



Members Present:

Bradley J. Frost	Mayor
Staci Carroll	Council Member
Tim Holley	Council Member <i>*electronically*</i>
Ryan Hunter	Council Member
Ernie John	Council Member
Clark Taylor	Council Member

Staff Present:

David Bunker	City Administrator
Stephanie Finau	Deputy Recorder
Patrick O'Brien	Development Services Director
Derric Rykert	Community Services Director
Cameron Paul	Police Chief
Aaron Brems	Fire Chief
Ben Hunter	Engineer
Heather Schriever	Legal Counsel

Also present: Kay Kristofferson, Corey Maloy, Craig Peterson, Ryan Peterson, George Brown and Cherylyn Egner

Notice is hereby given that the American Fork City Council held a work session on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, in the City Administration Conference Room, located at 51 East Main Street, commencing at 4:00 p.m.

WORK SESSION

The purpose of the City Work Sessions is to prepare the City Council for upcoming agenda items on future City Council Meetings. The Work Session is not an action item meeting. No one attending the meeting should rely on any discussion or any perceived consensus as action or authorization. These come only from the City Council Meeting.

1. Legislative update with the state legislative representatives.

Mayor Frost noted for the record that Council Member Holley was out of the country but participating by phone, and that Council Member Taylor was expected to arrive later due to a delay.

The Council then began the legislative update agenda item with participation from state legislative representatives and the City's legislative consultants, the Peterson Group. Mayor Frost noted that Senator Brammer might also attend and invited Representative Kay Christofferson to provide opening remarks and reflections on the 2026 legislative session.

Representative Christofferson stated that the 2026 legislative session began at a faster pace than in prior years due to increased interim work, with legislators arriving more prepared and opening more bill files to gather input and develop future policy. Although the session appeared busier, fewer bills ultimately passed than in recent years due to the limits of the 45-day session. He noted that technology has streamlined the legislative process, but legislators still face challenges reviewing and vetting bills thoroughly. He also highlighted Utah's strong fiscal position, noting continued income tax reductions, low debt levels, and strong reserve balances supported by long-term fiscal discipline and economic growth.

Representative Christofferson added that Utah continues to perform well economically and discussed ongoing tensions between branches of government, particularly around judicial review and separation-of-powers concerns during the session. As an example, he referenced Utah's abortion legislation enacted in anticipation of a potential reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. He explained that after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, Utah's previously enacted policy framework was challenged in court. He expressed concern that judicial orders had paused implementation of the law during litigation rather than allowing it to remain in effect while legal challenges proceeded.

Representative Christofferson then shifted the discussion to transportation and noted that transportation remains a recurring legislative priority. In discussing major transportation outcomes from the session, he stated that the Legislature continues to view infrastructure investment as one of the State's most important long-term priorities. He noted that over recent years Utah has increased the percentage of sales tax revenues allocated toward transportation and continues to direct substantial resources to infrastructure projects.

Representative Christofferson explained that legislators also addressed fuel affordability during the session by reducing the gas tax to lessen financial pressure on residents. However, he acknowledged that broader market conditions, including international factors affecting fuel prices, limited the practical impact of that reduction. He noted concern regarding fuel price disparities between Utah and neighboring states, observing that Utah residents were paying significantly more per gallon than drivers in Wyoming and Idaho despite operating within the same regional market conditions. Representative Christofferson stated that legislators raised concerns with refineries and suppliers regarding those pricing differences and encouraged efforts to increase fuel supply and reduce pricing pressure. Representative Christofferson stated that although the State reduced gas tax revenues, lawmakers believed economic growth and other revenue sources would offset the reduction.

Returning to transportation infrastructure, he stated that the State continues making steady progress on transportation improvements and referenced several transportation projects underway in the Eagle Mountain and Saratoga Springs areas that are expected to have regional impacts extending to Lehi and American Fork.

Council Member John stated that he was cautiously optimistic about recent coordination with UDOT. He observed that historically UDOT's planning process appeared to rely heavily on population projections that often lagged actual development trends. He recalled previous discussions encouraging UDOT to adopt more forward-looking planning assumptions and asked whether Representative Christofferson believed meaningful progress had been made in helping UDOT better anticipate future growth and infrastructure demand. Representative Christofferson responded that several years earlier he had considered sponsoring legislation to change UDOT's road prioritization formula. He explained that UDOT evaluates transportation projects using a

scoring system and ranks projects based on factors such as roadway conditions and congestion levels to determine statewide priorities. He said the Legislature agreed to allow UDOT to adjust its methodology internally because it would provide more flexibility than codifying specific formulas in state law.

Representative Christofferson explained that over the previous two years, regional leaders had been meeting periodically to coordinate transportation planning and establish shared priorities across northern Utah County. Participants in those discussions have included representatives from American Fork, Lehi, Saratoga Springs, Eagle Mountain, Utah County, MAG, and UDOT, with the goal of developing a coordinated approach to regional transportation challenges. He stated that the primary focus of those meetings has been addressing east-west mobility constraints. He observed that Pioneer Crossing is already operating at or beyond intended capacity and described it as significantly under designed for current demand. He noted that the Pony Express corridor had once presented an opportunity for expanded regional connectivity but indicated that growth and development had advanced more quickly than planning efforts, limiting available options.

Although some improvements continue to be considered in that corridor, existing residential development and built conditions now constrain what can realistically be implemented. Representative Christofferson also referenced Lehi's advocacy for a North Lake crossing and asked whether American Fork had been involved in those discussions.

