

Carpenter Public Comment EM 2 - Widening

From: [Pamela Carpenter](#)
To: [Diana Baun](#); charris@emigration.utah.gov; [Tamaran Woodland](#)
Cc: dbrems@emigration.utah.gov; jhawkes@emigration.utah.gov; rpinon@emigration.utah.gov; [Tabitha Mecham](#)
Subject: Re: Emigration Road Widening Project
Date: Thursday, January 15, 2026 1:12:43 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

You don't often get email from paintingsbypamelacarpenter@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Thanks so much all!

I was wondering, after seeing the alarming numbers of bikers, can we investigate lowering that number? It seems unreasonable and we actually should not encourage more bikers as they do not pay any taxes to maintain our city.

Have we investigated a fee system and even and odd day permit stickers? Biking is a sport that requires thousands of dollars to do. They are not using the Kmart blue light special bike I always had (ha ha). Therefore, I feel it would not be a hardship to pay for an annual bike tag and having different colors for even and odd days at least would cut our bikers in half each day.

I would be willing to do some research for this system if you would like.

I know that some of what was said last night was anecdotal but if this problem exists up higher where the road is widened it does not seem like we are addressing the real issue which is congestion and overall use.

In addition, you should know that residents are hesitant about the study phase because of the 'paying the money back' clause. If the study moves forward there will be a huge incentive not to stop and they know that. Paying that back is huge.

If there were ways to do a quality improvement project around this without the phase one of the study using actual data that someone collects for free, it might be advantageous to explore options.

I would be happy to investigate partnering with grad students for capstone projects to potentially get some of the required studies done on the cheap without this phase and grant monies.

For example, I could reach out to the following:

University of Utah

- Civil & Environmental Engineering (transportation + geotech + stormwater)
- Utah Traffic Lab (applied traffic operations + safety research)
- City & Metropolitan Planning (planning studio + capstone professional)

project)

Utah State University

- Utah Transportation Center (UTC)

Just a thought and happy to help in any way needed.

Best, Pamela

From: Diana Baun <dbaun@msd.utah.gov>

Date: Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 8:59 PM

To: charris@emigration.utah.gov <charris@emigration.utah.gov>, Tamaran Woodland <twoodland@msd.utah.gov>

Cc: Pamela Carpenter <paintingsbypamelacarpenter@gmail.com>, dbrems@emigration.utah.gov <dbrems@emigration.utah.gov>, jhawkes@emigration.utah.gov <jhawkes@emigration.utah.gov>, rpinon@emigration.utah.gov <rpinon@emigration.utah.gov>, Tabitha Mecham <tamecham@msd.utah.gov>

Subject: RE: Emigration Road Widening Project

I was going to respond and ask if you'd like this entered as a public comment, so this saved me that email – thank you!



G R E A T E R S A L T L A K E
**Municipal Services
District**

Diana Baun, Municipal Recorder

Cell: (385) 377-9466

MSD Phone: (385) 910-5600

Dbau@msd.utah.gov

Providing municipal services to Brighton, Copperton, Emigration Canyon, Kearns, Magna, White City and unincorporated Salt Lake County.

Office Address: 860 W. Levoy Drive, Suite 300, Taylorsville, UT 84123 ([Map](#))

Mailing Address: PO Box 147700, Salt Lake City, UT 84114-7700

From: Catherine Harris <charris@emigration.utah.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2026 2:15 PM
To: Tamaran Woodland <twoodland@msd.utah.gov>
Cc: Pamela Carpenter <paintingsbypamelacarpenter@gmail.com>; dbrems@emigration.utah.gov; jhawkes@emigration.utah.gov; rpinon@emigration.utah.gov; Tabitha Mecham <tamecham@msd.utah.gov>; Diana Baun <dbaun@msd.utah.gov>
Subject: Re: Emigration Road Widening Project

Hi Tamaran, cc all,

Thanks for forwarding this with the correct emails. Pamela, thanks for your thoughtful and detailed comments. Diana, could you please make sure these are entered into our formal public comments for our next meeting? (You probably have already done this - thanks!)

