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## **Staff Report Summary and Recommendation for update to Wasatch Canyons General Plan**

**Public Body: Salt Lake County Council**

**Meeting Date: May 19, 2020**

**Planner: Jake Young / Legal: Zach Shaw**

**Mountainous Planning District Planning Commission Recommendation: Approval**

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### **PLAN DESCRIPTION**

In 2017 Salt Lake County began the process of preparing a long-range comprehensive plan update for the Wasatch Canyons General Plan ("Plan"). On March 5th, 2020, the Mountainous Planning District Planning Commission ("Planning Commission") recommended approval for the plan. The Updated Wasatch Canyons General Plan will replace the County's 1989 Wasatch Canyons Master Plan. The Plan includes the required planning elements of Housing, Land Use and Transportation. Non-required elements of Recreation, Environment and Economy are also included. The Plan provides strategies to deal with growth in canyon recreation, policies regarding transportation, and methods for improving and maintaining healthy ecosystems.

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### **PLANNING PROCESS**

The plan preparation process has been methodical and taken nearly 3 years to complete. The process began with existing conditions research, review of all existing studies and plans for the Canyons, stakeholder interviews and the formation of a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee met and provided guidance throughout the process. Members were from the planning commission, Salt Lake County staff (including the Municipal Services District), USDA Forest Service, Utah Department of Transportation, Utah Transit Authority, Central Wasatch Commission staff, and Salt Lake City Public Utilities.

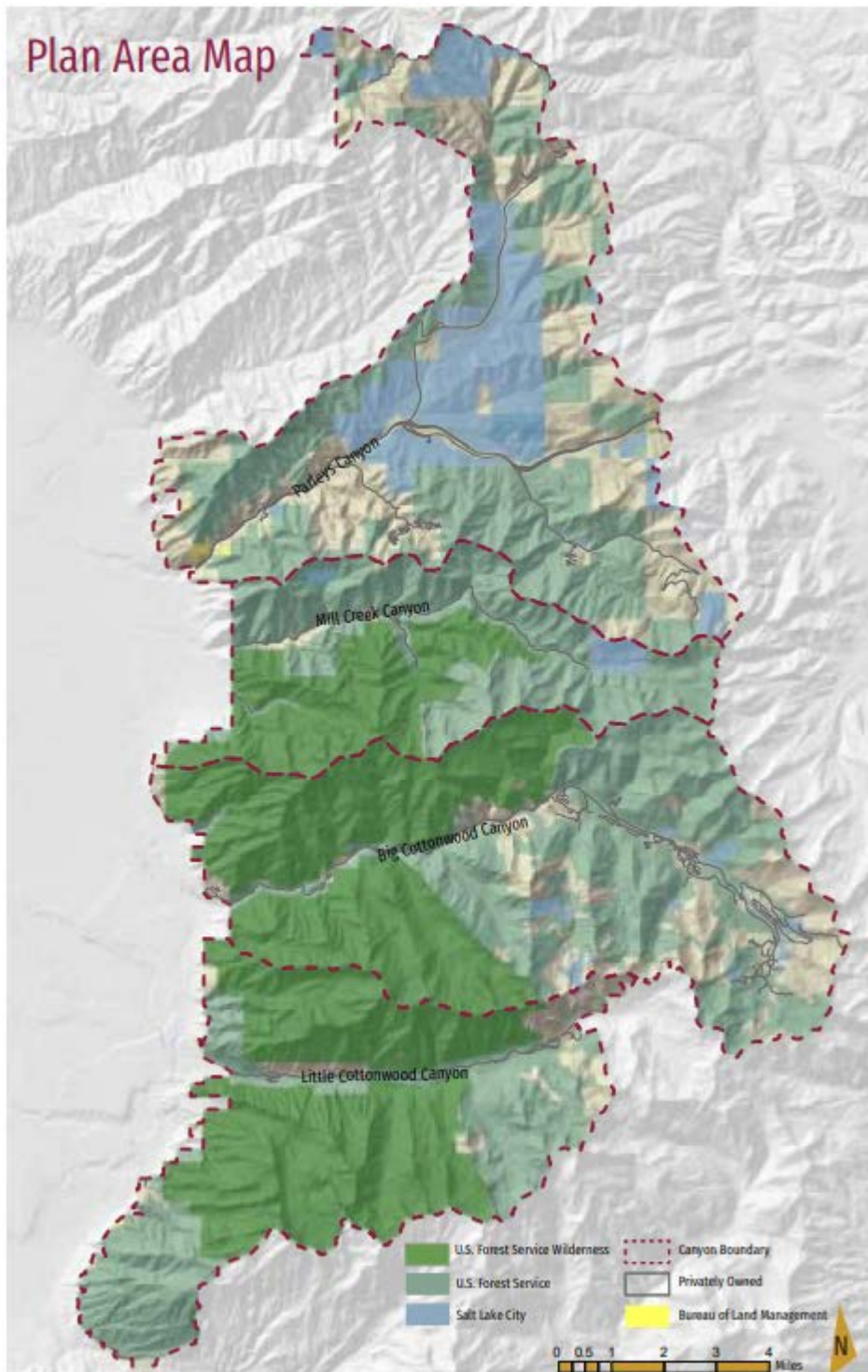
The Planning Commission provided ongoing participation, and nearly every monthly meeting with the Commission included an update, discussion, and/ or recommendations for the plan.

