

ROUGH DRAFT



Designing and Growing a **CREATIVE INDUSTRY ZONE**

DRAFT 08.10.17

for the City of South Salt Lake
by Creative Community Builders



SOUTH SALT LAKE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

I. South Salt Lake: A Regional Creative Industry Zone

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 social impacts in addition to its economic 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, these producing 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 typically in the mix.

Hundreds of such creative or arts/cultural districts are emerging across the U.S. Some focus on consumption of performing or visual arts where the public comes to enjoy experiences and purchase 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.

This type of creative production is flourishing in South Salt Lake. Creative businesses are found along West Temple through Downtown SSL and an emerging “Creative Industries Zone” leading from the Water Tower south to Mill Creek,

A District for Creative Production

A large swath of South Salt Lake stands as a remarkable creative cluster. The area between 2100 South and 2700 South and between State Street and TRAX at 200 West is an historic and present-day transportation crossroads in Utah. It is the “hinge” point of Sugar House and Downtown Salt Lake City, which are booming and driving out smaller, independent businesses.

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

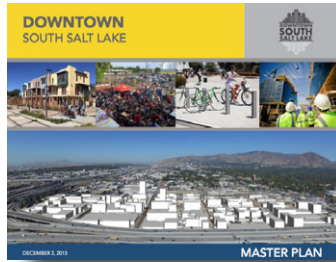
II. Building on Creative Assets

South Salt Lake faces a remarkable opportunity to retain and grow its existing creative industries that support 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. 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.



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.

Creative District Planning (2017)



The Creative District planning process began with a goal to ensure that arts and culture could come alive in Downtown SSL. With community involvement, the goals expanded to strengthen and protect South Salt Lake’s creative, artistic and industry assets and use them to build a robust local economy and stronger neighborhood. This plan asked people what strategies would help achieve both of these goals. To get this input, a “convergence” was planned, including a workshop-oriented conference and two evenings of events in the neighborhood.

Over 100 people brought their ideas and creativity to the Creative Industries Conference on Friday May 19 at the Utah Arts Alliance Art Factory. This was followed by the Second Annual Night on Commonwealth Saturday May 20 featuring music, food, beverages, artists, community activity booths, and a Creative District planning open house.

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Neighborhood Asset Mapping

Assets

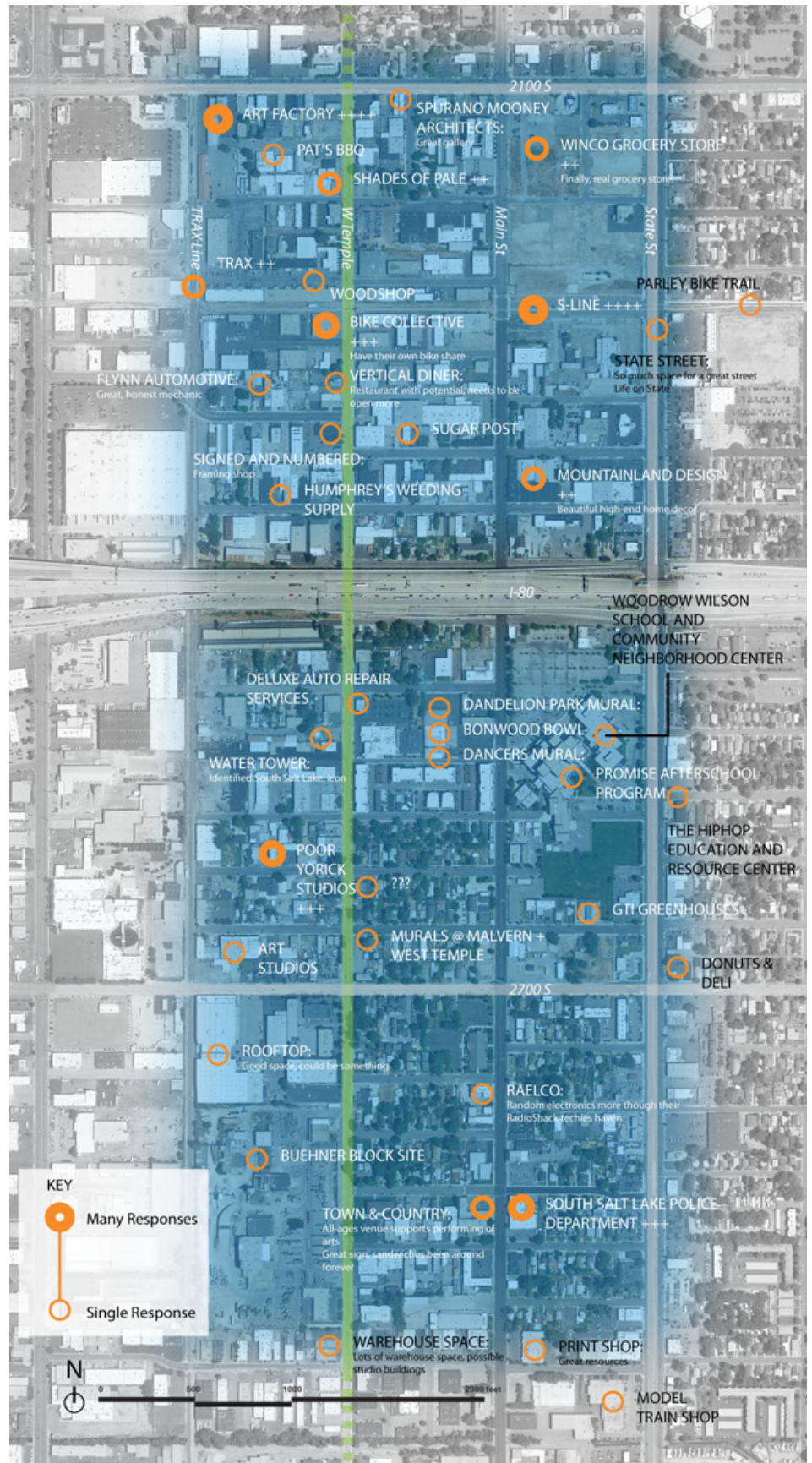
Creative Convergence participants identified district assets (*map to the left*) While not comprehensive, it points to the enterprises and sites considered valuable to people living and doing business in the area.

