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PROVO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Transportation Retreat Minutes

4:00 PM, Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Electronic meeting: [youtube.com/provocitycouncil](https://www.youtube.com/provocitycouncil)

Agenda ([0:00:00](#))

Roll Call

The following elected officials participated in the meeting:

Council Chair George Handley, conducting
Council Vice-chair David Harding
Councilor Shannon Ellsworth
Councilor Bill Fillmore
Councilor Travis Hoban
Councilor David Sewell
Councilor David Shipley
Mayor Michelle Kaufusi

Prayer

Councilor David Harding offered the prayer.

Business

1. **A presentation from Design Workshop to discuss transportation policy and the General Plan. (20-139) ([0:12:33](#))**

Becky Zimmerman and Brooks Cowles of Design Workshop outlined the role of transportation in the General Plan and long-range planning. Mobility was a broader qualifier that encapsulated a range of modes, all of which would be critical for a sustainable (both in an environmental and financial sense) future in Provo. Ms. Zimmerman and Mr. Cowles highlighted geographic constraints, population projections, connectivity principles, and how mobility modes related to automobile infrastructure. Ms. Zimmerman also shared details of the integrated corridor planning approach, which determines key opportunities in advance and then provides more tailored analysis and recommendations later on as development proposals are received.

Cliff Strachan, Council Executive Director, asked about Council input and public engagement regarding the General Plan. Several Councilors also shared brief comments regarding the importance of transportation and mobility, as well as the need for unique solutions for Provo's specific connectivity issues. Ms. Zimmerman responded to Councilors' comments and shared an overview of the public engagement process. *Presentation only.*

2. A presentation from the Utah Department of Transportation to discuss their key priorities in the future, particularly how these affect and involve Provo. (20-140) (0:51:32)

Eric Rasband, UDOT Region 3 Planning Manager, presented. He highlighted some of the major recent and upcoming UDOT projects in Provo:

- 500 West widening project (from Cougar Boulevard to 500 South)
- Central Corridor Transit project
- SR-114 Provo Center Street and Geneva Road
- Provo North interchange phase 1 (data collection on existing conditions)
- University Avenue Viaduct (it is structurally sound, but will require maintenance work unless a replacement is contemplated to factor in active transportation improvements)

Mr. Rasband indicated that projects in a preliminary phase, such as the Provo North interchange, had not yet had final outcomes determined as to location; he advised the Council that a decision on the specific interchange location would include a broad public process and stakeholder participation, as well as environmental studies. Mr. Rasband responded to several questions from Councilors about the planning process and public feedback. He explained that UDOT's master plans were updated every four years using local plans and traffic modeling, among other sources.

Councilor George Handley asked about UDOT's planning process and how their project planning was responsive to evolving conditions or trends in the city. Councilor Shannon Ellsworth shared comments about south State Street. Mr. Rasband explained that State Street was a US-designated highway and intended for regional travel and mobility; this purpose was likely not to change. Ms. Ellsworth suggested that the Council reconsider the land uses slated for south State Street. Councilor David Shipley asked whether it would be possible to factor in any Bus Rapid Transit infrastructure into the south end of 500 West, so that the new construction would not need to be redone in a couple of years if a BRT route were later approved. Councilor David Harding suggested that UDOT find better ways to integrate the south part of the County with the major employment centers; this would be critical to ongoing management of growth throughout Utah County. Mr. Harding mentioned a recent presentation to Provo's Transportation and Mobility Advisory Committee regarding the Central Corridor Transit study and several suggestions for expansion of UTA services in strategic areas. Mr. Rasband indicated that those options were included as alternative recommendations in the regional plan. *Presentation only.*

3. A presentation from the Utah Transit Authority to discuss their plans, how micro-transit works and might fit in, and how UTA coordinates with active transportation. (20-141) (1:29:04)

Mary DeLaMare-Schaefer, Utah County Regional General Manager for UTA, presented. She was assisted by Laura Hanson, UTA Planning Director, and Jaron Robertson, Innovative Mobility Systems Director. Ms. Hanson highlighted the general uses and purposes of various modes of transit. Micro-transit specifically was used to serve low ridership areas that were hard to serve with traditional transit. She cited Thanksgiving Point as a location that was difficult to serve with traditional transit modes but could be a good candidate for micro-transit.

As UTA plans for future transit needs, they consider the community character, how and where growth is occurring, and what modes would best serve areas with growth. UTA has excellent publicly available data which could be an asset to the City's General Planning process, available online at: <https://data-rideuta.opendata.arcgis.com/>

Ms. DeLaMare-Schaefer highlighted the various value judgments which have impacted decisions at UTA. She highlighted the impacts of COVID-19 to their services; despite the pandemic, ridership remains high, suggesting that many people rely on transit. She and the other presenters shared some more detailed observations about specific transit needs or opportunities in the Wasatch Front and more specifically in the Provo community. UTA is in the process of drafting their five-year plan; although challenging to do during a pandemic, UTA has identified some priority goals: increase ridership overall, improve financial stability, and improve customer satisfaction. UTA plans to refresh this plan every few years, including collaboration with local governments. This plan will work in tandem with area-specific planning studies underway at the moment. Ms. DeLaMare-Schaefer noted that transit only works well when active transit is in use.

