



# IRON COUNTY RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION

ICRTEC CHAIR—MAYOR CONNIE ROBINSON • ICRTAC CHAIR—TOM STRATTON • PLANNING MANAGER—CURT HUTCHINGS

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## MINUTES

### Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)

August 6, 2014, 1:30 p.m.

Enoch City Offices

900 E. Midvalley Rd., Enoch UT

#### **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. Tom Stratton  
Mr. Rob Dotson  
Mr. Shayne Scott  
Mr. Steve Platt  
Mr. Monte Aldridge

#### **REPRESENTING:**

Brian Head Town  
Enoch City Manager  
Parowan City  
Iron County  
Utah Dept. of Transportation

#### **MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

Mayor Connie Robinson  
Mr. Kit Wareham  
Mr. Stoney Shugart

#### **REPRESENTING:**

Paragonah Town  
Cedar City  
Kanarraville Town

#### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. Dave Demas  
Mr. David Ence

#### **REPRESENTING:**

Five County Assoc. of Governments  
Kanarraville Town

#### **I. Quorum Declaration**

Mr. Tom Stratton was delayed, the meeting was chaired by Mr. Shayne Scott. Mr. Scott welcomed all present and declared there was a quorum present.

#### **II. Approve Minutes for June 4, 2014**

**A motion was made by Mr. Steve Platt, seconded by Mr. Rob Dotson, to approve the June 4, 2014 Minutes of the Iron County Rural Transportation Advisory Committee.**

**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**



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### III. UDOT Strategic Direction Document

Mr. Aldridge handed out a copy of the 2014 Strategic Direction and Performance Measures report prepared by UDOT. He explained that UDOT will be reviewing the report over the next several months and he thought it might be valuable to have the committee members review it as well. He asked the committee to review the report for any information that needs to be corrected or if something is missing that they would like to see included in the report. He welcomes any suggestions or additions. He explained that the region will put together the comments/suggestions and submit them to UDOT's Technical Committee.

Mr. Aldridge briefly reviewed the section of the report on bridges. He remarked that Utah is rated in the top 5 in the nation as far as the condition of their bridges and that the state has a very proactive bridge preventative maintenance program. He noted that approximately 2-3 years ago the off-system local bridges (non-UDOT facilities) became eligible for federal funding. Bridges are inspected every 2 years. The off-system bridges compete equally with UDOT bridges for funding.

Mr. Platt indicated that he was very interested in reviewing the report. Mr. Scott asked if there was a deadline to review the report and submit comments. Mr. Aldridge responded that they are reviewing one section per month and they are currently reviewing the 'Preserving Infrastructure' section.

Mr. Aldridge gave a quick review of how the districts of Region 4 are split. The districts are basically determined by the locations of the sheds. UDOT consolidated their resources to become more efficient due to the budget cuts in 2008-2009. Jim McConnell is the UDOT contact for us.

Mr. Demas asked if the committee's comments could be e-mailed to Mr. Aldridge. Mr. Aldridge responded that e-mail would be fine. Mr. Scott requested that he be copied on any comments that are e-mailed to Mr. Aldridge. Mr. Demas asked if Mr. Aldridge will be providing the report to the Regional Transportation Executive Committee (RTEC) at their meeting next week. Mr. Aldridge stated that he would provide the report.

Mr. Aldridge and Mr. Scott requested that they be excused from the meeting at 2:30 p.m. in order to attend other meetings.

At this point in the meeting Mr. Stratton arrived and Mr. Scott turned the meeting over to him to chair.



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#### IV. Brian Head Transit

Mr. Demas reported that he has had several conversations with Mr. Tim Boschert from UDOT regarding the possibility of a Brian Head transit route. He handed out copies of Mr. Boschert's comments he had received via e-mail. He noted that he did provide Mr. Boschert with a copy of the last CATS study. Mr. Demas explained that the concept he presented to Mr. Boschert was two-fold, a fixed route system that would operate throughout the day traveling around Brian Head. The other route would be more of a commuter route that would pick up somewhere in the Cedar City area; Mr. Demas proposed the location be near the South Interchange area. The route would have a stop in Parowan and then travel up the canyon, similar to the route identified in the CATS study.

Mr. Demas pointed out that in the comments received from Mr. Boschert; he did state that Brian Head could pursue their own public transit system. However, UDOT is leaning towards a service expansion with CATS. Mr. Boschert did indicate that it is possible to do either one if funding is available. Mr. Demas noted that federal funding would be available at a 50/50 match for operational and administrative expenses and an 80/20 match for capital expenditures. He remarked that there is one caveat regarding the federal funding. The federal funding must be applied for every year so there is a possibility of not receiving the funds. In the event that there was not enough funding for all projects, the funding would be split it up proportionally.

Mr. Aldridge remarked that the current transportation bill expires October 1<sup>st</sup> and UDOT does not know what is going to happen with future funding. Mr. Demas remarked that Mr. Boschert did not mention the pending budget issues in his discussions. However, the possibility of funding cuts always exists.

