



Emerald Ribbon Action Plan

Existing Conditions Report
DECEMBER 2023

PREPARED BY
Agency Landscape + Planning
Siglo Group



CONTENTS

Introduction	13
Context	23
Communities	33
Connectivity	41
Capacity	49
Awareness	57
Activity	63
APPENDIX	71



**944 ACRES
OF LAND**



**10 MILES
OF RIVER
CORRIDOR**



**4 SALT LAKE CITY
NEIGHBORHOODS**



INTRODUCTION

It's time to embrace the Emerald Ribbon.

Embracing the Emerald Ribbon means embracing the Jordan River's future and all its roles in our community: for Salt Lake City residents, the Great Salt Lake, and all the plants and animals that call it home. The Emerald Ribbon is the 10-mile stretch of the Jordan River including surrounding trails and parks, that is the geographic heart of Salt Lake City's West Side.

INTRODUCTION

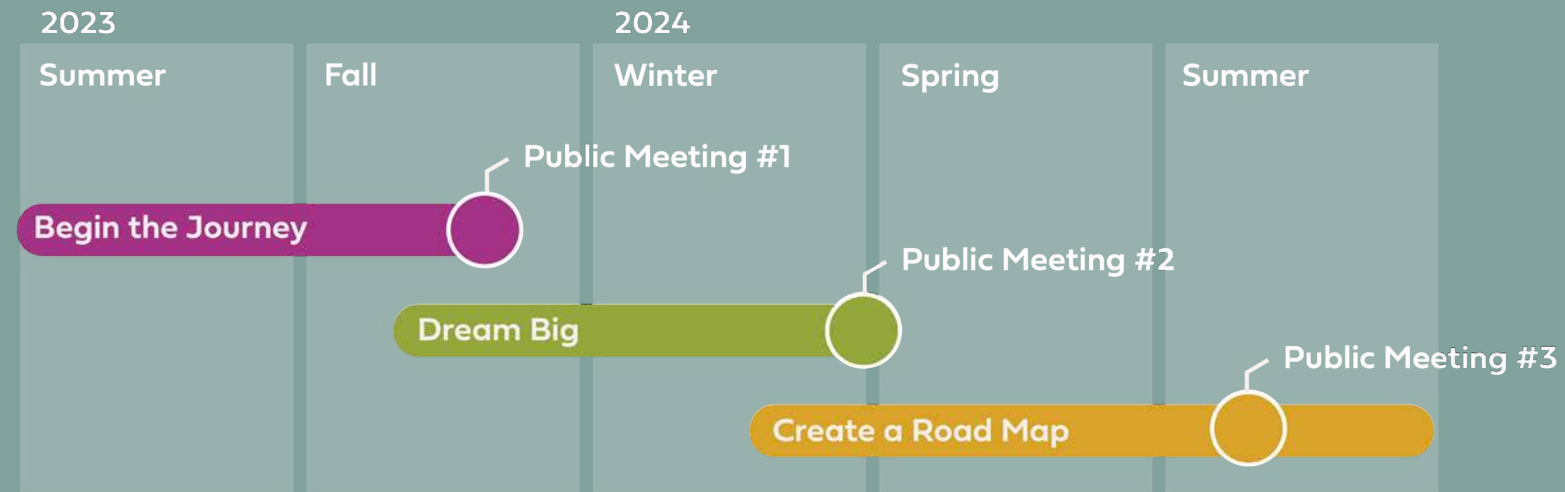
This plan will determine how to prioritize future investments on the Jordan River.

The 2022 Reimagine Nature Plan made it clear that it is a priority for the Salt Lake City community to restore and enhance natural habitats on the Jordan River, create more welcoming and activated spaces, and foster places for community gathering along the Jordan River Parkway. To support that work, Salt Lake City voters approved the SLC Parks Bond in November 2022, \$9 million of which is allocated specifically for Jordan River improvements.



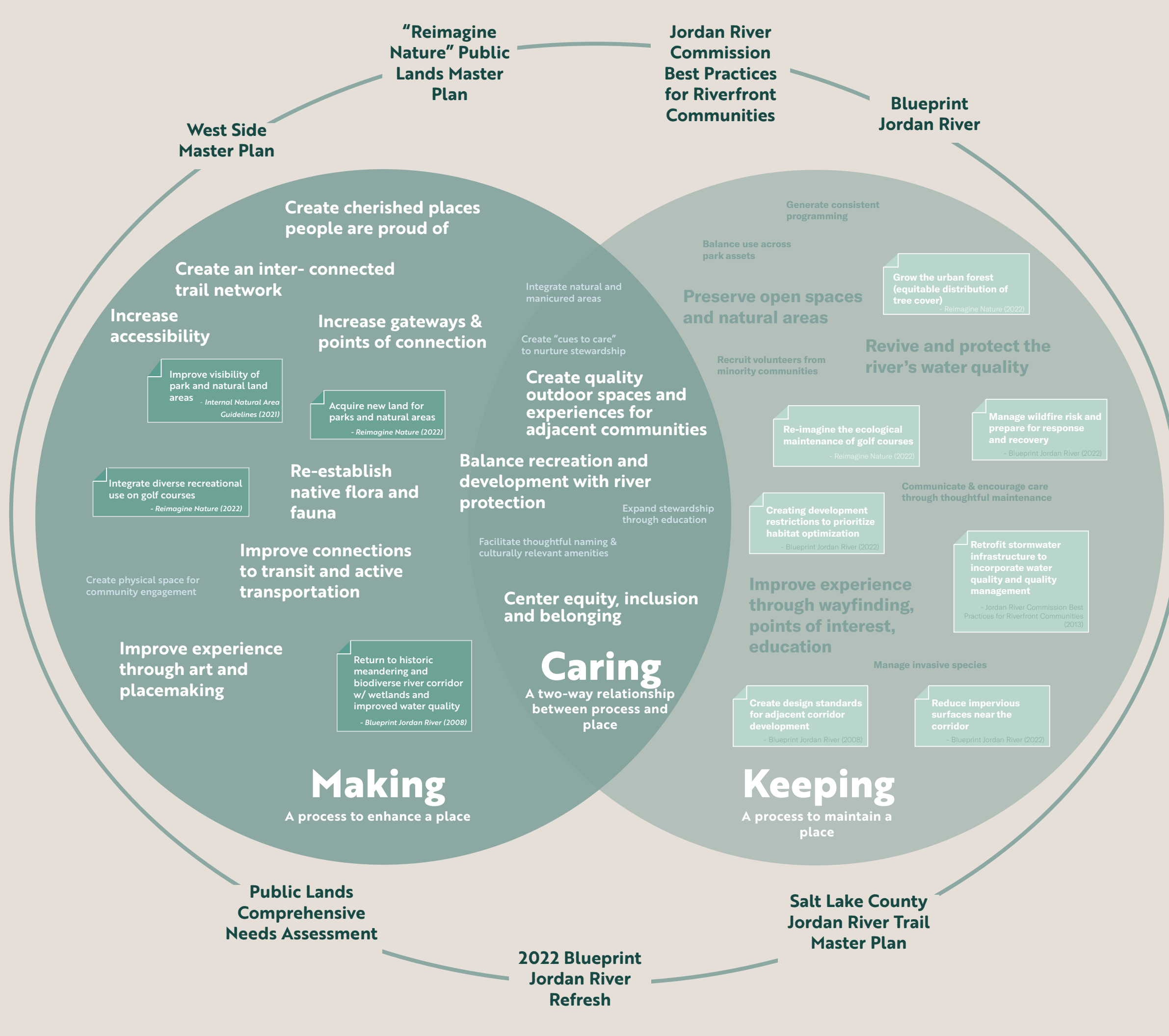
THE TIMELINE

The planning process kicked off in July 2023. This report represents key findings from the first phase - 'Begin the Journey' and focuses on existing conditions, research and analysis. The final plan will be completed in late 2024.



THE PROCESS

Salt Lake City's Public Lands Department is developing the plan in collaboration with the community. A Technical Advisory Group and Community Advisory Group will play critical roles in guiding the final output.



INTRODUCTION

This plan builds from a strong planning foundation.

The need for the Emerald Ribbon Action Plan emerged out of a number of important planning efforts. The synthesis of these efforts, shown to the left, focuses on three main concerns: how the Corridor is invested in as a place (Making), how it is maintained (Keeping) and how the two-way relationship between Making and Keeping can lead to Caring.



CARE

NATURE

We steward and care for ecological health

CULTURE

Nature engages and sustains human well-being

CARE

INTRODUCTION

The Emerald Ribbon is tied together by nature and culture.

This report explores the Jordan River and its environs through the lens of the Nature, Culture, and Care that is required to cultivate and maintain an ecologically and culturally rich corridor. Each chapter will examine the existing Context, Communities, Connectivity, Capacity, Awareness, and Activity from both a natural and cultural perspective.



CONTEXT

Key Questions

What is the natural context of the Jordan River?

What is the cultural context of the Jordan River?

Key Takeaways

- The potential of the Jordan River to more explicitly represent Westside populations in identity, programming and use.
- Opportunities to build trust through action-oriented strategies with an emphasis on maintenance and care.
- Ways of modeling best practices to address the broader watershed issues of water quality, flood resilience and habitat restoration.



COMMUNITY

Key Questions

What flora and fauna that live along the corridor?

Who are the river's different users and advocates?

Key Takeaways

- Opportunities to enhance biodiversity and habitat quality to strengthen the corridor's appeal as a natural refuge.
- Ways to engage and support houseless neighbors living along the corridor while improving a sense of safety for all users.
- Programming and activation that relates more specifically to the identity and needs of the river's neighbors.



CONNECTIVITY

Key Questions

What are the flows and movements of the river's natural systems?

How do people move to and along the river today?

Key Takeaways

- Ways to improve wayfinding and orientation via placemaking, signage and design, particularly at decision points.
- Incorporation of systems of flood risk reduction for greater resiliency.
- Access to, from and onto the river as a key trail and open space itself.
- Partnership and collaboration to enhance the health of the entire watershed.



CAPACITY

Key Questions

What is the capacity of the river to provide healthy habitats?

What is the capacity of the city to create a healthy river?

Key Takeaways

- Opportunities to expand wetland spaces and improve the river banks for greater ecological function and beauty.
- Ways to simplify, clarify and streamline maintenance, operations and management of the river corridor.
- The establishment of standards for care, cleanliness and capital investment.



AWARENESS

Key Questions

How does awareness (or lack thereof) of the river impact it today?

How does public perception of the corridor impact it today?

Key Takeaways

- What role this plan can play in achieving the community's goals of a cleaner river in partnership with collaborators upstream.
- Design changes to the corridor to make people feel safer, especially at night.
- Revised maintenance strategies to address waste in and out of the water.
- How to work with community partners in thoughtfully addressing the unhoused population on the corridor.



ACTIVITY

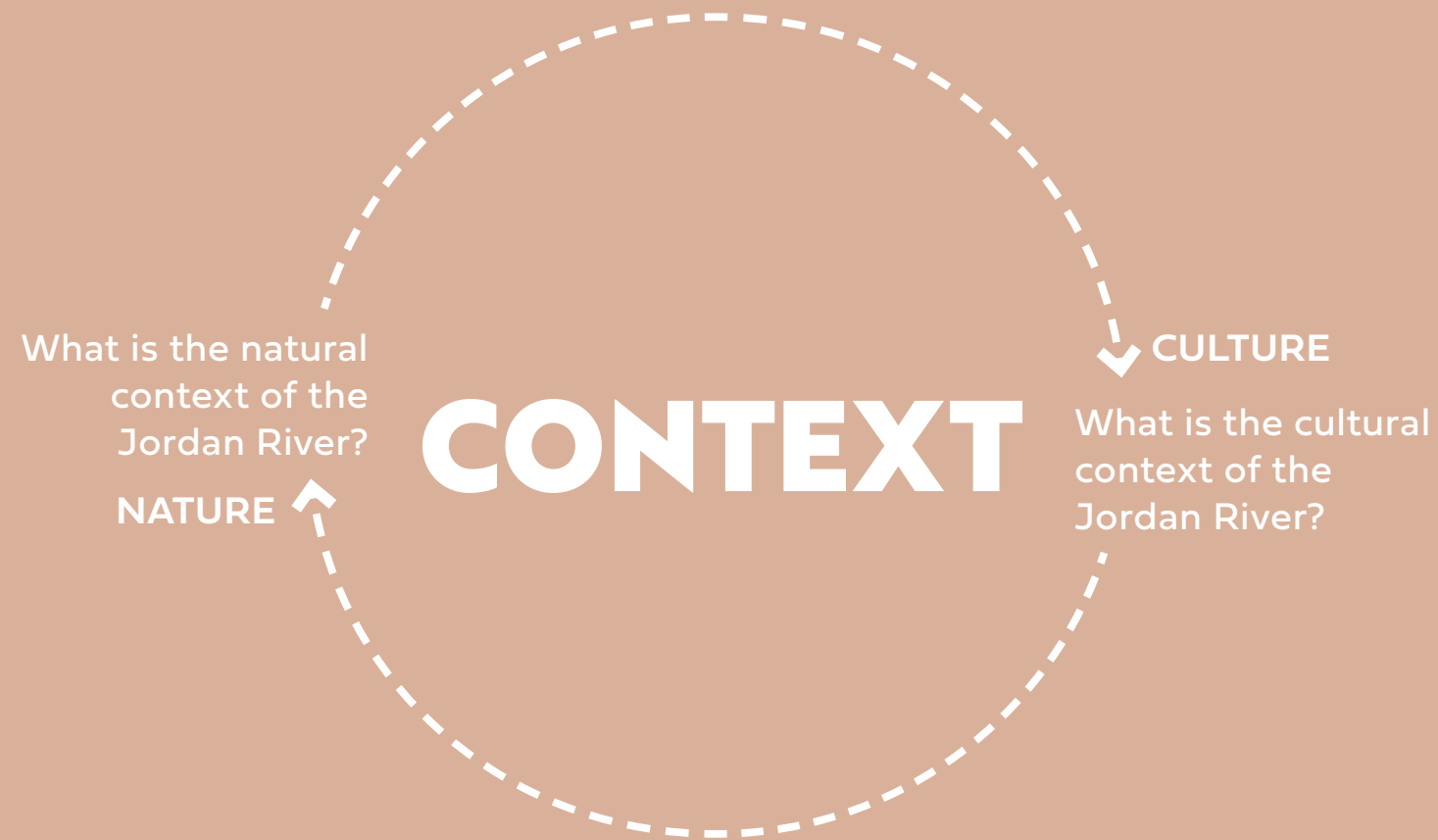
Key Questions

Where along the corridor are the ecologically vital places?

Where along the corridor are the vital people places?

Key Takeaways

- Opportunities to create more natural spaces to improve ecological health and human experience.
- Promote stronger visual connection between the urban fabric and the corridor, particularly at parks and more private stretches.
- Explore the potential for more diversity of trail experience, including exploration of slow or unpaved paths.



Key Takeaways

The next steps of the Action Plan should explore:

- The potential of the Jordan River to more explicitly represent Westside populations in identity, programming and use.
- Opportunities to build trust through action-oriented strategies with an emphasis on maintenance and care.
- Ways of modeling best practices to address the broader watershed issues of water quality, flood resilience and habitat restoration.

The Jordan River is at the heart of Salt Lake City.

The Jordan River sits at the intersection of major ecological, hydrological, and cultural systems, all of which impact the character and context of the corridor.



"We should protect wildlife and the actual habitat of the river. Safety and protection for the ecological system."

"People are becoming more aware of the river, but I love that it's wild."

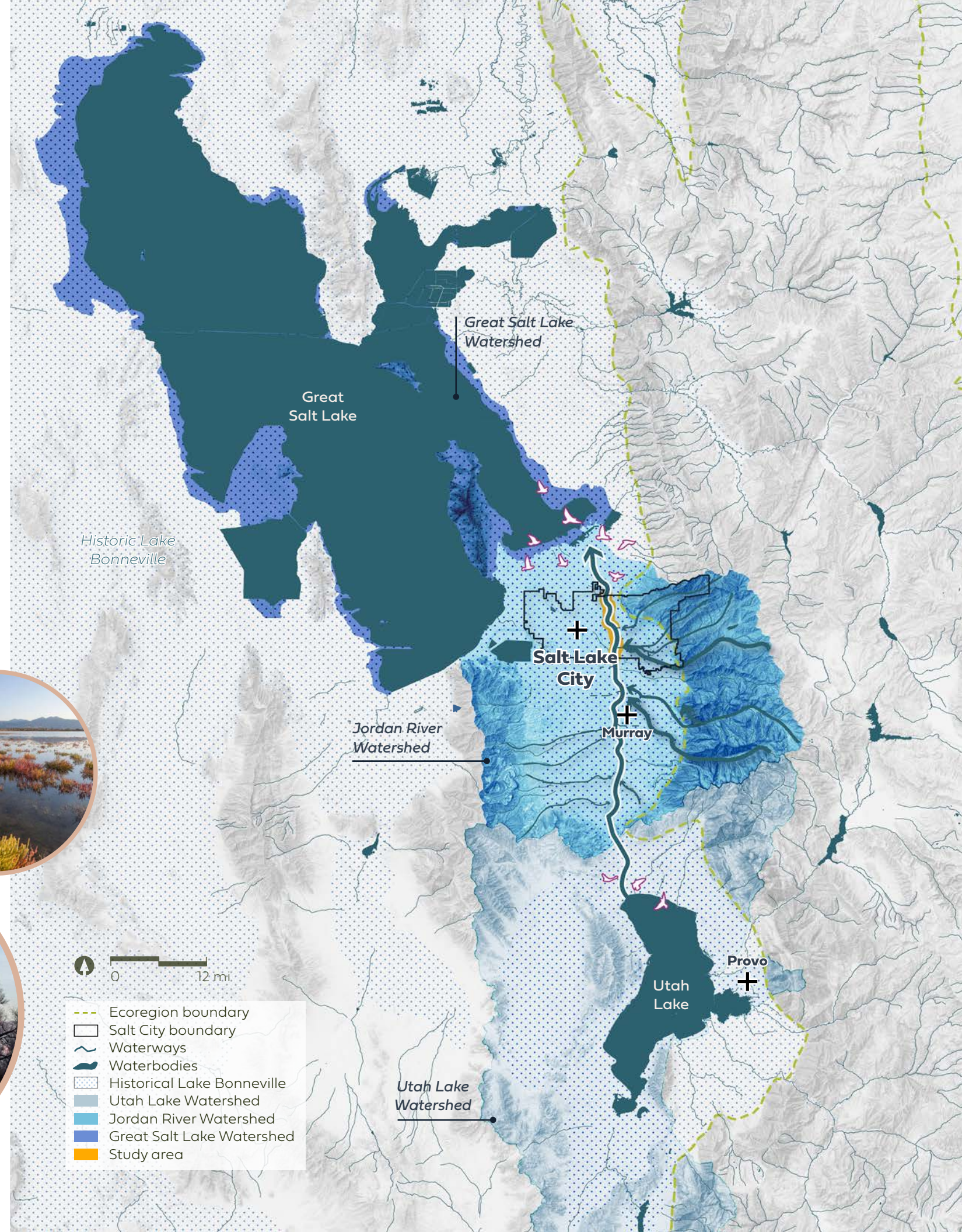
"Without cleaning up, the 9 million dollars will be worthless cuz all the nice things will be ignored cuz they're so gross."