The planning process included more than 17 public events located in multiple cities in Salt Lake County and in the Canyons. The public provided input on maps, comment cards, and surveys. The public process also included two online surveys with 3,000+ respondents.

Early on a vision was developed with statements regarding land use, transportation, recreation, economy, and environment. The vision developed into goals for the canyons with strategies, policies, and actions to achieve them. Following the preparation of the draft plan, multiple open houses were carried out and the plan went through many revisions with feedback given by the public, stakeholders, Steering Committee, Planning Commission and others. Two public hearings were held by the Planning Commission, which provided a recommendation on March 5<sup>th</sup>.

## PROJECT AREA

The General Plan area includes Parleys Canyon, Mill Creek Canyon, Big Cottonwood Canyon (including Town of Brighton), Little Cottonwood Canyon (except Alta) and adjacent Unincorporated foothills.



## STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS

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**The Wasatch Canyons General Plan meets the requirements of the State Code for General Plans.**

**The General Plan Process has met the following conditions as required in State Code:**

**Notice of preparing General Plan, the Planning Commission recommended the Plan for approval, and the Plan does include the area of Town of Brighton.**

**Utah State Code 17-27a-403. Plan preparation.**

*(1) (a) The planning commission shall provide notice, as provided in Section 17-27a-203, of its intent to make a recommendation to the county legislative body for a general plan or a comprehensive general plan amendment when the planning commission initiates the process of preparing its recommendation.*

*(b) The planning commission shall make and recommend to the legislative body a proposed general plan for:*

*(i) the unincorporated area within the county; or*

*(ii) if the planning commission is a planning commission for a mountainous planning district, the mountainous planning district.*

*(c) (i) The plan may include planning for incorporated areas if, in the planning commission's judgment, they are related to the planning of the unincorporated territory or of the county as a whole.*

*(ii) Elements of the county plan that address incorporated areas are not an official plan or part of a municipal plan for any municipality, unless it is recommended by the municipal planning commission and adopted by the governing body of the municipality.*

*(iii) Notwithstanding Subsection (1)(c)(ii), if property is located in a mountainous planning district, the plan for the mountainous planning district controls and precedes a municipal plan, if any, to which the property would be subject.*

**The Plan includes maps, charts, and descriptions.**

**Utah State Code 17-27a-403.**

*(2) (a) At a minimum, the proposed general plan, with the accompanying maps, charts, and descriptive and explanatory matter, shall include the planning commission's recommendations for the following plan elements:*

**The Plan includes proposed land uses including housing, business, industry, recreation, education, and other land uses. Recommendations for Federal Lands (Forest Service) are supportive in nature and complimentary to their current plans.**

**Utah State Code 17-27a-403.**

*(i) a land use element that:*

*(A) designates the long-term goals and the proposed extent, general distribution, and location of land for housing for residents of various income levels, business, industry, agriculture, recreation, education, public buildings and grounds, open space, and other categories of public and private uses of land as appropriate; and*

*(B) may include a statement of the projections for and standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various land use categories covered by the plan;*

**The Plan includes proposed transportation improvements and facilities. Transportation recommendations are linked to current and growing demands. Recommendations for State Routes are supportive and do not supersede their authority.**

**Utah State Code 17-27a-403. Plan preparation.**

*(ii) a transportation and traffic circulation element that:*

*(A) provides the general location and extent of existing and proposed freeways, arterial and collector streets, public transit, active transportation facilities, and other modes of transportation that the planning commission considers appropriate;*

