The following items were discussed at the spring Community Forum, held April 12, 2012, at the Natural History Museum of Utah.

**EAST BENCH MASTER PLAN PROCESS**

WAYNE MILLS, SENIOR PLANNER,
SALT LAKE CITY PLANNING DIVISION

Salt Lake City’s East Bench Master Plan, first adopted in 1987—
the oldest adopted master plan on the city’s books—is now under review to evaluate whether it still meets the goals and vision of the area. (A master plan is an inventory of community assets and gives direction and guidance on how a community and the use of its land should develop in the future. It also helps identify how resources should be allocated.)

In the recently completed visioning/information-gathering stage, which started in October 2011, East Bench residents were asked: What do you like about your neighborhood? What would you change and what challenges are facing your neighborhood or organization? To identify concerns, city planners met with residents, representatives of local businesses, and other stakeholder groups such as Hogle Zoo, Bonneville Golf Course, Research Park, Friendship Manor, the University of Utah, and the Foothill Cultural District.

From these outreach efforts, the city received more than 700 comments, categorized into four areas: community identity; transportation/mobility/accessibility; land use; and urban design. "This will be our cornerstone and guiding document as we create community goals that will lead us in developing the actual policy and strategies," said Mills.

Mills also gave credit to an ad hoc group of neighborhood residents who have organized around the East Bench Master Plan and a related initiative, the gateway into the valley from Foothill Drive and Parley’s Way at the base of Parley’s Canyon. This group—the Foothill Gateway Focus Group—is looking specifically at Foothill Drive and Parley’s Way and how those two streets provide access from the east into the city.

Calling the ad hoc group a “great community resource,” Mills and his staff will work closely with them on strategy and next steps. Community members who are interested in participating with the Foothill Gateway Focus Group may contact Pat Schulze at 801-631-4995 or patrice.schulze@gmail.com.

“We want the Foothill/Parley’s Way plan to include implementation strategies, funding options, a chain of responsibility, and a timeline,” said Mills. “Once a draft scope of the project is developed, it will take a course of its own parallel to the East Bench Master plan.”

Access the East Bench Master Plan website at: http://www.eastbenchmp.com/. Residents are encouraged to review the information to ensure their concerns are represented.

**SPEED: THE ART OF THE PERFORMANCE AUTOMOBILE**

**AGENDA:**

- Curtis Leetham, AIA Campus Planner: Ambulatory care construction project at North Campus Drive and Mario Capecchi Drive
- Mike Perez, Associate V.P. and Keith Sterling, U Communications Director: Olympics, Fort Douglas, and the U
- David Moyes, U Construction Manager: UDOT’s repaving of North and South Campus drives
- Hal Fordham, landscape contractor at ARUP: Walking tour of ARUP’s water-wise landscape
In 1965, Utah Governor Calvin Rampton wanted to ensure that the land was not divided up so he established a committee to evaluate possible uses for the Fort Douglas land upon which Research Park now sits. The committee in February 1966 recommended a report which reviewed all requests for a research park, which they felt would stimulate the economy, support the University, and distribute employment more efficiently in the Salt Lake Valley. The committee's decision was based in part on the Salt Lake County Master Plan, which had given the area a research park zone. That means that prior to 1965, the county master plan had designated that area of Fort Douglas for a research park even before it came out of federal control. The University of Utah's application noted four uses for the land. The first priority was for education purposes; second was for a research park as an interior use; third was for an arboretum; and fourth was to designate part of the land as part of the private sector. In 1968, the land was granted to the University by the federal government under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. In the management plan, which was included to justify the use of the land for those purposes, the federal government recognized that the primary use would be for an expansion of the University, and an interim use would be for a research park until such time as the land was needed for academic expansion. So the U set out to develop a research park, based on the Stanford University model. Many are not aware that the primary use of the land was designated for educational purposes with a research park being a secondary, interim use. Many erroneously believe that the land was to be used only for a research park.

