



Utah Transit Authority

Local Advisory Council

MEETING MINUTES - Final

669 West 200 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84101

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

1:00 PM

FrontLines Headquarters

Present: Chair Mark Johnson
Vice Chair Troy Walker
Council Member Neal Berube
Council Member Karen Cronin
Council Member Dan Peay
Alternate Council Member Ellen Birrell
Alternate Council Member Jon Larsen

Excused: Council Member Julie Fullmer
Council Member Erin Mendenhall
Council Member Trent Staggs
Alternate Council Member Brandon Gordon

Remote: 2nd Vice-Chair Bob Stevenson

Also in attendance were UTA staff members and interested community members.

1. Call to Order & Opening Remarks

Chair Johnson welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. He announced this is an in-person, recorded meeting, with live streaming available online. Live public comment is available in person or via Zoom.

Chair Johnson noted the following Council Members were excused from the meeting: Erin Mendenhall, Trent Staggs, and Julie Fullmer. Alternate Council Members Ellen Birrell and Jon Larson will be filling in for Trent Staggs and Erin Mendenhall with 2nd Vice-Chair Bob Stevenson joining the meeting remotely.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Safety First Minute

Viola Miller, UTA Chief Financial Officer, delivered a brief safety message.

4. Public Comment

No in-person, virtual, or online public comments were received.

5. Consent

a. Approval of May 31, 2023 Local Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

b. Board Policy Revisions

A motion was made by Council Member Cronin, and seconded by Council Member Peay, to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

CONSULTATION WITH BOARD OF TRUSTEES**6. Capital Projects****a. Capital Development Update:****- OGX Opening****- First/Last Mile Connections Program (TIGER)**

UTA Project Managers Andrea Pullos and Travis Colledge, provided an update on capital development projects.

OGX Opening

Ms. Pullos reported on the successful opening of the Ogden Express (OGX) bus service in August 2023. A ribbon cutting was held on August 20 with the service opening the same day. She provided an overview of the service which includes 5.3 miles of express bus service to 13 station locations from the Ogden Central FrontRunner Station to McKay Dee Hospital. This includes 1.8 miles of exclusive bus lanes with 21 electric buses providing 15 minute headways on weekdays and Saturdays, and 30 minutes on Sundays. Ms. Pullos also referenced the Wildcat Shuttle which was introduced in 2022 and provides a continual shuttle service loop at three stations on the Weber State University Campus.

A question regarding exclusive versus dedicated bus lanes was posed by Council Member Cronin and answered by Ms. Pullos.

First/Last Mile Connections Program (TIGER)

Mr. Colledge reported on the TIGER grant projects which included projects in 32 cities in 6 counties. The project, executed in 2018, is the first of its kind spanning a large geographical area. The grant allocation was \$20 million in addition to \$11.8 million in funding from local partners.

137 projects under the grant have already been completed which include ADA ramps, bike lanes, bike shares, crosswalks, two pedestrian bridges, a railroad crossing, sidewalks and multi-use paths.

Mr. Colledge cited remaining projects including: The 300 N - Salt Lake City pedestrian bridge, the Provo pedestrian bridge, and 22 wayfinding projects at FrontRunner stations. These projects will be completed in October and November 2023.

A question regarding wayfinding projects was posed by Council Member Cronin and answered by staff.

b. AR2023-09-01 - Resolution Approving the Proposed Third Amendment to the 2023-2027 Capital Plan and Recommending Approval by the Authority's Board of Trustees

Dave Hancock, UTA Chief Capital Services Officer, was joined by Ms. Miller to present an amendment to the 2023-2027 Capital Plan.

Jay Fox, UTA Executive Director, announced the retirement of Mary DeLoretto, UTA Chief of Capital Services, in January 2024. Until then, Ms. DeLoretto will be serving in the capacity of Senior Advisor to the Executive Director. Mr. Fox introduced Mr. Hancock as the newly appointed Chief of Capital Services.

Mr. Hancock noted agenda item 6b. the proposed 2023-2027 Capital Plan Amendment, and item 7a. the 2023 Capital Budget Amendment, will be addressed together since item 7a. is related to the Capital Plan Amendment request.

The request includes the addition of a new capital project, the Daybreak TRAX station, to serve the area where the new baseball field is being constructed. The project will add \$6.5 million to the five-year capital plan with funds being reimbursed by external sources with zero impact to UTA's cash balance.

