

PAYSON, UTAH

Community Revitalization Plan

Prepared for Payson City
by Cordes & Associates
Proposed August 21, 2019

In an effort to design a participatory and comprehensive Community Revitalization Plan for Payson, Utah, the Payson City Council agrees on the core elements and priorities for a comprehensive city plan. This Community Revitalization Plan complements the broader goals for the city that complement the *Imagine Payson* initiative, and update to the city general plan.

Background

- Payson is located in Utah County and is listed by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget as part of the Provo-Orem, UT Metropolitan Statistical Area.
- Payson lies along U.S. Interstate 15, 15.4 miles south of Provo, Utah. The 2017 U.S. Census Bureau estimates Payson's population as 19,826.
- The Primary Market Area (PMA) is Utah County, with a U.S. Census Bureau estimated population of 622,213 residents in 2018² with a growth of 2.6% in the past year.³
- According to U.S. Department of Housing and Human Development (HUD), Utah County has the second highest birth rate in the nation, 20.8 births per 1,000 people, a number much higher than the national average of 12.4. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017)
- The largest industries in Utah County are Educational Services (39,693 people), Retail Trade (34,900 people), and Health Care and Social Assistance (28,362 people).⁴
- The highest paying industries in Utah County are Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction (average \$79,195 per year.) The median annual household income in Utah County is \$70,417. ⁵
- From 2016 to 2017, employment in Utah County has grown at a rate of 2.68%.⁶ Unemployment has been steadily declining since 2010, and is currently 2.8%.⁷
- Utah County has an estimated overall rental vacancy rate of 4.0 percent.⁸ Approximately 41 percent of renter households in the Provo-Orem housing market live in single-family homes or mobile homes. The remaining households rent multi-family units, such as condominiums or apartments.
- In its 2018 study, *Utah Foundation Quality of Life Survey: Measuring Utahns' Perceptions of their Communities, Personal Lives*,⁹ The Utah Foundation found that there are growing concerns about the affordability of housing in Utah County driven in part by unprecedented population growth.

Plan Goals and Objectives

This Community Revitalization Plan provides action items to address specific goals supported in Quality Assurance Procedures revitalization factors.

- Goal 1: Improve the quality of low income housing
- Goal 2: Improve the quality of public infrastructure and public facilities
- Goal 3: Facilitate and promote economic development opportunities for existing residents and businesses
- Goal 4: Strengthen linkages between land use and transportation
- Goal 5: Improve public safety
- Goal 6: Leverage resources for strategic neighborhood investments
- Goal 7: Assemble vacant tax delinquent land for redevelopment
- Goal 8: Stimulate and attract neighborhood investment

Improving the Quality of Low-Income Housing

The Department of Housing and Community Services (HUD) is guided by certain principles to assist in the allocation of local, state and federal resources in the provision of affordable housing. These principles seek to:

- Promote affordable homeownership, quality rental housing and sustainable mixed communities;
- Balance affordable and market rate housing; and
- Link housing with other public/private investments, including transit oriented development.

All available tools and resources will be used to promote healthy communities within the targeted areas. The Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program is a critical resource for developers to construct high quality rental property in Community Revitalization Plan areas and throughout Payson.

Payson City has a demonstrated need for low-income housing. The Payson City General Plan includes a Housing Element (adopted April 6, 2011) for the provision of a variety of housing units available to residents of moderate- or low- income.

The Plan shows a projected deficit of 1145 units for low-income residents by 2016. A shortage is likewise projected for moderate-income residents in the 2018 Moderate-Income Housing Report. It notes, “Payson will need to expand the number of housing units to accommodate anticipated growth. This will also increase the need for affordable housing units.”¹⁴

There are currently few apartment complexes in Payson serving predominantly, or entirely, low- and moderate- income residents. Two of the larger projects in the community are in need of rehabilitation.

- Mountain View Apartments (“Mountain View”) and Mountain View East Apartments (“Mountain View East”), located at 252 North 900 East and 987 East 200 North. Built in 1995 and 1985 and both in need of updating, it is slated for acquisition and substantial rehabilitation using low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC) beginning in July 2020. The rehabilitation will deliver 50 fully renovated, ADA-compliant and energy efficient low income housing units receiving USDA RD 155 rental assistance. They have specific set aside units for the disabled and the homeless or near-homeless. Currently, this is one of the only projects in Payson that has been awarded low-income housing tax credits for a substantial rehabilitation.

