Council of Governments Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2026
Council Chambers
5:00 PM
Zoom Link

1. Call to Order

   Scott Wardle called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

2. Roll Call

   Scott Wardle, Jared Hamner, Erik Stromberg, Maresa Manzione, Dave McCall, John Olson, Bryan Johnson, Kathleen VonHatten, Sheldon Birch, Heidi Hammond, Joe Johnston, Christopher Damour, Wayne Bennion, Andrew Gruber, Geoff Dupaix, Kyle Jensen, Cameron Diehl, Brittany Lopez and Andy Welch.

3. Public Comment

   No public comment

4. Minutes

   A. Meeting Minutes from December

   Attachments
   1. December Meeting Minutes 12.18.25.pdf

   Maresa Manzione motioned to approve the minutes and John Olson seconded the motion. All in favor, minutes were approved.

5. Recognitions, Presentations, & Board Appointments

   A. 2026 Appointments for Wasatch Front Regional Council(WFRC) Committees, Andrew Gruber

   2026 Appointments:
   Wasatch Front Regional Council Member — Scott Wardle & Alternate — Maresa Manzione
   Wasatch Front Economic Development — Member — Jake Thomas & Alternate — Tye Hoffmann
   CDBG Regional Review Committee — Member - John Olson & Member - Rachelle Custer
   Regional Growth Committee — Member — Heidi Hammond & Alternate — Kendall Thomas
   Transportation Coordinating Committee — Member — Erik Stromberg & Alternate — Sheldon Birch
   Active Transportation Committee — Member — Sheldon Birch & Alternate — Kathleen VonHatten
   Joint Policy Advisory Committee — Member — Dave McCall & Alternate — Jared Hamner

   John Olson motioned to approve the recommendations for WFRC. Bryan Johnson seconded the motion. All in favor

B. Appoint 2026 COG Transportation Sub-Committee Members

2026 Subcommittee:
Erik Stromberg, Kathleen VonHatten, Maresa Manzione, Heidi Hammond, and Sheldon Birch. All were approved.

The Chairman asked this committee to return to COG with a timeline for scoresheets and applications.

C. Appointment of UTA Local Advisory Council

Chairman Wardle explained the roles and responsibilities of the UTA Local Advisory Council. Melodi Gochis was recommended to fill the position. Maresa Manzione motioned to approve and Dave McCall seconded the motion. All in favor.

6. Discussion

A. WE ARE ALL PART OF THE SOLUTION 2026

Chair Scott Wardle opened the discussion by emphasizing the Council of Governments' role in developing solutions that address both immediate needs and long-term challenges, with planning horizons of three to five years, ten years, and twenty-five years. He stated that effective decision-making depends on gathering accurate information, understanding interests, and committing to shared education. Chair Wardle referenced a prior period when all faced significant intergovernmental challenges and noted that progress was achieved through a structured, multi-month educational process involving governmental entities and community partners. He expressed interest in applying a similar approach to current growth-related issues and invited members to identify topics where additional data, subject matter expertise, and coordinated learning would support informed decision-making in the coming months.

Members identified transportation as a primary concern and discussed the need for stronger coordination in regional transportation planning. The discussion included long-term transportation needs, east-west connectivity, and the importance of corridor planning that reflects growth trends across jurisdictions. The Mid-Valley Highway was referenced as a significant priority, along with the need for additional routes to improve mobility through the valley. Members also raised concerns regarding freight movement and the impact of heavy truck traffic on local main streets, noting the importance of bypass options and regional routing strategies.

Geoff Dupaix, representing the Utah Department of Transportation, participated in the discussion and emphasized the importance of coordinated planning across jurisdictional boundaries. He noted that long-range transportation planning efforts are evolving to better identify key local routes and connections within the broader regional network. He shared that UDOT has begun incorporating discussions of how local transportation routes connect across city and county boundaries into long-range planning, acknowledging that this approach reflects a shift toward more integrated and collaborative planning. He also recognized that transportation planning can involve competing priorities and tension, but emphasized the value of continued dialogue and collaboration.

The conversation expanded to include transit planning and the Utah Transit Authority's role in supporting regional mobility. Members emphasized that transportation challenges do not end at municipal boundaries and that alignment among cities and the county is necessary to achieve effective outcomes. Several comments highlighted the value of developing shared priorities, so the region can present a unified voice when working with the Wasatch Front Regional Council and when coordinating on funding tools such as corridor preservation and third-quarter sales tax initiatives.

