

From: Open Gorge <hello@opengorge.org>

Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 5:54 PM

To: Jenny Taylor <jenny.taylor@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

Cc: City Council <citycouncil@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

Subject: Public Comment: Support for Maintaining Video Access to Council Meetings

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Dear Mayor Taylor and Stevenson City Council,

We are writing to you as Open Gorge to offer our support as you navigate the significant transitions taking place at City Hall. We know that managing leadership changes while keeping city operations running smoothly is a heavy lift.

We were relieved to read in [Uplift Local](#) that the City has decided to reverse the initial direction regarding video recordings and will continue posting Council and Planning Commission meetings online. We wanted to write specifically to encourage you in that choice. While reviewing compliance and sustainability is always wise, we believe keeping the cameras rolling is actually the safest, most protective path for your new administration.

Here are three key takeaways from government transparency experts on why maintaining this access is the right call:

1. Transparency is the "Temperature Regulator" The Washington Coalition for Open Government (WashCOG) frequently reminds local leaders that transparency is the quickest way to lower the temperature in a community during times of change. As WashCOG President Emeritus Toby Nixon often says, "Transparency builds trust, and secrecy breeds suspicion." By continuing to post meeting videos, you remove the perception of "backroom deals" and provide constituents with a primary source of truth, rather than letting rumor mills fill the void.

2. MRSC Guidance: "When in Doubt, Open it Up" We understand the desire to ensure all postings are "compliant and sustainable." However, the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) generally advises that broad public access is the best defense against legal gray areas. A simple, unedited upload to YouTube is a standard practice used by cities across Washington. It is a clean, consistent standard that is easy for staff to maintain and easy for the public to access.

3. Peace of Mind for Leadership Finally, we want to ensure you and the Council feel secure in your service. An accessible video record is the best "insurance policy" for elected officials. It ensures that your words and decisions cannot be taken out of context. By maintaining this objective record, you protect the City and yourselves from misinterpretation.

We strongly encourage the Council to affirm the Mayor's decision to continue posting meeting videos. Modern tools make this easy, and it meets the "gold standard" of access that Stevenson residents have come to rely on.

"When in doubt, opt for transparency." It is a small administrative step that yields a big return in public trust and peace of mind.

Thank you for your service to Stevenson.

Sincerely,

Open Gorge Team

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