

1 **Transportation Commission Amendments**

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Wayne A. Harper

House Sponsor: Kay J. Christofferson

LONG TITLE**Committee Note:**

The Transportation Interim Committee recommended this bill.

Legislative Vote: 12 voting for 0 voting against 6 absent

General Description:

This bill adds study items for the Department of Transportation.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ requires the Department of to study the composition of the transportation commission;
- ▶ requires the Department of Transportation to study the necessary qualifications of the executive director;
- ▶ adds a repeal date for the studies; and
- ▶ makes technical changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:**AMENDS:****63I-1-272 (Effective 05/06/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 391**72-1-217 (Effective 05/06/26) (Partially Repealed 07/01/29)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 452**72-1-301 (Effective 05/06/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 219**72-1-303 (Effective 05/06/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 512

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*Section 1. Section **63I-1-272** is amended to read:**63I-1-272 (Effective 05/06/26). Repeal dates: Title 72.**

31 (1) Subsection 72-1-217(4), regarding highway reduction strategies within Salt Lake City,
32 is repealed July 1, 2029.

33 (2) Subsections 72-1-217(5), (6), and (7) regarding study items, are repealed January 1,
34 2027.

35 [({2})] (3) Section 72-2-134, Transportation Infrastructure General Fund Support Subfund, is
36 repealed July 1, 2028.

37 [({3})] (4) Title 72, Chapter 4, Part 3, Utah State Scenic Byway Program, is repealed January
38 2, 2030.

39 [({4})] (5) Title 72, Chapter 10, Part 13, Spaceport Exploration Committee, is repealed July 1,
40 2027.

41 Section 2. Section **72-1-217** is amended to read:

42 **72-1-217 (Effective 05/06/26) (Partially Repealed 07/01/29). Department of**

43 **Transportation study items.**

44 (1) The department shall carry out transportation studies described in this section as
45 resources allow.

46 (2)(a) The department shall study items related to advanced air mobility as described in
47 this Subsection (2).

48 (b) The department shall study vertiport locations and infrastructure, including:

49 (i) identification of suitable locations for vertiport infrastructure and parking
50 infrastructure for vertiports in metropolitan areas;
51 (ii) identification of commuter rail stations that may be suitable for vertiport
52 placement; and
53 (iii) identification of underutilized parking lots and parking structures for vertiport
54 infrastructure placement.

55 (c) The department shall study best practices and implementation of advanced air
56 mobility technologies, including:

57 (i) seeking input through community engagement;
58 (ii) state and local regulations;
59 (iii) unmanned aircraft system traffic management; and
60 (iv) weather reporting and monitoring for advanced air mobility safety.

61 (d) The department shall study unmanned aircraft traffic management infrastructure,
62 including:

63 (i) unmanned aircraft system traffic management development, implementation,
64 procedures, policies, and infrastructure; and

65 (ii) obtaining a full understanding of unmanned aircraft system traffic management,
66 including:

67 (A) designation of airspace for advanced air mobility;
68 (B) creation of geographic categorical areas;
69 (C) identifying the appropriate number and location of advanced air mobility
70 sensors; and
71 (D) other state specific details regarding unmanned aircraft system traffic
72 management.

73 (e) The department shall study the creation of an advanced air mobility sandbox,
74 including:

75 (i) potential locations for the sandbox testing area and desirable attributes of a
76 suitable sandbox location;
77 (ii) requirements to create a geographical advanced air mobility testing area and the
78 parameters for the types of technology that may be utilized in the testing area; and
79 (iii) testing and studying different types of advanced air mobility transportation of
80 manned and unmanned aerial vehicles, including:
81 (A) aerial vehicle size;
82 (B) aerial vehicles that carry cargo, including medical cargo;
83 (C) commercial aerial vehicles; and
84 (D) public transportation aerial vehicles.

85 (f) On or before September 30, 2023, the department shall provide a report to the
86 Transportation Interim Committee of the department's findings from the study items
87 described in Subsections (2)(b) through (2)(e).

88 (g) The department may only use existing funds to cover the expenses incurred from the
89 study of items described in Subsections (2)(b) through (2)(e).