*(B) addresses the county's plan for residential and commercial development around major transit investment corridors to maintain and improve the connections between housing, employment, education, recreation, and commerce; and*

*(C) correlates with the population projections, the employment projections, and the proposed land use element of the general plan;*

**In December 2019 Salt Lake County Council adopted a Moderate Income Housing plan for the unincorporated area of Salt Lake County. The Wasatch Canyons General Plan includes the same recommendations as adopted in the 2019 Moderate Income Housing Plan.**

**Utah State Code 17-27a-403.**

*(iii) a plan for the development of additional moderate income housing within the unincorporated area of the county or the mountainous planning district, and a plan to provide a realistic opportunity to meet the need for additional moderate income housing; and*

**Salt Lake County adopted a Resource Management Plan in 2017, this document is part of the County's General Plan. The Wasatch Canyons General Plan is compatible with the County's Resource Management Plan.**

**Utah State Code 17-27a-403.**

*(iv) before May 1, 2017, a resource management plan detailing the findings, objectives, and policies required by Subsection 17-27a-401(3).*

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## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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In general, the public is supportive of the plan. Public participation took place throughout the entire process, which has resulted in smaller number of comments at the end of the process.

Recent email comments include the following:

Barbara Cameron/Big Cottonwood Community Council - Date 05.06.2020

Big Cottonwood Canyon Community Council is grateful to the staff and consultants who have included our community in this General Plan Update every step of the way. It is a comprehensive plan for our future, and we look forward to helping implement its suggestions and guidelines. Congratulations on a very impressive project.

Barbara Cameron  
Chair, BCCA"

Doug Hansen – 05.11.2020

Here is a link that gives a little history on the quarry in parleys

canyon(<https://utahrails.net/industries/cement.php>). This quarry has been operating since the late 1800'S and has always been a key component to the growth of the Salt Lake Valley. The quarry is very important element to Utah's present and future economic growth. I believe it might be worthy to be added to the timeline.

P. Bruce Badger – 05.14.2020

I own a cabin in The Firs summer home tract in Millcreek Canyon. Please, please, please do not put a trash receptacle at the Alexander Basin trail head. My cabin is one of the closest to that trail head (nearly across the road) and a trash receptacle will attract bears and other animals. This would risk the safety of my children and grandchildren. Please don't do it.

### **The Mountainous Planning District Planning Commission held two Public Hearings February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and March 5<sup>th</sup> 2020.**

At the February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting 10 speakers spoke regarding the General Plan.

These comments are taken from the minutes.

<https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/580175.pdf>

Speaker # 1: Sierra Club Name: Will McCarvill Address: 3607 Golden Hills Avenue Comments: Mr. McCarvill said he likes the plan, forward looking, much better than the old plan. Definite engagement by the county in the hills, county stepped up and would be a good partner, including money. Users are Salt Lake County residents.

Speaker # 2: Big Cottonwood Community Council Name: Barbara Cameron Comments: Ms. Cameron said she agrees with Mr. McCarvill, outstanding plan and pleasure working with all involved. Accessory dwelling units and short-term rentals discussed. Read from her handout; can work on action items in ordinances.

Speaker # 3: Town of Brighton Council Name: Carolyn Keigley Address: Comments: Ms. Keigley read from her emails. Asked to limit density/number of short-term rentals, make affordable for locals to live.

## **Request: General Plan Update**

Speaker # 4: Citizen Name: Norm Henderson Address: Comments: Mr. Henderson said he has appreciation for the plan. Transportation planning is a focus of the plan and a requirement to focus on that. Concerned the plan didn't hearken back to the state direction in the Wasatch canyons. Mountain accord was trying to find a solution. State came out with goals of what needed to be done and connection of the seven ski resorts between Summit and Salt Lake County. People getting trapped at dead ends because of catastrophe, and ski resorts concerned. Plan should have brought the goals of the state into the county plan and addressed. Suggestion Town of Brighton be brought into the process and get their thoughts as well. Concern with safety and transportation is a big concern.

Speaker # 5: Parley's Canyon Community Council Name: Shaun Hoggan Address: Mount Aire Comments: Mr. Hoggan thanked staff for the open hearing environment. Indicated demographics of Parley's is different, various stipulations in a blanket format may not apply. Moderate-income housing difficult for residents of the area. Appreciate Ms. Cameron's comments on suggestions and alternatives.

