

MINUTES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - YUMA CITY HALL
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA
November 18, 2025
5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Smith called the Regular City Council Worksession to order at 5:30 p.m.

Councilmembers Present: Martinez, Morris, McClendon, Smith, Morales, and Watts (telephonic)
Councilmembers Absent: Mayor Nicholls
Staffmembers Present: Acting City Administrator, John D. Simonton
Director of Public Works, Joel Olea
Public Works Manager, Jose Garcia
Assistant Director of Engineering, Steve Wilson
Various department heads or their representatives
City Attorney, Richard W. Files
Deputy City Clerk, Janet L. Pierson

I. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Olea presented the Public Works Department Update as follows:

- What Is Accreditation?
 - Accreditation is voluntary and evaluates operational procedures against national best practices, ensuring internal processes are well-documented and accessible.
 - The initiative began over three years ago, with a formal announcement during Public Works Week in 2022, inspired by the longstanding accreditation of the Yuma Police (YPD) and Fire (YFD) Departments.
 - The process revealed challenges beyond administration, especially in organization-wide communication, despite initial confidence in readiness.
 - Accreditation is a four-year continuous improvement cycle, not a one-time test, with the first review scheduled for 2027.
- Three-Year Process
 - Accreditation usually takes about three years; the team followed a 36-month plan with biweekly meetings to stay on track.
 - The process began with a self-assessment comparing existing policies to American Public Works Association (APWA) standards, followed by registration and application approval.
 - Involved collaboration with other City departments to gather training resources, materials safety programs, and administrative regulations – this phase alone took over a year while continuing to manage daily operations.
 - Storing documents in a shared, editable centralized document system served as a vital component to the process; Information Technology helped implement Power DMS, which was already used by YPD and YFD.

- After compiling 288+ policies and Standard Operating Procedures, the team underwent an online peer review by three U.S. agencies, followed by an on-site visit from a different APWA team to inspect facilities and conduct interviews.
- Multiple departments (Human Resources, Legal, Finance, etc.) supported the effort; APWA provided ongoing feedback, and final results were sent to the Accreditation Council.
- Why Pursue Accreditation?
 - Accreditation reveals gaps in documentation and consistency, especially in areas such as human resources and safety where standardized practices are essential.
 - While some variation is acceptable in operational tasks (e.g., concrete work or vehicle repair), uniformity is critical for administrative and compliance-related procedures.
 - The process helped the team realize that even a seemingly efficient department can benefit from structured evaluation and improvement.
- Benefits to the City
 - Consistency and safety are key benefits. Clear standards help employees follow best practices in hazardous tasks like operating heavy vehicles and setting up traffic control.
 - Accreditation improves transparency, training, and succession planning, leading to improvements such as the adoption of a “turnover binder” system to ensure continuity when roles change.
 - The process supports both employee readiness and organizational resilience, aligning operational duties with structured documentation and shared knowledge.

Garcia presented the following information on the City’s storm response efforts:

- Emergency Management
 - Public Works plays a key role in the City’s overall emergency response plan, which was explored in depth during the accreditation process.
 - The team used the accreditation framework to standardize emergency response procedures, especially for storm events.
 - Operations are organized into three phases: Pre Storm, Storm Response, and Post Storm, with work beginning well before rainfall starts.
- Pre Storm
 - The team begins preparations as soon as weather forecasts indicate concern, including infrastructure inspections, equipment checks, and scheduling 24-hour response shifts.
 - Traffic control setups are pre-staged in flood-prone areas for quick deployment and to signal readiness to the public.
 - Materials are hauled for sandbag distribution in partnership with Parks and Recreation, and lift stations are switched to auto function.
- Storm Response
 - When a storm hits, Public Works Superintendents activate the emergency command center and begin calling in staff from the standby list.
 - All storm-related calls from YPD, Wastewater, and Utilities are routed through the command hub and prioritized based on public safety, size, and location.
 - Teams of 2-4 employees are dispatched with specialized equipment to handle tasks like road closures, lift station monitoring, debris clearing, and hazard control.
 - Field crews continuously report back, acting as extra eyes for the command center to monitor evolving conditions.
 - The ultimate goal is to ensure everyone caught in the storm makes it home safely.

