

GOALS FOR THE WASATCH CANYONS

WASATCH CANYONS GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

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PARLEY'S MILL CREEK BIG COTTONWOOD LITTLE COTTONWOOD



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INTRODUCTION

Building on the Vision Document, the five vision statements have been expanded in the following Goal Initiatives. The five Vision Statements, developed through a series of community conversations, represent the aspirational outlook for the Wasatch Canyons' land use and development, environment, recreation system, transportation system, and the broader economy. They are overarching statements that describe the desired future of the Wasatch Canyons based on shared community values. The vision document is available for review on the project website (slco.org/wasatch-canyons).

GOAL INITIATIVES

This Plan focuses on fundamental concepts to make the Vision Statements and Principles materialize. The 19 Goal Initiatives are goal-level statements that highlight a specific subject. The Goal Initiatives have been prioritized by level of implementation importance based on public input and staff review.

STRATEGIES

The Strategies are the last and most specific component within the planning framework. A strategy is a statement of intent or expectation -- a course of action that provides clarity on the type, location, and methodology to accomplish goals. Presented in this document are several strategy choices under each Goal.

DEFINITIONS

A number of acronyms are used in this document for brevity. Those include:

- ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act
- BMP – Best Management Practices
- BSA – Boy Scouts of America
- CRMP- County Resource Management Plan
- CWC – Central Wasatch Commission
- DNR – Utah Department of Natural Resources
- DWR – Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
- FCOZ – The Foothills and Canyons Overlay Zone
- MRZ – The Mountain Resort Zone
- NGO – Non-governmental Organization
- USFS – United States Forest Service
- UTA – Utah Transit Authority
- UDOT – Utah Department of Transportation
- WFRC - Wasatch Front Regional Council

1. RECREATION MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

GOAL 1A: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF RECREATION FOR VISITORS AND RESIDENTS WHILE MEETING THE NEEDS FOR ANTICIPATED FUTURE DEMAND.

STRATEGY CHOICES

Overall System

1. Support the USFS in maintaining a quality trail system canyon-wide.
2. Ensure that all new trails have identified sources of funding for operation and maintenance prior to trail construction.
3. Establish a volunteer program to lead and train volunteers. Dedicate County staff time to coordinate with volunteer groups.
4. Concentrate and encourage recreation use in key identified recreation activity nodes. Manage and maintain recreation facilities and systems in a way that protects open lands and natural resources
5. Promote lesser-used recreation areas in Salt Lake County outside the Wasatch Canyons to provide alternatives to the frequently-used Wasatch Canyons. Alternatives could include the Oquirrh Mountains, Dimple Dell, Ensign Peak, Yellow Fork, etc.
6. Develop new phone and computer applications to maximize user experience, promote key recreational areas, and provide most up-to-date information.
7. Work with willing sellers to acquire strategic land or easements for recreation access and management. Promote trailheads as transit-friendly or ride-sharing options.

Recreation Infrastructure

1. Assist the USFS and other agencies and stakeholders that manage trails and lands in implementing their standards for the development of trailheads, parking areas, and other use areas.
2. Provide and maintain key areas to include designated parking and needed amenities (garbage receptacles, restrooms, parking, etc.).

Trails

1. Work with the Forest Service, state and local jurisdictions, and property owners to develop an updated trails master plan for the central Wasatch area.
2. To the extent possible, locate trails outside of riparian and stream areas.
3. Implement sustainable trail and trailhead design guidelines and work with volunteer trail groups on implementation projects.
4. Complete the entire Bonneville Shoreline Trail for entire north-to-south system.
5. Enhance selected high use trails (such as Doughnut Falls) to handle significant usage. High use trails whenever possible should be surfaced and include amenities such as benches, restrooms, drinking water, bus stops and parking.
6. Focus on enhancing foothill easement acquisition programs and trailhead developments (for areas such as Deaf Smith Canyon).

GOAL 1B: IMPROVE PUBLIC ACCESS FOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

STRATEGY CHOICES

Overall System

1. Establish additional locations for parking lots, recreational access to the Bonneville Shoreline Trail, and other recreational open spaces.
2. Utilize multiple funding sources to protect and maintain key parcels for open space and recreational access through acquisition from willing sellers or conservation easements.
3. Pursue acquisitions with willing sellers of land at trailheads for additional facilities and parking.

BACKGROUND

The Wasatch Canyons are a unique recreational amenity close to a major metropolitan area. Achieving sustainable recreation in the Wasatch Canyons will require specific management tools to manage capacity and ensure a high-quality visitor experience.

Sustainable trail development can provide other recreational opportunities while protecting our environment. The intentional design and retrofit of trailheads, use areas, and parking areas can promote sustainability, encourage resiliency, and manage visitation. Additionally, the concentration of use at key recreation nodes can help preserve the Wasatch Canyons into the future.

The 2003 Revised Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan comprehensively addresses recreation access and management on USFS lands in the Canyons. The CRMP identifies management objectives, policies, and guidelines for recreation and tourism including:

- Engage recreation users, resource managers, and residents in developing strategies for managing recreation to meet desired future conditions and address recreation pressures and demands.
- Work cooperatively across agencies to support recreation choice and demand. When conflicts arise, pursue practical, lasting, win-win solutions in an atmosphere of open communication, broad participation, and respect.
- Encourage education in values of outdoor recreation.
- Support education efforts about naturalness, solitude, and other backcountry values.
- Recognize the value of outdoor activities in the development of children and young people, and through education and hands-on experience, encourage their active participation.
- Improve the quality of recreation experience for visitors and residents.
- Support the development of funding mechanisms for the creation, implementation, and ongoing operations of needed recreational facilities, transportation options, infrastructure, and maintenance.
- Install interpretive signs in multiple languages at high-use areas, including parking lots, trailheads, and viewpoints to foster stewardship, encourage proper behavior, and appreciate natural resources.
- Encourage participation from a diverse range of stakeholders in the development of recreation system improvements, including local

governments, private landowners, and recreation groups.