Best, Rin (Catherine) Harris
Emigration Canyon Council
charris@emigration.utah.gov

On Wed, Jan 14, 2026 at 8:29 AM Tamaran Woodland <twoodland@msd.utah.gov> wrote:

Pamela,

Thank you for your email.

The Council email addresses you sent your email to are the old 'dot org' emails and I believe they are no longer active. I have updated those email addresses on this response to the 'dot gov' emails so the Council gets this information.

Thanks,
Tamaran



G R E A T E R S A L T L A K E
**Municipal Services
District**

Tamaran Woodland, PE, CFM, Assistant City Engineer

Cell: (385) 522-4980
twoodland@msd.utah.gov

Address: 860 W LeVoy Dr., Suite 300, Taylorsville, UT 84123 ([Map](#))

Providing municipal services to Brighton, Copperton, Emigration Canyon, Kearns, Magna, White City and unincorporated Salt Lake County.

From: Pamela Carpenter <paintingsbypamelacarpenter@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 2:30 PM

To: Tamaran Woodland <twoodland@msd.utah.gov>; hawkes@ecmetro.org; brems@ecmetro.org; harris@ecmetro.org; pinon@ecmetro.org; Diana Baun <dbaun@msd.utah.gov>; Tabitha Mecham <tamecham@msd.utah.gov>

Subject: Emigration Road Widening Project

You don't often get email from paintingsbypamelacarpenter@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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, ECRC, 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,
Pamela Carpenter, MEd
Professional Artist
Instructional Designer
Director, Online Medical Education

5623 Emigration Canyon

Macfarlane Public Comment EM #1 - Widening

From: [R Macfarlane](#)
To: charris@emigration.utah.gov
Cc: Diana.Baun@emigration.utah.gov; dhawkes@emigration.utah.gov; rpion@emigration.utah.gov; jvaldez@kearns.utah.gov; seanclayton@whitecity.utah.gov; msudbury@slco.org; keithzuspan@brighton.utah.gov; tknowlton@wfrc.gov; wfrc@wfrc.utah.gov; Jenny.Wilson@cameron
Subject: Re: Public Comment for 1/14/25 MSD Board of Trustee Meeting, Emigration Widening Project
Date: Friday, January 16, 2026 2:47:34 PM

Catherine, thank you again for your reply and for taking the time to engage with these concerns while also managing family responsibilities. I appreciate your openness and your long service to the canyon.

I'd like to add a few points from my perspective as someone who has lived here through many of the events referenced—including the 100-year flood a few years ago. Despite the dramatic framing at the time, the road remained passable. Front loaders cleared the minor erosion within minutes, and traffic continued to move. In fact, I am not aware of a single instance where UPD or UFA were unable to access this section of the canyon due to narrow road conditions. That experience matters because it demonstrates that even under extreme circumstances, the canyon's challenges do not automatically justify a multimillion-dollar widening project with permanent property impacts and significant legal exposure.

I also want to revisit the idea that lane narrowing and speed reduction have been “overwhelmingly opposed.” What residents have overwhelmingly opposed—consistently, repeatedly, and in every survey—is **widening**. The WFRC survey showed 96% opposition, and more than 100 residents have signed a petition against expansion. If there is any doubt about community sentiment, a referendum on widening would settle it cleanly.

At the same time, there is a constructive, low-risk middle path that has not been meaningfully tested. Before committing to an irreversible widening, Emigration could implement a **modest, low-cost speed-management and lane-configuration pilot** in the upper canyon:

- **Set a 35 MPH speed limit**
- **Install two speed cameras**
- **Establish KPIs with UPD to maintain average speeds at or below 38 MPH through consistent enforcement**
- **Trial narrower vehicle lanes** within the existing roadway width

Narrower lanes are widely recognized as a proven traffic-calming tool, and they could be tested in the same corridor without any permanent impacts. They would almost certainly be *less* unpopular than widening, which requires land acquisition, tree removal, and long-term alteration of the canyon's character.

It's also important to acknowledge that widening the road would have predictable consequences: **it would increase average speeds and attract more traffic**, both motor vehicles and bicycles. This is not speculation—it's a well-documented outcome of roadway expansion. A wider, faster-looking road invites faster driving and higher volumes, which is the opposite of what most residents want for a quiet, rural canyon.

By contrast, a targeted pilot program is inexpensive, quick to implement, reversible, and directly aligned with the safety concerns raised by UPD and UFA. If the pilot fails to improve safety or traffic flow, we will have real data to guide next steps. If it succeeds, we avoid

spending millions and permanently altering the canyon.

Given that Emigration Canyon Road is a dead-end rural road with no commuter function, no commercial centers, and no regional connectivity, a cautious, evidence-based approach is far more appropriate than a full-scale widening project. It respects residents' overwhelming desire to preserve the canyon's character while still addressing legitimate safety concerns.

Thank you again for ensuring these comments are part of the public record. I look forward to continuing the conversation at upcoming meetings.

Regards,
Robert Macfarlane

On Fri, Jan 16, 2026 at 12:55 PM Catherine Harris <charris@emigration.utah.gov> wrote:

Hello Robert,

Thanks for your letter, and I apologize for taking so long to respond ... I've been out of town dealing with aging parent concerns and helping them move (at ages 91 and 96 years old they haven't exactly rushed into the move, and are physically incapable of doing it on their own, complicated by the fact that I don't think they've ever thrown away a single thing in their entire life - found piles of bank statements from the 1980s and earlier!)

I'm including Diana Baun, our city clerk, in the response so that she can enter this into public comments for this month, along with any in person comments we get at the public meeting on Tuesday.

In the interests of transparency, I'm replying to all, but have deleted the old, non-functioning emails ending with metro.org, and updated them with the current emails for Emigration Canyon City Council mails, as well as our new mayor David Brems. I also deleted Joe Smolka's email as he is no longer on the council, or serving as mayor, and the email address is no longer functioning.

I can't speak on behalf of the full council or Mayor Brems on this issue, however, speaking only for myself, I know that this is a complicated issue with a lot of different problems to get addressed. Our current road has numerous safety issues, and according to data from UPD, has the highest likelihood of an accident being "serious" (having major injuries/hospitalization/death) of any public road in the county. I am not certain; there may have been other parameters used to arrive at this conclusion, and will look into this more closely. However, as a longtime canyon resident, Emigration Council member, and UFA/UFSA Board of Directors member, I know that both UPD and UFA have long standing concerns about several sections of road in our canyon. There are no road shoulders in several areas, there are slope stability and creek flooding/erosion concerns, and the road has a history of being closed entirely with even minor accidents, or, as happened a couple years ago, with relatively small mudslides and creek flooding. Additionally, the road needs to meet current safety standards - in the event of a wildfire evacuation or other disaster (there are numerous natural gas pipelines running through the canyon), the entire community is at risk if the road becomes blocked or closed due to an accident in one of the narrow areas without any road shoulder.

I personally agree with your comments about narrowing lane width and reducing speed as a partial solution in some areas (this would at least reduce the work to be done along the road,

although not slope stabilization or creek bed/culvert concerns) This has been proposed to the community on at least 3 different occasions, and met with overwhelming opposition from residents throughout the canyon who desire a single 40 mph speed limit, and uniform 11 foot wide lanes. It was proposed as recently as the late summer of 2025, and met with the same overwhelming opposition. I am happy to keep proposing it for the remainder of my term (2 years) but suspect it will meet the same opposition.

I'll look forward to seeing you at our upcoming meeting, and thank you again for the time and energy you've put into getting involved with community issues!

Best, Catherine Harris
Emigration Canyon City Council
charris@emigration.utah.gov

On Tue, Jan 6, 2026 at 5:27 PM R Macfarlane <robert.c.macfarlane@gmail.com> wrote:

Robert Macfarlane
6102 Emigration Canyon Road
Salt Lake City, UT 84108
robert.c.macfarlane@gmail.com

January 6, 2026

To:

The MSD Board of Trustees
Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC)
Emigration City Council

Subject: Request to Disqualify the Emigration Canyon Road Widening Project from Transportation-Corridor Funding

Dear Members of the MSD Board, WFRC, and Emigration City Council,

I am writing to formally request that the proposed Emigration Canyon Road widening project be removed from consideration for transportation-corridor funding and paused pending a transparent, fact-based reassessment. The project does not meet the fundamental criteria for corridor-based funding, presents significant legal and fiscal risks, and is overwhelmingly opposed by canyon residents.

