

March 8, 2022

451 S State Street

Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Mayor Erin Mendenhall and City Council Members,

Please allow this letter to serve as a ringing endorsement for the Salt Lake City Public Lands Master Plan, aptly named “Reimagine Nature”. Thirty years after adoption of the 1992 Salt Lake City Open Space plan, development of a new Master Plan is long overdue and sorely needed in a time of unprecedented population growth that severely impacts the environmental health and quality of our invaluable public lands. As city residents and appointed members of the Parks, Trails, Natural Lands and Urban Forestry Advisory Board (PNUT), we are highly sensitive to the stress on our public lands and the funding necessary to protect, enhance and preserve this land for future generations.

We applaud the foundational values of the plan as they highlight the ***culture of stewardship*** necessary to protect public lands, while also emphasizing that public lands ***improve livability*** as we face the challenges of climate change. Most importantly, these values state that all residents of SLC need ***equitable access*** to high quality public lands to improve their own personal health and well-being.

Additionally, as an advisory board we wish to communicate the following:

- Our advisory board had ample opportunity to review and comment on the draft Master Plan. We thank the lead staff and consultant group for using evidence-based analysis, coupled with public engagement, to form a guiding vision and identify transformative projects.
- The extensive community process was multifaceted and successful despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate that this outreach was intentionally planned to reach community members traditionally unheard and/or unreached in city planning processes, and that these voices are reflected in the values, principal goals and transformative projects of the Master Plan.
- We wish to thank the students and faculty of the University of Utah for their assistance during the community engagement process.
- Adoption of the Master Plan will pave the way for capital improvements currently funded and those requested in future budget years. We urge the City Council to approve the FY23 CIP request for development of a five (5) year strategic plan to identify and accelerate near-term implementation of the Master Plan.
- We urge the City Council to embrace the foundational values and five principal goals of the Master Plan. This is a crucial step for the City Council as it helps both embed the Master Plan and ensure advocacy by current and future elected leaders to seek and support sustainable funding throughout the plan lifecycle.
- We recommend each City Department leadership team become familiar with the foundational values and five principal goals of the Master Plan and coordinate their projects and funding initiatives to dovetail therein - thereby maximizing limited taxpayer dollars.

We are excited about the prospect of seeing this Master Plan fully implemented in the next 10-20 years. This is a huge step for the Public Lands Department and for the city as a whole. We applaud the

hard work of staff, consultants, elected officials and our fellow community members in the development of this Master Plan. We are proud to lend our support and advocacy for this work, and honored to serve as members of the PNUT advisory board during this important moment in public lands history.

This is a plan that will not sit on a shelf. For our community to have a healthy, livable and equitable future, now is the time.

Yours sincerely,

Polly Hart, Chair PNUT Board

Brianna Binnebose, Vice Chair

Ginger Cannon

Samantha Finch

Jenny Hewson

Phil Carroll

CJ Whittaker

Melanie Pehrson

Clayton Scrivner