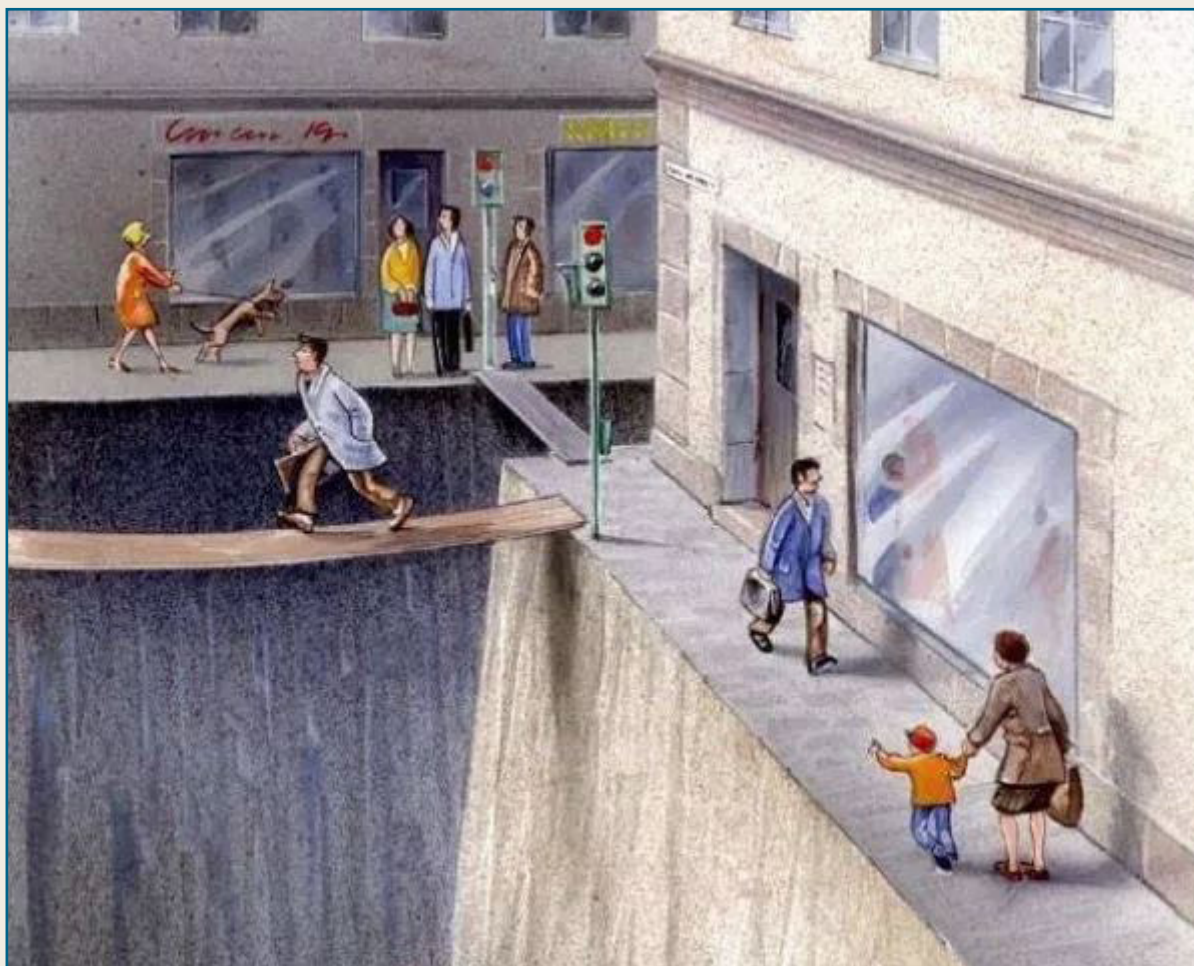


# Cache

## Planning News

June 2020



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# Streets for People

Nationwide, communities are closing roads to vehicles, and opening them to people. We hope the trend will stick and spread.

One result of people around the nation staying home during the Covid-19 pandemic is roads devoid of traffic and cars. Many have taken advantage of the extra time at home to go on walks and bike rides, increasing the number of pedestrians on the streets. This has led some communities, including Salt Lake City to temporarily close some streets to traffic, giving them back to the people, these efforts have largely been greeted by populations, and some communities are considering making the changes permanent.

