Frequently Asked Questions
Regarding the Scoping Period for the Parley’s Interchange Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Why did the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) make repairs to the Parley’s interchange in 2017, then decide to conduct an EIS to redesign the interchange?

The improvements to the Parley’s interchange in 2017 were associated with required maintenance. This maintenance was needed to ensure the continued safe operation of the interchange before UDOT makes a final decision regarding the entire interchange as part of the EIS process.

Why does it take 2 years to go through an EIS process before a decision can be made?

The guidelines for the EIS process were established by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970, which requires specific timeframes for public input and review. In addition, the EIS process requires that UDOT involve federal, regional, and local agencies and governments in the process of developing alternatives and evaluating impacts. For a project like the Parley’s interchange, UDOT will spend up to 6 months designing interchange alternatives. Given the complex traffic movements that occur at this interchange, UDOT must ensure that all alternatives considered in detail in the EIS would meet the project’s goals and safety standards.

Does the proposed project include improvements to Foothill Drive?

UDOT will consider evaluating improvements to Foothill Drive if they affect the operation of the Parley’s interchange—for example, if they prevent traffic on Foothill Drive from backing into the interchange. Currently, UDOT believes that any improvements to Foothill Drive would be limited to the segment south of Stringham Avenue. UDOT doesn’t anticipate that improvements to Foothill Drive north of Stringham Avenue would be needed as part of the Parley’s Interchange Project.

Will local interchanges on I-80 and I-215 be considered for improvement in the EIS?

Alternatives to improve the Parley’s interchange would be focused on the operations and safety of the interchange. UDOT would consider improvements to adjacent interchanges (1300 East and 2300 East on I-80, and 4500 South, 3900 South, and 3300 South on I-215) only if improvements to these interchanges are needed to meet UDOT’s goals of improving the operations and safety of the Parley’s interchange.
Will the proposed project consider mass transit such as light rail, buses, and travel demand management?

The alternatives considered by UDOT will accommodate current and proposed transit operations identified in the 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 Regional Transportation Plan as the best source for managing region-wide traffic through transit.

Similarly, travel demand management on system-to-system interchange such as the Parley’s interchange is difficult. Elements such as ride-share programs, flex hours, and working from home are better addressed by the employers whose employees use the interchange, and by the University of Utah, whose students use the interchange on a daily basis. Given the regional nature of the traffic that uses the interchange, the issue of travel demand management is better addressed at a regional level.

Will the existing recreational trail system be affected by the proposed 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.

Will noise walls be considered as part of the proposed project?

Yes, UDOT will evaluate noise impacts and mitigation as part of the proposed project. UDOT will follow its latest Noise Abatement Policy when conducting this evaluation. Noise-abatement measures could include installing new noise walls and/or changing 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.

Will Parley’s Way Park be affected by any of the alternatives?

UDOT is in the process of developing alternatives, and UDOT understands the importance of Parley’s Way Park and other parks that are adjacent to the interchange. In developing alternatives, UDOT will strive to first avoid and second to minimize impacts to existing parks.

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

The final decision regarding a preferred alternative is anticipated in early 2020 with the release of the project’s Record of Decision. Currently, no funding has been identified for construction. Typically, funding for construction isn’t identified until the completion of the EIS process in order to take into account the
specifics of the alternative that’s selected. The project is included in the Regional Transportation Plan for construction funding during the period 2025 to 2034.