

Town of Brighton

2025 Strategic Planning Session Meeting Minutes

Location: Event Room - Silver Fork Lodge

Date & Time: Monday, April 14th, 2025, 11:00AM – 4:00PM

*Minutes were approved at the Brighton Town Council Meeting on May 13th, 2025

ATTENDANCE: Mackey Smith (facilitator), Dan Knopp, Keith Zuspan, Carolyn Keigley, Jeff Bossard, Lise Brunhart, Polly McLean, Nate Rockwood, Kara John, Barbara Cameron, Wendy Smith, Brian Reynolds

Key Meeting Objectives:

1) Discuss long-range goals and needs of the Town

Prioritize community input, improve communication with residents and visitors, community engagement, thoughtful future development, maintain natural aesthetics, and continue partnerships with other agencies. Specific initiatives discussed were enhancing trail connectivity, public transportation efficiency, and potential civic center locations. The meeting also highlighted the importance of stakeholder relationships, fire prevention, and preserving the town's rustic environment.

2) Identify strategic initiatives for the Town over the next five years

Preserve the community and environment through land acquisitions and partnerships. Identify potential locations for a community gathering place. Contingency plans for service districts. Explore communication channels. Advocate for additional bathrooms. Prioritize adopting a highway, adopting a trail, evaluate strategies to preserve view sheds, traffic calming, staffing plan. Eliminate roadside parking, improve transportation. Resident shuttles. Potential geofencing tools.

3) Continue to build trust, cohesion, and alignment as a team

Community connectivity, transparency, educate the community on the emergency response plan.

Discussion:

Setting Expectations. Today's meeting identified overarching missions, strategic imperatives, action items, and metrics for success. The importance of community involvement and feedback was emphasized in the strategic planning process. The meeting will not result in a fully adopted strategic plan but will provide a draft for feedback and refinement.

Review Community Input.

Over the last year, the Brighton Neighborhood Nodes study drafted a trail system as a major focus, aiming to connect four nodes with a multi-purpose trail. The trail would parallel Big Cottonwood Road to connect the communities of Cardiff, Pine Tree and Silver Fork, Solitude, and the Brighton Loop. Community feedback shows concerns about the trail coming into the

neighborhoods and past private residences, especially in Silver Fork. There was a concept depicting a dedicated transit lane around the Loop. With UDOT's support, there could be a reversible lane for public transportation during peak hours. The plan must align with transportation and environmental studies. The nodes survey showed mixed results about a civic center. The goal for the Nodes study is to have a draft ready by the end of the month, and the final report by the end of May.

Council interviews prioritized many of the same goals as the community. Also mentioned were to maintain service levels, and plan for density and growth, create a connected community, preservation, recreation economy, public safety, and financial stability.

Strategic Intent and Visioning.

The overall mission is to preserve the rustic quality of life by making needed investments in the community. Maintain what we have, preserve our community and environment and help to manage our recreation economy. Emphasize the importance of communication and transparency, creative connectivity, and maintain public safety services. Preserve our community and environment through land acquisitions, both for open space and strategic assets. Also, continue partnerships.

Strategic Imperatives.

Communication and partnerships.

What Does Success Look Like?

Continuing the things we've established: collaborating with CWC on restrooms, fuels mitigation projects, coordinating utilities, advocating for funding, noise management, traffic calming, set a staffing plan, continued compliance for STRs, carry out the neighborhood nodes plan, collaborate with UDOT on transportation plans, resident shuttles, engage the ski resorts as partners.

Wrap Up & Next Steps

Mackey noted the amount of time it takes in the beginning to make changes, but once there is momentum, changes happen exponentially. Mackey will follow up with a plan outline for review.

Adjourn

PUBLIC INPUT RECEIVED IN ADVANCE:

1) Chad Smith

Dear Mayor and Council,

I love that you're holding a visioning meeting. So much is changing in our town, it's very important

to step back, collect feedback, and set goals for the future! Thanks especially for encouraging community involvement in general, and specifically for hosting Monday's Public Focus Group to gather input. Our family was out of town during the in-person input collection, but I see that those unable to attend can also send in feedback, which we really appreciate.

As you have seen over the last few years, I've got plenty of specific ideas for our town, but I will try to keep this list high level and easy to reference for the purposes of your visioning meeting. I'm speaking for myself here, though I know many other community members who feel similarly. Following are my hopes and concerns, which I hope will be helpful as you continue your important work to make our town the best it can be!

Also, I hope that one goal coming out of this meeting will also be flexibility, and continued transparency and involvement of the community. Thanks!

