

Joint Policy Advisory Committee

MOUNTAINLAND ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
UTAH DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIXIE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



WASATCH FRONT REGIONAL COUNCIL
UTAH TRANSIT AUTHORITY
CACHE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MEETING MINUTES

Wasatch Front Regional Council Offices
Rio Grande Board Room
41 North Rio Grande Street, Suite 103
Salt Lake City

Thursday, February 6, 2020
11:30 am – 1:30 pm

PRESENT: Teri Newell, JPAC Chair, UDOT

Ted Knowlton, WFRC
Carlton Christensen, UTA
Jeff Scott, Box Elder County
Beth Holbrook, UTA
Carolyn Gonot, UTA
Shawn Seager, MAG
Zach Jacob, West Jordan City Council
Tina Cannon, Morgan County Council
Andrew Gruber, WFRC
Ivan Marrero, FHWA
Clint Smith, Herriman City Council
Trent Staggs, Riverton City
Dennis Clark, Tooele County
Myron Lee, Dixie MPO
Scott Hess, WFRC
Lauren Victor, WFRC
Julie Bjornstad, WFRC
Megan Townsend, WFRC
Jory Johner, WFRC
Ben Huot, UDOT
Andrea Olson, UDOT
LaNiece Davenport, WFRC
Michelle Carroll, MAG
Alex Roy, WFRC
Ryan Taylor, UTA

Sheila Bishop, UTA
Michelle Larsen, UTA
Annette Royle, UTA
Jay Aguilar, UDOT
Steve Call, FHWA
Brigitte Mandel, FHWA
Mary DeLoretto, UTA
Diane Josie, UDOT

1. Welcome and Introductions

Teri Newell, Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) Deputy Director of Planning and Investment and Joint Policy Advisory Committee (JPAC) Chair, opened the meeting at 11:40 a.m. and welcomed attendees.

2. Approval of November 21, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Andrew Gruber, Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC) Executive Director, moved to approve the minutes. Mayor Trent Staggs, Riverton City, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Legislative Update – UDOT

Linda Hull, UDOT Policy and Legislative Services Director, discussed several bills of interest including the following:

- Electric Vehicle Charging – Ms. Hull said this bill will require charging stations every 50 miles. It will require charging stations in key locations by June 2021.
- Transit Funding – Ms. Hull explained that this bill is to address the tax reform proposal that was appealed.
- Statewide Rail Plan – Ms. Hull said this bill is regarding the statewide compatibility for passenger and freight lines.
- Eminent Domain – Ms. Hull said there are currently four eminent domain bills. One bill prohibits a condemning authority from condemning property on a “century farm.” Another bill defines the time when property can be condemned for a recreational trail. Another bill will allow property owner to file a lawsuit against a condemning authority and that public entity would have to prove in court the need for the public use of the land. Another bill clarifies the relationship between the condemning authority and the property owner.
- Abandoned Aircraft – Ms. Hull explained that this bill allows an airport property owner to cease aircraft that is abandoned on the airport property.
- Corridor Preservation – Ms. Hull said this bill codifies current practice and will apply to municipalities as well.

4. Frontrunner Business Plan – UTA

Carolyn Gonot, Utah Transit Authority (UTA) Executive Director, conducted a presentation regarding the future of FrontRunner. She said FrontRunner is becoming a vital part of transportation along the Wasatch Front and as the region continues to grow, there are increasing demands on FrontRunner. Users would like to see more frequent service, potentially faster trains, and shortened travel times. She said FrontRunner will eventually need electrification and a double track. This would require \$2 to 4 billion to implement.

Ms. Gonot explained the goals of improvements which include reduction of I-15 corridor congestion, support clean air initiatives, use for regular mode of travel, increase train reliability over time, improve safety at grade crossings, and support economic development. The overall goal is to make a strong back bone to serve passengers in the future. Improvements would be done in three phases. They believe they can implement the first two phases in the next 5 to 10 years.

A member asked if the improvements will be made using existing revenue sources. Ms. Gonot said UTA will need to leverage additional revenues sources to get the funds from the State for the capital improvements.

Mr. Gruber said there is a lot of interest in making enhancements to FrontRunner in many different corridors. He complimented Ms. Gonot and UTA for their work on this business plan.

Carlton Christensen, UTA Board Chair, wanted to underscore conversations about enhanced bus service. These are separate conversations hoping to add buses based on availability of funding.

A member asked about the timeline and if the amount presented today is inclusive of acquiring right of way. Ms. Gonot said UTA has almost all the right of way for the first phase, and they might need to acquire some right of way for the second phase.

