

CITY OF OREM
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
56 North State Street Orem, Utah
September 22, 2026

3:30 P.M. WORK SESSION - CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM

CONDUCTING	Mayor Karen McCandless
ELECTED OFFICIALS	Karen McCandless, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett, Quinn Mecham, Crystal Muhlestein, Chris Killpack
APPOINTED STAFF	Brenn Bybee, City Manager; Ryan Clark, Assistant City Manager; Keri Rugg, Deputy City Manager; Steve Earl, City Attorney; Chris Tschirki, Public Works Executive Director; Bryce Merrell, Community Services Executive Director; Brandon Nelson, Chief Finance Officer; Marc Sanderson, Fire Chief; BJ Robinson, Police Chief; Gary McGinn, Community Development Executive Director; Peter Wolfley, Civic Engagement Executive Director, PIO; Teresa McKittrick, City Recorder

NOTE: The referenced report and presentation documents for each discussion may be viewed at orem.gov/meetings under “City Council Presentations”

WORK SESSION ITEMS

Tiger Traffic Team and Speed Limits Presentation *Presenter: Chris Tschirki, Public Works Executive Director*

Mr. Tschirki and members of Orem’s Traffic Tiger team—comprising representatives from traffic engineering, public safety, engineering, and fire—presented on how speed limits are established across the city under Utah State Code. The discussion centered on Utah Code Section 41-6a-601, which mandates that drivers operate vehicles at a "reasonable and prudent" speed given current conditions and establishes posted speed limits as *prima facie* evidence of reasonable speed. In legal terms, a posted speed limit serves as initial proof of a safe speed, but drivers can refute citations by demonstrating that higher speeds were prudent under prevailing road, traffic, and weather conditions. Engineering standards generally determine a reasonable speed through the 85th percentile speed—the speed at or below which 85% of drivers travel naturally—which research shows is largely independent of posted limits and remains unaffected when posted limits are raised.

Mr. Tschirki reviewed historical data from a 2003–2004 speed study conducted in Orem on major corridors like 16th North, 12th West, 4th North, and 8th East. After recommendations

led the City Council to raise posted limits closer to actual 85th percentile speeds, subsequent monitoring confirmed that vehicle speeds barely changed, with average speed shifts fluctuating by only fractions of a mile per hour. Presenting recent speed data gathered via stealth radar units across several collector and local corridors staff noted that while many collector streets have posted limits of 25 mph, the 85th percentile speeds regularly sit around 33 to 35 mph, making strict enforcement impractical. Traffic engineering noted that aligning posted speed limits closer to actual driving speeds tightens the speed range among drivers, making traffic more uniform and predictable.

The team presented specific findings and potential adjustments for several corridors, proposing a speed limit reduction on 8th East (from 8th South to University Parkway) from 40 mph down to 35 mph due to signals, medians, side friction, and higher traffic volume. Council members discussed driver perception, traffic calming measures, neighborhood access challenges, and the potential for resident backlash during public open houses, referencing past public concern over raising limits. Police representatives explained that enforcement focuses on clear outliers exceeding reasonable speeds rather than blanket ticketing, utilizing stealth radar data to direct patrol resources efficiently in response to resident complaints. Mr. Tschirki concluded by noting that multi-jurisdictional roads like 2000 North and 2000 South would require discussions with neighboring cities before formal recommendations are made, while state-controlled corridors such as State Street, Geneva Road, and University Parkway fall under UDOT jurisdiction.

Amending Section 21-1-3 Water Connection Requirements Presentation *Presenter: Brandon C. Nelson, Chief Financial Officer*

Mr. Nelson presented a proposed amendment to Orem's municipal water connection ordinance aimed at removing the phrase "or occupants." The primary objective of this change is to align commercial utility account practices with existing residential policies under the city's landlord licensing framework. Under the revised ordinance, all utility accounts—both commercial and residential—must be held strictly in the property owner's name. Mr. Nelson and Mr. Bybee explained that this update addresses a recent uptick in unpaid commercial utility accounts, as the city experiences significantly higher success in bill collections when dealing directly with property owners rather than short-term or third-party tenants.

