

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



- **Agenda**

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

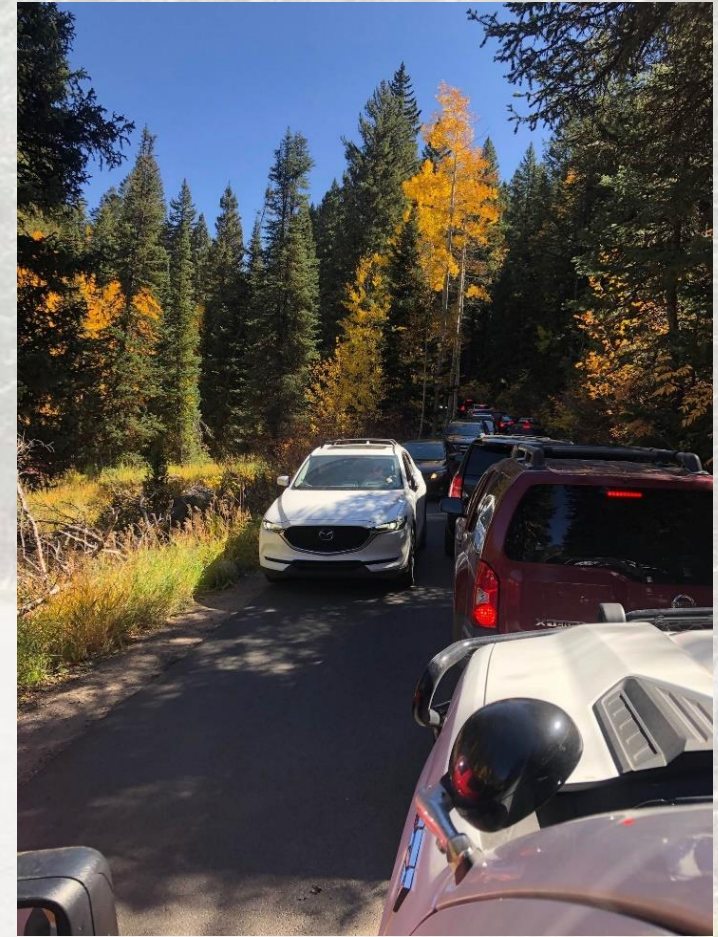


- **Purpose**

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

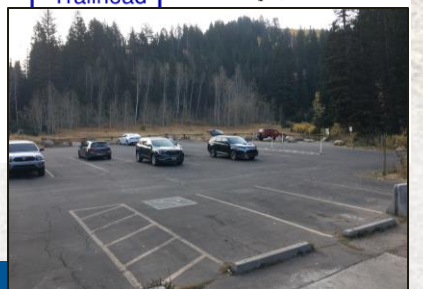
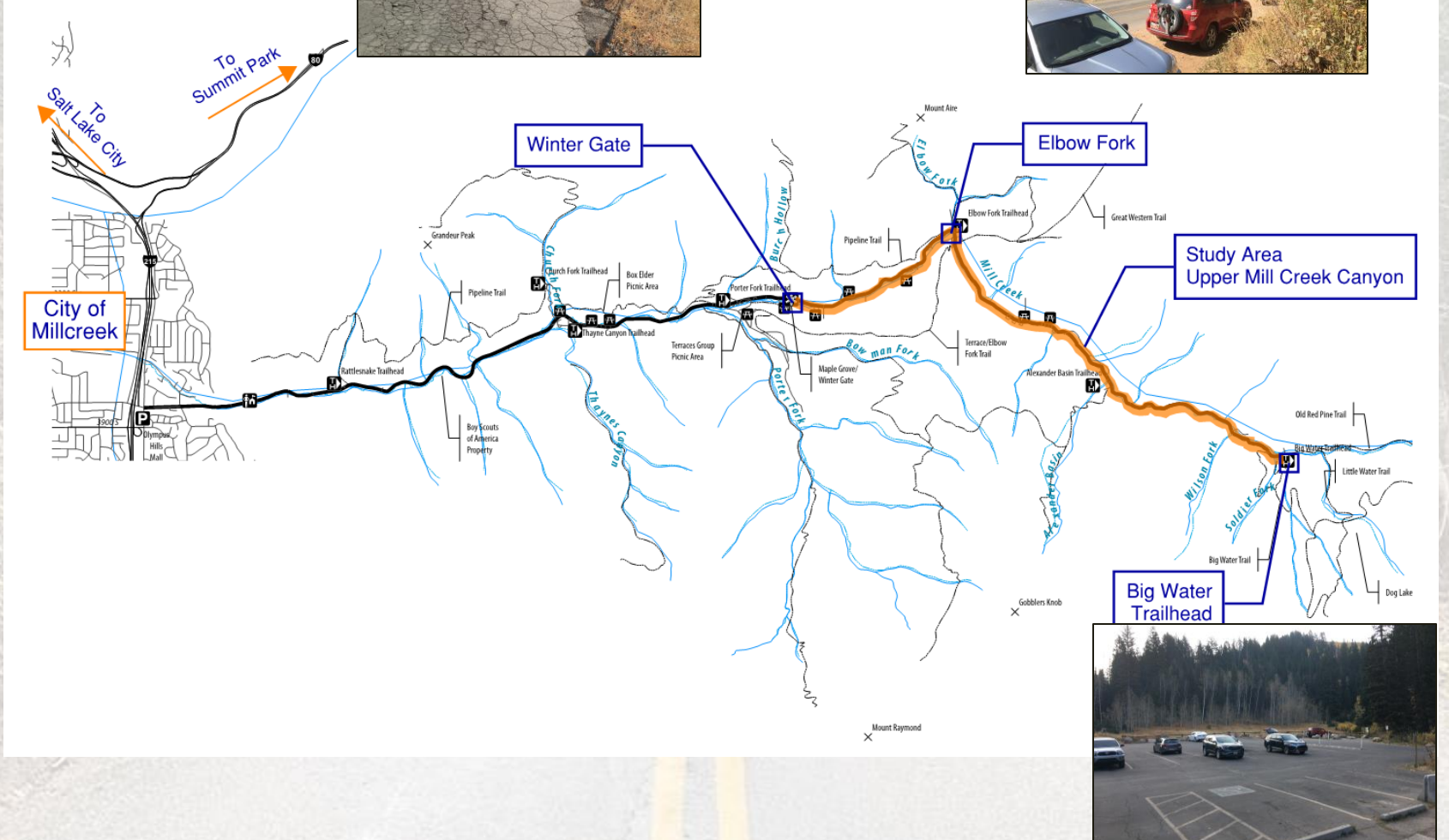
- **Needs to Address**