- **Post Storm Efforts**
 - After the storm, Public Works and Parks and Recreation shift focus to supporting residents, addressing hundreds of infrastructure issues that impact thousands citywide.
 - Teams schedule and execute repairs such as washouts, retention basin pumping, sign replacements, and green waste drop-off – which recently collected 175 tons of debris from residents.
 - The new Asset Management Program (Open Gov) enables centralized tracking and reporting, replacing older methods like paper logs and spreadsheets.
 - Public Works and Parks and Recreation embrace storm challenges with a shared mission to protect and serve the community.

A video message from Vic Bienes, National President of APWA, was played to congratulate the Public Works Department – specifically the Street, Solid Waste, and Fleet Services divisions – on achieving full accreditation. Bienes emphasized that APWA’s accreditation process is rigorous, evaluating agencies against 260 best practice criteria, and Yuma earned a perfect compliance score. Accreditation enhances credibility, attracts top talent, and ensures practices remain current. Yuma’s team received special recognition for outstanding practices in human resources supervisor training, fleet management parts inventory, solid waste management planning, and street cleaning planning processes. Bienes also acknowledged the leadership of Jay Simonton, Joel Olea, and Martin Agundez for their dedication to the project.

Olea concluded the presentation by noting that Public Works was accredited on October 10th, becoming the seventh department in Arizona and the 153rd in the nation to receive this recognition.

Discussion

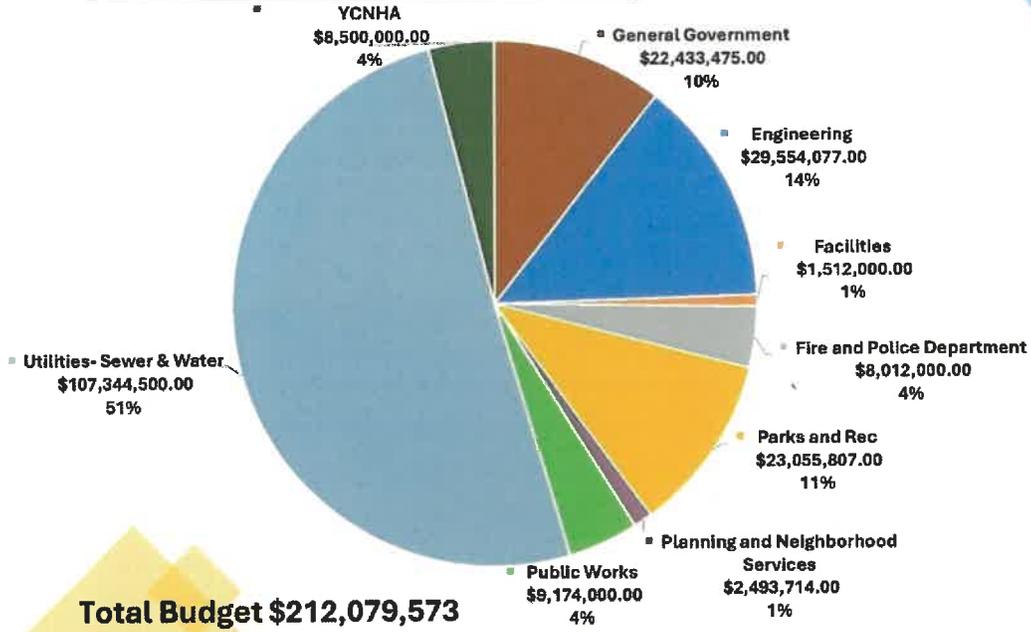
- Public Works is only beginning to implement its accreditation, with early improvements seen in succession planning and employee access to standardized policies and procedures. Efforts are underway to integrate these materials into the City’s training platform, NeoGov, and conversations are taking place to share the accreditation framework with other departments. (**Morris/Olea/Simonton**)
- The Public Works Department response to the September storm was commendable. Residents particularly expressed appreciation for the establishment of a green waste drop-off site to safely dispose of fallen trees. The department’s proactive approach is a valued and effective service to the public. (**McClendon**)

II. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM UPDATES

Wilson presented the following Capital Improvement Program (CIP) update:

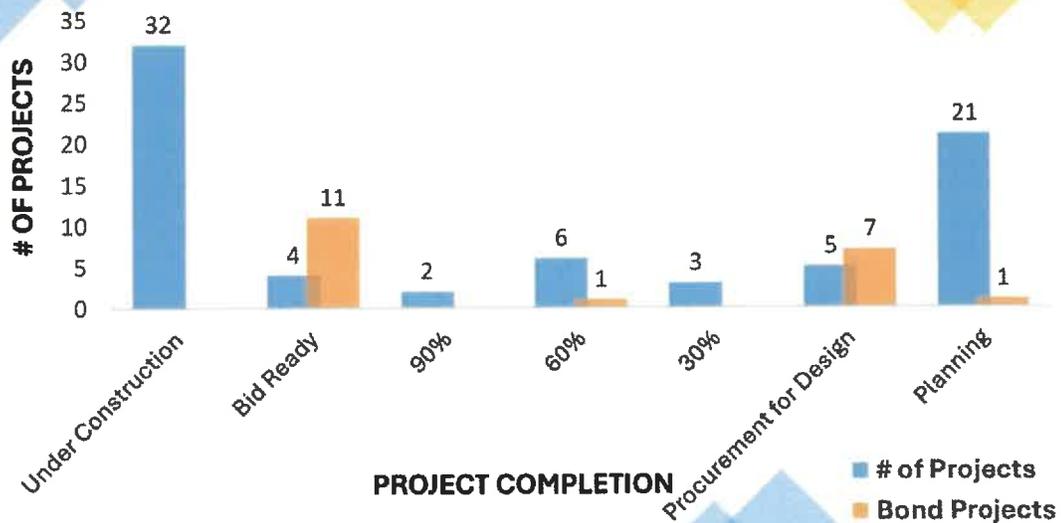
- **Fiscal Year 2026 Budget**
 - The approved Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget totals \$212 million, with a significant portion – \$102 million – allocated to Utilities, primarily for the Desert Dunes Wastewater Treatment Plant.
 - The budget supports a wide range of departmental projects, and progress toward organizational goals is actively being achieved.

Total Funds for CIP Projects FY 2026



- Project Status Update
 - Project Completion
 - Approximately 32 projects are either under construction or in the warranty phase.
 - Of the bid-ready projects, 11 are funded through bonds and four are part of the CIP.
 - Two projects are nearing completion at 97%, seven are at 60% (including one with bond funding), and three are currently at 30% progress.
 - Twelve projects are in procurement, and 22 are in the initial planning phase.

Status of FY 2026 Projects (93 Total)



- Utility Department Projects – Water
 - Key projects include the Fifth Avenue Waterline Replacement and the Main Street Water Treatment Plant Phase 3 filters, which is at 90% design.
 - Additional efforts include recoating the Agua Viva and 16th Street tanks, renovating Basins 1 and 2 at the Main Street Water Treatment Plant, and expanding the Agua Viva PureFlow system.
 - The George Bell Avenue Waterline Replacement is bid ready, and several projects are in various stages of design and contracting.

*** Bond Funded**

Projects	Budget	Status
*5 th Ave Waterline Replacement Gila St. to Redondo Dr.	\$900k	Bid Ready
*Main St. WTP Phase 3 Filters	\$4.38M	90% Design
*Aqua Viva Tank Recoating	\$4.20M	Starting Design
*Main St WTP Basin 1 & 2 Renovations	\$1.50M	Received Construction Proposal
*Aqua Viva WTP PureFlow Expansion	\$1.15M	Started Design
George Bell Ave Waterline Replacement	\$360K	Bid Ready

- Utility Department Projects – Wastewater
 - The Avenue 4E Sewer Extension (from 36th Street to 28th Street) is a gravity flow sewer project set to begin construction on December 17, lasting about six months with phased closures.
 - A new lift station at the Jackrabbit Water Treatment Facility has completed design, with delivery planned for FY27.

