

DRAFT Project Purpose and Need – Summary

Study Overview

The Cities of Provo, Springville, Mapleton, Spanish Fork, Salem, Payson, and Santaquin, in collaboration with Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG), Utah Transit Authority (UTA), and Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) have initiated a transit study to evaluate options for providing expanded transit service in south Utah County, from Provo to Santaquin. The purpose of the study is to determine a Preferred Alternative that can be advanced into the next phase of project development – environmental study and preliminary engineering. The Preferred Alternative will identify the:

- **Transit alignment** – corridor and station locations
- **Transit mode** – type of transit technology (such as commuter rail, bus rapid transit, etc.)

Additional characteristics of the Preferred Alternative, including service frequency and other operating features will also be defined. In addition, near term investments and phased transit service options will be explored in this study to bridge the gap between existing transit service and full implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

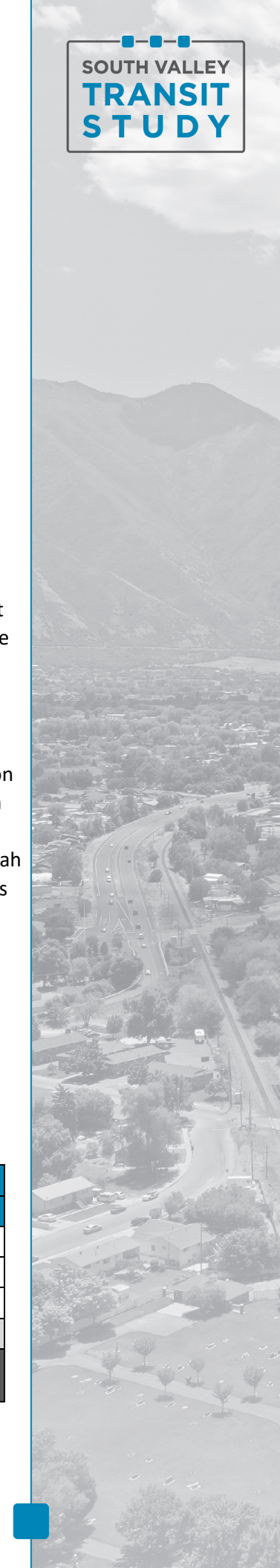
Regional Context

The Wasatch Front has experienced rapid urbanization and suburbanization in the last few decades as the area has grown. Topographical and other natural constraints limit the provision of regional north-south transportation corridors that serve the region. The major north-south regional transportation facilities include I-15 and FrontRunner commuter rail. I-15 is the primary north-south highway that links Utah County with the Wasatch Front and connects Utah to the surrounding intermountain region. FrontRunner runs roughly parallel to I-15 and serves regional destinations from Ogden in Weber County to Provo in Utah County.

Robust growth is expected to continue along the Wasatch Front as shown in the table below. Of the Wasatch Front, Utah County, and in particular the south Utah County, is expected to grow more rapidly than other areas along the Wasatch Front. The southern portion of Utah County is connected regionally by I-15, the only freeway within Utah County. As is true for other areas along the Wasatch Front, expansion of transportation facilities to meet projected growth in south Utah County will be constrained due to topographical challenges due to mountains to the east and west, and Utah Lake, west of the study area as shown in Figure 1.

	Population			Employment		
	2020	2050	% change	2020	2050	% change
State of Utah ¹	3,325,425	5,017,232	51%	2,163,867	3,214,743	49%
Salt Lake County ¹	1,181,471	1,531,282	30%	970,805	1,341,790	38%
Davis County ¹	364,813	493,263	35%	197,304	289,191	47%
Utah County¹	679,188	1,297,515	91%	375,334	689,992	84%
South Utah County Study Area²	161,174	381,917	136%	77,600	164,069	111%

¹Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute; ² WFRC MAG Travel Demand Model



