

EMIGRATION CANYON MOTORISTS AND BICYCLISTS SAFETY ASSESSMENT



Figure 1. Dean - Flickr, Sept. 2012

A.J. Martine
Collaborative Process Facilitator
Environmental Mitigation and Mediation
for SALT LAKE COUNTY OFFICE OF TOWNSHIP SERVICES



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mayor Ben McAdams

Township Executive Patrick Leary

SALT LAKE COUNTY COUNCIL

Randy Horiuchi, At Large

Richard Snelgrove, At Large

Jim Bradley, At Large

Arlyn Bradshaw, District One

Michael Jensen, District Two, Chair

Aimee Winder Newton, District Three

Sam Granato, District Four, *Resolution Sponsor*

Steve DeBry, District Five, *Resolution Sponsor*

Max Burdick, District Six

EMIGRATION CANYON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Rick Raile, Chair, Roadway Improvement Committee Sponsor

Steve Hook Co-Chair

Lincoln Nehring

Gary Bowen

Pat Struhs

Joan Gallegos

Joe Smolka

Kathy Christensen

Matt Boley

Kris Hohenshelt

Jeff Bierman

Steve Borst

EMIGRATION CANYON MOTORIST AND BICYCLIST

SAFETY ASSESSMENT WORKING GROUP

Rick Raile, Emigration Canyon

Phil Sarnoff, Salt Lake City – Bicycle Utah

Tyler Tippetts, Emigration Canyon

Barbara Cameron, Big Cottonwood

John Herbert, Salt Lake - SLCBAC Chair

David Ward, Emigration Canyon

Chad Mullins, Holladay

Lisa Fitzgerald, Emigration Canyon

Pete Kuennemann, Salt Lake City

Henry Whiteside, Emigration Canyon

David Jones, Salt Lake City

Gary Bowen, Emigration Canyon

Betsy Byrne, Salt Lake City

Brian Stillman, Cottonwood Heights

Jennifer Hawkes, Emigration Canyon

Roger Bird, Emigration Canyon

Joe Smolka, Emigration Canyon

Beatrice Lufkin, Salt Lake City

Dan Frazini, SLCBAC

Jaye Rieser, Salt Lake City

Randy Rasmussen, Emigration Canyon

INTRODUCTION

Emigration Canyon is one of the most popular places in Salt Lake County for outdoor recreational activities. Due to the canyon's popularity, issues among bicyclists, motorists and canyon residents have existed for several years. In 2013 and early 2014 Legislation was considered as a solution to mixed use active transportation issues in the Canyon.

The Salt Lake County Mayor's office, Emigration Canyon Council Chair Rick Raile and Emigration Canyon Council Member Joan Gallegos, and the Salt Lake County Bicycle Advisory Committee (SLCBAC) suggested a non-legislative and solutions-driven collaborative alternative. Salt Lake County Council Members Granato and DeBry supported this alternative.

On February 25, 2014 a joint resolution between Salt Lake County Mayor Ben McAdams and the Salt Lake County Council was passed and directed that a working group be formed.

PURPOSE

The working group was tasked with assessing bicyclists/motorists related concerns in Emigration Canyon through a facilitated collaborative process. Safety within a mixed use corridor was the overarching consideration.

PROCESS

Twenty-six County residents responded to a notice soliciting volunteers to participate in the assessment. The County hired a professional facilitator—who uses the collaborative process to resolve large group environmental issues-- to develop a process best suited to evaluate roadway safety factors, assess conflict between users, and recommend solutions in Emigration Canyon. A list of fundamental topics were developed that captured the sideboards of topics affecting safety in the Canyon: Engineering/Infrastructure, Ecology, Parking/Sanitation, Enforcement, Communication/Education.

After two large group meetings, two self-directed work groups were assigned the task of meeting and finding proposed solutions to questions identified by the larger group. The groups were Infrastructure and Outreach.

OUTCOME

The working group identified other Canyon road users who added to the congestion, ecologic impacts that exacerbated road maintenance and construction, historic (inadequate) road design, construction, and maintenance, and an underlying theme of continued acrimony or unresolved conflict.

These findings are further explored and defined in the following actions (see the full report). NOTE: The report is an assessment of infrastructure and outreach issues but does not solve the inter-personal conflict between Canyon Residents and Non-Canyon Residents. (Refer to recommendations)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Emigration Canyon Working Group strongly suggests that the County start the process of converting these recommendations into a strategic policy to reduce the acrimony and make Emigration Canyon a safe place for residents and recreationists.

- **COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS (Facilitated)**--A comprehensive assessment plan with a list of recommendations was presented to Salt Lake County Mayor Ben McAdams. This plan is the result of a facilitated collaborative process. The plan lists actions that can be implemented in the short-term (some at minimum costs), mid-term, and long-term which will require coordinated and collaborative planning.
- **COLLABORATIVE ACTION PLAN (Facilitated)**— A Core Team (six Working Group members representing the Canyon and the County at-large) has been chartered by the Working Group to consult with the Consulting Engineer to complete a comprehensive assessment of critical issues and opportunities in Emigration Canyon. This Core Team will meet, after the assessment, with County staff and leadership to insure that the Collaborative Action Plan is on track.
- **COLLABORATIVE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY (Facilitated)**—This component is a long-term working document. The findings in the assessment report drives long-term project planning, identifies opportunities for partnerships to leverage funding and intellectual capital, and insures coordination with other County or Regional scale planning. This element suggests opportunities for the various County Departments to cooperatively plan for success by sharing the planning and implementation of this strategy. It strongly recommends that the County reassess stipulations for road repair contracts and inspections by the County,

The approach puts in place long-term outreach and communication, implemented in regular PSA's and public meetings, both in the Canyon and in the County, to insure that the public will have an opportunity to participate in a meaningful way. This strategic component suggests that economic development can occur in the Canyon.