*** Bond Funded**

Projects	Budget	Status
*Sewer Manhole Rehabilitation & Replacement (JOC)(3 Locations)	\$1.42M	90% Design
*Ave 4E Sewer Extension 36 th St to 28 th St	\$4.18M	Bid
*Sewerline Replacement Between 3 rd Ave & 4 th Ave from 4 th St to 6 th St	\$440K	Bid Ready
*Jackrabbit WTF, New Lift Station	\$1.28K	Design Complete (Construction in FY27)
*Figueroa Ave WPCF Electrical Upgrades	\$3.70M	Design Complete (Construction in FY27)
Figueroa Ave WPCF Digester 3 Mixing Replacement	\$2.20M	Started Design

- Public Works Department Projects
 - A 30% designed pavement rehabilitation project is underway on Avenue B from 16th Street to 1st Street.
 - Two subdivision pavement replacement projects – Yuma Country Club Estates and La Mesa Vista/La Mesa Hermosa – are in final design.
 - A new project has started to rehabilitate 32nd Street from Catalina Drive to Avenue 8½E, supported by \$2 million from the Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization.
 - Additional efforts include addressing groundwater issues at La Quinta Retention Basin and a new project on First Street from Fourth Avenue to Avenue B.

*** Bond Funded**

Projects	Budget	Status
*Ave B Pavement Rehabilitation 16 th St to 1 st St	\$8.47M	30% Design
*Yuma Country Club Estates (Unit 1) Subdivision Pavement Replacement	\$1.81M	Final Design
*La Mesa Vista/ La Mesa Hermosa Subdivision Pavement Replacement	\$1.832 M	Final Design
*32nd St Pavement Rehabilitation Catalina Dr. to Ave 8 ½ E	\$15.951M	Started Design
*Stormwater Control at La Quinta Retention Basin	\$520K	Bid Ready
*1 st St Pavement Rehabilitation 4 th Ave to Ave B	\$2.75M	Not Started

- Engineering Department Projects
 - A project is underway to widen Avenue 9E from two to four lanes between North Frontage Road and 24th Street, currently at 30% design.
 - Five new High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signals are being installed at various locations to improve pedestrian safety, with support from the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT).
 - A stormwater pump improvement project in Hacienda Estates is progressing, funded by a flood mitigation assistance grant.
 - A bus pull-out project is planned for 16th Street and Avenue A to support the Yuma County Intergovernmental Public Transit Authority.
 - Design is beginning for 40th Street from 6E to 6¾E, including a new at-grade intersection at the Area Service Highway, aimed at easing congestion on 8½E and 32nd Street.

*** Bond Funded**

Projects	Budget	Status
*Ave 9E Widening N. Frontage Rd to 24 th St	\$11.000M	30% Design
HAWK Traffic Signals (5 Locations)	\$4.832M	Bid (ADOT)
*Hacienda Stormwater Pump Station Improvements	\$5.600M	60% Design
16 th St & Ave A Bus Pull-Outs	\$220K	90% Design
*40th St Improvements Ave 6E to Ave 6 3/4E	\$11.300M	Procurement
*Ave 4E Widening 30 th St to 40 th St	\$4.100M	Not Started

○ Parks and Recreation Department Projects

- The Valley Aquatic Center project has been bid, with work scheduled to begin once temperatures are cool enough for plaster replacement.
- A shade cover is being added to the Pacific Avenue Athletic Complex Archery Range.
- A new bridge structure on the Par 3 course at Desert Hills.
- Kennedy Basketball Court upgrades are underway.
- The East Mesa Community Park project includes bid alternates, which will be discussed further during the construction update section of tonight's presentation.

