

Mountainous Planning District Planning Commission

Public Meeting Agenda

****AMENDED****

Thursday, March 19, 2026, 3:00 P.M.

Virtual Option: WebEx

Meeting number (access code): 2557 809 0522

<https://greatersaltlakemunicipalservicesdistrict-926.my.webex.com/meet/wgurr>

Join by phone

+1-650-479-3208 United States Toll

Access code: 2557 809 0522

Anchor Location: **2001 South State Street North Building, Room N1-110**

*UPON REQUEST, WITH 5 WORKING DAYS NOTICE, REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS MAY BE PROVIDED. PLEASE CONTACT WENDY GURR AT 385-391-8268.
TTY USERS SHOULD CALL 711.*

The Planning Commission Public Meeting is a public forum where, depending on the agenda item, the Planning Commission may receive comment and recommendations from applicants, the public, applicable agencies and MSD staff regarding land use applications and other items on the Commission's agenda. In addition, it is where the Planning Commission takes action on these items, which may include: approval, approval with conditions, denial, continuance or recommendation to other bodies as applicable.

PUBLIC HEARING(S)

OAM2026-001589 - An ordinance amending section 19.72.110, entitled "Tree and Vegetation Protection" and enacting section 19.72.115, entitled "Forest Management Plan, Fuels Reduction Plan" of the Salt Lake Code Of Ordinances, 2001, to provide greater clarity on the standards and processes for approving and implementing these plans; and making other related changes. (Motion/Voting)

BUSINESS MEETING

- 1) Election of Chair and Vice Chair 2026. (Motion/Voting)
- 2) Approval of the December 18, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. (Motion/Voting)
- 3) Open and Public Meetings Act and Planning Commission Responsibilities Training. **Counsel:** Zach Shaw
- 4) Other Business Items. (As Needed)

ADJOURN

Rules of Conduct for the Planning Commission Meeting

1. Applications will be introduced by a Staff Member.
2. The applicant will be allowed up to 15 minutes to make their presentation.
3. The Community Council representative can present their comments.
4. Persons in favor of, or not opposed to, the application will be invited to speak.
 - a. Speakers will be called to the podium by the Chairman.
 - b. Because the meeting minutes are recorded it is important for each speaker to state their name and address prior to making any comments.
 - c. All comments should be directed to the Planning Commissioners, not to the Staff or to members of the audience.
 - d. For items where there are several people wishing to speak, the Chairman may impose a time limit, usually 3 minutes per person, or 5 minutes for a group spokesperson.
5. Persons opposed to the application will be invited to speak.
6. The applicant will be allowed 5 minutes to provide concluding statements.
 - a. After the hearing is closed, the discussion will be limited to the Planning Commission and the Staff.



Ordinance Amendment

Meeting Body: Mountainous Planning District Planning Commission

Meeting Date: March 19, 2026

File Number & Project Type:
OAM2026-001589

An ordinance amending section 19.72.110, entitled "Tree and Vegetation Protection" and enacting section 19.72.115, entitled "Forest Management Plan, Fuels Reduction Plan" to provide greater clarity on the standards and processes for approving and implementing these plans; and making other related changes.

Planner: Curtis Woodward, Senior Planner

Applicant: Salt Lake County

Key Findings:

- A clear review and approval process is essential to administer 19.72.110(B)(4) for fuels reduction applications.
- A clear set of standards is also essential to administering the code.

Staff Recommendation:

Recommendation of approval from the planning commission to the Salt Lake County Council.

Exhibits:

- A. Proposed ordinance**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Salt Lake County Code section 19.72.110(B)(4) is in need of an amendment to provide greater clarity on the meaning of an "approved forest management program," and the applicable standards and processes that govern approval and implementation of the same.

OBJECTIVES

Salt Lake County ("SLCO") has recently been approached by property owners within the Foothills and Canyons Overlay Zone, who wish to perform tree thinning, fire breaks, and similar activities that are typically performed by forest managers, such as the United States Forest Service or the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands.

Salt Lake County Code section 19.72.110(B)(4) currently provides an exception to tree and vegetation protection standards for "approved forest management programs." An amendment to this subsection is required to provide greater clarity on the meaning of an approved forest management program, and the standards and processes that govern approval and implementation of the same. This amendment will only apply to the unincorporated county. Any projects in other jurisdictions will be subject to the regulations of and need to make application to that jurisdiction.

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT ENGAGEMENT

SLCO met with subject matter experts to discuss the proposed ordinance amendment, including from the following: State Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands ("FFSL"); Unified Fire Authority ("UFA"); Greater Salt Lake Municipal Services District Planning Division ("MSD"); and Salt Lake City Public Utilities ("SLCPU"). Those discussions resulted in the following concepts that are reflected in the proposed ordinance amendment, which were vetted with these subject matter experts.

