

Alta Planning Commission Minutes
Community Center/Library, 10361 E. Hwy 210, Alta, Utah
October 21, 2013, 4PM

IN ATTENDANCE:

Planning Commissioners: Joan Degiorgio, Roger Bourke (participating via phone), Rob Voye, Elise Morgan, Skip Branch, and Mayor Tom Pollard (Ex Oficio member.)

Town of Alta staff: John Guldner, Claire Woodman, Rich Mrazik (counsel),

Members of the public: Mark Haik, Jen Clancy, Karen Travis, Robin Cohen, and Onno Wieringa.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR.

Joan Degiorgio: Opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. Discussed the "Alta Symposium," an event that brought people together to do research in a more coordinated way.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 14, 2013, PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING.

Skip Branch: Made a motion to adopt the August 14, 2013, Planning Commission minutes as amended.

Rob Voye: Seconded the motion.

All members of the Planning Commission voted in favor.

DISCUSSION OF INTERCONNECT

WASATCH SUMMIT PROGRAM, LAYNEE JONES

Laynee Jones: Introduced self as the Program Facilitator for the Wasatch Summit program. Read through goals of program (see handout, page 1.) Major driving issue is transportation, but other issues of equal value will be considered in making decisions. Embarking on long term view, it will be a two-year study to determine a preferred transportation alternative and associated land use options, and three years after that to get a formal decision. The project approach and area will be holistic, not looking at just Little and Big Cottonwood Canyon (see handout, page 4-5.) Decisions will be made in conjunction with the economy, transportation, environment, and preserving recreation activities. Discussed project schedule and the NEPA process (see handout, page 2). The NEPA process outlines the steps that you need to complete in order to get approval from the federal government on a project. The process assumes big impacts and helps weigh the public benefits against environmental impacts.

Tom Pollard: Project is not focused on ski area connections, it's focused on regional transportation.

Laynee Jones: Project website is wasatchsummit.org. New website will be unveiled in January. First phase has a \$5 million budget for first two years. \$2.6 million is from the state, another million from local government and looking to make up difference from private funding. Parametrix is the environmental consultant on board. We will have a good idea of the termini, where it is starting, where it is ending, and what the mode is, and the general alignment at the end of this phase. Going to put together an economic committee that looks at the economic

benefits and a funding and finance committee to figure out where to tap into private money. Looking at doing this as a private/public partnership. Will come back and update the Planning Commission in six months or so.

ALTA SPECIFIC ISSUES RE: INTERCONNECT (E.G. GRIZZLY GULCH, RIDGELINE ORDINANCE)

Joan Degiorgio: May have a piece of this transportation solution coming through Alta and we don't have a lot of guidance, especially on private land.

Tom Pollard: Planning Commission needs to be aware of this program and the impact it could have on our community. Either John, Claire or I can update you at each meeting.

Skip Branch: What is the Planning Commission's area of responsibility?

John Guldner: The Wasatch Summit program will come to you as the Land Use Authority. The Town is not quite equipped to deal with this right now. Currently the only permitted use in FR-50 is a single family house or accessory uses. Commercial and private recreation is a conditional use. Not many ordinances address ski lifts specifically.

Propose the Planning Commission look at: 1) creating a ridgeline ordinance, 2) ensuring that lifts are tied into existing base areas so parking, restroom, restaurants, etc. are made available, and 3) tighten up ordinances to address lift alignment, height, preservation of natural features, etc.

Roger Bourke: Where does the Grizzly Gulch lift stand now?

Onno Wieringa: Do you like the process we go through now with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS)? Would like to follow a process similar to the NEPA process that looks at social, biological, ridgelines, transportation, capacity, etc. It would create consistency throughout the Town.

The door is still open on the Grizzly Gulch lift, it didn't work initially because of the process.

Joan Degiorgio: Summed up meeting so far: 1) Need more direction for northern private property, 2) Want to protect natural environment, 3) Need to look at creating ordinance to address vegetation, ridgelines, waterways, natural features, and impact on residences, 4) Look at what the USFS is requiring.

Mark Haik: Get a map to look at parcels on ridgeline, which are largely private on a tri-canyon scale. Also need to look at impacts of ideas outside of the Town and how it would affect ridgelines. Can get mining district exhibit or exhibits from USFS.

