

DRAFT



PARKS RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE





08 Introduction

A defining element of the East Bench is the abundance of open space and recreational opportunities within and near the community that are enjoyed by not only the local residents, but by visitors from all over the City and region. The adjacent foothills and the natural stream corridors that bisect the community provide opportunities to enjoy the City’s natural resources while also providing critical habitat for wildlife. The Community’s vision of an interconnected trail system will provide opportunities for recreation, as well as additional mobility options.



**WASATCH HOLLOW NATURAL
OPEN SPACE AREA**

FUNDED BY:
**SALT LAKE CITY OPEN SPACE LANDS PROGRAM
SALT LAKE COUNTY OPEN SPACE PROGRAM**

PROPERTY OWNERS:
SALT LAKE CITY MAYOR AND COUNCIL, SALT LAKE COUNTY MAYOR AND COUNCIL,
UTAH OPEN LANDS, CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, GOODWILL FAMILY,
WASATCH HOLLOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL, WASATCH HOLLOW COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Proximity and Variety

All East Bench residents are in close proximity to a variety of year round and well maintained recreational opportunities.

Natural Lands

Riparian corridors and other open spaces provide opportunities to interact with nature, are natural trail corridors that connect the City’s open space resources, and provide habitat for wildlife and native vegetation.

Protect the Foothills

The Wasatch foothills are considered the scenic backdrop of the City and are preserved for wildlife habitat and recreation.

City Planning Context

The important role that parks, recreation and open space have on the health of a community is evident in numerous Citywide and area specific plans.

Plan Salt Lake states:

“Our parks, plazas, greenways, and natural lands all contribute to our community identity, sense of place, and livability.”

One of the key guiding principles in Plan Salt Lake places importance on:

“Protecting the natural environment while providing access and opportunities to recreate and enjoy nature”

Plan Salt Lake goes further by providing the following initiatives to help communities achieve the overall citywide vision:

- Provide access to opportunities for a healthy lifestyle;
- Protect and enhance existing parks, recreational facilities, and trails allowing for modifications to enhance usability and promote activity;
- Enhance trail and open space connectivity through improved visual and physical connections;
- Preserve open space and critical environmental areas;
- Protect critical natural wildlife habitat, watersheds, and ecosystems;
- Protect and enhance the existing urban forest,



A number of creek corridors and trails run through East Bench neighborhoods, providing numerous nearby opportunities for residents to enjoy the natural environment.

including street trees; and

- Balance protection and management of natural lands with access to recreational opportunities.

The **Salt Lake City Open Space Plan**, adopted in 1992, is a comprehensive citywide plan for the City. The purpose of the plan is to provide analysis of the City’s natural environment and identify an approach to connecting the existing natural resources. The Open Space Plan establishes the following citywide goals:

- Conserve the natural environment;
- Enhance open space amenities for all citizens;
- Connect the various parts of the City to natural environments; and

- Educate the citizens on proper use of open space.

There are four corridors in the East Bench Community that are identified in the Open Space Plan:

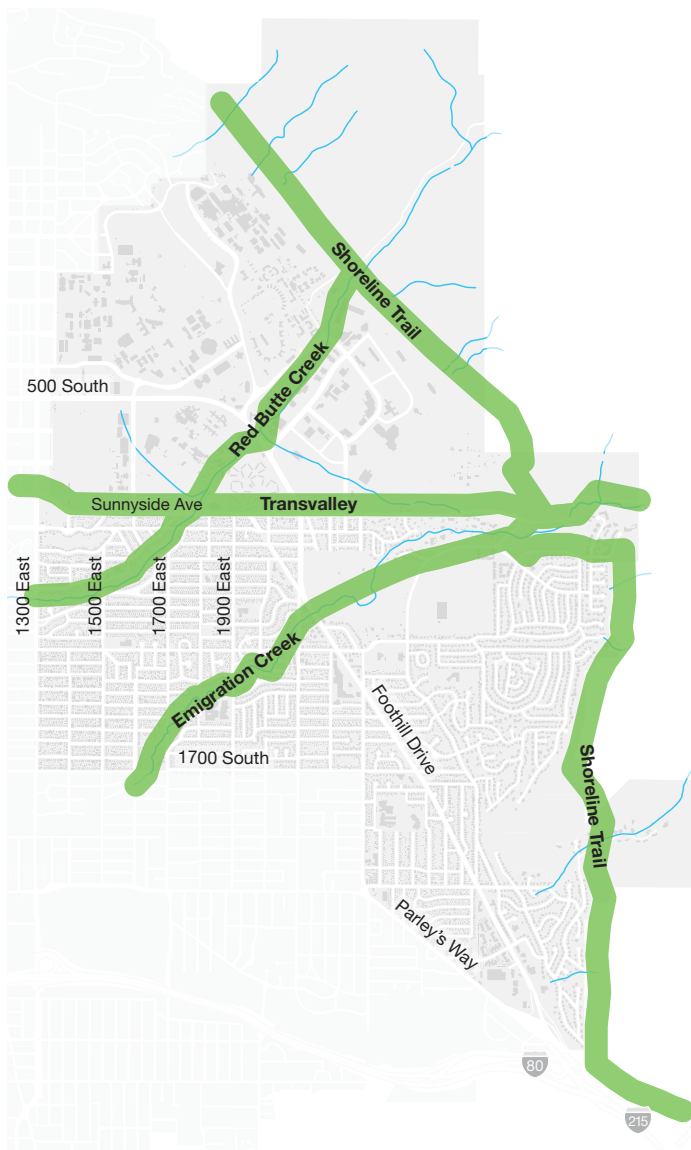
The *Bonneville Shoreline Trail Corridor* follows the prehistoric shoreline of Lake Bonneville along the foothills of the Wasatch Mountains. The vision for the Shoreline Trail is a combined hiking and mountain biking trail that allows controlled access to other trails into the foothills and provides a development limit line protecting the natural foothill environment from further encroachment into the foothills. Portions of the existing trail are located in the foothill open space;

however, much of the trail in the East Bench south of Sunnyside Avenue is located along City streets due to private property constraints.

The *Emigration Creek Corridor* follows Emigration Creek from the mouth of the Emigration Canyon through residential neighborhoods and Wasatch Hollow Park. Sections of Emigration Creek are located on private property.

The *Red Butte Creek Corridor* connects Miller Park and Sunnyside Park to Red Butte Gardens at the mouth of Red Butte Canyon. This corridor goes through the Veterans Administration Hospital campus and follows the creek through Research Park.

The *Transvalley Corridor* provides the opportunity to connect several existing open space amenities such as Rotary Glen Park, Pioneer Trails State Park, Hogle Zoo, Sunnyside Park, Liberty Park and the Jordan River. It connects the City east of I-15 to the City west of I-15 and provides a pedestrian/bicycle route from the foothills, through the urban area, into the wetlands. The corridor is mapped in three sections. The Foothills section is located within the East Bench Community. Implementation strategies for the Transvalley corridor are addressed in the Major Corridors chapter of this plan.



There are four open space corridors that run through the East Bench community and many of the improvements envisioned by the Open Space Master Plan have yet to be realized. The green lines represent corridors and not specific trail paths.

The **Salt Lake City Parks and Recreation Recovery Action Plan** was developed in 2001 for the purpose of providing an inventory and needs assessment of parks within Salt Lake City. The plan states that there is a deficiency in neighborhood and community parks within the East Bench and states that the City should pursue the development of parks along the foothills that would provide view vistas and access to foothill trails. The plan further states that a “Mountain Recreation Area” designation should be established for all publicly-owned land on the Wasatch Front between Emigration and Parley’s Canyons.