Transportation-corridor funding is intended to support infrastructure that connects population centers, facilitates commuter movement, or supports commercial activity. Emigration Canyon Road is a dead-end rural road serving a small residential community and recreational visitors. It does not connect commuting hubs, does not function as a regional through-route, and does not support commercial or freight activity. Applying corridor-level funding to a road that lacks these characteristics undermines the purpose and integrity of the program.

The canyon also lacks the commercial activity that would justify such an investment. Aside from two restaurants located low in the canyon—well below the proposed widening area—there are no material businesses, employment centers, or commercial districts that rely on expanded roadway capacity. The widening would not improve economic mobility or regional connectivity and would instead impose significant impacts on adjacent residential properties without delivering meaningful transportation benefits.

Active-transportation justification is similarly unsupported. Approximately 99% of bicycle traffic in the canyon is recreational. The small number of residents who commute by bike already do so safely using the existing shoulders and bike lanes, which are adequate for current utilitarian cycling needs. Recreational use, while valuable, does not convert a rural, dead-end road into a qualifying transportation corridor.

Community sentiment is unequivocal. According to the WFRC survey, 96% of residents oppose the widening, and over 100 residents have signed a petition formally opposing the project. Residents consistently express a desire to preserve the canyon's quiet, rural character. Emigration Canyon is more akin to Topanga Canyon—a scenic, low-speed, nature-oriented corridor—than to West Valley City, where high-capacity arterials are appropriate. Residents want a sedate country road, not a faster highway, which widening would inevitably create.

New facts have also emerged that materially alter the feasibility and legality of the project. Former Mayor Smolka promoted the widening as a project that would not require land acquisition. However, it is now clear that portions of the existing roadway may lie outside the surveyed corridor. Compounding this, the County and UDOT failed to secure title to the roadway in the 1950s. As a result, any expansion would require extensive land acquisition from numerous residents, many of whom would face direct impacts to their property, structures, and property values. Under these circumstances, it is highly likely that affected residents will band together and pursue a class-action lawsuit if the project advances.

These land-title and acquisition issues also carry significant fiscal risk. The project has already increased in cost by more than \$1.5 million, and that figure reflects only the embankment “improvements” required to make widening physically possible. Litigation, compensation, and right-of-way costs would add substantially more. With Emigration Canyon's small taxpayer base, every \$1 million in cost overruns could translate into roughly \$1,000 in additional tax burden per household. This level of financial exposure is inappropriate for a project that does not meet corridor-funding criteria and lacks

demonstrated transportation necessity.

Finally, practical, lower-cost, and community-supported alternatives exist. Implementing a 35 mph speed limit in the upper canyon and reallocating existing roadway width—narrowing vehicle lanes and widening shoulders—would improve safety for drivers and cyclists without requiring land acquisition, litigation risk, or major capital expenditure. These solutions align with best practices for rural canyon roads and reflect what residents actually want: a safe, calm, scenic roadway, not a widened, faster corridor.

For all these reasons—failure to meet corridor-funding criteria, lack of commercial or commuter justification, overwhelming resident opposition, significant legal and property-rights complications, substantial fiscal risk, and the availability of simpler, community-supported alternatives—I respectfully request that the Emigration Canyon Road widening project be disqualified from transportation-corridor funding and halted pending a full reassessment.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your service to our community.

Sincerely,

Robert Macfarlane

Sheffield HOA Public Comment EM - Meeting Dates

From: [Emigration Oaks POA Manager](#)
To: [Diana Baun](#)
Cc: [Paul Brown](#); [Herman Post](#); charris@emigration.utah.gov
Subject: Emigration Oaks / Emigration Canyon City Monthly Board Meeting - Conflict
Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 2:32:03 PM

Diana,

Dave Sheffield here, Manager of the Emigration Oaks Property Owners Association. Paul and Herm are cc'ed on this message as our President and Vice President, as well as Rin Harris, a resident and member of The Oaks.

