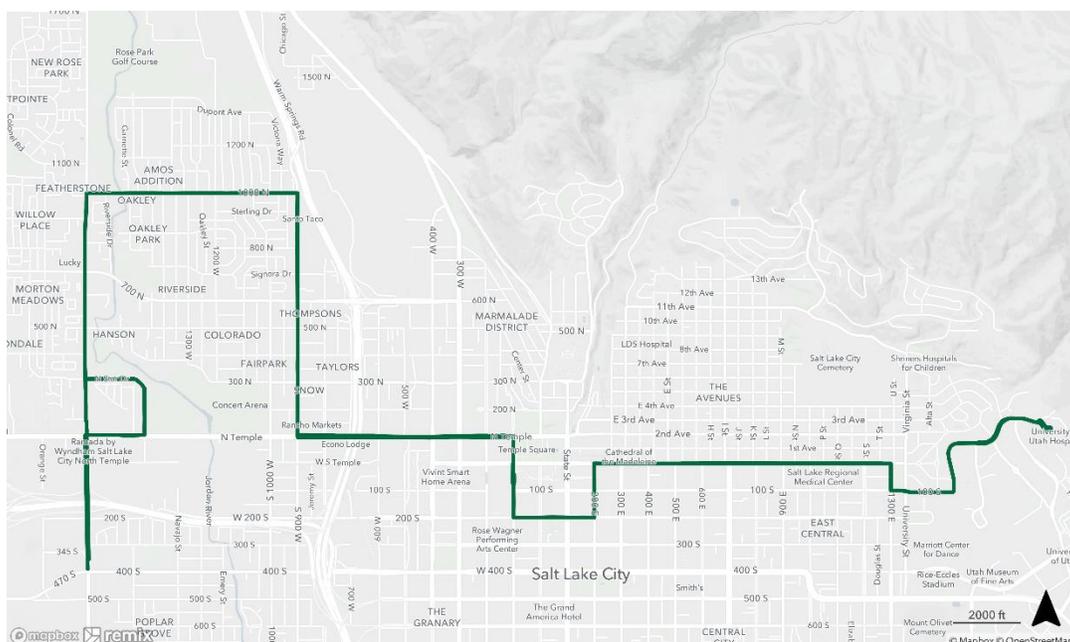


June 9, 2022

## Response to Resident Concerns and Proposed Alternatives for Transit Service in the Avenues, Salt Lake City

### Background

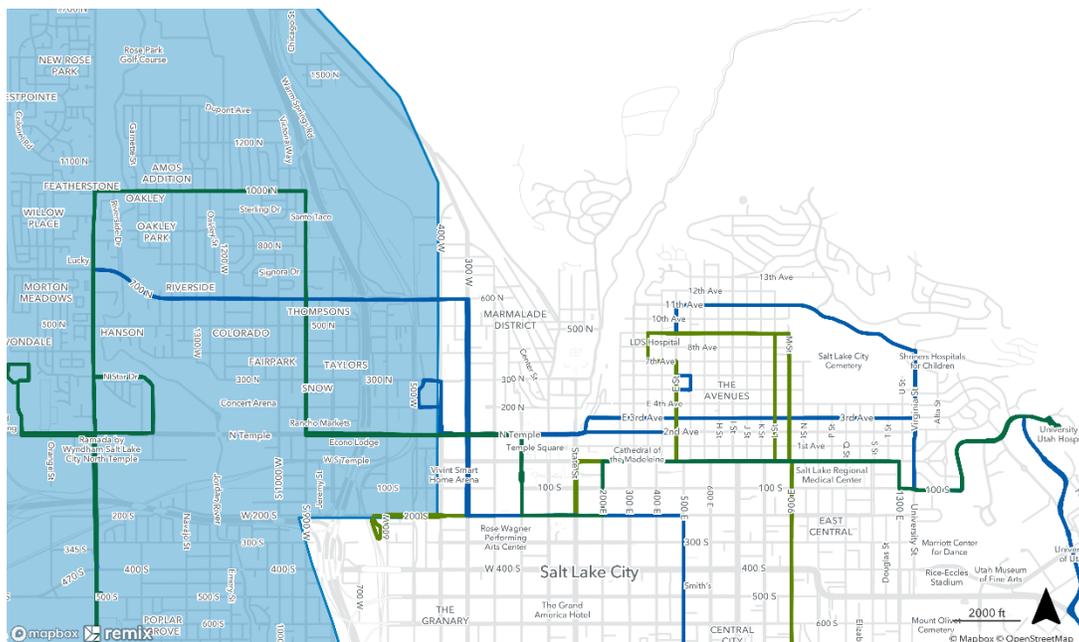
As part of an ongoing collaboration with Salt Lake City to implement the city's Transit Master Plan, Utah Transit Authority plans to begin service on new local route 1 on August 7, 2022.