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



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 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?

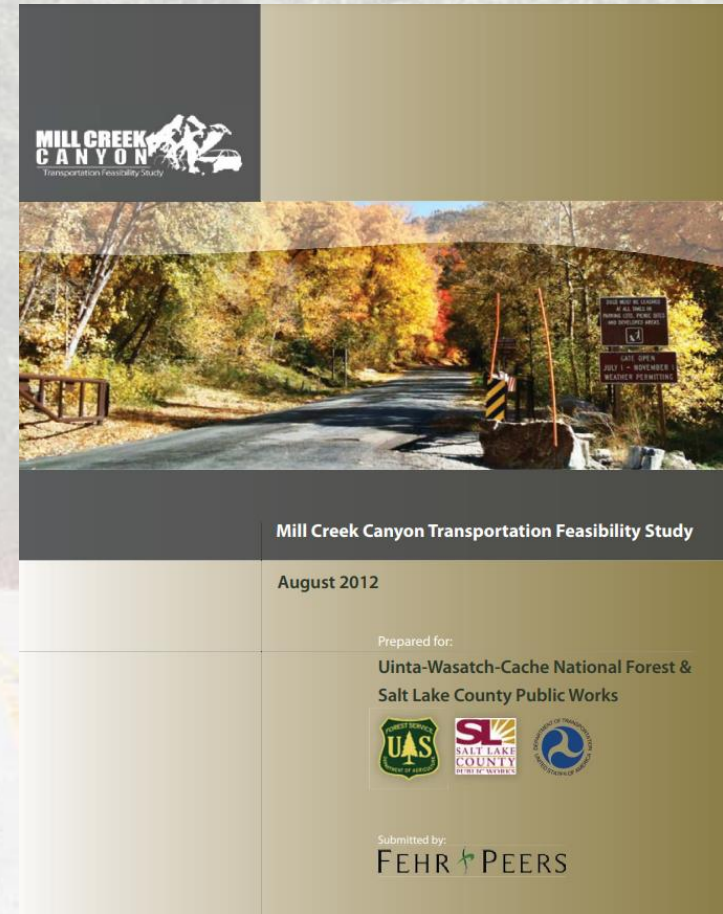
- **November 2021 Public Meeting Overview**
 - Shared a conceptual design
 - Approximately 100 attendees
 - Over 300 comments received



- **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**
 - 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**

