Neighborhood House Garden Project
Concept Plans
Created by the University of Utah Westside Studio
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Neighborhood House, a non-profit organization that provides daycare and support services for children and adults, has served the Salt Lake area since 1894. Offering only a public kindergarten and other services to disadvantaged families and parents, it became a major center of social activity and individual development in the neighborhood, offering workshops, trainings, entertainment, and social connection for the neighbors. In 1978, Neighborhood House added adult day services for aging, frail, and/or traumatic brain injury adults.

In the face of many challenges, Neighborhood House is presented with a tremendous opportunity both to improve outdoor facilities for its clients and to reestablish its physical connection to the community. In order to achieve these goals, Neighborhood House was forced to relocate to make way for I-15, losing some of its connection to the community. The physical disconnect was followed by changes in insurance requirements which have made it too risky or too expensive to keep offering certain services. Changing demographics and increasing ethnic diversity has made communication with neighbors challenging while evolving needs and modern technologies have reduced the needs of many families on their immediate community. All the while, Neighborhood House has sought to bridge the gap between the organization and members of the community in order to continue serving those in need.

Neighborhood House’s current activities are centered on the day services offered for children and adults. The children participate in various activities such as art, reading, learning centers, group activities, and outdoor play. Adult clients participate in group activities, crafts, games, movies, and outdoor walks.

In the face of many challenges, Neighborhood House is presented with a tremendous opportunity both to improve outdoor facilities for its clients and to reestablish its physical connection to the community. In order to achieve these goals, Neighborhood House is seeking guidance by researching relevant issues, exploring possible site uses, and PERC was of particular concern for the studio group. In addition to a Drager hand-pump that IHI donated, Salt Lake City offered a set of Drager Gas tubes that can give an indication of contamination levels. To help extract soil vapors at a prescribed four-foot depth, Earth Probe provided a geo-probe that dug out four-foot deep, roughly two-inch diameter columns of soil in various locations. After pumping out the ambient air in the soil, the sub-surface vapors were tested, which did not reveal any indication of PERC contamination. For a more comprehensive test, ground water samples were collected for any persistent PERC residues. These tests also came back negative, eliminating the concern of PERC contamination.

The Planning Process
To develop this plan, the Westside Studio group began with a basic research stage to better identify the issues and the opportunity at hand. Through this process it is hoped that the talents and interests of various potential stakeholders could be turned into an action plan. The Studio gathered information on neighborhood demographics, Neighborhood House history, and legal and regulatory constraints on potential site uses. The research stage comprised of a series of meetings with Neighborhood House staff, a variety of city officials and other government representatives, community leaders, and local non-profit organizations.

Site History
Neighborhood House acquired the parcel of land east of the Jordan River between 400 South and 500 South in the late 1980s by generous donation from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. When Neighborhood House acquired the land an initial set of soil tests was performed to verify the site’s potential for use as a garden space (See Appendix C). Neighborhood House invited the participation of a local youth group in the cultivation of small garden plots, but nothing the initial cultivators planted grew. Since then, the site has lain fallow with only periodic weed control.

Soil tests conducted in 1990 and 1997 revealed exceedingly high levels of lead, with concentrations ranging from 45,474 mg/kg. According to the soil scientist from Utah State University, concentrations above 5 mg/kg should be considered unsafe for edible plants. The report also indicated fairly high salinity, and the presence of cadmium. The West Side Studio group hopes to conduct a more comprehensive soil test of the site particularly regarding lead exposure and determining the overall safety and fertility of the site.

In late November 2008, the West Side Studio group worked with hydrogeologist Mark Taggart of Earth Probe and Chris Nolan from Industrial Health Incorporated (IHI), two environmental scientists who graciously donated their time, equipment, and expertise to test the soil for Perchloroethylene (PERC) vapors, a common toxic byproduct of dry cleaning operations. The site housed a dry cleaning business in the past and PERC was of particular concern for the studio group. In addition to a Drager hand-pump that IHI donated, Salt Lake City offered a set of Drager Gas tubes that can give an indication of contamination levels. To help extract soil vapors at a prescribed four-foot depth, Earth Probe provided a geo-probe that dug out four-foot deep, roughly two-inch diameter columns of soil in various locations. After pumping out the ambient air in the soil, the sub-surface vapors were tested, which did not reveal any indication of PERC contamination. For a more comprehensive test, ground water samples were collected for any persistent PERC residues. These tests also came back negative, eliminating the concern of PERC contamination.

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Studio students toured Wasatch Community Gardens, Red Butte Gardens, and the TrueU Utah Ecogarden to learn about garden design possibilities, maintenance issues, and long term administrative issues involved in establishing a community garden on the site. Studio members also met with representatives from the Salt Lake City Mayor’s Office of Sustainability, Public Utilities, and the City’s Office of Sustainability to discuss the development of a site plan and address the regulatory issues concerning the Jordan River Riparian Corridor. Interested individuals from each organization or City agency agreed to serve on an advisory committee for the project.
Simultaneously, students held a series of charrettes with various stakeholders: members of the community, Neighborhood House clients and staff members, and all partners enlisted throughout the research stage. At these meetings, a variety of activities to gain input were designed around the specific groups’ talents, interests, and ability to participate. For example, charrettes for the public and for Neighborhood House adult and child clients employed visual and verbal activities, such as drawing specific features on an aerial photo of the area. The charrettes were very successful in gathering ideas for uses and specific elements to be incorporated into the plan. The Westside Studio specifically reviewed some of the feasibility issues with the partners during a separate charrette.

Based on the input from the various stakeholders, the Westside Studio group created five conceptual site plans for further consideration. The public was invited to an open house where students presented the alternatives for comment and discussion. Students also presented the plans to the Neighborhood House Board, and created a blog site to host the alternatives for the partners and members of the public to provide comments. Rough costs of the plan’s elements and general space allocation for the various elements were added to the plans for comparison.

This plan is the Westside Studio’s final product to be handed off to the Neighborhood House Board. It contains the five revised site alternatives, a detailed analysis of site issues, and an action plan to combine the talents and commitments of our partners and stakeholders for the project to move forward.

