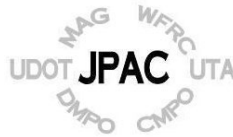


# Joint Policy Advisory Committee

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**  
**LOCATION: ZOOM**  
**MOUNTAINLAND.ORG/LIVE**

**April 1, 2021**  
**11:30 am – 1:30 pm**

Shawn Seager, JPAC Chair, MAG	Jeff Scott, Box Elder County
Andrew Gruber, WFRC	Jenny Wilson, Salt Lake County
Andrew Jackson, WFRC	Jim Evans, UDOT
Ben Hout, UDOT	Jory Johner, WFRC
Beth Holbrook, UTA	Julie Bjornstad
Blaine Fackrell, Morgan County	Linda Hull, UDOT
Carlos Braceras, UDOT	Michelle Carroll, MAG
Carlton Christensen, UTA	Michelle Larsen, UTA
Chris Hart, Dixie MPO (Ivins)	Miranda Jones Cox, WFRC
Clint Smith, Salt Lake County (Herriman)	Myron Lee, Dixie MPO
Dennis Clark, Tooele County (Vernon)	Rod Mann, MAG (Highland)
Jeff Acerson, UTA	Shawn Eliot, MAG
Jeff Gilbert, Cache MPO	Ted Knowlton, WFRC

## **Welcome and Introductions** [:06]

Shawn Seager, Director of Planning Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG) and Joint Policy Advisory Committee (JPAC) Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. Mr. Seager gave a brief overview on the background and function of JPAC. The meeting began at approximately 11:32 a.m.

## **Approval of November 24, 2020 Meeting Minutes** [1:54]

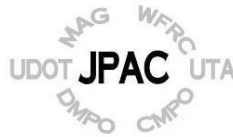
Council Member Clint Smith moved to approve the minutes of the JPAC November 24, 2020 meeting. Carlos Braceras seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Impacts of COVID 19 in the St. George Area** [2:30]

Myron Lee reported that transportation in St. George has increased 50-75% over the past year and that visitation in Zions National Park has nearly doubled January 2019 to January 2021. An overview of housing and traffic trends that took place in Washington County during the COVID shut down period to current date was provided. UDOT 2020-2021 traffic volume trends show that the area is currently at 124% normal average traffic. Mr. Lee said transportation planners will need to take into consideration

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economic development shifts, dissimilar traffic patterns, growth/zone changes, diverse transportation modes, and the demand on regional roads when planning for future growth. See presentation slides for details.

**Comment Mayor Chris Hart:** [17:20] Mayor Hart acknowledged that Mr. Lee does a thorough job covering transportation changes in their area.

**Comment Trustee Carlton Christensen:** [17:49] Trustee Christensen asked how Dixie MPO is preparing for transit in the Washington County area and is that part of the long-term plan.

**Response Myron Lee:** [18:12] Mr. Lee reported that UDOT has approved \$25M in funds from the 2017 Recreation Hotspot Funding to build a transit line between St. George and Zions National Park. The process is moving slower than hoped, but recently key agreements between Washington County and St. George City are taking place to expand the Suntran public transit system out to Springdale. In addition to funding from UDOT, the County Commission has passed the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Sales Tax to help fund transit over time. Once it is implemented, the transit line will be sustained with those tax dollars and grant moneys for the next 10-15 years. They are also looking at solutions to make the Suntran work better.

**Comment Ted Knowlton:** [20:28] Mr. Knowlton asked where Dixie MPO is on cycling and planning for future growth.

**Response Myron Lee:** [20:09] Mr. Lee reported that Dixie MPO has an Active Transportation Plan and that there has been an uptick in cycling. They have seen successes recently with the addition of a pedestrian underpass under I-15 east of Dixie State University. Dixie MPO is working through the challenge of counting the number of people using the trails and at what times of day.

**Comment Trustee Jeff Acerson:** [23:18] Trustee Acerson asked Mr. Lee what his projections are for 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Cent Sales Tax funds and if it will be used to help facilitate support of Suntran.

**Response Myron Lee:** [23:36] Mr. Lee reported that before the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Cent Sales Tax, St. George City was using \$500k a year to supplement the federal and state grants for Suntran. With the implementation of the sales tax, St. George is seeing \$1.6M for transit. They are also looking into FTA Grants to purchase electric buses and charging stations. Mr. Lee mentioned that Mayor Pike started an experiment of going to a no fare transit system from February 2020 to April 2020 to see if it increased ridership. Unfortunately COVID happened and they were not able to get a good measurement.

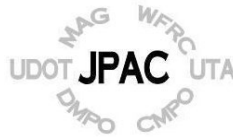
**Comment Trustee Jeff Acerson:** [25:14] Trustee Acerson said the reason he asked is there has been discussion of having FrontRunner go all the way down to St. George.

**Response Myron Lee:** [25:50] Mr. Lee reported that it would be a challenge due to the steep grade in their area.

**Comment Trustee Beth Holbrook:** [26:25] Ms. Holbrook asked if the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Cent Sales Tax investment for transit will translate into looking at station areas, in addition to looking at housing density, land use, and other components.

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**Response Myron Lee:** [26:53] Mr. Lee said they recently started that dialogue with their elected officials, and that they will work with the funding they have in addition to finding opportunities to improve.

There were no further comments or questions.

**Federal Infrastructure Update** [28:03] Andrew Gruber, WFRC MPO welcomed JPAC member Commissioner Blaine Fackrell. Mr. Gruber also introduced Miranda Jones Cox, Government Affairs Manager for WFRC.

**American Rescue Plan** [30:05] Mr. Gruber gave a brief overview of the American Rescue Plan and said that this bill does not provide funding that is authorized directly for transportation infrastructure. The American Rescue Plan is eligible to be used for sewer, water, and broadband infrastructure. Mr. Gruber said a key question that remains to be answered by the U.S. Treasury Department is if money comes into the state government or to a local government from the American Rescue Plan, can that money be put to investments or costs that were already planned and covered by general funds allowing the state/city/county to switch those funds over to use for other things such as transportation.

**Biden Infrastructure Plan** [31:50] Mr. Gruber reported that the Biden Administration released the contours of their Americas Jobs Plan Infrastructure Proposal totaling \$2.3T. About half of the funding is for traditional infrastructure, \$571B or \$621B is designated for transportation infrastructure. The proposed bill of \$174B is for electric vehicle infrastructure, \$115B for modernizing roads and bridges, and \$85B for transit. Mr. Gruber stated that there is economic debate on having the increased funding as a long-term stimulus because it will increase corporate and multinational corporate tax rates.

**Earmarks** [36:16] Community Based Projects have returned to congress. There are members of congress accepting requests from communities for earmarks in appropriations and reauthorizations. In closing, Mr. Gruber asked the committee members what their thoughts are on these issues.

**Comment Trustee Carlton Christensen:** [37:35] Trustee Christensen said it is important to have a plan in place and to identify Utah's priorities. He reported that the efforts over the last six months have been helpful in prioritizing projects.

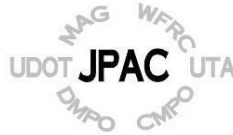
**Comment Shawn Seager:** [39:39] Mr. Seager reported that Trustee Acerson had a conversation with Senator Lee regarding earmarks earlier this week.

**Response Trustee Jeff Acerson:** [39:58] Trustee Acerson said Senator Lee does not support receiving the additional federal funds.

**Comment Shawn Seager:** [40:12] Mr. Seager said MAG's experience with using federal funds is that they lose efficiency and that any extra funding is evaporated in the requirements tied to receiving federalized funds.

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**Comment Andrew Gruber:** [41:12] Mr. Gruber said the amount of money in an earmarks and the amount of effort required to get an earmark pales in comparison to project needs and the demand for investment. Mr. Gruber thanked Carlos Braceras and the staff at UDOT for doing a remarkable job this past legislative session in collaboration with local stakeholders.

**Response Carlos Braceras:** [43:29] Mr. Braceras said it is great that there is recognition for the need for investing in infrastructure in our country. That alone and the conversation taking place around it is positive. Utah is unique in the level of support we have had from the legislature. The continued commitment to transportation has been beneficial. The bill is trying to create jobs, improve infrastructure and address climate change. He reported that there is unanimity and support on the democratic side and the republicans are going to need evidence showing the importance. Mr. Braceras expressed concern about how big the earmarks could grow, and that money from formula funds may get pulled to get more earmarks out there. That would be detrimental because formula funds are what the MPO's and UDOT use to maintain and operate Utah's transportation projects.

