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**INTRODUCTION**

The *Imagine Orem: Geneva Road Area-Wide Plan (AWP)* area is a predominately industrial corridor on the western border of the City. This area has served as an important employment center for the City and County since the 1940s, as it grew around the Geneva Steel plant (formerly located across Geneva Road in the city of Vineyard). Geneva Steel was constructed by the United States government in 1912 and was purchased by United States Steel Division (US Steel) in 1946. The Geneva Heights, Suncrest, and Orem Park neighborhoods in the eastern part of the GRA was the original housing constructed for Geneva Steel workers during the 1940s and 1950s. Since 2001, the majority of the former Geneva Steel structures have been demolished and in recent years redevelopment has occurred.

Despite the challenges posed by the closure of Geneva Steel and the resulting loss of jobs, Geneva Road retains significant assets and redevelopment potential. The area has excellent transportation infrastructure, including access to Interstate 15, the Orem Intermodal Center (currently served by UTA FrontRunner commuter rail and planned for MAX bus rapid transit line) and two freight rail lines (the Union Pacific and Denver Rio Grande). The area also benefits from its proximity to a highly educated workforce and educational opportunities. Finally, the area has benefitted from multiple long-range planning studies over the past ten years, ranging from the City-wide Orem General Plan and Economic Development Strategic Plan, to neighborhood-level plans and redevelopment reports. This report examines some of these in detail and relates their significance to the current Area-Wide Planning effort.

**Brownfields**

The EPA defines *brownfields* as “real property, the expansion, redevelopment or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant”. The cleanup of Brownfields sites improves and protects the environment and may result in many benefits for the local community, including:

- community involvement in the project,
- job creation, and
- an increase in nearby property values once a brownfield site is assessed or cleaned up.

According to a 2005 report by Envision Utah, investing in the re-use of brownfield sites is an important component of a municipal economic development strategy. Employers may be reluctant to locate their business on a brownfield site because of potential liability, cost of clean-up and the additional time required to conduct clean-up activities. However, because brownfields are often located in desirable, close-in areas, require limited new infrastructure, and provide easy access to transportation and housing, they are a valuable resource to be developed. ¹

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**Brownfield Area-Wide Planning Program**

The EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning (AWP) program provides grant funding to local governments and non-profit organizations to support community-driven brownfield planning to identify opportunities where communities can assess, cleanup and reuse brownfields for the benefit of the community, its residents, and its local and regional economy.

According to the non-profit Groundwork USA, the brownfields area-wide planning approach enables a community to look broadly at an area containing a concentrated number of brownfield sites. Rather than a site-by-site approach, several brownfields are considered simultaneously in the context of shared infrastructure and synergistic uses to address current and anticipated drivers of success and identify short- and long-term goals and implementation strategies.

In 2017, Orem received a $200,000 EPA Brownfield Area-Wide Planning grant to conduct a two-year brownfield area-wide planning process for the Geneva Road Area and the Rocky Mountain Power “catalyst” site located on North Geneva Road between West 800 North and West 1200 North. Successful redevelopment of the catalyst site and surrounding brownfield properties should build momentum for the redevelopment of improvement of brownfield sites along the entire Geneva Road corridor.

*Figure 1: Rocky Mountain Power Site and North Geneva Road*
FIGURE 2: BOUNDARIES OF GENEVA ROAD AREA-WIDE PLAN
PROJECT AREA

The Geneva Road Area encompasses approximately 1400 acres of land in the northwest corner of Orem, Utah. The area is generally organized north to south along four major thoroughfares – Geneva Road, Interstate 15, 1200 West and 800 West – with numbered streets connected the plan area east to west.

The plan area is bounded by North 1600 West at the North, Interstate 15 and 800 East on the east, South 800 West at the South and Geneva Road at the West. The plan area east of I-15 is predominately residential with some commercial uses, while the area west of I-15 is predominately industrial. The residential neighborhoods are identified north to south as Timpview, Geneva Heights, Orem Park and Suncrest.

The plan area takes its name from the Geneva Resort, which operated on nearby Utah Lake at the beginning of the 20th century.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Geneva Road Area (GRA) includes the commercial/industrial area known locally as “the Wedge” and three residential neighborhoods, Geneva Heights, Suncrest, and Orem Park, that lie to the east of this industrial area on the other side of I-15. These neighborhoods were originally created for the Geneva Steel Plant workers in the 1940s and 1950s, which was located on the site of present-day Vineyard, Utah.

Today, these neighborhoods are impacted by all the negative effects of a major interstate highway and industrial corridor can produce, compounded by uses past and present and the decline of industrial employment associated with the closure of the Geneva Steel plant. These are among the poorest neighborhoods in Orem, with key economic indicators (unemployment levels, median home values, and percent of households receiving food stamps) showing economic challenges compared to the rest of Orem, Utah County, and the State of Utah. According to the USDA, these neighborhoods are currently in
low income and low access areas, with the nearest grocery store more than ½ mile away.

The Alpine School District, the primary school district in northern Utah County, has two Title I schools within one mile of the GRA. Title I schools are those which utilize federal funding to improve academic achievement to disadvantaged students who may be affected by concentrations of poverty or environmental challenges. The neighborhoods in the GRA have high levels of households with single mothers, children under 18 years old, and adults over 65 years old- all of which are sensitive receptors to environmental contaminants and poverty. The GRA also has one of the highest minority population rates (Hispanic majority) in the City of Orem, substantially higher than the rest of Utah County or the State of Utah. Finally, it is important to note that the 84057 ZIP code, which includes the GRA, is the fourth most densely populated ZIP code in the State of Utah. Census information is shown in Tables 1 and 2 below.

### Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Geneva Road Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristics</th>
<th>Geneva Road Area</th>
<th>City of Orem</th>
<th>Utah County</th>
<th>Utah</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>8,468</td>
<td>94,457</td>
<td>540,425</td>
<td>2,858,111</td>
<td>314,107,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Population under 18 Years Old</td>
<td>28.65%</td>
<td>29.07%</td>
<td>35.06%</td>
<td>31.10%</td>
<td>23.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Population over 65 Years Old</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2: Household Characteristics of Geneva Road Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Characteristics</th>
<th>Geneva Road Area</th>
<th>City of Orem</th>
<th>Utah County</th>
<th>Utah</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$55,617</td>
<td>$54,048</td>
<td>$60,830</td>
<td>$59,846</td>
<td>$53,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Home Value</td>
<td>$163,033</td>
<td>$202,000</td>
<td>$222,300</td>
<td>$212,500</td>
<td>$175,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Rate</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Households with Female Head with Own Children</td>
<td>6.94%</td>
<td>5.71%</td>
<td>4.68%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
<td>7.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Households Receiving Food Stamps</td>
<td>12.52%</td>
<td>10.33%</td>
<td>8.26%</td>
<td>9.04%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Geneva Road Area includes demographics identified in Census block groups 490490008011, 490490008021, and 490490011082. While a large portion of the industrial uses in the GRA are located in Census block group 490490022011, this data was not included as it reflects a population not living in the GRA.

2Data is from the U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2010-2014 5-year estimates.
**Review of Existing Plans**

**Orem General Plan 2011 (Last Amended 2016)**

This comprehensive plan is the official statement of policies for the future development of the City including land use, transportation, housing, urban design guidelines, economics, parks and recreation and public services and facilities. The guides for land use are intended to provide classifications and locations for uses that manage growth as well as provide sufficient land for residential, commercial, industrial and public uses.

**Community Character:** Orem places a high priority on protecting its reputation as a family-friendly city and this is translated into its goals to protect older residential neighborhoods, to provide affordable housing in newer mixed use development and to create places that can meet the growing demand for student and senior housing. The desired outcomes include improved public services and schools that will improve the quality of life in Orem. The General Plan lists the numerous parks and recreation facilities, festivals, civic organizations, educational resources, and the city library which make up its “tapestry” of community culture. Its desire is to foster an environment where such organizations and amenities can develop and flourish.

**Urban Planning and Design:** Orem also places significance on urban design principles and methods to create a desirable physical environment for its community. The major planning objectives of the City are to develop and implement an urban forestry plan and to humanize its streetscapes with inviting amenities and buffers that encourage pedestrian activity. Other design goals include creating gateways, signage improvements, reducing light pollution, anticipating the eligibility of historic structures for preservation and the inclusion of public art.

**Economic Development:** The economic vitality of Orem has depended on its strong workforce, area universities, low cost of living and its recreational opportunities. As competition from surrounding communities has grown, the City added an Economic Development Division in 2012 and developed the 2014 Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP). The goals for this action include expanding the tax base, increasing assessed property values and to ensure that ongoing land development meets economic development goals (more on the EDSP is below).

**Transportation:** Orem has a highly developed multi-modal transportation system with several in-depth plans and studies to guide its future. In order to address projected growth in both the City and region, the General Plan outlines the need to support strategies such as biking and walking improvements, the expansion of transit services (bus and rail), encouraging transit-oriented developments (TODs) and the addition of a Transportation Center.

The Plan concludes with a brief overview of public safety, public works and administration services provided by City government.
OREM TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN (2015)

Between today and 2040, the population in Orem is projected to grow by 20,800 or 23% overall. While considered moderate growth, the larger regional growth in tandem with the attraction to visit Orem is projected to result in 74% of all vehicles from outside the city using the roadway network to stop somewhere in Orem. With this in mind the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) was developed to combat potential congestion and to coordinate the goals of Orem with the regional infrastructure planned and maintained by UDOT, UTA, Utah County and neighboring municipalities. The plan includes projects separated into 10 year and 25 year windows for roadway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements as well as updated policies and guidelines for traffic management and design standards.

Geneva Road is characterized as a 5-lane principal arterial route that provides an acceptable level of service (C or better) through the AWP study area. Running parallel to the east are Interstate 15 and 1200 West, an adjacent surface road categorized as a 2-3 lane minor arterial route that borders the neighborhoods in the study area on the west. 1200 West is also rated acceptable except for the area around the intersection of Center Street. Center Street is a major connector between the center of Orem, State Street and I-15. The segment is rated a D level of service but is expected to drop to an E without action. Another major improvement at the northern end of the AWP study area is the widening of 1600 North between 400 West and I-15 to 5 lanes. All of these projects will significantly improve east-west accessibility to Geneva Road but will impact the neighborhoods these roadways bisect.

According to the TMP, the preferred alternative to address increased transportation needs is light rail. Routes along Geneva Road with connection to downtown, the University and Vineland are part of the vision plan in the MAG RTP and North County Transit Study, but are secondary to the preferred routes slated for Phase 1 and 2 in those plans. Currently the area is served by routes that run the length of Geneva Road and 1200 West with connection to State Street via 800 North. Operated by UTA, this service is flexible and able to expand and adjust routes and stops as demand changes. Another transportation alternative the city wishes to promote is bicycle and pedestrian options. The 2010 Orem Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan shows an extension of the bike lane on 1200 West, the addition of bike lanes on Geneva Road, several east-west connections spanning I-15 and planned bike routes through the neighborhoods along 800 West.

Geneva Road is designated as a major truck route along the west edge of the city and 1200 West is designated as an alternative truck route. These designations are intended to keep the impacts of truck travel limited to these routes and away from smaller and residential streets. As such, it is important to keep in mind the role these roadways serve within the entire transportation system. The plan also outlines important design considerations for roadway design, access management, traffic calming, crosswalks, safety and connectivity.

