

Salt Lake City's Comprehensive Housing Policy

Introduction

As the largest city in Utah and the economic hub of the state, Salt Lake City faces significant housing and population issues. Precipitous increases in land values over the last decade, volatile financial and lending conditions, and escalating construction costs are some of the factors that create barriers to the development of affordable housing. At the same time, a renewed interest in walkable neighborhood commercial centers, increased residential development downtown, and an emphasis on dense, transit-oriented residential projects throughout Salt Lake City offer opportunities for policymakers to capitalize upon as they seek to provide a range of housing choices to meet the desires and needs of residents.

Demographics in the United States are rapidly changing, and Salt Lake City is no exception. Populations are aging, minority communities are growing, and there are more single-parent households and households without children. These seismic shifts require changes in Salt Lake City's housing policies to effectively address today's realities.

Purpose

By establishing the Salt Lake City Housing Policy, the Mayor and City Council seek to:

- Foster and celebrate the urban residential tradition;
- Respect the character and charm of predominantly residential districts, including those with historic character and qualities, while also providing opportunities for the provision of local goods and services easily accessed by neighborhoods;
- Promote a diverse and balanced community by ensuring that a wide range of housing types and choices exist for all income levels, age groups, and types of households;
- Develop new housing opportunities throughout the City;
- Ensure that affordable housing is available in all neighborhoods and not concentrated in a few areas of the City;
- Emphasize the value of transit-oriented development, transit accessibility and proximity to services;
- Recognize that residents, business owners, and local government all have a role to play in creating and sustaining healthy neighborhoods;
- Create an appropriate balance of rental and ownership opportunities in neighborhoods without jeopardizing an adequate supply of affordable housing; and
- Strongly incentivize or require the use of green building techniques and sustainability practices in public and private housing developments.

The Mayor and City Council expect this Housing Policy to be considered whenever the City Administration engages in the following activities:

- City and Redevelopment Agency funding assistance
- Zoning and land use planning
- Master planning of neighborhoods
- The creation of economic development incentives

The Housing Policy is a combination of 13 Policy Statements that are detailed below.

Policy Statements

1. New Development

New housing development in Salt Lake City should meet the following criteria:

- Be consistent with requirements of the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act, Fair Housing Amendments Act (FHAA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the International Building Code.
- Encourage for sale and rental mixed-use and mixed-income projects in areas with established transportation, public infrastructure, and related public services. Encourage mixed-use projects to include some affordable housing units.
- Encourage single-family infill housing, in single-family neighborhoods, to attract middle-income families where appropriate:
- Require architectural designs that are contextually compatible with the surrounding structures and overall fabric of the neighborhood. These designs should:
 - a. Preserve and incorporate open space, even minimal amounts.
 - b. Interface well with public spaces.
 - c. Incorporate energy efficient technologies and design.
 - d. Create quality living environments.
- Provide for realistic parking needs in the least intrusive manner possible in single family neighborhoods.
- Provide aesthetically pleasing and attractive public spaces, such as designated common areas, community centers, community parks, trail networks, bikeways, resident gathering places, and resident/community gardens.

Action items:

- a. Ensure better compatibility with existing neighborhoods for new infill development.
- b. Review the residential and mixed-use zoning regulations for redundancy and consistency to ensure they accurately reflect this policy.
- c. Revise the permitted and conditional use tables to reflect a stronger emphasis on mixed-use development and to limit or prohibit uses that are incompatible with the neighborhood.
- d. Consider developing design standards for buildings in residential and mixed-use zones.
- e. Establish, strengthen and enforce City ordinances mitigating the loss of affordable housing due to development of higher end housing and other facilities.

2. Affordable Housing

Provide affordable housing and homeownership opportunities for residents who make 80% or less of the area median income in Salt Lake City. The City should strive to ensure that affordable housing is available for purchase in Salt Lake City.

Provide affordable rental housing in Salt Lake City for residents who make 80% or less of the area median income. The City should strive to ensure that affordable rental housing is available in Salt Lake City.

A primary purpose of Salt Lake City's Housing Policy is to foster a diverse and balanced community with housing that offers a wide range of choices for all income levels. Accordingly, affordable housing should be available in all neighborhoods and not concentrated in a few areas of the City. Encouraging a variety of low, medium and high density housing developments for all income levels will help to enhance, maintain and sustain livable, viable neighborhoods.