The council discussed tenant rights, water usage transparency, and conservation incentives. Councilmember Millett raised concerns about tenants losing direct visibility into their water consumption data, citing past billing abuses in multi-unit properties where landlords unfairly divided utility bills among renters. Mayor McCandless and Councilmember Mecham reinforced these points, noting that withholding usage data eliminates tenant incentives for water conservation and could leave renters vulnerable to hidden leaks or overcharging. Mr. Tschirki countered by pointing out the operational limits of municipal infrastructure, noting that 99% of commercial and multi-unit developments rely on a single master meter servicing an entire

building or HOA rather than individual meters for each unit, making unit-specific sub-metering or usage tracking cost-prohibitive for the city.

Ultimately, the council confirmed that the proposed voting item would apply strictly to establishing sole financial responsibility and account ownership with property owners. To address the council's transparency and conservation concerns, staff committed to exploring follow-up policies. These future initiatives will focus on public water conservation education and establishing legal frameworks that allow tenants to access basic usage metrics without disclosing private financial data.

Partner Cities Presentation *Presenter: Jennica Jones, Strategy and Innovation Director and Sara Monson, Management Intern*

Ms. Jones and Ms. Monson presented a research-backed proposal to establish a peer-city collaboration network. The objective is to build formal relationships with structurally and demographically similar municipalities across Utah and the Western United States. This network aims to help Orem share best practices, optimize staff time, avoid policy pitfalls, improve benchmarking, and strengthen state and federal legislative advocacy through unified municipal feedback.

To identify suitable peer cities, the team evaluated 22 regional municipalities using a weighted scoring model tailored to Orem's specific profile. The highest weight was assigned to population size (targeting cities around 100,000 residents) and young family demographics (measured via median age and household size). Moderate weight was given to presidential voter demographics, university landscape (evaluating student population impacts on local services), and projected 2050 build-out status. Housing affordability ratios, poverty rates, and Metropolitan Statistical Area size carried the lowest weight. Based on this methodology, the top-scoring Tier One peer matches were Provo, Lehi, and Ogden, Utah. Tier Two matches included Layton, Utah, alongside out-of-state cities such as Kennewick and Spokane Valley, Washington; Nampa, Idaho; and Sparks, Nevada.

The proposed network will focus on high-priority municipal issues, including downtown revitalization, neighborhood preservation, housing affordability, code enforcement, community events, and public safety facilities. As a practical example, staff cited researching Spokane's multi-purpose indoor ice and track facilities to inform local proposals for potential regional recreation grants.

During the presentation, Councilmember LaNae Millett raised concerns regarding the structure of a governing "board," cautioning against delegating local legislative authority or creating external policy pressures. Staff clarified that the oversight body—tentatively rebranded as an Intercity Collaboration Team—will possess zero decision-making or legislative power. Its sole function will be administrative coordination, agenda planning, and facilitating working groups to ensure active participation across member cities. Ultimately, the Mayor and Council expressed strong support for the initiative as a low-cost, high-yield framework for information sharing, comparative policy analysis, and municipal innovation.

Short Term Rentals Continued Discussion *Presenter: D. Jacob Summers, Deputy City Attorney*

Mr. Summers led a detailed discussion focused on crafting the city's short-term rental (STR) ordinance under a strictly owner-occupied framework. Mr. Summers opened by outlining three strategic pathways for the council to consider as they move forward with regulation. The first option is to advance an ordinance limited exclusively to owner-occupied properties. The second option is an owner-occupied framework that incorporates a limited, one-time licensure window for existing non-compliant operators. The third option is to pursue two independent ordinances concurrently—one governing owner-occupied STRs and a separate standalone ordinance addressing one-time licensing exceptions for non-owner-occupied properties—allowing each to stand or fall on its own merits.

The council debated whether to require property owners to obtain an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) permit as a mandatory prerequisite for operating an STR. Mr. Summers explained that requiring an ADU permit helps the city map exact rental spaces on a parcel, simplifies property tax assessments, and ensures the space can transition into long-term housing if needed. However, he noted that ADU compliance requires adherence to strict building codes, which can prove costly for homeowners. Mayor McCandless and Councilmembers Millett and Muhlestein supported mandatory ADU integration, emphasizing that formal inspections guarantee essential life-safety standards, proper egress windows, and electrical code compliance. They also expressed concern that allowing STRs without ADU permits could create a parallel, unregulated rental system. In contrast, Councilmember Gale voiced concern that the upfront costs of retrofitting a home to meet ADU standards could create an excessive financial burden for residents seeking supplemental income.

