

Technical Advisory Committee

Workshop #4

September 14, 2021 | 12:00 – 1:30 pm

1. Welcome and Introductions – Trustee Jeff Acerson (UTA)

- Trustee Acerson kicked off the meeting. He's excited to show the progress which this study has achieved and is hopeful that everyone is pleased with the progress and recommendations to date. This study will help advance the vision to bring transit to south Utah County.

2. Transit Study Recap and Process Overview – Jackie Kuechenmeister (Parametrix)

- Jackie 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.

3. Detailed Environmental Review – Claire Woodman (Parametrix)

- Alternatives Overview:
 - Claire Woodman presented a high-level overview of the evaluation process (the funnel!).
 - The detailed evaluation includes three alternatives – commuter rail, bus rapid transit (BRT), and a BRT design option that reduces costs and impacts through some mixed travel lanes. Commuter rail and BRT operate along the same route, in exclusive right-of-way.
- Detailed Evaluation – General Observations:
 - Many similarities between commuter rail and BRT as they operate in exclusive right-of-way and along the same route.
 - Differences are more apparent in cost and ridership. Commuter rail tends to attract higher ridership and have slightly lower capital costs, and a higher return on investment. Operating costs tend to be lower for BRT.
 - The BRT design option has tradeoffs from commuter rail and full BRT. It is a lesser investment, which reduces costs but lowers ridership and increases travel times.
 - We wanted to have some understanding of how operational differences could impact costs and ridership. Two operational “bookends” were reviewed: Scenario A: High Frequency (all day service, similar to current commuter rail) and Scenario B: AM/PM Peak (four trips in each peak hour only). Reducing frequency reduces O&M costs, but reduces performance.
- Detailed Evaluation - Results:
 - The team has run through the detailed evaluation results with each community. Overall, commuter rail performs higher than BRT.
 - Both commuter rail operating scenarios perform well; high frequency scenario has higher ridership (no forced transfer in Provo) and greater return on investment.
 - Annual O&M estimates are likely higher than reality, but this provides some context of what to expect. The team is working on refining these.

- Detailed Evaluation – Phasing and Implementation:
 - Commuter rail
 - Less flexibility for phased implementation – need to construct north to south
 - Has the ability to start with regional express bus and extend as funding is available and ridership established
 - Less flexibility to add more stations later
 - BRT
 - More flexibility to phase, add stations, and adapt to serving desired stations while supporting investments are implemented
 - Geographic Phasing
 - Provo to Payson is the key initial segment to reduce cost, improve return on investment, and reduce natural and build environmental impacts (e.g., agricultural impacts)
 - Will continue to coordinate and work through implementation to Santaquin

- Detailed Evaluation – Public Input:
 - Attended 8 community events, received over 800 comments, and more than 2,500 website users
 - Overwhelming support for the project and establishing transit connections.
 - Strong support for commuter rail with connecting bus/transit linkages.

- Detailed Evaluation – Recommendation:
 - Proposed Preferred Alternative Recommendation (2050)
 - Commuter rail – Provo to Payson; explore different operational scenarios
 - Express bus service – Payson to Santaquin; explore corridor preservation opportunities for future commuter rail
 - TAC Community Input
 - Santaquin: supportive of this data-driven decision; looking forward to setting the foundation for transit
 - Payson: supportive of the preferred commuter rail option; excited to help make this happen
 - Spanish Fork: supportive of the recommendation
 - Springville: supportive of the recommendation
 - Provo: supportive of the recommendation
 - Mapleton: no concerns with recommendation
 - Timing is a major consideration for everyone

4. Transit Study Next Steps – Claire Woodman (Parametrix)

- Claire described next steps.
 - Develop Implementation Plan
 - Refine Preferred Alternative
 - Consider phasing options
 - Potential funding sources
 - Land use recommendation
 - Local transit connections

- Liz Scanlon (UTA FrontRunner Forward Program Management Team) provided an update on the FrontRunner Forward program
 - Operations planning is underway to understand how FrontRunner grows over time.
 - Developing a Business Plan (long-term strategic plan), including a future service vision – how does UTA offer faster, more reliable service? Will fold in South Valley into the broader FrontRunner vision. Will be examining corridor preservation opportunities.
 - The South Valley Transit Study implementation plan will be developed to be complementary to the FrontRunner Forward work program. South Valley environmental is receiving funding (\$2M) through MAG and will move in parallel.

5. Wrap-up – Claire Woodman (UTA)

- Final meeting in October 2021 to review next steps, funding options, and land use recommendations.
- Going back out to the public in the next few weeks to present detailed evaluation findings.
- Shane confirmed with the group that everyone understands that the recommendation discussed earlier represented a decision to move forward with commuter rail from Provo to Payson, and express bus and corridor preservation from Payson to Santaquin. The group agreed.

Meeting Attendees:

Mapleton: Cory Branch, Sean Conroy

Payson: Mayor Bill Wright, Jill Spencer, Dave Tuckett

Provo: Dixon Holmes, Rob Hunter, Wayne Parker, Shane Winters

Santaquin: Jason Bond, Ben Reeves

Spanish Fork: Dave Anderson, Seth Perrins

Springville: Troy Fitzgerald

Salem City: Ryan Selee

UTA: Trustee Jeff Acerson, Mary De La Mare-Schaefer, Ken Anson, Mary DeLoretto, Megan Waters, Sean Murphy, Todd Provost, Liz Scanlon

UDOT: Darren Bunker, Eric Rasband, Matt Parker

MAG: Shawn Seager, Chad Eccles

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