



# Designing and Growing a Creative Industry Zone

November 2017



# South Salt Lake: The Region’s Creative Industry Leader



South Salt Lake Arts Council challenged youths to design a new Water Tower.

The creative sector in the U.S. is growing at a faster clip than most other sectors. Data from *Americans for the Arts and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis*, among others, provide evidence of a robust and dynamic sector providing positive economic impacts in addition to social contributions. Utah is among the top ten states for concentration of creative sector workers employing an estimated 30,000; the nonprofit arts sector alone supports over 10,000 jobs. Like other industries, creative businesses thrive when located in clusters. Clustering of producers of similar goods brings benefits such as availability of skilled labor, research, raw materials, market identity, and opportunities for innovation.

**Because of the types of structures, costs, and zoning that permits light industry and related activities, creative clusters tend to co-locate with other small craftsman industries.** These include producers of hand-made goods such as woodworkers, specialty machine shops, ceramic studios and craft food and beverage producers, to name just a few. Artists, design and media firms

and small-scale technology start-ups are also in the mix in South Salt Lake. Hundreds of such creative or arts/cultural/maker districts are emerging across the U.S. Some focus on consumption of performing or visual arts where the public enjoys experiences and purchases works of art; others focus on the production of creative work such as studios where painters, sculptors, and photographers create new work; dancers, actors, and musicians devise and rehearse.

## A District for Creative Production

**A large swath of South Salt Lake stands as a remarkable creative cluster.**



Creative industries are growing in the zone.

The area between 2100 South and Mill Creek on the south and between State Street and TRAX at 200 West is an historic and present-day transportation crossroads in Utah and it is the “hinge” point of Sugar House and Downtown Salt Lake City.

This zone possesses a wealth of small industrial buildings offering flexible, inexpensive space for start-up enterprises, artists, craftsman industries, and small service businesses. Owners and tenants cherish the location, flexible zoning, appropriate real estate, the rugged character and the company of other creative entrepreneurs.

## Building on Creative Assets

**South Salt Lake faces a unique opportunity to retain and grow its existing creative industries supporting artists, small business ownership, growing employment, and creative production for both export and for local enjoyment.** This can be a catalyst to develop an active, mixed-use downtown with amenities for creative and cultural activity and an active ‘maker’ zone extending south. Such an opportunity to build complementary and conjoined creative districts is highly unusual within a city of any size.

## Utah Design District (2009-2012)

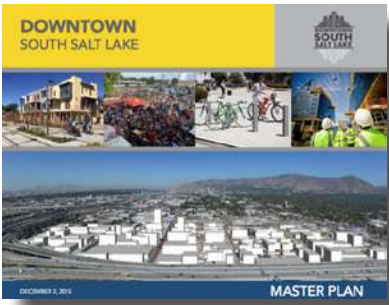
The community desire to organize around creative industry has roots in a marketing campaign led by the South Salt Lake Chamber as the Utah Design District. This effort promoted businesses in building, remodeling, and home furnishings. These remain vital and are among the expanded definition of creative industries.



## Downtown Master Plan (2015)

The South Salt Lake Downtown Master Plan, adopted in 2015 sets in place a framework for transformation of areas north of I-80 into a Destination Downtown with ‘third places’ and amenities attracting people to creative and cultural experiences.

The plan recognizes the potential in South Salt Lake to stake a regional position as a creative hub and as an innovation cluster. The plan calls for special focus on developing retail offerings, adaptive reuse, transit-oriented development, and connection with a revitalized State Street.



In the Downtown planning process, businesses and property owners strongly identified with the idea of a creative district. The neighborhood recognized this strength and how it is growing and expanding to new areas, and highlights a future Commonwealth Arts District.

The Downtown Master Plan highlights seven catalyzing “Big Ideas”

1. Destination Downtown
2. Creative and Cultural Hub
3. Innovation Cluster
4. Retail Destination
5. New Ideas in Old Buildings
6. Regional Transit Hub
7. State Street Revitalization

The plan recognized that the Commonwealth District is a part of the downtown identity and economic success: “This neighborhood fosters many small, local, and independent

businesses that produce art and cultural goods. This master plan proposes creating and protecting an arts district for these creative uses and experiences. A proposed future Arts District Study will explore the needs of these businesses and potential investments in creative placemaking here.”

*(Downtown South Salt Lake Master Plan Appendix Page 56)*



*“Our city is building a culture of creativity...There are so many businesses already thriving in and around our downtown and water tower. We are bringing them together to help us create a reputation for creative industries, and to help us better understand how we can support artists and creatives in South Salt Lake.”*

*-Mayor Cherie Wood*

In this document:  
Planning for a Creative Industry Zone ..... Pg 4-5  
The Vision ..... Pg 6-15  
Acknowledgements ..... Pg 16



# Planning for a Creative Industry Zone



Community members sharing expertise and ideas for growing South Salt Lake.

