

**SOUTH JORDAN CITY
CITY COUNCIL STUDY MEETING
AUGUST 18, 2026**

Present: Mayor Dawn R. Ramsey, Council Member Patrick Harris, Council Member Kathie Johnson, Council Member Don Shelton, Council Member Tamara Zander, Council Member Jason McGuire, City Manager Dustin Lewis, Assistant City Manager Jason Rasmussen, Assistant City Manager Don Tingey, City Attorney Ryan Loose, Police Chief Jeff Carr, Director of Administrative Services Melinda Seager, Director of Human Resources Teresa Robinson, Fire Chief Chris Dawson, Director of Recreation Janell Payne, Director of Planning & Economic Development Brian Preece, Deputy City Engineer Jeremy Nielson, Long-Range Planner Joe Moss, CTO Matthew Davis, Senior Systems Administrator Phill Brown, Communications Specialist Joshua Timothy, City Recorder Anna Crookston

Absent:

Other (Electronic) Attendance: Lauren Notetaker

Other (In-Person) Attendance: Nik Anderson, Devin Child

4:37 P.M.

REGULAR MEETING

A. Welcome, Roll Call, and Introduction - By Mayor Dawn R. Ramsey

Mayor Ramsey welcomed everyone present and introduced the meeting.

B. Invocation - By Council Member Jason McGuire

Council Member McGuire offered the invocation.

C. Mayor and Council Coordination

Council Member McGuire noted that the Utah League of Cities and Towns Legislative Policy Committee meeting would be held in Saratoga Springs the following Monday. Mayor Ramsey stated that the committee was beginning to rotate meeting locations around the state and that an electronic participation option would remain available.

Council Member Zander requested additional information regarding Council participation and volunteer opportunities for the upcoming 9/11 event. Mayor Ramsey stated that staff would send the Council an email with links and scheduling information and that Council Members could select volunteer times that worked for them. She also reported that fundraising efforts with businesses and community partners were progressing well.

Council Member Shelton discussed the Jordan River Commission's upcoming Get to the River event and an August 27 kickoff activity. Mayor Ramsey stated that she was unavailable that day but was willing to assist with the event at another time.

City Manager Dustin Lewis reminded the Council that the Mayor, Council, and employee appreciation barbecue would be held September 10 at 11:30 a.m. at the Main City Park pavilion. He also asked Council Members to hold time on September 19 for a farmers market passport activity that would encourage visitors to interact with vendors and learn about the City's passport

office. Council Member Johnson indicated that she could participate in the farmers market activity. Mayor Ramsey stated that she would be attending a water conservation education program that day.

D. Discussion/Review of City Council Meeting

Mayor Ramsey reviewed the regular City Council meeting agenda. She noted a resolution appointing a member to the Senior Advisory Committee and two public hearing items; a proposed right-of-way vacation for Rosary Way near the future Catholic church and Highland Park, and a resolution stating proposed compensation increases for specified City officers.

E. Presentation Item:

E.1. Planning Commission member appointment. (By Director of Planning & Economic Development, Brian Preece)

Director of Planning & Economic Development Brian Preece introduced Nik Anderson as Mayor Ramsey's proposed appointment to the Planning Commission. He stated that Mr. Anderson was a long-term South Jordan resident and that staff had discussed the responsibilities of the position with him.

Nik Anderson stated that South Jordan had been his home for approximately 20 years and that he and his family lived in the Highland Park neighborhood. He described his experience owning and operating wedding and event venues, with five locations in operation and additional locations under development. He stated that his businesses employed 78 Utah residents, including 12 South Jordan residents, and that he wanted to serve the community and help preserve opportunities for people to live and work in the City.

Mayor Ramsey recommended Mr. Anderson for the appointment, citing his long-standing involvement in South Jordan, engagement with residents, and business experience. She stated that he would bring a fresh and valuable perspective to the Planning Commission and explained that he would be notified following the Council's discussion.