The Council and Mayor recognize that there is a segment of the City's population whose income level and other circumstances may make it difficult to qualify for established housing programs. The City should address housing for this population.

The City, through the Redevelopment Agency (RDA), the Housing and Neighborhood Development division, the Housing Authority of Salt Lake City and successful housing development nonprofit organizations should provide examples of how affordable housing can be built or rehabilitated.

Action items:

- a. Analyze the impacts of fees and current zoning on affordable housing.
- b. Develop an incentive program for housing developers to provide a percentage of affordable housing as part of their overall development.
- c. Preserve and expand, as appropriate, the amount of subsidized and Section 8 housing in the City.
- d. Continue to provide funding for homeownership and affordable rental housing projects with federal funds and housing trust funds.
- e. Investigate inclusionary zoning practices which encourage development of affordable housing.

3. Housing Stock Preservation and Rehabilitation

The City should support the preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of existing housing stock to the most practical degree possible.

Action items:

- a. Adequately fund the City's apartment inspection program to promote housing safety and quality.
- b. Adequately fund programs that assist home and apartment owners in rehabilitating and maintaining housing units.
- c. Support reinvestment in existing urban and inner suburban areas.

4. Transit-Oriented Development

The City should support transit-oriented development as well as adequate, reliable public transportation so that residents may easily access employment, goods and services, and housing.

The City should support housing densities, mixed-use and mixed-income projects, parking policies, and pedestrian-oriented urban designs that encourage walking and the use of alternative and public transportation.

Action Items:

- a. Review the residential and mixed-use zoning regulations for redundancy and consistency to ensure they accurately reflect this policy.
- b. Continue to review the permitted and conditional use tables to reflect a stronger emphasis on mixed-use and mixed-income development on an on-going basis.

5. Zoning

The City should evolve its zoning regulations to effectively address the City's changing housing needs.

While the City supports mixed-use development, it also recognizes that there are some zones that are not conducive to residential development.

Action items:

- a. Allow for higher densities and building height, in the form of density bonuses, in affordable multi-family, mixed-income and mixed-use housing developments if the developer incorporates features to minimize potential negative impacts such as buffer landscaping, usable open space, on-site amenities, support services, preservation of existing structures, and underground vehicle parking.
- b. Provide opportunities for the development of newly adopted residential densities.
- c. Allow neighborhood anchor areas or commercial uses that enhance the function of residential neighborhoods and/or are compatible with residential activity.
- d. Allow the flexible application of zoning standards to encourage innovation and creative problem solving in new developments.
- e. Research and adopt an ordinance to allow the Director of Community and Economic Development or the Planning Director the authority to administratively modify zoning requirements up to 10% when specific criteria have been met.
- f. Research inclusionary zoning options that encourage and enhance mixed-use and mixed-income development and rehabilitation.

6. Permitting

The City should review and evaluate the impacts of the building permitting process on proposed residential development.

Action items:

- a. Provide expedited plan review for projects designed as sustainable, high performance buildings, including designs that impact neighborhoods in a positive manner and meets the Mayor's Executive Order, Expedited Plan Review for New Construction and

Major Renovation Projects that Meet Certain Sustainable Building Criteria, dated August 22, 2008.

- b. Complete the City's One Stop Shop initiative, which will streamline the permitting process for development and provide seamless customer service at the City and County Building for development related customers. The goal remains co-location of staff responsible for core plan review, thus creating a true One-Stop-Shop for development-related customers. To accomplish this level of customer service, a representative from each of the six groups conducting plan review must be represented in Room 215 at the City and County Building. Space issues and staffing levels must be resolved to realize this goal. Electronic plan review and digitized submittals/records will aid toward this accomplishment.

7. Downtown Housing

Permanent residences in downtown Salt Lake City are a critical part of creating a vibrant, safe, and sustainable Capital City. The urban core should be considered a neighborhood for purposes of housing planning, and the City should expect housing to be available to all income levels downtown.