Mayor Frost responded that American Fork had been participating and noted that the proposal is being evaluated as part of the PEL (Planning and Environmental Linkages) study.

Representative Christofferson explained that current efforts include evaluating multiple lake crossing concepts, including a North Lake crossing, a Mid-Lake crossing, and additional alternatives farther south near the southern portion of Utah Lake. He clarified that the study area extended generally toward the Goshen area rather than Eureka. He stated that the PEL study process had recently been adjusted to better integrate planning and project development into a more streamlined approach rather than treating them as separate phases. According to Representative Christofferson, this change is intended to accelerate implementation once a preferred alternative is identified.

Representative Christofferson noted that consultants had been retained to complete the study and that additional stakeholder meetings were anticipated, although no future meeting date had yet been finalized. He expressed concern with an estimated study timeline of approximately two years and stated that he had encouraged agencies to identify opportunities to accelerate the process if possible. He emphasized that regional transportation challenges are unlikely to be solved by a single project and instead will require a combination of improvements working together. He stated that discussions are focused not only on selecting new corridors but also on understanding how future investments would connect with existing transportation systems, including Redwood Road, Mountain View Corridor, Geneva Road, I-15, and local facilities within American Fork.

The discussion concluded with reference to a separate conversation regarding the American Fork Main Street flyover concept and continued evaluation of what improvements or further study may be appropriate for that corridor.

Ryan Peterson asked whether the transportation coordination meetings being referenced were public meetings. Representative Christofferson responded that the PEL (Planning and Environmental Linkages) meetings had been public but indicated uncertainty regarding the status of some of the other coordination meetings. He explained that some of those discussions had developed more informally as participating agencies and stakeholders gathered to align priorities and coordinate regional planning efforts.

Craig Peterson added that he had been communicating with Rob Clayton and had been receiving periodic updates regarding transportation discussions. He stated that, in his view, progress had been made in elevating projected growth as a factor in transportation planning and project prioritization. He noted that while there may still be differing perspectives regarding the extent to which transportation decisions remain insulated from politics, he believes there continues to be political influence in how projects ultimately move forward. Representative Christofferson responded that the intent has been to minimize that influence and maintain an objective process.

Craig Peterson continued by emphasizing that transportation agencies increasingly recognize the significant growth pressures occurring in northern Utah County and in southwestern Salt Lake County, particularly around east-west connectivity challenges. He stated that regional transportation leaders appear to understand that historical planning assumptions no longer fully reflect actual growth conditions. He specifically referenced Rob Clayton and UDOT Region 2 leadership, including Rob Stewart, and stated that they appear to be actively working to address these issues and improve regional planning responsiveness.

Craig Peterson added that he would like to see stronger support from the broader transportation and state funding structure regarding how transportation dollars are allocated. He described ongoing efforts to influence those discussions through collaboration and behind-the-scenes coordination intended to improve outcomes for the region. He also highlighted another legislative development that he believed could have implications for American Fork: the reorganization of UTA governance. He explained that UTA was moving toward a structure that more closely mirrors UDOT's organizational model, including the appointment of an executive director role, which he indicated was expected to be filled by Jay Fox. He stated that the governance model would transition toward representation through a commission structure rather than relying on the previous full-time trustee model.

Craig Peterson shared that informal indications were beginning to emerge regarding likely appointments under UTA's new governance structure. He stated that some prospective appointees were individuals he already knew, while others were less familiar to him. He specifically noted that former Lehi Mayor Mark Johnson appeared to be a strong candidate for appointment, along with other potential representatives from around the state.

Representative Christofferson clarified that the UTA governance changes were scheduled to become effective on July 1.

Craig Peterson then discussed the anticipated implications of the reorganization. He explained that major capital construction decisions would continue to involve coordination across multiple transportation entities and would remain somewhat integrated between UTA and broader regional transportation planning efforts. However, he suggested that day-to-day transit operations and service delivery could become more accessible and responsive under the new structure. He

stated that local communities, including American Fork, may find it easier to communicate concerns and advocate for adjustments to specific UTA services.

Craig Peterson shared that he had spoken with several individuals connected to the transition during the League convention, including Jay, Jeff, and former Representative Paul Ray—who had since joined UTA—and Nicole Martin, who previously served in communications for Mayor Kaufusi and had also moved into a role with UTA. He commented that the organization appeared to be assembling an experienced and interesting leadership team and stated that it would be worth watching how the governance transition ultimately influences transit operations, service delivery, and transportation coordination in the region.

Representative Christofferson discussed the financial challenges facing UTA and noted that the agency is carrying a substantial long-term debt burden, estimating outstanding debt at approximately \$2.4 billion. He stated that debt service consumes a significant portion of available funding and suggested that the agency's debt obligations are unlikely to materially decline for many years. He explained that UTA is simultaneously managing multiple competing demands, including maintaining and replacing aging infrastructure, upgrading deteriorating equipment, and advancing system modernization efforts. He characterized UTA's position as difficult given the scale of regional expectations relative to available resources and stated that he did not envy the complexity of managing those competing priorities.

Mayor Frost observed that transit funding operates under a fundamentally different model than traditional private transportation services. He noted that UTA's revenues are not primarily generated through passenger fares and passes but instead rely on broader public funding mechanisms and transportation-related revenue streams. He commented that fare revenue alone would not sustain the transit system.

