

CITY OF SOUTH SALT LAKE
CITY COUNCIL WORK MEETING

COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday September 9, 2026
6:01 p.m.

CITY OFFICES

220 East Morris Avenue
South Salt Lake, Utah 84115

PRESIDING:

Council Chair Sharla Bynum

CONDUCTING:

Council Vice Chair Corey Thomas

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joy Glad, Corey Thomas, Nick Mitchell,
Irvin Jones, Clarissa Williams (Zoom), and Ray deWolfe

COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Sharla Bynum (excused)

STAFF PRESENT:

Mayor Cherie Wood
Josh Collins, City Attorney
Terry Addison, Fire Chief
Jared Christensen, Deputy Fire Chief
Tyler Cluff, Deputy Police Chief
Sharen Hauri, Neighborhoods Director,
Stewart Okobia, Finance Director
Jonathan Weidenhamer, Community & Economic Development Director
Spencer Redden, Police Officer
Eliza Ungricht, Community Development Deputy Director
Lee Garbett, Neighborhoods Deputy Director
Ariel Andrus, City Recorder
Sara Ramirez, Deputy City Recorder

Matters for Discussion

1. Presentation – FrontRunner 2x Project

Neighborhoods Director, Sharen Hauri, presented proposed revisions to the City landscape Ordinance. She explained that the current Ordinance had become clunky and outdated due to various additions over the years, and the proposed revisions aimed to align the Ordinance with new goals for urban tree canopy increase, air quality improvement, heat island mitigation, utility and infrastructure protection, and water conservation.

The revised Ordinance would provide better guidance on plant health during droughts, stormwater support, tree preservation, and noxious weeds. She noted that the new rules would apply to new construction, changes of use, significant parking or floor area expansions, relandscaping of over fifty percent of a property, and newly applicable public parks and open

spaces. City facilities would remain largely exempt but would require review to demonstrate landscaping adequacy.

Ms. Hauri detailed the potential financial impacts of the revisions, noting areas where costs and time burdens might increase or decrease for developers. Increased costs would stem from requiring professionally prepared and stamped drawings by licensed landscape architects for commercial, mixed-use, multi-family, and right-of-way projects. Additional costs would also arise from requiring larger soil volumes for trees in downtown areas, specifically using soil cells under pavement to prevent soil compaction, and requiring separate irrigation valves for trees to ensure their survival during droughts while other landscaping goes dormant. To balance these costs, the revised Ordinance would offer savings by reducing the required minimum plant and tree sizes at planting, which would also improve plant survival rates. Further savings would come from a modified tree replacement ratio based on canopy size rather than a strict per-tree count, reduced setback sizes in urban corridors, and greater flexibility in plant species selection and placement.

During the presentation, Ms. Hauri highlighted proposed prohibitions on artificial turf and landscape fabric. She stated that artificial turf would be banned as a general ground cover due to its tendency to absorb and reflect heat, though it would still be permitted in designated active-use areas. Similarly, landscape fabric would be prohibited over plant roots to ensure proper air and water flow but would remain allowable under bark or rock mulch where no live plants are present.

Council Vice Chair Thomas and other Council Members inquired about how to provide feedback on the extensive changes.

Ms. Hauri requested that the Council Members email their questions and feedback to the Mayor and City staff, as internal conversations regarding the specific terms of the Ordinance were still ongoing.

A copy of the presentation is attached and incorporated by this reference.

2. Discussion – Landscape Ordinance Revision

Utah Department of Transportation Deputy Project Director, Braden Andersen, along with Marcus Bennett from the Utah Transit Authority and other project leads, presented on the FrontRunner 2x project.

Mr. Andersen explained that the project is a partnership wherein the Utah Department of Transportation executes the construction and hands the completed project over to the Utah Transit Authority for operation. The primary goal of the project is to add double-tracking to the FrontRunner alignment, which currently suffers from delays due to single-track limitations. By adding eleven new double-track sections, one new station in Bluffdale, ten new trains, and a new maintenance facility, the project aims to decrease wait times from thirty minutes to fifteen minutes during peak rush hour. The construction phase is anticipated to begin in 2027 and conclude by 2030, at which point FrontRunner travel is projected to eventually outpace travel on Interstate 15.

The presenters detailed the specific impacts the project would have within the City. The South

Salt Lake segment will see approximately two miles of new track added primarily on the east side of the existing rail corridor between 1700 South and 3300 South. Environmental studies indicated no significant noise or vibration impacts that would require mitigation walls, and only minor impacts to Mill Creek. The project requires the acquisition of right-of-way space from fifteen commercial properties, though no total acquisitions are necessary.

Council Member Williams asked for clarification regarding the impact on local businesses and the planned relocation of storm drains.

The design lead explained that the property impacts vary from minor strip takes to larger impacts, such as the removal of a back row of storage units at Cook Storage, for which the owners are being compensated at fair market value to rebuild elsewhere. Regarding the storm drain, it was explained that a shared City and rail corridor storm drain currently located along 600 West will be relocated into the street at the project's expense, eventually tying back into the rail corridor drainage system further north.

A Council Member inquired if the project was driven by the upcoming 2034 Olympics.

Mr. Andersen clarified that while the Olympics serve as a good motivator, the expansion has long been part of the Utah Transit Authority's phased long-term plan.

Questions were also raised regarding construction disruptions.

The project team acknowledged that there will be service impacts, but they plan to utilize creative supplemental bus bridges and schedule major shutdowns around holidays to minimize rider inconvenience.

Further discussion occurred regarding the speed of the trains versus the frequency of the service.

Mr. Bennett explained that within the thirty-year planning horizon, travel time improvements for riders will primarily come from increased frequency rather than increased vehicle velocity.

Council Member Williams asked why the focus was on expanding FrontRunner instead of simply increasing TRAX service, considering the City already utilizes TRAX.

Mr. Bennett explained that while both networks require significant investment, they serve different operational spectrums; TRAX features stops every half mile for short trips, whereas FrontRunner is designed for longer regional commutes.

Finally, the team confirmed that the three-billion-dollar project had recently received a recommendation for a 1.3-billion-dollar federal grant, and no funding was being requested from the City.

A copy of the presentation is attached and incorporated by this reference.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Sharla Bynum, Council Chair

Ariel Andrus, City Recorder