BUILDING OUR FUTURE

A COMMUNITY HOUSING WORKSHOP SERIES

DRAFT

FINAL REPORT   2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sandy City is currently navigating a pivotal moment in its development. To address the dual challenges of rising housing costs and a severe shortage of diverse housing options, the Sandy City Council and Administration initiated a multi-phase workshop process in 2025. This report details the strategic journey from identifying 48 specific housing "problems" to establishing a unified vision and an implementation roadmap for 2026 and beyond.

The findings emphasize a shift toward three actionable pillars: Variety, Location, and Ownership. By incentivizing missing middle housing (such as duplexes and ADUs), focusing density in transit-oriented centers and corridors, and utilizing tools like development agreements to prioritize owner-occupancy, Sandy City aims to expand affordability while maintaining neighborhood character.

LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Beginning in 2026, the City will move beyond the "what" and "where" to specific legislative and administrative actions:

Diversifying Housing

Legalizing "gentle infill" such as small-lot single-family homes, detached ADUs, and "mansion-style" multi-family units.

Strategic Density

Directing high-density growth toward "The Cairns" and commercial centers while requiring context-sensitive infill in established neighborhoods.

Public Benefits

Trading increased density, accelerated permit approvals, and other incentives for "deed-restricted" affordability, owner occupancy, and other public benefits that meet our housing vision.

Regulatory Tools

Implementing a hybrid regulatory process consisting of Form-Based Codes, Overlay Zoning, and By-Right Approvals to provide a predictable path for high-quality and affordable housing development.

OVERVIEW
BUILDING OUR FUTURE— A COMMUNITY HOUSING WORKSHOP SERIES

The housing landscape in Sandy and across the state of Utah has undergone a dramatic transformation over the last several decades. The widening gap between household income and housing costs, along with the rate of demand and available housing units, have created an urgent need for the City to rethink its land-use policies and development review processes.

Workshops #1 and #2 (July 1 and July 22, 2025) featured industry experts, elected officials, and city staff. These sessions were designed to move beyond individual concerns and toward a shared understanding of the factors impeding housing affordability in our community. This report represents the culmination of that collaborative effort.

◆ Identifying the Challenge

A key phase of this initiative involved identifying and documenting an extensive list of 48 housing issues and categorizing them into ten distinct areas including severe housing shortages, limited variety in housing stock, and neighborhood opposition. Through a prioritization process, elected officials identified the most critical obstacles:

Missing Middle Gap— Supply vs. Demand	Cost Drivers	Neighborhood & Community Opposition
Current zoning practices often limit the development of housing types between single-family homes and large apartment complexes, contributing to a fundamental shortage of middle housing units.	Rising land and construction costs, coupled with other development obstacles, have pushed home prices beyond the reach of first-time buyers.	Residents depend on their community character for lifestyle and financial stability, and often view changes to their neighborhoods, such as an increase in higher-density housing, as threats to that livelihood.

◆ A Unified Vision

Following the identification of these issues, Workshop #3 (September 2, 2025) focused on developing a vision statement to guide future policy. This statement serves as the framing constraint for all proposed growth, explicitly emphasizing owner-occupancy and thoughtfully increasing housing stock variety.

> "
> *To ensure continued sustainability and to maintain the character of our city - Our goal is to encourage housing and housing affordability for residents across all stages of life. We want to encourage, allow and incentivize a larger variety of housing (including housing for seniors, first time home buyers, middle housing, and workforce housing), more housing (in the right locations) and we want the housing to be owner occupied.*
> "
>
> **— Unified Vision**

◆ From Vision to Action

The next component of this report details the transition from high-level goals to concrete results. After identifying and detailing these shared, high-level goals, Workshops #4 and #5 (October 14 and December 16, 2025) shifted focus toward achieving concrete outcomes. By leveraging feedback from the final workshops, Sandy City has identified three overarching strategies:

1 | **Incentivize Variety**
Legalize diverse housing types like "mansion-style" multi-family and small-lot single-family homes.

2 | **Target Strategic Locations**
Place higher-density housing in "right locations," such as neighborhood activity centers and corridors, while keeping "gentle infill" in established neighborhoods.

3 | **Encourage Ownership and Quality Design**
Use development agreements and overlay zones to trade regulatory flexibility for guaranteed community gains, such as deed-restricted owner-occupancy and high-quality design standards that preserve Sandy's character.

Implementation and Next Steps

The final phase of this initiative moves beyond the "what" and "where" to define the specific legislative and administrative actions required to achieve the City's housing goals. The implementation plan is built upon four primary objectives: legalizing "gentle infill" such as detached ADUs and mansion-style multi-family units to support the workforce and seniors ; directing high-density growth toward transit-oriented centers like "The Cairns"; and utilizing density bonuses and accelerated approvals to incentivize major public benefits, such as deed-restricted affordable and owner-occupied housing. To ensure these changes enhance rather than disrupt neighborhood stability, the City will further explore the deployment of a hybrid set of regulatory tools like Form-Based Codes, By-Right Approval Packages, and Development Agreements to mandate high-quality design and owner-occupancy.

Timeline

March 31, 2026
Presentation of progress and recommendations for external Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to the Council.

April 14, 2026
Staff presentation of City and RDA-owned property with potential for future housing projects, including a recommendation for an initial test case.

April 21, 2026
Staff presentation of initial recommendations for the interconnected use of Development Agreements, By-Right Approvals, and incentive programs

FOLLOWING COUNCIL ADOPTION
This report will be provided to the consultant hired to re-write the Sandy City Land Development Code. They will use this report to address all identified strategic priorities—specifically Variety, Location, and Ownership—and will ultimately propose a comprehensive regulatory framework for the City.

SECTION TWO:
IDENTIFYING & PRIORITIZING ISSUES

Before working on solutions, the Sandy City Council and Administration needed to come to a shared understanding of what issues are impeding housing affordability in Sandy and in Utah. The first two housing affordability workshops featured presentations from industry experts, stakeholders, and data analysts, who all shared their perspectives on what factors are contributing to rising housing costs. City staff collected and documented those issues into an extensive list of 48 problems broken down into ten categories:

A.	Severe Housing Shortages	**F.**	Neighborhood & Community Opposition
B.	Soaring Housing Costs	**G.**	Rising Construction & Land Costs
C.	Widening Gap Between Income & Housing Costs	**H.**	Developer/ Buying Financing, Funding, & Insurance Needs
D.	Limited Housing Stock Variety	**I.**	Aging Housing Stock
E.	Zoning and Land Use Regulations	**J.**	Transportation

The full extended list of "Housing Affordability: The Problems" is attached to this report in the Appendixes.

NARROWING THE FOCUS

An *"Issues Prioritization"* process was developed by Sandy City staff to narrow the list of housing affordability issues into a mutually agreed upon, streamlined list of issues that Sandy City would address first. A short housing questionnaire was distributed to the Sandy City Council Members and Mayor, asking the elected officials to anonymously select, and then rank, their top ten housing affordability issues. The first question asked respondents to select up to ten issues out of the list of the 48 identified issues. The second question then pulled their unique ten selected issues and asked respondents to order the issues in highest (#1) to lowest (#10) priority.

Housing Workshop Priorities Questionnaire

This questionnaire will identify and prioritize your top housing affordability concerns in Sandy. The responses to this questionnaire will directly inform the discussion at the September 2nd Housing Workshop.

Housing Issues

To best fit the questionnaire format, only the bolded titles from the Questionnaire Reference Sheet are listed. The issues below have been numbered to correspond with the Questionnaire Reference Sheet.

Results of the survey were sent to Council Staff, who compiled the data into several graphs, depicting various aspects of the questionnaire results. The graphs are color coded so that each individual selection represents their overall category based on color.
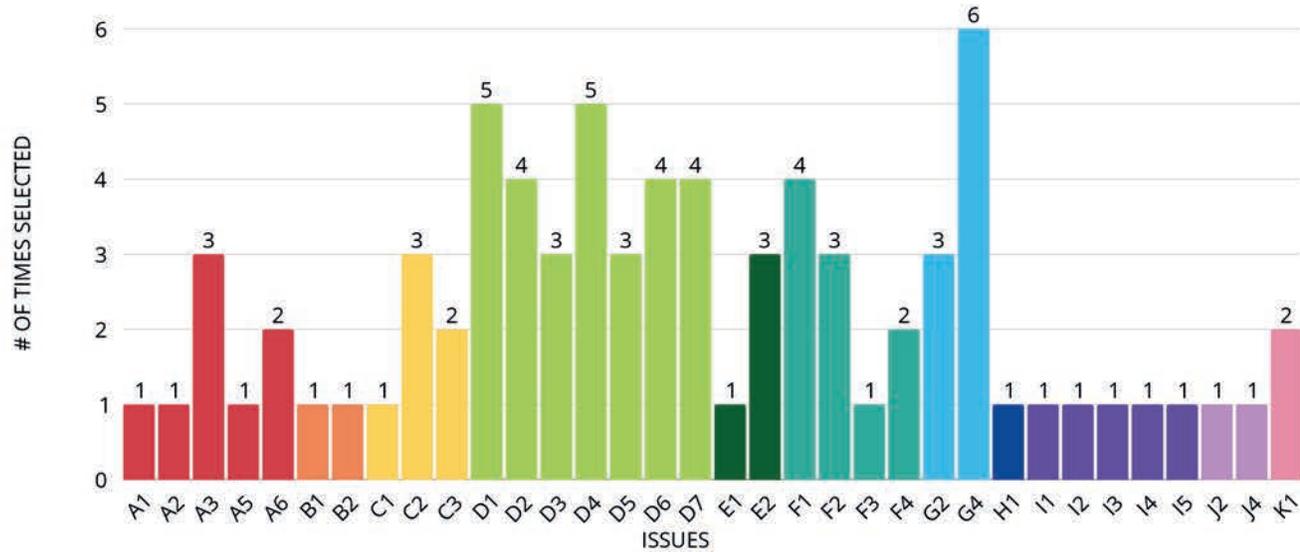
GRAPH 1
ALL SELECTED CATEGORIES
CATEGORIES W/ ZERO SELECTIONS EXCLUDED

Graph 1 shows the number of times each issue was selected in the first question by individual respondents. The Y axis shows the number of times an issue was selected out of a total possible score of eight, and the X axis labels the issue selected. Any issues that did not receive any selection by the eight respondents were excluded from the graph.
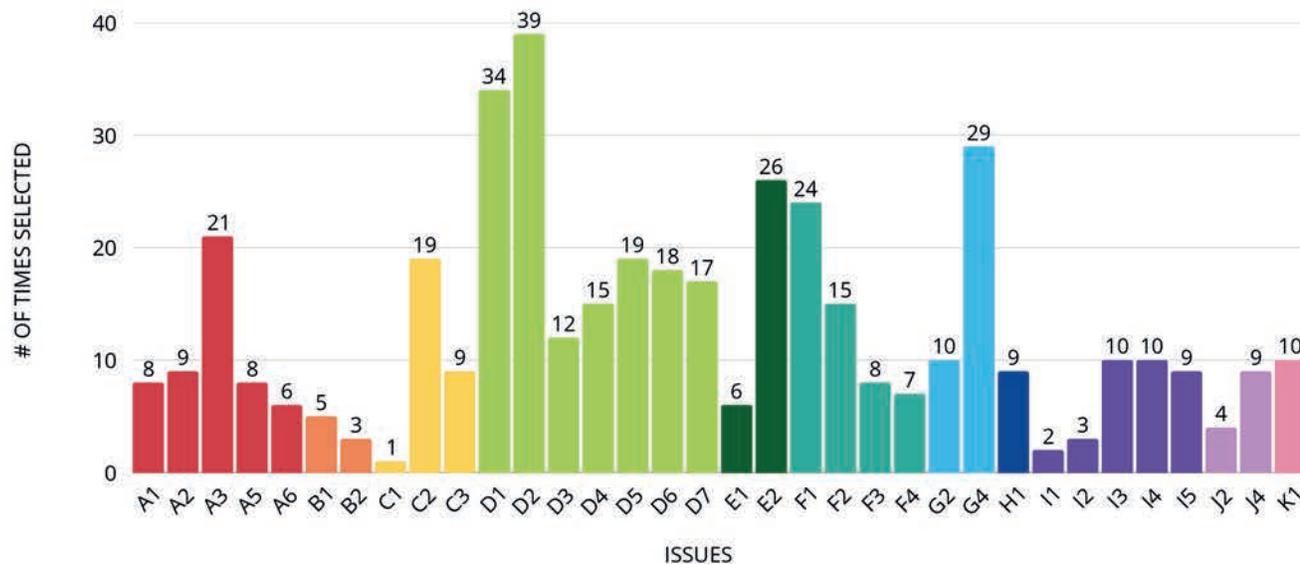

Graph 1 — # OF TIMES SELECTED (Y axis) vs ISSUES (X axis). Values: A1=1, A2=1, A3=3, A5=1, A6=2, B1=1, B2=1, C1=1, C2=3, C3=2, D1=5, D2=4, D3=3, D4=5, D5=3, D6=4, D7=4, E1=1, E2=3, F1=4, F2=3, F3=1, F4=2, G2=3, G4=6, H1=1, I1=1, I2=1, I3=1, I4=1, I5=1, J2=1, J4=1, K1=2.

GRAPH 2
WEIGHTED RESULTS
CATEGORIES W/ ZERO SELECTIONS EXCLUDED

Graph 2 represents the results of the second questionnaire question— the priority rankings. After selecting up to ten issues, respondents were then asked to rank those issues from highest (#1) to lowest (#10) priority. A numerical score was then assigned to each selected priority based on rank, as displayed in the graph below.

Graph 2 — # OF TIMES SELECTED (Y axis) vs ISSUES (X axis). Values: A1=8, A2=9, A3=21, A5=8, A6=6, B1=5, B2=3, C1=1, C2=19, C3=9, D1=34, D2=39, D3=12, D4=15, D5=19, D6=18, D7=17, E1=6, E2=26, F1=24, F2=15, F3=8, F4=7, G2=10, G4=29, H1=9, I1=2, I2=3, I3=10, I4=10, I5=9, J2=4, J4=9, K1=10.

✦ SCORING SYSTEM

The results for Graph 2 were calculated using a weighted numerical system based on the respondents' chosen ranks. After selecting up to ten issues, respondents were then asked to rank those issues from highest (#1) to lowest (#10) priority. A numerical score was then assigned to each selected priority based on rank.

✦ EXAMPLE SCORING (ISSUE D1)

Scores of selected and prioritized issues were then combined to find the total weighted ranking result for each issue. For example, issue D1 (Limited Options Between Large Single-Family Homes and Apartments) was selected by five respondents, and received a total weighted score of 34.

Priority #	Assigned Score
1 (highest priority)	10
2	9
3	8
4	7
5	6
6	5
7	4
8	3
9	2
10 (lowest priority)	1

| Ranking Calculation for Issue D1		
Respondent	Rank	Assigned Score
1	10	10
2	3	8
3	2	9
4	Not Chosen	0
5	9	2
6	6	5
7	Not Chosen	0
8	Not Chosen	0
		Total Score: **34**

GRAPH 3
RANKINGS AND SELECTIONS
CATEGORIES W/ ZERO SELECTIONS EXCLUDED

Graph 3 summarizes all collected data. The X-axis lists the issues selected by respondents (unselected issues are excluded). For each issue, the first bar shows how many times it was selected, and the second bar shows the combined total of its priority ranking scores.


FIRST NUMBER - # OF TIMES SELECTED
SECOND NUMBER - RANKING TOTAL
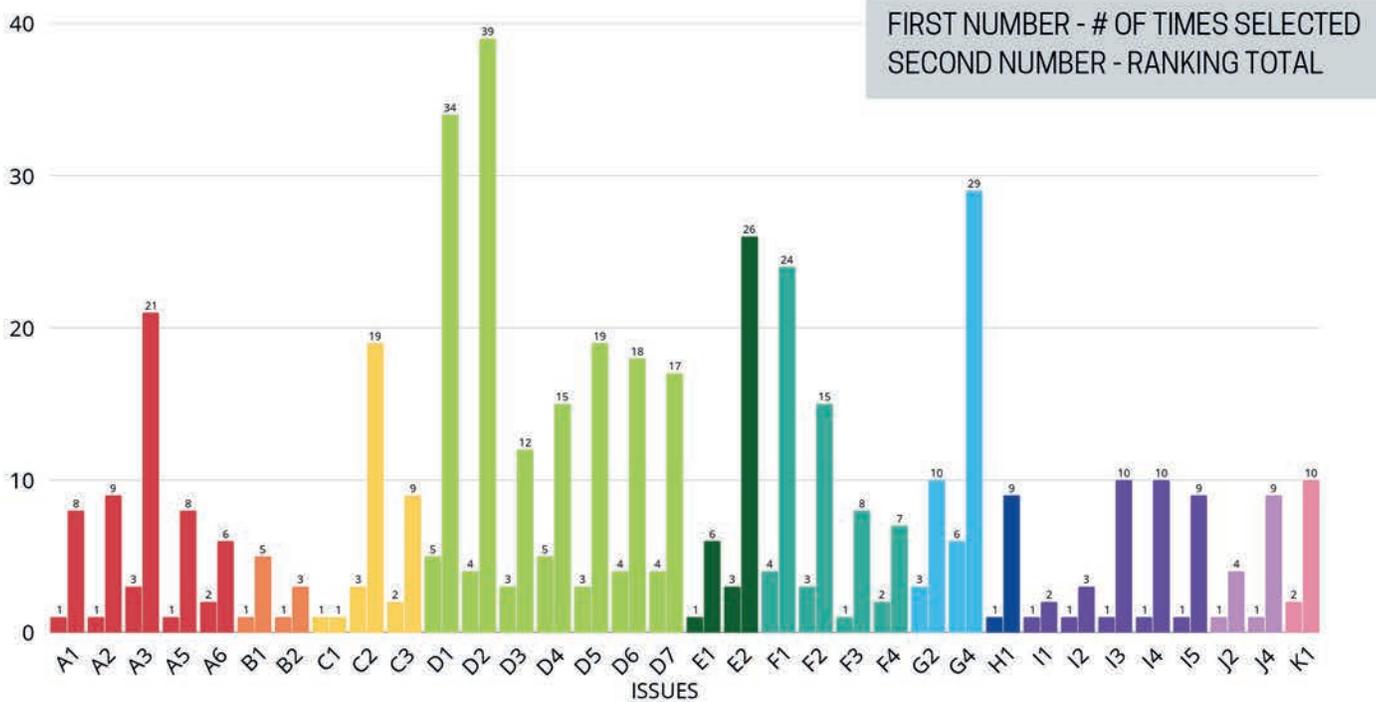
ISSUES

KEY FOR ISSUES WITH A SCORE OF 10 OR MORE

- **A3: Focus on Single Family Homes**
- **C2: Impact of Renting on Wealth Building**
- **D1: Limited Options Between Large SF Homes & Apartments**
- **D2: Obstacles to Middle Housing**
- **D3: Appearance and Neighborhood Integration**
- **D4: Housing for Seniors**
- **D5: Lack of Affordable Options for First Time Homebuyers**
- **D6: Housing Diversity for a Wide Range of Demographics**
- **D7: Minimal Construction of Smaller Homes**
- **E2: Low Condominium Construction (Lack of For Sale Units)**
- **F1: Restrictive Zoning Codes**
- **F2: Lack of Alternative Zoning Models and Flexibility**
- **G2: Appearance is Key (Aesthetic Concerns from Residents)**
- **G4: Lack of Tools to Enforce Owner Occupancy**
- **I3: High Interest Rates**
- **I4: Lack of Housing Assistance**
- **K1: Public Transportation Access**

GRAPH 4
CATEGORIES SELECTED THREE TIMES OR MORE

To condense the data and streamline the discussion process, staff also compiled data of issues that were chosen by three or more respondents. In Graph 4, the Y axis shows the number of times an issue was selected, and the X axis shows the selected issue. From the list of 48 identified issues, 14 were selected by three or more respondents.
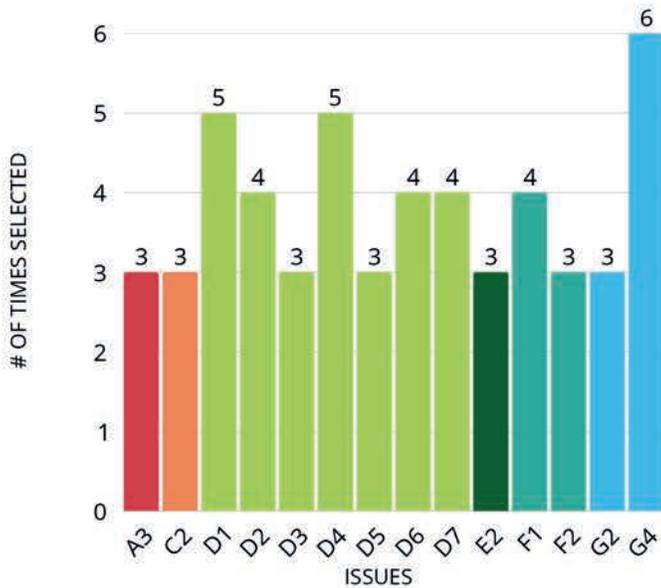

ISSUES KEY

- **A3: Focus on Single-Family Homes**
- **C2: Impact of Renting on Wealth Building**
- **D1: Limited Options Between Large SF Homes & Apartments**
- **D2: Obstacles to Middle Housing**
- **D3: Appearance and Neighborhood Integration**
- **D4: Housing for Seniors**
- **D5: Lack of Affordable Options for First Time Homebuyers**
- **D6: Housing Diversity for a Large Range of Demographics**
- **D7: Minimal Construction of Smaller Homes**
- **E2: Low Condominium Construction (Lack of For Sale Units)**
- **F1: Restrictive Zoning Codes**
- **F2: Lack of Alternative Zoning Models and Flexibility**
- **G2: Appearance is Key (Aesthetic Concerns from Residents)**
- **G4: Lack of Tools to Enforce Owner Occupancy**

GRAPH 5
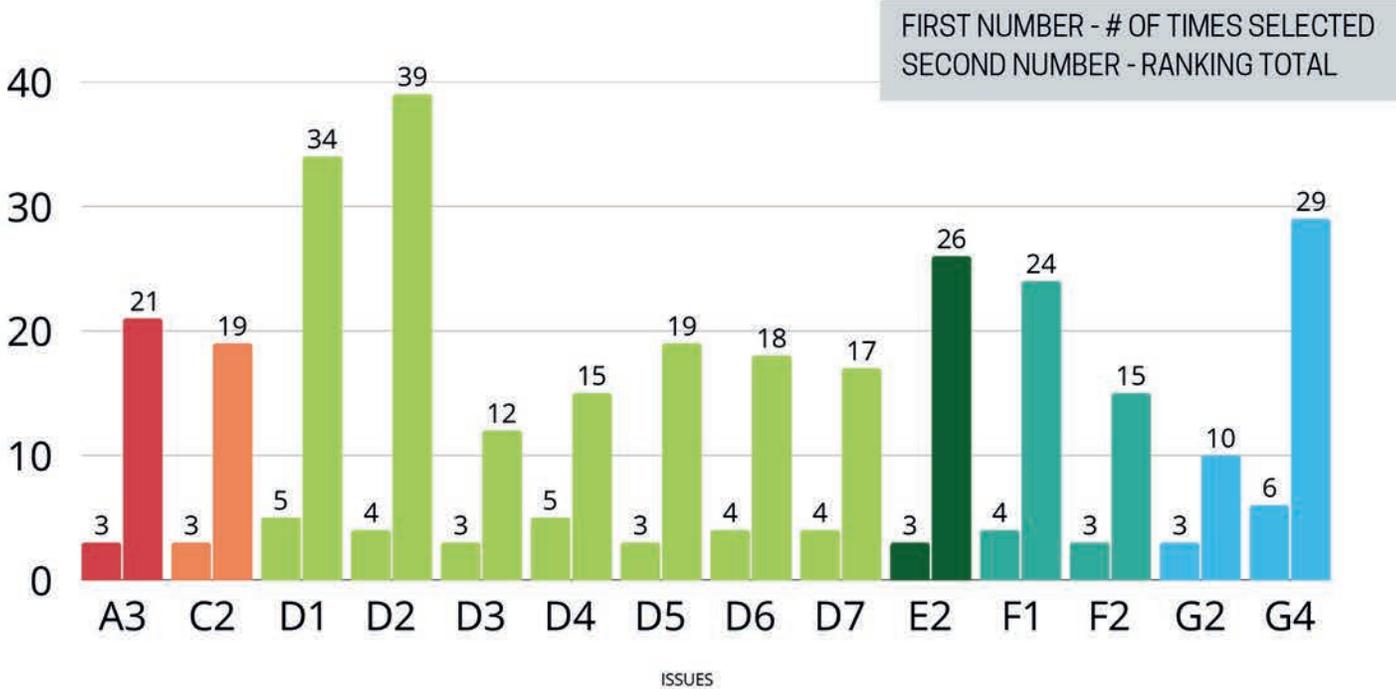## WEIGHTED RANKING RESULTS OF CATEGORIES SELECTED THREE TIMES OR MORE

Similar to Graph 3, Graph 5 shows the weighted ranking scores of categories that were selected three times or more.
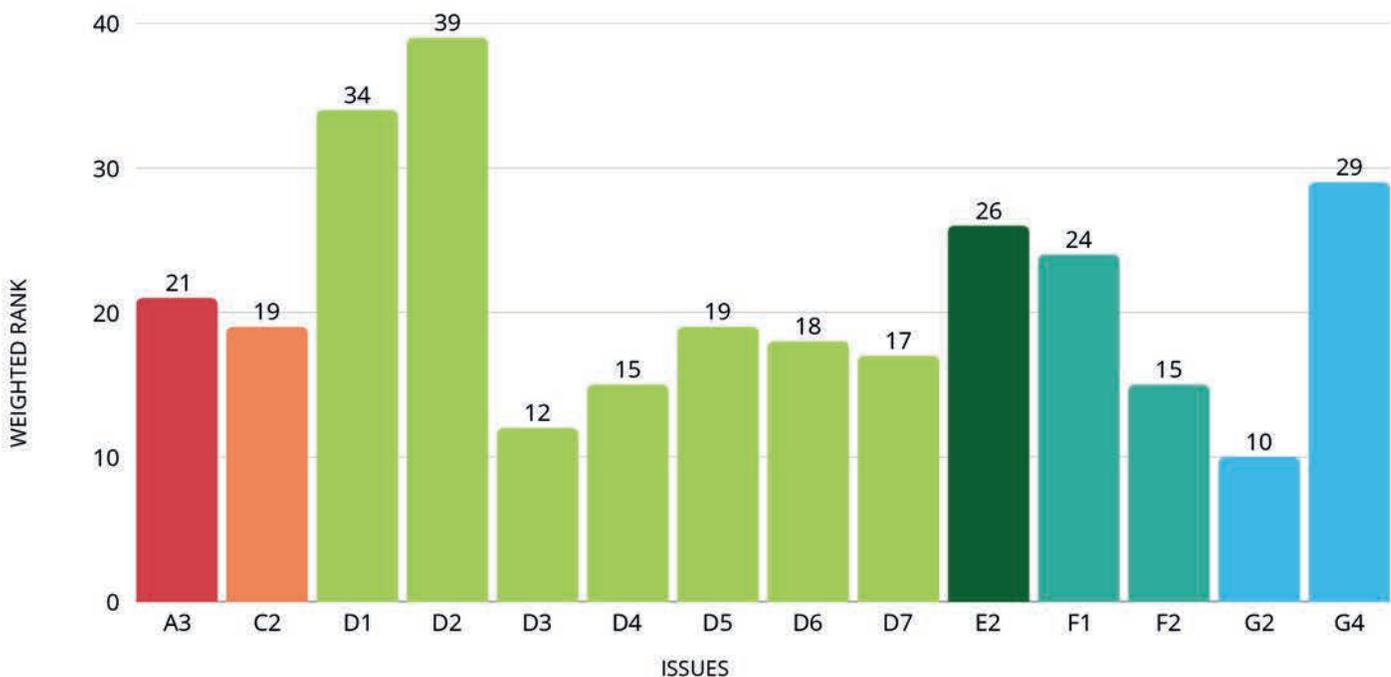
GRAPH 6
SELECTIONS AND RANKINGS OF CATEGORIES SELECTED THREE TIMES OR MORE

Graph 6 combines the data from Graphs 4 and 5. Each issue along the X axis has two bars; the first bar shows the number of times the issue was selected, and the second shows the total weighted priority ranking score of that tissue. This graph was designed to easily compare the number of times an issue was chosen to the priority ranking results of issues selected by three or more respondents.

FIRST NUMBER - # OF TIMES SELECTED
SECOND NUMBER - RANKING TOTAL

| Issue	# Selected	Ranking Total
A3	3	21
C2	3	19
D1	5	34
D2	4	39
D3	3	12
D4	5	15
D5	3	19
D6	4	18
D7	4	17
E2	3	26
F1	4	24
F2	3	15
G2	3	10
G4	6	29

ISSUES

TOP CATEGORIES AND ISSUES

Consolidated data from the elected officials' survey responses revealed three highly ranked categories and the five most prioritized issues.

✦ CATEGORIES

1.	2.	3.
Severe Housing Shortages	**Limited Housing Stock Variety**	**Neighborhood & Community Opposition**
(Category A)	*(Category D)*	*(Category F)*

✦ ISSUES

Obstacles to Middle Housing
(D2)

Limited Options Between Larger Single-Family Homes & Apartments
(D1)

Lack of Tools to Enforce Owner Occupancy
(G4)

Low Condominium Construction
(E2)

Restrictive Zoning Codes
(F1)
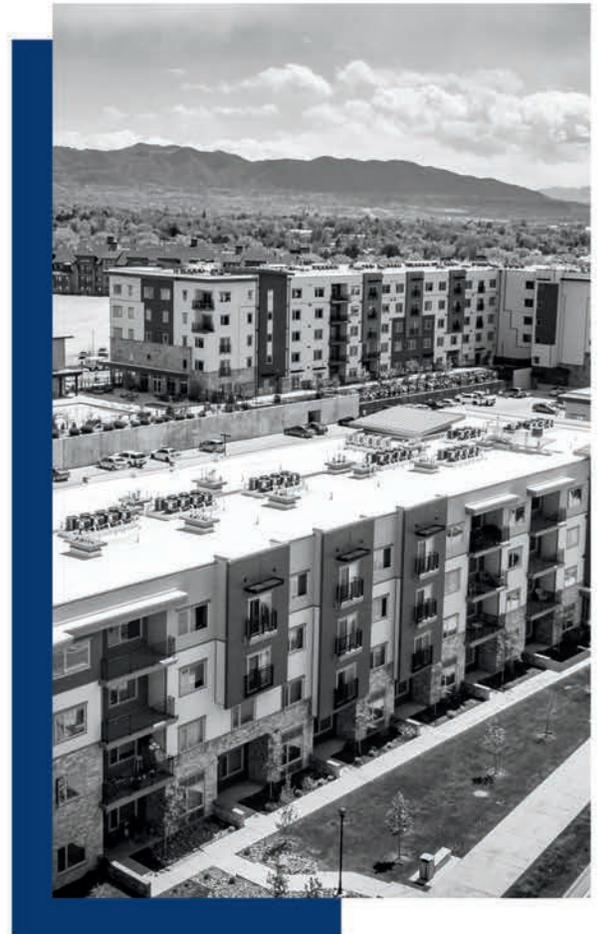
Developing a Shared Understanding

Prior to identifying these housing affordability categories and issues, it was necessary for the City Council and Administration to establish a shared understanding of housing affordability conditions in Sandy City and beyond. To support this effort, Council staff invited key stakeholders to present their perspectives on housing affordability statistics, challenges and barriers. Insights from these presentations informed the development of the categories and issues that were subsequently prioritized by Sandy's elected officials.

SEVERE HOUSING SHORTAGES
CATEGORY A

The Utah Foundation, an independent, non-profit and non-partisan public policy research organization in Utah, published a comprehensive "Missing Middle Housing Series" between 2021 and 2022. Within the study, researchers found that household formation in Utah has significantly outpaced the number of available housing units. To meet demand, the Wasatch Front is expected to require approximately 200,000 housing units per decade between 2026 and 2055.

Declining household size is a key factor contributing to the growing gap between housing demand and supply. Steve Waldrip, Senior Advisor to the Governor for Housing Strategy and Innovation, cited U.S. Census Bureau data showing a steady decrease in average household size both in Utah and the United States: from 4.38 in 1930 to 3.08 people per household in 2019. As household sizes continue to shrink, a greater number of housing units are required to accommodate the same population.

> *To meet demand, the Wasatch Front is expected to require approximately 200,000 housing units per decade between 2026 and 2055.*
>
> — *Missing Middle Housing Series,*
>   **The Utah Foundation**

LIMITED HOUSING STOCK VARIETY
CATEGORY D

The demand for additional housing units in the Wasatch Front and Utah is closely tied to the need for a broader range of housing types. The Kem C. Garnder Institute, Utah's premier economic and public policy research institute, examined the relationship between housing costs and income levels for residents in Sandy City and statewide. By categorizing renters in Utah by income and housing types (apartments, townhomes, single-family houses, etc.), the Institute assessed the availability of affordable rental units per 100 rental households.

In Sandy, the number of renters earning 80% of the area median income is roughly proportional to the number of local, available rental units affordable to that income group. However, as income levels decrease, the gap between the rental households and number of affordable rental units widens significantly. Renters making 50% of Sandy's median income have access to only 35 affordable units per 100 renters. Those making 30% of Sandy's median income, the demographic that is most vulnerable to housing instability and homelessness, only have three available, affordable units per 100 renters in that demographic.

While greater housing variety can improve affordability, it also introduces financial risk for developers. Cowboy Partners provided the Council and Administration with a developer's perspective of housing affordability obstacles. Residential development is heavily reliant on outside investors, who require rates of return that justify their financial risk. When interest rates

Affordable Renter Units Available/ 100 Household, Sandy, 2022 &2024

Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute   DAVID ECCLES SCHOOL OF BUSINESS   UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

are high, investors are more likely to place capital in low-risk alternatives, such as money market accounts, which offer predictable and stable returns. High interest rates, combined with lengthy municipal approval processes, elevated construction costs, and stringent development requirements can discourage investment in diverse housing projects.

These affordability gaps are amplified by a limited variety of housing stock. Today, Sandy's housing supply is dominated by single-family homes, with large apartment complexes (20+ units) comprising the next largest share. During the early 2000s, Sandy experienced substantial growth in single-family detached housing, reflecting broader national development trends at that time. Current development trends indicate a preference for building larger apartment complexes, due in part to limited available space, financing risks, rising land costs, and other factors. This lack of housing stock diversity intensifies affordability challenges by limiting options for households at varying income levels.

NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY OPPOSITION
CATEGORY F

In July of 2024, the Utah Foundation surveyed Utah's municipal officials, in an attempt to gauge the appetite for housing affordability. More than half of the officials surveyed considered community opposition to be the most substantial barrier to improving housing affordability in their communities. This finding is consistent with public feedback and broader research.

Findings from the *Pace of Progress, Sandy City General Plan 2050* public engagement process show that Sandy residents expressed a preference for higher-density housing located near transit stations and commercial centers. This attitude is mirrored in a statewide survey completed by the Utah Foundation— 60% of respondents support more affordable housing in their neighborhoods, as long as it is not large apartment complexes. Instead, Utah residents favor development that closely resembles the aesthetics and format of their neighborhoods, such as mansion style duplexes.
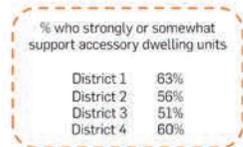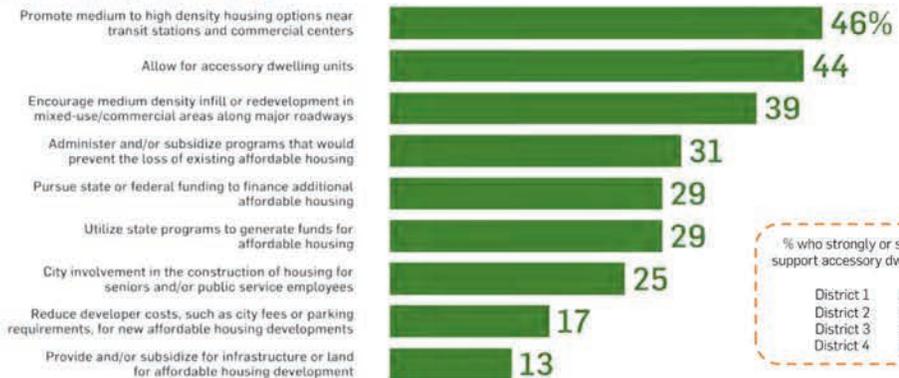
Resistance to higher-density development is often shaped by homeowners' perceptions of neighborhood stability and property values. For many Utah residents, homeownership represents a primary source of personal wealth, and changes to neighborhood character are therefore perceived as potential financial risks. Research and stakeholder feedback indicate that acceptance of higher-density development increases when housing units are owner-occupied, rather than renter-occupied. However, municipalities have limited authority and few policy tools to require or enforce owner occupancy in multifamily developments.

Snapshot from *Pace of Progress, Sandy City General Plan 2050*, Appendix C— "Community Engagement"

RESIDENTS FAVOR DENSITY HOUSING & ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

When presented with potential strategies for providing affordable housing, nearly half of residents say that they favor housing density near transit stations and allowing for accessory dwelling units. About 1 in 3 residents favor redevelopment in commercial areas, affordable housing programs, and using government funding to increase affordable housing. Resident are less enthusiastic about options relating to the City constructing or subsidizing new affordable housing developments.

Q *If you had to choose, which three of the following strategies would you recommend the city implement? Please select three total strategies.*

Strategy	%
Promote medium to high density housing options near transit stations and commercial centers	46%
Allow for accessory dwelling units	44
Encourage medium density infill or redevelopment in mixed-use/commercial areas along major roadways	39
Administer and/or subsidize programs that would prevent the loss of existing affordable housing	31
Pursue state or federal funding to finance additional affordable housing	29
Utilize state programs to generate funds for affordable housing	29
City involvement in the construction of housing for seniors and/or public service employees	25
Reduce developer costs, such as city fees or parking requirements, for new affordable housing developments	17
Provide and/or subsidize for infrastructure or land for affordable housing development	13

% who strongly or somewhat support accessory dwelling units

|	
District 1	63%
District 2	56%
District 3	51%
District 4	60%

If you had to choose, which three of the following strategies would you recommend the City implement? Please select three total strategies. (n = 521)

Missing Middle Housing

◆ OBSTACLES TO MIDDLE HOUSING (D2) *AND* LIMITED OPTIONS BETWEEN LARGER SINGLE FAMILY HOMES & APARTMENTS (D1)

Missing middle housing refers to residential building types that fall between the large-lot single-family homes and large-scale multifamily apartment complexes. These housing types include small-lot single family homes, duplexes, townhomes, and mixed-use development. While not commonly identified in missing middle literature as a missing middle housing type, Sandy City included detached ADUs when discussing missing middle housing. Comparable in scale to single-family homes, missing middle housing can integrate more seamlessly into existing neighborhood.

Sandy's housing stock is comprised of approximately 75% single-family homes, while townhomes, duplexes, and other multiplex housing types represent a relatively small share of the overall housing supply. Additionally, Sandy City does not currently allow for detached ADUs. In the absence of these middle housing options, the gap between housing availability and affordability will continue to widen. Single-family homes alone cannot meet the rising demand due to high development and purchase costs, while large apartment complexes often do not address demand for home ownership. Expanding missing middle housing could help reduce rental costs, increase homeownership opportunities, and address key affordability challenges; however, these housing types also faces distinct regulatory and market barriers.

Graph from The Utah Foundation Workshop presentation.
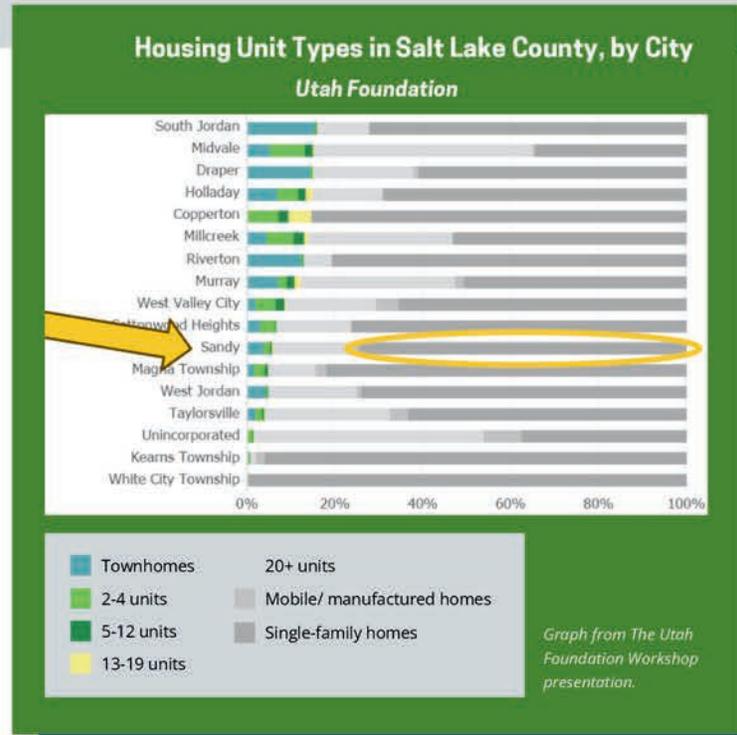
The Utah Foundation, as part of their "Missing Middle Housing Series" cites that majority of residential land in Utah is zoned for single-family homes. In Salt Lake County, more than 88% of residential land is designated for single-family use. Zoning in the United States essentially began with a rigid separation of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Rather than representing a modern shift or a temporary trend, this separation has been the historical norm for local ordinances. This foundational approach has directly contributed to the regulatory challenges facing missing middle housing today. Because traditional zoning practices often limit or exclude housing types between single-family homes and large apartment complexes, they create a fundamental shortage of middle housing units.

✦ LACK OF TOOLS TO ENFORCE OWNER OCCUPANCY (G4)

One Utah Foundation survey found that 80% of Utahns feel the pressure of rising home and rent costs, including those who currently own their home. In fact, many respondents indicated that they believe they could not afford to purchase their current homes at today's market prices. As a result, housing affordability concerns in Utah have extended beyond low-income households and focuses on first-time homebuyers.

A common affordability bench march suggests that a home is affordable when its purchase price is relatively comparable to three years of a household's median income. According to the Kem C. Gardner Institute, a Sandy resident currently needs approximately 5.7 years of median household income to purchase a median-priced home in Salt Lake County. While this ratio is slightly more favorable than the statewide figure of 6.2 years, it still exceeds accepted affordability thresholds and places homeownership out of reach for many residents. In 2024, only about 3% of homes sold in Sandy were affordable to households earning 80% of Sandy's median income.

Median Multiple Change for 20 Biggest Cities

Local governments have limited tools to promote and enforce home ownership, and those that do exist are often constrained by legal, financial, or market barriers. For example, condominium development can offer a lower barrier-to-entry pathway into homeownership, and municipalities may consider requiring minimum owner-occupancy rates as a condition of project approval. However, condominiums already face significant development challenges, and additional regulatory requirements may further discourage their construction.
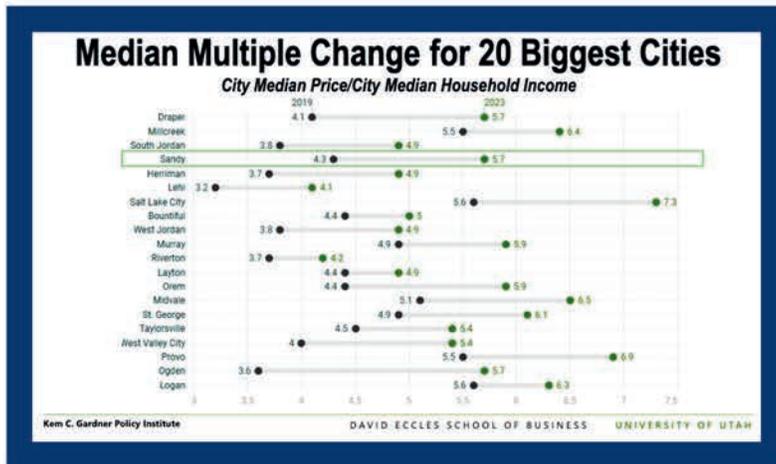
Other policy options, such as imposing higher taxes on vacant properties, could help return units to the housing market while generating revenue for other affordable housing programs. At the same time, such policies may result in investment losses for property owners and raises concerns related to property rights. Utah also has more than 18,000 short term rental units statewide, which reduces the availability of housing for long-term residents. However, state-imposed regulations and enforcement limitations create significant challenges for municipalities seeking to regulate or restrict short-term rentals. Across all available home ownership strategies, implementation barriers and other challenges often limit their effectiveness.

LOW CONDOMINIUM CONSTRUCTION (E2)
(LACK OF FOR SALE UNITS)

Condominiums are more affordable than single-family homes in most major cities and can offer an easier market entry for new or low-income buyers, yet condo construction is at historic lows across the country and in Utah. And when they are built, the Utah Foundation explains that many developers prioritize selling to large investors who make them available as rental property, to reduce selling time and to take advantage of federal income tax laws that encourage multifamily rental property development.

Cowboy Partners, a local real estate and property management company in Utah, shared that condo developers face a multitude of barriers, including high interest rates, rising construction costs, steep land prices, and design and pre-sale requirements. Land holding costs can add high price tags to projects who are slowed down by lack of financing, customization and design requirements, and municipal approval processes. The Utah Foundation finds that condos can be more difficult for developers to finance than other housing, particularly if there are pre-sale requirements. Many condo developments can take years to sell every unit, in contrast to an often-quicker leasing or rental process.

The Wasatch Front Regional Council also cites high insurance risks as a barrier to condo development. Condos experience high insurance costs and liability limits, as condo or townhome residents are more likely than single-family homeowners to sue builders at any given time, given the sharing of legal costs across residents. These insurance risks once again encourage condo sale to large single investors instead of individual households, as those sales are characterized by less risk.

> *Condo developers face a multitude of barriers, including high interest rates, rising construction costs, steep land prices, and design and pre-sale requirements.*
>
> — **Cowboy Partners**
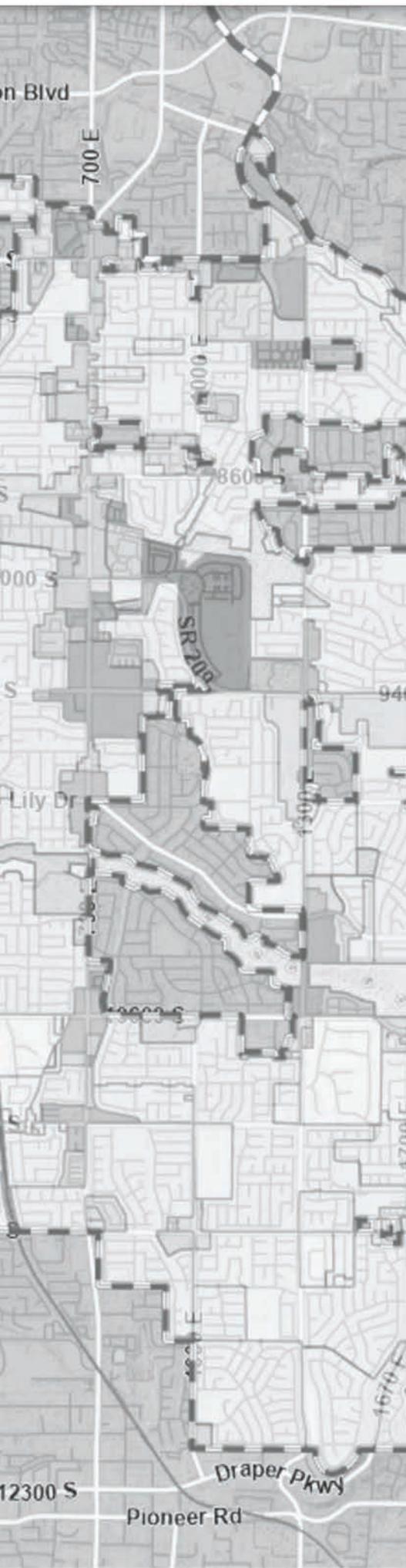
✦ RESTRICTIVE ZONING CODES (F1)

Zoning restrictions and requirements represent a substantial barrier to housing affordability, particularly as it relates to missing middle housing development. Land use, density, and design standards put in place by municipalities and the state can dictate the supply, location, and cost of housing development.

Zoning serves an essential role in community development by allowing municipalities to thoughtfully plan smart and sustainable growth while considering public safety, neighborhood character, property values, density, area usage, and other factors. Still, from a developer's perspective, meeting zoning requirements or obtaining permits can impose time and resource-intensive requirements. Many housing projects depend on the ability and willingness of developers to pursue rezoning or conditional use permits, which can increase project timelines, costs, and financial risks.

Opposition to shifts in land use policy over the past several decades—changing from automobile-oriented, single-family development to more diverse development patterns that encourage affordability— have also become a staggering challenge to development. Minimum parking requirements present a substantial obstacle to housing development. Requiring one or more parking spaces per dwelling unit increases construction costs and expands the amount of land needed for a project, resulting in higher costs that are ultimately passed on to renters and homebuyers.

Policy tools such as upzoning, overlay zones, and accessory dwelling units are all potential solutions to mindfully increasing density to meet demand in a measured and context-sensitive manner. Implementing these strategies, however, would require changes to existing zoning standards and development review processes. Changes to zoning requirements and processes would be needed to achieve those solutions and are often met with public opposition.

CREATING A SHARED VISION

> To ensure continued sustainability and to maintain the character of our city, our goal is to encourage housing and housing affordability for residents across all stages of life. We want to encourage, allow and incentivize a larger variety of housing (including housing for seniors, first time home buyers, middle housing, and workforce housing), more housing (in the right locations) and we want the housing to be owner occupied.

The draft vision statement was the product of Workshop #3 (held on September 2, 2025), which was specifically dedicated to "Goal Prioritization and Vision Development."

VISION CREATION PROCESS

FACILITATED DISCUSSION AND REVIEW

The workshop participants did not write the statement from scratch in a vacuum. Instead, they reviewed themes and concepts that had emerged from the educational phases of Workshops 1 and 2. Subject matter experts and a facilitator guided the participants through these concepts.

GOAL PRIORIZATION EXERCISE

Prior to Workshop 3, the participants completed a prioritization questionnaire to identify which housing issues were most critical to the City. The questionnaire included 48 issues that were identified during the first 2 workshops. Each participant completed the questionnaire, selecting and prioritizing as many as 10 issues that they felt were most important for Sandy to address.

COLLABORATIVE REFINEMENT

The participants then actively refined the language during Workshop 3 to ensure it balanced competing interests.

"Sustainability" and "Character"
were added as the framing constraints (the *condition* for growth).

"Owner Occupied"
was explicitly emphasized as a priority to distinguish the City's goals from rental-heavy developments.

"Across All Stages of Life"
was included to broaden the scope beyond just "affordable" housing to include seniors and first-time buyers.