Speaker # 6: Citizen Name: Kirk Nichols Address: 12377 Camp Tuttle Road Comments: Mr. Nichols referred to three gap studies. Latent demand study indicates visitation will double tomorrow if it's easy to get up the canyon. Suggests a little more regional transportation planning for Wasatch front and back connection. Suggests a visitor use management study; similar to proposals with CWC.

Speaker # 7: UDOT Name: John Thomas Address: 2060 South 2760 West Comments: Mr. Thomas said the County reached out to UDOT and did a really good job engaging meaningfully with the public. Taught and showed the importance of the canyons. Good overview of topics and issues and support different goals and policies and action items and very engaged. Working with Mr. Young was fantastic and engaged and recognized his meaning for being there. UDOT supports the general plan.

Speaker # 8: Town of Brighton Mayor Name: Dan Knopp Address: 11332 East Big Cottonwood Canyon Comments: Mr. Knopp said the council met prior to this meeting. Mr. Young was supposed to bring the general plan to the council meeting, little too much work to do in that meeting. Now some issues resolved, thinks town will be able to support but requests Commission to push off until after the town council meeting in March (Council ultimately recommended approval).

Speaker # 9: Save our Canyons Name: Carl Fisher Address: 3690 East Fort Union Blvd, #101 Comments: Mr. Fisher said he compared notes from October and January. Great work; doesn't know he's ever been to a meeting on the Wasatch mountains where everyone is saying the same thing. Likes the idea of parking garages outside of the canyons on approaches. Requests stronger language on ski area expansion and connect. Supported the legacy product environmental dashboard and funding. Need funding for plan implementation, including retaining revenues from canyon users and other innovative solutions. Advised the MRZ is not mountain recreation zone but mountain resort zone.

Speaker # 10: Citizen Name: Emily Gretsky Address: Brighton Comments: Ms. Gretsky said she loves the collaboration. When the projects are outlined, a lot of good ideas come from the locals to get involved. Echoes keeping funds in the town and she operates a short-term rental and is honest. Concern over potential short-term rental ordinance limitations encouraging short-term rentals to fly under the radar and hurt the community. Supports reasonable regulations of short-term rentals, not everyone is as responsible.

The March 2020 Planning Commission meeting notes are unavailable. During that public hearing multiple comments were made regarding the need for emergency egress, water availability for ADUs, including housing data for building permits in the plan, and emergency planning.

The Town of Brighton and residents have concern over short term rentals. Currently the Planning Commission is working on an update to the County's short-term rental ordinance to address the concerns raised in the public comment to the General Plan, which it will share with the County Council and request that such update go through the public process.

## **MOUNTAINOUS PLANNING DISTRICT PLANNING COMMISSION RESPONSE**

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The Mountainous Planning District Planning Commission recommended approval of this general plan on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

## **OTHER AGENCIES RESPONSES**

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Forest Service – Provided a letter (found in appendices of the plan) which says “The Plan appears to be consistent with the policies, guidelines, and standards for the management of National Forest System lands as identified in the 2003 Wasatch -Cache Revised Forest Plan”.

Town of Brighton – Provided a recommendation and letter of support.

UDOT – Provided verbal support at the February 2020 Public Hearing.

## **PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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After recent input, along with staff and legal discussion there are two minor text changes recommended.

- 1) Staff recommends the removal of the following statements found on pages 94 and 121 “By ordinance, Salt Lake City is prohibited from entering into additional surplus water agreements to allow additional development” and replace with “Salt Lake City is not authorized to enter into additional or expanded water agreements in the watershed areas except as allowed under the City’s code 17.04.020.”
- 2) Staff recommends the addition of the following statement “The County supports the study of emergency egress alternatives in the Canyons regarding evacuation routes in the event of natural hazards which could include fires, flooding, avalanches, landslides, earthquakes and others.” This section should be added under the Environment section goals of chapters 2-6 under “PREPARE FOR POTENTIAL NATURAL HAZARDS AND DISASTERS IN THE CANYONS AND FOOTHILLS.”

It is Staff’s opinion that this General Plan meets all the requirements of State Code for General Plans. It is also staff’s opinion that the plan has gone through a rigorous public process with significant involvement by partner agencies and key stakeholders. The plan provides general goals with strategies, policies, and actions to provide the County with guidance for planning and managing the Canyons.

It is staff’s recommendation that the plan be adopted with minor proposed text changes (listed above) after hearing public comments, discussion and vetting any concerns.