NATURAL CONTEXT

The Emerald Ribbon is the spine of a unique and threatened ecosystem.

The Jordan River is the ecological heart of the Salt Lake Valley. Flowing 44 miles from Utah Lake in the south to the Great Salt Lake in the north, the river is a vital waterway in the Salt Lake Valley that has supported robust wetlands and wildlife for millenia. The Great Salt Lake and the Valley are a remnant of the massive Lake Bonneville that was 20 times the size of the Great Salt Lake. As Lake Bonneville subsided, the Jordan River formed a connection between Utah Lake and the Great Salt Lake full of meanders, broad floodplains, marshes, and oxbows. The river that settlers saw in the 1800's has been significantly altered and channelized to fill wetlands, increase areas for development, reduce flooding, and divert water. Despite the changes over more than a century, the river continues to play a crucial role in supporting migrating birds, wetland habitat, other wildlife, and places for people to enjoy nature.

The Emerald Ribbon Action Plan's study area includes 944 acres reaching from the southern to northern ends of the Salt Lake City limits (2100 South and the north end of the Recreational Athletic Complex). The study area includes all Salt Lake City Public Lands owned parcels adjacent to the river as well as a 150 foot buffer from the river.

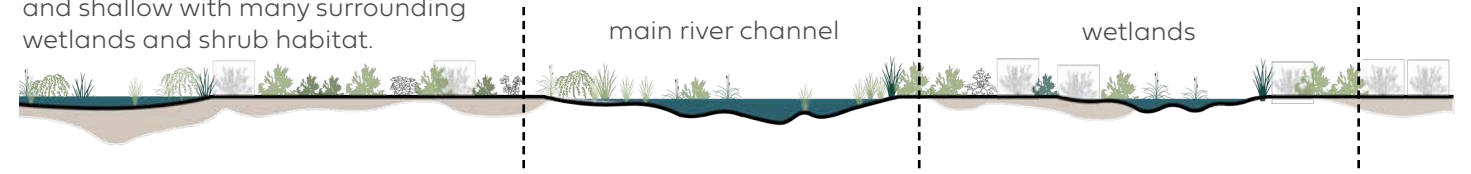


NATURAL CONTEXT

A river's ability to meander is key to a healthy ecological system. Artificial straightening allowed for increased urban development along the Jordan River.

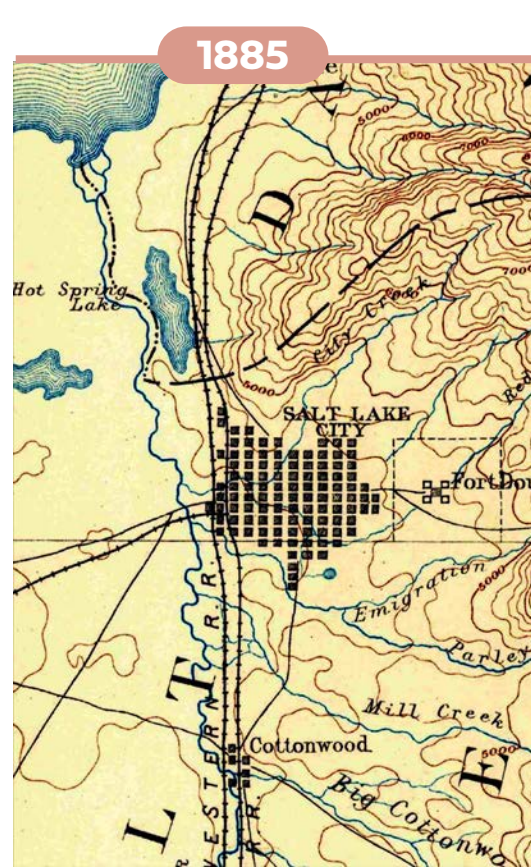
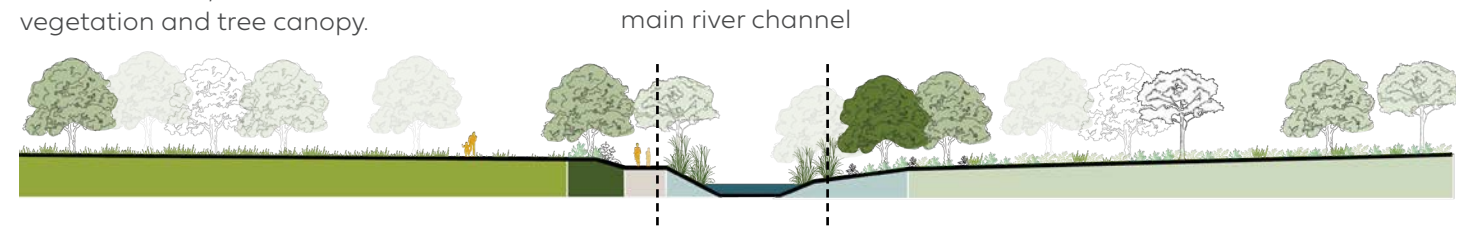
HISTORICAL RIVER SECTION

River channel was historically wide and shallow with many surrounding wetlands and shrub habitat.

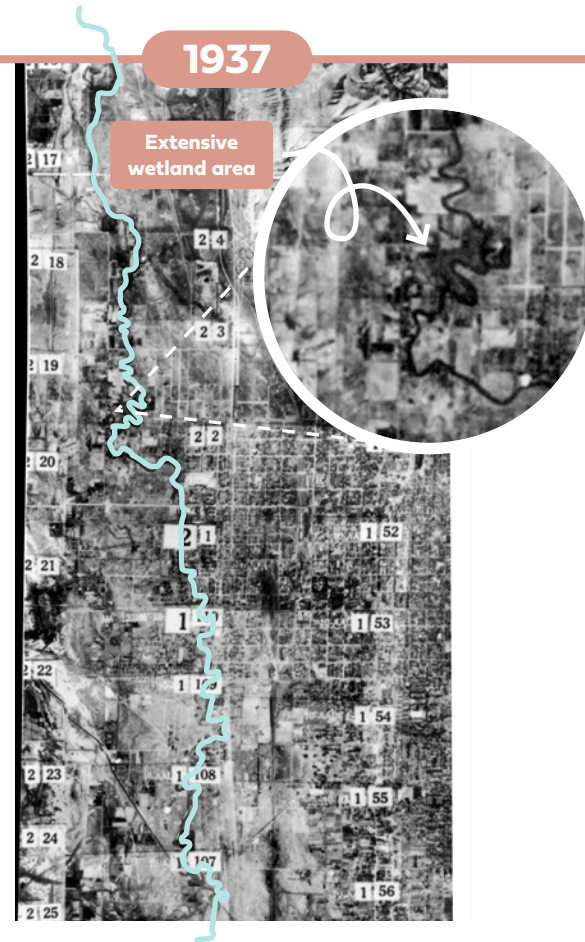


PRESENT DAY RIVER SECTION

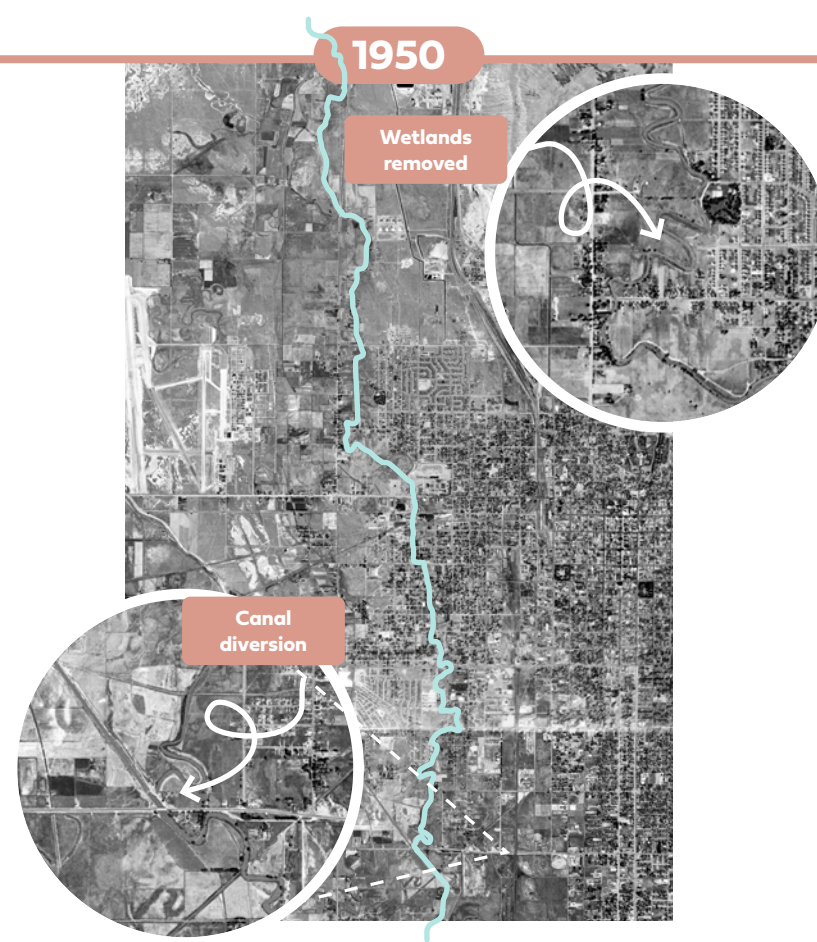
Today, the river is much narrower with development on either sides, fewer wetlands, and more invasive vegetation and tree canopy.



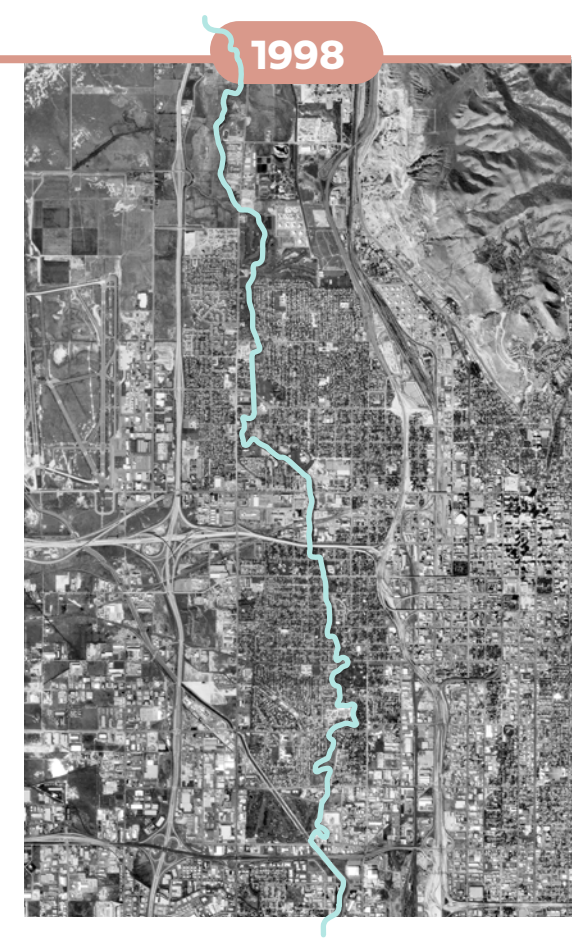
The river remains a meandering corridor, but some historical water bodies have already been filled in, such as Hot Spring Lake.



The dark coloration near the river indicates likely wetlands. The river is a meandering corridor through mostly rural lands at the western most edge of the built city.



The downtown core of Salt Lake City has encroached westward beyond the river boundary. Much of the wetlands seen in 1937 have been filled in. The northern section of the site still shows a meandering corridor through undeveloped land.



The river is heavily channelized. Its surroundings are highly developed and much of the open space within the study area is programmed for public use, such as golf.

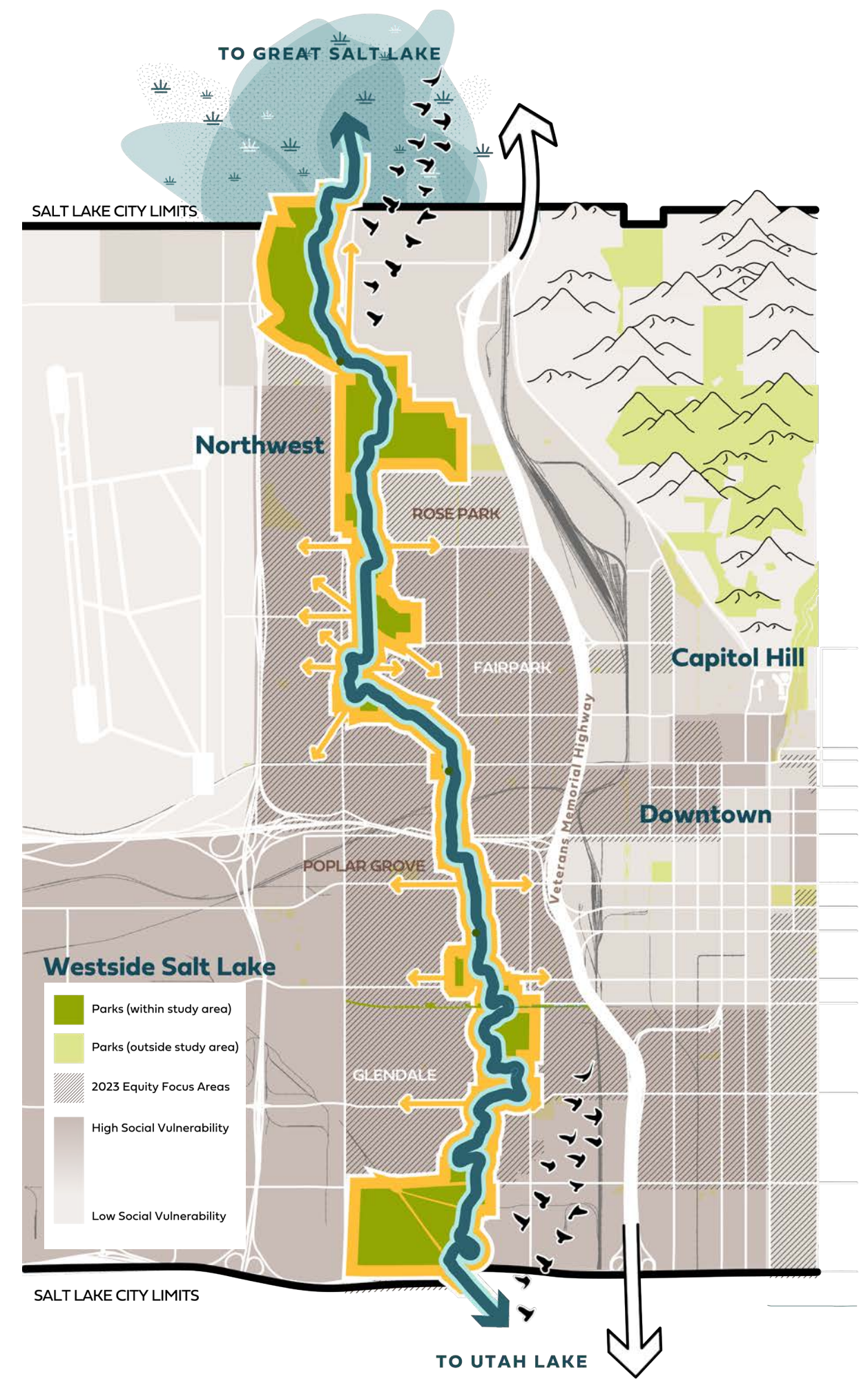
CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Emerald Ribbon is the heart of some of Salt Lake City's most diverse neighborhoods.

People have always had an important relationship with the Jordan River. Indigenous groups traded and celebrated along its banks. Since the late 1800s, the development of the railroad and ensuing industrial activity along the river brought more people to Salt Lake City. The city's rapid population growth corresponds directly with the rapidly shrinking size of the Great Salt Lake.

In the mid 19th century, the I-15 freeway created a physical, cultural and socioeconomic divide between the east and west sides of the city that remains today. While the east side has access to a variety of downtown parks and mountain landscapes, the Jordan River serves as the primary open space for the west side. The Westside is made up of neighborhoods diverse and varied in their own right: Poplar Grove, Glendale, Fairpark, Jordan Meadows, Rose Park and Westpointe. Across all of these neighborhoods, social vulnerability (a measure that includes income, race, lack of vehicle access, and housing instability) is on average higher than Salt Lake City as a whole.

