



COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL of SALT LAKE CITY

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Allison Rowland, Senior Policy Analyst

DATE: May 13, 2025

Item Schedule:

Briefing: May 13, 2025

Public Hearing: n/a

Potential Action: n/a

RE: INFORMATIONAL: UPDATE ON AND FUNDING REQUEST FOR THE PARKS, TRAILS, & OPEN SPACE GENERAL OBLIGATION (GO) BOND

ISSUE AT-A-GLANCE

The Council will receive an update on projects funded by the first issuance of the General Obligation Bond for Parks, Trails, and Open Space (GO Bond Series 2022), along with the Administration's request for the second bond issuance (Series 2025). Specifically, the Administration is requesting that the Council indicate whether it supports the three items below, which are summarized in attachments to this staff report and are more fully described in the transmittal on the pages indicated below:

1. Proposed project costs and scopes (beginning on page 8);
2. Proposed changes to bond-funded personnel funding (pages 5-6), and
3. The proposed second tranche total of \$34,986,400 (page 4).

The total value of the GO Bond approved by Salt Lake City voters in 2022 was \$85 million, which is to be used for acquiring, improving, renovating and upgrading parks, trails, open space and related facilities and recreational amenities. The first tranche of bond funding was revised in Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget Amendment #2 (FY25 BA2) to provide a total of \$24,660,000. The second issuance would fund nearly \$35 million in additional project phases, including the next stage of Glendale Park, and new investments in Allen Park, the Jordan River Corridor, and smaller parks, trails, plus open space projects in each Council district. Specific project costs and scopes are discussed in more detail in Section B, below, and in the attachments. The proposed changes to bond-funded personnel funding would update salary amounts in line with market rates, as defined in the City's compensation plans, for bond-specific full-time personnel for two additional fiscal years not funded by the first tranche, and to add one part-time position.

The Council would need to approve the proposed uses of the second tranche total of \$34,986,400—or agree to modify certain amounts—before June 17 so the Finance Department can include these items and budgets in their summer 2025 transmittal for the issuance of the second tranche of bonds. *Note: The City begins to charge residents and businesses a higher level of property tax to repay these bonds only as each issuance is approved by the Council.*

Goal of the briefing: Receive information and provide feedback to the Administration on both the progress made with the first tranche of GO Bond funding, and the proposals for using the second tranche.

ADDITIONAL & BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- A. **Background.** The \$85 million GO Bond may be divided into at least three tranches for the City to use as staffing and logistics permit. After the first tranche of bond funding was revised in FY25 Budget Amendment #2, it provided a total of \$24,660,000, with \$18,800,000 for the revised first tranche subtotal for projects, and \$5,860,000 for the revised first tranche contingency subtotal. The contingency amount includes not only project contingency funds, but also funding for public art, and the salaries, benefits, and operational costs for three temporary full-time employees (FTEs) for the first three fiscal years of the GO Bond.
- B. **Proposed Second Tranche Requests.** The second tranche of GO Bond funds is planned to be the largest of the tranches, at \$34,986,400. Specific funding details of GO Bond projects, contingencies, and funding tranches can be found in Attachment C1.

The Administration is requesting that the Council indicate its preferences related to this proposed second tranche by June 17 so the Finance Department can include these items and budgets in their summer 2025 transmittal for the issuance of the second tranche of bonds so that funds can be available to spend as soon as possible this fall. To assist the Council, summaries of the work already completed (or soon to be completed) with first tranche funding, which was authorized in October 2023, appear in Attachments C2 and C3. Additional information on scopes, costs, and possible schedules for all projects that will be funded by the second tranche of the bond, to be accomplished in the next 3-5 years can be found in the Administration's transmittal.

- C. **Operations and Maintenance.** The Administration recognizes that all new assets, including those funded by the GO Bond, will require ongoing operations and maintenance (O&M) funding. The Department reports that estimated O&M activities and associated costs will be developed during the design and construction phases of each project. These will be provided for review in future annual budget cycles.
- D. **Management Changes and Additional Requests.** The Public Lands Department and the Engineering Division also included in the transmittal a summary of their approach to managing all parks, trails, and open space projects, including those funded by the Parks GO Bond. This was facilitated by the transfer of landscape architects to the Public Lands Department in October 2023 and the creation of the Public Lands Department's Planning & Design Division in March 2024. Overall parks, trails, and open space project management is now handled by Public Lands staff. The Engineering Division's main roles in these projects have shifted to contracting/procurement and construction management. (*Note: In the FY26 Mayor's Recommended Budget, the Engineering Division is proposed to be moved to CAN.*) These changes would affect how the Administration proposes organizing and funding the three, bond-funded, full-time planning, design, and construction management positions in Public Lands and Public Services in the future, beginning with the second tranche.

