

Transportation Interim

September 18, 2024

Passenger Rail

Overview

- Corridor Identification and Development Grant Program
- Long-Distance Service Study
- Existing Travel Options
- Statewide Passenger Rail Study

About the Corridor ID Grant Program

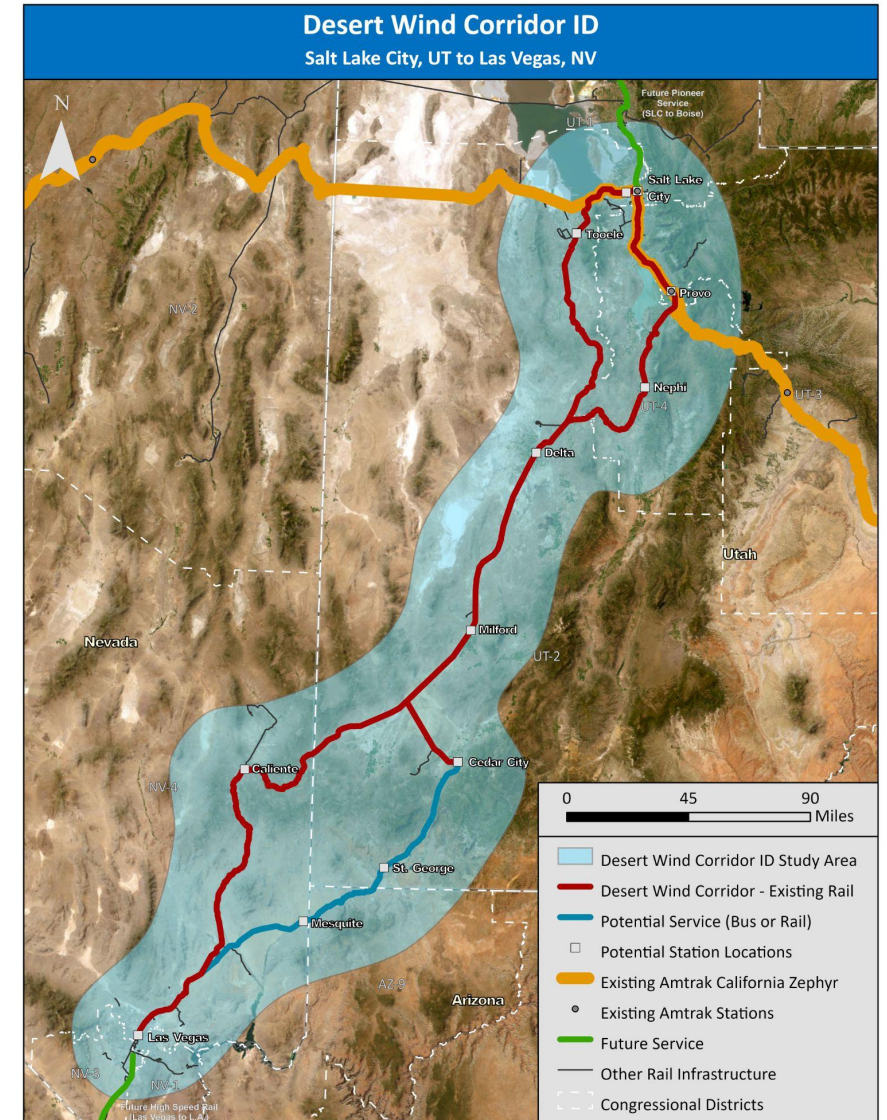
- The Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) grant program is administered by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for Intercity Passenger Rail Projects and provides funding to:
 - Develop detailed service development plans (which include routes, stations, service, infrastructure, operations, costs, financing, etc.)
 - Complete pre-construction activities (e.g. preliminary engineering and environmental)
- Three Step Grant Program
 - Step 1 - Develop scope, schedule, budget, and staffing estimates for the service development plan - \$500,000 w/ with no matching funds required.
 - Step 2 - Plan development - 10% match required
 - Step 3 - Pre-construction - 20% match required
- The next Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is expected to be announced in 2025.