The strategies communities are taking are varied, reflecting the different needs of various communities and once again reminding us that there isn't and can't be a "one-size fits all solution." Salt Lake City is opening some streets for community recreation, limiting auto traffic to local traffic only. Oakland is restricting vehicles on 10% of the city's streets, placing signs and cones on streets but allowing them to remain open to traffic (but discouraging traffic by slowing travel speeds down) and encouraging automobiles to use other routes while pedestrians have flocked to the newly opened streets. Some are taking stronger stances like Seattle which is closing 20 miles of streets to cars. Charlotte has opened up "shared streets" inviting the public to bike, walk, and run on designated streets.

Opening roads to pedestrians and cyclists and closing them to through traffic (and/or slowing down automobiles to 10 MPH) has resulted in large numbers of pedestrians and cyclists using the infrastructure formerly devoted to cars. Much like the field of dreams, building (or re-appropriating) infrastructure for people brings them out of their cars in droves, and the speed and numbers that communities have seen come out to use pedestrian friendly streets suggests that there is a pent up demand for active infrastructure. In fact these changes have proven so popular that some cities like Seattle have decided to make some of the changes permanent even after the pandemic is over.

These efforts are the first step toward reversing the policies that have caused us to devote 30-40% of our communities to the driving and parking of automobiles at the expense of pedestrians, cyclists, children and families. When we tell our friends and family why we love the places we live it is because of the quality of life, the beauty of the open spaces, and the built environment of the communities where we gather together, not the availability of parking or the brand new fast-food chain with a drive-through window. This isn't to say the automobile, parking, and automobile infrastructure don't have a place in our communities and way of life, only that we should be reprioritizing our development so that the needs of people are given priority over the automobile.

## Good for Business

Not only are walkable streets (those that are built with people in mind) more interesting, and comfortable, they are more economically productive than auto oriented streets, in fact they are the **MOST** economically productive developments, Urban3 has mapped the tax productivity, that is how much tax revenue is produced compared to public costs per acre, for communities large and small all across the nation, and have consistently found that walkable places vastly outperform auto-oriented development (check out their website for great examples <http://www.urban-three.com/>). Not only are Walkable streets more productive, but they are cheaper to build, and maintain, this is because the wear and tear caused by pedestrians and bikes are nothing compared to cars and trucks.

## Name The General Plan

PROJECT TITLE GOES HERE



PROJECT TAGLINE WOULD GO HERE.

Cache County Planning has begun the process of undertaking a comprehensive General Plan re-write. In addition to this major planning effort we are also undertaking:

- An Urban Rural Areas Assessment and Cost of Services Plan
- Regional Collaboration Plan

As this is a countywide plan participation from all communities of the valley are paramount to the success of the project, and many public hearings and engagement meetings will be held over the next 18 months as we undertake this process.

The first step is to finalize the branding of the project so that it speaks to the purpose and vision of the project and reflects the nature of the county. To help us with this we invite you to participate in our branding survey by visiting:

<https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5551951/Cache-County-Plan-Branding-Follow-up>

Here you can chose between existing branding slogans, or enter your own for consideration.

We look forward to getting your feedback, and working closely with you on these exciting projects in the months to come.

# Covid and Density

## ...and the role Planning plays in public health

**O**n April 29th and April 22nd letters to the editor of the [Herald Journal](#) both question Logan City's proposal to introduce higher density housing in downtown on the Emporium Block. The conventional wisdom, both articles cited, is that in the time of Covid-19, and social distancing it's not only a bad idea, but unsafe to build housing in a more dense development pattern. The articles go on to claim that Cache Valley has been spared the worst of the virus because of our rural nature.

As the vision from "Envision Cache Valley" calls for: Growth within existing towns, reducing the miles traveled and spent in cars, increasing housing and transportation options. (In short increasing the density in our built environments to protect open spaces in the rural portions of the county) it begs the question of if the adopted vision for the cities, towns, and the other rural parts of the valley can survive in the age of quarantine. To test this I decided to look into the numbers and see if the conventional wisdom is correct that density isn't sustainable in the face of global pandemics.

As seen on the table below, it is safe to assume that the main culprit in the spread of COVID is related to something other than population or density. These numbers show Seoul South Korea, whose population is 3 times that of Utah's with a population density nearly double that of New York City with one of the lowest death and infection rates in the world, while rural Randolph Georgia has an infection and death rate higher than New York City. This data leads me to believe that the planning decisions that we make as communities should reflect the hard work we have put into our visioning, land use, and long range plans. These are and remain our guiding documents, and best represent the will of the public as they incorporated public engagement and participation, and not be hastily made over reactions made out of fear of the unknown. Public health decisions are better left to Health and Public Officials.

Location	New York City	Seoul, South Korea	Utah	Cache County	Randolph County Georgia
<b>Population</b>	8.339 Million	9.776 Million	3.206 Million	128,289	6,833
<b>Population Density</b>	26,403 / Square Mile	42,000 / Square Mile	33.6 / Square Mile	95 / Square Mile	18 / Square Mile
<b>First COVID - 19 Case</b>	March 1st 2020	January 20th 2020	March 5th 2020	March 18th 2020	March 21st 2020
<b>COVID - 19 Cases</b>	199,000	738	8,260	77	169
<b>COVID - 19 Deaths</b>	16,410	4	97	1	21
<b>Infection Rate</b>	1 in 41.9	1 in 13,246	1 in 388	1 in 1,666	1 in 40.43
<b>Death Rate</b>	1 in 508	1 in 2,444,000	1 in 33051	1 in 128,289	1 in 325

\* Stats of May 26th 2020

### Planning For Health

While density and development patterns might not be the best indicators of if communities are healthy and safe, as planners and policy makers in your community you do have the ability to greatly enhance the health of your communities through planning. Below we'll discuss some topics that are able to be addressed by planning to enhance the health and wellbeing of our communities:

**Promotion of Active Living:** by addressing active living and adopting policies that support active transportation and recreation we are able give our residents choice when it comes to transportation, increase the safety and accessibility of our communities for those who are unable to transport via automobile, and give residents an opportunity to get active, reducing the risk of obesity and heart disease.

**Emergency Preparedness:** Planning documents should consider natural and human caused disasters such as flooding and fires, escape routes, and emergency response times. Infectious Diseases including how to provide basic services to those in need.

**Environmental Health:** Planning policies can address air quality, water quality, protecting green and open spaces, and promote redevelopment of brownfield sites.

**Other health topics:** Access to quality food and water, access to health services, Open Space, Dark skies, high quality housing, are all health topics that can and should be addressed by local planning efforts to strengthen our communities.

# Main Street Assessment

## Using the “Sandwich Method”

**A**s walking gains a newfound respect and popularity now may be the time to conduct a Main Street Assessment using what is known as “The Sandwich Method”

According to the Rural Planning Group of Utah the “Main Street Sandwich Method” is a rural-tailored evaluation process which breaks down Main Street into five segments. Each segment is evaluated through a walking tour of the street while using various evaluation methods. This method helps community leaders ascertain their Main Street’s “flavor”, or unique positive and negative aspects. It includes a selection of methods to approach analysis from various entry points.

This process is intended to help those not otherwise familiar with Planning or main street design understand and critique their town’s main street. This may be town staff, elected officials, or interested citizens. The resulting analysis helps identify opportunities for improvement and start moving towards solutions.

Due to the nature of the Assessment it is ideal for planning commission meetings, and involving the public as it happens outside, and is easily able to be done while maintaining social distancing.

### Sandwich Method?

This method visions Main Street (or any other important street that you wish to assess) as a sandwich, bookended by “Gateways” a transition area from the gateway to the core, and another transition from the core back to the gateway

“Gateways” are the areas that signal that you have arrived or are leaving town. They holder main street a sense of arrival and departure.

“Transition Areas” are the parts of town between a gateway and the core. These should provide clear way find to important destinations.

“The Core” The core or downtown is a destination. A good core provides experiences, activates, and is an inviting place to be.

### Getting Started

Conducting a successful street assessment requires being prepared and some pre-planning. In preparing to take the assessment it is suggested that you have the following items available to you:

A printed map of Main Street (or the street you plan to assess) pencils, pens, colored markers, clipboard, measuring tape, camera or smartphone, visible clothing, comfortable walk shoes

Having all of the proper gear, the Rural Planning Group recommends taking the following 4 actions before undertaking your assessment:

Define your purpose - Who is supporting the assessment, what is the goal, how will you use the information, will it be the only assessment or one of many?

Identify who should be involved - List and invite key stakeholders, what do they need to know to engage in the assessment? Who might help you engage with stakeholders and supporters?

