

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Central Federal Lands Highway Division

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

and

FINAL SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

for the

Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project

FHWA Project No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1)

Salt Lake County, UT

This Finding of No Significant Impact is made available pursuant to:

42 U.S.C. §4332 (2)(c) and 49 U.S.C. §303

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Central Federal Lands Highway Division has determined that the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project will have no significant impact on the human or natural environment. Principal areas of public controversy have been addressed, and no major unresolved issues remain outstanding. This finding is based on *Environmental Assessment and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project*; public involvement; and applicable laws, executive orders, and regulations. The environmental assessment, with revisions contained herein, accurately and adequately discusses the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed FHWA action and appropriate mitigation measures. A list of measures to be carried out by the FHWA to minimize unavoidable impacts associated with its action is presented in the environmental assessment and included herein to support this decision. The environmental assessment, with information presented herein, provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an environmental impact statement is not required.

JUDY SALOMONSON

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Judy Salomonson

Date

FHWA-CFLHD, Chief of Business Operations

Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS), Salt Lake County, and Millcreek, has examined actions to improve access and safety for visitors to upper Mill Creek Canyon on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest in Salt Lake County, Utah. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) documents FHWA-CFLHD's decision on the project under the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. §4321 et seq. and 40 C.F.R. §1501.6) and FHWA's implementing regulations (23 C.F.R. §771, specifically 23 C.F.R. §771.121). It incorporates by reference *Environmental Assessment and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project* (EA) and presents relevant information to support FHWA-CFLHD's decision on the project.

The EA analyzed road reconstruction and establishing a consistent width along the road, including a bicycle lane for about 1.5 miles; reducing informal parking sites and expanding and formalizing parking areas at existing trailheads and adjacent to the road in other designated areas; modifying, replacing, or installing culverts; constructing associated improvements, such as retaining walls, ditches and other drainage features, signs, and trail connections; and striping the road.

The road width would be 24 feet from approximately Winter Gate at the south end to Elbow Fork, which includes 10-foot-wide lanes and a 4-foot-wide bike lane, and 18- to 20-feet from Elbow Fork to the Upper Big Water Trailhead at the end of the road, which includes 9- to 10-foot-wide lanes with no shoulder due to topographic and other constraints. One bridge crossing below Elbow Fork would restrict the road to 22 feet wide to avoid the need to replace or extend the structure (referred to as Stone Bridge 1).

Parking improvements analyzed include modifications to four existing parking lots at picnic areas or trailheads, relocation of one parking lot, and decommissioning or formalizing existing informal parking areas along the road. In association with the modified parking lots and road improvements, existing trails would be extended, shifted, or adjusted to align with the proposed improvements.

Drainage improvements analyzed consist of ditch or curb and gutter establishment, where feasible; vegetated swales; water quality basins; replacement of White Bridge (box culvert); modifications to several culverts or walls associated with culverts; and installation of a new culvert to access the new parking lot.

An estimated eight retaining walls are proposed along the road or at parking areas to stabilize steep slopes and minimize the overall disturbance footprint.

The purpose of the project is to improve user safety, access to recreational opportunities for all users, and water quality degraded by surface erosion and poor drainage infrastructure. As part of the design and environmental review processes, the following needs were identified:

- **Inconsistent Roadway Width.** The narrow and variable road width makes it difficult and dangerous for vehicles to pass each other. These same conditions inhibit the ability of emergency vehicles to efficiently travel through the canyon. Vehicles often need to pull off the road to let others pass during heavy use times (e.g., weekends and holidays), which

worsens traffic congestion. Several creek crossings along the alignment result in constrictions to the already narrow roadway. A more consistent roadway width is needed to safely accommodate users in the upper canyon.

- **Limited Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities.** The lack of road shoulders, lack of bicycle lanes, limited sight distances, informal parking, and lack of crosswalks and signs create unsafe conditions for cyclists and pedestrians using and crossing the roadway. Improvements are needed to better accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Substandard Parking.** Informal, undesignated parking areas located on corners with poor sight distance create hazards as vehicles enter and exit these spots. User-created pullouts that are too narrow to fully accommodate vehicles create hazards for motorists and cyclists when parked vehicles encroach on the roadway. Use associated with these informal parking areas and associated user-created trails often results in resource damage and increased erosion resulting from reduced vegetation cover and soil compaction. Existing designated parking areas have substandard access points, show signs of erosion, and lack capacity to accommodate visitors. Well-designed and designated parking areas are needed to better accommodate visitor volume and eliminate informal parking areas and the hazards and resource degradation associated with them.
- **Poor Drainage.** Soil erosion and uncontrolled surface runoff due to poor drainage patterns result in a need for updated drainage infrastructure to reduce erosion and improve water quality of nearby streams. In conjunction with the road improvements, a system of culverts, ditches, and similar infrastructure is needed to ensure proper drainage off the roadway and parking areas.

Public and Agency Coordination

As discussed in the EA, the public has been offered several opportunities to provide input on the project and its potential effects on the environment.

FHWA-CFLHD and its partner agencies on the project held three public open houses during the preliminary design phases. Each meeting was accompanied by a public comment period of at least 30 days. The first two meetings and associated comment periods were held before initiating preparation of the EA (November 9, 2021, and May 19, 2022), with a goal of soliciting input on the project itself. The third meeting (held virtually on June 13, 2023, and in person on June 14, 2023) was held to solicit input on issues to consider in the EA, as well as present updated design plans. See **Appendix A** for the public open house materials.

The comment period for the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation was initiated with the publication of a news release (legal notice) in The Salt Lake Tribune on March 3, 2024. The EA notice of availability was simultaneously published on the Salt Lake County, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, and Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD) websites, and notices were posted at the Winter Gate in Mill Creek Canyon. The USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) published a separate notice in The Salt Lake Tribune to support their independent decision document based on the same EA. The EA was made available on the FHWA-CFLHD website (<https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/projects/ut/flap-sla-10-1>) on March 6, 2024, and the comment period lasted for 30 days –

from March 6, 2024 through April 5, 2024. Additionally, links to the EA were provided on the Salt Lake County website and the Forest Service website.

This comment period provided those interested in or affected by the proposed project an opportunity to comment on the Proposed Action and identify any issues and concerns. Comments received during the official comment period are reproduced and responded to below. As discussed above and in Section 1.4 of the EA, the Forest Service intends to issue an independent decision on select components of the Proposed Action. The Forest Service may issue an additional response to comments received during the official comment period that are specific to, or contain elements related to the Forest Service decision space on this project.

A total of 417 letters, including 13 duplicate submissions, were received during the public comment period. This includes letters received on April 6 and 7, the weekend following the end of the comment period. Comments received after April 7, 2024, were not addressed. Most comments were received through the email address identified in the legal notice, with only a few of them routed through other communication channels available through the project partners. Of the 404 non-duplicate letters received, 274 were form letters, leaving 130 unique submissions. Some of the letters contained attachments, including photos and formal letter documents.

All unique letters were reviewed for substantive comments. Substantive scoping comments are specific comments that:

- Provide new information about the Proposed Action, an alternative, or the analysis;
- Identify a different way to meet the need or point out a specific flaw in the analysis;
- Suggest alternate methodologies and the reason(s) why they should be used;
- Make factual corrections or identify a different source of credible research which, if used in the analysis, could result in different effects; or
- Express a concern rationally connected and directly related to the project.

Most of the substantive comments received were concerns, many of which were expressed multiple times. To streamline responding, "Common Public Concerns" were identified. The Common Public Concerns, or themes, represent the most prevalent comments received. There were 18 Common Public Concerns identified, which are included in **Table 1**, along with FHWA-CLFHD's responses.

Table 2, in Appendix B, includes the text of each unique public comment with individual responses. Individual responses in Table 2 reference the Common Public Concerns in Table 1, where appropriate, and include additional responses as needed. Comments in Table 2 are organized by date received, and the form letter is only included once. Text included in attachments is reproduced in Table 2, and photos and other images are omitted.

To provide additional information a "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) document was developed. The Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project FAQ includes responses to some of the most common questions, provides more information about the Proposed Action and agency considerations in their decision making, and speaks to public comments regarding topics that were outside the scope of the EA, such as operational changes in the canyon. The FAQ is available on the project website, <https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/projects/ut/flap-sla-10-1> and in Appendix A.

Table 1. Common Public Concerns

ID	Concern Summary	FHWA-CFLHD Response
A	<p>Shuttle System / Operational Changes: Many respondents expressed their desire for the County to implement a shuttle system in Mill Creek Canyon. Others recommended operational changes related to vehicle restrictions, dog restrictions, and a full closure of the upper canyon to passenger vehicles. Some of these commenters wanted these operational changes implemented along with the Proposed Action, and others wanted them implemented instead of the Proposed Action.</p>	<p>Operational changes, such as a shuttle system, are discussed in Section 2.3.6 of the EA. Operational changes fail to meet the project’s purpose and need, primarily because they do not improve water quality degraded by surface erosion and poor drainage infrastructure. Additionally, such changes are outside of the purview of FHWA-CFLHD.</p>
B	<p>Cyclist Safety: Cyclist safety was one of the leading concerns expressed by the public during the EA comment period. Some commenters wanted to see the uphill bicycle lane extended to Upper Big Water Trailhead, some wanted the bike lane removed, and others preferred a narrower road where cyclists shared the roadway with motorists. This range of concerns is similar to those expressed during previous public comment periods. (See also Common Public Concern D).</p>	<p>The design team considered different perspectives and incorporated them into the Proposed Action in a way that balances the safety and needs of multiple uses with other social, environmental, and economic considerations. As addressed in Section 2.3.1 of the EA, continuing the bicycle lane beyond Elbow Fork would result in adverse environmental impacts and excessive project costs. Therefore, we anticipate the proposed improvements would result in a net increase in safety for all.</p>
C	<p>Increased Parking: Several commenters expressed concern that parking in upper Mill Creek Canyon would increase as a result of the Proposed Action and expressed their desire not to increase parking. Many of these individuals were concerned that increased parking would lead to increased levels of visitation in an already crowded area.</p>	<p>Under the Proposed Action, parking capacity in the upper canyon would remain approximately the same (see the first paragraph under Section 2.2.2 on page 9 of the EA). Current informal parking spots would either be formalized or eliminated. For those eliminated, an equivalent number of parking opportunities would be created in formalized parking areas during parking lot improvements. Thus, parking capacity in upper Mill Creek Canyon would not increase or decrease as a result of the Proposed Action.</p>
D	<p>Lane Width / Vehicle Speed: Several commenters expressed concerns that roadway widening would lead to increased vehicle speeds and that increased vehicle speeds would reduce safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians using the canyon.</p>	<p>Mill Creek Canyon Road is in mountainous terrain with a functional classification of “Rural Local Road”. The existing posted speed of the Mill Creek Canyon corridor is 30 miles per hour and a design speed of 30 miles per hour was used for the project.</p> <p>The speed limit in the canyon would not increase as part of this project. Lane widths in the upper and lower portions of the project area would be made more consistent (10 feet throughout most of the project area, as described in Section 2.2.1 of the EA), which would increase the predictability and safety for all users.</p>

Table 1. Common Public Concerns

ID	Concern Summary	FHWA-CFLHD Response
		<p>Many portions of the roadway already meet the design widths and would not be widened. The design lane width was intentionally kept narrow to preserve the character of the canyon, reduce environmental impacts, and discourage excessive speeds while meeting project objectives.</p> <p>The proposed improvements are designed to increase the consistency, predictability, and safety of traffic flow while limiting vehicle speeds and associated noise levels. The safety benefits associated with consistent lane width, increased sight distance, constant radius curves, and consistent striping are predicted to outweigh the expected nominal increase in average vehicle speed.</p>
E	<p>Curve Improvements: A few commenters were concerned that the proposed curve improvements would result in a significantly straighter road that would change the character of the canyon and encourage motorists to exceed the speed limit.</p>	<p>Visual character of the canyon was considered in section 3.2.5 of the EA which identified that while there would be visual changes associated with the proposed action, the anticipated visual impacts would be consistent with the landscape character and Scenic Integrity Objectives.</p>
F	<p>Traffic Congestion: Some commenters questioned the ability of the Proposed Action to decrease congestion. This seemed to be largely based on two related assumptions: (1) that traffic congestion is solely a function of the number of vehicles traveling through the canyon, and (2) that the Proposed Action would dramatically increase the number of vehicles on the roadway in upper Mill Creek Canyon.</p>	<p>As identified in the Purpose and Need in the EA Section 1.2, current traffic congestion is caused primarily where the roadway width is inadequate for oncoming vehicles to pass each other. Vehicles must pull over and stop to allow others to pass.</p> <p>The Proposed Action would reduce congestion by establishing two full travel lanes throughout the upper canyon, and informal parking areas would be removed or formalized. Some congestion would inevitably remain due to traffic volumes and the popular nature of the upper canyon, but this would be reduced with a roadway that facilitates consistent travel in both directions.</p>
G	<p>Aquatic Impacts: A few commenters expressed concerns related to aquatic resources. General concerns included impacts to water quality. More specific concerns included impacts to Thousand Springs and the Beaver Pond.</p>	<p>The Proposed Action would not involve rerouting Mill Creek and it would not impact Thousand Springs or the Beaver Pond. Section 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 of the EA analyzed potential affects to aquatic wildlife and water resources.</p> <p>Section 5.2 of the EA identified permits that would be received prior to construction including but not limited to state and federal water quality permits. In addition, as identified in Section 5.3 of the EA, the construction contractor would be required to implement standard best management practices and project-specific mitigation measures to limit short-term impacts on water quality associated with construction.</p>
H	<p>Environmental Damage: Some commenters expressed general concerns about environmental damage associated with the Proposed Action. These tended to be oriented around a loss of natural</p>	<p>Some relatively small areas that have not been recently disturbed would be developed as part of this project (see response to Common Public Concern J). These areas were designed to balance the need to limit environmental impacts while meeting the project's purpose and need.</p>

Table 1. Common Public Concerns

ID	Concern Summary	FHWA-CFLHD Response
	<p>area and corresponding increase in developed area.</p>	<p>As identified in Sections 1.1 and 1.2 of the EA, environmental damage is currently occurring, largely due to informal parking and poor drainage infrastructure throughout the project area. Potential effects to resources were considered throughout the EA which determined the Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse effects. In addition, standard best management practices and project-specific mitigation measures would be adhered to limit environmental impacts.</p>
I	<p>Roadside Vegetation: Some commenters expressed their desire to maintain the tree canopy effect over the roadway, which contributes to the character and feel of the canyon. Others expressed their desire to retain large trees that exist adjacent to the roadway.</p>	<p>Section 3.2.2 of the EA identifies that large trees would only be removed where necessary for construction, selective tree removal would be used in certain areas to protect larger trees even when they are located within the clearing limits, and clumps of trees would be protected where feasible.</p> <p>Potential effects to scenic character were analyzed in Section 3.2.5 of the EA. As analyzed in Section 5.1 of the EA, the Forest Service has ongoing and proposed fuels treatments that overlap portions of the project area, as well as adjacent areas, that are designed to reduce the risk of wildfires and promote the resilience of stands to insects and disease.</p> <p>These ongoing and proposed fuels treatments may also contribute to the loss of vegetation along Mill Creek Canyon Road.</p>
J	<p>Trailhead Development Impacts: Some commenters expressed a generic concern over the environmental impacts associated with the expansion of formalized parking areas at trailheads. These concerns also related to perceived changes to the character of the canyon.</p>	<p>The total additional size of parking areas would be 0.88 acres (0.08 acre at Winter Gate, -0.02 acre at White Bridge, 0.21 acre at new Elbow Fork, 0.13 acre at Alexander Basin, and 0.48 acre at Upper Big Water), much of which would be offset by closing and revegetating informal parking areas.</p> <p>This is equivalent to about 1% of the project area and a much smaller percentage of the canyon. Parking area expansions would facilitate the removal of informal roadside parking and concentrate use on durable surfaces that are designed to accommodate current use levels, which would help protect the surrounding area.</p> <p>Stormwater management improvements would further reduce the environmental impacts associated with trailhead and parking areas compared to existing conditions. Many of these changes are also a result of increasing the safety of trailhead parking area ingress/egress, one of many considerations that were balanced with other desired outcomes.</p> <p>In summary, the proposed trailhead parking area improvements are expected to reduce long-term environmental impacts while improving public safety.</p>

Table 1. Common Public Concerns

ID	Concern Summary	FHWA-CFLHD Response
K	<p>Preservation: Several commenters expressed their desire to prioritize the preservation of the canyon over the Proposed Action, often requesting that no improvements be made. Some individuals requested that things be left the way they are and that the Winter Gate be permanently closed (see Common Public Concern A). Some commenters thought that a goal of the project was to increase recreational use of the area.</p>	<p>Potential effects to resources are analyzed in Section 3.2 of the EA.</p> <p>The upper canyon is a heavily used recreation area and is likely to continue to be so. Use is expected to increase in proportion to the surrounding metropolitan area's population, with or without these improvements.</p> <p>Forest Service management classifications for the project area and surrounding lands are described in Section 1.4 and Section 3.2.1 of the EA. The 2003 Wasatch-Cache Revised Forest Plan (Forest Service 2003) as amended indicates that the project area is to be managed for developed recreation, providing access to areas with more primitive management designations.</p> <p>We recognize that some people would like to see the upper canyon closed to motor vehicles; however, this is inconsistent with the Forest Service management direction in this part of the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Changing these management priorities is beyond the scope of this project.</p>
L	<p>Trail Closures: Some commenters were concerned about trail closures adjacent to the project area and seemed to conflate the closure of the roadway with the closure of the adjacent trails. Some comments were specific to the Upper Pipeline Trail, Old Red Pine Road Trail, and Little Water Trail.</p>	<p>Most trails would remain open during construction (See Figure 9 of the EA). The Upper Pipeline Trail, specifically, would not be closed. (See Figure 9 on page 16 and narrative on page 24 of the EA).</p> <p>Aside from short periods where small sections of trail would be actively modified, it would be possible to ride the Wasatch Crest Trail and connect all the way down to lower Mill Creek Canyon.</p> <p>Trail users could set up a shuttle to/from any point below the project area in the lower canyon. We have discussed requests to open the portions of Old Red Pine Road Trail and Little Water Trail currently marked for closure on Figure 9 with project partners and will continue to seek opportunities to keep as many trails open during construction as possible.</p>
M	<p>Public Access During Construction: A few individuals questioned the need to close the canyon during construction, requesting that the construction request for proposal (RFP) include a provision to maintain public access to Upper Big Water Trailhead for the duration of construction.</p>	<p>We are aware that the public access closure associated with the proposed project would inconvenience many individuals. The design team considered alternatives to a complete closure and found them to be infeasible for several reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large construction equipment needed for construction would block the narrow roadway during operation. • The contractor would need to use the roadway as a staging area for equipment and materials. • Culvert reconstruction and improvements would necessitate a complete closure. • Public safety concerns resulting from, but not limited to, users encountering excavation

Table 1. Common Public Concerns

ID	Concern Summary	FHWA-CFLHD Response
		<p>activities, tree removal operations, vehicles parked on the roadway, large equipment navigating the corridor, or a roadway impassable to passenger vehicles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining a single lane of access would slow construction and result in additional construction seasons and cost to complete the Proposed Action.
N	<p>Closure Overlap with City Creek Canyon: A few commenters expressed concern about the simultaneous closure of City Creek Canyon with this Proposed Action. Much of City Creek Canyon is scheduled to be closed through 2027 for water treatment plant upgrades.</p>	<p>We recognize that the construction closure of upper Mill Creek Canyon, as proposed, would coincide with part of the City Creek Canyon closure, as discussed in Section 5.1 of the EA. While the road through the upper canyon and adjacent trailheads and picnic areas would be closed, the lower canyon would remain open, as would most of the trails surrounding the project area.</p> <p>We understand that these closures, individually and collectively, may inconvenience some individuals, and we regret that this is necessary to complete the proposed improvements.</p>
O	<p>Retaining Walls: A few commenters expressed general concerns about the visual impacts associated with the planned retaining walls.</p>	<p>We recognize that some members of the public would prefer not to see retaining walls in the upper canyon, regardless of their appearance.</p> <p>Retaining walls are only planned where necessary to reduce the need for large cut- and fill-slopes and keep the overall project footprint as small as possible, to limit environmental impacts.</p> <p>Visual character of the canyon was considered in Section 3.2.5 of the EA which identified that while there would be visual changes associated with the proposed action, the anticipated visual impacts would be consistent with the landscape character and Scenic Integrity Objectives.</p> <p>The design also reduces the visual impacts of retaining walls. Rocks for rockery walls would be selected to be visually similar to those existing in the canyon, and the soil nail wall facing would be colored and sculpted to mimic rock outcrops in the area.</p>
P	<p>Firs Cabins: Firs Cabin owners expressed a variety of concerns related to cabin access during construction. We received requests to maintain one-way vehicle access for cabin owners, provide access on holidays, and waive fees and taxes associated with cabin ownership. These are all concerns previously expressed during public comment periods.</p>	<p>We recognize that cabin owners have unique needs related to this project and have attempted to balance those needs with those of other users.</p> <p>As a result of previous requests for holiday access, the construction contractor would be required to provide cabin owners with access during four holiday weekends as described in Section 2.2.6 of the EA.</p> <p>The nature of this road reconstruction project, with work at multiple bridges/culverts and only one ingress/egress route, makes it impractical to open the roadway for more than what is described in Section 2.2.6 of the EA.</p>

Table 1. Common Public Concerns

ID	Concern Summary	FHWA-CFLHD Response
		<p>Maintaining a single lane of access would slow construction and result in additional construction seasons and cost to complete the Proposed Action (see Common Public Concern M).</p> <p>Requests to waive taxes and lease fees for the cabins during the construction period have been relayed to the appropriate jurisdictional agencies. As described on page 24 of the EA, the Forest Service anticipates discounting lease fees during this period. Salt Lake County does not plan to waive or discount property taxes.</p>
Q	<p>Cell Service: Some commenters expressed their desire for cell service to be added to upper Mill Creek Canyon as part of this project. One commenter thought that adding cell service was part of the project and requested that it be removed.</p>	<p>Adding cell service to the canyon is not included in the Proposed Action. We recognize that many people would like cell service throughout upper Mill Creek Canyon. However, the installation of cell towers is beyond the scope of this roadway improvement project and beyond the purview of FHWA-CFLHD.</p> <p>As described in Section 2.2.5 of the EA, the Proposed Action includes the installation of underground conduits to facilitate future potential communication system(s) in the canyon.</p>
R	<p>Bike Racks: A few commenters suggested that recreation area improvements include bicycle racks to encourage the use of bicycles to access picnic areas and hiking trails.</p>	<p>Thank you for this suggestion. We will look for opportunities as the design progresses to include bike racks at trailheads and picnic areas.</p>

FHWA-CFLHD has concluded consultation with the Utah State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act with execution of a memorandum of agreement between FHWA-CFLHD, the SHPO, and the USFS to resolve adverse effects associated with the removal of White Bridge, a historic property and contributing feature to the Mill Creek Canyon Road historic property. Further coordination between the signatories on the agreement will continue until all agreed-to stipulations have been satisfied. This consultation also supported FHWA-CFLHD’s evaluation of use of historic properties under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, now codified in 49 U.S.C. §303 and 23 U.S.C. §138.

FHWA-CFLHD is posting a notice in the Federal Register announcing its decision described herein, which will invoke a 150-day limitations on claims period in accordance with FHWA regulations (23 USC §139(1)(1)).

Selected Alternative

FHWA-CFLHD analyzed the environmental consequences of implementing the No Action alternative and one Action Alternative (Proposed Action) in the EA. The Proposed Action is being selected for implementation because it was determined to best meet the purpose of and need for the project and will have no significant impact on the human or natural environment, with implementation of mitigation measures.

Changes or Corrections to the Environmental Assessment

The following changes and/or revisions have occurred since the release of the EA on March 6, 2024.

- **Section 4(f):** Two trails, Old Red Pine Road Trail and Little Water Trail, were described as being under USFS management in the EA. This is incorrect as the portions of these trails within the project area are on land owned by Salt Lake County. Therefore, Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation Department manages these trail segments. FHWA-CFLHD notified Salt Lake County on May 8, 2024, of its determination of use of recreation resources that fall under county jurisdiction and are considered Section 4(f) properties. Salt Lake County concurred with the determinations by signing FHWA-CFLHD's letter on May 9, 2024.

FHWA-CFLHD notified the USFS on April 10, 2024, of its determination of use of recreation resources that fall under the USFS' jurisdiction and are considered Section 4(f) properties. The USFS concurred with the determinations by signing FHWA-CFLHD's letter on April 12, 2024. Agency correspondence is included in Appendix C.

The draft individual Section 4(f) evaluation was included in the EA in accordance with 23 C.F.R. §774.7(f). FHWA-CFLHD provided the EA specifically to the SHPO and the Department of Interior for a 45-day review and comment period on March 12, 2024, per 23 C.F.R. §774.5(a). No comments were received from the public or other agencies that altered the findings of the draft Section 4(f) evaluation. Therefore, based upon the above considerations, FHWA-CFLHD, in accordance with 23 C.F.R. §774.3, has determined that no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from the historic White Bridge and Mill Creek Canyon Road exists, and the Proposed Action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the historic properties resulting from such use.

Mitigation Measures

FHWA-CFLHD is responsible for implementing appropriate mitigation measures as listed below to reduce or alleviate adverse impacts associated with the Proposed Action. The measures listed below have been identified based on specific impacts described in the EA.

Vegetation Mitigation Measures

VEG-1. FHWA-CFLHD will coordinate with USFS to create a restoration plan for riparian areas based on the USFS-provided riparian management objectives. Examples of what could be included in this plan consist of the following:

- Minimize loss of stream shading by incorporating woody vegetation plantings like willows or other species in temporarily disturbed areas along Mill Creek.
- Minimize erosion and sedimentation through the use of BMPs.
- Obtain USFS approval of the Storm Water Pollution Protection Plan prior to construction.
- Restoring contours or banks that have been temporarily disturbed.

- Coordination with USFS regarding post-planting monitoring and remediation as necessary.
- Control for noxious and invasive plant species during construction.
- Obtain USFS approval of seed mix.

VEG-2. Flag or clearly mark the construction limits in the following locations prior to construction activities in the area and assess the ability to protect the plants:

- On the south side of Mill Creek Road at the location of the known population of Wasatch fitweed to avoid inadvertent disturbance outside the construction limits (approximated between Project Station 195+00 and 197+00).
- At the two known occurrences of sand fleabane area (around Project Station 33+15 and Station 73+00).
- Notify USFS prior to ground disturbance in these areas.

VEG-3. FHWA-CFLHD will control for invasive plant species during construction to minimize the introduction and spread of invasive species within the project area. Examples of treatment could include the following:

- Leave natural vegetation buffers in place where possible.
- Avoid walking through or placing equipment, materials, or supplies in areas that are infested by noxious and invasive weeds.
- All equipment should be cleaned and free of vegetation, soil, and debris prior to beginning work on USFS land.
- Native seed mix used will be approved by the USFS botanist and certified weed-free for revegetation of areas of ground disturbance where reseeding is necessary. Reseed as soon as practical.
- Noxious and invasive weeds, including cheatgrass, should not be increased due to project work activities within the project area.

Wildlife Mitigation Measures

WL-1. Schedule vegetation removal outside of the nesting season (May 1 through August 15) if possible. Conduct preconstruction surveys for active migratory bird nests if vegetation removal will occur between May 1 through August 15. Establish no-disturbance buffers, in coordination with USFS, around active nest sites and monitor the nest activity.

WL-2. FHWA-CFLHD will avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to cutthroat trout through the following measures:

- Preclude work that results in direct disturbance to Mill Creek or creates increased sediment inputs or sediment loading to Mill Creek or its tributaries from May 1 to July 15.
- Implement BMPs when working in live water to minimize sediment transport.
- Dewater at select locations to eliminate downstream transport of sediment plumes.

- Equip dewatering pumps with intake screens to prevent impact to aquatic species.
- Relocate any fish remaining in dewatered areas to the adjacent creek.

Archeology Mitigation Measures

ARCH-1. FHWA-CFLHD will include notes or callouts on the design plans at the locations of the rock walls associated with the Mill Creek hydroelectric system, Firs Bridges 1 and 2, and Stone Bridges 2 and 3 to ensure no disturbance or damage to the structures/features occurs during construction. The construction contractor will not modify the structures/features, and if inadvertent damage occurs, the contractor will notify FHWA-CFLHD immediately and coordinate on a plan to repair the damage. FHWA-CFLHD may also need to consult with the USFS and Utah SHPO in the event of damage.

ARCH-2. FHWA-CFLHD executed a MOA with the USFS and Utah SHPO to resolve adverse effects related to Mill Creek Canyon Road and White Bridge. The MOA was finalized on February 16, 2024, and will be implemented before initiation of construction activities or as part of construction, depending on the measure. Specific measures included in the MOA are:

- FHWA-CFLHD will retain a qualified historian to prepare Historic American Engineering Record Level II documentation of the White Bridge culvert and associated features, which will be submitted to the USFS and Utah SHPO for review and filing.
- FHWA-CFLHD will design an interpretive sign that documents photos of the historic culvert, its importance to the transportation history of the area, and the historic uses of the road. The construction contractor will install the sign at the picnic area near White Bridge or another approved location in coordination with the USFS.
- FHWA-CFLHD will assess the ability to preserve a section of the historic railing at White Bridge and display it at a nearby trailhead or with the interpretive sign or possibly incorporate it into nearby trail or trailhead improvements (assuming the railing can be successfully detached and relocated without further damage). The design plan will depict the specific details of the preservation approach and location if this measure is deemed feasible. The construction contractor will be responsible for removing the railing and placing it where shown in the design plans.

Historical Architecture Mitigation Measures

HIST-1. FHWA-CFLHD will require its construction contractor to retain a Secretary of Interior-qualified architectural historian and a qualified stone mason to oversee reconstruction of the parapet walls associated with Stone Bridge 1 and to prepare and submit a wall reconstruction plan for the work. The plan will include pre- and post-work photographs, identification of the in-kind materials (e.g., stones, mortar) to be used to match the historic materials where existing materials must be replaced, an approach to track stones being removed and replaced to ensure their placement matches the current style and configuration, and other appropriate measures to avoid loss of historic integrity of the walls and existing stones. FHWA-CFLHD will coordinate with the USFS and Utah SHPO on their review of the plan to ensure the bridge is not adversely affected.

Appendix A
Public Involvement

Public Open House #1

FLAP-Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project

Public Open House #1 | November 9, 2021 | 4:30 PM to 7:00 PM | Millcreek City Hall

WELCOME

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US



PROJECT PARTNERS AND FLAP

Project Partners

- + Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD)
- + Salt Lake County
- + Millcreek
- + US Forest Service (USFS), Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest

Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)

- + Improve transportation facilities owned or maintained by a non-federal agency providing access to, adjacent to, or location within federal lands (typically national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, BLM lands, BOR lands, or USACE lands)
- + Improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within federal lands
- + Emphasis on high-use federal recreation sites and federal economic generators
- + Supplements State and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities
- + Thirteen (13) FLAP projects have been completed or are in progress in Utah
- + Federal and local match: costs are split between federal and local project partners

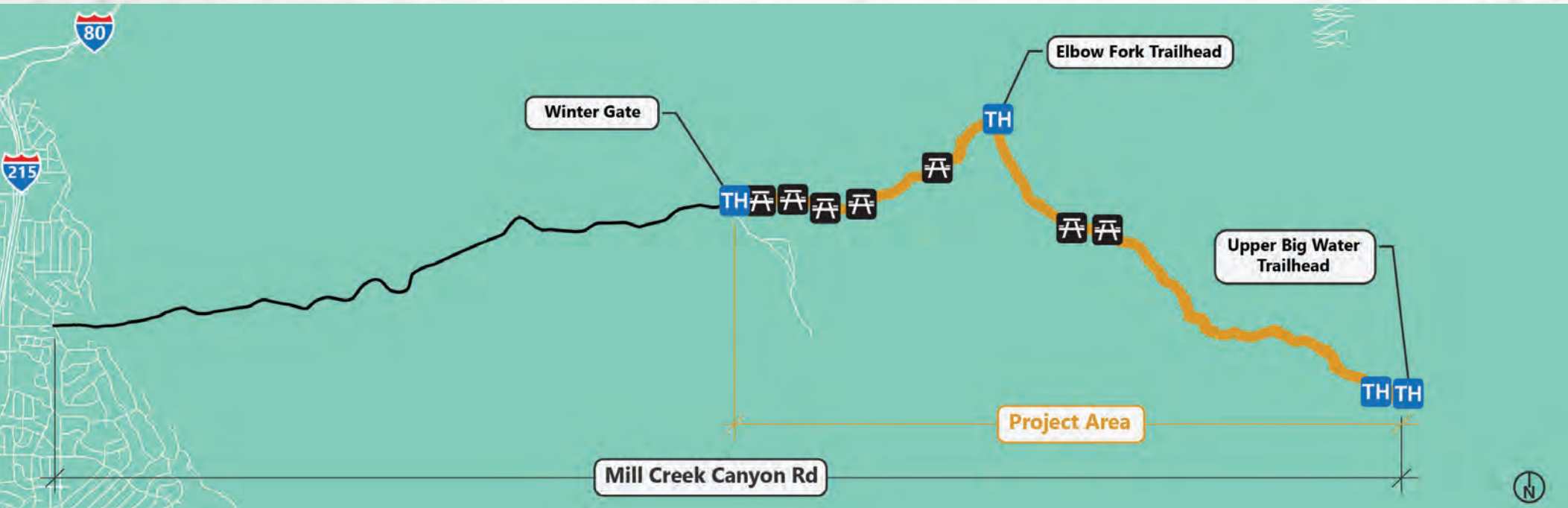
PROJECT OVERVIEW AND ESTIMATED COST

Major Project Elements

- + Reconstruct 4.5 miles of Mill Creek Canyon Road
- + Picnic area and trailhead parking improvements
- + Bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements
- + Drainage and watershed improvements

Project Funding

- + FLAP Contribution: \$15.4M
- + Local Contribution: \$4.2M
- + Total: \$19.6M



PURPOSE AND NEED

The **purpose of the project** is to enhance access to the recreation opportunities along Mill Creek Canyon Road in the Uinta-Cache-Wasatch National Forest.

Project needs include:

- + Inconsistent roadway width (single lane in some areas)
- + Roadway safety concerns, including inadequate sight distance, tight curves, and steep grades
- + Traffic congestion at the Upper Big Water Trailhead
- + Structures nearing the end of their service life
- + Inadequate directional signage
- + Lack of crosswalks at trailheads
- + Bicyclist safety



WHAT IS NEPA?

WHAT RESOURCES ARE CONSIDERED?

- + The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions.
- + Requires agency and public participation
- + Requires disclosure about the action, alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation
- + FHWA-CFLHD is completing a documented categorical exclusion in accordance with Title 23 CFR § 771.117

Resources Considered

- + Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- + Air Quality
- + Cultural
- + Cumulative Impacts
- + Environmental Justice
- + Farmlands
- + Floodplains
- + Geologic Resources and Soils
- + Hazardous Materials/Waste
- + Land Use and Planning
- + Noise
- + Paleontological
- + Parks/Recreational
- + Right-of-Way
- + Section 6(f)
- + Section 4(f)
- + Social Resources
- + Threatened/ Endangered Species (MBTA)
- + Transportation
- + Utilities
- + Vegetation and Noxious Weeds
- + Visual Resources/Aesthetics
- + Water Quality
- + Wetlands and Other Waters of the US
- + Wildlife (terrestrial and aquatic)

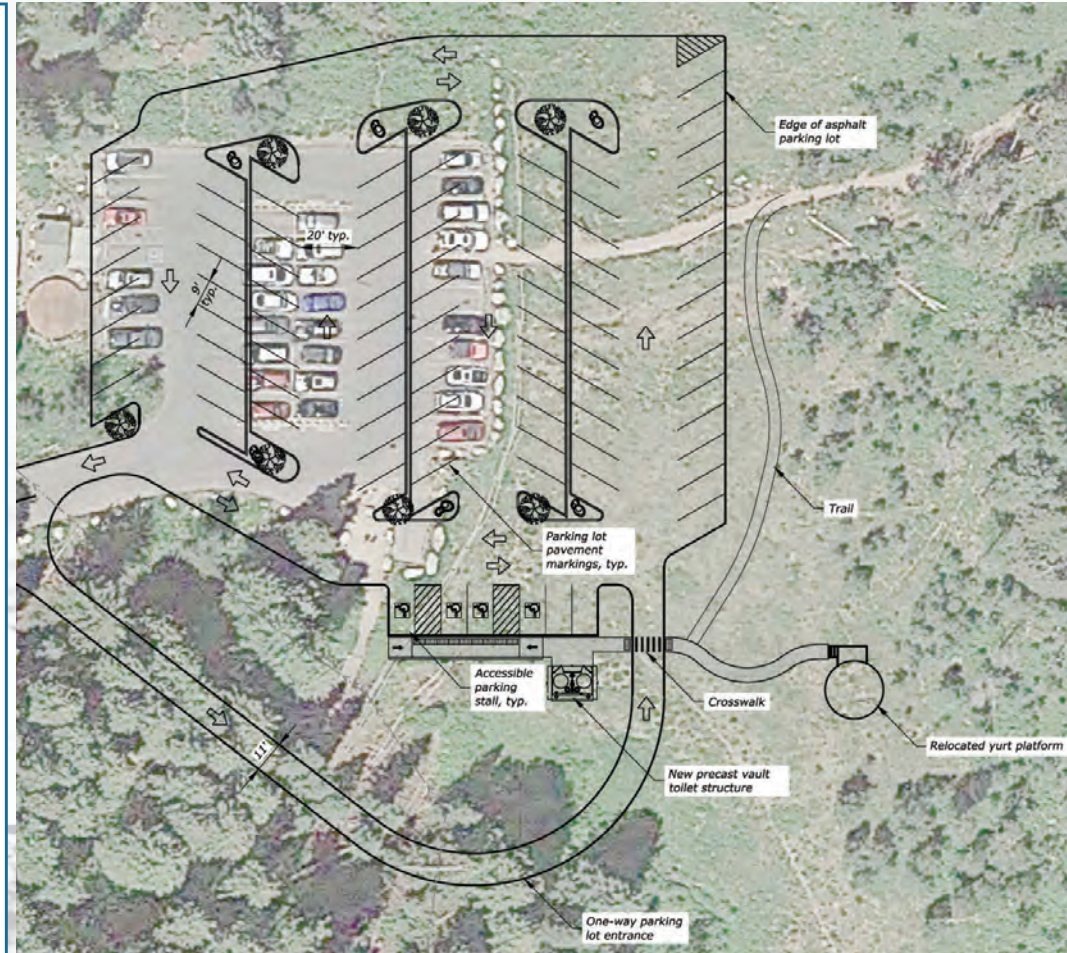
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

+ Reconstruct Mill Creek Canyon Road

- Big Water Trailhead to Elbow Fork (3.1 miles) with a 24-foot paved surface
- Elbow Fork to Winter Gate (1.4 miles) with 29-foot paved surface

+ Formalize picnic area parking and trailhead areas. May include:

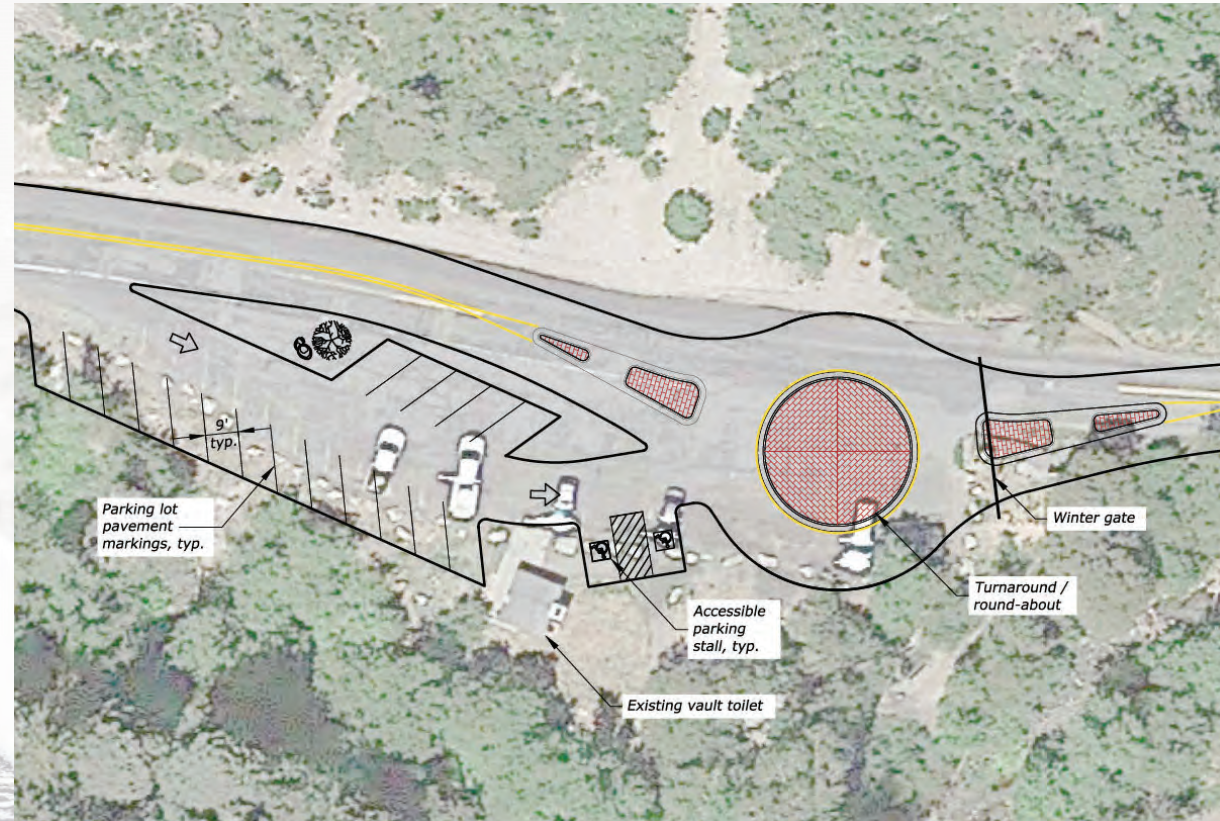
- Big Water Trailhead
- Alexander Basin Trailhead
- Clover Springs Picnic Area
- Fir Crest Picnic Area
- Elbow Fork Trailhead
- Winter Gate Parking/Trailhead



Conceptual design at the Upper Big Water Trailhead. The design is subject to refinement and change during project development.

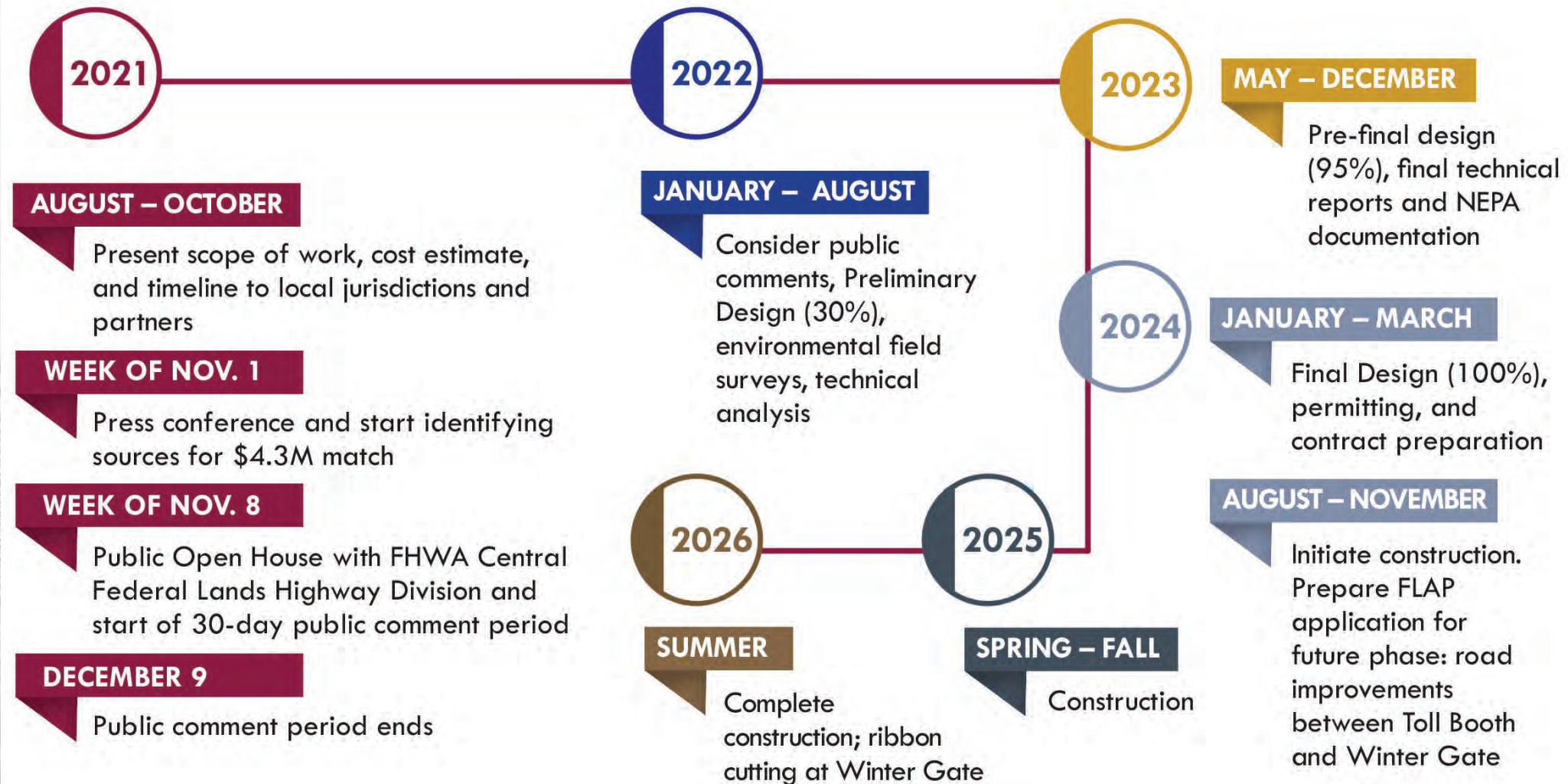
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- + **Implement roadway safety and pedestrian crossing safety measures:** Improvements could include signing, striping, and installing guardrails at appropriate locations.
- + **Improve bicyclist safety:** An uphill climbing lane will be added between Winter Gate and Elbow Fork.
- + **Improve roadway drainage and snow storage:** Recently installed box culverts will be extended and headwalls and wingwalls added to improve roadway safety. The parking lot improvements will better accommodate snow storage and plow operations.
- + **Realign roadway and improve watershed functioning at Thousand Springs:** The road through this section will be widened and the streambed channel will be realigned to address safety issues.
- + **Install a 2-inch diameter conduit:** This will allow for future improvements for emergency communication and future traffic monitoring.



Conceptual design at the Winter Gate. The design is subject to refinement and change during project development.

SCHEDULE



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

We Want to Hear from You

Please provide comments by December 10, 2021. Your comments will be considered throughout project development and help guide design decisions.

- + What are your questions, concerns, and comments about the project?
- + Are you aware of sensitive resources that may be affected by the project?
- + Are you aware of individuals, groups, or organizations who should know about the project?

Stay Engaged, Ask Questions, and Provide Input

- + **Project website:** <https://slco.org/millcreekcanyon>
- + **Questions/Comments:**
 - Email: millcreekroad@slco.org
 - USPS Mail: Salt Lake County Regional Development, c/o Helen Peters, 2001 S. State Street S2-100, PO Box 144575, Salt Lake City, UT 84114
- + **Public meeting:** The preliminary (30%) design will be presented at a public meeting in spring 2022.

Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements

Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in coordination with the USDA Forest Service, Salt Lake County, and Millcreek, is proposing improvements to Mill Creek Canyon Road. The Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements project begins at the Winter Gate and proceeds east 4.5 miles, passing Elbow Fork, and ending at the Upper Big Water Trailhead.

Public Outreach and Comments Received

Salt Lake County and Millcreek published and distributed two flyers and held a press conference, on November 3, 2021, to broaden awareness of the project.

The project team hosted an open house on November 9, 2021, to present a project overview, share conceptual designs, and gather input from the public. Notice for the public open house was provided via social media, local news media, and the Salt Lake County project website. The open house had over 100 attendees and was followed by a 30-day comment period. Approximately 340 comments were received. This included comments submitted at the open house and online during the comment period.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the comments received. The comments illustrated the importance of Mill Creek Canyon as a community resource, whether for its natural environment or the recreation opportunity it provides. Generally, the comments fell into one or more of the following major themes:

- Resource protection
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety
- Increased speeds
- Parking
- Design element considerations
- Shuttle system or other mass transit option
- Level of environmental review
- Fire cabin owner concerns
- Section 4(f) evaluation

The intent of the early public engagement was to hear what the public may be concerned about relating to this project and allow the project team to address those concerns through the preliminary engineering and environmental review processes, to the extent practicable. As described below in responses to the key comments, the project team will consider the public input to design the project in a way that provides the best balance across different, and often competing, interests. FHWA-CFLHD will also address resource concerns through its environmental process.

Design Considerations

The existing road width varies throughout the canyon and the road tends to narrow as one drives up the canyon. The project team took measurements throughout the project area and confirmed that the width of the road changes above and below Elbow Fork, as follows.

- **Winter Gate to Elbow Fork:** the roadway width varies from 18.5 to 25.5 feet, and averages approximately 22 feet.
 - **Elbow Fork to Upper Big Water Trailhead:** the roadway width varies from 11 feet at its narrowest to 23 feet, and averages approximately 17 feet.
-

To balance different uses and concerns along the road, the project design team is considering different roadway widths and lane configurations as part of the preliminary design. A narrower roadway width typically results in less physical impact to the surrounding environment. However, that comes with tradeoffs for the amount of space provided for cyclists and drivers.

The primary roadway widths being considered range from 20 to 26 feet wide and include a variety of lane configurations. Widths up to 30-feet have been considered, but these result in the highest costs and impacts, and have numerous construction challenges. Examples of potential lane configurations include the following:

- A 26-foot wide road, with two 10-foot lanes, a 5-foot climbing lane for bicycles, and a 1-foot shoulder on the downhill side. This provides the maximum amount of space for cyclists and drivers, but also has higher costs and higher impacts.
- A 24-foot wide road, with two 10-foot lanes, a 3-foot climbing lane for bicycles, and a 1-foot shoulder on the downhill side. This maintains a climbing lane for cyclists, albeit narrower, and has a smaller footprint.
- A 20-foot wide road, with 10-foot lanes and no shoulders. This has the smallest footprint and lowest cost, but also results in drivers and cyclists sharing space. This could be used in select locations where unique resources or physical constraints, such as adjacent hillsides, are present.

None of the examples above have been selected, and additional options are being studied during preliminary engineering. The intent is find solutions that balance the interest of various user groups and environmental impacts, while addressing the transportation needs. The environmental review process will be used to help determine the most context-sensitive design solution

Responses to Comments

A summary of comments and responses is included in the table below.

Comment Summary, and Response
Resource Protection
<p>Comment Summary: The beauty of Mill Creek Canyon and its natural and cultural resources should be protected.</p> <p>Response: The project design team is considering concepts that include both different roadway widths and different lane configurations. As the canyon increases in elevation, it becomes narrower, so there are also different options being explored between Winter Gate to Elbow Fork and Elbow Fork to Upper Big Water Trailhead. A narrower roadway width typically results in less physical impact to the surrounding environment. However, each project element can create both positive and negative impacts. For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retaining walls reduce the physical footprint of the project, but have a high cost and result in visual impacts. • Drainage ditches and curbs create a wider road, but reduce erosion by directing water to specific locations. <p>The goal of the project is to develop a solution that strikes a balance between improving access and safety while minimizing environmental impacts. More information on these concepts will be presented at the next public open house.</p>
Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety
<p>Comment Summary: Bicycle and pedestrian safety is important because of the number of people walking or riding across or along Mill Creek Canyon road.</p> <p>Response: As stated above, the project design team is analyzing multiple concepts that include both different roadway widths and lane configurations. A wider roadway allows more space for driver and cyclists, however it can also result in greater environmental impacts. Multiple concepts are being developed to find a balance between drivers and cyclists and environmental impacts. Other safety considerations beyond roadway width and bicycle lanes include eliminating informal parking areas and installing signing and striping.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of informal roadside parking areas (described below) will keep vehicles from parking on the shoulder. These cars often encroach into the road, making it even narrower, and can create unsafe conditions for cyclists.

- Crosswalks could be striped, flashing signs could be installed in high traffic areas, and informational and warning signs could be placed in areas where drivers, pedestrians, and cyclist may be present, such as trailheads and sharp curves with limited sight distance.

Additional information on these concepts and potential impacts will be presented at the next public open house.

Parking

Comment Summary: A change in parking management is required to improve safety and reduce impacts to natural resources without increasing the overall parking capacity in the Canyon.

Response: The project team is considering options to eliminate existing informal roadside parking areas and generally maintain the current overall parking capacity by increasing parking capacity at existing trail heads.

Increasing parking capacity is not a project objective. The intent of the project relative to parking is to approximately maintain the current overall parking capacity in the Canyon. Informal roadside parking presents a safety hazard to pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles in the travel lanes. Additionally, informal roadside parking tends to encroach on and damage vegetation, causes erosion, and typically results in other impacts to natural resources, including water quality. Informal parking areas also typically lead to informal user-created or “spider” trails, as visitors hike to their destination from their parked vehicle.

- Elimination of informal roadside parking areas will keep vehicles from parking on the shoulder. These cars often encroach into the road, making it even narrower, and can create unsafe conditions for cyclists.
- Moving existing informal parking capacity to redesigned, formal parking areas such as the Big Water Trailhead will concentrate parked vehicles in areas designed to manage and minimize parking related impacts to natural resources through hardened surfaces, proper drainage, and other best management practices.
- Concentrating parked vehicles in specified areas will also reduce human impacts, including informal trails, by allowing visitors to park in areas with direct access to formal Forest Service System trails and restrooms.

More information on proposed parking changes will be presented at the next public open house.

Section 4(f) Evaluations

Comment Summary: Mill Creek Canyon, particularly the entire upper canyon (above the winter gate) should qualify as a Section 4(f) Property in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Department of Transportation Act of 1966.

FHWA-CFLHD will be reviewing the project under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act during the environmental review process. This review consists of identifying Section 4(f) properties and resources in coordination with the official or agency with jurisdiction, which would be the USDA Forest Service for recreation-type resources and the Utah State Historic Preservation Office for historic-type resources. Once the locations and boundaries of Section 4(f) properties and resources have been determined, FHWA-CFLHD will assess use of those resources based on the proposed project design and document the findings, which may require additional agency and public coordination. The specific requirements for the Section 4(f) process have not been identified, as we are still very early in the process.

Increased Speeds

Comment Summary: Widening Mill Creek Canyon Road could lead to increased speeds.

Response: The project design team is analyzing multiple concept that include a narrower lane width than the 11-foot lanes shared at the public open house. There are tradeoffs however, as lanes continue to narrow there is increased potential for accidents, including head on collisions or vehicles running off the road. Drivers also anticipate a consistent lane width and by providing that the amount of weaving within the lane itself is reduced.

Mill Creek Canyon Road needs to be able allow for passage of emergency service vehicles. Per the United Fire Authority, their trucks measure 8.5 feet across the front bumper. The sideview mirrors extend an additional 6 inches on each side of the truck, for a total truck width of 9.5 feet. In the event of an emergency first responders need to be able to travel efficiently through the canyon, and in the case of a fire, while canyon users may be evacuating.

The project development process is meant to find the right balance between driver safety, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and accommodate emergency service providers.

Level of Environmental Review

Comment Summary: A greater degree of environmental analysis should be completed to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) than the proposed categorical exclusion.

Response: Under FHWA regulations, FHWA-CFLHD follows an environmental review process for all projects, regardless of the level of NEPA documentation or the class of action that is selected. This process can be very simple or more complex with public involvement and extensive analyses, depending on the project. For the proposed project, FHWA-CFLHD will be coordinating closely with the partner agencies throughout the process and will ensure the public is kept informed about the project at key milestones or stages in the process. In reviewing the comments received to date about the project, FHWA-CFLHD has re-evaluated the purpose and need and preliminary design features in an attempt to address public concerns about the proposed improvements. In addition, FHWA-CFLHD is conducting resource studies to better understand the environmental issues in the area, with background research and fieldwork for cultural and biological resources and other data gathering being conducted so far.

With additional information about the project being presented at the next public open house, FHWA-CFLHD anticipates considering additional public input at that time to determine the most appropriate class of action for the project.

Shuttle or Other Mass Transit Option

Comment Summary: Implement a shuttle system or other mass transit option to provide access while limiting the number of vehicles.

Response: Although beyond the scope of this project, a future shuttle will not be precluded by the proposed improvements. Some of the challenges and questions facing a shuttle system include the following:

- Which agency or municipality would own and operate the shuttle?
- How and who would pay for shuttle service? This include costs such as buying shuttles, building parking facilities, and paying shuttle drivers and mechanics.
- Where do shuttle users park? This parking would need to accommodate parked vehicles, shuttles, and likely restrooms. A shuttle starting at the Winter Gate would face similar challenges.

This road improvement project addresses the issues of a crumbling and narrow roadway. The project would upgrade the existing roadway, which would better support a future shuttle or transit option. In addition, parking improvements at Upper Big Water Trailhead and at the Winter Gate would be designed to facilitate future conversion to shuttle use by considering potential pick up/drop off locations and turnarounds.

Firs Cabin Owner Concerns

Comment Summary: Lease holders at the 24-cabin Firs tract expressed three primary concerns:

1. Access limitations during construction.
2. Ongoing financial obligations, such as taxes, resulting from cabin ownership and its burden while having only limited access to their cabins.
3. The importance of protecting cabins' water source during construction.

Response: FHWA-CFLHD is considering schedule constraints and restrictions that will become part of the construction contract and will attempt to balance delays and access concerns with all users of the Canyon. However, the Recreation Resident Special Use Permits do not require the Forest Service to provide motorized access for cabin owners in the Firs Cabins tract. The Forest Service has the right to limit access when necessary. This project is considered necessary to address safety and infrastructure needs. FHWA-CFLHD and the Forest Service will work together during construction to potentially provide access if feasible, safe, and if it doesn't delay construction activities.

During the environmental review process, FHWA-CFLHD will consider social and economic effects of the project, as well as other resource effects, such as ground water. The Forest Service can pro-rate or adjust the recreation resident special use permit fee, but does not have the jurisdiction or authority to waive or adjust county or state tax fees. FHWA-CLFHD is aware of the spring location that provides water to the cabins. Because it is located beyond the limits of construction, and on the opposite side of Mill Creek from the roadway, it is not anticipated to be affected by the project.

