



Response to the Long-Range Transit Plan: UTA Moves 2050

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Introduction

The Utah Transit Riders Union (UTRU) was formed in 2014 to act as a voice for transit riders across the state of Utah. UTRU is one of nearly 50 formal, independent, transit advocacy organizations in North America, and such organizations work with, against, and alongside their respective transit agencies, local, regional, and state/provincial governments, and citizens to fight for better transit. UTRU is just one of two such organizations with a statewide focus.

UTRU strives to make transit that is:

- Reliable - Reliable transit systems allow people to make life-changing decisions about where and how to live—confident that their decisions will remain valid over the long term. Reliable transit systems also re-enfranchise disadvantaged persons by offering them a way to be vibrant members of their immediate and extended communities.
- Accessible - Accessible transit systems actively serve the needs of minority or disadvantaged communities who, in turn, become fundamental to the system’s long-term strategic and financial health. When accessibility is a priority, all transit users are better served.
- Comfortable - Comfortable transit systems encourage widespread adoption by the community, resulting in increased ridership and more political capital. Comfortable transit systems achieve these goals by reinforcing the dignity and safety of the rider.
- Efficient - Efficient transit systems are able to accomplish more with limited resources. This includes not only serving more riders but also serving them better. Efficient transit systems honor their host communities by being resource-aware and resource-wise.
- Affordable - Affordable transit systems understand their roles as community infrastructure. Transit isn’t an amenity, it’s a necessity.

In addition, we strive to create a transit-affirming culture that legitimizes transit and reinforces the dignity of the transit rider. In so doing, we want to greatly increase transit use and inoculate riders against the occasional inconveniences they bear. Put another way, transit affirmation grows and empowers a loyal user base.

UTRU’s Opinion of the Long-Range Transit Plan: UTA Moves 2050

As part of our duties, we wish to provide the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) with this formal response to their Long-Range Transit Plan: UTA Moves 2050 (LRTP) on behalf of our members who currently use UTA’s services, as well as those who may use the system in the future.

In short: UTRU’s opinion of the LRTP is...complicated.

Though the LRTP is stated by UTA as being unbound by cost restrictions, UTRU recognizes that, as a quasi-governmental organization, proposals from UTA automatically attract increased scrutiny. Therefore, though UTA may not be restricted by costs in the LRTP, it certainly is restricted by political pressures.

Because of this, UTRU approached its response to such a far-reaching and high-level document with two views in mind.

The first response makes up the majority of what is contained in our response: a county-by-county analysis of the proposed service changes, additions, and removals as outlined in the LRTP. The suggestions we make, we feel, fit within the general parameters that UTA imposed upon itself when creating the LRTP in the first place and merit review and possible modification within the universe where the rules of the LRTP exist.

The second approach, however, is far larger.

COVID changed many things, including how we view transportation and transit. With remote work exploding during the pandemic and showing no signs of decreasing in popularity. UTRU feels that the LRTP was an opportunity to imagine a transit system that wasn't just tailored to the 9-5, Monday through Friday commuter but was, instead, built for the mom taking their child to school, the teen who was meeting friends at a park on the weekend, the couple going out on the town on a Friday night, the retiree who volunteers Tuesday afternoons, and the professional who has a 2 PM meeting at a coffee shop across town. Here, we feel that the LRTP fell well short.

UTRU is in the early phases of creating its own version of a long-range plan. *Transit: Imagined* asks a simple question: what if 2.1 million Utahns, stretching from Logan to Nephi and from Tooele to Heber, lived, worked, and played within a 10-minute walk to a bus, BRT, light rail, and/or commuter rail line? What if that route had, at minimum, 15-minute arrivals? And what if that service was available 365 days a year?

In short, it is a plan where there are more buses and trains, and that they are everywhere all the time.

Ambitious? Absolutely. But this vision is truly unrestrained by cost and is designed to be the blueprint for a world-class transit system where people don't need a personal vehicle to live, work, and play if they don't want one and, instead, have the freedom to travel without needing a personal vehicle.

Compared to *Transit: Imagined*, the LRTP falls well short. Some early ideas from *Transit: Imagined* do find their way into our critique of the LRTP, however, we do feel that our suggestions are still practical within the bounds of the LRTP.

The comments contained in this response were unanimously approved by UTRU's Board of Directors on October 17, 2023, and submitted on October 30, 2023.

Executive Summary

UTRU has provided a review of the LRTP in five sections: General systemwide improvements, Salt Lake County, Utah County, Weber and Davis Counties, and Tooele, Box Elder, and Summit Counties collectively. Within these sections are areas within the respective counties (i.e. Salt Lake City or Southern Davis County) where UTRU provides comment on specific routes, plans, or details we are in favor of, have concerns with, or simply have more to speak on.

Because stating that we disapprove of something is not productive, UTRU attempts, wherever possible, to provide solutions or alternate ideas to consider within the internal logic of the LRTP. Though UTRU would like to see more transit everywhere, all the time (as we advocate for with our *Transit: Imagined* initiative), we understand that UTA has outside constraints to consider.

UTRU is generally supportive of the LRTP, and we are pleased to see that increasing service frequency and the creation of more rapid transit lines were a particular focus of UTA. It is UTRU's opinion that these actions help improve the reliability, accessibility, and efficiency of the system, ultimately resulting in increased ridership as a percentage of the total population. To this end, UTRU intends to work hand in hand with UTA in whatever ways possible to help see these plans become a reality.