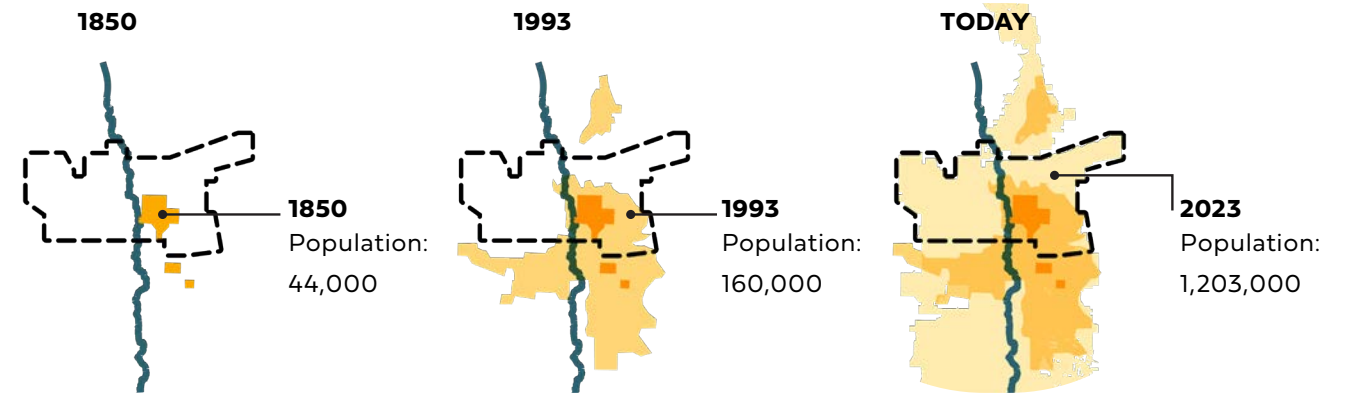
"I want healthy places that are accessible in the community. And I want more coffee shops."



CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Jordan River is closely tied to industrial growth and de facto segregation in Salt Lake City.

SALT LAKE COUNTY POPULATION GROWTH



1871



The coming of the railroad changed everything for the Westside: henceforth, only settlers who arrived before the railroad would be considered the original pioneers. The railroad cut off the Westside geographically, making it the first area in the Utah to be considered "the other side of the tracks."

1890s



The Westside was quickly becoming a transportation and industrial hub; with that came an increase in immigration from around the world to fuel the labor needed to run the railroad and manufacturing boom.

Early 1900s



Immigration from Mexico grew rapidly, spiking during the Mexican Revolution in the 1910s. Starting in the 1940s, redlining started to label neighborhoods like the Westside, with higher populations of immigrants and African Americans, as 'undesirable,' further exacerbating public disinvestment in the area.

Late 1990s



Since the late 1900s, neighborhoods on Salt Lake City's Westside have seen immense transformation as industry moved overseas. In the 1970s, the construction of I-15 further divided the Westside from the rest of the city. Today, increasing attention is being paid to the root causes of disinvestment in the area. The new concern of displacement is becoming front of mind for residents.

Source: Utah State Department of Community Engagement



Key Takeaways

The next steps of the Action Plan should explore:

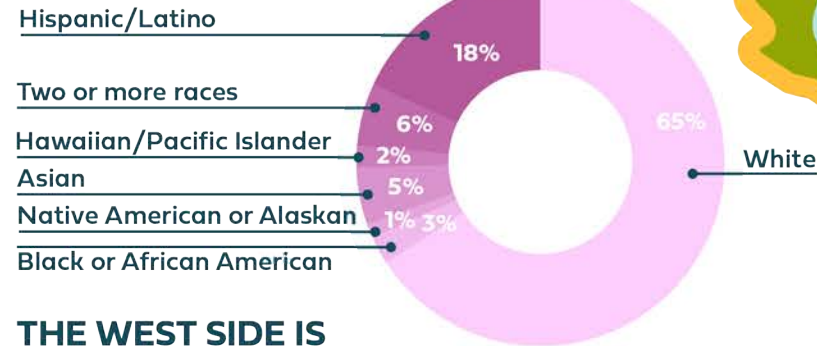
- ▣ Opportunities to enhance habitat and species quality to strengthen the corridor's appeal as a natural refuge.
- ▣ Ways to engage and support houseless neighbors living along the corridor while improving a sense of safety for all users.
- ▣ Programming and activation that relates more specifically to the identity and needs of the River's neighbors.

The River Corridor is a place of great diversity.

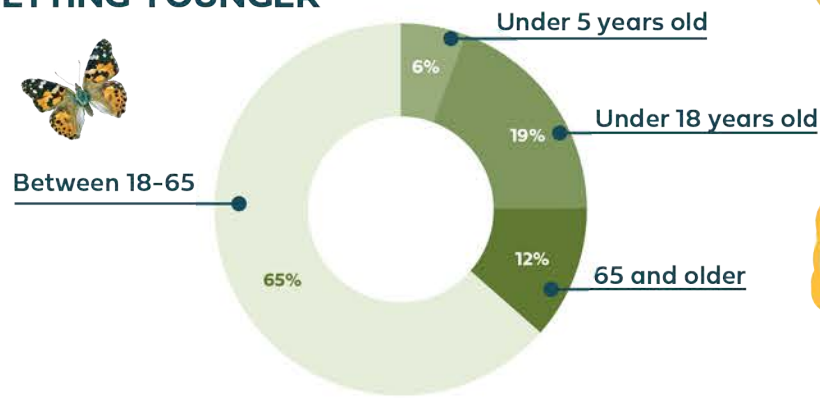
From some of the most racially and culturally diverse neighborhoods of Salt Lake City to the greatest array of wildlife species in the urban extents, the Jordan River has the great potential to be a showcase of ecological and cultural vibrancy. It is a place for residents to experience and care for nature that is unique for this largely urbanized part of the Wasatch Front.



THE WEST SIDE IS MULTIRACIAL



THE WEST SIDE IS GETTING YOUNGER



THE WEST SIDE IS MULTICULTURAL with immigrant communities from...

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| Mexico | Vietnam |
| Canada | China |
| Peru | Nepal |
| El Salvaor | Tonga |
| Germany | India |



THE WEST SIDE IS MULTILINGUAL

75% of the community speaks languages other than English, with Spanish being the most common non-English language particularly in Poplar Grove

THE JORDAN RIVER IS A GARDEN

THE JORDAN RIVER IS A CLASSROOM

THE JORDAN RIVER IS FOR PADDLERS

THE JORDAN RIVER IS A SHELTER
Many unhoused residents live along the river today

THE JORDAN RIVER IS COMMUTER CORRIDOR

"I want to see murals of different languages and cultures represented in the community."

"Homeless people... Even if we have a beautiful corridor, we won't have the liberty to enjoy it and walk there."

"The river doesn't feel like it belongs to the community right now; does not belong to anyone - we need to make it a destination so that people want to protect it."

"After COVID, the river got worse. Five years back it was better. Now you can't take your family there."

CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Westside neighborhoods are multicultural and diverse.

Six Salt Lake City neighborhoods comprise the area known as the Westside: the area has emerged as one of the Wasatch Front region's most diverse regions. A significant portion of Westside residents speak languages other than English, with Spanish the most common. 1 in 10 residents speak English less than "very well." Westside residents are on average younger than Salt Lake City as a whole: almost 30% are under the age of 18, compared to 20% city-wide. 23% of residents have a disability, compared with 11% city-wide. Approximately a quarter of residents live under the poverty level. The Westside is home to numerous diverse communities, including a growing Southeast Asian and African refugee population. Within the Westside, the Poplar Grove and Glendale neighborhoods have the highest number of residents living beneath the poverty line. They also have the highest percentage of young people, lowest car ownership, and are majority minority populations. The Rose Park and Westpointe neighborhoods in the north of the study area are still highly diverse (a substantial percent of the population in these neighborhoods has limited English language proficiency), but have the lowest minority populations and lowest number of residents beneath the poverty line within the Westside.

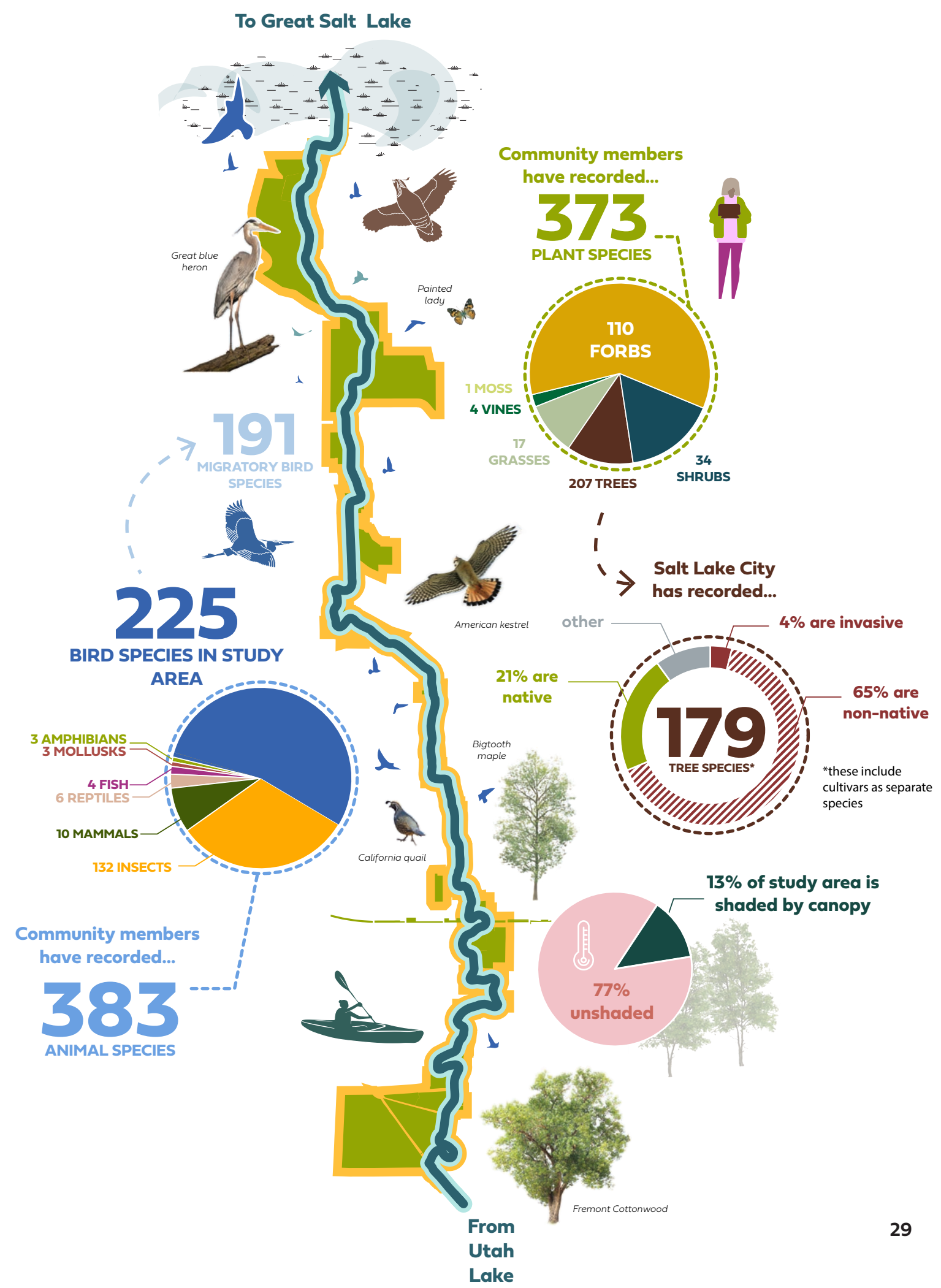
Source: 2020 Census, Salt Lake City Corporation



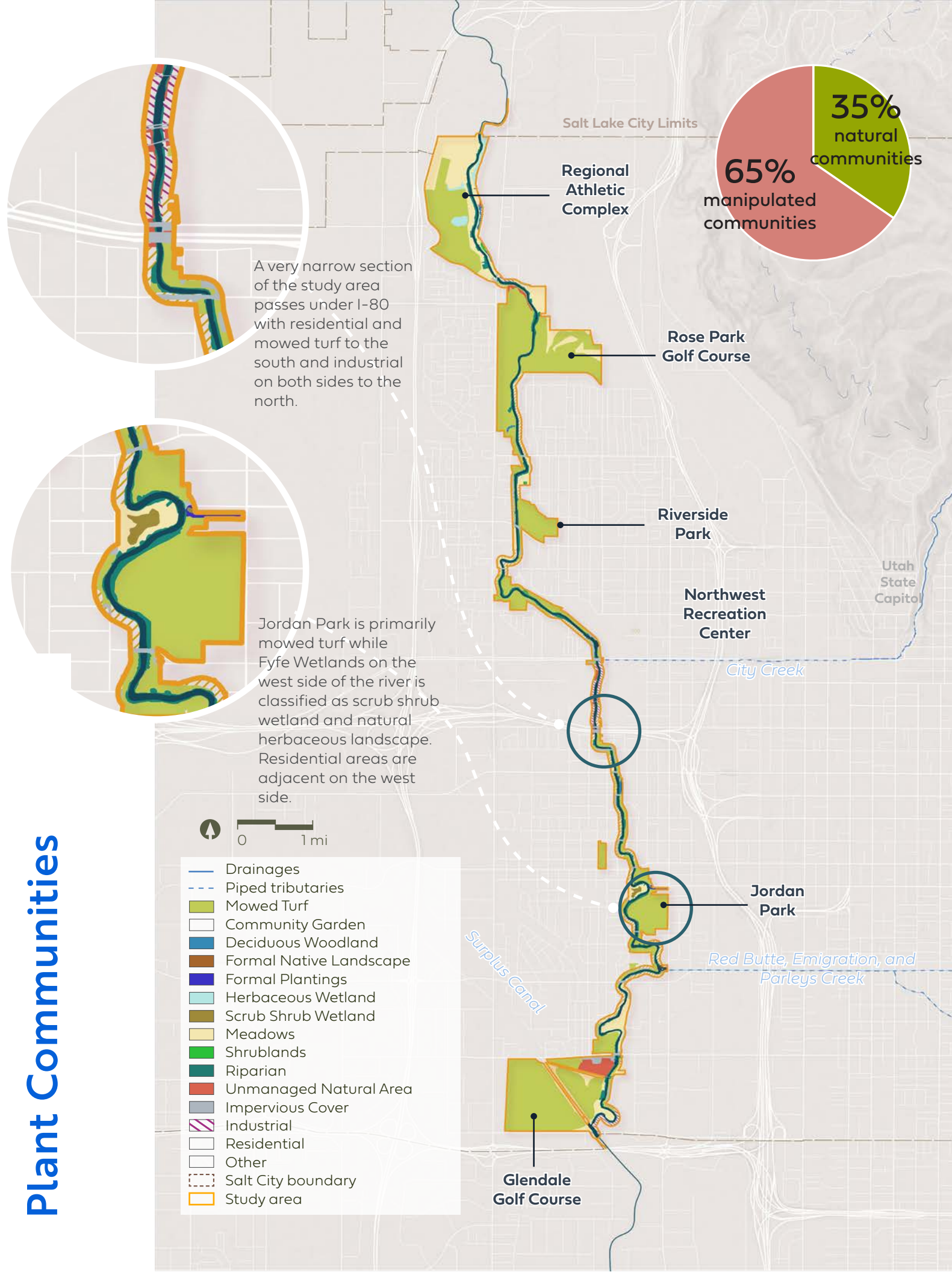
NATURAL COMMUNITIES

The Jordan River Corridor is home to diverse plant and animal life.

The Jordan River and its open spaces provide habitat for over 700 plant and animal species including over 225 bird species, such as the great blue heron. These species depend on the river's riparian and wetland habitats that form a vital connector of habitat through the developed areas of the Salt Lake Valley. There are 8 ecological communities represented within the site area: riparian, scrub shrub wetlands, herbaceous wetlands, meadows, shrublands, unmanaged natural areas, deciduous woodlands, and mowed turf. The rest of the corridor is either impervious cover, residential or industrial zones, dog parks and community gardens. At 549 acres, Mowed Turf occupies a majority of the site area. This means that over half of the corridor is mowed, which impedes the potential for high ecological activity and the support of diverse habitats.



