



# MILL CREEK GREENWAY

South Salt Lake, Utah

Technical Assistance Panel | January 28-30, 2025

# About

## Urban Land Institute

Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries.

Cover photo: Mill Creek winds through South Salt Lake, serving as a recreational asset in some places while also being buried underground and under-utilized in others. (ULI)

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## ULI Utah

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policymakers dedicated to creating better places. ULI Utah brings together real estate professionals, civic leaders, and the community for educational programs, initiatives impacting the region, and networking events, all in the pursuit of advancing responsible and equitable land use throughout the region. ULI Utah provides a unique venue to convene and share best practices in the region. ULI Utah believes everyone needs to be at the table when the region's future is at stake, so ULI serves the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines—from architects to developers, CEOs to analysts, builders, property owners, investors, public officials, and everyone in between. Using this interdisciplinary approach, ULI examines land use issues, convenes forums to find solutions, and impartially reports findings.

## ULI Utah Leadership

### **Beth Holbrook**

ULI Utah Chair  
Utah Transit Authority

## Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Program

Urban Land Institute harnesses its members' technical expertise to help communities solve complex land use, development, and redevelopment challenges. Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) provide expert, multidisciplinary, and unbiased advice to local governments, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use and real estate issues in the region. Drawing from its professional membership base, ULI Utah offers objective and responsible guidance on various land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The sponsoring organization is responsible for gathering the background information necessary to understand the project and present it to the panel. The ULI panelists spend two days interviewing stakeholders, evaluating the challenges, and ultimately arriving at a set of recommendations that the sponsoring organization can use to guide development going forward.

# About

## Technical Assistance Panel

### Panel Leadership

**Molly McCabe**

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TAP Co-Chair  
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## Acknowledgments

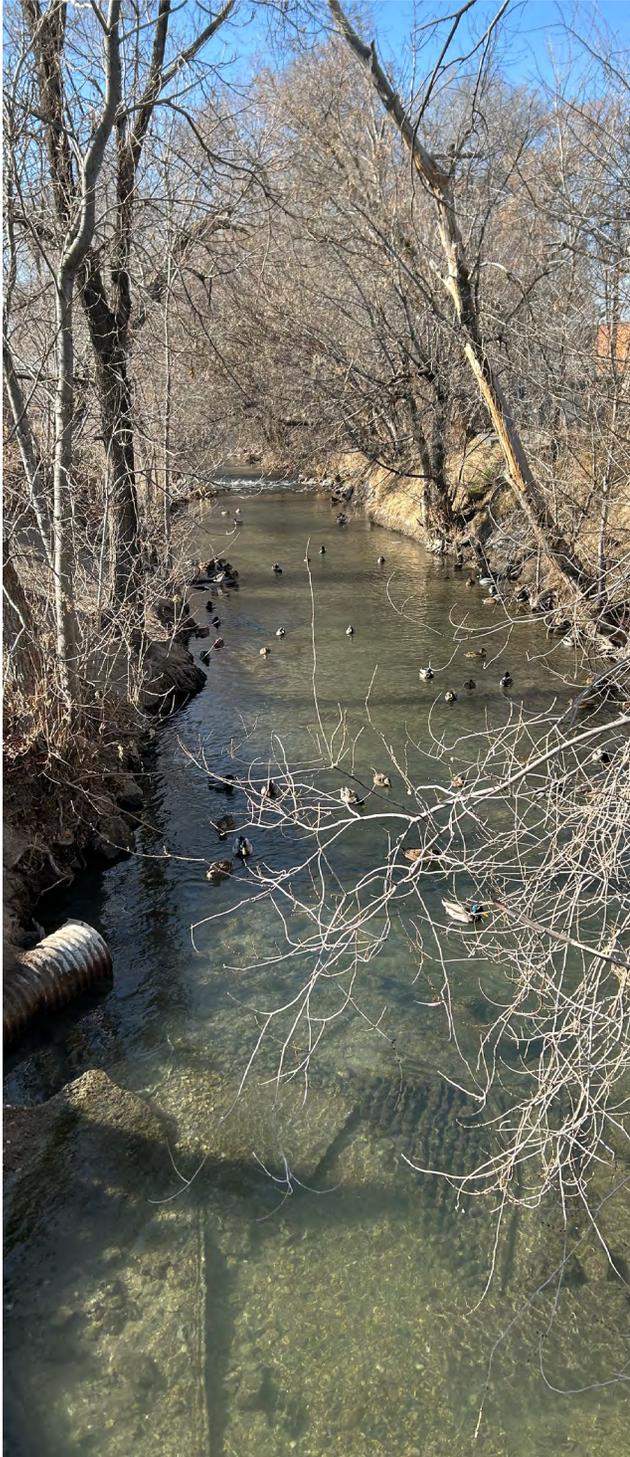
ULI Utah would like to thank the City of South Salt Lake and Seven Canyons Trust for inviting ULI to conduct this technical assistance panel. Additionally, ULI thanks Salt Lake County and the Wasatch Front Regional Council for their support of this work and insights during the panel workdays. Finally, ULI would also like to thank the over 40+ stakeholders who generously shared their time and insights with the panel.



The panel and City of South Salt Lake staff pause for a photo in front of the Community Opportunity Center.

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# Executive Summary

The creeks that run down from the Wasatch Mountain Range into the Salt Lake Valley serve a vital role in helping to channel snow melt from the mountains and manage stormwater runoff in the valley. While many of these creeks have been partially channeled and buried, renewed attention by civic leaders, community members, and organizations like the Seven Canyons Trust is highlighting the valuable role these waterways play in the community and the opportunities they present to not only assist with stormwater management in the valley but to also positively impact community members' health and wellbeing in a variety of ways.

The City of South Salt Lake and the Seven Canyons Trust (together the Sponsors) turned to the Urban Land Institute Utah District Council (ULI) for assistance with plans for Mill Creek. The Sponsors requested strategies for daylighting the stream and creating a greenway trail and also asked ULI to make recommendations for further activating the surrounding four-block stretch of the creek corridor, spurring economic development in the area.

ULI, using its trusted Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program, convened a panel of real estate professionals with the expertise to answer the questions posed by the Sponsors. The ULI panel's recommendations leveraged the good planning work already completed in the Mill Creek area and identified a series of steps the Sponsors can take in the near, medium, and long term to achieve their goals

for an active and vibrant Mill Creek corridor.

The panel articulated the goal of this work as follows: to create a mobile, connected community, to facilitate economic growth, to remain inclusive of meeting all types of housing needs, and to create a healthy and vibrant waterway providing recreation, open space, and connections. The panel's recommendations coalesce around four areas: community connectivity, creekside connectivity, rezoning and overlay potential, and funding.

## Recommendations Community Connectivity

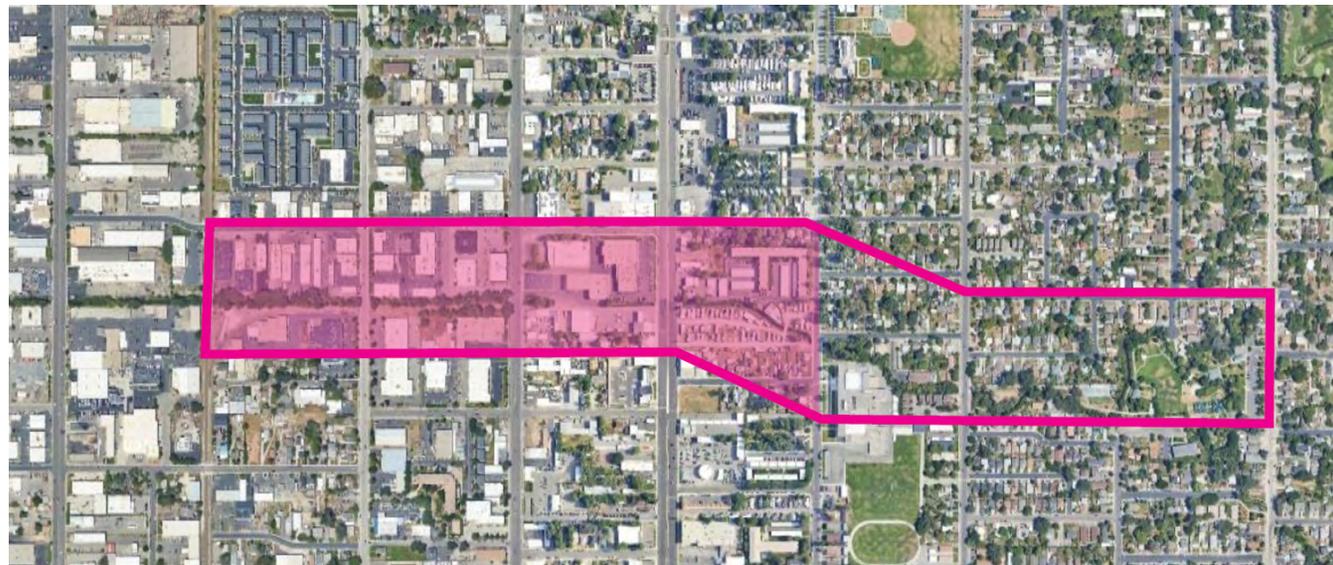
The panel's first set of recommendations outline how a Mill Creek trail can connect beyond the creekside. Mill Creek is an extraordinary community asset that provides

a host of positive impacts starting east of the study area at Kaleidoscope Park. A trail along Mill Creek should connect the community beyond the corridor, inviting visitors and residents to explore its path and connect them to community assets beyond the trail.

Using a comprehensive approach, a Mill Creek trail can connect users to the Jordan River Trail network, Downtown South Salt Lake, the Creative Industry Zone (CIZ), the TRAX and streetcar lines, Parleys Trail, community parks, and the city's beloved community centers.

### Start Now (Year 1)

The following recommendations can begin now and in some instances point to and amplify work already underway.



The panel was charged with evaluating the TAP study area, marked by the pink shading. In doing so, the panel also considered the blocks east to Kaleidoscope Park as outlined in pink to the right of the study area.

- Enhance community wayfinding with larger, more frequent trail signage, and paint bike lanes on streets to assist with trail navigation.
- Create painted intersections on State Street to increase pedestrian safety and call attention to the creek running under the roadway.
- Continue street diets on Main Street and West Temple and continue to improve the City’s sidewalks.
- Build an urban connectivity loop using West Temple and Main Street, connecting Mill Creek to downtown, the streetcar line, CIZ, and 3300 South. A second neighborhood loop to the east could connect residential neighborhoods, community centers, and parks.
- Create creekside activity nodes around Fitts Park. Mixed-used development, plazas, pocket parks, and public art would help activate these nodes and welcome people into the greenway and to the businesses lining the corridors to the north and south.
- Connect to the Jordan River Trail network using 27th Street to 600 West and using a new proposed entrance recommended by the panel to Parlays Trail.

### Medium Term (2-5 Years)

- Continue to build creekside activity nodes at West Temple and Main Street.
- Connect to the Jordan River Trail network along Gregson Avenue to the TRAX line and south to 3300 South.



Often used to describe waterways coming or flowing together, the term ‘confluence’ for the panel also pointed to community, leaders, and agencies coming together to create something special along Mill Creek.

### Long Term (5+ Years)

- Connect to the Jordan River Trail network through a direct path that crosses the TRAX lines, Interstate 15, and the rail yard beyond.

### Creekside Connectivity

The study area, the Mill Creek corridor, and additional blocks to the east provide an exciting opportunity to create a trail and greenway that will assist with east-west connectivity in South Salt Lake.

### Near Term (Year 1)

- Create a trail and park experience between West Temple and Main Street using a vacant Utah Transit Authority (UTA) right of way.