The Public Lands Department proposes two staffing changes for existing FTEs in the second tranche of funding:

1. **Reclassification to Senior Landscape Architect.** The Department of Public Lands requests that the Council approve a reclassification from Associate Landscape Architect II (Grade 29) to Senior Landscape Architect (Grade 34) to reflect the qualifications and experience

of the project manager hired in this role. DPL states, “Further reclassification would align their qualifications, job description, and pay. We wish to retain these time-limited staff for as much of the remainder of the Parks GO Bond as possible.” Note: The costs included in the proposed second tranche total assume these changes are approved by the Council.

2. **Funding Increase for Three FTEs.** Since July 1, 2023, the salaries, benefits, and operational costs for three full-time employees who work exclusively on Parks GO Bond projects are reimbursed with bond funds at the beginning of the following fiscal year. However, the estimates for these personnel costs were developed in early 2023 and were initially very conservative. Some savings in the first tranche will continue to fund their personnel costs into FY27, and the second tranche will fund the remainder of that fiscal year and the entirety of FY28. The Department proposes that an estimated \$296,000 balance from the first tranche go toward reducing the second tranche’s FY27 and FY28 salary, benefits, and operation costs for these employees.

➤ ***The Council may wish to ask about the strategies the Administration will use to help the Engineering Division maintain a close relationship with DPL after the proposed shift of the Division to CAN.***

- E. **Arts Council Request.** In addition to the requests related to Public Lands and Public Services employees, the Arts Council requests that \$75,000 (7%) of the total \$1,035,000/1.5% for art from the Parks GO Bond fund the salary and equipment for a part-time position to manage bond-funded art projects. (Note: The Arts Council is currently in the Department of Economic Development, but the FY26 MRB proposes it be moved to CAN.) DPL states “This change would reduce the *bond’s* contribution to Glendale Park’s art commission, but the overall budget for Glendale’s public art would be made whole with part of the \$150,000 in CIP funds allocated for a westside art installation.”

Note: If the Council has any questions, please let staff know. Otherwise, we will follow up with the Department to process the requests in a budget opening.

ATTACHMENTS.

Attachment C1. Proposed Distribution of GO Bond Funds by Tranche.

Attachment C2. Progress on First Tranche Activities and Plans for Second Tranche.

Attachment C3. Progress on First Tranche Activities and Plans for Second Tranche: Neighborhood Parks, Trails, or Open Spaces Projects.

Attachment C1. Proposed Distribution of GO Bond Funds by Tranche.

Site	Total Amount of GO Bond Funding Approved	Share of total GO Bond Funding Allocated to Project	Funding from First Tranche (after FY25 BA2 revisions)	Share of each project's funding from First Tranche (after FY25 BA2 revisions)	Proposed Second Tranche Funding	Proposed share of each project's funding from Second Tranche	Possible funding from future tranches	Planned share of each project's funding from any future tranches	Sum of Shares in Each Tranche
Glendale Park	\$27,000,000	32%	\$3,650,000	13.5%	\$23,350,000	86.5%	\$0	0.0%	100%
Liberty Park Playground	\$2,000,000	2%	\$2,000,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	100%
Allen Park	\$4,500,000	5%	\$850,000	18.9%	\$3,650,000	81.1%	\$0	0.0%	100%
Folsom Trail Completion & Landscaping	\$5,000,000	6%	\$5,000,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	100%
Public Space at Fleet Block	\$6,000,000	7%	\$600,000	10.0%	\$900,000	15.0%	\$4,500,000	75.0%	100%
Fairmont Park	\$6,500,000	8%	\$650,000	10.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$5,850,000	90.0%	100%
Neighborhood Parks, Trails, or Open Spaces projects	\$9,000,000	11%	\$4,950,000	55.0%	\$3,375,000	37.5%	\$675,000	7.5%	100%
Jordan River Corridor	\$9,000,000	11%	\$1,100,000	12.2%	\$2,400,000	26.7%	\$5,500,000	61.1%	100%
Other (see below)	\$16,000,000	19%	\$5,860,000	36.6%	\$1,311,000	8.2%	\$8,829,000	55.2%	100%
Total	\$85,000,000	100%	\$24,660,000		\$34,986,000		\$25,354,000		

	Total Amount of GO Bond Funding Approved	Share of total GO Bond Funding Allocated to Project	Funding from First Tranche (after FY25 BA2 revisions)	Share of each project's funding from First Tranche (after FY25 BA2 revisions)	Proposed Second Tranche Funding	Proposed share of each project's funding from Second Tranche	Possible funding from future tranches	Planned share of each project's funding from any future tranches	Sum of Shares in Each Tranche
"Other" consists of 3 subcategories	\$16,000,000	19%	\$5,860,000	36.6%	\$1,311,000	8.2%	\$8,829,000	55.2%	100%
Contingency Funds	\$ 10,379,600	65%	\$3,832,000	37%	\$0	0%	\$6,547,600	63%	100%
Public Art	\$ 1,035,000	6%	\$594,000	57%	\$441,000	43%	\$0	0%	100%
Salaries, Benefits, and Operational Costs (3 FTEs, first 3 FYs of GO Bond)	\$ 4,585,000	29%	\$1,434,000	31%	\$870,000	19%	\$2,281,000	50%	100%

Attachment C2. Progress on First Tranche Activities and Plans for Second Tranche.

