



# CREATING COMMUNITIES: *A GUIDE TO WALKABLE CENTERS*

A RESOURCE FOR CREATING LIVE, WORK, PLAY, AND LEARN COMMUNITIES IN UTAH

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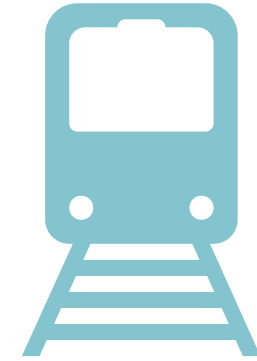




## INTRO TO CENTERS



## WHAT'S IN A CENTER?



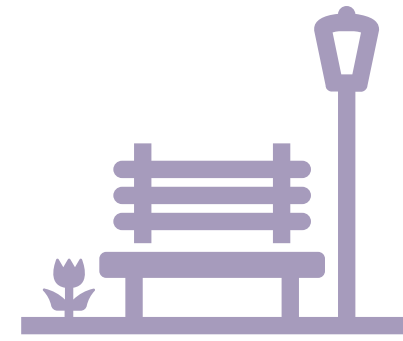
## MOVING TO & THROUGH CENTERS



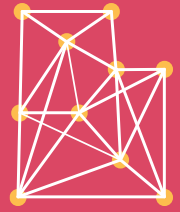
## REGIONAL BENEFITS



## PLANNING A CENTER



## SCALES & EXAMPLES



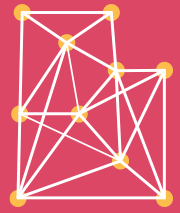
# HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

- Tool for city staff, officials, planners, and the general public
- To learn more about creating centers as a strategy for accommodating growth while maintaining our high quality of life
- The guide discusses the major components of centers & how to bring them to life in your community



*UNIVERSITY PLACE, OREM*  
*PHOTO CREDIT: UNIVERSITY PLACE*

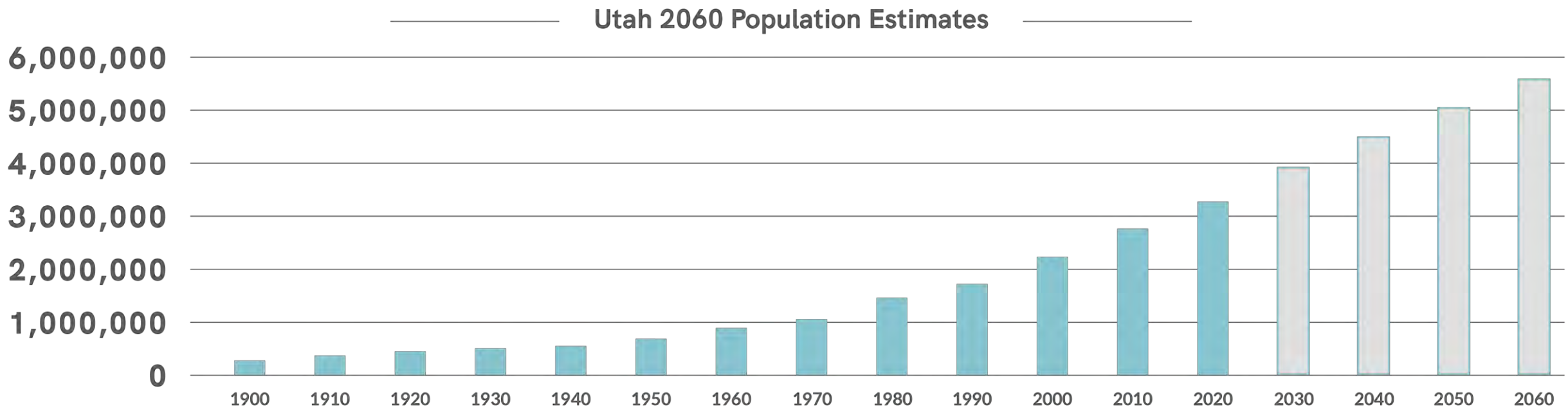
# INTRO TO CENTERS



# HOW WE GROW MATTERS

## Challenges

- Water
- Traffic
- Air Quality
- Housing
- Geographically constrained



Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute. (2017, July 1). *Utah's Long-term Demographic and Economic Projections*. <https://gardner.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/Kem-C.-Gardner-County-Detail-Document.pdf>.  
U.S. Census Bureau, & Utah History Encyclopedia. (n.d.). *Population of Utah between 1850 and 2010 (Compared with the United States)*. Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute; <https://gardner.utah.edu/demographics/user-data/>.  
Harris, E. (2020, December). *State and County Population Estimates for Utah: 2020*. <https://gardner.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/State-County-PopEst-Dec2020.pdf>.

# WHAT IS A CENTER?

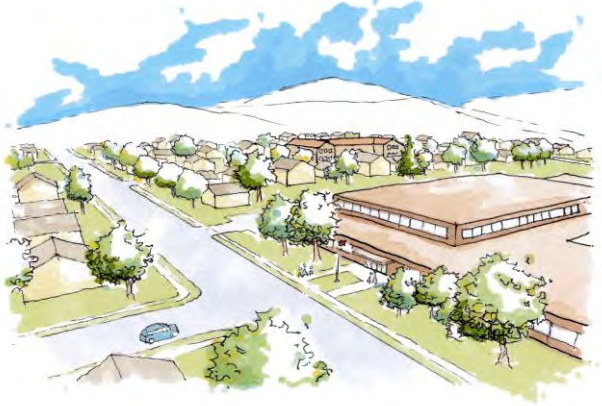


- A walkable, mixed-use location in a region, city, or neighborhood that provides a variety of amenities and services.
- All centers share 3 fundamental components:
  - A mix uses
  - Access to regional transportation
  - A walkable design