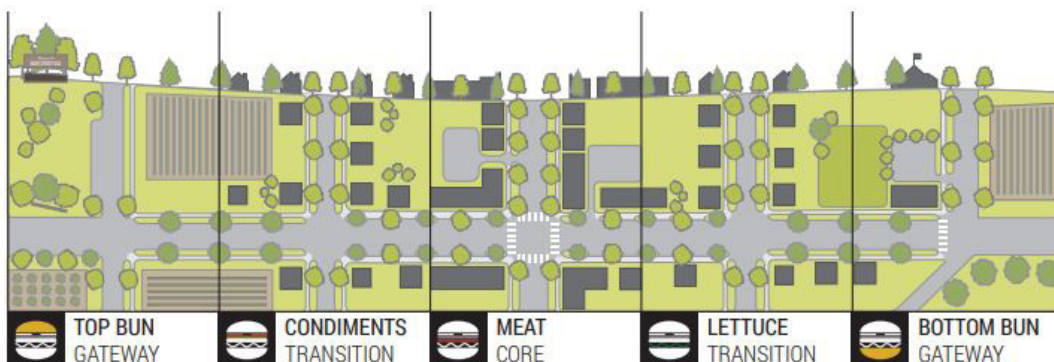
Design and prepare for the assessment - Prepare a map of Main Street, designate where you will begin and end, mark specific areas or issues to highlight, review general plan and land use code relevant to Main Street, and walk the route beforehand and make sure there are no safety concerns that need to be addressed before conducting the assessment.

Get the word out - notify and remind stakeholders, notify the public, gather maps and materials.

In the end take advantage of this period of time, and your nightly walks to get to know your main street and to envision how you can improve it for generations to come.

The complete “Main Street Sandwich Method” guide from the Utah Rural Planning Groups is available online at:

<http://www.ruralplanning.org/assets/main-street-audit-tool-web.pdf>



# Compliance Column

## The three roles of Planning

If you've attended a Planning Commission, or City Council meeting you've no doubt heard someone ask what the role of the body is? It's a good question, and in fact one that likely has different answers depending when it is being asked, and what action is being reviewed.

We've learned in Civics 101 that there are three branches of the Government, and they have overlapping powers, keeping each other in check through a system of checks and balances. It's easy to see this in action at the state and federal level, we can even see it fairly easy at the local level, but when it comes to planning it can be confusing because one body can exercise all three powers. In this column we will discuss the three planning roles and when you, the Planning Commission, and the City Council may be acting in one of them.

### Definitions

Before moving forward with the three roles we'll define some terms that will come up later:

- Land Use Authority: The person, board, commission, agency, or other body designated by the local legislative body to act upon a land use application
- Land Use Ordinance: A Planning, zoning, development, or subdivision ordinance of a municipality DOES NOT include the General Plan
- Land Use Application: An application required by a municipalities land use ordinance
- Appeal Authority: Person, board, commission, agency, or other body designated by ordinance to decide an appeal of a decision of a land use application, or a variance request. May not be the individual, board, commission, or body that made the original decision.

With those basic definitions down lets take a look at the three roles of planning:

### Legislative Role

When adopting Ordinances, General Plans, and processing Rezone applications you are engaging in the **Legislative** planning role. This is typically the domain of the City Council, however, Planning Commissions are involved with drafting of General Plans, and may be asked to hold public hearings for ordinances and rezones, and other land use activities. Examples of Legislative land use decisions include:

- Adoption of General Plan and General Plan Amendments
- Adopting Land Use Regulations
- Considering the Rezoning of property

Legislative actions give land use authorities

broad discretion when making decisions this means public comments may be used in the decision making process.

### Administrative Role

When considering development applications such as Subdivision Requests, Conditional Use Permits, and Building Permits you are engaging in the **Administrative** planning role. This role is typically fulfilled by a Planning Commission or staff, but can be the City Council.

It's important to remember when acting in an administrative capacity a body does not seek to determine if a use/proposal is good or bad, it's only concern is if it complies with existing ordinances, as such these decisions are NOT subjective. Public comments and concerns are relevant only to the extent they speak to issues of compliance with the existing law or code. Examples of these actions include:

- Site Plan Review
- Subdivision Review
- Preliminary and Final Plats
- Conditional Use Permits
- Building Permits

### Quasi-Judicial

If it is believed that a land use authority acted inappropriately and if that decision is appealed, or if a variance to code is sought you may find yourself acting in the Quasi-Judicial planning role.

A land use authority may be an appeal authority, only if they have been granted appeal authority (by ordinance), and if they were not the original approval authority. E.G. If a City Council is the approval authority for a rezone, the appeal authority must be a different body or individual.

The most likely cases where one might find themselves acting as a Quasi-Judicial role would be in considering an application for a variance. Quasi-Judicial hearings run like a court, including allowing for witnesses. In the case of Variances, state law dictates when a variance may be granted, if a proposal doesn't narrowly conform to 5 criteria it's illegal to grant a variance.

If you're community needs you to act in a quasi-judicial role contact CPDO and/or the State Ombudsman for training.