



Detailed Qatar Trip Report: United States Mayoral Delegation Visit

Mayor Davis was part of a special United States Mayoral Delegation invited to visit the State of Qatar.

The purpose of the visit was to learn, exchange information and best practices, and continue the advancement of the United States and Qatar partnership.

The itinerary consisted of meetings with Doha leaders to discuss the following:

- The environment and climate change
- Economics to include free zones and the Qatar Investment Authority
- A visit with the Ministry of Municipality, which oversees urban planning and strategy, management of public lands, and manages Qatar's agricultural sector
- A visit to the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development
- A visit to the Al Udeid Air Base, the largest U.S. overseas airbase in the world



The importance of these meetings was the exchange of ideas with leaders from around the world. For Augusta to be competitive on the global stage and continue its claim of being an international city, we have to make global connections.

Background about each of the discussion areas:

The State of Qatar consolidated the functions of various ministries to create the **Ministry of Environment and Climate** change in 2021 as part of a broader effort to increase the priority and attention placed on climate change and related issues. The Ministry is principally tasked with advancing the implementation of Qatar's



National Environment and Climate Change Strategy, which identifies five key environmental priority areas and sets targets for each:

- **GHG Emissions and Air Quality:** Reduce GHG emissions to limit global warming and improve ambient and indoor air quality to better protect public health and the wider environment. To do so, Qatar seeks to reduce GHG emissions by 25% versus a business-as-usual scenario by 2030, enhance ambient air quality standards and update limit values by 2024, among other targets.
- **Biodiversity:** Enhance efforts to conserve, restore and protect biodiversity for natural ecosystems. To achieve this, Qatar will conserve and effectively manage more than 25% of its total land area by 2030 and put in place restoration and protection plans for key species, among other targets.
- **Water:** Ensure the sustainable and integrated management of all water resources. For example, Qatar will reduce groundwater extraction by 60%, reduce daily household water consumption by a third, and double desalination via reverse osmosis or more sustainable technologies, among other targets.
- **Circular Economy and Waste Management:** Enhance critical infrastructure for sustainable waste management and drive more circular use of materials. To do so, Qatar seeks to close and rehabilitate 100% of unsanitary landfills and achieve a 15% material recycling rate of municipal wastes, among other targets.
- **Land Use:** Enhance the long-term potential of all land resources. Qatar will prioritize high-yield and sustainable agriculture production by driving a more than 50% improvement in farmland productivity and launch sustainable urban planning initiatives such as mandating green building requirements, amongst other targets.



Why this is important in Augusta:

Augusta is working on a zero-emissions plan aimed at converting 20 percent of the city's fleet by 2030.



As a leader in the ARTS MPO, Augusta and its partners are working on protecting and enhancing the environment, promoting energy conservation, and improving the quality of life.

Additionally, Augusta and the ARTS MPO is committed to Environmental Stewardship by enhancing the social and environmental fabric of the region, minimizing disruption or displacement of residential or commercial areas from restructured or new transportation facilities, minimizing the impact on environmental resources, wetlands, wildlife, historic properties, and water quality, reducing the mobile emissions and meeting air quality standards with projects including managed lanes, operational projects, transit, and non-motorized vehicles such as bicycles, and pedestrians, and serving the Environmental Justice populations through direct benefits or access to the project.

As Augusta continues to plan for a sustainable future, it is crucial to examine best practices of other locales and determine if and how they can be implemented in Augusta to advance our goals.



The Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) is the sovereign wealth fund of the State of Qatar. The government created QIA in 2005 to diversify the economy and prepare for a time beyond the hydrocarbon era. QIA has evolved into a world-class investment organization staffed with top talent from Qatar and around the world. The State of Qatar mandates QIA to invest,

diversify and grow the State's sovereign reserves to create value for future generations of Qataris, support Qatar's economy by investing in local companies, and provide liquidity to the State when needed.

QIA today has an extensive global portfolio, including a range of investments in communities throughout the United States in various sectors. The fund continually



reviews its investment strategy to take into account changing market conditions and trends and take advantage of new opportunities.

Why this is important in Augusta:

Augusta is a diverse city with diverse economic development opportunities. Given Qatar's current global portfolio, it is not out of the range of possibility that investment in Augusta is plausible.

Qatar Free Zones Authority (QFZA) was established in 2018 to oversee and regulate free zones in Qatar as part of the country's effort to transform into a global industrial and logistics hub. QFZA currently oversees two free zones, which are closely interconnected and separated by just 10 miles:

- The Airport Free Zone at Ras Bufontas covers 2.5 square miles directly adjacent to the world-renowned Hamad International Airport.
- The Port Free Zone at Umm Alhoul, which covers 20 square miles and is situated near Hamad Port, among the world's largest greenfield ports, and also offers its own port, MARSA, a fully integrated maritime ecosystem with amenities to support a variety of maritime activities.



