



REBUILDING AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE  
WITH SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUITY • FY 2021



# TECHLINK

LINKING COMMUNITIES  
TO INNOVATION



JULY 12, 2021



# Contents

## 1

<b>Project Description</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Challenges to be Addressed	2
1.2.1 Serving Existing Communities and New Development	3
1.2.2 Serving Research Park and the Innovation District	6
1.3 Opportunities to Address Challenges	7

## 2

<b>Project Location</b>	<b>11</b>
-------------------------	-----------

## 3

<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 Primary Selection Criteria	12
3.1.1 Safety	12
3.1.2 Environmental Sustainability	12
3.1.3 Quality of Life	15
3.1.4 Economic Competitiveness	18
3.1.5 State of Good Repair	20
3.2 Secondary Selection Criteria	21
3.2.1 Partnership	21
3.2.2 Innovation	22

## 4

<b>Environmental Risk (Readiness)</b>	<b>25</b>
4.1 Required Approvals – State, Local, and Federal	25
4.2 Federal Transportation Requirements Affecting State and Local Planning	26

## 5

<b>Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds</b>	<b>27</b>
--	-----------

Cover photos provided by Lance Tyrell via Salt Lake City, The University of Utah, and Garrett via Flickr.



## **Figures**

Figure 1-1. Study Corridors and Activity Centers	1
Figure 1-2. Study Corridors and Low Income Areas	8
Figure 2-1. Project Location	11
Figure 3-1. Salt Lake City and Pollution	14
Figure 3-2. Green Line TRAX Station with Rooftop Solar	14
Figure 3-3. Letters of Support	22
Figure 5-1. Project Funding Sources	27

## **Tables**

Table 1-1. Census Tracts Designated as Areas of Persistent Poverty	7
Table 3-1. Population of the Granary District compared to Salt Lake County	16
Table 4-1. Study Schedule	25
Table 5-1. Study Budget	27

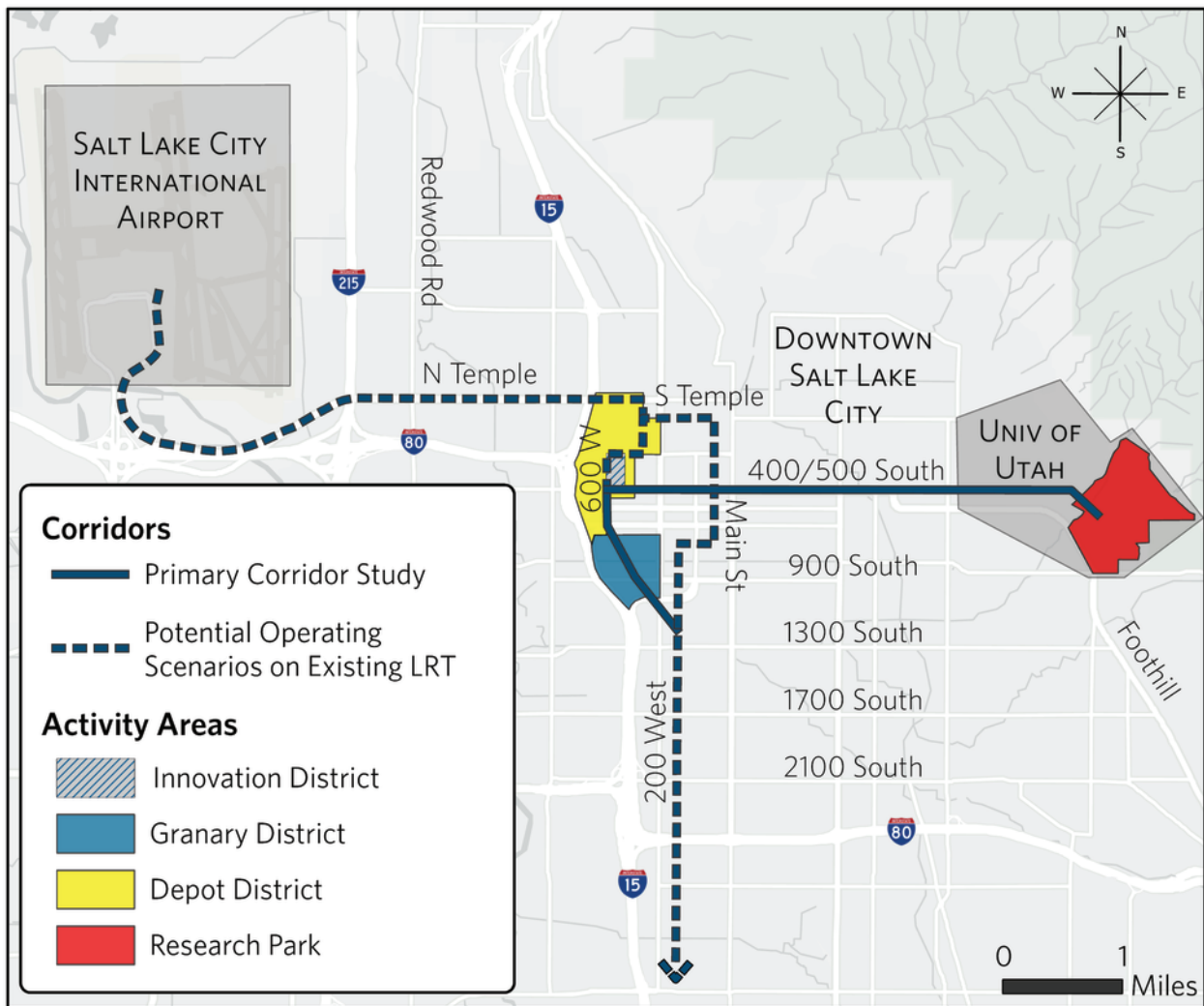


# 1 Project Description

## 1.1 OVERVIEW

The Utah Transit Authority (UTA), Salt Lake City (City), and the University of Utah (University) have formed the **TechLink Partnership** to explore new transit connections in Downtown Salt Lake City, including a link between the University’s existing Research Park campus with its emerging Innovation District on the west side of the central business district (CBD). The **TechLink Corridor** is rich with potential, with approximately 157,331 jobs located within a half mile of the study area. Moreover, the corridor is ripe for redevelopment, with the City’s plans for the nearby Granary and Depot Districts complementing the University’s Innovation District concept, creating an unusual opportunity to create a thriving new mixed-use, mixed-income community in a currently under-developed area of the City. Figure 1-1 presents a map of the *TechLink Corridor* and the location of these redevelopment opportunities.

*Figure 1-1. Study Corridors and Activity Centers*



The TechLink Partnership has developed the *TechLink Corridor Study (the Study)* scope of work (uploaded to Grants.Gov as an attachment to this RAISE grant application) which builds upon prior planning efforts as well as each partners' commitment to promoting equity and mitigating climate change by using new evaluation measures to quantify these benefits. The Partnership is submitting this RAISE grant application for \$950,000 to fully fund this transformative study, a planning effort that will lead to the identification of a transit corridor investment that will not only provide improved transit access for growing neighborhoods on the east and west sides of Downtown Salt Lake City, but improve regional connectivity via UTA's TRAX light rail transit (LRT) system. It will also establish a new model for interagency cooperation and equity-based planning and decision-making.

## 1.2 CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED

Salt Lake City is the largest city in Utah, and the center of one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States. With that growth comes the pressure for increased transit service. Before the pandemic, UTA's regional TRAX system carried a peak of nearly 50,000 passengers per day, two-thirds of which originated, was destined for, or passed through Downtown Salt Lake City. TRAX and UTA's FrontRunner commuter rail lines thus serve as important regional economic drivers, moving people from throughout the Wasatch Front region to downtown jobs, attractions, and educational opportunities, as well as a growing downtown residential population wishing to reach destinations throughout the metropolitan area by transit.

UTA and the City have completed a number of [studies and plans](#) over the past decade to identify and assess opportunities to improve regional connectivity and serve growing areas on the west side of the Salt Lake City CBD with light rail, including the Salt Lake City Redevelopment Agency's (RDA) *Downtown Streetcar Study (2010)*; Salt Lake City's *Downtown Plan (2016)*; Salt Lake City's *Transit Master Plan (2017)*; the Wasatch Front Regional Council's (WFRC) *Regional Transportation Plan 2019-2050 (2019)*; the RDA's *Central Station Area Plan (2019)*; and UTA's *Downtown Salt Lake City Rail Extensions & Connections Feasibility Study (2021)*.

The University has also studied ways to extend the reach of transit from the South Campus TRAX station to the University of Utah Research Park (UURP) along its southeastern border, most recently with its 2020 *Research Park Strategic Vision Plan*. The *TechLink Corridor Study* - the subject of the RAISE grant application - has grown out of a collective recognition among the TechLink Partners that a unified approach to serving downtown and University travel via the UTA's transit system offers the best opportunity to develop a holistic mobility solution, while promoting their shared equity and climate goals.



