IMAGINE: GENEVA ROAD AREA-WIDE PLAN

Existing Conditions Report
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLAN OVERVIEW

In 2017, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected the City of Orem as a Brownfield Area-Wide Plan (AWP) grant recipient. The AWP program assists communities in responding to local brownfields challenges, particularly where multiple brownfield sites are in close proximity, connected by infrastructure, and limit the economic, environmental and social prosperity of their surroundings, areas such as the Geneva Road corridor.

Orem received $200,000 to work with community stakeholders to develop an area-wide plan and implementation strategies for brownfields assessment, cleanup, and reuse in the Geneva Road Corridor. The Imagine Orem: Geneva Road plan will provide direction for future brownfields area improvements that are:

• protective of public health and the environment,
• economically viable, and
• reflective of the community's vision for the area.

PLAN AREA

The Imagine Orem: Geneva Road plan focuses on developing a strategy for addressing brownfields in the Geneva Road corridor. This historic industrial area continues to be an important source of employment and tax revenue for the City; however, it also contains many vacant and blighted brownfield sites, owing to commercial and industrial uses historically located in the community.

The primary brownfield sites, or “catalyst” sites this plan focuses on is the Rocky Mountain Power site located at the southwest corner of North Geneva Road and W 1200 N. Redevelopment of this site – and other nearby brownfield sites – will catalyze investment throughout the corridor that leads to increased employment opportunities, tax revenues and visual appeal.

The planning team will also ensure that the redevelopment scenarios proposed for the corridor’s brownfield sites are consistent with existing plan for the area, including the Orem General Plan Economic Development Strategy, Transportation Master Plan and Neighborhood Plans.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

In order to develop a comprehensive strategy for brownfield redevelopment, the project team conducted research on existing conditions in the Geneva Road area, including a review of existing plans, review of historic land uses, zoning analysis, market study, and inventories of brownfields, infrastructure and businesses. This research was important because it enabled the planning team to identify the issues and opportunities shaping the Geneva Road corridor, in order to more effectively plan for the area’s future.
Orem’s population is projected to increase from a 2010 population of just over 88,000 residents to 123,000 residents by 2060 according to 2010 U.S. Census & Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget 2013 projections. In addition, Orem – and the Geneva Road Area particularly –will be impacted by the redevelopment of the City of Vineyard. According to from Central Utah Water Conservancy District, this area is projected to experience tremendous growth and house 90,000 residents by 2060.

Orem is bounded to the east by mountains, to the west by Utah Lake, and to the north and south by neighboring communities. Because of this, Orem has nowhere left to grow. Therefore, Orem’s future development will depend on strategic infill of the City’s existing sites, including underutilized brownfield sites in the Geneva Road corridor.

Significantly, the Geneva Road corridor is also the only area of the City that contains industrially-zoned properties. The Utah County industrial market is experiencing continued growth, with historically low vacancy rates and correspondingly high rents. New, high-quality industrial space is not readily available in Utah County. Further, The Geneva Road Area is located in a thriving economy strong on the fundamentals with a highly educated workforce and supportive government policies that can drive redevelopment of brownfields to highly productive industrial, research and varied manufacturing uses. Therefore, the availability of industrially zoned space, underdeveloped and undervalued in an area close to Utah Valley University and its strong culture of research and support for hi-tech start-ups, provides the Geneva Road Area an obvious competitive advantage as land for new development becomes more limited.

However, Orem does not currently have a plan for the industrial uses west of I-15 where future redevelopment could occur, and valuable industrial land is being snapped up for low-quality uses that do not significantly contribute to local employment opportunities, tax revenues or improvements to community aesthetics. Therefore, it is critical for the City to engage in a planning process now to ensure that the redevelopment of Geneva Road’s valuable industrial properties is reflective of the community’s vision for the area and will provide robust community benefits.

PARTNERS

Implementation of the AWP is being led by the City of Orem, with assistance from the planning firms of BRS and WRT, who are serving as the consultant team for this project. Together the planning team will host a series of public open houses throughout 2018 to involve residents and property owners in the planning process, share information on plan progress and receive feedback on redevelopment scenarios, in order to inform the area-wide plan. In addition, a plan Advisory Committee has been convened with representatives of various local and state agencies working in the Geneva Road Area. Key partners represented on the Advisory Committee include the Cities of Orem and Vineyard, Utah County, UTA, UDOT, UDEQ, and UVU.

NEXT STEPS

The next step in the Imagine Orem: Geneva Road plan is develop a set of redevelopment scenarios for brownfield sites and key intersections in the plan area to imagine a possible future for this area. Residents will have the opportunity to compare scenarios and vote for preferred scenarios.