1. The scope of the proposed ordinance amendment addresses tree and vegetation removal for fuels reduction or forest management projects beyond creation of defensible space or removal of dead or naturally fallen trees, which SLCO Code already allows without a permit. See SLCO Code sections 19.72.110(B)(1) and 9.90.025(E).
2. FFSL already engages in forest management projects and fuel reduction projects and has significant expertise in implementing such projects. FFSL also partners with private property owners on such projects, and FFSL uses its expertise and experienced contractors to implement these projects. Due to FFSL's experience and expertise on forest management and fuel reduction projects, the proposed ordinance provides for deference to FFSL in implementing these projects, either on its own behalf or on behalf of property owners that it partners with (where the property owner authorizes FFSL to implement the project with FFSL's contractors).
3. Recognizing that FFSL has limited resources, and that property owners may desire to conduct their own fuel reduction projects, the proposed ordinance provides standards and processes for such projects, balancing the need for fuel reduction with the need for environmental protection and aesthetic preservation of the sensitive areas within the Foothills and Canyons Overlay Zone ("FCOZ"). See proposed section 19.72.115(3),(4)
4. Application requirements are outlined, including a project narrative that outlines existing conditions of the project area, number and type of trees and other vegetation to be removed, disposal of the same, revegetation of steep slopes, time for completion, and the contractor who will implement the plan (including experience/qualifications). See proposed section 19.72.115(5)(a).
 - a. Application will also include a site plan of the area, which will identify water bodies, steep slopes, tree stands to be thinned, where trees will be transported, access to the property, etc. See proposed section 19.72.115(5)(b).
 - b. Simplified application requirements and fuel reduction plans are allowed for smaller properties. See proposed section 19.72.115(5)(e), (6)(c).
5. Standards for tree/vegetation removal are outlined, including the types of trees that can and cannot be removed, and the size of trees that can be removed. See proposed section 19.72.115(8). These standards were derived from FFSL property-specific guides, and from Utah's Forest Water Quality Guidelines: A Practical User's Guide for Landowners, Loggers, & Resource Managers, issued by FFSL ("FFSL Guidelines").
6. Standards for fuel reduction in the especially sensitive areas near water bodies are outlined. These standards include designating and marking these sensitive areas, and limited disturbance of land or vegetation, limited equipment usage, felling methods and transporting trees/vegetation to avoid water bodies, avoiding use or storage of chemical/hazardous materials in these sensitive areas, etc. See proposed section 19.72.115(9). These standards were also derived from FFSL Guidelines.
7. Standards for minimizing the impact of transporting and storing removed trees and vegetation are outlined, including revegetating steep slopes. See proposed section 19.72.115(10)

8. Standards for operating vehicles and equipment on steep slopes are outlined. See proposed section 19.72.115(11)
9. Standards for roads are outlined, including no construction of new roads unless prior approval obtained per applicable standards. See proposed section 19.72.115(12)
10. Standards for disposal of removed trees and vegetation are outlined, including no burning unless all applicable regulations can be met and the applicable permit obtained. See proposed section 19.72.115(13)
11. Time for completion of fuel reduction projects outlined, including phasing of larger projects. See proposed section 19.72.115(14)
12. Requirements for contractors implementing fuel reduction plans outlined to ensure that experienced contractors are used. See proposed section 19.72.115(15)
13. Inspections are outlined to ensure compliance with the standards and processes of the proposed ordinance. See proposed section 19.72.115(16)
14. Justification for deviation from standards is outlined. See proposed section 19.72.115(17)
15. Emergency fuels reduction is permitted under limited circumstances. See proposed section 19.72.115(18)
16. Penalties for noncompliance are outlined. See proposed section 19.72.115(19)

APPLICABLE FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

17-27a-502 of the Utah Code outlines the process and authority by which land use regulations are adopted:

10-9a-502. Preparation and adoption of land use regulation.

(1) A planning commission shall:

- (a) provide notice as required by Subsection [17-27a-205\(1\)\(a\)](#) and, if applicable, Subsection [17-27a-205\(4\)](#);*
- (b) hold a public hearing on a proposed land use regulation;*
- (c) if applicable, consider each written objection filed in accordance with Subsection [17-27a-205\(4\)](#) prior to the public hearing; and*
- (d) (i) review and recommend to the legislative body a proposed land use regulation that represents the planning commission's recommendation for regulating the use and development of land within all or any part of the area of the municipality; and
(ii) forward to the legislative body all objections filed in accordance with Subsection [17-27a-205\(4\)](#).*

- (2) (a) *A legislative body shall consider each proposed land use regulation that the planning commission recommends to the legislative body.*
- (b) *After providing notice as required by Subsection [17-27a-205\(1\)\(b\)](#) and holding a public meeting, the legislative body may adopt or reject the land use regulation described in Subsection [\(2\)\(a\)](#):*
- (i) *as proposed by the planning commission; or*
- (ii) *after making any revision the legislative body considers appropriate.*
- (c) *A legislative body may consider a planning commission's failure to make a timely recommendation as a negative recommendation if the legislative body has provided for that consideration by ordinance.*

PUBLIC INPUT

Planning Staff has not received any comments from the public as of the completion of this staff report. Any comments that are received will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for review and will be summarized at the planning commission meeting.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Analysis and Summary:

The exception to the tree and vegetation protection standard found in 19.72.110(B)(4) was intended to apply to programs already reviewed and approved by outside agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service or Utah Department of Forestry, Fire, and Public Lands. However, in discussions with those agencies, it became apparent that there are fuels reduction projects that do not rise to the level of review normally conducted by those agencies, but which are not covered by the Wildland Urban Interface Code. The proposed ordinance creates a set of standards as well as a mechanism for local review and approval of those projects.

Recommendation:

Staff requests a recommendation of approval to the Salt Lake County Council.

PLANNING COMMISSION OPTIONS:

As a recommending body to the Council for zoning map amendments and text changes, the planning commission has the following options:

1. **Approval:** The planning commission recommends approval of application OAM2026-001589 to amend Title 19 of the Salt Lake County code as proposed. **Staff Recommendation**
2. **Approval with changes:** The planning commission recommends approval of application OAM2026-001589 to amend Title 19 of the Salt Lake County code with the following changes:
 - a. ...
 - b. ...
3. **Denial:** Having considered the purposes of land use ordinances as set forth in 17-27a-102 of the Utah code and 19.02.020 of the Salt Lake County zoning ordinance, the planning commission

recommends denial of application OAM2026-001589 to amend Title 19 of the Salt Lake County code.