Representative Christofferson agreed and suggested that residents might ultimately be willing to pay more for transit if service quality and travel times became more competitive with personal vehicle travel. He remarked that when accounting for personal transportation costs, including fuel, insurance, and vehicle ownership—public transit could become more attractive if riders were able to reach destinations in travel times closer to automobile trips rather than substantially longer durations. He noted that improving service frequency remains a major area of focus.

Craig Peterson added that the Frontrunners double-track project is expected to significantly improve service performance and frequency and could influence ridership patterns and regional mobility.

Representative Christofferson then broadened the discussion to long-range transportation planning and explained that recent legislative efforts involving both UTA and UDOT have attempted to make agencies more proactive in preparing for future growth. He stated that the Legislature has provided additional funding and authority to support corridor preservation efforts. Rather than waiting for landowners to initiate property discussions, agencies are increasingly being encouraged to identify future transportation corridors earlier and proactively pursue preservation opportunities.

Representative Christofferson explained that this approach allows agencies to acquire or secure strategic property interests before development forecloses future transportation options. He stated that transportation agencies are now dedicating staff and resources specifically to corridor

preservation and indicated that this more proactive strategy is already being applied in areas such as Eagle Mountain, where planning efforts are underway to preserve future freeway corridors extending southward. He concluded that these actions reflect a broader shift toward planning for future transportation demand earlier rather than reacting after growth has already occurred.

*Representative Malloy arrived.

Council Member Carroll asked Representative Christofferson to look ahead beyond the recently concluded legislative session and share what issues legislators were already beginning to focus on for the interim. Representative Christofferson responded that interim committee work was beginning and indicated that transportation issues would again receive significant attention. He stated that one of the upcoming transportation discussions would focus on safety-related topics, including roadway rules, vehicle-related safety issues, etc.

Council Member John then shifted the discussion to commercial vehicle policy and referenced a national coalition advocating for changes to truck size regulations. He asked whether there was meaningful momentum nationally toward reducing the size of trucks operating on highways. Representative Christofferson responded that he had received outreach on the issue but was uncertain how much traction those proposals were gaining, particularly within Utah.

Council Member Hunter expressed concern that transportation discussions affecting northern Utah County are often framed too broadly at the regional level, which can obscure the specific needs of American Fork. While acknowledging that regional coordination is necessary because transportation impacts cross municipal boundaries, he stated that he wanted a clearer understanding of how American Fork's individual priorities had been specifically advanced during the legislative session. He referenced the Main Street flyover discussion as one example and stated that regional transportation conversations can sometimes feel too abstract or generalized when compared to concrete local needs facing American Fork residents.

Craig Peterson responded that one important development was the ongoing UDOT study examining the I-15 and Main Street corridor area affecting American Fork. He stated that, based on conversations with UDOT leadership, this is the first time some of the transportation concepts previously resisted by UDOT, including elements related to the flyover discussion—were being seriously evaluated as part of a broader transportation analysis. He noted that the collaborative meetings involving local governments and transportation agencies had helped elevate American Fork's concerns within regional discussions. He specifically credited Senator Brammer for assisting behind the scenes in helping ensure that American Fork's concerns were being heard at the state level.

Craig Peterson emphasized that while regional transportation planning must remain coordinated, American Fork's unique transportation needs cannot simply be absorbed into a larger regional framework and ignored. Craig Peterson stated that Representative Christofferson had participated in multiple meetings specifically focused on American Fork's concerns and had worked to ensure that the City's priorities remained visible throughout the planning process.

Ryan Peterson added that one of the meetings referenced had been specifically focused on American Fork issues, although scheduling conflicts had prevented broader participation from some attendees. Council Member Hunter responded that this type of information was particularly valuable because residents frequently ask how legislative advocacy efforts are directly benefiting

American Fork. He stated that understanding the extent of behind-the-scenes coordination and meetings held specifically on behalf of the city helps demonstrate that local concerns are actively being represented.

Ryan Peterson then broadened the discussion beyond transportation and noted that numerous legislative issues affecting cities generally—and American Fork specifically—had arisen during the session. He explained that there were multiple occasions when proposed legislation raised concerns for municipalities and that he regularly coordinated with City staff, including discussions with Mr. Bunker, to evaluate the potential impacts of pending bills. Ryan Peterson stated that in several instances, legislative proposals were either prevented from advancing, substantially amended, or modified in ways that protected American Fork’s interests. He noted that many of these concerns were also shared by the Utah League of Cities and Towns, particularly regarding proposals perceived as limiting municipal authority or creating operational challenges for local governments.

Ryan Peterson contrasted the 2026 session with the prior two legislative sessions, stating that earlier sessions at times felt less receptive to municipal concerns. By comparison, he described the most recent session as more collaborative and responsive, with legislators appearing more willing to slow down, reconsider proposals, and defer unresolved issues to interim study and discussion rather than immediately advancing legislation over local government objections.

Craig Peterson added that water policy was another area where American Fork’s interests required significant attention during the legislative session. Ryan Peterson agreed and explained that several major policy discussions arose involving water, property tax, municipal autonomy, and broader local government authority. He stated that in a number of instances, legislators appeared more willing than in prior years to slow down and reconsider proposals rather than move forward immediately. He highlighted water policy as a particularly significant example and described one proposed water bill as having the potential to create serious unintended consequences if enacted in its original form. He stated that the proposal ultimately did not move forward in that form but emphasized that the outcome required substantial discussion and engagement.

Council Member John added that he had also been communicating behind the scenes with Laura Briefer regarding the issue.