Barriers

The Creative Industry Zone sits apart from the daily life of many South Salt Lake residents, cut off to many by State Street. It is difficult for many to imagine a transformation of the older industrial areas to the west. But 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 also uninviting to many. A new barrier arising is affordability. Many people are finding homes and business properties are now beyond financial reach. Given Utah's projected growth, this situation may not improve. 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 west 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 fixing State Street itself are shifting expectations (www.lifeonstate.com)
- Completion of Parley's Trail and 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.



“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

- The Buehner Block site is being redeveloped and will likely include significant new housing. It could also include public amenities for the entire neighborhood.
- The city water tower stands as a proud icon of the founding of the “City of Industry” as the city’s first motto boasted.

III. Future Framework

Vision

This neighborhood should become a supportive and welcoming place for a wide-range of residents and visitors. 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 a creative maker zone including a mix of small businesses including music, art, dance, print, design, and other studios 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 while providing space for celebration and casual activity.

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 to the 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

Expressions of public art, activities, design, and branding that builds place, a unique identity and generates opportunities for local artists to express themselves and be paid for their work.

7. Social Infrastructure

Building social, professional, and civic networks that can foster ongoing progress and changes in the district.

Future Framework

The Creative Industry Zone has four major organizing components, summarized here and described in detail on the following pages:

West Temple

A spine of the district, connecting people and places and leaving a memorable impression on those lingering or just passing through.