Previous Applications Submitted by UDOT and ITD

- UDOT and the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) submitted grant applications for the Corridor ID program in March 2023.
- UDOT's application was for potential re-establishment of a route from Salt Lake City to Las Vegas (previously the "Desert Wind" route under Amtrak).
 - Partners included Utah Transit Authority (UTA), and Nevada DOT
- ITD's application was for potential re-establishment of a route from Salt Lake City to Boise (previously the "Pioneer" route under Amtrak).
 - Partners included UTA, UDOT, and City of Boise.

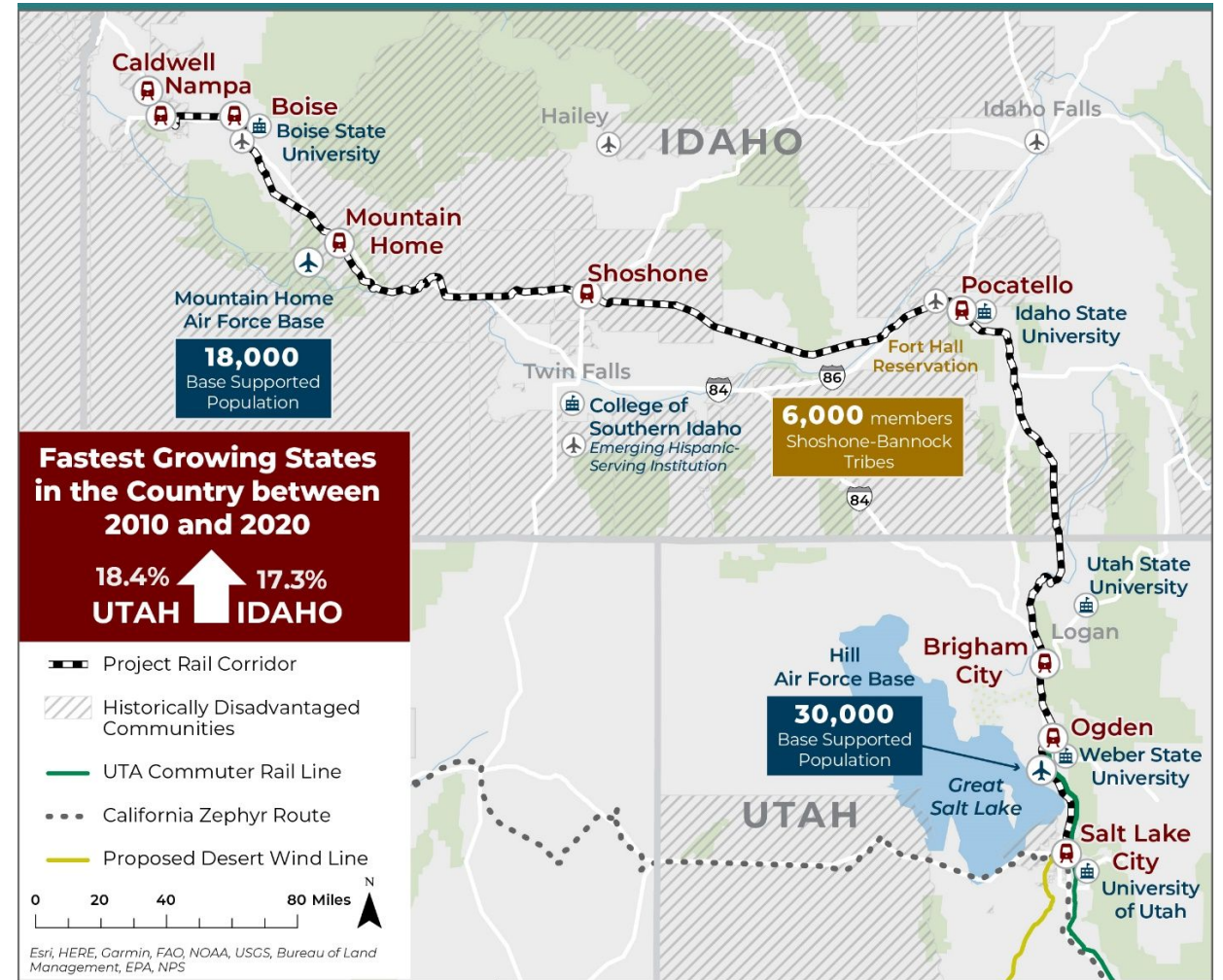
Salt Lake City to Las Vegas (Desert Wind) Route

