

MINUTES FOR THE
BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, June 11th, 2025

1. Roll Call

The following members of the Business Advisory Board were present:

Sheridan Mordue, Vice-Chair	Andy Robertson
Jeff Carleton	Jocelyn Kearl
Pook Carson	Isaac Atencio
Barri Allaire	Abudujaannah Soud

Also Present:

Peter Makowski, Department of Economic Development; Will Wright, Department of Economic Development; Kiara Polee, Department of Economic Development; Ibrahim Ramazani, Department of Economic Development; Anne Olsen, Young Professionals of Salt Lake City; Bryce Wurtsbaugh, Suazo Business Center; Andie Feldman, Department of Economic Development; Alyn Toalepai, Utah Pacific Island Chamber of Commerce; Peter Nelson, SLCgreen; Silvia Castro, Suazo Business Center; Blake Thomas, Mayors Office.

Absent:

Alfonso Brito
Brittany Reese
Scott Lyttle

1. Approval of the minutes

- a. Review and Approval of April 9th, 2025, and May 14th, 2025, BAB Minutes.

Mr. Robertson made a motion to approve the minutes of April 9th, 2025. Mr. Carleton seconded the motion. Upon roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Kearl made a motion to approve the minutes of May 14th, 2025. Mr. Soud seconded the motion. Upon roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Briefings by the Staff

- a. Report from the Deputy Director.

Deputy Director Peter Makowski gave an update to the Business Advisory Board highlighting key developments within the Economic Development Loan Fund (EDLF) and recent city programming efforts. He shared that Hruska's Kolaches, a well-known Sugar House business, was recently approved for a \$200,000 EDLF loan to help with its relocation to the former Brownies building at 1780 South 1100 East. Mr. Makowski also celebrated the successful launch of Open Streets, noting strong attendance and

programming across the four-block span of Main Street, including live performances, buskers, and extended patio service hours. He emphasized the growing community engagement and synergies with other large downtown events such as Pride and the upcoming Arts Festival and expressed interest in partnering more closely with those events in the future.

Will Wright, Project Manager, presented the updated EDLF dashboard, providing metrics on the program's impact. Since taking over the program in 2020, the city has issued \$5.1 million in loans and supported the creation of 230 self-reported jobs. In the current fiscal year alone, 12 loans totaling \$2.2 million have been disbursed, supporting 142 new jobs. So far in calendar year 2025, five loans totaling \$875,000 have created 60 jobs. Eight additional loans, totaling \$1.6 million, are currently in the pipeline. Mr. Makowski noted that the fund is self-sustaining as a revolving loan fund, with repaid funds reinvested back into the business community. He invited the board to attend the upcoming ribbon-cutting for Policy Kings Brewery and encouraged continued feedback on Open Streets and related initiatives.

3. Business Items

A. SLCgreen's e2 Business Program

Peter Nelson, Sustainability Program Manager, presented an overview of the e2 Business Program to the Business Advisory Board. The program is designed to support and recognize Salt Lake City businesses committed to environmental sustainability. It offers a combination of consulting, certification, and promotional opportunities, helping businesses identify actionable ways to improve their sustainability practices. The program also supplies educational resources, collateral marketing, and community engagement tools to encourage environmentally responsible operations.

Mr. Nelson highlighted that participating businesses receive tailored guidance through on-site evaluations and follow-up consultations. Once certified, businesses gain access to promotional benefits, including recognition on the city's website and other marketing materials. The program fosters collaboration between the city and local businesses, driving a shared commitment to environmental stewardship while also supporting the economic vitality of the business community.