UTRU also appreciates the emphasis the LRTP makes regarding UTA's workforce. The system has been struggling with operator shortages post-COVID, and these issues could have been addressed sooner. Though the current issues appear to be resolving themselves, there is still some lag that may take 1-3 years to fully resolve. It appears that UTA may have learned its lesson regarding working conditions and pay as the plan does make nodes to their workforce.

The plan does rely heavily on Innovative Mobility Solutions Zones (IMSZ) to help increase the overall service area footprint—something that raises red flags in the eyes of UTRU.

Though UTRU is not inherently opposed to the use of IMSZs to increase overall service and recognizes that IMSZs, when deployed in communities where the personal automobile and not walkability/transit was the primary planning consideration, can be a way to increase ridership overall we are concerned that IMSZs are being used to replace traditional fixed-route services by UTA rather than supplement them. Our cause for concern originates in the fact that, in UTRU's opinion, we have witnessed this exact behavior from UTA in all current iterations of IMSZs to varying degrees within the current system, and feel that this is the underlying motivation for most usages of IMSZs in the LRTP.

In such situations, we are opposed.

While IMSZs offer flexibility and a far wider service area when providing transit services to a community when compared to a fixed-route bus line, their unpredictable arrival times, combined with their limited service area when compared to for-profit rideshare or taxi services, make them inferior to both. In addition, when compared to an automobile, their perceived higher costs for shorter trips also make them a less appealing option.

It is for these reasons that UTRU feels that IMSZs should only be used when residential and commercial development is so sparse that it cannot reasonably support a fixed route bus line on its own. In such situations, UTRU would still only fully support an IMSZ if it was anchored by, at minimum, one 15-minute

fixed route line and that the fixed-route still maintains a catchment area of 1 to 2 miles. This rationale, we feel, encourages usage of the IMSZ for local trips, while also allowing people easier access to the larger network.

In many situations within the LRPT, UTA appears to be using IMSZs as a replacement, and not a supplement to fixed routes. In these situations, UTRU will always be opposed.

Long-Range Transit Plan Proposal: UTA Moves 2050 Comments

System Wide

UTRU Supports:

- As a general statement, UTRU will always be supportive of **increased service frequencies overall**. That is why we were excited to see that this was a specific priority in the LRTP. Similar to this, we were happy to see that the service frequencies also included **increased service start and end times on weekends as well as offering more 15-minute service on these routes**. These are much-needed improvements to the system as the needs of transit and how people who use the system have evolved away from simply using transit for commuting to and from work and are, instead, using the system as a way to get around in their day-to-day lives.
- Though **Double-tracking FrontRunner** is currently in the works as-is, we are nonetheless happy to see that having **more frequent FrontRunner service** was also a specific priority in the LRTP.

UTRU Concerns:

- As a selling point, the LRTP states that there are **“Up to 25 new bus routes or Innovative Mobility Solutions Zones.”** It is UTRU's opinion that this statement is intentionally deceptive and designed to downplay the fact that there will not be many “more” routes for people under the LRTP.

Currently, there are four Innovative Mobility Solutions Zones (IMSZ) in UTA's system: Southern Davis County, North West Salt Lake City, Southern Salt Lake County, and Tooele County. **The new plan appears to add up to 20 new IMSZ's**, depending on how things are ultimately cut.

An IMSZ is, at its core, a rideshare service not dissimilar to a taxi or Uber, and **UTRU does not inherently think that IMSZs are a bad thing, but we do feel that they are inferior to fixed routes in most situations.**

The single biggest issue with an IMSZ is that they are not reliable when compared to a fixed route. Depending on demand, you may receive a ride in 3 seconds, 3 minutes, or over 30 minutes - with a bus or train, your ride will generally arrive within a window of plus or minus only a minute or two. With this confidence, a rider can plan for transfers and make appointments around these schedules whereas **the uncertainty of an IMSZ at the start, middle, or end of a trip makes the use of them less appealing** and, therefore, less likely to be used.

In addition, by design, IMSZs work in a limited service area, so they are unable to compete with rideshare services, taxis, and (most importantly of all) personal auto usage which either have much larger boundaries, or no boundaries at all.

It is UTRU's opinion that IMSZs should only be deployed in areas when two specific conditions are met: first, residential and commercial development is so sparse that it cannot reasonably support a fixed route line, and second, the IMSZ is anchored by, at minimum, one 15-minute fixed route line that has a catchment area of 1 to 2 miles. It is UTRU's opinion that using IMSZs in this

way makes it a supplement to transit routes and not a replacement for them. Under such a system, a person could make local trips using the IMSZ or be funneled onto the larger network by connecting with a high-frequency route with relative ease.

Additional Comments:

- If UTA intends to expand IMSZs so drastically, **the rules about traveling between zones will need to be made abundantly clear to riders in order to avoid confusion while also being fair to the communities that have these services.**

Though we understand that UTA doesn't want to set up a system where someone could ride from North Ogden to Farmington or the western reaches of Eagle Mountain to Provo on a single trip just because their zones happen to touch, other theoretical "zone hopping" trips seem logical, probable, and fair for the communities UTA serves; Lehi, for example, is divided into 3 IMSZs under the current LRTP.