Recreational access to open space is an important component of an open space preservation program. The County is committed to completing the Bonneville Shoreline Trail corridor and trail system and providing for access to the trail at appropriate locations. Additionally, some privately-owned parcels of property are located within the National Forest. Many of these lack potable water and have limited access and development potential, leaving landowners with few options to realize ownership benefits. Access to open spaces and public lands is often through or across private lands which creates difficult challenges for both the property owners and public.

The County could evaluate the utility of acquiring conservation easements, or fee title to strategic properties especially relating to the Bonneville Shoreline Trail, in conjunction with Salt Lake City's land preservation efforts.

2. DEDICATED FUNDING SOURCES

GOAL: EXPLORE AND IMPLEMENT OPTIONS FOR DEDICATED FUNDING SOURCES TO ASSIST THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CANYONS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AND TO PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT FOR MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS TO SUPPORT THE GROWING DEMANDS OF THE CANYONS.

STRATEGY CHOICES

Overall System

1. Tap into funding resources from foundations, grants, State, federal, and other revenue sources.
1. Implement Canyon user fees or roadway tolls, with all funds to be used within the canyons for improvements.
2. Create a Regional Wasatch Canyons Recreation District (Local or Special Service District).
3. Apply for grants through Zoo, Arts and Parks Tax (known as the ZAP or RAP tax).
4. Request a portion of Transient Room and Lodging Taxes.
5. Implement tax shareback agreements or tax increment financing.

BACKGROUND

Funding for needed infrastructure improvements and ongoing maintenance has not kept up with the growing needs. The types of funding necessary for one-time construction projects are different from sources that can provide long-term revenues for operations and maintenance. To achieve the community's vision, additional funding sources should be evaluated to implement a variety of strategies. Money generated should directly benefit the canyons.

Implementation of Canyon use fees or roadway tolls.

While some Wasatch Canyons currently charge entry fees, such as Mill Creek Canyon, others do not. The Utah legislature recently passed legislation that allows UDOT to levy tolls on identified State highways for a variety of purposes. The toll-authorizing legislation is flexible and allows UDOT to use tolls collected to support non-transportation projects, such as expanded recreational facilities, parking improvements and facility maintenance, among others. Dashboard permits are an alternative to fee collection, but the enforcement of a permit system (e.g., bicycle tags, parking permits, etc.) would be costly, and enforcement would be sporadic at best.

The County would work with the USFS, UDOT, and other stakeholders to determine potential sites for tollbooths or variable tollings per TRIP studies, or potential revenues from permit-restricted programs, based on USFS data regarding use. The Millcreek fees are collected by the County and remitted to the Forest Service for maintenance projects in Millcreek Canyon. The County would work with the USFS and UDOT to allocate collected tolls in a manner to address the most pressing demands in the Canyons.

Create a Regional Wasatch Canyons Recreation District (Local or Special Service District).

Creation of a Wasatch Canyons Recreation District would provide a stable, predictable revenue source for both operating and capital expenses, and a basis to bond for capital improvements. The process of forming a local district requires cooperation of all cities/counties involved, and creates

a new taxing authority. Local districts have independent taxing power whereas special service districts must request any taxes or assessment from the governing body that created them

The County would work with all municipalities in the County to create a local special service district. If the district area is larger than Salt Lake County, the County would work with involved taxing entities to develop and manage the district(s).

Implement a Zoo, Arts and Parks Tax (known as the ZAP or RAP tax).

Salt Lake County has already enacted this tax to the full allowable 1/10th of one percent, and the ZAP tax generated approximately \$24 million in revenue for Salt Lake County in 2017. The ZAP tax is a competitive process to apply for and receive funds; many other organizations rely on this same revenue source. Raising the limit above 1/10th of 1% would require State legislative approval. The ZAP tax revenues are year by year, and is best utilized for capital improvements.

The County is responsible for reviewing ZAP tax applications and distributing funds. The County could decide to re-allocate some funding to address the Canyons' issues.

Implement Transient Room and Lodging Taxes.

A county may impose a tax on charges for lodging facilities for less than 30 days at a rate not to exceed 4.25 percent. Salt Lake County has already enacted this tax at the full 4.25 percent rate. Municipalities may also enact a rate of up to one percent of the rates charged for fewer than 30 days. An additional transient room tax of 0.5 percent may be imposed under certain circumstances to repay bonded or other indebtedness. There are only two cities in Salt Lake County that are currently eligible to, and have enacted, this tax: Sandy City and West Valley City. Other travel and tourism-related taxes include the resort communities tax, restaurant tax, and motor vehicle leasing tax. The benefits of these taxes include a stable and predictable revenue source, and that tourism and travel-related taxes have been growing in Utah. Raising the tax rate would require legislative approval

The County would need to allocate funds generated to the Canyons on an ongoing basis. The County could also work with the Legislature to increase the tax rates in Salt Lake County to be used specifically for funding in the Canyons.

Tap into funding from foundations, grants, State, federal, and other revenue sources.

Foundations - Creating a foundation is one means of raising revenues. The benefits of creating a foundation to raise funds include creating partnerships with the private sector to obtain business contributions, and a sense of ownership by the entire community in addressing Canyon needs. This would not be a steady or consistent revenue source, being dependent on voluntary contributions, and foundation funds are not a basis for bonding. Operating a foundation involves significant administrative costs, unless that work is done by volunteers.

Grant Funding - Some of the most popular grant sources for recreation-related projects include the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Utah Waypoint Grant, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Grant funding is a new money source that does not need to be repaid, but is not a steady or consistent revenue source. Grants may also require matching funds or other restriction on use of funds

The County could devote resources to provide leadership assistance in grant writing.

Tax shareback agreements or tax increment financing.

With tax sharebacks or tax increment financing (TIF), Revenues are generated through growth in property values or sales taxes. A portion of the revenues received may be paid back to a developer for improvements or to a Redevelopment Agency (in the case of a creation of Project Area) to assist with improvements. Advantages include flexibility in use of funds, and the ability to incentivize development to occur in a particular area.

The County would need to evaluate the creation of a Project Area(s) in the Canyons where tax increment generated funds could be applied.

3. TRANSIT SERVICE ENHANCEMENT

GOAL: SUPPORT ENHANCED YEAR-ROUND TRANSIT SERVICE TO AND WITHIN THE WASATCH CANYONS.

STRATEGY CHOICES

Because the character, uses and visitation patterns vary among the Canyons, transit strategies are presented for both the Wasatch Canyons Plan Area, and for each Canyon, as appropriate.

Overall System

1. Support the development of transit centers/hubs outside canyons, but within reasonable distance of entrances. Transit centers should provide access to a variety of transportation choices and information and connect to the regional transportation system. Encourage these hubs in mixed-use/business centers where parking can be shared.
2. Assist funding to support UTA with increased year-round bus service.
3. Where possible, develop ride-share and bus pullouts at key use nodes.
4. Incentivize carpooling/share vehicle or programs.
5. Support the development of areas, such as pickup spots, that prioritize rideshare vehicles, transit, and electric vehicles.
6. Support increased transit frequency and additional stops at critical locations in the canyons such as trailheads to improve usability and ridership of public transit.
7. Ensure that new and enhanced transit facilities and operations are designed to avoid degradation of watershed health and water quality.

Mill Creek Canyon

1. Consider voluntary permitted summer shuttle service.

Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons

1. Support the addition of summer UTA bus service and significantly increased winter service to key destinations.

BACKGROUND

Transit serves as an essential tool to reduce single occupancy vehicles and the growing demand of visitors in the canyons. Coupled with parking management strategies, transit allows for the ability to transport visitors and employees while mitigating the need for additional parking. Additionally, bus service can reduce the delay and congestion on the roadways in the canyons.

Public transit in the canyons, in the form of bus service, is currently provided by UTA per their transit plans. During the summer, there are limited public transit options. UTA runs route 990 to Snowbird, which consists of one trip up the canyon in the morning and one trip back down in the evening.

Separate fixed UTA routes are proposed for winter and summer services. Summer services may require additional/different stops than those used for the winter Ski Bus service. Additional bus service would need to be funded through a dedicated funding stream, such as a purchase agreement with the County so that the increased service does not disproportionately affect the overall UTA service area. It should also be noted that transit service expansion at trailheads and recreation areas is directly tied to supporting infrastructures such as restroom facilities and their associated operations and maintenance funding.

Mill Creek Canyon currently does not have any transit service. Transit concepts should address parking congestion at key areas in Mill Creek Canyon, and accommodate a range of users and their gear: dogs, bicycles, picnic hampers, skis, snowshoes, and other accessories. The Mill Creek Canyon Transportation Feasibility Study (2012) considered various transportation concepts, including the idea of a permitted shuttle. Salt Lake County could consider a shuttle system to reduce parking demand in Mill Creek Canyon, though banning personal vehicles altogether is not an appropriate solution.

4. ROADWAY FACILITIES

GOAL: SUPPORT ADEQUATE ROADWAY FACILITIES TO ENHANCE SAFETY AND MODE CHOICE IN THE WASATCH CANYONS.

STRATEGY CHOICES

Overall System

1. Support roadway design that allows for transit and increased occupancy rates where appropriate. Pursue enhancements to Park and Ride lots.
2. Work with UDOT and UTA to integrate active transportation planning in the canyons.
3. Utilize appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) when upgrades and enhancements to roads are performed to address stormwater impacts to the watershed and water quality. Ensure there is a funding source for maintenance of BMPs.

Parley's Canyon

1. Support construction of an off-street bicycle pathway (uphill and downhill) connecting Salt Lake County and Summit County via Parley's Canyon.

Mill Creek, Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons

1. Provide a bicycle lane in the uphill direction, where feasible.
2. Provide downhill bicycle shared-lane marking and signage in the Cottonwood Canyons, where possible, as much as the terrain and site conditions will allow.
3. Where needed, provide downhill bicycle pullouts and passing areas.
4. Provide an uphill bicycle lane at Guardsman Pass.

BACKGROUND

New types of road facilities will be more consistent with the vision of Wasatch Canyons while protecting character and environment while providing transportation choice. An obvious solution to improve the cycling environment is bicycle lanes. There are a growing number of people road bicycling, mountain biking, and running or walking on the road shoulder. According to the 2017 Cottonwood Canyons Transportation Recommendations, a substantial portion of the canyon's roadways lacks the sufficient shoulder width to accommodate dedicated active transportation facilities like bicycle lanes. In addition to narrow shoulders, cyclists must also compete with automobiles using the shoulders for roadside parking. In some cases, cyclists must move into travel lanes to avoid opening doors, parked vehicles, and road debris.

Specific issues include:

- The shoulder is less than 6 feet for most of the Canyons, which is not enough space to accommodate parking, cycling, and pedestrians.
- The walking and biking experience can be uncomfortable and unsafe. In the summer, pedestrians sometimes walk in the lane of traffic or the vegetation if cars are parked on the shoulder. On peak days when the ski resort parking lots are full, skiers often walk in the snowbank or in the lane of traffic with skis and/or with children. High vehicle volumes and the speed differential between vehicles and cyclists degrade the cycling experience and impact safety.

Mill Creek Canyon Road could be an ideal route for road cyclists with proper facility accommodations. The current need to share the roadway with much faster motor vehicles, particularly in the uphill direction, makes for an experience stressful enough to likely be discouraging otherwise interested people from biking into and up the canyon.

5. PUBLIC UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL: MEET THE GROWING DEMANDS FOR RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, AND VISITORS BY ENHANCING AND IMPROVING PUBLIC UTILITY SYSTEMS.

