

Midvalley Connector
Salt Lake County, Utah
Small Starts Project Development
(Rating Assigned October 2022)

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	Bus Rapid Transit 7 Miles, 15 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$103.42 Million
Section 5309 CIG Share (\$YOE):	\$62.80 Million (60.7%)
Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2025):	\$4.40 Million
Current Year Ridership Forecast (2022):	2,100 Daily Linked Trips 604,700 Annual Linked Trips
Overall Project Rating:	Medium-High
Project Justification Rating:	Medium
Local Financial Commitment Rating:	Medium-High

Project Description: The Utah Transit Authority (UTA) proposes to implement bus rapid transit (BRT) in the corridor connecting the Murray Central Station served by FrontRunner commuter rail and TRAX light-rail to the West Valley Central TRAX light-rail station. The project includes 1.4 miles of dedicated bus lanes, stations with off-board fare collection, transit signal priority, and unique branding for vehicles and stations. Service is planned to operate on weekdays from 4 AM to 12 AM, with buses every 15 minutes during the day and every 30 minutes during nights. During weekends, service is planned to operate from 4 AM to 12 AM with buses every 15 to 30 minutes.

Project Purpose: The project corridor serves multiple activity centers including the flagship campus of Salt Lake Community College with 21,000 students. The college plans to develop a mix of retail and student housing adjacent to the project. The project is intended to improve transit service frequency and visibility, increase mobility, and provide an alternative mode of transportation for future population and travel demand growth. In addition, the project is intended to enhance the local economy by encouraging redevelopment and improving access to existing and planned developments.

Project Development History, Status and Next Steps: UTA selected the project as the locally preferred alternative in January 2019. It was included in the region's fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan in May 2019. The project entered Small Starts Project Development in April 2021. UTA completed the environmental review process in September 2022. UTA anticipates receipt of a Small Starts Grant Agreement in Spring 2023 and the start of revenue service in mid-2025.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Federal:		
Section 5309 CIG	\$62.80	60.7%
FHWA Flexible Funds (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program)	\$2.00	1.9%
State:		
State of Utah Transit Transportation Investment Fund	\$22.80	22.0%
State of Utah Legislative Funds	\$11.00	10.6%
Utah Department of Transportation Land Donation	\$3.05	3.0%
State of Utah Highway General Obligation Bonds	\$0.40	0.4%
Local:		
West Valley City Land Donation	\$0.37	0.4%
Private Sector/Other:		
Salt Lake Community College Land Donation	\$1.00	1.0%
Total:	\$103.42	100.0%

NOTE: The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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LAND USE RATING: Medium-Low

The land use rating reflects population density within one-half mile of proposed stations, employment served by the line, and the share of legally binding affordability restricted (LBAR) housing in the station areas compared to the share in the surrounding county.

- The average station area population density is 5,700 persons per square mile, corresponding to a Medium-Low rating by FTA benchmarks. Total employment in the station areas is 38,000, corresponding to a Low rating. The ratio of station area to county LBAR housing is 1.88, corresponding to a Medium rating.
- The areas around the two termini, which are also existing light and commuter rail stations, have been at least partially redeveloped with moderately to strongly transit-supportive development. Development in most of the corridor, however, is primarily auto-oriented at relatively low densities.
- Much of the proposed alignment runs along multi-lane divided arterials although some is on smaller neighborhood-scale streets. Streets in the corridor generally have sidewalks and crosswalks. Parking is generally free throughout the corridor.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: Medium-Low

Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium-Low

- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* General plans for two of the three corridor municipalities reference encouraging transit-oriented development (TOD). More detailed moderately transit-supportive TOD planning was undertaken around existing commuter and light rail stations and along a portion of the BRT corridor, although specific density targets are rarely set. At least three additional stations will have station-area plans developed.
- *Supportive Zoning Regulations Near Transit Stations:* Zoning is most transit-supportive around the termini stations, where maximum height limits do not exist in some areas, minimum building heights are two to five stories, setback requirements are low, and mixed-use development is permitted. In other station areas, zoning is more typical of suburban areas with low to moderate densities. One municipality is in the process of updating its zoning ordinance. Base parking requirements are generally typical for suburban areas, although there are provisions for reductions near transit.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* Regional programs have funded transit-supportive land use planning in parts of the corridor that has included outreach to the community, developers, and property owners. The municipalities have conducted their own developer outreach for specific opportunity areas. Two redevelopment districts have provided tax-increment financing.

Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* Redevelopment in the area around the western terminus station has been underway for years and this area is now characterized by mixed-use and high rise multi-family buildings with some scattered office buildings. There is also some recent development in the eastern terminus station area that is transit-oriented in character. There are very limited examples of clearly transit-supportive development completed or planned elsewhere in the corridor.
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* Redevelopment potential in the corridor appears to be moderate, with nearly 300 acres available on a golf course, mobile home communities, and research park infill. At the eastern terminus, 42 percent of 920 acres of land is considered underutilized or vacant. Less redevelopment potential was noted in the western end of the corridor where development is already denser. The corridor is projected to see moderate growth.

Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing: Medium-Low

- Municipalities are required to complete moderate-income housing plans every five years; in their plans, each city has recommended implementing at least nine potential strategies. However, information on implementation of these strategies was not provided. No new affordable housing projects have been recently developed within half a mile of the corridor meeting the 60 percent AMI threshold, but there have been recent developments elsewhere in the municipalities, and one preservation project in West Valley City station area.

