

**DIXIE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 5, 2014**  
**Five County Association of Governments**  
**Conference Room**  
**St. George, UT**

**PRESENT**

Cameron Cutler, St. George City, Transportation Service Manager, Chair  
Larry Bulloch, St. George City, Public Works Director  
Monty Thurber, St. George City, Engineer Associate/Traffic Coordinator  
Dave Glenn, Ivins City, Public Works Director  
Mike Shaw, Washington City, Public Works Director  
Arthur LeBaron, Hurricane City Engineer  
Angela Rohr, Leeds Town  
Dana Meier, UDOT, Region Four Dixie Division  
Steve Call, FHWA, Planning Engineer  
Justin Morgan, FHWA, Utah Division  
Elden Bingham, UDOT, Planning  
Kirk Thornock, UDOT, Region Four  
Myron Lee, MPO Planning Manager, Five County AOG  
Bryan Thiriot, Executive Director, Five County AOG  
Curt Hutchings, Transportation Manager, Five County AOG  
Diane Lamoreaux, Five County AOG  
Bob Lamoreaux, Stanley Consultants  
Aron Baker, Horrocks Engineering

**ABSENT**

Jack Taylor, Santa Clara City, Public Works Director, Chair  
Derek Imlay, LaVerkin City  
Darren Cottam, Toquerville City  
Todd Edwards for Ron Whitehead, Washington County, Public Works Director  
Fred Davies, St. George City Transit Manager  
Kelly Lund, FHWA, Planning Engineer

Cameron Cutler, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. He noted that a quorum was not present for conduct of business, and proceeded to non-action agenda items until a quorum was present.

**2. SHORT RANGE PLANNING**

- A. Status of BLM's Resource Management Plan:** MPO staff and DTAC members discussed several documents related to the BLM's Red Cliffs NCA Resource Management Plan. Staff referenced a chart containing the Resource Management Plan Chapter 2 Alternatives. The section for Alternative B outlines the BLM's intent to close the Historic Babylon Trailhead at the top of the steep descent to full-size vehicles. UTV-size and smaller vehicles would be allowed beyond that point. Alternative C proposes to close the road leading to the Historic Babylon Trailhead at the top of "the steep descent" to all motorized vehicles with non-motorized traffic

only beyond this point. Alternative D would allow the Historic Babylon Trailhead to remain open to all vehicles. It was noted that jurisdictions should be prepared to argue against the closure options now or at a distant time. Members of the group were advised to be ready to provide responses to the Draft EIS document when it is released for public review and comment in April or May 2014. Currently, Alternative D is the only alternative that would allow the northern transportation route. A Preferred Alternative is not addressed in the Draft document. Staff reported that the only agencies allowed to participate as cooperating agencies in the process were St. George City, Washington County and the state of Utah. Larry Bulloch explained that St. George City was not allowed to participate as a cooperating agency and had to go through Washington County for any participation. Other handouts include responses to the BLM Draft Alternatives for the Beaver Dam Wash NCA RMP, Red Cliffs NCA RMP, and St. George Field Office RMP Plan Amendment from Washington County, the state of Utah and Senator Orrin Hatch. The second paragraph in Senator Hatch's letter reads: "Although the Law stated that there be at least one alternative and the current iteration of the draft does include one alternative, the law did not intend that the BLM include one alternative and then discard the idea of building the Northern Transportation Route (NTR). The law clearly intended that the NTR be built and should, therefore, be included in all of the alternatives, or, at least, the preferred alternative." This is a very strong statement provided by Senator Hatch. Jimmy Tyree, St. George Field Office Manager, has indicated that the BLM does not intend to provide any additional information to cooperating agencies in terms of the Draft EIS. BLM staff will work next with their consultant to draft Chapter 4 of the document to provide an analysis of the impacts of different alternatives to the Washington, D.C. office for review prior to the release of the documents for the 90 day public review. The intent is to move forward with no further consultation with cooperating agencies. The MPO is very concerned with this approach and the fact that the MPO could not be considered as a cooperating agency. Washington County does not feel that they have been involved in the process and has requested more input into the Resource Management Plan process as a cooperating agency. The County is working diligently to preserve the Northern Transportation Route to make sure that the road can be constructed sometime in the future.

