From: Pamela Carpenter
To: Tamaran Woodland; hawkes@ecmetro.org; brems@ecmetro.org; harris@ecmetro.org; pinon@ecmetro.org; Diana Baun; Tabitha Mecham
Subject: Emigration Road Widening Project
Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 2:30:30 PM

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Dear Mayor Brems, the Emigration Township Council, and Ms. Woodland,

My partner and I chose to move to Emigration Canyon because it offered something increasingly rare — a place where low traffic, natural quiet, intact wildlife habitat, protection of native plant species, and true night skies are treated not as obstacles to development, but as values to be safeguarded. The Canyon's commitment to conservation, including participation in dark-sky principles that preserve the visibility of the stars and protect nocturnal wildlife, was a major reason I made this community my home. It is deeply upsetting to now see proposals that would fundamentally alter the very character that drew so many of us here.
I am writing now as a resident of Emigration Canyon to formally oppose the recently submitted grant application proposing widening of Emigration Canyon Road and to propose a safer, community-supported alternative use of TIP funding. This proposal was initiated without transparent public consultation, without a resident vote, and without demonstrated community support. This lack of resident engagement is inconsistent with the governance framework outlined in the 2022 Emigration Canyon General Plan, which emphasizes community vision, public input, and protection of canyon character.

The General Plan does not support corridor widening as a primary strategy

The General Plan identifies Emigration Canyon's defining assets as its open space, ecological sensitivity, low-density character, and intergenerational environmental stewardship. It explicitly warns that geography, water quality, wildfire risk, and slope constraints limit development and require a precautionary planning approach.

Widening the primary arterial directly conflicts with these values by:

- Increasing impermeable surface area and stormwater runoff
- Accelerating traffic speeds and commuter cut-through traffic
- Increasing wildfire interface and erosion risk
- Permanently altering canyon character and private property setbacks

Prior transportation studies favored targeted safety interventions — not corridor widening

The Emigration Canyon Transportation Study (2016) documented over 200 public, ECRIC, and engineering comments. The highest priorities were geometric deficiencies, slope stabilization, drainage repair, signage, striping, **speed management**, and school-bus safety — **not wholesale roadway widening requiring property acquisition**.

Public comments repeatedly warned: "Don't widen the road — wider roads will bring more traffic, more pollution and will not make the canyon safer." This opposition has never been replaced with resident consensus.

The current grant application minimizes documented risks

The 2029 TIP Project Evaluation report proposes a $6.5 million widening project yet lists:

- No prioritized safety countermeasures
- No transit or pedestrian infrastructure improvements
- No Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), Transportation Demand Management (TDM), or other demand-management strategies
- No equity focus designation
- No corridor preservation framework

This is not a safety project — it seems like a capacity-expansion project for cyclists who do not reside in the canyon.

Widening will increase traffic volumes, not safety

The **Transportation Study explicitly warns that widening will induce more traffic, raise speeds, and degrade safety over time**. Emigration Canyon is already becoming a scenic bypass route; widening will only accelerate this trend. Wildlife, cars exiting driveways, pets, children, and all residents are at risk when traffic and more concerningly, speed, increases.

Any Property acquisition without resident consent is unacceptable

This proposal will require taking private land without resident approval, mitigation framework, or transparent compensation strategy. This violates the community trust and contradicts the Township's stated values.

Alternative TIP Proposal: Hiker-First, Pedestrian-Priority Improvements

The TIP program explicitly supports pedestrian and trail infrastructure — not only road widening for cyclists. Instead of a widening project, I urge the Township to amend and submit a **pedestrian- and hiker-priority TIP proposal to secure the funding for infrastructure and improvements mentioned** that includes:

A. Emigration Canyon Trailhead Expansion

- Expand existing trailhead parking beyond the planned limited spaces
- Add ADA-accessible pedestrian paths, signage, trail maps, and bike racks
- Improve safety crossings to separate foot traffic from vehicle lanes

B. Miner's Trail & High-Use Trail Access Improvements

- Formal parking areas for Miner's Trail and similar high-use hiking routes
- Clearly designated **hiker-first access** away from roadway shoulders
- Trail routing and wayfinding that prioritizes foot traffic over bicycles

C. Pedestrian Safety Measures

- Increase signage and mark roads for pedestrians where needed.

D. Safety Enhancements at Trail Access Intersections

- Crosswalks, raised tables, improved sightlines, and speed-reduction design at key trail access points such as Rotary Glen, Little Mountain, and Miner's Trail zones

These projects directly reduce roadside parking hazards, improve safety, support healthy outdoor recreation, and preserve canyon character — all core priorities of the General Plan and fully eligible under the TIP program.

I am happy to volunteer time to rewrite the grant for that purpose.

Requested Actions

I respectfully request that the Township:

1. Immediately pause the current widening grant application
2. Convene a resident-led public forum prior to any resubmission
3. Re-scope the project toward pedestrian- and hiker-priority TIP-eligible improvements as outlined above

I cannot support any project that widens Emigration Canyon Road or takes private property without informed community consent.

Our elected representatives are entrusted to speak for — and protect — the residents who put them in office. Watching the Council decline to pause this project or even acknowledge the widespread opposition while voting to increase salaries was disheartening and, you can imagine, alarming. It

conveyed a disregard for the voices of the community and undermined the very purpose of representative local government. I suspect if this is what the residents envisioned, they would have not elected to create a township and, instead, remained what they might have felt as 'voiceless' as part of the Salt Lake City proper. It goes against the very advantage of having a local representative government to advocate for the canyon's unique needs. I am also disappointed at the mention in the plans to 'persuade' residents which seems to convince them to go against their best interest, the interest of the wildlife, the canyon, the whole charm of the area, etc. That just seems for lack of a better term, 'icky.'

What makes it feel so wrong is the combination of:

• **Lack of transparency** — decisions being made in venues most residents never see
• **Process without consent** — community "engagement" after direction is already set
• **Professional silence** — elected officials not speaking when harm is clearly being raised
• **Reframing harm as progress** — disruption, environmental damage, and safety risks labeled as "improvements"

I respectfully urge the Council to correct this course immediately by halting the current application and engaging residents in a transparent, good-faith public process.

By continuing to advance major infrastructure decisions without meaningful community engagement, the Township risks alienating a uniquely talented and deeply invested group of residents who are eager to contribute constructively. Emigration Canyon is home to professionals with terminal degrees and specialized expertise across education, medicine, technology, engineering, environmental science, public policy, and the arts — individuals who routinely lead complex projects, secure grants, design curricula, manage large budgets, and build innovative systems. These residents are not obstacles to progress; they are an extraordinary, untapped resource. Excluding them from planning processes not only erodes trust, but forfeits the opportunity to develop stronger, more creative, and more sustainable solutions for the Canyon's future.

Since moving here, I have seen a significant resident sentiment of mistrust and suspicion of those in authority and power. I feel this will exacerbate significantly if this project is not pulled back and done with more resident input, more transparency, clarity, and a community vote.

Best,
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Instructional Designer

Director, Online Medical Education

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