Action Items:

- a. Conduct an inventory and zoning review of land within the Downtown that could be used for housing sites, and study the feasibility of developing the sites for housing uses.
- b. Explore options for protecting multi-family housing units east of 200 East between South Temple and 400 South and encourage infill development housing east of 200 East.
- c. Permit and encourage retail support services that promote increased residential population and support downtown workers.
- d. Continue pursuit of official City commitment to provide more single room only (SRO) housing to complete spectrum of housing needs.

8. Homeless, Transitional and Special Needs

The provision of temporary and permanent housing options for those who have no other option is a fundamental responsibility of government in modern day society. The City will work with Salt Lake County, the State of Utah, and community partners to assist in providing temporary and permanent housing options to city residents.

Action Items:

- a. Collaborate with the providers of homeless services, neighborhood residents and business owners to create an environment to ensure that a mix of income populations can live, work, flourish together while still providing services to those in need.
- b. Utilize the efforts of the "Long Range Planning for Sheltering Needs of Homeless Persons Committee" in implementing the Countywide ten-year plan to end chronic homelessness.
- c. Continue to support the development of scattered site affordable housing projects with appropriate case management as needed.
- d. Include temporary dwellings, excluding tents, in the definition of transitional housing.

9. Historic Preservation

The City should preserve valued historic structures designated as significant to the cultural or architectural heritage of the City based on an up-to-date historic resource survey.

Action Items:

- a. Complete a City-wide historic resource survey.
- b. Develop a Preservation Plan.
- c. Reevaluate infill ordinances and revise them accordingly.

10. Funding Mechanisms

Housing development is funded through a combination of private and public funds. The City should continue to use best practices to efficiently fund the development of a variety of housing.

Action items:

- a. Increase the housing stock through non-profit and/or for profit partnerships.
- b. Maintain the Salt Lake City Community Housing Plan that outlines annual sources and uses of funds for housing and housing programs.
- c. Maintain public reviews and input relating to use of City housing monies through the City's Housing Trust Fund Advisory Board, Redevelopment Advisory Committee and the Redevelopment Agency Board.
- d. Establish a permanent funding source for the Housing Trust Fund. Examine options for increasing City resources available to assist in affordable housing development.
- e. Evaluate opportunities to efficiently deliver housing services among service providers.
- f. Fund projects that create quality living environments.

11. Marketing and Education on Housing in Salt Lake City

Residents, developers, government, and social service providers all play a role in educating the public (and each other) about the availability of housing types and the gaps in the housing spectrum. The City can take the lead to ensure that accurate information is conveyed to all stakeholders.

Action Items:

- a. Develop educational programs for developers, community councils, and the public to dispel myths and stereotypes about high density and affordable housing. Topics to be covered in these programs include: density, accessibility and visitability design concepts; affordable housing; and home buyer issues for developers.
- b. Develop public/private partnerships to market housing and educate the public on housing issues.
- c. Invest in marketing programs to highlight Salt Lake City's housing strengths and opportunities.
- d. Utilize market research for the development of aggressive public marketing campaigns to entice area residents to live in Salt Lake City; and to provide guidance for the City,

the Redevelopment Agency and the development community in their efforts to develop housing within the city.

- e. Prepare educational information to distribute to the public regarding when a building permit is required.
- f. Continue the development advisory forum that brings together all stakeholders in the development process, including applicants, Housing, Planning, Building, Fire, Engineering, Public Utilities and Transportation Divisions.
 - 1. Review new/proposed programs and processes.
 - 2. Offer presentations from specific City department/divisions that may affect the industry and stakeholders.
 - 3. Provide training in current best practices.
 - 4. Review changes and additions to city processes that regulate and control development of the built environment.
 - 5. Include question and answer dialogues.

12. Growth Targets

Salt Lake City's goals for growth are predicated upon the orderly development of additional housing. Accordingly, the City's housing policies must be consistent with overall growth goals.

Action items:

- a. Develop and maintain a citywide plan for attracting population growth in Salt Lake City.
- b. Set and achieve 5-, 10-, and 20-year growth targets that will help maintain the City's status as Utah's largest city. The City should use all available tools to achieve these growth targets including zoning, permitting, marketing, fees and incentives.
- c. Set growth targets for different housing types.

13. City Funded Projects

The preservation and creation of affordable housing are high priorities. The City will continue to provide financial assistance to projects that meet the goals of the Housing Policy.

Requests for City funding will be evaluated based on their consistency with this Housing Policy.