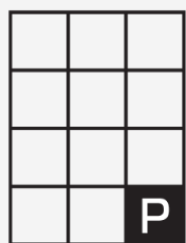


# REIMAGINE

# NATURE

## SLC PUBLIC LANDS MASTER PLAN

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STUDY



City and  
Metropolitan  
Planning

## Abstract

This report seeks to understand the perceptions of Salt Lake City (SLC) parks, trails, and natural areas users around issues of stewardship and equity, among other topics. From August 26 to October 15, the Community Engagement in Planning students enrolled in the Master's Program in the City and Metropolitan Planning Department were the SLC Public Lands Division feet on the ground and conducted one-on-one intercept surveys in our public spaces. Reached out to organizations to share information on the project and hang posters, collected surveys, and conducted focus groups with traditionally underrepresented communities. Outreach included pop-up events and trail intercepts where we meet outside about Reimagine Nature to solicit community input at events hosted by Public Lands (1) ice cream and food truck pop-up events, (2) trailside snacks activities, (3) intercept surveys in our public spaces and, (4) micro engagement focus groups with underrepresented communities. Students collected 635 intercept interviews on their own and over 3,733 responses to the digital survey in partnership with the Public Lands Division—totaling 4,368 responses. The course alone made over 236 connections with organizations, posted 215 social media posts and 54 participants of our focus group that centered on the west side (Rose Park, Glendale, Poplar Grove, Fairpark, Jordan Meadows and Westpointe) and Central City. All together we made 4,871 interactions. The study presents findings, recommendations, and concludes that it is more important than ever to focus on stewardship and equity within the Public Lands Master Plan.

## Community Engagement in Planning Series

The “Community Engagement in Planning Series” consists of publications by students, faculty, and partners about a semester long community engaged project. This publication was created by the Community Engagement Course at the City and Metropolitan Department at the University of Utah for the Salt Lake City Public Lands Division. Staff members of the Public Lands Division and DesignWorkshop provided guidance and advise. Content shared in the series have a “Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License” (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). The authors take full responsibility for the views and information expressed, not the Salt Lake City Public Lands Division or DesignWorkshop.



*This report could be found online at: <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.29026.15047>*

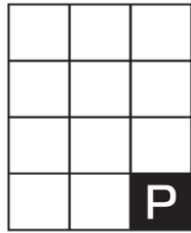
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**DESIGNWORKSHOP**

## **Community Engagement in Planning**

In this course students work in real world community engagement project as a planning consultant. Via planning practice, students learn tools and strategies to gather experiential knowledge, engage a community, and structure collaboration with multiple stakeholders in a range of contexts. This course is taught in the City and Metropolitan Planning at the University of Utah, for more info: <http://plan.cap.utah.edu/>.

## **Salt Lake City Public Lands Division**

Salt Lake City's Parks Division ensures the preservation, development and maintenance of parks throughout the city for the use and enjoyment of the community of and visitors to Salt Lake City. For more info: <https://www.slc.gov/parks/parks-division/>.

## **DesignWorkshop**

DesignWorkshop is a community of designers, planners, and strategists driven to create places of meaning and resonance. They work to increase social equity, amplify connections to nature and bring joy to everyone through design. To learn more: [www.designworkshop.com](http://www.designworkshop.com).







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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION



# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## ***PROJECT BACKGROUND***

Since its first public park, Pioneer Park, Salt Lake City has continued to provide excellent public open spaces and recreational areas. Today, the City offers its residents a variety of trails, natural areas, and parks. Its location in the northeast region of the Salt Lake Valley provides relative ease of access to exciting and beautiful natural resources such as the foothills of the Wasatch Mountains, the Jordan River, and subsidiary creeks.

Salt Lake City residents' value and frequent their parks. The Salt Lake City Parks and Public Lands Needs Assessment (2019)<sup>1</sup> revealed that these public assets play a significant role in meeting the community's recreational needs. Salt Lake City's parks and natural areas are a large part of what makes this City a unique and desirable place to live. Figure 1 shows that the City has an impressive inventory of 42 mini parks, 19 neighborhood parks, 85,500 trees in urban forest, to mention a few.

The City is currently developing a Public Lands Master Plan, a document intended to guide and prioritize investments for the three Public Lands Divisions (Parks, Natural Lands, Urban Forestry and Trails) over the next 10 to 20 years. As a crucial first step in creating a Master Plan, the City has engaged residents and park users to assist in reimagining our public lands. The goal to "Reimagine Nature" will rely on a combination of comprehensive analysis and community input to identify and prioritize transformative initiatives to be included in the final Public Lands Master Plan.

Community engagement is essential in creating a community supported Master Plan. The remaining phases will be an ongoing effort, with two additional community engagement windows scheduled before the adoption of the final Master Plan programed for mid 2021. The initiative detailed in this report concerns the first engagement window, occurring from August 26 to October 15, 2020, which was to establish a foundation of understanding. The subsequent chapters of this report will discuss the various methods, findings, and conclusions of the University of Utah students' contribution to this phase of the engagement process, conducted in Fall 2020.

---

<sup>1</sup> Parks and Public Lands and Landmark Design. 2019. "Salt Lake City Parks and Public Lands Needs Assessment." Salt Lake City, UT: Parks and Public Lands and Landmark Design. <https://www.slcdocs.com/parks/SLCPLNeedsAssessment.pdf>.



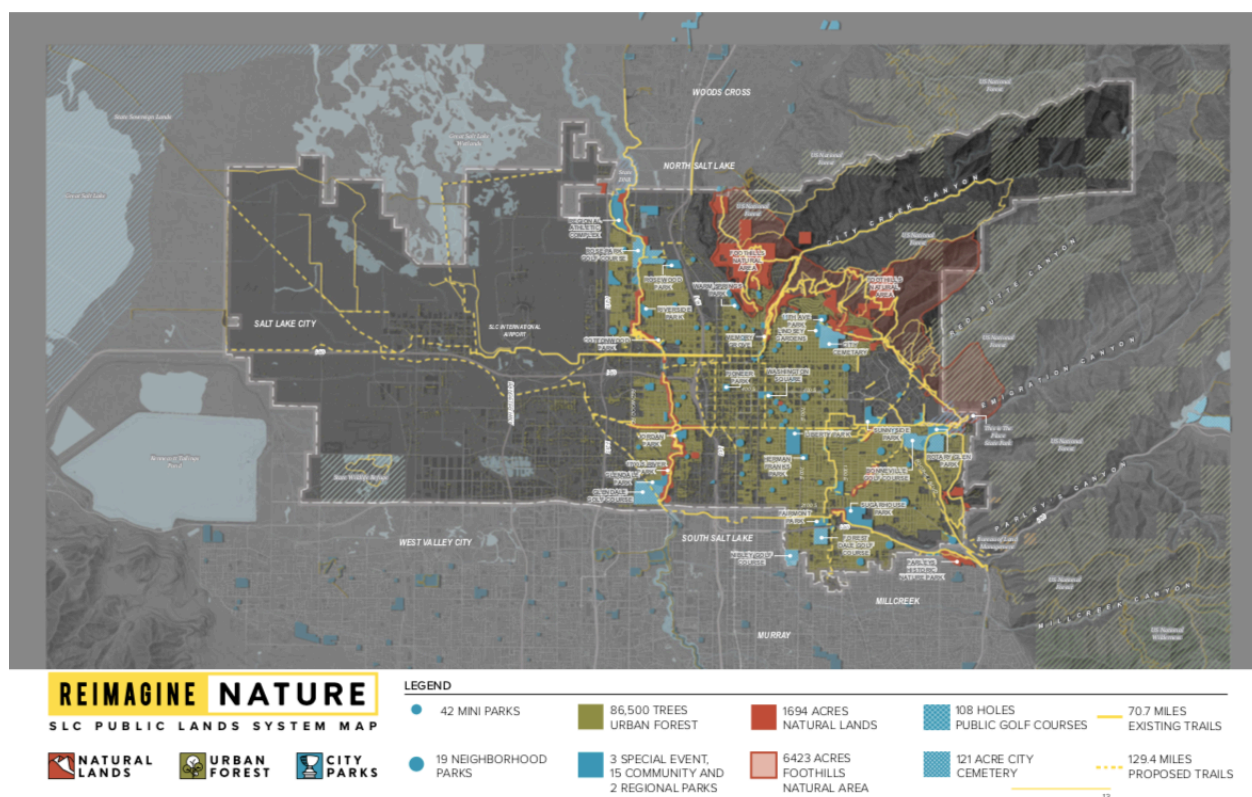


Figure 1: Needs Assessment's Map Of SLC Public Lands, Parks, And Trails

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY

The 2019 Salt Lake City Parks and Public Lands Needs Assessment helped identify existing and potential opportunities and develop the content of the survey. It is estimated that by 2040, 30,000 new residents will be living in Salt Lake City. If those projections are realized, 94 acres of additional park space are required to maintain the existing City park service level or the park area available to each City resident. Of the City's ten planning areas, the Central Community currently has the lowest park level of service (2.8 acres per 1,000 residents) with no natural lands. This compares with a citywide average of 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents. Central City is also the area expected to see the most growth in upcoming decades. This means that as more people move to the Central Business District, the ratio of park acreage per capita decreases, and access to outdoor recreation opportunities reduces over time.

Salt Lake City is home to more than 70 miles of existing trails, yet, some accessibility gaps persist. East and west connections across the City are particularly limited. There are currently 129.4 miles of proposed trails that could help remediate this issue of connectivity.

In addition to distribution characteristics and service levels, the condition of current amenity and facility offerings is essential in understanding the needs of the City. In 2017, Parks and Public Lands staff conducted an amenities assessment in preparation for this initiative. Playground equipment, infrastructure, and sports fields were among the amenities evaluated and placed in one of three categories, good, fair, or poor. Of

the 284 assessed assets, 37 percent were in good condition, 53 percent were rated as fair, and the remaining 10 percent were found to be in poor condition (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: 2019 Needs Assessment Survey Results

## ***PARTNERSHIP***

The Salt Lake City (SLC) Public Lands Division contracted Design Workshop in 2019 to assist with the creation of a new Master Plan. The “Reimagine Nature” campaign branded this initiative across the City, to gain attention for the revision of the Salt Lake City Open Space Plan, last adopted in 1992.<sup>2</sup> A significant portion of the project is the community engagement process. The process includes multiple public engagement windows to best solicit input from Salt Lake City residents, visitors, and other stakeholders on how they envision parks and public lands in the next 10 to 20 years.

This report outlines the first window of community engagement in the Salt Lake City Public Lands Master Plan. In order to achieve a substantial sample size, the University of Utah Masters in City and Metropolitan Planning (MCMP) students, facilitated by Dr. Ivis García, collaborated with SLC Public Lands Division and Design Workshop.

Twenty three students, five SLC Public Lands staff, and two Design Workshop staff collaborated to create, distribute, and receive public input. The collaboration of three different entities allowed for a robust engagement period, which cast a wide net across the City and beyond.

Collaborating with the University of Utah provided SLC Public Lands staff support in the engagement process. Students were able to devote time outside of the classroom to

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<sup>2</sup> Smith, S., J. B. Jorgensen, and J. Branson. 1992. “Salt Lake City Open Space Plan.” Salt Lake City, UT: For Salt Lake City Planning Division.

<http://www.slcdocs.com/openspace/92OpenSpaceMasterPlan.small.pdf>.

engage the public in real life input on peoples’ feelings toward public lands. Students were energized and engaged with the public beyond their connections to the University. Additionally, bilingual students allowed for better engagement with Spanish speaking participants. The quantity of input achieved by this partnership and the quality of engagement was remarkable—4,368 responses to the online and in person survey, 215 social media posts, and 54 focus group participants. Below we offer a summary of these community engagement activities.

## ENGAGEMENT WINDOW #1

The Public Lands Master Plan’s first engagement window includes intercept and online surveys, business, and organization outreach, and focus group facilitation. See the community engagement timeline in Figure 3.

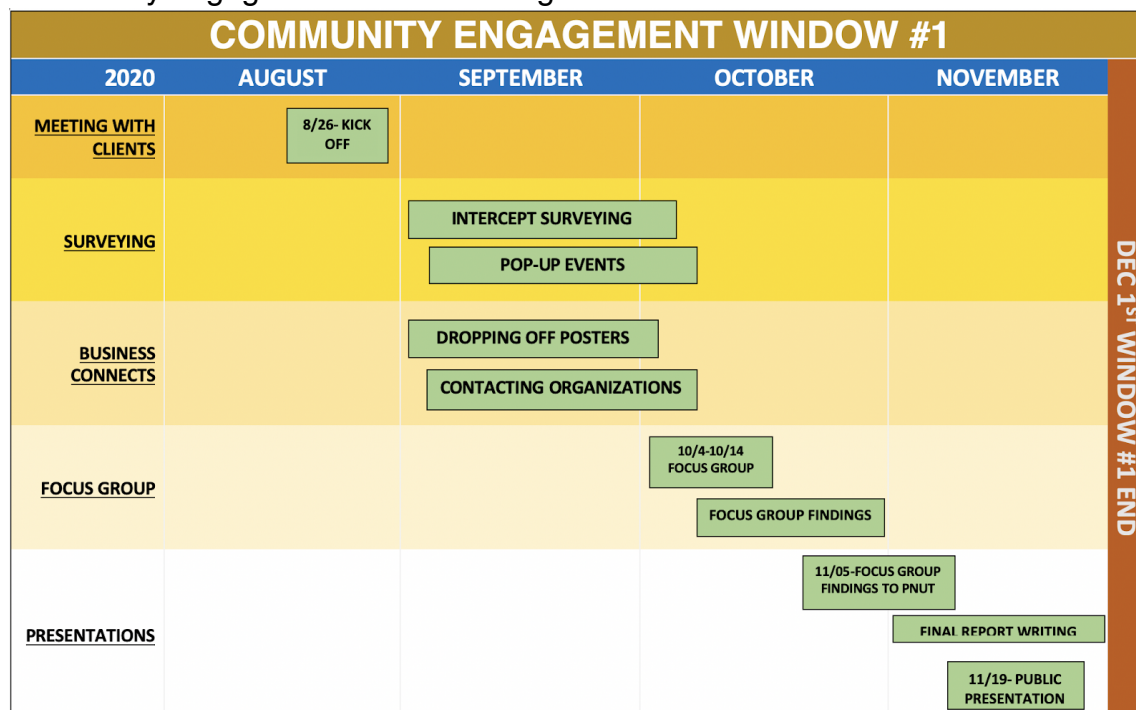


Figure 3: Community Engagement Timeline

## Intercept Survey

The intercept survey included twelve questions, which were intended to be asked by an MCMP student to a member of the public (see Appendix A). The questions aimed to better understand how individuals and families utilize public spaces, specifically trails, natural areas, and public parks. Surveys were distributed across the City and in a variety of spaces. The intercept survey’s goal was to physically intercept public land users and gather feedback on what is working and what could be improved on when reimagining public places. The details of the results are outlined in Chapter 3 of this final report.

As part of the intercept surveys, students, in conjunction with SLC Public Lands Division, attended pop-up events in various locations across the City. These events



partnered with food vendors to attract people to give input on their vision for City parks and open spaces. Students received over 600 responses from members of the public throughout the intercept surveying.

## **Online Survey**

In a world that many people have moved to be virtual, online engagement was an essential tool utilized to gather input. Students made use of their connections with organizations, groups, businesses, and other avenues to share online information about the Reimagine Nature campaign. The online survey was about 15 minutes long, asking more open ended questions than the intercept survey (see Appendix B). Through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Linked In, Reddit, and more, students were able to market the campaign beyond SLC public areas. Students reached hundreds of businesses and organizations, passing out flyers, posters, and postcards resulting in close to 4,000 responses.

## **Focus Groups**

The final component of the first engagement window was the facilitation of focus groups. The focus groups dove deeper into questions that uncover current feelings towards parks and open space, stewardship, and equity in a more intimate setting (see Appendix D). The focus group questions are derivatives of the original survey, adapted to the meeting format. Students broke up into six groups and facilitated more than 50 participants. The majority of participants were from Central City and west side neighborhoods (Rose Park, Glendale, Poplar Grove, Fairpark, Jordan Meadows, and Westpointe). These community areas were chosen because they tend to be lower income and more ethnically and racially diverse than other areas in the City. Moreover, MCMP has historical connections with these communities, which facilitated engagement. Community council members, leadership groups, and other community oriented organizations helped organize participants that would best represent their community. Utilizing a full hour and a half allowed students and community members to have candid conversations about the future of public lands and improve social, environmental, and physical elements within these spaces.

## ***METHODS***

The primary method of gathering community input was the distribution of the Reimagine Nature survey. In collaboration with Design Workshop, the Public Lands Division developed the survey questions based on research and previous surveys that identified constituents' values. The resulting survey was then digitized for distribution in both English and Spanish using ArcGIS Survey 123. A total of 23 MCMP University of Utah students distributed the survey in three primary methods, by (1) intercept (in person) interviews, (2) online engagement, and (3) organizational outreach. Intercept interviews refer to in person solicitation of the survey initiated through a cold approach in a public space. The 23 students each conducted at least 30 of these interviews. Parks, trails, and grocery stores were among the variety of public areas where they sought feedback. The surveyors also had QR codes linked to the surveys, in both English and Spanish, to

offer potential respondents who did not feel comfortable with the interview setting for any reason.

In addition to the intercept interviews, each student contacted at least ten local organizations by email, phone, or in person. The purpose of these interactions was to introduce local and regional community stakeholders to the initiative. Restaurants, coffee shops, apartment complexes, gyms, cultural centers, senior centers, and recreational centers are among the blend of organizations contacted by students in this method. Students requested that the stakeholder post a Reimagine Nature survey flyer in their establishment, distribute the link to the digital survey by email, and distribute postcards from their location during these interactions.

Lastly, the students distributed the digital survey link on social media platforms of their choosing. In this method, students posted the survey link to a minimum of five different group pages, not repetitive with the organizations contacted in the second method of engagement. Facebook, Reddit, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter were among the platforms used to distribute the survey in this manner. The methods are explained in Figure 4.

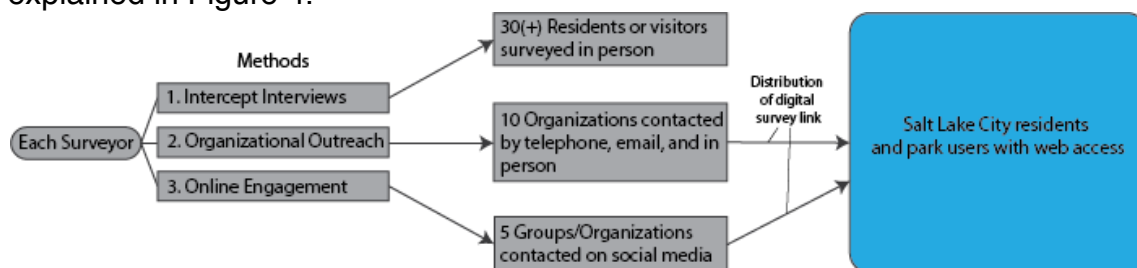


Figure 4: Conceptual Model Of Methods

For the focus groups, organization partnerships were leveraged to reach traditionally underrepresented groups. Using a script with questions adapted from the original survey, the students facilitated six different micro engagements (focus group discussions) between October 8th and October 15th. These meetings were roughly an hour and a half in length, with about ten community members or representatives in attendance, who were from or affiliated with a traditionally underrepresented community. Due to the coinciding and ongoing pandemic, the meetings were hosted through the online platform Zoom.

## ***WHY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS***

Community engagement seeks to provide the community with a voice. It is truly the only way to understand cultures, desires, and needs essential to prosperous communities. Engaging community members can encourage and support involvement in project planning. A project with no community input will inevitably be unsuccessful. Engagement can reveal diversity, understanding, new ideas, and support for a project. The SLC Public Lands Master Plan aims explicitly to provide positive spaces for the public further. Therefore, the public should be the loudest voice in the project and be consulted throughout the creation and implementation of the plan.



Community engagement is a two way communication and interaction tool. The goal of the SLC Public Lands Master Plan is to outline the public vision for open spaces. Engaging the public is essential for this plan because it aims to be a plan for the community. By outlining multiple engagement windows, SLC Public Lands Division can truly understand public concerns, needs, and values to then incorporate into the final plan. The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum—inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower—provides a framework for engaging community members depending on what is the public participation goal and the promise to the public. Figure 5 describes this framework in the context of the Public Lands Master Plan.

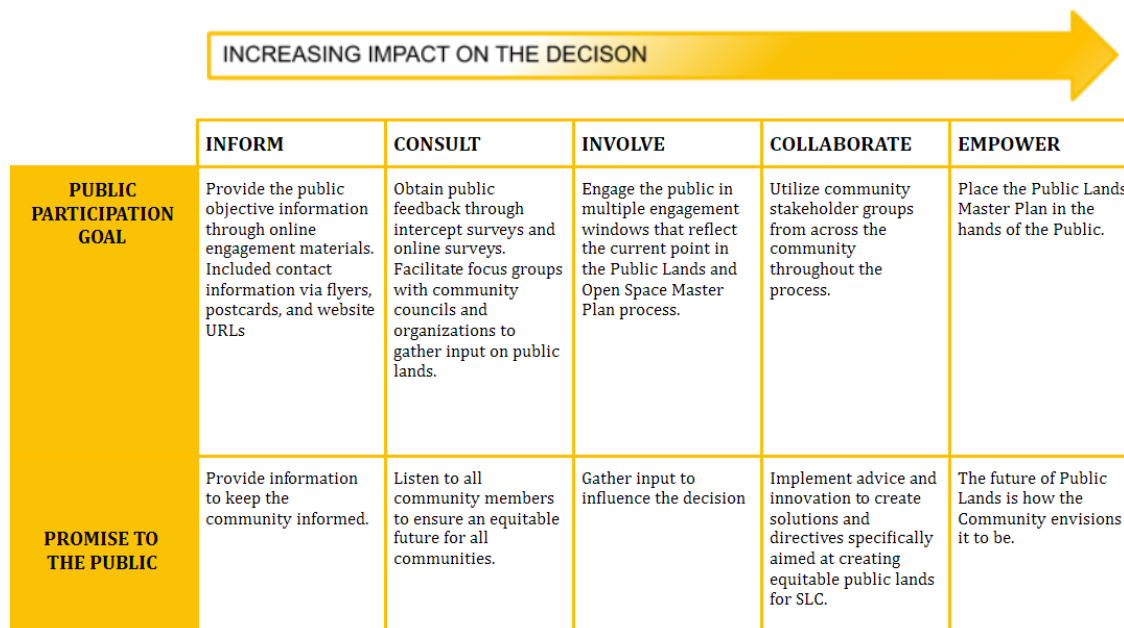


Figure 5: International Association Of Public Participation's Spectrum

## EQUITY MATTERS

The Public Lands Master Plan aims to build a more significant relationship between all residents of Salt Lake City and public lands. Salt Lake City is diverse and culturally rich, with over 80 different languages spoken throughout the City. Although diverse, Salt Lake City, like many other cities across the U.S., struggles to represent different cultures equally and equitably. The City's composition is relatively segregated, with less ethnically and racially diverse higher income residents, primarily residing on the east bench of the City. While lower income residents and more people of color live in the west side neighborhoods—that is, Rose Park, Glendale, Poplar Grove, Fairpark, Jordan Meadows, and Westpointe.

Because the plan focuses on creating a better future for all residents, it was essential to concentrate on equity. It spans beyond creating an equal amount of open space in each neighborhood and focusing on each neighborhood's wants or needs. The only way to access this input is to spend the energy and focus on gaining everyone's perspective. When evaluating the feedback submitted, it was clear that there were some gaps in residents giving input, primarily from the City's western districts. Identifying this

gap prior to the engagement window closing was vital because it allowed for the SLC Public Lands Division to redirect efforts and focus on these areas. Additional events were created and the survey timeline was extended by two weeks to solicit more input from west side neighborhoods. This evaluation of process, while in progress, was important in the lens of equity because it allowed for re-evaluation of priorities and a better understanding of what all communities want for their public lands and open spaces.

The focus groups specifically made equity a priority by bringing together community organizations that were predominantly underrepresented in the initial surveys. The conversations that sparked between students and community members led to some of the most valuable comments about existing disparities within public lands. Continuing to spend time with these groups will be essential in creating a genuinely equitable plan for the future of public lands and open spaces in Salt Lake City.

## **GLOSSARY**

Please see below a glossary which defines several of the terms used in our report.

- **Active transportation:** Self-propelled, human-powered mode of transportation, such as walking or bicycling.
- **Biodiversity:** The variety of life in the world or in a particular habitat or ecosystem.
- **Carbon footprint:** The amount of carbon dioxide and other carbon compounds emitted due to the consumption of fossil fuels by a particular person, group, etc.
- **Culture:** The integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social group.
- **Diversity:** Diversity is an inclusive concept and encompasses race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexuality, ability, educational attainment, spiritual beliefs, creed, culture, tribal affiliation, nationality, immigration status, political beliefs, and veteran status, among others.
- **Equality:** The quality of being fair and impartial.
- **Equity:** The state of being equal in status, rights, and opportunities.
- **Ethnicity:** Ethnicity determines if a person is of Hispanic origin. For this reason, ethnicity is broken out into categories, of Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino in the U.S. Census. Ethnicity can also be considered a social group that shares common cultural values (e.g., religion, language, customs, etc.).
- **Gender identity:** A person's deeply felt, inherent sense of being a boy, a man, or male; a girl, a woman, or female, or an alternative gender (e.g., genderqueer, gender non-conforming, gender neutral) that may or may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth.
- **Gender:** The attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex.
- **Master plan:** A comprehensive plan of action.



- **Native species:** A species that has been observed in the form of a naturally occurring and sustaining population in historical times.
- **Open Space Zone:** Land that is in the inventory of parks and natural lands, and it protected from development.
- **Public lands:** Land that is accessible to the public and is under the umbrella of the Open Space Zone.
- **Race:** The racial categories included in the survey reflect a social definition of race recognized in the U.S. and is not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. It is understood that the categories of race include racial and national origin or sociocultural groups. Respondents may choose to report more than one race to indicate their racial mixture, such as “American Indian” and “white.” Respondents who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino or Spanish may be of any race.
- **Socioeconomic:** Relating to or concerned with the interaction of social and economic factors.
- **Stewardship:** Taking care of something such as public lands.
- **Urban forest:** Wooded areas within the city.
- **Waterwise plants:** Plants that evolved in regions with lower precipitation and requires less water.