*Guadalupe TRAX Station, which connects LRT, commuter rail, bus routes and micromobility with a densifying mixed-use neighborhood, is an example of the sustainable multimodal connections that Research Park is seeking to create.*



### 1.2.1 Serving Existing Communities and New Development

As Salt Lake City has grown, mixed use redevelopments have occurred in areas south and west of the historic city core that are not well-served by the LRT system. Two of these areas—the Granary and Depot Districts – are the site of significant redevelopment plans. Both Districts are located in designated [Opportunity Zones](#). Salt Lake City’s 2016 *Downtown Plan* [defines the Granary District](#) as the area bounded by 600 South, 300 West, the People’s Freeway at approximately 1000 South, and I-15. The [City intends that the Granary District](#) be primarily a residential neighborhood of the downtown while repurposing primarily industrial uses and warehouse buildings to creative industries and space for office, retail, and restaurants. The neighborhood has already experienced an acceleration of development, with approximately

1.4 million square feet of mixed use development constructed, under construction, or in the planning phase. An additional 1.1 million square feet of office or residential development has been built or is under construction or in the planning phase. Currently, the neighborhood is served by UTA bus service, however, almost all of the District is outside of a comfortable walking distance to transit.

The *Rails to Revitalization Study* led by the Granary District Alliance and completed in 2019 identified obstacles in access to businesses in the district and challenges hindering the revitalization of the area. The largest challenge is the existing configuration of an abandoned rail line running down the center of 400 West between 600 South and 900 South. The old infrastructure left behind broken and exposed rails and cement barriers which prevent access to businesses and pose a safety hazard for



Granary District project area.

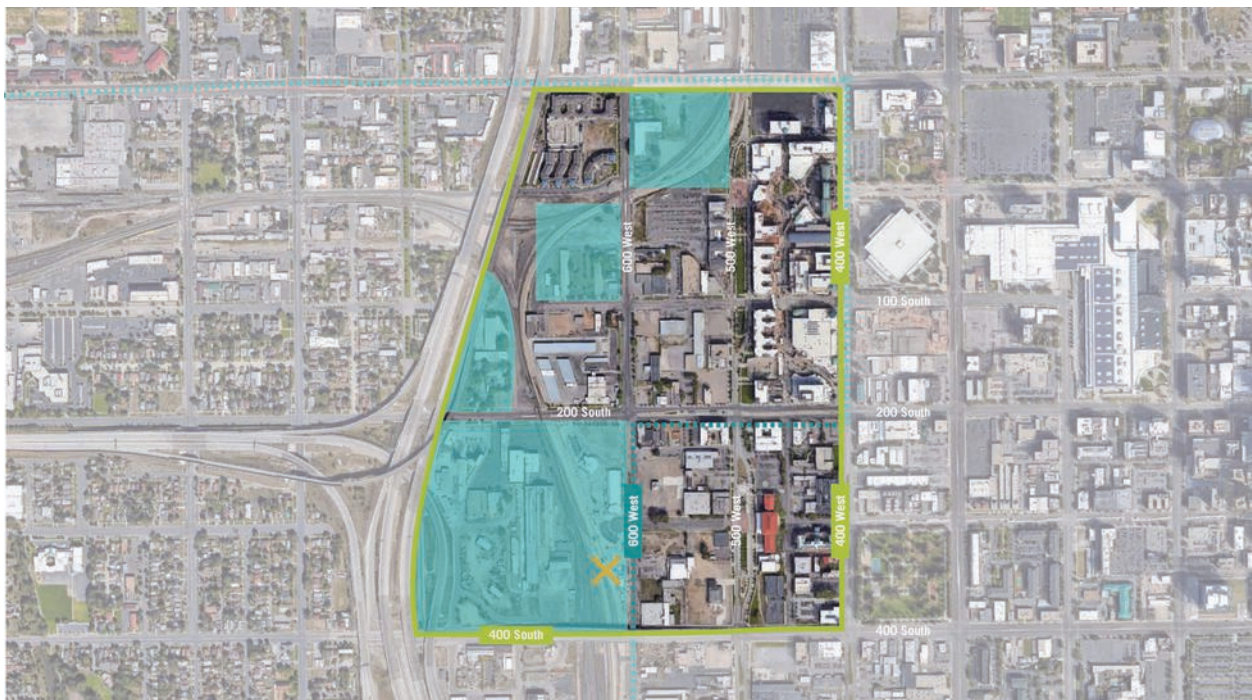


cyclists. The area is characterized by side streets without formalized paving and separation for sidewalks. The Study cites that small businesses are leaving due to the infrastructure challenges. Among its recommendations was the implementation of new transit connections, including the reuse of the rail right-of-way for a new TRAX alignment from the existing Ballpark Station to Salt Lake Central Station, permitting a connection to UTA's FrontRunner commuter rail service.



400 West at 700 South in the Granary District demonstrates the area's safety issues for all users, particularly bicyclists.

The Depot District is another long-standing downtown neighborhood with a history as the City's industrial and railroad corridor. The [District is located](#) in an area bounded by North Temple Street, 300 West, 700 South, and I-15 and is expected to be a dense urban neighborhood served by transit when fully redeveloped. The RDA has designated a large portion of the neighborhood as an area for redeveloping vacant parcels, underutilized space, and surface parking lots into new office, residential, and retail uses. The entire Depot District is located in an Opportunity Zone and the RDA offers additional development incentives. The RDA also owns 9 acres within this District with plans for adaptive reuse of the remaining historic structures. While encouraging new development, the RDA is committed to residential affordability. Since 2016, the RDA has supported the planning and creation of 1,950 housing units, 48 percent of which qualify as affordable. The agency plans to continue this priority with its [work in the Depot District](#). While reinvestment in this neighborhood



Depot District project area.



reflects [a strategy to connect land uses and public transportation](#) with its proximity to two existing LRT stations, a key goal of transit improvements in this area is reducing travel times to Downtown Salt Lake City by offering more direct TRAX routing.

The TechLink Corridor is currently home to more than 600 affordable housing units that were made possible through RDA-facilitated loans, property discounts, or tax-increment financing, and include:

- Pamela's Place – 525 S 500 West (100 affordable units for households less than 30% AMI)
- Citifront Apartments – 641 W North Temple (94 affordable units at various income levels)
- Central Station Apartments – 549 W 200 South (52 family affordable units for households less than 50% AMI) – under construction
- Northgate Apartments – 135 S 500 West (159 affordable units for households less than 60% AMI)
- Macaroni Flats – 244 S 500 West (13 affordable units for households less than 80% AMI and 8 affordable commercial spaces)
- Utah Paperbox – 340 W 200 South (38 affordable units for households less than 60% AMI) – under construction
- Rio Grande Hotel – 428 W 300 South (49 weekly rental SRO units)
- Colony B – 228 West 1300 South (106 affordable units for households less than 50% AMI) – construction to begin August 2021

A project with an additional 86 affordable units at various income levels is also located in the corridor, and was developed by a non-RDA private developer.

The area of study is an important stronghold for social services and institutions, which further strengthens the need for quality connections to public transportation services. Social services and institutions in the TechLink Corridor include:

- TURN: An organization supporting people with disabilities
- Volunteers of America Homeless Youth Resource Center: An organization committed to individuals with disabilities offering space to live and create community with services across the state



*Artspace Macaroni Flats at 244 South 500 West, one of seven mixed-use affordable live-work projects within the study area, provides income-qualified artists with high-quality homes among other creatives where they can produce and sell their work as they grow their careers.*

- Artspace Affordable Housing for Artists: An organization providing mixed-use projects that incorporate affordable housing a commercial spaces supporting the arts
- Volunteers of America Detox Center: An 83-bed center offering detoxification for men
- Volunteers of America Women's Resource Center: An organization providing emergency shelter to homeless women in and around Salt Lake City
- The Road Home: An organization providing social services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Salt Lake County
- Salt Lake County Aging Services: A division of Salt Lake County offering programming, care, food, education, and legal protection services for aging adults
- Fourth Street Clinic: An organization providing health care and support services to homeless Utahns





- Refugee and Immigrant Center of Asian Association of Utah: An organization offering social services, ESL classes and trafficking victim services for refugees and immigrants in Utah
- Catholic Community Services: An organization offering housing, food assistance, culinary training, new mother, and refugee and immigrant services
- Rescue Mission: An organization dedicated to services for homeless individuals in Utah

### 1.2.2 Serving Research Park and the Innovation District

UURP, located adjacent to the University of Utah to the south, is [home to 48 companies and 81 university departments](#). Many successful businesses have been incubated here, benefiting from the University both in terms of groundbreaking research and in highly qualified graduates. The area currently has [4.7 million square feet of space](#) and is expected to grow by up to [2.7 percent annually](#). Therefore, this considerable employment hub that attracts [15,000 commuters daily](#) will become an even greater attractor of regional trips. The *Research Park Strategic Vision Plan* explicitly states the desire for multimodal options and the establishment of mode share goals to incentivize sustainable and affordable access to UURP. Without any investment in multimodal access, the University estimates an additional 30,000 daily auto trips and a transit mode share of less than four percent to reach UURP.

