

balls to determine who would be drafted for Vietnam. "It scared the hell out of us," he recalls. Sanders was spared, but remembers, "Some ended up in Canada, while others went to fight."

initiative to make this possible. It failed by a handful of votes. Four years later, they issued a second bond, this time to purchase land for a city park. It failed again. Instead, against strong

SOUTH SALT LAKE CITY'S DOWNSIDE: ITS REP.

South Salt Lake's crime rate, 88 per 1,000 residents, is considered one of the highest in America according to *neighborhoodscout.com*. Those numbers don't help SoSL's reputation. "Regardless of whether South Salt Lake does well or poorly compared to all other cities and towns of all sizes in the US, compared to places with a similar population, it fares badly," the site gloomily reports. According to *cityrating.com*, "The violent crime rate for South Salt Lake in 2016 was higher than the national rate average by 106 percent."

Yikes. But wait. Really? You've lived in SoSL for years and have never had issues. If this is true—why are these numbers so high?

Ken "give me a match" Sanders, growing up in South Salt Lake some 60 years ago, claims he never felt unsafe. He remembers the town knitted together with several small mom and pop grocery and drug stores which over the years have slowly disappeared. As a youngster, Ken recalls being able to roam without supervision, spending Saturdays shopping for comic books and candy.

Sanders did notice a change when the high school boundaries were re-drawn, and a portion of SoSL's east side students were sent to attend Cottonwood High School. Granite High School was diverse by Salt Lake standards, Sanders said, and losing its mostly white east side students made the student population lopsided.

And a high percentage of

Enjoy the view. By streetcar, bike or foot, the S-Line and Parley's Trail offer an alternative route to neighboring Sugar House.

S

Some may carry a sentimental attachment to the now-demolished South Salt Lake landmark, Granite High School building. Others, like Ken Sanders, owner of Ken Sanders Rare Books, class of '70, saw its exit quite differently: "Give me the match."

"It was old when we attended," Ken explains. "They were actually tearing down parts of the high school while I was a student in the late '60s." Granite student Sanders recalls standing with fellow classmates as President Richard Nixon selected numbered ping-pong

The school boasts other notable alumni such as Ed Catmull, president of Pixar, prominent church leaders like Neal Maxwell, Super Bowl XII's Golden Richards, and BYU's LaVell Edwards. But there's no room for sentiment in the march of development.

With the old Granite building gone, 27 prime acres became available and zoned for single residential units. There was an attempt to mitigate the loss of the school with a community recreation center. The city launched a \$25 million dollar bond

opposition from SoSL's mayor and surrounding residents, those running against her and some city council members were pushing for a new power shopping center. Some candidates were meeting up with business developers with big pockets and forming alliances, and the Granite High School Legacy Walmart was becoming a possibility.

The fight for the future of South Salt Lake was on.

And it continues.

Why such a fuss? We're talking about South Salt Lake.



Inside Level Crossing Brewery, co-owners Katie Flanagan, Mark Medura and Chris Detrick

SO THEN, WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT SOUTH SALT LAKE?

SoSL was and is industrial space. After business hours, vacated spaces open up possibilities for trouble: arson, theft, vandalism and other types of evening mischief. "My neighbors have had to deal with vandalism, I've been finding remnants of food wrappers in my backyard for a while," reports South Salt Lake resident, Ellen Zinn. And while she hasn't encountered much difficulty, she notes that as an area zoned for residential and business, the "community has many homeless people around."

South Salt Lake's intergenerational poverty issues have been linked to the fact that 37 percent of its population is foreign-born. In 2009, 23 percent of residents, concentrated among young families, lived 200 percent below the federal poverty threshold. Ninety-two percent of elementary students take advantage of free and reduced lunch programs.

Despite those dismal statistics, outsiders are seeing something valuable now that a lot of locals never did. With demand for land and prices skyrocketing all around the valley, developers are foaming at the mouth for land to accommodate—and profit from—the influx of population. While some may wish they could somehow wipe the slate—meaning, most of State Street—clean, what still remains is its history. So take note. While we are all shaking our heads about what has happened to mess up Sugar House, a formerly treasured part of a town because of its walkability and uniqueness, SoSL could be headed for the same traffic-jammed, bland fate.

Incorporated as a city in 1938, South Salt Lake is made up of seven (very flat) square miles, from 21st to 39th South, and running west of 500 and 700 East to the Jordan River.