Council Member John noted that wastewater systems vary significantly between cities and expressed concern that a uniform statewide policy could unfairly impact certain communities and ratepayers. Ryan Peterson stated that legislators ultimately paused to reconsider the proposal after hearing those concerns. Council Member John added that he had coordinated with Representative Christofferson and others during the process. Ryan Peterson cautioned that while immediate concerns were addressed, the issue is expected to return in future interim discussions or legislative sessions.

Representative Maloy observed that the 2026 legislative session felt different from recent years, with greater emphasis among House leadership on supporting local control and working collaboratively with cities rather than advancing statewide policies without municipal input. He noted that American Fork’s transportation concerns, including the flyover concept, were discussed frequently and emphasized that although his district includes multiple cities, American Fork’s priorities remain important.

Representative Maloy encouraged making city legislative priorities more formal and consistent at coordination meetings so legislators can keep those priorities visible throughout the legislative process. He also emphasized that transportation challenges in northern Utah County are regional in nature and difficult to separate by city boundaries, since traffic patterns and congestion move across communities. Using Lehi and Saratoga Springs as examples, he noted that transportation improvements are most effective when planned as connected regional solutions rather than isolated city projects that stop at municipal borders. He stressed the importance of coordinated infrastructure planning that reflects actual travel patterns across the region.

Mr. Bunker observed that cities advancing transportation improvements independently can create the perception that they have completed their responsibility and are waiting on neighboring communities to act.

Representative Maloy acknowledged that concern and noted that while those efforts may show progress locally, they do not necessarily solve the broader regional transportation problem. Council Member Hunter agreed and expressed concern that this dynamic can unintentionally shift blame to neighboring cities such as American Fork or Lehi, even though congestion and mobility issues are regional in nature.

Representative Maloy stated that communities, including American Fork, have been taking steps to preserve corridors and prepare for future improvements but emphasized that greater regional coordination is needed to achieve effective solutions.

Craig Peterson emphasized that obtaining regional designation for transportation corridors through MAG is significant because, once recognized under UDOT's framework, those projects become eligible for state funding. He noted that achieving that designation had taken years of effort but created meaningful opportunities for advancing projects. He stated that transportation prioritization formulas must properly account for congestion and growth and suggested that while UDOT plays an important technical role, legislative leadership has historically been necessary to advance major infrastructure projects.

As an example, Craig Peterson referenced Bangerter Highway and stated that legislative intervention was critical to moving the project forward despite initial resistance and skepticism about future demand. He argued that UDOT should not be viewed as the sole authority on long-range transportation needs and encouraged continued legislative involvement to elevate emerging regional priorities.

Representative Christofferson added that regional coordination and prioritization are responsibilities that should be led through MAG and encouraged continued engagement with that process.

Mayor Frost noted that American Fork had recently performed well in transportation scoring efforts and expects funding for an additional phase of the Pony Express project. He also highlighted approximately \$250,000 allocated for further study of transportation improvements around the flyover area, including evaluating circulation opportunities near the Frontrunner station, potential frontage road concepts, and ways to improve regional mobility despite site constraints created by I-15 and the diverging diamond interchange. Mayor Frost emphasized that the city has intentionally framed these projects as having regional significance rather than local-only value. He stated that UDOT has increasingly recognized the flyover, 700 West, and

connections into the Frontrunner station as regional transportation facilities because they serve travel demand extending beyond American Fork. He noted that strengthening that regional designation improves eligibility for regional transportation funding and supports broader corridor investment.

Craig Peterson emphasized that obtaining regional designation for transportation corridors through MAG is significant because, once recognized under UDOT's framework, those projects become eligible for state funding.

Representative Christofferson recalled that early in his legislative service he raised concerns with UDOT about the need for improved east-west transportation connections in northern Utah County. He stated that UDOT's position at the time was to direct traffic toward existing corridors, including 2100 North and I-15, rather than invest in additional east-west routes. He noted that local leaders have continued advocating for expanded transportation options over the years and suggested that current studies and corridor discussions reflect growing recognition of the same long-term issues that had been identified earlier.

Mayor Frost then noted for the record that the chair of the tax committee was present. Representative Christofferson clarified that the individual currently serves as vice chair and indicated that the mayor is expected to serve as chair the following year.

Council Member Taylor arrived at 4:33 p.m.

Representative Christofferson stated that growth patterns in Utah County have shifted and suggested that MAG should more aggressively recognize that growth is occurring outside traditional population centers such as Orem and Provo. He encouraged development of a long-term transportation plan with clear implementation steps that aligns infrastructure investment with projected growth and demonstrates how future transportation needs will be addressed.

Mr. Bunker observed that Lehi is projected to become the largest city in Utah County for a period and noted that the county's population and economic center is shifting north. He emphasized that infrastructure priorities and investment decisions must shift accordingly and

Mayor Frost asked whether the State may eventually consider another transportation bond as a way to accelerate infrastructure delivery and get ahead of future transportation demand, particularly if projects are already planned, studied, and positioned through the MAG process. Representative Christofferson responded that he does not currently anticipate another transportation bond. He stated that the State's present approach is focused on reducing and eliminating debt, with the expectation that funds previously directed toward debt service can eventually be redirected into future infrastructure and construction investments.

Council Member Hunter asked for updates on two additional priorities beyond transportation: water reuse and state involvement in local zoning authority. Mayor Frost noted that earlier zoning discussions appeared tied to a gubernatorial initiative and asked whether the issue had effectively ended. Ryan Peterson responded that he did not consider it fully resolved but said it never advanced significantly during the session.

Representative Christofferson stated that legislators received substantial pushbacks from cities on zoning issues and that there appeared to be recognition that local governments should retain authority over their own zoning decisions rather than having the State dictate outcomes.