Riders will be turned off if they have to wait for multiple rides, pay for multiple trips, and leapfrog from car to car just to travel between zones.

- Over the past 18 months, **the operator shortage came to a head, with UTA being forced to cancel individual trips and, ultimately, entire routes because routes could not be staffed.** In many ways, the pandemic just delayed the inevitable when it came to operator shortages, but operators had been complaining about poor conditions, low pay, and difficult working conditions for some time, and it has made retention and recruitment difficult.

For this reason, we are happy to see that investments in the workforce were specifically noted in the LRTP, and we strongly encourage UTA to not wait to implement these changes.

Salt Lake County

Salt Lake City

UTRU Supports:

- The idea of a **downtown light-rail circulator** has been discussed for years, and it would be great to actually see this idea come into being. Taking advantage of an existing rail spur directly north of the Ballpark stop and traveling along 400 West before finding its way to the Salt Lake Central FrontRunner/Trax station only makes sense and would help bring greater cohesion to this growing section of the city. This, combined with an **extension of Trax to continue west from 400 South and Main** and the construction of a **streetcar line along 200/100/South Temple** would help further continue the trend of ever-growing interconnectedness between the University of Utah and Downtown that will only grow stronger over the next 30 years.
- The inclusion of a **University of Utah/Fort Union Express Route** is a logical connection between these two communities and the areas in between. No doubt, the University of Utah will continue to be an economic driver for the region and state, and increased access to this driver will only grow more important in the years to come. This route should offer an interesting mix of off-campus students and mid-century doctors, scientists, and business professionals.
- Bus Rapid Transit Routes (BRT's) also appear to be here to stay under the LRTP, and UTA's plan to **Connect Downtown Salt Lake to Daybreak via the airport and 5600 West with a BRT** should prove to be an important way to tie the west side of the valley to the economic, cultural, and political heart of the state. This project is one of the more likely ones to actually take place as it was an agreed-upon item between UDOT and transit advocates after the Mountain View Corridor was greenlit in 2008, and will be triggered once the Corridor is converted into a full-fledged grade-separated roadway.

UTRU Concerns:

- Under the LRTP, the **West Side of Salt Lake** continues to be viewed as an inconvenience, with routes largely being either a means-to-an-end to connect Downtown/the University of Utah with the Airport with the few fixed routes that exist largely connecting to Downtown and not circulating within the neighborhoods themselves.

We acknowledge that this isn't entirely UTA's fault, however. I-15, I-80, and the Union Pacific Railroad (with its unpredictable schedules and just stopping on major cross streets) make it extremely difficult to reliably connect the west side with the rest of Salt Lake City and County. If these literal roadblocks are cleared, **we would strongly advocate for fixed bus routes running along 900 West and 800 South.**

What is achievable today but missing from the plan are bus routes that penetrate deeper into the Westpointe and Rose Park neighborhoods; a dedicated circulator route along Star Crest Drive, North Temple via the State Business Park and State Fairpark (and possible future MLB Baseball stadium), up 1200 West before connect back via Dupont Avenue and 1000 North would go far in creating a cohesive network within the neighborhood. **The Glendale and Poplar Grove**

neighborhoods do appear to be better served, but, again, an **800 or 900 South** route would help increase circulation within this area.

Additional Comments:

- We understand that creating **dedicated transit lines within Salt Lake’s west-side industrial areas is difficult** and appreciate the fact that UTA is trying to remedy this **by expanding IMSZs in the area**. That being said, **the area’s major arteries (namely 500/700 South and California Avenue) could benefit from the addition of lines connecting people to FrontRunner and Trax both to the north and south of the area**. As we have stated previously, it is UTRU’s opinion that IMSZs only work when they have fixed routes at their core.
- From the start, the **S-Line** has been the black sheep of the system, and there doesn’t appear to be any efforts to change this situation under the LRTP. **Extending the S-Line to connect with Westminster College and possibly the Stadium Trax Station** could help increase overall circulation within the area and reduce auto-traffic to both institutions but, for some reason, this option was not included in this non-budget-constrained plan.

Mid Valley

UTRU Supports:

- It is great to see the forward-thinking on an east/west **3300 and 3500 South Rapid Line**. This corridor is ripe for a dedicated BRT line, which has a solid mix of residential, commercial, shopping, civic, and industrial districts with easy connections to all three Trax Lines. Our only real question is that the plan appears to require a transfer at Millcreek Station to go from Wasatch Boulevard to 9180 West. We estimate that the round-trip route would take approximately 2 hours, so we would only want to see this happen if driver breaks and lunches could be respected.
- The **Mid-Valley Connector** has seen a lot of starts and stops over the past few years and is still behind schedule (according to the project website, construction was supposed to begin in Spring of this year). That being said, we still have a lot of enthusiasm for the project and, with the federal government finding that there is no significant environmental impact for the project, construction and completion is now more of a “when” and not an “if.” This valuable connection will provide more direct and rapid connections for the Green Line and Salt Lake Community College’s Main Campus in Taylorsville to FrontRunner and the Red and Blue Lines by creating dedicated lanes and/or signal prioritization. We hope UTA is able to break ground soon on this important project.
- We are encouraged by the continued review and elevation of standard bus routes to rapid transit lines, and the **State Street North Rapid Line** is no exception. With Trax generally two to three blocks away, the State Street North Rapid line can serve as a valuable rapid transit “gap filler” as Trax stations become more spread out south of 900 South. We also think that photos of a BRT line with the Utah State Capitol Building in the background flanked by skyscrapers will make for fantastic promotional shots for UTA!