Exhibit A

19.72.110 Tree and vegetation protection.

- A. Purpose. Protection of existing tree and vegetation cover is intended to:
1. Preserve the visual and aesthetic qualities of the county's foothills and canyons.
 2. Encourage site design techniques that preserve the natural environment and enhance the developed environment.
 3. Control erosion, slippage, and sediment run-off into streams and waterways.
 4. Increase slope stability.
 5. Protect wildlife habitat and migration corridors.
 6. Conserve energy, in proximity to structures, by reducing building heating and cooling costs.
- B. Applicability. These provisions apply to all development in the foothills and canyons overlay zone, with the following exceptions:
1. The removal of dead or naturally fallen trees or vegetation to protect public health, safety, and welfare, which may be removed at all times without a permit.
 2. The removal or trimming of trees or vegetation necessary to obtain clear visibility at driveways or intersections, to perform authorized field survey work, or to comply with the Utah Wildland-Urban Interface Code.
 3. The trimming of trees and landscaping which overhang roads in accordance with Salt Lake County Roadway Development Standards.
 4. The removal of trees or vegetation on land zoned or lawfully used for agricultural and forestry activities, including tree farms~~[-or pursuant to approved forest management programs]~~. In the event a site is substantially cleared of trees pursuant to such legitimate activities, no development or site plan applications for other types of development may be accepted by the county within thirty-six months from the date of the clearing.
 5. The removal of trees or vegetation pursuant to a fuels reduction plan or forest management plan in accordance with section 19.72.115.
 5. The director has discretion to administratively offer relief of the standards in this section by up to twenty-five percent if either of the following circumstances applies:
 - a. The modification is designed to yield:
 - i. More effective preservation of existing mature trees, vegetation, riparian areas, rock outcrops, or other significant natural features of the site;
 - ii. Less visual impact on the property or on the surrounding area; or
 - iii. Better protection of wildlife habitat; or,
 - b. Strict application of the standard(s) would render a site undevelopable.

C. Tree/Vegetation Removal.

1. Outside the Limits of Disturbance. No trees or vegetation may be removed outside the approved limits of disturbance unless specifically exempted by this section.
2. Within the Limits of Disturbance. Significant trees removed from within the limits of disturbance shall be replaced as set forth in this section, unless specifically exempted by this section.
3. Wildfire Hazards and Tree/Vegetation Removal. Defensible space is defined as the required space between a structure and wildland area that, under normal conditions, creates a sufficient buffer to slow or halt the spread of wildfire to a structure. Appropriate defensible space surrounding a structure is established in Utah Wildland-Urban Interface Code incorporated in UFA Wildland-Urban Interface Site Plan/Development Review Guide. If required by the Wildland-Urban Interface Code, a copy of the approved fire protection plan shall be submitted to the director for incorporation into the final approval documents.
4. Tree/Vegetation Removal for Views Prohibited. No trees or vegetation may be removed solely for the purpose of providing open views to or from structures on a site.

D. Replacement of Significant Trees.

1. When a significant tree is removed from inside the established limits of disturbance, which removal is not required by wildland-urban interface standards referenced in B.2. or C.3. above, the applicant or developer shall replace such tree(s) on the lot, according to the following schedule and requirements:
 - a. A significant tree that is removed shall be replaced by two trees with a minimum size of one inch caliper for deciduous trees and a minimum height of four feet for coniferous trees in locations on the lot that comply with UFA Wildland-Urban Interface Site Plan/Development Review Guide Plant Spacing Guidelines and defensible space requirements of the Utah Wildland Urban Interface Code. To the extent that is not possible, tree replacement is not required.
 - b. Replacement trees shall be maintained through an establishment period of at least two years. The applicant shall post a bond in the amount of ten percent of the value of all replacement trees guaranteeing their health and survival during the first year of the establishment period.
2. If the director determines that the remainder of the lot outside the permitted limits of disturbance is heavily wooded, defined as areas of trees with canopies that cover eighty percent of the area, and is not suitable to the planting of replacement trees, the requirement to plant replacement trees shall be waived. The director shall also waive the requirement to plant replacement trees for properties that require Class 1 ignition-resistant construction in accordance with the Wildland Urban Interface Code, as determined by the local fire authority.

E. Revegetation and Land Reclamation Plan.

1. On a parcel of land that has been or will be altered from its natural condition by man-made activities, a revegetation and land reclamation plan prepared and certified by a qualified professional may be required for review and approval by the director. The

plan shall incorporate the elements of the fire protection plan (if required by the Wildland-Urban Interface Code), and shall indicate a timeframe for revegetation that is acceptable to the county and that takes into account optimal seasonal growing conditions.

2. The revegetation and land reclamation plan shall depict the type, size, number, and location of any vegetation and trees to be planted and illustrate how the site will be recontoured with sufficient topsoil to ensure that vegetation is successful. All new trees shown on the plan shall:
 - a. Comply with all applicable requirements of the Wildland-Urban Interface Code, including the Vegetation Clearance Guidelines;
 - b. Be spaced no closer than twenty feet on center; and,
 - c. Be on the Utah Fire Resistive Species list in the Wildland-Urban Interface Code.
 3. Any slope exposed or created in new development shall be landscaped or revegetated with native or adapted trees and plant material. New vegetation shall be equivalent to or exceed the amount and erosion-control characteristics of the original vegetation cover in order to mitigate adverse environmental and visual effects.
 4. On man-made slopes of twenty-five percent or greater, plant materials with deep rooting characteristics shall be selected to minimize erosion and reduce surface runoff. The planting basin shall be kept level with a raised berm around the base of the plant to help retain moisture.
 5. Topsoil that is removed during construction may be conserved for later use on areas requiring revegetation or landscaping, such as cut-and-fill slopes.
 6. The land reclamation plan may not include landscaping or other elements that conflict with the approved fire protection plan (if required by the Wildland-Urban interface Code).
- F. Tree/Vegetation Protection During Construction and Grading Activities.
1. Limits of disturbance, as established in Section 19.72.160, shall be shown on the final plans for development and shall be clearly delineated on site with fencing or other separation methods approved by the director prior to the commencement of excavation, grading, or construction activities on the site.
 2. Within the limits of disturbance, fencing, at a minimum, shall be placed around each significant tree that will not be removed and around stands of twelve or more smaller trees. Such fencing shall be placed at the edge of the individual or outermost tree's drip zone. No construction, grading, equipment or material storage, or any other activity is allowed within the drip zone, and the fencing must remain in place until all land alteration, construction, and development activities are completed.
 3. If it is necessary to fill over the root zone, compacted soils shall be avoided by sandwiching fabric, rocks, and more fabric under the area to be filled.
 4. If fill creates a tree well or depression around a tree or shrubs, such area shall be filled in or drained so that the vegetation is not drowned by the pooling of rainfall or irrigation.