Representative Maloy clarified the discussion around proposals that would shift zoning authority toward the State and stated that he did not view the issue as permanently resolved, although he was not aware of broad legislative support for that approach.

Mr. Bunker noted that the State did move forward on legislation related to external ADUs, requiring cities to adopt local code changes consistent with new state direction, which represents continued state involvement in land use policy.

The discussion then shifted to water reuse. Mr. Bunker explained that water reuse is particularly important for cities served by TSSD because treated wastewater is discharged to Utah Lake while cities continue to bear costs associated with securing and developing water resources. He emphasized that local governments have invested substantial amounts preparing for growth and stated that expanded water reuse opportunities could provide meaningful long-term benefits for cities like American Fork.

The discussion focused on water reuse and the status of local applications to retain reuse rights. Mr. Bunker explained that the City had submitted an application to the State but had not yet received approval or denial, leaving the matter in limbo.

Ryan Peterson noted that American Fork and TSSD communities had begun planning reuse efforts before recent legislative changes and were expected to qualify for grandfathered treatment. Council Member John added that local entities had intentionally acted before the deadline and believe they should fall under the prior rules but are still awaiting action.

Craig Peterson stated that decisions have slowed due to statewide sensitivity around Great Salt Lake water policy and pressure on the State Engineer's office. He noted concerns that water reuse is sometimes viewed as reducing water returns to the lake, although he argued that the issue is more complex and requires hydrologic analysis to understand actual impacts and conservation tradeoffs.

Representative Christofferson concluded by noting that conservation discussions can overlook the fact that unused or discharged water often reenters and helps recharge the broader water system.

Mr. Bunker noted that ongoing drought conditions have made water reuse discussions more difficult because of heightened concern about protecting water resources. Craig Peterson stated that current efforts to support the Great Salt Lake may eventually require a broader reassessment of strategy and questioned whether existing investments are producing meaningful results.

The group discussed how other regions have received state support for reuse projects, with examples including funding for Central Iron County and St. George, while American Fork's reuse application remains pending.

Council Member Carroll questioned whether the State could indefinitely leave an application unresolved, and Ryan Peterson noted that state laws generally require agencies to respond. Craig

Peterson offered to contact State Engineer Teresa Wilhelmsen to request a status update and determine whether broader policy considerations are delaying approvals.

Mayor Frost emphasized that American Fork is uniquely positioned because it can directly capture and reuse water within city boundaries. Staff noted that while some infrastructure would still be needed, the city already has irrigation and secondary water systems that could support reuse more efficiently than other communities.

The discussion concluded with agreement to contact the State Engineer's office to better understand the review status and determine whether a broader policy delay is affecting reuse applications statewide.

Council Member Hunter noted a separate interest in receiving an update on the State Street widening project and commented that the project had been under discussion for several years.

Ryan Peterson stated that water rate and water policy issues remain a high priority and noted that upcoming interim committee agendas would provide a clearer picture of which issues will receive attention. He anticipated continued discussion in the Natural Resources Committee and through water-related policy groups. Craig Peterson added that the Water Development Commission and Water Task Force would likely also be involved and expressed hope that future water proposals would receive more thorough review before advancing.

Craig Peterson expressed concern that several water bills advanced during the session without adequate vetting and recalled criticism from Senator Dave Hinkins regarding the pace at which water legislation was moving compared to the more deliberate process traditionally used for water policy. He noted that emergency meetings were eventually convened through the Water Task Force and Water Development Commission, which at least created opportunities for public input, even if review remained compressed.

The group concluded by emphasizing the importance of transparency and early policy review so cities have time to prepare and respond effectively to legislation that could significantly affect local water management and infrastructure planning.

Council Member John noted that water policy work had required significant effort and mentioned that Laura Briefer had been approached to participate in interim discussions, which he believed would benefit local governments. He then asked whether the upcoming Olympics would create any transportation opportunities or concerns for UDOT and UTA.

Representative Christofferson responded that, as a member of the Olympic Transportation Committee, he had been told that most Olympic venues already exist and that current planning is focused primarily on accelerating projects already underway rather than launching major new infrastructure efforts. He stated that no significant new funding has been identified yet and that current expectations are to continue advancing existing priorities. He added that discussions with Utah's congressional delegation suggested that Olympic planning remains largely on hold until completion of the Los Angeles Olympics. He expressed concern that delaying planning could compress timelines for major infrastructure delivery.

Mayor Frost asked whether the Legislature's recent focus on local government issues, including fund balances, truth-in-taxation changes, and local fiscal controls—reflected a broader shift in

how the State views cities and whether local governments are being treated more as partners or as entities requiring greater state oversight. Representative Christofferson responded that property taxes generated more constituent feedback than any other issue over the past year. He said many residents expressed concern about rapid tax increases, particularly those on fixed incomes who felt financial pressure from rising housing costs and questioned why local governments continued pursuing truth-in-taxation increases.

Mayor Frost noted that not all tax increases were attributable to cities alone. Representative Christofferson agreed and stated that increases across cities, school districts, and counties often compounded for residents, with some experiencing substantial cumulative increases over a short period. Representative Maloy noted that several nearby cities had discussed potential future tax increases.

