
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MONICA ZOLTANSKI

SUBJECT: MASTER TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC CORRIDORS PLAN

DATE: APRIL 22, 2021

CC: CITY COUNCIL OFFICE

I welcome your questions and look forward to your feedback.

A few weeks ago, the City Council enacted a temporary land use moratorium for certain property east of Wasatch Blvd. It was suggested by several public speakers that the area of the land use restriction be extended to through the “triangle” area at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon Road to the north boundary of Sandy City. I have been considering that suggestion over the last few weeks and researching options to protect that sensitive area of our City. An analysis of the land still available for development in that area quickly demonstrated that a development moratorium, or even the specific study of parameters to support a moratorium would not be the right approach to examine the deeper question of the transportation and development impacts to this sensitive area because the conditions start much further upstream.

After consulting with council and administrative staff, I now see the bigger issue is the lack of a city-wide comprehensive study that examines both the challenges and opportunities we face on the cusp of massive transportation infrastructure investment to serve visitors to Little Cottonwood Canyon. I am requesting the City Council now consider a long-term strategy for creating a Sandy-specific transportation and economic development plan that encompasses not only the triangle, but the immediately adjacent areas and key corridors that will ultimately carry thousands of tourists through our City and into the canyon.

It is time we bring together the current plans and future studies for our city’s growth along the canyons transportation corridors under one umbrella, examining all major transportation corridors from 10600 South to 9000 South along I-15 through Sandy up to Little Cottonwood Canyon. This will provide our residents a better understanding and meaningful participation in the decision-making processes surrounding growth and development.

Later this year the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) will be completing an Environmental Impact Statement to determine their preferred scenario for traffic flow in and out

of Little Cottonwood Canyon. Regardless of the option they select, it will undoubtedly have a profound influence on the future of Sandy City. We need to be preparing now for that eventuality. After consulting with staff in Community Development, City Attorney, Economic Development, and Council Office, the plan I envision anticipates transportation adaptations the City will need to consider in light of future UDOT scenarios and helps us understand how we can capture the economic development opportunities associated with those different scenarios. Importantly, we have to plan in a way that places the well-being, their quality of life, and our environmental concerns ahead of tourist-convenient traffic solutions. Let's signal to our residents that we are serious about not being caught flat-footed when new state and regional transportation developments encroach into our neighborhoods.

As a first step, I propose that the Council start budgeting now toward the goal of developing our own transportation and economic development corridor plan. Sequencing of these projects is important. While it would not be advisable to hypothesize what UDOT may offer at this point, we can begin to utilize some of the programmed funds to mobilize community engagement in the UDOT EIS processes. In addition to UDOT's outreach efforts, we can be helping to equip our residents with information about how they can influence UDOT's decisions in a way that benefits Sandy City without duplicating efforts and creating redundancies. In turn, the stakeholders will also be prepared to engage with us, our staff, and consultants to as we work to adapt to future transportation scenarios.

There is significant, inevitable change on the horizon. I hope you will agree that we should start planning now to balance the many competing interests in a way that serves Sandy socially, environmentally, and financially well into the future.