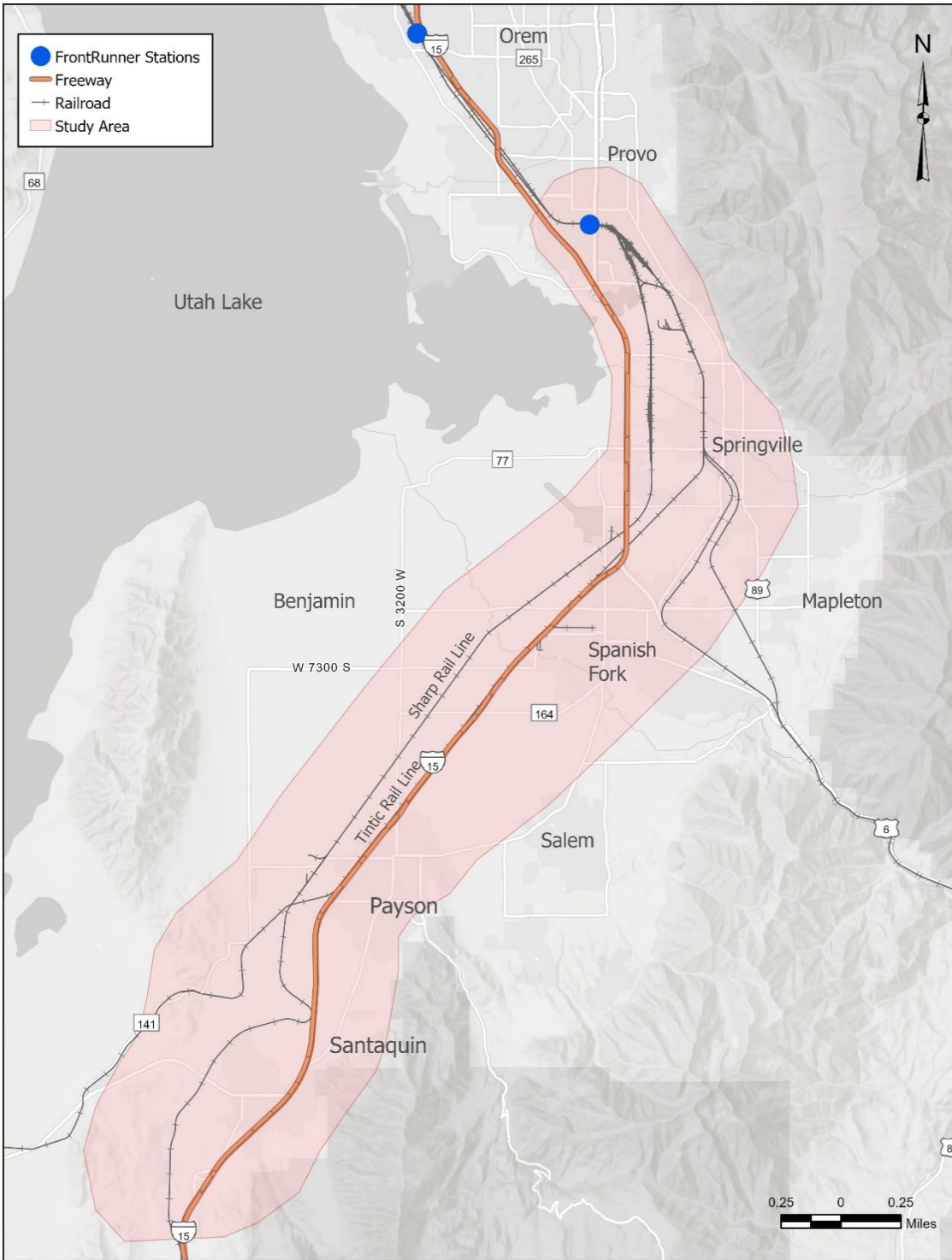


Figure 1. Study Area Context



Project Purpose and Need

A project's **need** describes the underlying problems or conditions that the project should address. The identification of these needs help establish a project's **purpose**, which defines the objectives to be achieved. A project's "Purpose and Need" is used to help guide decisions about alternatives that should be considered and helps determine measures that evaluate their performance.

