

Street Connectivity Planning

A Report by Utah's Metropolitan Planning Organizations

CMPO

UNIFIED TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
DIXIE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MAG

WFRC

October 2026

Purpose and Legislative Background

WHY STREET CONNECTIVITY MATTERS

Connected street networks are an important component of an efficient, accessible, and resilient transportation system. They provide people with multiple routes to reach destinations, improve access to jobs and essential services, reduce pressure on state and local roads, and support travel by vehicle, transit, bicycle, and on foot. In contrast, disconnected street networks can concentrate traffic on a limited number of major roadways, increase travel distances, and create barriers to accessing nearby destinations.

WHAT SENATE BILL 195 DOES

In 2025, the Utah Legislature passed Senate Bill 195 (Harper), establishing new requirements for municipalities within metropolitan planning organization (MPO) boundaries to identify and plan for priority transportation connections in their communities. The legislation builds on statewide efforts to better understand Utah's regional roadway networks and identify opportunities to improve transportation connectivity.

WHAT THIS REPORT COVERS

Prepared by Utah's four MPOs, this report provides an overview of the statutory requirements established by Senate Bill 195, the importance of street connectivity, available planning and funding resources, the status of the Regional Roadway Grid Study, and progress toward municipal implementation.

CENTRAL THEMES OF THIS REPORT

- Connected streets are a critical strategy for increasing mobility and reducing pressure on state roads.
- Municipalities, with support from MPOs, are making significant progress in planning for and building connected streets.
- Limited funding remains a key barrier to advancing identified connectivity opportunities.

Statutory Requirements and Timeline

Senate Bill 195 requires municipalities located within an MPO boundary to *"update the transportation and traffic circulation element of the municipality's general plan as described in Subsection 10-9a-403(2)(a)(ii) to identify priority connections to remedy physical impediments, including water conveyances, that would improve circulation and enhance vehicle, transit, bicycle, or pedestrian access to significant economic, educational, recreational and other priority designations."*

The legislation establishes the following timeline and reporting requirements:



2025 Report and 2026 Report

The MPOs must annually report to the Transportation Interim Committee on the status of municipal general plan modifications, the status of the Regional Roadway Grid Study, and other impediments and potential funding sources.

July 1, 2027

Municipalities must update the transportation and traffic circulation element of their general plans to meet the statutory requirements.

Before November 1, 2027

The MPOs must provide a subsequent report on implementation progress and the remaining statutory requirements.

ADDITIONAL STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

For each identified priority connection, municipalities must also identify estimated costs, potential funding sources—including state, federal, and private sources—and impediments to construction.

Understanding Street Connectivity

Street connectivity describes how streets link together to form a transportation network. A connected network offers multiple routes between locations, while a disconnected network relies more heavily on cul-de-sacs, dead ends, limited access points, and a small number of connecting roadways. Connectivity is a fundamental function of the transportation system. Public streets connect people to jobs, schools, businesses, public services, recreation, and one another. The way streets are connected influences how efficiently people can travel and which transportation options are practical.

A well-connected street network can provide several benefits:

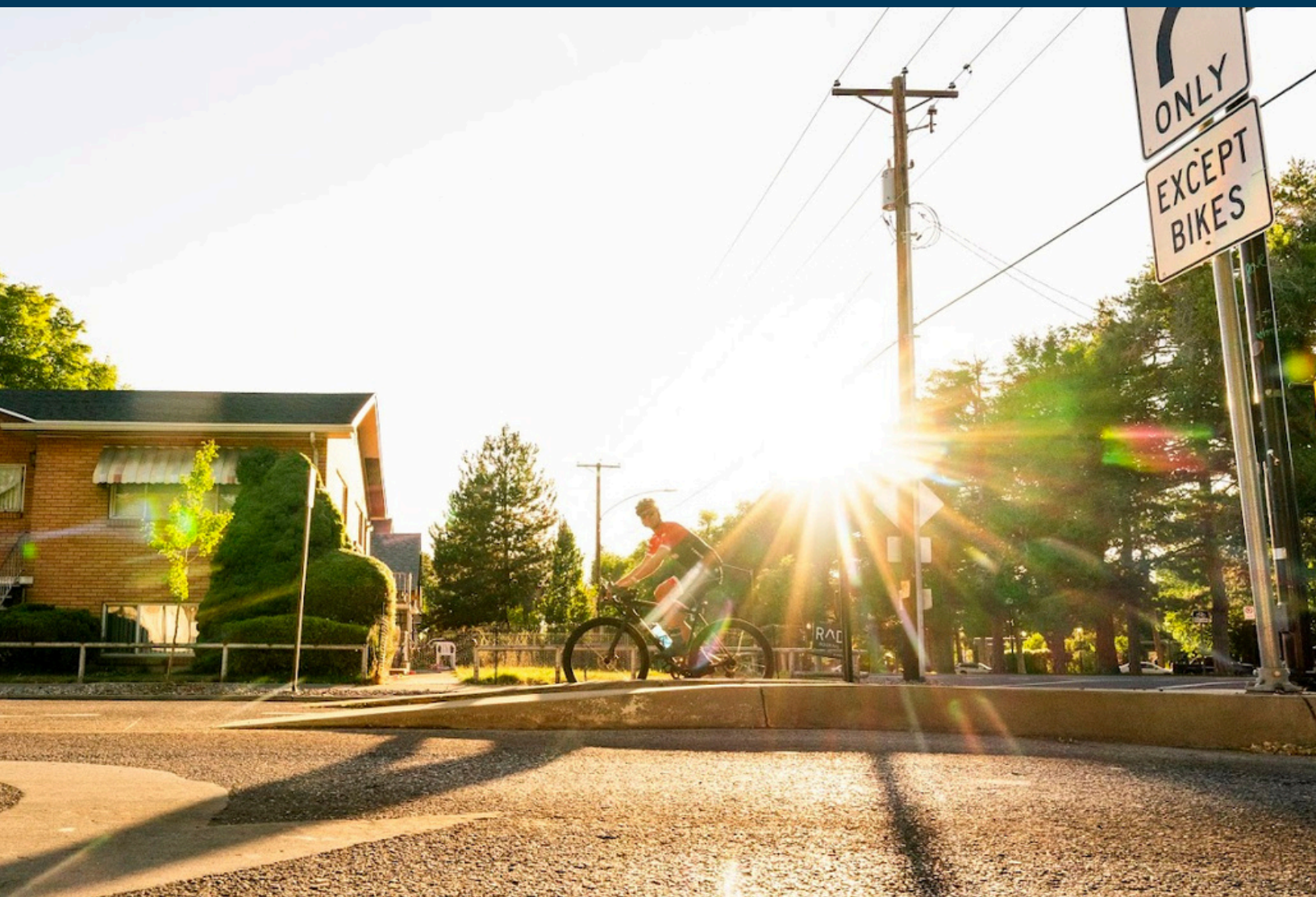
- **Improved mobility and circulation.** Multiple local routes distribute trips throughout the network, balancing and mitigating the load on state-owned roadways while reducing travel distances, delays, and congestion at key intersections.
- **Better access to destinations.** Connections can make nearby jobs, schools, businesses, parks, and other destinations easier to reach.
- **More transportation choices.** Connected networks can improve the practicality of walking, bicycling, and transit by providing more direct routes and reducing the need to travel along major roadways.
- **Greater network resilience.** Alternative routes can help maintain access when a roadway is congested, closed, or otherwise unavailable.
- **More efficient use of existing infrastructure.** Connectivity can help communities accommodate travel demand through better use of the existing street network rather than relying exclusively on widening major roads or constructing additional capacity.



Multiple connections to a local school.

Connectivity does not mean that every street should accommodate high volumes of through traffic or that every neighborhood should have the same street pattern. Appropriate connections depend on local context, including development patterns, topography, environmental constraints, roadway function, and community priorities. Planning for connectivity means identifying where additional links can improve access and network performance while respecting these considerations.

Importantly, identifying a potential connection does not necessarily mean it should be constructed immediately. Planning allows municipalities to evaluate the benefits, costs, feasibility, and tradeoffs of potential connections and to establish priorities for future implementation.



Implementation Challenges

For each identified priority connection, municipalities must identify impediments to construction. Although a potential connection may offer transportation benefits, planning and constructing it can present significant challenges. These vary by location and may include:



Right-of-way and property acquisition: Securing the land necessary to construct a connection can be costly, particularly in developed areas.



Existing development: Buildings, subdivisions, infrastructure, and established land uses may limit the feasibility of creating new connections.



Physical and environmental barriers: Rivers, canals, irrigation facilities, railroads, steep terrain, and other features can require specialized designs, additional infrastructure, or coordination with other entities.



Community concerns: Proposed connections may raise questions about traffic, neighborhood character, safety, property impacts, and other local priorities.



Construction and infrastructure costs: Bridges, underpasses, drainage improvements, utility relocation, and other design requirements can substantially increase project costs.



Funding availability and competition: Municipalities must balance connectivity projects with other transportation and infrastructure needs, and many funding programs are competitive or have specific eligibility requirements.



Staffing and technical capacity: Identifying, evaluating, designing, and advancing projects requires staff time and technical expertise that may be limited, particularly in smaller communities.



Coordination across jurisdictions and agencies: Connections may require cooperation among multiple municipalities, transportation agencies, property owners, or entities responsible for adjacent infrastructure.