The discussion then turned to density controls, physical spacing, and overall numerical caps across Orem's housing stock. Reviewing local housing statistics, Mr. Summers pointed out that out of approximately 16,500 single-family homes in Orem, 81% are owner-occupied. To demonstrate density limits, Mr. Summers presented models showing that enforcing a 1,000-foot buffer between STRs would restrict the total number of owner-occupied STRs citywide to between 130 and 165. Councilmembers Mecham and Killpack argued that a 1,000-foot radius was overly restrictive and raised equity concerns, with Mr. Killpack proposing a smaller 500- to 600-foot buffer instead. Councilmember Millett advocated for clear spacing limits, arguing that density buffers prevent STRs from clustering in specific neighborhoods and ensure the operational impacts are distributed evenly across the city. Meanwhile, Councilmember Muhlestein highlighted that even in owner-occupied settings, transient neighborhood turnover causes anxiety for surrounding residents, making density caps necessary to preserve long-term community cohesion.

Mr. Summers also detailed proposed parking controls designed to give Neighborhood Improvement Team (NIT) officers and police clear, enforceable boundaries. Under the draft framework, STR operators would be required to submit a dedicated off-street parking plan that meets all setback requirements and post these expectations for guests. Rather than forcing code

enforcement officers to investigate vehicle ownership on the spot, the ordinance would establish a bright-line rule prohibiting STR guests from parking on public streets entirely. Any verified street parking by an STR guest would constitute an automatic violation and register as a strike against the operator's license. Mr. Summers noted that while consensus was reached on strict off-street parking enforcement, staff will continue refining the proposed options for ADU requirements and density buffers for future council direction.

Mr. Summers shifted the council's focus toward qualitative operational restrictions, parking requirements, and occupancy limitations within the owner-occupied short-term rental (STR) framework. Summers noted that based on prior council feedback, the refined draft ordinance would feature reduced density limits while maintaining proximity buffers around schools and integrating mandatory Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) safety standards, omitting hard numerical caps since physical density spacing effectively regulates total inventory.

Addressing qualitative restrictions, Mr. Summers outlined baseline nuisance controls to protect neighborhood livability. STR operators will be required to maintain properties in full compliance with municipal maintenance codes, including prompt snow removal and landscaping upkeep. To mitigate late-night disturbances, the draft institutes strict quiet hours from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. governing outdoor amenities such as hot tubs, pools, sports courts, and amplified sound systems. Exterior lighting must be shielded to eliminate light trespass into adjacent residential properties during early morning or late-night guest movements. Additionally, the draft introduces a mandatory background check requirement modeled after Sedona, Arizona. STR operators will hold an explicit legal duty to screen guest lists against the National Sex Offender Public Website or through integrated property management tools, making it a municipal violation to rent to registered sex offenders.

The council engaged in a debate regarding a proposed parking matrix that assigns required off-street parking spaces based on maximum guest occupancy, such as requiring two off-street spaces for properties accommodating one to four guests. Councilmember Mecham questioned tying parking capacity strictly to guest counts, pointing out that traveling families often arrive in a single vehicle and could be artificially restricted. Conversely, Councilmembers Muhlestein, Millett, and Lambson supported the matrix, emphasizing that non-family groups frequently arrive in separate vehicles and park on public streets when off-street space is insufficient. The proposed rule places responsibility directly on the operator to prove adequate off-street parking before setting guest occupancy limits on their license.

To prevent operators from circumventing single-family or student-housing zoning regulations, the draft establishes a maximum stay limit of 30 consecutive days for any guest group, replacing previously considered annual night limits or mandatory vacancy periods between bookings. Mr. Summers also recommended prohibiting owners from operating both a long-term rental (LTR) and an STR on the same parcel. Under this rule, a homeowner may operate an LTR or an STR, but cannot combine multiple commercial streams—such as renting an LTR basement while running an STR in a detached accessory dwelling unit (DADU). The council agreed that an STR could be situated in a backyard DADU, provided it remains the only

active rental space on the property. Finally, Mr. Nelson provided corrected figures regarding city utility licensing, clarifying that Orem currently registers 1,382 licensed landlords overseeing 4,588 distinct rental properties, averaging roughly three rental units per landlord.

CITY COUNCIL REPORTS (BOARDS & COMMISSIONS, NEW BUSINESS, ETC)

Councilmember Mecham provided updates on the Cultural Arts Advisory Commission, the Library Advisory Commission, and the Planning Commission. The Cultural Arts Advisory Commission has recently hosted successful local performances, utilizing commission members as emcees at community events like Taste of Orem. Although Cody Hale is no longer a formal member, he and Adam from the SCERA Center for the Arts continue to lend their expertise to assist with event programming. The commission is also developing a municipal arts master plan, researching new locations for high-quality public art, and seeking to join the council for a future work session.

