Updated 1/21/2026

UDOT's Research Prioritization Process 2026

The information provided below is intended to provide instruction regarding how the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) administers the research prioritization process and the annual Research Workshop. This is the process that UDOT will follow to receive and evaluate Problem Statements that have been submitted for potential new **research, development, and technology transfer projects related to highways**.

All Research Problem Statements submitted become the property of UDOT, and authors are not guaranteed to receive a contract for any work that may result from the Problem Statements. However, if a Utah public university co-authors a Problem Statement, and if UDOT selects the project for funding, UDOT will consider recommending the funding for that public entity first.

Cost estimates in Problem Statements should be reasonable. Primary funding for new UDOT research projects will be federal State Planning and Research (SPR) funding through the UDOT Research & Innovation Division (R&I). As such, proposed research projects should not include estimated capital equipment costs ($10,000 or greater per item), but rather could include estimated costs based on equipment usage fees specific to the proposed research. UDOT's overhead rate for research projects with universities is 10%. Including student tuition in estimated costs is allowed with SPR funding and as agreed with universities in Utah. Note that including tuition cost could take away from the available project funding for the performance of the research. In the Problem Statement funding notes, it would be helpful if the Problem Statement authors would mention the basic types of cost items that pertain to the estimate such as labor, tuition, supplies, equipment, and travel.

UDOT's Research & Innovation Website link

- See "UDOT's Research Prioritization Process (Annual Research Workshop)"

Problem Statement Evaluation Process

1. Research Ideas Open House and Problem Statement Due Date

On February 5, 2026, R&I will host an in-person event called the Research Ideas Open House at the UDOT Calvin Rampton Complex. The purpose of this event is to encourage informal discussions that will lead to quality Problem Statements for new UDOT and Utah Transit Authority (UTA) research projects, promote networking between internal and external research partners, and increase awareness about UDOT's research process and projects. At the open house, UDOT and UTA subject leaders will be at designated tables to discuss their current research needs with attendees and meet new researchers. Consultants and university professors and others from UDOT, UTA, FHWA, or other partner agencies are invited to attend

to learn about UDOT's and UTA's research needs and process and to discuss their own research ideas. Information on how to attend will be sent out in advance.

Then UDOT/UTA personnel and researchers are invited to prepare Problem Statements. Researcher input is encouraged but not required at this stage.

All Problem Statements are due by Monday, March 9, 2026 and must be submitted as an email attachment to UTRAC@utah.gov using the MS Word format template provided on the workshop website. A Problem Statement Guidance document is also available on the website. Any Problem Statements that are received after the deadline will be considered late and not evaluated as part of this main process. It is imperative that Problem Statements are submitted on time so all statements are given the same level of consideration. *Each Problem Statement must be developed with a UDOT/UTA Champion in one of the participating Subject Groups, and it must be submitted by the UDOT/UTA Champion*. Submitted Problem Statements accepted by R&I will be posted on the workshop website prior to the workshop. The Subject Groups for the 2026 workshop (subject to change) are as follows:

- Materials & Pavements
- Maintenance & Stormwater
- Traffic Management & Safety
- Planning (incl. Active Transportation)
- Aeronautics
- Public Transportation
- Structures & Geotechnical

2. Initial Review, Evaluation, and Written Q&A
From Problem Statement submittal to the workshop time (approx. 5 weeks)

R&I reviews the submitted Problem Statements and provides comments to the evaluation teams for consideration in the evaluation of the Problem Statements.

The Subject Group evaluation teams are composed of individuals who have been identified by the Subject Group Leader. Generally, they are from the direct Subject Group or division within UDOT or UTA.

R&I posts the Problem Statements on the workshop website and provides these to the evaluation teams for initial review. Initial evaluations are performed based on what is in the Problem Statements. Initial evaluations are performed using the specific evaluation criteria and weighting for that Subject Group, generally 50% based on the Importance of the research and 50% based on the likelihood of Implementation of the research results. An online scoring tool will be provided to the evaluation teams by R&I.

