UTAH LEAGUE OF CITIES AND TOWNS

Legislative Policy Committee

January 12, 2026

RE SPECT
OUT COMES
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ULCT Bill Tracker

LPC Sign-in

LPC Homework:

1) faces and places to legislators (prop tax, housing, LAA)
2) Property tax analysis (what does SB 95 mean for your city?)
3) Examples of regional infrastructure needs

AGENDA:

1. Welcome
2. 2026 Political Outlook
3. Session Logistics
4. Messages for Legislators
5. Revenue & Taxes
6. Wildland Urban Interface
7. Housing and Land Use
8. Rapid Fire Updates
9. Bill Tracker
10. Adjourn

REMINDERS:

- January 21st: Local Officials Day at the Capitol
- April 22-24: Midyear Conference in St. George

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- Next LPC: Mon. January 26 at 12pm at the Capitol, Senate Room 220
- Upcoming LPCs:
  - 1/26, 2/2, 2/9, 2/17 (Tue), 2/23, 3/2

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Upcoming Events

Elected Officials Essentials	• Utah Legislature 101: **Tuesday, January 13th at noon via Zoom** • Running a Small Community 101: **Friday, January 16th at noon via Zoom** • Budget and Finance 101 pt 2: **TBD via Zoom**
Local Officials Day at the Legislature	**January 21, 2026** at the State Capitol (youth) and Salt Palace (all)
National League of Cities Congressional City Conference	**March 16-18** in Washington, DC
ULCT Midyear Conference	**April 22-24** in St. George, Utah

2026 Political Outlook

Retiring Legislators

Senators

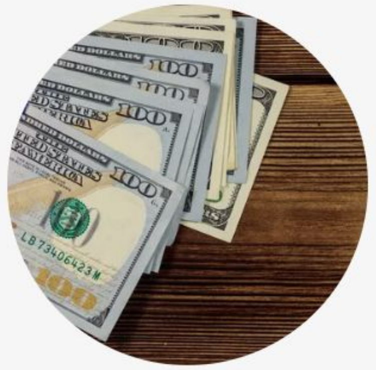
- Ann Millner (D5)
- Jerry Stevenson (D6)
- Nate Blouin (D13)

Representatives

- Matthew Gwynn (D6)
- Karen Peterson (D12)
- Karianne Lisonbee (D14)
- Stewart Barlow (D17)
- Sandra Hollins (D21)
- Bridger Bolinder (D29)
- Carol S. Moss (D34)
- Cheryl Acton (D38)
- Mike Kohler (D59)
- Tyler Clancy (D60)
- Christine Watkins (D67)

It's Campaign Season for All Other Legislators

ISSUES



Truth in Taxation

The messaging from last year, that we've been given the biggest tax cut in history doesn't tell the whole story. We've gone from being the 15th highest taxed state to the 11th.

Truth in Education

We keep asking teachers to do more outside their scope. Is this fair or sustainable?

Truth in Legislation

1500 bills will be presented at the Utah 2026 Legislative Session. Do they all get read, presented transparently, or horse traded?

Fair Taxes

Our community is strongest when when we pool our funds to protect our common resources and provide services for the common good. I will work toward fair taxes by:

- **Ensuring individuals and companies all contribute fairly** since we all benefit from public infrastructure and other common goods.
- **Ensure property taxes are based on realized value, not projected value** and are only charged when property is transferred or improved.
- **Eliminate the grocery tax and state tax on social security income.**
- **Wisely and transparently spend taxpayer funds.**

Fiscal Responsibility, Local Control & Government Transparency

Fiscal responsibility and local control are core Utah values. Taxpayers deserve leaders who respect their hard-earned dollars, keep government efficient, and ensure decisions are made as close to the community as possible. I will work to strengthen transparency, reduce unnecessary spending, and support policies that allow cities, counties, and school districts to govern effectively without overreach from the state....

Read more

$

Lower Taxes

Fighting to reduce the tax burden on Utah families and businesses. Your hard-earned money belongs in your pocket, not in government coffers.

Transparency

Demanding open and accountable government at every level. Utahns deserve to know how their tax dollars are being spent.

Sunset property taxes for seniors on fixed incomes - When attending the Davis County tax commissioner hearing, I was the first to stand and express these points. I saw that one commissioner understood this, but the other two did not. I sat next to a senior citizen who has to sell his house and land because his property values are so high that he can't afford his home anymore. This is heartbreaking. Seniors, at a certain age or with a specific tax-to-income ratio that is unsustainable, need our help. Their taxes need to be locked in place and even "sunset" after a certain age. Why, despite owning their property, can't they keep it? If elected, I will be addressing this issue.

Legislative Priorities

BUILDING THE FUTURE GRID

Energy powers our homes, innovation & defense. AI runs on data centers. Data centers rely on energy. And it all flows through the grid, our energy highways. The next industrial revolution starts here.

WE DON'T REINTERPRET, WE UPHOLD

The Constitution endures because it works. Utah stands firm in defending the rule of law, the separation of powers and the freedoms they protect. Guardrails on the government protect liberty for citizens, and that balance must never be compromised by politics or outside influence.

