

**MINUTES OF THE COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS CITY
PLANNING COMMISSION WORK MEETING**

Wednesday, September 3, 2025

5:00 p.m.

**2277 East Bengal Boulevard
City Council Chambers**

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Chair Lucy Anderson, Vice-Chair Sean Steinman, Commissioner Mike Shelton, Commissioner Dan Poulson, Commissioner Dan Mills, Commissioner Mike Smith, Commissioner Garry Barnes, Commissioner Rusty Lugo-Alternate

Staff Present: Community and Economic Development Director, Jim Spung; Deputy City Recorder, Cienna Brummel; Planner II, Maverick Yeh; System Administrator, Alex Earl

Public: Aubrey Larsen; Mark Vlastic

WORK SESSION

Chair Lucy Anderson called the Planning Commission Work Session to order at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed Community and Economic Development Director, Jim Spung. The Commissioners and Mr. Spung then introduced themselves.

1.0 Review Business Session Agenda.

Chair Anderson reviewed the Business Session Agenda and indicated that the public comment period would be followed by the Consent Agenda.

2.0 Business Items.

Chair Anderson reported that the remainder of the meeting would be dedicated to discussing the General Plan.

Mr. Spung stated that the draft General Plan was forwarded to all members of the Planning Commission and he requested that they review it prior to the October 21, 2025, joint work session with the City Council. He hoped that it would be a productive meeting and provide direction for the consultants. Once any revisions are made, it will be brought back to the Planning Commission to begin the formal public hearing and adoption process by the end of the year.

Chair Anderson asked about the Planning Commission's role in the General Plan. Mr. Spung stated that the Planning Commission is an advisory body to the City Council. The Council would

formally adopt the General Plan as policy, but it relies heavily on the Planning Commission’s expertise and input regarding development patterns, trends, and its vision for the City.

Mark Vlasic and Aubrey Larsen of Landmark Design introduced themselves. Ms. Larsen provided an overview of the General Plan update project.

The Utah Land Use, Development, and Management Act (“LUDMA”) requires all municipalities to adopt a comprehensive General Plan that addresses present and future needs, as well as future growth and development. The current Cottonwood Heights General Plan was adopted in 2005 and focused on priorities and goals for the brand-new City, many of which had been achieved. The new General Plan would address new opportunities and challenges and help plan for the next 10 to 20 years. Areas of focus include how to maintain a high quality of life, address growth had development pressure, explore strategies for meeting affordable housing needs, and solutions for managing increasing traffic.

The process began in July 2020, and a draft plan was presented to the public in March 2022. Based on comments received, Staff decided to conduct additional outreach and focus on the development of a form-based code. Efforts to complete the General Plan then began in late 2024, and the current draft was a result of that work.

A General Plan is intended as an advisory guide to Land Use decisions. It describes where the City is, where it wants to be, and how it will get there. It does not create regulations or requirements, but it may recommend them as implementation strategies. Under State law, public infrastructure must conform to the General Plan in order to be authorized and constructed.

Utah Code requires General Plans contain the following chapters, but others can be added as appropriate for the municipality:

1. Land Use
2. Housing
3. Transportation
4. Water Use and Preservation

The Cottonwood Heights General Plan contains a total of eight chapters, each of which defines current conditions, describes desired future conditions, and outlines the path to achieve them.

1. Overview and Introduction
2. Land Use
3. Moderate-Incoming Housing Plan
4. Transportation
5. Economic Development
6. Water Use and Preservation
7. Recreation
8. Sustainability

Ms. Larsen then provided an overview of each chapter.

Chapter 1: Overview and Introduction

- History and evolution of the City
- Purpose of the General Plan
- Demographic snapshot of the City
- Community engagement process
- Community vision and future goals based on public input

Chapter 2: Land Use

- Designates future Land Use vision and map for housing, jobs, recreation, public facilities, and open space.
- Outlines population density and building intensity standards by Land Use category.
- Reflects community priorities and smart growth principles from plans and public input.
- Provides tools to realize goals including activity centers, housing options, neighborhood improvements, and transportation enhancements.
- The future Land Use Map included in this chapter specifies five areas of focus:
 1. Town Center
 2. Enhanced regional centers and destinations like Union Park and the Gravel Pit
 3. Neighborhood planning districts and master plans
 4. Small-scale neighborhood centers
 5. Key transportation corridors

Chapter 3: Moderate-Incoming Housing Plan

- This chapter was already adopted by the City.
- Addresses future housing needs and requirements.
- Includes five strategies to meet State-mandated affordability targets.

Chapter 4: Transportation

- Identifies existing and proposed transportation systems.
- Plans for how to support connections between housing, jobs, education, recreation, and commerce while mitigating regional traffic.
- Correlates with the City's population, employment, and Land Use vision as outlined in Chapter 2.
- A Network Concept Map is included in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Economic Development

- Provides an economic snapshot of the City.
- Highlights opportunities to strengthen financial diversity and resiliency.
- Aligns with the Land Use, transportation, and recreation chapters.