Connectivity and traffic

I realize this is not entirely within Brighton's control. Organizations like UDOT and UTA can't always respond quickly, or in the ways we would prefer. That said, both the livability and safety of our town are declining significantly due to excessive traffic, despite the resorts requiring parking reservations. Please lean heavily and continually on our various partners—the resorts, county, UDOT, etc—to address these unsustainable problems, particularly with traffic on Big Cottonwood Canyon Road. This is a multifactorial issue, and subsequently it requires an arsenal of partial solutions. Not only increased bussing, canyon tolling, etc (as contemplated in the BCC EIS), but also solutions currently being contemplated by both UDOT and the Brighton Nodes study, including the potential addition of a third lane between Solitude and Brighton resorts and around the Brighton Loop (hopefully a directional lane specifically for busses, emergency vehicles, and local traffic). Again, I know this problem is not entirely within our town's purview to solve, but we do have influence, and the need is urgent, especially considering that big solutions will take a long time to implement. Our town should launch a concerted advocacy effort here.

Additionally, we should prioritize and implement the Brighton Nodes plan, which calls for foot/bike paths that will connect our town from Brighton Resort all the way to Cardiff.

Please, let's be creative in finding multi-pronged solutions to connect our town and to avoid unsafe and unlivable traffic gridlock!

Community gathering options

Other than the fire station, our community is occasionally provided gathering space at the church, Silverfork Lodge, and Brighton Resort (Rose or Chalet). As the canyon gets more crowded and the opportunity costs rise for private businesses when they graciously provide space for public events, we will need our own gathering spaces. If we don't plan for this immediately, we will miss our window.

Personally, I really like the ideas designed by the Brighton Nodes group, including both indoor and outdoor community spaces where the Store parking lot currently is. (With this being private property, clearly there are some things that would need to be worked out.) But whether it is there or elsewhere, it really is vital to move on this now, or forever hold our peace. Let's add the facilities that will help us maintain a well-connected community here in our town!

Balance in our regulations

We all want the town to promote a sustainable, livable community here in Brighton. And yet none of us wants to create a bureaucratic nightmare of onerous code that negatively impacts property owners while requiring heavy-handed enforcement from the town. When Brighton became a town, most residents expected a shift toward less onerous government involvement in their lives. Most of us want only minimal ordinances, those specifically necessary to live here sustainably and enjoyably. We don't want restrictions that don't directly achieve these goals, particularly when they come at a significant cost to our time, money and stress.

Many times, particularly when adopting burdensome and controversial code, we have heard that these issues can be revisited and updated later. I truly hope this is the case, and this is provided for during the next 3-5 years. And for all new regulations, I hope we can set a goal to clearly and simply define what is *not* allowed and to make our code precise enough to prohibit *only* that. (I would hope we discontinue adopting overly-broad or indirectly-related restrictions to property rights, hoping for potential and indirect improvements while imposing real and immediate burdens on so many owners who already care deeply about our town and who are trying to do the right thing.)

Please let's not justify over-reaching regulations because they are technically legal or likely defensible in court. Let's justify them because they are clearly needed and would not impose burdens beyond what is required to achieve their clear and direct goal.

Areas of differing character

Speaking of revisiting and updating controversial or overly-broad code, please let's take the time to address and treat different areas differently, as called for in our General Plan. I totally get how we've had to customize and adopt county code in a way that is specific for Brighton, and how it has been a case of shutting the barn door before more horses get out. We've had to act quickly and paint with an overly broad brush in some cases. Over the next 3 to 5 years, I would hope that we can take the time to be more nuanced in some of our current solutions. The issue of house size comes to mind here. As we have recognized with STRs, different areas within our town should have differing restrictions. I think this should also be the case with building size. (While 5000 sq' including a garage is much too large in many areas of our town, I hate to see garage space included in this restriction in other areas. This passed by an extremely close, controversial vote for a reason.) Let's remember that property rights, STRs, etc are not just legally-required evils that we hope to restrict as much as possible. We should truly value these kinds of things, and strive to restrict them in some ways, but also promote them in some ways. Let's envision the positive: what we want to foster, as well as what we want to avoid.

Improvement in our process

There have been requests and subsequent effort regarding the timely publication of agendas and meeting packets. While the law may only require brief item descriptions on an agenda to be published 24 hours before a meeting, and important supporting documents can be dropped later (sometimes even during the meeting and after public comment has been closed), we should do better than what is minimally required by law. With the intent and your desire being to have enough time to read, consider, research and solicit community input, *please* require staff to have agendas and packets published a full week in advance of meetings. If we can't get this, particularly on important or potentially controversial decisions, it is probably best to delay the discussion as well as action to the next month's meeting. Staff typically works on town requests for a month

between meetings. Instituting a straw deadline of one week earlier should not be onerous, and it would make a world of difference!