TMP diagrams illustrating the transportation scenarios described in this section are provided below.
Figure 33: Existing UTA Transit Routes

Legend
- **Blue** UTA Bus Routes
- Orem City Boundary
- Annexation Area

Transportation Master Plan
Figure 35: Pedestrian and Bike Paths

Legend

Pedestrian and Bike Paths
- Existing Bike Lane
- Planned Bike Lane
- Existing Multi-Use Path
- Planned Multi-Use Path
- Existing Bike Route
- Planned Bike Route
- Proposed Bike Boulevard

Transportation Master Plan
Figure 36: Orem Truck Routes
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN (2014)**

The City’s 2014 Economic Development Strategic Plans takes a holistic approach to documenting the current economic environment in Orem and the challenges it faces in the future. Orem’s economic vitality has been the result of its location at the center of retail activity for the region coupled with its relatively low cost of living and highly educated workforce. These assets are anticipated to continue to fuel the future of Orem’s economy.

However, competitive pressures from outside the city are growing. The surrounding communities are growing more rapidly and have open land available for new development. Orem’s future development depends on more expensive infill and strategic approaches. The plan creates 19 development nodes and outlines recommendations that best uses the assets of each district and how it can best contribute to the goals the City has to grow a stable tax base. Emphasis in the plan is placed on the need to focus on the amount and availability of Class A office space needed to keep desirable tech, information and professional services startups and growing companies from leaving Orem.

Nodes 17 and 18 along I-15 and Geneva Road are located in the heart of the GRA study area. According to the Economic Development Strategic Plan, these areas, collectively known as “the Wedge” are “prime for conversion from underdeveloped industrial uses to high-quality, freeway-visible office space, in addition to retail and advanced manufacturing.” Retail development is targeted for the I-15 interchanges and areas along Geneva Road to capitalize on the increased development expected to occur next door in Vineyard. Specifically, the Vineyard population growth is expected to create the need for two grocery stores and Orem wishes to capture that market position before it goes to Vineyard.

**Table 3: Population Growth Projection (Orem City Economic Development Strategic Plan)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geneva Road</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2040</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Mile</td>
<td>10,377</td>
<td>10,800</td>
<td>11,648</td>
<td>12,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Miles</td>
<td>89,869</td>
<td>94,253</td>
<td>104,929</td>
<td>113,834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Miles</td>
<td>185,312</td>
<td>194,189</td>
<td>210,490</td>
<td>223,283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The GRA is not identified as a targeted area for future housing redevelopment or a prime location for Class A office space but the plan acknowledges further planning for this area is required. Plans for a business park in the north portion of GRA are already under development, utilizing some of the limited vacant land in that portion of the City (see Figure 1 below).

The EDSP also includes the results of community engagement in the branding of Orem. Participants developed four leading brand attributes that lead to a simplified brand positioning statement:

*For the City of Orem’s economic development audience, Orem provides great value through a low cost of doing business and a quality workforce. Orem is the epicenter of Utah County, where start-up companies, established businesses and developers prosper.*
STATE STREET CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN (2017)

The State Street Corridor Master Plan provides a framework to guide the future growth along State Street, which served as the central commercial corridor of Orem. The goal is to transform State Street, into an attractive, urban lifestyle alternative for residents, businesses and visitors through economic development initiatives, transportation solutions and enhanced community image and identity. The plan identifies five (5) major nodes of development each with a different focus – employment and civic center, arts and entertainment, shopping and dining, mixed use center and residential/retail.

The plan projects the impacts the proposed strategies for State Street could have on shaping the future of Orem. These include absorbing over 75% of the projected population growth, the addition of over 4300 office jobs, 48% increase in taxable sales and 140% increase in tax revenue. It will be important that development away from the State Street Corridor be compatible and not compete with the desire to create a vibrant downtown core. It will be equally important that the design standards and aesthetics established by this plan are carried through to other redevelopment areas, such as Geneva Road to reinforce the community image and identity of the City.