**Comment Andrew Gruber:** [47:55] Mr. Gruber asked Mr. Braceras if Utah will be prepared if more federal money becomes available.

**Response Carlos Braceras:** [48:13] Mr. Braceras said projects have been identified in the Unified Plan. In regard to being ready, it will depend on how fast the money has to be spent and the restrictions placed on it. With those things taken into consideration, Utah has the capacity to manage the additional funding.

**Response Trustee Carlton Christensen:** [49:53] Mr. Carlton reported that UTA is more prepared this year compared to last year. In the next few months, UTA will be prepared with key consultants and project management teams.

**Comment Andrew Gruber:** [50:46] Mr. Gruber added that JPAC has worked together to develop Utah's Unified Plan and have also developed a shared set of federal transportation reauthorization principles. He listed the five principles and said those principles were put together so that Utah, as a team could speak with one voice at a high level. They have been shared with our congressional delegation, the presidential transition and now with Secretary Pete Buttigieg's office.

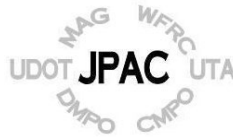
**Comment Shawn Seager:** [52:45] Mr. Seager said the approach MAG is taking is getting projects shovel ready in the event a large sum of money can be applied to the projects that could receive federal funds. MAG is working closely with UDOT and UTA on three very important transit capital projects as well as a highway expansion on Mountainview Corridor. MAG's main goal is to push the planning and environmental studies forward as fast as possible to ensure they are in the position to fund projects. There were no further comments or questions.

## Long Range Planning for Post-Pandemic Travel Demands Disruptive Trends

**Discussion** [54:25] Julie Bjornstad, WFRC MPO gave an update about the Unified Plan

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and how they are integrating disruptive trends into Long Range Planning. Ms. Bjornstad said the way we move and travel, both individually and as a society, is ever evolving. Today, we are experiencing major disruptions to how we travel and how goods and services are delivered to us. These changes will not only affect our mobility, our mode choices, and our travel demand, but will have significant impacts on our built environments, to our local land uses, and to our funding paradigms. Ms. Bjornstad discussed various situations and strategies to address the situation. Unified Plan partners, with the expertise of local communities and public and private stakeholders, have been researching the feasibility, timing, and potential ranges of implementation for a number of disruptive forces and policies. They began with about two dozen forces and policies and have narrowed down the list to what was thought to be the most feasible. They are in the process of testing the forces and policies shown here in their travel demand models and would like to come back to JPAC and show the results. See presentation slides for details.

**Comment Trustee Carlton Christensen:** [58:04] Mr. Carlton asked if any of this work has been done on a national level.

**Response Julie Bjornstad:** 58:18] Ms. Bjornstad said a lot of other MPO's are starting similar work on travel plans and the scenario testing. Some policies have been implemented nationally and internationally. She reported that the first program of the congestion pricing in the U.S. was supposed to begin this year in New York City, but it has been pushed back and may not get started until 2022.

**Comment Ted Knowlton:** [59:45] Mr. Knowlton said it is a change in the way we plan. In the past, we settled on one sense of how the future might unfold and then planned around that one trajectory. Now we are preparing multiple threats. It is essential to plan on a variety of potential scenarios and look at our resiliency of potential ways that the future might unfold. This is not all about regional unified plan, but what happens on a local scale.

**Comment Trustee Jeff Acerson:** [1:01:21] Trustee Acerson said he would be interested in having this group privately message Shawn Seager their expectations of working at home or in the office. As a planning organization planning for the future of our community and state, the reality is there is a real transition going on right now and an unknow of what the future is going to be.

**Response Julie Bjornstad:** [1:02:38] Ms. Bjornstad said she agreed and would like to get everyone's opinion on long term telecommuting.

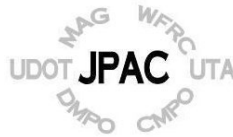
**Comment Trustee Carlton Christensen:** [1:03:30] Trustee Christensen reported that UTA recently completed a space study to determine future needs. They are also looking at what other state agencies are doing.