Specific Design Considerations

Comment Summary: Several substantive comments included recommendations relating to project design elements or alternative methodologies to address the project's purpose and need that may not have been previously considered.

Response: The project team is considering various design features and options to meet the project's purpose and need in light of the comments that have been provided. Some of these considerations are presented above and will be shared at the next public open house.

Future Opportunities to Provide Input

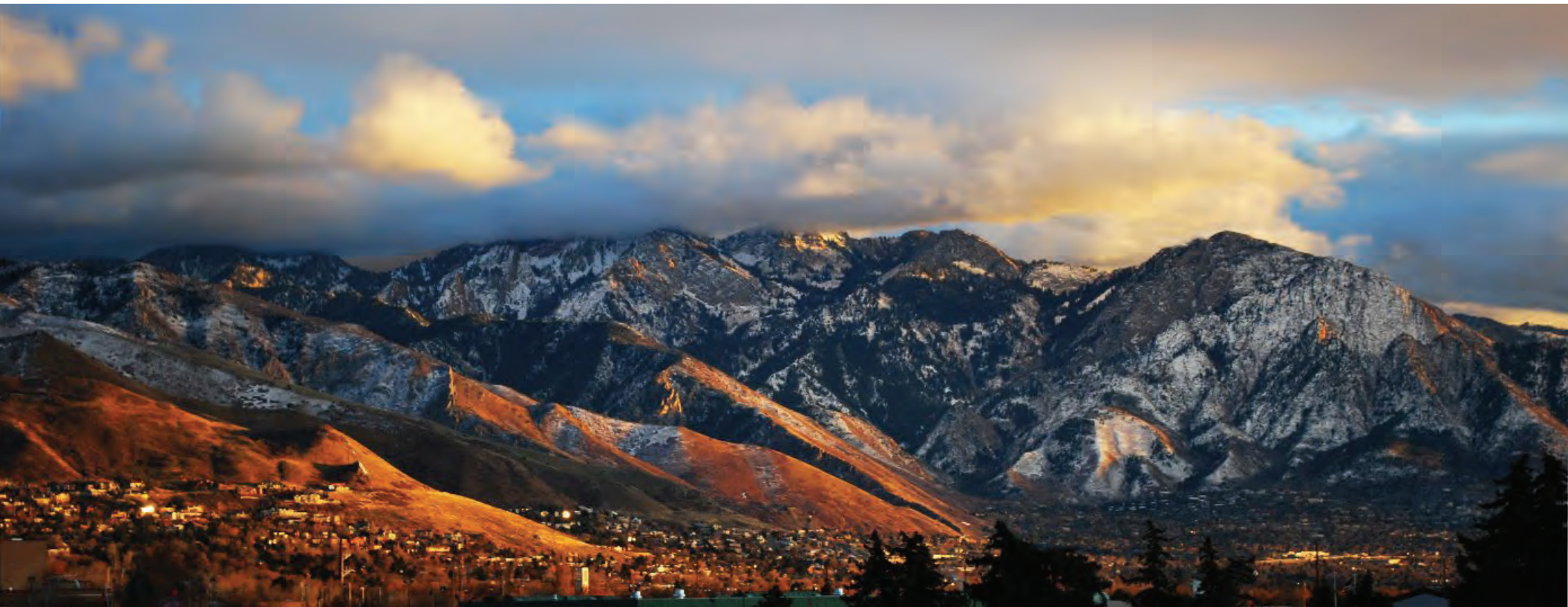
Another public open house will be held 4 –7 P.M., May 19, 2022, at the Millcreek City Hall, 3330 S 1300 E, Millcreek, UT 84106. This public open house will include:

- A presentation and question and answer session
- Descriptions and figures of concepts
- Summary of the environmental data gathered to date
- An opportunity to speak with project team members and provide additional input

The meeting will be advertised via social media, the project website (<https://slco.org/millcreekcanyon>) and emails sent to persons who have previously provided input.



Public Open House #2



Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project Public Meeting #2: Preliminary Design Update May 19, 2022



Purpose and Need

▪ Purpose

- The purpose of the project is to enhance access and safety for motorists and recreationists visiting upper Mill Creek Canyon Road

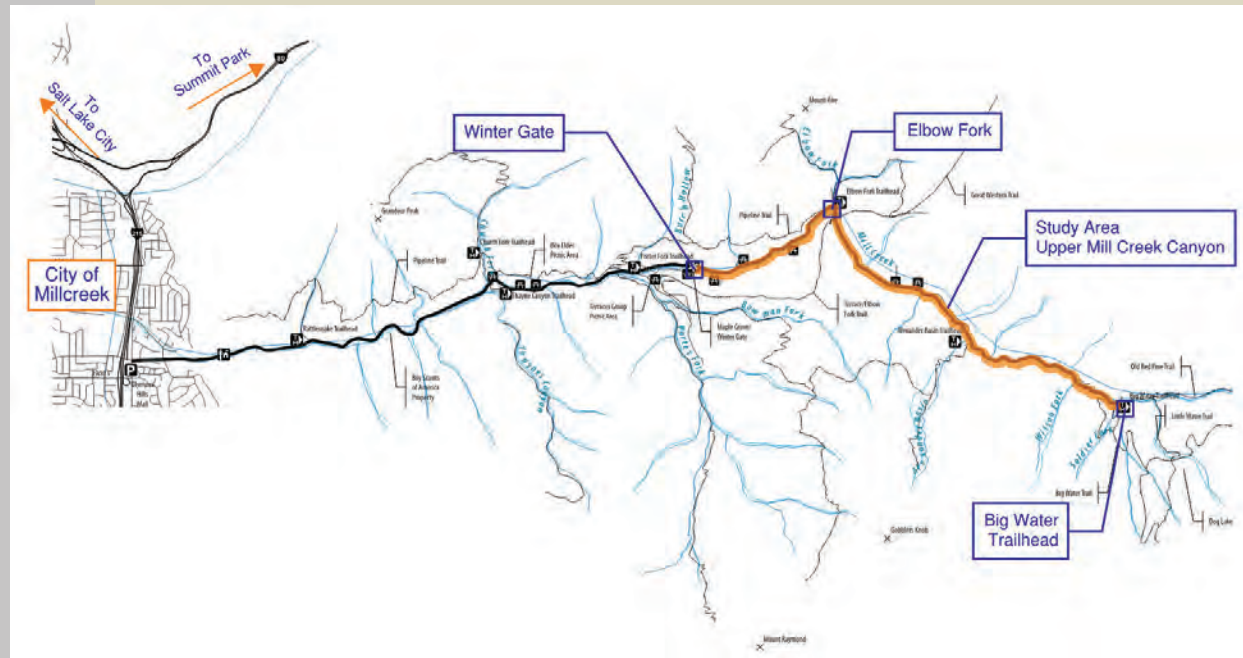
▪ Needs to Address

- Deteriorating road condition
- Variable road width
- Lack of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- Informal roadside parking resulting in safety concerns
- Stormwater drainage resulting in erosion

Project Overview

▪ Potential Project Elements

- Improvements to 4.5 miles of Mill Creek Canyon Road
- Formalize parking
- Modifications to the Winter Gate and Big Water trailheads/parking areas
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety infrastructure
- Stormwater drainage and watershed health



What Have We Done So Far

- Purpose and need
- Initial concept development
- Environmental data collection
- Public meeting #1 (November 2021)
- Begun preliminary design
- November 2021 Public Meeting Overview
 - Shared a conceptual design
 - Approximately 100 attendees
 - Over 300 comments received



Comments Received

- Major comment themes
 - Shuttle system/mass transit
 - Changes to Winter Gate operation
 - Parking
 - Environmental concerns
 - Firs cabin owners
 - Increased speeds
 - Bicycle safety



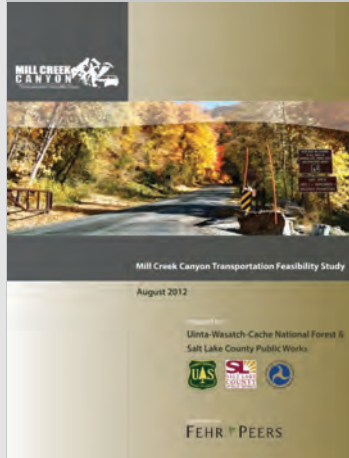
Shuttle System

What we heard

- A shuttle system should be implemented based on the 2012 transportation study

What we are doing

- Design choices will not preclude a future shuttle option
- The FLAP application was specific to addressing roadway issues
- A shuttle system is beyond the scope of this project



Access Past the Winter Gate

What we heard

- Will the upper canyon be open year-round
- Will access or management of users change

What we are doing

- This project will not affect how USFS and the County operate and/or maintain the upper portion of the canyon



Parking

What we heard

- Will there be more parking
- Will there be less parking

What we are doing

- Removing informal roadside parking
- Looking at opportunities at trailheads to reconfigure parking
- Approximately maintaining existing number of parking spaces available



Firs Cabin Owners

What we heard

- 24 cabins located in the canyon
- Access during construction
- Ongoing financial obligations

What we are doing

- USFS will coordinate with cabin owners
- Construction access is an ongoing consideration throughout project development



Increased Speeds

What we heard

- Wider roads results in higher speeds
- Higher speeds will endanger everyone

What we are doing

- No changes to the existing speed limit
- Minimal changes to existing curves
- Narrower lane widths



Environmental Impacts

What we heard

- Minimize impacts to natural resources, such as vegetation and the creek
- Minimize visual effects

What we are doing

- Conducting ongoing studies
- Using context sensitive solution design processes



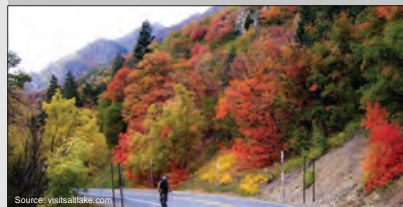
Bicycle Safety

What we heard

- There needs to be room for bikes
- The canyon is heavily used by the cycling community

What we are doing

- Looking at several design concepts that include bicycle facilities



Environmental Review

What we heard

- A Categorical Exclusion (CE) is inadequate
- The project requires an EA or an EIS

What we are doing

- FHWA is reviewing public input and resource information to determine the appropriate NEPA class of action



Environmental Review Process

▪ FHWA and NEPA

- FHWA is lead federal agency for project and follows its NEPA implementing regulations
- All FHWA-led projects follow the environmental review process, regardless of NEPA class of action
- FHWA CEs apply to many types of road projects
- Unusual circumstances are considered to determine if EA or EIS is appropriate
- Public input and resource impacts will be considered

▪ Next Steps

- Review public input from public meeting #2
- Conduct preliminary impact analyses based on design concepts and resource information
- FHWA to confirm appropriate NEPA class of action
- Continued coordination with USFS and other agencies
- Continued public involvement

Environmental Research Completed to Date

Aquatic resource delineation	Threatened and endangered species
Archeological survey	USFS sensitive species
Historic survey	Riparian habitat
Paleontological research	Noxious weeds
Section 4(f) resource inventory	Migratory birds and raptors

What is Considered During Preliminary Design

▪ Design Considerations

- Does it meet the purpose and need?
- Does it minimize environmental impacts?
- Does it enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety?
- Does it improve driver expectation?
- Can it be built?
- How much does it cost?

▪ Challenges in the Canyon

- Steep slopes
- Mill Creek adjacent to the roadway
- The canyon narrows as you travel uphill
- Unique features, such as Thousand Springs



Pond adjacent to the road



Narrow road in the upper canyon

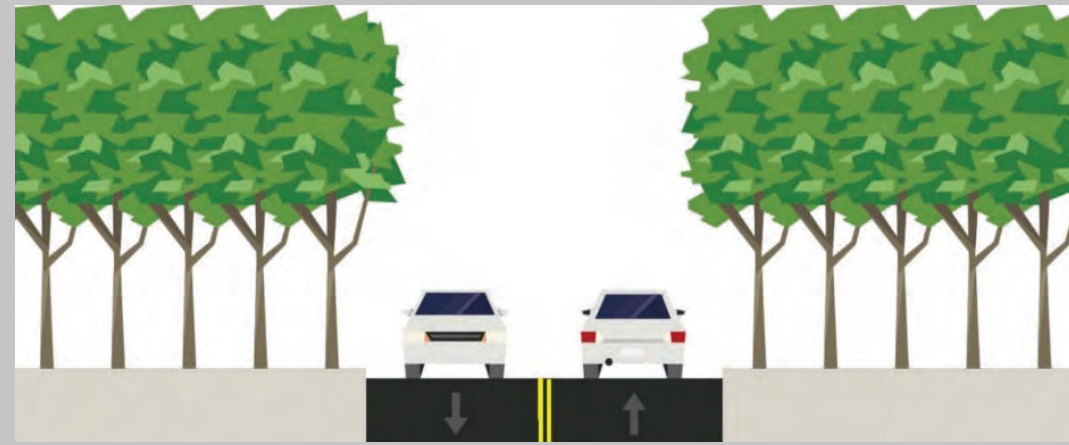


Steep slopes and creek adjacent to the road



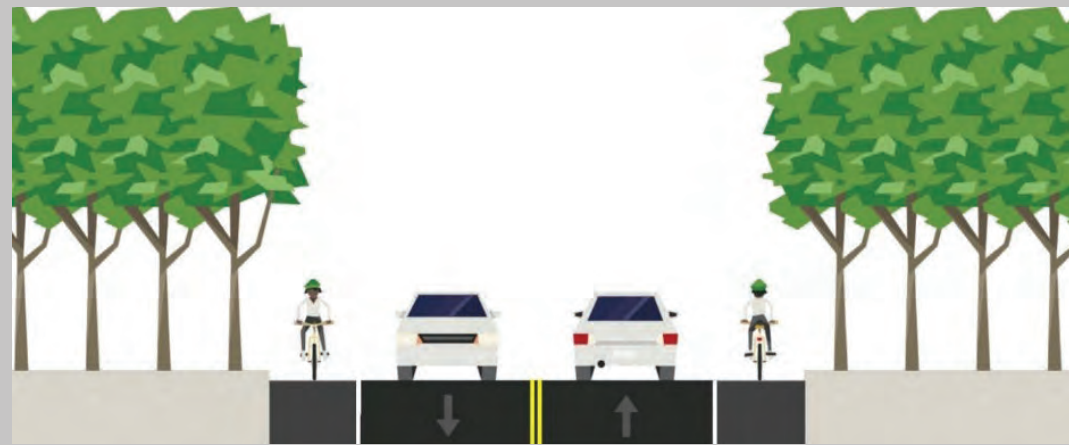
Mill Creek flowing on both sides of the road

What Concepts Have Been Considered



Narrowest Roadway Concept: 20-foot wide with 10-foot lanes, no shoulders

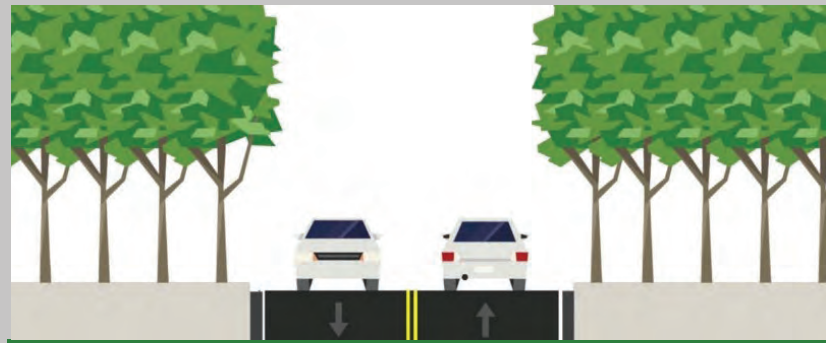
- Least environmental impacts
- Lowest cost and easiest to construct
- Does not provide bicyclist accommodations



Widest Roadway Concept: 30-foot wide with 10-foot lanes, 5-foot bicycle lanes

- Greatest environmental impacts
- Highest cost and greatest challenges to construct
- Bicycle lanes throughout the canyon

What Concepts Have Been Considered



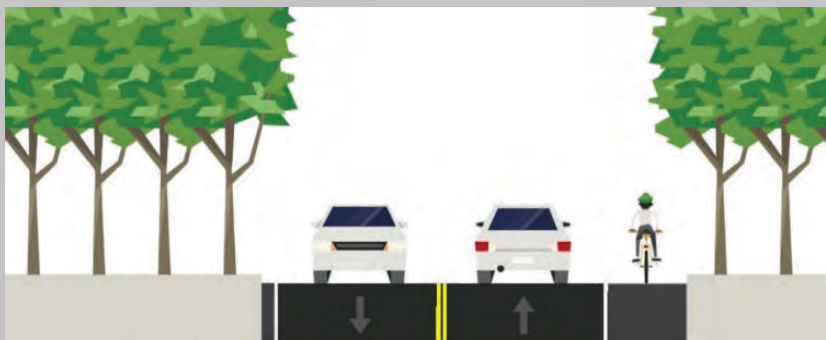
22-foot roadway with 10-foot lanes and 1-foot shoulders

- Less environmental impacts
- Lower cost and easier to construct
- Could include 1-foot shoulders or a 2-foot shoulder on the uphill side
- Minimal improvement for cyclists



24-foot roadway with 10-foot lanes and a 1-foot shoulder and 3-foot shoulder

- Moderate environmental impacts
- Moderate costs and moderate construction challenges
- Could accommodate a 3-foot uphill shoulder, creating more space for cyclists and a 1-foot downhill shoulder



26-foot roadway with 10-foot lanes, 5-foot bicycle lane, and a 1-foot shoulder

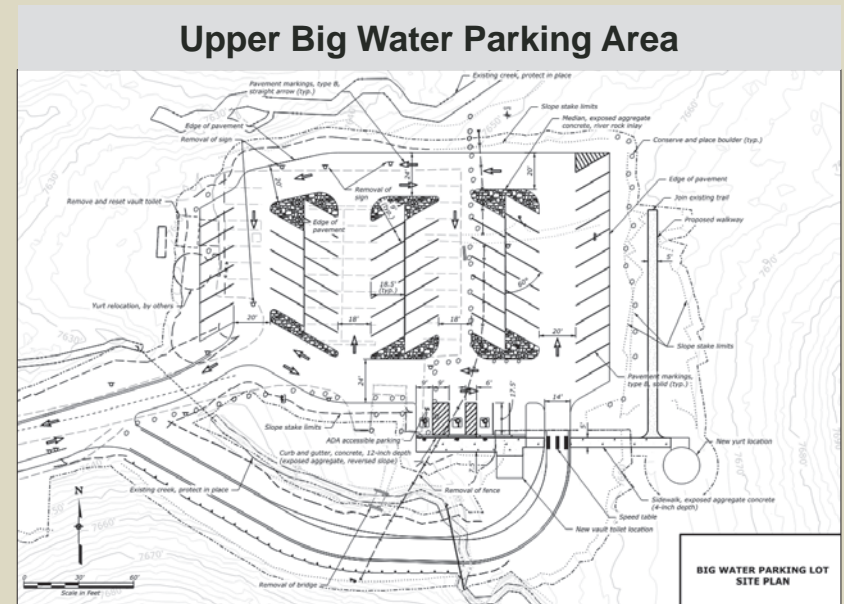
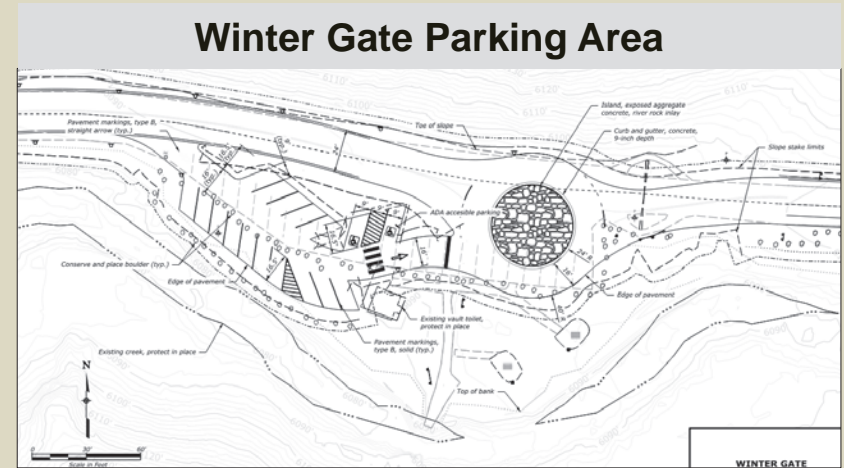
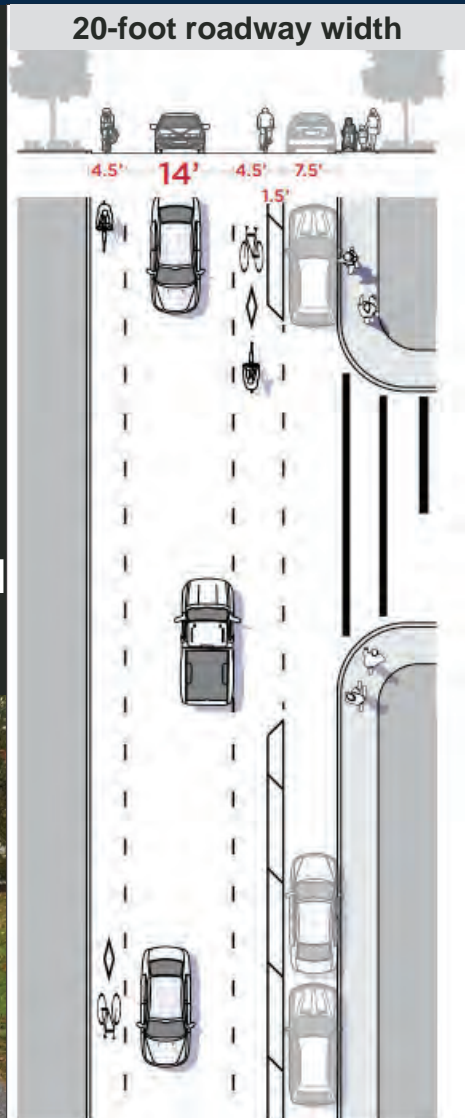
- More environmental impacts
- Higher cost and more construction challenges
- More improvements for cyclists with a 5-foot uphill bicycle lane and a 1-foot downhill shoulder

What Concepts Have Been Considered

- Defines a space for bicyclists
- Well suited for low-volume narrow roads
- Oncoming vehicles encountering one another merge into the bicycle lanes as needed
- Does not alter standard maintenance practices

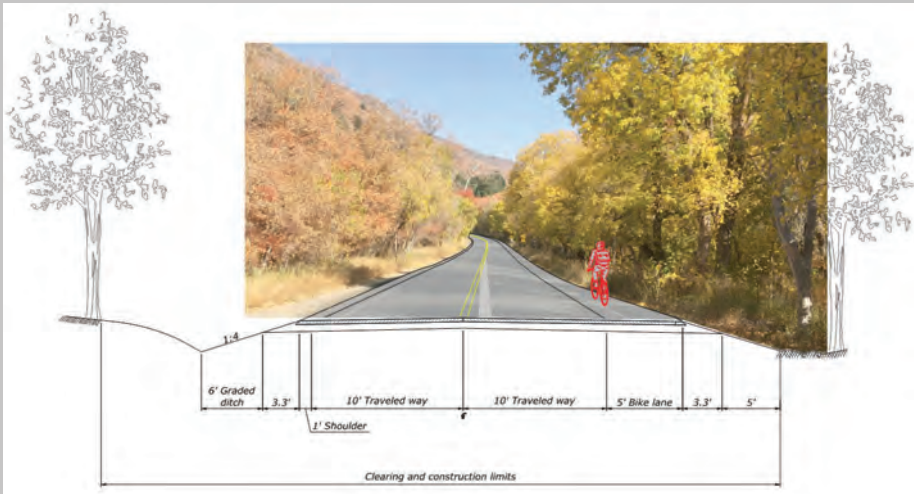


Bicycle Advisory Lanes

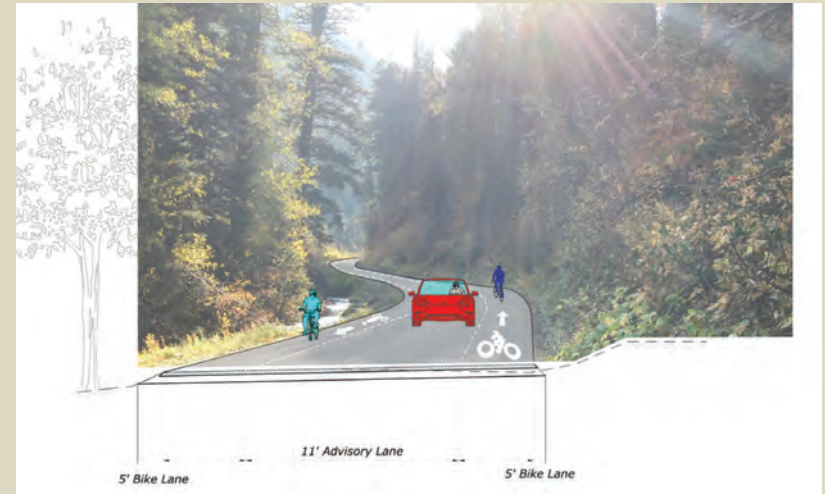


Parking Areas

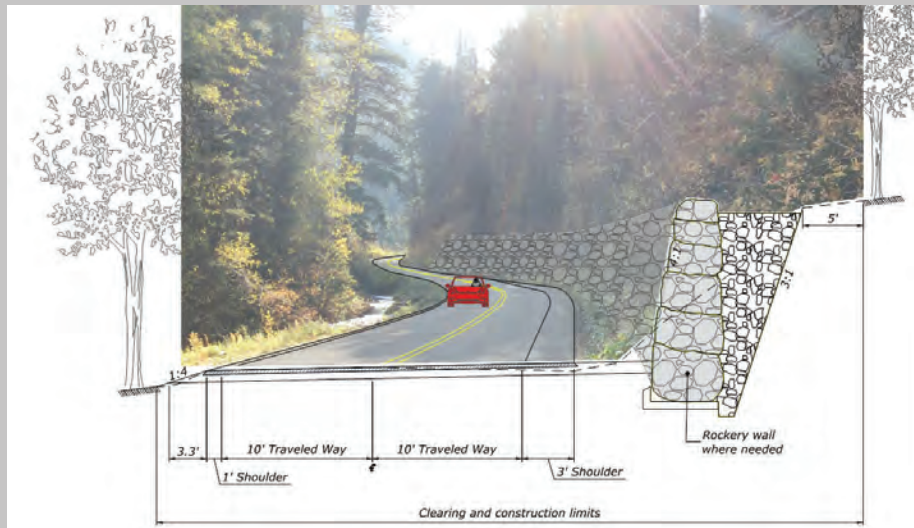
What Would the Concepts Look Like



26-foot roadway with 10-foot lanes and a 1-foot shoulder and 5-foot bicycle lane



Advisory bike lane



24-foot roadway with 10-foot lanes and a 1-foot shoulder and 3-foot shoulder



Rockery wall example



Soil nail wall example

What is Next

▪ Next Steps

- Continue preliminary design
- Environmental review process
 - ✓ Continued data collection
 - ✓ Analysis and documentation
 - ✓ Identification of appropriate mitigation measures
 - ✓ Consultations and coordination
- Ongoing public outreach

▪ Schedule

- 2022
 - ✓ Ongoing preliminary design and environmental review process
- 2023
 - ✓ Finish preliminary design and environmental review
 - ✓ Obtain permits
- 2024+
 - ✓ Final Design
 - ✓ Advertise and award project
 - ✓ Begin construction

Provide a Comment

Please provide comments by
June 19, 2022.

Your comments will help continue to
guide design decisions.

Fill out a comment card tonight

Email:

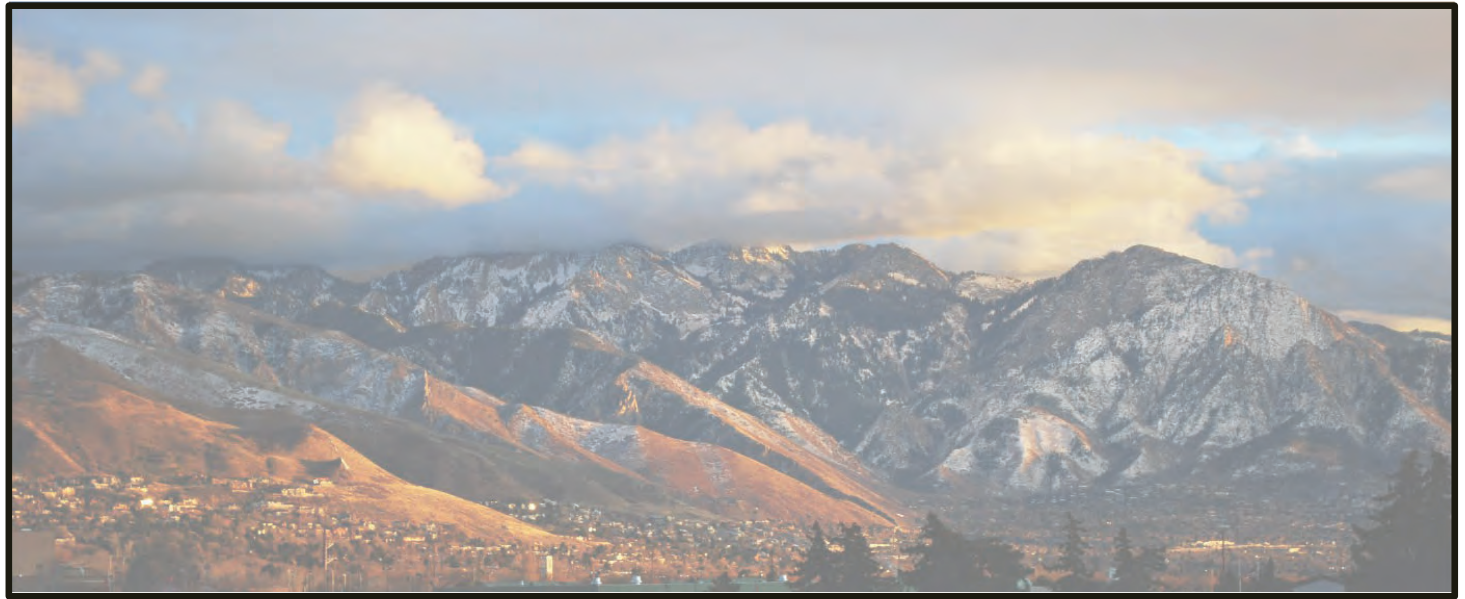
millcreekroad@slco.org

USPS:

Salt Lake County Regional Development
c/o Helen Peters
2001 S. State Street S2-100
PO Box 144575
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Project Website:

<https://slco.org/millcreekcanyon>



Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project

*Preliminary Design Update
Public Meeting*



▪ Project Partners

- Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD)
- Salt Lake County
- Millcreek
- US Forest Service (USFS), Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest

▪ FHWA Federal Lands Access Program

- Improve transportation facilities on or adjacent to federal lands
- Emphasis on high-use federal recreation sites
- Supplements state and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities
- Federal and local match: costs are split between federal and local project partners



Project Partners and the Federal Lands Access Program

- **Agenda**

- Project overview
- Status update
 - Public outreach
 - Environmental process
 - Preliminary design
- Next steps



Source: Salt Lake Tribune

Agenda

- **Purpose**

- The purpose of the project is to enhance access and safety for motorists and recreationists visiting upper Mill Creek Canyon Road

- **Needs to Address**

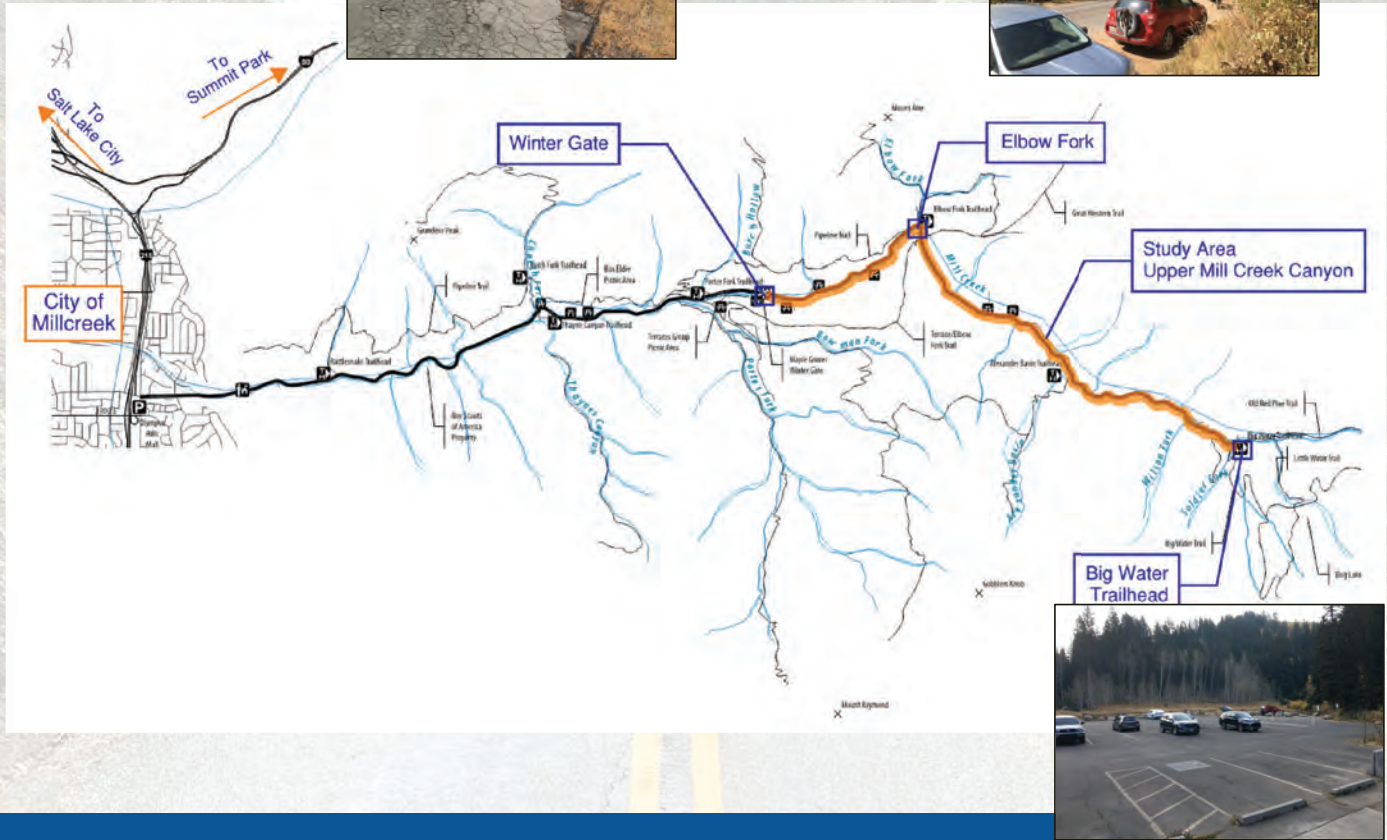
- Deteriorating road condition
- Variable road width
- Lack of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- Informal roadside parking resulting in safety concerns
- Stormwater drainage resulting in erosion



Purpose and Need

Potential Project Elements

- Improvements to 4.5 miles of Mill Creek Canyon Road
- Formalize parking
- Modifications to the Winter Gate and Big Water trailheads/parking areas
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety infrastructure
- Stormwater drainage and watershed health



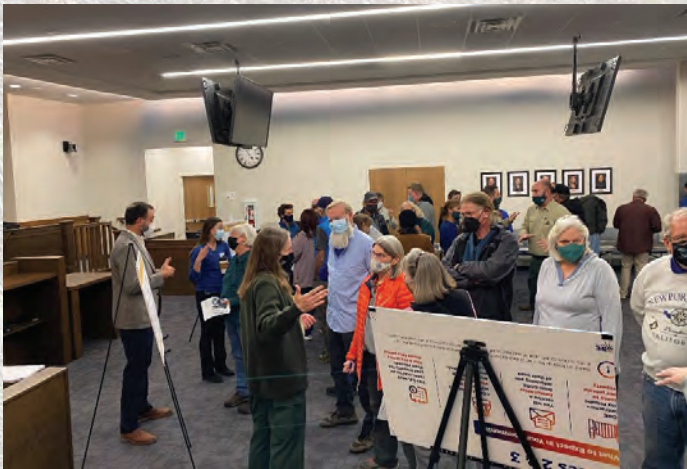
Project Overview

- **Project activities to date**
 - Purpose and need
 - Initial concept development
 - Environmental data collection
 - Public meeting #1 (November 2021)
 - Started preliminary design



What have we done so far?

- **November 2021 Public Meeting Overview**
 - Shared a conceptual design
 - Approximately 100 attendees
 - Over 300 comments received



- **Major comment themes**
 - Shuttle system/mass transit
 - Changes to Winter Gate operation
 - Parking
 - Firs cabin owners
 - Increased speeds
 - Environmental concerns
 - Bicycle safety

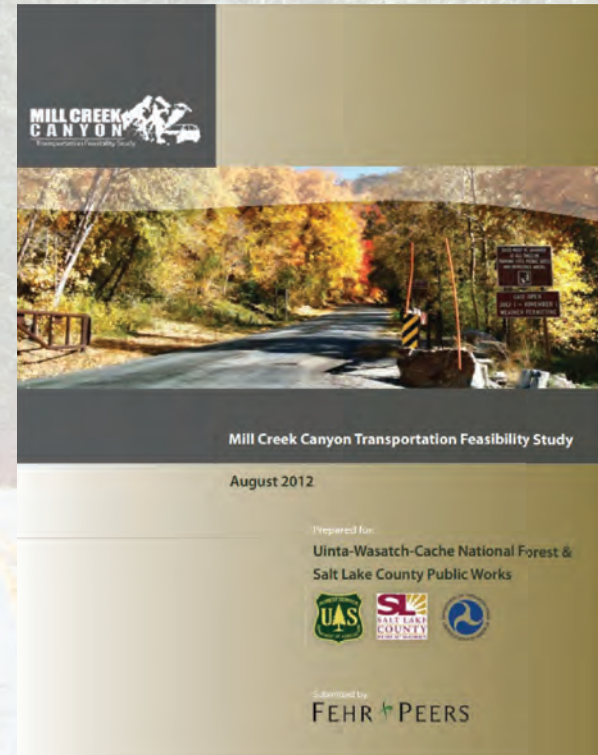
Public Meeting #1: What We Heard

- **What we heard**

- A shuttle system should be implemented based on the 2012 transportation study

- **What we are doing**

- Design choices will not preclude a future shuttle option
- The application FLAP was specific to addressing roadway issues
- A shuttle system is beyond the scope of this project



What We Heard: Shuttle System

- **What we heard**
 - Will the upper canyon be open year-round
 - Will access or management of users change
- **What we are doing**
 - This project will not affect how USFS and the County operate and/or maintain the upper portion of the canyon



What We Heard: Access Past the Winter Gate

- **What we heard**
 - Will there be more parking
 - Will there be less parking
- **What we are doing**
 - Removing informal roadside parking
 - Looking at opportunities at trailheads to reconfigure parking
 - Approximately maintaining existing number of parking spaces available



What We Heard: Parking

- **What we heard**

- 24 cabins located in the canyon
- Access during construction
- Ongoing financial obligations



- **What we are doing**

- USFS will coordinate with cabin owners
- Construction access is an ongoing consideration throughout project development



What We Heard: Firs Cabin Owners

- **What we heard**

- Wider roads results in higher speeds
- Higher speeds will endanger everyone

- **What we are doing**

- No changes to the existing speed limit
- Minimal changes to existing curves
- Narrower lane widths



Source: Google Earth



Source: Google Earth

What We Heard: Increased Speeds

- **What we heard**
 - There needs to be room for bikes
 - The canyon is heavily used by the cycling community
- **What we are doing**
 - Looking at several design concepts that include bicycle facilities



What We Heard: Bicycle Safety

A photograph of a paved road winding through a dense forest. The road has a yellow double line down the center and curves to the right. The trees are tall and thin, with some green foliage. At the bottom of the image, there is a solid blue horizontal banner.

- **What we heard**

- A Categorical Exclusion (CE) is inadequate
- The project requires an EA or an EIS

- **What we are doing**

- FHWA is reviewing public input and resource information to determine the appropriate NEPA class of action

- **FHWA and NEPA**

- FHWA is lead federal agency for project and follows its NEPA implementing regulations
- All FHWA-led projects follow the environmental review process, regardless of NEPA class of action
- FHWA CEs apply to many types of road projects
- Unusual circumstances are considered to determine if EA or EIS is appropriate
- Public input and resource impacts will be considered

What We Heard: Environmental Review

- **What we heard**
 - Minimize impacts to natural resources, such as vegetation and the creek
 - Minimize visual effects
- **What we are doing**
 - Conducting ongoing studies
 - Using context sensitive solution design processes



Source: millcreekjournal.com

What We Heard: Environmental Impacts

Research to Date

- Aquatic Resource Delineation
- Archeological Survey
- Historic Survey
- Biological resources review
 - Threatened and endangered species
 - USFS sensitive species
 - Riparian habitat
 - Noxious weeds
 - Migratory birds and raptors
- Paleontological research
- Section 4(f) resource inventory

Next Steps

- Review public input from public meeting #2
- Conduct preliminary impact analyses based on design concepts and resource information
- FHWA to confirm appropriate NEPA class of action
- Continued coordination with USFS and other agencies
- Continued public involvement



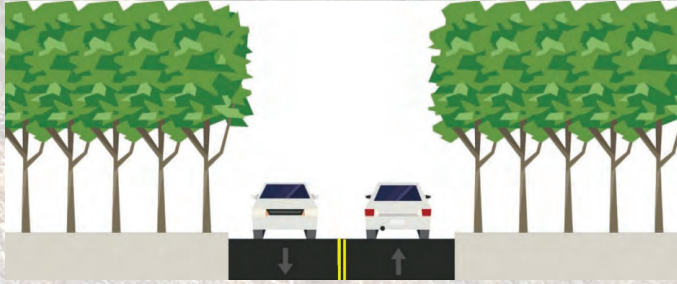
What We Heard: Environmental Analysis and Next Steps

- **Design Considerations**

- Does it meet the purpose and need?
- Does it minimize environmental impacts?
- Does it enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety?
- Does it improve driver expectation?
- Can it be built?
- How much does it cost?



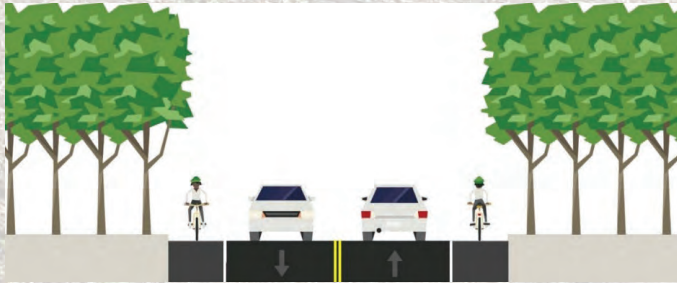
What is Considered During Preliminary Design



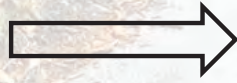
Narrowest Roadway Concept: 20-foot wide with 10-foot lanes, no shoulders



- Least environmental impacts
- Lowest cost and easiest to construct
- Wider road, but does not provide bicycle specific accommodations



Widest Roadway Concept: 30-foot wide with 10-foot lanes, 5-foot bicycle lanes



- Greatest environmental impacts
- Highest cost and greatest challenges to construct
- Bicycle lanes throughout the canyon

What Concepts Have Been Considered



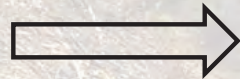
22-foot roadway with 10-foot lanes and 1-foot shoulders



- Less environmental impacts
- Lower cost and easier to construct
- Could include 1-foot shoulders or a 2-foot shoulder on the uphill side
- Minimal improvement for cyclists



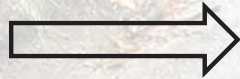
24-foot roadway with 10-foot lanes and a 1-foot shoulder and 3-foot shoulder



- Moderate environmental impacts
- Moderate costs and moderate construction challenges
- Could accommodate a 3-foot uphill shoulder and a 1-foot downhill shoulder



26-foot roadway with 10-foot lanes, 5-foot bicycle lane, and a 1-foot shoulder

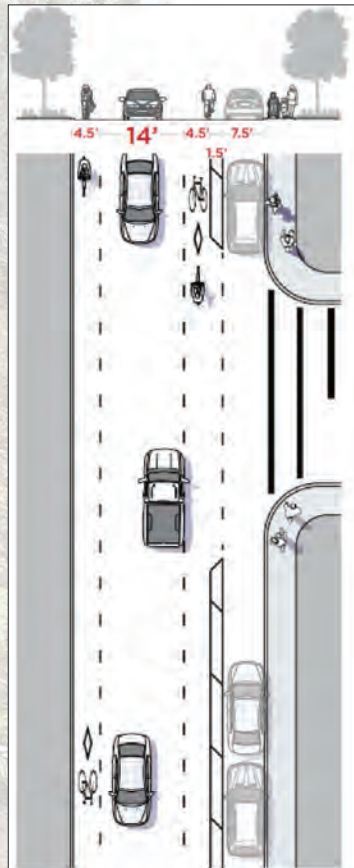


- More environmental impacts
- Higher cost and more construction challenges
- More improvements for cyclists with a 5-foot uphill bicycle lane and a 1-foot downhill shoulder

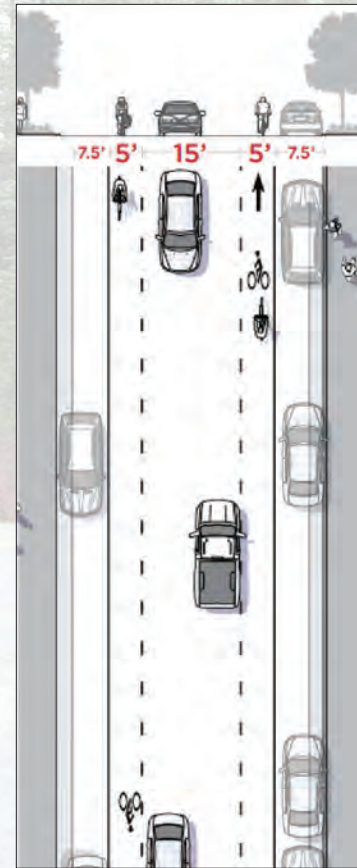
What Concepts Have Been Considered

ADVISORY BICYCLE LANE(S)

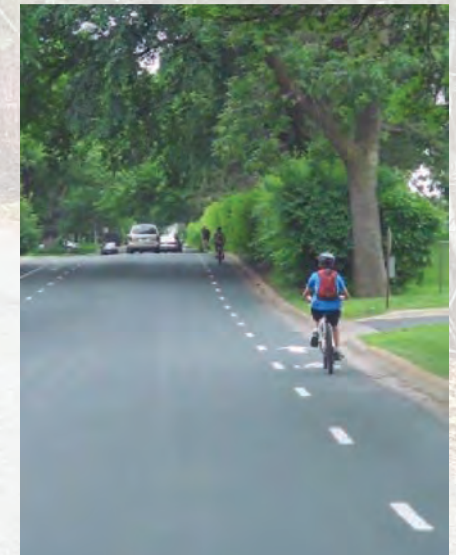
- Defines a space for bicyclists
- Well suited for low-volume narrow roads
- Oncoming vehicles encountering one another merge into the bicycle lanes as needed
- Does not alter standard maintenance practices



20-foot roadway width



25-foot roadway width



What Concepts Have Been Considered

- **Challenges in the Canyon**

- Steep slopes
- Mill Creek adjacent to the roadway
- The canyon narrows as you travel uphill
- Unique features, such as Thousand Springs

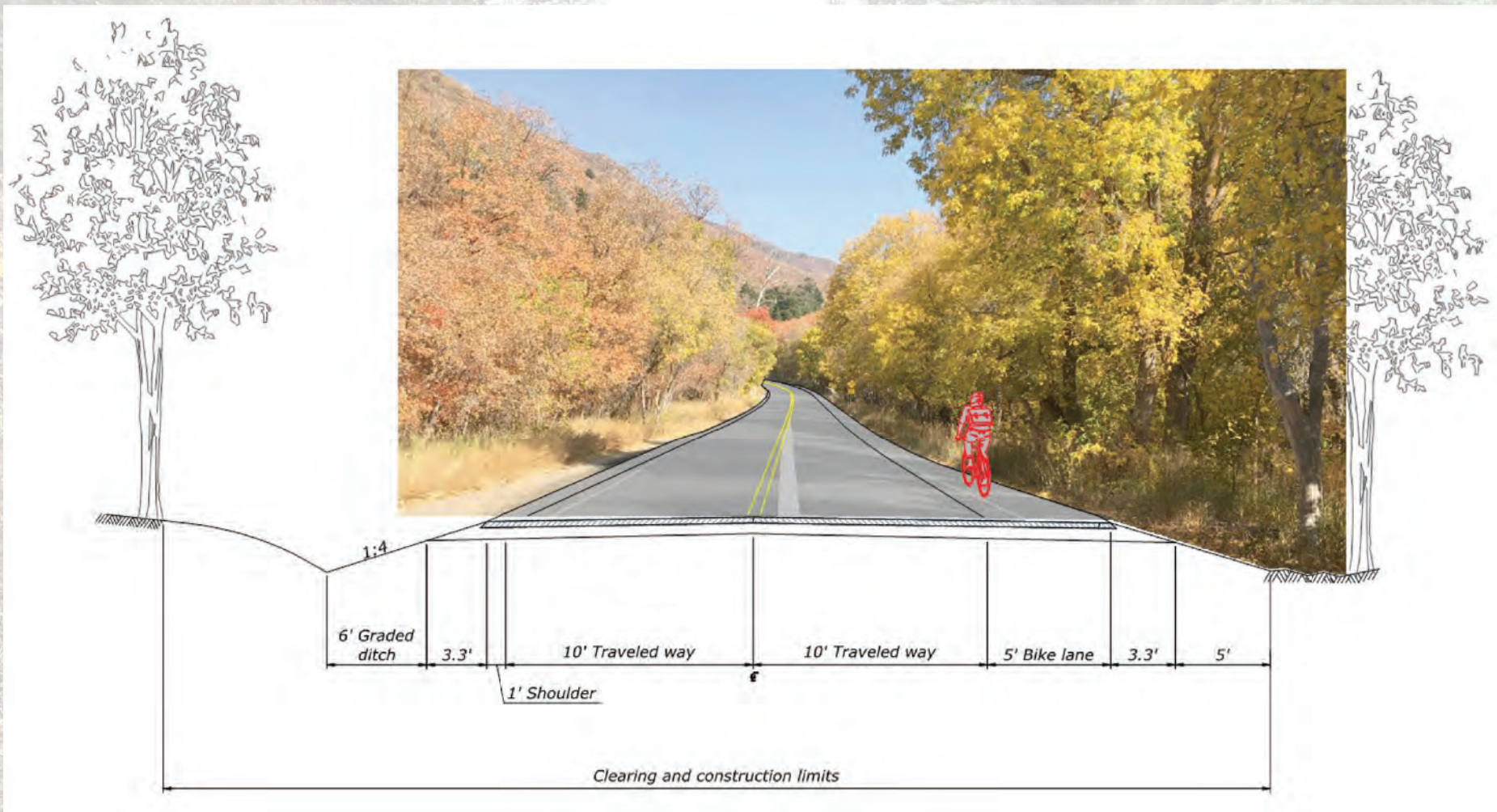


Steep slopes and creek adjacent to the road

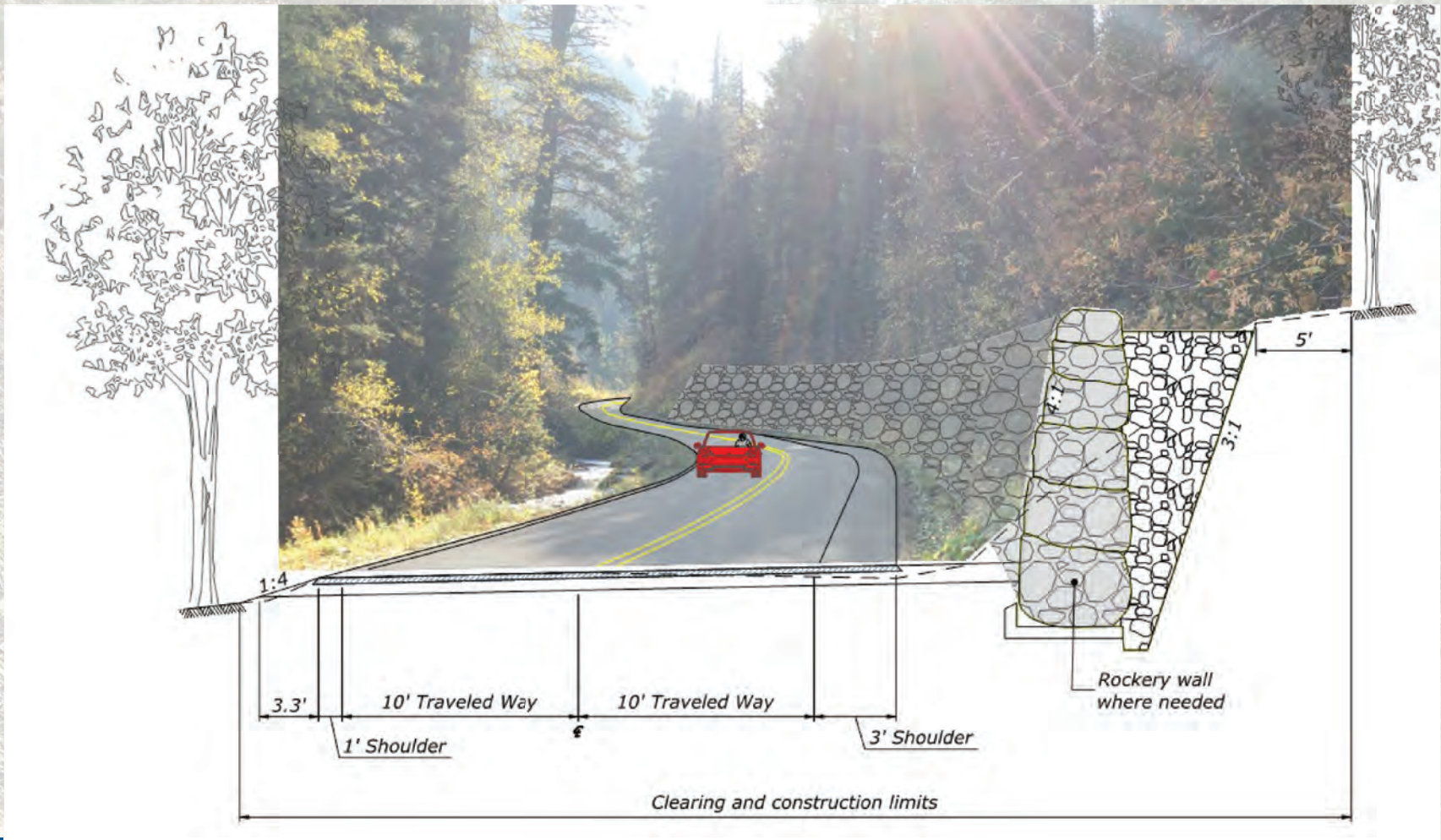


Mill Creek flowing on both sides of the road.

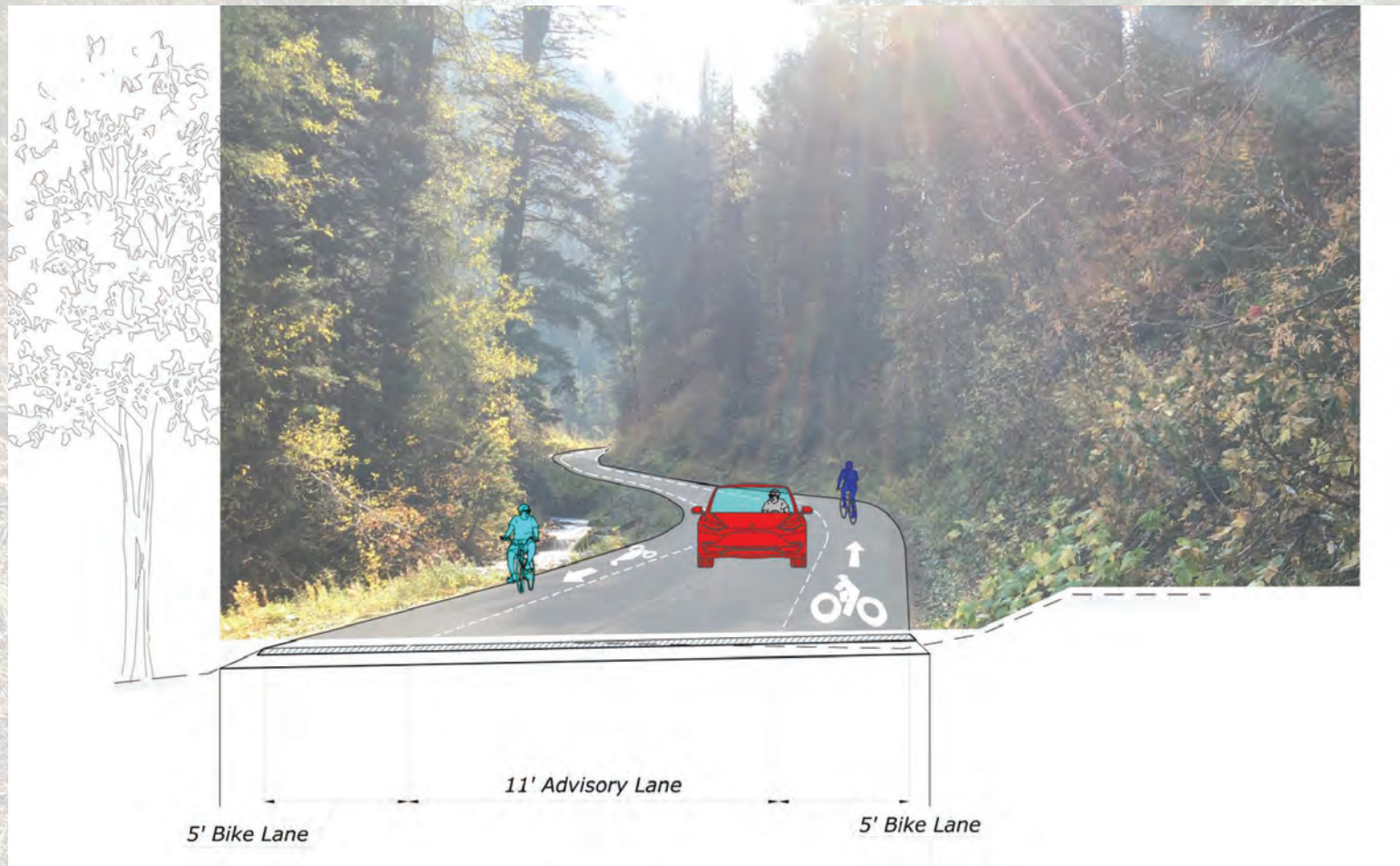
How Does the Canyon Itself Influence Design



What Would a 26-Foot Wide Road Look Like?



What Would a 24-Foot Wide Road Look Like?



What Would a Bicycle Advisory Lane Look Like?

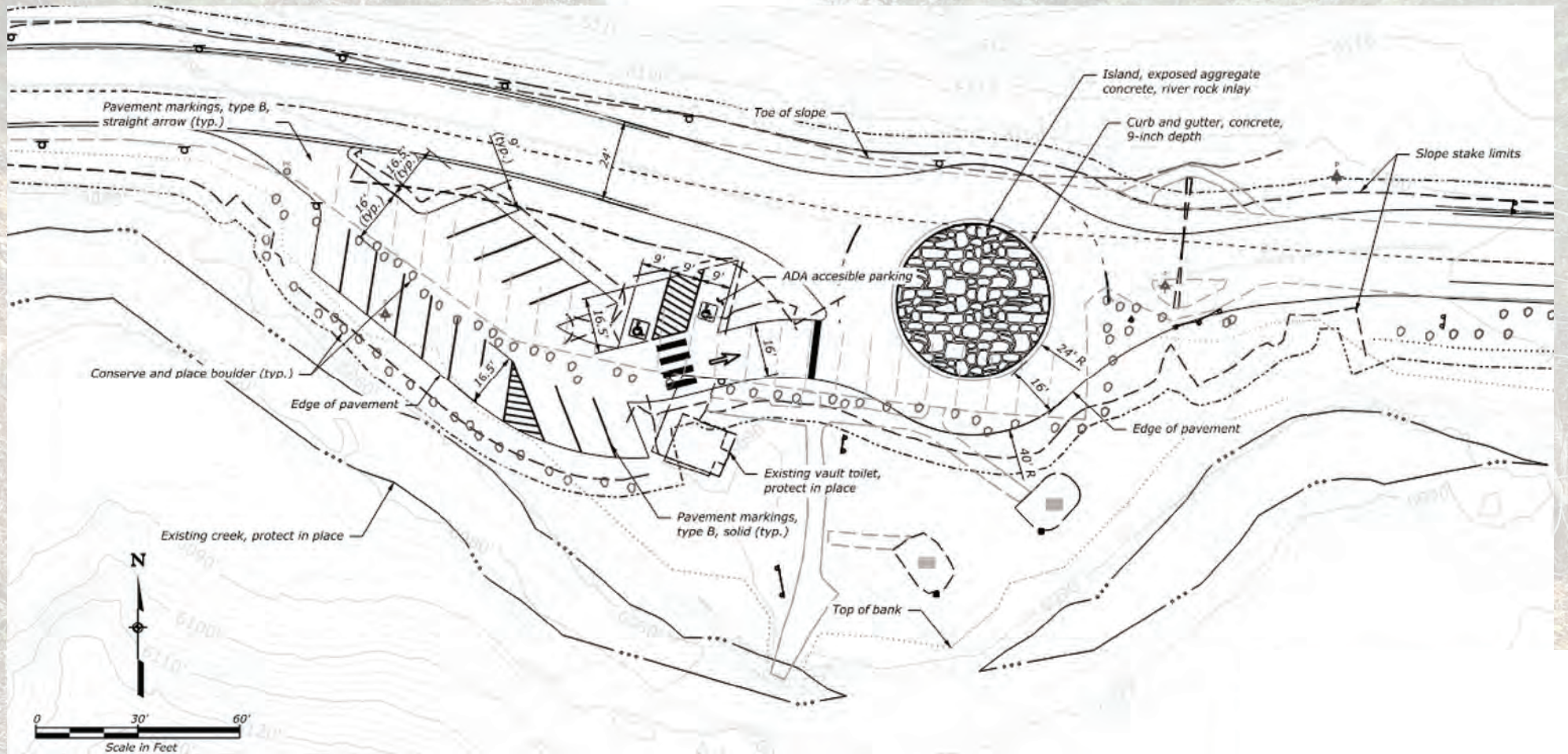
Rockery Wall Examples



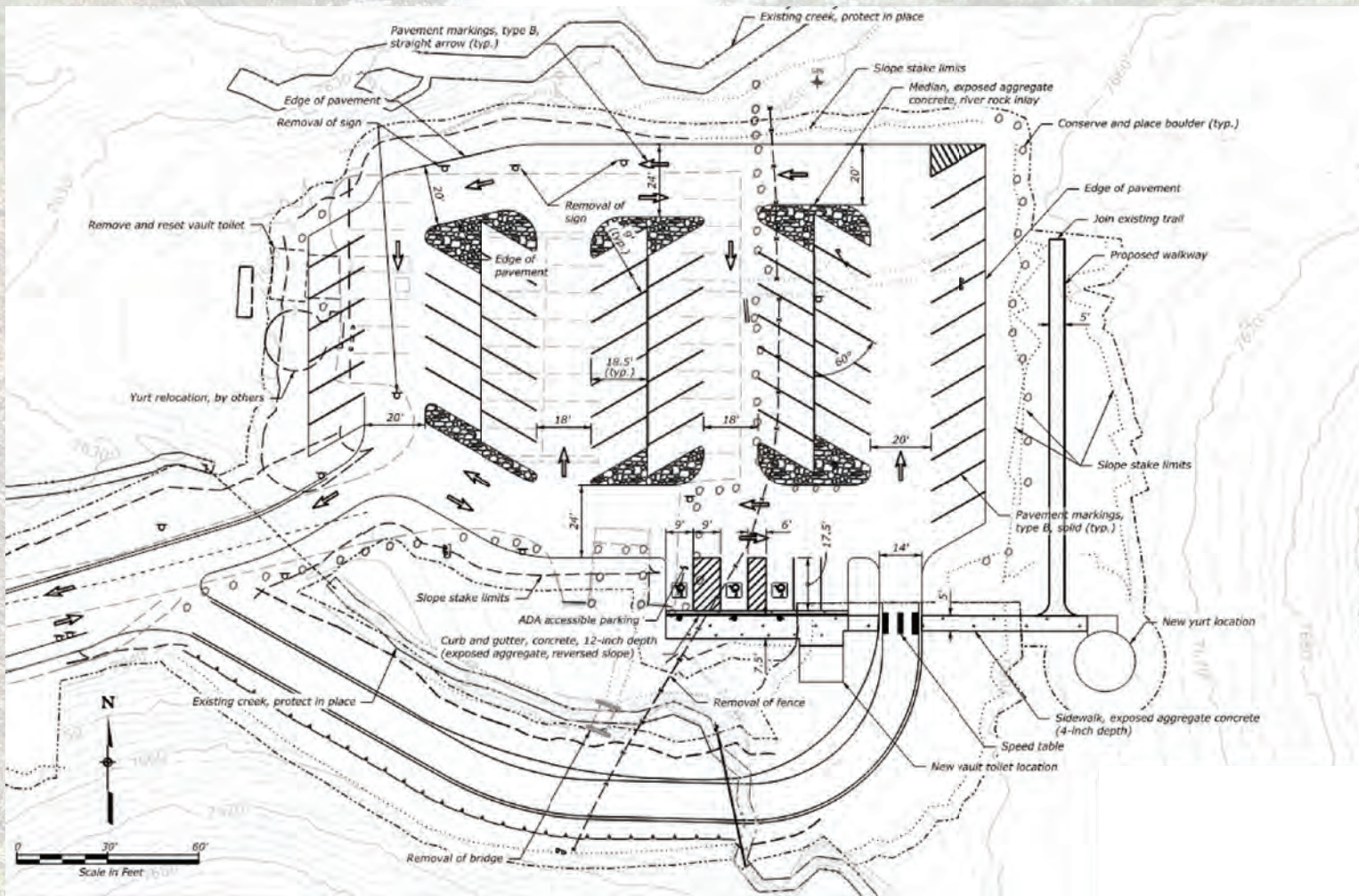
Soil Nail Wall Example



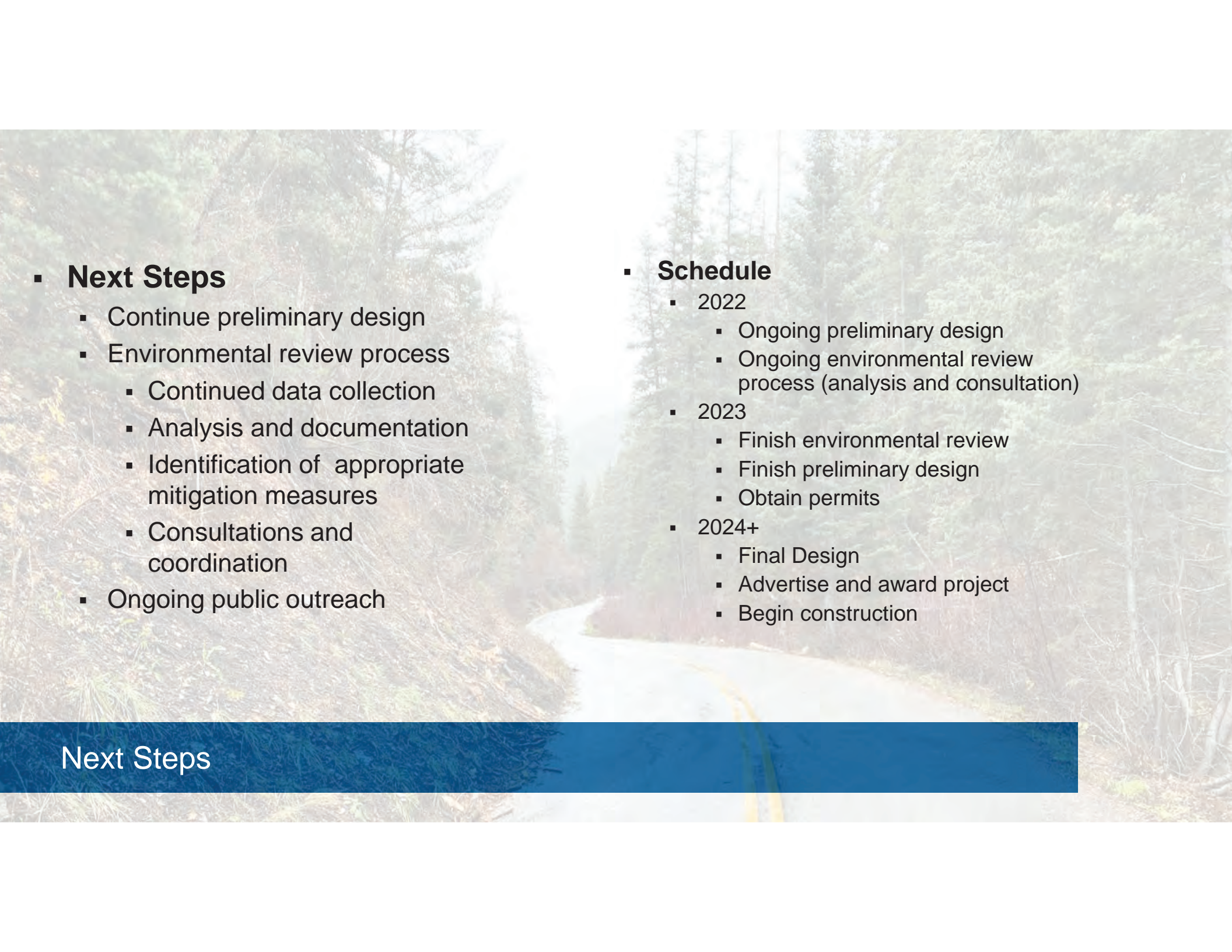
What Could Retaining Walls Look Like?



Winter Gate Parking Lot Concept



Big Water Trailhead Parking Lot Concept

A background image showing a paved road with a yellow center line curving through a dense forest. The trees are mostly evergreens, and the scene is slightly hazy or misty. The road is the central focus, leading the eye from the bottom center towards the top center of the frame.

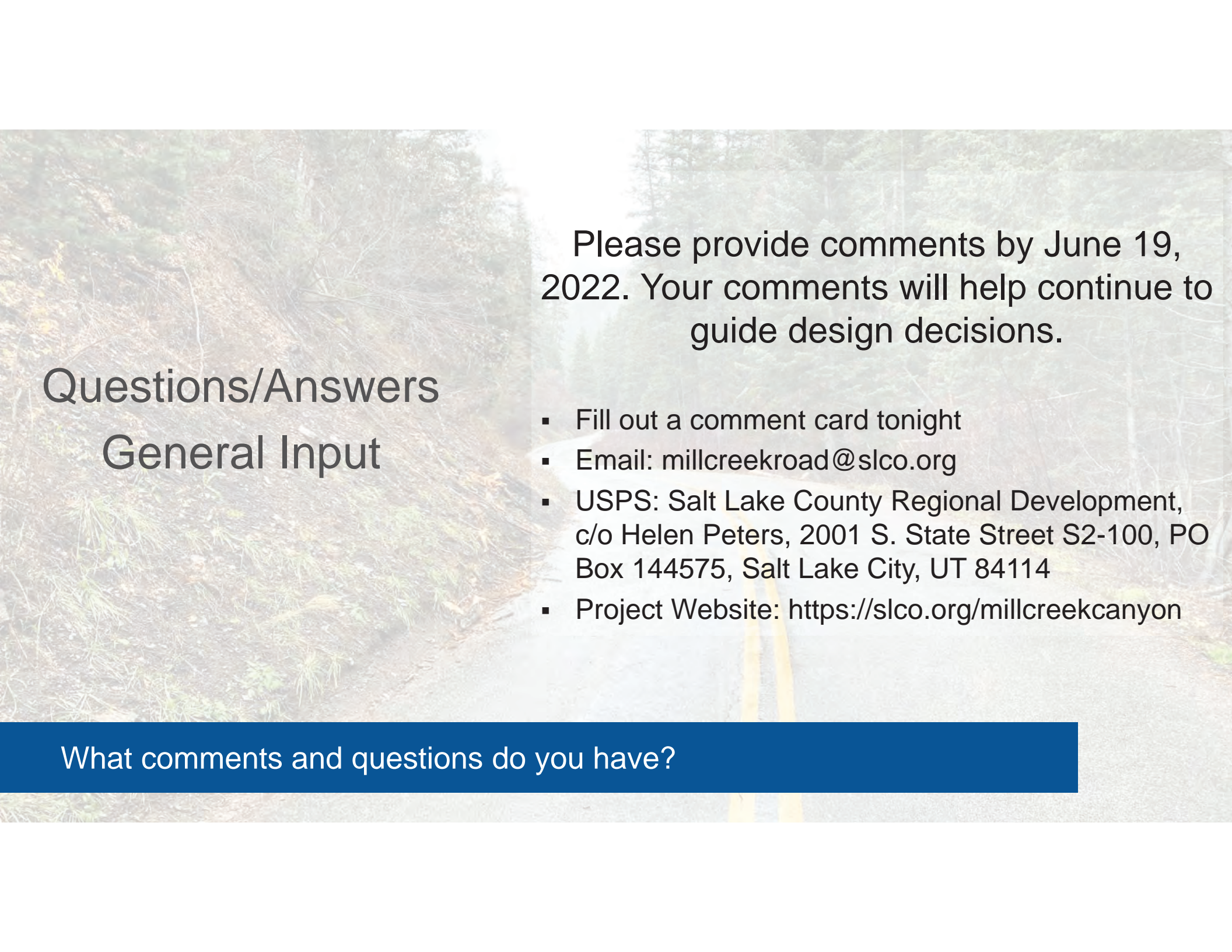
▪ **Next Steps**

- Continue preliminary design
- Environmental review process
 - Continued data collection
 - Analysis and documentation
 - Identification of appropriate mitigation measures
 - Consultations and coordination
- Ongoing public outreach

▪ **Schedule**

- 2022
 - Ongoing preliminary design
 - Ongoing environmental review process (analysis and consultation)
- 2023
 - Finish environmental review
 - Finish preliminary design
 - Obtain permits
- 2024+
 - Final Design
 - Advertise and award project
 - Begin construction

Next Steps



Questions/Answers General Input

Please provide comments by June 19, 2022. Your comments will help continue to guide design decisions.

- Fill out a comment card tonight
- Email: millcreekroad@slco.org
- USPS: Salt Lake County Regional Development, c/o Helen Peters, 2001 S. State Street S2-100, PO Box 144575, Salt Lake City, UT 84114
- Project Website: <https://slco.org/millcreekcanyon>

What comments and questions do you have?

Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in coordination with the USDA Forest Service, Salt Lake County, and Millcreek, is proposing improvements to Mill Creek Canyon Road. The Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements project begins at the Winter Gate and proceeds east 4.6 miles, passing Elbow Fork, and ending at the Upper Big Water Trailhead.

Public Outreach and Comments Received

The project team hosted the second open house on May 19, 2022, to present a project overview, share preliminary designs, and gather input from the public. Notice for the public open house was provided via social media, local news media, and the Salt Lake County project website. The open house was followed by a 30-day comment period. Approximately 170 comments were received. This included comments submitted at the open house and online during the comment period.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the comments received. Similar to the first open house, the comments fell into one or more of the following major themes:

- Resource protection
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety
- Increased speeds
- Parking
- Shuttle system or other mass transit option
- Level of environmental review
- Firs cabin owner concerns
- Project cancelation or No Action Alternative

The intent of the ongoing public engagement is to hear what the public may be concerned about relating to this project and allow the project team to address those concerns through the preliminary engineering and environmental review processes, to the extent practicable. As described below in responses to the key comments, the project team will consider the public input to design the project in a way that provides the best balance across different, and often competing, interests. FHWA-CFLHD will also address resource concerns through its environmental process.

Responses to Comments

A summary of comments and responses are included in the table below. Because many comments were of a similar nature between the Open House #1 and Open House #2 many responses have remained unchanged. The exception is the level of environmental review and whether or not the project could be halted or a No Action Alternative selected.

Comment Summary, and Response
Level of Environmental Review
Comment Summary: A greater degree of environmental analysis should be completed to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) than the proposed categorical exclusion.
Response: FHWA-CFLHD is completing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project. The EA will include discussion of a No Action and Action Alternative, discuss alternatives considered and dismissed, affected environment, impacts, avoidance and minimization measures, and mitigation. The EA will be made publicly available for review and include a 30-day comment period.
No Action Alternative
Comment Summary: Can the project be halted or a No Action Alternative selected?
Response: Salt Lake County, Millcreek, and USFS identified the need for improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road, with support from other local agencies, which led to the application for federal funds. Project partners could request the project be halted, however, the project will continue to advance since the agencies involved wish to address the ongoing maintenance and safety concerns in the upper canyon. A No Action Alternative and Action Alternative will be analyzed in the EA. Selection of an alternative,

either a No Action or Action Alternative, will be made by FHWA-CFLHD, in coordination with project partners and in consideration of public input.

Resource Protection

Comment Summary: The beauty of Mill Creek Canyon and its natural and cultural resources should be protected.

Response: The project design team is considering concepts that include both different roadway widths and different lane configurations. As the canyon increases in elevation, it becomes narrower, so there are also different options being explored between Winter Gate to Elbow Fork and Elbow Fork to Upper Big Water Trailhead. A narrower roadway width typically results in less physical impact to the surrounding environment. However, each project element can create both positive and negative impacts. For example

- Retaining walls reduce the physical footprint of the project, but have a high cost and result in visual impacts. Retaining walls concepts include rockery walls for shorter walls, and a treated surface for larger retaining walls.
- Drainage ditches and curbs create a wider road, but reduce erosion by directing water to specific locations.

The goal of the project is to develop a solution that strikes a balance between improving access and safety while minimizing environmental impacts. More information on these concepts will be presented at the next public open house.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

Comment Summary: Bicycle and pedestrian safety is important because of the number of people walking or riding across or along Mill Creek Canyon road.

Response: As stated above, the project design team is analyzing multiple concepts that include both different roadway widths and lane configurations. A wider roadway allows more space for driver and cyclists, however it can also result in greater environmental impacts. Multiple concepts are being developed to find a balance between drivers and cyclists and environmental impacts. Other safety considerations beyond roadway width and bicycle lanes include eliminating informal parking areas and installing signing and striping.

- Elimination of informal roadside parking areas (described below) will keep vehicles from parking on the shoulder. These cars often encroach into the road, making it even narrower, and can create unsafe conditions for cyclists.
- Crosswalks could be striped, flashing signs could be installed in high traffic areas, and informational and warning signs could be placed in areas where drivers, pedestrians, and cyclist may be present, such as trailheads and sharp curves with limited sight distance.

Additional information on these concepts and potential impacts will be presented at the next public open house.

Parking

Comment Summary: A change in parking management is required to improve safety and reduce impacts to natural resources without increasing the overall parking capacity in the Canyon.

Response: The project team is considering options to eliminate existing informal roadside parking areas and generally maintain the current overall parking capacity by increasing parking capacity at existing trail heads.

Increasing parking capacity is not a project objective. The intent of the project relative to parking is to approximately maintain the current overall parking capacity in the Canyon. Informal roadside parking presents a safety hazard to pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles in the travel lanes. Additionally, informal roadside parking tends to encroach on and damage vegetation, causes erosion, and typically results in other impacts to natural resources, including water quality. Informal parking areas also typically lead to informal user-created or "spider" trails, as visitors hike to their destination from their parked vehicle.

- Elimination of informal roadside parking areas will keep vehicles from parking on the shoulder. These cars often encroach into the road, making it even narrower, and can create unsafe conditions for cyclists.
- Moving existing informal parking capacity to redesigned, formal parking areas such as the Big Water Trailhead will concentrate parked vehicles in areas designed to manage and minimize parking related impacts to natural resources through hardened surfaces, proper drainage, and other best management practices.
- Concentrating parked vehicles in specified areas will also reduce human impacts, including informal trails, by allowing visitors to park in areas with direct access to formal Forest Service System trails and restrooms.

More information on proposed parking changes will be presented at the next public open house.

Increased Speeds

Comment Summary: Widening Mill Creek Canyon Road could lead to increased speeds.

Response: The project design team is analyzing multiple concept that include a narrower lane width than the 11-foot lanes shared at the public open house. There are tradeoffs however, as lanes continue to narrow there is increased potential for accidents,

including head on collisions or vehicles running off the road. Drivers also anticipate a consistent lane width and by providing that the amount of weaving within the lane itself is reduced.

Mill Creek Canyon Road needs to be able allow for passage of emergency service vehicles. Per the United Fire Authority, their trucks measure 8.5 feet across the front bumper. The sideview mirrors extend an additional 6 inches on each side of the truck, for a total truck width of 9.5 feet. In the event of an emergency first responders need to be able to travel efficiently through the canyon, and in the case of a fire, while canyon users may be evacuating.

The project development process is meant to find the right balance between driver safety, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and accommodate emergency service providers.

Shuttle or Other Mass Transit Option

Comment Summary: Implement a shuttle system or other mass transit option to provide access while limiting the number of vehicles.

Response: Although beyond the scope of this project, a future shuttle will not be precluded by the proposed improvements. Some of the challenges and questions facing a shuttle system include the following:

- Which agency or municipality would own and operate the shuttle?
- How and who would pay for shuttle service? This include costs such as buying shuttles, building parking facilities, and paying shuttle drivers and mechanics.
- Where do shuttle users park? This parking would need to accommodate parked vehicles, shuttles, and likely restrooms. A shuttle starting at the Winter Gate would face similar challenges.

This road improvement project addresses the issues of a crumbling and narrow roadway. The project would upgrade the existing roadway, which would better support a future shuttle or transit option. In addition, parking improvements at Upper Big Water Trailhead and at the Winter Gate would be designed to facilitate future conversion to shuttle use by considering potential pick up/drop off locations and turnarounds.

Firs Cabin Owner Concerns

Comment Summary: Lease holders at the 24-cabin Firs tract expressed three primary concerns:

1. Access limitations during construction.
2. Ongoing financial obligations, such as taxes, resulting from cabin ownership and its burden while having only limited access to their cabins.
3. The importance of protecting cabins' water source during construction.

Response: FHWA-CFLHD is considering schedule constraints and restrictions that will become part of the construction contract and will attempt to balance delays and access concerns with all users of the Canyon. However, the Recreation Resident Special Use Permits do not require the Forest Service to provide motorized access for cabin owners in the Firs Cabins tract. The Forest Service has the right to limit access when necessary. This project is considered necessary to address safety and infrastructure needs. FHWA-CFLHD and the Forest Service will work together during construction to potentially provide access if feasible, safe, and if it doesn't delay construction activities.

During the environmental review process, FHWA-CFLHD will consider social and economic effects of the project, as well as other resource effects, such as ground water. The Forest Service can pro-rate or adjust the recreation resident special use permit fee, but does not have the jurisdiction or authority to waive or adjust county or state tax fees. FHWA-CLFHD is aware of the spring location that provides water to the cabins. Because it is located beyond the limits of construction, and on the opposite side of Mill Creek from the roadway, it is not anticipated to be affected by the project.

Future Opportunities to Provide Input

Another public open house will be in later Summer 2023

- A presentation and question and answer session
- Preliminary design concepts
- Summary of the environmental data gathered to date and resource reports,
- An opportunity to speak with project team members and provide additional input

The meeting will be advertised via social media, the project website (<https://slco.org/millcreekcanyon>) and emails sent to all persons who have previously provided input.

Public Open House #3



Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project

*Public Meeting No. 3, June 13 (virtual) and June 14 (in person)
Environmental Review Process and
Preliminary Design Update*



▪ Agenda

- ✓ Project Background
- ✓ Activities to Date
- ✓ Design Update
- ✓ Environmental Update
- ✓ Schedule
- ✓ Next steps

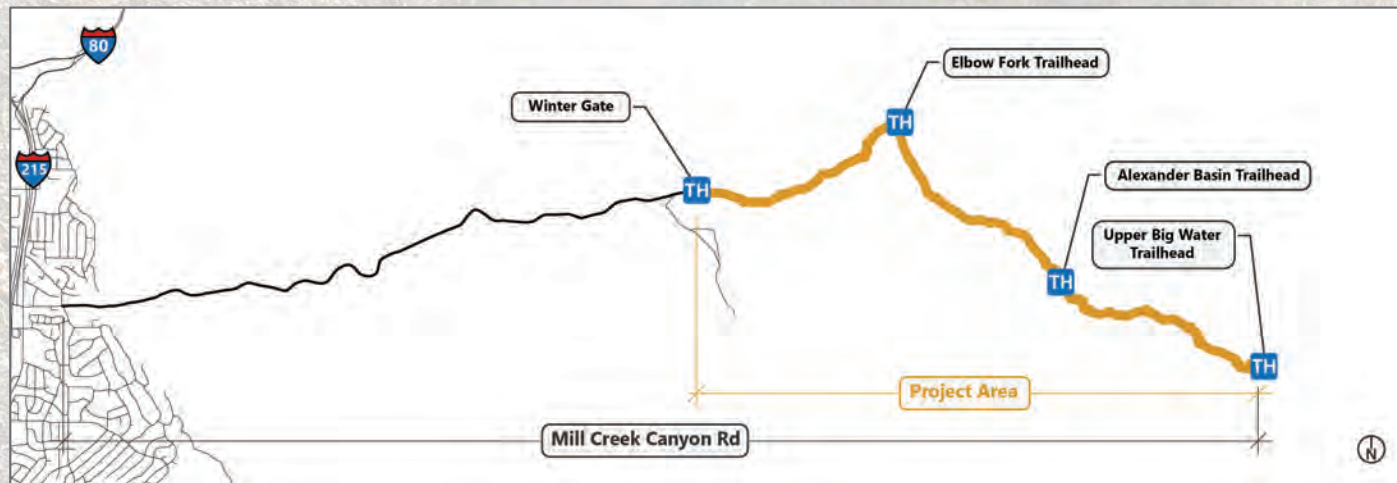
Federal Lands Access Program

- **Purpose**

- Enhance access and safety for motorists and recreationists using upper Mill Creek Canyon Road

- **Needs to Address**

- Deteriorating road condition
- Variable road width
- Lack of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- Informal roadside parking that causes safety concerns



Purpose & Need / Project Location

- **Three proposed roadway widths:**
 - Winter Gate to Elbow Fork, **24 feet wide**
 - Elbow Fork to Upper Big Water Trailhead **20 feet wide**
 - At three constrained locations **18 feet wide**



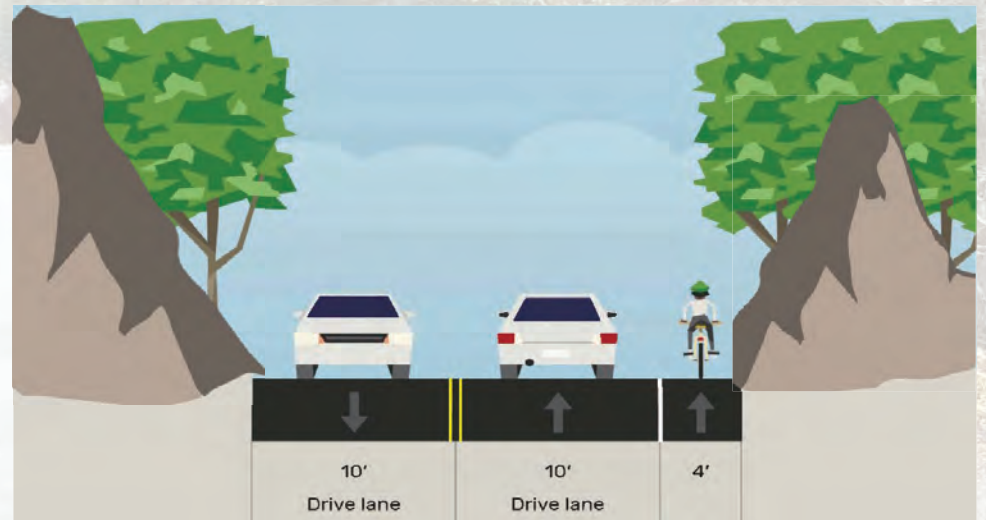
Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements Overview

- **Existing**

- 1.4 miles long
- Width varies from 16 to 24 feet

- **Proposed**

- 24-foot-wide roadway
 - Two 10-foot travel lanes
 - One 4-foot bicycle lane on the uphill side
- Curve widening



Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements, Winter Gate to Elbow Fork

- **Existing**

- 3.2 miles long
- Width varies from 13 to 20 feet

- **Proposed**

- 20-foot-wide roadway
 - Two 10-foot travel lanes
 - Curve widening
- Minimizes impacts in the narrower upper canyon



Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements, Elbow Fork to Upper Big Water Trailhead

- **Existing**

- Road near Firs Cabins, Thousand Springs, stone bridges, and “beaver pond”

- **Proposed**

- 18-foot-wide roadway
- Two 9-foot travel lanes
- A narrower road results in fewer impacts to the natural environment



Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements, Constrained Locations

- **Why Alter Parking Areas?**

- Improved circulation and access
- Easier maintenance
- Staging for emergency response
- Safety
- Accommodate future potential transit use
- Formalized parking reduces environmental impacts, such as erosion and social trails



- **Which parking areas are affected?**

- Maple Grove Picnic Area (Winter Gate)
- White Bridge Picnic Area
- Elbow Fork Trailhead
- Alexander Basin Trailhead
- Upper Big Water Trailhead
- Informal Parking Areas

Proposed Improvements: Parking Area Improvements

Winter Gate Parking Area

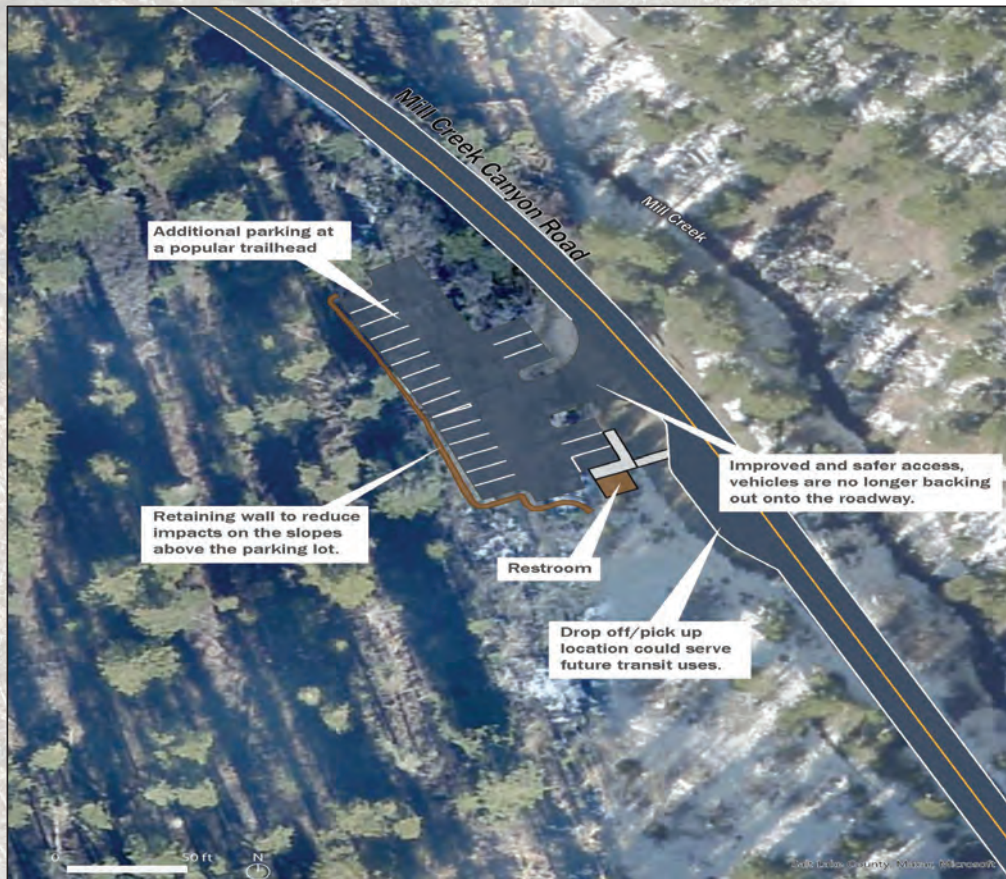


Elbow Fork Trailhead / Parking Area

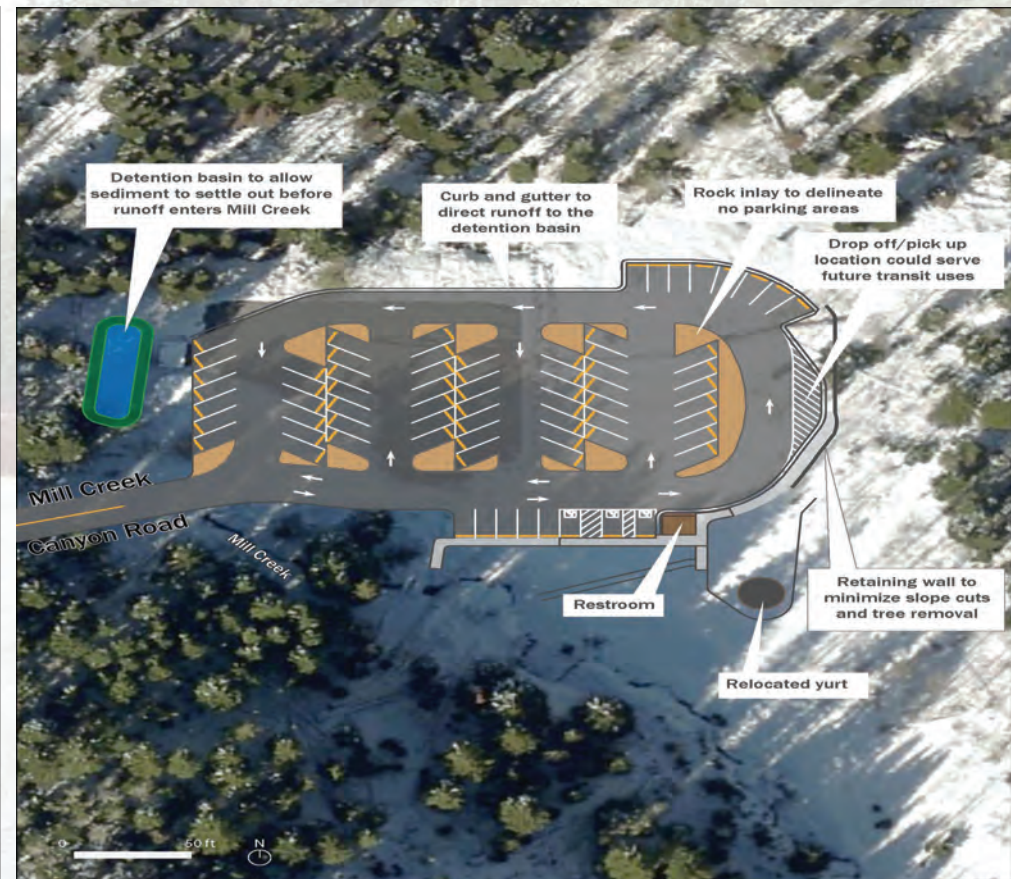


Proposed Improvements: Parking at Winter Gate & Elbow Fork Trailhead

Alexander Basin Trailhead / Parking Area



Upper Big Water Trailhead / Parking Area



Proposed Improvements: Parking at Alexander Basin & Upper Big Water Trailheads

- Air Quality
- Archeology
- Architectural History
- Aquatic Resources
- Biological Resources
- Environmental Justice
- Floodplains
- Land use
- Noise
- Paleontology
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Water quality
- Section 4(f)
- Section 6(f)
- Visual
- Roadless areas

Resource reports include:

- Aquatic Resources Delineation Report
- Archeological Resources Report
- Architectural Resources Report
- Cultural Resources Report (for public)
- Biological Resources Report (for public)
- Other Resources Report (for public), which includes aquatic resources, land use, visual resources, recreation and access

- **Floodplains**

- Zone A 100-year floodplain around Mill Creek
- Anticipate no rise in flood elevations with drainage improvements



- **Water Quality**

- Key resources include:
 - Mill Creek and its tributaries
- Preliminary considerations:
 - Temporary water quality concerns during construction
 - Decreased erosion from improved drainage
 - Water quality treatment at parking lots

- **Land Use**

- Key resources include:
 - Plan consistency
 - Existing land uses
 - Inventory Roadless Areas (IRAs)
- Preliminary considerations:
 - Road improvements are consistent with planning goals
 - Modification of easement between the County and USFS
 - Encroachment into IRAs
 - Modification of uses due to expanded parking lots



Mt Aire and Mt Olympus Inventoried Roadless Areas



- **Schedule**

- Publish EA and finish preliminary design in Summer/Fall 2023
- Following environmental review, next steps include:
 - Finish final design (2024)
 - Obtain permits (2024)
 - Advertise and award project
 - Begin construction, est. 2024/2025

- **Public Outreach**

- Public Meeting #3
 - Meeting materials will be available online on June 15, 2023
 - Comment period is June 3 through July 3, 2023
 - Please provide written comments
 - Ongoing consideration of comments
- Environmental Assessment
 - 30-day comment period

Questions / Answers – General Input

Please provide input by July 3, 2023.

Your input will be considered throughout the design and environmental process.

Fill out a comment card tonight.

- Email: millcreekroad@slco.org
- By mail: Salt Lake County Regional Development, c/o Helen Peters, 2001 S. State Street S2-100, PO Box 144575, Salt Lake City, UT 84114
- Project Websites:
<https://slco.org/millcreekcanyon> and <https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/projects/ut/flap-sla-10-1>

What comments and questions do you have?



Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project

*Public Meeting No. 3, June 13 (virtual) and June 14 (in person)
Environmental Review Process and
Preliminary Design Update*



▪ Agenda

- ✓ Project Background
- ✓ Activities to Date
- ✓ Design Update
- ✓ Environmental Update
- ✓ Schedule
- ✓ Next steps



Source: Salt Lake Tribune



Project Background

- **Project Partners**

- Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD)
- Salt Lake County
- Millcreek
- US Forest Service (USFS), Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest



- **FHWA Federal Lands Access Program**

- Improve transportation facilities on or adjacent to federal lands
- Emphasis on high-use federal recreation sites
- Supplements state and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities
- Federal and local match: costs are split between federal and local project partners

Project Partners and the Federal Lands Access Program

- **Purpose**

- Enhance access and safety for motorists and recreationists using upper Mill Creek Canyon Road

- **Needs to Address**

- Deteriorating road condition
- Variable road width
- Lack of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- Informal roadside parking that causes safety concerns



Purpose & Need / Project Location



Activities to Date

- **Public Meetings**

- Two public open houses to gather input (Nov. 2021, May 2022)
- Cabin Association coordination

- **Agency Meetings and Involvement**

- FHWA-CFLHD and USFS coordination
- Utah SHPO coordination

- **Preliminary Design**

- Survey
- Concept development
- Ongoing refinements
- Site reviews



Activities to Date

- **NEPA Class of Action**
 - Environmental Assessment
- **Environmental Studies**
 - Aquatic resources (streams, wetlands)
 - Archeological resources
 - Architectural resources
 - Biological resources
 - Other resources, such as land use and Inventoried Roadless Areas, visual resources, recreation and access





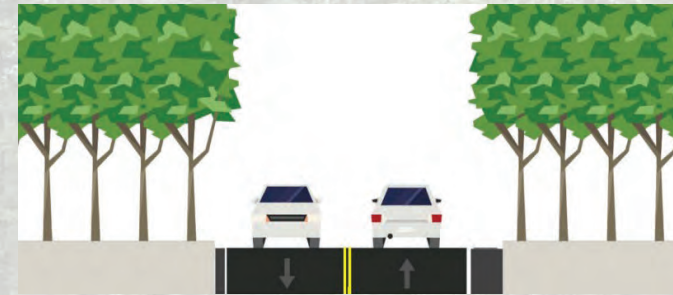
Design Update

- **Proposed Improvements**
 - Roadway improvements
 - Parking area improvements
 - Bridge, culvert, and drainage improvements
 - Other improvements
 - Striping and signing
 - Trail connections
 - Sight distance improvements
 - Communications conduit

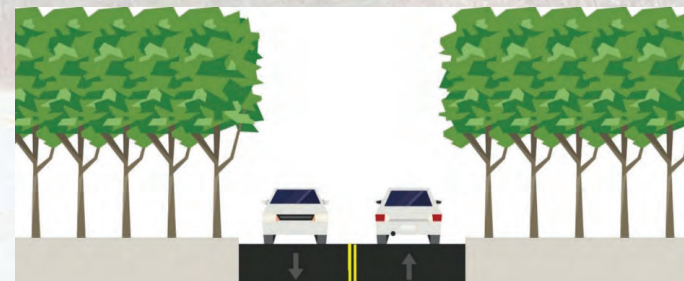
Design Considerations

- ✓ Does it meet the purpose and need?
- ✓ Does it minimize environmental impacts?
- ✓ Does it enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety?
- ✓ Does it improve driver expectation?
- ✓ Can it be built?
- ✓ How much does it cost?

- **Conceptual Design**
 - 29-foot-wide road, Winter Gate to Elbow Fork
 - 24-foot-wide road, Elbow Fork Trailhead to Upper Big Water Trailhead
- **Early Design**
 - 18-foot-wide road
 - 20-foot-wide road
 - 24-foot-wide road
 - Bicycle advisory lanes



24-foot roadway with 10-foot lanes with a 1-foot shoulder and 3-foot shoulder



Narrowest Roadway Concept: 20-feet wide with 10-foot lanes, no shoulders

Concepts Considered

- **Three proposed roadway widths:**
 - Winter Gate to Elbow Fork, **24 feet wide**
 - Elbow Fork to Upper Big Water Trailhead **20 feet wide**
 - At three constrained locations **18 feet wide**



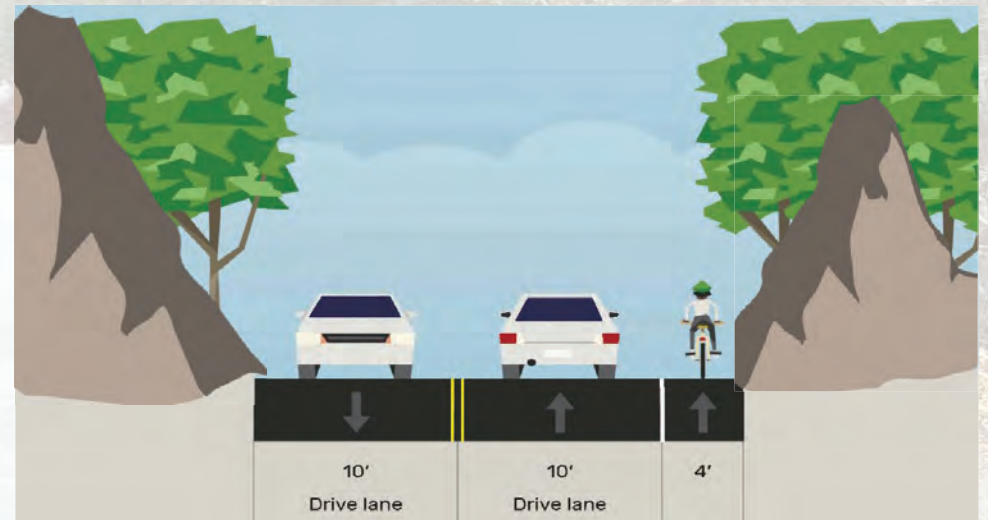
Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements Overview

- **Existing**

- 1.4 miles long
- Width varies from 16 to 24 feet

- **Proposed**

- 24-foot-wide roadway
 - Two 10-foot travel lanes
 - One 4-foot bicycle lane on the uphill side
- Curve widening



Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements, Winter Gate to Elbow Fork

- **Existing**

- 3.2 miles long
- Width varies from 13 to 20 feet

- **Proposed**

- 20-foot-wide roadway
 - Two 10-foot travel lanes
 - Curve widening
- Minimizes impacts in the narrower upper canyon



Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements, Elbow Fork to Upper Big Water Trailhead

- **Existing**

- Road near Firs Cabins, Thousand Springs, stone bridges, and “beaver pond”

- **Proposed**

- 18-foot-wide roadway
- Two 9-foot travel lanes
- A narrower road results in fewer impacts to the natural environment



Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements, Constrained Locations

- **Why Alter Parking Areas?**

- Improved circulation and access
- Easier maintenance
- Staging for emergency response
- Safety
- Accommodate future potential transit use
- Formalized parking reduces environmental impacts, such as erosion and social trails



- **Which parking areas are affected?**

- Maple Grove Picnic Area (Winter Gate)
- White Bridge Picnic Area
- Elbow Fork Trailhead
- Alexander Basin Trailhead
- Upper Big Water Trailhead
- Informal Parking Areas

Proposed Improvements: Parking Area Improvements

Winter Gate Parking Area

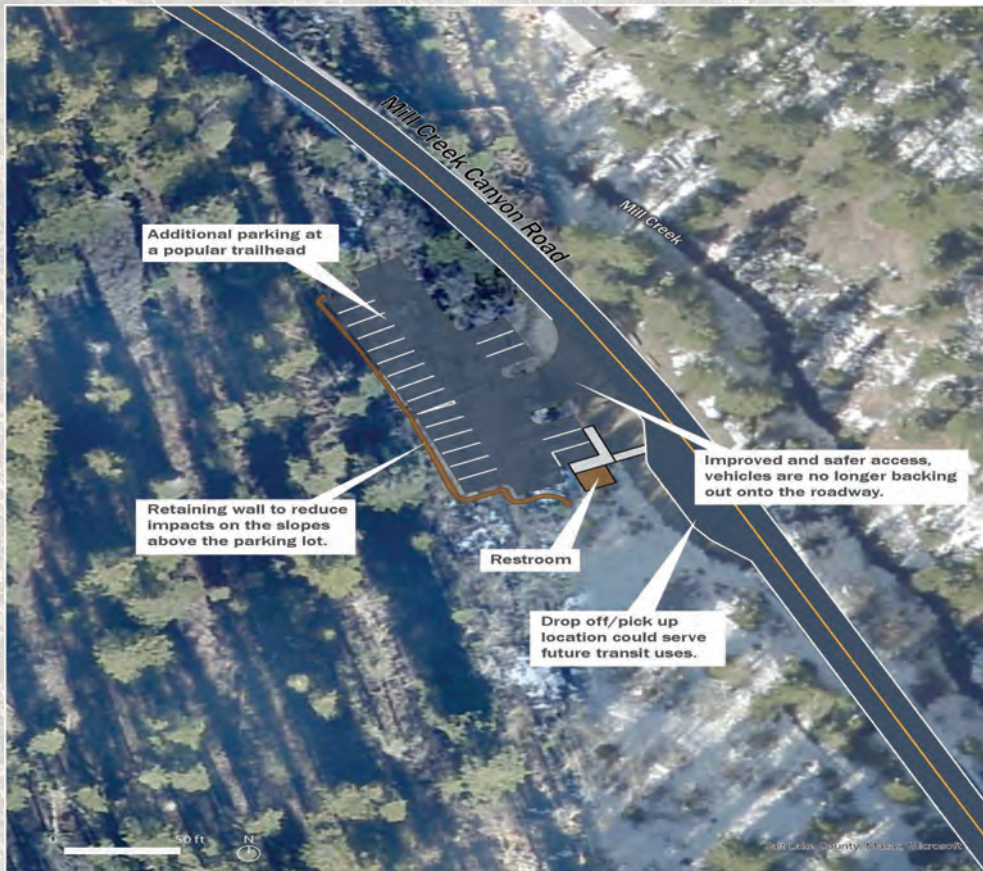


Elbow Fork Trailhead / Parking Area

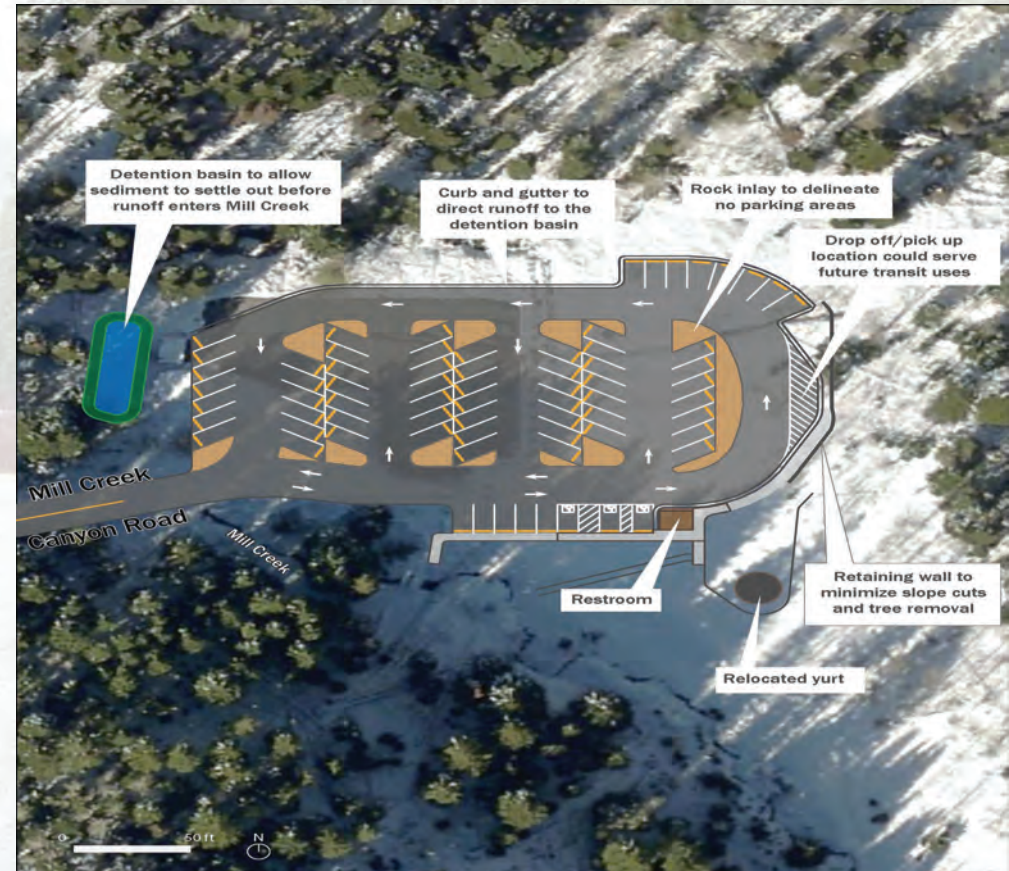


Proposed Improvements: Parking at Winter Gate & Elbow Fork Trailhead

Alexander Basin Trailhead / Parking Area



Upper Big Water Trailhead / Parking Area



Proposed Improvements: Parking at Alexander Basin & Upper Big Water Trailheads

- **White Bridge replacement**

- New bridge railing being designed to match the existing railing

- **Culverts**

- **Water Quality Features**

- Detention basins
- Swales
- Curb and Gutter
- Ditches



Proposed Improvements: Bridge, Culvert, and Drainage Improvements

- **Other Associated Features and Improvements**
 - Striping and signing
 - Crosswalks
 - Pedestrian and bicyclist specific signage
 - Trail connections
 - Sight distance improvements
 - Conduit for future communication
 - Speed limit and other operations - unchanged



Proposed Improvements: Associated Improvements

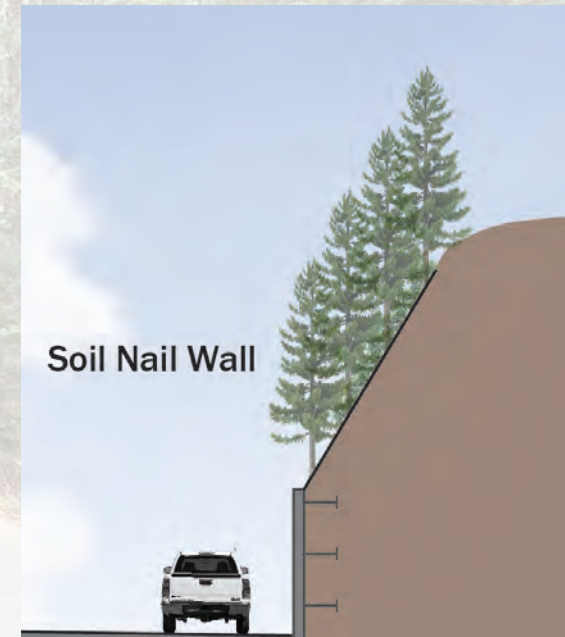
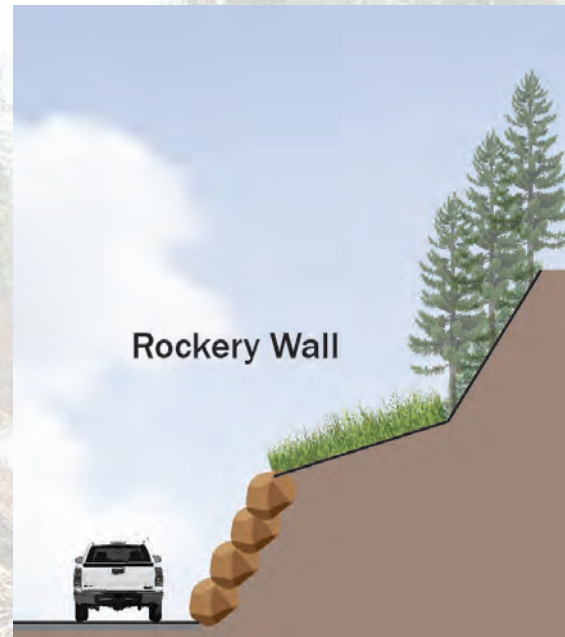
- **Retaining Walls**

- **Rockery Walls**

- Constructed of boulders
 - Require shallow slopes above them, so slope flattening and clearing may be required

- **Soil Nail Wall**

- Can be rock faced
 - Can hold steeper slopes above, so less clearing





Environmental Update

- **Environmental Assessment (EA)**

- In response to public input, FHWA-CFLHD will prepare an EA
- The EA will describe the proposed action and present environmental consequences of the preliminary design
- Public will have an opportunity to review the EA before any decision is made on the project
- FHWA-CFLHD will prepare its decision document after the EA public review period

Criteria for Consideration

- Beneficial and adverse effects
- Concerns with public health or safety
- Impacts to sensitive resources, such as federally listed species, wetlands, and historic properties
- Individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts
- Public concerns related to environmental issues

- Air Quality
- Archeology
- Architectural History
- Aquatic Resources
- Biological Resources
- Environmental Justice
- Floodplains
- Land use
- Noise
- Paleontology
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Water quality
- Section 4(f)
- Section 6(f)
- Visual
- Roadless areas

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- **Historic Resources**

- Eligible historic resources are also Section 4(f) properties
- Key resources include:
 - Firs Cabins
 - White Bridge
 - Several smaller bridges
- Preliminary considerations:
 - Visibility of proposed retaining walls from some cabins
 - Replacement of White Bridge
 - Modification of a stone bridge
 - No modifications to any cabin properties or other bridges



Architectural Resources

- **Archeological Resources**

- Key resources include:
 - Mill Creek Canyon Road
 - Mill Creek Hydroelectric System
- Preliminary considerations
 - Modifications to Mill Creek Canyon Road
 - No modification to the Hydroelectric System



- **Recreation and Access**

- Designated recreation sites are also Section 4(f) properties
- Key resources include:
 - Picnic areas
 - Trailheads
 - Trails
- Preliminary considerations
 - Canyon access during and after construction
 - Improved access at parking areas
 - Modifications to trails and trailheads
 - No changes to recreation uses or opportunities



- **Biological Resources**

- Key resources include:
 - USFS sensitive species (several plants and aquatic wildlife)
 - Riparian habitat
 - Streams and wetlands (waters of the U.S.)
 - Invasive plants
- Preliminary considerations:
 - Minor habitat disturbance along road
 - Potential impacts to sensitive plants
 - Discharge of fill and other work in streams/wetlands
 - Potential spread of invasive plants



Biological Resources

- **Floodplains**

- Zone A 100-year floodplain around Mill Creek
- Anticipate no rise in flood elevations with drainage improvements



- **Water Quality**

- Key resources include:
 - Mill Creek and its tributaries
- Preliminary considerations:
 - Temporary water quality concerns during construction
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What comments and questions do you have?

Upper Mill Creek Canyon Federal Land Access Project

Public Comment Period 3 - Summary

Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in coordination with the USDA Forest Service, Salt Lake County, and Millcreek, is proposing improvements to Mill Creek Canyon Road. The Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements project begins at the Winter Gate and proceeds east 4.6 miles, passing Elbow Fork, and ending at the Upper Big Water Trailhead.

Public Outreach and Comments Received

- The project team hosted the third open house both virtually and in-person on June 13th and 14th, 2023 respectively. At these Open Houses they reviewed the project background, activities to date, the preliminary design and the newly released environmental documents.
- Public comments were accepted from June 4, 2023 to July 10, 2023 - the deadline was extended once to accommodate the July 4th holiday.
- In total the Office of Regional Development received 196 comments during this period. They were received via an online form and email, as well as by physical comment cards or mail.

Sentiment Received and Responses

Residents were able to provide comments via an online form, email, physical mail and comment cards at open house. Below are the comments we received during the public comment period of June 4th - July 10th. [You can read the full list of comments \(and a couple comments in the form of attached files\) here.](#)

In addition, we've broken down key themes found across the various comments received below and provided a draft response.

- Parking Lot – Both positive about moving parking off the road and negative about the size of the lots, specifically Upper Big Water Parking Lot
- Road Widening and Straightening (Speed of Vehicles) - Lots of comments about a consistent 9' lane past elbow fork
- Bike Lane – Decrease vehicle lane to a consistent 9' lane and add a smaller bike lane past elbow fork
- Cabin Access and Privacy
- Bathrooms and Infrastructure
- Safety
- Canyon Closure
- Environmental Concerns
- Retaining Walls (Height, number and look)
- Communications (Cellular)
- Operational

Parking Lot Issues

- While it is great to get more people into nature, turning the area into a parking lot is not healthy for the forest and lessens the experience for the user.
- If parking helps Picnic sites it will be an improvement
- “Do not expand the road or parking or allow any additional buildings past the Winter Gate in Mill Creek Canyon.”
- The parking improvements seem reasonable, especially at Alexander and Big Water.
- Is Jon Pedersen’s comment about not increasing parking, just relocating it, completely accurate? What statistics do you have regarding the number of vehicles in the canyon in the summer and where the vehicles are parked?
- Please expand the parking at the winter gate as much as possible: it is always terribly overcrowded.
- I am concerned about the pattern of closing user-created parking as justification for expanding parking lots - The 2003 Forest Plan clearly states that no additional parking should be created in order to protect the resources and water.
- More parking means more people in this small canyon and a larger negative impact on trails, plants, the stream and wildlife.
- I am concerned about the pattern of closing user-created parking as justification for expanding parking lots
- I applaud removing the impromptu parking spaces at Elbow Fork and creating a new parking area down canyon as proposed. But the parking area as depicted will add to significant foot and bike traffic in the already highly congested Elbow Fork area.
- I don't like the placement of the new Elbow Fork parking area. That stretch of road is super steep and cars exiting the parking would make a conflict with cyclists
- Removing pullover areas along the canyon will also restrict the ability for anglers to fish along the canyon river. It is also a resource for people who drive up the canyon to simply pull over and relax. It may be beneficial to leave them functional along the roadway and pave them when necessary.

Response

We understand and appreciate your concerns about potential impacts on the natural environment, user experience, and the balance between maintaining the beauty of the canyon and providing necessary access and parking.

We acknowledge the need for sufficient parking to accommodate visitors, but also recognize the importance of limiting our footprint on the natural environment.

Please know that the proposal is not final and modifications may be made based on public input. We will continue to review the Forest Plan and existing data on vehicle usage and parking patterns in the canyon to inform our decisions, and we will strive to ensure that any changes do not negatively impact the canyon’s wildlife, vegetation, or water resources.

As we proceed, we will take into account the diverse needs and perspectives of all stakeholders, including cyclists, anglers, and those who enjoy the serenity of the canyon. We value your input and

encourage everyone to stay engaged in this process. Thank you again for your comments and commitment to preserving the beauty and accessibility of Mill Creek Canyon.

Issues with widening the road/Narrow Feel of the Canyon

- Widening the road for increased vehicle traffic is a bad idea.
- Design will increase vehicle speed
- Wider road will mean faster traffic
- Widening of road has been needed for awhile
- Apprehension about widening of road but acknowledgment that something has to happen. Only widen road where absolutely necessary. Narrow is better
- I fear that widening the upper road and making other changes will destroy the beauty of the canyon that has been so well preserved.
- I oppose enabling more private vehicle use to the Big Water trailhead. It is simply not appropriate in this canyon
- Upper Millcreek is just about perfect the way it is, the undeveloped natural feel is what makes it great.
- I do not want to see any changes to the current road width. Repair the road as needed, but leave the road with as is.
- 9-foot lanes, instead of the proposed 10-foot lanes, are not only legal, they are more appropriate for a recreation-centric mountain/canyon road.

Response

We understand and respect your concerns about maintaining the natural beauty and tranquil atmosphere of the canyon.

We want to reassure you that our primary goal is to ensure safety and accessibility, while preserving the unique character of the area. The road design has already been narrowed from its initial concept in response to feedback like yours.

Balancing the need for improvements with preservation of the canyon's ambiance is a challenge we take seriously. We appreciate your suggestions and will continue to consider them as we refine our plans. Your engagement in this process is invaluable.

Lane Size Considerations

- Have the designers considered narrowing the driving lanes - but maintaining the planned width? 10' driving lanes mean people drive fast endangering pedestrians and bikers.
- I really prefer the narrower road alternative in the upper canyon, that is 20 foot and less in places. This is because, as a biker, I would rather share the road with slower traffic than ride a 3 foot bike lane with cars going by faster on the wider road.
- I think the road widening should be kept to a minimum above Elbow Fork

- Widening the road from the winter gate to Elbow Fork to 29 feet and 24 feet from Elbow Fork to Big Water Trailhead to improve line of sight for vehicles both increases vehicle speed and reduces safety in this multi-use canyon
- This also invites more vehicles into this upper canyon section and exacerbates the very issues we are trying to address - why? Why not leave such access for those capable of reaching it by non-motorized means?
- Wants minimum road legal width 10 ft wide travel lanes
- the alternating road widths might make sharing the roadway with cyclists more difficult.
- A resounding NO to plans to widen the road above the winter gate.
- The project team should look at taking the narrowest width introduced (18 feet) and implementing it consistently throughout the upper canyon.

Response

Thank you for sharing your concerns and suggestions about the proposed lane sizes for the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements. We understand that the size of the lanes can significantly impact speed, safety, and the overall experience for all canyon users.

Your feedback is crucial as we strive to balance accessibility, safety, and preservation of the canyon's natural environment. In addition, we strive to provide a Consistent feel and expectations of users within the canyon. Be assured that we are taking into account all these factors as we continue to refine our plans.

Bike Lane

- Love bike lane to elbow fork, a lot want it to go all way up
- Uphill Bike/pedestrian lane should be included
- Any negative comments about the bike lane?
- Wants a bike tool station in the canyon
- I do not want to see bike use becoming a priority and other users' needs are not considered as much
- I would like to advocate for a full bike lane all the way to Little Water trailhead.
- Need bike lane from elbow fork to big water if built.
- Think about how signage and roadway paint may be able to give a wide shoulder for cyclists and warn cars to share the road. This is especially important around curves with limited sight lines. Maybe an extra foot or two of the shoulder could keep it safer for cyclists in those spots where feasible.
- Wants a minimum legal 4 ft wide uphill bike lane all the way up the canyon
- build a separate green way going up Mill Creek for road bikes
- The addition of a 4 foot shoulder for cyclists would only dissuade motorists from exercising extra caution around cyclists that comes from actively sharing the lane.

- I and many people I know ride all the way up to big water and even a 2ft uphill bike lane with 9ft auto lanes would make riding up much safer.
- A 4-foot bike lane to Elbow Fork is great, but eliminating any bike lane, or a wide shoulder, from Elbow Fork to the top is nonsensical at best and necessarily dangerous at worst.
- The lack of a bike lane above Elbow Fork or even a 2-foot shoulder for uphill bicyclists is a glaring omission in the plan. It creates an unsafe situation. A presenter commented on June 14th, 2023, that few bicyclists go above Elbow Fork. If you have study data that supports this, it should be presented.
- Striping narrow roadways with bicycle lanes on both sides and with no center stripe(s) for vehicles, is done extensively throughout Europe, even on winding roads. They most commonly use dashed lines of bright colors, such as red, to demarcate the bicycle lanes, although sometimes they use a different color of asphalt for the bicycle lanes. See the attached photo from Germany as an example. Therefore, this approach does not seem "experimental" as stated at the presentation

Response

Thank you for providing your valuable insights and suggestions regarding the proposed bike lanes as part of the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements. We understand that cycling is an important aspect of the canyon experience for many visitors, and we appreciate your thoughtful input on how to enhance this.

We are considering all feedback, including the desire for more extensive bike lanes, the need for safety measures, and the balance between catering to cyclists and other users. Your specific suggestions such as tool stations, signage, and international examples are greatly appreciated and will be examined closely.

Please know that our priority is to create a safe and enjoyable environment for all users while preserving the natural beauty of the canyon. We are committed to refining our plans with your valuable feedback in mind.

Firs Cabin Concerns

- Appreciate consideration for cabin access
- Okay will no access if project is completed on time
- Will new road increase visibility of cabins due to vegetation removal
- Will changes cause changes to noise pollution
- We are concerned about the limited or loss of access to our cabins. We would like to recommend that as much of the construction as possible take place during October, November and December when we are not using our cabins and the weather is often still compatible with construction work in the canyon.
- Please consider allowing access on more weekends if possible
- Please plan to minimize as much as possible the removal of trees/vegetation that provide cover between the road and the cabins. Request especially that fir trees on the stream side of the road not be removed.
- We ask that the Project be designed specifically to better accommodate Cabin Owner access along the upper canyon road during construction.

- Make Cabin Owner vehicle access on the upper road a primary element of Project planning, funding, bidding, and construction requirements.
- Ask Project bidders to propose both no cost and low-cost proposals to provide Cabin Owner vehicle access during more than just five holiday weekends. If you don't make this a bidding requirement, then no bidder will make a creative proposal. Make these creative proposals one measure of selecting the successful bidder.
- Cabin Owners Project Coordinating Committee
- Once the Project is finalized and construction is underway, a system should be set up so Project leads (including Salt Lake County) can communicate consistently with Cabin Owners and receive Cabin Owner input about upper road construction and access issues. A prearranged committee (one representative from The Firs is sufficient) will save Project leads and Cabin Owners time and money and will help to mitigate the outsized impacts the Project will cause to Cabin Owners.
- The idea to only impose a hardship on the special permit holders of the FIRS not only violates the policy of the Forest Service, but also violates the intent of the Permits. While the bid process has not even begun, closing the canyon would violate policy and permits. It is also unnecessary.
- I would ask to help not restrict the flow of traffic around our entry and exit gates is to plan to keep a generous car length pull out between our gate and the road so we can open and close the gate without having the back of our vehicle in the roadway.

Response

Thank you for sharing your concerns and suggestions about the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements, particularly in relation to cabin access. We understand that maintaining access to your cabins and preserving the natural surroundings are important to you.

We're considering all feedback as we finalize our plans. Your suggestions about timing construction to minimize disruption, maintaining as much vegetation as possible, and ensuring clear communication with cabin owners are all valuable insights.

We assure you that our aim is to implement the project with as minimal impact as possible for cabin owners and other users of the canyon, while enhancing safety and accessibility. We appreciate your engagement and will continue to take your feedback into account as we move forward with the project.

Bathrooms & improved infrastructure are important

- Welcome in the plans are the additions of swales and detention basins to collect and filter stormwater. Why no such feature at the White Bridge parking lot?
- Good bathrooms to keep human waste is a great idea.

Response

Thank you for your feedback on the proposed Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements, particularly regarding the addition of swales, detention basins, and bathrooms as part of the infrastructure upgrades.

We appreciate your acknowledgement of our stormwater management efforts and your suggestion for a similar feature at the White Bridge parking lot will be taken into consideration. Similarly, your support for improved restroom facilities aligns with our commitment to enhance the visitor experience while ensuring environmental responsibility.

Safety Concerns

- This plan does not adequately address the safety of non-motorized users which was by far the number one concern voiced in the previous public comments. (Related to bike lane ending at Elbow Fork)
- It looks like the improvements are for car traffic mostly. The new road will make it more dangerous for bikes.
- I disagree that widening the road will improve safety - I am in favor of the 18-20 foot proposal.
- How many accidents or incidents have been recorded in the upper canyon? Is the safety concern based on actual statistics or other information?
- Widening the road will encourage cars to go even faster in the canyon, endangering wildlife, hikers and cyclists.
- Please do not put those recreating in the canyon at risk by reducing the bike lane, widening the road, or straightening the road. It will only increase danger for everyone in the canyon without benefit.
- If safety is most important, DO NOT make 10 ft wide, straight lanes with no bike lane! Safety = protected bike lane, skinny car lanes, winding roads that naturally reduce vehicle speed.
- You guys are really trying to kill cyclists with this plan, wider roads mean higher speeds, more angry drivers when we get in spots where we need to take the lane, and more close calls when drivers try to squeeze past us without entering the other lane. A bike lane up to elbow fork sounds great, but on a windy mountain road you can't trust drivers to stay out of it.
- The alternating road widths might make sharing the roadway with cyclists more difficult.
- One of the stated goals of this project is to improve driver expectations in the canyons by widening the road and eliminating blind turns, thus improving safety. With that said, I worry that creating a road with varying widths may create dangerous conditions for other users of the road.

Response

Thank you for your thoughtful feedback on the proposed Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements. We understand your concerns about the safety of non-motorized users, particularly cyclists, in relation to the proposed changes.

We assure you that safety is a top priority in our plans. We are carefully considering all comments, including those advocating for narrower lanes, winding roads, and protected bike lanes, as well as concerns about increased vehicle speed with wider roads.

Your questions about accident statistics and the impact of varying road widths are very important. They will be thoroughly addressed as we continue to refine our plans.

Our goal is to improve access and safety for all users while preserving the natural beauty of the canyon.

Road Straightening

- I think you are remiss in not defining exactly what "curve widening" and "sight distance improvements" mean. Does this mean you are going to try to straighten out many of the curves? The curves and its narrowness are part of Millcreek's charm.
- The reduced widening/straightening of the road will hopefully also keep vehicular traffic at reasonably slow speeds--thus increasing the safety of cyclists and pedestrians in the area.
- Please don't widen the roads and straighten the roads, or at least minimize it for practical concerns like drainage
- To keep recreationists safe, it is crucial to maintain 4 foot bike lanes throughout the length of the canyon, and not widen or straighten the road. Widening and straightening the road will increase drivers' speeds, putting cyclists, runners, and all other pedestrians at greater risk.
- If safety is most important, DO NOT make 10 ft wide, straight lanes with no bike lane! Straight big lanes like the highway allow people to blow past the speed limit.
- As someone driving down the road I do not want a straighter wider road that just encourages people to go faster and lead them to more likely end up in my lane or off the shoulder.
- Wider lanes and straighter roads encourage higher speeds, contradicting the original goal of increasing safety.
- I think the main goal of the Millcreek improvement should be recreation based. Millcreek does not need more cars or excessively wide lanes. If the road is straightened, cars will go faster.
- straighter roads promote faster speeds
- The drive up to the top of Millcreek is lovely and it would be shame to create straighter, wider roads to create easier passage for cars.
- Do NOT widen or straighten any roads in the upper canyons as this will results in increased vehicle speeds and more hazardous conditions.
- Keep or widen bike lanes. Don't straighten the road.
- Widening lanes and straightening the road in Upper Mill Creek will DECREASE safety, not increase it.
- If sight lines are to be improved for vehicles then additional countermeasures must be added to ensure that average vehicle speeds do not increase, thereby resulting in reduced safety.

Response

We appreciate your concerns about maintaining the charm and safety of Millcreek, particularly as they relate to preserving the canyon's curves and managing vehicle speeds.

Your comments highlight the importance of clear communication about what our proposed changes entail. "Curve widening" and "sight distance improvements" are measures intended to improve safety, but we appreciate that these changes must be balanced with the current character of the canyon and the needs of all users, including cyclists and pedestrians.

We hear your calls to maintain or extend planned bike lanes, keep the roads winding, and consider the impact of straighter, wider lanes on vehicle speeds. We're committed to ensuring that any improvements made do not compromise safety but enhance it.

Construction Duration Issues

- Suggestion that construction is split into two phases: Phase 1 would take place in 2025 from the snow gate to the Alexander trailhead - The upper portion would require more widening, tree removal, etc. this would be performed in 2025 and 2026.
- The idea of having it closed for two seasons seems unreasonable. Two seasons!?! If you are going to do the project, then get a company who can come in and do it as fast as possible.

Response

Thank you for sharing your concerns and suggestions about the construction timeline for the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements. We understand that minimizing disruption and completing the project efficiently is important to our community.

Your suggestion to divide the project into two phases will be taken into consideration. We understand the concern about the potential closure for two seasons. Please be assured that if such a closure becomes necessary, we would strive to ensure work is completed as quickly and efficiently as possible, while maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety.

Again, we appreciate your input and patience as we continue to refine our plans for this important project. Your engagement is crucial in helping us make the best decisions for our community. Thank you.

Environmental Concerns

- Impact to habitat, creek
- Concerns about impact to trout
- Leave the vegetation on the north side of the stream intact

- Please consider these large trees as an important component and legacy of the canyon and protect them where possible.
- Shoulder treatments should be given careful thought. Where roadside runoff will happen, put large enough stone to prevent it from eroding away and make it wide enough to minimize annual brush cutback maintenance.
- protect the stream and riparian zone
- The anticipated temporary dewatering of active channels can only spell bad news for the ecology of Mill Creek and its tributaries.
- Expanding the vehicle traffic will increase pollution and crowds.
- I am also concerned that the biological concerns are not being adequately considered. It is a delicate and very small stream and riparian corridor. The road, as it is, probably impairs that ecosystem. To widen the road would be an even greater continuous impact.
- In my opinion, the encroachment on creek and natural spring areas above elbow fork, plus the removal of trees, cannot be justified for this project.
- Hydroelectric Systems – Comments during public meetings indicate that Project coordinators are aware of the remnants of the rock and rubble dam built at Elbow Fork in the early 1900s. Project design and construction should avoid impacting those remnants and any other remnants that may exist. Urge the EA team to examine the dam, pipeline, and other project drawings and information for this location as housed at the Special Collections section of the J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah
- The EA should at least attempt to pinpoint the locations of these sawmills as part of an effort to assure that the Project does not impact any remaining sawmill artifacts.
- Efforts should be made to discover and document any information or artifacts relating to the lives of Indigenous people in the upper canyon at least along the roadway side of Mill Creek to assure that the Project takes account of those, if any.
- Please do everything possible to preserve the lush roadside vegetation and tree canopies that make the drive up Millcreek Canyon completely unique.
- Changes to the Thousand Springs area could be particularly irreparably devastating to the natural flora and fauna. Please also avoid tree removal as much as possible around Alexander Basin trail and The Firs cabins, as the existing cover from the road provided by trees in that area has already been decimated by the 2020 windstorm and other recent winds.

Response

Thank you for sharing your thoughtful concerns and suggestions regarding the environmental impact of the proposed Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements. We understand the importance of preserving the natural beauty, ecosystem, and historical artifacts in the canyon.

Your comments highlight crucial points about protecting habitats, minimizing erosion, reducing pollution, and preserving the lush roadside vegetation and tree canopies that contribute to the uniqueness of Millcreek Canyon. We acknowledge your concerns about the potential impact on the creek, trout population, and riparian zone.

We appreciate your suggestions to leave the north side vegetation intact, carefully consider shoulder treatments, and avoid impacting remnants of historical significance. Your insights on preserving indigenous artifacts are also noted.

Please be assured that we will take these concerns seriously as we refine our plans. Our goal is to balance necessary improvements with the preservation of the canyon's natural and historical assets.

Retaining Wall Comments

- I believe a limit on the height of the walls should be established and such limit should be consistent with other walls (or bridges) in the canyon. If a proposed wall would exceed the limit, then the road should not be widened in that location.
- I was in the canyon recently and saw that approximately 5' is the height of the highest wall in the canyon. I believe this wall height should be the highest wall.
- The stacked boulder retaining walls would be a lot nicer than tall soil-nailed concrete vertical retaining walls.
- Maps show where retaining walls are located in parking areas but not on the roadway. About how many miles of retaining walls will be on the roadway? My concern is that extensive use of retaining walls will change the visual impact from woody to that of a tunnel.
- minimize the appearance of large man-made structures like retaining walls
- Please minimize the use of retaining walls that would be visible from the cabin area.

Response

Thank you for sharing your perspectives on the use of retaining walls in the proposed Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements. We understand your concerns about maintaining the natural aesthetic of the canyon and minimizing the visual impact of man-made structures.

We also acknowledge your concern that an extensive use of retaining walls could change the visual experience. Furthermore, your point about minimizing the visibility of these walls from the cabin area is well taken.

Please be assured that we will consider your feedback as we refine our plans. Our goal is to strike a balance between necessary road improvements and preserving the natural charm of Millcreek Canyon.

Speeding Concerns

- I believe that rumble strips could be a very cost-effective way to get people to drive more slowly

- I am concerned that the proposed "safety improvements" to the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road will have the opposite effect and will increase the speed that cars will travel at, thereby resulting in crashes that are more severe.
- We want to keep it small and curvy enough to keep car speeds down to 30 mph

Response

We understand that maintaining a safe speed limit is crucial to the safety of all road users and the overall tranquility of the area.

We hear your concerns that certain safety improvements could inadvertently lead to increased speeds and potentially more severe accidents. Our goal is to ensure that any changes made serve to enhance safety, not compromise it.

The desire to keep the road small and curvy to maintain lower speeds aligns with many of our community's views. We are committed to taking into account these considerations as we refine our plans.

Your engagement in this process is invaluable. Thank you for participating and sharing your thoughts.

Communications Concerns

- Any chance that a cell tower repeater of some sort could be installed at the top of Murdock Peak instead of spending money on an empty conduit under the road? There are already other communications facilities up there.
- Please work on getting cell service in the canyon similar to what the Cottonwood Canyons have. It is very disconcerting for elderly people hiking in the canyon knowing it could take hours to get help in a medical emergency.

Response

Thank you for your comments regarding the need for improved cellular service in Millcreek Canyon. We understand how crucial reliable communication can be, particularly in emergency situations. That's why we are taking the time to install communications conduits throughout the canyon to improve the future communications potential within the canyon.

While our immediate focus is on the proposed Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements, we will certainly pass along your feedback to the relevant parties who will manage communications infrastructure in the area.

Operational Comments

- Tolling is good
- Add vehicle capacity limits

- Shuttle system – EV and Bike racks
- Less Car Traffic
- “Make the gate be open on the same schedule as off leash dogs.”
- leave the gate closed year round and offer a shuttle bus system to take hikers, bikers, and picnickers to the upper canyon
- better enforcement of leash laws and dog poop laws
- I don't think an odd-even day car vs. bike concept is practical.
- Utilizing a permit and parking system, implementing a shuttle, and improving pedestrian and cycling amenities to allow our communities to experience the canyon in a more natural state not requiring personal vehicles
- Could a "take a number" dispenser at the booth indicate when you arrived and you get charged at a variable rate on the way out: heavy usage times costs more than off peak and no ticket gets charged max.
- Maybe an automated traffic count sign with a chart indicating how full the canyon is at your moment of intended entry.
- Signage at the mouth of LCC indicates when parking lots are full saving would be entrants from a fruitless trip up and back.
- automated notification and vehicle restrictions when no parking was available in the upper canyon (or parking reservation requirements).
- vehicle closure every other day
- automated speed enforcement cameras
- As has been done in LCC, an electronic sign should notify drivers when parking is "full" based on the electronic count and they can decide whether to pay and hope somebody is leaving or turn around. This would require some reconfiguration at the fee station for reasonable turn around.
- Alternate car/bike days. Closing the gate every other day except to cabin owners/forest service vehicles etc.
- Perhaps the canyon can determine the number of visitors acceptable and limit entrance. A plan needs to be presented on how to manage the use of canyon.
- Someone proposed making the upper canyon similar to City Creek Canyon where bikes and motorized vehicles alternate days of the week. We are opposed to this. The canyon road and trails have been shared for years.
- What I'd like to see is maybe a reservation only situation for parking up there and or maybe only allowing cars up on off leash days

Response

Many of the comments pertained to operational changes, future canyon access management, and alternative operation solutions like a shuttle system, these aspects, while important, are beyond the scope of this specific project. However, they have been noted for future considerations in our long-term planning.

In this project, our primary focus remains on making necessary roadway improvements to enhance safety and accessibility. That said, we are also looking ahead. We're designing these improvements

with the future in mind, including potential areas for shuttle stops and conduits that could support future telecommunication enhancements and improved in-canyon connectivity.

Miscellaneous Comments

- You need to be very clear that you are closing summer road access for two consecutive years. Do not wait until complaints start and claim you have been transparent in seeking input.
- Please work on getting cell service in the canyon similar to what the Cottonwood Canyons have.
- **The State of Utah's Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office (PLPCO)** has reviewed the biological resources report and cultural resources report for the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project, DOT Project Number: UT FLAP SLA 10(1). PLPCO does not have any concerns with the findings of the biological resources report and cultural resources report and fully supports the proposed project. It appears that the proposed project is consistent with the policies and objectives of both the Utah State Resource Management Plan and Salt Lake County Resource Management Plan. Please contact our Office if we can provide any assistance.
- I believe a limit on the height of the walls should be established and such limit should be consistent with other walls (or bridges) in the canyon. If a proposed wall would exceed the limit, then the road should not be widened in that location.
- I believe that rumble strips could be a very cost-effective way to get people to drive more slowly
- Any chance that a cell tower repeater of some sort could be installed at the top of Murdock Peak instead of spending money on an empty conduit under the road? There are already other communications facilities up there.
- Why not post some information about the project at the Winter Gate? I was there yesterday and no one I talked to knew about the FLAP project. If you want comments from people who use the canyon, please offer information where those people are.
- Please evict Camp Tracy from Mill Creek Canyon and turn it into a giant park with bike trails and a green way.
- off leash dogs and the waste that is often left behind is largely unregulated currently. Please, let's use taxpayer dollars wisely to protect this asset in its current state
- In many areas above Elbow Fork, significant erosion of the stream banks is occurring as a result of the water flow being disrupted by downed timber. Please consider removal of larger tree trunks, etc that are causing bad bank erosion which will consider plaguing the road stability.
- So far during public discussions about the Project, Forest Service personnel have pledged to help Cabin Owners receive an exemption to federal cabin fees during construction years. This is welcome news. Thank you very much! I request that Salt Lake County also take whatever steps are necessary to make a similar commitment regarding property taxes. The fee AND property tax exemption would go a long way to help mitigate the impact to the unique interests of Cabin Owners.

Response

Thank you for taking the time to provide your valuable feedback on the Upper Millcreek Canyon Road Improvement Project. We appreciate hearing from our community members, and we want to assure you that all comments are taken into consideration as we continue to move forward with this project.

Positivity

- I am grateful for the FLAP funds and the opportunity to improve the environment and safety of the upper portion of Millcreek Canyon.
- The information presented at the open house on June 14, 2023, indicates that those planning the project have been listening to comments made by the public. The planners are not tone deaf to public input and progress is being made.
- Hi, I'm an owner of one of the nine Firs tract cabins that fall within the Area of Potential Effect. Thank you for the open house held last night. I very much appreciate the consideration of our access in this process. I also appreciate the overall vision of the project, and I have no problems with having reduced or even no access for two years, if it means that the project will be completed and we will then have normal access for the foreseeable future afterward.
- While I continue to have some concerns about the Project, I am pleased with the efforts that have been made to address some of the issues that have been raised by many of those who have concerns with the Project. For example, I was very encouraged to hear that a more thorough environmental assessment of the Project will be conducted. I also appreciate the collaborative tone presented at the meeting by the speakers. I am optimistic that a successful Project can be developed, but I believe it can be made even better if the Project Sponsors will engage more fully with the various interested parties who want to make Millcreek Canyon a better place for all visitors.
- Thank you! There is much needed repairs in the canyon. Anything you can do to improve the road and the canyon is greatly appreciated. Thank you! I am a weekly user of the canyon and I know I will hate all the repair trucks, but it will be worth it in the end. Thank you.
- Thanks for the open house meetings...very helpful and informative.
- Appreciate your keeping the Firs community in the loop with future changes to the construction plans.
- I appreciate the effort to maintain the unique natural character of the canyon and would like to keep that as a high priority.
- Welcome in the plans are the additions of swales and detention basins to collect and filter stormwater. Why no such feature at the White Bridge parking lot? I also appreciate more dedicated parking areas to discourage parking in the shoulder of the road, as well as retaining features to prevent road material and sediment from eroding hillsides to enter the creek.
- We appreciate any and all efforts to maintain the unique natural character of the canyon and keep that as the highest priority while adding infrastructure a future shuttle bus can utilize.

- Thanks to all the players for your thoughtful, informed efforts to come up with viable improvements to upper Millcreek. No solution will meet everyone's expectations, nor have no impact in some way or another. But the current situation is untenable, and in my view the proposed project is a nice, viable improvement. Also love the endorsement of future shuttles. I just hope that such will still provide a way for those of us who love hiking with our dogs to use the shuttle to access our favorite trails!
- The parking concepts with potential future shuttle bus drop-offs at the winter gate, Alexander, and Big Water look good. The Elbow Fork trailhead on that old home site is a great concept.
- Nice planning on vegetated parking runoff catchment basins.
- We think most of the Millcreek road, parking, bridge, trailhead, etc. improvements which have been proposed are great.

Response

We are deeply appreciative of the many positive responses we received regarding the Upper Millcreek Canyon Road Improvement Project. Your feedback is invaluable to us and it's heartening to know that our planning process has been well-received to a portion of the public.

It's your positivity and support that fuels our commitment to improving our community. Knowing that we're on the right track in our planning makes all the difference.

Frequently Asked Questions

Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What National Environmental Policy Act document was the Federal Highways Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD) proposing for this project? What type of environmental review document did the Federal Highways Administration's Central Division (FHWA-CFLHD) decide to use for this project?

For federal projects like this one, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to decide the NEPA class of action. This decision helps guide the amount of analysis and public and agency outreach is needed. In the case of this project, the team originally believed the project could be approved with a more streamlined review called a categorical exclusion, as outlined in 23 CFR § 771.117(d). However, after meeting with project partners and evaluating the high-level of public interest, it was decided to elevate the NEPA class of action to an environmental assessment.

2. What is the purpose and need for project?

The purpose of the project is to improve user safety, access to recreational opportunities for all users, and water quality degraded by surface erosion and poor drainage infrastructure.

The project is needed because Upper Mill Creek Canyon currently has traffic congestion, safety issues, and resource damage resulting from inconsistent roadway widths, limited pedestrian and bicycle facilities, substandard parking, and poor drainage infrastructure.

See Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project EA section 1.2.

3. Who makes the decision on the project? How is the Forest Service involved?

Salt Lake County has an easement to operate and maintain the roadway. This easement, which was established in 1991 under the Forest Road and Trail Act (FRTA), granted a non-exclusive 66-foot-wide easement to operate and maintain the roadway in the upper and lower portions of the canyon. The Federal Highway Administration is funding the project under the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) and is the lead federal agency making the decision on actions within the FRTA easement.

The Forest Service is a cooperating agency and has limited decision space on the Proposed Action. The Forest Service will issue a separate decision document using the FHWA-CFLHD EA to make decisions on the:

- Termination of the existing 1991 FRTA easement and authorization of a FRTA easement of similar width over NFS lands. The new easement would include additional areas that would require frequent maintenance by Salt Lake County, such as drainage features.
 - Authorization of construction on NFS lands outside of the new FRTA easement to stabilize slopes adjacent to the roadway. These areas would not require frequent maintenance by Salt Lake County.
-

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- Replacement of unsafe and environmentally damaging informal roadside parking with parking lots.
 - Proposed improvements outside of the easement, including trailheads, picnic areas, and trail relocations to connect existing trails to the relocated improvements.

4. What Alternatives were considered?

The Proposed Action and No Action Alternative were fully considered in the EA. Additional alternatives were considered but dismissed from further analysis such as increased roadway width throughout the canyon, extending the proposed bike lane to Upper Big Water Trailhead, adjusting parking areas, and more.

These were dismissed due to these actions not meeting the purpose and need of the project due to resource and safety concerns, and/or were determined to be infeasible due to physical and/or natural resource related constraints (slope, stream proximity etc.).

5. Was a shuttle system considered? What about fees, differing days, parking lot counters etc.?

While these operational changes have the potential to reduce congestion and improve user safety in upper Mill Creek Canyon, they do not address existing erosion issues or the inadequate drainage infrastructure. The ability of these operational considerations to improve recreational access varies, and many of them would restrict access to certain user groups, which is counter to improving recreational opportunities. Furthermore, the current degraded state of the roadway, erosion issues, and inadequate drainage infrastructure must be addressed regardless of whether shuttles and/or other operational changes are considered in canyon.

As proposed, the project would not inhibit the implementation of any of these operational considerations in the future and would serve to facilitate the implementation of shuttle service.

However, these and similar types of operational considerations are beyond the scope of this project and fail to fully meet the project's purpose and need; thus, they were excluded from further analysis in this EA.

The Forest Service and FHWA-CFLHD decisions on the Proposed Action do not preclude any future decisions the Forest Service and/or Salt Lake County may make regarding public transit or other visitor use or vehicle management systems such as timed-entry, permits, etc. in Mill Creek Canyon.

Proponents of a shuttle system in Mill Creek Canyon should continue to advocate for such a system through local interest groups, Salt Lake County, and the Forest Service.

6. How will this road width compare to other canyons?

The 10-foot-wide lanes proposed in Upper Mill Creek Canyon would generally be narrower than those in adjacent canyons. For comparison, standard highway lanes like those in Little and Big Cottonwood Canyons are 12 feet wide. The narrowest lane width recommended by the Utah Department of Transportation for any road is 10 feet (Design Manual Drawing No. DM 4.1).

Similarly, federal lane-width guidance for rural and urban collector roads is 10 to 12 feet (A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets). The road shoulders would also be narrower than those found in adjacent canyons, contributing to an overall roadway width that is less than the roads in these comparison canyons.

7. How will the character of the canyon change?

The widening of Mill Creek Canyon Road would result in a roadway that looks similar to the existing road in many areas. Some areas would require cut slopes, fill slopes, and retaining walls to stabilize slopes adjacent to sections of the existing and realigned roadway, many of which would be visible to motorists and recreationists travelling through the project area.

In many areas, vegetation overhangs the road, especially in the upper canyon. Vegetation removal required for the reconstructed roadway could result in a more open viewshed as seen by roadway users in some areas. While the reconstructed road would involve minor realignments, it would follow natural topographic contours and visually fit in with the landscape in much the same way as the existing road.

Independent from the Upper Mill Creek Road Improvement Project, the Forest Service is planning a fuels reduction project in Mill Creek Canyon. The fuels project will remove some vegetation along the existing roadway to improve wildfire resiliency in the canyon, including the removal of diseased and hazard trees adjacent to the roadway.

While there would be visual changes associated with the Proposed Action, the anticipated visual impacts would be consistent with the landscape character and Scenic Integrity Objectives defined by the Forest Service for the analysis area. Aesthetic considerations and context-sensitive design elements would further contribute to reducing visual impacts and maintaining the current level of scenic integrity throughout the analysis area.

8. Upper Mill Creek Canyon naturally lends itself to reduced vehicle speed because of the narrow roadway and multiple uses. Will the increased road width and bike lane result in increased vehicle speed in the canyon?

The speed limit in the canyon would not increase as part of this project. Lane widths in the upper and lower portions of the project area would be made more consistent (10 feet throughout most of the project area, as described in Section 2.2.1 of the EA), which would increase the predictability and safety for all users. Many portions of the roadway already meet the design widths and would not be widened.

Increased lane width can increase operational speeds, although this relationship is complex and dependent on several other variables. A [FHWA report](#) notes that operational speeds tend to increase approximately 0.4 to 1.1 mph on two-lane highways for every 1-foot increase in lane width. Applying this to the Proposed Action, where lane width increases vary between 0 and 3.5 feet (assuming an average increase of 1.75 feet), the anticipated speed increase compared to existing conditions would be about 0.7 to 2 mph. The safety benefits associated with consistent lane width, increased sight distance, constant radius curves, and consistent striping are predicted to outweigh the expected nominal increase in average vehicle speed.

Further, as evidence of the success of bicycle lanes increasing safety, the Wasatch Canyons General Plan Update notes that the uphill bicycle lane added in lower Mill Creek Canyon in 2018 successfully

mitigated conflicts in that area. Studies cited by FHWA found that bicycle lane additions can reduce crashes on collector and local roads by 30%.

9. How was appropriate lane width determined?

Lane widths were designed using guidance in state and federal design manuals such as the AASHTO Green Book, A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, and the Utah Department of Transportation's Roadway Design Manual.

Considering the design speed, traffic volume, and width of many emergency vehicles (9.5 feet, including mirrors), the proposed 10-foot lane width is the minimum practical width. The design uses this minimum practical lane width to intentionally keep the roadway narrow to preserve the character of the canyon, reduce environmental impacts, and discourage excessive speeds while meeting project objectives.

10. What other cyclist safety improvements would be made?

Bicycle safety features proposed in the project include bike lane symbols, sharrows, and yield arrows using thermoplastic pavement markings with glass beads. Thermoplastic pavement markings are known for their durability and longevity, remaining visible and vibrant far longer than paint even in high-traffic areas.

11. How long will Mill Creek Canyon Road, above the Winter Gate, be closed for as part of these proposed changes? Why would the project take this amount of time vs. alternative options (e.g. a partial closure)?

Construction of the upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project is anticipated to take from Spring 2025 through Fall 2026 to complete. The construction season would start as soon as seasonal snowpack is receding and conditions are suitable for construction activities. Construction start is anticipated in May 2025, conditions allowing, and would continue until winter conditions halt construction, likely around December 1.

The project team evaluated all proposed alternative methods of construction without a road closure. Constructability and safety are primary considerations for the road closures. Due to the limited existing roadway width and tight confines of the canyon, there isn't sufficient space to pass construction equipment, stage materials off the roadway, and only limited opportunity to perform concurrent construction activities. To minimize impacts of the road closures on canyon users the trails will remain open to the extent practical, Firs Cabin access will be allowed at designated times, and the road will be open for snow grooming and normal winter recreation during a winter shutdown of construction activities.

12. Will the public be notified of temporary road and trail closures? How would this occur?

The construction contractor would be responsible for preparing and implementing a traffic control plan with public noticing. Salt Lake County and the Forest Service will also post updates at physical locations in the canyon, on agency websites, and on social media regarding trail and traffic closures in the canyon

during the project. The Forest Service would be responsible for posting signs along trails at major intersections and trailheads before construction. Information will be available at the Mill Creek Canyon fee booth to inform the public of the planned and current trail detours and closures.

13. How can I access the Upper Canyon (Winter Gate to Upper Big Water Trailhead) during construction?

Trails and the road will be open to winter recreation opportunities as discussed below. Outside of the winter recreation period upper Mill Creek Canyon Road, adjacent recreation areas, and some trail segments in the project area would be closed to the public during construction. Most trails connecting through Mill Creek Canyon would remain open year-round, including a crossing through the construction area at Elbow Fork (a decision is still being made as to whether Old Red Pine Road and Little Water trails will remain open).

Recreationalist can access Upper Mill Creek Canyon Trails from:

- Lower Pipeline Trail in Mill Creek Canyon starting at the Burch Hollow Trailhead in Mill Creek Canyon
- Terraces/Elbow Fork Trail via Porter Fork Trailhead and the Terraces Trailhead in Mill Creek Canyon
- Lambs Canyon Trail via the Lambs Canyon Trailhead from Lambs/Parley's Canyon
- Wasatch Crest Trail will remain open, which has numerous starting points from Big Cottonwood Canyon and Summit County
- Access to Dog Lake/ Big Water Trails via Mill D North Trailhead starting in Big Cottonwood Canyon
- The new Upper Pipeline Trail that parallels the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road will remain open. This trail will provide access from Elbow Fork to Alexander Basin and the Big Water Trails to Dog Lake. This trail will be open and accessible via the Elbow Fork Trail Crossing

A trail closure and detour map can be found at the end of the FAQ.

Recreation sites available during construction:

Trailheads and picnic sites below the Winter Gate in Mill Creek Canyon will be open and operated normally during construction, including:

- Rattlesnake, Porter Fork, and Burch Hollow Trailheads
- Church Fork, South Box Elder, Main Box Elder, and Upper Box Elder Picnic Sites

Recreation sites not available during construction:

Trailheads above the Winter Gate are being improved and/or relocated during construction and will therefore be closed during for the entire project duration from approximately May 2025 through December 2026 (construction schedule may be revised as needed; check project website for more information). Likewise, access to picnic areas at and above the Winter Gate will be modified as part of the road reconstruction and therefore these picnic areas will be closed for the duration of the project. Restrooms and other amenities at these sites will not be open or available during this time. Sites that will be closed for the duration of the project include:

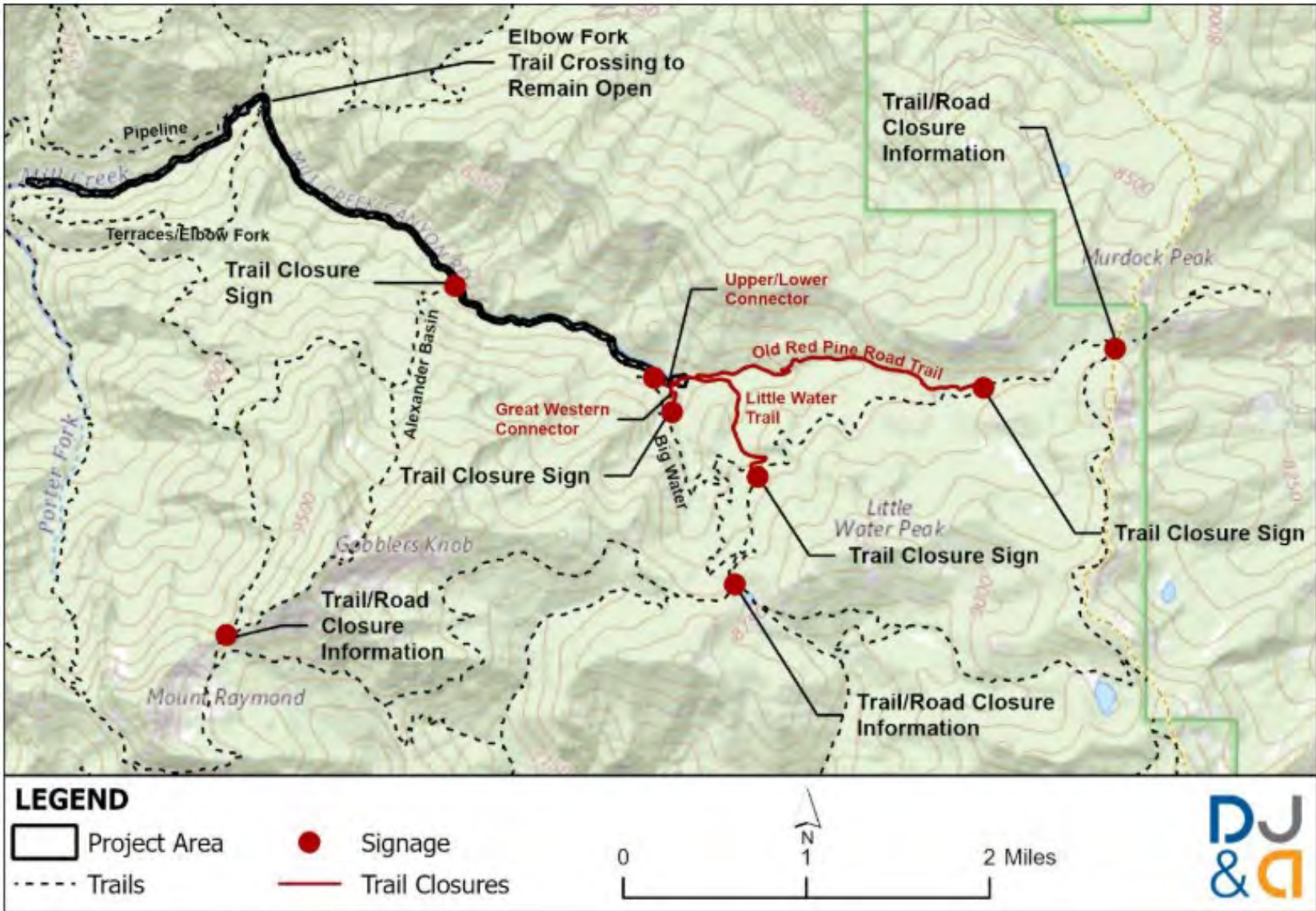
-
- Elbow Fork, Alexander Basin, Lower Big Water, and Upper Big Water Trailheads
 - Maple Grove, White Bridge, Maple Cove, Evergreen, Clover Springs, and Fir Crest Picnic Areas

Mill Creek Canyon Road above the Winter Gate will be open for winter recreation.

Construction will pause during the winter months, and Mill Creek Canyon Road would be open above the Winter Gate for winter recreation activities between roughly December 15 and March 15, and possibly longer depending on conditions and the actual construction schedule. The USFS would continue to groom the snow along the road for recreation uses during the winter pause of construction activities.

Firs Cabin Owners will be able to access their cabin over designated weekends.

Firs Cabin owners will be provided with access to their cabins over four designated weekends (Memorial Day, Pioneer Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day) each construction season to check on cabins and perform any needed maintenance. During these scheduled access times, the roadway would be drivable by high-clearance vehicles such as trucks or sport utility vehicles. Steel plates will cover ditches, open trenches, and holes would be installed as necessary to allow vehicle passage. Mill Creek Canyon Road within the project area would remain closed to the public during these weekends.



Proposed Trail Closure and Detour Plan current as of April 12, 2024

Appendix B
Public Comments

Table 2 includes the text of each unique public comment with individual responses. Individual responses in Table 2 reference the Common Public Concerns in Table 1 (starts on page 4), where appropriate, and include additional responses as needed. Comments in Table 2 are organized by date received, and the form letter is only included once. Text included in attachments is reproduced in Table 2, and photos and other images are omitted. Personally identifiable information, which is any information connected to a specific individual that can be used to uncover that individual's identity, has been removed.

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
1	<p>Good Afternoon, I'm writing to request a copy of the documents for the above-mentioned project as indicated in the invitation to bid. Thank you for your assistance.</p>		This is not a comment on the EA.
2	<p>Good Afternoon, I'm following up on my request for the bid documents for the above mentioned project I sent 3/11. Per the ITB, we are to contact you via email for bid documents. Thank you in advance for your assistance.</p>		This is not a comment on the EA.
3	<p>Hello. My name is Alek and I am a resident of Salt Lake City. I just read through a good portion of the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project EA and I have some serious concerns. 1. On pedestrian / cyclist safety As someone who never drives a car in the canyon, increasing bicycle and pedestrian safety in the canyon is generally a good thing. I like the inclusion of bicycle lanes and cross walks. People hiking and biking have consistently been forced to endure dangerous conditions on the road with drivers. The more we can do to prioritize non-cars in the canyon the better. However, increasing parking and accommodating more drivers does the exact opposite of that. By encouraging more car use, we are encouraging more change of user conflict, accidents, or death. The addition of extra parking at the top of the canyon will incentivize more driving, less carpooling, and will result in increased conflicts. More accommodations for private cars in the canyon is not the solution. 2. Public Transit There is absolutely zero mention of public transportation in Millcreek Canyon in the report. There are no forward looking accomodations for the use of buses or shuttles in the canyon. This is a huge flaw in the plan. It is</p>	A, B, C, L, N	Thank you for your interest in this project. See the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>simply not physically possible to keep accepting more car use in the canyon. In planning, induced demand means that by creating more facilities for use cases, those users will come. By creating more parking and widening lanes, the canyon becomes more friendly for car use. More car use will cause congestion and traffic, and user conflicts on the road. Less than 10 years after completion of this project, we will be having this exact same conversation again. How many times do we have to go over the fact that building and maintaining car-based amenities does NOT resolve congestion in the long term. We are simply pushing off the problem to the future, because we refuse to accept public transit as a reasonable solution to the problem. What will we do in 2035 when demand for the canyon and its cool temperatures exceeds the capacity of the roadway and parking facilities? Will we build a 3 story parking garage? Will we make the roadway even wider? Creating more facilities for privately owned vehicles is going to drown this canyon in traffic, pollution, and erosion. This plan needs public transit amenities. It is short sighted and a waste of taxpayer funds to build the project without them. Let's include bus stops and shelters throughout the canyon. Let's think about how we can connect Millcreek with the rest of the UTA system. Before we simply expand parking and lanes, why don't we consider alternatives like public transportation?</p> <p>3. The close has awful timing In the construction plan, it is mentioned that traffic will be pushed to other surrounding canyons. This is to be expected. It also notes that more traffic will be pushed to City Creek Canyon. If the project owners are unaware, City Creek Canyon will be under construction through 2027. We are going to have two major canyons in the Wasatch front closed (at least partially) at the same time? This is going to create massive user conflicts and issues for people biking, hiking, and recreating generally. Similar canyons like Big and Little Cottonwood are already bursting at the seams in the summer. This closure is going to continue those issues. I beg you not to start on this construction until at least 2027 when City Creek is set to reopen.</p> <p>4. The closure of trails</p>		

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>While I agree that the road must be closed for public safety, we are talking about closing some of the most popular trails in the Wasatch. People who ride the Wasatch Crest trail will no longer be able to descend towards the Millcreek side with this closure. We just got the Upper Pipeline trail completed in 2023, and now this trail is set to close just two years after opening? Is there anything that can be done to at least keep trails open while the road is worked? Otherwise, people will just use the trails anyways and they will become eroded and unmaintained.</p> <p>I hope you can provide a response to me on these important issues. I would also love to speak with project managers in person if there are any public events coming soon.</p>		
4	<p>Good Afternoon, I'm with ConstructConnect. We're currently reporting on the above-mentioned project and I was hoping to get a set of plans/specs for our planroom. Is it possible to get a set emailed or mailed to us? I also have a couple of quick questions for you. What is the estimated construction budget? Thank you!!</p>		This is not a comment on the EA.
5	<p>Hi there! I wholeheartedly support repairing the road in Millcreek canyon, improving existing trailhead infrastructure, and closing roadside parking. However, I'm concerned about adding that parking elsewhere in the canyon through the expansion of parking lots. The project's goal of improving access and safety to the canyon could be better achieved by providing efficient, reliable shuttles or busses that can more safely share the road with pedestrians and cyclists. Thank you</p>	A, C, J	Thank you for your support and interest in this project. See the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.
6	<p>To Whom It May Concern Dear Madame, Sir, or Ms., I am a long term citizen and resident of Salt Lake County. I understand that improvements are being planned for Millcreek Canyon. I appreciate the road widening and repairs that are expected. I understand that there are more and more people that enjoy the campgrounds and hiking trails. I urge caution in enlarging parking lots at the expense of destroying natural land. The better solution would be to restrict the vehicle traffic so there</p>	A, H, J	Thank you for your support and interest in this project. See the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>aren't as many cars that need to park. Other highly visited attractions in our state have required users to make appointments in advance or have provided shuttles/buses to visitors. Perhaps similar options could be considered to reduce the need to significantly enlarge parking lots that would damage the environment.</p> <p>Thank you for your efforts to maintain the road and facilities in Millcreek Canyon. Thank you for considering my concern, request, and suggestions.</p>		
7	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am a frequent, year-round user of Millcreek Canyon. I frequently ride a road or mountain bike up the canyon road and use the trails for MTB and hiking/running. In the winter I ski in porter fork, bowman fork and alexander basin, and on the groomed road. I am concerned the proposal to increase the size of upper canyon trailhead parking lots and widen the upper canyon road will not decrease congestion and reduce user safety.</p> <p>I feel safer riding on the Millcreek Road in the upper canyon than I do in Emigration, Big Cottonwood, or Little Cottonwood Canyons because reduced sightlines seem to keep vehicles from driving too fast. I am admittedly relatively comfortable riding in traffic. Cars don't go nearly as fast in Millcreek as they do in the other canyons which have generous bike lanes and very wide sections. While adding enough width in key narrow areas for cars to pass (above thousand springs?) makes sense, I am concerned increasing width throughout the canyon will cause vehicles to drive faster. Coupled with adding cell service, I envision distracted drivers going faster on an improved road that is still steep, narrow, winding, and undulating. I've ridden bicycles in European cities and countrysides a few times and generally roads are much more like the upper millcreek road than they are like SR 190/BCC road. Consequently, bikes for transportation and recreation are more popular in Europe.</p> <p>I am not a professional transportation planner but I do work in government proximal to transportation planning and my sense is that adding parking capacity always increases congestion. Visitors will drive up to Big Water looking for a spot, find the lot full, and idle or turn around and drive back</p>	A, B, C, D, Q	Thank you for your interest in this project. See the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>down. Perhaps congestion will be improved modestly if there are two travel lanes from the gate to Big Water. But I suspect there will still be a considerable amount of congestion and much less parking than there is demand for it presently and more so as the population grows.</p> <p>My dream for this project was to rebuild the paved surface to improve and manage runoff, and add just enough width for cars to pass where necessary, but not provide a bike lane; and, to add parking at the winter gate, prohibit vehicle access to the upper canyon, and provide a shuttle service. It seems to me most people who ride in/up MCC are comfortable riding in traffic and people who are not comfortable riding around traffic will not ride up a steep, remote roadway anyway. Per my comment above, I don't see the proposed improvements reducing demand for parking so I do not believe the improvements will yield reliable mitigation of congestion.</p> <p>Thank you for all the work on Millcreek Canyon!</p>		
8	<p>To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>While I support road improvements in Millcreek Canyon, I absolutely do not support expanded parking. I've recreated in the canyon for over 45 years and can guarantee that more parking will never solve accessibility issues. It'll just add more cars and, at popular times, there still won't be any parking.</p> <p>Please work on creating alternatives to improve traffic. Shuttles are a good start.</p>	A, C	Thank you for your support and interest in this project. See the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.
9	<p>To whom it may concern.</p> <p>Upper Millcreek canyon is unique among the central Wasatch canyons. The narrow tree lined road is what makes the upper half of the canyon so special. The tall old growth trees next to the road give the upper canyon its character and provide a more intimate feel than the neighboring big and little cottonwood canyons with their wide roads fast speed limits. Re routing the river, cutting down majestic old trees, possibly damaging thousand springs and beaver pond would be a travesty. Instead of bike lanes and widening the road, simply close the gate on an every other day basis in the summer months just like city creek canyon. It's a model that</p>	A, G, I	Thank you for your interest in this project. See the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>has been proven to work for many years. This is the safest solution for cyclists. And the best way to preserve the integrity of Millcreek Canyon. Please reconsider this proposal and scale back what has been planned. Accommodating more private vehicles is no longer the answer in the cities or the canyons. We need efficient public transportation not more cars and parking lots. We need to stop trying to solve these problems with the same old. It's time to be progressive and think differently than we have in the passed. Thank you for your consideration.</p>		
10	<p>Hello, I am writing to express concern over any expansion of the road and/or parking lots in upper Millcreek Canyon. Any expansion or widening of the road will destroy the character and beauty of upper Millcreek Canyon. While I understand that safety is important, creating more parking and widening the road will only encourage more individuals driving their cars to upper Millcreek Canyon. Fewer cars should be encouraged through other means such as limiting the number of cars at any given time allowed up, special permit requirements and increased access fees. People should be encouraged to access upper Millcreek Cayon on foot or bike only. If necessary, create a shuttle system. More cars up the canyon will offset any safety enhancements gained by widening the road in addition to the damage created by widening the road.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p>	A, C	Thank you for your interest in this project. See the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.
11	<p>Love the plan.</p> <p>Except: Has there been any internal discussion on piloting a shuttle program on the weekends, especially in the summer months? Perhaps from Skyline HS. Maybe get a grant to try it for a summer?</p> <p>I, and many other folks, are increasingly choosing to avoid Millcreek Canyon on the weekends due to lack of parking at trailheads.</p> <p>Maybe a poll can be electronically available to SLCo residents to determine potential interest?</p>	A	Thank you for your support and interest in this project. See the referenced Common Public Concern for a response to your comment.

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	Thank you for your consideration		
12	<p>Thank you for attempting to improve safety in Millcreek Cyn.</p> <p>Adding an uphill bicycle lane, fixing potholes, and preventing roadside parking are three good steps. However, I don't see any merit in ADDING any parking lots. Please do NOT add parking lots. Instead, you can improve safety (as well as helping preserve the natural beauty of the canyon) by providing reliable shuttle service in the canyon. This would allow you to keep more cars off the road. Keep car traffic to a minimum!!!! This would greatly increase safety and reduce hassle for all users.</p> <p>Keep Millcreek as the magical place it has always been. No more new parking lots.</p>	A, C	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern responses for additional information.
13	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My family and I are cyclists, hikers, skiers, and picnickers of Millcreek Canyon, and have been for two generations. While we enjoy all Wasatch Front canyons, Millcreek Canyon has a distinct personality. The canyon feels narrower, calmer, greener, and cooler than all other canyons East of the S.L. valley. This is a huge attraction, and the fact that it gets relatively low traffic and the road undulates <i>in a way that cars are required to keep speeds low</i> is another huge attraction and benefit, especially for the road-cycling community. The proximity of the cascading creek to the road provides coolness and sound-therapy to the Millcreek Canyon experience to many, many users. Widening the road past the winter gate would result in higher driving speeds and increased vehicle numbers which would irreversibly ruin the existing natural speed-control the canyon provides.</p> <p>My #1 choice of development for Millcreek Canyon would be to keep the narrow road as-is and preserve the personality of the canyon, with simple repairs, parking lot controls, and asphalt-painting being sufficient. Use the remaining funds to implement or subcontract a <i>Sprinter-Van type shuttle service for hikers and mountain-bikers</i>, as those two activities cause the parking issues that appear on the summer weekends.</p> <p>Those parking issues and any related traffic issues that arise in the canyon are limited to weekends only, for only 2 or three months a year. It would be environmentally and economically wise to implement the</p>	A, D	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	aforementioned approach, and <i>preserve</i> the magic that is Millcreek Canyon, rather than attempt to irreversibly turn it into something it is not.		
14	a concerned user of the canyon for over 30yrs. Yes, add the shuttle! More parking will only bring more people driving out of control up and down the canyon!!	A, C	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.
15	This road construction will encourage overuse of the upper canyon. It will discourage those of us that have supported fee based use to prevent environmental damages and now lose this access for over 2 years. Millcreek Canyon is a treasure and should be preserved as such.	H, K	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.
16	No big improvements in upper canyon. Close upper canyon. Open to walkers, wheelchair, bicycle, hikers, runners. Put in a booth like up at Alta to control information about the history of the canyon. Have a daily shuttle for special needs. This canyon is one of a kind in Salt Lake County. It is very special. Now is the time to have one car in one car out of lower canyon. Limit car to two dogs per car. Please do not destroy the canyon. Control the people and dogs.	A	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for a response to your comment.
17	<p>1. Section 4.2 Purpose and Need <i>Inconsistent Roadway Width. The narrow and variable road width makes it difficult and dangerous for vehicles to pass each other. These same conditions inhibit the ability of emergency vehicles to efficiently travel through the canyon.</i> This is a false statement. Conversations with Unified Fire Authority emergency personnel have indicated that they do not feel that there is any safety problem with the existing road. They currently access the canyon with emergency vehicles and report no problems. This also neglects the fact that there have been no reported motor vehicle accidents in the canyon resulting in injuries or fatalities.</p> <p><i>Limited Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities. The lack of road shoulders, lack of bicycle lanes, limited sight distances, informal parking, and lack of crosswalks and signs create unsafe conditions for cyclists and pedestrians using and crossing the road.</i> This plan does not adequately address this Need. The proposed plan does not provide road shoulders or lanes to better accommodate pedestrians and cyclists for most of the project area. Project team members justified this by reporting that "most cyclists don't ride past Elbow Fork". They have ignored a formal request to provide data</p>	B, D, F	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Our response to your specific comments are below. Please also see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses to your comments.</p> <p>1. The roadway is too narrow for vehicles to pass each other at several locations. During periods of heavy use, vehicles regularly must pull over to allow oncoming vehicles to pass. This results in lines, waiting, and increased travel times. Even if it has not been formally documented to date in Upper Mill Creek Canyon, it is well documented that increased travel times for emergency responders inhibit their ability to respond efficiently and save lives. Crash data for upper Mill Creek Canyon was obtained from three sources and analyzed for this project for time periods ranging from</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>supporting that assumption. Anecdotal observations do not support this assertion. Failing to provide a shoulder or bike lane for 2/3 of the project area does not adequately address this issue. They have also failed to address the impact of cyclists exercising their right to use the entire lane (Title 41, Chapter 6a of the Utah Code) when no shoulder exists on motor vehicle speed. Motorists will be faced with the option of either following cyclists at 5-10 mph or pass dangerously on a road that still has narrow lanes and limited lines of sight, a scenario incompatible with the stated goal of increasing user safety. Both of these options are likely to lead to more accidents and user conflicts.</p> <p>2. Design speed The design speed is the speed which probably will be adopted by the faster group of drivers but not, necessarily, by the small percentage of reckless ones. The concept was introduced so that an appropriate speed, based upon the reasonable desires of the majority of drivers, could be selected, and then all highway geometry features designed to accommodate that speed. There is no mention of design speed in the EA, despite the fact that design speed is a fundamental component of road design. It is well established that features such as roadway straightening, wider lanes, and increased lines of sight increase the design speed of roads. By increasing the design speed, motor vehicles will travel at higher speeds, regardless of the posted speed limit, thereby decreasing the safety in the canyon, at least to cyclists and pedestrians.</p> <p>3. Section 1.3 Public Involvement This statement is made: <i>In total, over 700 comments were received. Comments were generally oriented toward proposed design elements, such as roadway width, parking, travel speed, and bicycle infrastructure. However, many of them related, directly or indirectly, to environmental resources.</i> This statement is misleading. The public comments, which the design team refused to publish, were obtained via FOIA. Cyclist and pedestrian safety was by far the most mentioned desired outcome by the public. The proposed plan does not adequately address that concern.</p>		<p>2005 to 2021. Based on this analysis, the relatively low levels of reported accidents in the upper canyon are likely associated with the lack of cell service (i.e., accidents either go unreported or are erroneously attributed to a downcanyon location with cell service) and the general lack of identifiable locations.</p> <p>As explained throughout the EA, physical, environmental, and economic constraints within the project corridor limit the range of feasible options for addressing project needs. The original design concept included a bicycle lane for the length of the project (see Section 2.3.1 of the EA), but it could not be accomplished within these constraints.</p> <p>Consequently, the Proposed Action represents the design team’s balanced solution to accommodate as many needs and wishes as possible while working within these constraints. We heard public comments requesting that the design cater more to cyclists and pedestrians and others requesting that it cater more to motorists. The Proposed Action represents a compromise among all interests while meeting the project purpose and need to the greatest extent practical within the physical, environmental, and economic constraints.</p> <p>Neither the EA nor the public meeting materials contend that “most cyclists don’t ride past Elbow Fork.” However, it is anticipated that use in the canyon decreases as you climb higher in the canyon.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>4. Page 24: <i>Vehicle travel along the roadway would be safer and less congested due to the wider and more consistent lane widths and increased sight distance. The new road surface would also improve recreationist experiences through the elimination of potholes and 24 Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project EA other damaged pavement sections. The speed limit would remain the same, so user experiences related to vehicle travel speeds would not be impacted.</i> Logic problem - if actual speeds are not increased, how will congestion be decreased? This casts doubt on the stated plan to maintain the existing speed limit</p> <p>5. Page 25: <i>The Proposed Action would also result in improved cyclist safety by adding an uphill bicycle lane from Winter Gate to Elbow Fork. Above Elbow Fork, the widened roadway creates more space for vehicles and cyclists to share the road. Sight distance and parking improvements discussed above would also improve cyclist safety as motorists would be able to see cyclists from farther away, and vehicles parked along the roadway would be less likely to impede that sight distance or encroach directly into the bicycle lane or roadway. Crosswalks and other signs would be added to further increase pedestrian and cyclist safety.</i> The impact of increased vehicle speed on pedestrian and cyclist safety is not addressed.</p> <p>In short, the proposed plan is a classic historic transportation solution: How do we get more cars and trucks from point a to point b by making it easier to drive faster? The study fails to address the character of a quiet, winding dead-end recreational road and fails to address the safety and quality of experience of non-motorised users. The proposed action fails to meet the stated Purpose and Need and should be revised to adequately address the <u>safety of all users.</u></p>		<p>There are 20 Parts containing over 260 Sections in Title 41, Chapter 6a. It is beyond the scope of this EA to address each Section of this Chapter, or other tangentially relevant code sections. We acknowledge that cyclists and motorists are subject to the law, and the application of accepted roadway design principles and professional judgement implicitly take this into consideration.</p> <p>2. Design Speed – See Common Public Concern D.</p> <p>3. The design team held three public meetings (see Section 1.3 of the EA). Public comments associated with each meeting were summarized and responded to in publicly available documents posted on Salt Lake County’s project website (https://slco.org/regional-development/planning-transportation/plans-projects/upper-mill-creek-canyon-road-improvements-project/). Please see our comment summary and response related to Bike Lanes and Cyclist Safety for the third public meeting, which accurately portrays the many varied comments we received on the subject.</p> <p>4. Our analysis has determined that congestion in the upper canyon is not a result of people intentionally driving below the speed limit. Rather, congestion results from a combination of (1) the inability of the existing roadway width</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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			<p>to convey two lanes of traffic in all locations, and (2) informal parking encroaching on the roadway. Both of these issues require vehicles to stop and wait while oncoming traffic passes, often resulting in queues. The Proposed Action would remedy both of these issues, reducing congestion in the upper canyon while allowing vehicles to travel up to the speed limit without additional delays.</p> <p>5. See Common Public Concern B.</p>
18	<p>I am a heavy user of Millcreek both summer and winter trails. I do not want to see the road beyond elbow Fork widened, nor massive pads for parking put in. I would much prefer to pay for a shuttle bus that would drop me at trailheads along the canyon. This would also allow for hikes, beginning and terminating at a different parking area. Widening the road would certainly change the character of the canyon. I oppose it as well as UDOT plans for changes.</p>	A	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for a response.</p>
19	<p>I'm a old great-granny with a beautiful posterity. I'd like to have them enjoy the Canyons as I have. I would love to see upper Millcreek closed to all traffic that produces exhaust (in other words, that has a tail pipe). The road is always in need of repair because it wants to be a more natural path, just as spring runoff (in particular) dictates.</p> <p>If motorized vehicles <u>must</u> run to the top, then consideration has to be made to the limitations of the size of the canyon. A widened road will not increase the space in the canyon but will damage its beauty. We need to be close to nature. We don't need our views filled with more pavement in our canyons!</p> <p>Repair the road, of course. Biking is <u>always</u> a risk in the canyons, no matter how wide the road is however. We had a beautiful young friend biking the canyon and was killed by a woman turning into Snowbird where the road is quite wide.</p>	A, K	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.</p>

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	<p>A dependable shuttle service is an option, but again...how many people can you pack into the canyons and still call our treasured wild places a retreat?</p> <p>What's my dream? A path in upper Millcreek with bikes still using it only on odd days (because there's no slowing some of them down to where it's safe for others) with an improved side-trail system... and access limited by a lottery, increased fees, a shuttle, or simply putting up a "full" sign when it's full. There's no sense making wider and wider roads if in the process you destroy the special places we actually have left in the natural world.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>		
20	<p>Hello - safety and improvements for Millcreek Canyon are wise and good and due.</p> <p>Making the road safer for bikes, also good. But a general focus on widening the roadway, more parking, and related "car-focused" improvements is not an overall best approach to these improvements.</p> <p>Ultimately, more parking (etc.) only begets more cars, which will NOT create safer biking, safer walking/hiking. So, please work toward improvements that do not simply invite additional auto traffic. Road striping and marking, yes, but wider roads will simply invite higher speeds—making a move away from safety.</p> <p>More and more parking = an invite to more and more cars—again reducing safety.</p> <p>Please think of improvements that invite wise and safe use, reduce noise and pollution, and increase safety for people and animals, which means not more and more individual cars, thank you</p>	C, D	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The overall parking capacity in the upper canyon will not be increased as a result of the proposed project.</p> <p>The design seeks to strike a balance among the various needs and desires expressed by members of the public while working within physical, environmental, and economic constraints to meet the project's purpose and need.</p> <p>Please also see responses to the referenced Common Public Concerns.</p>
21	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>The changes you are planning in Millcreek canyon are a horrible idea. You will be removing way to many trees some of them are 100s of years old. You will be affecting the river and fish ecosystem. You will be adding</p>	A, H, I, K	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Part of the purpose of the project is to improve water quality degraded by surface erosion and poor drainage infrastructure.</p>

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	<p>more cars to a canyon that is already at capacity. Buses are the answer!!!!</p> <p>The canyon should be closed from the gate up permanently to all traffic and only allow bikes and bus shuttles. Parking lots, and wider roads are not the answer!!!!</p> <p>We need to preserve not rape and pillage the wilderness! Development is not the key!</p>		<p>The proposed project includes many elements, described in detail in Chapter 2 of the EA, to do this. These improvements would improve water quality and fish habitat.</p> <p>Please also see responses to the referenced Common Public Concerns.</p>
22	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I wholeheartedly support repairing the road, improving existing trailhead infrastructure, and closing roadside parking. However, I remain concerned about adding that parking elsewhere in the canyon through expanding parking lots. The project's goal of improving access and safety to the canyon could be better achieved by reducing the number of cars in the canyon and providing efficient, reliable shuttles that can more safely share the road with pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Best,</p>	A, J	<p>Thank you for your support and interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.</p>
23	<p>An addendum to the comments I submitted on March 21: Writer and transportation design consultant Jeff Speck has published extensively about the ways in which our current established transportation designers misunderstand road needs by effectively applying highway design tools to every type of road which in some cases directly decreases transportation safety. He focuses primarily on urban streets vs freeways but I believe short winding dead-end roads into recreation areas may be a third category, likely more closely related to urban roads. In short, highway designers prioritize higher speeds to make travel more efficient. Period. In the case of Mill Creek Canyon, higher speeds and efficiency are not necessarily desirable objectives. I believe the fact that the Federal Highway Administration is designing the project and establishing the goals and objectives pretty much summarizes the problems associated with this project. <i>In short, they define safety as the ability of motorists to drive faster without compromising their safety, while failing to consider the safety of other users.</i></p>	D	<p>While FHWA has of experience in highway design, they also regularly design roadway improvement projects similar to this one. In addition, we also engage consultants who specialize in designing roadways in this type of recreational environment.</p> <p>Higher vehicle speed is not a goal of this project. The goal is to provide additional roadway efficiency in order to improve safety conditions. We have determined that two full lanes would prevent queues from forming. Additionally, the proposed lane widths (10 feet) are relatively narrow.</p>

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	For more information and resources, check out this interview.		See our response to Common Public Concern D for additional information.
24	<p>Good morning,</p> <p>I'm reaching out to submit my comment for the Millcreek Canyon Road Improvement Project. I live in Cottonwood Heights and, like so many, use the trails in Millcreek Canyon regularly and year-round. As such, I'm happy that an environmentally sensitive plan is in place to support improved access and recreation. That said, I would like to express my disappointment that a shuttle service is not part of the current proposal. Given the increasing levels of recreation, this seems to be one of the smartest long-term solutions to control canyon access and parking. I am not in favor of simply increasing parking lots to accommodate personal vehicles.</p> <p>Please consider including a shuttle service and/or increased fees for single-occupancy vehicles.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and for your work on this project. Best,</p>	A	Thank you for your support and interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for a response.
25	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment.</p> <p>Bottom line is that upper Millcreek is an incredible place with a tiny road that allows limited access. That is how it MUST remain. It is so narrow and beautiful with trees pressing right to the edge of the tiny road. Widening the road would be ecologically devastating and truly spoil the beauty of that entire area forever. Anyone contemplating this widening MUST drive up there, all the way to the top, before being so sure it is the right thing to do.</p> <p>Quite sincerely,</p>	I	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for a response to your comment.
26	<p>As a recreational athlete who regularly enjoys the canyons of the Wasatch, I have concerns about the planned parking lot expansion. Such construction is very damaging (the current state of the Rock Canyon Trail Head is the perfect example of this). Traffic could be lowered just as effectively by having a reliable shuttle (it would lower emissions too). I support the bike lane idea. This could also help reduce traffic.</p>	A, J	Thank you for your support and interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
27	<p>Thank you for your consideration, Hello and many thanks for taking time to read these thoughts.</p> <p>In all months of the year I spend more time in Millcreek Canyon than anywhere else (except maybe my home) and I love it dearly. For seven or eight months of the year the upper canyon is actually not a road, but instead is a trail for countless hikers, bikers, skiers, and snowshoers, plus their pups. Eliminating the winding curves should NOT be the goal, because not only does this increase vehicle speeds (the one straightaway in Millcreek near the BSA camp entrance often sees cars going 40-50 mph), but it also diminishes use of the road as a scenic trail. Likewise, adding unsightly retaining walls and widening the road to the detriment of the creek should NOT be the goal. Please (oh please oh please oh please) keep Millcreek the quaint and scenic place that it is. Expanding some parking lots is great...repairing the damaged road areas would be great...adding a weekend shuttle system would be nice...but please don't drastically alter the beautiful canyon road that so many people enjoy as a trail for most of the year.</p> <p>Thank you for preserving this beautiful canyon for year-round use for all.</p>	A, D, E, O	Thank you for your support and interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.
28	<p>All, I've recently received and reviewed in detail the environmental Assessment (EA) document. I appreciate the effort that has gone into it and the additional design information that has been provided as part of the EA. The following are my comments on several topics:</p> <p><u>Alexander Basin Trailhead</u> Given the new information in the EA, I have some serious concerns particularly with the planned changes at the Alexander Basin Trailhead as the changes noted in the EA are not at all consistent with what has been previously communicated to members of "The Firs" cabin community. I'm hoping that you can understand my concerns given that what is planned will be in direct view of all of the cabins at the east end of "The Firs".</p>	C, D, I, O	<p>Thank you for your continued interest in this project. Our responses to your specific comments are below.</p> <p><u>Alexander Basin Trailhead</u> - The location of the planned Alexander Basin Trailhead was shown in a presentation made at the third public meeting, which was held both virtually and in person.</p> <p>We recognize the new trailhead parking area will be in view of one or two of the easternmost cabins. We heard your concerns and balanced them with the concerns of others, the project's purpose and need, the desire to reduce</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>Over the past years, cabin owners have expressed our request that the road project would minimize the visual impact to the cabins within "The Firs" cabin tract. I now find that the plan is to include a retaining wall directly across from the upper cabins, greatly expand the parking at the Alexander Basin Trailhead, and move the trailhead parking area to the west (closer to the cabins). As well, I note that it is planned to elevate the parking area above the road grade so that it is "less visible from the road" (why does this matter?)...it appears that all of these changes will have the unfortunate effect of making the trailhead facilities more visible from the cabins, and conversely, making the cabins more visible from the parking area. As you can understand, it is the desire of the cabin owners to maintain as much privacy as possible and to minimize the impact of canyon road traffic on the cabin residents.</p> <p>Additionally, we have several times expressed concerns about any possible additional of a vault toilet to the Alexander Basin Trailhead facility given likely, associated problems with flies and possible unpleasant odors. On all of the previous occasions I have discussed this as part of public meetings, I was told that there was no plan to have toilet facilities at the trailhead...I now find in reading the EA that a vault toilet is planned. Given that length and difficulty of any hikes originating at this trailhead, it is highly likely that trailhead users are coming directly from their places of residence and not from other canyon activities. Additionally, if toilet facilities are needed at the conclusion of hiking activities, it would be very easy and convenient to utilize the nearby, existing vault toilet facilities at either the Clover Springs or Fir Crest picnic areas. If the decision is made to include a new vault toilet at Alexander Basin Trailhead, certainly our request would be that it be placed as far away as possible and out of view from the cabins (to the far east of the trailhead improvements).</p> <p>My request is that the whole Alexander Basin Trailhead design be re-evaluated, taking into account the impacts that any changes would have on the existing cabin group. I suggest that any expansion of the parking, etc. occur to the east rather than to the west of the current parking area, as is indicated in the EA.</p>		<p>environmental impacts, public safety, and other physical constraints in the area.</p> <p>The parking lot will not be intentionally elevated, rather it will be located at an elevation higher than the roadway to best blend in with existing topography. The proposed location represents the solution that reduces cuts, fills, and retaining wall heights to the maximum extent practical.</p> <p>The planned rockery retaining wall would be constructed with rocks that mimic native rocks to limit visual impacts. Shifting the entire parking area and trailhead to the east of its proposed location is not feasible due to topographic constraints.</p> <p>A vault toilet is needed at the Alexander Basin Trailhead for reasons of public health and safety. Location considerations include citing the vault toilet where the vent stack will receive ample sunlight, operations and maintenance considerations, and limiting visual and olfactory impacts to Firs Cabin owners. As such, the vault toilet is planned at the far eastern side of the parking area, which is on the opposite side from the nearest cabin.</p> <p><u>Canyon Parking</u> - The plan presented at all three public meetings was to eliminate informal parking areas and replace them with an equivalent number of formalized parking spaces. This aligns with the proposed plan does.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p><u>Canyon Parking</u> It was previously advertised that there was no intention of increasing the number of formal parking spaces in the canyon (understand that there is significant informal parking in the canyon which has never been legal and which has been subject to ticketing and fines). I now read in the EA that the overall number of formal parking spaces in the canyon will be increased to offset the removal of informal/illegal parking in many areas...how is this not encouraging increased usage of the canyon which has been a stated goal of the proposed canyon road improvements?</p> <p><u>Rockery/Soil Nail Retaining Walls</u> The EA indicates that retaining walls are planned for sections of the road adjacent to the lower and upper areas of "The Firs" cabin tract. We request that the extent and height of these walls be minimized from a visual impact point-of-view. Any such walls should be rockery. It should also be noted and taken into consideration that wild game (deer, elk, moose) regularly come of the south hillside onto the canyon road and into the stream and that the presence of retaining walls may be a safety hazard for the wild game.</p> <p><u>Tree Cover along the Road</u> As you are aware, many of the cabins in "The Firs" are located in close proximity to the canyon road. In many cases, trees/bushes are present adjacent to the road shoulder/between the road and the stream on the north side, and these trees provide the only visual barrier between the cabins and the roadway. This is particularly the case at the west and east ends of the cabin tract. Our request is that special consideration be given to allowing "cover" trees to remaining in place in these areas even though the trees would normally have been removed as part of the roadway preparation. This will be particularly important for cabins #1 and 2 at the upper end of the cabin tract to provide as much cover as possible from the expanded Alexander Basin Trailhead facilities. We request that the affected cabin owners be allowed to identify the trees such that they can</p>		<p>Use of informal parking spaces has historically been over capacity during peak use times, which is why implementation of the plan would not encourage increased parking within the upper canyon, but rather relocate parking to intentional areas with durable surfaces.</p> <p>See Common Public Concern C for additional information.</p> <p><u>Rockery/Soil Nail Retaining Walls</u> - The height of all walls have been reduced to the maximum extent practicable to limit both visual impacts and project costs. Rockery walls were selected over soil nail walls wherever possible. Structural stability concerns necessitated the use of soil nail walls where they are planned. Retaining walls in the vicinity of Firs Cabins are less than 200 feet in length. Given the relatively short length and presence of natural cliffs in the project vicinity, the planned retaining walls should not pose an undue threat to wildlife. See Common Public Concern O for additional information.</p> <p><u>Tree Cover along the Road</u> - Throughout the project corridor, large trees will only be removed where necessary for construction and selective tree removal will be used in certain areas (including adjacent to the Firs Cabins Tract) to protect larger trees even when they are located within the clearing limits where feasible (see narrative on pages 29 and 39 of the EA).</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>be specifically be identified and needing to be left in place. This request has been made several times to USFS personnel.</p> <p><u>Roadway above Elbow Fork</u> Given the narrow nature of the canyon above Elbow Fork, I am in firm agreement with the plan to minimize the roadway width as much as possible from Elbow Fork to the upper end of the canyon. As has been noted many times, this section of the canyon has historically been very safe because drivers go slowly. Minimize changes to the width and direction of the road will help preserve the natural beauty of this area while keeping it as safe as possible. Not including a bike lane as part of this section of the road is a good and necessary thing. If biking safety is a concern, I suggest that the bikes utilized the new trail which was recently constructed on hillside south of the roadway, particularly for uphill travel.</p> <p>Appreciate your consideration of these items and suggestions....</p>		<p>We hear your concerns and your request relating to tree cover between the cabins and the roadway. We are discussing this concern with the Forest Service and will coordinate with your group to better understand the specifics of this request and discuss what may be feasible within the project objectives and requirements to protect public safety. See Common Public Concern I for additional information.</p> <p><u>Roadway above Elbow Fork</u> - The planned 10-foot lane width in the upper part of the project area is the narrowest reasonable width to provide for consistent two-way travel and public safety.</p> <p>See Common Public Concern D for additional information.</p>
29	<p>These are my comments/suggestions regarding proposed changes to Millcreek Canyon. Keep the road consistent in width to prevent confusion for motorists and bicyclists. Minimize widening to protect the wilderness aspects of the canyon. That is why people love it so much up there....the beauty of the tree lined road. It has a totally different feel than that of LCC or BCC.</p> <p>I hope there will be dedicated bicycle lanes because there are lots of shadows and curves, making it particularly difficult to see bicyclists at certain times of the day. Frankly, I would never ride a bike up that road for those reasons. It's dangerous.</p> <p>I like the idea of having shuttle service for hikers to minimize vehicles in the canyon. Putting in additional parking just makes it more dangerous for bicyclists.</p>	A, B, D, I	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The road does not currently have a consistent width, which is why the Proposed Action attempts to make it as consistent as possible, given the various constraints.</p> <p>Protection of the scenery and feel of the canyon was one of several important factors balanced when developing the Proposed Action.</p> <p>Please also see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses to your comments.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>I have had a Millcreek Canyon pass for over 10 years. go up there in all seasons and different times of day. I have NEVER not been able to find a parking spot. I might have to walk a short distance from my vehicle but never very far.</p>		
30	<p>Branden,</p> <p>Please see the attached comments concerning the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements, Environmental Assessment and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation project.</p> <p>[Letter text copied from the attached letter, submitted by the directors of the Utah Department of Natural Resources and Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office, March 27, 2024]</p> <p>Subject: Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements, Environmental Assessment and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation RDCC Project No. 85895 Dear Mr. Peters: The State of Utah (State), through the Utah Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office (PLPCO), has reviewed the Environmental Assessment and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project, DOT Project Number: UT FLAP SLA 10(1). The State fully supports this project, which will improve safety along upper Mill Creek Canyon, enhance pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and improve the water quality of nearby streams through better drainage systems. The State appreciates the close cooperation between the Federal Highway Administration, the U.S. Forest Service, Salt Lake County, and the City of Millcreek. The State commends the federal agencies for respecting Salt Lake County's 66-foot-wide easement held by Salt Lake County under the 1991 Forest and Road Trail Act. The State also appreciates that the project has attempted to avoid or minimize effects to historic properties, and to mitigate adverse impacts through a Memorandum of Agreement among the FHWA Central Federal Lands Highway Division, U.S. Forest Service, and Utah State Historic Preservation Office.</p>		<p>Thank you for your thorough review of the EA and your support of this project.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>Although the construction period will significantly impact recreation, the State appreciates efforts to open Upper Mill Creek Canyon for winter recreation during the winter of 2025-2026. Salt Lake County has worked closely with the Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation to minimize construction impacts using funds from the State's Recreation Restoration Infrastructure Grant to reroute the Pipeline Trail around Elbow Fork. The State has reviewed the Proposed Action for consistency with the 2023 Utah State Resource Management Plan¹ and the 2017 Salt Lake County Resource Management Plan² and finds that the Proposed Action is consistent with the policies and objectives of both plans. Please contact our Office if the State can provide any assistance.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>		
31	<p>It would enhance most visitor's experience if a shuttle system is implemented in Millcreek Canyon. Parking has become a major problem especially in the upper canyon during the summer months. Millcreek Canyon's use has skyrocketed in the past decade and the limited parking can't keep up with the increasing number of users. The continued degradation of Millcreek Canyon is largely due to off trail trampling and dog feces both bagged and unbagged littering the trails, it is sad, disgusting, and unacceptable. It is not what a person should expect or have to tolerate when visiting Millcreek Canyon to picnic or hike in our National Forest. It would also help address the water quality problems caused by the huge number of dogs being brought into the canyon daily and turned loose on all the trails. The dogs are not being adequately cleaned up after.</p> <p>City and County laws both require the owner to remove their dog feces immediately from all public areas. Let's be honest, no one ever cleans up what's left daily by the hundreds of dogs running off leash off the trails where they are left to wander. I have spoken with Millcreek Canyons compliance enforcement officers about these issues, they said the leash rules compliance is 50% or less and they're sick of cleaning up the feces lining the trails. Millcreek Canyon's current leash laws are; On odd numbered days dogs can be off-leash. On even numbered days dogs are required to be on leash. Very few people with dogs ever put them on a leash and once they leave the trailhead parking areas most, no matter</p>	A	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for a response to your comment.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>what day it is, let them run off leash. If dog owners can't follow the current rules of keeping them on leash when required, and cleaning up after their dogs they shouldn't be rewarded by being allowed to bring their dogs up the canyon every day. Maybe the rule should be; on odd days; you can bring your dogs and on even days no dogs are allowed in the canyon. Or implement a per dog fee and use the collected fees to fund a crew to remove the feces from the trails and issue tickets for non-compliance.</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limit the number of cars allowed in Millcreek Canyon per day and provide a shuttle system for visitor access. 2. Make Millcreek and all of the tributaries a Watershed and prohibit dogs completely. Protect the water in Millcreek for future culinary use when its water will be much needed. 3. If a Gondola is actually ever needed in Little Cottonwood Canyon, it's already used over its winter capacity for a quality experience, route it in from Wasatch County and save the National Park quality views in Little Cottonwood Canyon for future generations to enjoy as all the current visitors do. <p>Best regards,</p>		
32	<p>Thank you for this opportunity. From my review i remain concerned that pedestrian space will still not be provided. this is a major issue both above and below the winter gate in both winter and summer. MCC is a tremendous pedestrian resource. please make it safer for those who walk it. both on the up and own sides.</p> <p>next please install cell towers so that emergency communications can occur without the need of a satellite phone.</p> <p>thank you very much</p>	Q	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road is pedestrian friendly most of the year, when the gate is closed. During the summer months, when the gate is open, the planned roadway is designed for vehicles and cyclists to the extent practical.</p> <p>The existing trail system throughout Mill Creek Canyon caters to pedestrians, including the Pipeline Trail which parallels the roadway. Pedestrian crossings and other features would be included to facilitate pedestrian crossings where trails cross the roadway (see Section 2.2.5 of the EA). Physical, environmental, and economic constraints all prohibit further</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
			<p>widening the roadway to better accommodate pedestrians.</p> <p>Please also see the referenced Common Public Concern for additional response to your comment.</p>
33	<p>[First form letter submitted. Substantially similar letters are not included below] Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Millcreek Canyon is incredibly important to me and the community that enjoys access to the canyon. I appreciate your work in considering improvements to access Millcreek Canyon, and I encourage agencies to consider the following during the Environmental Assessment of proposed changes to the character of Millcreek canyon.</p> <p>Environmental Impact To protect Millcreek Canyon's natural character and water, we should not be creating additional parking whenever possible. The current project's introduction of bigger parking lots and road widening would make it more dangerous and difficult for pedestrians to safely and freely enjoy the upper canyon, altering people's relationship with the canyon.</p> <p>Varying Road Width While I appreciate the three varying road widths, particularly above Elbow Fork, to reduce impact on slopes, adjoining streams, and wetlands, I believe the varying widths will introduce road designs that make sharing the roadway more difficult. I suggest keeping the minimum width consistent up and down the canyon. Keeping the roadway 18' or less would also reduce the need for slope cuts and retaining walls that would constrict the shared use of the roadway and unnecessarily cut into the hillsides. Wider roads will increase vehicle speed in wider sections, making a less safe environment overall.</p>	A, B, D, G, J	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>Safety and Accessibility The draft project’s introduction of bigger parking lots and road widening would make it more dangerous and difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to safely and freely enjoy the upper canyon, altering people’s relationship with the canyon.</p> <p>Road Closure and User-Created Parking I do not support formalizing parking that was created by users. I support regional public transportation alternatives in Millcreek Canyon.</p> <p>Shuttle Service While the scope of this review did not include a proposed shuttle, the single biggest problem in this unique canyon is the need for an alternative to private automobiles to keep the canyon safer for pedestrians and bike users along the roadway. I support efforts to expand public transportation in Millcreek Canyon to reduce the need for private automobiles and additional parking in the proposed project area.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Millcreek Canyon Upper Road Improvement Project.</p>		
34	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I Love Millcreek Canyon! I would love to see the road become even safer for bicycles and would especially appreciate places to lock up my bike at the trailheads. I have to use handicap parking posts or trees many times. (I have seen the rack at Rattle Snake Gulch thank you!) Church Fork and Desolation would be amazing!</p> <p>I think bicycles and e-bikes are an answer to many of our “problems”. But people need to feel safe on the roads. And a place to put them while they enjoy our amazing mountains.</p>	R	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project and your recommendation to include bike racks (see response to Common Public Concern R). The bike lane/vehicle lane idea you described is referred to as an advisory bicycle lane in the EA.</p> <p>We considered and dismissed this idea from further analysis for the reasons described in Section 2.3.3 of the EA.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>Please help to preserve Millcreek Canyon. I hope we are asking what the mountain needs above what we want from the mountain. More is probably not the answer. Less but improved is probably what the mountain needs.</p> <p>Here is a radical idea: What if we made the road 1 lane for cars and 2 bike lanes on either side. Bikes would have the right of way. The cars would be able to drive on the bike lane, but only when no bikes are not present. This slows down the cars and makes them hyper aware of bicycles. I have been on roads like this and it is amazing.</p> <p>Just some ideas. Many thanks,</p>		
35	<p>Has a cabin owner in Mill Creek canyon. (The Firs) I am concerned about no access to the cabins for two seasons. Can't some provisions be made so that we could access the cabin on holidays or various other short periods or days during the seasons? Would it be possible to allow one way traffic on specified days? Please give these requests and suggestions some serious thought. Thank you.</p>	P	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for a response to your comment.
36	<p>Hi,</p> <p>Widening the upper Millcreek road without adding bike lanes is ridiculous. Please leave the road width alone. It's narrow width keeps vehicle speed low, which improves safety for all users.</p> <p>Also, why is there no plan for bus service or a shuttle up the canyon?</p> <p>Finally, closing the upper canyon road for two straight years is asinine. Don't do that.</p>	A, B, D, M	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.
37	<p>As far as I can tell this project is going to happen, no matter what. 3 things on my mind.</p> <p>#1. Traffic will increase significantly in the canyon.</p>	P	Thank you for your interest in this project. Visitor use is expected to increase with or without this project as described in Section 3.2.1 of the EA. Implementation of this project

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>#2. Most likely the value of our cabins will increase. #3. If we can't have access to our cabin, we SHOULD NOT have to pay the taxes. Is there anyway that could be addressed?</p> <p>Thank you,</p>		<p>is not expected to have a significant impact on this trend.</p> <p>Please see our referenced response to Common Public Concern P for more information.</p>
38	<p>April 2, 2024</p> <p>Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Lakewood, Colorado. 80228</p> <p>Federal Highway Administration; U. S. Forest Service (Wasatch-Uinta-Cache National Forest, SLRD); Salt Lake County (UT); Millcreek Community (UT):</p> <p>This pertains to the Upper Millcreek Canyon Road Improvement Project. I am submitting comments about the project and its environmental assessment. My name is [xx] and I have lived in Salt Lake City since the 1980s. I am involved with outdoor activities such as hiking, nordic skiing, snowshoeing, backpacking, volunteer trail work. I appreciate the beauty of Millcreek Canyon and the outdoor recreation opportunities available there. I recognize the importance of improving the Upper Millcreek Canyon Road infrastructure and safety. The improvements in water drainage on the road are especially important during these times of climate change and extreme weather events. I appreciate that the plans outlined in the environmental assessment seek to balance the roadway improvements with preserving the natural character and minimizing negative environmental impacts. However, the tremendous popularity of Millcreek Canyon and the large number of visitors require additional actions for safe canyon road travel and protection of the Millcreek Canyon environment. The 50-60 addition parking spaces planned in the Upper Millcreek Road improvement project will not be enough to meet the demand for parking. In addition to the Millcreek Road structural improvements, I favor the implementation of mass transit resources for Millcreek Canyon travel. I also support that</p>	A, C, L	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project and your constructive recommendations.</p> <p>We reviewed your request to preserve fir saplings at the east side of the meadow at the Upper Big Water Trailhead. Based on the photo you provided, the saplings appear to lie squarely within the area of planned improvements.</p> <p>After considering your request, we determined that these saplings do not warrant a redesign of the trailhead and parking area. We understand that people develop special relationships with specific places and regret that we cannot reasonably accommodate this request.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses to your comments.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>regulations be put in place to restrict motor vehicle travel in Millcreek Canyon (perhaps vehicle pooling incentives and high toll fees). I realize that even with the upper Millcreek road improvements, it will not be practical to have large buses traveling through Millcreek Canyon. I do think that it would be possible to have smaller mass transit vehicles such as shuttle vans travel in Millcreek Canyon. I also realize that purpose of the project is the improvement of the road infrastructure and not the implementation of a mass transit plan. Still, I encourage that improvements in the upper Millcreek Canyon road in this plan also include accommodations for shuttle vans at trailheads. Hopefully someday, there will be mass transit resources for Millcreek Canyon and other popular areas in the Wasatch National Forest.</p> <p>During the construction phase of the project, I recognize the importance of hikers, bikers, and other visitors stay out of the way of the Millcreek road project construction. I support the trail closures that are outlined in the plan. I appreciate that there will be a permitted crossing through the construction area at Elbow Fork that will allow connectivity between the Upper Pipeline, Lower Pipeline, Elbow Fork (Mount Aire), and Terraces trails. I am also thankful that it is planned that the Millcreek Canyon road will be open for winter recreation during the project. Also, it is good that the trails paralleling the Millcreek Canyon road are planned to stay open.</p> <p>I note that it is planned to close the Little Water trail from the Upper Big Water trailhead to its junction with the Great Western trail and close the entire Old Red Pine Road trail during the project construction (Environmental Assessment, page 16). Instead (if it is possible?), I suggest to close these two trails at their junction near the Old Red Pine Road trail bridge. That junction is about 0.1 miles up trail from the Upper Big Water trailhead and appears be away from the project construction area. Closing these trails at the Old Red Pine Road trail bridge would allow much of these trails to be open during the construction and provide more space for recreation.</p>		

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>The expansion of the Upper Big Water trailhead parking area will likely take place in the beautiful meadow that is east of the existing parking area (Environmental Assessment, page 41). I recognize that the project construction will attempt to minimize negative impacts to the natural character of the area. I appreciate that rockery wall will be used to protect the area and provide a somewhat natural feel. Still, I hope that cluster of fir tree saplings at east end of the meadow be preserved and not disturbed by the project. Please see the enclosed photo with an arrow pointing to the fir tree saplings cluster.</p> <p>Thank you for taking on this project that will hopefully enhance safety, improve the Millcreek Canyon road condition, and help preserve what makes Millcreek Canyon special. Thank you for considering my comments.</p> <p>Respectfully</p>		
39	<p>I believe the proposed complete closure of the millcreek canyon is too long to block public access to the complete canyon.</p> <p>With traffic reaching unbearable levels in the cottonwood canyons, millcreek is the last canyon available for residents to recreate in safely.</p> <p>Access to the upper portion of the canyon should be a priority. As someone who deals in open RFPs and bids, this is most definitely a request that can be added to the RFP, and bidders/contractors can brainstorm and propose ways that they can maintain access to the upper portion and upper parking lot of the canyon.</p> <p>If you don't put that as a request, contractors will never put any additional brainstorming effort toward a solution. I believe it's your duty and responsibility to at the very least propose this for consideration.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>	M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for a response to your comment.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
40	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>As someone who frequents Millcreek Canyon canyon I can say that by adding cycling improvements it will make every mode of transportation better. I absolutely love the idea of adding an uphill bike lane! My hope is that the width of the road remains consistent, especially from some who cycles it. Also, remove parking minimums with the focus of removing parking! I'm worried that the the proposed parking lot and road widening will create a unsafe environment for pedestrians and cyclist. Thanks for the opportunity to <u>price</u> comments!</p>	B, C	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.
41	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Hi there!</p> <p>I love Millcreek Canyon so much take advantage of everything it has to offer- from running, biking, skiing, & picnicking! I appreciate your work in considering improvements to access Millcreek Canyon, and I encourage agencies to consider the following during the Environmental Assessment of proposed changes to the character of Millcreek canyon.</p> <p>I'd advocate for not creating additional parking whenever possible - if the goal is to get more people into the canyon to recreate - I think frequent shuttles would be the best & least impactful option.</p> <p>With that - I'd also advocate for not widening the road at any point. Not only would that impact slopes, streams & wetlands, but it encourages cars to move faster - which, as a biker, makes it scarier to bike on the road.</p> <p>And though the scope of this review did not include a proposed shuttle - I think the biggest problem in MillCreek canyon that we're trying to solve for is the need for an alternative to private automobiles to keep the canyon safer for pedestrians and bike users along the roadway.</p> <p>I would so support efforts to expand public transportation in Millcreek Canyon for these reasons & I very much hope it's considered!</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Millcreek Canyon Upper Road Improvement Project.</p>	A, B, C, D, G	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The goals of this project are articulated in the project's purpose and need on pages 4 and 5 of the EA. None of these goals relate to increasing canyon visitation.</p> <p>By maintaining the existing parking capacity, as stated in Note 4 on page 9 and elsewhere in the EA, the intent is to have no impact on visitation levels and visitor use trends. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses to your letter.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
42	<p>Hi Braden, Helen, and all who helped- Thank you for all the work that you have put into the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Environmental Assessment! This will be great project to improve Mill Creek Canyon for generations to come.</p> <p>I generally agree with and strongly support your analysis, findings, and proposal for work to improve the upper road and associated trailheads. Thank you!</p> <p>I've been involved with this project for a decade now, ever since I urged the Fehr and Peers recommended Millcreek Shuttle to be put in as an 'agreed upon action' in the 2015 Mountain Accord. That resulted in the FLAP grant as a prerequisite for the USFS SLRD to consider a shuttle bus operation. I'm on the Mount Olympus Community Council whose jurisdiction used to include Millcreek Canyon. I'm also on the CWC Millcreek Canyon Committee and the Board Chair for Trails Utah non-profit.</p> <p>I'll keep my comments short -</p> <p>1) While I understand the geographical constraints of the steep canyon walls and the stream riparian zone, I encourage a 'bike shoulder' to extend to the top of the canyon. In Big Cottonwood Canyon when they last did a rotomill and overlay, we worked with UDOT to have them shift the shoulder white lines over to give a three foot uphill shoulder and just a one foot downhill shoulder. This greatly improved cycling safety in that canyon. If you could give just a two foot wide uphill shoulder that would help meet one of the important 'purpose and needs' of the EA. That could be done by adding a foot or two of road pavement width where feasible and/or by narrowing the travel lanes to nine feet where acceptable. Anything to give some room for cyclists would be greatly appreciated! Please also include in the project bicycle safety signage such as 'share the road', 'give three feet', and 'watch for cyclists'.</p>	A, B, M, Q	<p>Thank you for your support and interest in this project. Our responses to your questions, concerns, and recommendations are below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See Common Public Concern B. 2. One of the purposes of this project is to improve drainage, which includes stabilizing roadside slopes to reduce erosion. The project would use a combination of engineered slope angles, retaining walls, riprap, and vegetative plantings to achieve this objective. FHWA's standard safety edge detail would be used to construct road shoulders (see https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/safetyEdge/pdfs/brochure101.pdf). 3 & 4. Thank you. 5. See Common Public Concern M. 6. See Common Public Concern Q. Installing communication lines is beyond the scope of this project and the purview of FHWA-CFLHD. <p>However, the project includes plans to install underground conduit and frequent pull boxes to facilitate this type of work in the future, should others decide to do it.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. See Common Public Concern A. Trailheads would include pick-up and drop-off locations that could be converted to shuttle stops in the event that a shuttle system is incorporated in the future.

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>2) Please make sure that ample shoulder treatment is done to protect the road edge from degradation. That will also help protect the stream from road runoff and make the road edge more comfortable for cyclists. A sharp road edge drop-off pushes cyclists further into the car travel lane. Strong mountain thunderstorms can result in serious road runoff which results in washing away inadequate shoulder treatment. This can be mitigated by installing two feet wide of large riprap covered with smaller gravel. Please make the shoulder treatment flush with the road surface.</p> <p>3) Providing off-road trailheads with restrooms, signage, and needed connector trail segments is great. Hardening some of the additional roadside parking and eliminating others is great. Thank you!</p> <p>4) Improving the winter gate area with the roundabout and increasing the winter parking area is also great!</p> <p>5) Please try to coordinate construction work to minimize the upper canyon road closure duration. Closing the upper canyon will greatly impact the local communities. Possibly work from the top down during construction so that the lower section up to Elbow Fork could stay open in July when the valley is sweltering.</p> <p>6) If budget allows, please pull some fiber optic or wire communications cable up one of the conduits so that the project of actually installing cell towers, emergency communications, and/or parking information equipment will be more cost-feasible in the future.</p> <p>7) Since this project originated out of the desire to run a shuttle bus up the canyon on weekends, please ensure that the main trailheads have adequate passenger dropoff areas that meet USFS requirements for bus stops.</p> <p>Thanks and good luck!</p>		
43	Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,	A	Thank you for your interest in this project. This project is in no way intended to bring more

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Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>We live about 5 minutes from the entrance to Millcreek Canyon and use the canyon several times a week throughout the year. The beauty of the canyon and it's value as a recreation site for bike rides, hikes, dog walking and skiing is in its relatively undeveloped state, with a simple access road that allows people to get into the canyon but that doesn't take away from the experience. The thought of widening the road in any way is simply horrifying. Spend the money where needed, on major roads throughout the city that benefit all — not by paving over a natural resource. If you believe we need to get even more people in the canyon, which seems crazy given how crowded the trails are already, invest in a shuttle, instead of pavement. This is another poorly thought out "improvement" project that isn't supported by residents and is an irresponsible use of taxpayer funds. Please do better. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Millcreek Canyon Upper Road Improvement Project.</p>		<p>people into the canyon, but rather to better manage existing use and improve drainage infrastructure.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for additional response.</p>
44	<p>Dear Sirs:</p> <p>Please accept these personal comments about the proposed project to improve the Upper Millcreek Canyon Road. First let me say, that indeed many of the bridges are currently in bad disrepair and need immediate attention. And yes, certain parts of the road are a bit too narrow, making oncoming passing traffic in both directions unsafe. However, I don't know that a lot of straightening or widening the road beyond a two lane passage way is necessary. For example, I don't think a full emergency lane on both sides is warranted, because I fear it will just cause traffic to increase, as well as make people think they can travel faster. I'm also leary of increasing the size of parking lots at trailheads, but I do support the installation of more restrooms at various places throughout the canyon. Yes, a narrow bike lane might be warranted, complete with bike racks at trailheads to encourage people to bike more in the canyon instead of driving their private vehicles. But most importantly, I support a frequent shuttle program at an affordable price so that people can more easily access the canyon without causing traffic jams or unnecessary crowding at parking lots. I totally support the current closure of the upper canyon during the winter months, thus ensuring quality habitat needs for the canyon's wildlife. Thank you for your attention</p>	A, C, D, E, R	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. As described in Chapter 2 of the EA, the roadway would not be widened beyond a two-lane road with a bike lane below Elbow Fork. Curve improvements would be minimal and limited to tight curves with limited sight distance.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>

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45	<p>Upper Millcreek Canyon Road Improvement Project Comments of [xx] Submitted April 1, 2024</p> <p>Commenter is a frequent user of Millcreek Canyon and serves on the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council, Millcreek Canyon Committee. These comments are being submitted in response to the release of the Environmental Assessment for the project. The road in Upper Millcreek is a recreational amenity and not a transportation corridor.</p> <p>This is not a highway project where speed and reliability are important factors. This is a dead-end highway, closed for 8 months each year, which serves only 13% of the vehicles entering Millcreek Canyon each year. The road's purpose is nearly exclusively to allow citizens access to mountainous forest land for recreation in all its many forms – from the tamer forms such as picnicking to the most rugged assaults on peaks in the winter. Any improvements to the road should focus on how well the road meets the purpose of being a recreational amenity and maintains the unique environmental feature of Millcreek Canyon.</p> <p>Progress is being made but issues remain.</p> <p>Some of the more transportation centric ideas presented in the early FLAP grant presentations have been modified in favor of a narrower road more in keeping with the environment in the Canyon. This is evidenced by the undertaking of an environmental assessment rather than relying on a categorical exclusion, by narrowing the road from the widths originally proposed, and by making the road narrower in spots to preserve the environmental qualities of Millcreek Canyon. The planners are not tone deaf to public input and progress is being made. However, more needs to be done and the planners need a broader, more holistic approach to the project and not simply view it as a road improvement project. This includes more attention to 1) the safety issue presented by the lack of mobile phone service in the Canyon, 2 the lack of serious planning for shuttle service, and 3) the lack of a bike lane in the upper portions of the project. The issue of mobile phone service.</p>	A, B, D, Q	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. We are aware of the road's primary uses and have designed the Proposed Action accordingly.</p> <p>While we understand your desire for this project to take a more holistic approach to solving traffic and safety issues in the canyon, this is beyond the scope of this project as defined in the purpose and need.</p> <p>The purpose and need were developed to reflect the funding mechanism and the immediate goals of FHWA-CFLHD and the project partners. Future planning efforts by the county and USFS may very well address cell service and public transit, but that is not the purpose of this project.</p> <p>The omission of a bicycle lane in the upper portion of the project area does not “create a dangerous situation,” but rather maintains the current situation in terms of the lack of a bicycle lane. Project constraints and competing objectives prevented this as a possibility.</p> <p>Other planned improvements (e.g., consistent lane widths, pavement markings, and the elimination of informal roadside parking) would increase cyclist safety above Elbow Fork.</p> <p>See Common Public Concerns B and D for more information.</p> <p>We determined that the lack of accident data in the upper canyon relative to the lower canyon,</p>

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	<p>Although the purpose and need for the project refers to improving safety in the canyon, the plan does not adequately address accommodating future mobile phone service in the canyon.</p> <p>Cell service in the canyon is an important safety issue. When someone is injured, either hiking in the back country or on the road, they are not able to call for assistance. Their options are to drive down to the mouth of the canyon where cell service works, or to stop by Log Haven or the Millcreek Inn and request to use their landlines. These options involve significant delay in contacting assistance in an emergency, whether police, fire, or emergency medical responders.</p> <p>The proposal calls for putting a conduit in the road as part of this project. This could be used for a fiber optic cable to convey information about parking availability or possibly used as a backbone for a series of small cell towers, similar to how cell service was installed in both Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons. Putting a conduit in the road may help accommodate future cell service, but that alone is not adequate. Salt Lake County needs to carefully study and determine what is required for future cell service in the canyon and determine whether the proposed conduit in the road is adequate. Cell service planning should be integrated into this project. Should junction boxes be placed at points where cell towers are likely to be installed? How will the fiber in the conduit be connected in the lower half of the canyon?</p> <p>Addressing this critical safety issue must be done by Salt Lake County as part of this FLAP grant process. If Salt Lake County does not take the lead, no one else will. If carriers like AT&T, T-Mobile or Verizon thought it was profitable to bring cell service to the canyon, they would've already applied for permits to put in towers. The Forest Service will not advance this objective. Those designing and building the FLAP grant road are so focused on the road that they have little concern for mobile phone service as a safety feature in the canyon, so this falls to Salt Lake County.</p> <p>In addition to the issue of safety, cell service in the Canyon would improve efficiency in the use of the Canyon. I have personally been sent up to reserve a picnic spot in Church Fork for a group of picnickers, discovered that Church Fork was completely full, moved to a different campground to secure a picnic site, then driven down to the bottom of the canyon to text</p>		<p>as you point out, is largely due to the fact that it is closed most of the year and significantly fewer vehicles travel the upper section of roadway.</p> <p>Crash data for upper Mill Creek Canyon was obtained from three sources and analyzed for this project for time periods ranging from 2005 to 2021. Based on this analysis, the relatively low levels of reported accidents in the upper canyon are likely associated with the lack of cell service (i.e., accidents either go unreported or are erroneously attributed to a downcanyon location with cell service) and the general lack of identifiable locations.</p> <p>While accident data may not be highly reliable, it did not inhibit the design team from using sound design principles and engineering judgement to improve safety where possible and feasible given the project's purpose and need and the various physical and environmental constraints.</p> <p>The traffic data relied upon to prepare the EA was sufficient for the purposes of this project. While additional data might help to quantify the predicted safety impacts, this would be unlikely to influence design decisions.</p> <p>The proposed improvements apply industry standard safety design measures to the greatest extent practical given the project's constraints, and additional data would not alter the application of sound design principles.</p>

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	<p>the other party’s information on the new picnic location. Similarly, cell service could be used to help various parties locate each other and connect.</p> <p>Cell service in the canyon has both an important efficiency and safety aspects, and the rebuilding of the road in the upper half of the canyon should not move forward until it is determined that the new infrastructure in the road is built in the way to maximally provide for future cell service in Mill Creek Canyon.</p> <p>The Issue of parking and the shuttle.</p> <p>The planners of this project gave a presentation to the Salt Lake County Council on February 27, 2024. At that time Millcreek City Mayor Jeff Silvestrini stood up and recited the genesis of the FLAP grant project. He said that in about 2017 he, as Mayor of Millcreek City, the County Mayor Jenny Wilson and Council member Jim Bradly were meeting with the Forest Service to discuss getting a shuttle in the Canyon to alleviate the traffic problems in the Canyon. "It became apparent in that meeting that the condition of the road would not support a shuttle." "With that in mind we brainstormed about what was necessary, and what was necessary was to get a FLAP grant. The genesis of the (FLAP grant) idea relates to being able to get a shuttle service in the Canyon consistent with what the Forest Service goals were and to work on this in a collaborative manner – so that is why we are here (pursuing the FLAP grant)." (See recording of Feb 27th Council meeting beginning at minute 34).</p> <p>Fast forward to the recently released EA, and one can search the 74-page document in vain for any reference to the shuttle project. There are only oblique references to widening the roadway at trail heads to include some modest pullouts that could be used as shuttle stops. This falls far short of the planning that is required if shuttle service is to be implemented in the canyon someday.</p> <p>I think that part of the blame here falls on the Forest Service and not on the planners. The Forest Service seems very averse to the concept of shuttles in the Canyon. They recognize that parking in the Canyon is limited. They recognize that the number of people who would like to use Millcreek, or who are expected to use Millcreek in the future, exceeds the</p>		<p>Please also refer to the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>

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	<p>number of parking places. They do not seem to embrace the idea of a future shuttle.</p> <p>A shuttle in Mill Creek Canyon is a stated goal of the Mountain Accord, an agreement of multiple parties reached after serious consideration of best practices and usage of the Wasatch Mountains near Salt Lake City. It is also a stated goal of the Central Wasatch Commission, a multi-jurisdictional body created to implement the principles of the Mountain Accord. Shuttle planning should be given serious consideration in conjunction with these road improvements.</p> <p>The Forest Service and Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation recently release the Tri Canyon Trails Draft Plan which suggest that the main trail heads, those where a shuttle stop would be likely to be located, include Elbow Fork, Alexander Basin, Lower Big Water and Upper Big Water. At a minimum the FLAP project should be designing shuttle stations at these locations.</p> <p>A more holistic approach to transportation and use of the Canyon is needed. Do not limit your view of the project to simply one of road improvements: a broader view and approach is needed. The project must include consideration of incorporating a shuttle and of parking.</p> <p>Define the job as how to best improve transportation and recreational use in the Canyon while protecting the environment. If the mission is defined this way then serious consideration must be given to construction of facilities ancillary to the road. These facilities include shuttle stops, parking, and trailhead improvements such as bathrooms. Work with other jurisdictions to coordinate these improvements at the same time the roadway is improved.</p> <p>The plan to create parking lots to replace roadside parking is a good one. Several years ago, I would have objected to this and argued that it is better to leave cars on the road and protect the environment than to build off-road parking lots. The changes implemented by the Forest Service at Rattlesnake Canyon in lower Mill Creek Canyon have convinced me otherwise. Off road parking works. The issue becomes how extensive should these parking lots be and are we fostering a car culture by building the lots rather than focusing on the implementation of a shuttle in the Canyon.</p>		

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	<p>The issues of a bike lane above Elbow Fork and road width. The narrowing of the road width from 24 feet to 20 feet above Elbow Fork, and even narrower widths in environmentally sensitive areas, are changes in the design that show an appreciation of the need to protect the environment in the Canyon. However, the lack of a bike lane above Elbow Fork, or even a 2-foot shoulder for uphill bicyclists A project presenter commented on June 14th, 2023, that few bicyclists go above Elbow Fork. There does not appear to be any data supporting this claim. There is conflicting anecdotal evidence: the road from the winter gate to Elbow Fork is quite steep, and the bicyclists who have made it that far are likely to proceed up the more gradual portion of the road from Elbow Fork to the end of the Canyon.</p> <p>With no bike lane, or even a shoulder for uphill bicyclists to get out of the way, uphill traffic will need to swerve around them into the oncoming lane and sometimes pass bicyclists without giving them the 3 feet of clearance required by law. This is not a good plan and creates real danger.</p> <p>One of the problems is that the planners appear to be relying upon a general rule (or some law or regulation) that 10 feet is the proper width for a car lane, which rule can be modified in exceptional circumstances. Elsewhere it has been noted that 9 feet is the required width for a lane. I am unclear what is actually required for lane width, but 9-foot-wide lanes seem to be adequate. The Unified Fire Authority weighed in at some point in this project that 9-foot-wide lanes are sufficient for their needs.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the goal to keep the road as narrow as possible to preserve the character of the Canyon, there is a real need for a bike lane or at least a substantial shoulder for bikers. Put in 9-foot-wide lanes, make the downhill shoulder as narrow as possible, and install at least a two-foot-wide shoulder for uphill bikers, all of which fits within the current road width in the EA. If there is some regulation requiring 10-foot-wide lanes except in exceptional circumstances, I suggest that the need to protect the environment qualities of Mill Creek Canyon between Elbow Fork and the end of the Canyon are exceptional circumstances which warrant 9-foot-wide traffic lanes.</p>		

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	<p>Narrower lanes will slow traffic down. Providing at least a 2-foot shoulder for uphill bicyclists (if not a bike lane) will greatly enhance the usability and safety in this portion of the Canyon.</p> <p>Safety The FLAP project promoters have consistently invoked safety as a justification for the project. Recently a document circulated (insert reference) related to incidents in the Canyon above the winter gate and attempted to identify the incident location by an approximate address number. Clearly many of these incidents are nothing more than traffic violations. There is little record of safety incidents above the winter gate. The vast majority of accidents occur in the lower portion of the canyon below the winter gate. See the graphic illustration of this below from the Millcreek Canyon Transportation Feasibility Plan, page 28).</p> <p>Perhaps this should not be too surprising since the lower canyon traffic count is between 7 and 9 times greater than that above the gate (reflecting the estimate that only between 9 and 13 per cent of all canyon traffic go above the winter gate.</p> <p>There may be other reasons they there are fewer accidents in the upper canyon. The narrow nature of the road above the gate forces traffic to slow down. The FLAP project proponents should be careful that the project does not make the upper Canyon less safe than its current condition. Specifically, 1) keep the lanes as narrow as possible to keep traffic moving slowly and 2) put some sort of bike lane or two-foot-wide shoulder for cyclists going above Elbow Fork.</p> <p>As noted above, the project proponents also put narrow limits on how they define safety. The lack of mobile phone service in the Canyon is a very real safety issue. The those whose task is to build highways may say that type of safety issue is beyond their job description. Salt Lake County, as a funding party to this project, should address this safety issue.</p> <p>Better data may result in better decision-making.</p> <p>The data used to justify aspects of this project seems weak in several places. I've noted above that there is no data regarding uphill bicyclists stopping at Elbow Fork and questionable incident report safety data has been circulated. The overall data on Canyon use also seems weak. I have</p>		

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	<p>gone in and out of the Canyon many times when the fee booth was not open, and my visit was not counted.</p> <p>I have stated several times that only 13% of vehicles in the Canyon travel above the winter gate. This figure is not in the EA but derived from statements at the open house that 1) Millcreek Canyon has 4,000 daily users, and 2) that when the winter gate is open, approximately 40% of these Millcreek Canyon visitors go above the winter gate. If these figures are accurate, this means that only about 13% of Millcreek Canyon visitors are using the road above the winter gate based on the following computation:</p> <p>4,000 x 365 = 1,460,000 1,460,000 / 3 = 486,666 40% of 486,666 = 194,666 194,666 / 1,460,000 = 13%</p> <p>However, both the 4,000 daily user figure and the 40% above the winter gate figure may be inaccurate. In the 2012 Millcreek Canyon Transportation Feasibility Study it is stated that the estimated number of cars above the winter gate are between 30% to 40% of traffic in the Canyon when the gate is open. (See Millcreek Canyon Transportation Feasibility Plan, August 2012, prepared for the Forest Service and Salt Lake County Public Works by Fehr Peers, page 14). If the 30% estimate is the correct number, then only 9% of total Canyon visitors are going above the winter gate.</p> <p>The decision-making process impacting this project would be improve if the project proponents could provide more accurate data.</p>		
46	<p>To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>I have been a user of the road and trails in Millcreek Canyon for over 40 years, and have seen many changes in usage and conditions. While agreeing that the roadway should be maintained, I am adamantly opposed to road rebuilding. It is a terrible idea that I adamantly oppose for the following reasons:</p>	A, B, C, D, K, M	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.