Plant Communities

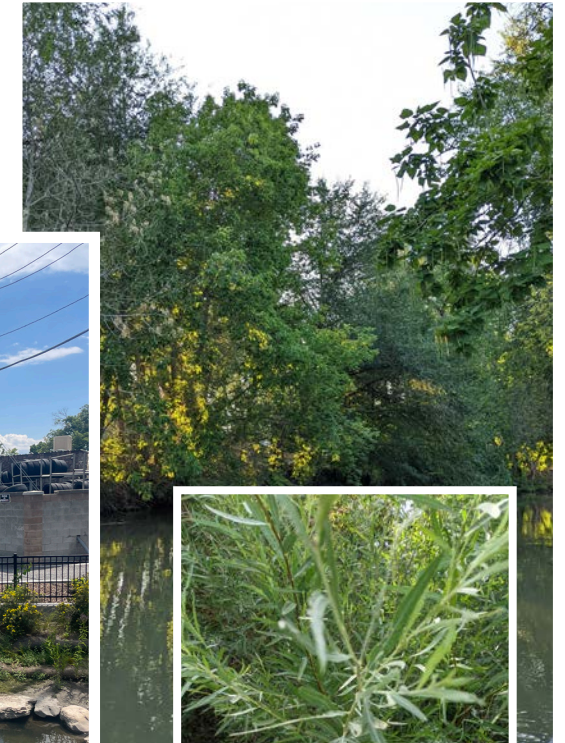


Plant communities include:

DECIDUOUS WOODLAND



RIPARIAN

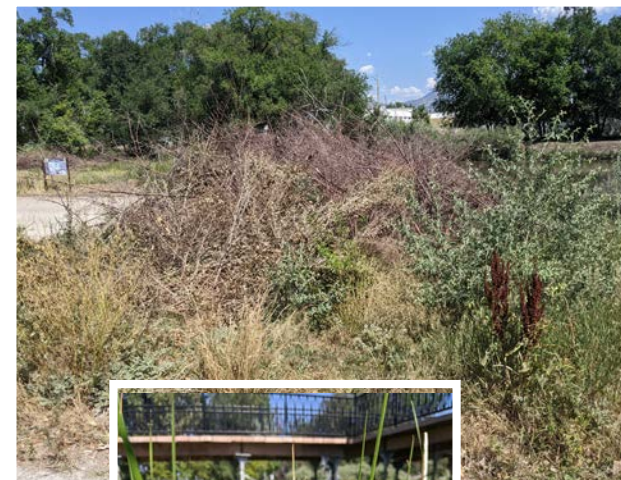


FORMAL PLANTINGS



HERBACEOUS WETLAND

UNMANAGED NATURAL AREA



HERBACEOUS WETLAND



MOWED TURF



RESIDENTIAL EDGE

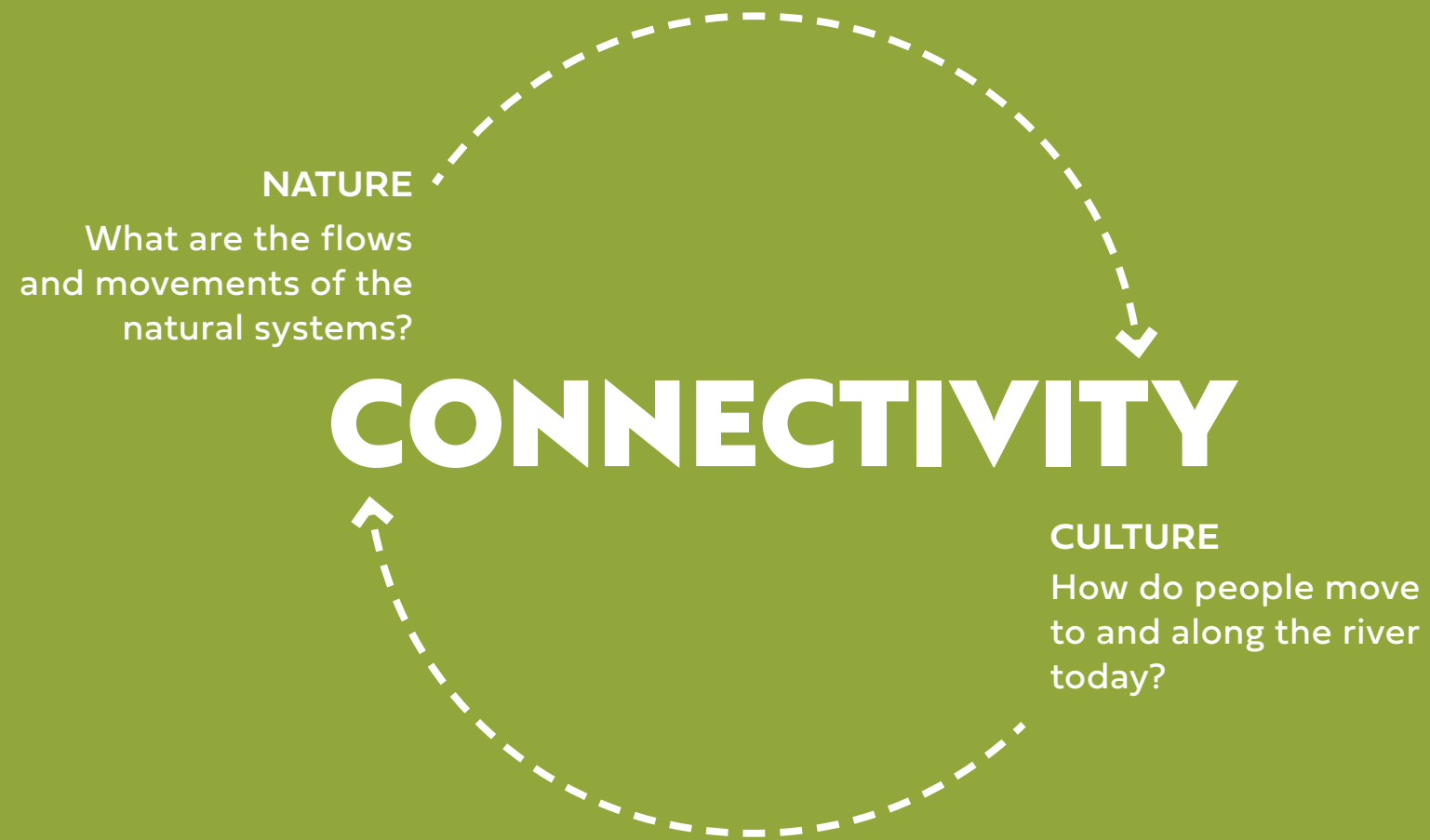


NATURAL COMMUNITIES

Invasive species threaten the health of the landscape throughout the corridor.

MANAGING INVASIVE SPECIES

Managing invasive species is crucial as they disrupt soil and water chemistry, natural processes, displace native plants, affect light availability, and diminish wildlife resources. Their impact is significant, second only to habitat destruction in threatening rare species. Within the study area over 22% of the tree canopy is invasive, with species like Russian olive, Siberian elm, and tree of heaven being problematic. Unmanaged natural areas have high percentages of invasive species. Under-story and herbaceous Invasive species include Phragmites, whitetop, and cheatgrass.



Key Takeaways

The next steps of the Action Plan should explore:

- Ways to improve wayfinding and orientation via placemaking, signage and design, particularly at decision points.
- Potential to incorporate planned and ongoing systems of flood risk reduction for greater resiliency.
- Access to, from and onto the River as a key trail and open space itself.
- Partnership and collaboration to enhance the health of the entire watershed.

The River is a connective thread locally and regionally.

Unique among urban greenways, the Jordan River Trail is a well-connected place, both in terms of hydrologic and mobility systems. The challenges to address are less about the quantity of connections but rather the quality.



NATURAL CONNECTIVITY

The Jordan River is part of a critical system of waterways.

A CONTROLLED SYSTEM

The Jordan River, within the study area, is highly controlled. Over 70% of its water is diverted at the southern end into a surplus canal. This diversion facilitates land development, reduces flooding risk, and supplies water for agriculture and wildlife west of the river. There are multiple diversion canals between Utah Lake and the study area that prevent water from running through the system at its full potential. The manipulation of the natural water way—including the reduction of natural flooding, river straightening, channeling, and dredging—has led to diminished floodplains, wetlands, and sediment carrying capacity. In addition, upstream flows from the seven canyon creeks that feed the Jordan River are impaired by agricultural run off and mining wastes. These combined factors, along with localized stormwater runoff and waste pollutants have resulted in water quality levels that do not meet Clean Water Act standards for human recreation and are degrading wildlife habitat quality within the study area. Within the study area, both e-coli and dissolved oxygen levels are problematic, prompting studies and efforts to meet water quality standards. Numerous outfalls eliminate urban stormwater into the Jordan River within the study area; Cornell Lift Station and 9th South Wetlands are two notable wetland areas where stormwater is being filtered and cleaned by plant material before it enters the River.

FLOOD VULNERABILITIES

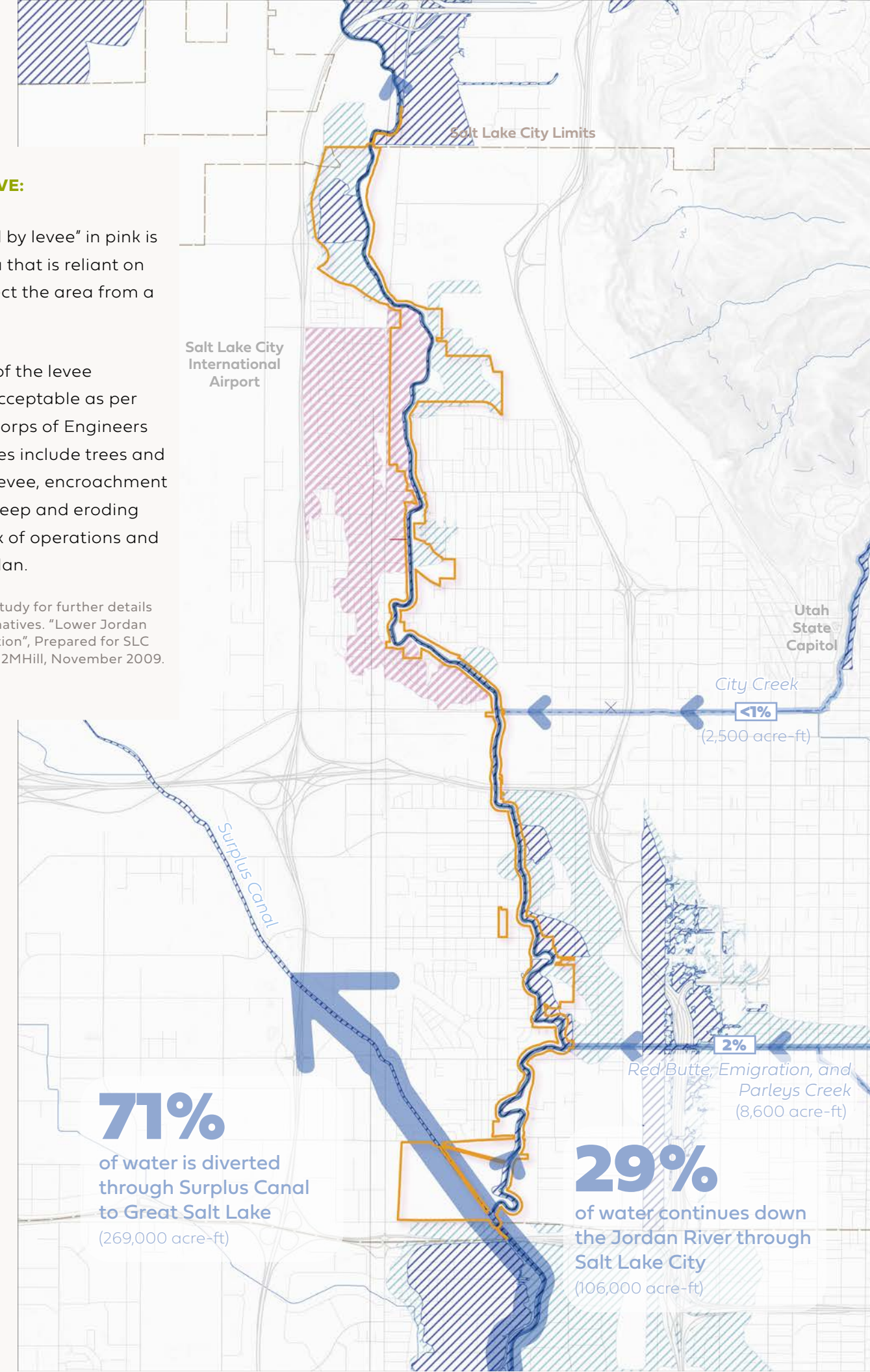
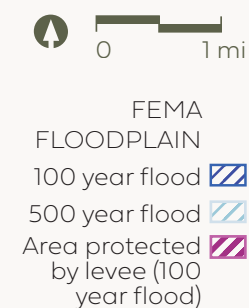
A significant portion of the site is within an area protected by a levee that was recently declared unacceptable by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A smaller area on the east side of river between Three Creeks and I-80 is also at risk per the 100-year floodplain. The Recreational Athletic Complex (RAC) is almost entirely in 100 & 500 year floodplains. The east side of Rose Park Golf and a portion of Riverside Park is within the 500 year floodplain.

LEVEE DEEP DIVE:

“Area protected by levee” in pink is residential area that is reliant on a levee to protect the area from a 100 year flood.

A recent study of the levee declared it unacceptable as per United States Corps of Engineers guidelines. Issues include trees and vegetation on levee, encroachment of structures, steep and eroding slopes, and lack of operations and maintenance plan.

Refer to the levee study for further details on issues and alternatives. “Lower Jordan River Levee Evaluation”, Prepared for SLC Public Works by CH2MHill, November 2009.



71%
of water is diverted through Surplus Canal to Great Salt Lake
(269,000 acre-ft)

29%
of water continues down the Jordan River through Salt Lake City
(106,000 acre-ft)

Legend

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Trail
- Boat Ramp
- Trailhead
- Road Bridge
- Pedestrian Bridge
- TRAX Station
- TRAX Station



"We need more small bridges to be able to cross the river."

"There are tensions between people who live near the river and cyclists, commuters and people who pass through."



CULTURAL CONNECTIVITY

The Jordan River has the potential to be a highly connected corridor.

The neighborhoods that comprise the Westside are in some ways a hub of transportation, surrounded by I-15, the Union Pacific Railroad, and numerous other major roads. At the same time, most transportation infrastructure is designed to pass through or around the neighborhood, and there are major barriers that limit residents' connection to the city, especially to Downtown.

A 2022 Westside Transportation Equity Study, conducted by Salt Lake City, found that residents experience gaps in transit service and in infrastructure for safe walking and biking compared to other neighborhoods. The Jordan River and Jordan River Trail are not exempt from this trend: while for many Salt Lake City residents, the trail is a commuting or recreation corridor, for residents it's a critical connective tissue throughout the heart of their neighborhoods. Across Westside neighborhoods, on average 8.5% of households don't have a vehicle (twice that of Salt Lake City households as a whole); 1 in 10 Fairpark neighborhood households don't have access to a car. The trail is consistently available along the 10-mile study area, but in most places only exists on one side of the river, with pedestrian crossings interspersed unevenly along its length. Residents report concern over unsafe or uncomfortable intersections, which include multiple railroad crossings.

In recent years, considerable efforts have been made to better connect east and west side neighborhoods by connecting the Jordan River Trail with other trail systems, like the Foothills, including the connection to the 9 Line Trail and the development of the Folsom Trail, a route which the city hopes to complete through potential land acquisitions in the coming years.

NORTH OF 1200 N



BETWEEN 1200 N AND N. TEMPLE ST



BETWEEN N. TEMPLE ST AND INDIANA AVE



SOUTH OF INDIANA AVE

Legend

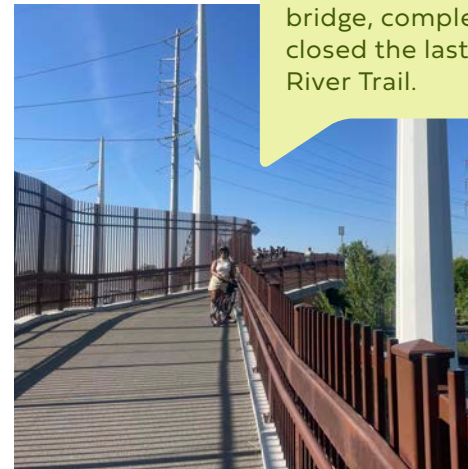
- ↔ Major Road
- ↔ Minor Road
- Trail
- 🚤 Boat Ramp
- 🚶 Trailhead
- 🚗 Road Bridge
- 🌳 Pedestrian Bridge
- 🚇 TRAX Station
- TRAX Station



Trail Condition



This 1,200 foot, ADA-accessible bridge, completed in 2017, closed the last gap in the Jordan River Trail.



Crossings & Intersections



Signage & Wayfinding





CAPACITY

NATURE

What is the capacity of the river to provide healthy habitats?

CULTURE

What is the capacity of the city to create a healthy river?

Key Takeaways

The next steps of the Action Plan should explore:

- Opportunities to expand wetland spaces and improve the river banks for greater ecological function and beauty.
- Ways to simplify, clarify and streamline maintenance, operations and management of the River corridor.
- The establishment of standards for care, cleanliness and capital investment.

The River is a complex, interwoven set of natural and human systems.

The river was once a richly-braided system of wetlands that has been consolidated over time in a singular stream. Conversely, over time, the systems of human care for the river have become more complex and interwoven.