- Conventional (<80 mph) train service running on existing freight rail tracks.
- Options to travel through Provo or Tooele on the north end.
- 451 - 463 miles long (depending on route option)
- Stops could include Nephi, Delta, Milford, and Caliente (NV).
- Route does not currently exist through the St. George area.
 - Potential for a bus connection between Cedar City and Las Vegas.



Salt Lake City to Boise (Pioneer) Route

- Conventional (<80 mph) train service running on existing freight rail tracks.
- 435 miles long (with Caldwell as final stop)
- Stops could include Ogden, Brigham City, Pocatello, Shoshone, Mountain Home, Boise, Nampa, and Caldwell.



Feedback from the FRA

- The FRA announced grant awards for the Corridor ID program in December 2023, but neither Utah nor Idaho were selected.
- UDOT and ITD received feedback from the FRA on their grant applications in Winter 2024.
 - **UDOT's Application:** The FRA told UDOT that its application would benefit from additional quantitative data (e.g. projected ridership, estimated costs and benefits).
 - **ITD's Application:** ITD mistakenly submitted its application to the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail grant program rather than the Corridor ID program. The error was not discovered until after the deadline had passed, and ITD's application was not considered under Corridor ID.

Data Provided by Amtrak

- After UDOT and ITD received feedback from the FRA, Amtrak provided high-level forecasts of ridership, revenue, costs and benefits for the potential Desert Wind and Pioneer routes.
- These are very preliminary high level estimates and more analysis would be required as part of a formal Service Development Plan.

Measure	SLC to Boise	SLC to Las Vegas
Annual One-Way Trips	110,000	66,900 - 81,500
Daily One-Way Trips (average)	301	183 - 223
Route Length (mi)	424	451 - 463
Travel Time (hr:min)	7:24	8:20 - 8:51
Annual Operating Cost	\$18.6M	\$19.7M - \$20.9M
Annual Ticket Revenue	\$5.4M	\$3.9M - \$5.5M
Capital Cost Estimate	\$650M - \$800M	\$610M - \$920M