Mr. Demas noted that Mr. Boschert did state that the route would need to be a year round transit system to qualify for federal funding. Mr. Demas asked him if the schedules could be adjusted to reduce the service during the off-season and increased during peak-season and still qualify for the funding. Mr. Boschert stated that the schedules could be adjusted but it must be a fixed route system that operates every day.

Mr. Demas explained that Mr. Boschert recommended that another study be completed. Mr. Boschert indicated that UDOT (PTT) would support funding a new study to look at a finite scope. The RTAC committee would need to put the scope together and submit it to Mr. Boschert for approval. The funding for the new study



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would be an 80/20 match so a local match would be needed. Mr. Boschert estimated that the cost of the study would be approximately \$50,000 in order to get a good indication of the feasibility of the project. Mr. Boschert believed that the cost for the last study was between \$40,000 and \$60,000.

Mr. Demas reported that he had reviewed the data from the original study and agreed with Mr. Stratton that it does look possible to operate a route utilizing the \$100,000 – 140,000 that Brian Head is currently spending for transit. He noted one issue in the current study is that it did not recognize an increased fee for the skiers. The study assumed a flat fee for all riders. If a increased fee could be charged to the skiers similar to the \$4.50 charge per skier used to travel the Cottonwood Canyons it would generate an additional \$70-80,000 in revenue. However, because the route would be a public transportation system, according to Mr. Boschert, differentiating between riders by charging the skiers a higher fee would not be allowed. Mr. Stratton suggested splitting the difference and charging everyone the same amount; possibly charge all riders \$2.75.

Mr. Demas stated that the current Brian Head transit funding would need to be dedicated to the system in order for the route to be viable. Mr. Aldridge asked if the goal is to try to relieve the Brian Head businesses of their current tax for transit. Mr. Stratton stated that the businesses would still need to have that expense. Mr. Demas remarked that it may be possible to relieve the businesses of part of the expense. It would depend on whether it was developed as a separate public transit system or an expansion of CATS. Mr. Demas explained that the fare box funds cannot be used for the 50% matching funds; they can be used for operating the system. It may be possible to use those funds to buy down the capital expense. Mr. Demas felt that it would take an expert in transit analysis to determine ridership and put together a spreadsheet with accurate funding amounts.

Mr. Scott asked if it would be possible to do a little research to determine the actual cost of a new transit study. Mr. Demas noted that if the cost for the study is \$50,000, the RPO currently has approximately \$2,500 available that could be used towards the local match (\$10,000). The committee would need to determine how to come up with the difference. Mr. Demas offered to make some calls to investigate the possible cost for a study.

Mr. Aldridge asked if the contracting mechanism would work through UDOT or a separate contract. Mr. Demas stated that in order for federal funds to be used the study would somewhat need to go through the Five County AOG and be included in the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Planning (CHSTP) Transit Plan. He



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did not know if the actual contact would be with Brian Head or the Five County AOG. However, Mr. Boschert did lead him to believe that it would need to be sponsored by an agency. This would be a good question to discuss further with Mr. Boschert. Two possible study firms would be Fehrs & Peers, and Nelson Nygaard.

Mr. Demas reported that he spoke at length with Mr. Boschert regarding CATS and their ridership numbers. If it was determined that the new system would be an expansion of CATS, it could be a benefit to CATS to help their ridership, circulation and route times and provided expanded service to Parowan. Mr. Stratton noted that the hotels in Cedar City are also benefitting from the Brian Head skiers but that the voters did not want to support something that benefited Brian Head. That is basically how the thing died because of that reluctance to support. Mr. Demas noted that all those details would need to be identified in the study.

Mr. Demas felt that his conversations with Mr. Boschert were very positive and that the new transit system is possible. If the transit study determines that the system is feasible, the UDOT Public Transit Team would begin their review. Once that review was complete it would be 2-3 years before funding would be available. There is also a 1-2 year process when ordering new buses so it may be 2-5 years before the new system could be operating. Mr. Stratton noted that because of the length of time needed it would be important to increase all the numbers for inflation and hopefully the growth will equal the inflation.

Mr. Demas reported that the Brian Head transit system would need to be ADA compliant and also include para-transit service. In his discussions with Mr. Levi Roberts regarding the previous transit study, he believes that the para-transit liabilities to the system were over-estimated. The system being proposed from Cedar through Parowan and up to Brian Head is basically a commuter route and would not be conducive to para-transit riders. Mr. Stratton remarked that the talk was that para-transit would be needed to transport from Parowan to Cedar more so than up to Brian Head. He noted that there has also been discussion about possibly using the county senior citizen vehicles for transportation between Parowan and Cedar City. Mr. Demas stated that since the para-transit riders are required to provide 24-hour notice it may be possible for the buses coming down the canyon to divert to pick up a rider and still stay on schedule. It was agreed that the para-transit issue would need additional review and discussion.

Mr. Aldridge asked what the next step for the committee would be at this point. Mr. Demas responded that the committee would recommend to the Executive Committee that the study be completed, obtain their approval and determine how the matching funds would be funded. Mr. Stratton suggested continuing the



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discussion at the next meeting. He will gather additional information regarding costs and ridership.

