

Jordan River Commission Technical Advisory Committee

October 16, 2025 | 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Location

The meeting was conducted virtually online via Zoom, with an anchor location at the Jordan River Commission office.

Meeting Attendees

Technical Advisory Committee Members

Marian Rice, Chair, Director - Peak Water & Sustainability Engine, University of Utah
Gina Grandpre, Vice Chair, Senior Planner - Saratoga Springs
Tom Beesley, Stormwater Manager - Riverton
Tori Bird, Conservation Action Coordinator - Utah's Hogle Zoo
Lynn Berni, Watershed Planning & Restoration Coordinator - Salt Lake County
Tim Brown, Executive Director - Tracy Aviary
Angelo Calacino, Park Development Project Manager - Salt Lake County Parks & Recreation
Travis Christensen, Engineer - Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District
Cory Fralick, Director of Public Services - West Jordan
Laura Haskell, Jordan River Basin Area Specialist - Utah Division of Water Resources
Sharen Hauri, Director of Neighborhoods - South Salt Lake
Bruce Holyoak, Park Superintendent - Murray City
Heidi Hoven, Gilmore Sanctuary Senior Land Manager - National Audubon Society
Eric McCulley, Riparian Restoration Expert - McCulley Watershed Consulting Services
Todd Munger, Sustainability Director - Lehi, and Jordan River Foundation Board Member
Nathan Paige, Grant Administrator - Riverton
Dan Potts, Aquatic Ecologist - Salt Lake Fish & Game Foundation
Matt Ryan, Community Planner - Wasatch Front Regional Council

Commission Staff

Ren Griffeth, Administration, Grant & Research Specialist
Caroline Johnston, Event & Volunteer Coordinator
Soren Simonsen, Executive Director & Secretary

Visitors and Guests

Brandon Biederman, Associate Principal and Project Manager - PORT
Benn Buys, Executive Director - Utah Fairpark Area Investment & Restoration District (UFAIR)
Rob Craig, Volunteer Coordinator - Lehi
Dan Sonntag, Park Development Project Manager - Salt Lake County Parks & Recreation

Meeting Minutes

Marian Rice, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:04 PM.

1. Welcome & Introductions

a) Committee Roll Call & Other Introductions

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Presentations & Discussion – Community Development

a) Central Jordan River Reconnect Master Plan Update

Brandon Biederman, Associate Principal and Project Manager with the consulting team from PORT, presented an update of the ongoing Master Plan of the Central Jordan River Reconnect project (<https://www.centraljordanreconnect.com>). This project includes a planning process and implementation strategies for a proposed Jordan River regional park from 5400 South to Highway 201 in the central Salt Lake Valley. He reviewed initial ideas and recommendations that have emerged from public engagement, investigation, and research, and is requesting feedback and guidance from the Committee. Angelo Calacino and Dan Sonntag, park planners with Salt Lake County Parks & Recreation, also participated to answer questions about the Master Plan.

Brandon noted that this project began last year through funding from state legislation for the Jordan River Recreation Area. Their primary partners include Rio ASE, a hydrological engineering firm that is assisting with river restoration and ecological improvements, and PROS Consulting, a nationally recognized practice for management, operations, governance, and funding strategies for parks. They also work with other consultants, including Ecosystem Sciences, Horrocks, Zions Public Finance, and Psomas. Brandon described the project schedule as a four-part endeavor that involves connecting to raise awareness and gather input, working with the community on plans, conceptualizing, which is currently underway, and culminating efforts into a final plan to present in February or March of next year.

Brandon explained they are working on the preferred plan and concept frameworks and building towards stakeholder engagement, which involves informal discussions of this presentation with the planning commissions of the five municipal jurisdictions, this meeting with the Committee, and a meeting with the Commission's Governing Board in December. They have also met with technical advisors, including those from the U.S. Army Corps and county flood control, and will meet with the Department of Natural Resources soon to ensure all important agencies and stakeholders review the plan. The final plan will be developed through December and January into February, with the hope of formal adoption by the five municipal jurisdictions by the end of February or March, to be incorporated into their general plans.

