



Upper Mill Creek Canyon Road Improvements Project

Salt Lake County Council Update

▪ Agenda

- ✓ Mill Creek Canyon Project Considerations
- ✓ Project Partners and Funding
- ✓ Project Purpose and Need
- ✓ Activities to Date
- ✓ Public Input
- ✓ Design Update
- ✓ Environmental Update
- ✓ Schedule
- ✓ Next steps



Source: Salt Lake Tribune

- **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

- **Present Project Considerations**
 - Infrastructure focused project
 - Operations and maintenance are not changing
 - USFS will reissue easement to County for entire roadway
 - Future projects are not being precluded
- **Future Project Considerations**
 - Lower canyon improvements and FLAP funding
 - Changes in management strategy
 - Timed entry
 - Transit
 - Others



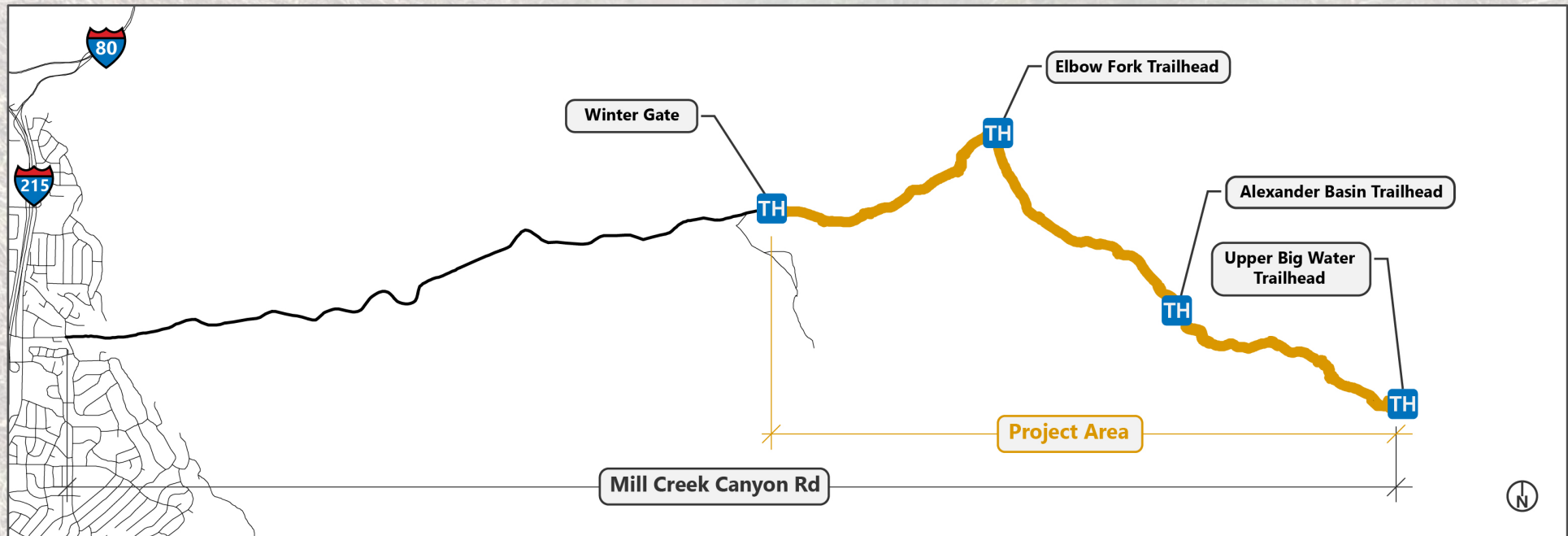
Source: <https://austendiamondphotography.com/fall-wedding-millcreek-canyon/>

- **Purpose**

- Enhance access 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

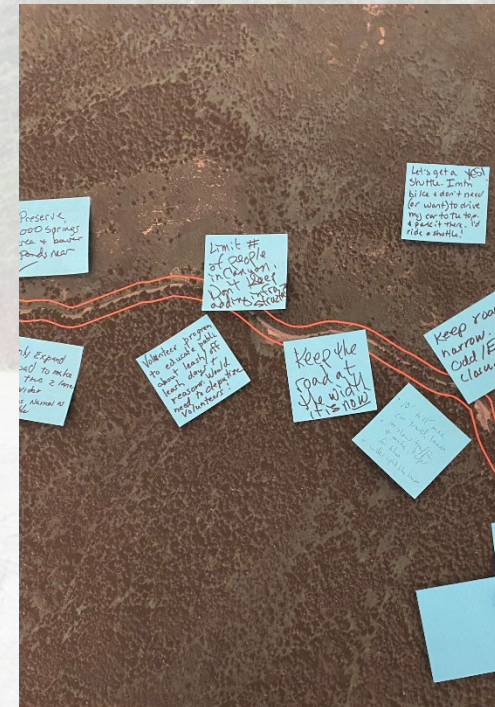


Purpose & Need / Project Location

- **Preliminary Design**
- **NEPA (ongoing)**
- **Agency meetings and coordination**
- **Public Meetings**
 - Three public open houses [11/21, 5/22, 6/23 (virtual and in person)]
- **Cabin Association coordination**
- **Central Wasatch Commission**
- **Mayoral Update**



- Major comment themes include the following:
 - Minimize roadway width to minimize environmental resource impacts
 - Include a bicycle lane to the top
 - Parking area improvements, more parking, and less parking
 - Transit
 - Travel speed
 - Firs Cabin leaseholder access
 - Level of environmental review

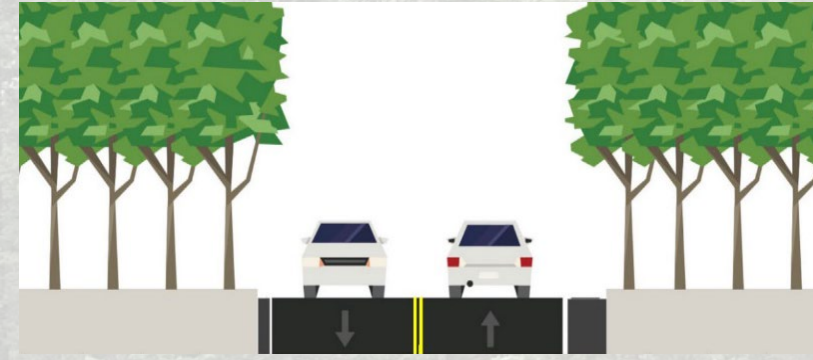


- **Proposed Improvements**
 - Roadway improvements
 - Parking area improvements
 - Bridge, culvert, and drainage improvements
 - Other improvements
 - Striping and signing
 - Trail connections
 - Sight distance improvements
 - Communications conduit

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?
- ✓ Does it preclude future options?
- ✓ 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-foot wide with 10-foot lanes, no shoulders

