

Big Cottonwood Canyon

SR-190 | Ft. Union Blvd. to Brighton



Central Wasatch Commission January 12, 2026

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by UDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022, and executed by FHWA and UDOT.

Study Timeline and Process



Two alternatives are evaluated in detail in the EA:

No-action Alternative and a Proposed Action

NO-ACTION ASSUMPTIONS:



Planned Projects: All planned Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC) road and transit projects would be built, except for Big Cottonwood Canyon tolling and enhanced BCC bus route projects.



Transit Service: UDOT assumes that Utah Transit Authority (UTA) ski bus Route 972 would continue its current operations, running at 30-minute frequencies from late November to mid-April.

A No-action Alternative serves as a baseline that describes the environment and the transportation system without the proposed project, in the design year (2050).



No BCC Tolling or Improvements: UDOT would not implement a winter-season toll in BCC and would not make improvements to mid-canyon or resort bus stops.



Mobility Hub and Interchange: A smaller mobility hub and a grade-separated interchange on Wasatch Boulevard would be constructed at the gravel pit site to accommodate the needs of the enhanced bus service for Little Cottonwood Canyon.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action includes enhanced bus service, tolling, a mobility hub, and resort bus stops as its primary elements. It also includes:

- **Improvements to existing bus stops** at Cardiff Fork, Spruces Campground, Silver Fork, and Silver Lake/Solitude Nordic Center
- **Add a bus priority lane** around **Brighton Loop Road** from about Camp Tuttle Road to the southern tip of Brighton Loop Road
- **Add a grade-separated interchange** on **Wasatch Boulevard** to access mobility hub
- **Add a bus-only transitway** at base of Big Cottonwood Canyon



Purpose and Need Criteria for Evaluating Alternatives

Purpose	Reduce wintertime traffic congestion on SR-190 as directed by 2023 Utah legislature in Senate Bill 2 to provide enhanced bus service, tolling, a mobility hub, and resort bus stops in Big Cottonwood Canyon.
Needs	Decreased mobility on SR-190 during peak periods in the winter leads to increased travel times.
Measure	Does the alternative improve projected travel times (in minutes) from the mobility hub to Brighton Resort? (yes/no)
No-action Alternative	No AM (all vehicles): 56:10 PM (all vehicles): 44:40
Proposed Action	Yes AM (buses): 24:55 // AM (private vehicles): 29:10 PM (buses): 27:05 // PM (private vehicles): 28:00 AM Peak travel times reduced by 27 to 31 minutes

Purpose and Need Criteria for Evaluating Alternatives

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Purpose	Reduce wintertime traffic congestion on SR-190 as directed by 2023 Utah legislature in Senate Bill 2 to provide enhanced bus service, tolling, a mobility hub, and resort bus stops in Big Cottonwood Canyon.
Needs	The operational capacity of SR-190 is compromised during peak periods in the winter.
Measure	Does the alternative maintain an operational road capacity of about 1,000 vehicles per hour by implementing tolling and providing an enhanced bus service? (yes/no)
No-action Alternative	No No method to maintain an operational road capacity of about 1,000 vehicles per hour.
Proposed Action	Yes Maintains operational road capacity of ~ 1,000 vehicles per hour by implementing tolling and providing an enhanced bus service to accommodate a majority of future travel demand.

Purpose and Need Criteria for Evaluating Alternatives

Purpose	Reduce wintertime traffic congestion on SR-190 as directed by 2023 Utah legislature in Senate Bill 2 to provide enhanced bus service, tolling, a mobility hub, and resort bus stops in Big Cottonwood Canyon.
Needs	There is a high existing demand for winter bus service and the need for bus service to accommodate a majority of future travel demand.
Measure	Does the alternative provide enhanced bus service along with other elements as specified in Senate Bill 2 to improve the rider experience and encourage a mode shift? (yes/no)
No-action Alternative	<p style="text-align: center;">No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ UTA Route 972 would continue to provide winter bus service for BCC at 30-minute frequencies.➤ Riders would continue to face infrequent buses, long wait times, crowded conditions, lack of bus station amenities, and inadequate parking at bus park-and-ride lots.
Proposed Action	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Provides enhanced winter bus service with buses leaving mobility hub every 5 to 10 min.➤ Resort bus stops with enclosed waiting areas, restrooms, and lockers; and a mobility hub with centralized parking to improve overall rider experience.