The **Wasatch Hollow Open Space Plan** was adopted in 2011 and covers the Emigration Creek riparian corridor



The Wasatch Hollow Open Space Plan details a number of improvements, including a final plan for the trail.

between 1600 East, 1800 East, 1700 South and Harrison Avenue. The purpose of the plan is to establish strategies that protect native vegetation, water quality, and aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat of Emigration Creek while providing appropriate access and educational opportunities for the public. The plan provides a good baseline of the existing conditions of the riparian corridor and provides future management direction for the open space area including a final plan showing trail and use type locations.

The East Bench Master Plan supports these citywide and area specific plans. Future improvements in the East Bench should be consistent with the policies established in these plans and any subsequent changes adopted by the Salt Lake City Council.

Existing Conditions

The East Bench Community is situated at the base of the Wasatch Foothills and is bisected by prominent stream corridors, both of which are valuable resources in the local ecosystem. There is a close relationship in the East Bench between the urban and natural environment, which is a defining feature of the community.

The proximity of the undeveloped foothills to the east provides an abundance of recreational opportunities, such as hiking or biking. There are many trail routes from the edges of the community into the foothill areas, including

portions of the Bonneville Shoreline Trail, an important regional recreational resource. These areas can be very popular and attract visitors from the larger city and region.

The long term Vision for the foothills above the City Boundary is to develop the Bonneville Shoreline Trail near the eastern edge of the existing development and establish the trail as the development limit line. The foothills east of the trail would remain as open space that provides wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities, and remains a stunning visual backdrop for Salt Lake City.

Overall Land Use Distribution

The East Bench Existing Conditions Report provides an overview of the current state, location and other aspects of parks, recreation and open space facilities in the East Bench Community. Parks, recreation and open space land uses occupy approximately 30% of the land area in the East Bench. This includes developed neighborhood or community parks, designated or zoned open space, the Bonneville Golf Course, This is the Place State Park, the Hogle Zoo and recreational facilities such as the Salt Lake Sports Complex.

Park Distribution

Plan Salt Lake places a high emphasis on ensuring that all Salt Lake residents have convenient access to parks and recreational facilities. These places provide not only opportunities for recreation, but also serve as spaces for social interaction and community building. Plan Salt Lake sets a target of providing these facilities within ½ mile of all residents.

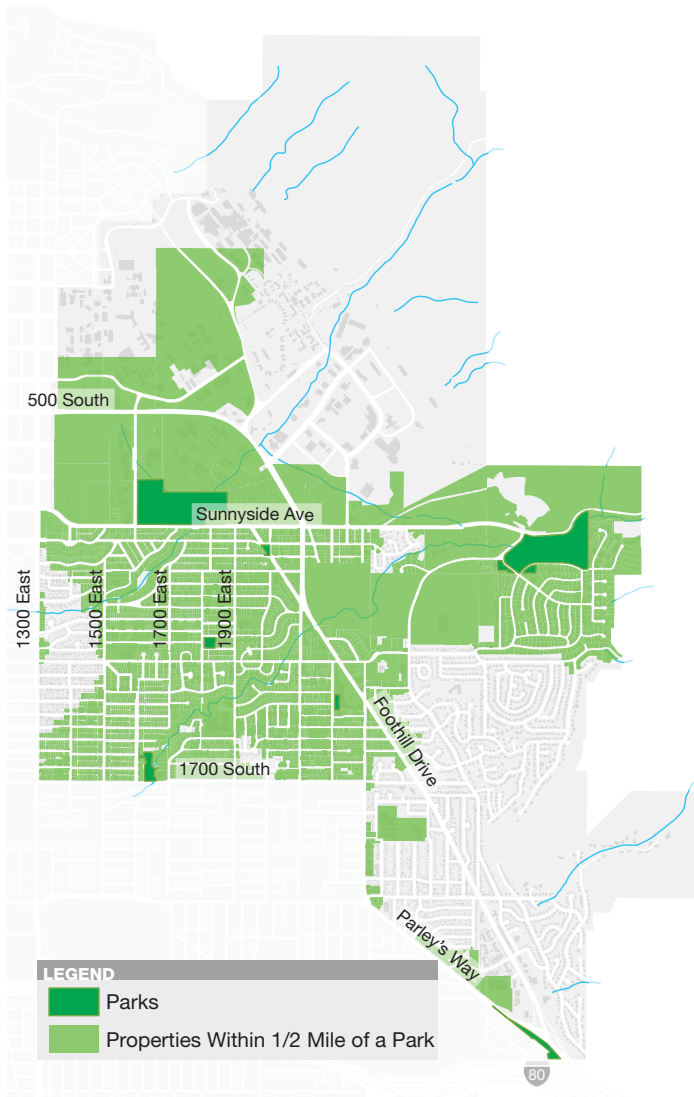
Within the East Bench, approximately 35% of households are more than a half-mile walking distance from a public park. There are also a limited number of parks that provide sports facilities such as baseball fields, soccer/football fields or tennis courts. The southern half of the East Bench community lacks any City-provided public sports facilities.

