



HIGHLAND CITY

General Plan

2025

Adopted **Date**

This page intentionally left blank



HIGHLAND CITY **VISION STATEMENT**

Highland City cherishes its roots as a family-oriented bedroom community defined by large lots, single-family homes, and open spaces that connect residents to nature. As the City approaches build-out, Highland is committed to thoughtful, incremental infill that respects its established character, the revitalization of its Town Center as the heart of community life, and the long-term preservation of its distinctive identity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

Kurt Ostler, Mayor
 Brittney P. Bills, City Council Member
 Ron Campbell, City Council Member
 Doug Cortney, City Council Member
 Kim Rodela, City Council Member
 Scott L. Smith, City Council Member

PLANNING COMMISSION

Jerry Abbott, Commissioner
 Tracy Hill, Commissioner
 Christopher Howden, Commissioner
 Claude Jones, Commissioner
 Sherry Kramer, Commissioner
 Debra Maughan, Commissioner
 Audrey Moore, Commissioner
 Trent Thayn, Commissioner
 Wesley Warren, Commissioner Alternate

CITY STAFF

Erin Wells, City Administrator
 Rob Patterson, City Attorney/Planning & Zoning Administrator
 Jay Baughman, Assistant City Administrator/Community Development Director
 Chris Trusty, City Engineer/Public Works Director

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Brian Braithwaite
 Mark Thompson
 Nicki Brammer
 Wade Haddlock
 Liam Thrailkill
 Briawna Hugh
 Linda Walton
 Liz Rice
 Ryder Zumwalt
 Manuel Beuno

CONSULTANT TEAM

Landmark Design

Sam Taylor, ASLA, PLA, Principal-in-Charge
 Aubrey Larsen, APA, Project Manager
 Corinne Bahr, Project Planner
 Yazmine Mihojevich, Project Planner
 Amy Cervantes, Project Planner

LRB Public Finance Advisors

Fred Philpot, Vice President/COO

Hales Engineering


Josh Gibbons, PE, PTOE, RSP1, General Manager
 Shawn Eliot, AICP, MPA, Planning Manager
 Dallin Borrowman, Transportation Planner

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VISION STATEMENT	11
<i>Acknowledgments.....</i>	<i>iii</i>
INTRODUCTION	2
<i>Background.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>History & Context for the General Plan</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>The Role of Public Engagement.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Plan Structure</i>	<i>9</i>
LAND USE & PLACEMAKING	12
<i>Existing Land Use</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Future Land Use Descriptions.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Placemaking Ideas.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Goals & Implementation Strategies</i>	<i>37</i>
TRANSPORTATION	42
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Transportation Master Plan (2025) Snapshot.....</i>	<i>45</i>
HOUSING	54
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Existing Conditions</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Moderate Income Housing Strategies.....</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Strategies & Implementation Measures.....</i>	<i>61</i>

WATER USE & PRESERVATION	66
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>67</i>
<i>Highland Water System Snapshot.....</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>Water & Land Use.....</i>	<i>73</i>
<i>Regional Conservation.....</i>	<i>84</i>
<i>Looking Forward.....</i>	<i>87</i>
<i>Goals & Implementation Strategies</i>	<i>89</i>
PARKS, OPEN SPACE, TRAILS & RECREATION.....	94
<i>Park System at a Glance.....</i>	<i>99</i>
<i>Guidance for future Parks & Open Space.....</i>	<i>105</i>
<i>Open Space.....</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>Trails.....</i>	<i>110</i>
<i>Recreation</i>	<i>113</i>
<i>Goals & Implementation Strategies</i>	<i>116</i>
ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY.....	126
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>127</i>
<i>Environmental Considerations.....</i>	<i>128</i>
<i>Building Resiliency Through Sustainable Practices</i>	<i>137</i>
<i>Goals & Implementation Strategies</i>	<i>139</i>
PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES.....	142
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>143</i>
<i>Existing Conditions</i>	<i>145</i>
<i>Future Vision & Recommendations.....</i>	<i>150</i>
<i>Goals & Implementation Strategies</i>	<i>153</i>

This page intentionally left blank



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the purpose of the General Plan, establishes the context for the plan update, and provides an overview of community engagement efforts.

BACKGROUND

All Utah communities are required by the *Utah Land Use, Development, and Management Act* (LUDMA) to adopt a comprehensive general plan that establishes general guidelines for future development and growth.

The last comprehensive update to the Highland City General Plan was in 2008. Since that time, the City has continued to grow and evolve. While much has changed in surrounding communities, Highland has remained committed to its open spaces, large-lot neighborhoods, and family-oriented character. This update provides an opportunity to reaffirm the City's values, ensure existing policies continue to support the community's unique needs and identity, and offer guidance for preserving Highland's character and quality of life well into the future.

“Sustainable, inclusive, and community focused civic planning is my top priority.”
- Highland Resident Survey, (2024)



PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The Highland City General Plan is an official document intended to outline the long-term goals and priorities for the community. It serves as a blueprint for City leadership as they make decisions about land use, development, infrastructure, and public investments. Updating the General Plan gives residents and City leaders an opportunity to review what works well, identify areas for improvement, and plan responsibly for the future.

A General Plan is advisory rather than regulatory. It does not create laws but instead guides the development of ordinances, programs, and policies that align with the City's vision. Utah State Code requires the General Plan to address topics including general health and safety, land use, economic development, affordable housing, transportation, recreation, and other essential elements. Adoption of the General Plan may be accompanied by updates to zoning ordinances, development guidelines, and other implementation tools to ensure consistency with its goals.

The General Plan is intended to be a living document, flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions. It provides guidance for five to ten years while establishing a vision for 20 to 30 years or more. As trends, needs, and priorities shift, the General Plan can be revised to continue serving Highland effectively.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR USING THE PLAN

- **A Unified Vision:** All elements of the plan are interconnected. Progress in one area should support the goals of another.
- **A Living Document:** The plan is a flexible guide, not a rigid set of rules. It is meant to be adapted and updated to reflect the community's evolving needs.
- **Policy Recommendations:** The goals and strategies within this plan are policy recommendations. They provide a framework for future decisions and actions that align with the community's vision.

HISTORY & CONTEXT FOR THE GENERAL PLAN

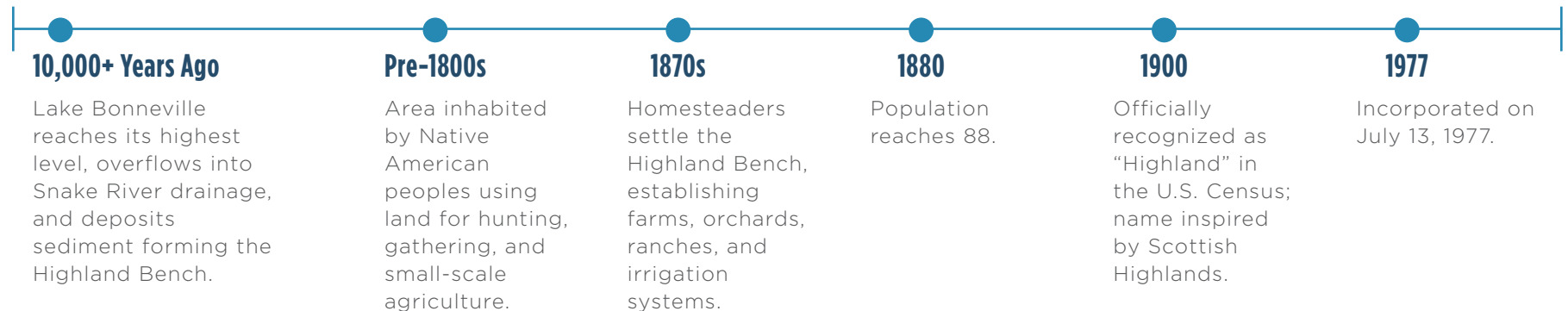
A BRIEF SETTING & HISTORY

Highland’s unique landscape was shaped roughly 10,000 years ago when Lake Bonneville reached its highest level and overflowed into the Snake River drainage, carving a deeper outlet channel and lowering the lake. Over time, streams from Alpine and American Fork Canyons carried sediment into the valley, forming the Highland Bench.

Before European settlement in the 1800s, Native American peoples lived in and traveled through the area, relying on its resources for hunting, gathering, and small-scale agriculture. In the 1870s, homesteaders—primarily

members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints—established farms, orchards, and ranches on the bench. They introduced livestock, built irrigation systems, and created the institutions that shaped Highland’s semi-rural character. By 1880, the population had grown to 88, and the area was listed as “Highland” in the 1900 census. Historical accounts suggest the name was chosen by Scottish immigrants who thought the landscape resembled their homeland, the Scottish Highlands. Highland was officially incorporated as a city on July 13, 1977 (**Figure 1.1**).

FIGURE 1.1 – A BRIEF HISTORY OF HIGHLAND CITY



DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

In addition to context and history, understanding Highland's population characteristics, age distribution, and household composition is useful for planning and providing community services (see **Appendix B** for the full demographic report).

SUMMARY OF TRENDS

Highland City has experienced slow but steady population growth over the past decade, averaging 2.23% annually and reaching approximately 20,000 residents in 2023. By 2050, the population is projected to reach 24,500. While growth continues, surrounding areas such as Eagle Mountain and Saratoga Springs are expanding more rapidly, gradually shifting Utah County's demographic center westward.

Highland's population is gradually aging, though the median age remains younger than the County average. The City maintains a high housing occupancy rate of 93.5%, reflecting stable residential demand. Residential construction has slowed in recent years, while non-residential development grew by 38% between 2020 and 2021. Highland benefits from high average household incomes and a well-educated population, with 72% of residents holding at least an associate degree. These factors support the City's continued economic vitality and foster a strong sense of community.

DEMOGRAPHIC TAKEAWAYS FOR PLANNING

- **Steady, Manageable Growth:** Population growth is moderate; the City can accommodate future needs through careful planning without changing its rural-residential character.
- **Regional Shifts:** Faster growth in nearby cities underscores the importance of coordinating services and preserving Highland's unique identity.
- **Aging Population:** While still younger than the County average, planning should account for age-appropriate housing and services.
- **Housing Stability:** High occupancy rates reinforce the need for thoughtful infill and preservation of open spaces, rather than large-scale development.
- **Balanced Development:** Recent growth in commercial development suggests opportunities to support local businesses while avoiding over-expansion.
- **Skilled & Engaged Community:** Residents' education and experience support local initiatives, civic involvement, and strong community connections.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The planning process for the *Highland City General Plan Update (2025)* included a substantial community engagement effort to gain deeper insights into the needs and aspirations of Highland residents. The engagement process, which ran from Spring 2024 through Winter 2025, provided multiple opportunities for residents to share feedback, raise concerns, and help shape the plan. The following summarizes the engagement methods used to gather insights into the needs and aspirations of Highland residents (see **Appendix A** for the full report).

ENGAGEMENT METHODS

- **City Leadership Briefings & Workshops:** The Planning Commission and City Council participated in briefings and joint workshops covering all plan elements. These sessions allowed leaders to stay informed, discuss issues, and build consensus on priorities.
- **Project Website & Social Map:** Launched early in the process, the website provided project updates, comment forms, and access to an interactive map to gather public feedback.
- **Annual Highland City Open House:** Public input boards were displayed at the Open House and later near the library, giving residents multiple opportunities to share their ideas.



ENGAGEMENT METHODS CONTINUED

- **Highland Field Trip:** City leaders and the planning team toured 16 notable locations, including parks and landmarks, to better understand key assets and challenges.
- **Highland Fling:** The General Plan update was promoted at the annual festival with a booth, posters, and flyers to reach a broad audience.
- **Advisory Committee:** A 10-member committee representing diverse backgrounds provided guidance and feedback, helping ensure the plan reflected community values.
- **Stakeholder Interview:** The Longhorn Property owner shared insights on the site's history, development, and community preferences.
- **Public Open Houses & Workshops:** Visioning and scenario sessions allowed residents to explore topics, share ideas, and review the draft plan to influence Highland's future development.
- **2024 Resident Survey:** The survey collected input on City operations, services, and planning priorities, informing the General Plan.



PLAN STRUCTURE

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the purpose of the General Plan, establishes the context for the plan update, and provides an overview of community engagement efforts.

CHAPTER 2: LAND USE & PLACEMAKING

An updated future land use vision that balances Highland's low-density, open-space character with thoughtful, incremental growth, focusing on residential infill, reinforcing the Town Center as the heart of the community, and intentional placemaking.

CHAPTER 3: TRANSPORTATION

Provides a snapshot of the new *2025 Transportation Master Plan* (TMP), offering a high-level overview rather than a full technical document. The chapter describes Highland's current transportation conditions, and identifies proposed projects. While this element highlights key improvements and strategies, readers should refer to the TMP for detailed analysis, policies, and implementation steps.

CHAPTER 4: HOUSING

The moderate-income housing element presents a targeted vision for facilitating a variety of housing options for residents of all life stages. The plan builds on existing strategies, including the creation of new opportunities for detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs), targeted residential zoning in commercial and mixed-use areas, and the development of housing projects for seniors.

CHAPTER 5: WATER USE & PRESERVATION

Integrates Highland water use and land use planning with the goal to ensure that water is used and conserved wisely and sustainably for today's residents and future generations.

CHAPTER 6: PARKS, OPEN SPACE, TRAILS & RECREATION

Highland's vision for parks, open space, trails and recreation prioritizes a high-quality system for its residents. The chapter highlights the importance of enhancing trail connectivity and safety, protecting valued open spaces, and focusing on maintenance-first strategies. It also emphasizes the role of expanded partnerships and low-cost strategies for strengthening community life and recreational opportunities.


CHAPTER 7: ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Addresses Highland's environmental setting and natural hazards, emphasizing practical strategies for sustainable development. The chapter highlights the importance of protecting sensitive lands, water resources, and wildlife while offering optional, locally appropriate approaches to increasing community resilience.

CHAPTER 8: PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Outlines Highland's vision for public services and facilities, focusing on its commitment to a safe, resilient, and connected community. Guided by resident feedback, the chapter highlights the importance of maintaining existing infrastructure and strategically allocating resources. It emphasizes how partnerships and fiscal prudence will help to ensure high-quality services for both current and future residents.

This page intentionally left blank



CHAPTER 2

LAND USE & PLACEMAKING

An updated future land use vision that balances Highland's low-density, open-space character with thoughtful, incremental growth, focusing on residential infill, reinforcing the Town Center as the heart of the community, and intentional placemaking.

INTRODUCTION

Highland's future depends on thoughtful planning that both respects the past and safeguards the characteristics that residents cherish. A clear land use vision will help the City navigate build-out—a scenario that will likely take the form of **incremental residential infill, revitalization of the Town Center, and efforts to strengthen the City's unique character** through strategic placemaking. At the core of this vision is the idea of connection, the “glue” that binds the community together through well-maintained public and green spaces, an extensive network of paths and trails, and opportunities to gather and build social ties.

“We want our small-town community feel with large open space to still exist.”

– Highland Resident Survey, (2024)

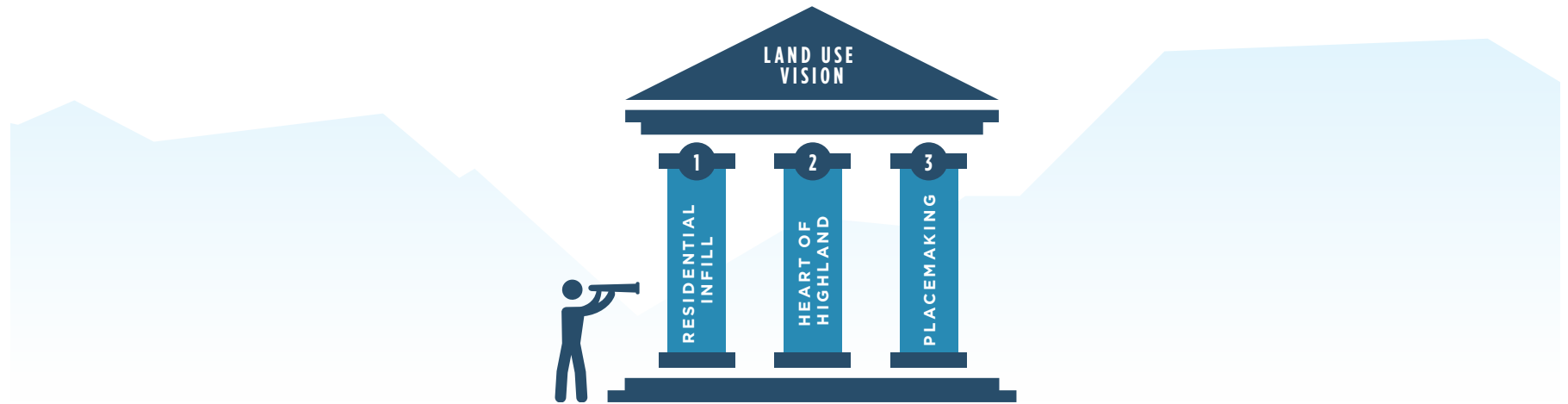
TOP COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Highland City's land use vision is guided by the priorities that emerged from community feedback. While a variety of topics were raised, several clear themes emerged. At its core, the vision is rooted in a clear commitment to **safeguard Highland's low-density character**, strategically **support all stages of life** through thoughtful housing options, and **strengthen the local economy** to ensure long-term sustainability.

- **Preserving Low-Density Character:** Residents consistently express concern about land use decisions that could threaten Highland's low-density, rural character. Many oppose high-density housing, citing worries about increased traffic, congestion, school overcrowding, and declining property values. The community voiced a strong preference for large residential lots and careful development that connects and provides public spaces. The sentiment: "keep Highland, Highland" is agreed upon by most.
- **Supporting All Stages of Life:** While most residents favor limiting growth, many also recognize that Highland offers limited housing options to support people at different stages of life. Allowing external accessory dwelling units (ADUs) is seen by many as a reasonable way to expand housing choices without compromising the City's low-density character. Supporters emphasize the importance of thoughtful regulations, such as limiting use to family members, restricting short-term rentals, and addressing traffic impacts, to ensure that external ADUs align with the community's values and needs.
- **Offsetting Community Costs:** Many residents are concerned that rising costs are becoming increasingly burdensome, particularly for seniors and long-term community members. Rather than relying solely on property tax increases, there is strong support for strategic commercial development that can generate revenue and help offset the costs of providing essential city services. Residents have expressed interest in attracting more retail businesses and restaurants, particularly in the Town Center. Some also see an opportunity to revisit certain business regulations to further support this goal.

LAND USE VISION COMPONENTS

Grounded in community priorities and aspirations, the following three components describe the City's vision for future land use and how it can take shape.



1. INCREMENTAL RESIDENTIAL INFILL

Highland's low-density character isn't just a development pattern; it is a cherished legacy and way of life. Generous lot sizes linked by abundant open spaces give residents room to enjoy their surroundings. As the City approaches build-out, residential infill will primarily take the form of low-density, large-lot single-family homes. This can be supported by a targeted range of additional housing options within development in appropriate areas that incorporate Highland's connected and open character. This ensures the needs of residents at various stages of life are met.



2. THE HEART OF HIGHLAND

The Town Center is envisioned as a vibrant, functional, and visually appealing destination that serves as the heart of Highland, seamlessly blending mixed-use, commercial, and office development. The Town Center is intended to be a central gathering place that brings people together and reflects Highland's identity, creating a focal point for civic life, local businesses, and community connection. Beyond the Town Center, limited mixed-use opportunities may be explored at the southern gateway of North County Boulevard. As the Town Center serves as the City's primary commercial hub, any additional mixed-use areas are intended to complement, not compete with it.



3. PLACEMAKING

Highland's appeal comes from both its distinctive character and the connections that tie the community together. Residents value a city that feels intentional, where streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces demonstrate thoughtful design, cohesion, and care—both in the layout of streets and trails and in overall community design. Residents want to feel connected to each other, to local amenities, and to the natural landscapes that define the City. Preserving and enhancing Highland's character means protecting its visual identity and scenic beauty while strengthening the physical, social, and cultural links that make it a welcoming, close-knit community—a process often referred to as placemaking.

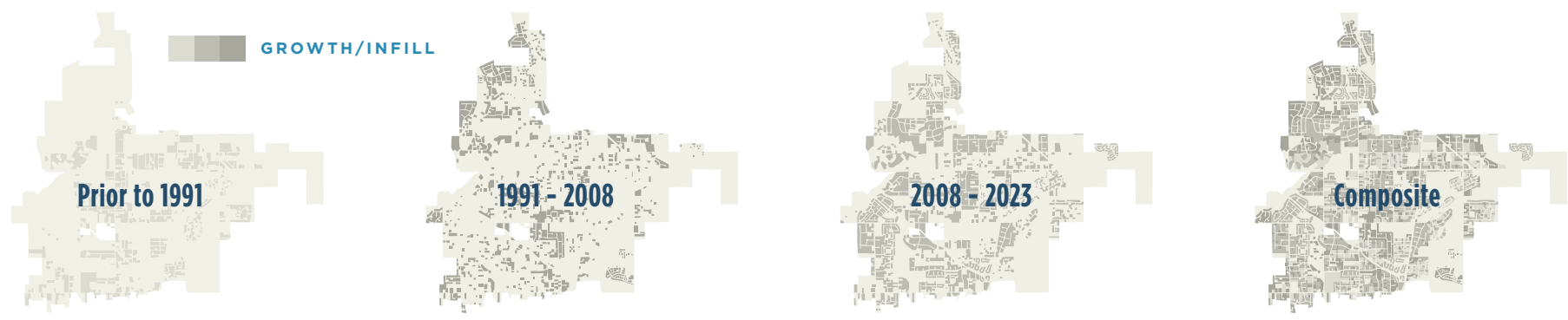


EXISTING LAND USE

Highland’s existing land use pattern reflects a long-standing commitment to large-lot residential development and the preservation of open spaces. These patterns include both traditional layouts established prior to incorporation and newer development approaches that have emerged since the City’s incorporation in 1977. Based on data from year-built, approximately 22% of Highland was developed prior to 1991, 46% between 1991 and 2008, and 32% between 2008 and 2023 (**Figure 2.1**). Today, Highland remains a predominantly residential “bedroom community,” characterized by low-density housing, limited commercial services, an extensive network of parks, trails, and open spaces, and a modest level of public infrastructure (**Table 2.1** and **Existing Land Use Map**).

TABLE 2.1 – EXISTING LAND USE BREAKDOWN			
USE		ACRES	% OF TOTAL
	Low-Density Residential	2,188.49	39.32%
	Medium-Density Residential	1,020.97	18.34%
	School	105.52	1.90%
	Institutional	18.20	0.33%
	Religious	72.05	1.29%
	Private Recreation	30.34	0.55%
	Highland City Public Park	139.01	2.50%
	Golf Course	215.11	3.87%
	Open Space	440.31	7.91%
	Cemetery	16.49	0.30%
	Conservation Area	177.69	3.19%
	Commercial	52.52	0.94%
	Commercial Ag	21.01	0.38%
	Office	36.88	0.66%
	Utility	33.00	0.59%
	Ag/Vacant/Underutilized	244.68	4.40%
	Roads/Other	753.22	13.53%

FIGURE 2.1 – HIGHLAND’S EVOLUTION

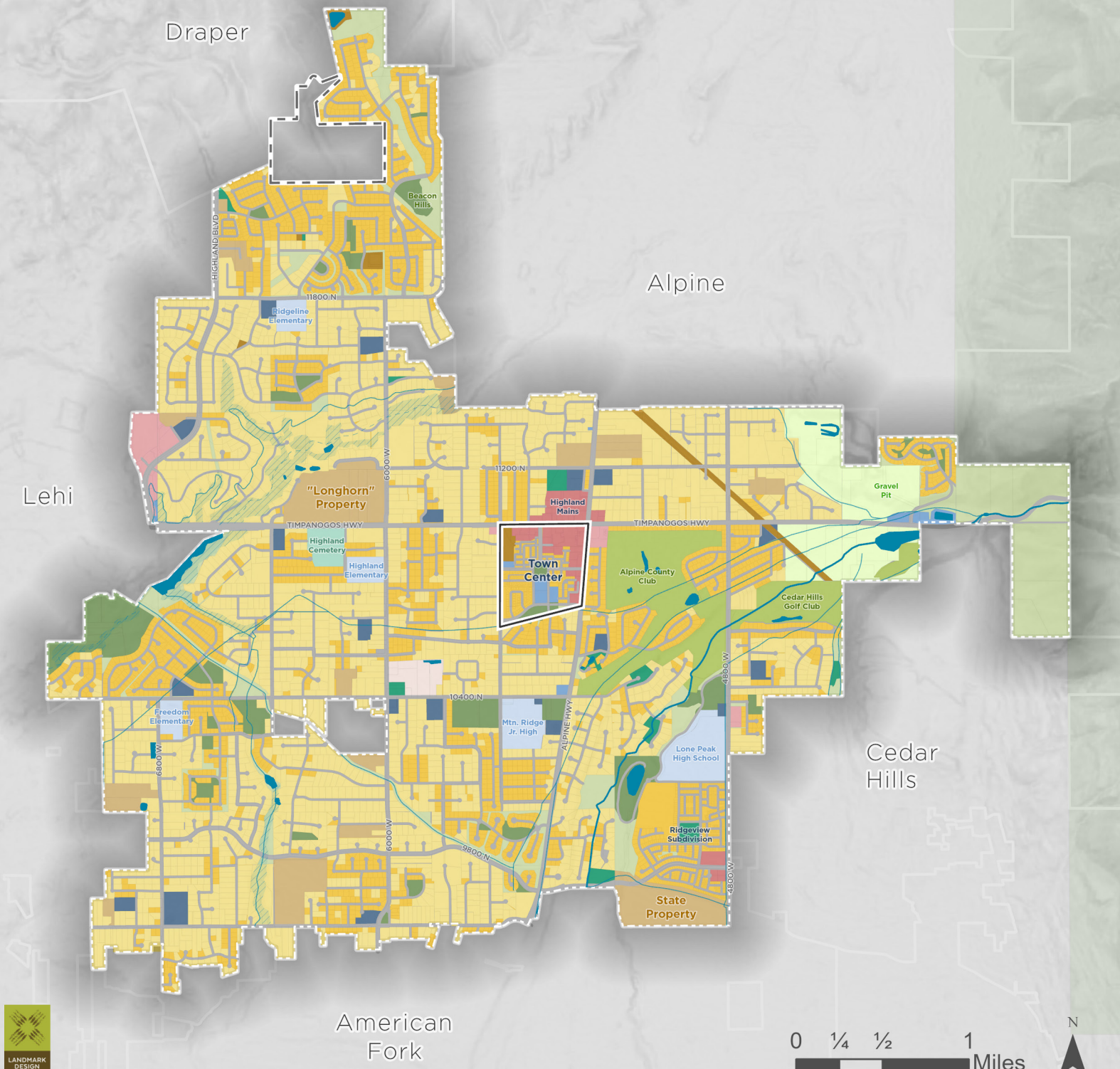




HIGHLAND CITY

Existing Land Use

- Annexation Boundary
- Town Center
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Res. (1/2 acre or less)
- School
- Institutional
- Religious
- Private Recreation
- Highland City Public Park
- Golf Course
- Open Space
- Cemetery
- Conservation Area
- Commercial
- Office
- Commercial Ag
- Utility
- Ag/Vacant/Underutilized
- Forest Service Land
- Riparian/Wetland
- Waterbody
- Canal/Ditch
- Stream/River - Perennial
- Stream/River - Intermittent



FUTURE LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS

Highland's Future Land Use Vision is guided by the desire to preserve the City's unique character while thoughtfully managing future growth. The following section describes the preferred land uses in Highland, providing guidance as the City approaches buildout. (see also ***Future Land Use Map***).