The Creative District planning process began with a goal to ensure that arts and culture could come alive in Downtown South Salt Lake. With community involvement, the goals expanded to strengthen and protect SSL's creative industry assets to build a robust local economy and stronger neighborhood. This process asked people what strategies would help achieve both of these goals.

## Creative Convergence

To expand this input, a "convergence" was planned, including a workshop-oriented conference and two evenings of events. Over 100 people brought their ideas and creativity to the Creative Industries Conference on May 19, 2017 at the Utah Arts Alliance Art Factory. This was followed on May 20 by the Second Annual Night on Commonwealth featuring music, food, beverages, artists, community activity booths.



## Assets

Through multiple outreach efforts, district assets have been identified (map to the right) While not comprehensive, it points to some enterprises and sites considered valuable to people living and doing business in the area.

## Challenges

The Creative Industry Zone sits apart from the daily life of many SSL residents living east of State Street. It is difficult for many to imagine a transformation of the older industrial areas to the west. Those who are already invested in this area can clearly see the potential. The current condition of the neighborhood, in some areas blighted, with frequent dead end streets is uninviting to some. A new barrier arising is affordability. People are finding homes and business properties are now beyond financial reach. Given Utah's projected growth, this situation may not improve. The city is welcoming higher density housing, transit oriented development in this area. However, redevelopment could overwhelm a Creative Industries Zone if not directed to promote and preserve the unique character and potentials of existing neighborhoods.

## Opportunities

Efforts are paying off to change the character of this neighborhood from an industrial area to a urban mixed-use neighborhood.

- The center of gravity is shifting with a new downtown, streetcar, and transit-oriented development including a grocery store and over 500 new housing units in the next two years.
- Earnest discussions about bringing new activity to State Street are shifting expectations ([www.lifeonstate.com](http://www.lifeonstate.com))
- Completion of Parley's Trail and the construction of Mill Creek Trail are bridging the gap east to west.
- Booming housing and office markets in Utah are causing major changes in formerly industrial areas between State St, and I-15, in South Salt Lake and surrounding cities.
- The Buehner Block site will likely include significant new housing. It could also include neighborhood amenities such as an arts hub and park.
- The City's Water Tower stands as a proud icon of the founding of the "City of Industry" - the city's first motto.
- Enhancement of West Temple as a creative corridor and pedestrian-friendly connector.

## Asset Mapping by Community



## Areas of Improvement

Creative Convergence participants identified seven key areas of improvement:

### 1. Parks/Green Space

Dedicated open space and parkland serving purposes including dog parks, social gathering, and festivals as well as adding green canopy.

### 2. Commercial/Retail

Developing new and existing enterprises ranging from artist studios to restaurants.

### 3. Housing/Residential

Affordable housing, including artist housing and amenities that support residential communities.

### 4. Physical Infrastructure

Public realm, streetscape improvements, and transportation network upgrades.

### 5. Programmatic/Events

Events and public space activities that bring people into the neighborhood, onto the streets and into studios and businesses.

### 6. Public Art/Placemaking

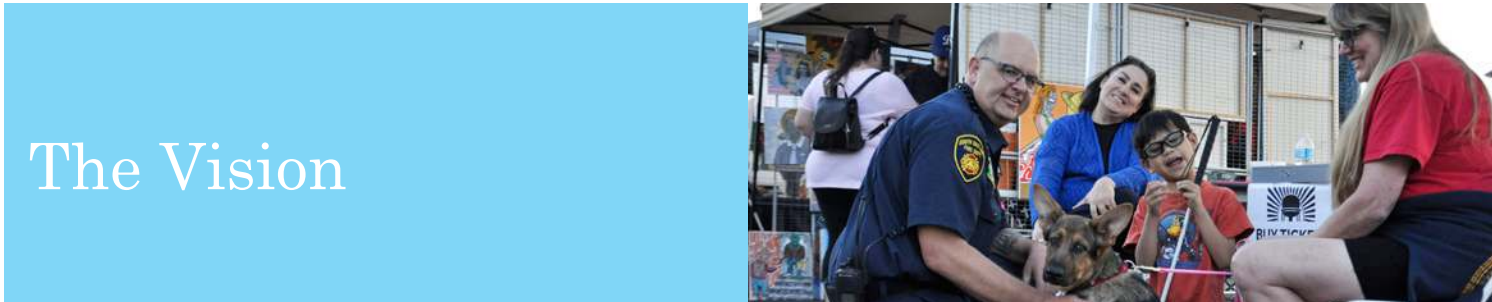
Public art, activities, design, and branding that builds place, a unique identity and generates opportunities for local artists to be paid for their work.

### 7. Social Infrastructure

Building social, professional, and civic networks that foster ongoing progress and changes.

Additional information on the Creative Convergence may be found in Appendix A





Neighbors gathering together for the Night on Commonwealth.