F. Discussion Item:

F.1. Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations. (By Director of Planning & Economic Development, Brian Preece & Long-Range Planner, Joe Moss)

Mayor Ramsey introduced the item and stated that South Jordan had regulated and approved ADUs for many years. She explained that the City needed to review its standards for compliance with recent State legislation while determining which local regulations would best address South Jordan's circumstances.

Long-Range Planner Joe Moss explained that, under the new state legislation, setbacks will be one of the City's primary tools for regulating detached ADUs. Setbacks may account for proximity to property lines and other structures, window orientation, and massing. He reiterated that detached ADUs must be allowed on lots of at least 11,000 square feet where single-family residential is an allowed use and that the City may no longer require a conditional use permit. Certain design standards prohibited for single-family homes, such as roof pitch requirements, will also be prohibited for detached ADUs.

Long-Range Planner Moss reviewed prepared presentation (Attachment A). He noted that the city currently requires a minimum lot size of 14,520 square feet for a detached ADU, compared with the new state minimum of 11,000 square feet. He referenced Council Member Shelton's previous suggestion to consider eliminating a specific minimum lot-size requirement and instead rely on setbacks and maximum lot coverage. Under that approach, a property below the current lot-size threshold could potentially accommodate an ADU if its configuration, setbacks, and lot coverage allowed it. Using examples from an R-3 neighborhood, he illustrated how existing setbacks would affect different ADU designs. Detached ADUs generally require a 10-foot setback from the property line, while certain accessory structures may be as close as five feet. Under the current ordinance, walls exceeding 16 feet in height or second-story windows facing a property line require a 20-foot setback unless approved through a conditional use permit. Because state law will prohibit the CUP process for detached ADUs, those standards will need to be addressed directly in the ordinance. He compared two similarly sized lots (Attachment A) to demonstrate the importance of lot configuration. One property had nearly maximized its building envelope and lot coverage, making it difficult to accommodate an ADU. A nearby property of approximately the same size had a two-story home with substantial backyard space and could readily accommodate the example ADUs. He concluded that relying on setbacks and lot coverage rather than a strict minimum lot size is feasible and would allow the physical characteristics of each property to determine whether an ADU can be accommodated. He added that the minimum lot size for an internal ADU is 6,000 square feet, making that option more feasible for smaller lots. From staff's perspective, he suggested either eliminating the minimum lot-size threshold for detached ADUs or aligning it with the 6,000-square-foot minimum for internal ADUs. Under that approach, any lot of at least 6,000 square feet could have an ADU, with a detached ADU permitted if the required setbacks could be met. He noted that this may be the simplest approach to administer in the City Code.

Mayor Ramsey asked whether any homes on 6,000-square-foot lots could realistically accommodate a detached ADU, noting that lots of that size are relatively small and the primary home typically occupies most of the available property. Long-Range Planner Moss responded that accommodating a detached ADU on a 6,000-square-foot lot would likely require an unusual lot configuration. He suggested allowing the required setbacks to determine whether an ADU is feasible on a particular property, rather than relying solely on lot size. Property owners could then evaluate their individual lot to determine whether the required setbacks could be met.

Director of Planning & Economic Development Brian Preece explained that applicants have often determined what they want to build and then sought a conditional use permit to address requirements their proposal did not meet. He suggested that if the City establishes clear, reasonable, and somewhat more flexible criteria, applicants could design their detached ADUs to meet those standards rather than relying on a conditional use permit. He noted that Long-Range Planner Moss would provide additional information on the types of conditional use permit requests the city has seen in the past later in the presentation.

Long-Range Planner Moss asked whether the Council was comfortable with the proposed strategy of regulating detached ADUs through setback requirements rather than establishing a minimum lot size.

Council Member Zander supported regulating detached ADUs through setbacks rather than a minimum lot size and asked whether parking would remain regulated. Long-Range Planner Moss stated that each ADU would continue to require one additional paved parking space that did not obstruct the required parking for the primary dwelling. Council Member Zander expressed support for that approach.