*CENTER STREET, LOGAN*

# SCALES OF CENTERS



NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



CITY CENTER



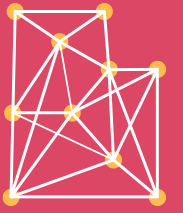
URBAN CENTER



METROPOLITAN CENTER



# LOCATION IS IMPORTANT



*STATION PARK, FARMINGTON*

- Centers provide the most benefit when connected as part of a network
- Centers of different scales should be distributed throughout the region
- Connect centers through robust transportation corridors
- Distribution allows centers to remain accessible and economically viable

# CENTERS ARE A UTAH TRADITION



MAIN STREET & 200 SOUTH | SALT LAKE CITY 1909



MAIN STREET | PARK CITY (DATE UNKNOWN)

**WHAT'S IN A  
CENTER?**

# MIXED USE



Good centers include more than one of the following uses:

- Housing
- Retail
- Office space
- Public spaces
- Civic uses

Centers are not:

- Strip malls
- Auto-oriented



*RICHFIELD, UTAH*



*HOLLADAY, UTAH | 2002*

# HOUSING



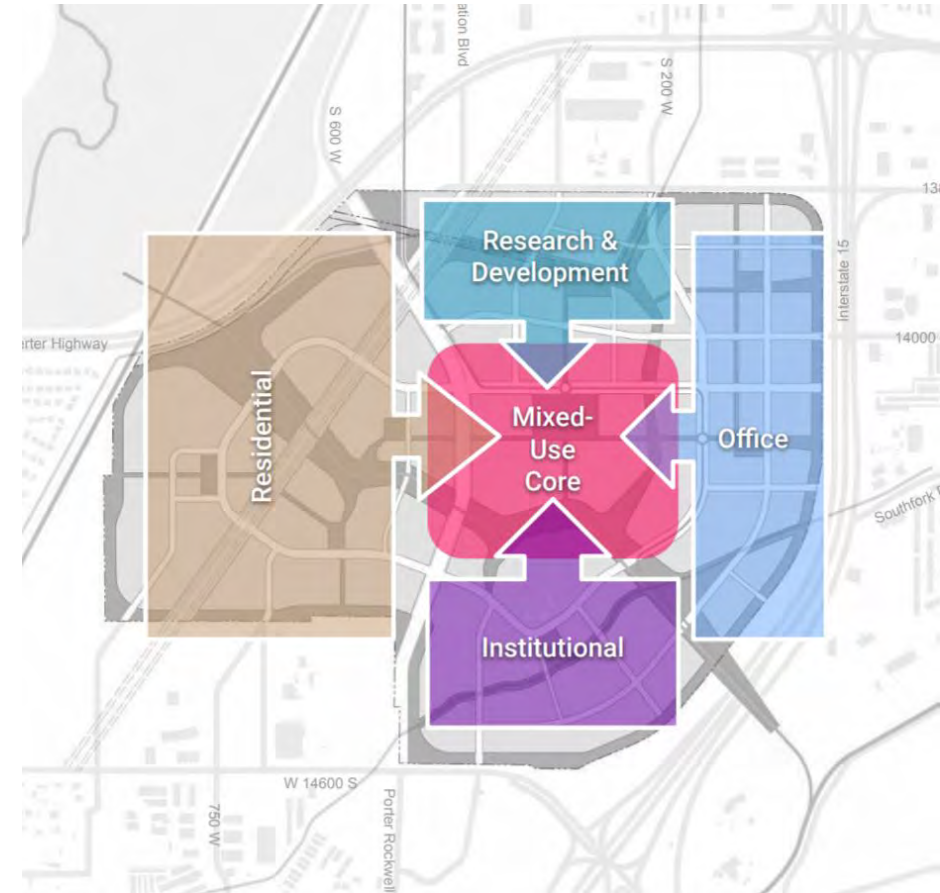
*THE GATEWAY, SALT LAKE CITY*

- A key use to include in centers
- Residents have convenient access to amenities and transportation
- Centers create opportunities to increase the supply of affordable and missing middle housing

# ZONING & FORM-BASED CODE



- Zoning for multiple uses allow a space to best respond to market shifts
- Form-based code
  - Regulates the design of buildings and streets rather than the use of spaces
  - Contributes to sense of place
  - Ensures development matches the desired urban form



