

Integrating Water and Land Use Planning Project
Utah Water Task Force Update
November 2021

In 2021, the Utah Legislature approved \$270,000 for an FY22 non-lapsing Request for Appropriation to advance community efforts to integrate water supply and demand with land use planning. This need is imperative because the ability for the State of Utah to accommodate new growth is directly affected by the water availability and its wise use. There is broad consensus that optimizing and reducing demand for municipal, institutional and industrial water is critical to ensuring that Utah's limited water supply can equitably meet the needs of people, agriculture, business and nature.

Strengthening the nexus of land use and water planning, and advancing efforts to optimize or reduce consumption of municipal, industrial and institutional water use in Utah, are goals that have been supported by notable key stakeholder processes, studies, and legislation, including, but not limited to the:

- [2017 Recommended State Water Strategy](#)
- 2020 Utah State Water Policy – [Utah Code §73-1-21](#)
- [2020 Great Salt Lake HCR10 Steering Group Recommendations](#) to help maintain adequate flows to Great Salt Lake and [reports and studies](#) commissioned by the [Great Salt Lake Advisory Council](#)

To help kick-off this important project as early as possible, in March 2021, the Great Salt Lake Advisory Council (GSLAC) provided \$30,000 in funding for Phase 1. The [Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy](#) at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (Babbitt Center), working with [Western Resource Advocates](#) (consultant team) were engaged through the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands to develop a framework for Integrated Water and Land Use Planning. The consultant team completed the tasks with plenty of praise, support and requests from communities for further consultation and assistance. Phase 1 consisted of the following:

- 1. Develop a Utah-Tailored Assessment Framework for Community Action** - The consultant team developed a Utah-specific assessment framework and related materials for use by, and with, municipalities, counties, planners, and others that can serve as a tool to:
 - (i) evaluate the status of a local community/government's approach to incorporating water with land planning processes and codes;
 - (ii) identify practices, policies and laws that support and improve communities/local governments incorporation of water issues, water supplies, water conservation/optimization into their planning, development, processes, and codes.
 - (iii) identify barriers, including knowledge or resource gaps, that limit a local jurisdiction's ability to incorporate water into land planning and development processes; and
- 2. Stakeholder Outreach** – The consultant team conducted interviews to gather information from interested stakeholders and refine the Framework for Community Action.
- 3. Expressions of Interest from Municipalities, Water Providers, or Other Organizations** – As part of the outreach process, stakeholders were asked about their

interest in a future multi-stakeholder workshop about integrating water and land use planning. Universal enthusiasm was expressed for involvement in subsequent phases.

The Phase 1 framework and tools are hosted on the Utah Division of Water Resources website at <https://water.utah.gov/integrated-water-land-planning/>.

The Utah Division of Water Resources has contracted with the Babbitt to complete Phase 2 of the Integrating Water and Land Use Planning project. The Phase 2 work has begun and includes the development of workshop curriculum, stakeholder workshops and technical assistance, through 2023, with a final report due in June 2024. Importantly, the stakeholder workshops will be broad-based including, but not limited to, senior staff from public works, water providers, parks departments, planning and community development departments, city management, local elected officials, developers and other community interests.

At the conclusion of Phase 2, it is anticipated that a number of municipalities and counties will be able to participate in the project, increasing the breadth of integrated water and land use planning across urban and rural locations of the state, helping to stretch water supplies, while still allowing for anticipated growth.

Utah Integrating Water & Land Use Planning Project: Growing Water Smart (GWS) Implementation

