

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** October 6, 2026

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Daryel Dunston, City Manager  
Zoe Mirabile, City Clerk

**SUBJECT:** City Council Administration and Mayor and Vice Mayor Transition Options

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### **Recommendation**

1. Review options to select mayor and vice mayor positions for calendar year 2027 and beyond and provide direction to staff.
2. Provide feedback to staff on any other Council administration items that staff should bring back to the Council for 2027 and beyond.

### **Fiscal Impact**

There is no fiscal impact to these actions.

### **Council Goal(s)**

The governance of the city furthers all Council Goals.

### **Commission Input**

This matter concerns the governance and administration of City Council, and is therefore under the direct authority of City Council.

### **Background and Analysis**

#### **Mayor and Vice Mayor Transition**

The City of Davis has five city council districts and each councilmember serves a four-year term. Municipal elections occur every even year in November, with either two or three council seats on the ballot. Council Districts 1 and 4 are on the November 2026 election ballot and Council Districts 2, 3, and 5 will be on the November 2028 election ballot.

The City of Davis does not have a directly elected mayor position. Therefore, the City Council annually designates one of its members as mayor and one as vice mayor. The mayor is the ceremonial head of the city, presiding officer at council meetings, and performs other duties as assigned by the Council. The mayoral role does not include additional legal authority or compensation. The vice mayor performs the duties of the mayor if the mayor is absent or unable to perform essential functions. Historically, a councilmember serving as vice mayor is designated as mayor the following year. However, there is no official succession process to automatically promote a vice mayor to mayor.

City Council directed staff to return with rotation and phasing options to consider for the selection of the mayor and vice mayor positions.

### Option 1: Status Quo (Retain Existing Process)

Currently, the Council may select any of its members to serve as the mayor or vice mayor. In 2020, Council adopted the following criteria to consider during the designation process: *seniority on council; consensus building skills; experience presiding over legislative bodies; and other factors that promote good governance practices* (see Attachment 1, Resolution 20-176).

For calendar year 2026, the Council District 3 representative (Neville) was designated as mayor and the Council District 4 representative (Partida) as vice mayor. If the Council makes no changes to the current process, they will designate calendar year 2027 officers at the last meeting in December 2026 by a majority vote.

### Option 2: Rotation by Previous Council District Selection as Mayor

This rotation option recognizes the current 2026 designation of Council District 3 (Neville) as mayor and Council District 4 (Partida) as vice mayor and assigns the historical progression of vice mayor to mayor. It also includes a look back to the three mayors preceding this appointment: Council District 2 (2023), Council District 5 (2024) and Council District 1 (2025). This option provides equitable distribution of the mayor/vice mayor role across districts, consistent with previous selections.

| Calendar Year | Mayor                    | Vice Mayor               |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>2026</b>   | <b><i>District 3</i></b> | <b><i>District 4</i></b> |
| 2027          | District 4               | District 2               |
| 2028          | District 2               | District 5               |
| 2029          | District 5               | District 1               |
| 2030          | District 1               | District 3               |
| 2031          | District 3               | District 4               |

### Option 3: Automatic Rotation by Sequential District Number

This five-year rotation option would provide each district an opportunity to be represented by the mayor on an equal basis and because it is sequential, it is easy to articulate to the general public. Based on rotation order, the first person in the sequence is selected as mayor and the second as vice mayor. Given that the Council District 3 representative currently serves as mayor, and should the current vice mayor (and Council District 4 representative) serve as mayor in 2027, the Council could decide to continue in sequential order with Council District 5 as mayor in 2028, Council District 1 in 2029, Council District 2 in 2030, and so forth.

| Calendar Year | Mayor                    | Vice Mayor               |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>2026</b>   | <b><i>District 3</i></b> | <b><i>District 4</i></b> |
| 2027          | District 4               | District 5               |
| 2028          | District 5               | District 1               |
| 2029          | District 1               | District 2               |
| 2030          | District 2               | District 3               |
| 2031          | District 3               | District 4               |

#### Option 4: Random Selection

This option would take all members of the Council interested and willing to serve as mayor and randomly select one of those names. It would do the same for the vice mayor. This selection does not make an attempt to provide representation for each district, but it does ensure that only councilmembers interested in serving the roles would be selected by lot. Selections could be weighted by number of years served on the Council if desired. Council would also need to determine whether any councilmember would be ineligible to be mayor. (e.g. newly elected Councilmember)

#### Additional Considerations for Rotation Options (2 and 3)

The Council may wish to modify the rotation queue based on whether a member is newly elected to the Council. If a Council District is next in line to be mayor, and the councilmember from that Council District is newly elected, Council can decide to skip the newly elected member and select the representative from the next Council District in the rotation. If this rule is instituted, Council must then decide whether that person/district bumps to the end of the rotation altogether or if there is another remedy the Council would like to pursue.

If a Councilmember who is in line to become mayor or vice mayor does not wish to serve in that position, the person/district would need to “pass” and move to the end of the rotation. Similar considerations would need to be determined if a councilmember vacated their Council seat during their term for any reason.