# CHAPTER 2

## INTERCEPT INTERVIEWS & ONLINE ENGAGEMENT





## CHAPTER 2: INTERCEPT INTERVIEWS AND ONLINE ENGAGEMENT



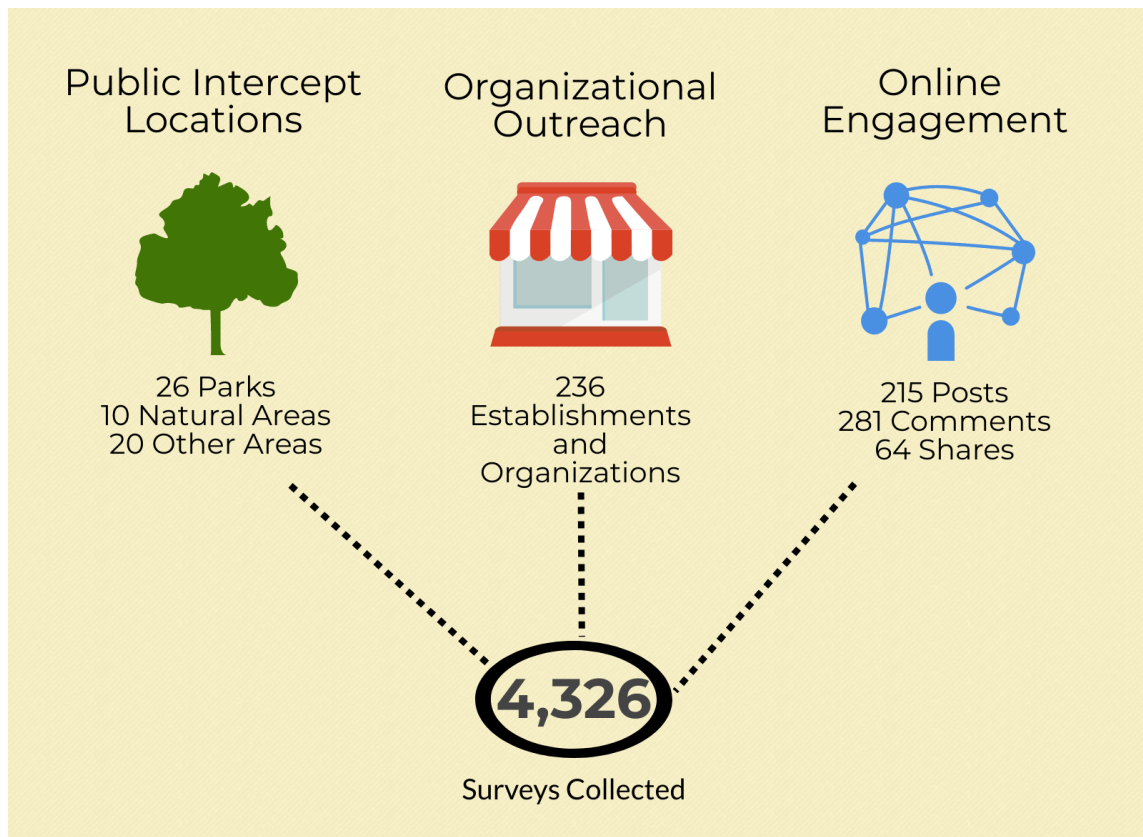
### OVERVIEW

We focused on several strategic forms of public participation during this first round of community engagement for the Salt Lake City Public Lands Master Plan. In this chapter, we will review our experiences with intercept interviews and online engagement, including organizational outreach and social media use. As previously mentioned, this is the first window of community engagement, and further engagement opportunities will arise as the planning process continues.

Through this outreach, we were able to have genuine conversations with residents and stakeholders invested in the future of public lands. Due to the unusual circumstances under which this engagement took place, we used creative advertising solutions to reach as many community members as possible. Figure 6 summarizes how a total of 4,326 surveys were collected.

First, social media was extensively used to reach groups and individuals who may have a vested interest in our public lands and their future. Students made 215 posts, which resulted in 281 comments and 61 shares. Online engagement was highest when a request to share information with followers was accompanied by an image and caption ready for posting (see Figure 7).

The responsiveness of businesses and organizations, which were contacted online and through social media, varied significantly. Brick and mortar closures, due to the pandemic, limited the number of places willing to display signs or advertise the community engagement process. Still, students placed flyers in 236 establishments and organizations (see Figure 8).



**Figure 6: Summary Of Intercept Interviews And Online Engagement**

Lastly, we focused on completing intercept interviews. This type of interviewing involves approaching people in person to ask survey questions—literally intercepting a sample of the population in public places. As a class, we visited 26 parks, ten natural areas, and 20 other areas such as supermarkets, breweries, etc. to conduct these intercept interviews. These interviews proved to be challenging for a variety of reasons. Some of us had previous experience in engaging strangers, and others of us did not. However, events, including pop-ups, that involved food were particularly successful in drawing crowds. One effective strategy identified was giving food vouchers to participants after their completion of a survey.



Figure 7: Creative Social Media Post



Figure 8: Flyers Hung In Communal Laundry

Regardless of prior experience, there was undoubtedly a learning curve when it came to navigating COVID-19. We experienced a general uneasiness to speak in person and varying degrees of comfort in social distancing. Communication difficulties due to necessary precautions for the ongoing pandemic ranged from hearing challenges through mask wearing to privacy concerns from not passing the paper to the interviewee to fill out demographic questions. We found that, in general, older adults were more willing to complete the intercept interviews than were younger adults. Having an online option accessible through a flyer or postcard was helpful for those who either didn't feel comfortable answering questions in person or didn't have the time.

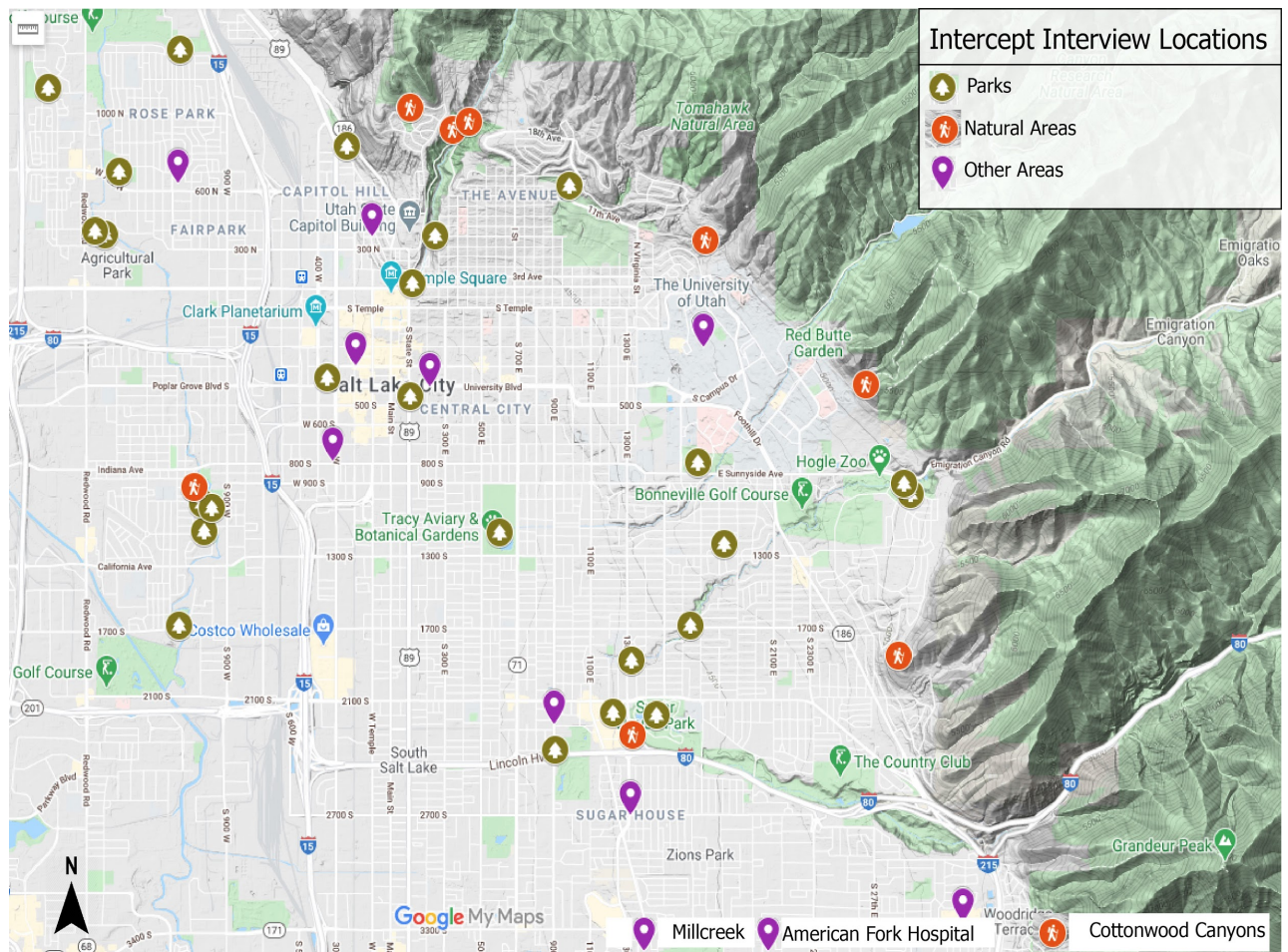
Given the number and variety of survey responses, though, it does not appear that COVID-19 stifled participation in this community engagement process. In fact, it may even have emphasized the importance of our nearby natural spaces.

### ***PUBLIC INTERCEPT INTERVIEWS***

Figure 2.4 shows all of the locations where students collected intercept interviews. As a class, we completed 635 intercept interviews at parks, trails, and open spaces, outside of businesses, such as grocery stores, and at pop-up events hosted by the SLC Public Lands Division (see Figures 9-13).







Intercept interviews were completed at 26 different parks, ten natural areas, and 20 other areas (such as on sidewalks, in neighborhoods, or outside of businesses). We attended 16 different pop-up events and performed intercept interviews at each. We also targeted eight grocery stores in various locations throughout the City in an effort to survey a representative sample of the population.



Figure 12: Pop-up Outside Smith's, Northwest Quadrant



Figure 13: Jordan Park Pop-up Event

Overall, there was immense value in gathering feedback from residents on the future of Salt Lake City Public Lands. Most who chose to engage did so eagerly and showed a tremendous amount of interest. It was evident that many participants had not considered some of the survey questions prior to being asked, and several had not heard the term “master plan” before. The engagement efforts were great opportunities to share information about the SLC Public Lands Master Plan and planning processes in general. A couple of interviewees answered the survey questions with such aggression and anger towards the City that it was difficult to continue the interview, but this was great practice for effectively dealing with the variety of responses that such situations can cause. This community engagement process was an important component of making public policy decisions in collaboration with communities. Challenges and recommendations can be found below.

*“These were young people using the skatepark that were actually very excited to take the survey without the promise of frozen ice because they were interested in civic responsibility. There were several events in the park that evening which added to the diversity of the interviewees.”*  
**Delaney Sillman, MCMP student**

## **ORGANIZATIONAL OUTREACH**

To promote the online survey, posters and other advertising materials were created by the Salt Lake City Public Lands Division and distributed by students to organizations and businesses via email and in person. As Figures 14 and 15 show these entities agreed to post the advertisements in their establishments and on their social media pages. MCMP students reached out to 236 establishments throughout the Salt Lake



City area, including grocery stores, nonprofit organizations, coffee shops, laundromats, apartment complexes, public services organizations, and restaurants. Figure 16 shows a map of the organizations that students contacted.



Figure 14: Sharing Flyers And Postcards



Figure 15: Community Board

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many students reached out to organizations via email. There was a mixed success as many organizations did not reply or forwarded the email to another person in the organization with no follow up. Some students were able to reach out and have the organization post the survey on their social media pages. Most students found success through in person contact at establishments. Through these interactions, they were able to post flyers on doors and bulletin boards or leave postcards with management and employees.

Local small businesses were most receptive to posting the surveys and advertisements in their establishments along with organizations that were tied to natural lands directly, such as Wasatch Community Gardens. Places targeted by students included organizations located on Salt Lake City's west side and those that represent underserved communities.



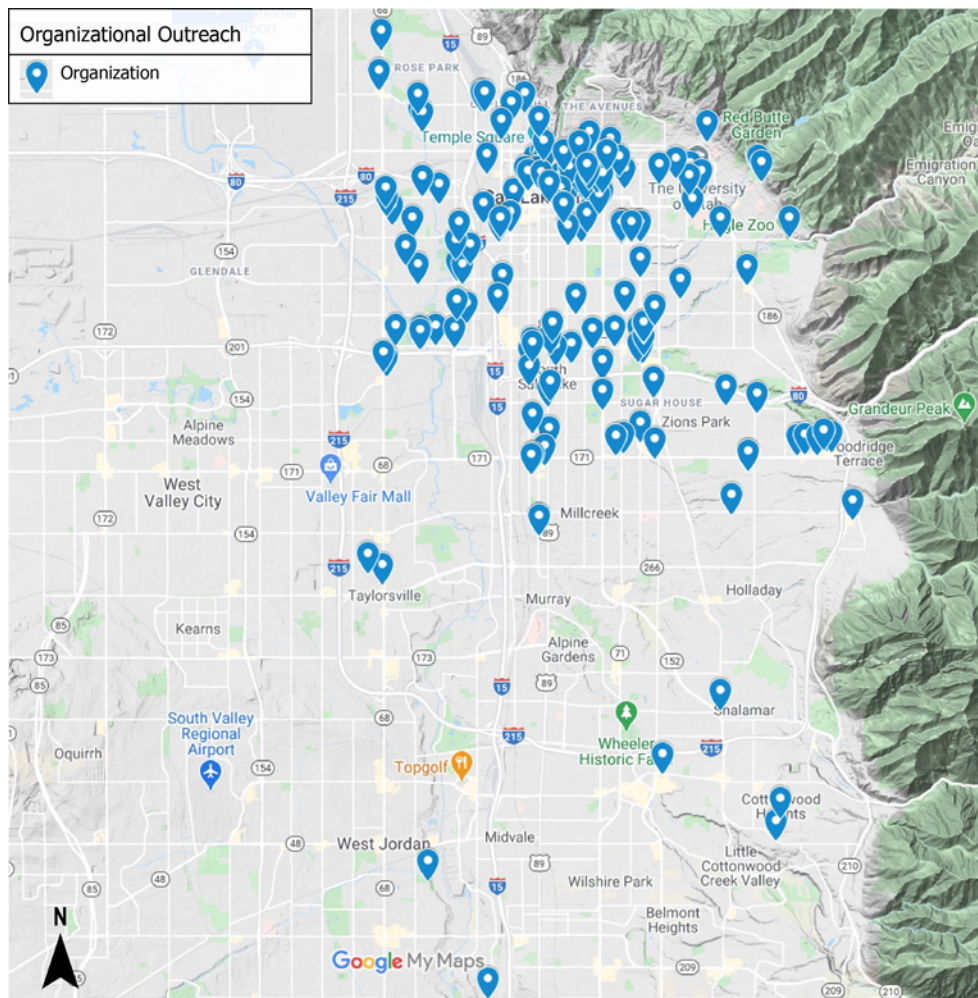


Figure 16: Map Of Contacted Organizations

Generally, students had positive experiences with the organizations they reached out to and felt it made an impact on the number of online survey responses and the diversity of the respondents. Bringing awareness to organizations now can help SLC Public Lands elicit comments from them in the future and gain support for the approval and implementation of the Public Lands Master Plan.

## ***ONLINE ENGAGEMENT***

Students made 215 posts on social media to promote the online survey through social media engagement (see Figures 17 and 18 as examples). Platforms most used include Reddit, Facebook, and Instagram. Other platforms, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Snapchat, were also used. Much success was found using Reddit as groups featured large audiences and most posts were not taken down. Facebook and Instagram also had varying levels of success with opportunities to share with friend groups and other groups in the local area. The postings received 281 comments and 64 shares in total.



Figure 17: Example Of Facebook Bilingual Survey Post

The groups contacted via social media include Females of the Front, Outdoor Afro Salt Lake City, Bike Utah, Utah Outdoors, and People of Color Hiking Group. Most students found that reaching out to organizations was more effective than posting on their personal accounts.

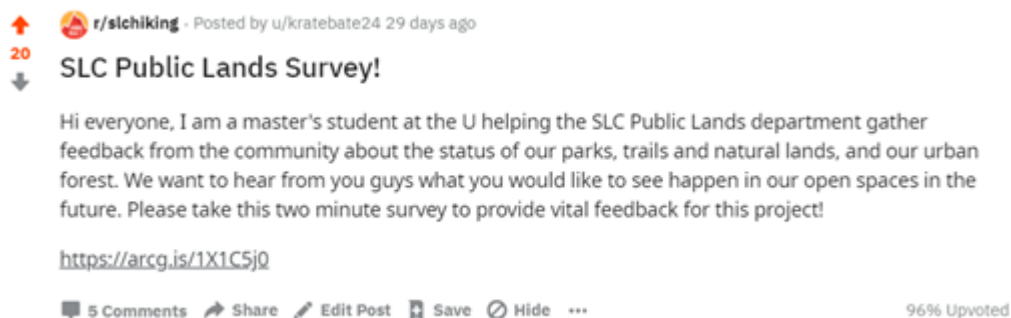
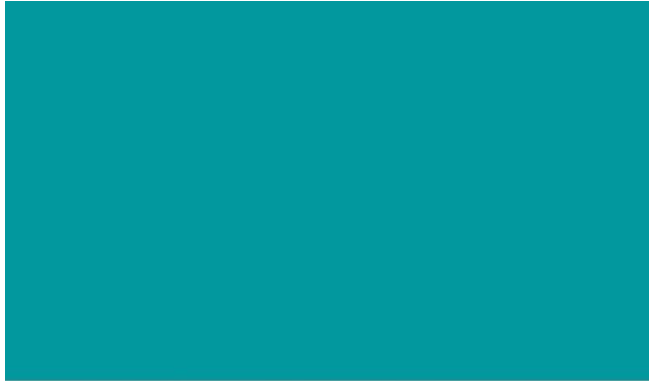


Figure 18: Example Of Reddit Post



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations based on our involvement in the Salt Lake City Public Lands Master Plan's first community engagement window. We focus on both content based and procedural feedback based on observations and comments from the public.

### Intercept Interviews

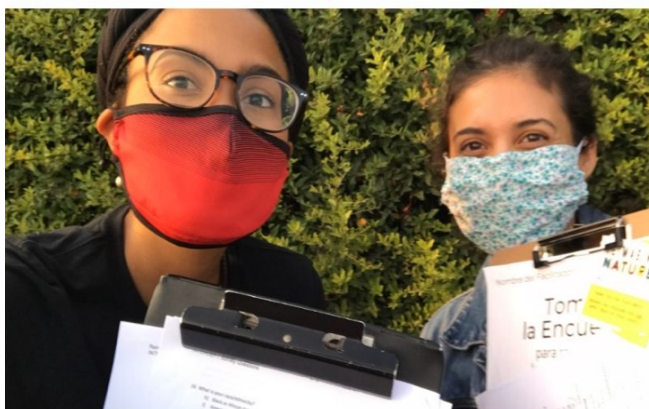
#### Content

Through the course of conducting interviews, several issues with the text and flow of the survey emerged. First, potential survey recipients should be asked where they live before answering survey questions. Several times, it wasn't until the demographic questions at the end that interviewees revealed they reside outside of Salt Lake County or Utah. While feedback from visitors could be valuable, the survey questions were prepared with residents in mind.

Another issue with the survey that surfaced was the use of terms like "stewardship," "equity," "biodiversity," "master plan," and "public lands." These words often required a synonym or description to achieve full comprehension by the interviewee.

Recommendations for future surveys include placing some vetting questions at the start of the survey and containing more accessible language or explanation of technical terms. These issues do, however, represent a prime opportunity to incorporate an information campaign about the survey to explain terminology and basic planning processes.

If geospatial data about where respondents completed the intercept





interview and where they live is important for future analysis. The online surveys had x and y coordinate data for where people live, which is great for analysis. However, the intercept surveys only captured general information about the community areas and home zip codes of participants, rather than street addresses, which proved insufficient for analysis of the survey's geographical comprehensiveness. Furthermore, interviewers were told to collect general information about the location of interviews, such as which park or public space, rather than specific geographic coordinates.

Finally, the length of the intercept interview should be reduced for future rounds of engagement. We recommend that the total time for each intercept interview be limited to no more than eight minutes. This allows for capturing detailed responses without overburdening interviewers and interviewees. Additionally, a recent study done by Survey Monkey found that “survey abandon rates increase for surveys that [take] more than seven to eight minutes to complete.”<sup>3</sup>

## Procedure

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic did not aid interviewers in collecting data. Parks and public land areas are places where masks are recommended but not mandatory. Most of the interviewers did not feel comfortable approaching unmasked community members which limited the number of potential interviewees. Individual interviewers were not supplied with masks for disbursement, and disposable masks were only offered to unmasked persons at certain pop-up events. Providing masks certainly helps mitigate the issue, but not everyone is willing to wear a mask. Better measures to protect student representatives are recommended for future engagement activities during a pandemic.

Based on the somewhat limited geospatial data we have, there is an apparent bias regarding where the intercept interviews occurred. Though some location data only indicated a general area (such as around Downtown or in Millcreek), a vast majority were completed at parks as opposed to on trails and golf courses or in urban forests and natural areas. Throughout the process, we received several comments about this planning process being focused too much on parks and not enough on natural lands and things like biodiversity. This seems to directly result from project team members utilizing the word “park” as synonymous with “public lands,” which it clearly is not. It is recommended that the term public lands is defined and used appropriately moving forward.

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<sup>3</sup> Chudoba, Brent. n.d. “How Long Should a Survey Be? What Is the Ideal Survey Length?” SurveyMonkey. Accessed December 17, 2020.  
[https://www.surveymonkey.com/curiosity/survey\\_completion\\_times/](https://www.surveymonkey.com/curiosity/survey_completion_times/).

## Organizational Outreach

### Follow Up, Initial Contact

Most felt the initial list of places to engage with was small in number and could be difficult for students from all over the world to know which businesses to contact. Recommendations included producing a larger list of businesses along with noting which places have been contacted in the past. Keeping a list can also help facilitate future interactions with businesses that have been involved with the Master Plan update.

As noted earlier, emailing was generally difficult for students. It may be useful to host a training briefly on how to market to businesses through email. Another recommendation from another student was that if an organization does not respond to an email and has a physical location then more follow up should be done by visiting the establishment in person. With COVID-19, in person interactions were complicated, but this may change for future engagements.

If organizations had followed up questions concerning the survey many students were unaware of the formal contact information for the Public Lands Division to share with the public. It was made aware from the Salt Lake Public Lands Division that such a formal email did exist (info@reimagineatureslc.com.) It is then recommended that the contact information should be better emphasized to engagement representatives to provide a better experience for follow up with organizations.

### The Approach

When a poster was passed on to a manager there wasn't always a clear sense that they understood the meaning behind the poster because there was no direct contact with the student. Many posters that went through the approval process were never posted or denied. One recommendation made was to provide a letter or document created formally with Reimagine Nature branding that explains the reasoning behind the poster for those approving and may not have any contact with the student. This template can also be useful for contacting organizations via email.

Most of our advertisements were created in English which was a disadvantage to some of our target populations, especially Spanish speaking residents. Later some students created a Spanish version of the poster, which was beneficial. For future engagement sessions to be more inclusive, providing at least English and Spanish materials are valuable. Some also felt that the posters were too generic and that intentional design reflecting the audience, as in the people who visit that particular business or organization, should be considered. This could include refreshing different posters at establishments or make catchphrases that connect to the type of business.

## Online Engagement

### Social Outreach

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of online engagement for students was that most of the people that they connected with online were not from the Salt Lake City area. This was noted in the prior section that students found more success with organizations than they did with their personal contacts. There were several groups and organizations that many students joined from around the area that were searchable on social media platforms, but many posts were taken down because the survey did not directly relate to the organization's goals. Some recommendations include using the list of groups students found on this report when reaching out online in future engagements, especially for students with no online connections to Salt Lake City.

### Incentives

A handful of social media posts garnered some attention, but most lacked engagement. Many surveys are posted on social media platforms which can be overwhelming to the average user who may ignore them. As noted in the intercept interviews and focus groups, incentives such as treats and gift cards were very successful. The same incentives can be applied online. For example, when a person enters the survey, they enter themselves in a drawing to win a gift card. This could greatly increase online feedback. To determine which social media posts are successful, it may be useful to include a question on the online survey to ask where they heard about the survey or use trackable hyperlinks.

### Media Available

Other than the survey itself and the Reimagine Nature engagement website, very few media resources were available for posting. Students need to be creative with the way they post or share images to reach a greater audience. One recommendation to garner more outreach by students is for the Salt Lake City Public Lands Division to create a video that can be shared on social media. A YouTube page with multiple videos for educational and advertising purposes can also help create a better online presence for the Salt Lake City Public Lands Master Plan.





# CHAPTER 3

## SURVEY ANALYSIS



# CHAPTER 3: SURVEY ANALYSIS

## OVERVIEW

As discussed in previous chapters, the Salt Lake City Public Lands Division, with Design Workshop as a consultant, created an online and in person survey to get feedback to update the Public Lands Master Plan. The Master Plan will guide the funding, investment, and improvements of urban forestry, parks, trails, and open spaces for the next 10 to 20 years. That being said, the surveys, which can be found in Appendix A and B included questions to understand people's priorities. As part of the public engagement strategies, graduate students from the City and Metropolitan Planning Department at the University of Utah were entrusted to analyze the surveys collected during this engagement window.

Surveys were collected using two methods: in person intercept interviews and the online main survey. The intercept interviews were conducted by intercepting participants during the day in public parks, trails, and other open spaces. Contrastingly, the main survey was executed exclusively through online participation. The surveys were collected across Salt Lake City to gain a geographically representative sample of the population. The two different survey methods were collected from August 26, 2020, until October 15, 2020. During this period, the students collected public input through 635 intercept interviews and 3,733 main surveys. Data was collected at parks, public lands, trails, and other natural areas within Salt Lake City's boundaries. With a sample size of 4,326 respondents in total, students conducted a demographic and spatial analysis.

