

VISION FOR THE WASATCH CANYONS

WASATCH CANYONS GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

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PARLEY'S • MILL CREEK • BIG COTTONWOOD • LITTLE COTTONWOOD



BACKGROUND

WHAT IS THE GENERAL PLAN?

The General Plan will be a long-term strategic plan with a guiding vision, policies, strategies, and ordinances for management and collaboration; and will shape decisions related to new development, redevelopment, County programs, projects, budgets, and services. It identifies a vision for the future of the Canyons and provides goals and prioritized actions that ensure critical decisions are aligned with what's important to the community.

PROJECT SCOPE

Most of the planning area is within the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest and is managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service). The County has direct planning and zoning jurisdiction over the private lands in the planning area. The scope of the General Plan broadly considers all lands, agency land management plans, and resources within the planning area, and the County's partners in recreation, transportation and environmental quality across jurisdictional boundaries.



INTRODUCTION

The Wasatch Canyons Vision document defines how the Wasatch Canyons (Parley's Canyon, Mill Creek Canyon, Big Cottonwood Canyon, Little Cottonwood Canyon, and the foothills) should look into the future. It considers how the greater community will access them, how millions of people will play in them, how to balance the need for private property uses and environmental preservation, and how management of the landscape will evolve to preserve the Canyons for future generations. Protecting the qualities that collectively encompass the Canyons and celebrating the area's natural significance have been essential to the visioning effort.

Visioning is a critical step in every planning process, creating a foundation for more effective community engagement and planning. Visioning ensures that County residents and leaders values and goals are accurately reflected in the plan's elements, policies, and frameworks. Visioning also provides the framework foundations for the next phases of the planning process. The vision creates the structure and initial agreements necessary to discuss the tough issues that will be further addressed in the General Plan Update process. The Vision document will be updated and expanded over the course of the planning process to eventually serve as a chapter of the General Plan.

The vision is organized into five planning themes: Land Use, Environment, Recreation, Transportation, and Economy.

A VISION FOR THE WASATCH CANYONS

The vision developed through a series of community conversations and ideas from prior planning projects and represents the aspirational outlook for the future the Wasatch Canyons. Building on public feedback, discussions with stakeholders, and County staff, this vision document will help guide the creation of the Wasatch Canyons General Plan. For a summary of all visioning activities and events, visit slco.org/wasatch-canyons.

PROCESS TO CREATE THE VISION



*REVISED BASED ON PRELIMINARY PUBLIC INPUT AND STEERING COMMITTEE REVIEW

**MOUNTAINOUS PLANNING DISTRICT

WE ARE HERE!

Vision: The five vision statements describe the desired future of the Wasatch Canyons based on shared values. The vision themes also guide the direction of the General Plan.

Principles: The principles under each of the vision elaborate on the future setting, character, opportunities, and agency actions for the Wasatch Canyons in the next 15-20 years.

LAND USE

Vision: Strive for mutually beneficial partnerships among jurisdictions, government agencies, and stakeholders through collaboration and coordination to provide for water resource protection, recreation opportunities, wildlife, approved private property uses, and quality open spaces.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. [Partnerships] Maintain consistent and effective collaboration and coordination among jurisdictions, government agencies, and stakeholders, while acknowledging that stakeholders include canyon residents, businesses, and visitors.
2. [Community] Support quality planning and zoning that encourages social and community relationships, healthy lifestyles, and public safety.
3. [Private Property] Provide for continuation and improvement of approved uses.
4. [Regulatory Tools] Maintain zoning that allows development in appropriate areas and preserves lands for watershed, recreation, scenic value, and wildlife.
5. [Environment] Collaborate with public and private entities to support clean watersheds, biodiversity, healthy forests, and resilient landscapes.
6. [Aesthetics] Encourage the aesthetic beauty of the man-made environment and the protection of the scenic natural environment.





ENVIRONMENT

Vision: Serve as stewards to support healthy forests, connected ecosystems, habitats, and waterways for current and future generations. Promote programs that improve watersheds, air quality, vegetation, wildlife ecosystems, and scenic quality.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. [System] Protect and steward open lands and natural resources (air, water, wildlife, fisheries, climate, trail systems, wetlands, dark skies, soundscape, soils, open space, native vegetation).
2. [Open Space] Promote the acquisition of natural and undeveloped lands for conservation.
3. [Water] Protect, maintain, and improve watershed health, water supply, and water quality.
4. [Air] Protect and improve air quality for protection of public health, environmental health, and scenic visibility.
5. [Native Species] Maintain healthy populations of native species and support early detection and rapid response to eliminate invasive species and noxious weeds.
6. [Wildlife] Preserve sensitive habitats and migration areas for wildlife.
7. [Property] Respect approved private property uses and promote their stewardship of the environment.
8. [Wildfire] Support wildfire safety and defensible space.