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	<p>1. The road is a unique, intimate part of the Millcreek experience, altogether different than the Cottonwoods. It needs to be preserved, not altered.</p> <p>2. Studies have long shown that more parking and wider, straighter roads will not improve visitor experience. If anything, they encourage more car traffic and less safe conditions for cyclists and pedestrians. Clearly, a better use of public resources is a shuttle system. There is parking at the bottom of the canyon. A shuttle is the most logical and cost-effective solution to making the canyon more accessible to more people, safer, and improve visitor experience.</p> <p>3. The road should be kept open during maintenance. Plan for it.</p>		
47	<p>I'm writing in regards the Millcreek Highway construction. This is an area used by everyone and the construction should reflect that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mill Creek Canyon is a small, intimate canyon with an aesthetic, unusual road that is used almost exclusively for recreation and lanes can and should be no more than 9 feet wide. • Some sort of bike lane should go to the top, or at least commit to a big shoulder. • Minimize road straightening and increased sight lines. • Figure out a way to keep the road open to cyclists during the construction summers of 2025 and 2026. 	B, E, M	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.
48	<p>Like many local residents, I have been concerned about the proposed changes in this very unique Canyon. I recreate there with my family frequently, including on bicycles. The road, especially near the top is quite narrow and windy, and while this may provide some inconveniences, it does keep the traffic speed down. The size of the road also gives a very intimate feeling to the Canyon. I would hope that any proposed changes include the continued ability for people to ride bikes, safely, especially with children. This could be a wide shoulder or as designated area for the cyclists to feel protected from traffic, going up and down. Wider roads, of course, could lead to faster traffic which would defeat the purpose of this special place, and its feel.</p>	A, B, D, M	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.

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	<p>another alternative would include a shuttle for people who wish to park at the bottom but hike near the top.</p> <p>I also understand that, if there are major road changes, this would prohibit use of the Canyon for perhaps a couple of years. We look forward every year to when the road opens so we can enjoy the grandeur. I hope there will be accommodation for cyclist and other non-car traffic to be able to use the road in the upcoming summers.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information Sent from my iPhone</p>		
49	<p>To whom it May concern,</p> <p>Millcreek is my favorite canyon for recreation in the Central Wasatch. I particularly enjoy riding my bike up the road and to the trails in the summer and backcountry skiing in the winter. My favorite part of this canyon is that it is quiet and it doesn't feel like the other two blown out canyons nearby.</p> <p>While there is always room for improvement, the proposed solutions may not be the improvement we need.</p> <p>The improvement priority should be better and safer bike lanes and pedestrian lanes so that this canyon does not get dominated like cars as are the other canyons. More established and safer bike and pedestrian lanes will enable users to have a better experience in the canyon outside of their cars and offer less reliance on cars to access the canyon . It will also limit the need for more cars and more car infrastructure, thus solving many problems in one.</p> <p>I hope that if we are going to improve this canyon, we will maintain curvy roads to slow the speed of traffic and we will increase bike lanes, wide shoulders, and other safety features for our non-motorized users.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to a bright future in Millcreek canyon.</p>	B, D, E	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.

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Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
50	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project, I'm a concerned citizen living in the millcreek canyon area. I've grown up here and have seen unprecedented growth. The question we ask ourselves is at what point do we decide to accomadate only cars and not pedestrians? My ideal in nature is to get out of my car and go far on foot in it. Millcreek canyon in particular is one of the only gullies not shredded with too much pavement to actually enjoy the environmental aspects of a river bottom. There is easy access to cars down lower in the canyon but as Salt lakes population booms we will never be able to accomadate the numbers. Its simply not possible. I will tell you what want and I hope you listen. I want the road permanently closed at the winter gate to cars for bicyclists, wheelchair programs like wasatch adaptive sports, dog days, pedestrians. All those awesome trails can be earned with extra effort.</p> <p>Heres the thing. Salt lake is wayyyy behind on modern city structures that allow for bicyclists to bike without threat of cars.</p> <p>I would like to see shuttles ran up the canyon that have the only access beyond the gate. Thats what Id like to see.</p> <p>Thank you for listening,</p>	A	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for a response.</p>
51	<p>Pavement is not the answer. Consider other options first! Shuttles, timed entry, every- other-day car use, mandatory carpool etc. If you build it they will come. This will do nothing to reduce cars and impact, does not increase parking, and limits our access for far too long a period of time. Bad idea.</p> <p>P.S. while walking up Porter Fork last fall, I saw ruffed grouse! That is not common!! Any modifications to this previous canyon deeply affect its inhabitants (save the few humans who have cabins there and, I see, who support the project. Of course they do.</p>	A	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The EA considers wildlife impacts in Section 3.2.3 of the EA.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for additional response.</p>
52	<p>Dear Central Federal Lands Highway Division,</p> <p>Do not increase the width and decrease the curvature of the upper Mill Creek road in Salt Lake County, Utah.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mill Creek Canyon is a small, intimate canyon with an aesthetic, unusual road that is used almost exclusively for recreation and lanes can and should be no more than 9 feet wide. 	A, B, D, E, M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The Proposed Action is in no way intended to increase visitor use in upper Mill Creek Canyon, but rather better manage existing use (see Section 1.2 of the EA).</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sort of bike lane should go to the top, or at least commit to a big shoulder. • Minimize road straightening and increased sight lines. • Figure out a way to keep the road open to cyclists during the construction summers of 2025 and 2026. • Rather than increasing car parking and car traffic in upper Mill Creek, introduce a bus or shuttle to get people into the canyon to recreate. There are viable parking options near the mouth that have tacit approval. • Just because more people want to visit Mill Creek Canyon, doesn't mean that you should do everything possible to accommodate everyone to be up there together. Mill Creek is small and fragile and can only handle a limited amount of human impact before it becomes permanently destroyed. Packing as many people in there as possible is not the solution. <p>While more people than ever want to enjoy and recreate in Mill Creek Canyon, simply enhancing vehicle access is shortsighted and will degrade the intimate upper Mill Creek Canyon experience for me, you, and future MCC lovers forever. Buses, shuttles, and incentivizing cycling by reducing the traffic will keep MCC in the natural, enjoyable state that people go up there for in the first place. Don't ruin it with more traffic and way too many people.</p>		
53	<p>I support the position of wasatch backcountry alliance. Also, stop closing our canyons. How do your plans include 2+ years of closure? It was the same with city creek. And then people complained and somehow you were able to keep trail open. Don't widen the road. Get a shuttle. Maybe ask users for options rather than just assuming you know best</p>	A, L, M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. As part of this project, we held three public meetings to ask users for their input on the Proposed Action as described in Section 1.3 of the EA. The design incorporates public feedback obtained during these meetings, as well as others.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>
54	<p>I've been worrying about this since I first heard about it. What canyon user group is interested in this endeavor? All the runners and hikers and bikers I know think this is a terrible idea.</p>	A, D, E	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The Proposed Action in no way intends to increase visitor use in upper Mill Creek Canyon, but</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>Mill Creek Canyon is unique among the canyons, offering a smaller and quieter experience than it's bigger cottonwood neighbors. We should try to protect that, not change it into a super highway for increased car traffic.</p> <p>Getting more cars up the canyons faster CAN NOT BE A PRIORITY. Infact, the opposite would be desirable.</p> <p>If any improvement was made, I would suggest odd/even days for vehicle access - leaving the canyon car free the other days!</p> <p>So trying to get more people and cars everywhere. How did that become the goal/default action?????!</p> <p>Let's look at shuttles and bike lanes, not a straighter, faster road.</p> <p>PLEASE RECONSIDER.</p>		<p>rather better manage existing use (see Section 1.2 of the EA).</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>
55	<p>As a Millcreek City homeowner and regular user of Millcreek Canyon, I am commenting on the Road Rebuild Environmental Assessment.</p> <p>I support a road bike lane to the top of the canyon. Strava data shows 90% of road riders utilize the full road, and regularly ride past Elbow fork.</p> <p>I am opposed to straightening the road, and opposed to lanes wider than 9ft. Studies show that wider and straighter roads encourage faster drivers, which will endanger hikers, bikers, dogs, and other canyon users. Please find ways to slow canyon traffic, not increase it.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>	B, D	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>
56	<p>Hello,</p> <p>Noting the absence of a shuttle plan in the recent Environmental Assessment, please note my concerns with the current project.</p> <p>Lanes can and should be no more than 9 feet wide, with a bike lane to the top, or wider shoulder. Minimize road straightening and increased sight</p>	A, D, M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>lines for cyclist safety, planning as to keep the road open to cyclists for the summers.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>		
57	<p>Speaking as a resident who frequently hikes the trails at the top of Millcreek Canyon to avoid the summer heat and who arrives by automobile, I am in favor of retaining the current road width to the top, but increasing the parking at and/or near the top. I have cycled this road in past years, and feel more comfortable with motorists slowing down due to the narrow width of the road than below the winter gate where their speeds are much higher. Hikers and mountain bikers who drive the upper section seem to be particularly courteous toward other users of the roadway and, like me, are nearly all comfortable with a few seconds delay in passing a bicyclist or pedestrian due to poor sight paths or oncoming traffic for this short section of road. I suspect that Millcreek accident reports involving bicyclists and automobiles reflect national reports that show that injury severity rises very steeply with increased speeds. Not only does the narrow roadway reduce the likelihood of serious injury to bicyclists, if hit, but the slower speeds of automobiles on that narrow road make the cycling experience far more enjoyable.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>	B, C, D	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>
58	<p>Good afternoon,</p> <p>I am concerned about possible changes to Mill Creek Canyon being discussed. The canyon is one of the most beautiful places I've ever seen and I have been all around the world. I have also spent most of my life able-bodied and a passionate outdoors woman who loves to camp, backpack, day hike and just spend as much time wandering the woods as I could. Seven years ago I was diagnosed with a rare disease which made my favorite hobbies nearly impossible. However, once in a while and with a lot of help I have been able to make it up to spend just a little time in Mill Creek on some of my favorite trails. Some years I have only got out once during the upper canyon's open season.</p>	K, M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The Proposed Action would involve closure of the roadway in the upper canyon to the public during two construction seasons as described in the EA. The closure would apply equally to all people, regardless of ability.</p> <p>The addition of accessible parking spaces and new, accessible vault toilets would improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>Changing the unique landscape of the canyon and closing it for several years would be heartbreaking. I would support other ideas that could allow cyclists and cars to share the space, but as someone who is physically disabled and cannot go into the canyon without my car, I have to speak up to share that those with disabilities enjoy the canyon too and hope that it's accessibility can be preserved during these changes. If the canyon needs more resources, please let us know - I am happy to contribute. If the canyon needs to make changes to adapt to its popularity - I am happy to do my part to support that. Please though, remember that those of us who are disabled cherish the canyon too and love it for its natural beauty just how it is now.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>		
59	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>YOU REALLY should schedule these projects on differing dates.</p> <p>My one Question is Will the lower parts of the canyons be closed.</p> <p>If so you're gonna have trouble with dis honest contractors.</p> <p>(See refurbish of Howard R Drugs Elementary. They closed the whole playground then did a poor , More expensive job. Also the drainage doesn't even go to the drain.)</p> <p>Do let this happen to you(us)</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>	N	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The lower part of the canyon (below Winter Gate and the project area defined in the EA) would not be closed during construction. We plan to use an experienced contractor and hold them accountable.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for further response.</p>
60	<p>To Central Federal Lands Highway Division,</p> <p>My name is [xx] and I am a resident of Salt Lake City and a frequent user of upper Millcreek canyon. I hike, bike, and picnic in the canyon at least once a week during the warmer months and occasionally access the canyon in the winter months.</p>	A, B, D, E, M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>I am strongly opposed to the widening and straightening of the upper canyon road. Widening of the road will destroy the intimate nature of the canyon and will not improve safety for cyclists. As the road is only used for recreation access, the lanes do not need to be more than 9 feet wide. The safest, clearest option is to put a bike lane in that reaches the top of the canyon. Reasonable shuttle options exist near the mouth of the canyon, and my understanding is that a plan for a shuttle was already drawn up. We MUST have a shuttle. Increasing car traffic in the canyon and making it easier for cars to rip down the road is not the answer.</p> <p>Please also allow cyclists to access the entire road during construction. This is one of the precious few closer, less traveled canyons that cyclists can use in the city. This is especially true considering City Creek canyon is also closed until 2027. PLEASE keep access open to cyclists via a bike lane during the construction project.</p> <p>Widening and straightening the Millcreek canyon road is a very short-sighted plan and I beg you to reconsider other options first, such as a shuttle bus.</p>		
61	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Environmental Impact:</p> <p>Prioritizing cars at the expense of the environment is poor and lazy policy, especially for an organization that calls itself the Forest Service. Just like the Cottonwoods, there are ways to limit the number of cars in the canyons on any given day. The technology is available to count the number of cars entering and leaving the upper canyon. If there is no parking then the gate doesn't raise for the car trying to enter. There is plenty of room to make a turn-around at the winter gate and a sign at the entrance of the Canyon. There is even technology to check parking status with an ap, that could also be tied into the Millcreek annual pass.</p>	A, B, D	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. As explained throughout the EA, the Proposed Action balances the needs of all users with environmental considerations while operating within physical, environmental, and economic constraints.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	<p>I don't agree that there should be a wider road above Elbow Fork and no bike lane. I love to ride above the gate and so do many many other people. Data from Strava confirms this. Wider roads encourage higher speeds which tend to kill cyclists and pedestrians. How bout a wider shoulder or even a designated bike lane instead. That alternative will increase safety.</p> <p>I suggest keeping the minimum width consistent up and down the canyon. Keeping the roadway 18' or less would also reduce the need for slope cuts and retaining walls that would constrict the shared use of the roadway and unnecessarily cut into the hillsides.</p> <p>Safety and Accessibility The draft project's introduction of bigger parking lots and road widening would make it more dangerous and difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to safely and freely enjoy the upper canyon, altering people's relationship with the canyon.</p> <p>Road Closure and User-Created Parking I do not support formalizing parking that was created by users. I support regional public transportation alternatives in Millcreek Canyon.</p> <p>Shuttle Service While the scope of this review did not include a proposed shuttle, the single biggest problem in this unique canyon is the need for an alternative to private automobiles to keep the canyon safer for pedestrians and bike users along the roadway. I support efforts to expand public transportation in Millcreek Canyon to reduce the need for private automobiles and additional parking in the proposed project area.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Millcreek Canyon Upper Road Improvement Project.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>		

Table 2. Individual Comments

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62	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Thank you for taking public comment on the Millcreek Canyon Upper Road Improvement Project.</p> <p>As with the Cottonwood Canyons, Millcreek Canyon suffers from overuse by private automobiles. Bigger parking lots and widened roads can't satisfy the insatiable demand for recreation in Millcreek, especially during Fall leaf viewing season. Wider roads and expanded parking lots will only encourage more private car use, which will be self-defeating. A shuttle bus system is much more likely to actually solve the congestion problem and will do it without degrading the natural character of the canyon, which is the source of the canyon's appeal to the public.</p> <p>Zion National Park had the same problem as Millcreek--too many people wanting to use a natural area that is simply too small to accommodate the demand without degrading the asset itself. Zion's system allows access only via shuttle bus during high season (which is most of the year). It is working beautifully in Zion and it can do the same for Millcreek. It costs the National Park Service under \$3 per person, per trip, to provide its shuttle service. This would be an incredibly efficient way to allow the public to use Millcreek Canyon without compromising it as a natural area. The Olympus Hills shopping center parking lot, the large undeveloped lot across from Olympus Hills on the west side of I-215, or the Skyline High parking lot, are all candidates for staging areas. If electric buses were used to provide the shuttle service, the Inflation Reduction Act would subsidize each bus by \$40,000.</p> <p>This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to get it right. Please follow the example of Zion National Park in your Millcreek transportation planning and take advantage of the huge Inflation Reduction Act subsidies while they are still available.</p>	A, C	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.
63	Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,	A, B, C, D	Thank you for your interest in this project. We do not anticipate that implementation of the

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>Dear Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Hwy Division,</p> <p>I have been hiking, running, and skiing in Millcreek Canyon since I moved here in 1991. Millcreek's proximity to the city and the fact that it is largely protected from development, make it an invaluable asset to the many of us who live here in good part because of the access to the mountains. We were grateful to see power lines being buried in the canyon last year, and appreciate that your office is engaged with issues of concern in Millcreek. I appreciate the opportunity to add my voice to the mix during the environmental assessment of currently proposed changes to the canyon.</p> <p>i consider it a mistake to widen the road and add parking to the canyon. I believe this would result in many more cars, and people driving faster, which would make the canyon less safe for pedestrians and bikers in the upper canyon. I believe it would also fundamentally change the nature of the canyon, making it "less wilderness," and "more city." This is not a place that it would be positive for people to be encouraged to 'go for a drive.' And I also fear that these proposed changes could well be the first step toward a future with more development, more cars, more parking--in what is really a fairly limited space.</p> <p>I am in full agreement with Save Our Canyons in supporting a shuttle alternative. It would be somewhat less convenient--but the canyon would remain more special, the roads would be safer, road cuts and water degradation would be avoided. The Salt Lake valley is growing rapidly. That is not likely to slow down anytime soon. Creating a shuttle service would accustom people to thinking of the canyon as something to be protected, a place for a special outing. It would set the tone for preserving the canyon. I'm afraid that widening the road and increasing parking, would do the very opposite of these things.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to contribute my concerns on the Millcreek Canyon Upper Road Improvement Project.</p>		<p>Proposed Action would fundamentally change the nature of upper Mill Creek Canyon.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
64	<p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>I love that you are planning to make some improvements, but please consider graceful changes to this beautiful canyon. It's a special canyon because it is gently developed. Please do not increase road width or expand parking. That may sound strange to request considering we are experiencing a lot of population growth. Nevertheless, if parking is limited, people will learn to adapt their visit times to when there is more parking and fewer crowds. Millcreek is a wildlife sanctuary that should see limits in the number of visitors at any time.</p> <p>An outstanding idea would be to finally have some form of public transportation up into this special canyon and so that people without transportation can have the opportunity to visit as well.</p> <p>Thank you for hearing my thoughts.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>	A, C	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.
65	<p>To Whom it may concern:</p> <p>I've been biking on the road in Millcreek Canyon for over 20 years now. By far, the most dangerous part for cyclists is traveling up the canyon, above the gate. If the time and expense is being put into this improvement without widening the road to include at least a wide shoulder, if not a bike lane, on the up canyon direction of travel, this is a huge missed opportunity as well as not representing who uses the canyon.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>	B, D	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.
66	<p>Hello, I'm writing to incidcate my support for changes to the proposed road improvements. Namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mill Creek Canyon road should be no more than 9 feet wide. The canyon is small and used mostly for recreation, there's no need to create highway sized roads. 	A, B, D, E, M	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I bike to the top, most cyclist do. Please include some sort of bike lane should go to the top, or at least commit to a big shoulder. • Minimize road straightening and increased sight lines • Please the keep the road open to cyclists 2025 and 2026. Millcreek is a special place for us and losing it for two seasons would be heartbreaking • Please please please include a shuttle! I'd much prefer not to drive up Millcreek. There are parking areas near the base. A shuttle would be more environmentally friendly and safer for other road users. <p>Thank you,</p>		
67	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am a resident of SLC who frequently recreates—walks, hikes, runs, bikes, skis—in Millcreek canyon, throughout the entire canyon, and I strongly disprove of the Upper Millcreek Canyon road widening project. I would advocate for a public shuttle to serve the upper road as it would be a great application for such a service, is likely more cost-effective, and would likely have a secondarily environmental benefit upon implementing with reducing single occupancy vehicles in a part of the country that so obviously has a problem with tailpipe emissions degrading air quality.</p> <p>I bike on the road up the canyon to roads end fairly often during the summer and fall months when it is open and from my purview, widening the road would degrade the stunning natural environment, likely have high cost in dealing with the creek already right up against the road, and would introduce more harm than good in allowing car drivers to move at higher speeds. The current road winds and meanders, necessitating slower car driving, and as a result creates a beautiful experience moving through nature, no matter what your mode of transit—foot, 2 wheels, or four wheels, etc. Road widening and creating more line of site would not only ruin that experience, but also increase danger on what is supposed to be a shared road.</p> <p>If any change is necessary, I would advocate for purely necessary infrastructural improvements to the pavement and erosion control, and a shuttle service if something further must be implemented I would be</p>	A, B, D, E, H	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>highly disappointed if my tax payer dollars went to a project that was so obviously resulting in more negative outcomes and moving us backwards. We collectively need to be investing in solutions that benefit the community in all ways: people and planet, and there is much room for opportunity in taking advantage of shared transit initiatives to reduce noise, volume and air pollution as well as ghg emissions, and preserve the beauty of a local canyon that is so near and dear to the community that gets to enjoy it.</p> <p>Thank you so much for your time and consideration! I look forward to learning how the assessment unfolds.</p>		
68	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Millcreek Canyon is just blocks from my home and a favorite destination for hiking (not biking for me). The canyon is its own self-limiting destination. It is not dangerous, it is not impassable, and the only limitation is parking, which is, again, self-limiting.</p> <p>Widening the road would seriously compromise the creek and its riparian habitats, it would increase traffic (not safety!), it would invite more vehicle traffic (not ease congestion!), and it would add burden to local wildlife and local habitats.</p> <p>I hike other canyons of the Wasatch too and would GLADLY take a shuttle from the bottom to a variety of upper destinations to hike. Why is that never considered a solution to congestion?</p> <p>Please consider alternatives that limit traffic, not expand access, that minimize vehicle and construction disturbance to the creek, not tear things up to make the canyon more accessible.</p> <p>Instead of compromising the creek and the canyon, why don't we ask for some serious human compromises? I'd gladly compromise my preference for my own car to save Wasatch canyons.</p>	A, C, G	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The Proposed Action is in no way intended to increase visitor use in upper Mill Creek Canyon, but rather better manage existing use (see Section 1.2 of the EA). Wildlife impacts are addressed in Section 3.2.3 of the EA. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>

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	Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Millcreek Canyon Upper Road Improvement Project.		
69	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Shuttles, shuttles, shuttles! For the cost of widening the road and or enlarging parking areas, small shuttles every 15 minutes for multiple years. Why is it we cannot have an alternative to private automobiles (and no big buses running every 30 to 60 minutes is not a viable alternative).</p> <p>12 to 20 man shuttles every 15 minutes and we would not have to drive! Really it's so simple!</p> <p>Thanks</p>	A	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for a response.
70	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>In a scarcity issue, there are two ways to solve the problem: get more of it or need less of it.</p> <p>This plan is an attempt to get more of it. If implemented, you'll allow for more people to access the commodity (access to fun places), but ruin the reason why people want it. Users value the quaint, old time feel of the canyon, its narrow road, the minimal trailheads, a feel of uniqueness and few (sorta) people. If you proceed with this plan, more people will access it, but you'll largely diminish its value. More people will have access (get more of it) but will be less satisfied. Lose lose.</p> <p>Or you can need less of it. To retain the integrity of that commodity, you must restrict the number of users. That's being done already in one form or another. It's inconvenient for some, but the resource remains intact and unique. Controlling demand is the most beneficial option. Best for users (though inconvenienced) and best for the integrity of the canyon.</p> <p>In other words, don't proceed with this project.</p>	A	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project and your perspective.</p> <p>The Proposed Action in no way intends to increase visitor use in upper Mill Creek Canyon, but rather better manage existing use (see Section 1.2 of the EA).</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for additional response.</p>

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	<p>* I grew up in the canyon and enjoyed pivotal, life-guiding moments there. I moved away from Utah, but my past is still there.</p>		
71	<p>Hello,</p> <p>An article in the Salt Lake Tribune is the first that I have heard about plans to widen Millcreek Canyon Road and add new parking. I am so happy that I have one more day to comment. Thank you for giving residents the opportunity to provide feedback on this proposal and thank you for all of your hard work to date (many years it looks like!)</p> <p>It is not sustainable for the solution to increased use of wild lands to be making it possible for more cars to access the canyon. It's people that need access, not cars. Cars don't care.</p> <p>Widening Millcreek road is the most unsafe proposal for people use. Wider roads mean cars will travel faster and pose more risk. The accommodations for wider roads will also mean big cuts into the natural hillside and retaining walls that feel more like I-80 and Parley's Canyon (most unsightly) than beautiful natural Millcreek Canyon.</p> <p>Please no more parking lots or bigger parking lots. If people want a big parking lot they can park at numerous unused asphalt accommodations in the valley and shuttle up. We frequently park in the huge parking lots along I-215 at the base of Millcreek Canyon and carpool up with friends.</p> <p>I think that limiting cars in Millcreek Canyon and operating a shuttle service like we have seen at Zion National Park would work great in Millcreek Canyon. It would be amazing to see some of the proposed \$19,600,000 Total Project Value going to a sustainable organized shuttle service. With electric buses! Wow would that be awesome.</p> <p>It is sad for us that have been driving our cars to the top of the canyon our whole lives. It is very convenient and even kind of fun taking the mountain curves at the speed limit (hence the bad idea to widen the road). But</p>	A, C, D, K, O	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The Proposed Action in no way intends to increase visitor use in upper Mill Creek Canyon, but rather better manage existing use (see Section 1.2 of the EA).</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>

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	<p>there are just too many people that want to access the canyon. Single car driver days are over (on busy weekends and holidays and such).</p> <p>Please create a proposal that relies heavily on a shuttle system like that which is working great in Zion Canyon.</p> <p>All The Best,</p>		

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72	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>I do not support the FLAP project in Millcreek Canyon. I ride my bike above the winter gate frequently in the summer and I ski there in the winter. This upper canyon should be left alone. Make improvement up to the winter gate and leave the upper canyon to bikers, hikers, and walkers. Develop areas below the winter gate to accommodate people with cars. Enhancing the upper road and creating formal parking lots encourages people in private vehicles to use the canyon more and drive faster. Most motorists drive to the end of the road, turn around, and drive back out. Encourage them to go elsewhere with the \$1 million per mile you will spend here. Road straightening, sight improvement for drivers, large parking areas, tree removal, crosswalks, signage, and retaining walls collectively change the mood, ambiance, and experience people want to have there.</p> <p>Sincerely, Sugar House 40-year resident</p>	A, C, D	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.
73	I am against the widening of the Millcreek canyon road and expanding the parking.	C	Thank you for your interest in this project. Parking in the upper canyon would not be expanded.

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
			See Common Public Concern C for more information.
74	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>My large family moved near the entrance of Millcreek Canyon in the very early 1960s. To say we were (and are) deeply in love with it is a gross understatement. Together we hiked, biked, cross-country skied, fished and/or picnicked there at least once a week. We believe that it is critical to keep road designs that force car drivers to slow down and actually see and smell this unique place.</p> <p>We appreciate your work to limit excessive access to it. We encourage agencies to not make any changes to this peaceful wild place.</p> <p>Environmental Impact To protect Millcreek Canyon's natural character and water, we should NOT create more parking whenever possible. If you build them even more people will come, and it's being overused already. The current project introduction of bigger parking lots and road widening will ruin this treasure.</p> <p>While we appreciate the 3 varying road widths, particularly above Elbow Fork may reduce impact on slopes, adjoining streams, and wetlands, we think this encourage cars to speed, thus endangering people, wildlife and the quiet that makes it unique.</p> <p>The draft project's introduction of bigger parking lots and road widening would make it more dangerous and difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to safely and freely enjoy the upper canyon, altering people's relationship with the canyon.</p> <p>We oppose formalizing parking that was created by users. We support small, frequent public shuttle buses to reduce cars and the risks they bring.</p>	A, C, D, H, K	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.

Table 2. Individual Comments

Ltr. No.	Comment Text	See Response to Common Public Concern	FHWA-CFLHD Individualized Response
	Thank you for listening to us,		
75	<p>Hello!</p> <p>What makes Millcreek special to me is the intimate feeling of the upper canyon. The narrow road winding along the flowing water helps keep traffic speed lower and safer for bikers and pedestrians. I'd be happy to see the road resurfaced but disappointed to see the natural environment changed to accommodate a wider road which leads to higher car speeds and decreased safety.</p> <p>Kind regards,</p>	D, E	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The road would be widened to safely accommodate two lanes of traffic but would remain narrow and winding. We do not anticipate that this would substantially alter the feel of the upper canyon.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for more information.</p>
76	<p>[Form letter with additions included here]</p> <p>Hello, I am a 25 year citizen of SLC and love Millcreek canyon. I welcome the attention to making sure it is a safe canyon, improving the existing eroding infrastructure. I also want us to think about centuries of success for the canyon.</p> <p>So we have assurance that the wider roads will ensure safety for cyclists? Walkers? Again I am concerned that more road, more parking = more cars, more frustrated drivers. Can we think about a limit on cars up and or a shuttle or bus? I see limits needed in the upper regions of Little Cottonwood for parking reasons when the flowers bloom. Can we implement this type of counting system for Mill Creek? Can we consider a shuttle? Maybe we start with weekend support as we trial this?</p> <p>I love that we are helping the canyon. Let's think about how people behave and plan long term.</p>	A, B, C	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Hazards always exist, so we cannot ensure the safety of anyone, including cyclists and pedestrians under either the Proposed Action or the No Action alternative.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional information.</p>
77	<p>We are frequent canyon users with 2 active dogs, pass holders too.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A bike lane all the way to the end of the upper canyon is needed. 2. Reduction in speeds is the safest way to manage cars, bikes, and pedestrians. 3. Minimize road straightening, everything does NOT have to be a grid! <p>The road is safe, especially if lower speeds are in effect and enforced.</p>	A, B, D, E, M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>There are few accidents in the upper canyon, and the local fire departments say the road is fine as is. I am from the east coast where roads often seem to be paved animal paths. It works not being straight too! Speed reduction works!</p> <p>4. A shuttle option should be built into the plans- reduces traffic, allows our youth to be independent, especially all those boy scouts. Accommodate shuttles, even if they aren't implemented just yet. Show some foresight please.</p> <p>It will be a great loss to be denied access to the canyon for 2 summers. We need shady forests with water in the triple digit summers, as do our dogs.</p> <p>Please make a plan to open the canyon in the summers, create bike lanes all the way up, and most importantly reduce speeds.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>		
78	<p>Please leave Millcreek canyon as it is. Road widening will destroy a lot of the beauty.</p>		<p>Thank you for your interest in this project.</p>
79	<p>Greetings,</p> <p>I am a USFS employee who was part of the original 30% design calls and review team for the Millcreek Canyon Road project. I am submitting these comments as a member of the public as they may not represent the current viewpoint of the agency. I am commenting from the following perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I spent 25 years living in the Salt Lake Valley and have extensive experience cycling, hiking and skiing in Millcreek Canyon. I have literally 100's of days skiing and biking in Millcreek Canyon and am familiar with the canyon's hydrology. My cycling time includes slowly peddling up the canyon and looking at the road/stream, I'm a nerd for these things. • I am a registered professional geologist in Utah with 30+ years' experience in NEPA, hydrology, construction and design. As a member of the public, prior to working for the USFS, I have worked on major road projects such as I-15 reconstruction (CAD designer), Legacy Highway 	<p>A, B, D, E</p>	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project and unique perspective. Your questions and concerns are responded to sequentially, below.</p> <p>1. Design documents (plans and specifications) are not typically attached to NEPA documents for a few reasons.</p> <p>First, they are a work in progress. Sharing intricate design details with the public that are subject to change tends to result in more confusion than anything. The purpose of the EA is to describe the Proposed Action and the anticipated environmental, social, and economic impacts in enough detail that members of the public can weigh in and let us</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>(NGO hydrology expert for the NEPA lawsuit), the Snowbasin Road partnering team (SLOC consultant), Empire Canyon runaway truck ramp (CAD designer) and Mountain Accord transportation subgroup to name some.</p> <p>My comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The EA needs to contain an appendix with the current design document. The public or myself, an agency professional, should not have to go on an Easter egg hunt to find this information. This makes it difficult to provide specific comments on road widths and features such as walls. This is especially important on a project with varying road widths. In my professional opinion, it would be difficult to provide detailed comments without this information. 2. I understand that this is a FHWA project. The project is being implemented on USFS lands. On that note, an EA may not provide a NEPA level of analysis consistent with USFS practices which would typically require an EIS for the project of this magnitude. How will this impact the USFS portion of any decision? 3. The Purpose and Need, Section 1.2 includes limited pedestrian and bicycle facilities. This section states that "Improvements are needed to better accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists." Negating to add a bicycling lane or shoulder above Elbow Fork does not fulfill the Purpose and Need. Without a bike lane or shoulder cyclists may need to exercise their right to occupy the whole lane. This will complicate traffic and safety in the canyon. It could also further decrease safety by drivers who wish to pass in risky/unsafe locations. One example of this is an unsafe pass leading to one of America's premier cyclists getting hit by an SUV and having his international racing career curtailed. Is there data to support the lack of a need for a bike lane above Elbow Fork. My experience is that anyone who cycles to Elbow Fork will continue up the canyon. I realize that this is qualitative data, is there any quantitative data contrary to this? This data would have been reasonable to collect. 4. As I have stated numerous times, construction of the road in the vicinity of Thousand Springs requires extra costs and constraints due to the current beaver dam configuration in the area. The current design will have to be built with live water on both sides and a very likely shallow water 		<p>know if they think we missed anything critical in evaluating those impacts.</p> <p>The level of detail provided in the project description (Chapter 2) is typical of what is included in EAs and adequate for these purposes.</p> <p>Additionally, the EA process, including public comment, can influence design decisions. Preparing a set of plans and specifications for public review at this stage would be premature and an inefficient use of government funds.</p> <p>2. The FHWA regularly completes roadway projects like this on federal lands managed by other agencies, such as the USFS and BLM. Projects like this, where there is an existing roadway, are typically completed under a categorical exclusion.</p> <p>However, the level of public interest observed during the first two public meetings led the FHWA and its cooperators, including the USFS, to complete an Environmental Assessment (EA). This does not preclude an EIS, which would be necessary if the EA analyses result in a finding that the project would, or likely would, result in significant environmental impacts.</p> <p>Additionally, the USFS will be issuing its own, separate decision related to the Proposed Action as described in Section 1.4 of the EA.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>table. This will require extensive engineering controls. Removing the beaver dams will simplify construction and reduce maintenance and costs. It may also allow for more consistency in road width. Water from these beaver dams has encroached on the road in the past and is likely to happen again. The document does not state or provide a reference to demonstrate that the road surface will remain dry during a 100-year flood event. This may be difficult with live water on both sides of the road and known beaver activity. Has any modeling (e.g. HEC-RAS) been conducted on the design? This modeling should include scenarios of beaver dam buildup. The modeling if not conducted, is a data gap that needs to be addressed. Was bridging this area evaluated? I realize it would have likely been eliminated due to costs etc.</p> <p>5. It is illogical to think that straightening and widening the road will not increase vehicle speeds, regardless of what the posted speed limit is. Are there any traffic calming features included in the current design? It is not possible to determine this by reading the EA.</p> <p>6. Section 1.3, Public Involvement, mentions that comment items included bicycle infrastructure. The current EA/Design neglects bicycle infrastructure above Elbow Fork which is approximately 2/3rds of the project undergoing construction. Once again, this does not meet the Purpose and Need. This lack of bicycle infrastructure over 2/3rds of the project area does not reflect the needs of the public concerning a significant use of the canyon.</p> <p>7. The document needs to address the potential for higher speeds due to the road being wider and straighter. Is there data to show that this will or will not occur?</p> <p>8. There needs to be a visual simulation for the upper part of the canyon that shows cyclists and cars.</p> <p>9. The EA does not mention the potential for walls to impact backcountry skiers exiting onto the road.</p> <p>10. Will the loss of informal parking areas and replacement with formal parking reduce accessibility to areas served by the lost parking spots? This may increase pedestrian use on the road as members of the public access the areas formerly served by the informal parking.</p>		<p>3. The project team attempted to include an uphill bicycle lane all the way to Upper Big Water Trailhead for all of the reasons you cite (see Section 2.3.1 of the EA).</p> <p>The design team found that the environmental impacts and associated costs of doing this were untenable, largely due to the size of cuts, fills, and retaining walls required and stream impacts necessary to widen the road in the topographically constricted upper canyon. If continuing the uphill bike lane to the end of the road were feasible, it would have been included in the Proposed Action.</p> <p>Lastly, we do not feel that additional data would have impacted these decisions. Making the upper canyon cyclist friendly while balancing this need with other project needs and physical constraints was the goal, regardless of what insights additional quantitative data on cyclist use would have provided.</p> <p>4. The majority of the project area lies within the 100-year floodplain as indicated on FEMA maps, so we expect that portions of the roadway would be overtopped during a flood.</p> <p>Given the lack of existing evidence of roadway damage resulting from such flooding, near Thousand Springs and elsewhere, we do not think this is a significant operational or maintenance concern.</p>

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	<p>11. The alternative to close the upper road every other day was a good one in my opinion. This could be coordinated with the bicycle closure on the upper canyon trails. Including it in the analysis would have provided a good balance in the document.</p> <p>12. During the initial design calls, one option discussed was to determine the maximum feasible road width and leave stripping/travel way options open to further discussion. Is this still possible?</p> <p>Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or would like me to elaborate further on any of my comments. I'm always happy to discuss this project.</p>		<p>5. See responses to Common Public Concerns B, D, and E, which help clarify the level of widening/straightening and anticipated impacts to vehicle speed. The roundabout planned above the Winter Gate parking area would calm traffic in that area. No other traffic calming devices are planned.</p> <p>6. A combination of environmental, topographical, and economic constraints rendered the inclusion of a bicycle lane above Elbow Fork infeasible. The design balances the various needs in the context of these constraints, and unfortunately, it was not possible to extend the bicycle lane beyond Elbow Fork. See Common Public Concern B for additional information.</p> <p>7. See Common Public Concerns D and E.</p> <p>8. Visual simulations are not required as part of the EA. We included two simulations to help people visualize the more involved sections of the planned roadway. We do not consider two ten-foot lanes complex enough to warrant a simulation.</p> <p>9. Backcountry skiers in the project area are required to consistently navigate trees, cliffs, boulders, creeks, and other obstacles. The quantity and dimensions of retaining walls would have little impact on the necessity of backcountry skiers to be aware of their surroundings and navigate accordingly.</p>

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			<p>10. We consulted with a variety of user groups to identify informal parking areas that might be useful to retain. This resulted in the eight pullouts proposed for formalization.</p> <p>The primary use of these informal parking areas is as overflow parking for designated recreation sites. While there may be the occasional user who would need to walk along the road to access their desired location, far more users would be kept off the road by shifting the parking capacity to the more heavily used recreation sites.</p> <p>11. These types of operational considerations are discussed in Section 2.3.6 of the EA.</p> <p>12. The iterative design process considered road width, lane width, and shoulder width in great detail. While design decisions are not yet complete and subject to change, proposed lane and shoulder configurations are considered optimized at this time.</p>
80	<p>Hello I am a resident in SL. Millcreek canyon is a second home for me where I bike and trail run almost everyday. I am asking you to please reconsider any road expansion of this special canyon. I don't believe expanding for a bike lane is necessary it is an unnecessary cost. My family and friends all feel the same way on this issue. The people you serve do not want to see any more of this canyon changed and wish for you to not move forward with your proposals. Please listen to those who care and to those you are serving.</p> <p>Thank you</p>		<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please understand that we are listening to a lot of people with different, and often competing, perspectives on what they want to see in upper Mill Creek Canyon.</p>

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81	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Hello,</p> <p>As a lifelong Utahn, I am deeply concerned about protecting Millcreek Canyon's natural preservation. Although I am appreciative of the considered accessibility improvements to Millcreek Canyon, I do believe it is necessary to conduct an Environmental Assessment of the proposed changes. I'm worried additional parking lots will negatively impact the important aspects of the ecosystem. Environmental assessments are crucial in reviewing changes to the canyon.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Millcreek Canyon Upper Road Improvement Project.</p> <p>Best,</p>	H, K	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. We completed an Environmental Assessment (EA), which is what you commented on.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your general concerns about preservation of the environment.</p>
82	<p>[Copy of form letter with alterations copied below]</p> <p>I have lived near Millcreek Canyon for almost 50 years. It is very important to me and our community that enjoys. Your work to improve access to Millcreek Canyon is greatly appreciated, and I encourage the consideration of the following during the Environmental Assessment of proposed changes to the character of Millcreek canyon.</p> <p>Parking has always been an issue in Millcreek Canyon.</p> <p>There is a real concern that the draft project's introduction of bigger parking lots and road widening would make it more dangerous and difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to safely and freely enjoy the upper canyon.</p>	B, C, D	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. We are not proposing changes to the character of Mill Creek Canyon. Impacts of the proposed improvements are evaluated in Chapter 3 of the EA and indicate only minor impacts to the canyon's character.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for more information.</p>
83	<p>Is there an option for public transportation during the construction period for the hiking/biking season rather than eliminating canyon use altogether for 2 years? That would be my preference.</p>	M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for a response to your comment.</p>
84	<p>To whom it concerns,</p>	A	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for a response to your comment.</p>

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	<p>As a salt lake resident and frequent user of Millcreek canyon, I would like to voice my dissent for widening Millcreek Canyon road. I believe simpler and easier solutions exist and should be a first act. Adding speed bumps, a shuttle service, or limiting vehicles will serve to create a safer environment for all users and not harm delicate ecosystems in upper millcreek.</p> <p>I believe it's time we recognize that we cater almost wholly to private vehicles and make adjustments accordingly. Please consider simpler and less invasive options for millcreek. Thank you.</p>		
85	<p>I understand updating or constructing retaining walls are necessary but widening projects most definitely will lead to faster vehicle speeds and more accidents. In any case, would it be unreasonable to close one lane or side at a time for construction even if it were to extend the timeline of the project? Additionally, does this mean that the winter gate will no longer exist and drivers are welcome during the winter months because that would be a terrible move?</p>	D, M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Winter Gate would be relocated about 200 feet to the east of its current location to accommodate the new roundabout, as mentioned in Section 2.2.1 of the EA.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional information.</p>
86	<p>I consider a wider road and more paving for parking to be deleterious to the long term health of Millcreek Canyon. The damage or destruction of wetlands would be permanent and undermine the long term ecological balance of the canyon. Paving, parking and driving are old solutions. Frequent shuttle buses used year round could accommodate most able-bodied people for the day trips that are so popular. It is a solution that could be introduced immediately. Some people may require personal vehicles because of a disability and could use a disability permit, for example. The road to the future that preserves our natural treasures requires solutions that do not require paving and parking.</p>	A	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The proposed improvements are designed to increase the long-term health of Mill Creek and Mill Creek Canyon. Specific long-term positive ecological impacts are documented in Chapter 3 of the EA.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for additional information.</p>
87	<p>At a minimum, please keep the trail systems open.</p>	L	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern, which addresses your request.</p>
88	<p>There is a limit on how many people an area can support in recreational use. Upper Millcreek is an area where limits need to be established. This road expansion would permit loading beyond what should be considered reasonable.</p>	A	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern, which addresses your concern.</p>

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89	<p>Thank you very much for your continued work on improving Mill Creek Canyon. I live at the base of Mill Creek Canyon and recreate in the canyon more than 3 times per week in various manners- personal recreation, dog accessible hiking, and exploring with my children. As a cyclist, trail runner, nordic and back-country skier, I would like to see an improved road to Big Water. However, am very concerned about preserving the intimate nature of the canyon. If the road is widened, I strongly support a safe and wide bike lane to the top. Only extending a bike lane to elbow fork is illogical, as the majority of cyclists continue to Big Water. User conflict between cars and bikes will only increase, as well as the frequency of potentially fatal car vs. bike interactions. I commonly bike my children in a pull-behind trailer or bike seat above the rear wheel to Big Water and would like to promote the safest environment possible for myself and my children. Mill Creek canyon will only continue to grow in popularity as temperatures and population density increase in the SLC valley, however improving the canyon's infrastructure should strive to maintain its safety, small canyon feel, and decrease user conflict between cyclists and automobiles. Thank you again for your hard work at preserving the beautiful and local nature in Salt Lake City's backyard.</p>	B, D,	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Improving the canyon's infrastructure while balancing the needs for increased safety and maintaining the canyon's character with other project objectives is what this project strives for.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses to your comments.</p>
90	<p>Why are we trying to put more people into nature than the canyons naturally allow, eg. road projects, gondolas, etc. We should increase the price of entry to limit use.</p>	C	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The project's purpose and need are stated in Section 1.2 of the EA. Increasing visitor use is not a need associated with this project, which explicitly aims to maintain the existing capacity. Altering the price of entry is beyond the scope of this project and outside of FHWA-CFLHD's authority.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for more information.</p>
91	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>ing the roadway 18' or less would also reduce the need for slope ip with the canyon.</p>	A	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for more information.</p>

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	<p>Road Closure and User-Created Parking I do not support formalizing parking that was created by users. I support regional public transportation alternatives in Millcreek Canyon.</p> <p>Shuttle Service While the scope of this review did not include a proposed shuttle, the single biggest problem in this unique canyon is the need for an alternative to private automobiles to keep the canyon safer for pedestrians and bike users along the roadway. I support efforts to expand public transportation in Millcreek Canyon to reduce the need for private automobiles and additional parking in the proposed project area.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Millcreek Canyon Upper Road Improvement Project.</p>		
92	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Shuttle Service While the scope of this review did not include a proposed shuttle, the single biggest problem in this unique canyon is the need for an alternative to private automobiles to keep the canyon safer for pedestrians and bike users along the roadway. I support efforts to expand public transportation in Millcreek Canyon to reduce the need for private automobiles and additional parking in the proposed project area.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	A	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for more information.</p>
93	<p>You can't close the canyon to the public in the summer. Provide hikers a shuttle bus, at the very least. Stage construction to make this happen.</p>	M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. We assure you that it is within the authority of FHWA-CFLHD and its project partners to close the upper canyon for construction in order to provide long-term benefits.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for more information.</p>

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94	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I'm writing to voice opposition to the Millcreek Canyon road expansion project. This will negatively impact the environment including waterways, wildlife disruption, wetlands, and noise and air pollution. Things are manageable just the way they are now. A dog-friendly shuttle in the summer would be a helpful and cheaper option.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>	A	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. In general, short-term environmental impacts associated with this project are expected to be minor, and long-term environmental impacts are expected to be positive as documented in Chapter 3 of the EA.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concern for more information.</p>
95	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>STOP, Please do not widen the road. Instead, use the pattern that City Creek does: Odd days cars; even days bikes. This creates less traffic, not more. This creates safer roadway for bikes. This leaves the stream intact and does not destroy trees and vegetation to widen the road.</p> <p>I am old and i do not want to lose two years of not being able to ride my bike or drive up the canyon to explore the upper trails and the beauty of the woods that hug the road .</p> <p>Also, the best part of the cross-country ski trails is the part past Elbow Fork, when the road narrows and you feel the beauty of nature and the pristine creek hugging the road.</p> <p>Please do no destroy upper Millcreek Canyon. There are other solutions.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>	A, H, I, M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.</p>
96	<p>Dear Government Officials and Project Managers:</p> <p>The scope of the Environmental Assessment appears to have been limited strictly to activities and impacts that will occur inside the "Project Area." However, the Proposed Action may also have significant impacts on adjacent areas and property owners that are located outside of the Project Area. These external impacts have not even been mentioned in the</p>		<p>Thank you for your interest in this project and expressing your concerns about impacts to private property owners in lower Mill Creek Canyon.</p> <p>With summer daily traffic volumes in the lower canyon ranging from about 1,600 – 4,600 vehicles (Fehr & Peers 2012), construction-</p>

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	<p>Environmental Assessment, much less evaluated for severity and possible measures to minimize harm.</p> <p>For example, the large number of heavy-duty trucks necessary to perform the construction work for the Proposed Action must use Millcreek Road and pass through the lower canyon to enter and exit the Project Area. From May to December, for two years, these trucks will be transporting heavy construction equipment and materials up and down the canyon. Construction crews will also be commuting to and from the Project Area on a daily basis. They all will be passing through the residential areas at the base of the canyon, then the Boy Scout Camps, Millcreek Inn, and Log Haven before accessing the Project Area.</p> <p>The heavy-duty trucks could make noises and emissions that impact all of the neighbors along lower Millcreek Road by increasing the noise level and lowering the air quality. In addition, the degree of care with which the drivers handle their big rigs may have a negative impact on the safety of the residents, guests, recreational users, and businesses in lower Millcreek Canyon. For the Boy Scout Camps, Millcreek Inn and Log Haven, these impacts may affect not just quality of life but the ability to operate normally and fulfill their contractual event obligations.</p> <p>We, at [organization] have supported the FLAP Grant Project in order to benefit the public, and we continue to support it. In turn, even if external impacts are not required to be evaluated in an Environmental Assessment, we ask that the government partners managing the Project be mindful of its external impacts and supportive of its neighbors. We request that the Project Managers, FHWA-CFLHD, the U.S. Forest Service, Salt Lake County, and any additional government partners commit to using "Best Management Practices" in identifying the outside impacts and implementing effective mitigation measures to minimize their harm.</p> <p>One way in which the external impacts can be mitigated is for the government partners awarding and issuing the construction contracts to maintain effective supervision and control over the construction activities</p>		<p>related traffic through lower Mill Creek Canyon, including construction crews, is not expected to significantly contribute to the existing traffic volume.</p> <p>However, the type of vehicle mix will change. Heavy equipment would be transported up to the project area seasonally and stored on site during the construction season or for the duration of use. Trucks hauling materials to and from the site would be more frequent, contingent upon what materials are being brought to or hauled from the project area.</p> <p>There would be no night work, so these trips would be limited to daytime hours. These large vehicles would result increased traffic noise and localized emissions as they pass residential and commercial land uses. Air quality and noise are considered in Section 3.1 of the EA, and these same conclusions apply to local impacts outside of the project area.</p> <p>As you note, the contractor would have to adhere to federal, state, and local laws. The contractor would also have to adhere to the terms and conditions of the construction contract, which will include FHWA-CFLHD standard specifications, as well project specific specifications.</p> <p>The project team includes representatives of Millcreek and they have been requested to provide input on the need for any additional restrictions above and beyond existing</p>

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	<p>by carefully crafting the clauses that they require in all construction contracts and subcontracts. For example, it is not sufficient or acceptable to ignore the potential safety impacts of the truck drivers by saying that they are already subject to the same speed limits and rules of the road as every other driver. The government partners cannot in good conscience merely say it is an "enforcement issue" and pass the buck to the UPD.</p> <p>Best Management Practices should require, at a minimum, that all construction contracts and subcontracts for the Proposed Action contain strong clauses that expressly require the contractors and subcontractors to maintain strict control over the speeds and driving practices of their drivers. These clauses must have clear obligations and meaningful financial consequences for the breach of those obligations.</p> <p>Maintaining current safety and minimizing other impacts in the lower canyon, while working on improving safety and conditions in the upper canyon, should be of paramount importance to all government partners involved in the Proposed Action. Given the numerous projects that each of the government partners has administered and completed in the past, hopefully all of you have developed additional effective measures to mitigate the impacts of a Proposed Action that occur outside of a Project Area itself.</p> <p>Thank You,</p>		<p>regulations. If identified, these will be incorporated in the final design package.</p> <p>Based on your input, the project will include advance warning signs in the vicinity of major Boy Scout Camp entrances, the Millcreek Inn, and Log Haven. These will alert drivers of increased pedestrian and vehicular activity in the immediate area.</p> <p>FHWA-CFLHD will oversee construction and the Project Engineer contact information made available so that stakeholders and the public can report concerns during construction.</p> <p>We appreciate your support for this project.</p>
97	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>I love Millcreek Canyon. My husband grew up at the mouth of the canyon, exploring it from top to bottom as a boy. When we started dating, we had many dates in the canyon. We hiked so many trails together. When we got dogs, we trail ran with them in the canyon. We trained for a marathon in the canyon. When we wed, it had to be in the canyon so the Millcreek Inn provided the perfect venue.</p> <p>Yes the canyon is more crowded now, but the canyon still remains beautiful and on weekdays, you can still find solitude. I disagree with</p>	A, C, D	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.</p>

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	<p>widening the road and creating more parking as this would ruin the natural beauty of the canyon. We need to manage crowds other ways like a shuttle system. Another idea, is variable fees depending on peak canyon usage. What about providing online statistics about canyon use at a given time, so people can self regulate their usage. I don't want to be there when the parking is already full. Knowing that ahead of time would allow me to make other plans.</p> <p>The changes planned with the Upper Road Improvement project will only bring MORE people to the canyon on peak days and hours. There are many other ways to solve the problems. Let's explore those first. Thanks!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>		
98	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>I am extremely disappointed with the proposal to have upper Millcreek worked on. The notion that it's what the people want is not ok. This is NOT what the people want. Stop ruining our canyons to make things 'better,' it's unnecessary development that is completely unwanted. If the traffic is the issue, other solutions should be put forward for the people to decided on. Solutions such as a bus system, and raising the price of toll. Millcreek is beautiful, and the top needs to stay untouched. Putting more lanes, pushing the road out further, ruining the nature up there is a horrible idea. I am horrified by this, and by those who are putting it forward. I truly hope that those pushing for this wake up and realize that things like this are destroying the canyons near Salt Lake. Please don't take our beautiful places away.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>	A, C, D, E, F	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please read Chapters 1 and 2 of the EA to gain a better understanding of the project. The Proposed Action does not involve adding lanes. Section 1.3 summarizes the public involvement process that was used to better understand public desires, which was used to help inform the design.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional information.</p>
99	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>The last thing Millcreek Canyon needs is the creation of more opportunities for private vehicle access. I love this canyon - as do thousands of others. But I fear it is being loved to death.</p>	A, C	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The Proposed Action is not intended to create more opportunities for private vehicle access, but rather to increase user safety and protect the environment given the current recreational use levels within upper Mill Creek Canyon.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>The only sensical solution is to implement a shuttle system - small electric busses / vans that run on a frequent schedule. Develop three specific types; people only, people and their dogs, people and their bikes. Maintain a system of on and off leash days, do the same with bikes and e-bikes, and dedicate walking only trails every day.</p> <p>While I appreciate there may be issues with parking to access these shuttles, its time there was a coordinated effort in this valley to develop a more comprehensive, affordable public transportation system that would limit the necessity of large parking areas.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Millcreek Canyon Upper Road Improvement Project.</p>		<p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for more information.</p>
100	<p>[Copy of form letter with alterations copied below]</p> <p>Extreme Bill Nye voice: "Please consider the following" in your Environmental Assessment of proposed changes for Millcreek canyon.</p> <p>One of the benefits of Millcreek is the narrow road! It slows cars down and deters some traffic.</p> <p>As I said before, Wider roads will increase vehicle speed in wider sections, making a less safe environment overall. We should not have to build roads and parking to accommodate mega vehicles. This increases cost to everyone for the benefit of a very few. It's government welfare for truck drivers.</p> <p>Shuttle Service!!! PLEASE READ While the scope of this review did not include a proposed shuttle, the single biggest problem in this area is the need for private automobiles to access public space. Promote equity and keep the canyon safer for pedestrians and bike users along the roadway by introducing shuttle/bus service. I support efforts to expand public transportation in Millcreek Canyon to reduce the need for private automobiles and additional parking in the</p>	A, D	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	proposed project area. Let's create a pilot project that BCC and LCC can use in the future!		
101	<p>I grew up in millcreek canyon and enjoyed my childhood- still enjoying at 63</p> <p>I beg you to leave it alone-it is on the brink of being over run and may be too late.</p> <p>More traffic will destroy this jewel.</p> <p>Please listen to your people- forget the extra revenue-</p> <p>Do the right thing.. do nothing</p>		<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The Proposed Action is not intended to increase traffic, but rather to increase user safety given the current recreational use levels within upper Mill Creek Canyon.</p> <p>Section 1.3 of the EA summarizes the public involvement process that was used to better understand public desires, which were used to help inform the design.</p>
102	<p>I live at the very mouth of Millcreek Canyon and have for decades. I'm up there on a near daily basis, doing some sort of recreation. The road reconstruction has been a long time coming and is long overdue and you're talking about a revamp to it and you're not going to make an extra wide shoulder to accommodate for bikers and joggers?!</p> <p>For real?!!</p>	B, D	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. While we wanted to incorporate a bike lane all the way to Upper Big Water Trailhead, a combination of topographical, environmental, and economic constraints rendered this impractical (see Section 2.3.1 of the EA for more information).</p> <p>Please also see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p>
103	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I know my comments will probably not make a difference, but I ask you to please consider not going through with this project. I understand that the canyon has been getting more traffic in recent years, but a wider road isn't going to fix that problem, although I will concede that it would be safer for bikers who use the canyon.</p> <p>I read the environmental assessment and although there is not a lot of damage that will occur to the existing vegetation and ecosystem, I worry that enough will be done to ruin what is currently existing there. One of my favorite places used to be Tibble Fork Reservoir. The updates they have made there have made it completely different and while it may appear</p>	C, D, K	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project and sharing your perspective. The Proposed Action is not intended to increase traffic, but rather to increase user safety given the current recreational use levels within upper Mill Creek Canyon. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for more information.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>more accessible to the public, it's not - trails were covered to make room for a larger reservoir and a false beach. What used to draw people in for solitude and beauty now draws huge crowds for paddle boarding and laying on the beach, things that could be easily done at multiple other areas. So many people go, the beach is always trashed, the peacefulness of the area is gone, the diversity of what you were able to do there is now minimal. I want more people to be able to experience the outdoors, but once some accomodations are made and places are drastically changed for more public use, the place loses all that made it special. It often becomes trashed easier, too busy to use, places that once held memories would now be covered in concrete.</p> <p>Again, I do understand the need. But there are other canyons in Utah that are more already larger and accommodate more of the public, this canyon doesn't need to be changed. Please consider those of us who hold Millcreek close to our hearts and don't want change beyond regular canyon maintenance.</p> <p>Thank you for your time,</p>		
104	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Building more parking will only incur more cars. Create a shuttle system like at Zion. THere is no reason to have 300 cars up at the top of Millcreek canyon.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p>	A, C	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.
105	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>The whole of Millcreek Canyon is an important natural resource that needs to be preserved in as natural a state as possible.</p> <p>Yes it is a well loved recreation area that I am privileged to use often, but it's primary value is as a natural area in the urban wilderness boundary. We have so little of this space left, what we have must be protected.</p> <p>Adding parking and widening roads will negatively impact the ecosystem function and natural characteristics of Millcreek Canyon. Repairs and minimal improvements should ensure the health of the creek, meet</p>	A, C, F, H, K	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses.