A member asked if FrontRunner is currently at capacity. Ms. Gonot said within the next 10 years there will not be enough capacity on the trains. UTA is preparing for the demand and increase in ridership. Ms. Newell said we need to double track FrontRunner based on the Governor's bill.

A member asked if a tax increase will be needed to build the capital projects outlined in Utah County. Ms. Gonot said UTA is working on enhancement for services in areas. Local dollars will be required to operate.

A member asked if a statewide rail plan is feasible south of the Wasatch. Ms. Newell said we have a statewide rail plan, but we are also looking at freight and passenger rail running on the same system.

5. eVouchers - UTA

Ryan Taylor explained UTA's eVoucher system. He said the project may be small in size, but the impact is vital. The program is to help individuals who have difficulty to use the regular transit system.

Mr. Taylor said the administration of the program uses a paper system and has a high cost, there is no automation, and is very slow. There is the potential for waste, fraud and abuse as well.

UTA came up with an idea to create an electronic system to improve efficiency. A service agency qualifies individuals, rides would be scheduled with a driver using an app similar to Uber or Lyft, the driver picks up the customer and provides the trip, the individual getting the ride would provide a token or QR code, and the driver would be paid.

UTA has teamed up with Cambridge Systematics. They've also teamed up with a group from Florida who will assist with tracking the health outcomes of individuals using the system. It will take 12-14 months to complete the software and then deployment. This project is just over \$1 million. Bulk of the project is being funded with federal funds with a local match being funded by UTA.

A member asked if a rideshare company could provide this service. Mr. Taylor said those mechanisms exist, but are not tapping into the volunteer network which lowers the cost per trip. This service is for those who cannot afford an Uber or Lyft trip or when that service is not available.

Mr. Taylor said these programs are very successful around the country.

6. Utah's Unified Transportation Plan – WFRC

Mr. Gruber presented Utah's Unified Transportation Plan. He said it is a product of all of Utah's transportation agencies coming together to determine what type of transportation is needed to 2050. This includes all modes of transportation. The Plan is updated and adopted every four years. FHWA recognizes the Unified Plan as a national model for collaboration for achieving the best results for the investment of our resources.

Mr. Gruber demonstrated the new website for the new Unified Transportation Plan. He said the information is more accessible on the website and can be updated dynamically. The URL is unifiedplan.org.

Mr. Gruber demonstrated the interactive map. The map shows all the projects on the Unified Plan. A user can click on any project and get information about the project.

Mr. Gruber said the Plan evaluates revenues anticipated to be available and identifies priority needs for transportation. The Plan is not just looking at new capacity needed but looks at investments needed to keep our current infrastructure in a state of good repair. He said we don't assume all the needs on the Plan will be met. We make assumptions about what revenues are likely to be available and then apply that to the highest priority needs in each of those categories of available revenue.

Mr. Gruber discussed the gap in revenue to meet the needs. Significant revenues are going into the state highway system. Very little revenue is available to enhance the transit system. He said we cannot meet the travel and population growth in the future by just adding road capacity. We need to provide transportation choices which include transit, biking, and walking as alternatives to driving. If residents have the ability to work and live in the same area, that gives them more transportation options.

Mr. Gruber discussed the benefits of the Unified Transportation Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to achieve the goals listed under "Benefits" on the website. If we make the Unified Plan investments, there will be a significant impact on Utah's economy and its ability to continue to thrive and flourish. Air quality will be improved as well.

Andrew thanked the partners who worked on the Plan.

Andrea Olson, UDOT Transportation Planner, said she thinks the Plan is unique in the country. It gives the group credibility when asking for funding from decision makers.

Mr. Christensen said we know transit isn't the solution for everyone, but having the bigger picture helps the decision makers figure out how to utilize the corridors we have to make the right decision.

Shawn Seagar, MAG, said he has enjoyed the partnership over the years to pull the Plan together.

Myron Lee, Dixie MPO, said this information represents a great deal of work, negotiation, and thinking.

Tina Cannon, Morgan County Council, said there are still needs in rural Utah that need to be addressed.

Mr. Gruber said we cannot take for granted that the quality of life we enjoy will continue. He encouraged everyone to keep at this work and work together.

Ms. Newell, said the prioritization process that UDOT uses to choose transit and transportation investment projects are all based on the Unified Plan. In order to qualify to have a project funded and ranked, the project has to be in Phase 1 of the Plan.

7. Other Business

The date of the next meeting was not determined. The time and location of the next meeting will be communicated to members.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously.