

INLAND PORT PRIMER



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WHAT IS AN INLAND PORT?

Think of a seaport, but... inland.

Ports typically **facilitate distribution of international goods**, making it easier for goods to clear customs via air, truck and rail.

Utah's will be located primarily on a large chunk of land on Salt Lake City's northwest side. The state owns no land in that area but will be able to influence development through the use of tax growth incentives known as tax increment. **It's not clear, though, what Utah's inland port will look like**, since there's no business plan detailing how the area will develop.

KEY DATES

- **2015:** Utah decides to relocate the state prison, setting the stage for critical infrastructure to come to the area near where the port will someday be proposed.
- **August 2016:** The Kem C. Gardner Institute releases its Salt Lake Inland Port Market Assessment, confirming that Salt Lake County “meets many of the essential criteria for developing an inland port.”
- **August 2016:** Salt Lake City adopts a Northwest Quadrant Master Plan, which outlines how the area will develop into the future.

KEY DATES

- **2017:** Shortly after taking office, Mayor Jackie Biskupski identifies the development of an inland port as a key piece of her economic development strategy.
- **2017 legislative session:** Lawmakers unveil SB278, which would have created an entity to facilitate development near the Utah State Prison. The bill doesn't pass.
- **2018 legislative session:** The state Legislature votes in favor of a bill to take over a portion of Salt Lake City's zoning and taxing authority to create an inland port. The bill was adopted in the final hours of the legislative session with little discussion.

KEY DATES

- **March 2019:** Biskupski files suit against the inland port, which she argues has usurped key municipal functions.
- **April 2019:** Activists stage the first of several demonstrations against the port, shutting down an Inland Port Authority Board meeting.
- **July 2019:** A large and violent protest against the project at the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce building directs public attention to the development.
- **November 2019:** A judge in Utah's 3rd District Court considers the city's lawsuit against the state. The court has yet to issue a written decision, though one is expected in the coming weeks.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF A PORT:

- Salt Lake City is considered to be in a **prime geographic location** for development of port infrastructure, due to its proximity to I-80 and I-70 and the Salt Lake International Airport.
- The project has been billed as the state's **largest-ever economic development project** and is expected to **create jobs**, including in rural Utah through a proposed hub-and-spoke model.
- A recent court filing stated that the Inland Port Authority Board, tasked with overseeing development, is in discussions with several companies seeking to make investments in total of more than \$100 million, **creating more than 3,000 jobs with annual salaries likely to be \$100,000 or more.**

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES:

- Increased rail, truck and air traffic along with tailpipe emissions could **impact air quality and quality of life** across the state and for residents on the west side near the Great Salt Lake, an already **environmentally sensitive** landscape.
- Questions about **transparency** and concerns over a **lack of representation** on the board, which currently includes just one elected official from Salt Lake City.
- Loss of zoning authority means a **loss of local decision-making**. Loss of taxing authority means **less funding for important needs**, including schools. Salt Lake City School District projected earlier this year that it could lose up to \$500 million over the next 25 years in property tax revenue the inland port now controls.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Resolution of Salt Lake City's lawsuit is expected by the end of the year and will set precedent for future state land decisions made and **determine who maintains control of the land** in question. Even if the lawsuit is unsuccessful, activists have pledged to bring forward other lawsuits on environmental grounds.

The Inland Port Authority Board has completed the first phase of its public engagement process but will be offering **other opportunities for feedback** from interested members of the public. The board is also expected to present a business plan early next year **outlining how the area will develop**.

QUESTIONS?