- Focuses on smart growth, complete streets, and pedestrian-friendly centers.

Chapter 6: Water Use and Preservation

- Examines the City’s green assets and trail networks.
- Highlights recreational assets that support livability including canyons, corridors, the Recreation Center, parks, open spaces, and the trail system.
- Aligns with the Land Use and transportation chapters.
- Reflects planning ideas from the 2021 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Maps included in this chapter show canyon recreation and parks and how they fit within the trail network.

Chapter 7: Recreation

- Explores the effect of permitted development and development patterns on water demand and infrastructure.
- Explores methods to reduce water demand for existing and future development.
- Recommends modifications that can be made to reduce or eliminate wasteful water practices.
- The chapter considers ways cities in the Jordan River Basin can work together to support wise water usage and stewardship.

Chapter 8: Sustainability

- Describes the City’s commitment to a sustainable and resilient community.
- Summarizes and supports the 2019 Interlocal Sustainability Action Plan.
- This chapter was adopted as part of the Cottonwood Heights Sustainability Master Plan in 2021.

In response to a question raised by Commissioner Smith, Ms. Larsen stated that she did not know who controls Little Cottonwood Creek but would research the matter. Commissioner Smith believes several entities have a claim on it, which can be confusing. Ms. Larsen indicated that it may be tied to secondary water, which is not a requirement and was not addressed in the General Plan. However, it does discuss watershed health and how the network of streams, groundwater, and aquifers work together. Commissioner Smith stated that the average citizen who wants to access Little Cottonwood Creek does not know who to speak with because too many entities are involved. Commissioner Poulson noted that they would likely have the same issues with Big Cottonwood Creek.

Commissioner Smith asked about the park and playground design process. Mr. Spung stated that who is involved in the process depends on who owns and is paying for the park. The City generally has a strong voice in what amenities are included, but those decisions are usually budget-restricted. He noted that the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Committee has expressed an interest in helping inform future park programming to ensure that it meets residents’ needs. Commissioner Shelton added that parks in the area are owned by the City, County, and Parks and Recreation Service

Area. Maintenance is handled differently because the City contracts with the Service Area to maintain its parks.

Mr. Spung reviewed the Tentative Schedule as follows:

- September 16: City Council Work Session.
- First week of October: The project will be featured in the newsletter, and public participation will be solicited via an online platform.
- October 21: Joint City Council/Planning Commission Work Session.
- November 5: Tentative Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation to the City Council.
- November 18: City Council meeting for review and adoption.

Mr. Spung noted that although it is an advisory document, Staff generally references the General Plan when a zoning change or development agreement is proposed, and the City Council and Planning Commission consider it in their decisions. The General Plan is also a roadmap for Zoning Text Amendments to help facilitate the development established in the plan. He believed the joint Work Session would be a productive meeting and provide final direction for the consultants.

Chair Anderson stated that the Planning Commission needed to come to the joint Work Session prepared. Commissioners should read the General Plan and make note of any questions or items for discussion so the result of the meeting is a document everyone agrees with. Mr. Spung stated that they should consider the high-level goals for each chapter to ensure that both the vision and the steps taken to achieve it are accurate. It is a living document, and it is common for cities to reevaluate their General Plan every few years to continue ensuring that it is a cohesive vision for the community.

Commissioner Lugo asked if the 2005 General Plan was available. Mr. Spung indicated that it is on the website, and he will also email it to the Commission. Commissioner Mills noted that other documents, like the Wasatch Boulevard and Fort Union Boulevard Master Plans, form-based code, and tentative plans for the Town Center, supersede the 2005 General Plan. Many of the plans overlap, and in some cases, decisions may need to be made about which takes precedence.

Commissioner Mills referred to the Land Use Map on page 22 of the draft General Plan and noted that similar maps are coded differently in other documents, and a general strategy for addressing that would be useful. For example, the Planning Commission had discussed being strategic about how form-based code will be implemented, and form-based code has implications for the Town Center, Gravel Pit, and existing centers. They need to be ready to help people understand what form-based code is, because they believe it will be universally accepted once people understand it.

Regarding the Transit Corridor Map on page 45, Commissioner Mills believes it is important that the public understand that the City does not have control over roads it does not own. For example, the City can control what happens on Fort Union Boulevard but cannot control anything on Wasatch Boulevard. He also believes residents will have questions about transit around the 2034 Winter Olympics, as well as in relation to the Town Center.

With regard to economic development, Commissioner Mills believes it is important for the public to understand the crucial role commercial development plays in their quality of life, and the only reference to that is buried in the last sentence of the last goal. He recommended that it be given more emphasis. He would love to see a significant economic engine for the City in the Gravel Pit. They need to ensure that Staff use their economic expertise to communicate where the economic engines are and what the City should lean towards from a planning and City leadership standpoint.