"Although the original plans showed we would build to a 5,200 foot elevation, we backed away from that and agreed with the city that we would not build on anything with more than a 30 percent slope," said Charles Evans. That decision pulled construction down below what are now the pipelines, with the exception of Red Butte Garden and the Natural History Museum of Utah, which were constructed on fairly level and buildable land, well under the 30 percent slope. This original plan for Research Park, as it was presented to the community, anticipated 300 leasable acres with 15,000 park employees (50 per acre), retaining 30 percent of the land as a landscape requirement. But with the decision not to build above the 30 percent slope, the park ended up with 258 leasable acres (with about 17 or 18 of those acres currently vacant); and a little more than 9,000 employees (around 10,000 at full build out). The decision also ensured that there would be fewer employees in the park, so, less traffic.

Then—University President James Fletcher's objective was to use the park as a land bank for the University, since it was unclear what would happen to education in the future. However, the University's presentation to the community and Legislature emphasized the economic benefit of a research park, which was listed as an interim use. "So we had to balance those two things as we made our presentation of estimates of what we expected the park to develop into," said Evans. Today, about one-third of the land is privately owned, the remaining third is owned by or under the control of the University. The use of the University-owned buildings most likely will not change, especially those that are of high quality (UNI, Orthopaedics, etc.), so about one-third of the Park's use has been established by the University-owned buildings.

"One of the difficulties in planning a research park is that we don't have the control that we have on campus where we own everything," said Evans. "At the park, we have to take what we attract to the park, and that includes the funding and the function." He explained that the developer-owned buildings have been instrumental in facilitating the growth and spinoff of new companies—like Idaho Tech and Myriad Genetics—start out capital-poor. They don't have money to put into bricks and mortar, and they want to invest in their research and ideas. So the developer-owned buildings have been a great asset to them, and also to the University. The US research budget has increased steadily over the years, partly because the space provided in the park is still close to campus, so it works for the professors, who need access to both places.

**QUESTIONS FROM NEIGHBORS**

**NEIGHBOR:** How will the Foothill/Parley's Way Gateway plan deal with the University and Research Park?

**WAYNE MILLS:** The Foothill/Parley's Way Gateway Plan will deal with just those two streets, so the University and Research Park will not be included. However, because the University is one of the big generators of traffic on Foothill Drive, they will be part of the conversation. Recommendations for the streets internal to Research Park will come from the University and from the East Bench Master Plan.

**NEIGHBOR:** Will TRAX ever come to the east side of the city?

**MILLS:** Currently, it's not in any of the long-range plans to do that. The Wasatch Front Regional Council and Utah Transit Authority are looking at bus rapid transit for Foothill Drive. But if the idea for TRAX comes out of this plan, we will include the idea because we'll be looking further into the future.

**NEIGHBOR:** They say people won't ride transit in this part of the city (Foothill area) but if they don't provide bus service, how do they know people won't ride it?

**MILLS:** There has been a lot of change in the past few years about how people view transit. People who weren't interested in the service before, now want access. Residents would like to use the University TRAX to get downtown, but they can't park on campus, and they can't get to the campus TRAX stations by bus from where they live in the Foothill area. We need to think about the links needed to get people to this good service we now have.

**NEIGHBOR:** Has any consideration been given to building a below-grade subway on Foothill?

**MILLS:** Actually, that has been brought up—the option of tunneling underground along Foothill for through traffic, and keeping the at-grade road for local traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians. It always comes down to money. Another idea that came up was to consider tunneling through the foothills, so there are some creative ideas out there, and this is a good time to start meshing all those groups and ideas together toward solutions.

**REPORT ON RESEARCH PARK**

**CHARLES EVANS, DIRECTOR**

Research Park was established in 1965 when Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara declared part of Fort Douglas surplus land. Surplus federal land made available first to the state, then counties, and then cities, if there is no interest, the land is sold to the public. As the U increases its ownership of the park's buildings, its requirement to abide by the city's regulations will diminish. In 12 years, when leased buildings start to revert to U ownership, the U will need to do something about surface parking because there isn't going to be any more land in proximity to the city.

**EVANS:** The U will handle it the same way they will on campus—they'll be moving away from surface parking and investing more in parking structures. Other comments from neighbors included a suggestion that University employees commit to using public transportation "so that as we grow, we don't run over the neighborhoods." Another would like to see some restrictions in the covenants or more zoning oversight from the city. "A lot of the streets that provide access to the park fail during the day and when that happens, drivers cut through the neighborhoods, creating safety issues for kids, and decreasing the value of the neighborhoods." Let's not assume anything is going to be fine. Let's put in place some reasonable limits on it. I think it would make everyone better neighbors."