Mr. Robertson shared updates on the new and emerging technologies that UTA uses to innovate and expand their offerings. Micro-transit is the most recent concept which UTA is piloting; this mode utilizes ride-sharing and on-demand technology to offer more efficient services for users, including disabled passengers currently served by paratransit, which is time-intensive and limited in its service range. Mr. Robertson shared data from the initial pilot project and highlighted potential areas in which they may expand the service. Cliff Strachan, Council Executive Director, asked whether North University Avenue would be a good location for micro-transit. Mr. Robertson indicated that urban vehicle corridors with a fixed route would not be a logical application of micro-transit. On fixed route networks, demand would likely exceed capacity. Several Councilors shared brief comments regarding various aspects of UTA's services and presentation. *Presentation only.*

4. A presentation from the Mountainland Association of Governments to discuss regional transportation demands and how they impact Provo over the next 20-30 years. (20-142) ([2:19:33](#))

Several staff members from Mountainland participated in the meeting, including Andrew Jackson, Executive Director; Shawn Seager, Director of Regional Planning; Shawn Eliot, Senior Planning Manager; and Jim Price, Active Transportation Planner. They highlighted the exciting opportunity for Provo as the city redoes its general plan and they noted the efforts Orem did for long-range planning in their general plan which has led to great developments along State Street now. The presenters shared a video ([Vimeo.com/243183373](https://vimeo.com/243183373)) by Gardner Policy Institute at the University of Utah about the long-term demographic and economic projections for Utah's growth, noting that the Provo City Council would be helping set the stage for growth and change in Utah County. Several major transportation planning studies were underway addressing different growth opportunities throughout the County.

Mr. Eliot highlighted details from TransPlan50 ([available here](#)), which is updated every four years and serves as a regional transportation plan for urbanized Utah County. Growth in Utah County is outpacing growth in the other three urban counties (Weber, Davis, and Salt Lake) of

the Wasatch Front combined. The growth patterns projected for Utah County identify Provo Bay as a potential site of the greatest congestion in the County in 2050 because of the limitations on what transportation systems can be located there. Mr. Eliot reviewed the major goals in the plan:

- Update regional highway system to a metropolitan grid-based network.
- Explore additional freeways and add capacity.
- Create a robust regional transit system.
- Build a regionally connected active transportation system.
- Maintain and invest in existing infrastructure.

Mr. Eliot and his colleagues also highlighted considerations of future transit and highway planning and needs. Some solutions are identified in the long-range plan, but the specifics of these measures will be determined in future studies to assess the specific needs. Mr. Seager noted some of the particular challenges in Utah County and the transportation pinch points. Councilor David Harding shared feedback and suggested that light or commuter rail would be a huge asset in any future infrastructure investments (such as a bridge over Utah Lake). If that type of investment were made to service convenience, it would make more sense to invest in transit. Councilor Shannon Ellsworth asked about the pinch points between Springville and Provo. The MAG team shared statistics on the number of trips occurring in various areas of the County which might be better serviced by adding parallel highway facilities. *Presentation only.*

5. A presentation from the Mountainland Association of Governments to discuss active transportation trends and how it can be better encouraged. (20-143) [\(2:57:15\)](#)

Jim Price, MAG Active Transportation Planner, presented. Mr. Price shared an overview of the recent achievements with active transportation in Provo. One of the ongoing challenges of active transportation is to continue to create robust and interconnected systems. Mr. Price shared some statistics on the makeup of types of cyclists in the area and some of the barriers that likely users experience. He shared effective strategies that have been employed in other communities.

Councilors shared comments and asked questions related to active transportation in Provo. Councilor George Handley enjoys using Cougar Boulevard and 200 East for the convenience. He wondered how to better promote tools like Google Maps, which prioritize safe routes for cyclists. Mr. Price commented BikeWalk Provo, a great grassroots organization in Provo. Councilor Shannon Ellsworth shared this appreciation and she asked how the City can better facilitate active transportation across major barriers such as the railroad tracks. Mr. Price noted the forthcoming bridge across 600 South to the intermodal center; often it is critical to add in these missing areas when planning opportunities are presented. Shawn Seager, MAG Director of Regional Planning, noted some collaboration with the city of Lehi to install shared use paths along major roadway corridors in order to help facilitate active transportation and mitigate the impacts of these large major transportation facilities. Mr. Seager indicated that UDOT and UTA were cognizant of the challenges and that continuing advocacy from city officials to speak up and hold these agencies accountable in their design of such projects was critical. In response to a comment on the bridge idea over Utah Lake, MAG staff indicated there were permitting processes with the State of Utah to make any changes to the lakebed. There was a permit at one time but it has since lapsed. *Presentation only.*

6. A discussion to wrap up the Transportation Retreat. ([3:28:12](#))

Following the presentations, Councilors discussed the next steps and future plans for further discussion on transportation issues. Councilor Shannon Ellsworth commented that land uses may merit reexamination as residential uses along a highway with 50-60 MPH speeds may not be the best use. Cliff Strachan, Council Executive Director, asked who Councilors might like to hear from at a subsequent transportation retreat. Councilors suggested included BikeWalk Provo and Provo Public Works in a future roster of presenters.

Councilors briefly shared additional comments, including areas in which Provo could avoid past mistakes as well as implement creative solutions, long-term airport planning, and balancing the needs of active transportation and traffic solutions while considering impacts to quality of life and the community. The General Plan would include details and methods by which City officials could analyze projects that were consistent with Provo's community values and goals. Mr. Strachan thanked the presenters for the depth and detail of their presentations. *Presentation only.*

Adjournment

Adjourned by unanimous consent.