Areas located further than ½ mile from existing parks and playgrounds should be considered priority areas for

park planning in the East Bench Community. All future parks should focus on providing diverse amenities, such as skateboard facilities, bicycle facilities, dog play areas, sports fields and other play/exercise equipment that encourage active lifestyles.

Urban Forest

One of the defining features of many of the neighborhoods in the East Bench is the mature vegetation. This is a major contribution to the City’s urban forest, which helps to cool the City, reduces air pollution, creates wildlife habitat and helps to mitigate other impacts related to our urban environment.



The areas shown in light green on the map are within a half-mile from a park. Approximately 65% of households in the East Bench have access to a park within a half-mile of their home. Areas not shown in green are considered priority areas for future park planning.



The green areas in the above map represent the tree canopies that make up the urban forest in the East Bench. Nearly half of the community is covered by tree canopies, making the canopy an important character defining feature for much of the East Bench.

MOVING FORWARD > > >

The following are the guiding principles and associated initiatives that are intended to help guide the East Bench Community into the future. The initiatives include general policies, as well as specific strategies and goals. Applicable Plan Salt Lake policies are also included that help inform these guiding principles and initiatives.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE PR-01

PROXIMITY AND VARIETY

All East Bench residents are in close proximity to a variety of year round and well maintained recreational opportunities.



Plan Salt Lake initiatives supported by this action:

Neighborhoods

- Promote accessible neighborhood services and amenities, including parks, natural lands, and schools.
- Improve green infrastructure (including parks, natural lands, green-ways, and urban forestry) in neighborhoods by incorporating best management practices for our parks and streetscapes.

Growth

- Provide access to opportunities for a healthy lifestyle (including parks, trails, recreation, and healthy food).

Parks & Recreation

- Provide accessible parks and recreation spaces within 1/2 mile of all residents.
- Protect and enhance existing parks, recreational facilities, and trails allowing for modifications to enhance usability and promote activity.
- Establish level of service standards that address type, proximity, quality, and quantity of park space that is responsive to both citywide and neighborhood needs.

INITIATIVE PR-1.1

Utilize Schools to Fill the Park Deficiency Gap

One way to fill the gap in park facilities is to utilize other assets in the community, such as the local schools. While these facilities may not be as readily accessible to the public as a public park due to scheduled school functions, they do contain many similar features, such as outdoor play fields, indoor sports courts, and playgrounds. Partnering with the schools to emphasize the use of the grounds as public open space and recreation facilities should be pursued. Given

the built-out nature of the East Bench and the associated difficulties in establishing new parks or other facilities, this strategy is a cost-effective way to help fill the gap with minimal community disruption and impact.