QFZA is currently prioritizing three key sectors, Logistics, Chemicals, and Emerging Technology, and is creating specialized industry clusters within these sectors to support the development of local industries and facilitate international companies' access to the broad range of opportunities and benefits Qatar has to offer.

Why this is important in Augusta:

Augusta is home to the Augusta Regional Airport. Recently, establishing a Free Trade Zone around the airport has been discussed.

The importance of a Free Trade Zone in Augusta is economics and the larger benefit to the community and region. Businesses can employ the practices of a Foreign Trade Zone relationship and enjoy more significant cash flow, enhanced efficiency



of global trade logistics, reduced costs, and more flexibility in orchestrating their operations.¹



The Ministry of Municipality

was initially established in 1972 and is responsible for providing a range of services to improve the daily life of the general public of Qatar across the country's eight municipalities.

The Ministry's wide range of responsibilities include urban planning and strategy, the management of public lands, execution of a variety of urban

projects such as public buildings and parks, the maintenance of roads, general public cleaning, pest control, regulation of markets and retail outlets, waste management, issuance of building and advertisement permits, commercial licensing, and food control.

The Ministry also oversees Qatar's agricultural sector, including managing the country's agricultural research initiatives.



Why this is important in Augusta:

With the new census information, many of Augusta's rural areas are now considered urban. As Augusta continues to find its niche(s) for sustainable development, visiting an area that has focused on urban planning and strategy for almost 50 years makes sense.

The Ministry has figured out what works and what doesn't work and has the capability to assist in

thinking through future planning and strategy with its global partners.



Qatar Foundation (Q.F.) is a non-profit organization created in 1995 by His Highness The Father Emir, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. Founded initially to provide quality education to develop Qatar's human capital, the organization now comprises an ecosystem of more than 50 entities working in education, research, and community development to address society's most pressing challenges and empower people worldwide.

Q.F.'s flagship initiative is Education City, a one-of-a-kind international campus that spans more than seven square miles and hosts branch campuses of some of the world's leading educational institutes, including six U.S. universities - Carnegie Mellon University, Weill Cornell Medicine, Virginia Commonwealth University School

of the Arts, Texas A&M University, Northwestern University, and Georgetown University.

Q.F. is also deeply engaged in a wide variety of other areas, including extensive work to promote primary education both in Qatar and globally, spearheading Qatar's research and development initiatives, and supporting community development through a range of arts and culture programs.

Why this is important in Augusta:

Augusta is in a unique position when it comes to education, research, and community development. As home to Augusta University (MCG), Augusta Technical College, Paine College, the Cyber Center of Excellence, and the Georgia Cyber Center, along with the Augusta Economic Development Authority and the Downtown Development Authority, Augusta is on the cusp of creating the perfect ecosystem that is already established in Qatar through the Qatar Foundation.



Augusta can replicate successes that have grown Qatar without displacing Augustans but instead creates an ecosystem that builds entrepreneurs, businesses, and systems based on niches that work to the advantage of filling in the gaps in Augusta's development/economic development.

Al Udeid Air Base (AUAB) is the largest U.S. overseas airbase in the world and the forward headquarters of U.S. Central Command, U.S. Air Force Central Command, and U.S. Special Operations Central Command, as well as host to the Combined Joint Interagency Task Force – Syria, U.S. Central Command's Combined Air Operations Center, and the U.S. Air Force's 379th Air Expeditionary Wing.

The thousands of U.S. troops and support civilians stationed at the base lead the U.S. military and global coalition's air operations to defeat ISIS and violent extremists across the region.

Cooperation at the base began in 1996 when Qatar granted the United States' request to establish a presence in the region following Desert Storm and funded the base's initial \$1 billion development. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the base played an increasingly central role in U.S. military activities in Iraq and subsequently Afghanistan. As a result, US CENTCOM Forward H.Q. was established at AUAB beginning in 2003. Today, the base is home to a large U.S. fleet and has runways long enough to accommodate any U.S. aircraft.

Since its creation, Qatar has contributed more than \$8 billion to develop AUAB. In addition, Qatar recently agreed to fund and manage an additional \$1.8 billion in upgrades to the base that will provide an increased quality of life for Airmen and their families.





Why this is important in Augusta:

While Augusta does not have an airbase, we are home to Fort Gordon and the Cyber Center of Excellence. Just as Qatar has invested in the airbase and established a symbiotic relationship, Augusta does the same with Fort Gordon.

Anytime a community can support its servicemen and women, the community and, in Augusta's case, the entire region benefits.

**While visiting the airbase, we had time to visit with US servicemen and women many of whom were involved in the recent Afghan withdrawal as well as operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria.*

Funding:

No city funds were used for this trip to Qatar.

¹ "What is FTZ and why it's important." *Remote Technologies*, October 23, 2019, <https://remotetechnology.net/2019/10/23/what-is-ftz-and-why-its-important/>.