Mr. Spung stated that the General Plan will address a lot of Commissioner Mills' concerns. A lot of General Plans provide a general goal that the city will evaluate the fiscal impact of a Land Use decision rather than just transportation or other specific criteria. As the City Code is updated, a requirement can be included that the developer submit a fiscal analysis to show the tax benefit for the City. The General Plan could facilitate that conversation, and then later the City could implement policies or legislation requiring the development outlined in the plan.

Commissioner Mills suggested that information be added to help the public understand the overlapping plans going back to 2015, perhaps by including appendices or parenthetical statements. He believed it was reasonable to ask the contractors to familiarize themselves with those plans and reference them to indicate how they have been addressed in the General Plan.

Mr. Vlasic stated that the 2022 draft included a lot of ideas and options, but the primary focus of the current draft was work that had already been completed and where the City should be headed in the next 10 years. At the time of the first draft, the Town Center site was not defined, but it now had its own studies and site. Various Master Plans had also been adopted with strong support from City leadership and the public. Those plans are linked together, and the new General Plan builds upon that work and summarizes where the City is and where it is headed.

Commissioner Shelton noted that the draft is a compilation of ideas from previous City leaders and Staff, but current City leaders might not have the same opinion. He requested a copy of the draft in an editable format so it could be redlined. Mr. Spung stated that comments can be added in the PDF, but redlining would not be possible with the original format. Staff would collect and consolidate comments into one document for the consultants. Commissioner Mills suggested that the text be provided to the Commission without graphics. Mr. Spung indicated that the draft General Plan could be discussed in more detail at the October 1, 2025, Planning Commission meeting so the Planning Commission could present a cohesive vision at the joint Work Session.

Mr. Vlasic stated that they value the Commissioners' comments but it was not possible to convert the document to Word for redlining. He asked that their comments be added to the PDF or noted in some other way. Commissioner Shelton and Commissioner Mills were dissatisfied with that solution. Chair Anderson agreed and asked if it was possible to review the document and comment on it online. Mr. Spung indicated that he would follow up with Mr. Vlasic to determine if there was an interactive solution.

Chair Anderson stated that the Planning Commission does not often have homework, but their time and attention were needed to provide commentary on the draft General Plan and be prepared to have a valuable discussion with the City Council.

Commissioner Mills stated that he liked the goals, but some reorganization and re-emphasis were needed. He believed the public comments would be interesting and possibly surprising.

Chair Anderson asked for more information on the online platform that would be used for public comment. Mr. Spung stated that Staff and the Landmark Design team discussed the most effective way to engage the public and determined that the most effective method would be to use the City's social media channels and newsletter to make residents aware of the process. They will include a link to review the full draft General Plan and submit their feedback. They had not yet determined if that feedback would be through answering structured questions or open comments.

Commissioner Mills recommended that the information be broadcast weekly via social media and cautioned that they should only ask for input if they will consider that feedback. He suggested asking questions like, "Which goals are you most excited about?" and "Which goals are you most concerned about?" Mr. Spung agreed that it is important to steer the conversation and balance competing interests.

Chair Anderson appreciated the streamlined timeline. The General Plan is important, and she was pleased that it should be adopted by the end of the year.

Chair Anderson reported that the Chair and Vice Chair elections would be held at the October 1, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting.

Mr. Spung indicated that the American Planning Association Conference would be held October 9 through 10, 2025, at the Gateway. Anyone interested in attending should respond to his email so they can be registered for the event. The conference is held over two days, and typically, the second day has more specific information for Planning Commissioners. Attendance could fulfill the State's four-hour training requirement. Chair Anderson stated that she attended the Taylorsville training and would be following up with Mr. Spung on what she learned there. She encouraged the Commissioners to take advantage of those learning opportunities.

3.0 Adjourn.

Commissioner Mills moved to ADJOURN the Work Session. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Commission.

The Work Session adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

**MINUTES OF THE COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS CITY
PLANNING COMMISSION BUSINESS MEETING**

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6:00 p.m.

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Staff Present: Community and Economic Development Director, Jim Spung; Deputy City Recorder, Cienna Brummel; Planner II, Maverick Yeh; System Administrator, Alex Earl

BUSINESS SESSION

Chair Lucy Anderson called the Planning Commission Business Session to order at 6:00 p.m.

1.0 Welcome and Acknowledgements.

1.1 Ex Parte Communications or Conflicts of Interest to Disclose.

There were no Ex Parte Communications or Conflicts of Interest disclosed.

2.0 General Public Comment.

There were no public comments.

3.0 Consent Agenda

3.1 Approval of August 6, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.

Commissioner Smith moved to APPROVE the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Poulson seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Commission.

4.0 Adjourn.

Commissioner Shelton moved to ADJOURN the Business Session. Commissioner Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Commission.

The Business Session adjourned at approximately 6:03 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Cottonwood Heights City Planning Commission Work Session and Business Session held on Wednesday, September 3, 2025.

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes
T Forbes Group
Minutes Secretary

Minutes Approved: _____