UTRU Concerns:

- As we have said before, UTA isn't going to propose higher route densities in the heart of the Salt Lake Valley, we would hope that they would provide IMSZ services to support and funnel people onto the system as a whole.

That is why we find the **lack of fixed route density AND IMSZ services in the middle of the valley disappointing**. The east benches seem logical regions to offer, at the bare minimum, IMSZ service, and if the popularity currently seen at the south end of the valley is any indication, it isn't as if east-bench suburbanites are avoiding using the service. Though similar questions could be raised in the Provo/Orem area and Northern Davis County, this omission is particularly glaring when compared to the areas immediately north and south of the area.

- Though we understand that north/south Light Rail is not viable east of roughly 700 East, **we would like to see some form of BRT running along 700 East/VanWinkle/Highland Drive potentially connecting with the Draper Town Center Trax Station**. This would provide a needed east-side rapid connection along the Benches.

This would have been placed under "Additional Comments" if it didn't feel like such an obvious addition to the system overall as the corridor is certainly wide enough to physically support a BRT line, could easily connect downtown with the heart of the valley, and access underserved east-bench communities that would probably enjoy the convenience of such an express route.

Additional Comments:

- Despite its fantastic, centralized location within the valley, **Murray Central still feels underutilized under the LRTP**. Yes, three BRT lines, two Trax lines, and two IMSZs radiate out from the stop, but there is only one fixed route bus line that heads east from the stop ... and this route is more of a north-east route. This all culminates in Murray Central not actually servicing Murray.

It feels like it shouldn't be difficult to provide at least IMSZ service east of I-15 should exist inside the belt route, but what **we would like to see are circulators perhaps along 5600 or 5900 South to help provide regular service to the residents in this area**.

South Valley

UTRU Supports:

- When on-demand service was first rolled out at the south end of the valley, our principal complaint was that numerous fixed route lines were removed. That is why we are pleased to see **the return of several fixed routes to the area**. We suspect that UTA is using the data gathered by Via trips (and the often long wait times to actually get a ride) to determine viable routes. Given that the area is almost defined by its suburban sprawl, we acknowledge that transit in this area is difficult to provide traditional services to and that IMSZ service needs to remain in order to supplement the system. We just hope that data collected from Via ride requests continue to be used to create new fixed-route lines.
- As part of this resurrection of lines, it is refreshing to see that the **Red Line stops in the Daybreak area are being used as transit hubs**. Currently, all the Red Line is good for in this area as it relates

to transit is park-and-ride lots and for those who happen to be in the catchment area. Given that the Red Line in this area of the valley largely acts as the border between open space and the Daybreak community, it means that these stops are not currently meeting their full potential. Feeding these stops with bus routes will do much to improve overall system connectivity.

- Similar to the State Street North Rapid Transit Line, we are excited to see the idea of a **State Street South Rapid Transit Line** – out of the two, however, we would like to see this one implemented first if forced to choose. Why? Because, unlike the North line, Trax stations at the south end of the valley are spread even further apart and are even further away from State Street at this end of the valley.

By providing BRT to this area several residential, office, and shopping areas will suddenly gain access to rapid transit options and greater system connectivity. Even the RSL Stadium will be elevated to the same status as other major stadiums across the state with rapid transit stops immediately adjacent to them.

Ideally, we would love to see a full BRT line running from the Draper to North Temple and/or Central Station FrontRunner stations via Murry Central along State Street (of course, considering driver needs).

UTRU Concerns:

- The **Draper FrontRunner Station** has always been a bit of an odd-duck and has been the source of controversy over the years due to questionable development deals associated with the station and its specific placement. Indeed, though there is little doubt that Draper should have a FrontRunner station *somewhere*, the location of the actual station is awkward and somewhat difficult to access for buses – making the station difficult to integrate into the system. Though not much can be done to change this fact, it doesn't feel like UTA is trying to make the station work under the LRTP.

Much like Murray Central, the Draper Station doesn't really service Draper under the LRTP (or most of the south end of the valley, for that matter).

The **Mountain View South** route takes the most convoluted route possible to connect the absolute southern end of the valley to the Draper stop while the **Daybreak – Riverton – 12300 South** Route has potential to connect the southern tips of both the Blue and Red lines via 12600 South and the Draper Station (which is a great idea, mind you), by making a perplexing detour west to 5600 West and south to 13400 South before turning back north at 3600 West. **If this were two separate routes, we would probably praise them**, but turning this all into one feels like it isn't going to encourage people to take the connection as the route feels like it is too long and too meandering to be attractive to people.

In all, more routes radiating out could serve to make the Draper Station a natural extension of the prison redevelopment if UTA seizes the opportunity – but as it currently stands, it looks like the Draper Station will just continue to be little more than a parking structure.

- **North/South Connections are almost non-existent south of 9000 South and those that do exist largely have lower frequencies compared to their east/west counterparts.** We know that lower density in this area means that it is difficult to run more frequent service, but **a route with higher frequency along 2700 West** would help fill in this gap. Ultimately, providing at least a few more connections to the Red Line going North and South would go a long way toward helping further integrate the region into the system.
- Perhaps one of the biggest disappointments of the LRTP is **that UTA failed to reach for the golden ring that is expanding the Blue Line potentially as far south as Lindon in Utah County.** Instead, UTA has opted to mark the area of the map as “corridor preservation.”

With trips between Utah County and Salt Lake County only expected to increase over the next 30 years, converting these unused rail corridors into light rail connections could go a long way to alleviating future transit needs for Utahns on both sides of the Point of the Mountain. Instead, UTA has opted not to include this in the plan.

We find the statement by UTA that, essentially, the unknowns of the prison redevelopment complicate the transit needs of the area too much for it to be able to reasonably include it in the LRTP unsatisfactory. If anything, UTRU feels that the multi-billion dollar redevelopment of one of the most valuable pieces of land in the state only heightens the importance of UTA inserting itself into the process early and helping to create a vision of a transit system in the area that could be fully implemented using existing, proven, and popular transit types.

Other Comments:

- It is worth noting that UTA **did not incorporate the controversial Big Cottonwood Canyon Gondola project** into its 2050 plan. This is for two reasons: First, the gondola isn’t actually a UTA project, rather, it is being handled primarily by UDOT. Second, because the nature of the project is still very fluid, the question of *how* UTA can integrate with any future gondola is still up in the air. If the project does move ahead, we will no doubt see plans and projects to help move people from places like Murray Central and along Wasatch Boulevard.

Unlike the failure to comment on the Point of the Mountain Project, we do feel that the time has largely come and gone for UTA to have a major impact on the long-term fate of Big Cottonwood Canyon and that, in many ways, policymakers had their minds made up long before UTA was allowed to come to the table.

UTRU hopes that UTA uses the time between now and the start of construction to demonstrate the value of the current ski-bus program in the hopes of proving that alternative options to the gondola provide more viable and scalable solutions that better integrate into the overall transportation and transit system. In addition, we hope that, ultimately, these options are chosen over a vanity project that largely serves ski resorts and not the public.

Utah County

Provo/Orem Area

UTRU Supports:

- Utah's newest city, Vineyard, has been fairly forward-thinking in its attitudes towards transit and active mobility, especially when compared to other cities along the Wasatch Front. The Vineyard FrontRunner stop is a minor miracle and is a major investment on the part of both UTA and the community and both seem to be continuing the trend with the proposed **extension of UVX to the Vineyard FrontRunner station**. Given how geographically small Vineyard is, this addition might mean that Vineyard could hold the title of the community with the most access to transit in the state in the years to come.

UTRU Concerns:

- Combined, Provo and Orem have roughly the same population as Salt Lake City and are actually a bit more compact compared to their neighbor to the north (once you remove the mountains and wetlands all three cities include in their boundaries); but **in terms of transit, when comparing Salt Lake to Provo and Orem, it really is a tale of two (or, we suppose, three) cities**.

Though the LRTP is "cost unrestrained" (in other words, not concerned about how to pay for the ideas it proposes), we can forgive UTA for its hesitation to create denser networks in this community...to a degree.

Back in 2015 voters in Utah County rejected Proposition 1, which would have raised taxes to, among other things, fund transit in Utah County – *however*, part of the reason voters rejected the tax was that it was widely seen at the time that UTA would waste the money. You see, at the time, UTA was engaging in questionable trips and business dealings that ultimately resulted in a restructuring of UTA, the state moving portions of capital construction projects over to UDOT, and a group you might of heard of, the Utah Transit Riders Union, forming to ensure that the transit rider is actually considered in transit decisions.

All of this is to say that there is still **a lack of investment in the Provo/Orem area**, and we would like to see some greater density in the area, unfortunately, UTA is still reaping what it sowed, even, in theory, 50 years later.

To this end, we hope that UTA is able to continue to work to change the hearts and minds of those in Utah County and change perceptions about the transit agency so that more investment can take place. UTRU, for its part, will work to encourage a transit-affirming culture in Utah County. **These areas deserve more transit, and would greatly benefit from it**, but the people need to see the benefit of it first.

Additional Comments:

- **Though we appreciate that UTA wants to increase service to 30 minutes to the Provo Airport** we have to wonder if this actually a bit short-sighted.

Currently, the Provo Airport offers flights to places like Phoenix, Chicago, and San Diego, and it is not unreasonable to assume that other destinations will be added over the next 30 years. If UTA can successfully extend FrontRunner further South, **why not extend UVX to the airport?** A more direct connection from downtown Provo, BYU, and FrontRunner has obvious benefits for the region when compared to making multiple transfers and waiting upwards of 30 minutes for a bus. We feel that long-term thinking on a project like this could become a self-fulfilling prophecy for the region and airport.

Northern Utah County

UTRU Supports:

- Understandably, service on the west side of Utah Lake is difficult for UTA. Currently, the communities of Eagle Mountain and Saratoga Springs are in a bad spot when it comes to transit: designed with the car and not transit in mind, but clearly in need of transit options both now and in the future.

