

# LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON EIS

## PURPOSE AND NEED & ALTERNATIVE SCREENING CRITERIA

### PROJECT OVERVIEW



### LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON (LCC) BY THE NUMBERS

ANNUAL VISITORS  
**2.1 MILLION**

#### REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH BY 2050

Salt Lake County **37% GROWTH**

Utah County **108% GROWTH**

Combined new residents **1 MILLION**

### LCC EIS PURPOSE

UDOT's purpose is to substantially improve safety, reliability, and mobility on S.R. 210 from Fort Union Boulevard through the town of Alta for all users on S.R. 210.

### NEED FOR THE PROJECT

- Decreased mobility in winter during the morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) peak travel periods related to visits to ski areas, with the greatest traffic volumes on weekends and holidays and during and after snowstorms.
- Decreased mobility on Wasatch Boulevard resulting from weekday commuter traffic.
- Safety concerns associated with avalanche hazard and traffic delays caused by the current avalanche-control program in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Periodic road closures for avalanche control can cause 2-to-4-hour travel delays, or longer, which can cause traffic to back up in the neighborhoods at the entrance of the canyon.
- Roadway elements do not meet current design standards; for example, shoulders that are narrow, and horizontal and vertical curves that are steep and/or sharp.
- Limited parking at trailheads and ski areas leads to on-road parking that reduces mobility and safety for all users.

### WHAT ARE RELIABILITY AND MOBILITY?

**Reliability** refers to the degree of certainty and predictability in travel times on the transportation system.

**Mobility** refers to the ability and level of ease to travel along a roadway.

# OBJECTIVES



Avalanche Mitigation



Wasatch Boulevard



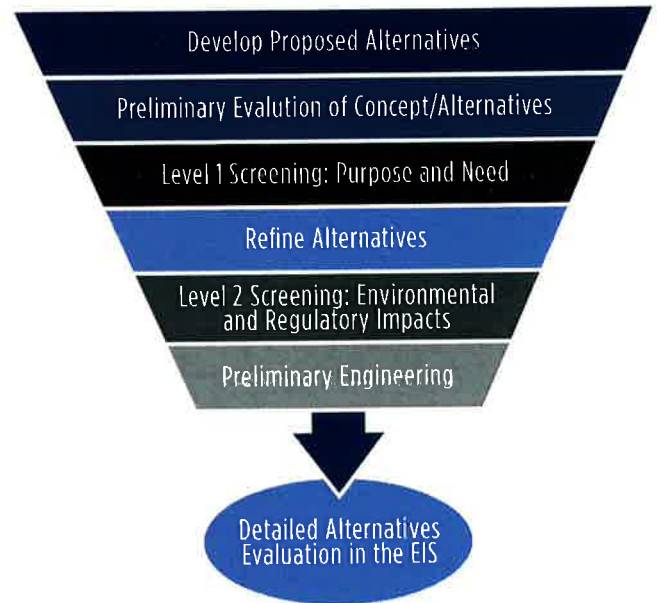
Trailhead Parking



Little Cottonwood Mobility

## ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND SCREENING PROCESS

The alternatives development and screening process will provide critical information about how well an alternative satisfies the project’s purpose and meets the transportation needs, and whether it is reasonable under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), practicable under the Clean Water Act, and prudent and feasible under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. The alternatives development and screening process will consist of the phases shown in the figure to the right. The key phases in the screening process are Level 1 screening based on the project purpose and need and Level 2 screening based on environmental and regulatory evaluation. The criteria used for Level 1 and Level 2 screening are shown below.



