

THE CREEK FLOWS ANEW IN THE CROSSROADS OF THE WEST

Salt Lake City, anchored in the fertile plains at the outer reaches of ancient Lake Bonneville, is nestled right up against the mountains, with the waterline of the old lake visible along them high overhead. Out of those mountains and through the city used to gush beautiful City Creek. Now, through an innovative downtown development, the creek runs again.

It is no mean feat to insert a huge and comprehensive new shopping and dining complex in the heart of an already vibrant and growing downtown Salt Lake City—City Creek Center comprises 700,000 square feet—nor to manage the intricacies of existing businesses, from small to anchor, during the lengthy transformation.

Macy's had its whole front removed for a revised historic facade, and Nordstrom built a stunning new store—but they otherwise may look as though they had never left. But leave they did, demonstrating the complexities during construction. Nordstrom absorbed traf-



fic at its Murray location (and/or generally just held its breath) during the shutdown, ready to add back its downtown location this spring.

Launched before the nationwide financial crash, the development benefits from greater Salt Lake's continued population growth and far-above-average economy, fueled partly by a Utah tech boom, and from the horsepower of owner-operator Taubman Centers, Inc., with funding from City Creek Reserve, Inc. (CCRI), deriving in turn from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Nature stakes a claim downtown

Sustainability and green concerns—from healthy air, to vegetation, to energy efficiency—have been addressed comprehensively. City Creek Center is fully LEED Certified—Stage 2 Silver overall, with some elements Gold. The site also contained a neglected element of pure magic. City Creek was a natural feature when the area was first settled, cascading down from the Wasatch Mountains and providing water to the first pioneer farmers. But the flow had been tunneled underground as the city grew. As its name implies, City Creek Center brings this bubbling brook back to life. As they stroll the courtyards and plazas of the Center, shoppers can enjoy a 1200-foot-long re-creation of the south fork of City Creek, with two 18-foot waterfalls. Three major fountains, by the designers of the Bellagio in Las Vegas, will include musically choreographed fire and water displays.

A four-sided outdoor fireplace overlooking the stream has art relief panels depicting Utah's four seasons. Other artwork is inspired by area mountains, canyons, foothills and the Great Salt Lake. The Center features animal tracks sandblasted into stone, throughout, plus sculptures of Utah's wildlife—bears, eagles, elk and seagulls. The courtyard near Nordstrom will include a migratory bird sculpture. At the heart of the Center, a fully retractable glass roof spans the shopping galleria, while a pedestrian skybridge crosses Main Street and the light rail. The etched glass panels of the skybridge roof automatically lift open to provide cross ventilation.

History repeats—and writes a new chapter

The retail center is part of the mixed-use City Creek project developed by Salt Lake-based master developer CCRI, constructed on the site of two former shopping malls, with more than 80 percent of the material from the former malls recycled or reused as part of its sustainability program. Elements of modern architecture and historic restoration are often combined within the same piece. The ZCMI facade is a story unto itself. The facade you see at lower right is an exacting reproduction

of the original. The previous facade—constructed 35 years ago—was also a reproduction of the original. ZCMI (Zions Co-operative Mercantile Institution) was one of America's first department stores—once the largest retail establishment west of the Mississippi River—originally built to establish fair trade practices on the early frontier. (Before the transcontinental railroad, and the driving of the Golden Spike near Provo, ZCMI even accepted a unique Mormon pioneer currency.) When the prior facade was removed, the decision was made to do a new restoration. Though in great condition, the prior work wasn't as elaborate as the original, and its size and shape were not perfect for new construction. Over 1000 components of the 75-foot-tall storefront were meticulously removed, catalogued, cleaned, repaired and reassembled. The beautiful new historic facade—built by the same local company as the prior restoration—has all the flavor of exactly what it is: the original location of ZCMI going back to Salt Lake City's earliest roots. And it fits in with the rest of the Center's modern design just as effectively as the Center fits in with all of downtown.

The new Nordstrom facade on West Temple integrates art glass, merchandising windows and a dramatic two-story entrance, with a two-story translucent glass wall of LED lights that glow and subtly change colors—the only Nordstrom exterior of its kind.

Shop, dine and be merry

City Creek Center will have about 80 stores and restaurants, fully one third of which are new to the Salt Lake City market, and most new to the state of Utah. A sampling of retail operations includes 77kids® by American Eagle®, BCBG Max Azria, Bose, Brooks Brothers/Brooks Brothers Women, Coach, The Limited, L'Occitane, Michael Kors, N3L Optics, Papyrus, Porsche Design, Tiffany & Co. and Yankee Candle Company.

Food court restaurants already open include Bocata, Chang Chun, Great Steak, McDonald's, Roxberry Juice Co., Sbarro, Subway, Suki Hana and Taste of Red Iguana—and they will be joined by full service dining options such as Texas de Brazil Churrascaria (its first location in Utah), where costumed Brazilian gauchos deliver skewers of sizzling meats in traditional churrascaria style (open flame) and carve them tableside. There are many more.

Opening in March

City Creek Center opens March 22. Bordered by South Temple, 100 South, West Temple and State Street, the Center is in the heart of downtown Salt Lake City, just blocks from I-15 and I-80, or a 10-minute drive from Salt Lake City International Airport. Or a road trip from Arizona will take you past a number of National Parks and Monuments—Zion, Bryce, Cedar Breaks, Arches, Escalante-Grand Staircase—and plenty of great open road driving in between. The I-80 corridor across northern Utah includes a chance to visit the Bonneville Salt Flats, Historic Wendover Airfield Museum and Miller Motorsports Park (see Nov/Dec 2011 issue). When you're ready to settle back into civilization, Salt Lake City is your anchor. Traditional attractions abound, including Temple tours and historic sites. For information and updates, visit www.ShopCityCreekCenter.com. ■



BY JOE SAGE