Regarding library operations, the Library Advisory Commission scheduled a retreat for November to refine its long-term vision and mission. Mr. Mecham highlighted the library's ongoing experiential initiatives, including the launch of "Cinemanía"—a reading-style challenge designed to promote the library's extensive physical media collection of over 31,000 films.

Finally, Mr. Mecham reported on recent Planning Commission activity, noting their interest in holding a joint meeting with the City Council to align planning priorities. He highlighted a recent concept plan review for a proposed multi-unit residential project at the former Hale Theater site on Orem Boulevard, which the commission continued to further examine density and housing affordability concerns. Mr. Mecham concluded by emphasizing the need to fill a current vacancy on the Planning Commission to maintain a reliable quorum, noting he has forwarded a list of candidate recommendations to the mayor for consideration.

AGENDA REVIEW & PREVIEW OF UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURN TO REGULAR SESSION

6:00 P.M. REGULAR SESSION - COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CONDUCTING	Mayor Karen McCandless
ELECTED OFFICIALS	Karen McCandless, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett, Quinn Mecham, Crystal Muhlestein, Chris Killpack
APPOINTED STAFF	Brenn Bybee, City Manager; Ryan Clark, Assistant City Manager; Keri Rugg, Deputy City Manager; Steve Earl, City Attorney; Chris Tschirki, Public Works Executive Director; Bryce Merrell, Community Services Executive Director; Brandon Nelson, Chief Finance Officer; Marc Sanderson, Fire Chief; BJ Robinson, Police Chief; Gary

McGinn, Community Development Executive Director;
Peter Wolfley, Civic Engagement Executive Director, PIO;
Teresa McKittrick, City Recorder

CALL TO ORDER

INVOCATION / INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHT – Rodney Garner, American Legion Post 72
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / FLAG CEREMONY – Kelly Kirkpatrick, American Legion Post 72

Mr. Kirkpatrick and speaker Rodney Gardner delivered remarks on military service, ceremonial flag-folding, and constitutional principles. Mr. Kirkpatrick highlighted the extensive community work performed by local veterans, noting that their organization contributes between 200 and 500 hours of service monthly, conducts 120 to 154 military funeral honors each year across seven regional cemeteries, teaches patriotism in schools and retirement centers, and sponsors youth programs such as constitutional oratorical contests and Boys State.

Officers Alan Anderson and Gerald Ney performed a formal 13-fold casket flag demonstration while Mr. Gardner explained the traditional symbolism associated with each fold. The presentation detailed how each step carries specific religious, patriotic, and civic meanings—ranging from symbols of life and eternal life to tributes recognizing veterans, the Armed Forces, mothers, fathers, womanhood, and divine providence. Mr. Gardner noted that the completed triangular shape of the folded flag pays homage to the cocked hats worn by Revolutionary War soldiers under General George Washington, displaying only the blue field of stars to recall the national motto, "In God We Trust."

MAYOR'S REPORT/ ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

Youth Council Introduction and Swearing In Presentation *Presenter: Jennica Jones, Strategy and Innovation Director and Sydney Wong, Events Coordinator*

Ms. Jones and Ms. Wong introduced the 2026–2027 Orem Youth Council to the Mayor and City Council. Ms. Jones highlighted that this year's cohort consists of 38 student members representing various local high schools across the community, marking the largest youth council group in the city's history.

Ms. Wong outlined the upcoming scope of activities planned for the student members throughout the year, which includes volunteering at municipal events, learning directly about the operations of different city departments, engaging with local issues, participating in Local Officials Day at the Utah State Capitol, and leading various community service projects. Following the introduction, the City Recorder conducted an official swearing-in ceremony to administer the oath of office to the new youth council members, concluding the segment with a group photograph alongside the Mayor and City Council.

Day of Caring Presentation *Presenter: Peter Wolfley, Civic Engagement Executive Director and Bradley Day, Community & Sustainability Officer*

Mr. Wolfley and Mr. Day presented a summary of Orem's 2026 Day of Caring service event. Mr. Wolfley thanked the council for its continued backing, highlighting that 2026 marks the 12th consecutive year city employees have stepped out of their daily roles to serve the local community. Mr. Day explained that the annual initiative, organized in partnership with the United Way of Utah County, brings city workers together with local schools, non-profits, and municipal facilities to address pressing community needs and promote civic unity.