As coordinated and collected by R&I, evaluation team members will be invited to provide written questions about the Problem Statements. These questions will be shared with the statement

Champions and co-authors. Then the Champions and co-authors will be invited to provide written responses to the evaluation team's questions. R&I will provide these responses to the evaluation teams for their use in Problem Statement evaluations and workshop discussions.

3. Workshop Days (Evaluation Teams, Champions, and R&I Team only)

The 2026 UDOT Research Workshop sessions will be held April 7 and 13-15, 2026. Workshop sessions will be held for evaluation teams to discuss the submitted Problem Statements and the written Q&A, and conduct final scoring and prioritization. The UDOT/UTA Champions of submitted Problem Statements may also attend their respective workshop session to participate in the discussions. These workshop sessions will be held mainly in person at the UDOT Calvin Rampton Complex, with a virtual option available to individuals upon request. The exact format of the workshop, a schedule (date and time) of each Subject Group breakout session, and the meeting rooms will be shared closer to the event. An agenda will be posted on the R&I website prior to the workshop.

Attendance at the workshop breakout sessions will be by invitation only. The evaluation teams and Problem Statement Champions will respond to let R&I know of their intent to attend. No others may attend the workshop sessions, including co-authors of Problem Statements who are not UDOT or UTA employees.

No presentations will be given on Problem Statements during the Subject Group breakout sessions in the Research Workshop. During the sessions, the Subject Group evaluation teams will have an opportunity to discuss the submitted Problem Statements and the written Q&A, spending a few minutes on each Problem Statement. In the sessions, Champions of submitted Problem Statements will be able to answer any additional questions about their statements. Then, prior to concluding the session, the evaluation teams will conduct final scoring and prioritization by updating the online scoring tool provided by R&I.

4. Funding and Prioritization Efforts

During and soon after the workshop, the Subject Group Leaders will work with their groups to finalize the group scoring, rank/prioritize the Problem Statements, and determine if any additional funding from the respective Subject Groups will be applied to the Problem Statements. This will result in a final list of Problem Statements for each group showing prioritization and possible additional funding.

The Subject Group Leaders will work with R&I to create and prioritize the overall list of projects that are to be presented for funding consideration.

Once the final list is assembled, it will be presented to the UDOT Director of Technology and Innovation for approval. Additional leaders may be invited to review the list. The Director of

Technology and Innovation, or their designee, may request that the Subject Group Leaders and R&I re-evaluate the submitted Problem Statements to potentially re-prioritize them.

R&I will then proceed with advancing the Problem Statements that have been selected for UDOT funding. Note that UTA will follow up separately with Champions and co-authors regarding new research projects selected for UTA funding.

5. FHWA Work Program Approval

UDOT will provide to the FHWA Utah Division office a list of the selected Problem Statements with the corresponding budgets within the Annual Work Program. Once the Annual Work Program has been approved by FHWA, R&I will work to enter into contracts for the new research projects, or coordinate with Champions on internal studies.

6. Contract Selection and Notice to Proceed

UDOT will assign a Project Manager from R&I to manage each research project, including coordination with the Champion, other members of the project Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Principal Investigator. The Consultant organization for each new research project will be selected based on qualifications related to the research.

Private consultants, private universities, and out-of-state universities that are interested in doing research for UDOT are strongly encouraged to submit a pool proposal (qualifications) for UDOT's General Engineering Services Pool, in the Research work discipline, by the applicable pool proposal deadline date. The pool proposal deadline may be earlier than the Problem Statement due date. Besides Utah public universities, this is **the main pool** from which UDOT selects qualified firms for research projects. If a Utah public university co-authors a Problem Statement, and if UDOT selects the project for funding, UDOT will consider recommending the funding for that public entity first.

Upon issuance of the contract notice to proceed, UDOT will work with the Principal Investigator to engage in the contracted scope of work. Notice to proceed for new research contracts will typically be in July (or later) in the year of the workshop.