CONCEPTUAL AREA MAP FOR THE DRAPER PRISON SITE

PHOTO CREDIT: POINT OF THE MOUNTAIN STATE LAND AUTHORITY



# USABLE PUBLIC SPACE



PROXIMITY TO  
DOWNTOWN CORE

LOCAL HISTORY  
HIGHLIGHTS

NATURAL GREENERY  
& GARDEN FEEL

STROLLING &  
LOUNGING AREAS

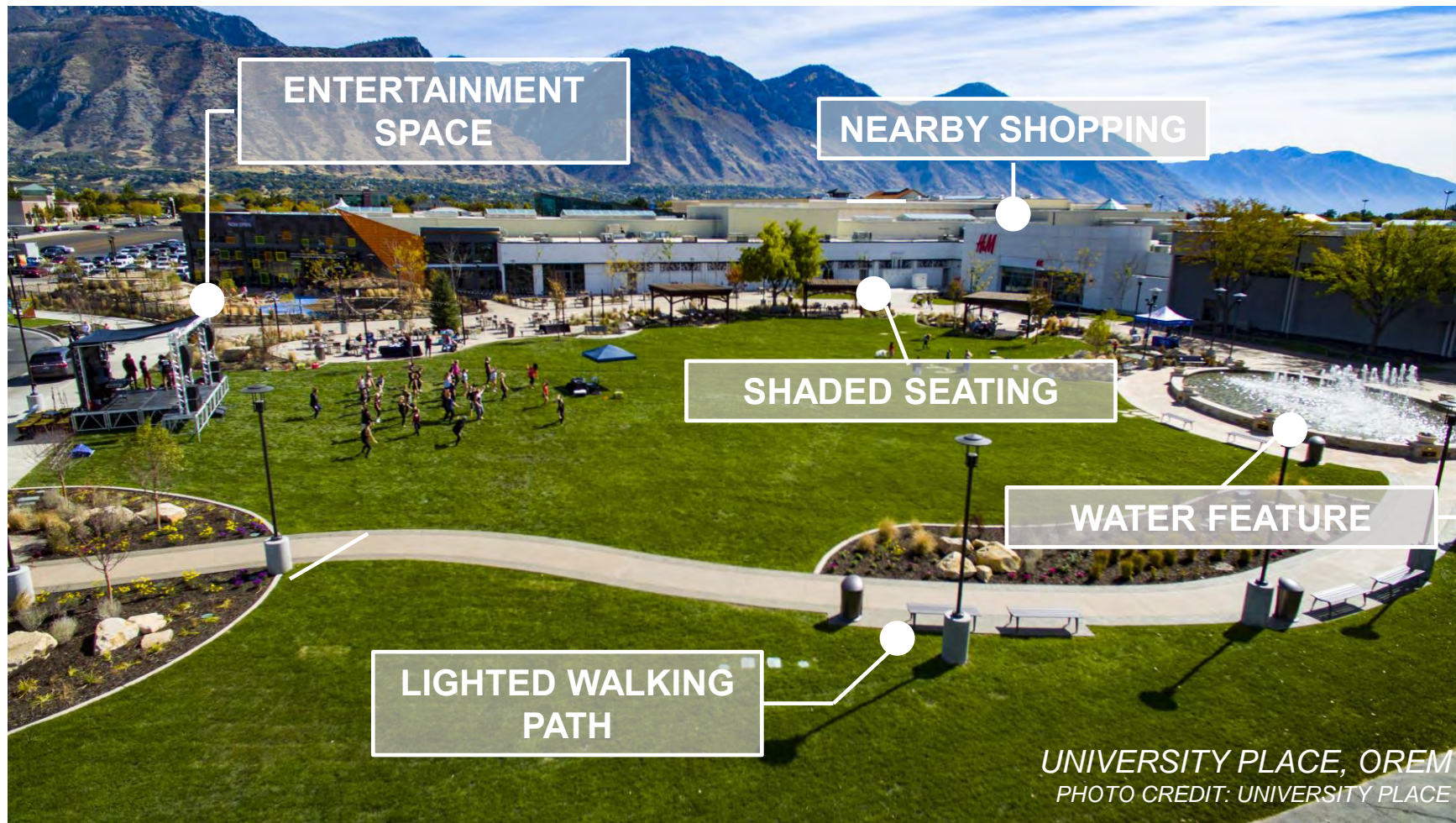
TEMPLE SQUARE, SALT LAKE CITY

- Valuable amenity, especially in urban areas
- Create safe and welcoming public spaces



# USABLE PUBLIC SPACE

- Open space should be a few minutes walking distance from other destinations
- To be truly usable, include:
  - Walking paths
  - Benches
  - Plaques
  - Picnic tables
  - Shade covers
  - Lighting
  - And other community needs or desires







# EXPERIENCES & CREATIVE RETAIL

Today's shoppers are spending less on goods and more on services and experiences like dining out, concerts, and festivals.



*HOLLADAY VILLAGE, HOLLADAY*  
*PHOTO CREDIT: CITY OF HOLLADAY*



*PIONEER PARK, SALT LAKE CITY*



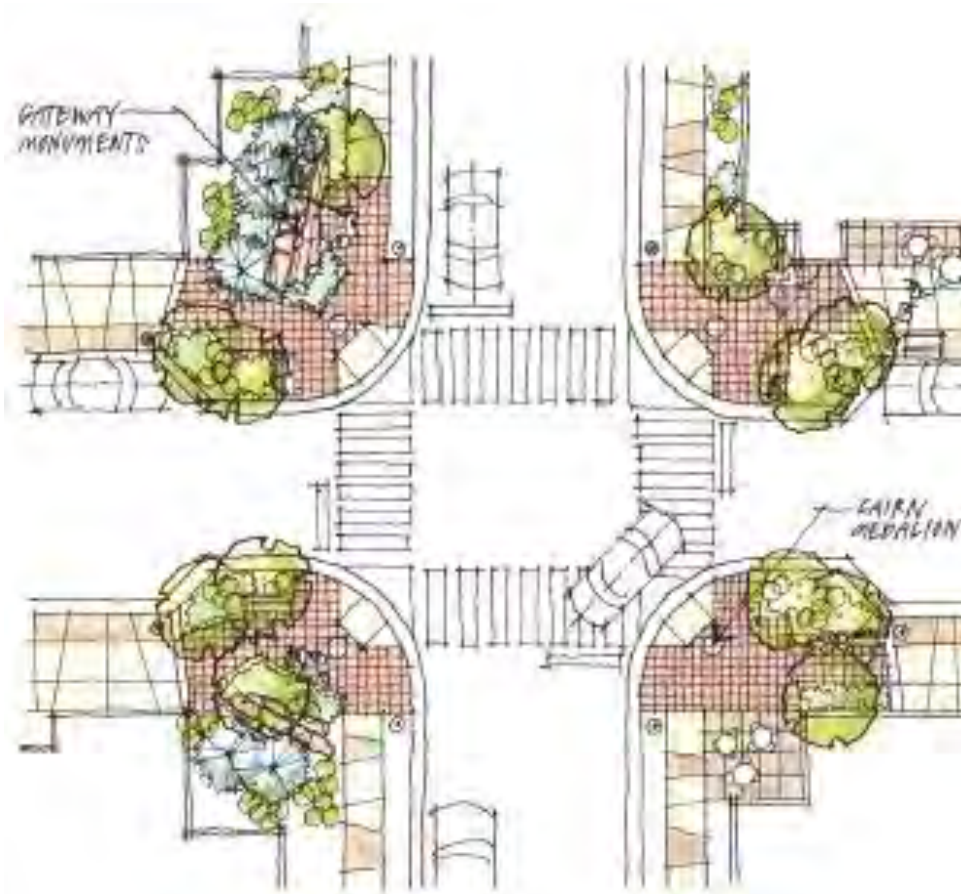
# LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

The best centers are unique to the locality and blend into the fabric of the surrounding community.