Brandon provided an overview of the project area, from 5400 South to SR01 South, encompassing five jurisdictions of Murray, Taylorsville, Millcreek, West Valley City, and South Salt Lake. The designated area extends 250 yards to either side of the Jordan River, focusing on county, state and municipal lands, and potential development opportunities with municipalities. He detailed the community engagement efforts, which included pop-up events and open houses throughout the summer. This feedback, including safety concerns, desired improvements, preferred amenities, and positive comments, led to aspirations for a more connected, active, and healthy river corridor system, forming the project's groundwork.

Following community engagement and the project's restart this year, a priority was to meet with the five municipal jurisdictions. These discussions, combined with community and public input, formed the plan's foundation. They are working to unify priorities across jurisdictions and stakeholders for a more cohesive master plan, finding alignments and shared resources for the plan's future.

Brandon then discussed system-wide goals, starting with connected communities. The aim is to have a trail on both sides of the Jordan River and increase public access points for users, police, fire, and maintenance, ensuring a safe, inclusive, and well-maintained space. Diagrams show current trail gaps, which they aim to address, providing a rhythm of access points. Benefits of a two-sided trail include increased access, more travel circuit options for users, and enhanced safety through visual access.

A healthy river corridor is a crucial aspect of their plans, and this project will focus on ecological restoration, habitat improvement, and water quality, with long-term goals of restoring floodplain connections. They worked with Rio ASE to identify areas where the Jordan River has been straightened, aiming to restore natural fluidity

and activate wetlands and riparian areas in four primary zones. Activating the River involves increasing water access, identifying existing boat launches, and creating opportunities for people to interact with the water for fishing or recreation. They also plan to enhance existing amenities to create a continuous rhythm throughout the project area.

A significant planning focus is their operations and maintenance strategy, and they are exploring a single entity to oversee consistent maintenance, signage, and park amenities like restrooms. Funding and financing options for annual maintenance, programming, and project implementation are also being identified. PROS Consulting is working on ideas for more cohesive strategies for long-term management.

Brandon then shifted to specific projects, identifying seven segments being used for easier implementation and funding opportunities. These segments are based on themes rather than jurisdictional boundaries.

Segment 1, from 5400 South moving north, focuses on neighborhood connections between Murray (east) and Taylorsville (west). This area already has amenities and well-maintained trail systems in parks like Germania and Millrace. The existing trail is on the east side, and Millrace Park has a newer ramp-style boat launch, with an older platform style boat launch on the west side.

In this zone, primary thoughts include ecological enhancements to restore stream fluidity and provide riparian and wetland restoration. They are considering adding another trail, potentially a boardwalk. Another project involves connecting the trail to the Jordan Canal Trail, a project Taylorsville has been studying. A larger portion of this segment involves working with Rio ASE to restore historic river channels for a more natural flow, with main channels potentially becoming side channels, activating wetlands. They are also considering a side channel through the pond at Millrace Park to improve flow and reduce algae buildup.

Segment 2, to the north, focuses on unifying the amenities of three parks: Confluence Park, Little Confluence Trailhead, and Arrowhead Park, along with the Kennecott Nature Center in Murray. The trail continues on the east side, crossing to the west after Murray Taylorsville Road. The goal is to make these parks a unified destination, building on each other rather than being disconnected and redundant. Ecological improvements and additional trail segments are also planned.

Segment 3, the "ecological spine," focuses on trail and habitat. There are limited redevelopment opportunities, but some strategic options exist. This segment includes the Taylorsville World War II Memorial, with plans for improvements and a simple parking lot to make it more accessible. The existing trail is on the west side, and they aim to add a trail on the east side to create more loops and access.