- Install a pedestrian bridge over the creek at South Richards Street.
- Create a park and trail rest area near the creek’s intersection with the TRAX line.
- Create a pocket park on City-owned land at the southwestern corner of 300 East and Gregson Avenue South.
- Reinforce the crossing at State Street and Gregson Avenue with a more robust crossing mechanism, and paint bike lanes on Gregson.
- Visualize the creek’s path in paint in places where it is buried under street crossings and other pavement.

### Medium Term (2-5 Years)

- Lower the walls and open the channelized portions of the creek with the goal of creating paths along and more proximate access to the waterway.
- Consider a boardwalk along the channelized areas to allow people to walk along the waterway and move closer to its sights and sounds.
- Develop guidelines or a toolkit for private property owners to guide private property improvements that can enhance the riparian environment.

### Rezoning and Overlay Potential

With regard to catalyzing development along the Mill Creek corridor, the panel proposes an expansion of the City’s mixed-use zoning into the study area, which will help stimulate and expand development in the activity

nodes and along the streets radiating north and south. In conjunction with the change to mixed use zoning, the panel recommends a riparian overlay for the creek corridor, which will preserve and protect the creek as developments and other improvements along the waterway occur.

### Near Term (Year 1)

- Move forward with a comprehensive zoning analysis for South Salt Lake, including the efforts for the TOD study underway, to pull all of the updates together and align efforts.
- Establish Mixed-Use zoning in the study area, and consider expanding it into other parts of the city.
- Concurrently with the updated zoning, establish a riparian overlay for the Mill Creek corridor and communicate and emphasize that existing property owners' structures and current property improvements will be grandfathered into the overlay area.

### Medium Term (2-5 Years)

- Create compelling incentives for property owners along the waterway who choose to improve their property and enhance its relationship with the creek and potential trail system.

### Funding Opportunities

Although the panel was not specifically charged with identifying funding sources for its recommendations, a number of the

recommendations and improvements suggested for the study area may require new funding streams, which prompted these additional suggestions from the panel.

### Near Term (Year 1)

- Explore potential grant funding with an eye toward opportunities to collaborate with other partners or layer creek improvements with other community initiatives for exponential impact and broader potential funding access.

### Medium Term (2-5 Years)

- Establish a Community Reinvestment Agency (CRA) to include the areas around the creek from State Street to the TRAX line to help pay for creek restoration and the public infrastructure improvements needed to build a greenway and trail.
- Overlay a Public Infrastructure District (PID) along the corridor to help finance public infrastructure improvements and incentivize additional development within the study area.

### Conclusion

The work proposed by the panel and laid out before the TAP Sponsors will require long-term commitments and the political will to pursue improvements that will preserve and protect Mill Creek, create a greenway trail that can connect inside South Salt Lake and beyond, and stimulate economic activity in the areas surrounding the Mill Creek corridor.

The Sponsors of the TAP have demonstrated their capacity for and interest in working together. The complex connectivity challenges that a Mill Creek trail will face in its direct westward expansion and the real estate challenges inherent in daylighting a fully buried stream will require continued collaboration, determination, grit, and grace. Much like the confluence of nature's waterways, collaboration can be exciting, rocky, and even stressful, but the result will be a stronger path forward together, increased momentum along the way, and bigger downstream impact for the South Salt Lake community.





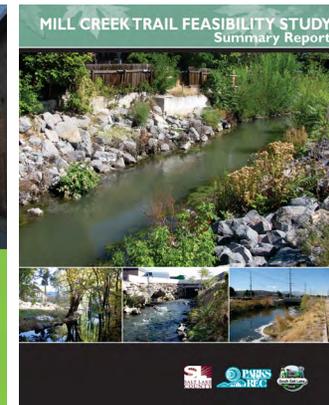
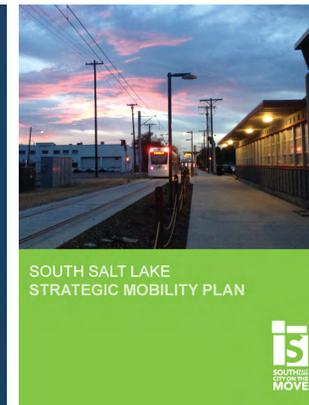
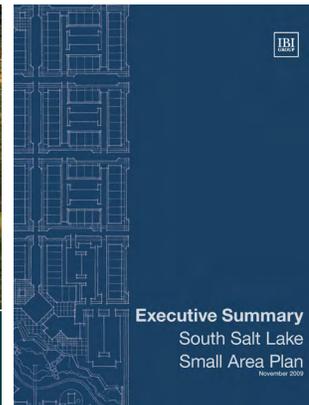
# Introduction and Background

The seven creeks that run through the Salt Lake Valley drain the Wasatch Range and the residential and commercial neighborhoods across the Salt Lake City metropolitan area. Before joining the Jordan River, these small but mighty creeks provide habitat and refuge for wildlife, recreational spaces for people, and important cooling mechanisms for everyone during the heat of the summer.

Mill Creek, one of these waterways, runs east to west through South Salt Lake and is at times visible and celebrated and other times channeled under roadways, funneled into narrow passages, and buried underground in parking lots. Recognizing the additional value that the Mill Creek waterway can bring to the community, to the environment, and to economic development potential in South Salt Lake, the City of South Salt Lake and the Seven Canyons Trust (together the Sponsors), turned to the Urban Land Institute Utah District Council (ULI) for assistance. The challenge was generally three-fold: create a framework for the area around the stream that supports economic and real estate development while protecting the creek and elevating its stature in the community; make recommendations for the long-term daylighting of the creek; and foster development and an identity along the creek that is authentic to the surrounding community.

## TAP Questions Posed by the Sponsors

1. What should be developed along the Mill Creek corridor between 200 East and 200 West? Why should it develop that way?
  - a. What do you see as the key obstacles (e.g. potential resident displacement, multiple property owners, differing business/civic interests, maintenance, etc.) in revitalizing the Mill Creek area, and how can we address them?
  - b. What are the key steps that need to be taken to develop along Mill Creek, and which area along Mill Creek might be the first place to start development and enhancement/restoration efforts?
3. What approaches and strategies can be incorporated to support the long-term of daylighting Mill Creek and building a continuous multi-use trail along its entire length through South Salt Lake?
4. How can new development along Mill Creek celebrate and enhance the area's unique sense of place while recognizing the diverse community and its needs and economic challenges? How can urban design and community engagement help shape the neighborhood's identity, ensuring that development reflects the values of the community while fostering a vibrant and cohesive environment?



From roughly 2009 to 2023, at least six very good studies have focused on South Salt Lake and the area around the Mill Creek corridor. While these studies did not focus specifically on the real estate and economic development potential of a greenway along the creek, the panel did gather key information from the studies that helped inform their recommendations.

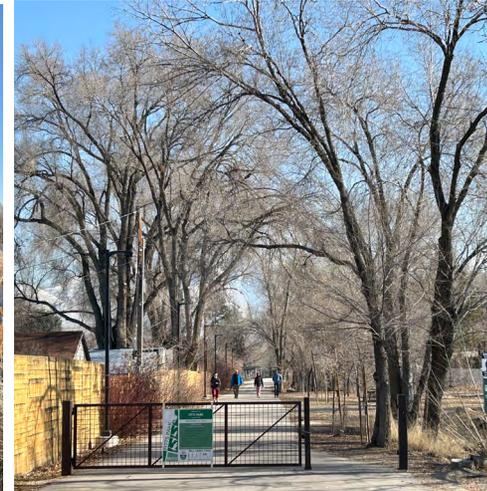
## Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Process

To address the questions posed by the Sponsors, ULI convened a technical assistance panel (TAP) of local and regional real estate professionals with expertise in the areas of real estate development, landscape design, urban planning, and real estate finance.

The Sponsors asked the panel to study the Mill Creek corridor from 200 West to 200 East. In addition to this portion of the waterway, the panel also studied areas of Mill Creek to the east, including where it winds through Kaleidoscope Park and Fitts Park and along property owned by the City within the 200 East block. This slightly expanded study area provided the panel with insights into the wide range of creek environments: an open and naturalistic setting in the parks; riprap and concrete channeling; culverts under roadways and through commercial areas; and even complete encapsulation below an asphalt parking lot. Walking the study area also allowed the panelists to experience the challenges pedestrians and others using non-motorized means may face while navigating the area. Movement east and west is particularly challenging and street crossings, State Street in particular, create additional barriers to east-west movement. Beyond the study area, east-west navigation is further challenged by the TRAX rail line, Interstate 15, and an expansive freight rail yard beyond.

As a function of the TAP process, the panel interviewed over 40 stakeholders from the community. These interview sessions helped the panel further understand the opportunities and challenges related to Mill Creek access, waterway protection, potential

trail development, and opportunities for real estate development nearby. The stakeholders interviewed included City of South Salt Lake professional staff, leaders from the Seven Canyons Trust, elected officials, institutional neighbors, public sector property owners,



Mill Creek flows through South Salt Lake and is found in a wide variety of environments, from park settings to channelized paths to underground culverts. Each of these settings comes with varying degrees of public accessibility: the creek is accessible in the parks; visible yet less-accessible in areas where private property abuts the creek bank; and inaccessible due to infrastructure, fencing, and other man-made barriers that are generally found in commercially-zoned areas.

creative professionals, nonprofit advocates, business owners, residents, and even students from nearby Granite Park Junior High who had been exploring potential designs for a greenway along this same section of Mill Creek.

Following the interviews, the panel spent the remainder of the two days deliberating their findings, ultimately arriving at a set of recommendations the sponsoring organizations can embrace as they continue to elevate the presence of Mill Creek and encourage recreational and nearby economic development. The constant theme across all recommendations is that Mill Creek represents an important confluence for the community. It provides physical and cultural connection points for those living, working, and visiting South Salt Lake. It presents an exciting opportunity to restore the natural environment in and around the waterway. Mill Creek also represents a unique community asset around which the City can encourage complementary economic and real estate development.

The panel further articulated the goal of the TAP and the broader Mill Creek work as follows: to create a mobile, connected community, to facilitate economic growth, to remain inclusive of meeting all types of housing needs, and to create a healthy and vibrant waterway providing recreation, open space, and connections.

## What the Panel Heard

Interviews with stakeholders uncovered the following themes.

### City and Community Character

- Strong community identity and pride
- The city is largely self-sufficient
- Welcoming and diverse population
- Gritty and creative (CIZ) and supportive of the arts
- Affordable, yet becoming less so
- Broad respect for private property rights
- Lowest per capita green space in the state; there is a need for more tree canopy
- It is largely a food desert
- Many legacy and engaged property owners
- Committed community partners
- Good plans and previous studies in hand

### Mill Creek Waterway

- Variety of conditions including day-lit, covered, naturalistic, and channeled
- Too many fences, barriers, and invasive plant species
- Trails and access are often hard to see, made harder with varied property lines
- Highest pollution of the seven waterways

- Multiple creek maintenance entities
- Great adjacent neighborhood parks
- Bordered by homes and businesses
- Untapped community asset (may need a reconnaissance survey)

### Broader Area

- Walkability is a challenge
- State Street is a barrier with high volumes, traffic, and speeds; limited crossing opportunities
- TOD focus includes bus and rail access
- Good start with bike trail route and signage
- Movement east-west is challenging (north-south connectivity is generally good)
- Challenges with safety and perceptions of safety
- Trail crossings at rail lines and I-15 will be challenging
- Businesses are concerned about disruptions caused by further construction
- Good institutional partnerships in the Utah Department of Transportation, Utah Transit Authority, Union Pacific, and more





# Community Connectivity

Connectivity along the Mill Creek corridor will benefit from and lead to connectivity to the broader South Salt Lake community and amenities across the valley. Ultimately, a trail built along Mill Creek needs to connect elsewhere in order to be well-used and fully useful.

