

Murray City Municipal Council
City Council Workshop

Meeting Minutes of Monday, July 28, 2025
Murray City Hall, 10 East 4800 South, Poplar Meeting Room, Murray, Utah 84107

Attendance:

Council Members:

Paul Pickett	District #1
Pam Cotter	District #2 – Council Chair
Scott Goodman	District #3
Diane Turner	District #4
Adam Hock	District #5 – Council Vice Chair

Others:

Brett Hales	Mayor	Jennifer Kennedy	City Council Executive Director
Doug Hill	Chief Administrative Officer	Pattie Johnson	Council Administration
G.L. Critchfield	City Attorney	Brenda Moore	Finance Director
Craig Burnett	Police Chief	Sydney Maxfield	Police Department
Kristin Reardon	Police Department	Ben Gray	IT Support
Russ Kakala	Public Works Director	Chad Wilkinson	Community and Economic Dev. Director
Kim Sorensen	Parks Director	Erica Brown	Chief Communications Officer
Citizens			

Introduction and Overview: Council Chair Cotter called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

Discussion Items:

- Police Department Reports – Council Member Goodman said all Council Members receive weekly police reports from the Murray Police Department detailing criminal activity in their districts. Mr. Goodman said the reports are informative and descriptive, but to better identify high crime areas in his district he recently requested a heat map. Mr. Goodman believed having access to the heat map in addition to weekly police reports could help other Council Members and requested they be provided in the future. Crime Analyst Sydney Maxfield confirmed she could easily generate heat maps and include them into her weekly reporting to the Council. Police Chief Craig Burnett confirmed that a city-wide heat map could be made available on the City's website.
- Parking in Bike Lanes and Bike Lane Restrictions – Council Member Turner requested clarification on new legislation prohibiting vehicles from parking in bike lanes and noted complaints about the City's implementation of the new Code. Police Chief Burnett said that officers were focused on educating the public about the new law which prevents citizens from parking in front of their own homes if it is a restricted bike lane.

City Attorney Critchfield said the City was following Utah House Bill 290, Bicycle Lane Safety Amendments correctly and confirmed that the State Code prohibits any vehicle from parking in a restricted bike lane for any reason.

Mr. Goodman noted that most houses in the City predate the new code and asked whether bike lane changes could be made on City-owned streets. Chief Burnett explained that State Code applies regardless. A restricted bike lane runs parallel to the curb, while a shared bike lane allows bicycles to travel in the same lane as cars. Some restricted lanes are set away from the curb, allowing space for vehicle parking, others provide no parking space. He thought education was most important at this time and so only warning

notices are currently being issued. Citations would begin when repeat offenders ignore a warning notice.

Chief Burnett confirmed bike lanes from 700 West to Vine Street are all restricted and residents on 700 west from Winchester to 5300 South had nowhere for visitors to park anymore. He noted that a Murray resident on 700 West was upset because parking was no longer allowed in front of their home for friends or guests. He explained that due to the restricted bike lane, painted closer to the curb, with no space allowed for a car, family members resorted to parking on the front lawn to avoid a citation.

Ms. Turner thought the City should not discourage cyclists. The Chief said it was a catch-22 because the new Code was discouraging for many Murray citizens. Ms. Cotter said parking should be allowed in front of a home, even for a few hours, noting that others had parked on curbs and sidewalks to avoid a citation.

Mr. Critchfield said bikers should feel safe using bike lanes in Murray, biking should be encouraged, however he felt with more density coming to Murray, more parking spaces would be needed that did not involve street parking. Mr. Goodman agreed bike lanes are necessary but agreed it was concerning that some citizens can no longer park in front of their own home. Mr. Hock pointed out that the entire R-1-8 zone allows for street parking and said a solution was needed for some areas.

Council Members compared restricted bike lanes with shared bike lanes, discussed safety, road striping differences and locations of bike lanes in different areas of the City. There was consensus that shared bike lanes were just as useful as restricted bike lanes. Ms. Turner asked if the City could do anything to modify the new legislation.

Chief Administrative Officer Doug Hill said the Council approved bike lanes when they adopted the 2021 Transportation Master Plan. Designated bike lanes were encouraged by the Wasatch Regional Council, meant to correlate with other cities bike lanes for bike travel from city to city. Mr. Hill clarified that changing or restriping bike lanes was an administrative function and informed the Council they could change bike lane standards during the next process to update the Transportation Master Plan.