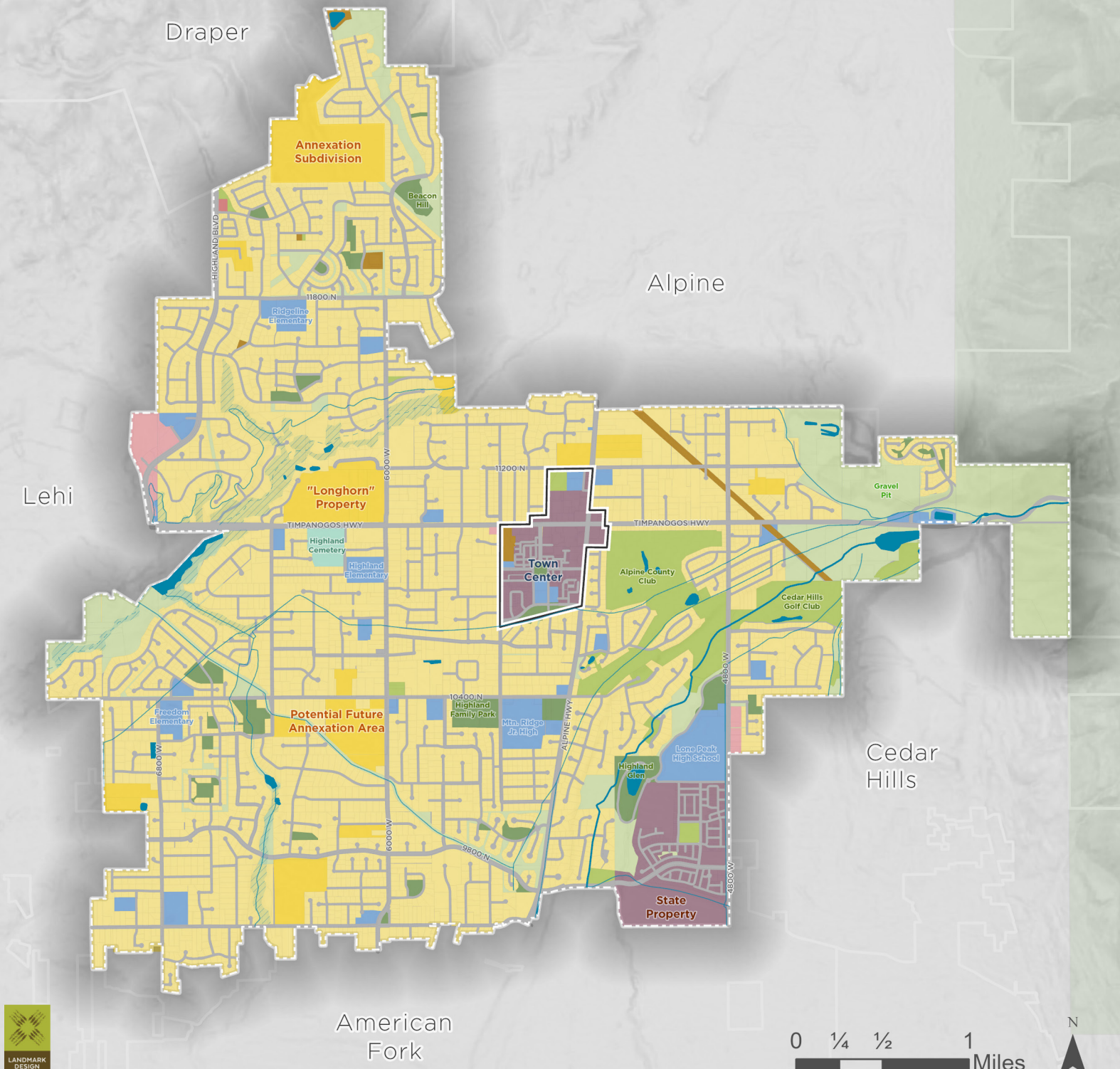
RESIDENTIAL USES	
Location	Future residential uses are envisioned to account for nearly 60 percent of the total land area, representing the largest land use in the community.
Purpose & Character	Highland's residential neighborhoods are a defining strength, central to the City's identity and a major reason people choose to call Highland home. The community's pattern of low-density, large-lot single-family homes is reflective of the semi-rural, family-oriented character Highland is known for. Residential neighborhoods are closely connected by open spaces, trails, and greenways that weave through the City. While honoring these established patterns, Highland envisions supporting a targeted range of thoughtfully placed housing options. The goal is to ensure that residents can plant roots, raise families, and remain in the community through every stage of life.
Preferred Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low-Density Single-Family Homes: Characterized by large lots and strong neighborhood identity. ■ Medium-Density Single-Family Homes: Typically located within residential subdivisions, with lot sizes under half an acre. ■ Open Space Residential: Clustered homes with usable shared open space and trail access. ■ Senior-Friendly Housing: Options such as small cottages or courtyard homes, ideally situated near trails, parks, and amenities. ■ Educational and Civic Uses: Integration of schools, civic buildings, and places of worship as part of the neighborhood fabric.



HIGHLAND CITY

Future Land Use

- Town Center
- Existing Residential to Remain
- Residential Infill
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Office
- Civic/Education/Religious
- Public Park
- Private Recreation/Golf Course
- Open Space
- Cemetery
- Utility
- Forest Service Land
- Riparian/Wetland
- Waterbody
- Canal/Ditch
- Stream/River - Perennial
- Stream/River - Intermittent



MIXED-USE, COMMERCIAL, & OFFICE USES

Location	The vision for future mixed-use, commercial, and office development is to focus on Highland's unified Town Center, with limited new development anticipated at the southern gateway along North County Boulevard. The Town Center is intended to serve as the heart of the community—a central gathering place that brings people together and reflects Highland's identity. As the primary hub for civic life, local businesses, and events, the Town Center is a focal point for community connection and activity.
Purpose & Character	Mixed-use, commercial, and office areas in Highland are envisioned to serve the community's everyday needs while reflecting the city's rural setting and small-town feel. These areas should be walkable, well-landscaped, and human-scaled, blending naturally with nearby residential neighborhoods and integrated into the City's trail and park network. The intent is to create vibrant, attractive areas that include locally oriented businesses, professional offices, civic uses, and senior-friendly housing—places that strengthen connection and reflect Highland's distinct sense of place.
Preferred Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mixed Use: Thoughtfully integrated commercial retail, office, and residential uses in a walkable, attractive setting. ■ Commercial: Neighborhood-scale retail, food services, and personal services that meet the daily needs of residents, with high-quality architecture and landscaping, generally part of mixed use developments. ■ Office: Low-impact professional, medical, and private education uses that are compatible in scale with surrounding uses. ■ Senior-Friendly Housing: Small-scale senior living options, including assisted living and age-restricted housing, ideally located near trails, parks, or commercial amenities. ■ Civic & Public Gathering Spaces: City Hall, Library, Community Center, and other public spaces designed for community use and interaction.

INSTITUTIONAL, SCHOOLS, & RELIGIOUS USES

Location	Institutional, educational, and religious uses are currently integrated throughout Highland and are typically located within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Future siting of such uses should consider access, buffering, and compatibility with surrounding development, while supporting the City's goals for connectivity, open space, and neighborhood cohesion.
Purpose & Character	Institutional, school, and religious uses are essential components of Highland's community identity, providing spiritual, educational, and civic services in a manner that supports the City's family-oriented and rural residential character. These uses should be designed to enhance the neighborhoods they serve—offering welcoming, well-maintained facilities that contribute to Highland's sense of place and provide opportunities for gathering, learning, and service.
Preferred Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Religious Facilities: Churches, temples, and other places of worship integrated into the neighborhood fabric, with appropriate site and building design to minimize impacts on adjacent residential areas. ■ Educational Uses: Public K-12 schools, early childhood education centers, and specialized learning facilities that support Highland families and children. ■ Civic and Institutional Uses: Libraries, government buildings, cultural centers, and public safety facilities that provide essential services and community space. ■ Open Space Integration: Where appropriate, shared open space, trails, and recreational facilities associated with schools or religious sites to enhance public access and community benefit.

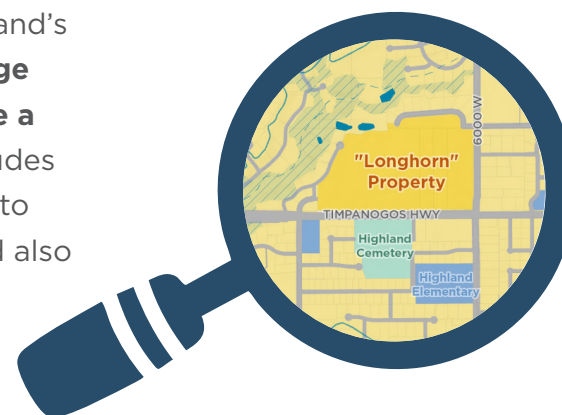
PARKS, TRAILS, & OPEN SPACE

Location	Parks and natural open spaces are both woven throughout Highland and integral to the City's character. Existing assets include community and neighborhood parks, a growing trail network, and large areas of natural open space (see also Chapter 6: Parks, Open Space, Trails & Recreation).
Purpose & Character	Highland's open space system defines its identity, offering natural beauty, recreational opportunities, and connection with nature. These spaces support the city's rural, low-density character while promoting health, wellness, and community connection. The City's parks and trails are designed to be accessible, scenic, and compatible with surrounding land uses. As Highland continues to grow, open space preservation will remain a high priority, ensuring that future generations enjoy the same quality of life and access to nature.
Preferred Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mini (or Pocket) Parks: Small parks (<3 acres) that generally serve nearby neighborhoods (¼-mile radius) with limited amenities like small playgrounds and open lawn areas. ■ Neighborhood Parks: Form the core of the park system, offering space for unstructured play, limited active use, and passive recreation (3-10 acres). ■ Community Parks: Community parks (10-40 acres) support organized sports and recreation, with amenities like fields, trails, and picnic areas. They typically serve residents within a 1-mile radius but can also serve regional needs. ■ Private or Quasi-Public Recreation: Facilities that are not publicly owned but provide recreational opportunities. These may be part of a subdivision or HOA, affiliated with a church or religious institution, or operated by a private business such as a golf course. ■ Special Use Parks: Single-purpose recreation sites (e.g., campgrounds, community gardens, bike parks, etc.) No standard size; depends on the specific use. ■ Natural Open Space: Preserved areas that protect visual character, sensitive lands, and ecological functions while offering opportunities for passive recreation. ■ Trails, Pathways, & Greenways: Multi-use trails, trailheads, and linear open spaces that connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, and civic spaces. These corridors may follow creeks, canals, or roadways, providing visual relief, stormwater functions, and opportunities for trail connections. ■ Open Space Residential: Clustered housing development that conserves large tracts of usable, publicly accessible open space or natural land.

OTHER FUTURE LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

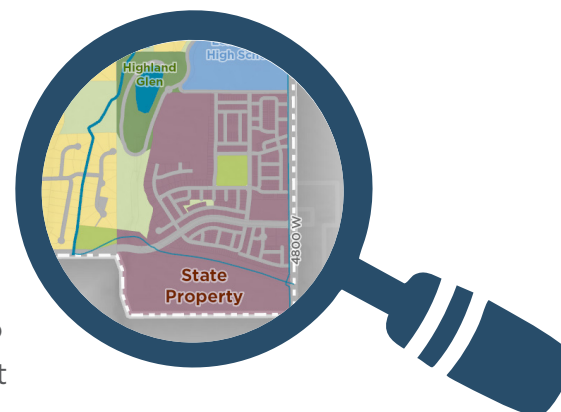
THE “LONGHORN” PROPERTY (65 ACRES)

The future of the privately owned “Longhorn” property has been a focal point of community discussion for many years, with residents advocating for its role in preserving Highland’s distinctive character. **The overarching desire is to maintain the City’s rural feel, large lot sizes, and abundant open spaces while using thoughtful placemaking to create a welcoming community gateway.** A favored vision for the “Longhorn” property includes significant open space buffering Bull River, with large residential lots “feathering” into future low-density single-family homes. Thoughtfully designed senior housing could also be a good fit for the property. Any approach should actively maintain open spaces, protect scenic viewsheds, and celebrate this area as Highland’s most prominent gateway. Residents strongly desire uses for this property that contribute to the community’s aesthetics and overall quality of life, ensuring it remains a hallmark of Highland’s unique identity.



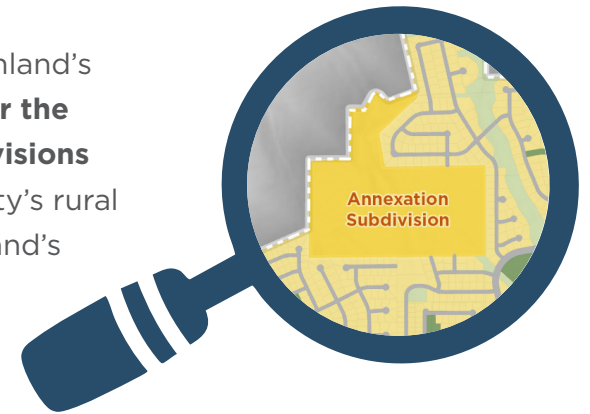
VACANT STATE OF UTAH PROPERTY (54 ACRES)

With limited vacant land left, the State-owned property south of Ridgeview Subdivision presents **a strategic opportunity to create preferred residential uses that support all phases of life from young families to seniors.** A vision for this location could be low-maintenance homes designed with accessibility and livability in mind. Drawing from the positive example of the Coventry Subdivision, the site could include well-designed townhomes or similar units that offer quality design features, options to downsize, and access to open space and trails. With attention to landscaping, traffic flow, and integration with the surrounding area, the development could add needed housing while respecting Highland’s character and avoiding the issues associated with overly dense development.



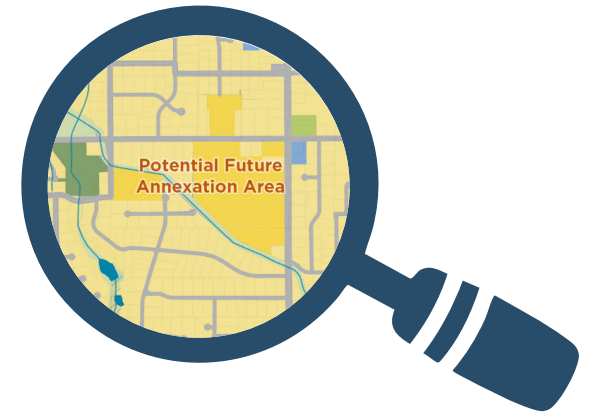
NORTHERN FUTURE ANNEXATION (98 ACRES)

The declared northern future annexation area should integrate seamlessly with Highland's established land use patterns. **Development within this area is envisioned to mirror the prevailing character of neighboring residential landscapes, featuring small subdivisions connected by generous open spaces.** A core objective is to preserve the community's rural and open feel, ensuring that new growth enhances rather than detracts from Highland's distinctive identity. Other considerations for this area include the provision of essential public facilities, including schools, future neighborhood parks, and a comprehensive trail system.



POTENTIAL FUTURE ANNEXATION AREA (48 ACRES)

Note that the "Buhler Property" along 10400 N is a potential future annexation area. As an unincorporated island, Utah law provides a process for Highland to annex the area if the conditions in *Utah Code § 10-2-812* are met. Similar considerations as the northern future annexation area would apply.



PLACEMAKING IDEAS

An important component of Highland's Future Land Use vision is enhancing the City's character and sense of connection. This process, often called placemaking, involves creating high-quality places where people want to live, work, and play. Well-designed places are active, engaging, and visually appealing, incorporating thoughtful design, public art, and creative programming that reflect the community's unique identity. Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces. It's a process that focuses on the people who use a space, rather than just the physical infrastructure. It involves a collaborative effort to capitalize on a community's assets and potential to create public spaces that are not only beautiful but also promote people's health, happiness, and well-being.

Essentially, placemaking transforms a “space” into a “place.” A space is just a physical area, like a park or a street. A place, however, has a strong identity and sense of community. It’s somewhere people feel a connection to, a place they are proud of and want to spend time in.

WHERE TO FOCUS PLACEMAKING EFFORTS?

Placemaking principles can be applied across the community, from major public spaces to small neighborhoods. By focusing on intentional design and connectivity, the City can strengthen the social and physical ties that bring the community together. This chapter highlights two focal points selected for their potential impact and alignment with other land use goals:

1. **The Town Center**
2. **Gateways & Corridors**

FROM “SPACE” TO “PLACE

Places that exude local community character include well-designed buildings, attractive streetscapes, and a sense of cohesion achieved through commonality in design elements, materials, and landscaping.

- **People-First Design:** They are people-friendly with a mix of human-scale uses.
- **Active & Accessible:** They’re walkable, bikeable, and easy to navigate.
- **Thoughtful Connectivity:** They offer a variety of transportation options for getting there.
- **Diverse Offerings:** They include a variety of uses, including housing options that support all stages of life.
- **Honoring Heritage:** They respect community heritage and values.
- **Cultural Vibrancy:** They embrace the creative arts and provide cultural opportunities.
- **Connection to Nature:** They include green space that’s well-connected to Highland’s extensive pathway and trail systems.
- **Safe & Welcoming:** They are safe and welcoming for everyone.
- **Comfort & Ease:** They are accessible and comfortable.
- **Well-Maintained:** They’re well-maintained and exude a sense of local character and pride.
- **Social Connection:** They are sociable, encouraging people to connect with one another.

1. THE TOWN CENTER

Achieving the vision for Highland's Town Center has long been a guiding ideal, yet the area has not fully realized its potential as the heart of the community. Moving toward a unified and vibrant center will likely require a combination of targeted programs, clear design standards, business attraction efforts, and incremental improvements. The ideas and strategies shown in **Table 2.2**, while not exhaustive, have proven successful in similar communities.



Inspirational Town Center placemaking imagery.

TABLE 2.2 – TOWN CENTER PLACEMAKING IDEAS & STRATEGIES

IDEA/STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
Community Events & Programming	Community events play a vital role in energizing a downtown area and increasing foot traffic. By drawing in both residents and visitors, events encourage people to spend more time in the Town Center, frequenting local businesses and other attractions. Highland may consider proactively encouraging more events—such as the Highland Fling and holiday celebrations—to be hosted in the Town Center whenever possible. Additionally, the City can explore hosting new events at other times of the year to encourage year-round visitation.
Civic Center Activation & Expansion	The Civic Center—featuring the splash pad, City Hall, and Library—is a key Town Center focal point. Highland can boost activity by enhancing amenities, programming, and events, and by exploring expansion onto adjacent property to strengthen city services. This would reinforce the Civic Center as the vibrant heart of the Town Center.
Local Business Incentive Programs	To generate interest and foot traffic Downtown, the City can implement incentive programs that encourage residents to shop at local businesses. These could include event-based programs like a “Tour of Downtown” or a “Meet the Owner” night. The City could also explore a “Buy Local” reward system to build a stronger connection between the community and its businesses.
Business Incubators	Business Incubators are a useful tool for helping small businesses get started. These spaces offer entrepreneurs a flexible option to begin operations with a short-term, reduced-cost lease, which can significantly lower initial overhead. Highland can explore using these spaces in a few ways. They could be permanent facilities, such as a specialized commercial kitchen for food-based startups. Alternatively, they could be temporary or seasonal, like a street market held during the summer. This approach would support aspiring entrepreneurs and help cultivate the specific types of businesses residents want to see in the Town Center.
Food Trucks	Food trucks have become increasingly popular and have the potential to bring a lot of energy to an area with their variety of local eats. The City can build on the success of food trucks that have already been used at community events by bringing them in more frequently. This could be done by hosting a regular “Food Truck Night” during the summer or even by creating a dedicated food truck park.
Clear, High-Quality Design Standards	Many residents have expressed a strong desire to ensure that both current and new developments are of high quality and reflect Highland’s unique character. A form-based code is an excellent tool for achieving this in the Town Center. Unlike conventional zoning, which focuses on land use, a form-based code prioritizes building form and design. This ensures more predictable, aesthetically pleasing spaces that align with the community’s vision. If the City decides not to pursue a form-based code, a comprehensive update to the existing Commercial Zone Design Standards would also be a viable alternative to achieve similar goals.
Public/Private Partnerships	Successful Town Centers often feature a mix of public and private gathering places, such as small plazas and pocket parks. These spaces offer a place to relax or recreate and can be used for events, street performances, or dining. To create these types of spaces and programming, the City can forge strategic public/private partnerships. For example, the City could collaborate between the Highland Library and local businesses to host joint events in the Town Center—such as a summer reading program at a local shop or a mobile “story time” at a seasonal street market. This approach leverages the Library’s role as a community connector, strengthening the link between the Town Center’s civic and commercial hubs without requiring significant City funds.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS BEYOND THE TOWN CENTER

While Highland’s vision emphasizes a vibrant Town Center, a broader view of the City’s economy highlights key considerations for long-term fiscal health. The following insights are drawn from an analysis (see [Appendix C](#)) and help illustrate how thoughtful placemaking strategies and business activity could support the generation of revenue to offset community costs by supporting essential City services.

- **Sales Tax Pooling:** Highland benefits from the State’s sales tax pooling formula, which returns some sales tax revenue from adjacent cities. Given limits on supportable commercial space, the City should focus on strengthening existing commercial areas and recapturing sales tax revenue rather than pursuing major expansion.
- **Sales Leakage:** An estimated \$709 million in taxable sales “leaks” from Highland to neighboring communities, representing a potential loss of nearly \$5 million in sales tax revenue for the City.
- **Existing Strengths:** Local taxable sales are concentrated in non-store retail and food and beverage services. The vast majority of the City’s property value is tied to single-family homes, highlighting its residential focus.
- **Limited Development:** The City’s planned commercial space may already exceed the estimated supportable square footage for the future population, suggesting a focus on strengthening existing areas.
- **Economic Barriers:** High land values and development impact fees are factors that could make it difficult for new, small businesses to open in the City.
- **Location:** Not being on a major interstate limits the City’s potential to attract large industrial or distribution centers.
- **Targeted Growth:** The most viable path for commercial growth could be through infill and small-scale retail. By encouraging this type of development, the City could capture a portion of the sales revenue currently spent elsewhere, which in turn could help fund City services.
- **Fiscal Strategy:** The City’s long-term financial stability could benefit from a strategy that doesn’t rely solely on major commercial expansion. This includes prudent budgeting, targeted tax adjustments as needed, and supporting home-based businesses. This approach could help create a more resilient economic foundation.

2. GATEWAYS & CORRIDORS

Gateways and corridors help define Highland's character, creating a clear sense of arrival and leaving a lasting impression on those who enter or exit the community. Placemaking efforts at these locations should emphasize consistency and common design elements to establish a cohesive and distinct Highland identity throughout all gateways and corridors. The locations identified in **Figure 2.2** provide a starting point, with the opportunity to identify and enhance additional areas as the City evolves.

Community **gateways** are the 'front door' to Highland, welcoming residents and visitors and reinforcing the community's unique identity. Intentionally designed gateways create a sense of arrival and leave a lasting first impression through visual cues, such as enhanced water-wise landscaping, coordinated signage, unique landforms, or public art, that aid in wayfinding and highlight scenic views. **Corridors** play a similar role but function as a continuous system that extends this sense of place along a highway, street, or greenway. A corridor may feature enhanced street or parkway landscaping, medians, roundabouts, lighting, and banners, all designed to unify the experience and reinforce the community's visual identity.

FIGURE 2.2 – MAJOR GATEWAYS & CORRIDORS

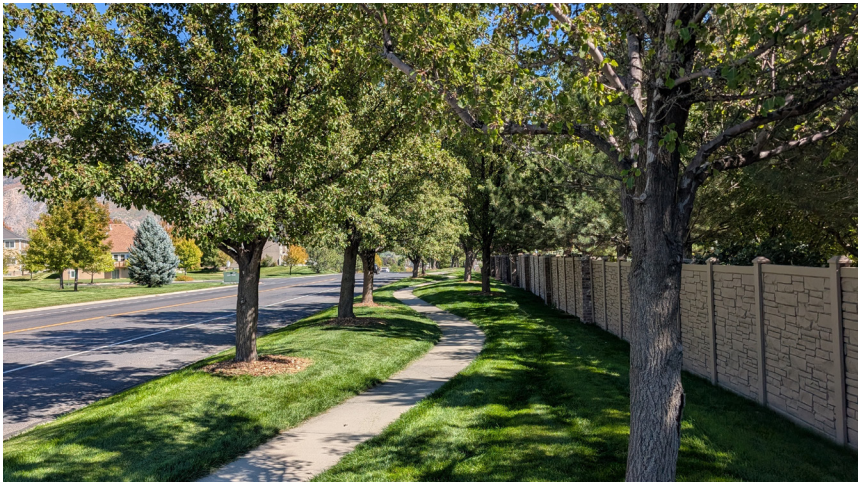


PARKWAY DETAIL

As part of its placemaking efforts, Highland has adopted a “parkway detail” streetscape and landscaping standard for key gateways and corridors. Originally designed with traditional landscaping, the standard has been updated to emphasize water-wise xeriscaping and refined elements such as the removal of berms, elimination of special planters, and updated grading requirements. The parkway detail generally includes a 29-foot landscaped area on each side of the street, with trees, attractive fencing, and a meandering sidewalk or trail.

The standard has been implemented, or is planned, along major corridors including Timpanogos Highway (SR-92), Alpine Highway (SR-74), 4800 West, North County Boulevard (SR-129), Highland Boulevard, Beacon Hill Boulevard, 10400 North, and 11800 North. Additional gateways or corridors may also be designated. Where appropriate, the parkway detail may be adapted to improve public use and connectivity, such as widening roadways or adding multi-use trails, while ensuring that enhancements preserve the corridor’s open and welcoming character.

The Parkway Landscape Detail can be found in the [*Highland City Standard Drawings*](#).



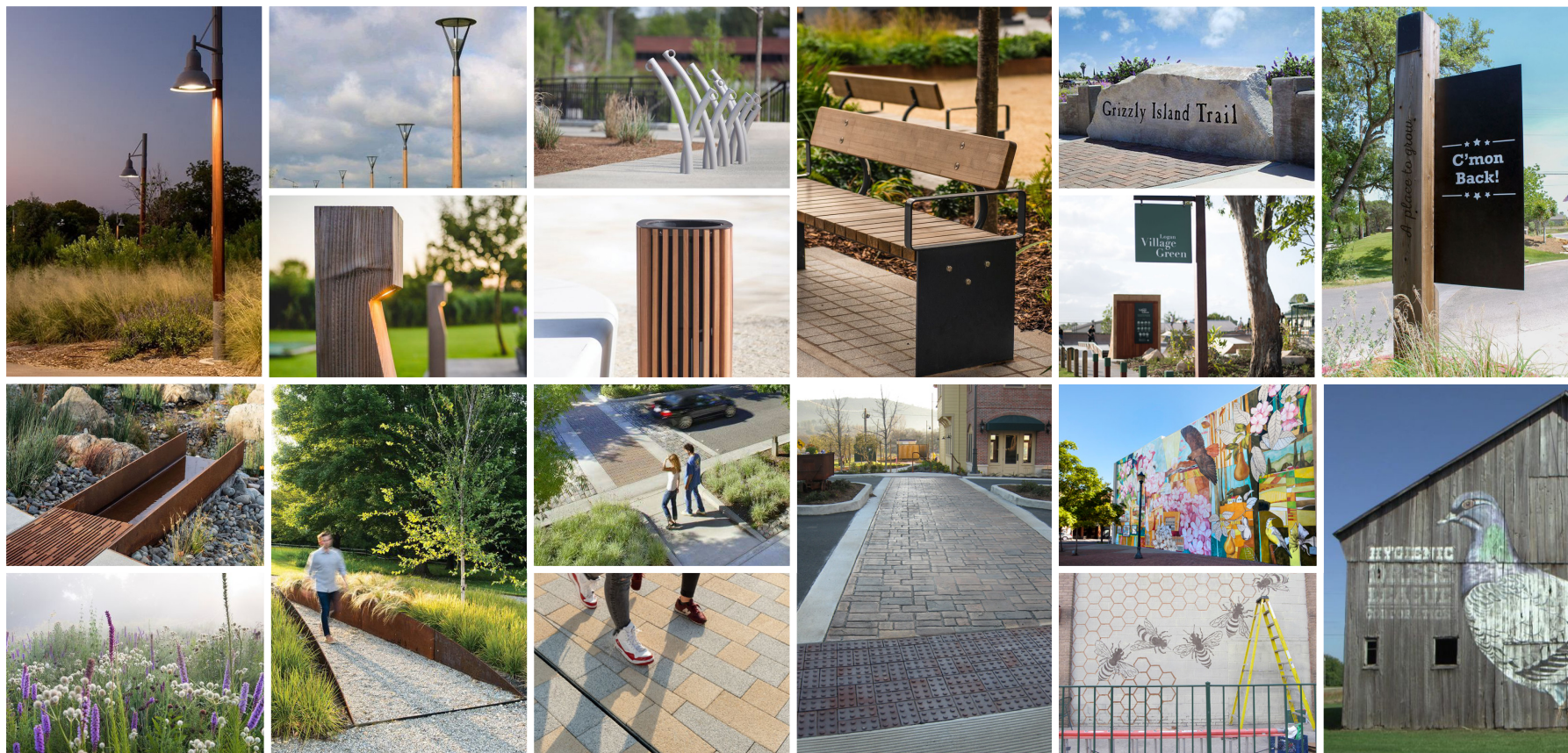
Example of the typical application of the parkway detail.



A digital rendering showcasing a water-wise approach to parkway detail landscaping.

ESTABLISHING A THEMATIC BRAND & IDENTITY

The following ideas and recommendations for gateways and corridors expand on ideas to establish a thematic brand and identity that can apply throughout the City. This approach is intended to guide design decisions, ensuring every element reinforces the community's unique identity. By focusing on a semi-rural, open-space aesthetic, Highland can create a welcoming and authentic experience.



Inspirational thematic community branding imagery.

SUGGESTED ELEMENTS FOR HIGHLAND'S THEMATIC BRANDING:

- **Decorative Lighting:** Light fixtures could emphasize dark-sky principles to preserve Highland's rural, starry night views. This may include low-level, fully shielded fixtures with warm-toned bulbs. Designs could be simple and rustic, using natural materials such as weathered steel or wood to complement the landscape. Unified decorative lighting could extend throughout the Town Center and potentially to other destinations.
- **Street Furniture:** Durable, timeless materials that fit a rural character, such as reclaimed wood, stone, or recycled composite materials, could be selected. Benches, bike racks, and trash receptacles can be thoughtfully placed in communal areas to encourage gathering without cluttering open spaces.
- **Signage and Banners:** A consistent design language for all signage could be developed. Primary signage may use natural materials like carved wood, stone, or metal with a weathered finish. Banners can be used for special events while maintaining the overall thematic branding.
- **Street Trees and Landscaping:** Prioritizing water-wise, drought-tolerant trees and plants that thrive in the local climate could be a central theme. Large canopy trees can provide shade and help define corridors, while low-maintenance, water-wise grasses and shrubs enhance the natural, open-space feel. Highland's updated Parkway Landscaping Detail provides a strong foundation, requiring a 29-foot-wide landscape strip along collector and arterial roads—including the City's iconic street medians—that incorporates xeriscaping (see also **Chapter 5: Water Use & Preservation**).
- **Crosswalks:** To enhance safety and aesthetics, crosswalks could be upgraded with durable, decorative pavers or textured concrete in natural colors. This may provide clear visual cues for pedestrians and vehicles while harmonizing with the surrounding landscape.
- **Public Art or Landmark Features:** Public art could be installed that celebrates Highland's unique story and semi-rural lifestyle. Consider sculptures made from natural materials, murals depicting local history or landscapes, or artistic landmarks that reflect community values. This offers an opportunity to create memorable features that are distinctly Highland.

GATEWAY A: NORTH ENTRANCE (HIGHLAND BLVD.)

With development on the west side in Lehi City now complete, Highland Boulevard is fully improved with parkway features, medians, and a roundabout that present strong placemaking opportunities. Most property within Highland in this area is fully developed, except for the future annexation area (see discussion on p. 25) and a small commercial zone. The City should ensure that any new commercial development here aligns with Highland's placemaking themes and branding to reinforce community identity.