STRATEGY CHOICES

Overall System

1. Work with agency partners to identify public infrastructure needs to address residential, recreational, environmental, and business impacts.
2. Evaluate infrastructure needs and coordinate agency capital improvement plans (CIPs) to ensure they are consistent with the General Plan. Ensure General Plan projects (to be identified) are in CIPs and prioritize their implementation.
3. Evaluate infrastructure priorities and incentives for development in appropriate areas that achieve environmental protection, recreational impact mitigation, and other goals consistent with the General Plan
4. Ensure that infrastructure development, maintenance and repair are conducted in a manner that protects water quality.
5. Evaluate all funding options to support development and maintenance of needed infrastructure. All funds generated within the canyons should be spent within the canyons.

BACKGROUND

Providers and managers of public infrastructure and services in the canyons include the USFS (trails, trailheads, toilet facilities, picnic areas, parking); SLCDPU (watershed); UDOT (roads); UTA (transit); Salt Lake County (sewer services), and other agencies. No centralized public water service is provided in the canyons. Private water companies and individual springs, wells, mine tunnels, and other sources such as cisterns and small storage have been developed by businesses and property owners to meet their water needs to date. Roads and transit are addressed in later sections of the Goal Initiatives. These agencies identify infrastructure and service needs and prioritize projects and spending through the development of CIPs. Although several initiatives are underway to address shortfalls, funding for infrastructure improvements and maintenance is not meeting current needs. Ideas to address funding shortfalls are discussed in Goal Initiative 2. *Dedicated Funding Sources for Capital Improvements and Ongoing Maintenance and Operations.*

The Wasatch Canyons see many visitors across all seasons, primarily for recreational uses. Targeted new infrastructure development and upgrades to existing infrastructure will be needed to achieve the vision for recreational experience and to support the desired future land uses. Also, visitors and residents can adversely impact the natural environment due to the current lack of infrastructure (sanitation, parking, etc.) and intentional damage (graffiti). A challenge is that agency budgets have not been sufficient to keep up with infrastructure development and maintenance needs, and alternative or additional sources of funding need to be identified.

6. PARKING MANAGEMENT

GOAL: SUPPORT YEAR-ROUND PARKING MANAGEMENT TO PROVIDE PARKING IN DESIGNATED LOCATIONS AND SAFETY, SCENIC QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION THROUGHOUT THE CANYONS AND FOOTHILLS.

STRATEGY CHOICES

Some parking strategies could apply to all of the canyons in the planning area, while some are canyon-specific.

PLAN-AREA STRATEGIES

1. Collaborate with UDOT, UTA, and the Forest Service to develop a parking system master plan for parking and canyon transportation. Construct parking structures/transit center or park-n-ride near entrances in or nearby cities close to the canyons with connections to transit.
2. Encourage striping parking lots and allowed roadside parking areas to maximize parking availability. Manage roadside parking to minimize pedestrian and vehicle conflicts.
3. For high usage centers, design parking lots and pedestrian roadway to enhance user experience and safety.
4. Partner with public and private agencies to encourage the most efficient use of parking.
5. Work with ski areas, Forest Service, UDOT, UTA, businesses, and hotels near the canyons to coordinate parking and provide real-time information on lot capacity and areas that are less crowded as well as alternative locations to visit through a website and phone apps.
6. Utilize appropriate best management practices (BMPs) when upgrades and enhancements to parking facilities are performed to address stormwater impacts to the watershed and water quality. Ensure there is a funding source for maintenance of BMPs.
7. Explore the feasibility of dynamic congestion pricing parking fees during peak demand days.

MILL CREEK CANYON

1. Consider developing a parking master plan to work in conjunction with a shuttle service for Millcreek Canyon.

BACKGROUND

Parking management is a valuable tool to manage users, provide access, and reduce adverse environmental impacts. Several recent documents have researched parking management solutions in the Wasatch Canyons. These include the 2017 Cottonwood Canyons Transportation Recommendations, The Mountain Transportation Study (2012), and Canyons Parking Study (2012). The USFS policies and guidelines also address parking management and needs within the Wasatch Canyons.

REAL-TIME PARKING INFORMATION

Electronic parking utilization signs, used in a variety of applications to communicate to visitors when lots are at capacity, could be useful for mitigating parking issues. Messaging signs connected to vehicle counters and placed strategically along canyon roads, and more importantly, outside the canyons, would be able to provide real-time utilization information and direct incoming visitors towards open parking spots. The biggest hurdle to implementing a system of parking management signs is bringing the technology required into a remote area. Vehicle counters and a power source (likely solar) would be needed at each parking lot, along with a cellular or satellite connection to a control center capable of feeding real-time information to each messaging sign.

PARKING OUTSIDE THE CANYONS

According to the 2017 Cottonwood Canyons Transportation Recommendations, to meet the bus and carpool goals for the Wasatch Canyons, about 2,500-3,000 new/additional parking spaces are needed in the valley on the three ski bus routes (estimated cost of \$60-100 million). There are currently 2,900 spaces at nine key park-and-ride lots serving the ski bus routes, and they are reaching capacity. It is presumed that many of these lots are being used for carpooling in addition to accessing the ski bus since there are 2,900 spaces and the current ski bus takes around 750-1,500 people into the canyons.

7. ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

GOAL: EDUCATE AND ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS, EMPLOYEES, AND VISITORS TO ENHANCE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES TO PROMOTE A CULTURE OF BICYCLING AND WALKING.

STRATEGY CHOICES

1. Develop a wayfinding signage program for bicyclists and pedestrians with detailed, site-specific signage that directs users to key destinations within the canyons.
2. Develop additional wayfinding collateral such as maps or online information to prepare visitors traveling to the canyons.
3. Provide education on appropriate speed and safety of cyclists and increase enforcement of speed of cyclists.
4. Work with UTA and UDOT to incorporate and enhance bicycle usage on bus and shuttle systems.
5. Collaborate with UDOT, Salt Lake City, and Forest Service to include needed amenities such as bike fix station and potable water (where available and feasible) at key trail heads or activity centers.

