
APPENDIX G

FAQ Comment Responses

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Kimball Junction EIS NEPA Scoping Report FAQ

The following comment and question themes were frequently submitted to the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) during the December 27, 2022 to January 27, 2023 public comment period during National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping for the Kimball Junction Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

1. How will the 3 alternatives be compared; are they all equally effective in traffic mitigation?

- UDOT will evaluate how well each alternative meets the project purpose and the potential environmental impacts associated with each alternative.
- Potential criteria that UDOT will use to evaluate each of the alternatives include:
 - Travel times (how long it takes to you to get to where you're going)
 - Intersection performance (how long you're waiting at a light)
 - Queue lengths (length of traffic backup) on I-80
 - Pedestrian/bicycle connectivity and comfort
 - Impacts to environmental resources
- At this phase, traffic performance analysis for each alternative is not complete. This process will be documented in the Alternatives Development and Screening Report and the Draft EIS. Both documents will be made available for public review and comment.

2. How is public input used in making a decision? Does the majority rule?

- The NEPA EIS process is not a vote. Rather, public input is only one of several elements that will be considered. UDOT must also consider technical data, established environmental policies, and agency input.
- A preferred alternative will be selected using an objective, data-driven approach that is informed by all public input received during the various comment periods throughout the NEPA process alongside the technical data and analysis.

3. Who decides what alternative will be selected?

- UDOT is the lead agency that is responsible for the NEPA process.

4. What is the destination of traffic in the study area?

- Traffic is a blend of drivers accessing local businesses and neighborhoods and drivers passing through. Depending on the time of day and direction, the local access traffic is about 30% to 55% of the total traffic on SR-224.

5. Will this project induce traffic demand?

- Potential shifting traffic volumes or growth in traffic volumes for each alternative will be developed using the regional travel demand model.
- The model will consider how traffic may shift to study area roadways as improvements reduce congestion and improve travel times.

6. Will this project lead to big bottlenecks down the road?

- The primary transportation needs are the long travel time people experience leaving to get onto I-80, which has the capacity to receive these people in the PM peak.
 - The morning peak experiences queuing on I-80 and there are additional bottlenecks downstream such as the Canyons Resorts Drive area.
 - This project does not address those bottlenecks but would address the safety concerns of people stopped on the freeway in winter conditions.
- Other studies are looking at travel demand management strategies and intersection improvements to alleviate congestion towards Park City.

7. How is future development being accounted for in the study?

- UDOT uses the information provided by local governments and puts it in a travel demand model.
 - The model includes growth in general but doesn't focus on specific development plans.
 - Local government plans assume future growth in the area.
 - UDOT coordinates with local governments to discuss if any potential corrections are needed.
- UDOT is using the Summit-Wasatch travel demand model that accounts for future development in the area.
 - This model is updated every four years.
 - Population forecasts are developed through a collaboration with multiple agencies, including the Kem C. Gardner institute.

8. What was the time period for your data collection; would COVID have impacted those numbers? Does your data account for future growth?

- Winter 2021/2022 season (December through April)
 - Most ski and transit operations were functioning at a pre-COVID capacity with the exception of Sundance.
- The planning horizon for the EIS is the year 2050. The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute produces long-term demographic and economic projections for the state of Utah and its counties.

- Wasatch and Summit Counties are projected to have large increases in population, employment, and households by 2050.
- These projected increases are expected to result in continued increased travel demand on the transportation network including Kimball Junction. UDOT uses these growth projections in developing potential alternative solutions considered in the EIS.
- The Summit–Wasatch travel demand model was developed to forecast future traffic. The Mountainland Association of Governments, the Wasatch Front Regional Council, UDOT, and Summit County worked together to develop the model.
 - It is a traditional four-step travel demand model consisting of trip generation, trip distribution, model split, and trip assignment.
 - Refinements were made to the Summit–Wasatch model to better represent existing travel patterns and improve forecasts. The geographical subdivisions within a travel demand model are called traffic analysis zones (TAZ). Each TAZ is populated with household, population, and employment estimates.

9. How will the parking reservation system at the resorts impact your traffic data analysis?

- UDOT will monitor conditions such as this throughout the study for consideration.
- This season, traffic delays in the study area are comparable to past seasons.

10. How will these alternatives impact traffic on Landmark Drive?

- The traffic analysis will look at the traffic impacts on Landmark Drive.
- The Summit County long-range plan has Landmark Drive being widened to 4 lanes from Best Western to the Outlets in the future.