On September 10, 2026, over 140 city employees volunteered across 10 project sites categorized into schools, non-profits, and city property. At local schools, volunteers restored playground features and refreshed campus infrastructure: police officers painted a new compass game and touched up play areas at Westmore Elementary, employees repainted sun-faded walls at Orem Junior High, and volunteers stenciled a custom "peace walk" path at Aspen Elementary to assist children with conflict resolution. At the non-profit Kids on the Move, city workers dismantled a deteriorated, hazardous planter box and replaced it with fresh soil and sod to create a safe lawn space for children.

City facility and park projects also saw significant volunteer labor during the initiative. Employees cleared heavy overgrowth and discarded debris from segments of abandoned municipal canals, beautifying the corridor and preparing the area for future maintenance and service projects. Additionally, City Council members and volunteers planted 30 trees at Lakeside Park as part of the city's ongoing "Rooted in Orem" urban forestry initiative. Mr. Day concluded the presentation by expressing gratitude to the United Way of Utah County, school principals, non-profit directors, employee project leads, and city leadership for maintaining the longstanding community partnership.

Companies Championing Women Award Presentation *Presenter: Heather Cox, Management Analyst*

Ms. Cox presented the City of Orem with the "100 Companies Championing Women Award," which the city officially received on August 27, 2026. Cox highlighted that the award recognizes Orem's municipal workplace standards, specifically pointing to its family-friendly operational policies, flexible work arrangements, professional development and leadership opportunities, and commitment to equal pay equity. She commended city leadership for supporting women in the workplace.

Councilmember Millett offered personal reflections in support of the achievement. Ms. Millett shared an experience from earlier in her career where she was hired at a significantly lower salary than a male colleague with equal qualifications, emphasizing how far workplace standards have progressed since then. She expressed gratitude toward the city, female staff, and supportive male leaders for fostering equal opportunities, encouraging women to demonstrate their talents, and recognizing positive advancements in modern municipal hiring and compensation practices.

PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Opened at 6:27 PM

Aaron Larson announced plans to sue the City of Orem over a roof design ordinance, arguing it unlawfully takes away property rights by restricting flat roofs and forcing a minimum 3:12 pitch for max-height homes. Mr. Larson asserted the ordinance was an arbitrary, public-driven reaction to a single property rather than sound policy, noting the city ignored lawful height and story limits in favor of regulating roof pitch. Citing Utah Code § 10-9a-528 and Utah League of Cities guidance, he emphasized that state law explicitly forbids cities from imposing building design elements like roof pitch. Mr. Larson urged the council to amend the ordinance to prevent costly taxpayer-funded legal battles and requested a meeting with city officials to address ongoing enforcement actions against his home that he believes violate his constitutional rights.

James Gaffney urged the City Council to pause and reconsider a proposed mosque project in Orem until potential community impacts and safeguards are fully evaluated. Clarifying that his concerns focus on Islam as a legal and political system rather than individual peaceful worshippers, he asked officials to establish clear guidelines regarding amplified calls to prayer, public sidewalk and street management during large gatherings, and strict enforcement of noise regulations. Citing free speech and public order disputes in Michigan and Europe, Mr. Gaffney requested that the city ensure equal application of local laws, protect peaceful religious criticism, and reaffirm that constitutional law supersedes all religious doctrines.

Mayor McCandless asked Mr. McGinn to clarify the status of any mosque proposals in the city. Mr. McGinn confirmed that the city's community development department is not aware of any active applications or formal plans for a mosque being built or proposed in Orem. Mr. Gaffney claimed that online searches indicate property has been purchased for that purpose and that funds are actively being raised for a future build.

Claudia Stokes shared a ChatGPT query comparing authoritarian structures to certain religious doctrines, arguing that Islamic systems restrict personal freedoms, female autonomy, and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution. Recounting a trip to Indonesia where calls to prayer were broadcast continuously over loudspeakers, Ms. Stokes warned that unmonitored religious practices could disrupt Orem neighborhoods and drastically alter the community's culture, urging city leaders to thoroughly research these concerns before approving future developments.