RECREATION

Vision: Continue to support high-quality recreation opportunities for a diverse public and sustainable facility maintenance.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

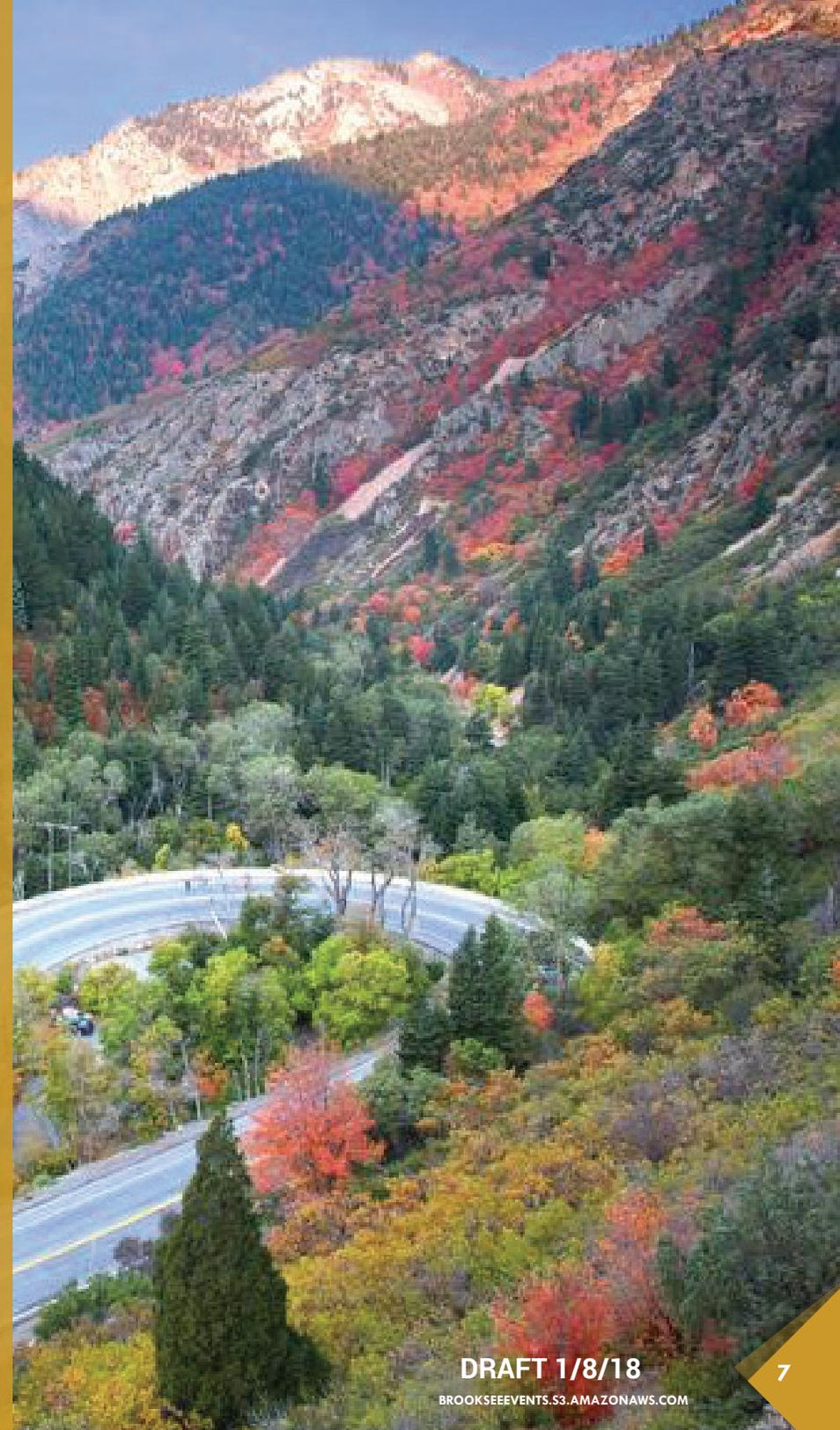
1. [System] Maintain consistent coordination with neighboring jurisdictions and agencies to support a connected recreation system.
2. [Responsible] Support programs that promote responsible recreation and personal responsibility for public safety and protection of the Canyon's natural resources.
3. [Accessible] Enhance and preserve access to public lands.
4. [Diversity] Maintain a spectrum of diverse recreation opportunities for participants at all levels, abilities, and interests.
5. [Sustainable] Recognize the need to accommodate different user groups in ways that minimizes user conflict and landscape damage.
6. [Facility] Provide support through grants and or other funding revenues for recreation facility maintenance, trailheads, and restrooms.
7. [Year-Round] Consider year-round needs in recreation planning and facility maintenance.