Meanwhile, approximately four miles to the west of UURP, the RDA has strategically assembled an area of approximately 10.5 acres known as Station Center to become Utah's premier model of transit-oriented development (TOD). The area is located between 500-600 West and 200-400 South within the Depot District. In 2020, the RDA recognized an opportunity to expand its vision to include the University of Utah and establish a University

presence, rebranding Station Center as the City's first true "[Innovation District](#)."



*A rendering of the Innovation District, a future TOD neighborhood that was jointly planned by the TechLink Partners and will occupy the publicly owned land directly east of Salt Lake Central Station. It will provide the type of live-learn-work-play environment where innovation thrives.*

As part of this development, the University has committed to RDA's vision for a mixed-use neighborhood that meets the needs of a diverse population. The team pursuing this development has identified a number of public benefits to be explored, including:

- Housing for extremely low-income households (50% of AMI and below) and other vulnerable groups
- Opportunities for affordable home/commercial ownership
- Development of housing conducive to larger household sizes (3 to 4 bedroom units)
- Affordable commercial spaces with subsidized rental rates to stabilize existing businesses
- Programming that meaningfully closes the gaps between the City's east and west sides through educational and/or job opportunities supporting upward mobility
- Implementation of strategies to reduce auto dependency and encourage use of alternative modes of transportation

The RDA and University completed a [series of studies](#) to pursue development of the Innovation District; feedback from stakeholders identified the need to improve access by transit to the area.



### 1.3 OPPORTUNITIES TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES

In Salt Lake County, 30 Census Tracts are considered Areas of Persistent Poverty, and the *TechLink Corridor Study* area [includes 60 percent of these, or 18 Census Tracts](#) (see Table 1-1).

The *TechLink Corridor Study* is intended to identify improvements that will connect low-income and transportation-disadvantaged populations to opportunities at major employers in the region, including:

- Downtown Salt Lake City: [70,000 jobs](#)
- Salt Lake City International Airport: [32,000 full time jobs and expected to grow once the entirely new, expanded airport is operational.](#)
- University of Utah: [20,000 jobs.](#)
- State of Utah: [20,000 jobs in various department offices in Downtown Salt Lake City.](#)
- Intermountain Healthcare: [15-20,000 jobs, some of which are located at corporate headquarters in Downtown Salt Lake City.](#)
- Research Park: [15,000 jobs adjacent to the University](#)

**177,000**

The approximate number of jobs at major employers that low-income and transportation-disadvantaged populations will be connected to via improvements identified in the *TechLink Corridor Study*.

More specifically, the *Study* will serve to analyze different transit alternatives addressing the following objectives:

**1. Determine alignment and mode to connect the following markets**

• *TRAX University Medical Center Station - Research Park*

The University of Utah has studied scenarios for access to the UURP for proposed 2030 and 2040 buildout phases. Each phase explores transit access, transportation demand management, and parking supply to strategically incentivize a balanced mode share. The University identified scenarios for transit access, but the *TechLink Corridor Study* to be funded with a RAISE planning grant is needed to advance the scenarios to a higher level of technical analysis.

• *University of Utah - Innovation District*

The University of Utah has partnered with the RDA to develop an Innovation District, which will complement the existing and expanding UURP. As part of the University’s strategy to be sustainable as established in their [Climate Action Plan](#), it took the opportunity to study additional growth within Station Center/ Innovation District. In the fall of 2020, the University and RDA conducted stakeholder engagement to learn more about the opportunity and its interest within the broader downtown community. This process identified the need for “increased transit access and comfortable bike and pedestrian connections to ensure that [Station Center is well connected and accessible to all parts of Salt Lake City](#),” including UURP.

**Table 1-1. [Census Tracts Designated as Areas of Persistent Poverty within Project Area](#)**

1003.06	1006	1014	1015	1016	1017
1018	1019	1021	1023	1025	1029
1115	1116	1119.05	1124.03	1133.05	1133.07

This connection requires further study to identify mode and alignment, which could be either LRT or new direct bus/bus rapid transit (BRT) between the two destinations.

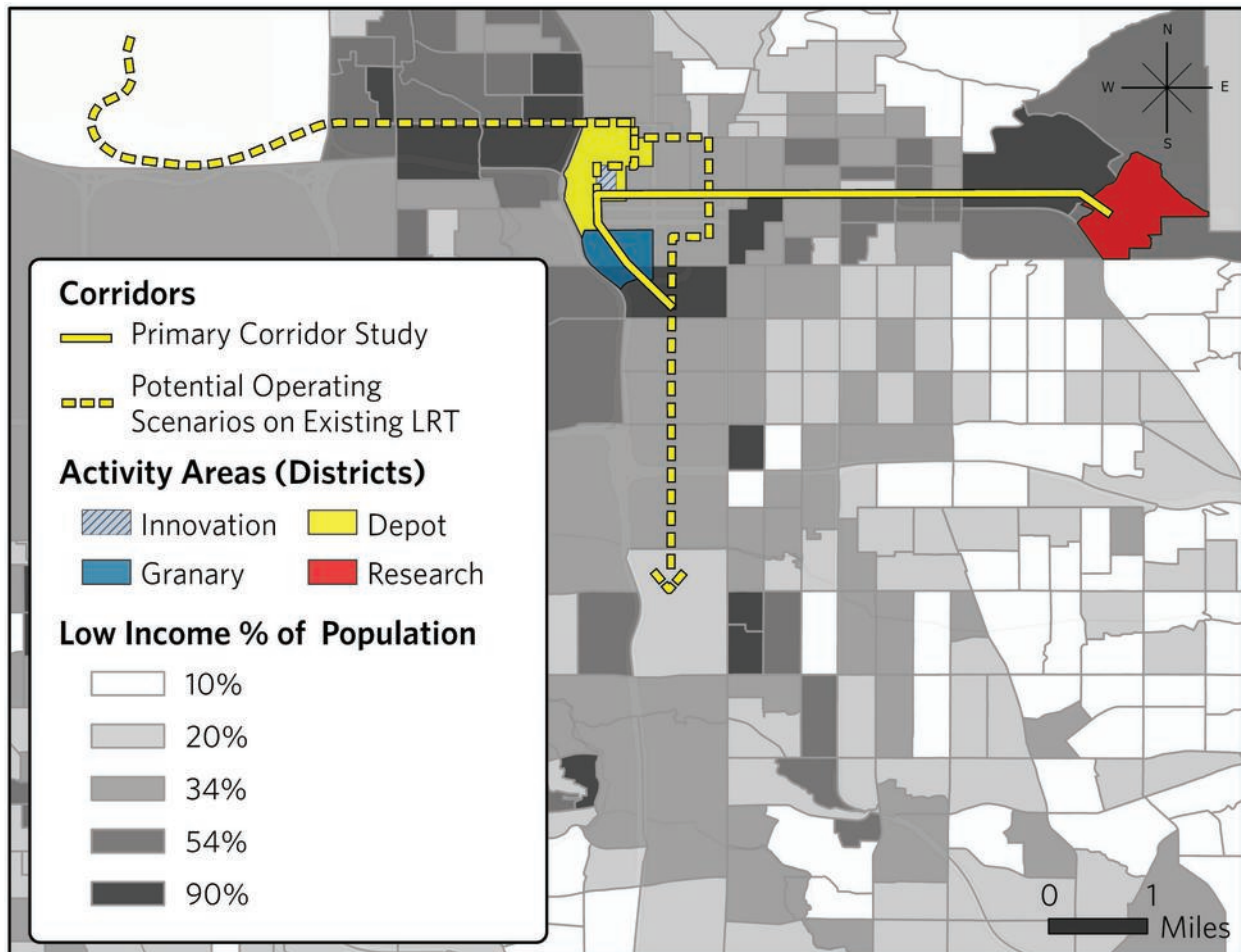


Erin Mendenhall, Mayor of Salt Lake City, discusses the PIVOT Center at Research Park at The University of Utah.

• *Granary and Depot Districts – Regional TRAX System*

UTA’s recently completed *Downtown Salt Lake City Rail Extensions & Connections Feasibility Study* examined three new TRAX alignment and operating plan scenarios that take advantage of the abandoned rail right-of-way (ROW) that runs through the Granary District. The *Feasibility Study* anticipated reduced transit travel times through more direct routing and fewer transfers, but did not include any quantitative analysis. The *TechLink Corridor Study* will investigate these and other potential alternatives using Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Simplified Trips on Project Software (STOPS)

Figure 1-2. Study Corridors and Low Income Areas



model results to better understand the mobility benefits of new transit connections.

- *University of Utah - Salt Lake City International Airport*

Two of the three scenarios examined in the *Feasibility Study* featured a revised TRAX operating plan (with the creation of a new Orange Line) providing a one-seat ride between the University and Salt Lake City International Airport. The *TechLink Corridor Study* will evaluate the costs and benefits of such a connection.

## 2. Address inequity and climate change

Through previous planning for the Innovation, Granary, and Depot Districts, the TechLink Partnership has determined that historically underserved populations must be engaged in a more robust way than is traditionally considered by current planning practice. The *TechLink Corridor Study* will therefore include engagement and feedback processes that will target underserved populations to achieve a locally preferred alternative (LPA) that reduces racial inequity and overcomes previous barriers to opportunity.

Each of the TechLink Partners have adopted plans and policies to promote equity, as discussed in Section 3.1.3. To that end, the *Study* will include evaluation metrics regarding travel patterns, station area land use, and area demographics that emphasize access to transit and employment opportunities by historically underserved populations. As part of this effort, the *TechLink Corridor Study* will analyze the availability of affordable housing and recommend locations and needs for additional affordable housing within the proposed station areas.

Likewise, the Partners have committed to the fight against climate change (see Section 3.1.2) and the *Study* will address it by evaluating

alternatives that will likely affect the most mode shift from car driving to the public transportation network in order to reduce overall emissions per capita in the region. Moreover, the TechLink Partnership strives to reduce climate impacts by bringing together major land use and transportation decision-makers that can create a *TechLink Corridor* to promote infill development and investment. The University will serve as an anchor of economic activity to further encourage development within the *TechLink Corridor*.

As a component of this effort, the siting of transit stations/stops will consider access from existing or planned improvements that will facilitate multimodal access, and consider mobility hubs for making last-mile connections. The *TechLink Corridor Study* intends to connect several planned developments that will capture a higher share of transportation trips by transit over use of a private vehicle. The TechLink Partnership recognizes the connection between land use and transportation, and the *TechLink Corridor Study* is one of [several ongoing efforts](#) to meet their shared vision for urban growth patterns that produce shorter travel distances facilitated by shared transportation modes instead of urban sprawl. By avoiding sprawl, the Salt Lake region can grow with less greenfield development and auto emissions to support a healthier environment.

Lastly, the *Study* will consider emissions from the propulsion type used by transit vehicles. In the case of bus technologies, electric and compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles will be a priority over diesel. If it is determined that the mode should be light rail, those vehicles will be propelled by the same electric system that is used for the TRAX light rail system.



## TechLink Partnership Goals

The TechLink Partnership desires to pursue a strategy to reduce climate impact by bringing together major land use and transportation decision-makers. The *TechLink Corridor* has the potential to be the ‘anchor’ for those living near and accessing the economic activity near the corridor. The TechLink Partnership desires to consider multimodal mobility solutions and land use investments that balance people’s needs and access to social, educational, and job opportunities. The *TechLink Corridor Study* will provide decision-makers with analysis needed to make informed decisions on a transportation solution that improves the quality of life of residents, while mitigating for the area’s rising housing costs and reduced reliability of the transit system caused by congestion.

### 3. **Coordinate with the RDA and other City departments, agencies, and authorities to ensure that land use and affordable housing is considered—and promoted—in the Study area**

Because it is such a high priority, Salt Lake City is leveraging significant internal resources to aid the TechLink Partnership in delivering the Study. The City’s Transportation Division and the Redevelopment Agency of Salt Lake City will assist the study team in providing detailed knowledge of local transportation

plans, including a current update to the City-wide Transportation Master Plan, detailed knowledge of redevelopment plans, and overall guidance on coordinating the study with related outreach and planning efforts. The City’s Planning Division, Engineering Division, and Economic Development Department will provide existing and future conditions data to inform the Study and will incorporate the Study’s community engagement strategies into ongoing public outreach activities. The City’s Community and Neighborhoods Department (CAN) is conducting two land use focused studies – the Granary District Area Plan and the Gentrification Assessment & Displacement Mitigation Plan – to identify equity-informed policy and zoning strategies to mitigate displacement in the study area due to rapid growth. CAN will further provide the Partnership with foundational land-use and transportation analyses for the *TechLink Corridor Study*.

### 4. **Introduce University of Utah students to the transportation corridor planning process**

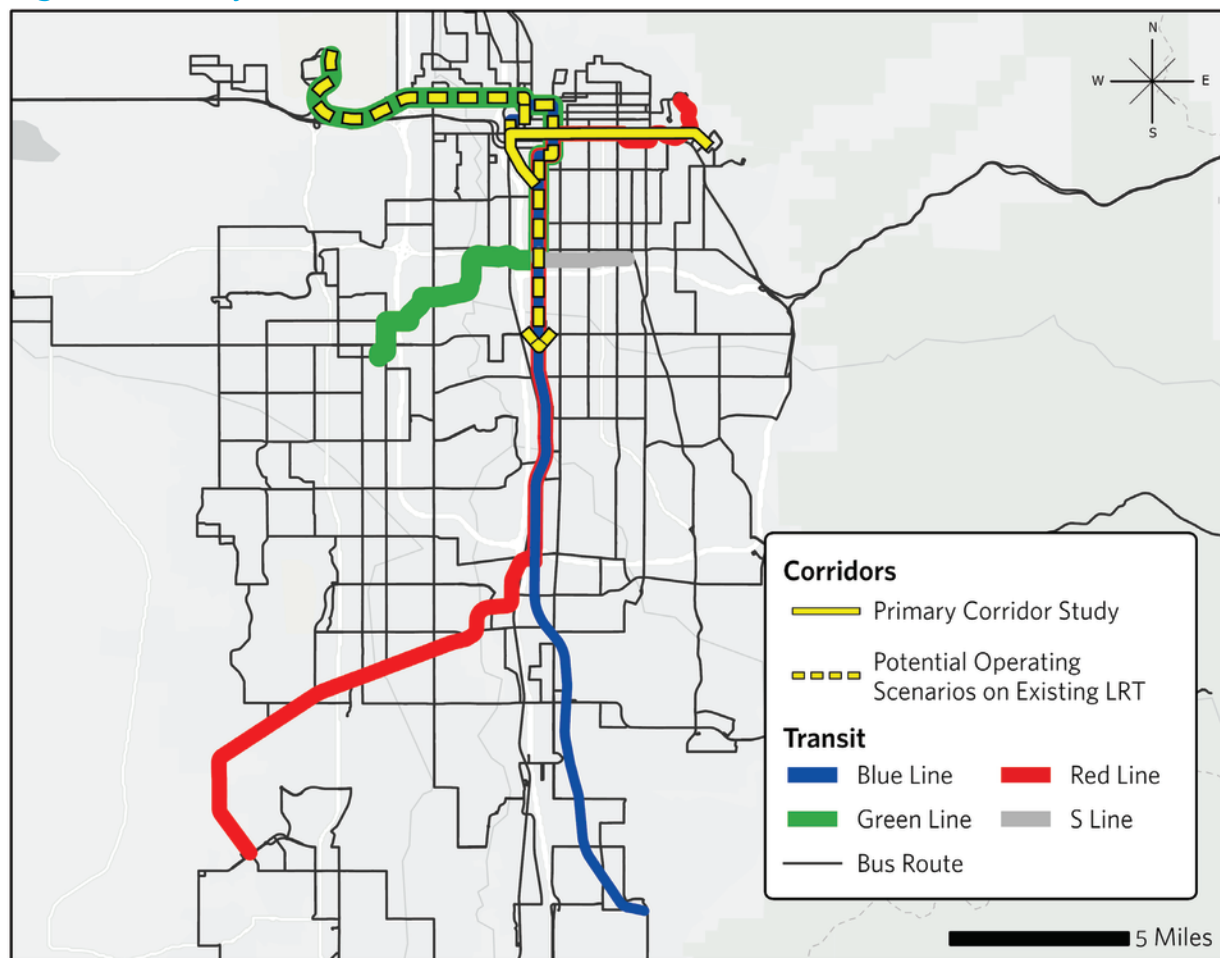
The University of Utah views the *TechLink Corridor Study* as a means of introducing students to transportation planning and how to plan for systems that promote equity and mitigate climate change. The University’s Department of Sustainability has committed to providing internship credit to students working on the Study, engaged in (for example), on-board ridership surveys, GIS-based socioeconomic analysis, national and international research on equity-based evaluation measures, etc. The Departments of Planning, Design, and Construction and Real Estate Administration have also expressed interest in participating in this.