DATA PRIVACY

Digital freedom must never become digital manipulation. We must keep our online world aligned with American values and individual rights.

WATER SHAPES TOMORROW

In the West, water means everything: strong communities, thriving farms, future growth and lasting freedom. Investing in infrastructure, smart conservation and long-term planning. Every drop counts, and securing water means securing Utah's future for generations.

ELECTION INTEGRITY

Secure. Transparent. Verified. Utah sets the gold standard for election integrity with advanced safeguards to ensure only Americans decide American elections.

Senate Priorities

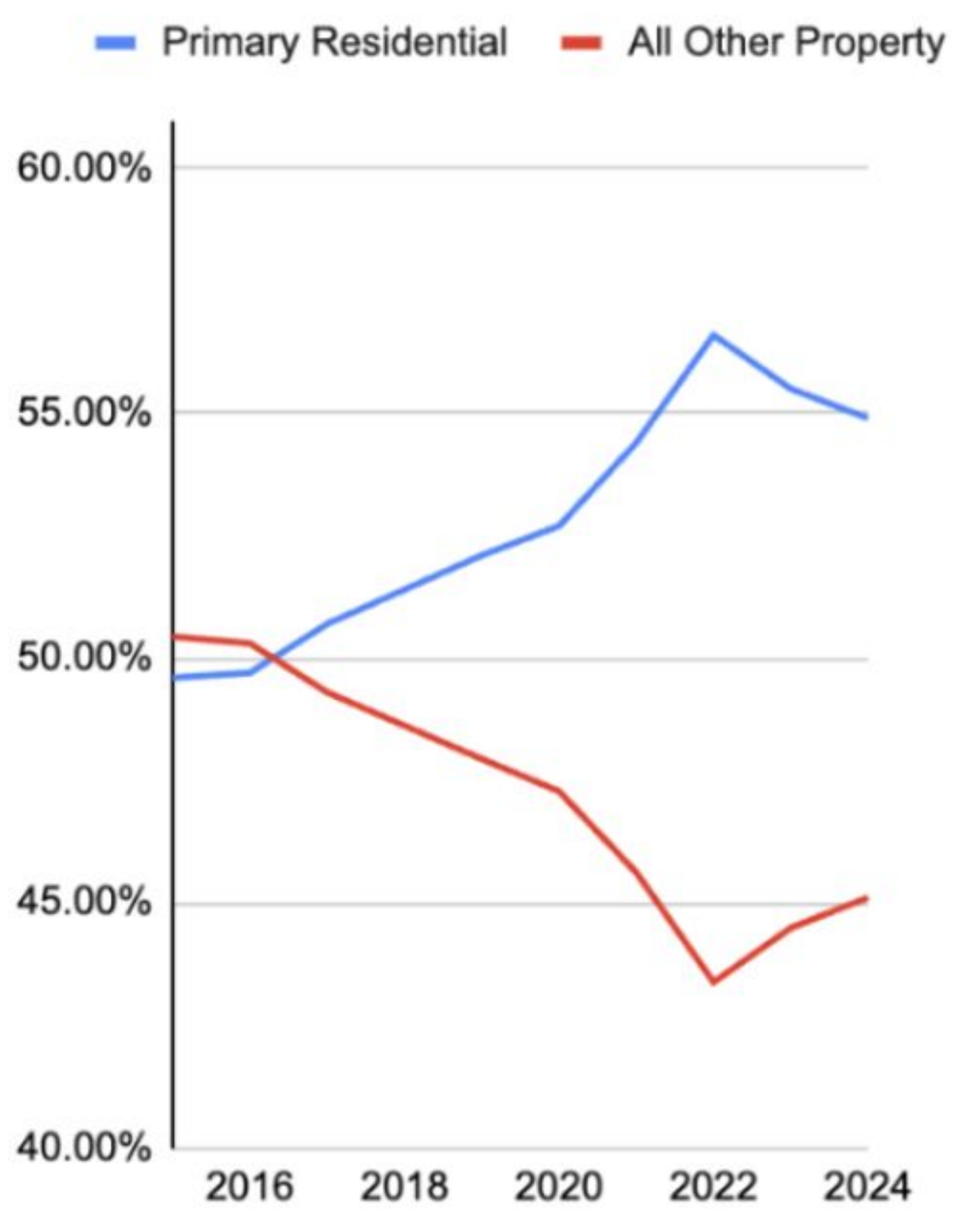
The Property Tax Burden in Utah has Shifted to Homeowners

Reining In Property Tax

Utahns are feeling the pinch of increasing property taxes. Over the past few years, local governments and school districts have approved high property tax increases. Additionally, increases in home values relative to other property types have skewed the property tax burden borne by Utah homeowners.

Utahns deserve to have their voices heard when decisions are made about how property taxes are levied and spent so that any tax increase is not only justified, but necessary to provide essential services citizens depend on.

We'll take steps to reduce property taxes for Utah homeowners and ensure taxpayers can make their voices heard on local property tax increases.



