

Mayor's Report

24 April 2023 – 7 May 2023

Larry Jacobsen

Greetings, boss! Knock on wood, the spring runoff so far has been as good as we could hope for. High enough to bring the water down at a meaningful rate, but not enough to cause big problems. Unrelated to the runoff, and by coincidence, many of the items in this report deal with transportation.

- **Construction Projects Near Nibley**
- **Council of Governments (CoG)**
- **US 89-91 Corridor Plans**
- **CDC Walkability Academy**
- **Nibley School Safety**
- **Code Enforcement**

Construction Projects Near Nibley

You may have noticed a couple of construction projects starting on the east and west sides of town. The work on Hwy 165 is in preparation for Millville's sewer project. With that project, Millville will build a lift station near the intersection of 2900 South and Hwy 165 and trench a sewer line beneath Hwy 165 to the Hyrum wastewater treatment plant. The current work on the highway, called "pot holing", drills exploratory holes along the proposed sewer route to ensure that the sewer construction will not interfere with existing utilities. This is an important activity for Nibley because many of those utilities serve our citizens.

The work starting on the west side of Nibley is a UDOT project that will realign 3200 South and US 89-91. Below is a schematic from UDOT. As you can see, the present 3200 South connection will be closed when the new realignment is completed. The new intersection of 3200 South and US 89-91 will include a traffic light that stops traffic on US 89-91, making a much safer access for Nibley citizens onto the highway. UDOT anticipates completing this project by fall, and we will keep you posted on the schedule and the expected one-week disruption to traffic. This realignment is going to be a great improvement for the safety of Nibley citizens.



The Council of Governments (CoG)

This body consists of the mayors of Cache Valley, and its job is to recommend funding to the Cache County Council for transportation projects made possible by a voter-approved local sales tax. The preliminary estimate for this year's funding is around \$6.6M. This is the source for Nibley's 1200 West project that was approved last year and totaled \$3.4M. We will be reapplying for the final phase of 1200 West that will connect Hyrum to 1000 West just south of US 89-91. We have a very strong chance (fingers crossed) of getting the requested \$1.6M for this final phase of 1200 West.

The CoG's responsibility to select worthwhile projects is an interesting one, in part based on technical merit and in part based on politics. A technical committee assesses the technical merit of proposals for safety and congestion relief, while the mayors of each city rank their preference for each proposed project. In the final scoring, the mayors' votes are weighted more heavily than the results from the technical committee. In the past, Shaun Dustin, Nibley's previous mayor, convinced the CoG that cities would be required to cover a 90-percent engineering design before requesting funds for a project. Although the costs of that design could be counted in the required eight-percent local match if awarded, it was at-risk money if the project was not approved. I believe this was a good rule that required municipalities to "put skin in the game." But the other mayors felt it gave cities with a large engineering staff (think Logan) the advantage. Therefore, the mayors removed the 90-percent engineering requirement last year. Project proposals are due soon, and the project selection process will kick up later this summer.

US 89-91 Corridor Plans

UDOT is working on a plan for the US 89-91 transportation corridor from Brigham City to Logan. The counties and municipalities who have jurisdictions along this route are participants in this planning process, and last week UDOT held a meeting with elected officials and managers. This is an important corridor for Nibley. Above all, we need safe access and safe travel on the highway. Each of the jurisdictions can agree on that goal. After that, it gets more complicated. Nibley sees this corridor as an opportunity for economic development, while cities to the north of us are more interested in travel times as they pass by Nibley's jurisdiction. I believe we had a reasonable discussion during the meeting and showed respect for one another's priorities. The part that includes arguing with one another (if it comes to that) will come later.

CDC Walkability Academy

The final transportation item in this report isn't about vehicles. Instead, it is about active transportation. Levi Roberts (Nibley City Planner), along with several county staff and myself, finished a training course provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on how to plan and build active transportation in our communities. Although this training was a heavy lift at 20 hours of class time, plus homework, I felt it was worth it. The CDC covered our tuition with a \$10k grant. I am thankful that Levi has a passion for active transportation, and that he is helping us figure out how to incorporate that transportation component in Nibley. Our final class project is still ahead of us: three different Team Action Plans. We have a good start on defining the first one that will identify and test ways to encourage parents of grade schoolers to have their kids

walk to school rather than being driven. We are not ignoring the factors that detract from walking to school. On the contrary, we will work to understand those factors, and with the help of parents and school administrators, we will hopefully find ways to mitigate those detractors. It turns out that each of the other four participating jurisdictions from around the country have the same opportunity to improve school walkability, and the interaction with those jurisdictions, along with the CDC staff, was very helpful. Our other two Team Action Plans will update the Nibley City Connectivity Standards and develop our first stand-alone Active Transportation Plan during the upcoming year.

School Safety

Motivated by a presentation at the recent Utah League of Cities and Towns Conference, Justin Maughan (City Manager) set up a meeting with the Cache County Sheriff to learn about preparation for the unthinkable: an active shooter in one of our schools. While this is a difficult topic, it is not one that we can ignore. We talked about the training and coordination between law enforcement, the Cache County School District, and Nibley City. We will never be finished working on the need to be as prepared as possible for this scenario.

Code Enforcement

One of the important balances that local governments try to achieve is the line between individual property rights and the rights of the community. Through a legislative process, the city council adopts code that tries to be fair while drawing that line. That municipal code involves many things from business licenses, noise and other nuisances, to animal land uses. Much of Nibley code enforcement is initiated by a complaint from a neighbor. In addition, this is the time of year that city staff tours our neighborhoods checking for code compliance. I realize that this can be a frustrating process when problems are identified with specific properties. I hope that the message Nibley City conveys is that this is not a personal attack against individuals, despite how it might feel. City staff are doing their job of enforcing our adopted code. That doesn't mean that our code is perfect. The council (I am a member of the council) adopted that code, and the council can change that code. There is an open and public process to make those changes, and it can start with you. If you feel there are code issues that we should consider or reconsider, then please let me or a council member know, and we will discuss those issues with you. The goal is to find the fair and proper balance between what individuals can do on their own property while maintaining reasonable standards that allow us to live together in a community that we can be proud of.

Thanks for reading, boss. Agree or disagree, please call, text, or write anytime.

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My continued appreciation to Leslie Maughan for proofreading and giving me feedback on these reports before you see them. Thank you, Leslie!