In conjunction with the implementation of route 1, the following additional changes are planned within Salt Lake City:

- Route 3: replaced by extended route 223
- Route 6: replaced by route 1 and extended route 209
- Route F11: route alignment changed to use C Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue near LDS Hospital
- Route 205: route extended to serve Fairpark, Rose Park neighborhoods via 300 West, 600 North, Redwood Road. Service to Salt Lake Central Station covered/replaced by routes 2, 209, 220
- Route 209: route alignment changed to serve Avenues neighborhood via L/M Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, C Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, E Street; route alignment changed to serve Salt Lake Central Station via State Street, 200 South. Service on South Temple replaced by route 1; service to North Temple Station covered/replaced by routes 200, 223
- Route 217: route shortened to DSBVI/Blind Center on 1950 West. Service north of DSBVI covered/replaced by routes 1, 205, UTA On Demand
- Route 223: route extended to North Temple Station via North Campus Drive, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Service to U of U Student Union covered by routes 9, 17, 21, 213

- Route 519: replaced by new route 1, extended route 205, and UTA On Demand service
- Route 520: replaced by new route 1, extended route 205, and UTA On Demand service
- Route 919: replaced by new route 1, extended route 205, and UTA On Demand service
- Route 920 replaced by new route 1, extended route 205, and UTA On Demand service



In response to the planned changes, a group of residents in the Greater Avenues community have raised a number of concerns regarding potential negative impacts to the neighborhood due to the planned changes to route 209.

At a meeting of the Greater Avenues Community Council on June 1, 2022, a group of residents presented four alternatives to the planned changes to route 209:

- Alternative 1: North/South service on J Street and K Street between South Temple and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue; service on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue between J/K Street and E Street
- Alternative 2: North/South service on M Street between South Temple and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and on J Street and K Street between 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue; service on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue between M Street and J/K Street; service on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue between J/K Street and E Street
- Alternative 3: Flex route circulator using K Street northbound, 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue westbound, E Street southbound, and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Eastbound
- Alternative 4: North/South service on M Street between South Temple and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue; service on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue between M Street and E Street, with a loop around LDS Hospital on E Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, C Street, and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue

### UTA Service Planning Response

The UTA Service Planning department’s response to the concerns and alternatives presented hinges on the following two questions: 1) Do the concerns raised rise to the level at which a change to planned

service is necessary to mitigate them? and 2) Do the alternatives presented provide an equal or greater benefit than the current plan?

### *Evaluation of Concerns*

Service Planning staff note that concerns raised regarding the impacts of increased transit service are not unique to this change. Review of UTA customer comment records suggests that concerns such as noise, fumes, or endangerment of children and pets have never been borne out once the service is implemented, with the sole exception of buses holding for time, as described in multiple conversations with the community: buses will hold for time when they arrive early at a stop designated as a timepoint, which has led to complaints in the past when holding occurs directly in front of a residence.

To minimize the impact of holding for time to residents, UTA has structured the schedule so that the majority of holding in the Avenues will occur adjacent to LDS Hospital. UTA examines on-time reliability data three times per year in connection with the Change Day process; consistent with UTA processes, staff will make adjustments in the future as necessary to reduce early/late arrivals at timepoints on all routes.