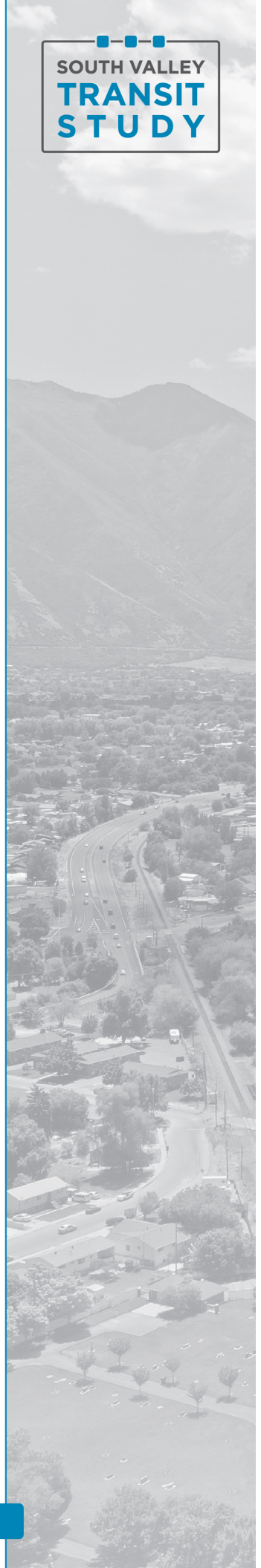
The following describes the **project needs** based on review of existing and future conditions and discussion with project stakeholders.

Project need – growth:

- Long-term population and employment growth in Utah County, and particularly south Utah County, is forecasted to be substantial and as a result, will require additional and robust transportation options to meet the forecasted travel demand.
 - Between now and 2050, population is forecasted to more than double from approximately 160,000 to 380,000, a 136% increase, and employment is also projected to grow rapidly from 77,000 to 165,000, a 111% increase.
 - This percentage change in population and employment is larger than growth expected in Utah County as a whole, and substantially larger than other counties along the Wasatch Front.

Project need – roadway and congestion:

- Roadway congestion is increasing on I-15 and major arterials in south Utah County, affecting reliability for vehicles (Figure 2).
 - Total trips will more than double between now (approximately 640,000 total trips) and 2050 (approximately 1,660,000 trips) and will create additional travel demand.
- Major roadways facilities that connect communities along the study area to each other and the region are limited. Physical constraints and topography limit opportunities to expand the existing roadway infrastructure (Figure 2).
 - Of particular concern is the chokepoint in Springville, which is anticipated to become the most congested area in Utah County. MAG's TransPlan50 notes that traffic volumes are forecast to increase from 134,000 vehicles per day in 2015 to 318,000 vehicles per day in 2050. Transportation solutions are limited in this area due to Provo Bay, wetlands, and the Wasatch Mountains.



