

DRAFT
WASHINGTON AS COMMEMORATION
Capital Cities Case Study Research Study

APPENDIX F
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

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Salt Lake City has a population of 181,700, making it the largest city in Utah. The Salt Lake City metropolitan area spans three counties and has a total estimated population of 1,115,700 as of July 2008.

The Salt Lake City Council has been a separate and equal branch of government since it became a mayor-council form of government in 1979. Council seats are divided into seven geographic districts and council members serve four-year terms. The Council employs a staff of 14 that research and analyze issues pertinent to city policies and work with constituents.

Commemoration Planning in Salt Lake City

Salt Lake City's commemoration planning efforts center on its *Naming of City Assets Ordinance*, which has been under development since November 2007.

A number of controversies related to naming city assets to honor individuals illuminated the need for a policy to address issues related to commemorative works. In one instance, heated community debate erupted over a grassroots movement to quickly rename the city's airport after a terminally-ill three-term governor before he died. Another controversy arose with a proposal to rename a street after the first fallen Iraq War soldier from Salt Lake City a few months after his death. Without knowing how long the conflict would last, some expressed concern over the precedent such a renaming would set. With the Mayor an outspoken opponent of the war, the issue became politically charged when President Bush came to meet with the soldier's family. Local boy scouts eventually raised money to rename a street near a ballfield where the soldier played as a child.

In April 2008, an ad hoc committee of Salt Lake City Council members, council staff and city administrators recommended that the city develop an ordinance to establish policy direction with regards to the naming, renaming and dedication of city assets. While much of the resulting ordinance focuses on the naming of existing infrastructure and buildings, the draft ordinance also includes new works that are primarily commemorative in nature.

To date, the *Naming of City Assets Ordinance* has not been adopted by the City Council; however, the ordinance has been reviewed by outside legal counsel and city staff has recommended approval. At its November 2009 work session, the City Council referred the draft ordinance back to the ad hoc committee for a final review and to resolve several remaining issues.

The ordinance addresses both the naming of city assets, such as public buildings, parks or benches, and new works established primarily for commemorative purposes, such as memorials, statues or busts. As a result, the policy must respond to a wide range of issues, from corporate sponsorships of museums and stadiums to endowments for statue maintenance.

Commemorative Subject Matter and/or Thematic Analysis

The *Naming of City Assets Ordinance* broadly identifies three categories of subjects appropriate for commemoration:

- Sponsorships: naming rights for city assets in exchange for a cash or other contributions;
- City Recognitions: naming of city assets to recognize contributions to the city by a person, organization or "group of similarly situated persons" (e.g. law enforcement);
- Tributes and Memorials: naming of a minor city asset as a tribute to a "person, group, event or other thing."¹

Proposed subjects of commemoration must have made a significant contribution to Salt Lake City by:

- enhancing the quality of life and well-being of the City;
- contributing to the historical, cultural or societal preservation of the city, state, or U.S.;

- contributing a significant portion of property acquisition or development costs or project; or
- achieving personal or organizational excellence which represents Salt Lake City in a meritorious manner.²

The ordinance clarifies that a religious figure can only be commemorated for his or her civic contributions, which is important in a city with such a distinctive religious foundation. The policy also aims to address previous conflicts by noting that commemoration proposals may be rejected if the subject “relates to or may create a controversial situation within the City.”³ The ordinance does not designate a waiting period before memorial subjects can be proposed, but this issue will be revisited by the ad hoc committee.

To date, Salt Lake City has not conducted any thematic analysis of its existing commemorations.

Process to Establish New Works

Approval of new memorials and asset naming is currently handled by the Mayor’s office on an individual project basis. The proposed *Naming of City Assets Ordinance* would establish an Asset Naming List to identify all city assets, individually or within a class, which are eligible for naming. Such assets would include parks, landscape elements, public amenities, recreational elements, properties and buildings. One issue the ad hoc committee will reconsider is whether to establish standards for naming specific classes of assets based on cost, type, useful life cycle, prominence of the site.⁴

The *Naming of City Assets Ordinance* would require proponents to submit a naming petition accompanied by documentation of the financial solvency required to construct and maintain the asset. Once the petition is circulated to City Departments for comment, the Mayor or City Council will have the authority to issue a final decision, depending on the asset. At present, the ordinance does not include public review process, but this is an issue that will be reconsidered by the ad hoc committee. The city may circulate the petition to the appropriate community council for comment in cases where a direct relationship exists with a current or former place of residence and an asset proposed for renaming.

There are no specific guidelines for location or design of new monuments or memorials.

Selected Commemorations in Salt Lake City

While public and private monuments (many sponsored by the LDS Church) are scattered across the city, several secular memorials are located on the grounds of the state capitol building or in the adjacent Memory Grove Park, which is owned by the city. The State of Utah added a Vietnam Memorial to honor the 388 Utahns killed in the war in 2008. In Memory Grove Park, monuments to commemorate WWI and WWII and are set around a large lawn and pond that honors sailors who died in service.

a. Celebration of Life Monument

In 2003, the Quest for the Gift of Life Foundation approached the Mayor’s Office with a proposal to build a monument to honor organ donors, encourage organ donations, and serve as a memorial for family members of whole-body donors who do not have remains for burial. The Mayor’s Office approved the request to build the monument on Library Square in front of the public library with the understanding that the Foundation would solicit and raise sufficient funds to pay for the monument.



Quest for the Gift of Life Memorial

The project became entangled with a public works project related to other improvements on Library Square when the permitted the same contractor to install plumbing lines to the monument. When the Foundation folded, the Salt Lake City government was left to pay more than half the of the construction costs to complete the \$650,000 monument. The experience contributed to the city’s motivation to create procedures for the establishment and maintenance of new monuments and memorials through the *Naming of City Assets Ordinance*.

b. Summum / Seven Aphorisms

In 2009, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Summum v. Pleasant Grove* that followers of the religious philosophy of Summum could not force the City of Pleasant Grove, Utah to accept and display a donated tablet celebrating their “Seven Aphorisms,” even though the city already had a monument of the Ten Commandments in a public park that had been similarly donated. The Court found that “the placement of a permanent monument in a public part is best viewed as a form of government speech and is therefore not subject to scrutiny under the Free Speech Clause.”⁵

Although Salt Lake City was not involved the Supreme Court case, it has been sued over the same issue by the Summum group in the 1990s. In that case, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Salt Lake City could continue to allow a Ten Commandments monument on public property surrounding the City-County building, as long as Summum was permitted to erect its own monument. The Salt Lake City Council opted to move the monument to private land.

Photo Credits

Celebration of Life Monument

Utah’s Donate Life Coalition –

<http://www.celebrationoflifemonument.com/tour.php?level=album&id=4>

Endnotes

¹ *Naming Opportunities* Policy, Section 14.56.030.

² *Naming Opportunities* Policy, Section 14.56.040.C.3.

³ *Naming Opportunities* Policy, Section 14.56.040.B.3.e.

⁴ <http://www.slcgov.com/council/agendas/2009agendas/Nov17/111709A7.pdf>

⁵ *Pleasant Grove City, Utah, et al v. Summum*. (No. 07-665). <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/08pdf/07-665.pdf>