Potential Funding Sources

For each identified priority connection, municipalities must identify potential funding sources. Municipalities may use a combination of federal, state, and local funding sources to plan, design, acquire right-of-way for, and construct priority connections. Availability depends on program eligibility, project readiness, funding cycles, project competitiveness, and other requirements. Additionally, no single funding source is likely to address every identified connection, particularly because many of these sources are programmed out for many years, are highly competitive, or have limited funds. Municipalities may need to combine funding programs, coordinate projects with planned development or roadway improvements, preserve future rights-of-way, and pursue projects incrementally as resources become available.

Funding Source	Type	Description
Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)	Federal	Roadway and multimodal improvements, administered by MPO and UDOT
Transportation Alternatives (TA)	Federal	Pedestrian, bicycle, and other active transportation projects, administered by MPO
Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ)	Federal	Projects that reduce transportation emissions, including active transportation infrastructure - administered by MPOs and UDOT
Carbon Reduction Program	Federal	Projects that reduce transportation emissions, including active transportation infrastructure - administered by MPOs and UDOT
Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)	Federal	Infrastructure improvements, including certain streets, sidewalks, and pedestrian facilities that principally benefit low and moderate income residents - administered by MPOs and State of Utah
Federal Discretionary Grants	Federal	Miscellaneous objectives and eligibilities

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Potential Funding Sources

Funding Source	Type	Description
Active Transportation Investment Fund (ATIF)	State	Active transportation improvements - administered by UDOT for the Utah Trail Network
Recreational Trails Program	State	Motorized and non-motorized trail development and maintenance, administered by Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation
Transportation Investment Fund (TIF) Active	State	Paved pedestrian and non-motorized active transportation infrastructure - administered by UDOT
Transit Transportation Investment Fund (TTIF) - First/Last Mile	State	Bicycle and pedestrian improvements that provide access to transit - administered by UDOT
B&C Road Funds	Local	Local roadway improvements
Corridor Preservation Funds	Local	Property acquisition and preservation for future transportation corridors
Local option sales tax revenues	Local	Local transportation improvements, some required for transit
General Funds	Local	Eligible projects funded through municipal appropriations
Redevelopment Agency (RDA) Funds	Local	Transportation projects that support redevelopment project objectives
Private developer contributions	Private	Developer often responsible for designing the local street network, building, and paying for it

Planning and Technical Assistance Available to Municipalities

Utah's MPOs provide regional planning, technical assistance, and resources to help local governments identify transportation needs and incorporate connectivity into local planning and implementation decisions. These resources can support municipalities as they evaluate potential connections, assess transportation impacts, coordinate with partner agencies, and identify opportunities to advance projects.

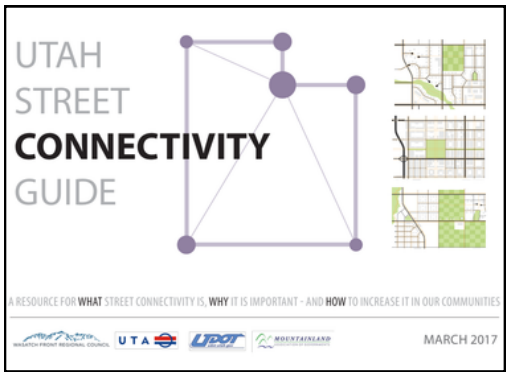
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS

UTAH'S UNIFIED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Utah's MPOs develop regional transportation plans that establish long-range transportation priorities and identify anticipated investments in roadway, transit, and active transportation infrastructure.

These plans collectively inform Utah's Unified Transportation Plan, providing a statewide framework for coordinating transportation investments and connecting local transportation needs with broader mobility goals.

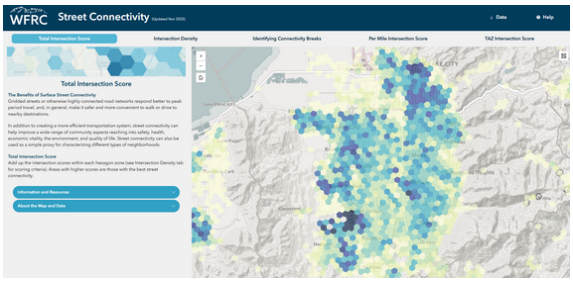
STREET CONNECTIVITY GUIDE



The Street Connectivity Guide is a comprehensive resource for improving street connectivity in communities throughout Utah. Developed jointly by MAG, the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), the Utah Transit Authority (UTA), and WFRC, the guide identifies strategies and evaluation tools appropriate for different community contexts, from urban to suburban to rural areas and from neighborhoods to special districts.

The guide provides a framework for understanding connectivity and identifying approaches that reflect local development patterns, community character, and transportation needs. Municipalities can use it to inform general plan policies, evaluate potential connections, and establish local approaches to improving their street networks.