Mr. Demas suggested that the committee start putting together information that should be included in the new study. The previous study was completed in January 2011 so it is old enough that the numbers have changed. Mr. Dotson suggested possibly building on the older transit study and not starting over completely. He felt that it was important to determine if the needs have changed enough for a new study rather than focusing only on the numbers. Mr. Demas noted that there are changes that could be made in the 2011 study that would help to reduce the operational costs. The 2011 study identified \$400,000 in operational costs. He made some rough calculations and determined that the system may be viable with an operational cost estimate in the \$300,000 range with the matching funds that are available. He noted that, if the decision were made to merge with CATS, the operational cost would be a 60/40 or 70/30 in favor of Brian Head. 42:01 Mr. Dotson remarked that with updated information it may be possible to reduce the burden on each municipality. Mr. Platt noted that it may be possible to update and expand the original CATS study and save the cost of a complete new study.

The committee agreed to continue the discussion of the Brian Head transit system at the next meeting. Mr. Demas suggested inviting Mr. Boschert to attend the meeting to answer specific questions from the committee. Mr. Aldridge responded that it may be a more efficient use of Mr. Boschert's time to conduct a video conference in the Cedar City office.

## V. Project Discussion

### A. Concept Reports

Mr. Demas passed out a copy of the newest version of the concept report and provided a short computer presentation on how to complete the report. He explained that he had created a computerized fill-in the blank form that can be easily completed and saved. He suggested that the committee members begin using the new form to create concept reports for existing projects that are on the prioritization list. Also, if there are any new projects that need to be added to the prioritization list, now is the time to get them added. He noted that the STIP meetings for their new cycle are scheduled to begin in September. If there are projects that are not on the prioritization list, the project information will need to be pulled together in some format and added to the list. The committee will then need to re-prioritize the list and submit it to UDOT. The new concept report form would be a great first step in the process of documenting these projects.



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Mr. Platt clarified that the reason the concept report is being used is to help the committee prioritize projects on the prioritization list that will be sent to UDOT. Mr. Demas concurred that the concept report will be used to assist with the prioritization process. He explained that the committee will take the project concept reports and go through a process of ranking each of the projects in order to determine the top priority projects.

Mr. Platt asked if it was necessary to complete a concept report for a project that is already on the STIP with funding identified. Mr. Demas stated a concept report would not be necessary in that circumstance. However, it would be very helpful to have a concept report completed for projects on the prioritization list that have not been funded yet. Not only will the report assist in the prioritization process but a secondary benefit would be that the committee will have a record of the project in the event that questions are raised about the project.

Mr. Demas discussed the options that the committee has available to them to evaluate, rank and prioritize the projects. They can use a system whereby each project goes through a ranking process based on the information in the Concept Report, see how that comes out and then make adjustments. Or, if they would like, they could do what has been done in the past by putting the projects on the table and discussing and ranking them by consensus.

Mr. Demas will e-mail a copy of the concept report (including the selection criteria information) to the committee members. He asked that they try out the form and provide him with their input. Mr. Scott commented that this looks simple enough that they can now do it. Mr. Dobson likes the report and commented on the usefulness of the information that could be put on it. Mr. Scott agreed sitting the Airport road project as an example.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Scott and Mr. Aldridge were excused to attend other meetings.

## B. Prioritization List

Mr. Demas provided a copy of the prioritization list to each member noting that there is a project map on the back side. This information can be found in the Long Range Plan as well.

Mr. Dotson asked if there was an update on the coal haul issue. Mr. Demas stated that he has been in contact with Mr. Johnson, the Alton Coal Mine plant



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manager, and also with Keith Rigtrup of the BLM. The supplemental DEIS is complete. They are waiting for approval from Washington to move forward with the public hearing. Mr. Rigtrup anticipated that the approval would be received in the next couple months and then it would be opened up for public comment. After the public comment period is closed and it is approved, they are looking at approximately 1 year in order to file the application and start moving forward with the bidding process to eventually begin digging the coal. Mr. Demas noted that it will require a public bid for digging the coal. Obviously, Alton hopes they are awarded the bid.

Mr. Demas stated the Alton Coal Mine manager reported that due to the economy, they have cut production some but not any significant amount. Mr. Platt asked if there was a recommendation that came from the Supplemental DEIS. Mr. Demas stated that he was told that information would not be available until approval is received from Washington to conduct the public hearing. Mr. Demas added that Alton is still taking coal to Delta and still has plans to build a loading dock at Iron Springs. They have been sending coal to Moapa and one other location south on I-15.

Mr. Dotson noted that this item pertains to many projects on our prioritization list. Dave indicated that several projects from the Alton work are moving forward in the STIP with UDOT.

- VI. A general discussion took place concerning the projects already moving forward. Mr. Platt indicated that the south leg of the Belt Route would be two lanes all the way however they have acquired enough right of way for 4 lanes. **Other Discussion Items**
- A. Next meeting will be held on October 1, 2014 at 1:30 p.m.
- i. Location: UDOT Office – Cedar City, with video conference with Tim Boschert.

VII. **Adjourn**

**A motion was made by Mr. Rob Dotson, seconded by Mr. Steve Platt, to adjourn the meeting.**

**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**