

February 15, 2022

Dear Honorable Members of the Executive Appropriations Committee,

On behalf of the Utah League of Cities and Towns and Wasatch Front Regional Council, we are reaching out to express our strongest **support for the full appropriations request by GOPB to fund technical planning assistance, as well as a much-needed statewide planning for growth conversation with Utah residents.** We appreciate the recommendation for partial funding from the EOCJ Appropriations Subcommittee, however, we strongly believe that a reduced amount is insufficient. The original appropriations request of **\$1.65M ongoing funding for “Planning Technical Assistance”, and \$1M one-time funding for “GOPB Planning For Growth”** were unanimously approved by the Unified Economic Opportunity Commission and are fully supported by the Utah League of Cities and Towns and Wasatch Front Regional Council.

As the legislature continues to pass legislation directing a vision on how to manage Utah’s nation-leading growth, including a pending proposal requiring station area plans around fixed guideway transit, local communities across the state often do not have the adequate tools, expertise, or resources to execute on the direction. How growth occurs matters, and it is imperative that we work together as state and local officials to ensure we grow in ways that will not result in a negative impact on our quality of life. By providing the state’s seven Associations of Governments and the Utah Department of Transportation with funding to provide technical assistance to local communities of all sizes, we can better accomplish the goals of the legislature as Utah continues to grow.

We often hear that Utahns are anxious about potential consequences of growth. In a Y2 survey from the League and WFRC, 63% of Utahns felt that Utah was growing too quickly. Additionally, a survey of League and WFRC members last fall found that local leaders overwhelmingly favored engaging the public on growth. A statewide conversation about growth would allow for values-based community engagement to help shift public opinion, provide a clear policy direction for Utah leaders, and aid local governments in making wise planning choices. We believe that without a state led conversation on growth, we can expect the challenges of community resistance to growth to continue.

As elected officials we want to work together with the legislature to ensure the best outcomes for our state, and the individual and wonderfully unique communities found here. Appropriating the full technical assistance request will provide additional support to help cities plan for growth in smart ways, and appropriating the full amount for a statewide growth conversation will help residents who are opposed to Utah’s growth gain a better understanding of the realities we face over the next 30 years. The full amount of this funding is consistent with the joint goals of the legislature and local governments and critical to enable success.

Please reach out if you would like to discuss this further and thank you for all you do for our state.

Sincerely,



Dawn R. Ramsey
Mayor, *City of South Jordan*
President, *Utah League of Cities and Towns*
Chair, *Regional Growth Committee,*
Wasatch Front Regional Council
Unified Economic Opportunity Commission



Jeff Silvestrini
Mayor, *Millcreek*
Chair, *Wasatch Front Regional Council*
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