Finally, the Cooperative Implementation Strategy outlines a facilitated process so the County and the Communities of Place and Interest can work together to solve further issues, insure that timelines are being met, that the public is informed in a timely manner about progress, or if the strategic deployment plan has to be modified.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

- Consultation between the Core Team and the Consulting Engineer should begin immediately. The Core Team will cooperatively develop an infrastructure and outreach strategy with the Consulting Engineer. *All recommendations made by the Emigration Canyon Working Group should be the framework for further consultation;*
- The County should retain a media consultant and a conflict resolution consultant on an as-needed basis to inform the County about effective communication strategies; and to facilitate *the unresolved conflicts* between residents of the Canyon and non-residential users and use facilitated meetings as one vehicle to keep Canyon and County residents informed about plans and progress.
- Actions items from the full assessment report could be completed prior to or in conjunction with the engineering these items include but are not limited to: composting restroom facilities, swing out signs on the school buses, communication and education.
- Actions items from the full assessment report, that could be completed prior to or in conjunction with the engineering assessment, include but are not limited to: purchasing and/or placing composting restroom facilities, water and bicycle repair stations (at locations recommended in the full assessment) remove aging and dangerous guard rails, improve sight distance, collaborate with Granite School District to install swing out signs on the school buses, and start the process of frequent and meaningful communication with residents and non-Resident Canyon Users and the general public, and education of all parties about laws and regulations concerning bicycle use.

BENEFITS

- Improved SAFETY throughout the Canyon
- Improved road surface
- Improved road structure and layout
- Improvement to Telecom Infrastructure
- Improved communications, emergency services and utilities
- Improved road drainage
- Improved sanitation issues
- Safer conditions for children, getting on/off the school bus and crossing streets
- Better water quality
- Better maintenance of the road

BENEFITS (CONTINUED)

- Better winter conditions
- Better enforcement for both vehicles and cyclist
- Better communication with SL County, City and school district
- Stewardship of resources
- Healthy Community

As stated by members of the Working Group: "White stripes on the roadway are not the answer. Only communication and a process of facilitated conflict resolution, between Canyon residents and non-resident Canyon users, will provide long-term solutions. It could be a template for conflict resolution and infrastructure improvement for the state or other western states to follow."

APPENDIX A: Joint Resolution

JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SALT LAKE COUNTY COUNCIL AND THE SALT LAKE COUNTY MAYOR DECLARING THE LAUNCH OF A MOTORIST AND BICYCLIST SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF EMIGRATION CANYON ROAD

WHEREAS, Emigration Canyon Road is heavily utilized and enjoyed by a large number of users, including motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, school children, runners etc.;

WHEREAS, Emigration Canyon is considered one of the "Crown Jewels" of our community by virtue of its natural beauty and accessibility, both geographically and for recreationists of many skill levels, which results in attracting permanent residents and visitors from near and far;

WHEREAS, use of Emigration Canyon has and will continue to steadily increase, resulting in both the benefit of more people enjoying this public amenity and the drawback of additional competition for space, resulting in potential conflict among users and increased public safety concerns;

WHEREAS, Salt Lake County, the Emigration Canyon Community Council and Salt Lake County Bicycle Advisory Committee are concerned about increasing safety issues and are committed to seeking collaborative solutions to address these concerns;

WHEREAS, it will take a multifaceted solution involving education, infrastructure to support the volume of recreational use in the canyon, enforcement, and commitment from local governing authorities to improve conditions;

WHEREAS, Salt Lake County is committed to spearheading a motorist/cyclist study group to review and produce recommendations for canyon improvements similar to successful efforts undertaken in communities such as Boulder, Colorado;

WHEREAS, Salt Lake County is committed to seeking funding for infrastructure improvements, including an assessment of Emigration Canyon Road as a "recreational facility";

WHEREAS, public safety cannot be achieved without proper enforcement and Salt Lake County is committed to ensuring law enforcement and the District Attorney's Office have the tools they need to enforce existing law and prosecute offending motorists and bicyclists effectively;

WHEREAS, Salt Lake County is committed to an ongoing review of local ordinances and state statutes, to ensure all stakeholders have the tools they need to promote safety for all road users;

WHEREAS, other heavily-used canyons in unincorporated county experience similar safety concerns and this review should serve as an analysis for similar areas;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Council of Salt Lake County, Utah, and the Salt Lake County Mayor that: Tuesday February 25, 2014 The County Council and Mayor declare the launch of a motorist and bicyclist safety assessment to promote safety for all Emigration canyon users, with results being reported back to the County Council and Mayor no later than October, 2014.

APPROVED and ADOPTED this 25th day of February, 2014.

By /s/ BEN MCADAMS By /s/ MICHAEL JENSEN

Salt Lake County Mayor / Council Member

Council Member Bradshaw, seconded by Council Member Granato, moved to ratify the vote taken in the Committee of the Whole meeting. [Council Member DeBry, seconded by Council Member Granato, moved to approve the resolution and forward it to the 4:00 p.m. Council meeting for formal consideration. The motion passed unanimously. Council Member Horiuchi was absent for the vote.] The Council motion passed unanimously, authorizing the Chair and the Mayor to execute the resolution, and directing the County Clerk to attest the Chair's signature, showing that all Council Members present voted "Aye."