



Staff Report

PLANNING DIVISION

To: Salt Lake City Planning Commission
From: Joe Taylor, Transportation Planner
Date: 11/8/23
Re: Connect SLC – Citywide Transportation Plan

Application Type

REQUEST:

The Transportation Division has updated the 1993 Transportation Master Plan. The new document, rooted in values derived from existing citywide plans and robust public engagement will shape policy governing the Right of Way in Salt Lake City for the foreseeable future. This includes travel lanes in the street as well as curbs, sidewalks and park strips. The plan is not a list of projects, but rather a framework for centering the identified values of Safety, Reliability, Sustainability, Equity and Affordability in all work done in the Right of Way in Salt Lake City.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the information and findings listed in the staff report, staff recommends the Planning Commission accept public comment and make a positive recommendation to The City council to adopt *Connect SLC – Citywide Transportation Plan*.

ATTACHMENTS:

A. ATTACHMENT A: Draft Citywide Transportation Plan

PROJECT DESCRIPTION & BACKGROUND

Connect SLC is a 20-year vision for transportation in Salt Lake City.

The draft plan does not specify a series of capital projects, but rather lays out a set of process and policy that can be adopted by the Transportation Division and our partners to better reflect our city values and seek the highest and best value of our roadway network regardless of mode. The vision of Connect SLC is...

It is our plan, envisioned by the community, to work toward a future where everyone enjoys equitable, affordable, and reliable transportation choices. Connect SLC sets goals to improve health and safety, expand access to opportunities, and improve air quality.

Connect SLC identifies how we move today, what we value, how we want to improve public spaces, and what improvements would make it easier for us to move around Salt Lake City (SLC). Through our transportation programs, policies, and investments, we can directly influence the quality of life for people who live in, work in, and visit our city.

Work began with the creation of a Community Advisory Council (CAC). Through a formal application process, we identified nine individuals who would be compensated hourly for their work on the project. The CAC gave ideas directly, but also shaped the broader community engagement plan, participated in events, edited documents including the final plan and perhaps most importantly gave us access to their own networks.

With the help of the CAC we launched a public engagement effort that asked the community directly what they value in their transportation system. Results from an online survey and in person events conducted at pop up vaccine clinics were weighted to reflect the demography of The City. In this case adjusting for a lack of young people. The values identified by people who live, work and/or go to school in Salt Lake City were...

- Safety from Harm
- Affordability
- Reliability
- Equity
- Sustainability

The project team then took these values and created a large menu of policy options that might address them. A second round of public engagement took place asking the public to select those options they felt most desirable, while also pointing out what they thought was not working. Free from full pandemic restrictions, the project held events at community recreation centers, homeless shelters, street fairs and schools in addition to an online map-based survey. The policy areas that received the most public support formed the basis for Connect SLC.

A total of 879 (15 in Spanish, 864 in English) people responded to the City's online survey and approximately 60 people participated through in-person outreach. While demographic information was not consistently collected for in-person participants, these events focused on reaching communities who were under-represented in online survey responses, particularly people who live in SLC's Westside neighborhoods. The full report for these engagement activities, including geographic and demographic analysis of the respondents is Appendix B of this document.

It was after this second round of engagement that staff presented the project to the Planning Commission for the first time. Recommendation from the commission was to focus on the following areas.

Safety, especially at human scale

Integration with Land Use Policy

Continue work on the East-West Divide

Streets for uses other than car travel

These comments were integrated into the plan, specifically in Key Moves 2, 5, 7 and 8. The Key Moves are discussed more in detail below.

The document is broken down into the following chapters...

1. Our Vision

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2. Getting Around Salt Lake City

This section identifies how things are working today, including demographics, what modes are used and some of the challenges we face within the Right of Way.

3. Community Engagement

Here the community engagement process (described above) is laid out in detail.

4. Allighing Transportation with Our Values

This section outlines the five values described above, describes what is currently in process to achieve them and the challenges they face.

5. Key Moves

The bulk of the plan is eight key policy moves and strategies and actions to implement them. Each is described briefly below.

