



# Utah Transit Authority

## Local Advisory Council

### MEETING MINUTES - Final

669 West 200 South  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101

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**Wednesday, September 7, 2022**

**1:00 PM**

**FrontLines Headquarters**

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**Present:** Chair Julie Fullmer  
Council Member Leonard Call  
Council Member Karen Cronin  
Council Member Dan Peay  
Council Member Trent Staggs  
Council Member Bob Stevenson

**Excused:** Vice Chair Mark Johnson  
2nd Vice-Chair Troy Walker  
Council Member Erin Mendenhall  
Alternate Council Member Ellen Birrell  
Alternate Council Member Jon Larsen

Also attending were UTA Board of Trustees Chair Carlton Christensen, Trustee Beth Holbrook, and Trustee Jeff Acerson, along with UTA staff and interested community members.

#### **OPENING BUSINESS**

##### **1. Call to Order & Opening Remarks**

Chair Fullmer welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. She announced this is an in-person meeting with live viewing available online. Chair Fullmer excused Vice-Chair Johnson, Second Vice-Chair Walker, and Council Member Mendenhall from the meeting.

##### **2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

##### **3. Safety First Minute**

Daniel Hofer, UTA, Director of Capital Assets and Project Controls, provided a brief safety message.

##### **4. Public Comment**

Chair Fullmer noted no online comments were received. An in-person comment was presented by Alternate Local Advisory Council Member Ellen Birrell who expressed her disapproval of the Utah Department of Transportation's (UDOT) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the proposed construction of a 2,500 stall parking garage near the mouth

of Cottonwood Canyon for the Gondola B plan. [Full written comment attached as Appendix A].

**5. Consent**

- a. **Approval of June 01, 2022 Local Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**
- b. **Board Policy Revisions**

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Council Member Stevenson and seconded by Council Member Cronin. The motion carried unanimously.

**CONSULTATION WITH BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Some items discussed at this chronological point in the meeting fall under agenda item 8.a. "Open Dialogue with the Board of Trustees." Minutes from this conversation are consolidated under item 8.a. in this minutes document.

**6. Capital Projects****a. Five-Year Capital Plan Update**

Bill Greene, UTA Chief Financial Officer, introduced Mary DeLoretto, UTA Chief Service Development Officer, and Daniel Hofer, UTA Director of Capital Assets and Project Controls. Staff presented an update on the five-year capital plan.

Mr. Greene referred to Board Policy no. 2.1 Financial Management which details the governance of the plan in addition to sharing the capital plan goals.

Ms. DeLoretto discussed the seven project categories within the capital plan in addition to project evaluation criteria. She then highlighted the plan summary by year including a proposed budget with UTA funds and projected grants and state/local partners funds.

Mr. Hofer presented updates to the 2023-2027 capital plan which included reduced budgets for two state funding projects, FrontRunner double track and Point of the Mountain, which will now be led by UDOT. Mr. Hofer proceeded to detail the costs associated with each of the seven projects in 2023. He concluded his report by summarizing next steps including timelines for presentation, final approval, and adoption of the plan.

Discussion ensued. Questions concerning projects, UDOT's role, and state of good repair were posed by the council and answered by staff.

**b. Davis-Salt Lake Community Connector Update**

Ms. DeLoretto invited Hal Johnson, UTA Project Development Manager, to provide an update on the Davis-Salt Lake Community Connector.

Mr. Johnson provided historical context to the project which dates back to studies from 2005. The project has been part of UTA's long range plan for many years and has been

through a number of processes and studies. Legislative funding in recent years has allowed the project to move forward.

Mr. Johnson shared the project objectives which are to provide improved connectivity between southern Davis County and Salt Lake City, bus stop improvements, increased frequency, reliability, expansion of routes 455 and 470, and connections to FrontRunner stations. Mr. Johnson shared additional information including map routes, project details, capital cost estimates (\$75 million dollars), and next steps.

## **7. Service Update**

### **a. Zero Fare Transit Study Overview**

Alex Beim, UTA Acting Manager of Long Range Strategic Planning was joined by Julie Bjornstad, Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC) Senior Transportation Planner, to present an overview of the Zero-Fare Transit study.

Ms. Bjornstad outlined the scope of the zero-fare study, including goals, timeline, and final reporting, which will be presented toward the end of the year. Part of the project scope includes analyzing case studies of other transit agencies across the country to identify zero-fare alternatives including system-wide zero fare, zero fare on select services, and zero fare for select riders. The project scope also includes stakeholder engagement.