Some concerns, such as those regarding changes to neighborhood composition, are not within UTA's direct control. For example, per UTA's Service Design Guidelines, the planned increase in frequency in the Avenues would already be justified even if no additional housing were planned in the future.

UTA commends the desire to engage and robust response from the residents who have raised concerns but must emphasize that these concerns do not represent the sum total of all feedback received nor are representative of the community as a whole. The planned changes in both the Avenues and Westside areas are the culmination of planning work and public engagement that began in 2015 with the development of the Salt Lake City Transit Master Plan, as well as the UTA Service Choices project in 2019. UTA has worked closely with Salt Lake City to plan service in line with the Master Plan and Salt Lake City Transportation has expressed support for the planned changes.

More recently, UTA has received positive comments regarding the planned service changes both during and after the public comment period in March-April 2022; in particular, after the op-ed "Letter: Redesign of UTA bus lines in the Avenues raises safety concerns" was published in The Salt Lake Tribune, UTA has received additional feedback in support of the change through social media, emails, in-person conversations, and the Tribune itself.

Given the mix of feedback received and UTA's experience with concerns associated with prior service changes, UTA Service Planning staff feel that concerns raised regarding route 209 are not representative of the Greater Avenues community as a whole and do not in and of themselves constitute grounds to consider alternate service proposals before August 2022.

### *Evaluation of Proposed Alternatives*

Each of the proposed alternatives presented at the Greater Avenues Community Council meeting involves a decrease in the level of transit service in the Avenues, a change in routing, or both. These impacts must be weighed against the current plan to determine the potential benefits or drawbacks involved.

Any decrease in the frequency or hours of transit service reduces the utility of the service to current and potential riders, which reduces ridership. This in turn reduces the benefit of the transit service to the community in terms of reduced car traffic, fewer emissions, and access to non-work destinations or to commutes outside the “traditional” rush hour. Jarrett Walker, head planning consultant for the UTA Service Choices Project, summarized this phenomenon to the UTA Board of Trustees in 2019: “The benefits of transit service can only be realized to the extent that transit is *ridden*.” Reducing frequency and/or hours of service in the Avenues would not meet UTA’s stated goals for the service.

Some proposed routes can be ruled out as unsuitable for bus operations. For example, any alternative involving 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue would forfeit UTA’s ability to install more accessible bus stops along that portion of the route, and M Street is not wide enough for buses to pass in both directions at the same time. Other streets, such as 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, are operable for buses, but staff expressed concern during review that these alternatives do not provide optimal transit service for the neighborhood as a whole. The planned routing and bus stop locations have been thoroughly vetted and tested by representatives from UTA and the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 382 (which represents UTA drivers), and both groups have determined that the planned service can be operated safely and without negatively impacting traffic volumes, street crossings, and emergency services.

Apart from simply moving the route to a different street, staff did not identify any additional benefits compared to the current planned routing that would justify changing the route alignment for August 2022. Given the lack of benefits and potential disadvantages to changes in routing and level of service based on the alternatives proposed by the Avenues residents, UTA’s Service Planning department do not agree that the proposed service alternatives warrant adoption over the current planned service.

## Conclusion

Having reviewed concerns received and evaluated potential service alternatives, UTA Service Planning has determined that the planned changes to route 209 will best serve the Greater Avenues and the community at large. Changes to routes 1, 3, F11, 205, 209, 217, 223, 519, 520, 919, and 920 will proceed as planned on August 7, 2022. UTA will monitor rider and community feedback along with service performance on these and all other routes, and will make adjustments to service in the future as necessary.



**Eric Callison**

*Manager of Service Planning*

**Utah Transit Authority**

[ecallison@rideuta.com](mailto:ecallison@rideuta.com)

669 W. 200 S.

Salt Lake City, UT 84101

[www.rideuta.com](http://www.rideuta.com)