Dana Meier mentioned that the BLM process is much different from the process that UDOT has to follow in preparing an environmental document. Whenever a specific group expresses concern about not being involved in the UDOT process, it opens up the document for challenge in court. The lack of participation and input into the BLM Resource Management Plan for cooperating agencies may provide leverage if this turns into a legal battle in the future. It was noted that correspondence from the state of Utah and Washington County address this very issue. Myron Lee mentioned that the Public Lands Law for Washington County requires direct coordination with the City of St. George. The BLM Field Office should have worked to coordinate and cooperate with St. George City. Arthur LeBaron indicated that a clarification of what constitutes local government needs to be made. It does not seem right that Washington County would be applied as local government all inclusive. Larry Bulloch indicated that staff would work with Gary Esplin, the City Manager, and the St. George City attorney to determine an appropriate response to the Bureau of Land Management. Other jurisdictions would likely have to wait until the 90 day comment period to provide input. MPO staff is hopeful that the BLM will respond to Senator Hatch's letter. However, if this does not happen, jurisdictions need to be prepared to challenge the process in the future. At this point, it is important to document what has taken place throughout the RMP update

process in case of a possible challenge at a later time. It will also be interesting to see what the BLM response is to the comment letters. It was noted that the BLM responses to St. George City and the MPO requests to be a cooperating agencies were verbal and not stated in writing. Myron Lee explained that the MPO has worked with both the state of Utah and Washington County to feed vital information that is of concern to the MPO. Steve Call responded that the Federal Highway Administration has not been involved in this effort either.

Cameron Cutler indicated that a quorum was present and returned to agenda action item #1-A.

## 1. MINUTES

- A. **Approval of December 4, 2013 DTAC Meeting Minutes:** Cameron Cutler, Vice-Chair, presented minutes of the December 4, 2013 Dixie Transportation Advisory Committee (DTAC) meeting for committee consideration.

**MOTION WAS MADE BY MIKE SHAW, SECONDED BY DAVE GLENN, TO ACCEPT MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 4, 2013 MEETING AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED.**

- B. **Nomination and Election of Chairman, Vice-Chair:** Myron Lee explained that the positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman are for two year terms, and it is time to elect new officers. For the past two years, Jack Taylor has served as Chairman and Cameron Cutler has served as Vice-Chairman.

**MOTION WAS MADE BY MIKE SHAW NOMINATING CAMERON CUTLER TO SERVE AS CHAIRMAN AND ARTHUR LEBARON TO SERVE AS VICE-CHAIRMAN. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY LARRY BULLOCH AND CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.**

## 3. SERVICES

- A. **COG PRIORITY LIST RECOMMENDATIONS:** Cameron Cutler indicated that Todd Edwards was not present to provide this update. Myron Lee reported that each year the Washington County Council of Governments (COG) opens the corridor preservation list for update and/or inclusion of new corridor preservation projects. These funds are collected from a \$10.00 vehicle registration fee assessed on vehicles registered in Washington County. Approximately \$1 million is added to this fund on an annual basis. Some of the initial funds have been expended on SR-9 and authorization has been provided for the Bluff Street Corridor as willing sellers come forward. The fund has been established to acquire rights-of-way and/or to preserve particular transportation corridors. The Dixie MPO received one request from Washington City to add the Merrill Road right-of-way acquisition to the COG list. Mike Shaw provided additional information regarding Merrill Road and its interface with St. George City to tie into the Mall Drive Bridge. This will also enhance access to the new airport via the Washington Fields Road. St. George City representatives asked that the project be expanded to include areas within their city limits. A revised map of the project area and application will be provided to the MPO.

