

GACC June 1, 2022 Community Hybrid Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Meeting - This meeting is the first time the GACC has met in the Sweet Library since February 2020. Because board and community members are still uncomfortable with in-person meetings, the meeting was a hybrid with a Zoom option. It was also on Facebook Live. There were about 70 community members on the Zoom and about 55 community members in the library. There were problems with sound and video, but everyone was patient, and we made it through.

Candidate Forum – Beginning at about 5:30, community members gathered just outside the library for a brief Meet and Greet with the candidates for Senate District 9 and other local races.

Welcome – Chair Gwen Springmeyer welcomed the candidates who attended the Meet and Greet. Suzanne Harrison, candidate for the Salt Lake County Council. Ashley Anderson, Curtis Linton, and Frank Langheinrich, candidates for the Salt Lake School Board.

Senate District 9 Candidate Forum - GACC Board Member Gene Fitzgerald moderated a forum with Senator Derek Kitchen and challenger Dr. Jen Plumb.

UTA Bus Route Changes for the Avenues - Councilmember Chris Wharton moderated a discussion with representatives from the UTA, the City, and representatives of the neighborhood.

Representing UTA:

- Carlton Christensen, UTA Board Chair,
- Nichol Bourdeaux, Chief Planning & Engagement Officer,
- Eric Callison, Manager of Service Planning.
- Cristobal Villegas, Community Engagement Specialist.

Representing the City: Jon Larson, Director of Transportation.

Representing the residents of the Avenues living on L Street and 9th Avenue:

- Carol Fudyma
- Donna Dinsdale
- Lauren Holland

UTA – UTA has worked on a joint master plan with Salt Lake City to increase east-west and north-south movement. This movement has been missing. Implementation of these changes would have happened years ago if not for the pandemic. Some of the changes are a result of ADA requirements. The current ailment along 6th Avenue is not suitable for people with disabilities. The new proposal complies with design standards for the Americans with Disabilities Act. UTA has authority over six counties, 80 cities, and 80 miles of service areas, and it is the largest transit authority geographically in the nation.

Avenues Residents – The residents request a plan that has less impact on the community. The new plan impacts the 6% of riders and the 94% of nonriders. There will be buses every 15 minutes and 132 buses per day starting at 4:00 am and running to midnight with the new routes. The residents are worried about the safety of the children who use L Street to travel to Ensign Elementary. They want UTA to stop this plan and work with the Avenues residents to create a better plan.

Questions:

- Will UTA consider stopping this plan and working with the residents? UTA said that would be too difficult. UTA is well along in its process, and it is unlikely they will change their minds at this point and start all over.
- How many people responded during the comment period, and how many were Avenues residents? Three hundred two people responded, but they do not know the percentage from the Avenues. They don't do any neighborhood engagement, and they don't go door to door. They posted changes on bus stop signs and buses. They make a mass approach to the cities and counties they serve.

- Why didn't the GACC know about the changes? UTA works with the Cities they serve. It would be almost impossible to work with community councils and community members.
- University of Utah Hospital employees used to have a direct line to the hospital. They are no longer able to do that. UTA has looked at Route 6 ridership, and they believe they will have a faster trip, with buses every 15 minutes to the hospital. Carol said it is not 15 minutes faster because of the transfer.
- Can we expect bus routes to reach hiking trailheads? That is not in the plans, but UTA would like to hear more about it.
- What have you done about neighbors' concerns about the quality of life, pollution, frequency, and impact on residents along the route? UTA's diesel buses are the same as eliminating four cars. They have learned that more frequency increases utilization. Carol is worried the duration until midnight and starting up at 4:00 am can potentially disrupt people's sleeping patterns. UTA said high frequency lowers the rider's anxiety.

Announcements:

- Gwen reported the Member Grove Cleanup was a huge success. She thanked the neighbors, the volunteers, Salt Lake City Parks Department, the 20th Ward for tables and chairs, and the LDS Hospital for lunch.
- Gwen invited anyone interested in helping with the Avenues Street Fair to be part of the planning. The next meeting is on June 11 at 9:00 am. Details are on the GACC Website.

Community Reports:

- **Fire Department** - Captain Eric Meyers from Station 4. People are in the hills again, and there have been rescues in the Bobsled area. The 4th of July restrictions will be similar to past years, and the signs will likely start to appear in the next few weeks. No fireworks in the Avenues, Memory Grove, or City Creek. How will UTA changes affect the fire trucks going down L Street? Eric said he has been asked the question often and has deferred the question to the Chief. Captain Meyers said they can co-exist with all traffic on any street without any issue. Snow is the only issue preventing trucks from getting around.
- **Police Department** - Officer Bob Norgaard was promoted to sergeant and will no longer attend our meetings. We do not yet know who will take his place. Gwen recognized the work of the police department responding to a complaint about speeding on I Street. The police department was able to get traffic enforcement to issue tickets and set up the electric speed signs. They are installing an overhead warning light on I Street and 6th Avenues.
- **City Council** - Chris Wharton talked about a cost of living increase for City employees, particularly the first responders. He is also trying to honor commitments made to the police and non-police emergency responders in the wake of the George Floyd murder. The City's calls for service have increased dramatically, particularly the non-emergency calls. The City created a new program for non-police officers to take some of the non-emergency calls. He said it is like building a rocket ship as it flies, which is not cheap. The City has a lot of significant infrastructures that need replacing. Traffic calming is the most frequent single request from residents. If the property tax increase requested by the Mayor is approved, along with the bond, water rate increases, sewer fees, waste collection fees, and the library board request, the average homeowner will pay an additional \$1 per day from now to 2024. There are programs where Vets and people with disabilities can apply to freeze their tax increases. This sacrifice is necessary for the functioning of the City. The \$20 million for Pioneer Park is in the bond. A resident raised the concern about growth and suggested the City should take steps to stop it. Chris says our growth is of our own making.
- **SLC School Board** - Katherine Kennedy is moving part-time to Cambridge, MA, to get her MPA. Her School Board term ends Dec of 2022, so she will maintain a residence in District 3 and travel back and forth to attend meetings. The Board is looking at the

budget and will vote on June 7. There will be a new ELP at Washington Elementary for grades 4 to 6. There will be healthcare clinics next to the high schools. The goal is to have the funding donated through SLC Education Foundation. School is out on Friday, so watch for the children out in the neighborhoods.

- **Mayor's Office** - Eva Lopez explained some details about the Mayor's proposed budget. She then introduced Hannah Barton, the new Mayor's Office Liaison. Hannah said she appreciates the UTA conversation and applauds the new 20 mph speed limits to keep our street safe. The Mayor has introduced a Safe Streets Task force to update the Transportation Master Plan, which was last updated in 1996. The goal is for high-level policy to plan transportation and provide equity in the East/West connection.
- **Public Lands**, Tyler Fonarow – Because of Zoom glitches, Tyler was eliminated from the meeting. Gwen said he would have announced that he is looking forward to the July GACC meeting, which will focus on our foothill trails.
- **LDS Hospital**, Brandy Lee – The IHC system works on water conservation as they maintain the grass at their facilities. The new landscaper advisor is into conservation to make sure this happens. Brandy advised everyone to drink lots of water to avoid dehydration.
- **Library**, Mary Maloney is excused
- **University of Utah**, Shawn Wood is excused

Open Forum Salt Lake School Board Candidates Frank Langheinrich, Ashley Anderson and Curtis Linton, were each given time to speak.