ZONING DISTRICT AMENDMENT STUDY

POTENTIAL APPROACHES TO SIMPLIFYING AND IMPROVING R-1 DISTRICTS

Introduction

During their formal meeting on September 5, 2023, the Salt Lake City Council passed a legislative action requesting that staff study options for a zoning text amendment that would make changes to all R-1 single-family residential zoning districts.

Specifically, the Council asked staff to:

- Explore consolidating the R-1 zoning districts.
- Provide options that may include, but not be limited to, reducing minimum lot sizes, reducing, or removing minimum lot widths, easing flag lot standards, and allowing attached single-family dwellings in all zones.
- Consider options for zoning changes along collectors and arterials to allow greater residential density and mixed-use development.

The Council also wanted staff to evaluate how the proposals would impact strategies within Thriving in Place, future land/water policy, public transportation needs, walkability, and local historic districts.

The options identified by the Planning Division are outlined in this report. The Division started with a history of the city's zoning regulations to provide context for how single-family zoning in the city was established. The report is broken down into chapters that address each request individually. This information is intended to help the Council decide what, if any, actions are appropriate and necessary to help define the role that single-family zoning districts fulfill in addressing the housing needs of the city for future generations and the housing goals adopted by the City Council.

If the council initiates any of the options identified in this report, the Planning Division will provide more specific analysis, research, and background information. This report is not intended to capture all issues, identify all examples, or establish a full list of pros and cons of any potential actions.

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Summary of Options

This section provides a summary of the options discussed in this report. It is intended to provide a quick look at the options. Specific sections provide more detail about the options.

A. Consolidating R-1 Zoning Districts

- *Rezone the R-1/12,000, R-1/7,000, and R-1/5,000 zoned properties to R-1/5,000.*
- *Rezone all the R-1 zoned properties to one of the zoning districts that allows single-family attached uses.*
- *Maintain the three R-1 zoning districts but consolidate into a single chapter so the only difference between the zones are the minimum lot dimensions.*
- *Maintain the three R-1 zones as is.*

B. Reduce Minimum Lot Areas in the R-1 Zones

- *If the R-1 zones are consolidated into the R-1/5,000 zone, maintain the minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet.*
- *If the R-1 zones are consolidated into the R-1/5,000 zone, reduce the minimum lot size to a size so nearly all lots comply with the minimum lot area.*
- *If the three R-1 zones are rezoned to a zone that allows single-family attached, maintain the minimum lot size of that zone, and ensure that the minimum lot size is not a barrier to producing single family attached housing.*
- *If the three R-1 zones are maintained but placed in a single chapter, modify the minimum lot area in each so at least 98% of the lots in each zone comply with the minimum lot size.*

C. Reduce the Minimum Lot Width in the R-1 Zones

- *Reduce the minimum lot widths.*
- *Eliminate the minimum lot width.*

D. Reduce the Minimum Setbacks

- *Modify the minimum setbacks so that they are the same in each of the R-1 zones.*
- *Modify the setbacks so they are a % of the lot width so that smaller lots are not as negatively impacted as larger lots.*
- *Maintain the setbacks as if no consolidations occur.*
- *If the three R-1 zones are consolidated, utilize the R-1/5,000 setbacks.*
- *If a different zoning district is used to replace the R-1/5,000 district (to allow single-family attached, for example) use the setbacks in the replacement district.*

E. Flag Lot Standards

- *Eliminate the minimum lot area for the street adjacent lot and the flag lot.*
- *Reduce the minimum lot area for the street adjacent lot and the flag lot so both require the same amount of lot area.*
- *Allow the pole part of the lot to be an easement across the street adjacent lot.*
- *Create standards and processes for creating lots without frontage that are not flag lots.*

F. Authorize Single-Family Attached in the R-1 Zones

- *Add the use as a permitted use in the zone and develop specific standards for this type of housing.*
- *Utilize another zone that already permits this housing type and has existing standards.*
- *If allowing single-family attached, consider adding cottage style developments and duplexes as well.*

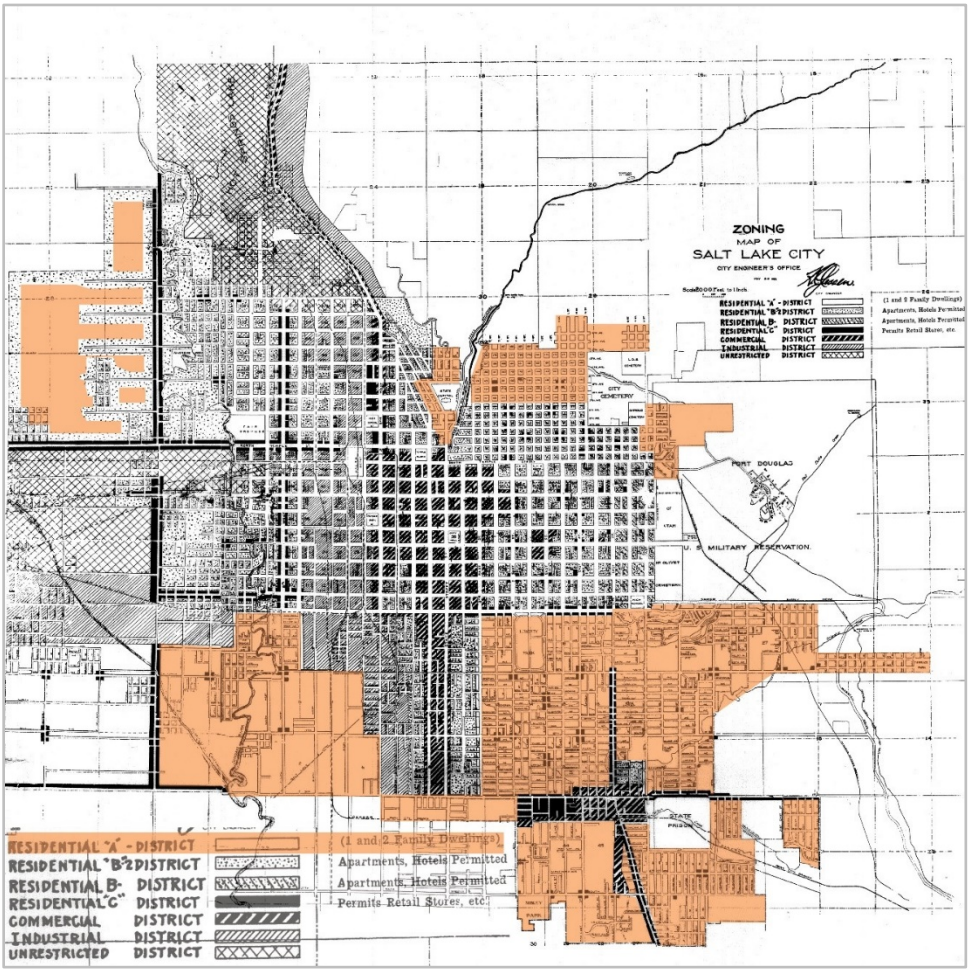
G. Zoning Map Amendments to Increase Residential Density and Mixed-Use Opportunities Along Arterials and Collectors

- *Consolidate existing mixed-use and commercial zones into a series of new zones that allow for appropriate scaled mixed-use based on the characteristics of specific corridors.*
- *Extend existing commercial and mixed-use zoning to properties that are adjacent to existing commercial properties.*
- *Remove limitations on residential development in commercial zones.*
- *Rezone corridors based on presence of other commercial uses along the corridor.*
- *Increase the development potential within existing commercial and mixed-use areas.*

Relevant History of Salt Lake City's Zoning Regulations

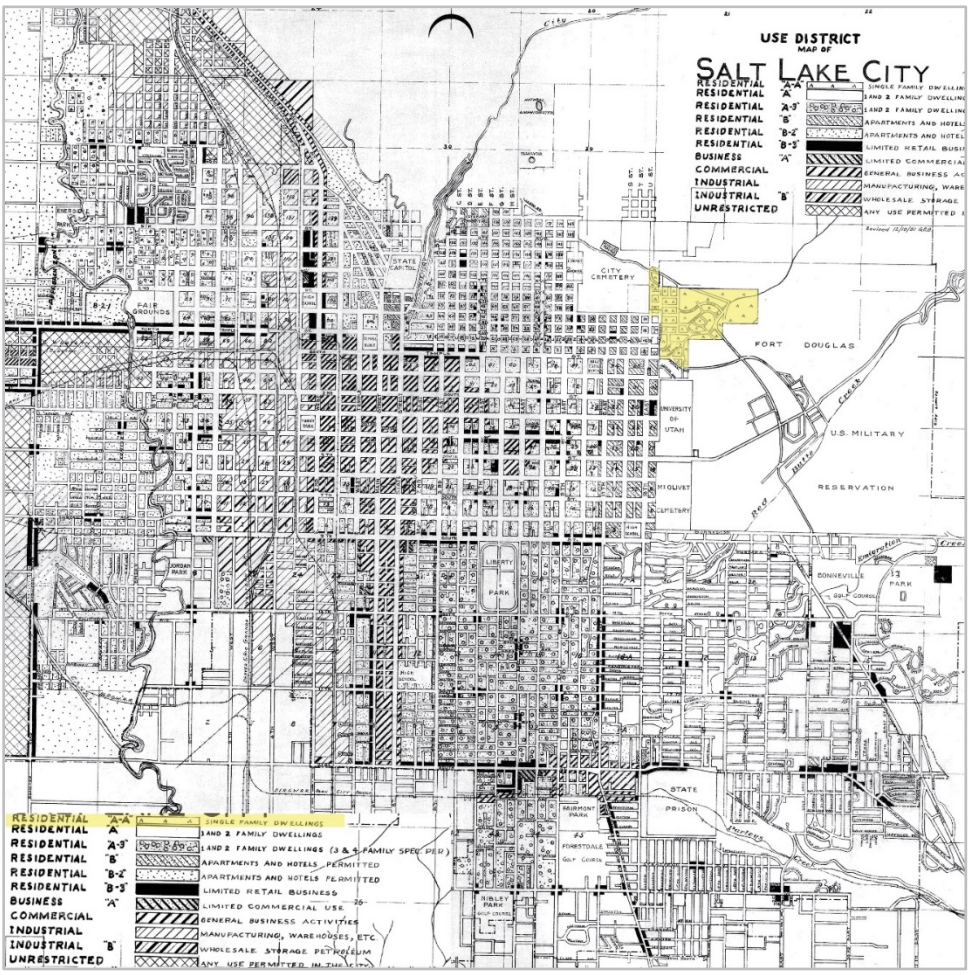
Zoning was first **adopted in Salt Lake City in 1927**. The first zoning ordinance divided the city into seven zoning districts. The district with the lowest residential density was the "**Residential A**" district, which allowed for single-family homes and duplexes.

The **Residential A** district also allowed "renting of rooms for lodging purposes, or the furnishing of table boards for not to exceed six (6) persons in a one-family dwelling" and "dormitories, fraternity, or sorority houses or boarding houses" occupied by faculty and students of public universities. Offices for doctors, musicians, and other professionals were also allowed within a dwelling. This zoning designation could be found in Federal Heights, Capitol Hill, east of 300 E & south of 900 S, north of 7th Ave, and in some parts of Glendale and Rose Park. Multi-unit buildings were allowed in all other residential areas of the city.



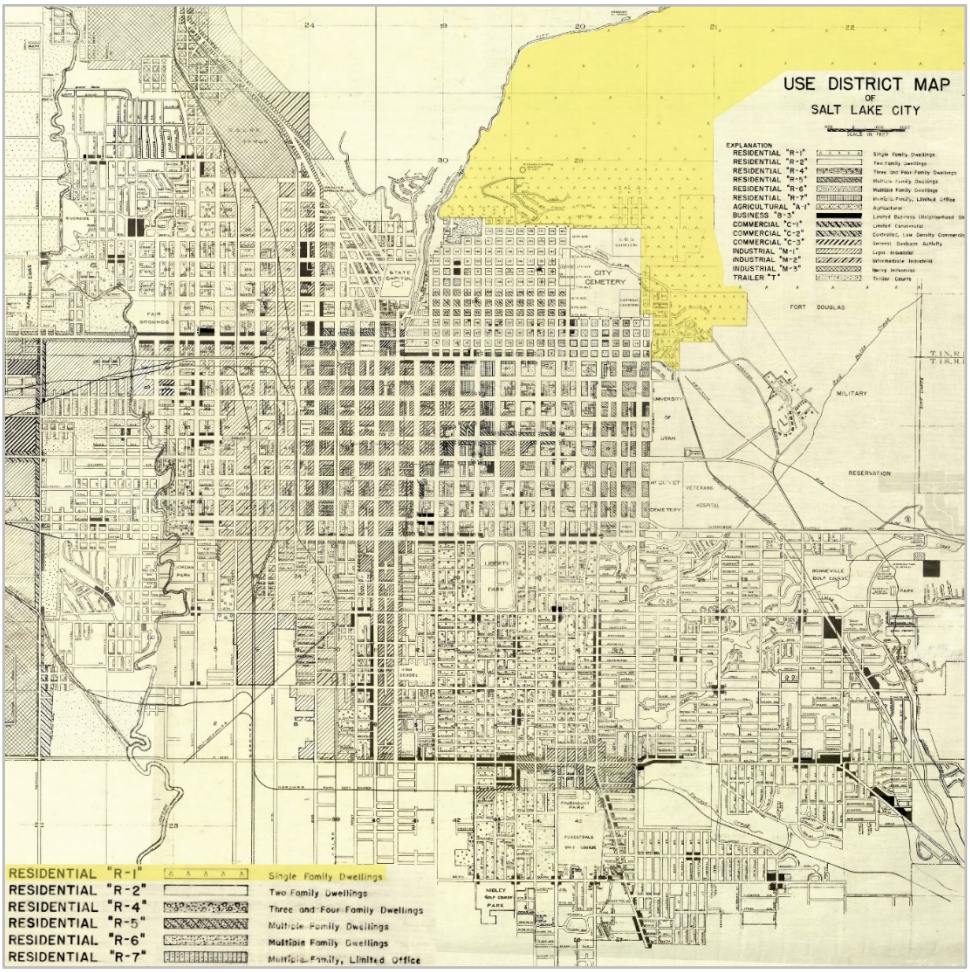
1927 Zoning map (Residential A zone highlighted)

By 1948, the "**Residential AA**" zoning designation appeared in the zoning ordinance. Unlike the "**Residential A**" district, this zoning designation prohibited duplexes and established the city's earliest exclusive single-family zoning**. This zoning designation was originally mapped only to the Federal Heights neighborhood.**



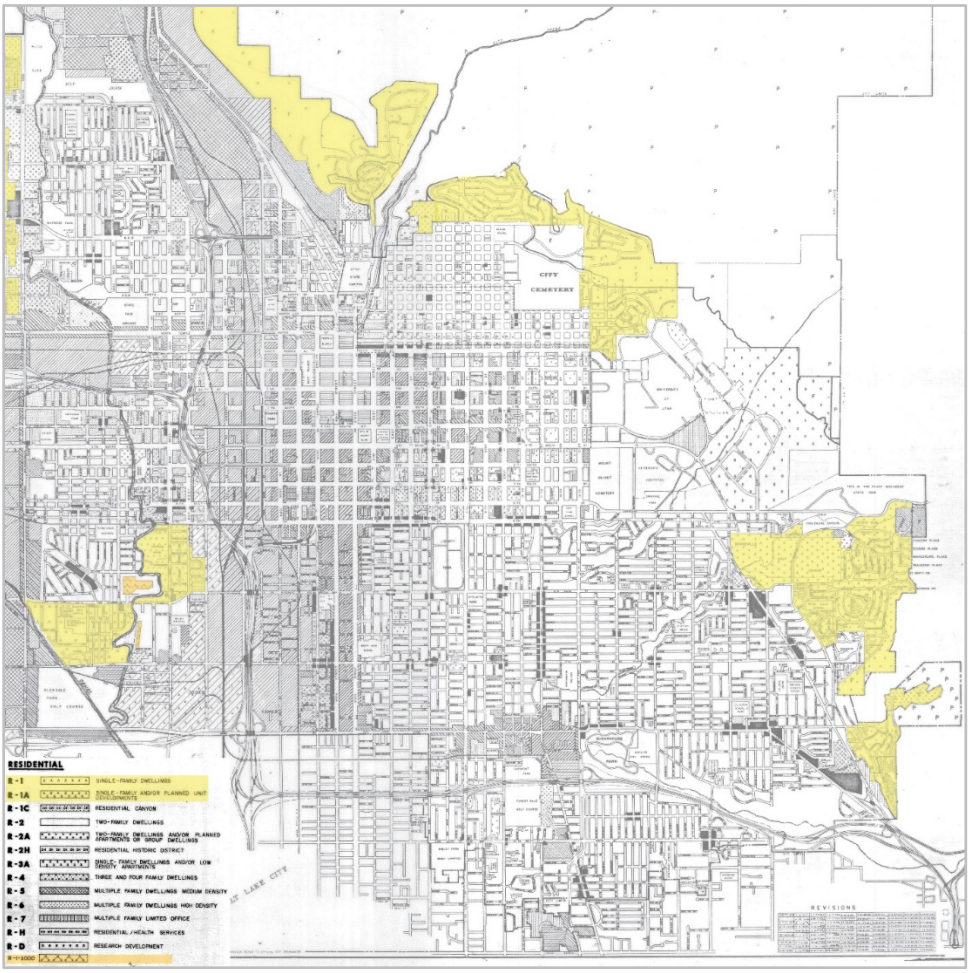
1951 Zoning map which reflects the 1948 zoning code showing the Residential AA zone. (Federal Heights neighborhood highlighted)

By 1958, the "**Residential AA**" designation had been renamed "**Residential R-1**" and required at least 7,000 square feet of lot area for new lots. **This designation originally appeared north of 13th Ave and east of Virginia Street, mostly in areas that had not yet been developed, as shown on the 1958 zoning map**.