**Vision Statement**

The South Salt Lake Creative Industry Zone is a supportive and welcoming place for a wide-range of residents, visitors and entrepreneurs. It offers affordable housing, creative experiences, and active spaces for gathering and enjoyment of local foods, beverages, arts, and entertainment. This is complemented by and connected to creative maker spaces with small businesses including music, art, dance, print, design, and other craftsman industries that produce and sell hand-made products ranging from wood, metal, glass, paper, and ceramics to sounds, sets, and sculptures. Streets are vibrant public spaces moving people using various means of transportation while providing space for celebration and casual activity.

- Implementation Framework**
- The Creative Industry Zone is organized around four major components:
- Capital Investments
  - Branding and Identity
  - Policy, Regulation and Development
  - Organization, Programming and Events

**Capital Investments**

Creative industries in South Salt Lake are connected by the north-south corridor of West Temple. A high priority is to strengthen this network of assets and support a mix of compatible, smaller-scale uses that keep creative industries vital and viable, and that make the zone work for residents, workers, and visitors. This plan calls for a renewed, human scale and multi-modal West Temple from 2100 to Mill Creek connected by walkable east-west connector streets to critical places like schools, the bowling alley, grocery store, parks, galleries, housing, and transit.

Investments begin with improvements in the public realm along West Temple in and around the three hubs: Commonwealth, Water Tower, and Buehner Block. Key design principles start with sustainable reuse, diversity of work-live-play-gathering places and spaces. The public realm should be characterized by slower traffic, human scale, walkability, green canopy, resting places, and both permanent and temporary public art. Zoning, design, and programming should allow this place to be a little noisy, a little strange,

a little industrial – and very diverse.

- Next Steps**
- Acquire property near to Water Tower for Arts Hub, and re-design/re-purpose for creative activities and green space.
  - Stabilize and paint Water Tower.
  - Acquire land in Commonwealth District for Downtown park.
  - Acquire property for green space and Arts Hub at Buehner Block.
  - Purchase ROW/easements for connectivity to transit stops.
  - Fund streetscape improvements to West Temple.
  - Build tactical/temporary urbanism projects to bring energy and creativity to public realm.
  - Help private property owners redesign and renovate with referrals for technical support (design) and financing (programs such as Utah Microenterprise loan fund).

**Branding and Identity:  
A Creative Industry Zone**

The identity of the Zone – if it reflects the spirit, vision, and reality of the district – is ultimately its greatest asset. The creative energy of entrepreneurs

and artists already in the Zone, if celebrated and successfully coordinated, will sustain positive momentum among existing individual enterprises and contribute to a healthy local economy. A strong identity will attract others by creating and projecting a distinctive sense of place that is both appealing and filled with people, products, and places of interest.

Beginning with the prominent and iconic Water Tower, there are many opportunities to reinforce a positive image and create a real focal point for the Zone. Maintaining the tower’s historic integrity through restoration, along with creative temporary treatments using projections and lighting, it will promote and anchor the community’s industrious and creative nature. Maintaining an industrial character among older buildings helps build on this identity.

The Downtown/Commonwealth District, by building on its existing creative buzz, will fill in and grow as a distinctive destination for food, entertainment, retail, and cultural attractions anchored by a park and easy public transit access. Engaging



Community events can celebrate both the community spirit of South Salt Lake and its scenic beauty.

marketing and branding expertise to help South Salt Lake effectively project and refine this creative image is a key step.

- Next Steps**
- Develop and implement brand identity for Creative Industry Zone.
  - Commission artistic treatment of Water Tower.
  - Designate Creative Industry Zoning.
  - Devise wayfinding and signage systems centered on West Temple.
  - Commission artist to treat area under West Temple I-80 underpass.
  - Collaborate with other “maker nation” communities and businesses to share ideas and resources.

**Organization,  
Programming and Events**

**Programming**

Throughout the Zone, several new or re-purposed facilities and clusters of buildings will provide low-cost space for a creative tenant mix. These hubs also provide a measure of education, business support, critique and capacity building while helping enterprises grow. Hubs emulate a campus with indoor and outdoor gathering spaces.

In addition to individual and shared workspaces, it is critical to have space for social networking, ideation activities, and sharing new work or works-in-progress with intimate audiences.

**A Creative Network**

Long-term success of the Creative Industry Zone requires responsive organizational infrastructure. Building on an existing informal network of creative entrepreneurs in partnership with the South Salt Lake Chamber, Arts Council, and Salt Lake Community College Center for Arts and Media is an important early step. An active creative industry association will ensure the best mix of policies, services, and physical infrastructure. Developing a shared and effective identity for the Zone also requires broad-based engagement and active participation.