5. If a significant tree that will not be removed has roots that are cut, the branches shall be trimmed by an amount equal to the percent of roots that were lost. Cutting more than thirty percent is prohibited. Roots shall be pruned cleanly prior to digging and not ripped off by heavy equipment. If the tree whose roots have been cut dies within a two year period, the replacement provision in section D above applies.
 6. Utility trenches near trees shall be avoided. If a line must be near a tree, tunneling, auguring, or other mitigation measures shall be used.
- G. Tree Removal not Authorized by this Section.
1. If a significant tree(s) is removed contrary to any provision in this section, the person(s) responsible for the removal shall pay to the county the value of the tree(s).
 - a. The value of the tree(s) shall be determined by a tree appraiser who is an ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) certified arborist with at least five years of experience appraising trees using the appraisal methods outlined in the current edition of "The Guide for Plant Appraisal," authored by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers (CTLA). The appraiser shall prepare an appraisal report using these methods, and adding to the value from these methods an analysis of the tree(s) contributory value, i.e., the value that the tree(s) contributed to the overall value of the property on which they were located.
 - b. The appraiser shall be chosen by the person(s) responsible for the removal and the county.
 - c. The person(s) responsible for the removal shall pay the cost of the appraisal.
 2. If a significant tree(s) is removed contrary to this section, all development and county permitting and processing of the land use application shall be put on hold for up to sixty days from the date of county's discovery of removal. During that time, the county will inventory the significant tree(s) that were removed, and the process of valuing the tree(s) that were removed shall commence, pursuant to paragraph 1 above.
 3. The person(s) responsible for removing the significant tree(s) shall pay for the cost of site restoration, including the removal of the stump(s). The stump(s) may not be removed until an appraisal is completed pursuant to Paragraph 1. above.
 4. The person(s) responsible for removing the significant tree(s) shall also replace the tree(s) in accordance with the provisions in this section. The bond referenced in subsection (D)(1)(b) of this section shall be a surety bond for those that unlawfully remove trees.

In addition to the civil penalties provided in paragraphs 1—4 of this subsection (G), the person(s) responsible for removing the significant tree(s) may also be subject to criminal prosecution as a Class B misdemeanor for each significant tree unlawfully removed.

1. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings.
 - a. Caliper. The diameter of a tree trunk, measured 4.5' from the ground on the uphill side of the tree.
 - b. Chipping. The mechanical reduction of woody material into small pieces using a chipper or similar equipment designed to produce chips generally less than 3 inches in any dimension.
 - c. Decking. The process of gathering, sorting, and stacking logs after their removal.
 - d. Directional Felling. The technique of using precise cuts to control where a tree falls, creating a "hinge" of wood that guides its descent, even against its natural lean, to protect other trees, minimize damage, and ensure safety.
 - e. Division. The Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands.
 - f. Forest Litter. The collective composition of needles, leaves, small twigs and other vegetative matter that are present on the forest floor before trees and vegetation are removed.
 - g. Invasive Plants or Noxious Weeds. Any plant identified on the Utah Invasive Species List prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture, or the Salt Lake County Noxious Weed List.
 - h. Fuels Reduction. Removal of trees and other vegetation in accordance with a Fuels Reduction Plan.
 - i. Fuels Reduction Plan. A plan for removal of trees and vegetation that are not already dead or naturally fallen or that are not subject to WUI removal standards, in order to achieve fuel reduction and/or wildfire prevention, including for firefighter safety.
 - j. Forest Management Plan. A systematic and long-term strategy for the limited removal of trees and vegetation for any of the following purposes:
 - i. Conservation of natural resources and biodiversity,
 - ii. Sustainable timber production or other forest products,
 - iii. Enhancement of wildlife habitats,
 - iv. Reduction of Invasive Plants or Noxious Weeds, or
 - v. Soil and water quality conservation
 - vi. Protection of drinking water supply
 - k. Government Land Manager. A federal, state, or local public entity, other than the Division, responsible for the administration, stewardship, and regulated use of publicly owned lands, which oversees activities like conservation and protection of habitat, watershed, etc.
 - l. Hand-held Equipment. Tools and equipment that are carried and operated by a walking operator, including but not limited to chainsaws, brush cutters, and loppers.
 - m. Heavy Equipment. Machinery that is sufficiently large, powered, and specialized to perform tasks that would be impractical or unsafe to do manually, including but not limited to skid steers.
 - n. Ladder Fuels. Vegetation of varying heights that can carry fire from ground surface into tree crowns, including low-hanging branches, shrubs, small trees, and dead material in the understory.