- **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**

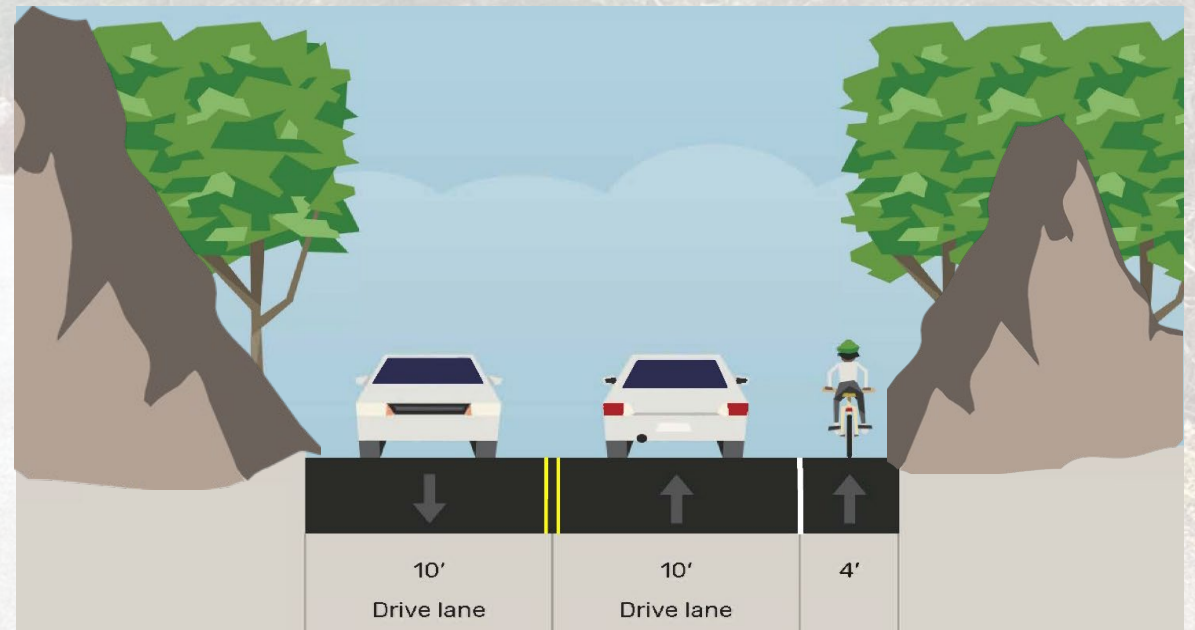


- **Existing**

- 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 modifications



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 modifications
- Minimizes impacts in the narrower upper canyon



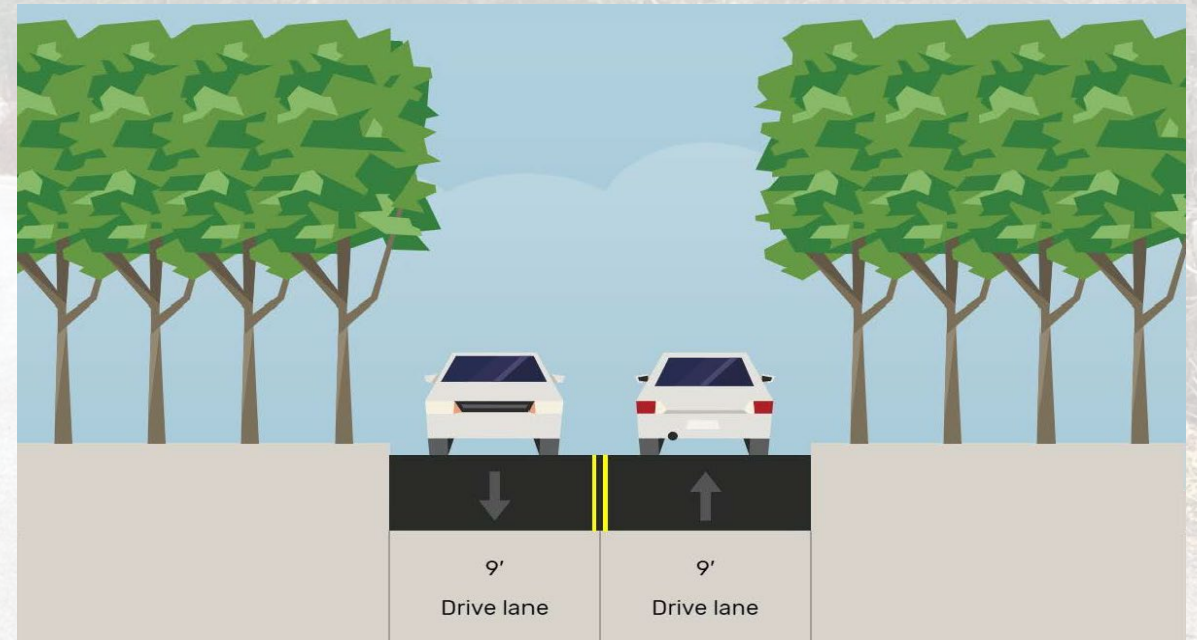
Proposed Improvements: Roadway Improvements, Elbow Fork to Upper Big Water Trailhead