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>minimum emergency code, and ensure sustainability of the roadway - but no more. Adding parking and widening roads will not improve the canyon visitors' safety or recreational experience - it will only cause further congestion and continued overuse problems like people creating their own parking. These user created parking areas should not be improved, but removed.</p> <p>A public transit route (aka shuttle) should be established for Millcreek Canyon removing the impact of individual users cars and increasing the safety of users. Greatly reducing motorized vehicle traffic in the Canyon is good for the canyon and its users.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>		
106	<p>I have enjoyed Millcreek Canyon since I was a child. I understand that it is now busier than ever, but increasing the road size will only make this worse. This is not a through path. People driving this road know that it is shared and the nature of it lends itself to slow-safe travel. Increasing the road width will do the opposite.</p> <p>Thanks,</p>		Thank you for your interest in this project.
107	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>I'm writing to address the proposed improvements to access in Millcreek Canyon. As an avid cyclist and trail runner, I appreciate Millcreek Canyon for its incredible access to multi-use trails right in the backyard of Salt Lake City. Any Salt Laker who visits Millcreek Canyon regularly can tell you that its popular trailheads have exploded in popularity in recent years, particularly for those with dogs who cannot recreate in watershed areas. I appreciate the effort to address access and use in Millcreek and have some thoughts on the proposed plans.</p> <p>As a road cyclist, I find Millcreek Canyon unique in that the road itself tends to prevent drivers from traveling with excess speed. In contrast, Emigration and Big & Little Cottonwood Canyons have wider lanes with wide shoulders, making it possible to travel at higher speeds. In Millcreek, the narrower road (particularly above Elbow Fork) keeps drivers at a</p>	A, B, C, D	<p>Thank you for your support and interest in this project. We anticipate that there would be little change in the ability of downhill cyclists to travel with the speed of vehicle traffic as a result of the Proposed Action.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional information.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>reasonable speed, with the ultimate effect being that downhill cyclists can comfortably cycle at the speed of car traffic. Widening the road would encourage drivers to travel at higher speeds and pass downhill cyclists, creating dangerous situations for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.</p> <p>To be clear, I am in favor of improving the roadway surface, particularly in the upper canyon. I am also in favor of standardizing the roadway width throughout the canyon. I believe the road width should be narrower than the proposed widths of 24 and 29 feet. I would rather see a total width of 18 feet or less, which would reduce the need for slope cuts & retaining walls and also keep drivers at a lower speed. Again: downhill cyclists are safest when they can move WITH vehicular traffic AT THE SPEED of vehicular traffic—not when cars are whizzing by at unsafe speeds, regardless of whether there is an unprotected bike lane.</p> <p>I am unclear as to why expanding parking areas is included in the project proposal. Wider roads and more parking do not alleviate traffic problems; they simply cause more traffic by encouraging more people to enter the canyon. I would much rather see a transit alternative with frequent service to trailheads. I would gladly use public transit to access trailheads if it existed and were easy to use.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p>		
108	<p>I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed road expansion project in Mill Creek Canyon. As a taxpayer, concerned citizen and frequent visitor to the canyon, I believe that the project's current direction undermines the unique qualities that make this area so special to our community and visitors.</p> <p>First and foremost, Mill Creek Canyon is renowned for its intimate and scenic charm, largely due to its narrow, aesthetically pleasing road that caters primarily to recreational use. The proposal to widen lanes beyond 9 feet seems not only unnecessary but also detrimental to the canyon's serene ambiance. Such a change would disrupt the natural landscape and</p>	A, B, D, E, K, M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The lack of a bicycle lane beyond Elbow Fork was not an oversight, but simply could not be accommodated given the project constraints as described in Section 2.3 of the EA.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses to your concerns.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>the experience of countless visitors who come here to escape the hustle and bustle of city life.</p> <p>Moreover, the absence of a comprehensive plan to include a bicycle path extending to the canyon's summit—or, at the very least, a commitment to a substantial roadside shoulder—ignores the growing demand for safe, accessible routes for cyclists and hikers alike. This oversight not only limits the potential for sustainable tourism but also contradicts the broader trends towards promoting outdoor activities and environmental stewardship.</p> <p>Equally concerning is the proposal to straighten the road and enhance sight lines, which could further erode the canyon's character and potentially lead to increased vehicle speeds, thereby raising safety concerns for pedestrians and wildlife. Such changes threaten to irreversibly alter the landscape we currently cherish.</p> <p>The construction scheduled for the summers of 2025 and 2026 poses an additional threat to accessibility, particularly for cyclists who rely on the canyon for recreation and commuting. It is imperative that a viable plan be developed to ensure continued access during these periods, thus preserving the canyon's role as a year-round haven for outdoor enthusiasts.</p> <p>Finally, the suggestion to implement a shuttle service, while acknowledging the existing, informally approved parking solutions near the canyon's entrance, signals a recognition of the need for improved access. However, without a holistic approach that considers the canyon's ecological and recreational value, such measures fall short of addressing the underlying concerns associated with the road expansion.</p> <p>In light of these points, I urge you to reconsider the proposed road expansion project in Mill Creek Canyon. I strongly advocate for a plan that prioritizes the preservation of the canyon's natural beauty and recreational</p>		

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	accessibility, aligning with the community's values and the environmental imperatives of our time.		
109	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am an avid user of Millcreek Canyon, especially the upper canyon in the summer as the temperatures in the valley get too hot.</p> <p>With the proposal of the road widening, I have some concerns that I hope you seriously take into consideration. Although I am not a cyclist, I am friends with many cyclists, even married to one, and take their perspective of shared spaces, like roads, and cyclist safety very seriously. One of my biggest concerns is just that: cyclist safety. Millcreek Canyon is a popular road biking location and I worry that the proposal, without inclusion of a bike lane or shoulder is lacking. Even as it stands now, parking overflows onto the shoulders and irresponsible car owners park their cars over the white line, forcing cyclists onto the road.</p> <p>I am not necessarily opposed to straightening the road (if that is possible), as I think that will provide better sight line for cars to better see cyclists by minimizing the number of blind corners. However, I do know that increasing road lane size also increases driving speeds, regardless of posted signage. I do believe the upper Millcreek Canyon road, at this point, can barely be considered a two lane road. I think increasing the road to be a standard size would be an improvement, but like I said, to encourage safe speeds, the lanes should be no more than 9 feet wide.</p> <p>If construction is to take place, I beg you find a solution to keep the upper canyon accessible during it. It would be such a shame to lose access for potentially years. Perhaps the solution can be closed during weekdays, open on weekends. Or a single lane alternating traffic stoplight, like has been done in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons. Or close it for a shorter amount of time, perhaps utilizing the period of time between when the snow melts but the gate is not yet open, to make the road wide enough to then implement the single lane alternating traffic. The upper canyon is open for such a short period of time in the summer in the first place, I</p>	B, C, D, E, M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The design includes lane widths equivalent to the narrowest recommended lane widths for two-lane roads.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses to your concerns.</p>

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	<p>would really hate to not be able to access it at all. It is one of my favorite places in the fall.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>		
110	<p>Will the fee for canyon access increase? If so, when? Glad we can still access road for winter skiing/hiking!</p>		<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. There is no fee increase associated with the Proposed Action.</p>
111	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>I have lived near Millcreek Canyon and have hiked, fished and biked in it for over 50 years. One of the unique things of this canyon is once you get above the winter gate it becomes an amazing near wilderness feel due to the smaller road and healthy forest growth. I realize a few parking spots need to be improved and a few corners of the road need widening in the upper canyon but please make this exception and not the rule for this upper section. I feel that the upper section of the canyon should be limited in parking so the upper canyon does not become another Big and Little Canyon that is run over with people.</p> <p>I like the idea of having a shuttle service during busy weekends for folks to reach the upper canyon and would be willing to pay for that service.</p> <p>Thank you for asking for feedback on this amazing canyon.</p>	A, C, I, K,	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.</p>
112	<p>Hello Millcreek FLAP team,</p> <p>Thank you for considering this comment regarding the Environmental Assessment on behalf of Save Our Canyons. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out!</p> <p>Best regards, [Attachment Text] To Whom It May Concern,</p> <p>Mill Creek Canyon is cherished by many members of our community, from leaf-peepers to picnickers to backcountry travelers. We appreciate the work that you have put forth on this project to rebuild Mill Creek Canyon road above the winter gate, and the consideration of improving access and safety to the canyon.</p>	A, B, C, D, E, H, I, K	<p>Thank you for your support and interest in this project. We understand that Save Our Canyons represents an organized interest group within the community and appreciate your involvement to date.</p> <p>We appreciate your suggestion to narrow the roadway width to 18 feet above Elbow Fork. While this would allow the lane widths to be more consistent, 9 feet is below the minimum recommended lane width according to both state and federal guidance. The design team concluded that meeting the 10-foot minimum</p>

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	<p>We understand that a major factor behind rebuilding Mill Creek Canyon road above the winter gate is to improve drainage and repair the crumbling road base, and we support these modifications of the aged and deteriorating roadbed to protect stream health.</p> <p>Mill Creek Canyon (especially the upper portion) is unique with its narrow, tree-lined upper road, compared to the higher-speed, wider lanes of Big Cottonwood and Little Cottonwood Canyon. The natural features of Mill Creek Canyon lend themselves to a different character and make-up of recreational uses, with more non-motorized users (cyclists and pedestrians) and dog owners seeking solace in this unique canyon. While we understand that widening the road may increase sight distances and therefore driver expectations, we remain concerned that road widening may also increase driving speeds. Introducing a wider road corridor could inadvertently lead to people driving faster, thus causing unsafe conditions for non-motorized users sharing the roadway.</p> <p>In addition, while we appreciate the purpose of including varying road widths in this assessment (especially in environmentally sensitive areas), we are concerned that inconsistent road widths may lead to driver confusion and introduce difficulties when sharing the roadway. Indeed, inconsistent roadway width was a stated purpose and need for this project, and a consistent roadway width was recommended to safely accommodate users in the upper canyon. Therefore, we suggest keeping the minimum width of 18 feet consistent up and down the canyon. Having a consistent road width closer to 18 feet could improve driver expectations, reduce the need for retaining walls and slope cuts into the hillsides, and help save money on asphalt and excavation for this project. Overwhelmingly, one of the biggest concerns that we have heard from the community throughout this process is the prioritization of car-centric infrastructure and transportation to and from the canyons.</p> <p>It's noteworthy that the original project application and scope contained a request for a shuttle or transit planning, which was removed from the scope of this assessment and evaluation. After receiving public input on former designs, project partners shared an iteration where parking lots would include potential shuttle drop-off locations, to help facilitate a potential future transit system. During Summer 2023 public open houses,</p>		<p>lane width where possible would result in a safer roadway for all users.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses and thank you again for your involvement in this process.</p>

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	<p>project partners expressed that they used the vehicle size of a small shuttle when redesigning trailheads, adding shuttle pull outs, and improving/adding restroom facilities at trailheads. After the open house, we were encouraged to hear the prioritization of shuttle service within this design. However, we note that in the environmental assessment, there is no mention of a shuttle and only certain locations that could allow for vehicle drop-offs. There has also been no update on the Forest Service and other partners' efforts to facilitate a future shuttle service in Mill Creek Canyon since Summer 2023.</p> <p>It is disheartening this assessment does not prioritize a potential shuttle system. As visitation continues to grow with more people seeking solace and respite in our canyons, it is vital to prioritize equitable access and additional transit options to our public lands. A majority of comments asked for a shuttle, and a transit system in Mill Creek has been a major recommendation from many plans. The 2003 Revised USFS Plan calls for increased transit and bus service and generally shies away from the creation of new parking in order to protect the watershed. Numerous Salt Lake County plans and studies (2012 Mill Creek Canyon Transportation Study, Wasatch Canyons General Plans) call for a shuttle program, as does the 2015 Mountain Accord charter.</p> <p>As Salt Lake Valley continues to grow in population, there will be an increase in people drawn to visit and experience the outdoors. We must create more opportunities for people to connect to their public lands that preserve the natural, interconnected ecosystems which make Mill Creek Canyon an outstanding place for visitors, wildlife and flora. Rather than maintaining existing natural spaces, the public is losing them at a rapid rate, as agencies continue to treat cars and pavement as the solution. In response to growing visitation, project partners should help connect people to the amazing experiences in Mill Creek Canyon through a shuttle program and active transportation (i.e. biking, walking), and using existing infrastructure (instead of adding more impervious surfaces in our canyons).</p> <p>Public transit is the most equitable option for transportation up and down the canyon and is the most environmentally sensitive option to improve existing access options for users. We ask the Forest Service to continue</p>		

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	<p>its consideration of a shuttle for Mill Creek Canyon, exploring options and co-creating solutions with the community for offsetting shuttle costs to ensure that funds stay within the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, and for mitigating any perceived potential environmental impact of a shuttle.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration of these comments and for incorporating some of the concepts from prior public engagement efforts into the plan. We hope that you will continue working to increase safety and access for all users of Mill Creek Canyon and continue the pursuit of a transit system. Should you have questions or require further consultation regarding our organization's comments please contact [individual name].</p>		
113	<p>[individual name], and in addition to being a 25 year weekly - and at times daily - user of Mill Creek Canyon I was a founding member and vice president of the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance, a member of the Mountain Accord process, I am on the Central Wasatch Commission's Stakeholders Council where I am the past chair and current co-chair of the Mill Creek Canyon subcommittee and am the current co-Chair of the Council.</p> <p>I am commenting as an individual who - via my affiliations - has been a part of the FLAP grant project from the beginning.</p> <p>1. In the original purpose and need there was significant emphasis on a wider road enabling improved emergency vehicle access. Through interviews with Unified Fire we found no formal request that the road be widened to accommodate fire trucks, and indeed emergency vehicles have been accessing the entire canyon since it was built. There was no documentation of incidents involving emergency vehicles in the upper canyon to validate the decision to widen the road to account for potential incidents. In the final EA presentation there was no mention of improved emergency vehicle access, so either the purpose and need was incorrect or the final design did not reflect improved emergency vehicle access.</p> <p>2. Another purpose and need was to improve access/safety for private vehicles traveling up the canyon. There was very little definitive information on historic accidents in the upper canyon, yet in checking with Unified Police records we discovered that there have been an average of</p>	A, B, D, F, G, M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Our comments responding to your specific comments are below. Please also see the referenced responses to Common Public Concerns.</p> <p>1. The roadway is too narrow for vehicles to pass each other in several locations. During periods of heavy use, vehicles regularly must pull over to allow oncoming vehicles to pass. This results in lines, waiting, and increased travel times. Even if it has not been formally documented to date in Upper Mill Creek Canyon, it is well documented that increased travel times for emergency responders can inhibit their ability to respond efficiently and save lives.</p> <p>We do not think this self-evident fact requires additional support. We would also like to emphasize that emergency vehicle access is a contributing reason for using a consistent lane width that meets minimum state and federal</p>

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	<p>one incident per year for the last decade+, and none were serious accidents. Additionally, the proposed safety measures of widening the road and straightening it to improve sight lines as a safety measure was not supported by any documentation that was presented, and in fact contradicts many recent studies that show that increased speeds is the primary cause of accidents and a more-typical way to increase safety is to narrow roadways and use atypical striping to create more cautionary drivers and decrease vehicle speeds. Indeed, there are good examples of this even on the wide and busy streets in SLC and in BCC and LCC; traffic calming measures involved narrowing streets/lanes and installing unusual barriers that were intended to - and have created safer roads, particularly for pedestrians and bicycles. In the case of MCC, one option of no center lane stripe was offered in an early design phase but was rejected without explanation.</p> <p>3. A stated purpose was to add cycling infrastructure to increase cyclist safety. Again, recent studies attempting to understand the dramatic increase in cyclist safety have shown that increased vehicle speeds - and big cars - was the major cause of cyclist fatalities. No studies associated with any of the road design options showed any documentation about how the proposed designs would address cyclist safety. The only nod toward cyclist safety in the final design is a bike lane that only extends 1/3 of the way through the project zone. When queried about the 2/3 of the canyon road that would not have the safety-oriented bike lane, the project lead stated that "only some" of the cyclists continue up the canyon, yet despite repeated requests to confirm how this "data" was gleaned, the project team neglected to answer that. Strava - a very popular cycling tracking app - shows that actually 90% of cyclists continue the rest of the way up the canyon past Elbow Fork. And even if "only some" cyclists continue beyond Elbow Fork, apparently their safety has been rejected by the lack of options presented in the final design, therefore not fulfilling the purpose and need for 90% of the users.</p> <p>4. Pedestrian safety - there was virtually no infrastructure put in place to address pedestrian infrastructure as per the purpose and need. Attempting to limit illegal roadside parking so that pedestrians don't walk so far on the road was a very weak secondary validation for eliminating</p>		<p>regulations, and not the sole justification for widening the narrower portions of the roadway.</p> <p>2. Crash data for upper Mill Creek Canyon was obtained from three sources and analyzed for this project for time periods ranging from 2005 to 2021.</p> <p>Based on this analysis, the relatively low levels of reported accidents in the upper canyon are likely associated with the lack of cell service (i.e., accidents either go unreported or are erroneously attributed to a downcanyon location with cell service) and the general lack of identifiable locations.</p> <p>The Proposed Action reflects the application of modern design and safety standards and practices in a context-sensitive manner with respect to lane width and improved sight distance. Additional data regarding the level of historic accidents would not have prevented the inclusion of these standards and practices.</p> <p>The bike lane/vehicle lane idea you described is referred to as an advisory bicycle lane in the EA. We considered and dismissed this idea from further analysis for the reasons described in Section 2.3.3 of the EA.</p> <p>3. As explained throughout the EA, physical, environmental, and economic constraints within the project corridor limit the range of feasible options for addressing project needs. The original design concept included a bicycle</p>

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	<p>illegal roadside parking, and the aforementioned higher speeds associated with a wider/straighter roadbed likely will offset any improvement in ped safety in accessing trailheads. Certainly the popular wintertime activity of walking up the road when the gate is closed will absolutely not be done by MCC visitors with a wider/straighter road that will undoubtedly increase vehicle speeds.</p> <p>5. Despite the fact that 9-foot lanes are an acceptable FHWA standard for rural roads, that concept was inexplicably dropped with no associated data to support that decision. Two 9-foot lanes would have allowed at least a de facto bike lane via a 2-foot shoulder getting to the 20-foot goal for the additional 2/3 of the canyon road. As it stands, canyon cyclists will always be reminded that despite the purpose and need of this very disruptive project the FS and the county don't actually care about cyclist safety or user experience when they'll see the seemingly-random "bike lane ends" sign at Elbow Fork.</p> <p>6. An original purpose and need was to address the aged and deteriorating roadbed for stream health. Heavy road construction by definition will affect stream health for two years, likely much more than random pieces of asphalt falling into the stream. While spot improvements of the roadbed in key places was discussed as an option, it was dismissed without explanation.</p> <p>7. Additionally, options to limit private vehicle use in the canyon to in turn limit roadbed damage was not seriously discussed: odd/even day use (ala the on/off dog leash law) or even complete and permanent road closure to vehicles aside from special permitted use and/or a shuttle system. The Team neglected to even consider full closure, even as they also neglected to consider options to keep the road open somehow, for some users for two years. Over that time MCC visitors will likely get accustomed to not being able to access the upper canyon, yet if imagination and foresight had been engaged to indeed "improve access" (as per the purpose and need) the canyon could possibly have never seen any closure and would still stand the test of time.</p> <p>8. Regarding "improved access" and foresight the 2012 Fehr and Peers study contracted by SLCo strongly advocated for a shuttle system. Early designs of this project mentioned improved infrastructure for a future</p>		<p>lane for the length of the project, but it could not be accomplished with these constraints (see Section 2.3 of the EA).</p> <p>Consequently, the Proposed Action represents the design team's balanced solution to accommodate as many needs and wishes as possible while working within these constraints. We heard public comments requesting that the design cater more to cyclists and pedestrians and others requesting that it cater more to motorists.</p> <p>We feel the Proposed Action represents a compromise among all interests while meeting the project's purpose and need to the greatest extent possible within the physical, environmental, and economic constraints.</p> <p>We recognize that cyclists travelling to Elbow Fork can and will continue up the road. This does not change the feasibility of continuing the bicycle lane between Elbow Fork and the Upper Big Water Trailhead.</p> <p>Please also see Common Public Concern B for additional information on cyclist safety.</p> <p>4. The extensive trail system throughout the canyon and paralleling the road provides the primary form of pedestrian safety in upper Mill Creek Canyon. Shifting the available parking to be more concentrated at popular trailheads should further reduce the need for pedestrians to walk along the road.</p>

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	<p>shuttle, but the final presentation only made vague references to "vehicle drop-off points." A year ago the Forest Service enthusiastically supported initiating a NEPA process to jump-start a shuttle program to run concurrently with the road improvement project, but now seems determined to not enable that, which appears to be reflected in the final presentation which makes no mention of a canyon shuttle.</p> <p>9. The consultant team gave misleading summaries of one of the draft plan public comments. Half of the public comments from summer 2023 indicated "no change" to any nature of the canyon road yet the summary of the comments indicated that there were only "a few" comments to that effect.</p> <p>The three agencies and the consultants associated with this project know as well as I do that this "road improvement" project was/is much less valuable to the community than a "transportation improvement" project. Most transportation solutions around the country over the last few years do not prioritize private vehicle use, yet this project does nothing to attempt to lessen the vehicle traffic in the canyon, which is the real problem there.</p> <p>It's clear from the straying from the original purpose and need to the final design that this was a project intended to get and spend a lot of federal funds in a local setting and justify it by fulfilling national standards that are inappropriate for such an intimate, unique, and much-loved local mountain canyon used exclusively for recreation. The many variances from the original intentions lend themselves to the opportunity for potential litigation, and it's a shame that so much money is being applied to a project as unpopular as this when those funds could have been very effectively applied to a better holistic transportation system, which is what the canyon really needs and what the canyon users/taxpayers/constituents actually desire as once-in-generation change to Mill Creek Canyon.</p>		<p>Crosswalks and other signs would be added to further increase pedestrian and cyclist safety as mentioned on page 25 of the EA.</p> <p>Winter recreation opportunities during the construction shutdown would continue to be available as described in Section 2.2.6 of the EA.</p> <p>Please see Common Public Concern D for additional response related to your concern about increased speed.</p> <p>5. Please refer to Common Public Concerns B and D.</p> <p>6. See Common Public Concern G for a response to your concern about aquatic impacts. Spot improvements are included in the No-Action alternative, as described in Section 2.1 of the EA.</p> <p>7. The project's purpose and need does not include limiting private vehicle use in upper Mill Creek Canyon. Operational considerations were considered and dismissed from further evaluation as described in Section 2.3.6.</p> <p>The rationale stated in this section applies to the six listed operational changes and "other suggestions" provided by the public.</p> <p>8. Please see Common Public Concern A.</p>

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			<p>9. We apologize if you feel misled. We have attempted to be as open and transparent as possible throughout this process.</p> <p>During our first public open house held on November 9, 2021, we indicated that scope of the project did not include a shuttle system or other mass transit option, and that such a system would not be precluded by the design. This continues to be the case.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional information.</p>
114	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Millcreek Canyon is a beautiful area of Utah and holds a special place in my heart, having attended school at the base of its majestic mountains.</p> <p>I appreciate your work in considering improvements to access Millcreek Canyon, and ask that you honor local perspectives, in addition to expert opinions, when determining the best path forward with the least environmental impact.</p> <p>Personally, I think the best way to reduce our communal footprint and ensure safety for all to enjoy this breathtaking scenery would be to create a shuttle system and reduce the number of allowed personal cars. Creating additional pavement makes crossing roads dangerous for pedestrians and wildlife alike. Additionally, creating more parking spaces impacts the beauty and water in the area. Therefore, expanding mass transportation options is the best way to continue providing access to the canyon while also prioritizing safety and the natural environment.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Millcreek Canyon Upper Road Improvement Project.</p>	A, C, D	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.</p>

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115	<p>Sincerely,</p> <p>I work in Mill Creek Canyon, have run the Pipeline Trail hundreds of times over 27 years, cross country skied, mountain biked and road biked the canyon depending on the season. Please consider the following when “improving” the canyon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mill Creek Canyon is a small, intimate canyon with an aesthetic, unusual road that is used almost exclusively for recreation and lanes can and should be no more than 9 feet wide. • Please consider the impacts on the water quality of designing for shuttles and cyclists vs. private vehicles. • Some sort of bike lane should go to the top, or at least commit to a big shoulder. This is a popular canyon for cyclists. Let’s make it safe. • Minimize road straightening and increased sight lines, Thus only increases speed. • Figure out a way to keep the road open to cyclists during the construction summers of 2025 and 2026. • Plan for the future and design for a shuttle, not personal vehicles. Thre are viable parking options near the mouth that have tacit approval. I would ride a shuttle to work at Log Haven or to recreate. 	A, B, D, E, G, M	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.
116	<p>I have reviewed the environmental documents regarding the proposed revisions to the Millcreek Canyon Road above the winter gate, and have the following comments.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I appreciate many of the compromise solutions that are incorporated into this plan - this will be a difficult few years, without our favorite local recreation place - but we know that it has needed attention for many years. 2. The most troubling part of the proposal, for me, is the enlarged parking lot at the top of the canyon/end of the road. That meadow is such a place of peace and tranquility - in all seasons. The changes the occur there are reflective of all that is wonderful about our local canyons. I really hate to see that meadow destroyed. Is there not an opportunity to instead expand the parking lot that exists (and was expanded some years back) just to the west/down-canyon instead? Could that lot not be made larger instead of destroying the meadow and the habitat it includes? 		<p>Thank you for your support and interest in this project and for sharing your concern specific to the meadow adjacent to Upper Big Water Trailhead.</p> <p>While the parking lot would be expanded to the east, the portion of the meadow south of the proposed improvements (most of the meadow) would remain untouched. Accommodating parking opportunities at Upper Big Water Trailhead, where demand is high, would reduce the issues associated with people using the Little Water Trailhead and other informal parking areas for overflow parking.</p>

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	<p>3. I am glad that 1000 Springs area will be protected - I also hope the fish pond just down-canyon from there (and immediately up-canyon from the Alexander Basin Trail) will also be protected and left intact - again, a wonderful place in all seasons.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>		<p>Recognizing that there are tradeoffs, we believe the proposed solution, even in this area, strikes a good balance between reducing long-term environmental impacts and meeting the project's purpose and need.</p>
117	<p>I am writing to urge you to not proceed with plans for Millcreek Canyon outside of Salt Lake City, Utah. I have traveled it since 1985. Yes, the road is narrow above the winter gate and th last few miles are very narrow. I initaly was amazed when I traveled it and was certain that it had to be a road with many accidents, injuries and deaths, including head-on collisions. My experience and observations proved otherwise. The narrow road causes users to reduce speed. Wider lanes and straigher roads will result in increase vehicular speed. This will increase the danger for all users.</p> <p>The road should not be expanded beyond the current width. Parking spaces are limited and should not be increased. Millcreek's problems you are attempting to address can be corrected with a shuttle system. Limiting the number of vehicles could also correct the problems.</p>	A, C, D	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.</p>
118	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>I am vehemently against the expansion of millcreek road. Firstly, it is such a delicate ecosystem and the amount of work needed to widen the road in such a small canyon seems incredibly unhealthy.</p> <p>I also feel that widening the road will make it so that cars go even faster thus making it even more dangerous.</p> <p>Millcreek has an intimate, wild feel to it that will be lost with all of the road work.</p> <p>This just feels like a waste of funds to me.</p>	D, H, I, K	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.</p>
119	<p>Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division 12300 W. Dakota Ave. Suite 380 Lakewood, Colorado 80228</p>	A, C, F	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. We understand that many people with a strong connection to Mill Creek Canyon see a need for a shuttle/mass transit system. Unfortunately, this is beyond the scope of this</p>

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	<p>Re: Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project EA Thank you for the opportunity to address the transportation issues facing Millcreek Canyon. The Wasatch Mountain Club has participated in a variety of activities concerning Millcreek Canyon over many years, and looks forward to helping further the process and develop a solution acceptable to all. We are pleased to provide our comments to this EA. The WMC currently has over 1200 paid members. We have been recreating in Millcreek Canyon for over a century and have a special interest in the canyons of the Wasatch and preserving their beauty and recreation opportunities for future generations.</p> <p>WMC members, and many others in the Salt Lake Valley, have deep affection and an appreciation of the recreation opportunities in Millcreek Canyon. Use of the Canyon has seen tremendous growth in recent years however and recreation opportunities are being negatively impacted. It is important to continue to facilitate recreation there but traffic is a major concern. Something must be done to provide transit options to help reduce traffic.</p> <p>Much work and study has been done to address the traffic problems with offsite parking and a shuttle service into the Canyon. Continuation of this effort would alleviate the problem more than road widening and must be considered. This service connected to a regional transportation network would help more than straitening and widening the existing road which would only lead to more traffic.</p> <p>We believe that recreation and safety would be better achieved by reducing the number of vehicles in the Canyon. The best way to do that would be to implement a shuttle system as we have seen in other similar high-use areas across the nation. Transit would help reduce congestion caused by personal cars and increase opportunities for all people to enjoy this canyon. It has the added benefit of decreasing car exhaust pollution, collisions, traffic jams and competition for limited parking spots. FHA, UDOT, USFS, and Salt Lake County should integrate transit into any of the design and construction actions.</p>		<p>project and beyond the authority of FHWA-CFLHD.</p> <p>However, the proposed improvements are designed to help facilitate the future implementation of a shuttle system, should the local authorities decide to implement one.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses to your comments.</p>

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	Sincerely,		
120	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>I think widening the road too much will have two major impacts. One will be the environmental damage caused by an invasive project in a fragile ecosystem. The second is increased traffic speeds, causing increased danger to cyclists and pedestrians. I think the road above the winter gate should be completely closed to personal autos and a shuttle service should be operated from the winter parking area to serve upper millcreek.</p> <p>I also am extremely disappointed to hear that the project will take 2 years to complete and that the road will be closed to all traffic during that time. With the closure of city creek at the same time, this eliminates the quietest canyon riding available to cyclists and puts more pressure on emigration canyon and the cottonwoods. The cottonwoods are very busy and dangerous to ride bikes on, and emigration is already full of cyclists as well. Taking the time to make millcreek available at least part of the time to cyclists will be much appreciated by one of the largest communities to recreate in the canyon.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>	A, H, I, K, M, N	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Impacts to plant and animal species associated with the Proposed Action are analyzed in detail in Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 of the EA.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses to your comments.</p>
121	<p>I strongly urge against widening the road in upper Millcreek Canyon. As someone who uses the canyon year round, multiple times a week, there has never been a time I wished the road was wider, unless it was for a better bike lane. The narrow, curvy road keeps vehicle traffic at a slower pace, which is hopefully safer for cyclists, pedestrians crossing the road, etc. And it maintains the character of the canyon. There have been times that finding parking was difficult at certain trailheads. And times when exiting the canyon takes a very long time. But a shuttle, with dedicated parking at the bottom, seems like a better fix for both than widening the road.</p> <p>Please explore better solutions than the current proposal.</p>	A, B, D	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.</p>

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122	<p>Thank you,</p> <p>The proposed widening of the road up Millcreek Canyon from the winter gate to the top of the canyon is a big mistake. Road repair and gentle care of the area may be necessary, but the proposed widening and construction will create a loss of beauty and uniqueness that, once destroyed, can never be replaced. This canyon has a long history and is so beautiful as it is and that history and beauty deserve to be preserved forever. In addition, Millcreek Canyon is like no other canyon in the valley. Please don't change the pristine, beautiful, historical nature of this canyon. I believe that addressing each area of necessary road repair (without widening the road) can be done in a limited and careful way coming up with solutions that are unique to each need.</p> <p>An example of the incredible peacefulness and beauty of the canyon is when you hike up the road from the winter gate, reach Elbow Fork and round the bend. The road then transitions to an indescribable experience of the beautiful forest and amazing view as you make your way up the canyon. The wilderness, trees, wildlife, peacefulness, the soothing sound of the river and the embracing life all around are so powerful, calming and uplifting. This is experienced so strongly during a hike up the road, but is also experienced once the road is open in the summer to early Fall when driving up the road to the top of the canyon. Removing the trees along the side of the road and widening the road will forever adversely affect this wondrous experience. It will change what Millcreek Canyon is now. It will be a loss to all now and in the future.</p> <p>In Table 3 (Summary of Section 4(f) Historic Resources in the Area of Potential Effects) the widening of Millcreek Canyon Road is listed as a Section 4(f) use. To maintain its historic and archaeological nature, it is important for the road to be taken care of and repaired as needed, but not widened, trees that are part of its history and beauty should not be chopped down, and the river should not be put at risk. Road repairs may be necessary in various locations and should be done in a way that gently works with and maintains the surrounding environment. Natural bends in the road should not be eliminated, this will only increase the speed of drivers. Make the speed limit 25 mph, and reduce it with slower speed limits in narrower places of the road.</p>	A, D, E, G, I, K	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. For responses to many of your comments, please see the referenced Common Public Concerns. Other specific concerns are addressed below.</p> <p>Your concerns about the roadway being a Section 4(f) historic resource are addressed on pages 62 and 63 of the EA, where we state that the “use” of the “historic transportation facility [i.e., roadway] is solely related to replacement of White Bridge, as the other improvements to Mill Creek Canyon Road would not adversely affect the historic integrity of the road...” In short, the project partners and the Utah State Historic Preservation Officer agree that the historic nature of the roadway would not be adversely impacted by making the roadway a more consistent width.</p> <p>Impacts to water quality are discussed in Section 3.2.4 of the EA. To summarize, Mill Creek’s stream quality is negatively impacted by existing conditions, which is why part of the project’s purpose is to improve water quality degraded by surface erosion and poor drainage infrastructure. New drainage infrastructure proposed as part of this project would greatly improve this situation in the long term. Standard BMPs and other measures would be implemented to keep short-term impacts associated with construction low. The long-term positive impacts to stream health are expected to far outweigh any short-term negative impacts associated with construction.</p>

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	<p>“Tender loving care” needs to be the approach given to the road with the compassion and care the canyon deserves and with each area of repair gently made to address the repairs to the road or bridge or river area at that location. Perhaps consider concrete in areas in which the road may suffer greater chances of degradation. Subsequent to the repairs made (without widening the road) the asphalt problems may best be taken care of as they emerge --asphalt has a tendency to deteriorate-- instead of what seems like a long term build up of problems. If that approach and proposition cannot be made, I suggest closing the canyon from the gate to the top year round to motorized vehicles with the exception of those with cabins up the road and instead allow it to continue to be an historical place and a lovely place to hike and experience now and forever.</p> <p>Some people drive up the canyon for the scenic drive and all of its beauty (seniors and some with disabilities included). Not widening the road and not removing trees and other vegetation would enable these users to continue their valued experiences in the canyon. The proposed widening of the road, the removal of embracing trees, the increase in speed of canyon traffic and the various eyesores would harm the beauty that the canyon currently has.</p> <p>User safety is proposed as a reason for the widening. I suspect it will be the opposite. It may instead increase the speed of traffic. Already people drive above the speed limit very often in the wider lower road of the canyon prior to the winter gate. I have observed this so very much. The inconsistent roadway width and bends in the road can actually keep traffic slower.</p> <p>It also seems that the road widening option proposed in the project’s design could significantly damage the water quality during construction. That should matter as this canyon is full of life, and water is an irreplaceable necessity for life in the canyon.</p> <p>The meadow at the top of the canyon is an iconic aspect of the canyon road. It is a beautiful and refreshing site that visitors value for its beauty and opportunity for picture taking. The loss of this meadow would be tragic. It is doubtful with the proposed parking lot expansion and construction that the top of the canyon will have its same peaceful,</p>		<p>For clarification, the stream would not be rerouted as part of this project, and all proposed impacts to the stream would be permitted and approved by the appropriate state and federal agencies.</p> <p>While the parking lot at the Upper Big Water Trailhead would be expanded to the east, the portion of the meadow south of the proposed improvements (most of the meadow) would remain untouched. Accommodating parking opportunities at Upper Big Water Trailhead, where demand is high, would reduce the issues associated with people using the Little Water Trailhead and other informal parking areas for overflow parking. Recognizing that there are tradeoffs, we believe the proposed solution, even in this area, strikes a good balance between reducing long-term environmental impacts and meeting the project’s purpose and need.</p>

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	<p>amazing and refreshing feel to it and instead will feel more like a parking lot at a busy store.</p> <p>It seems like consistent road care and stream protection strategies without widening the road would enable the stream to continue to exist as is. The very significant stream rerouting and the extensive amount of construction associated with the road widening (which I oppose) would have a very negative effect on the stream. The stream deserves protection as do all of the flora, fauna, trees and wilderness associated with this area.</p> <p>Public input is very important when taking on a project that has the potential to greatly and adversely affect the citizens of the Salt Lake Valley. Unfortunately, so many people have no idea that this is going to take place. That does not seem like what the county and Salt Lake Valley wants in this situation.</p>		
123	<p>Please reconsider widening and straightening the road above Elbow Fork in MC canyon to 10 ft lanes with no bike lane. I firmly believe that a wider, more straight road in the upper canyon will result in higher vehicle speeds and increased possibility of accidents, in addition to ruining the intimate nature of this beloved place.</p> <p>Yes, the road needs to be rehabilitated in various places but to forever change the character of that canyon through increasing traffic and speeds with a wider road would be an utter catastrophe to future generations. Millcreek canyon is a very special place that we should keep primitive and unsullied. Not everyone needs to be in the canyon at the same time! I support designated days for cars like City Creek, or a shuttle system above the gate during the summer. Please spend the grant money more wisely and listen to those of us that live and breathe MC canyon. Millcreek canyon has been our special place to escape the city and to exercise in nature since the early 80's. We live near the mouth of the canyon.</p> <p>Further, we are avid cyclists and have so appreciated the efforts to support cycling in the lower canyon. Please reconsider road cyclists in the upper canyon. Narrower lanes with a decent shoulder would keep traffic traveling slowly, as it should be currently, and allow safe cycling of all types. Other means of promoting traffic control and safety could be</p>	A, B, D, E, H, K	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for responses to your comments.

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	<p>instituted vs creating more and higher speed traffic by widening and straightening the road.</p> <p>Please, please listen to the people!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>		
124	<p>The United States Supreme Court held in <i>Citizens to Preserve Overton Park v. Volpe</i>, 401 U.S. 402 (1971) "[t]hat protection of park land was to be given paramount importance. The few green havens that are public parks were not to be lost unless there were truly unusual factors present in a particular case or the cost or community disruption resulting from alternative routes reached extraordinary magnitudes. If the statutes are to have any meaning, the Secretary cannot approve the destruction of park land unless he finds that alternative routes present unique problems." The Environment Assessment finds that the proposed road widening of the upper Mill Creek Canyon Road constitutes "Use Per Section 4(f)" but it fails to show that the destruction of the "green haven" meets this standard because it 1) does not show that there are truly unusual factors or that alternatives would have costs or disruption of extraordinary magnitudes, 2) fails to consider the road as a whole in light of Section 4(f) Criterion C despite the road's distinctive narrow width and proximity to natural features being integral to its character, 3) does not provide evidence of historical harms from the road's current design and dismisses the traffic calming benefits of the narrow width, 4) does not adequately consider alternatives that would repair the road without widening it, and 5) incorrectly applies the same "Roaded Natural" classification to the entire expanse above the Winter Gate.</p> <p>While EA section 4.5 analyzes the eligibility of White Bridge under 36 CFR 60.4 Criteria C, it does not extend this analysis to the upper Mill Creek Canyon Road despite the fact that it also "embod[ies] the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction", "possess[es] high artistic valu[e]", and "represent[s] a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction." The EA recognizes the distinctive characteristics of its method of construction in</p>	D, G, H, I, J, K, M	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Our responses to your comments are organized by paragraph, below. Please also see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses.</p> <p>Paragraph 1 – As described in section 2.2.1, the variable roadway width of 16 to 24 feet below Elbow Fork would be widened in places to make it a consistent 24-foot width. Above Elbow Fork, the variable roadway width of 13 to 20 feet would be widened in places to make it a more consistent 20-foot width, with two 18-foot wide sections to limit environmental impacts.</p> <p>The modest amount of road widening planned to increase user safety, reduce congestion, and improve recreational access does not amount to a "destruction of park land." (1) and (2) As described on pages 62 and 63 of the EA, the "use" of the "historic transportation facility [i.e., roadway] is solely related to replacement of White Bridge, as the other improvements to Mill Creek Canyon Road would not adversely affect the historic integrity of the road..." In short, the project partners and the Utah State Historic Preservation Officer agree that the historic nature of the roadway</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>primarily derogatory terms while noting the "narrow and variable road width" and the "lack of shoulders." However, as public comments have stressed repeatedly, widening the road is inconsistent with the mandate in 23 USC 138 that "special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites." It is precisely the narrowness of the road, the proximity of the Forest, and its responsiveness to topography and natural features which define the road's beauty and historic character. According to the NRB 15 (How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation) the evaluation of a structure (of which a highway is given as an example) must include all relevant aspects of the structure, giving an example in which "the abutments, and supporting piers [...] must be included when considering the property for eligibility." Surely the rock outcroppings, ancient trees, and the gentle stream bank which currently lend splendor and beauty are integral to the nature of the road (which functions as a trail closed to motorized vehicles more than 8 months of the year) and must be considered in the Section 4(f) analysis. However, the EA fails to consider the road in the light of Criteria C despite public outcry over the violence of soil nail retaining walls and timber harvesting permits called for in the plan. Because of the EA's failure to consider the road's eligibility under Criteria C, there was also apparently no coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) regarding the road's eligibility, as required by 23 CFR 774.5.</p> <p>It is also imperative when evaluating the project's Section (4f) analysis to recognize that the broad brush strokes used to characterize the road as "difficult and dangerous for vehicles to pass each other" and "need[ing] to pull off the road to let others pass" presents no evidence of historical harms and applies equally to similar last-mile approaches to parking areas, such as the road to the Bowman Fork and Terraces parking area after its respective gate. In addition to preserving an intimate natural beauty characterizing the space, these narrow roads also ensure that traffic is slow and cautious along roads with significant pedestrian interfaces. I have walked along this road during "heavy use times" and know that widening will inevitably result in faster traffic and far less</p>		<p>would not be adversely impacted by making the roadway a more consistent width.</p> <p>Consequently, our Section 4(f) analysis only need show that impacts to White Bridge meet the necessary criteria for use. (3) Data and hard evidence regarding the harms of the road's current configuration are lacking. Consequently, the proposed design is based on professional judgement and expertise, and accepted design principles.</p> <p>See Common Public Concern D for additional information on vehicle speed concerns. (4) The No-Action alternative considers repairs that do not involve widening (see Section 2.1 of the EA). (5) Per the current forest management plan, the entire project area is classified as Roaded Natural. The only exception to this is the section of County-owned land at Upper Big Water Trailhead, which is zoned by the county for Forestry and Recreation as described on page 47 of the EA.</p> <p>Paragraph 2 – See response to (2) in the preceding paragraph. With respect to 23 U.S.C. §138, we do not believe the natural beauty of the area would be compromised as a result of making the roadway a more consistent width.</p> <p>See Section 3.2.5 of the EA for a discussion of impacts to visual resources, as well . We consulted with the Utah SHPO in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>pedestrian safety. The assertion "consistent roadway width is needed to safely accommodate users in the upper canyon" is not supported by any evidence in the EA and directly contradicted by the increase in speed experienced in the lower Mill Creek Canyon after it was recently widened. Instead, it is feasible and prudent to repair the road and take advantage of the natural traffic control properties that so distinctly characterize the construction methodologies of the upper Mill Creek Road, in stark contrast to the modern propensity to bulldoze, raze, and replace with retaining walls. To the extent that eliminating the destructive aspects of road widening past Elbow Fork reduces the project's time and cost, it additionally lightens the Section (4f) use of closure and results in both a short and long term gain.</p> <p>I would also urge the USFS in its separate decision making regarding "authorization of construction on NFS lands outside of the new FRTA easement to stabilize slopes adjacent to the roadway [...] includ[ing] clearing of vegetation to facilitate construction activities." to consider both the 36 CFR 60.4 analysis above as well the Inventoried Roadless Areas which abut and overlap the project, which further emphasize the unique character of this area.</p> <p>While the proposal recognizes the distinct topology of the Canyon above Elbow Fork by wisely adopting a narrower overall road width and providing accommodation for tight quarters, it incorrectly applies the same "Roaded Natural" classification to the entire expanse above the Winter Gate. The EA fails to recognize the distinct grandeur that the narrowness of the road and the embracing nature of the Forest's proximity in the upper canyon contributes to the beauty and Scenic Integrity of a space distinct from the road between the Winter Gate and Elbow Fork. The upper canyon, with its intimate proximity to the forest and the narrow road, deserves a separate SIO analysis that acknowledges its distinct visual and experiential qualities. An example of this is how the statement that "[t]he long-term impacts are considered negligible based on the relatively small area of impact adjacent to existing roads and parking areas and in relation to the extent of these vegetation communities in the surrounding area"</p>		<p>executed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) as discussed in Section 3.2.6, 3.2.7, Chapter 4, and elsewhere in the EA.</p> <p>Paragraph 3 – Per the MOA and as noted in the EA, roadway improvements in the upper canyon do not result in a Section 4(f) use. See our response to Paragraph 1 and Common Public Concerns B and D for additional information.</p> <p>Paragraph 4 – Thank you for this suggestion. Inventoried Roadless Areas are discussed in Section 3.2.8 of the EA.</p> <p>Paragraph 5 – We understand that some commenters have a strong attachment to the character of the roadway above Elbow Fork. However, this does not impact the ROS and SIO designations prescribed for the area in the forest's current management plan.</p> <p>Land use is discussed in Section 3.2.8 of the EA, and impacts to visual resources are covered in Section 3.2.5. While the roadway would be widened in places and the character may be altered, we anticipate that the overall visual character and feel of the upper canyon would remain largely the same.</p> <p>Paragraph 6 – Short- and long-term stream impacts are analyzed in Section 3.2.4 of the EA. The analysis is completed in full consideration of the proximity of the proposed</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>misses that it is precisely these forested road margins in immediate proximity to the road are integral to the experience of the Forest in the upper canyon and draws the opposite conclusion. A recognition of these considerations is not entirely absent from the EA when it notes that the snow conditions will be adversely affected by increased melting and patchiness a wider road with more sun will experience. However, generally the SIO analysis considers the trailheads without recognizing that the road itself is a trail for more than 8 months of the year and the detrimental impact that widening --let alone retaining walls-- will have on this majority use.</p> <p>Although the topology of Millcreek Canyon is often referenced as a guiding consideration for the proposal analyzed in the Environmental Assessment, much of the analysis loses sight of the fact that the flowing creek and steep mountainside are very close to the road. The analysis of the proximity of Wasatch fitweed and sand fleabane proposes identifying and attempting to avoid this valuable flora, but it does not consider the harm that bringing a widened road into their immediate vicinity would cause in both the near and long terms. Similarly, while the EA considers erosion migrations associated with destructive stream bank restructuring, it does not address the fact that the entire project area is within a few feet of the pristine creek into which not only massive amount of silt but also oils, fuels, and toxic chemicals from both the equipment and the road construction materials would constantly flow. Demolishing and constructing miles of new road mere feet away from a pristine creek of exceptional recreational and ecological significance demands a thorough analysis of the inherent harms posed by the proximity of the project. The EA should have quantified the expected volume of e.g. silt, oils, fuels, and toxic chemicals that will contaminate the creek during construction and assess the long-term impact on water quality and aquatic life. Perhaps such detail was omitted because it will be surfaced in the permitting processes, but it is shielded from public comment by not being considered in the EA. Notice should also be provided for engagement during the permitting process.</p>		<p>improvements to Mill Creek and other water resources.</p> <p>As described in this section, short-term impacts would be mitigated through the use of BMPs and project specific mitigation measures, and long-term impacts are expected to improve stream quality as a result of the various drainage infrastructure improvements, thus meeting the purpose of the project to improve “water quality degraded by surface erosion and poor drainage infrastructure.”</p> <p>Paragraph 7 – Impacts to recreation during construction (short-term impacts) are discussed on pages 23 and 24 of the EA.</p> <p>We recognize that regular users of upper Mill Creek Canyon would be negatively impacted by closures during the two construction seasons. Your point about not specifically addressing users who regularly visit the canyon with dogs is well taken.</p> <p>In addition to the alternatives listed in the EA, we would add that the lower canyon and most trails in the upper canyon would remain open, and users with dogs would be able to continue using these trails in accordance with current regulations. Impacts of informal parking area removal on anglers are recognized on page 25.</p> <p>FHWA-CFLHD reached out to the angling community and made efforts to specifically address their needs in the design by</p>

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	<p>The Assessment also routinely dismisses impacts from consideration based on an apparent lack of understanding of the unique character and value of Millcreek Canyon. One example is diminishing the impact of the closure because there are other canyons in the region, without considering that watershed protections for both East and Little Cottonwood canyons prohibit dogs. The impact of the project on anglers is also understated considering that in addition to closing informal parking, stream banks will be demolished and then reseeded, likely resulting in several additional years of inaccessibility while erosion control plantings take root, on top of the two years of construction-related closure (another Section 4(f) burden not addressed in the draft response).</p> <p>A similar disregard for the reduction in speed that the topology of the canyon currently provides characterizes statements about the safety enhancements of the proposal. During the busy summer months there is often a steady stream of pedestrian traffic in the final stretch of the road between the overflow parking (where a new trailhead was recently established) and the Big and Little Water parking lots (upper and lower) which greatly benefits from the fact that vehicles are not travelling at 30 miles an hour; there is no way that a wider road won't result in faster traffic and a more dangerous pedestrian interface. A road analogous to the final stretch of the upper canyon road (beginning at the first narrowing where it truly becomes a single lane) is the road to the Terraces/Bowman parking lots. This road potentially handles a high load due to the presence of picnic sites in addition to trailheads and parking, but in consideration for the topology and foot traffic a single lane road with pullout was installed, and this keeps traffic slower and safer. Drivers are aware and courteous in both this location and in the final stretches of the upper canyon road, and widening will only increase speeds and decrease safety.</p> <p>The proposal also does not discuss the feasibility of keeping the road open during construction for most of the time. This was successfully done during the widening and repaving of the canyon below the winter gate, with traffic signals managing single-direction traffic, and would greatly reduce the impact of a 2 year closure given the unique recreational</p>		<p>formalizing previously informal parking areas at important fishing access locations, where possible. Stream banks would not be demolished, and we do not anticipate a delay between the end of construction and improved erosion control.</p> <p>Paragraph 8 – Please see Common Public Concern D for a response to your concerns about vehicle speed.</p> <p>Regarding the pedestrian traffic you describe in the final stretch of the road, the proposed improvements are intended to greatly reduce this by shifting parking opportunities to where use is more concentrated (i.e., those wishing to begin recreating at Upper Big Water Trailhead could park there rather than further down canyon and walking up the road. Trail improvements in this area would also encourage pedestrians to use the trail that parallels the road.</p> <p>Paragraph 9 – Please see Common Public Concern M for a response to your concern about closure during construction.</p> <p>Paragraph 10 – While the proposed parking area would extend across the meadow at Upper Big Water Trailhead to the east, the majority of the meadow lies to the south and would not be impacted.</p> <p>Accommodating parking opportunities at Upper Big Water Trailhead, where demand is high,</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>opportunity provided by Millcreek Canyon. Consideration of this option should not be foreclosed at this stage of the project, and a decision to disregard the public's access to the project area to cut costs should be supported by analysis which is not present.</p> <p>While the meadow adjacent to the upper Big Water parking lot owned by the County is subject to a different standard of scrutiny, it is extensively used for portrait photography, especially in the fall. The detriment of paving it over to expand the parking lot extends beyond "altering the visual characteristics of the area toward a more developed and less rustic appearance", and constitutes a wholesale elimination of this opportunity.</p> <p>In conclusion, while the proposed plan in the EA is presented as a necessary step to improve safety, access, and environmental conditions in the upper Millcreek Canyon, widening the road --especially between Elbow Fork and the top-- will ultimately detrimentally affect all three of these objectives in the short and long term. Speeds will be increased, stream beds destroyed, angler access reduced, and construction grime and detritus washed into the creek. At the same time, the widely appreciated natural beauty and uniquely embracing character of the canyon will be permanently damaged. A proposal with a lighter touch, repairing road damage and formalizing limited parking but not widening the road or excavating the stream bed, should have been fully considered. By leveraging the way that the existing topology slows traffic, and recognizing that the roads already handle more traffic than parking is available for, this style of proposal would better direct the limited funds towards accomplishing the project's goals while retaining the cherished beauty and character of the upper canyon.</p>		<p>would reduce the issues associated with people using the Little Water Trailhead and other informal parking areas for overflow parking. Recognizing that there are tradeoffs, we believe the proposed solution, even in this area, strikes a good balance between reducing long-term environmental impacts and meeting the project's purpose and need.</p> <p>Paragraph 11 – While we appreciate your interest in this project, your clear passion for the canyon, and your time spent crafting this letter, we disagree with your conclusions.</p> <p>Between the rationale in the EA and our responses here, we hope that you can appreciate that tradeoffs are necessary to balance competing needs and public desires.</p>
125	<p>Please also include my comment below from the last period in record for the independent USFS NEPA decisions. ----- Forwarded message ----- From: <xx> Date: Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 6:48 PM Subject: Millcreek FLAP Project Comments To: <millcreekroad@slco.org></p>	A, D, F, O, Q	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see our response to Letter 124, above.</p> <p>Substantive concerns not addressed above are responded to below. Comments that relate to earlier design considerations that are no longer applicable are not addressed. Please also see</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>I am grateful for the project team's responsiveness to the multitude of comments detailing the many ways that the project in its current and previous iterations would materially degrade the unique and embracing character of upper Millcreek Canyon. However, I feel that the accommodations that have been made have only highlighted the central tension between the project's vehicle-centric focus and the reality that for at least 8 months of the year the winter gate is closed and the upper canyon is used to hike, bike, run, ski, fish, stroll, picnic and take family photos-- often accompanied by dogs in these various activities.</p> <p>The project's focus on consistent road widths and wide turns fundamentally undervalues the benefit that these users get from the way the road's width currently adapts to natural features which allows the river, forest, and road to closely follow the topology. Instead, the current proposal carves out wide swathes buttressed by hundreds of feet of soil-and-nail retaining infrastructure. The negative impacts of this approach on the character of the canyon are inevitable. It additionally imposes increased monetary cost, engineering requirements and more extensive canyon closures while at the same time decreasing the safety of pedestrians, anglers, and cyclists as vehicles invariably speed up on the wider roads. This effect is not hypothetical, but is evident in the speed differential of drivers in the lower and upper canyon on any given day of the week. To address the clear risk that these increased speeds pose to non-motorized users, the project promises even more signage and lane-wide painting that would not only be ineffective and diminish the natural character for all users (indeed, even the motorists who drive up the canyon to enjoy the beautiful fall colors), but quite simply isn't as safe as the decreased speeds that are currently present in the upper canyon.</p> <p>As evidence for the claim the wider roads are a net benefit to safety the project states that the current road conditions cause accidents that a wider road would prevent. However, they were unable to provide details beyond acknowledging that most incidents they're aware of involve a single vehicle. In more than a decade frequenting Millcreek Canyon, I'm only</p>		<p>the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional information.</p> <p>As explained in the EA, the proposed reconstructed roadway would adapt to the natural topography in much the same way as the existing road. With limited traffic data and statistics, we relied heavily on professional judgement and expertise, accepted design principles, and partner and public input to develop the Proposed Action and meet the project's purpose and need.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>aware of a single incident in the upper canyon, in which a car slid a short distance off the road in early winter conditions at the very top stretch of the road. While my personal experience isn't as comprehensive as the full data that the project may have but hasn't shared, it is an example of the risk that wider roads pose to motorists who, at inevitably higher speeds, are at an even greater risk for this precise type of accident.</p> <p>Instead of imposing these safety risks on motorists and non-motorists alike, I urge the project to study the current traffic patterns in the upper canyon. I'm confident that they will discover that the very features of the canyon which they seek to bulldoze in the name of safety are actually gently slowing traffic and encouraging road sharing. Even the cultural report mentions that the road is more than a hundred years old (and is potentially eligible for NRHP listing), a testament to the effectiveness and durability of these organic traffic control features.</p> <p>Performing road and shoulder repairs would be of great benefit. Drainage and shoulder stability improvements would help protect the waterway and ensure the longevity of the road base. As I'm sure the environmental assessment will highlight, the fact that the road so closely follows the Millcreek waterway means that these types of improvements are essential to protect environmental quality. In a couple very short stretches where the road narrows to a single, undivided lane a slight widening might ensure the constant flow of traffic. Overall, however, at its current width the road safely and effectively handles the traffic volumes and has for many years. Given the Forest Service's stated goals of not increasing overall parking availability in the upper canyon, the widening would only serve to create a faster highway to Big Water instead of the slower, safer, and more beautiful road everyone currently enjoys. Assuming a great increase in vehicle traffic would be inconsistent with the wise policy of not increasing parking to preserve the environment in Millcreek Canyon.</p> <p>However, I would again encourage studying and understanding current usage of the upper canyon to inform the project's approach. For example, informal parking has been cited as an environmental hazard. However,</p>		

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>eliminating these pullouts by expanding a constant-width road on top of them fundamentally ignores the reason they exist: anglers, bird watchers, and picnickers regularly use them to access parts of the canyon for recreation. Instead, the utility and necessity of these accesses should be recognized and the environmental impacts addressed with formal, paved, and clearly defined pullouts, rather than forcing these users to either wedge new (and equally harmful) access throughout, or to just abandon wide swaths of now-inaccessible canyon. This can be accomplished by eliminating the constant-width requirement.</p> <p>A similar approach of improving existing informal parking would save much of the meadow near the Big Water parking lot from paving annihilation. There's already a trailhead for a new trail system and informal parking slightly lower down the canyon. This parking could be formalized, and the bad drainage situation addressed at the same time, without needing to pave over an open meadow. One need only look at the constant presence of cars parked in the bike lane near the Rattlesnake trailhead to recognize that, like the river, cars overflow despite signage and paint to the contrary. The project would be wise to recognize the advantage that the topology naturally affords the existing informal parking sites in limiting additional parking and damage, and formalize these places instead.</p> <p>The only constituency whose goals might actually be better served by a constant-width road are those encouraging a shuttle. The post-covid crisis in ridership all public transportation is experiencing will only be compounded by the fact that canyon users often have dogs, skis, tackle, or coolers and are even less likely to use a shuttle system. Additionally, given that the project cannot guarantee cell coverage but instead relies on private companies to choose to serve a decidedly small population, using the shuttle could actually mean being forced to overnight or walk down the entire canyon if unanticipated delays cause one to miss the last pickup.</p> <p>An anticipated shuttle service is also evidenced by the roundabouts the current proposal has placed in the parking areas. In addition to expanding</p>		

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	<p>the footprint of the parking lots by displacing parking spaces, these designs also are ignorant of a common scenario occurring in the Big Water parking lot where cars queue up to the side waiting for a parking spot to open up. I would encourage the project to study the traffic patterns in the parking lot and provide space for the patient driver to wait for someone returning to make their parking space available, instead of designing the lots to accommodate a future shuttle of questionable ridership.</p> <p>It would also be appropriate to vastly expanded public engagement in this process. It's a shame that existing bulletin boards at the winter gate, Alexander Basin and Big Water trailheads aren't being used to share information about a process which is proposed to close the canyon for two or more years. Posting details about the scope and impact of the project at the trailheads would reach the very constituencies which will be materially and forever impacted by the design decisions being made, and who have extensive experience with the current state of the canyon. To do otherwise disenfranchises these stakeholders.</p>		
126	<p>Please do not widen Millcreek canyon or expand the parking. There are some things that should be preserved.</p>		<p>Thank you for your interest in this project.</p>
127	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Wider roads and more parking are not the best available solution for upper millcreek canyon. Both these things attract more users, traveling at higher speeds. Upper millcreek canyon, and even lower millcreek canyon would be best served by a shuttle services and a limited number of passes for vehicle access.</p> <p>The fact that the road narrow down in upper millcreek canyon serves to both reduce and slow traffic, and also eases both motorist and cyclists into the wilderness, versus having the equivalent of an express lift right to it. Practically and psychologically the current arrangement serves humans and wildlife well. The proposed changes do neither. Please refrain from unneeded and wasteful road development.</p>	A, D	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for a response.</p> <p>Please also refer to Section 3.2.3 of the EA for our analysis of impacts to wildlife.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	Sincerely,		
128	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Consider leaving the upper Millcreek road just the way it currently is - the road being narrow makes cars drive slower and a safe place to bike, walk, run. The upper canyon trailheads and trails are already clogged and a wider more accessible road would only make it worse.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>		Thank you for your interest in this project.
129	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>I use Millcreek Canyon several times a week to ski, bicycle, hike, and trail run and have done so for three decades. Thus, I have followed the process to consider improvements to Millcreek Canyon, and I hope the responsible agencies will consider the following during the Environmental Assessment of proposed changes to the character of Millcreek canyon.</p> <p>Increased Road Width</p> <p>The current project's introduction of road widening would make it more dangerous and difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to safely and enjoy the upper canyon. Keeping the roadway 18' or less would also reduce the need for slope cuts and retaining walls that would constrict the shared use of the roadway and unnecessarily cut into the hillsides. Wider roads will increase vehicle speed in wider sections, making a less safe environment overall. In addition, retaining walls will be dangerous for backcountry skiers who return to the road from Alexander and Wilson areas.</p> <p>Road Closure and User-Created Parking I support regional public transportation alternatives in Millcreek Canyon.</p> <p>Shuttle Service</p>	A, B, D	Thank you for your interest in this project. Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for a response.