Mr. Hill said other surrounding cities were experiencing similar complaints from citizens and many city officials planned to work on amending the legislation next year. There was consensus to have Mayor Hales work with Chief Burnett and Public Works Director Russ Kakala to monitor restricted bike lanes where possible and observe the 2026 Legislative Session for possible amendments to Utah House Bill 290 before making changes to restricted bike lanes in Murray.

- Mixed-Use Zoning— Council Member Hock said there were many types of MU (Mixed-Use) zones in the Murray Zoning Code, some might be working, others were not. It was important to review current MU developments to understand where ground floor businesses have succeeded and where they have not. He asked for input on what seemed to be working well and believed the discussion would provide a better vision for further development. Mr. Hock met previously with Community and Economic Development Director Chad Wilkinson and invited him to summarize the discussion they had.

Mr. Wilkinson reviewed the City's MU zones saying the TOD (Transit Oriented Development) zone was in Fireclay, the MCMU (Murray Central Mixed-Use) zone was intended to be near Trax Stations but was applied to the Royce On 9th which is the apartment complex at the old Kmart site.

The CMU (Centers Mixed-Use) zone was only applied to the development at The Point at 53rd and a variety of MU multi-family developments ranging between low, medium and high density were located throughout the City. In the future the MU zone would be applied to the new Fashion Place Small Area plan near the Fashion Place TRAX station.

Mr. Hock asked how to stop converting business zones into residential zones. Ms. Turner and Mr. Goodman asked how many ground floor businesses occupied the various Multi-Family MU projects. Mr. Wilkinson agreed some businesses do not do well in MU zones, and some need more time. He reported that all Fireclay apartment complex phases were fully occupied including bottom floor businesses. Another MU projects in the Fireclay area, the Murray Depot was 50% occupied and bottom floors were occupied by a Foxglove flower shop and a mini mart. The Birkhill located in the Fireclay area was totally occupied.

In downtown Murray, MU developments include the Center Court Senior Living apartment complex, the Hilton Home 2 Suites hotel and the Desert Star Building. Mr. Wilkinson said they are all considered successful and were all established years ago at a smaller size.

He said the Murray Crossing needed improving. Ground floor businesses are currently 50% occupied and have struggled for a few years. Several issues like walkability, parking challenges and signage attribute to it being unsuccessful. He explained that MU developments go through growing pains and that horizontal MU developments often work better than vertical MUs because established businesses are already located in the surrounding community. He felt this was what Murray Crossing was lacking, and hopefully it would improve over time.

Mr. Wilkinson said two out of three ground floor commercial spaces were occupied at the Vine on 4800 South; the Current on Commerce Drive needs help in filling commercial spaces; and at the newest MU development all commercial spaces are currently empty at the Focal. He said the Point at 53rd would be most successful since it was an established commercial shopping area. The Murray Crossing and the Current have a ways to go before any commercial success is expected. He explained that MU developments were designed with pedestrians in mind, to integrate various land uses so it was important to have a good vision of what would be successful for a specific area.

Mr. Hock agreed there was already a vision at the Point at 53rd. Ms. Cotter asked what the height allowance was at the Point at 53rd. It was confirmed that a seven-story MU apartment complex would be developed. Mr. Hock wondered if implementing commercial occupancy regulations could help other struggling MU locations become more vibrant. Mr. Pickett believed having adequate parking for MU businesses was vital including clear parking signage. Mr. Hock said MU developments could be overparked which resulted in empty parking lots most of the time and moving forward it was important to transition MU areas were viable commercial components already exist.

There was consensus that successful MU developments take time to establish. Mr. Wilkinson believed this would happen at Block One over time as pedestrian use increased. He said perception of parking was challenging when an art piece or green space was included in a MU development.

Ms. Cotter said better parking options are needed at many MU projects and better signage for ground floor businesses would increase visits. It was noted that some multi-family projects become MU developments.

Mr. Pickett questioned if developers should be forced to provide commercial space in apartment complexes.

Mr. Hock said some should not, noting that pedestrian use at Murray Crossing was not commonly seen. Ms. Turner noted that management issues might contribute to whether a ground floor commercial business was successful or not and thought unsuccessful spaces should be evaluated. Mr. Hock agreed higher rent prices often help developers avoid filling commercial spaces.

Mr. Hock suggested a MU committee be formed to analyze and further understand why many commercial businesses aren't thriving in the City's MU developments. There was consensus that Mr. Hock would form the committee to keep Council Members informed on the status of ground floor businesses.

- Private Lanes – Mr. Hock said many private lanes in the City were grandfathered in and that historically the City has not allowed private lanes, mostly because they are not serviced by the City. Problems related to private lanes include snow removal and trash collection. Mr. Wilkinson said private lanes are broadly accepted, but there were good reasons Murray did not allow them.