The State Street Master Plan will serve as a template for recommended zoning changes and potential design guidelines in the Geneva Road Area. More information on the synergies between these two planning efforts will be explored as the planning process progresses.
GENEVA HEIGHTS, OREM PARK, SUNCREST NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
(2017)

The Geneva Heights, Orem Park, Suncrest Neighborhood Plan was created by neighborhood residents and Orem City planning staff to communicate the values and interest of neighborhood residents and serve as a guideline for future growth, development and preservation. It specifically references the development of the Geneva Road Area-Wide Plan using an EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning grant, as the neighborhood boundaries stretch west to Geneva Road and encompass a large portion of the industrial properties along the middle of the Geneva Road Corridor.

Together, these three neighborhoods include approximately 16,500 residents in 4,769 households, according to 2015 American Community Survey Estimates. Roughly a third of these households have children under age 18. About half of the 5,019 housing units in the plan area are single-family detached units, while the other half are multi-family units. Owing to strong demand for affordable units, and lack of supply, vacancies are generally low, and correspondingly, rents are generally high. There are also four (4) mobile home communities which provide another opportunity for affordable housing.

According to this plan, the Geneva Heights, Orem Park and Suncrest neighborhoods contain some of Orem’s oldest residential, commercial and industrial properties. While the residential areas are not expected to change, the redevelopment of the Geneva Steel site in Vineyard has generated interest in the redevelopment of industrial properties along the Geneva Road corridor in Orem. However, as noted above, many of these properties have been identified as brownfield sites and will require assessment and cleanup before being redeveloped.

A key goal of this plan as it relates to the Geneva Road Brownfield Area-Wide Plan is the “Economics” goal to “continue to encourage business development to provide a source for local jobs and to add to sales tax and property tax revenue.” Industrial businesses in the Geneva Road area are an important source of revenue and jobs for the entire City. Additionally, according this section, the Geneva Road corridor contains the vast majority of properties with the highest assessed values in the City (by area), showing the potential to unlock the value of these properties through strategic investment and redevelopment.
ASpen and Timpview Neighborhood Plan (2017)

Like the Geneva Heights, Orem Park and Suncrest Neighborhood Plan, the Aspen and Timpview Neighborhood Plan was created by neighborhood residents and Orem City planning staff to communicate the values and interest of neighborhood residents and serve as a guideline for future growth, development and preservation. The Aspen and Timpview neighborhoods comprise the northwest corner of the City, with a western boundary of Geneva Road. It specifically references the development of the Geneva Road Area-Wide Plan using an EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning grant, as the neighborhood boundaries stretch west to Geneva Road and encompasses the northern section the Geneva Road Corridor, including the catalyst site of Rocky Mountain Power.

The Aspen and Timpview neighborhoods, like much of Orem, were historically agricultural lands with limited commercial and industrial development until the designation of residential subdivisions in the 1970s. These neighborhoods remain predominately residential, with commercial and industrial uses concentrated along Geneva Road, 1200 W, 800 N and State Street. The last large undeveloped parcel in the City is the former Williams Farm property located at the northwest corner of the plan area between 1600 N, I-15, 1200 N and Geneva Road.

These neighborhoods contain approximately 9,532 residents residing in 2,790 households, according to 2015 American Community Survey estimates. Forty-five percent (45%) of these households have children under age 18. As with the Geneva Heights Orem Park and Suncrest neighborhoods, Aspen and Timpview have a very low vacancy rate of 3%, owing to a strong demand for affordable units, and a lack of supply.

Key goals of this plan that pertain to the Geneva Road Brownfield Area-Wide Plan are found in the Transportation and Economics sections. The Transportation section has goals that include the following:

- increase roadway capacity through improvements along major corridors, prioritizing 1600 N;
- increase the network and improve the quality of bike and walking paths;
- better access management for new developments;
- utilize major thoroughfares for traffic from new development; and
- deal with traffic and safety issues at congested intersections, particularly 1600 N and 1200 W.