STREET CONNECTIVITY ANALYSIS MAP



The Street Connectivity Analysis Map is a statewide resource that provides detailed street connectivity data. Key street connectivity evaluation data such as total intersection score, intersection density, and connectivity breaks are geographically shown and directly downloadable.

MAG'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO GOVERNMENTS (TAG) PROGRAM



MAG's Technical Assistance to Governments (TAG) Program is available to local governments throughout Utah, Summit, and Wasatch Counties for plans and studies that address growth-related challenges and opportunities, including improving transportation network connectivity.

WFRC'S TRANSPORTATION LAND USE CONNECTION PROGRAM

TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE CONNECTION

The Transportation and Land Use Connection (TLC) program is a partnership between WFRC, UDOT, UTA, and the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB).

The TLC program provides technical assistance to help local communities plan for growth, maximize the value of public infrastructure investment, enhance access to opportunities, and expand travel choices to optimize mobility. Eligible projects include connectivity-related studies.

Grid Study Completion

In 2023, the Utah Legislature provided resources and directed the state's four MPOs to undertake a **Regional Roadway Grid Study**. The study was intended to examine how the roadway networks in Utah's metropolitan regions function as interconnected systems and to identify locations where new or improved connections could enhance mobility for all users.

The study provides a regional perspective on street connectivity, helping identify gaps in the roadway network and opportunities to improve connections between communities and destinations. Its findings can inform local planning, regional transportation priorities, and the identification of potential projects.

The study also provides an important resource for municipalities implementing Senate Bill 195. By identifying potential connectivity improvements at a regional scale, the study can help local governments evaluate their own street networks, consider connections that may benefit neighboring jurisdictions, and identify opportunities for further analysis or coordination.

The Grid Study identified 37 priority connections identified at an approximate total cost of $770 million. This study was completed in early 2026.

October 2026



Statewide MPOs Regional Roadway Grid Study

A resource for better connectivity and more mobility.

AT-A-GLANCE:

SB3 (2023) — *Funded statewide evaluation of roadway grid connectivity*

350+ — *Connections screened*

37 — *Priority concepts identified for further consideration through MPO Regional Transportation Plans*

WHY IT MATTERS

Early corridor preservation avoids higher future costs

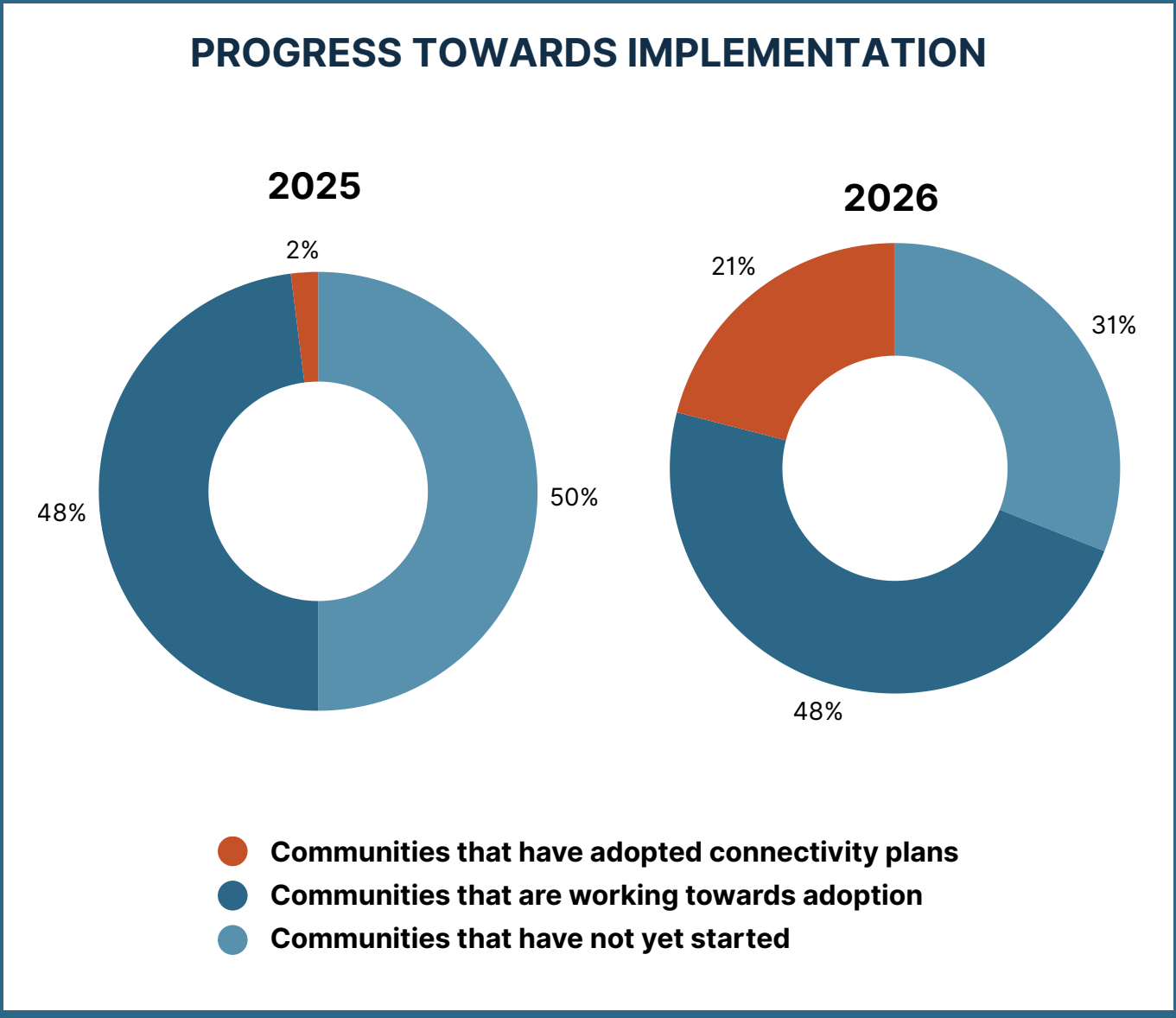
Study supports future funding and ownership decisions