**Timeline of Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Side Studio project review</td>
<td>August 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood House property &amp; facility tour</td>
<td>August 26</td>
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<td>Red Butte Garden tour</td>
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<td>U of U Hinckley Forum on Jordan River</td>
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<td>Wasatch Community Gardens Tomato Garden tour</td>
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<tr>
<td>U of U Stephen Goldsmith public art discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poplar Grove Community Council meeting presentation</td>
<td>September 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salt Lake City Public Utilities meeting</td>
<td>October 3</td>
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<td>337 Project Garage Door art unveiling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salt Lake City Office of Sustainability meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tree Utah Eco Garden tour</td>
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<tr>
<td>NH staff, client &amp; community charrettes</td>
<td>October 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>NH Project partner lunch</td>
<td>October 16</td>
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<td>NH children’s activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poplar Grove Community Council meeting presentation</td>
<td>October 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation of site alternatives to community</td>
<td>November 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posting of site alternatives on blog site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation of site alternatives to Neighborhood House Board</td>
<td>November 19</td>
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The Westside Studio students have identified several issues that were taken into consideration in the design of the site alternatives. These issues originated from research carried out by the students as well as from comments gathered in the charrettes. The Next Steps section of this document will give guidance for further addressing these considerations.

**Natural Issues**

*Jordan River.* Neighborhood House is located just east of the Jordan River, which has historically served as a discharge collector for the city. Over the years it has become polluted, but generally not recognized as the valuable resource it is. Regulatory considerations regarding the river are complex with city, county, state, and federal agencies all having varying authority over the river. The Jordan River Trail Master Plan, commissioned by Salt Lake County Department of Parks and Recreation and completed in June 2000, attempts to address competing interests for the river. Goals of the plan include improvements to the public right of way along the Jordan River, the acquisition of new lands, the restoration of existing and new natural areas, and the creation of new education opportunities and enhancement of existing ones.

*Riparian Corridor.* The site is overlaid in part by a Riparian Corridor Overlay District designated by Salt Lake City. This designation restricts construction of structures and most uses on undeveloped sites within 100 feet of the annual high water mark of the river without review and approval by Salt Lake City Public Utilities. Riparian Corridor Issues are discussed in detail in Appendix C of this publication.

*Flood Plain.* Much of the vacant parcel was filled as part of a flood control and meander- straightening project leaving areas of non-compacted soil unsuitable for building throughout the site. Ironically, the actual one-year flood line indicates that a major flood would not affect the bulk of the property, but instead would engulf the Neighborhood House buildings. Fortunately, the upstream controls of the Jordan River make the flooding of its banks unlikely.

*Conservation Easement.* A conservation easement could be an attractive alternative for Neighborhood House. Along with preserving a natural area, it would effectively transfer some of the building, maintenance, and liability issues related to a large piece of property to the city, while allowing Neighborhood House the continued ownership and use of the property. Furthermore, the portion of the property dedicated to the conservation easement becomes a valuable educational resource for Neighborhood House as a restored natural area.

**Neighborhood Issues**

*Noise.* One concern expressed by neighbors was noise generated by the proposed new uses of the site. It will be important to continue a dialogue with immediate neighbors in considering the impacts of final components to be included in the plan. Of particular concern was the creation of an amphitheater that would result in noise projection towards the neighbors if it faced toward the river. Facing the amphitheater toward Neighborhood House buildings could mitigate this possibility.

*Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).* The Poplar Grove area has some of the highest crime rates in all of Salt Lake City. During neighborhood meetings, there was much discussion about vandalism, gang related activity, and vagrancy issues. Specifically, it is feared that if the site is made more accessible, it might become the province of the various gangs near the area. Although the area has suffered from these activities, Neighborhood House has been spared, almost completely. It will be important to design the site in such a way as to maintain open lines of sight and to prevent secluded areas where people might congregate at night. Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles should be considered in the final site plan.

*Fencing.* Utah regulations regarding both adult and child outdoor day services facilities require the area to be completely closed off with fencing for safety reasons. As the final site design will include both public and private areas, it will be necessary to carefully consider the use of access points and gates in the public and private zones on the site. A poorly considered fence could create a psychological barrier where a pedestrian who sees a fence, even with an open gate, might not feel welcome to enter the property. It will be important to create a system of fences, gates, and informational signs that clearly express access intentions, yet maintain a feeling of an open community space where appropriate.

The fence itself could become an artistic element on the property through collaboration with local artists and non-profit groups such as the 377 Project. Similar collaboration elsewhere has resulted in fences that are both functional and beautiful.

**Regulatory Issues**

*ADA.* Public pedestrian pathways throughout the site need to be carefully designed with safety, accessibility, and partitioning of public and private areas in mind.
Neighborhood House Clients. The primary focus of the final site design and built amenities will be to enhance services for Neighborhood House clients and to expand educational program possibilities. For adult clients, site components should stimulate sight, auditory, and tactile senses and provoke memories and enhance the outdoor experience. For children, site components should be interactive and educational. All components should be safely accessible to disabled users. As the secondary focus has always been to give something back to the community, consideration of site components will consider community needs and access.

Regulatory Issues

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities lists standards that may need to be addressed concerning provisions for disabled individuals. This may affect the public portions of the site in particular. These standards are included in Appendix C.

Child Care Centers and Adult Day Service Facilities. The Bureau of Child Care Licensing at the Utah Department of Health has adopted rules governing child care centers. Adult day service facility licensing is governed by the Utah Department of Human Services. Neighborhood House is currently seeking to become an accredited child care facility, and will need to meet the standards created by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The design will need to consider these standards, along with applicable regulations for daycare facilities (See Appendix A).

Liability and Access. The presence of a fence with closed gates surrounding private Neighborhood House facilities protects Neighborhood House from liability issues on their property. The determination of access to public and private areas will need to be considered by those designing the site. Adult day service clients are permitted even on adjacent lots, providing the use is permitted in open space (OS), natural open space (NOS), agricultural (AG), special protection (FP), and mixed use district (MU) zones (Salt Lake City Code, 21A.32.140). Accessory uses and structures are permitted only on public lands (PL) zones. Community gardens are permitted only in mixed use (MU) zones. Conservation areas are only permitted in open space (OS), natural open space (NOS), agricultural (AG), special protection (FP), and mixed use district (MU) zones (Salt Lake City Code, 21A.32.140). Accessory uses and structures are permitted even on adjacent lots, providing the use is “incidental and subordinate” to the main use or structure on the site. Unfortunately, the code does not specifically indicate whether the uses and structures considered for the site would be considered accessory or not.

Programmatic Issues

Jeff Robertson

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Lee is originally from California and grew up in Huntsville, Alabama. A summer trip to Utah during college convinced him to move here for graduate school in 1999. Although he quickly deflected to explore other pursuits, he became interested in growth issues surrounding his home in Heber City and returned to the U in 2007 to pursue a Master of City & Metropolitan Planning degree. He hopes to apply his education by forming intergovernmental cooperation and regional planning to address growth issues along the Wasatch Back.