BACKGROUND

Encouraging proper and safe use of trails and active transportation facilities will aid in converting more trips from vehicle trips to non-motorized trips. Wayfinding signage helps bicyclists and pedestrians traveling for transportation and recreation navigate unfamiliar areas. The inclusion of travel time and distance on wayfinding signage has proven to be a positive influence on active transportation activity. Wayfinding information can promote active transportation as a viable method for traveling to or within the Canyons. Wayfinding signage can be coordinated with branding and aesthetic goals.

8. PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

GOAL: ENSURE PEDESTRIANS CAN SAFELY ACCESS TRAILHEADS, PARKING LOTS, AND OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES.

STRATEGY CHOICES

1. Enhance or where appropriate create new off-street trail connections. The USFS would like to see trails connecting to other trails.
2. Implement pedestrian road crossing signs, pavement marking, and traffic controls at key recreation destinations.
3. Implement ADA and senior/child-friendly facilities at key locations throughout the canyons.
4. Support the replacement and reconstruction of the Silver Lake boardwalk.

BACKGROUND

To provide additional access and reduce roadside parking conflicts with the growing number of people walking, running, and bicycling, non-motorized recreation options must be available with the appropriate connections. Pedestrian facilities for persons of all ages and levels of ability should be provided in key destination areas. Although sidewalks are not likely feasible, off-street pathways and on-street crosswalks would improve pedestrian conditions at key locations. Additional concerns to consider are that, other than the ski resorts and park and ride lots, there are limited ADA facilities (ramps, parking spaces, cross-walks) in the canyons.

The extensive trail network is perhaps the primary feature drawing visitors to Mill Creek Canyon. Due to the Canyon's parking congestion issues, however, some visitors are not able to park in the lot closest to their desired trailhead. Instead, they must drive to a different lot and walk or bicycle in or alongside the roadway to the trailhead. Better pedestrian connections between parking lots and trailheads would make this a much more comfortable experience. The Mill Creek Canyon Feasibility Study identified the Big Water, Church Fork, and Maple Grove trailheads as the most problematic for trail connectivity.

According to the 2017 Cottonwood Canyons Transportation Recommendations, the lack of adequate facilities along or parallel to the roadway make it hard for pedestrian users to access their destination. There is also a lack of safe facilities to bicycle and walk on canyon roadways. Bicycle and pedestrian use of the Canyons contributes to some transportation issues on roads.

Informal trailheads (or social trailheads) created by people straying from official USFS access locations have developed as people access a myriad of dispersed recreational opportunities. Informal trailheads contribute to erosion, mineral soil loss, loss of vegetation, and can be unsafe for users. Unregulated roadside shoulder parking adds to informal trailheads when users are not funneled to official access points. Regulation and control of roadside parking within the canyon can help alleviate this problem.

9. WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

GOAL: ENSURE THE MANAGEMENT OF WATERSHEDS IN THE WASATCH MOUNTAINS TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY.

STRATEGY CHOICES

Both the 2017 Salt Lake County Integrated Watershed Plan and the 1999 Salt Lake City Watershed Management Plan establish goals and policies for future watershed management and recommendations for implementation of management strategies. Salt Lake City is currently updating the 1999 Plan.

1. Support the continued implementation of the recommendations of the most current Salt Lake County Integrated Watershed Plan and the Salt Lake City Watershed Management Plan.
2. Identify impaired reaches of streams for funding to implement restoration.
3. Continue cooperation with the Salt Lake County Health Department, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, the Forest Service, and Salt Lake City to implement anti-degradation standards, stream setback and environment zones, stormwater BMPs, monitoring programs, enforcement activities, and other canyon watershed policies to maintain water quality in the canyons.
4. Concentrate major developed recreation facilities as much as possible to avoid sprawl and preserve open space.
5. Pursue canyon land use policies which will allow continued use of the Canyons for transportation, recreational, residential, and commercial development as long as these activities do not result in deterioration of water quality. Any new or expanding uses in the watershed canyons must be reviewed and carefully scrutinized to determine if the proposed use is consistent with water quality goals.

6. Require recreation facilities to be constructed and operated to minimize both point and non-point sources of pollution.
7. Encourage landowners, developers, utility providers, and government agencies to establish stream setbacks, protect vegetation, site appropriately, and implement stormwater BMPs as factors that should be considered in the design and construction of all canyon development.

BACKGROUND

Surface water emanating from the canyon watersheds in the Plan area is a critical source of culinary water for 500,000 people in Salt Lake County. Communities that rely on these source waters include Salt Lake City, Mill Creek, Holladay, Sandy, and Cottonwood Heights. Public water suppliers such as Salt Lake City and Sandy City have strict regulatory obligations to meet federal and state Safe Drinking Water Act requirements, and amendments in 1996 to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act recognized the importance of protection of sources of drinking water as critical prevention to protect public health.

Water quality protection is a top priority within the multi-use watershed of the Wasatch Canyons. The health and resiliency of these resources must not be degraded to ensure high-quality drinking water for Salt Lake County in the future. Pressures related to water supplies are increasing due to climate change and population growth, making these water sources more critical, and more in need of protection than ever. Therefore, protection of the current drinking water supplies continues to be a critical priority.

10. WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

GOAL: ENSURE THAT FUTURE USE OF AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE WASATCH CANYONS ARE MANAGED TO PROTECT WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND HABITAT AND TO REDUCE HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICTS.

STRATEGY CHOICES

1. Support the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) in the implementation of the Utah Wildlife Action Plan.
2. Work with other agencies to further designate sensitive areas, wildlife corridors, and conflict areas.
3. Identify wildlife protection measures (such as fencing, changes in trails, and wildlife crossings) for key sensitive areas.
4. Review and revise, as necessary, Salt Lake County codes and regulations to support wildlife.
5. Continue to support a science-based data resource to inform decision-making.
6. Work with applicable federal, state, and local agencies to identify sensitive aquatic populations within the plan area and, if needed, explore feasibility related to in-stream flows to protect sensitive aquatic life.

