

Memorandum

TO: City Council Workshop
FROM: Renee Eisenbeisz , Assistant City Manager
DATE: August 17, 2026
SUBJECT: Continued discussion on open appointment policy for advisory boards
ITEM NUMBER: 1.b
SECTION: GENERAL BUSINESS

REQUESTED MOTION

INTRODUCTION

The city is fortunate to have residents who are actively engaged in the community, whether that is through a community organization or one of our advisory boards. The city's advisory boards include four commissions (economic development, human rights, parks and recreation, and planning) and three committees (bikeways and trails, environmental quality, and public safety). Commissions are created by ordinance to provide ongoing input in major policy areas. Whereas, committees are created through resolution to provide input in specific areas. We also have the economic development authority and Snail Lake Improvement District Board.

Recognizing the importance of an engaged community, the city's strategic goals or priorities have included an effort to cultivate future leaders from our advisory boards for a number of years. Part of this goal is to ensure our boards have a membership that balances the experience and institutional knowledge of active, long-term members while still providing opportunities for new perspectives. In 2021, the city sent a letter to all advisory board members notifying them of this goal and asking them to keep it in mind when considering reappointment.

The city council reviewed our current structure and open appointment policy at the [April workshop](#) and directed staff to bring forward recommendations for continued discussion at a future meeting. The city council is now being asked to review the recommended changes to the open appointment policy and discuss a communication plan for implementing.

Please note that this information does not include the Snail Lake Improvement District Board since membership requirements for that board are different and require members to live within the Snail Lake improvement district.

DISCUSSION

In 2015, the city council approved the city's current open appointment policy. Per the attached policy, members may be reappointed to an advisory board an indefinite amount of times. The only exceptions are for the economic development authority and planning commission. Any member who has served one full term (six years) on the EDA or two full terms (six years) on the planning commission needs to reapply in order to be considered for reappointment. Their applications are then considered along with any new applicants and interviewed by the city

council. Please note that [State Statute 469.095, subdivision 2\(b\)](#) requires the city to have six-year terms on the economic development authority board.

The policy also outlines general guidelines such as where and how long to advertise and the appointment process. The typical schedule is below:

- Early September: staff will reach out to any members whose terms are expiring to see if they are interested in being reappointed.
- October - November: the city will advertise any openings.
- December - January: advisory boards will review the received applications and possibly interview applicants.
- January - February: the city council will consider reappointments, as well as any recommended appointments.

Options

Staff presented the following options to the city council during the April workshop.

1. Implement a term limit of three terms
2. Implement a term limit of three terms with an option to reapply after a few years
3. Require all members to reapply after two terms
4. Implement option 2 for committee members and option 3 for commission members
5. Continue our current practice

Based on the discussion with the city council, staff are recommending moving forward with option 2, implementing a term limit of three full terms with an option to reapply after a two-year absence. Please note that staff recommend that the current practice for EDA and planning commission members remain as is.

Based on this recommended option, staff is proposing the attached updates to the city's open appointment policy for council review. The majority of the changes are to reflect plain language practices to make the policy easier to scan and understand. The language for term limits is being added to the former reappointment section. As noted above, the city will follow two processes for term limits and reappointment. Members on the economic development authority and planning commission will continue their current practice of reapplying after two full terms. Members on all other boards will now have a term limit of three full terms with an option to reapply after a two-year absence. By saying members need to serve three full terms, that may mean that some serve longer than nine years if they were appointed to fill a seat mid-term.

Membership information

The city currently has 59 volunteers serving on the six advisory boards that would be impacted. Of these members:

- 39 have served two terms or less
- 12 have served three to four terms
- 1 have served five to six terms
- 7 have served seven terms or more

Over the next three years, 20 of our current 59 members will be impacted by implementing term limits:

- January 31, 2027 - 8 members will not be able to seek reappointment, 7 have served 10 or more years
- January 31, 2028 - 3 members will not be able to seek reappointment, 2 have served 10

or more years

- January 31, 2029 - 9 members will not be able to seek reappointment, 5 have served 10 or more years

Communication plan

Staff are recommending a phased communications plan. It will begin with personal outreach by the mayor, city council, city manager, and assistant city manager to the 14 members with 10 or more years of service. Following those conversations, three separate letters will go out by the end of September:

- One for the six individuals impacted by the policy update who were not part of the initial outreach
- One for the 14 long-term members following the initial outreach
- One for all remaining members as a general update

Advertising for the newly opened seats will begin in early October with applications due in mid-November.

Staff are also recommending that the city start to recognize outgoing members at the November volunteer appreciation dinner.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the city council provide direction on the proposed recommendations and communications plan. If the council is comfortable with this direction, a resolution to update the open appointment policy will be placed on the September 8 agenda.

ATTACHMENTS

[Current open appointment policy](#)

[Draft open appointment policy](#)

[July 2026 member list](#)