Joan Degiorgio: For next meeting, direct staff to prepare a draft ordinance and a map to show affected areas.

John Guldner: Would like our review to be easier than the USFS process, don't want Planning Commission to go through NEPA for a chairlift. I can ask USFS to come to the next meeting.

REVIEW OF MEETING DATES AND TIMES.

The next meeting dates were set for November 18th and December 16th. Claire was asked to send out a reminder of the upcoming meeting dates.

Roger Bourke: Is it sensible to have this property zoned residential, or should it be rezoned? Everything outside of the 1976 Town boundary is zoned for residential, but there is no water for residential, so there is a disconnect there.

John Guldner: It matches what is done elsewhere in Salt Lake County. Aside from the disconnect related to water, it's still a pretty good match for being up in the mountains.

Joan Degiorgio: We can take that up next meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN.

Skip Branch: Made a motion to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting.

Rob Voyer: Seconded the motion.

All members of the Planning Commission voted in favor.

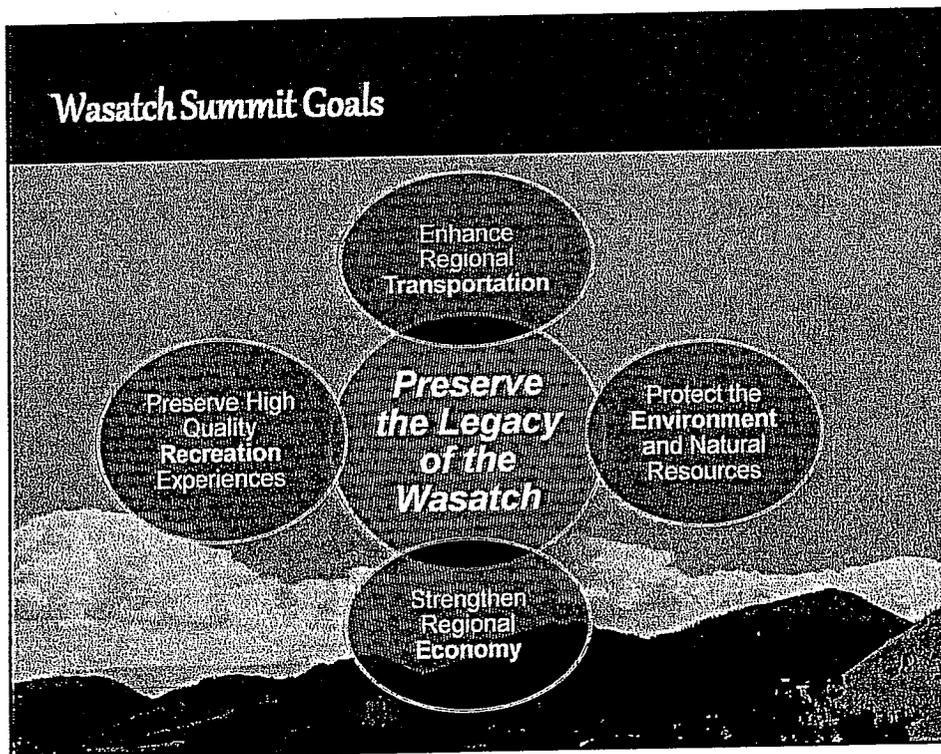
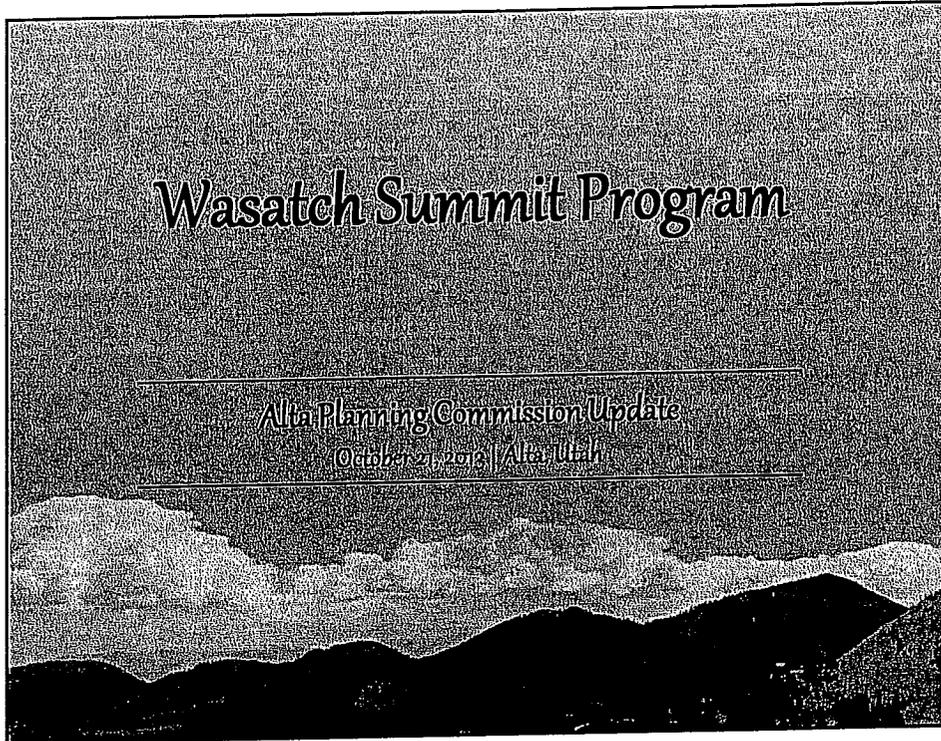
The content of the minutes is not intended, nor are they submitted, as a verbatim transcription of the meeting. These minutes are a general overview of what occurred at the meeting.

