

Utah Department of Transportation
Utah Transportation Commission
STAFF UPDATE MEETING
Thursday, November 18, 2021 at Noon
Springhill Suites, 1865 North Highway 191, Moab

Members of the Utah Transportation Commission, Utah Department of Transportation staff, and others, met on Thursday, November 18, 2021 for a Staff Update meeting, at the Springhill Suites, located at 1865 North Highway 191 in Moab.

Those in attendance included:

- Commissioners: Naghi Zeenati, Lew W. Cramer, Donna J. Law, Jim Evans, Kevin T. Van Tassell, Ronda Menlove
- UDOT Staff: Carlos Bracerias, Teri Newell, Lisa Wilson, Heather Barthold, Ben Huot, Bob Pelly, Devin Squire, Ivan Hartle, Jared Beard, Jordan Lee, Kayde Roberts, Keriann Noble, Kevin Kitchen, Kris Peterson, Leif Elder, Linda Hull, Lyle McMillan, Monte Aldridge, Nathan Lee, Rick Torgerson, Rob Clayton, Rob Wight, Robert Dowell, Robert Stewart, Ryan Anderson, Sharice Walker, Troy Peterson
- Others: Greg Curtis, Tweet Zeenati

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION DISCUSSION

Ben Huot, UDOT Program Development Director, presented the draft Input List, which consists of Phase 1 projects from the Unified Long Range Plan. Per Utah Administrative rule R940-6 (Prioritization of New Transportation Capacity Projects), the Commission has the option to consider additional projects for prioritization beyond those identified in Phase 1 of the Long Range Plan if during the development of the Long Range Plan there were determined to be a Phase 1 need. Additionally, the Commission determines if any nominated projects will be included in the Input List. If the Commission chooses to add a project from the Phase 1 Needs List or the Nominated Projects List, a motion will be required. The resulting ranked list of highway projects will be presented at the future Commission meeting, and will be available as a decision support tool for future Commission programming actions. Information on Project Prioritization can be found on the [UDOT website](#).

Commissioner Van Tassell said that the group needs to consider the “Simplot Road: Improvements on 191” project from the TIF Highway Nominated Projects list for a number of reasons. He asked how often is it that we get a partner that can do half of the project; he also said it might not be a capacity project that we need, but it’s a capacity project that will save lives and improve quality of life. He said the mine has been there for 60+ years, and this project will extend the life of that operation another 10 to 15 years, with high paying jobs and mineral resources. He said that at the end of the day, this becomes a win/win for the company willing to do this and for Utah and the motoring public. He said he would encourage adding the project to the Input List, and will try to make a motion in the next day’s meeting. He said that this offer of almost half the project is not going to wait forever. He reiterated that this project improves safety and is a big deal for the recreating public, by doing away with the switchbacks, and giving a straighter route to get where they need to be.

Commission Law asked for a reminder of why the project wasn’t included on the list. Ben Huot said that the Department tried to be objective on how to come up with recommendations based on the long range plan, and believes the recommendations were made through a capacity project lens. Commissioner Van Tassell said he hates to make exceptions to the general policy, but anytime someone wants to give 50% of a project, maybe an exception can be made. Chair Zeenati said that the motion can be made to include the project, but the Department will still need to find the money.

SALT LAKE CITY STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK LOAN RENEWAL

Lyle McMillan, UDOT Strategic Investments Director, reviewed the history of the request on the next day’s agenda for a continuation of the terms for Salt Lake City’s SIB loan of \$7 million with a term of 15 years and an interest rate of 1.96%, to construct a parking structure in the Industry Neighborhood between 400 and 500 West and 600 and 700 South. The loan, originally approved by the Commission in April 2021, had not been fully executed by the maximum 180 days while the City negotiated loan repayment terms in the loan agreement. The loan agreement is now ready for ratification and the City is requesting a continuation of the terms per the Transportation Commission’s Administrative Rule R940-3-3.

LOGAN MAIN STREET UPDATE

Rob Wight, UDOT Region One Director, gave an update on the completed Loan Main Street planning study. UDOT has worked with Logan City to identify the next steps, and will be requesting to add a new \$52,000,000 TIF project to the current STIP to move forward with an operational analysis, the environmental document and potential construction.

At Commissioner Van Tassell's request, Rob also gave an update on the SR-30, Main Street to SR-23 project, saying it will be advertised in April 2022, and is currently working through right of way.

SR-18 UPDATE

Rick Torgerson, UDOT Region Four Director, gave an update on the SR-18 corridor, public outreach efforts and concerns, and proposed improvements. He reviewed the SR-18; Ledges to Diamond Valley and Veyo to MP 29.5 project as well as the SR-18; Winchester Hills to Snow Canyon Widening project that both have a programming request on the next day's agenda.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT

Teri Newell, UDOT Deputy Director of Planning and Investment, talked about the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Acts, which reauthorizes the existing core federal highway programs which are apportioned to the States by formula, and enacts two new core formula programs as well as a temporary bridge formula program. After accounting for inflation (4 to 4.5% per year), UDOT anticipates a \$15 to \$20 million annual increase in funding across the existing seven core formula programs, which includes programs with funds allocated to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). UDOT anticipates receiving \$68 million annually under the three new formula programs. A portion of those funds is anticipated to be suballocated to MPOs. The bill authorizes new programs, such as electric vehicle charging and broadband, that will be allocated to Utah, not necessarily to UDOT, through a currently unknown mechanism. The bill will provide increased funding for the existing federal Airport Improvement Program, with funds allocated to airports by formula based on passenger boarding and cargo data.

Following normal protocol, the Transportation Commission has already programmed projects in the five-year STIP, assuming Congress will reauthorize the federal transportation program. Congress has also expanded existing and created new discretionary grant programs. If Congress adopts these provisions, the US DOT will develop criteria and processes for those discretionary grant programs. The criteria is anticipated to be aligned with the Administration's policies, such as equity and climate change. Typically grant programs require significant state match. As those programs are better defined, UDOT will work with the Transportation Commission to determine if grant applications should be submitted.

Teri showed a table comparing FY2021 FAST Act Continued Resolution formula funding with the IIJA formula funding for core formula programs (National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP (Safety)), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program, MPO Planning, National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) and Rail Crossing), as well as New IIJA Highway Formula Programs, Carbon, Protect, and Bridge, which equates to \$2.65 billion to UDOT over the 5 year program.

Teri reviewed the new opportunities for dedicated funding to the State, including Improve Healthy Transportation Options, EV Charging, Broadband, Weatherization (Wildfire and Cyber), Water, and Airport, which all total \$266 million a year, with a \$1332 million 5-year total. She also reviewed the funding for existing nationwide Transportation Grant Programs, including \$7.5 billion RAISE/BUILD/TIGER, \$3.2 billion INFRA, \$5 billion CRISI, \$36 billion Intercity Passenger Rail Partnerships, \$16 billion Amtrak National Network and \$6 billion Amtrak NE Corridor, as well as the funding for new IIJA Nationwide Transportation Grant Programs, including \$9.2 billion Bridge Investment Program, \$5 billion National Infrastructure Project Assistance, \$5 billion Safe Streets and Roads for All, \$1 billion Culvert Removal,

Replacement and Restoration, and \$500 million Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation Grant program.

Carlos Braceras, UDOT Executive Director, echoed Teri's comment that this is a really good reauthorization bill that allows the Commission and UDOT to do what we've been planning to do.

Other

Before the group departed for an area road tour, Chair Zeenati asked the group to take advantage of the opportunity to see projects and communities on the tours and to really listen to the information being shared so the Commission can make good judgments for the requests presented in Commission meetings. He also asked for courtesy to the presenters and planners who have prepared the tours and materials, and asked that side conversations and background noise be kept to a respectful level so others on the bus can focus on the tour.

A video regarding the UDOT Giving Tree program was shared.

The meeting ended at 2:18 p.m.



Heather Barthold, Commission Assistant