- **Existing**

- Sensitive resources are located near the roadway, such as Firs Cabins, Thousand Springs (beaver pond), stone bridge #1

- **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

- **White Bridge replacement**
 - Historic feature, mitigation developed in coordination with USFS and SHPO
 - 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



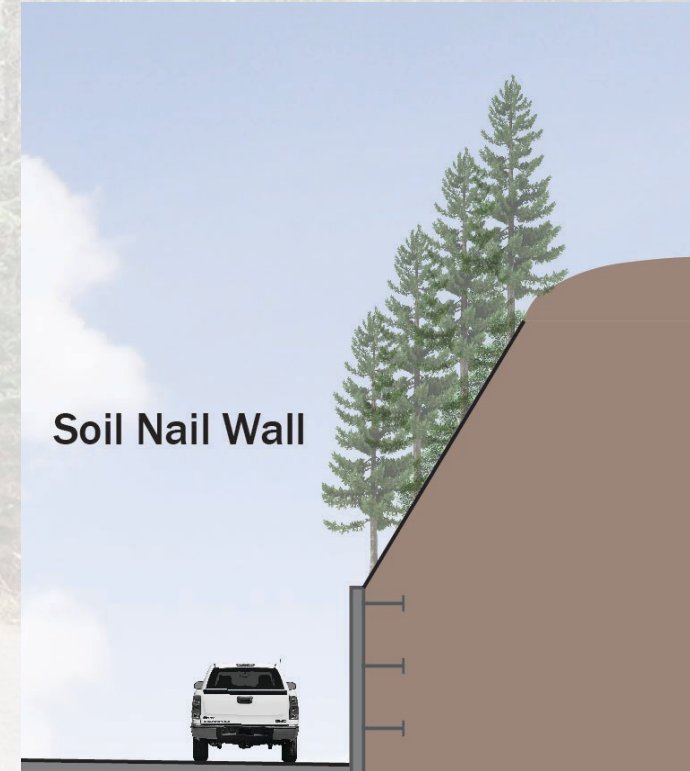
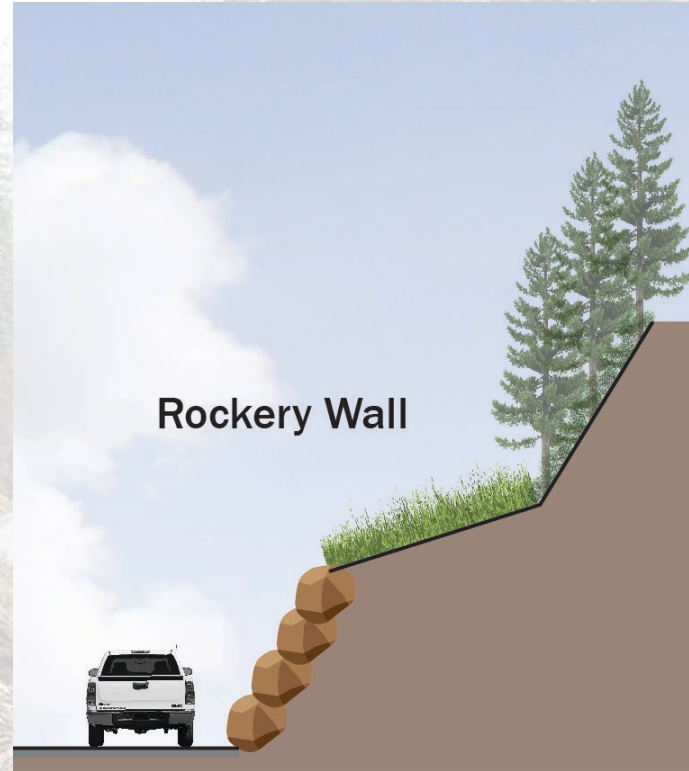
- **Retaining Walls**

- **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 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
 - Comment response will be include in the decision documet