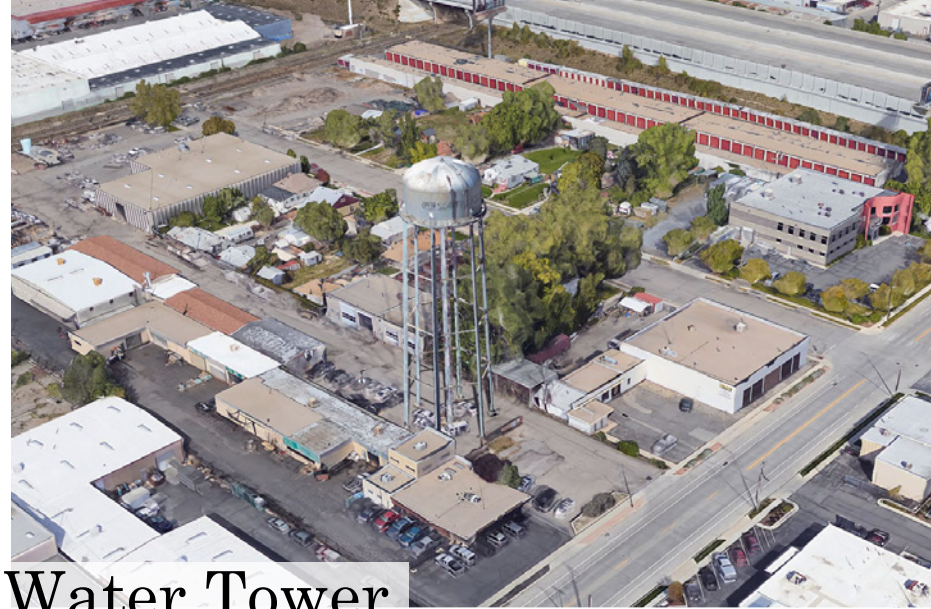
**Distinctive Local Events**

A variety of ongoing and special events help build awareness of the Creative Industry Zone, its own sense of identity, and the capacity of its constituents to work together to get things done and to advocate for their collective interests. Key in these events is to build a broader understanding of the economic and social value of producers and presenters of creative work. For greatest impact, events grow organically from local vision and collaborative efforts and are based in the Zone’s unique assets and identity.

Continued on Page 10...