## Community Connectivity

The panel's evaluation and recommendations were built upon the goals of community connectivity, a focus that was identified and outlined in the reports included in the briefing materials. The panel collected, synthesized, and refined these connectivity goals, applying them specifically to the Mill Creek corridor and calling attention to the following key connection points.

- **Jordan River Trail network.** The Jordan River Trail is a fantastic recreational and commuter trail running north and south through the valley. Connecting a Mill Creek trail to the Jordan River Trail will be complicated due to Interstate 15 and rail yard infrastructure. Because of this, the panel identified ways to connect Mill Creek to the river trail in the near term via a connector to the north, connect in the medium term following improvements along 3300 South, and steps that will support more direct east-west trail connections in the long-term. These connection goals are explained in greater detail in the following pages.

- **Downtown South Salt Lake.** The City's focus on downtown revitalization is paying off with businesses and destinations choosing to locate downtown and support its vibrancy. Connecting trail users to downtown makes good economic sense.
- **Creative Industry Zone.** The Creative Industry Zone (CIZ) is home to a variety of businesses, breweries, and places people want to be, which again would be positively supported through Mill Creek trail connections.
- **TRAX, streetcar line, and Parleys Trail.** Connections to other multi-modal, non-vehicular transportation routes are key to the interconnectedness of the City's trail network, and the Mill Creek corridor can become a key east-west connector to these other transportation assets.
- **Parks.** Stakeholders noted that they would welcome the opportunity to travel to and from city parks via a trail system, making the experience more inviting and safe for all ages. Connecting to parks, beyond Kaleidoscope and Fitts Park will prove beneficial for visitors to the city's parks.
- **Community centers.** The city's community centers are active hubs for all ages. Providing trail connectivity to these centers helps ensure that residents can access the places they need and want to

go without having to use their personal automobiles or rely on friends or family for a ride.

## Connectivity Loops

The panel pulled one of the excellent maps from the South Salt Lake Strategic Mobility Plan and layered on a host of additional connection points, community amenities, economic zones, and activity nodes. Through this layering, the panel demonstrated how a trail system could be fashioned to create an urban loop and a neighborhood loop, both of which would feature a connection along the Mill Creek corridor. These trail loops could be created now, with a little effort and financial investment, and can help support broader community connectivity.

- **Urban Loop.** Nestled between State Street and the TRAX Red/Blue Line, the Urban Loop rail leverages West Temple and Main Street to connect north to downtown. The streetcar line along this loop's northern edge and 3300 South at its southern edge can take trail users further east or west. This loop runs into downtown, connects through the CIZ, runs along the Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, and connects to new multifamily developments. It is also important to note that the section of the Mill Creek corridor that lies between the two north-south lines of this trail is an excellent location for a new section

of Mill Creek Greenway\*, an idea that is described in further detail on page 15.

- **Neighborhood Loop.** The Neighborhood Loop is positioned further east, in the residential neighborhoods, and connects key community hubs. Running north and south along 300 East and 500 East, connections to the Central Park Community Center, Granite Park Junior High School, Fitts Park, and the South Salt Lake Community Center are facilitated along this trail.

The panel's annotated map to the right notes trail connectivity to the west, to the Jordan River Trail, as well as the assets noted above. The green dashed lines show how trail users can connect in the near term with Parleys Trail, the mid-term connection west on 3300 South, and later the longer-term connection directly west close to the Mill Creek TRAX Station.

Over time, mixed-used development should be encouraged at the activity nodes noted by the orange circles on the map to the right. These nodes represent Mill Creek's intersections with key roadways. Plazas, pocket parks, and public art could invite visitors to linger in these spaces, which could also serve as gateways to the greenway east and west and to the small businesses

\* The panel used the name "Mill Creek Greenway" as a placeholder in its work. To determine the actual name for the greenway, the panel recommends engaging the community in a naming pursuit, contest, or other community-led exercise. It is also important to note that the panel focused on a greenway instead of a park as the latter comes with certain legislative constraints that may prove limiting on the use and potential for events hosted in the space.

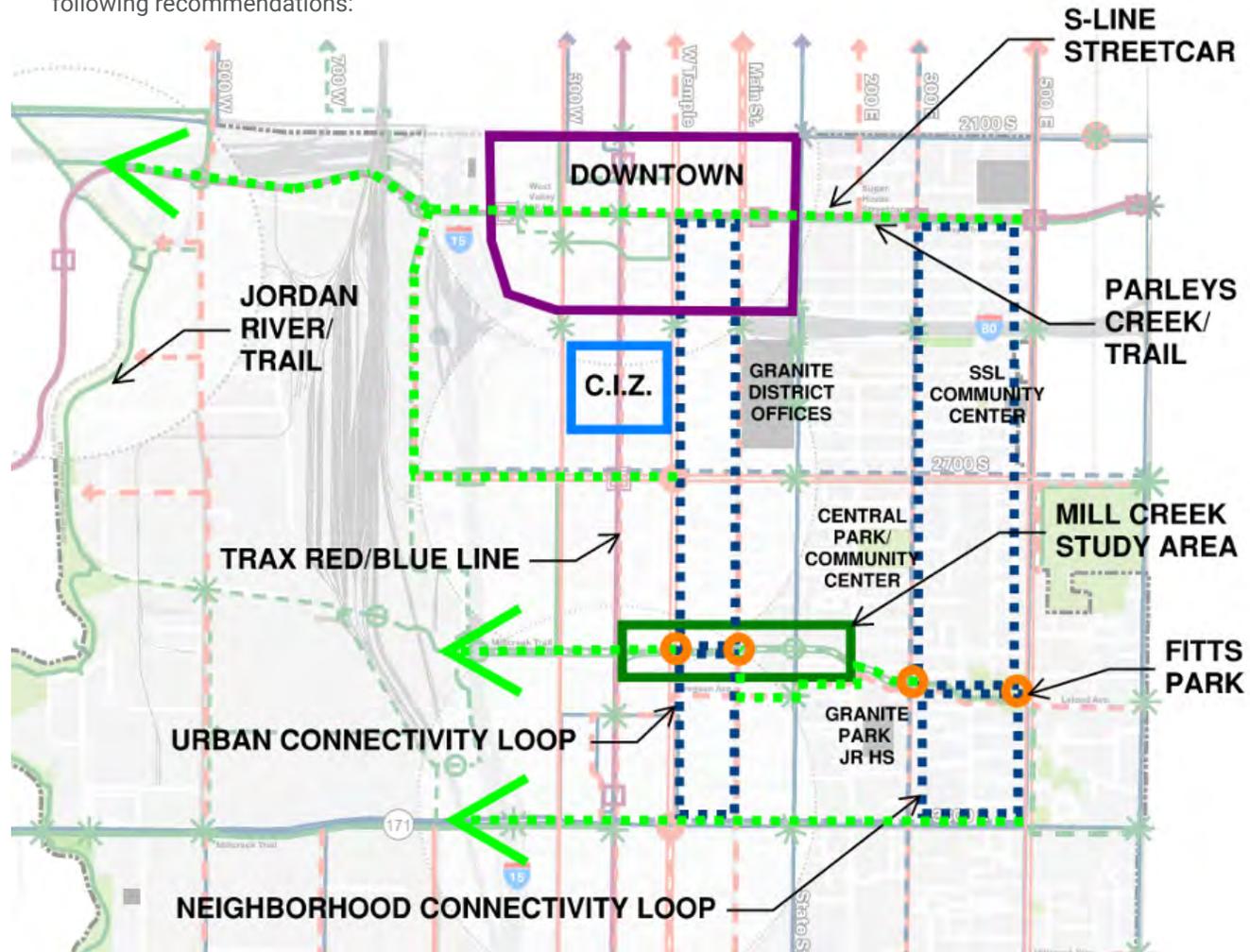
lining the corridors to the north and south. The panel also recommends that zoning in the area accommodate live/work buildings, which would further activate the area.

### Connectivity Recommendations

To put the above connectivity plans to work for South Salt Lake, the panel had the following recommendations:

### Start (Continue) Now

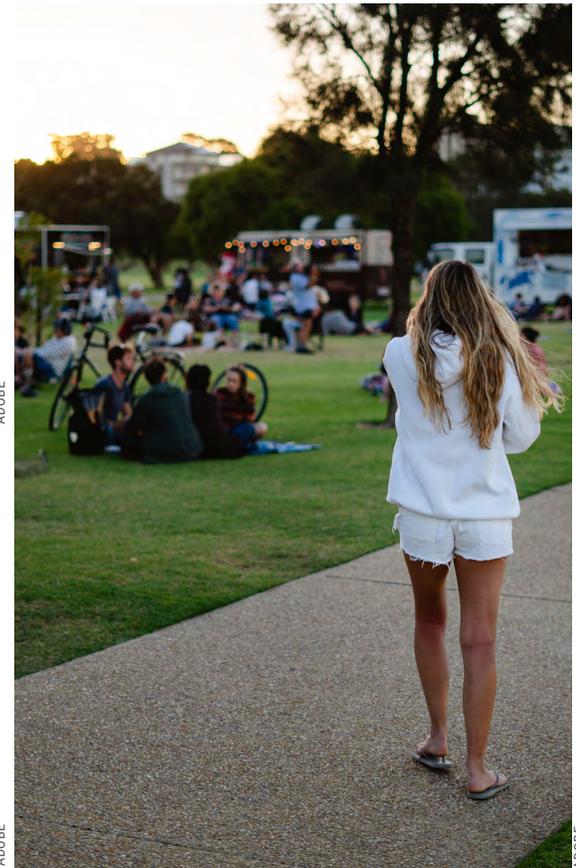
- **Create painted intersections on State Street.** Work with the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) to create painted intersections at key points along State Street. Painted road surfaces will not require costly infrastructure and will not create physical barriers for traffic. The



The panel used a map from the South Salt Lake Strategic Mobility Plan depicting the "existing and proposed bike and pedestrian network" and then layered on top of it key community assets, the proposed Urban and Neighborhood Loops (blue dotted lines) and activity nodes along the Mill Creek corridor (orange circles).

painted surfaces do, however, enhance multi-modal safety by slowing traffic speeds around the painted intersections.

- **Continue street diets on Main Street and West Temple.** The road work to date on West Temple and Main Street is having positive effects on traffic speeds and pedestrian safety. Those road diets should continue south to 3300 South.
- **Build sidewalks.** The published mobility studies highlight the importance of and the public's desire for wide sidewalks that are in good repair. This work is important to community and trail connectivity and should continue.
- **Create connectivity loops.** The two loops identified by the panel could be mapped and created now. The urban loop would connect downtown, arts, industry, and nature. The neighborhood loop would connect the streetcar, residential areas, community centers, parks, and nature.
- **Enhance community wayfinding.** Work has also begun on wayfinding for the bike network and small signs pointing to the trail connections dot city streets. Additional signage, more frequent and larger installations, will assist trail users in navigating the on-street trail. The City could turn to the community for assistance in naming the loops identified by the panel, and the community could likewise participate in branding activities for those loops.
- **Paint bike lanes on streets.** Similar to the need for enhanced wayfinding, painted



These images depict how public spaces and community parks can be activated to draw visitors in, encourage them to linger and explore, and elevate the benefits that nature can deliver in an urban environment.