Judy Christensen thanked the City Council for protecting Provo Canyon, supporting first responders, and advancing water conservation. Addressing prior concerns about local Muslims, Ms. Christiansen shared that she personally visited the Utah County Muslim Center during Friday prayers. She clarified that their calls to prayer are conducted strictly indoors, neighbors enjoy positive relationships with the center, and any potential plans for a mosque remain years away and fully aligned with local rules. Referencing LDS resources on Muslim-Christian relations, she encouraged residents to build understanding by meeting neighbors directly at the center's monthly community potlucks rather than relying on AI-generated information.

Closed at 6:45 PM

CONSENT ITEMS

Meeting Minutes Approval - September 8, 2026

APPOINTMENT - Cultural Arts Advisory Commission - Brandon Jeppson

APPOINTMENT - Library Advisory Commission - Diane Wanamaker

RESOLUTION - Authorizing the Mayor to sign a membership fee agreement and an interlocal agreement between central Utah 911 and the City of Orem to provide public safety dispatch services

ORDINANCE - Amending section 21-1-3 of the Orem City Code regarding water connection requirements

Mr. Killpack moved to approve the consent items, **seconded** by Ms. Gale. Those voting yes: Karen McCandless, Chris Killpack, Crystal Muhlestein, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett and Quinn Mecham. The motion **passed**.

SCHEDULED ITEMS

PUBLIC HEARING - ORDINANCE - Amending Section 22-6 of the Orem City Code establishing regulations for permitting detached accessory dwelling units on single-family properties. *Presenter: Jared Hall, Planning Director*

Mr. Hall outlined proposed municipal code updates to Chapter 22-6-11 designed to bring local ordinances into compliance with state legislative mandates regarding accessory dwelling units (ADUs). The proposed ordinance organizes regulations into three main structural components: general definitions and scope, rules for interior ADUs (formerly termed accessory apartments), and new baseline regulations for detached accessory dwelling units (DADUs).

In Part One, Mr. Hall established foundational definitions, noting that any ADU must remain subordinate to a single-family primary dwelling on the same lot. Under the proposed framework, interior ADUs continue to be permitted across most residential zones regardless of lot size, while remaining prohibited in Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) and R5 zones. DADUs, representing the most significant policy update, are restricted to residentially zoned lots measuring 11,000 square feet or greater, which applies to approximately 5,800 qualifying parcels citywide.

Part Two consolidates existing regulations for interior ADUs, transferring long-standing requirements under updated terminology. Key mandates for interior units remain unchanged, including mandatory owner-occupancy, placement entirely within the primary building's footprint, dedicated off-street parking distinct from the primary home, utility accounts registered under the property owner's name, secondary entrances positioned away from the front street-facing facade, and required building permits alongside active rental dwelling licenses.

Part Three details comprehensive standards for DADUs, stipulating a limit of one ADU per qualifying lot to prevent owners from operating interior and detached units simultaneously. DADUs must meet owner-occupancy mandates, satisfy building safety codes, and demonstrate adequate municipal utility capacity. DADU maximum square footage scales with lot size—ranging from 650 square feet on lots between 11,000 and 12,999 square feet up to 1,500 square feet on lots exceeding 20,000 square feet—with a strict overarching cap preventing any DADU from exceeding 50% of the primary dwelling's footprint.

To preserve neighborhood scale, DADUs are restricted to single-story structures that cannot exceed the height of the primary residence. Maximum height limits depend on roof style and setbacks: flat roofs allow 12 feet at minimum setbacks (extendable up to 14 feet at a 1:1 height-to-setback ratio), while pitched roofs allow 14 feet at minimum setbacks (extendable up to 18 feet). Exterior balconies are permitted, and interior lofts may occupy up to 20% of the floor area. Standard setbacks mandate a 6-foot clearance from the primary residence, 10-foot interior side yard setbacks, a 25-foot street setback on corner lots, and standard rear yard setbacks (typically 25 feet in R8 zones). An exception allows rear or side setbacks to be reduced to 5 feet when adjacent to commercial zones or dedicated open spaces, provided public utility easements allow. Existing detached garages may also be converted into DADUs if all setback and safety standards are met.

Off-street parking requirements comply with state caps, requiring one space for DADUs up to 650 square feet and two spaces for larger units, located strictly to the side or rear of the primary dwelling. Finally, all DADU operators must secure standard building permits and rental dwelling licenses prior to occupancy.

