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Council Department Report
9/3/26

TC Report September 9, 2026

Homelessness Mitigation Task Force

I traveled to Salt Lake City to attend the bi-weekly meeting of this committee. Erin Mendenhall, the Mayor of SLC, is the chair of the group. Other members are the mayors of Bountiful, Orem, South Salt Lake, Tooele, and Ogden.

We're not necessarily tasked with proposing a change to the amount of sales tax allocated to the fund by cities and towns, but we're looking at the formula for reimbursement of shelter cities. Meetings will be held every two weeks until the 2027 legislative session.

LPC Housing and Land Use Advisory Subgroup

As always, Utah has some of the smallest lot sizes and largest homes in the country. This is counter to our desire to build more affordable housing.

Utah may start a pilot program that explores using AI for processing plan reviews, permits, etc. This is intended to help planners, not replace planners.

One of the biggest issues in the upcoming session will be impact fees. It's going to get "spicy."

Zion Regional Collaborative Quarterly Workshop

Our quarterly workshop was held in Cedar City at the Visitor Bureau building. Items of interest are as follows:

Sheep Bridge Road is still scheduled to be paved this fall.

Washington County will contract with St. George shuttle to run shuttles from St. George on Labor Day weekend. The usual Suntran buses don't run on Sundays and holidays.

There have been more than 60 bike crashes that needed medical attention at Zion National Park this year (compared to 50 all year last year).

Virgin is getting a new electrical substation and improving their BMX track. The Kolob Terrace Road will be repaired once those projects are completed.

Dixie Transportation Executive Committee (DTEC)

Washington City has approved an inland port project, primarily because it comes with funding for the Purgatory Bridge that will connect Washington with Hurricane.

Healthy Utah

I've been invited to participate in the Get Healthy Utah annual event in Salt Lake City on September 16. I will be a keynote panelist in the final session along with mayors of other (large) cities. I will specifically be discussing how we welcome visitors from around the world while remaining home to a small community. I have a Mitigation Task Force meeting in Salt Lake City on September 17, so this worked out well from a timing perspective.

O. C. Tanner Amphitheater

Tom Dansie and I met with three executives from Utah Tech University to discuss the future of the Amphitheater. They have completed a feasibility study, which determined that the cost to bring the theater up to par is \$34 million. No decisions have been made at this time.

Housing Committee

The projects at Trapper Circle and Redhawk are moving forward, and construction could begin as soon as late Fall.

Zion National Park was successful in getting grants for housing in the Park. The projects will take about two years and will include approximately nine new housing units for their employees at Watchman and another on the east side of the Park.

Zion Forever Project is looking at properties along SR-9 for locations for employee housing.

Mayors Association of Washington County

Our September 1 meeting was held at Purgatory Correctional Facility, where we enjoyed a K-9 presentation, SWAT demonstration, jail tour, and drug task force presentation. A few fun facts:

Washington County has the only cadaver dog in the State of Utah, and they also have two K-9 officers.

They have about 25 ICE inmates a day coming through; they're usually deported within a week. They are the only 287-G agency in the County.

They only have two cameras in the county (Motorola), both on highway 91. They are not using them for random license plate recognition.

Their annual budget this year is \$36 million.

The jail capacity is 550-600 inmates.

Zion Canyon Visitor Bureau

Greater Zion is sponsoring a training session in Springdale for employees of our hospitality businesses; the training will focus on providing excellent customer service.

The occupancy rate for hotels in Springdale in July was 67.5%, up two percent from last year

Average daily rate for a hotel room in Springdale in July was \$228.

Zion National Park visitation was down one percent through July of this year.

Suntrans Zion ridership is up 17 percent this year.

The County is providing free transportation to ZNP on Labor Day; the SunTran buses don't run on holidays.