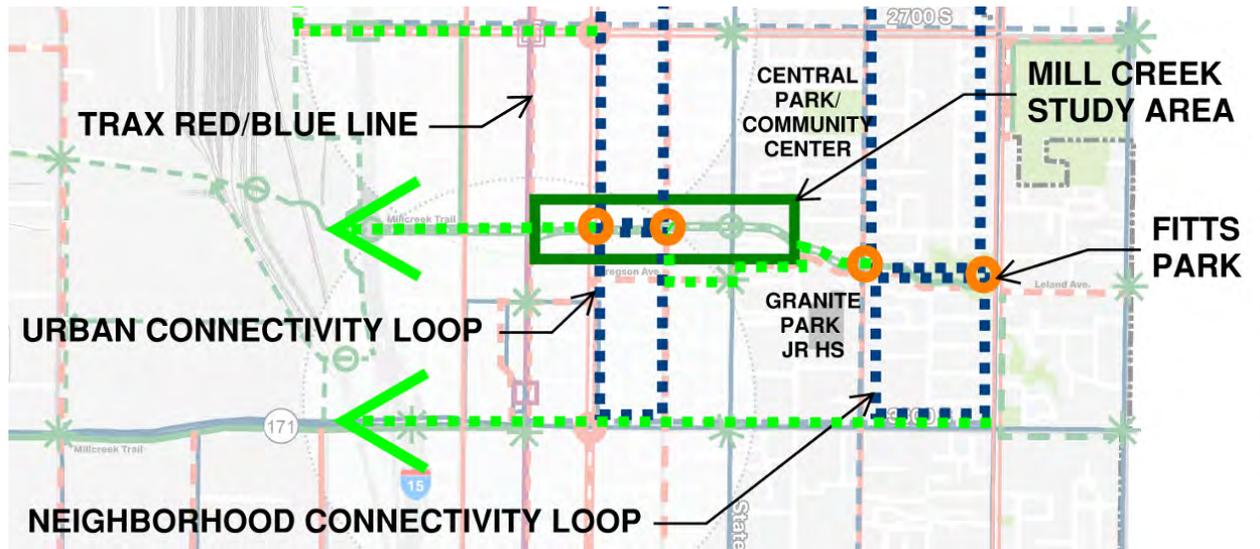
# Creekside Connectivity

The panel heard often from stakeholders that it is difficult to move east and west in the area. The Mill Creek corridor provides an exciting opportunity to create a trail and greenway that will not only assist with that east-west connectivity but will do so in a very enjoyable way.

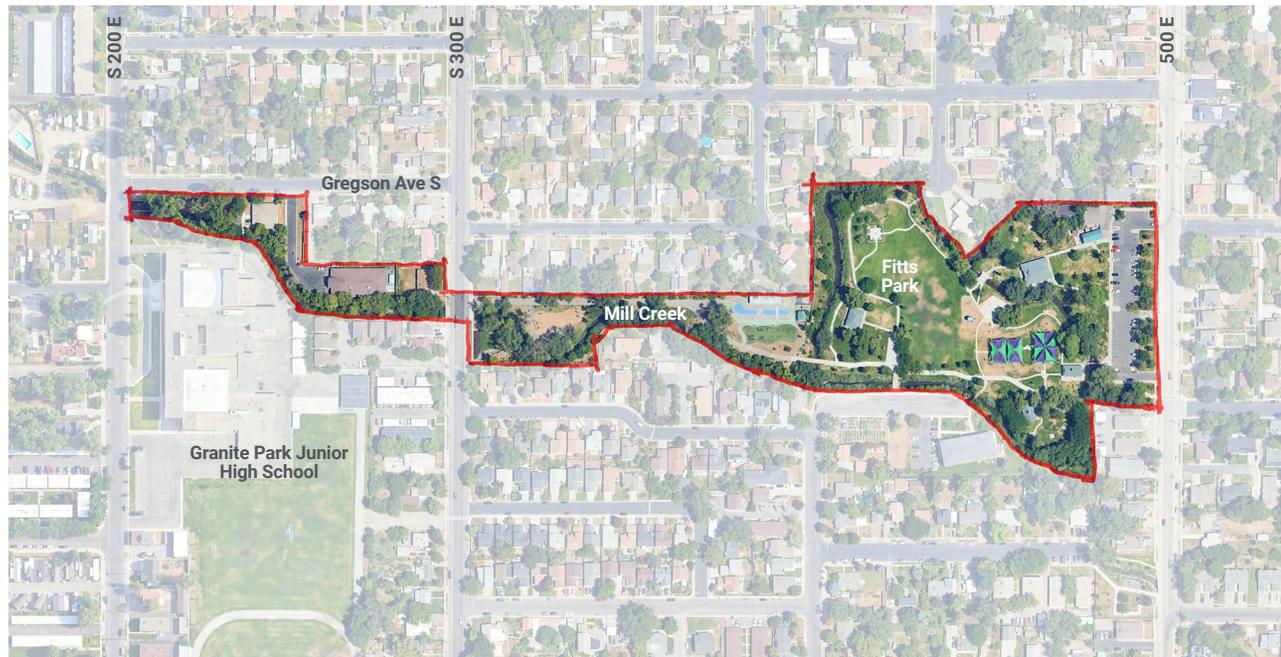
## Creek Context

As Mill Creek flows through the study area, it takes a variety of shapes and forms each of which were considered by the panel.

- Natural state.** In the eastern side of the study area, generally from Fitts Park to 200 East, Mill Creek is generally allowed to flow in a naturalistic stream bed. There are street crossings where the waterway is channeled through a culvert, but the stream is generally open to daylight. It is part of an enhanced park system that features an earthen stream bed and edge that is dirt, rock, grass, and plants. The bank is relatively low and park visitors can get close to and engage with the creek. The creek creates a southern edge to Fitts Park and it is in this park where Spring Creek joins Mill Creek.
- Channeled waterway.** Moving west from 200 East, the creek is funneled through a concrete channel and bordered on both sides by tall chain link fencing. Transforming this creek environment into something more naturalistic, with room perhaps for a creekside trail, will require long-term planning and early and regular



This zoomed-in image of the study area shows how the activity nodes can connect the Creek, the trail, and the surrounding mobility networks.



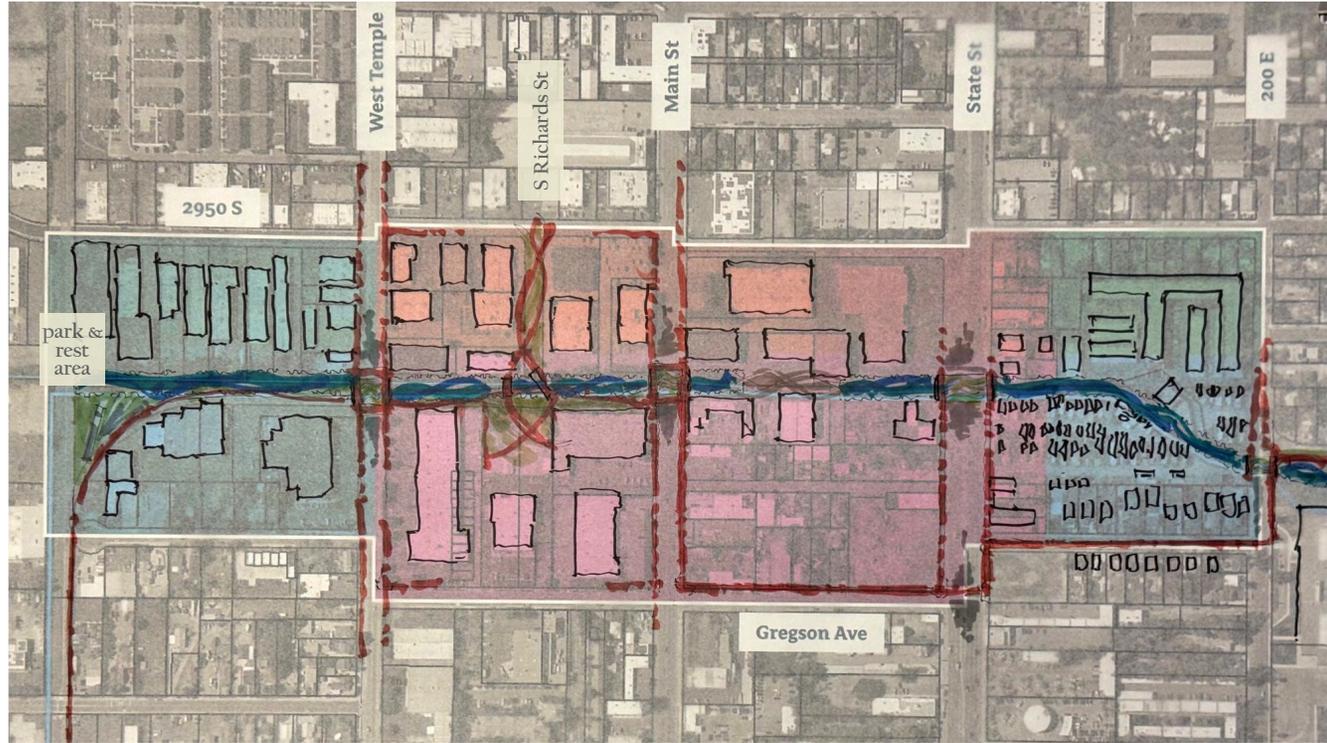
The area that surrounds Mill Creek, from Fitts Park to 200 East, features a waterway that is relatively close to its natural state, and the parks that surround the Creek feature its presence.

conversations with property owners who currently abut the concrete channel.

- **Buried waterway.** Daylighting the stream in places where it currently lies within a culvert and under dirt and asphalt is a project for the long term. This work will benefit from conversations with property owners today to open talks around potential future easements and alternatives to the current adjacent and perhaps incongruent land uses for a creek environment. In the meantime, the panel suggests artistic measures that will visually continue the creek through these areas and over the pavement.

### Creekside Recommendations

- **Create a trail and park experience between West Temple and Main Street.** In the center of the study area, between West Temple and Main Street, there is an existing UTA right of way with few barriers that would be a great location for a greenway trail and creekside park.
- **Install a pedestrian bridge over the creek.** In the block between West Temple and Main Street, a new pedestrian bridge could connect South Richards Street into the above-mentioned new public park and greenway.
- **Create a park and trail rest area near the TRAX line.** At the far western edge of the study area, between West Temple and the TRAX line, UTA also owns excess land that is no longer needed by the rail



The panel identified several crossings that should be enhanced to draw the public’s attention to Mill Creek. While most of these crossings are with north-south streets, a new crossing via a new pedestrian bridge could connect mid-block at South Richards Street.



The panel proposed a bridge connecting south over the creek from South Richards Street. Calling to mind the area’s industrial past and creative nature, a container bridge (left) could be installed rather quickly, or a more traditional bridge could provide users with a wonderful view of the creek while crossing. The container bridge, Bridge, was a temporary installation with two converted 20ft containers by Hoorn, The Netherlands, Luc Deleu and T.O.P.

line. The area close to West Temple is already in use by the community, with people fishing in the stream or visiting over their lunch hour. This full space could be transformed into a creekside park, creating another pearl along the city's string of Mill Creek parks. This park's location next to the rail line and its history as a freight loading area could provide inspiration for park furniture or amenities that would bring that railroad history to mind.

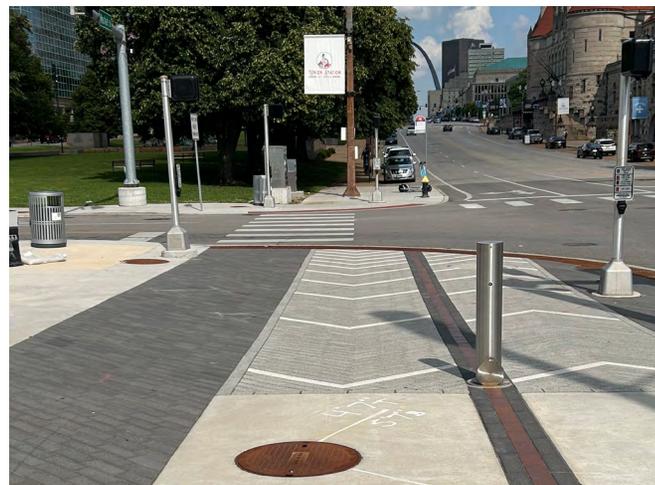
- **Create a pocket park at the southwestern corner of 300 East and Gregson Avenue South.** At the eastern end of the 200 East block, the City of South Salt Lake owns two parcels, one of which features a vacant home and the other features a commercial building with an uncertain future. By turning this corner into a pocket park, the enhanced natural landscape following the creek through Fitts Park is extended west, connecting

the creekside trail experience further and making it more enjoyable.

- **Improve the waterway functionally and visually.** In the places where the creek is channeled in concrete, near-term enhancements to the waterway can improve the visual appeal of the creek. By bringing more plant material to the streambed and allowing those to grow up closer to street level, people are better connected to nature along the waterway. Additional plants, stones, and other natural material added to the channel edges can also help filter the stormwater runoff entering the creek in these increasingly commercialized spaces.
- **Reinforce the crossing at State Street and Gregson Avenue.** In addition to the pedestrian crossing installed at this intersection a few years ago, additional efforts are needed to enhance Gregson as a trail connector, including painted



(top right) A painted bike lane, (bottom left) patterned sidewalks, and (bottom right) painted crosswalks can create engaging spaces that help separate pedestrians from traffic and support safer movement for those traveling outside of a car.



bike lanes and enhanced trail signage. A more robust pedestrian crossing should also be considered in the medium term.

- **Visualize the creek's path in paint.** In places where Mill Creek passes under a roadway or is buried under asphalt, painted surfaces can call to mind the wandering stream below. Colorful, fanciful, artistic, or even simple, painted surfaces can assist with trail navigation, enhance pedestrian crossings at streets, and elevate the presence of the stream to those who may be driving the roadway and not be aware that Mill Creek crosses below.

Organizations like [UrbanRivers.org](http://UrbanRivers.org) can provide additional insights, research, and ideas for volunteer events that can support the health and visibility of Mill Creek.



COURTESY OF BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES

COURTESY OF BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES / ELYSSA LEININGER, JODI LIGHTNER, ELLEY SWAN

(Top) In South Salt Lake, where bridges over Mill Creek are indistinguishable from the rest of the roadway, painted crosswalks can call to mind and draw attention to the stream channeled below.

(Middle) These before and after images show how painted asphalt can completely change the nature of the roadway, bringing the city's mural scene to the groundplane and honoring the riparian environment. More information can be found in the [Asphalt Art Guide](#).

(Bottom) The image to the right is the panel's rendering of how a painted bike lane on Gregson Avenue can more clearly delineate the space for bikes on the street. It also makes abundantly clear how and where to follow the bike trail.



GOOGLE EARTH / ULI PANEL

## Creek Enhancements, Recommendations

Understanding the value Mill Creek brings to the community and recognizing the Sponsors' desire to create more opportunities for community connection to the creek, the panel identified a series of enhancements for the creek and its immediate surroundings within each of the three creek contexts.

### Naturalistic State Enhancements

As Mill Creek flows through Kaleidoscope and Fitts parks, it is in a state that is close to natural, yet the following improvements can create an even more accessible experience and assist with high water events.

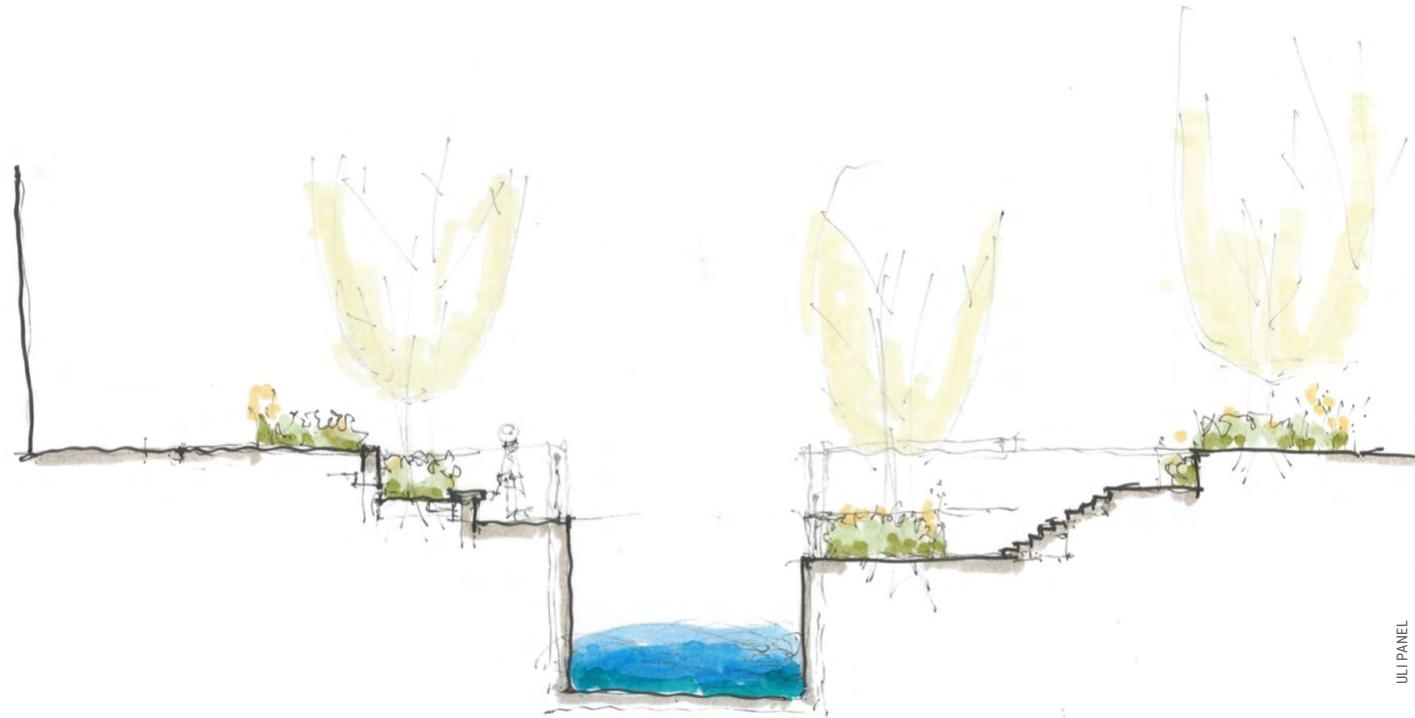
- **Lower the creek banks.** By lowering the creek banks and creating a more gentle slope to the creek, the waterway becomes more visible to park visitors, the water is easier to navigate down to, and more space is allowed for additional water flow when flooding concerns arise.
- **Add additional rock material.** In areas where the public is tempted or even encouraged to navigate down to the water, additional creekside stones can provide footing for humans and places for wildlife to hide and find summer shade.



## Enhancements to Channelized Areas

Moving closer to State Street and the commercial areas, Mill Creek is pushed into a channelized environment where concrete, riprap walls, and gabion baskets keep the water well-contained.

- **Lower the walls and open the channel.** While fencing is generally in place to keep people from interacting with the creek in these spaces, there might be opportunities to lower the surrounding walls, create paths along the water, and actually allow people to get closer to and move along the waterway. Trail crossings at street intersections, outdoor amenity spaces, and the activity nodes are all good places to modify the creekside environment, allowing some access and visibility to the waterway below.
- **Consider a boardwalk installation.** If full access to the creek is not possible, if the channel is too deep in places, a boardwalk along the channel could provide people with an opportunity to walk along the waterway and see and listen to its activity.



- Develop guidelines or a toolkit for private property owners.** For those property owners with land abutting the creek, a toolkit could assist them in making improvements to their property that will enhance the riparian environment while enhancing their private property. These guidelines will need to take the varying creekside conditions into account, identifying improvements for areas near a naturalistic state, the channelized areas, and even spaces where the creek runs underground, such as under a parking lot.



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SALT LAKE CITY ARTS COUNCIL / LOGAN SORENSON



ULI PANEL



# Rezoning and Overlay Potential

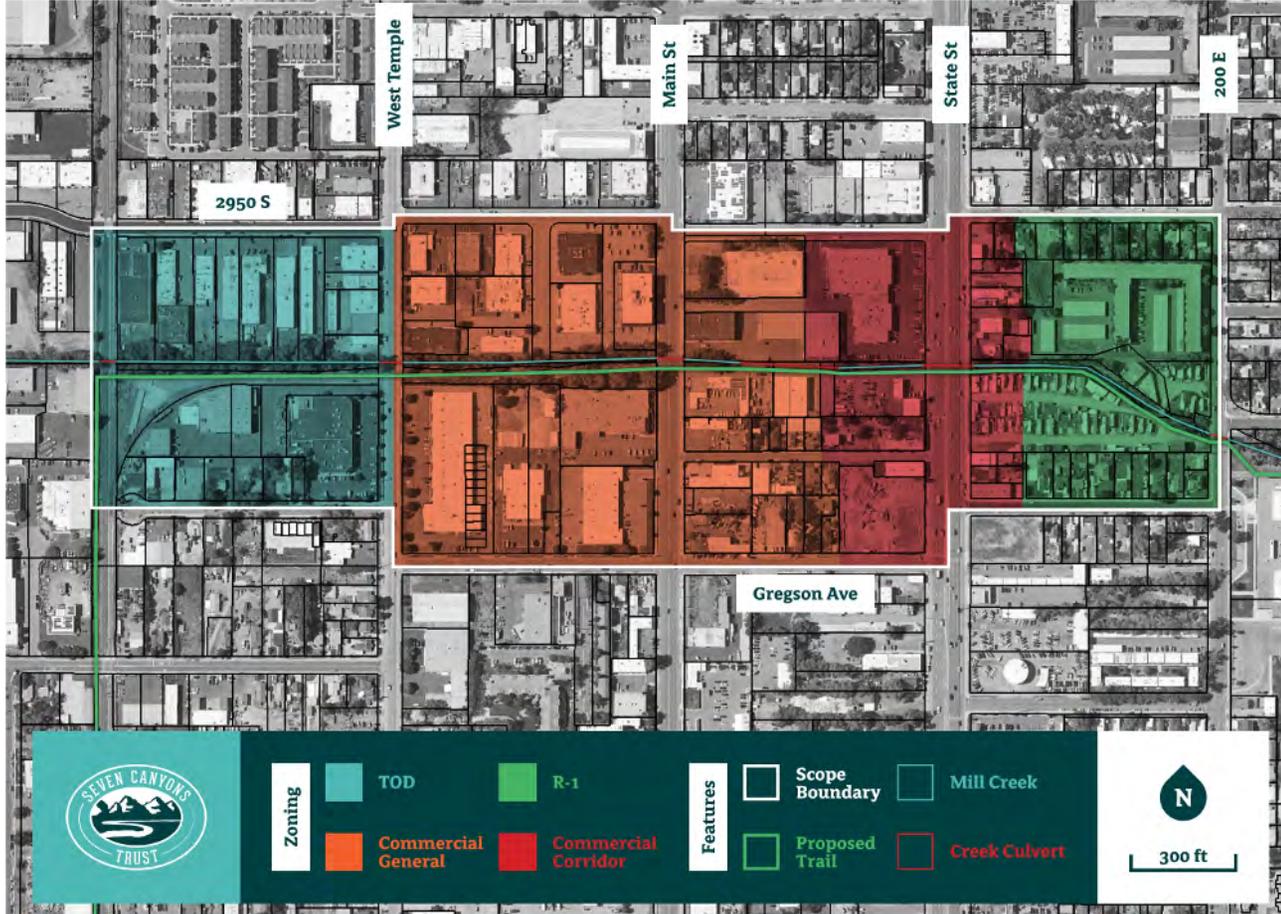
The panel was also charged with the task of incentivizing development along the Mill Creek corridor. This task, along with the enhancements to the creekside environment, can be supported through zoning tools and an overlay that very carefully protects and preserves Mill Creek. The goal of the panel's recommendations in this section is to incentivize development and protect Mill Creek, catalyzing private development while providing for environmental preservation.

