

# Quality Neighborhoods Initiative

## MISSION

**To stabilize and revitalize Ogden’s neighborhoods as “neighborhoods of choice” by establishing a pattern of public investment that catalyzes desirable and appropriate community development.**

Quality Neighborhoods are healthy neighborhoods that include the following summary components (See Appendix A for additional characteristics):

- **Variety** (commercial / residential / mixed-use / usable open space)
- **Multi-modal transportation** (pedestrians / bicycles / drivers)
- **Visual interest and memorable experiences** (quality site design and architectural features / preserved historic elements / diverse population)
- **Meaningful citizen interaction and social activities** (open Space / public space / community connection points)
- **A secure and safe environment** (community involvement / decent, affordable housing / low crime rate)
- **Promotes economic sustainability** (adaptability / longevity / strong and developing tax base / quality educational opportunities)

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

An active and vibrant public and private investment environment is critical to the development of Quality Neighborhoods. Accomplishing this in challenged neighborhoods involves identifying existing or potential locations of concentrated strength, removing impediments to their success, and building on them with targeted, focused investments. Successful interventions will:

1. **Concentrate resources and target interventions** to establish and encourage investment in the components that make up a Quality Neighborhood.
2. **Focus on creating communities of choice** by promoting and supporting an environment of unique homes with general market demand.
3. **Identify and build on strengths** by focusing on areas exhibiting a higher degree of Quality Neighborhood characteristics, by investing in historic structures, and preserving and promoting architecture that contributes to the unique character and value of legacy neighborhoods.
4. **Build confidence in the market** by maintaining critical momentum through appropriate velocity and scale of investments.
5. **Overcome impediments to success** by establishing a strong declared intent to the public that the City will take steps necessary to assure quality projects are supported.

## FRAMEWORK

1. **Market Values:** Address the imbalance between the inventory of substandard housing and the smaller inventory of existing and new market rate housing that creates a demand for housing within the neighborhood. Substandard housing will be reduced or eliminated by making existing houses safe and code-compliant, and by implementing strategies that will restore real estate market values. Restoring market values will allow people to invest confidently in historic housing within these neighborhoods. Such strategies will increase private investment, reduce the rate of disinvestment, and improve the standards of care in homes and apartments.
2. **Neighborhood Targeting:** Maximize the impact of funding and revitalization efforts by establishing neighborhood target areas that may show signs of blight but exhibit a higher degree of Quality Neighborhood characteristics. Create a master urban renewal area (“**URA**”) in the East Central Planning Community, with imbedded staged implementation areas, to facilitate project development and financing. Target areas may also be established to synergize with a public or private improvement project. Considerations for boundaries include, but are not limited to, neighborhood identity, stakeholder participation, revitalization needs, and funding levels.
3. **Property Targeting:** Focus on areas of concentrated blight and increase the rate of owner-occupancy by targeting specific, influential historic properties for renovation or conversion. Quality neighborhoods with predominantly single family housing have a high owner-occupancy rate. Select properties that will offer maximum visual market impact. This targeted approach is much different than the concept of repairing as many houses as possible in as large an area as possible.
4. **Recipients:** Do not focus only on houses and households with greatest needs. Respond to severe problems, but focus on houses and diverse homeowners with good potential for strengthening prices and raising housing maintenance standards. Select projects which help balance and create healthy diversity in neighborhood income levels.
5. **Programs:** Develop a variety of flexible financial incentives to support the mission and its objectives. In addition to stabilizing and improving the affordable housing stock, programs will focus on creating a mix of market rate owner-occupied and rental housing at levels comparable to regional levels. Although subsidized rental housing is a critical element of the housing resource, rent subsidy programs must be used as a neighborhood **revitalization tool**, and not as a way to build inventory.
6. **Funding:** Develop new and innovative funding sources to implement strategies. These will include on-going BDO Lease Revenue allocations, State funding, Community Reinvestment Act investments, as well as private and other non-governmental funding.
7. **Standards:** Address conditions contributing to blight. Evaluate, update, and coordinate relevant City ordinances. Rather than simply enforcing minimum standards, create expectations of quality rehabilitation, maintenance and good design.

8. **Marketing and Delivery:** Market targeted neighborhoods, encourage block projects, pride in community, and resident leadership. Enhance delivery efforts through City interdepartmental coordination, as well as coordination with outside groups and stakeholders.

## GENERAL STRATEGIES

To plan for the use of federal Housing and Community Development Block Grant dollars, Ogden City adopts a Consolidated Plan every five years, and an Action Plan each year. Ogden City adopts Community Plan Elements as a function of its General Plan. Ogden City has also adopted an East Central Revitalization Strategy. The following General Strategies bring these various plans and strategies together in a focused manner to implement an overarching Quality Neighborhoods approach to revitalizing neighborhoods in Ogden.

### Targeting

1. **Geographic Targeting:** Success of the East Central Planning Community has the greatest effect of any neighborhood on the economic viability of downtown Ogden because of its proximity to the downtown. Within this context, the greatest opportunity for success lies in geographically targeting neighborhoods and potential project sites that currently demonstrate a higher degree of Quality Neighborhood attributes and build on these “bright spots.” The neighborhood between Harrison and Monroe Boulevards and 23<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Streets is one of the priority areas. The Jefferson Avenue Historic District and adjacent properties east and west of the District is another priority area. The area surrounding the Dee School is preparing for transition, and is another priority area. Other priority target areas and project sites may be selected based upon need, opportunity, and funding.

A. Focus on improvements at the block level to maximize their impact. Attempt to impact at least 15% of properties on each block to achieve the critical mass needed for change. Coordinate housing improvements with all other neighborhood improvements, infrastructure improvements, and services.

B. Identify highly visible properties along the entry corridors of 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Streets and Harrison Boulevard that need reinvestment or occupancy changes to improve the neighborhood. Give priority to these property improvements.

C. Continue the revitalization efforts that began in the Eccles Historic District and radiate out in all directions within the priority target area.

D. In the Dee School neighborhood, identify and invest in properties available for renovation and resale, as well as properties suitable for infill development as a means of increasing owner-occupancy and elevating neighborhood design and maintenance standards. As the new Dee School is built, maximize the neighborhood impact by undertaking a well-designed housing infill project.

E. Facilitate the success of existing neighborhood organizations and foster new Neighborhood Watch organizations to encourage citizen participation in planning and implementing neighborhood revitalization efforts.

F. Implement *Section D. - Community Plan Implementation* - of the East Central Community Plan section of the General Plan.

2. **Property targeting:** High profile “eyesore” properties are impediments to the success of other projects and need to be improved or redeveloped. A significant percentage of these properties need to be improved to create the critical mass needed for change.

A. Develop infill housing in target areas with designs that are compatible with and enhance the scale and character of existing housing. Pricing should be on the leading edge of the market.

B. Purchase, rehabilitate, and resell problem properties primarily in target neighborhoods and entry corridors. Partner with nonprofit organizations and private developers to increase capacity and the number of homes impacted.

C. Continue to implement the “HUD Asset Control Area” program for the purchase of HUD foreclosures for rehabilitation and resale.

D. Continue the Home Exterior Loan Program to encourage existing owners to address needs such as roofs, porches, paint, windows, concrete, fencing, and sprinklers, improve the overall appearance of the neighborhood, and restore confidence in the market.

E. Utilize the Unit Reduction Program to eliminate apartments in converted homes with the goal of restoring the homes back into owner occupancy.

F. Focus the Rental Rehabilitation Loan Program on properties that were originally built as apartments, and that have strategic or historic importance in target neighborhoods.

G. Maintain the Emergency Home Repair Program as a safety net for home repairs on properties owned by low and moderate income households.

H. Provide increased focus of zoning and housing code enforcement to meet the purposes of re-establishing neighborhood standards and reconnecting neighbors.

I. Enforce the relative ordinances on dangerous/vacant buildings. Provide prompt decisions for rehabilitation or demolition.

3. **RDA Restructuring:** Evaluate the RDA districts in the East Central area for closure or restructuring into a new master district. Draft and get approved the state legislation needed to allow the creation of a new master district in the East Central area. This would streamline the process and allow for the staged implementation of smaller sub-areas in a coordinated and timely fashion. Establish the declared intent to use RDA authority under the strictly controlled processes outlined by State law, to acquire properties in support of approved projects after all other remedies are exhausted. Availability of this tool is critical to implementation of the Initiative. Actual use of the authority would require a separate vote of the RDA Board.

## Resource Development

### 1. **Ordinance Support:**

A. Update and align the Ogden City ordinances relating to housing, buildings and neighborhood standards. Relevant ordinances include the following: Substandard Buildings, Vacant Buildings, Demolition by Neglect, Dangerous Buildings, Good Landlord, Land Banking, Receivership, Nuisance Abatement, and the entire Zoning Code.

B. Increase the effectiveness of enforcement. Establish training parameters and enforcement procedures to teach effective implementation of ordinances.

2. **Funding Support:** Provide consistent and adequate incentive capital to give targeted areas an advantage. The program guidelines associated with this Strategy enable the City Council to establish parameters which allow staff to act quickly to address opportunities for investment of City funds. Further Council approval is needed only after predevelopment work is completed on larger development projects.

A. BDO Lease Revenue Appropriations: Five year priority of \$1 million dollars annually. Primary uses will be for pre-development and other costs related to infill housing, stabilization of market rental housing, and housing purchase/resale in support of infill projects.

B. State Funding: Request that the State Legislature allocate funds for the Unit Reduction Program to accelerate the progress of converting homes back to their original single family condition.

C. Private & Non-Governmental Funding: Develop relationships and means for Utah Banks to invest Community Reinvestment Act allocations into Ogden City projects, and other initiatives in support of this Strategy.

D. Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits: Develop a new program which assists owners of properties listed on the National Historic Register to utilize the income tax credits available to them through their investment in eligible home repairs.

E. Redevelopment Tax Credit: Develop draft Utah legislation which would establish a state income tax credit granted to owners of blighted properties that are redeveloped.

F. Land Bank Authority: Develop draft Utah legislation which would authorize creation of a legal entity that could acquire and hold properties that would otherwise go to tax sale for future development. .

G. Grant Writing: Establish an ongoing effort to research and write grant proposals for federal and other funds which meet the goals and objectives of this Initiative.

3. **Infrastructure Alignment:** Coordinate infrastructure improvements with neighborhood improvements and development projects for maximum effectiveness. Study public parks, public lighting, and proper maintenance of public spaces as a backdrop for future funding decisions.

4. **Social Programs:** Provide a link to and continue support of social programs that enable City residents to increase and maximize personal opportunities.

## **Marketing & Delivery**

1. **Market Targeting:** Implement a marketing campaign to attract middle-income homebuyers and long-term renters from outside the neighborhoods and keep the stable owners and renters from leaving the neighborhoods.

A. Continue to implement the Own In Ogden Program to increase owner-occupancy rates in the target area. Identify funding for use in the Own in Ogden program for households with incomes of 80% Area Median Income and above.

B. Use CIP, CDBG and other funds for public improvements which improve neighborhood appearance and increase curb appeal of homes in the neighborhood.

C. Survey the neighborhood to identify strong families committed to the neighborhood.

D. Increase homeownership in the targeted neighborhoods to achieve ratios comparable to regional ratios.

E. Develop leadership-training symposiums targeted to East Central residents. Partner with Weber State University or the University of Utah to present leadership workshops.

F. Develop a marketing program with realtors, neighborhood organizations, residents, etc....which includes newsletters, flyers, booths at community events, special newspaper articles, a neighborhood fair, etc.

G. Develop a housing partnership with Weber State University to encourage students, faculty and administrators to meet their housing needs by choosing East Central and other established target neighborhoods for their residency.

H. Establish pioneering assistance funds and employer outreach programs to provide incentives for employees to purchase homes in East Central.

2. **Training & Education:** Implement Code Enforcement Officer training to enforce the new or coordinated ordinances. Establish awareness of the ordinances among other City staff involved in neighborhoods and housing, and involve them in the reporting process.

3. **Opportunity:** Policies and procedures adopted by the City Council will establish broader parameters to allow staff to take advantage of development and regeneration opportunities as they arise.

## Appendix "A"

### Additional Quality Neighborhood Characteristics

#### Demographic Characteristics

1. Contain a mix of incomes with ratios close to regional trends.

#### Housing Characteristics

1. A mix of housing options is available to meet the needs of various household sizes and incomes.
2. Owner-Renter ratios are comparable to regional ratios.
3. Value trends are comparable to regional trends.
4. Housing is occupied at or below designed capacity.
5. Long-term vacant structures do not exist.
6. Private property is maintained in good repair. Rentals are visibly indistinguishable.
7. Housing design is compatible with and enhances the scale and character of existing housing.
8. Unit density is appropriate to neighborhood needs and characteristics.

#### Social Characteristics

1. Neighborhood is organized into associations which provide opportunities to develop identity, effect change, and access community and other resources.
2. Neighbors are provided with opportunities to be involved in regular social and recreational events.

#### Environmental Characteristics

1. Area is reasonably quiet and not subjected to excessive traffic, industrial or other noise.
2. No disproportionate environmental hazards or nuisances exist.
3. There is a low level of crime achieved through neighborhood watch, community policing, and citizen commitment.
4. A dispersed traffic flow is facilitated by grid network with calming to accommodate and promote pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

#### Facilities and Services

1. Infrastructure is maintained.
2. Recreational facilities, both active and passive, are accessible.
3. Quality public transit is easily accessible.
4. High quality and well maintained schools serve residents.
5. Commercial services necessary to meet daily needs are available with no incompatible uses.
6. Work opportunities are within a reasonable distance.
7. Civic and governmental facilities and services are easily accessible.