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The Westside Studio in the College of Architecture & Planning at the University of Utah, conducts research focused on ethnically and culturally rich neighborhoods west of State Street in Salt Lake City. These projects are meant to be mutually-beneficial for both west side residents and graduate students in the City & Metropolitan Planning program. Each year the Studio selects projects with themes such as community development, urban design, economic development, and public involvement. An emphasis is placed on involving a wide range of stakeholders from government agencies, urban organizations, to individual neighborhood residents.

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This alternative creates a large restored natural area along the Jordan River Trail through the granting of a conservation easement to Salt Lake City. A public art space and community garden serve as a buffer between Neighborhood House program space and newly created public space. Land immediately adjacent to Neighborhood House is reconfigured with therapeutic gardens, kids art space, an amphitheater, improved playgrounds, and an improved courtyard area serving as an outdoor classroom.

Needs Addressed

Neighborhood House staff expressed a strong desire for improvements immediately adjacent to the adult facility for the convenience and safety of their clients. Adult clients wanted more flower gardens and expressed their enjoyment of interacting with the children and watching them play. Children and staff wanted improved playground facilities with more imaginative play elements and increased outdoor classroom and art facilities.

The area immediately outside both facilities is improved to enhance program elements for both adults and children, as well as to enhance their interaction. The new adult area features an improved courtyard area with many wide trails weaving through raised planter beds with a variety of flowers and plants. These trails connect to all elements of the yard and directly to the new children’s art area.

The need for security is addressed by separating the Neighborhood House yard area from the “public area” with an improved fence roughly along the existing fence line. Another fence encloses the public art and community garden areas. A series of gates allow access to public areas during daylight hours and into Neighborhood House properties for select events.

Estimated Cost: $511,780

Natural Area Alternative

- 56,000 sq ft natural area restored with native trees and plants, a network of trails, and several docks at the Jordan River edge creates wildlife habitat, a public resource, and educational opportunities.
- 20,000 sq ft public art space featuring mural walls and a sculpture garden connected to the natural area and Neighborhood House trail system and can be seen from either side.
- 15,000 sq ft vegetable garden space and greenhouse for community and class use.
- 3,600 sq. ft. small garden amphitheater
- 6,400 sq ft larger amphitheater located near the adult facility for community events and Neighborhood House outdoor classroom use.
- 6,400 sq ft “adventure play” area featuring natural and artificial boulders as well as some more traditional playground elements provides a place for imaginative play and climbing.
- 6,000 sq ft interactive learning area with water features, sound generating devices, plant structures, birdhouses, and a giant ant farm for fun learning possibilities.
- 8,000 sq ft traditional children’s playground area.
- 5,500 sq ft improved outdoor classroom space in the existing courtyard.
- 1,600 sq ft therapy garden
- 1,600 sq ft kids art area
This alternative is exemplified by wild to built uses, or natural to developed space. The boundary of Neighborhood House would shift toward the facilities, relieving Neighborhood House of some land. The land left would go towards creating a public space composed of multiple community uses.

The uses that require some built elements are clustered toward Neighborhood House and actual residences. The entrances to the open space are made to be open, providing a view through the space as one moves through it. The focal points of the site plan are improvements on Neighborhood House land for the adult clientele, the public interpretive river lookouts, and the community garden and amphitheatre.

Estimated Cost: $356,990

Needs Addressed
Throughout the public involvement process, many issues and ideas were contributed in an effort to create a space that is useful and engaging. This alternative is the representation of some of those thoughts. This arrangement of the space accomplishes three main goals expressed in the community meetings: safety, natural and complementary to the Jordan River, multiple community and Neighborhood House uses.

Opening the space to street view as well as having uses properly fenced creates a safe environment. The emphasis on natural, native species of plants and the rehabilitation of the West bank of the Jordan River as an environmental asset helps the area to be natural. Finally, the space has the potential for a variety of uses. Some are casual, passive uses, such as park space for enjoyment of open lawn. Some uses are more engaging, such as the play space, which is proposed to be educational with a focus on natural elements.

In summary, this space respects the natural asset of the river as well as providing for a safe, engaging, and useable space for both Neighborhood House and the Poplar Grove Community.

Elements

- 10,000 sq ft community garden including a greenhouse and shed for community use
- 50 seat amphitheatre for class and community use
- 2,500 sq ft therapeutic garden for the adult clientele, composed of raised beds for flowers and aromatic plants, a small water feature, a birdhouse area and concrete walkways with benches
- 800 sq ft art garden for public and class uses displaying various art projects and media. This is also a possible site for permaculture gardens.
- 2-150 sq ft river lookouts for natural interpretation of the river, wildlife and the opposite bank when revegetated with native plants and trees. This is the key component for the natural area.
- 600 sq ft multi-purpose classroom building for a wide variety of projects and activities
- 1,000 sq ft play space
This alternative emphasizes variety and personal engagement through therapy gardens for the adult clients, a community and educational vegetable garden, an amphitheater, a memorial space, natural areas, and two exciting themed playgrounds. One of the playgrounds would belong to the public. Most of the rest of the improvements would belong to Neighborhood House and could be available to the public at the discretion of Neighborhood House.

Estimated Cost: $361,643

Needs Addressed

The staff and clients of Neighborhood House as well as the members of the community have provided valuable insight through their feedback. While not all ideas could be addressed, this plan meets the following desires: adult clients were very interested in flowers; adult program staff members were interested in therapeutic elements for their clients and desired that these amenities be near their building; community members expressed interest in a community garden and in a community gathering place; children program staff members desired features that would provide interactive and experiential activities and features that could be included in science lessons; children’s program staff also mentioned that the older kids needed better sports facilities; children liked flowers and play areas; adult program staff desired a memorial area for deceased clients and coworkers; and finally community members wanted natural areas and Utah-oriented landscaping.

Elements

- 11,900 sq. ft. Community and educational garden.
- 16,000 sq. ft. Therapeutic gardens with water fountain area to provide soothing sounds.
- 1,900 sq. ft. Memorial space with mementos commemorating deceased clients and staff.
- 25,400 sq. ft. Natural areas along the river.
- 2,600 sq. ft. Garden playground with percussion instruments. Children can learn about plants and interact with them through play. Children can also create music and rhythm.
- 9,800 sq. ft. Utah theme area and playground. This public playground provides a unique atmosphere for playing and for learning about the state.
- 2,400 sq. ft. Amphitheater. This feature provides outdoor classroom space for clients. It can also serve as a gathering area for neighborhood events, which could potentially generate a small amount of revenue.
- 1,100 linear ft. Paths.
- Basketball court improvements. Some improvements to the existing court could greatly improve the capacity for sports for the older daycare children. Such improvements would include expansion to a full-size basketball court and addition of small soccer goals for soccer play similar to futbol.
- Bridge across Jordan River. This element received mixed reviews during the public feedback sessions.
The community connections alternative opens the site to pedestrian and view access from the north, west, and south. The connections not only provide entry to the site but access through the site. The site provides easy access to a number of public, semi-public, and Neighborhood House-specific features. Much of the land will be dedicated to wildlife preservation, but the rest of the site will focus on food and people.

Needs Addressed

Neighborhood House approached this project with the desire to engage the community, so the site took on a public orientation from the start. While working with members of the community, several other needs came to light. Safety and cleanliness were key requirements for many community members. Many community members and Neighborhood House clients and staff members expressed a desire to be able to grow food in the area. All involved felt it appropriate to honor the local natural surroundings and to celebrate each other’s contributions to the community.

This alternative addresses these needs in a number of ways. A feeling of safety is promoted by straight, wide sight lines from the public roads to highly visible art and water features within the site. The connection with the community comes from the access the community has to the site on the north, south, and west. The community space for food includes opportunities for growing, preparing, and eating food together on the site. The alternative honors natural habitat by conserving much of the riverfront for it, with opportunities to observe wildlife in the area. We celebrate others through a memorial garden for remembering those who have passed on and an amphitheater for community gatherings, presentations, performances and other events.

Estimated Cost: $378,950

### Elements

- **3000 sq ft xeriscape garden**
- **30000 sq ft memorial and therapy garden**
  - will house a retreat for residents and Neighborhood House clients and staff.
- **30000 sq ft playground for Neighborhood House children**
- **45000 sq ft of natural habitat (conservation easement)**
  - will be dedicated as a conservation easement for habitat and wildlife interpretation.
- **150 sq ft river wildlife observation deck**
- **60’ by 10’ bridge over the river**
  - will provide access to the site from the west.
- **10000 sq ft community garden**
- **6000 sq ft permaculture orchard**
  - will offer users a chance to cultivate sustainable food gardens.
- **5000 sq ft amphitheater**
  - (including roughly 75 seats)
  - will provide Neighborhood House and the community with a place for local performances, workshops, and lectures.
- **1000 sq ft barbecue structure**
- **1000 sq ft art intersection**
- **1000 sq ft water feature intersection**
The majority of the elements have no discreet location; rather they are interspersed with each other over the area in question. The thought behind this arrangement is to allow unimpeded access from any one activity to any other. The main “mixed use” components are a community garden built on raised beds, permaculture fruit tree plots, natural areas by the river and an evolving art garden. The rock garden play area, amphitheater and therapy garden are more separated from the other uses. Although they are not as integrated as the other components they still are easily accessible from anywhere on the site.

Estimated Cost: $577,070

Needs Addressed

These components and layout are a result of the meetings with staff, clients, community members and partners. In particular, the width of the paths and proximity to the facility of the therapy garden came out of the adult staff meeting, and concern that the clients prefer to walk two to three abreast and the fact that some clients struggle to get around the entire current track. The integrated community, art, permaculture garden was the idea that came out of the first community meeting with four very excited neighbors. Although there is no fence shown on the map I imagine that it would run enclose the therapy garden, the rock garden, and half of the vegetable and permaculture area. This would allow for an equal distribution of space and resources to both Neighborhood House, and the neighborhood at large.

Elements

- Community garden.
- Therapeutic gardens with wide pathways.
- Natural areas along the river.
- Rock garden play area.
- Amphitheater. This feature provides outdoor classroom space for clients. It can also serve as a gathering area for neighborhood events, which could potentially generate a small amount of revenue.
- Greenhouse/tool shed for community members and class use.
- Permaculture fruit tree plots for all to enjoy.
- Rotating art work from professionals, amateurs, clients, and students. The art spaces would be placed all over the site and would occasionally be changed out with new art.
- Dock on the river.
- Sensory tables would be rather large and could have water, sand or soil. Preferably they would be made of glass so children could see what happens beneath the surface.

Dock on the river.

Sensory tables would be rather large and could have water, sand or soil. Preferably they would be made of glass so children could see what happens beneath the surface.
This project budget depicts estimated costs for the five alternatives. This provides a general perspective on how much the plans are expected to cost. The prices and totals listed show a general comparison of how much one particular plan will cost compared to another. In the future, real cost quotes will need to be obtained from potential suppliers and contractors in order to get a true idea of the price for the final plan. Seeking out in-kind donations and donations of labor could help reduce the cost of the final plan.

### Project Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Area</th>
<th>Nature Nurture</th>
<th>Garden, Playgrounds, Memorials</th>
<th>Community Connections</th>
<th>Mixed Use</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Element Cost</td>
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<td>Element Cost</td>
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<td>$ 460</td>
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</table>

| Mixed Use                  | $ 551,780.00  | $ 216,990.00                  | $ 361,643.00  | $ 374,510.00                  | $ 577,070.00 | $ 577,070                      | $ -          | $ -                            |
At this point, a team of interested partners has been assembled, Neighborhood House staff, clients, and Board Members have been engaged, the community has been mobilized, and five site plan alternatives have been presented. An Advisory Committee has been assembled from the various partner organizations that have assisted with exploration of alternatives for the property. What happens next?

The Neighborhood House Board will need to consider the possibilities presented in the five alternatives and weigh the costs involved with the opportunity at hand. It is hoped that the information presented in this report will assist in this effort. A continuing dialogue with the Advisory Committee will help to discuss the feasibility of specific site components, as well as levels of support that the individual partner organizations can offer.

The Neighborhood House Garden Project includes a variety of desired elements that must find a way to provide complementary, but unique experiences. Each component of the final plan should be planned in the context of the goals of the project, namely providing Neighborhood House with an opportunity to make the community a better place through education, positive contributions, and shared experiences.

To begin the process, four key planning elements need to be addressed:

1. A final conceptual site plan to guide the work
2. A timeline for achieving individual components
3. Donors to provide funding
4. Partners to provide planning and/or labor

Conceptual Site Plan. This plan will indicate desired components but should be general in nature. General use areas such as “community garden,” “playground,” or “natural area” are specific enough at this stage. Such designations give an overall vision of how the area is to be arranged without setting boundaries that are too specific or stipulations as to what exactly will make up the final design. It will be necessary to turn the “final concept” into a site plan in order to apply for necessary building permits, to get final cost estimates, and to obtain necessary approval from Salt Lake City to proceed.

A basic element of the conceptual site plan will be a determination by the Neighborhood House Board of a boundary between the elements of the plan that will be treated as private elements for Neighborhood House use, and those that will be public elements. This boundary will affect the positioning of fences, which are essentially “lines of liability,” though some elements may represent a combined access scenario.

Timeline. The conceptual site plan should be adapted to an overall project timeline wherein individual components can be developed as funding and resources are made available. Component construction timing will likely depend on coordination of contributions and the volunteer efforts of partner organizations and neighborhood residents.

