan Policies

2.2.B The City shall maintain an adequate factual base for its land-use planning processes, and all decisions and actions related to the use of land.

The proposed Development Code amendments will help provide a clear and accurate framework for the City's decisions regarding the use of land within its corporate limits. The regulations in the Development Code constitute the factual and policy basis for decisions and actions by appointed and/or elected decision makers. These amendments also reflect experience gained from, and feedback received on, land use applications and decisions.

Land Use Regulations

The proposed amendments to the Development Code are intended to make minor additions and corrections for clarity and to reduce upfront development costs for smaller projects. Specifically, the amendments allow for reduced parking lots paving and landscaping requirements, provide for monument signs at multi-family residential developments, and reduce the minimum lot width standard within the Downtown Commercial Core overlay district. The city has complied with all applicable procedures for legislative amendments as outlined in Section 18.20.035 (Type V Amendments – Legislative Decisions) of the Development Code, and the procedures for the amendments have been followed by the city as outlined in Section 18.20.035 (Type V Amendments – Legislative Decisions) of the Code.

Conclusions

Based upon the above findings, it can be concluded that the proposed amendments are consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Use regulations. As such, this Criterion 2 is met.

3. Advancement of Council goals, objectives, or policies, and/or necessity to comply with Oregon State Law, the Statewide Planning Goals, or Oregon Administrative Rules.

Findings

The proposed amendments to the Development Code are intended to improve code clarity and reduce upfront development costs, particularly for smaller developers, in order to lower barriers to entry and encourage additional investment and development within the City. Reducing minimum lot width requirements in the Downtown Commercial Core will further support this objective by making it more feasible to divide existing buildings into legal units of land that can be sold individually, thereby promoting more efficient use of existing structures, and increasing the likelihood of economic activity in the downtown area. The proposed amendments also allow for monument signs at multi-family residential developments, and the minor text corrections and clarifications resolve inconsistencies and improve the readability and enforceability of the Development Code without changing its substantive intent.

Conclusions

The proposed Development Code amendments advance City Council goals related to economic development, downtown revitalization, the efficient use of existing urban infrastructure, and the facilitation of housing and commercial development in a manner consistent with Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals and applicable administrative rules. Given the totality of the above findings, it is concluded that this Criterion 3 is met.

4. Public facility planning implications of the proposed amendments.

Findings

The proposed amendments do not carry implications for the planning of public facilities, although the modifications to parking lot paving and landscaping standards would potentially result in cost savings when such facilities are constructed for public use.

Conclusions

Based on the above findings, the public facility planning implications are expected to be minimal and, if triggered, would result in cost savings for the City if and when parking lots for public use are constructed. Accordingly, this Criterion 4 is found to have been met.

5. Consistency with Oregon State Law, the Oregon Statewide Planning Goals and all applicable Oregon Administrative Rules.

Findings

The proposed Development Code amendments are consistent with the following applicable Statewide Planning Goals:

Goal 1: Citizen Involvement. The proposed amendments have been publicly noticed and have been reviewed and discussed at public hearings, thereby providing opportunity for citizen involvement in the process.

Goal 2: Land Use Planning. The proposed amendments will update the adopted Development Code to help ensure that the City's land use regulations are accurate, consistent, promote development, and are able to be implemented.

Conclusions

Based upon the foregoing findings, the proposed amendments are found to be consistent with Oregon State Law, the Oregon Statewide Planning Goals, and all applicable Oregon Administrative Rules. Accordingly, this Criterion 5 is met.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission and staff recommend approval of the proposed amendments to the City of Burns Development Code based upon the findings and conclusions included in the City Council Report dated September 16, 2026, including the attached Exhibits A through E.

CITY OF BURNS PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT
By: Jay Harland
Contract City Planner
Date: September 16, 2026

Exhibits
A. Planning Commission Recommendation for LAPF-001-2026
B. Planning Commission Staff Report dated July 29, 2026, including Exhibits
C. Updated Development Code Amendment Text
D. Copies of Required Notice Materials

The council discussed proposed code amendments for parking lot standards, signage in multifamily zones, and lot divisions in the downtown core area.

Land Use Planner Jay Harland explained that the amendments were initiated to address economic burdens from required off-street parking and included a tiered system for parking and landscaping requirements based on the number of spaces needed.

The public hearing discussed parking requirements for downtown businesses, with City Councilor Lowe expressing concerns about businesses like the Palace and Central Hotel lacking off-street parking, which affects nearby businesses during events.

Land Use Planner Jay Harland explained that the current commercial overlay code does not require off-street parking for downtown developments, noting this was clarified in the code about three years ago to reduce barriers for smaller projects. He informed the council that the Planning Commission supported these changes.

Sharlene Walker, property owner of 433/441 North Broadway Ave., spoke as well as provided the council with printouts (attached) of a report she created giving some background on the property and explaining what she wanted to do with her lot. She wanted to let them know she was in favor of the changes and explained how they would help her accomplish what she was wanting to do.

There were no further public comments.

Mayor Hoke closed the hearing at 7:01 p.m.

Councilor Garo announced he would recuse himself from the upcoming vote since they had already approved the measures being a Planning Commissioner.

The City Council unanimously approved the amendments to the Burns Development Code, which included parking lot provisions, provisions for monument signs in multifamily developments, and special lot division rules for existing buildings in the downtown area.

