

Ogden/Weber State University BRT

Ogden, Utah

Small Starts Project Development

(Rating Assigned November 2019)

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	Bus Rapid Transit 5.3 Miles, 13 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$99.68 Million
Section 5309 CIG Share (\$YOE):	\$64.50 Million (64.7%)
Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2022):	\$2.40 Million
Current Year Ridership Forecast (2019):	2,500 Daily Linked Trips 1,261,583 Annual Linked Trips
Overall Project Rating:	Medium
Project Justification Rating:	Medium
Local Financial Commitment Rating:	Medium

Project Description: The Utah Transit Authority (UTA) proposes to implement bus rapid transit in the corridor connecting the Ogden FrontRunner commuter rail station with Weber State University (WSU) and McKay Dee Hospital. The project includes 2.2 miles of exclusive bus lanes, transit signal priority, the purchase of eight uniquely branded vehicles, and construction of a transit center on the WSU campus. On weekdays, the service is planned to operate every 10 minutes during peak periods and every 15 minutes during off-peak periods and evenings. On weekends, service is planned to operate every 30 minutes.

Project Purpose: The project corridor serves multiple activity centers, including WSU with 26,000 students, downtown Ogden, the Junction shopping district, and the Lindquist Field minor-league baseball stadium. The project includes a new bus-only road on WSU's campus to improve transit travel times and provide more direct service between the university and key local destinations. The project connects two nearby but separate pieces of WSU's campus, thereby allowing more efficient use of existing parking facilities on campus. Finally, the project is expected to help reduce overcrowding on existing bus service and improve access to major destinations in Ogden through the connection with the FrontRunner commuter rail station.

Project Development History, Status and Next Steps: A locally preferred alternative (LPA) was selected in August 2015, and adopted into the fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan in January 2016. The project entered Small Starts Project Development in September 2018. The environmental review process was completed on February 2019 with issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact. UTA anticipates receipt of a Small Starts Grant Agreement in September 2020, and the start of revenue service in August 2022.

Significant Changes Since Last Evaluation (November 2018): The total project cost changed from \$79.00 million to \$99.68 million due to design refinements, and the CIG request changed from \$49.75 million to \$64.5 million (increasing from 63 percent to 64.7 percent). The anticipated Small Starts Grant Agreement date changed from December 2019 to September 2020 because of the design refinements. The revenue service date changed from January to August 2022.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Federal:		
Section 5309 Small Starts	\$64.50	64.7%
FHWA Flexible Funds (Surface Transportation Program)	\$4.75	4.8%
FHWA Flexible Funds (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program)	\$2.75	2.8%
State:		
Utah Department of Transportation Cash Contribution	\$0.05	0.1%
Local:		
UTA Proposition 1 Sales Tax Revenues	\$12.43	12.5%
Weber County Transportation Sales and Use Tax Revenues	\$7.50	7.5%
Ogden City Sales Tax Revenues	\$4.10	4.1%
Other:		
WSU Right-of-Way Donation	\$3.60	3.6%
Total:	\$99.68	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

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 station areas have an average population density of 4,700 persons per square mile, corresponding to a Medium-Low rating by FTA benchmarks. The project would serve a total of 27,400 employees, corresponding to a Low rating. The submission indicated that there is an abundant supply of parking in Ogden's central business district (CBD), most of which is free. The ratio of station area to county LBAR housing is 3.19, which corresponds to a High rating.
- The Downtown Ogden stations include a mix of low rise commercial and warehouse buildings with surface parking in front. The middle part of the corridor is defined by historic single-family homes and low-rise commercial and institutional land uses. Further south the corridor contains single-family residences with schools and some light commercial uses. The final section of the corridor includes the campus of Weber State University (WSU), which has a mix of uses on its self-contained campus.
- The Downtown Ogden station areas are served by a complete pedestrian infrastructure, with sidewalks on all roads and pedestrian-oriented streetscapes in some areas. The remainder of the corridor has sidewalks but provides a less comfortable walking environment.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: Medium-Low

Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium-Low

- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* The Ogden General Plan encourages transit-supportive economic development and locating transit stops at new mixed-use centers. The neighborhood plan for the CBD supports higher-density transit-supportive development, but the remaining neighborhoods are planned to remain single-family housing areas. The Ogden Onboard Study, a multi-agency initiative to plan for transit-oriented development in the corridor, was completed in February 2019 and includes land use and design recommendations for the corridor.
- *Supportive Zoning Regulations Near Transit Stations:* Mixed-use zoning in the Ogden CBD stipulates that density is to be determined on a case-by-case basis such that new development is in scale with surrounding uses. Most other zoning between downtown and the WSU campus is single-family residential. The Ogden Onboard Study recommends the development of a TOD overlay zone.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* The Ogden Onboard Study was developed with significant public and private sector participation. The Ogden Redevelopment Agency can use tax increment financing in redevelopment areas in downtown Ogden to support development projects and fund public infrastructure. The Utah Transit Authority will use joint development to redevelop land surrounding the Ogden FrontRunner station.

Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium-Low

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* The submission offers three examples of recent developments along the corridor, and seven examples of proposed redevelopment sites. Moderate amounts of transit-supportive development have occurred in existing transit corridors in the region.
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* A recent market analysis found the highest development potential at the ends of the corridor in downtown Ogden and around the WSU campus, with limited potential elsewhere.

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

- The City published a housing report addressing Ogden's activities to implement affordable housing goals, including demonstrating that the proposed BRT corridor includes many of the available and programmed low- to moderate-income housing units. Up to 20 percent of the tax increment financing revenues available to redevelopment areas in downtown Ogden can be used to support the development of affordable housing. The City also has updated its zoning code to reduce barriers to affordable housing.

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