Salt Lake City Corporation

Vision for a Green City

Salt Lake City's Sustainable City Code Initiative

Mayor
Ralph Becker

Introduction-Blueprint for a Green City

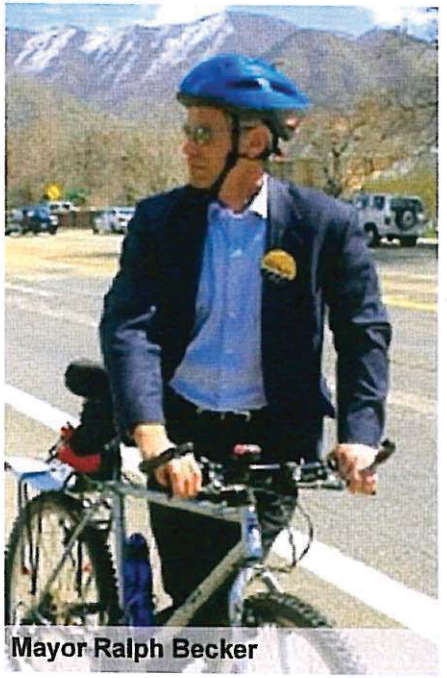
Salt Lake City residents deserve a city to match the spectacular scenery. A green city is a place that uses energy efficiently. It reduces, reuses and recycles its waste. It works to keep its air and water clean. A green city protects its open spaces as ecological and recreational treasures. It offers its residents healthy and efficient transportation and housing choices.

By doing these things, a city becomes green: it becomes a highly desirable place to live, work, play, raise a family and own a business. A green city is a place where people want to be because the quality of life is high. As a result, a green city is economically stable and less vulnerable to the ups and downs of national and global forces, such as the prices of imported fossil fuels, over which city residents have little control.

Salt Lake City can be one of America's leading green cities. In fact, Salt Lake City has the potential to be the greenest city in America.

To improve Salt Lake City's green credentials, we must:

- Reduce air pollution from sources both within the City and, with the cooperation of other cities; counties and the state, outside it.
- Use energy efficiently and from clean, renewable sources.
- Develop convenient public transit and non-motorized transportation choices for residents and visitors that link open spaces, residential neighborhoods, downtown and suburban cities.
- Preserve, improve and expand the network of open space and greenbelts throughout the City.
- Establish neighborhood centers for commercial and governmental services that foster walkable neighborhoods, reducing vehicular traffic and thus air pollution.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Salt Lake City's Sustainable City Code Initiative is one way to implement this vision. This project is a ground-breaking initiative to incorporate sustainability provisions into the City's development codes (Zoning, Subdivision and Site Development Ordinances). The revised codes will contribute to making Salt Lake City one of the most sustainable communities in the country.

The Sustainable City Code Initiative implements the Mayor's Blueprint for a Green City in many ways. This Vision document indicates how the project will help implement the vision for a green city.

7. Improve Air Quality

Air quality is an overriding concern. To improve our air quality, we need to work within the context of federal and state law. There is no single solution to this difficult problem. It will take a concerted effort from all of the municipalities in the valley and region to bring about positive changes. Our continued economic prosperity is dependent upon having a city and region with clean and healthy air.

Salt Lake City must take the lead and serve as a model in comprehensively reducing the amount of pollutants that are put into the air. Among other things, this means:

- *Making it easy and convenient for residents to walk, bike or take transit throughout the City.*
- *Finding ways to ensure that housing in the City (near where most people work) is affordable so that driving is less necessary*
- *Having zoning laws that carefully permit commercial and public centers in neighborhoods that complement residential areas*
- *Providing incentives to builders, homeowners, and business owners to retrofit their structures so that they use fuels efficiently and/or use renewable and clean-*

A. Urban Agriculture

Local food production can save energy through diminished transport needs and reduced reliance on mechanical equipment associated with large scale agriculture. Urban farms, community gardens and farm stands located near where people live and work allows people to access locally grown produce without relying on private automobiles, which in turn decrease green house gas. Additionally, urban farmers and residents benefit as the local economy is enhanced and social impacts strengthen neighborhoods. Studies have shown that community gardening increases community pride, property values, and personal physical health, while reducing crime and blighted lands.

The proposed regulations

- Allow accessory structures relating to urban agriculture with dimensional and locational requirements in appropriate zoning districts including residential
- Allow urban farm uses for food cultivation allowed in more zoning districts including residential and commercial.
- Allow residents to grow, distribute and sell produce from residential zoning districts with qualifying provisions to mitigate impacts.
- Allow community gardens in more zoning districts and allow the sale of food grown on site.
- Allow Seasonal Farm stands in more zoning districts but limit the sale to locally grown produce.

A community garden in Salt Lake City Credit: WFRC

7. Improve Air Quality (continued)

B. Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) refers to a variety of strategies that can be used by a city to influence travel decisions by residents and employees and thereby reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), alter driving from peak to off-peak periods, and shift use of automobiles to alternative modes. Reducing the use of automobiles is a key to reducing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change and also to control air pollution that affects public health. In the United States transportation accounts for fully 33% of CO2 emissions (the primary greenhouse gas), and that percent is growing according to recent studies. Moreover, despite technological advances, VMT are expected to increase nationwide and in Utah. Throughout the Intermountain West, sprawling growth patterns has lead to poor integration between land use and transportation. Between 1990 and 2007, the state of Utah experienced a 47% increase in population, but at the same time VMT increased 71%.

Bike parking at the Salt Lake City Main Library Credit: davidsilver@Flickr

Proposed Regulations include:

- Requiring bike parking with at least 50% of outdoor bike parking to be covered and to be located close to the main entrance.
- Requiring bike lockers and showers on site for companies with 100 or more employees.
- Ensuring car pool parking gets a preferential location.
- Requiring minimum and maximum parking requirements for high density residential, in the Downtown area and in Transit Oriented Development projects.
- Decreasing the parking requirement for development which includes more than 10 units, and where at least 20% of the units are affordable, senior or assisted living.
- A maximum parking requirement with a conditional use out for certain types of land uses.
- Allowing credit for on-street parking in all zones with criteria to mitigate impacts and where the on-street parking is located along the frontage adjacent to the use.
- Requiring lease and sale prices of commercial and residential space to be listed separate from lease sale space of associate parking for the use.
- Continuing to allow shared parking.
- Requiring TDM measures for uses that are proposed to have more than 2500 Vehicle Miles Traveled per day, have 500 employees or students or have 100 units or more. Examples of the measures include
    - Facilities and Improvements (such as bike facilities, transit stops, onsite business centers, etc.) Parking Management (such as reserved parking for alternative fuel vehicles, electric charge stations, etc.) and Alternative Modes of Circulation (such as transit passes, shared bike fleet, shared car fleet, flex work strategies, etc.)