*** Bond Funded**

Projects	Budget	Status
Valley Aquatic Center Pool Plaster Replacement	\$305K	Bid
Joe Henry Park Improvements	\$345K	100% Design
PAAC Archery Range Shade Structure	\$91K	Received Cost Proposal
Desert Hills Par 3 Golf Course Bridge Structure	\$40K	Received Cost Proposal
Park Improvement, Fencing along Ave A	\$120K	Received Cost Proposal
Kennedy Basketball Court Upgrades	\$28K	Received Cost Proposal
Yuma Catholic Irrigation Water Pump Replacement	\$40K	Received Cost Proposal
*East Mesa Community Park (Bid Alts)	\$2.76M	Previously Bid

○ Community Development Department Projects

- There are four pathway projects in progress, each at different stages of development.
- The 32nd Street pathway, from East Main Canal to Avenue B on the north side, is bid-ready.

*** Bond Funded**

Projects	Budget	Status
1 st St Shared-Use Pathway 4 th Ave to Ave B	\$444K	60% Design
32 nd St Shared-Use Pathway Ave 3E to Ave 7 ½ E	\$334K	30% Design
*32 nd St Multi-Use Pathway East Main Canal to Ave B	\$615K	Bid Ready
Pathway East Wetlands to Pacific Ave	\$314K	90% Design

- General Fund Projects – Downtown and Municipal Facilities
 - The Del Sol Multimodal Center is currently 60% designed, with approximately \$3.6 million in bond funding allocated to support its development.
 - The Spaceport Development is still in the permitting process and is considered an ongoing project.
 - The Innovation District Property Acquisition involves purchasing land, with a budget of \$2 million allocated for this purpose.
 - The Downtown Lighting Improvements include four strings of lights currently installed across Main Street, with additional strings expected to be added soon.

*** Bond Funded**

Projects	Budget	Status
Del Sol Multimodal Center	\$18.6M Total (*\$3.60 Bond Funds)	60% Design
*Buildout City Hall 3 rd Floor	\$720K	Not Started
*Spaceport Development	\$550K	Permit Phase
*Innovation District Property Acquisition	\$2.00M	Ongoing
Historic City Hall Renovations	\$410K	Not Started
Lighting Improvement Downtown	\$230K	100% Design

- Police and Fire Department Projects
 - The Emergency Dispatch Backup Center is bid ready.
 - The Fire Department Equipment Warehouse is currently 60% designed and progressing through its planning phase.
 - The Police De-escalation and Scenario Building is also 60% designed and in development.

*** Bond Funded**

Projects	Budget	Status
*Emergency Dispatch Backup Center	\$2.00M	Bid Ready
*Fire Dept. Equipment Warehouse	\$3.30M	60% Design
*Police De-escalation & Scenario Building	\$3.71M	60% Design
*Public Safety Training Indoor Shooting Range	\$5.40M	Not Started

o Planning Efforts

- The Integrated Multimodal Transportation Master Plan has been developed to guide the City’s roadway infrastructure over the next 10 years. One presentation has been made to City Council, and a second is expected on January 6.
- The Safe Streets for All initiative has begun, focusing on creating a Road Safety Action Plan. This includes analyzing crash data, identifying High Injury Networks, and developing countermeasures to systematically improve roadway safety.
- A project to update Development Fees has been initiated to ensure they reflect current needs and conditions.
- The City is also reviewing and updating its Construction Standards to align with modern practices and requirements.
- The City has received conditional acceptance from ADOT for its first certification acceptance project – a Citywide pavement marking project. This allows the City to bid its own federally funded projects for the first time.

Projects	Budget	Status
Integrated Multimodal Transportation Master Plan	\$200K	Final Report
Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Road Safety Action Plan (RSAP)	\$600K	Started
Development Fee Update	\$200K	Started
Construction Standards Update	\$50K	Started
ADOT Certification Acceptance Citywide Pavement Marking Upgrade	\$569K	Conditional Approval

• Construction Update

o East Mesa Community Park

- The project is currently about 50% complete, with an original budget of \$17 million and a planned duration of 18 months.