A question relating to funding partners was posed by Council Member Cronin and answered by Mr. Hancock. Board Trustee Holbrook reported South Jordan City and the developers were successful in obtaining state funds through the HTRZ program.

Mr. Hancock addressed the 2023 budget amendment consultation with the council to include an increase of \$500,000 in 2023 in response to the proposed modification to the five-year capital plan, raising the budget authority from \$336.66 million to \$337.16 million. Following Local Advisory Council review and approval of the capital plan amendment and consultation on the budget amendment, both amendments will go to the Board of Trustees for approval and adoption.

A motion was made by Council Member Cronin, and seconded by Council Member Peay, that this resolution be approved. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

7. Budget and Investments

a. Consultation on 2023 Capital Budget Amendment for the TRAX Daybreak Station

Chair Johnson asked for any additional consultation or questions on this agenda item addressed under agenda item 6b; none seen.

8. Service Planning

a. UTA Moves 2050 - Long Range Transit Plan

Russ Fox, UTA Director of Planning, was joined by Alex Beim, UTA Long Range Strategic Planning Manager, and Megan Waters, UTA Community Engagement Director, to provide a status update on the UTA Long Range Transit Plan. Mr. Fox turned the time over to Mr. Beim who provided an overview and update of the plan.

Mr. Beim shared an overview of the plan including the purpose and vision which is to plan for the future needs of the communities we serve with a vision for the future of public transportation. It includes consideration of ideas without funding constraints. The plan was developed in coordination with local partners including the local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG), and the Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC), to align with plans already adopted by these groups.

Mr. Beim emphasized the plan is not static and will be updated every four years when the local MPOs update their Regional Transportation Plans.

Further information including an online survey is available at:
<https://www.rideuta.com/Current-Projects/Long-Range-Transit-Plan>.

Mr. Beim turned the time over to Ms. Waters to outline the community engagement process. Ms. Waters shared engagement and outreach efforts including public comment, in-person and virtual open houses, social media outreach, and coordination with partners and cities. She mentioned there was a high level of interest with over 800 comments received to date.

9. Discussion

a. **FrontRunner Strategic Double Track Project Update**

Mr. Hancock introduced Josh Van Jura, Director of Trails and Transit for the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT).

Mr. Van Jura provided an overview of the FrontRunner Strategic Double Track Project. The goal of the project is to increase the frequency, reliability, and travel time, of the FrontRunner to meet the statewide growth and demand for public transportation. This will be achieved by double-tracking 9 sections (50%) of the track which will allow for an additional 10 more trains to provide more frequent, higher capacity service.

Estimated project costs are \$966 million which will be provided through appropriated state and UTA funding with a request for \$671 million of federal funding. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have recommended \$316 million in the FY24 President's budget through the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program.

Official coordination has begun with FTA and their project management oversight consultant and a construction project delivery method finalized. If approved, construction will begin in 2026 with project completion anticipated in 2029.

Mr. J Fox mentioned strong support for the project at the state and federal level. He also recognized Janelle Robertson, UTA Project Manager, for her contributions toward the project.

A question regarding CIG funding was posed by Alternate Council Member Birrell and answered by staff.

b. Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Identification and Development Program Update

Ethan Ray, UTA Project Development Planner, was joined by Nichol Bourdeaux, UTA Chief Planning & Engagement Officer.

Mr. J Fox introduced the FRA Corridor Identification and Development program and provided background information on the project, including vision and goals, in addition to the various partnerships involved in putting together the grants.

Mr. Ray provided an overview of the program which is included within the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to support transportation and infrastructure projects.

Mr. Ray's presentation included a summary of IIJA funding, (including advance appropriations and fully authorized funds), the Amtrak rail system map, and project summaries and routes for the Desert Wind Corridor, (Salt Lake to Las Vegas), and Pioneer Corridor, (Boise to Salt Lake). He noted there are many opportunities for shared corridor consolidation and improvements with both Union Pacific and Amtrak due to the shared lines UTA has with both entities.

Mr. Ray stated applications have been submitted by UDOT in partnership with UTA, the Nevada Department of Transportation, and the Idaho Department of Transportation. The FRA is anticipated to select projects for inclusion in the Corridor ID program in November 2023.