Mr. Bunker explained that American Fork is facing the same inflationary pressures as residents and the State and is evaluating options in its preliminary budget process. He cited the need to staff a future west-side fire station, noting that additional personnel and equipment would create approximately \$1.8 million in ongoing annual costs. He explained that even a proposed property tax increase would generate only a portion of those needs and emphasized that local governments face rising costs for labor, construction, infrastructure, and services just like households do. Representative Christofferson then asked whether American Fork had adjusted property taxes for inflation in recent years, and Mr. Bunker responded that the City had not done so in either of the prior two years.

Representative Christofferson stated that one challenge with property taxes is that delaying adjustments for many years can lead to larger increases later when cities eventually need to catch up with inflation and service demands. Mr. Bunker agreed and noted that annual inflationary adjustments are difficult politically, even though smaller, consistent increases may be easier to absorb than infrequent large increases. He pointed out that American Fork did not raise property taxes between 2008 and 2022, which significantly reduced the City's purchasing power over time.

Council Member Carroll noted that some of the increase residents are experiencing may not be due to local tax increases but instead from shifts in the property tax burden from commercial to residential properties. Representative Christofferson agreed, explaining that under Utah's property tax structure, total revenue may remain flat while changes in valuation shift more of the burden onto homeowners, creating the perception of tax increases even when entities are not collecting more revenue.

Council members discussed the importance of improving public communication around these dynamics. Ryan Peterson noted that Salt Lake City was among the first cities presenting a budget under the new HB 236 truth-in-taxation requirements and that American Fork would also comply with those rules.

Mr. Bunker thanked the legislators for the work required during the legislative session and acknowledged that while the session itself lasts 45 days, significant preparation and effort occur before and during that period.

- Representative Christofferson noted that substantial work also happens during interim meetings throughout the year.

- Representative Maloy encouraged more direct communication between city officials and legislators during the session, explaining that quick feedback on pending bills helps legislators respond in real time. He noted that informal communication with cities has become increasingly valuable because legislative decisions often move faster than formal organizational processes.
- Ryan Peterson added that organizations like the League of Cities and Towns serve an important role but sometimes face challenges balancing competing city interests. He suggested that direct input from individual cities can be especially useful when legislation has different impacts across communities.
- Craig Peterson supported improving communication and encouraged city officials to copy legislative consultants on those discussions so they can help elevate concerns with legislators and committees. He also praised the City's leadership for maintaining consistent communication throughout the session.

Council Member Taylor concluded by expressing appreciation for Representatives Maloy and Christofferson's consistent participation and engagement with the city, noting that their attendance and responsiveness had been recognized and valued.

2. Discussion on proposed amendments to the city code.

Ms. Egner explained that prior direction was to update the code format while preserving current content, rather than making substantive changes. However, as staff worked through the update, they identified several inconsistencies that made a straight formatting-only revision difficult. She pointed to residential lot standards as an example, noting that minimum home footprint requirements vary in ways that do not appear logically consistent across zones. She stated that staff had drafted proposed revisions intended to correct some of those inconsistencies but wanted Council direction on whether to preserve the existing standards as written or allow staff to address apparent conflicts.

Mr. O'Brien noted that another section of the code may already establish a general minimum structure size of 1,000 square feet. Ms. Egner stated that similar issues appear in commercial zones, where some districts lack minimum lot size or lot width standards entirely. She said staff can continue preserving the existing content if that is Council's preference but wanted clarification because the current code contains gaps and inconsistencies that complicate the cleanup process.

Mayor Frost asked how development standards are currently being applied when the code does not contain minimum requirements for certain items. Ms. Egner responded that where the code is silent, applicants effectively have flexibility to develop without those specific zoning limitations. She explained that in the absence of standards such as minimum lot width, the remaining constraints become compliance with fire code, building code, and other applicable regulations. She noted that this lack of standards has contributed to inconsistent development outcomes across projects. Staff's attempt to revise the code was intended to create greater consistency and predictability, but she acknowledged that some proposed changes may have gone beyond simple cleanup and into policy decisions, which is why staff was seeking additional Council direction before proceeding.

Council Member Hunter acknowledged that he did not have answers for every zoning standard but agreed that some of the current requirements appeared inconsistent and lacked logical progression. He suggested that, as a general principle, larger lots would reasonably be expected

to require larger minimum building footprints and expressed concern with standards that fluctuate without a clear rationale. He also referenced zoning categories that appear inconsistent with public expectations, citing examples where a zone designation suggests one density level but includes exceptions that allow significantly more intensive development. He expressed concern that residents could reasonably expect one type of development and instead see something substantially different occur under existing code provisions.

Council Member Hunter emphasized that he does not expect Council to evaluate and set every individual dimensional standard but instead wants clearer, more intuitive rules that align with how people interpret zoning categories. Ms. Egner responded that this tension is part of what has slowed the code update process. She explained that staff are trying to balance direction to preserve existing policy while also addressing inconsistencies and gaps, but proposed changes can sometimes be viewed as substantive policy shifts rather than code cleanup. She stated that staff is seeking clearer direction on where Council wants that balance to be.

Council Member Hunter clarified that prior concerns from both Council and residents were not about preventing all code changes but about avoiding broad policy shifts that unintentionally increase density, such as converting large areas from one zoning designation to another. He stated that the feedback he has heard is generally that existing densities should not increase. Ms. Egner responded that those concerns relate more to zoning map changes than to the code cleanup effort itself and noted that some of those mapping concerns had already been reconsidered.

Council Member Hunter added that residents have also raised concerns about practical impacts of code changes, such as setbacks affecting projects already being designed but not yet submitted.

Council Member Taylor distinguished between preserving zoning classifications and updating development standards. He stated that while Council wanted to retain existing zoning structure, he was open to staff recommendations on dimensional standards and supported creating more consistent requirements where current values appear arbitrary.