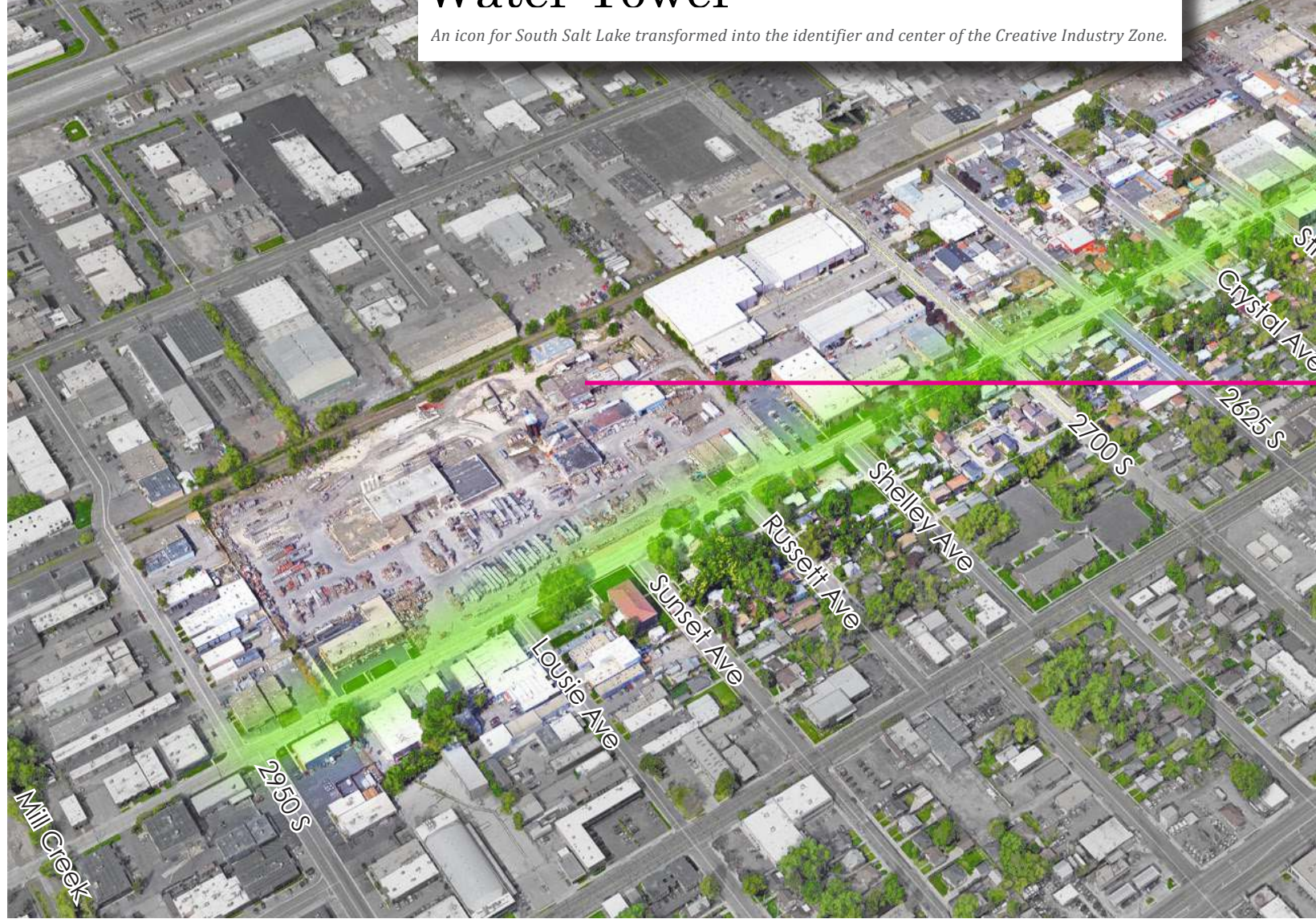


# Creative Industry Zone



## Water Tower

*An icon for South Salt Lake transformed into the identifier and center of the Creative Industry Zone.*



## Buehner Block

*With medium density housing, the site provides opportunities to create a significant public green space and an arts incubator.*



## Commonwealth

*A growing mixed-use neighborhood centered on a public park/plaza and retail spaces with opportunities to showcase art, culture, food, music, dance and everyday enjoyment. It also supports an existing cluster of craftman industries and creative incubation.*



...Continued from Page 7

Efforts are best focused on building events already organized by the SSL Arts Council and local artists and businesses.

Next Steps

- a. Build on informal alliance of artists and creative businesses by formalizing creative industry association with South Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce.
- b. Develop partnership for operations of Art Hub spaces.
- c. Continue SSL Arts Coalition engagement with public in Creative Industry Zone development, networking, and promotion.
- d. Seek out arts-oriented developers for residential and reuse projects.
- e. Write a fundraising plan.
- f. Celebrate and promote the Zone together by continuing successful events such as:
  - Poor Yorick Open Studio
  - Night on Commonwealth
  - Creative Convergence



Events like the Night on Commonwealth promote a sense of community.

- Gallery Stroll / Studio Stroll
  - Mural Festival
  - Regular walking tours, bike tours pub crawls, and meet-ups
  - Establish an “open studio” event
- g. Create a place for young people to gather and perform. This is a regional need and the location is ideal.
- h. Rebrand the “Arts Coalition” as the “Creative Coalition” and establish regular programming.
- i. Develop youth programming to help foster their skills and make them feel part of the community.

Policy, Regulation and Development

Public Art

Implement Percent For Art Ordinance allocating at least one percent of City’s annual capital budget for art to anchor the commitment to a quality public realm. Administration and selection of art projects placed with the South Salt Lake Arts Council.

Zoning

Arts and creative uses are best fostered where existing smaller-scale, older building stock can be repurposed easily and affordably. Current city zoning is relatively flexible for a wide range of uses, but is not as supportive of mixing uses, or range of housing types in this neighborhood. The city should work with existing businesses to identify barriers to their establishment and growth, and with residents to understand potential threats to the neighborhood. Zoning updates can help solidify success and the reputation sought.

Recommendations include:

Amendments to South Salt Lake City zoning ordinances can encourage development of a Creative Industry Infrastructure. These include improvements, uses, and regulations anchored in the existing built environment to promote adaptive reuse and new development compatible