	First Tranche Progress	Second Tranche Plans / Requests	Other
Glendale Park, \$27 million total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The grand opening for Phase I is set for fall 2025 (entire park’s parking lot; all ages and abilities playground; welcome plaza; seating areas; food truck plaza; pavilion; full court basketball; open lawn; trail connections and walkways; entry gate and signs; and significant stormwater infrastructure enhancements). By summer, 2025, four of the eight existing tennis courts will become twelve pickleball courts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish design for and then construct Phase II, which will be the larger of the two phases. Includes an enhanced splash park; Jordan River corridor access and boat ramp; enhancements, sledding hill; skating ribbon and skate park; additional trails including soft surface for walking and hiking; additional open lawn and events stage. Phase II construction will likely occur between 2026 and 2028. Request: \$23,350,000. 	<p>➤ <i>The Council may wish to request additional information on the following statement in the transmittal:” Phase III would be necessary only if operational capacity and funding for an outdoor public pool are identified.”</i></p>
Liberty Park Playground, \$2 million total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New playground to be built in 2025-226. All funding comes from the first tranche. Community engagement and design has been completed, and permitting is nearly finished. 	n/a	
Allen Park, \$4.5 million total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency repairs and installation of new utilities (pending permitting) are underway. Selection process is underway for project design consultant. Design will be led by Public Lands, in coordination with the Engineering Division, and Public Utilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build Phase 1 improvements, with construction beginning as early as 2026, lasting 1-2 years. Public Utilities may contribute additional stormwater funding. Request: \$3,650,000. 	
Folsom Trail Completion & Landscaping, \$5 million total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalization of design, construction of amenities and waterwise landscaping between 500 West and 1000 West. Construction in 2026 and 2027. 	n/a	<p>➤ <i>The Council may wish to ask when any potential Folsom Trail completion and landscaping will be</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment underway of preliminary trail extension alignment and feasibility of the section between 1000 W and the Jordan River, along with property/stakeholder discussions to facilitate easements or sales. More detailed construction documents will be developed then. Construction in 2027 and 2028. 		<i>brought to it for review and comment.</i>
<p>Public Open Space at Fleet Block, \$6 million total</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement and conceptual design are beginning. These are being coordinated with the site's public art commission. Final design concept to be finished by the end of 2025. CAN is soliciting RFPs for site developers at the same time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction documents to be finalized in 2026. Permitting, potential environment remediation, and potential related infrastructure within and near the site. Request: \$900,000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional remediations, community benefits agreements and other developer agreements to take place in 2026-2029, along with development and construction on the block.
<p>Fairmont Park, \$6.5 million total</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total funding includes both \$5 million as a stand-alone project and an additional \$1.5 million from the Neighborhood Parks, Trails and Open Spaces project. In early 2025, community engagement, design, construction documents, and initial SITES certification tasks began. Projects under consideration include: repair of, or possible new public uses for, the existing tennis courts site on the corner of Sugarmont Avenue and 900 East; possible improvement of the area near the Boys & Girls Club clubhouse; revitalizing and creating an improved entrance to Fairmont Park along Sugarmont Drive; and enhancing public access and safety in the park. 	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DPL hopes to begin construction in 2027. Most of the GO Bond's funding for this project would be requested in a potential third tranche.
<p>Neighborhood Parks, Trails, or Open Spaces, \$9 million total</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first tranche of \$4.95 million includes at least one project per Council District, with a maximum price of \$1,500,000 each. <i>See Attachment C3, below, for information on individual projects in this category.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second tranche funding would include the remainder of GO Bond funding allocated to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warm Springs & North Gateway Parks - \$1,350,000. Sunnyside Park - \$675,000. Jefferson Park - \$675,000. Request: \$3,375,000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The initial \$10.5 million allocated for these projects was reduced by \$1,500,000 to reflect Council District 7's neighborhood park project funding to be assigned to Fairmont Park also.

<p>Jordan River Corridor, \$9 million total</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First tranche funding of \$1.1 million began in 2025 with the development of construction documents for high priority projects, and supplementing community engagement for the 2025 Emerald Ribbon Action Plan. • Just over \$5 million is currently encumbered and being spent on the construction of the “Backman Community Open Space and Outdoor Classroom” project, which will be completed in 2025. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final construction document development for projects not covered by existing funds and construct the first high-profile and/or high-impact projects in 2026 through 2028. • Request \$2,400,000. 	
<p>Other, \$16 million total <i>Includes Project Contingencies, Public Art, and Salaries, Benefits, and Operational Costs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First tranche funding of \$5.86 million has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ helped keep Glendale Park on schedule, ○ allowed the City to purchase equipment and plan for the replacement of the Jefferson Park playground, ○ initiate and continue to fund several public art commissions in bond-funded sites, and ○ paid full-time employees since July 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional Contingency funding. • Remainder of the total public art funding from the bond, \$441,000. • Salaries, benefits, and operational costs for full-time employees for FY27 and FY28, \$870,000. • Request: \$1,311,000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any additional contingency funds would come from GO Bond interest revenue and first-tranche contingency funds.

Attachment C3. Progress on First Tranche Activities and Plans for Second Tranche: Neighborhood Parks, Trails, or Open Spaces Projects.

	First Tranche Progress	Second Tranche Plans / Requests	Other
Donner Trail Park (D6), \$750,000 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public engagement was completed in 2024, and design is underway. Construction will likely begin in 2026. The focus will be on public infrastructure refreshes, reducing turf and water use in passive areas, improving irrigation systems, updating playgrounds, planting trees, and introducing public art. 	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full project allocation from GO Bond has been funded: \$750,000.
Tauber Park (D4), \$750,000 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public engagement is complete, and design is underway. Construction will begin in 2026 or 2027. 	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full project allocation from GO Bond has been funded: \$750,000
Richmond Park (D4), \$750,000 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public engagement is complete, and design is underway. Construction will begin in 2026 or 2027. 	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full project allocation from GO Bond has been funded: \$750,000
Steenblik Park (D1), \$750,000 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction documents are complete, and permitting is underway. Construction may begin in late 2025 or 2026. 	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full project allocation from GO Bond has been funded: \$750,000
Cottonwood Park (D1), \$750,000 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First tranche funding (\$75,000, or 10% of the planned GO bond budget for this park) will result in detailed design and construction documents later in 2025. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning of construction in 2026 and 2027. Request: \$675,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional funding from several sources will be combined for this project, which has a key role in the <i>Emerald Ribbon Action Plan</i>.
Warm Springs and North Gateway Parks (D3), \$1,500,000 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design work on this project (\$150,000, or 10% of planned GO bond funding for this park) has been suspended while a cohesive parkwide approach to the parks and Warm Springs Plunge building is developed by the City. The goal is to engage indigenous and Pacific Islander communities, in addition to other communities, who are interested in the possible future improvements to and long-term operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of construction documents, and construction, may occur in 2026 or 2027. Pursue the consolidation of the two parks, 	<p>➤ <i>The Council may wish to ask the Administration about the expected timeline for this outreach to these communities, as well as the broader plans for the parks and building.</i></p>

		both through ordinance and design. • Request: \$1,350,000	
Ida Cotten Park (D5), \$750,000 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement was completed in 2024. The final concept design selection will occur in 2025, along with the completion of construction documents. Construction may begin as soon as 2026. 	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full project allocation from GO Bond has been funded: \$750,000
Madsen Park (D2), \$750,000 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community feedback and concept design phases ended in early 2025. A composite concept design is being developed, and construction may begin in 2026. 	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full project allocation from GO Bond has been funded: \$750,000
Sunnyside Park (D6), \$750,000 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using \$75,000 (or 10% of planned GO bond funding for this park) feedback was collected from neighbors and other stakeholders in 2024, and draft designs for improvements will be presented in 2025. An additional \$4.2 million was provided by the University of Utah in exchange for use of one section of the park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction will be completed by the middle of 2027. Request: \$675,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full funding will need to be in place before the third tranche is available, so that bidding and contracting can occur early enough to meet that deadline. No additional funds will be requested for this project from this program/source in the third tranche.
Jefferson Park (D5), \$750,000 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The playground will be replaced in 2025. Community engagement also will begin, in conjunction with planning efforts at the MeadUP site to the north. Design will occur in 2025 and 2026. These activities will use \$75,000 (or 10% of planned GO bond funding for this park). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction possible in 2026 or 2027. Request: \$675,000 	
Peace Labyrinth (D2), \$750,000 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project (with \$75,000, or 10% of the planned GO bond budget for this park) has been postponed for 1-2 years, until: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> several other of these smaller bond projects have progressed to construction, and Public Utilities is ready to possibly reimagine their infrastructure at the site. 	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Lands will wait until the third tranche to request the last \$675,000 in bond funding for this project.