Project Location

Mountain View complexes are located within a qualifying rural area by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

A 2018 Market Study for the area, performed by The Gill Group, estimates vacancy rates at apartment complexes in the area of Mountain View apartments at 1.4 percent. The adjusted rent range was between \$767 and \$1,247 for one-bedroom units and from \$1,013 to \$1,420 for two-bedroom units.

The complexes are part of the Northeast Neighborhood, described in the Payson City General Plan as a mix of existing residential neighborhoods, commercial development along major transportation corridors, a pocket of industrial uses, and undeveloped areas. Development patterns in this part of the city are expected to include:

- * New residential development
- * Infill development in the existing residential area
- * Commercial and limited industrial development

Areas of Focus in Community Infrastructure

1. Retail Shopping

Flanked by Walgreens to the North and Walmart Supercenter to the South, Payson's retail shopping area also includes:

- National chain stores (i.e. Ace Hardware, AutoZone Auto Parts, AT&T Store)
- Utah chains (maurices)
- Locally owned businesses (i.e. Morganson Frames and Sew Forth, Goofy Guys, Karen's Floral Design)

Grocery outlets include large big box options, Smith's Food and Drug (a regional chain with traditional and online shopping), and Payson Market which has a full range of grocery products, including floral, a butcher, and a large selection of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Mexican and Latin American foods and specialties can be found at El Mercadito and El Pueblo Market. IFA Country Stores, a Western chain specializing in agricultural products, is located eight miles away in near-by Spanish Fork.

The city's restaurant options feature:

- National fast food chains (McDonald's, Subway, Wendy's, Costa Vida)
- Local traditional restaurants (Dalton's Steakhouse, Fat Jack's Pizza)
- Local specialty cuisine (Tadka Cuisine of India, El Tapatio, Mi Rancherito)

Provo Towne Center, located approximately 15 miles north of Payson, is easily reached via a 20 minute drive on I-15. It's an enclosed mall of approximately 800,000 square feet. The center includes national, regional and local retailers. JC Penney, Dillard's, and Cinemark Theater are primary tenants.

2. Nearby Home Values

Traditionally, Payson has been on the lower end of home values as compared to the rest of Utah County. Today, Zillow estimates the median home value in Payson is \$299,400, with values having risen 16.0% in 2019 and expected to rise 10.1% within 2019 and 20. The median price of homes currently listed in Payson is \$305,000, although there are some new construction projects in the \$400,000-500,000+ range.

Properties with the highest prices and fastest appreciation are located in the neighborhoods of West Mountain, Spring Lake, City Center, and near the Payson, Utah LDS Temple.

3. Employment Opportunities and Businesses

Job outlook in Payson is considered positive, in large measure because of its location in Utah County, “the economic driver” for the state of Utah thanks to its growth in tech and life science industries and its “significant buildable land supply,” according to Utah economist Natalie Gochnour.

In Payson, the largest industries are:

- Retail Trade (employing 1,353 people in 2018)
 - Manufacturing (1,222 people in 2018)
 - Health Care and Social Assistance (1,080 people in 2018)
- (Data USA)

The highest paying industries in Payson are:

- Utilities (\$86,528)
 - Transportation & Warehousing & Utilities (\$57,472)
 - Finance & Insurance (\$53,250)
- (Data USA)

Payson City’s Economic Development Board says the foundation of the city’s economic development strategy is “retaining and assisting existing Payson businesses.”¹⁰

Built in 1995, the Payson Business Park, located west of Interstate 15, was developed as an Economic Development Area (EDA) and is served by fiber optic system and full municipal services.

In a 2003 addition to the Payson General City Plan, five factors were identified as key drivers of development:

1. Provision of Reliable and Cost-Effective Municipal Services and Infrastructure
2. Proper Land Assembly and Zoning Designation
3. Residential Development
4. Educational Opportunities
5. Creation of Places and Activities that People want to Visit and Experience

4. Schools

- Payson is home to five public elementary schools, two junior high schools, and one public high school, all part of the Nebo School District. The district offers school bus transportation, with a bus schedule available online.

- An approved 2018 Nebo School District bond will fund six new school construction projects beginning in 2019, including improvements to Payson High School and the conversion of Mount Nebo Junior High into a middle school. In addition, the district will build three new middle schools to meet its growing needs.
- Nearby, Payson residents can opt for C.S. Lewis Academy or American Preparatory Academy free public charter schools, K-6, in Santaquin and Salem, respectively. There is also New Haven, a private, residential treatment school for teenage girls located in nearby Spanish Fork.

5. Public Transportation

Like most other rural communities, Payson has no local public transportation.

- The city is linked to Spanish Fork, Provo and Utah Valley University in Orem by Utah Transit Authority buses running approximately every 30 minutes; there is also an hourly southbound bus to Santaquin.
- The possibility of a commuter rail line has been discussed, with a future station to be located not far from the Payson Business Park.
- Amtrack train service is available in Provo, with daily Zephyr service between Chicago and the San Francisco Bay Area.

6. Social Services

- While there are several private Licensed Family Child Care facilities in and around Payson, few if any participate in subsidized child care programs on which families in need rely. Tuition ranges from \$90-\$650 per month ¹¹, depending on hours. The Nebo School District offers part time tuition-based pre-school (age 3 and up), free special education pre-school for those who qualify (age 3 and up), and free Title 1 preschool services for qualified children.
- Payson City Library is open Monday-Saturday, with evening hours (until 8 PM) Monday-Thursday. The library offers a Summer Reading Program for kids, Story Hour for ages 0-5, a monthly evening book club, free Wi-Fi and computer access.
- Payson Senior Citizen's Center, open Monday-Friday 8 AM to 4 PM, offers low-cost hot lunches, social activities, classes, movies, wellness screenings and free bus transportation.
- Mountain View Hospital is a CAHO accredited, 124-bed hospital and level IV trauma center. It provides emergency care, cardiology, orthopedics, neurosurgery, pediatrics, intensive care, maternity care, behavioral health, radiology, respiratory therapy and a sleep center.
- Medical services are also offered at Payson Instacare a clinic that is part of the Utah-based non-profit system of 23 hospitals; and Payson Family Health Center, a low cost clinic specializing in care for the medically underserved.
- In 2019, Wasatch Mental Health moved its South County clinic to Payson, with its new offices located at 285 N 1250 E. Wasatch Mental Health is a comprehensive community mental health

center offering an array of programs and services for children, teens and adults in both Utah and Wasatch Counties.¹⁶

7. Parks and Recreation

- The general plan notes that “Public parks, recreational facilities and open spaces are limited at the present time in the Northeast Neighborhood,” presenting a revitalization opportunity in addition to the encouragement of new, infill and commercial development.
- Memorial Park, the largest gathering location in the community and a valuable historic asset, is a magnet for visitors and a setting for many city events and celebrations.
- Peteetneet Museum and Cultural Arts Center offers permanent and guest art and historical exhibits and free classes. Support for Peteetneet Museum and Cultural Arts Center reflects Payson City’s commitment to its culture and past as outlined in the Community Heritage and Historic Preservation Element, adopted in a 2011 update to the Payson City General Plan.
- Gladstan Golf Course, considered one of the best off-the-beaten-path courses in Utah, offers residents the experience of an 18-hole course at a competitive price. This scenic facility also has PGA-certified instruction for adults and a full juniors program.
- A full range of activities and sports are available through Payson City Parks and Recreation; the city offers everything from low cost gymnastics, baseball, football and volleyball to cheer, track and field and snowboarding/skiing. There are also programs and competition for adults.
- The sprawling Payson Aquatic Center has something for every member of the family, from a child-friendly water park to competitive lap swimming. The adjacent state-of-the-art skatepark, completed in 2008, is among the best in Utah County. The overwhelming popularity of this facility reflects the community’s hunger for low cost recreational opportunities and the excitement generated by such an investment.