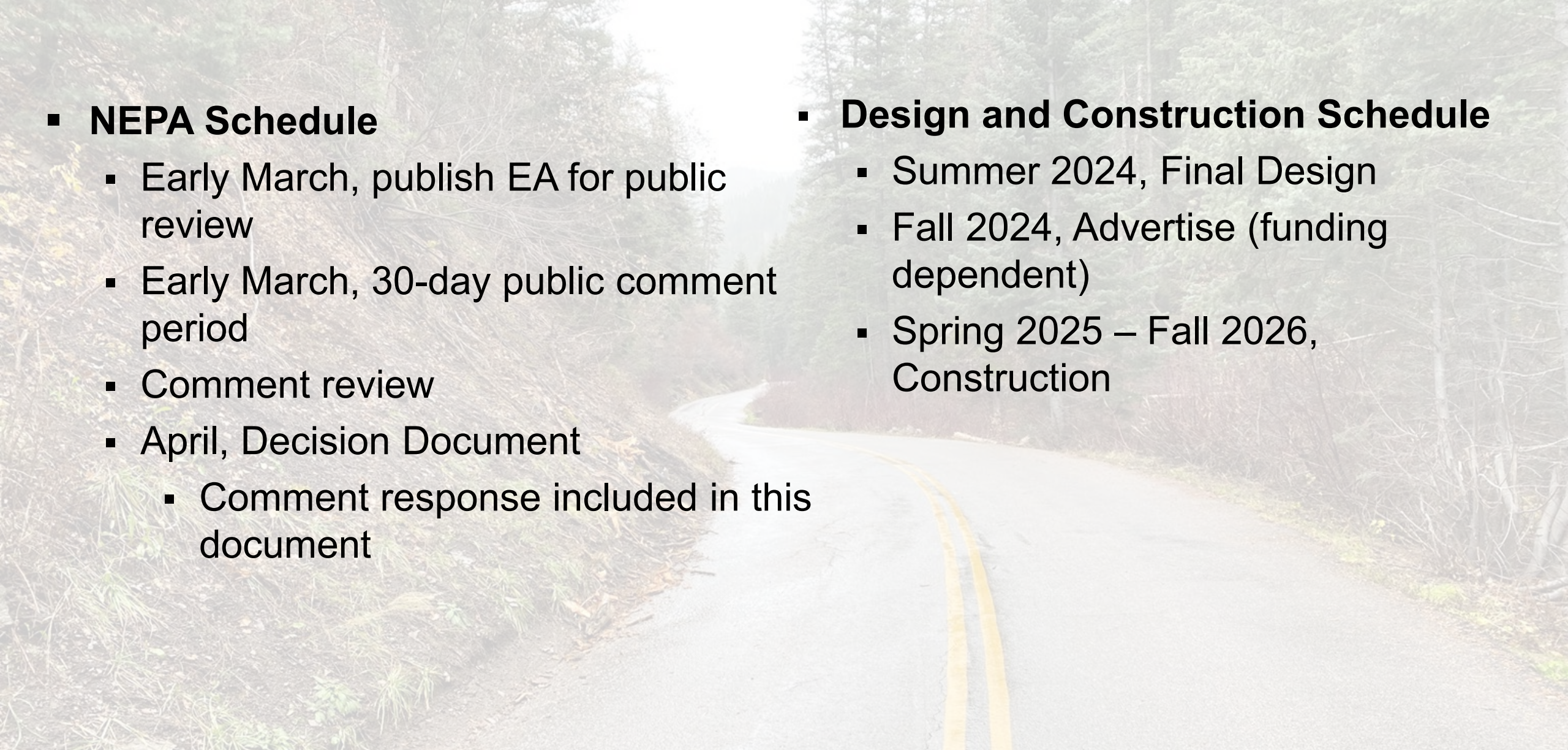
Criteria for Consideration

- 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

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



- **NEPA Schedule**

- Early March, publish EA for public review
- Early March, 30-day public comment period
- Comment review
- April, Decision Document
 - Comment response included in this document

- **Design and Construction Schedule**

- Summer 2024, Final Design
- Fall 2024, Advertise (funding dependent)
- Spring 2025 – Fall 2026, Construction