- 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**

- 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**

- 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



- **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**

- 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**

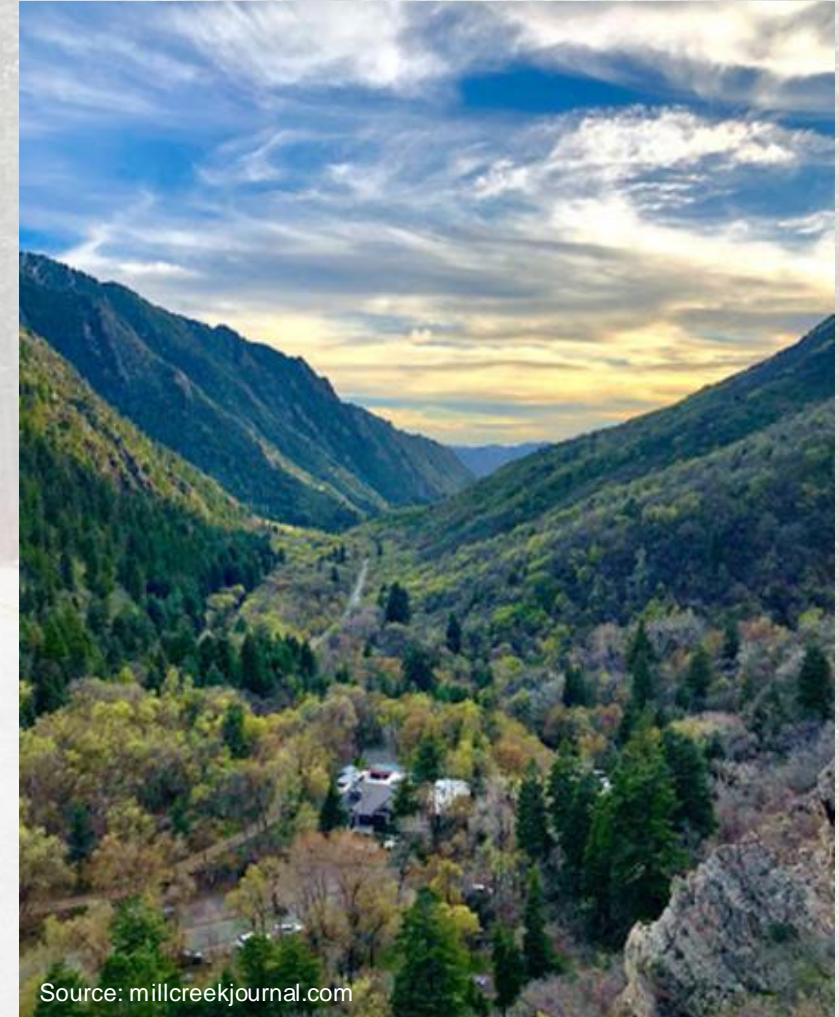
- FHWA is lead federal agency for project and follows its NEPA implementing regulations
- All FHWA-led projects follow the environmental review process, regardless of NEPA class of action
- FHWA CEs apply to many types of road projects
- Unusual circumstances are considered to determine if EA or EIS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

- **What we heard**

- 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

■ 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



- **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?

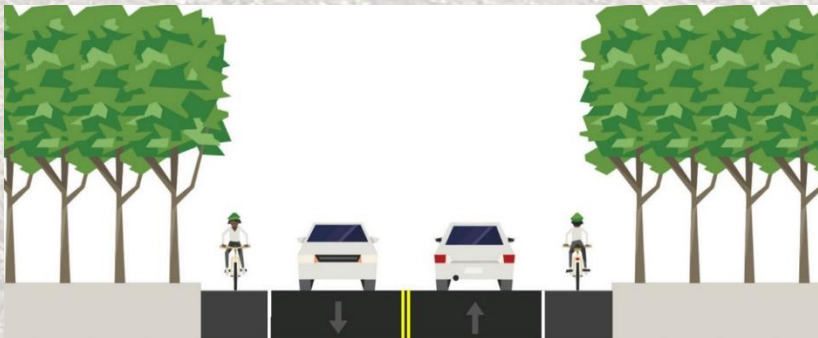




Narrowest Roadway Concept: 20-foot wide with 10-foot lanes, no shoulders



- 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

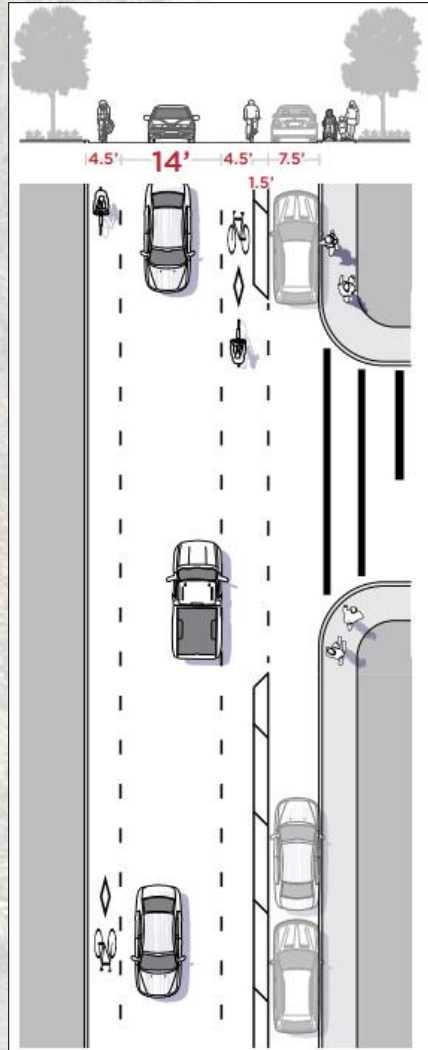


- More environmental impacts
- Higher cost and more construction challenges
- More improvements for cyclists with a 5-foot uphill bicycle lane and a 1-foot downhill shoulder