BACKGROUND

Increasing public visitation and vehicle use of the Wasatch Canyons could result in impacts to wildlife. The 2017 Salt Lake County Resource Management Plan (CRMP) addresses wildlife management on public lands in detail, identifying several management objectives with accompanying policies and guidelines. The four most relevant wildlife management objectives are:

1. Managing to keep species off the federal endangered species list.
2. Provide for the sustained diversity of species and maintain communities within their historic range.
3. Support maintenance and improvement of existing aquatic habitats, including riparian and wetland habitat.
4. Coordinate with DNR and UDOT to reduce wildlife and vehicle collisions on Salt Lake County roadways.

Section 19.72.140 of FCOZ, Wildlife Habitat Protection, establishes development limitations in areas of critical wildlife habitat and provides standards and guidelines to protect wildlife and their habitats.

11. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND STEWARDSHIP OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND RECREATIONAL VALUES

GOAL: ENHANCE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND STEWARDSHIP OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND RECREATIONAL VALUES AND PRACTICES.

STRATEGY CHOICES

1. In cooperation with canyon stakeholders and volunteers, develop a county-wide public education campaign and associated social media and materials to support public education and stewardship of the Wasatch Canyons.
2. Support development of educational materials for school programs and support programs aimed at making the Wasatch Canyons accessible to all.
3. Review and consider the Cottonwood Canyons Scenic Byways Plan signage plan when planning for educational signage.

BACKGROUND

Increasing visitation and use of the Canyons is creating additional impacts to the natural resources and the recreational experience. Greater understanding by visitors of the function and sensitivities of canyon resources to impacts could reduce those impacts and support better overall canyon visitor experiences. A program to promote environmentally-friendly and user-friendly public activities while in the Canyons and foothills could mitigate adverse impacts.

Visitation to picnic areas and trailheads in the canyons is increasing rapidly, with accompanying impacts to toilet facilities, parking areas, tables, fire pits, and other amenities. Canyon trails are also experiencing an increase in use and incidents of misuse. According to the 2016 report, An Estimation of Visitor Use in Little Cottonwood, Big Cottonwood, and Mill Creek Canyons (Utah State University's Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism), the estimated annual visitation in the Wasatch Canyons was 4,505,004 total users. Of those users, 30% visited designated resort areas, and 70% were dispersed users. The rate of visitation is expected to continue to increase as the Salt Lake Area population grows. The CRMP addresses environmental education as an element of wildlife and habitat preservation.

12. LAND PRESERVATION

GOAL: MAINTAIN AND INCREASE THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL LANDS THAT PROVIDE REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE TOWARDS ECOSYSTEMS, WATERSHED, AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

STRATEGY CHOICES

1. Identify priority areas of natural lands that should be conserved and maintained. Identify the criteria to prioritize areas that are important to be conserved and supported, such as environmental values, ecosystem health, aesthetics, recreation experience, and contiguity to trails and open space area linkages.
2. Develop a system to evaluate natural lands for purchase.
3. Create a mechanism to fund open space preservation and ongoing maintenance.
4. Utilize all possible funding resources available, such as the County's Open Space Trust Fund, Salt Lake City, State of Utah, or NGOs, to protect critical parcels. As a last resort, explore other funding mechanisms such as fees.
5. Coordinate with the State of Utah to purchase lands for conservation.
6. Promote the use of private land trusts and other means to facilitate the conservation and maintenance of key properties through donations, conservation easements, and acquisition from willing sellers.
7. Develop resource and stewardship plans for existing open space parcels.

BACKGROUND

A defining attribute of the Wasatch Canyons is the abundance of natural open space for scenic, recreational, and habitat values. The identification and protection of open space in identified locations will forever preserve the character of the Wasatch Canyons and protect sensitive resources.

The Salt Lake County Open Space Acquisition Plan was developed to meet Salt Lake County's goal of creating a diverse portfolio of conserved lands that improve quality of life and protect ecological health in Salt Lake County. The plan comprises the tools and process by which the Open Space Trust Fund Advisory Committee recommends projects for funding from the Open and Green Space Bond and the Open Space Trust Fund. It contains two major sections: policy and process and land analysis. The former establishes a Project Selection Process and sets priorities. The latter is a GIS-based (Geographic Information System) analysis designed to identify and evaluate open lands in Salt Lake County and recommended acquisition strategies.

The County could also evaluate the utility of acquiring conservation easements, or fee title to lands, in conjunction with Salt Lake City's efforts.

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13. RESILIENCY PROGRAM

GOAL: PREPARE THE CANYONS AND FOOTHILLS FOR POTENTIAL NATURAL HAZARDS AND ADDRESS THE IMPACTS CAUSED BY AGING INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CANYONS TO REDUCE IMPACTS.

STRATEGY CHOICES

1. Work with corresponding agencies to further prepare the canyons for the event of a wildland fire, earthquakes, landslides, and other natural disasters.
2. Work with the USFS to understand and prepare for the impact of insect and disease issues that may severely impact the forest ecosystem in the near future.
3. Apply adequate resources to fire protection, noxious weed control, and habitat protection.
4. Ensure communities and resort areas have adequate emergency preparedness plans and supplies.
5. Work to develop programs to incentivize the upgrading of existing homes and businesses including septic upgrades and improved water and sewer connections.
6. Explore a tree and mitigation bank for removed trees to help fund restoration work.
7. Work with science professionals to enrich and educate Salt Lake County planners, commissioners, and elected officials of lessons learned through research application.

BACKGROUND:

The long-term health of the Wasatch Canyons' ecosystems, water quality, and recreational experience in the canyons depend on both future protections and remediation of past and existing problems. Much of the development in the canyons is quite old, and water, sewer, and utility systems are aging. The climate is changing and better techniques for managing flooding, wildfire, noxious weeds, and other problems are emerging. A program to repair older systems and employ new management techniques would result in better environmental and recreational outcomes.