Segment 4, Four Corners Commons, explores the idea of a shared regional park, expanding the Millcreek Trailhead and General Holm Park, where the county has additional land. The plan includes a new path crossing over an existing bridge and continuing on the east side, as well as a loop on the west side that can also assist with ecological restorations. A potential new road is being considered to connect Riverboat Road to 3900 South, envisioned as a park drive with parking spaces to provide access to trail loops. A new trailhead at the end of Carlisle Street is also being discussed with UTA to address a large access gap and provide basic amenities, as well as support restoration efforts. This segment includes plans for numerous side channels, wetlands, and potential ponds.

Segment 5, further north, shows limited improvements focused around the Tracy Aviary Nature Center at Pia Okwai. This area has known security and safety issues due to the extended section of the constrained trail. Opportunities to alleviate these issues and provide exit points are being explored, along with working with the Tracy Aviary to complement improvements and provide a nature center amenity for other jurisdictions. The goal is to have a trail on both sides for more movement options and a series of connectors for access. They are also considering a buffer zone to make people feel safer on the trail.

Segment 6, the second-to-last segment to the north, is near the Oxbow Jail and presents a significant opportunity due to the Redwood Conservation Area. This area includes the County Redwood Recreation Center (undergoing a program study for improvements) and the Utah Cultural Celebration Center, with existing trails. The main trail runs on the east side, then switches to the west. This wetland-designated area previously had a canal filled in, so they are looking at opportunities to recharge the west wetlands and develop this as a county

destination park with new programming, active and passive recreation, and connections to the Jordan River trail system. Programming ideas include expanding wetlands for larger pond access, interpretive signage, and restoring native species. More active programs could include an all-wheel park or nature play areas.

At Mill Creek, there's a portion of land where conversations with South Salt Lake City are ongoing about a trailhead on the east side, as there is currently a stretch without one. Ecological opportunities exist here as well, with a focus on a more passive trailhead. Rio ASE is also involved in discussions about recharging these wetlands through the Chesterfield Canal, which could improve water quality and create internalized ponds and riparian ecological areas. Side channels are also being considered near Oxbow Park and the Oxbow Jail.

The last section, Segment 7, features the straightest corridor as it moves into the levee system. The current trail is on the west side, with an existing paved but undesignated maintenance trail on the east. The goal is to create loops and provide access from West Valley City and South Salt Lake. They are also considering how to create a buffer along the industrial edge within the restrictions of the levee structure and U.S. Army Corps requirements to improve the public experience. Redwood Trailhead Park and its existing amenities are being considered for improvements and a better connection to the River. This includes a landscape buffer and formalizing trail connections to the Mill Creek Trailhead and other options in South Salt Lake. At Redwood Trailhead, a boat takeout project is already under review with the U.S. Army Corps.

Redwood Park and a parcel to the north that was recently acquired are being explored as a water-based recreation hub for kayaking, boating, and potentially rowing crews. Discussions with Rio ASE are also underway regarding adjusting or improving the weir downstream to allow boating access into the longer straight section. Precedents for improving the buffer zone along the levee and working with industrial owners for landscaping and planting between their properties and public space are being considered, with Radius Engineering cited as a good example. They are also discussing with UTA about an access point where a gravel maintenance path is currently gated off.

Brandon emphasized that this is a comprehensive plan aiming to benefit all jurisdictions and users, building on existing infrastructure and providing more access and incentives for activity to change the area's culture. All efforts consider community and stakeholder feedback from the past year. A website and webinar will be launched in November to share the plan and gather further input. The Planning Commission meetings will be discussion-based to ensure awareness before the plan's completion in February for review and hopeful approval. Brandon stated that a comprehensive report will detail all aspects covered in more depth and incorporate feedback.

Eric McCulley thanked Brandon and his team for their work. While he supports having trails on both sides, he asked if anyone had considered making the trail a bit wider on one side and more narrow and winding to help slow people down on the other. He also noted that having a better vegetative buffer at bridges can help to reduce noise pollution while still maintaining open areas for better visibility. Brandon expressed appreciation for the feedback and agreed that the space available for trail expansions is variable, so they are exploring a variety of options. They are also looking at future traffic expectations and are considering having separate zones for bikers and walkers, which may include following Eric's recommendations.