**MOTION WAS MADE BY LARRY BULLOCH, SECONDED BY DAVE GLENN, TO APPROVE MERRILL ROAD IN WASHINGTON CITY AND 3000 EAST IN ST. GEORGE CITY TO THE COG CORRIDOR PRESERVATION LIST. MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.**

#### **4. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- A. Inclusion of Mall Drive Bridge and Other Locally-Funded Projects on the Dixie MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) / Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):** Larry Bulloch reported that it became necessary to include the Mall Drive Bridge on the TIP / STIP and this needed to be addressed in an expedited manner. The project began approximately six years ago with an environmental review, design and right-of-way acquisition. However, monies programmed for this project were shifted into the new airport. St. George City began the process with the Army Corps of Engineers as the lead agency. When they tried to secure federal funds for the bridge, the lead agency was changed to the Federal Highway Administration. Two different applications were submitted that were unsuccessful in securing federal funds for the project. Because of growth and pressure on the River Road transportation corridor, the St. George City Manager, Gary Esplin, recommended that the St. George City Council sell bonds to proceed with the Mall Drive Bridge project. The city continued with the Federal Highway Administration as the lead agency to maintain continuity with the project. Energy was then focused on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to get a biological assessment approved. The project had to work its way up their list and that became an issue. Redesign work was completed and the project was advertised for bid in October. Washington City was gracious in allowing St. George City's project to move ahead of their trail project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A final biological opinion was issued by this agency after about 150 days, and was sent to Federal Highways for their signature. Another issue then surfaced because the project is not on the Dixie MPO TIP and the state of Utah STIP. Federal Highway was not authorized to sign the environmental document and St. George City either had to award the project or lose the favorable bid. There were many conference calls between the state of Utah, Federal Highway Administration, Horrocks Engineering, and St. George City to find resolve for this issue. At this point, it would be impossible to switch lead agencies and still secure approval to begin work on the project. There is a short window in which work can occur in the Virgin River because of two endangered fish species and the Southwest Willow Flycatcher. An agreement was reached with the Federal Highway Administration that allowed work to begin on the bridge. The Mall Drive Bridge project will be added to the TIP / STIP and the city has agreed to comply with all federal regulations on the bridge, with the intent of utilizing federal funds in the future for road connections. This would create a nexus to continue the current process. DTAC must approve the addition of this project onto the TIP and the Transportation Commission will take action in February to bring the project onto the STIP. Under this agreement, FHWA was able to sign the Cad-X environmental document that allowed work to proceed on the bridge.

Steve Call, Federal Highway Administration, explained that the FHWA approves the Dixie MPO TIP and the State of Utah STIP, which include all federally funded projects. However, the TIP should include all regionally significant projects as well

as federally funded projects. This action is mainly for public information and involvement in all transportation projects in the area. FHWA is not able to sign an environmental document unless a phase of the project is included in the TIP. Regionally significant projects would include arterial, major collector roads and above. This is a good practice for all of the MPO's throughout the state. Including projects that are of regional significance provides a complete picture of what is happening in the region. Larry Bulloch mentioned that this project was not a typical conventional process because the mitigation was done early. Myron Lee indicated that he has contacted state UDOT staff to amend the STIP to include the Mall Drive Bridge project. Kirk Thornock indicated that UDOT staff is working to develop a process for the inclusion of non-federally funded projects into the Electronic Program Maintenance (EPM) program.

**MOTION WAS MADE BY ARTHUR LEBARON, SECONDED BY MIKE SHAW, TO ADD THE MALL DRIVE BRIDGE PROJECT TO THE DIXIE MPO TIP AND THE STATE OF UTAH STIP. MOTION CARRIED.**

- B. Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Funds:** The programming of TAP funds was tabled during the December 2013 meeting. The MPO will receive \$73,000 in TAP funds in 2014 and anticipates that same amount in 2015. Two applications were submitted for these funds as follows: **1) Washington City, \$60,000--** Sidewalks on Telegraph Street from 1100 East to 600 East on the north side of the roadway; and **2) St. George City, \$400,000--** Improvements to St. George Boulevard at 1000 East for pedestrian facilities. Representatives of St. George City were attempting to secure other UDOT choke point funding for this project and asked that this item be brought back for further discussion. Funding for the TAP program requires 20 percent match from the jurisdiction. Kirk Thornock reported that this project is not ranking very high in the UDOT process, and it could be several years before it would rise to the level for funding. He also noted that the next allocation of choke point funds would be in 2017. Larry Bulloch pointed out that capacity and safety will drive those funds and eventually the St. George Boulevard project will become a priority.
- C. Recommend TAP Fund Program:** Committee members asked if Washington City had considered federal requirements that would also come with the funding and the need for additional funds above the \$60,000 to make sure that regulations are followed. Kirk Thornock explained that the MPO will be forwarding their recommendation for TAP funds to UDOT for ranking. UDOT will rate the MPO recommendation heavily into their process.