GATEWAY B: EAST ENTRANCE (GRAVEL PIT/AF CANYON)

The eastern gateway is defined by the current gravel pit to the north, and forest service lands along with the American Fork River to the south. The gravel pit is being considered for an aquifer recharge project (see Page 79). The City should collaborate with the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, Forest Service, and other partners to explore opportunities for visitor centers or public programming at the American Fork Canyon entrance. Additionally, the City should investigate creating park or open space areas with trails and natural access within the gravel pit area, incorporating Highland's placemaking efforts and connecting seamlessly to the City's trail and park system.

GATEWAY C: SOUTH ENTRANCE (NORTH COUNTY – RIDGEVIEW/STATE PROPERTY)

This gateway borders American Fork and Cedar Hills and includes a large parcel owned by the State of Utah. Refer to **pg. 24** for a discussion of the Developmental Center property and a high-level development plan. Future development or redevelopment in this area should incorporate placemaking elements and parkway details consistent with those implemented in the Ridgeview planned development. The City should pursue placemaking strategies that distinguish Highland from adjacent communities.

GATEWAY D: SOUTH ENTRANCE (ALPINE HWY.)

The focus here should be completing parkway enhancements and trail connections along Alpine Highway and improving 9600 North. The City could explore partnerships with American Fork to enhance trail connectivity through this corridor, fostering a continuous and integrated pedestrian and bike network.

GATEWAY E: THE LONGHORN PROPERTY

Residents have identified the “Longhorn Property” as a critical gateway that signals “Welcome to Highland.” Known for its longhorn cattle and captivating views, this area offers an opportunity to create an idealistic and truly beautiful first impression of the community. While the area may change over time, a thoughtful approach to development can ensure it maintains its unique sense of place, preserving the special rural character that defines it (see also [pg. 24](#)).



Inspirational “Longhorn” Gateway imagery.

IDEAS & STRATEGIES FOR PRESERVING THE “LONGHORN” GATEWAY

- **Preserve the Open Feel:** Any future development could be clustered to group homes on a portion of the site, ensuring large areas remain as open space or pasture. This approach would maximize retained open space and maintain the area’s distinct agricultural feel. Views to the mountains should be safeguarded to ensure the property’s sweeping, pastoral vistas remain visible from key roads and entry points.
- **Honor the Longhorn Legacy:** A thematic brand could be built around the property’s history and its iconic longhorns. Ideas may include incorporating public art or interpretive features—such as a weathered steel sculpture of a longhorn or a mural depicting the property’s agricultural history—that serve as a unique landmark. Streets, parks, or trails could be named to reflect the Longhorn heritage, tying the development directly to the land’s storied past.
- **Specific Landscape & Design Standards** A naturalistic landscaping plan is a key element for maintaining a rural feel. The landscape design could prioritize the use of grasses and perennials to create a beautiful, meadow-like appearance rather than a manicured subdivision edge. A consistent use of rustic materials, such as split-rail fencing, low-profile stone walls, or weathered timber, could also be encouraged to ensure architecture and lot layouts blend seamlessly with Highland’s open, low-density character.
- **Public Realm Enhancements:** A central objective could be to create a prominent gateway feature at the property’s edge. This might be a unique sign or artistic installation crafted from natural or rustic materials, designed to not only signal “Welcome to Highland” but also to frame a beautiful view of the property. Integrating trail connections or open-space corridors could provide a significant community benefit and ensure the property contributes to the broader trail system.
- **Conservation Options:** The community may explore options for the long-term preservation of a portion of the property’s open space. This could involve exploring a conservation easement, establishing a public-private partnership, or dedicating a portion of the land as community park space, permanently protecting the open land and its rural character for future generations.

GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Preserve Highland's unique character and low-density development pattern.

- **Implementation 1.1:** Evaluate existing Development Code provisions, such as those in the R-1-40 and R-1-20 Zones, to identify if additional protections or clarifications are needed to actively preserve the low-density residential environment. This includes assessing whether current definitions and design standards are sufficient to ensure new developments align with the established character of large lots and abundant open spaces.
- **Implementation 1.2:** Identify additional opportunities to integrate open-space-first design principles into the City Code by building on successful projects and lessons learned from past developments. This could involve updating the Planned Development (PD) District or evaluating whether the open space density bonus concept should be revisited as an overlay.
- **Implementation 1.3:** Develop and incorporate clear, high-quality design standards for both new and reconstructed commercial, institutional, and mixed-use projects. This includes exploring a form-based code for the Town Center Overlay or a comprehensive update to existing design standards (see also **Implementation 4.1**).
- **Implementation 1.4:** Explore conservation options for key open spaces, such as the “Longhorn” property, including conservation easements, public-private partnerships, or the dedication of land for community park space and connections.
- **Implementation 1.5:** Where appropriate, continue to encourage development that clusters homes to preserve large areas of open space and protect views and access corridors.
- **Implementation 1.6:** Promote the use of well-designed xeriscaping and similar landscaping and materials inspired by Highland's semi-rural identity to ensure new development blends seamlessly with the surrounding landscape.
- **Implementation 1.7:** Monitor the potential annexation of the Buhler property along 10400 N, recognizing it as an unincorporated island within Highland. If property owners express interest or if future circumstances make annexation appropriate, consider initiating the statutory process in accordance with *Utah Code § 10-2-812*.

Goal 2: Support a modest range of housing options for all stages of life.

- **Implementation 2.1:** Explore opportunities for “senior-friendly” and other small-scale housing options in strategic locations like the Town Center or the State of Utah property south of Ridgeview. This could include revisiting existing tools, such as the Senior Care Assisted Living Overlay Zone and the Town Center Transitional Housing Overlay, and determining whether the concepts and policies that guided those codes could be refined.
- **Implementation 2.2:** Consider developing clear and thoughtful regulations for detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) that align with community values, ensuring they serve as a viable housing option without compromising neighborhood character (see also *Chapter 4: Housing*).

Goal 3: Strengthen the local economy and create a vibrant Town Center.

- **Implementation 3.1:** Explore strategic commercial development and business attraction efforts to increase local revenue, particularly in the Town Center. This requires a careful evaluation of the C-1 Zone and CR Zone regulations to ensure they support the type of businesses residents want.
- **Implementation 3.2:** Develop and implement a strategy to revitalize the Town Center, focusing on creating a vibrant, walkable, and aesthetically pleasing destination that reflects Highland’s identity. The Town Center Overlay is the primary tool for this, and a review of its regulations should be a priority.
- **Implementation 3.3:** Encourage community events and programming, such as food truck nights, seasonal markets, or cultural events, to increase foot traffic and community engagement in the Town Center. The City could review and improve existing code to ensure it supports such uses.

Goal 4: Enhance Highland's character through strategic placemaking efforts.

- **Implementation 4.1:** Develop a comprehensive “thematic branding” guide for gateways and corridors, focusing on elements like decorative lighting, consistent signage, and water-wise landscaping that reinforce Highland’s semi-rural character. This guide can establish a consistent aesthetic across the City, distinguishing it from the specific design standards for individual buildings or zones (see also *Implementation 1.3*).
- **Implementation 4.2:** Continue to prioritize the preservation and enhancement of scenic viewsheds and natural open spaces, particularly in prominent areas like the “Longhorn” property and along natural corridors.
- **Implementation 4.3:** Continue to strengthen connectivity throughout the City by expanding and linking the trail, pathway, and greenway network, ensuring all residents have access to parks, schools, and civic spaces (see also *Chapter 6: Parks, Open Space, Trails & Recreation*).
- **Implementation 4.4:** Explore opportunities to commission or install public art that celebrates Highland’s unique story and semi-rural lifestyle. This may include sculptures, murals, or artistic landmarks made from natural or rustic materials, particularly in the Town Center and at key gateways.
- **Implementation 4.5:** Consider creating a prominent gateway feature at the “Longhorn” property’s edge. This feature could be a unique sign or artistic installation that signals “Welcome to Highland” while framing the property’s scenic views.

Goal 5: Support locally desired services and modest economic activity to strengthen fiscal resilience.

- **Implementation 5.1:** Explore the feasibility of obtaining a unique Highland ZIP code through the United States Postal Service (USPS) ZIP Code Boundary Review Process, focusing on potential benefits for residents, local businesses, and municipal services.
- **Implementation 5.2:** Support small-scale, neighborhood-oriented retail and home-based businesses that complement the existing Town Center and other mixed-use areas, helping to retain local spending and provide services desired by residents.
- **Implementation 5.3:** Incorporate Highland's identity into community signage, branding, and civic events to strengthen recognition, pride, and awareness of local businesses.

This page intentionally left blank



CHAPTER 3

TRANSPORTATION

Provides a snapshot of the new *2025 Transportation Master Plan* (TMP), offering a high-level overview rather than a full technical document. The chapter describes Highland's current transportation conditions, and identifies proposed projects. While this element highlights key improvements and strategies, readers should refer to the TMP for detailed analysis, policies, and implementation steps.

INTRODUCTION

The Highland City Transportation Element provides a high-level overview of the City's long-range transportation vision. It is intended as a snapshot of the more detailed *Transportation Master Plan (2025)*, which serves as the primary guide for transportation improvements and investments. Rooted in the desire to preserve Highland's unique residential character and scenic beauty, this element highlights the goals, policies, and actions necessary to support a balanced, multimodal network. It addresses the needs of motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians while pointing readers to the TMP for full technical analysis, project lists, and implementation strategies.

“Paving the sidewalk would do a great deal for all the families that live on and north of 9600 N.”

- Social Pinpoint Comment, (2024)



RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES ON TRANSPORTATION

Highland residents have expressed significant concerns about traffic safety, road maintenance, and the impact of new development on congestion. Feedback highlights a shared desire for better enforcement of traffic laws and improvements to infrastructure in order to handle increased vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

- **Traffic Safety & Enforcement:** Many residents believe that speeding is a major problem on Highland's roadways. Specific concerns were raised about speeding near schools and parks, which creates dangerous conditions for children and pedestrians. There is a demand for increased traffic enforcement, with residents asking for more police patrols to issue tickets. Some comments suggest that the city should install speed bumps or cameras that can issue tickets, particularly on roads like Canal Boulevard and SR-92, to deter speeding.
- **Road Maintenance & Quality:** Residents frequently commented on the poor condition of city roads, citing issues such as potholes, cracks, and deteriorating asphalt. Some residents expressed frustration that roads in older neighborhoods have not been repaved for years, while newer areas seem to get attention. There are specific requests for road repairs on streets like 6800 W, 10050 N, and 10550 N.
- **Impact of Growth:** Residents are actively navigating the challenges that come with a growing community. The increase in traffic on major roads like SR-92 and Highland Boulevard is a primary concern, along with parking challenges near schools and parks. Residents express a desire to ensure infrastructure evolves to support this growth and maintain a high quality of life.
- **Walkability & Connectivity:** Some residents expressed a desire for more sidewalks, trails, and better connectivity to key community areas like parks and the Town Center. However, there is also a parallel concern that the city is not properly maintaining its existing trails and sidewalks. Comments mention overgrown brush on sidewalks and uneven surfaces that pose a tripping hazard.

TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN (2025) SNAPSHOT

CURRENT CONDITIONS

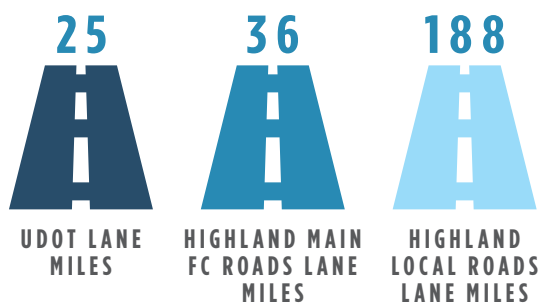
Highland City's transportation system is currently efficient and is generally expected to remain so. The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) maintains all primary arterials—North County Boulevard and Timpanogos Highway (SR-92)—as well as one minor arterial, Alpine Highway (SR-74). The City is responsible for the upkeep of all other minor arterials, collector streets, and local roads. Public transit, operated by the Utah Transit Authority (UTA), is limited to peak-hour express bus service, which connects residents to FrontRunner Commuter Rail, the State Street Core Bus route, and Utah Valley University. The City also benefits from an extensive active transportation network, with regional trail and bike lane connections planned. Overall, Highland's transportation infrastructure is in good condition (**Figure 3.1** and **Map 3.1**).

The City's road system follows a functional classification approach: arterial and collector streets are designed to carry higher volumes and provide efficient traffic flow, while local streets prioritize safety and pedestrian comfort. The *Alpine and Highland Active Transportation Plan (2024)* further emphasizes walking and biking, recommending backbone trails and bike lanes on larger corridors to improve safety and connectivity. New street designs should continue to incorporate traffic-calming features to manage vehicle speeds and support neighborhood livability.

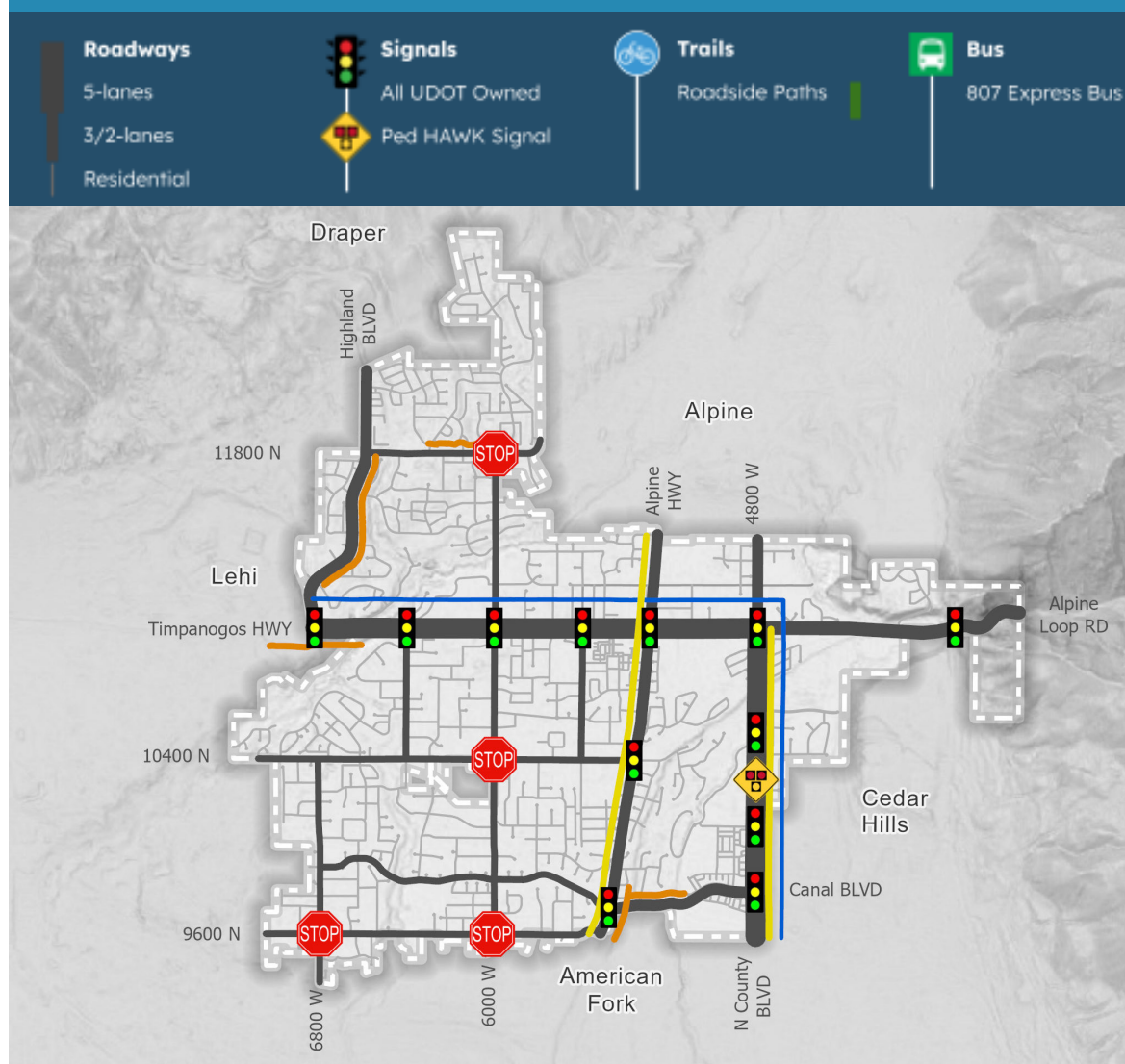
Future improvements are guided by recent traffic counts, socio-economic data (households and employment), and travel demand forecasts from the Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG) through 2050. Proposed projects are described on the following pages (see also **Map 3.2: Recommended Improvements** at the end of the chapter). In addition to these projects, the City has prioritized traffic calming efforts and adopted a traffic calming manual to help the City evaluate and implement small-scale projects that mitigate traffic impacts and improve safety. The City's traffic calming standards are described in the *Highland Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Safety Manual (2023)*, which the City should continue to use and update as needed.

FIGURE 3.1 – CURRENT CONDITIONS SNAPSHOT

Currently on the main functionally classified roads in Highland, there are:



MAP 3.1 – CURRENT CONDITIONS



PROPOSED PROJECTS: ROAD WIDENING

Location	4800 West (Timpanogos Highway to Alpine)
Proposed Improvement	Add a southbound through lane approaching Timpanogos Highway, improve intersection geometry, and construct an off-street shared-use path.
Additional Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs for future projects on 4800 West should be allocated between Alpine and Highway based on impact and resident use. Currently configured as a three-lane minor arterial (two lanes plus center turn lane), 4800 West experiences congestion and restricted intersection capacity at SR-92. A four-lane design is proposed (two southbound, one northbound, plus center turn lane) with upgraded intersection design. While the SR-92 Access & Circulation Study (2022) and MAG Regional Transportation Plan call for a five-lane road, Highland has opted for a four-lane approach due to right-of-way constraints and impacts to adjacent properties. The project will serve as a phased solution, allowing the City to evaluate whether additional widening is necessary in the future. The <i>Alpine & Highland Active Transportation Plan (2023)</i> identifies this corridor for a backbone off-street shared-use path. The City has partnered with Alpine and MAG to provide a multi-use trail along 4800 W into Alpine.
Location	6800 W
Proposed Improvement	Add a continuous turn lane, shoulders, curb, sidewalk (where needed), and buffered/separated bike lanes.
Additional Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This three-lane major collector connects 10400 North to regional destinations in American Fork. The City anticipates a 74-foot cross-section with two travel lanes and a continuous turn lane. The <i>Alpine & Highland Active Transportation Plan (2023)</i> calls for buffered/separated bike lanes along the corridor.

PROPOSED PROJECTS: ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Location	5600 West
Proposed Improvement	Add curb, sidewalk, storm drain, shoulders, and on-street bike lanes.
Additional Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This two-lane minor collector links 11000 North to 10400 North. ■ The City intends to standardize the corridor at 42 feet of pavement within a 66-foot right-of-way. ■ The <i>Active Transportation Plan (2023, Project 77H)</i> recommends on-street bike lanes with traffic-calming benefits.
Location	6000 W
Proposed Improvement	Add curb, sidewalk, storm drain, shoulders, and either on- or off-street shared-use path, plus buffered/ separated bike lanes.
Additional Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This two-lane major collector connects Alpine, Highland, and American Fork. ■ Improvements vary along the corridor due to mixed development history. ■ <i>Active Transportation Plan (2023, Project 11H)</i> prioritizes a shared-use path and buffered/ separated bike lanes.
Location	6400 W
Proposed Improvement	Add curb, sidewalk, storm drain, shoulders, and on-street bike lanes.
Additional Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Similar to 5600 West, this two-lane minor collector connects 11000 North to 10400 North. ■ The City intends to build the corridor to a 66-foot right-of-way. ■ <i>Active Transportation Plan (2023, Project 25H)</i> identifies on-street bike lanes to enhance safety and manage speeds.

PROPOSED PROJECTS: ROAD IMPROVEMENTS (CONTINUED)

Location	9600 North
Proposed Improvement	Add curb, sidewalk, storm drain, shoulders, and on-street bike lanes.
Additional Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This two-lane minor collector connects Lehi on the west to SR-74. ■ Current conditions reflect a rural cross-section with multiple driveways. ■ The City plans for a 66-foot right-of-way with urban improvements. ■ <i>Active Transportation Plan (2023, Project 33H)</i> calls for on-street bike lanes.
Location	10400 North
Proposed Improvement	Add curb, sidewalk, storm drain, shoulders, and an off-street shared-use path.
Additional Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This major collector provides east-west access to City offices and Mountain Ridge Junior High. ■ Improvements are inconsistent, with full curb and sidewalks on the west but gaps in the center. ■ The City intends to standardize the corridor and add left-turn lanes at key intersections. ■ <i>Active Transportation Plan (2023, Project 17H)</i> recommends an off-street backbone shared-use path.

PROPOSED PROJECTS: ROAD IMPROVEMENTS (CONTINUED)

Location	11800 North
Proposed Improvement	Add curb, sidewalk, storm drain, and off-street shared-use path.
Additional Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This two-lane major collector connects Alpine to the east and will link to Lehi on the west. ■ Planned improvements include sidewalks east of 6000 West, a roundabout at Highland Boulevard, and a new westward extension into Lehi. ■ <i>Active Transportation Plan (2023, Project 3AH)</i> identifies this corridor as a priority backbone shared-use path.
Location	Canal Boulevard (SR-74 to 6800 West)
Proposed Improvement	Add curb, sidewalk, storm drain, and off-street shared-use path.
Additional Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This two-lane minor collector provides an alternative east-west connection and is intended to channel traffic away from 9600 South. ■ <i>Active Transportation Plan (2023, Project 21H)</i> identifies a backbone shared-use path along this corridor.

PROPOSED PROJECTS: INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

Location/ Proposed Improvement

- **Canal Boulevard at Alpine Highway and North County Boulevard:** Add double-left turn lanes with receiving lanes while preserving trail access. Hybrid widening will taper to one lane mid-block due to right-of-way limitations.
- **Highland Boulevard / 11800 North:** Add a roundabout for traffic control.
- **6000 West / 10400 North:** Add a roundabout to improve flow and provide traffic calming.
- **6000 West / Canal Boulevard:** Add a roundabout to improve flow and provide traffic calming.

PROPOSED PROJECTS: UDOT ROAD WIDENING

Location/ Proposed Improvement

- **North County Boulevard (SR-129):** MAG projects a need for seven lanes by 2050 from Canal Boulevard into American Fork, with an off-street shared-use path also identified. Coordination with MAG and UDOT will be required, as this project is not yet in the Regional Transportation Plan.
- **Timpanogos Highway (SR-92):** UDOT projects seven lanes between I-15 and SR-74, tapering eastward. Future widening may include commuter lanes or a combination of lane types. Pedestrian connectivity across SR-92 remains a concern; options such as a pedestrian hybrid beacon (HAWK) or grade-separated crossing near Town Center Boulevard should be studied.

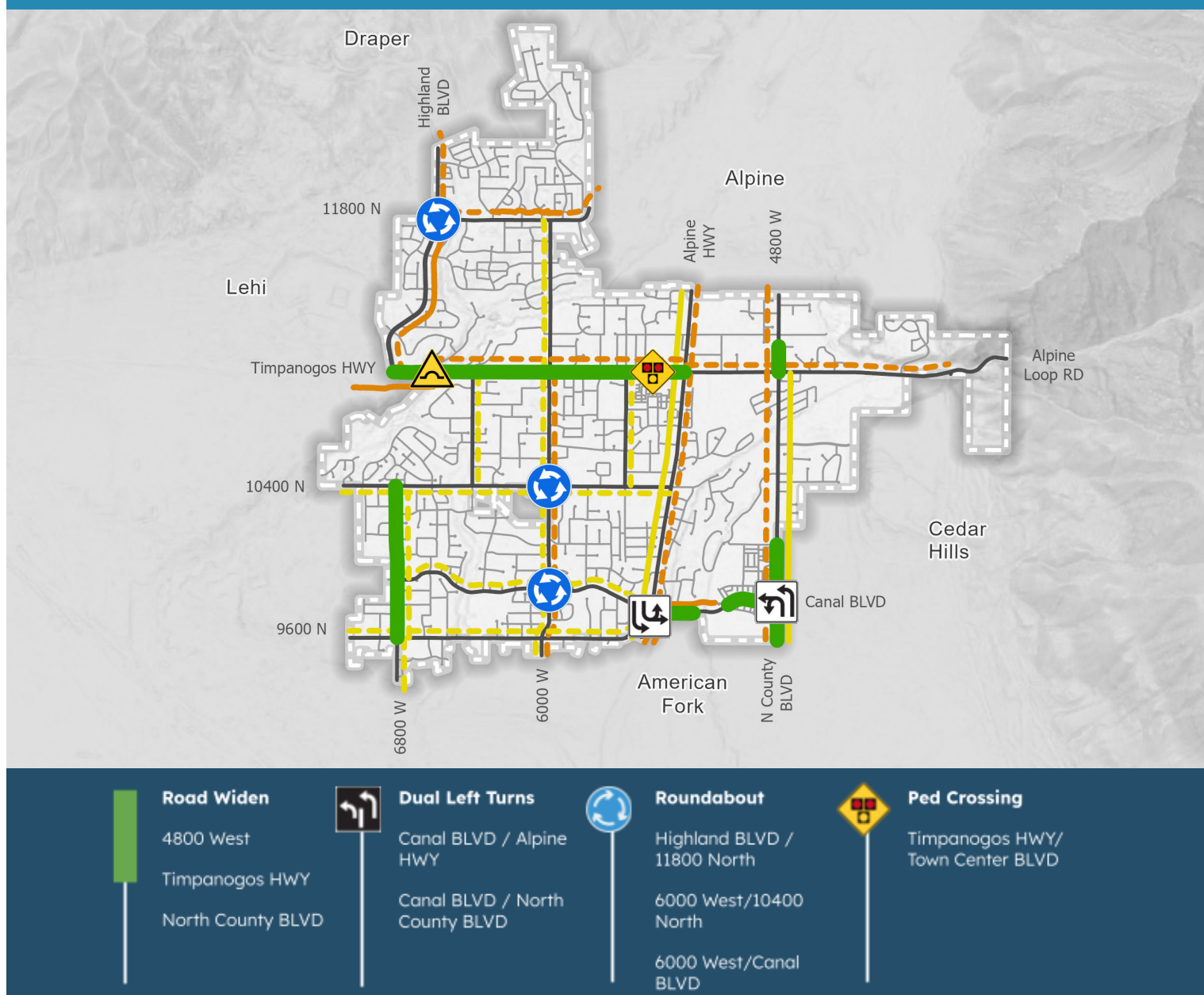
TRANSIT

No new transit projects are currently planned by UTA or MAG. While major investments in FrontRunner and light rail are anticipated elsewhere in Utah County, Highland will continue to be served only by limited express bus service.


ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation planning will continue to build on the *Alpine & Highland Active Transportation Plan (2023)*, which prioritizes trails, bike lanes, and regional connections.

MAP 3.2 – RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS



This page intentionally left blank



CHAPTER 4

HOUSING

The moderate-income housing element presents a targeted vision for facilitating a variety of housing options for residents of all life stages. The plan builds on existing strategies, including the creation of new opportunities for detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs), targeted residential zoning in commercial and mixed-use areas, and the development of housing projects for seniors.

INTRODUCTION

Housing is the foundation of community life. In Highland, residential neighborhoods define the City's identity, and ensuring that there are housing options for residents in different stages of life is critical to maintaining the City's character while welcoming future generations. Highland's Housing Element is guided by *Utah Code 10-9a-403*, which requires municipalities to include a Moderate-Income Housing Plan as part of the General Plan. The goal is to facilitate affordable housing options, which are based on 80% of the area median income (AMI). This chapter provides an overview of the City's housing profile, identifies emerging needs, and outlines current strategies to meet those needs. Additional resources to facilitate housing strategies can be found at the end of the chapter.

“Many of Highland's citizens in neighborhoods near me are aging and do not want such a large lot, but they want to stay in Highland. Allow lovely developments that could accommodate them.”

- Highland Resident Survey, (2024)



RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES ON HOUSING

Based on public feedback, residents hold a range of perspectives on housing. The key themes heard from the community are summarized below.

- **Concern for Future Generations:** Many residents are satisfied with their current housing but are concerned about whether future generations, particularly their children and grandchildren, will be able to find affordable homes. Residents acknowledge the need for more diverse housing options to support both an aging population and young people who wish to remain in Highland. Many are open to thoughtfully regulated solutions, such as detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and senior-specific housing, as long as these options are part of a strategic infill plan that preserves Highland’s low-density character.
- **Desire to Preserve Community Character:** Residents strongly desire to maintain Highland’s small-town feel. They voice concerns that “multi-dwelling units” and “small lots” could increase traffic and cause the community to lose its unique charm. At the same time, they want any new housing and business developments to be visually appealing and of high-quality design, enhancing the community’s identity rather than detracting from it (see also *Chapter 2: Land Use & Placemaking*).
- **Desire for Clear & Consistent Policies:** A common frustration among residents is the perceived inconsistency in development decisions. They express a desire for clear and transparent housing and land use policies. Residents want predictable policies that align with the community’s vision, ensuring that future growth is well-managed and understandable to everyone.

HOUSING ELEMENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Highland adopted its first General Plan in 2008, which included a Moderate Income Housing (MIH) element. In 2018, the Utah State Legislature passed *HB 259*, establishing specific strategies that cities must consider when developing or updating their MIH plans. In response, Highland City updated its General Plan in 2019 to align with these state requirements.

In 2022, *HB 462* further revised the strategies outlined in *HB 259* and added implementation requirements, including timelines with specific benchmarks for each chosen strategy. This legislation provided municipalities flexibility to make adjustments but required general plan updates by October 1, 2022. Highland City updated its plan to meet these requirements. Following State review, the City worked to ensure that the Moderate Income Housing element fully aligned with State standards, including adopting a five-year timeline with defined benchmarks.