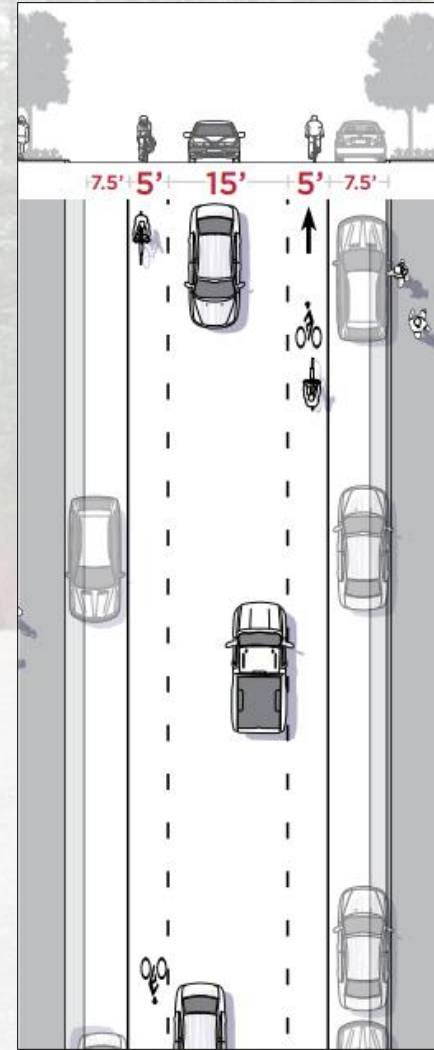
What Concepts Have Been Considered

ADVISORY BICYCLE LANE(S)

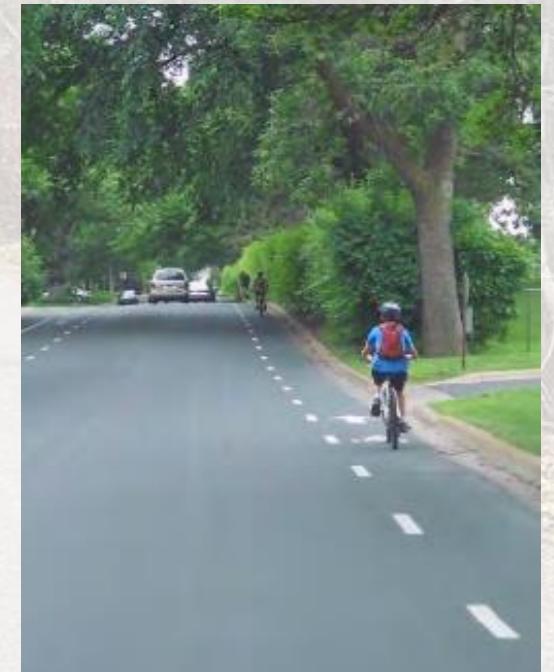
- Defines a space for bicyclists
- Well suited for low-volume narrow roads
- Oncoming vehicles encountering one another merge into the bicycle lanes as needed
- Does not alter standard maintenance practices



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

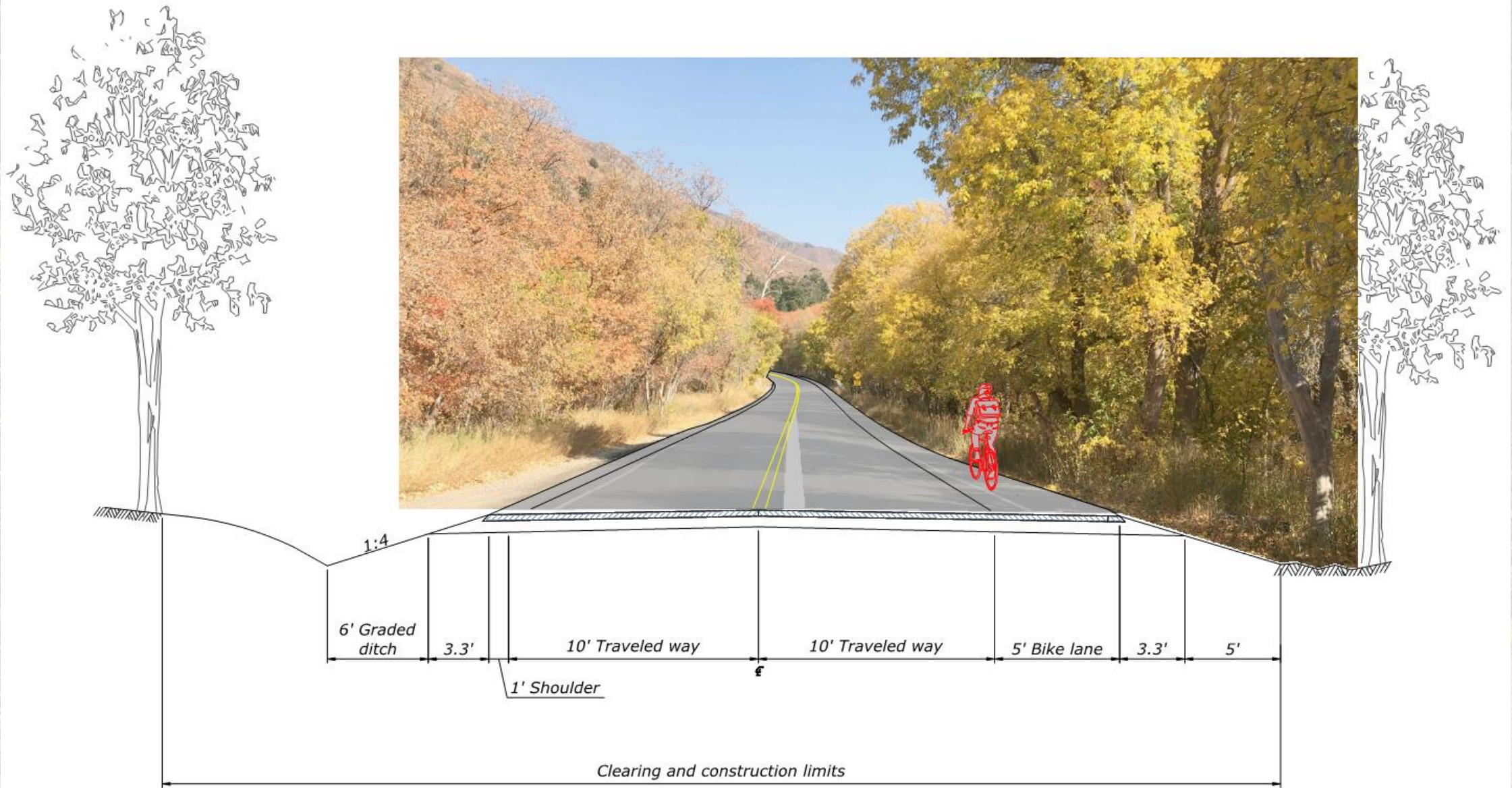


Steep slopes and creek adjacent to the road

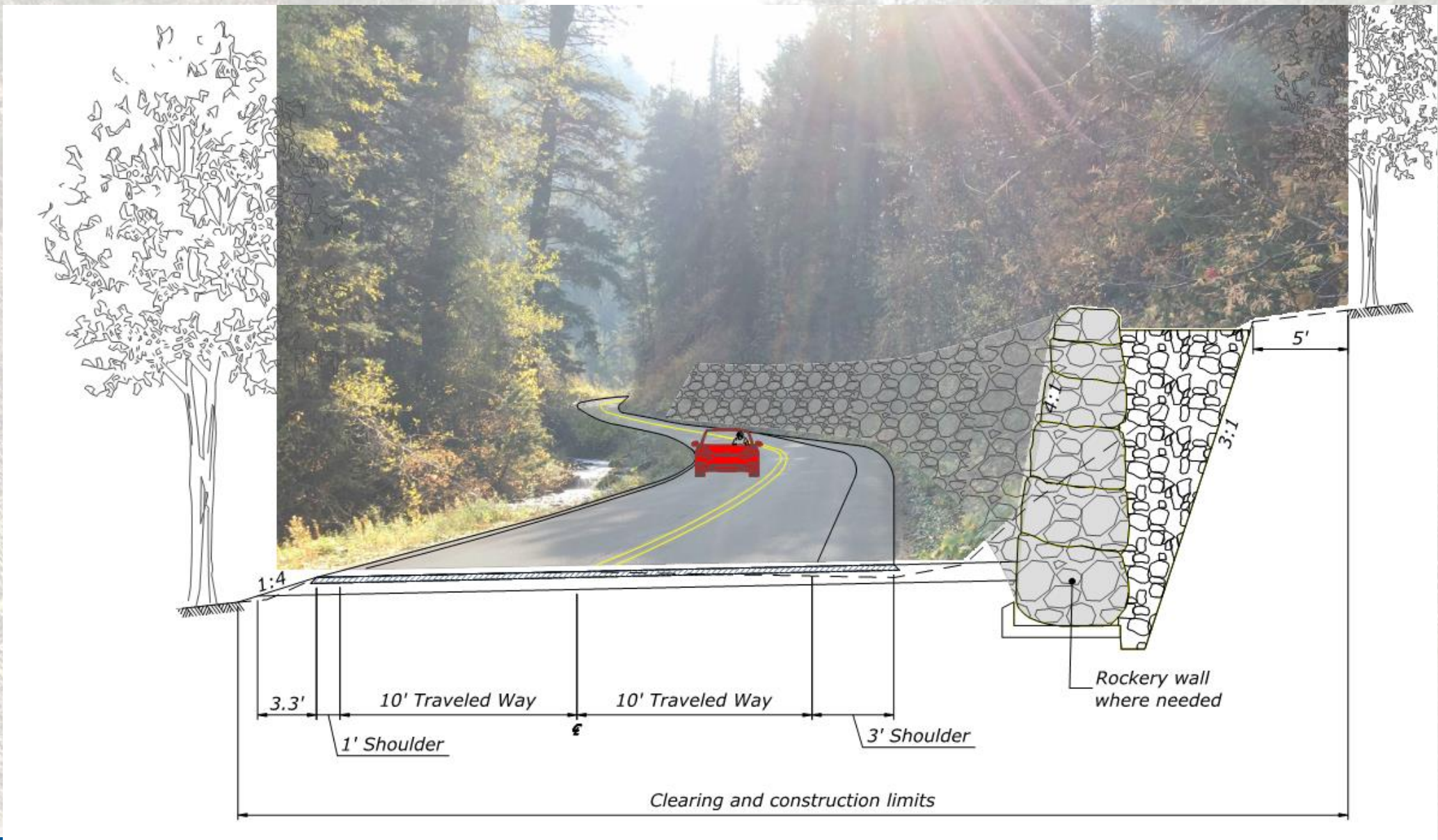


Mill Creek flowing on both sides of the road.

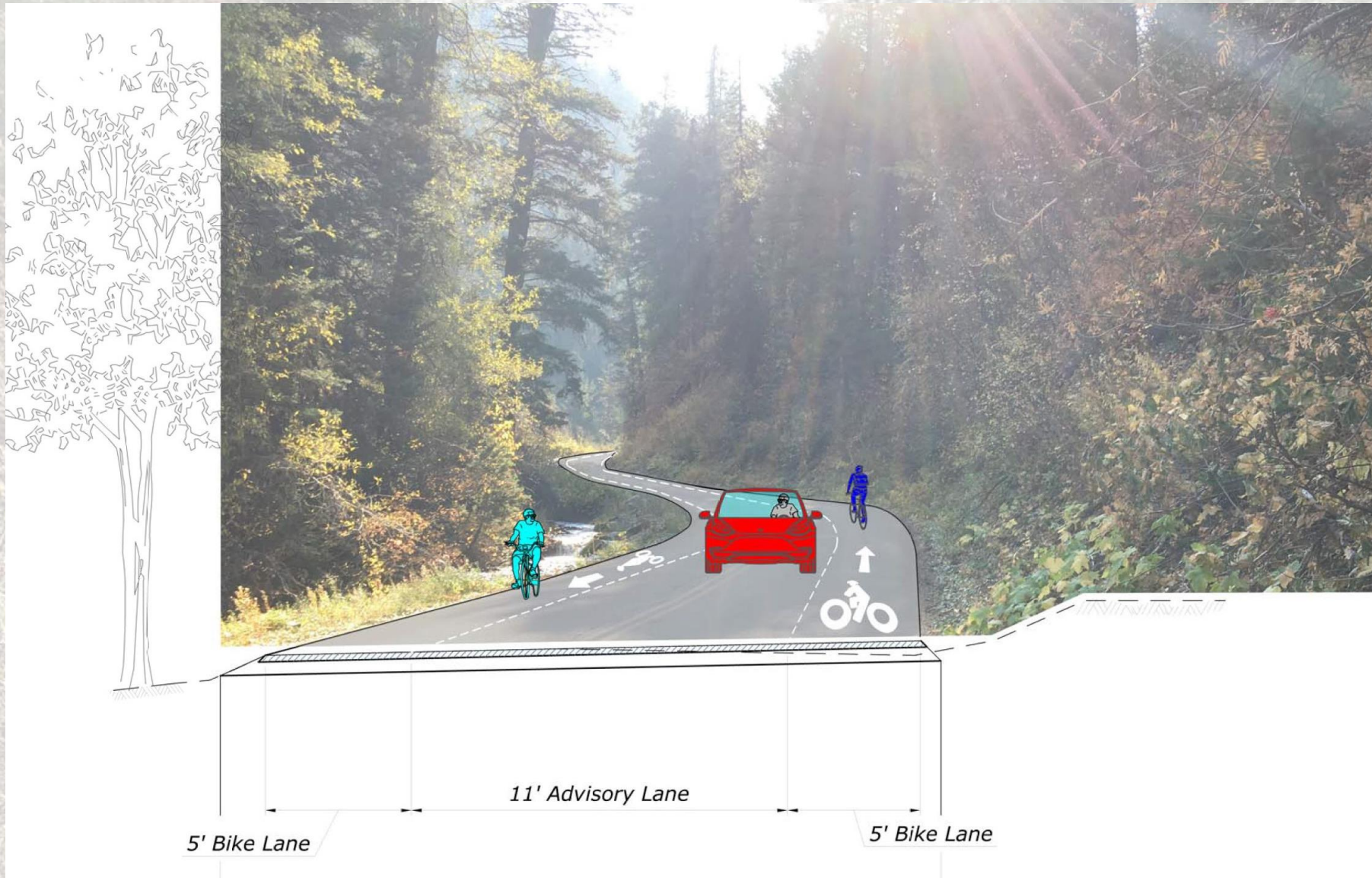
How Does the Canyon Itself Influence Design