**MOTION WAS MADE BY ARTHUR LEBARON TO RANK THE WASHINGTON CITY TELEGRAPH STREET SIDEWALK PROJECT AS THE NUMBER ONE RECOMMENDATION TO UDOT FOR \$73,000 IN TAP FUNDING, AND TO AMEND THE DIXIE MPO TIP TO INCLUDE THIS PROJECT. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MONTY THURBER. MOTION CARRIED.**

- D. Status of Safe Route to School Funds:** Kirk Thornock indicated that he has been working with other individuals to gather information about the safe route to school funds application period and availability of funds. As this information is

provided, it will be forwarded to Myron Lee at the Dixie MPO for distribution to DTAC members.

## 5. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- A. **Transportation Expo Survey:** Myron Lee announced the Transportation Expo is scheduled for Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at the Dixie Center. MPO staff has been working with Parson Brinkerhoff to develop a survey that will help to quantify public comments solicited during the Expo. The survey instrument will enable staff to measure and quantify comments. Larry Bulloch indicated that door prizes will be provided again this year. Myron Lee indicated that David DeMille from the Spectrum will be in his office Thursday to gather information for a newspaper article.

## 6. LOCAL PROJECTS STATUS UPDATE

- A. **Hurricane City:** Arthur LeBaron reported that Hurricane City is still working on the 600 North project and recently completed the 90% design review. Staff is working on some parcels for right-of-way acquisition. A high pressure gas line that goes out to Hildale will be relocated as part of this project. This will impact Hildale and Colorado City. For a two-day period, gas will be blown off at a specific unknown location on Highway 59. There will be 100' flames associated with this process. Construction of utilities will occur in August, with full blown construction anticipated in October. Project completion is scheduled for Memorial Day in 2015.
- B. **Ivins:** Dave Glenn reported the Center Street widening project right-of-way easement approval and other agreements will be presented to the Ivins City Council. The city is anxious to get this project out to bid. He also reported that the city is working with UDOT and Washington County to assume ownership of Old Highway 91 through Ivins. The road is currently maintained by Washington County, but UDOT owns the right-of-way. The city is currently working through the annexation process for this area. Kirk Thornock indicated that this would be a jurisdictional transfer from one entity to another that would need to be presented to the State Transportation Commission for their approval. It is important that the jurisdictional transfer be approved by the Commission in order to adjust B & C road funds that would be received by Ivins City for maintenance of the road. Dana Meier indicated that the request would need to go through the UDOT right-of-way process prior to presentation to the Transportation Commission. The city is anxious to accomplish this transfer because the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is committing funding for culverts. This funding is contingent upon resolution of the right-of-way issues.
- C. **LaVerkin:** None.
- D. **Leeds:** Angela Rohr reported that UDOT is beginning work on the southern portion of the Leeds interchange ramps. It appears that drainage pipe is on site to address issues on the northbound exit. Kirk Thornock indicated that UDOT is in the process of constructing climbing lanes in the Harrisburg area. Work will also include modification of the Leeds South exit to lengthen the southbound acceleration lanes. The northbound side is going to include a parallel deceleration lane that will come

in at a right angle. There will eventually be improvements made to the North Leeds exit. The project manager is Kim Manwill.