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Senate Bill 195 Implementation and Progress Toward Requirements

Utah's MPOs have been monitoring the implementation of municipalities' adoption of these requirements into the transportation element of their general plans over the past two years. Outreach to local communities indicates steady progress in meeting Senate BIII 195 planning requirements, with adoption increasing from 2% (2025) to 21% (2026) of local communities.

Communities noted that challenges to updating their general plans include staff capacity, funding, time constraints, residential support, and political acceptance.

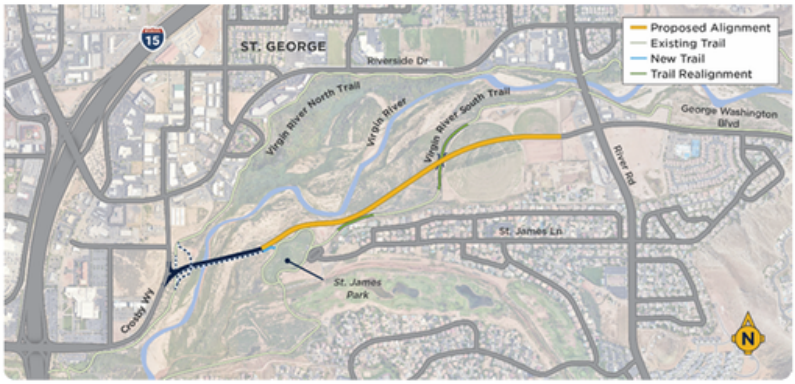


Examples of Effective Implementation of Connected Streets

Dixie MPO Region: George Washington Boulevard

George Washington Boulevard from Crosby Way to River Road (currently under construction) has long been identified as a key regional transportation need pertaining to connectivity, appearing in both the City of St. George Transportation Master Plan and the Dixie Metropolitan Planning Organization's Regional Transportation Plan. Its consistent inclusion in local and regional planning reflects a shared, long-standing example of circulation and connectivity planning in the region. As planned, George Washington Boulevard will function as a major east–west connector, linking multiple cities and providing a new travel route through the heart of the metro area.

Connecting transportation corridors in the St. George area is unusually challenging. Steep bluffs and two rivers restrict where continuous roadways can be built, funneling traffic through a limited number of locations, creating bottlenecks.



This segment of George Washington Boulevard addresses these constraints with a new bridge across the Virgin River, linking corridors in two cities and connecting interchanges on I-15 and SR-7. By creating another continuous east–west route across the valley, the project will improve regional mobility, reduce pressure on existing corridors, expand access to shopping and other economic centers, and support the coordinated growth envisioned by participating cities and the Dixie MPO.



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Examples of Effective Implementation