Key Move 1: Authentic and Intentional Public Engagement

Strategy 1.1 Prioritize underserve populations and marginalized voices

Action

Improve staff understanding of the local community by meeting people where they are

Action

Partner with Community-based Organizations in equity areas and build capacity for public engagement

Action

Center community input and needs in directing future investments for the Westside

Strategy 1.2 Redefine engagement as an opportunity for co-creation

Action

Give communities agency in planning contexts and empower neighborhood voices in leading outreach efforts

Action

Establish a compensation program for direct payment to citizen and community organization participants

Strategy 1.3: Facilitate long-term, ongoing dialogue between The City and the local community

Action

Establish embedded community focus groups or advisory panels

Action

Actively demonstrate the outcomes of community input

Action

Update the engagement guide with a workplan for recurring, collaborative co-creation

Key Move 2: Zero Traffic Deaths

Strategy 2.1: Establish a Vision Zero Action Plan

Action

Convene a Vision Zero working group

Action

Embrace the Safe Systems approach to traffic safety

Action

Analyze crash history and create a plan for action

Strategy 2.2: Build and operate safer streets

Action

Take advantage of federal funding opportunities

Action

Focus on high-injury corridors and intersections

Action

Reduce vehicle speeds

Key Move 3: Great Networks for Active Mobility

Strategy 3.1: Improve pedestrian safety and connectivity

Action

Designate a Pedestrian Priority Network

Action

Adopt crossing guidelines

Action

Identify the greatest needs for improving active mobility

Strategy 3.2: Expand low-stress bicycling networks and micromobility options

Action

Implement low-stress facility design

Action

Adopt an equitable shared mobility policy

Action

Improve work zone standards

Strategy 3.3: Create active spaces

Action

Create slow, shared, and car-free streets

Action

Activate alleys

Key Move 4: Transit-Friendly Neighborhoods

Strategy 4.1: Make transit convenient and reliable

Action

Institutionalize the SLC and UTA partnership with a joint taskforce on advancing transit

Action

Expand the City's bus lane and transit signal priority (TSP) network

Action

Explore regional transit connections and fill gaps in the external and intercity travel market

Strategy 4.2: Nurture inclusive and welcoming transit spaces

Action

Expand SLC's Downtown Ambassadors program to support and staff transit facilities

Action

Work with UTA to upgrade bus stops in SLC with passenger amenities

Action

Harness technology to modernize major transit facilities and waiting areas

Strategy 4.3: Enhance the urban context to make transit an attractive option

Action

Establish multimodal mobility hubs in local areas of importance and future growth

Action

Improve access-to-transit infrastructure to complete the city's street network

Action

Use Small Area and Circulation plans to encourage dense development around station areas

Key Move 5: Healing the East-West Divide

Strategy 5.1: Develop a community-driven East-West Transportation Strategy

Action

Elevate voices of communities on the Westside and those most impacted by transportation infrastructure

Action

Center human safety, health, and experience

Action

Craft a community-centric East-West Transportation Strategy that addresses immediate needs and inspires bold action

Strategy 5.2: Provide safe and reliable connections across the freeway and railroad tracks

Action

Develop fast implementation projects that stitch the east-west divide

Action

Develop bold concepts to repair and build community

Big Idea

Bury I-15

Big Idea

Trench The Train

Big Idea

Reconsider Freeway Ramps

Big Idea

Break the Berm

Big Idea

Integrate Development

Action

Improve transportation options that support safe, affordable east–west travel

Strategy 5.3: Reclaim spaces to serve community and function at a human scale

Action

Create a program to bring life and community identity to “below the freeway” spaces

Action

Foster local and grassroots efforts to envision remedies and uses for “in-between” spaces

Action

Rethink Freeway Ramps

Strategy 5.4: Develop equitable, connected neighborhoods where prosperity is shared

Action

Develop complete, inclusive, transit-oriented neighborhoods

Action

Use grade and elevation to create great experiences

Key Move 6: Low Emissions Options

Strategy 6.1: Build awareness and use of transportation options

Action

Hire a transportation options program manager

Action

Expand student and education pass programs

Action

Implement a transportation wallet

Strategy 6.2: Manage existing parking supply

Action

Incentivize developers to incorporate TDM into the development process

Action

Consolidate parking functions under a new parking program

Action

Understand parking utilization and performance

Action

Optimize a single mobile parking application

Strategy 6.3: Communicate a unified parking strategy and brand

Action

Create an updated parking brand and communications plan

Action

Prioritize clear and consistent wayfinding and signage

Action

Pilot a park-once-and-walk district in Downtown SLC

Strategy 6.4: Develop a curb management strategy

Action

Implement a project to pilot innovative and shared curb uses

Action

Conduct a survey for existing curb uses across SLC

Action

Develop Curb Management Guidelines

Key Move 7: Places for People

Strategy 7.1: Leverage private investment in high growth areas

Action

Create public realm action plans

Action

Incentivize developers to implement adopted street concept plans

Action

Establish a Green Street network

Strategy 7.2: Promote connectivity at the block level to create walkable districts