Commonwealth District

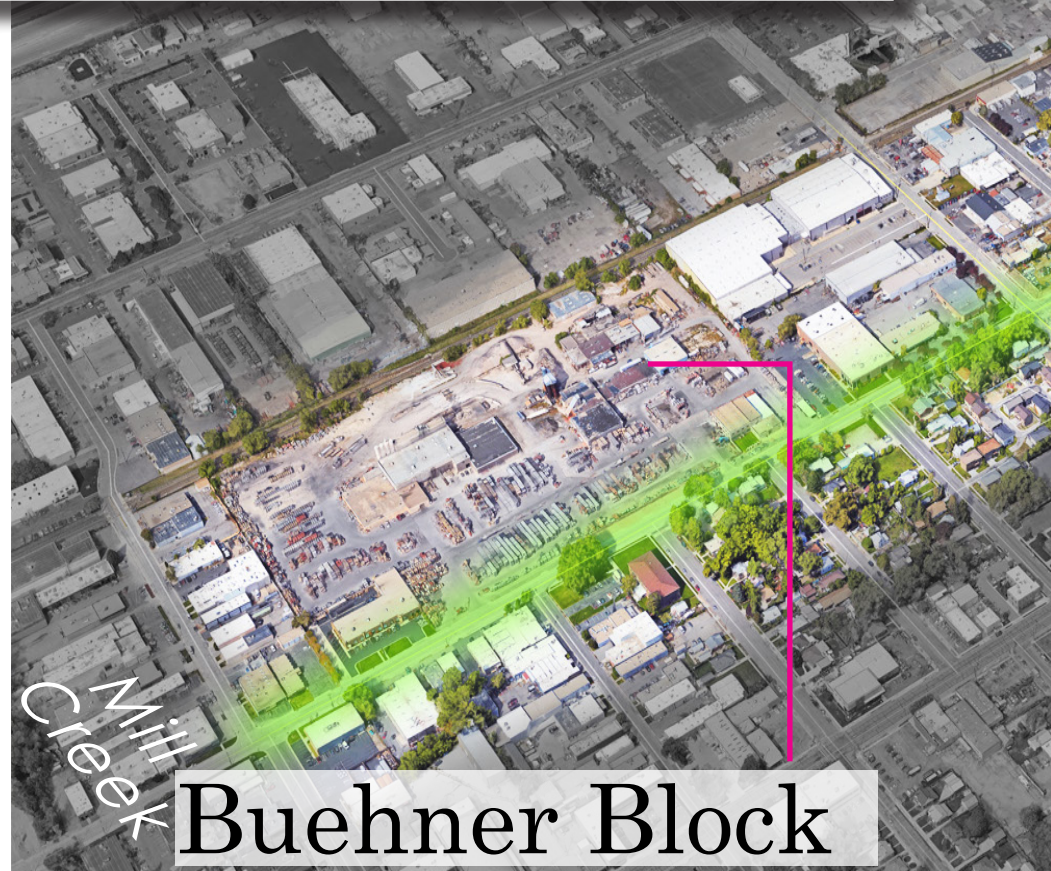
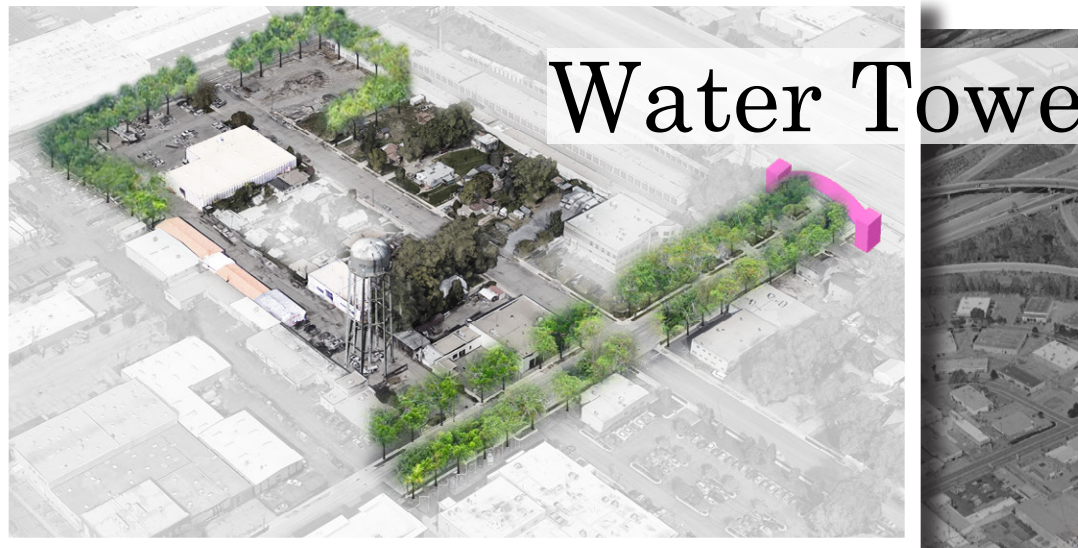
Located in Downtown SSL (north of I-80), this sub-neighborhood is centered on a public park/plaza with opportunities to showcase art, culture, food, music, dance and the every day enjoyment of city life. It also supports an existing cluster of small businesses and creative incubation.