The CRMP addresses floodplains, noxious weed control, and fire management, setting forth the County's desired future conditions, management objectives and associated policies and guidelines. FCOZ identifies floodplains and riparian areas as sensitive lands deserving of greater protections in the development process. The CRMP also recognizes agency partners for sustainability projects and efforts. Salt Lake County could develop its own program to incentivize upgrades of private systems and could coordinate with jurisdictional agencies on sustainability programs. The CRMP calls for coordination among the USFS and emergency service providers to prevent and remediate damage caused by fires, flooding, and other natural disasters. The County's Integrated Watershed Plan identifies strategies to protect water quality in the Canyons. The CRMP addresses explicitly fire management, floodplain management, and geologic hazards, with accompanying goals, policies, and management.

14. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

GOAL: ENSURE THAT FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND ENTITIES WITH JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE WASATCH CANYONS PLANNING AREA COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS AND PLANNING PROCESSES TO PROVIDE FOR EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND THE RESOURCES OF THE WASATCH CANYONS.

STRATEGY CHOICES

1. Implement the inter-agency coordination measures identified in the CRMP for fire management, forest management, riparian areas and wetlands, recreation management, and the other resources addressed in the CRMP.
2. Work to establish collaborative goals, action plans and timelines among jurisdictions, including the County, USFS, towns, cities, and community councils.
3. Work with the partner agencies and the Wasatch Front Regional Council on updates of their development and management plans and any corresponding amendments.
4. Work with the USFS, Army Corps of Engineers, UDOT, Salt Lake City, and UTA on any implementation level projects, so they meet the Wasatch Canyons General Plan's vision.
5. Include the USFS, towns, metro townships, cities, community councils, UDOT, CWC, and UTA on County level plans, studies, and projects to ensure all activities are coordinated.
6. Invite participation of the Scenic Byway Councils through the State of Utah Office of Tourism in future planning efforts.
7. Coordinate with WFRC and UDOT to ensure canyons transportation projects and appropriate funding are included in RTP and Unified Transportation plans.

BACKGROUND

Successful planning for management of the lands and resources in the Wasatch Canyons will require a general plan area-wide approach across jurisdictional boundaries. The CRMP identifies inter-agency coordination as key to successful planning and management of resources related to public lands, notably the National Forest. The CRMP calls for active engagement in forest planning and in other agency planning efforts. The CRMP calls explicitly for intergovernmental coordination on fire management, fisheries, forest management, noxious weed management, recreation and tourism, riparian areas and wetlands, water quality and water rights, wilderness areas, and wildlife management.

The CWC has been created as an inter-local entity by agreement among jurisdictional agencies and stakeholders. The CWC will be governed by a 28–35 person diverse stakeholder council and may decide to function as an intergovernmental coordination committee, although that determination has not yet been made. It is essential for the County to engage in future updates to the Forest Management Plan, city and community council management plans, and UDOT and UTA planning and approved implementation-level actions.

15. REGULATORY TOOL REVIEW

GOAL: AS NEEDED, REVIEW AND UPDATE COUNTY ORDINANCES TO FURTHER IMPLEMENT THE VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES OF THE GENERAL PLAN.

STRATEGY CHOICES

1. Consider the need to periodically update County ordinances like the Foothills and Canyons Overlay Zone (FCOZ) and the Mountain Resort Zone (MRZ) to meet the General Plan Vision and County leadership goals.
2. Consider the need to periodically update County ordinances related to development siting, access, floodplains, water protection and the structural design of buildings to ensure that health and safety requirements are met while allowing appropriate development to meet State Code.
3. Work to streamline and clarify the FCOZ/private property development process, including better coordination between jurisdictions.
4. At the General Plan draft level and adoption, review the FCOZ and MRZ to compare goal and strategy alignments or conflicts.
5. Review progress and update the Wasatch Canyons General Plan every five years to better understand progress and work towards goals.
6. Plan for a complete General Plan update in the 15-20 year time frame (2033-2038).

BACKGROUND

The Foothill Canyons Overlay Zone (FCOZ) and the Mountain Resort Zone (MRZ) were both adopted before this General Plan update process began. Both will be significant plan implementation tools and may need to be modified to implement the objectives of the General Plan. Significant revisions were recently made to the FCOZ, and the ordinance addresses current needs of the County; however, the General Plan update should consider the FCOZ and MRZ updates to aid in plan implementation. Potential revisions to the FCOZ and the MRZ should be carefully considered to accomplish General Plan goals without revisiting previously settled issues.

16. AESTHETICS AND CHARACTER GUIDANCE

GOAL: RAISE APPRECIATION AND STEWARDSHIP OF CANYON BEAUTY THROUGH AESTHETICS AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE.

STRATEGY CHOICES:

1. Consider creating design guidelines/standards for the commercial development, gateways, and public areas that include consistent design quality, materials, and placement.
2. Work with stakeholders, communities, and businesses to implement comparable aesthetic plans.
3. Consider the implementation of unique canyon theming, similar to national parks, which promotes a sense of place, stewardship, and heritage (i.e., signage, architecture, wayfinding, entry features, benches, etc.).
4. Support programs such as Keep It Pure to further public education in canyon and watershed values.

BACKGROUND

The beauty and physical aesthetics of the Wasatch Canyons are an essential factor to the success of the region. Guidelines for public and private improvements can support the preservation of its character. The County's CRMP identifies visual quality goals and policies including, "Encourage the enhancement of the aesthetic beauty of our built environment." Section 19.72.170 of FCOZ establishes design standards for private lands and development in the canyons to preserve and enhance the beauty of the landscape; encourages project planning and building design that protects natural terrain; manages development in sensitive lands, and steers development toward the most suitable areas. FCOZ and MRZ also set forth mandatory and advisory design guidelines to address structures, siting, vegetation, screening and other aspects of development in the Canyons.