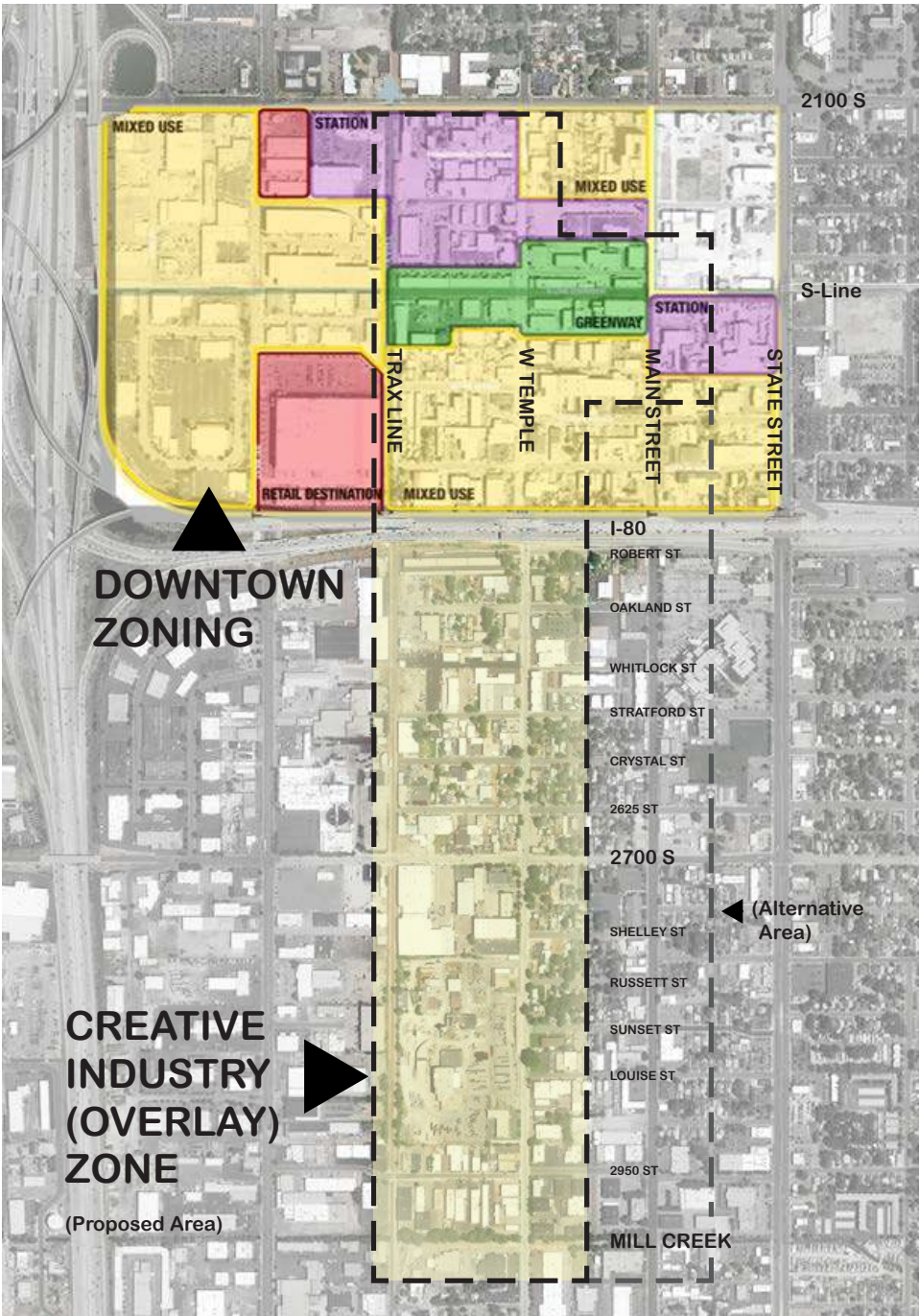


Many placemaking ideas were explored during the Creative Convergence.

with long-term development of the Downtown and Creative Industry.

Next Steps

- a. Designate Creative Industry Zone.
- b. Encourage investment in adaptive reuse in the Creative Industry Zone.
- c. Adjust zoning to stabilize creative industry and stimulate mixed-use development.
- d. Explore base zoning and text revisions for consistent regulation of Creative Industry.
- e. Consider new zoning designations or overlay development within Creative Industry Zone.
- f. Study and implement sustainable practices in new developments and retrofits.
- g. Implement a public art funding mechanism based on a percentage of City capital investments.
- h. Establish base-line metrics for economic development progress of Creative Industry Zone and track progress.
- i. Create opportunities and incentives to encourage housing diversity and artist live-work.





# Commonwealth: Creative City Center

Near the corner of Commonwealth and West Temple, a new downtown is on the rise. Long-time anchors Pat’s BBQ, Shades of Pale brewery, and the Commonwealth Building incubator space are joined by new apartments and the Utah Arts Alliance’s Art Factory. The Central Pointe TRAX station at the west end of Commonwealth is the best connected TRAX station in the valley, and ready to rise up as a regional destination. The Commonwealth District is the “Creative City Center”.