INITIATIVE PR-1.2

Maintain and Improve Existing Facilities

The lack of available land to build more parks accentuates the importance of ensuring that the existing parks are maintained and improved. The existing City parks in the East Bench Community should be improved with the goal of providing diverse amenities, such as skateboard facilities, bicycle facilities, dog play areas, tennis courts, sports fields and other play/exercise equipment that encourages an active lifestyle.



Skateparks are one possible recreational option that could help diversify the recreational amenities available in the community.

INITIATIVE PR-1.3

Preserve Bonneville Golf Course

The Bonneville Golf Course was established in 1929 and has provided year round recreational opportunities for the surrounding neighborhood, as well as visitors from outside of the East Bench Community. In addition to recreation, the golf course provides valuable wildlife habitat. The golf course should continue to function as an open space recreation facility that not only provides golf opportunities in the warm months, but is open for winter recreation as well. Future improvements should include a multi-use trail through the golf course that utilizes the Emigration Creek open space corridor and connects Wasatch Drive and Foothill Drive. Improvements to the Bonneville Golf Course should be coordinated with all City Departments in an effort to enhance East Bench recreational opportunities, protect wildlife habitat and improve connectivity in the neighborhood.



Additional recreational opportunities should be explored for the Bonneville Golf Course, while protecting existing wildlife habitat.

INITIATIVE PR-1.4

Support Expansion of the Salt Lake Sports Complex

The Salt Lake City Sports Complex located on Guardsman Way provides numerous indoor recreation amenities, such as ice skating, swimming, and gym equipment. The facility also has an outdoor pool open during the warmer months. The East Bench community supports further expansion of the complex to provide additional recreational opportunities in the community.



Expansion of the existing Salt Lake City Sports Complex is supported by the East Bench community.

INITIATIVE PR-1.5

Provide Off-Leash Dog Areas

One particular type of facility that is desired within the East Bench is off-leash dog play areas. The City should find appropriate areas for these facilities in existing parks and open space areas that balance natural land preservation with recreation. The City has designated an off-leash dog area in Rotary Glen Park, which is a good start. The City should continue to find appropriate locations for off-leash facilities, particularly in walkable areas of the community.



A few off-leash dog areas have been established in existing parks in the City, such as this one in Herman L Franks Park in the Central Community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE PR-02

NATURAL LANDS

Riparian corridors and other open spaces provide opportunities to interact with nature, are natural trail corridors that connect the City’s open space resources, and provide habitat for wildlife and native vegetation.



Plan Salt Lake initiatives supported by this action:

Neighborhoods

- Promote accessible neighborhood services and amenities, including parks, natural lands, and schools.
- Improve green infrastructure (including parks, natural lands, green-ways, and urban forestry) in neighborhoods by incorporating best management practices for our parks and streetscapes.

Air Quality

- Protect and enhance the existing urban forest, including street trees.

Natural Environment

- Preserve natural open space and sensitive areas to sustain biodiversity and ecosystem functions.

Parks & Recreation

- Balance protection and management of natural lands with access to recreational opportunities.
- Enhance trail and open space connectivity through improved visual and physical connections.
- Protect and enhance existing parks, recreational facilities, and trails allowing for modifications to enhance usability and promote activity.

Beautiful City

- Protect, maintain, and expand the City’s urban forest, including the provision of adequate space and infrastructure for street trees to thrive.
- Create opportunities to connect with nature in urban areas.
- Reinforce the development of a connected green network of urban open spaces and forest that accommodates active transportation and provides contact with nature.



INITIATIVE PR-2.1

Implement the Open Space Plan

In regards to all of the corridors identified in the Open Space Plan, the City should maintain ownership of property, or easements over property, along the corridors where they already have it and should pursue future property and/or easement acquisition where possible.

