Frequently Asked Questions
Regarding the Conceptual Alternatives Review Period for the Parley’s Interchange Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), July 2018

How was the public notified about the latest alternatives-development process?
UDOT notified everyone who signed up to be on the email list during the scoping process and posted information about the conceptual alternatives on the project website. In addition, postcards were mailed to residents who live within a quarter mile of the interchange based on county property tax data (see the attached figure showing the quarter-mile distance). In all, about 3,300 notifications were mailed out. The county property data doesn’t always have accurate mailing addresses or current names of residents, but it’s the most accurate information available.

UDOT made presentations to the Millcreek City Council, the Salt Lake County Council, and the Salt Lake City Council and hosted a public open house. Meetings were also held with the Stakeholder Working Group, which includes representatives from businesses, recreation groups, and community councils throughout the project area. These Stakeholder Working Group members help distribute information about the EIS to their organizations and constituents.

How will concepts identified by the public during the alternatives-development review period be addressed by UDOT?
UDOT is in the process of refining alternatives and will consider the suggestions and comments identified by the public during the alternatives-development review period. Each concept suggested by the public will be considered, and the results will be summarized in an alternatives-screening report, which is expected to be released in the fall of this year. The concepts will be evaluated to ensure that they meet safety and engineering standards, future congestion levels on the interstate and local streets, and UDOT and Federal Highway Administration interstate access requirements. Designing and evaluating these concepts will take time, so it might be a few months before we can provide a response to the suggested concepts.

Would the Parley’s Interchange Project affect Wasatch Boulevard, homes east of I-215 near 3300 South (Mount Olympus community), or the Grandeur Peak trailhead?
The design of the Parley’s Interchange EIS alternatives will need to maintain existing access and connections to local roads, trail connections, and utility infrastructure. Although Wasatch Boulevard would need to be slightly shifted to the east, it would be maintained in its same...
general location, and connections to existing roads from Wasatch Boulevard would also be maintained. With the current alternatives, there should be no impact to the Grandeur Peak trailhead.

As shown on page 23 of the project’s purpose and need statement, which is available on the project website, the 3300 South area of the interchange is considered a “hot-spot” location because of substandard merging movements, inadequate traffic capacity, and sharp curves. During a 7-year period from 2010 to 2016, 50 accidents were reported in this area. For these reasons, the roadway geometry in this area needs to be improved to address safety.

In addition, UDOT modeled the expected traffic volumes in the project area in 2050. As a result of this traffic modeling, UDOT identified the following capacity improvements to meet the projected transportation needs:

- Two lanes in each direction are needed for the northbound I-215 to eastbound I-80 movement.
- Two lanes in each direction are needed for the westbound I-80 to southbound I-215 movement.
- In order to address the existing merge-and-weave area on northbound I-215 north of 3300 South, a braided ramp is needed to separate the traffic exiting northbound I-215 to go to eastbound I-80 and the traffic going north on I-215 that’s entering from 3300 South.
- In order to address the existing merge-and-weave area on southbound I-215 north of 3300 South, an off ramp is needed for 3300 South that exits farther north on I-215 before the westbound I-80 ramp merges onto southbound I-215.

To meet these safety and additional capacity needs, UDOT needs to improve the interchange in the area of 3300 South. The area between 3300 South and Suicide Rock is the most constrained section of the project area. This section of the interchange has limited horizontal space and mountainous topography. In addition to I-215 and the existing ramps to and from I-80, this area includes the following resources adjacent to the interstate:

- Numerous water lines operated by Salt Lake City Public Utilities and the Metropolitan Water District of Salt Lake & Sandy (MWDSLS)
- MWDSLS water tanks on the west side of I-215
- The Grandeur Peak parking lot and trailhead
- Trail connections to the Parley’s Trail
- Trail connections to the Bonneville Shoreline Trail
- Wasatch Boulevard
- The residential community on the east side of Wasatch Boulevard

UDOT made conceptual alternatives for the Parley’s Interchange EIS available for public review in July 2018. These alternatives show conceptual designs that would meet the safety and travel demand (amount of projected traffic) for this critical area in 2050. UDOT hasn't yet performed
detailed vertical modeling of the conceptual designs or refined their horizontal alignment. UDOT shared the conceptual alternatives before performing these steps so that the public could weigh in on the conceptual alternatives before their designs were advanced further. At this time, UDOT hasn’t made any formal determinations regarding the effects of these alternatives, including property impacts, on any of the surrounding resources. Once the more-detailed engineering is complete, UDOT will determine any potential property impacts.

With the conclusion of the public review period for the conceptual alternatives (on August 10, 2018), UDOT and the project team are now reviewing and considering the comments on the conceptual alternatives and will refine these alternatives to include more-detailed vertical modeling and refinement of the horizontal alignments.

Why do the alternatives propose widening the interstates, ramps, and some connections to Foothill Drive and Parley’s Way?

