

Government Affairs Update January 22, 2022



One week down, six to go of the 2022 General Legislative Session! This government affairs update will provide a brief summary of the week's happenings, including appropriation subcommittee work, the WFRC Bill Tracker, the Governor's State of the State address, ULCT Local Officials Day, and a look ahead to next week.

Appropriations Process

Over the next two and a half weeks, the legislature's appropriations subcommittees will continue to meet to consider changes to state agency base budgets, and evaluate new funding requests. On Friday, our transportation partner UDOT gave their [Budget Presentation](#) to the Infrastructure and General Government appropriations subcommittee. Of note, they requested funding for several key items from the [Governor's FY23 Budget Recommendations](#):

- \$232 million to replace the previously authorized bonding for the strategic double-tracking of FrontRunner bonding with cash. This would save over \$30 million in interest costs, and would mean that funding will be available in the future for additional transit projects, rather than having those funds committed to paying debt service on bonds. This proposal has been [endorsed](#) by the Legislature's Executive Appropriations Committee.
- \$46 million for regionally important active transportation projects. This funding would build upon the \$35 million appropriated last year for active transportation. When coupled with a 20% local match, this would allow the completion of priority projects around the state.
- \$600,000 in ongoing additional funding to UDOT's existing Technical Planning Assistance Grant Program which provides transportation planning assistance to local governments.

WFRC supports these proposals, and they are consistent with the [principles for state infrastructure investment](#) that we developed last year in cooperation with other transportation agencies, ULCT, and UAC. As a reminder, those principles are:

1. Invest in infrastructure
2. Support multi-modal transportation choices
3. Utilize the professional planning and prioritization process

4. Be fiscally prudent - balance current infrastructure investment needs with long-term fiscal stability

There has also been some discussion about investing additional funding from the state's record surplus into infrastructure, potentially to accelerate the delivery of transportation projects that have already been planned and programmed.

Next week, our partners at the [Governor's Office of Planning and Budget](#) will present their budget overview and funding requests to the Executive Office and Criminal Justice appropriations subcommittee on Wednesday morning. There are several key planning and technical assistance items that we anticipate them requesting, as they were included in the Governor's Budget:

- \$1.05 for technical planning assistance to Utah's Associations of Governments (including WFRC) for training, grant writing, and other technical assistance to local governments.
- \$1 million to fund a statewide growth planning and communications effort which is intended to help gain the public's confidence in the state's growth management efforts, and set a clear policy direction for Utah's leaders to ensure sustainable growth.

At the end of the appropriations subcommittee review, the full legislature will consider their recommended changes to base budgets, which will then be passed by both the House and Senate. Additionally, each committee will provide a ranked list of funding recommendations to the Executive Appropriations Committee, which will then ultimately decide how the state's revenue surplus should be allocated. Though we'll see the subcommittee ranked lists and final base budgets in just a few weeks, the remainder of budgeting happens over the course of the session as final supplemental appropriation bills from EAC don't emerge until later on. As funding discussions continue, we will keep you apprised of notable funding items being considered.

WFRC Bill Tracker

Although the legislature is spending a large portion of their early-session time in appropriations subcommittees, funding items aren't the only things we're closely watching. The number of bills and bill files opened continues to grow, and to help you stay informed of legislation that has either a direct or indirect impact to the work of WFRC and its partners, our [WFRC 2022 Bill Tracker](#) is updated regularly. The tracker shares brief summaries, bill status, and recommended positions. These positions of "support", "oppose", or "neutral" often take into account the considerations of our transportation and community partners. If you have any questions about the bills or the recommendations included, please feel free to contact me.

Governor State of the State

On Thursday evening, Governor Spencer J. Cox delivered his second State of the State address to a joint gathering of the House and Senate. He outlined his priorities for the legislative session, called out specific legislation which he supports, expressed his gratitude to the legislature for working with the administration to enhance Utah's quality of life, and called on Utahns to set aside divisions and come together for the common good. You can watch the full speech [HERE](#) or read the text [HERE](#).

ULCT Local Officials Day on the Hill

Legislators joined elected municipal officials, and youth city council members on Wednesday for the Utah League of Cities and Towns Local Officials Day on the Hill. Of note, the League presented its 2022 [Legislative Priorities](#) which outlined their principled approaches and recommendations for the following areas:

- Good planning and partnership
- Housing and Transportation
- Economic Development and Tax Policy
- Water
- Public Safety
- ARPA / CARES Act

You can also keep track of the League's issues with their weekly Friday Facts email, or by following along on their [bill tracker](#).

Our partners at the **Utah Association of Counties** are also actively engaged at the legislature on behalf of Utah's 29 counties. Here's where you can access the [UAC legislative bill tracker](#).

Week Ahead

Next Thursday, January 27 at 2:00pm is the regular (virtual) meeting of the WFRC Council. At that meeting, we will be joined by Senate President J. Stuart Adams and House Majority Leader Mike Schultz, as they share some of their thoughts on infrastructure funding and the 2022 legislative session. (President Adams was previously a member, and Rep Schutz is currently a member of WFRC.) All are welcome to join us virtually for the Council meeting; here is a link to the [agenda and virtual connection](#).

We also anticipate that a significant piece of legislation will be released next week from the Commission on Housing Affordability. Over the interim, the commission met to consider various housing affordability proposals which this bill will likely include such as changes to accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and moderate income housing plans (MIHP).

Additionally, our friends at the Utah Transit Authority will host Transit Day on the Hill on Tuesday, January 25th from 11-2 PM. On the South Capitol Plaza you can meet with UTA leadership and learn how public transit can be a solution for better air quality, increased housing affordability, and managed growth.

We will continue to keep you apprised of the latest happenings up on the hill, but always feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Best,

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