Funding. Each component will require funding and other resources that should be outlined in the final site plan. Funding sources should be aware of how their donations will contribute to the site. It is critical to keep contributors close to the process of development and the site itself to give a feeling of ownership and connection with Neighborhood House as well as the community. For each component, a plan should be formed to make the component a stand-alone, remarkable use, based upon a need that was addressed in the public involvement process. Component descriptions should include some information on available and interested service providers.

Partners. Partnerships with local businesses or organizations for development of the specific components would be a great asset to the project. These partnerships will need to address the construction and continuing maintenance of that particular component into the future.
for remediation. The tests performed in November were a first step, but by no means an exhaustive assessment of site soil issues.

has contaminated the site, removal of the polluted soil or seeding the areas with grass and any other non-edible plants may be necessary

Soil Remediation.

restoration of natural areas surrounding the river to help ensure further soil stability.

making process. It is also important to engage in research as to all possible reclamation activities for riverbank stabilization and the

Soil Stability.

restricted by degree of distance from the river up to 100 feet. Most of this corridor is on the part of the site that is already owned by Salt

Riparian Corridor. This site is overlaid in part by a Riparian Corridor Overlay District. This designation restricts any construction and most

uses on undeveloped sites within 100 feet of the annual high water mark of the river. On developed plots, construction and many uses are

uses in the Institutional zone, even as conditional uses. It might be possible to negotiate conditional use terms as a condition of the easement. Further discussion of conservation easements is presented in Appendix C of this publication.

whether or not to grant a conservation easement to Salt Lake City, and if so, how much land to devote to this will be a major decision for the Board. While ownership of the land will continue, this agreement will determine Neighborhood House’s ability to utilize the land in perpetuity. The actual terms of the conservation easement will need to be negotiated with the city. The negotiation of the agreements of this conservation easement may factor into other land use decisions regarding Neighborhood House’s “leftover” land. Some of the proposed uses suggested in the site alternatives are not permitted in the Institutional zone, even as conditional uses. It might be possible to negotiate conditional use terms as a condition of the easement. Further discussion of conservation easements is presented in Appendix C of this publication.

Conservation Easement.

natural environment action plan

While the 2008 PERC testing results were negative, the possibility of lingering lead contamination is potentially a serious issue, especially if a community garden is to be pursued. The levels of lead found in the 1990 and 1997 tests were well above standard toxicity levels. At this point of the project’s production, a lead and cadmium test is being donated. Depending on how pervasively the lead has contaminated the site, removal of the polluted soil or seeding the areas with grass and any other non-edible plants may be necessary for remediation. The tests performed in November were a first step, but by no means an exhaustive assessment of site soil issues.

Soil Remediation. While the 2008 PERC testing results were negative, the possibility of lingering lead contamination is potentially a serious issue, especially if a community garden is to be pursued. The levels of lead found in the 1990 and 1997 tests were well above standard toxicity levels. At this point of the project’s production, a lead and cadmium test is being donated. Depending on how pervasively the lead has contaminated the site, removal of the polluted soil or seeding the areas with grass and any other non-edible plants may be necessary for remediation. The tests performed in November were a first step, but by no means an exhaustive assessment of site soil issues.

Invasive Weed Species Remediation: Before any natural restoration can be done on the vacant portion of the site, invasive weed remediation will need to be performed. Thistle is the first weed of consequence, and can be cleared by cutting the heads off the thistles and disposing of them. Whether they go to waste or are saved for thistle to propagate and will die out. A community cleanup will need to be organized to do this once or twice a year until the thistles are gone.

Canadian geese and other birds feed on developed cheatgrass seed, which is no longer suitable for grazing animals. As the parcel is restored to a more natural state, returning birds and animals should help with cheatgrass mitigation, allowing native perennial to thrive. This longer term approach should include the Salt Lake City Mayor’s Office Division of Sustainability, the agency with whom Neighborhood House would arrange the conservation easement and weed mitigation and control agreement.

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Cheatgrass mitigation may also be necessary. Mitigation can take place in a number of user-specific ways like general weeding, or by covering ground with hardscape or accessory structures. For the natural area, a more comprehensive approach will be required. The Utah State University Extension suggests that cheatgrass can be controlled by allowing grazing in the spring while the grass is flowering and forming seeds. Canadian geese and other birds feed on developed cheatgrass seed, which is no longer suitable for grazing animals. As the parcel is restored to a more natural state, returning birds and animals should help with cheatgrass mitigation, allowing native perennials to thrive. This longer term approach should include the Salt Lake City Mayor’s Office Division of Sustainability, the agency with whom Neighborhood House would arrange the conservation easement and weed mitigation and control agreement.

There are a number of potential partners who can help accomplish weed removal. Neighborhood House’s SOAR program may provide some assistance. Local church groups have expressed interest in supporting the development of the site and will most likely be willing to assist in the weed remediation. The University of Utah’s Bencention Center is another potential source for finding volunteers.

neighborhood and community involvement action plan

Community Involvement. A consistent dialogue will need to be maintained with the community. It was clear in the community charrette that there is a group of neighbors that would like to be involved in the process, informed about decisions, and involved in future maintenance of the site. It would be helpful to schedule a public meeting so that there is a clear understanding of what will be happening on the site, how they can be involved, and the proposed timeline. The important thing will be to keep the surrounding community involved in this project.

Community events and workshops could help maintain the community interest throughout development of the project. Some ideas include working with Wasatch Community Gardens and Red Butte Gardens to hold gardening workshops, including Neighborhood House clients in artistic design and development of fencing and pathways, the creation of community murals or sculptures, and holding community gatherings, markets and festivals on the site.

Community Needs. A possible answer to the concern of duplicating existing community assets is to use the site so that it complements existing programs instead of duplicating them, or by duplicating those elements for which there is already an unmet demand, such as for garden space. Red Butte Gardens has offered their expertise with site design and programming as part of their mission to bring new information to west side residents.

Neighborhood and Community Involvement Action Plan

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FENCING AND BOUNDARY ACTION PLAN

Fencing. The decision on how much land to devote to a conservation easement may largely determine ultimate fencing requirements. There are several factors to think about regarding fencing:

Aesthetics. There are many options for boundaries and fencing. One idea was to create a percussive fence or wall, where various materials are hung, welded, or otherwise attached to a fence for kids and adults to strike providing a musical learning activity and a safety fence. The extensive fencing required to enclose various elements of the space may well represent an opportunity for community involvement through art projects.

Safety. Neighborhood House private areas will need to be completely surrounded with fencing per Salt Lake City requirements for child and adult day services facilities. A decision will need to be made as to which areas are Neighborhood House private property and which will allow periodic public access upon invitation by Neighborhood House for select events.

