



COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL of SALT LAKE CITY

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Austin Kimmel
Public Policy Analyst

DATE: July 21, 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: August 25, 2026

[View Administrative Transmittal](#)

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. 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.

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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 could be approved under Title 21A but could later violate Title 17 and face enforcement for excessive water use.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

In its staff report to the Planning Commission, Planning staff identified two key considerations, summarized below. The complete analysis is on pages 2-3 of the report, linked in the ATTACHMENTS section below.

Consideration 1: How the proposal helps implement city goals & policies identified in adopted plans: Planning staff found the proposed amendment generally aligns with the city goals and policies identified in the adopted Plan Salt Lake.

Consideration 2: Public Input: The proposal was noticed to all registered community organizations and the 45-day comment period closed May 17. Planning Staff received a letter from a resident outside Salt Lake City objecting that the proposal is “a targeted zoning tool rather than a natural resource management policy.” The letter can be read in full on page 13 of the Planning Commission Staff Report.

PROJECT CHRONOLOGY

March 24, 2026 – Council adopts Temporary Land Use Regulations (TLUR)

March 31, 2026 – Mayor Mendenhall initiates petition to adopt temporary land use regulations.

April 12, 2026 – 45-day public input period starts with notice to all recognized organizations, and the Planning Division list serve.

May 14, 2026 – Planning Commission Public Hearing notice posted and emailed.

May 17, 2026 – 45-day public input period ends.

May 27, 2026 – Planning Commission Public Hearing held and recommendation provided.

June 4, 2026 – Final Draft of Ordinance received from Attorney's Office.

June 10, 2026 – Transmittal received in City Council Office

ATTACHMENTS

- A. [Planning Commission Staff Report](#)
- B. [Stream May 27, 2026 Planning Commission Briefing](#)
- C. [Plan Salt Lake \(2015\)](#)