



**SOUTH VALLEY  
TRANSIT  
STUDY**

**APPENDIX F -  
BEST PRACTICES FOR  
TRANSIT-ORIENTED  
COMMUNITIES**

# Best Practices for Transit Oriented Communities

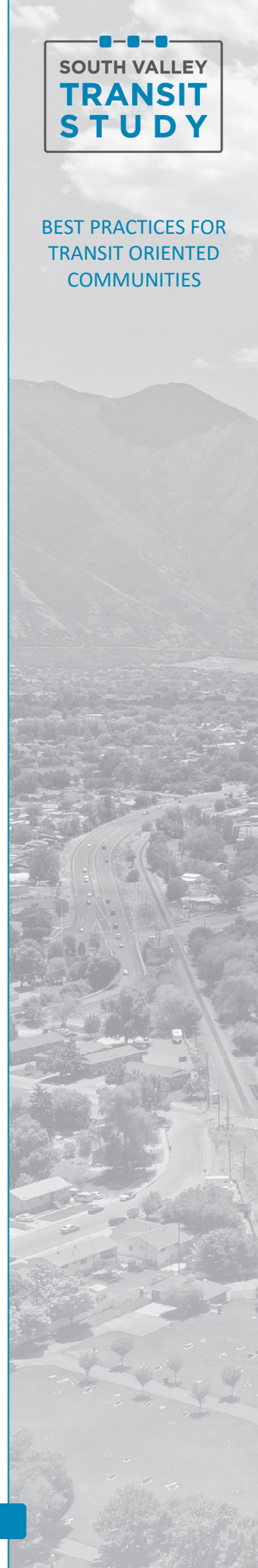
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*Prepared for*

**Utah Transit Authority**  
669 W. 200 S.  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101  
[www.rideuta.com](http://www.rideuta.com)

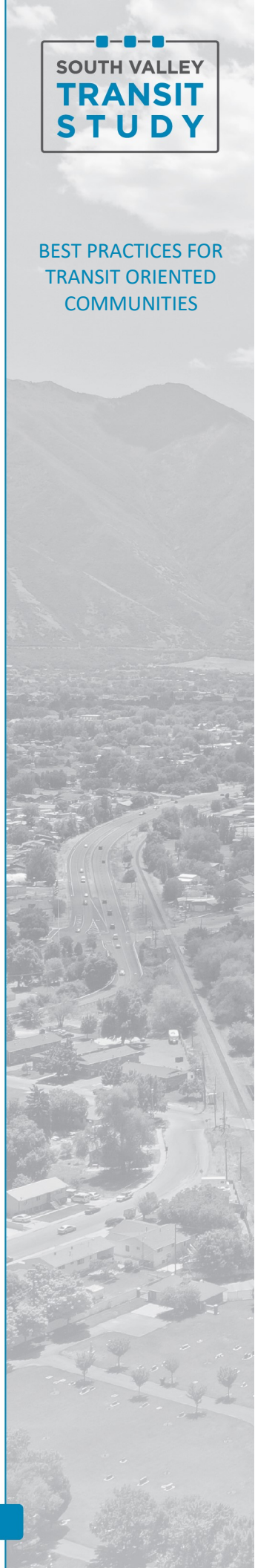
*Prepared by*

**Parametrix**  
4179 Riverboat Road, Suite 130  
Salt Lake City, UT 84123  
T. 801.307.3400 F. 1.855.542.6353  
[www.parametrix.com](http://www.parametrix.com)



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to identify best practices for station area planning to align land use with high quality transit investments in south Utah County. This document aims to provide local governments an action-oriented guide to assist the South Valley communities of Springville, Spanish Fork, Payson and Santaquin in preparing for development around a future transit investment. This document was prepared as part of the South Valley Transit Study, which has explored alignment and mode options for the corridor from Provo to Santaquin. A Locally Preferred Alternative has been selected, which includes Commuter Rail from Provo to Payson and Express Bus from Payson to Santaquin.

This memo will serve as a building block for more detailed UTA led transit-oriented development (TOD) planning efforts, anticipated to begin in 2022 for Springville, Spanish Fork, and Payson.

## 1.1.2 Topics

High quality transit investments are a major step in creating vibrant connected communities. Planning for the immediate station area, for the walkable transit-served district within a 5-10 minute walk, and for the transit corridor are equally important to capitalizing on future public investment in high-capacity transit. For this corridor, development is likely to precede regional transit investments.

The following best practices topic areas are covered:

- Mixed land uses
- Parking management
- Pedestrian-friendly urban design
- Urban growth
- Affordable housing
- Economic development
- Land use, ridership, and federal funding

In addition to best practices, this memo contains **portraits** of each of the four station areas, and several **case studies** from across the region and nation that provide helpful examples of successful transit-oriented communities and lessons learned from implementation.

## 1.1.3 Context

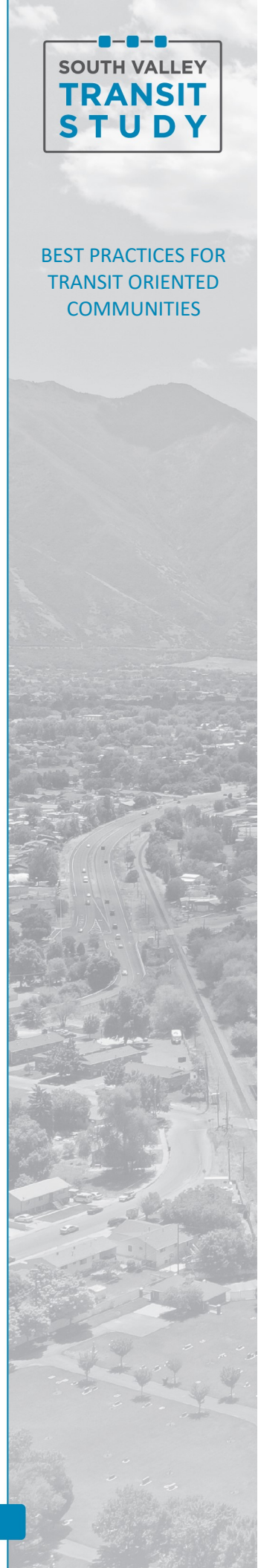
According to MAG's TransPlan 2050 and long-term county-level population projections from the University of Utah Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, by 2050 Utah County is expected to nearly double in population – adding over 660,000 more people and surpassing 1.3 million people. This equates to 100 percent growth and is more than double any other county in the Wasatch Front. For comparison, Salt Lake County (which is focused more on infill than greenfield development) has a growth rate of only 36



percent. During this period, Utah County's growth will be larger than the other three Wasatch Front counties combined.

Cities in south Utah County have begun planning for this growth and have been developing General Plans for increased density around future high-capacity transit service. The communities within the South Valley transit corridor are already experiencing an increase in development interest and activity, which will only become stronger with the addition of high-capacity transit.

Amid this growth pressure, it is critical that South Valley communities have the tools needed to harness development pressures in a way that realizes the one-time-only opportunity to "get it right" in terms of infrastructure, connectivity and development intensity. This moment offers a major opportunity for the South Valley to develop in a way that will support transit and provide urban infrastructure and appropriate densities that will best serve future generations of Utahns.



## 2. Best Practices for Creating Transit Oriented Communities

TOD typically includes a mix of commercial, residential, office and entertainment adjacent to a transit station. Dense, walkable, mixed-use places near transit attract people and catalyze additional investments. TOD is most successful when regional and local governments encourage it through land use planning, zoning laws, and changes to building codes. And successful transit-oriented development is most often supported by a coordinated ecosystem of regional, citywide, corridor-level and station area planning to ensure planning and policies are aligned to support development and maximize public benefit of the transit investment.

### 2.1.1 Mixed Land Uses

Successful transit-oriented districts are great places to walk around and that make driving less necessary. These places attract pedestrians with a mix of uses such as appropriately scaled retail, restaurants, services, housing, and other uses to support people who live, work and visit them.

#### Mixed Use Development

Some communities may find high-density TOD a poor fit with existing development and community fabric. Mixed use districts can take many forms, beyond the images that first come to mind. **Vertical mixed use** is a common form of TOD (that is, ground floor commercial uses with housing or offices in upper stories). **Horizontal mixed use**, which incorporates a variety of different single-use buildings, is equally important to creating a vibrant transit district. Horizontal mixed use can achieve the same community-building goals and can be a better fit where large multistory buildings may not be appropriate or supported by the market.

#### Allowed Uses

TOD districts are by nature mixed use places where people can travel and access what they need. The station areas and corridors should allow a broad range of uses compatible with walkable, urban development – from housing, office and retail employment to arts and entertainment, health care, human services, childcare, and more. Uses that are incompatible are most often excluded based on form and use of space – auto-scaled buildings such as drive-thrus or uses that need an expanse of parking. Large format warehousing, manufacturing and industrial uses are not appropriate. However small-format warehousing, manufacturing and light industrial (without nuisances such as noise that would impact nearby residents and businesses) should not be excluded based on use alone and could add to the diversity of the transit corridor as a whole. Transit-served employment can take many forms.



### Action Steps for Mixed Use Development

- **Identify TOD areas within the City’s General Plan.** The General Plan designation should reflect a diverse mix of future land uses and higher development intensities for transit station areas.
- **Develop a station area plan for land use and development.** The UTA TOD Department received FTA grant funding to complete station area plans for Springville, Spanish Fork, and Payson.
  - Engage the community; the station area plan should reflect community desires and clearly define the unique vision for each station area.
  - Establish vision, goals and implementation program for each station area.
  - Consider a market assessment or “highest and best use” study to understand local real estate market dynamics.
  - Consider a housing study to understand supply and demand for housing across the income spectrum to identify needs for housing units by type.
- **Undertake zoning and development code changes to establish and finetune the City’s transit-oriented areas.**
  - Ensure zoning allows and encourages a mix of uses. If mixed use development is desired, it should be the most convenient path for development review and permitting.
  - Review the list of uses that are prohibited or conditional, to ensure compatibility.
  - Allow for vertical and horizontal mixed use. Consider targets or requirements for the mix of uses within the district as a whole, rather than use requirements per building.
  - Consider form-based or hybrid zoning that shifts focus from use-based approvals to the urban form. These characteristics include lot coverage, setbacks, building height and massing, pedestrian frontage and transparency (creating a “streetwall”), entry locations, parking configuration (on-street, structured or rear parking), visual screening (for parking, garbage), and wide sidewalks, among others.
  - It’s also important to discourage non-transit supportive land uses at TODs: “big box” stores, auto-oriented businesses, sports fields, and parking configurations that separate uses.
  - Remain flexible and open to further changes over time. Engage with the development community to learn what is working and what is not. Revisit goals and outcomes and be willing to make additional code changes.

## 2.1.2 Parking Management

The role of parking supply and parking management cannot be overstated in the successful implementation of TODs. Like walkability, parking is a key ingredient to quality transit districts: *parking shapes urban form*. Driving alone is still the dominant mode of transportation, and TOD areas need an *appropriate* supply of parking to succeed. And it is likely that what is an “appropriate” amount of parking will shift and possibly decrease over the life of the district, as the area achieves full build out and transit use grows. Existing surface parking lots can be prime infill redevelopment sites as station areas mature, which provides one strategy for station area evolution as the



transit mode share increases. There are a variety of policy and code approaches to manage parking and prevent oversupply.

### **Reduced Parking Requirements**

Generally, cities should provide lower parking requirements in transit districts, both to maximize developable land and recognize that transit will make up a greater share of trips to and from the area. Cities should consider eliminating parking minimums and add parking caps (maximums) to TOD zones to help right-size the amount of parking provided by developers.

When minimum parking requirements are high, parking is an additional cost that drives up the cost of overall development, negatively affecting housing affordability and increasing commercial lease rates. And parking can push apart land uses and prevent the density needed for walkable urban places, with building spacing that discourages walking.

### **Shared Parking**

One way to address parking needs of mixed use, transit-oriented districts is to address the timing of parking demand for nearby uses. Parking demand for office and retail uses typically peaks during the day, where residential parking demand is typically highest in off-peak hours and overnight. Shared use of parking facilities can maximize use and efficiency of parking stalls and reduce the overall space demands for parking.

### **Parking Management**

Active management of parking is vitally important for transit-oriented districts, once occupancy is high enough that drivers are circling in search of parking. The Cities should encourage shared parking facilities and a district parking approach of shared responsibility among anchor tenants.

A parking district is designed for residents, employees, and visitors to “park once and walk” rather than driving between destinations within the station area. This parking district approach necessitates a quality pedestrian environment that is welcoming and provides for accessibility, safety and security of users.

As parking occupancy approaches 75-85% utilization, cities should consider time limits at peak times for curbside spaces closest to destinations. Dedicated employee parking farther away from entrances can help with visitor perceptions of parking availability, as utilization increases. Eventually, cities should consider paid parking to manage demand in the future, starting with paid parking at the most desirable locations.

### **Park and Ride Facilities**

Park and ride facilities can be an important component to a TOD, so long as the design and layout is conducive to walking and biking, including lighting, clear walking paths, bike parking, and other amenities. Commuter parking (which tend to be all-day use) should remain separate from active, high-turnover parking that serves uses within the station area development.





## Action Steps for Parking Management

- **Update parking code requirements** to support walkable urban development and protect housing affordability. Eliminate parking minimums and consider adding parking maximums to TOD zones.
- **Actively manage access to public parking.** Consider time limits and parking zones for different users, based on distance to destination and length of stay. Consider paid parking and dynamic pricing in the future, beginning with curbside parking spaces with high turnover. Utilize parking revenues for district improvements.
- **Designate park and ride facilities separate from other parking areas,** and discourage park and ride users from parking in active station areas with higher parking turn over.
- **Identify and secure land for future park and ride facilities.** UTA should act ahead of development to secure appropriate space for park and ride lots.
- **Work with landowners and developers to promote surface parking as part of phased development.** Existing surface lots can provide infill sites as the station area matures and transit mode-share increases.
- **Encourage building management to unbundle cost of parking.** This means parking rental fees separated from cost of rent for residential and commercial tenants. Parking that is priced independently does not unfairly burden those who do not utilize parking.
- **Establish parking policies to encourage shared parking and district parking management.** As the station area develops, Cities can work with building managers and anchor tenants to provide coordinated parking management to encourage shared use of spaces.

### 2.1.3 Walkable Urban Design

Walkability is critical in TOD areas. Creating safe and accessible options throughout the station area is crucial to creating a multimodal transit district. Ensure a network of sidewalks and pathways are part of the initial development & construction, and not an afterthought.

Many factors contribute to a walkable district; the list below offers some design elements of walkable urban places. The cities should update urban design guidance (code and policy) that applies to TOD/mixed-use areas.

#### Building Design and Scale

Buildings should be accessible to people on foot (and mobility device). Building entrances should be located as close as possible to transit station areas. Walking distances from the station to the nearest bus stop or destination should be shorter than the distance to the nearest parking space.

#### Pedestrian-friendly Streets

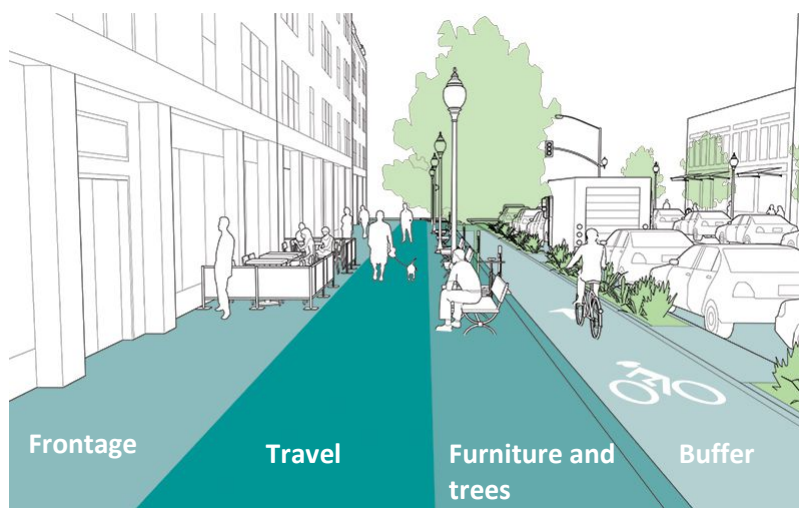
New streets within station areas should be scaled appropriately for pedestrians and cyclists and create a network of continuous sidewalks and paths. Cities should update policy and code to require sidewalks, walkways and street connections to enable direct walking routes throughout through the district.



Cities should adopt street design guidelines for TOD areas that provide for wide sidewalks and a dense network of bike routes. These guidelines should be applied to station areas and other mixed-use places in the city. The aim is to minimize conflict points between pedestrians and vehicles by providing a dedicated space for all users. Figure 1 shows a sidewalk with space for a variety of pedestrian uses.

### Bicycle-friendly Streets

By creating a robust bicycle and trail network, cities can create the conditions that make bicycling a viable alternative to driving, especially for shorter trips, which can mitigate local traffic congestion. Streets in the TOD areas should include protected bicycle lanes, bicycle parking and wayfinding signage, as well as bike access to the station platform.



**Figure 1.** The pedestrian zone is crucial to creating a walkable transit district at the station area. Direct routes, safe intersections, and dedicated space make walking and biking more comfortable for people of all ages and abilities. *Source: NACTO Urban Streets Design Guide – Sidewalks.*

### Action Steps for Walkable Urban Design

- **Plan for a connected network of routes.** It can be easy to design for specific trips, but the best practice is to create a connected network of sidewalks, paths and bicycle facilities that provides multiple routes between destinations. Ensure that pedestrian and bicycle routes from the station to key destinations are short and direct.
- **Design for a comfortable experience for people of all ages and abilities.** Cities must prioritize roadway safety for all users at all stages of design. The station area should be accessible for all, including people with physical disabilities and those who use mobility devices. For areas that currently have existing infrastructure, audit sidewalk conditions and intersections, and plan for capital improvements to fill gaps and intersection retrofits where needed. Ensure that infrastructure meets or exceeds ADA standards.
- **Provide clear signage and wayfinding.** Signage isn't only for people driving. Pedestrians, cyclists and transit users also need appropriate signage to navigate

the station area. Many of the station areas have major barriers to connectivity such as highways, railroads and environmental features; it will be important to provide clear signage that highlight routes across such barriers.

## 2.1.4 Urban Growth and Coordinated Planning

The concentration of housing and employment near in the station area is important for supporting transit. High quality development at moderate to high intensity will be needed to secure regional transit investment in South Utah County.

### **Transit Supportive Densities**

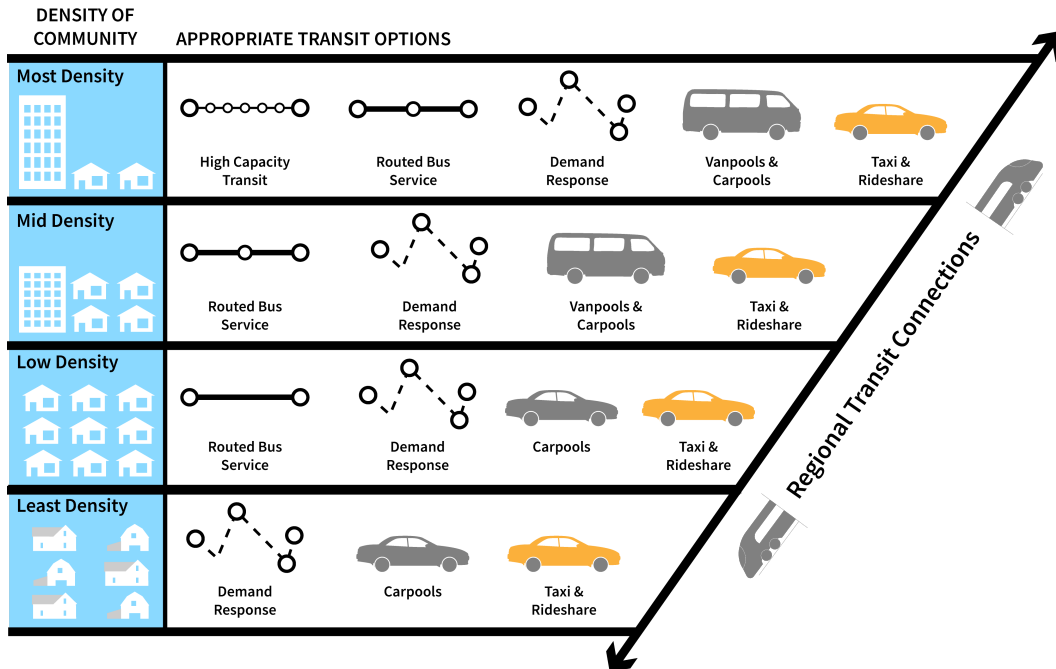
For transit investments to be viable, there will need to be a critical mass of people to use the system. Increasing the density of housing and jobs creates a walkable community that can support high frequency transit. That level will vary based on the type of transit service; commuter rail can serve lower density station areas than light rail, bus rapid transit, or streetcar. Figure 2 shows the range of urban densities and the types of transit that each can support.

Density includes housing units, employment, shopping, services, and local and regional destinations. Higher density districts will be more transit-supportive; density adds to the number of people who live or work in the area, and more destinations that are accessible by transit.

The benefits of transit investment can be enhanced by mixed-use development, especially housing; bike and pedestrian connections; supportive parking management; and flexible zoning at station areas.

Each community has a unique character and determining appropriate densities around transit investments should involve extensive public involvement and careful planning to ensure the “right fit” for each community.





**Figure 2.** Appropriate Transit for Density of Community. *Source: Transit Development Plan Guidebook. Oregon Department of Transportation.*

### Coordinated Planning

We know that major growth is coming to south Utah County; how growth occurs is still to be determined. The communities of south Utah County have a unique opportunity to shape this growth and create a county-wide corridor of connected station areas that can provide a wide range of amenities, accessible from the transit line. Working collaboratively will benefit residents of all communities along the proposed transit corridor.

#### Action Steps for Urban Growth:

- **Concentrate development at the station platform.** Density should be highest adjacent to the station and taper off from there. Cities should plan for phasing additional growth over time as conditions change.
- **Station areas serve the entire community.** Consider development densities that are ‘as great as possible’ within the appropriate community context. Increased density and mix of uses within the station area creates a high-value district.
- **Plan for transit-supportive densities.** Ensure residential densities are high enough to support frequent transit service, and adjacent mixed-use commercial.
- **Plan for increased growth over time.** Look for additional infill opportunities and plan for strategic infill, especially on surface parking lots.

### 2.1.5 Economic Development

Transit-oriented communities have proven economic benefits at the local and regional level. Creating attractive developments draws employers willing to pay a premium for space. Added job and housing opportunities have the potential to boost tax revenues. Cities should seek to maximize economic development opportunities that benefit not

only the development community, but also strengthen the City’s long-term revenues, and bring benefit to residents in the form of new amenities, lower transportation costs, and new housing that includes affordable housing.

### **Redefine Highest and Best Use**

Beyond the traditional “highest and best use” definitions that consider only benefit to the developer, communities are encouraged to take a broader view of development impacts. By understanding the implications of a range of possible development types, Cities can make better informed decisions to improve the City’s fiscal health.

- **Highest and best use for the developer:** considers the greatest return to the land, and has historically been all that has been considered by most municipalities.
- **Highest and best use for the City:** addresses the proposed fiscal impacts of development and what revenue and expenses are generated for a city. The impacts may include property taxes, sales taxes, municipal energy fees, Class B/C road funds, retail buying power, and costs of services to be provided.
- **Highest and best use for residents:** often relies on feedback from community members of what amenities are lacking in the area.

### **FrontRunner Tax Increment Financing with Housing and Transit Reinvestment Zone (HTRZ)**

Utah cities can take advantage of a state-sponsored program that provides HTRZ status to station areas along the FrontRunner. The HTRZ economic development tool is new as of 2021 and allows for 125 acres within a 1/3-mile radius of a FrontRunner station to be dedicated as a tax increment financing (TIF) area, which allow for the value capture of new growth via property taxes. It is not a new tax or a tax increase, rather it captures the increased tax revenue generated due to increasing assessed values. The revenues are available to use for improvements within the station area.

The HTRZ law intends to incentivize higher intensity development near FrontRunner stations. The tool is anticipated to maximize transit investment and to encourage uses near transit stations that will utilize the amenity provided by FrontRunner service and promote walkable, well-connected neighborhoods.

For a city to qualify for HTRZ consideration, the 125 acres must have a minimum designation of 50 residential units to the acre, with 51 percent or more of the land to be zoned for residential use. For nearly all affected communities (those with FrontRunner stations), this will require zoning changes and potentially small area plans. This HTRZ program may be subject to additional changes in the upcoming legislative session.

### **Transportation Reinvestment Zones (TRZ)**

Any two or more public agencies may enter into an agreement to create a transportation reinvestment zone. One of these entities must have land use authority over a TRZ area. While an HTRZ has focused depth and appeal, it only applies to 125 acres surrounding a FrontRunner station. A TRZ may be established anywhere and has the capacity to cover a much larger area.

A TRZ must be centered on transportation infrastructure needs because the agreement between the parties must define the transportation need and proposed investment.



However, the type of transportation needs is not defined in the law. There could be a wide range of uses, including roads, multi-modal transportation improvements, airports, street widenings, street landscaping, pedestrian access and walkways, transit-oriented development, transit, expanded bus routes, parking garages, etc. Ultimately, a TRZ could be used to fund the connections that will be vital to the success of a healthy station area.

Another possible advantage to TRZs and HTRZs is the ability to obtain the commitment of transportation agencies, such as UDOT or UTA, for specific planning projects. Interlocal agreements between the public entity with the land-use authority and a transportation agency will identify the specific projects associated with the TRZ or HTRZ. This will add another level of certainty to City planning efforts and will give these public entities some additional leverage in prioritizing needed transportation projects around the future transit stations.

### Funding Opportunities

Funding sources at the local, MPO, state, and federal level are available for transit, first/last mile, and active transportation planning and projects. By understanding and anticipating legislation, local, and other funding sources, Cities can establish internal protocols and timelines for grant applications and management. In addition to the HTRZ, detailed above, there are several other potential funding sources available.

- **UDOT Transportation Investment Fund.** Funded in part by state sales taxes, the TIF provides funding for first/last mile, transit, and active transportation capital improvements. Programmed funding ranges from around \$350 million to \$650 million each year.
- **MAG TIP Transportation Funding.** MAG allocates federal, state, county funding for projects that mitigate congestion, and offers technical support for jurisdictions, supporting approximately \$45 million in transportation projects annually. <https://web.mountainland.org/tip>
- **Public Infrastructure Districts (PID).** Cities should consider allowing the establishment of PIDs, which are a new and independent taxing entity that can raise revenue to fund public infrastructure. Ultimately property users pay for the improvements through property tax assessments; this tool results in higher taxes for property owners and/or users in the defined district, so benefits of the infrastructure investments should be targeted within the district. Improvements could include better landscaping, street lighting, public spaces, parks, trails, finishes, among others, all of which contribute to creating property appeal and increasing property values.

### Actions and Tools for Economic Development:

- **Conduct small area plans for land within 1/3 mile of possible transit stations.** These studies should look closely at current land use options, needed connections to maximize transit infrastructure, market dynamics and what type of development is market supported, and possible implementation of economic development tools.
- **Conduct Highest and Best Use analyses** in conjunction with small area plans to clearly understand 1) what property types create the greatest return to the



land; 2) what fiscal impacts are created by possible uses; and 3) what uses are most desired by the public.

- **Establish guidelines for instituting economic development tools**, including HTRZs and TRZs. These guidelines should clearly note what types of projects qualify for tax increment reimbursement.
- **Establish a Public Infrastructure District (PID) policy** so that the development community clearly understands the available tools for financing options.

## 2.1.6 Affordable Housing

Cities should pay special focus to housing affordability in transit corridors, especially at the outset of district planning and development. Cities can take steps to stabilize and increase the supply of affordable housing and increase equitable access to TOD station areas, for the benefit of all residents. Federal funding for transit investments (particularly the Small Starts and New Starts programs) take considerable interest in the steps cities have taken to ensure a supply of affordable housing in TOD areas.

### Evaluate Corridor-Specific Needs

As part of city-wide housing needs analysis or as part of upcoming station area planning efforts, Cities should identify specific needs along transit corridors and in station areas and should compare needs to current affordable housing supply. It is important to understand corridor-specific needs and how TOD areas can serve the local community and region in providing transit-accessible affordable housing.

There are a wide variety of tools available to preserve and increase affordable housing supply, many of which can be accomplished with zoning and parking code changes targeted to the station areas.

- Zoning to allow “missing middle” housing types such as accessory dwelling units, townhouses, family-size units, which can help to create *de facto* affordable housing by providing a broader range of small and mid-size housing units
- Developer incentives for income-restricted affordable units
- Density bonus or parking requirement reduction to incentivize developers to provide affordable units
- Employer-assisted housing using tax credits, partnerships, matching funds or other mechanisms that increase workforce housing
- Affordability covenants; rent controls or condo conversion controls
- Inclusionary zoning that requires a portion of all new units built are reserved for lower income individuals and families

Additionally, there are financing tools available to expand affordable housing, which include:

- Funding for property acquisition, rehabilitation and development of affordable housing
- Low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC), and local tax abatement for low income or senior housing
- Land banking by public, private or nonprofit developers



- Direct financial assistance to owners and renters in need (including home repairs, weatherization, utility support, tax abatement, mortgage or rent assistance)
- Housing trust funds for low-interest loans to housing developers
- Directing revenue from targeted tax increment financing, value capture, or transfer tax programs toward affordable housing

### Permanently Affordable Units

In creating a program to expand affordable housing and equitable access to housing in TOD station areas, it is important for cities to prioritize strategies that result in *permanently* affordable housing. Equally important is to understand the timing of restrictions on units that are not permanently affordable, to ensure a consistent long-term housing supply for low-income households.

### Actions and Tools to Increase Affordable Housing

- **Track inventory of affordable and permanently affordable housing.** To support a successful high-capacity transit investment, cities should track the inventory of housing availability within one-half mile of all existing and proposed transit stations, including the number of total housing units, affordable units, and permanently affordable units.
- **Evaluate housing needs for the City and within station areas.** Affordable housing targets can be tailored to the community's needs, depending on the needs for lower income seniors (who may want studio and 1-bedroom units), for families (2+ bedroom units) and other household types.
- **Update zoning and parking requirements to reduce development costs and increase affordability.** Cities can expand the range of possible housing development types to include more small and mid-sized units, reduce land costs associated with high parking requirements, and target these changes to station areas.
- **Be proactive in planning for TODs that benefit the whole community, including low-income residents.** Transit-served affordable housing provides multiple benefits for lower-income individuals and families. There are many tools available to Cities for enabling, encouraging and requiring affordable housing units.

## 2.1.7 Land Use, Ridership, and Federal Funding

Cities that incorporate best practices for TOD will also be in a better position to compete for and secure federal transit investment funding, specifically Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Investment Grant (CIG) opportunities (New Starts and Small Starts programs). These discretionary federal grant programs are highly competitive at a national level, and projects receive ratings based on a series of criteria, including economic development and land use.

### Criteria for economic development include:

- Transit supportive plans and policies
- Demonstrated performance of plans and policies





- Policies and tools in place to preserve or increase the amount of affordable housing

**Criteria for land use include:**

- Existing corridor and station area development and character
- Existing station area pedestrian facilities, including access for persons with disabilities
- Existing corridor and station area parking supply
- Proportion of existing “legally binding affordability restricted” housing within ½ mile of station areas to the proportion of “legally binding affordability restricted” housing in the counties through which the project travels.

A key factor in computing a federal grant rating for several criteria (mobility improvements, environmental benefits, congestion relief, and cost effectiveness) is existing and future **ridership** generated by the project. Transit ridership forecasts take into account the expected density of population and employment around a station area and multimodal access to the station. Stations that serve appropriate densities and are well connected typically result in better access and connectivity which leads to higher ridership, which in turn supports more favorable ratings in the CIG process.

**Actions and Tools to Improve Federal Funding Opportunities**

- **Compute a draft project rating for the transit investment** to understand where the project stands in the context of the CIG process given current and planned land use in and around the project area
- **Identify action steps based on draft rating.** Use information developed in the draft project rating to determine areas of improvement related to land use.
- **Develop strategies for implementing policies** and/or plans that encourage transit supportive land use and urban design as a means to enhance funding potential of the project.



## 3. Station Area Considerations

### 3.1.1 Springville

**Development overview:** Springville City is positioned for near-term station area growth. **High quality development at higher intensities will be needed to secure regional commuter rail transit investment in Springville.**

The City is already seeing high demand for developable land in the area, and there is active development interest in greenfield properties near the proposed station. The challenge for Springville will be to align development interests with community desires for a “village center” to realize development that will bring the highest value to the City, both in transit-oriented community building and strong fiscal return for the City.

**Planning context:** An updated planning vision and complementary zoning and future land use designations are needed to achieve the robust potential for transit-oriented development. Current zoning permits mixed use and community commercial in undeveloped properties adjacent to the proposed station location. However, the zoning would also allow for low-density single-family housing across a significant portion of the station area. The 2002 Westfield Community Plan established this area as a mixed-use center, but the plan is now nearly 20 years old, and should be updated along with zoning code changes. This plan calls for residential development at 3-7 dwelling units per acre, which is far lower than needed to create a transit-oriented community.

**Transportation connections:** The Springville station area is along the existing Union Pacific freight rail line, and less than a mile from the I-15 interchange, which provides great access. The rail line presents a barrier to east-west travel and is especially challenging for multimodal access within a station area; a grade-separated multimodal crossing is recommended. There is an at-grade vehicle crossing at 900 South (which may be converted to a grade-separated crossing in the future) and a grade separated crossing at 1600 South. Future connections to nearby commercial developments will be possible.

**Anticipated development:** There is active development interest in the station area. PRI/SLR have active development interests in moving forward development in the near-term. UTA, Springville, and PRI/SLR are collaborating on a shared development vision through the UTA TOD planning process, which will kick off in early 2022.

**TOD readiness: MEDIUM.**

- Transit supportive planning and zoning: NO
- Development potential: YES
- Infrastructure and connectivity: YES

**Additional considerations:**

- **Flexibility of station location:** The 400 South overpass to the north and horizontal curves of the alignment to the south restrict how far the station can slide to the north and the south. The flexibility to move this station is limited.
- **Engineering considerations:** A well-functioning commuter rail station would require approximately 123’ of UTA right-of-way for a platform, double tracks, a



station plaza for riders, and a bus facility (Figure 3). In addition, a public access road is needed to connect the station to the local road network. UTA currently does not own additional space outside of their 20' right-of-way that is adjacent to the east side of the Union Pacific corridor. To allow for appropriate train passing movements, approximately 3000' feet of double tracking is needed at the station. UTA will require additional right-of-way in this area. In addition, electrical transmission lines on the east side of this area will need to be relocated to accommodate the station programming elements shown in Figure 3. Considerations to address these constraints need to be an integral component of the future UTA TOD planning effort at the Springville Station, as well as the City's roadway network planning to ensure adequate space is maintained for commuter rail.

- Interim transit recommendations:** This area could be served by express bus in the interim. If development comes in before commuter rail investment has been constructed, this area could be easily served by express bus with a park-and-ride as part of the development and construction of local access roads. If there is a desire to serve this area before development occurs and before the commuter rail investment has been made, a park-and-ride for express bus could be provided in proximity of 400 South/1750 West or 400 South/1200 West.

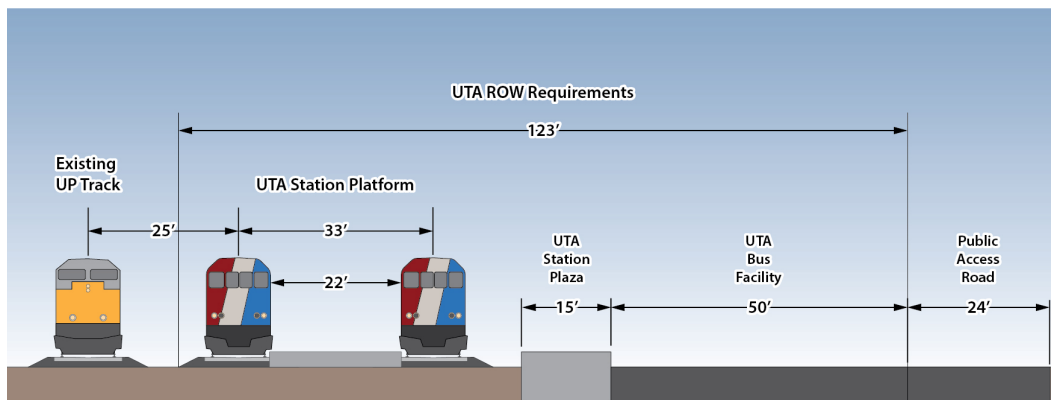


Figure 3. Typical section for Springville Station

### 3.1.2 Spanish Fork

**Development overview:** Spanish Fork is laying the groundwork for urban expansion to create a transit-oriented, mixed-use district. **High quality development at higher intensities will be needed to secure regional commuter rail transit investment in Spanish Fork.** UTA is most likely to make a transit investment in communities that commit to creating walkable districts with transit-supportive densities.

**Planning context:** The proposed transit station location is outside current city limits, so the area will be given a zoning designation when it is annexed. The City intends to implement form-based code, which could be applied to this new area. The City is also exploring a program for transfer of development rights (TDR), and the transit station area would be a receiving area for added density.

**Transportation connections:** The Spanish Fork station area is along the existing freight rail line and I-15 corridor; the nearest highway interchange is at the intersection of

Highway 6, located 1.6 miles northeast. The rail line and interstate highway present a barrier to east-west travel; there are at-grade vehicle crossings at 100 S and 400 N. Future connections to existing residential developments is desirable to increase bike and pedestrian connectivity. A future interchange at Center Street is proposed, but based on current UDOT funding, the projects is not likely to be initiated for at least 15 years.

**Anticipated development:** Spanish Fork City expects the station area will see mixed use development with a focus on residential land uses. A sewer line is being installed across the highway to the west side along 100 South to serve future development.

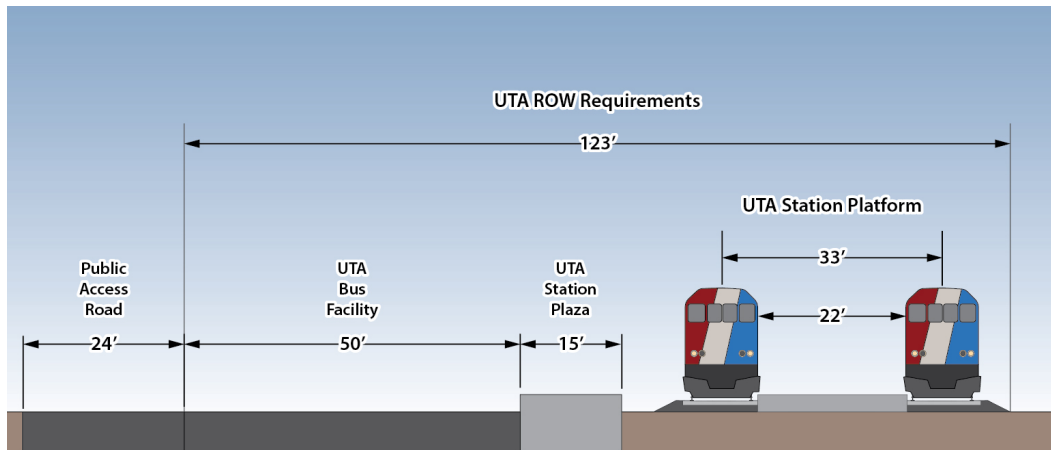
**TOD readiness:** **LOW.**

- Transit supportive planning and zoning: NO
- Near-term development: NO
- Infrastructure and connectivity: YES

**Additional considerations:**

- **Flexibility of station location:** Station location could slide to the north or south based on Center Street interchange concept refinement and desired alignment with Spanish Fork future development. Previous engineering concepts showed the station south of the future Center Street Interchange; however, locating the station north of the Center Street Interchange would provide better connectivity to 400 North which is shown as a Major Collector in the Spanish Fork Transportation Master Plan. Additional consideration to this station location should be an integral component of the future UTA TOD planning effort at the Spanish Fork Station.
- **Engineering considerations:** A well-functioning commuter rail station would require approximately 123' of UTA right-of-way for a platform, rail double track, a station plaza for riders, and a bus facility (Figure 4). In addition, a public access road is needed to connect the station to the local road network. UTA owns the property rights of the Tintic corridor, which is roughly 70' wide. To allow for appropriate train passing movements, approximately 3000' feet of double tracking is needed at the station. UTA will require additional right-of-way in this area. Considerations to these constraints need to be an integral component of the future UTA TOD planning effort at the Spanish Fork Station.
- **Interim transit recommendations:** This area could be served by express bus in the interim. The desired station location could be served by future improvements to 400 North and a local access road to a park-and-ride and express bus stop if prior to the construction of the Center Street interchange and development has started on the west side of I-15. If development has not started on the west side of I-15, an interim express bus station along Main Street with park-n-ride could be provided.





**Figure 4.** Typical section for Spanish Fork and Payson Stations

### 3.1.3 Payson

**Development overview:** Payson has identified a station location with strong longer-term development prospects. **High quality development at higher intensities will be needed to secure regional commuter rail transit investment in Payson.** UTA is most likely to make a transit investment in communities that commit to creating walkable districts with transit-supportive densities.

**Planning context:** The City recently completed its General Plan update, which identifies a transit station area at the north end, where the City expects higher residential and commercial densities and a greater mix of uses. The Bamberger Ranch P-C Zone Plan (completed in 2011) created a more detailed plan and Planned Community zoning district for this area. The City has also designated the district with a Transit Station Overlay, intended for high-density mixed use development and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods.

**Transportation connections:** The proposed station area is located along the existing Union Pacific freight rail line and I-15 corridor. The rail line and interstate highway present a barrier to east-west travel, especially for multimodal access within a station area. An interchange upgrade is proposed at Main Street, and an EIS has been prepared; however, without an outside funding source, the project is not likely to be initiated for at least 15 years. Additionally, the Nebo Beltway is a proposed new 5-lane roadway that runs perpendicular to the rail and interstate corridor and would provide for access across the district. Other transportation investments (new roads, trails, and bike and pedestrian facilities) and urban infrastructure will all be needed.

**Anticipated development:** In the long term, there are two key players with interests in Payson's North End. The North End station area is the future home of a Utah Valley University (UVU) campus expansion, which will greatly contribute to the station area mix of uses and pedestrian orientation. Property Reserve Inc. (PRI) also has land entitlements in the station area vicinity, but no known development plans.

**TOD readiness:** **LOW.**

- Transit supportive planning and zoning: YES

- Near-term development: NO
- Infrastructure and connectivity: NO

**Additional considerations:**

- **Flexibility of station location:** Station could slide to the north or south based on interchange and Nebo Belt Route construction and desired alignment with Bamberger Ranch development. Additional consideration to this station location should be an integral component of the future UTA TOD planning effort at the Payson Station.
- **Engineering considerations:** A well-functioning commuter rail station would require approximately 123' of UTA right-of-way for a platform, rail double track, a station plaza for riders, and a bus facility (Figure 4). In addition, a public access road is needed to connect the station to the local road network. UTA owns the property rights of the Tintic corridor, which is roughly 80' wide at this location. To allow for appropriate train passing movements, approximately 3000' feet of double tracking is needed at the station. If the Payson station serves as the terminus station, additional storage track will be needed to accommodate train operations. These storage tracks would extend beyond the end of the station platform and the length varies depending on the layover capacity required by UTA based on the frequency. Considerations to these constraints need to be an integral component of the future UTA TOD planning effort at the Payson Station.
- **Interim transit recommendations:** It would be challenging to serve desired station location with express bus in the interim due to lack of local roadway connections. Could have interim express bus station along Main Street with park-n-ride could be served by express bus in the interim before interchange construction and Bamberger Ranch development.

### 3.1.4 Santaquin

**Development overview:** Santaquin is growing faster than some of its northern neighboring cities, and the City is prepared to invest in urban infrastructure and utility expansion to support continued growth. **High quality development at higher intensities will be needed to secure regional commuter rail transit investment in Santaquin in the long term.** UTA is most likely to make a transit investment in communities that commit to creating walkable districts with transit-supportive densities.

**Planning context:** Santaquin began a General Plan update in 2021, which will replace the 2014 General Plan. The existing plan identifies the potential future land use mix as mixed-use commercial, mixed-use residential, and multifamily residential to the east of the rail line, and high residential (5-10 dwelling units per acre) to the west. The City's zoning does not establish transit-oriented or mixed-use zoning districts or overlays; however mixed-use development is allowed in the two commercial zones (C-1, interchange commercial and PO, professional office).

**Transportation connections:** Moderate density housing development has been completed recently to the west of the rail line and has spurred development of a local street and trail network. Additional trails are planned as the area continues to develop.



Ridership forecasts between Payson and Santaquin may not support commuter rail connection in the next 15-20 years. As well, land ownership for the proposed transit corridor right of way between Payson and Santaquin presents a challenge to implementation, as do some engineering challenges with the station siting.

**Anticipated development:** The City owns 35 acres in the station area and is planning for transit-oriented development. There are an additional 2,600 housing units approved at Summit Ridge.

**TOD readiness: LOW.**

- Transit supportive planning and zoning: YES
- Near-term development: YES
- Infrastructure and connectivity: NO

**Additional considerations:**

- **Flexibility of station location:** Station should remain in proximity the Santaquin owned parcel on the east side of the existing Union Pacific line, north of Summit Ridge Parkway.
- **Engineering considerations:** A well-functioning commuter rail station would require approximately 123' of UTA right-of-way for a platform, rail double track, a station plaza for riders, and a bus facility (Figure 4). In addition, a public access road is needed to connect the station to the local road network. UTA currently does not own any right of way in this location. To allow for appropriate train passing movements, approximately 10,000' feet of double tracking is needed at the station. In addition, if the Santaquin station serves as the terminus station, additional storage track will be needed to accommodate train operations. These storage tracks would extend beyond the end of the station platform and the length varies depending on the layover capacity required by UTA based on the frequency. UTA would need to purchase additional right-of-way in this area. Most notably, a future commuter rail alignment would require a flyover of Union Pacific or a pedestrian bridge at the station to ensure that riders are on the east side of the tracks where the desired TOD is anticipated. Considerations to these constraints need to be an integral component of the future planning efforts at the Payson Station.
- **Interim transit recommendations:** This location could be easily served in the interim by express bus with a park-and-ride in proximity to Summit Ridge Parkway.



## 4. Case Studies

### 4.1.1 Benefits and Challenges of Commuter Rail

Commuter rail extensions that serve less urbanized areas offer great quality of life and economic development benefits but can be challenging to fund, especially in the context of COVID-19 impacts to commute patterns and telework.

Commuter rail brings the economic benefits of TOD and increased business investment. In a recent study of commuter rail benefits for less urbanized communities,<sup>1</sup> all 10 commuter rail agencies interviewed cited the economic benefits that commuter rail brings to both urban and less urbanized communities, especially the economic benefits of compact, walkable, mixed-use TOD.

Quality of life benefits of the commuter rail investment include increased mobility and transportation choice, especially for those who have mobility limitations and cannot drive; greater convenience and safety; and improved access to education, employment, and essential services such as medical care. Commuter rail can also help reduce traffic congestion.

The most commonly cited challenge was funding a commuter rail system in areas of less density because of high capital and operating costs compared to the number of riders. This often means it is more difficult to generate the ridership, revenues and return on investment for less urbanized commuter rail than it is for urban systems. Another challenge in less urbanized areas is convincing residents who are accustomed to driving to choose commuter rail for some of their trips.

The following TOD case studies provide several examples of relevant projects that illuminate best practices for TODs in built environments like those in South Utah County. These highlighted project areas focus on two ingredients:

- The timing of land use and transit development
- Rural areas that are quickly suburbanizing

### 4.1.2 Case Study 1: RailRunner – Albuquerque, NM

#### *Los Lunas Station*

- A station area plan has been adopted, but the plan did not include proposed zoning changes. Following plan adoption, the station area was designated as an urban redevelopment area to enable desired development types.
- The station area plan proposed two sub-districts: Mixed-Use Core with high density and mixed-use areas, and Station Neighborhood, which has lower densities, closer to existing neighborhood development patterns.

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<sup>1</sup> “Commuter Rail: Information on Benefits and Funding Challenges for Service in Less Urbanized Communities.” U.S. Government Accountability Office. April 2021. (GAO-21-355R Commuter Rail)





- Because of the line, Facebook decided to build a six-building data center in the lower-density area because the commuter rail line would allow the company to attract workers from a larger labor pool.

#### *Town of Belen Station*

- The station is located in downtown Belen and surrounded by low-density development. Some galleries and restaurants are already built in the station vicinity.
- Pedestrian access between the station and parking areas will be improved by a planned pedestrian overpass.

#### *Bernalillo Station*

- The station area is envisioned as a multimodal TOD district. Currently, much of the surrounding area is rural residential and industrial uses. Most parcels adjacent to the station are vacant.
- The town of Bernalillo adopted a moratorium on building permits on areas near the station to allow time to establish and adopt a community vision for TOD.
- The station area plan included an elective TOD zoning classification that allows mixed uses, higher density, and TOD-compatible development standards. Properties within the station area are designated as eligible for zoning changes.

#### *Kiwa Station*

- As one of the most rural station areas, the rail line has meant economically disadvantaged residents are able to access essential services such as medical care, education and employment.
- The Santo Domingo Tribal Housing Authority received federal funding to create 41 low income housing units near the station.

### 4.1.3 Case Study 2: Northstar – Minneapolis metro, MN

#### *Fridley Station*

- Due to low utilization of the existing park-and-ride facilities, developers chose to reduce the number of planned parking spaces, opting to use that area for future development instead.
- A station area master plan was created to support transit-oriented development and establish a TIF (tax increment financing) district.
- TIF revenues are planned for use on bike and pedestrian safety improvements in the station area.
- The adjacent area was already fully developed, but new land use changes are proposed based on station area investments and will increase density as properties redevelop incrementally.

#### *Coon Rapids/Riverdale Station*

- A station area master plan was created to support transit-oriented development and establish a TIF (tax increment financing) district.
- Development is planned in multiple phases to increase density over time.



#### *Anoka Station*

- A station area master plan was created to support transit-oriented development and establish a TIF (tax increment financing) district.
- The largest development in the station area was the Homestead at Anoka, a senior living facility that includes 149 units of assisted living.
- Approximately 40% of land in the station area is still vacant; many opportunities for continued TOD investment.

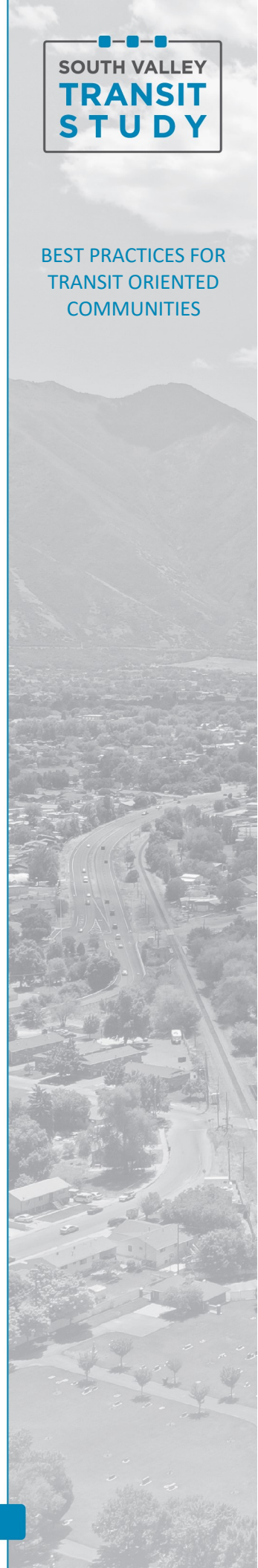
### 4.1.4 Case Study 3: Music City Line – Lebanon, TN

#### *Hamilton Station*

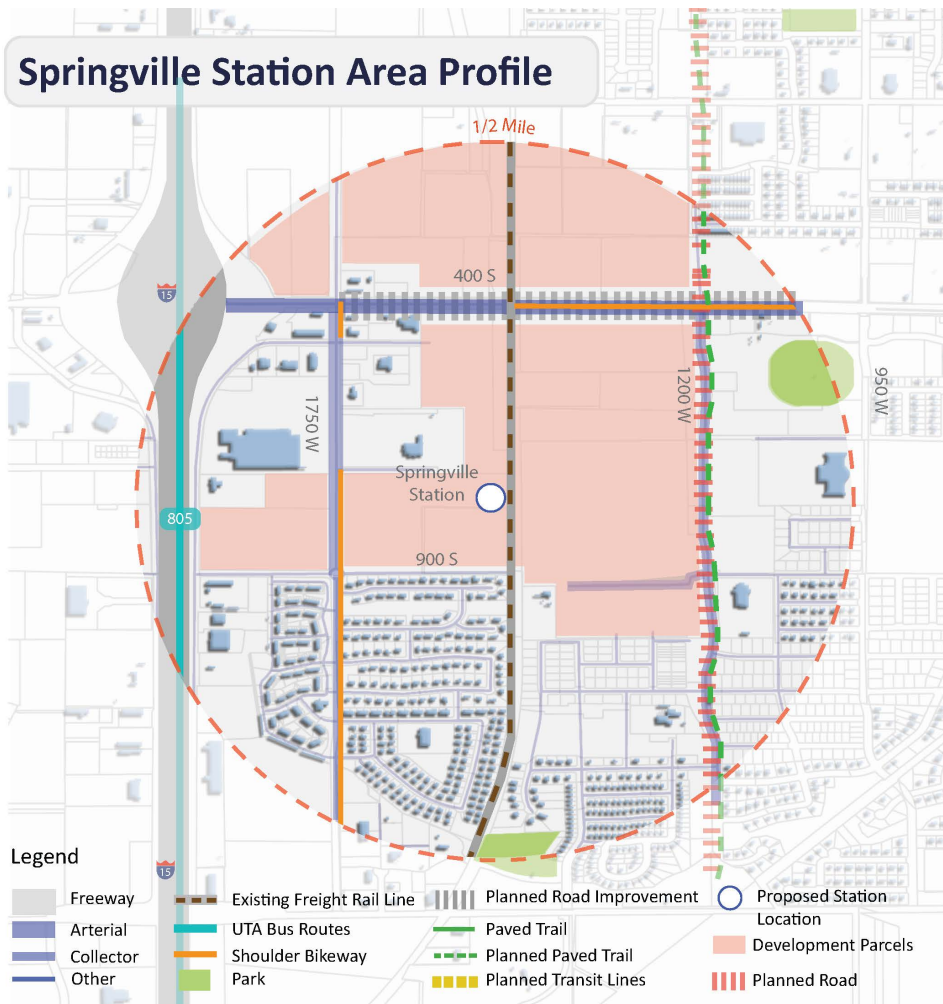
- The city adopted a land use plan with provisions to encourage TOD.
- Hamilton Springs was constructed as a traditional-style “village” with housing and businesses centered on a new transit station; emphasis on multiple modes of transportation within a walkable community.
- Station TOD includes 13,000 square feet of retail space, 396 luxury apartments, and 260-unit complex for seniors.
- Station development was region’s first public-private TOD development, worth \$4.1 million.
- Since first phase, an additional 312 apartments have been constructed, and the City has approved over 1,300 apartments within a mile of the station.

#### *Mt. Juliet Station*

- The Nashville MPO provided funding for needed infrastructure improvements to prioritize mixed use developments.
- The area was rezoned to allow multi-family housing; station area development occurred in five phases.
- This rural area quickly developed with multi-story housing.



# Springville Station Area Profile



**Development Overview**  
 Springville City is positioned for near-term station area growth. **High quality development at higher intensities will be needed to secure regional commuter rail transit investment in Springville.**  
 The City is already seeing high demand for developable land in the area, and there is active development interest in greenfield properties near the proposed station. The challenge for Springville will be to align development interests with community desires for a “village center” to realize development that will bring the highest value to the City, both in transit-oriented community building and strong fiscal return for the City.

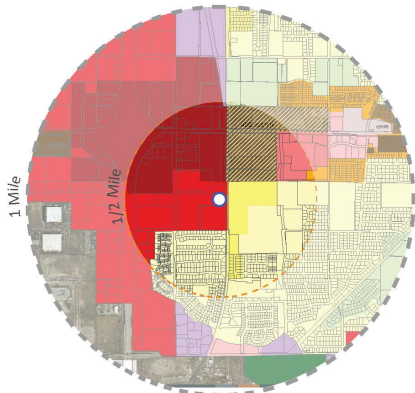
**Transportation connections**  
 The Springville station area is along the existing Union Pacific freight rail line, and less than a mile from the I-15 interchange, which provides great access. The rail line presents a barrier to east-west travel and is especially challenging for multimodal access within a station area; a grade-separated multimodal crossing is recommended. There is an at-grade vehicle crossing at 900 South and a grade separated crossing at 1600 South. Future connections to nearby commercial developments will be possible.



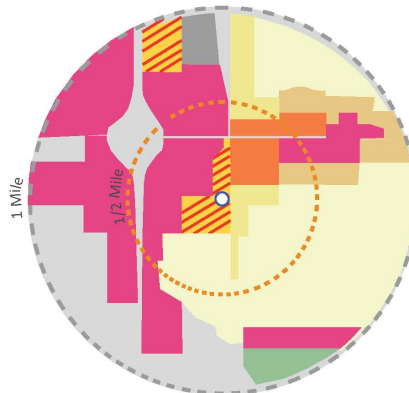
**Planning context:** An updated planning vision and complementary zoning and future land use designations are needed to achieve the robust potential for transit-oriented development. Current zoning permits mixed use and community commercial in undeveloped properties adjacent to the proposed station location. However, the zoning would also allow for low-density single-family housing across a significant portion of the station area. The 2002 Westfield Community Plan established this area as a mixed-use center, but the plan is now nearly 20 years old, and should be updated along with zoning code changes. This plan calls for residential development at 3-7 dwelling units per acre, which is far lower than needed to create a transit-oriented community.

**Anticipated development:** There is strong development interest in the station area. PRI/SLR have active development interests that are expected to move forward in the near-term. UTA, Springville, and PRI/SLR are collaborating on a shared development vision through the UTA TOD planning process, which will kick off in early 2022.

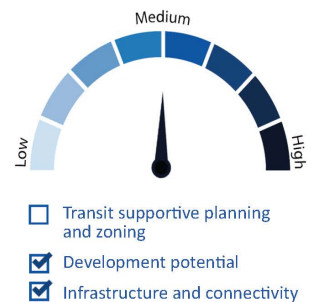
**Existing Zoning**



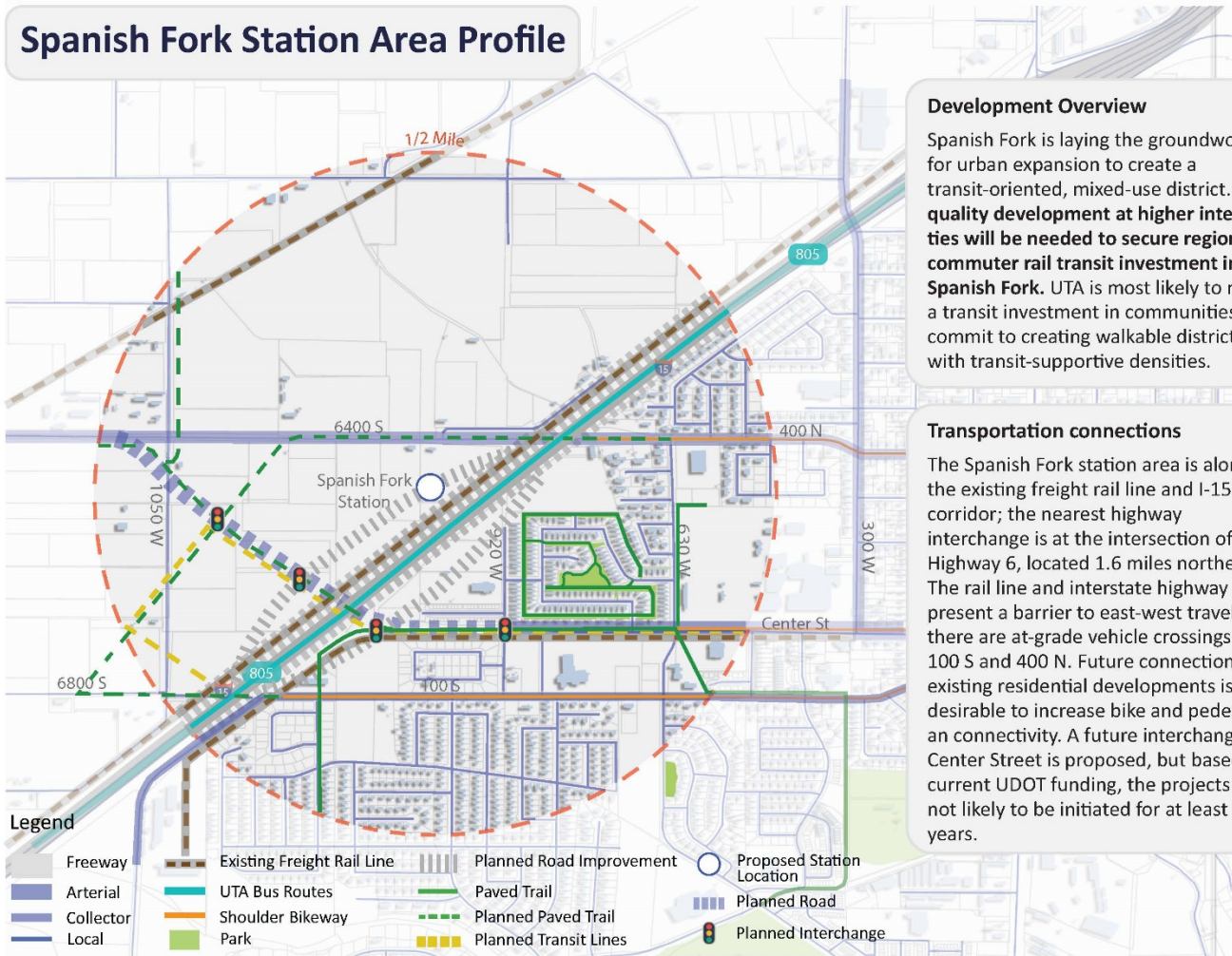
**Planned Land Use**



**TOD Readiness**



# Spanish Fork Station Area Profile



## Development Overview

Spanish Fork is laying the groundwork for urban expansion to create a transit-oriented, mixed-use district. **High quality development at higher intensities will be needed to secure regional commuter rail transit investment in Spanish Fork.** UTA is most likely to make a transit investment in communities that commit to creating walkable districts with transit-supportive densities.

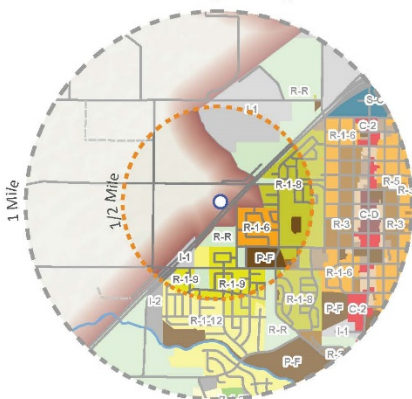
## Transportation connections

The Spanish Fork station area is along the existing freight rail line and I-15 corridor; the nearest highway interchange is at the intersection of Highway 6, located 1.6 miles northeast. The rail line and interstate highway present a barrier to east-west travel; there are at-grade vehicle crossings at 100 S and 400 N. Future connections to existing residential developments is desirable to increase bike and pedestrian connectivity. A future interchange at Center Street is proposed, but based on current UDOT funding, the projects is not likely to be initiated for at least 15 years.

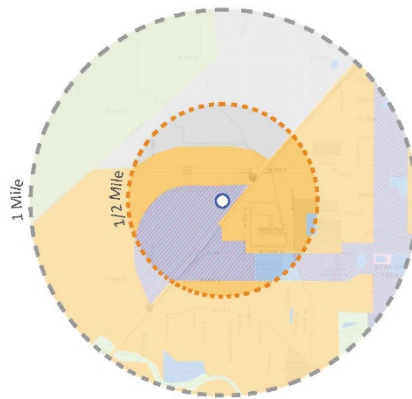
**Planning context:** The proposed transit station location is outside current city limits, so the area will be given a zoning designation when it is annexed. The City intends to implement form-based code, which could be applied to this new area. The City is also exploring a program for transfer of development rights (TDR), and the transit station area would be a receiving area for added density.

**Anticipated development:** Spanish Fork City expects the station area will see mixed use development with a focus on residential land uses. A sewer line is being installed across the highway to the west side along 100 South to serve future development.

Existing Zoning



Planned Land Use



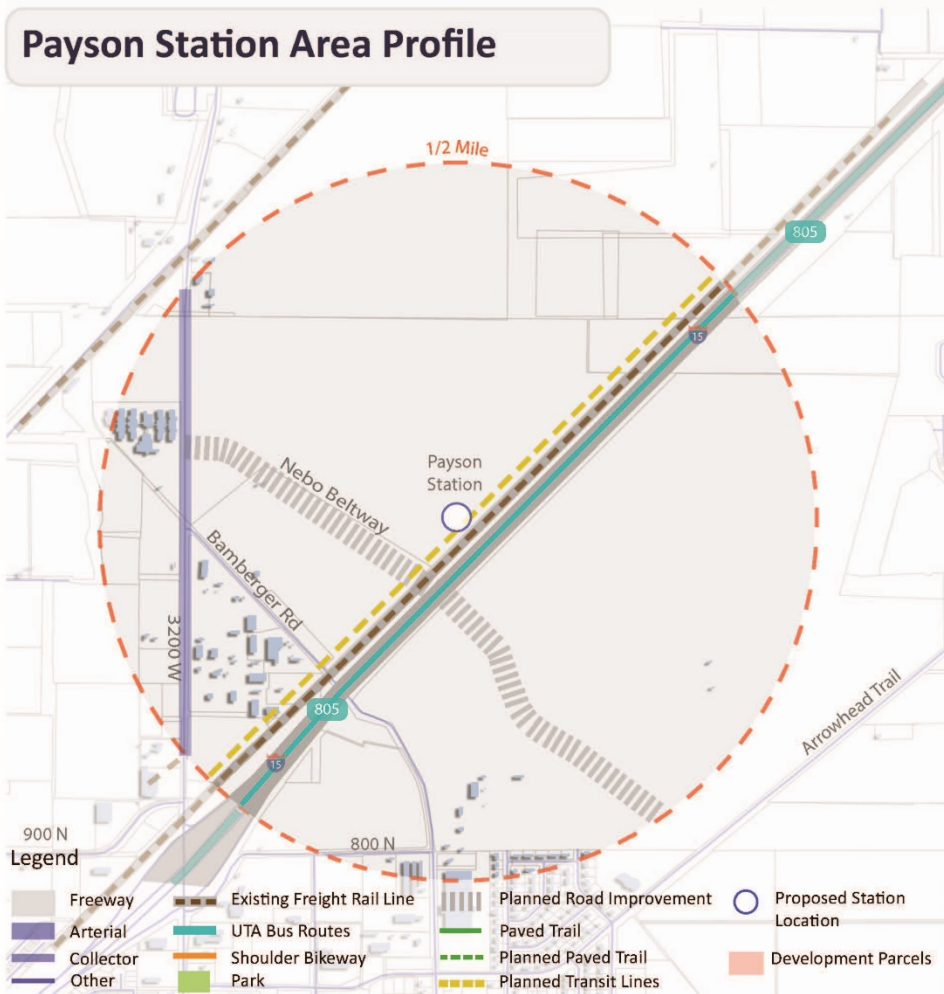
TOD Readiness



- Rural Residential
- Residential District (R-1-30)
- Residential District (R-1-20)
- Residential District (R-1-15)
- Residential District (R-1-12)
- Residential District (R-1-9)
- Residential District (R-1-8)
- Residential District (R-1-6)
- Residential District (R-3)
- Residential Office
- Public Facilities
- Commercial Office
- Downtown Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- General Commercial
- Shopping Center
- Light Industrial
- Medium Industrial

- Agricultural
- Business Park
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Open Space
- Public
- Residential

# Payson Station Area Profile



## Development Overview

Payson has identified a station location with strong longer-term development prospects. **High quality development at higher intensities will be needed to secure regional commuter rail transit investment in Payson.** UTA is most likely to make a transit investment in communities that commit to creating walkable districts with transit-supportive densities.

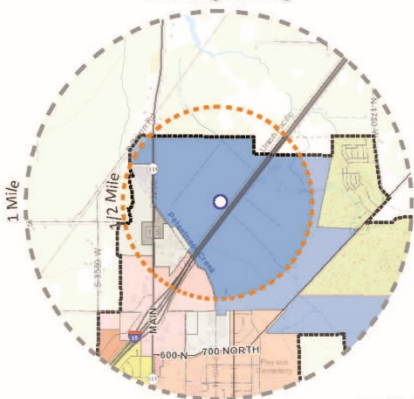
## Transportation connections

The proposed station area is located along the existing Union Pacific freight rail line and I-15 corridor. The rail line and interstate highway present a barrier to east-west travel, especially for multimodal access within a station area. An interchange upgrade is proposed at Main Street, and an EIS has been prepared; however, without an outside funding source, the project is not likely to be initiated for at least 15 years. Additionally, the Nebo Beltway is a proposed new 5-lane roadway that runs perpendicular to the rail and interstate corridor and would provide for access across the district. Other transportation investments (new roads, trails, and bike and pedestrian facilities) and urban infrastructure will all be needed.

**Planning context:** The City recently completed its General Plan update, which identifies a transit station area at the north end, where the City expects higher residential and commercial densities and a greater mix of uses. The Bamberger Ranch P-C Zone Plan (completed in 2011) created a more detailed plan and Planned Community zoning district for this area. The City has also designated the district with a Transit Station Overlay, intended for high-density mixed use development and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods.

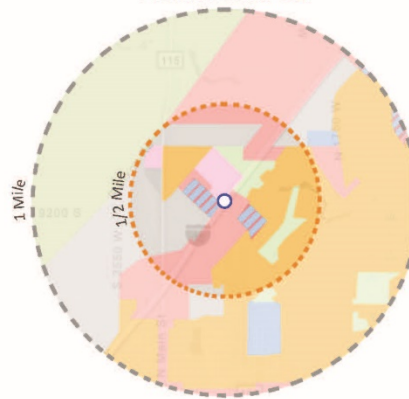
**Anticipated development:** In the long term, there are two key players with interests in Payson's north end. The station area is the future home of a Utah Valley University (UVU) campus expansion, which will greatly contribute to the station area mix of uses and pedestrian orientation. Property Reserve Inc. (PRI) also has land entitlements in the station area vicinity, but no known development plans.

## Existing Zoning



- |         |       |      |
|---------|-------|------|
| R-1-7.5 | R-1-A | GC-1 |
| R-2-7.5 | A-5-8 | PQ-1 |
| R-1-9   | P-C   | NC-1 |
| R-1-10  | PRZ   | S-1  |
| R-1-12  | BPD   | I-1  |
| RMF     | CC-1  | I-2  |

## Planned Land Use



- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| Agricultural  | Mixed Use   |
| Business Park | Open Space  |
| Commercial    | Public      |
| Industrial    | Residential |

## TOD Readiness



- Transit supportive planning and zoning
- Development potential
- Infrastructure and connectivity

# Santaquin Station Area Profile



**Development Overview**

Santaquin is growing faster than some of its northern neighboring cities, and the City is prepared to invest in urban infrastructure and utility expansion to support continued growth. **High quality development at higher intensities will be needed to secure regional commuter rail transit investment in Santaquin in the long term.** UTA is most likely to make a transit investment in communities that commit to creating walkable districts with transit-supportive densities.

**Transportation connections**

Moderate density housing development has been completed recently to the west of the rail line and has spurred development of a local street and trail network. Additional trails are planned as the area continues to develop.

Ridership forecasts between Payson and Santaquin may not support commuter rail connection in the next 15-20 years. As well, land ownership for the proposed transit corridor right of way between Payson and Santaquin presents a challenge to implementation, as do some engineering challenges with the station siting.

**Legend**

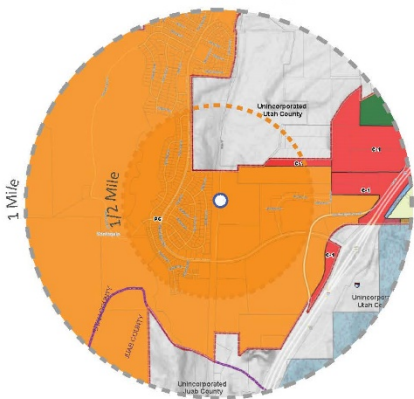
- Freeway
- Arterial
- Collector
- Local
- Existing Freight Rail Line
- UTA Bus Routes
- Shoulder Bikeway
- Park
- Planned Road Improvement
- Paved Trail
- Planned Paved Trail
- Planned Transit Lines
- Proposed Station Location
- Development Parcels

**Planning context:** Santaquin began a General Plan update in 2021, which will replace the 2014 General Plan. The existing plan identifies the potential future land use mix as mixed-use commercial, mixed-use residential, and multifamily residential to the east of the rail line, and high residential (5-10 dwelling units per acre) to the west. The City's zoning does not establish transit-oriented or mixed-use zoning districts or overlays; however mixed-use development is allowed in the two commercial zones (C-1, interchange commercial and PO, professional office).

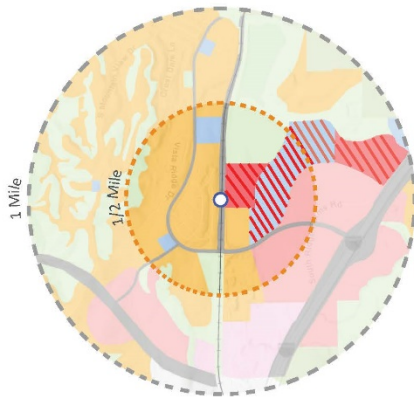
**Anticipated development**

The City owns 35 acres in the station area and is planning for transit-oriented development. There are an additional 2,600 housing units approved at Summit Ridge.

**Existing Zoning**



**Planned Land Use**



**TOD Readiness**



- Main Street Commercial
- Main Street Residential
- General Commercial
- Residential Commercial
- Core Area Residential (R-8)
- Planned Unit Development (R-10)
- Single Family (R-12)
- Planned Unit Development (R-12)
- Single Family (R-15)
- Planned Unit Development (R-15)
- Single Family (R-20)
- Single Family (R-43)
- Residential Agriculture
- Agriculture
- Planned Community
- Public Facilities
- Industrial
- Utah DNR
- Agricultural
- Business Park
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Mixed Use Residential
- Mixed Use Commercial
- Open Space
- Public
- Residential