*PARK CITY*

# DESIGN STANDARDS



*THE CAIRNS, SANDY*  
PHOTO CREDIT: SANDY CITY

- Preserve communities
- Amplifying the existing character of the area
- Inform design standards through public engagement

# EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY CULTURE



**GARDNER VILLAGE**  
PHOTO CREDIT: DANIEL KNIGHT



**MOAB**  
PHOTO CREDIT: jovannig – stock.adobe.com



**ST. GEORGE**



**VERNAL**  
PHOTO CREDIT: MelissaMN – stock.adobe.com

**MOVING TO  
AND THROUGH  
CENTERS**

# REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS



- Locate centers near high-capacity transportation infrastructure
- To maintain walkability, locate the center to one side of facilities
- Buffer areas with high pedestrian use from transportation infrastructure



*DAYBREAK, SOUTH JORDAN*



# TRAFFIC CALMING STRATEGIES

Examples include decreased or narrower lanes, larger medians, traffic circles, one-way couplets, and extended curbs.



# STREET CONNECTIVITY



- Connected streets provide safe and more direct routes for walking and biking
- Less connected streets force traffic into high-speed arterial roads



*CONNECTED STREET GRID*



*DISCONNECTED SUBURB*



# STREET CONNECTIVITY



REGENT STREET, SALT LAKE CITY

- If connecting streets isn't possible, consider adding pedestrian or bike connections
- Check out the Utah Street Connectivity Guide to learn more

# WALKABLE DESIGN



- Design spaces to be interesting for a person at walking pace, for example:
  - Eye-level signs
  - Buildings close to the street
  - Doors that open to the sidewalk
  - Clear pathways
  - Places to stop & sit



*CENTER STREET, LOGAN*

# COMPLETE STREETS



900 S 300 W, SALT LAKE CITY

- Streets that serve the needs of cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians
- Elements to include:
  - Well-marked crosswalks
  - Narrower driving lanes
  - Slower posted speeds
  - Center medians
  - On-street parking
  - Park strips
  - Artwork
  - Furniture



# THOUGHTFUL PARKING

- Parking detracts from walkability when located in large surface parking lots
- However, parking is essential for convenient auto access in a center

Add photo when its finalized

## THE STATE OF PARKING



At ten sites studied in Orem, observed supply exceeded observed demand at every site. Seven of the sites had observed parking occupancy rates at less than **75 percent**.<sup>4</sup>



Five case studies of transit oriented developments showed that walking, bus, and rail were key transportation options. Observed automobile road share was just **23 percent** at one site.<sup>5</sup>



Vehicle trips in transit oriented developments have been observed at **less than half** of the rates predicted by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE).<sup>5</sup>



The average American car is only driven **5 percent** of the time and is parked for the rest.<sup>6</sup>



Around **50 percent** of the cars parked in free spaces will stay longer than the posted time limit.<sup>6</sup>

4. Snideman, J. K., Bench, J., & Clark, R. (2019, April). *Orem City Parking Study*. Orem City. [https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/420894/Parking\\_Study\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/420894/Parking_Study_Final_Report.pdf)  
5. Ewing, R., Tian, G., & Lyons, T. (2017). (rep.). *Trip and Parking Generation at Transit-Oriented Developments* (pp. 1–108). Portland, OR: National Institute for Transportation and Communities. [http://mrc.cap.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2015/12/NITC\\_767\\_Trip\\_and\\_Parking\\_Generation\\_at\\_Transit-Oriented\\_Developments-1.pdf](http://mrc.cap.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2015/12/NITC_767_Trip_and_Parking_Generation_at_Transit-Oriented_Developments-1.pdf)  
6. Kazis, N. (2010, February 24). *Fun Facts About the Sad State of American Parking Policy*. Streetsblog USA. <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2010/02/24/fun-facts-about-the-sad-state-of-american-parking-policy/>

# THOUGHTFUL PARKING



- Parking in well-designed centers will be much lower than ITE recommendations
- Trends are showing less parking demand
- Parking should work to heighten overall connectivity, convenience, and walkability



# STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED PARKING DESIGN



*CENTRALIZE PARKING  
THE GATEWAY, SALT LAKE CITY*



*UTILIZE SHARED PARKING RESERVOIRS  
CITY HALL, PARK CITY*

# STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED PARKING DESIGN



*PROVIDE ON-STREET  
PARKING  
9<sup>TH</sup> & 9<sup>TH</sup>, SALT LAKE CITY*



*LOCATE SURFACE  
PARKING LOTS  
BEHIND BUILDINGS  
HOLLADAY VILLAGE,  
HOLLADAY*



*INCLUDE PEDESTRIAN NAVIGATION  
TROLLEY SQUARE. SALT LAKE CITY*

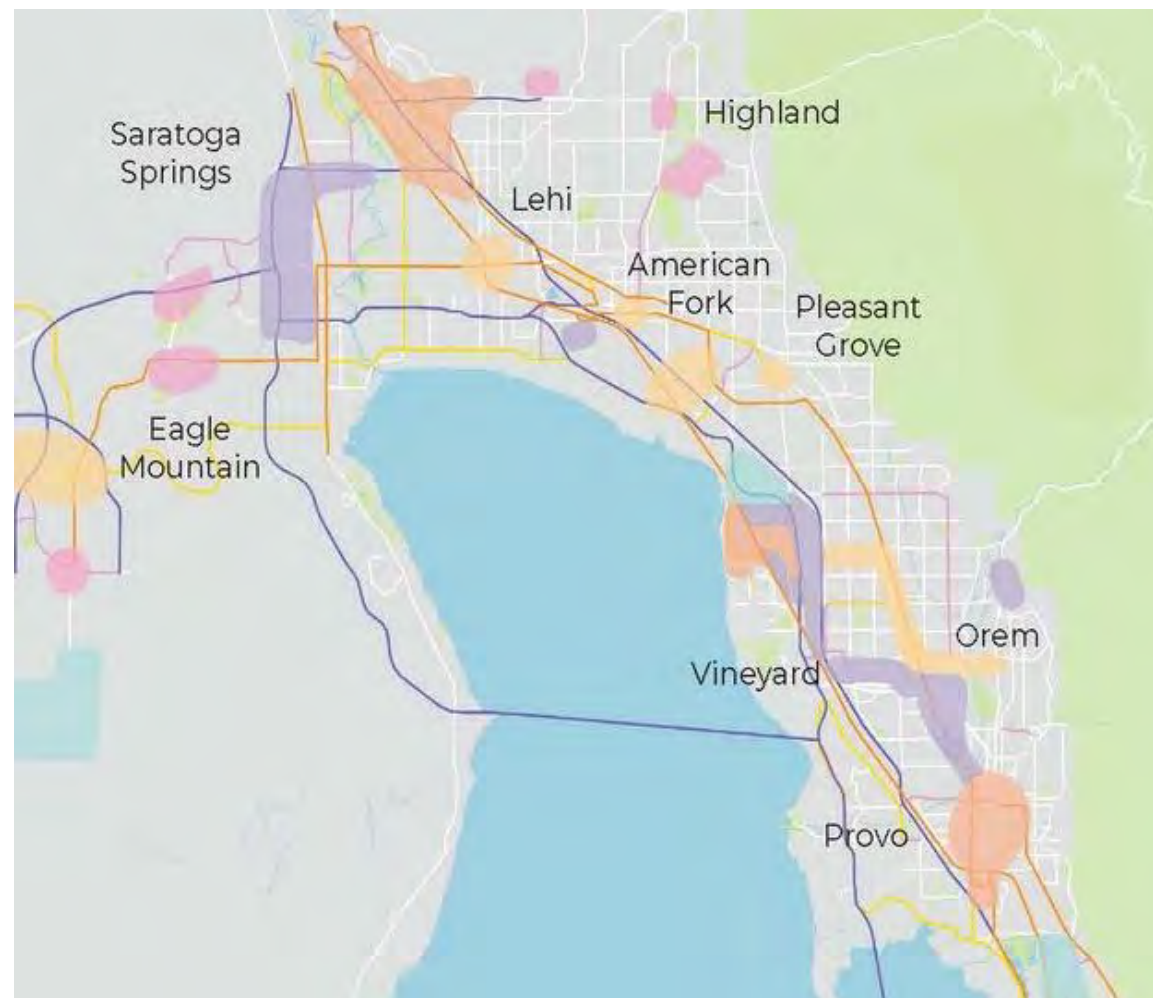
# REGIONAL BENEFITS





# BUILDING A NETWORK

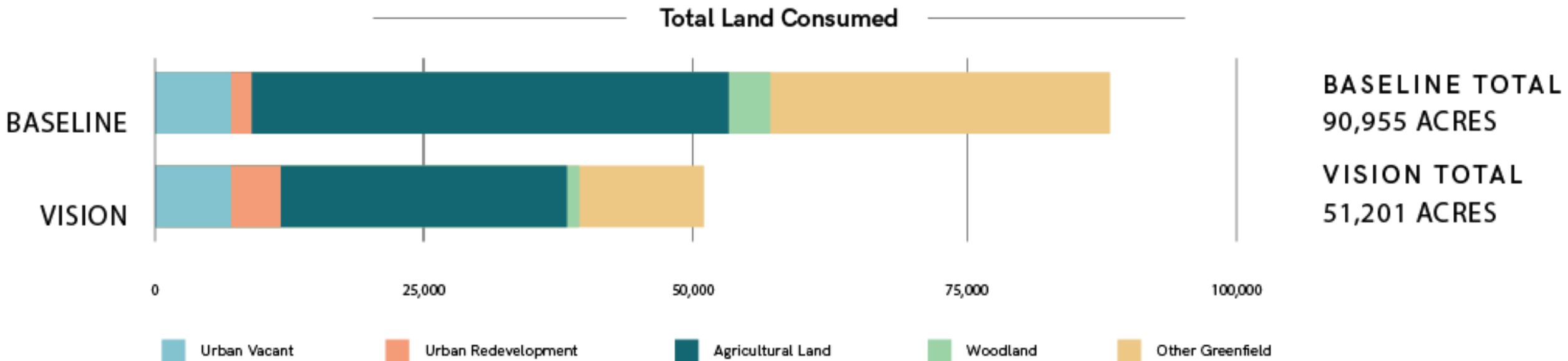
- Achieved by developing centers of different scales in strategic locations
- Ensure centers are well-connected
- A network of centers helps Utahns access:
  - Housing
  - Employment
  - Recreation
  - Education
  - Healthcare
  - Etc.