**Comment Julie Bjornstad:** [1:05:25] Ms. Bjornstad said she will send a short survey to the group about some of the forces and policies, and the feasibility and implementation.

**Comment Mr. Braceras:** [1:05:52] Mr. Braceras said we need to be careful when calling last year a trend as it was an unusual spot in time. He reported that Utah is back to 100% on where we were on traffic before the pandemic. There are still slightly

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smaller a.m. commutes, but p.m. commutes are back to normal. Trips are being made, just at different times. He said there is no single answer and thanked Ms. Bjornstad for taking this approach.

**Response Julie Bjornstad:** [1:07:18] Ms. Bjornstad agreed and said that research is saying people who work from home run more errands during the day, so trips are happening at different times.

**Comment Myron Lee:** [1:08:35] Mr. Lee said they are seeing that happen in St. George on a regular basis. It shows that there are a lot of trips in the middle of the day, especially on the weekends. The most important thing we can do is recognize that our long-range plans are based on solid demand models and what we need to do in the future.

**Comment Andrew Gruber:** [1:10:06] Mr. Gruber said if they were to use the transit evidence of last year, it showed that transit usage is down. However, with the rapid population growth, if people return to driving more than before, traffic congestion and air pollution will continue to increase. The travel demand plans accurately reflect what needs to be done and they will continue to take a balanced approach moving forward.

**Comment Julie Bjornstad:** [1:11:43] Ms. Bjornstad announced that a conversation will be hosted by Ted Knowlton about how COVID may change our communities and how we can use these lessons to build a better future. This event is May 6, 2021.

Registration can be found at <https://apautah.org/>

**Comment Ted Knowlton:** Mr. Knowlton provided details about the upcoming event. There were no further comments or questions.

## **UDOT Extended Transportation Investment Fund (TIF) Programming** [1:13:39]

Carlos Braceras said that Utah is familiar with being prepared when a request is given to provide a comprehensive list of transportation projects to consider. Recently, the legislature wanted to get as many projects as possible on the table for the transportation commission to consider ensuring more parts of our state can participate in projects.

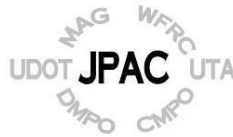
Mr. Braceras reviewed the material that was presented to the Transportation Commission on March 18, 2021 and showed the committee members how to navigate that information on the UDOT website. The list of projects the legislature identified as legislatively selected projects was reviewed. Mr. Braceras said there is \$705m designated for the legislated projects, and that all but one came from the first phase of the long-range plan. He reported that as they worked with the legislature, different members would be interested in specific projects and/or geographic areas which were focused back on the first phase of the long-range plan and considered a validation of the process. UDOT is working to determine the scope and budget for the legislated projects with the goal to the present the scope and budget for the legislated projects at the April Transportation Commission meeting. For more details go to

<https://www.udot.utah.gov/connect/about-us/commission/>

**Comment Trustee Carlton:** [1:28:34] Trustee Christensen said UTA has committed \$5m a year for 15 years in bonding. The funding is significant and allows UTA to plan

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for future needs. He said UTA will also actively look into federal sources of funding as well.

**Comment Andrew Gruber:** [1:32:22] Mr. Gruber said the legislature did not tell UDOT how to spend the money. There is confidence and trust in the prioritization processes. Mr. Gruber applauded UDOT for their collaboration in the legislative session this year. There were no further comments or questions.

**Trustee Beth Holbrook:** [1:34:02] Ms. Holbrook thanked everyone on the call for working with the legislature and for their collaborative efforts on how to best manage the projects. There was a lot of discussion from previous years that culminated and fueled the dialogue.

**Trustee Carlton Christensen:** [1:35:56] Trustee Christensen announced that there will be a groundbreaking for the Ogden BRT system on April 13, 2021. He added that this will be a great addition to northern Utah.

**Myron Lee:** [1:36:40] Mr. Lee announced that the Utah League of Cities and Towns will be held in St. George and is offering a tour of what is happening in St. George in the area of growth and transportation.

**Adjourn** [1:37:25] Trustee Carlton Christensen moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:09 p.m. Jim Evans seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 3, 2021