Resource Impact Summary Key Takeaways



Most land impacts occur at the gravel pit (28.96 acres outside of the canyon and 5.62 acres in the canyon)



Would not create new noise problems, as 11 areas already exceeding noise limits will continue to do so, and noise walls are not feasible



Aligns with regional goals for improving canyon public transit and implementing road-use pricing



Requires changing the Forest Plan because it would use about 2.3 acres of National Forest land where development is currently restricted



No homes or businesses relocated, 11 partial acquisitions for the mobility hub and 21 for in-canyon improvements



Minor permanent impacts on 3 recreational areas (Cardiff Fork, Solitude, Brighton) and temporary use or occupation of Big Cottonwood Trail for construction

Resource Impact Summary Key Takeaways

-  Could impact habitat for Columbia spotted frog and temporarily impact water quality and habitat for Bonneville cutthroat trout in Big Cottonwood Creek
-  Minor, short-term wildlife displacement expected, and tree and shrub removal will be scheduled outside of the migratory bird nesting season
-  Disturbs and fills about half an acre of streams, ponds, ditches, and other natural aquatic resources
-  Adds approximately 18 acres of hard road surface and affects about 4.5 acres of flood zones, but best management practices are expected to protect groundwater quality
-  Project will have varied visual impacts but will not unacceptably lower overall scenic quality and is expected to meet the Forest Service's scenery standards

Enhanced Bus Service

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Goal: Provide a reliable, frequent, and comfortable bus experience for Big Cottonwood Canyon.



Bus Frequency: Every 10-15 minutes for initial operations



Service Season and Hours: Likely operate **7 days a week** during **winter season** (late Nov. through mid-April), typically running from **6 a.m. to 10 p.m.**



Future Fleet: Estimated total **bus fleet size needed by 2050 is 25 to 30 buses**. Every 6 minutes (*or about every 12 minutes directly to each resort*), in peak hours by 2050

