

House Transportation Committee

2/24/2025

Bill: SB 174 – Transit and Transportation Governance Amendments

Sponsor: Senator Wayne A. Harper

Floor Sponsor: Representative Kay J. Christofferson

UASD Position: Support

This Bill amends provisions related to the governance of public transit districts.

Discussion: Senator Harper presented the Bill, stating that it clarifies the duties of each party involved with a large public transit district. The Bill shifts some day-to-day administrative responsibilities from the Board of Trustees to the Executive Director, further clarifies the Board of Trustees' responsibilities, and enhances the role of the local advisory boards. It also provides clarity regarding Fixed Guideway Oversight, improving the Utah Transit Authority's ("UTA") operations, what UTA should be focusing on, and who is responsible for performing administrative functions. The Bill amends and reallocates the roles of the Board of Trustees, Executive Director, and Local Advisory Council of UTA. It requires all fixed guideway capital development projects within UTA to be under the supervision of the Utah Department of Transportation ("UDOT"), regardless of whether the project includes state funding. Additionally, the Bill modifies provisions related to public transit planning and mandates that UTA provide a report regarding contracting for reduced fares. Finally, the Bill amends the levels of contracts within the district that require approval from the Board of Trustees.

Representative Chevrier asked whether cities and towns would still have a say in public transit functions. The sponsor responded that the Local Advisory Council, which represents the cities and towns, has had its duties strengthened by the Bill. Representative Chevrier then inquired if each city and municipality would have its own Council or if there would be a single Council made up of representatives from each location. The sponsor clarified that there would be one Council assigned to a geographic area, with representation based on population. Representative Defay pointed out that the strategic plan, which was originally required to be developed every four years, had been removed. However, she noted that line 431 still refers to another plan to be developed every four years and asked if they were essentially the same thing. The sponsor explained that while the Board of Trustees will still be responsible for creating the plan, both the Local Advisory Council and Executive Director will be more involved in the process. The Chair of UTA's Board of Trustees and a member of the Wasatch Front Regional Council spoke in support of the Bill.

Yeas: 9

Nays: 1

N/V: 2

Outcome: SB 174 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.