He said one reason property owners want to create private lanes was to provide more housing, but those projects usually come with challenges for the City. Mr. Wilkinson reviewed details about a Layton City ordinance related to the number of buildings allowed on a private lane, private drive, private alley or street, discussed why some parcels are hard to develop without a private lane and shared positive aspects like allowing for fill-in developments. Challenges include changes to connecting streets, future complaints if properties are sold and paying City fees without having services and costly HOA fees.

Mr. Kakala spoke about varying degrees of construction related to challenging errors, private water lines and private road construction not aligning with City Code, noting that flag lot areas are too small for the City to take care of. Mr. Wilkinson said careful consideration should be made before the City adopted a private lane ordinance, because a critical mass was required and small private roads often fail. Certain standards need to be met related to right of way changes to meet road construction specifications. Mr. Kakala agreed once the City takes over a private lane challenging changes are required like taking front yard landscaping to provide for infrastructure and room for proper road access.

It was noted that the City's existing Code for flag lots allowed for one extra dwelling on a parcel. Council Members discussed allowing two houses on a flag lot, expensive HOA fees, no City services provided to private lanes, and possible requirements before constructing a private lane.

There was consensus to table the discussion, leave the existing flag lot ordinance in place without changing it, allow development staff to study the possibility of allowing one or two homes on an existing private lane and encourage more flag lots to increase housing opportunities.

- Vacancy Tax – Council Member Pickett explained his research on vacancy taxes as a possible way to help address Murray's housing shortage. A vacancy tax would charge property owners for leaving homes empty instead of placing them on the market for sale. He noted that cities like San Francisco, New York City, Washington D.C., Detroit, Honolulu, Vancouver, and British Columbia have implemented this tax. The tax is intended to encourage property owners to rent or sell unused homes.

Mr. Pickett was unsure how effective a vacancy tax would be in Murray, but thought it was worth exploring. He discussed both potential benefits and the challenges of implementing the new tax. He also noted that a

vacancy tax would first need to be implemented at the state level by the Utah State Legislature. Currently, San Francisco was involved in a lawsuit related to its vacancy tax.

Mr. Pickett suggested monitoring any new legislation next year and explained that his intent was to show residents that the Council was exploring every possible option to improve housing affordability.

- **Deed Restrictions** – Ms. Turner and Mr. Pickett examined the implementation of deed restrictions on housing developments. Ms. Turner asked whether deed restrictions would help the City in controlling housing developments to ensure that developers provide what they say they would initially. Mr. Pickett agreed deed restrictions could be an effective tool to help increase home ownership.

Mr. Wilkinson discussed positive aspects of deed restrictions and noted that West Weber County implemented deed restrictions on Neilson Homes that resulted in a housing project with smaller lots and smaller homes, requiring owner occupation for 10 years.

Mr. Critchfield explained a deed restriction is not imposed unilaterally, they are made possible by mutual agreement. It was noted that the Wheeler project on Winchester Street and 900 East was originally described as a homeownership opportunity. Council Members discussed various zoning options, development agreements, preserving older housing communities, market restrictions and a related ordinance passed by Salt Lake City.

Ms. Turner proposed that deed restrictions remain an ongoing topic of discussion to explore ways the City could gain more control over developers who fail to follow through on proposed projects. There was consensus to have Mr. Wilkinson look into the preservation of existing single family homes in the City.

- **Private Ponds**– Ms. Turner said the City did not have regulations for residential ponds and wonder what could be done to monitor or permit them. Mr. Wilkinson said staff was currently researching the issue, confirmed that a building permit was not currently required to install a pond and highlighted the differences between installing a pond and constructing a swimming pool, which is subject to existing building code regulations. For ponds, an electrical permit was required if electrical components were used, no permit was needed for installing a membrane or liner and there were no size restrictions on ponds. He also noted that mosquito concerns are addressed through the Mosquito Abatement District. Most complaints about standing water are usually addressed and resolved quickly.

Mr. Wilkinson said many private ponds exist throughout the City and they have not been a real issue. Ms. Cotter asked whether the City could regulate private ponds by establishing a specific zoning designation for ponds or impose depth restrictions. She also asked whether health regulations would prohibit placing fish in ponds. Mr. Wilkinson said the City should be cautious about the intent behind any proposed regulations and expressed hesitation about creating an ordinance solely for the sake of regulating ponds.

