



COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL *of* SALT LAKE CITY

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Allison Rowland
Budget & Policy Analyst

DATE: July 12, 2022

RE: **INFORMATIONAL: MIDPOINT CHECK-IN ON BALLPARK STATION AREA PLAN**

Item Schedule:
Briefing: July 12, 2022
Set Date: N/A
Public Hearing: N/A
Potential Action: N/A

ISSUE AT-A-GLANCE

The Council will receive a briefing on progress to-date in the new Ballpark Station Area Plan, which the Department of Community and Neighborhood Development (CAN) has been working on since October 2020. The purpose of the briefing is to update the Council at this midpoint in the process and receive comments and suggestions from Council Members on the draft plan.

The plan is designed to guide future public and private investment in the vicinity of Smith's Ballpark and the Ballpark TRAX Station, defined as roughly between 900 South to 1700 South, and State Street to the I-15 freeway. It recommends specific infrastructure improvements in the area to create a "heart of the neighborhood," facilitate transit connections, and support "livability" and growth in residential, office, restaurant, and retail properties. The City's Transportation Division was awarded a Transportation and Land Use Connection grant from the Wasatch Front Regional Council, which helped fund the draft Plan.

The draft plan is premised in large part on continued use of the City-owned Ballpark facility by a privately-owned sports franchise. The Council and Administration have emphasized the importance of this private franchise continuing to operate in the City as a centerpiece to future planning and investment, and to the neighborhood as a whole.

The draft plan recommends six "Big Moves":

- Create and apply a Ballpark neighborhood specific Transit Supportive Zone.
- Reconfigure the Ballpark TRAX station
- Improve 1300 South for pedestrians
- Create a sense of place at and around the Ballpark
- Repurpose parking lots and underutilized properties to add activity to the Heart of the Neighborhood
- Invest in community amenities and green space to balance density with livability factors.

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The Administration provides more detail on these “Big Moves” in their transmittal and will outline them in their presentation. Because of time constraints, this Council staff report focuses on policy questions the Council may wish to consider in their ongoing discussions about this and other planning and investment activities in the area.

The Planning Commission will consider the draft plan and hear public comment at their July 27 meeting. After additional reviews and updates, the plan will be brought back to the Council for additional consideration and potential adoption later this year.

Goal of the briefing: *Receive an update and provide feedback on the ongoing work for the Ballpark Station Area Plan, in compliance with the Council’s policy on mid-terms plan updates.*

POLICY QUESTIONS

- A. The public investments proposed in the draft Ballpark Station Area Plan are substantial. The Council may wish to consider questions related to potential funding and timing of these investments, including the following:
1. In addition to funding this plan, the Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC) was a member of the “Project Management Team,” along with members of the Utah Transit Authority. ***Would the Council like to request additional information on the ways these two entities have and will continue to participate in planning efforts?*** For example, will WFRC and UTA continue to provide technical and financial support in the implementation stages of this plan?
 2. The draft plan’s section on case studies from other cities concludes that, “While a ballpark can help spur initial development and investment in an area, development or redevelopment efforts will often require additional supportive policies, financing, programs, and initiatives in order to truly maximize the investment in the Ballpark itself.” ***Would the Council like to request more details on how the Administration would ensure these additional resources are available?***
 3. The draft plan indicates that residents of the Ballpark Station Area are disproportionately white compared to other areas of the City, but their socio-economic profile is notably disadvantaged compared to the broader City and County. For example, the home ownership rate is 15% compared to 43% for the City as a whole. Median Household Income is just over \$26,000 for the Ballpark Station Area, versus nearly three times that (\$76,000) County-wide. ***Given the interest in equitable distribution of City funds, the Council may wish to ask the Administration how it views investments in this area compared to other neighborhoods in the City that have not received a proportionate share of public investment in the past.***
- B. The Ballpark itself has long been an RDA project area, albeit a “non-collection” area (meaning no tax increment is collected within those boundaries, and property taxes are collected and accrue to the general fund in the same way as in the rest of the City). ***Would the Council like to inquire about whether the Administration envisions a change to this status, and what that might entail?***
- C. The plan refers to a potential branch of the Salt Lake City Library system in the general Ballpark area. The FY23 adopted budget for the City Library includes a tax increase in part to pay for staffing and operations of a very small “storefront” type library, but not a full branch. ***The Council may wish to ask the Administration how they are coordinating with the Library Board (the policy-making body for the Library system) to ensure consistency in future budget and staffing proposals.***
- D. Some of the public comments on the draft plan ask why it does not include the area from 1700 South to the I-80 freeway. ***Would the Council like to ask the Administration’s view on the advantages and***

disadvantages of focusing this plan only on the immediate area around the Ballpark TRAX stop and stadium?

- E. The draft plan mentions the potential of “Implement[ing] a district-parking strategy that utilizes unused area parking and parking garages for game days to minimize the need for parking fields in the area.” ***Would the Council like to ask for more information on this approach, and how it would work in practice? Are there examples to point to?***

- F. The draft plan refers to several recent or ongoing City studies and policies that are issues of special Council interest, including housing affordability and involuntary displacement, transit, and public green spaces. ***Would the Council like to ask the Administration how coordination among departments and divisions is being handled to ensure that all parties have access to the most up-to-date information, and that new findings and policies are built into this plan as it develops into a final version?***