Utah State Tax Commission

Keeping Homeownership Within Reach

Utah families deserve the chance to build a life, own a home, and put down roots in the communities they love. Lawmakers have cut red tape and empowered cities and the free market to meet demand, so the next generation can afford to live, work, and raise families here. There is still more to be done to keep the American Dream within reach for new homeowners and maintain the quality of life we all know and love.

The Legislature will help cities invest in the infrastructure needed to bring new homes onto the market at prices Utahns can afford. We will also work to improve coordination between state, local, and private partners to ensure new homeownership opportunities strengthen communities rather than straining them.

By supporting infrastructure, simplifying regulations, and letting the free market work, Utah will make homeownership a reality and keep the American Dream alive.

OF BUILDING INSPECTIONS ARE NOW COMPLETED WITHIN ONE BUSINESS DAY, THANKS TO H.B. 58 (2025) **LOWERING BUILDING COSTS**

That's three times faster than the required standard

Utah League of Cities and Towns

Cutting Government Spending

Just like Utah families have to balance a budget, Utah's economy is strong because we live within our means. We're not afraid to make tough decisions to keep government lean and accountable. Every dollar saved is a dollar that stays in the pockets of hard-working Utahns.

Utahns are feeling the financial pressure from a flurry of recent property tax increases from cities, counties, and school districts. Tax hikes should be a last resort after government entities first exhaust all other options to cut waste and improve efficiency.

We are challenging all levels of government – cities, counties, school districts, and even ourselves – to take a hard look at their budgets and cut anything that isn't benefiting Utahns or is better delivered by Utah's businesses, non-profits, or citizens.

Restoring Our Representative Democracy

For more than a century, Utah has struck a careful balance: giving citizens the ability to propose initiatives and referendums while preserving the responsibility of elected representatives to refine and improve those laws as circumstances change.

A recent misguided Utah Supreme Court decision disrupts that balance and threatens to create a new class of untouchable "super-laws." These measures fall far short of the rigorous standards required for constitutional amendments, but would be almost impossible to update, amend, or refine — handing enormous power to unelected judges and to wealthy outside groups who try to influence our state.

Utahns deserve better.

This year, Utah voters will have the chance to approve a constitutional amendment that restores the balance our founders intended. It reaffirms that Utah's laws should be shaped and updated by the elected representatives who are accountable to Utahns — not locked in place by outside interests or unelected judges.

Addressing Homelessness

Urged by state leaders, Salt Lake City has stepped up enforcement against open air drug dealing, property crimes, and unsanctioned camping in public spaces like the Jordan River Trail. Our capital city's streets are safer today because of those efforts, but there's still work to do.

Effectively addressing homelessness requires more than just compassion – it also requires accountability. A homeless person sleeping on the streets is much more likely to die from a drug overdose than from exposure to the elements.

We will continue working with cities, counties, and the Homeless Services Board to streamline our homeless services system, focus resources on programs that deliver results, and help people get the treatment they need to turn their lives around.

Tackling Aging Infrastructure & Insufficient Supply

Across the state, aging water systems and limited storage threaten our ability to meet future needs.

In 2024, lawmakers passed H.B. 280 to strengthen coordination between state and local agencies and ensure every taxpayer dollar is used wisely to support Utah's long-term water needs.

The Legislature is taking the same long-term approach to water as it does for roads—investing in reliable infrastructure, expanding storage, and maintaining the systems that will keep the taps running for generations to come.

By 2060, Utah will need an estimated

$38 Billion

for drinking water infrastructure

$15 Billion

for water quality upgrades and

$6 Billion

for irrigation and canal improvements

Utah Division of Water Resources Report

Session Logistics

Legislative Policy Committee

- **LPC is held every Monday at noon**
  - except for the week of 2/16, when LPC will be held on that Tuesday 2/17

- **Room 210 of the Senate Building and Online**
  - You can vote and participate online or in person, but you need to sign in

Legislative Policy Committee

- Bill Tracking Positions*
  - **Support** - Good bill
  - **Oppose** - (motion to hate?)
  - **Neutral** - generally used for bills we negotiate
  - **Monitor** - watching for situational awareness
  - **No position** - did not reach consensus at LPC
  - **Position pending** - haven’t take a position yet

*There may be political reasons to take a position on a bill that don’t match how strongly we feel about a policy

DRAFT LEGISLATION

HB###
Name of Bill (Sponsor Name)