We found that the survey methods illustrate a predominant racial and income category dependent on the type of survey conducted. The respondents in the main survey were mostly white males, older, and with higher incomes. Younger, more racially and ethnically diverse populations with lower incomes were primarily reached through the intercept interview method. An analysis of the main survey showed that white respondents were more likely than Latinos, Asians, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans or Alaska Natives to report having more access to public parks and other natural areas. This is also true for individuals with higher incomes compared to those with lower incomes. It is important to note the limitations of our sampling method including geographical and non-response bias.

Chapter 3 seeks to illustrate the outcomes of the Community Engagement Window #1, which was crucial in identifying the community's vision for the Master Plan. First, this chapter will provide an analysis of demographic characteristics in Salt Lake City. Second, it will compare and contrast the responses from the intercept survey and the main survey. Third, it will show in a GIS map where intercept surveys were conducted based on community area and zip code, compared to population per square mile. Lastly, it will provide recommendations to public lands from these analyses and identify opportunities and challenges.

In the end, we recommend that the Public Lands Division continue their community engagement efforts to represent Salt Lake City's population more fully and in a way that can be used for cross-analysis comparisons of income, racial, and ethnic differences. Future efforts in data collection and analysis would help understand community aspirations and consideration of the Salt Lake City Public Lands Master Plan's long-term impacts.

## MAIN SURVEY

### Gender Identity

Of the 3,771 total respondents, 97 percent responded to the gender identity question. Of the 3,621 who responded, 1,948 (46 percent) reported their gender as male, 1,532 (41.7 percent) as female, and the rest reported their gender as non-binary (3 percent) or preferred not to say. This is a close representation of gender in Salt Lake City. According to the 2019 U.S. Census, 51 percent of Salt Lake residents identify as males, and 49 percent identify as female. See Figure 19.

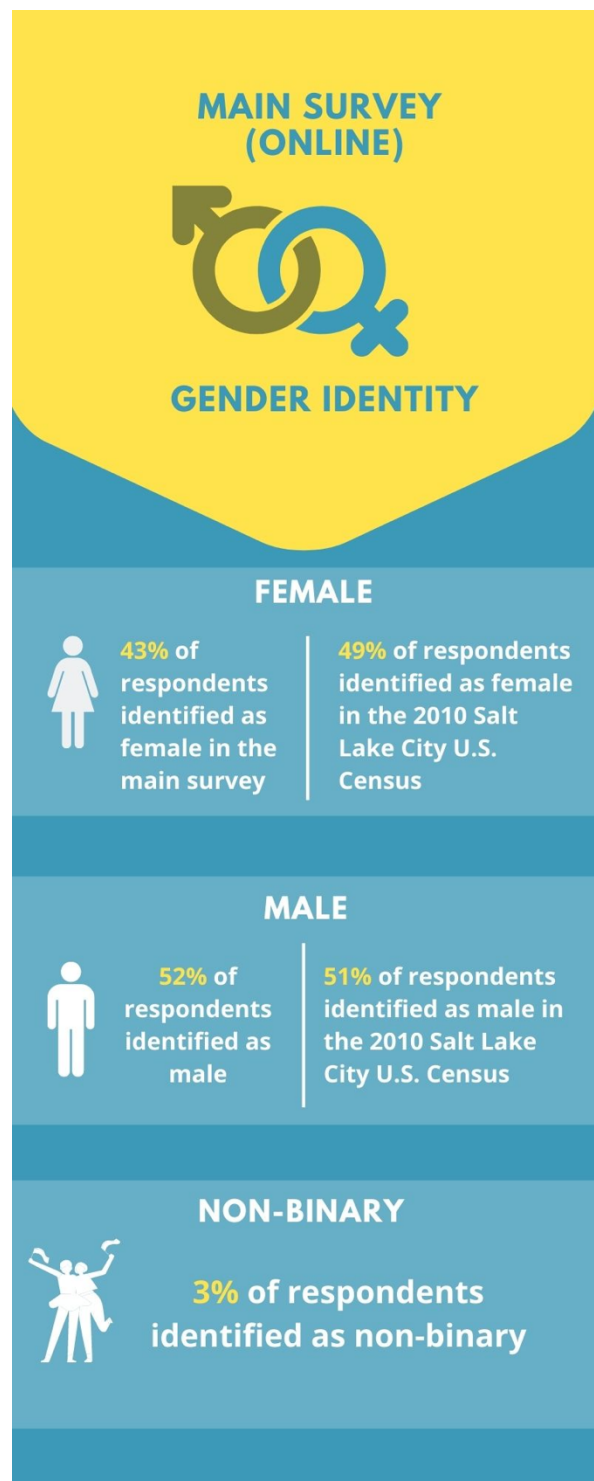


Figure 19: Census Data And Main Survey Data Identifying Respondents' Gender



## Age

Figure 20 shows main survey respondents by age; 98 percent responded to the age identity question. The main survey received more responses from older adults (refer to figure 3.2). Most respondents were between 31-40 years old (26.7 percent), followed by 22-30 years old (21.6 percent), and 61 years or older (19.4 percent). According to the 2019 U.S. Census, about 68 percent of the Salt Lake City population is between 18 and 65 years old and 20.6 percent of the Salt Lake City population is younger than 18 years old.

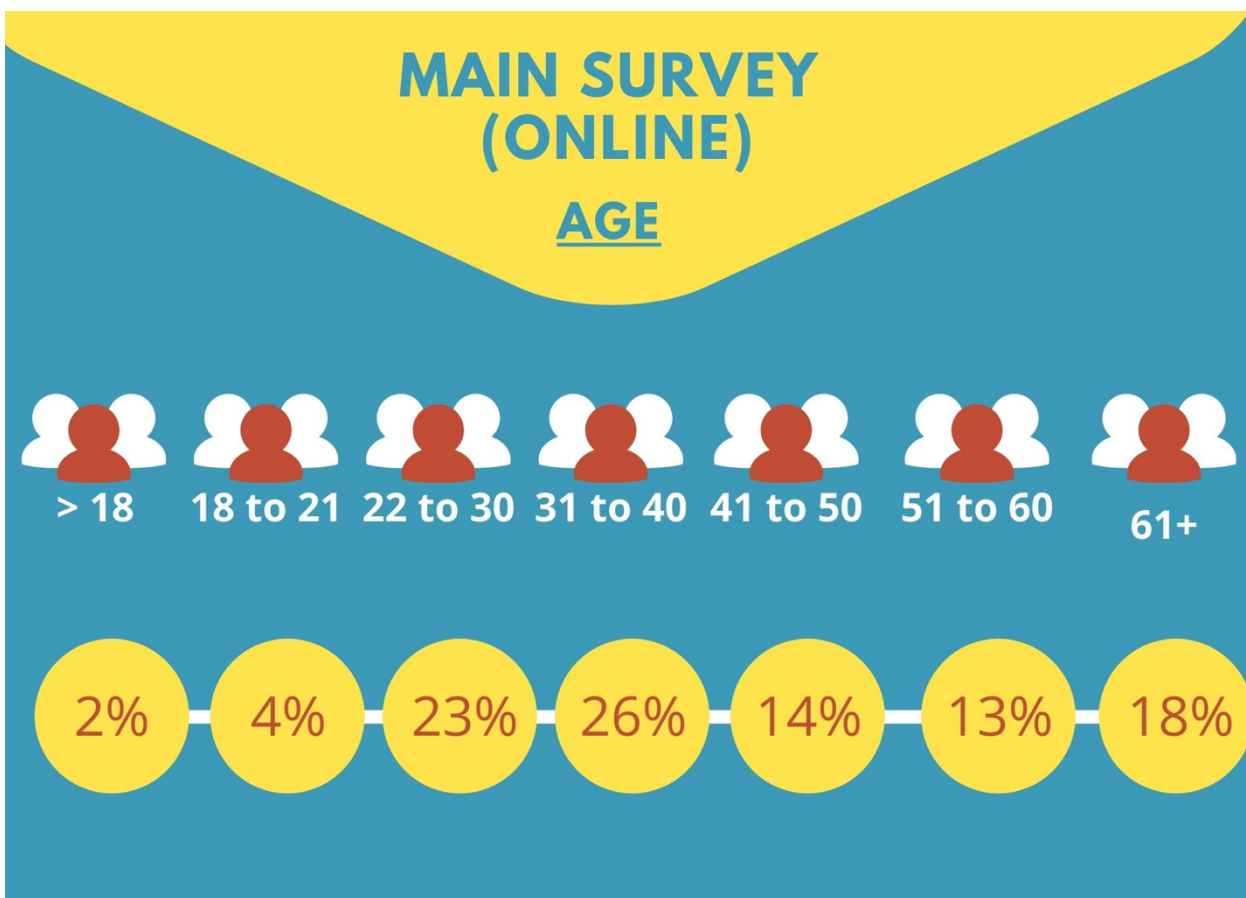


Figure 20: Main Survey Identifying Survey Respondents' Age

## Race/Hispanic Origin

Figure 21 shows that most main survey respondents identified themselves as white (85 percent). The second largest group identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (7 percent) followed by as Black/African American, Asians and other at 2 percent, respectively. Native American/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander were 1 percent both. This is a relatively close representation of race and Hispanic origin in Salt Lake City.

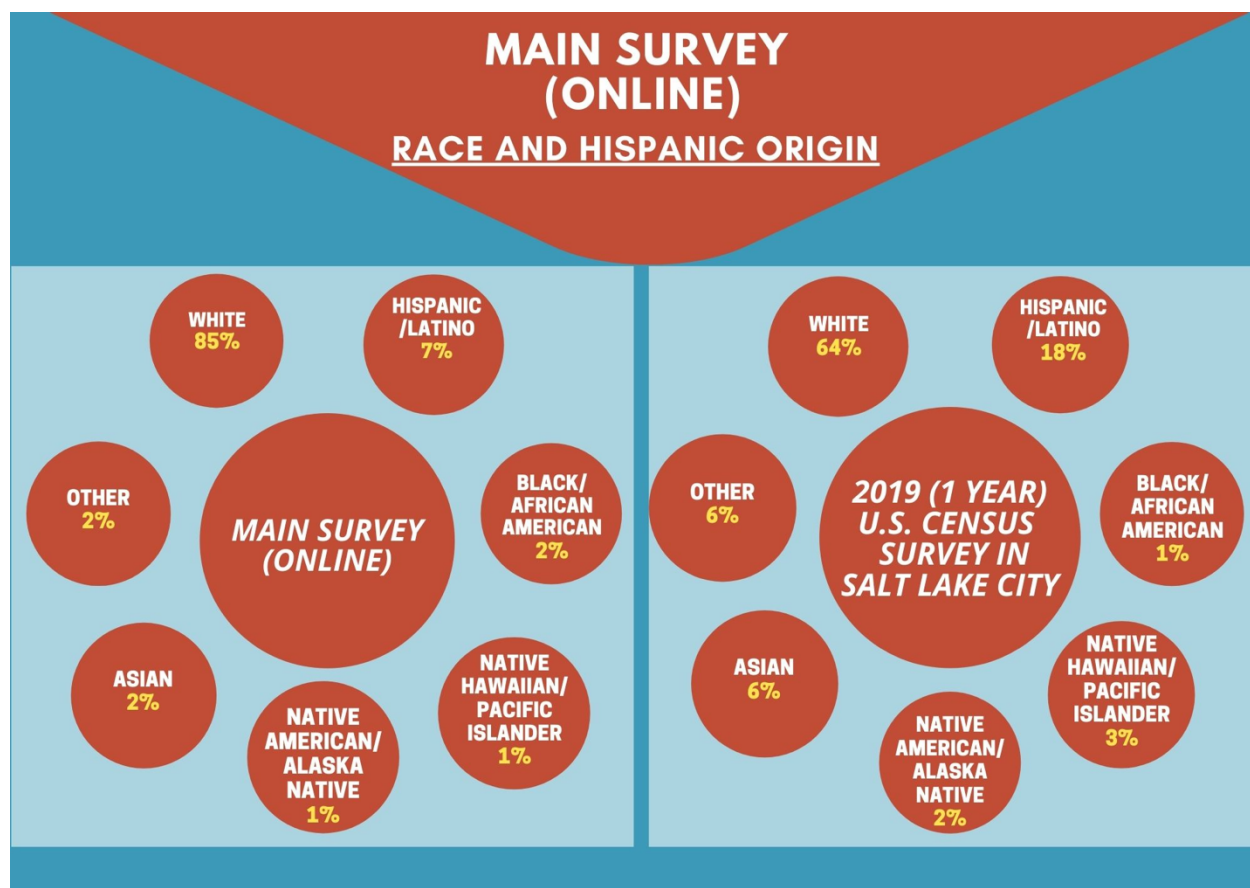


Figure 21: Main Survey Race And Hispanic Origin

## Income

A total of 3,490 participants in the main survey (94 percent) provided their household income. Meanwhile, the intercept survey had a 91 percent response rate. As shown in Figure 11, those who answered the main survey had higher incomes than those that answered the intercept survey. In fact, the highest percentage of respondents (26 percent) had an income of \$150,000 and over. The Salt Lake City, 2014-2018 American Community Survey indicates that Salt Lake City's median income is \$56,370 (adjusted for inflation to 2018). This information suggests that individuals who have taken the main survey have a higher income than the City's median income. Our findings also indicate that there is a digital divide. This is a major limitation of the main survey. Studies have found that income and internet access are correlated. To ameliorate this problem, we conducted in person intercept interviews. These will be discussed later on this chapter.

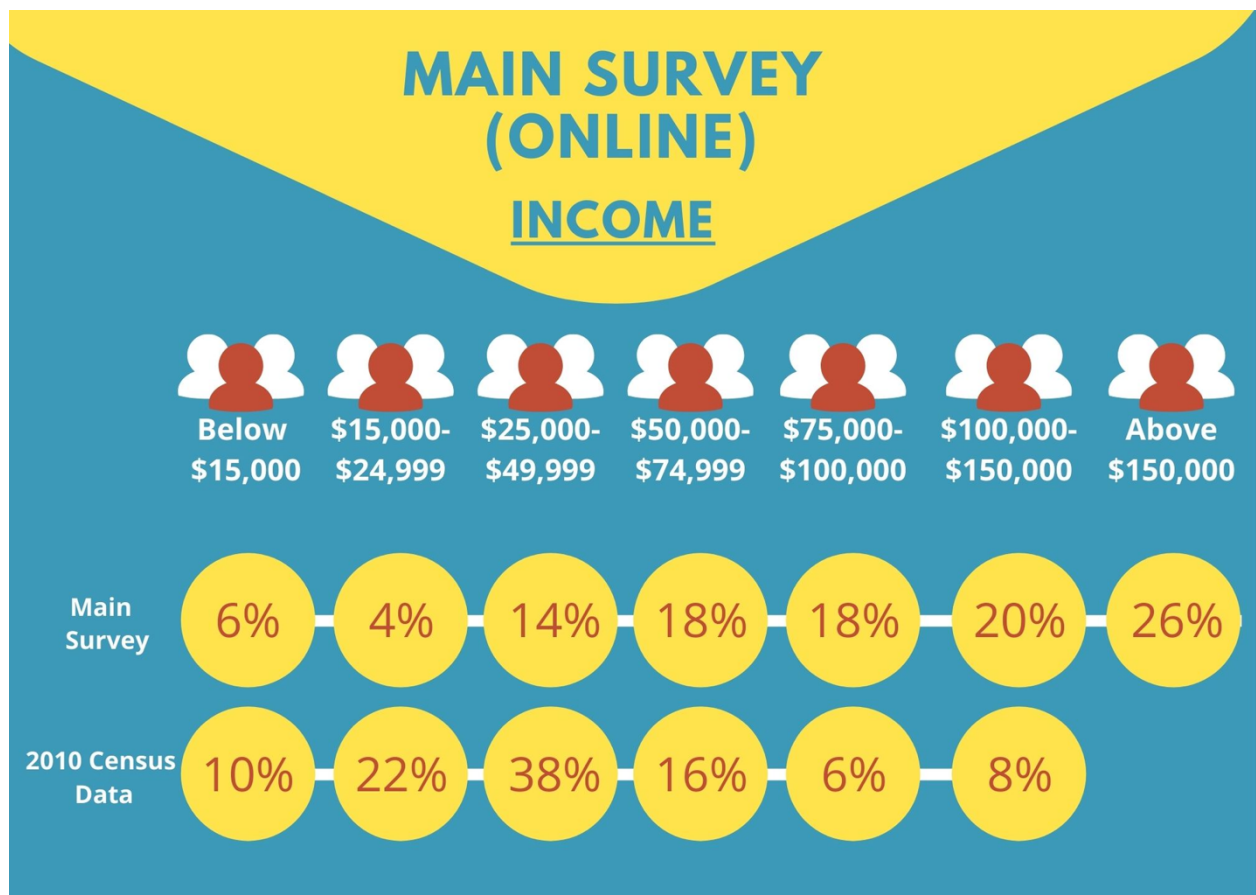


Figure 22: Main Survey Identifying Survey Respondents' Income



## Last Year's Public Lands Use

The main survey had a 99 percent response rate (3,711 responses for the trails question and 3,747 for the park question) regarding the frequency of trail and park use this year. Figure 23 shows that 1,524 respondents (41 percent) visited trails more, while 1,613 (43 percent) visited about the same, and 574 (15 percent) visited less.

Has the frequency use of trails change this year (in 2020)?

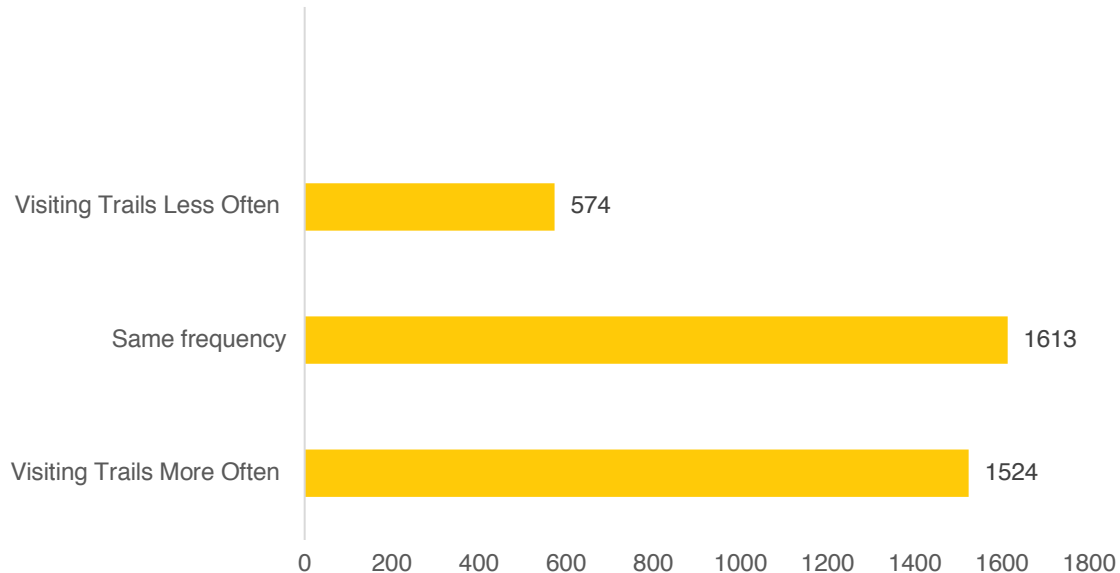
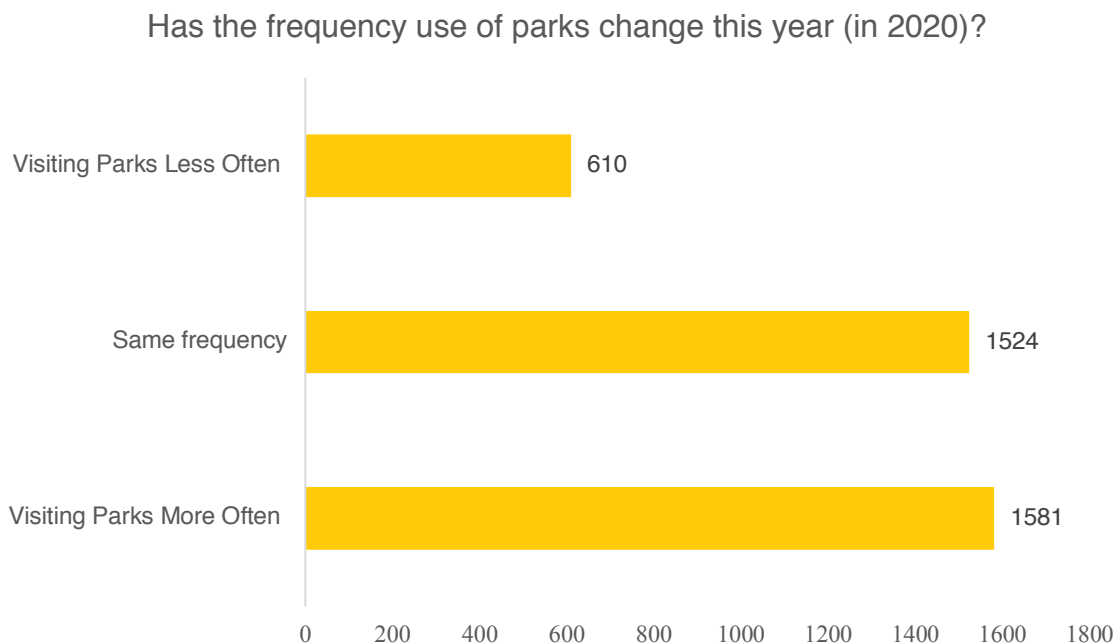


Figure 23: Main Survey Trail Use Frequency Last Year



Figure 24 shows that 1,581 visited parks more, 1,524 visited about the same, and 610 visited less—that is 40, 43, and 16 percent, respectively. Both surveys exemplified a pattern that people’s use of public lands has either increased or remained the same this year compared to previous years.

This survey question gauged both the general trends of the use of public lands as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. Various events were canceled, and many entertainment, dining, and other activities were discouraged or banned, potentially increasing the use of public spaces, which remained open.



**Figure 24: Main Survey Park Use Frequency Last Year**



## Park Proximity

One main survey question asked what types of public lands respondents had in proximity to their home (refer to Figure 25). The most common responses were a city park, trail and bike paths, tree lined streets, and natural areas. Ninety four out of the 3,701 responses to this question reported that public lands were not easily accessible from their home.

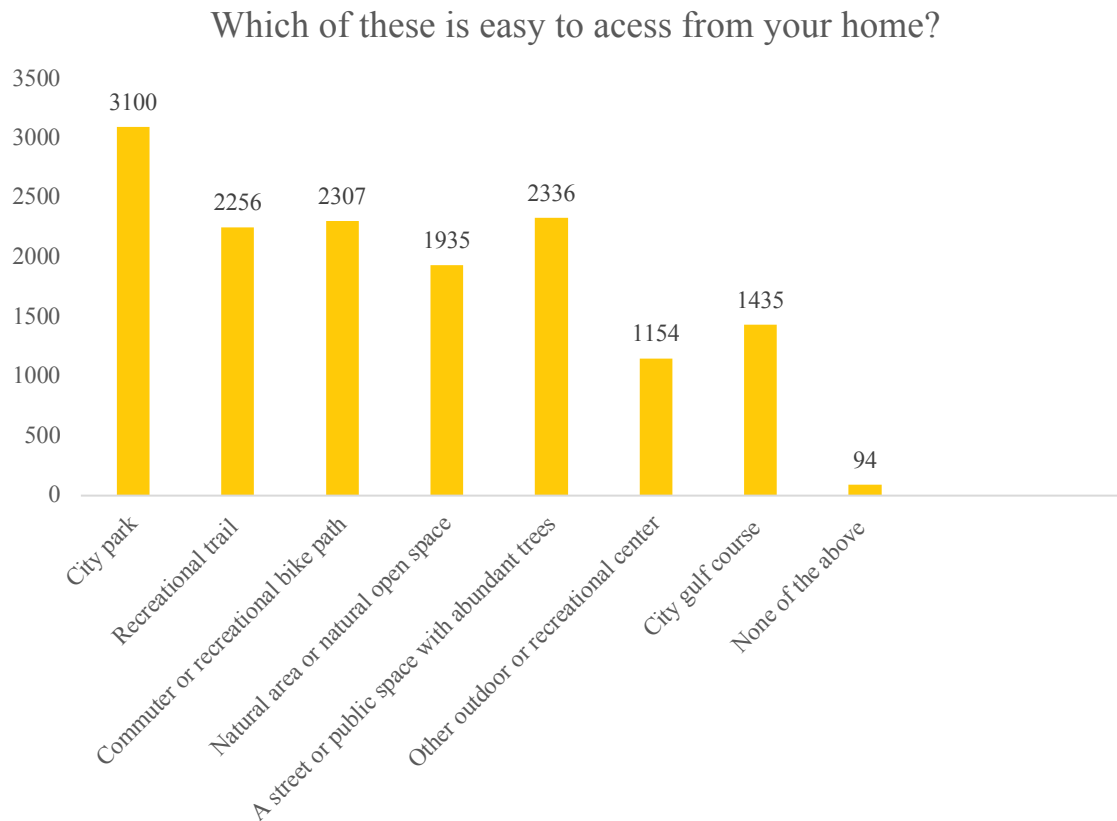


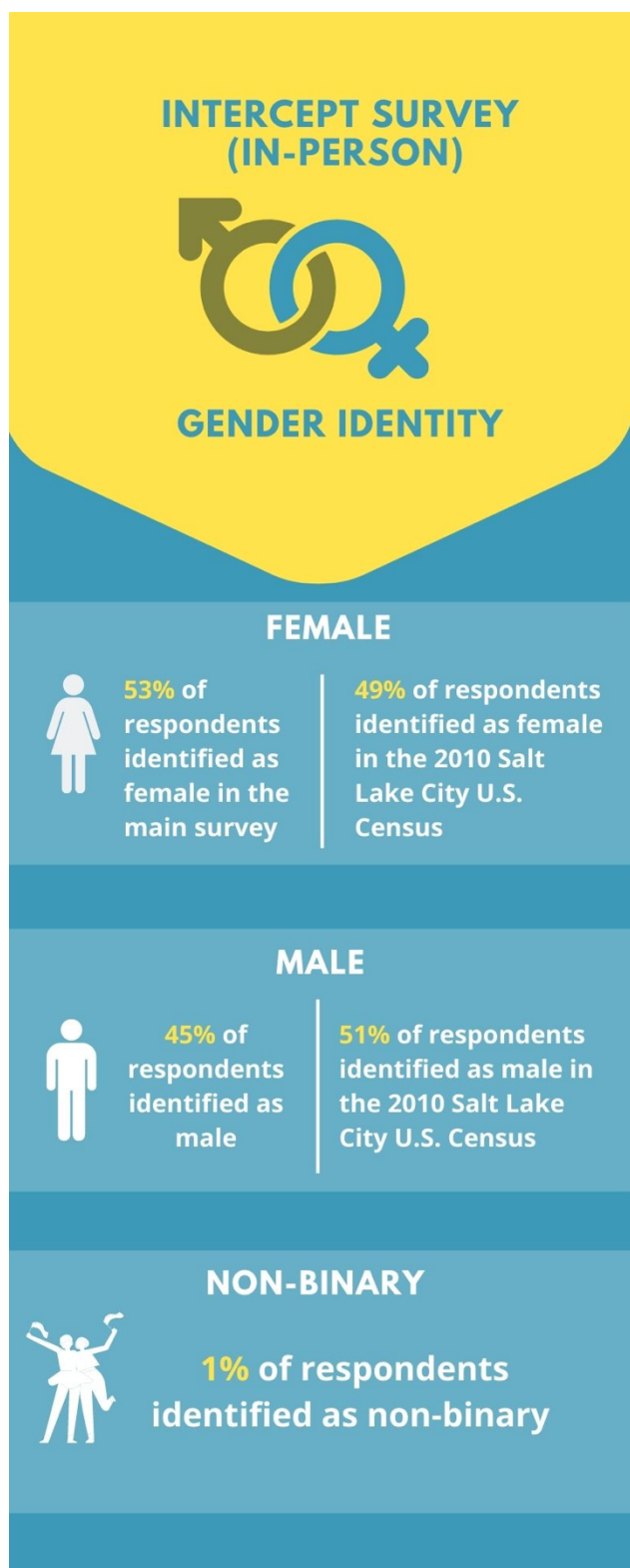
Figure 25: Main Survey Public Lands Accessibility

## Establishing Priorities

To help inform areas of focus for the 20-year Public Lands Master Plan, the survey asked respondents to pick three simple words that should represent the plan's goals. The top three words chosen were Protect, Grow, and Connect, expressing a desire for a broad approach involving both the protection and maintenance of existing lands while expanding and connecting to new public land.