Action

Value street and alley vacations

Action

Require midblock pathways

Key Move 8: Operationalize Complete Streets

Strategy 8.1: Develop shared goals and accountability for Complete Streets design and management

Action

Integrate Complete Streets into the full project development lifecycle

Action

Structure project development teams to ensure accountability

Action

Establish a Complete Streets Steering Committee

Strategy 8.2: Develop tools to guide decision-making

Action

Update the Quality Transportation Improvement Program screening tool to align with Connect SLC

Action

Develop data-driven storytelling tools to support Complete Streets assessments

Action

Align capital projects with policies and best practice

Strategy 8.3: Use street typologies to guide Complete Streets development

Action

Formalize use of the Street and Intersection Typologies Design Guide in project development

Action

Require compliance with the Street and Intersection Typologies Design Guide in the Complete Streets assessment

The final chapter “Achieving Our Vision” lays out a path to realizing the ideas put forward in the plan. It includes metrics, potential partnerships and organizational structures that can improve the process of the Transportation Division. Like the rest of the plan these ideas are rooted in the values originally identified by the community.

Some ideas in the document, such as Vision Zero and healing the East-West divide, are already in process. It is the intention of the Transportation Division, should The Plan be formally adopted, to begin moving forward on the implementation of the remainder of the Key Moves identified above.

APPROVAL PROCESS AND COMMISSION AUTHORITY

The Planning Commission may make a positive or negative recommendation to the City Council on the proposed update to the Transportation Master Plan. The recommendation will be sent to City Council, who will then hold a briefing and an additional public hearing on the Transportation Master Plan. The City Council may make additional modifications to the proposed updated plan before making a final decision on the adoption of the plan.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The key considerations listed below were identified through the analysis of the project:

1. How the proposal helps implement city goals and policies identified in adopted plans.

Consideration 1: How the proposal helps implements city goals and policies identified in adopted plans.

Plan Salt Lake

Connect SLC is rooted in the building blocks of Plan Salt Lake to “Establish and articulate a citywide vision for Salt Lake City.” It focuses specifically on the Plan Salt Lake guiding principles of Neighborhoods, Growth, Transportation, Air Quality, Beautiful City, Equity, and Economy.

1993 Transportation Master Plan

Connect SLC is a modernization of the existing adopted Citywide Transportation Plan. The spirit of public engagement and values-based planning is still present, while including more modern planning and professional practice. Salt Lake City is more dense than it was in the early 1990’s, and the number of people traveling into the city each day for work has increased dramatically. There are a range of mobility options that did not exist when the last plan was created. Traffic related deaths have increased as vehicles become ever larger. Perhaps most importantly the demographic landscape of Salt Lake City has changed dramatically in the last 30 years. Our challenges and our assets are not the same as they were 30 years ago. The work of this plan reflects the voices of Salt Lake residents in the early 2020’s rather than the 1990’s.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan / Transit Master Plan

These two modal plans establish the backbone of the Citywide Transportation Plan. By establishing a network of easy and useful routes that do not require the use of a personal automobile the Citywide Plan can establish a framework to advance the goals of equity, affordability, reliability, safety and sustainability.

Westside Equity Study

The Westside Equity Study is an attempt to course correct the Transportation Planning process to better serve those communities it has long neglected. It lays out a framework for more and better inclusion of those communities that the transportation profession has not sufficiently engaged in the past. The study is not an end, but a first step in a long and continuous process of improved professionalism. It laid the groundwork for how the Citywide Transportation Process engaged with the community, which then honed those ideas and proposed better engagement policy going forward. It is the hope of the Transportation Division that this process is iterative and will continue to improve with each project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission accept public comments and make a recommendation to The City Council to adopt the Citywide Transportation Plan

NEXT STEPS

After Planning Commission makes a recommendation to the City Council, the Transportation Master Plan will continue to the City Council for a final determination on the adoption of the plan.

ATTACHMENT A: Draft Citywide Transportation Plan

The Plan can be found online at...

<https://www.slc.gov/transportation/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2023/09/Connect-SLC-Plan-20230821-Spreads-reduced.pdf>

ATTACHMENT B: Vision-Values-Priorities Survey Report

The Report can be found online at...

<https://www.slc.gov/transportation/plans-studies/tmp/>