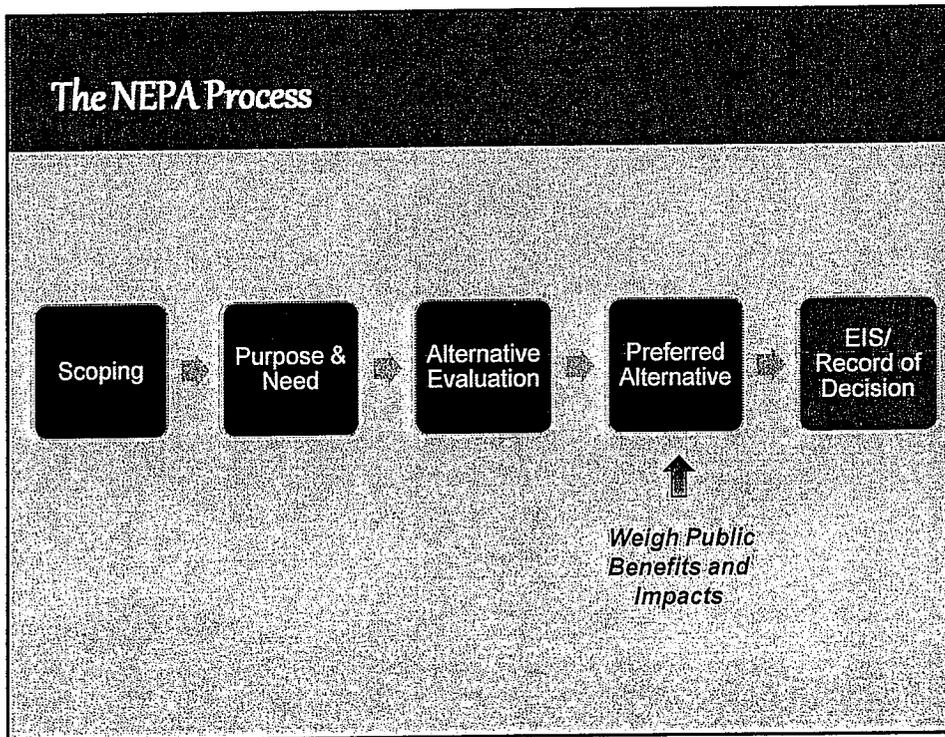
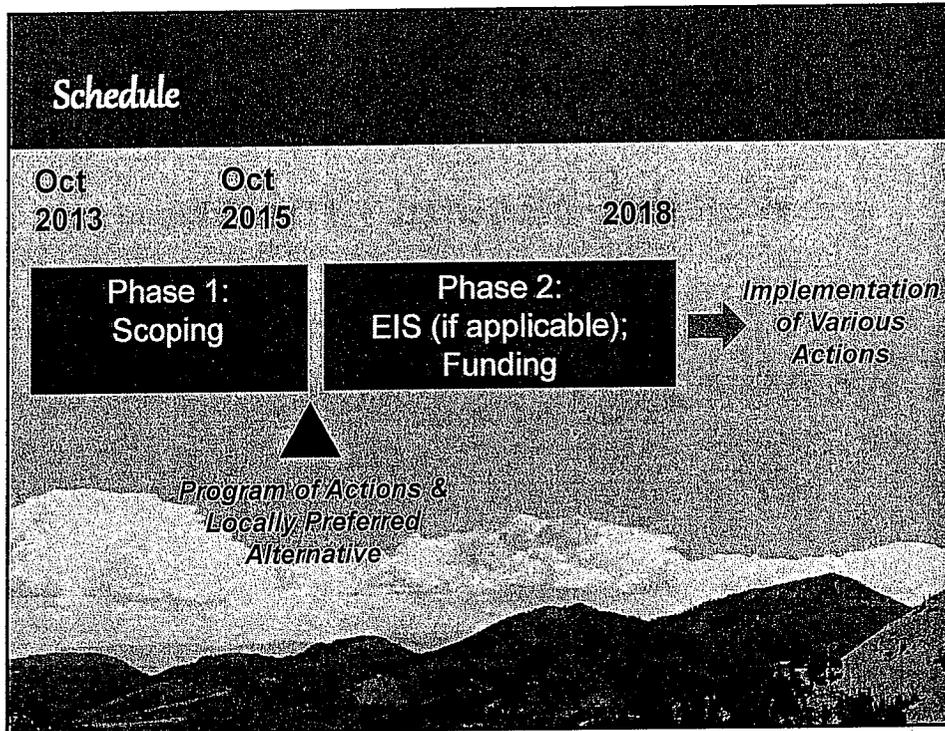
These minutes were passed and approved on the eighteenth day of November, 2013.