To resolve this two-fold challenge of separating public, private, and shared use areas while simultaneously maintaining a welcoming, safe environment, the following actions should be taken. First, Neighborhood House must create and post specific rules of access. These should indicate what behaviors are appropriate on the site and what times the fenced area will be available for use. The fence can include gates that may be opened during non-business hours for greater community space, while the posted rules will make it clear that the public is allowed access to some areas of the site but these areas remain private property and are subject to appropriate use limitations.

Second, Neighborhood House must specifically invite the community to use any semi-public fenced areas by holding an open house or community events on the site. With near constant use of the site by other community groups and families, the likelihood of uninvited use and vandalism will decrease. This will also give community members a connection with the site, with the consequent sense of ownership, and will mitigate the off-putting effect of the fence.

Liability. If Neighborhood House occasionally opens up the new facilities to the public, then there would likely need to be a sign with posted notification that releases Neighborhood House of any liability. It would be important to talk to an attorney to find out what kind of posting would be necessary. An attorney should be consulted to help identify any other liability issues and how to address them.

PARTNERSHIP AND FUNDING ACTION PLAN

Collaborative Process. Implementation of the garden project will be a collaborative and cooperative effort involving many who are interested in the successful development of the parcel and achieving the most desirable and product for the community and Neighborhood House. A wide variety of nonprofit organizations, city and county agencies, and members of the community have expressed a commitment to offer their knowledge and talents to this project. Successfully engaging the right expertise, funding, and coordinated physical effort at the right times will be critical in seeing this project forward.

Steering Committee. As mentioned before, one of the primary roles of the Steering Committee will be to work with the Neighborhood House Board to determine real needs, budgets, technical expertise, potential funding mechanisms for individual components, and perhaps to provide or to organize physical labor in the construction of individual components. If organized volunteer labor is used, partners could serve as a critical link between Neighborhood House, the project, and the community.

Staff. The primary role of the Neighborhood House staff is to organize projects for the site’s use and development, and provide advisory assistance in planning the area to fit programmatic goals.

Westside Studio. The University of Utah City & Metropolitan Planning Department’s Westside Studio can assist in facilitating planning efforts.
through collaborative work with the partners and Neighborhood House. The Westside Studio should be actively engaged in the planning process, soliciting volunteers, and ensuring collaboration and cooperation of the participating groups.

Community. Actual building and maintenance of the Garden Project will require funding and the help of volunteers, community members, and partners. A permanent garden coordinator position would be a valuable asset to the space and should be hired if funding can be acquired. This position should also be on the advisory committee. Volunteers are available through government programs like Americorps, various community groups, and through the local schools, colleges, and the University.

Research ways that community members and Neighborhood House clients can be involved with the development. Development of the site will offer opportunities for involving community members and Neighborhood House Clients. The site has potential for involving service projects from local Boy Scouts as well as displaying community or Neighborhood House client art or produce. The task of public involvement will principally need to be carried out by Neighborhood House and community members.

Create a committee to oversee activities that occur on the site: This committee should include people from Neighborhood House staff, the Neighborhood House board, partners, and the local neighborhood. Having a continuous connection between the space and interested parties will promote collaborative, complementary uses and a sense of ownership by all involved, which would contribute to the safety of the space.

Funding. The final project will need active assistance in raising funds, applying for grants, and negotiating donations. This will principally need to be done by Neighborhood House. This will be an important part of the new site operations manager, however, students could potentially be involved. Partners will be important for this part. Some partners may be able to donate expertise and service time. Other partners may be able to donate money or goods.

Programmatic Issues Action Plan

Programmatic issues are best addressed through the continued consultation of Neighborhood House and the partners involved in the space. Engendering the connections between those parties will promote ideas for components or uses that are effective and feasible.

It should be recognized that, while there are challenges in the development of this property, each stage presents unique educational opportunities for Neighborhood House programs. For example, if soil contamination turns out to be a big issue, remediation steps can be turned into an opportunity for children to learn. Likewise, children can participate in the restoration of the natural area along the Jordan River by planting trees and being involved.

Regulatory Issues Action Plan

Zoning. Significant assistance will be required from the Salt Lake City Planning Department to make sure the proposed elements may be constructed based on the site’s zoning. Neighborhood House and its partners will need to either obtain building permits from the planning department for the structures and elements of the site as necessary uses or seek a text amendment to the Institutional zone. A zoning change may also be required.

Accessibility. Most ADA accessibility issues are easily resolved through continued consultation with the Neighborhood House Program Directors and staff. Also see Appendix C for more detail on accessibility regulations.

Component Specific Action Plan

Jacobs. Jacobs, an International Engineering firm with interest in the project, has offered their help in planning and providing technical support on the docks and wetland areas. Funding would need to be sought for construction.

Wasatch Community Gardens (WCG). WCG is willing to help find community gardeners to help start this aspect of the plan for spring of 2009. They will ask those on their wait list for community garden plots who are interested in the project to attend the How to Start a Community Garden workshop in January. This will create an interested group of community members to help organise and move this element forward. WCG is also willing to host a workshop in March at Neighborhood House on building above ground garden beds in order to start putting the infrastructure in place for this plan component.

Salt Lake City. The City’s involvement in the construction of a park facility comes down to factors such as (i) need for a park facility in the area, (ii) community support for such, and most importantly, (iii) funding. Funding for projects like this can come from a couple different sources including capital improvement projects from the general fund or Community Development
Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the federal government. Because funding is a critical issue, it should be recognized that no single City employee can make a solid commitment from the City on a project like this since it would need to go through a review process by the City Administration then to a decision-making process by the City Council. The first step toward pursuing City involvement in a playground facility would be to submit a request to the Mayor’s office or to Val Pope, the Director of Parks Division. With the Mayor’s support, the Parks Division could then conduct a feasibility study.

The Future

There are many issues to be addressed in the final design and development phases of the Garden Project. Each component has its own issues and challenges associated with it. As the project evolves, it is critical to address these challenges in a collaborative manner, keeping in mind the breadth of potential users and uses of the space. While the project is complex, a thoughtful approach to the space can produce a powerful, unifying place.

