

Aug 11, 2026

Cache Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Summary

The meeting covered Advanced Air Mobility frameworks, roadway prioritization metrics, and the launch of transportation funding applications.

Advanced Air Mobility Strategy

State officials introduced a planning toolkit to assist local communities with Advanced Air Mobility zoning and infrastructure. The strategy prioritizes cargo delivery before moving toward future passenger transport.

Regional Transportation Prioritization

The Cache Metropolitan Planning Organization updated its project ranking system to include detailed safety, economic, and accessibility data. This refined model functions as a decision support tool for evaluating infrastructure projects.

Funding Application Launch

The organization issued a call for federal aid project applications for eligible roads. Proposals must avoid complex environmental or right-of-way issues to be considered for funding.

Decisions

Needs Further Discussion

- **Multi-jurisdictional criteria evaluation** The committee deliberated on the inclusion of multi-jurisdictional project status as a scoring criterion, weighing its value as an incentive against the potential ambiguity of the metric.

- **Prioritization as decision support tool** The group proposed adopting the quantitative prioritization process as a decision support tool rather than a hard-coded ranking, requiring further definition of a process for project advocacy and adjustment.
- **Active transportation scoring methodology** The group debated the weighting of active transportation criteria, specifically focusing on whether jurisdictional collaboration should be an independent factor or if it is already captured by complexity and right-of-way metrics.

Details

- **Introductions:** Isaac Gardner opened the meeting and all participants, including staff from the Cache Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMPO), county representatives, city administrators, and engineers, introduced themselves (00:30:41).
- **Advanced Air Mobility Purpose:** Matt explained that the state legislature requested community outreach to educate citizens and leaders on Advanced Air Mobility, clarifying what it is and is not, while creating a toolkit for zoning and master planning to help communities prepare for this technology (00:34:35).
- **Airspace Management and Uncrewed Traffic Management:** Clint Harper noted that they are collaborating with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on airspace management. The FAA's position is shifting toward the need for local collaboration, and they are utilizing Uncrewed Traffic Management systems to allow drone operators to file flight plans and ensure air traffic deconfliction (00:37:07).
- **Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing Integration Pilot Program:** Utah is participating in an Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing (EVTOL) integration pilot program designed to test aircraft in a controlled environment and collect data that the FAA will use to establish safety standards and regulations for national airspace integration (00:39:00).
- **Implementation Sequencing:** Cargo delivery is identified as the initial priority for Advanced Air Mobility because it offers increased safety and reduced costs without the complexities of human passengers. Subsequent phases will include medical transport and wildfire support, with passenger transport planned for the future, potentially before the Olympics (00:39:44).

- **Impact on Traffic and Air Quality:** While not a total solution for air quality or traffic congestion, Advanced Air Mobility is presented as a tool to help mitigate these issues by reducing the number of vehicles on the road (00:41:37).
- **Hybrid Propulsion Technology:** The group discussed hybrid-electric aircraft, such as the Cessna 337, which utilizes an electric motor for takeoff and climbing to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness compared to using gas engines alone during high-fuel-burn phases of flight (00:42:27).
- **Infrastructure Design Standards:** The industry aims to utilize existing helicopter design standards (heliports) to avoid the need for excessive new infrastructure construction. These aircraft share similar dimensions to traditional general aviation aircraft like the Cessna 182, and specific engineering briefs already exist to guide this design (00:44:47) (00:54:51).
- **Clint Harper's Background and Philosophy:** Clint Harper introduced themselves, highlighting their military background in airfield management and subsequent work with the Utah Department of Transportation and NASA on unmanned traffic management. They emphasized a focus on practical, non-theoretical solutions tailored to Utah's needs (00:46:11) (00:48:36).
- **Community Engagement and Zoning:** The industry has recognized that early engagement with city leadership regarding zoning, public safety, and infrastructure is essential for Advanced Air Mobility deployment, rather than relying solely on renderings to gain public support (00:50:10).
- **Defining Advanced Air Mobility:** Advanced Air Mobility encompasses innovations in autonomy, propulsion systems (specifically electric), and airframe aerodynamics. This umbrella covers various aircraft types, including EVTOL, short takeoff and landing aircraft, and both large and small drones (00:53:33).
- **Need-Based Planning Approach:** Planning for Advanced Air Mobility involves identifying local transportation problems and assessing how the technology can complement existing infrastructure and solutions. The focus is on what is technically feasible and practical in the near term (00:51:03) (00:56:08).
- **Policy Toolkit and Jurisdictional Authority:** The policy toolkit is a living document intended to guide community leaders. It clarifies that while the FAA maintains jurisdiction over navigable airspace, local communities hold authority over infrastructure entitlement, zoning, and land use (00:58:22) (00:59:21).