For reference, the State defines the following terms:

- **Moderate income housing:** Housing occupied or reserved for households with a gross income equal to or less than 80% of the median household income for households of the same size in the county.
- **Housing affordability:** The ability of a household to occupy a housing unit while paying no more than 30% of its income for gross housing costs, including utilities.
- **Moderate income housing unit:** A unit affordable to a household earning no more than 80% of the area median income, with gross housing costs (including utilities) not exceeding 30% of household income.

According to the US Census, the median household income in 2023 for Utah County was \$100,895. 80% of the median household income is \$80,716. To determine what is considered affordable housing, the State takes 30% of this household income, which comes out to \$24,214. When this amount is divided by the 12 months of the year, to be considered affordable, a housing payment including utilities could be no more than approximately \$2,017 a month.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Highland's housing landscape is predominantly single-family, reflecting the City's low-density, family-oriented character (**Figure 4.1**). As of 2022, the City had 4,925 housing units, 4,606 of which were occupied (**Table 4.1**). Owner-occupied housing is most prevalent, applying to 91% of units, while rental housing makes up less than 9% (**Figure 4.2**). This ratio **reflects the limited multi-family options and fewer affordable rental choices, affordable or otherwise, in the community**. Household sizes are relatively large compared with national averages, with owner-occupied households averaging 4.3 residents and renter households averaging 2.9 residents. From 2012 to 2022, occupied housing grew at an average annual rate of 2.9%, with rental units growing slightly faster (4.2%) than owner-occupied units (2.8%).

FIGURE 4.1 – HOUSING STOCK BREAKDOWN



FIGURE 4.2 – TOTAL OWNER VS. RENTER-OCCUPIED UNITS (2022)

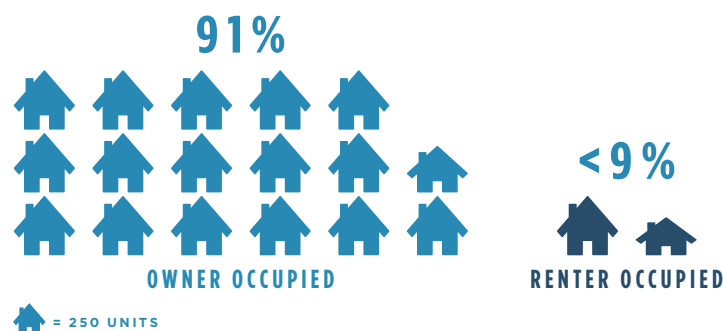


TABLE 4.1 – HIGHLAND EXISTING HOUSING UNITS

	2012	2022	AAGR
Total Housing Units	3,581	4,925	3.24%
Occupied Housing Units	3,446	4,606	2.94%
Owner-occupied Units	3,175	4,196	2.83%
Renter-occupied Units	271	410	4.23%

Sources: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25001, B25032)

Moderate-income housing is defined under *Utah Code 10-9a-403(40)* and *17-27a-403(43)* as housing “occupied or reserved for occupancy by households with a gross household income equal to or less than 80 percent of the median gross income for households of the same size in the county in which the housing is located.” Using Census data, the area median income (AMI) for Utah County is \$100,895, which sets a moderate-income threshold of \$80,716.

By contrast, Highland’s own median household income is \$178,662, and if an AMI-based target were calculated solely from Highland’s local income, the corresponding “affordable” housing threshold would be around \$142,929 (**Figure 4.3**). This figure provides context for affordability within Highland and highlights the discrepancy between moderate income housing, as defined by the state, and realistic benchmarks for developing affordable housing. This reality combined with Highland’s high home values—with a median near \$965,000 and rising annually—makes achieving truly affordable housing particularly challenging.

FIGURE 4.3 – AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI) COMPARISON



For current homeowners, housing is generally affordable: the median monthly cost for those with a mortgage is \$2,798, with a mortgage-to-income ratio of 20.2%, comfortably below the 30% threshold typically considered a financial burden. For prospective buyers, however, Highland’s high home values make entering the market a significant financial challenge.

Rental affordability is more nuanced. The median rent is \$2,122, with a rent-to-income ratio of 15.2 percent, currently indicating no widespread cost burden today. However, limited rental availability, rising costs statewide, and changing demographics suggest that **affordability may increasingly become a concern, particularly for younger families, moderate-income households, aging residents on fixed or limited incomes, and residents seeking smaller or rental homes.**

MODERATE INCOME HOUSING STRATEGIES

With Highland's zoning pattern already well established and new growth expected to occur primarily through infill, providing opportunities for alternative housing types is a difficult goal to achieve. However, the City can still find creative ways to make reasonable allowances for housing options that meet state requirements while aligning with community values.

Under current State requirements, this housing element is expected to be updated regularly, selecting new strategies periodically as needed to meet the demands of a changing community. When considering strategies, it can be helpful to think about them in terms of both impact and effort. Some strategies are quick wins—relatively simple actions with meaningful results. Others are major projects that require more resources but can deliver lasting benefits. Strategies with low impact, whether easy or difficult, tend to be less effective in meeting housing goals and are generally avoided. This framework may be a useful tool for evaluating the effectiveness of current and future strategies (**Figure 4.4**).

The goals, policies, and implementation measures that follow reflect Highland's chosen strategies, balancing feasibility with impact and ensuring that housing opportunities are addressed in a way that preserves what makes Highland, Highland.

FIGURE 4.4 – HOUSING STRATEGY EVALUATION MATRIX



STRATEGIES & IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Strategy E: Create or allow for, and reduce regulations related to, internal or detached accessory dwelling units in residential zones.

- **2023:** Include in the City's annual survey a question to gauge support for detached accessory dwelling units in residential zones.
- **2025:** Review the results of the annual survey. If there is significant support for detached accessory dwelling units, work with the Planning Commission and City Council to update the Development Code to allow for them.
- **2026:** Begin the process of drafting an ADU ordinance that aligns with Highland's community goals, housing needs, and neighborhood character (consider owner-occupied requirements, rental license requirements, consistent enforcement, etc). Adopt the ordinance by the end of 2026.
- **2027-2028:** Monitor development of detached ADUs under new ordinance to determine the impact of the regulations in terms of effectiveness, new housing opportunities, and impact to city infrastructure and services. Consider revisions to ADU ordinance as necessary to encourage ADUs or mitigate undesired impacts.

**HIGH IMPACT,
LOW EFFORT**

(QUICK WINS)

Strategy F: Zone or rezone for higher density or moderate income residential development in commercial or mixed-use zones near major transit investment corridors, commercial centers, or employment centers.

- **2023-2025:** Permit the remaining 425 lots for the townhomes, carriage lots, and cottage lots that have yet to apply for building permits in the Ridgeview Planned Development.

**HIGH IMPACT,
HIGH EFFORT**

(MAJOR PROJECTS)

- **2024:** Remove the requirement to include a commercial aspect in Planned Development (PD) Districts.
- **2026:** Work with the Planning Commission and City Council to update the Land Use Plan in the General Plan to allow for mixed-use moderate income development in the Town Center and higher density housing adjacent to Commercial Retail, Commercial-1, and appropriate Planned Development zones.
- **2027:** Work with the Planning Commission and City Council to research and draft an ordinance creating a residential zone with higher density such as a senior housing zone.

Strategy T: Develop a moderate income housing project for residents who are disabled or 55 years old or older.

- **2024:** Work with the Planning Commission and City Council to draft an age-restricted senior housing residential zone that requires a density higher than the City's typical residential zoning. Work with the Planning Commission and City Council to determine areas in the City where this zoning could be approved.
- **2025-2026:** Adopt the new senior housing zone and work with the State on application of that zone to State owned property adjacent to North County Blvd.
- **2026-2027:** Explore a Planned Development (PD) strategy tailored for senior and disabled housing. This could include zoning key locations with an age-restricted PD overlay that allows higher densities and requires integrated amenities, accessibility features, and supportive design standards. Consider initiating a City-led PD project on publicly owned or high-priority sites to catalyze development.
- **2028:** If no property owners have requested to rezone in appropriate areas, rezone areas determined to be appropriate by the Planning Commission and City Council.

**HIGH IMPACT,
HIGH EFFORT**
(MAJOR PROJECTS)

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT & ANALYSIS RESOURCES

There are resources available to the City to facilitate housing strategies, evaluate housing initiatives, and develop new perspectives on housing affordability. Below is a brief description of applicable resources available to the City. Some tools may require the City to identify funding sources to support local programs.

Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG)

- **Technical Assistance to Governments Program (TAG):** Technical assistance is available to local governments throughout Utah, Summit, and Wasatch Counties for plans and studies that proactively address growth related challenges. Competitive projects integrate transportation and land use in a meaningful way and align with the region's long-range plans.
- **Available Funding:** MAG appropriates up to \$1,000,000 annually depending on the number and quality of applications received. Assistance is provided in the form of consultant services procured by MAG on behalf of the local government. There is a local funding match requirement of 6.77%.

Land Use Academy of Utah (LUAU)


- **Missing Middle Housing Toolkit:** The Land Use Academy of Utah (LUAU), is a statewide uniform and comprehensive online land use website resource to train, inform, and educate elected and appointed officials in statutory land issues and best planning practices. LUAU provides the Missing Middle Housing (MMH) Toolkit, where all communities in Utah can learn about, consider, plan for, and implement more housing options tailored to their city or town. The Toolkit is continually updated with new and enhanced resources.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT & ANALYSIS RESOURCES CONTINUED

State/Federal Programs

- **Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund:** The Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund (OWHLF) is Utah's state affordable-housing fund, administered by the Department of Workforce Services' Housing & Community Development Division and overseen by a 14-member board representing diverse housing interests. OWHLF provides grants or below-market loans for acquisition, new construction, rehabilitation, land purchase, preservation of affordable units, predevelopment grants, eviction-prevention programs, and certain pilot projects (e.g., low-income ADU loans). Example programs include:
 - **Multifamily Program:** gap financing for 5+ unit rental projects (plus predevelopment grants).
 - **Rural Single-Family Home Land Revolving Loan:** 0% subordinated land/lot-dev loans up to \$25k per home for households $\leq 80\%$ AMI in rural Utah.
 - **Rural Single-Family Housing Programs:** Utah state-funded programs offering financial assistance to low- and moderate-income rural homeowners, including Rural Single-Family Rehabilitation Assistance Grants (forgivable home repair grants), SFRRP (rehabilitation or replacement of owner-occupied homes), and HomeChoice (help for eligible disabled homebuyers via partner nonprofits).
- **Housing Choice Voucher Program:** The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program (often called "Section 8") is HUD's primary rental assistance for low-income households, administered locally by Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) such as the Housing Authority of Utah County and Provo City Housing Authority. Eligible households rent privately, with the PHA paying a subsidy and tenants typically paying ~30% of adjusted income (up to 40% at initial lease-up if needed). Payment standards are generally 90%-110% of HUD Fair Market Rents. Eligibility is based on income, family size, and citizenship/immigration status, with at least 75% of new admissions required to be extremely low-income ($\leq 30\%$ of area median). Waitlists are common; multiple PHA applications are allowed.

This page intentionally left blank



CHAPTER 5

WATER USE & PRESERVATION

Integrates Highland water use and land use planning with the goal to ensure that water is used and conserved wisely and sustainably for today's residents and future generations.

INTRODUCTION

Water is a renewable, yet finite natural resource. This reality, coupled with years of severe drought, has made the use and preservation of water a priority for local governments, state leaders, water providers, and the public. Recognizing planning's critical role in water management, the state adopted *S.B. 110: Water as Part of the General Plan* in 2022. This new mandate requires most municipalities and all counties to amend their general plans to address how land use planning impacts water use.

This chapter describes Highland's water system and provides a snapshot of current and future municipal water use. It covers the relationship between land and water use in Highland and highlights the City's efforts to reduce and eliminate wasteful water practices. The chapter concludes with recommendations for additional goals and policies that will reduce water demand as part of current and future developments.

“Water-wise” refers to practices and strategies that emphasize the efficient and sustainable use of water.



RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES ON WATER USE & PRESERVATION

A 2022 survey, conducted by Utah State University under the Utah Wellbeing Project, revealed that **88% of Highland residents share a moderate to major concern for the future of the City's water supply** (*Figure 5.1*). The *2024 Highland Resident Survey* provided additional insight into how residents view water use and preservation, summarized below.

- **Water Metering:** Residents have mixed opinions on secondary water metering, with some viewing it as necessary for encouraging conservation, while others express frustration over higher costs.
- **Water Conservation Programs:** Many residents would like the option to participate in state-sponsored water-saving programs—especially landscape conversion rebates for removing turf.
- **Clearer Expectations:** Residents want to understand the effectiveness of conservation measures and express a desire for clearer policies, water use data, and more consistent reminders about watering days/times, etc.
- **System Efficiency & Maintenance:** Some residents are dissatisfied with the efficiency of the irrigation system, citing unreliable pressurized irrigation in certain areas leading to damaged sprinkler systems. Others express concerns about aging water lines and the need for improvements to the City's water infrastructure to ensure a clean and reliable water supply.
- **Lead by Example:** Residents want Highland City to set a clear example of water conservation, suggesting xeriscaping City-owned park strips and adjusting water-wasting sprinklers to demonstrate a commitment to water conservation.

FIGURE 5.1 – RESIDENT CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE WATER SUPPLY



8 out of 10 Highland residents are concerned for the future of the City's water supply.
Source: 2022 Utah Wellbeing Project Highland Survey Report.

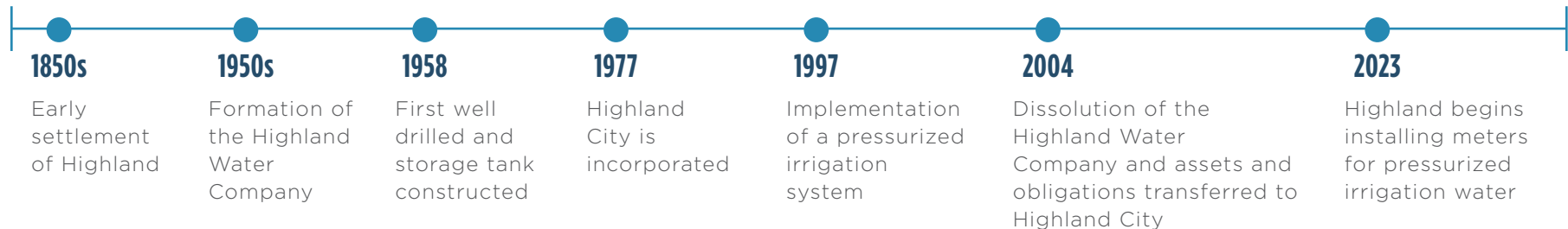
HIGHLAND WATER SYSTEM SNAPSHOT

By law, water of the state belongs to the public and the right to divert water and decide how it is used is determined by the state. Annually, over five million acre-feet of water are diverted from Utah's natural water systems and supplied to agricultural, residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial customers. Approximately 82% of this water is utilized for agricultural purposes, with the remaining portion allocated to other uses through water delivery systems.¹

A community water delivery system typically comprises one or more water sources, storage facilities, and a distribution system within a service area. To operate efficiently and effectively, each system component must be planned and designed to operate under the wide range of demands placed on the system by users. Water source capacity determines the system's ability to meet peak demand on the busiest days while also sustaining a consistent supply throughout the year. Typically, one water system delivers drinking water while another system delivers irrigation (secondary) water. Water system connections are the points where a water supply line connects to a building or home. To provide additional context, a historic snapshot of Highland's Water System is shown in **Figure 5.2**.

¹ Prepare60 Securing Utah's Economic Future. (2018). Understanding Utah's Water Municipal Manual 1st Edition. Retrieved from <http://prepare60.com/>.

FIGURE 5.2 – HISTORIC SNAPSHOT OF HIGHLAND CITY'S WATER SYSTEM



DRINKING WATER

Highland City provides drinking (culinary) water to approximately 5,164 connections. Of those existing connections, 5,081 (98.4%) are residential, 48 (0.93%) are commercial, 1 (0.02%) is industrial, and 34 (0.66%) are institutional (**Figure 5.3**). The culinary water system comprises a network of pipes, four water storage tanks, and five groundwater wells (**Figure 5.4**). Existing culinary water demand can be met with two or three of the five wells at any given time, all of which are used on a rotating basis.



Highland City provides drinking (culinary) water to approximately 5,164 connections.

FIGURE 5.3 – DRINKING WATER SYSTEM CONNECTIONS BREAKDOWN

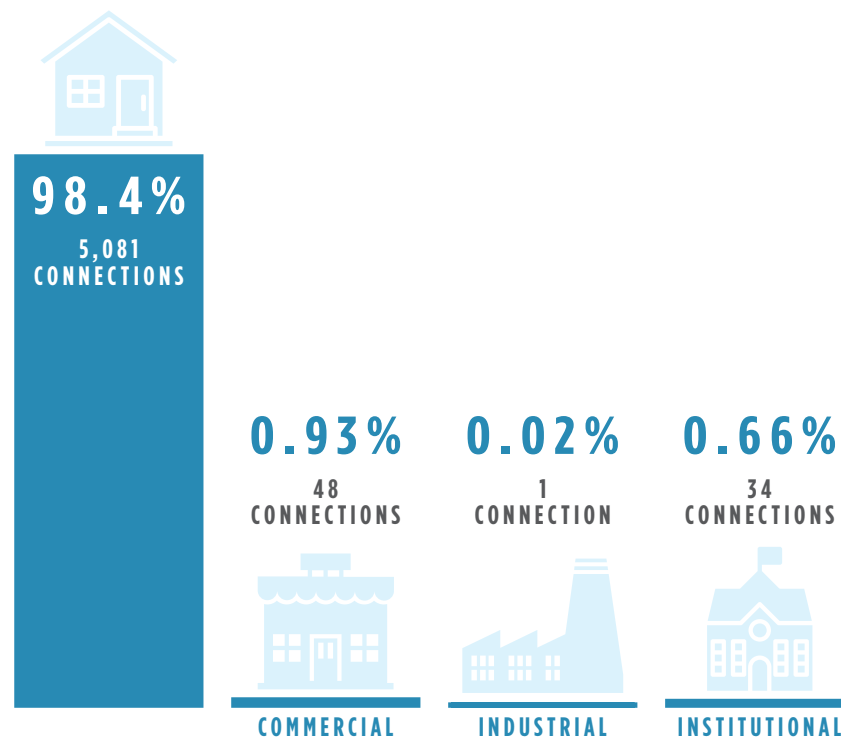


FIGURE 5.4 – DRINKING WATER SYSTEM COMPONENTS



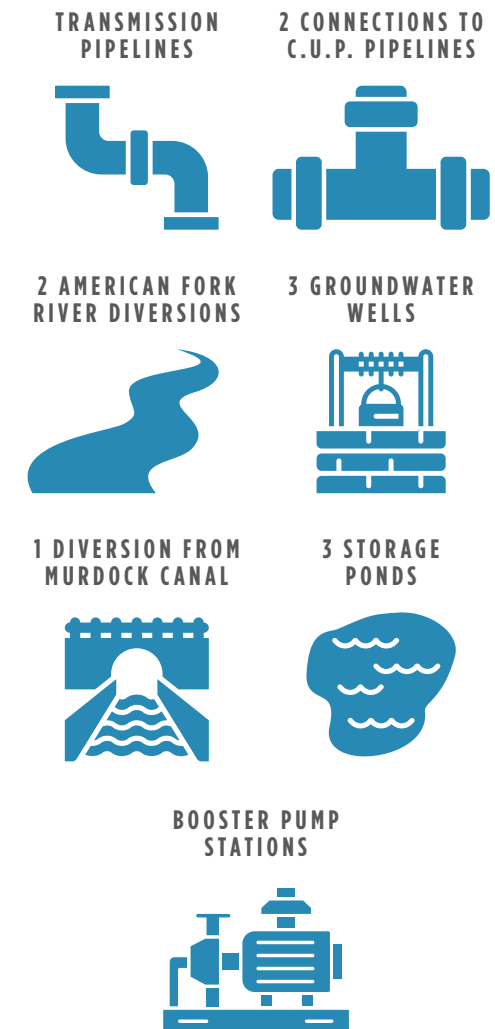
IRRIGATION WATER

Between 1997-1998, Highland City installed a pressurized irrigation system that provides irrigation (secondary) water for residents. The system is comprised of transmission pipe lines, three storage ponds, three groundwater wells, two diversions from the American Fork River, two connections to Central Utah Project (CUP) pipelines, a diversion from the Murdock Canal, and booster pump stations (**Figure 5.5**). The three wells are pumped to supplement the surface water sources during late season demand periods, peak demand periods, and other periods when surface water sources are unable to meet demands. There are currently 4,800 connections on the pressurized irrigation system.

SECONDARY METERING

In 2023, Highland City began the process of installing meters for pressurized irrigation water to comply with legislative requirements. Metering eases the data collection process and helps to identify opportunities to optimize water usage, policies, rates, and fees. Following the scheduled completion in 2025, the project will begin data gathering for a comprehensive rate study (2025-2026). The goal of the study will be to establish water rates that promote reasonable water usage, ensuring that rates align with the amount of water allocated to each property. This approach will help the City balance water conservation goals with fair and sustainable pricing. In the long term, consistency in water tracking will ensure that data-driven decisions shape future policies.

FIGURE 5.5 – PRESSURIZED IRRIGATION SYSTEM COMPONENTS





Pressurized irrigation meter installation began in Summer 2023.

WATER RIGHTS & WATER SHARES

Highland City utilizes both water rights and water shares to supply water to residents and businesses. The City's acquired rights and shares include surface water, reservoir water, and groundwater. As the City has grown, developers have been and continue to be required to dedicate water to the City, typically in the form of water shares from irrigation companies. Efforts have been made to convert water rights into municipal use, granting Highland the flexibility to use water for either drinking or pressurized irrigation purposes (see **Tables A-1 & A-2** in the *Highland City Water Conservation Plan (2022)* for a full summary of City water rights).

A NOTE ON IRRIGATION COMPANIES

Utah irrigation companies manage water resources by distributing water shares, maintaining canals and pipelines, and supporting efficient irrigation. Shareholders collectively decide water allocation and finances, making strong relationships with local irrigation companies essential for effective water management. Highland holds shares in the following companies:

- Highland Conservation
- Lehi Irrigation Company
- American Fork Irrigation Company
- Provo Reservoir Water Users Association:
- Winn Ditch Irrigation Company
- Central Utah Project
- Pleasant Grove Irrigation Company
- South Jordan Canal company
- East Jordan Irrigation Company
- Fort Field Little Creek Water Users Association

WATER & LAND USE

This section examines the link between land use and water conservation in Highland, outlining water-saving practices from *Utah Regional Municipal and Industrial (M&I) Water Conservation Goals Report (2019)*. While these strategies are detailed in the Residential section, they apply to all land use types. This section also highlights the City's efforts to reduce water waste and explores potential future conservation strategies. An inventory of Highland's current and developing water conservation strategies can be found at the end of the Chapter (see **Table 5.6**).

RESIDENTIAL USES

Typically, the largest consumption of municipal water comes from large-lot, single-family homes. This is the reality in Highland, where low to medium-density residential uses make up over 57% of the City's land use and account for 98% of existing drinking water system connections. As Highland approaches build-out, residential uses are envisioned to remain the dominate use, accounting for over 60% of the City's future land use.

Residential water use is often the primary focus of water conservation policies, as it accounts for the majority of municipal water consumption and provides the most comprehensive dataset for estimating conservation potential.² Strategies that reduce wasteful residential water use can correspondingly be applied to all municipal and industrial user types.

² Utah's Regional M&I Water Conservation Goals. Retrieved from <https://conservewater.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Regional-Water-Conservation-Goals-Report-Final.pdf>



Large-lot, single-family homes are the dominate land use type in Highland and will continue to be in the future.



WATER-CONSERVING PRACTICES & STRATEGIES

The following water-conserving practices and strategies apply across all water and land use types.

1. Appliance Upgrades & Leak Repairs
2. Increased Irrigation Efficiency
3. Landscaping Changes
4. Water-Efficient Land Use Patterns
5. Water Conservation Pricing
6. Water Conservation Education & Outreach

1. APPLIANCE UPGRADES & LEAK REPAIRS

Newer appliances and plumbing fixtures are more efficient than older ones. Upgrading toilets, faucets, and shower heads to high-efficiency options has proven to be among the most cost-effective conservation measures. Apart from decreasing water usage per use, modern fixtures also minimize leaks. Appliance upgrades and leak repairs will not be a major focus for Highland, however the City does share relevant appliance information and recommendations on their website.

2. INCREASED IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY

Inefficient irrigation practices result in a significant waste of water due to leaks, overwatering, watering outside of planting beds, and irrigating in the rain. Highland is increasing citywide irrigation efficiency through the installation of secondary meters and by collecting meter data to inform a comprehensive water rate study (see also ***Secondary Metering on pg. 55***). Highland is also installing smart irrigation controls in new City parks and will add them to existing parks where possible.

3. LANDSCAPING CHANGES

In Utah, approximately 65% of our culinary water is applied, often inefficiently, to landscapes.³ The types of plants we grow, the density at which they are planted, and the type of system used to irrigate them have a major effect on the amount of water needed outdoors. For this reason, many communities are focused on promoting principles of water-wise landscaping—including Highland City (**Table 5.1**).

A water-wise landscape is functional, attractive, easily maintained in its natural surroundings, and helps to conserve water. Efficient use of water in community landscapes reduces water waste and enhances the community's environmental, economic, recreational, and aesthetic resources. Other benefits include better functionality, less maintenance, enhanced curb appeal, lower water bills, simpler irrigation, and the option for phased installation.







³ Principles of Water Wise Landscaping. Utah State University. Retrieved from: <https://extension.usu.edu/cwel/principles>

WATER-WISE PARK STRIPS

In Highland, all park strip areas are required to be landscaped using xeriscape or water-wise methods without the use of lawn. The City defines xeriscape as landscaping in a manner that reduces the need for supplemental irrigation, conserves water, and enhances the beauty of the property. A xeriscape typically consists of an attractive mix of plantings, rocks, and other landscaping materials. Other best practices include:

- Adding pathways so guests who park in front of your home or business can easily access the sidewalk.
- Using plants, trees, and shrubs appropriate to the climate to minimize water loss from evaporation and runoff.
- Choosing trees from the City-approved Tree List.
- Keeping vegetation such as grasses, flowers, ground covers, and shrubs under 22 inches in height.

TABLE 5.1 – PRINCIPLES OF WATER-WISE LANDSCAPING

PRINCIPLE		DESCRIPTION
Start with a plan		For a landscape design to be water-conserving, it needs to use water efficiently. The planning stage is the optimal time to decide which water efficiency strategies will be used.
Practical turf-areas reduce over-irrigation		Water-efficient landscaping does not require the elimination of all turfgrass. In fact, turfgrass can be a practical and beneficial component of a water-wise landscape if best practices are followed. The use of turfgrass becomes problematic when it is over-irrigated, used in areas that are challenging to irrigate such as steep slopes or odd-shaped and narrow spaces, and when it is placed in areas where it isn't useful.
Soil preparation is the foundation of a quality landscape		Soil is the most basic component of a quality landscape and will have an impact on the growth rate, health, and appearance of plants.
Thoughtful plant selection & placement		Selecting the right plant for the right space is critical to creating a water efficient landscape. Proper placement provides shade, privacy, beauty, efficiency, and can even decrease yard maintenance.
Retain moisture with mulch		Mulch covers the soil and prevents crusting, compaction, and moisture loss. Mulching around trees, shrubs, and flower beds can result in a ten-fold reduction in evaporative water loss from soil.
Efficient irrigation is critical for conserving water		Grouping plants with similar water needs (hydrozoning) is the first step in developing an efficient irrigation plan. Once plants are properly zoned, develop an irrigation schedule that will apply the appropriate amount of water based on the unique needs of each zone.
Proper landscape maintenance keeps plants healthy and helps to conserve water		Landscape maintenance is one of the most important components of a beautiful and lasting landscape. The main activities required to maintain a water-wise landscape are irrigation and irrigation system maintenance, weed control, fertilization, pruning, and pest and disease control.

4. WATER-EFFICIENT LAND USE PATTERNS

Water-efficient land use patterns save water while supporting the effective use of existing infrastructure, protecting natural resources, promoting walkability, controlling flooding, and enhancing neighborhood vibrancy. Research shows that even small adjustments to development density can yield significant water savings. Strategies such as allowing smaller homes, reducing parking and setback requirements, and focusing development where infrastructure already exists can support water-wise land use. Highland's current code provides a foundation for these practices, as discussed in more detail below.

INFILL & WATER-EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT

Infill and cluster development, particularly where infrastructure already exists, can help preserve green space, reduce water demand, and improve water quality. In Highland, which is largely built out, opportunities for clustering are limited and likely to occur only in areas where preserving natural areas, wildlife habitat, or wetlands is a community priority. Future planned developments could incorporate water-efficient land use patterns, such as reviving cluster subdivisions with shared common spaces to reduce water demand and preserve open areas.



Well-regulated ADUs can take advantage of existing infrastructure and consume less water than a traditional home.

EXTERNAL ADU CONSIDERATIONS

Smaller lot sizes can reduce the size and water needs of lawns, as smaller homes support the reduction of indoor water use. In Highland, smaller homes on smaller lots will be limited and likely take the form of regulated detached ADUs or senior-specific housing (see also **Chapter 4: Housing**). The City may consider the benefits of water-efficient land use patterns and practices while evaluating policies and regulatory mechanisms for future residential growth.

5. CONSERVATION PRICING

Water conservation pricing encourages reduced water use by applying financial incentives, such as tiered rates that increase with consumption. Highland's drinking water rate structure is designed to promote conservation of high-quality groundwater. The ongoing secondary water metering project will also be used to inform a future water rate study.

Providing water users with access to their meter data in the future will empower property owners to better understand their water usage, allowing them to compare the amount applied to their landscapes with the actual water requirements of those landscapes.



