



COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL of SALT LAKE CITY

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Austin Kimmel
Public Policy Analyst

DATE: September 15, 2026

RE: ORDINANCE: Maximum Daily Water Use Text Amendment

Item Schedule:

Briefing: July 21, 2026

Set Hearing: July 21, 2026

Public Hearing: August 18, 2026

Potential Action: September 15, 2026

[View Administrative Transmittal](#)

NEW INFORMATION

Legislative Action

Following the July 21 briefing, Council Member Dugan asked staff to prepare a motion requesting that the Administration return to the Council in nine months and submit its findings after the 200k limit takes effect, to determine whether the maximum should be reduced in the future. Public Utilities, in correspondence with Council staff, confirmed the timeframe is reasonable.

This effort aims to support water conservation goals and the health of the Great Salt Lake. As indicated in the staff report, Plan Salt Lake, Salt Lake City's general plan, includes an initiative to monitor impacts on the water supply and adjust regulations as needed to ensure supply meets demand.

Additionally, Council Member Puy requested language be added asking the Administration to explore additional incentives to encourage the adoption of smart irrigation controllers to reduce outdoor water consumption.

The following motion is included in the Council's Sept. 15 motion sheet:

MOTION 1 – ADOPT ORDINANCE AND INITIATE A LEGISLATIVE ACTION

I move that the Council adopt the ordinance. I further move the Council adopt a legislative action requesting the Administration:

- 1.) Analyze water use data once the maximum daily water use for non-residential properties at 200,000 gallons per day is in effect, to determine whether the maximum daily use could be further reduced, and submit a report to the City Council with their findings within 9 months; and*



- 2.) *Explore additional incentives to encourage the adoption of smart irrigation controllers by customers and other measures to reduce outdoor water use.*

Updated Social Services Definition

Following the August 18 meeting, the definition of “social services” was revised at Council Member Petro’s request. The updated definition reads: *“For purposes of this section social services shall mean a land use that provides direct service for people who are in need of assistance with basic needs (such as food, housing, or job training) or with medical needs (such as addiction and mental illness).”*

The following information was provided for the July 21 Council meeting. It is provided again for background purposes.

NEW INFORMATION – August 18, 2026

During the July 21 briefing, the Council requested a definition of “social services” in the proposed zoning code. The City Attorney’s Office provided updated ordinance language, which reads:

For purposes of this section social services shall mean a land use that provides help for people who are in need of assistance with basic needs (such as food, housing, or job training) or with medical needs (such as addiction and mental illness).

The updated ordinance with this language is included in the agenda materials for this item. If the Council supports this definition, it will be included in the final ordinance.

The following information was provided for the July 21 Council meeting. It is provided again for background purposes.

ISSUE AT-A-GLANCE

The Council will be briefed on a proposal to amend Salt Lake City Code Title 21A to limit daily water use for all new non-residential land uses, with some exceptions for institutional uses. If approved, the text amendment would cap maximum daily water use for new non-residential properties at 200,000 gallons per day.

This proposal follows a temporary land use regulation (TLUR) the City Council adopted on March 24, 2026 for the same purpose. It seeks to make the TLUR permanent by adopting the ordinance, as the TLUR is valid for 180 days until September 20, 2026.

The proposed text amendment exempts the following land uses from the daily water use regulation: “Agricultural, schools, government-owned or operated facilities that primarily provide social services, places of worship, and hospitals.”

When the Council adopted the TLUR, it also adopted a companion ordinance amendment to Title 17 of City Code, which regulates public services like utilities and defines maximum daily water use. State law requires that following the enactment of a TLUR, a recommendation from the Planning Commission is required for all zoning text amendments before the City Council can act.

During its May 27, 2026 meeting, the Planning Commission held a public hearing and recommended that the City Council adopt the proposed text amendment.

Goal of the briefing: Review the proposed text amendment and determine if the Council supports moving forward. The Council will then hold a public hearing and consider adopting the text map amendment at future meetings.

POLICY QUESTIONS

1. The Council may wish to ask the Administration how it will determine or define social services under the exemptions for government-owned facilities.
2. The Council may wish to ask the Administration to discuss the engagement it conducted for this proposal and whether potentially affected stakeholders, such as large commercial or industrial businesses, were made aware of the proposed changes.

OTHER KEY POINTS

- The proposed changes were initiated primarily by a record-low snowfall season and worsening drought conditions in Salt Lake City.
- According to the Planning Commission staff report, this proposal aligns with Plan Salt Lake, which includes an initiative to monitor impacts on the water supply and to adjust regulations as appropriate to ensure that supply is adequate to meet demand.
- The Council must adopt the proposed text amendment by September 20, 2026, for the regulations included in the TLUR to remain in effect.
- One primary purpose of amending Title 21A is to mirror the regulation in Title 17.16.010.C.
- If approved, the language in Title 21A would give the Planning Division reason to deny a proposed project expected to use over 200,000 gallons per day before it proceeds. Without this language, the land use would be approved under Title 21 but could later violate Title 17 and face enforcement for excessive water use.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. [Planning Commission Staff Report](#)
- B. [Stream May 27, 2026 Planning Commission Briefing](#)