- **Operational Altitude and Physics:** While drones are often associated with low-altitude operations, larger Advanced Air Mobility aircraft will operate within the existing air traffic control system. Performance is subject to physics and density altitude, which may impact deployment timelines in high-altitude environments like Utah (01:00:55) (01:02:04).
- **Infrastructure for Diverse Modes:** Passenger transport infrastructure may differ from cargo infrastructure, though existing airports and heliports will be used initially. There is also potential for Advanced Air Mobility to improve transportation access to remote or tribal areas (01:02:50).
- **Safety and Noise Considerations:** Public concerns regarding safety and noise are acknowledged. Safety protocols will be rigorous, including flight risk assessments for revenue flights, and while aircraft will produce noise, they are being designed to be quieter than legacy counterparts (01:07:25) (01:13:45).
- **Continued Implementation Support:** Following the completion of the toolkit, the Utah Department of Transportation team and consultants will continue to provide technical support for cities as they implement these plans and navigate specific development applications (01:10:09).
- **Operational Safety Standards:** Advanced Air Mobility aircraft must meet certification standards comparable to other aircraft. Operators of revenue flights are subject to Part 135 regulations, which require high safety stringency, including pre-flight risk analysis to ensure flight safety even at the cost of revenue (01:12:11) (01:13:21).
- **Regional Transportation Plan Update:** Isaac Gardner transitioned to the Regional Transportation Plan update, noting that the draft project list, based on previous plans and community comments, is currently being prioritized (01:16:34) (01:20:14).
- **Prioritization Criteria:** The prioritization criteria are divided into health, economy, better mobility, connected communities, and implementation. This serves as a decision-support tool rather than an absolute rule, allowing for future revisions based on feedback (01:17:36) (01:18:33).
- **Safety Prioritization Criteria:** The safety criteria now utilize a crash modification factor derived from the safe streets for all safety analysis plan, moving away from previous binary improvement metrics. This allows for a more detailed, data-driven score based on project specifics (01:19:04) (01:20:43).

- **Safety Data Inputs:** To calculate the safety score, specific project details such as length, functional classification, average daily traffic, and proposed safety improvements (e.g., medians, barriers, roundabouts) are required from the jurisdictions (01:21:11).
- **Multimodal Enhancements:** Multimodal criteria prioritize projects with active transportation elements, such as separated trails, which receive the highest points, followed by road widening for cyclist protection (01:22:33).
- **Accessibility Criteria:** Accessibility criteria measure proximity to activity centers like schools, churches, and parks. This reflects an "access to opportunity" goal, and the team remains open to revisiting scores if specific activity centers were omitted from the analysis (01:23:05).
- **Freight and Economic Criteria:** The economic criteria include proximity to freight-intensive industries and corridors. The team identifies these using the Utah Department of Transportation freight map but relies on local input to identify additional freight-intensive clusters, noting that freight accommodation is essential for economic support (01:25:16).
- **Refining Freight Parameters:** The discussion clarified that while general average daily traffic might be low on certain roads, freight intensity (such as near industrial parks or gravel mining) should be accounted for, and the team requested input from local jurisdictions to refine these freight corridors (01:28:26).
- **Roadway Congestion Metrics:** Isaac Gardner explained that congestion is difficult to measure on roads that do not exist, so they utilize two metrics: the travel time index from cell phone data and the level of service from a travel model. If specific roadway data is poor, the travel model is used instead of the travel time index (01:31:35).
- **Roadway Functional Classification:** CMPO funding is restricted to projects on collector-class roads or higher (01:32:23). Isaac Gardner noted that they utilize UDOT's functional classification map, and if a road is new or unclassified, they look to local transportation master plans to determine the intended design. Federal Highway Administration rules limit the total number of designated collector-class roads, meaning funds cannot be used for local residential roads.