Access to secondary metering data can empower property owners to make more informed decisions when it comes to watering their landscapes.

6. WATER CONSERVATION EDUCATION & OUTREACH

The support of community members and organizations is a critical component of any water conservation strategy. Below are education and outreach strategies that Highland has implemented and may continue to use and refine:

- **Watering Requirements in Mailers:** Regular updates on watering schedules are included in monthly water bills.
- **Multi-Faceted Public Outreach:** Social media, emails, texts, flyers, videos, website updates, and billing inserts are used to promote conservation awareness.
- **Advertisement of Water Conservation Programs:** Links to programs, such as those offered by the *Central Utah Water Conservancy District*, can be found on the City website.
- **Time-of-Day & Watering Day Restrictions:** Highland educates residents on efficient watering by enforcing restrictions and communicating watering guidelines.

OTHER LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

COMMERCIAL & OFFICE USES

Municipal development standards statewide typically impose stricter water efficiency requirements on commercial developments, which have more resources to invest in such measures. In Highland, commercial and office uses make up only 2% of land use and less than 1% of drinking water connections. While commercial development will remain minimal, Highland can enhance water conservation by applying the same water-saving strategies described in the residential section, including establishing water efficient landscaping standards for future commercial and office developments.

INSTITUTIONAL USES

Institutional land uses, such as schools and religious facilities, make up about 3.5% of land and less than 1% of the City's drinking water connections. While small, they play a key role in water conservation. Much institutional water use occurs outdoors—parks, school fields, and government properties—which can serve as examples for the wider community. These spaces offer opportunities to showcase water-wise landscapes. One significant step Highland City has taken is requiring smart irrigation systems for all new public facilities.



City-owned park-strips and properties are opportunities to showcase water-wise landscapes, providing tangible and inspiring examples for the public

PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Public parks account for approximately 2.5% of Highland's existing land use while open space contributes an additional 7.9%. Managing these areas requires a significant number of sprinkler controllers distributed across the City. Highland is in the process of upgrading the current park irrigation systems to smart systems.

In addition to the smart system upgrades, Highland's parkway landscape guidelines have been updated to require a 29-foot wide strip of land along the City's collector and arterial roadways to incorporate xeriscaping instead of turf. In the future, the City may also consider adopting official Park Standards or a Parks, Trails, and Recreation Plan with guidelines and recommendations for converting some underutilized park lawns to water-wise landscapes, selecting water-efficient plantings and features, and enhancing on-site stormwater management through green infrastructure and other low-impact design (see also **Chapters 6 & 7**).

MIXED USES

Mixed-use spaces in Highland, particularly in areas like the Town Center, could support water-efficient growth by focusing development where infrastructure already exists, reducing the need for water-intensive landscaping, and encouraging shared water systems. Adjusting development standards such as parking requirements, lot sizes, and setbacks could help promote water-wise building practices and more efficient water use.

GRAVEL PIT/CONSERVATION AREA

It should be noted that the Highland Gravel Pit area, now owned by the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, is one of two potential sites being considered for a future aquifer recharge project. Aquifer recharge refers to the process of replenishing underground water sources in order to provide stable, long-term water storage. More than a decade in the making, the project may soon come to fruition. As an important regional water resource, Highland may work with partner entities to determine big picture management strategies for the Gravel Pit/Conservation Area should it become an aquifer recharge site including future parks and open space.

REVISITING LANDSCAPE STANDARDS

Highland has taken steps to provide landscaping options within a public street for current and future development that do not require the use of lawn or turf in a parkstrip. However, current landscaping standards for new commercial, industrial, institutional, and multifamily housing projects lack substantial low water use requirements. The City could consider adopting community-wide water efficiency standards that align with state recommendations and empower residents to participate in rebate programs, such as those administered by the Central Utah Water Conservancy District (**Figure 5.6**). In general, water-efficient landscaping standards include the following:

- Limitations on the use of turf
- Promotion of green infrastructure and Low Impact Development (LID) principles (see also **Chapter 7: Environment & Sustainability**)
- Limitations on ponds, pools, and other features that promote unnecessary water evaporation
- Restrictions on “zero-scapes” and artificial turf
- Recommendations for water-conserving landscape design
- Requirements for drip irrigation

FIGURE 5.6 – CUWCD LANDSCAPING STANDARDS

Municipalities within the Central Utah Water Conservancy District (CUWCD) service area that have adopted specific water efficiency standards are able to access landscape rebate programs. Based on resident interest, Highland may choose to participate in the future. Standards required to participate in the CUWCD rebate programs include:

- Drip irrigation or bubblers everywhere except for lawn
- WaterSense labeled smart irrigation
- 3-4 inches of mulch in planting beds
- 50% living plant cover at maturity
- Lawn shall not be installed in park strips, paths, slopes greater than 25% (4:1 grade), or areas less than 8 feet wide.
- For commercial, institutional, and multi-family uses, lawn areas should not exceed 20% of the total landscape area, outside of active recreation areas.

TRACKING WATER DEMAND

Water professionals typically use Gallons Per Capita Per Day (gpcd) to track water use, calculated by dividing total annual water use by the population, to represent water use for an area. It should be noted that while gpcd is a common metric, it can be calculated in different ways, making meaningful comparisons between cities difficult. Water demand can also be projected in terms of Equivalent Residential Connections (ERCs). An ERC represents the demand that a typical single family residential unit places on the water system. Water supply and use numbers are often reported in Acre Feet Per Year (AF/YR) where an acre foot is approximately 326,000 gallons—enough water to cover an acre of land in one foot of water.

Between 2016 and 2020, Highland's average gpcd was 502, with 15% (77 gpcd) for drinking water and 85% (425 gpcd) for pressurized irrigation (**Figure 5.7**). Highland's high per capita irrigation use reflects its larger lot sizes—typically over 1/2 acre, compared with about 1/4 acre in most Utah cities. Lot size directly influences total water demand, primarily due to variations in irrigated area. Indoor water use remains relatively consistent across lot sizes, averaging about 0.45 acre-feet per household per year. In contrast, outdoor irrigation demand increases substantially with lot size. Using the City's pressurized irrigation (PI) level of service of 5.17 acre-feet per irrigated acre, estimated total annual demand for various lot sizes is summarized in **Table 5.2**. Smaller lots, like those in developments such as Ridgeview, have much lower irrigation demand, supporting Highland's long-term conservation goals.

FIGURE 5.7 – AVERAGE 2016-2020 GPCD

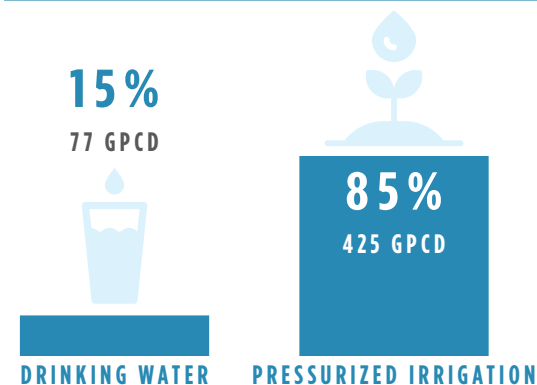


TABLE 5.2 – ESTIMATED TOTAL ANNUAL DEMAND FOR VARIOUS LOT SIZES

LOT SIZE	% IRRIGATED	IRRIGATION DEMAND (AF/YR)	TOTAL DEMAND (AF/YR)	GPCD
0.25 acre	39%	1.3	1.75	392
0.33 acre	45%	1.7	2.15	481
0.50 acre	50%	2.6	3.05	682
0.75 acre	50%	3.9	4.35	973
1.00 acre	50%	5.2	5.65	1,264

WATER BUDGET

A water budget compares the amount of water a community will need in the future with the amount it can reliably provide, ensuring an adequate supply as the city grows. Highland’s population is projected to increase from approximately 21,000 today to about 24,400 by build-out. With these conditions expected within the next 20 years, the drinking water system is projected to serve approximately 7,326 Equivalent Residential Connections (ERCs). The irrigated acreage at build-out is estimated to reach 1,865 acres, and if current water use trends continue, total annual demand could exceed 15,000 acre-feet.

The City can support development through build-out provided it continues to require 3 acre-feet of water rights per acre of developed property. According to the City’s 40-year water plan, build-out water rights demand is estimated at 13,177 acre-feet per year. Currently, the City holds 16,698 acre-feet of water rights. Under drought conditions, reliable water rights reduce to approximately 11,404 acre-feet, but with additional water rights acquired through development, reliable supply is expected to increase to about 14,000 acre-feet per year—sufficient to meet build-out demands. This forecast assumes development occurs primarily under the R-1-40 zoning designation, with some flexibility, and accounts for anticipated annexation areas. While larger lots typical of R-1-40 drive higher irrigation demand, smaller lots—such as those in developments like Ridgeview (see also **Table 5.2**) —use less outdoor water per household, supporting conservation goals and potentially lowering overall demand. Water rights availability should be sufficient, provided current extraction requirements are followed (**Table 5.3**).

TABLE 5.3 – WATER DEMAND PROJECTIONS			
METRIC	CURRENT	BUILD-OUT PROJECTION	BUILD-OUT PROJECTION (w/ Regional Reduction Goals)
Population Estimate	21,000	24,400 (TAZ)	24,400 (TAZ)
Water Rights	16,698 AF/YR* (currently held)	13,177 AF/YR (required for build-out conditions)	2030: -10,542 AF/YR (20% reduction) 2040: -9,622 AF/YR (27% reduction) 2065: -8,956 AF/YR (32% reduction)
*Source Capacity: 16,698 AF/YR, during drought contions the water rights would be reduced to 11,404 AF of reliable water rights. Additional water rights acquired through development will increase the reliable supply.			

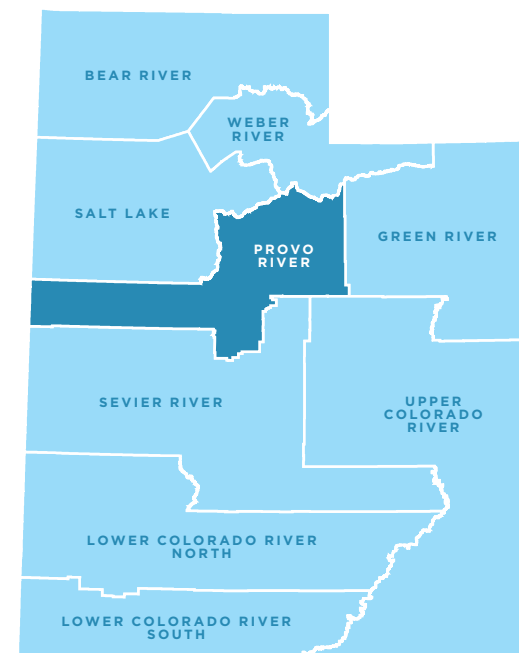
REGIONAL CONSERVATION

In 2019, the Utah Division of Water Resources released the *Utah Regional Municipal and Industrial (M&I) Water Conservation Goals Report*, outlining regional targets and best practices for residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial water use. While not a detailed conservation plan for every region, the report serves as a framework for future infrastructure, policies, and programs that align with Utah's semiarid climate and growing water demands. Utah is divided into nine water conservation regions, with the Provo River Region—including Highland—targeting a 20% reduction in outdoor water use by 2030, which as noted, is a goal Highland is currently pursuing (**Table 5.4 & Figure 5.8**). The City may consider adopting the reduction goals suggested for 2040 and 2065.

TABLE 5.4 – REGIONAL M&I 2030 WATER CONSERVATION GOALS & FUTURE GOAL PROJECTIONS

REGION	REDUCTION FROM BASELINE		
	2030	2040	2065
Bear River	18%	24%	28%
Green River	18%	21%	21%
Lower Colorado River North	19%	24%	28%
Lower Colorado River South	14%	19%	22%
Provo River	20%	27%	32%
Salt Lake	11%	15%	19%
Sevier River	20%	25%	25%
Upper Colorado River	20%	25%	25%
Weber River	20%	26%	30%
Statewide	16%	22%	26%

FIGURE 5.8 – WATER CONSERVATION REGIONS



WATERSHED RESILIENCE

A healthy watershed is essential for maintaining quality of life, public health, water quality, and economic sustainability. Watershed planning for resilience focuses on minimizing the negative impacts of new development through strategies such as mapping sensitive areas, adopting stormwater management plans, establishing development standards for stream buffers, and participating in collaborative efforts. These actions help protect natural and man-made environments and support outdoor recreation opportunities.

As part of the Utah Lake Watershed (Provo River Region), Highland plays a key role in enhancing watershed health and resilience. The City has adopted a sensitive lands ordinance to protect and mitigate sensitive areas, safeguarding residents from natural hazards and minimizing the degradation of resources. Additionally, Highland's Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) addresses runoff pollution, such as soil, animal waste, and oil, by implementing pollution reduction measures to protect water quality and support overall watershed resilience by implementing pollution reduction programs.⁴

⁴ Stormwater. Highland City. Retrieved from: <https://www.highlandut.gov/185/Stormwater>

THE GREAT SALT LAKE

The Utah Lake Watershed, one of five watersheds draining into the Great Salt Lake, plays a crucial role in maintaining the lake's ecosystem, air quality, and economy, which are threatened by declining water levels. Highland's water conservation efforts are part of a broader regional strategy that helps save water for the lake.



The Utah Lake Watershed is one of five watershed draining into the Great Salt Lake



WATERSHED NEIGHBORS & PARTNERS

While some conservation goals can be achieved locally, others require collaboration across jurisdictions, including regional neighbors, partners, agencies, the private sector, and non-profits. By working together, these collective efforts can align shared interests, expand resources, and enhance the overall success of protecting and preserving the watershed — including the Great Salt Lake

Building and maintaining lasting relationships with the following entities is recommended:





- Department of Agriculture and Food
- Utah Division of Water Resources
- Central Utah Water Conservancy District
- Timpanogos Special Service District
- Utah Lake Watershed Council
- The Great Salt Lake Watershed Council
- Local Irrigation Companies (see **pg. 70**)
- Utah County
- Neighboring Communities
- See also Gravel Pit/Conservation Area Aquifer Recharge Project on **pg. 78**

LOOKING FORWARD

Communities are increasingly prioritizing demand-side water management to reduce pressure on water resources and promote sustainable usage for the future. A key aspect of this strategy is integrating water conservation, efficiency, and reuse into land use planning.⁵ **Table 5.5** outlines potential points of intervention to enhance land-water integration. Deciding how and where to intervene will depend on a community's local values and needs, political motivations, staff capacity, the demand-side management initiatives already implemented, and the community's water-saving goals.

⁵ Utah Growing Water Smart. The Water-Land Use Integration Guidebook for Northern Utah. May 2024. Retrieved from: <https://extension.usu.edu/cwel/utah-growing-water-smart/files/GWS-SWUT-Guidebook-Jan2024.pdf>

TABLE 5.5 – INTERVENTION POINTS, TOOLS, AND PURPOSE FOR STRENGTHENING WATER & LAND USE INTEGRATION

POINT OF INTERVENTION	TOOL/MEASURE	PURPOSE
Planning & Goal Setting 	General Plans	Evaluates local water supplies, current and future demands, and related community economic values. Establishes goals and objectives for managing the intersection of natural resources and the built environment.
	Conservation Plans	
	Stormwater Management Plans	
	Capital Improvement Plans	
	Hazard Mitigation, Response, and Recovery Plans	
Water Smart Land Use & Development Policies 	Zoning Ordinances, Subdivision Regulations, and Planned Development Policies	Links new development to water supply planning. Determines the requirements applied to new development for water resource management, conservation, and efficiency.
	Water Budgets	
	Demand Offset Programs	
	Building and Design Codes	
	Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinances	
Watershed Resilience & Water Smart Infrastructure 	Watershed Planning for Resilience	An integrated water resource management approach helps mitigate the factors that can degrade ground and surface water quality and quantity. Green infrastructure can support these efforts.
	Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development	
Water Conservation & Efficiency Tools 	Conservation Rate Structuring	Empowers and incentives landowners and renters to reduce water consumption. Links community-wide programs to water supply planning.
	Post-Occupancy Incentives and Educational Programs	

Source: Utah Growing Water Smart. The Water-Land Use Integration Guidebook for Northern Utah. May 2024.

IN CONCLUSION

By continuing to adopt and refine water-wise practices—such as appliance upgrades, efficient irrigation systems, xeriscaping, and water-conscious development patterns—Highland is taking meaningful steps toward sustainable water management. The City’s policies, incentives, and collaborations with regional partners will further strengthen Highland’s ability to address water challenges while preparing for future growth.

As Highland continues to balance growth with water-wise practices, it is essential to prioritize strategies that reduce water waste, promote efficient land use, and ensure the long-term health of local and regional water resources. By integrating water-saving measures across all land use types, Highland is not only safeguarding its water supply but also setting an example for responsible water management in Utah’s semiarid climate.



GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Explore opportunities to develop and implement citywide policies and ordinances that encourage water conservation and efficient use in new and existing developments.

- **Implementation 1.1:** Enhance the definition of xeriscaping specifically in the Development Code by clearly distinguishing it from zeroscaping. Provide detailed recommendations for xeriscape design, emphasizing water-efficient, aesthetically pleasing, and environmentally beneficial landscaping practices. Incorporate inspiring examples, images, and guidelines where appropriate.
- **Implementation 1.2:** Explore further opportunities to integrate water-wise principles and language into City Ordinances, Standards, and Development Policies (e.g. Highland City Design Standards).
- **Implementation 1.3:** Consider developing and incorporating appropriate water efficient landscaping standards into the City Code for new and reconstructed commercial, industrial, institutional, and master-planned housing projects (see also *Implementation 4.1*).
- **Implementation 1.4:** Consider developing and incorporating appropriate water efficient landscaping standards into the City Code for new residential projects.

Goal 2: Explore opportunities to provide the community with inspiring, actionable, and useful educational resources and programs that promote a culture of water conservation and efficient use.

- **Implementation 2.1:** Explore funding opportunities, including partnerships with entities such as the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, to transition the existing parkway details and other city-maintained park strips from turfgrass to xeriscape.
- **Implementation 2.2:** Provide new Highland residents and/or homeowners with recommendations and resources for using both indoor and outdoor water more efficiently.
- **Implementation 2.3:** Consider opportunities to support youth education about water conservation at local schools.

Goal 3: Explore opportunities to maintain a coordinated planning process that aligns water supply, conservation, and demand across all City policies and plans.

- **Implementation 3.1:** Consider developing a drought response or water shortage plan to help protect public health, safety, and welfare during periods of drought, temporary water shortage, and supply interruption.
- **Implementation 3.2:** As City plans and policies are updated or amended, incorporate clear connections between water supply and demand, conservation, recharge, and reuse priorities, ensuring alignment in both policy and language.

Goal 4: Explore opportunities to support water conservation by promoting or offering accessible and effective rebate, incentive, and reward programs that encourage the adoption of water-efficient practices.

- **Implementation 4.1:** Revisit the water efficiency standards required by the Central Utah Water Conservancy District (CUWCD) for participation in sponsored rebate programs and evaluate whether the City should adopt them. (see also *Implementation 1.3*).
- **Implementation 4.2:** Explore potential incentives from Highland City to encourage water conservation, such as rebates linked to the Pressurized Irrigation System, incentives for water-efficient appliances and fixtures in new construction, reduced impact fees for developments that meet high-efficiency water use standards, and programs to encourage residents and businesses to adopt smart irrigation controllers for private properties.

Goal 5: Strengthen the City's water conservation efforts through dedicated leadership, support, and collaboration.

- **Implementation 5.1:** Explore the formation of a Water Conservation Team to support the Conservation Coordinator in coordinating public education campaigns, developing water conservation incentives, developing regional relationships, and addressing other related water use and preservation goals.

Goal 6: Regularly review and evaluate current and developing strategies to meet the community's needs.

- **Implementation 6.1:** Regularly review the list of current and developing strategies to ensure they remain relevant and effective over time (*Table 5.6*).

TABLE 5.6 – INVENTORY OF CURRENT & DEVELOPING WATER USE & PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

STRATEGY		DESCRIPTION	STATUS
A.	Continue to require all new developments to connect to the pressurized irrigation system.	Highland City requires all new developments to provide pressurized irrigation pipelines and to connect into the pressurized irrigation system.	CURRENT
B.	Continue to require developers to provide water rights to the City.	Highland City requires all new developments to provide irrigation water shares and rights, which must include reservoir/stored water or ground water, to adequately serve the development.	CURRENT
C.	Continue enforcing the time-of-day watering requirement.	Highland City currently requires residents to refrain from outdoor watering between the hours of 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	CURRENT
D.	Continue enforcing maximum number of watering days.	Highland City currently requires its residents to water a maximum of three days a week.	CURRENT
E.	Continue to require all park strips to be landscaped using xeriscape or water-wise methods.	The City adopted this policy in 2020.	CURRENT
F.	Continue to permit the use of xeriscaping in all zones.	In 2020, the City's "Landscaping" definition was updated to mean the use and integration of traditional landscape design methods including xeriscape. The definition for "xeriscape" was also added.	CURRENT
G.	Continue to apply the City's sensitive lands ordinance to protect environmentally sensitive areas including watershed recharge zones, wetlands, streams, river corridors, etc.	The ordinance aims to identify and manage the protection and mitigation of such areas.	CURRENT
H.	Continue to require all new parkway details to be xeriscaped.	The City adopted this policy in 2023. The City also worked with developers to provide at least partial xeriscaping between 2019-2023.	CURRENT
I.	Continue to mail water requirements to residents.	Watering requirements are periodically provided to residents through mailers included in monthly water bills.	CURRENT
J.	Continue to maintain a webpage dedicated to water conservation information and resources.	Highland City maintains a webpage dedicated to water conservation information and resources.	CURRENT
K.	Continue to utilize of a multi-faceted public outreach program.	The City utilizes social media, emails, texts, flyers, website and mailers to provide conservation awareness.	CURRENT
L.	Continue to maintain, repair, and upgrade the pressurized irrigation system.	In 1997-1998, Highland City installed a pressurized irrigation system that provides outdoor water for most residents.	CURRENT

TABLE 5.6 – INVENTORY OF CURRENT & DEVELOPING WATER USE & PRESERVATION STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
M. Continue to install smart irrigation systems at new public parks and facilities.	Highland City has implemented a policy that landscaped areas for all new public parks and facilities will be irrigated using a smart irrigation system.	CURRENT
N. Continue to maintain the weir near the mouth of the Canyon.	A Weir helps to control the flow of water for outlets of lakes, ponds, and reservoirs.	CURRENT
O. Continue to update the Highland Water Conservation Plan every 5 years.	The State requires communities with a certain number of water connections to create a Water Conservation Plan and update it every 5 years.	CURRENT
P. Continue supporting the Assistant Public Works Director in their role as Water Conservation Coordinator by providing clear direction, necessary training, and essential resources.	The Assistant Public Works Director is the designated Conservation Coordinator.	CURRENT
Q. Continue to task the Conservation Coordinator to conduct an annual water conservation review at the end of each year.	The Conservation Coordinator evaluates water use and conservation programs each year to ensure goals are being met and to identify opportunities for improvement.	CURRENT
R. Continue to decentivize high culinary water use.	City ordinances define penalties for water waste and are paired with tiered rate structures that charge higher rates as usage increases.	CURRENT
S. Continue utilizing a tiered rate structure to bill for drinking water usage. Regularly assess and adjust the drinking water rate structure to encourage efficient water use as needed.	Highland's drinking water rate structure is designed to promote conservation of high-quality groundwater for future growth.	CURRENT
T. Continue utilizing hydrant meters to meter and charge contractors for water use.	Hydrant meters allow the City to accurately track water used by contractors, ensuring fair billing and promoting responsible water use during construction and other temporary activities.	CURRENT
U. Trade reused water with American Fork through the Timpanogos Special Service District (TSSD) Water Reuse Agreement.	There is an agreement which will allow Highland City to trade reused water with American Fork.	DEVELOPING
V. Adopt an aquifer recharge program (gravel pit area).	ASR injects an aquifer with culinary water during low-demand winter months in order to extract water during higher demand months of June through September.	DEVELOPING
W. Continue the City's Secondary Metering project to install meters on all private pressurized irrigation connections.	The City is in the process of installing pressurized irrigation meters on all connections.	DEVELOPING
X. Conduct a future water rate study based on secondary water system metering data.	Data collected from the pressurized irrigation meters will be used to conduct a comprehensive water rate study.	DEVELOPING

This page intentionally left blank



CHAPTER 6

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, TRAILS & RECREATION

Highland’s vision for parks, open space, trails and recreation prioritizes a high-quality system for its residents. The chapter highlights the importance of enhancing trail connectivity and safety, protecting valued open spaces, and focusing on maintenance-first strategies. It also emphasizes the role of expanded partnerships and low-cost strategies for strengthening community life and recreational opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

Parks, trails, and open spaces are vital assets that shape Highland's identity and enhance residents' quality of life. For many residents, they are a key feature of why they choose to live here, as they provide places for gathering, recreation, exercise, social interaction, and connection to nature. Highland's scenic setting between Salt Lake City and Provo, and its proximity to American Fork Canyon, create unique opportunities to preserve natural landscapes while improving pedestrian and cycling connections. This chapter prioritizes maintaining and enhancing Highland's existing parks and open space with a renewed focus on quality—providing safe, well-maintained, connected, and thoughtfully designed recreation opportunities.

“ LOVE the new park by Mountain Ridge!!!
Love the trails. We need fewer little
parks that are challenging to maintain...
instead, channel resources into fewer
larger parks when creating new spaces.”

- Highland Resident Survey, (2024)



RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES ON PARKS, OPEN SPACE, TRAILS & RECREATION

Highland residents value parks, open space, trails and recreation with a strong focus on preserving the City’s open, natural character. Surveys highlight the importance of amenities that are **well-maintained, high-quality, and purposeful**, linking them directly to community well-being. Satisfaction with City parks rose from 74% in 2022 to 87% in 2024, reflecting support for the 2021 sales and use tax approved by voters to fund maintenance. While only 41% would support a property tax increase for new trails, this reflects a preference for fiscal responsibility and upkeep over major new expenditures.

- **Maintenance First:** The top priority for residents is maintaining and upgrading existing parks and trails before considering new ones. Residents noted a need for improved maintenance of current amenities, citing issues with overgrown weeds, dead trees, and uneven sidewalks and trails that pose safety hazards. As one resident noted, “all parks eventually become old parks,” highlighting the importance of ongoing care.
- **Quality over Quantity:** There is a clear preference for investing in a few, larger, well-maintained parks rather than creating many small, difficult-to-maintain ones. This principle of “quality over quantity” is a recurring theme in resident feedback.
- **Amenities:** Residents hold conflicting opinions on the types of parks and facilities that should be developed. While some are excited about new, large parks and all-abilities playgrounds, others question the budget allocation, suggesting that some parks are “money pits” and go “unused the vast majority of the year.” There are requests for more specific amenities, such as a community swimming pool, additional pickleball courts, and tennis courts.
- **Enhanced Connectivity & Safety:** Many residents express a desire for more trails, sidewalks, and stronger connections to key community destinations, including parks, the Town Center, and nearby neighborhoods. Proximity is valued, with well-connected parks and trails close to home seen as particularly important. Suggested improvements include enhanced trail lighting, wider sidewalks with planted buffers, and grade-separated crossings to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

TABLE 6.1 – EXISTING PARKS INVENTORY (SEE CORRESPONDING MAP)

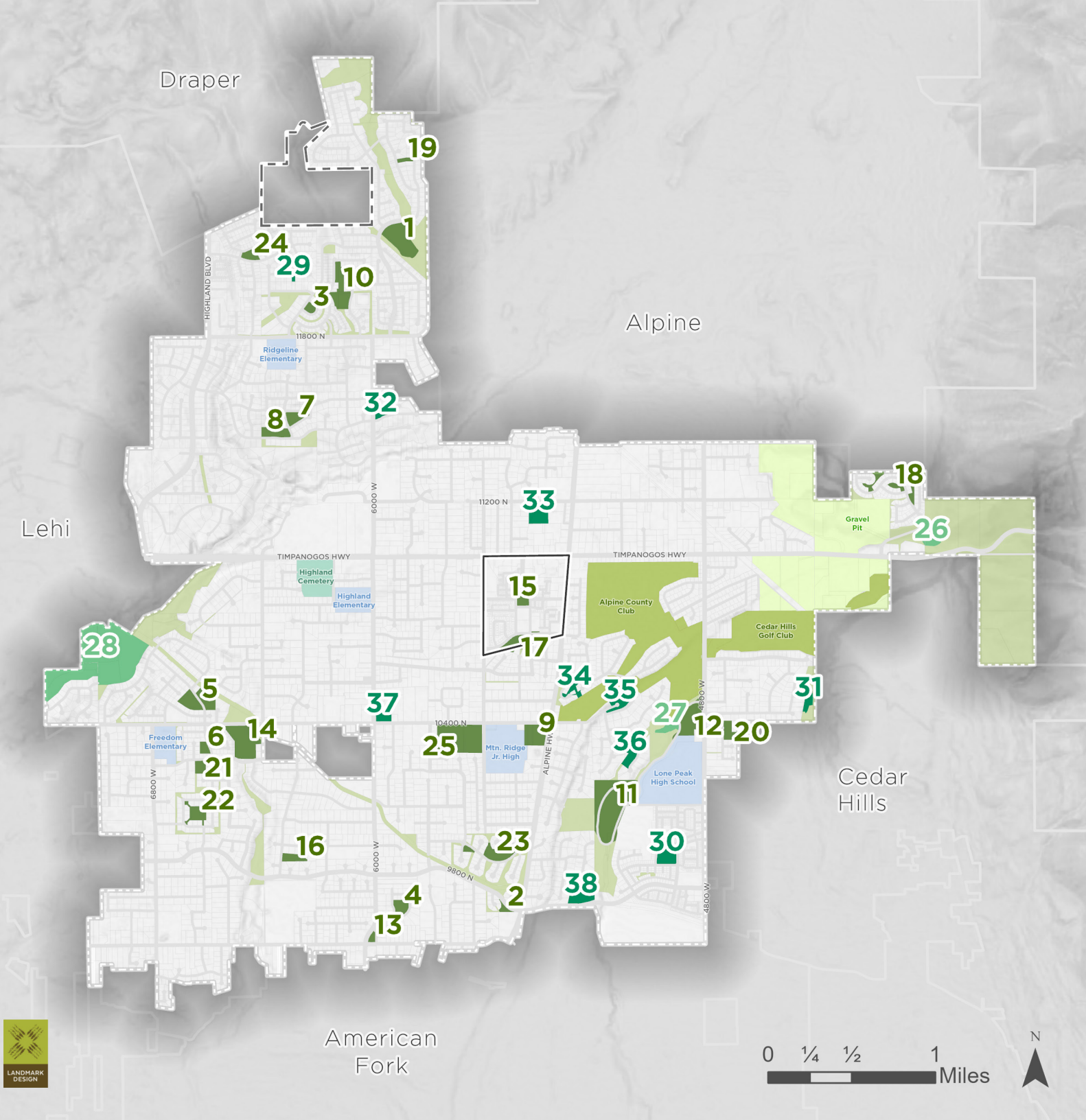
PARK NAME			CLASSIFICATION		
PARK NAME			CLASSIFICATION		
1	Beacon Hills	Neighborhood Park	20	Wild Rose	Mini Park
2	Apple Blossom	Mini Park	21	Wimbledon North	Mini Park
3	Argo Circle	Mini Park	22	Wimbledon South	Neighborhood Park
4	Canterbury Circle	Mini Park	23	Windsor Meadows	Neighborhood Park
5	Canterbury North	Neighborhood Park	24	Skye Estates	Mini Park
6	Canterbury South	Mini Park	25	Highland Family Park	Community Park
7	Dry Creek East	Mini Park	26	Canyon Oaks Campground	Special Use
8	Dry Creek West	Neighborhood Park	27	Highland Glen Bike Park	Special Use
9	Heritage	Neighborhood Park	28	Highland Hollow Trails Park	Special Use
10	Highland Hills North	Neighborhood Park	29	Hanover Way Common Area	Private Park
11	Highland Glen	Community Park	30	Ridgeview Private Park	Private Park
12	Lone Peak Fields	Neighborhood Park	31	The Highlands Common Area	Private Park
13	Merlin B. Larson	Mini Park	32	Oakview HOA Park	Private Park
14	Mitchell Hollow	Community Park	33	11200 N Park (LDS Owned)	Private Park
15	Town Center Splash Pad	Mini Park	34	Cottages on the Green Private Park	Private Park
16	Spring Creek	Mini Park	35	Hidden Oaks Private Park 1	Private Park
17	Town Center Meadows	Neighborhood Park	36	Hidden Oaks Private Park 2	Private Park
18	View Pointe (3 smaller park segments)	Mini Park	37	Strasburg Park (LDS Owned)	Private Park
19	Twin Bridges	Mini Park	38	Pheasant Hollow Common Area	Private Park



HIGHLAND CITY

Existing Parks

- Town Center
- Annexation Boundary
- Highland City Public Park
- Special Use Park
- Private Park
- School
- Golf Course
- Open Space
- Cemetery
- Conservation Area



PARK SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

With nearly **140 acres** of public park land distributed across **25 parks**, the City offers a range of recreational opportunities that complement Highland's lifestyle while promoting health, wellness, and a strong connection to nature. These spaces are meant to be intentionally designed as both scenic and functional, ensuring that current and future generations can enjoy the same quality of life and access to the outdoors. A full inventory of existing parks can be found in **Table 6.1** accompanied by an **Existing Parks Map** on the preceding pages. A breakdown of existing park amenities can be found at the end of the chapter in **Table 6.2**.