### LEVEL 1 SCREENING CRITERIA (PURPOSE AND NEED)

Criterion	Measure
<b>Safety, Reliability, Residential Access and Mobility</b>	
Improve reliability and safety by 2050	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantially reduce the number of hours and/or days during which avalanches delay users</li> <li>• Substantially reduce the avalanche hazard for roadway users</li> <li>• Improve roadway safety at existing trailhead locations</li> <li>• Reduce or eliminate traffic conflicts between motorized and nonmotorized transportation modes at existing trailhead locations</li> <li>• Reduce or eliminate on-road parking to improve the safety and operational characteristics of S.R. 210</li> </ul>
Improve mobility by 2050	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantially improve peak-hour (defined as the 30th-busiest hour) travel times for uphill and downhill users in 2050 compared to travel times with the No-Action Alternative</li> <li>• Meet peak-hour average total person demand on busy ski days</li> <li>• Substantially reduce vehicle backups on S.R. 210 and S.R. 209 through residential areas on busy ski days</li> <li>• By 2050, meet UDOT’s goal of Level of Service (LOS) D in the weekday AM and PM peak periods on Wasatch Blvd</li> </ul>

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

1989-2015  
**16 transportation related studies**

2017  
SB 277 approved funding for **Recreation Hotspots**

2017  
The Utah Transportation Commission allocated **\$66 million to Little Cottonwood Canyon**



## LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

Environmental analysis and selection of a transportation alternative for Little Cottonwood Canyon that improves reliability, mobility and safety.



Avalanche Mitigation



Wasatch Boulevard



Trailhead Parking



Little Cottonwood Mobility

*\*Technical analysis of tolling and transit will support the alternatives development process of both the EIS and future improvements in Big Cottonwood Canyon.*

*\*\$13 million in funding for the purchase of property for a future transit hub.*

## PROCESS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



**Current Phase**

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by UDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated January 17, 2017, and executed by FHWA and UDOT.

Learn more at [udot.utah.gov/LittleCottonwoodEIS](http://udot.utah.gov/LittleCottonwoodEIS)





## LEVEL 2 SCREENING CRITERIA

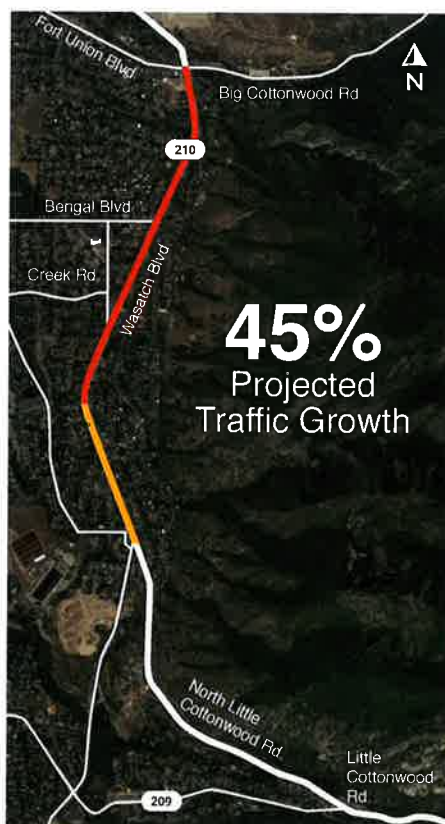
Criterion	Measure
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative's cost compared to other alternatives that pass Level 1 screening</li> </ul>
Consistency and compatibility with local and regional plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative's consistency with local and regional land use and transportation plans</li> <li>Alternative's compliance with the Wilderness Act of 1964 and consistency with the 2003 <i>Revised Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan</i></li> </ul>
Compatibility with permitting requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permit requirements</li> </ul>
Impacts related to Clean Water Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acres and types of wetlands and other waters of the United States</li> </ul>
Impacts to natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acres and types of sensitive habitat</li> <li>Acres of floodplain</li> <li>Acres of critical habitat</li> </ul>
Impacts to the built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and area of parks</li> <li>Number of community facilities</li> <li>Number of potential property acquisitions including residential, business and utility acquisitions</li> <li>Number of Section 4(f)/Section 6(f) uses</li> <li>Number of cultural resources (for example, historic and archaeological resources) affected</li> </ul>

## NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO WASATCH BLVD.

EXISTING CONDITIONS (2015)  
P.M. PEAK-PERIOD



FUTURE NO-ACTION CONDITIONS  
(2050) P.M. PEAK-PERIOD



## LEVEL OF SERVICE

**A** | NO DELAYS

Highest quality of service. Free traffic flow with few restrictions on maneuverability or speed.