Claire R. Woodman

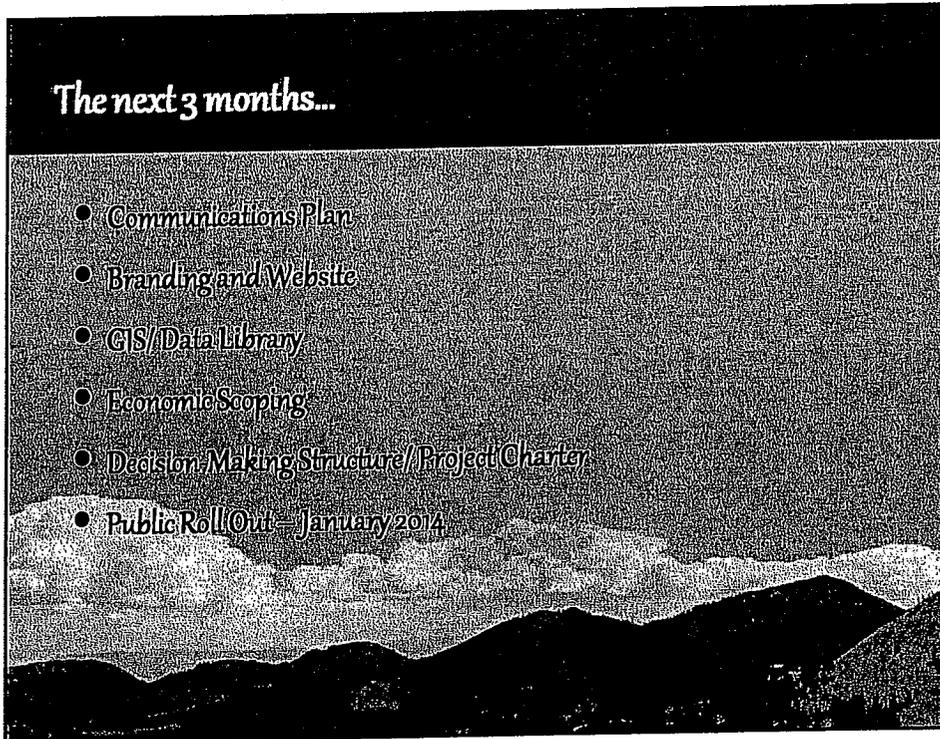
Assistant Town