
HOUSING CHOICE, AFFORDABILITY AND THE WASATCH CHOICE VISION

The way that we design our communities and infrastructure helps improve household affordability by reducing housing expenses and the cost of commuting. As Utah continues to grow, if we coordinate infrastructure investments with the location of housing and job opportunities, we can provide real choices for residents to meet their housing, neighborhood, and community preferences. The [Wasatch Choice Vision](#) — our region’s blueprint for growth — embodies this coordinated approach.

The Vision encourages communities to provide diverse housing options. One way to accomplish this is to work with landowners and developers to plan and permit multi-unit and smaller-lot housing to be built in mixed-use city and town centers. These centers can be part of the overall vision of the community, which may include various types of residences and lot sizes. Town centers can have a mix of uses, including residential, office, and commercial. Housing in centers can be coordinated with transportation systems, such as a transit station, thereby increasing access to jobs. Centers can also include other key destinations such as schools, grocery stores, childcare, parks, and trails.

Providing more housing choice in these strategic places has direct impacts on housing affordability for individual families:

- Provides a mix of neighborhood and housing types within a community. This is responsive to market and demographic trends. It provides options for smaller lot or multi-family housing, which can be more affordable.
- Coordinating mixed-use development with existing and planned transportation infrastructure will give residents more options to take transit, bike, or walk. This reduces the total household costs for housing and transportation. Giving people housing options and making it feasible to reduce car ownership and use, helps them to afford more housing and make ends meet.
- Reducing parking demand also reduces project costs, helping developers make projects “pencil” at lower rates for buyers and renters.

In addition to individual family benefits, this approach to centers has community and regional benefits:

- Linking housing and transportation gives workers better access to jobs, and businesses better access to potential employees/customers. Research shows a link between job access and the ability of people to climb the socio-economic ladder, which in turn supports regional economic development.
- Centering multi-family and smaller-lot housing absorbs growth and thereby helps to preserve the character of existing suburban neighborhoods. Locating these housing types in city and town centers can reduce local opposition to multi-unit housing while responding to market demand.
- Reducing driving by giving people transportation choices means less congestion and better air quality.

In short, when we employ the strategies that drive the Wasatch Choice Vision, including providing diversity of housing options, we promote greater housing affordability along with a host of other benefits that lead to an overall high quality of life.