90 (3)(a) The department and a large public transit district shall jointly study programs
91 offered by government entities related to human services transportation, including:
92 (i) coordinated mobility services;
93 (ii) paratransit services;
94 (iii) nonemergency medical transportation;
95 (iv) youth transportation programs, excluding school bus transportation; and
96 (v) other similar fare-based or fee-based programs provided or coordinated within the
97 boundary of the large public transit district, including those involving the
98 department, a large public transit district, local governments, or other government

99 agencies and nonprofit entities that provide similar services.

100 (b) The study shall evaluate strategies to consolidate the transportation services
101 described in Subsection (3)(a) to improve efficiency and service.
102 (c) The department and large public transit district shall:
103 (i) provide a preliminary report on the study to the Transportation Interim Committee
104 on or before November 1, 2025; and
105 (ii) prepare and present recommendations to the Transportation Interim Committee
106 on or before November 1, 2026, for the consolidation of the services described in
107 Subsection (3)(a).

108 (4)(a) As used in this Subsection (4):

109 (i) "City" means Salt Lake City.
110 (ii) "Highway reduction strategy" means any strategy that has the potential to
111 permanently decrease the number of vehicles that can travel on an arterial or a
112 collector highway per hour, including:
113 (A) reducing the number of motorized vehicle travel lanes on an arterial or
114 collector highway;
115 (B) narrowing existing motorized vehicle travel lanes on an arterial or collector
116 highway; or
117 (C) any other strategy that when implemented may increase congestion or impede
118 traffic flow for motor vehicles driving on an arterial or collector highway.
119 (iii) "Mobility and environmental impact analysis" means a study that assesses the
120 impacts within the study area of implementing a highway reduction strategy on
121 arterial or collector highways, including the impacts to other state and local
122 highways, mobility, traffic flow, pedestrian and nonmotorized vehicle flow, the
123 economy, public health, quality of life, air quality, maintenance, and operations.
124 (iv) "Study area" means the area within Salt Lake City that is west of Foothill Drive,
125 north of 2100 South, east of I-15, and south of 600 North.

126 (b)(i) Except as described in Subsection (4)(c), a city may not implement or begin a
127 project as part of a highway reduction strategy on an arterial or a collector
128 highway within the study area unless the project is part of a mobility plan
129 approved by the department as described in this Subsection (4)(b).
130 (ii) For a mobility plan described under Subsection (4)(b)(i), the city shall:
131 (A) assess the alternate routes for traffic and impacts on surrounding highways
132 due to any lane reduction;

133 (B) evaluate impacts to vehicle trip time;
134 (C) evaluate impacts to air quality;
135 (D) evaluate the cumulative multimodal and safety impact of the proposed
136 highway reduction strategies, including the cumulative impact from previous
137 highway reduction strategies implemented over the previous five years;
138 (E) provide options to mitigate negative impacts to vehicle traffic, vehicle trip
139 time, air quality, or adjacent travel routes;
140 (F) in collaboration with the department, assess impacts to state highways;
141 (G) proactively seek out and consult with relevant stakeholders, including
142 business owners, commuters, and residents impacted by the mobility plan and
143 each proposed project within the mobility plan;
144 (H) present the plan in an open and public meeting, including public comment;
145 (I) provide an open house or other event to allow public interaction and feedback
146 regarding the impacts of the mobility plan;
147 (J) present the plan to the membership of the city's chamber of commerce and
148 other business groups; and
149 (K) provide the plan to the department for the department's review.

150 (iii)(A) After the department receives a complete mobility plan as described in
151 Subsection (4)(b)(ii), the department shall determine if the mobility plan and
152 each project included in the mobility plan meet the requirements of this section
153 and shall approve or reject the plan within two months of receiving the
154 mobility plan.
155 (B) As part of the mobility plan, the city shall demonstrate to the department the
156 manners in which the city involved and received input from the business
157 community, the public, and other stakeholders as required in Subsection
158 (4)(b)(ii).