TRANSPORTATION

Vision: Support and prioritize projects for transit, bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles to reduce congestion, improve air quality, enhance safety, and facilitate connectivity to the regional transportation system.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. [Collaboration] Collaborate in long-term transportation planning with UDOT, UTA, USFS, Salt Lake City Public Utilities, private property owners, local jurisdictions (Salt Lake and Summit counties) and other involved agencies.
2. [Choice] Create convenient, safe, timely, sustainable, and efficient options for transportation by a variety of modes that satisfy multiple needs.
3. [Character] Promote context appropriate transportation modes and projects that are appropriate for the each canyon's unique context.
4. [Accessibility] Provide well-maintained and accessible transportation infrastructure including roads, parking facilities, pathways, and walkways.
5. [Transit Stops] Create canyon ADA-compliant transit stops with restroom facilities, and bus pullouts for user comfort and aesthetics.



ECONOMY

Vision: Sustain the Wasatch Canyons as a world-class recreation destination that provides significant economic benefit to the region. Enable businesses to continue providing goods and services without compromising the environment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. [Context Appropriate] Attract and retain canyon businesses that are economically and environmentally sustainable.
2. [Tourism] Recognize that tourism is a fundamental component of the Utah economy and is dependent on healthy and vast natural and scenic resources.
3. [Stewardship] Encourage businesses to be environmental stewards through practices and education outreach to customers and visitors.
4. [Branding] Promote signage and branding that highlights the history and heritage of the Canyons, and promotes appreciation and stewardship.



MOVING FORWARD

The Vision embodies the expectations and the potential of the Wasatch, and directs how the future built and natural environment is planned and designed. The next step is to establish the plan's policies and projects based on the foundation provided in this document. Each canyon and the foothills will have their own chapter within the General Plan where details on the policies and projects will be fleshed out. A thoughtful, deliberate combination of large and small projects, fresh programs, and new partnerships will lead to an implementable planning strategy.

Now is the Time!

Now is the time to put your mark on the Wasatch Canyons General Plan! As the process moves forward, it is important that the community continues to be involved. Make sure that your thoughts and ideas are heard. Jump into online discussions, slco.org/wasatch-canyons, join your friends and neighbors at public meetings, and share opinions in surveys and at open houses. Look out for "Opportunities and Choices" public events this spring!

We value your opinions and look to include your ideas in the future of the Wasatch Canyons.

GLOSSARY

ADA-Compliance: allows for persons in wheel chairs to access certain areas via ramps, elevators, hand rails, etc.

Biodiversity: Variety of wildlife within a particular habitat or ecosystem.

Branding: Creating an identity for a place in regards to its logo, slogan, design, etc.

Conservation: The act of protecting the natural environment from degradation.

Entities: A department within the government.

Government Agencies: An appointed organization that is allowed oversight and administration over specific functions of society.

Healthy Forests: A forest that is able to sustain its species and landscape even in the event of an outside disturbance such as a wildfire.

Invasive Species: Species of plant and animal life that are not native to an ecosystem causing harm to the native species of those ecosystems.

Jurisdictions: An official government power to make legal decisions and judgments over a defined area.

Man-made Environment: (or built environment) Man-made settlements that provide for human activity such as living, working, and playing.

Native Species: Species of plant and animal life that originate and naturally evolve within a region without human assistance.

Open Lands: Lands that are void of man-made structures with significant vegetation cover.

Public Lands: Non-privatized land that is owned by the public and accessible to all.

Recreation: Leisure relating to activities done for enjoyment.

Recreation Facility: Places such as trailheads that offer amenities like bathrooms, waste bins, and way-finding signs.

Resilient Landscapes: Landscapes with the ability to quickly recover from an outside disruption such as a wildfire.

Scenic Value: The, often intangible, worth of aesthetic views of nature and the environment.

Signage: Signs used to help navigate users to important destinations.

SLCPU: Salt Lake City Public Utilities: Responsible for protecting and managing the Wasatch watershed area.

Stakeholder: A person with a stake or interest, such as a land managing agency or property owner, within the Canyons.

Stewardship: Taking care of a place, something, or someone.

Transportation Modes: A way of traveling through different transportation options such as walking, biking, driving, or taking transit.

UDOT: Utah Department of Transportation: Responsible for building and maintaining state roads and bridges.

USFS: United States Forest Service. Responsible for protecting and managing US forest areas.

UTA: Utah Transit Authority: Responsible for serving the Salt Lake Metropolitan area with transit including bus, rail, and shuttle services.

Watershed: An area of drainage ranging from mountain snow pack to rivers, lakes, and oceans.

Wildlife: The collective populations of animal and plant life within a designated area.

Zoning: Laws and regulations defined by the government to determine how land can be used in certain areas.



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