As opposed to the city of Vineyard, these communities still lag behind when it comes to considering transit in their planning, perhaps because they have themed themselves as being “away from it all.” For this reason, we appreciate UTA’s efforts to mitigate this by **increasing options and access west of Utah Lake with routes to FrontRunner and deploying IMSZs** which, unfortunately, is the only viable option for communities that refuse to build communities for people and not cars.

- Though we are underwhelmed by the **Point of the Mountain BRT Line** (see the Additional Comments section below), we do want to highlight the fact that this line, along with the proposed **Redwood Road South Line** are important in regards to connectivity between Salt Lake and Utah Counties. It is odd to think that there are only two main roads between Utah’s largest counties, and yet we have such limited options to go between them.

As we noted in the South Salt Lake County section, we feel that a Trax extension makes more sense, but, alas, here we are. For now, the plan to at least utilize Redwood Road and the I-15 Frontage Road for both BRT and fixed route lines would help to provide more options for those moving between the two counties.

UTRU Concerns:

- The **Highland, Cedar Hills, and Alpine Communities are nearly abandoned by the LRTP**, with the area quite possibly being the **largest in UTA’s service area to not have a single bus route**. If you throw in the eastern benches of Pleasant Grove and Lindon, there are roughly 35 square miles of established and mature communities (more than twice the size of the Kennecott Copper Mine) that are more than a half mile away from a single fixed route. Yes, an IMSZ is being offered as an option in the area, but the catchment area is laughably large and will do little to funnel people onto the larger system.

Currently, the area is already underserved with just one limited route running along the Timpanogos Highway and Geneva Road, and yet UTA seems content with making the situation

worse by removing even that route. UTA cannot reasonably expect to increase ridership by decreasing service, right?

At best, UTRU hopes that we see a similar situation to the one we are witnessing in Southern Salt Lake County in the LRTP, where IMSZs initially removed the majority of fixed routes, only to have UTA restore (or at least propose the restoration) of fixed-route services, later on.

- Speaking of IMSZs, we find it surprising that **Lehi has three different IMSZs within its borders – and two of them don’t even cover the Lehi FrontRunner Station.** Yes, we know you have to draw the lines somewhere, but it seems odd to divide Utah’s 9th largest city up by what seems like relatively arbitrary lines. We hope that, if the 2050 plan comes into effect in this area, the bugs get worked out to allow for much greater flow in and between these areas.

Additional Comments:

- The Point of the Mountain has always been a chokepoint and UTA has only really been able to offer FrontRunner as an alternative to the 12 lanes of traffic that constantly snarl I-15. That is why it pains us to put the **Point of the Mountain Rapid Transit Line** in the “Eh” category when we would much prefer to gush over a new BRT line.

The route is primarily designed to serve as a bridge between the forthcoming redevelopment of the old prison site and the Draper/Lehi FrontRunner Stops. This is fine and it makes sense, but it doesn’t do much more to get people out of their cars. At a minimum, **extending the BRT line by converting portions of the Central Corridor Connector Line and/or taking advantage of the Draper to Pleasant Grove Corridor Preservation** in Utah County could do a lot more to help reduce traffic and congestion along I-15. Oh, and did we mention that we also would like to see **the expansion of the Blue Line into Utah County?**

Southern Utah County

UTRU Supports:

- One item we are particularly excited about in the LRTP is the **proposed southern expansion of FrontRunner by extending the current line to Payson.** UTA is showing that it really wants to get ahead of the demands of future growth along the ever-expanding Wasatch Front by proactively connecting Springville, Spanish Fork, and Payson to the rail network while **also beefing up the frequency of bus service to these areas.**

UTRU Concerns:

- In an area that already has limited service, **we don’t have many complaints about the plan to implement IMSZ services** as increases in service are always welcome. As we have stated before, it is UTRU’s opinion that IMSZ should exist only to provide transit in areas that otherwise could not support a traditional route due to low density, should be used to supplement the system, and still feature at least one fixed route within it to serve as a backbone.

In this case, where an IMSZ could connect people to the larger system in a very obvious way and where local routes most likely would not be viable on their own, we don't have much to complain about. **We just hope that UTA continues to keep an eye on the south end of Utah County and looks for opportunities to convert frequent on-demand routes into fixed routes where possible.**

Additional Comments:

- With nearly all of Juab County basically being Nephi, and the Wasatch Front metro area expanding at a rapid clip, it is not hard to imagine that, one day some 30 years from now, the citizens of Nephi might want mass-transit connections to Provo, Salt Lake, and Ogden (and dare we say Brigham City and Logan?). Yes, it makes sense for UTA to not include Juab County in the 2050 plan since they don't currently pay UTA for services, but we hope that, somewhere, in the back of UTA's mind, they are considering **expanding FrontRunner to Nephi, with stops in Santaquin and Mona, for good measure.**

Davis and Weber Counties

Southern Davis County

UTRU Supports:

- A 30-minute **bus route connecting the Power Trax station and Lakeview Hospital in Bountiful via Redwood Road and the Woods Cross FrontRunner Station** will help further connect the bedroom community with both FrontRunner and Salt Lake.