Discussion ensued. Questions regarding existing rail lines, travel times, and coordination with Union Pacific, were posed by the council and answered by staff.

c. Open Dialogue with the Board of Trustees

Chair Johnson was joined by Carlton Christensen, UTA Board of Trustees Chair; Beth Holbrook, UTA Board Member; and Jeff Acerson, UTA Board Member.

Chair Christensen spoke about the partnering efforts with local ski resorts to prepare for the upcoming 2023/24 ski season. UTA has been working diligently over the past several months with the ski resorts and other partners including Salt Lake County, Visit Salt Lake, and the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), to improve and expand

ski service during the 2023-2024 season.

Chair Christensen acknowledged a shortage of bus operators, traffic congestion, and resort parking issues contributed to the transportation challenges last year. These are being addressed and efforts include increased bus capacity, van pool options for resort employees, and surge service during peak times such as holidays or powder days. Additionally, the resorts plan on implementing reservation-based parking and bus travel in the canyons will be prioritized.

Discussion ensued. Questions on the hiring of operators, bus capacity, surge services, UDOT tolling, and communication efforts, were posed by the council and answered by staff.

Council Member Cronin reported on a recent Tooele Council of Governments (COG) where members of the COG shared their enthusiasm for the On Demand service. Concern was expressed regarding the 451 and F453 bus service and how ridership numbers have significantly reduced due to extended travel time to the University of Utah. The COG asked Council Member Cronin to bring this to the attention to the council. Trustee Acerson mentioned multiple stops on long trips can present challenges. Mr. J. Fox committed to review the service with the UTA planning team and report back to the council.

Council Member Berube and Trustee Holbrook summarized the success of the recent opening of OGX, the new bus rapid transit route in Ogden. Alternate Council Member Birrell asked if UTA has considered implementing an express campus connector to the University of Utah from the south east Salt Lake quadrant.

Discussion ensued regarding state support of transit, the need for reliable service, increased demand and growth, UTA's LRTP, and how members of the council could enlist support from their local communities by sharing the value of transit.

REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

10. Reports

a. **Executive Director Report - Operator Recruitment**

Mr. Fox provided a report on operator recruitment. He mentioned the pandemic had a severe impact on operator staffing with many staff leaving or retiring during this time in addition to a hold on recruitment resulting in a major shortage and the need to reduce or cut services.

Mr. Fox shared a presentation on bus operator hiring success and how UTA is actively working to improve operator recruitment to fill the staffing gap. This includes a more dynamic hiring approach, innovative processes, increased incentives including paid

training, and a more streamlined on-boarding process.

He shared data relating to applications, hiring, and retention from 2022-2023 YTD, which showed a significant increase in all areas. Mr. Fox also referred to UTA's successful ESL program, a UTA and state partnership, with the first class graduating 15 students at UTA.

Discussion ensued. Questions regarding recruitment data, the application process, hiring timeline, and training were posed by the council and answered by staff.

Chair Johnson announced the arrival of Vice Chair Walker at 2:49 p.m.

b. Audit Committee Report

Chair Johnson provided a summary report of the Audit Committee which met on June 26, 2023. The committee received reports on the status of the 2022 and 2023 Internal Audit Plans and progress on findings for past audits. The committee provided presentations on the following audit projects: Recruitment Assessment, Bus Operations, IT General Controls, and Capital Projects. Internal auditors presented findings and recommendations and discussed remediation efforts. The 2022 UTA Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), and National Transit Database Agreed Upon Procedures Report, were also presented.

11. Other Business

Chair Johnson reminded council members to complete and return the disclosure and training documents.

- a. Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

12. Adjourn

A motion was made by Vice Chair Walker, and seconded by Council Member Cronin, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by unanimous vote and the meeting adjourned at 2:57 p.m.

Transcribed by Hayley Mitchell
Executive Assistant to the Board
Utah Transit Authority

This document is not intended to serve as a full transcript as additional discussion may have taken place; please refer to the meeting materials or audio located at <https://www.utah.gov/pm/sitemap/notice/859905.html> for entire content.

A video recording of the meeting is accessible at

https://rideuta.granicus.com/player/clip/253?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=9999c56acc006271e5fa6f716bda505e

This document along with the digital recording constitute the official minutes of this meeting.

Approved Date: 11/29/2023

Mark Johnson
Chair, UTA Local Advisory Council