The Neighborhood House Garden Project began as a weed infested plot of land. The Westside Studio Graduates have found that this empty space has great potential for creatively fulfilling the needs of a community. This plot deserves to be made into a place where the community and Neighborhood House can grow and provide for a better future for the area.
APPENDIX A

Community Partners

This project is sponsored by Anne Watson of the Marriner S. Eccles Foundation and the University of Utah Department of City & Metropolitan Planning:

Neighborhood House
Jacob Bruce, NH Director............................................................ jacobbruce@qwest.net
Janette Schimpf, NH Development Director.................................. devdir@nhutah.org
Karen Funseth, NH Board Contact and Nature Conservancy........... west_karen@yahoo.com
Judy Moreton, Neighborhood House Board Chair......................... judy.moreton@comcast.net

Wasatch Community Gardens
Claire User, Director..................................................................... director@wasatchgardens.org
Brit Merrill, Volunteer Coordinator................................................ volunteer@wasatchgardens.org
Lauren Brown, Programs Assistant................................................ outreach@wasatchgardens.org

Red Butte Gardens
Gregory Lee, Director.................................................................... gregory.lee@redbutte.utah.edu
Patrick Newman............................................................................. patrick.newman@redbutte.utah.edu
Roxanne Kulakowski..................................................................... roxanne.kulakowski@redbutte.utah.edu
Jim Bach.......................................................................................... jim.bach@redbutte.utah.edu

Benjamin Center
Linda Dunn, Benjamin Center Director.............................................. ldunn@sa.utah.edu

Bend-in-the-River
Tara Poezing, Bend-in-the-River Coordinator................................. tpoelzing@sa.utah.edu

SWCA Environmental Consultants
Linda Sperry.................................................................................... laperry@swca.com

University of Utah
Valoree Dowell, Public Relations..................................................... v.dowell@ucomm.utah.edu
Sarah Monro, University Neighborhood Partners.......................... s.monro@partners.utah.edu
Stephen Goldsmith, Professor........................................................... goldsmith@arch.utah.edu

Caitlin Cahill, Professor.................................................................... caitcahill@gmail.com
Brenda Scheer, Dean of Architecture and Planning.......................... scheer@arch.utah.edu

Salt Lake City Mayors Office
Michael Stott, Community Liaison with Mayors Office..................... Michael.Stott@slcgov.com

Salt Lake City Department of Sustainability
Emy Storheim, SLC Dept of Sustainability........................................ emy.storheim@slcgov.com

Bridge Stubbly, SLC Dept of Sustainability...................................... bridge.stubbly@slcgov.com

337 Project
Adam Price....................................................................................... adam@337project.org

TreeUtah
Britt Retzlaff, Americorps Ecogarden Steward and Educator............ brittretzlaff@gmail.com

Poplar Grove Community
Mike Harmon, Community Council Chair...................................... harmon@xmision.com
Charlotte Fife-Jepperson, Neighborhood Representative............... lifejepp@gmail.com
APPENDIX B

Public Meeting Comments

Comments from Neighborhood House Staff

- Play Area:
  - Toddler Playground
  - Bigger Playground
  - Swings
  - No wood chips
  - No sand
  - Monkey bars
  - Slides
  - Extend Preschool playground
  - More play equipment

- Garden Area:
  - Vegetable garden
  - Kids garden
  - Flower garden (4)
  - Roses
  - Dandelions
  - Lilies
  - Peace Garden (2)
  - Mini Red Butte Garden
  - Educational garden
  - Green house
  - Community gardens (2)
  - Individual class plots for gardening
  - Therapy Garden (2)
  - Memorial Garden (3)
  - Arbors
  - Art Area:
    - Sculpture at kids level
    - Art center
    - Map painted mosaic of U.S./World/Utah
    - Animal sculptures
    - Hands on art area

- Water Features:
  - Water toys
  - Slip and Slide
  - Water game area
  - Pond/fountain-like at Gateway
  - Water fountain-like at Liberty Park
  - Wishing Well (2)
  - Waterfall
  - Fish Pond

- Sports Amenities:
  - Outdoor sports area
  - Track (2)
  - Baseball
  - Football
  - Basketball
  - Volleyball
  - Skateboard area (2)

- River Incorporation:
  - Bridge
  - Sitting areas
  - Canopy

- Structures:
  - Clubhouse
  - Treehouse
  - Kids sized tables
  - Outdoor classroom for summer classes
  - Picnic area
  - Theatre
  - Gazebo
  - Amphitheater (2)
  - Butterfly House
  - Arbors

- Restrooms
- Drinking fountain
- Animal friendly
- Host events (like Farmers Market-mentioned 3 times)
- Currently have no outdoor space for adults...Greatest need.
- Include lots of benches (6)
- Xeriscaping
- Closer paths to Adult Daycare
- Wider Paths (2)
- Safety concerns expressed
- Lots of light
- Open Spaces
- Sensory learning and therapy: plants with lots of colors and smells that attract birds and butterflies

- Exterior Amenity Areas:
  - Restroom
  - Drinking fountain
  - Animal friendly
  - Host events (like Farmers Market-mentioned 3 times)
• Gardens will not be taken care of if they do not do it now, they will not do it on the site
• Like the idea of a park with amphitheater or gazebo
• Fence for adult and child clients and set aside property
• Major works of art often look like graffitii or promote graffitii
• Art work along trail, like metal works sculptures
• Xeriscaped entry points
• Light along trails
• Not so interested in “natural” because it is likely to turn into thistles
• Amphitheater or garden would be well used by local wards
• Tie into Boy Scouts program
• Include sledding hill, rock garden
• Multiuse
• Firepits
• Winding paths
• Use trash as art
• Concrete tower for mural art
• Take out trees for open security
• Multi Use garden
• Keep some trees
• Handicap Friendly amphitheater
• Workshop shed for storage of tools with classroom space for classes like bike repair, sewing, quilting, art
• Solar powered buildings
• Classes taught by local citizens
• Small orchard- fruit or nut trees
• Lightning for security but not overpowering
• No light pollution
• Prefer solar powered and possibly designed by artists

• Sculptures in garden by local artists
• South side entrance with gate sculpture
• Community oversight with a committee of adults and youth to oversee maintenance, projects, and scheduling
• Winter gardens
• Ski trail- separate or part of Jordan River Trail
• Identify and protect wildlife
• Pathways as barriers
• Change the Jordan River Trail
• Tartan or rubber paths
• Places to put your feet in the river
• Pioneer trail history- plaque (ex. Paul Workman Park)
• Peacock space
• Peacock art
• Vegetables- donate food to shelter, food bank, People’s Market, etc.
• Flowers
• Wild Element from river
• Caretaking the corners- community ‘adopt a trail”
• Art in the garden and playground
• Avoid seclusion
• Metal sculpture preference
• Educate about existing wildlife along the river
• Attract birds

Community Charrette Comments

Community Oversight with a committee of adults and youth to oversee maintenance, projects, and scheduling

South side entrance with gate sculpture

Sculptures in garden by local artists

Art in the garden and playground

Avoid seclusion

Educate about existing wildlife along the river

Attract birds

South side entrance with gate sculpture

Sculptures in garden by local artists

Community Oversight with a committee of adults and youth to oversee maintenance, projects, and scheduling