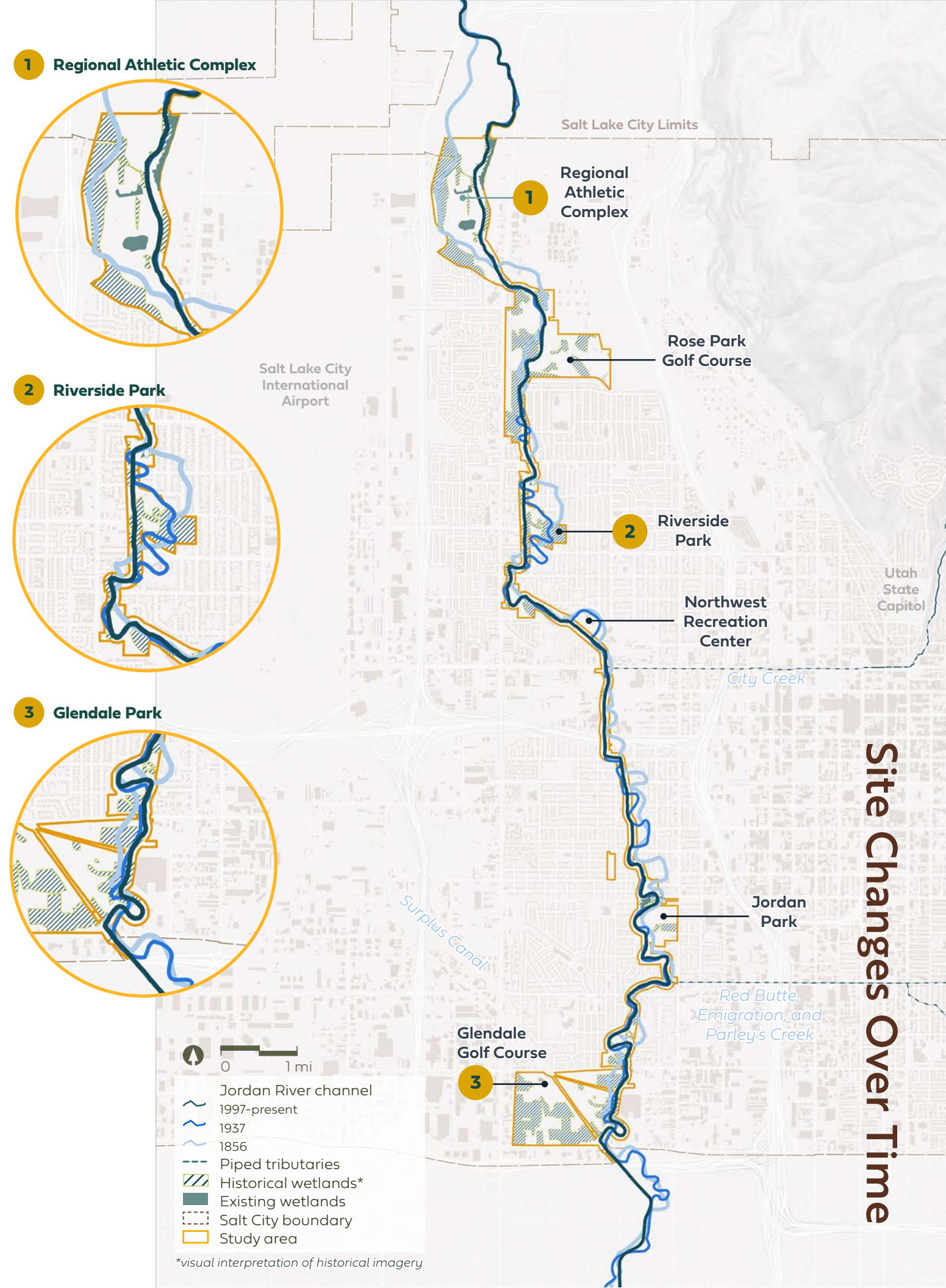
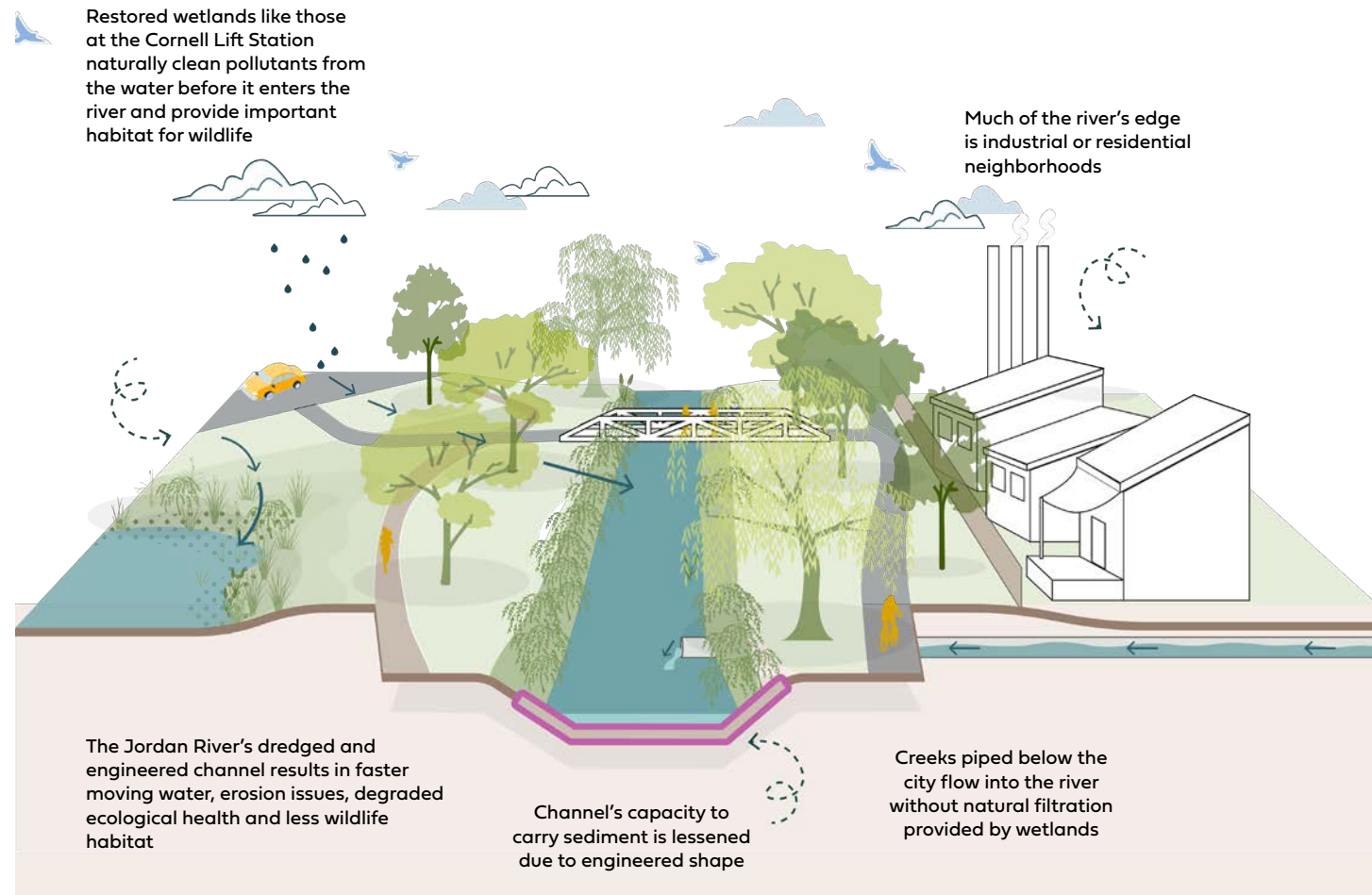


NATURAL CAPACITY

The Jordan River corridor used to be full of wetlands.

The river corridor once provided 25,000 acres of wetland habitat. In some places, the river meandered widely: these wetland habitats were once within the floodplain of the river, which has now been disconnected and filled in order to develop the area adjacent to the river. Knowing where natural wetlands existed in the past can help us identify places to restore them.

While introducing wetlands back into the study area will be beneficial to the ecology and experience of the study area, it must be balanced by assurances that the adjacent neighborhoods and commercial areas are protected from flooding. The west side of the river between between 2100 N and North Temple is particularly vulnerable to flooding in the case of a levee failure.



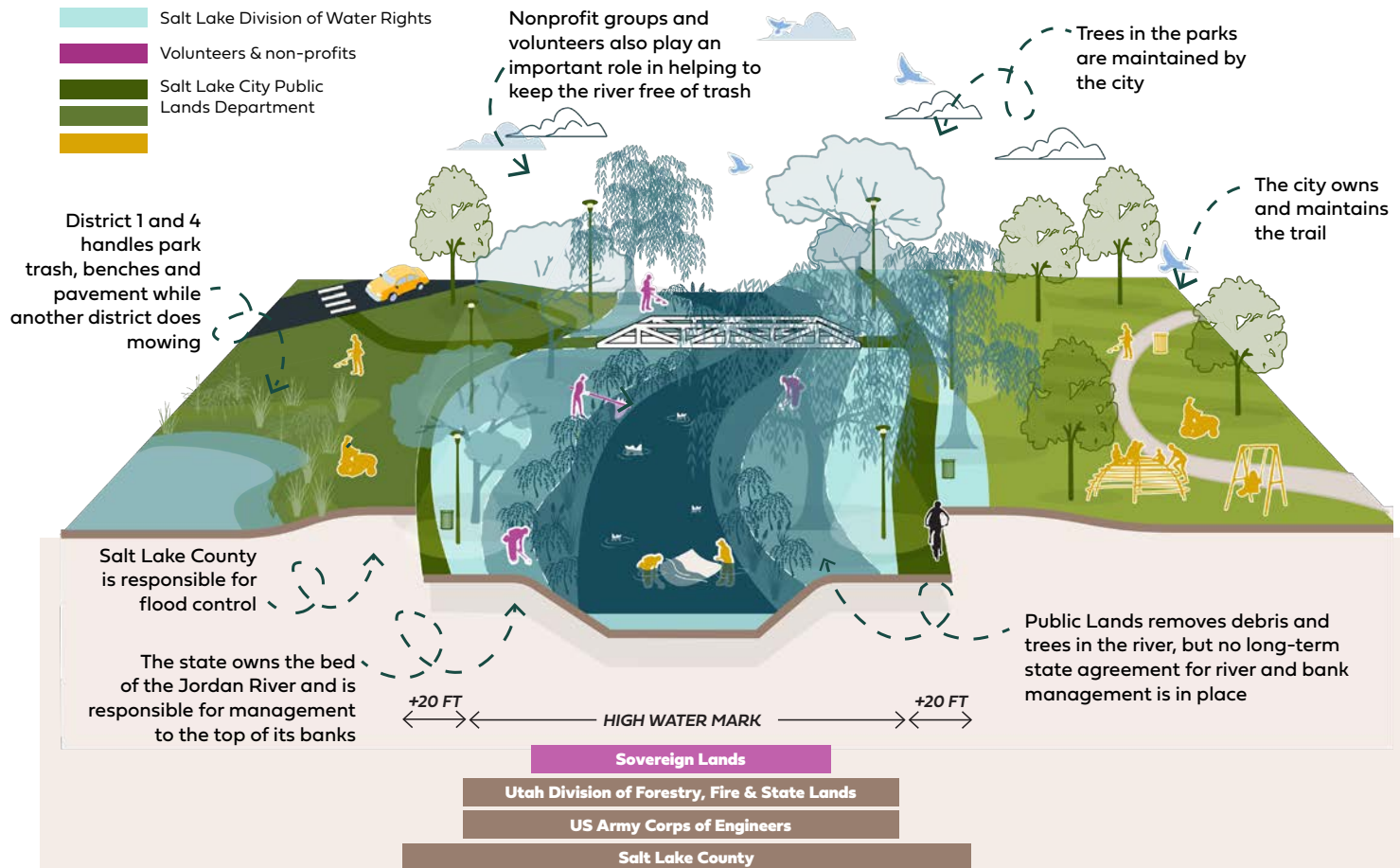
CULTURAL CAPACITY

There are many players involved in maintenance.

Within the study area, 772 acres are managed by Salt Lake City. Of those, 330 acres (43%) are for golf and 124 acres (16%) are managed as part of the Regional Athletic Complex. 154 acres (19%) includes recreational parks, dog parks, and cultural facilities managed by Districts 1 and 4. The remaining 164 acres (21%), owned by Salt Lake City Public Lands are managed as greenbelts and natural areas managed by Districts 5 and 6. While there are numerous park amenities adjacent to the river, their traditional focus has not been on river experiences.

Management Oversight

- Utah Division of Forestry Fire & State Lands & US Army Corps of Engineers
- Salt Lake County
- Salt Lake Division of Water Rights
- Volunteers & non-profits
- Salt Lake City Public Lands Department



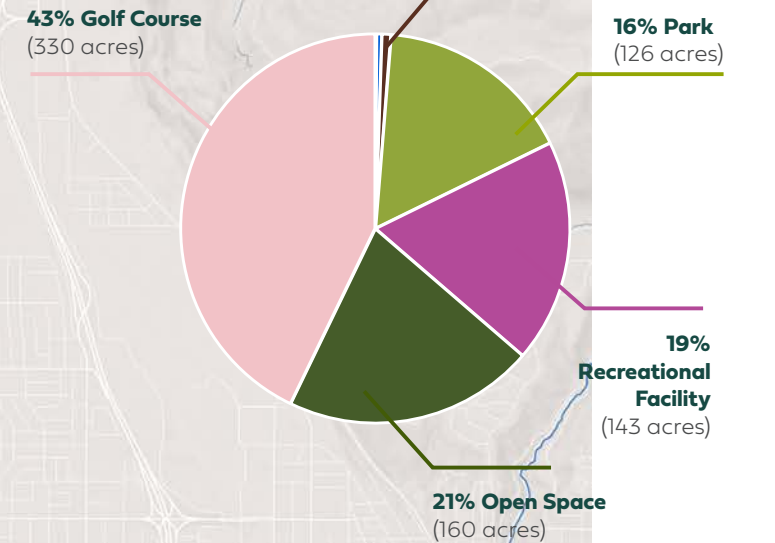
"Building a trail works, but building a trail culture is difficult."

"We need trash cans to keep it clean, and that are constantly getting emptied."

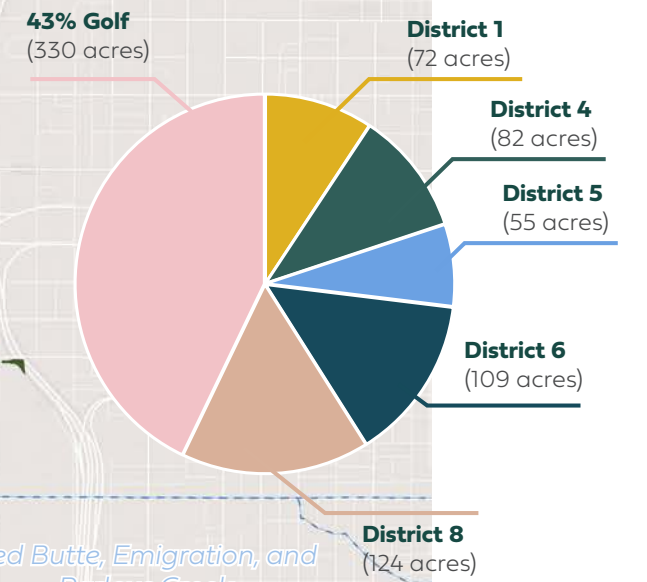
"Renovate the bathrooms. They don't work and they're only open 3 months a year."

CITY-OWNED PROPERTY

WITHIN STUDY AREA:



MANAGEMENT DISTRICTS



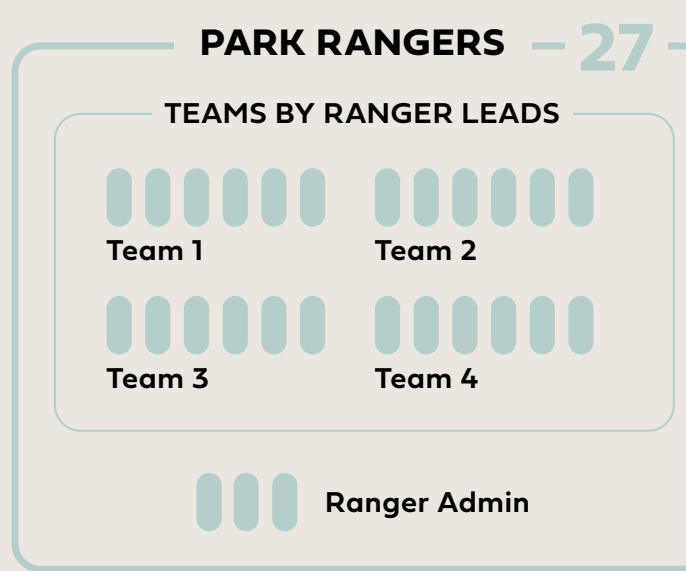
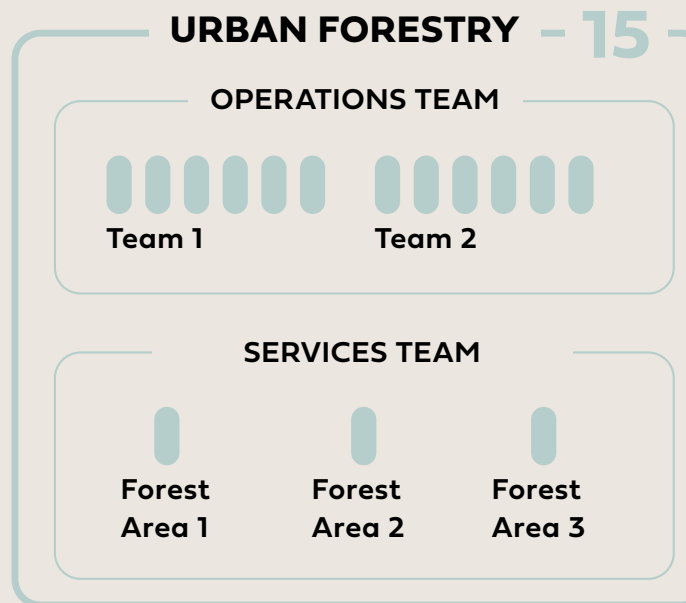
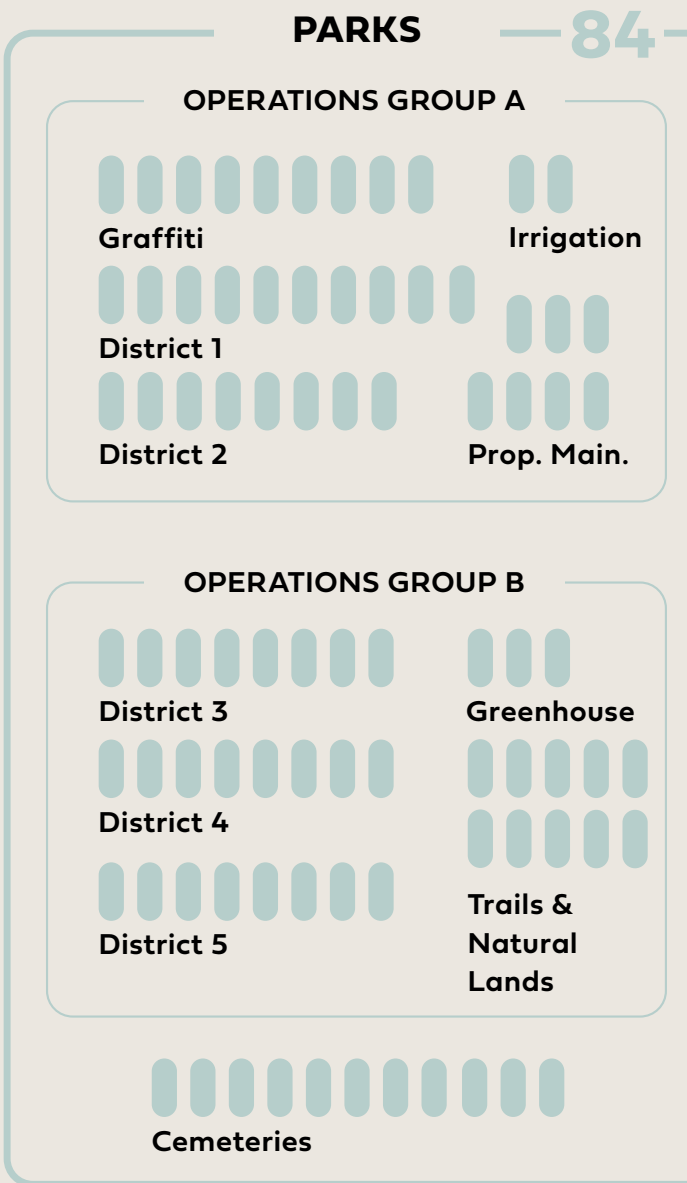
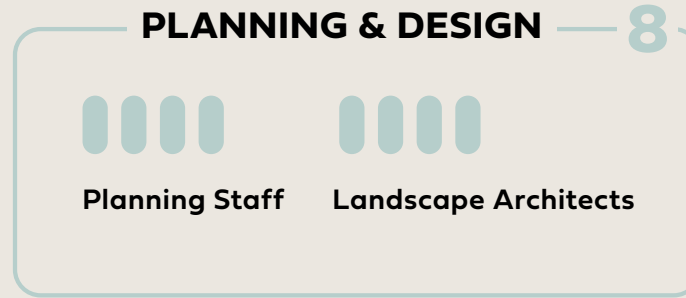
LAND USE WITHIN STUDY AREA