159 (c)(i) The city may begin or continue construction on an arterial or collector highway
160 project related to any reduction strategy within the study area if the project has
161 been advertised on or before February 25, 2025.
162 (ii)(A) For a project related to any highway reduction strategy that was
163 programmed by the department on or before July 1, 2024, but has not been
164 advertised on or before February 25, 2025, the department may conduct an
165 expedited review of the project.
166 (B) If the department approves a project after an expedited review as described in

167 Subsection (4)(c)(ii)(A), the city may begin or continue construction on the
168 project.

169 (d) The department shall, in partnership with the city, conduct a mobility and
170 environmental impact analysis to determine the impacts of highway reduction
171 strategies within the study area that the city has implemented on or after July 1, 2015,
172 or has plans to implement on or before July 1, 2035.

173 (e) As part of the mobility and environmental impact analysis, the department shall:
174 (i) assess the cumulative impact of each highway reduction strategy within the study
175 area that the city has implemented or has plans to implement between July 1,
176 2015, and July 1, 2035; and
177 (ii) consult with relevant stakeholders, including business owners, commuters, and
178 residents impacted by the highway reduction strategy.

179 (f) A city subject to a mobility and environmental impact analysis under this Subsection
180 (4) shall provide to the department any information the department determines
181 necessary for conducting the mobility and environmental impact analysis, including
182 any plans that city has adopted or discussed with regards to a highway reduction
183 strategy.

184 (g)(i) The department shall provide the mobility and environmental impact analysis
185 to the Transportation Interim Committee on or before October 15, 2025.
186 (ii) The city shall provide a response to the mobility and environmental impact
187 analysis to the Transportation Interim Committee on or before November 1, 2025.

188 (h)(i) As provided in Section 63I-1-272, this Subsection (4) is subject to a sunset
189 review by the Transportation Interim Committee during the 2028 interim.
190 (ii) The Transportation Interim Committee may also evaluate the mobility plan
191 process described in this Subsection (4) during the 2027 interim.

192 (5)(a) In conjunction with applicable stakeholders, the department shall study items
193 related to the efficiency of the commission and the commission's ability to meet the
194 future needs of the state as described in this Subsection (5).

195 (b) In conjunction with applicable stakeholders, the department shall study the
196 composition of members of the commission, including:
197 (i) the distribution of members;
198 (ii) the number of members; and
199 (iii) the efficiency of the commission in light of the factors described in Subsections
200 (5)(b)(i) and (ii).

201 (c) The department shall report the findings of the studies described in Subsections (5)(a)
202 and (b) to the Transportation Interim Committee on or before November 1, 2026.

203 (6)(a) In conjunction with applicable stakeholders, the department shall study the
204 geographic regions created by the department, including:
205 (i) the geographic composition of each region;
206 (ii) the number of regions;
207 (iii) the efficiency of the regions; and
208 (iv) the use of resources of each region.

209 (b) The department shall report the findings of the study described in Subsection (6)(a)
210 to the Transportation Interim Committee on or before November 1, 2026.

211 (7)(a) In conjunction with applicable stakeholders, the department shall study the office
212 of executive director of the department and the required qualifications of the
213 executive director position.

214 (b) The department shall report the findings of the study described in Subsection (7)(a)
215 to the Transportation Interim Committee on or before November 1, 2026.

216 Section 3. Section **72-1-301** is amended to read:

217 **72-1-301 (Effective 05/06/26). Transportation Commission created -- Members,**
218 **appointment, terms -- Qualifications -- Pay and expenses -- Chair -- Quorum.**

219 (1)(a) There is created the Transportation Commission which shall consist of seven
220 members.

221 (b) The members of the commission shall be residents of Utah.

222 (c) The members of the commission shall be selected on a nonpartisan basis.

223 (d) [The] Except as provided in Subsection (1)(e), the commissioners shall, in
224 accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 24, Part 2, Vacancies, be appointed by the
225 governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, for a term of six years,
226 beginning on April 1 of odd-numbered years.

227 (e) A commissioner appointed after May 6, 2026, shall serve for a term of four years.

228 [(e)] (f) The commissioners serve on a part-time basis.