South side entrance with gate sculpture

Sculptures in garden by local artists

Community Oversight with a committee of adults and youth to oversee maintenance, projects, and scheduling
APPENDIX C

Discussion of Significant Issues

Copy of the 1993 Soil Test Results

Analytical Report

Regulatory Information

The standards listed below come from the "ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities" and have been identified as standards that may need to be addressed. The text from the guidelines has not been reproduced here, because it is quite long and because the official text has references to helpful sample images. The standards are found in Appendix A to Part 36 of ADA. They can be viewed on the Internet at http://www.ada.gov/reg3a.html#Anchor-Appendix-52467

- 2. General.
- 4.1 Minimum Requirements esp. 4.1.1 & 4.1.2
- 4.2 Space Allowance and Reach Ranges
- 4.3 Accessible Route
- 4.4 Proluding Objects
- 4.5 Ground and Floor Surfaces
- 4.6 PKing and Passenger Loading Zones
- 4.8 Ramps
- 4.9 Stairs
- 4.14 Entrances
- 4.15 Drinking Fountains
- 4.29 Detectable Warnings
- 4.30 Signage
- 4.32 Fixed or Built-in Seating and Tables
- 4.33 Assembly areas

The Bureau of Child Care Licensing at the Utah Department of Health has adopted rules that govern child care centers. Rules can be found on the Internet at http://health.utah.gov/licensing/rules.htm. The following rules may be applicable to any site improvements related to the plans offered in this document:

- R430-100-5 (5)
- R430-100-6, esp. (a), (c), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j)
- R430-100-11, esp. (1), (3)
- R430-100-12, esp. (1), (3), (4), (6)
- R430-100-20
- R430-100-22
- R430-100-3 (1)(g) – (It would be wise to contact the Bureau of Child Care Licensing to find out how this rule would apply through a construction time table of several years.)
The Utah Department of Human Services has adopted rules that govern the licensure of adult day care facilities. These rules can be found on the Internet at http://www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r501/r501-13.htm. The following rules may be applicable to any site improvements related to the plans offered in this document:

- R501-13-14
- R501-13-15 C, D, E, G 1-4

Neighborhood House is currently seeking to become an accredited child care facility. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has created standards that should be met in order to achieve accreditation. These standards can be found on the Internet at http://www.naeyc.org/academy/standards/. The following NAEYC standards may be applicable to the plans outlined in this document:

- 9.A.03
- 9.A.04
- 9.A.05
- 9.A.07
- 9.A.09
- 9.A.11
- 9.A.13
- 9.B.01 - 9.B.07
- 9.C.03
- 9.C.07
- 9.C.08
- 9.C.09
- 9.C.12
- 9.C.16
- 9.D.01
- 9.D.03
- 9.D.05
- 9.D.06
- 9.D.07
- 9.D.08
- 9.D.09
- 5.C.04
- 5.C.05

Conservation Easement and Flood Plain Discussion

Conservation Easement. A conservation easement may generally be purchased by a conservation organization (SLC) at full market value, purchased at a fraction of market value, or donated by the landowner. Donation of the easement could carry significant financial benefit for NH that could help it to fund improvements to the rest of the site, their buildings, and their programs. Financial benefits may include a federal income tax deduction and possible estate and property tax relief. Because of the restrictive nature of the current zoning (Institutional) and the building restrictions imposed by soil suitability, it is possible that market value for sale would be low and donation may well be the best alternative.

Both the IRS and Salt Lake City require that lands to be considered for conservation easements must be donated into perpetuity, be used exclusively for conservation purposes, and have “significant” conservation value. According to IRS Code 170 (h), NH’s land would protect at least two of five criteria for conservation resources: wildlife or ecological and public recreation or education. It could be argued that it satisfies the historic or cultural requirement as well.

The Salt Lake City Open Space Lands Program, fund, and advisory board were created to facilitate acquisition, preservation, and protection of natural, scenic, historic, and important neighborhood open space lands. The program has established a fund (Bond measure November 4, 2003) to acquire, preserve, protect, and maintain open space lands either purchased or gained through conservation easements. Neighborhood House’s land was identified by Salt Lake City during their open space lands inventory as satisfying their criteria for open space protection during a city-wide inventory process, and a conservation easement was suggested by the city as the best way to handle this.

In summary, by granting a conservation easement, NH would retain ownership of the land but SLC would take on responsibility for maintenance into perpetuity. Although Salt Lake City takes on new financial and maintenance responsibilities, the city gains a large natural area and guarantees public access to a valuable public resource. Restoration of the area is a goal of both Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County, and satisfies goals set forth in the Jordan River Trail Master Plan.

Riparian Corridor Overlay and Flood Plain. As part of an effort to protect its riparian corridors, in July 2008 Salt Lake City passed the Riparian Corridor Overlay (RCO) Zoning District Ordinance, which applies to all major streams in the Salt Lake Valley, including the Jordan River. The riparian area is essentially the bank of a river or stream, plus any additional lands serving as a buffer in terms of flooding and runoff. Protection of the riparian zone is intended to help lower flood potential, minimize erosion, and decrease water pollution by preserving vegetation and soils and minimizing disturbance. An additional benefit is the protection of wildlife habitat both along riverbanks and in the river.

The RCO Ordinance extended protection on a graded basis to zones further than existing regulations, which generally focused only...
on the waterway itself or its immediate banks. Three disturbance zones were established, all based on the Annual High Water Line (AHWL). No new construction is allowed in the first 25 feet. From 25-50 feet, some structures are allowed and reconstruction of existing structures is allowed, and the final 50 to 100 foot zone is the most permissive and generally allows anything permitted by current zoning.

The actual AHWL has not yet been established, but by estimates, is essentially the top of the vertical bank on the edge of the Jordan River (the water’s edge). Therefore, the no-disturbance zone is roughly from the River edge to the existing paved Jordan River Trail, the second zone is from the paved Trail to the first fence, and the final zone is actually already owned by the city and, although not fenced off, is essentially the visible edge of the vacant parcel.

In terms of the proposed development, this means the RCO Ordinance will likely not prevent major elements of the site alternatives from being built; most are far enough back from the Jordan River that they will not be affected. However, new trail building and any bridge or dock on or over the River is effectively prohibited without a review and permit process by SLC Public Utilities Department. As these elements would be part of an overall natural restoration and construction of an educational/interpretive area, there is no reason to suspect that Public Utilities would not permit it. In fact, they have already expressed an interest in such a project. Clearing of invasive vegetation and replacement with native species is allowed and encouraged without a permit. Preparation of a conceptual site plan for Public Utilities review will be a first step in plan implementation.