- The project is now in month 11, and completion was originally scheduled for August 2026.
- The original bid included 27 alternates, which were added to assess their costs even though funding was not available for all of them.
- With the \$17 million budget, the City was able to proceed with the base bid and seven alternates.
- Approximately \$3 million worth of work could not be funded initially, including three splash pads, nine ramadas, three shade structures, and a playground.
- The City plans to pursue bond funding to cover the remaining unfunded alternates.
- Adding these alternates is expected to extend the project timeline by two to three months beyond the original completion date.
- Police Storage Facility
 - The Police Storage Facility has reached substantial completion.
 - The total cost of the facility was \$6.5 million, and construction took approximately one year.
- Police De-escalation and Scenario Building
 - This project is currently in the pre-construction phase, with construction scheduled to start in May 2026.
 - The total estimated cost for the project is \$5.5 million.
 - The construction timeline is expected to be approximately nine months, though that may vary slightly.
- Desert Dunes Water Reclamation Facility Capacity Increase
 - The project aims to double the plant's capacity from 3.3 million gallons per day to 6.6 million gallons per day.
 - It is currently about 50% complete, with a total cost of approximately \$102 million.
 - The overall duration of the project is three years, consisting of one year for material procurement followed by two years of construction.
 - Key components under construction include a clarifier basin, an aeration basin, and an aerobic digester.
 - The project is on schedule, with substantial completion expected in May 2027.
- Multimodal Transportation Center
 - The project is currently 60% designed, with construction scheduled to begin in April 2026.
 - It has a total estimated cost of \$17.8 million and a planned duration of two years.
- Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Bridge Lighting
 - The bridge lettering was refurbished and the LED lighting was replaced; the project was completed in September 2025.
 - The total cost of the project was approximately \$270,000.
- Rancho Serenade Sewer Main Extension
 - The project removed a lift station and converted the system to a gravity sewer between 37th Street and 30th Place.
 - It reached substantial completion after about seven months of construction, with a total cost of approximately \$3.5 million.
- Avenue 3E Median Landscaping
 - The project is at substantial completion.
- It cost \$1.4 million and took approximately four months to complete. Edenwood Subdivision
 - The project reached substantial completion, with a total cost of \$2.1 million.

- A technique was used to create a stable subbase for the pavement to address high groundwater, saving \$40,000 and reducing construction time by two months.
- Arizona Avenue Waterline Replacement
 - The project, located on Arizona Avenue from 24th Street to 17th Street (about three-quarters of a mile) cost \$1.7 million.
 - It reached substantial completion after six months of construction, and public patience during road closures was greatly appreciated.
- Emergency Sanitary Sewer Repair
 - Arizona Department of Environmental Quality regulations required municipalities to install ductile iron pipe when sewer lines crossed within two feet of water lines.
 - The City has experienced four failures of these pipes, with the most recent occurring at 1st Street and Gila Street, where the top of the pipe was severely corroded by sewer gases.
 - These failures have occurred over the past year and a half, highlighting a recurring challenge with this material in certain conditions.
- Traffic Management Center
 - The Traffic Management Center was completed with a ribbon cutting held in August 2025, and the center upgrades cost approximately \$350,000.
 - 45 traffic signals were upgraded for \$1.2 million, including video detection, new controllers, and communication equipment to enable centralized coordination.
 - Signal timing has been implemented on Fourth Avenue north of 16th Street, and 16th Street from Arizona Avenue to Pacific Avenue, with plans to expand timing across additional corridors to improve traffic flow and safety.
- Desert Hills Golf Course Irrigation Upgrades
 - The project reached substantial completion after 10 months of construction at a cost of \$4.2 million, funded in part by a Water Infrastructure Finance Authority grant.
 - Improvements included a new, more efficient irrigation system, turf removal, and refurbishment of the bunkers.
- 40th Street from Avenue 7E to Mississippi Street
 - The project is 50% complete, with a total cost of \$2.4 million and a construction duration of approximately five months.
 - It includes new street paving, a raised median, an intersection, and traffic lights, supporting development in the area.