8. Public Safety

Law Enforcement

While Payson sees little violent crime, the rapid growth in and around the city has brought higher numbers of theft and property crimes. To meet growing demand, Payson City has hired more police officers and has made it a priority to increase the effectiveness of its law enforcement.

Previously identified key goals in building law enforcement infrastructure that keeps up with population growth include:

- New public safety facilities
- Updated equipment
- Greater communication with Payson residents
- Maintenance of a trained and responsive reserve office program

Fire Department

Headed by Chief Scott Spencer, the Payson Fire Department is a full service emergency response agency within a 126 square mile response district. In addition to fulfilling its mission to meet natural and manmade fire emergencies, the department also offers safety training classes and emergency

preparedness services. Its Facebook page indicates the department responded to over 500 fire calls last year.

Payson Fire Department also benefits from a strong relationship with the Utah County Fire Department, which provides additional services and shares resources when needed; Utah County Fire Department, a federal and state cooperator, responds to incidents on BLM, Forest Service and State Land.¹²

Emergency Medical Services

A division of Payson Fire Department, the city's EMS includes an in-station ambulance crew for day shifts, and 40 technicians available on-call via pagers. The division handled over 1900 medical calls last year.¹³

Street Safety

Rapid growth has contributed to the wear and tear of city streets. Many are sub-standard and are in great need for repair. This includes potholes, utility cuts, age, lack of shoulders, etc. Many of these problems can be addressed with the new storm drain program. As the 2003 amendment to the Payson General Plan states, "strategy must be developed to rejuvenate or replace our aging streets and to have a cycle of maintenance to keep streets in good repair."

Conclusions

Identified areas of opportunities are:

- New housing on vacant lots
- New commercial/retail development
- Job training and continuous training
- Greater connectivity to other cities

Additionally, it is recommended the income targeted housing provider(s) conduct a household survey to provide an opportunity and platform for Payson residents to voice concerns, opinions, and priorities about future neighborhood revitalization plans. From an analysis of responses, the identified core priorities may form the basis of a comprehensive revitalization plan. It is recommended that such a plan have the following three areas as its fundamental components:

1. Affordable Housing
2. Employment and Income Generation
3. Community Safety

Public Infrastructure Improvements:

- Encourage public street resurfacing
- Encourage more stop signs, lights, consider roundabouts
- Encourage public and private sidewalk, curb & gutter improvements
- Continue to improve and address ADA accessibility

Neighborhood Park Improvements:

- Consider playgrounds and other park facilities in the neighborhood
- Consider a park with park furniture

Neighborhood Beautification:

- Tree planting by private and public entities consistent with the Payson tree ordinance
- Continue to encourage and use the existing gateway banners
- Encourage low maintenance landscaping of public spaces
- Promote neighborhood clean ups (which would also help build a stronger sense of community among the residents)

Recommendations

Communication efforts through a variety of stakeholders such as community-based organizations with close ties to residents need careful consideration for the future long-term impact of initiatives undertaken to improve the neighborhood.

Outlined below are suggestions for each core priority.

1. Affordable Housing

- Encourage new construction to include the renovation of existing projects if and when appropriate.
- Utilize existing homeowner rehabilitation programs for both minor and extensive rehabilitation.
- Encourage increased capacity of existing community groups for housing development.
- Strengthen outreach and dissemination of information about existing housing programs in Payson, UT by income targeted housing providers.
- Encourage housing developers and providers to articulate an acquisition strategy to meet the challenges of 'clean title' and 'cost v. value' disparity based on market analysis and housing inventory market analysis.
- Developers must be tasked with the construction or rehabilitation that strengthen and enhance existing neighborhoods.

2. Employment and Income Generation

- Utilize existing public and private business lending programs to focus on neighborhood shopping, thus addressing both the needs for local retail and that of small business promotion and employment opportunities.
- Link the skills of residents with local employers, in an effort to both match skills and employment requirements, and identify "on-the-job" training needs.
- Request that employment service providers design employment training programs collaboratively with potential employers.
- Continue outreach and dissemination of information about employment programs utilizing the Utah Governor's Office BEAR Program.
- Focus efforts on minority community residents where and when appropriate.