**Future Moves:**

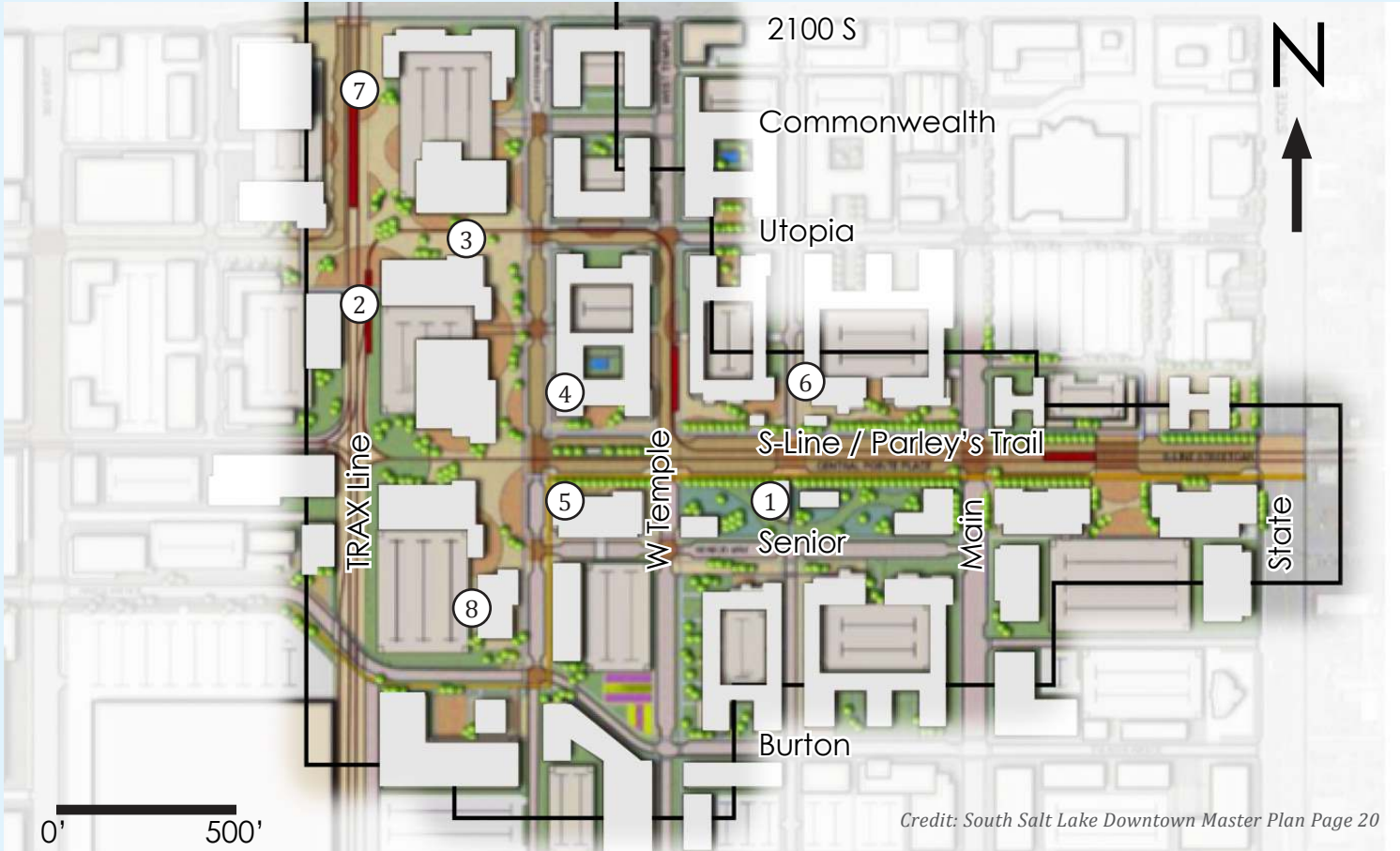
- 1 Build a destination Downtown public park/plaza with opportunities to showcase art, culture, food, music, dance and everyday city life.
- 2 Build a first-class TRAX Station at Central Pointe with improved connections to streets, sidewalks, bike routes as well as a public plaza.
- 3 Encourage street festivals and continue the Night on Commonwealth tradition.
- 4 Support expansion and preservation of creative and craftsman industrial businesses.
- 5 Encourage events and promotions

- 6 Create a restaurant row to anchor the neighborhood.
- 7 Support the expansion of the Art Factory as a center for the arts.
- 8 Encourage artist housing and live-work situations.

**Best Practices Checklist for New Development**



Guide private sector investments using Creative Industry Zoning, Design Guidelines, and Incentives. See Appendix C



Credit: South Salt Lake Downtown Master Plan Page 20

# Water Tower: Creative Hub

Near the corner of Oakland and West Temple, a mix of homes, businesses and institutions intermingle. The neighborhood includes SSL Public Works, Bonwood Bowl, Woodrow Wilson Elementary, and Granite Technical Institute. In the center of it all stands the iconic Water Tower. Public art projects that periodically change the Water Tower’s “face” signifies the City’s diversity and creativity.

**Future Moves:**

- 1 Renovate and preserve the Water Tower as a symbol of creativity and entrepreneurship featured in branding efforts.

- 2 Create a public park at the Water Tower.
- 3 Establish a non-profit maker-space for artists and creative entrepreneurs on the block.
- 4 Build Art Hub with a black-box style rehearsal and event space.
- 5 Commission public art projects using light, projections, and other means to rotate the face of the iconic tower.
- 6 Rethink dead end streets between West Temple and TRAX as outdoor rooms and neighborhood assets.
- 7 Encourage artist housing and live-work situations.
- 8 Improve Public Works facilities or

- 9 locate a new home for them. Study public realm and public art improvements on West Temple and at Interstate “Gateway” to Downtown.

Guide private sector investments using Creative Industry Zoning, Design Guidelines, and Incentives. See Appendix C





# Buehner Block: Creative Hub

The historic Buehner Block company sits the intersection of West Temple and Sunset Avenue. In 2017, the family business closed after 79 years making concrete blocks in South Salt Lake. The 19-acre property is likely to become medium density housing as current zoning permits. This is an opportunity to fulfill the long- range goals of South Salt Lake in several areas - housing, park space, and also arts infrastructure, as proposed in this plan. This aims to make this a more livable and attractive neighborhood.

**Future Moves:**

- ① Develop a more diverse contemporary, green, and family friendly residential area including artist housing or live-work situations.
- ② Preserve deco-style Buehner Block building and convert to artist/ creative studio space.
- ③ Build a 1 to 2 acre public park to serve the neighborhood west of State St. and provide for recreation, arts events and a “third space” for neighborhood residents and workers.
- ④ Reserve space and right-of-way for future north- south greenway/trail along TRAX.
- ⑤ Consider how the neighborhood connects to potential future 2700 S TRAX station and bus service.