This extra time would also result in less reliance on our attorney for policy recommendations. We should use her as counsel regarding the legality of how we might achieve the Town Council's stated directions, and not for presenting de facto policy decisions into a vacuum created by too little time to explore other options and a rush to adopt something. This is a touchy subject, and I don't intend it personally, but many in our town feel it's an unaddressed elephant in the room when it comes to good governance, transparency and accountability in our town process. Thanks for understanding.

And thanks again for planning so conscientiously for our town. You care about our town and our canyon and our community, and it shows! We truly appreciate your hard work on our behalf!

-Chad Smith

2) Helen Hooper

My name is Helen Hooper, and I am the owner of the cabin located at 7850 S. Big Cottonwood Canyon Rd., Brighton. I have proudly owned this cabin since 2016 and, with the help of Carole McCalla have successfully rented it each ski season. I've spent many days enjoying the canyon, actively supporting the community, and serving as treasurer for the BCA for the past eight years. I've also attended every water meeting, and many business meetings via Zoom or in person.

I am writing to express my concern regarding the involvement of the Salt Lake City Public Utilities (SLCPU) in the short-term rental licensing process.

In May, 2024, while seeking a renewal of my business license, I was informed that SLCPU requirements had been added to the process. Initially, I was asked to provide historical information about the cabin, including details on water and sewer usage and location. I complied and submitted the requested documents, including the original survey to both SLCPU and the SLCO Health Department. A site visit was made in June, 2024.

I was then asked by SLCPU to have another certified survey done that was in more detail and showed a 50-foot set back from water sources. I complied and submitted another survey with this information.

I was then asked to complete a series of three questions. In compiling the documentation for these questions, I was able to easily complete the first two concerning if I could change the property boundaries and how to protect the water quality but the third question concerning specific conditions SLCPU deemed necessary was not clarified and the agencies that I contacted (Isabella Leopard at SLCPU, and Mathius Neville at SLCO Health Department) were not able to help me address what they felt were specific conditions. Mr. Neville questioned why he was involved in this decision as the cabin had been a rental since 2006.

Shortly afterward, I was informed by SLCPU that a certified wetland survey was now also required. The closest companies offering this type of survey are located in Logan, Utah, and Colorado, making the process burdensome and costly. Despite the inconvenience, I proceeded with arranging for the survey and submitting it in July. However, I was then told that a completely new survey submission was required—one that combined both the wetland and original information. At that point, I stopped pursuing additional documentation, as I had already been granted a business license for the 2024–2025 season.

My concern extends beyond my own experience. These additional and evolving requirements from SLCPU create a significant barrier for all cabin owners—particularly when it comes time to get a new license, renewal or to sell. The uncertainty around short-term rental licensing eligibility could deter potential renters following the guidelines provided by Brighton City and potential buyers, ultimately reducing property values.

I am not requesting that the number of short-term rentals be increased or that all requirements be eliminated. I believe Brighton has been able to cover those requirements for safety and percentages of short-term rentals in each area. However, I am respectfully requesting that SLCPU's involvement be reconsidered, and that their requirements be removed to allow more clarity, fairness, and consistency for all property owners in the area.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Helen Olabarri Hooper

3) Heather Moore

Sadly I missed the focused meeting on Monday. I would like to see a fee station in high cottonwood canyon. Silverlake is over run in the summer months and it would be nice to see some improvements made with those funds. I would like to see some summer activities offered on the mountain like...mountain trikes, scooters. trottibikes etc

<https://www.jungfrau.ch/en-gb/grindelwaldfirst/first-mountain-cart/>

We have the people, let's capitalize on the traffic in a small way.

The light at Donut Falls is a major traffic problem in the winter. I'd like to see that managed better with a shorter stop and less times the button can be pushed to stop traffic.

Thank you.

Heather Moore

4) Tara Paras

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

Thank you so much for all your hard work and the time you've dedicated to the Town. I truly appreciate the effort that goes into shaping a thriving community. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the focus group this evening, but I wanted to take a moment to share some thoughts and general feedback on how things have been progressing in Brighton.