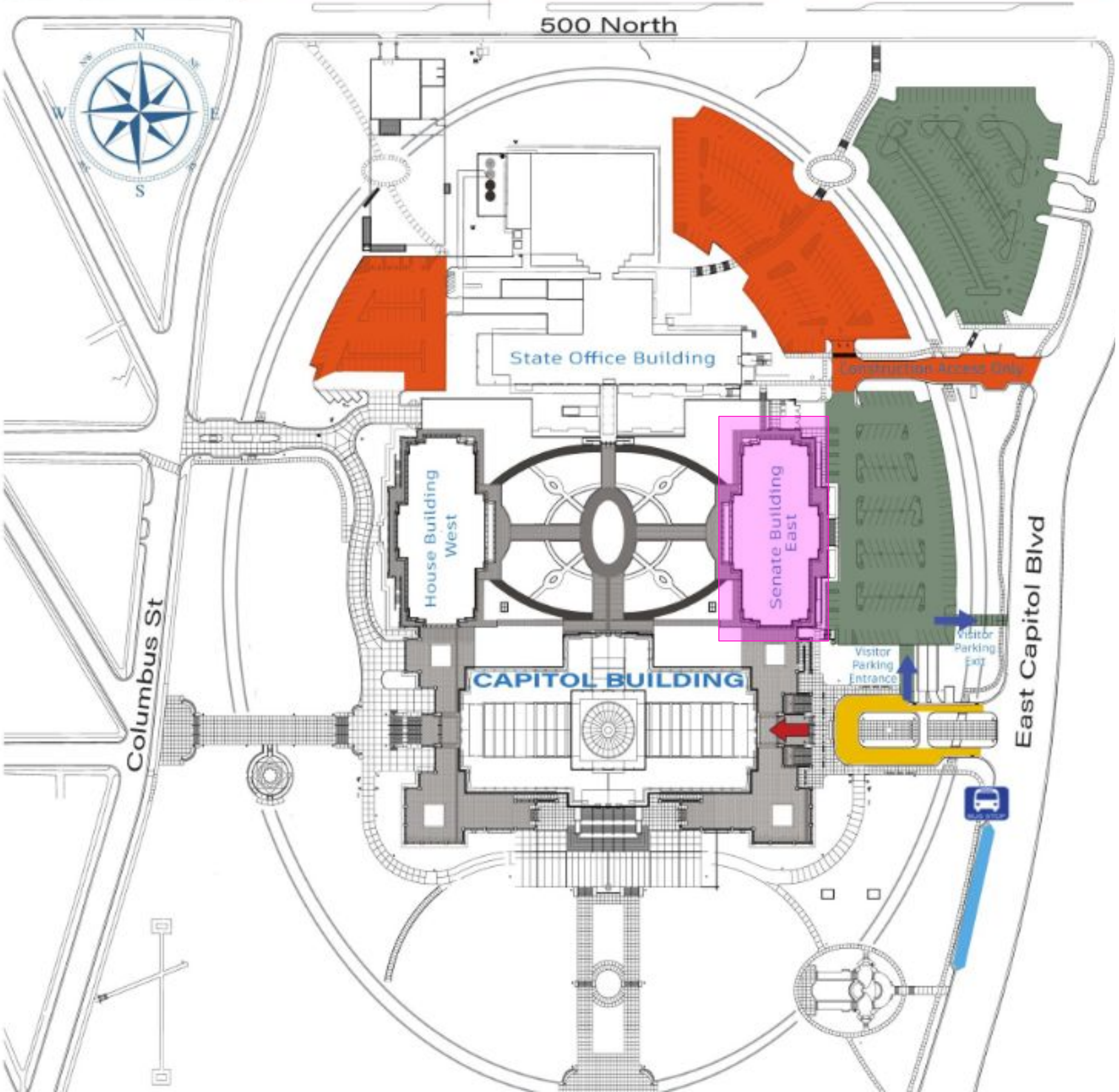
QR CODE THAT TAKES YOU TO THE BILL

Staff Recommendation:
Position Pending
(Negotiating to support)