You've probably driven through at least once today—just under a half-million cars do—on either State Street, I-15, I-80 or along 21st South. SoSL is highly accessible. All major transportation hubs intersect here, including TRAX, S-Line and Parley's Trail, making it desirable for businesses as well as for those who live here. You've got multiple ways to get around the valley—an easy hop to the airport or a quick train to downtown.

The city's closest neighbors include Salt Lake, Sugar House, West Valley City and Millcreek. Driving past and looking south of I-80, you can see SoSL's landmark water tower. That's Horton, built in the 1940s—the city's name painted on it is now faded and almost unrecognizable.

Adding to its attraction, SoSL recently amended its liquor laws, easing zoning restrictions and welcoming a larger number of local evening establishments. With its new

friendliness to booze, the city hopes to improve its vibe while attracting more entertainment and nightlife centered around restaurants and music.

The bait has worked—newly opened Level Crossing Brewery and several other craft beer and distillery establishments have opened in SoSL. Obtaining liquor licenses in Utah can be a famously tedious and time-consuming process. Level Crossing co-owner Katie Flanagan acknowledges how SoSL's support, including its attendance at license approval meetings, made a huge difference in expediting the entire headache of a process.

PEOPLE FIRST

The city's first female mayor, Cherie (pronounced /sher-ee/ and if you say "Cherry" she'll correct you) Wood took office 10 years ago. As a third generation resident of the city, the mayor attended SoSL public schools, is a graduate of the former Granite High School and also resides next to it. Taking a job with the city at the age of 19, she kept tabs on her home while she was earning degrees and creating her family. Mayor Wood is invested in SoSL, and has high hopes to attract the right types of businesses to the area, while prioritizing people over profit.

Eight years ago the mayor, along with other government leaders, toured a program for children in Harlem and, seeing what was possible, was convinced a similar program would work in SoSL. Mayor Wood came home and founded Promise SSL, an after-school program which became a city department in 2014. Currently, Promise SSL operates 14



HORTON THE WATERTOWER

Standing at 162 feet, Horton, named after its founder, Horace Ebenezer Horton, who was the owner of Chicago Bridge and Iron Company. Built in 1949 and is turning 70 this year, it was the first of its kind both in its design and function. While many South Salt Lake lots have water rights and wells in their backyards, Horton held water for 40 years and is considered a symbol of the city. The water tower now marks SoSL's Creative Industries Zone, a new area designated to open up affordable business and retail spaces.

after-school neighborhood centers offering students homework assistance and activities, including dinner and transportation home. It's in the little details, like making sure they get help with their schoolwork and have a fun, safe place to hang out before returning home that is making a huge impact not just on students, but their families and the city. And the kids are actually attending these programs—not ditching.

Since 2011, SoSL's average graduation rates for low-income families have climbed to 68 from 58 percent, and the number of those without health insurance has been cut in half. Since the establishment of Promise SSL, crime is down 32 percent and youth crime is down 64 percent between the hours of 3-6 p.m. (the times between when school gets out to when parents actually get off of work). Without question, these statistics reflect more than numbers, and demonstrate what an invested city government can do for its own. For example, Promise SSL stepped in to provide transportation after school, making it possible for students to attend activities like soccer and join the Cottonwood High School Robotics Team (13 of whom are refugee students.)

WHAT'S THE FUTURE OF SOSL?

The rebuilding phase started with the creation of a 235-acre mixed residential/business new downtown area, on State Street, I-15, I-80 and 21st South.

This quadrant has been a major focal point, including the new Parley's Trail (both a pedestrian and cyclist pathway) and the UTA's Streetcar S-Line, Central City Station. Along with transit lines came the opening of WinCo

Foods grocery store in 2018, followed by both the Ritz classic bowling apartments and Liberty Crossing Townhomes.

Yet again, once leveled, the huge area was claimed, divided, sub-divided and built up lickity-split by developers: the grocery store, parking lot, townhouses, a large multi-unit business center and a credit union. With the S-Line running down the middle and new structures rising on both sides, a once empty space is now crowded.

Residents notice the fast pace of what's going on around them.

"It's concerning how the shock

“THERE IS NO POWER FOR CHANGE GREATER THAN A COMMUNITY DISCOVERING WHAT IT CARES ABOUT.”