## INTERCEPT SURVEY

The intercept survey received 635 responses from a wide variety of demographic categories (refer to Figures 26-29).

Overall, compared to the main survey, intercept surveys (administered in person) better target women, younger people and ethnically and racially diverse individuals.

## Gender Identity

Figure 26 shows that about half (53 percent) of the surveys were completed by females, 45 percent by males, 1 percent by non-binary or third gender people and 1 percent by people who preferred not to say.

Intercept surveys had an overrepresentation of females while an underrepresentation of males—which is the exact opposite from the online survey.



**Figure 26: Gender Comparison, Census vs. Main Survey Data**

## Age

The intercept survey received more responses from younger adults (refer to Figure 27). While in the main survey most respondents were between 31-40 years old (27 percent), the intercept survey was mostly filled out by 22-30 years old (33 percent). Overall, the intercept survey is more skewed to the left, including more respondents below 18 years old.

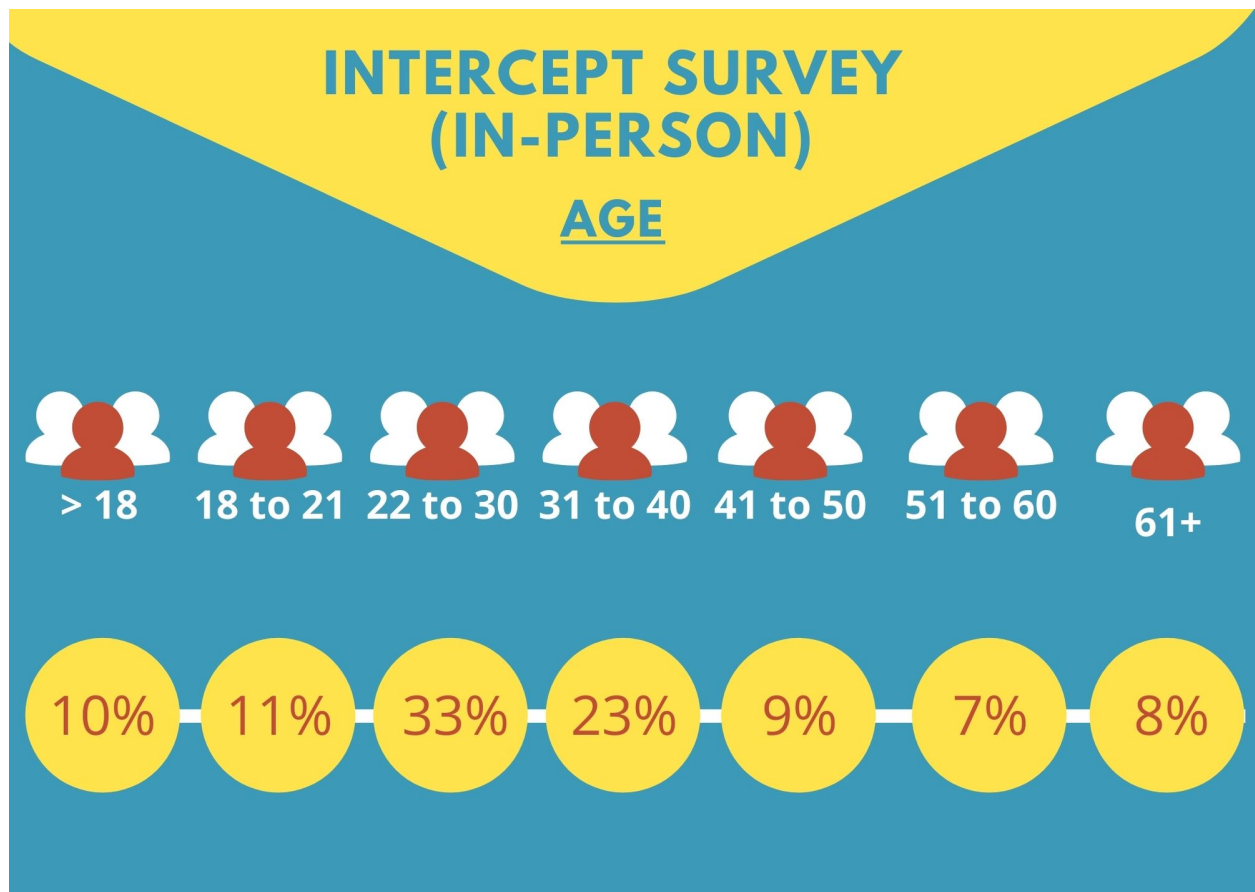


Figure 27: Intercept Survey Identifying Survey Respondents' Age

## Race/Hispanic Origin

Figure 28 shows that 67 percent intercept (in person) survey's respondents identified themselves as white—compare that to 85 percent in the main survey. In the main (online) survey, 7 percent were Hispanic/Latino, while in the intercept survey, it more than doubles, at 16 percent. While in the main survey, Blacks/African Americans, Asians, and others stood at 2 percent, in the intercept survey, they were much higher at 5, 4, and 3 percent, respectively. The main survey Native American/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander were 1 percent both. But in the intercept survey, they were 2 and 3 percent respectively—which was more than double. All that being said, intercept surveys (in person) proved to be better to target ethnically and racially diverse groups than the main (online) survey.

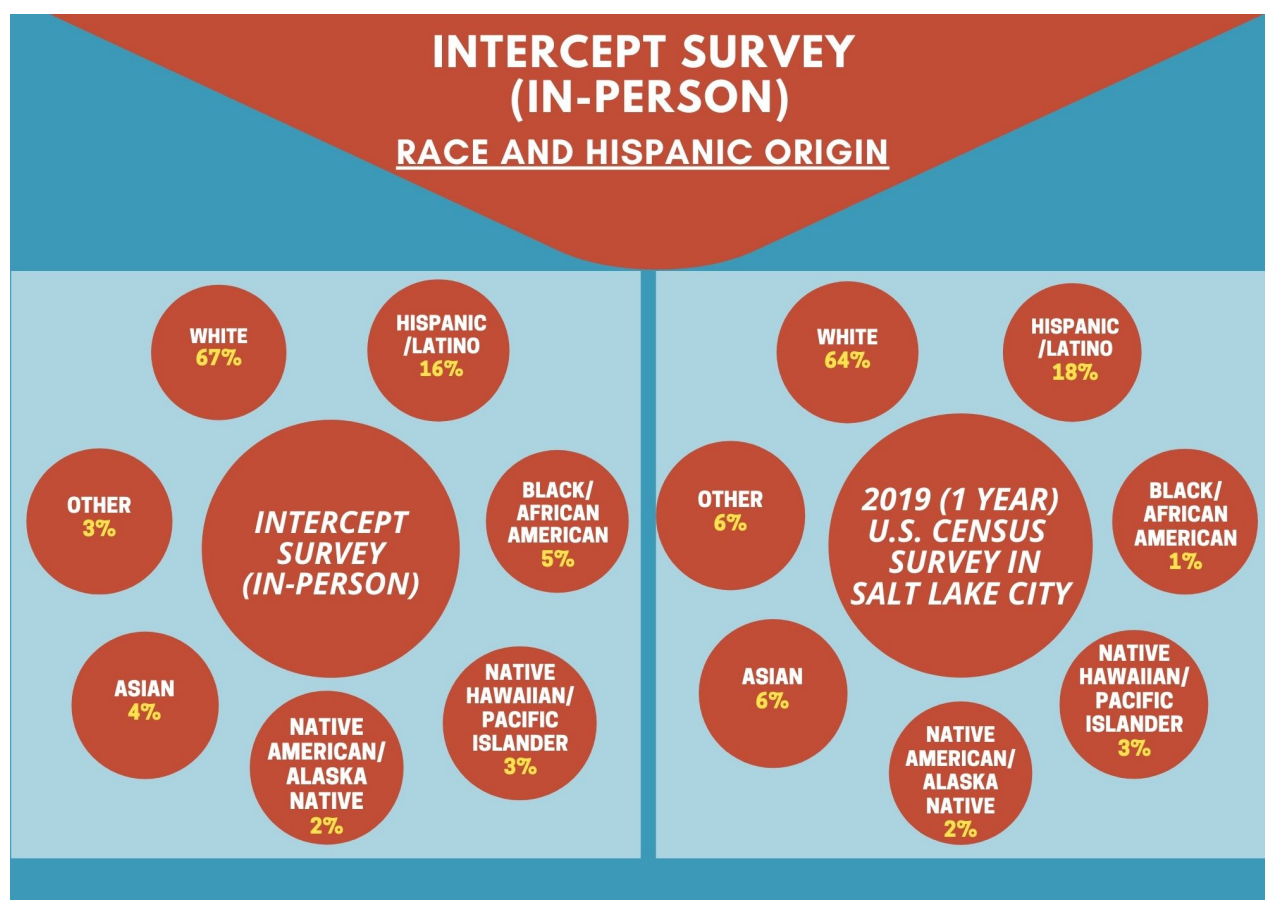


Figure 28: Intercept Survey Identifying Survey Respondents' Race/Hispanic Origin



## Income

As discussed above, those who answered the main survey had higher incomes than those that answered the intercept survey. The majority of the main online survey respondents (26 percent) had an income of \$150,000 and over. Meanwhile, as shown in Figure 29, most intercept survey respondents (22 percent) had an income of \$25,000-\$49,999 below the average income for the City. Not only that, but another 24 percent of respondents made less than \$25,000 or below the poverty level. From these, we can conclude that intercept surveys were better at targeting lower income households, while the main survey was better at targeting higher income households.

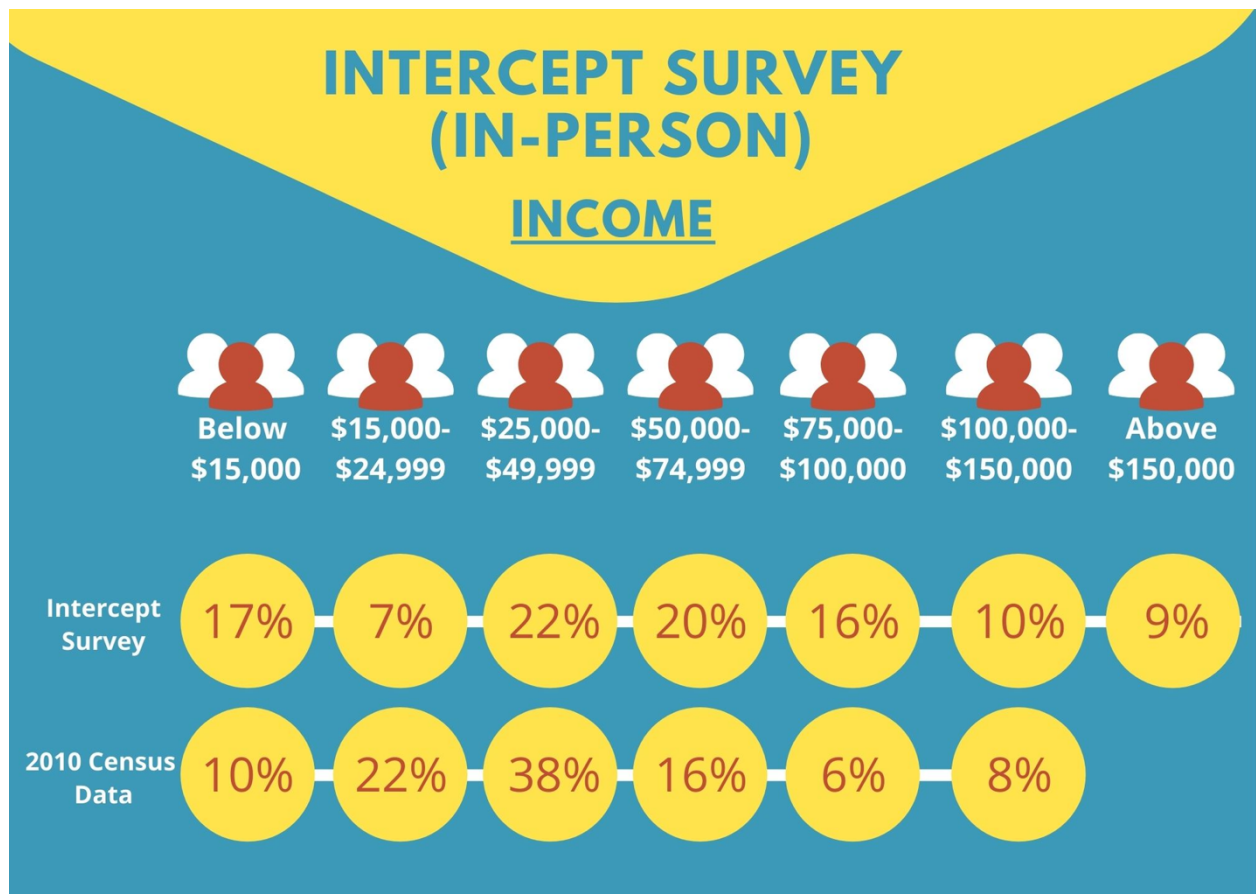


Figure 29: Intercept Survey Identifying Survey Respondents' Income

## Public Land Amenities Proximity

### By Race and Ethnicity

Trends in the intercept surveys were analyzed in a variety of ways. Initially trends were identified on a macro level, reviewing responses to all questions from the 610 respondents. Then, questions 7, 8, 10, and 11 were broken down to assess trends by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and income. Underlying trends were explored that may indicate inequities, inequalities, or differing preferences by group. The data for each group can be found in Figure 30. Some of the most strongly exhibited trends are highlighted in this section. We found that the proximity of public spaces across the City is not always evenly distributed. Though the City has parks within walking or biking distance from most respondents, some communities such as Central City tend to have less parks, trails, and natural areas per capita than other neighborhoods.

Which of these is easy for you to access (through walking or biking) from your home?							
Amenity	White	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	American Indian or Alaska Native	Other	
City park	84%	77%	77%	79%	78%	88%	
Recreational trail	62%	51%	55%	74%	56%	47%	
Natural area or open space	51%	27%	45%	58%	44%	35%	
A street or public space with abundant trees	53%	26%	45%	63%	56%	29%	
City golf courses	24%	14%	18%	47%	22%	12%	

Figure 30: Accessibility Based on Race/Ethnicity



## By Income

The survey data indicated a relationship between proximity to park, trails and natural areas and those making \$150,000 or more as seen in Figure 31. Assessment based on income also revealed that those with lower incomes were less likely to have a recreational trail near where they live. However, it must be noted that this difference was relatively small at 16 percent, and over half of all income groups indicated that they were still in walking or biking distance from these recreational opportunities. Finally, Hispanic or Latino respondents were the least likely to have parks, trails, and natural areas in their communities. The data suggests that white community members had the most access.

Which of these is easy for you to access (through walking o biking) from you home?							
Amenity	Below \$15,000	\$15-25 K	\$25-50 K	\$50-75 K	\$75-100 K	\$100-150 K	More than \$150 K
City park	78%	84%	83%	85%	86%	83%	82%
Recreational trail	53%	56%	58%	62%	61%	63%	69%
Natural area or open space	40%	47%	39%	52%	47%	52%	71%
A street or public space with abundant trees	47%	51%	41%	51%	49%	54%	69%
City golf courses	11%	19%	20%	34%	19%	22%	33%

Figure 31: Accessibility Based On Income

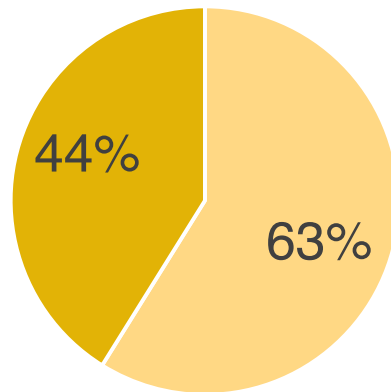




## Safety Concerns

When asked “Do you avoid, not enjoy, or feel unfordable in any City parks or natural areas?” most 55 percent indicated that they had (Figure 32). This question was really trying to get at safety issues and most respondents highlighted, Liberty Park, and the Jordan River Parkway Trail as locations where the public is the most concerned about their safety and that homelessness, night access, and drug use caused the most concern.

Do you avoid, not enjoy, or feel unfordable in any City parks or natural areas?



■ Female ■ Male

Figure 32: City Parks/Natural Areas Comfort Level



While over half of the responses indicated that respondents had felt uncomfortable in parks, the groups that tended to respond that they had felt unsafe in parks the most were generally females (see Figure 33), as well as those over the age of 21. It is worth noting that in general, as age increased, perceived safety in parks decreased (see Figure 34).

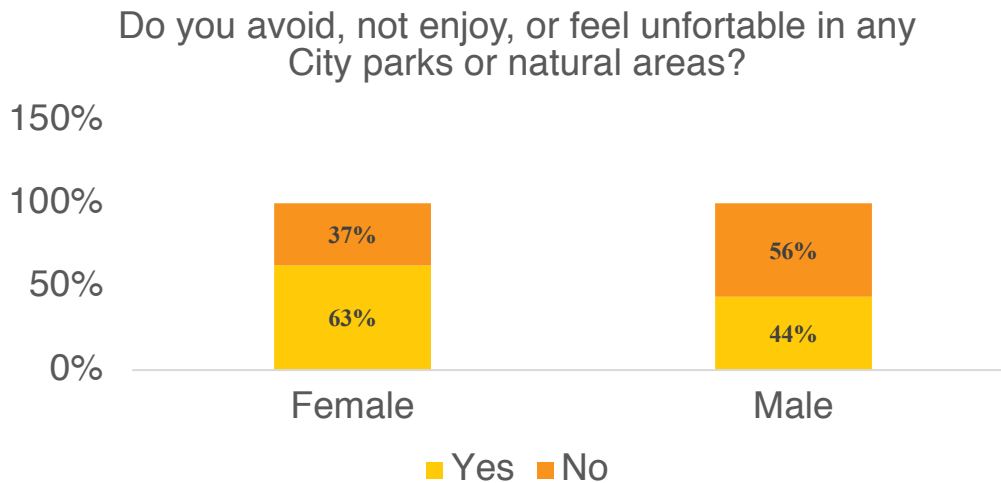


Figure 33: City Parks/Natural Areas Comfort Level By Gender

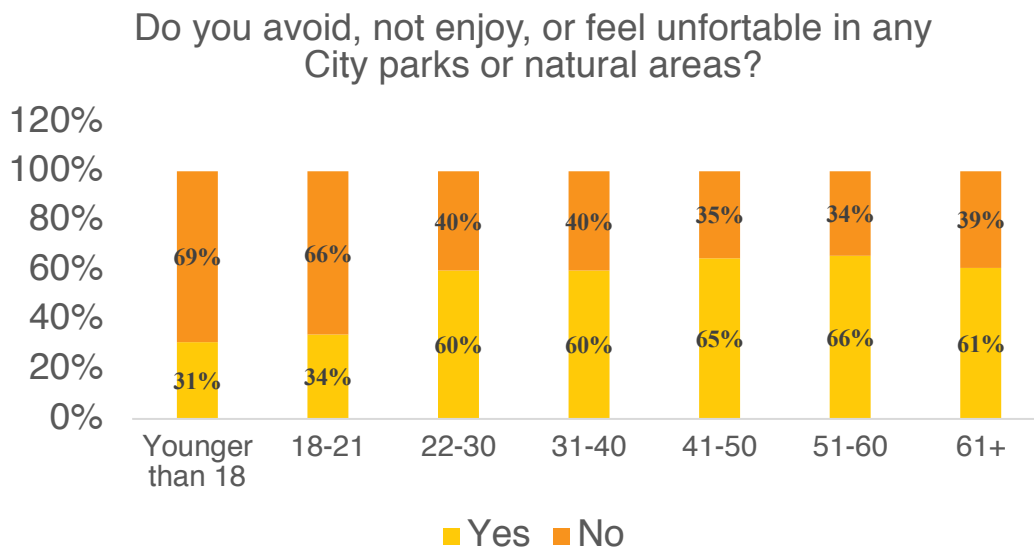
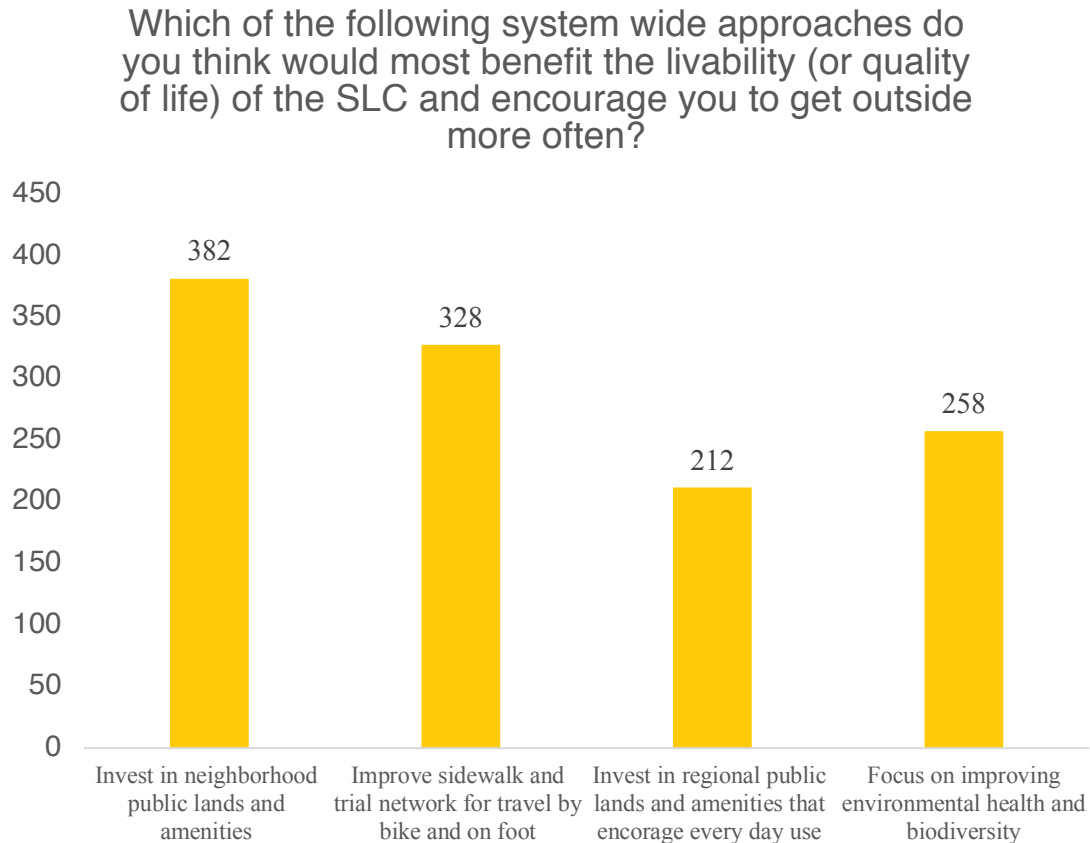


Figure 34: City Parks/Natural Areas Comfort Level By Age

## Quality Of Life

When asked about the future of the parks, trails, and other natural areas, responses showed some overarching similarities. As seen in Figure 35 respondents indicated investing in neighborhood public lands and amenities that encourage every day (382 respondents) use and improve sidewalks and trail networks were the most critical initiatives (328 respondents). Respondents wanted more of these spaces in both size and quantity, as well as a focus on maintenance and cleanliness.