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?

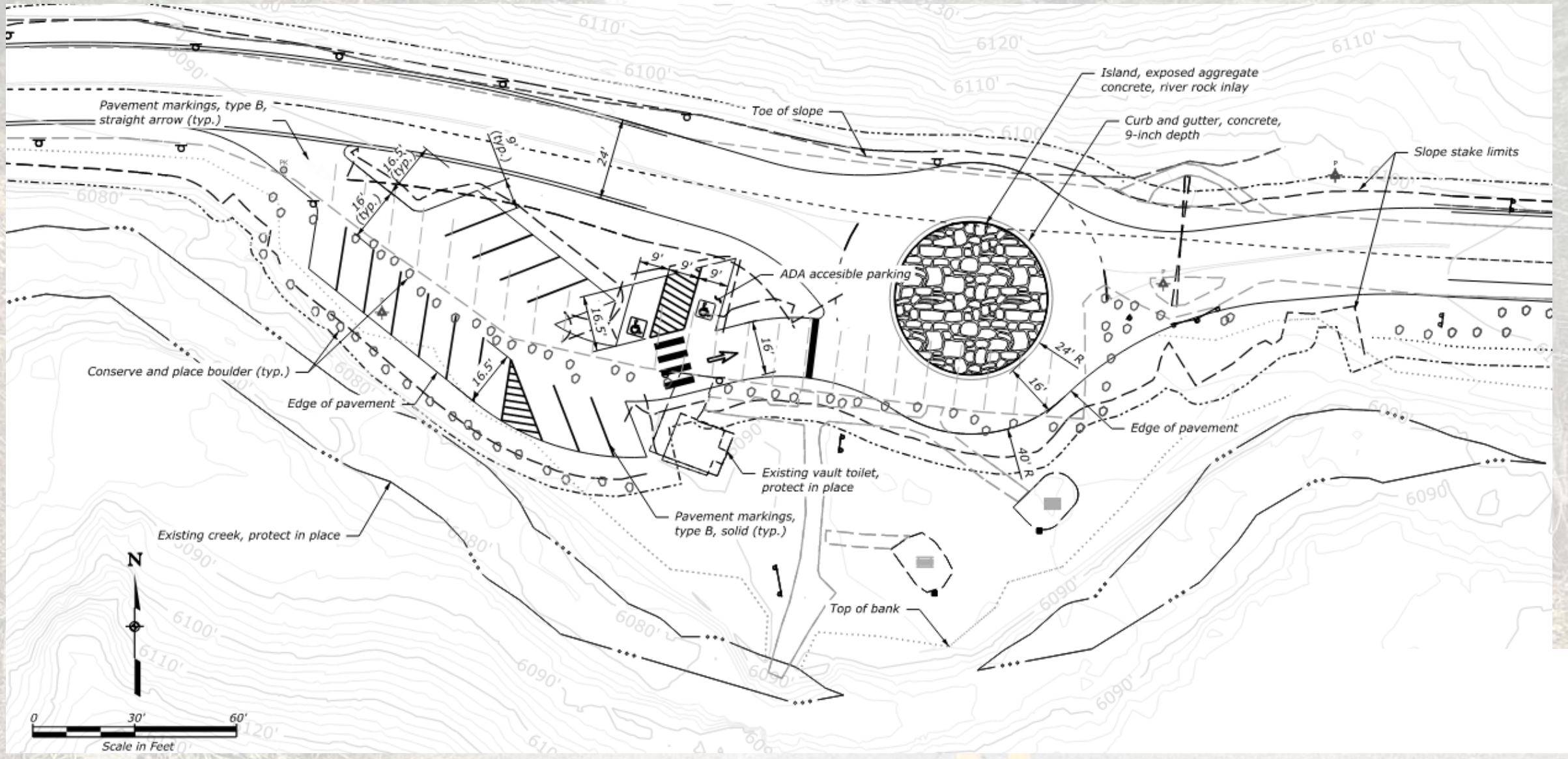
Rockery Wall Examples



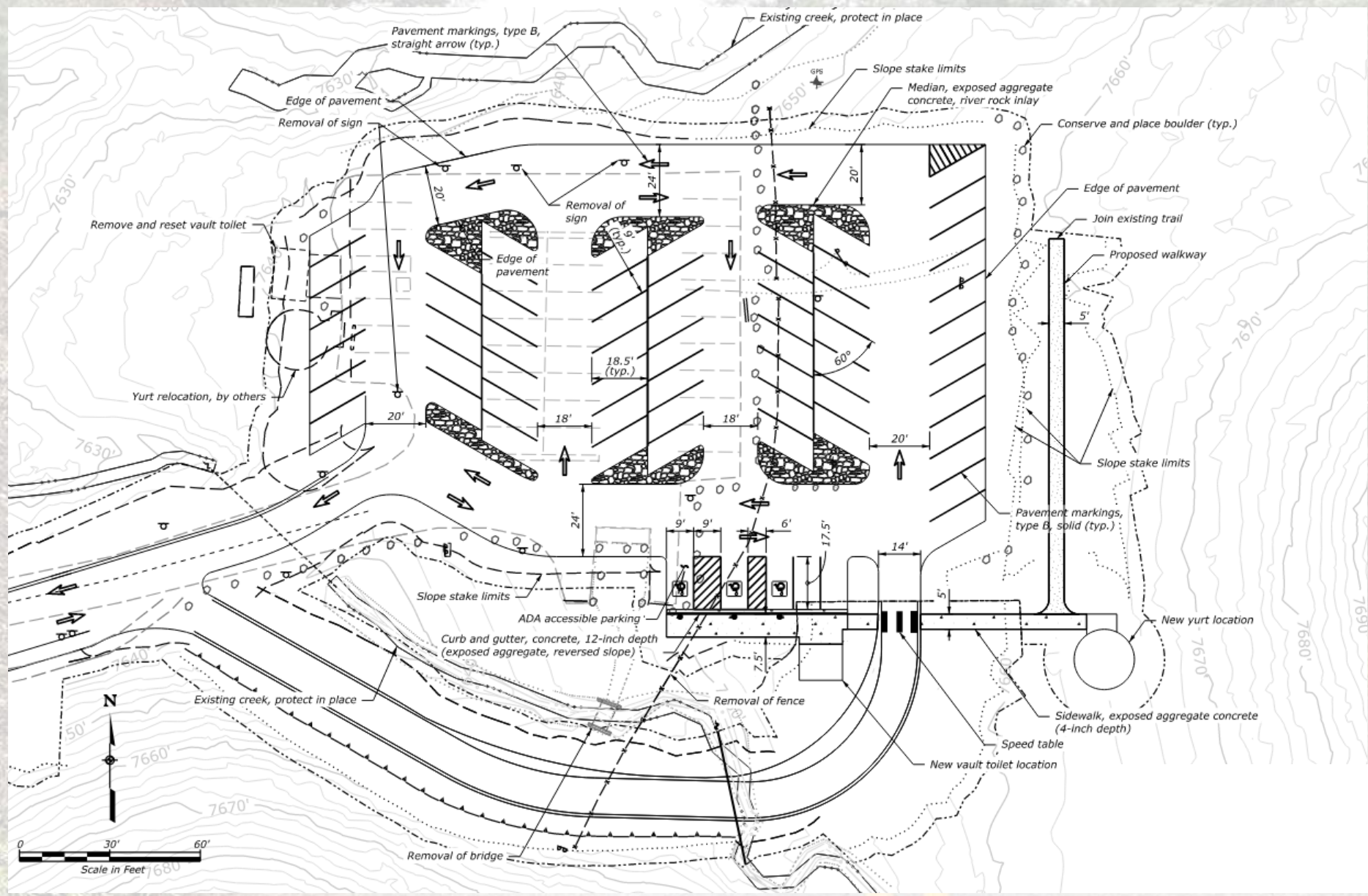
Soil Nail Wall Example



What Could Retaining Walls Look Like?



Winter Gate Parking Lot Concept



Big Water Trailhead Parking Lot Concept

▪ **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

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?