Public Hearing open at 7:00 PM

Aaron Larson urged the council to reject the proposed detached accessory dwelling unit (DADU) ordinance, arguing it restricts property rights and violates Utah law. Mr. Larson highlighted three specific legal conflicts: regulating bedroom counts and interior loft layouts, prohibiting driveway tandem parking to meet space requirements, and imposing height limits that discriminate against flat roofs. Warning that the ordinance intentionally limits housing affordability solutions, Mr. Larson cautioned the council that voting for the measure risks forcing taxpayers to fund legal defenses for unlawful municipal restrictions.

Claudia Stokes voiced strong opposition to expanded housing options, warning that increased density worsens severe local traffic and parking congestion. Drawing on her experience as a former school bus driver and duplex owner, Ms. Stokes argued that past

developments failed to provide adequate parking, leaving narrow streets clogged and travel frustrating. She urged the city to study the traffic and financial impacts of additional units, cautioning that overcrowding risks changing Orem from "Family City USA" into "Apartment City USA."

In response to resident public comments, Mayor McCandless clarified that the city is adopting the detached accessory dwelling unit (DADU) ordinance to comply directly with state mandates, advising concerned residents to contact state legislators regarding state-directed zoning requirements. Addressing concerns about street congestion, Mayor McCandless acknowledged traffic frustrations and noted that road capacity is managed separately through the city's master transportation plan. Councilmember Millett concurred with the public's concerns, criticizing the state legislature's mandate as an example of government overreach that forces increased local density onto municipalities without accounting for local traffic and infrastructure impacts.

David Lechty urged the council to raise the maximum DADU size for the smallest eligible lots (11,000–12,999 sq. ft.) from 650 to 800 square feet. He argued that the extra 150 square feet accounts for just over 1% of the total lot area, causing negligible impact on neighborhood aesthetics or scale. Noting that Orem cannot remain unchanged from decades past, Mr. Lechty encouraged city leaders to accommodate growth and support property rights by minimizing unnecessary restrictions on what homeowners can construct on their own land.

Marian Baxter commended city staff and leadership for their thorough work on the detached accessory dwelling unit (DADU) ordinance, stressing that intentional design is crucial for protecting safety, privacy, and neighborhood aesthetics. Drawing on her experience living near expanding development around Utah Valley University, she emphasized the need for strict building safety standards consistent with short-term rental and interior apartment regulations. Pointing to Santa Cruz, California as a model for clear operational criteria, Ms. Baxter suggested that design solutions like secure fencing or privacy buffers could help resolve neighbors' proximity concerns.

Mr. Earl addressed the legal concerns raised by Mr. Larson regarding potential conflicts between the proposed ordinance and Utah state law. Mr. Earl acknowledged that while Mr. Larson had previously raised similar arguments regarding residential building envelope regulations, he agreed with Mr. Larson's point concerning bedroom limits, explaining that staff had intended to remove bedroom caps previously and recommended striking that language from the final draft via motion. However, Mr. Earl respectfully disagreed with Mr. Larson's remaining legal objections, affirming his legal opinion that the proposed ordinance otherwise fully complies with state statutory requirements.

Public Hearing closed at 7:13 PM

Mayor McCandless and council members evaluated potential adjustments regarding maximum square footage, driveway parking limits, and setback exceptions. Mayor McCandless opened by seeking clarification from Mr. Hall on a public request to raise the maximum

allowable DADU size on smaller qualifying lots (11,000 to 12,999 square feet) from 650 to 800 or 850 square feet. Ms. McCandless emphasized that raising the cap would not guarantee larger builds across the board because the ordinance enforces a secondary restriction capping DADUs at no more than 50% of the primary residence's main-floor footprint. Councilmember Gale confirmed that larger primary homes on those lots would qualify, and Councilmember Mecham expressed support for increasing the cap to 850 square feet if supported by a majority, noting that 850 square feet aligns better with standard unit designs while praising staff for crafting a balanced compromise draft.

Councilmember Millett offered a contrasting perspective, stressing the need to protect neighboring homeowners who bought into single-family neighborhoods from facing quasi-commercial rental operations next door. Mr. Millett raised two specific concerns regarding the current draft. First, she advocated for restricting parking driveways from extending past the rear wall of the primary home to prevent headlights and traffic noise from disturbing adjacent bedroom windows. Mr. Hall noted that current codes do not restrict driveway depth into backyards, and Councilmember Killpack argued against added restrictions, favoring property owner flexibility so residents can park closer to their DADU. Second, Mr. Millett objected to allowing a reduced 5-foot setback when adjacent to "open space," warning that temporarily vacant or rezonable land could eventually be developed into residential homes whose owners would suffer from reduced buffers. Following discussion, the council reached consensus to modify the exception text by striking "open space," thereby limiting the 5-foot setback reduction strictly to property lines adjacent to commercial zones, industrial zones, public facilities, or established parks.