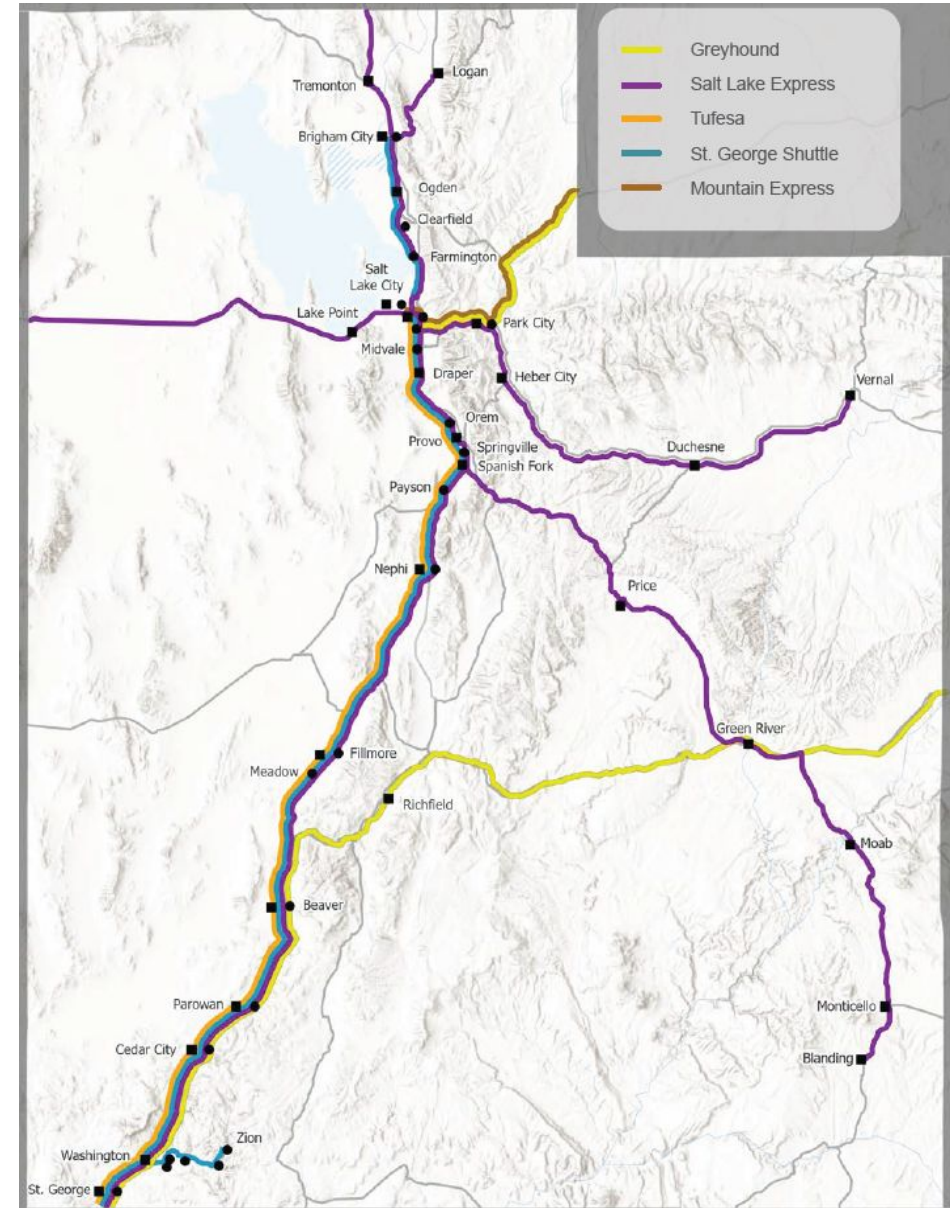
FRA Long-Distance Service Study

- The FRA is conducting a [national study](#) that looks at the potential for new or expanded long-distance (750+ miles) Amtrak routes.
- The study is looking at two potential routes passing through Utah and overlapping the potential Desert Wind and Pioneer Corridor ID routes.
- Funding has not been allocated to implement these routes.



Existing Travel Options

- SLC to Las Vegas
 - Three private bus companies (Salt Lake Express, St. George Shuttle, Tufesa) provide daily service, two of which run multiple trips per day.
 - Four airlines (Delta, Southwest, Frontier, Spirit) provide daily direct flights.
- SLC to Boise
 - Salt Lake Express runs two trips per day. FlixBus provides additional, but less frequent service.
 - Delta provides multiple direct flights every day of the week.
- Other Destinations
 - Salt Lake Express provides service to Vernal and Blanding.



Statewide Passenger Rail Study

- UDOT is preparing to conduct a high level statewide passenger rail feasibility study to gather more information on the potential for passenger rail in Utah and to prepare for future Corridor ID grant opportunities. The proposed study will:
 - Explore a variety of destination/route options, which could include new routes.
 - Evaluate both conventional (<80 mph, using shared freight track) and high-speed (>125 mph, using dedicated track) options.
 - Quantify the costs and benefits of potential passenger rail services.
 - Gather additional information needed to support a potential future Corridor ID application.