## 2 Project Location

The study area is located completely within Salt Lake City and within Utah's second Congressional District, extending from the University of Utah in the foothills of the Wasatch Front mountain range in the east to the west side of the CBD. While these boundaries above represent the primary focus of the evaluation, there are TRAX operations scenarios which could also impact travel to and from the study area and will likely include Salt Lake City Airport and destinations to the south and west of UTA's TRAX system. The TRAX system consists of 42.5 miles across three lines, with service operating at 15-minute headways. The three lines are denoted by different colors—Red, Blue, and Green—and share a common alignment between Courthouse station in Downtown Salt Lake City and 2100 South. The Blue and Green Lines share a common alignment serving the historic office and retail core of Salt Lake City near Temple Square and along Main Street between South Temple and 400 South. The Red Line extends east to the University of Utah along the 400 South corridor. TRAX connects with UTA's FrontRunner commuter rail at Salt Lake Central (TRAX Blue Line), at North Temple Bridge/ Guadalupe station (TRAX Green Line), and at Murray Central (TRAX Red Line). FrontRunner parallels I-15 and connects Salt Lake City to Ogden, Provo, and eleven cities in between. The *TechLink Corridor Study* area within the broader region is illustrated in Figure 2-1.

**Figure 2-1. Project Location**



## 3 Selection Criteria

### 3.1 PRIMARY SELECTION CRITERIA

The following sections describe how the *TechLink Corridor Study* meets the primary and secondary evaluation criteria for the 2021 RAISE grant program.

#### 3.1.1 Safety

Transit is a key component to advancing [Vision Zero](#) (the elimination of all traffic fatalities and severe injuries) plans in urban areas. This is exemplified by the [finding](#) by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that urban areas with higher public transportation use have lower traffic fatality rates. This result is largely because casualty rates are less on public transit vehicles than on automobiles. The *Study* will evaluate how a transit solution could improve the safety of various user groups within the study area and greater region. To understand how users in the study area and region could benefit from new transit service, the *Study* will evaluate the following:

- How can walking and cycling connections to existing and proposed facilities decrease fatalities and injury?
- How can reliable transit service and design target high risk groups, such as young or senior drivers, consumers of alcohol, and distracted drivers?
- How can travelers be shifted from private vehicles to public transit?

The *Study* will contribute to improved safety conditions by identifying additional and improved transit connections that will shift private automobile traffic to transit, a safer mode of travel.

#### Commitment to Safety

UTA's commitment to safety is documented in its [Transit Agency Safety Plan \(TASP\)](#) which focuses on "integrating safety into all aspects of UTA." It also lays out quantitative targets for a set of eight safety objectives such as total employee industrial injuries, safety events, and avoidable accident rates. For fatalities per 100,000 miles, the TASP states "UTA's goal is zero fatalities" and establishes a quantitative target of 0.0 fatalities for all modes. [Salt Lake City](#) is likewise committed to Vision Zero, stating the "only acceptable goal for traffic fatalities and serious injuries is zero."

#### 3.1.2 Environmental Sustainability

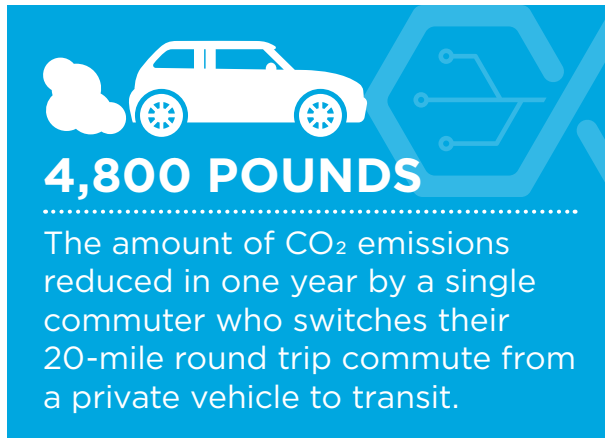
The *TechLink Corridor Study* aims to balance economic, social, and environmental objectives of the affected communities experiencing rapid redevelopment growth.

##### Climate Change

The US [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) notes that "Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation account for about 29 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions", meaning that one of the most significant ways cities can reduce GHG is by facilitating the development of transportation infrastructure that is more carbon neutral. The [American Public Transportation Association](#) estimates that a single commuter switching their 20-mile round trip commute from a private vehicle to transit can reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 18 pounds per day or more than 4,800 pounds in a year. Increases in vehicle miles of travel (VMT) [can negate any investments in transit](#), therefore it is critical to ensure the



investment of high-capacity transit will result in the reduction of VMT within the local community as well as regionally. The Study will provide the community, the Partnership, and its decision-makers quantifiable air quality emission changes to inform the selection of an LPA.



**4,800 POUNDS**

The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduced in one year by a single commuter who switches their 20-mile round trip commute from a private vehicle to transit.



*UTA electric buses charging at Salt Lake Central Station is one implementation of many planned electrification projects, several of which are being pursued in collaboration with Salt Lake City and the University of Utah.*

The *Study* will focus on ways to leverage existing Partner policies and initiatives that improve energy efficiency, reduce oil dependence, and reduce emissions. Policies that support environmental sustainability are at the forefront of the planning process for all three entities. The TechLink Partnership is proactive in its approach to implement measures that improve the communities they serve:

- **UTA:** In its [operations](#), the agency implements several measures including

environmental management, land recycling, air quality emission reductions, battery recycling, and alternative fuels. These operational practices ensure the agency is compliant with all federal, state, and local regulations. Additionally, building compact, vibrant, mixed-use, walkable facilities, formed around a well-connected street grid and high-capacity transit is a priority for the agency. By optimizing land use and accessibility, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) decreases traffic congestion, improves air quality and public health, lowers the cost of living, and makes opportunities more accessible. Therefore the agency has implemented a robust [TOD implementation effort](#) intended to catalyze TOD within the region. To date, this effort has resulted in the construction of 1,275 dwelling units, 570,000 square feet of office space, 50,000 square feet of retail space, and 192 hotel rooms, on properties controlled by UTA, either adjacent to or within walking distance from a fixed transit station.

- **City:** The City is prioritizing a [near-term transition](#) to clean, renewable energy since carbon pollution from electricity generation represents over half of the community carbon footprint. Critical to this goal will be improving multimodal options and targeting housing near high-capacity transit. The City released its first [Transit Master Plan](#) in 2017 and continues to collaborate with UTA on enhanced service options. Affordability is also crucial and served as a catalyst for the discounted [Hive transit pass](#) for City residents.
- **University:** In addition to encouraging [transit and active transportation](#) use, the University implements a ‘grass roots’ approach to sustainability, encouraging students, staff and faculty to be part of the solution for a more sustainable infrastructure and community. The [Sustainable Campus Initiative Fund \(SCIF\)](#) is the University





of Utah's green grant program. Students, faculty, and staff from all disciplines are invited to propose projects that enhance the sustainability of the campus and community. SCIF encourages ideas that operate at the crossroads of academics and operations and work to facilitate collaborative efforts among diverse members of the campus community. The University of Utah also works to incorporate [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design \(LEED\) Building design](#) and other energy-wise construction on campus.

These comprehensive policies that focus on infrastructure, mode of travel, and promoting environmental stewardship are important as Salt Lake County is a [nonattainment area for ozone and particulate matter \(PM<sub>2.5</sub>\) and a maintenance area for PM<sub>10</sub>](#), while Salt Lake City is a [maintenance area for carbon monoxide \(CO\)](#). Because the urbanized area of Salt Lake City lies in a valley between the Wasatch and Oquirrh mountains (Figure 3-1), pollution is often trapped and causes air quality issues, a process known as inversion.

**Figure 3-1. Salt Lake City and Pollution**



Transportation emissions contribute to poor air quality in the region. The *TechLink Corridor Study* will identify and evaluate new and improved transit connections that will contribute to reduced VMT as drivers become transit riders; reduced VMT directly results in reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

UTA is committed to clean energy. The Authority is currently constructing the Depot District Clean Fuels Tech Center within the corridor. This new garage will replace UTA's Central Bus Garage which is nearing the end of its useful life and is no longer large enough. When complete in 2023, [the Tech Center](#) will provide capacity for 150 buses, 25 of which will be battery electric buses (BEBs) and 47 of which will be CNG.

UTA has shifted to renewable sources of electricity in other areas, including [powering the S-Line streetcar with wind and solar](#), saving over 1.4 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually. Four TRAX Green Line light rail stations have been [equipped with rooftop solar](#) that generate enough power to operate all station needs (Figure 3-2).

**Figure 3-2. Green Line TRAX Station with Rooftop Solar**



These investments are making a difference. From 2018 to 2019 alone, [the agency has](#):

- Reduced nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) and PM fleet emissions by 21 percent
- Deployed 3 BEBs and procured 31 more
- Upgraded FrontRunner commuter rail locomotive to the Tier II emissions standard, resulting in a 29 percent reduction in air pollution emission
- Reduced hazardous waste generation by 33 percent through more efficient use of paint and other materials

The University has [successfully reduced net greenhouse gas emissions](#) from campus



operations by one third compared to 2007 despite significant growth in building square footage and campus population.