The following are specific recommendations related to the implementation of the open space corridors in the East Bench Community:

Shoreline Trail

- Negotiate property acquisition or easements with private property owners along the eastern City boundary to complete the trail in the foothill open space area.
- Coordinate and establish connections to trails that penetrate the eastern foothills.
- Establish the Shoreline Trail as the edge of the built area and discourage development beyond this edge.
- Partner with area stakeholders and develop a corridor nature park between Sunnyside Avenue and Red Butte Canyon.

Emigration Creek Corridor

- Implement the Wasatch Hollow Open Space Plan.
- Investigate the feasibility of using the Emigration Creek tunnel under Foothill Drive as a trail corridor.
- The section of the corridor adjacent to the Foothill Anderson Library should be embraced by the library as a nature learning area and improved as such.
- Private property along the corridor should be respected. The areas of Emigration Creek that are located on private property should be protected as riparian open space, but should not include public trails unless authorized by the property owners. Pedestrian and bicycle routes along the public right-of-way should be improved to provide links between the publicly accessible open space corridors.
- Negotiate trail easements or acquire property and

develop a trail connecting the Wasatch Hollow Open Space area to 1900 East.

Red Butte Creek Corridor

- Maintain trails through Miller Park.
- Work with the University of Utah, Research Park and the Veterans Administration Hospital and encourage them to design future developments to positively interact with the corridor. Future development should not turn its back on the corridor but should compliment it. It should be seen as an amenity to future development.
- Protect and preserve the integrity of the riparian corridor.



The 1992 Open Space Plan provides recommended improvements to open space corridors throughout the City.

INITIATIVE PR-2.2

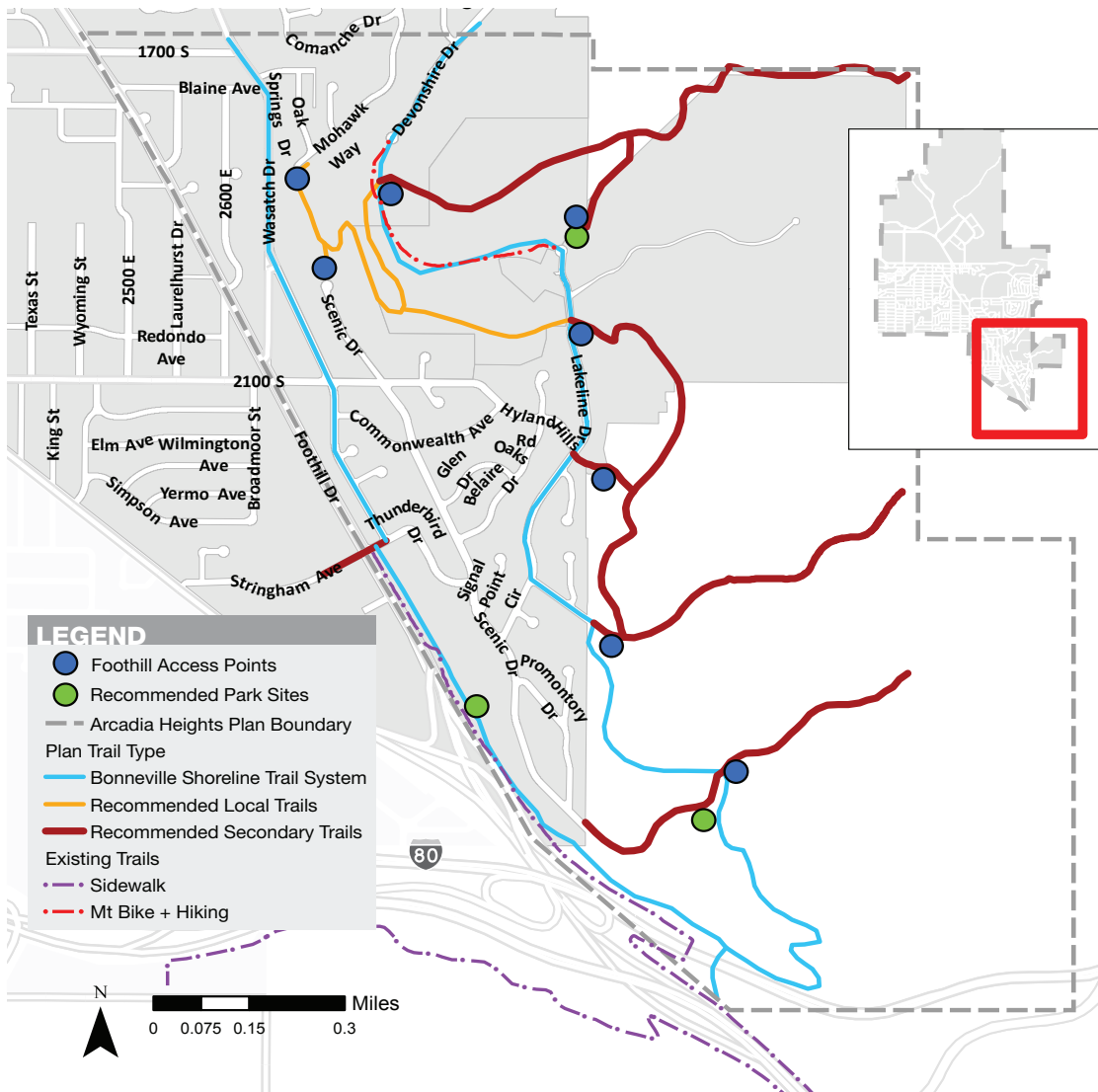
Preserve and Expand Foothill Trails and Trailheads