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Note that park classifications have been updated from the 2008 plan **to better reflect Highland's current character and contemporary classification standards**. This document indicates the classification changes. Notably, the "Athletic Complexes" category has been removed. Since City code still references the previous park standards, it is recommended that the relevant ordinances be revised to align with the updated classifications.

UPDATED PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

The City's parks are organized by size and function to meet a range of community needs (see also **Chapter 2: Land Use & Placemaking**). Highland's updated park categories include:

- **Mini (or Pocket) Parks:** Small parks (under 3 acres) that primarily serve as local amenities for nearby neighborhoods, offering basic features like a playground or open lawn.
- **Neighborhood Parks:** The backbone of the park system (3-10 acres), these parks provide space for passive recreation and unstructured play within a neighborhood.
- **Community Parks:** Larger parks (10-40 acres) that are equipped to host organized sports and recreational activities. These parks, which typically include fields, trails, and picnic areas, serve the broader community and can also meet regional needs.
- **Special Use Parks:** These are single-purpose recreational areas, such as arenas or community gardens, with a size that is determined by their specific function.

EXISTING PARKS

MINI (OR POCKET) PARKS

Highland's **Mini Parks** are small (typically less than three acres) and provide limited amenities such as small playgrounds and open grass areas with minimal furnishings. They usually do not include restrooms and mainly serve nearby neighborhoods within about a quarter-mile. While these parks can be valuable in areas without other options, **community feedback shows a stronger preference for larger, well-maintained parks over smaller ones.**



Residents enjoying the Town Center Splash Pad.

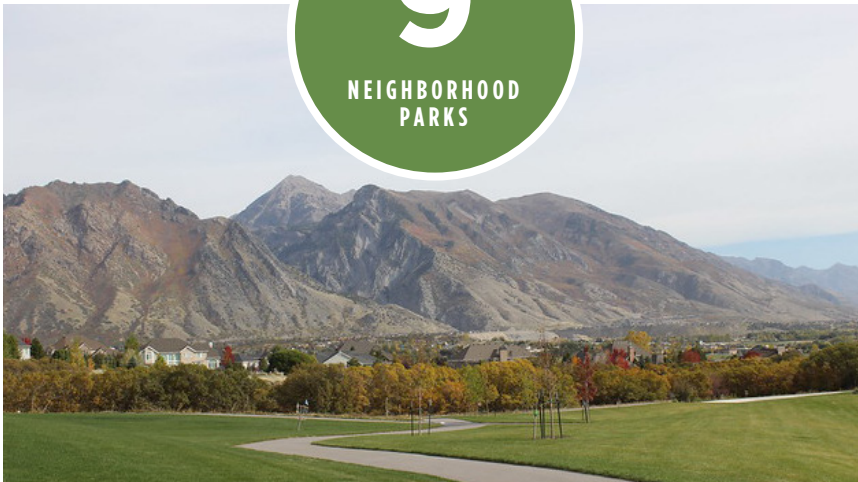
EXISTING MINI PARKS

- View Pointe – 3.53 acres (composed of 3 smaller segments)
- Dry Creek East – 2.73 acres (formerly classified as a Neighborhood Park)
- Wild Rose – 2.72 acres
- Canterbury Circle – 2.67 acres
- Spring Creek – 2.24 acres
- Splash Pad – 2.02 acres
- Skye Estates – 1.94 acres
- Merlin B. Larson – 1.89 acres
- Wimbledon North – 1.83 acres
- Canterbury South – 1.35 acres
- Argo Circle – 1.15 acres
- Apple Blossom – 0.99 acres
- Twin Bridges – 0.79 acres

Total Acreage: 25.85 acres

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood Parks (3–10 acres) are the core of Highland’s park system, providing opportunities for recreation and play close to home. They support a mix of unstructured play, limited active recreation, and passive uses, serving nearby residential areas within a half-mile radius. Typical amenities include trees and landscaping, playgrounds, picnic tables or benches, drinking fountains, open lawns, small to medium pavilions, sport courts, and informal sports fields. Pedestrian and bike paths or trails are generally part of neighborhood parks and often connect them to other parks, open spaces, and key community destinations.



Beacon Hills Park offers scenic views, a disc golf course, and large multi-use fields.

EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

- Beacon Hills – 9.28 acres (formerly classified as an Athletic Complex)
- Lone Peak Fields – 9.22 acres (formerly classified as a School Facility)
- Canterbury North – 7.42 acres
- Highland Hills North – 6.79 acres
- Town Center Meadows – 6.41 acres
- Heritage Park – 6.21 acres
- Windsor Meadows – 4.85 acres
- Wimbledon South – 4.19 acres
- Dry Creek West – 3.44 acres (formerly classified as a Mini Park)

Total Acreage: 57.81 acres

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community Parks (10+ acres) are large sites designed to support organized sports, recreation, and community activities, with amenities such as athletic fields, trails, and picnic areas. They include complementary passive features like pathways, open spaces, and natural areas, creating opportunities for a variety of recreational experiences. In addition to serving nearby neighborhoods, community parks can also meet regional needs. These parks generally serve residents within approximately a one-mile radius, providing accessible spaces for both active and passive recreation.



Highland Family Park is a new Community Park with numerous amenities including a 8-court tournament level pickleball complex.

EXISTING COMMUNITY PARKS

- Highland Glen – 26.88 acres
- Highland Family Park – 17.02 acres (formerly classified as an Athletic Complex)
- Mitchell Hollow – 11.26 acres (formerly classified as an Athletic Complex)

Total Acreage: 55.16 acres



Mitchell Hollow offers access to trails, soccer, and baseball fields, as well as a playground, and picnic areas.

SPECIAL USE PARKS

A **Special Use Park** is typically a single-purpose site designed for specific recreational, cultural, or environmental activities, such as arenas, community gardens, or bike parks. They may stand alone or be part of another park type, with size varying by use. These parks often include distinctive features—like water amenities, amphitheaters, or wooded areas for group gatherings—and provide opportunities for active recreation, interpretive walks, or even educational experiences tailored to specific user groups.

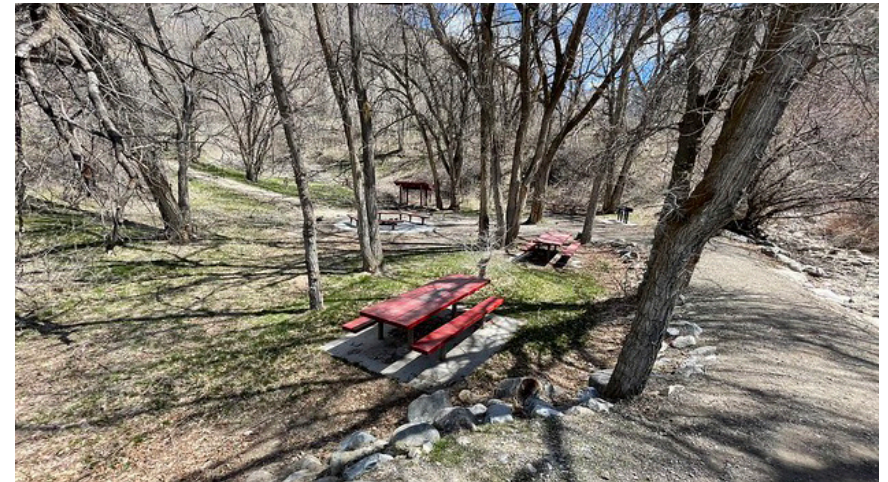


Highland Glen Bike Park provides a range of trails and features that cater to both families and more experienced riders of all skill levels.

EXISTING SPECIAL USE PARKS

- Highland Hollow Trails Park - 50.3 acres (formerly classified as a Community Park)
- Highland Glen Bike Park - 2.9 acres
- Canyon Oaks Campground - 1.7 acres

Total Acreage: 54.9 acres



Canyon Oaks Campground offers a one-acre site with tent areas, a picnic area, seasonal restrooms, a campfire pit, parking, and overnight camping for up to seven nights.

PRIVATE OR QUASI-PUBLIC PARKS

Private or Quasi-Public Parks are parks typically located within subdivisions or managed by homeowners' associations (HOAs). They are designed primarily to serve the residents of the community in which they are located and are generally not open to the public. These parks often include amenities such as open lawn areas, playgrounds, sports courts, and small pavilions, but usually do not provide the larger facilities or active sports fields found in public parks intended to meet broader community needs.



Strasburg Park is a notable example of a Quasi-Public Park with large multi-use fields.

EXISTING PRIVATE OR QUASI-PUBLIC PARKS

- 11200 N Park (LDS Owned) – 5.38 acres
- Ridgeview Private Park – 4.80 acres
- Pheasant Hollow Common Area – 4.38 acres
- Hidden Oaks Private Park 1 – 3.68 acres
- Strasburg Park (LDS Owned) – 3.47 acres
- Hidden Oaks Private Park 2 – 3.31 acres
- The Highlands Common Area – 2.13 acres
- Cottages on the Green Private Park – 2.12 acres
- Oakview HOA Park – 0.84 acres
- Hanover Way Common Area – 0.28 acres

Total Acreage: 30.39 acres

GUIDANCE FOR FUTURE PARKS & OPEN SPACE

The Level of Service (LOS) analysis, a tool developed by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA), helps communities determine if they have enough parkland to serve their residents. It works by calculating the ratio of park acres per 1,000 people. While LOS was once a national standard, its use has evolved. Now, it's primarily a reference point for communities to set their own goals, make informed decisions about park acquisition, and compare their unique situations with others.

This is especially true for Highland, where the City leads the Wasatch Front in LOS as a result of its expansive park system. Looking forward, **Highland's primary focus isn't on increasing its overall park acreage, but rather on ensuring the quality and proper maintenance of its existing parks.** The following section examines Highland's current and future LOS as well as geographic park distribution, providing context and guidance for future park planning.



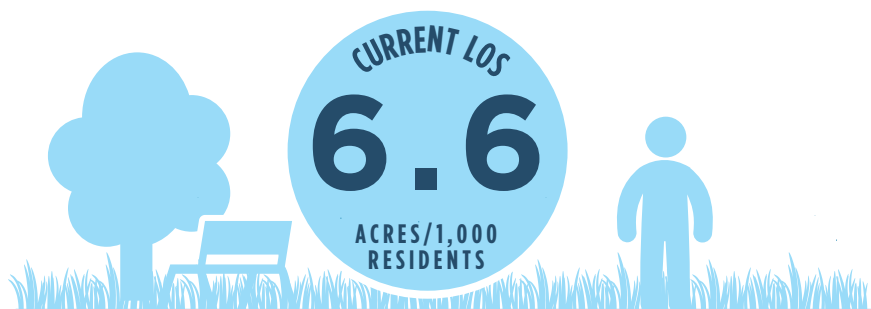
CITY LOS COMPARISON (PARK ACRES/1,000 PEOPLE)

Highland	6.6
Springville City	5.1
Mapleton City	4.9
Provo	4.8
Bluffdale City	4.5
Spanish Fork	4.7
Salem	4.3
Farmington	4.2
Sandy	3.8
Draper	3.7
Saratoga Springs	3.7
Lehi	3.6
West Jordan	2.9
Orem	2.8

CURRENT LOS

Highland's current Level of Service (LOS) (ratio of park acres per 1,000 residents) is **6.6** (*Figure 6.1*). This was calculated by dividing the acreage of existing public parks that contribute to the park system (138.82 acres) by the 2025 population (21,000) and multiplying by 1,000 ($138.82 / 21,000 \times 1,000 = 6.6$). Benchmarking against neighboring communities in the region, **this LOS is a key indicator that Highland may have a more than sufficient amount of parkland to serve its current population.** While Special Use Parks and Private Parks also help meet the recreational needs of residents, they are excluded from LOS calculations. This is because they fill non-traditional park needs, require a fee, or are not owned and managed by Highland City.

FIGURE 6.1 – CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)



If Special Use Parks and Private Parks were included in LOS calculations, Highland would have a current LOS of 10.7 acres per 1,000 residents.

FUTURE LOS

Based on the TAZ population estimate of 24,446 for 2050, Highland's Level of Service (LOS) for parks **would still maintain 5.7 acres per 1,000 residents, even if the City doesn't add any new parkland** (*Figure 6.2*). This projected LOS is significantly higher than that of many surrounding communities, further indicating that Highland's existing park acreage will continue to meet the recreational needs of future residents. For reference, an additional 19 acres of parkland would be needed to maintain the current LOS of 6.6, which is generally unfeasible given that the City is nearly built-out. While Highland will continue to prioritize maintaining and enhancing the quality of its existing parks and trails, there may be select opportunities to add new facilities in response to community needs or strategic opportunities.

FIGURE 6.2 – 2050 ESTIMATED LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)



If Special Use Parks and Private Parks were included in LOS calculations, Highland would have a future LOS of 9.2 acres per 1,000 residents.

PARK DISTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

In addition to assessing needs through level-of-service (LOS) standards, analyzing the spatial distribution of parks offers another perspective. Highland residents have emphasized that having parks and trails within walking distance of home is a top priority. To examine this, a park distribution analysis was conducted using 1-mile, 0.5-mile, and 0.25-mile buffers along existing roads, accounting for access barriers and planned walking and biking projects. The results provide guidance for future decisions, **helping to ensure equitable access to parks and reinforcing the focus on connectivity.**

The map on the following page indicates that Highland generally provides excellent park access throughout the City, with gaps (areas without purple) mostly located in places with little or no current population. When private parks and parks in neighboring communities are included, even fewer gaps are apparent (***All Parks: Service Area Gaps Map***). Areas that could be strong candidates for future parks or community open space include the northern Annexation Area, the Longhorn Property, and the Gravel Pit area. Note that a small dog park or other Special Use Park (1 acre) has been discussed for a site near the Town Center.

THE ROLE OF SUPPORTIVE PLANS

To support Highland's focus on quality over quantity and the ongoing maintenance of its park system, the City could adopt official Park Standards or a more detailed Parks, Trails, and Recreation Plan. Such a framework would guide the design, development, and enhancement of existing and future parks, ensuring that each space meets community needs. Minimum standards would provide guidance without making parks uniform or limited to basic requirements, allowing for site-specific design and unique features that enhance Highland's character.

Supportive plans—such as the existing *Alpine & Highland Active Transportation Plan*—and other guiding documents can help Highland maintain a high-quality, well-connected, and sustainable park system that balances residents' expectations for maintenance, accessibility, and enjoyable recreational experiences with long-term cost efficiency.

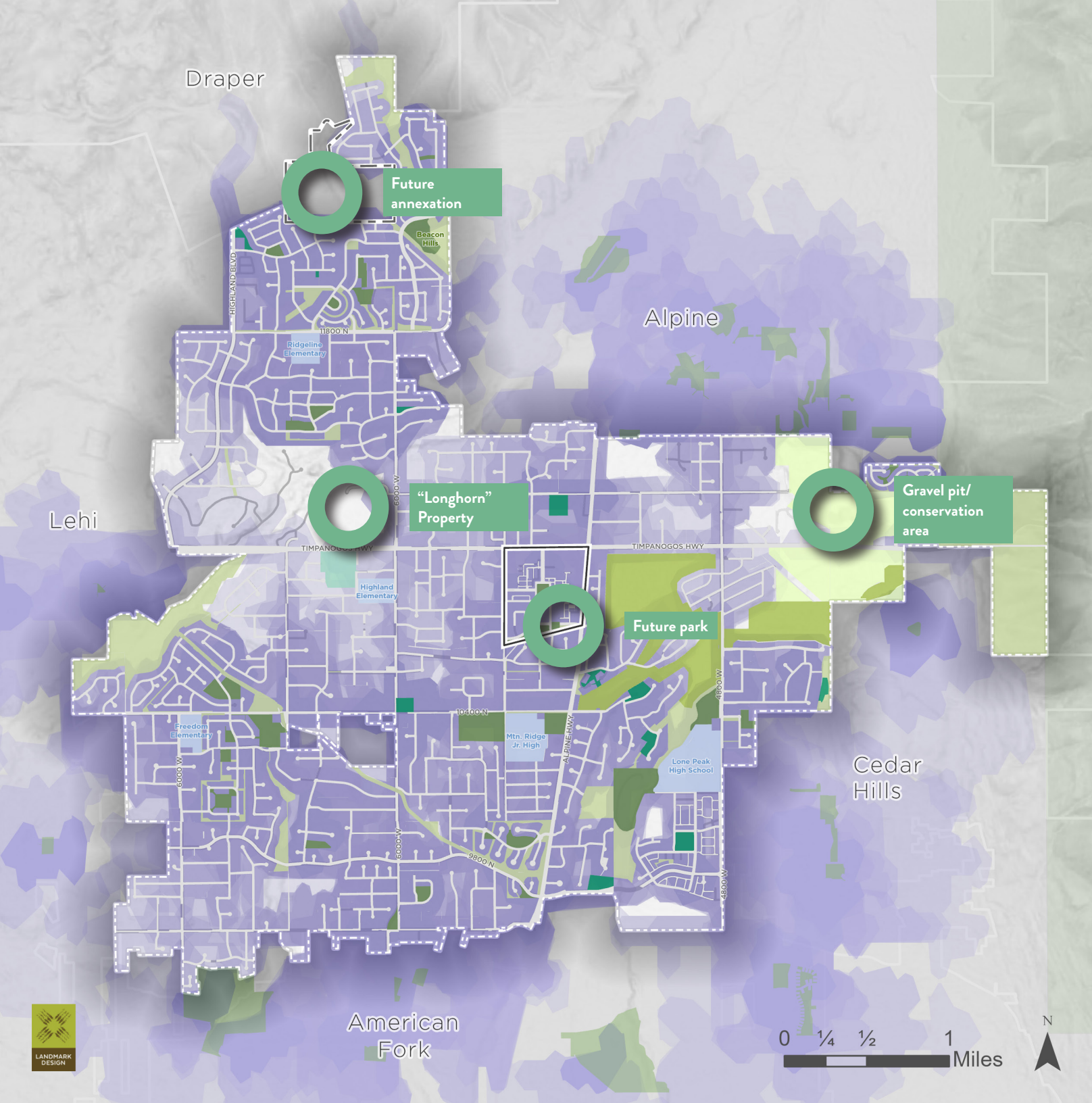


HIGHLAND CITY

All Parks: Service Area Gaps

- Annexation Boundary
- Town Center
- School
- Private Recreation
- Highland City Public Park
- Golf Course
- Open Space
- Cemetery
- Conservation Area
- Neighboring Parks
- 0.25 mile
- 0.5 mile
- 1 mile

Areas that could be good candidates for future parks or open space



A NOTE ABOUT LOS AND IMPACT FEES

The LOS discussion in this document relates specifically to planning for future parks in Highland. Its purpose is to understand the level of service currently provided in the community and to determine how to maintain that service or establish an appropriate standard for the future. It is important to distinguish LOS for planning purposes from LOS used in determining impact fees.

The Parks Element provides a foundation for developing a Capital Improvements Plan, Impact Fee Facilities Plan (IFFP), and Impact Fee Analysis (IFA). The IFFP identifies the demands that future development will place on existing facilities and evaluates the improvements needed to maintain the current LOS. The IFA proportionately allocates the cost of new facilities and any excess capacity to new development, while considering all possible financing methods. While the IFFP and IFA serve as companions to this document, their content may differ due to the specific requirements for calculating impact fees under *Utah Code 11-36a*, the *Impact Fee Act*.

OPEN SPACE

Open space, whether publicly or privately owned, provides physical and visual relief from more developed areas. Highland benefits from its location along the Wasatch Mountains and foothills to the east, as well as Dry Creek, which connects the mountains to Utah Lake through the heart of the community. Encompassing over 436 acres, Highland's undeveloped natural areas include drainage corridors, foothills, hillsides, and canals. While not formally part of the City's park system, these spaces offer significant visual and physical benefits, helping to preserve Highland's rural, low-density character while promoting health, wellness, and a strong connection to nature. **Natural open spaces will continue to be among the community's most cherished features, and protecting and enhancing these areas remains a top priority** (see also ***Chapter 2: Land Use & Placemaking***).

TRAILS

Trails are a vital component of Highland's recreational and transportation system. They provide opportunities for walking, running, and cycling while connecting homes, parks, open spaces, and key community destinations. Trails support active lifestyles, safe non-motorized travel, and everyday recreation, enhancing connectivity and community well-being (see *Existing & Proposed Trails Map*).

A VISION FOR TRAILS

The City's long-term vision for trails focuses on completing a continuous network that links neighborhoods, parks, and open spaces, creating loops and corridors for both recreation and commuting. Trails should be designed with safety, privacy, and accessibility in mind, including ADA-compliant and use-specific routes where appropriate.

Any future trail development should follow established design standards while responding to the unique conditions of each segment. Opportunities to integrate trails with green infrastructure, water-wise landscaping, and low-impact design should be pursued where feasible. Some trails will be built opportunistically, while others will be strategically aligned with roadway or development projects.

TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Highland's trail system includes a variety of trail types, each serving distinct purposes:

- **Unpaved Trails:** Natural surface trails, primarily located in Highland Hollow and the Wasatch foothills, supporting hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian use.
- **Neighborhood Trails:** Paved trails that connect residential areas to parks, schools, or local open spaces, usually contained within a specific neighborhood development.
- **Regional Trails:** Long-distance trails such as the Bonneville Shoreline Trail and Murdock Canal Trail, linking Highland with neighboring communities and providing extensive recreational opportunities.
- **Local Multi-Use Paths:** Paved paths designed for both pedestrians and cyclists to link residential areas to parks, schools, public facilities, and other community destinations.
- **Major Road Trails:** Trails aligned along or adjacent to significant roadways to ensure citywide connectivity and safe crossings.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAILS

To strengthen Highland's trail system and address resident priorities, the following considerations are recommended:

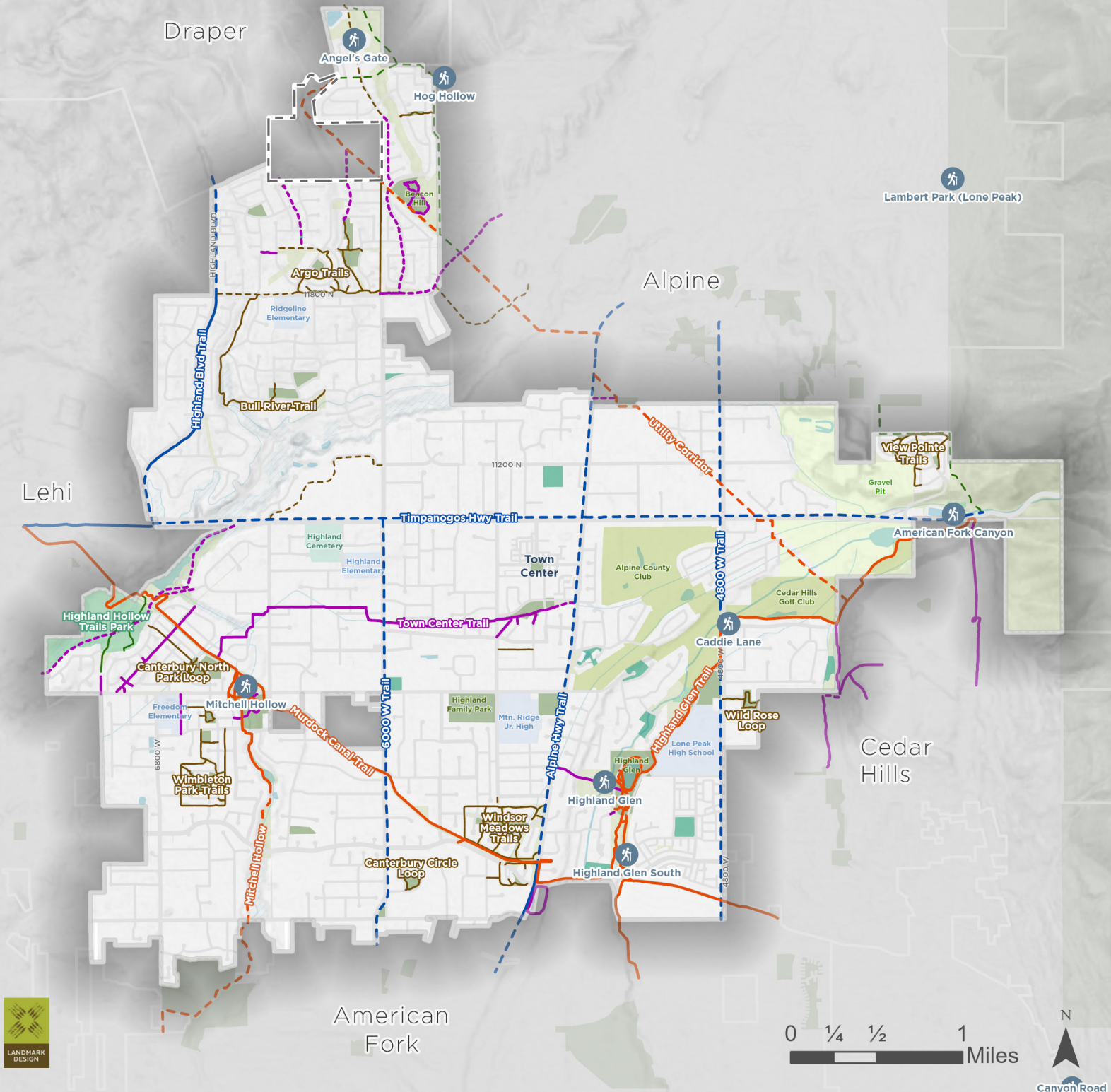
- **Expand Connectivity & Fill Gaps:** Focus on completing connections between neighborhoods, parks, open spaces, and key destinations, including the Town Center. Completing continuous trail loops may support both recreation and commuting, and new trails can be developed strategically in under-served areas.
- **Diverse Trail Experiences:** Ensure that each trail type appropriately serves the intended variety of trail users. For example, unpaved trails should support hiking and mountain biking, while paved neighborhood and multi-use paths should support walking, jogging, and cycling. The City should also consider ADA-compliant or beginner-friendly routes as part of trail design in open space areas.
- **Safety & Accessibility:** Trail crossings at major roads could be improved, with curb extensions, improved signals and crosswalks, planted buffers, or grade-separated crossings added where feasible.
- **Amenities & Wayfinding:** Trailheads can provide parking, restrooms, bike racks, and drinking fountains. Signage and wayfinding helps guide users, promote safety, and encourage trail etiquette.
- **Maintenance & Stewardship:** Ongoing maintenance keeps trails safe, accessible, and enjoyable. Programs like “adopt a trail” or “service days” may engage volunteers, build community pride, and enhance upkeep without extra funding.
- **Long-Term Planning & Partnerships:** Trail planning should follow the adopted *Alpine & Highland Active Transportation Master Plan* and possibly a broader Parks, Trails, and Recreation Plan. Partnerships may help secure easements and crossings while phased and opportunistic development is explored along the way.