CONSENSUS BUILDING

The resulting text was not a single participants motion but a consolidated draft that staff compiled based on the keywords and priorities agreed upon during Workshop 3. This draft was then formally reviewed and reaffirmed at the beginning of Workshop 4 (October 14, 2025)

SECTION FOUR:
TURNING VISION INTO ACTION

This section details how the City might translate the drafted Vision Statement into concrete results. By utilizing the feedback from Housing Workshop 5 (December 16, 2025), we have identified three overarching strategies and the tactics, conditions, and tools necessary to achieve the goals of housing variety, location efficiency, owner occupancy, and maintaining neighborhood character that were identified in the draft housing vision statement.

✦ Key Strategies:

1.	**Permit and Incentivize a Variety of Housing Options for a Broad Range of Residents**
2.	**More Housing in the Right Locations**
3.	**Maintaining Neighborhood Character**

BREAKDOWN OF THE VISION STATEMENT

To realize the goal of encouraging "housing and housing affordability for residents across all stages of life", the Council and Mayor focused on four actionable pillars derived from the vision statement:

Variety	Location	Ownership	Character
Incentivizing diverse housing types (seniors, first-time buyers, workforce).	Placing more housing and the appropriate housing types in the "right locations" (neighborhoods, activity centers, corridors, and transit centers).	Ensuring housing remains owner-occupied.	Preserve Sandy's unique character.

✦ How We Developed our Strategies, Tactics, and Tools

The identification of these tools was a cumulative process involving staff recommendations and consensus building amongst the City elected officials during Workshops 4 and 5.

Workshop 4

The "What" and "Where"

Participants engaged in focused discussions to determine which missing housing types belonged in which location types throughout the City. This resulted in staff conducting preliminary "test-fit" analyses to visualize how preferred housing types would physically fit within certain locations.

Workshop 5

The "How"

Building on the "test-fits," the final workshop utilized a consensus-building exercise to answer specific questions on implementation. The Council and Mayor participated in an exercise to determine appropriate incentives (e.g., fee waivers, density bonuses) and necessary conditions (e.g., design standards, owner occupancy).

Consensus Criteria

During the Workshop 5 exercises, specific tactics were designated as recommendations if they were selected by at least half of city elected officials (selected by 4 or more).

✦ What's our Strategy?

The following outlines the specific strategies identified through the Workshop Series to support each section of the vision statement.

STRATEGY ONE:

PERMIT AND INCENTIVIZE A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS FOR A BROAD RANGE OF RESIDENTS

To support seniors, first-time homebuyers, and the workforce, the City must diversify its housing stock. The workshop results indicated a strong desire to legalize specific "Middle Housing" types across many location types.

✦ TACTIC ONE: LEGALIZE "MIDDLE HOUSING" MUCH MORE BROADLY

Consensus was reached to more broadly permit specific middle housing types in locations where they are currently restricted. In low and very-low density neighborhoods certain housing types were identified as appropriate for "gentle infill". Specifically, the results of the Workshop 5 Exercise showed strong support for permitting:

Detached ADUs

Preferred in Low/Very-Low Density Neighborhoods **with** conditions.

Small Lot Single-Family

Preferred in Low/Very-Low Density Neighborhoods **without** conditions.

Small Mid Rise

Preferred in Centers (SAP), Centers (NAC), and Corridors **with** conditions.

Mansion Style Multi-Family

Preferred in the Cairns, Centers (NAC), and Low/Very Low-Density Neighborhoods **with** conditions. Preferred in Corridors and Medium Density Neighborhoods **without** conditions.

Twin Homes / Duplexes

Preferred in Low/Very-Low Density Neighborhoods **with** conditions. Preferred in Centers (NAC) **without** conditions.

✦ TACTIC TWO: ADOPT FINANCIAL AND REGULATOR INCENTIVES

Participants reached a clear consensus on which incentives the City should pursue, moving toward a model that rewards outcomes rather than locations or specific housing types. By focusing on project use and affordable price points, these incentives will be more effectively leveraged to drive affordability across the City. Incentives may be considered in exchange for a major public benefit.

Examples of Public Benefit:

- ✦ "Affordable" units
- ✦ Housing for first-time home buyers
- ✦ Workforce housing
- ✦ Housing for Seniors
- ✦ Owner-occupied housing

Incentives

A majority of workshop participants selected the following incentives to help achieve these major public benefits:

Density Bonuses

Permitting developers to build more units than base zoning allows.

City Assistance

Utilizing tools like land write-downs, city sourced funding, and fee waivers or reductions.

Accelerated Approval Process

Reducing soft costs by moving projects more quickly through permitting and inspections.

STRATEGY TWO:
MORE HOUSING IN THE RIGHT LOCATIONS

The vision statement emphasizes placing housing in the "right locations." The workshop results clarified that density should be focused on corridors and centers, while sensitive infill is appropriate for neighborhoods.

◆ **TACTIC ONE: ENCOURAGE HIGHER DENSITY HOUSING OPTIONS DOWNTOWN, IN CENTERS, AND ALONG CORRIDORS:**

The exercise results showed a distinct preference for moderate-density middle housing types in transit and commercial areas within the Cairns, Centers, and along Corridors.

Mansion Style Multi-Family was identified as a preferred moderate density middle housing option within the Cairns, Neighborhood Activity Centers, and along Corridors.	*Townhomes* were identified as a preferred moderate density middle housing type specifically along Corridors and within Centers.	*Small Mid-Rise* was identified as a preferred moderate density middle housing option for The Cairns, in Centers, and along Corridors.

For existing lower density neighborhoods, participants supported "invisible density" or "gentle infill" that respects the current residents and existing character of neighborhoods.

- **Small Lot Single Family:** A majority of participants identified this missing housing type as a preferred option in Medium-Density, Low Density, and Very-low Density Neighborhoods. In the lower density neighborhoods this housing type should be a permitted use with few conditions.

- **Twin Home's and Mansion Style Multi-family:** A majority of participants identified this missing housing type as a preferred option in Medium-Density, Low Density, and Very-low Density Neighborhoods, assuming a range of conditions could be met.

  - *Design Standards*— A majority of participants identified the overall appearance of these housing types as an essential condition.

  - *Impact*— For Mansion Style Multi-family, a majority of participants identified issues such as sufficient off-street parking and traffic considerations as essential conditions.

- **Detached ADUs:** In lower density neighborhoods participants indicated that detached ADUs should be permitted, but that specific conditions must be met to ensure they fit within the neighborhood fabric.

  - *Owner Occupancy*— Every participant identified owner occupancy of the primary unit as an essential condition to maintain the character of the neighborhood.

  - *Dimensions and Other Design Standards*— Every participant identified the dimensions (scale/mass, size, setbacks, and placement) of detached ADUs as an essential condition.Furthermore, a majority of participants identified other design standards (overall appearance) as an essential condition.

  - *Location*— A majority of participants identified lot location as an essential condition. Detached ADUs are preferred in locations that meet one or more of the following criterial (1) adjacent to non-residential uses; (2) transitional or serve as a buffer between traditional single family residential and higher intensity residential uses; (3) adjacent to busier streets; (4) are near centers or corridors; or (5) are located on unique lots that result in a lower impact to surrounding neighbors.

STRATEGY THREE:
MAINTAINING NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

A primary concern reflected in the vision statement is maintaining the "character of our city" and ensuring housing is "owner occupied".

◆ TACTIC ONE: INCENTIVIZE, ENCOURAGE, OR REQUIRE OWNER OCCUPANCY REQUIREMENTS WHENEVER POSSIBLE:

This was the single most agreed-upon condition in the workshop exercises.

Detached ADUs

Every participant agreed that owner occupancy must be a mandatory condition for Detached ADUs.

Neighborhoods

A majority of participants agreed that owner occupancy regardless of housing type is essential in medium, low, and very-low density neighborhoods.

◆ TACTIC TWO: ADOPT ROBUST STANDARDS FOR THE LOCATION, DIMENSIONS AND DESIGN OF MIDDLE HOUSING IN NEIGHBORHOODS:

To ensure new middle housing types blend into existing neighborhoods location, dimensional and design regulations were prioritized by a majority of participants for detached ADUs, Twin Homes, and Mansion Style Multi-family.

Maintaining neighborhood character was the single most agreed-upon condition among Sandy's elected officials.

OPTIONAL TOOLS

Taking into consideration all of the data that we gathered during the workshop series from participants, each of the three strategies that we've identified in this report, and the professional recommendations from City Staff, we've identified a series of tools that might be used to help the City achieve its housing affordability vision.

By-Right Development Approval

The "Self Check-Out Lane" of municipal planning. By-Right is a streamlined path where, if an applicant's project perfectly aligns with a pre-existing set of rules developed by the City and approved by the City Council, then that project must be approved without a lengthy series of reviews, debates, or hearings.

> If the City Council has determined that a specific middle housing type belongs in a particular geographic location or neighborhood, a proposal that aligns with that determination should be able to proceed with minimal additional discussion or reconsideration.

