

Government Affairs Update January 28, 2022



We're wrapping up week two of the 2022 legislative session and things are picking up quickly! This update will provide some highlights from the week, including where we are at in the appropriations process, what bills you should be keeping an eye on, highlights of our visit with President Adams and Representative Schultz at our WFRC Council meeting, and share an announcement from Transit Day on the Hill. We will also share a brief federal update, with information about competitive grant program opportunities for local governments through the federal infrastructure bill.

Appropriations

Legislative appropriation subcommittees finalized base budgets this week, passing them in both the House and Senate on Thursday. The committees also continued to hear agency budget presentations and requests for appropriation, and will continue to do so over the next week as they prioritize funding requests. Once the prioritized lists of funding recommendations are provided to the Executive Appropriations Committee, the remainder of budgeting will happen over the course of the session as final supplemental appropriation bills from EAC don't emerge until later on. In the meantime, here are a few noteworthy appropriation updates for some of WFRC's funding priorities:

- \$232 million in general fund (GF) cash was included and passed in the Infrastructure and General Government base budget to replace the previously authorized bonding to strategically double-track sections of FrontRunner. This WFRC priority will now allow the Transit Transportation Investment Fund (TTIF) to be freed up – rather than being obligated to debt service – for other transit projects throughout the state.
- Legislative leadership is considering putting as much as a billion dollars of one-time funding into multi-modal transportation investments, meaning roadways, transit, and active transportation. Though it is too early to tell what this will ultimately look like, multi-modal investment aligns with our WFRC shared [principles for state infrastructure investment](#), creating a balanced approach to transportation funding, and aligns with our infrastructure priorities, including:
 - \$232 million to replace previously authorized FrontRunner bonds
 - \$46 million for regionally significant active transportation projects
 - Funding to accelerate roadway projects as prioritized in the [Unified Plan](#)
 - Point of the Mountain transportation solutions
- On Wednesday, our partners at the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB) gave their [Budget Presentation](#) to the Executive Offices and Criminal Justice appropriations subcommittee. Of note, they requested funding for several key items from the [Governor's FY23 Budget Recommendations](#) that WFRC

supports.

- \$1.65 million ongoing funding for technical planning assistance, \$1.05 million of which would go to Associations of Governments for training, grant writing, and other technical assistance, as well as a \$600,000 increase for UDOT's Technical Planning Assistance Grant Program. Technical assistance will help aid our local governments as they are challenged to meet the increasing demands of planning for growth, transportation, housing, and economic opportunity.
- \$1 million one-time to fund a statewide conversation on growth. The conversation can help residents statewide understand the implications of the various ways that growth might unfold, and the importance of planning today for tomorrow. As the fastest-growing state in the nation, how growth occurs has and will continue to have a significant impact on our quality of life.

As committees prioritize funding requests, and legislative leadership makes decisions about transportation and other related funding, we will keep you apprised.

Legislation You Should Know About

[SB140](#) *Housing and Transit Reinvestment Zone Amendments*, by Senator Wayne Harper was released this week and makes various changes to [SB217](#), Housing and Transit Reinvestment Zones (HTRZ), which was passed during the 2021 general session. In short, SB140 would authorize a limited number of additional HTRZs around light-rail transit and bus rapid transit (BRT) stations, in addition to FrontRunner stations as is now allowed. You can find WFRC's summary of the SB140 [HERE](#). WFRC was instrumental in working with Senator Harper last year to develop the HTRZ tool, and likewise, has provided input into the development of SB140. HTRZs are designed to help Utah tackle its housing crisis by facilitating mixed-use, multi-family and affordable housing development around transit stations. HTRZ enables a portion of incremental tax revenue growth to be captured over a period of time to support costs of development.

WFRC Bill Tracker

As a reminder, you can stay up to speed on the legislation that has either a direct or indirect impact to the work of WFRC and its partners with our [WFRC 2022 Bill Tracker](#) which is updated regularly. The tracker shares brief summaries, bill status, and recommended positions of "support", "oppose", or "neutral". If you have any questions about the bills or the recommendations included, please feel free to contact me.

You can also find the Utah League of Cities and Towns bill tracker [HERE](#), and the Utah Association of Counties bill tracker [HERE](#).

WFRC Council Meeting - Legislative Update

At WFRC's Thursday [Council meeting](#), the Council was joined by Senate President J. Stuart Adams, and House Majority Leader Mike Schultz for a legislative update. Both President Adams and Representative Schultz shared with the group the legislature's intent to make generational investments in infrastructure with the state's expected revenues. They both noted the importance of making multi-modal transportation investments for surface transportation, transit, and active transportation. Specifically, Representative Schultz shared his desire to build on last year's nearly \$1 billion investment in transportation ([HB433](#)), with another near billion dollar transportation package. Recognizing that things are still early on in the legislative process, we will continue to work with our legislative leaders and partners to further our transportation funding priorities and ensure these generational investments. We appreciate the President and Representative Schultz for their partnership and for taking the time to speak to us!

Free Fare February / Transit Day on the Hill

On Tuesday, the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) hosted Transit Day on the Hill where UTA leadership was joined by the Governor, local officials, and legislators to speak about the importance of transit and its role in addressing air quality and Utah's growth. Salt Lake City Mayor Erin Mendenhall also [announced](#) that for the month of February, transit fares across the entire system would be free. Mayor Jeff Silvestrini, WFRC Chair, shared that WFRC is a sponsor of [Free Fare February](#), saying "*In order for us to solve the problems we face with additional population growth, additional congestion on our roads, we need transit.*"

Federal Updates

Utah's transportation partners continue to analyze and move towards implementation of what is included in the federal infrastructure law.

Senator Romney's office shared this very helpful information on [25 Competitive Infrastructure Funding Opportunities for Local Governments](#) to apply for.

Information about specific funding opportunities is being gradually released by USDOT:

- FHWA provided a [guidance](#) and [funding](#) notice on the new \$27 billion Bridge Formula Program (BFP) established in the federal infrastructure law, intended to replace, rehabilitate, preserve, and protect bridges.
- Notice of funding opportunity for the [Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Demonstration Project \(due April 9th\)](#).
- Notice of funding opportunity for [Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity \(RAISE\)](#) (due April 14th).

It's important to note that because Congress is operating under a continuing resolution at fiscal 2021 funding levels through mid-February, USDOT does not yet have access to all the money it needs to implement the infrastructure law - which means that Utah and other states are not actually receiving all the funds that were authorized. This [joint letter](#) was sent to Congress by many organizations urging Congress to complete their work on the FY22 budget

As we continue to receive additional information on funding information, and discretionary grant program funding opportunities, we will keep you informed. Here is WFRC's summary of the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#).

We look forward to the weeks ahead and remind you that if there's any questions you have about federal or state legislation and funding, to please reach out.

Best,
Miranda

Miranda Jones Cox
Government Affairs Manager
C 435-691-3043
miranda@wfr.org
wfr.org

WFRC Website

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