Administrator



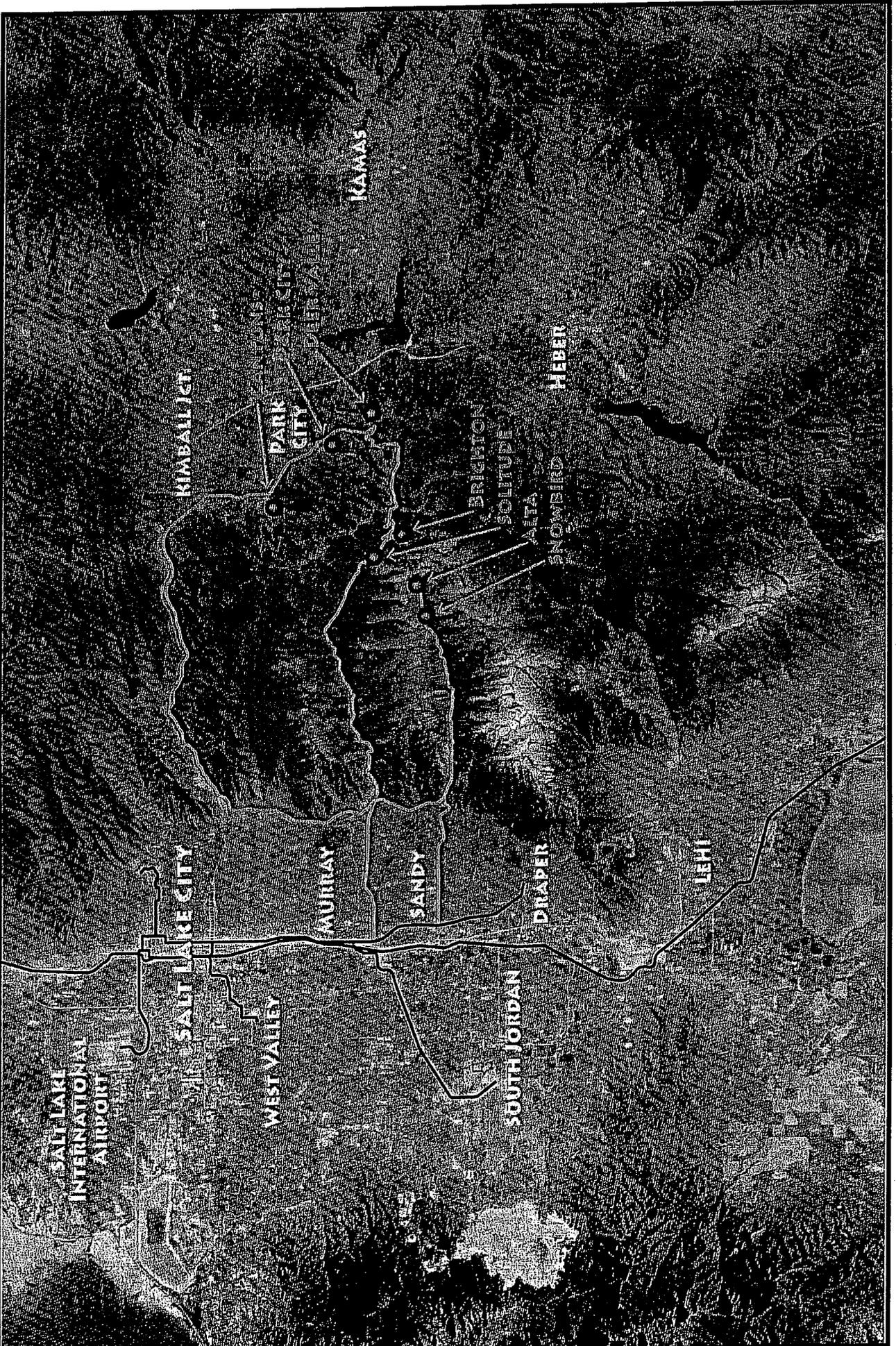


The next 3 months...