- o. Landing. A collection area, usually centrally located, to where logs or forest products are transported so the products may be disposed of.
 - p. Limb/Limbing. The process of removing the branches and limbs from a tree.
 - q. Lop and Scatter. A fuel reduction technique where tree branches are cut into smaller pieces and spread out on the forest floor instead of piling or removing them.
 - r. Mulch. The shredding of trees and brush into small pieces on-site to create a protective, nutrient-rich ground cover.
 - s. Professional Forester. A person who has earned a bachelor of science in forestry or masters degree in forestry from a Society of American Foresters accredited college or university or equivalent and has experience in the management of forested lands.
 - t. Project Area. The area within the lots or parcels depicted in a Fuels Reduction Plan where actual Fuels Reduction will take place.
 - u. Related Entity. A company that directly or indirectly controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with another company or individual.
 - v. Site Plan. A visual that illustrates the components of a Fuels Reduction Plan, as outlined in subsection (4)(b). A Site Plan can be on an overhead photo, a topographical map, and/or other visual depiction of the property that is subject to the Fuels Reduction Plan.
 - w. Skid Trail. The temporary course through which removed trees and vegetation are transported to a Landing(s), without addition of any fill or other improvements.
 - x. Slash. Any residual woody material left on the site after any type of harvest operation and usually includes tree stems, branches and foliage.
 - y. Stand. A contiguous group of trees sufficiently uniform in age class distribution, composition, and structure, and growing on a site of sufficiently uniform quality to be a distinguishable unit.
 - z. Stream Ford. Crossing of a stream without a structure or culvert, where stream banks are low and firm, the streambed is firm, and the stream is shallow.
 - aa. Stream Management Zone. An area of specialized management to protect water quality by limiting soil disturbance and exposure; an area of land adjacent to a Waterbody where soil disturbance is minimal and vegetative disturbance is reduced to provide a buffer for the filtration of contaminants entering the Waterbody, while also maintaining cooler temperatures.
 - bb. Substantially Cleared. Removal of 75% or more of trees over six inches (6”) Caliper within a Stand, resulting in less than 30% canopy cover remaining.
 - cc. Waterbody. Any stream, creek, river, pond, lake, reservoir, wetland, or other feature that contains or seasonally contains water.
 - dd. Watershed, Protected. The Salt Lake City Watershed Area and the Salt Lake County Watershed Area defined in the Salt Lake County Health Department Watershed Regulation #14.
 - ee. Watershed, General. All watershed areas, as defined in Salt Lake County Health Department Watershed Regulation #14, not located within the Protected Watershed.
 - ff. Wetlands. Land designated as wetlands by the United States Army Corps of Engineers or other agency of the federal government.
2. Findings and Authority. The County Council finds that:

- a. Wildfire presents a significant and increasing threat to public health, safety, property, drinking water supplies, and ecological resources within the Foothills and Canyons Overlay Zone;
 - b. Fuels Reduction and Forest Management activities, when properly planned and implemented, reduce wildfire intensity, improve firefighter safety, and protect watershed functions;
 - c. Improper tree and vegetation removal may result in soil erosion, sedimentation of Waterbodies, degradation of drinking water quality, and increased flood risk; and
 - d. Salt Lake County has authority to regulate land use and land-disturbing activities pursuant to its police powers to protect public health, safety, and welfare. This section is adopted pursuant to that authority.
3. Purpose and Scope. This section recognizes the need for Fuels Reduction by property owners to mitigate wildfire risks on their own property, and the need for the Division to implement Fuels Reduction and the goals of Forest Management Plans throughout the Foothills and Canyons Overlay Zone. The section recognizes the institutional expertise of the Division in preparing and implementing Fuels Reduction Plans and Forest Management Plans, but also its limited resources to implement these Plans on behalf of all property owners within the FCOZ areas. Accordingly, this section provides for standards that will direct property owners in their fuel reduction efforts on their own property.
- a. Exceptions. The Section does not apply to removal of trees or vegetation for creation of defensible space under the Utah Wildland Urban Interface Code, or that are dead or naturally fallen, both of which are allowed by Salt Lake County Code without a permit.
4. Applicant
- a. For Forest Management Plans or Fuel Reduction Plans prepared by the Division and implemented by the Division or its contractors on its own behalf or on behalf of property owners, the Division need only submit said Plans to the Director for their awareness and need not make formal application to and receive approval from the Director.
 - i. If the Division prepares either of these Plans on behalf of a property owner, the Division must also implement the Plans itself or through its contractors.
 - b. Property owners desiring to submit and implement their own Fuel Reduction Plans are subject to the application processes and standards in this section.
 - i. Property owners preparing and implementing their own Plan are limited to applying for a Fuels Reduction Plan and may not apply for approval of a Forest Management Plan.
5. Application. An application for approval of a Fuels Reduction Plan shall contain the following. An applicant for approval of a Fuels Reduction Plan need not also comply with the FCOZ Development approval procedures outlined in section 19.72.030.
- a. A project narrative that describes the following:
 - i. Types of trees within Stands where Fuels Reduction will take place
 - ii. General size of existing trees and density/acre of the same in the Project Area
 - iii. General forest health conditions of the Project Area, especially presence of insects and disease, as well as Noxious Weeds and Invasive Plants.
 - iv. The wildfire risk of the Project Area pursuant to maps issued by the Division.