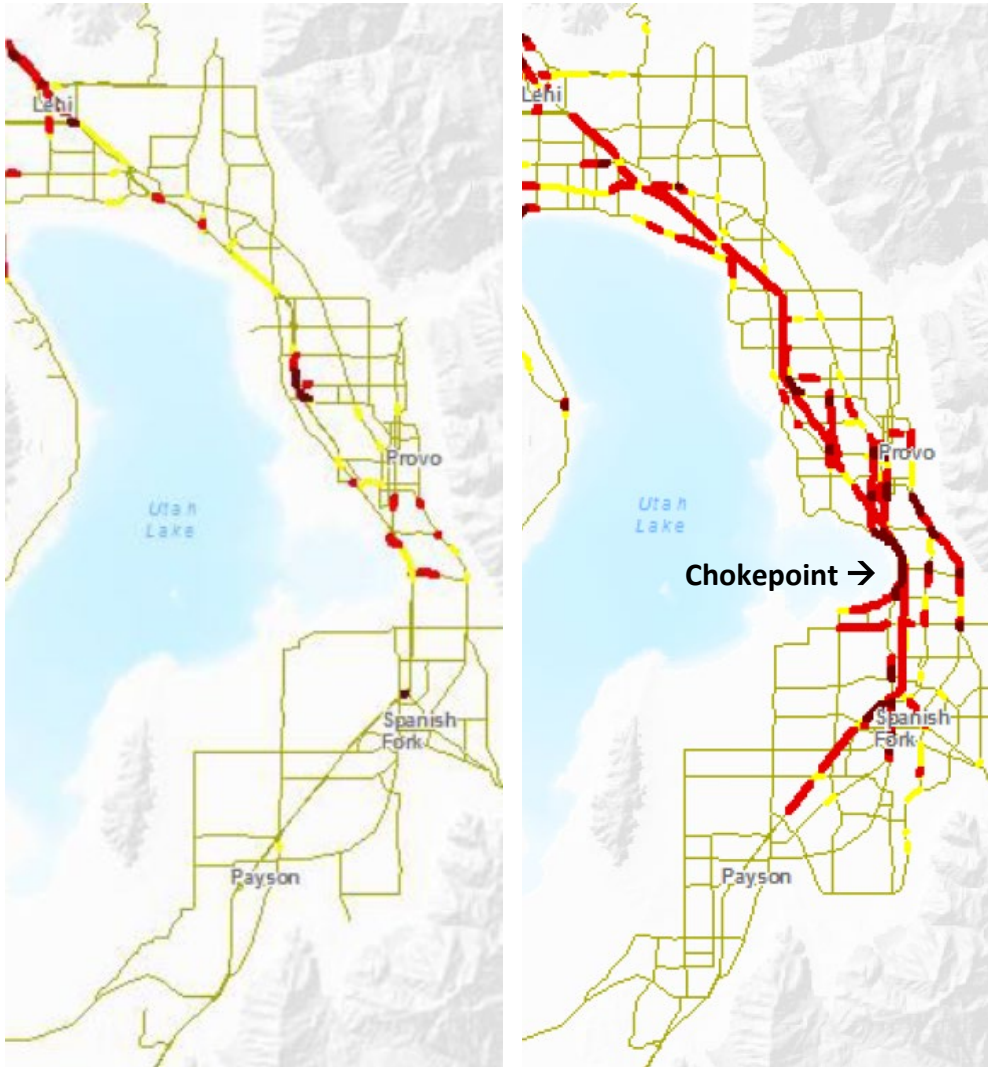


Figure 2. 2015 Congestion (left); 2050 Congestion with Planned Projects and Arterial Grid Network (right) (Source: MAG TransPlan50)

Project need – transit options:

- Limited regional north-south transit options exist to meet existing and future transportation travel demands, particularly for home-based work travel, which is primarily leaving south Utah county for destinations to the north.
 - Compared to travel patterns in north Utah County, travel patterns in south Utah County, especially those for commuting purposes, are more regional in nature and cover longer distances. Over 50% of home-based work trips originating in south Utah County are destined to central and northern Utah County and Salt Lake County.
 - 2018 American Community Survey (U.S. Census) data reveals that the largest shares of workers from south Utah County are employed in Provo, Orem, Lehi, Salt Lake City, and American Fork.



- Transit trips, particularly for home-based work travel now and forecasted for 2050, are longer than non-transit trips and tend to be more regional.
 - The average transit trip length for trips starting in south Utah County is approximately 20 miles, both now and also projected for 2050. More than half of the destinations for transit trips originating in south Utah County are in north Utah County, with the remaining transit trips split between Salt Lake County and south Utah County. This pattern remains similar for now and projected for 2050.

Project need – local and regional planning:

- Local and regional plans call for increased residential, commercial, and employment center development located in nodes served by high-capacity transit. Local and regional future land use plans would not be adequately served by the existing transit network.
- Local plans have anticipated future transit service based on regional planning and have developed land use plans around these future transit investments to catalyze economic development and employment opportunities. Transit-supportive zoning and/or overlays have been established in nearly all communities in the study area.

Project need – project partner interests:

- Communities in the study area are experiencing substantial development pressure and have expressed a unified interest in providing alternatives to driving (particularly for commuting trips), reducing trips on I-15, and providing a transit investment that also spurs transit-oriented land uses and economic development.

Based on the identification of needs in the study area, the following purpose statements describe the objectives to be achieved by this project:

- Support the transportation demands of population and employment growth in south Utah County.
- Provide efficient regional transit service in the project corridor between Provo and Santaquin.
- Support adopted regional plans and local plans and policies.
- Enhance economic development in the corridor by improving access to and connections between existing and planned employment and key activity centers.