Eric also noted that if their final plan includes installing softer materials for a pedestrian path, it tends to work out better for logistical and ADA access purposes if the multi-use path is wider and concentrated on a single side.

Dan Potts suggested dedicating one side of the river to wildlife wherever possible, even if there are paved trails on both sides. He noted that many people who use the trail put a high value on more natural spaces, which are especially important in segments adjacent to wildlife preserves and management areas. He also mentioned that the warmer water entering the River towards the north end of the project area attracts a large number of native and migrating birds, who could be negatively impacted by adding paved trails on both sides.

Brandon replied that his team agrees with making this area more of a passive recreation and waterfowl viewing destination, and that he appreciates the specific feedback.

Sharen Hauri noted that South Salt Lake has previously been designated as a wetland mitigation area, but, unfortunately, has also suffered extensive degradation from fires, tree removals, and other incidents. She expressed appreciation for Tracy Aviary's Nature Center, creating a controlled, stewarded space, and asked if the team had considered adding any other fenced-off restoration areas within the project area. Sharen also commented on a map that was shown, and noted that a certain area is now designated for a future police substation. Brandon replied that they had been made aware of this more recent change.

Eric added that the Meadowbrook area, located near 3900 South and General Holm, presents significant challenges due to conflicting wildlife objectives and maintenance difficulties. A proposal was made to establish a 3 to 4-foot-wide soft trail, especially at trailheads, to enhance visibility while preserving the riparian canopy for birds and maintaining a 10-foot buffer around wetland areas for ducks.

Sharen emphasized the necessity of involving law enforcement, public safety, and fire personnel in addressing issues at the River. Some strategies, while limiting general public access, could lead to more effective management of recreational opportunities if each area is clearly defined and adequately patrolled.

Soren Simonsen extended appreciation to Salt Lake County and Brandon's team for their efforts, acknowledging the challenge of covering all aspects within the limited meeting timeframe. He asked Brandon to provide a quick update on outreach with the five cities and upcoming Planning Commission meetings for additional input.

Brandon explained that the November stakeholder and Planning Commission meetings would involve sharing a similar high-level presentation to update them on project goals and timelines. More detailed information regarding safety, parcels, limits, and specific concepts for each project will be developed and shared with jurisdictions and the community, and eventually presented to the Planning Commission and municipalities in February or March. He noted that this comprehensive report would detail everything covered in the presentation and incorporate feedback.

Soren then asked about the change in terminology from "regional park" to "recreation area," noting that the project appears to be a collection of smaller regional parks. Brandon explained that they are now calling it the "Jordan River Recreation Area Master Plan" to align with legislative terminology for continuity. Soren cautioned using this terminology, stating that the Jordan River Recreation Area in legislation is a funding program covering the entire Jordan River, not just this specific zone, although there is a Jordan River Recreation Area "Zone" identified by the legislature that matches the geographic area of this planning initiative.

Dan emphasized the importance of fishing locations and recreational opportunities, including comfortable places to sit and watch nature. He believes fishing could be a recreational and significant benefit and could also increase the public presence to help reduce crime. He urged Brandon to consider fishing more prominently in the plan.

Soren thanked everyone for their questions and discussion, noting that this is an ongoing planning effort. He again thanked Brandon for his presentation and work.

b) Public Safety Discussion & Working Group

Soren Simonsen began the discussion by describing the increasing number of accidents involving various motorized devices. This has led to a significant rise in complaints received by the Jordan River Commission and law enforcement agencies in different jurisdictions. He shared a brief news clip (see <https://www.fox13now.com/news/driven-to-change/woman-hit-by-e-bike-speaks-out-as-officials-see-increase-in-accidents>).

A previous Board meeting included a discussion on this topic, featuring Matt Schulz from the Salt Lake Valley Emergency Communications Center, who highlighted challenges in responding to injuries and accidents due to difficulties in pinpointing exact locations on the Jordan River Trail. Issues such as people not knowing their geographical location or jurisdiction and the lack of consistent signage were identified as contributing factors to delayed emergency response.

