
State Prison Relocation to Salt Lake City

I have strongly opposed relocation of the state penitentiary from Draper to Salt Lake City since it was first announced our city was a potential site. The City Council and many residents also have been strongly opposed.

Despite this overwhelming opposition, the State of Utah Prison Relocation Commission selected a site at 7200 West, north of Interstate 80 near the Kennecott tailings pile.

Now, together with the Council and others, I am assessing strategies we might pursue to prevent the prison from moving to SLC.

Our analysis indicates serious problems with the site:

- SLC estimates costs will exceed the high state development costs for this site.
- Because of its proximity to the Great Salt Lake, there is exceptionally high risk to inmates and infrastructure in the event of an earthquake.
- The site is adjacent to an old landfill. Due to high ground water levels there, any excavation work and the de-watering that would be required may draw water and environmental contaminants from the old landfill property offsite.

The City [*Analysis of Potential Sites in Salt Lake City for State Prison Relocation*](#), as well as additional analysis and information, was presented to the State and circulated publicly.

There are some, including my opponent, who have questioned the authenticity of my opposition to this relocation, because of my position on state legislation that included a

local option sales tax for whichever community was ultimately selected.

Accusations that I made a deal to receive the prison in exchange for this tax are utterly untrue, and have been confirmed by everyone involved in my discussions with the State. Some facts surrounding this issue:

- I was informed in a confidential discussion with co-chairs of the Prison Relocation Commission that a local-option sales tax for the recipient community was being considered. My response was that this option would not alter my opposition.
- I then consulted with City Council members, who agreed it was important to continue to be open to dialog, and continue to oppose the prison, regardless of any “sweeteners” offered to a community.
- A local-option tax could only be instituted with City Council approval. There are no plans or commitments to pursue this option now that SLC has been selected. In fact, I have been clear that at this time, the City should not opt to pursue this tax.
- I have also said this tax option is a value-add for any community. In SLC, half of our property is non-taxable due to the amount of public and non-profit property within our borders. And because our daytime commuting population doubles, we are subject to disproportionately high property taxes to cover services and facilities for so many non-residents. A sales tax recovers more revenues from non-residents.
- I remain staunchly opposed to relocating the prison to Salt Lake City, and I will continue to fight its development.

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