



Recent Bypass History

After the passage of SB 277 in 2017, members of the Grand County Commission and the Moab City Council convened to discuss the prospect of seeking funding for a re-visioned U.S. 191 bypass around downtown Moab. Officials recognized that the need for a bypass was driven by the continued buildup of congestion on U.S. 191 and around Moab's Main Street and surrounding neighborhoods.

In 2018, UDOT commissioned consultants Fehr & Peers to conduct a study to understand the need for a bypass and determine conceptual routes, costs, and benefits. Informal consensus between the two bodies focused on Alternatives "1D and 1A" – routes that would require a new bridge at the southern portal of the Colorado River to connect Potash Road and Kane Creek Boulevard. An 'alternative' to Alternatives 1D and 1A was also explored, where bypass traffic would not travel down Kane Creek but instead go directly into a tunnel and travel for a few miles under the rim and exit south of the residential areas and back onto Hwy 191. This was the only concept presented that would not have a negative impact on any residential neighborhoods. To be clear, the concept alternative that received consensus was a tunnel, where the bypass would be completely underground.

As of 2016, traffic counts through Moab had reached approximately 17,000 vehicles per day traveling through downtown, with 36 percent of those vehicles being semi-trucks. Using historic figures as a baseline, the study determined that the average vehicle growth rate was expected to increase by 2 percent each year, while semi-truck traffic was expected to grow at a rate of 4 percent annually. Approximately 75 percent to 85 percent of the "cut-through traffic" – drivers who would prefer to re-route around downtown Moab – was estimated to be commercial trucks, which is approximately 4,000 to 5,000 trucks per day. The remaining 20 percent to 30 percent of non-commercial traffic is estimated to be approximately 2,000 to 3,500 vehicles per day traveling through downtown Moab via U.S. 191.

The study conducted by Fehr & Peers estimated that the cost to complete a U.S. 191 bypass around Moab would be between \$75 million to \$125 million depending on the route.

The concept of a second bridge and a tunnel in 2018 seemed excessive. However the traffic congestion Moab experienced this fall is a compelling reason to look hard at this alternative concept today. Fehr & Peers initially explored a cost estimate in 2018 for this new bridge and tunnel alternative concept. In order for Moab to continue to explore this bypass option, the Grand County Transportation Plan must be amended.

Why Consider A Bypass Now

The Mayor and I are committed to the concept and the benefits to the local community, our tourism economy, and UDOT's transportation needs and responsibilities by re-routing semi-

truck and other pass-through traffic from U.S. 191 around the downtown Moab area. We are equally as committed to an enhanced level of public engagement and developing a final project that prioritizes neighborhood integrity and character.

With the continuing trends of increased visitation and congestion, it is now critical that City and County policymakers utilize vision and a pro-active approach toward a direct solution to our congestion problems in the Moab Valley.

Sincerely,

Curtis Wells
Grand County Council

Emily S. Niehaus
Mayor of Moab