Our Goal



Reliable

On schedule



Frequent

Buses every 6 minutes during peak hours by 2050, minimal wait times

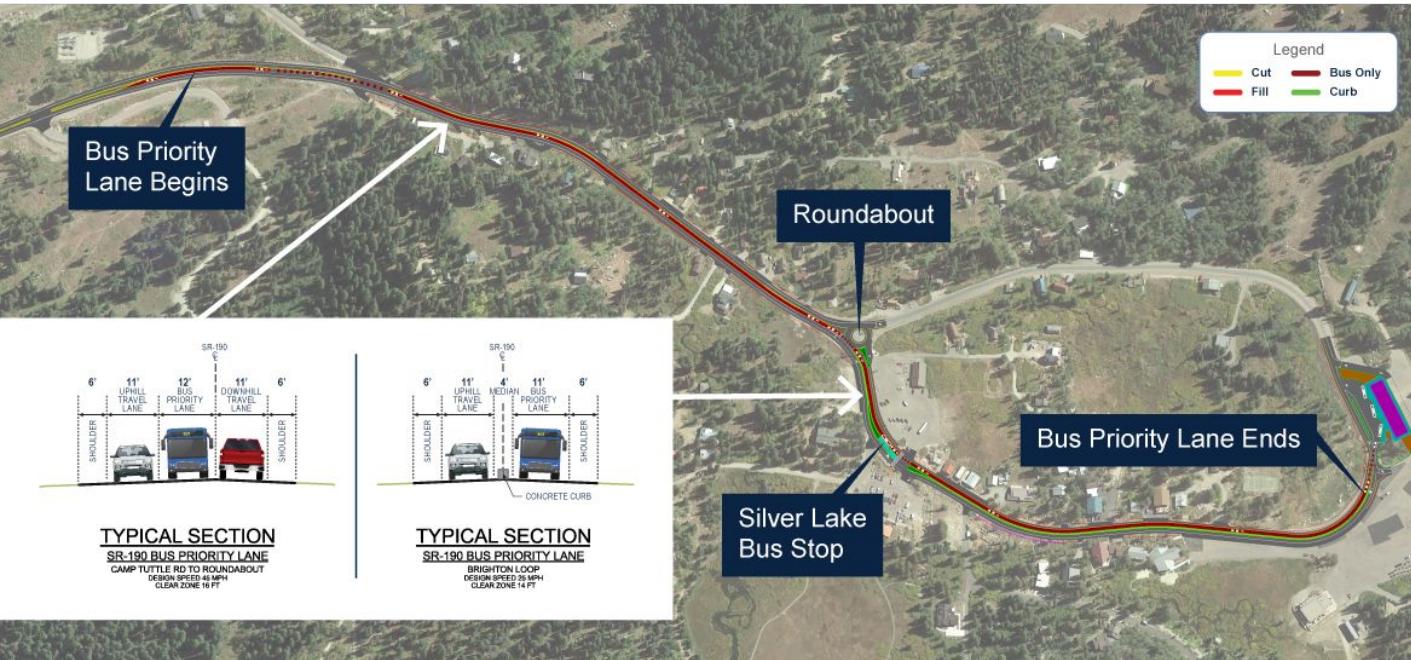


Comfortable

Easy access, ample parking, short walks, stops with enclosed waiting areas

Enhanced Rider Experience

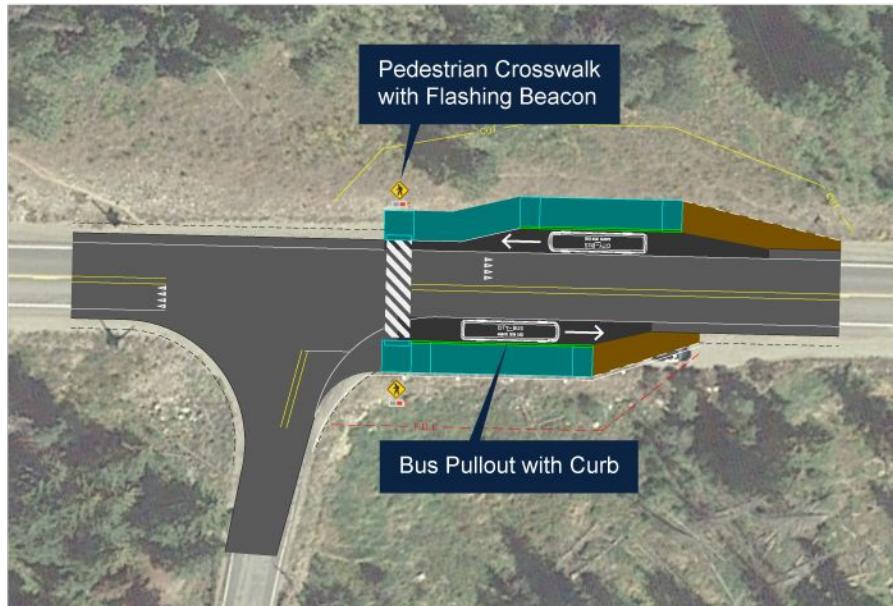
Bus Priority Lane: Brighton Loop Road



- From Camp Tuttle Road to southern end of Brighton Loop Road
- From Camp Tuttle to roundabout, **bus lane on up-canyon inside lane** between two personal vehicle lanes