- v. General description of wildlife that are present in the Project Area and vicinity, including any endangered species.
 - vi. Existence of cultural or archeological resources or sites within the Project Area or vicinity.
 - vii. Estimated number of trees over 6” in Caliper to be removed, together with the tree species to be removed
 - viii. Other vegetation that will be removed, including Limbing and other understory vegetation removal. Indicate species of this other vegetation to be removed.
 - ix. The plan for disposing of trees, Slash, and other vegetation that is removed
 - x. The plan for re-seeding and adding Mulch or Slash to Skid Trails on slopes greater than 35%.
 - xi. Estimated time required to implement the Fuels Reduction Plan to completion.
 - xii. The contractor who will implement the Fuels Reduction Plan, including the following:
 - 1. The contractor’s experience with specific projects in the areas of expertise outlined in subsection (14)(b), and references from those projects.
 - 2. The contractor’s experience operating the equipment outlined in subsection (14)(c), including how it will access this equipment.
 - 3. Safety measures that the contractor will use to mitigate risk caused by implementation of the Fuels Reduction Plan, especially removal of trees on slopes greater than 35%.
- b. A Site Plan showing the following:
- i. Boundaries of the parcels or lots where the Fuels Reduction Plan is to be implemented, together with the boundaries of the Project Area within those parcels or lots.
 - ii. The location of all Water Bodies.
 - iii. The location of Stream Management Zones within the Project Area.
 - iv. Slopes in excess of 35%, as obtained from a private study or from the Salt Lake County Surveyor.
 - v. Location of Tree Stands where Fuels Reduction will take place, including the species type and estimated number of trees over 6” Caliper that will be removed from each Stand.
 - vi. Location of Landings, Skid Trails, and Stream Fords.
 - 1. Also indicate portions of Skid Trails on slopes over 35%.
 - vii. Location of all existing roads and trails, together with the location of existing roads that will access the Project Area.
 - viii. Location of existing structures.
- c. A legal description of the lots or parcels in which the Project Area is located.
- d. Payment of the application fees for a Fuels Reduction Plan as provided in the Salt Lake County Fee Schedule for planning and development services.
- e. For project areas less than five (5) contiguous acres, the Director may waive or modify submittal requirements deemed unnecessary. An Applicant and/or a Related Entity may not file multiple applications to avoid the submittal requirements of this subsection.

6. Approval.
 - a. The Director shall approve an application and site plan for a Fuels Reduction Plan if the application, site plan, and associated materials meet all of the applicable standards in this Section. Approval may include reasonable conditions in accordance with applicable standards.
 - b. The Director may approve minor modifications to an approved Fuels Reduction Plan during implementation where site conditions necessitate adjustment, provided the modification does not increase impacts to waterbodies, Stream Management Zones, slopes greater than 35%, or tree removal thresholds. Minor modifications shall be documented in writing.
 - c. The Director may approve a simplified Fuels Reduction Plan for parcels of one (1) acre or less or where tree removal is limited to Ladder Fuels, provided the Plan demonstrates compliance with Stream Management Zone protections and slope limitations. An Applicant and/or a Related Entity may not file multiple applications to circumvent the requirements of a full Fuels Reduction Plan.
7. Appeal. Denial of an application for a Fuels Reduction Plan is appealable pursuant to Section 19.92.050.
8. Tree and vegetation removal standards.
 - a. No removal of aspen
 - b. No removal of trees larger than 12” Caliper.
 - c. No limit on removal of the following:
 - i. Noxious Weeds or Invasive Plants
 - ii. limbs of any tree up to 6’ from ground, measured on uphill side of tree.
 - d. Where a site is Substantially Cleared of trees pursuant to an approved Fuels Reduction Plan, no development or site plan applications for new structures may be accepted within the affected Stand for thirty-six (36) months from the date of the clearing. This restriction shall not apply to structures constructed by public utilities.
9. Stream Management Zones.
 - a. The following Stream Management Zones shall be designated on both the Site Plan and on the ground of the Project Area:
 - i. A zone 15’ horizontally from the ordinary high-water mark of a Water Body.
 - ii. In a Protected Watershed, a zone 75’ horizontally from the ordinary high-water mark of a Water Body. If any portion of this zone has slopes in excess of 35%, the zone shall be 100’.
 - iii. In a General Watershed, a zone 35’ horizontally from the ordinary high-water mark of a Water Body. If any portion of this zone has slopes in excess of 35%, the zone shall be 50’.
 - b. Designation of Stream Management Zones shall be by temporary paint, flagging, and/or signage.
 - c. The following standards apply to the Stream Management Zone in subsection (8)(a)(i):
 - i. Except for Limbing of trees or removal of Noxious Weeds or Invasive Plants, no disturbance of land or vegetation

- ii. No construction of culverts or bridges is allowed to cross streams in order to implement a Fuels Reduction Plan; only use of existing bridges, or a Stream Ford, is allowed.
- d. Subject to the limitations in subsection (8)(c), the following standards apply to the Stream Management Zones in subsections (8)(a)(ii) and (iii):
 - i. No use of equipment other than hand-held equipment. This prohibition includes equipment on existing roads, except that existing legally established roads within Stream Management Zones may be used for access provided no ground disturbance occurs outside the existing road.
 - ii. No trees, Slash, or Mulch in Water Bodies as a result of implementing Fuels Reduction Plan.
 - iii. Do not Limb trees below the ordinary high water mark of Water Bodies.
 - iv. Remove Slash caused by implementation of Fuels Reduction Plan; Forest Litter can remain.
 - v. No Skid Trails that cross Water Bodies.
 - vi. No use, mixture, storage, or handling of chemicals or hazardous/toxic materials.
 - 1. No cleaning, fueling, or servicing equipment. No cleaning containers of fuels, pesticides or herbicides.
 - 2. No storage of fuel, oil, or antifreeze.
 - 3. No draining used oil, fuel, or antifreeze onto ground anywhere in the Project Area.
 - 4. Pesticide may not be used anywhere in a Project Area unless allowed by Salt Lake County Health Department regulations.
- 10. Heavy Equipment, Skid Trails, Landings.
 - a. Heavy Equipment. All Heavy Equipment must be thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated off-site prior to usage within the Project Area to remove oil, seeds, plant material, insects, invertebrates, and other biological material.
 - i. The applicant shall provide written notification to Director of compliance with this subsection prior to commencement of work.
 - b. Skid Trails
 - i. Minimize the number of Skid Trails by using Directional Felling methods.
 - ii. Revegetate any portion of Skid Trail in excess of 35% slope in accordance with section 19.72.110(E). Director may inspect revegetation in subsequent growing seasons to verify that revegetation has resulted in the growth of live vegetation in areas that had vegetation prior to the Fuels Reduction Plan implementation.
 - iii. Fertilizers and other growth stimulators may only be used if permitted by Salt Lake County Health Department regulations.
 - c. Landings.
 - i. No portion of Landings may be on slopes greater than 35%.
 - ii. Number of Landings may be minimized by Decking removed trees along existing roads so long as no portion of the road is obstructed.
- 11. Slope. The following standards apply to implementation of a Fuels Reduction Plan on slopes in excess of 35%:

- a. No vehicles, including commercial vehicles, are allowed unless such vehicles are on a previously approved and permitted road.
 - b. Hand-held Equipment is allowed to implement a Fuels Reduction Plan if the applicant proposes measures to mitigate the risk of falling and rolling timber.
 - c. Vehicles, including commercial vehicles, and Hand-held Equipment are allowed to implement a Fuels Reduction Plan on slopes less than 35%, subject to the other standards in this section.
12. Roads. No new roads or trails shall be created for purposes of implementing a Fuels Reduction Plan unless they are first applied for and approved pursuant to applicable grading and land use requirements. This prohibition does not apply to Skid Trails.
13. Disposal. Any or a combination of the following are allowed methods of disposal of removed trees and vegetation:
- a. Hauling to a disposal facility that accepts green waste
 - b. Chipping in place
 - i. Wood chips may not exceed 6” in depth
 - c. Cutting and storing or selling firewood.
 - i. Firewood may be stored on-site so long as doing so complies with the version of the Wildland Urban Interface Code currently adopted by the State of Utah.
 - d. Slash may be Lopped and Scattered.
 - e. Burning is only permitted if doing so is allowed and a permit obtained pursuant to Salt Lake County Health Department’s Solid Fuel Burning Regulation, Utah Administrative Rules for General Burning, and other applicable regulations.
14. Time
- a. A Fuels Reduction Plan with an estimated completion date of longer than one year must submit a phasing plan.
 - i. A phasing plan shall be in one-year increments.
 - ii. Each phase of a phasing plan must include all the requirements of an individual Fuels Reduction Plan.
 - b. A Fuels Reduction Plan and each phase of a phasing plan shall expire three years after approval. A new Fuels Reduction Plan may be submitted after expiration of the Plan or phase.
15. Contractors. A Fuels Reduction Plan must be implemented by a contractor with all of the following qualifications:
- a. Experience and expertise in at least one of the following areas, as established in subsection (4)(a)(xii):
 - i. Land/natural resource management services
 - ii. Fuel reduction services for wildfire prevention/mitigation
 - iii. Tree Felling/removal/trimming
 - iv. Vegetation/land clearing
 - b. Experience operating and access to equipment for mastication, Chipping, or hauling removed trees and vegetation, as established in subsection (4)(a)(xii).
 - c. Due to their experience with fuel reduction projects and their existing contractors who implement these projects, Government Land Managers may use contractors of their

choosing or those required by multi-party grants to implement their Fuels Reduction Plans.

16. Inspections. Implementation of a Fuels Reduction Plan shall be subject to the following inspections:
 - a. A site visit prior to commencement of implementation of the Fuels Reduction Plan.
 - i. For any property within the Protected Watershed, this site visit will include the presence of Salt Lake Public Utilities or the Salt Lake County Health Department to ensure that all Water Bodies are accounted for on the Site Plan pursuant to subsection (4)(b)(ii) and that all Stream Management Zones are marked on the ground pursuant to subsection (8)(b). Such site visits shall not take place during winter conditions when snow prevents verification of all Water Bodies.
 - ii. This site visit will also ensure that all other requirements of this section for commencement of Fuels Reduction Plan implementation have been satisfied.
 - b. For Fuels Reduction Plans with an estimated completion time of longer than 60 days, scheduled inspections may take place at reasonable times agreeable to the Applicant and the Director.
 - c. A final inspection upon completion of the Fuels Reduction Plan to verify compliance with this section.
 - d. In addition to these scheduled inspections, the Director retains the authority under Salt Lake County Code section 19.94.020 to conduct unscheduled inspections to verify compliance with this section.
17. Plans that deviate from standards
 - a. Fuels Reduction Plans that deviate from the Standards in subsections (7) – (9) shall be approved if:
 - i. The Plan is prepared by a Professional Forester;
 - ii. The Plan is consistent in all respects with Utah’s Forest Water Quality Guidelines issued by the Division, and all applicable Salt Lake County regulations; and
 - iii. The Plan is implemented by a contractor from the Division’s Approved Rangeland Contractor List, or for Plans approved for Government Land Managers, a contractor chosen by the Government Land Manager or via a multi-party grant.
18. Emergency Fuels Reduction.
 - a. The Director may authorize emergency Fuels Reduction activities without prior plan approval where an imminent wildfire risk exists, such as windthrow, insect infestation, drought conditions, or proximity to active wildfire.
 - b. Emergency authorization shall be in writing and shall be limited to the minimum activity necessary to mitigate the immediate hazard.
 - c. A Fuels Reduction Plan documenting the completed emergency work shall be submitted within thirty (30) days of commencement.

Penalties. Failure to comply with an approved Fuels Reduction Plan or this section is subject to the applicable penalties outlined in section 19.72.110(G) and chapter 19.94.