- **Connectivity and Grid Improvements:** Projects that eliminate dead ends, close gaps, or are identified in the Utah Grid Study are prioritized, as these projects improve access .
- **Multi-jurisdictional Cooperation:** Projects that involve multiple jurisdictions or regional cooperation receive priority points (01:36:40). Isaac Gardner acknowledged that while the criteria are somewhat subjective, the intent is to reward projects that have redundant, multi-jurisdictional support, even if the project itself does not strictly span multiple jurisdictions .
- **Local Priority Ranking:** To improve the prioritization process, Isaac Gardner asked participants to submit their top three project priorities for their respective jurisdictions (01:39:28) (01:44:56). These priorities are assigned points—three for the top priority, two for the second, and one for the third—replacing the previous, less effective method of simply checking if a project was in a master plan .
- **Redundancy and Geographic Equity:** Projects previously funded by COG or CMPO are awarded points for "redundancy" to maintain project momentum (01:41:01). Concerns were raised regarding the potential for large, multi-phase corridors—such as those on 200 East and Wolfpack Way—to dominate funding for decades, creating geographic inequities . Current policy awards redundancy points if a project touches a previously funded corridor, but the board is open to feedback on this approach (01:44:16).
- **Project Complexity and Readiness:** To ensure projects can move forward quickly, less complex projects are awarded more points, while more complex projects receive fewer points (01:45:53).
- **Decision Support Process:** Isaac Gardner emphasized that the prioritization system functions as a decision support tool rather than a rigid mandate (01:46:21). They are looking for a process that allows participants to present a case for a project's importance if the ranking does not reflect its necessity, ensuring the committee can consider adjustments .
- **Transit Planning Update:** CMPO conducts planning updates every five to seven years, including public surveys and stakeholder meetings (01:48:21). The current process involves developing prioritization scenarios based on board input over the next month and a half, followed by public and stakeholder input in

September and October, with final project rankings expected by January or February .

- **Transit Service Needs and Gaps:** Areas experiencing population growth, such as Smithfield and the east bench, have been identified as having limited transit service . Additionally, public input indicated a desire for later service hours to accommodate diverse job schedules (01:51:32).
- **Western County Transit:** Isaac Gardner noted that the lower population density in the western part of the county presents challenges for effective fixed-route transit . Currently, a voucher program is used to provide service options for residents in these areas (01:52:15).
- **Transit Transfer Points:** CMPO is investigating the implementation of north and south transfer points to improve connectivity and efficiency (01:48:46). This strategy aims to connect these points to the existing loop service, allowing commuters to reach a wide range of popular stops with only one transfer .
- **Active Transportation (AT) Prioritization Model:** Isaac Gardner introduced a new draft prioritization model for active transportation, marking the first time such a structured model has been used for this category. The model is intended to provide a more balanced approach than previous methods (01:54:31).
- **AT Prioritization Criteria (Health, Mobility, Density):** The proposed AT model includes criteria such as projected mode shift (using a model to estimate ridership), network connectivity, facility width, safety based on the CMPO safety action plan, and residential density .
- **AT Prioritization Criteria (Economic and Regional Planning):** Additional criteria for AT projects include serving underserved populations, proximity to major employers, alignment with future land use planning, and the level of regional buy-in from various jurisdictions .
- **AT Prioritization Criteria (Complexity and Regional Significance):** Regional significance is evaluated based on whether a project connects, pioneers, or patches trails (02:03:33). Complexity factors include the number of jurisdictions involved and the number of private property owners affected by right-of-way requirements, as eminent domain is not used for trails in Utah .
- **Debate on AT Model Weights:** Participants discussed the trade-offs in the AT model, specifically noting that rewarding multi-jurisdictional projects while

simultaneously penalizing project complexity may be contradictory . Feedback suggests focusing on whether a project has a primary sponsor and addressing the actual engineering or right-of-way challenges rather than just the number of jurisdictions .

- **Feedback Mechanism for Criteria:** Isaac Gardner invited participants to send emails or meet to discuss the draft criteria for both roadway and AT prioritization, emphasizing the need for integration and feedback before applying fiscal constraints to the plan .
- **CMPO Federal Aid Funding:** CMPO has approximately \$8.6 million in federal aid available, with the potential for \$4 million to be exchanged through UDOT for increased flexibility (02:12:24) (02:13:19).
- **Call for Applications:** A call for applications has been issued with a September 11th deadline for letters of intent (02:12:24) (02:13:38). No engineering is required at this stage; the goal is to inventory project concepts (02:14:04) (02:18:16). A threshold of \$450,000 per project is suggested, though multi-jurisdictional or combined projects are encouraged (02:14:32).
- **Funding Eligibility and Restrictions:** Approximately half of the available funds are restricted to emission reduction or active transportation projects, such as CMAC, carbon reduction, and TAP funds . Projects must be on collector-class or federally eligible roads (02:15:36). The committee aims to fund projects that are manageable and avoid complex issues like wetlands or extensive right-of-way acquisitions that would trigger environmental impact studies (02:17:08).