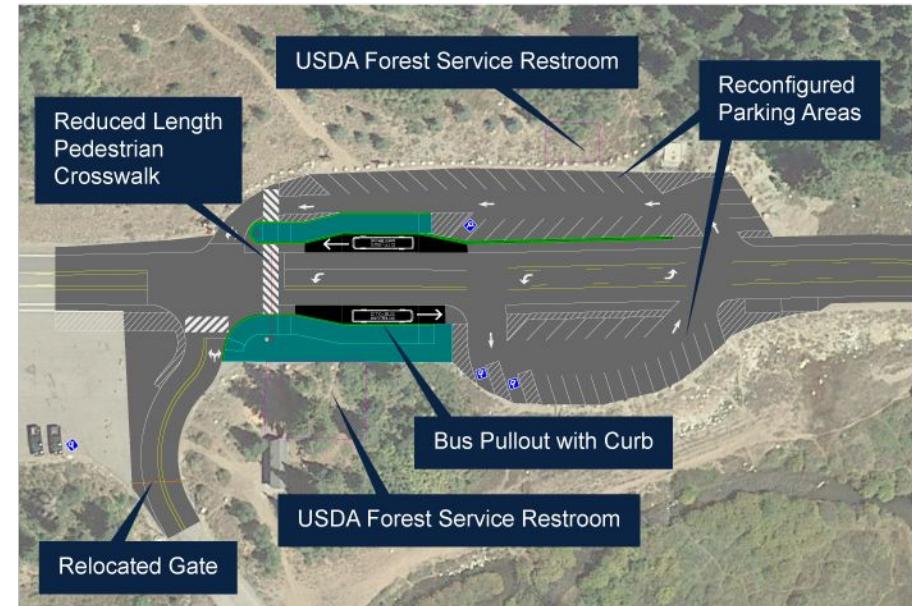
Mid-Canyon Bus Stops

Spruces Campground Bus Stop



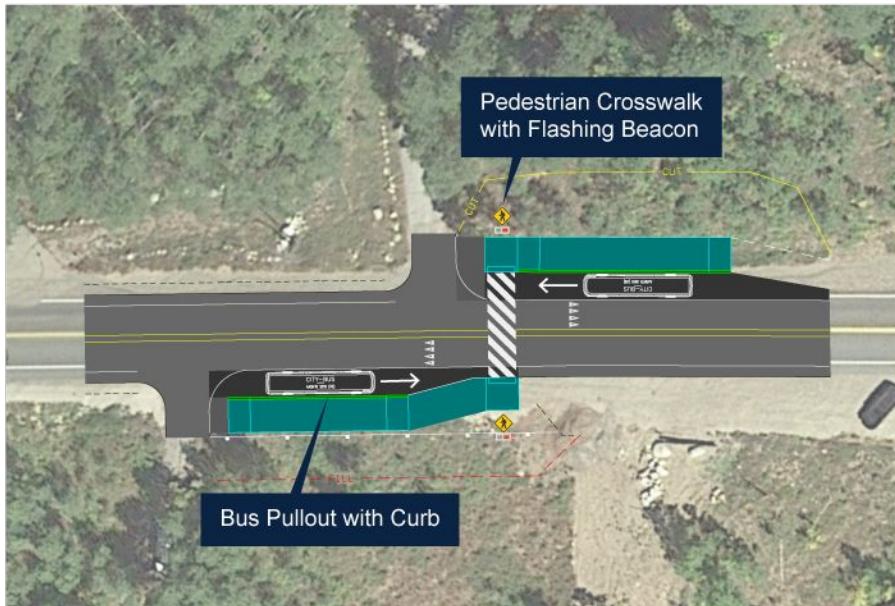
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Cardiff Fork Bus Stop