This *Study* will contribute to climate commitments by identifying transit improvements that reduce pollution resulting from mobility.

- The City’s commitment is called [Climate Positive 2040 Plan](#), which commits to 100 percent renewable energy for electricity by 2030 and an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2009 levels by 2040 and complement other local climate initiatives.
- The University signed, in 2008, the American College & University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, which dedicated the campus to reaching carbon neutrality by the year 2050. The University adopted the [2010 Climate Action Plan](#) to reach that goal. In 2019 the [University joined the University Climate Change Coalition](#) (UC3), a group of 20 leading North American research universities that are committed to mobilizing their resources and expertise to accelerate local and regional climate action.

### Climate Change Impacts

It is predicted that in 30-years Utah’s weather will be closer to what Nevada’s desert is today because of climate change. Impacts of climate change to Salt Lake City include [decreased availability and quality of drinking water](#), [increased wildfires](#), [increased insect outbreaks](#), and [increased temperatures that are tough on the young and elderly](#). The *TechLink Corridor Study* is critical to understanding how to decrease VMTs to mitigate against the harms of climate change.

### 3.1.3 Quality of Life

The TechLink corridor is quickly becoming a burgeoning area for new housing, technology companies, research institutes, social services, hip eateries, and more. This redevelopment is changing travel patterns and the existing transit network is not designed to accommodate potential new passengers desiring fast, reliable, and affordable mobility options to the new urban landscape. As such, the corridor’s economic changes present both an opportunity and threat to existing and future residents.

In terms of opportunities, the *Study* area is unique in that ‘innovation’, ‘entrepreneurial’, ‘tech’ – aspirations for the corridor - and current demographics throughout the region suggest that a resulting LPA from the proposed planning scope of work has the potential to capture the ‘youngest state’ in the United States. [“Not only is Utah one of the fastest-growing states in the country, but it also has a median age of 30.5 years, making it the youngest state.”](#) Quality of life benefits resulting from a transit solution would need to consider not only this burgeoning community of ‘innovators’ but future generations of residents who could be aging in place. Therefore, the *TechLink Corridor Study* will consider ‘future proofed’ solutions for an accessible city center for years to come.

Moreover, the *Study* will benefit from the strong commitment of the TechLink Partnership. Lack of coordination can limit the agility of public transit agencies to provide meaningful solutions that improve trip reliability, reduce carbon emissions, and provide affordable mobility. Because land use is so important to the effectiveness of transit to meet these objectives, the Partnership **is critical to understanding mobility needs in the developing Districts to ensure those living and traveling to and from the areas to**



**access opportunities truly benefit from the land-use and transportation decisions made by the City, UTA, and University of Utah.**

Consequently, the *TechLink Corridor Study* will provide the public, stakeholders and decision-makers the ability to understand and select an LPA that equitably invests finite resources for transit improvements that benefit today’s and future generations in Salt Lake City.

This coordination is necessary to mitigate the threat of potential displacement of the important social services (see Section 1.2.1) that serve area (and beyond) residents.

“One of the things that came out in the quality growth strategy was civic will to build a really good public transportation system. And so we built public rail faster than anywhere in America over the last 15 to 20 years. We have a very good mixture of transit systems here. We have a major backbone of commuter rail system that’s 92 miles long that runs up and down the Wasatch Front. And then we have all these light rail lines that go off of it. We have bus rapid transit, we have street cars. People who come to Utah are shocked to see this fabulous transit system in what is viewed as a Western conservative state.”

- Robert Grow,  
Former CEO, Envision Utah

The City is currently in the process of beginning two studies that will result in measures to mitigate displacement. The Granary District Area Plan will evaluate active transportation, roadway, and land use. The Plan will identify policies, measures,

and investments to mitigate displacement and improve affordable multimodal options to the area. The second planning study is a city-wide anti-placement that will include an extensive public outreach effort initiative, partnering with social service and non-profits organizations representing housing affordability, to identify ways to mitigate involuntary displacement.

The City is beginning the *Salt Lake City Gentrification Assessment and Displacement Mitigation Plan* to evaluate gentrification within the City limits and work with partners to develop a toolbox of strategies to mitigate involuntary displacement. The City is in the selection process now and plans to begin the study in late July or early August 2021.

**Environmental Justice**

The Granary District population has a higher proportion of individuals identifying as minority or low income or with limited access to a private vehicle compared to the County (Table 3-1). This underlines the importance of serving this District with high quality transit.

*Table 3-1. Population of the Granary District compared to Salt Lake County*

Population	Salt Lake Co.	Granary District
Minority	28%	39%
Low income (below federal poverty level)	10%	14%
Without access to a private vehicle	5%	17%

Sources: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates for 2010-2014 and 2015-2019; Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Jobs Data; Census Transportation Planning Products (CTPP) for 2016

As this area transforms to a regional activity center, rapid redevelopment can decrease affordability and increase congestion, which



has the potential for this community to become less inclusive. This means that those that currently don't have access to a vehicle and are low-income, without resources, must relocate farther from this upcoming economic and academic hub. Therefore, the *Study* will evaluate how transit options can mitigate the 'Wealth Creation' gap created by obstacles like area affordability and transportation reliability that typically prevent minorities, low-income individuals, and students without resources from advancing professionally to create wealth. The *TechLink Corridor Study* is one step to understand how to connect underserved, overburdened, and disadvantaged communities to the high-quality career pathways and educational opportunities the new innovation zone and other private investments in the area will generate.

To recognize the need to target benefits of investments to underserved, overburdened, and disadvantaged people, the UTA, City, and University of Utah have signed the [Utah Compact on Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) (December 2020), that lays out five principles and actions to create equal opportunity.

1. **Acknowledgment and action** – We acknowledge that racism exists, and our actions make a difference. We call out racism wherever we see it and take purposeful steps to stop it.
2. **Investment** – We invest our time and resources to create greater opportunity for people of color. Eliminating racial and ethnic disparities requires our significant effort and investment.
3. **Public policies and listening** – We advance solutions to racial ills by listening and creating policies that provide equal opportunity and access to education, employment, housing, and healthcare.

4. **Engagement** – We engage to effect change. Broader engagement, equitable representation, and deeper connection across social, cultural, and racial lines will uphold the principle – “nothing about us, without us.”
5. **Movement, not a moment** – Utahns unite behind a common goal to create equal opportunity. We affirm our commitment will not just be a passing moment, but a legacy movement of social, racial and economic justice.

The TechLink Corridor Partnership will work closely with the [University's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) to take advantage of the practices and resources they have available. Additionally, the Partnership will lean on the expertise of the City's [Chief Equity Officer](#) hired in May 2021. The position is within the Mayor's Office and oversees equity efforts citywide including access to transportation. As the Study progresses, a number of equity analysis will be employed, including the degree to which alternatives redress areas of past inequities or provide new connections for communities that have been underserved; identification of the best alternative to serve transit-dependent populations; impact of alternatives to riders from Equity Focus Areas, including potential changes in air quality as a result of the alternatives; impacts to unsheltered populations; anti-displacement analysis (including an assessment of affordable housing availability and unmet demand in station areas); consultation of UTA's Transit Propensity Index; and adherence to equity guidance provided in Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.

**UTA Transit Propensity Index** – UTA's planning processes incorporate equity in a number of ways, including through a Transit Propensity Index used to understand the potential and need for transit. The Index considers seven



factors, but weights two of them (low income population and minority population) a total of 30 percent. Another 40 percent is given to jobs. By weighting in this way, UTA ensures EJ populations are prioritized for transit service.

UTA also [promotes affordable housing in transit-oriented development](#) (TOD). As the agency expands service, it has the opportunity to reserve land around stops and stations for future TOD. UTA is [required to evaluate affordable housing needs within the station area](#) and if a station area plan recommends residential use for UTA property, the developer must meet with the Affordable Housing Group—consisting of representatives from state, regional, and/or local housing organizations and the community—to discuss how to incorporate affordable housing into the plan.

The *TechLink Corridor Study* will seek to generate environmental and equity benefits from transit alternatives for underserved, overburdened, and disadvantaged communities in a manner that is transparent, data-driven, and takes into consideration community preference.



*A UTA passenger prepares to board a TRAX vehicle. The Partnership is committed to participatory governance that is accessible to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, religion, age, income or ability.*

### 3.1.4 Economic Competitiveness

The [2017 Downtown Rising Action Plan](#) describes Downtown Salt Lake City as historically focused on the financial and legal

services sector but is transforming into a center for high-tech. As this application makes clear, there is demand in the downtown for tech-oriented office space due to capital investments in high-tech infrastructure and fiber optic networks. With the redevelopment of the *TechLink Corridor* area, an opportunity exists to direct this demand into the Plan's vision for a "Tech Anchor Campus" to diversify the greater Salt Lake economy, leverage existing University and tech sector companies' presence, and invest in growth as a regional or national generator of innovation.