- E. St. George:** Cameron Cutler reported that work began on the Mall Drive Bridge on Monday. It is anticipated that the project will be completed within the next seven months. Work in the Virgin River will need to be completed by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Wadsworth Brothers is the contractor for this project. The connecting roads have not been bid out at this point. The 3000 East Phase I construction contract was awarded to Interstate Rock and the road is under construction. They are hoping to get a portion of this phase paved and open to traffic. Phase 2 of the 3000 East project from 1450 South to Mall Drive connection is slated to bid next week. The Little Valley Road project bid will be awarded by the City Council this week. The roundabouts at 600 West Tonaquint and 400 East Tabernacle bids will also go to the City Council this week. Work is progressing on the River Road study, but the contractor is still analyzing traffic counts for this area. Larry Bulloch commented that the Traffic Demand Model developed by the MPO has proven to be within 15% of the actual traffic counts currently on this roadway. This provides validity to the model. Cameron Cutler reported that Indian Hills Drive is still under design and had a 30% review a few weeks ago. Monty Thurber reported that St. George and UDOT recently worked to time all of the signals in St. George. This should help to decrease or improve travel time throughout the system. A lot of time was expended in this effort.
- F. Santa Clara City:** None.
- G. Toquerville:** None.
- H. Washington City:** None.
- I. Washington County:** None.
- J. UDOT:** Kirk Thornock reported that the Bluff Street/Red Hills Parkway Interchange construction will begin in mid-March. UDOT will also be doing a chip/seal project on SR-18 between Diamond Valley and Veyo in April/May. A bridge preservation project will incorporate five decks in the area to apply a polyurethane treatment. The Arch Bridge to LaVerkin will be undergoing reconstruction on the outside lane westbound in October/November. Beginning in July, funds will be available to begin looking at the Green Springs Drive thru turns and the Mall Drive underpass. The location of the Mall Drive underpass has not been determined at this time. The location of the crossing will impact the amount of funding that will be required for this project. Even if this project was the highest priority, funding would not be available until 2018. The Bluff Street/Sunset project has kicked off with the same public involvement consultant as the Red Hills Parkway Interchange to provide continuity and less confusion for information releases. The construction on Exit 8 has been completed with the exception of some planting in the spring. Dana Meier reported that the St. George Boulevard/Bluff Street intersection was originally identified as first priority project in the Environmental Assessment document. UDOT has been able to do some tweaks and perform a re-analysis of this project. It will be approximately five years before anything happens in this location. UDOT is moving forward with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the

biological opinion for the Southern Parkway. They are hoping to be able to bid the project in August and begin construction in the fall. This will include earth work over the winter months, but an additional \$7 million is needed for the finish package on this section.

**7. STATE AND FEDERAL UPDATE**

- A. Program Development - UDOT:** Elden Bingham reported that as the MPO begins the new work program some things will need to be put in place. A recent FTA State/Federal audit produced a negative result in conjunction with the A-133 requirement that deals with pass-through funds. An agreement will need to be put in place when the work plans are submitted to satisfy this requirement. UDOT staff will work with Myron Lee to take care of this issue. Myron Lee indicated that over the next month, a draft work program will be developed that will outline the vote share for the next program year.
- B. Federal Oversight:** Steve Call introduced Justin Morgan, who will be working with FHWA in their professional development program. Justin graduated from Morgan State University and will be with FHWA for the next two years. He originates out of Boston, but has embraced Utah. Justin will be also working in Washington, D.C. in the freight division for a short period of time. FHWA has a new division administrator, Ivan Merero, who replaced James Christian. He transferred from the Oklahoma division and is a native of Cuba. Steve Call will try to bring Ivan to one of the upcoming DTAC meetings to make an introduction.

**8. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

Larry Bulloch announced that he will be retiring on February 28, 2014 and this is his last DTAC meeting. He thanked committee members for the cooperation and accomplishments that have been achieved through DTAC. He expressed his enjoyment in working with the group and took pride in working with the organization. Myron Lee and several group members expressed their appreciation to Larry for his participation with the organization and fostering the groundwork for the success of the MPO. It was also announced that Cameron Cutler will assume the role as Public Works Director beginning March 1st.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at the Five County Association of Governments office.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE BY MIKE SHAW AND SECONDED BY ARTHUR LEBARON. MOTION CARRIED.**

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.