



Parks, Natural Lands, Urban Forestry, & Trails NEWSLETTER

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Planning for the Future: Public Lands Comprehensive Needs Assessment

How do Salt Lake City residents love our parks and natural lands?

Public Lands is completing its first ever comprehensive needs assessment. The scope of work included analysis of all our existing assets and collection of community feedback on our current system. The project solicited community input through an Open City Hall survey, scoping and stakeholder meetings, tabling at community events and conducting a statistically valid random survey. This resulted in the collection of over 1842 comments over the course of the project. A full report will be available on-line this summer.

Our parks and natural lands are very popular with over 42% of Salt Lake City residents stating they visit weekly and an additional 30% of residents stating they visit monthly. In total, Salt Lake City residents visit our parks and natural lands over five million times each year. Liberty Park's trees, atmosphere and events help to attract the most visits of any park in the City. Linear recreation including hiking and biking trails are the most used facilities. A majority of residents state

they value un-programed natural and grassy areas with shade and benches. Residents also stated they would like to see an urban farm, nature center and a climbing park in the future. Residents also support more enforcement of existing ordinances in our parks and natural lands. Public Lands is actively researching implementation of a Park Ranger Program to help provide for this need within our parks

Due to Salt Lake City's rapid growth, the needs assessment points to a growing demand for more park lands and facilities to ensure similar access into the future. The Central City area is the fastest growing planning area and has the greatest need for new parks and natural lands. Finding new park space in a built out city is challenging, but Public Lands is working with other departments to identify opportunities for new parks and recreation locations.

Overall, residents are supportive of our parks and natural lands and indicated they would be willing to pay more for increased maintenance and needed improvements to existing parks. During the spring of 2018, Public Lands' staff will be visiting all community council meetings to review park and natural lands' priorities for each district in order to gather community feedback.

TOTAL PARK ACRES

690

MINI PARKS

42

COMMUNITY &
NEIGHBORHOOD

34

REGIONAL &
SPECIAL EVENT

5

Urban Forestry: Protecting and Planting Trees around Salt Lake City

Salt Lake City Urban Forestry program has utilized the dormant season to catch up on a number of housekeeping items that tend to be elusive during the warmer months.

Aside from working hard to reduce a back log of more than 250 tree removal jobs and more than 500 tree trimming jobs, our in-house and contracted tree crews have allocated additional resources to completing stump removal in advance of the rapidly approaching tree planting season. The hard work of our arborist crews has paid off, reducing service backlogs to a level that has allowed the Urban Forestry team to proactively structure prune hundreds of younger trees.

Administratively, the Urban Forestry program has been focused on enhanced protection of public property trees during construction and development activities. Over the last many years, too many neighborhood street trees have been needlessly damaged or destroyed during building projects. Recognizing this, the Urban Forestry program has now taken an active role in plan review for all projects that could impact city trees, and has established a construction site inspection plan (to ensure compliance with required tree protection measures). Throughout 2018, Urban Forestry will take additional steps to ensure effective tree protection during construction activities.

Furthermore, the Urban Forestry team has been focused on increasing public awareness and knowledge, regarding trees, by improving our website content and refining virtually all informative materials that are accessible to the public. A new and improved city interactive tree map has just been launched and can be accessed through the Urban Forestry website. Salt Lake City residents are encouraged to utilize the map to learn more about any and all of trees in our inventory.



Trails and Natural Lands: Jordan River Parkway Trail Maintenance

It is no secret that the Jordan River Parkway is a popular location for homeless individuals looking to establish a campsite. Managing the homeless population on the Jordan River Parkway Trail is an ongoing challenge for the Trails & Natural Lands program. In order to keep the Parkway Trail clean and protect natural resources along the river, our maintenance staff end up engaging with homeless individuals on a daily basis. Even after campers have moved on, clearing garbage left behind requires a significant portion of our program's staff resources. Thankfully, the Trails & Natural Lands program

received a one-time allocation of \$140,000 in January to help cover the resource impacts of homeless camps on the Jordan River. These funds are related to Operation Rio Grande, and must be spent by the end of the fiscal year (June 30). The funds will be used to increase spring maintenance staffing on the Jordan River, replace and repair damaged amenities, upgrade trail lighting, and fund daily bike patrols on the Jordan River Parkway Trail by SLC police officers. Ideally, this funding will continue as long as the Jordan River Parkway experiences impacts from transient camps, helping us achieve lasting positive impacts for the River.

CEMETERY HISTORY SPOTLIGHT

ORRIN PORTER ROCKWELL

Orrin played a big role in the settling of the Salt Lake Valley and in LDS Church history. He was a figure of the Wild West period of American History, a Mormon Danite, and a law man in the Utah Territory. His nickname was Old Port and he was labeled as “The Destroying Angel of Mormondom”. During his lifetime he was as famous and as he was controversial to those who knew him. He served as the bodyguard and personal friend of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Latter Day Saints movement.

Parks: New Possibilities in Pioneer Park

On Monday, January 22nd, Public Lands participated in a public open house for Pioneer Park. The Open House had 34 people in attendance to provide feedback about the upcoming park improvements. Many of those who attended filled out comment cards. The comments informed the community desire for more benches in the park and that separating the playground with signage and / or a fence would be helpful so that parents felt more comfortable letting their children play. Some of the negative comments we received were related to homeless use of the playground and the concern that past park improvements did not mitigate the challenges related to homeless issues within the park.

Parks: Community Collaboration Leads to New Playground

Public Lands is beginning a design process for an additional playground at Redwood Meadows Park. After meeting with the community, Public Lands requested that City Council reallocate funding slated for a fence, to be used to fund a playground. The playground will be located on the north side of the park. Several designs will be developed at which point Public Lands staff will return to the community to determine a preferred design.

Regional Athletic Complex: Gearing Up for a Great Season

This month the maintenance crew will meet and develop an operational plan that will describe the weekly duties for each scheduled reservation. This plan will be organized into two sections: March-July and Aug-November. Once complete, supervisors will focus on hiring and training seasonal staff.

Beginning in March the Regional Athletic Complex will start recruiting, hiring and training seasonal staff. Part-time staff will work 7-8 months limited hours per week and seasonal staff will work 40 hours per week for six months enabling the complex to have coverage throughout the season.

The Regional Athletic Complex is scheduled to install two EV charging stations later this year. The stations will be available during hours of operation and located on the south end of the parking lot. The funding came from the Utah Division of Air Quality (DAQ) grant.