B. Suazo Business Center

Silvia Castro, Chief Executive Officer of the Suazo Business Center, presented an in-depth overview of the organization to the Business Advisory Board. She described Suazo as the most culturally responsive business development center in the region, headquartered in Salt Lake City's Glendale neighborhood, with an additional office in Ogden. Since 2002, the Suazo Business Center has worked to uplift individuals and communities by offering more than just business services—it provides holistic support that includes housing, food security, health access, and credit building. Ms. Castro emphasized that the Suazo Center's ultimate goal is to help individuals climb the economic ladder by addressing the full spectrum of challenges entrepreneurs face. In the last fiscal year, the center supported the creation of over 400 new businesses and offered multilingual advising, mentoring, and tiered training programs in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Ms. Castro also highlighted the Suazo Business Center's role as a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), which allows it to provide small business loans up to \$50,000, particularly to clients underserved by traditional financial systems. The center's services are open to all, though their expertise lies in serving historically underserved communities. In addition to in-person services, the Suazo Business Center offers virtual advising and is expanding its online educational programming. Workshops—ranging from AI for business to legal compliance and home buying—reflect the

organization's commitment to practical, accessible support. Ms. Castro noted that the Suazo Business Center serves over 2,000 individuals annually and operates with a diverse funding mix of public, private, and earned income. Ms. Castro closed by inviting the Board to visit the center and expressed pride in seeing second- and third-generation clients return, calling it a testament to the Suazo Business Center's lasting community impact.

C. Blake Thomas, Senior Advisor of Real Estate and Capital Projects

Blake Thomas, Senior Advisor of Real Estate and Capital Projects in the Mayor's Office, introduced himself to the Business Advisory Board by sharing an overview of his professional background and current role with Salt Lake City. Having served previously as Director of the Community and Neighborhoods Department, he brings experience managing divisions such as building services, transportation, housing, and youth and family programs. His new role is focused primarily on downtown development, overseeing large-scale real estate and capital projects that impact economic vitality and public infrastructure. He emphasized his collaboration with multiple stakeholders, including city departments and regional partners, to implement projects that align with the Mayor's vision.

Mr. Thomas provided updates on several key initiatives, including the Downtown Sports, Entertainment, Culture, and Convention District, which involves renovating the Delta Center and Salt Palace to accommodate increased event activity and drive economic impact. He also discussed the proposed public market at Pioneer Park, the Grand Boulevards beautification along 500 and 600 South, and the revival of the Green Loop—a six-mile linear park designed to enhance pedestrian and bike connectivity throughout downtown. Each project, he explained, aims to improve the livability, safety, and economic vitality of Salt Lake City's urban core while remaining responsive to community input and long-term planning goals.

4. City Council Announcements

A. Fiscal Year 2025-26 City Budget

Austin Kimmel, Public Policy Analyst with City Council, provided the Business Advisory Board with a summary of Salt Lake City's recently approved Fiscal Year 2025–26 budget, which totals \$2.2 billion, with \$512 million allocated to the city's general fund. He highlighted several changes relevant to local businesses, including increases in parking meter rates from \$2.25 to \$3.50 per hour and the extension of paid parking until 10 PM and on Saturdays (Sundays remain free). The budget also includes funding for Open Streets, scooter parking infrastructure, railroad crossing improvements, the creation of a new "Clean City Team" to address graffiti and illegal dumping, and enhanced park security. Additional adjustments include a 10% increase in residential curbside waste fees and new utility fees beginning July 1.

Outside of the core budget, Mr. Kimmel noted the annexation of unincorporated Salt Lake County land into the city, which helps create more cohesive boundaries in the northwest area. He also shared that the Community Reinvestment Agency (CRA) board approved \$2.1 million in funding for NeighborWorks Salt Lake to support affordable housing in Poplar Grove and Fairpark neighborhoods. Mr. Kimmel concluded by emphasizing the city's efforts to keep the public informed about upcoming changes through communications from the Public Services Department and invited questions from board members.

B. Hruska's Kolaches EDLF Loan Approved.

Hruska's Kolaches, a Utah-based bakery known for its kolaches, was recently approved for a loan through the Economic Development Loan Fund (EDLF) by the Salt Lake City Council. This support will help the local business continue to grow and contribute to the city's vibrant small business community.

5. BAB Member Announcements

There were no BAB member announcements.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Scott Lyttle

Scott Lyttle (Oct 7, 2025 12:14:14 MDT)

Scott Lyttle, Chair

This document and the recording constitute the official minutes of the Economic Development Business Advisory Board meeting held on June 11th, 2025.