**Figure 35: What Would Improve Quality Of Life**



Respondents were asked, “Which 3 words sum up what you think should be big 10-year goals of Salt Lake City Public Lands?” Figure 36 shows, most people wanted “more,” as noted by the word in the very center. They would qualify more with phrases such as “more skate parks, trees, and water features,” “more parks, less trash” and, “more native/biodiverse plants”—to mention a few. People also say words like maintenance, safety, accessibility, equity, inclusivity, among others. More careful qualitative analysis is needed to analyze what people care about the most when looking into the future.



### Figure 36: Big 10 Year Goals

## GIS – Population Density

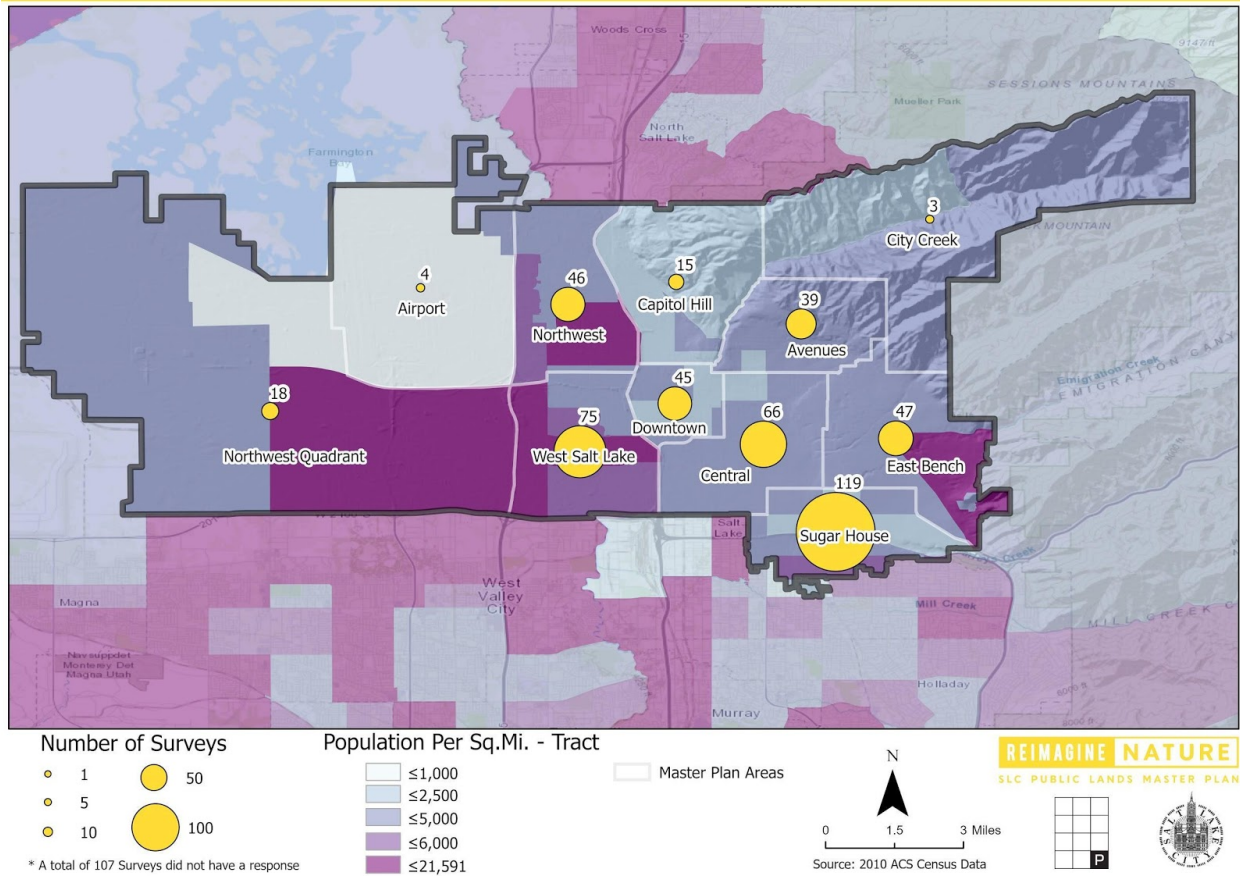
Population density allows for a broad comparison of settlement intensity across geographic areas. Population density is typically expressed as the number of people per square mile of land area. However, the population is not evenly distributed across space. People tend to cluster in cities, and those who live in rural areas are spread out across a sparsely populated landscape.

When comparing population density values for different geographic areas, it is helpful to keep in mind that the values are most useful for small areas like neighborhoods. Population density values of larger areas, especially at the state or country scale, are less likely to provide a meaningful measure of the density levels at which people actually live, but can be useful for comparing settlement intensity across geographies of similar scale. For the analysis conducted below (Figure 37), the American Community Survey 2015 1-year estimates census tracts were used to provide a well-balanced distribution between the population and the physical geography of the focus areas.

As shown in Figure 37 it is apparent that the pop-up events held on the west side of Salt Lake City were successful in collecting surveys in an area that is densely populated and considered underrepresented in the main survey. A large portion of the intercept surveys were collected from the West Salt Lake and Northwest communities, meaning the contribution of these intercept surveys provides greater feedback from communities underrepresented in the main survey. The East Bench community also received more surveys during the intercept process than the main survey. While these three communities are represented by the surveys collected during the intercept process, it is recommended for more surveys be collected in these areas to provide greater feedback and an overall voice from these communities.



## - INTERCEPT SURVEY - Population Density & Surveys Collected



**Figure 37: Population Density Overlaid With Intercept Surveys By Master Plan Areas**

Unlike the Intercept Survey map, where data was spatially correlated to the Master Plan Areas, the Main Survey map (Figure 38) is spatially correlated to the zip codes within or overlapping the Salt Lake City boundary. The main survey showed a high representation of surveys collected within the Avenues, Central, and City Creek communities. The main survey shows a fair portion of the surveys collected were in fairly populated tracts.



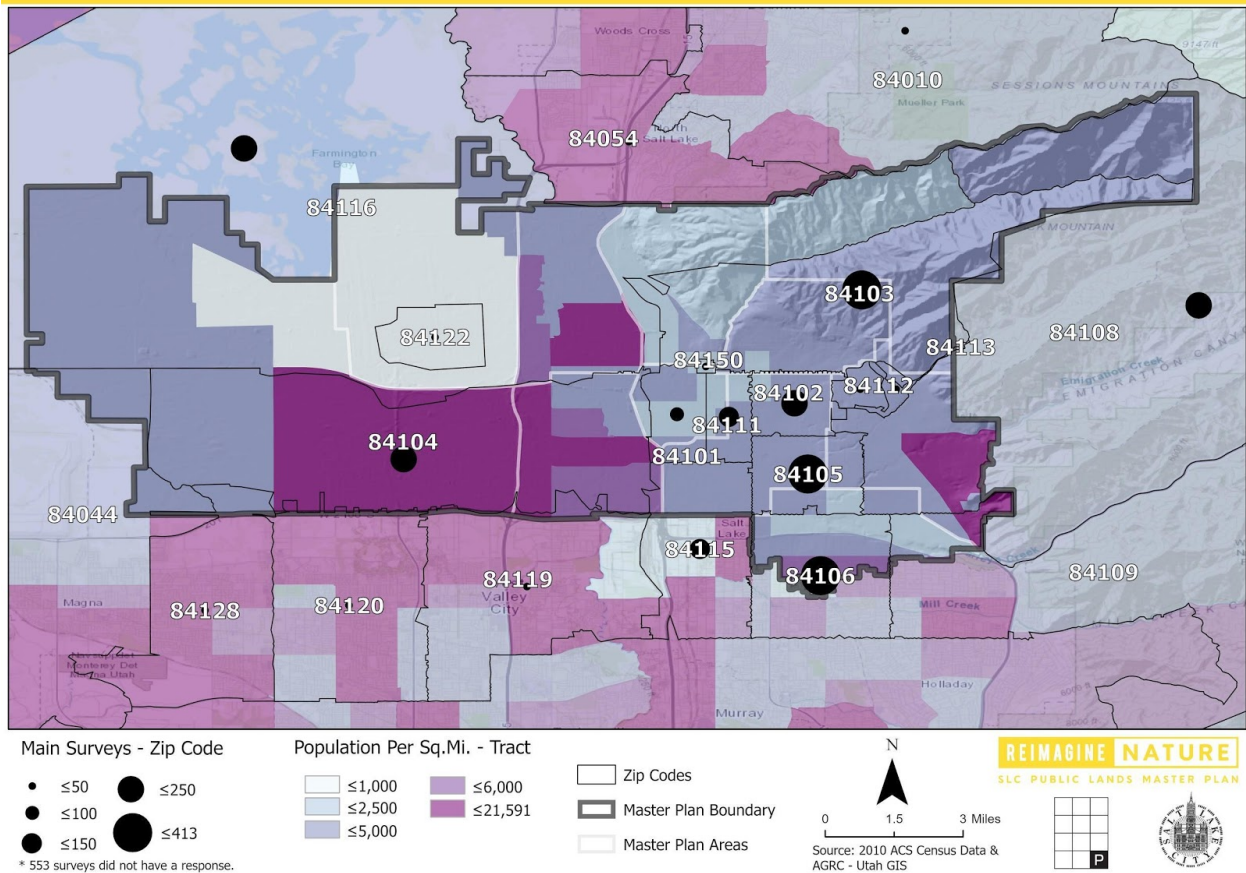


Figure 38: Population Density Overlaid With Intercept Surveys By Zip Codes

## CONCLUSION

As discussed in the previous section, much of the data provided will prove beneficial in the creation of the Master Plan. The data indicates that respondents consider parks, trails, golf courses, and other natural areas to be “extremely important” and are using them “more often.” When asked what is keeping people from using these spaces more, the majority of respondents chose “not applicable,” which could indicate that either they did not feel like anything was preventing them from using public lands or did not find an answer that conformed with their reason for not using the space more. Using this data, one can conclude that perhaps people feel safe enough in these spaces to continue using them.

However, we also found that the majority of female participants (63 percent) and those respondents over the age of 22, indicated that they had avoided, not enjoyed, or felt uncomfortable in these spaces. Furthermore, participants self-reported a high uneasiness in Pioneer Park, Jordan River Trail, and Liberty Park. Some of the inferences from intercept interviews indicate discomfort due to lack of lighting, crime,

and homeless population in the area. While there were other locations and concerns indicated, these factors need further investigation to better understand their causes and a plan to address them. Finally, participants reported a preference to invest in neighborhood public lands and amenities over other system wide approaches. While this could mean a great deal more than is indicated from the survey, this suggests the desire to decrease the distance that Salt Lake City residents have to travel in order to access these spaces.

While the data collected from the intercept interviews is important for the creation of a Master Plan that can be used for at least two decades, it tends to generalize some of the issues. Therefore, using this data to create overarching goals would be the most beneficial use of the information. Allocating resources toward additional surveys, focus groups, or stakeholder interviews are examples of specific actions to achieve future goals. In general, respondents indicated that they believed that the parks and public spaces needed to be safe, maintained, and expanded in the next 20 years. The data indicated a greater need to invest in areas of the City that citizens find important and be used to garner support for the expansion and improvement of areas managed by the Public Lands Division.





# CHAPTER 4

## FOCUS GROUPS





## CHAPTER 4: FOCUS GROUPS

### ***INTRODUCTION***

As part of the first window of engagement for the Master Plan, University of Utah graduate students conducted focus groups to ask community members about stewardship, equity, and other ways to improve our parks, trails, and open spaces. Chapter 4 discusses the methodology, findings, and recommendations from six 1.5 hour focus groups. Recruitment for the focus groups prioritized two particular communities: (1) residents of Salt Lake City's west side neighborhoods and, (2) people living in permanent supportive housing in Central City. Representation from these communities in the first window of engagement is imperative for creating an equitable plan. Teams of University of Utah students facilitated these small groups using a script that highlighted key topics while allowing other ideas and discussions to emerge naturally. Findings from these focus group discussions provide comprehensive information on how the participants perceive and use city parks, trails, and open spaces inside and outside of their neighborhood. The findings are the foundation for the Master Plan recommendations found at the end of this chapter. Appendix C and D includes materials for soliciting participation and records related to the focus groups.

### ***RECRUITMENT***

Dr. Ivis García of the University of Utah contacted organizations and partners within the target neighborhoods as a part of the recruitment process. These organizations include the Westside Coalition, University Neighborhood Partners, Glendale Community Learning Center, Glendale Community Council, and The Road Home. Dr. García designed and distributed flyers providing the time, date, location, links to RSVP, and compensation (if applicable) for each focus group to the organizations and partners (see Appendix C). The flyer was branded with the Reimagine Nature logo and pictures of areas around Salt Lake City. Dr. García also created a flyer in Spanish to recruit participants for the focus group conducted in Spanish.

The participants for each focus group filled out a short survey to establish the demographics of attendees. The survey asked in which neighborhood they resided, their age, sex, income, and race. These demographic questions were the same as those included in the intercept interviews. A participant profile is provided further in this chapter based on the results of this demographic survey.

Following Dr. García's contact with the community groups, student facilitators were able to view individuals' responses through a Google Form as they registered for a focus group. Facilitators then emailed, called, or texted those who had RSVP to remind them of the focus group meeting details and confirm their intention to attend.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Focus Group Technique and Relation To Equity, Inclusion, And Diversity**

Focus groups are defined as “a small discussion groups whose participants are selected either randomly or to approximate the demographics of the community or target market.”<sup>4</sup> A focus group is an informal way to collect a target population’s thoughts and opinions that you may or may not have heard from. This is a key part of equity because a moderator needs to ensure the participants are proportional to the targeted community in age, gender, and race. The goal is to attempt to get eight to ten people to attend. Planners may achieve this by offering compensation, such as a gift card, to each participant. This method persuades and makes individuals feel like the focus group is worth attending.

Sometimes the community participants may perceive the focus group as an attempt to manipulate the public. Thus, they may withhold information that is helpful to the plan. To remove this barrier, a trained moderator should be transparent from the beginning of the meeting that the focus group is one of several methods to get input from the public on the planning effort. The moderator should be knowledgeable of the public participation program. Participants should also be invited to receive updates and attend subsequent presentations on the topic.

Timekeeping is a key factor in getting everyone to speak. The moderator is given the responsibility to make sure everyone is comfortable and is given time to state their view on the topic being discussed. Focus groups should have a maximum duration of two hours. This should be enough time for participants to answer the questions and for the moderator to make every participant feel like their point of view was validated and understood. This also establishes trust with everyone and promotes equity because everyone is heard.

### **Script Development**

Six to ten guiding questions should be prepared in advance of a focus group. In preparation, Dr. García used survey questions from the intercept interviews to formulate the script questions for each group (see Appendix D). The script started with general questions and moved to more specific and complex questions. The script was revised by Nancy Monteith of the Salt Lake City Public Lands Division and Amanda Jeter of Design Workshop. This process ensured that the questions addressed all aspects of

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<sup>4</sup> Creighton, J.L. 2005. *The Public Participation Handbook: Making Better Decisions Through Citizen Involvement*. 1 edition. Place of publication not identified: Jossey-Bass, p. 113.

what the plan needs from the participants. After the questions were approved, the script was disseminated to the student facilitators.

Typically, the moderator asking the questions should derive responses that reveal a participant's true thoughts and feelings about a particular issue. This is vital because each individual is a representation of the broader community. Not encouraging certain individuals to speak excludes a viewpoint that should be considered in the development of a site or plan. In the focus groups, the facilitators asked quiet participants who have not spoken in a while what they thought about the topic being discussed.

## **Public Lands Master Plan Focus Groups**

Student facilitators conducted six focus groups in the first engagement window for the Public Lands Master Plan, spanning from October 6, 2020, to October 15, 2020. See Table 1 for details regarding the date, time, location, language, compensation, and community partners of the meetings. The scheduled duration for each focus group was 90 minutes. Dr. García and various staff members from the Public Lands Division also attended the focus groups to listen and answer questions as necessary.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, four focus groups met using an online interactive video platform, Zoom. Facilitators for these focus groups gave instruction on utilizing basic features of the platform as needed. Two focus groups were conducted in person at Palmer Court in Salt Lake City, and took precautions by arranging distant seating and requiring masks to be worn. Participants in these focus groups have had lived experiences of homelessness, and the in person meeting allowed for engagement without the accessibility barrier of an online platform. Focus groups on Zoom were video recorded to transcribe the meeting, while the focus groups at Palmer Court were only audio recorded. Images were taken with the permission of the participants (see Figures 40 and 41).

Facilitators utilized at least nine scripted, open ended questions to get thorough and honest responses from participants. These responses brought attention to each person's experience and understanding of the topic. The questions were related to topics such as overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction, stewardship, equity, accessibility, and programming within the Salt Lake City Public Lands Division's jurisdiction. At the beginning of each focus group, the facilitators informed participants of the scheduled time, requiring moderators to be flexible and condense vital questions for each section of the script in order to finish on time. Figure 39 shows more details about the time, place, language, etc. of each focus group.



Date and Time	Location	Language	Compensation	Community Partner(s)
Oct. 6, 2020 6:00-7:30PM	Online (Zoom)	English	None	Westside Community Council
Oct. 8, 2020 9:00-10:30PM	Online (Zoom)	Spanish	Yes; \$25 gift card	Westside Leadership Institute, University Neighborhood Partners, Glendale Community Learning Center
Oct. 13, 2020 10:00-10:30PM	Palmer Court	English	Yes; \$25 gift card	The Road Home – Palmer Court
Oct. 14, 2020 5:00-6:30PM	Palmer Court	English	Yes; \$25 gift card	The Road Home – Palmer Court
Oct. 14, 2020 6:30-8:00PM	Online (Zoom)	English	Yes; \$25 gift card	Westside Leadership Institute, University Neighborhood Partners, Glendale Community Learning Center
Oct. 15, 2020 6:00-7:30PM	Online (Zoom)	English	None	Glendale Community Council

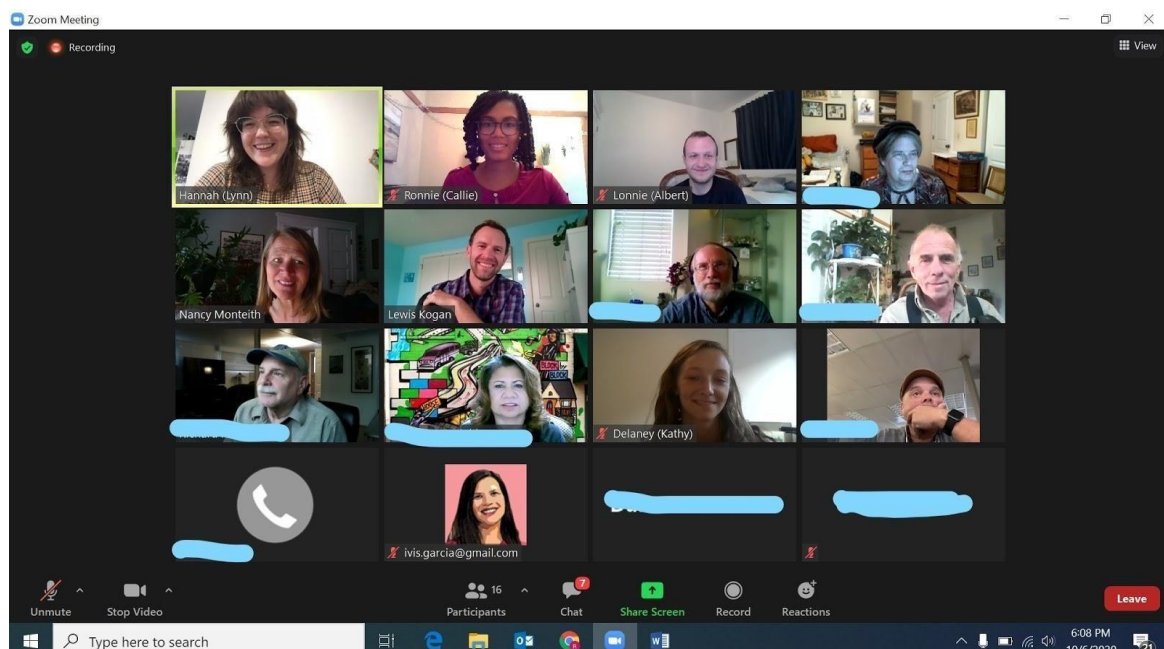


Figure 40: Participants Meet On Zoom For A Focus Group



Figure 41: Student Facilitators Talk To A Focus Group At Palmer Court

## ***PARTICIPANTS PROFILE***

A total of 54 people participated in the focus groups, with an average of nine participants per group. Demographic information regarding community area, age, income, ethnicity, and gender was collected through a survey completed by participants prior to the focus group session. Results of the demographic survey are shown in Tables 42-46 below.

As previously stated, one goal of conducting these focus groups was to gather information from underrepresented communities in the Central/Downtown neighborhood and west side neighborhoods. Please note that in Table 42, Rose Park, Fairpark, Poplar Grove, Glendale, and Westpointe are considered a part of the west side neighborhoods and that a vast majority of participants lived in these community areas or in the Central/Downtown neighborhood.

Community Area	No. of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Rose Park	7	13.0%
Fairpark	2	3.7%
Poplar Grove	9	16.7%
Glendale	10	18.5%
Westpointe	4	7.4%
East Side	2	3.7%
Central/Downtown	13	24.1%
Other	7	13.0%

Figure 42: Focus Group Participants Community Area

Age	No. of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Younger than 18	2	3.7%
18-21	1	1.9%
22-30	10	18.5%
31-40	13	24.1%
41-50	13	24.1%
51-60	6	11.1%
61 or older	9	16.7%

**Figure 43: Focus Group Participants Age**

Race/Ethnicity	No. of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Black or African American	2	3.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1.9%
Asian	0	0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	22	40.7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3	5.6%
White	23	42.3%
Prefer not to say	1	1.9%
Other	2	3.7%

**Figure 44: Focus Group Participants Race/Ethnicity**

Household Income	No. of Participants	Percentage of Participants
\$0-\$14,999	15	27.8%
\$15,000-\$24,999	11	20.4%
\$25,000-\$49,999	9	16.7%
\$50,000-\$74,999	5	9.3%
\$75,000-\$100,000	7	13.0%
\$100,000-\$150,000	4	7.4%
\$150,000+	0	0%
Prefer not to say	3	5.6%

**Figure 45: Focus Group Participants Household Income**



Gender	No. of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Male	18	33.3%
Female	36	66.7%
Non-binary/third gender	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
Prefer to self-describe	0	0%

Figure 46: Focus Group Participants Gender

## FINDINGS

The following findings reflect the overall themes which emerged throughout the focus group discussions. Facilitators began by asking participants to share their general perceptions of Salt Lake City’s public lands and then moved into specific stewardship and equity questions. The first section aimed to get a general understanding of the participants’ attitudes about the parks and public lands, while the next two sections probed deeper regarding two of the topics the Salt Lake City Public Lands Master Plan seeks to address. Finally, the groups were asked to make any final comments about what they think the Public Lands Division should consider when drafting the Master Plan.

While the focus group discussion was divided into specific guiding topics, general trends started to emerge as being of higher importance to the group. Some of the recurring themes include safety, cleanliness, accessibility, diversity, and community building. Overall, residents highly valued their parks, trails, and open spaces and were eager to share their opinions and suggestions for improvement.

## Introduction

The introductory section of the focus group served as an ice breaker for the rest of the conversation. Many of the themes brought up in this section continued to be discussed in subsequent sections. Attendees were first asked about the importance they place on having a park, trail, or open space near their home. The discussion continued by asking what they liked and disliked about these spaces and what could make them better.

From the outset of many focus group conversations, participants made it clear that they value public lands and are very interested in contributing to the future of these spaces. As one participant stated,

I believe that green spaces and parks are a fundamental part of our life, and more so in these times, because it is the only place where we can still, well, have free time with the family. I have two children, so they are the ones who ask me to be going to parks or green areas or walking.

The focus groups highlighted the importance of parks for community health. Parks are essential spaces where community members can socialize with friends and family, and meet new people. One said they liked going to parks and “seeing people you don’t know. You know, making new friends.”

There was also a sense that the parks became more important for community gathering in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. One participant commented,

My mother loves the house, but it has a very small yard...we always tend to go to a park when we want to grill meat or be with family or get together with friends. As someone else had mentioned with the pandemic, these green areas have become even more important.

Public spaces have also become more important for maintaining a healthy lifestyle during the pandemic. "My husband goes to the canyon to run and I [go to] walk. Well yes, it is very important to have an area, a green area to be able to go out and more in this pandemic that one has to go out to destress." Beyond physical health, one participant reflected on the mental health benefits as well,

[I]t is important to have the green spaces, you know, not just for our physical health, but for our mental health. I'm a transplant from the islands. So, I'm used to seeing green all the time. So just being able to see that, especially in the spring. It helps a lot with the mental health side of it as well.

However, participants were not satisfied with everything they saw in their parks. Three major themes came up during the conversations: safety, cleanliness, and maintenance, and more connectivity between parks.

Safety was brought up in each of the six focus groups during the introductions. There were many different facets of this discomfort. The most often brought up issue was safety on the Jordan River Trail. A response from a frequent user of the public lands stood out, "We've lived here for 20 plus years. And I usually feel pretty safe on the trails, but I did get robbed at gunpoint on the Jordan River Trail like three years ago... All they took was my phone. But they also took my phone."

One said, "I do have access to the Jordan River trail, but I don't use it anymore, because it's unsafe. It is extremely polluted and is extremely unsafe in the night, especially for women." Another added, "[...] the Rose Park area, the Valley and Jordan River area, it just doesn't seem welcoming to go on those trails. [Speaking specifically about the Jordan River trail] it's a lot of trees there, so, you know, it's kind of hidden in an alleyway, in a place where it doesn't feel safe."

A couple of women stated that they felt uncomfortable or unsafe at parks, either due to people or poor lighting. One mother expressed, "I think one of the only things I'm looking for, it's security. I am a single mother of two, and there comes a time when going to the park so early is very impossible because of no sun and later there is no lighting."

Homelessness was brought up in terms of safety and cleanliness. A Latinx Glendale resident shared her concerns on this issue, "I like all the paths between 17th and 21st South. It's usually cleaner than the one between 17th South and 800 South. That area behind the peace gardens, increasingly getting homeless population, makes it a little frightful." A man supported her statement and raised the need for additional security by saying,

There's a lot of people experiencing homelessness along the trail, homeless camps, in fact. In the Fife reserve, there's been a homeless

camp for a couple of months, and they're in the park next to it too. They sleep on cement pads that the City has had there for a while. They are in the park with their leftovers from home because it's a clean, easy place for people experiencing homelessness to sleep. It's right at where the stub street hits the trail and, you know, and you see there's a white minivan that comes there, and I see homeless people get in and out of it. I don't know what they're doing, probably drugs, but I don't know that. But talk to the police, and they'll tell you there's a lot of that. So, it'd be nice to have more security on the trails.

Some suggested not to accuse the homeless people of the drug incidents or crime as the City government was responsible for shutting the shelters down and left folks experiencing homelessness with no other options. A young female participant mentioned,

I see a lot of people criminalize homelessness, and I don't know that police would make all of the residents in this community feel safer. So, I just want to add sort of a voice to say Salt Lake City has done a lot to really harm homeless services by closing the Road Home and by reducing funding. And I think it's just to tie it back, like, if this is going into an official report anyway, something needs to be done in terms of having closed down the shelter.

Homelessness is a larger issue that the Public Lands Division cannot solve solely on their own. They can do things that would help with this, though. As mentioned by one male participant,

I do see a lot of camping on the Jordan River Trail. And I don't think that I mind so much the camping. I do mind how much stuff they leave behind when they're done. I think just a patrol in the morning just to remind people they have to take everything with them might be a nice gesture.

Cleanliness and maintenance of the parks was also a recurring theme. "When you asked what I was unsatisfied with, the first thing that came to mind was the lack of restrooms. That was immediately followed by the low number of trash receptacles on the trail." Participants also connected the cleanliness of the parks with the quality of the parks. "International Peace Gardens is the epitome of what a really good park is. You know, there are different types of parks, but for public parks and usage, that gets the most. And it's also the cleanest. It stays that way because they maintain it. They input a lot of resources into it."

Many people felt that parks were not close enough to them. One man said, "There are many groups in Salt Lake City, and those of a lower income bracket do not often have access to neighborhood parks like in other areas do." Some of the participants identified that they also felt out of place in the parks when compared to people with higher incomes.

Many participants felt that Liberty Park is a good example of what a park should be. One of the female participants said, "I just think we need to do more things like Liberty



Park.” Liberty Park was also regarded as one of the strongest in terms of various amenities and natural features.

Some residents preferred to visit Liberty Park or Jordan Park but reported that these parks were too far away and hard to get to via public transit. “Jordan Trail is still pretty far there really isn’t a bus to get there.” Some participants do not feel safe on bike lanes and would like to see bike paths and parks connected for easier accessibility. A participant also mentioned how connecting bike paths to parks would minimize her driving, “If one goes on the trail or paths, because there are many cars, a lot of traffic, but the trails do not always connect. There must be paths for children, for adults too, because it is lacking here. We are always mobilizing by car.”

## **Stewardship**

The conversation on stewardship began with brief introductions to stewardship actions currently underway by members of the Salt Lake City Public Lands Division. Nancy Monteith, Lewis Kogan, and Luke Allen were present as division representatives at the various focus groups. Facilitators then asked participants about areas for improvement in the parks caretaking and how they see themselves contributing to the stewardship of public lands.

Many participants again brought up issues surrounding cleanliness. One participant in Poplar Grove shared that in her neighborhood park “there is only one garbage can, but it is the kind that is mobile, but I suggest that there must be some that are fixed.” Another suggested more trash cans at regular intervals so that public lands users were never too far from a place to dispose of rubbish.

When questioned on the personal contribution that individuals can make to the stewardship of public lands, a common response was simply picking up trash and leaving public lands in a better state than when found. One participant stated that she has “volunteered with cleanups and would participate in them in the future.” This idea was further built on as a way to promote safety in public spaces, specifically along the Jordan River Trail. Another participant wrote in the Zoom chat, “it might be tricky at first, but I think getting groups to have activities in the park would help [with safety].” This was not exclusive to volunteering events and included community events and gathering spaces in the park to help have more eyes in the area and discourage illicit activities.

There was also a conversation about involving the youth in cleanup programs. “I feel like if we were to focus these programs of cleanup more towards youth, then there’d be more people involved in cleaning up these neighborhoods because, you know, youth have a lot of energy.” This sentiment resonated with fellow participants. Another participant later said,

I liked his comment on the youth, because I think that will also create buy in for keeping them, for keeping them nice and clean. Right? Because if the youth are involved, if they see someone dropping it, you know they’re going to call these people out and be like, ‘Hey, we just clean this park. Don’t do that. Pick it up and throw it away.’ So, I think that’s good. But I do like the idea of rangers, as well, but community buy in, especially on our west side ones, I think is huge.

Other participants echoed that sentiment and maintained that any ranger program should involve community residents. “It’s a great idea in regards to they probably have a greater capacity to add to the areas, but it would be nice that they do have some connection to the community where they can implement programs like focus groups like these to discuss any ideas.” This illustrates the need for a social connection to the neighborhood to help ensure the ranger program participants care about what they are protecting.

Another participant proposed the ranger program be based on the National Park Service’s senior volunteer ranger program. Her idea presents several potential benefits, including engaging different age groups in Salt Lake City Public Lands and using rangers as a first line of communication between Salt Lake City and unsheltered people living in the parks. There was also a call for educational programming on stewardship. A young Latino shared the following.

[Community programs give] education to the public because there are many people who abuse the parks, people who destroy them or do not know how to protect it. Like littering, I think it is more about education. People have to understand the purpose of parks and how to keep them clean.

Another participant made the point of including children in the stewardship process in order to ensure that there is longevity for maintenance solutions.

I think any efforts to get kids on the river to get them involved in caring for the river, that will go a long way. So, it’s thinking long term, as those kids grow up and they teach their kids and their future generations and you know, instead of throwing shopping carts in the river, they’re going to want to canoe or kayak or, I mean they’ll see the value of the river.

Participants noted the importance of cultivating personal responsibility so that taking care of public lands and treating them as a collective resource would become second nature. This potential programming could be categorized as stewardship action and present a great way to include diverse populations in the ownership of our parks.

The focus group members also pointed to the maintenance of amenities in the parks as an area for improvement. Participants complained about the lack of available or clean bathrooms, saying that it impacted how they use parks. “You go there and you have to rush home because there is no bathroom to use.” They further noted that COVID-19 has exacerbated this problem with many bathrooms being closed to limit the spread of germs without a sufficient replacement. They argued that when you take away the bathrooms “at least replace the bathrooms with porta potties.” They continued saying that the available bathrooms are not being cleaned frequently enough. “Most of the parks need bathrooms daily cared for... or maybe twice a day.” Finally, they noted that some park bathrooms are old and not fully functional and would benefit from a renovation. “They’re so old that they’re not updated and everything doesn’t work.”

There were also discussions about the need for more trees and addressing issues of biodiversity. In reference to the invasive Russian Olive tree, one participant said,

I would like to start seeing us eliminating them as a non-native species here in Salt Lake. They consume massive amounts of water, more so

than any other tree. They just consumed water and I'd like to see us trying and start working as a 20 years or 30 years 50-year goal to eliminate those trees from that entire stretch as an environmental statement relative to endangered species occupying lands where we should be having native species.

There was interest on planting more trees, especially to replace those knocked over in the windstorms. "Resources for the parks are not there. The trees are dying, they're not maintained. But we have people who are able to volunteer."

## Equity

To begin the equity conversation, facilitators gave a short overview of Salt Lake City's diversity in spoken languages and cultures. Then participants were asked about improvements in terms of equity, accessibility, and diversity in programming. Overall, participants were very proud of the diversity in the west side and wanted to see this reflected more in their public spaces. "Everyone may not agree with me, but it is important to be culturally inclusive. We should celebrate who we are and not concentrate on the division."

Many participants made it clear that equity and representation are within public open spaces in Salt Lake City. There are some systemic issues that perpetuate inequity which may not be addressable by the Public Lands Division. However, there were many productive comments that painted a better picture for the future of public lands in underrepresented communities. Some of these comments touched on accessibility, programming, and additional efforts that could be improved upon. Participants saw the cultural diversity in their neighborhoods worth celebrating. One participant noted the lack of events occurring on the west side,

When you think about the diversity of the people in Salt Lake City west side, I don't think we celebrate it. We talk a lot about it. Some events happen but they don't occur on the west side... People don't want to cross the other side of the tracks. There are so many celebrations that can occur on the west side to celebrate the diversity.

Another participant shared this view. "Look at our community in Glendale, we have a huge, Latinx, Pacific Islander, refugee... I mean, we've got this really, really rich population, but none of the festivals are held around our areas." She also emphasized how holding cultural events representative of the community would also show significant support for local business owners. There were also comments on diversity in representation within the public spaces.

You know, there's like trail markers. How many of those discuss folks that are not from their religious majority or white? That's something to look into for sure, because if I don't see myself represented as like "the trail of like John Smith, who came and lived the life and had a house," and there's like this whole, like, marker for them. And I'm like, OK, cool. I don't know, I want to see one for somebody who looks like me, you know, like we did stuff too. We're still doing it. Where's my face?



The same participant mentioned that she “would love to see some maybe renaming of trails or park names, to really reflect the racial and ethnic minorities that built this City as well.”

Participants said it was important to have signage in multiple languages, not just Spanish and English. As one participant remarked, “you’ve lost the battle because everybody has got their own language and they all need that kind of information so they can learn to live in the United States,” referring to the importance of providing signage and information about parks in multiple languages. Participants also called for increased language access and inclusion in terms of community input. “When you speak to them in their language, they feel included.”

There were also concerns about the accessibility of the parks. For some participants, their accessibility to parks is defined by the UTA bus routes, especially those included in the free fare zone. Certain public spaces are more difficult to visit. “Jordan Trail is kind of still far because there’s not really a bus to get there.” The participants in this discussion stated that they frequent the parks that are immediately in their neighborhood, even though they do not offer a lot of amenities. The need for public transit access is also important for residents with mobility issues. One participant who lives with two disabled individuals shared that “they can only walk from here to the post office. It’s half a block from my house...if they do not have a vehicle, if they do not have someone to drive them or do not have a vehicle that fits them, they cannot reach the park.”

One participant noted the importance of public transportation between parks. He noted that public transportation is especially good around Fairmont Park in Sugar House. The S-line streetcar connects to TRAX and offers connectivity to that neighborhood from other areas in the City. He said of Fairmont Park, “that’s probably the only one that’s accessible for somebody who has a disability. That really is a beautiful thing because you know, if you use a wheelchair, you can get there from here.”

Folks with disabilities need other accommodations as mentioned by our participants. One mentioned that the dog parks do not have an entrance which allows wheelchairs to pass through. Others pointed out that uneven sidewalks are hazardous for people with disabilities or joint issues as they present a risk of falling. There was also interest to provide opportunities for disabled children to use playgrounds. “They’re starting to get disabled play equipment for children. And that’s safer. Liberty Park has it now and Jordan Park has it now. But the other parks, it’s either not enough equipment out there. It’s just too small. They have the space.” The lack of benches and bathrooms at regular intervals was identified as a challenge to using trails. A caretaker mentioned that, “[t]here is nowhere to sit in the middle of the trail,” so the elderly that she cares for tends to “avoid it a bit, because they get exhausted easily...I think some benches are needed so that they can take a break and continue and [more] bathrooms.”

There was also a call for more access to sporting and recreational equipment. One of the amenities they would like to see brought to Salt Lake City parks is fitness equipment such as the one found in Murray Park. “Murray has like a workout activity area. And it’s divided up in like six different areas, little mini parks in sections as you go,

you have workout equipment out there.” Another participant stated that he would use certain parks more if there were access to equipment,

As we discuss access to parks and activities, I think we’ve got to also discuss equipment. Well, with equipment, people don’t have access to that. So, if you’re going to say “we’re going to have kayaking, a kayaking spot, then where are people going to get them?” We don’t have that in Rose Park, so having access to all that stuff, I think that would make people want to go out and kayak the Jordan River.

A white male commented that he has repeatedly heard families share that there is a lack of equipment on the west side. He proposed figuring out a check out system as a method to provide greater access to equipment, thus enabling communities to utilize a variety of amenities. He said,

[H]aving them be checked out at the local library or something, so that kids have access to equipment to actually be able to go use the facilities that are there. And this also works for larger equipment in terms of like picnic tables and such..., if there was a way to increase or to kind of bridge that equipment barrier, I think that would help residents [and] provide that next level of access, [which] is another thing that could really help the neighborhood.

Another participant advocated for trying to provide amenities for youth and adult sports.

We have a lot of youth of color in our west side schools, [the] most popular sport is soccer. Nevertheless, all the soccer leagues that are well equipped are in the East. And there are not soccer fields available lately. There should be more support for outdoor sports that are more popular.

Her remarks expound on the reality that there is an unequal distribution of facilities throughout Salt Lake City.

Those comments were built upon by a Pacific Islander male who shared that “from a Pacific Islander lens [parks] usually [revolve] around sports.” He mentioned a high demand for pickleball courts and noted that tennis courts located at the 17th South Park are rarely used and could be transformed into pickleball courts. Creating spaces and amenities which are of interest to the public is crucial and creates opportunities for parks to be more inclusive, utilized, and equitable. Additionally, informing the public of resources they can access could also improve the system to be more equitable as many residents are not aware of the resources available to them due to the privilege that is associated with the ability to recreate, utilize, and enjoy the public lands.

One woman remembered a program which she described as, “...teaching yoga, and everybody could go and join. And it was like eight different teachers and they let us drink water. That was awesome, because I don’t like when they judge homeless people.” The inclusion she felt as someone experiencing homelessness was really important and impactful to her. She added that practicing mindfulness helped limit her medication to manage her mental health, and that this free and inclusive program helped her. Another participant mentioned that her family relied on the grills in parks to

cook while living out of their car. These two examples emphasize how programs and amenities aren't just a nice bonus to parks, but vital for vulnerable populations.

## Closure

We closed the focus groups by again going in a circle and asking each participant to answer the following question: "What else should be considered in developing the Public Lands Master Plan?" This question is intentionally open ended and was meant to draw out any observations, ideas, or concerns that participants may have either overlooked or were inspired by the previous discussion. The focus groups expanded on many of their previous comments and also brought up a few new ideas. Participants reflected on many major themes including safety, cleanliness, accessibility, diversity, and community building. They also reiterated the importance of parks and public lands in their life.

By the end of the conversation, one of the focus groups mentioned improving lighting more than 15 times. One participant mentioned that in "Jordan Park, not all areas are well lit. I avoid going to certain parts because there is no light". The ranger program was also brought up again and was brilliantly connected to the larger racial justice movement which has gripped the attention of the nation,

I think part of the discussion about defunding the police, we could actually use this as an opportunity to talk about park rangers and funding. And I don't think park rangers have to be law enforcement, but I do think a different approach than a law enforcement approach using park rangers. This is the time to talk about it and think about it in come up for some innovative ideas.

Another participant stated, "I think safety, like it's been a recurring theme. Parents, too, want to be confident that their kids can go to the park and be safe. Women want to feel safe when they're in a park or on a trail." This comment received lots of nods from fellow group members.

In regard to maintenance, one participant commented, "One thing would be cleanups.... just maybe more people helping out." The way she phrased this reminded us that everyone helping a little can actually help a lot.

There were renewed comments on the importance of caring for the parks as part of our ecosystem. One focus group member stated, "This is our planet and the parks are our basic society. (The trees) they're breathing there. We need the oxygen, we need a clean environment." Another brought up an article he recently read,

I would be remiss if I didn't suggest that, you know... in the second driest state and the nation, with global warming hanging over our head, ten years of drought. Right. National Geographic has us, along the Wasatch Front, as the most wasteful water users in the entire world. It's kind of embarrassing for one thing. And what's even more embarrassing is to be watering Kentucky Bluegrass that belongs in Kentucky with potable water, drinking water, that's just crazy. So, and I don't think it's sustainable under the current conditions.



Additionally, one participant felt the need to emphasize wildlife connectivity being a focus of the Master Plan. “I’m not going to go super into it,” she began, “but I definitely want to echo, and support that sort of being looked at and taken into consideration.”

Another participant brought up golf courses and the grandiose public resources devoted to them. “We have got too many golf courses,” he began, “and they don’t support themselves.” He continued, “It’s kind of an elitist sport...Like, particularly on the west side where football and soccer are very popular, and rugby as well.” Another participant reinforced his position. “I’m speechless, because that speaks to equity,” she started. “The number of golfers living in the west side, they are receiving a huge subsidy versus the other sports...That is a consistent presence in discussions with those who live in the neighborhood.”

One focus group also brought up funding. Speaking about Salt Lake City’s Community Councils, one participant said:

They reach out to a variety of partners to make things happen. They don’t have the kind of money that falls behind government departments, but boy, do they make things happen. And if municipalities could really think about how, within their department, how to execute on these recommendations that you all are making to them and how they could partner with community groups you can really make some things happen.

The groups emphasized many times throughout the meeting how important parks were to them. They act as a community center for many of them where they can “be with others that they don’t know, and to learn from others and be a part of the community. And the parks are our community. Yeah, we need to care for them.” The need for natural areas was seen throughout our conversations as green space uses have increased since the onset of the pandemic. “These green areas have become even more important since I have not much space other than my porch.”

Participants also focused on the lack of representation in the stages of decision making processes. “Poplar Grove, Glendale, has been gentrified, where it almost feels like folks that are moving into the neighborhood have a different attitude, and it makes me feel like I should be uncomfortable in my own neighborhood.” The needs of the west side communities are very different from those of other areas in the City, and the residents want to ensure that their community is involved throughout decision making processes.

I would like for voices like ours to be part of the process all the way up to the very end. A lot of times it’s just in the initial stages of data gathering, and then like somebody else will draft it and present it, and then there’s no follow up with a community. So, I think its representation and trying to avoid the recolonization of our communities, and taking knowledge from us without that knowledge coming back to us in some way.

These comments reinforce the need to include input from all communities prior to the implementation of any policies in an effort to make our public lands more inclusive.

## ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

The following recommendations have been developed from participants' comments that were shared during the focus group sessions. They address major themes from the findings section.

### **Implement A Community Led Volunteer Program**

Each of the six focus groups raised concerns about the safety and the cleanliness of Salt Lake City's public lands. We recommend implementing a community led volunteer program to address these issues. This could take the form of a ranger program, as many of the participants proposed. This program could be responsible for hosting educational events about stewardship and patrol areas to ensure there are no unwanted behaviors occurring, such as littering. Volunteers could also engage in routine trash pick up and hosting community clean up events. There are important caveats to this program. It should include a diverse age range of volunteers and include both youth and senior programs. The program should be entirely community led, meaning the volunteers should work in the neighborhoods in which they live. This will help foster a sense of responsibility within the community. This program should be separate from law enforcement since the police do not represent safety to all community members. The department should heavily publicize the program in order to gain support and volunteers.

### **Add More Trash Cans**

In addition to the volunteer program, the City should also add additional trash cans to the parks. These should be placed at regular intervals to provide users with consistent locations to dispose of trash. Trash cans should be monitored to determine how quickly they fill and emptied on a regular basis.

### **Improve Lighting**

Many of the participants cited feeling unsafe at night due to a lack of lighting within the parks. Rather than merely increasing the number of lights in parks and trails, we recommend providing better lighting. According to the International Association of Dark Skies, simply adding more lighting does not improve safety. Incorporating Dark Sky compliant lighting can help increase park visitors' sense of safety while also limiting light pollution. Lighting should prioritize visibility over brightness and should be shielded to direct lighting towards the ground rather than the sky. Incorporating Dark Sky sensitive lighting will also help establish a shared community value and provide educational opportunities. Glendale Community Council is currently preparing to incorporate Dark Sky compliant lighting into it's One Glendale Plan. Salt Lake City Public Lands Division has an incredible opportunity to distinguish itself from other departments by incorporating Dark Sky sensitive lighting.

## **Incorporate Inclusive Designs**

Participants pointed out many areas for improvement in terms of accessibility and park users with disabilities. The parks department should incorporate inclusive play equipment for users of all abilities as a universal standard. Broken sidewalks in the parks are hazardous for users with mobility issues and are sometimes impossible to traverse in a wheelchair or with a walking frame. Sidewalk conditions should be regularly monitored and repaired.

## **Maintain/Expand Public Restrooms**

Many participants in the focus groups lamented at the state of the restrooms in the parks. Some complained that the restrooms were not open, even prior to the coronavirus pandemic. Others pointed out that they were not well maintained or clean. The lack of clean and available restrooms can significantly decrease the amount of time spent in parks if visitors are required to leave the park to use a restroom. Every park should have a porta potti or restroom open year round. All restrooms should be accessible, clean, and regularly maintained.

## **Provide Targeted Multilingual Signage**

Residents signified the importance of providing information and wayfinding signs in multiple languages. There are over 80 languages spoken in Salt Lake City, yet the majority of signs are only available in English. Signs in where non-English speakers concentrate should provide translations to ensure that residents and visitors alike feel welcome and included. It will also help increase awareness and participation from communities traditionally affected by language barriers.

## **Host Cultural Events**

Participants were highly engaged in discussions around hosting cultural events on the west side. They reflected on the diversity of their communities but were dissatisfied that there were no events celebrating the range of cultures in their neighborhoods. The Public Lands Division should develop annual events that cultivate community identity and social bonds. There was special interest in that would provide opportunities for socializing and to support local businesses and organizations, which should be objectives of these events. The Public Lands Division should work directly with community members and organizations to brainstorm and implement cultural events.



## **Rethink Sports/Recreation**

The Public Lands Division should also consider implementing a sports and recreational equipment check out service to increase the accessibility of these activities. The Jordan River is an excellent natural amenity, but many folks lack the resources to purchase a kayak or other recreational water equipment. By providing a location along the river to rent equipment and educate users about the river, the department could demolish several barriers that have excluded people from outdoor recreation. Additionally, the Public Lands Master Plan should challenge the subsidies provided to neighborhood golf courses. Repurposing underutilized infrastructure such as tennis courts, golf courses, and the dilapidated waterpark into popular activities such as pickleball courts, soccer, football, and rugby fields may be a better use of public funds. The additional support for youth sports has great potential to activate more residents per dollar.

## ***DISCUSSION***

For most of the students, this was the first time they facilitated a focus group. There was a diversity in experiences among the students as some focus groups were conducted online while others met face to face. Despite being inexperienced in facilitating, the students felt that their focus groups were conducted successfully. Most participants were willing to share their thoughts and speak candidly. A few of the students had difficulty keeping the conversation on track and had participants who dominated the conversation. Other groups had to coax individual participants to encourage their participation. Generally, residents offered thoughtful and provoking answers to scripted questions.

There were difficulties for the student facilitators with regard to time constraints and staying on script. Some groups expressed difficulty with timekeeping as the participants provided lengthy answers. The robust responses often led to off topic discussions, which made staying on script difficult. Occasionally, scripted questions were omitted due to these discursive answers, and the facilitators had to creatively steer the conversation back to the topic at hand. However, many students agreed that this experience would better prepare them for future focus groups.

The ability to conduct a focus group and engage with the community first hand helped shape students' understanding of the engagement tool. Students were able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the process more clearly. We were also able to confront our preconceived notions of our diverse community members. Some students who conducted online focus groups also believed that conducting the interviews in person would have been more effective. The online groups faced more difficulty in encouraging participation and discussion amongst themselves.

Students were surprised by participants in many ways. One group was surprised by the level of commitment to diversity expressed by the white majority participants. Another group had an unexpectedly high turnout, reflecting the interest these folks have in their community. Other students were amazed by the forthrightness which their participants spoke about gentrification, particularly as the students were all white. Additionally, the Palmer Court residents surprised the students by expressing security concerns in parks related to other individuals who also experienced homelessness.

There are many different types of engagement techniques, but focus groups allow residents to express their needs and concerns directly in order to alter the course of plan making. The fluidity of this method presents opportunities if there is interest in providing information and willingness to listen to it. It was also apparent from these meetings that the information that planners or other experts want from the public is not always the information that the public cares about giving. Ultimately, our understanding of focus groups has expanded in invaluable ways. The students found that focus groups are a powerful method of community engagement that can provide a wealth of knowledge when carefully planned and conducted.

## **CONCLUSION**

One goal of these focus groups was to obtain insightful perspectives of community members through more nuanced responses. The focus groups allowed facilitators to detect emotional triggers within the community and note such triggers in this report. This type of in depth information adds to the overall knowledge from the first window of engagement for the Public Lands Master Plan. Another goal of the focus groups was to hear from underrepresented groups within the Salt Lake City community. Specifically, people who have experienced homelessness were the Palmer Court focus groups' target participants, and west side neighborhood residents were target participants for the remaining focus groups. This is an essential aspect of the community engagement efforts as it ensures the Public Lands Division is gathering conclusive input from all demographics to create a Master Plan that is representative of the entire community's values. Due to the comprehensive and representative qualities of the data collected, the student facilitators found that the goals of this engagement effort were achieved.

Although each focus group had their own unique conversations, primary themes were identified. Through discussion of their lived experiences and perceptions, many participants touched on safety, cleanliness, amenities, accessibility, and volunteer programs related to parks, trails, and open spaces. Based on the focus group participants' information and ideas, recommendations were developed that address each of these subject areas.

While gathering in depth information from underrepresented communities was achieved, using this knowledge to improve the quality and representative nature of the Salt Lake City Public Lands Master Plan is the most vital step. Incorporating this bank of information into the Master Plan is imperative to achieving equity in the planning process, gaining trust from these participants and the communities they represent, and improving parks, trails, and natural lands.

# CHAPTER 5

## RECOMMENDATIONS





# CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

## ***INTRODUCTION***

Chapter 5 includes recommendations on the engagement process and ways the Public Lands Division can improve its community outreach efforts throughout Salt Lake City. This section includes student feedback, recommendations based on survey responses, and recommendations from focus group results. Although this report has already offered a number of recommendations in previous chapters, this chapter only discusses those that we found to be a priority.

The chapter is organized as follows. First, we summarize the main takeaways from the survey and the focus groups including (1) invest in neighborhood parks, (2) cultivate cultural representation, (3) assess west side vs. east side quality, (4) connect green spaces and support active transportation and, (5) promote the ranger program.

Second, based in the insights we gained by engaging with the public, we offer five main recommendations: (1) streamline outreach materials, (2) continue outreach of underrepresented populations, (3) expand collaboration with community organizations, (4) develop methods to assess equity and, (5) revise community engagement protocol during COVID-19.



## MAIN TAKEAWAYS FROM SURVEYS AND FOCUS GROUPS

The students for this engagement window surveyed the public about their thoughts of public lands around Salt Lake City. Interviewing people about their opinions was a first time experience for many students; this alone would make people nervous, but the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic amplified this feeling with the added health risk. As described in Chapter 4, the students and Public Lands Division also facilitated focus groups with community members that were underrepresented. Most students did not have experience facilitating focus groups before besides a mock group done in class, and this was a rewarding experience for the students. Although many recommendations originated from these interactions, we chose to highlight five main ideas.



### 1. INVEST IN NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

#### Invest In Neighborhood Parks

Survey and focus group respondents supported lighting around paved courts, increase bathroom facilities for users, trash and recycling receptacles, and signage for better wayfinding and path identification. Incorporating urban farming in neighborhood parks was a popular suggestion that would improve the local food production within the communities.



### 2. CULTIVATE CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

#### Cultivate Cultural Representation

As described by focus group participants, the lands were previously held by Native Americans and are now used by many different racial and ethnic groups. Hosting cultural events in areas that are represented by that culture would enable community members to celebrate Salt Lake City's rich diversity. Naming public lands after black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) or traditional names for land features would help with cultural representation.

### 3. ASSESS WEST SIDE VS. EAST SIDE QUALITY



#### Assess West Side Vs. East Side Quality

Focus groups reveal that people in the west side perceive their public lands to be of lesser quality. The quality of parks, trails, and natural areas should be assessed between the west side and the east side. Westside Studio to be taught Spring of 2021, another community engaged course of Dr. García, will be assisting the Public Lands Division with this task.

### 4. CONNECT GREEN SPACES AND SUPPORT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION



#### Connect Green Spaces And Support Active Transportation

Both surveys showed most people use their cars to access public lands. However, the percentage of those engaging in public transportation is higher than for those commuting for employment purposes. Coinciding with Climate Positive 2040, improving the walkability and bikeability of these public lands would reduce community greenhouse gases from vehicles. The City could achieve this goal by creating links between parks, so that people can move around freely without interacting with heavy traffic. Connecting green spaces would assist and promote inclusivity and access to already existing transportation systems.



## 5. PROMOTE THE RANGER PROGRAM



### Promote The Ranger Program

The survey indicated support for the current ranger program, but it seems like most respondents were unaware of the existence of this program. Focus group participants spoke about promoting the existing ranger programs and building their efforts instead of increasing policing. Rangers would facilitate increased security and promote stewardship. Additionally, rangers could interact with individuals experiencing homelessness and would be made up of members of the community they would serve in.

1. STREAMLINE  
OUTREACH  
MATERIALSS

2. CONTINUE  
OUTREACH OF  
UNDERREPRESENTED  
POPULATIONS

3. EXPAND  
COLLABORATION  
WITH  
COMMUNITY  
ORGANIZATIONS

4. DEVELOP  
METHODS TO  
ASSESS EQUITY

5. REVISE  
COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT  
PROTOCOL  
DURING COVID-19



FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

## ***FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS***

### **Streamline Outreach Materials**

Outreach materials, including surveys, and the Reimagine Nature website, are critical for creating positive first impressions of the Master Plan redevelopment initiative and informing residents about its goals. The following recommendations address outreach materials and stem from student feedback during in class exercises.

#### **a. Shorten intercept interviews**

Students felt that the intercept interviews were too lengthy and were sometimes a deterrent to people engaging with the survey. A shorter survey may make people more likely to engage and offer responses. Online only surveys may need to be shortened to no more than 5 minutes.

#### **b. Translate intercept surveys into multiple languages**

More than 80 languages are spoken in Salt Lake City. The surveys were translated into Spanish and administered by Spanish speakers. Having intercept and online surveys in other main languages spoken in the City such as Chinese will expand the engagement effort's reach to demographic groups that are not as likely to be involved in public processes.

#### **c. Include Likert scale questions to streamline data analysis**

Likert scale questions usually contain answers on a scale of 1 to 5. Median and mean scores can be calculated for these questions, allowing for more straightforward qualitative data analysis obtained through surveys.

#### **d. Consider using online promotions/advertising**

In person interviews and events can be useful for spurring conversations, but the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic makes these interactions risky for volunteers and participants. Online advertising on social media platforms could engage Salt Lake City residents more safely. This method would also allow the Public Lands Division to reach people who do not visit parks as often and are less likely to participate in intercept interviews.

### **Continue Outreach Of Underrepresented Populations**

Continuing community engagement with underrepresented populations is essential to promoting and achieving equity throughout the Master Plan update. Focused efforts to reach and partner with youth should be prioritized as youth populations will be the future decision makers and caretakers of Salt Lake City public lands. Furthermore, partnerships with BIPOC community organizations and those of lower socioeconomic backgrounds can provide community members opportunities to give input and feedback regarding their vision and needs. The following recommendations will include creative and innovative methods to further current outreach methods.

### **a. Create a youth advisory committee**

Partnerships with local elementary, junior high, and high schools, including clubs, National Honors Society, and sports teams, can provide opportunities for youth to be involved and influence their peers to take an interest in the Master Plan update. Holding schoolwide and citywide competitions, including art, essay, digital media, and music can be an opportunity to promote participation in the Master Plan update.

### **b. Utilize social media accounts**

The Youth Advisory Committee can be assigned to create and manage social media accounts to promote and advertise the Master Plan update. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and TikTok can be utilized to reach more people through popular social media campaigns.

### **c. Events geared towards individuals experiencing homelessness**

To increase public input from those currently experiencing homelessness, hosting a pop-up style event near prevalent homelessness encampments would be beneficial. Offering small incentives, such as coffee and donuts, in exchange for taking the time to complete a survey could not only incentivize participation but also build relationships with vulnerable populations who spend the majority of their time in public spaces.

## **Expand Collaboration With Community Organizations**

Representatives of Friends of the Park, community councils, NeighborWorks, the West Side Coalition, Westview Media, the Jordan River Commission, and Envision Utah (a regional development nonprofit) all attended the final student presentation on the Phase 1 engagement window or were involved at some point throughout the engagement window. This engagement level highlights that Salt Lake City has a large base of community involvement that the Public Lands Master Plan redevelopment process can tap into.

### **a. Continue outreach efforts to community groups**

Students were asked to reach out to community groups, businesses, and community centers in addition to the intercept surveys that they completed in September. This phase was critical because students were tapping into social networks that already exist. Continuing to engage with these groups will be key to the next phases of community engagement, especially to capture input from communities of color and unsheltered community members that were not captured as thoroughly as other groups.

### **b. Partner with nonprofits in order to reach individuals experiencing homelessness**

Local nonprofits and social workers engage unsheltered populations in Salt Lake City. Partnering with resource centers, social workers, or nonprofits could help to achieve more representation from people experiencing homelessness.

### **c. Collaborate with the Jordan River Commission**

The Jordan River Commission recently finished a community input campaign related to this area. It would be helpful to combine information derived from both surveys to address the Jordan River Corridor's management in the Master Plan.

### **d. Continue to engage with University of Utah students and other institutions**

In the first community input window, the Public Lands Division chose to partner with the University of Utah's Department of City and Metropolitan Planning. Collaborative efforts like this one have several additional benefits outside of reducing costs associated with collecting surveys. Students who are beginning careers in planning gain experience in engagement and they also are exposed to networks that are doing engagement work in the community. It is essential to include other academic bodies like high schools and middle schools to engage younger students for input.

### **e. Create space for community groups to collaborate**

A participant in the first focus group belonged to the Westside Coalition, which has been doing collaborative work since 2006. This participant responded to a question about placemaking and recreation along the Jordan River by saying that many groups would benefit from certain amenities. Creating space for problem solving and resource sharing should be a priority to reduce the burden that falls on the City and the Public Lands Division. This could include an advisory committee or more focus groups with members of these organizations.

## **Develop Methods To Assess Equity**

Several methods may be useful for analyzing park stewardship, use, and equity. The Public Lands Division should consider collecting public comments from different platforms and using a condition of care scale to examine the condition of parks and amenities to inform stewardship actions and ensure equity.

### **a. Use existing technology to gather community input**

One such idea involves using technology to gather information in real time from users. This would come in the form of an application (app), similar to Yelp or other platforms for public reviews. The app would capture geospatial data to create a live feed with up to date information about if bathrooms are open, drinking fountains are turned on, if there are concerns about the condition of playground equipment or the state of vegetation. A related app called Streetwyze is currently undergoing testing in several cities throughout the United States. This app delivers information about grocery stores, street safety and health concerns, public goods' functionality, and other topics. Although app development may be difficult for the Public Lands Division to take on, it may be possible to use existing platforms like Streetwyze with an orientation toward the same goal.



### **b. Search current forums related to the Public Lands Division**

Collecting comments is crucial to Master Plan updates moving forward, especially if they are not solicited. Utilizing recent news articles or other public meetings can provide direction as to the public's insights. Sifting through comments in public review boards like Yelp, Google, and public conversation boards via Facebook can give insight on where improvements could be made. In addition, it could provide opportunities for groups that would not otherwise be engaged. Methods for qualitative analysis of comments across platforms should be used to conclude what types of comments are most common (i.e., what amenities are consistently missing or which parks are consistently cited for not having certain amenities).

### **c. Develop a condition of care scale for parks in Salt Lake City**

Using a scale to assess park quality can reduce the subjectivity of park audits. This will be helpful for comparing parks throughout the City. Allocating resources to parks that need specific amenities, garbage clean up, horticultural remediation, or even increased canopy cover is crucial to ensure that funds are being used as efficiently as possible. It is also possible to use a condition of care scale to assess the change in stewardship over time the way that a team of researchers has done with the "Large Lot Program" in Chicago, Illinois. In this example, values are given to specific maintenance and amenities indicators to judge spaces' stewardship quality over time. This study includes other articles related to the community connectivity that emerges from beautification. This could be an essential initiative in Salt Lake City in order to address the concerns of residents related to the equity of parks through all neighborhoods and how this affects community identity. To reduce the cost of such a study, it could be beneficial to continue to collaborate with the University of Utah or other agencies interested in community development. The condition of care scale can also include satellite imagery, which is often public domain, and available daily or hourly based instead of in person audits when they are unavailable or cost prohibitive.

## **Revise Community Engagement Protocol During COVID-19**

COVID-19 has created a new normal of social distancing and mask wearing in public places and has made public engagement more challenging as health concerns are prevalent for in person activities. While public engagement is critical to creating a Master Plan representing the community, engagement efforts must include taking public health precautions to keep volunteers, officials, and participants safe. Based on feedback from students and recommendations from public health officials, engagement during times like these should consider:

### **a. Give hand sanitizers**

Provide hand sanitizer to the interviewers to help reduce virus transmission.

### **b. Provide free face masks**

Provide participants, volunteers, and staff at engagement events with either disposable or branded face masks.

### **c. Support QR codes**

Continue using QR codes for surveys to reduce the time needed for interaction between interviewers and interviewees.

### **d. Expand pop-up events**

Have tabling pop-up sessions where people can complete surveys/provide input and receive free hand sanitizers and masks.

### **e. Meet virtually**

Use online meeting platforms like Zoom to reduce in person contact during engagement events.

### **f. Send a mail in survey**

This method would be particularly beneficial during the COVID-19 pandemic for at risk groups due to health concerns. It will also provide those who may lack access to digital resources or are not technologically proficient to participate in the public engagement process.



# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSION



## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

### **SUMMARY**

As a class, we sought to understand what values are essential to Salt Lake City residents to guide a vision for public lands in the foreseeable future. Through the first window of engagement, we conducted in person surveys in all parts of the City, reached out to numerous businesses to share the online survey, posted the online survey on social media, and conducted six focus groups with 54 participants. With 635 in person surveys and 3,733 online surveys, we were able to identify the key themes that the residents of Salt Lake City want in their public lands over the next 10 to 20 years, including improved safety, enhanced language access, cultural representation, strengthened stewardship activities, and more.

This report outlines numerous recommendations for what Salt Lake City Public Lands should consider moving forward. The public engagement project's recommendations included streamlining outreach materials, such as shortening the intercept interviews, translating the survey into multiple languages, including Likert scale questions, and considering the use of online advertising. Further, continuing community engagement with underrepresented populations was another recommendation that must be considered moving forward, not only in the community engagement process but also in the operations of Salt Lake City Public Lands. Some future engagement methods include creating a youth advisory committee to engage youth led, social media campaigns.

Having events geared towards individuals experiencing homelessness to ensure their voice as users of public lands are included. Continuing outreach efforts and partnering with nonprofits to reach the unhoused population will create a more equitable and legitimate process. Collaboration with community organizations is a vital step in the Master Planning process. Engaging these organizations will help the community feel more included and provide support for the project. Some organizations to reach out to would be the Jordan River Commission as they are interested in this project and are directly impacted by it, and continue to engage with University of Utah students and other institutions.

The final primary recommendation the City must think about is how to develop methods to assess equity in SLC public lands. Equity was one of the critical values identified in the 2019 Needs Assessment, and it is a value that is central to Mayor's Erin Mendenhall's administration. This can be done using existing technology to gather community input, such as an app called Streetwyze, which allows community members to share information, stories, and ideas about how to improve their neighborhood.

The City can also search social media forums related to the Public Lands Division to conduct a content analysis on the parks' quality. These comments would not be solicited but collected for content analysis. This method has the potential to reach communities that may not traditionally be engaged in the planning process. As described in the recommendations chapter, developing a Condition of Care scale would be beneficial for comparing parks between the east and west sides. It will help the City



to have an objective measure of parks and public land quality. This assessment will also help the City to understand if there is unequal development between the east and west sides, which is a comment that has been emphasized by west side residents.

Finally, the last recommendation would be to take public health precautions to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. It will be challenging to keep the participants, officials, and staff safe in a community engagement program, but certain precautions like providing hand sanitizers, distributing face masks, and using online meeting platforms like Zoom can help.

## ***MAIN SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP TAKEAWAYS***

To improve community engagement, the students conducted intercept interviews. Moreover, the Public Lands Division and the students facilitated focus groups with community members underrepresented in the surveys. From both the surveys and focus groups, the report outlined significant takeaways.

Respondents and participants urged the City to invest in neighborhood parks to increase facilities and improve infrastructure such as lighting, trash bins, signage for better wayfinding, etc. Building the local food production capacity within the communities is also a takeaway from the focus group meetings.



**Figure 47: Diversified Cultural Events Example**

Another recommendation from the surveys is hosting cultural events to celebrate Salt Lake City's rich diversity. Events will increase the parks and open lands' usability and encourage community members to celebrate their cultural diversity.

An important objective from those tasks is to connect green spaces throughout the City, which will increase access to already existing transportation systems and facilitate mobility. The survey indicated that people are interested in promoting active transportation by improving the bikeability and walkability within public lands. Furthermore, active transportation can help reduce greenhouse emissions.

Due to the pandemic, many people felt uncomfortable taking an in person survey with students. Mail in surveys might support community members who have limited or no access to digital resources and are not technologically proficient but are eager to participate in the public engagement process.

The students realized in their focus groups that the parks and open spaces in the west side of the City are perceived to need more maintenance. However, we have more park space on the west side of the City, when measured as acres/population. District 1, in particular, has the highest amount of park space in the whole City. We need to understand why west side residents perceived their parks of less quality. A next study that the Westside Studio course will be conducting Spring of 2021 would seek to understand if there is a difference in quality between the east and west side parks.

A final proposal is to expand the Friends of the Park program and the ranger program which could help the community have less dependency on Salt Lake City police. Rangers would ensure security and promote stewardship and interact with the homeless population to keep the parks safe from unwanted incidents.

## ***IMPLEMENTATION METRICS***

The following sections are tangible goals that should be met to achieve each recommendation. It should be noted that these are simple suggestions to fulfill each recommendation as they can be achieved in many ways.

### **Streamline Outreach Materials**

Shortening the survey length of future surveys should be the first goal of the Public Lands Division. Engagement windows #2 and #3 would benefit from translating the survey into Spanish or other common languages spoken in Utah like Chinese and Pacific Island languages. Nonprofit organizations can be an excellent source for this task, especially if they are willing to collaborate in the distribution of surveys in multiple languages.

### **Reach Underrepresented Populations**

The goal to create a youth advisory committee could be achieved using the following recommendations. Outreach at local high schools through after school programs such as Youthworks would help generate interest in this committee. Selecting a representative from at least two high schools on the west side of Salt Lake City can ensure adequate representation, and school credit could be offered to each student. Staff at SLC Public Lands could create governance guidelines, which would then be revised and adopted by the youth group. The school staff could get the committee started, but the youth should elect their own chair and govern themselves with the staff as an advisory role. Staff would also act as a liaison between the committee and Public Lands to disseminate ideas and communications.



Figure 48: Youth Advisory Committee Example

The goal to carry out a social media campaign can be achieved in a multitude of ways. One way is to allow this to be one of the tasks of the youth committee. They could run the social media campaign as they generally have more knowledge of social media, but with some supervision, such as through the existing Public Lands Division outreach coordinator, to ensure no violations occur.

A final goal is to create more events geared towards individuals experiencing homelessness in Salt Lake City. One step to ensure this materializes is to consult with a nonprofit organization that works directly with unsheltered individuals, like Volunteers of America (VOA), to better tailor events to them. Having outreach events near homeless encampments will directly reach these populations and help them feel more included. Furthermore, compensation of some sort should be given, like snacks, care packages, or gift cards. It should be noted that those who experience homelessness are undergoing a temporary condition and it is not their identity.

## Collaborate With Community Organizations

The recommendations to continue outreach efforts with community groups is essential. These include partnering with nonprofits to reach the unsheltered population, collaborate with the Jordan River Commission, continuing to engage with University of Utah students and other institutions, and creating space for community groups to collaborate. Many of these goals can be achieved through the creation of a volunteer stakeholder and community liaison team. Three or four members can take each outreach section that must occur, such as youth, unsheltered individuals, nonprofits, etc. Another member could be in charge of creating spaces for community groups to collaborate. This would have a formal committee in charge of outreach to ensure all Salt Lake City community members are approached to have their input included. The first

step would be to form this committee and then select the members. Staff members at the Public Lands Division could appoint members based on districts. Once the committee members are chosen, Public Lands Division staff would have to set up meeting times and official duties.

## **Develop Methods To Assess Equity In Salt Lake City Public Lands**

The two recommendations to use existing technology to gather community input and search current forums related to the Public Lands Division can be achieved by incorporating these activities into the existing outreach coordinators duties. We believe utilizing the existing outreach coordinator for these additional responsibilities is the most affordable and feasible option, but hiring an intern through a high school or undergraduate program, or partnering with a workforce organization such as Americorps, could also be considered. The outreach coordinator could report to the Public Lands Division head and consult with all relevant divisions on social media postings. Using existing technology and searching public forums, the existing outreach coordinator would gather input on various aspects of the parks such as equity. Further, they could analyze these findings and disseminate this information to relevant division heads to implement any changes. The current outreach coordinator could also liaise with the youth committee to consult on social media posts, such as writing off approval before publishing.

The recommendation to develop an assessment like the condition of care scale for parks in Salt Lake City could be realized in several ways. The next step would be to set up the categories that should be included in this assessment but based in the comments that came from the surveys and focus groups. Some main categories of the assessment might include:

### **1. Connected and accessible parks**

Trails, transit, walkability, bikeability, and ADA Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access

### **2. Active and welcoming places**

signage that reflects the community culture and place, absence or presence of translated signage, cultural events, and absence or presence of relevant cultural monuments.

### **3. A commitment to stewardship**

overall condition being poor, average or good, maintenance such as the presence of litter, garbage cans (serviced regularly or not), dog waste, cleanliness of bathrooms, presence of graffiti, and clearing pathways in the winter.

### **4. Environmental health and sustainability**

Status and health of native and non-native plants, presence, absence and condition of shrubs, young and mature trees, presence of invasive species, and status of water quality in ponds, rivers, and water features.



## 5. Infrastructure elements

Maintenance and conditions of major infrastructure elements including lighting, playgrounds, walking and biking trails, bridges, sports courts, recreation fields, pavilions, etc. Consider places to install pavilions and seating near pathways with lighting features for safety. Consider the maintenance and function of human-made ponds and water features.

The recommendations above are intended to be a starting point. This evaluation could become part of a Westside Studio course evaluations in early Spring of 2021. The assessment could be posted online and be accessible from the City website to allow residents the chance to provide input. The link can be provided in a QR code on park signage to ensure it is accessible to park users.

The condition-care scale as applied in this study.

Rating	Descriptive criteria
-1	<b>Mismanaged:</b> Ground and tree cover is unmanaged and use by authorized or unauthorized parties is largely uncontrolled (see “unmanaged” criteria detail for more detail). In addition, there are signs where lack of control over use has resulted in abuse and safety hazards including dead trees (hazardous branches), serious erosion including potholes and large puddles from vehicle use, vehicle paths cutting through the property and off the curb into the street, junked and abandoned vehicles, dumping and large amounts of litter, vandalism and graffiti, and/or structures in obvious disrepair.
0	<b>Unmanaged:</b> Ground cover vegetation is largely weedy and not recently mown (average is > 10” tall). Significant portions of the lot may be devoid of ground vegetation and either bare soil or broken pavement (former use). If present, shrub and tree cover is weedy and unmanaged, and there may be dense clumps of volunteer woody plants and/or malformed trees, especially along perimeter areas. Lot is unfenced, may have vehicles parked on it with areas of erosion and potholes/puddles, and litter may be prevalent. Overall there appears to be little control over use, but there are no signs of abuse or safety hazards.
1	<b>Periodically Managed</b> (“Basic Management” – minimum standard under City ordinances): Ground cover vegetation is periodically mown (1-2x/season) but may be weedy and somewhat tallish at the time photo was taken (though < 10”). May have some small volunteer trees and shrubs, especially along perimeter, but larger woody vegetation shows some signs of pruning and control. Lot may be unfenced or with bollards or older fencing, and some fencing may be in need of repair. The lot may have cars parked on it, patches of dirt from car use, and small amounts of litter, but signs of control over use are evident. For example, cars do not use the property as a cut-through between alley and street, and there may be some signs of infilling potholes and low spots to minimize erosion damage from vehicles.
2	<b>Regularly Managed:</b> Ground cover has been recently mowed and is predominantly lawn grass, and trees and shrubs if present are planted and/or pruned to have good form. The property may be unfenced or fenced, and if fencing is older it is in reasonable repair. No gardens are present, and other social, aesthetic, or recreational signs of occupancy are minimal. There may be cars parked on the property (in the rear and in some cases middle or front) but they are clearly “in their place” and do not dominate the view, and efforts are made to minimize any erosion due to vehicle use.
3	<b>Small-scale gardens and other cues to care:</b> Flowers in pots or a small garden patch is visible, usually along the front of the lot, lot corner, or around a tree (including the parkway strip). Trees and shrubs if present appear to be planted and are maintained in good form. Fencing if present is in good condition. Other social, aesthetic, or recreational signs of occupancy may be present but are small in scale. One or two vehicles may be visible, but they are in a designated space at the rear of the property.
4	<b>Moderate-scale gardens and other cues to care:</b> Flower or vegetable beds are present but are moderate in scale in relation to lot size. Trees and shrubs if present appear to be planted and are maintained in good form. Fencing if present is in good condition. Other social, aesthetic, or recreational signs of occupancy are present but are moderate in scale or number. Vehicles if present are in a designated space at the rear of the property and efforts are made to separate them from the rest of the property, e.g., screening with fencing or vegetation.
5	<b>Extensive gardens and other cues to care:</b> Flower or vegetable beds and other plantings including trees, shrubs and other ground cover dominate the lot. Fencing if present is in good condition. Numerous other social, aesthetic, or recreational signs of occupancy may be present. Vehicles are not visible.

Figure 49: Chicago’s Large Lot Program Condition of Care Scale



## MOVING FORWARD

In the table below, we summarize where we have been (engagement window #1) and look towards where are we going (engagement window #2 and #3).

Engagement Window Proposed Name	Engagement Window Objectives	Aligns with content from:	Consultant and SLC Staff Roles and Responsibilities Overview
Engagement Window #1: Discover SLC's Outdoors	IAP2 Goals: INFORM (public) and CONSULT (stakeholders) Presents a foundation of understanding the various groups to gain a common understanding of opportunities and challenges to public lands. Informs the public of the Master Plan objectives and is an opportunity to gather new or known community values regarding public lands. Test thoughts on 7 big goals.	Recent Needs Assessment and RFP Tasks 1, 2, 3.	DW Digital Meeting Cycle 1 (3 meetings total): Core Team Strategic Kick-off on 5/18, Internal Working Group Meeting Follow Up and SLC Civic Engagement Team coordination meeting #1 DW Digital Meeting Cycle 2 (12 meetings total): Technical Advisory Meeting #1, Stakeholder Interviews by phone (up to 6), and (up to 3) focus group meetings using a 5 minute, project overview slide presentation video with narration, a brief online pre-survey, summary notes and virtual focus group webinar, Survey questions would be developed in word document and anticipate up to ten questions. Internal Working Group and SLC Civic Engagement Team Coordination Meeting #2 by conference call, Steering Committee Meeting #1 by conference call. SLC Staff Efforts (informed by DW deliverables): Initiate project website and social media campaign to publicize potential techniques outlined in task 2. Facilitate community events, including meeting in a box kit-DW can help provide questions and graphic content for the box. Inform

			decision makers on project kick-off.
Engagement Window #2: Imagine the Future of SLC's Outdoors /7 Big Projects Ideas	IAP2 Goals: CONSULT (public), INVOLVE and COLLABORATE (stakeholders) Convenes visioning efforts with a variety of groups to understand priorities, and areas of shared and divergent visions. Collaborates with core stakeholders to prioritize vision elements.	Tasks 4 and 5	DW Digital Meeting Cycle 3 (34 meetings total): Technical Advisory Meeting #2: Visioning Workshop (virtual webinar), SLC City Partners Visioning Workshop (virtual webinar), Internal Working Group Meeting conference call, and SLC Civic Engagement Meeting #3 conference call. DW can support this phase with a short online survey. Survey questions would be developed in a word document and anticipate up to 10-15 questions. SLC Staff Efforts (informed by DW deliverables): Convene Steering Committee Meeting #2. Update project website and social media campaign to publicize potential techniques outlined in tasks 4 and 5. Facilitate staff visioning workshop and update decision makers on plan progress.
Engagement Window #3: Transforming SLC's Outdoors	IAP2 Goals: CONSULT (public), COLABORATE (stakeholders) EMPOWER (decision makers)	Task 6	DW Digital Meeting Cycle 4 (1 meeting total): Final Draft presentation to Steering Committee Meeting #3 or other group of decision makers via virtual webinar SLC Staff Efforts (informed by DW deliverables): Facilitate PDF draft of plan on the project website,

	Presents a draft plan with varying levels of input by stakeholder groups.		facilitate a preparatory final adoption meeting with decision makers, and final adoption meeting.
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## Engagement Window #2

The results of the first engagement window can help inform and streamline the proceeding engagement windows. Engagement window # 2 is to convene visioning workshops with various groups to understand priorities and areas of shared and differing visions. It is also to collaborate with core stakeholders and prioritize vision elements. Due to the focus groups' success on the west side, visioning sessions should be held with stakeholder groups on the west side, including community councils and nonprofit groups. In doing so, they can identify what those communities envision for their public lands, which we have already seen is different from what east side residents reimagine. Having an internal meeting conference call with these stakeholders would be beneficial during COVID-19.

## Engagement Window #3

The third engagement window encompasses the creation of a draft plan. We recommend that the draft be presented to relevant stakeholders before presenting it to the steering committee. This helps ensure the community's vision is met and guarantee the community sees the final product and approves it. One of the focus group members mentioned how marginalized communities are typically part of the data gathering process, but they never see the final product. They brought up how this was another form of colonization by taking their knowledge but never receiving anything in return. To ensure this is an equitable process, the community and relevant stakeholders must see the plan before it is sent to the Parks, Natural Lands, Forestry and Trails Board, the Planning Commission, and City Council to gather final input and approval.

The initiative taken by Salt Lake City Public Lands Division to reimagine the Master Plan and inspire people of the community to be engaged in this process will bring out the best for this project. By addressing the public's needs and desires, the future of public lands and open spaces of SLC will better serve the community and its natural spaces.



# APPENDIX



# CHAPTER 7: APPENDIX

## **APPENDIX A: INTERCEPT SURVEY**

Date & Time:

Location:

Weather:

Student Survey Facilitator Name:

\* Items in red are instructions for the interviewer

### Introduction

Salt Lake City Public Lands Division includes our city's parks, urban forests, natural areas and trails. As part of the first window of engagement for the master plan, we are asking the community to help us create a vision to guide future change and investment for our public spaces over the next 20 years.

### Interview Preamble

"We are University students working with the City Public Lands Department to better understand how people might reimagine the future of parks, trails and natural areas. Do you have two minutes to answer some questions?"

### Survey Questions

Background: Having a park within walking distance of home (half a mile or 10-minute walk) was considered extremely important to 57% of Salt Lake City residents surveyed in 2017 and having a park in biking distance of home was extremely important to 38%.

1. Which of these is easy for you to access (through walking or biking) from your home?

*Select all that apply*

- a) A city park
- b) Recreational trail or bike path
- c) Natural area or open space
- d) A street or public space with abundant trees
- e) City golf course

Background: Prior to COVID-19, 42% of Salt Lake City residents reported visiting parks and 30% reported using trails at least once a week.

2. Has your frequency of use of parks changed this year from previous years?

*Select one*

- a) Visiting parks more often
- b) Same frequency
- c) Visiting parks less often

3. Has your frequency of use of trails changed this year from previous years?  
*Select one*
  - a) Using trails more often
  - b) Same frequency
  - c) Using trails less often
4. Are Salt Lake City parks, trails, urban forest, natural areas or golf courses important to you? *Select one*
  - a) Extremely important
  - b) Somewhat important
  - c) Indifferent
  - d) Unimportant
5. Is this [park / golf course / trail] in your neighborhood? (Y/N) About how far is this from where you live? *Please write interviewee response below*
6. How did you get here today? *Select one*
  - a) Walk
  - b) Bike/Skateboard/Scooter
  - c) Public Transit
  - d) Car / Carpool
  - e) Other

Background: When it comes to stewardship of our parks, citizens have indicated they would most like to see the following improvements: maintenance and cleanliness, additional or improved restrooms, lighting or safety features and additional trees.

Stewardship activities in public lands can also support more natural habitat protection, like recent efforts at Fife Wetland Preserve.

7. Thinking long-term over the next 10-20 years, what stewardship actions do you think would be most impactful to Salt Lake City's public lands? Please write the interviewee response in the blank provided. Can provide one or two examples to prompt response from the list below:
  - a) Add or renovate aged restrooms, playgrounds and other amenities
  - b) Add and service more bins for trash and dog waste
  - c) Plant more trees in parks and natural areas
  - d) Incorporate more native, waterwise or pollinator plants in landscaping
  - e) Acquire additional natural areas to increase size of existing habitat blocks and wildlife corridors
  - f) Support "Friends of the Parks" groups
  - g) Develop ranger/ambassador programs
  - h) Host educational events to build land ethics
  - i) Support active modes of transportation to reduce carbon footprint (e.g., walking, biking)

8. **Are there ways you can imagine yourself contributing to the stewardship of public lands?** Please write the interviewee response in the blank provided. Examples if needed include volunteering for clean-up days, tree planting, etc.

Background: SLC is expecting 30,000 more people by 2040, and the recent Public Lands Needs Assessment found that the city would need to add 94 acres of parkland (roughly another Liberty Park) to keep up. In addition, 63% of current public lands assets are in poor to fair condition. While our urban forests help cool temperatures and improve air quality, the overall number of trees have been in decline over the last 20 years.

9. Which of the following system-wide approaches do you think would most benefit the livability (or quality of life) of Salt Lake City and encourage you to get outside more often? *Pick top two*
- a) Invest in regional public lands and amenities that create unique destinations
  - b) Invest in neighborhood public lands and amenities that encourage everyday use
  - c) Improve the sidewalk and trail network for travel by bike and on foot
  - d) Focus on improving environmental health and biodiversity (the richness of different kinds of plants and animals in our public lands)
10. Do you avoid, not enjoy, or feel uncomfortable in any city parks or natural areas? If yes, can you tell me about some of these locations and what could improve your experience? *Please write the interviewee response in the blank provided*

Background: SLC is home to over 196,000 people who speak 80 languages representing a broad range of socioeconomic backgrounds and cultural heritages. As in most American cities, there are gaps in the amount and quality of public lands available to different neighborhoods in SLC.

When you imagine our public lands 10-20 years from now, what changes can we make to our public lands system to help serve and include all people more equitably? Please provide a written response in the blank below

11. What prevents you or members of your household from spending more time in these outdoor places? *Please select all that apply-can write N/A or other if none of these answers resonate*
- a) No places nearby
  - b) Places are too crowded
  - c) Safety or security concerns
  - d) Not accessible to those with disabilities, health or mobility challenges
  - e) Which 3 words sum up what you think should be big 10-year goals of Salt Lake City Public Lands? *Please provide a written response in the blank below*
12. What would make this place (park, trail, natural areas, golf course) better? *Please provide a written response in the blank below*



13. What else should be considered in developing the Public Lands Master Plan for natural areas, urban forests, and parks? *Please provide a written response in the blank below*

14. Which Salt Lake City neighborhood or community do you live in?

- a) Northwest Quadrant Community
- b) Airport Community
- c) Northwest Community
- d) West Salt Lake Community
- e) Capitol Hill Community
- f) Avenues Community
- g) Downtown Community
- h) Central Community
- i) East Bench Community
- j) Sugar House Community
- k) City Creek Community

15. What is your age?

- a) Younger than 18
- b) 18-21
- c) 22-30
- d) 31-40
- e) 41-50
- f) 51-60
- g) 61 or older

16. What is your race/ethnicity?

- a) Black or African American
- b) American Indian or Alaska Native
- c) Asian
- d) Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- e) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- f) White
- g) Prefer not to say
- h) Other

17. What is your household income level?

- a) \$0 - \$14,999
- b) \$15,000 - \$24,999
- c) \$25,000 - \$49,999
- d) \$50,000 - \$74,999
- e) \$75,000 - \$100,000
- f) \$100,000 - \$150,000
- g) \$150,000 +

18. What is your gender?

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) Non-Binary/Third Gender
- d) Prefer not to say
- e) Prefer to self-describe

19. The City Feedback Community is an essential tool in engaging and seeking feedback from residents. Add your email below if you would like to subscribe to the Feedback Community and receive alerts about future surveys.

## APPENDIX B: ONLINE SURVEY

REIMAGINE

NATURE

SLC PUBLIC LANDS MASTER PLAN

Salt Lake City Public Lands Division includes our city's parks, urban forests, natural areas and trails. As part of the first window of engagement for the master plan, we are asking the community to help us create a vision to guide future change and investment for our public spaces over the next 20 years.

This brief survey shares information gathered from the *2019 Salt Lake City Parks & Public Lands Needs Assessment*. The questions ask you to reflect on how you use our green spaces today and to reimagine how public lands could support stewardship, livability and equity for our city's future.

If you need more background information, please click here for a Reimagine Nature: [SLC Public Lands Master Plan Snapshot](#).

Next

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# REIMAGINE NATURE

## SLC PUBLIC LANDS MASTER PLAN

*Having a park within walking distance of home (half a mile or 10-minute walk) was considered extremely important to 57 percent of Salt Lake City residents surveyed in 2017 and having a park in biking distance of home was extremely important to 38 percent.*

### Which of these is easy for you to access from your home?

(Select all that apply)

☐ A city park

☐ Recreational trail

☐ Commuter or recreational bike path

☐ Natural area or natural open space

☐ A street or public space with abundant trees

☐ Other outdoor or recreational center

☐ City golf course

☐ None of the above



*Prior to COVID-19, 42 percent of Salt Lake City residents reported visiting parks and 30 percent reported using trails at least once a week.*

**Has your frequency of use of parks changed this year from previous years?**

☐ Visiting parks more often

☐ Same frequency

☐ Visiting parks less often

**Has your frequency of use of trails changed this year from previous years?**

☐ Using trails more often

☐ Same frequency

☐ Using trails less often

## STEWARDSHIP

*When it comes to stewardship of our parks, citizens have indicated they would most like to see the following improvements to care for our public lands: maintenance and cleanliness, additional or improved restrooms, lighting or safety features, and additional trees. Stewardship activities in public lands can also support more natural habitat protection, like recent efforts at Fife Wetland Preserve.*

**Thinking long-term over the next 10-20 years, what stewardship actions do you think would be most impactful to the public lands that include city parks, urban forests, natural areas and trails? Select all that apply or provide others.**

*(Provide your feedback in the three categories below)*

### Direct Actions

(Select all that apply)

☐ Add or renovate aged restrooms, playgrounds, and other amenities

☐ Add and service more bins for trash and dog waste

☐ Increase the frequency of litter clean-up

☐ Plant more trees in parks and natural areas

☐ Incorporate more native, waterwise plants in landscaping

☐ Increase enforcement of activities that degrade natural resources including inappropriate recreation use, predation from cats, exposure to pesticides or other toxins, light and noise pollution.

☐ Create wildflower meadows for bees and other pollinators in parks, streets, the cemetery, and golf courses.

☐ Maintain natural-surface trails and improve or expand public access points

☐ Install better signage in parks, trails and natural areas for wayfinding and interpretation

☐ Other Ideas for Direct Action

## Funding

(Select all that apply)

☐ Acquire additional natural areas to increase size of existing habitat blocks or connect wildlife corridors

☐ Acquire lands adjacent to water course to support riparian health and reduce flooding risks

☐ Invest in increased maintenance for priority parks and natural areas

☐ Invest in increased maintenance for trails and trail corridors

☐ Add more staff to care for trees

☐ Develop adoption programs to help fund maintenance of park amenities, such as trees and benches

☐ Improve the City's donation process and actively solicit private donations to support stewardship

☐ Hire a Stewardship Coordinator.

☐ Other Ideas for Funding



## Daily Practices

(Select all that apply)

☐ Support "Friends of the Parks" groups

☐ Develop ranger/ambassador programs

☐ Host educational events to build land ethics

☐ Expand collaborations with non-profits, schools, community centers, and others to enhance education and stewardship opportunities.

☐ Support active modes of transportation to reduce carbon footprint (e.g., walking, biking)

☐ Create a Biodiversity Advisory Committee composed of public members, technical experts, and staff to guide biodiversity conservation efforts.

☐ Work with City departments to improve capacity and resources to respond to oil spills, wildfire and other environmental emergencies

☐ Other Ideas to Encourage Daily Practices

## LIVABILITY

SLC is expecting 30,000 more people by 2040, and the recent public lands needs assessment found that the city would need to add 94 acres of parkland (roughly another Liberty Park) to keep up. In addition, 63 percent of current public lands assets are in poor to fair condition. While our urban forests help cool temperatures and improve air quality, the overall number of trees have been in decline over the last 20 years.

### Which of the following system-wide approaches do you think would most benefit the livability (or quality of life) of Salt Lake City and encourage you to get outside more often?

(pick your top 2)

- ☐ Invest in regional public lands and amenities that create unique destinations
- ☐ Invest in neighborhood public lands and amenities that encourage everyday use
- ☐ Improve the sidewalk and trail network in order to travel by bike and foot to public lands and everyday destinations like work and school
- ☐ Focus on improving environmental health and biodiversity (the richness of different kinds of plants and animals in our public lands)
- ☐ Grow our urban forests to help provide shade, clean water and air for our city and neighborhoods
- ☐ Find outside-the-box opportunities to use our city's parks, golf courses, school yards, natural areas and streetscapes to increase public access to nature, trails, sports fields, and public gathering places.
- ☐ Other

## EQUITY

*SLC is home to over 196,000 people who speak 80 languages representing a broad range of socioeconomic backgrounds and cultural heritages. As in most American cities, there are gaps in the amount and quality of public lands available to different neighborhoods in SLC.*

**When you imagine our public lands 10-20 years from now, what changes can we make to our public lands system to help serve and include all people more equably?**

(please provide a written response in the blank below)

1000

## Which words sums up what you think should be big 10-year goals of Salt Lake City Public Lands

(select all that apply or provide others)

☐ Grow

☐ Protect

☐ Empower

☐ Resilient

☐ Connect

☐ Welcome

☐ Equity

☐ Prioritize

☐ Fund

☐ Other



## TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS

*Big ideas for Public Lands properties often originate in Master Plans like this. The next step of this plan is to create visions for transformational projects and programs on public lands.*

### **The list below share some potential big ideas and possible locations for projects and programs in our public lands.**

Please select any of the potential transformational projects listed below that excite you or share your own idea.

- ☐ Build Salt Lake's Emerald Ribbon: Turn the Jordan River Parkway into the City's most active recreation destination space, by investing in tree canopy, grounds maintenance, a recreational paddle trail, and park development, renewal and expansion from the former Seven Peaks Waterpark at the southern boundary to the Regional Athletic Complex on the north end.

- ☐ Reimagine Salt Lake City's mini and neighborhood parks: Small parks evolve to reflect neighborhood identity, provide quality amenities and experiences that reflect unique community desires, and provide better options for recreation, respite and community gathering in neighborhood parks.

- ☐ Transform Pioneer Park into the city's most dynamic, programmed, and desirable public space, transforming it into both a neighborhood destination, and a regional amenity for events and gatherings.

- ☐ Trails from the Mountains to the Lake: Extend the City's growing multi-use and natural surface trail network to connect regional recreation destinations, extending west to the Great Salt Lake Marina and east to the Wasatch Crest Trail with the 9Line/Transvalley Corridor as the backbone.

☐ Reimagine how our citywide Urban Green Spaces can accommodate more public access, provide diverse recreation opportunities, grow food, provide nature education and support biodiversity.

☐ Implement a citywide Ranger-Ambassador program in the City's parks, natural areas and open spaces that focuses equally on resource protection and enriching the experience for public land visitors.

☐ Create a citywide Equity Mapping Tool that identifies areas of the city that do not have as much access to urban forests, natural areas and city parks. Use this tool to help prioritize areas for investment in public lands.

☐ Other

**What else should be considered in developing the Public Lands Master Plan for natural areas, urban forests, and parks?**

Please provide a written response in the blank below.

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**If you would like to receive regular email updates about the Public Lands Master Plan process, please enter your email address below:**

## APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP RECRUITMENT FLYER

# REIMAGINE NATURE

## SLC PUBLIC LANDS MASTER PLAN

We want to hear your opinion about parks!  
1.5 hour conversation

Salt Lake City Public Lands, the University of Utah and the Glendale Community Council invites you to a group discussion to get to know your opinion about the free, open all year-round parks, trails, and green areas that surround Glendale for the enjoyment of your community. We hope this discussion will also feed into the Glendale One conversation.

### When

Thursday, October 15 @ 6:00-7:30 p.m.

### Where

<https://utah.zoom.us/j/98683614967>

Passcode: 591717

+1 669 900 6833

Meeting ID: 986 8361 4967

### To RSVP

Go to <https://forms.gle/XXMKd2PNErEc1f817>

Call or text Ivis Garcia  
801.833.4073



## **APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUPS FACILITATOR SCRIPT**

### **Facilitator #1 – Welcome! – 15 minutes**

[Choose a student to be the main facilitator and give the introduction. Welcome people informally as they enter to the SLC Public Lands Master focus group. Engage in small chat and answer questions people have. Tell them to fill out the demographic questionnaire, survey in English or Spanish, and asked them to take a look at the Snapshot (upload in zoom, for in person we will have copies).

My name is *[name]* and I am a master student at the University of Utah in City and Metropolitan Planning. We are University students working with the City Public Lands Divisions to better understand how people might reimagine the future of parks, trails, and natural areas. And now each team member will introduce themselves to you. *[Introduction of other students in the team]*. Here with us we also have staff from SLC Public Lands *[introduction of SLC Public Lands staff]*.

As you know from our previous communication, you are here to participate in a focus group (or in other words a group discussion) on a specific topic. The topic that we will be discussing today is what you reimagine the future of parks, trails, and natural areas in Salt Lake City. During this focus group, you all will have the opportunity to share your experiences about going to trails, parks, and natural areas in the City. Most importantly we interested in your thoughts about how to improve them in the next 10 and 20 years.

We do not want to miss anything that you say, that being said this conversation will be audio recorded. The recording will be used to transcribe the conversation and later pull out some quotes for a report we are writing. We will not use your name on the report. We will give you a fake name. We asked you for your demographics previously to know as a collective who came to all the focus groups, we have six in total and about 40 people will be participating. In the report we will use your fake name with some identifiers including possibly your age, gender, race and ethnicity. We will also be taking pictures to put in our report.

- If in person: However, we will be taking pictures of your back or hands. We will not take pictures of your face, where other will be able to identify you.
- If in Zoom: If you are in Zoom and you would not like pictures of you, make sure to turn off your camera now, so we can take a quick group picture with our screenshot right now.

[For community councils there is NO compensation. If is not a community council, mention that we will be offering \$25 gift card as a token of our appreciation. We will talk more about this at the end of the meeting].

All that being said, our discussion will last about 1.20 minutes [change if there is less time due to tardiness. If in person, say, please help yourself to the refreshments throughout the meeting]. Are there any questions so far?



## Ground Rules

Before starting with the conversation, we would like to set up some guiding principles. Principles that will help us to make the best of our group discussion:

1. Turn off your cell phones.
  2. One person speaks at a time.
  3. There are no right or wrong answers.
  4. Like in Las Vegas, what is said in this room stays in this room.
  5. Talk to each other not strictly to the person asking questions.
  6. If you feel uncomfortable please let us know.
  7. Would someone like to add something?
- 
1. **Facilitator #2:** Introduction (20 minutes, student led): First, I will ask you about parks, trails, natural areas near home.
    - a. **Icebreaker:** Salt Lake City Public Lands Divisions conducted Needs Assessment which found that, having a park within walking distance of home (half a mile or 15-minute walk) was considered extremely important to 57 percent of Salt Lake City residents surveyed in 2017 and having a park in biking distance of home was extremely important to 38 percent. We will go in a circle and we will have everyone introduce themselves. In 1 minute, tell me your name where you live in and how important is to you to have nearby your home a city park, a recreational trail or bike path, a natural area or open space, a street or public space with abundant trees, maybe a city golf course? [I want to hear specifically about the places that you go near your home so in your neighborhood].
    - b. **Satisfaction:** Now I would like to know: What you enjoy about this place? What is great about it? Prompts: Maybe you feel more connected to nature, it's a great place to exercise or meet friends in the neighborhood, its clean and well taken of.
    - c. **Unsatisfaction:** What prevents you or members of your household from spending more time in these outdoor places? Prompt maybe there are no places nearby, places are too crowded, hard to get there, safety or security concerns? Do you avoid, not enjoy, or feel uncomfortable or not welcome in some city parks or natural areas near your home or in your neighborhood? If yes, can you tell me about some of these locations and what could improve your experience?
    - d. **Exit Question:** In general, what would make park, trail, natural areas, golf course near your home better?
  2. **Facilitator #3:** Stewardship (20 minutes, staff and student led). The next topic we will discuss is stewardship.
    1. Student will introduce SLC staff so he or she can talk about stewardship (if SLC staff is not available student will assume this role instead).
      - a. Public Lands Division Staff Member: When it comes to stewardship of our parks, citizens have indicated they would most like to see the following improvements: maintenance and cleanliness, additional or improved restrooms, lighting or safety features and additional trees. Stewardship activities in public

lands can also support more natural habitat protection, like recent efforts at Fife Wetland Preserve ([Link #1](#), [Link #2](#)) or at [Friends at Fairmont Park](#) which is a group of citizens in Sugar House that advise the city on issues regarding this park as well as organize their own activities (include other examples that you are personally involved with). *[Student note: show images, find online, make a collage if you like. Here are some instructions for printing posters for free at the college: [http://www.cap.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Plotting-Instructions\\_01.pdf](http://www.cap.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Plotting-Instructions_01.pdf)].*

2. Student will ask questions: Are there any areas for improvement for any of the parks, trails or natural areas that are close to you? Prompts:
  - a) Add or renovate aged restrooms, playgrounds and other amenities
  - b) Add or renovate aged restrooms, playgrounds and other amenities
  - c) Add and service more bins for trash and dog waste
  - d) Plant more trees in parks and natural areas
  - e) Incorporate more native, waterwise or pollinator plants in landscaping
  - f) Acquire additional natural areas to increase size of existing habitat blocks and wildlife corridors
  - g) Support “Friends of the Parks” groups
  - h) Develop ranger/ambassador programs
  - i) Host educational events to build land ethics
  - j) Support active modes of transportation to reduce carbon footprint (e.g., walking, biking)
2. Student will ask question and staff will discuss opportunities for volunteering: Are there ways you can imagine yourself contributing to the stewardship of public lands? For example, you can volunteer for clean-up days, tree planting, etc.
3. **Facilitator #4:** Equity (20 minutes, student led). Now we will discuss topics related to equity.
  1. **Introduction:** SLC is home to over 196,000 people who speak 80 languages representing a broad range of socioeconomic backgrounds and cultural heritages. As in most American cities, there are gaps in the amount and quality of public lands available to different neighborhoods in SLC. Question: When you imagine our public lands 10-20 years from now, what changes can we make to our public lands system to help serve and include all people more equitably?
  2. **Accessibility:** Now, I would like to hear about how accessible are these places to you? Prompts:
    - a. Are parks, trails and natural areas located in close enough proximity to you?
    - b. You feel that they close by walking distance? Do you have to drive? How do you get there (walk, bike, take public transit, carpool)? Has transportation been a challenge in the past when wanting to visit a park, trail or natural areas anywhere in the city?
    - c. Are these places accessible for older adults and for people with disabilities? Once you are there, can you move around freely (sidewalks are good, there are handrails if you need them, etc.)?

3. **Programming:** Unfortunately, Public Lands does not do significant programming. They only do a small number of events to activate parks. Collaborating departments, such as the Arts Council does cultural programming and Public Lands facilitates access to outside groups that also program their spaces. We still want to learn how do you think that programming could be more inclusive to different cultural groups? Let's use as an example the Hispanic or Latinx, Somali or Pacific Islander community but we might extend our thinking to other ethnic groups like.
  - a) Could translations of Public Land materials (e.g. website, events, signage at parks, trails, etc.) encourage participation and use?
    - a. What about park, trail, and natural area locations in neighborhoods where there are people from different cultures?
    - b. How about activities, are there some cultural events or programs for families, youth or older adults that would be appealing to you?
    - c. What else would be important for you, your family, and others in your community?
3. Facilitator #1: Closing (15 minutes).
  1. We have arrived to the end of our discussion, like at the very beginning we will go in a circle, hearing from each one of you with a closing question: What else should be considered in developing the Public Lands Master Plan for natural areas, urban forests, and parks? [If people do not know what to say, asked them: what resonated the most with you in this conversation? What is the most important thing that the Master Plan should include? What is the one message that decision makers should hear from this conversation we just had?].
  2. I now have a question for staff of the Public Lands Division: What was some of the most important things that you heard today?
  3. Thanks, you all for coming! Your comments will be very valuable in creating the next Public Lands Master Plan. Make sure that you fill out the full survey online so you can sign up to receive updates on the plan and can be engage in any future activities.
  4. I also would like to invite you to our final class presentation to take place online, using the same link and passcode, on Thursday November 19, from 9:10 a.m.- 10:30 a.m. We will be sending you a formal invite a few weeks before the event. At this presentation we will be providing a summary of the six focus groups as well as findings from more than 2,000 surveys that have been collected for this project. [Upload to the chat the invite that is in Canvas under this homework].
  5. And now [name of student] will have more information for you about the payment. [Please note that Community Councils would not receive payment].
  6. If in person: I have some \$25 Walmart cards for you. I will be going around getting your signature for documentation and I will give you the card.
  7. If in Zoom: We will be sending you an online gift card for \$25 to Amazon. We have taken attendance and we have double checked we have your email [please do this]. With your email we can just send you this e-card. However, because we have six focus group we will be sending these after October 15.

# REIMAGINE

# NATURE

## SLC PUBLIC LANDS MASTER PLAN



City and  
Metropolitan  
Planning