The Partners envision investment in job creation, mixed-use land density, transit connections and placemaking to achieve economic impact on the scale of the PHX Core Innovation District in Phoenix, which has had an increase in the number of tech companies from [67 to 285 since 2012](#). Anchored by Arizona State University, Phoenix Biomedical Campus and Galvanize co-working space for entrepreneurs, PHX has experienced an increase in jobs by [20% between 2010 and 2015](#). PHX's success was supported by the extension of light rail transit.

### Salt Lake City Leads Metro Area Growth in US

Metro areas where the overall geographic concentration of information sector jobs increased between 2004 and 2015 saw [faster gross metropolitan product and job growth](#) than metro areas where jobs were more dispersed. Cities must also [invest in placemaking](#) to create the dense, vibrant, and inclusive environments that advanced economy firms and workers increasingly demand.



In the Salt Lake City RDA's ongoing work to realize the Innovation District, their [market and development research](#) completed calls for supporting life sciences including biotechnology research, healthcare and technology and entrepreneurship that simultaneously addresses local challenges of food security, health equity and education, and nutrition. Additionally, this work calls for development of an Innovation District located in an urban setting to be competitive with the [national trend for innovation districts](#) located in urban areas that offer the active, transit-oriented lifestyle sought by those working in the industries supporting innovation.

To achieve this vision of an Innovation District, the TechLink Partnership and previously planning work voice the need for quality transportation access between areas of innovation and between neighborhoods where their employees may live. The *Study* will evaluate transit improvements intended to better connect UURP, the redeveloping Granary and Depot Districts, and the new Innovation District. In identifying transit improvements, there is a potential for:

- A one-seat ride between the Research Park, Downtown Salt Lake City, the Innovation District, and Salt Lake City International Airport
- Serving growth in employment and resulting commuters expected at Research Park
- More direct routing/travel time savings between the Depot District, Downtown Salt Lake City, and other destinations
- Directly connecting the Granary District to the TRAX LRT system
- Providing increased accessibility to job opportunities at major employers including Salt Lake City International Airport, University of Utah and its Research Park, and those located downtown
- More reliable trips for minority, low-income, and transit-dependent residents of the downtown and surrounding areas



*A student awaits the arrival of a TRAX vehicle at South Campus Station, which is adjacent to the site of a planned mobility hub that will support a potential future connection to Research Park and create a gathering place for students, employees, faculty and visitors from throughout the UTA system.*

The [market and development work](#) completed to-date also recognizes that the economic success of the Innovation District, and of the Salt Lake region overall, depends on the inclusivity of all income levels. Visioning for the Innovation District includes affordability and equity components, including:

- Housing for extremely low-income households (50% of AMI and below), persons with disabilities, the elderly, and other populations at risk for homelessness
- Housing that is conducive to larger household sizes (3-4 bedroom units)
- Opportunities for affordable home and commercial ownership
- Reduction of displacement risk of existing businesses and barriers to entry for new ones

The RDA is poised for connections to transit in the Innovation District with their allocation of \$8.9 million for the construction of street and utility upgrades. This will ensure that the infrastructure for last-mile connections between the public transportation network and buildings within the Innovation District are accessible, comfortable, and convenient.



## Jobs, Labor Agreements, and Provisions

Transportation investments directly align with the [American Jobs Plan](#) to “fix highways, rebuild bridges, upgrade ports, airports and transit systems.” The *TechLink Corridor Study* is the first step to realize the benefits of providing high-paying jobs for the design, construction, and maintenance of American infrastructure.

The TechLink Partners have already developed frameworks that promote the creation of jobs and advancement opportunities should the adopted LPA advance into design, construction, and operation. The Partnership and the affected community is eager to see a mobility solution that is transit oriented and promotes the long-term sustainability of the area. Policies that would support jobs, labor, and other provisions that advance economic stability for local residents include:

- **UTA** – for any implemented transit service emerging from the *Study*, UTA recognizes the Amalgamated Transit Union as the sole and exclusive collective bargaining agent for all bus, TRAX Operators (except Extra-Board), and Parts and Maintenance employees of UTA. The Union recognizes that UTA shall continue to have and to exercise exclusive rights to set policy; to manage the business; to determine qualifications for employment; to select all personnel; to determine the size of the work force; to make and enforce reasonable rules and regulations governing the operation of the business and the conduct of its employees; and to otherwise exercise full control except as limited by the express terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- **City** – The City participates in the annual Utah Procurement Symposium, hosted by the Utah Procurement Technical Assistance Center and the Governor’s Office of

Economic Development, to help small businesses connect with government entities for potential procurement opportunities. The City encourages Disadvantaged Business Enterprise participation and complies with any federal contract or grant assurance conditions that are a prerequisite to forming a contract.

- **University** – The University is dedicated to providing educational opportunities that advance students from all backgrounds professional and personal development. As such, and as described in Section 1.3, the University is engaging its students in the *TechLink Corridor Study*. This is expected to include helping at public workshops, providing data and analytics support, and other activities that support the Study management team. The University’s staff and faculty see this *Study* as an opportunity to promote public transportation as a career and civic-minded stewardship as a responsibility.

### 3.1.5 State of Good Repair

UTA has the technical capacity and experience to understand how to introduce transportation assets to the system and maintain them in a state-of-good repair. UTA departments responsible for maintaining assets will provide input to the *TechLink Corridor Study* on cost estimates, design specifications, and other technical criterion with the goal to support the Partnership’s, stakeholders, and public in their decision-making process for an LPA. UTA staff is familiar with [FTA’s state of good repair](#) policies and procedures.

A primary goal of the TechLink Partnership is to adequately maintain infrastructure to ensure the safest and most efficient possible delivery of public works. The Partners’ foundational procedures and policies that would maintain any LPA identified and constructed in a state-of-good repair are summarized below.



- **UTA, Asset Management System** – A robust asset management system to ensure transit infrastructure is maintained in a state of good repair. All assets and their condition are tracked in UTA’s integrated JD Edwards asset management system, and costs to keep them in good repair are estimated. These costs and projects are evaluated and rolled into UTA’s five-year budget plan, which is updated at least annually. The assets associated with future transit improvements identified by the Study will be included in this tracking system. It will also identify operational cost savings from routing changes that would allow UTA to provide cost-effective service. Operating cost savings allow UTA to fund state of good repair projects.
- **UTA, 5-Year Capital Plan** – A five-year capital plan for 2021 to 2025 specifies that projects are prioritized for funding in part based on the [objectives of “assuring a safe system” and “taking care of/replacing what we have.”](#) [Board policy](#) also includes a capital replacement reserve equal to one percent of property, facilities, and equipment costs as reported in the comprehensive annual financial report that is to be used for capital repair or replacement costs due to extraordinary circumstances. This allows the agency to continue to address state of good repair needs even in the case of major revenue shortages such as that caused by the pandemic. [Board policy](#) also states that the five-year capital plan is to be fiscally constrained and be adequate to maintain all assets in a state of good repair.
- **City State of Good Repair Policies** – In 2018, Salt Lake City passed [Funding Our Future](#), which consisted of an \$87M streets bond and a half cent sales tax - roughly half of which is dedicated to street maintenance and transit investments.

In the same year, a new Salt Lake County quarter-cent sales tax, [SB 136](#), was authorized by the Utah Legislature and passed by a supermajority of cities within the County, including Salt Lake City. 40% of this new revenue source goes to the individual cities within the County, and is exclusively for transportation maintenance and infrastructure projects. Another 40% goes to UTA, and the remaining 20% goes to Salt Lake County, also all exclusively for transportation. Projects within the City are prioritized according to good governance, equity, safety, and sustainability. The good governance category includes metrics for asset condition, as well as opportunities for bundling maintenance and upgrade projects, such as underground utilities with street reconstruction, in order to maximize resources and minimize community disruption.

## 3.2 SECONDARY SELECTION CRITERIA

The following summarizes how the *TechLink Corridor Study* meets the RAISE Partnership and Innovation criteria.

### 3.2.1 Partnership

A robust, meaningful, and transparent public engagement process for the *Study* can be achieved by the TechLink Partnership collaborating with many agencies, non-profits, and community groups. This collaboration will allow for a meaningful stakeholder engagement practice that can be adaptive, responsive, and provide an opportunity for anyone to get involved and feel comfortable in the planning process. Therefore, the many supportive group of this study can help UTA reach out to low-income, minorities, seniors, persons with disability, and any underserved transportation users.

