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Corroon pushes west-bench planning

4 summits to target 93,000 acres along foothills of Oquirrhs

By [Doug Smeath](#)

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WEST VALLEY CITY — Calling for "some bold, new and important ideas for the future of our county," Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon on Wednesday kicked off the first of four summits aimed at creating a wide-ranging plan for the future of the valley's west bench.

The summits, organized by the county's Council of Governments and spearheaded by Kennecott Land, will bring together mayors and planners from cities throughout the county, Kennecott officials, representatives of the Wasatch Front Regional Council, Utah Transit Authority and Utah Department of Transportation planners, lawmakers, environmental groups and others.

The topic: 93,000 acres of land lie mostly undeveloped along the foothills of the Oquirrh Mountains. The land, owned by Kennecott Land, is seen by many planners as the nexus of future growth in the valley, as Kennecott Utah Copper's mining operations change course and the land is no longer needed for mining.

Kennecott Utah Copper's Scott Lawson said the company's mining in the Oquirrhs is changing and will reach its end eventually but not any time soon. He said an expansion of the mine's large open copper pit will extend the mining life by about five years, and the company's current plan takes mining operations to 2018, but there are resources left to be mined beyond that.

"We're very confident we'll be able to expand the mine life by another 10 or 15 years," he said.

It is predicted Kennecott Land's holdings — 144 square miles stretching from the Davis County line into Utah County — could eventually bring 500,000 new residents to Salt Lake County.

So Kennecott Land wants to bring all the key players in the early stages to master-plan the course of growth along the Oquirrhs. Already, Kennecott has started Daybreak, a master-planned community in South Jordan where nearly 700 homes have been sold in the past year, a school and community center has been built, and the focus is on walkability, recreation and a unique sense of community.

"Once upon a time, the term 'land-use planning' scared people into thinking Big Brother was coming," Corroon said. "Well, Big Brother is not coming."

Rather, residents want growth, infrastructure, conservation and transportation planned

before the development begins, he said.

Kennecott's method is fairly unusual and is being called an unprecedented opportunity. Typically, growth is directed by developers who come up with a plan for a piece of land, then ask county or city leaders for an OK. But County Councilman Mike Jensen, a Magna resident whose district encompasses all the Kennecott Land holdings, said, "This is really shaking that paradigm up."

Kennecott wants the decisionmakers to be involved in the beginning stages.

"Measure twice and cut once," Corroon said, referring to a saying used in the construction industry. "Growth anywhere in this valley affects us everywhere."

All of Kennecott's developable land lies within 20 minutes of downtown Salt Lake City, a fact many summit participants touted as making it ideal for the valley's future growth.

"Development is already creeping pretty far west," Kennecott Land's long-range planning vice president Jim Schulte said. "If we did nothing, that would still happen."

At the next summit, to be held Oct. 12, Kennecott Land will present its preliminary master plan for the area, though Peter Calthorpe of Calthorpe Associates, the planning company working with Kennecott Land, said the move is not meant to be "pre-emptive."

Instead, it is seen as a jumping point to get summit participants talking. Another summit later in October will give participants a chance to react, give input, raise issues and ask questions. Kennecott Land expects to cull all that into a revised master plan to be presented at a summit in December.

After that, the plans go on a case-by-case basis before county and city planners for approval as each new development is ready to start.

In the meantime, Kennecott Land has created an informational booklet that is available at county and some city library locations throughout the valley. Residents can look through the information and can pick up a comment card to be mailed to Kennecott Land.

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