# REDUCING THE URBAN FOOTPRINT

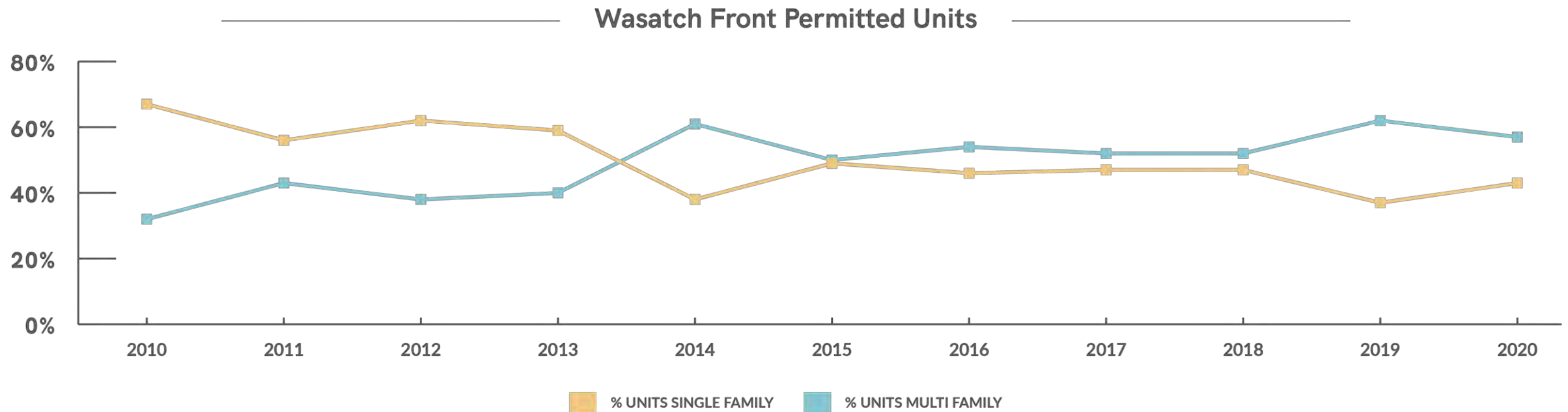
- Centers provide attractive, convenient spaces for new housing & other buildings in concentrated areas.
- Denser development reduces infrastructure costs by saving miles of roads, pipes, and utilities.





# MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

- Housing construction has not kept pace with population growth
- This is especially true in the Wasatch Front, which also hosts the majority of Utah jobs





# MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

- A variety of housing types allows people to have flexibility and freedom to choose where they live throughout different stages of life
- Centers create an opportunity to supply a variety of housing types in attractive places supported by transportation infrastructure.



# INCREASING & IMPROVING ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION & OPPORTUNITY



MAIN STREET, SALT LAKE CITY

- Centers expand travel options and reduce the cost of living
- A network of centers reduces the overall amount of driving by bringing destinations closer to people
- Housing, transportation, job, and education opportunities located in centers and nearby centers increases the accessibility of opportunities for Utahns

# PROMOTING HEALTHIER LIVING AND IMPROVED AIR QUALITY



- Local centers provide the opportunity for more Utahns to spend time walking or biking rather than in their car
- 40% of Utah's air pollution comes from our vehicles
- Centers can reduce or eliminate the need for vehicle trips, promoting healthy activity and reducing poor air quality



SALT LAKE COUNTY

REGIONAL BENEFITS

# ENSURING FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



*DAYBREAK, SOUTH JORDAN*

- Research has shown that higher density developments that are well-connected to existing transportation infrastructure are less costly to the public sector
- The Wasatch Choice Regional Vision forecasts that increasing the level of centered growth to match the vision would save local governments **approximately \$2.3 billion**
- Savings would come from needing to provide less infrastructure to serve new development

# FOSTERING SENSE OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY



- Centers provide an opportunity to create enjoyable, welcoming, and memorable gathering spots
- Help foster a sense of local identity and distinguish the community from neighboring areas
- Centers encourage social interaction, which helps cultivate a sense of safety and community



*SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL, CEDAR CITY*  
*PHOTO CREDIT: KARL HUGH*



# PLANNING A CENTER



# EMBRACE THE PROCESS

- Centers should be unique to the local community
- Have the goals of the community in mind
- Learn from other centers in similar settings
- Ultimately the process and resulting center must be their own

## — EXAMPLES OF CENTER METRICS —



### *Transportation*

- Mode Share
- Walking Opportunities
- Miles of New Bike Lanes
- Transit Stop Density and Ridership
- Intersections per Square Mile
- Average Percent of Income Spent on Transportation



### *Housing*

- New Housing Units
- Residents per Acre
- Percent of Units Occupied
- Job-Housing Balance
- Average Percent of Income Spent on Housing
- Percent of Housing that is Affordable (< 30%, 50%, 80% Area Median Income)



### *Economics*

- Tax Revenue
- Employment per Acre
- Infrastructure Maintenance Costs
- Commercial Occupancy and Rents
- Number of Residents in Catchment Area
- Commercial Market Value (dollars per square foot)

