



U.S. Department  
Of Transportation

Federal Transit Administration  
Region 8  
1961 Stout Street,  
Suite 13301  
Denver, CO 80294-3007  
303-362-2400

Federal Highway Administration  
Utah Division  
2520 West 4700 South,  
Suite 9A  
Salt Lake City, UT 84129  
801-955-3500

October 1, 2024

In reply refer to: HDA-UT

Mr. Carlos Braceras  
Executive Director  
Utah Department of Transportation  
4501 South 2700 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

Subject: Utah FFY 2025-2030 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)  
**STIP Approval, Federal Planning Finding, and Conformity Determinations**

Dear Mr. Braceras:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have completed our joint review of the Utah Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025-2030 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) submitted on August 28, 2024. Based on our review of the information provided, certifications of statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes for and within the State of Utah, and our participation in those transportation planning processes (including planning certification reviews conducted in transportation management areas), we hereby take the following actions:


1. The FHWA and FTA jointly approve the Utah FFY 2025-2030 STIP which incorporates the individual Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) for all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) within the State of Utah: *Wasatch Front Regional Planning Council (WFRC)*; *Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG)*; *Cache Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMPO)*; and *Dixie Metropolitan Planning Organization (DMPO)*. The approval of the STIP does not constitute an obligation of funds. Authorization to proceed on individual projects will be in accordance with existing procedures as established among FHWA, FTA, UDOT, and local governments.
2. The FHWA and FTA find that the projects contained in the STIP and MPO TIPs are based on transportation planning processes that meet the requirements of 23 USC 135-134, 49 USC 5303-5304, and 23 CFR 450, and related regulations.
3. Based on our joint review of the overall Utah statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes, the FHWA and FTA are issuing the FFY 2025-2030 STIP Federal Planning Finding, as enclosed.
4. FHWA and FTA, in concurrence with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), have determined that the conformity findings for the FFY 2025-2030 TIPs in all nonattainment and maintenance areas of the State adequately address and meet the requirements as specified in the Transportation Conformity Rule (40 CFR 93, as amended). This includes nonattainment and

maintenance areas within the urbanized areas of the WFRC, MAG, and CMPO MPO boundaries. This conformity determination remains in effect until such time as a new determination is required, either by new regulatory requirements, major revision of transportation plans or programs, or a revision to the State Implementation Plan.

We appreciate the comprehensive and collaborative efforts of UDOT and the Utah MPOs and look forward to our continued partnership. If you have any questions regarding this finding or any of the observations contained herein, please contact Peter Hadley, FTA, at (303) 362-2393, or Rex Harris, FHWA, at (801) 955-3515.

Sincerely,

Cindy Terwilliger  
Regional Administrator, Region 8  
Federal Transit Administration



Ivan Marrero  
Utah Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration

Enclosure

ecc: Andrew Gruber, WFRC  
LaNiece Davenport, MAG  
Jeff Gilbert, CMPO  
Myron Lee, DMPO  
Ben Huot, Tiffany Pocock, Andrea Olson, Ivan Hartle, Robert Pelly - UDOT  
Jay Fox, Alex Beim - UTA  
Greg Lohrke - EPA Region 8  
Tracey MacDonald, Peter Hadley, Robyn Kullas - FTA Region 8  
Brigitte Mandel, Rex Harris - FHWA Utah Division

## UTAH FFY 2025-2030 STIP FEDERAL PLANNING FINDING

This is the documented Federal Planning Finding (FPF) for the Utah FFY 2025-2030 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and incorporated Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) for all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) within the State of Utah: *Wasatch Front Regional Planning Council (WFRP)*; *Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG)*; *Cache Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMPO)*; and *Dixie Metropolitan Planning Organization (DMPO)*. This FPF is issued jointly by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Utah Division and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region 8 for statewide and metropolitan transportation planning and programming processes within the State of Utah. The FPF is a required prerequisite to FHWA's and FTA's joint approval of the STIP and applies to both UDOT and the Utah MPOs. Below, please find our observations on the strengths and recommendations for improvement concerning the planning processes in Utah. No corrective actions were identified.

The following **strengths** of the statewide and metropolitan planning processes have been identified:

- ***Unified Transportation Plan Process*** – The ongoing development of the 2025-2055 Utah Unified Transportation Plan continues to exemplify the collaborative nature of transportation planning process within Utah. This unified approach demonstrates the ongoing commitment of UDOT and the planning partners to consistent and comprehensive planning within Utah. We commend the State for addressing the implementation of a new planning horizon to the year 2055.
- ***Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) implementation*** – We commend the State for quickly moving to implement new funding programs in BIL and work towards meeting new requirements. In particular, UDOT recently submitted its updated strategic plan for the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program and is on track for implementing the next phase of the program. The successful opening of the Moab charging station is a welcome indication of the successful program in action. Additional sites across the State in the next phase, including the next in Snowville, is further indication of actively pursuing programs within BIL. UDOT is currently coordinating with MPOs to develop carbon reduction strategies as required by the Carbon Reduction Program. UDOT and the MPOs have utilized the Utah Federal Transportation Funds Coordination Committee as a forum for sharing information and resources related to BIL discretionary grant funding. We also commend WFRP for providing excellent information to their stakeholders on new discretionary grant programs and notices of funding opportunities.
- ***Safety*** – The State is commended for continuing to prioritize safety in the planning process and work collaboratively with the MPOs to address safety issues. Of note, all four MPOs were awarded Safe Streets for All discretionary grants to develop regionally based safety action plans. Additionally, UDOT plans on programming at least 15% of Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds annually, even if not required, for vulnerable road user projects. Safety was a strong component of the statewide and MPO long-range plans and is reflected in the project prioritization in the relative TIPs and STIP.
- ***Active Transportation*** – The State is commended for continuing to prioritize active transportation in the planning process and implement a collaborative approach to identifying active transportation and transit needs. Active transportation was a strong component of the statewide and MPO long-range plans, which has carried through into the relative TIPs and STIP, particularly with the increase in state funds for active transportation projects. UDOT planners have increased efforts to collaborate with design engineers to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists in projects, improve east-west access, and increase access to transit.

- ***Fiscal Constraint*** – UDOT continues to incorporate funding for transit (FTA), Federal Lands Transportation Program, and Federal Lands Access Program projects into its fiscal constraint demonstration providing a more comprehensive depiction of how transportation funding is allocated in the state. We appreciate UDOT including the tribal transportation program in the FY2025-2030 STIP.

The following areas of the statewide and metropolitan planning processes have been identified for improvement:

- ***STIP and TIP Alignment*** – TIPs from each of the MPOs, along with all other Federal and State transportation plans (e.g. FTA, Federal Lands, tribal transportation program, etc.) are incorporated into the STIP. It is important that all projects from each of these programs be identified and accurately represented within the STIP. This allows for the verification of fiscally constrained programs, transparency of transportation actions, and accountability of project delivery. Often programs are in flux and minor changes within TIPs and other programs do not get reflected in the STIP in a timely manner. This is an area that has been identified for improvement. It is recommended that process controls be reviewed and updated where needed to increase the accuracy of the STIP.
- ***Transportation Conformity*** – FHWA and FTA are required to make transportation conformity determinations for the regional transportation plan (RTP) and associated TIPs in nonattainment and maintenance areas (per 40 CFR 93). During the planning process, the MPOs complete regional emissions analyses and conduct interagency consultation and public involvement. FHWA and FTA have identified coordination of these efforts and communication among agencies as areas for improvement. FHWA and FTA recognize the efforts have made in the last several years to make improvements in the area. The MPOs and UDOT are encouraged to continue to increase coordination regarding conformity requirements and to establish more formal procedures for timely completion of tasks. This will ensure adequate time for interagency consultation and issuing conformity determinations according to schedules. Additionally, MPOs should update their TIP amendment procedures to include conformity determinations on non-exempt/regionally significant projects and non-exempt/non-regionally significant projects (per 40 CFR 93.102).
- ***Performance-Based Planning Process and Performance Measures*** – UDOT has developed statewide performance measures which the MPOs have adopted. As part of the TIP development process, MPOs should include a corresponding narrative explaining how both highway and transit projects support the achievement and advancement of federal performance targets, enhancing the connection between programming and performance outcomes. MPOs should provide greater detail on how transit goals, objectives, and performance targets are integrated into their planning processes. UDOT's STIP should include sections on transit-specific performance measures related to safety and asset management. Additionally, monitoring and evaluating project selection can improve outcomes for meeting performance targets and provide opportunities for MPOs to adjust their targets. Incorporating this analysis into project selection would support performance-based planning and programming for the MPOs.