3. Community Safety

- Further the analysis and broaden the understanding of the types and causes of crime occurring in Payson, UT. Continue the working relationship with the local police department and residents.
- Consider a safety-focused urban design plan for Payson (street lights, public spaces, boulevard treatment). This design plan should focus on crime prevention through strategic environmental design and layout.

- Work with the police department to articulate a community safety plan, with participation from the residents.
- Design both employment and housing components with a view to eliminate the causes of crime through increased economic opportunities and enhanced physical conditions.
- Encourage forming a Payson Neighborhood Association of resident leaders and merchants to serve as the catalyst for carrying out resident-led community safety action plans.
- Reinvigorate the neighborhood watch program that will also promote volunteer recruitment, enlistment and retention of concerned community residents of Payson.
- Encourage social service providers to develop a training program and course curriculum to teach resident and non-sworn citizens active roles for participation in crime prevention and reduction strategies.

Suggested Low Income Housing Initiatives at the State Level:

- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) policies that ensure that the "stock" of deeply targeted housing subsidies is preserved when project-based subsidies are turned into tenant-based vouchers.
- HUD policies that encourage more flexibility in allowing project-based subsidies to be moved from an existing project to a new project in a different location.
- Encourage more research on what constitutes neighborhood revitalization efforts with a high likelihood of success. Such research would help states define the standards for concerted community revitalization plans.
- State policies that support the acquisition of property in high-opportunity areas that can be used for affordable housing. For example, such policies could target foreclosed properties (including scattered-site properties) that become available during an economic downturn in locations that are likely to continue to have high-performing schools and strong public services.
- State policies that shift the burden of zoning appeals for affordable housing or that support inclusionary zoning provisions, making it easier for housing developers to bring projects in high-opportunity locations into the LIHTC competition.
- Support for the emergence of a sector of the multifamily development community that focuses on creating affordable rental developments in high-opportunity locations. This includes capacity building for the industry and also may include support for land acquisition costs beyond the basis boosts that states are able to provide within LIHTC.
- A proactive effort to identify multi-family properties, both subsidized and unsubsidized, that are at risk of loss as affordable housing in high-opportunity neighborhoods. This would help state officials identify policy changes that might be necessary to preserve these properties as affordable housing.

These measures are important steps toward ensuring that the LIHTC program is leveraged to create housing opportunities that enhance the effectiveness of – and go beyond - the Housing Choice Voucher program.

END NOTES:

1. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 Population Estimates.
https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml?src=bkmk
2. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 Population Estimate, July 1, 2018
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/utahcountyutah>
3. Source: Daily Herald, “New Census Data Ranks Provo-Orem the 10 Fastest Growing Metro Nationwide,” April 18, 2019
https://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/new-census-data-ranks-provo-orem-the-th-fastest-growing/article_afc6f789-8fdc-54ff-addf-f8c3379e4f30.html
4. Source: DataUSA <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/utah-county-ut>
5. Source: DataUSA <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/utah-county-ut>
6. Source: DataUSA <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/utah-county-ut>
7. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 2019
<https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.ut.htm>
8. Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis, June 2017
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/ProvoUT-comp-17.pdf>
9. Source: Utah Foundation study, *Utah Foundation Quality of Life Survey: Measuring Utahns’ Perceptions of their Communities, Personal Lives*, 2018
<http://www.utahfoundation.org/reports/utah-foundation-2018-quality-of-life-survey/>
10. Source: City of Payson website
<https://paysonutah.org/government-transparency/boards/economic-development-board>
11. Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services, Office of Childcare
<https://careaboutchildcare.utah.gov/parent/prices.aspx>
Sample preschool tuition:
I Can Do It Myself 2 ½ per day, \$90-\$200 per month
<https://paysonpreschool.com/tuition/>
Oak View Pre-School (Salem)
\$120 per month, 2.5 hours per day/3 times per week
12. Source: Utah County Fire website
<http://www.utahcountyfire.org/about/>
13. Source: Payson Fire Rescue Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/paysonfire/>
14. Source: Moderate-Income Housing Report, 2018 page 8
15. Source: Moderate-Income Housing Report, 2018 page 6
16. Wasatch Mental Health webpage
<http://www.wasatch.org/about-us/>