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>While the scope of this review did not include a proposed shuttle, the single biggest problem in this unique canyon is the need for an alternative to private automobiles to keep the canyon safer for pedestrians and bike users along the roadway and to allow people to access the canyon when parking is limited. Winter weekend days are incredibly congested due to lack of parking since private vehicles provide the sole access to the canyon.</p> <p>I strongly support efforts to expand public transportation in Millcreek Canyon to reduce the need for private automobiles and additional parking in the proposed project area.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Millcreek Canyon Upper Road Improvement Project.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>		
130	<p>Dear Mill Creek Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,</p> <p>Dear Sirs:</p> <p>These comments are in response to the Environmental Assessment for the Upper Millcreek Canyon road improvements project. As a preface, I have used Millcreek Canyon for over 20 years, hiking most of its formal trails, and snowshoeing many of the side canyons. I acknowledge the need to improve access to the upper portion of the canyon, but would like the federal and state agencies that will be tasked with implementing this project to seriously consider the following suggestions.</p> <p>One of the objectives of the Environmental Assessment should be to minimize any additional parking for private vehicles. There are few places in upper Mill Creek (i.e., beyond the winter gate) where additional parking areas could be constructed without significantly impacting the water quality of Mill Creek itself and adjacent wetlands, or cutting into moderate to steep slopes along the road. Creating additional parking areas will only</p>	A, B, C, D, G, H, K	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. Minimizing private vehicle parking is not an objective of this project and would directly conflict with the purpose of improving access to recreational opportunities for all users.</p> <p>Please see the referenced Common Public Concerns for additional responses to your comments.</p>

Table 2. Individual Comments

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	<p>encourage more traffic and will degrade the natural environment of the upper canyon. Moreover, owing to the limited number of areas, and their constricted size, that are suitable for parking area construction, the number of additional vehicles that could be accommodated would be relatively small. Is the cost of constructing additional parking, both in terms of dollars and the damage to the environment, really worth it to incrementally increase the parking capacity ?</p> <p>I appreciate that the Environmental Assessment has proposed that road improvements incorporate different road widths, contingent up terrain, distance to Mill Creek and wetlands, etc. Where possible, and taking into consideration the possible construction of any dedicated bike lane, the road should be kept to the a minimum width (18-20 ft) to limit speeding and provide pedestrians and cyclists with greater safety. This approach will also minimize project costs by reducing the volume of soil and rock that would otherwise be removed (and trucked out of the canyon) during construction.</p> <p>The road improvements to upper Mill Creek, and any increase in parking, represent a temporary solution to address the problem of access via private vehicles. The narrow width of the upper section of the canyon does not really lend itself to more parking areas and further road widening in the future, without substantially degrading the natural environment that people drive into the canyon to experience.</p> <p>Thus, this Environmental Assessment needs to seriously consider some type of public shuttle as a partial solution to any road & parking improvements that are eventually implemented in upper Mill Creek. As use of Mill Creek Canyon increases in the future, the need for a shuttle as a viable means of accessing the canyon will become paramount. This Environmental Assessment needs to discuss that option, even though funding for a shuttle system is currently an obstacle. To make a shuttle system a reality, user fees to access the canyon would need to increase from the existing fee of \$3.00 per vehicle per trip. But other funding</p>		

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	sources would also be required. Moreover, a reservation system for parking in upper Mill Creek also deserves serious consideration. Sincerely,		

Appendix C
Agency Correspondence

Section 106 Correspondence



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 20, 2022

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Honorable Delice Tom
Cedar Band of Paiute Indians
PO Box 235
Cedar City, UT 84721

Sent via email: cedar@utahpaiutes.org

Subject: Tribal Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Chairperson Tom:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The improvements would extend 4.5 miles along the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon Road, from the Winter Gate to the Upper Big Water Trailhead. A brief overview of the project is presented below, and a project location map is attached for reference.

The Forest Service identified your Tribe as having an interest in the area. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), we are seeking your knowledge of historic properties of traditional religious or cultural importance that may be affected by the proposed road improvements. FHWA-CFLHD is serving as the lead federal agency for the project and will be the lead for Section 106 consultation.

Mill Creek Canyon Road provides access to numerous recreation opportunities, such as hiking, bicycling, skiing, and picnicking, and various trails and recreation sites in the canyon. The existing road varies in width from 11 feet at its narrowest to approximately 25 feet at its widest. Proposed improvements consist of repaving and widening the road, establishing bicycle lanes, expanding two parking areas, and constructing associated improvements, such as drainage modifications, sign installation, and striping the road. A study area has been established for technical studies and initial research that encompasses a 100-foot-wide corridor along the road and around the parking areas, totaling about 73 acres.

Preliminary research has identified two previously recorded historic sites and several historic buildings along the road. FHWA-CFLHD has retained a contractor to conduct a cultural resources investigation. As part of the investigation and the environmental analysis, we will identify and evaluate historic properties in the APE and assess the potential for the project to affect those historic properties. Please inform us if your Tribe has a religious or cultural affiliation to resources that have been identified in the study area, and we will continue to consult with you on the nature and level of impacts and potential measures to avoid or reduce impacts. FHWA-CFLHD is also reviewing the project under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act and may follow up with you if further evaluation of impacts on historic properties is required under this Act.

Your knowledge of the area is of great value and your feedback is important. Please reply with information you wish to share and to confirm your interest in being a consulting party on this project. Please be assured that, in accordance with confidentiality and disclosure stipulations in Section 304 of the NHPA, we will maintain strict confidentiality about certain types of information regarding historic properties. We would also appreciate any suggestions you have about other groups or individuals that we should contact regarding this project.

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Sincerely,

**BRADEN M
PETERS**

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Date: 2022.04.19 15:43:01
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Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosure: Project Location Map



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 20, 2022

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Honorable Madeline Greymountain
Confederated Tribes of Goshute
HC 61, Box 6104
Ibapah, UT 84034

Sent via email: madelineg@goshutefedcorp.com

Subject: Tribal Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Chairperson Greymountain:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The improvements would extend 4.5 miles along the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon Road, from the Winter Gate to the Upper Big Water Trailhead. A brief overview of the project is presented below, and a project location map is attached for reference.

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Sincerely,

**BRADEN M
PETERS**

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Date: 2022.04.19 15:43:01
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Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosure: Project Location Map

Cc: Melissa Oppenheim, Cultural Preservation Officer (oppenheim_04@yahoo.com)



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 20, 2022

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Honorable Timothy L. Nuvangyaoma
The Hopi Tribe
PO Box 123
Kykotsmovi, UT 86039

Sent via email: hopicouncil@hopi.nsn.us

Subject: Tribal Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Chairman Nuvangyaoma:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The improvements would extend 4.5 miles along the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon Road, from the Winter Gate to the Upper Big Water Trailhead. A brief overview of the project is presented below, and a project location map is attached for reference.

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**BRADEN M
PETERS**

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Date: 2022.04.19 15:43:01
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Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosure: Project Location Map

Cc: Stewart Koyiyumtewa, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (skoyiyumtewa@hopi.nsn.us)
Barbara Lomayestewa, Staff Assistant (BLomayestewa@hopi.nsn.us)



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 20, 2022

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Honorable Tamra Borchardt-Slayton
Indian Peaks Band of Paiute Indians
4377 Old US HWY 91
Cedar City, UT 84720

Sent via email: indianpeaks@utahpaiutes.org

Subject: Tribal Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Chairperson Borchardt-Slayton:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The improvements would extend 4.5 miles along the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon Road, from the Winter Gate to the Upper Big Water Trailhead. A brief overview of the project is presented below, and a project location map is attached for reference.

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Sincerely,

**BRADEN M
PETERS**

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Date: 2022.04.19 15:43:01
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Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosure: Project Location Map



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 20, 2022

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Honorable Ona Segundo
Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians
HC 65, Box 2
Fredonia, AZ 86022

Sent via email: osegundo@kaibabpaiute-nsn.gov

Subject: Tribal Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Chairwoman Segundo:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The improvements would extend 4.5 miles along the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon Road, from the Winter Gate to the Upper Big Water Trailhead. A brief overview of the project is presented below, and a project location map is attached for reference.

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Sincerely,

**BRADEN M
PETERS**

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Date: 2022.04.19 15:43:01
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Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosure: Project Location Map

Cc: Charley Bullets, Cultural Resources Director (cbullets@kaibabpaiute-nsn.gov)



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 20, 2022

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Honorable Darlene Arrum
Kanosh Band of Paiute Indians
PO Box 116
Kanosh, UT 84637

Sent via email: kanosh@utahpaiutes.org

Subject: Tribal Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Chairperson Arrum:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The improvements would extend 4.5 miles along the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon Road, from the Winter Gate to the Upper Big Water Trailhead. A brief overview of the project is presented below, and a project location map is attached for reference.

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**BRADEN M
PETERS**

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Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosure: Project Location Map



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 20, 2022

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Mr. Richard Begay, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Navajo Nation
PO Box 4950
Window Rock, AZ 86515

Sent via email: r.begay@navajo-nsn.gov

Subject: Tribal Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Mr. Begay:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The improvements would extend 4.5 miles along the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon Road, from the Winter Gate to the Upper Big Water Trailhead. A brief overview of the project is presented below, and a project location map is attached for reference.

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**BRADEN M
PETERS**

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Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosure: Project Location Map



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 20, 2022

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Honorable Dennis Alex
Northwestern Band of Shoshone Nation
2575 Commerce Way
Ogden, UT 84401

Sent via email: banner02@gmail.com

Subject: Tribal Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Chairman Alex:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The improvements would extend 4.5 miles along the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon Road, from the Winter Gate to the Upper Big Water Trailhead. A brief overview of the project is presented below, and a project location map is attached for reference.

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**BRADEN M
PETERS**

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Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosure: Project Location Map

Cc: Patty Timbimboo-Madsen, History and Culture Specialist (ptimbimboo@nwshoshone.com)



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 20, 2022

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Honorable Hope Silvas
Shivwits Band of Paiute Indians
6060 West 3650 North
Ivins, UT 84738

Sent via email: shivwits@utahpaiutes.org

Subject: Tribal Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Chairperson Silvas:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The improvements would extend 4.5 miles along the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon Road, from the Winter Gate to the Upper Big Water Trailhead. A brief overview of the project is presented below, and a project location map is attached for reference.

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If you have any comments regarding the proposed project or desire to participate in the Section 106 review process, please respond by letter to: Braden Peters, Federal Highway Administration, 12300 W. Dakota Ave., Suite 380, Lakewood, CO 80228 or by email to braden.peters@dot.gov and leslie.perry@dot.gov. Also, if you have any questions about the project or would like to schedule a meeting, I can be reached at 720-963-3397 or you may contact Leslie Perry at 720-963-3734.

Sincerely,

**BRADEN M
PETERS**

Digitally signed by BRADEN
M PETERS
Date: 2022.04.19 15:43:01
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Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosure: Project Location Map



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 20, 2022

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Honorable Candace Bear
Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians
PO Box 448
Grantsville, UT 84029

Sent via email: candaceb@svgoshutes.com

Subject: Tribal Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Chairwoman Bear:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The improvements would extend 4.5 miles along the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon Road, from the Winter Gate to the Upper Big Water Trailhead. A brief overview of the project is presented below, and a project location map is attached for reference.

The Forest Service identified your Tribe as having an interest in the area. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), we are seeking your knowledge of historic properties of traditional religious or cultural importance that may be affected by the proposed road improvements. FHWA-CFLHD is serving as the lead federal agency for the project and will be the lead for Section 106 consultation.

Mill Creek Canyon Road provides access to numerous recreation opportunities, such as hiking, bicycling, skiing, and picnicking, and various trails and recreation sites in the canyon. The existing road varies in width from 11 feet at its narrowest to approximately 25 feet at its widest. Proposed improvements consist of repaving and widening the road, establishing bicycle lanes, expanding two parking areas, and constructing associated improvements, such as drainage modifications, sign installation, and striping the road. A study area has been established for technical studies and initial research that encompasses a 100-foot-wide corridor along the road and around the parking areas, totaling about 73 acres.

Preliminary research has identified two previously recorded historic sites and several historic buildings along the road. FHWA-CFLHD has retained a contractor to conduct a cultural resources investigation. As part of the investigation and the environmental analysis, we will identify and evaluate historic properties in the APE and assess the potential for the project to affect those historic properties. Please inform us if your Tribe has a religious or cultural affiliation to resources that have been identified in the study area, and we will continue to consult with you on the nature and level of impacts and potential measures to avoid or reduce impacts. FHWA-CFLHD is also reviewing the project under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act and may follow up with you if further evaluation of impacts on historic properties is required under this Act.

Your knowledge of the area is of great value and your feedback is important. Please reply with information you wish to share and to confirm your interest in being a consulting party on this project. Please be assured that, in accordance with confidentiality and disclosure stipulations in Section 304 of the NHPA, we will maintain strict confidentiality about certain types of information regarding historic properties. We would also appreciate any suggestions you have about other groups or individuals that we should contact regarding this project.

If you have any comments regarding the proposed project or desire to participate in the Section 106 review process, please respond by letter to: Braden Peters, Federal Highway Administration, 12300 W. Dakota Ave., Suite 380, Lakewood, CO 80228 or by email to braden.peters@dot.gov and leslie.perry@dot.gov. Also, if you have any questions about the project or would like to schedule a meeting, I can be reached at 720-963-3397 or you may contact Leslie Perry at 720-963-3734.

Sincerely,

**BRADEN M
PETERS**

Digitally signed by BRADEN
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Date: 2022.04.19 15:43:01
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Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosure: Project Location Map



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 20, 2022

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Honorable Corrina Bow
Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah
440 North Paiute Drive
Cedar City, UT 84721

Sent via email: corrina_bow@yahoo.com

Subject: Tribal Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Chairwoman Bow:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The improvements would extend 4.5 miles along the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon Road, from the Winter Gate to the Upper Big Water Trailhead. A brief overview of the project is presented below, and a project location map is attached for reference.

The Forest Service identified your Tribe as having an interest in the area. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), we are seeking your knowledge of historic properties of traditional religious or cultural importance that may be affected by the proposed road improvements. FHWA-CFLHD is serving as the lead federal agency for the project and will be the lead for Section 106 consultation.

Mill Creek Canyon Road provides access to numerous recreation opportunities, such as hiking, bicycling, skiing, and picnicking, and various trails and recreation sites in the canyon. The existing road varies in width from 11 feet at its narrowest to approximately 25 feet at its widest. Proposed improvements consist of repaving and widening the road, establishing bicycle lanes, expanding two parking areas, and constructing associated improvements, such as drainage modifications, sign installation, and striping the road. A study area has been established for technical studies and initial research that encompasses a 100-foot-wide corridor along the road and around the parking areas, totaling about 73 acres.

Preliminary research has identified two previously recorded historic sites and several historic buildings along the road. FHWA-CFLHD has retained a contractor to conduct a cultural resources investigation. As part of the investigation and the environmental analysis, we will identify and evaluate historic properties in the APE and assess the potential for the project to affect those historic properties. Please inform us if your Tribe has a religious or cultural affiliation to resources that have been identified in the study area, and we will continue to consult with you on the nature and level of impacts and potential measures to avoid or reduce impacts. FHWA-CFLHD is also reviewing the project under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act and may follow up with you if further evaluation of impacts on historic properties is required under this Act.

Your knowledge of the area is of great value and your feedback is important. Please reply with information you wish to share and to confirm your interest in being a consulting party on this project. Please be assured that, in accordance with confidentiality and disclosure stipulations in Section 304 of the NHPA, we will maintain strict confidentiality about certain types of information regarding historic properties. We would also appreciate any suggestions you have about other groups or individuals that we should contact regarding this project.

If you have any comments regarding the proposed project or desire to participate in the Section 106 review process, please respond by letter to: Braden Peters, Federal Highway Administration, 12300 W. Dakota Ave., Suite 380, Lakewood, CO 80228 or by email to braden.peters@dot.gov and leslie.perry@dot.gov. Also, if you have any questions about the project or would like to schedule a meeting, I can be reached at 720-963-3397 or you may contact Leslie Perry at 720-963-3734.

Sincerely,

**BRADEN M
PETERS**

Braden Peters
Project Manager

Digitally signed by BRADEN
M PETERS
Date: 2022.04.19 15:43:01
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Enclosure: Project Location Map

Cc: Dorena Martineau, Cultural Resource Manager (dmartineau@utahpaiutes.org)



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 20, 2022

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Honorable Shaun Chapoose
Ute Indian Tribe
PO Box 190
Fort Duchesne, UT 84026

Sent via email: shaunc@utetribes.com

Subject: Tribal Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Chairman Chapoose:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The improvements would extend 4.5 miles along the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon Road, from the Winter Gate to the Upper Big Water Trailhead. A brief overview of the project is presented below, and a project location map is attached for reference.

The Forest Service identified your Tribe as having an interest in the area. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), we are seeking your knowledge of historic properties of traditional religious or cultural importance that may be affected by the proposed road improvements. FHWA-CFLHD is serving as the lead federal agency for the project and will be the lead for Section 106 consultation.

Mill Creek Canyon Road provides access to numerous recreation opportunities, such as hiking, bicycling, skiing, and picnicking, and various trails and recreation sites in the canyon. The existing road varies in width from 11 feet at its narrowest to approximately 25 feet at its widest. Proposed improvements consist of repaving and widening the road, establishing bicycle lanes, expanding two parking areas, and constructing associated improvements, such as drainage modifications, sign installation, and striping the road. A study area has been established for technical studies and initial research that encompasses a 100-foot-wide corridor along the road and around the parking areas, totaling about 73 acres.

Preliminary research has identified two previously recorded historic sites and several historic buildings along the road. FHWA-CFLHD has retained a contractor to conduct a cultural resources investigation. As part of the investigation and the environmental analysis, we will identify and evaluate historic properties in the APE and assess the potential for the project to affect those historic properties. Please inform us if your Tribe has a religious or cultural affiliation to resources that have been identified in the study area, and we will continue to consult with you on the nature and level of impacts and potential measures to avoid or reduce impacts. FHWA-CFLHD is also reviewing the project under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act and may follow up with you if further evaluation of impacts on historic properties is required under this Act.

Your knowledge of the area is of great value and your feedback is important. Please reply with information you wish to share and to confirm your interest in being a consulting party on this project. Please be assured that, in accordance with confidentiality and disclosure stipulations in Section 304 of the NHPA, we will maintain strict confidentiality about certain types of information regarding historic properties. We would also appreciate any suggestions you have about other groups or individuals that we should contact regarding this project.

If you have any comments regarding the proposed project or desire to participate in the Section 106 review process, please respond by letter to: Braden Peters, Federal Highway Administration, 12300 W. Dakota Ave., Suite 380, Lakewood, CO 80228 or by email to braden.peters@dot.gov and leslie.perry@dot.gov. Also, if you have any questions about the project or would like to schedule a meeting, I can be reached at 720-963-3397 or you may contact Leslie Perry at 720-963-3734.

Sincerely,

**BRADEN M
PETERS**

Digitally signed by BRADEN
M PETERS
Date: 2022.04.19 15:43:01
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Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosure: Project Location Map

Cc: Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (betsyc@utetribe.com)



Timothy L. Nuvangyaoma
CHAIRMAN

Craig Andrews
VICE-CHAIRMAN

May 16, 2022

Branden M. Peters, Project Manager
Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division
12300 West Dakota Ave. Suite 380
Lakewood, Colorado 80228-2583

Re: Mill Creek Canyon Road Project, Salt Lake County, Utah

Dear Mr. Peters,

This letter is in response to your correspondence dated April 20, 2022, regarding the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) proposing improvements to 4.5 mile of Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. The Hopi Cultural Preservation Office appreciates the FHWA's continuing solicitation of our input and your efforts to address our concerns.

The Hopi Tribe claims cultural affiliation to earlier identifiable cultural groups in Utah. The Hopi Cultural Preservation Office supports the identification and avoidance of our ancestral sites, and we consider the prehistoric archaeological sites of our ancestors to be Traditional Cultural Properties. We request consultation on any proposal in Utah with the potential to adversely affect prehistoric cultural resources.

If the cultural resource survey of the area of potential effect identifies prehistoric sites that may be adversely affected by project activities, please provide us with copies of the cultural resources survey report and any proposed treatment plans for review and comment.

We appreciate that if any cultural features or deposits are encountered during project activities, these activities will be discontinued in the immediate area of the remains, and the State Historic Preservation Office will be consulted to evaluate their nature and significance and if any Native American human remains or funerary objects are discovered during construction they will be immediately reported as required by law. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stewart B. Koyiyumptewa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Stewart B. Koyiyumptewa, Program Manager/THPO
Hopi Cultural Preservation Office

xc: Arizona State Historic Preservation Office



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

January 26, 2023

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Chris Merritt, State Historic Preservation Officer
Utah Division of State History
State Historic Preservation Office
3760 South Highland Drive
Salt Lake City, Utah 84106

Submitted via E106

Subject: Section 106 Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Mr. Merritt:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Salt Lake County; and Millcreek City, is proposing roadway improvements along Mill Creek Canyon Road in Salt Lake County, Utah. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, FHWA-CFLHD is taking into account the effects of our undertaking on historic properties and is initiating consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer to discuss the undertaking and its effects on historic properties.

Overview of the Undertaking

Mill Creek Canyon Road provides access to numerous recreation opportunities, such as hiking, bicycling, skiing, and picnicking, and various trails and recreation sites in the canyon. The existing road varies in width from 11 feet at its narrowest to approximately 25 feet at its widest. Proposed improvements consist of repaving and establishing a consistent width along the road, expanding and formalizing parking areas at existing trailheads and adjacent to the road in other designated areas, and constructing associated improvements, such as wall construction, drainage modifications, sign installation, and striping the road. Pending further design, the road width would be 24 feet from Winter Gate at the south end to Elbow Fork, which includes 10-foot-wide lanes and a 4-foot-wide bike lane, and 18-20 feet from Elbow Fork to the Upper Big Water Trailhead at the end of the road. Drainage improvements consist of ditch establishment, where feasible, and culvert replacements, including the White Bridge (culvert).

Area of Potential Effect

FHWA-CFLHD has defined the area of potential effects (APE) as an approximately 80- to 130-foot-wide corridor along 4.5 miles of Mill Creek Canyon Road and adjacent areas where parking would be formalized or expanded and where potential indirect effects could extend beyond the roadway corridor (where walls are proposed). The APE encompasses about 76 total acres. Vertical limits where excavation is needed extend up to about 6 feet deep at culverts and less than 2 feet along most of the road, mostly in previously disturbed areas associated with prior road construction. Proposed walls would be up to about 8 feet tall. The APE was established based on the preliminary design limits and existing constraints along the road (e.g., creek, steep slopes), and it covers potential direct and indirect effect areas. Maps are enclosed that depict the APE.

Identification and Evaluation of Historic Properties

SWCA Environmental Consultants conducted archaeological and architectural resource investigations for the proposed undertaking. Both investigations consisted of file and literature reviews, coordination with the Forest Service, field surveys, and preparation of relevant site forms and reports (reports are currently being finalized and will be provided with a subsequent submittal). The archaeological investigation identified two previously recorded sites (sites 42SL713 and 42SL872), two newly recorded sites (sites 42SL951 and 42SL970), and two isolated finds in the area that was surveyed. The Mill Creek Hydroelectric System (site 42SL713) was previously determined eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and a couple components of the site are in the APE, although no direct effects to them are anticipated. Mill Creek Canyon Road (site 42SL970) is determined eligible as well and is fully within the APE. The two other sites (a trail, site 42SL872, and dendroglyphs, site 42SL951) are not eligible.

The architectural investigation identified one previously recorded historic site, the Firs Recreation Residence Tract, consisting of 24 cabins, near the road and 14 other historic-age buildings and structures in the area that was inventoried. A reconnaissance-level assessment of the resources was conducted to present initial eligibility recommendations, which resulted in 28 buildings or structures being considered eligible or contributing and 10 being considered not eligible or out of period. Intensive-level research was conducted for those buildings and structures in the APE to provide more details on the eligibility of each resource. The results of this research and the eligibility determinations are pending.

Consultation and Public Outreach to Date

FHWA-CFLHD sent letters about the project to 12 Native American tribes in April 2022, based on contacts provided by the Forest Service and State. The Hopi Tribe responded with interest in consulting if prehistoric sites are encountered. The Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah responded and deferred to other more local tribes. No other responses have been received to date, although FHWA-CFLHD followed up via email initially in April 2022 and again in December 2022. In coordination with our partner agencies, we have also held multiple public meetings about the project in fall 2021 and spring 2022 and plan another meeting in spring 2023, which is intended to focus on environmental issues and potential impacts.

At this time, we would like to schedule a virtual meeting with your office to discuss this undertaking and the consultation process, as well as obtain feedback on the APE and preliminary historic properties evaluation. Please respond by email to braden.peters@dot.gov and leslie.perry@dot.gov to coordinate further on the process. If you have any questions in the interim, I can be reached at 720-963-3397 or you may contact Leslie Perry, Senior Environmental Technical Specialist, at 720-963-3734.

Sincerely,

BRADEN M PETERS
Digitally signed by BRADEN M PETERS
Date: 2023.01.26 08:53:03 -07'00'
Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosure: APE maps

Cc: Tom Flanigan, Forest Service Heritage Program Manager (thomas.flanigan@usda.gov)



Spencer J. Cox
Governor

Deidre M. Henderson
Lieutenant Governor

Jill Remington Love
Executive Director
Utah Department of Cultural
and Community Engagement



Christopher Merritt
State Historic Preservation Officer
Utah State Historic Preservation Office

February 3, 2023

Braden Peters
U.S. Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration
Washington, D.C.

RE: Mill Creek Canyon Road Project

For future correspondence, please reference Case No. 23-0232

Dear Braden,

The Utah State Historic Preservation Office received your submission and request for our comment on the above-referenced undertaking on January 27, 2023.

We concur with your determination of Area of Potential Effects for this undertaking, and await submission of cultural resources data for eligibility and finding of effect.

This letter serves as our comment on the determinations you have made within the consultation process specified in §36CFR800.4. If you have questions, please contact me at 801-245-7263 or by email at cmerritt@utah.gov.

Sincerely,

Christopher W. Merritt
State Historic Preservation Officer



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

May 17, 2023

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Chris Merritt, State Historic Preservation Officer
Utah Division of State History
State Historic Preservation Office
3760 South Highland Drive
Salt Lake City, Utah 84106

Submitted via E106

Subject: Continued Section 106 Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (Case No. 23-0232; FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Mr. Merritt:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD) initiated consultation with your office on the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project in January 2023, with the initial submittal focused on defining the area of potential effects (APE). For this submittal, we are requesting a review of our eligibility determinations based on the archaeological resources report and the architectural resources report. FHWA-CFLHD's determination of eligibility for each resource is presented below, and copies of the reports and supporting files are being submitted electronically.

SWCA Environmental Consultants conducted archaeological and architectural resource investigations for the proposed undertaking. Both investigations consisted of file and literature reviews, coordination with the Forest Service, field surveys, and preparation of relevant site forms and reports. The archaeological investigation identified two previously recorded sites (sites 42SL713 and 42SL872), two newly recorded sites (sites 42SL951 and 42SL970), and two isolated finds in the area that was surveyed. The Mill Creek Hydroelectric System (site 42SL713) was previously determined eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). FHWA-CFLHD is not proposing to change this previous determination of eligibility, although the site form clarifies that some previously recorded components of the site in the APE are not actually associated with the hydroelectric system and are not part of the site. FHWA-CFLHD has also determined that Mill Creek Canyon Road (site 42SL970) is eligible for listing. Based on the report, FHWA-CFLHD has determined that the two other sites (a trail, site 42SL872, and dendroglyphs, site 42SL951) are not eligible.

The architectural investigation identified one previously recorded historic site, the Firs Recreation Residence Tract, consisting of 24 cabins, near the road and 14 other historic-age buildings and structures in the area that was inventoried. Of these resources, 10 bridges/culverts, nine cabins, and one weir are in the APE. Based on the architectural resources report, FHWA-CFLHD has determined that five of the bridges/culverts (White Bridge, three stone bridges, and one culvert accessing the First Tract) are eligible for listing because of their historic associations and unique characteristics. FHWA-CFLHD has also determined that the other five bridges/culverts (four picnic area bridges and one culvert accessing the Firs Tract) and the weir are not eligible for listing because of their modern features or lack of unique characteristics. Within the APE, seven of the nine cabins have also been determined eligible for listing, while the other two are not eligible due to being too modern. As a whole, FHWA-CFLHD is proposing the

Firs Recreation Residence Tract be considered an eligible historic district, with most of the cabins contributing to its eligibility.

Now that we have more information on the resources, we would like to schedule a virtual meeting with your office to discuss this undertaking and the consultation process. We will follow up with you and Chris Hansen via email to schedule a meeting. If you have any questions in the interim, I can be reached at 720-963-3397 or you may contact Leslie Perry, Senior Environmental Technical Specialist, at 720-963-3734.

Sincerely,

Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosures: Archaeological and Architectural Resources Reports

Cc: Tom Flanigan, Forest Service Heritage Program Manager (thomas.flanigan@usda.gov)



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

November 13, 2023

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Chris Merritt, State Historic Preservation Officer
Utah Division of State History
State Historic Preservation Office
3760 South Highland Drive
Salt Lake City, Utah 84106

Submitted via E106

Subject: Continued Section 106 Consultation for the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project (Previous Case Nos. 23-0232 and 23-1186; FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA 10(1))

Dear Mr. Merritt:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD) initiated consultation with your office on the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project in January 2023, with the initial submittal focused on defining the area of potential effects (APE), and followed up in May and September 2023 about eligibility determinations for multiple archaeological and architectural resources in the APE. Based on the previously submitted information and reports, we are submitting our finding of effect for the project with supporting information, as well as information on a slight adjustment to the original APE. FHWA-CFLHD has concluded that the Mill Creek Canyon Road Project will result in an adverse effect to historic properties, specifically White Bridge and Mill Creek Canyon Road. Based on the preliminary designs and available information, other historic properties will not be adversely affected or are able to be avoided completely through the design approach. The enclosed finding of effect memo documents the analysis.

Since our previous submittals, we have identified minor design adjustments that extend beyond the original APE, specifically some trail connections between proposed parking areas and additional temporary work areas. We have modified the APE to encompass these small additional areas (see attached figure). As documented in the enclosed memo, we have sufficient information from the previous cultural investigations to be confident that no other historic properties are in these areas, and this change to the APE does not change the results of the reports that were previously submitted.

As discussed with your office in July 2023, we will initiate preparation of a memorandum of agreement to resolve the adverse effects, pending confirmation on the agreed-upon measures to implement. We will also notify the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation about this finding and determine if they would like to be a consulting party or involved with the agreement. If you feel another meeting would be helpful, please let me know. I can be reached at 720-963-3397 or you may contact Leslie Perry, Senior Environmental Technical Specialist, at 720-963-3734.

Sincerely,

BRADEN M PETERS Digitally signed by BRADEN M PETERS
Date: 2023.11.13 08:43:12 -07'00'

Braden Peters
Project Manager

Enclosures: Finding of Effect Memo, Preliminary Design Plans, Revised APE Map

Cc: Tom Flanigan, Forest Service Heritage Program Manager (thomas.flanigan@usda.gov)



Spencer J. Cox
Governor

Deidre M. Henderson
Lieutenant Governor

Jill Remington Love
Executive Director
Utah Department of Cultural
and Community Engagement



Christopher Merritt
State Historic Preservation Officer
Utah State Historic Preservation Office

November 14, 2023

Braden Peters
Project Manager
U.S. Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration

RE: Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Project

For future correspondence, please reference Case No. 23-2590

Dear Mr. Peters,

The Utah State Historic Preservation Office received your submission and request for our comment on the above-referenced project on November 13, 2023. Based on the information provided to our office, we concur with your determinations of eligibility and with a finding of Adverse Effect (specifically on White Bridge, Mill Creek Canyon Road) for the proposed undertaking. We look forward to completing an MOA that specifies mitigation measures, including those previously suggested (and potentially others if proposed by the ACHP or other interested parties).

This information is provided to assist with Section 106 responsibilities as per §36CFR800. If you have questions, please contact me at (801) 245-7239 or by email at clhansen@utah.gov.

Sincerely,

Christopher Hansen
Preservation Planner/Utah SHPO

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
AMONG THE
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION,
THE USDA FOREST SERVICE (UINTA WASATCH-CACHE NATIONAL FOREST),**

AND

THE UTAH STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER,

REGARDING

**The Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project,
Salt Lake County, Utah**

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration – Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service – Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest (USFS), proposes to improve Mill Creek Canyon Road in the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon, above Winter Gate, which consists of repaving and establishing a consistent width along the road for about 4.6 miles, including widening for a bicycle lane for about 1.4 miles; expanding and formalizing parking areas at existing trailheads and adjacent to the road in other designated areas; modifying, replacing, or installing culverts; constructing associated improvements, such as retaining walls, ditches and other drainage features, signs, and trail connections; and striping the road (hereafter referred to as “undertaking”).

WHEREAS, FHWA-CFLHD in accordance with 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 800.2(a)(2) has assumed lead responsibilities for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, and initiated consultation with the Utah State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) pursuant to Section 106 (54 United States Code (U.S.C.) 306108) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR § 800.2 (c)(1)(i) and 36 CFR § 800.6(b)(1)); and

WHEREAS, FHWA-CFLHD, in consultation with the USFS and SHPO and pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.4(a)(1), has determined that the area of potential effects (APE) for the undertaking encompasses approximately 78 acres and includes an approximately 80- to 300-foot-wide corridor along 4.6 miles of Mill Creek Canyon Road, covering both direct and indirect effect areas; and

WHEREAS, FHWA-CFLHD, in consultation with the USFS and SHPO and pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.4(b) and (c), has determined that fifteen (15) historic properties are in the APE and could be affected by the undertaking; and

WHEREAS, FHWA-CFLHD, in consultation with the USFS and SHPO and pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.4(d) and 800.5(a) and (b), has found that thirteen (13) of the fifteen (15) historic properties will be avoided through the design approach or will not be adversely affected by the undertaking; and

WHEREAS, FHWA-CFLHD, in consultation with the USFS and SHPO and pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.5 and 54 U.S.C. § 306108, has found that the undertaking will have an adverse effect

on Mill Creek Canyon Road and White Bridge due to the replacement of White Bridge and its associated features; and

WHEREAS, the SHPO is authorized to enter into this memorandum of agreement (MOA) to fulfill its role of advising and assisting Federal agencies in carrying out Section 106 responsibilities under Sections 101 and 106 of the NHPA (36 CFR § 800.2(c)(1)(i) and § 800.6(b)), and the SHPO has participated in development of this MOA and is a signatory; and

WHEREAS, the USFS as a project partner has participated in consultation and development of this MOA and is an invited signatory; and

WHEREAS, FHWA-CFLHD, in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.2(c)(2) and with contacts provided by the USFS and State of Utah, contacted the following Native American tribes: Cedar Band of Paiute Indians, Confederated Tribes of Goshute, Indian Peaks Band of Paiute Indians, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, Kanosh Band of Paiute Indians, Navajo Nation, Northwestern Band of Shoshone Nation, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, Shivwits Band of Paiute Indians, Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians, The Hopi Tribe, and Ute Indian Tribe, hereinafter referred to as Tribes; and

WHEREAS, responding Tribes did not express any knowledge of cultural resources in the APE or objections to the undertaking, nor did they wish to be consulting parties except if prehistoric sites would be adversely affected, which none would be; and

WHEREAS, FHWA-CFLHD invited the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) to participate in the resolution of adverse effects in November 2023, and the ACHP did not respond with interest in consulting on the undertaking; and

NOW THEREFORE, FHWA-CFLHD, the USFS, and the SHPO agree that the undertaking shall be administered in accordance with the following stipulations in order to resolve adverse effects to historic properties and to satisfy responsibilities under the NHPA.

STIPULATIONS

FHWA-CFLHD will ensure that the following stipulations will be carried out:

I. MEASURES TO MITIGATE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON WHITE BRIDGE AND THE ROAD

FHWA-CFLHD will ensure implementation of the following measures to resolve adverse effects to White Bridge and Mill Creek Canyon Road as a result of the undertaking:

- A. As a design-specific requirement, the new railing installed along the road at the White Bridge location will mimic the existing historic railing in terms of appearance (design and color) and feeling. The new railing will be a concrete replica railing that is designed to match the existing railing, while also meeting appropriate crash worthy design requirements. FHWA-CFLHD will submit the White Bridge railing design plan to the USFS and SHPO for review and approval before finalizing the design. The USFS and SHPO will be provided a 15-day review to comment on the plan, then FHWA-CFLHD will finalize the railing design.
- B. Before initiating construction activities for the undertaking, a qualified historian will complete historical recordation and documentation of the White Bridge culvert and associated features to meet Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) Guidelines for Historical Reports (2008, updated December 2017), following the outline format for engineering structures, and the Level II documentation requirements in the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Architectural and Engineering Documentation (68 Federal Register 43159). The historian will meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for history.

FHWA-CFLHD will submit an electronic copy of the draft HAER documentation to the USFS and SHPO for a 30-day review. The USFS and SHPO will provide comments on the draft documentation, and the historian will finalize the documentation and produce a final electronic copy for FHWA-CFLHD, USFS, and SHPO records. If hard copies are requested by the agencies, they will follow the materials requirements in the Secretary of Interior's documentation guidelines. No construction activities for the undertaking will begin until the final documentation has been accepted.

Key components of the documentation include the following and will be confirmed in coordination with the MOA signatories before beginning the documentation process:

1. Drawings: select existing drawings, where available, may be photographed with large-format negatives or photographically reproduced on Mylar in accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act, as amended
2. Photographs: photographs with large-format negatives of exterior and interior views, or historic views where available and produced in accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act, as amended
3. Written data: history and description following the engineering structures outline

- C. Before initiating construction activities for the undertaking, FHWA-CFLHD, through a qualified historian, will design an interpretive sign that documents photos of the historic culvert and road, their importance to the transportation history of the area, and the historic uses of the road. Before the end of construction activities, FHWA-CFLHD's construction contractor will install the sign at the picnic area near White Bridge or another approved location based on coordination between FHWA-CFLHD, USFS, and the SHPO. The sign design will entail the following:
1. The interpretive information for the sign may include topics such as characteristics of the historic road and White Bridge (e.g., culvert features, walls, railings, general setting); engineering, construction methods, and challenges of building the historic road and culvert; work force or people involved in designing and building the original road; historic uses of the road and surrounding area; and other applicable topics. Photographs will show the historic condition of the road and culvert. Final topics and photos will be confirmed by FHWA-CFLHD in coordination with USFS and the SHPO.
 2. A draft of the interpretive sign plan in electronic format will be provided to USFS and the SHPO for a 30-day review. FHWA-CFLHD will update the plan in response to comments and produce a final draft for approval.
 3. Once the sign plan is approved by MOA signatories, FHWA-CFLHD will coordinate with a qualified company to produce the sign and deliver it to the installation location. FHWA-CFLHD's construction contractor will install the sign at an approved location. The USFS will maintain the sign over the long term.
- D. As a potential measure before removal of the historic railing at White Bridge, FHWA-CFLHD will assess the ability to preserve a section of the railing and display it at a nearby trailhead or with the interpretive sign or possibly incorporate it into nearby trail or trailhead improvements. If the railing can be successfully preserved, FHWA-CFLHD will prepare a design plan to depict the specific details of the preservation approach (e.g., method to remove section of railing and place elsewhere) and location and submit it to USFS and the SHPO for a 15-day review. Once the MOA signatories agree on the preservation approach, FHWA-CFLHD's construction contractor will be responsible for removing the railing and placing it where shown on the design plan. If the railing is too deteriorated to make this measure feasible, FHWA-CFLHD will confirm with USFS and the SHPO that the measure will not be implemented.

II. DISCOVERY SITUATIONS

The following processes will be followed if new cultural resources or human remains are discovered during construction activities associated with the undertaking:

- A. If previously unknown cultural resources are exposed by construction activities associated with the undertaking, work will stop in the immediate vicinity to protect the resources and FHWA-CFLHD will notify the USFS and SHPO, as well as Native American tribes that might attach traditional cultural and religious importance to the resource if applicable, within 24 hours of the discovery. FHWA-CFLHD will not

allow work to resume in the area until the resources have been documented and evaluated, if necessary, and an appropriate mitigation strategy has been developed, if applicable, in accordance with pertinent laws and regulations and in coordination with the USFS, SHPO, and tribe(s) as applicable.

- B. To the best of the MOA signatories' knowledge and belief, no human remains, associated or unassociated funerary objects or sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony as defined in Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) (25 U.S.C. 3001) are expected to be encountered. However, should human remains be encountered, the above protocols will be followed, establishing a no disturbance area for about 100 feet around the discovery, and FHWA-CFLHD will notify the Utah Office of the Medical Examiner, Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office, and SHPO Human Remains Program within 24 hours. If the human remains are determined to be of Native American ancestry, FHWA-CFLHD and USFS will be responsible for compliance with the provisions of NAGPRA for activities on National Forest System land and with applicable State laws on non-federal lands.

III. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Should any signatory to this MOA object at any time to any actions proposed or the manner in which the terms are implemented, FHWA-CFLHD will consult with such party to resolve the objection. If FHWA-CFLHD determines that such objection cannot be resolved, the following process will be implemented:

- A. FHWA-CFLHD will forward all documentation relevant to the dispute, including a proposed resolution, to the ACHP. The ACHP is expected to provide FHWA-CFLHD with its advice on the resolution of the objection within 30 days of receiving adequate documentation. Prior to reaching a final decision on the dispute, FHWA-CFLHD will prepare a written response that takes into account any timely advice or comments regarding the dispute from the ACHP and MOA signatories and provide them with a copy of the written response. FHWA-CFLHD will then proceed with its final decision.
- B. If the ACHP does not provide its advice regarding the dispute within 30 days, FHWA-CFLHD will prepare a written response that takes into account any timely comments regarding the dispute from the MOA signatories and provide them and the ACHP with a copy of such written response. FHWA-CFLHD may then make a final decision on the dispute and proceed accordingly.
- C. FHWA-CFLHD's responsibilities to carry out all other actions subject to the terms of this MOA that are not subject to the dispute remain unchanged.

IV. AMENDMENTS

This MOA may be amended when such an amendment is agreed to in writing by all signatories. The amendment will be effective on the latest date it is signed by all of the signatories.

V. DURATION OF AGREEMENT

This MOA will expire if its terms are not carried out within five (5) years from the date of execution, which is the latest signed date. Prior to such time, FHWA-CFLHD may consult with the other signatories to reconsider the terms of the MOA and amend them in accordance with Stipulation IV. FHWA-CFLHD will notify the signatories when the terms of this MOA have been met and confirm no further responsibilities under the MOA remain.

VI. TERMINATION

This MOA can be terminated following the below processes:

- A. If any signatory to this MOA determines that its terms will not or cannot be carried out, that party shall immediately consult with the other signatories to attempt to develop an amendment pursuant to Stipulation IV. If within 30 days (or another time period agreed to by all signatories) an amendment cannot be reached, any signatory may terminate the MOA upon written notification to the other signatories.
- B. If the MOA is terminated and prior to further work related to the undertaking, FHWA-CFLHD must re-consult with the signatories and ACHP and execute a new MOA pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.6 to resolve adverse effects. If a new MOA cannot be reached and consultation is terminated, FHWA-CFLHD will follow the process identified in 36 CFR § 800.7 to allow the undertaking to proceed. FHWA-CFLHD will notify the signatories as to the course of action it will pursue.

VII. ANTI-DEFICIENCY ACT

FHWA-CFLHD's obligations under this MOA are subject to the availability of funds, and the stipulations of this MOA are subject to the provisions of the Anti-Deficiency Act (31 USC 1341). FHWA-CFLHD will make a reasonable and good faith effort to secure the necessary funds to implement this MOA in its entirety. If compliance with the Anti-Deficiency Act alters or impairs the FHWA-CFLHD's ability to implement the stipulations of this MOA, FHWA-CFLHD will consult with the SHPO and USFS in accordance with the amendment and termination procedures in Stipulations IV and VI respectively.

VIII. SCOPE OF AGREEMENT

This MOA is limited in scope to the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project on the Uinta Wasatch-Cache National Forest in Salt Lake County, Utah, and is entered into solely for that purpose. Execution of this MOA by FHWA-CFLHD, USFS, and the SHPO and implementation of its terms is evidence that FHWA-CFLHD has taken into account the effects of this undertaking on historic properties and afforded the ACHP and others an opportunity to comment.

Federal Highway Administration

JUDY SALOMONSON

Digitally signed by JUDY
SALOMONSON

By: _____

Date: 2024.01.22 15:06:01 -07'00'

Judy Salomonson
Chief of Business Operations

United States Forest Service – Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest

DAVID
By: **WHITTEKIEND**  Digitally signed by DAVID
WHITTEKIEND
Date: 2024.02.13 14:27:52 -07'00' Date: _____

David Whittekiend
Forest Supervisor

Utah State Historic Preservation Office

By:  for Chris Merritt Date: 2/16/2024

Christopher Merritt
Utah State Historic Preservation Officer

Section 4(f) Correspondence



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

April 9, 2024

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

David Whittekiend, Forest Supervisor
USDA Forest Service
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest
857 West South Jordan Parkway
South Jordan, UT 84095

Sent via email: david.whittekiend@usda.gov ; lance.kovel@usda.gov

Subject: Section 4(f) De Minimis and Exceptions for the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA10(1))

Dear Mr. Whittekiend:

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with your agency (the Forest Service), Salt Lake County, and Millcreek, is proposing to implement the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest in Salt Lake County, Utah. As a part of the environmental review process, FHWA-CFLHD has a responsibility to comply with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended. The intent of the Section 4(f) Statute, 49 U.S.C. Section 303, and the policy of the FHWA is to avoid transportation use of historic sites and publicly owned recreational areas, parks, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges.

Section 4(f)'s applicability for multiple-use public land holdings such as the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest is defined in 23 CFR Section 774.11(d). Section 4(f) applies only to those portions of lands that function for, or are designated in USDA Forest Service plans as being for, significant park, recreation, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge purposes.

The project consists of proposed improvements to the upper 4.6 miles of Mill Creek Canyon Road, starting at the Winter Gate parking area and ending at the Upper Big Water Trailhead, where the road terminates. Proposed improvements include road widening, minor realignments to improve sight distance, cyclist and pedestrian safety improvements, parking improvements, drainage improvements, and related improvements such as signage and striping. The Forest Service manages various recreation facilities throughout the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon, and these recreation sites and trails are considered Section 4(f) properties or resources. As part of the environmental assessment prepared for the project, FHWA-CFLHD reviewed the anticipated effects and various activities proposed at the recreation sites and trails and discussed the types of use under Section 4(f) that require further approval.

Section 4(f) Exception

Based on the environmental assessment, FHWA-CFLHD has determined that the project meets the exception for enhancement activities for the following Section 4(f) resources:

- Alexander Basin Trail (Forest Service Trail No. 1310)
- Great Western Trail – Big Water To Guardsman Road (Forest Service Trail No. 1900G6)

- Mill Creek Canyon Road (as a shoulder season trail; Forest Service Trail No. SNO-1313)
- Great Western Trail – Parleys To Big Water (Forest Service Trail No. 1900G5)

Trail improvements associated with the project would preserve and enhance the activities, features, and attributes, all recreation use related, that qualify the properties for Section 4(f) protection. Trail improvements are minor in nature, and generally serve to tie the existing trail into the modified trailheads. The proposed project would result in long-term improved access throughout the canyon, aiding recreationists in being able to use trails and other amenities located in Mill Creek Canyon.

Application of this exception requires agreement in writing from the official with jurisdiction (Forest Service), which is the purpose of this letter. With this agreement, no further approval under Section 4(f) is required.

Section 4(f) De Minimis Impact

Based on the environmental assessment, FHWA-CFLHD has determined that the project would have a *de minimis* impact on the following Section 4(f) resources:

- Maple Grove Picnic Area and Winter Gate Parking Area
- White Bridge Picnic Area
- Maple Cove Picnic Area
- Evergreen Picnic Area
- Elbow Fork Trailhead
- Fir Crest Picnic Area
- Clover Springs Picnic Area
- Alexander Basin Trailhead
- Lower Big Water Trailhead
- Upper Big Water Trailhead.

De minimis impacts on publicly owned parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges are defined as those that do not “adversely affect the activities, features and attributes” of the Section 4(f) resource. An analysis of avoidance alternatives is not required when making a *de minimis* finding. The finding of a *de minimis* impact on recreational and wildlife resources can be made when:

1. The transportation use of the Section 4(f) resource, together with any impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation or enhancement measures incorporated into the project, does not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that qualify the resource for protection under Section 4(f);
2. The public has been afforded an opportunity to review and comment on the effects of the project on the protected activities, features, and attributes of the Section 4(f) resource; and
3. The official(s) with jurisdiction over the property are informed of FHWA’s intent to make the *de minimis* impact finding based on their written concurrence that the project will not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f).

As discussed in the environmental assessment, temporary closures and occupancy of several of the recreation sites in the upper Mill Creek Canyon would be required, and removal of two picnic tables from the Winter Gate recreation area is required to accommodate parking area/trailhead improvements.

Temporary occupancy of the recreation sites listed above is considered a use under Section 4(f). Removal of the two picnic tables would modify the Section 4(f) property, but would not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes that qualify it for protection because picnic tables would remain available at the adjacent Maple Grove Picnic Area. To meet the second requirement, the public was provided an opportunity to review the environmental assessment and Section 4(f) assessment from March 6, 2024 through April 5, 2024. No comments specific to the *de minimis* impact approach were received. The Forest Service's signature below satisfies the third requirement for a *de minimis* finding.

We request that the Forest Service, as the owner and manager of the Section 4(f) properties, concur with the determinations presented above related to the applicable exception and the *de minimis* impact by signing the below statement and returning a copy of this letter to our office. If you have any questions about the project or would like to discuss the analysis, please contact me at braden.peters@dot.gov or 720-963-3397 or Sandy Beazley, Environmental Team Lead, at philip.beazley@dot.gov or 720-963-3408.

**BRADEN M
PETERS**

Sincerely,

Digitally signed by BRADEN M
PETERS
Date: 2024.04.09 13:23:59 -06'00'

Braden Peters
Project Manager

As the official with jurisdiction over Alexander Basin Trail, Big Water Trail, Mill Creek Canyon Road as a Shoulder Season Trail, and Great Western Trail, I concur that the project would enhance the activities, features, and/or attributes that qualify the properties for Section 4(f) protection as noted under 23 CFR 774.13(g).

As the official with jurisdiction over Maple Grove Picnic Area and Winter Gate Parking Area, White Bridge Picnic Area, Maple Cove Picnic Area, Evergreen Picnic Area, Elbow Fork Trailhead, Fir Crest Picnic Area, Clover Springs Picnic Area, Alexander Basin Trailhead, Lower Big Water Trailhead, and Upper Big Water Trailhead, I also concur that the project will have a *de minimis* impact on the properties. The project will not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that make the properties eligible for Section 4(f) protection.

DAVID WHITTEKIEND



Digitally signed by DAVID WHITTEKIEND

Date: 2024.04.12 13:11:48 -06'00'

David Whittekiend, Forest Supervisor, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest Date



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

May 8, 2024

12300 West Dakota Avenue
Suite 380
Lakewood, CO 80228-2583
Office: 720-963-3397
Fax: 720-963-3596
braden.peters@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

Julie Peck-Dabling
Interim Director
Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation
2001 South State Street, Ste S4-700
Salt Lake City, UT 84190

Sent via email: jpeck-dabling@slco.org; hpeters@slco.org

Subject: Section 4(f) *De Minimis* and Exceptions for the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project (FHWA No. UT FLAP SLA10(1))

Dear Ms. Peck-Dabling,

The Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD), in cooperation with the Forest Service, Salt Lake County, and Millcreek, is proposing to implement the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvement Project on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest in Salt Lake County, Utah. As a part of the environmental review process, FHWA-CFLHD has a responsibility to comply with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended. The intent of the Section 4(f) Statute, 49 U.S.C. Section 303, and the policy of the FHWA is to avoid transportation use of historic sites and publicly owned recreational areas, parks, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges.

The project consists of proposed improvements to the upper 4.6 miles of Mill Creek Canyon Road, starting at the Winter Gate parking area and ending at the Upper Big Water Trailhead, where the road terminates. Proposed improvements include road widening, minor realignments to improve sight distance, cyclist and pedestrian safety improvements, parking improvements, drainage improvements, and related improvements such as signage and striping. Salt Lake County and the Forest Service manage various recreation facilities throughout the upper portion of Mill Creek Canyon, and these recreation sites and trails are considered Section 4(f) properties or resources. As part of the environmental assessment prepared for the project, FHWA-CFLHD reviewed the anticipated effects and various activities proposed at the recreation sites and trails and discussed the types of use under Section 4(f) that require further approval.

Section 4(f) Exception

Based on the environmental assessment, FHWA-CFLHD has determined that the project meets the exception for enhancement activities for the following Section 4(f) resources:

- Little Water Trail
- Old Red Pine Road Trail

These trails are located adjacent to the Upper Big Water Trailhead on land owned and managed by Salt Lake County. Trail improvements associated with the project would preserve and enhance the activities, features, and attributes, all recreation use related, that qualify the properties for Section 4(f) protection.

Trail improvements are minor in nature, and generally serve to tie the existing trail into the modified trailheads. The proposed project would result in long-term improved access throughout the canyon, aiding recreationists in being able to use trails and other amenities located in Mill Creek Canyon.

Application of this exception requires agreement in writing from the official with jurisdiction (Salt Lake County), which is the purpose of this letter. With this agreement, no further approval under Section 4(f) is required.

We request that the Salt Lake County, as the owner and manager of the Section 4(f) properties, concur with the determinations presented above related to the applicable exception by signing the below statement and returning a copy of this letter to our office. If you have any questions about the project or would like to discuss the analysis, please contact me at braden.peters@dot.gov or 720-963-3397 or Sandy Beazley, Environmental Team Lead, at philip.beazley@dot.gov or 720-963-3408.

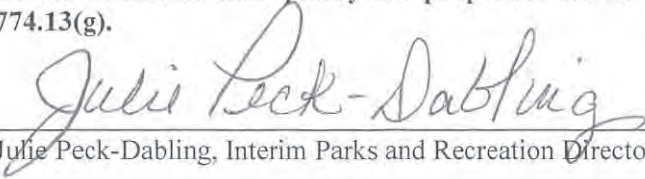
Sincerely,

**BRADEN M
PETERS**

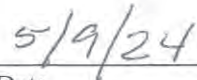
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Date: 2024.05.08 16:39:11
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Braden Peters
Project Manager

As the official with jurisdiction over the portions of Little Water Trail and Old Red Pine Road Trail that will be affected by the project, I concur that the project would enhance the activities, features, and/or attributes that qualify the properties for Section 4(f) protection as noted under 23 CFR 774.13(g).



Julie Peck-Dabling, Interim Parks and Recreation Director



Date



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Denver Federal Center, Building 46
Post Office Box 25207
Denver, Colorado 80225-0007

In reply refer to:
ER 24/0104

April 11, 2023

Sandy Beazley
Federal Highway Administration
Central Federal Lands Highway Division
Lakewood, CO 80228

Subject: Draft Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation for Upper Mill Creek Canyon Improvement Project, Salt Lake County, UT

Dear Sandy Beazley:

The U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) has reviewed the Federal Highways Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA CFLHD) Draft Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation for the Upper Mill Creek Canyon Improvement Project in Salt Lake County, Utah (UT). The National Park Service (NPS) has provided the following comments.

NPS Comments

NPS understands the purpose of the project is to increase safety, decrease congestion, and improve travel on 4.6 miles on the Mill Creek Canyon Road. The evaluation seeks to analyze impacts that qualify as properties under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (USDOT).

NPS concurs with the Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation that there are no prudent and feasible avoidance alternatives for Section 4(f) use of the historic properties noted, and that the 4(f) evaluation describes the affected Section 4(f) resources including properties that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). NPS concurs that the proposal would result in an adverse effect to the Mill Creek Canyon Road and White Bridge.

Because the FHWA CFLHD, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Utah State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) executed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to resolve the adverse effects through the NHPA consultation process (Mitigation Measure ARCH-2), the NPS has no

Sandy Beazley

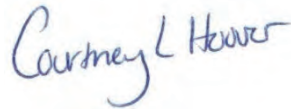
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objection to Section 4(f) approval of this project.

NPS has a continuing interest in working with UDOT to ensure that impacts to resources of concern are addressed. For matters related to these comments, please coordinate with Karen Skaar, Environmental Protection Specialist, National Park Service, at karen_skaar@nps.gov.

If you have any questions for the Department, please contact me at (303) 478-3373, or courtney_hoover@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Courtney Hoover". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Courtney Hoover
Regional Environmental Officer
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance