

Jordan River Commission Technical Advisory Committee

June 20, 2024 | 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Location

This was a virtual meeting conducted via Zoom, with an anchor location at the Jordan River Commission office.

Meeting Attendees

Technical Advisory Committee Members

Marian Rice, Chair, Associate Director, Peak Water Sustainability Engine (University of Utah)
Ali Avery, Long Range Planner, North Salt Lake City
Anthony Baimont, Parks Project Manager, South Salt Lake
Bruce Holyoak, Park Superintendent, Murray City
Dan McBride, General Manager, South Salt Lake Valley Mosquito Abatement
Dan Potts, Aquatic Ecologist, Salt Lake Fish and Game Foundation
Eric McCulley, Project Coordinator, Utah Reclamation Mitigation Conservation Commission
Gina Grandpre, Senior Planner, Saratoga Springs City
Hugh Van Wagenen, Wasatch Front Regional Council
Isaac Gomez, Engineer, South Salt Lake City
Jonathan Anderson, Midvale City
Kade Christensen, Division Manager, Parks & Trails- Utah County
Kiani Ellingson, Water Quality Advisor, Kennecott/Rio Tinto
Matt Ryan, Connection Planner, Wasatch Front Regional Council
Michele Rehbein, Education Specialist, Salt Lake City Mosquito Abatement District
Mike Guymon, Stormwater Program Manager, Salt Lake City Public Utilities
Nathan Page, Grant Administrator, Riverton City
Sandy Wingert, Environmental Scientist, Utah Division of Water Quality
Sharen Hauri, Urban Design Director, South Salt Lake City
Todd Taylor, Planner, Draper City
Travis Christensen, Engineer/Project Manager, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District
Wendelin Knobloch, Planning Director, Midvale City

Commission Staff

Julie Williams, Event & Volunteer Manager
Rachel Turk, Communications & Outreach Manager
Soren Simonsen, Executive Director/Secretary

Visitors and Guests

Wayne Niederhauser, State Homelessness Coordinator
Kelsey Berg, Larry H. Miller Real Estate
Nick Johnson, Intern, Salt Lake City Council
Terrence Marasco, Chair, Northwest Community Council
Trisha Davis, Director, Utah Office of Homeless Services
Councilmember Victoria Petro, Salt Lake City

Jim Winder, *Law Enforcement Chief- Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands*

Meeting Minutes

Marian Rice, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Introduction and roll call of Technical Advisory Committee members and other meeting participants.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments

3. Presentations & Discussion - Community Development

Utah Homelessness Strategic Plan & Legislative Funding Updates:

Wayne Niederhauser provided an update on the ongoing implementation efforts related to the Utah Homelessness Strategic Plan. He also discussed recently appropriated funding to address the large and growing population of individuals experiencing homelessness. He noted that they are looking for a new shelter location.

Terrence Marasco asked how law enforcement plans to manage the dispersal of unhoused individuals into other areas as no-camping regulations are enforced in Salt Lake City.

Wayne replied that the police department has limited resources, and their management can vary by area. He stated that without adequate shelter space for unhoused individuals to go to, this will inevitably happen as no-camping rules are enforced. He is hopeful that there will be additional shelter space available in the next 12 months. In the meantime, he recommends letting local police departments know about illicit activities so that they know how to allocate resources.

Todd Munger asked how the Committee could help with the migration of the homeless population.

Wayne replied that as a society we need to make sure peoples' minimum needs for shelter are met. Different city and county governments can make sure they are allocating enough resources for this population and creating programs to reduce homelessness. He stated that people become homeless in every city, but very few cities address it.

Dan Potts asked about the prioritization of abatements.

Wayne replied that his question gets into a conversation that needs to be had with local police departments. His office does not make those types of decisions.

Marian Rice asked if Wayne's office has looked at establishing a shelter in Utah County or Davis County rather than Salt Lake County.

Wayne replied that some cities and counties have been unwilling to address homelessness in their jurisdictions. However, Davis, Weber, and Washington Counties are required to have plans developed and on his desk by August 1st of this year.

Soren Simonsen asked how the Plan would be implemented, given that the State Legislature funded less than half of what was asked for.

Wayne replied that the main elements of the Plan are housing, services, coordination, and prevention. Some categories are seeing progress, such as the creation of more affordable housing units. Ideally, homelessness would be a temporary issue that would affect people for less than 90 days. However, until the necessary resources are available in all categories, it will be difficult to fully address the issue.

Roundtable Discussion:

Committee members and other guests discussed the impacts of homelessness, and drug and crime-related activity on the Jordan River Parkway, particularly around the Utah Fairpark. Participants provided feedback on impacts and solutions related to law enforcement, social services, and related matters to advise the development of an unsheltered homelessness strategic initiative of the Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness.

Soren summarized a document that included interviews with individuals who were camping along the Jordan River, which provided good insights into some of the drivers of homelessness.

Victoria Petro emphasized that this is a statewide issue that is mostly a humanitarian crisis and that moving unhoused people to different locations is unproductive. She noted that the established micro-shelters have shown an increase in safety and effectiveness in their areas. She would like to see an increase in mobile response units to help with hygiene measures (bathrooms, laundry facilities, etc.).

Victoria also noted that unhoused people often become targets for drug cartels and violent offenders. She reported that an entire police squad has been dedicated to policing along the Jordan River Trail.

Jim Winder noted that while homelessness is certainly having impacts along the Jordan River, criminal activity is causing the most problems. He reported that a variety of agencies are coordinating officer deployment to address this issue.

Terrence commented that his residential area is suffering because of the dispersal of crime into it. He asked that police departments turn their attention to the residential areas that are seeing an increase in break-ins and assaults.

Jim replied that the crime occurring along the Trail cannot be ignored, as cartels and other groups use the larger encampments to hide their operations. He seconded Wayne's comment that without places for people to go, there will continue to be disbursement issues, and encouraged Terrence to inform local police about suspicious activities.

Soren noted that he participates with the Unsheltered Task Group established by a local coalition. He asked what issues and solutions different attendees were aware of.

Marian asked if mobile units to provide hygiene services were still on the table.

Sandy Wingert replied that they are still on the table, but require extensive planning.

Soren added that the Task Group he mentioned is already funding a similar program that uses vouchers for existing facilities. He asked for attendees to send him information about best practices, funding resources, or anything else that could assist.

General Updates – Fairpark Area Revitalization District:

Postponed due to time constraints.

4. Committee Business

Committee Officer Nominations & Appointments:

The Committee Vice Chair position is open and there are no nominations at this time.

Web Site Updates:

Rachel Turk asked Committee members to share how they use the website so that her team can make the most effective updates possible.

Highlights from the May Committee Field Trip:

Soren Simonsen noted the new GREENbike installments are very promising, and that they are looking to expand if other municipalities are interested.

5. Commission Staff Report

Commission Staffing Updates:

Soren Simonsen reported that funding for an additional administrative assistant position has been approved. Rae Robinson is leaving the Commission but has accepted a different position within the Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands. The Commission is looking for a replacement for this position.

Julie provided a brief introduction and expressed excitement to be working with the Commission.

Grant Updates:

Soren noted that the next funding cycle for grants is coming up. He offered to assist with grant applications if anyone needs it.

6. Upcoming Committee Meeting

July – No Committee meeting

August 15, 2024 – Cooperative Weed Management and Restoration Focus

7. Adjourn

Gina Grandpre moved to adjourn the meeting. Eric McCulley seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

A meeting recording, presentation and handout materials, and meeting minutes are available at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/918929.html>.

Meeting minutes prepared by Ren Griffeth, Jordan River Commission Administrative, Grant & Research Specialist, and Soren Simonsen, Commission Secretary.

Meeting Minutes adopted 10/17/2024.