Councilor Gahley made a motion to approve the amendments to the Burns Development Code. Councilor Roy seconded the motion. All Ayes. (7/0)

NEW BUSINESS

1. Jim Pex – Water Project Update –

   Jim Pex, the Principal in charge of the water project, provided an update on the water project, reporting it is 70-82% complete and tracking slightly under budget, with contractors working to complete mainline construction by the end of October and finish all work by November 7th. The council discussed concerns about potential paving delays due to weather, with Pex clarifying that while there is some risk, the contractor has financial incentives to complete the work, and maintenance plans are in place if needed.

2. Discussion on Minutes –

   The council discussed simplifying the minute-taking process for City Clerk Tiffany Leffler, who handles minutes for multiple meetings including a variety of City Council meetings, URA, Planning Commission, and Cemetery as well as many other duties in the city. They explored using YouTube to upload recordings and leverage AI transcription to reduce workload, while ensuring compliance with Oregon state statutes that allow digital recordings as long as motions, seconds, and votes are clearly attributed. The council came to a consensus to try a trial run of simplified minutes focusing on key information like agenda items and motions, with City Clerk Tiffany Leffler to test this approach and share examples with council members before the next meeting.

3. Discussion on bill Reports for the Council –

   The City Council discussed plans to implement financial reporting at council meetings and proposed adding a requirement for council member signatures on checks, though this proposal was met with mixed reactions from other council members. The discussion revealed concerns about financial

oversight and accountability, with some council members expressing that current processes lack proper checks and balances. The conversation highlighted tensions between the need for financial oversight and maintaining operational efficiency, with the council agreeing to explore implementing regular financial reports in the consent agenda as a starting point for improved transparency.

The council agreed on implementing monthly financial reports to provide oversight without requiring council members to sign checks.

Councilor Garo made a motion to direct staff to prepare monthly financial reports for presentation to the council. Councilor Gahley seconded the motion. All Ayes. (7/0)

4. Richard Roy -Warranty Deed - Pocket Park – Removed from new business per Richard Roy's request.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES

Ordinance No. 26-909 – An Ordinance approving amendments to the City of Burns Development Code.

Councilor Garo made a motion to read Ordinance No. 26-909 by title only. Councilor Gahley seconded the motion. All Ayes. (7/0)

Councilor Gahley made a motion to approve Resolution No. 26-829. Councilor Patterson seconded the motion. All Ayes. (7/0)

ADDITIONAL INFORAMTION

City Manager Brenda Engebretson presented a city management report covering several key updates. The Great Basin Smoke Jumpers expressed gratitude for support during the 2026 fire season, and Steel Earthworks received EPA payment number 2 in the amount of $1,017,030.98. A wastewater improvements meeting was held on September 30th where six different funding scenarios were presented for Phase 1 projects totaling $7,377,800, with council members needing to provide input on scenarios before voting. The URA meeting scheduled for next Wednesday at 6 p.m. will focus on deciding between raising water and sewer rates or moving B Street Extension into the URA to be paid for with county money, with a decision needed by November 15th.

City Council also discussed the expired authorization for annual water and sewer utility rate increases and proposed prioritizing language to reauthorize them at the next City Council meeting to stay ahead of inflation. Some council members expressed concerns about frequent rate increases and their impact on the community, particularly given high poverty rates and other financial pressures. The discussion also covered potential solutions including collecting missed revenue from short-term rentals like Airbnb and hotels, and exploring alternatives to the current URA upgrade options presented.

Councilor Gahley provided graphs of URA cumulative growth over 15 and 30 years (attached) and presented a detailed comparison between John Day's URA (Urban Renewal Agency) program and Burns' URA, explaining how John Day's financial struggles stem from halted development after Nick Green's tenure as City Manager from 2016 to 2022. He then highlighted that Burns' URA has a more stable revenue stream due to covering developed properties and receiving 3% of frozen base tax revenue annually, while John Day's program was riskier as it focused almost exclusively on undeveloped land. He

expressed his concern about the decisions on URA-related loans needing to be made before November 15th to meet the timeline requirements.

NEXT STEPS

1. City Manager Brenda Engebretson: Prepare and present a monthly financial report to the City Council starting at the next meeting.
2. City Council: Decide at the next URA meeting (10/21/26) whether to include B Street in the URA or to raise water/sewer rates to secure the loan for the wastewater project.
3. City Council: Schedule the November City Council meeting for November 11th (Veterans Day) to meet the loan application timeline.
4. City Council: Announce themselves before speaking at future meetings to facilitate accurate transcription.
5. City Staff: Research and consider setting up a YouTube channel for City Council meetings and reach out to the county for guidance.
6. City Staff: Explore options for improving Council Chambers' acoustics and camera setup to better capture all members.
7. Cemetery Committee: Develop a 5-year and 15-year plan for the cemetery, including plotting the new section and resetting headstones.
8. Safety Committee: Ensure an agenda is sent out for future safety meetings.

ADJOURN

Mayor Hoke adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Recording for October 14, 2026, City Council meeting:

https://zoom.us/rec/share/r_gqw7g8cXlWs_szqTtGn_gfIIqaJREtKoT-wSz1S2OrM5XXvzk_mcdbLQPXB7qBa.-Rd_k8s9YDHQLKko?startTime=1792027828000

Passcode: 3B$5%xd=

Tiffany Leffler, City Clerk

Bryan Garo, Council President