Residential growth and associated infrastructure demands were also discussed. Members acknowledged that population growth continues to place pressure on local infrastructure and services. The discussion further addressed commercial development and economic development strategies, with members recognizing the challenges of balancing municipal competition for tax base with the benefits of cooperative planning. It was suggested that a

coordinated approach to commercial development across the valley could strengthen the overall tax base and support critical services, including public safety and emergency response. Tooele City's experience with long-term commercial development was referenced as a potential example for regional consideration.

Cameron, representing the Utah League of Cities and Towns, provided perspective on cooperative leadership and regional coordination. Cameron emphasized that communities across the state are experiencing rapid growth and increasing public frustration with government, underscoring the importance of collaboration among cities, counties, and state partners. He noted that regions are most successful when they define success collectively before developing strategies to achieve it. Cameron encouraged the Council of Governments to take advantage of the current opportunity created by the number of newly elected officials to establish shared expectations, strengthen relationships, and build momentum for cooperative planning.

The discussion also identified parks, open space, and recreation as important topics for future consideration. Cameron shared insights from his experience on state-level boards evaluating grant applications for recreational facilities and trail projects. He noted that when multiple jurisdictions within the same region submit competing proposals without a clear regional priority, it can be difficult for state decision-makers to assess relative importance. He encouraged the group to coordinate priorities and build consensus so that regional applications for state and federal funding are stronger and more competitive.

Members raised concerns about the practical implications of jurisdictional boundaries, particularly where certain communities experience disproportionate impacts from recreation activities, emergency response demands, and enforcement responsibilities. While participants expressed support for regional cooperation, it was acknowledged that funding structures and operational realities can complicate these efforts. The discussion highlighted the importance of addressing growth, recreation, and transportation pressures while fully considering their impacts on local services and resources.

In response, planning partners reaffirmed the importance of maintaining open dialogue and shared problem-solving, even when perspectives differ. Chair Wardle indicated that he would return with a proposed model and structured plan for further discussion and asked members to consider how they would define success for the region and what shared principles could guide future decision-making. He also noted an intent to include brief educational presentations in future meetings and to invite broader participation from city councils to strengthen continuity and shared understanding.

The discussion concluded with partner organizations expressing support for the Council of Governments' efforts and reaffirming their willingness to assist as the region works toward coordinated growth planning and shared regional priorities.

7. New Business

A. Proposed Time Change to COG

The Council discussed a proposed change to the COG meeting start time to 5:00 p.m. Joe Johnston expressed concern that a 5:00 p.m. start time would be difficult for him to attend due to his work schedule. Following the discussion, Jared made a motion to approve the change to a 5:00 p.m. meeting start time, which was seconded by Kathleen VonHatten.

8. COG Committee Reports/Updates

Dugway:

Christopher Damour, representing Dugway Proving Ground, provided an update and expressed appreciation to the Council and partnering agencies for their support of the recent Industry Day held at Dugway Proving Ground. He reported that the event was well attended and included strong representation from state and county government, as well as other agencies, which he noted was very beneficial. He also shared that representatives from the Office of the Secretary of the Army were in attendance, which further enhanced the event's value.

Mr. Damour indicated that a second Industry Day is scheduled for February 4. He noted that the

opportunity to host a second event suggests that additional engagement with private industry is being pursued. Due to a scheduling conflict, he will be unable to attend the February event, as he will be participating in Legislative Meet the Military Day at the State Capitol. He advised that members of his team would attend the Industry Day in his place.

He reiterated that the Army is proposing to allow private corporations to enter into enhanced use leases to develop privately operated data centers on U.S. Army property. He clarified that the Army has identified four potential locations nationwide and that private industry is submitting bids for them. He further noted that more than one location can be selected and that the process does not preclude development at multiple sites.

Mr. Damour stated that he had no additional updates to share at this time and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to attend his first meeting with the Council. He also noted a scheduling conflict involving a future meeting and indicated that he would explore options to address that conflict.

Vernon: Just a reminder that CDBG grants are due at the end of this month, at 5:00 PM

9. Adjournment

Maresa Manzione motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Dave McCall seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 PM.