



## Short-Term Projects 2024-2025 Grant Cycle Project Idea Worksheet

Please complete this worksheet and the questions found at the bottom of this page and send to Sam Kilpack at [samantha@cw.utah.gov](mailto:samantha@cw.utah.gov) no later than **March 25, 2024**.

For project criteria, visit [cw.utah.gov](http://cw.utah.gov).

Name of the project:	Transit to Trails- Wasatch Front
Location of the project:	Transportation from Sandy and/or Cottonwood Heights area to the Bonanza Flat Conservation Area.
Project contact person:	Alli Eroh
Project contact email address:	<a href="mailto:alli.eroh@utahopenlands.org">alli.eroh@utahopenlands.org</a>
Project category (select any that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation and transit <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental protection <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation stewardship
Do you have community partners for this project? Please list your partners, if applicable:	City of Sandy and/or City of Cottonwood Heights
What is the estimated total cost of the project? How much will you request from the CWC?	Depending on the frequency/length of shuttle service and the selected transportation provider, this project is estimated to cost between 50,000 and 75,000. We are requesting \$15,000 in funding from the Central Wasatch Commission.
What is the expected starting date and completion date for the project?	Expected start date is dependent on weather, road conditions and additional matching funding from partners. Ideally, the program would run from July to October.

Please attach your answers to the following questions:

1. Briefly describe your idea. How will it implement transportation and transit solutions, protect the ecosystems that originate in the Central Wasatch, steward recreational access, or sustain the economic viability of the project area?
2. Does this idea result in other benefits to the Central Wasatch and its users?

**Briefly describe your idea. How will it implement transportation and transit solutions, protect the ecosystems that originate in the Central Wasatch, steward recreational access, or sustain the economic viability of the project area?**

Utah Open Lands has proudly partnered with the Park City Municipal Corporation in recent years to implement the Transit to Trails program, offering a sustainable transportation solution for Park City residents. This year, we are excited to seek funding to expand this successful initiative, forging partnerships with cities along the Wasatch Front including Salt Lake City, Sandy, and Cottonwood Heights to extend similar services to trail users.

In 2017, Bonanza Flat, one of the Central Wasatch's most beloved recreational areas within "the Heart of the Wasatch," faced the threat of development. Recognizing its ecological significance, Utah Open Lands and the Park City Municipal Corporation rallied the community to safeguard this cherished landscape. Through a remarkable display of civic engagement, Park City residents approved a \$25 million open space bond. Utah Open Lands spearheaded the \$13 Million fundraising campaign to close the funding gap and protect Bonanza Flat. Contributions poured in from various stakeholders, illustrating widespread support for preserving this area. Sandy, Salt Lake City, agencies, and over 3,500 individual donors contributed to secure Bonanza. Particularly during the summer months, many recreationists from the Wasatch Front visit Bonanza Flat to escape the valley's heat. Cell phone area usage data for the area (included below) shows that visitors from the Wasatch Front represent a substantial proportion of the total visitors.

Top Ten Visitors: Area Usage Data from 2022 (July 1st through September 19th)		
Location	Number of Visitors	Percentage of Total
<b>Salt Lake City</b>	<b>63,140</b>	<b>23.6%</b>
Park City	16,486	6.2%
California	16,168	6.1%
<b>Sandy</b>	<b>16,150</b>	<b>6.0%</b>
<b>West Jordan</b>	<b>9,705</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
Texas	9,092	3.4%
Florida	6,976	2.6%
Arizona	5,311	2.0%
Heber City	5,232	2.0%
<b>Draper</b>	<b>4,977</b>	<b>1.9%</b>