If implemented, this route would mark the return of regular bus service to the Woods Cross FrontRunner station, which hasn't been seen a regular bus route since the area converted to an IMSZ service. In addition, this route would also take advantage of one of the few viable routes between Utah's largest and third largest counties.

It is worth noting that Woods Cross is only one of two FrontRunner Stations that do not have a single bus route currently connecting the station (the other being American Fork). Though both should have regular bus service, the American Fork Station is somewhat on the edge of a community with other stations relatively closer to it - the Woods Cross Station, on the other hand, is squarely in the middle of the geographic region where other FrontRunner access points are sparse.

All this is to say that we hope UTA implements this particular route sooner rather than later. Yes, the IMSZ serves the stop, but as we have said before, this is not ideal in UTRU's opinion.

- Though the idea of a Trax extension north to Davis County has been kicked around for years, we are still happy to see the **Davis – SLC Community Connector Rapid Line** proposed on the LRTP. The increased frequency and shorter route between Farmington and Salt Lake only makes sense as the two areas are so interconnected when compared to the 470, which spans Ogden to Salt Lake and largely runs alongside FrontRunner. Southern Davis County riders will have increased options while those taking longer trips won't lose much with the more easterly and northern Davis County being able to take the train for their trips to Salt Lake and alternate express routes into Ogden.

UTRU Concerns:

- Though one bus route connecting to the Woods Cross Station is, mathematically, infinitely more than the current zero routes that currently go to the station, we can't help but think that the **Woods Cross FrontRunner Station is still underutilized**. The real issue is that Southern Davis County is **lacking any "community" routes, instead focusing on moving people north and south**. Though the Bountiful hills are hard, we feel there is a missed opportunity to not include a route that includes the Centerville, Bountiful, and Foxborough communities along 400 East and 500 South via the FrontRunner Station.

Additional Comments:

- Southern Davis County is very close to being out of space and has largely matured into established communities with predictable patterns. The only thing that can truly disrupt this is going to be transit and the opportunities that transit stops can bring. We hope that civic leaders in these communities welcome transit (particularly rapid transit and development around FrontRunner) to help address smart growth, and trust that UTA will be a leader in these conversations.

Northern Davis County

UTRU Supports:

- Security and logistical concerns aside, it is nice to see **bus service going directly through Hill Air Force Base**. Hill is a major employer for the state in general and is of particular importance for the region and those who live and work around Hill also know just how backed-up traffic can get during shift changes.

Though we aren't quite sure how security will work in regards to this route (stops have security holding areas? Drivers have to pass specific background checks?) this route could go a long way towards helping improve area traffic and quality of life for residents.

- All three FrontRunner Stations: **Farmington, Layton, and Clearfield Station, are well utilized under the LRTP**, with several fixed routes originating from the stops, respectively. Given the relatively tight geographic area of Davis County, in many ways it is almost difficult for UTA not to include FrontRunner stops as part of any route in this area.

UTRU Concerns:

- In what seems like a theme, **UTA has largely abandoned the foothills in Davis County, not even offering IMSZ service in the majority of the area**. Only one route mildly penetrates Kaysville and Layton, while the other mainly sticks to Highway 89 as express service to the east side of Weber County. The missing middle ensures that the majority of Northern Davis County residents continue to not have transit as an option in their transportation mix.
- We are also disappointed to see **how underserved the Freeport Center is**. One route on the east side of this major economic area feels like a missed opportunity and a route departing from either the Layton or Clearfield FrontRunner Station that runs down 7th or 9th Street before exiting and going down 1500 West in Clinton before connecting with the Roy Station have some real potential.

Additional Comments:

- Similar to many parts of Utah County and Southern Salt Lake County, Northern Davis County really was made for the car and this does make establishing fixed routes difficult. As we have said before, **we hope that UTA uses data gathered by IMSZs to identify areas where potential fixed routes are viable and, where possible, create fixed routes while IMSZ supplements service**.

Ogden Area

UTRU Supports:

- Though increased frequency is a theme across the LRTP, **the emphasis on 15-minute service in the urban core of Ogden is of critical importance, and one we are happy to see.** OGX is already raising expectations in the community, and we have no reason to doubt that this trend will change in the future.

As the Ogden area continues to grow its image as an area whose economy is built on the environment and outdoor activity, reliance on public transit will become key to upholding this image. We hope that the community follows in Salt Lake City/County's footsteps by increasing taxes to help further fund transit.

UTRU Concerns:

- The biggest disappointment is that, aside from frequency, **there is nothing really new here.** As is the theme, the foothills remain unserved, even by an IMSZ, and we can't spot any new routes or major route deviations. The whole **LRTP feels unimaginative and unwilling to try expand transit in and around an area.**

Additional Comments:

- The Ogden-Hinckley Airport is a bit out of place in regards to transportation and transit access, but is right next to the Roy Station, so it feels like some attempts should be made to connect it to the transit system.

With Allegiant Air pulling out of the airport, it is understandable why UTA may not want to connect to the airport at this time. But, on the flip side, there is a logic to have **a route connecting the airport that departs at the Roy station, stops at the airport, and travels along Washington and/or Wall before hooking into the Ogden Station.** The hub with OGX would allow for easy transfers and would provide an option for those flying in and out of the airport whose final destination may be Weber State or McKay-Dee Hospital.

Ultimately, one has to wonder if there is an "if you build it, they will come" aspect to connecting to the airport.