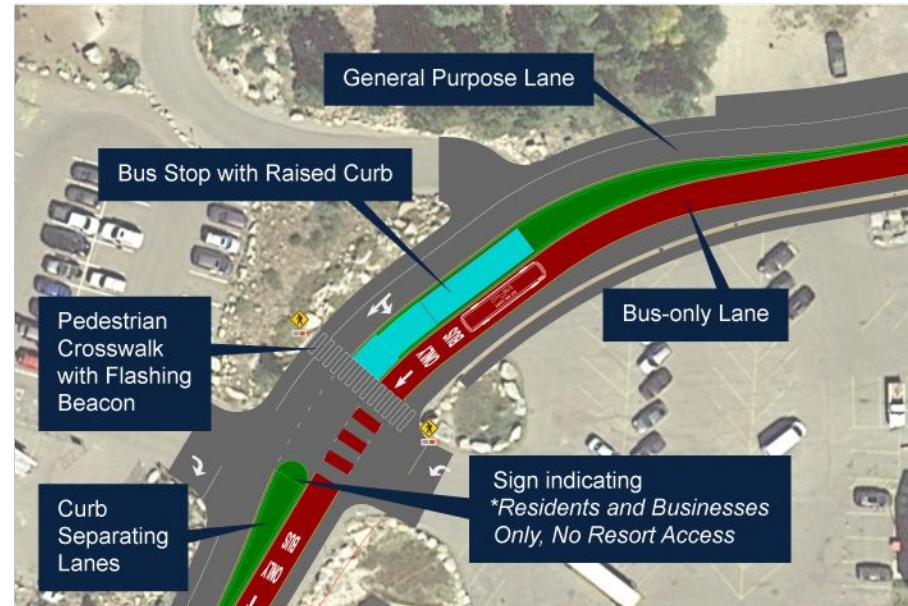


Mid-Canyon Bus Stops

Silver Fork Bus Stop



Silver Lake Bus Stop



Mobility Hub: Parking Structure

- Would accommodate about **1,750** public parking spaces with four levels of parking
- Structure would be about 70' tall and would encompass about **4.5 acres**
- **Accommodates total of ~ 23 buses per hour**, split between 13 buses per hour for Little Cottonwood Canyon and 10 buses per hour for Big Cottonwood Canyon by 2042
- **14 bus bays**, including two extra bays for varied arrival/departure times or routes originating elsewhere in valley
- **Space allocated for overnight bus parking**, eliminating need for buses to travel from remote facility to start canyon routes
- Includes **dedicated areas for bus driver facilities** and for performing bus inspections and minor maintenance



Mobility Hub: Transitway

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- **One-way, bus-only transitway** runs south from the gravel pit, bypassing proposed Wasatch Boulevard grade-separated interchange and Fort Union intersection
- Exits onto **Big Cottonwood Canyon Road** (near MP 2.0) using new **bus-activated traffic signal** to control traffic for bus turns
- Requires **new bridge over Big Cottonwood Creek** to accommodate 12' bus lane, shoulders, and **12' shared-use path**

Resort Bus Stops

Goal: Locate stops along Big Cottonwood Canyon Road to keep buses out of resort parking lot congestion and minimize impacts to existing parking while minimizing walk times to main resort facilities.

- **Rider Amenities:** Features for an attractive rider experience, including **enclosed waiting areas**, ample seating and standing room, and **storage lockers**
- **Facilities:** Dedicated **restrooms** for public use at each stop
- **Driver Support:** Separate **restrooms and break areas** specifically for bus drivers



Example: Resort Bus Stop A-Frame Structure

- **Capacity:** Sized to accommodate **200 to 300 waiting people**, accounting for potential bus delays (30–40 minutes) caused by traffic congestion, vehicle crashes or people leaving resorts at the same time

Solitude Mountain Resort Bus Stop

Conceptual Renderings

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Solitude Mountain Resort Bus Stop Looking Southwest



Solitude Mountain Resort Bus Stop Looking East

Brighton Resort Bus Stop

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Brighton Resort Bus Stops and Bus Priority Lane



Brighton Resort Bus Stop and Bus Priority Lane Signal

Tolling

Goal: Implement variable priced tolling to encourage transit use and carpooling, reducing traffic and maintaining an operational capacity of 1,000 cars per hour on the road during peak winter months.