The majority of the open, non-developed areas in the foothills are not located within Salt Lake City limits. However, they are enjoyed and heavily utilized by the East Bench Community due to their close proximity. When fully implemented, the Bonneville Shoreline Trail will serve as the major north-south corridor that provides access to east-west trails going to more remote areas of the

foothills. The City should work with Salt Lake County and the US Forest Service to develop a foothill trail system plan for the purpose of preserving the existing sustainable trails east of the City limits and creating new trails where feasible. The City and County and should work with the owners of the property located outside of the City boundary to establish trail easements to the public Forest Service lands. The foothill trail system should be designed to reduce user conflicts and enhance the user experience. For example, trails dedicated to walkers and uphill only mountain bikers should be coupled with downhill only mountain bike trails.

Developing a comprehensive trail system also involves developing sufficient access points. Where possible, trailheads should be developed as multi-use facilities providing parking, restroom facilities, playground equipment, and view areas. These facilities should be designed in a manner that makes all users feel safe. Trailheads should be viewed as opportunities to help meet the recreation needs of the surrounding neighborhood.

The map below shows the approximate location of potential trails and trailheads that have been recommended in various City planning documents and are supported by this plan.



The Arcadia Heights Plan (1998) included a number of recommended trail system improvements (shown above) that are supported by this plan.

INITIATIVE PR-2.3

Preserve and Expand the Urban Forest

The City's urban forest should be preserved wherever possible, particularly along the public right-of-way. When designing street and sidewalk improvements, the City should consider landscape features that expand the urban forest and design sidewalks and curbs to support existing, healthy trees instead of removing them. Private development should make every effort possible to design around existing trees. Where the removal of trees is unavoidable, they should be replaced elsewhere. The City should continue to fund programs that financially assist property owners who wish to install new street trees in their park strips in order to expand the urban forest.

INITIATIVE PR-2.4

Protect Natural Lands and Habitat

The City has undertaken some efforts in the East Bench to protect natural lands and open space areas through the development of the Wasatch Hollow Open Space Plan, the Miller Park Restoration Plan, and through adoption of the Riparian Corridor Overlay Zoning District. The East Bench Master Plan supports implementation of these efforts.

Future open space planning efforts in the East Bench should not focus on closing off human access to natural lands. They allow the East Bench Community to momentarily escape from the urban environment, act as neighborhood gathering places and are natural playgrounds for kids. Accessibility to natural lands should be embraced and designed in a way that allows people to be a part of the natural environment without negatively impacting it.