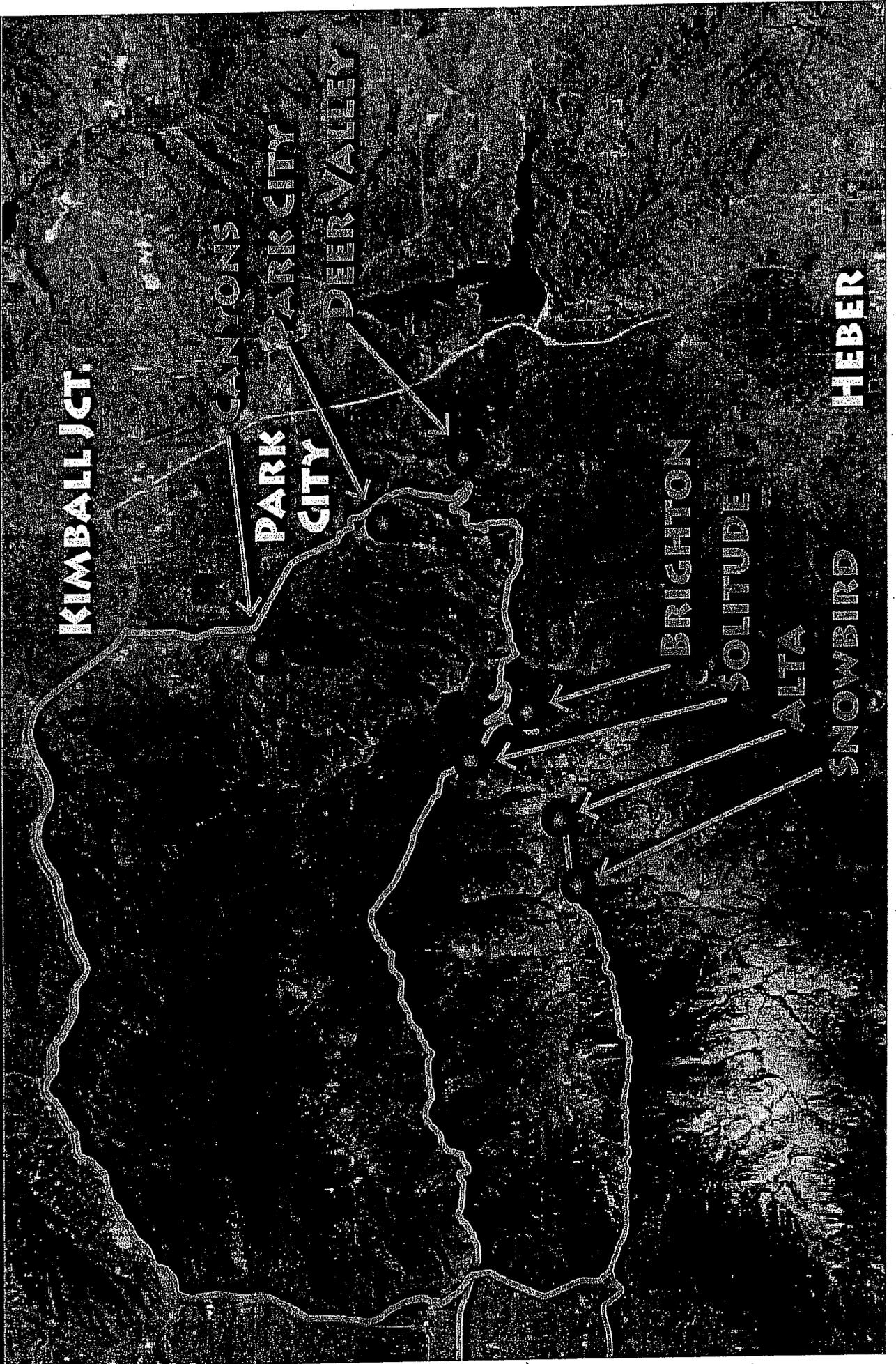
- *Communications Plan*
- *Branding and Website*
- *GIS/Data Library*
- *Economic Scoping*
- *Decision Making Structure/Project Charter*
- *Public Roll Out - January 2014*



STUDY AREA



STUDY AREA



October 14, 2013

Memo to the Alta Planning Commission

Re: Introductory Overview of Conditions to Consider for Reviewing Ski Lift
Conditional Use Permits.