Greater Weber County

UTRU Supports:

- One bright spot in Weber County for the LRTP is the **route connecting the Roy FrontRunner Station to Weber State along 40th Street,** This addition should help take some pressure off of OGX and provide more service to the southern end of Ogden. This is a much-needed southern connection for the county and helps better utilize the Roy Station.

UTRU Concerns:

- Similar to our complaint about routes on the east side of I-15, we have to wonder **if UTA even bothered to consider new routes west of I-15, since there is nothing new here either.** The IMSZ service is nice, but even that isn't comprehensive in the region. We are just profoundly underwhelmed by what is being offered here.

Additional Comments:

- We want to be more excited about the **limited route connecting the Ogden FrontRunner station with Brigham City, but we mostly are just left wondering why UTA won't simply reactivate the FrontRunner line in Pleasant View and have the route originate from there.** It seems hard to believe that this area, over the next 50 years, when combined with the added growth of Brigham City and Logan, won't be able to support the added stop. Frankly, we would love to see FrontRunner head up to Logan, but that is a conversation for another day.

Tooele, Box Elder, and Summit Counties

Tooele County

UTRU Supports:

- It is depressing to see just how underserved Tooele County currently is by UTA. There are more flights leaving the Salt Lake City International Airport to Phoenix every day than there are buses that leave downtown Salt Lake and go to Tooele.

For the average Tooele resident, it is extremely easy for someone to simply get stranded in Salt Lake – you miss the 5:40 PM leaving the Courthouse station? Well, that’s it, you better either find a ride or find a hotel, because you are stuck. It is for this reason we are very happy to see **greatly increased service between Tooele and Salt Lake City that is slated to span from 4 AM to midnight and that connects directly to Salt Lake Central.**

UTRU Concerns:

- It is disappointing that UTA **failed to create any local fixed bus routes in Tooele County.** If UTA can support one circulator route in Brigham City, surely UTA could create at least one route in Tooele and one or two extension routes to Stansbury Park and Grantsville. An IMSZ could still serve as a supporting transit role, but in this case, it feels like UTA is punting on the issue.

Additional Comments:

- Though we do like the idea of a high-frequency high-service express route between Tooele and Salt Lake City, we feel that UTA is thinking too small regarding the needs of Tooele Counties citizens. Yes, connecting to Salt Lake Central will grant a connection to FrontRunner and the Blue Line, but this still poses an inconvenience for those who travel to the west and southwest portions of the Salt Lake Valley.

We think **there should be an additional express route that takes advantage of existing BRT infrastructure along 3500 South and future BRT infrastructure from the Mid-Vally Connection and make an express route that starts in Tooele and ends in Murray Central via the airport.**

This would give Tooele County residents more direct access to not only the airport itself, but both ends of the Green Line, the rough midpoints of the Blue and Red Lines, and a FrontRunner stop that is further south for those who might be headed in that direction anyway.

Box Elder County

UTRU Supports:

- Currently, Brigham City doesn’t get much love - after all, for the majority of the day it has less than hourly service. To be fair, it is a bit far-flung from Ogden, being roughly 20 miles north as the crow flies.

That being said, as the Wasatch Front Metro Area continues to grow, so too will the transit needs of these exurbs. That is why we are happy to see **the addition of limited express service to Brigham City via Pleasant View without the elimination of existing service**. Our only real complaint, which we discussed in the Weber County section of our review, is that, though the route stops at Pleasant View, they don't extend FrontRunner to Pleasant View despite the infrastructure already existing.

With the addition of this proposed express route, it seems more likely, not less, that a reopened Pleasant View Station would be utilized as residents of both Brigham City (and, by extension, Logan) gain greater and more immediate access to the transit network.

- Given the geographic area and relatively low density, we do feel that **the single flex route within Brigham City and the standard route between Brigham City and Ogden is an adequate level of fixed route coverage, so the added IMSZ service is a good supplemental addition to the area.**

UTRU Concerns:

- We are disappointed to see that there is **no attempt to connect UTA with the Cache Valley Transit District**, which serves Logan and its outlying communities.

We have heard anecdotally from our members of a desire to connect the two networks, and it makes sense as the micropolitan Cache Valley has several economic and social connections to the Wasatch front.

We suspect that **4-8 runs between CVTD's Central Stop and Ogden Station via Brigham City** would be supported because, unlike a Tooele to Salt Lake run, the distance is just far enough as to where more "destination" trips become likely (i.e. trips to the Salt Lake International Airport or stay in Provo to visit friends and family), so high frequency isn't as necessary. If, of course, more runs prove fruitful, increasing the number of runs should be explored as well.

Additional Comments:

- If statewide passenger service becomes a reality, we would love to see **FrontRunner take advantage of more local stops between Ogden and Logan via Brigham City and Tremonton**. Yes, this might be better suited for the 2100 plan than the 2050 plan, but we can always dream.

Summit County

Additional Comments:

- With the **Park City Connect route being shuttered** by UTA last winter, it is understandable that UTA is not including routes up Parley's Canyon in the 2050 Plan – and it is not so much that we expected to see service, but we were hopeful. **Our biggest request is that UTA and High Valley Transit continue to work together to help ensure the success of the state's only inter-agency route.**