> From a municipal perspective, form based code (FBC) improves housing affordability by shifting the regulatory focus from restrictive land-use categories to the physical form of buildings, which unlocks missing middle housing—such as twin homes and mansion style multi-family—that traditional zoning often prohibits. By establishing clear, visual standards, FBCs enable a predictable "by-right" approval process that slashes the expensive "soft costs" associated with legal delays and public hearings. Rather than limiting the number of units per acre, FBCs regulate the building envelope, allowing developers to fit more small, attainable units within the same footprint, which increases housing supply and lowers the overall cost of production.

Form Based Code

FBC is a tool that a municipality might use to, for example, implement By-Right Development approvals. Instead of regulating the specific use of a property (what happens inside the building), a FBC regulates the physical form of buildings—such as location, height, placement on the lot, and relationship to the street. This can help ensure that new, denser housing development still fits the desired character of a neighborhood (such as a mansion style multi-family unit). FBC would constitute a comprehensive change to our land development code. However, as the City is moving towards a full re-write, now would be the time to pursue form based code if that is the direction desired by the Council.

Overlay Zoning

Overlay zoning is a regulatory tool that a municipality uses to establish a special set of standards and requirements for a geographically defined area that supplements, and often supersedes, the rules of the existing underlying base zone. It does not replace the original zoning but instead places an additional layer of regulation—such as development incentives (to help achieve a major public benefit), dimensional regulations, location, architectural design standards, use restrictions, or density requirements—on top of it to achieve a major public benefit, like preserving character, promoting owner occupancy, or promoting housing affordability. Overlay zoning is more "surgical" than FBC, and would require far less of a comprehensive "overhaul" of our land development code.

For a municipality, overlay zoning serves as a surgical policy tool to address localized needs without the administrative friction of a full-scale rezoning. By stacking a secondary layer of rules over the existing base zone, the City can precisely apply targeted mandates or incentives—such as density bonuses to drive housing affordability— within a specific geographic location while keeping the underlying "rulebook" intact. This allows officials to adapt to urgent community goals while maintaining long-term regulatory stability.

From the municipality's perspective, a development agreement functions as a strategic "handshake in writing" that trades regulatory flexibility for guaranteed community gains. Rather than relying on rigid, broad-stroke zoning, the City uses these binding contracts to swap specific incentives—like density bonuses or expedited timelines—for high-priority public benefits such as deed-restricted affordable housing, or owner occupancy. This logic allows the City to custom-fit a project to its goals, ensuring that developers provide tangible social value in exchange for the extra "slack" or speed granted in the approval process.

Development Agreements
(To incentivize a major public benefit)

A negotiated agreement that allows the City to trade an incentive (density bonus, quicker approval, etc.) for a major public benefit (affordable units, owner occupancy, etc.) through a legally binding contract. This type of agreement can work in combination with an overlay zone, or alternatively, when an applicant requests a change to existing zoning or other regulations to build a project.

IMPLEMENTATION & NEXT STEPS

To translate the vision of a sustainable, owner-occupied, and diverse housing market into reality, the City will pursue the following implementation roadmap. This phase moves beyond the "what" and "where" to the specific legislative and administrative actions required to achieve our identified housing goals.

✦ **IMPLEMENT NOW**

✦ **IMPLEMENT WITH LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE REWRITE**

DIVERSIFY HOUSING TYPES VIA "GENTLE INFILL"

To support seniors, first-time buyers, and Sandy City's workforce, the City can legalize and incentivize specific "Middle Housing" types:

✦ **Legalize Small Lot Single Family Housing:** Permit these broadly in low, very-low, and medium-density neighborhoods to provide entry-level ownership opportunities.

✦ **Permit Detached Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):** Allow these in lower-density neighborhoods, provided they meet specific "invisible density" criteria like scale, massing, and setbacks.
  - *Staff will be making a presentation on its progress and recommendations for external ADUs to the Council on March 31, 2026.*

✦ **Encourage "Mansion Style" Multi-family:** Authorize multi-unit buildings designed to look like large single-family homes in neighborhoods and corridors, ensuring they blend into the existing fabric.

✦ **Allow Twin Homes and Duplexes:** Permit these in neighborhoods and Neighborhood Activity Centers (NAC) to increase variety without disrupting character.

IMPLEMENT LOCATION-SPECIFIC DENSITY

The City can strategically place housing where it makes the most sense to maintain neighborhood stability:

✦ **Focus High Density in "The Cairns" and Centers:** Direct small mid-rise developments and townhomes toward transit areas, commercial centers (SAP/NAC), and major corridors.

✦ **Establish Design-Based Conditions:** For neighborhoods, require "context-sensitive" infill that respects current residents through strict appearance and impact standards (e.g., off-street parking and traffic mitigation).

INCENTIVIZE PUBLIC BENEFITS

Instead of just regulating location, the City can reward developers for achieving specific community goals:

✦ **Trade Density for Affordability:** Use Density Bonuses to allow developers to build more units than base zoning permits in exchange for "deed-restricted" affordable housing, senior housing, workforce housing, and first-time homebuyers.

   ◦ *On April 21, 2026, staff will present initial recommendations for the interconnected use of Development Agreements, By-Right Approvals, and certain incentive programs to achieve our desired housing outcomes.*

✦ **Offer Financial and Soft-Cost Relief:** Provide city-sourced funding, property, or fee waivers for projects that target deed restricted affordable housing, housing for seniors, workforce housing, or first-time homebuyers.

   ◦ *On April 14, 2026, staff will present city and RDA owned property that has the potential for future housing projects that will help us to achieve our desired housing outcomes. Staff will also present for Council consideration a particular City/ RDA property to use as our initial test case.*

✦ **Accelerate Approvals:** Create a "fast lane" for permitting and inspections to reduce the "soft costs" for developers who commit to deed restricted affordable housing, housing for seniors, workforce housing or first-time homebuyers.

   ◦ *On April 21, 2026, staff will present initial recommendations for the interconnected use of Development Agreements, By-Right Approvals, and certain incentive programs to achieve our desired housing outcomes.*

ENSURE OWNER-OCCUPANCY AND CHARACTER

To maintain the City's character and distinguish goals from "rental-heavy" developments, specific mandates can be applied:

✦ **Mandate Owner-Occupancy for ADUs:** Require that the primary unit of any property with a detached ADU be owner-occupied.

   ◦ *Staff will be making a presentation on its progress and recommendations for external ADUs to the Council on March 31, 2026*

✦ **Prioritize Ownership in Neighborhoods:** Whenever possible, emphasize owner-occupancy requirements for all new housing types in medium, low, and very-low density areas.

✦ **Use Development Agreements:** Negotiate legally binding contracts to ensure developers provide what has been agreed to—like owner-occupied units—in exchange for regulatory flexibility.

   ◦ *On April 21, 2026, staff will present initial recommendations for the interconnected use of Development Agreements, By-Right Approvals, and certain incentive programs to achieve our desired housing outcomes.*

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

To put these ideas into practice, the City can utilize three primary regulatory frameworks:

TOOL	PURPOSE	BENEFIT
✦ FORM-BASED CODES (FBC)	Regulates the physical form (height, placement) rather than just the use.	Unlocks missing middle housing while ensuring it looks like it belongs in the neighborhood.
✦ OVERLAY ZONING	Adds a "surgical" layer of rules (like design standards or incentives) over existing zones.	Addresses localized needs without requiring a full re-write of the land development code.
✦ BY-RIGHT APPROVAL	Creates a "self check-out lane" for projects that perfectly match pre-approved rules or packages	Slashes expensive soft costs and provides a predictable path for developers.

PARTICIPANTS

ELECTED OFFICIALS

2025 Sandy City Council

Ryan Mecham, *District One*
Alison Stroud, *District Two*
Zach Robinson, *District Three*
Marci Houseman, *District Four*
Aaron Dekeyzer, *At-Large*
Brooke D'Sousa, *At-Large*
Cyndi Sharkey, *At-Large*

2026 Sandy City Council

Brooke Christensen, *District One*
Kris Nicholl, *District Three*

Sandy Mayor

Monica Zoltanski

SANDY CITY STAFF

Shane Pace, *CAO*

Lynn Pace, *City Attorney*

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Justin Sorenson, *Council Office Asst. Director*

Liz Theriault, *Council Policy & Comms. Analyst*

James Sorensen, *Community Development Director*

Jake Warner, *Long Range Planning Manager*

Kasey Dunlavy, *Economic Development Director*

Rob Sant, *Economic Development Dep. Director*

THANK YOU TO OUR WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Shawn Tiegan, *The Utah Foundation*

Steve Waldrip, *Utah Governor's Office*

Lee Dial, *Cowboy Partners*

Dejan Eskic, *Kem C. Garnder Policy Institute*

Megan Padjen, *Wasatch Front Regional Council*

APPENDIXES