Council Member Shelton asked whether a minimum separation was required between the primary dwelling and a detached ADU. Long-Range Planner Moss and Director Preece stated that separation would be governed by the fire code; approximately 10 feet would typically be required unless fire-rated construction and limitations on openings were incorporated.

Council Member Shelton asked whether the proposed changes were expected to cause a substantial increase in ADU applications. Director Preece anticipated an initial increase based on inquiries received following the legislative changes. Long-Range Planner Moss reported that 30 ADU applications had been approved during Fiscal Year 2025-26, approximately five or six more than the prior fiscal year, and noted that some applications legalized ADUs that already existed. He expected some pent-up demand that could diminish over time.

Mayor Ramsey stated that the City should also anticipate concerns from neighboring property owners, particularly regarding privacy and the effect of two-story ADUs.

Council Members Zander discussed balancing those concerns with property owners' future needs, including housing for aging family members and opportunities for supplemental income. She stated that clear standards for second-story windows and setbacks could help protect neighbors while preserving property rights.

Council Member Johnson predicted that each detached ADU application could generate opposition from several neighboring property owners. Based on her familiarity with applications in her neighborhood, she noted that she was aware of which neighbors supported or opposed them.

Long-Range Planner Moss continued reviewing prepared presentation (Attachment A). He reviewed conditional use permit applications for ADUs and accessory buildings considered by the Planning Commission since 2014. He reported 17 projects, with one withdrawn and one tabled without returning. Fifty-nine percent requested relief from more than one standard, and 24 of 33 individual requests were approved. He stated that wall height, overall building height, and window placement were among the most common issues and that most applicants received the requested relief. He explained that the current ordinance generally limits an accessory building wall within 20 feet of a property line to an average height of 16 feet unless a conditional use permit is approved.

Director Preece noted that two full stories generally exceed that wall height. Long-Range Planner Moss discussed accessory building height as another common reason applicants have sought conditional use permits. He explained that the current ordinance prohibits an accessory building from being taller than the primary structure, which can be difficult for properties with lower-profile homes, particularly 1970s-era ramblers that may be only about 17 feet tall. This can create challenges for structures such as RV garages. He reviewed previous requests and noted that the average primary structure height was approximately 17 feet 4 inches, while the average requested accessory building height was approximately 23 feet. Most requests remained below the City's maximum accessory building height of 25 feet. He noted that the difference between the average

primary structure height and the 25-foot maximum is approximately eight feet and may not be particularly noticeable from the street, although impacts on neighboring properties could vary.

Mayor Ramsey noted that the height of accessory dwelling units can also significantly affect neighboring properties. She expressed concern about a 25-foot-tall ADU with a second story and windows adjacent to a 17-foot-tall home, noting that even with a 20-foot setback, the situation closely reflected concerns previously raised by a resident who was upset about the impact of a neighboring structure.

Long-Range Planner Moss explained that accommodating a two-story accessory structure generally requires a height of approximately 18 to 20 feet or more. With two eight-foot floors and space between the floors, the structure could reach approximately 19 feet before accounting for the roof, unless the second level is designed more like a half-story. He noted that this made height one of the most common reasons applicants sought conditional use permits. He added that topography could also trigger the current 16-foot maximum wall-height standard. For example, a single-story garage might have a 12-foot wall on one side but exceed 16 feet where the grade drops, requiring a conditional use permit. He noted that the Planning Commission had consistently approved these requests, suggesting the existing standard may not have been particularly effective. He asked whether the Council would prefer to regulate accessory structures based solely on the overall building-height limit or retain a maximum wall-height standard. If the wall-height requirement is retained, he suggested considering an adjustment that would more reasonably accommodate two-story structures.

Council Member Shelton supported relying on maximum building height rather than retaining the 16-foot wall-height cap.

