



## Weber County

June 21, 2011

RE: Options for heliports in the Ogden Valley

To: Ogden Valley Planning Commission

From: Sean Wilkinson  
Weber County Planning Division

Dear Commissioners,

The issue of heliports in the Ogden Valley has been discussed at length over the last year. Recently, a zoning ordinance text amendment application was submitted which sought to remove heliports as a conditional use in the CV-2 Zone. After discussing the application and the associated policy questions, you tabled the application to the June 7<sup>th</sup> work session.

Staff has prepared several options for your consideration in relation to the use and location of heliports in Ogden Valley. The following list of options is not intended to be comprehensive, but it provides a good starting point for the discussion and includes information that was discussed at the previous Planning Commission meeting.

**Option 1: Remove heliport as a use in the Ogden Valley.** The Zoning Ordinance currently allows heliports as a conditional use in the CV-2 Zone. The proposed text amendment would remove this use from the zone and eliminate it from the Ogden Valley, except for resort operations within the DRR-1 Zone.

Although an application for a heliport in a CV-2 Zone was recently denied, it was clear from the Planning Commission and County Commission meetings that the use of heliports in the Ogden Valley was desirable in appropriate locations. Rather than eliminating this use completely, staff recommends maintaining the existing use in the CV-2 Zone, while looking for alternative locations and standards that may better support the use. The text amendment application has put a temporary hold on applications for heliports, so you have time to consider alternatives before acting on the text amendment application.

**Option 2: Allow heliports above a certain elevation in multiple zones.** One of the major issues with heliports in the CV-2 Zone is that all of the CV-2 locations in the Ogden Valley are located on the valley floor. Allowing heliports above a certain elevation would eliminate concerns about safety and noise within the Valley's most densely populated areas. However, other zones would have to be included in this option due to the lack of CV-2 zoning at higher elevations. Other zones that may be considered include CVR-1 and F-40. In addition to an elevation requirement, other regulations can be considered to make sure that heliports are compatible with surrounding land uses. A map showing property in the Ogden Valley above an elevation of 6,200 feet has been attached as an example.

A variation to this option is to create an overlay zone that could be placed anywhere in the valley over a certain elevation. The overlay zone would be subject to specific criteria that would make sure the area for the proposed zone is compatible with surrounding properties and uses.

**Option 3: Allow heliports above a certain location within the DRR-1 Zone only.** The DRR-1 Zone currently allows a heliport for internal resort operations only. This option is more limiting than allowing the use in multiple zones, but it provides more stability than allowing the use in multiple zones, and fits more with the intent of the DRR-1 Zone. Again, a specific elevation is not being proposed, but the attached map shows an example of 6,200 feet. Allowing heliports as a conditional use only at resorts above a certain elevation eliminates the safety and noise concerns from the majority of the Ogden Valley and still allows the Planning Commission to put conditions on any approval that is given.

**Option 4: Allow heliports as an accessory use to a ski resort above a certain elevation.** The Ogden Valley currently has three ski resorts in operation. While heli-skiing and other helicopter operations are uses typically found at ski resorts, heliports are not allowed in the zones where the ski resorts are located. Snowbasin and Powder Mountain are located in areas and have elevations that may be conducive to this use, but Wolf Mountain is located much closer to the Valley floor and to a populated area, where the use may not be conducive. Depending on the elevation proposed for this use, Wolf Mountain may be prohibited from having a heliport as an accessory use. Another potential issue with calling heliports accessory uses at ski resorts is that there are few regulations for accessory uses. The Planning Commission would lose the ability to put conditions on heliports.

In reviewing the issues associated with heliports in the Ogden Valley, staff has identified several definitions that need to be clarified. Heliports and helistops need to be defined in the Zoning Ordinance and differentiated between if both uses are to be included. The definition of airport should be clarified to differentiate between actual airport facilities, private landing strips, heliports, etc. It is important to clarify these definitions so that future applications reflect what is actually being requested and appropriate regulations are in place for the proposed use. Actual definition language is not being proposed at this time, but the Planning Commission should begin thinking about this issue.