
REDEVELOPMENT
Introduction

Throughout our 50-year history, the Redevelopment Agency of Salt Lake City (RDA) has taken a leading role in improving the viability and economic vitality of Utah’s capital city. We have done this by focusing on the areas and neighborhoods that need it most, and supporting vital housing efforts citywide.

When the RDA began in June 1969, the practice of redeveloping a city was relatively new to residents of Salt Lake City, many of whom had only heard of this concept in relation to somewhat-controversial public housing projects undertaken by urban renewal agencies in Chicago and New York City. This perception of redevelopment was soon dispelled as the RDA tackled strategic projects that not only put Salt Lake City on the map of great cities in the West, but also enhanced its neighborhoods and business districts and stimulated additional private investment therein.

Over the past five decades, as American cities experienced growing pains and cultural shifts, we observed these economic and social trends through a careful lens, making sure to keep the changing needs of Salt Lake City in focus. During those 50 years, there were many legislative changes that enabled redevelopment agencies across Utah to use tax increment financing to fund new types of projects within their respective communities. Mindful of fostering Salt Lake City’s authenticity, we strived to operate in a balanced way that not only built up and revitalized the City, but also preserved its history and nurtured its unique character.

With projects spanning from pocket parks to urban places, from midblock walkways to festival streets, from historic single-family homes to multi-story apartments, from neighborhood businesses to office towers, the RDA has contributed to the fabric of Salt Lake City in a myriad of ways. Our role in hundreds of redevelopment projects that have helped cultivate so many of Salt Lake City’s residential, commercial, and public places is vast and varied. Sometimes our contribution has been a stand-alone effort to stabilize or spur development in a particular area (Heber Wells Building ’82, Central Ninth Market ’16, Macaroni Flats ’17), often we funded public infrastructure (Pierpont Walkway ’92, Pioneer Park ’95, 500 West Utility Undergrounding ’10), and many times we provided gap financing through our loan program (Odyssey House ’00, Vivint Smart Home Arena ’15).

Our efforts have resulted in the creation of approximately 15,000 housing units of which nearly half are affordable, historic renovation and adaptive reuse of more than 50 existing buildings, providing $33.6 million in commercial loans, and investing upwards of $170 million in public improvements with infrastructure, green space, transit, and public art projects. Our contribution and balanced approach to community reinvestment has proved worthwhile.

However, we could not have done this work alone. We are grateful to the residents, businesses, and property owners in our project areas for their patience and input, our talent and expertise partners for their financial support and confidence, our fellow City agencies and nonprofit organizations for their services and programs, and our visionary community representatives and public officials. We also appreciate the development community for its immense expertise, and investment. The amazing architects, builders, engineers, landscapers, planners, preservationists, and real estate professionals with whom we have partnered and worked are too numerous to name.

To all those whom our work has touched or with whom we have crossed paths, we extend a collective “thank you” for joining us on this 50-year journey. Your trust and cooperation has allowed us the opportunity to complete 50 years of significant work that has contributed to Salt Lake City’s quality of life and economic stability. We truly hope you take as much pride in our collective impact on the City as we do.

As you look through this summary of the RDA’s work, we expect you will recognize many of our projects as the buildings and gathering spaces you may see, pass through, or utilize on any given day. While not able to dedicate a page to every project, we have included a sampling of projects for each decade, with a running timeline below. Additionally, on page 20 you’ll find a literal overview of the RDA’s impact on the City in the form of an aerial map, with pins marking the locations of our major projects.

We look forward to adding more pins to this map as we continue to serve the community through investment in redevelopment projects that will enhance the City’s housing opportunities, commercial vitality, and public spaces for the next 50 years, and beyond.

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Acknowledgements

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- Mayor Erik Anderson  
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About Redevelopment Agencies

Most are familiar with the general term “redevelopment” describing the action or process of developing something again or differently. Some may even think of redevelopment in more city-specific terms, understanding it as the rehabilitation or new construction of buildings in an urban area. But for many people, the concept of an entire government agency devoted to redevelopment might be a bit unfamiliar. Such an entity—a “redevelopment agency”—typically operates at a city level as a type of tool that strategically focuses on a particular area of a municipality that is experiencing disinvestment or neglect.

Traditionally, a redevelopment agency, commonly referred to as an “RDA,” is established by a city to reverse this trend through investments in buildings and public infrastructure. RDAs may also focus efforts on industrial areas of a city outside of the downtown core. These industrial areas are typically only served by very basic infrastructure that is inadequate in attracting and supporting new investment and development.

In both cases, the end result is a decrease in the assessed valuation of property, leading to reduced property tax collections for the city itself and all other taxing entities, such as school districts, counties, libraries, and public utilities. This decrease in tax base drives further disinvestment that, in turn, promotes a cycle of urban degeneration. RDAs intervene to break the cycle by:

- Facilitating redevelopment of underutilized property through acquisition, clearance, re-planning, and/or sale;
- Investing in core infrastructure, such as streets, lighting, sidewalks; and
- Providing gap financing in the form of loans, grants, reimbursements, and property discounts to encourage private investment.

To do this work efficiently and strategically, RDAs target certain areas to focus efforts. These “project areas” have been called many things over the decades—urban renewal areas, redevelopment areas, community reinvestment areas—each describing a designated boundary within a municipality wherein an RDA prioritizes projects and programs. Redevelopment projects and programs are designed to spur additional growth, allowing disinvested areas to be reestablished as economically productive centers for business and social activity.
After the RDA works in a project area for a number of years, the social value and economic potential increases, encouraging businesses and private investors to respond with additional development and improvements that will further build up the area’s vitality.

Property tax increment financing is the primary means by which RDAs fund redevelopment and economic development. This “tax increment financing” (TIF) is described as the increase, or “increment,” in the property taxes generated within a project area, over and above property taxes generated in that same area prior to the establishment of the project area.

The intent of tax increment financing is to pledge future increases in property tax revenues within project areas to fund projects that will result in economic revitalization and directly, or indirectly, further increase tax revenue. The increment generated in a project area is reinvested back into that same project area for a specified period of time, usually 20-25 years. During the life of the project area, the taxing entities continue receiving the same amount of property taxes they received prior to the establishment of the project area, along with any share of the increment they may have negotiated with the RDA. After a project area expires, the taxing entities again collect the full tax revenue, which typically increased substantially over the period of time the project area was active.

Our Redevelopment Vision & Practices

The Redevelopment Agency of Salt Lake City (RDA) follows the standard redevelopment model, doing the majority of our work in and around the City’s urban core. It’s our mission to revitalize Salt Lake City’s neighborhoods and business districts to improve livability, spark economic growth, and foster authentic communities. We serve as a catalyst for strategic development projects that enhance the City’s housing opportunities, commercial vitality, and public spaces.

Under the Utah Code Title 17C Community Reinvestment Agencies Act, we create and administer community reinvestment areas (project areas), and work with community councils, property owners, neighborhood residents, and businesses to learn how they would like to see their communities improved.

This community reinvestment comes in many forms, but most commonly through mixed-income housing, commercial buildings, economic development, historic preservation, public art, neighborhood business districts, environmental remediation, and infrastructure improvements. Under 17C, we are also authorized to undertake housing projects citywide, in addition to those located within project areas. We are able to contribute up to 20% of tax increment from each project area to fund affordable housing projects throughout the City.

ECONOMIC GROWTH
We act as a responsible steward of public funds, taking a long-term view of investment, return, and property values.

COMMUNITY IMPACT
We prioritize projects and programs that demonstrate commitment to improving equity and quality of life for residents and businesses in Salt Lake City.

NEIGHBORHOOD VIBRANCY
We cultivate distinct and buildable environments that are contextually sensitive, resilient, connected, and sustainable.
Guided by these values, we participate in Salt Lake City’s redevelopment projects in a range of ways, implementing tools. One such tool is our Loan Program, which assists property owners in the renovation, rehabilitation, and new construction of buildings within project area boundaries. The Program provides critical gap financing for projects that advance project area goals. We work with project developers and lenders to bridge the funding gap between a project’s economics and market realities. In support of the RDA’s mission, we can assume a higher level of risk than traditional lenders to ensure that transformative projects get built. While our approach is flexible, we assist projects that achieve the RDA’s goals for affordable housing, placemaking, sustainability, high quality urban design, and economic development.

The RDA’s Tax Increment Reimbursement Program helps achieve the RDA’s project area goals by offering a tax increment reimbursement to developers for building eligible projects. The RDA will reimburse property owners or developers a portion of construction costs associated with projects that meet project area objectives. The amount of the tax increment reimbursement is determined by what the project generates, and the percentage of tax increment split between the RDA and developer.

Focusing specifically on the adaptive reuse in one of our most industrial project areas, the Adaptive Reuse Loan Program provides forgivable loans to encourage the reuse and revitalization of the Granary District’s unique stock of buildings. The loans are intended to ease the sometimes daunting cost of the necessary building code updates local developers face when renovating aging warehouses and distressed industrial buildings. The Program has facilitated a number of transformative development projects that have increased the number of residents visiting the Granary District.

In addition to offering financial programs to encourage development, we often purchase property to market for strategic redevelopment, particularly to stimulate private investment, improve community conditions, and increase economic development. We count our “property acquisition” tool as one of the most powerful in the RDA toolbox, as this practice of purchasing underutilized land and working with developers to bring a variety of commercial and housing projects to Salt Lake City has led to the substantial growth in the taxable land values within project areas.

For example, from the inception of the Sugar House Project Area in 1986 to its sunset in 2015, the land valuation within project area boundaries increased by 572%. Collectively, the taxable values within project areas have increased by an average of 32-51% each year. The citywide average taxable value increase per year since 2007 has been 4%.
Our Impact

The RDA has reinvested a total of more than $530 million back into communities across Salt Lake City, tallying up some notable figures along the way.

**Provided**: $117 million in total loan funding

**Invested**: $170 million in public improvements

**Facilitated**: The construction of approximately 7,000 housing units throughout the city

**Dedicated**: $3.4 million to public art

**Committed**: $123 million in tax increment reimbursements

**Completed**: 349 major redevelopment projects
In 1969, the Redevelopment Agency of Salt Lake City (RDA) was created to stimulate economic growth and revitalize the downtown area of Utah's capital city. This major event in Salt Lake City's economic history was a long time in the making, and one that would enable the City to grow and thrive for the next 50 years.

During the 1950s, Downtown Salt Lake City experienced a robust retail trade, but declining population throughout the City, new suburban shopping malls, and aged structures on small parcels of land posed significant impediments to the continued development of Downtown. The interiors of some of the City's large 10-acre blocks were neglected, weedy tracts scattered with wood shacks and sheds, some dating back to the late 1800s. In addition to physical development barriers, stunted housing and rental market and dwindling sales tax proceeds were leading the City down a path of an unsustainable economic future.

Beginning as early as 1956, efforts were made in the Utah Legislature to enable the State's municipalities to undertake redevelopment as a mechanism for revitalization. Although the first redevelopment legislation was passed by 1965, attempts to establish a redevelopment authority in Salt Lake City that year ultimately failed.

By the late 1960s, other capital cities across the nation were utilizing federally sponsored Urban Renewal Program grants on redevelopment projects to revitalize their urban cores, yet a redevelopment strategy within Salt Lake City had not been created. Luckily, the local redevelopment movement regained momentum in 1968 when the University of Utah released a report asserting that Salt Lake City had missed receiving more than $300 million in federal aid since 1965 due to its lack of a redevelopment authority.

Thus, in 1969 the Utah Legislature made the redevelopment law more functional, and that same year the Salt Lake City Commission created Salt Lake City's Redevelopment Agency, drawing from two federally funded programs: The Neighborhood Development Act, which funded capital improvement projects, and the City's housing rehabilitation program. Redevelopment in Salt Lake City was on its way.
Project Areas

1970s

BLOCK 77
S TEMPLE
BLOCK 76

BLOCK 68
BLOCK 69

BLOCK 59
BLOCK 58

200 W
200 S
100 S
300 S

22 23
The first decade of redevelopment in Salt Lake City began modestly. A four-person staff set forth to undertake the first official “urban renewal” projects in Utah, focusing on enhancing the public environment with midblock connections and improved common areas near the newly constructed Salt Palace arena and convention center. The overall goal being to make the area more accessible and better used by the downtown workforce, visiting conventions, and residents.

Using non-cash grants under the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Urban Renewal Program, the RDA started its work on Block 58 (bounded by 200 South, 300 South, West Temple, and Main Street) and Block 69 (bounded by 100 South, 200 South, West Temple, and Main Street), located directly east and southwest of the Salt Palace.

In 1974, the RDA received a major boost when the Utah Legislature followed a nationwide trend and approved the use of tax increment financing to fund redevelopment projects. The RDA was then able to expand its focus to include new types of projects, including new construction of commercial, housing, and mixed-use buildings.

Further widening of the RDA’s focus occurred with the subsequent enactment of the Community Development Block Grant Program through the federal Housing and Community Development Act, which empowered redevelopment agencies nationwide to conduct housing revitalization within neighborhoods.
The RDA’s first major project was the construction of Block 58’s American Plaza. The land assembly for this project entailed the RDA’s purchase of several parcels on Block 58 over a period of years. By 1975, the RDA had purchased nearly half of the western side of the block for a total of approximately $1.5 million, resulting in $130 million in private investment to build three five-story office buildings, a 16-story hotel, and two 26-story condominium towers (American Towers).

The addition of the 392 condominiums to the City’s urban core was a critical step in beginning the residential re-stabilization of Downtown, from which many people had moved during the 1950s and 60s in favor of less expensive suburban areas.
To support Salt Lake County’s development of arts facilities in downtown Salt Lake City, the RDA contributed $240,000 to the County’s acquisition of the historic Capitol Theatre on 200 South.

The restoration of the theater’s interior and exterior that followed would foreshadow the RDA’s continued support of historic preservation through future projects and programs. The RDA spent an additional $250,000 to construct the public plaza adjoining Symphony Hall (now Abravenel Hall) and the Salt Lake Arts Center (now Utah Museum of Contemporary Art), which sat just north of the convention center portion of the Salt Palace.

The Phillips Plaza project led to additional projects to which the RDA contributed over the next decade, including the directly adjacent St. Marks Towers, the Multi-Ethnic High Rise (120 S. 200 West), and Romney Park Plaza (475 E. 900 South). Between 1975 and 1984 the RDA contributed $920,000 to the construction of low-income senior housing developments in and around Downtown.

Identifying Salt Lake City’s specific need for more affordable housing units to serve the City’s senior population, the RDA partnered with the Housing Authority of Salt Lake City to acquire the land necessary to build Phillips Plaza at 660 S. 350 East, an area that would soon be established as the RDA’s Central City Project Area. The 100 units at Phillips Plaza provided low-income elderly and disabled households with independent living spaces, including on-site transportation, meal, and community services.

Senior Housing

With the 1974 inception of the Federal Community Development Block Grant Program, a widespread focus on the need for public housing projects emerged nationwide.
Project Areas

1980s

- West Temple Gateway
- Central Business District
- Central City
- Sugar House
- West Temple Gateway
The early-80s signified the period of time when Salt Lake City’s elected officials and community leaders became increasingly interested in creating more downtown housing to promote a more vibrant city center. With this new administrative direction, the RDA became actively involved in encouraging and supporting the construction of housing in the area, which included low-income senior housing, mixed-income apartments, middle-income condominiums and townhomes, and market-rate residences.

The RDA continued its support of the City’s arts and culture during this decade, with its 1984 inclusion of the City’s Percent-for-Art Program into its projects, allocating 1% of development costs for public improvements for art. Artworks funded by the RDA or created as part of redevelopment activities included murals, sculptures, and fountains. It also took on one of the City’s first artist live-work developments. With several projects underway in the Central City and Central Business District Project Areas, the RDA began looking at neighborhoods outside of Salt Lake City’s urban core. The Sugar House Project Area was created in 1986 to address specific issues outlined in the City’s Sugar House Master Plan, and the West Temple Gateway Project Area was created in 1987 to assist with the redevelopment of the automobile sales and service-oriented commercial and residential area directly southwest of Downtown.

City Creek flood diverted down State Street, 1983.

The RDA’s second decade marked the beginning of officially bounded redevelopment project areas. The densest neighborhoods of the City in which the RDA had focused its previous efforts were established in 1981 and 1983 as Central City and Central Business District, respectively.
The renovation of the Eccles Browning Warehouse on Pierpont Ave. between 300 and 400 West was the first in a long list of adaptive reuse projects the RDA would complete.

In 1982, the RDA provided a loan to a new non-profit developer to renovate the 80,000-square-foot industrial structure that had been housing wholesale produce companies since 1910. Preserving its exterior and many interior surfaces, the space was transformed to provide artists affordable living quarters, working studios, and backyard garden plots. The mixed-use project also included office space and retail storefronts.

Eccles Browning Warehouse

In 1983, the RDA stepped in to help Salt Lake City redevelop the area around another one of its oldest structures, the 1857 Devereaux House (334 W. South Temple), which had fallen into disrepair and sat amongst a vast amount of undeveloped land on Downtown’s west side.

The RDA worked with a developer to create a plan for the area that included a three-building, mixed-use development called the Triad Center. By 1984, Triad’s first phase was completed and consisted of 615,000 square feet of office and retail space, with private investment totaling $65 million. The RDA provided $4.5 million to finish the restoration of the Devereaux House, as well as public improvements to the surrounding streets, installation of drainage systems, and the creation of a public park. Later phases added an amphitheater, ice skating rink, and parking.

Triad Center & Devereaux House
Aligning with the City’s collective vision to bring more housing Downtown, the RDA focused its efforts on Block 49 in Downtown’s western area. Bounded by 200 West, 300 West, 300 South, and 400 South, Block 49 was slated to accommodate a variety of projects: housing, commercial, and community amenities.

Though additional complications impacted the speed of Block 49’s redevelopment in the following years, the RDA’s continued efforts ultimately resulted in the construction of the original mixed-use vision: affordable residential, hotel lodging, and a childcare center.

The block’s first 5.5-acre project was delayed when preliminary readying of the site revealed early Mormon pioneer and Native American graves. The RDA hired archaeologists to carefully search the entire site, resulting in the excavation and relocation of 33 sets of remains.

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Block 49

Deveraux House at Triad Center

1985
Upon the Utah Legislature’s changing of the redevelopment statute in 1989 that permitted redevelopment agencies to collect extended funding to facilitate convention center and sports facility projects, the RDA created a plan to redevelop a massive surface parking lot one block south of the newly constructed Triad Center into a world-class sports arena.

The RDA acquired the property and quickly got to work with development partners constructing a 20,400-seat arena that would host the City’s National Basketball Association franchise, the Utah Jazz, as well as other sports and entertainment events. The Delta Center (now Vivint Smart Home Arena), its surrounding plaza, and additional adjacent parking were completed in an astonishing 15 months and 24 days, opening in time for the 1991-92 basketball season. With a total investment of $24 million, the RDA had completed its largest project up to that point.

In 2016, approximately 25 years after completing the Delta Center’s construction, the RDA entered into a Tax Increment Reimbursement agreement with the Larry H. Miller Arena Corporation to help fund a $125 million renovation that would bring the facility up to current safety, security, and energy-efficiency standards, and keep the arena as a community asset and economic driver for years to come.
The 1990s represented a time of significant growth and change for the RDA. While the Utah Legislature’s changes to the Utah Neighborhood Development Act in 1993 reconfirmed the idea of conventional redevelopment serving a public purpose, the changes also put restrictions on the time frame during which redevelopment agencies could exercise eminent domain. The 1993 legislative change also empowered redevelopment agencies to become more involved in developing housing within their community, allowing up to 20% of available tax increment to be used for affordable housing.

To obtain third-party perspective and community representation on project development, the RDA established the Redevelopment Advisory Committee (RAC), an organization comprised of Salt Lake City residents with architectural, design, financial, construction, and legal expertise. RAC still stands today as a valuable group to which the RDA turns for recommendations on specific and challenging development-related issues.

The latter part of the 1990s brought the RDA’s Neighborhood Business Loan Program, which facilitated façade renovations, parking improvements, and electrical and structural upgrades for a number of small local businesses in RDA project areas. By 1999, this included three additional areas: West Capitol Hill, Depot District, and Granary District.

Between 1993 and 1999 the RDA assisted in a number of affordable housing projects, including: Artspace Rubber Company, Sedona, Citifront, Odyssey House, and Kathleen Robison Huntsman transitional housing. In addition to affordable housing, the RDA also spent the 1990s facilitating the development of some of Salt Lake City’s most beloved and enduring gathering spaces.
One of the RDA’s largest investments in its Central Business District Project Area has been the redevelopment of Block 57 (bounded by State Street, Main Street, 200 South, and 300 South) into a multi-faceted project that spans decades, with the majority of its construction activity occurring in the 1990s. The RDA’s acquisition of properties on Block 57 began in the 1980s, with a plan for a three-acre urban plaza, construction of a new hotel, and renovation of a historical building finalized by 1989.

Beginning with the construction of the One Utah Center office tower and parking garage in 1990, Block 57 was well on its way to transformation by 1993 when the RDA completed the construction of the public space component planned for the interior of the block, the John W. Gallivan Utah Center (commonly known as the “Gallivan Center”). Phases II and III followed, and by the end of the decade the Gallivan Center included an array of unique public art projects, performance stage and amphitheater, ice rink, green space for outdoor recreation, wayfinding, and retail storefronts on the adjacent midblock street, Gallivan Ave.

Upon the Gallivan Center’s completion and activation during the 2002 Olympic Winter Games, the RDA continued to invest in Block 57 with its facilitation of the Marriott Hotel development on the block’s northeast corner, and its essential role in the rehabilitation of the historic Brooks Arcade Building on the corner of 300 South and State Street.

The RDA’s diverse investment in Block 57 catalyzed additional adjacent development, in which the RDA also was involved. The former American Stores, now the Wells Fargo Tower, preserved 25% of its property with public easements, as well as parking and other public improvements to complement the Gallivan Center. In 2003, local television station KUTV received a renovation loan from the RDA to relocate its broadcasting facilities to the sidewalk-facing ground floor space of the Wells Fargo Tower, creating an interactive experience for Main Street pedestrians.

In 2010, after more than a decade of heavy public use, the Gallivan Center underwent a renovation project that included substantial infrastructure repair, ice rink reconfiguration, amphitheater expansion and technical upgrades, as well as the construction of a new multi-purpose building facing 100 South. The RDA’s 2015 improvements to the retail storefronts on Gallivan Avenue gave way to a new host of local retailers, establishing the street as a lunching niche for the daytime workforce, and creating a destination for Downtown visitors in the evening.
In 1993, the RDA joined with Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, and private entities to construct a new field and stadium to replace Salt Lake City’s minor league baseball stadium. Originally built in 1915, and then reconstructed in 1947 after a devastating fire, Derks Field had fallen into disrepair with sections of its bleachers officially condemned. Built on the same site as Derks at 1300 South and West Temple, the new Franklin Covey Field (now Smith’s Ballpark) was made possible through a variety of public and private funds, including $5.8 million committed by the RDA.

Through the creation and adoption of the 31-acre Salt Lake City Baseball Stadium Neighborhood Development Plan, the RDA not only funded a substantial part of the stadium structure, but also assisted in the construction of a surface parking lot immediately north of the stadium to reduce the impact on the adjacent residential neighborhoods. This multi-agency, public-private project created a major recreational anchor within the adjacent residential and commercial neighborhoods.
Having successfully completed substantial infrastructure improvements in between 1200 and 1300 East, as well as a number of renovation projects with small businesses along 2300 South, in the late-90s the RDA set its sights on creating the heart of the Sugar House Business District through a unique commercial-natural area development.

Commons at Sugar House & Hidden Hollow

Funded in-part by the RDA’s new Tax Increment Reimbursement Program, the 15-acre Commons at Sugar House Project not only fulfilled a commercial purpose, but also served the community. The heavily landscaped project provided ample underground and surface parking, accommodating visitors of the adjacent Sprague Branch of the Salt Lake City Public Library. It also linked to the Hidden Hollow Natural Area on which the RDA had been working with the community for years, including a group of motivated eco-conscious youngsters, Kids Organized to Protect our Environment (The KOPE Kids).

By Hidden Hollow’s completion in 1999, the RDA had invested approximately $700,000 towards its preservation and rehabilitation, including landscaping, installation of irrigation, overhead and perimeter lighting, observation deck along Parley’s Creek, and a naturally terraced amphitheater. New pathways, bridges, boardwalks, and trails throughout the area provided additional connectivity.
Project Areas

2000s

- Central Business District
- Central City
- Depot District
- Granary District
- Sugar House
- West Capitol Hill
- West Temple Gateway
As Utah’s capital city was preparing to host the Winter Olympic Games in February of 2002, a state-wide examination of its mass transit, housing, and recreational opportunities commenced. With Salt Lake City now in the national and international spotlight, the RDA spent the next decade flexing its tax increment financing muscles to play an increasing role in some of the City’s most transformative mixed-use (Gateway), transportation (TRAX), and housing (Metro Condominiums) projects.

Trolley Lane Buildings. It also managed the restoration of Sugar House’s iconic monument, which had deteriorated since its construction in 1930.

To continue addressing the perpetually changing needs of Downtown, the RDA’s Board of Directors and Taxing Entity Committee authorized an extension of the Central Business District Project Area in 2004. With a new sunset year of 2040, the Central Business District was now poised to benefit from new projects and programs that would address Downtown’s critical housing and revitalization needs. One such program was the RDA’s Main Street Grant Program, which allocated money to new and existing Main Street business owners.
By 2000, the plan for a major project on the west side of Downtown in the RDA’s new Depot District Project Area was well underway. The 40 nearly unused acres previously serving as a rail yard and passenger station would soon be home to The Gateway, a mixed-use, mixed-income development that would feature space for retail, entertainment venues, office, lodging, and underground parking. The Gateway would also house a children’s museum, planetarium, and large public plaza.

After participating in the extensive environmental assessment and remediation of the site, the RDA provided tax increment reimbursements for numerous project elements, including the public plaza and a portion of the construction costs for the underground parking. Incorporating and renovating the historic Union Pacific Depot on the east side of the property, the Gateway gave nod to the neighborhood’s past, while bringing new life to the local economic landscape by luring many national retail tenants to open their first-ever Utah locations.

Today, the Gateway is experiencing a rebirth as an entertainment destination. It continues to bring activity to the Rio Grande neighborhood west of Downtown Salt Lake City, through its hosting of community, arts, and cultural events.
After working for years to acquire 20 residential rental properties on and around Pugsley Street (located on the block between 500 and 600 North, and 300 and 400 West), in 2000 the RDA began a transformative two-phase project in its West Capitol Hill Project Area. Pugsley Street had long-suffered from physical decline and high crime rates. The RDA's goal was to improve housing in the area and increase owner-occupancy to add stabilization.

Pugsley East, the first phase of the Pugsley Street project, marketed six single-family homes to non-profit developers for renovation. Salt Lake Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) agreed to renovate the homes and sell them for owner-occupancy. The second phase, Pugsley West, included the construction of nine new single-family homes, which were developed by NHS and Salt Lake City’s Housing and Neighborhood Development Division (HAND). Six of the Pugsley East and West homes were sold at 80% AMI.

The RDA’s affection for supporting affordable housing projects in the historic neighborhoods of its West Capitol Hill Project Area has never waned. In 2012, the RDA partnered with the non-profit organization Preservation Utah (formerly known as Utah Heritage Foundation) to rehabilitate a small, historic home, also located on Pugsley Street, launching what would become known as the Preservation at Work Program. This program successfully rehabilitates historic homes and provides neighborhoods with additional single-family housing stock by working with community partners to learn historic renovation skills through on-site, hands-on, educational workshops. The RDA and Preservation Utah completed the rehabilitation of the second Preservation at Work House in 2018 when it cut the ribbon on 528 N. Arctic Court in West Capitol Hill’s Marmalade neighborhood.

The 2000s decade marked the RDA’s increased participation in transportation projects that would serve the people living and working in the neighborhoods that have benefitted from RDA investment for the past 30 years. The RDA has provided financial support to a number of Utah Transit Authority (UTA) light rail system projects, including its $2.45 million allocation for a portion of the design and construction of a 2003 TRAX line extension from its terminus at 400 West and South Temple to Downtown’s multi-modal transportation center, the Salt Lake City Intermodal Hub. The project included the construction of three new TRAX stations and several pieces of art at the Hub, now known as Salt Lake Central Station.

The RDA also contributed over $1 million toward the construction of the 900 South TRAX Station on 200 West in its West Temple Gateway Project Area. This was the first station to be built in a neighborhood, sparking future transit-oriented development (TOD) in the area. This work set the stage for another TRAX partnership in 2010 with UTA and the RDA constructed a light rail line between Salt Lake Central Station and Salt Lake City International Airport along North Temple Boulevard.
In April 2007, the RDA provided Shelter the Homeless II with a $3 million grant to assist in the acquisition and renovation of a former hotel at 999 S. Main Street. The terms of the arrangements guaranteed that 60 weekly rental single-room occupant (SRO) units would be provided for 25 years.

Palmer Court continues to provide permanent housing for chronically homeless men, women, and families that would otherwise use the shelter system as a long-term housing option.

The next year, the RDA would embark on its second SRO project, the Rio Grande Hotel in the Depot District Project Area. The RDA funded $4.25 million in repairs to the historic hotel and engaged a private operator to provide 49 weekly rental SRO units for low-income individuals.

In 2008, the RDA provided a $2.5 million renovation loan to Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals to transform a commercial building previously used as a bank into the non-profit organization’s international headquarters.

Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals HQ

At the time, this was the largest investment the RDA had made in the West Temple Gateway Project Area. Underutilized and vacant for years, the five-story building was now home to a team of committed professionals, who brought new activity to the edge of the project area, and utilized the then newly created 900 South TRAX station. Today, Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals still occupies the space.
Project Areas

2010s

- Central Business District
- Central City
- Depot District
- Granary District
- North Temple
- North Temple Viaduct
- Northwest Quadrant
- Sugar House
- West Capitol Hill
- West Temple Gateway
The fallout from the economic downturn of 2008 gave the RDA the opportunity to heavily utilize its acquisition tool to secure property around Salt Lake City, purchasing underutilized parcels in Depot District, Central Business District, and West Temple Gateway Project Areas. With the volatile real estate market still hindering private development, the RDA spent the early years of the decade formulating strategic plans that would put the purchased properties into the development mix when the time was right, and focusing on small-scale development, and placemaking projects in the meantime.

At this time, the expertise of RDA staff was broadening to include those with engineering, landscape architecture, urban design, planning, construction, and communications backgrounds. This diversified approach to project management facilitated an elevated level of expertise within the RDA that lent itself well to projects with environmental remediation, xeriscaping, urban forestry, and other technical elements.

Mid-decade, as the economic pendulum started to re-center itself, more private development opportunities on which the RDA could partner started to emerge. This ranged between one of the largest projects in the RDA’s history—the Eccles Theater in tandem with the reconstruction of historic Regent Street— to the small, but catalytic, neighborhood-scale Central Ninth Market that firmly established a business center in the West Temple Gateway Project Area.

The RDA also invested in outreach and community spaces anchored by shipping containers in its Granary District Project Area. These efforts yielded valuable community engagement and input on the vision for the area and rebalanced the Granary’s historical manufacturing reputation, differentiating it with a small-scale twist differentiating it with a small-scale twist. The RDA also invested in outreach and community spaces anchored by shipping containers. These efforts yielded valuable community engagement and input on the vision for the area and rebalanced the Granary’s historical manufacturing reputation, differentiating it with a small-scale twist.

The Granary District Project Area plans approved in 2015 creatively reflected the history of the neighborhood. The Granary District adaptive reuse development (Atmosphere, Fisher Brewing, and A-3 Project) and drew additional businesses to the area by offsetting costs of the renovation of auto garages and warehouses to serve new purposes. In 2018, the RDA commissioned local artists to adorn the blank sides of such industrial buildings with large-scale mural artworks that creatively reflected the history of the neighborhood.
With a Sugar House Project Area sunset date of 2015 on the horizon, in 2012 the RDA joined with the City’s Transportation Division, Utah Transit Authority, and South Salt Lake City to construct the 2-mile long Sugar House Streetcar line, later dubbed the “S Line.” Completed in 2014, the new transit line made a vital east-west connection between Sugar House’s commercial center and the Wasatch Front’s mass transit grid at the streetcar’s western terminus at the Central Point TRAX station.

To complement the new corridor and provide an asset to the community, the RDA worked with stakeholders to plan and develop the Sugar House Greenway, a linear park running parallel to the streetcar line from 500 East to McClelland Street featuring a pedestrian and bike path, public plazas, and extensive landscaping. The construction of the Greenway added five acres of public space to the Sugar House neighborhood.

Building on the addition of the S Line, Sugar House Greenway, and mixed-use redevelopment of Sugar House’s Granite Block, the RDA culminated its 28 years in the Sugar House community by taking on the funding, design, and renovation of Sugar House’s Monument Plaza. After input from the community, in fall of 2014, the RDA worked tirelessly to transform the plaza previously bisected by a roadway into a highly walkable, public space for pedestrians and special events that included nearly an acre of open space, new public art, and an interactive water feature that paid homage to the site’s original use as a waterway. A public event in June 2015 gathered the community to celebrate the plaza’s completion and the thriving Sugar House business district that surrounded it.

Between 2010 and 2015, the RDA invested $6.2 million to expand the transportation, green spaces, and public gathering areas in the heart of Sugar House, which resulted in a subsequent estimated investment of $200 million in private projects.
When Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County identified the need for a Broadway-style theater to elevate the Capitol City’s cultural core and provide greater arts access across the Wasatch Front, the RDA wasted no time in serving a vital role in securing and administering the funding of such a venue. This entailed the establishment of the Block 70 Community Reinvestment Area (bounded by Main Street, State Street, 100 South, and 200 South), and a combination of private funding and support from the Salt Lake City School District, Salt Lake City, and Salt Lake County. The RDA was also responsible for finding the theater’s location at 131 S. Main, taking the project from the early feasibility studies to site selection to acquisition, as well as managing the entire construction process.

As development of the Eccles Theater and neighboring 111 Main office tower commenced, the RDA championed improving the public spaces adjacent to the theater, most notably Regent Street, the long-neglected midblock street running parallel to Main Street in between 100 and 200 South. One of the City’s first midblock streets, historic Regent Street was home to many of the City’s first immigrant populations, and the Salt Lake Tribune was headquartered there for more than 80 years. Drawing from the street’s history, the RDA lead its reconstruction and engaged a skilled design team to implement improvements through a process driven by significant public input and involvement from property owners and Block 70 stakeholders.

On October 21, 2016, the state-of-the-art George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Theater opened, featuring a 2,500-seat main performance hall, an intimate black box theater, event and rehearsal spaces, a five-story grand lobby, patron and donor lounges, an upper outdoor terrace overlooking Main Street, and a galleria connecting the theater to the adjacent 111 Main office tower.

Not long after, the Regent Street Reconstruction Project was completed, which included the following improvements: “festival street” features such as covered walkways and pedestrian amenities; a public multi-use urban plaza; ground floor retail spaces; and a secure, lighted, landscaped midblock walkway to Main Street, allowing for easy transit access and inviting sightlines into the center of the block.
In 2012, the RDA purchased the vacant Kiwanis-Felt Boys and Girls Club recreation building and .57-acre property with a vision of creating a place that would serve the surrounding community. The RDA identified the site as optimal for a transit-oriented, mixed-use development because of its central location in between the University of Utah and Downtown, and half-block away from the TRAX light rail system.

The RDA prepared the site for redevelopment by conducting careful environmental remediation to ensure the safety of the land, and also coordinated with Salt Lake City Public Utilities to relocate the Jordan-Salt Lake canal out from under the future construction site. This was a complicated process that was completed in early 2014, upon which the property was sold at a substantial discount to the Housing Authority of Salt Lake City for redevelopment.

After a groundbreaking in August of 2015, construction began and less than two years later the 9th East Lofts mixed-income, mixed-use project was complete.

Today, 9th East Lofts is strengthening and supporting the community through affordability, easy access to public transit, and ground-floor commercial spaces that activate a common, outdoor plaza. The building’s common areas feature salvaged hardwood gymnasium floors, backstops, scoreboards, and lockers from the original Boys & Girls Club in the common space. Of the six-story building’s 68 units, 54 are rented at no more than 60% of the area median income and 22 accommodate special needs residents.
Central Ninth Neighborhood

By the mid-2010s, the RDA had steadily invested nearly two decades of time and funding to revitalize West Temple Gateway’s public spaces through TRAX line beautification and 900 South station infrastructure, alleyway improvements, public art, and a community garden. It had also participated in residential projects, including the Second West Apartments and Washington Street Town Homes. In the commercial realm, the RDA-supported Atlas Architects / Blue Copper Coffee Project (175 W. 900 South) was warmly received by the area’s residents and business owners once it was completed in 2013.

In 2015, construction on a small-scale commercial cornerstone for the neighborhood began. The 9,216-square-foot Central Ninth Market building was designed to fit into the neighborhood, featuring a horizontal mixed-use design that preserved visibility from the street. Central Ninth Market in new home to five locally owned small businesses and one non-profit, and has successfully solidified Central Ninth’s commercial corridor.

At the same time the Central Ninth Market was being built, the RDA was involved with the City’s Planning Division in changing the neighborhood’s zoning to accommodate more density, while still preserving character of scale. With the new form-based zoning in place, the RDA was able to facilitate the new construction of a single-family home featuring a detached dwelling unit (DDU) in an effort to stabilize Jefferson Street with owner-occupied housing.

Circling back to its very first midblock project that connected Dinwoody Plaza to Killowatt Park on Downtown’s Block 58, the RDA continued its long-standing goal to make the City’s neighborhoods more pedestrian-friendly and walkable by embarking on a public space project that would create a midblock walkway from Central Ninth’s residential Jefferson Street to the 900 South TRAX station on 200 West. The resulting Jefferson Street Midblock Walkway was the first-of-its-kind walkway in the City, as its design accommodated the building of new residential cottage homes to look upon the public pedestrian space. Completed in 2018, the six, neighborhood-scale houses facing the walkway provide a local presence to help keep the new walkway amenity active and safe.

This led to the RDA working with the community to establish a vision for the rising neighborhood business district along 900 South from West Temple to 300 West, including its branding as “Central Ninth.” In its outreach work with Central Ninth-adjacent residents and property owners, the RDA determined the best strategy for establishing a neighborhood commercial center was to focus on small, local businesses.

The Jefferson Street Midblock Walkway
Project Areas

Block 70
Central Business District
Granary District
North Temple
North Temple Viaduct
Northwest Quadrant
State Street
West Capitol Hill
9th Line

2020’s & Beyond
The RDA will continue investing in Salt Lake City, focusing on redevelopment projects in its 10 active project areas: 9 Line, Block 70, Central Business District, Depot District, Granary District, North Temple, North Temple Viaduct, Northwest Quadrant, State Street, and West Capitol Hill. Many future projects are already underway.

By the time 2020 begins, the largest public art installation in the City’s history will call Block 70’s Regent Street home, and the Granary District will have welcomed another adaptive reuse renovation project. Soon after, the West Temple Gateway Project Area will serve as the headquarters for two organizations—a large-scale design firm and a non-profit digital media group. The Union Station Hotel historic restoration project is slated to break ground in the Depot District Project Area in 2020.

The RDA will continue its substantial support of citywide affordable housing projects, with $23.8 million of funding already committed to projects that include affordable residential units in the pipeline, including Pamela’s Place, Paperbox Lofts, The Exchange, Capitol Homes Apartments, Overniter Motel redevelopment, and 255 S. State Street.

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2020s & Beyond
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