It has recently come to our attention, or finally being recognized, that the Emigration Canyon City Council meetings are now scheduled at the same time as the monthly Emigration Oaks Board Meeting (generally held on the third Tuesday of each month). We are open to options; however, our Board has traditionally met on the third Tuesday of each month for many years, and our owners are very accustomed to this established schedule. I am sure you recognize this as an issue that we get to deal with. As you can imagine, this creates a scheduling conflict for several individuals who participate in or closely follow both meetings, and we completely understand that scheduling adjustments can be complex, especially when multiple stakeholders are involved.

With all this in mind, we wanted to kindly ask whether there may be any flexibility on the City's side to consider a slight adjustment to your meeting schedule, if feasible. We truly value the City's partnership and want to maintain strong coordination and communication moving forward.

Also, we have a guest speaker that has been scheduled for a few months, attending our Board meeting next week.

Thank you very much for your time, consideration, and continued service to our shared community. We sincerely appreciate your collaboration and look forward to working together toward a solution that works well for everyone.

With Gratitude,

Dave Sheffield
(801) 455-5666

Steed Public Comment EM #1 - Setbacks

From: [Catherine Harris](#)
To: [Jessica Steed](#); [Diana Baun](#); charris@emigration.utah.gov
Cc: rpinon@emigration.utah.gov; jhawkes@emigration.utah.gov; dbrems@emigration.utah.gov
Subject: Re: Proposed zoning change
Date: Friday, January 16, 2026 12:12:09 PM

Hi Jessica,

Thanks for your letter, and I apologize how long it's taken me to send this email ... I've been out of town dealing with aging parent concerns and helping them move (at ages 91 and 96 years old they haven't exactly rushed into the move, and are physically incapable of doing it on their own, complicated by the fact that I don't think they've ever thrown away a single thing in their entire life - found piles of bank statements from the 1980s and earlier!)

I'm including Diana Baun, our city clerk, in the response so that she can enter this into public comments for this month, along with any in person comments we get at the public meeting on Tuesday.

I wasn't at the planning commission meeting, nor was I aware of which ordinances or zoning they were discussing last month, although I'm sure you know we have charged them with systematically reviewing all of our land use and zoning ordinances, as many of them are outdated, or conflicting with each other. This is a byproduct of the transition to metro township status being imposed on us several years ago, when because of lack of money or staff we simply adopted the county's zoning laws and ordinances wholesale. Before we even had a chance to complete that, city-hood was imposed on us by the state legislature (again without appropriate funding). The planning commission, in general, has been great at reviewing things in a very thoughtful way. However, we have gotten more than one letter about this issue - all I can do at this point is promise that we will look into this more closely as a council. One thing did strike me, and again, I need to look into this more. However, generally there are "grandfather" type clauses, so that existing homes and properties are not affected by changes in zoning or development ordinances. Was this not included in the planning commission's recommendations? I will look at this.

I can't speak for the rest of the council, nor for Mayor Brems, but for myself I want to say that I appreciate your involvement and the time you've put into things.

Have a good weekend, and we'll see you at the meeting on Tuesday evening.

Catherine (Rin) Harris

Emigration City Council
charris@emigration.utah.gov

On Wed, Jan 7, 2026 at 8:21 PM Jessica Steed <jessiesteed@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear City Council and Planning Staff,

My name is Jessica Steed and I live in Emigration Canyon. I'm writing because I'm very concerned about the proposed zoning change OAM2025-001463 that would change how setbacks are measured along the canyon road.

From the outside, this might sound like a small technical adjustment. From the perspective of someone who lives here, it feels like a big shift with real consequences.

Setbacks are one of the few clear lines homeowners can rely on. They tell us where our property begins, what is protected, and what won't suddenly be reinterpreted years later. Removing the reference to the public right-of-way makes those lines blurry. It leaves too much room for future changes that homeowners have no control over and no way to plan for.

What worries me most is how this amendment fits into the larger road-widening discussion. There are still unanswered questions about right-of-way and property boundaries in the canyon, yet this change seems to move things forward as if those questions don't matter. That feels backwards. Zoning rules shouldn't be adjusted to make a difficult project easier — especially when that project is still highly contested.