Council Members analyzed various ponds that currently exist at apartment complexes and other pond type water features like a fountain overseen by private business owners. Ms. Turner noted that many regulations already took care of pond installation standards and asked what surrounding cities do to regulate ponds. Mr. Wilkinson confirmed few cities regulate backyard ponds and anyone could install a pond on their property.

Mr. Wilkinson said he would research how other cities handle the issue but believed that the regulating the size of a pond should be carefully considered in relation to the size of a property, because swimming pools are permitted to reach certain depths regardless. He felt pond size and depths could be researched but did not think the City should regulate fish types. Mr. Pickett confirmed that the Division of Wildlife has regulations for stocking private ponds with fish. There was consensus that Mr. Wilkinson would find out how or if other cities are regulating private ponds.

- RDA Meeting Night – City Council Executive Director Jennifer Kennedy said the start time of the COW (Committee of the Whole) meeting often varies and sometimes feels rushed, creating a tight schedule for the evening. Ms. Kennedy said the idea to change the day of the RDA (Redevelopment Agency) board meeting was proposed years ago with a goal to begin the COW at a standard time. One downfall would be a cost increase of least \$300 for live streaming an RDA meeting on a separate night. Mr. Hock noted the annual cost increase would be approximately \$4,000 per year, Ms. Kennedy confirmed they could also change the start time of the RDA meeting.

Council Members discussed pros and cons of holding the RDA meeting on a separate night. There was consensus to leave the RDA meeting on the same night as the council meeting and schedule it first.

- Council vs. Administration Roles – Ms. Kennedy provided documentation from the City Council Handbook to review the powers and duties of a mayor that are separate from the powers and duties of a city council. The review was meant to ensure that Council Members understood their proper role legislatively, which was different from the administrative functions of the Mayor's office.

Ms. Kennedy clarified that legislative power ultimately tells the mayor what to do. She explained that the council may prescribe general policies to be followed by the mayor, they appropriate funding by approving the mayor's tentative budget, adjusting the budget if needed and adopt the final budget. The council may review the municipal administration by auditing any department at any time. Ms. Kennedy noted that an audit was not a bad thing, but a way of ensuring that the City was operating as it should financially which help improve processes. Ms. Turner agreed financial accountability was an important and responsible job of the City Council.

Ms. Kennedy noted that funding for a department audit was always included in the City Council's annual budget and that it was recommended to hire an independent third party to conduct an audit.

Mr. Hock believed city departments should undergo an audit considering the many financial actions taken by the Council over the last four years. He felt with great turnover, there was increased opportunity for bloated spending and inconsistencies. Mr. Pickett suggested a rotation schedule for looking at City department budgets. Ms. Kennedy noted that audits also help council members understand functions of each city department. There was consensus to audit city departments as needed.

Ms. Kennedy discussed the importance of maintaining clear communication with her, particularly when interacting with citizens and staff. This included emails that relate to the council role, so that she can help provide appropriate guidance and ensure alignment with council member responsibilities. She clarified that any time a council member wants to work with a City employee or contact a department director, the request should be made through Ms. Kennedy or the mayor's office. She reminded Council Members that the Council Handbook was always available as a resource to help them understand their roles, such as

passing ordinances and resolutions, implementing initiatives, providing advice and consent and reviewing the municipal administration.

- Council Chair Rotation – Ms. Turner explained that West Jordan City started rotating Council leadership positions, so she felt rotating the Chair position and the Vice Chair positions would also be a benefit to the Murray Council. She believed it would lessen political tension, lessen criticisms and favoritisms and help avoid divisiveness, giving most members a chance to experience being Chairperson.

After further discussion there was consensus to change the Murray City Council leadership positions on an annual basis. Mr. Pickett asked if a council member could decline the leadership role. Ms. Turner confirmed. Ms. Kennedy pointed out that on the annual rotation, it was possible that not each council member would get a turn as Chair and pointed out that the six month rotation option would give each person the opportunity to be Council Chair. There was consensus that a new council member should not hold a leadership position for one year, a two year appointed council member would not hold a leadership position until after one year and the set rotation would occur annually.

- 2026 4th of July Parade – Ms. Kennedy requested direction in how council members would like to participate in the next July 4th parade, reporting that this year was the easiest and most efficient method using individual cars. She noted that in past years council members rode in the Wheeler Farm wagon that was provided by the County and pulled by City parks department staff. She noted this was not always safe and it might not always be an option moving forward. There was consensus to use individual convertible cars next year.
- **Adjournment:** 3:45 p.m.

Pattie Johnson
Council Administrator III