- Drainages
- Piped tributaries
- Recreational Facility
- Golf Course
- Park
- Open Space
- Community Garden
- Dog Park
- Median
- Riverine
- Salt City boundary
- Study area

"Improvements on the east side seem faster and more efficient. Funding seems inequitable."

PUBLIC LANDS DEPARTMENT STAFF
Division directors and administrators not included.

Full Time Employee



*data depicted only for golf courses within study area.

CULTURAL CAPACITY

Public Lands is growing its capacity to care for the corridor.

Within a new and growing department created to care for Salt Lake City's Public Lands, care for the river corridor is a pressing concern. The Park Rangers team, created in 2023, have already become a key component of trail experience, offering aid, orientation, and a sense of safety.

The Trails and Natural Lands (TNL) team on the Parks Division is growing substantially, with six additional positions opened in 2023. Four landscape architects, previously in the Public Services department, moved to Public Lands in 2023, further positioning the department to lead the way on the management of natural lands.

Golf is an enterprise district in Salt Lake City; designed to be financially self-sustaining, golf employees work at the courses and have minimal interaction with other teams at Public Lands.



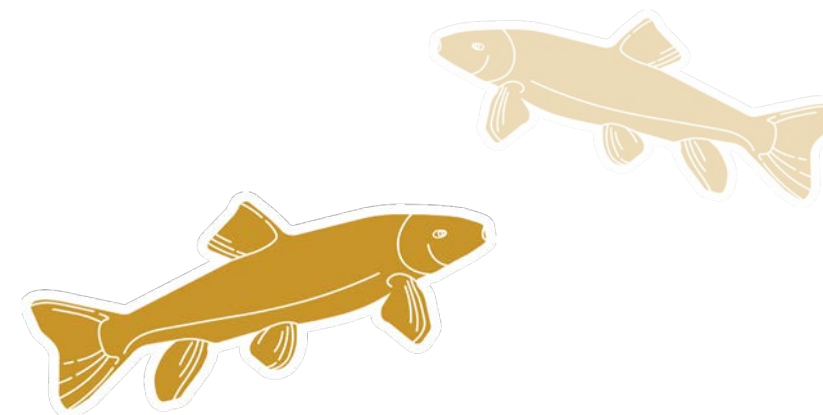
Key Takeaways

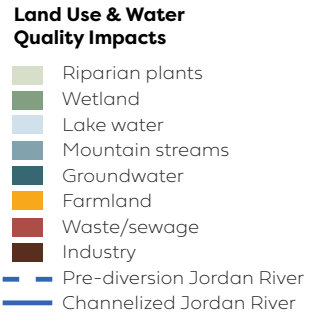
The next steps of the Action Plan should explore:

- What role this plan can play in achieving the community's goals of a cleaner river in partnership with collaborators upstream.
- Design changes to the corridor to make people feel safer, especially at night.
- Revised maintenance strategies to address waste in and out of the water.
- How to work with community partners in thoughtfully addressing the unhoused population on the corridor.

Cleanliness and safety threaten public perception of the corridor.

Resident and visitor relationships to the river have changed over time. Today, concern over cleanliness both in the water and on the adjacent lands is a frequent complaint that limits interest in the corridor as a place to enjoy. Concern over water quality is supported by the data: stormwater inflows and substantial diversions upstream from Salt Lake City are critical issues that affect water quality today.





CULTURAL AWARENESS

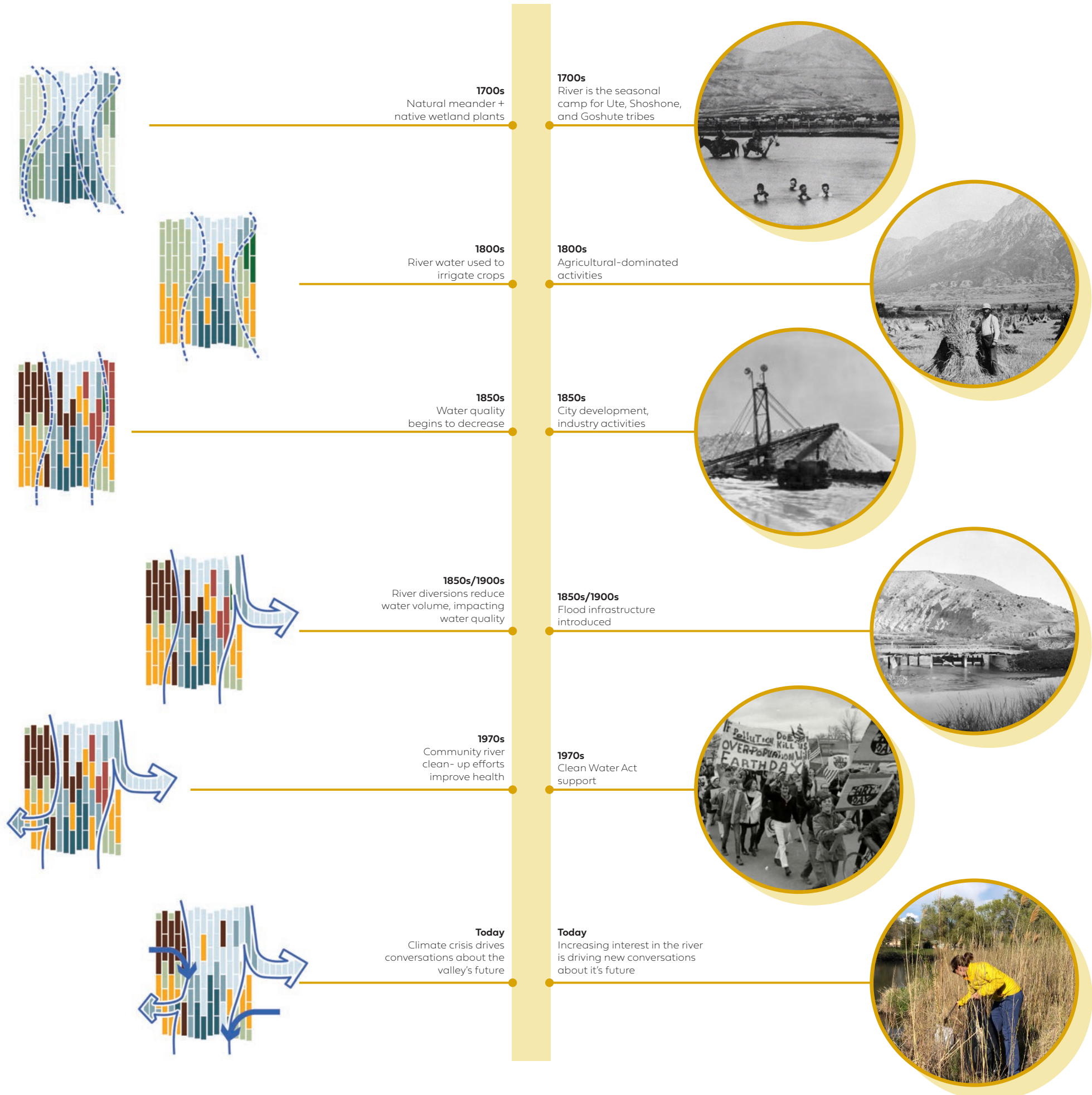
Water quality has been a moving target since the 1800s.

The Jordan River is classified as an impaired waterway which means that, based on standards from the Clean Water Act, it does not meet basic services provided by healthy waterways, which include:

- Protect water supply for human use
- Protect recreational uses (boating and wading) and aesthetics
- Protect for aquatic wildlife
- Protect for agricultural uses
- Protect inflows to the Great Salt Lake

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies show that The Emerald Ribbon study area is impaired due to high E. coli and low dissolved oxygen levels.

Salt Lake City's efforts to resolve watershed issues and enhance water quality within the study area will require collaboration with upstream partners. While the Emerald Ribbon Action Plan cannot solve all water quality issues, it can catalyze many of the needed changes necessary over the coming decades.



NATURAL AWARENESS

There are many factors that contribute to the Jordan River's diminished water quality.

Awareness of the Jordan River's impact on the Salt Lake Valley is lacking. Air quality, water quality, and biodiversity are deeply connected in Salt Lake Valley. As awareness and concern around air quality has risen in Salt Lake City, an understanding of the state of the Great Salt Lake, and its connections to water quality, the Jordan River, as well as air quality are essential to implementing the regional solutions necessary to prepare the region for the future.

The Jordan River's waters feed the Great Salt Lake; if the Great Salt Lake continues to recede, as it has in recent years, fine particulate matter containing toxins from the exposed lake bed will be released into the air at an increasing rate. The toxins that have settled on the lake bottom have accumulated over years of urban activity runoff and expulsion of industrial waste both in the lake and throughout the watershed. Growing awareness of the Jordan River's water quantity and quality issues is critical to not only the health of the watershed, but of the Great Salt Lake and the communities throughout the Wasatch Front.

More opportunities to interact with water safely!

My dream is for a trail that is smooth, safely graded and uninterrupted so that I can in-line skate from lake to lake.

CHANGING COURSE

Wetland removal and corridor manipulation such as canal diversions and channelization have limited the river's water flow and capacity to mitigate contaminants or wash away debris.



DOMINATED BY DEBRIS

Storm events wash urban and natural materials into the river.



IMPACT OF INDUSTRY

Runoff from surrounding industrial and urban areas wash contaminants and unsafe bacteria into river.



CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS

The community has shared a perceived lack of safety and cleanliness along the river.

Throughout community focus groups, interviews and workshops, lack of safety and cleanliness have come up the most frequently when describing the perceptions of the river today. Safety considerations are multifaceted: residents expressed feeling unsafe at night due to poor lighting along the trail, during the day due to the presence of the unsheltered folks in the corridor, and within the river due to unsafe water quality.

Perceptions about water quality also come through in the community's feedback around the corridor's cleanliness. Feeling that it is not well maintained by the city, some residents and stakeholders have mentioned taking it upon themselves to clean certain sections of the river. Debris and trash floating along the river and a lack of trash receptacles along the trail were noted as some of the primary cleanliness issues.

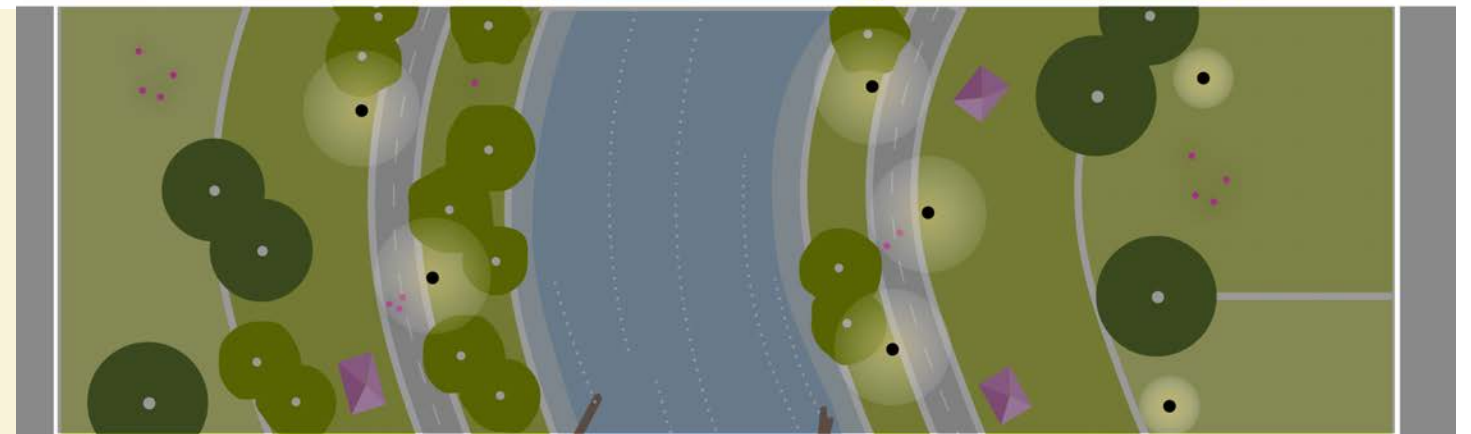
HISTORIC HOLY GROUND

Indigenous groups historically used the river for transportation and trade. Religious groups also cherish the river for its northward flow.



SIGHT LINES AND SAFETY

Today, safety along the corridor is a top concern, due to inconsistent lighting and perceived safety threats posed by the unhoused population.



DOMINATED BY DEBRIS

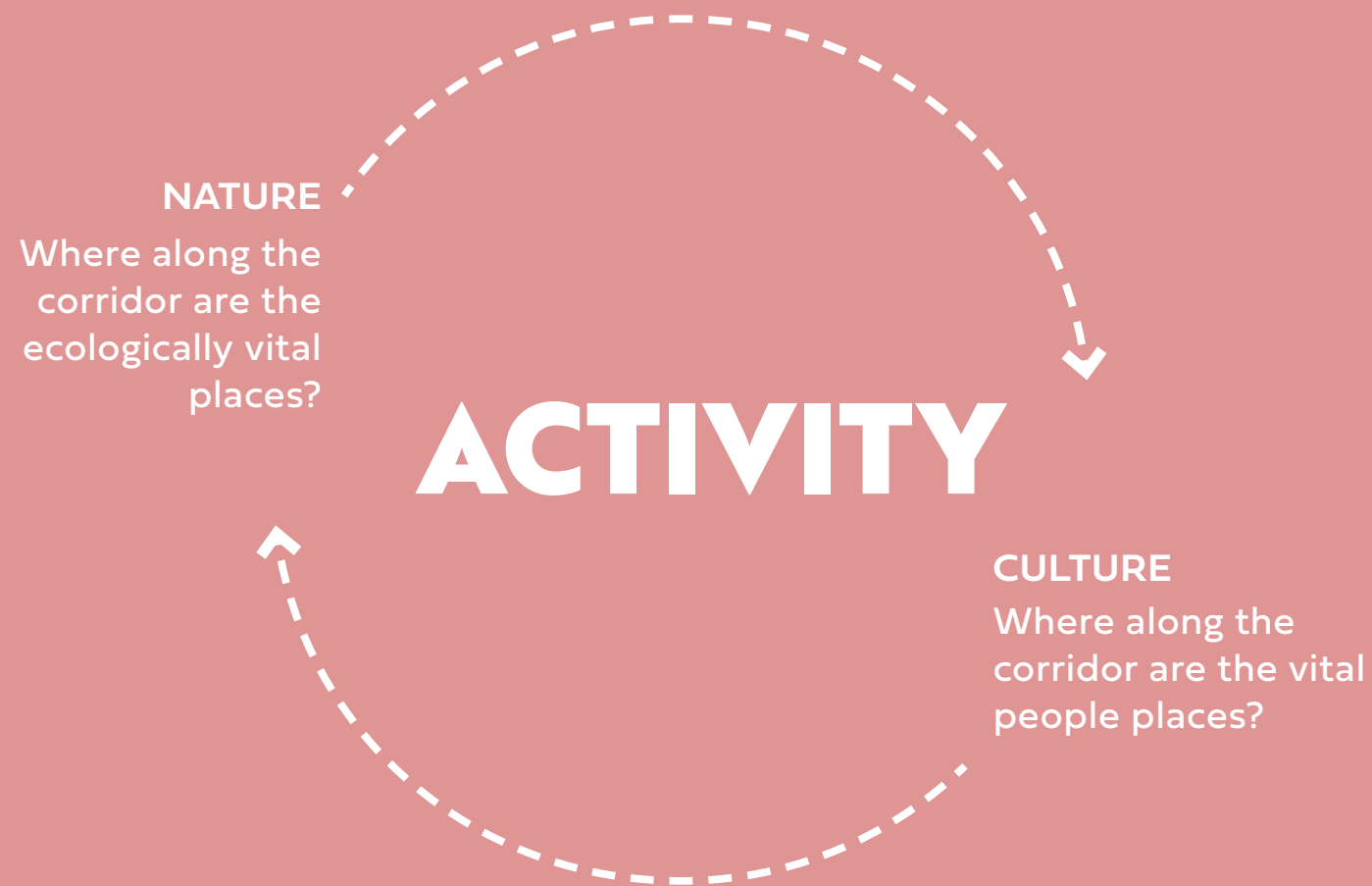
Trash and debris along the river contribute to the perception that the river is not well maintained by the city.