Revisiting the unit size cap, Mayor McCandless voiced support for increasing the smallest tier's maximum size to 850 square feet, viewing DADUs as vital tools to house aging parents or extended family members comfortably. Councilmember Millett opposed the increase, asserting that the 650-square-foot cap was a previously negotiated compromise and cautioning against altering collaborative agreements late in the approval process.

The Orem City Council deliberated and finalized specific amendments to the proposed detached accessory dwelling unit (DADU) ordinance through a series of informal consensus votes before moving to formally adopt the updated code.

Councilmember Millett reiterated concerns regarding potential light pollution and noise from vehicles driving deep into rear yards near neighbors' windows. Mr. Bybee and Mr. Hall proposed a compromise: allowing driveway extensions beyond the primary home, but restricting parking from extending past the front corner of the DADU structure itself. This proposal gained majority support from the council as a balanced measure to ensure residents can park near their unit while screening vehicle headlights from adjacent properties.

The council then addressed the size limit for DADUs on the smallest eligible lots (11,000 to 12,999 square feet). While Councilmember Millett and Councilmember Lambson initially preferred maintaining the original 650-square-foot compromise cap, Councilmembers Gale, Mecham, Killpack, and Mayor McCandless advocated raising the maximum allowable size to

850 square feet. Proponents highlighted that larger units better accommodate families and aging parents, emphasizing that the overarching 50% main-floor footprint cap would still prevent oversized structures on smaller homes. Following further discussion, Councilmember Lambson agreed to support the increase to assist family housing needs, establishing a clear majority in favor of the 850-square-foot limit.

Councilmember Gale initiated a motion to approve the DADU ordinance incorporating all agreed-upon modifications: 1) Bedroom Limits: Striking all references capping or regulating the number of bedrooms to ensure full compliance with state law. 2) Parking Extensions: Capping rear-yard driveway extensions at the front corner of the DADU structure. 3) Unit Size Cap: Increasing the maximum allowable DADU footprint for lots between 11,000 and 15,999 square feet to 850 square feet (while maintaining the 50% primary footprint restriction) .4) Setback Exceptions: Striking "open space" from setback exception rules so that the 5-foot reduced setback applies strictly to property lines directly adjacent to commercial, industrial, public facility, or park properties, and clarifying that the reduced setback applies only to the adjacent property line rather than all parcel boundaries.

Ms. Gale moved to approve, by ordinance, amending Section 22-6 of the Orem City Code establishing regulations for permitting detached accessory dwelling units on single-family properties, **seconded** by Ms. Muhlestein. Those voting yes: Karen McCandless, Chris Killpack, Crystal Muhlestein, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett and Quinn Mecham. The motion **passed**.

CITY MANAGER INFORMATION ITEMS

City Manager Bybee shared final metrics for the Taste of Orem event, highlighting an attendance of 6,600 people, over \$60,000 in ticket sales, and vendor Fancy Burger taking top honors as the most popular food option. Mr. Bybee previewed several upcoming municipal events, including the Harvest Festival at Orem Community Hospital, Orem Night at Utah Valley University soccer, the fire training facility grand opening on October 6, and Fire Safety Night on October 8. Closing on a personal note, Mr. Bybee publicly expressed heartfelt gratitude to the mayor, city council, executive staff, and municipal colleagues for their compassionate support during his son's two-and-a-half-year battle with cancer, announcing that his son would officially ring the bell on October 5 to mark the completion of his treatment.

ADJOURN

Mr. Lambson moved to adjourn, **seconded** by Mr. Killpack. Those voting yes: Karen McCandless, Chris Killpack, Crystal Muhlestein, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett and Quinn Mecham. The motion **passed**.

(These minutes were created with the help of AI)

PASSED and APPROVED on this 13nd day of October 2026.


Jeff Lambson, Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:


Teresa McKittrick, City Recorder



COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Karen McCandless
Chris Killpack
Crystal Muhlestein
Jeff Lambson
Jenn Gale
LaNae Millett
Quinn Mecham

AYE NAY ABSTAIN ABSENT

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