Top Ten Visitors: Area Usage Data from 2023 (July 1st through September 17th)		
Location	Number of Visitors	Percentage of Total
<b>Salt Lake City</b>	<b>63,018</b>	<b>25.4%</b>
Park City	17,380	7.0%
<b>Sandy</b>	<b>16,466</b>	<b>6.6%</b>
California	11,907	4.8%
<b>West Jordan</b>	<b>7,924</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
Texas	7,549	3.0%
Florida	5,897	2.4%
<b>West Valley City</b>	<b>5,327</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>South Jordan</b>	<b>5,136</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
AZ	4,184	1.7%

When Bonanza Flat was placed under conservation easement, it wasn't a pristine landscape. A network of social trails that eroded soil and intruded upon ecologically sensitive areas, affecting water quality. Addressing these concerns required an Adaptive Management Plan developed by Utah Open Lands in partnership with the landowning partner. Part of the plan involved managing parking to reflect the land's carrying capacity. While significant improvements have been observed in parking compliance since enforcement measures were implemented, the ongoing goal is to strike a balance between recreational access and ecological protection. Expanding the Transit to Trails program aims to better serve the population of visitors recreating at Bonanza Flat. By offering an alternative transportation solution, users are encouraged to minimize their impact on the area, enhancing the recreational experience while safeguarding its ecosystems. Utah Open Lands' involvement in the program ensures that educational and practical resources promoting recreational stewardship are accessible to trail users both online and during shuttle rides. Our initiative not only facilitates transportation but also fosters a culture of responsible recreation, empowering users to make mindful choices that benefit both the land and the recreational activities they cherish.

When Bonanza Flat was placed under conservation easement, it was not a pristine landscape. A spider web of social trails existed that eroded soil and cut through ecologically sensitive areas, negatively impacting water quality. Beginning with the paving of Guardsman Pass in 2014, parked cars lined both sides of Guardsman Pass, posing a safety issue and overflowing the area with use. Addressing these concerns required an Adaptive Management Plan developed by Utah Open Lands in partnership with the landowning partner. Part of the plan involved managing parking to reflect the land's carrying capacity. While significant improvements have been observed in parking compliance since enforcement measures were implemented, the ongoing goal is to strike a balance between recreational access and ecological protection. Expanding the Transit to Trails program aims to better serve the population of visitors recreating at Bonanza Flat. By offering an alternative transportation solution, users are encouraged to minimize their impact on the area, enhancing the recreational experience while safeguarding its ecosystems. Utah Open Lands' involvement in the program ensures that educational and practical resources promoting recreational stewardship are accessible to trail users both online and during shuttle rides, fostering a culture of responsible recreation and empowering users to make mindful choices that benefit both the land and the recreational activities they cherish.

### **Does this idea result in other benefits to the Central Wasatch and its users?**

The Transit to Trails program yields numerous benefits for the Central Wasatch and its users. One key advantage is its ride-sharing system, which reduces automobile pollution by encouraging trail users to drive shorter distances to transit pickups instead of directly to trailheads, thereby minimizing overall vehicle emissions.

Moreover, by reducing roadside parking and associated pressure on vegetation, the program contributes to preserving the area's scenic beauty. This conservation effort not only enhances the environment but also offers tourists unobstructed views of the Wasatch, enriching their experience and supporting local economies through increased tourism expenditure on lodging, food, and services.

By enhancing access for users from the Wasatch Front, we ensure that the entire population benefiting from this area is better served, promoting not only overall sustainability but also equity. As Bonanza Flat is beloved by many residents of the Central Wasatch, our sustainable transportation solutions should aim to serve the entire community. Securing funding for this project would mark the first step in the direction of expanding transportation to communities beyond Park City, potentially garnering support from entities such as the City of Sandy and the City of Cottonwood Heights.

Additionally, the program fosters a sense of community among Central Wasatch residents who share a conservation ethic. By alleviating parking frustrations and promoting stress-free experiences, it cultivates cohesion among trail users. Furthermore, by providing reliable transportation, the program expands access to the area for demographics who might otherwise struggle to reach it, thus enhancing community inclusivity and overall quality of life for Central Wasatch residents and visitors alike.