I'm also concerned about the people who would bear the cost of this decision. Many canyon homes were built decades ago under the rules that existed at the time. Changing those rules now could put homeowners in a position where their own homes no longer comply, through no action of their own. That doesn't feel fair, and it creates stress and uncertainty for families who simply want to maintain their homes.

Lastly, I want to say plainly that many residents remain deeply uneasy about road widening in the canyon. Moving forward with a zoning change that appears to support that effort, before those concerns are addressed, makes it feel like decisions are being made ahead of public understanding and consent.

I'm asking the City to slow this down, reconsider whether this amendment is truly needed, and take more time to engage with the people who live along this road and will be most affected by any changes.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for considering the impact of this decision on canyon residents.

Sincerely,

Jessica Steed

Walker Public Comment EM - Widening

From: Catherine Harris
To: Andy Walker; Diana Baun; charris@emigration.utah.gov
Cc: dbrems@emigration.utah.gov; jhawkes@emigration.utah.gov; rpinon@emigration.utah.gov
Subject: Re: Emigration Canyon Road Widening
Date: Friday, January 16, 2026 11:12:17 AM

Dear Mr. Walker,

Thanks for your letter - I want to let you know that I'm acknowledging it on behalf of the Emigration Canyon City Council, and also asking our city clerk to enter it into the public comments for this month's meeting (upcoming next Tuesday evening)

With our new system of government and a separate mayor, I'm not sure that I can formally acknowledge your comments on behalf of Mayor Brems without his permission, but he is included in this email, and I'll discuss with him whether he wants me to do this on his behalf as well.

Regards,

Catherine Harris
Emigration Canyon City Council
charris@emigration.utah.gov

On Sun, Jan 11, 2026 at 9:15 AM Andy Walker <altamaniac@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear City Council Members,

I just sent the below email to several people involved in this road widening action, but arbitrarily left your names off. Of course, you are the most important people to hear from me and I apologize for my pre-coffee error.

From: Andy Walker <altamaniac@gmail.com>
Subject: Emigration Canyon Road Widening
Date: January 11, 2026 at 9:03:34 AM MST
To: wfrc@wfrc.utah.gov, tknowlton@wfrc.gov, LLstringham@slco.org, aperry@whitecity.utah.gov, jvaldez@kearns.utah.gov, seanclayton@coppertonutah.org, msudbury@magna.utah.gov, keithzuspan@brighton.utah.gov

Dear City Council and MSD Members,

It has come to my attention that you might be under the impression that there is little opposition among Emigration Canyon residents to the idea of widening Emigration Canyon road, purportedly, to improve safety for cyclists and motorists who coexist on that limited blacktop.

I'm going to take a minute to add my voice to the overwhelming opposition I feel, and hear, from fellow Emigration Canyon residents.

This plan reminds me a great deal of the Gondola idea for Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons. A plan that was going to put a great deal of money in a few people's pockets—people that knew someone who knew someone, and figured they could ignore all sensible alternatives and just go to the nine hundred and fifty-five million dollar plan that few doubted would end up north of two billion.

There is already a proposal for increasing Salt Lake County's property taxes by 20%. That, as you surely must know, is 740% above 2025's rate of inflation. I wonder how it is that so many administrators and government workers feel, in a time when people are struggling with a tremendous affordability problem in this country, that additional, extraordinary financial burdens place unnecessarily on them will be tolerated, or simply accepted. Sure, if there was some clear improvement to safety and livability to our community, we might be willing to tighten our belts (several notches) but that keeps being absent, and is especially so with this road widening plan. There are any number of alternatives that will improve safety more effectively (see below) at a tiny fraction of the financial burden, (and property usurpation!) to residents (if, in fact, safety needs improving at all, a premise I believe is statistically unsupported).

I apologize for Mr. Macfarlane's incorrect statement that Emigration Canyon is a "dead end" road. It's not and serves as an emergency corridor for hordes of traffic when there is an accident in Parley's Canyon. But surely, his points are not diminished by that overstatement to any significant degree. Surely, you don't propose making Emigration Canyon capable of handling those horrendous traffic days along with our typical cyclists who ride the canyon.