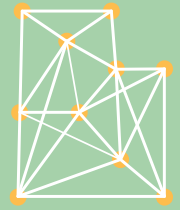


### *Sense of Place*

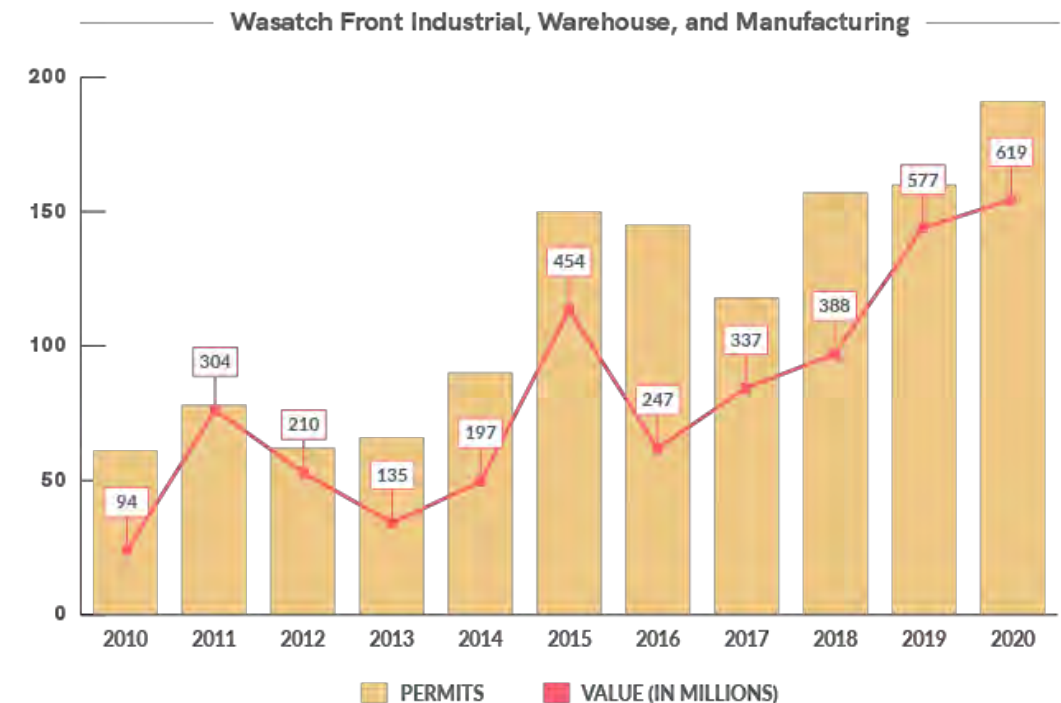
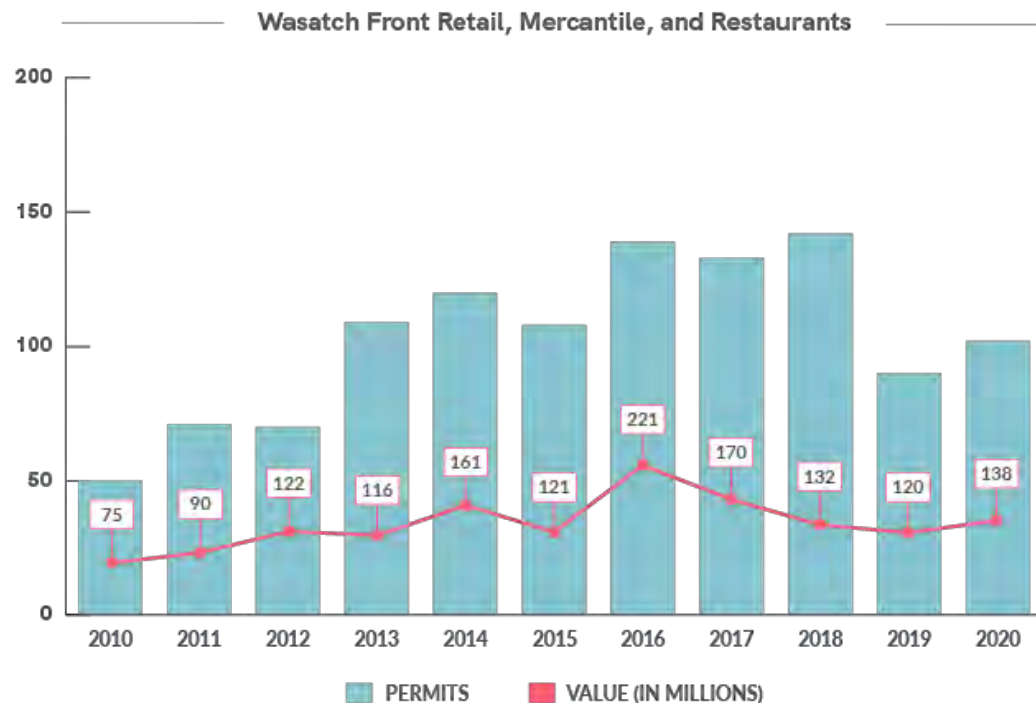
- Land Use Mix
- Number of Daily Visitors
- Event Space Reservations
- Recognition of Community Branding
- Total Acres Within the Center
- Households Near Open Space or other Key Features

To learn more about how centers are assessed, see Wasatch Front Regional Council's State of the Centers 2019 report.

# MEETING MARKET DEMAND THROUGH RETROFITS



- Consider the market when deciding what needs to be built in your community & where
- Look to existing retail-only spaces to meet other needs, especially housing



# MEETING MARKET DEMAND THROUGH RETROFITS



- The public sector can play key roles in retrofitting commercial areas by:
  - Acquiring & aggregating property
  - Reducing parking requirements
  - Improving walkability
  - Adopting flexible zoning
  - Adding civic uses, open spaces, or points of interest
  - Using tax increment or other financing mechanism to fund infrastructure and affordable housing costs



*FAIRBOURNE STATION, 2006*



*FAIRBOURNE STATION, 2020*

# REIMAGINING DOWNTOWNS



*HOLLADAY BOULEVARD, 2002*



*HOLLADAY BOULEVARD, 2019*

# PLANNING FOR EVOLUTION IN NEW DEVELOPMENT



- Building a quality center can take many years
- The future is impossible to predict
- Establish and maintain a clear vision for the future, but allow for flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances



*UTAH STATE CAPITOL, 1936*

PHOTO CREDIT: UTAH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, UGS AERIAL IMAGERY COLLECTION



*UTAH STATE CAPITOL, PRESENT*

# STRATEGIES TO INCREASE FLEXIBILITY



## FORM-BASED CODE

Use principle-based ordinance wording and form-based code rather than focusing on use-based regulations.



## STREET GRID

Build a connected street grid to support a variety of development types and intensities over time.



## INTEGRATED DESIGN

Design standards can help a center look and feel integrated into the community, regardless of use.



## FLEXIBLE FIRST FLOORS

Ground floors that can go from housing to commercial space offer the ability to adapt to changing economic realities



## TRANSITION ZONES

Create a transition zone between the center and residential areas that could be integrated into the center in the future.



