

Executive Committee

Workshop #3

March 11, 2021 | 9:00 – 11:00 am

1. Welcome and Introductions – Laura Hanson (UTA Project Manager)

- Laura kicked off the meeting, which is technically the first Executive Committee-only meeting, and conducted introductions. The TAC and the Executive Committee will be meeting separately from this point forward.

2. Recap from Last Meeting – Laura Hanson

- Laura provided a brief recap from last meeting where the group discussed the Purpose and Need, an overview of the evaluation process, and the initial range of alternatives (rail corridor, I-15, State/Main) and modes (commuter rail to local bus). We concluded the meeting with a pre-screening, which eliminated local bus, which doesn't meet the Purpose and Need to serve regional travel. The alternatives development will include a mix and match of corridors and modes.

3. Transit Study Process Overview and Refresher – Claire Woodman (Parametrix)

- Claire provided an overview of the transit project development process. We are currently in the first step (Planning and Alternatives Analysis), which is a critical step to understand the project need, investigate alternatives, and identify a preferred transit alignment and mode. After this step, it will move into environmental review and preliminary engineering.

4. Initial Evaluation Workshop – Project Team

- Alternatives Overview:
 - Claire Woodman presented a high-level overview of the evaluation process (see funnel graphic). We have just completed the initial evaluation and today, will focus on the results and propose recommendations for alternatives to move into the more detailed and quantitative screening.
 - The initial evaluation includes logical combinations of three alignments and four modes, which have resulted in nine alternatives (corridor + mode). All alternatives would primarily operate in an exclusive transit alignment, except express bus (operates in mixed flow). Each would offer regional service, which includes longer stop spacing (approximately four stations through the study area).
 - Troy Fitzgerald suggested considering 1200 West in Springville that will connect Provo into Springville in the near future (local route).
 - The alternatives represent the ultimate solution that we want to see by 2050; the opportunity to phase modes exist, but that will be explored during the implementation planning phase, not the alternatives analysis phase.
 - The initial evaluation looks at a variety of criteria to understand key differences.
- Initial Results – General Observations:
 - Rail Corridor tends to be the best performing overall. I-15 has the most variability of performance by mode, and most complex to serve with fully exclusive transit. State/Main is the most difficult to serve the regional need.

- Shawn Seager (MAG) stated that this project is currently in the RTP, as a Phase 1 project. MAG is exploring funding options to get the environmental phase started immediately after this study.
- Initial Results – Corridor-Specific Observations:
 - Rail Corridor
 - Includes commuter rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit.
 - Commuter rail has the greatest ability to serve regional connections. Light rail has several operational challenges and would include lower speeds. Bus rapid transit is similar to commuter rail, with reduced performance in transit connections.
 - There are some additional cost considerations with utilizing the Rail Corridor, to be explored as the project progresses.
 - I-15
 - Includes light rail, bus rapid transit, and express bus.
 - Light rail has high transit reliability, but most costly with constructability concerns. Bus rapid transit has high transportation system impacts and constructability considerations. Express bus generally has the least impacts, but low transit reliability and potential for transit connections.
 - State/Main
 - Includes light rail, bus rapid transit, and express bus.
 - Light rail has higher transit reliability, but most costly. Bus rapid transit is a mid-range alternative, with moderate reliability and impacts. Express bus has the least overall impacts, least costs, and least economic development potential, but the greatest reduced speeds and reliability due to operating in mixed flow traffic.
 - Just because this doesn't perform well for regional high-capacity transit service doesn't mean that it might not be a good fit for other transit service types.
- Initial Results – Draft Recommendations:
 - Recommend moving commuter rail and bus rapid transit, both along the rail corridor, into more detailed evaluation. For both scenarios, explore two operational scenarios: (1) all day service and (2) AM/PM peak service.
 - Supportive of recommendation: Payson, Provo, and Springville. Laura and Claire to connect with cities that are not in attendance today.
 - Project team consulted with Bruce Cardon, UTA FrontRunner General Manager, regarding implementing another mode within the Rail Corridor right-of-way. There is not necessarily a fatal flaw, but will require some additional considerations to separate bus traffic from existing freight rail.
 - Carolyn Gonot asked if we are considering alternative train sets on the Rail Corridor (e.g., DMU/EMU, smaller train sets than full 5-car FrontRunner train). A lot of agencies are doing this for corridor extensions into growing areas. This includes the ability to convert.
 - Claire clarified that we will look at that more closely in the detailed evaluation.
 - Mary DeLoretto clarified that UTA will have more flexibility with ownership over the Sharp-Tintic corridor, but over the entire route, conflicts with freight lines will need to be worked out.