HIGHLAND CITY

Existing & Proposed Trails

- Existing Trailheads
- Existing Regional Trail
- Future Regional Trail
- Existing Major Road Trail
- Future Major Road Trail
- Existing Neighborhood Trail
- Future Neighborhood Trail
- Existing Local Trail
- Future Local Trail
- Existing Unpaved Trail
- Future Unpaved Trail
- Highland City Public Park
- Special Use Park
- Private Park
- Neighboring Parks





TRAIL CROSSING CONSIDERATIONS

Highland is divided by major roads, including Timpanogos Highway (SR-92) and Alpine Highway (5300 West), creating a separation between the north/east and south/west sides of the City. Trails that cross these corridors should be designed to prioritize safety and ease of access. Safety improvements are also recommended for crossings along the Murdock Canal Trail.

The *Alpine & Highland Active Transportation Master Plan* provides guidance on crossing design and improvements. These recommendations can be used to ensure safe, accessible passage for all trail users.

RECREATION

Highland provides a limited number of city-owned recreation facilities, but residents have access to a wider range of recreational opportunities through partnerships with neighboring municipalities, schools, and private providers. By building on these relationships, the City could expand program offerings, improve access to active recreation, and provide more diverse options for residents.

EXISTING FACILITIES & PROGRAMING

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Highland offers some recreation programming, including the popular Hooked on Fishing event. Additionally, residents can participate in Cedar Hills City recreation programs—such as youth sports, skiing, and adult fitness classes—without paying non-resident fees. Arts programming in Highland includes after-school art clubs, theater, watercolor, choir, bell choir, sewing, and senior-focused programs. The limited local options for active recreation, particularly for adults, often lead residents to rely on neighboring communities.

GOLF COURSES

Portions of three golf courses—one private (Alpine Country Club) and two public (Cedar Hills Golf Course and Tri-City Golf Course)—cover approximately 217 acres within the City. While none are owned by Highland City, these courses serve as valuable recreational amenities that contribute to the City’s perceived open space character and should be maintained. No new golf courses are anticipated.

PRIVATE & SCHOOL DISTRICT RECREATION FACILITIES

Highland partners with Alpine School District to share indoor gyms, outdoor fields, and other facilities. While these agreements are currently in place, they may be impacted as the district splits into three separate districts in the coming years. Partnerships with schools remain an important strategy for maximizing recreational opportunities and reducing duplication of facilities. Highland should continue to prioritize these relationships and ensure that its recreational programming does not adversely burden school partners.



UNIQUE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Highland’s location at the entrance to American Fork Canyon and near Timpanogos Cave National Monument offers unique recreation and learning opportunities (see also **Chapter 2: Land Use & Placemaking**). The City could explore:

- Partnering with the National Park Service to explore the development of a visitor or interpretive center at the canyon entrance.
- Developing outdoor classrooms and programs that connect residents and visitors to nature or astronomy.
- Activate parks with seasonal or temporary experiences, like festivals, adventure courses, or outdoor exhibits that relate to canyon recreation

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Highland hosts a variety of community events throughout the year that bring residents together. Seasonal favorites include the Easter Egg Hunt in April, Hooked on Fishing programs in May and June, a Senior Dinner in September, Trick-or-Treat Street in October, and annual holiday events in November and December. **A community highlight is the annual Highland Fling, a multi-day summer celebration featuring parades, fireworks, concerts, contests, and family activities.** The Fling draws residents and visitors serving as a signature community tradition and reinforcing Highland's unique identity.



The Highland Fling brings the community together through summer festivities and traditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECREATION

- **Expand Programming Beyond Facilities:** The City could broaden recreational offerings by using a variety of existing spaces, including the Library, City Hall, and local parks, to reach more residents and diversify programming.
- **Strengthen Partnerships & Leverage Existing Facilities:** The City could build on relationships with the Alpine School District, neighboring cities such as Cedar Hills, and private providers to expand recreational opportunities. Shared facilities and cooperative agreements allow Highland to offer more programs—especially active recreation—without new construction. These partnerships will be particularly important as the school district undergoes restructuring.
- **Partner with HOAs and Private Entities:** Ridgeview, which will add nearly 2,000 residents through 691 units, includes HOA amenities such as a park, pool, and clubhouse. Partnering with the Ridgeview Owners Association—and other private entities—could allow the City to host programs within these spaces, creating targeted opportunities for residents while reducing the need for new public facilities.

GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following goals and strategies are intended to guide Highland's parks, trails, and recreation system. Their success will be greatest when informed by a comprehensive Parks, Trails, and Recreation Plan or similar framework (*see Implementation 1.1*).

Goal 1: Prioritize the quality and maintenance of existing parks and trails to ensure safe, well-designed, and enjoyable recreational opportunities.

- **Implementation 1.1:** Consider adopting a comprehensive Parks, Trails, and Recreation Plan or similar framework to guide the design, development, and maintenance of all city-owned parks and trails. This plan could include official standards for park amenities, a hierarchy for park maintenance, and alignment of City ordinances with updated park classifications.
- **Implementation 1.2:** Consider options for a maintenance-first or “fix-it-first” funding strategy that allocates resources to the upkeep and upgrading of existing amenities before considering new park or trail construction.
- **Implementation 1.3:** Consider conducting a feasibility study to evaluate opportunities for new parkland in strategic locations such as the northern Annexation Area, the Longhorn Property, or the Gravel Pit, pursuing them only when fiscally and operationally feasible.
- **Implementation 1.4:** Explore the creation of a system for residents to easily report park or trail maintenance issues using tools such as ESRI's Crowdsourcing Reporter or a dedicated city app, and establish a clear timeline to respond and resolve reported issues.
- **Implementation 1.5:** Explore partnerships and programs, such as an “Adopt-a-Park” or “Adopt-a-Trail” initiative, to engage volunteers and encourage community stewardship in the upkeep of these spaces.

Goal 2: Enhance the connectivity of the City’s trail system and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

- **Implementation 2.1:** Fill critical gaps in the trail network, focusing on connecting neighborhoods, parks, the Town Center, and other key community destinations to create continuous loops and corridors for both recreation and commuting.
- **Implementation 2.2:** Implement enhanced safety measures at major road crossings, including wider sidewalks, planted buffers, grade-separated crossings where feasible, and pedestrian-activated HAWK beacons, especially along Timpanogos Highway and Alpine Highway (see also **Chapter 3: Transportation**).
- **Implementation 2.3:** Strategically install enhanced lighting, wayfinding signage, and trail amenities—such as benches, drinking fountains, and bike racks—to guide users, increase safety, and improve the overall trail experience. The City should also install and enforce signage that limits trail use by e-bikes and similar equipment to protect trail facilities and ensure user safety. This process could be guided by design standards to ensure consistency.
- **Implementation 2.4:** Prioritize trail segments identified in the *Alpine & Highland Active Transportation Master Plan*, aligning new trail development with roadway and development projects to reduce costs.

Goal 3: Explore options to diversify park amenities and recreational opportunities to meet the varied needs and interests of residents.

- **Implementation 3.1:** Consider conducting a comprehensive recreation needs assessment to identify the most desired amenities (e.g., pickleball courts, tennis courts, or an all-abilities playground). This assessment could inform decisions about upgrades or new features.
- **Implementation 3.2:** Explore opportunities to expand program offerings by using existing City facilities—such as parks, the Library, and City Hall—and by partnering with neighboring cities, the Alpine School District, and private providers. Partnerships will be especially important as the school district undergoes restructuring.

Goal 4: Continue to protect Highland’s natural open spaces and integrate them with the park and trail system where appropriate.

- **Implementation 4.1:** Explore additional opportunities to extend trails through natural open spaces, providing safe, low-impact recreation and connections to existing parks and neighborhoods.
- **Implementation 4.2:** Collaborate with the National Park Service and other partners on opportunities that highlight Highland’s natural setting, including exploring the feasibility of a potential Timpanogos Cave Visitor Center at the community’s eastern edge, and considering outdoor classrooms, interpretive programs, and educational signage—particularly at gateway locations such as the entrance to American Fork Canyon (see also **Chapter 2: Land Use & Placemaking**).
- **Implementation 4.3:** Continue to assess and pursue tools such as property acquisition, conservation easements, or cooperative agreements to protect key open space areas. The Gravel Pit, owned by the Water Conservancy District, offers a unique long-term opportunity for a park or open space with potential trail connections, passive recreation, and expanded natural access (see also **Chapter 2 & 5**).
- **Implementation 4.4:** Continue to protect public spaces by ensuring that use of the City parks, open space areas, and trails is consistent with their purposes. Limit private use and encroachment into these spaces that restricts the public’s ability to access, use, and enjoy the property.

TABLE 6.2 – HIGHLAND PARK AMENITIES SNAPSHOT









Park Name	Address	Park Total Acres	 Restrooms	 Pavilion	 Multipurpose Filed	 Picnic Areas	 Soccer Fields	 Baseball/Softball	 Tennis	 Pickleball
MINI PARKS										
Apple Blossom	5520 West Canal Boulevard	0.99								
Argo Circle	6190 Argo Circle	1.15			Y					
Canterbury Circle	5920 West 9740 North	2.67		Y	Y					
Canterbury South	9721 N 5920 W	1.35			Y					
Dry Creek East	11590 Lone Rock Road	2.73			Y					
Merlin B. Larson	9600 North 6000 West	1.89		Y		Y				
Skye Estates	6479 W Carrick Way	1.94		Y	Y					
Spring Creek	9900 North Mountain View Drive	2.24		Y	Y					
Twin Bridges	12440 Wildflower Lane	0.79								
View Pointe	4040 N View Pointe Drive	3.53								
Wild Rose	10340 North 4370 West	2.72			Y					
Wimbledon North	6615 West 10250 North	1.83			Y					
Subtotal Mini Parks		23.83								
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE										

TABLE 6.2 – HIGHLAND PARK AMENITIES SNAPSHOT CONTINUED











Volleyball 	Basketball 	Multi-Use Sports Courts 	Playgrounds 	Water Access 	Dog Park 	Splash Pad 	Skate Park/Bike Park 	Disc Golf 	Paths/trails 	Other/Notes
MINI PARKS (CONTINUED)										
			Y						Y	
			Y							
		Y	Y						Y	
									Y	
			Y						Y	
Y										
			Y							Swingset separate from playground
			Y						Y	
	Y		Y						Y	
	Y		Y						Y	3 park segments
									Y	
			Y						Y	
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE										

TABLE 6.2 –HIGHLAND PARK AMENITIES SNAPSHOT CONTINUED









Park Name	Address	Park Total Acres	 Restrooms	 Pavilion	 Multipurpose Filed	 Picnic Areas	 Soccer Fields	 Baseball/Softball	 Tennis	 Pickleball
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS										
Beacon Hills	5959 W Beacon Hill Boulevard	9.28	Y				Y			
Canterbury North	10500 Canterbury Lane	7.42		Y	Y					
Dry Creek West	6380 Bull River Road	3.44			Y					
Heritage Park	10400 Alpine Hwy	6.21	Y	Y			Y	Y		
Highland Hills North	12020 N Ithica Drive	6.79			Y					
Lone Peak Fields	10189 North 4800 West	9.22	Y				Y			
Town Center Meadows	5400 West 10700 North	6.41		Y	Y					
Wimbleton South	10120 North 6580 West	4.19			Y					
Windsor Meadows	5600 West 9970 North	4.85		Y						
Subtotal Neighborhood Parks		57.81								
COMMUNITY PARKS										
Highland Family Park	5525 W 104000 N	17.02	Y	Y			Y	Y		Y
Highland Glen	4800 West Knight Avenue	26.88	Y	Y		Y				
Mitchell Hollow	6400 West 10250 North	11.26	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		
Subtotal Community Parks		55.16								
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE										

TABLE 6.2 –HIGHLAND PARK AMENITIES SNAPSHOT CONTINUED





























 Volleyball	 Basketball	 Multi-Use Sports Courts	 Playgrounds	 Water Access	 Dog Park	 Splash Pad	 Skate Park/Bike Park	 Disc Golf	 Paths/trails	Other/Notes
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS (CONTINUED)										
								Y	Y	
			Y						Y	
									Y	
Y	Y		Y							Horseshoe pit
			Y						Y	
										Soccer specific
			Y						Y	
									Y	Sandbox
	Y		Y						Y	1 large segment and 1 small
COMMUNITY PARKS (CONTINUED)										
	Y		Y							
Y			Y	Y			Y		Y	
Y			Y						Y	
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE										

TABLE 7.1 –HIGHLAND PARK AMENITIES SNAPSHOT CONTINUED

Park Name	Address	Park Total Acres	 Restrooms	 Pavilion	 Multipurpose Fields	 Picnic Areas	 Soccer Fields	 Baseball/Softball	 Tennis	 Pickleball
SPECIAL USE PARKS										
Canyon Oaks Campground	4000 W 11000 N	1.7	Y			Y				
Highland Glen Bike Park	4800 Knight Ave	2.9								
Highland Hollow Trails Park	10527 Canterbury Dr	50.25								
Subtotal Special Use Parks		54.9								
TOTAL CITY PARKS (EXCLUDES PRIVATE)		193.67								
TOTAL ACRES FOR LOS (EXCLUDES SPECIAL USE & PRIVATE)		138.82								
PRIVATE PARKS										
11200 N Park (LDS Owned)	5335 W 11200 N	5.38								
Cottages on the Green Private Park		2.12								
Hanover Way Common Area		0.28								
Hidden Oaks Private Park 1		3.68								
Hidden Oaks Private Park 2		3.31								
Oakview HOA Park	5943 W Oakview Dr	0.84								
Pheasant Hollow Common Area	9822 N Pheasant Dr	4.38								
Ridgeview Private Park	4642 Elmfield Wy	4.8								
Strasburg Park (LDS Owned)	5998 W 10400 N	3.47								
The Highlands Common Area		2.13								
Subtotal Private Parks		30.39								

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

TABLE 7.1 –HIGHLAND PARK AMENITIES SNAPSHOT CONTINUED

Volleyball 	Basketball 	Multi-Use Sports Courts 	Playgrounds 	Water Access 	Dog Park 	Splash Pad 	Skate Park/Bike Park 	Disc Golf 	Paths/trails 	Other/Notes
SPECIAL USE PARKS (CONTINUED)										
									Y	
							Y			
							Y			
PRIVATE PARKS (CONTINUED)										
										Baseball fields/ church softball and football
										Detention basin
										Baseball fields

This page intentionally left blank



CHAPTER 7

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Addresses Highland's environmental setting and natural hazards, emphasizing practical strategies for sustainable development. The chapter highlights the importance of protecting sensitive lands, water resources, and wildlife while offering optional, locally appropriate approaches to increasing community resilience.

INTRODUCTION

Highland is a unique and scenic community, valued for its mountain views, gentle slopes, waterways, and convenient access to outdoor recreation. These natural features provide both benefits and challenges, including potential hazards such as earthquakes, flooding, landslides, and rockfalls. Thoughtful planning and responsible development protect these areas while prioritizing public health, safety, and property. By managing land wisely, Highland can maintain the qualities that make it special while minimizing risks from natural hazards.

This chapter summarizes Highland's environmental conditions and natural hazards. It highlights the City's commitment to sustainable practices in development and operations, supporting community resilience and ensuring the preservation of Highland's natural beauty while safeguarding residents and their property.

“Sensitive lands” are areas, such as steep slopes, wetlands, and flood zones, protected to safeguard people and property while enhancing quality of life.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

GEOLOGIC CONDITIONS

Areas prone to erosion, landslides, earthquakes, or other geologic events are influenced by slope, soil type, geologic material, and hydrologic conditions. These hazards can affect life, property, and infrastructure through movement, settling, or shifting of the earth. Highland's risks include unstable slopes, faulting, landslides, rockfall, liquefaction, debris flows, and areas affected by excavation or mining (see ***Geologic Conditions Map***).

SOILS

Highland's soils consist of gravelly and silty loams, generally well-drained and suitable for agriculture and development when properly managed. More challenging conditions exist north of Dry Creek in the critical runoff zone and near canyon mouths, where limestone (karst) formations present engineering challenges. Addressing these conditions requires geotechnical techniques to ensure safe, stable development.



HIGHLAND'S SENSITIVE LANDS ORDINANCE

Highland's sensitive lands ordinance, adopted in 2023, aims to protect and mitigate sensitive lands, safeguard the health and safety of residents from geologic and other hazards, and minimize potential resource degradation. The ordinance applies to all property and development within Highland City, adds regulations to existing zoning requirements and defines important terms such as environmentally sensitive area, flood hazards, geologic hazards, steep slopes, and wetlands.

The ordinance requires applicants to provide a sensitive lands analysis for proposed developments and sets regulations for environmentally sensitive areas, including prohibited activities, boundary delineations, setbacks, runoff control, and protection of wildlife and persons.

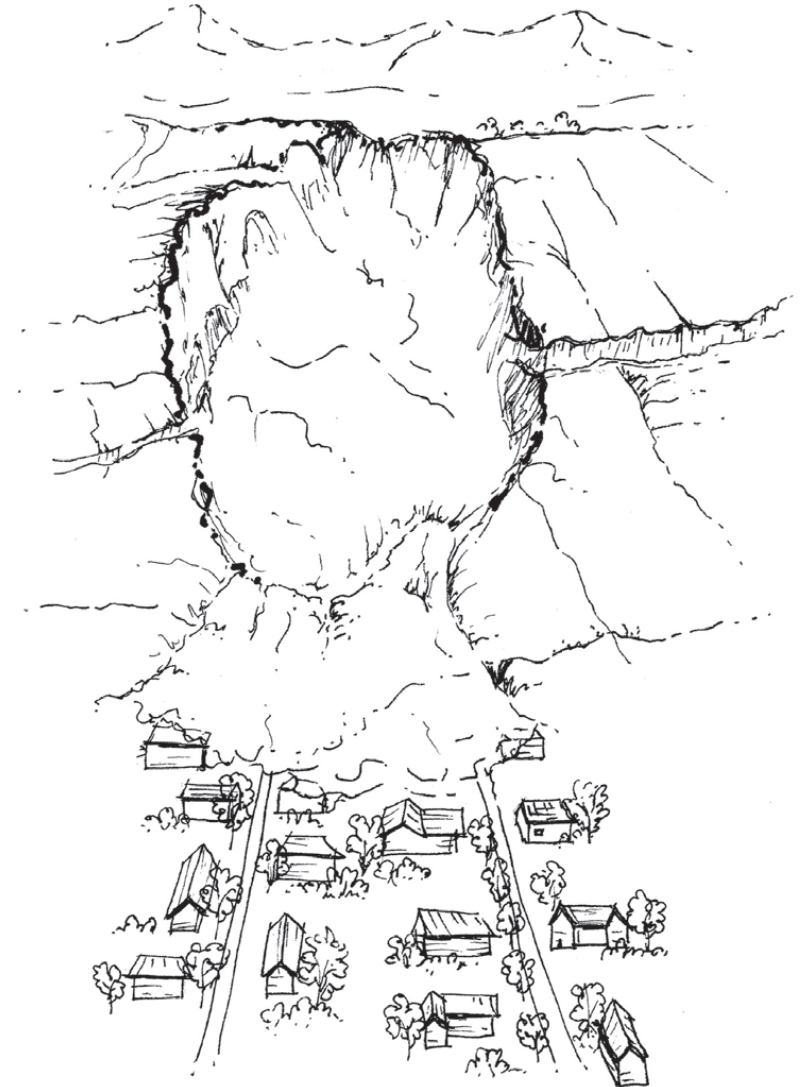
STEEP SLOPES

Steep slopes, defined as greater than 15% with development prohibited above 25%, are concentrated in foothills at canyon mouths and along stream corridors. These areas are prone to debris flows, rockfall, landslides, and soil slumping, which increase property and construction risk (**Figure 7.1**). Highland prohibits development in areas prone to landslides and other geologic hazards. However, a developer may submit a sensitive lands analysis, along with professional recommendations, to demonstrate that the proposed development will not pose a risk to health, safety, or property, and that identified hazards can be permanently mitigated or avoided.

SEISMIC ACTIVITY

Faults are breaks in the earth's crust where movement triggers earthquakes. Highland lies near the Wasatch Fault, Utah's most active fault, which can cause ground shaking, liquefaction, and infrastructure damage. Homes built before 1985 are especially vulnerable due to older building codes. Avoiding construction directly on faults and conducting site-specific investigations with appropriate setbacks reduces earthquake risk. The **Geologic Conditions Map** illustrates a general buffer of 250 feet on either side of known faults.

FIGURE 7.1 – LANDSLIDE ILLUSTRATION



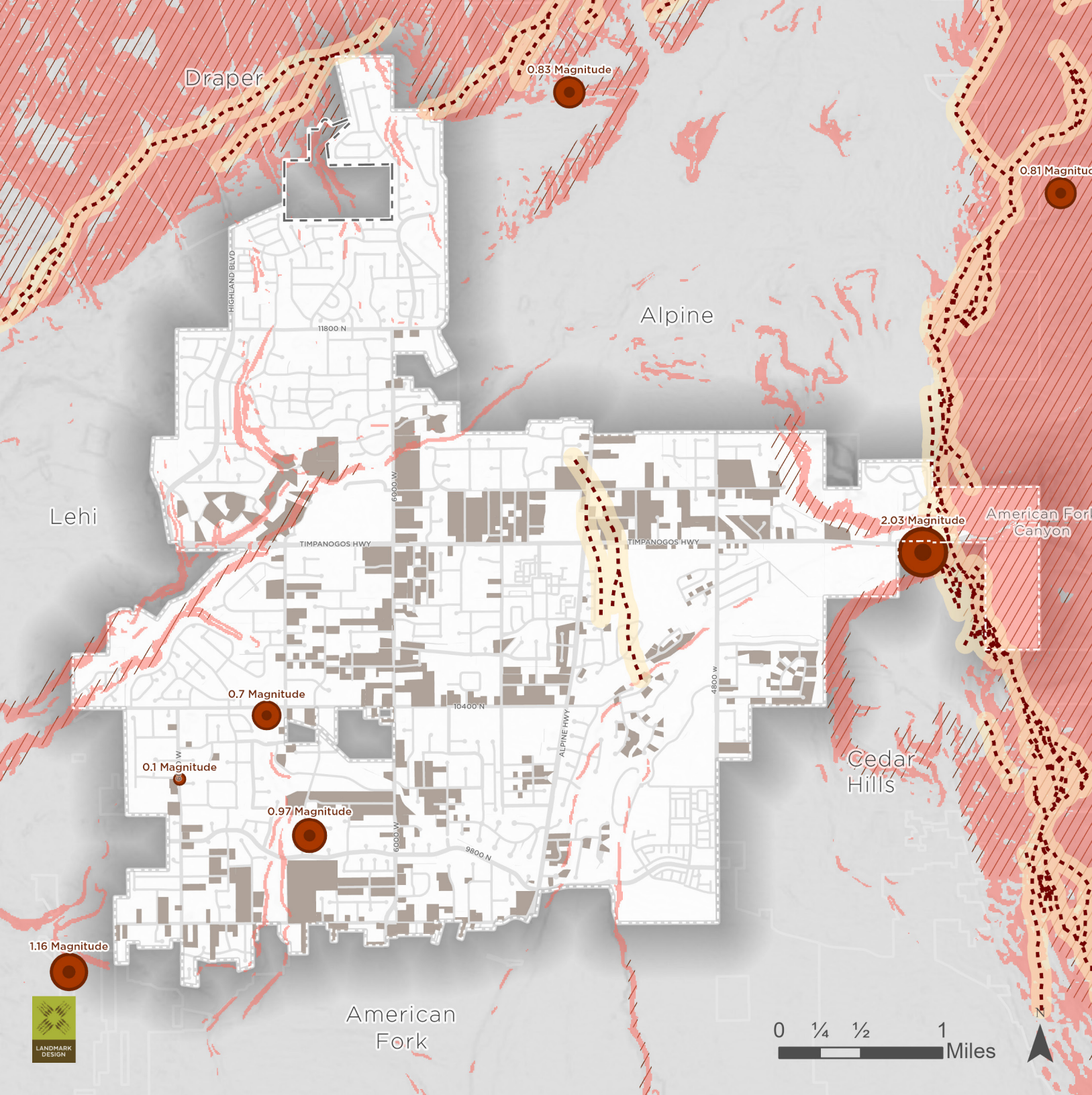
Steep slopes are especially vulnerable to material movement, including debris flow, rockfalls, slumping, collapsible soils, and landslides.



HIGHLAND CITY

Geologic Conditions

- Annexation Boundary
- Steep Slopes (<15%)
- Landslide Potential
- Earthquake Epicenters (1850 - 2016)
- Fault Line
- Fault 250' Buffer
- Likely Older Structures (built before 1985)



HYDROLOGIC CONDITIONS

A land area that drains into a common water source is a watershed. Healthy watersheds provide valuable services to communities including the supply and purification of clean water (see also **Chapter 5: Water Use & Preservation**). Hydrologically sensitive areas protect water quality and may include critical aquifer recharge areas, riparian and wetland vegetation, and streams and canals. Development can disrupt natural drainage patterns, increasing runoff, flooding, and property risk, especially near waterways such as Dry Creek and the American Fork River (see **Hydrologic Conditions Map**).

RIPARIAN ZONES & WETLANDS

Riparian zones and wetlands play a crucial role in water quality and biodiversity by filtering pollutants and recharging groundwater. These ecosystems serve as floodwater catchments and wildlife habitats, making their preservation essential due to their sensitivity to human disturbances. Wetlands, covering just 1% of Utah's landscape, are among the most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rainforests. Due to the scarcity of these critically productive systems, special emphasis is necessary for their management.

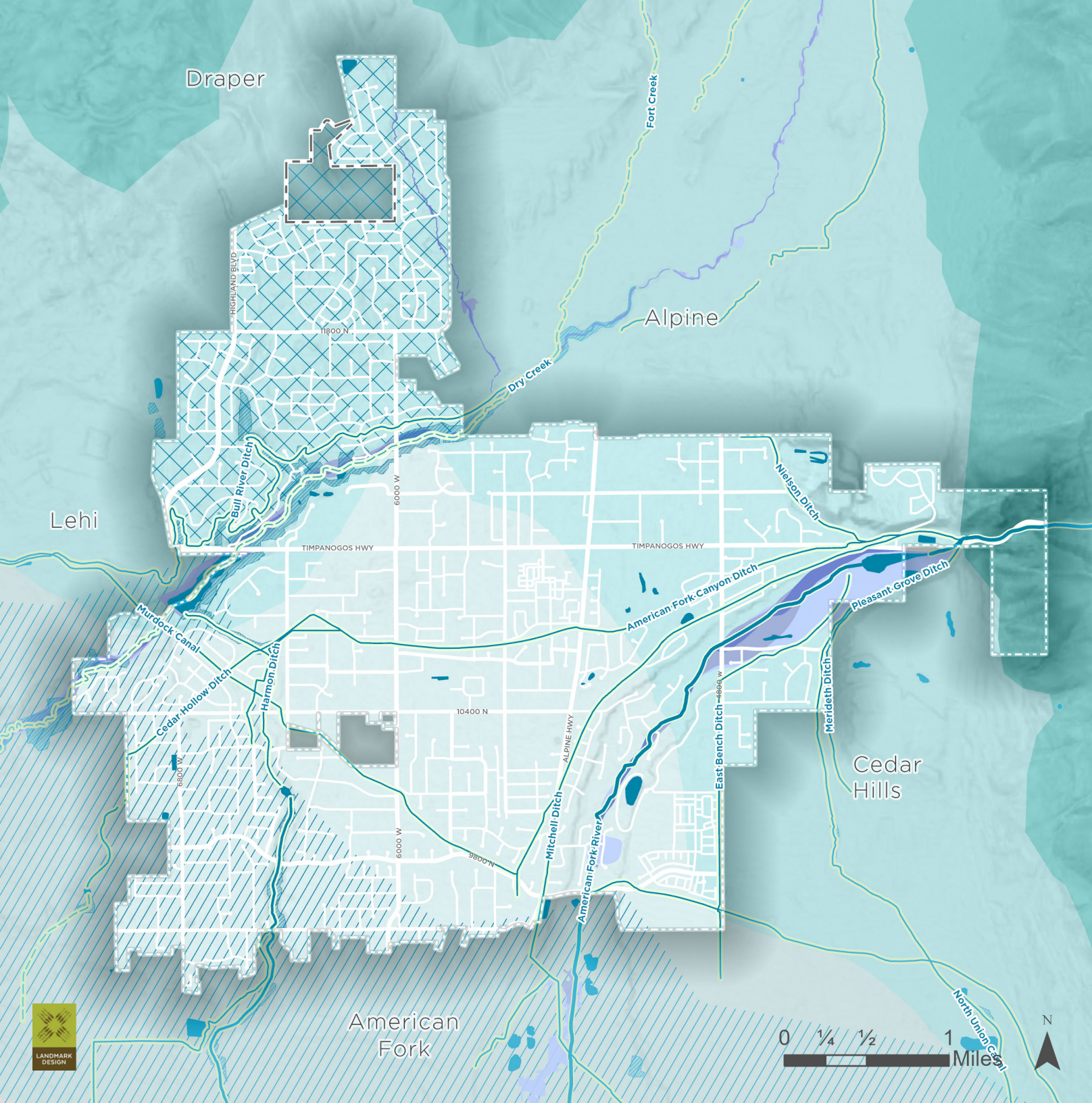
GROUNDWATER

Highland City depends on groundwater for a significant portion of its water supply, making its protection critical. The City sits above a relatively shallow water table, which limits the feasibility of constructing basements and contributes to liquefaction potential during earthquakes. City wells draw from the local aquifer, which is recharged through precipitation and surface water. Protecting and sustainably managing these groundwater resources is essential to ensure a reliable water supply. To reduce contamination risks, Highland has implemented ordinances that balance water demand with responsible management, including safeguarding wellhead areas and promoting sustainable practices such as xeriscaping.