I recently had a conversation with my father, Nick Paras, and another property owner in the area. When the decision was made to vote for Brighton to become a town, one of the key promises that resonated with many was the idea of moving away from the County's more restrictive zoning policies. Sadly, it feels as though that promise has not been fulfilled. In fact, the direction the Town has taken seems to be increasingly restrictive, making it more difficult for property owners to maintain and enjoy their properties.

I respectfully urge you to consider a more balanced approach—one that supports thoughtful regulation without making it burdensome for homeowners. It's important that all property owners feel heard and represented when decisions and ordinances are being made. Many of us chose to live and invest in Brighton because of its unique character and community spirit, and it would be

encouraging to see that same spirit reflected in how governance is carried out.

As both a resident and property owner, I've voiced concerns previously about the need to evaluate each neighborhood based on its unique needs and characteristics. Unfortunately, ordinances have been passed without sufficient consideration for these differences. We've even been told that things can always be fixed later—but in reality, that's a very difficult and often costly process. Ordinances should be passed with the mindset of getting it right the first time—not just for efficiency, but out of respect for those impacted.

With that in mind, I respectfully offer the following points for consideration:

1. **Remove Salt Lake City Public Utilities from the Short-Term Rental Process:** Their involvement appears unnecessary and duplicative, especially since they're already engaged in building oversight in the canyon. The rationale for including them in STR regulation remains unclear.
2. **Allow One STR Per Property:** Where approval is available, homeowners should be allowed one short-term rental, whether it's a portion of the home or the entire house. Additionally, allowing a long-term rental in the remaining portion should be considered—this is already permitted in places like Park City.
3. **Revise the 5,000 Sq. Ft. Ordinance:** The current blanket ordinance, which includes garage space, doesn't account for the practical needs of homeowners in this environment. Lot sizes and neighborhood characteristics vary, and the ordinance should reflect that. Garages are essential here—not just for vehicles but for equipment like snow blowers and skid steers that are necessary in our canyon setting.
4. **Offer Incentives for Local Employee Housing:** Encourage property owners to rent to long-term tenants who work in the canyon. Overly restrictive policies are discouraging this kind of local support. Also, the current square footage limitations make it harder to add ADUs, which could be vital for workforce housing.
5. **Address Traffic and Emergency Access:** Consider infrastructure improvements like adding a turnaround or a second lane on the loop specifically for emergency vehicles, buses, and pass-holding property owners. This would significantly improve safety and flow.
6. **Ensure Objectivity in Governance:** Please make sure that all council members and ordinance decision-makers are acting in the best interest of the community as a whole, without personal agendas influencing policy.

I hope this feedback is received in the spirit it's intended—with respect and a genuine desire to support a more inclusive and sustainable approach to town governance. Thank you again for your commitment to Brighton, and for taking the time to consider the perspectives of residents and property owners alike.

Warm regards,

Tara Paras

5) Wes Greaves

With Brighton now being its own official town, why do we not have tax financed snow removal? Is this something that can be implemented? If not, why?

Thanks!

-Wes

6) Laura Bossard

1. The aesthetics: First, I'd like to say that whenever I have traveled (and I have traveled quite a bit), there are certain things that endear me to a town or place. Not only is the place beautiful in its natural state (surrounding mountains, fauna and flora), but also the town itself, has kept its buildings and public places consistent in theme, architecture and flow. Brighton certainly has a great backdrop of mountains, fauna and flora, but we need to work on maintaining the quaint mountain feel. Buildings need to be built in "alpine" style...all buildings. Exteriors need to be somewhat uniform to what an alpine community would look like. Europe does such a great job maintaining their small towns to look so quaint and welcoming, that you always want to come back because of that charm. Please keep the architecture alpine.

2. The Center: The Neighborhood NODES has been working on a "community/central center." I think this is a great idea (again, as long as it has that Alpine feel). People love to "gather." Let's make a welcoming "gathering" spot. Let's have coffee, and quaint restaurant spots. Let's have a spot where we can talk shop over a great cup of coffee, any time of the year. Let's have a town Christmas tree in the center of that spot (with a tree lighting ceremony in early December). Let's have brightly colored umbrellas to shade our guests and residents as they sip coffee, eat lunch, and enjoy a deep conversation. Let's have benches (people love benches) and overflowing flower barrels.

3. The services: Our trash and recycling center is in desperate need of "some quaintness." I hear that is in the works. I hope it is, and that it is hidden under a building with an Alpine feel. It would also be nice to have a self-serve post office...where you can purchase stamps, weigh, mail and post packages and mail letters.

Thank you for reading my words and considering my vision.

Laura Bossard



Submitted by Kara John, Town Clerk