We have been discussing the future of ski lift interconnection with neighboring areas over Alta's ridgelines. It has been noted that Alta's ordinance doesn't specifically address ski lifts (ski lifts, lift towers, trams, rope tows, etc), being more geared toward buildings.

Using Grizzly Gulch as an example; the zoning is Forestry and Recreation (FR) around and above the existing homes in Grizzly Gulch, in fact all the way up the to the ridgeline above and beyond the Patsey Marley area.

The only things permitted in the FR zone are single family dwellings and accessory uses and structures customarily incidental to a single family dwelling. Ski lifts or trams are not specifically mentioned but would require a conditional use permit, falling under the "commercial and private recreation" clause of the zone.

FR development regulations such as height, coverage and setbacks are more directly aimed at houses or buildings than any type of ski lift.

Again, a ski lift on private land would require conditional use approval by the Planning Commission. This has never been addressed to date because all ski lifts have been permitted on National Forest Lands under Forest Service Special Use Permits.

Ordinances from other areas have been reviewed. These include Salt Lake County, Utah County, Summit County, Wasatch County, Brian Head, Park City, Telluride and Vail Colorado, Taos Ski Valley, New Mexico and Waterville Valley, New Hampshire.

These ordinances are quite variable ranging from no distinction at all for ski lifts compared to other structures, to complicated and defined approaches for ski lift alignment and ski lifts. Generally, even when ski lifts are listed, setbacks, heights, ground disturbance etc. seem to address buildings better than ski lifts. Oftentimes ski lifts are not even listed in the ordinances. When ski lifts are addressed separately, they still seem to be addressed individually as part of a larger overall ski area masterplan.

Regular zoning conditions are often waived. As an example, by nature, ski areas are on steep slopes, so lift tower locations may be exempted from slopes over 30%, so long as other vital conditions such as vegetation, erosion control and stream setback are addressed and protected.

Without going into detail of what other areas do, you are at the perfect starting point to address ski lift conditional use permit review. This is mainly due to our recent 2+ year review of the base facilities zone in which we identified the elements critical to the Alta community and environment, namely, viewsheds, topographical features, vegetation; the exact same elements we would want to address and protect when reviewing/approving a ski lift on private, not Forest property.

Handouts, page 6

I'd recommend our discussion start with those elements that we want to protect, viewsheds, topographical features, vegetation, natural waterways, when reviewing and approving any ski lift request for a conditional use. Then ensuring those critical elements and any other considerations you may come up with, are added into our ordinance.

There are two other elements that are important in any ski lift review and should be added to the review criteria:

- 1) ridgeline protection and,
- 2) connection of any additional or new lift to the existing base of the ski area

In addition to the aforementioned elements important to the Town when considering approval of any ski lift, ridgeline protection stands alone as something critical to address. Past discussions point out that it is as important to protect and preserve the ridgeline as much as any other natural element. There are many examples of ridgeline protection ordinances. Following are two of the simplest. After identifying ridgelines desired to be protected, in our case, the ridges above the Town on the North, East and South comprising the Town's boundary, either of the attached ordinances or a hybrid would work perfectly for Alta.

Many ordinances don't address parking or traffic, either car or pedestrian/skier traffic during the review of additional ski lifts. Requiring any additional or new lift to be tied into the existing lift base answers those concerns very well. Parking, pedestrians, skiers, bathroom facilities, shops and restaurants are all available when new lifts are tied to the existing base.

H. Visually Sensitive Areas:

Development shall not be placed on any hillside or ridge-top in a manner that causes any portion of a structure to extend into the skyline as viewed from public roadways when the roadway is located below the ground elevation of the structure. Visually sensitive areas shall be determined at the time of a development application.

18.30.080: SPECIAL PROVISIONS:

H. Ridgeline Protection: All ridgeline areas, as seen along the entire length of Main Street from 2000 North to the southern city limits, in this zone shall be retained in a natural state, and development shall be sited in such a manner so that all structures are located away from areas that are visible against the sky or mountains along a ridgeline. No building, roof or other appurtenant device shall encroach or visually intrude upon a ridgeline area.