Long-Range Planner Moss added that additional setbacks apply when the average wall height exceeds 16 feet. For each foot of wall height above 16 feet, the structure must be set back an additional foot. Council Member Johnson asked how the additional setback requirement would be applied if the city regulated accessory structures based solely on the maximum overall building height. Long-Range Planner Moss clarified that the 25-foot maximum building height could be applied while retaining the additional setback requirement for walls exceeding 16 feet. He explained that the issue is the current requirement for a conditional use permit when the overall wall height exceeds 16 feet, since the City will no longer be able to issue a CUP for detached ADUs. The City could therefore maintain a 16-foot wall-height limit, modify the standard to accommodate taller walls, or eliminate that particular restriction and rely on the overall building-height limit to regulate the structure.

Mayor Ramsey expressed concern that a 25-foot ADU could tower over a shorter primary dwelling in an older neighborhood and asked whether the height could be tied to the existing home. Staff and Council discussed allowing an accessory building to be up to five feet taller than the primary dwelling, with an absolute maximum of 25 feet, while retaining the increased setback for taller walls. Council Member McGuire supported that approach, and Mayor Ramsey stated that it would provide flexibility while responding to neighborhood context.

Council Member Zander asked whether linking height to the primary dwelling could encourage flat roofs to maximize usable space. Long-Range Planner Moss and City Attorney Ryan Loose

clarified that roof pitch was among the design characteristics the city could no longer regulate. City Attorney Loose noted that the visual impact of taller accessory structures could become more pronounced on smaller lots, and Long-Range Planner Moss stated that the graduated setback would help address that impact.

Long-Range Planner Moss reviewed window placement. He stated that the current ordinance generally prohibits second-story windows within 20 feet of a property line but that revised standards could allow windows closer to the property line when they were located high enough to provide light without creating a direct view into neighboring property. He suggested permitting a second-story window at a 10-foot setback when the bottom of the window was at least seven feet above the finished floor, while retaining a 20-foot setback for a full window. He also suggested allowing windows on building elevations that did not face the adjoining property line. Council Members supported greater flexibility for windows that preserved privacy.

Long-Range Planner Moss identified outdoor decks and similar habitable areas as an issue not addressed by the current ordinance. He explained that a deck within the second-story setback could create a greater privacy impact than a window. Council Member Shelton asked whether a 20-foot setback would be appropriate, and Long-Range Planner Moss stated that it would be consistent with the second-story window standard. Council indicated concern with decks located within 20 feet when oriented toward neighboring property, while supporting flexibility for decks oriented toward the property owner's own yard.

Long-Range Planner Moss reviewed the maximum size of an ADU. He stated that the current limit was 35 percent of the primary dwelling's living area, with a 1,500-square-foot cap unless a conditional use permit was approved. He explained that increasing the proportional limit to 50 percent, while retaining the 1,500-square-foot maximum, would better accommodate reasonable ADUs associated with smaller or older homes. Council indicated support for the 50 percent standard with the 1,500-square-foot cap. Long-Range Planner Moss also noted that the City's three-bedroom limit would need to be removed because the new legislation prohibited regulation by room type.

Long-Range Planner Moss then discussed the size of accessory buildings that may be combined with ADUs. He stated that prior conditional use requests varied widely based on lot size and neighborhood conditions, and staff had not identified a clear benefit from a separate square-footage cap. Council indicated support for relying on setbacks and maximum lot coverage to regulate accessory building size. He stated that staff had received the direction needed to prepare the ordinance amendments.

Council Member McGuire motioned to recess the City Council Study Meeting and move to executive closed session to discuss the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual and the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property. Council Member Zander seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, unanimous in favor.

G. Executive Closed Session:

- G.1. Discuss the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual.
- G.2. Discuss the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property.

Council Member McGuire motioned to adjourn the executive closed session and return to the City Council Study Meeting. Council Member Johnson seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, unanimous in favor.

Council Member Zander motioned to adjourn the August 18, 2026 City Council Study Meeting. Council Member Shelton seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, unanimous in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

The August 18, 2026 City Council Study Meeting adjourned at 6:32 p.m.