- Rob Clayton questioned the Rail Corridor commuter rail transportation system impacts rating, thinking that this option provides much greater benefits than impacts.
 - Laura Hanson explained that this area will be included in the new UTA Business Plan, which is looking at how to maximize the existing FrontRunner system. FrontRunner is like the I-15 of transit and a critical backbone. How does it benefit riders and communities. What needs are outstanding for better service. Most of the corridor is single-tracked, which limits the capacity, travel times, and overall flexibility. UTA is looking at where UTA may double-track portions of the corridor.
 - Jeff Acerson concurred that these two alternatives look like the best options. This corridor becomes the “transit backbone” to south Utah County.
- **Other Key Takeaways:**
 - Transit alternatives along State/Main should continue to be explored for more localized transit service.
 - MAG has some form of high-capacity bus planned for this corridor.
 - Express bus on I-15 could still be considered as a possible phasing element while the long-term project is being developed, funded, and constructed.
 - Shawn Seager explained that MAG has big plans for transit growth in south Utah County. We are making the plans to manage the growth that we know is coming. We are ahead of the growth that we thought we’d be at 10 years ago and expect continued acceleration in south Utah County communities.
 - Troy Fitzgerald – continues to receive requests for new development in this study area vicinity, especially along the Sharp-Tintic line.
 - Local corridor preservation is critical (Shawn Seager). Local corridor preservation funds are available through the county (via MAG). Must first exhaust local tools through development approval process.
 - MAG, UTA, and local cities should come together to discuss these options further.
 - <https://mountainland.org/corridor-preservation-program>
 - Rob Clayton reminded the group that there is a bottleneck on I-15 near Springville. No viable plan for 2050 without additional capacity elsewhere; need to implement high-capacity transit off I-15.
 - **Future Steps:**
 - Will advance recommended alternatives into the Detailed Evaluation, which will review similar factors in greater detail with more quantitative data.
 - With a Preferred Alternative in mind, the team will strategize implementation options (phasing, technology, etc.).

5. Stakeholder Engagement Update – Megan Waters (UTA) and Beau Hunter (Horrocks)

- Megan Waters presented an overview of community engagement efforts.
- The website is live and information can be found at <http://www.southvalleytransit.com>.
- UTA is obtaining a community partner to support engagement with Spanish-speaking and Latino/Hispanic community.
- Coming up next: will be seeking public feedback on the Purpose and Need and initial range of alternatives.

6. Next Steps and Workshop Wrap-up – Laura Hanson (UTA)

- Laura described next steps.
 - Begin detailed evaluation of alternatives
 - Kick off land use planning task
 - UTA has a separate grant from FTA to perform more detailed station area planning

Meeting Attendees:

Payson: Mayor Bill Wright, David Tuckett

Provo: Dixon Holmes

Salem: Ryan Selee

Spanish Fork: Seth Perrins

Springville: Mayor Rick Child, Troy Fitzgerald

UTA: Laura Hanson, Mary DeLoretto, Mary De La Mare-Schaefer, Trustee Jeff Acerson, Nichol Bourdeaux, Paul Drake, Carolyn Gonot, Megan Waters

UDOT: Eric Rasband, Rob Clayton

MAG: Shawn Seager, Chad Eccles, Andrew Jackson

Project Team: Claire Woodman, Ian Kilpatrick, Jackie Kuechenmeister, Morgan Stumpf (Parametrix); Shane Marshall, Beau Hunter, Alexis Verson (Horrocks)

