



6: Quality Neighborhoods

Santaquin will encourage a variety of living options so that families and people in all stages of life can continue to live and thrive in our city and enjoy neighborhoods that meet their needs and desires. Options include larger suburban lots as well as possible new options for living adjacent to farms, within downtown, and in neighborhoods with recreational amenities and a mix of housing types and sizes.



One of the primary components of a positive quality of life is our neighborhoods. Since change is inevitable as growth continues, it is important that we shape neighborhood growth in a manner that enhances the community, and also provides for diverse housing needs.

Rising land and housing prices can place considerable pressure on farms and orchards to transition to new subdivisions. Santaquin is like many communities in Utah that want to retain their traditional character in the midst of unrelenting pressure to develop land. Whether it is our high birth rate leading to larger families, in-migration for abundant jobs, or simply a high quality of life with excellent access to many recreational activities, our State keeps growing at a rapid rate; growth is simply a constant that demands attention.

Creating high quality, enduring neighborhoods is not a simple task. Developers build subdivisions based on their market understanding and local zoning ordinances. Their goal is often profit driven, and they may not be concerned about leaving a long-lasting community. Builders need options that both benefit the community and are sufficiently profitable. While Santaquin currently supports a range of conventional subdivisions, new options and more housing choices could provide broad benefits. With rising housing prices, many families that previously could afford a home in Santaquin are now priced out of the market, including people critical to our city—teachers, nurses, police officers, firefighters. etc. It may also be difficult for seniors and those just starting out to find more affordable options suited to their needs. Unfortunately, this situation has become commonplace along the Wasatch Front.

A WIDER VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

The housing stock in Santaquin does not necessarily provide a wide range of choices for those that want to live here. Families that have raised their children in Santaquin may find that many of those children are unable to afford to live in the town in which they grew up. On the other hand, families with greater incomes that wish to live in a larger home on a larger lot also need to be accommodated. These may include executive housing or ranchette style lots.

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Housing types that are in between large detached single-family and mid-rise apartments are commonly referred to as “missing middle” housing (see *Missing Middle Housing – Thinking Big and Building Small to Respond to Today’s Housing Crisis*, by Dan Parolek). Missing middle housing can provide a greater variety of housing types that could be more affordable for middle income families. Most developers either build single family detached homes or large complexes, with very few choices in between. In the past, smaller, clustered housing units were constructed near downtowns and in neighborhoods because



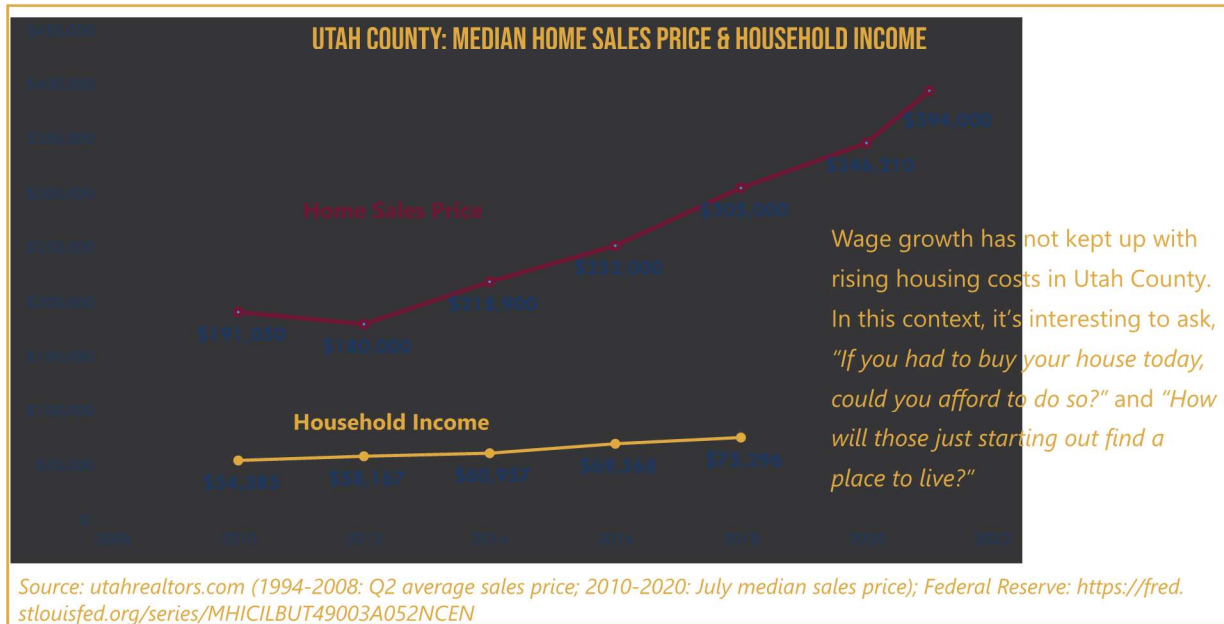
Small lot cottage



Mixed housing neighborhood



Live/work home





Small lot homes in a blended neighborhood with common open space



Single family home with detached accessory dwelling unit



A multi-unit mansionplex bended into a neighborhood

zoning did not prevent them. Historically duplexes, twin homes, cottage homes, triplexes, fourplexes, accessory dwellings located in backyards, large homes partitioned into several interior units, senior housing, small condominium and apartment complexes, and smaller lots were blended into neighborhoods. These housing types provided a variety of housing options for people and families in all stages of life. Blending different types of dwellings can also increase overall community stability.

While missing middle housing choices are not widely available in many Utah communities, there are both new and old examples of neighborhoods with greater housing variety.

A recent Utah Foundation study, *Missing Middle Housing, Part 3*, based on a survey focused on the Wasatch Front, included relevant findings to Santaquin:

- Utah Foundation survey respondents prefer single-family detached housing, but they offered positive responses to missing middle housing with the appearance of a single-family home.
- Utahns' preference for the appearance of single-family homes suggests that missing middle housing will meet with greater acceptance if developed in a manner that mimics the style and scale of single-family

dwellings.

- Nearly three-quarters (72%) of survey respondents say that style is the most important factor (other than housing type) in their housing preferences, followed by scale, or the size compared to other homes (64%). Topping the list for open-ended comments is having lower density (35%).
- Half of survey respondents prefer housing of similar prices (47%) and similar types (50%) in their neighborhoods, but not far behind are people who prefer housing with a variety of prices (36%) and a variety of types (42%), which includes middle housing.
- Most survey respondents (60%) support more affordable housing options in their neighborhoods, with 38% strongly supporting more options. About 18% of respondents oppose more affordable housing options, while 22% are neutral.
- To address affordability issues, about 46% of survey respondents would accept missing middle housing in their neighborhoods; 33% of respondents oppose middle housing, and the remainder are neutral.

A possible conclusion could be that style and design play an important role in introducing more housing choices into existing neighborhoods and new developments.

How can missing middle housing be a part of our neighborhood structure? Introducing missing middle housing would require zoning ordinance changes and community support. Current ordinances can be modified to allow for compatible missing middle housing options while still preserving neighborhood character, through styles that replicate a single family home.

MARKET DEMAND FOR HIGHER END HOUSING

Because developers often attempt to meet the price ranges that more people can afford, it is important to set aside some areas of the community for larger estate lots, to maintain a balance of housing options within Santaquin. Larger families with higher incomes are looking for a place to grow and raise their families, and Santaquin is a desirable place to foster that growth. Executive housing and/or ranchette style lots including animals are also in demand.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL CLUSTERS

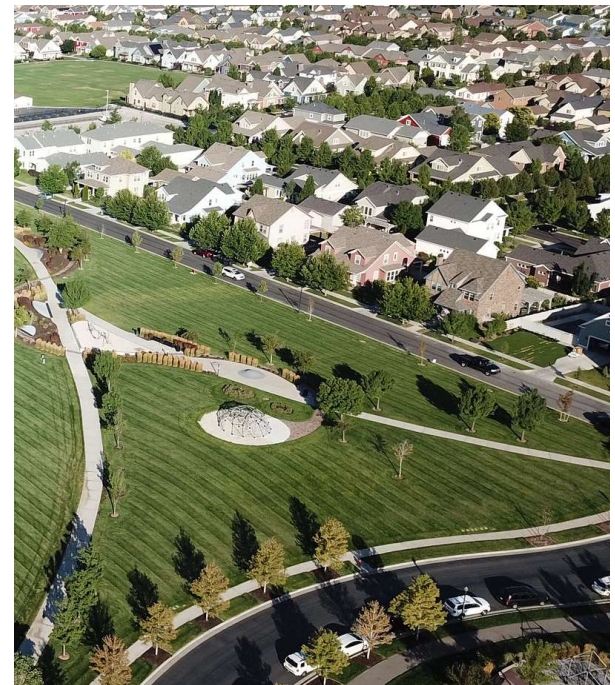
This development type clusters housing on a small percentage of a development parcel, while permanently preserving most of the parcel for continued agricultural use. See the appendix for further discussion.

NEIGHBORHOODS WITH OPEN SPACE AND HOUSING VARIETY

Public feedback during Santaquin’s visioning process uncovered an interest in more diverse neighborhood options that include both housing variety and amenities. A concept called neighborhoods with open space and housing variety (NOS) has been used in other communities to achieve additional parks and open space. This option essentially already exists in Santaquin with its planned unit development ordinance (PUD). NOS has the potential to provide housing for a wider range of household types—including young families, mature families, and empty nesters—with common open space areas for socializing and recreating. Ordinance enhancements to promote more missing middle housing types within the PUD ordinance could achieve greater acceptance of the form of this type of development.

When combined with the incentives mentioned below, developers can reduce the development footprint in order to establish common open space areas, such as neighborhood parks, trails or community gardens, providing a less standard subdivision appearance. This encourages higher quality design and distributes shared maintenance costs among more homeowners, often through a homeowner’s association, keeping costs sustainable over time for each household and not relying on the City budget.

Sample Rural Residential Cluster
75% open space | 25% housing
(see appendix for more detail)



Neighborhoods with open space and housing variety



Bike routes and sidewalks can connect neighborhoods



Water-wise residential irrigation options

Both rural residential clusters and neighborhoods with open space and housing variety present benefits to developers, landowners, and communities:

- Developers can profit from decreased infrastructure costs, as they build fewer miles of roads, run fewer miles of water and sewer pipes, and have fewer storm drains to install.
- Because infrastructure is more efficient, communities can benefit from lower long-term infrastructure maintenance costs, whether for road repairs, sewer line replacement, or snow plowing.
- In the case of rural residential clusters, farmers may see an incentive to continue farming while also realizing the economic benefits of land development on a small portion of their land.
- Community members benefit from preserved open spaces that could take several forms: traditional parks, private parks, natural open spaces, and working farms/orchards.
- Encouraging a wider variety of housing types and lot sizes helps communities provide more housing choices.

EFFICIENT/CONNECTED NEIGHBORHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE

New neighborhoods need established standards

to ensure that their streets provide a safe and pleasant experience for all users, including cars, trucks, walkers, and bikers. Usually this translates to a streetscape profile that includes a system of sidewalks in town and connecting to town (especially when connections to important destinations are nearby), streetlights for safety purposes, street trees to reduce the heat gain from paved streets, park strips or swales to handle street runoff, and pavement of sufficient width to accommodate on-street parking and enable two cars to pass each other on the street. Santaquin has such standards already in place.

Curb and gutter may be necessary in most of the more urban areas, but, for some streets, swales are a good option, especially in the core area of town, where wide rights of way exist. Swales return stormwater runoff to the ground near where it falls rather than piping to retention facilities. Swales are representative of a larger trend called low impact development (LID), in which the City is already engaged.

RESIDENTIAL IRRIGATION

In the face of on-going drought conditions, water conservation techniques are becoming the norm for new neighborhoods, including using secondary water systems for landscape irrigation needs, water use standards, water-wise landscaping (e.g. xeriscaping), and possible

reductions in required yards/setbacks. With Santaquin managing the secondary water system, regulations are already in place to accomplish water conservation.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The current housing crisis in Utah makes finding affordable housing for service-oriented workers (restaurant servers, house cleaners, etc.) and seasonal/temporary workers (those needed to support the farms and orchards) difficult. In general, most Utah communities do not build enough affordable units to meet demand. Some Utah communities provide density incentives and ordinance flexibility to support workers that have lower paying jobs. Some require 10% affordable units as part of larger residential developments. These projects may include deed restrictions that help enable home ownership for lower income residents. For rental units, these projects may include rent control or a rent assistance voucher from a housing authority, negotiated with the developer/manager. When a quota of affordable units is required, it may be prudent to consider a density or a height flexibility offset. Density offsets make providing affordable units more palatable for developers, as they may enable a developer to make a profit. Many affordable housing developers also take advantage of state and federal incentives. Some communities also offer a fee-in-lieu option, which results in a fund for

affordable housing. In 2021, the State legislature discussed tying affordable housing requirement to density bonuses.

Another issue that arose in the general plan process is the need to maintain and reinforce the housing in the City that is more affordable. Often there are grants and low cost loans available to assist homeowners with basic but expensive needs like HVAC systems, roofs, appliances, energy upgrades, and exterior maintenance. The Utah County Housing Authority is a good source of assistance for these types of projects. Currently, the most affordable housing is downtown.

Housing costs are increasing in Santaquin, making a single-family home on a large lot difficult to purchase for many interested buyers. Rental rates are also rising, and the supply is not meeting demand. The State-required moderate income housing plan (MIHP) is intended to address affordable housing needs by requiring the City to adopt strategies and implement programs to combat the rising costs of housing. Santaquin updated its MIHP plan last year. **The entire plan can be found in the appendix.**

In general, the housing market lacks the incentive to build affordable housing, as it is usually less profitable or unprofitable in many communities. Research reveals how others across the Country are addressing affordable housing:

MODERATE INCOME HOUSING

Moderate income housing is defined by the Utah State Code 10-9a-103(38) as: "...housing occupied or reserved for occupancy by households with a gross household income equal to or less than 80% of the median gross income for households of the same size in the county in which the city is located."



Neighborhoods with open space and housing variety





 = priority strategy





- **Density increases:** offset a certain amount of a project with additional density if developers are willing to commit to long-term rent control or deed restricted housing.
- **Inclusionary Zoning:** drop exclusive single family zones and replace those with zones that allow more variety in housing types such as duplexes/twinhomes, triplexes and fourplexes.
- **Height flexibility:** allow an extra story or some additional regulatory flexibility with a commitment to affordable housing.
- **Partnerships:** partner with housing authorities and nonprofits that build affordable housing to address more housing needs.
- **Programmatic incentives such as grants:** seek grants that can only be used for long-term affordable housing, and use those to buy land or assist a developer with costs.

STRATEGIES

-  **1. Encourage neighborhood/property owner-initiated improvements and beautification work on properties in existing neighborhoods.**
-  **2. Encourage a variety of new missing middle and higher end housing options, such as executive housing and ranchettes, in appropriate locations, such as downtown,**

busy corners in new subdivisions, and adjacent to major roads. Missing middle housing suggests smaller clusters of development with design variety coupled with internal nodes that encourage resident interaction, as opposed to large complexes with consistent architecture, that, due to the scale of the project, become sterile and repetitive in design. Missing middle housing provides housing for a wider variety of residential needs and may include accessory dwelling units, twin homes, mansion-style multiplexes, small lot single family homes, live/work homes, etc.

 **3. Through purposeful design approaches, connect neighborhoods to each other and to the Citywide trail system.**

 **4. Where street widths permit, encourage opportunities for bioswales, street trees, and walkable pathways in the public right-of-way.**

5. Consider a modification of the planned unit development ordinance that not only promotes neighborhoods with open space (NOS) as per the existing ordinance, but also supports rural residential clusters (RRC) and other housing types that emphasize a single family home appearance.
6. Evaluate a potential payment-in-lieu system, as an ordinance addition enabled with a

development agreement. A developer would pay a fee based on the required open space/ park and improvements instead of building an on-site park that creates redundant facilities to an adjacent park. Under this system, a dedicated fund is set up for additional public park improvements or for land acquisitions in nearby areas of need. Some on-site open space would still be required.

7. Promote water conservation practices for homes and yards.
8. In new neighborhoods, promote low impact development (LID) techniques to minimize stormwater runoff and return cleaner water to the underground aquifer.
9. In the downtown area with the established grid system, create a street improvement plan. This may include reducing the existing rights of way for some streets where extra wide streets exist and are not needed.
10. Explore housing improvement programs for downtown neighborhoods that provide for repairs and upgrades to HVAC systems, facade enhancements, and water efficient landscaping.
11. Avoid the development of sensitive lands (land less appropriate for development due to natural hazards or cultural/environmental significance), while honoring private rights, with a focus on those lands with natural

hazards. Especially address areas with increased potential for debris flows from fire scorched lands. Consider wildfire interface techniques, such as trails that become firebreaks, to reduce potential property damage. Consider incentives, such as density bonuses or density transfers (within the property or to other properties), to limit building above the Bonneville Shoreline Trail.

12. Work toward identifying at least three strategies in the City's Moderate Income Housing Plan for implementation within the next several years.