1958 Zoning map showing the area changed from Residential AA to Residential R-1 (-1 zone highlighted)

By 1994, R-1 zone had spread to the upper east bench (east of 2340 East), Capitol Hill (north of 650 N), and a few areas within the Glendale and Westpointe neighborhoods. A small area of Glendale was zoned R-1/5,000 near 1300 S and the Jordan River. **Duplexes were allowed in all other residential areas of the city, and multi-family housing was allowed in some areas where it is not allowed currently.**

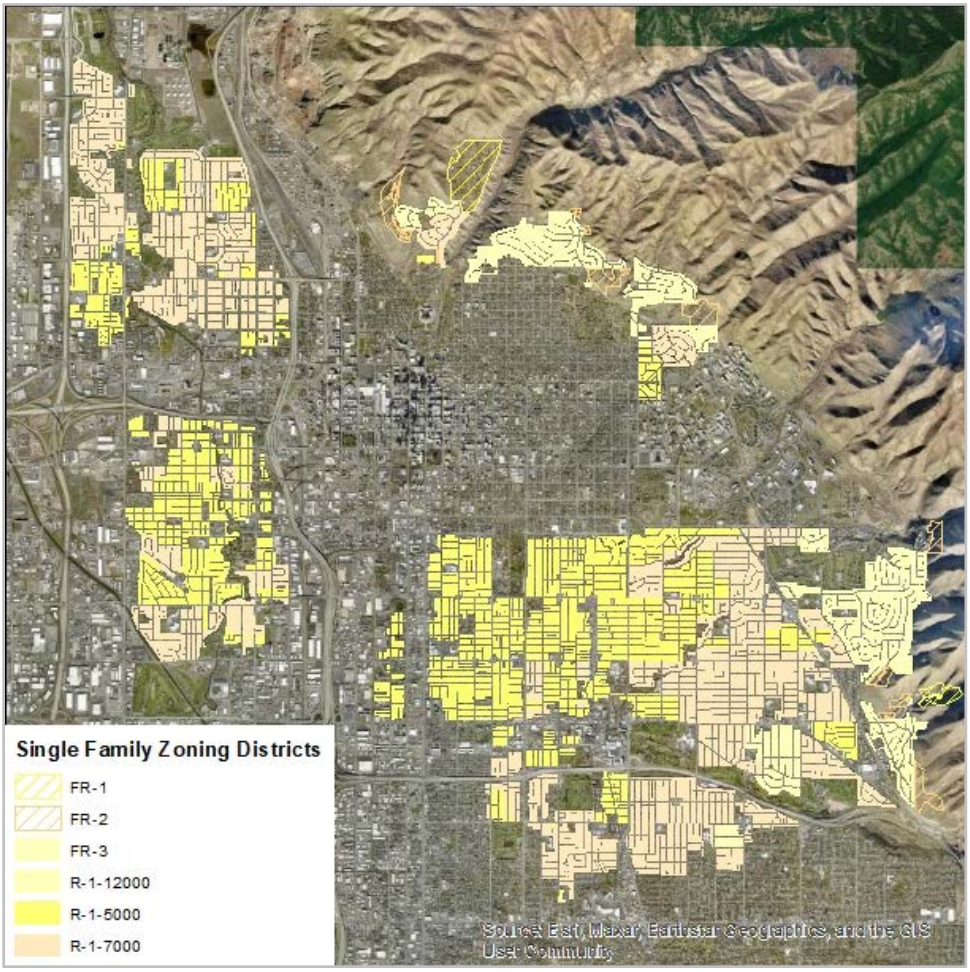


1994 Zoning map (R-1 and R-1/5,000 zones highlighted)

In 1995, the zoning ordinance was rewritten, and the entire city was rezoned. **The new ordinance was intended to accomplish the following four goals:**

1. *To implement the land use and growth management goals of the Salt Lake City Master Plans*
2. *To recognize the existing development pattern of the city*
3. *To simplify the development regulations and standards*
4. *To streamline the development review process*

Although not explicitly mentioned in these goals, the 1995 Zoning Rewrite downzoned a significant amount of land within the city by rezoning mostly R-2 land to one of the new R-1 zones. After the zoning rewrite, most residential areas were rezoned to one of six single-family zoning classifications**: R-1/5,000, R-1/7,000, R-1/12,000, FR-1/43,560, FR-2/21,780 and FR-3/12,000**.



Current Zoning map – single-family zoning.


809
Protect
WILD
UTAH

City Council Requests

Section 2 breaks down each of the specific requests from the Council into different categories, explains the current regulations, identifies a rationale for the options, and discusses possible issues. Please refer to the "**Best Practices**" section for information about actions taken by other cities.

A. Consolidation of R-1 Districts

The City Council asked the Planning Division to provide options that would consolidate the R-1 zoning districts.

There are three R-1 districts: **R-1/12,000, R-1/7,000, and R-1/5,000**.

The three Foothill Residential Districts are also considered to be single-family zoning districts. The FR districts include specific regulations that apply only to the foothill areas. Some FR regulations are complex and would be difficult to consolidate with the R-1 zones. For these reasons, this section does not discuss the FR zoning districts.

CURRENT ZONING REGULATIONS

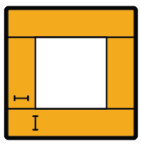
Currently, there are three R-1 districts in the Salt Lake City Zoning Ordinance: R-1/12,000, R-1/7,000, and R-1/5,000. **Each zoning district includes the following regulations:**

LOT REQS.

Lot Area & Width Requirements

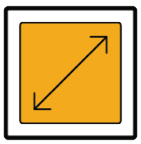
BUILDING HEIGHT

Same Regulations for Each District



SETBACKS

Front Yard, Corner Side Yard (corner lots), Interior Side Yard, & Rear Yard



MAXIMUM LOT SIZE

ATTACHED GARAGE REGULATIONS

The City Council has multiple options to consolidate R-1 zoning districts based on the goal and purpose of consolidation. **Each of these options are outlined below**.

A1: Rezone the R-1/12,000 and R-1/7,000 zoned properties to R-1/5,000.

This option would consist of a zoning map amendment and a text amendment. The map amendment would change the zoning map for all R-1/12,000 and R-1/7,000 zoned properties to R-1/5,000.

Important things to know:

- *Would eliminate multiple pages of mostly redundant regulations and use only the regulations in the R-1/5,000 zone.*
- *Would reduce the number of noncomplying lots, particularly in the R-1/7000 zone where nearly half of the lots are less than 7,000 square feet.*
- *There are 5,011 parcels in excess of 10,000 square feet that could be subdivided, based solely on lot area. Other regulations, like lot widths and setbacks of existing buildings may prevent some of these lots from being subdivided.*
- *Is likely to be unpopular with some property owners in the R-1/7,000 and R-1/12,000 zones, even if those properties do not have enough land area to be subdivided further and technically these lots can already be developed following the R-1/5,000 zoning regulations because the lots are noncomplying with the minimum lot area.*

A2: Rezone all the R-1 zoned properties to one of the zoning districts that allows single-family attached uses.

This option relies on the Council's decision related to allowing single-family attached housing types in the R-1 zone. If that is an option that the Council selects, it may be a simpler process to utilize one of the existing zoning districts that already allows this housing type. This would require a zoning map amendment to rezone the existing R-1 properties and a text amendment to delete the existing R-1 zones.

There are multiple zoning districts that could be considered:

- **SR-3:** would allow single-family (detached and attached) and duplexes/twin homes. The minimum lot size would range from as low as 1,500 square feet up to 2,000 square feet. This zone includes minimum lot widths that vary between housing types and for corner lots versus interior lots. SR-3 has the same building height and wall height regulations as the R-1 zones and generally has smaller setback requirements. This zone was initially created to be used on small, inner block lots served by narrow streets, but has been used in other areas in the city.
- **FB-UN1:** this allows a mix of housing types, including detached single-family, duplexes, townhomes, and cottage style developments. There are no minimum lot regulations, but there are minimum land areas requirements per building type. This zone allows buildings up to 30' in height, which is two feet taller than the R-1 zones. This zone is primarily mapped in the Central Ninth neighborhood.

Important things to know:

- *This is likely to be highly controversial.*
- *Would expand the areas of the city where "missing middle" housing is allowed.*
- *Would require affordable housing incentives to be recalibrated.*
- *Would likely result in more housing construction.*
- *Will generate a high level of opposition.*
- *Will likely result in the demolition of existing single-family detached homes that are replaced with townhomes, particularly on lots with large lots but low lot coverage.*
- *Could create some conflicts with the parking contexts depending on which zoning district is used.*

A3: Maintain the three R-1 zoning districts but consolidate into a single chapter so the only difference between the zones are the minimum lot dimensions.

This option would only require a text amendment because the zoning map would not be altered. This would essentially consolidate the lot requirements into a table, with each column indicating the requirements in the specific R-1 zones. Setbacks would also be addressed in a similar way. The regulations that are the same across the board would remain, but the need to duplicate those regulations would be eliminated. This option is dependent on other options related to minimum lot area, lot width, and setbacks found in the following sections of this report.

Important things to know:

- *Requires the least amount of staff resources.*
- *Simplifies the code by removing repetitive regulations.*
- *Does not require changes to other chapters of the zoning code, such as the land use tables.*
- *Will not help address housing issues or needs.*
- *Maintains the status quo, but in a condensed format.*

A4: Maintain the three R-1 zones as is.

This option is self-explanatory. This approach will not alter anything and maintain the existing conditions in the R-1 zones.

DISCUSSION

The options listed above (**except for A4**) essentially consolidate single-family zoning districts and simplify the regulations. The zoning regulations for the three single-family zoning districts are currently separated into three different sections in the zoning code, yet many of the regulations are often very similar or (in some cases) identical. Some of the regulations are complex and can be difficult to understand.

Residents or developers may need to hire consultants to navigate the code, which can be expensive—increasing development costs that are passed on to the future buyer or renter. Simplifying the code language would make these regulations easier to understand for more people and would reduce the amount of time needed by Planning staff to explain regulations. **This in turn makes Salt Lake City more friendly to those who want to build homes in the R-1 zones.**

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. The public is likely to have concerns with consolidating districts, the degree of which likely depends on how the zones are consolidated. There is little precedence for any city to eliminate all but one residential zone. Most cities will consolidate to reduce districts, but usually not down to a single R-1 zone. Although Duluth consolidated residential zones in 2006, they have since added 3 additional residential zones. One explanation may be that cities are finding it challenging to address context specific issues that exist in some neighborhoods, but not in other neighborhoods.
2. Some cities find it more effective to focus on consolidating different zoning types with the intent to create a more walkable city. They will consolidate higher density residential zones with lower intensity commercial zones to encourage mixed-use development and gentle commercial districts such as the 9th and 9th neighborhood in Salt Lake City. This approach is more common than consolidating single-family residential zoning districts.
3. Some states and some cities have elected to modify existing standards to accomplish the same goals, such as allowing more housing types and modifying regulations to accommodate different housing types. This is likely because the goal of these cities is to expand housing options, particularly the “missing middle” housing types. This approach would only require amending the text of the zoning code, not the zoning map.
4. Consolidating the R-1 zoning districts is likely to have a relatively small impact on increasing housing in neighborhoods unless the consolidation includes significant changes to other regulations, such as allowing other housing types, reducing the minimum lot area and lot widths, increasing lot coverage allowances, and potentially reducing some setbacks to increase the buildable envelope of a property.
5. Numeric values should not be increased as part of this process. This helps prevent the creation of new nonconformities during the consolidation process.
6. Any consolidated district should allow the same or more opportunities for development and redevelopment.
7. When consolidating many standards into one, scaling setbacks proportionately to lot size will help maintain existing scale. Averaging standards have been done in the past in SLC and other cities, but averages take more time for the applicant and the city to establish and review than a set standard does.
8. By adding tables and charts to the zoning ordinance, the code is easier to read and use. This improves the understanding of the code and reduces administrative time for applicants and the city.

B. Reducing Minimum Lot Areas

This section contains options related to modifying minimum lot area requirements. Minimum lot area regulations are intended to establish and maintain a certain development pattern. This is primarily done to make it easier to predict what will be developed because the development potential is essentially the same for all lots, but intentionally limits how much land can be developed. Minimum lot area regulations reduce the number of lots that can be created and effectively limit the number of homes that can be built. Reducing these requirements would allow for more infill development and create additional opportunities for adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

CURRENT ZONING REGULATIONS

The minimum lot size requirements in the R-1 zones are embedded into the title of the district, with the last number indicating the minimum lot size:

- **R-1/12,000:** *minimum lot size is 12,000 square feet.*
- **R-1/7,000:** *minimum lot size is 7,000 square feet.*
- **R-1/5,000:** *minimum lot size is 5,000 square feet.*

An analysis of the lots within each of these zones shows a high number of lots that are less than the minimum lot size, as shown in the following table:

	R-1/12,000	R-1/7,000	R-1/5,000
Total Lots	1,472	15,585	16,698
Lots less than the minimum lot area	664 (45% of all lots)	6,723 (43% of all lots)	4,450 (27% of all lots)
Lots exceeding minimum area	808 (54.6% of all lots)	8,862 (57% of all lots)	12,248 (73% of all lots)

One of the goals of the project should be to reduce noncomplying situations. Noncomplying issues increase the amount of staff time needed to interpret the code because when a lot is less than the minimum lot area, it requires checking the history of the lot to determine if it was created legally.

Often, there is no evidence of a lot being approved by the City, but that can be misleading because sometimes lots were historically created through other legal means. Noncomplying issues creates some uneasiness with lending institutions, who want some assurance from a city that a lot is legal. The zoning code does include a provision that states that all legally existing lots that are noncomplying in terms of lot area may be developed provided they comply with the standards of the R-1/5,000 zoning district. This means that an R-1/7,000 zoned lot that is less than 7,000 square feet is allowed to use the R-1/5,000 zoning standards.

Only 65% of all of the lots in an R-1 zone comply with the minimum lot areas. If all of the lot sizes are set at 5,000 square feet for a minimum, it would increase the total % of complying lots to around 85%. Lot sizes would have to drop to 2,000 square feet to increase the percentage of complying lots to 97%. This is because there are more than 5,700 lots that are between 3,000 and 5,000 square feet.

OPTIONS

The Council has numerous options for considering modifications to the minimum lot area. Given the other potential options in different sections, the Planning Division has identified the most likely options that would be considered depending on the consolidation of the R1 zones.

B1: If the R-1 zones are consolidated into the R-1/5,000 zone: maintain the minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet.

This option would not require any specific action if all the R-1 zones are zoned R-1/5,000. This would have no impact on the R-1/5,000 zoned properties. The impact on R-1/7,000 zoned properties would be limited to those properties that are over 10,000 square feet and could therefore be further subdivided. Most of the properties in the R-1/12,000 zone could potentially be subdivided. However, most homes in these zones are situated in a manner that would require the demolition of the existing dwelling to subdivide. That may not be economically feasible depending on land, demolition, and construction costs.

Important things to know:

- *About 84% of all lots in a consolidated R-1/5,000 zoning district would be complying in terms of lot area. This is significantly higher than what currently exists in the R-1/7,000 and R-1/12,000 zones.*

- *This would have minimal impact on increasing the housing supply because most lots would still not likely be subdivided due to the associated costs.*
- *This may promote the use of the affordable housing incentives if properties over 10,000 square feet could be subdivided and up to four dwellings could be built on each of the resulting lots.*
- *A high number of lots in the R-1/7,000 and R-1/12,000 zones were created by recording a plat. For lots that may be eligible to subdivide with a lower minimum lot size, a subdivision amendment would be required. Under Utah Code, this requires a notice to other property owners within the subdivision.*

B2: If the R-1 zones are consolidated into the R-1/5,000 zone, reduce the minimum lot size to 4,000 square feet so most lots comply with the minimum lot size.

This option would require a modification to the R-1/5,000 zone to change the minimum lot size (and likely the name) to 4,000 square feet. This has the same key considerations as above, but if a lot is over 8,000 square feet, it could be subdivided into additional lots. This would reduce the number of noncomplying lots in the R-1/5,000 zoning district.

B3: If the three R-1 zones are rezoned to a zone that allows single-family attached, maintain the minimum lot size of the proposed zone, and ensure that the minimum lot size is not a barrier to producing either type of housing.

This option would utilize an existing zoning district that already allows single-family attached, such as SR-3 or FB-UN1**. The minimum lot sizes in those zones are listed below:**

	SR-3	FB-UN1
Minimum Lot Area (single-family detached)	2,000 Sq ft per dwelling	3,000 sq ft (allows up to two dwelling + one accessory dwelling)
Minimum Lot Area (single-family attached/townhome)	1,500 sq ft per dwelling	1,500 sq ft (per building, with up to 4 dwellings per building)

Important things to know:

- *This option is likely to result in a noticeable increase in missing middle dwellings in the city because it would allow these housing types on all residentially zoned properties in the city.*
- *The low minimum lot sizes in both zones would likely promote demolition of existing homes and replacement with townhomes.*
- *The affordable housing incentives in these zones should be calibrated under this option to promote affordability. The incentives likely would be made irrelevant if these housing types could be constructed by right.*

B4: Eliminate minimum lot sizes in the R-1 zones.

This option would delete the minimum lot sizes from each of the R-1 zones. Doing this would result in relying on setbacks, lot coverage, and building height to regulate scale. It would also rely on the recorded subdivision plats for most lot sizes because creating new lots will require a subdivision process.

Important things to know:

- *Most lots in the city were created by recording a plat. Creating new lots will require approval through a subdivision amendment process. This includes a public notice and comment period.*
- *Lot coverages and building setbacks will likely still limit new homes in R–1 zones if other regulations are not also changed.*
- *This action will be highly controversial. Depending on the action directed, the city council may also want to consider what the role and purpose of public engagement should be.*
- *Reducing or eliminating minimum lot sizes would likely result in an increase in demolition of existing homes in neighborhoods.*
- *There will be some areas where infrastructure will need to be upgraded due to age. Those costs may be a barrier to developing more homes.*
- *Without allowing other housing types, a net increase in housing supply in neighborhoods will still be limited.*
- *This may increase staff workloads processing subdivision applications. This could impact other departments who review and are part of the subdivision approval process. This could allow someone to subdivide and sell an ADU or similar small homes on their property.*

Maintaining minimum lot sizes in the R-1 zones may not be necessary to serve any public health, safety, or welfare purpose at this point. There are several reasons why minimum lot sizes were originally implemented: create predictable growth projections, align development potential with infrastructure, limit the impact on schools, and maintain property value during a period when cities were shrinking to name a few. Minimum lot sizes were also added for reasons that resulted in neighborhoods being segregated by race, ethnicity, and income by effectively blocking smaller lots with smaller homes that were more affordable and more accessible. One current argument for minimum lot sizes is to preserve neighborhood character.

In this era, there is reason to believe that none of these purposes are valid or related to the purpose of zoning to protect the health, safety, and welfare of people. Households are shrinking, which results in less people living in each home. Modern plumbing fixtures and appliances are using less water. Combined, this is resulting in less consumption of water and less impact on our sewer system.

While these systems are aging and need upgrades, capacity is not the concern that it may have been when the systems were built. Public schools are seeing a decrease in the school age population, and we are entering a time when building new housing within existing neighborhoods is a necessary component for the long-term stabilization of schools. Property values are increasing to the point that they are making neighborhoods less affordable to more people and are not highly impacted by the type or size of lots that are in our neighborhoods. Neighborhood character may no longer be more important than the need for more housing.

Eliminating the minimum lot size completely may be a beneficial action to help achieve housing goals in the City's adopted housing plan, promote more housing in existing neighborhoods, and stabilize the school aged population by creating more family sized housing in neighborhoods. However, if lot sizes are eased but other lot and bulk regulations are kept the same, small lots would still be difficult to build on. Maximum lot coverage, setbacks, building height, and parking requirements will diminish the ability of smaller lots to be economically viable with the high cost of land in the city. The below table compares two properties to help demonstrate how lots of different sizes may be subdivided and what could be constructed on the lots using the SR-3 zoning regulations.

The following chart demonstrates what a potential development scenario may produce if minimum lot sizes are reduced. The intent of this analysis is to demonstrate that if the minimum lot size is reduced to 2,000 square feet, setbacks and lot coverage further restrict development of family sized homes and in some cases make it highly unlikely. This analysis does not include any fiscal analysis, however for reference this property was listed on the MLS on February 26, 2024 for a sale price of $729,000 (rounded).

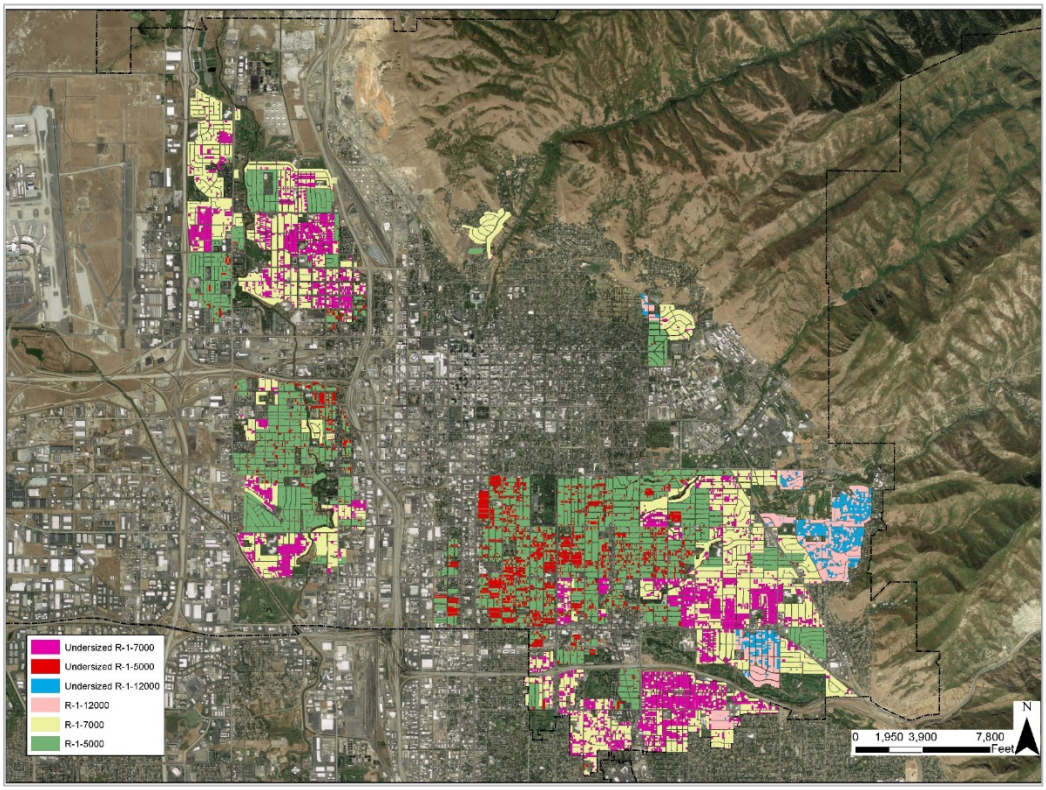
As shown in the table below, reducing the minimum lot size in the R-1/5,000 zone but leaving other regulations the same results in a buildable area that is unlikely to support redeveloping this property with two new homes. However, increasing the lot coverage and reducing setbacks does produce two new homes that may be more likely to be constructed.

Neighborhood	Liberty Wells	
Lot size (current)	4,791 sq ft	
Lot dimensions	70 x 68 (ft)	
Home size	1,600 sq ft	
Subdivided Data (using SR-3 zone)	**SR3**	**R-1 with minimum lot size of 2,000 sq ft, all other regulations the same as R-1/5,000**
Lot size (each lot, 2 lots)	2,380	2,380
Dimensions per lot	35 x 68	35 x 68
Max lot coverage	60% = 1428 ft^2	40% = 952 sq ft
Setbacks (total area of each setback)	**Total:** 1,219 ft^2 **Front:** (10')=350 ft^2 **Sides:** (4')=344 ft^2 **Rear:** (15')=525 ft^2	**Total:** 1,932 **Front:** (20')= 700 ft^2 **Sides:** (4' & 10')= 532 ft^2 **Rear:** (20')=700 ft^2
Buildable area	1,161 ft^2	448 ft^2
Max square feet of building (2 story, no basement)	1,161 x 2 = 2,322 sq ft	896 ft^2

As stated above, the current zoning regulations make it difficult to build on lots that are irregular, whether that is due to size, width, or other standards. Salt Lake City has 33,755 R-1 lots. Of that, 11,837 (35.1%) are too small for the district they are within. However, many of these are considered legal lots due to different reasons (within a subdivision, length of existence, etc.). **By easing and adjusting the minimum lot size, a significant number of lots would come into compliance with this standard.**

The city would also provide the opportunity to landowners with larger lots to subdivide into multiple smaller lots. This impact, when coupled with a smaller minimum lot frontage, can lead to numerous new lots that can provide a home in the future. Using the smallest minimum lot sizes and widths applicable in the included zones (as Winnipeg and Duluth did) also reduces the creation of nonconformities.

One of the largest drivers of housing costs is the raw land cost. By decreasing or eliminating minimum lot area requirements, it reduces the impact land costs have on building new housing.



Map that shows if the size of the single-family lot complies with the required minimum lot size

C. Reducing Minimum Lot Widths

Lots in the city have historically been created based on two measurements. First, was the use of a “rod” and a “chain”. A “rod” equals 16.5 feet and was used with some frequency historically. A rod was also called a “perch”. It is also a quarter of a chain. A chain is 66 feet in length. A furlong is 10 chains, or 660 feet. The 660 feet distance should sound familiar because it is the length of one block face in the Plat of Zion.

When the city was first platted, lots were divided into rods to ensure that each lot was 1/2 acre in size. Each lot was supposed to be “4 perches wide” which equaled 66 feet. However, as the city expanded, the lots were often divided further to be one, two, or three perches wide. As a result, many older neighborhoods have subdivision plats that show lots at 33 and 48.5 feet in width.

At some point in time, lots started to be divided into multiples of 25 feet. This was likely as rods and chains were phased out in the early to mid-1900’s. In SLC, people could purchase as many 25’ wide lots as they could to build whatever size home they wanted. When the minimum lot width of 50’ was introduced, it was likely based on the 25’ wide lots. However, older lots became noncomplying because most were less than 50’ wide, even if only by 1.5 feet because some purchased a lot that was 3 rods wide. Lots were also modified by agreement between adjacent landowners, through tax sales, or through court proceedings. Some lot widths are shown on recorded plats and established at the whims of the subdivider. **As a result, there is a wide variety of lot widths in the city and establishing any minimum lot size will not fully eliminate nonconformity.**

CURRENT ZONING REGULATIONS

The existing minimum lot widths in the R-1 zones are shown in the below table. The table only shows minimum lot widths for residential uses. The R-1 zones allow other uses and some minimum lot widths are use dependent.

	R-1/12,000	R-1/7,000	R-1/5,000
Min Lot Width	**Interior Lots:** 80 ft **Corner Lots:** 100 ft	50 ft, all lots	50 ft, all lots

C1: Reduce the minimum lot width.

The City Council could consider reducing the minimum lot width. This could be to a width that captures most lot widths based on the various methods that lots have been measured in the city. For example, setting the minimum lot width to 25 feet would capture most lots within the city, regardless of how the lot was created or how the lot widths were measured. There is likely little harm to this approach as most lots are located within an existing subdivision and creating new lots would require a subdivision amendment. There are some instances where a lot line adjustment might be possible to make an existing lot that is not developable because the lot is too narrow.

Important things to know:

- *Reducing the number of noncomplying lots is a best practice when setting development standards and should be considered if there is direction to modify lot widths.*
- *If the lot width is reduced and it allows an existing lot to be further subdivided, lots within an existing subdivision will be required to go through a subdivision amendment process. Parcels that are not within an existing subdivision can be divided through recording of deeds and new legal descriptions.*
- *Reducing lot widths may reduce the number of planned developments that are submitted to the city due to the width of the lot. This has occurred in R-1 zones in the past.*
- *Reducing minimum lot widths may promote the subdividing of larger lots and produce smaller homes, which increases the opportunity for people to purchase a home.*

C2: Eliminate the minimum lot width.

These options would eliminate the minimum lot width completely. This is not as impactful as it may sound because most lots in the city are within a platted subdivision and the subdivision plats show the lot width. Therefore, creating new lots from an existing lot within an existing subdivision requires a subdivision amendment that includes a notice to owners within the subdivision. There are lots in the city that are not in a subdivision. These lots (technically called parcels) could be divided by the owner with no notice to neighbors. But as discussed, minimum lot widths are only loosely tied to the provisions that establish the basis of zoning (health, safety, and welfare) and would eliminate all noncompliance issues associated with minimum lot widths.

Important things to know:

- *This option has the same key considerations as option C1 but may increase the likelihood of existing lots being further subdivided and increase the number of new lots that may contain smaller homes.*
- *Minimum lot widths are a barrier to creating smaller homes and home ownership.*

DISCUSSION

The Council should consider whether having minimum lot widths is necessary. Most of the R-1 lots in the city were created through a subdivision plat process and the plats identify the lot widths. City code allows a lot line adjustment to modify the width of adjacent lots. However, the lot line adjustment process cannot create a new lot. Any effort to create a new lot within an existing platted subdivision would require a subdivision amendment, which includes certain noticing requirements to neighbors. Other property owners within the subdivision, if they are materially damaged by a subdivision, have a right to protest a subdivision amendment and a proposed amendment can be denied as a result. However, proving that there is material harm is not the same thing as a property owner not liking a proposed subdivision amendment. An example of a potential injury would be the reduction or elimination of access to an easement if the amendment did not address the rights granted by the easement.

Eliminating minimum lot widths would eliminate all nonconformities caused by the existing minimum lot widths in the R-1 zoning districts. It would also likely lead to the demolition of some homes to accommodate additional homes, particularly when associated with a reduction in minimum lot areas and reductions in setbacks. This is a value judgement that the Council would have to determine because a net increase in homes aligns with the City's housing goals, but the demolition of existing homes may not align with goals aimed at preserving existing housing or preserving historic structures. Other benefits from reducing lot standards and regulations include the promotion of infill development and the promotion of inclusivity.

D. Reduce Minimum Setbacks

Most residential districts include setbacks to help create separation from neighboring buildings, land uses, and streets. Setbacks are usually small on the side, but larger on the front and rear. Corner lots typically have specific setbacks along each street. In higher density settings, setbacks are typically reduced. However, in lower density districts they tend to be larger. Setbacks have existed in the City's zoning code since 1927 but they have been measured differently over time.

For most of the time since the city has had zoning, the front yard and rear yard setbacks were a set distance while the side yard setbacks were a percentage of the lot width or based on building height, with the rationale being that taller buildings should have larger setbacks and smaller lots didn't need as big of setbacks. In more recent times, this approach has flipped, with front yard setbacks being linked to the averages of the block face and rear yard setbacks mostly being a percentage of the lot depth up to a maximum requirement. Side yard setbacks in R-1 zones have become fixed dimensions, regardless of the width of the lot or the height of the structure.

EXISTING ZONING REGULATIONS

The following table provides the setbacks in each of the R-1 zoning districts. The front yard setbacks are the same in all three districts. This was established around 2005 when the City adopted the "Compatible Infill Ordinance" which was intended to address what was identified as gaps in the zoning code that was producing homes that were perceived as out of scale with various neighborhoods.

The other differences in setbacks are relatively minor, with changes in corner side yards, small changes between interior setback, and reduced rear yard setback in the R-1/5,000 zoning district.

	R-1/5,000	R-1/7,000	R-1/12,000
Min Lot Area	5,000 sq ft	7,000 sq ft	12,000 sq ft
Min. Lot Width	50’	50’	**Interior Lots:** 80’ **Corner Lots:** 100’
Front Setback	**Average of Block Face;** 20’ if no other structures on block face; or as shown on recorded plat.		
Corner Side Setback	10’	**Average of Block Face;** 20’ if no other structures on block face; or as shown on recorded plat	
Interior Setback	4’ on one side; 10’ on other	6’ on one side; 10’ on other	8’ on one side; 10’ on other
Rear Yard	25% of lot depth, not to exceed 20’	25’	25’

OPTIONS

As with other sections, the City Council has a variety of options that can be considered. Each of these options has some potential issues that are identified within each option.

D1: Modify the minimum setbacks so that they are the same in each of the R-1 zones.

This assumes that no districts will be consolidated. The reason for larger setbacks in the R-1/12,000 and R-1/7,000 is not tied to health, safety, or welfare of the inhabitants because the health, safety, or general welfare is not impacted by slightly different setback requirements. The minimums are larger in these zones simply as a preference. Fire safety can be provided in all 3 districts, so can access to sunlight, and single-family homes generally do not need greater separation just because the lots are bigger.

In fact, the lot coverage requirements prevent nearly every lot from building on their entire buildable area after the setbacks are applied. Setbacks typically take up 25-40% of the lot area. The total lot coverage in the R-1 zones is 35% or 40 %, depending on the zone. If the setbacks take up 40% of the lot and the maximum lot coverage is 35% or 40 %, then an additional 20-25% of the lot is not developable, even for accessory buildings. That 20-25% of the lot area usually ends up being incorporated into the rear yard.

Important things to know

- *This is a relatively minor change because most setbacks are similar.*
- *This is unlikely to have an impact on housing supply.*
- *Lot coverage requirements further restrict how much of a property can be covered with buildings.*

D2: Modify the setbacks so they are a % of the lot width so that smaller lots are not as negatively impacted as larger lots.

This would essentially tie setbacks to the provided width of the side yard. It can be a complex method for measuring setbacks. This would not modify front or rear yard setbacks. The SR-1A establishes side yard setbacks based on the width of the lot.

Important things to know

- *This benefits narrower lots and would likely help promote the creation of smaller lots and smaller homes provided other measures are taken related to minimum lot areas and lot widths.*
- *This may make it more challenging for applicants because it is easier to design a site plan when a numerical value is known and not dependent on other measurements.*
- *This usually takes more time to administer because the reviewer must perform a calculation compared to simply just checking numbers. However, this is a relatively minor issue.*

D3: Maintain the setbacks as if no consolidations occur.

This is self-explanatory and requires no additional discussion.

D4: If the three R-1 zones are consolidated, utilize the R-1/5,000 zoning district.

This would essentially be the same action as D1.

Important things to know:

- *The R-1/5,000 setbacks are a known and applied regulation, so there would be no need to make interpretations related to setbacks.*
- *This would not require any additional steps or actions beyond the consolidation of the districts.*
- *Noncomplying lots can already use the R-1/5,000 setbacks.*

Unless other modifications are made (such as lot coverage increases) the impact of this in terms of promoting more housing will be reduced because other regulations would be a barrier.

D5: If a different zoning district is used to replace the R-1/5,000 district (to allow single-family attached, for example) use the setbacks in the replacement district.

If the SR-3 or FB-UN1 zone is used to replace the R-1 zones, it is logical to utilize the same setbacks from those zones for a variety of reasons. First, those setbacks are already being applied in the city and they generally do not create significant issues and align with applicable fire codes for building separation, which should be the driving force for establishing side yard setbacks. Front yard setbacks are more challenging because people tend to prefer buildings to be set back in a similar fashion along a block face. The average can be time consuming to measure and calculate. Rear yard setbacks are easier to make consistent because there is less variation.

Important things to know:

- *These setbacks are already in use, so there is no need for interpretations.*
- *There may be some desire to push buildings closer to the street to create larger rear yards, where most accessory uses and outdoor activity in neighborhoods occurs.*
- *Modifying front yard setbacks will change some streetscapes as some buildings will be closer to the street than others.*
- *Front and rear yard setbacks are the least likely to impact the creation of more housing because most lots in the city are deeper than wide. Other regulations have larger impacts.*
- *Changing the average front yard setback to a setback within the range of the existing building reduces staff time doing zoning reviews and makes the code more direct for property owners, architects, and designers. This also has less impact on the development pattern of a block.*

DISCUSSION

Setbacks have not traditionally been a barrier to housing development in the city. However, if the R-1 zones are consolidated and one of the goals of the proposal is to minimize any new nonconformity, the setbacks in the R-1/7,000 and R-1/12,000 zones would be reduced on one side and in the rear yard. The reduction would be from eight or ten feet down to six feet in one interior side yard, from 25' to 20' in the rear, and the corner side yard would be 10' instead of the average of the block face.

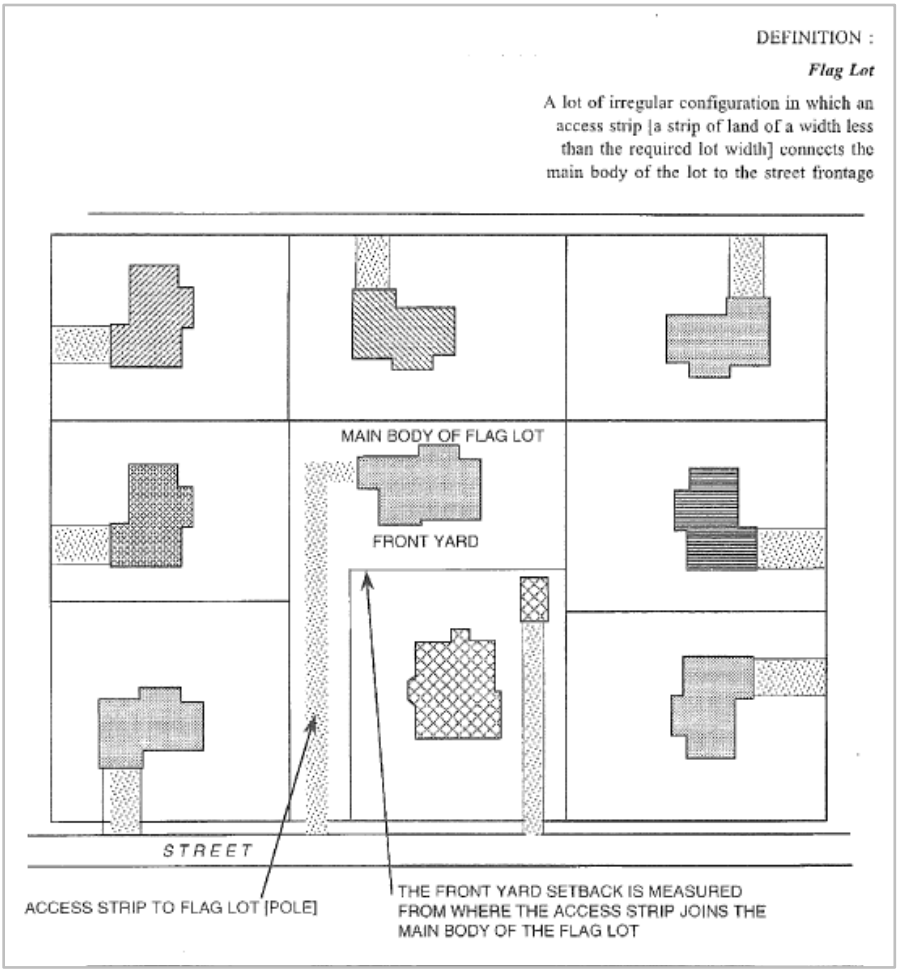
When coupled with any changes to minimum lot widths or lot areas, the smaller setbacks should be utilized so that the setbacks are not a barrier to the purposes for modifying the other provisions. Another option is to apply the same setbacks to the R-1 zone that exists in the SR-1 or SR-1A zone. The minimum side yard setbacks in these zones allow a reduction for narrow lots.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. Reducing lot widths and setbacks will likely lead to more homes being built in neighborhoods. Increased density is typically opposed at public meetings and hearings. It should be expected that there will be opposition to the proposal.
2. If there is no relief from setbacks or other regulations included with changes, small lots would still be difficult to create and build homes on. This could be addressed by considering modifications to lot area, lot width, and setback requirements.
3. Concerns regarding demolitions to make way for development. Durham tracked the demolitions of residential properties in the "Urban Tier" and found that their initiatives did not have a significant impact on demolitions. Please see the "Case Studies" section for more information.
4. If the consolidated district allows the same or more opportunities for development and redevelopment as before, cities with precedence show that there is less of a chance of losing a lawsuit over regulatory takings.

E. Flag Lot Standards

Flag lots are lots without street frontage, located behind an existing lot and connected to the street by an access strip. Flag lots must meet additional requirements beyond those normally required in the underlying zone, so it can be difficult to use flag lots to develop new housing. Easing these additional standards could promote more flag lot development in Salt Lake City.



(Flag lot illustration from SLC Code: 21A.62.050)

The current zoning requirements for residential flag lots can be found in 21A.24.010.G. Flag lots are a permitted use in the Foothills zoning districts and can be approved in all other residential zoning districts as a conditional use. In addition to meeting the requirements of the underlying zoning district, flag lots require a 24'-wide access strip, a minimum 100' lot depth, and a minimum lot area 1.5 times larger than the minimum in the applicable district.

Requiring flag lots to have a minimum lot area 1.5 times larger than the base zoning limits this option only to particularly large lots. This means that a flag lot would only be possible on existing lots that are 2.5 times larger than the minimum required by the zoning district:

	R-1/5,000	R-1/7,000	R-1/12,000
Minimum Lot Size (sq. ft.)	5,000	7,000	12,000
Minimum Flag Lot Size (sq. ft.)	7,500	10,500	18,000
Total Area Required (sq. ft.)	**12,500**	**17,500**	**30,000**

Due to the additional lot size and access requirements, as well as the extra time required for Planning Commission approval, this development option is uncommon in Salt Lake City.

The flag lot regulations in the city are so burdensome that very few flag lots have been developed in the city. The options listed below are intended to reduce the barriers to promote more flag lots.

E1: Eliminate the minimum lot area for the street adjacent lot and the flag lot.

There does not seem to be any rational justification for the lot area requirements for flag lots. Regardless of having the specific flag lot minimum requirements, a flag lot requires a large land area and must be large enough to be subdivided. The minimum lot area for the flag lot can be eliminated with minor implications. The rational part of the flag lot provisions are the perimeter setbacks for the flag lot, which are intended to reduce the impact to the privacy of neighbor's rear yards. However, since many of these properties could build a single-family dwelling far from the street, and closer to a property line, this intent does not seem valid.

Important things to know:

- *The minimum lot area required to create a flag lot is a significant barrier to creating new homes on large lots and could be eliminated.*
- *If minimum lot sizes were reduced or removed, it would promote more flag lots on properties with large rear yards that are easily accessible.*

E2: Reduce the minimum lot area for the street adjacent lot and the flag lot so both require the same amount of lot area.

This has the same discussion and important things to know as E1.

E3: Allow the pole part of the lot to be an easement across the street adjacent lot.

The access to a flag lot could be an easement across the street facing lot. It would still be subject to fire code requirements for roadway width and proximity. Any easement would have to include provisions for maintenance of the driveway.

Important things to know

- *An easement could be used instead of the required dimensions for the access "pole".*
- *Fire code provisions for minimum width and proximity would still apply.*
- *The easement should include provisions for long term maintenance of the access to ensure emergency access.*

E4: Create standards and process for creating lots without frontage that are not flag lots.

Like item E3, the flag lot provisions could be deleted and replaced with provisions for requiring access to lots without street frontage and ensuring utility access to the flag lot.

Important things to know:

- *This could create an easier path for building new homes on large/deep lots that is easier than creating a flag lot.*
- *This could be a way to promote smaller lot, smaller footprint homes that could be purchased and increase home ownership opportunities.*
- *This may reduce the number of planned developments that are submitted because lots without street frontage are one of the primary reasons planned developments are submitted. Although these are not typically in an R1 zone, these provisions could be applied more broadly.*
- *This could promote ADUs being subdivided off from the main lot and create more home ownership opportunities.*

DISCUSSION

For cities like Salt Lake City that are mostly built out, building new housing behind existing homes is one way to promote infill development without drastically changing neighborhood character. Salt Lake City currently allows Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in all residential zoning districts, but these must be located on the same property as the main building, so it is not possible for both buildings to be owner-occupied.

Flag lots make it possible for both the front and rear buildings to be individually owned, increasing opportunities for home ownership throughout the city.

Flag lot standards could be eased by making the process an administrative (staff) approval, which would eliminate the processing and noticing time required for Planning Commission items (2-3 months). Implementing such a change in conjunction with reduced lot sizes, widths, and setbacks would expand the number of properties eligible for flag lot development. Changes to the requirements for the access strip, such as reducing the required width or allowing an easement to provide access instead of full ownership, could also promote more flag lot development.

Flag lot regulations include the same types of regulations that apply to other lots, such as setbacks, lot coverage, and access. Flag lots also have the added need to comply with fire code requirements.

This section discusses each of these specifically and utilizes flag lot regulations from the City of Los Angeles as an example.

Setbacks: Current standards require flag lots to maintain the same yard requirements as the front lot. Los Angeles requires lot splits to maintain the typical front yard setback, but only requires 4' interior side and rear setbacks.

Lot coverage: As with setbacks, the lot coverage requirements for flag lots in the current code must comply with the standards of the underlying zone. The lot coverage requirements for the R-1 districts range from 35%-40%. Increasing the maximum lot coverage would allow more land currently used for yard space to be used for housing. Flag lot regulations in Los Angeles regulates massing based on a combination of floor area ratios and lot coverage standards, but in no case allows more than 50% lot coverage in R1 zones. Under LA's small lot subdivision option allowed in certain zones, the maximum lot coverage is 75%. It is unlikely that a lot could achieve 75% lot coverage and comply with setback requirements.

Access strip and fire code: Current zoning standards require a 24'-wide access strip (at least 16' paved with 4' landscape yards on each side). Fire Code requires an approved fire apparatus access road to extend to within 150' of all portions of a building. These roads must be at least 20' wide (or 26' for structures greater than 30' high). A turnaround must also be provided for access roads greater than 150'. It may be worth considering decreasing the required width of the paved portion of the access strip for properties if the proposed length of the access is less than 100'. The city of Durham, NC recently adopted a "reduced pole width option" in their flag lot standards that allows the width of the access to be reduced to 12' if the primary structure meets a maximum height of 25' and a maximum size of 1,200 sq. ft.

Another possible consideration would be to allow the access strip to be either provided as part of the flag lot or provided through an access easement for the flag lot over and across the original (front) lot. This approach would allow the property line to remain in the same location on the front lot, avoiding possible issues related to setbacks and required yards.

Even with eased standards, flag lot subdivisions are expected to remain a limited tool, mostly useful for unique properties with large backyards. The subdivision process can still be lengthy, even when only creating one new lot, and properties with smaller backyards may elect to build an ADU rather than a new principal dwelling on a flag lot. Despite these potential concerns, flag lots can still be a useful tool to provide additional housing that is more likely to be larger than an ADU (more family-sized) and increases ownership opportunities for future residents.

F. Allow Single-Family Attached Dwellings in R-1 Zones

In the Salt Lake City zoning ordinance, single-family attached dwellings are defined as: "A dwelling unit that is attached via a common party side wall to at least one other such dwelling and where at least three (3) such dwellings are connected together." Single-family attached structures include duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, and townhomes. Currently, none of these uses are permitted or conditionally permitted in any R-1 District. The options discussed in this section are intended to identify ways that these types of housing can be allowed in the R-1 Zoning Districts.

CURRENT ZONING REGULATIONS

Single-family detached dwellings are the only primary dwelling types permitted in the AG (Agricultural), FP/FR (Foothills), and R-1 (Single-Family Residential) Districts. Most neighborhoods in Salt Lake City are within these districts. Two-family and single-family attached building types are permitted in a variety of other residential and mixed-use districts, but these districts are less prevalent.

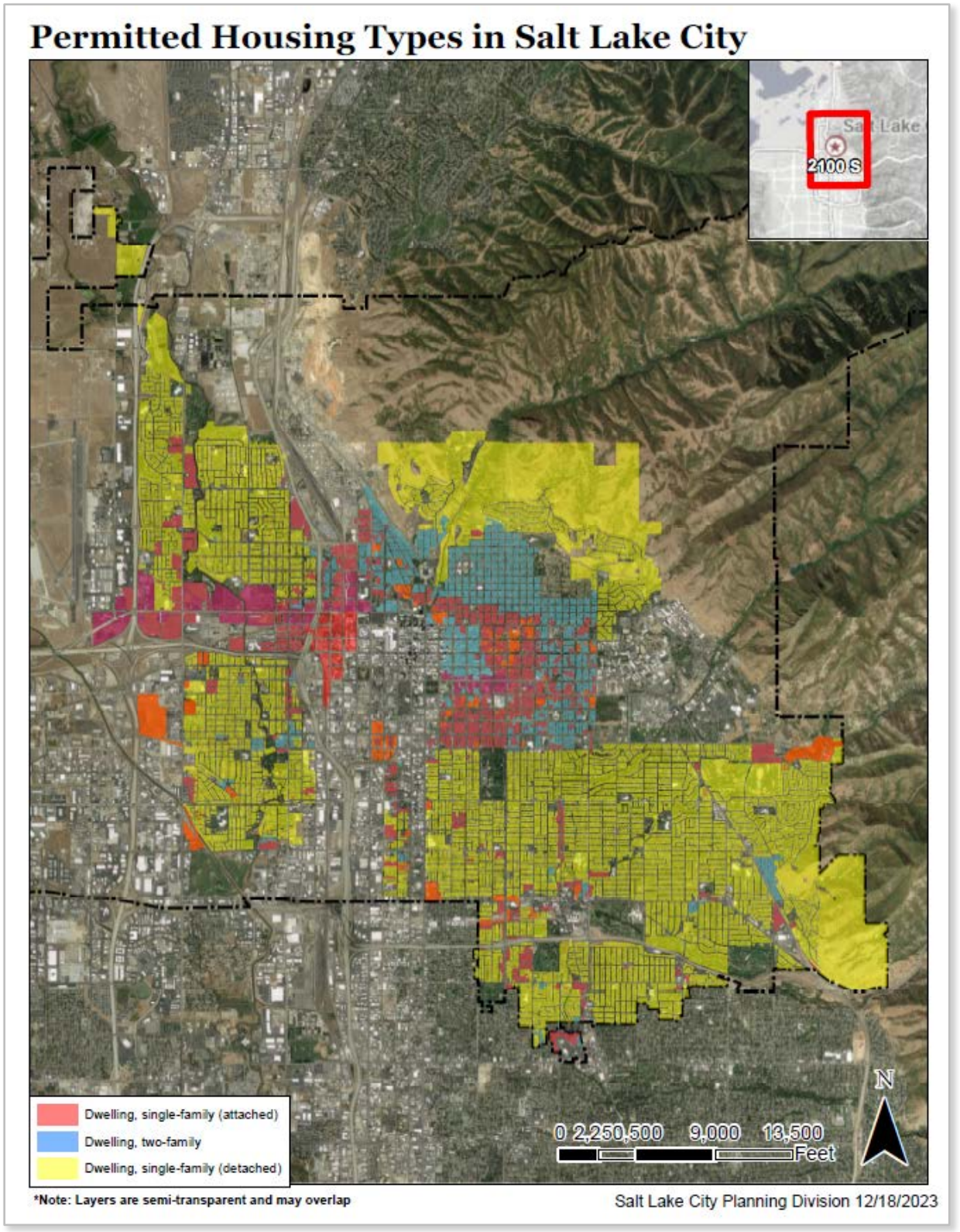
See the table and map below for more detailed information about where each housing type is allowed.

Zoning District	Single-family, Detached	Two-family	Single-family, Attached
AG-2 *Agricultural District*	✓		
AG-5 *Agricultural District*	✓		
FP *Foothills Protection District*	✓		
FR-1/43,560 *Foothills Estate Residential District*	✓		
FR-2/21,780 *Foothills Residential District*	✓		
FR-3/12,000 *Foothills Residential District*	✓		
R-1/12,000 *Single-Family Residential District*	✓		
R-1/7,000 *Single-Family Residential District*	✓		
R-1/5,000 *Single-Family Residential District*	✓		
R-2 *Single- and Two-Family Residential District*	✓	✓	

Zoning District	Single-family, Detached	Two-family	Single-family, Attached
SR-1 and SR-1A *Special Development Pattern Residential District*	✓	✓	
FB-UN1 *Form Based Urban Neighborhood District*	✓	✓	✓
MU *Mixed Use District*	✓	✓	✓
RB *Residential/Business District*	✓	✓	✓
RMF-30 *Low Density Multi-Family Residential District*	✓	✓	✓
RMF-35 *Moderate Density Multi-Family Residential District*	✓	✓	✓
R-MU *Residential/Mixed Use District*	✓	✓	✓
R-MU-35 *Residential/Mixed Use District*	✓	✓	✓
R-MU-45 *Residential/Mixed Use District*	✓	✓	✓
RO *Residential/Office District*	✓	✓	✓

Zoning District	Single-family, Detached	Two-family	Single-family, Attached
SNB *Small Neighborhood Business District*	✓	✓	✓
SR-3 *Special Development Pattern Residential District*	✓	✓	✓
TSA-MUEC-T *Transit Station Area District*	✓	✓	✓
TSA-SP-T *Transit Station Area District*	✓	✓	✓
TSA-UC-T *Transit Station Area District*	✓	✓	✓
TSA-UN-T *Transit Station Area District*	✓	✓	✓
TSA-MUEC-C *Transit Station Area District*		✓	✓
TSA-SP-C *Transit Station Area District*		✓	✓
TSA-UC-C *Transit Station Area District*		✓	✓
TSA-UN-C *Transit Station Area District*		✓	✓

Zoning District	Single-family, Detached	Two-family	Single-family, Attached
G-MU *Gateway-Mixed Use District*			✓
FB-SE *Form Based Special Purpose Corridor District*	✓		✓
FB-UN2 *Form Based Urban Neighborhood District*	✓		✓
RMF-45 *Moderate/High Density Multi-Family Residential District*	✓		✓
RMF-75 *High Density Multi-Family Residential District*	✓		✓


Permitted Housing Types in Salt Lake City
2100 S
Dwelling, single-family (attached)
Dwelling, two-family
Dwelling, single-family (detached)
0 2,250,500 9,000 13,500
Feet
N
*Note: Layers are semi-transparent and may overlap
Salt Lake City Planning Division 12/18/2023

The City Council may consider several options to allow single-family attached (also called townhomes) in the R1 zones. This section outlines those options and some of the key considerations that may help the Council decide what approach to take, if any. One aspect that should be considered for any option is to modify the definitions of these housing types. The current definitions are based on the definition of family, which is somewhat outdated. Other codes from around the country are starting to use more generic terms, such as detached dwelling, duplex, triplex, townhome (or rowhome) and multi-plex.

These terms are describing the building, not who lives in the building. There may still be occupancy rules, but the terminology is more straightforward. In the SLC zoning code for example, single-family attached can be 3 dwellings attached together through a common wall. Multi-family is defined as three or more dwelling units in a single building. In this situation, what is commonly referred to as a townhome or rowhome could be considered both single-family attached and multi-family dwellings.

In addition, if the Council is considering allowing single-family attached, it should also consider the twin home and two-family dwellings as well. It does not make much sense to allow 3 attached single-family dwellings but not two attached single-family dwellings. The options listed below assume duplexes and twin homes would be included. The council may also want to consider allowing single family attached dwellings in the SR-1, SR-1A, and R-2 zones as well. That would make the housing type a permitted use in all residential zoning districts except the FR zones.

F1: Add new definitions for missing middle housing to the zoning code and allow those uses in the R-1 zone.

This option would require adding these uses to the table of permitted and conditional uses and adding specific regulations for these housing types. While some of these housing types can fit within the existing bulk standards, at the very least the standards would have to clearly state how they apply to these other uses. This is not a complicated text amendment.

Important things to know:

- *The maximum lot coverage is likely a barrier to allowing these housing types in the R-1 zoning districts. Other cities that have taken this approach have increased the lot coverage (or floor area ratio) so that other housing types are more feasible.*
- *The height in the R-1 zones is likely a barrier to townhomes. Most townhomes have "tuck under parking." This is often considered a "suburban" arrangement by those who promote missing middle housing. With the height limited to 28 feet, the only option for parking is in detached garages. However, the maximum lot coverage, as identified, will create a barrier. The city should consider which path is more appropriate: allow more height to accommodate ground floor parking or allow more lot coverage to allow for more detached garages.*
- *If more height is allowed, it should be limited to 30 feet to avoid triggering certain fire code provisions. Thirty feet allows for two livable stories above ground floor parking without adding additional fire code requirements.*
- *Most lots in the city are narrow, so it should be expected that townhomes would likely be sideways oriented. Street facing design standards should be included where allowed.*
- *Cottage developments (small lot, small footprint, detached housing) should be allowed land use.*
- *This would likely eliminate the affordable housing incentives in the R-1 zones. However, the incentives could be calibrated to allow more dwellings if some of the dwellings are affordable. For example, in Portland up to four dwellings are allowed on any lot, but that can be increased to six if two of them have a specified level of affordability.*

F2: Utilize an existing zoning district to replace the R-1 zones.

This is like prior discussions that indicate the use of the SR-3 or FB-UN 1 zoning district as an alternative approach. These zones already allow townhomes and have produced missing middle housing.

Important things to know:

- *This would likely be highly controversial, as indicated earlier in this document.*
- *Cottage developments should be allowed in the SR-3 zone. The Council may want to consider adding that type of housing as an allowed use in that zone regardless of if this option is used. Cottage developments allow small lot, detached housing.*

Salt Lake City needs to build more housing to support a growing population. Gentle density and "missing middle housing" can help provide more units in a balanced way that allows more housing to be built in neighborhoods where people want to live.

Missing Middle Housing Diagram, www.missingmiddlehousing.com

Cities across the country are looking at ways to provide "middle housing" as a strategy to help deal with the national housing crisis. Middle housing is a term often used to refer to housing types with more units than single-family homes, but less dense than larger multi-family developments. This could include housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, and townhomes. **The term "middle housing" or "missing middle housing" is often used for these housing types because they provide options that are middle scale between single-family homes and large apartments, and because they provide more affordable options to middle-income families**.

The primary benefit of this approach is that it offers more freedom of choice in the housing market and does so in a way that is compatible with existing neighborhoods. Middle housing has a lower perceived density, while still increasing the number of households in an area to support local businesses and transit service. It can help provide more opportunities for a living experience like traditional single-family housing, since most middle housing units are built with two or more bedrooms.

This is also aligned with current demographic trends towards smaller household sizes – smaller families may prefer to live with smaller yard space in a duplex or townhome if it is in a desirable neighborhood close to amenities. Middle housing types are inherently more affordable than single-family homes due to the reduced land costs associated with smaller lot sizes.

In Salt Lake City, many houses have been converted to duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes because those uses were not always illegal in R-1 districts. These existing structures are currently non-conforming, which is to say that they would be illegal if built under today's zoning code.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

One potential policy implication to consider would be the impact on the City's new affordable housing incentives. The affordable housing incentives authorizes two-, three-, and four-family dwellings, row houses, sideways row houses, and cottage developments in the R-1 zoning districts when affordability requirements are met. Allowing these building types without the requirement to provide affordable units would effectively eliminate the incentive in single-family zones, so the incentives would likely only be used in other higher density zoning districts.

To address this possible impact, the Council could consider revising and expanding the incentives in single-family zones to allow even more units for affordable developments. For instance, the City of Saint Paul, MN allows up to four units per lot and a density bonus of two additional units for affordable housing. Portland, OR allows six-plexes on single-family lots if half of the units are affordable, but some initial studies show that the majority of the middle housing units built in Portland are four-plexes (the maximum allowed without the affordability requirements).

Implementing middle housing zoning reforms is highly political and likely to encounter community opposition in many neighborhoods. Addressing concerns and ensuring effective communication with residents will be crucial for successful adoption.

Like Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), several barriers may limit homeowners' ability to take advantage of middle housing options. Factors such as the high cost of construction and requirements to upgrade utilities will need careful consideration, even though some of these factors may be beyond the scope of this project. Even for those who can afford to

build, the process of designing, permitting, and building new construction can take years, so any benefits will not be realized immediately.

Middle housing zoning reforms may only result in a relatively small number of projects. One study found that about 5% of upzoned parcels saw new development after more than a decade. Using that figure, we might estimate that of SLC's approximately 33,000 residential lots, about 1,700 might be developed over the next decade (about 100-200 per year).

Consideration should be given to what development standards would be appropriate for attached housing in R-1 districts. 2-story townhomes are compatible in size with existing single-family neighborhoods, but 3-story townhomes, especially those with a garage on the main level, can be seen as incompatible with existing neighborhoods because of their increased scale and intensity, even if the permitted height may be as little as two feet additional feet. A form-based approach, like the City's recently adopted RMF-30 standards, may be an appropriate way to ensure future development is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Current parking standards require 2 spaces per dwelling unit for single-family attached housing in a general context. This may be a barrier to infill development, so reductions to the parking standards would also be worth considering with a future amendment. Townhomes being built in this region typically have parking on the ground floor of the building, making the existing height in the R-1 zones a barrier to creating 3 story townhomes and likely results in townhomes not being built.

Many of the cities that have recently adopted middle housing reforms are facing legal challenges. Montana's reforms have been blocked by a judge based on several arguments related to potential contradictions between certain housing laws and an issue related to homeowners' associations. Minneapolis is appealing a decision by a district court to strike down the Minneapolis 2040 Plan until an environmental analysis is complete.

In December 2023, the Spokane City Council approved an emergency ordinance to limit the maximum number of units in R1 zones to 4 (down from "no density"). The real estate industry raised concerns about mortgage guidelines being restricted to a maximum of 4 dwelling units and residential appraisers limited to performing appraisals on properties with up to 4 dwelling units.

Studies consistently indicate that the addition of dwelling units in single-family districts does not necessarily result in a reduction in home values. Studies suggest that well-planned developments, even those introducing higher-density housing, can contribute positively to the economic vitality of the surrounding area.

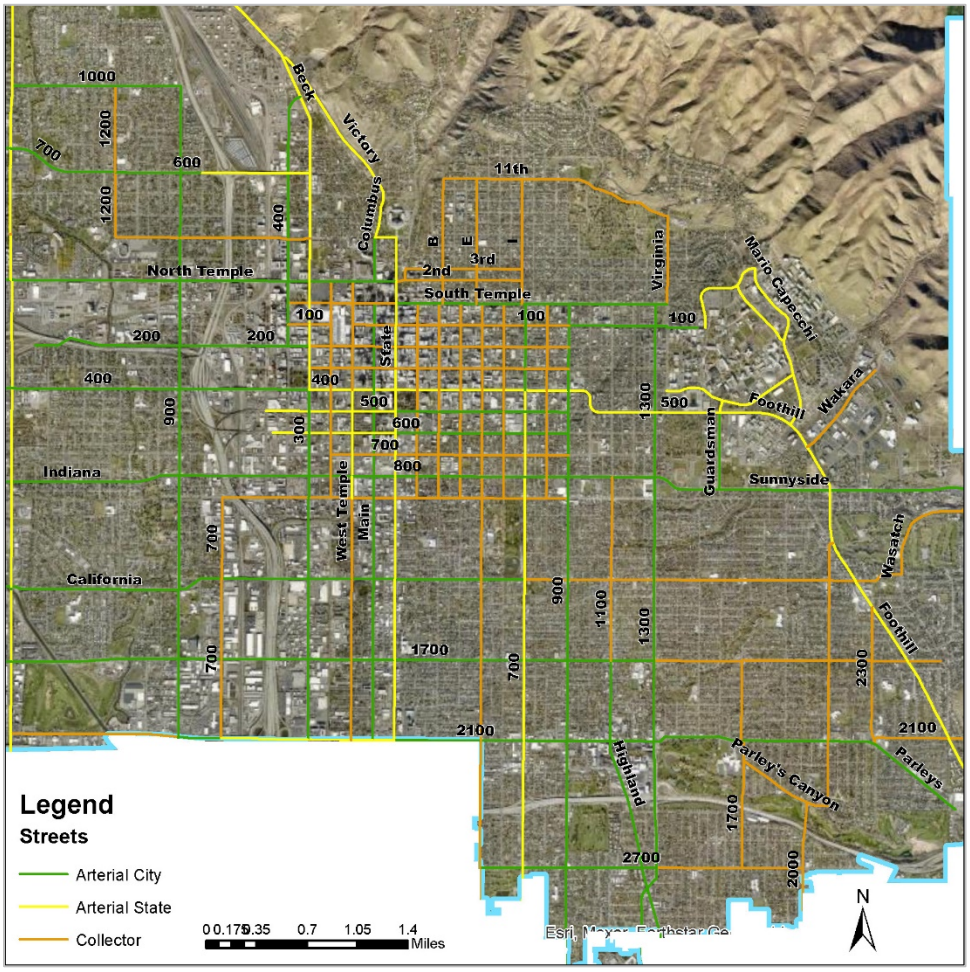
A 2021, the University of Utah published a study with significant relevant findings, which can be found here.

Furthermore, concerns about increased population density and resource strain are often mitigated when considering the existing dynamics of single-family neighborhoods. Most of the neighborhoods in SLC were developed when household size was larger. Utility demands, such as water and sewer were also higher. Declining household size is resulting in fewer people living in some neighborhoods and changing awareness of water use is resulting in a decline in overall household water use. The high cost of housing is also creating more households comprised of unrelated adults. Providing housing options in neighborhoods provides more options for people based on household size. This aligns with the evolving nature of housing preferences, where a diverse range of residents seek affordable, low-maintenance options in existing neighborhoods that are close to daily needs and amenities.

The successful incorporation of attached dwelling units depends on thoughtful planning and adherence to design standards that are in scale with the neighborhood. Municipalities that have implemented such changes often establish guidelines to ensure compatibility with the built environment. This approach helps address concerns about neighborhood desirability and ensures that the addition of attached dwelling units aligns with the evolving needs and preferences of the community. **The evidence suggests that, when implemented responsibly and in response to housing trends, additional dwelling units can positively contribute to neighborhood vitality without causing a decrease in property values.**

Zoning Map Amendments Along Collectors And Arterials To Allow Greater Residential Density And Mixed-Use Development.

Arterial and collector streets are found throughout the city and connect neighborhoods within the city, as shown on the map below. Many of these streets were once streetcar streets and developed as some of the original "transit-oriented development" over 100 years ago. The development pattern still reflects that, with various housing types, densities, and commercial uses found where the streetcar lines intersected or where a collection of businesses developed. These areas have become some of the most important areas in the city because of the amenities that are available.



Salt Lake City Map of Collector and Arterial Streets

When considering how to apply zoning to arterials and collectors, there are a few issues that should be discussed. First, the Planning Division is just starting on a proposal that will consolidate the mixed-use and commercial zoning districts into a new chapter of mixed-use districts. This will merge as many as 25 zoning districts into as few as six new districts. The new districts would utilize the existing form-based districts FB-UN2, MU-8, and FB-UN11 while creating two new districts.

The new districts would be:

- **MU2:** *buildings up to 2 stories*
- **MU3:** *buildings up to 3 stories*
- **MU5:** *The current FB-UN2 zone;*
- **MU6:** *the current FB-UN2 zone where building heights are allowed up to 65';*
- **MU8:** *currently going through the adoption process, allowing buildings up to 90 feet;*
- **MU11:** *recently adopted as FB-UN11.*

Under this proposal, only two new zoning districts would have to be created, while the others would be moved to a new chapter, renamed to fit the order of the chapter, and the other districts deleted. This would require a zoning text amendment to draft the new chapter, the new zoning district regulations, and relocate the existing zoning districts to the new chapter. The Planning Division strongly believes that this effort should at least receive a recommendation from the Planning Commission before arterials and corridors are rezoned.

Second, the City's Transportation Division has recently completed a street typology project that established different types of streets. The recently adopted subdivision code references the street typologies for new streets. While there are not many new streets built in the city, the subdivision code also requires developments over a certain size to create new streets when those subdivisions are in mixed-use zoning districts. Linking zoning to the street typologies will help provide more context when determining how to zone the arterials and collectors.

Third, the future land use designations in the community plans are as varied as the current zoning districts are. There should be an adopted set of defined future land use designations, along with guidance on how those designations are used, within Plan Salt Lake. This could also tie the future land use designations to the consolidated zoning district when the two have common characteristics. Because it will take years to update all the community plans, the planning division will be proposing changes to Plan Salt Lake as part of the consolidation of the mixed-use and commercial districts.

This action will also be tied to the water conservation planning being done by Public Utilities so that it is easier to forecast future water needs and zoning decisions are tied to best practices that are known to reduce water consumption.

Based on these related projects, the division is suggesting that this effort commence after these other projects are at least recommended by the Planning Commission. The division has a goal of achieving that recommendation during this calendar year (2024). However, when it comes time to start that process, the division has identified several guidelines that should be considered when deciding how to proceed with zoning changes along arterials and collector streets. These guidelines are intended to encourage appropriate-scale development that is compatible with surrounding context.

GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE ZONING CHANGES

1. **Align building heights to the scale of the street and surrounding properties.**

Building height is one of the most identifiable characteristics of scale and should be appropriate to the context. Some streets may warrant modest increases in building height, while other streets may be able to accommodate taller buildings. Some additional height is likely to accommodate ground floor commercial uses and residential uses above. If the height only allows two stories, it is unlikely that new development will be of mixed use.

2. **Retail, restaurants, other neighborhood-scale commercial uses should be allowed by right. Allowing these uses along collectors and arterials will allow for more neighborhood-scale commercial business within walking distance of more residents.**

3. **Reducing front yard setbacks will allow for larger buffer setbacks and potentially off-street parking behind buildings.**

4. **Future zoning changes should allow all housing types.**

All types of housing that comply with dimensional zoning requirements should be permitted, although additional regulations should be implemented to prevent existing neighborhood-scale commercial buildings from being redeveloped into entirely residential uses.

5. **Design standards should be used to establish minimum urban design standards.**

Design standards should be like those required in low intensity commercial zoning districts. Design standards can be found in Chapter 21A.37. The proposal to consolidate the existing mixed use and commercial districts will include identifying appropriate design standards.

6. **Off-street parking requirements will change if the zoning is changed from residential to commercial.**

The Neighborhood Center parking context requires slightly less off-street parking than the General Context and is appropriate in areas with pedestrian-scale development patterns, building forms, and amenities.

7. **Minimal lot area and lot width requirements.**

These regulations can prevent smaller properties from being repurposed for new uses. Reducing them will allow for more types of uses to be established in these areas.

8. **Buffering**

Landscape buffers should be required to help minimize the potential impacts of new development. Landscape buffers typically include a continuous shrub hedge, shade trees, and fencing.

Outside of downtown, most collector and arterial streets are surrounded by residential zoning that does not permit commercial uses. Single-family residential is the most prevalent land use designation along these types of streets, except in Council District 4 where there is no single-family zoning.

Arterial and collector streets can accommodate more vehicular traffic than local streets and many are served by UTA bus routes. Several of these are part of the Frequent Transit Network routes which offer 15-minute service and several more are slated for similar service upgrades. Allowing for additional residential density and mixed-use along these types of streets could help to create new housing and commercial opportunities in high-demand areas with adequate transportation options. These opportunities could bring additional activity to these streets and help to create vibrant, walkable neighborhoods. Concentrating and intensifying uses along the Frequent Transit Network is supported by Recommendation 6.1 of the Transit Master Plan (Page 143).

1. Impacts

Additional residential density and new commercial uses have the potential to create impacts on nearby properties. Landscape buffers should be used to enhance privacy, reduce noise, and provide visual screening between dissimilar uses.

2. Traffic and Parking

Concerns regarding traffic and parking are commonly cited by residents when a zoning amendment is proposed that has the potential to bring more cars to a certain area. While this is a possibility with any zoning amendment that facilitates new development, the relatively small-scale development allowed by this proposal is not expected to create significant parking or traffic impacts. Additionally, the availability of frequent transit on these streets can provide a realistic alternative to driving.

3. Displacement

Upzoning has the potential to raise property values, spur redevelopment and displace long-term residents. Property owners tend to have more options regarding changing how their property is used or selling their property. Renters are more susceptible to displacement. The zoning amendments associated with this proposal should consider how the anti-displacement strategies from Thriving in Place are implemented.

Allowing more residential types in commercial zones also has the potential to displace businesses if the property owner determines that converting the use of the property to residential is more advantageous for them. This has occurred in several locations in the city, most notable on a property in Glendale where a site that formerly contained a grocery store was proposed to be redeveloped into housing with no commercial uses included in the plans. This type of action decreases walkability by decreasing access to neighborhood commercial spaces.

Supporting Plans and Policies

The City Council asked the Planning Division to consider several policies and goals when considering each of the options identified in this report. This is a rather tall order to analyze each option now and a more thorough analysis is more appropriately done after the Council provides some direction on what options should be pursued. There needs to be some acknowledgment that not all zoning regulations are going to align perfectly with adopted goals. Furthermore, those goals are often in competition with one another when implemented through zoning. As a result, it is up to the Council to make value judgements regarding which policies to prioritize and what are the best actions to move forward.

This section lists some of the relevant policies from the identified plans with a brief explanation of how the options generally align.

Thriving in Place

Salt Lake City's anti-displacement strategy, *Thriving in Place* (2023), has set specific goals for the City to "combat involuntary displacement" and reduce the disparate impacts of development on marginalized and at-risk communities. Those goals, listed below, include specific strategic priorities to provide direction on policy decisions.

Thriving in Place Goals

1. **Protect** tenants from displacement, especially the most vulnerable.
2. **Preserve** the affordable housing we have.
3. **Produce** more housing, especially affordable housing.
4. **Expand Funding** for tenant support and affordable housing.
5. **Partner + Collaborate** for maximum impact.
6. **Advocate** for tenants at the state level.

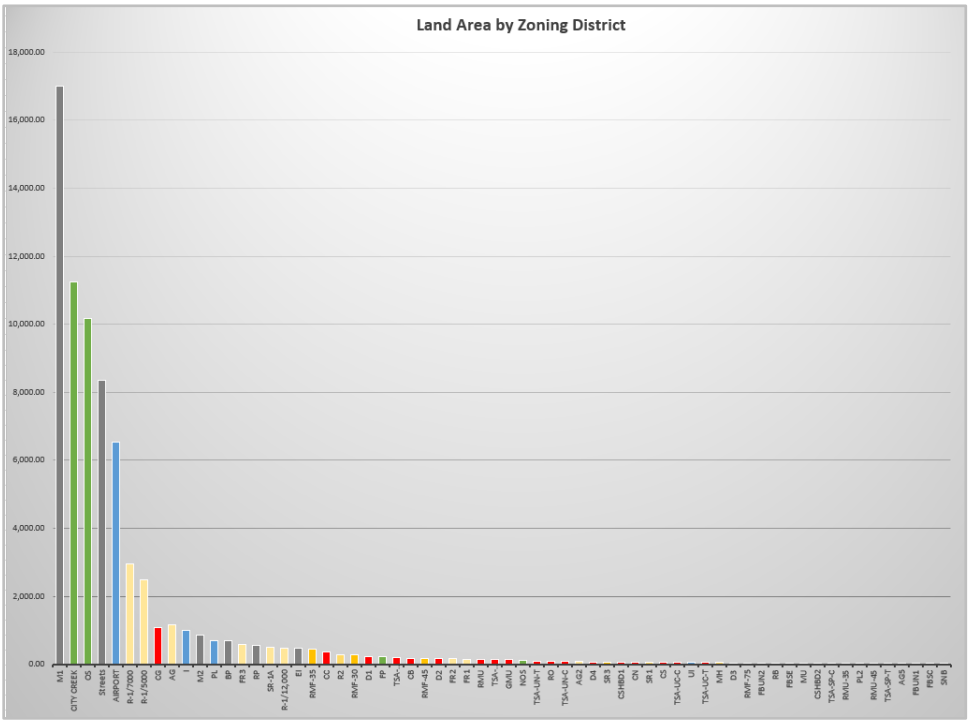
Each of the options listed in this document has some impact on Thriving in Place goals. Of all the strategic priorities found in *Thriving in Place,* Strategy 3C stands out as the most relevant to this proposal. The strategy specifically calls for more "missing middle" housing options. As discussed earlier in this report, "missing middle" is a term often used to refer to housing types with more units than single-family homes, but less dense than larger multi-family developments. They provide more affordable options to middle-income families without the significant impacts of high-density development.

The implementation options in this report would likely encourage more “missing middle” options. Zoning limits where missing middle housing can be built to multi-family zones and some mixed-use zones, where land must accommodate commercial uses as well. This creates situations where important commercial uses have been displaced by residential development. For example, the CB zone allows multi-family development. In the Glendale neighborhood a grocery store that is zoned CB closed and is being replaced by housing.

This may align with Thriving in Place goals related to housing, but it does not align with other citywide and neighborhood goals of creating commercial nodes and business districts and improving the livability of our neighborhoods by increasing access to businesses, amenities, and groceries.

Modifying zoning to allow missing middle housing in R-1 zones does increase the amount of land where it is possible to build this scale of housing and reduces the competition between residential and commercial uses in commercial zones. About 8% of the total land area in SLC is zoned R-1.

The chart below provides a summary of how land is zoned (including streets) in the city based on 2019 GIS data.



Goal 2 listed above may also conflict with some of the options outlined in this report. By increasing housing types in existing neighborhoods, it is possible, maybe even likely, that some existing, lower cost housing will be replaced with more expensive housing. Some of the options specifically identify that recalibrating the affordable housing incentives should be considered to help address this issue.

For these options to effectively provide a diversity of choices, they need to include a variety of housing types that are accessible to all income levels in all parts of the city. Regulations that don't promote more than one type of housing (beyond studio or one-bedroom units) or are implemented only within historically red-lined neighborhoods are not supported by *Thriving in Place*. The recently adopted Affordable Housing Incentives will also need to be considered. Implementing many of the proposed options could effectively eliminate the incentives within single-family districts. To address that impact, and to align with *Thriving in Place* recommendations, the Council should consider revising or expanding those incentives in a way that would promote affordable opportunities within missing middle development.

The other relevant strategy found in *Thriving in Place is* 3E, which calls for prioritizing long-term affordability, integrated services, and transit access. Increasing density and expanding the mix of uses along major corridors and transportation lines may help improve residents' access to transit infrastructure, bring essential services closer to those who need them, and as discussed above, improve affordability by expanding options. While the steps outlined by Strategy 3E may not explicitly call for any of the implementation options proposed in this report, investments in new housing by other departments and organizations will benefit from the flexibility provided by the presented options.

Water Use

In the context of promoting water efficiency in land use planning across the Interior West of the United States, "Integrating Water Efficiency into Land Use Planning in the Interior West: A Guidebook for Local Planners" (Blanchard, J. C. N., 2018) has proven to be a valuable resource for local governments.

This guidebook outlines various water conservation best practices, many of which align with the implementation options discussed in this report, including:

- *Increasing the number of homes per acre,*
- *Implementing cluster development or reducing lot size,*
- *Encouraging infill development, and*
- *Reducing setback requirements.*

Research conducted by Sampson, Quay, & Horrie (2022) supports these practices, highlighting a correlation between higher housing density and lower per capita water use. Additionally, insights from Heidari et al. (2021) emphasize that promoting infill not only revitalizes existing urban areas but also leverages existing infrastructure, reducing the need for new larger-scale improvements to utilities. This approach aligns with the guidebook's emphasis on sustainable urban growth, fostering a more resilient and water-conscious community design.

There have been many studies exploring the relationship between urban development patterns and water use. Specifically, a study by Arizona State's College of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture illustrates the water-saving influence vegetated land cover, housing density, housing age, and lot size have on water use in Portland, Oregon; Austin, Texas; and Salt Lake City, Utah (Stoker et al., 2019).

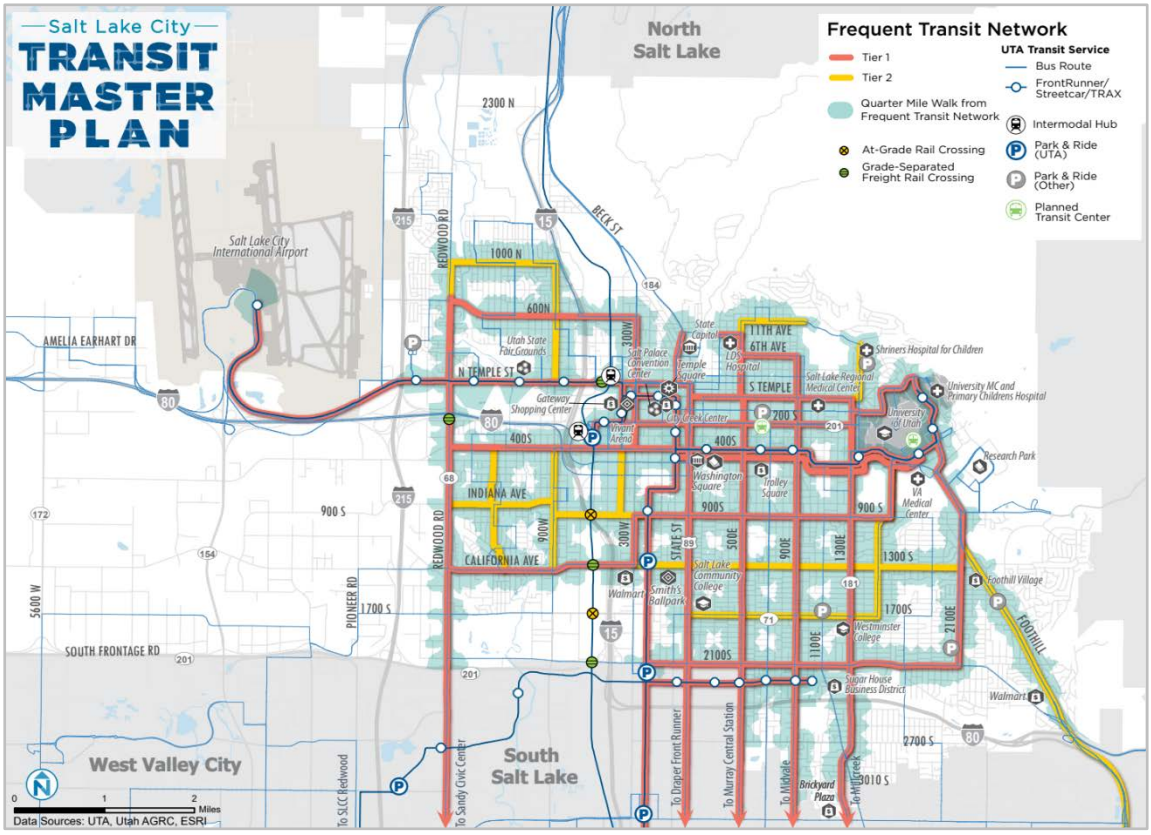
Additionally, research by the EPA emphasized the positive impact of higher-density development on safeguarding water resources (Office of Sustainable Communities, 2006). It showed that higher-density scenarios typically generate less stormwater runoff and impervious cover compared to low-density development, ultimately benefiting watersheds.

Examining some case-specific examples, a study on building types and water use in Denver highlighted that single-family dwellings with larger lots generally consume significantly more water than relatively smaller dwellings (Sampson, et al., 2022). Similarly, a study investigating development patterns and water use in Fort Collins, Colorado, points out the water consumption disparities between sprawl and high-density development (Heidaris et al., 2021). It concludes that sprawl development patterns are associated with higher water consumption due to increased outdoor activities like landscape irrigation. Conversely, high-density development not only reduces future water use but also mitigates the impacts of water shortage events on municipal water supply systems.

The studies mentioned above illustrate the positive impact of the implementation options discussed in this report on water-related infrastructure. Incorporating these strategies can contribute to water conservation and foster resilience in the face of Salt Lake City's evolving water-related challenges. Each of the options listed in this report aligns with the best practices associated with water conservation in urban environments.

Public Transportation

Since August of 2019, Salt Lake City and UTA have been incrementally implementing bus service upgrades along many collector and arterial streets within Salt Lake City to create a Frequent Transit Network (FTN) as shown below and explained on page 16 of the City's Transit Master Plan. FTN bus routes typically offer 7-day-a-week service, 15-minute service from 7 AM to 7 PM Monday-Saturday, and service until midnight Monday-Saturday. The additional residential density and commercial uses allowed by this proposal could potentially lead to increases in ridership on these routes, although further analysis may be necessary to understand the impact more accurately. Additionally, the availability of frequent transit service could potentially reduce the demand for additional parking.



Page 17, Transit Master Plan

The Transit Master Plan provides guidance to consider when implementing new land use regulations along Frequent Transit Network (FTN) bus routes to encourage transit-supportive design and development practices (Page 137 of the plan). Most FTN routes run along collector or arterial streets.

Specific standards recommended for new development can be found below and on page 142 of the plan:

Parking management policies:
The number of parking spaces and whether parking is free for employees and visitors (see Chapter 5).

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policies:
Integrating TDM plans and strategies into the approval process for new development can ensure that developments of certain sizes, that meet certain thresholds, or that are in certain places implement TDM strategies (such as subsidized bus passes, on-site transportation coordinators, etc.).

Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements:
Depending on the size or location of the development, the City could require specific bicycle and pedestrian improvements, or bus stop improvements be implemented as a requirement of development approvals.

Pedestrian-oriented design:
Identify design standards that promote pedestrian oriented urban design features, such as active frontages built right to the street with parking located at the rear of the building and landscaping that provides a buffer between the sidewalk and the street. See Chapter 4 for further details on pedestrian improvements to the right of way.

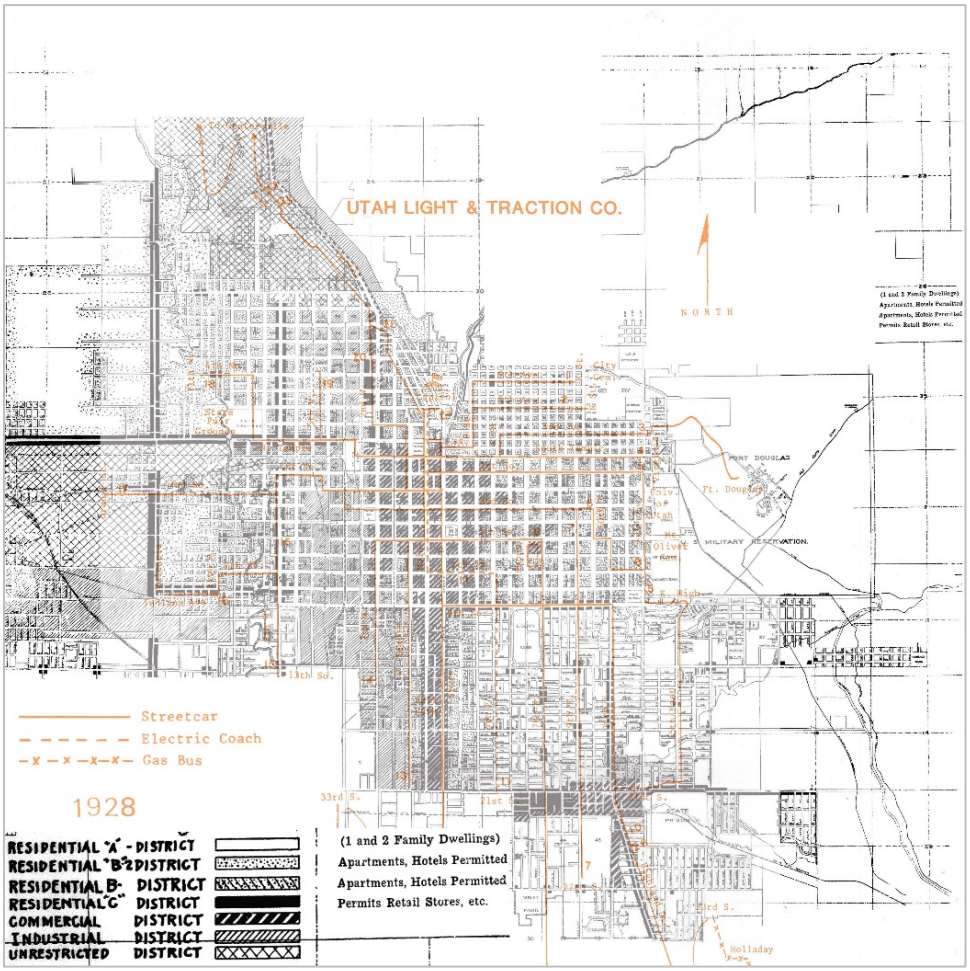
It should be noted that not all neighborhoods have transit access. In those areas, an effort to increase housing options should still be considered because of the benefits it has towards implementing the goals and strategies found in Thriving in Place, the adopted housing plan, and implementing best practices associated with water conservation.

Walkability

HISTORY OF WALKABILITY IN SALT LAKE CITY

Walkability existed in the early years of Salt Lake City, despite having famously large blocks. Commercial businesses were located along transportation arterials and around the nodes where streetcar lines intersected. These were popular places to allow commercial land use because business owners were supported by the constant flow of pedestrian traffic around these streetcar lines and intersections. Residents were served by the convenience of having businesses located right next to their daily commute.

The following map shows the 1928 streetcar lines in relation to the 1928 zoning map and demonstrates this point.



Clear examples of this zoning pattern can be seen along 800 W, 900 S, 1100 E and 1300 E. In 1928, the parcels directly adjacent to the streetcar lines were zoned residential "C". This zone allowed small-scale commercial uses, such as retail shops, hotels, drug stores, restaurants, banks, and theaters. These uses were permitted along the busy transportation arterials, allowing residents to conveniently access their everyday needs without needing to travel too far. Business owners could open these types of businesses by right, without special zoning approval. The remaining parcels on the block not directly adjacent to streetcar routes were zoned residential "A" and only allowed for single- and two-family homes.

BENEFITS OF WALKABILITY

The benefits of walkability extend to people of all ages. Walking is a form of exercise that is accessible to all ages and fitness levels. The term The health benefits of regular walking include improved cardiovascular health, reduced risk of chronic disease, and reduced obesity rates (The Weight of Place: Built Environment Correlates of Obesity and Diabetes).

Walkable cities can help reduce reliance on cars, leading to lower carbon emissions and improved air quality (vehicles contribute to more than 50% of Utah smog, according to the Department of Environmental Quality).

Walkable neighborhoods provide public spaces such as parks, plazas, and sidewalks that serve as common grounds for neighbors to meet, interact, and engage with one another. These spaces become venues for various community activities, from casual strolls and children's play to organized events and gatherings. The increased face-to-face interactions in these spaces can lead to stronger social bonds, a greater sense of community, and improved social cohesion. The visibility and accessibility of neighbors can enhance mutual support and cooperation, contributing to a safer and more secure neighborhood. Walkable environments not only promote physical health but also nurture the social health of the community.

If implemented correctly, walkability can provide more affordable housing options for potential homebuyers. A report published by the Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies found that housing affordability can increase when zoning changes are implemented on a larger scale. Walkable neighborhoods provide more housing variety than traditional single-family neighborhoods, but they are only allowed in a few places where the zoning permits it. Limiting walkability to a few properly zoned areas makes these places expensive because there is a high demand to live in a few existing areas.

The report argues that if zoning is changed to encourage walkability city-wide, walkable neighborhoods will become more affordable than they currently are because the supply would be allowed to catch up to the demand for more walkable neighborhoods. Whatever changes the City Council chooses to implement should be done at the citywide level to have real effectiveness.

CITY PLANS THAT SUPPORT WALKABILITY?

Plan Salt Lake // Guiding Principles

- *Neighborhoods that provide a safe environment, opportunity for social interaction, and services needed for the well-being of the community therein (pg. 17).*
- *Access to a wide variety of housing types for all income levels throughout the city, providing the basic human need for safety and responding to changing demographics (pg. 21).*
- *A beautiful city that is people-focused (pg. 31).*
- *Ensure access to all city amenities for all citizens while treating everyone equitably with fairness, justice, and respect (pg. 37).*

Pedestrian and Bicycle General Plan // Plan Goals

- *Integrate walking and bicycling into community planning to enhance livability, health, transportation, the environment, and economic development (pg. 23).*
- *Develop a safe, comfortable, and attractive walking and bicycling network that connects people of all ages, abilities, and neighborhoods to the places they want to go, such as work; home; school; shopping; places to socialize; places to worship; and parks, trails, and open space (pg. 24).*
- *Promote the safety and attractiveness of walking and bicycling through education, encouragement, and enforcement programs (pg. 26).*

IMPLEMENTATION OF WALKABILITY

The adopted city-wide plans make it clear that residents desire a more walkable Salt Lake City. This demand for walkable cities reflects a bigger national trend. According to a survey completed by the National Association of Realtors, 79% of Americans would prefer to live in a walkable neighborhood, but only 13% have access to one.

Pockets of walkable areas currently exist throughout the city, but only where zoning permits it. Ninth and Ninth, Central Ninth, and Sugarhouse all enjoy the benefits of walkability. The corresponding zones of these areas (CB Community Business, FB-UN2 Form-Based, and CSHBD Sugarhouse Business District) do not require minimum lot areas or widths. Those zones allow small-scale commercial uses, while carefully regulating other zoning standards, such as building height and design requirements. Reducing lot standards in the R-1 zones is one action that can help create a more walkable city, but it won't solve walkability issues on its own.

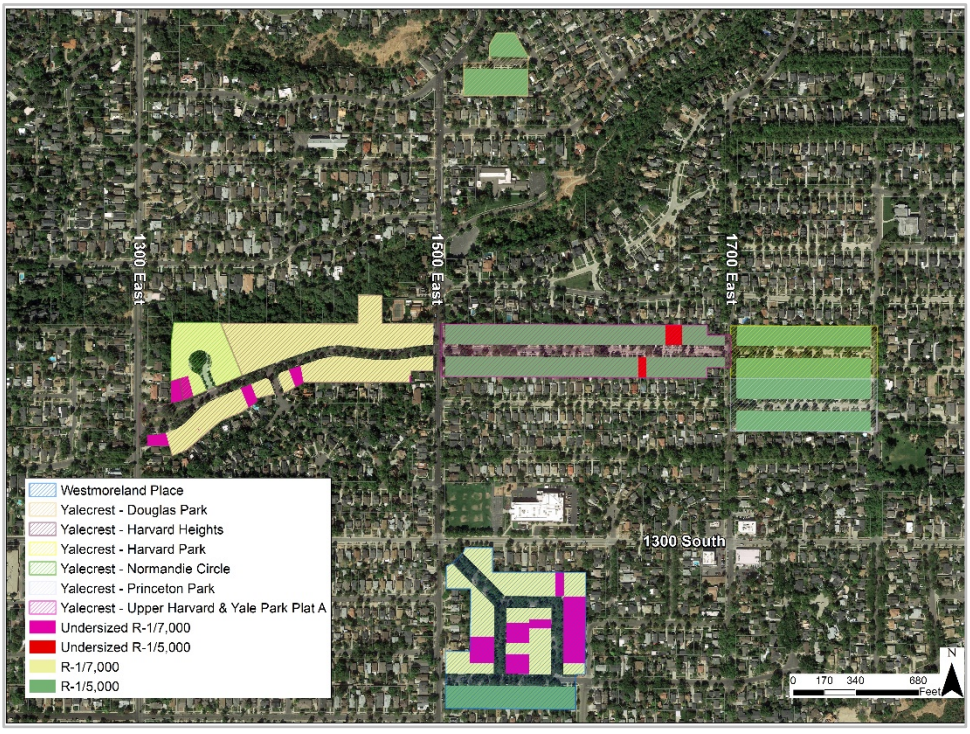
A few of the zoning standards needed to create walkability include an increased variety of permitted housing types, reduced parking requirements, and a mix of uses. Having quick access to commercial services is a key component of walkability. A dense neighborhood of apartments and duplexes is not walkable if the nearest grocery store is 5 miles away. More than basic retail, residents should be able to access schools, stores, coffee shops, and restaurants by foot.

The proposal to allow commercial uses and additional density along collector and arterial roads would make it easier to build walkable neighborhoods in places where it makes sense.

Historic Districts

Salt Lake City's historic districts are, for the most part, made up of buildings constructed prior to 1950. (as illustrated in Section 1 of this report). Buildings in local historic districts may have non-conformities (conditions that don't comply with zoning) including multiple units (within a building), smaller lots, narrower widths (frontages), and irregular configurations because they were constructed prior to the city adopting zoning or under past zoning regulations. The city's H Historic Preservation Overlay District includes processes and standards for modifications to buildings and lots that don't conform to an underlying zoning district. Demolitions, additions, and renovations must comply with additional historic preservation standards beyond zoning regulations. The implementation options discussed in this report would not have the same impact on landmark sites or historic districts as they would on other areas.

Only local historic districts within the Yalecrest neighborhood (including Westmoreland Place) would be affected by the options proposed in this report (see map). The Central City, Avenues, and Capitol Hill local historic districts do not contain properties with an R-1 zoning designation. A handful of properties within the affected districts are currently non-conforming. The changes proposed in this report could bring those properties into compliance with zoning requirements.



Affected Local Historic Districts

Case Studies

Other communities have already taken action to address many of the items the City Council requested to be studied. Some of the relevant case studies of other communities are included below. The intent of the case studies is to provide some idea about what to expect, in terms of what has been done, how it was done, and what the results have been. Implementing zoning changes does not happen overnight. In many instances the effect of zoning changes is not readily apparent for years, sometimes decades.

Residential zoning district consolidation is a policy tool that is frequently used during zoning reform initiatives with mixed results. There are many examples of cities that have undergone a text amendment to consolidate their residential districts, with positive and neutral results. The following examples are municipalities that have consolidated residential districts with a few applicable key insights to the process and result.

Middle housing zoning reforms have the potential for significant positive impacts on housing diversity. Exploring successful case studies and best practices can guide effective implementation. Salt Lake City is not alone in the effort to address the housing crisis. In recent years, a variety of reforms have been adopted by state and local governments across the country. The various policies range from allowing duplexes on single-family lots to allowing affordable six-plexes in neighborhoods.

Duluth, MN

Duluth went through the process to consolidate their R1-a, R1-b, R1-c, and R-2 zone districts. Their three R-1 districts differed only in minimum lot area, lot width, and setbacks. The R-2 district also allowed construction of two-family structures but was rarely utilized and has some similarities to the R-2 zone in SLC. The new zones were largely consolidated into 1 zone.

To ensure that future development would be consistent with the established character or surrounding areas, Duluth included contextual standards for minimum lot size, minimum lot width, and setbacks in the consolidated district. The update adjusted the new district's minimum lot sizes to match the average size of lots already developed with similar houses on the same block face. However, the spacing between houses is decided immediately based on neighboring lots with similar structures. This is seen in the table from their zoning ordinance below.

R-1 DISTRICT DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS		City of Duluth, Minnesota
Lot Standards		
Minimum lot area per family (One-family)		The larger of 4,000-sq. ft. or average of developed 1-family lots on the block face
Minimum lot area per family (Two-family)		The larger of 3,000 sq. ft. or average of developed 2-family lots on the block face
Minimum lot area per family (Townhouse)		2,500 sq. ft.
Minimum lot frontage (one-family, two-family, and townhouses)		The larger of 30 ft. or average of developed lots with similar uses on the block face
Setbacks, Minimum		
Minimum depth of front yard		The smaller of 25 ft. or average of adjacent developed lots facing the same street
Minimum width of side yard (one- and two-family)	General	The larger of 6 ft. or average of adjacent developed lots facing the same street
	Lots with less than 50 ft. frontage and garage	Combined width of side yards must be at least 12 ft.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

From 2005 to 2007, Winnipeg went from 10 distinct R1 districts, with varying minimum lot sizes and widths, to four. Minimum lot sizes were lowered or held constant, which meant that there were no additional properties that were made nonconforming.

Suburban property owners typically do not desire their neighbors to subdivide and introduce additional units. To preempt this scenario, the Winnipeg Zoning Bylaw stipulates that in the event of subdivision for R1 or R2 properties, all lots within 100 feet (excluding rights-of-way) of established R1 or R2 neighborhoods must meet or surpass the minimum lot width of the existing neighborhood.

DeKalb County, GA

While consolidating their residential districts, they focused on creating a “user friendly document” with tables and graphs to increase readability and understanding among residents and developers. After implementation, residents praised its clarity and ease of use.

Houston, TX

Houston is well known for not having traditional zoning regulations. However, the city does have some regulations that regulate development. Houston has a long history of reducing barriers to creating new housing. Below are some examples:

- *In 1998, Houston reduced the minimum lot size in urban core from 5,000sqft to 3,500sqft (or 1,400 if meeting certain standards). In 2013, the policy was expanded to cover the entire city.*
- *Between 1999-2016, more than 25,000 homes were built on lots under 5,000sqft in area.*
- *Houston does, however, allow attached single-family housing, which is where the biggest boom was seen.*

The land area of Houston is about six times larger than SLC.

Durham, NC

Durham, NC, introduced a program called "Expanding Housing Choices (EHC)." This initiative impacted most of the residential districts within the Urban Tier. The purpose of this program is to promote small lot housing**.**

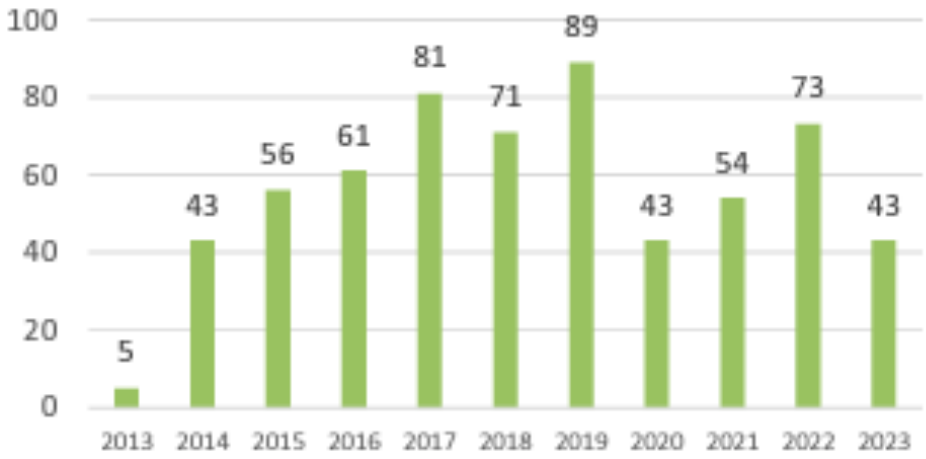
The EHC program reduced the minimum lot area from 5,000 sq. ft down to 2,000 sq ft. and reduced the minimum lot width to 25 feet. Setbacks were also reduced:

- ***Front:*** *10 ft*
- ***Sides****: 5 ft*
- ***Rear:*** *15 ft*

The maximum building height for those that utilize the program is 25 feet. To promote small scale housing, the maximum footprint of a building was set at 800 sq ft and the maximum total floor area set at 1,200 sq. ft.

One major concern was that there was going to be an increase in demolitions to make way for new development under the EHC program. Durham tracked the demolitions of residential properties in the "Urban Tier" and found that their initiatives did not have a significant impact on demolitions.

While demolition permits reached the 10-year high the year the program was introduced, the average number of demolition permits obtained between 2019-2023 was 60.4 per year. This number between 2013-2018 was 52.8 per year and was lowered by 2013 only having 5 demolition permits. If 2013 were removed from the equation, there was an average of 62.4 demolition permits obtained per year between 2014-2018.



(Graph showing the 10-year residential demolition permits pulled in Durham, NC. The Expanding Housing Choices program went into effect in 2019.)

Durham released a study of the impacts of the program late last year, can be found here: Final Report - December 6, 2023.

Below are a few quick data points from the report:

Small lots accounted for 2.21% of all single-family permits (215 small lot permits between 10/01/2019 and 10/01/2023).

- *Affordability impact was significant. Median sales price for a SFD in the "Urban Tier" on a standard lot is $605,000.*
- *Median sales price for a small lot/small house in the "Urban Tier" is $348,000.*
- *Homes on "small lots" have been significantly more affordable than homes on larger lots (42.5% cheaper, on average).*

Minneapolis, MN

Minneapolis received a lot of attention for essentially ending single family zoning in 2020. The changes adopted in Minneapolis allowed up to 3 units per structure in single-family zones but didn't modify lot size req's. In the first two years, only 104 two- & three-unit structures were built (Urban Minimum Lot Sizes: Their Background, Effects, and Avenues to Reform). Minneapolis has seen some success with other aspects of the changes they adopted, including ending minimum parking requirements and allowing more density along corridors.

Portland, OR

Portland's Residential Infill Project recently adopted new rules allowing up to four attached units in most residential zones and up to six units for projects meeting the City's affordability criteria (adopted 2020, in effect 2021).

Spokane, WA

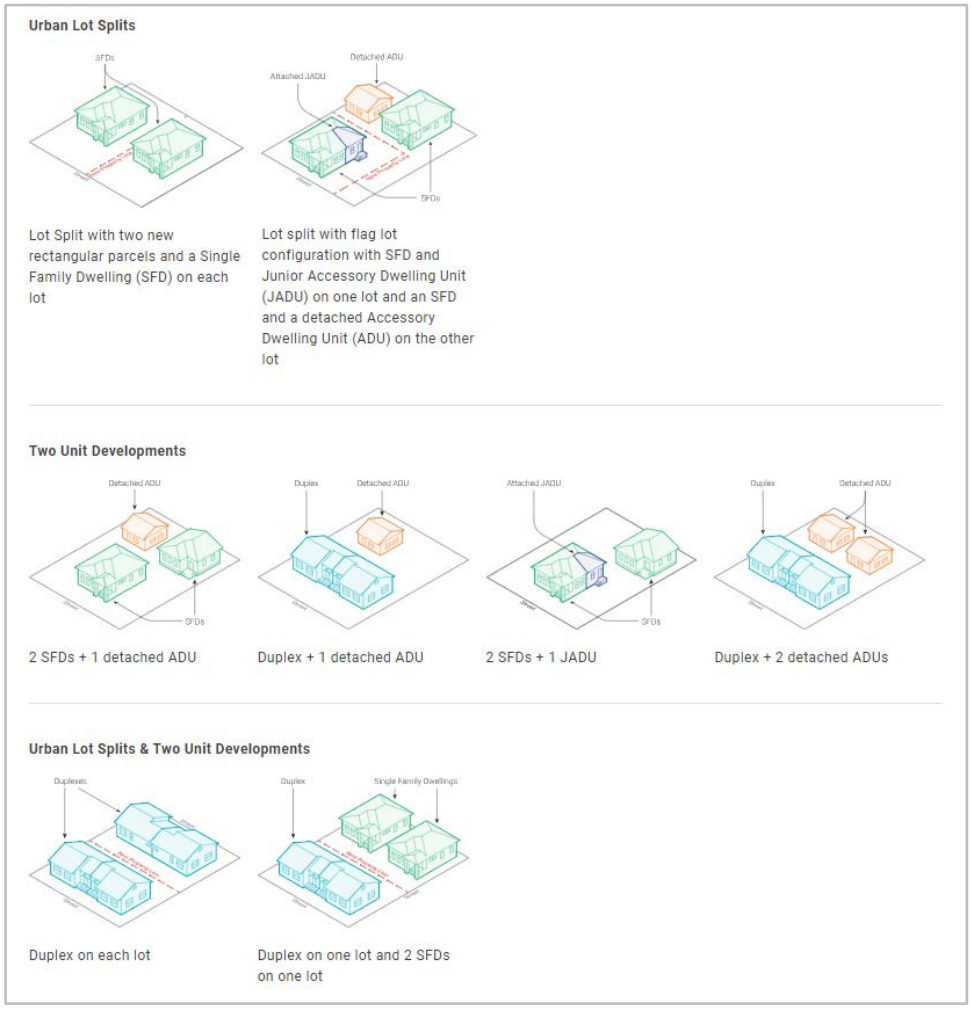
Spokane's Building Opportunity for Housing project established a minimum density of 4 units per acre, with no maximum density on site less than 2 acres. Rather than establish a maximum density, buildings are limited by maximum coverage, maximum footprint, and maximum height. Commenters speculate that these standards may lend themselves to the development of six-plexes.

	R1	R2	RMF	RHD
Maximum density on sites <2 acres	No maximum	No maximum	No maximum	No maximum
Minimum density	4 units/acre	10 units/acre	15 units/acre	15 units/acre
Minimum lot area	1,200 sf	1,200 sf	1,200 sf	1,200 sf
Minimum lot width	15 ft (or 36 ft with a driveway)	15 ft (or 36 ft with a driveway)	15 ft (or 25 ft with a driveway)	15 ft (or 25 ft with a driveway)
Minimum lot depth	80 ft	40 ft	N/A	N/A
Maximum total building coverage	65% (or 80% with bonus) [1]	80% (or 90% with bonus) [1]	100%	100%
Floor area ratio	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maximum building footprint	2,450 sf	2,450 sf	N/A	N/A
Maximum building height	40 ft	40 ft	40 ft	40 ft

(City of Spokane, Dimensional Standards)

California Home Act

The California Home Act allows lot splits with no minimum frontage that results in new lots of approximately equal size (60/40 proportion), and up to two primary dwelling units on single-family zoned lots. **These standards allow a wide variety of development possibilities combining principal dwellings, accessory dwellings, and duplexes:**



Illustrated development scenarios, Los Angeles City Planning

The California Home Act is a case study that relates to the creation of flag lots and could be an example of flexibility with lot sizes to promote more housing, especially on lots with large yard areas that could accommodate additional housing. **This approach may be able to replace the flag lot regulations in the city because it provides more flexibility and is not as rigid.**

Vermont Home Act

The Vermont HOME Act permits duplexes statewide and requires a density of at least 5 units per acre in areas served by water and sewer (2023)

Montana

In 2023, Montana adopted Montana SB 323 which authorized duplexes on all properties in cities that have a population greater than 5,000.

Washington

HB 1110 in Washington State requires cities with a population of over 75,000 to allow up to four units per lot (2023).

BROADER STUDIES

As more cities have looked at zoning reform to remove barriers for more housing, several studies have been conducted to provide some insight into what works or doesn't. One of the goals of the research is to determine if housing affordability increases as housing supply increases. Additionally, there is an abundance of research that shows housing affordability increases as housing supply increases, typically accomplished by upzoning. A summary of some of these studies can be found in this article: Upzoning Affordability Impacts: The Latest Research. Vicki Been, Ingrid Gould Ellen and Katherine O'Regan have also shown that "easing land use restrictions, at least on a broad scale and in ways that change binding constraints on development, generally leads to more new housing over time," (Supply Skepticism Revisited). By bringing more lots into compliance, whether that is due to reduced lot size, width or setbacks, more lots are then buildable, and more homes are brought to the market, thus lowering housing costs.

Yonah Freemark has also found that incremental zoning changes that do not include broader changes does not result in an increase of housing supply or a noticeable impact on housing costs (Zoning Change: Upzonings, Downzonings, and Their Impacts on Residential Construction, Housing Costs, and Neighborhood Demographics). Freemark points out that one cause of limited results could be that "upzonings only tackled one of the many interconnected elements of land-use policy, such as allowing height increases but not reductions in minimum lots sizes..."

A handful of cities have reduced lot width requirements in conjunction with other lot standards, and these case studies are listed above under the “Reduce Minimum Lot Area” section. A key component of considering minimum lot widths is that they should be seen as a piece in a broader set of changes. Nolan Gray (The 6 Zoning Reforms Every Municipality Should Adopt) writes, “if rules like setbacks or lot coverage still make it physically or financially infeasible to build a home on a small lot, those rules also need to be adjusted.” . Building a house on a small lot that is still required to have a 50’ public frontage will render small lots and small houses impossible**. Similarly, allowing other housing types while keeping lot coverage the same will likely result in the other housing types not being constructed.**

Relevant Studies and Background Information

Planning staff reviewed numerous academic studies and actions by other government entities in the process of creating this document. **References to the research sources are found in this section.** There are additional resources that are available that may provide some counter arguments to those cited here.

It should be noted that there are some research papers, academic papers, and other similar sources that counter the notion that modifying zoning to remove barriers for housing improves the affordability of housing. However, this study is primarily focused on removing barriers that limit the supply of housing and is not solely focused on affordability of housing**. The City recently completed, and adopted, "Thriving in Place" that includes more data and resources related to housing affordability and displacement.**

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