Buehner Block

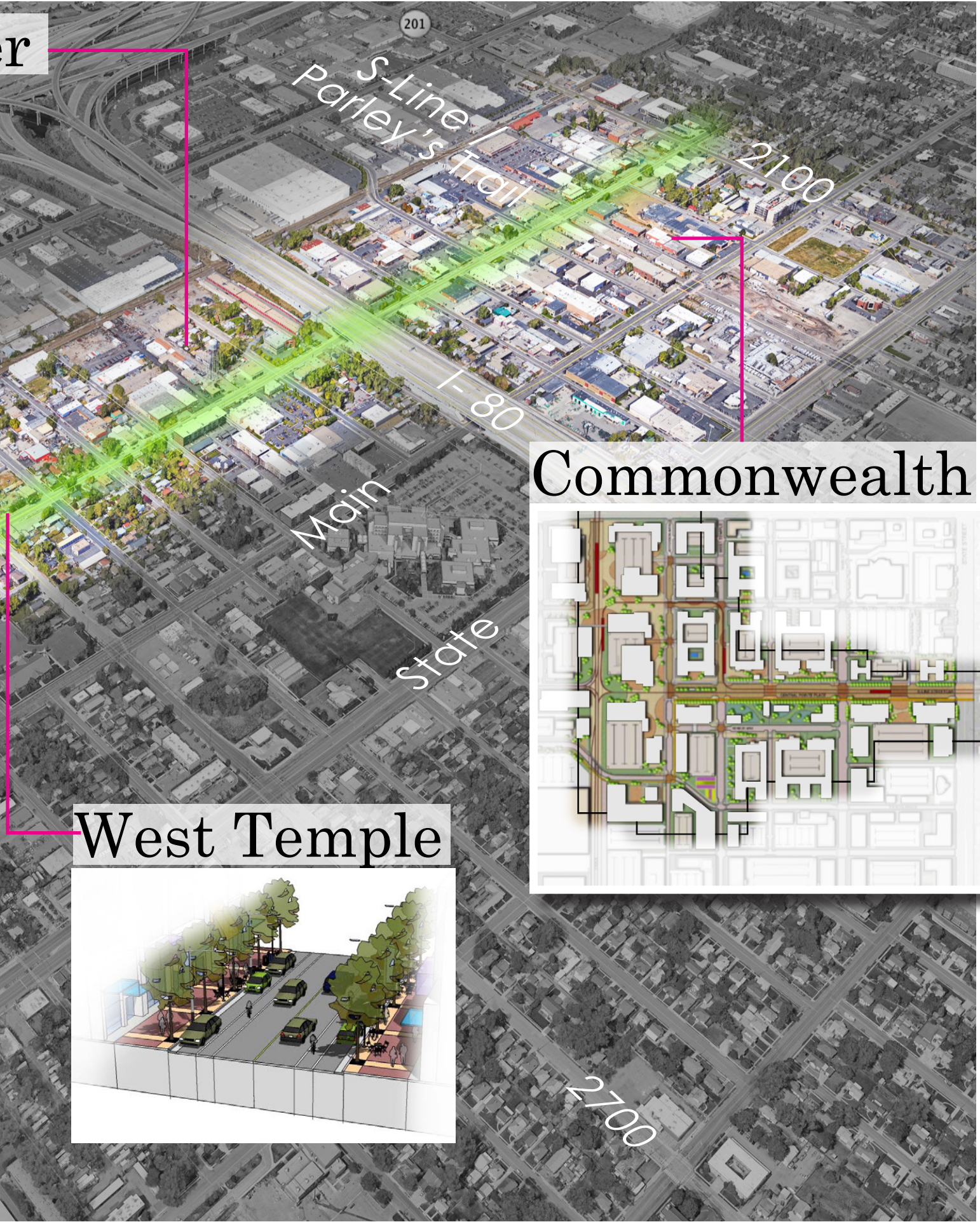
This 20-acre site is for sale and proposed for redevelopment. The likely use will be a medium density housing, in conformance with current zoning. But there are opportunities to create a significant public space and arts amenity here.

Water Tower

This icon for the city can be transformed into the identifier and ground zero for the Creative Industry Zone.



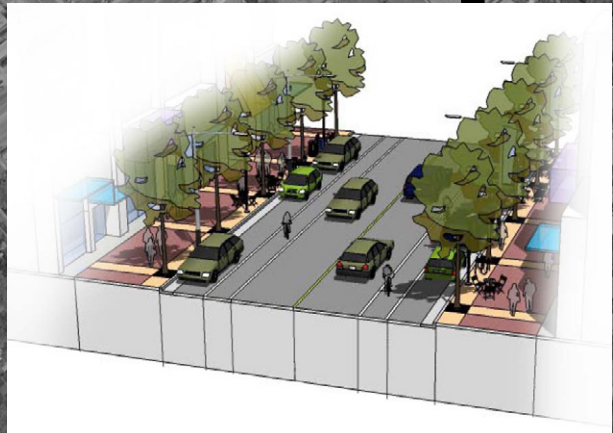
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Commonwealth



West Temple



Creative Industry Hub: Water Tower

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.

Future Moves:

- Renovate and preserve the Water Tower as a brightly adorned symbol of creativity and entrepreneurship featured in branding efforts.
- Create a public park at the water tower.
- Convert an industrial warehouse into a black-box style rehearsal and event space.
- Establish a non-profit maker-space for artists and creative entrepreneurs.
- Rethink dead end streets between West Temple and TRAX as outdoor rooms and neighborhood assets.
- Encourage artist housing and live-work situations.
- Relocate, renovate or rebuild Public Works and Fleet.



Creative Industry Hub: Buehner Block

The historic Buehner Block company sits the intersection of West Temple and Sunset Avenue. In 2017, the family business closed after 79 years making of 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 all should aim to make this a more livable neighborhood.

Future Moves:

- This large site has the opportunity to be a more diverse contemporary, green and family friendly development. It could also include artist housing or live-work situations.
- Preserve deco-style Buehner Block building and convert to artist/creative studio space.
- Build a 1 to 2 acre public park to serve entire neighborhood west of State St. and provide for recreation, arts events and a “third space” for neighborhood residents and employees.
- Reserve space for future north-south greenway/trail along TRAX.
- Consider how the neighborhood connects to potential future 2700 S TRAX station and bus service.
- New streetscape on West Temple, including sidewalk, trees, enhanced bike route.
- Increase ecological function of this formerly industrial site with green space, trees, green infrastructure.
- Provide easy connection to Mill Creek and its trail to the south.