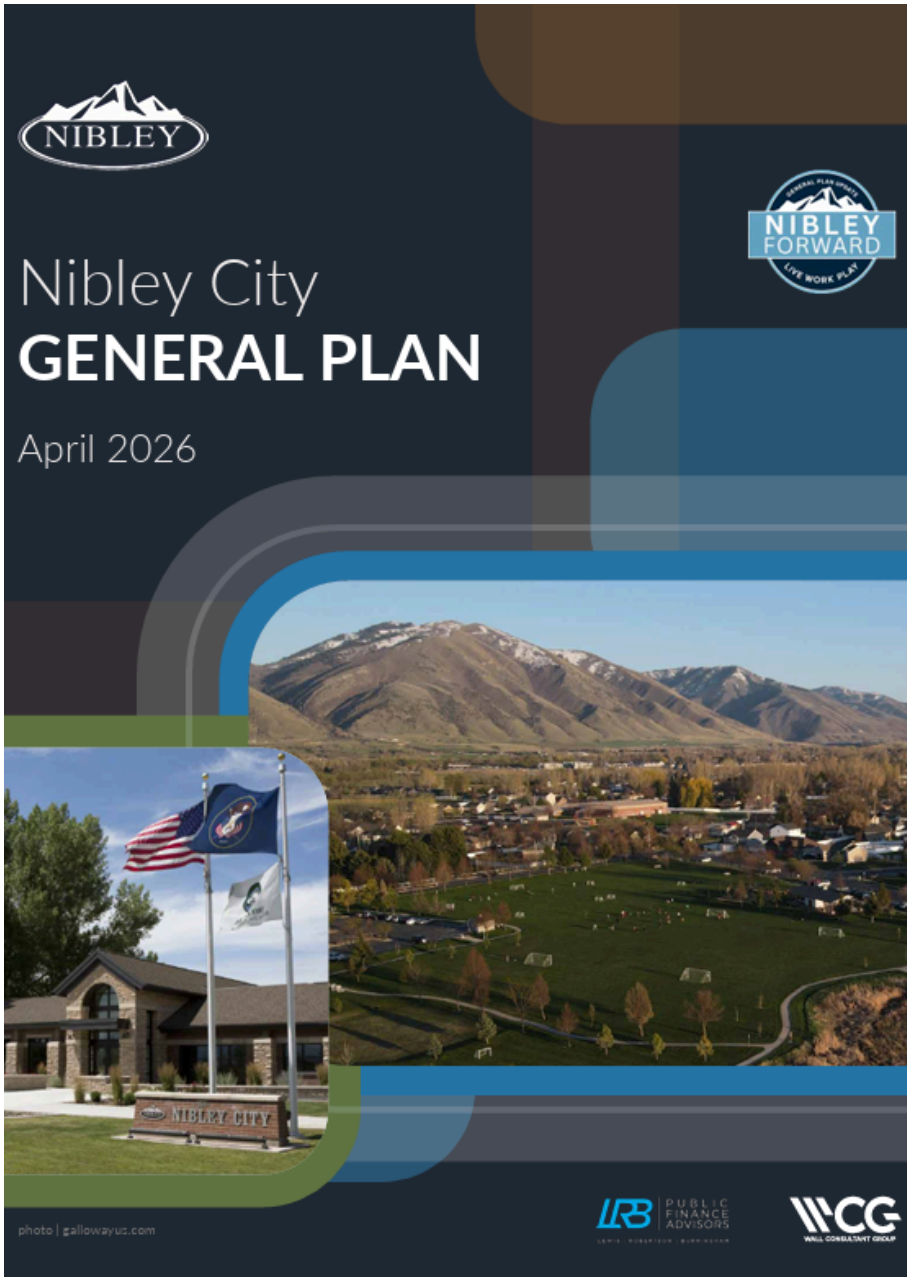
Cache MPO Region: Nibley City

Nibley City provides an example of Senate Bill 195 implementation through its General Plan. The plan identifies transportation barriers, including US-89/91, SR-165, the Union Pacific rail line, the Hyrum Slough canal, and the Blacksmith Fork River, and outlines potential improvements, estimated costs, funding sources, and implementation challenges.

Proposed projects include pedestrian crossing improvements, active transportation crossings over the Blacksmith Fork River, and pedestrian underpasses or grade-separated crossings of major transportation corridors.

This provides a practical example of how Senate Bill 195 requirements can be incorporated into a city's General Plan to identify transportation needs and establish a framework for future improvements.

Elsewhere in the CMPO area, CMPO has hired Parametrix as its consultant to conduct a study supporting implementation in the general plans of Smithfield, Hyde Park, North Logan, Logan, and Providence, while Hyrum, Millville, River Heights, and Wellsville are pursuing implementation independently.