Discussion ensued. Questions regarding zero-fare alternatives, inclusion of VIA On Demand service, fare box costs, data applications, stakeholder engagement, and deadline for comments were posed by the council and answered by staff.

Chair Fullmer encouraged council members to submit feedback to UTA in the next couple of weeks as part of the community engagement effort.

## **8. Discussion**

### **a. Open Dialogue with the Board of Trustees**

Chair Fullmer yielded the floor to UTA Board of Trustees and Local Advisory Council Members for open dialogue.

#### **UTA Strategic Plan**

Carlton Christensen, UTA Board of Trustees Chair, shared with the council the authority's strategic planning process which began earlier this year. The plan, which is currently being drafted, will extend to 2030 and focus on organizational aspirations and excellence with a focus on how UTA can become an "employer of choice." Chair Christensen added that an external piece to the plan will involve documenting the agency's interaction as a community partner, not just a transit partner. He used Vineyard Station as an example and how transit can pave the way for economic growth within a community. He reported a draft plan will be presented to the council toward

the end of the year.

### **Station Area Planning**

Chair Fullmer encouraged city councils to share their Station Area Plans (SAP) with their local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and provide feedback to assist in the planning process especially as it relates to first and last mile connections. Trustee Beth Holbrook agreed and expressed the agency's continued desire to be actively engaged in the communities and MPOs to create greater connectivity.

### **UDOT Gondola Project**

Council Member Stevenson expressed the importance of protecting the canyons and favors the idea of a gondola as an alternative mode of transport. Chair Christensen pointed out the decision lies with UDOT, not UTA, although the agency has given input on the operational needs and costs. He further stated there is no guarantee UTA will be the provider of the proposed bus service although UTA will continue to run the ski bus service. He mentioned discussions are still on-going.

### **South West Salt Lake County Service**

Council Member Staggs said he is trying to be a voice in his county for transit and shared his appreciation for his recent dialogue with UTA staff and for the data they provided, which he indicated could be part of a separate meeting. He highlighted the relatively low number of regular bus stops in south west Salt Lake County. He added that in some areas UTA OnDemand/Via is the only transit service available. He emphasized that several service areas, including his municipality, have limited coverage and he hopes these areas will be considered in future planning efforts by UTA.

Discussion ensued. Chair Christensen stated the items Council Member Staggs referenced will be included in UTA's long range plan. Chair Fullmer mentioned the bigger picture and a need to manage growth and address concerns in each municipality.

### **Capital Project Planning**

Council Member Staggs referenced the \$75 million cost for the Davis-Salt Lake Community Connector and inquired how UTA prioritizes projects. He expressed concern about imposing costs on residents in his municipality for UTA projects outside his area.

Chair Fullmer inquired about the process and planning for capital projects and how data and metrics are used to determine community priorities. Mr. Johnson explained priorities are put together by the local MPOs in consultation with community

stakeholders including municipalities. Feasibility studies are then put together leading to the creation of the agency's planning and priorities.

Further discussion ensued regarding local demand, growth, data measurement, how projects are planned (often several years out), prioritized, and adopted within the long range and capital project plans. These are based on many factors including data, demand, operational costs, efficiency, projected growth, and funding sources to strategically meet the needs of the communities.

### **Sardine Canyon**

Council Member Cronin shared the need for transportation options to Sardine Canyon. She was curious if this would be a conversation with UTA or Logan Transit District. Trustee Holbrook shared information on a 2019/2020 transportation study of Sardine Canyon presented to the Box Elder Commissioner's office. Connectivity recommendations were suggested but due to COVID, the study didn't progress. Trustee Holbrook suggested Council Member Cronin reach out to Cache Valley Transit.

## **REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS**

### **9. Reports**

#### **a. Executive Director Report**

- **Grants Update**
- **Ridership Report**

#### **Grants Update**

Mr. Fox invited Alma Haskell, UTA Grants Development Administrator, to provide an update on discretionary grants awarded since June 2022. The following three grants were awarded totaling \$21.2 million.

- TTIF - 5600 W/Westside Express Bus (\$20.5M)
- FTA Route Planning Restoration - Equity Index Study (\$300K)
- FTA Areas of Persistent Poverty - Paratransit Forward (\$386K)

#### **Ridership Report**

Mr. Fox invited Cheryl Beveridge, UTA Chief Operating Officer, and Jaron Robertson, UTA Acting Planning Director, to present the ridership report.

Ms. Beveridge provided ridership data by year for the months of January - July in 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. Ridership numbers in 2019 were 25 million. This dropped to 15.4 million and 12.4 million in years 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic.