The population in Salt Lake County is expected to increase by 36% between now and 2050. As a result of the increase in population, travel demand will also increase, causing congestion to worsen at the Parley’s interchange. UDOT modeled the expected traffic volumes in the project area in 2050. As a result of the increase in population by 2050, travel demand modeling showed the need for increasing the capacity of the interchange area. UDOT identified the following improvements to meet the projected transportation capacity needs:

- I-80 will be increased by a lane in each direction.
- Two lanes in each direction are needed for the northbound I-215 to eastbound I-80 movement.
- Two lanes in each direction are needed for the westbound I-80 to southbound I-215 movement.
- In order to address the existing merge-and-weave area on northbound I-215 north of 3300 South, a braided ramp is needed to separate the traffic exiting northbound I-215 to go to eastbound I-80 and the traffic going north on I-215 that is entering from 3300 South.
- In order to address the existing merge-and-weave area on southbound I-215 north of 3300 South, a braided ramp is needed to separate the traffic exiting westbound I-80 that is going to southbound I-215 from the traffic going south on I-215 that is exiting at 3300 South.

UDOT will evaluate concepts suggested by the public during the alternatives-development review period to determine whether those concepts meet safety and engineering standards.

Does the Parley’s Interchange Project include widening Foothill Drive?

No. Widening Foothill Drive isn’t part of the Parley’s Interchange Project, so it would be addressed in a separate project. UDOT anticipates that any improvements to Foothill Drive for this project would be limited to the segment south of Stringham Avenue.
Would improvements to the Parley’s interchange increase the amount of northbound traffic on Foothill Drive?

UDOT modeled the expected traffic volumes in the project area in 2050. The modeling assumes the projected household and population growth that was developed by the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute at the University of Utah (http://gardner.utah.edu/demographics) for the Wasatch Front and that was provided to the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget.

According to the modeling, between 2018 and 2050, traffic on Foothill Drive is projected to increase by 21%. The modeling showed that, with no improvements to the Parley’s interchange, Foothill Drive in 2050 would have about 55,400 vehicles per day. Compared to the amount of traffic that’s projected with no improvements to the Parley’s interchange in 2050, the proposed improvements to the interchange would increase the amount of traffic on Foothill Drive by about 1.8% over the entire day, or about 1,000 additional vehicles per day. This slight increase in the number of vehicles wouldn’t change the congestion level on Foothill Drive. Therefore, the proposed improvements wouldn’t substantially change traffic conditions on Foothill Drive.

Will noise walls be considered as part of the Parley’s Interchange Project?

UDOT considers noise impacts and noise abatement (reduction) for all residential properties adjacent to any project for which UDOT’s Noise Abatement Policy applies. Neither the values of properties nor the income levels of residents are considered in the noise analysis. By following its Noise Abatement Policy, UDOT ensures that all residents who might experience noise impacts from roads are considered equally under UDOT’s processes.

UDOT will evaluate noise impacts and mitigation as part of the Parley’s Interchange Project. UDOT will follow its Noise Abatement Policy when conducting this evaluation. Noise-abatement measures could include installing new noise walls and/or changing the locations or heights of existing noise walls.

Noise impacts and evaluated mitigation measures will be included in the Draft and Final EIS documents. UDOT’s Noise Abatement Policy requires UDOT to allow affected residents and property owners to vote on noise walls before any new or modified noise walls are installed. The balloting of residents for noise walls usually occurs after the EIS process and before construction. For more information, see: https://www.udot.utah.gov/main/uconowner.gf?n=10496602977480171.

When will UDOT conduct the noise study and release the results?

To study future noise conditions, UDOT needs to know details such as the horizontal and vertical location of an alternative and the associated traffic volumes, speed, and mix for each segment of the road. Now that UDOT has received feedback on the conceptual alternatives, it will refine and develop alternatives to include these details. The noise study will then incorporate the proposed alternative designs into a noise model so that UDOT can accurately evaluate
noise impacts. The extent of the noise analysis will be based on the physical extent of the project alternatives.

UDOT anticipates that the noise study will be completed toward the end of 2018. The results of the study will be released in the Draft EIS, which is currently anticipated to be published in the summer of 2019. The results of the noise study won’t be published before the Draft EIS is released, since the alternatives might be modified up to the release of the Draft EIS, and these modifications might change the results of the noise study.

Why doesn’t UDOT include noise impacts in the upcoming screening process for evaluating alternatives, similar to wetland and wildlife impacts?

As discussed above, noise analyses require more-detailed engineering information (such as vertical profiles) that aren’t available for the alternatives during the alternatives-screening process. The noise analyses are conducted as part of the evaluation for the Draft EIS, so the noise analyses are conducted only for the alternatives that pass through the screening process.

Will existing noise walls be replaced?

UDOT’s Noise Abatement Policy includes a section about relocating existing noise walls. See Section (C)(2)(d)(1)(e) of that policy.