11. How will semi-trucks continue to access the area with Alternatives A or B?

- Semi-trucks will be accommodated during the design phase and after the construction of any of the proposed alternatives. This includes large single trucks as well as double and triple trailer trucks.

12. Couldn't some of the traffic pressures be reduced by widening SR-248?

- Analysis conducted for the study area showed that problems will persist at Kimball Junction whether or not SR-248 is widened.

13. Is a third lane between Kimball Junction and Park City being considered?

- A third lane for general-purpose traffic between Kimball Junction and Park City is not in the rural long-range plan.

14. Can a slip ramp be made to connect I-80 and Ecker View Park and Ride?

- The Federal Highway Administration controls access to the interstate.
 - Slip ramps are typically discouraged unless there is a strong, justifiable reason.
 - When UDOT discussed the potential connection between the park and ride and the local system, it was not seen as a strong, justifiable reason.

15. Could improved transit such as the BRT or tolling solve this instead of building?

- Transit is an input in the travel demand model and we are taking into consideration increases in ridership.
- None of the alternatives would be a barrier to an improved transit system, such as the BRT project.
- Previous studies in the area have shown a low level of interest in travel demand management strategies such as tolling.

16. Does the EIS take into account the SR-224 BRT project? How is this related to the BRT project?

- One purpose of the Kimball Junction EIS project is to maintain or improve the SR-224 BRT transit travel time through the evaluation area. Note that the BRT is not currently planned to operate on SR-224 between Olympic Parkway and the I-80 interchange. The only improvements that the BRT is incorporating on SR-224 in the Kimball Junction area are dual left turns at Olympic Parkway and a transit-only eastbound right turn lane from Olympic Parkway onto SR-224. All alternatives considered for the Kimball Junction EIS will be compatible with the SR-224 BRT.
- The BRT is not building a large amount of infrastructure that would be impacted by the currently proposed alternatives.

17. Is the project funded?

- The project is currently not funded for design and construction.
- In the future, the project will go through UDOT's prioritization process and will be considered for funding against other infrastructure projects.
- Funding could come from a variety of sources, such as state, federal, local, or private funding or a combination of sources.

18. What can UDOT do now, since building one of these alternatives is years away?

- A safety improvement project is funded at SR-224 & Ute Boulevard to add dual left-turn lanes that are programmed to be built in 2025.
- The SR-224 bus rapid transit is planned to be built soon and will provide travel options for local and visiting travelers. UDOT contributed over \$30 million towards the project.

19. How do the Olympics affect the EIS process? Would the Olympics fund this project?

- It doesn't impact our existing and future conditions, this is a special event condition.
 - There are teams with the traffic operations center that manage this.
 - It will be important to have a project and cost identified to pursue funding opportunities if the Olympics are awarded here.
- We focus on the funding pool that typically funds UDOT projects, the Transportation Investment Fund (TIF), but the Olympics might impact other funds.
 - If the project is funded by the TIF, the funding year might be moved up from being at the end of the queue.
 - The Olympics could provide federal funding opportunities but is outside the scope of this study.

20. How does cost influence the decision-making process?

- In the NEPA process, cost may be considered during the initial screening process if the cost of an alternative is extraordinary, which generally we define as magnitudes higher than other alternatives, and would therefore exceed any reasonable expectation of future funding.
- The alternatives identified to date are within the same order of magnitude and will therefore be screened on how well they meet the purpose & need of the project and their potential environmental impacts. If numerous alternatives perform similarly and have comparable environmental impacts, cost may then be used as a screening criterion.
- We will be looking to find alternatives that provide the greatest benefits and minimize costs.
- Updated cost estimates will be developed throughout the study.

21. How will wildlife be impacted by this project?

- Wildlife impacts will be evaluated in the detailed impacts analysis for the Draft EIS.
- Previous coordination has resulted in wildlife fencing placed along the corridor from Jeremy Ranch to Roundabout in front of outlets. A separate project will add wildlife fencing east of Kimball Junction to the east of the I-80 underpass but not to US-40.

22. How will noise impact be measured and accounted for?

- All of the current alternatives would be considered a Type I project and a noise analysis would be conducted in accordance with UDOT's Noise Abatement Policy. This analysis will look at the impacts of traffic noise in the year 2050 and evaluate if noise mitigation measures, such as noise walls, would be warranted and effective.
- If noise walls are proposed within any area of the project, any benefitted or front-row receptors would be balloted later in the design process to determine if a noise wall is desired.

23. How will UDOT take into consideration the visual impacts of the proposed alternatives?

- Visual impacts are one of the many environmental resources that are evaluated in the impacts analysis of the Draft EIS.