Hydrologic Conditions

- Annexation Boundary
- Stream/River - Perennial
- Stream/River - Intermittent
- Canal/Ditch
- Stream/River/Canal 100' Buffer
- Riparian/Wetland
- Waterbody
- 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Regulatory Floodway
- Groundwater Within 30'
- Critical Runoff Area
- Bedrock Aquifer Recharge
- Primary Aquifer Recharge
- Secondary Aquifer Recharge



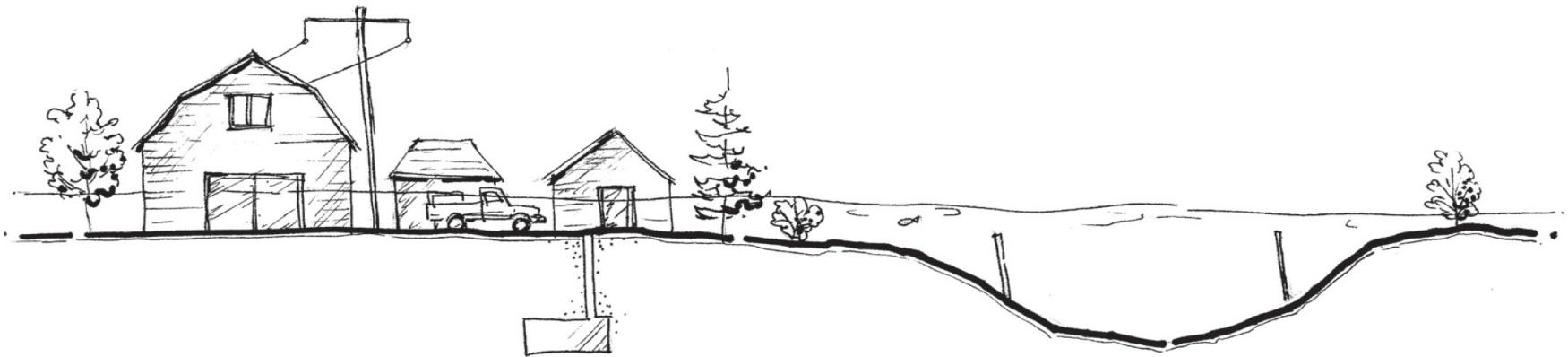
FLOODING, URBAN RUNOFF, & STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Floods can damage property and infrastructure, particularly in steep or clay-rich areas. The northern portion of Highland is a Critical Runoff Area, where soil conditions can increase flood and pollution risks during storms. FEMA flood maps guide development in flood-prone zones (**Figure 7.2**). Highland's Stormwater Management Program, supported by Low-Impact Development (LID) and green infrastructure, reduces downstream pollution and erosion. LID approaches may include bioretention cells, pervious paving, bioswales, infiltration basins, and constructed wetlands. These strategies can be evaluated on a project-by-project basis to protect water quality and property.



A bulb-out incorporating green infrastructure to manage stormwater and enhance the streetscape.

FIGURE 7.2 – FLOOD ZONE ILLUSTRATION



The appeal of natural waterways can drive development near riparian zones, often leading to construction in areas ill-suited for such activity.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

WILDFIRE RISK

Fire management involves strategies to control or influence wildland fires for resource protection and includes ecosystem restoration, community preparedness, and wildfire response. In Utah County's rural, fuel-heavy areas, wildfires are a natural ecological event but increasingly pose a threat to life and property as development expands into fire-prone regions. This challenge, especially in areas near canyons and foothills, necessitates coordinated efforts involving both ground and air firefighting resources, along with "firewise" practices such as defensible space, fire-resistant construction, and annual restrictions on fireworks in sensitive areas (see **Wildfire Risk Map**).

MICROCLIMATE WINDS

Strong canyon winds and occasional "microburst" events have caused considerable damage in the City, particularly to power infrastructure along SR-92. Likewise, snowstorms and harsh winter weather are endemic, particularly considering the unique setting of Highland. These challenging climate conditions must be considered in the design and review process, especially since climate change has intensified the frequency and severity of microburst events.

CRITICAL HABITAT

The *Utah Division of Wildlife Resources* has identified critical habitat for rare and high-interest species in Utah. In Highland City, eight species are noted: band-tailed pigeon, California quail, chukar partridge, mule deer, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, Rocky Mountain elk, ring-necked pheasant, and ruffed grouse. California quail and ring-necked pheasant habitat covers much of the city, while the others are mainly in the foothills near Traverse Ridge and American Fork Canyon. Key drainages, including rivers, streams, and wetlands, support migratory and wetland birds. Development should avoid encroaching on these areas. Important corridors to protect for wildlife, water quality, and recreation include Dry Creek, American Fork River, Mitchell Hollow, and Murdock Canal.

VEGETATION

The nearby Wasatch Mountain foothills provide a unique plant community in Highland City, supporting wildlife and contrasting with more urban areas. Natural and human changes can degrade this resource over time. Protecting it is important, as noxious non-native plants destroy native grasses and ground cover, causing erosion and the loss of wildlife food and habitat.

AIR QUALITY

The mountains and lakes in the area moderate the climate and contribute to frequent winter temperature inversions in Utah County. These inversions trap stagnant air and pollutants, causing cold, fog, icy roads, and prolonged air pollution. The haze is mainly from vehicle emissions and commercial and industrial activities linked to population growth. Sunlight struggles to penetrate the haze, worsening the inversions, which only break when a weather front brings fresh air and sunlight.

Highland has adopted an air pollution and fugitive dust ordinance that incorporates state regulations for open burns, providing an important foundation for local air quality management. However, the ordinance could be updated to reflect current best practices and allow for stronger enforcement. At the same time, Utah County and state agencies promote prescribed burns, forest improvement techniques, and other methods to reduce fire hazards while protecting air quality. These practices, guided by Utah Division of Environmental Quality permits, help minimize smoke impacts and reduce pollutant emissions through more efficient land management.



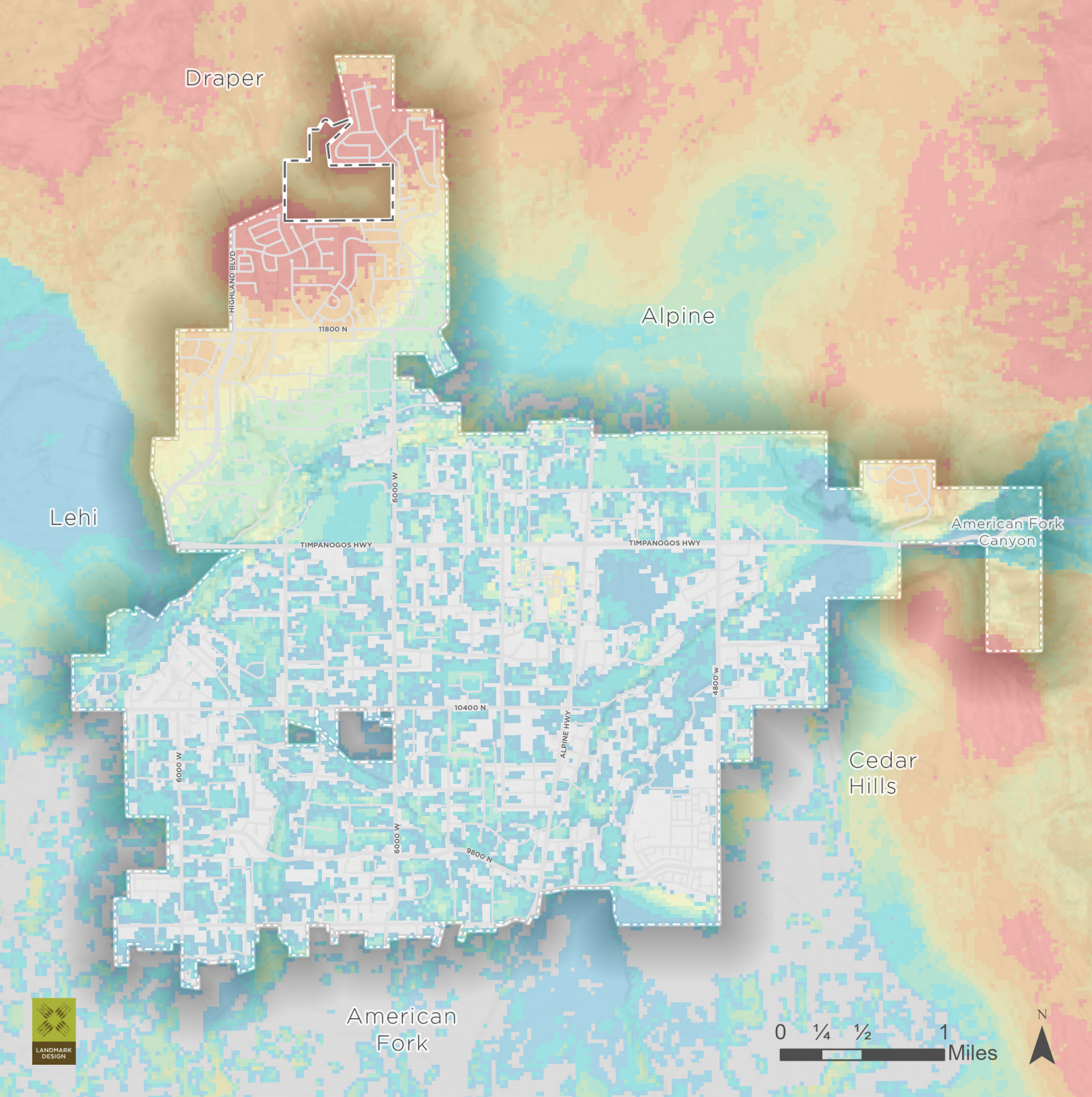
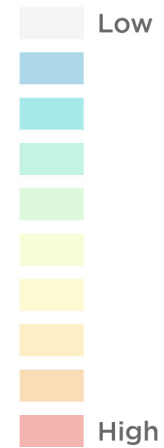
A NOTE ON DARK SKIES

Highland is the gateway to Timpanogos Cave National Monument, a certified Urban Night Sky Place known for preserving authentic nighttime skies. Despite surrounding light pollution, the City can protect its skies by exploring updates to standards that incorporate dark-sky requirements for public improvements, including dark-sky friendly lighting in City buildings and streetlights, and encouraging these standards in private development (see also **Chapter 2: Land Use & Placemaking**). Highland's Nuisances ordinance already limits nighttime light reflection onto adjacent properties, supporting efforts to maintain the area's natural night skies.



HIGHLAND CITY

Wildfire Risk



BUILDING RESILIENCY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

As Highland approaches build-out, much of the community's environmental setting and natural hazards have already been addressed. **Future sustainability in Highland can be understood as a practical approach to building long-term community resilience.** By selectively implementing targeted strategies, the City may strengthen its ability to adapt to future challenges, protect residents and property, and reduce costs over time. **These ideas are optional and meant to serve as inspiration or starting points, many of which align with goals and policies in other chapters.** These approaches demonstrate that sustainability is not just about protecting the environment—it is about protecting families, property, and using limited resources wisely. By choosing strategies that make sense locally, Highland can continue to grow as a resilient community where residents enjoy both security and quality of life for generations to come.

IDEAS & STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- **Land Use & Water Preservation:** Water is one of Highland's most valuable resources. Optional strategies may include appliance upgrades, leak repairs, more efficient irrigation, water-wise landscaping, or development policies that encourage conservation from the start. These measures complement ***Chapter 5: Water Use & Preservation***.
- **Disaster Preparedness:** Preparedness strengthens community resilience. Highland could pursue opportunities to coordinate with state programs, conduct drills or educational campaigns, and reinforce critical infrastructure to maintain essential services during floods, wildfires, or other hazards.
- **Air Mitigation:** Cleaner air benefits everyone. Highland could reduce emissions and support future mobility by upgrading municipal fleets to hybrid or electric vehicles, limiting vehicle idling, and providing EV charging stations at City facilities. Additionally, updating the air pollution and fugitive dust ordinance could enhance monitoring and enforcement, further protecting local air quality.

IDEAS & STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE (CONTINUED)

- **Stormwater & Low-Impact Development (LID):** Managing stormwater protects property and water quality. Optional LID measures for City properties could include permeable paving, bioswales, detention basins, or other techniques to reduce runoff and flood risk.
- **Durable, Efficient, & Healthy Buildings:** Durable, efficient building systems reduce long-term costs and improve indoor health. For example, a new construction or retrofit of the Community Center could serve as a model by using recycled or locally sourced materials, incorporating water- and energy-saving systems, and minimizing harmful chemicals (see also *Chapter 6: Parks, Open Space, Trails & Recreation*).
- **Responsible Site Development:** Connected, walkable neighborhoods with bicycle infrastructure can enhance resilience by supporting mobility options. City projects could model sustainable practices such as dark-sky friendly lighting, low-impact design, and water-wise landscaping.
- **Trees, Open Space, & Habitats:** Preserving trees, planting drought-tolerant species, and protecting riparian corridors help reduce erosion, flooding, and heat impacts while supporting property values and maintaining the open-space character residents value.
- **Partnering with Utilities to Conserve Resources:** Highland could work with utility providers to promote sustainability and resource conservation. Optional approaches could include exploring green waste or glass recycling programs with the City's waste provider and connecting residents to energy-efficiency programs, rebates, or incentives offered by electric and gas providers (see also *Chapter 8: Public Services & Facilities*).

GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Support resilient development practices and policies that protect people and property from natural hazards and emergencies.

- **Implementation 1.1:** Periodically review and, as appropriate, update the Sensitive Lands Ordinance or related development policies to reflect current best practices in geotechnical and environmental management. Clarify procedures for submitting and reviewing sensitive lands analyses to help residents and developers understand expectations for infill or redevelopment.
- **Implementation 1.2:** Explore opportunities to strengthen collaboration with regional and state agencies, such as the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the Utah Geological Survey, to increase awareness of programs, initiatives, and best practices that could support local preparedness.
- **Implementation 1.3:** In coordination with the Lone Peak Fire District or other emergency response organizations, consider exploring opportunities to develop a Highland-specific disaster response and preparedness plan. This plan could include public education campaigns, for example, promotion of “firewise” practices in areas near canyons and foothills, or guidance for flood preparedness in high risk areas.

Goal 2: Explore opportunities to further protect and enhance Highland’s natural ecosystems while encouraging sustainable practices.

- **Implementation 2.1:** Continue to consider the preservation of natural corridors such as Dry Creek and the American Fork River as part of long-term land-use planning to protect wildlife habitat, improve water quality, and reduce flood risk.
- **Implementation 2.2:** Explore opportunities to integrate low-impact development (LID) features on public properties, such as permeable paving, bioswales, and other green infrastructure techniques, to reduce stormwater runoff and protect water quality (see also **Chapters 5 & 6**).

- **Implementation 2.3:** Explore options to work with utility providers and community partners to promote resource conservation. Optional strategies may include green waste or glass recycling programs, energy-efficiency incentives for residents, or educational outreach on sustainable household practices (see also **Chapter 8: Public Services & Facilities**).
- **Implementation 2.4:** Consider options for municipal fleet improvements, such as hybrid or electric vehicles and charging infrastructure at City facilities, where practical.
- **Implementation 2.5:** Consider updating Highland's air pollution and fugitive dust ordinance to reflect current best practices, strengthen enforcement, and ensure alignment with state regulations for open burns.
- **Implementation 2.6:** Consider the integration of dark sky-friendly lighting (fully shielded fixtures with warm color temperatures) on public properties. Highland could also partner with Timpanogos Cave National Monument, a certified Urban Night Sky Place, to promote dark sky awareness and preservation efforts within the community (see also **Chapter 2: Land Use & Placemaking**).

This page intentionally left blank



CHAPTER 8

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Outlines Highland's vision for public services and facilities, focusing on its commitment to a safe, resilient, and connected community. Guided by resident feedback, the chapter highlights the importance of maintaining existing infrastructure and strategically allocating resources. It emphasizes how partnerships and fiscal prudence will help to ensure high-quality services for both current and future residents.

INTRODUCTION

Highland's quality of life depends on reliable, efficient, and resilient public services. From clean water and dependable utilities to public safety and community resources, these services form the foundation of residents' well-being. The City has historically relied on a combination of in-house services, regional partnerships, and private utility providers to meet community needs. This collaborative approach has allowed the City to maintain high levels of service while managing costs responsibly—an effective model that will continue into the future.

Residents want to see a continued focus on improving core services. The community has voiced strong support for better road maintenance, snow removal, and public safety, along with expanded recreation opportunities (see **Chapter 6: Parks, Open Space, Trails & Recreation**). This chapter highlights these priorities and outlines strategies for ensuring that Highland's services and facilities continue to meet both current and future community needs.

“ I am so glad the libraries have combined!
It's so much easier to get the books I
want.”



RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES ON PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Community feedback highlights the aspects of public services and facilities that matter most to residents, providing guidance for future planning and resource allocation. The following priorities reflect the community's input and help shape a vision for a safe, connected, and well-maintained Highland.

- **Reliable Utilities and Infrastructure:** Residents emphasized the need to maintain and improve existing infrastructure before expanding services. Frequent concerns included potholes, uneven roads, unsafe driving conditions, and snow removal.
- **Community Gathering Spaces:** Residents view the Highland Library, Community Center, and schools as vital hubs for connection, learning, and culture. There is strong interest in exploring options for a dedicated community gathering facility, as well as pursuing partnerships to provide spaces that meet community needs in a fiscally responsible way. Feedback highlights the importance of strengthening and maintaining these spaces to support events, programs, and everyday activities, ensuring they remain central gathering points for the community.
- **Public Safety & Emergency Services:** Many residents support first responders and recognize their essential role in community well-being. Feedback highlights opportunities to maintain high-quality public safety services while also exploring targeted improvements, such as enhanced traffic enforcement and improvements to ambulance services, to better meet resident needs.
- **Fiscal Prudence & Strategic Investment:** The community is interested in a fiscally responsible approach to public services. Feedback suggests a desire for the City to demonstrate prudence and sound judgment in its use of tax dollars, ensuring that funds are allocated to areas that provide the greatest value to the community. This includes thoughtful consideration of how fees and taxes are structured to be both effective and equitable.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Highland relies on a variety of public services and facilities to support daily operations and community needs. Key services include law enforcement, fire protection, utilities, and garbage collection, while major facilities include City Hall, police and fire stations, the library, and the Community Center. The following section summarizes the City's major services and facilities and describes potential future needs. Note that several topics also overlap with **Chapter 6: Chapter 6: Parks, Open Space, Trails & Recreation** and **Chapter 7: Environment and Sustainability**, with the sections complementing each other by addressing service provision, recreation strategies, and long-term community resilience.

EXISTING SERVICES & FACILITIES

CITY HALL

Located at 5400 Civic Center Drive, Highland City Hall serves as the administrative hub, housing multiple city departments. Built in 2008, the building is relatively new but limited in size and shares space with the City's library. As administrative and library needs grow, the facility may require expansion or repurposing in the future.

MUSEUM

The Highland Historical Society Museum, housed within the Community Center and certified by the Utah Division of Arts and Museums, preserves local history and enriches the city's cultural identity through exhibits and educational programs.



Highland City Hall currently share spaces with the library.

COMMUNITY CENTER

Located across from Heritage Park, the Highland Community Center provides reservable rooms and facilities for arts, recreation, and community programs. Recent improvements include expanded parking and a maintenance storage shed. While currently sufficient, the building may require updates to accommodate future programming needs.

LIBRARY

The Highland Library is a key community resource, valued for its programs that foster connection, learning, and community identity. With steady growth, current space is limited for certain programs. To address near-term needs, the Library has recently partnered with American Fork and Pleasant Grove libraries, allowing residents to access additional catalogs and pick up materials locally—a proposal supported by 67% of respondents in the 2024 citizen survey. Future expansion may be needed to keep pace with demand.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Police and fire services are provided through the Lone Peak Public Safety District, which serves both Highland and Alpine and is headquartered south of City Hall. The district's professional, full-time staff provide law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical care, burn permits, and planning services that enhance community safety and reduce wildfire risk.

Highland enjoys a relatively low crime and fire incident rate, but **demand should be monitored as the community grows, with potential future expansions in staffing, equipment, or facilities.**

CEMETERY

The Highland City Cemetery, located at 6200 W 11000 N, provides a community service as a place of remembrance and heritage. The 17-acre cemetery includes more than 10,000 plots and offers a variety of burial options, supported by interactive mapping and recordkeeping tools. Policies guide monument placement, decorations, and upkeep to ensure respectful, well-maintained grounds. Future cemetery expansion options may be considered as needed.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Highland Public Works Building, located at 4066 W 11000 N near the gravel pit, serves as the hub for the City's essential services. Public Works is critical to maintaining the quality of life residents often take for granted—from delivering clean drinking water and pressurized irrigation to managing sewer and stormwater systems, as well as maintaining roads. The staff works behind the scenes to ensure that Highland remains safe, functional, and attractive for all residents. As the City continues to grow, ongoing investment in facilities, equipment, and staffing will be important to sustain these vital services.

PARKS BUILDING

Highland's new Parks Building is located near the Community Center. It serves as the base of operations for the City's parks staff, supporting maintenance and management of Highland's parks system. The facility provides space for equipment storage and administrative functions, helping the City coordinate park operations efficiently.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Alpine School District owns and operates five public schools in Highland (three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school) to meet the K-12 educational needs of residents.

By 2028, the Alpine School District will reorganize into three new districts, with Highland joining the newly formed Aspen Peaks School District with Lehi, Alpine, Cedar Hills, American Fork, and a portion of Draper City. The City is expected to have sufficient school facilities for the near term, but continued coordination with the district will be necessary to address future growth. Many school facilities also provide recreational and cultural opportunities through City-district partnerships.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN HIGHLAND

- **Ridgeline Elementary** | K-6 | 6250 W 11800 N
- **Highland Elementary** | K-6 | 10865 N 6000 W
- **Freedom Elementary** | K-6 | 10326 N 6800 W
- **Mountain Ridge Junior High** | 7-9 | 5525 W 10400 N
- **Lone Peak High** | 10-12 | 10189 N 4800 W

STREETS & SIDEWALKS

Public roads are maintained by the City and the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT). Road construction and maintenance are currently underfunded and face challenges in keeping up with needs (see also **Chapter 3: Transportation**).

Highland also maintains an extensive network of trails and sidewalks, providing active transportation and recreational benefits. Construction and maintenance costs, along with network gaps, remain concerns addressed further in **Chapters 3 & 7**.



Well-maintained streets and sidewalks are crucial for both transportation and recreation.

WATER

Highland provides high-quality culinary water from five deep wells that require no treatment. To enhance the system's resilience to surface contamination, the City is constructing a chlorination facility as an emergency backup. In a parallel effort, Highland is metering its pressurized irrigation system to promote conservation, a project that is largely funded by federal and state grants and is expected to continue through 2025. (see **Chapter 5: Water Use and Preservation**).



In line with state legislation requiring irrigation metering by 2030, Highland is metering its pressurized irrigation system to promote conservation. The project is largely funded by federal and state grants.

SEWER

Sanitary sewer service is administered under the Timpanogos Special Service District, with treatment at the Timpanogos Wastewater Treatment Facility southwest of the City. Infrastructure is generally in good condition, though upgrades may be required to accommodate future growth.



Timpanogos SSD administers Highland's sanitary sewer service.

GARBAGE COLLECTION

Residential and commercial trash and recycling services are contracted through Waste Management Inc., with additional disposal available at the Utah County transfer station in Lindon.

OTHER UTILITIES

Communications, electricity, and natural gas are provided by private utility companies.



Trash and recycling services are provided by Waste Management Inc., with additional disposal options at the Utah County transfer station.

FUTURE VISION & RECOMMENDATIONS

As Highland continues to mature, the City's vision for public services is one of resiliency, adaptability, and community connection. Meeting future needs will require both ongoing stewardship of existing infrastructure and thoughtful investment in new facilities. Regional partnerships, both intergovernmental and public-private, will continue to be the City's strongest tool for delivering high-quality services while maintaining fiscal responsibility

BUILDING ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

UTILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Highland's culinary water system is one of its most important assets, providing residents with high-quality water from deep wells. While treatment has not historically been required, the City is constructing an emergency chlorination facility to protect public health in the event of contamination. Looking ahead, the City will maintain this facility in a state of readiness and continue to monitor potential vulnerabilities. A key opportunity for conservation and efficiency is the effort to meter pressurized irrigation by 2030, a move supported by both state law and Highland's own conservation goals.

Residents have voiced significant concerns about road maintenance and snow removal. Acknowledging this feedback, the City must adapt its funding strategies to sustain safe and reliable streets, especially as the Transportation Utility Fund sunsets in 2028. Across all utilities and infrastructure, Highland will follow and update departmental strategic plans to ensure timely upgrades, maintenance, and the efficient delivery of services that directly address residents' concerns.

COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

The Highland Library will continue to serve as a focal point of the community, serving as a source of education, enrichment, and social connection. The library should continue to expand its programming and strengthen partnerships with nearby cities to broaden resident access to shared resources. While long-term growth may require expanded or relocated facilities, the City can meet short-term needs by utilizing other City-owned spaces—such as the Community Center, City Hall, or parks—to host programs and events, directly responding to the community's desire for gathering spaces.

The existing Community Center could benefit from updates and improvements. The City can explore opportunities to renovate and expand the building or, alternatively, develop a new facility east of City Hall optimized for hosting events, classes, workshops, and performances.

For broader recreational needs, a feasibility study should be conducted to evaluate regional partnerships, special service districts, or public-private ventures to determine whether a recreation center could be sustainably pursued, or if access to existing facilities in neighboring communities could be expanded. The city can also continue to collaborate with Alpine School District to maximize the joint use of school facilities for recreation and cultural programming.



The Highland Library will continue to serve as a focal point of the community, serving as a source of education, enrichment, and social connection.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Lone Peak Public Safety District represents one of Highland's most important partnerships, providing a cost-effective and professional level of protection. The City will maintain and enhance this partnership as Highland grows, recognizing the community's strong support for first responders. Highland and the Lone Peak Public Safety District partner together to provide adequate facilities and well-equipped and trained staff. The City will monitor call volumes, incident trends, and resident needs to anticipate future public safety needs.

The City should continue to follow and update public safety strategic plans to ensure excellence, preparedness, and adaptability in the face of changing community needs, including addressing specific resident feedback on issues like traffic enforcement and other service details.

SUSTAINABILITY & RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Some residents have expressed interest in expanding options for waste diversion, particularly green waste and glass recycling. Working with the City's waste collection provider, the City could explore the feasibility of adding these services as an option for residents. This may include the provision of a glass recycling site on public property or coordination for other collection events. Beyond waste, the City can promote the wise use of natural resources by connecting residents to energy efficiency opportunities, helping households reduce costs while contributing to the City's long-term sustainability goals. Sustainability goals and implementation strategies are found in **Chapter 7: Environment & Sustainability**.



Residents have expressed interest in expanding options for waste diversion, particularly green waste and glass recycling

GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Ensure reliable and resilient utility services and infrastructure.

- **Implementation 1.1:** Complete the City’s emergency chlorination facility and maintain readiness in the event of water contamination.
- **Implementation 1.2:** Monitor and update road maintenance programs, including adjustments after the Transportation Utility Fund sunsets in 2028, to maintain safe, functional streets and sidewalks.
- **Implementation 1.3:** Maintain, update, and follow the strategic plans of the City’s public works and utility departments to ensure long-term facility and infrastructure upgrades, operational efficiency, and service reliability.
- **Implementation 1.4:** Consider adopting emergency response plans focused on City utilities and infrastructure, and provide training for staff and residents to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters and other emergencies (see also *Chapter 7: Environment & Sustainability*).

Goal 2: Explore options to strengthen Highland’s community institutions.

- **Implementation 2.1:** Expand library programming, community outreach, and partnerships—including joint access to regional library catalogs—and maintain, update, and follow the library’s strategic plan to ensure ongoing relevance, sustainability, and responsiveness to community needs.
- **Implementation 2.2:** Identify long-term opportunities for library expansion or relocation to meet growing community needs and maximize the use of other City facilities for near-term programming.
- **Implementation 2.3:** Explore the use of City-owned land east of City Hall as a potential location for a new community center offering multi-purpose programming for events, workshops, and arts and cultural activities.

- **Implementation 2.4:** Conduct a feasibility study for regional recreation center partnerships or service districts, including potential public-private collaborations.
- **Implementation 2.6:** Coordinate with Alpine School District/Aspen Peaks School District to expand joint use of school facilities for community recreation, arts, and cultural programming.

Goal 3: Maintain strong public safety and emergency services.

- **Implementation 3.1:** Continue working with the City's fire, emergency medical, and law enforcement providers to continue providing professional, community-focused, cost-effective public safety services.
- **Implementation 3.2:** Monitor service demands as the City grows and determine options for expanding staffing, equipment, or facilities as needed to maintain safety and responsiveness.
- **Implementation 3.3:** Maintain, update, and follow public safety department strategic plans to ensure excellence, preparedness, and adaptability to changing community needs.

Goal 4: Promote fiscal responsibility and strategic investment in public services.

- **Implementation 4.1:** Ensure City budgets and funding decisions prioritize maintenance of existing infrastructure, high-demand services, and programs that deliver measurable community value.
- **Implementation 4.2:** Explore innovative partnerships—intergovernmental, public-private, or regional—to leverage resources while maintaining quality service delivery.
- **Implementation 4.3:** Continue to assess fees, taxes, and service charges regularly to ensure they are equitable, effective, and aligned with community priorities.