- ⑥ Transform streetscape on West Temple to include sidewalk trees, enhanced bike route.
- ⑦ Increase ecological function of this former industrial site with green space, trees, and green infrastructure.
- ⑧ Provide easy connection to Mill Creek and its trail to the south.
- ⑨ Study installation of major public art at intersection terminating Russett Avenue that draws people and exemplifies South Salt Lake’s values.

Guide private sector investments using Creative Industry Zoning, Design Guidelines, and Incentives. See Appendix C



# West Temple: Creative Industry Spine

West Temple is a spine running through the district, with many businesses on, or within a block east or west of it. This street is pedestrian and bike friendly, low- traffic volume, and has numerous businesses fronting it. West Temple can be a “main street” for the district, by focusing branding, placemaking, and public art to create a memorable impression and experience.

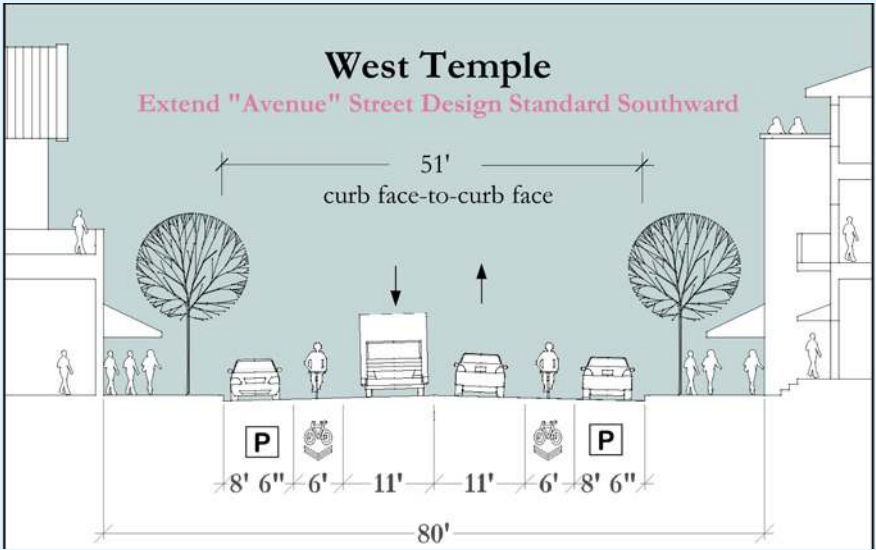
West Temple supports and connects multiple creative incubators, co-working spaces, and other affordable, supportive, and stimulating environments assisting start-ups, creative entrepreneurs, craftsman

industries, and artists. South Salt Lake already has a multitude of formal and informal incubators in this Creative Industry Zone, including the Utah Arts Alliance music studios and Art Factory, Poor Yorick studios, Tempest Business Park, the Commonwealth Building, and others. There is room for several more such spaces in the neighborhood to provide stable space for creative industries to blossom.

A thick tree canopy and warm pedestrian lighting welcome workers, visitors, and residents to its colorful, decorative sidewalks. Stimulating public art is seen up and down the street.



West Temple today, looking north from Oakland Ave. Although there are spaces for walking, biking and on-street parking, there is room for improvement on West Temple.



As private and public investments are made, continue to implement the “Avenue” design south of downtown, including active and engaging frontages, narrower drive lanes (11’), street trees, wider sidewalks, public art, artistic paving, traffic calming, benches and pedestrian-scaled lighting.





# Acknowledgements



## City of South Salt Lake

Mayor Cherie Wood  
Sharen Hauri, Urban Design Director  
Mike Florence, Community and  
Economic Development Director



## South Salt Lake Arts Council

Lesly Allen, Director  
Keith Beard, Miri Gallery  
Sharla Beverly, SSL City Council  
Derek Dyer, Utah Arts Alliance  
David Dynak, Westminster College  
Leslie Jones, Resident  
Brittany Reese, Sugar Space  
Cherie Wood, Mayor



Taylor Kirch, Promise South Salt Lake



## Salt Lake County

Phil Jordan, Community Planning and  
Project Director  
Cami Munk, Salt Lake County Center for  
the Arts

## Community Partners

South Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce,  
Gary Birdsall, CEO  
Westminster College Masters of  
Community Leadership, Amy McDonald,  
Instructor  
Salt Lake Community College Center for  
Arts and Media  
Utah Arts Alliance  
Hip Hop Education and Resource Center  
(HERC)



## Creative Community Builders

Tom Borrup  
Carrie Ann Christensen  
Tom Ellison  
Jeri Gravlin  
Peter Musty  
Peter Truax

**A special thank you to the  
many residents, businesses,  
artists, and supporters who  
made the Creative Convergence  
and other community planning  
activities possible!**

