Memorandum

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THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
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To: Arden Cook, Local Entity Specialist, Office of the Lieutenant Governor
From: Megan Rabe, Demographic Research Associate, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute
CC: Mallory Bateman, Dir. of Demographic Research, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute
Subject: Bear Canyon Preliminary Municipal Feasibility Review

Introduction

The Utah Population Committee (UPC), at the request of the Utah Lieutenant Governor's Office on June 26, 2026, reviewed the preliminary municipality of Bear Canyon, in Wasatch County, Utah to determine whether it meets the population, population density, and contiguity requirements for preliminary incorporation as defined in Utah Code 10-2a-503.

The analysis indicates that Bear Canyon does not meet the preliminary incorporation requirements.

Table 1: Initial Feasibility Requirements for Bear Canyon Preliminary Incorporation

Criteria	Meets Criteria?	Requirement by Statute	Details
Population	Yes	Population must be equal to or greater than 100 when all phases of the plan are completed.	Provisional population estimate upon plan completion: 501
Population Density	Yes	Density must be seven people per square mile or higher	Provisional population density estimate upon plan completion: 144 persons per square mile.
Contiguity	No	Area is contiguous, does not have a strip of land connecting geographically separate areas	Proposed boundary does not cover a contiguous area.

Note: Requirements are summarized; Full statutory requirements are delineated in Utah Code 10-2a-502.

Provisional Population Estimate

When a boundary fails the contiguity requirement, the population and density estimates for the preliminary municipality are provisional. Final estimates are only made for contiguous boundaries.

Table 2: Bear Canyon Provisional Population Estimate

Phase	Provisional Population Growth Estimate
1	55
2	207
3	238
Total	501

Methodology

The UPC uses the housing unit method of estimation to determine the population of places seeking to incorporate. For preliminary municipal incorporations where the population of the defined area is zero, estimates of housing units are taken as given from the description of the preliminary municipality.

The method assumes that condo and multi-family units are renter occupied and single family units are owner occupied. The method assumes 99% occupancy for owner occupied units and 97% occupancy for renter occupied units. Occupied units are multiplied by the 2020 census tract-level persons per housing unit ratio to determine an initial household population. The initial household population is then multiplied by a county raking factor, so that the population estimate for the preliminary municipality is consistent with the population estimate for Wasatch County.

Detail on Contiguity of Proposed Boundary

The proposed boundary of Bear Canyon does not meet the requirements for contiguity. A contiguous boundary does not include a circumstance where "two areas of land are only connected by a strip of land between geographically separate areas; and the distance between the geographically separate areas… is greater than the average width of the strip of land connecting the geographically separate areas," (Utah Code 10-2a-102).

The current boundary contains a strip of land where the distance between geographically separate areas is greater than the average width of those strips (see Figure 1). The approximate dimensions of the strip in question are as follows:

- **Strip A:** 1,359 feet long by an average width of 423 feet

The calculation for average width depends on the shape of the polygon. To approximate the average width at Strip A, we used the following equation:

$$average\ width\ (ft) = \frac{area\ (ft^2)}{length\ (ft)}$$

The area of Strip A is approximately 574,404 ft^2 and the length is 1,359 ft, resulting in an average width of approximately 423 ft.
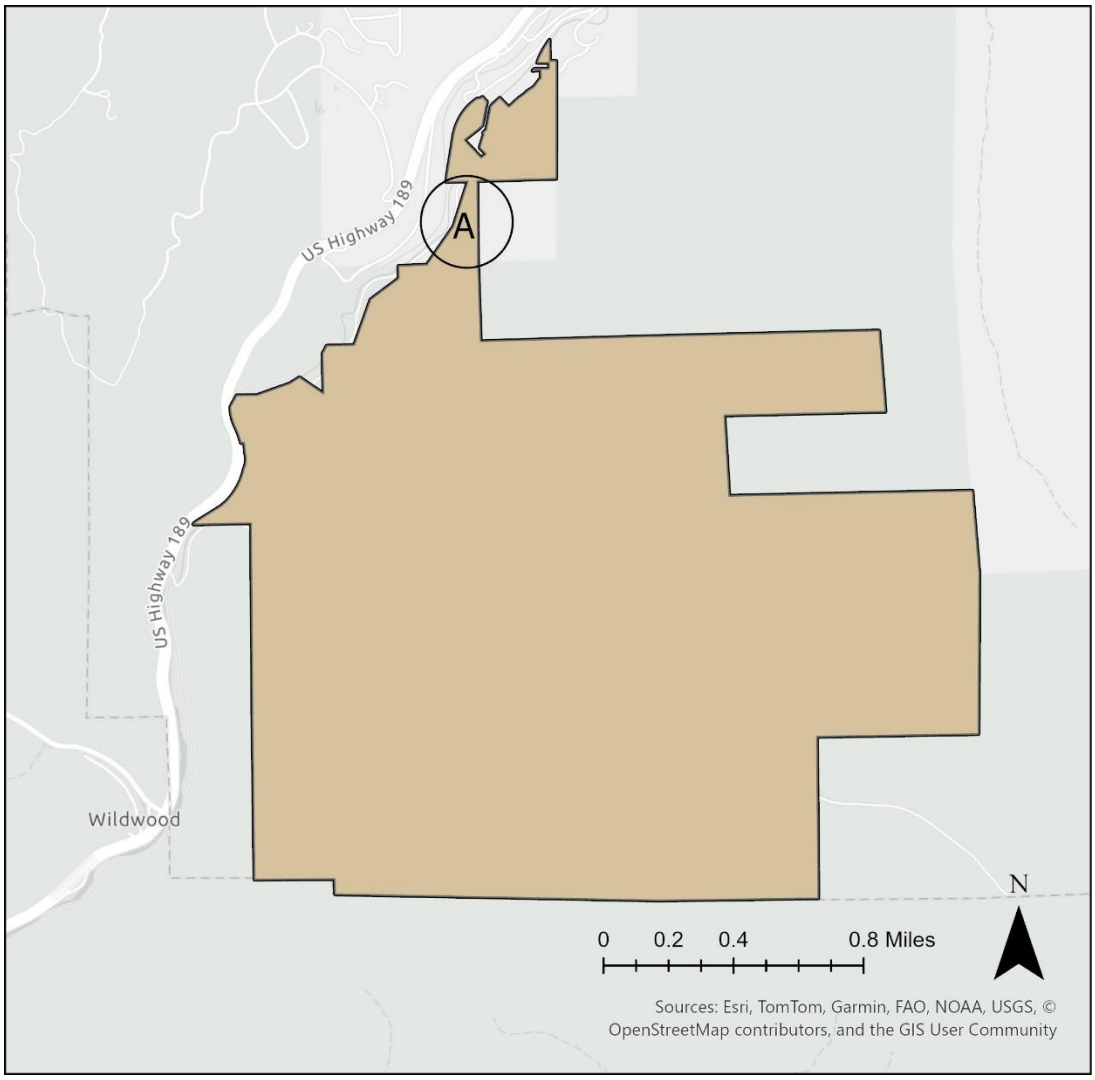
Figure 1: Proposed Bear Canyon Boundary