—CHERIE WOOD QUOTING
AUTHOR MARGARET WHEATLEY

of increased density is going to be absorbed into our smaller, neighboring streets,” says SoSL resident, Ellen Zinn. She wonders how it will impact traffic, on- and off-ramps onto highways, and whether the area has enough grocery stores, libraries and parks, to meet the demands of the population increase. She asks, “Who holds the highest priority? Residents or developers?”

Just look at Sugar House, once so quaint and lovable. While financially more profitable, this area is an example of a place being developed without a

coherent plan. Things got torn down and up it went, the skyline, the prices, the middle finger. The UTA's S-Line stops at Fairmont, Parley's Trail is disconnected and gets lost between stopping points. Bicycle paths and walkways are tight and inconsistent.

Mayor Cherie Wood and city planners are working hard to avoid the same type of development “glop” from occurring, but it already is happening. City planners conducted research visiting cities like Austin, Texas and asking other city leaders the smart types of questions you would hope they would ask like, “What would you do differently?”

One bit of advice they received and followed: Add a grocery store first. Until recently, Ream's on State and a few convenience stores made SoSL a food desert. The Mayor says that it took some convincing before WinCo agreed to build their store in the Central Pointe S-Line neighborhood, adding to a growing number of food stores including the Chinatown Supermarket (State Street), Tenoch Market (33rd South) and the New Roots refugee-supported Sunnyvale Farmers Market.

Why build up a space that is going to be torn down or unusable in 20 years? According to Wood, the lifespan of the average shopping center is 20 years. However, when built near transit, a grocery store and a residential area, that number jumps to 50 years. Adding murals and art to an urban area is another way to enhance the value and the longevity of developments.

Along with building, South Salt Lake is paying attention to decay, operating on the principle of “the broken window effect.” If a window is broken and not quickly

MAYOR CHERIE WOOD

Third-generation resident Wood started working for the city at the age of 19 and took on different roles with the city earning a college degree along the way. After visiting an after school program in Harlem, she was inspired to build a similar program, Promise SSL, to support students and the community—the data to prove its value and smiles on the kids faces don't lie. With rapid growth and city development, she doesn't want to forget those who live here. As a mother of three boys, she loves to ride bikes and conducts regular community bike strolls along the Jordan Trail (come join her.)





A squid has 10 legs, an octopus has 8—both are found in Dan Toro's Mural at SaltFire Brewing Co., 2199 S. West Temple



Home of the Farmers? Former Granite High School will be the home of a Salt Lake County Library (and a lot of townhomes).

repaired, someone may walk past, notice the damage and throw another rock, break another window and so on. SoSL along with the city planners and its police department are working together to stop this kind of vicious cycle of decline. SoSL's Community Connection program strategically selects residents and areas around town that are in need of some assistance—a fence repair here, yard work or a new roof there. Its Good Landlord Program provides incentives to landlords and encourages good renting policies. "Bowling with a Cop" and "Coffee with a Cop" programs encourage both youth and residents to get to know the police, and discover that they are people too, who also like to bowl and drink coffee. The fixed window effect can also expand its influence outward,

and these are the hopes to make SoSL a little nicer and yes, a safer place to live.

But the struggle between residents and developers continues. Going back to the old Granite High School, if the original bonds had passed, the lot would have become a park, or a much-needed recreation center.

Instead, the Granite School District ended up selling the whole enchilada, all of its 27 acres, to developers. And without fail, gridlock followed. One half of the property was built up into single residential units and developer Wasatch Residential Group saw an opportunity to make more money with the last 11 acres.

We'll call it the County Library Hostage Crisis. It went like this: We (the developers) will sell five acres back to the county for a library if the city

agrees to rezone and allow us to pack in 100+ densely spaced townhomes. You may think that the term hostage seems harsh—it really isn't. According to Director of SLC County Library, Jim Cooper, until just a few months ago the county was about to give up on the location for its new county library. Without the new zoning approval the Granite lot could have been another subdivision. Or worse, a Walmart.

Staying true to her vision for building a better city, Mayor Wood and enough city council members insisted on offering something more sustainable than just a power shopping center. In her words, "We owe that to our residents, to somehow mitigate the impact of development in our community." The projected 30,000 sq. ft. county library space will include an outdoor amphitheater and walkway. Wishing to preserve some of the aspects from the Granite HS, the new library plans to display the school's director "rock" (guessing it's granite) and the former school seal, both to be placed outside. SLC County Library Director Jim Cooper, says, "It is anticipated that the new County Library at Granite would welcome 600-800 visitors per

day. The County Library provides a variety of programs and services to the public—from early learning, entertainment activities, lifelong learning, digital literacy, robotics, family game nights, financial education and 3D printing."

