

## 9.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following are questions that were heard throughout Phase II of the study:

### **What is happening in the canyon?**

The Transportation Commission asked UDOT to conduct a study to look at all modes of transportation in the canyon. The purpose of the study is to gather and share information and develop an understanding of the safety and mobility needs in the canyon.

- Phase I (2014-2015) – Gathered engineering and environmental data, met with stakeholders, and gathered public opinion
- Phase II (2015-2016) – Developed concepts, formed focus groups, and narrowed options

### **What can I expect from the completion of the study?**

Regarding the roadway, UDOT will use the study's recommendations to prioritize projects for funding approval by the Transportation Commission. Each improvement will require an environmental approval and maintenance and safety projects will be prioritized first.

### **When will a trail be built in the canyon?**

Weber County is the lead agency on any future trail in the canyon. The County will assess this Study's final report and determine any future funding, phasing, and timing of a trail system.

### **Have you looked into additional parking?**

Possible parking locations were examined in Phase II but focus groups indicated early in the process that less drastic changes to the roadway were more favorable which eliminated areas for additional parking. Further study is recommended to enhance existing parking locations and development at major access locations.

### **Have you looked at adding turn lanes?**

While looking at modifications of the entire canyon in Phase II, it created an opportunity for adding left and center turn lanes at various locations. When less drastic roadway changes were desired, the turn lanes were no longer an easy implementation. The crash history doesn't indicate left hand turn pockets are needed but will be considered as turning volumes meet standard thresholds.

### **What is speed limit versus design speed?**

Speed limit is the maximum speed at which a vehicle may legally travel on a particular stretch of road. In Utah, speed limits are set by law at or below the speed at which 85% of vehicles travel. Design speed is a design criteria for determining the geometric factors of the road, such as curve length and stopping sight distance.

### **Why are we trying to make the canyon faster?**

We are not trying to make the canyon faster. The canyon is signed at 40 mph, but many curves are signed for less and there are areas that do not meet current standards.

**Can you limit the size of trucks in the canyon because they cross the middle line?**

The size of trucks are already limited in the canyon to single units. We received comments from UDOT Maintenance as well as the general public concerning large trucks crossing the center line. This information was also mapped using traffic simulation software to show the curves where this problem occurs. Flattening the curves and providing shoulders will help eliminate center line crossings.

**Have you addressed limiting heavy trucks in the canyon?**

Because of state laws, trucks are unable to be completely restricted from the canyon. However, the Utah Trucking Association is willing to discuss voluntary limitations.

**How will the shared use trail be maintained? Who will be responsible for this?**

Recreational trails built in the canyon will be maintained by the county. UDOT will facilitate and maintain the bike shoulders on the roadway.

**How will you deal with winter maintenance if a trail is constructed in Ogden Canyon?**

If snow removal is performed at all, it would likely only be for paved portions of the trail, near the mouth of the canyon. Other sections of the trail could become a snowshoe/cross-country skiing trail in the winter.

**Is Ogden Canyon a scenic byway?**

Ogden Canyon is designated as a Utah Scenic Byway from I-15 to the Monte Cristo mountain range under Utah Administrative Rule R926-7. The purposes of the Scenic Byway designation are to conserve and enhance the byway's qualities and promote tourism and economic development.

**Could a trail be constructed on the old railroad alignment in the canyon?**

There were two railroad alignments in the canyon at various times. One railroad line, the Salt Lake and Ogden Interurban, was built by Simon Bamberger and was never fully completed. The Bamberger line later became part of the public highway (SR-39). The other railroad line from the Sanitarium (now Rainbow Gardens) to the Hermitage (and later extended to Huntsville in 1915) was owned by the Ogden Rapid Transit Company which ran from 1909 to 1932. The Ogden Rapid Transit Company tracks were damaged by floods in 1932 and service was discontinued in Ogden Canyon. It is not clear what happened to the tracks and the railroad right-of-way. Current property ownership maps show that there is no remaining railroad right-of-way left in the canyon. In places, the original railroad grade can still be seen and in others, there are private homes and other structures built where the railroad line would have been. In short, there is no way to build a trail solely on what used to belong to the railroad line without encroaching on private property.

**Is there a bus system in the canyon currently?**

UTA provides a ski bus service through the canyon during winter months only.

**What's the expected population increase for Weber County?**

According to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, Weber County's population will increase from about 232,000 (2010) to almost 399,000 by the year 2050.

### **Have you looked at improvements to the North Ogden Divide instead of improving Ogden Canyon?**

It has been suggested by numerous respondents that the North Ogden Divide be improved instead of Ogden Canyon. The North Ogden Divide has some challenges such as steep drop offs, sharp curves, and rock fall and is a more difficult route than Ogden Canyon.

### **Are there any upcoming projects in Ogden Canyon?**

UDOT has two projects coming up in Ogden Canyon. One project will flatten a curve and widen the road in The Narrows (as recommended from our Phase I Study). The other project will replace the bridge at Grey Cliffs and do minor rehabilitation on the bridges at the top and bottom of the canyon.

### **Will a trail through Ogden Canyon lower the value of my property?**

Many studies across the country show that in most cases, close proximity to a trail actually raises the value of property. Some examples:

- A 2012 study by the Cache Valley (Utah) Assessor's Office showed that homes within 500 feet of a trail or park were worth 29% more than similar homes that were farther away.
- According to a 2008 study of the Little Miami Scenic Trail (Ohio), homeowners were willing to pay a \$9,000 premium to live within 1,000 feet of the trail.
- In Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, for every 400 meters (about 1300 feet) closer a median-priced home is to an off-street bicycle facility, its value increases by \$510, as documented in a 2009 study.

### **Will crime increase if a trail is constructed in Ogden Canyon?**

While crimes do happen on trails, it has been documented that crimes on trails do not occur more regularly than crimes in other areas. In a nationwide study of 372 rail trails in urban, suburban, and rural settings, only 3% of these trails reported any crimes against persons (assaults, muggings, rape, and murder). Crime against persons on rural trails was negligible. Burglary near trails was extremely rare. A yearly average of four burglaries were reported in homes adjacent to 7,000 miles of trails. In general, the increase in pedestrian and bicycle traffic acts as a deterrent to undesirable activity, as there are more "eyes on the corridor".

### **What if canyon residents do not like living near the trail?**

Some people may not like living near a trail because they feel they have lost privacy or they fear that they are less safe. However, many people do enjoy living near trails because of increased opportunities to be active and experience nature. Here are some examples:

- In Utah County, for many years, a canal ran along the backyards of hundreds of residences. When the canal was piped and the Murdock Canal Trail was announced, the initial reaction from many property owners was that they did not want foot traffic near their backyards. In the four years since the trail opened, many of those same people have installed gates in their fences so they can more easily access the trail. It has become a community recreational center for individuals, groups, and families.
- 84% of Americans who do participate in outdoor activities and 71% of those who don't, say that biking/walking trails in their neighborhoods are important.
- A recent study in Omaha, Nebraska found that 75% of residents perceived a positive relationship between the trail and their neighborhood quality of life.