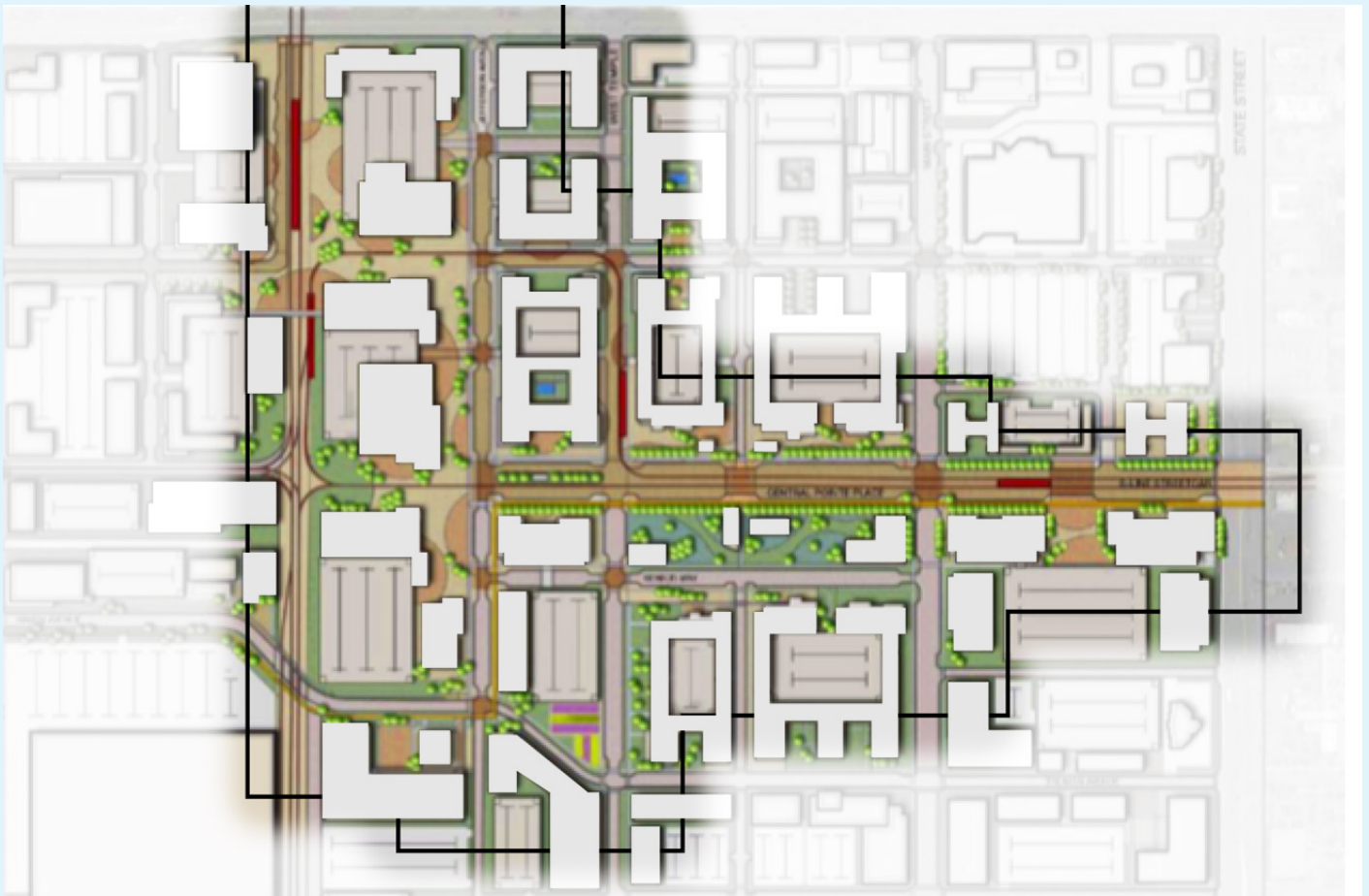


Creative Industry Hub: Commonwealth District

Near the corner of Commonwealth and West Temple, a new downtown is on the rise. Long-time anchors Pat's BBQ and the Commonwealth Building incubator space are being 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:

- Build a destination Downtown Park public park/plaza with opportunities to showcase art, culture, food, music, dance and everyday city life.
- Build a first-class TRAX Station at Central Pointe with improved connections to streets, sidewalks, and bike routes as well as a public plaza.
- Encourage street festivals and continue the Night on Commonwealth tradition.
- Revitalize Richards Street
- Support the establishment, expansion and preservation of creative and arts-based businesses. Encourage events and promotions that highlight them.
- Create a restaurant row to anchor the neighborhood.
- Support the expansion of the Art Factory as a center for the arts.
- Encourage artist housing and live-work situations.
- Winco grocery store opens and supports residential growth.



Creative Industry Backbone:

Arts Hub

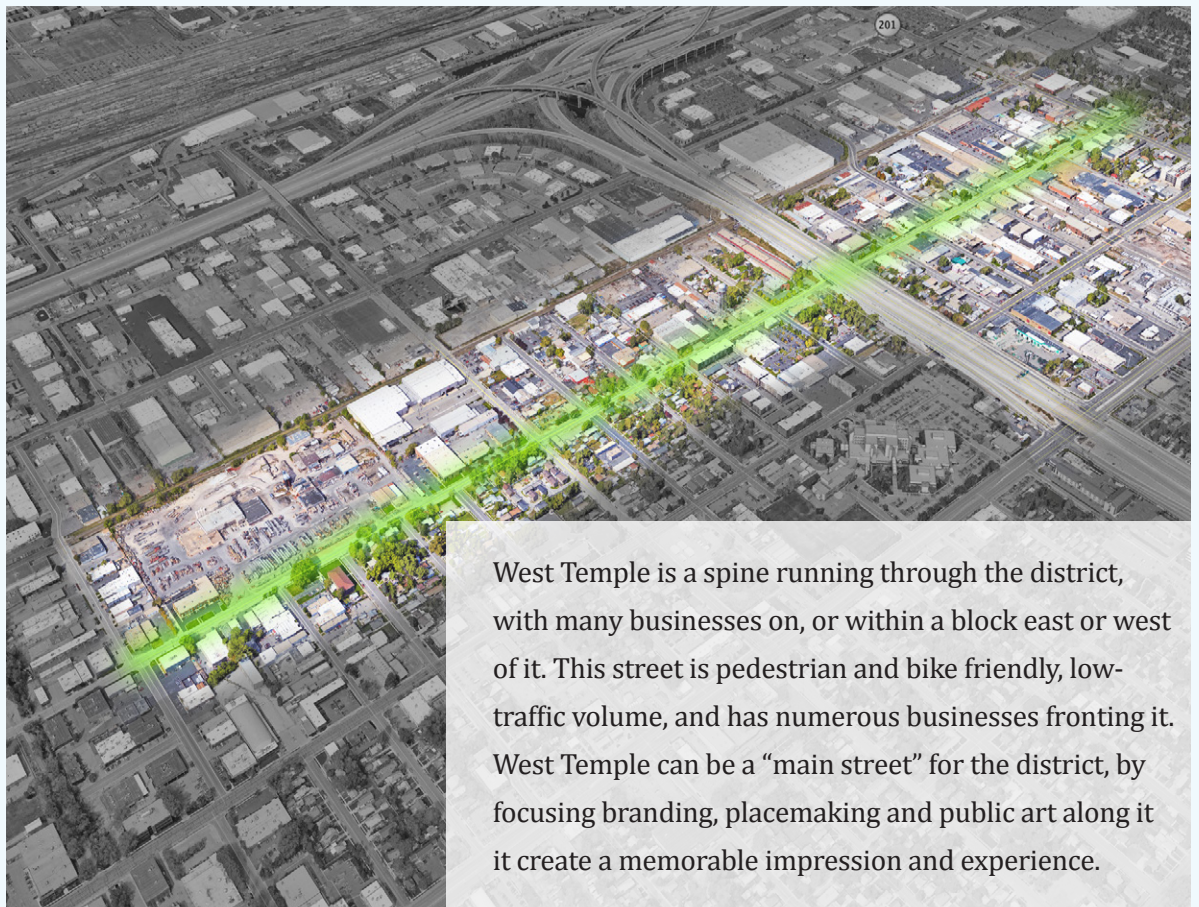
Hubs, incubators, co-working spaces are several terms for affordable, supportive, and stimulating environments assisting start-ups, creative entrepreneurs, and artists. South Salt Lake's has a multitude of formal and informal incubators in this Creative Industry Zone, including the Utah Arts Alliance music studios and Art Factory, Poor Yorick studios, Sugar Space, Tempest Business Park, the Commonwealth Building, and others. There is room for several more "arts hubs" in the neighborhood to provide space for creative industries to blossom.