The Board asked for technical support and recommendations to address increasing public safety concerns, from the proliferation of electric and other motorized mobility vehicles and devices on the Jordan River Trail, to speed and congestion, creating risks and injuries among diverse users of the Jordan River Trail. The Board requested forming a work group from the Technical Advisory Committee to develop recommendations for public safety on the trail. Topics for discussion include guidelines for the use of motorized vehicles and devices, speed limits, trail widths, addressing blind corners, and improving wayfinding for navigation and emergency response. He asked for ideas from the Committee.

Laura Haskell suggested separating trails into higher and slower speed sections. Soren noted that this is similar to the Murdock Canal Trail in Utah County, which has a wider path for bikes and faster equipment and a narrower path for walking and jogging.

Eric added that even a simple physical barrier between different types of users them can make a significant difference.

Cory Fralick noted that even with wider trails, similar issues with accidents involving e-bikes, scooters, and other fast-moving devices are occurring on the Murdock Canal Trail.

Todd Munger added that many of the issues with high speeds come from traditional bicycle users, and rules are difficult to enforce.

Cory clarified that some electric bicycles, motorcycles, and ATVs are state-banned as off-road vehicles and are not permitted on public trails. The challenge lies in educating the public and parents about these laws.

Eric mentioned that an area near Three Creeks Confluence is testing cameras with artificial intelligence at night, motion-activated lights or sprinklers, and design elements that slow traffic, which may be helpful.

Dan raised the issue of a lack of notification from behind by faster-moving trail users, leading to near-misses and accidents. The importance of trail etiquette was emphasized.

Dan Sonntag further contributed to the discussion by highlighting the need to identify different classes of e-bikes, as many users are unaware of the distinctions. He suggested designating specific classes to appropriate facilities or settings, citing Dimple Dell Park as an example where only Class 1 e-bikes are allowed on natural surface trails.

Matt Ryan echoed this comment and suggested Hugh Van Wagner, the active transportation planner at Wasatch Front Regional Council, as a valuable resource.

Soren described the complexity of varying rules across different jurisdictions and cited an example of a Fox 13 reporter referencing a Salt Lake City rule for an accident that occurred in South Jordan. This underscored the need for uniformity in standards across cities.

4. Committee Business

a) [Action Item] Adopt the August 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Tori Bird moved to adopt the August 21, 2025, meeting minutes. Laura Haskell seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved by the Committee members present.

b) Upcoming Committee Meetings:

- 1) October 30-31, 2025, Utah Lake Symposium (info & registration at <https://utahlake.gov/join-us-for-the-utah-lake-symposium>)

- 2) November 19-20, 2025, Salt Lake County Watershed Symposium (info and registration at <https://www.saltlakecounty.gov/watershed/get-involved/watershed-symposium>)
- 3) Thursday, December 18, 2025, 2:00 PM - Regular Committee Meeting, Weed Management & Restoration Focus

Soren Simonsen announced some upcoming educational opportunities, including the Utah Lake Symposium on October 30 and 31, and the Salt Lake County Watershed Symposium on November 19 and 20, which will be in lieu of the November Committee meeting. The Utah Lake Symposium has a modest fee, while the Salt Lake County Watershed Symposium is free. The Commission will have a presence at both events. The next regular Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 18th, with a focus on weed management and restoration.

Finally, Tori Bird mentioned an event at Hogle Zoo on Saturday, hosted by the Utah Wildlife Federation, focusing on the 2025-2035 Utah Wildlife Action Plan. Presentations will start at 10:30 AM, and tabling partners will be present until 2:30 PM.

5. Commission Staff Reports

Item 5 was postponed due to time constraints.

6. Adjourn

Travis Christensen moved to adjourn the meeting. Dan Potts seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:32 PM.

A meeting recording, presentation, handout materials, and meeting minutes are available at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/1023731.html>.

Meeting minutes prepared by Ren Griffeth, and Soren Simonsen, Commission Secretary.

Adopted December 18, 2025.