Mr. O'Brien added that proposed amendments to setbacks and dimensional standards are intended to address recurring issues staff sees in practice and create greater consistency with neighboring communities. He cited examples such as improving side-yard access, accommodating parking and ADUs, and reducing pressure to push parking and storage onto streets.

Council Member Taylor concluded that his expectation for the code update is to preserve zoning policy while relying on staff expertise to modernize technical standards where appropriate, recognizing that Council does not typically work at that level of detail.

Council Member Carroll stated that code updates will matter to existing residents, particularly for those who have been planning projects or improvements based on current standards. She expressed appreciation for side-by-side comparisons showing existing and proposed standards because they make changes easier to understand, while acknowledging that approach may not be feasible for every section of code.

Ms. Egner explained that creating detailed comparison materials for the entire code is extremely time-consuming and has become one of the major challenges of the update process. She noted

that staff attempted to organize items such as use tables but found that the current code contains extensive inconsistencies, including different terminology and definitions for similar uses across zones. She explained that the existing code also contains situations where uses are listed as permitted but includes conditions that function more like conditional uses, creating confusion in administration and interpretation. She concluded by expressing uncertainty about the best path forward and indicated that staff was looking for clearer direction on how much cleanup and modernization Council wants included in the update effort.

Mayor Frost asked whether part of the challenge was balancing efficiency with avoiding future rework—essentially whether it made sense to correct issues now rather than preserving problems that would require another amendment later. Council Member Carroll responded that Council may not realistically be able to preserve every existing provision exactly as written because staff is already consolidating and reorganizing sections to create a workable code structure.

Ms. Egner agreed and explained that staff had begun creating a comparison approach to show where language remains unchanged versus where revisions are being proposed. She described using indicators to distinguish sections that are largely unchanged from those that include more substantive edits but noted that creating that level of comparison for the entire code is extremely time intensive given the code's size.

Mr. O'Brien added that staff could continue expanding comparison tools such as permitted use charts and definitions but explained that doing so requires substantial uninterrupted work time. He emphasized that the current code has become difficult to administer because of age, contradictions, and inconsistent terminology.

Ms. Egner pointed out that some common land uses and business categories currently lack definitions entirely, forcing staff to rely on assumptions and interpretation rather than clear standards. She explained that one goal of the update is to establish basic definitions and improve consistency so future development decisions can be made more predictably and transparently. Ms. Egner explained that staff paused further work on creating detailed comparison materials because of the time involved and wanted confirmation from Council before continuing down that path. She stated that staff is willing to build section-by-section comparison tools and highlight changes but wanted clearer direction before committing additional effort.

Ms. Schriever added that, based on public response during the previous noticing process, the primary frustration was not necessarily that changes were being proposed but that residents did not understand what was changing. She emphasized that public outreach, education, and clear communication tools would be critical regardless of the final policy decisions. Ms. Schriever suggested that providing residents with accessible comparisons showing what changed and what stayed the same could reduce concern and improve public trust in the process. She noted that those types of communication tools may have been missing during the previous code update effort and could help make future discussions more productive.

Discussion focused on public outreach and process planning for the code rewrite and general plan efforts. Council Member John stated that the mayor's proposed rollout approach generally addressed concerns about communication but agreed additional supporting materials would still be needed.

Staff questioned whether the planned May 21 open house was premature given the ongoing effort to clarify proposed code changes and prepare comparison materials. The conversation also addressed whether the general plan update and code rewrite should continue together or be separated. Council Member Carroll reiterated her preference to separate the processes because combining them creates confusion for the public.

Ms. Egner agreed that some of the previous public concern may have resulted from overlap between the general plan and code discussions, while Mr. O'Brien observed that much of the prior public reaction centered specifically on zoning concerns. Council Member John added that existing zoning provisions themselves can produce unexpected outcomes, referencing examples where current code allows higher-density development than residents may anticipate based on zoning labels.

Council Member Taylor proposed a different approach to the code rewrite process and suggested considering adoption of a fully rewritten code as a new baseline rather than continuing to reconcile every provision with the existing code section by section. He described a hypothetical process where the City would develop a clean, updated code that incorporates lessons learned, addresses recurring issues, modernizes standards such as setbacks and ADUs, and creates a more coherent and understandable framework moving forward. Under that concept, the existing code would remain available as historical reference but would no longer drive decision-making. The city could then revisit and reintroduce specific American Fork preferences and nuances intentionally rather than preserving inconsistencies that accumulated over time. Council Member Taylor acknowledged the idea was conceptual but expressed concern that continuing to compare and preserve every legacy provision may continue delaying completion of the project, noting that the rewrite effort has already been underway for several years.

Council Member Carroll asked whether Council was comfortable giving staff greater discretion to prepare a recommended code rewrite, with Council reviewing and approving the updated framework rather than preserving every historical provision. Council Member Taylor supported that concept and suggested adopting a cleaner, modernized code first, then selectively bringing back provisions from the old code only where they remain necessary or reflect intentional City policy. Council Member John agreed and noted that removing years of project-specific carveouts and creating consistent definitions could help avoid future interpretation issues.

Ms. Egner responded that this approach would significantly simplify the process. Rather than translating the entire existing code into a new format, staff could focus on identifying and highlighting major policy changes while carrying forward standard provisions where appropriate. She noted that minor wording updates would likely not all be tracked individually but larger substantive changes could be identified for Council review. She added that permitted use tables would still require additional work.