In addition to its residential and commercially zoned areas, the City has updated its zoning ordinances to now include transportation-oriented development (TOD) around the TRAX lines. This update has served the city well, yet with the additional focus on the Mill Creek corridor, a comprehensive zoning analysis for South Salt Lake is in order. This analysis, which would include the TOD study that is currently underway, would help the City more fully identify the zoning regulations that are currently working (and not) in South Salt Lake.

Specifically, the zoning updates would center around two major components:

- Rezoning the study area bounded by State Street and 200 West to mixed-use, and
- Establishing a riparian overlay for the area that bounds Mill Creek.

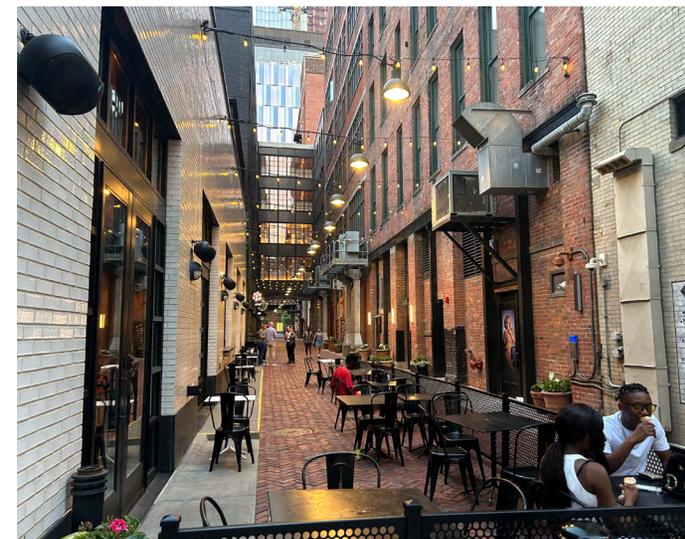
The combination of these two updates provides the City with the best of both worlds—incentives for development and creek preservation.



Current zoning for the study area.

## Mixed-Use Zoning

Mixed-use zoning is a planning tool that permits a complementary mix of residential, commercial, and/or industrial uses in a single district. It is not a new concept and in fact calls to mind a time, long before zoning ordinances, when it was common for shopkeepers to live above their stores in village centers. South Salt Lake already has mixed-use zoning in certain areas, and the panel recommends expanding it to the Mill Creek corridor.



Mixed-use zoning allows for the maximized use of available land while also allowing for more open and green spaces. Non-residential uses are often subject to a higher level of control, often manifested in design standards, which helps blend those uses into a district where residential and commercial uses feel natural together.

Mixed-use developments combine a mix of uses in one area or one building. This could include apartment buildings with ground floor retail space, commercial offices topped by condominiums, and even light industrial uses which could be blended with residential, e.g., allowing artisans to live above their fabrication studio. The scale of these developments varies wildly and fits easily into small neighborhoods as well as larger downtown districts.

## Mixed Use Benefits

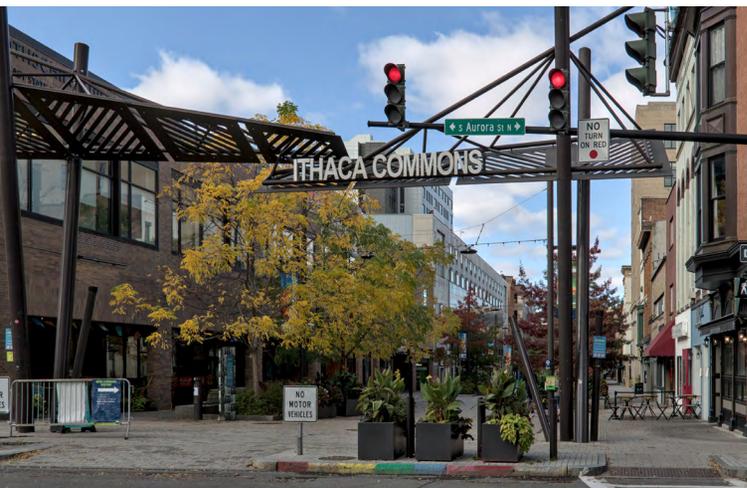
Mixed-use zoning provides communities and property owners with a variety of benefits and generally encourages a more active and vibrant environment. Notably, mixed-use zoning provides the following:

- The mix of uses allows the co-existence of commercial and residential spaces in the same district or building, activating the environment throughout the day and into the evening.
- Mixed-use zoning helps spur redevelopment with a wider range of potential uses for one building or parcel.
- This broader zoning also provides a greater degree of housing opportunities and options thus expanding residents' ability to find housing of a size and price that fits their households' needs.

- With a mix of uses in any one area, people are more likely to walk or bike between destinations rather than drive, which can also help promote a sense of place and community.
- Economic investment is also stimulated by mixed-use zoning as the range of potential uses is wider and a wider array of potential businesses might find the space suitable. Mixed-use areas also tend to experience stronger increases in property values.

## Other Mixed-Use Examples

As stated, mixed-use zoning is not new to South Salt Lake, yet it may be worthwhile to explore how other communities are creatively using mixed-use zoning to spark additional development and streamline and improve their development processes.



**Salt Lake City.** Home to several mixed-use zones, including residential mixed-use districts, gateway mixed-use districts, and form-based mixed-use zones, Salt Lake City recently consolidated up to 27 existing mixed-use and commercial zoning districts into just [six new districts](#). This consolidation retained the benefits of the various zoning measures yet streamlined the review and approval process, making it easier for everyone to understand and follow the codes. The result encourages a mix of residential, commercial, and office uses while creating a more manageable zoning code that is easier for everyone to understand.



The six mixed use (MU) zoning districts are based on building type with each building meeting specific regulations, rather than the same standards applying to all buildings.

**Magna, Utah.** This municipality to the west is similar in size to South Salt Lake and recently established [mixed-use zones](#), including a Downtown Historic District (DH) Mixed Use Zone, a Neighborhood Mixed Use Zone, and a Corridor Mixed Use Zone. These zones become the tools the City and developers can use to implement the vision identified in the

[Magna General Plan](#) (2021) for the Historic Preservation Future Land Use Area.

**Sugar House Business District.** “The purpose of the CSHBD Sugar House Business District is to promote a walkable community with a transit-oriented, mixed-use town center that can support a twenty-four-hour population. The CSHBD provides for residential, commercial, and office use opportunities, with incentives for high-density residential land use in a manner compatible with the existing form and function of the Sugar House master plan and the Sugar House Business District.” This classification includes retail, entertainment, office, residential, and some manufacturing and warehouse uses. The intention of the ordinance is to create a safe, aesthetically pleasing commercial environment. Supporting the code is the [Sugar House Business District Design Guidelines Handbook](#), which puts the guidance in an easy-to-follow format and categorized for easier reference.

## Riparian Overlay

Cities use riparian overlays to provide additional protections for stream corridors and water quality by guiding, and at times limiting, the types of uses and materials that can fall within the overlay footprint. The overlay creates a creek buffer, typically by designating the distance from the creekbank that structures can be built, and often addressing neighboring building heights and setbacks for new construction. Building

design standards and landscaping standards are also often included in riparian overlays.

A riparian overlay along Mill Creek would apply to permitting new uses and construction along the corridor and existing uses and buildings would be grandfathered into the overlay.

Together with zoning ordinances, a riparian overlay provides incentives, such as density bonuses or adjustments to parking ratios, to induce property owners to voluntarily improve their creekside property. The property improvements are generally those that enhance the creekside environment through landscaping and other features, such as art (e.g., murals, sculpture), rather than additional structures or new impervious surfaces. To be clear, existing structures are grandfathered in and the overlay will only apply to changes or new improvements.

Finally, the overlay allows for varying creek typology, which is important for Mill Creek and its wide-ranging environments, and identifies those entities who are responsible for creek maintenance. Conversations with stakeholders brought to light the challenges associated with maintaining Mill Creek, as the City is responsible in some instances, the County in others, and the adjacent property owners also hold certain maintenance responsibilities.

## Benefits of Riparian Zones

The key feature of a riparian zone is the protection of the aquatic environment, including the animals, plants, and water quality.

- Water quality in a riparian zone is supported by the additional filtering provided by the pervious surfaces and plant materials that line the waterway and naturally filter out pollutants as the water moves through on its way to the streambed.
- The waterway creates a community amenity marked by the sounds of the water moving across rocks and through grasses. The waterway also supports the surrounding vegetation, providing green and open spaces and supporting a tree canopy that helps cool the space in the summertime and reduces the urban heat island effect.
- Creeks enhance the community's biodiversity by creating and supporting a wildlife habitat. Whether it is ducks in the creek, migratory birds following the tree line to the river, fish swimming in its depths, or any manner of mammal that uses the creek for hydration, the creek is a hive of activity.
- When put in place, a riparian overlay can help to stabilize stream banks and mitigate flooding events.
- A riparian overlay for Mill Creek can help support the city's recreational spaces and provide important connections between the city's green spaces.
- Property owners with land adjacent to the creek often enjoy higher property values than those land owners whose

parcels do not adjoin the waterway. Managing that connection point and enhancing it with an overlay can have additional positive impacts on property values as the experience of the creek is improved.

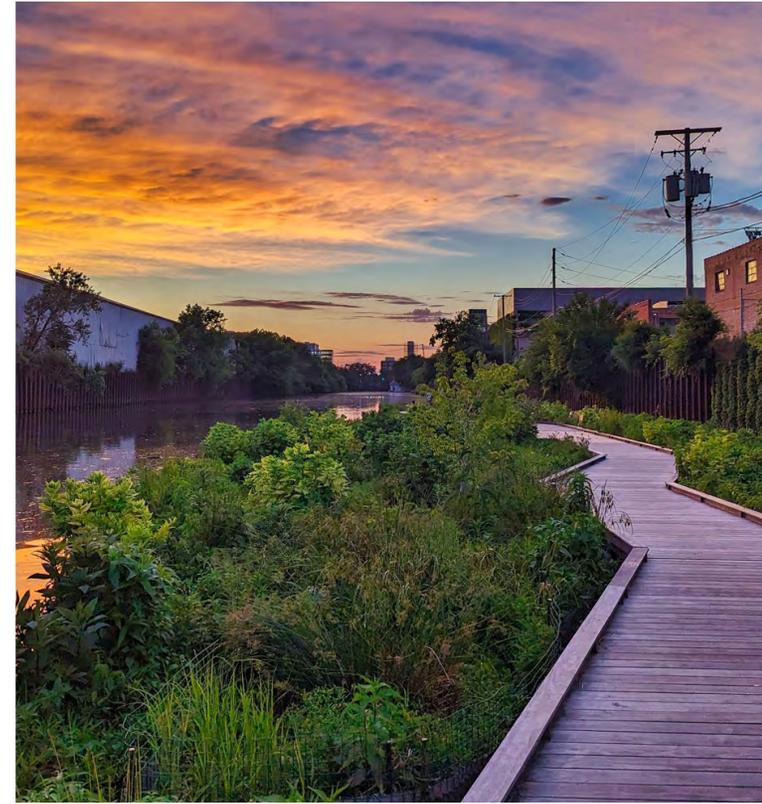
## Examples of Riparian Overlays

Communities and entities in the Salt Lake valley have already identified the benefits of riparian overlays and put them to use.