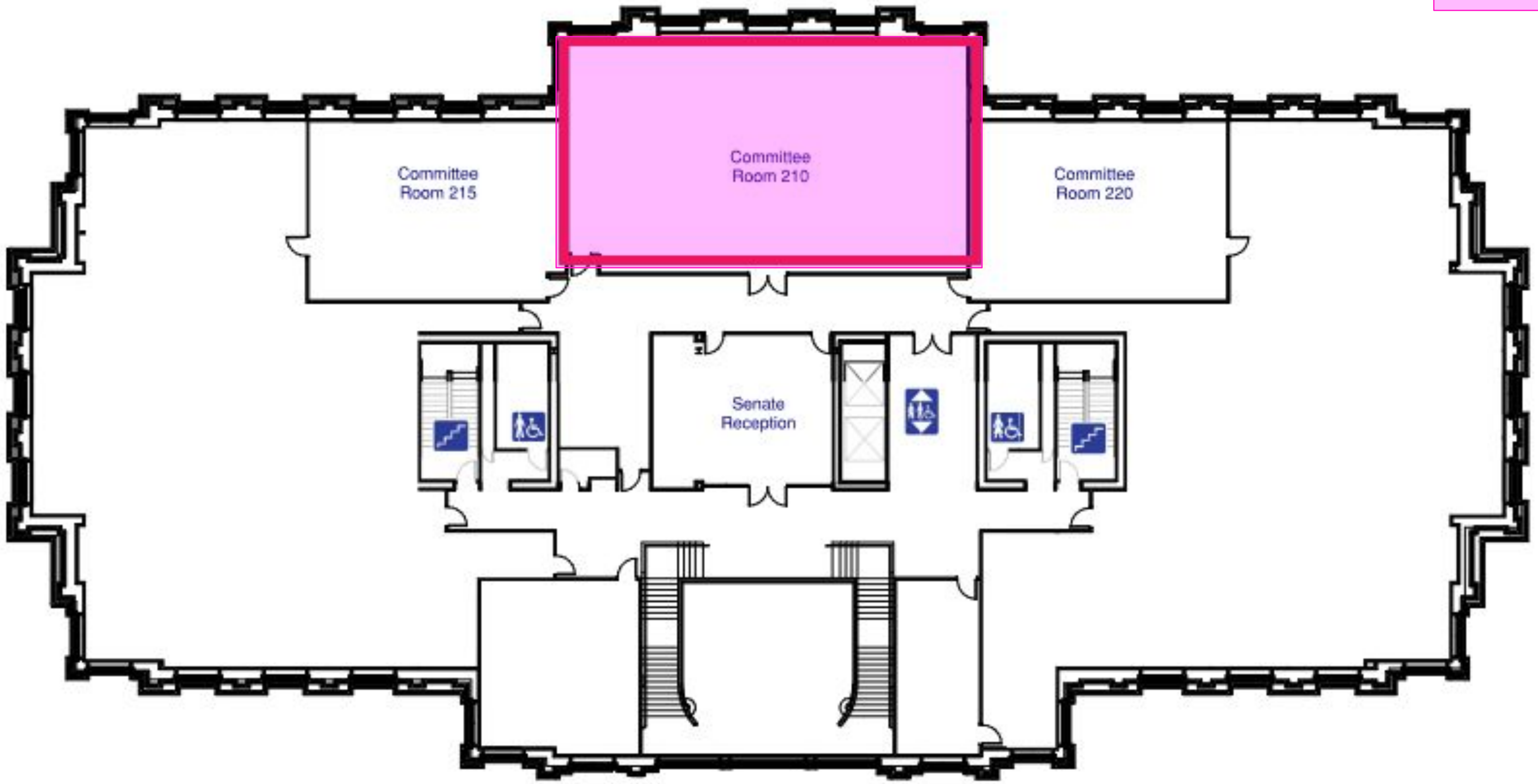
Useful Information about the key provisions of this legislation.

Less useful information but we are being thorough

Extremely niche part of the legislation but we know the attorneys will ask about it so we are including it, you probably won't be able to read it because the font is so small (Cassidy hates this section…)



Senate Building



Senate Room 210

Messages for Legislators

What you need to do with your legislators:
Faces and Places

1) Explain how **property tax *works and* impacts** your city

2) Show what your city is doing on **housing and land use**
   a) Cities plan for housing but we don't build housing
   b) cities don't control market forces (interest rates, labor, land, inflation, materials)

3) Restore the funding ($500k) for **Local Administrative Advisor**
   a) Focused on communities without full-time staff
   b) 1,279 projects in 123 communities in first full year
   c) LAAs in each AOG with ULCT coordination

Revenue & Taxes

A Performance Audit of

Local Authorities' Property Tax

And the Shifting Tax Burden

FINDING 1.1
Some Local Entities Have Room for Improvement in Truth in Taxation

NO RECOMMENDATION

FINDING 1.2
There Are Concerns with Truth in Taxation Implementation

RECOMMENDATION 1.1
The Legislature should consider clarifying the meaning and intent of virtual participation.

CONCLUSION

Overall, Utah's truth in taxation system is working as intended: collections generally align with budgets, discrepancies are minor, and the Property Tax Division has recently denied some property tax increases due to truth in taxation noncompliance.

Timeline

The timeline of truth in taxation poses unique challenges for fiscal-year taxing entities.

Virtual Participation

Virtual participation in TNT hearings is another area of confusion for local taxing entities.

A Parallel Inflationary Structure Could Be Applied to the Property Tax Administration of Local Entities. The Legislature could authorize an automatic inflationary adjustment to be included in the certified tax rate prepared by the Property Tax Division (the Division). If an entity wanted revenue beyond the inflationary adjustment, it would remain subject to the full TNT process, preserving transparency and accountability.

This framework could improve the TNT process in a few ways:

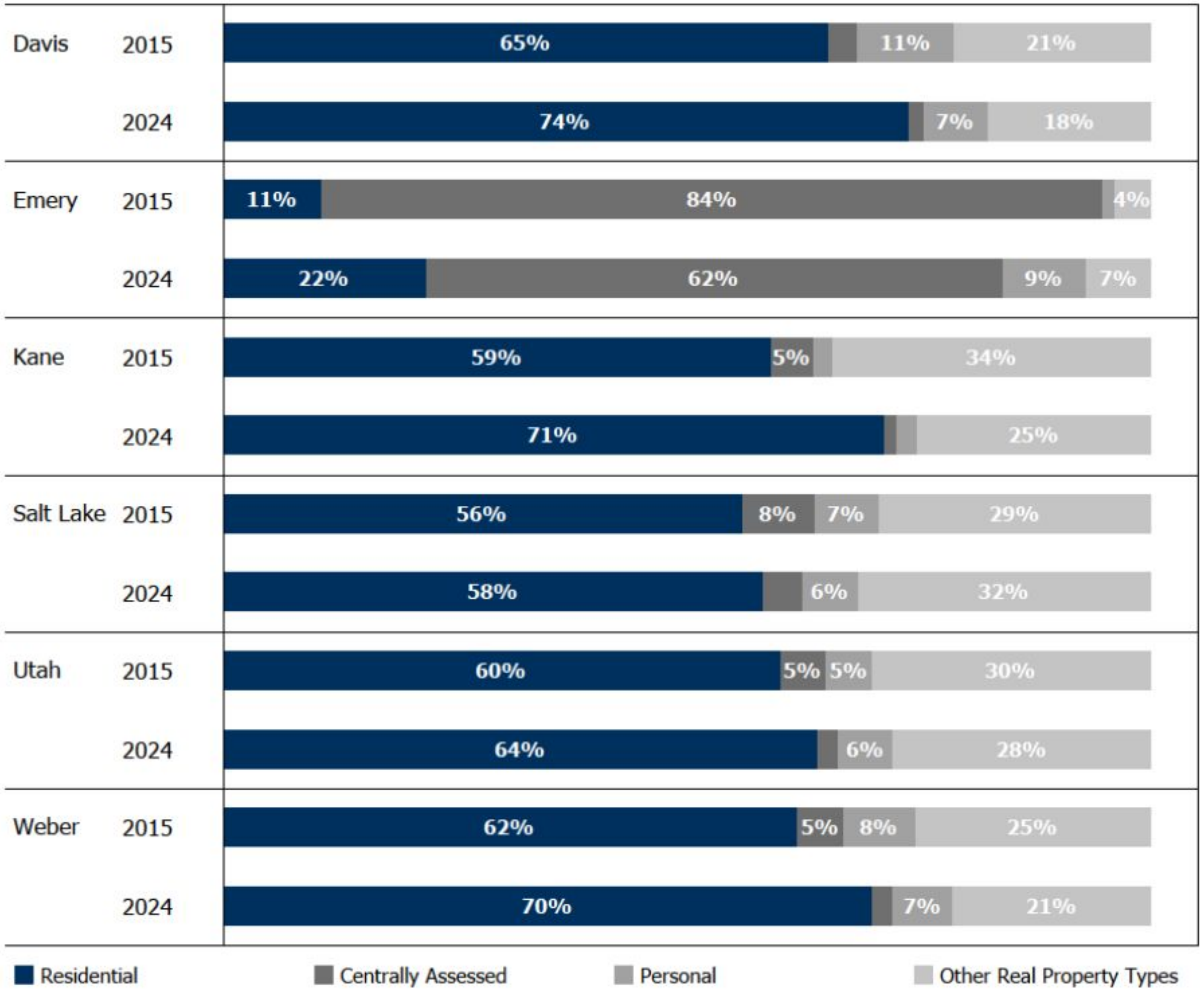
Transparency	Accountability	Efficiency
Taxpayers would be able to distinguish between revenue increases due to inflation and those resulting from policy choices by elected or appointed officials.	Entities seeking additional revenue would need to justify increases beyond inflation.	Taxing entities could maintain service levels in the face of inflation without relying on less transparent mechanisms, such as fee increases.

BACKGROUND

In 2018 the Legislature froze the basic levy tax rate at 0.0016 for 5 years. At the same time, they added a component to the basic levy to maintain a 15 percent contribution from local funds. The rate was frozen for a period of five years, ending after the 2023 property tax collection.

Finding	Recommendation
FINDING 2.1 **The Increase in Home Values Influenced Rising Property Taxes**	**NO RECOMMENDATION**
FINDING 2.2 **The Basic Levy Tax Rate Freeze Resulted in Unexpected Increases in Property Tax Revenue**	**NO RECOMMENDATION**
FINDING 2.3 **The Property Tax Burden is Shifting to Residential Taxpayers**	**NO RECOMMENDATION**

Figure 2.3 The Audit's Sample Counties All Saw a Shift in Tax Burden to Residential Property Owners. Over the past 10 years, the sample counties saw increases in the percentage of taxable value held by residential properties to varying degrees.



Source: Auditor generated using Property Tax Division data.
**Note: The "Other Real Property Types" category contains taxable value for commercial and agricultural*

BACKGROUND

Centrally assessed property value, assessed at the state level, peaked in 2022 with a statewide taxable value of almost $30 billion. It has since dropped back down to approximately $27 billion for 2024, an amount that is $1 billion more than the statewide value in 2015. This change in value can be attributed to

- centrally assessed property values increasing at a slower rate than other property types
- appeals granted to some centrally assessed properties
- telecommunications properties are no longer being centrally assessed.

Even though telecommunications properties are still assessed through another property type, the change in taxable value in some counties has been substantial enough to shift the tax burden to homeowners. The distribution of primary residences compared to other residential properties, and the Tax Commission's increasing oversight of county assessors have also impacted the residential tax burden distribution in some counties.