I'm copying Robert Macfarlane's extremely articulate, and sensible letter below. Please read it. Then please consider one of the many alternatives to the poorly conceived road widening plan.

Sincerely,

Andrew Walker
6016 E Red Hill Lane
Emigration Canyon, UT 84108

January 6, 2026

To:
The MSD Board of Trustees
Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC)
Emigration City Council

Subject: Request to Disqualify the Emigration Canyon Road Widening Project from Transportation-Corridor Funding

Dear Members of the MSD Board, WFRC, and Emigration City Council,

I am writing to formally request that the proposed Emigration Canyon Road widening project be removed from consideration for transportation-corridor funding and paused pending a transparent, fact-based reassessment. The project does not meet the fundamental criteria for corridor-based funding, presents significant legal and fiscal risks, and is overwhelmingly opposed by canyon residents.

Transportation-corridor funding is intended to support infrastructure that connects population centers, facilitates commuter movement, or supports commercial activity. Emigration Canyon Road is a dead-end rural road serving a small residential community and recreational visitors. It does not connect commuting hubs, does not function as a regional through-route, and does not support commercial or freight activity. Applying corridor-level funding to a road that lacks these characteristics undermines the purpose and integrity of the program.

The canyon also lacks the commercial activity that would justify such an investment. Aside from two restaurants located low in the canyon—well below the proposed widening area—there are no material businesses, employment centers, or commercial districts that rely on expanded roadway capacity. The widening would not improve economic mobility or regional connectivity and would instead impose significant impacts on adjacent residential properties without delivering meaningful transportation benefits.

Active-transportation justification is similarly unsupported. Approximately 99% of bicycle traffic in the canyon is recreational. The small number of residents who commute by bike already do so safely using the existing shoulders and bike lanes, which are adequate for current utilitarian cycling needs. Recreational use, while valuable, does not convert a rural, dead-end road into a qualifying transportation corridor.

Community sentiment is unequivocal. According to the WFRC survey, 96% of residents oppose the widening, and over 100 residents have signed a petition formally opposing the project. Residents consistently express a desire to preserve the canyon's quiet, rural character. Emigration Canyon is more akin to Topanga Canyon—a scenic, low-speed, nature-oriented corridor—than to West Valley City, where high-capacity arterials are appropriate. Residents want a sedate country road, not a faster highway, which widening would inevitably create.

New facts have also emerged that materially alter the feasibility and legality of the project. Former Mayor Smolka promoted the widening as a project that would not require land acquisition. However, it is now clear that portions of the existing roadway may lie outside the surveyed corridor. Compounding this, the County and UDOT failed to secure title to the roadway in the 1950s. As a result, any expansion would require extensive land acquisition from numerous residents, many of whom would face direct impacts to their property, structures, and property values. Under these circumstances, it is highly likely that affected residents will band together and pursue a class-action lawsuit if the project advances.

These land-title and acquisition issues also carry significant fiscal risk. The project has already increased in cost by more than \$1.5 million, and that figure reflects only the embankment "improvements" required to make widening physically possible. Litigation, compensation, and right-of-way costs would add substantially

more. With Emigration Canyon's small taxpayer base, every \$1 million in cost overruns could translate into roughly \$1,000 in additional tax burden per household. This level of financial exposure is inappropriate for a project that does not meet corridor-funding criteria and lacks demonstrated transportation necessity.

Finally, practical, lower-cost, and community-supported alternatives exist. Implementing a 35 mph speed limit in the upper canyon and reallocating existing roadway width—narrowing vehicle lanes and widening shoulders—would improve safety for drivers and cyclists without requiring land acquisition, litigation risk, or major capital expenditure. These solutions align with best practices for rural canyon roads and reflect what residents actually want: a safe, calm, scenic roadway, not a widened, faster corridor.

For all these reasons—failure to meet corridor-funding criteria, lack of commercial or commuter justification, overwhelming resident opposition, significant legal and property-rights complications, substantial fiscal risk, and the availability of simpler, community-supported alternatives—I respectfully request that the Emigration Canyon Road widening project be disqualified from transportation-corridor funding and halted pending a full reassessment.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your service to our community.

Sincerely,

Robert Macfarlane