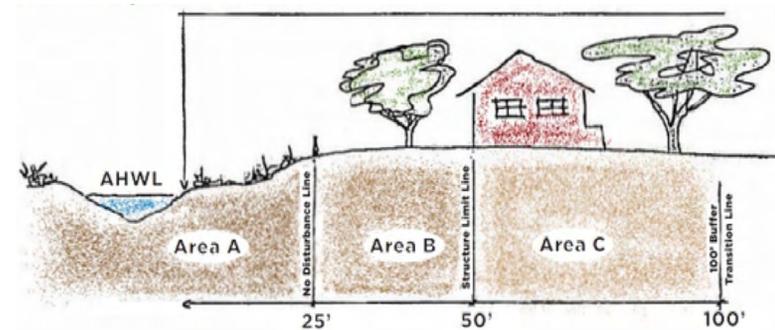
**Jordan River Commission.** The Jordan River Commission has published guidelines for municipal planners across the state. [Riparian Ordinance Toolkit, A Guideline for City Planners across the State of Utah](#) outlines in very clear and easy-to-follow language for jurisdictions wanting to use riparian overlays and buffers to guide development and redevelopment along their community's waterways.

**Seven Greenways Vision Final Plan.** The final plan created for the Seven Greenways Vision points to a number of interventions along Mill Creek, including its "Big Idea" of creating a linear park in the TAP study area. The riparian buffer noted in this plan will play a significant role in the future health of the creek.

**Municipal Ordinances.** [Salt Lake City](#), [Lehi City](#), and [Cottonwood Heights](#) have created riparian ordinances, with Cottonwood Heights folding the ordinance into its Sensitive Lands Evaluation and



Even flowing through this industrial area, this stream, boardwalk, and plant material creates a beautiful and inviting environment.



Although a 100-foot riparian corridor will likely be too wide for Mill Creek, this sample guidance from the Jordan River Commission outlines what type of structure can be built within each of the three zoned areas.

Development Standards ordinance. Salt Lake City's [Riparian Corridor Fact Sheet](#) (see pp i-iii) may prove particularly helpful with messaging to property owners.

## Land Use Recommendations

The panel suggests the Sponsors pursue the following land use recommendations in the near to medium term to address the mixed-use zoning updates and adoption of a riparian overlay for the Mill Creek corridor.

## Mixed Use

- Move forward with a comprehensive zoning analysis for South Salt Lake, including the TOD study underway, to pull all of the updates together.
- Establish mixed-use zoning in the study area and consider expanding it into other parts of the city.

## Riparian

- Establish a riparian overlay for the Mill Creek corridor. Customize South Salt Lake's overlay to the scale of its city

blocks and size of the buffer zone. Use the Jordan River and City of Salt Lake overlay ordinances for reference points. Ensure that existing property owners' structures and current property improvements are grandfathered.

- Create compelling incentives for property owners who are improving or changing their property. These incentives could include density bonuses for new development, lower parking requirements, and funding (grants) for murals, art installations, and landscaping.





# Funding Opportunities

## Money Matters

While many of the recommendations from the panel can be implemented in the near term with a small capital investment, other measures, particularly infrastructure improvements along the Mill Creek corridor, may require new sources of funding.

**Establish a Community Reinvestment Agency (CRA).** A CRA can provide the type of organizational infrastructure a greenway corridor needs. Its strength lies in its foundation as a public-private partnership. This same broad partnership base also presents a challenge as all property owners must vote to approve the formation of the CRA at the start. The process takes time.

- The CRA footprint would likely include the areas around the creek from State Street to the TRAX line and would thus involve those adjacent property owners.
- Once established, the CRA can help pay for creek restoration and the types of public infrastructure that will be required for greenway and trail build-out.

**Overlay a Public Infrastructure District (PID).** A PID, which also requires property owner consent, becomes a taxing agency for the area and has the power to finance the public infrastructure needs of the greenway through the addition of a new tax in the district. PIDs are led by a board that would be separate from the CRA, and its funding can also be used to incentivize additional development within its geography.

## Look for Co-Benefits

The panel also outlined a host of additional funding sources, from fees to state grants to new local programs, that the Sponsors should explore as potential funding sources for creek corridor improvements. The efforts would typically be led by the public sector or supported by the public sector and executed by private property owners. In all instances, the panel strongly encourages South Salt Lake to look for opportunities to combine efforts with partners, apply jointly for funding, and leverage proximate initiatives in order to boost the impact of any funding.

- **[Asphalt Art Initiative.](#)** Supported by the Bloomberg Foundation, this initiative funds visual art on roadways and other public infrastructure in order to improve pedestrian safety and activate underutilized public spaces. Funding closed for the 2025 cycle in January, so planning should begin for 2026.
- **[Partnerships for Aquatic and Watershed Restoration \(PAWR\).](#)** This USDA Forest Service program supports aquatic and watershed restoration needs and helps empower local communities and partners to assist with the implementation of restoration activities. Applications for 2025 closed on February 7, so planning should begin for the 2026 grant cycle.
- **[Community Planning and Green Infrastructure.](#)** Supported by the US EPA, community planning and green infrastructure grants, particularly those

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Because green infrastructure projects offer multiple benefits, they can qualify for a variety of federal, nonprofit, and local funding sources.

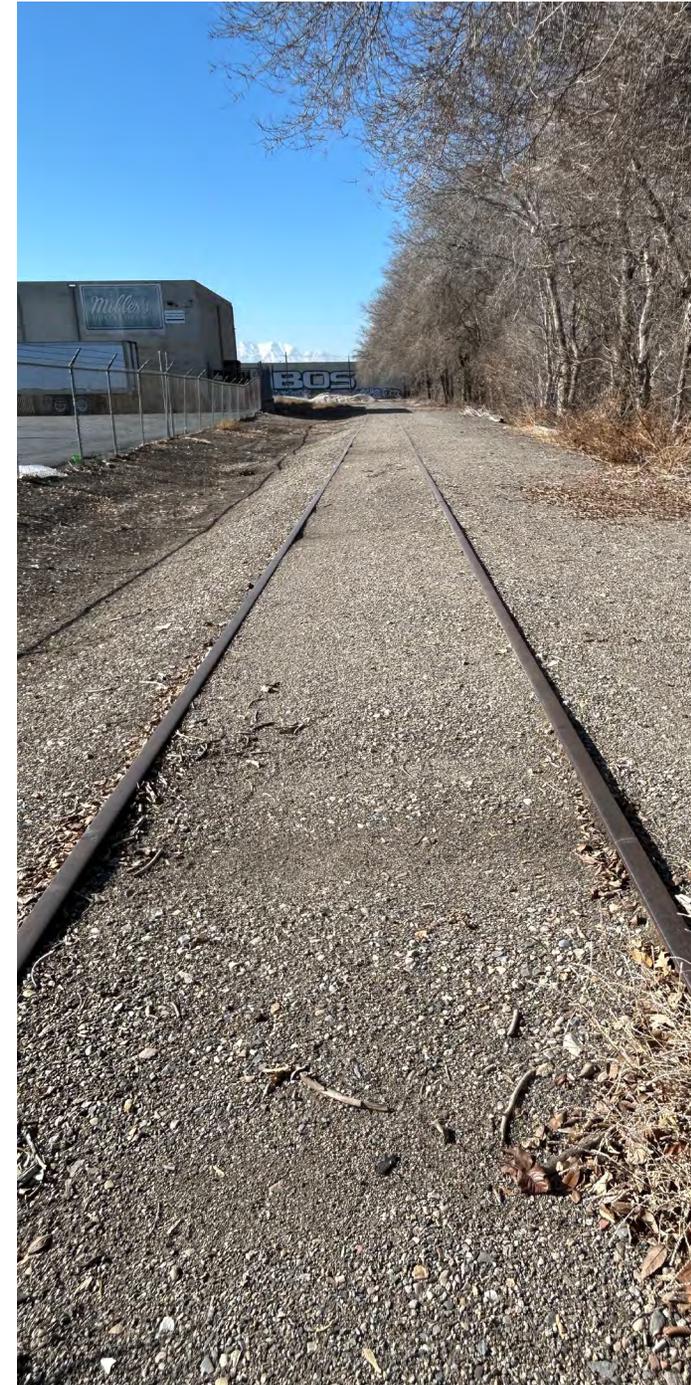
—US EPA

- encouraging watershed restoration, are worth exploring and are typically project-based.
- **[Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant \(UORG\).](#)** The UORG supports new outdoor recreation infrastructure projects that enhance local economic development, tourism, and quality of life. Eligible applicants include municipalities, state and federal agencies, non-profits, and tribal governments. Funding tiers range from \$30,000-\$1,000,000 and applications for the 2026 grant cycle will open soon.
- **[Recreation Restoration Infrastructure Grant \(RRI\).](#)** The RRI grant focuses on restoring, repairing, or replacing aging or degraded outdoor recreation infrastructure on public lands. Municipalities, state and federal agencies, non-profits, and tribal governments are eligible. Funding tiers



range from \$5,000-\$250,000, and applications for the 2026 grant cycle will open soon.

- **[Community Parks and Recreation Grant \(CPR\)](#)**. This new grant program provides funding to aid in the rehabilitation and construction of assets such as community parks, sports fields, pools, and playgrounds. CPR grants range from \$5,000-200,000 and applications for the 2026 grant cycle will open soon.
- **[Rails to Trails](#)**. As a portion of the study area and potential trail network runs along an abandoned rail line, there may be potential for accessing the federal Rails to Trail program.
- **Other potential revenue sources**. The panel also suggested the Sponsors explore a few other potential sources of revenue including a Stormwater Franchise Fee, a US EPA [Sewer Overflow Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant](#), or US EPA [Brownfield Program](#).
- **Riparian “Facade” Grants**. Commercial districts often offer small (\$5,000-10,000) facade grants to encourage business owners to better maintain or upgrade their building facades. Similar small grants could be offered to creekside property owners to make improvements that could be seen and appreciated by those moving along the creek and greenway.



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## Next Steps

The Sponsors of this ULI TAP are each working in their own capacity and together to support the goals for Mill Creek as outlined by the City of South Salt Lake and the Seven Canyons Trust. This work will benefit from a

multi-pronged approach executed over a number of years that can leverage the expertise of each organization. Confluence and connection were themes heard across this TAP and those themes continue through

the recommendations. There is strength in organizations working together to create physical and cultural connections along the Mill Creek corridor.

