

Deseret Morning News, Thursday, October 13, 2005

West-bench plan would focus on 2 urban hubs

Kennecott proposes linking the centers with a 'transit spine'

By [Doug Smeath](#)

Deseret Morning News

WEST VALLEY CITY — Kennecott's draft plan for Salt Lake County's west bench predicts that nearly a half-million new residents will be in the valley by 2060 and that one or two ski resorts might be operating in the Oquirrh Mountains.

The plan, which was announced Wednesday at the second of four west-bench planning summits at the E Center, would focus on two urban centers — areas of about 1 million square feet of retail space mixed with some residential and office space — connected by a "transit spine" running parallel to the Oquirrh Mountains, running along U-111 in some areas.

The two urban centers would be at Kennecott Land's new Daybreak community in South Jordan and another at the far northern end of the company's land holdings, west of Magna along I-80. That new development is listed in the draft plan as a "near-term" project, possibly the next development Kennecott will get to work on.

Kennecott Land owns 93,000 acres of undeveloped land along the county's west bench, seen by many planners as the nexus of future growth in the valley. The land is a holdout from Kennecott Utah Copper's mining operations, but as those operations wind down and change focus, Kennecott Land is looking to use the land for master-planned development.

The summits, organized by the county's Council of Governments and spearheaded by Kennecott Land, 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.

Kennecott Land wants to bring all the key players in the early stages to make a master plan for growth along the Oquirrhs. That approach — involving community decisionmakers in the planning instead of seeking government approval of a development at the end — is being called an unprecedented opportunity.

The plan is based on a series of "centers," ranging from the two large urban centers down to neighborhood centers, small gathering places that include schools, community centers, recreation, churches and other community facilities. Of the estimated 162,800 new households expected along the west bench by 2060, about 68,000 of them would be within walking distance of such neighborhood centers under the plan.

It calls for about 4,300 housing units within a half-mile of an urban center, 7,400 within a

half-mile of smaller town centers and 66,000 within a half-mile of "village centers," which would include services such as grocery stores and other commercial and civic facilities to serve the surrounding neighborhoods.

Most employment would be incorporated into residential areas rather than segregated into office and business districts, said Peter Calthorpe of Calthorpe Associates, the company behind Kennecott's plan. Dr. James Wood of the University of Utah's Bureau of Economic and Business Research said his group projects 106,000 jobs located along the newly developed west bench — though the entire project, including construction and other off-site jobs, could generate 262,000 new jobs in the county.

Calthorpe said the development will focus on affordable housing, with most neighborhoods a mix of everything from government-subsidized homes to \$1.5 million homes, rather than segregated neighborhoods based on class and income level.

Of Kennecott Land's 93,000 acres, about 75,000 are included in the plan. The rest is in Tooele County or elsewhere and is not primed for development.

Calthorpe said 41,000 acres of that 75,000 would be developed. The plan calls for the other 34,000 to be open space, especially in the Oquirrh Mountains at areas with slopes steeper than 30 percent. There would be additional open space — such as parks and trails — within the developed area beyond that.

The development will open the Oquirrhs to recreation in areas that were once closed off because they were owned by Kennecott. One idea the plan considers for the mountain area is the possibility of skiing coming to the Oquirrhs.

"Balancing east and west in this community might be a really healthy thing on a lot of levels," Calthorpe said, referring to the perception that skiing is a pastime reserved for the Wasatch Mountains east of Salt Lake Valley.

Calthorpe said the plan also holds out the possibility that areas now used for mining in Bingham Canyon and the land near I-80 currently used for tailings ponds could someday be developable, though that would require a lot of cleanup and testing and would be decades down the road.

Summit participants will spend the next two weeks mulling over the details of the plan. They will then return for the third summit to consider questions and concerns. Kennecott and Calthorpe hope they can incorporate that input into a revised master plan that would be presented at a summit in December.

E-mail: dsmeath@desnews.com
