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Salt Lake City Takes Next Step Toward Open Government with Public Release of Draft Open Government Policy

Public Invited to Offer Feedback and Comments on Draft Policy

SALT LAKE CITY – Salt Lake City government officials took the next step toward making Salt Lake City more open and accessible with the release of a draft of the Open Government Policy for public comment. The proposed policy is the result of months of work by City officials to identify methods for making Utah’s capital city one of the most open governments in the state and region.

The draft policy is available online at www.transparency.slcgov.com where the public is encouraged to review and comment on it. In the lead up to the announcement today, Mayor Becker and the Salt Lake City Council have envisioned Salt Lake City’s open government to consistently follow certain basic principles. These principles include:

- Providing the public and City employees easy access to information that educates and informs.
- Listening to all people affected by the City’s actions. No person or group affected by the City’s actions has a greater right to be heard than anyone else.
- Seeing the public as a source of creative ideas and effective solutions.
- Following stated processes, being truthful, and welcoming accountability.
- Disclosing public officials’ conflicts of interest to the public.

The goals of Salt Lake City’s draft Open Government Policy include:

- Providing complete and understandable information to the public.
- Planning for and incorporating public input at the beginning of each project.
- Letting the public know “why” decisions are made.
- Going above and beyond the requirements when providing information to the public.
- Making the information on www.slcgov.com easily searchable, accessible, and sortable.
- Ensuring Salt Lake City’s public processes are understandable and fair to all parties involved.
- Practicing the principles of an open government in City employee’s daily interactions within City government and between employees and departments.

Since the transparency initiative was announced in January, City officials have come to understand how critically important employee engagement is to the success of open government in Salt Lake City. To that end, City officials will encourage employee input as well as public input on the proposed policy.

In acknowledging today's announcement, Mayor Becker commented, "More openness can have a transformational impact on how government serves those who live, work and invest in Salt Lake City. Clear procedures and accessible, easy-to-understand records and information will promote the accountability of our public servants as they make decisions and conduct the public's business and will invite the participation of residents to collaborate in the strengthening and governance of our Capital City."

The City is also releasing its final proposed policy implementation plan. The plan was originally opened for public comment on January 6, 2009, at the Mayor and City Council's joint announcement of the Transparency for a Collaborative Government initiative. The revised plan has incorporated public comments received and additional research on the part of the steering committee. A copy of the implementation plan is available online.

For more information about Salt Lake City's Open Government Initiative visit www.transparency.slcgov.com.

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