Near Term	Medium Term	Long Term
<p><b>Enhance connectivity</b> by installing designated and painted bicycle lanes, improved and connected sidewalks, and roadway narrowing at intersections (“neckdowns”) to improve non-vehicular mobility and support community connectivity. Work with UDOT to focus on State Street painted neckdowns to start.</p>	<p><b>Create a new pocket park</b> on the City-owned land by the junior high to create a continuation of the Mill Creek corridor publicly accessible natural landscape.</p>	<p><b>Pursue the Life on State goals</b> to create a more economically vibrant, mobility-connected, and safe environment for South Salt Lake. The realization of those strategies will take time but align well with the goals and recommendations for the Mill Creek corridor.</p>
<p><b>Continue street dieting</b> work on Main Street and West Temple south into the study area and beyond.</p>	<p><b>Create a street-level trail connection</b> from Mill Creek using Parleys Trail at 600 West.</p>	<p><b>Connect to the Jordan River Trail network</b> working with partners to establish trust and a shared understanding of the most viable long-term solution.</p>
<p><b>Enhance community wayfinding</b> with increased signage on Gregson, Main Street, and West Temple to help people find the Mill Creek Greenway.</p>	<p><b>Activate the trail along Gregson Street</b> with larger, more visible signage and a painted bike lane to boost wayfinding assistance north to Mill Creek.</p>	
<p><b>Create trail loops</b> to connect the community to key amenities and place Mill Creek and its new greenway path at the center of the action.</p>	<p><b>Create a CRA</b> in the Mill Creek corridor. Begin the work now by identifying the specific geography, establishing the unique benefits for property owners, and begin socializing the idea with land owners.</p>	
<p><b>Pilot water-themed street art</b> and expand the community mural program to the street, celebrating and drawing attention to the creek below. Additional activation—e.g., video installations or pop-up art—will further engage people.</p>	<p><b>Implement a riparian overlay</b> starting with research now into potential model overlays and identifying what will work best for the Mill Creek corridor so that implementation can soon follow.</p>	
	<p><b>Expand mixed-use zoning</b> by broadening the geography of the City’s mixed-use zoning code to include, at a minimum, the Mill Creek corridor.</p>	
	<p><b>Identify and execute land/easement</b>, starting by identifying the parcels that will most benefit a greenway strategy so that conversations can be had with landowners as they consider their parcels’ future use.</p>	
	<p><b>Embrace public-private partnerships</b> to bring the Mill Creek Greenway to life. Public-private partnerships can provide structure for the types of collaborations that will be needed to support greenway development and catalyze economic development.</p>	

- Community Connectivity
- Mill Creek Trail Actions
- Waterway Visibility
- Policy Updates

## Continued Confluence

This work highlights the exciting opportunities that can be found at the intersection of community connectivity, the waterway, and economic opportunity. It is at this intersection where efforts should begin, focusing activation and investment where it can be easily seen, accessed, and experienced, all with the goals of restoring and preserving the creek and stimulating economic development.

The City, the Seven Canyons Trust, and their fellow TAP sponsors are doing tremendous work for the region, for the South Salt Lake community, and for the Mill Creek waterway. These efforts take time, passion, collaboration, and grit—all of which the partners have already demonstrated in spades. By leveraging previous planning efforts and on-the-ground work completed to date, it is possible to create a greenway corridor along Mill Creek that will serve the community and catalyze additional development. ULI and the real estate professionals who participated in this study stand ready to help.

## Case Study: Kalispell, Montana

In Kalispell, Montana, a city of approximately 24,000 people, 1.7 miles of abandoned BNSF rail line is slowly transforming into a trail and economic generator for the community. The industrial businesses that once lined the rail line were relocated to an industrial park, creating a nexus of economic activity there. The remaining right-of-way once used for the rail line was then freed up for transformation into a linear park and community trail instead. People are now actively using the trail and new development—featuring uses better aligned with the community’s goals for the area—is moving into the area.

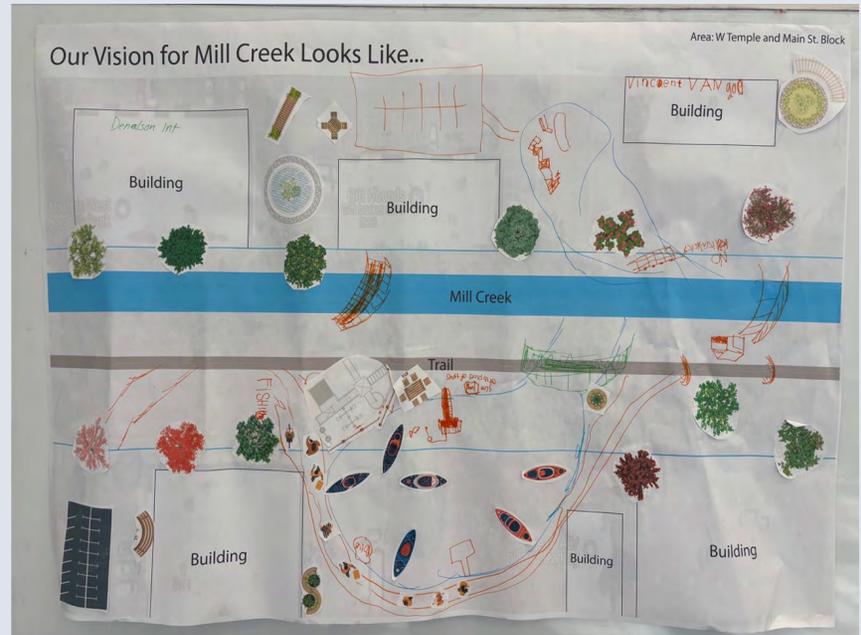


## Mill Creek Visioning Granite Park Junior High School

At Granite Park Junior High School, an after-school program supported by Promise South Salt Lake, challenged sixth-grade students to envision Mill Creek as they would like to experience it. Equipped with a large mock-up of the creek, adjacent buildings, and rough trail, the students used markers, stickers, and photo cut-outs to depict a vibrant, connected, and active scene. In much the same way the ULI panel outlined how the space could better meet the recreational and mobility needs of the community, the students placed additional paths, bridges, and plant life along the corridor.

As one student said, it is “a place for people who live close, and like the outdoors, but can’t go far.”

Through their work, the students highlighted what is most important to the community and what was the focus of the panel—creating a space where everyone can enjoy nature.



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# About the Panel



## Molly McCabe

Panel Chair  
CEO and Founder  
HaydenTanner  
Kalispell, Montana

Molly McCabe is the

CEO of HaydenTanner, a development and investor advisory firm accelerating impact and sustainability in the built environment. A veteran of commercial real estate finance and capital markets, she serves as a bridge between risk and return, visionary development and the bottom line, to create financially and environmentally resilient buildings and vibrant, sustainable cities. Experienced in leading through complexity, she has also helped launch and guide several start-ups, new ventures, and change management initiatives.

McCabe sits on the boards of The Freshwater Trust and the City Craft Foundation and is co-founder and board member of The Lotus Campaign, providing housing-driven solutions for homelessness. She is past chair of ULI's Responsible Property Investment Council, founder of a venture capital-funded, commercial mortgage-backed securities firm, and manager of an institutional real estate capital markets group. She is author of *Practical Greening: The Bottom Line on Sustainable Property Development and Investment* and "Financing and Driving Value: Responsible and Resilient Property Investing in the New Millennium."



## Robert Schmidt

Panel Co-Chair  
Managing Director  
PEG

Salt Lake City, Utah

Robert Schmidt is a key figure at PEG, where

he has been instrumental in advancing the organization's investment and development capabilities. As a Managing Director, Robert ensures that every project is executed with timeliness, accountability, and innovation, always keeping investors' best interests at the forefront.

Robert joined PEG early on, bringing with him a wealth of experience as a licensed Professional Civil Engineer. His technical background allows him to approach each project with a unique methodological perspective, considering safety, functionality, mechanics, traffic, environmental, topographical, and electrical details. This comprehensive approach enables Robert to seamlessly manage the various aspects of development while aligning the interests of partners and stakeholders.

With extensive expertise in site design and layout, city entitlements, construction management, and contract negotiations, Robert's favorite part of his role is witnessing the transformation of projects through each phase. "Each project takes on its own personality, and being part of that process is incredibly rewarding," he says.

Robert holds a BS in Civil Engineering from Utah State University.



## Greg Boudrero

Principal  
MGB+A Studio

Greg Boudrero is a Principal at MGB+A

Studio, a landscape architecture and urban design firm located in downtown Salt Lake City. Greg possesses an unwavering passion for design, striving to infuse every project he undertakes with a unique level of excellence and meticulous attention to detail. He places great value in collaborating with teams comprising diverse fields of expertise, recognizing that open design processes yield optimal solutions. His portfolio encompasses a wide range of projects, from institutional plazas and courtyards to urban plazas and streetscapes, as well as gardens and parks.

Greg's exceptional site planning, graphic and visualization skills enable him to convey two-dimensional and three-dimensional project plans and themes effectively. He fosters solid and personal relationships with clients through direct communication, leading to successful projects and inspiring loyalty among many clients.

Greg holds a BLA in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning from Utah State University and sits on the USU LAEP Advancement Board.



## Gretchen Milliken

**Director of Strategic Planning and Initiatives  
Blaser Ventures**

Gretchen Milliken is a seasoned architect,

urban planner, and strategist known for her innovative problem-solving, cross-functional collaboration, and expertise in managing complex projects. She currently is the Director of Strategic Planning and Initiatives at Blaser Ventures.

Previously, Gretchen was the Planning Director for Park City Municipal, where she oversaw all land-use planning activities, including significant resort development applications, land annexations, and historic district management. Before her tenure in Park City, she spent eight years as the Director of Advanced Planning and Sustainability for Louisville Metro Government in Kentucky. Gretchen also played an active role in the Urban Land Institute (ULI), participating in the prestigious ULI Rose Fellowship and spearheading the creation of the Kentucky ULI District Council.

Gretchen's professional journey began in Stockholm, Sweden, where integrating architecture, urban planning, and sustainable growth profoundly shaped her approach. Her work is guided by a holistic philosophy that places people and their interaction with the natural and built environment at its core. This ensures every project fulfills its functional goals and enhances the well-being and quality of life of the communities it serves.



## Mary McCarthy

**Real Estate Professional  
Jackson, Wyoming**

With a blend of formal architectural training and practice, followed

by a Wharton MBA in finance, Mary has a 30+ year career in the real estate capital markets, including investment banking and real estate private equity fundraising. Her professional journey included notable tenures at Morgan Stanley and Hines. These experiences have equipped her with a profound understanding of the built environment and the forces that shape it. Today, Mary's love for everything related to the built environment continues to underpin her civic, philanthropic, and private sector board work, which includes service on the Town of Jackson (Wyoming) Design Review Committee, board membership and treasurer for the Grand Teton National Park Foundation, board member for Silicon Couloir (supporting entrepreneurship in the Teton region), and advisory board member for the University of Virginia's White Ruffin Byron Center for Real Estate. Mary's work for real estate funds/firms also includes an advisory board role for a family-office sponsored multifamily fund.

Mary received a BS in Architecture from the University of Virginia and M Arch and MBA degrees from the University of Pennsylvania's graduate schools of design and business (Wharton), respectively.



## Diana Rael

**Principal  
Norris Design  
Denver, Colorado**

Diana Rael, a licensed landscape architect and principal in the firm, has

been with Norris Design since 1992. Working on multi-disciplinary projects, she has been responsible for leading a variety of complex projects using creative solutions. With her background in landscape architecture, extensive planning, and entitlement experience, she works with clients to formulate strategies that can be implemented.

Diana's philosophy is to start each project with the desired results in mind. She understands that the ongoing evaluation of planning and design and its relationship to a project's objectives are critical to achieving success. She believes in creating long-term value through project branding, identity building and the creation of a strong amenity program to meet the needs of the end user. Her strong organization and communication skills allow her to successfully lead project teams with an inclusive approach.