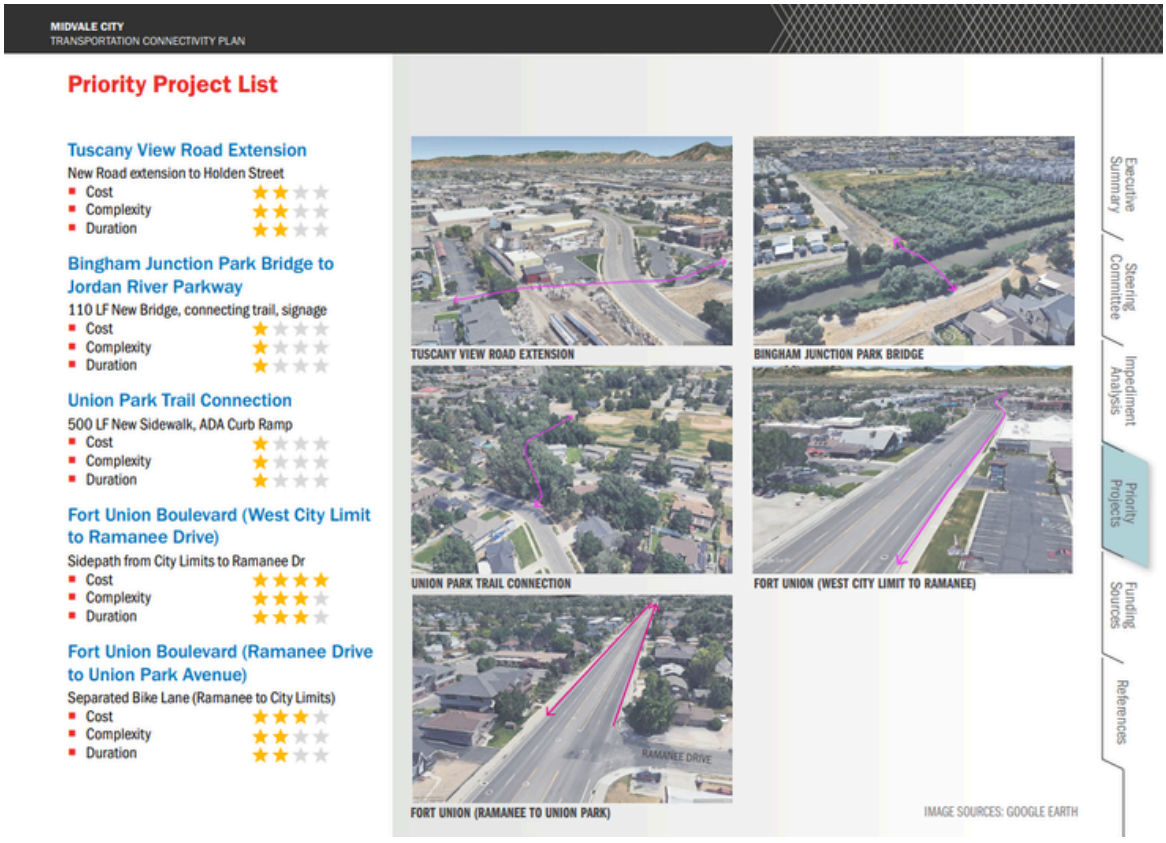


Examples of Effective Implementation

WFRC Region: Midvale City

Midvale City recently adopted a Transportation Connectivity Plan designed to build an efficient, connected, and balanced transportation system that enhances quality of life for all residents and visitors. The Transportation Connectivity Plan was developed in collaboration with a steering committee and neighboring communities to address regional gaps and ensure continuity of multimodal connections. Grounded in a transparent planning process, the initiative utilized GIS-based barrier analysis to identify physical constraints - such as rivers, canals, rail lines, and disconnected road grids - while screening for environmental and regulatory considerations like floodplains and land use policies to identify priority projects and cost estimates. For each priority project, a cut sheet highlights a project description, existing conditions, right-of-way needs, impediments, cost estimates, and potential funding sources.

In alignment with Senate Bill 195, the plan prioritizes key infrastructure connections that overcome local barriers, significantly expanding safe, multimodal access for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists to essential community destinations, employment centers, schools, and parks.