Discussion

- Updates of this nature are provided approximately every four to six months. Additional information about the East Mesa Community Park, including phase details, will be shared in an upcoming departmental update. Future presentations will also include more detailed tracking of bond expenditures as spending progresses. **(Morales/Simonton)**
- The Hacienda Stormwater Pump Station Improvement Project is currently 60% designed and has received grant funding of \$3.9 million. It will upgrade four pump stations by installing larger pumps and upsizing the pipes that feed into the retention basin, aiming to lower water levels and reduce flooding in the surrounding subdivision. The project also includes switching to a more reliable power source due to inconsistent service in the area. Final design is expected within six months, pending updates to Yuma County's hazard mitigation plan, which is required to fully secure the grant. **(Morris/Wilson)**

- The Edenwood Subdivision pavement Replacement Project introduced a new subgrade stabilization method using a proprietary blend of cement and lime, which was milled into the subgrade after removing the asphalt. This process created a hardened base that set within a day, performed well under high groundwater conditions, and resulted in both cost savings of approximately \$40,000 and a two-month reduction in construction time. It is a promising solution for similar ground conditions in future projects. **(Morris/Wilson)**

III. REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA OF NOVEMBER 19, 2025

Ordinance O2025-045 – Rezoning of Property: Three properties located along 1st Avenue, between 12th Street and 13th Street (rezone approximately 1.29 acres from Light Industrial/Infill Overlay to Medium Density Residential/Infill Overlay) (Comm Dev/Comm Plng)

Morris declared a conflict of interest on Ordinance O2025-045. There being no questions or discussion on this item, **Morris** remained on the dais.

Ordinance O2025-044 – Lease: Elevate Southwest (authorize a two-year lease with an additional three-year option to Yuma Multiversity Corporation, DBA Elevate Southwest, for City-owned property located at 2450 South Madison Avenue) (City Admin)

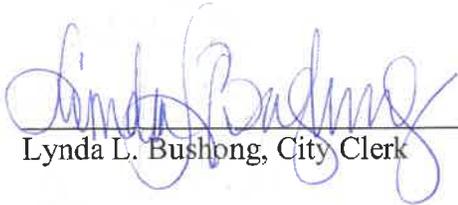
Discussion

- The lease agreement with Elevate Southwest raises concerns due to their connections with multiple City projects and recent bond-funded initiatives. Questions remain about the viability and timeline of the Innovation Hub, as well as the return on investment for public funds. There is a need for clearer benchmarks and accountability to ensure the City’s support of Elevate Southwest is justified, and to evaluate whether future renewals or alternative partnerships would better serve public interests. **(Morales)**
- The City is not currently providing \$30,000 annually to Elevate Southwest; that amount is a contingent grant match, which has not been requested or used in recent years. The two-year lease was offered as a temporary solution after Elevate Southwest lost their previous location, and there is no indication they plan to stay longer. Bond funding is being used for certain projects due to expenditure limitations, but the City has sufficient General Fund money and intends to repay the bonds within two years to avoid interest costs. **(Simonton)**
- The Innovation Hub has been a long-term strategic vision for City Council, discussed over several years during retreats and planning sessions. It represents a large-scale initiative that will take time to realize, with Elevate Southwest serving as a key partner to help drive progress. City Council had prior awareness of the lease agreement before it was formally presented, and there were no initial concerns. **(Morris)**
- Concerns have been raised about the clarity and transparency of bond-related expenditures, particularly regarding lease agreements and the inclusion of certain items in bond issues. There is a shared understanding that Councilmembers sometimes receive large amounts of information quickly, making it difficult to fully process details during meetings. As such, asking questions and seeking updates is seen as a necessary part of due diligence and accountability, especially when decisions involve public funds and are not approved by voters. **(Morales)**

- Receiving an updated report from Elevate Southwest may help City Council better understand its direction and ensure accountability. A presentation will be scheduled early next year. **(Smith/Morales/Simonton)**
- Elevate Southwest approached the City after losing their previous lease, and the City had a suitable vacant property available. The lease was modeled closely after another recent agreement, with Elevate Southwest committing to invest over \$25,000 in improvements to the facility, which will remain City-owned. There was no preferential treatment or deviation from standard leasing practices. **(Morris/Simonton)**

EXECUTIVE SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, **Deputy Mayor Smith** adjourned the meeting at 6:44 p.m. No Executive Session was held


Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk

APPROVED:


Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor

Approved at the City Council Meeting of:
Dec 17, 2025
City Clerk: LB/Simonton