In 2022, the ridership numbers are increasing and currently stand at 17.6 million which is 29 percent below the pre-pandemic ridership of 25 million. Mr. Fox interjected other transit agencies across the country are struggling post-pandemic at around 50% ridership.

Ms. Beveridge further provided ridership data month-by-month for 2019, 2021, and 2022. She also reported that UTA On Demand (VIA) Microtransit service increased by 213% from January - July 2021 to the same period in 2022. The significant increase in 2022 is due, in part, to new service in Salt Lake City, South Davis County, and Tooele County.

Ms. Beveridge referred to the new Weber State University campus bus service which has been operating for the past 10 days with ridership numbers to date between 3,000 to 4,000. She said student feedback on this service has been very positive.

Discussion ensued. Questions concerning ridership type for returning riders, Free Fare February, fare pricing, and ridership demographics for UTA On Demand, were posed by council members and answered by staff.

#### **UTA Electrification Forum - September 23, 2022**

Mr. Fox announced UTA will be hosting an electrification forum on September 23, 2022. He provided a handout for the event and encouraged council members to attend. He stated the forum will be an exciting event with several partner and community organizations in attendance.

#### **New UTA Communications Officer**

Mr. Fox introduced UTA's new communications officer, Steven Wright, to the council.

#### **b. Audit Committee Report**

Chair Fullmer provided an update to the council on the last UTA Audit Committee meeting held on June 27, 2022. The 2021 UTA Financial Audit Report (ACFR) and National transit Database Agreed Upon Procedure Report were presented to the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee also received reports on the status of the 2022 Internal Audit Plan and progress on findings for past audits and other projects.

### **10. Other Business**

- a. Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 2, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

### **11. Adjourn**

A motion was made by Council Member Staggs and seconded by Council Member Cronin to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by a unanimous vote and the meeting adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

**TOUR OF DEPOT DISTRICT CLEAN FUELS TECH CENTER**

Following the meeting, members of the UTA Local Advisory Council, guided by UTA staff, were invited to tour the Depot District Clean Fuels Tech Center.

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 and audio located at <https://www.utah.gov/pmnsitemap/notice/778664.html> for entire content.

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

Approved Date: 11/02/2022

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Julie Fullmer  
Chair, Local Advisory Council

**APPENDIX A**  
**In Person Public Comment to the**  
**Local Advisory Council of the Utah Transit Authority (UTA)**  
**September 7, 2022**

**From: Ellen Birrell, Cottonwood Heights City Council District 4**

As the elected representative of Cottonwood Heights District 4, I oppose UDOT's Final Preference LCC EIS (Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement). An agency that builds highways should not be the decision-maker on safe mobility for all users.

The State Legislature should deny funding.

I favor regionalized Carpool/Transit/Parking hubs with enhanced electric bus service located throughout Salt Lake County that strategically addresses travel needs for skiers and canyon recreationalists year round.

I also oppose UDOT's "LCC EIS 2-lane Imbalanced Wasatch Blvd Expansion" which is actually six lanes wide and designed for moving private commuter vehicles (not skiers) and uses irrelevant 2016 data and projections based on insufficient transit. Urbanizing Salt Lake Valley requires a switch from high speed, car-centric to safe & viable mobility for all users.

Fracturing the foothill gateway to Big and Little Cottonwood canyons with another huge, high-speed arterial when commuters currently have no viable transit alternatives is opposed by the citizenry. Thoughtful and financially practical alternatives that move commuters on existing arterials would lessen injuries, fatalities, and air pollution.

UDOT's focus on "traffic reliability" within their "Zero Fatalities by 2030" campaign is yielding a higher incidence of injuries and fatalities (see UDOT graph below).

The City of Cottonwood Heights opposes UDOT building a 2500 parking stall garage far from a highway and within the neighborhoods and foothill gateway to Little Cottonwood Canyon.

UDOT's previous preference for an Intermodal Hub located at the gravel pit near Big Cottonwood Canyon would service both Big and Little Cottonwood canyons and is proximal to I-215. Cottonwood Heights opposes widening roadways, building parking garages and inducing traffic with its associated danger, noise, and air pollution into Utah's prized Big and Little Cottonwood canyon area."

For more information, contact:

Ellen Birrell, Cottonwood Heights City Council District 4

[ebirrell@ch.utah.gov](mailto:ebirrell@ch.utah.gov) <<mailto:ebirrell@ch.utah.gov>> 385-910-5942