229 [(f)] (g) Each commissioner shall remain in office until a successor is appointed and
230 qualified.

231 (2)(a) Subject to the restriction in Subsection (2)(c), the selection of commissioners shall
232 be as follows:

233 (i) four commissioners with one commissioner selected from each of the four regions
234 established by the department; and

- (ii) subject to the restriction in Subsection (2)(b), three commissioners selected from the state at large.
- (b)(i) At least one of the three commissioners appointed under Subsection (2)(a)(ii) shall be selected from a rural county.
 - (ii) For purposes of this Subsection (2)(b), a rural county is a county of the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth class.
- (c) No more than two commissioners appointed under Subsection (2)(a) may be selected from any one of the four regions established by the department.

A member may not receive compensation or benefits for the member's service, but may receive per diem and travel expenses in accordance with:

- (a) Section 63A-3-106;
- (b) Section 63A-3-107; and
- (c) rules made by the Division of Finance in accordance with [pursuant to] Sections 63A-3-106 and 63A-3-107.

- (a) One member of the commission shall be designated by the governor as chair.
- (b) The commission may select one member as vice chair to act in the chair's absence.

Any four commissioners constitute a quorum.

Each member of the commission shall qualify by taking the constitutional oath of office.

Each member of the commission is subject to the conflict of interest provisions described in Title 63G, Chapter 24, Part 3, Conflicts of Interest.

For the purposes of Section 63J-1-504, the commission is not considered an agency.

Section 4. Section **72-1-303** is amended to read:

72-1-303 (Effective 05/06/26). Duties of commission.

The commission has the following duties:

- (a) determining priorities and funding levels of projects and programs in the state transportation systems and the capital development of new public transit facilities for each fiscal year based on project lists compiled by the department and taking into consideration the strategic initiatives described in Section 72-1-211;
- (b) determining additions and deletions to state highways under Chapter 4, Designation of State Highways Act;
- (c) holding public meetings and otherwise providing for public input in transportation matters;
- (d) making policies and rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, necessary to perform the commission's duties

described under this section;

- (e) in accordance with Section 63G-4-301, reviewing orders issued by the executive director in adjudicative proceedings held in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 4, Administrative Procedures Act;
- (f) advising the department on state transportation systems policy;
- (g) approving settlement agreements of condemnation cases subject to Section 63G-10-401;
- (h) in accordance with Section 17B-2a-807, appointing a commissioner to serve as a nonvoting member or a voting member on the board of trustees of a small public transit district;
- (i) in accordance with [Seetion] Sections 17B-2a-808 and 17B-2a-808.1, reviewing, at least annually, the [short-term and long-range public transit plans] plans submitted by small and large public transit districts;
- (j) determining the priorities and funding levels of public transit innovation grants, as defined in Section 72-2-401;
- (k) approving grant awards administered by the Utah Broadband Center in accordance with Section [17-19-301] 72-19-301; and
- (l) reviewing administrative rules made, substantively amended, or repealed by the department.

(2)(a) [For projects prioritized with funding provided under Sections 72-2-124 and 72-2-125, the] The commission shall annually report to the Transportation and Infrastructure Appropriations Subcommittee:

- (i) a [prioritized] list of the new transportation capacity projects in the state transportation system and the funding levels [available] or shortages for those projects; and
- (ii) the unfunded highway construction and maintenance needs within the state.

(b) The Transportation and Infrastructure Appropriations Subcommittee shall:

- (i) review the [list] information reported by the Transportation Commission; and
- (ii) make a recommendation to the Legislature on:
 - (A) the amount of additional funding to allocate to transportation; and
 - (B) the source of revenue for the additional funding allocation under Subsection (2)(b)(ii)(A).

(3) The commission shall review and may approve plans for the construction of a highway facility over sovereign lakebed lands in accordance with Chapter 6, Part 3, Approval of

303 Highway Facilities on Sovereign Lands Act.

304 (4) One or more associations representing airport operators or pilots in the state shall
305 annually report to the commission recommended airport improvement projects and any
306 other information related to the associations' expertise and relevant to the commission's
307 duties.

308 **Section 5. Effective Date.**

309 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.