**B** | NO DELAYS

Stable traffic flow. Speed becoming slightly restricted. Low restriction on maneuverability.

**C** | MINIMAL DELAYS

Stable traffic flow, but less freedom to select speed.

**UDOT Goal**

**D** | NOTICEABLE DELAYS

Traffic flow becoming unstable. Speed subject to sudden change.

**E** | CONSIDERABLE DELAYS

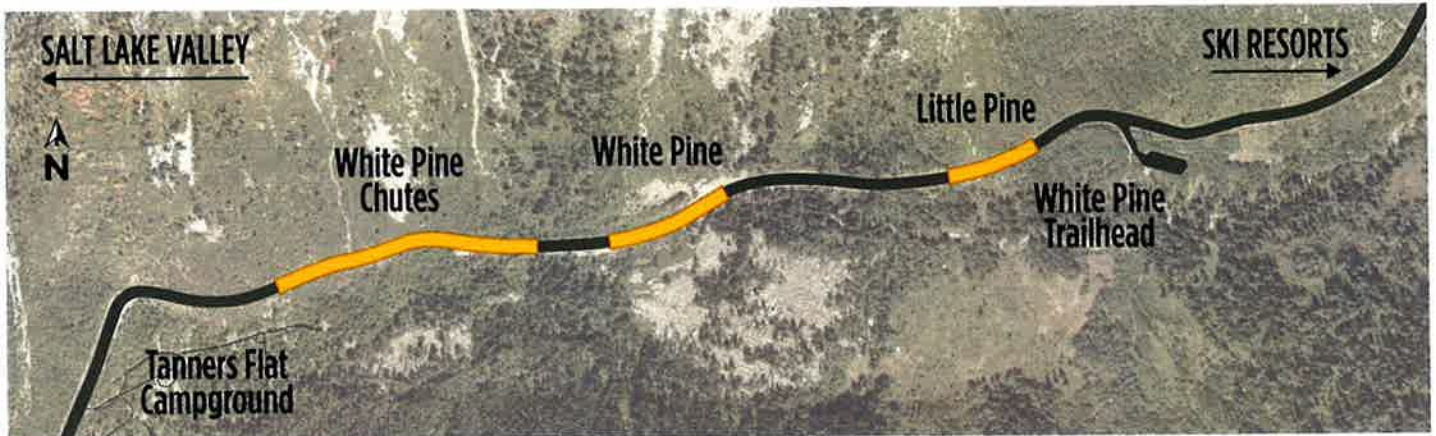
Unstable traffic flow. Speed changes quickly and maneuverability is low.

**F** | CONSIDERABLE DELAYS

Heavily congested traffic. Demand exceeds capacity and speed varies greatly.

# NEED FOR AVALANCHE MITIGATION

## KEY AVALANCHE LOCATIONS



ON AVALANCHE CLOSURE DAYS,  
TRAVEL TIMES FROM I-215  
TO ALTA RANGE FROM  
**45 TO 120 MINUTES**  
COMPARED TO  
**28 MINUTES**  
UNDER IDEAL CONDITIONS.

### CURRENT AVALANCHE HAZARD INDEX (AHI)

Hazard Category	AHI	
Very Low	Less than 1	
Low	1 to 10	
Moderate	10 to 40	
High	40 to 150	← LCC AHI=90 (Mitigated)
Very High	Greater than 150	← LCC AHI=7,304 (Unmitigated)

Source: Dynamic Avalanche Consulting 2018

## PROJECT TIMELINE



### Current Phase

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