



News Release

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Citizen group says canyon planning must balance needs of environment, business

The group's recommendations will be folded into new canyon development policies

Salt Lake County, UT – After a year's work, a volunteer citizen board, known as the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) is out with guidelines for development in and around the Wasatch Mountains. Watershed protection and eliminating "one size fits all" policies are their top recommendations. The greatest change would be the creation of a "Mountain Resort Zone" that governs future activities sought by ski resorts in the canyons. The complete report can found on the county's website.

"Balancing the uses of the Wasatch Canyons is a complicated task," said Mayor Ben McAdams. "The Blue Ribbon Commission report is an important look at how policies might accomplish that. With this report we can rewrite an ordinance that works for both our mountains and county residents."

The BRC's recommendations will go to Salt Lake County planners for incorporation into the rewrite of the Foothills, Canyons, Overlay Zone (FCOZ), which is Salt Lake County's zoning ordinance that regulates building and development in the canyons and foothills.

Planners saw the need to update the FCOZ when the Salt Lake County Planning Commission was asked to consider a proposal to build a mountain coaster in Little Cottonwood Canyon. The FCOZ did not have a well-defined policy regarding this type of development, raising questions about what is and is not allowed under the ordinance. Now, with the BRC recommendations, planning staff can clarify and update the canyon overlay zone.

"We want to take the guess work out of planning and development in our canyons," said Patrick Leary, Salt Lake County's Township Executive. "Property owners, businesses, and the community deserve to know what to expect when it comes to canyon development."

Blue Ribbon Commission members include environmental groups, canyon residents and private property interests, public safety, watershed, resort and business interests. The purpose for bringing this group together was to represent a broad section of the community. McAdams said the members deserve a great deal of credit for their effort as well as the county's thanks.

The BRC report was presented to the Salt Lake County Council today. A complete report and more information on the Foothills, Canyons Overlay Zone can be found at www.slco.org.

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The Office of Township Services was created by Mayor Ben McAdams in 2013 to provide municipal services and improved customer service exclusively to the more than 160,000 residents and 4,100 businesses in the unincorporated areas and townships of Salt Lake County.