FINDING 3.1
Other Causes of Increasing Residential Tax Burden Can Vary by County

RECOMMENDATION 3.1
The Legislature should consider whether statute concerning primary residential exemption eligibility would benefit from a statewide requirement.

DRAFT LEGISLATION

S.B. 97 Property Tax Rate Amendments (D. McCay)

Staff Recommendation:
Position pending

1. Taxing entity may not raise property tax more than 5%
2. Change definition of “locally assessed new growth”
   a. current definition, “minus any change in value to property as a result of physical improvements, that is less than 100% higher than the taxable value of the property for the previous year”
3. “Project area new growth” for certain entities does not include a change in value for tangible personal property
   a. most tax increment financing tools

Homework: analysis of what (2) & (3) would mean in your city

DRAFT LEGISLATION

H.B. 161 Property Tax Modifications
(J. Koford)

Staff Recommendation:
Position pending

Requires a constitutional amendment (HJR7)

Currently, a primary residential unit is taxed at 55% of its value

HB 161 would tax a primary residential unit at 40% of its value

Intent:

- reduce tax burden on homeowners
- maintain revenue for taxing entities

Homework: what would the impact of this bill be on your city?

DRAFT LEGISLATION

HB TBD (Rep. Auxier)

What Is Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR)?

- Constitutional limit on revenue + spending growth tied to **inflation + population growth or other set percentage**.
- **Refund of surplus revenues** to taxpayers when revenue exceeds the cap.
- **Voter approval** required for new tax increases.
- Flexibility in how rebates are returned (credits, rate reductions, checks).

Staff recommendation:
Position pending

DRAFT LEGISLATION

H.B. 170 School Board Referendum Amendments (R. Shipp)

Staff recommendation:
Position pending

- Makes school board decisions subject to referendum process

DRAFT LEGISLATION

HB TBD: Rep. Karen Peterson

Truth in Taxation Amendments

Staff recommendation:

Position pending

working toward support

Problems to solve:

- public concern that entity has started their new budget by the Aug Truth in Taxation hearing & thus the tax proceeds

Part 1: required preliminary property tax increase meeting

- In May/early June, taxing entity shall notify public of the intent to raise property taxes
  - shall do May/June mtg or you can’t do Aug TinT hearing
- notice & meeting shall include “approximate” dollar and percentage amounts

Part 2: “tentative operating budget”

- adopt a budget that does not include the proposed property tax increase revenue
- present an “alternate tentative budget” with the

DRAFT LEGISLATION

HB TBD:
Rep. Karen Peterson
Local Gov't Fees Amendments (Transportation Utility Fee)

Staff recommendation:
Position pending
working toward support

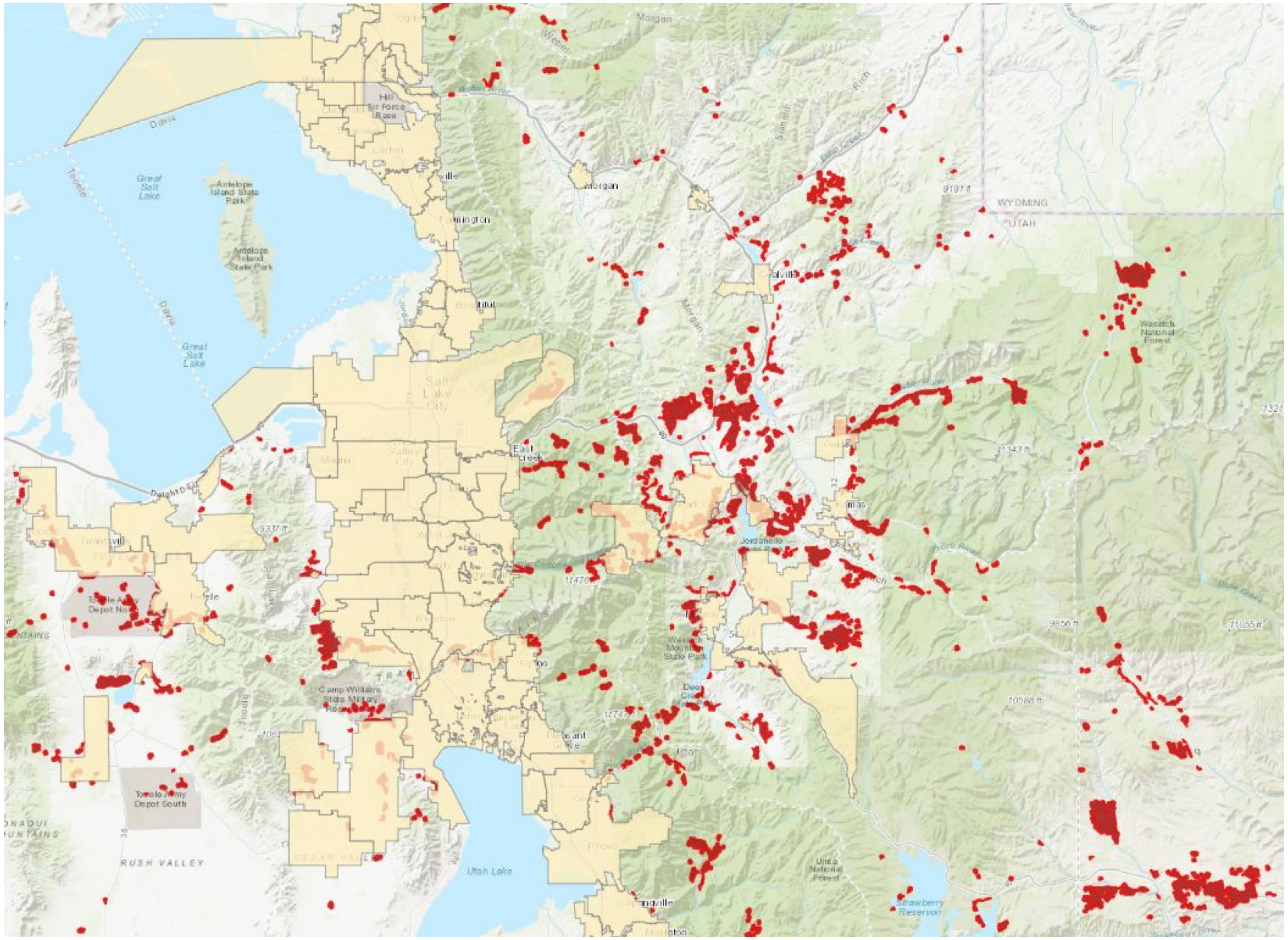
1. TUF methodology
   a. statutory language to require trip counts, traffic impacts
   b. cannot use property value or ownership
   c. exclude the lowest day of the week
2. TUF appeal process
   a. require a local appeal process about fee category or alternate data about trip counts

