



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Utah Transportation Commission Awards \$10.8 Million to Washington County's Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office to Build Paved Trail from LaVerkin to Springdale

**St. George, Utah (August 31, 2021)** - During the August meeting of the Utah Transportation Commission, the group awarded \$10.8 million to Washington County and the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office to build the Zion Corridor Trail, a 12-foot-wide, 18-mile-long, asphalt trail from the LaVerkin Confluence Park to Springdale.

"This is such a big win for county residents and our visitors," said Kevin Lewis, Director of Greater Zion Convention and Tourism. "Years ago leaders had the vision to create a paved trail from St. George to Zion National Park. This project is a collaborative effort that keeps that vision alive. It will provide a significant addition to the overall goal of the Greater Zion Trail Network for Washington County. After many years of thoughtful preparation, this is a victory for all of us."

Key organizations involved in the project include the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office, Washington County, and the Zion Regional Collaborative (ZRC).

As a condition to be awarded the Active Transportation monies, local municipalities were required to provide a 20% match in funding. Utilizing tourism funds generated by visitors to the area, Washington County stepped up to set aside the \$2.7 million match earlier in the year and submitted the official request for the project.

"Our mission is to maximize the revenue generated by visitors to create a superior experience for residents and visitors," said Lewis. "The development of the Greater Zion Trail Network is an outstanding example of how that happens." According to Lewis, the majority of the matching funds will come from taxes paid by visitors when they stay in lodging properties in the county. Additional funding will come from in-kind or labor matching partners. The total cost for the project improvement is \$13.5 million.

It is anticipated the trail will take five to six years to complete with construction starting in about two years. Currently, the preferred route for the trail is along the old highway bed just south of SR-9 and near SR-9. The trail will be appropriate for walking, running, cycling and certain types of



electric assist transportation like e-bikes. It will be built in six phases with future improvements including parking and kiosks at various locations, bathrooms, rest benches and interpretive signs.

Future activities to keep the project moving forward will include an Environmental Assessment which will be conducted according to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), right-of-way clearances, and determination of the final trail location and design.

The ancillary improvements of the Zion Corridor Trail are expected to reduce congestion on SR-9 by providing an alternative form of approach for commuting, sightseeing, etc.; create a safe, non-motorized access to amenities along SR-9 as well as Zion National Park; complete another section of trail which will eventually connect St. George to Springdale and improve the current and future adjacent neighborhoods.

“The award of these funds furthers the goal of ZRC for Zion Canyon to be accessed by an efficient transportation system that delivers tourists and employees to destinations throughout the Zion Canyon Region, including Zion National Park, in a safe and convenient manner,” said Emily Friedman, ZRC Coordinator. “Residents and visitors will have improved access to recreational opportunities, efficient and economical transportation options for employment and enjoyment with an overall goal of reducing traffic and parking congestion in the Town of Springdale and the entrance to Zion National Park.”

Greater Zion serves as the Washington County representative on the ZRC which is a group of municipalities, public land management agencies, state agencies and other interested parties providing regional planning and improvements in the Zion Canyon area. The ZRC and representative entities were instrumental in preparations for and advising on the winning proposal.

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#### **About Greater Zion**

Located in the southwest corner of Utah, Greater Zion is a destination that offers more than 2,400 square miles of adventure and inspiration. Zion National Park, the fourth most visited National Park in the United States, is the premier attraction, but Zion is only the beginning. Four state parks and a multitude of year-round recreational lands set the stage for a burgeoning mountain biking scene, some of the best off-highway vehicle riding in the country, scenic and challenging play at 13 top-rated golf courses, world-class cultural performances at Tuacahn Center for the Arts and so much more. The vibrant communities of St. George, Springdale, Hurricane, Ivins and towns in between offer a wide range of lodging options, dining experiences and access to outdoor pursuits through local outfitters and tour companies. Home to the 2021 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship, Greater Zion also is a world-class destination for sporting events, conferences and meetings. The Greater Zion Convention and Tourism Office is a transient-room-tax-funded entity of Washington County, Utah. For more information, please visit [GreaterZion.com](http://GreaterZion.com).