With the increase of new businesses and residents, the city's tax income will increase and become available for infrastructure and government agencies (police, fire department, programs like Promise SSL and community arts funding). But Wood gives us a quick lesson in city government, "A city council is the governing arm of the city," like the legislative branch, and as the executive, "the mayor serves to enforce what is allowed by the council." To ensure proper representation, it's crucial for residents to keep up with the city council meetings and find out how what their council members are supporting—or not.

What seems inevitable is the need for a strong police and fire department to keep up with the increase in population—earlier this spring, the Mayor proposed a 31 percent property tax hike to the City Council to help keep up with wage increases and upsizing. With no reported city property tax increase since 2006, the average cost to residents will be \$71 per year.

It's going to take a team of passionate and informed leaders and members of the community, like the Mayor, Ken, and Ellen to keep things moving. Building a community is not about just what leaders want. Residents need to speak up. ■

SHE'S GOT THIS.

It takes a village to raise a city. Something unique and inspiring is happening and the women in charge have something to do with it. More than ever, women who are strong, smart and competent need to take the lead. In 2018, a social media blitz ensued after a warranted pay-increase was voted down for Mayor Wood. In response, a city council member, Sharla Bynum wished to open up a discussion, pointing out that in similar cities, local male mayors on average received both higher salaries and regular pay increases. The immediate backlash from several male city council members was both transparent and so back to the 1980's. From taking the lead in city government to dropping down with the kids at Woodrow Wilson Elementary—word up! to the women who are getting it done on the south side.



SHAREN HAURI

SoSL Urban Design Director

Passionate about cities and wild spaces, she found both in Utah. Sharen has planned and designed public projects of all scales. As the Urban Design Director for the last eight years, she has helped the community envision its leap from an inner-ring suburb to a walkable, urban neighborhood. With a B.A. in Architectural Design from the University of Utah and a Masters of Landscape Architecture from Utah State, Hauri moved to Utah 20 years ago for the mountains and stayed to raise a family in what is finally becoming "a real city."



SHARLA BYNUM

City Council for District 3

She got some backlash for pointing out a possible gender bias issue following a denied pay raise for the Mayor after serving for eight years. Sharla's full-time career is as an educator, teaching at Roosevelt Elementary 1-3 grades—she was approached by the Mayor to run for City Council (and is in her second term.) Sharla inspires by her ability to lead and call out the elephant in the city council room when she sees it.



LESLY ALLEN

Executive Director SoSL Arts Council

With a degree in Community Leadership and a love for working with disadvantaged populations and youth, Allen is the tour de force behind SoSL's Mural Fest, along with the Utah Arts Alliance and acclaimed artists who have created 10 murals in SoSL's Creative Industries Zone. Artist murals display a wide range of styles and themes which brighten many not-so-vibrant cinder brick facades, sometimes deterring graffiti, sometimes not. To view these works of public art, walk along West Temple or Parley's trail.



BONNIE OWENS

Promise SSL, Deputy Director

Meeting up with Bonnie as the kids gather in the cafeteria at Woodrow Wilson Elementary, one thing stands out—how much they love her. With big smiles, they run up to greet her. The Promise SSL after school program provides snacks, homework help and activities for children around the city and extends through the summer. Staff and volunteers from Westminster provide a safe, caring environment; the positive impact is very clear.



KELLI MERANDA

Promise SSL, Director

With a background in community recreation, she's been working with Promise SSL since its start in 2011. Meranda now oversees 14 school and neighborhood after-school centers serving SoSL youth. Seeing things run full circle is the most rewarding part of her job—those students who have participated in the program, graduated and gone on to earn degrees are now coming back to Promise SSL as employees and giving back to the community. Meranda is excited to announce the opening of the new Best Buy Teen Tech Center, opening this fall at the Columbus Center.



EMILY SAMUEL

Administration Assistant, SoSL Fire Department

Prior to her employment with the SSLFD, Emily worked in numerous administrative positions, including a retail business, owning a real estate team and leading a telecom company. Along with keeping up with a rowdy bunch of fire fighters, she also works along side her husband as the co-owner of Z Nectar Craft Beverages—perhaps you've tasted their iced teas at the Farmers' Market?