RECREATE AT YOUR OWN RISK

Paddlers have expressed that they exercise caution when coming in contact with the water due to contamination.





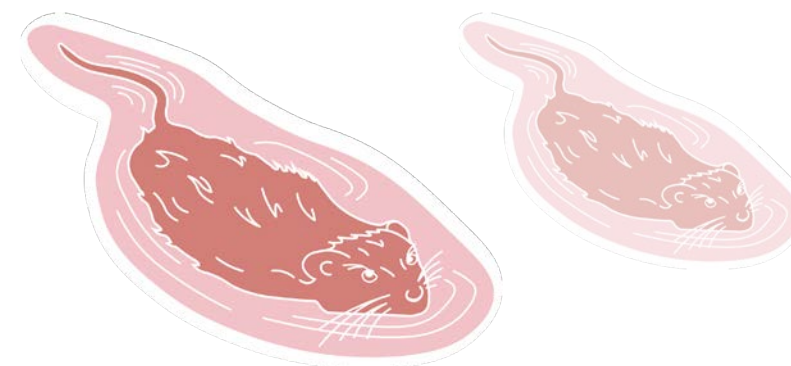
Key Takeaways

The next steps of the Action Plan should explore:

- Opportunities to create more natural parks to improve ecological health and human experience.
- Promote stronger visual connection between the urban fabric and the corridor, particularly at parks and more private stretches.
- Explore the potential for more diversity of trail experience, including exploration of slow or unpaved paths.

Places of positive ecological and human health are rich with activity.

Though the Jordan River Trail is a continuously accessible system, it varies in adjacent land use and level of activity across the ten mile study area. This chapter identified five recurring “types” of trail segments, largely based on adjacent land use. These are annotated with observations about natural and cultural opportunities and challenges.



NATURAL ACTIVITY

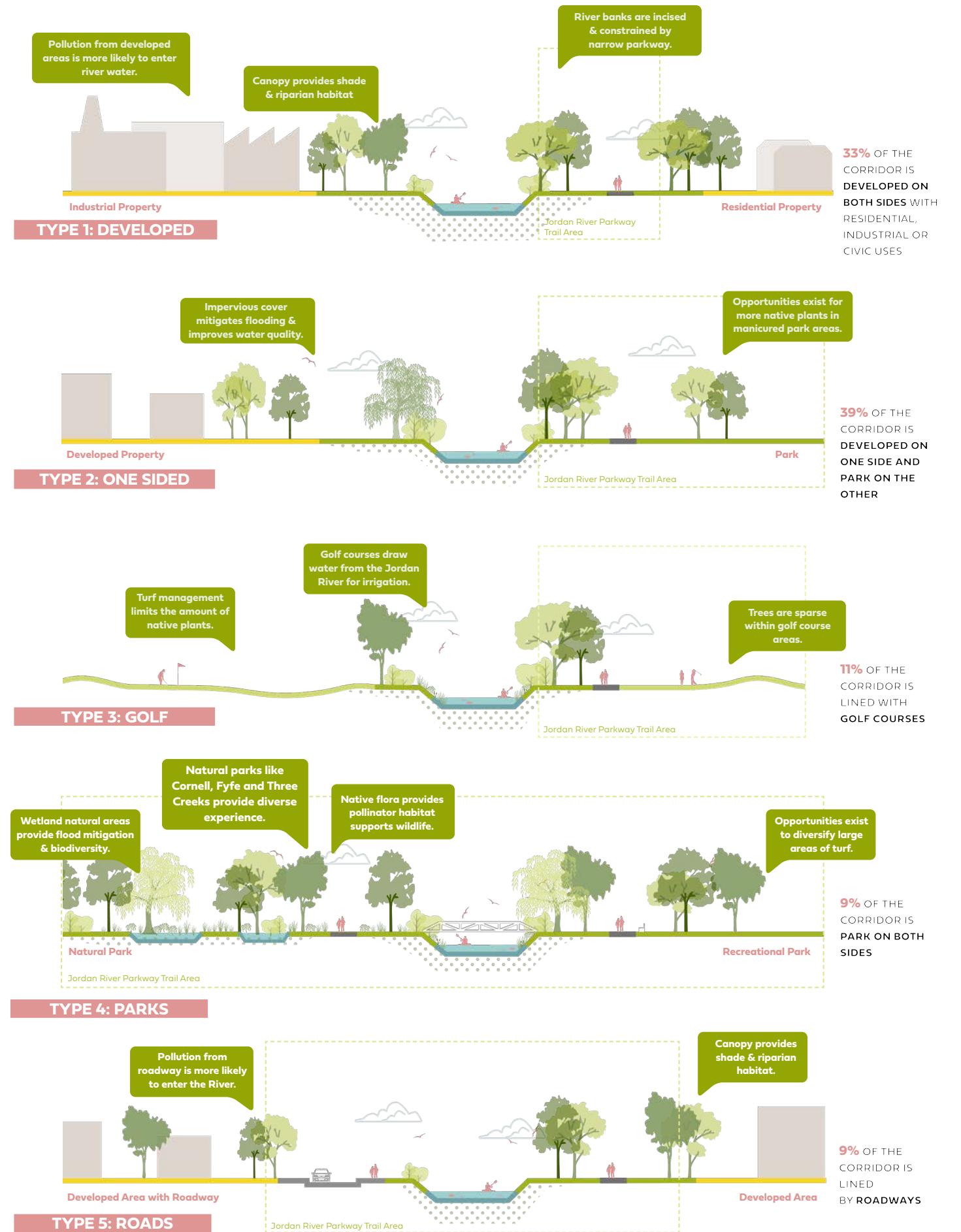
Existing adjacent land uses vary in how they impact the ecological health of the River.

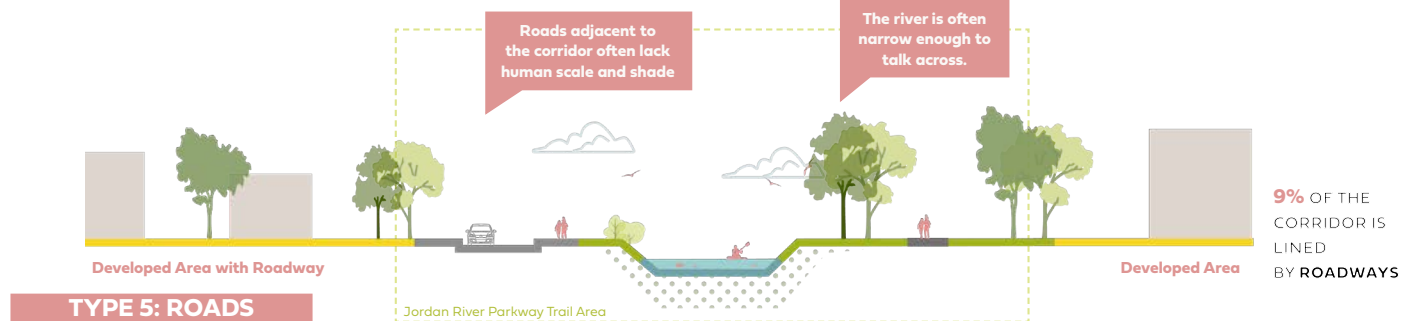
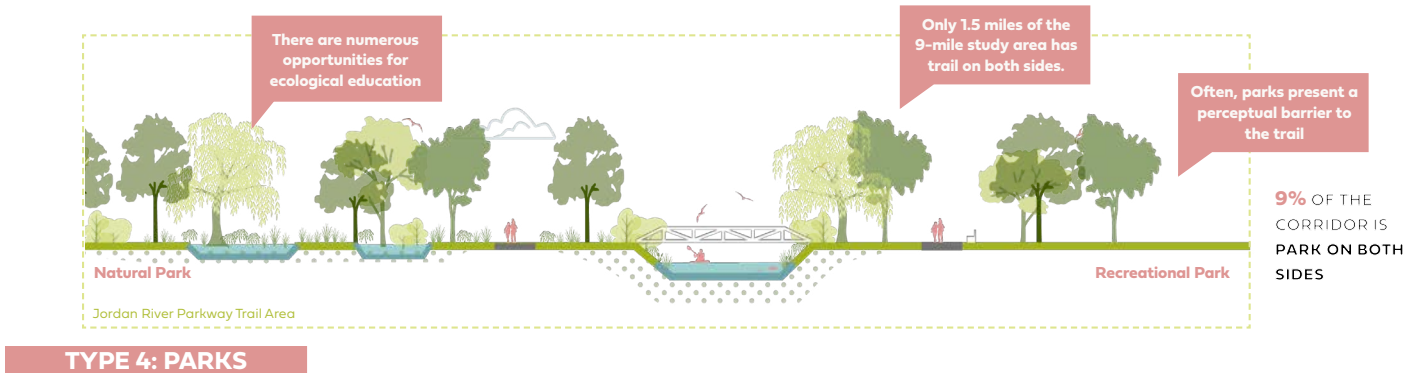
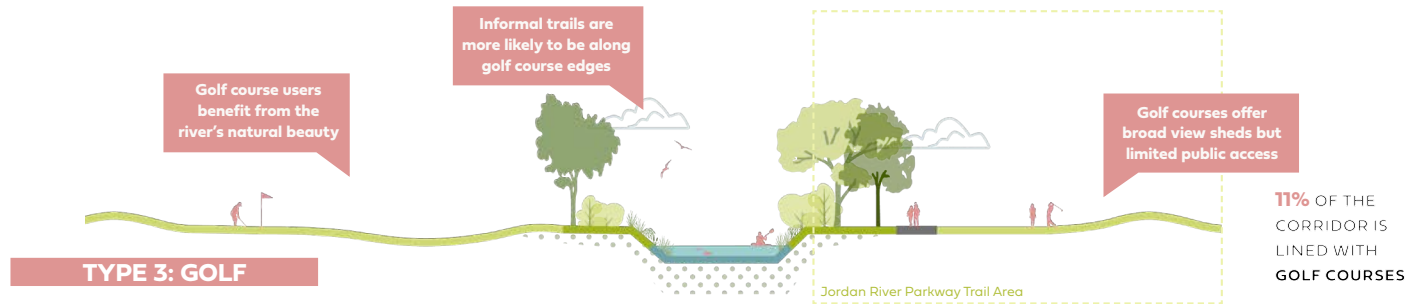
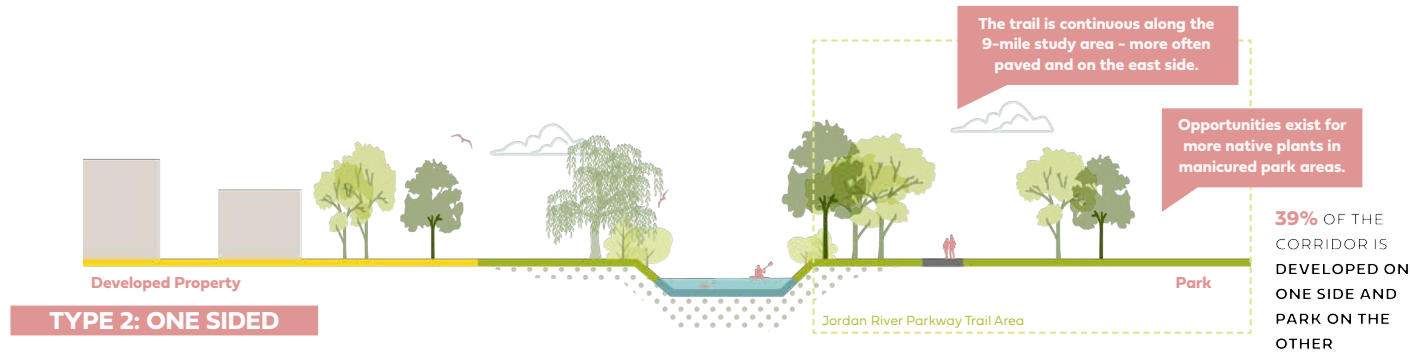
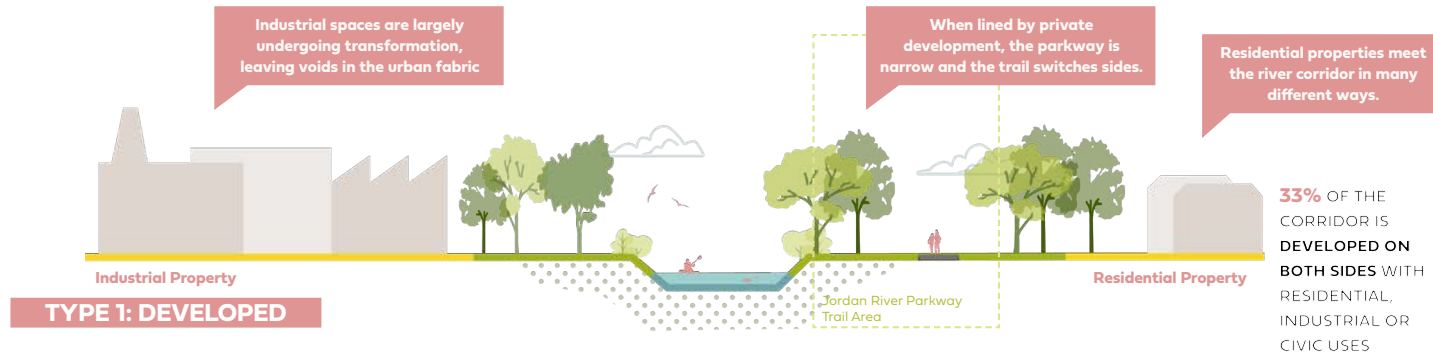
Ecologically, the narrowing and straightening of the River over time yields a continuous experience of highly-eroded bank edges. Historic human actions to manipulate the Jordan River have given way in recent years to a greater desire for a more natural river with healthy habitat and places for people to enjoy nature while recreating. This desire has led to ecological restoration efforts along the banks of the river that have included erosion and invasive species management, the planting and seeding of native plants, as well as increasing wildlife habitat quality.

Throughout the study area, there are pockets of ecological health - mostly in the more naturalized park spaces - and places of high levels of degradation. Natural areas complement traditional parklands and golf courses in the study area to provide a variety of experiences for SLC residents along the corridor. The SLC Public Lands Department's master plan, Reimagine Nature, as well as numerous other documents and the directive for this project support the enhancement of ecological health throughout the corridor. The focus on greater natural area management is also evidenced by the more than doubling of full time employees this year in the natural lands division of the Public Lands Department.

Preserve the natural beauty of the Jordan River. It is so unique because of the desert surroundings.

On signage, let's promote indigenous narratives and stories, connect to history, amplify stories.





"More family and community activities to get them involved and so we can enjoy it."

CULTURAL ACTIVITY

Activities along the trail are varied and make for diverse experience.

The human experience of the corridor is greatly shaped by the adjacent land uses. While the trail connects major open space resources like parks, recreational places and golf courses, the great majority of the corridor - about 72% - is lined by private development. In these stretches, the River is harder to access and the public realm is far more narrow.

The Westside, while in many ways cut off from the rest of Salt Lake City, has a rich variety of community amenities and resources that are primarily located adjacent to the corridor. Within a 10-minute walk of the Jordan River on both the east and west sides are 18 schools, 3 libraries, and 3 community centers. What is missing today are social amenities like markets, coffee shops, entertainment options, and bars. Today, the river is barely visible from these destinations even when they directly abut the trail (for example, Day-Riverside Library). Schools and after-school programs located on the river consider it more of a water and public safety risk than an asset, and facilities located on the trail rarely have gateways or connections into the corridor.

"It needs to be safer. I want to bike or run with my baby on the trail, I don't feel safe using the trail. Clean up."