The study will be managed by the TechLink Partnership. Each Partner plays a specific role in, and brings particular value to, the execution





of the study. TechLink Partner roles and responsibilities include:

- **Utah Transit Authority:** Third-party match. RAISE grant applicant. Study project manager.
- **City:** Third-party match. Technical and public/stakeholder outreach support. City transportation, land use, and affordable housing coordination (see Section 1.3).
- **University of Utah:** Third-party match. Technical and public/stakeholder outreach support. Contribution of research and planning skills provided by University of Utah faculty and students (see Section 1.3).

The TechLink Partnership is committed to ensuring ‘everyone is at the table’. The *TechLink Corridor Study* Public Involvement Plan (PIP) will establish a framework that will deliver an equitable planning approach. To do this, the PIP will:

- Identify what has worked best in previous planning initiatives for neighborhoods along the route. Seek local leaders and participants who can play a hands-on role
- Engage in concentrated periods linked to key decisions
- Use focused, well-publicized, and accessible platforms and techniques for engagement
- Use clear platforms for maintaining continuous engagement
- Integrate the process with ongoing community events
- Make the process fun and hands-on
- Leave people with more expertise than they had at the beginning

Community groups, stakeholders, and government officials have already committed to an equitable planning process that is inclusive of all voices, as illustrated by the letters of support received for this Study in Figure 3-3.

### Figure 3-3. Letters of Support

- [Letters of Support](#)
- BlackRock Microsystems
- Downtown Alliance
- IDbyDNA Laboratory
- iVEENA Delivery Systems, Inc.
- LS Peery MD Orthopaedic Innovation Center
- Marriott University Park Salt Lake City
- Salt Lake County Planning and Transportation Department
- University of Utah Department of Orthopaedics
- University of Utah Office of the President
- University of Utah Red Butte Garden and Arboretum
- University of Utah Vice President for Research
- Utah Department of Transportation

### 3.2.2 Innovation

A transit planning study that calls itself TechLink better demonstrate innovation in planning! To that end, the TechLink Partnership will advance the following innovations in the execution of the *TechLink Corridor Study*.

#### Innovative Technologies

A Public Involvement Plan will be developed for this *Study* and will be compliant with federal requirements for environmental justice, language proficiency, and Title VI. However, the partners consider compliance a minimum requirement and will undertake a robust process using innovative technology. While in-person events, in the form of open houses and pop-up events, will remain an important component, use of technology will allow the project team to reach a wider audience on a regular and ongoing basis, rather than only during a limited number of in-person events.



A project website will be created and will be mobile-friendly/mobile-first in design because [many low income and minority populations access the internet primarily via smartphones](#). Tailoring the website ensures these populations have access to important project information without precluding access by other groups using computers.

Social media accounts for the University, UTA, and the City will be used to provide project information and encourage direct, online engagement among members of the public. [Comprehensive public engagement platforms](#) will allow the Partnership's Study management team to host virtual public meetings and can help track attendee information to ensure EJ populations are effectively engaged. These platforms can also track comments, maintain databases of contact information to ensure continued engagements, and allow surveys of attendees to gain valuable feedback. These online tools may allow individuals with limited access to transportation or with limited time to engage with the project and provide feedback without having to attend an in-person event.

In-person events remain important for those individuals who prefer this method of engagement and especially for those who do not have access to the internet. These events can also benefit from use of innovative technologies such as story maps, interactive mapping exercises, and [tablet-based surveys that allow for multiple languages to be used with the click of a button](#).

For both virtual and in-person events, [online ads](#) in general and on social media can be used to target specific populations to ensure engagement by a representative cross-section of the public.



*This drop-in UTA-SLC workshop at a local Harmon's Grocery Store exemplifies the type of hands-on outreach that meets people where they are and invites them to participate in the planning of their community.*

### Innovative Project Delivery

In addition to typical evaluation criteria used in alternatives analyses, this Study will incorporate evaluation measures directly related to equity. The final measures to be used will be developed during the course of the study, but will measure the degree to which alternatives:

- Redress areas of past inequities or provide new connections for communities that have been underserved
- Serve transit-dependent populations
- Improve access to transit and air quality for residents in Equity Focus Areas
- Affect unsheltered populations
- Adhere to equity guidance provided in the Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government

In addition, the *Study* will include an anti-displacement analysis to ensure transit improvements and expected development benefits, rather than displaces, residents who most need the improvement in the study area. Included in this analysis will be an inventory of affordable housing policies and tools related to preserving and creating



new affordable housing in the study area.

Though rare, a similar effort was [undertaken in Portland](#), Oregon, where work was completed early in project planning for transit improvements to identify best practices in affordable housing preservation and creation, assess existing policies and tools, and recommend changes to improve and/or add mechanisms to increase the supply of affordable housing near the project. The approach for the *TechLink Corridor Study* will ensure existing residents benefit from transit improvements and those in need of affordable housing are able to live near transit, with both groups benefiting from increased accessibility to jobs, services, and recreation that new transit connections will provide.

Evaluation measures will also assess alternatives related to resiliency and climate, including greenhouse gas emissions reductions, the potential for zero-emissions vehicles or electrification improvements, and the promotion of TOD. Measures will link to partner climate change commitments discussed earlier in this application.

### Innovative Financing

This *Study* will be partially funded by each partner in the **TechLink Partnership**:

- Utah Transit Authority
- Salt Lake City
- University of Utah

This is a unique approach that highlights the strong need for the *Study*; three organizations critical to the economy of the Salt Lake City area have come together not only to conceptualize the *Study*, but also to commit funds to it. Table 5-1 details the funding committed by each of the partners, totaling \$450,000 in local funding. The City's \$50,000 funding contribution includes \$25,000 from Funding our Future and \$25,000 from the [RDA of Salt Lake City](#).



## 4 Environmental Risk (Readiness)

Addressing environmental risk of a transit improvement in the TechLink corridor is a primary objective of the proposed *Study*. As shown in Figure 4-1, the TechLink Partnership has developed an ambitious but achievable schedule for executing the *TechLink Corridor Study*. The schedule assumes obligation of the RAISE grant by early 2022 and the completion of all elements of the Study within 18 months.

The Partnership has the commitment of staff and qualified consultant resources under contract to ensure that this schedule will be met. In addition, the University of Utah will provide internship opportunities to students to supporting Study data collection, analysis, and public involvement efforts.

### 4.1 REQUIRED APPROVALS - STATE, LOCAL, AND FEDERAL

There is no permitting nor approvals required to deliver the *Study*. The TechLink Partnership will memorialize their commitments to the *Study* in an interagency agreement (IA) which specifies each Partner’s role and responsibility. The IA will further establish a process for consensus-based decision-making at major study milestones and for selection of an LPA. This IA will highlight the Partnership’s commitment to the community to deliver a planning process robust enough to consider all stakeholders needs. The planning process will advance project design as far as possible within the proposed budget.

**Table 4-1. Study Schedule**

TASK	2021		2022				2023		
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
<b>Project Management</b>									
Grant Award Notice	■								
Grant Obligation			■						
<b>Public Engagement</b>									
Team Equity Training			■						
Community Engagement	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Public Workshops	TO BE SCHEDULED								
<b>Transit Study Process</b>									
Purpose and Need				■					
Definition of Screening Criterion					■				
Definition of Alternatives						■			
Evaluation of Alternatives						■	■		
Equity Analysis							■	■	
LPA and Implementation Strategy								■	
Adoption of LPA									■



## 4.2 FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS AFFECTING STATE AND LOCAL PLANNING

In accordance with UTA procedures, official adoption of the Preferred Alternative will require amendment of the long-range plan and approval by the City, the UTA Local Advisory Council, and the UTA Board of Trustees. Upon adoption, the TechLink Partnership intends to advance the LPA into federal environmental review in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.



## 5 Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds

The TechLink Partnership has committed \$450,000 in local funding for the *TechLink Corridor Study* and is requesting \$950,000 in RAISE funds to complete the *Study*. The *Study* budget is presented in Table 5-1 below.

Evidence of these local funding commitments are confirmed by the letters of support from executive leadership of each Partner.

### Partner Funding Commitments

All three partners are committed to expending funds for the purposes of advancing a transportation solution that serves people in the greater Salt Lake City community. RAISE funds would help to complete a critical milestone, an LPA, needed to advance any project identified by the public into NEPA and engineering.

Figure 5-1.  
Project Funding Sources

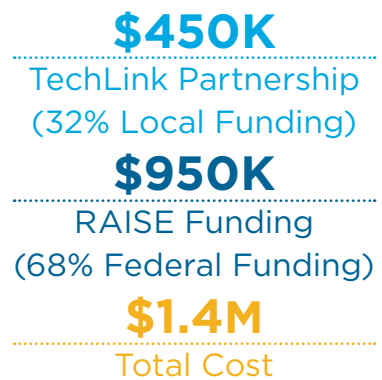


Table 5-1. Study Budget

Total Cost	UTA	City/RDA	University	RAISE
\$1,400,000	\$200,000	\$50,000	\$200,000	\$950,000
% of Cost	14.3%	3.6%	14.3%	67.9%