The USFS needs to be engaged to ensure that branding, aesthetics, and character guidance are consistent across county and federal lands, including UDOT highway easements throughout the area. Also, recommend considering coordinating with the Utah Office of Tourism Scenic Byway Program in regards to the State Scenic Byway status of SR-190 and SR-210.

17. VOLUNTEER AND CITIZEN GROUP SUPPORT

GOAL: SUPPORT ENGAGEMENT OF CITIZENS' GROUPS AND VOLUNTEERS IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE WASATCH CANYONS.

STRATEGY CHOICES

1. Identify the citizens groups, community councils, property owners associations, non-profits, and other similar associations active in each canyon, and meet with regularly them to identify opportunities for the County to support their activities, enhance communications, and define common objectives that align with the Wasatch Canyons General Plan.
2. Commit staff time and/or funding to these groups in the form of grants for activities that support the implementation of the General Plan.
3. Sponsor a forum of volunteers and community groups to coordinate communications and interactions with the County and other agency stakeholders.
4. Track service projects, hours, and efforts to show progress and gauge involvement.
5. Using a County website, list citizens groups, and government agencies to provide resources for the County to better coordinate with and utilize existing groups.

BACKGROUND

There are many citizen-led organizations with interests in the Canyons. These groups serve many valuable roles, but coordination among them is generally limited to addressing specific issues as they arise. Small organizations and groups may not have the ability to address systemic issues efficiently; a larger pool of resources and funding are often necessary to accomplish this task. In the long term, these coalitions need resources and organizational support to maintain viability. The County could act as a facilitator in improving communication, coordination, and partnerships among community organizations that represent the needs of specific interests on an on-going basis.

18. ECONOMY

GOAL: SUPPORT THE CONTINUATION AND VIABILITY OF CANYON RESORTS AND BUSINESSES. WORK TO CONSERVE THE NATURAL FEATURES AND RECREATIONAL ATTRIBUTES THAT MAKE THE CANYONS A VITAL ECONOMIC DRIVER IN UTAH.

STRATEGY CHOICES:

1. Review County FCOZ, MRZ, and other relevant Salt Lake County development codes to ensure they meet the goals of the Wasatch Canyons General Plan.
2. Focus on the environmental and scenic preservation of the Wasatch Canyons as an economic development strategy.
3. Encourage businesses to have the proper business permitting (guiding, shuttle, etc). The County should work with businesses and public to assist in reporting violation of laws, policies, respecting private property, etc.
4. Include tourism and economic groups in planning, coordinating, and implementing the Wasatch Canyons General Plan.
5. Coordinate transportation planning and implementation with canyon resorts and businesses. If tolling is used as a transportation, request that a portion of the tolling money be used for assistance with transit, parking, activity center trailhead, etc.
6. Regulate through business licenses the use of short-term rentals. Work with short-term rentals and hotels to understand necessary canyon policies for parking, watershed protection, and permits.
7. Support appropriate ski area/Forest Service land exchanges.

BACKGROUND

The economic benefits and opportunities related to the Wasatch Canyons can be generally characterized in two categories. The first is the economic activity that occurs within the canyons and the economic benefits that canyon activities, such as destination tourism, create for the County as a whole. The second is the value of the canyons as a lifestyle asset that supports recruitment of new businesses and skilled employees.

Figures reported by the Utah State Tax Commission indicate that the tourism-related tax revenues realized by Salt Lake County in 2017 totaled approximately \$53 million. While that figure includes all tourism-related activities county-wide, a significant portion of that can be attributed to recreation activity in the Wasatch Canyons.

Based on a 2014 study, sales revenues from Big Cottonwood Canyon were \$471 million; Little Cottonwood Canyon, \$365 million; Parleys Canyon, \$217 million; and Mill Creek Canyon \$123 million. The Wasatch Canyons Tomorrow study reported that revenues generated by jobs and wages paid by canyon businesses totaled approximately \$150 million in 2010, and are projected to increase to \$220 million by 2030 assuming no ski area expansions occur.

Recent studies have shown that approximately 55 percent of Utah skier-days are due to out-of-state and international visitors. A 2016 research paper reports that \$895 million was spent by nonresident skiers and snowboarders in 2015 with an average daily per person expenditure of \$315.

The second economic benefit category is harder to quantify. The Wasatch Canyons are an asset to both Salt Lake County and the State in addition to their attraction as a premier recreation destination. The natural beauty, recreational opportunities and proximity of the Wasatch Canyons to the Wasatch Front are a significant attraction for new businesses and businesses that are recruiting skilled employees. The Canyons therefore have a substantial impact on the Utah economy as a whole.

19. BROADBAND AND COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

GOAL: SUPPORT THE EXTENSION OF BROADBAND AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS HARDWARE TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN THE WASATCH CANYONS.

STRATEGY CHOICES

1. Evaluate and modify, if necessary, communications infrastructure and CIP plans so that they are consistent with the General Plan.
2. Incentivize development of communications infrastructure in appropriate areas and achieve other goals such as public safety improvements and environmental protection.
3. Investigate other methods of providing broadband services (preferred providers, county partnerships, etc.)
4. Ensure that new communications infrastructure is designed and installed per General Plan goals regarding aesthetics, environmental and water quality, and character of the canyons.
5. Implement improvements in broadband and telecommunications in the canyons.

BACKGROUND

Enhanced electrical capacity and improved fiber optic, wireless, and broadband are critical to support year-round employment, local businesses, quality of life, tourism, and public safety. UDOT has recently installed real-time traffic monitoring equipment in Big Cottonwood and Little Cottonwood Canyons, which includes wireless communication capabilities. These improvements have expanded and improved cell communications in the Canyons.

In pursuing communications infrastructure upgrades, emphasis should be placed on broadband services to Big Cottonwood Canyon, Little Cottonwood Canyons, and improved cellular services to Mill Creek Canyon, which has significant gaps in coverage or available providers. Providers' facilities should be consolidated or co-located.

