

IMPLEMENTATION STORIES:

MILLCREEK

Millcreek is a largely built-out suburban community. In recent years the city has focused on how to create a mixed use, transit-oriented city center - a heart of the community. The city center allows for a broad mix of land uses organized around a central "Millcreek Commons."



WASATCH CHOICE VISION MAP

Orange = growth center
Blue = major transit corridor
Red = major road corridor

OVERVIEW OF LESSONS LEARNED

- **Utilize growth to create a sense of place.** Millcreek Commons will provide a nostalgic nod to the history of the area while also creating space for mixed-use development.
- **Maximize Transit-Oriented-Development.** Millcreek aims to increase the potential use of public transit by supporting future investment in a new streetcar extension to Millcreek (S-Line).
- **Leverage Infill.** Millcreek has seen 800 housing units grow in an area already served by roads and infrastructure -- saving public funds and enabling more residents to live near job centers in Salt Lake County.
- **Integrate Mixed Land Use.** Within the new city center, known as Millcreek Commons, there will be a public park and walkways, multi-family residential housing, and commercial development.

DETAILS

1. Population and population change.

- a. Current population: 62,230

2. Date of last comprehensive General Plan update and other plans.

- Major General Plan update in 2019
- City Center Master Plan in 2019



“Millcreek’s gathering centers are the heart of community activity, characterized by walkability, unique spaces, commercial areas and compatibility with surrounding land uses.”

A rendering of Millcreek Commons, the new city center, to be located at Highland Drive and 3300 South.

3. What is a key way you “provide(d) a reasonable opportunity for middle income housing development within the next five years?”

Because Millcreek recognizes that affordable housing requires a variety of solutions, the city has worked on a year-long public engagement process to consider accessory dwelling units in most low-density residential zones. The city held several open houses and conducted multiple resident surveys on the matter. The city found that, while there are concerns about the impact of ADUs on surrounding neighborhoods, there is also considerable residential support for ADUs. ADUs are particularly appealing as a solution to the region’s housing needs because they do not radically alter existing neighborhood form and character. Millcreek City anticipates taking a draft ADU ordinance through a formal adoption process in the spring of 2021.

4. Recent planning or development near major transit investment corridor stations.

Through a lengthy public engagement process, the city identified the area around Highland Drive and 3300 South as an ideal location for its City Center. With the help of two Transportation-Land Use Connection grants, the city wrote a general plan, a master plan for the City Center, and adopted a form-based code. The city has entitlled nearly 800 dwellings over the last year. The area at the intersection of 3300 South and both Highland Drive and 1300 East is a future extension of the S-Line streetcar. A corridor study is taking place on 3300 S. to explore concept designs for safer and multi-modal transportation options moving east/west in Millcreek.

5. How has your city has implemented active transportation?

Along with Taylorsville, Murray, Cottonwood Heights, Midvale, and Holladay, Millcreek is engaged in an active transportation plan that will shape both internal active transportation options and connections to surrounding trails and paths. Millcreek Commons, when completed, will connect to trails.

6. What experiences have come from integrating your housing, transportation, and land use?

Challenge: Many residents in the vicinity of the town center were concerned and vocal about the potential impacts of a town center. This included sentiments like:

- “How does adding more people in a small area help anything?”
- “We already have too much traffic, how are we going to deal with more?”
- “What will happen to my views of the valley?”
- “Will this impact the schools and utilities in the area?”

Solutions:

- Good design matters. The city worked to ensure a high level of design quality.
- Listening is important. Staff went to residents to listen to their thoughts and concerns.
- Participation always helps. Residents were engaged in the design process.
- Respond to concerns. The city responded to traffic concerns by completing and implementing findings from a traffic study. They responded to view concerns by allowing taller buildings on the downhill side of the City Center to reduce the visual impact from those on the uphill side.
- Package improvements, not just density. Through the process of planning and implementing the City Center, the city learned from residents that Highland Drive safety was a big concern. They responded and reduced travel lanes from 4 to 3. The incorporation of a safer Highland Drive was part of the overall package that has come to be seen as improving quality of life in Millcreek. The City Center has committed \$9 million in tax-increment funds to develop Millcreek Common, an urban park and open space, that will serve as the heart of the city, when it is completed in late 2021.