3690 E Fort Union Blvd, Suite 101
Cottonwood Heights, UT 84121
info@saveourcanyon.org
(801) 363-7283

To:
Salt Lake County
Mountainous Planning District
Planning Commission

CC:
Doug Campbell, FFSL
Laura Briefer, SLCPU
Claudia Weise, SLCo

Re: Comments on proposed ordinance OAM2026-001589

To Whom it May Concern,

Save Our Canyons is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1972. Our mission is to preserve the beauty and wildness of the Wasatch Mountains. We regularly participate as a community partner on fuel treatment projects with state, federal, and local agencies. We understand the critical and pressing need for fuel treatments in the Wasatch Mountains. We support efforts of local, state, and federal governments that empower land managers and landowners to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, as long as those projects adhere to best practices, informed by best available science. We submit the following considerations in support of OAM2026-001589.

1. In addition to minimum qualification requirements, we suggest that a list of pre-qualified contractors be maintained Salt Lake County (SLCo) and the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands (FFSL). We further recommend that private landowners only be able to work with contractors who maintain standing on this list by successfully passing final project inspections. This would ensure that contractors working on these private lands are properly vetted and aligned with best practices, while opening opportunities to streamline application processes.
 - a. This could be consolidated with FFSL's Division's Approved Rangeland Contractor List.
2. We request that the use of mastication and tracked equipment be prohibited within Protected Watershed. Though significantly cheaper to operate per acre, these vehicles are likely to have a much higher impact on watershed resources. The use of heavy, tracked vehicles is also likely to disturb the ground more than other methods, therefore allowing for the introduction of invasive species.



3690 E Fort Union Blvd, Suite 101
Cottonwood Heights, UT 84121
info@saveourcanyon.org
(801) 363-7283

3. We request that the ordinance implement a plan for invasive species monitoring to take place at least six months after final inspections. We also request that a plan for subsequent mitigation be implemented for cases where invasive species proliferate due to these projects.
4. We request that SLCo and FFSL coordinate with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) to understand and clarify if there are any necessary seasonal restrictions that should be implemented to limit impacts on migration or nesting.
5. We suggest the following specific language changes:
 - a. Definition 1(a) and subsequent uses of this term: change “Caliper” to “Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)”. We understand “caliper” to be a measurement at 6-12” above ground, and DBH to be 4.5’ above ground. Some trees vary in diameter significantly between these heights, the ordinance should provide enough clarity here to prevent miscommunication.
 - b. 5(a)v: “any threatened or endangered species.”
6. We request more clarity on how possible wildfire and flooding incidents stemming from these projects would be addressed and paid for.
 - a. The introduction of additional machinery within areas with heavy fuel loading could increase risk of new ignitions. For example, the 2024 Yellow Lake Fire, the biggest wildfire of the year in Utah, was started by a contractor removing dead and standing fuel. They were only charged a \$16,000 fine for the mistake despite suppression estimated to be around \$20 million, leaving taxpayers to handle the burden of suppression and restoration costs for a 33,000 acre burn scare. The ordinance should ensure that mistakes of this nature are prepared for.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments in support of proposed ordinance OAM2026-001589. We look forward to its implementation, and remain open to questions or conversation to help advance this important initiative.

Sincerely,
Doug Tolman,
Policy Manager
Save Our Canyons
3690 E. Fort Union Blvd, Suite 101
Cottonwood Heights, Utah 84121
Phone: 801-363-7283



MEETING MINUTE SUMMARY

MOUNTAINOUS PLANNING DISTRICT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, December 18, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

Approximate meeting length: 26 minutes

Number of public in attendance: 0

Summary Prepared by: Wendy Gurr

Meeting Conducted by: Commissioner Staker

***NOTE:** Staff Reports referenced in this document can be found on the State and County websites, or from Salt Lake County Planning & Development Services.

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners	Public Mtg	Business Mtg	Absent
Ulrich Brunhart	x	x	
Don Despain	x		
Burke Staker (Chair)	x	x	
Mark Hales	x	x	
Daniel Schoenfeld	x		
Elizabeth Davis			x
John Knoblock (Vice Chair)	x	x	
Dallas Bullock			x
Bonnie McAllister	x	x	

Planning Staff / DA	Public Mtg	Business Mtg
Wendy Gurr	x	x
Brian Tucker	x	x
Helen Peters	x	x
Ryan Anderson	x	x
Jason Rose (DA)	x	

BUSINESS MEETING

Meeting began at – 3:01 p.m.

- 1) Approval of May 15, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. (Motion/Voting)
Motion: To approve May 15, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes as presented.
Motion by: Commissioner Knoblock
2nd by: Commissioner Brunhart
Vote: Commissioners voted unanimously in favor (of commissioners present)

- 2) 2026 Planning Commission Schedule. (Discussion)

Commissioners confirmed the 2026 planning commission schedule. Commissioner Hales advised he will be unavailable for the February meeting.

- 3) Other Business Items. (As Needed)

No other business items to discuss.

PUBLIC HEARING(S)

Hearing began at – 3:04 p.m.

Consideration of Proposed Amendment to Salt Lake County’s Wasatch Canyons General Plan to add a Water Use and Preservation Element. **Presenter:** Garrett Stone with GSBS Consulting (Motion/Voting)

GSBS Consulting, Planning Consultant Garrett Stone provided an analysis of the proposed water use and preservation element plan.

Commissioner Knoblock motioned to open the public hearing, Commissioner McCallister seconded that motion. Commissioners voted unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION OF HEARING OPENED

No one from the public was present to speak.

Commissioner Knoblock motioned to close the public hearing, Commissioner Brunhart seconded that motion. Commissioners voted unanimously.

PUBLIC PORTION OF HEARING CLOSED

Motion: To recommend file #OAM2025-001554 Consideration of Proposed Amendment to Salt Lake County’s Wasatch Canyons General Plan to add a Water Use and Preservation Element for approval to the Salt Lake County Council.

Motion by: Commissioner Hales

2nd by: Commissioner Brunhart

Vote: Commissioners voted unanimously in favor (of commissioners present)

Commissioner Brunhart adjourned.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Time Adjourned – 3:27 p.m.