Mayor Frost expressed support for moving toward a practical and manageable approach, observing that the code will continue evolving over time due to legislative and local changes and that waiting for perfection could delay progress indefinitely.

Mayor Frost then asked whether a finalized code could eventually support an AI-based question-and-answer tool for public use. Mr. O'Brien responded that such a tool would require training and configuration but could become more feasible with a cleaner, more consistent code structure.

Ms. Egner added that one of the benefits of the rewrite is creating a single clear answer to questions instead of multiple conflicting interpretations across different sections of the code.

Discussion focused on sequencing the general plan and code rewriting efforts and improving public communication. Ms. Egner recommended completing the general plan first to establish a policy foundation before advancing the code update.

Staff and Council raised concerns about the cost of conducting separate public noticing processes, but Council members expressed support for separating the two efforts if it improves public understanding and trust. The group discussed legal noticing requirements and whether the general plan adoption could qualify for a more limited process since it does not substantially change zoning. Ms. Schriever indicated additional review would be needed to confirm notice requirements. Council emphasized that messaging should clearly communicate that the general plan itself does not change zoning and is intended to guide long-term growth and economic development. Staff and Council discussed creating clearer public-facing materials and outreach tools so residents can easily understand what is changing and what is not.

Mayor Frost asked whether staff now had enough direction to move forward and whether the code rewrite effort remained close to completion despite recent adjustments. Ms. Egner stated that staff had been approximately 80% complete but paused after the last Council meeting to reconsider the approach and align with updated direction. She explained that while she initially felt clearer on expectations, attempting to preserve and compare the existing code in detail proved more difficult and time-consuming than anticipated.

Staff proposed moving forward by highlighting major substantive changes rather than documenting every minor revision so Council can focus review on the most meaningful policy decisions.

Ms. Egner then returned to the discussion of setbacks and referenced earlier proposals to increase side-yard dimensions. She explained that those recommendations were informed by comparisons with neighboring communities and practical concerns related to vehicle access and parking.

Mr. O'Brien added that Planning Commission discussed the issue and initially questioned increasing setbacks, but after reviewing parking and access concerns—particularly in relation to ADUs and side-yard vehicle storage—many commissioners supported maintaining or increasing the setbacks. He noted that a wider side yard better accommodates vehicle access and usability, whereas narrower dimensions can make parking impractical when fences and structures limit maneuverability.

Ms. Egner asked whether Council wanted staff to continue proposing practical updates to standards—such as setbacks—or preserve existing requirements and only make formatting changes.

Council Member Hunter expressed support for staff, bringing forward recommendations that address real issues rather than simply maintaining current standards. Council Member Carroll questioned whether increasing side-yard setbacks was necessary and specifically asked why residents would need to park vehicles beside their homes.

Mr. O'Brien explained that the recommendation was less about encouraging side-yard parking and more about preparing for state-driven housing changes, including internal and external ADUs that require additional parking. He noted that without adequate side-yard space, residents may instead pave front yards or create street parking pressures.

Ms. Egner added that staff is trying to anticipate future development pressures, so Council is not repeatedly asked for exceptions or code amendments later. Mr. O'Brien noted that additional side-yard flexibility also supports storage of trailers and other vehicles on private property rather than on neighborhood streets. Ms. Egner concluded by emphasizing that these types of code changes would primarily affect future development and redevelopment, not existing neighborhoods unless a property owner substantially rebuilds.

Council Member John emphasized that public messaging should clearly explain that proposed code changes primarily affect future development and not existing homes unless substantial redevelopment occurs.

Council Member Hunter excused from the meeting at 5:45 pm

Council Member Carroll noted that her concern with setbacks was less about parking and more about preserving usable lot areas for homeowners. Staff then discussed how setback changes could affect existing homes. Mr. O'Brien raised the issue of grandfathering and whether homeowners with structures built under prior standards would be required to meet new setbacks when adding onto existing homes. Ms. Egner explained that, without a specific exception, new standards would typically apply, though staff could draft provisions allowing expansions as long as they do not increase existing nonconformities. Mr. O'Brien supported allowing extensions that do not move closer to property lines.

The discussion then shifted to commercial development standards. Mr. O'Brien asked whether Council supported adding maximum setbacks in commercial areas to encourage buildings closer to streets and reduce large parking lots along road frontage. Council Member Carroll asked how that concept would relate to existing shopping center layouts. Staff clarified that existing developments would remain unaffected and that the proposal would apply only to future projects and redevelopment. Mr. O'Brien explained that the intent is to create more active streetscapes by bringing buildings forward rather than allowing developments to locate at the back of sites behind parking fields. He noted this approach also helps preserve commercial character and avoid future arguments for residential-style development patterns in commercial areas.

Discussion continued on commercial setback standards and how they shape development form. Ms. Egner highlighted professional office zoning as a key example, explaining that the current code requires a minimum 30-foot setback, while staff's proposal would shift to a maximum 30-foot setback to bring buildings closer to the street and place parking behind structures. She noted that this approach could improve transitions to adjacent residential areas and create more attractive street frontage.

Council Member Carroll commented that recent projects have voluntarily followed this pattern and that the results have been noticeably better. Mr. O'Brien added that the current minimum setback requirement can create site design challenges by forcing buildings too far back and making parking layout more difficult.

Ms. Egner concluded by stating that staff would prepare highlighted comparisons of proposed changes and distribute updated materials to Council, with the goal of providing enough time for review before the next discussion.

3. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.



Stephanie Finau
Deputy Recorder