In summary, existing noise walls must be relocated or replaced due to conflicts with new construction projects, and, where the walls don’t meet the noise-abatement criteria, the existing walls will be relocated or replaced with an “in-kind” wall as long as the replacement wall doesn’t reduce roadway safety, preclude or conflict with planned roadway projects, require property acquisitions or additional right-of-way, conflict with utilities, or result in unacceptable costs to UDOT.

Will UDOT improve the pavement on I-80 from 1300 East to the Parley’s interchange as part of the Parley’s Interchange Project?

UDOT realizes the pavement on this segment of I-80 should be replaced. UDOT has identified funding and is planning to replace the pavement in the next 3 to 4 years. The pavement project is a separate project from the Parley’s Interchange Project.

Will UDOT consider using asphalt instead of concrete to help reduce noise levels?

Pavement type is one of several factors that contribute to the noise caused by tires on pavement. A final decision regarding the pavement type used for the Parley’s Interchange Project would be made prior to construction. UDOT considers the cost of the pavement type versus the long-term maintenance of the pavement. Normally, on interstates with a high volume
of truck traffic, concrete is used because it lasts substantially longer than asphalt and is more cost-effective over the long term.

Did UDOT change the discussion of pavement conditions in the purpose and need statement after the April 2018 public review period? No. Section 1.4.5, Aging Infrastructure, in the purpose and need statement still includes a section about pavement conditions in the project area.

Would Parley’s Way Park be affected by Alternative A? No formal determinations have been made regarding the impacts to Parley’s Way Park. Alternative A might require acquiring a very small portion of the southeast corner of the park. There are no amenities or features in this portion of the park. Given the high noise levels in the park from existing traffic on Foothill Drive, Parley’s Way, and I-80, UDOT doesn’t expect that noise levels would substantially increase at the park as a result of interchange modifications. All designs would consider the safety of the park’s users and local residents.

Would the cut and fill of the proposed improvements increase landslides or related issues from earthquakes? No. All designs will take into account landslides, drainage, and the earthquake risk in the area. The designs will use walls and other methods to eliminate the potential for slides along the highway.

Would afternoon southbound traffic increase on Foothill Drive, leading to greater use of Parley’s Way via 2300 East? The Parley’s Interchange Project wouldn’t increase congestion on Foothill Drive during the afternoon commute. The improvements to the Parley’s interchange should improve overall traffic flow near the interchange. The project wouldn’t change congestion on Foothill Drive farther north of the interchange, since that congestion is a function of the capacity of Foothill Drive and not the interchange.

Would access to Parley’s Way be eliminated? Only Alternative C would eliminate access to Parley’s Way. With Alternative C, traffic traveling eastbound on I-80 that exits onto Foothill Drive wouldn’t be able to access Parley’s Way and would need to use Stringham Boulevard.
Will any of the alternatives include mass transit such as light rail or buses, or travel demand management?

The alternatives considered by UDOT will accommodate current and proposed transit operations identified in the 2015–2040 Regional Transportation Plan. Because the Parley’s interchange is a facility that’s used by regional traffic from all areas of the Wasatch Front and Summit County, any transit solution would need to be developed at a regional level and account for traffic traveling from many locations to destinations all over the Salt Lake Valley. For this reason, UDOT will rely on the future transit services in the 2015–2040 Regional Transportation Plan as the best source for managing region-wide traffic through transit.

Similarly, travel demand management on a system-to-system interchange such as the Parley’s interchange requires collaboration with multiple entities at a regional scale. As part of transportation planning efforts, UDOT is working with the University of Utah, other area employers, and municipalities to identify ways to balance transportation demand and improve mobility options. The outcomes of these efforts will be used to inform and manage travel demand at the regional level.

Would the existing recreational trail system be affected by the Parley’s Interchange Project?

Alternatives to improve the interchange could require relocating or reconstructing some trails that cross through the interchange. UDOT would maintain all current connections, though some trails might need to be rerouted.

When will UDOT make a decision regarding which alternative to implement, and when would construction start?

The alternatives-development and refinement phase occurs early in the EIS process to ensure that the alternatives carried forward for more detailed evaluation in the Draft EIS consider all of the concerns raised by the public. A final decision regarding the alternatives’ alignments has not been made. UDOT will release a Draft EIS in the summer of 2019 to seek additional input. UDOT anticipates that a final decision about the project will be made in the spring of 2020. Throughout the 2-year EIS process, UDOT will continually seek input before a final decision is made.

Currently, no funding has been identified for construction. Typically, in order to take into account the specifics of the alternative that’s selected, funding for construction isn’t identified until the completion of the EIS process. The Parley’s Interchange Project is included in the 2015–2040 Regional Transportation Plan for construction funding during the period from 2025 to 2034.
POSTCARD DISTRIBUTION MAP
PARCELS WITHIN A QUARTER MILE OF THE PROJECT STUDY AREA

Legend
- Study Extent
- Parcels Within Quarter Mile Buffer
- City Boundaries

0 0.5 Miles