Meeting this Thursday

If you want to see the draft, contact Cam **today**

Wildland Urban Interface

New Maps Out Now



Housing and Land Use

DRAFT LEGISLATION

H.B. 68 Housing Amendments (C. Roberts)

Staff Recommendation: Support (w/amendments

This bill is mostly technical but makes changes in three main categories:

i. *State Agency Restructuring of Housing Programs*

- Creates Division of Housing at GOEO and structures state-level housing programming under this division

ii. *Grant, Sale, or Lease of government properties*

iii. *Repeals the Commission on Housing Affordability, the low-income ADU loan guarantee pilot program, the subordinate shared appreciation loan program, and the Housing and Community Development Division within the Dept. of Workforce Services*

DRAFT LEGISLATION

H.B. 184 Local Land Use Revisions (R. Ward)

Staff Recommendation: **Oppose** (as drafted)

- **“Preferred land use regulation” = starter homes, 5,400 sq. ft. lots, and IADUs/DADUs**
- Applicant submits a request that a municipality accept a preferred land use regulation as part of a development application
- If municipal staff determines that part of the application qualifies as a preferred land use regulation, a planning commission or legislative body has 30 days to approve or deny request for preferred land use regulation

DRAFT LEGISLATION

H.B. 184 Local Land Use Revisions (R. Ward)

Staff Recommendation:
Oppose *as drafted*

- To deny, planning commission/Council must make findings on the record that cons outweigh pros for the community and deny by majority vote
- 31 days after applicant submits request with no action from the planning commission or council, the preferred land use regulation becomes a vested permitted use for that property

1/9 LPC Housing Advisory Subgroup Slido: 74% very or somewhat concerned

DRAFT LEGISLATION

HB TBD (Rep. Koford)
Land Use Task Force/CHA

Staff Recommendation:
Position Pending
working toward support

- technical clean ups to **HB 368** (done)
- **planning commission** training req'ts (done)
- **planning commission** removal/recusal process (still negotiating, Board/LPC advisory direction)
- shall allow **detached accessory dwelling units** under certain conditions (still negotiating, Board/LPC advisory direction)
- delete req't to have **annexation policy plans** (still negotiating, Board/LPC advisory direction)
- clarify **incorporation process** due to the West Hills court decision (still negotiating)
- **"reasonable diligence"** definition (Board/LPC advisory direction, still negotiating)
- **public infrastructure standards** (no consensus)

DRAFT LEGISLATION

HB TBD (Rep. Roberts)

Staff Recommendation:
Position Pending
working toward support

Infrastructure funding partnership

- bill coming soon
- focus on state $ for system infrastructure (water, sewer, etc.) with a nexus to housing units that promote affordable home ownership

Homework: analysis of regional infrastructure needs (system improvements) in your city

Rapid Fire Updates

Updated Bill Tracker Positions

- HB13 - Municipal Services Fees and Political Sub Lien Amend (Cutler) **Support**
- HB33 - Political Signs Amendments (Teuscher) **Neutral**
- HB79 - Governmental Immunity Amendments (Gwynn) **Support**
- SB28 - County Classifications Modifications - (Winterton) **Position Pending**
- SB48 - Kratom Revision - (Vickers) **Monitor**

ULCT Bill Tracker

LPC Homework:

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3) Examples of regional infrastructure needs