



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **County Signs Land Purchase Option in a Bold Effort to Address Traffic Congestion and Housing Affordability Problems**

*Snyderville Basin* – Yesterday Summit County Manager Tom Fisher signed a purchase option for a nearly 30-acre parcel of land in the Snyderville Basin for the purpose of seeking out and implementing solutions for two related problems currently afflicting the Snyderville Basin: traffic congestion and affordable housing. Both substantial public input and the 2015 Citizen’s Survey results indicate citizens want the County Council to take prompt action on these issues. This purchase option is the first actionable step for the County Council in a process that will include public input to determine the best solutions to mitigate traffic congestion and potentially increase the amount of workforce/affordable housing within the Snyderville Basin.

The property known as the Cline-Dahle parcel has a total purchase price of \$3.7 million, or \$125,000 an acre. By placing a purchase option on the parcel the Council can control the property and take the time necessary to complete property due diligence. They can also prepare a development program and project plan that supports the County’s goals to “*connect people to jobs, services and communities while limiting congestion.*”

Several traffic studies indicate that workforce trips into our community are significantly contributing to our problems. This is especially prevalent at the Kimball Junction interchange and on SR 224. By capturing some of the workforce traffic before it reaches critical points and utilizing a public or private mass-transit transportation, we can address a portion of the problem. The coupled development of workforce/affordable housing could potentially require occupants to commute to work in something other than a single occupancy vehicle. It is

anticipated this type of housing could be utilized for teachers, service sector employees, or local government workers; all workforce populations that have large percentages commuting from Salt Lake City.

“This purchase option demonstrates the County Council’s commitment to solving two major problems in the County,” said Tom Fisher, County Manager. “Workforce housing and traffic problems are interwoven so it makes sense for the Council to take a bold, two-pronged approach in order to put a dent in these dominant issues.” Fisher also stated that this type of project does not come without some major challenges. “Addressing these core issues requires several different but complementary strategies and this property represents a critical and strategic first step,” said Fisher. “The ultimate solutions will require cooperation among the County and our school and local government partners, major employers and our non-profit housing partners. Infrastructure changes, such as the already planned Jeremy Ranch interchange and frontage road improvements, are the next logical and critical link.”

The property is situated off of Rasmussen Road next to the Summit Center Commerce Park in an area that easily connects to our County transit and trail systems. The location provides access to jobs and housing that will have a significant impact on vehicle travel and air pollution. “We have been searching for a property in the I-80 corridor that could provide a key transportation and affordable housing link to the transit system,” said Roger Armstrong, Summit County Council Chair. “This particular property represents a remarkable opportunity to address some of the Snyderville Basin’s critical needs with a reasonable degree of flexibility and choice.”

Affordable housing in Summit County has long been an issue of concern for the County Council, who are committed to ensuring housing is available across all socio-economic sectors. Summit County’s current affordable housing deficit estimates are over 1000 units, beyond those units already required in current development agreements. Furthermore, employment growth continues to outpace population/residential building permit growth, contributing to the region’s transportation problems.

In addition to the housing dilemma, the Council has been focused on finding solutions to traffic congestion on our major roadways. With S.R. 224 and S.R. 248 becoming stressed at more than just peak times, holidays, and events, citizens have voiced their opinion that the Council needs to take decisive action.

County Council Chair Roger Armstrong concluded, "We look forward to working with local businesses, government, non-profit partners and neighborhoods to determine what this solution will look like."