The term Arts Hub refers here to a center of creativity that supports a group of users and interests. No one place can be everything to every one, so several different hubs are proposed here to suit the unique needs and character of its users and uses. This plan proposes several hubs, with different focuses ranging from performance, to production to maker spaces. Existing inexpensive and flexible commercial and industrial buildings are ideally suited to adapt and reuse to create several "purpose-built" interests.

Programming

A new facility or cluster of buildings should provide low-cost space for a dynamic tenant mix. Hubs can also provide a measure of education, business support, critique and capacity-building and help enterprises grow. Spaces emulate a campus with indoor and outdoor gathering spaces. In addition to individual and shared work spaces, there should be a space for social networking, ideation activities, and sharing new work or works-in-progress with intimate audiences.

Street Life



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 along it it create a memorable impression and experience.

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IV. Next Steps

1. Capital Improvements

- a. Acquire property adjacent to Water Tower for Arts Hub. Re-purpose property under tower for creative activities and green space.
- b. Stabilize and paint Water Tower.
- c. Acquire land in Commonwealth District for Downtown park
- d. Acquire property for green space and Arts Hub at Buehner Block.
- e. Purchase ROW/easements for connectivity to transit stops
- f. Fund streetscape improvements to West Temple.
- g. Build tactical/temporary urbanism projects to bring energy and creativity to public realm.

2. Branding and Identity

- a. Develop and implement brand identity for Creative Industry Zone.
- b. Commission artistic treatment of Water Tower.

- c. Designate Creative Industry Zoning
- e. Devise wayfinding and signage systems centered on West Temple
- f. Commission artist to treat area under West Temple I-80 underpass;

3. Policy, Regulation and Economic Development

- a. Adjust zoning to stabilize creative industry and stimulate mixed-use development
- b. Establish base-line metrics for economic development progress of Creative Industry Zone and track progress.
- c. Study and implement sustainable practices in new developments and retrofits
- d. Implement a public art funding mechanism based on a percentage of City capital investments.

4. Organization

- a. Build on informal alliance of artists and creative businesses and formalize creative industry association with South Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce.
- b. Develop partnership for operations of Arts 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 together by continuing successful events:
 - Poor Yorick Open Studio
 - Night on Commonwealth
 - Creative Convergence
 - Gallery Stroll / Studio Stroll
 - Mural Festival
 - Regular walking tours, bike tours pub crawls, and meet-ups.