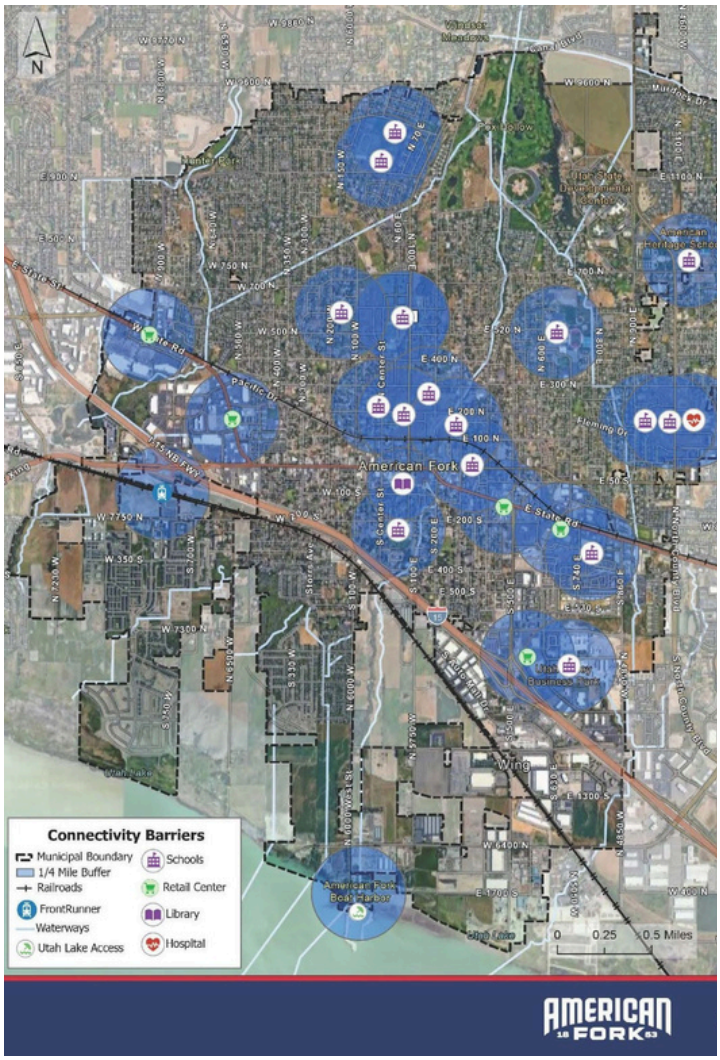


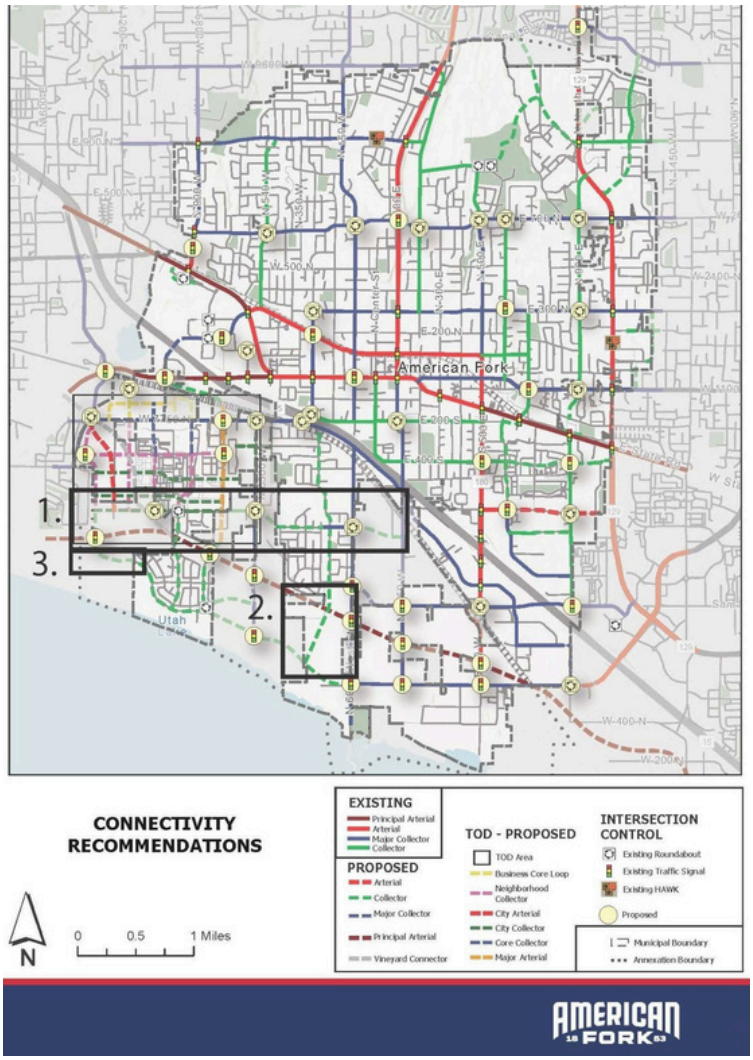
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Examples of Effective Implementation

MAG Region: American Fork City

In American Fork City's recently adopted general plan, the city identifies connectivity barriers from the perspective of multimodal transportation network and service gaps, as well as barriers to significant destinations (i.e., schools, retail centers, library, and hospital). Collectively, these barriers and recommended connections are illustrated in their general plan and shown below. The general plan also highlights key connections in greater detail with separate exhibits.





Conclusion

Street connectivity is a key strategy for increasing mobility, reducing pressure on state roads, and providing efficient access to jobs, services, and other destinations while supporting multiple travel modes. Senate Bill 195 provides a framework for municipalities to identify priority connections, evaluate the challenges to constructing them, and document potential funding strategies.

Municipalities, with support from MPOs and resources like Utah's Regional Roadway Grid Study, are making great progress in planning for and building connected street networks. As municipalities complete the required general plan amendments, continued coordination among local governments, MPOs, and state agencies can help ensure that connectivity opportunities are identified, evaluated, and considered alongside other transportation and community priorities.

However, funding remains limited to advance many of the identified opportunities for connected streets. The MPOs will continue to monitor implementation and report to the Transportation Interim Committee on progress, remaining challenges, and opportunities to support the development of more connected transportation networks throughout Utah.

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