APPENDIX

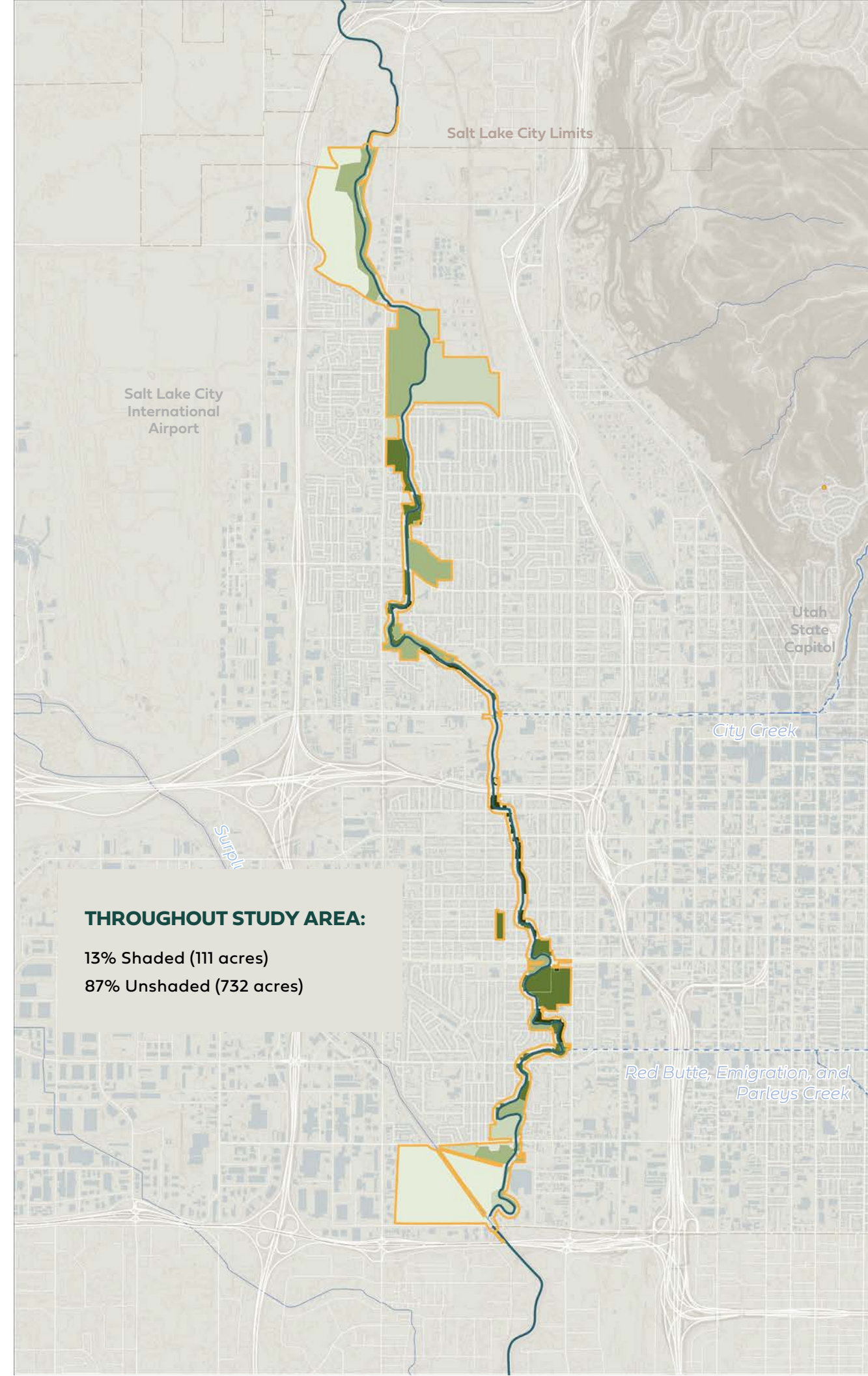
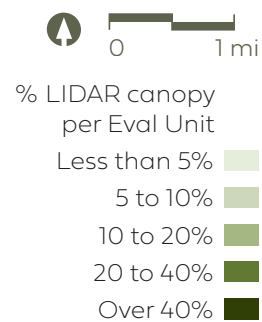
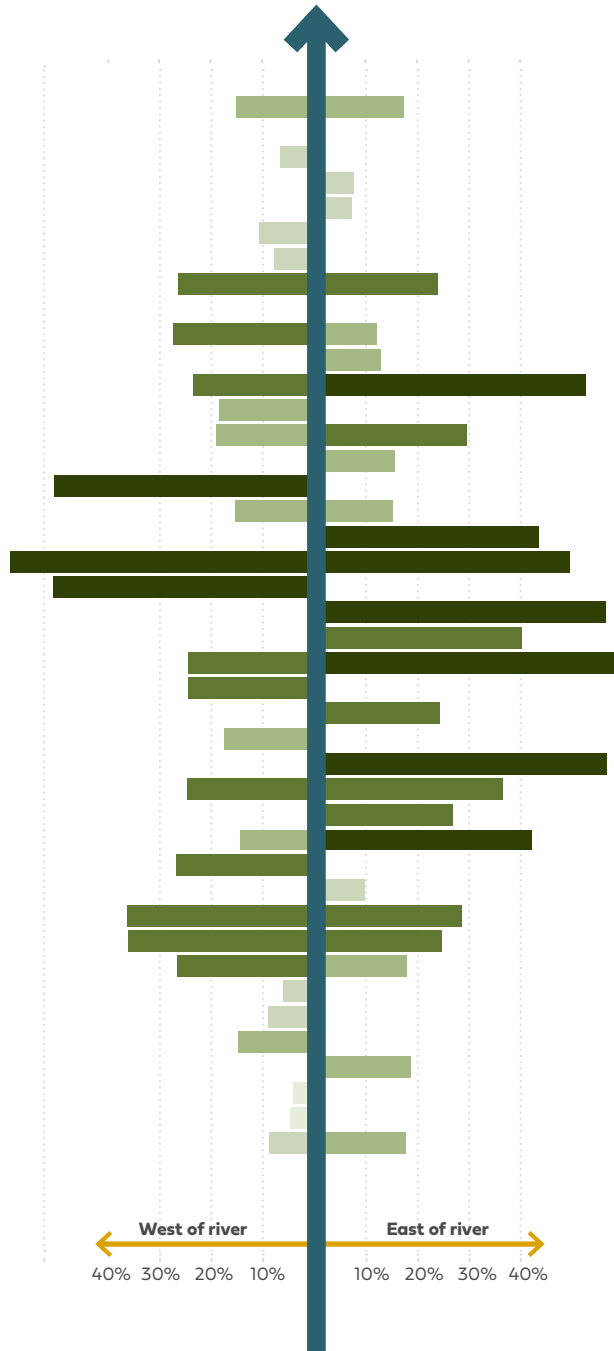
Tree Canopy	66
Soils	68
Geology	70

CANOPY

Canopy percentages within study area were measured from the latest available LIDAR data, which dates from 2012/2013. It is important to note that a storm in 2020 caused the death of thousands of trees within city limits, and that Salt Lake City has made substantial efforts to plant additional trees. Evaluation units with lowest canopy cover are west of river; the Regional Athletic Complex has nearly 0% canopy per acre. The east side has more canopy density throughout corridor, with the densest shade concentrated within center of study area.

CANOPY % PER EVALUATION UNIT ACRE:

- RAC-OPEN SPACE
- REGIONAL ATHLETIC COMPLEX
- 1800 N TRAILHEAD
- RIVERVIEW
- ROSE PARK GOLF COURSE
- ROSE PARK GOLF PRACTICE
- ROOTS COURSE
- CORNELL WETLANDS
- NORTH RIVERSIDE
- ROSE PARK COMMUNITY GARDEN
- RIVERSIDE PARK
- BACKMAN
- COTTONWOOD PARK DOG PARK
- COTTONWOOD PARK
- NORTHWEST REC CENTER
- KOA
- GADSBY TRAILHEAD
- FISHER MANSION
- ALZHEIMERS PARK
- FRANKLIN
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- JAKE GARN
- GOSHEN
- POPLAR GROVE PARK
- 900 SOUTH RIVER PARK
- FYFE WETLAND PRESERVE
- JORDAN PARK OFF LEASH
- INTERNATIONAL PEACE GARDENS
- JORDAN PARK
- BEND IN THE RIVER
- MODESTO PARK
- 1240 S 900 W
- THREE CREEKS
- RIVERSIDE
- PEACE TREE BEND
- 1700 SOUTH RIVER PARK
- GLENDALE PARK
- FUTURE GLENDALE REGIONAL PARK
- SEVEN PEAKS
- GLENDALE GOLF COURSE (NORTH)
- GLENDALE GOLF COURSE (SOUTH)
- 2100 S RESTORATION



THROUGHOUT STUDY AREA:

13% Shaded (111 acres)
87% Unshaded (732 acres)

SOILS

SITE HAS VERY DEEP, POORLY DRAINED SOILS

Soils formed due to the past existence of Lake Bonneville and its accompanying sediment accumulation and deposits. The soils along river bottom are mostly fine sand and clay deposits with gravel found in the stream bed.

Lewiston loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes (Ir)
Consists of very deep, somewhat poorly drained soils that formed in lacustrine deposits

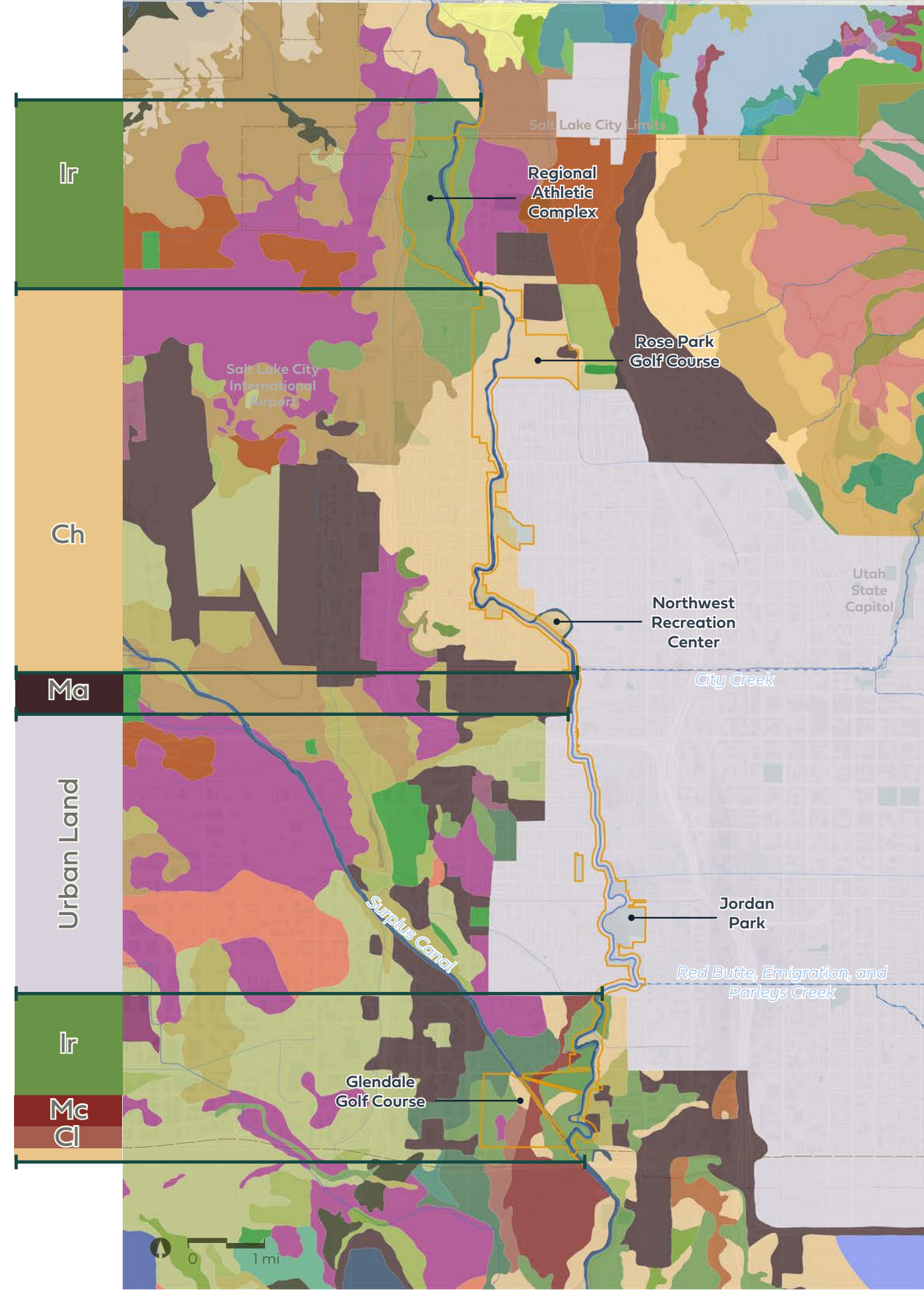
Chipman silty clay loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes (Ch)
Consists of very deep, poorly drained soils formed in lacustrine sediments from shale and limestone. Chipman soils are low lake terraces and floodplains. In lake terraces.

Made land (Ma)

Urban Land

Magna silty clay, 0 to 1 percent slopes (Mc)
Consists of very deep, poorly drained soils that formed in alluvium and lacustrine deposits derived from mixed rocks.

Chipman silty clay loam, saline, sodic, gravelly substratum, 0 to 1 percent slopes (Cl)
Consists of very deep, poorly drained soils formed in lacustrine sediments from shale and limestone. Chipman soils are low lake terraces and floodplains. In lake terraces.



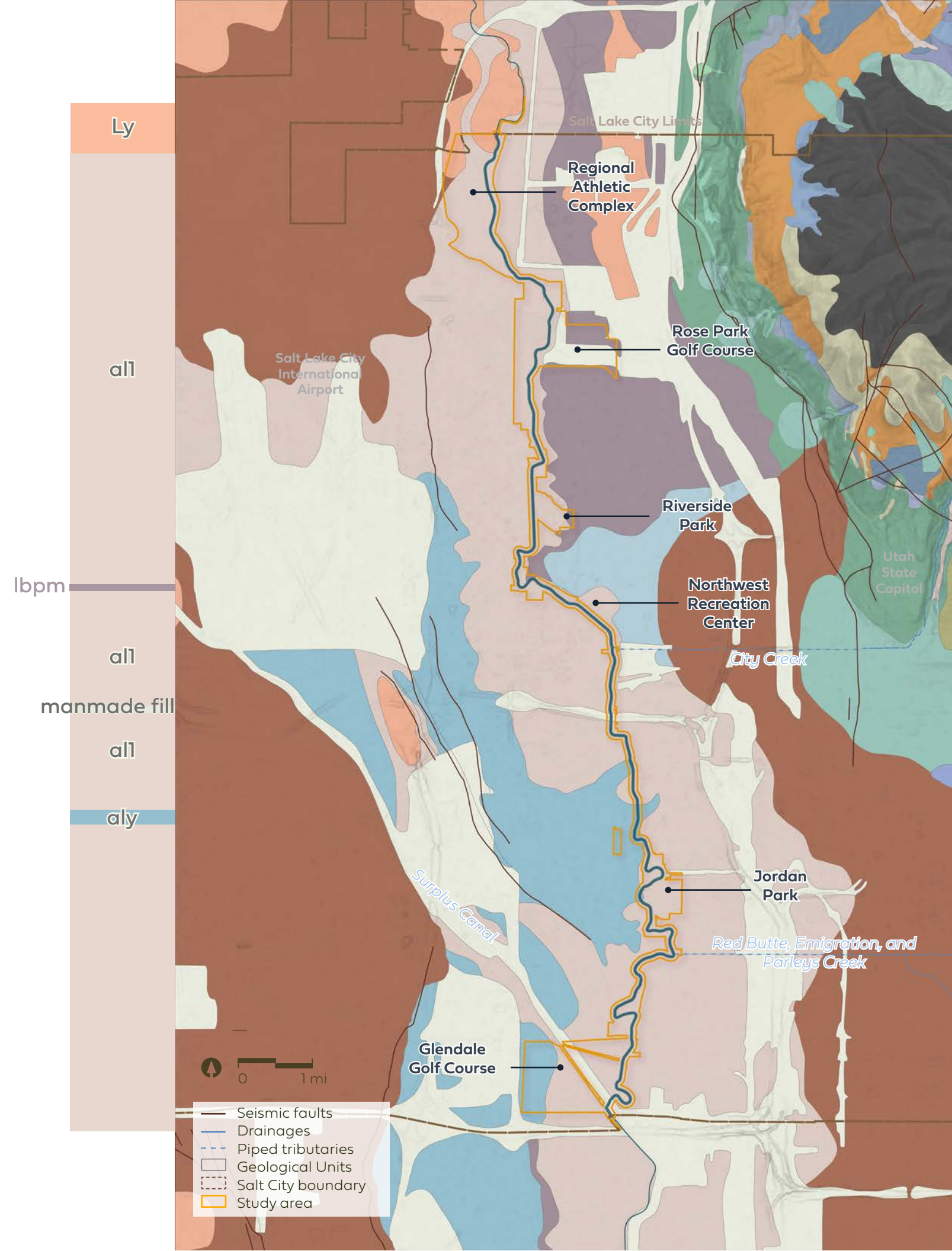
GEOLOGY

SITE IS MOSTLY STREAM ALLUVIUM

As Lake Bonneville receded, deposits of gravel, sand, silt, and clay formed the valley. At the north of the site is marsh and lacustrine deposits, coinciding with the wetland habitats found near Great Salt Lake.

- Marsh and lacustrine deposits (Ly)**
 Age: Holocene to uppermost Pleistocene
These deposits consist of gravel, sand, silt, and clay deposited in response to major cycles in the level of the last deep lake (Bonneville lake) in the Bonneville basin and its Holocene successor Great Salt Lake
- Stream Alluvium 1 (all)**
 Age: upper Holocene
Drying of pluvial lakes. Pebble and cobble gravel in a matrix of sand, silt, and minor clay deposited by perennial streams. Surface characterized by subdued bar and swale topography, forms modern floodplains and terrace 2m-5m above stream level.
- Lacustrine clay and silt (lbpm)**
 Age: upper Pleistocene
Organically rich deposits made of silt, clay, and minor sand deposited in Utah Lake, marshes, slow-moving streams and oxbow lakes. May contain peat deposits as thick as 1m. Associated with areas of high water table
- Manmade fill**
 Age: Anthropocene
Artificial fill follows contemporary roads and industry
- Younger Stream Alluvium, undivided (aly)**
 Age: Holocene to uppermost Pleistocene
Pebble and cobble gravel in a matrix of sand, silt, and minor clay deposited by floodplains.

PRELIMINARY SURFICIAL GEOLOGIC MAP OF THE WASATCH FAULT ZONE, EASTERN PART OF UTAH VALLEY, UTAH COUNTY, AND PARTS OF SALT LAKE AND JUAB COUNTIES, UTAH By Michael N. Machette. Department of the Interior U.S. Geologic survey





Emerald Ribbon

Action Plan