## MULTI-USE PARCELS

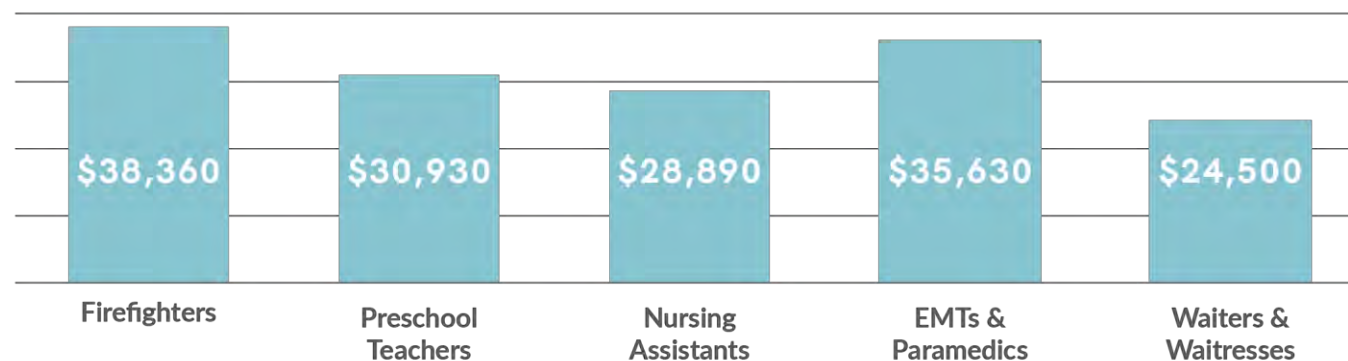
Ensure each subdivided parcel is of a shape and size that it could in the future be used for other purposes.



# AFFORDABILITY

- Higher density development has the opportunity to save costs by using less land and infrastructure
- However, new construction is typically unaffordable for low-income residents or small businesses
- Attractive centers are in high demand, further driving up costs
- Incorporate the topic of affordability from the beginning stages of development

Essential Workers Average Annual Income







# AFFORDABILITY

- Long-term affordability is often a challenge when relying on grants or loans
- Partners like the Utah Housing Corporation and other housing authorities specialize in funding opportunities and managing administrative work
- Consider mixed income housing strategies to keep the project economically viable while reducing community opposition



700 E 400 S, SALT LAKE CITY

# MYTHS



## NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY

Residents often fear that higher density development leads to a decline in the neighborhood and decreased property values.



## CRIME

Another common fear is that high density development may increase crime, often rooted in stereotypes about multifamily residents.



## TRAFFIC & CROWDING

Adding residents and visitors to the neighborhood raises concerns around traffic and crowding.

# MESSAGING

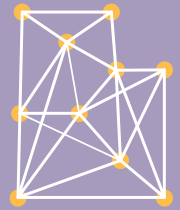






- General messaging techniques include:
  - Emphasize growth realities
  - Speak to audience values
  - Convey fiscal benefits
  - Pursue placemaking
  - Address myths
- Engaging the public creates support and buy-in to the center



# SCALES AND EXAMPLES

# WASATCH CHOICE CLASSIFICATION OF CENTERS



	<b>CATCHMENT</b> <i>(Population estimated to regularly use services and amenities)</i>	<b>FLOOR AREA RATIO</b> <i>(Comparison of building floor area to lot size)</i>	<b>HOUSING DENSITY</b> <i>(Housing units per acre)</i>	<b>BUILDING HEIGHT</b> <i>(In stories)</i>	<b>TYPICAL LAND USES</b>
 <b>NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>0.35 TO 1.0</b>	<b>6 TO 25</b>	<b>1 TO 3</b>	<b>RETAIL/CIVIC</b>
 <b>CITY CENTER</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>0.5 TO 1.5</b>	<b>10 TO 50</b>	<b>2 TO 5</b>	<b>GROCERY/ RESTAURANT</b>
 <b>URBAN CENTER</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>0.75 TO 4.0</b>	<b>20 TO 100</b>	<b>4 TO 10</b>	<b>COMMERCE/ REGIONAL RETAIL</b>
 <b>METROPOLITAN CENTER</b>	<b>ENTIRE AREA</b>	<b>1.0+</b>	<b>40+</b>	<b>4 TO 25</b>	<b>UNIQUE DESTINATIONS</b>

# WHY A VARIETY OF CENTERS IS IMPORTANT



The regional goal is to develop centers of various scales that are as close together as the market will permit but also widely distributed throughout the region.



*DOWNTOWN OGDEN*



*DOWNTOWN MOAB*

# NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS



*SODA ROW, DAYBREAK, SOUTH JORDAN*



*15<sup>TH</sup> & 15<sup>TH</sup>, SALT LAKE CITY*

# CITY CENTERS



*DOWNTOWN LOGAN*



*DOWNTOWN ST. GEORGE*



# URBAN CENTERS



*DOWNTOWN PROVO*



*FAIRBOURNE STATION, WEST VALLEY CITY*

# METROPOLITAN CENTERS



*DOWNTOWN SALT LAKE CITY*



# EMERGING CENTERS

- Taylorsville Center Point
- Millcreek City Center
- Murray City Center District
- Sandy The Cairns District
- Downtown South Salt Lake
- Heber City Envision 2050
- Layton Forward
- Vineyard Town Center



**MILLCREEK CITY CENTER**

PHOTO CREDIT: MHTN ARCHITECTS, VODA LANDSCAPE + PLANNING, MILLCREEK CITY



**THE CAIRNS, SANDY CITY**

PHOTO CREDIT: SANDY CITY

**QUESTIONS  
AND  
DISCUSSION**



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A RESOURCE FOR CREATING LIVE, WORK, PLAY, AND LEARN COMMUNITIES IN UTAH