Location & Pricing: Applied to upper canyon, starting just below Solitude Entry 1, with cost varying dynamically to achieve vehicle reduction goals



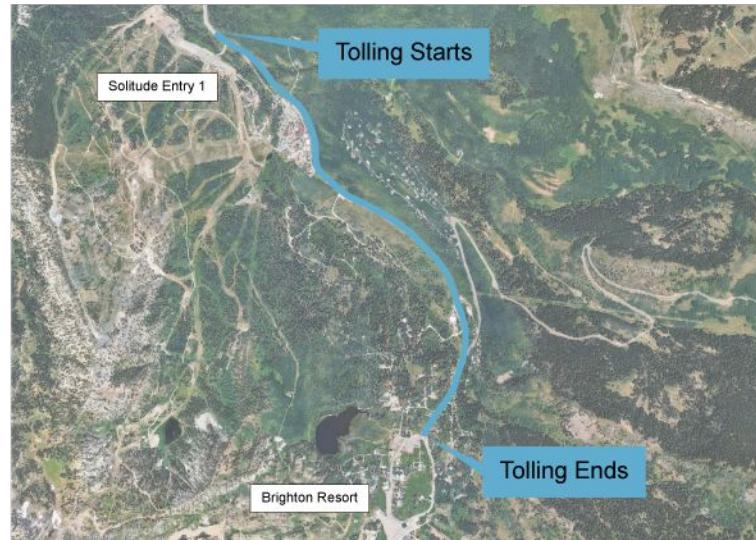
Transit Incentive: Bus fare should be substantially lower than toll to effectively shift travel modes from personal vehicles to transit



System: Would likely use an electronic pass or license plate recognition



Exemptions: Could include Big Cottonwood Canyon residents and resort employees



Cost Estimate

Element	Cost(millions)
 Mobility Hub – Parking Structure	\$123.9
 Mobility Hub – Wasatch Interchange	\$53.4
 Mobility Hub – Transitway, and other roadways	\$18.4
 Bus Costs (30-bus fleet – \$18 million. UDOT would initially purchase fewer buses and scale up overtime to accommodate actual ridership demands.)	\$18
 Bus Priority Lane	\$11.4
 Solitude Mountain Resort Bus Stop	\$17.1
 Brighton Resort Bus Stop	\$10.7
 Mid-canyon Bus Stops	\$0.5
 Tolling	\$5
 Cost Currently Programmed following the LCC EIS for Wasatch Interchange and 1,500-stall Parking Structure at Mobility Hub	\$-114
 Grand Total Proposed Action	\$144.4

Public Comment Period

DEC. 3, 2025 - JAN. 19, 2026

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Give your input on:



The analysis of the potential impacts of the Proposed Action



The proposed mitigation for the Proposed Action



Potential USDA Forest Service decisions

Comment on our website:

<https://udotinput.utah.gov/bccstudy>





Public Comment Period USDA Forest Service

DEC. 11, 2025 - JAN. 9, 2026

The public is invited to comment on the Environmental Assessment (EA) and a proposed Forest Plan amendment for the project. The project is led by UDOT with the USDA Forest Service as a cooperating agency.

- Forest Service decision areas include authorizing any or all portions of the BCC Project for actions on National Forest System lands and the proposed project-specific Forest Plan amendment.
- Forest Service decisions specifically include whether to authorize a special use permit for:
 - The construction and operation of two new transit stops
 - Reconfiguration and addition of existing transit stops at the Mill D/Cardiff Fork Trailhead and Spruces Campground
 - Adding a bus-only priority lane around the Brighton Loop on NFS land.
- The proposed project-specific Forest Plan amendment would allow for the new transit stop near Solitude Mountain Resort.

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Please include the following information with your comments:

1. Name, address, and contact telephone number or email
2. Name of the project on which you are commenting
3. Specific written comments related to the project

To be eligible to object to Forest Service specific decisions, comments must be submitted between Dec. 11, 2025 and Jan. 9, 2026 in accordance with the Forest Service legal notice (36 CFR 218).

**More information on the
USDA Forest Service website:**



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Thank you!

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