The Red Butte and Emigration riparian corridors are important features of the East Bench and contribute to the quality of life of all residents of the City. As such, it is critical that these corridors are protected. They should be



The extensive tree canopies are a defining feature of the East Bench and should be preserved and expanded.

restored to their natural condition to the extent possible in order to provide nature corridors through the City, while allowing people to experience the setting. Development should have an adequate setback from the riparian area in order to preserve the hydrological, ecological, aesthetic, recreational, and educational functions that these areas provide. Any construction associated with new development should limit the removal of riparian vegetation and protect this vegetation from construction impacts.



Formal walking paths in Miller Park allow people to explore, while still restoring and protecting the natural spaces.

INITIATIVE PR-2.5

Support Wildlife

With the foothill open space land to the east and the natural stream corridors that traverse the community, the East Bench is the interface between the natural and urban environment. Abundant wildlife either lives in the East Bench or crosses the East Bench to access habitat. Future projects in the East Bench should recognize this role and should incorporate features to support this role. Some examples might include, but are not limited to, wildlife caution signs on streets near open space corridors, preserving existing habitat areas and creating new connections between habitat areas.

INITIATIVE PR-2.6

Dark-Sky Friendly Lighting

The East Bench is the interface between the natural and urban environment. As such, the built environment within the community should respect the natural surroundings. One particular aspect of development that can impact both the natural and human environment is lighting. In an effort to minimize disruption to wildlife, impacts on adjacent property, and the community's enjoyment of the night sky, lighting should:

- Only be on when needed;
- Only light the area that needs it;
- Be no brighter than necessary;
- Minimize blue light emissions; and
- Be fully shielded and pointing downward.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE PR-03

PROTECT THE FOOTHILLS

The Wasatch foothills are considered the scenic backdrop of the City and should be preserved for wildlife habitat and recreation.



Plan Salt Lake initiatives supported by this action:

Growth

- Preserve open space and critical environmental areas.

Natural Environment

- Preserve natural open space and sensitive areas to sustain biodiversity and ecosystem functions.

Beautiful City

- Identify, preserve, and enhance view corridors and vistas, including views of natural lands around and within the City.

INITIATIVE PR-3.1

Preserve the Foothill Open Space

One obstacle in preserving the foothill open space area is the private property that extends beyond the city boundary and into the foothills. A government entity cannot take away all development opportunities from a private property owner. First and foremost, the City, in conjunction with other open space stakeholders, should pursue ownership of these lands or obtain conservation easements. In the event any of the property is developed it should be done so according to the following policies:

- Annexation in the City should be required for all development. The city should refuse to provide water or sewer services to accommodate development of property outside city boundaries.
- Development should be limited to single-family land uses or other low intensity uses that serve the neighborhood, and should minimize impacts to the natural environment and views of the foothills. The development should be clustered in a manner that preserves the maximum amount of open space.
- Private land that is undevelopable should be

designated as open space and conveyed to a land trust or similar public or private entity for perpetual preservation.

- Streets and utilities serving the development should be constructed to serve the development itself or provide access to adjacent open space. It should not be built to accommodate or encourage further private development.
- Cuts and fills in grade should be kept to a minimum. Natural vegetation should be preserved, and structures should be tucked into hillsides rather than perched on knolls and other prominent, visible areas. Location and height of foothill development should be such that development blends into natural features to the extent possible.
- Require that foothill trail access and trailhead facilities, such as off-street parking and garbage receptacles, are designed into each new development at appropriate locations.
- All developments should be required to dedicate a strip of land around the perimeter of the development to the City for control over future development.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX CONTENTS

1	Implementation	116
2	Parley's Way Corridor Plan	118

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IMPLEMENTATION

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PARLEY'S WAY CORRIDOR PLAN

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