#### Similar Jurisdiction Comparisons

For comparison purposes, the following chart provides some examples of mayor and vice mayor selection processes from similar jurisdictions. Each city is a general law city with 5 council districts (no directly elected mayor), and has a population between 50,000 and 100,000 (categorized as small cities).

| Mayor and Vice Mayor Selection: Examples from General Law Cities with Council Districts and Similar Population |            |                                                                                   |               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Agency                                                                                                         | Population | Selection Process for Mayor (vice becomes mayor, unless opt out or not nominated) |               |
|                                                                                                                |            | How                                                                               | Length        |
| City of Davis                                                                                                  | 66,850     | City Council nomination; established criteria                                     | One year term |
| Lodi                                                                                                           | 67,008     | City Council nomination, no specified criteria                                    | One year term |
| Rocklin                                                                                                        | 72,340     | City Council nomination, no specified criteria                                    | One year term |
| Yuba City                                                                                                      | 69,545     | City Council nomination, no specified criteria                                    | Two year term |
| Citrus Heights                                                                                                 | 87,036     | City Council nomination, no specified criteria                                    | One year term |
| Rancho Cordova                                                                                                 | 80,656     | City Council nomination, no specified criteria                                    | One year term |

|              |        |                                                                                                                                                                                |               |
|--------------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Pittsburg    | 75,868 | Rotation, order based on vote count                                                                                                                                            | One year term |
| Woodland     | 61,256 | Rotation, order based on district number                                                                                                                                       | One year term |
| Lincoln      | 51,629 | Rotation, order based on vote count; newly elected placed at end of sequence, must serve at least 2 yrs before appointment to mayor                                            | One year term |
| Walnut Creek | 69,790 | Rotation, order based on initial sequence adopted by council; if re-elected incumbents retain position, newly elected placed at end of sequence with order based on vote count | One year term |

#### Action Needed from Council

Staff seeks direction on how the City Council would like to determine the selection of the mayor and vice mayor. Staff will ensure that the process is coordinated appropriately.

If Council wishes to adopt a rotation schedule, staff recommends Council provide direction on the following:

- Preferred rotation order – Council may choose either of the rotation options above or any other rotation
- Minimum years of service prior to serving as mayor or vice mayor
- Mid-year designation – determine if there is a minimum amount of time in the position that will count as a complete term

Should Council direction require changes to implementation documents, staff will return with the necessary resolution or ordinance.

#### City Council Administration

From time to time, City Council reviews and updates internal administrative matters such as roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures, protocol, etc. Staff recommends councilmembers determine if there is interest to discuss any of the following matters:

1. Meeting procedures:
  - a. Official start time
  - b. Agenda structure: order of agenda items
  - c. Time management: time allotted for items, length of meetings
  - d. Public comments procedures
  - e. Staff report template/presentation materials: what level of information is needed/helpful to Council for decision making
  - f. Ceremonial activities
2. Protocols for effectiveness and accountability:
  - a. Liaison assignment role and rotation/alignment of assignments

- b. Subcommittee and liaison reporting
  - c. Seek feedback prior to action/report out activities of inter-jurisdictional assignments
  - d. Routine check-ins on subcommittee work to determine if there is consensus interest/direction
- 3. Legislative platform - define values, principles, policy positions on matters:
  - a. Develop framework/definition of community values and ideals to guide official positions/stances
  - b. Pre-approved legislative platform that reflects values and operational needs
  - c. Alignment of advocacy efforts to local impact
- 4. Strategic priorities:
  - a. Alignment of council goals and city budget
  - b. Alignment of city operations and implementation of adopted plans
  - c. Consider focus areas/prioritize projects based on available resources

Based on the Council's feedback, staff will schedule future council discussion items or return with implementing documents.

#### Council Subcommittees Check-in

Council Subcommittees regularly check-in with the full Council regarding their activities and status. Currently, there are 12 subcommittees with varying levels of activity:

- 1. Pacifico
- 2. Inclusionary Housing Ordinance--Affordable Ownership
- 3. Commission Process and Administration
- 4. Respite Center
- 5. Measure JRD Exemptions
- 6. Investment Policy
- 7. Willowgrove: Tax Share Negotiations
- 8. Sanctuary City Tasks: Research Possible Funding Sources for Immigration Defense Work; Research Rapid Response Plans Developed by Other Jurisdictions
- 9. Long Range Revenue Generating Opportunities
- 10. Exploration of Inventopia Exclusive Negotiating Agreement
- 11. General Plan Update
- 12. Tree Program

Subcommittees should consider whether their tasks are nearing conclusion and schedule discussions for check-ins or recommendations at upcoming council meetings. If subcommittees need to be re-established with different tasks or new members, that is anticipated to occur in January when new appointments are made for the calendar year.

#### Attachment:

- 1. Resolution 20-176

**RESOLUTION NO. 20-176, SERIES 2020**

**RESOLUTION OUTLINING CRITERIA TO SELECT THE MAYOR AND VICE MAYOR AND DESIGNATING THE TERM FOR THE MAYOR THROUGH 2023**

WHEREAS, the City of Davis moved from an at-large system of city council elections to a district-based election system, with the first district election in November 2020; and

WHEREAS, the City of Davis changed the date of its general municipal elections from June of each even-numbered year to November of each even-numbered year, effective in November of 2020; and

WHEREAS, these changes to the election processes necessitate a change to the process and timing by which the City Council selects the mayor and vice mayor from among its members; and

WHEREAS, City Council intends to honor the term of the current mayor elected under the at-large system; and

WHEREAS, the City Council intends to establish a process and guidelines to consider when selecting the mayor and vice mayor.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Davis does hereby authorize that the current mayor, selected in June of 2020 under the previous selection schedule, shall serve a two-year term, ending in July of 2022. The next mayor, selected in July of 2022, will serve a term of one-and-a-half years, through December of 2023. Subsequent mayors will serve one-year terms from January through December each year, beginning in 2024; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Davis, when selecting the mayor and vice mayor from among its members, will consider criteria such as seniority on the City Council, consensus building skills, experience presiding over legislative bodies, and other factors that promote good governance practices.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Davis on this 17th day of November, 2020, by the following vote:

AYES: Arnold, Carson, Frerichs, Lee, Partida

NOES: None



Gloria J. Partida  
Mayor

ATTEST:



Zoe S. Mirabile, CMC  
City Clerk