Questions / Answers



Winter Gate Parking Area

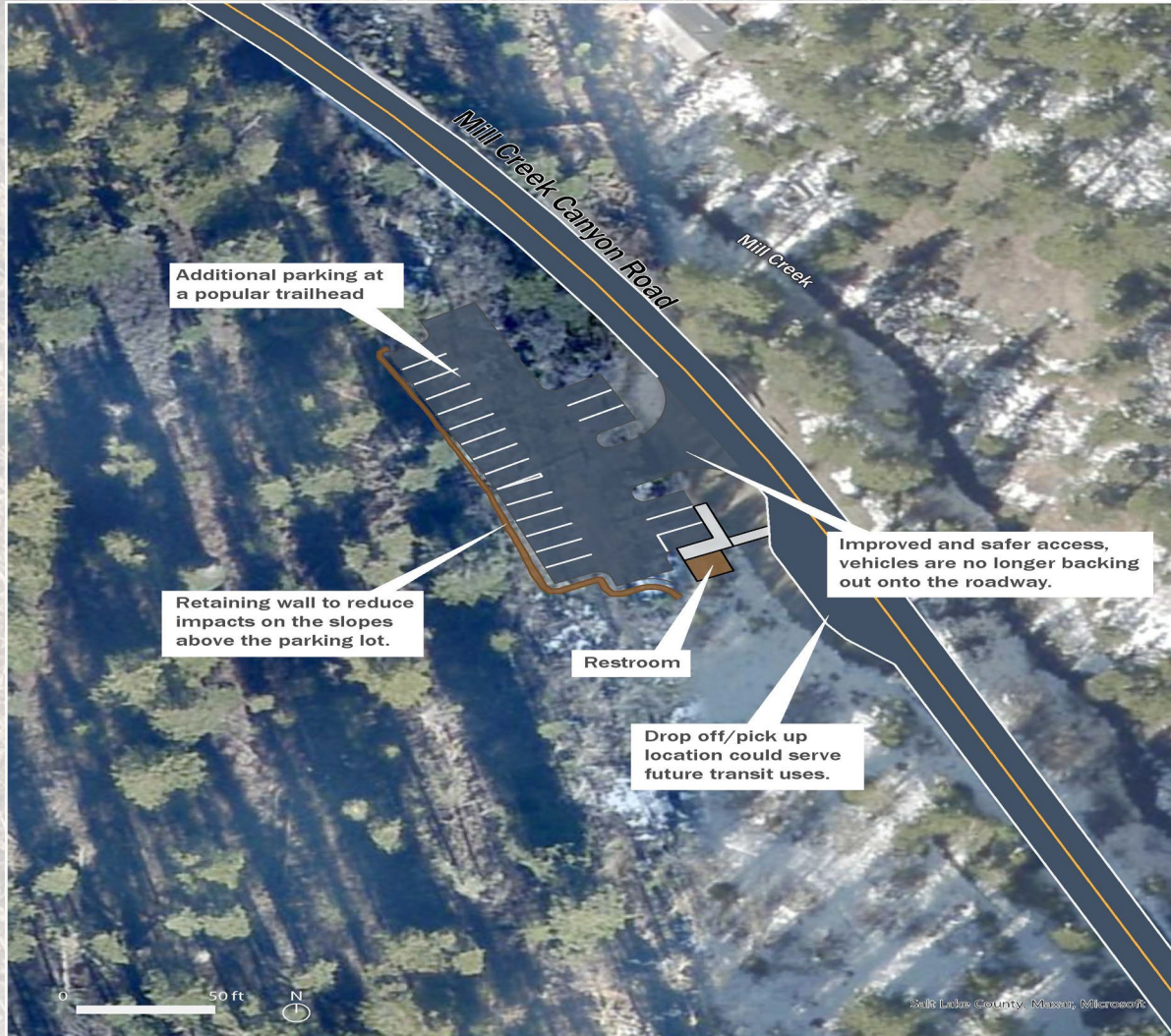


Elbow Fork Trailhead / Parking Area

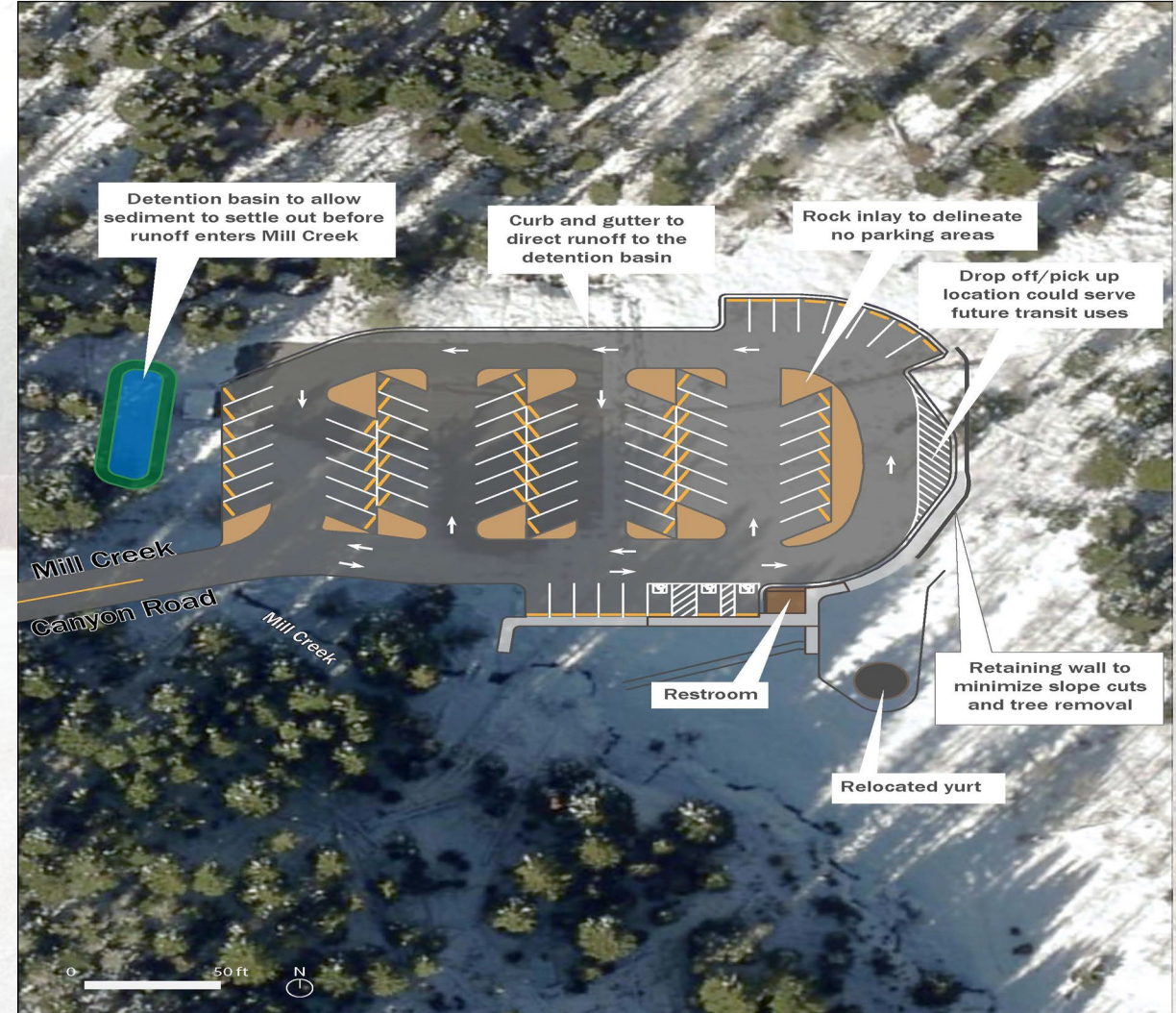


Proposed Improvements: Parking at Winter Gate & Elbow Fork Trailhead

Alexander Basin Trailhead / Parking Area



Upper Big Water Trailhead / Parking Area



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