

# Introduction



## OVERVIEW

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It's been said that as the Mormon pioneers moved westward Brigham Young was looking for country that no one else wanted. In the dry and desolate desert of the Salt Lake Valley, he apparently found what he was looking for. Jim Bridger is claimed to have offered \$1000 to anyone who could grow a bushel of corn in the valley. (Wallace Stegner, Mormon Country) While it was a barren valley, within a short time it provided for the needs of thousands of pioneers.

The early pioneers did not arrive unprepared. Settlement patterns had previously been devised and within a few days of first arriving a planning commission was established to implement those plans. Those initial developments became essential to their survival. Beyond the practical purposes of survival, they understood that development patterns would have important social, civic, financial, and environmental impacts. Sound planning practices would positively influence their future as well as the future of this valley.

The tradition of community planning and the effects of those development patterns



continues today. The purpose of this General Plan is to build upon this tradition by providing a vision and a framework to guide development for a better future for South Jordan than would otherwise be possible. While the challenges may be different than they were in the mid 1800's in this valley, sound planning will continue to enrich lives by providing social, economic, and environmental advantages.

## GENERAL PLAN

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The state of Utah is among many states requiring that "each municipality shall prepare and adopt a comprehensive long-range general plan." (Utah Code 10-9a-

401) By doing so the state is consistent with it's long history of planning and ensures greater coordination and uniformity in the planning process throughout the

state. The state's purpose is to benefit the state, municipality, residents, and businesses by the following:

- Provide for the health, safety, and welfare
- Promote prosperity
- Improve morals, peace and good order
- Improve comfort and convenience
- Improve aesthetics
- Protect the tax base
- Secure economy in governmental expenditures
- Foster the state's agricultural and other industries
- Protect urban and nonurban development
- Protect and ensure access to sunlight for solar devices
- Provide fundamental fairness in land use regulation
- Protect property values  
(Utah Code 10-9a-102)

The general plan is required to contain land use and transportation elements. It is also recommended to include environmental, public services/facilities, redevelopment, conservation, and economic elements, as well as "any other element the municipality considers appropriate." (Utah Code 10-9a-403) The wording and requirements of the state code also illustrates the state's concern for affordable housing, the environment, alternative modes of transportation, land use and transportation integration, and economic prosperity.

A general plan is advisory and provides a direction to reach the municipality's vision. The state grants the authority needed by the municipality to carry out the purposes of the general plan through ordinances, resolutions, rules, restrictive covenants, easements, and "other forms of land use controls and development agreements that they consider necessary or appropriate for the use and development of land within the municipality." (10-9a-102-2)

## PROFILE

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### History

The South Jordan area was among the early settlements in the Salt Lake Valley. In 1859, Alexander and Catherine Beckstead moved their family to the area currently known as South Jordan (about 15 miles south of Salt Lake City). They purchased land between 9000 south and 12500 south and between the Jordan River to 1300 west from George A. Smith. They built a "dug-out" home in the bluffs along the west banks of the Jordan River and set about irrigating the land for farming, portions of



the main ditch is still in use today. Many families soon followed the Becksteads to the area, however by 1960 the population had grown to a mere 1354 individuals.

Beginning in 1960, the City's population would double or nearly double every decade through the present day. South Jordan has been among the fastest growing cities in Utah over the last few decades. Even with the tremendous growth, the City could still be considered an agricultural community well into the 1990's.

**South Jordan timeline:**

- 1859** – Settled by the Becksteads
- 1863** – LDS Church created the South Jordan Branch, giving the area its name
- 1876** – South Jordan Canal completed
- 1894** – Jordan Mercantile opened
- 1895** – Faun Flour Mill built
- 1914** – Working water, electrical systems, and an Interurban railroad (the Red Heifer) completed
- 1931** – Utah Lake Canal completed
- 1935** – South Jordan became an incorporated city
- 1974** – Introduction of city-wide sewer system
- 1975** – Bingham High School moved to current building
- 1981** – Completion of the Jordan River LDS Temple
- 2003** – Hindu Temple completed, Work begins on the Daybreak Subdivision
- 2009** – City's Sesquicentennial Celebration, Oquirrh Mountain LDS Temple Completed

**Growth By Decade, 1960-2000**

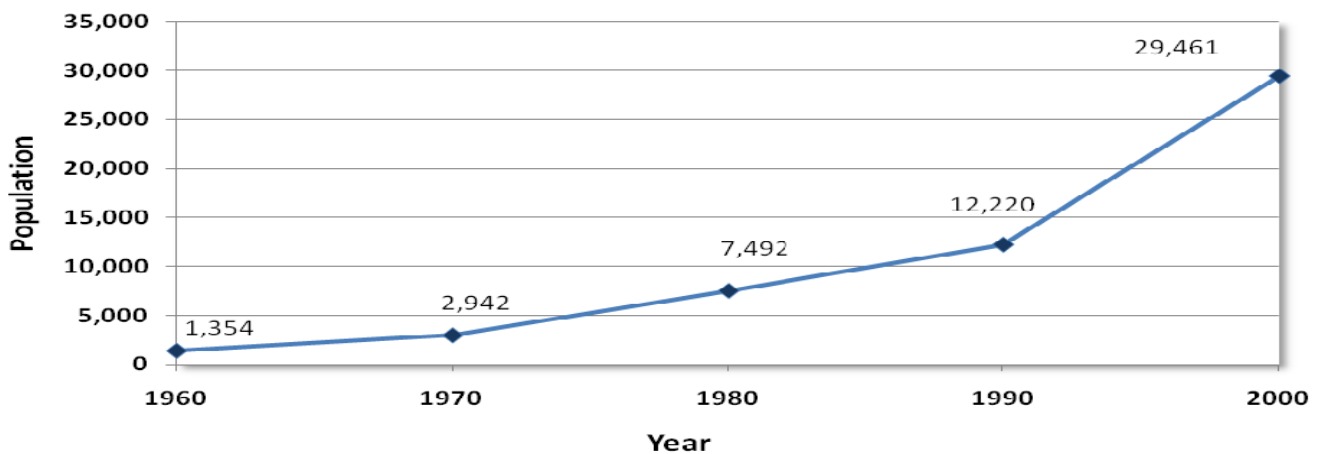
Decade	% Growth
1960-1970	117%
1970-1980	155%
1980-1990	63%
1990-2000	141%
<b>Average</b>	<b>119%</b>

**Today**

South Jordan continues to provide a 'small town' feel in a growing urban environment. As of July 1, 2009, its population had grown to 54,309. Many parcels are still farmed and many of those have been farmed since the City was settled. Even more parcels retain rights to large animals and South Jordan is home to the Salt Lake County Equestrian Park. That history continues to shape its character, contributing to South Jordan's growth, and remains an important aspect of life to many residents.



## South Jordan's Population By Year 1960 - 2000



Source: US Census Bureau

**Population.** The majority population (distinguished by the US Census bureau as white, not of Hispanic descent) accounted for 94% of the population at the time of the 2000 Census. The remaining population is either of Hispanic origin or of a minority race. The Hispanic population grew by 300% from 1990 to 2000, doubling its share of the population from 2% to 4%. This follows a national trend of an increasing minority population, specifically Hispanic.

The median age was 25 in 2000. This is somewhat deceiving as that age group is among the smallest by 5-year age group. South Jordan is largely comprised of middle-aged families with teenage children. The age structure is likely a function of the housing stock, largely higher valued homes and fewer housing units available to younger families, singles and the elderly. The national median age is 35. This also happens to be the largest 5-year age group (35-39).

The most recent census data (ACS 2006-

2008), reveals that that the increase in the Hispanic population is continuing. It also reflects more diversity in the population age structure as the City has added housing units more compatible with young families, singles, and elderly. (see Population Pyramids).

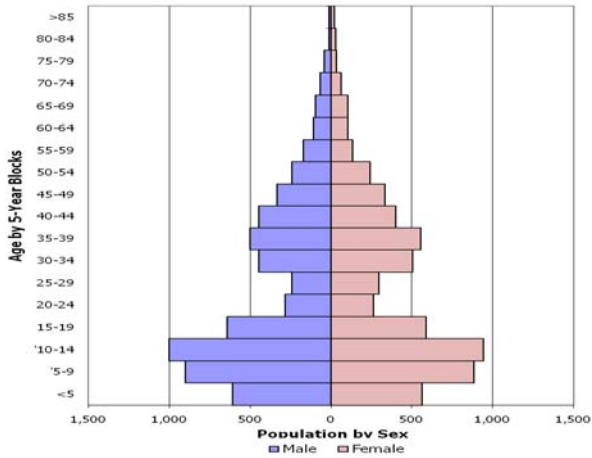
The estimated population for January 1, 2010 was 54,830.

**Housing.** South Jordan is known as a quality residential community. Many of the farms that lined the canals west of the Jordan River have been parceled and re-parceled into rural residential (<1.8 units/acre) and low density (1.8-3 units/acre) single-family neighborhoods. These neighborhoods have provided quality housing and established the "semi-rural residential/small town" feel and character the many people enjoy about South Jordan.

More recently the city has established a base of additional housing types. Multiple condo, apartment, and townhome developments have been approved and developed. The largest diversion from the

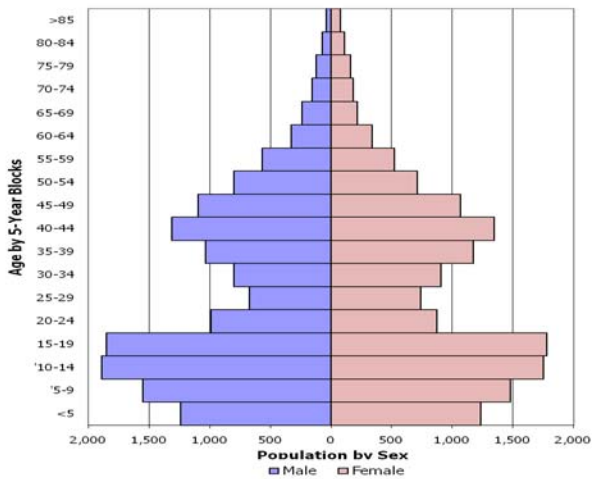
# Population Pyramids: South Jordan City's Age/Sex Structure

South Jordan City, 1990



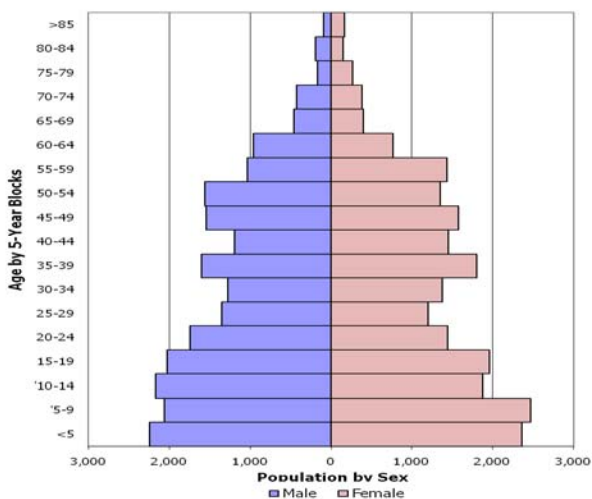
Source: US Census Bureau, Census 1990, Table QT-P1A

South Jordan City, 2000



Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000, Table QT-P1

South Jordan City, 2006-2008 ACS



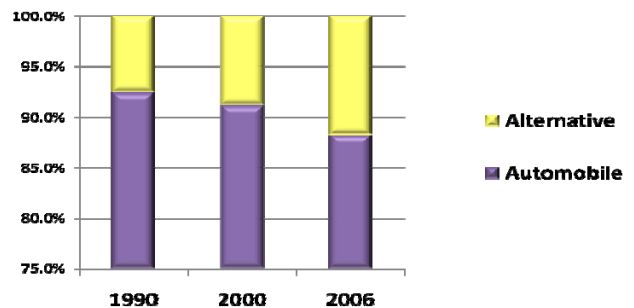
Source: US Census Bureau, 2006-2008 ACS, Table B01001

traditional housing type came in 2003 with the beginning of the Daybreak community. The property is owned by the largest land owner in South Jordan, Rio Tinto, who also owns the Kennecott Copper Mine, owning nearly 1/3 the land in South Jordan. In 2003, Daybreak was approved as the largest master planned community in the state. Rio Tinto created Kennecott Land Corporation to develop the property. A total of 20,785 housing units were approved, at a gross density of approximately 4 units/acre and a net residential density of near 11 units/acre.

The total number of existing housing units in the City, as of January 1, 2010, was 15,441, approximately 2,000 of which are in the Daybreak community.

**Accessibility.** South Jordan is centrally located between Provo and Ogden, the Wasatch Front Region. It extends westward from the interstate freeway, I-15, to state road U-111 and between about 9400 south and 11800 South. It is easily accessible by road, within minutes of the Salt Lake International Airport, and is intersected by rail line. A new freeway ramp is under construction at 11400 South. Work is underway on an extension of the

## Mode of Commute by South Jordan Residents



Source: US Census Bureau (1990 & 2000 Census, 2005-2007 ACS)  
Note: Created Oct 2009 (J. Warner)

valley's light rail system (TRAX) that will bring two stations to the western portion of the city. Work has also started on the commuter rail line that will connect Ogden and Provo, with a station in South Jordan.



**Households.** At 3.92 people per housing unit, South Jordan's household size is more than 50% larger than the national average. The composition of households is also quite different. South Jordan's households are comprised more by families than the nation, state and county. As with the household size, the City's average family size (4.16) is larger than these other entities.

**Socioeconomic.** According to many socioeconomic indicators, South Jordan maintains a high quality of life. South Jordan performs better than the nation, state, and county in measurements for median income, homeownership rates, and educational attainment. South Jordan's median household income (\$75,433), according to the 2000 Census is nearly twice the median household income of these other entities, however it appears that it is somewhat a function of larger

household size. The per capita income (\$20,938) is average compared to these other entities. The greatest difference is seen in the percent of those living in above poverty. Poverty is seven times lower in South Jordan (1.7%) than the national rate (12.4%). More South Jordan households own their homes (89.7%) as compared to the nation (69.0%), state (71.5%) and county (66.2%) by significant margins

**Land Use.** As has been mentioned, South Jordan has evolved from a community known for its agricultural land use to a community known for its residential use. According to the previous land use map, the combined residential use (rural, low, medium, and high) accounted for 46% of total land use within the City. The largest land use designation is Planned Community (the Daybreak Community) at 31%. However, 64% of Daybreak is expected to also be residential. Combining the Planned Community residential with the other residential designations brings the total residential land use to nearly 2/3 of total acreage within the City. The agricultural feel still exists through larger parcels that continue to be farmed and areas of exceptionally low density residential (Rural Residential).

The Planned Community designation was established for the Daybreak community. Daybreak comprises nearly the entire western 1/3 of the City. It is a master-planned area allowing for mixed-use and flexibility within a preapproved community development agreement and community development structure plan map.

## **Future-The Development of the Vision**

It's been said that we create the future by the decisions that we make today. The purpose of the General Plan is to establish a vision for decisions that will be made. The City of South Jordan is well founded in tradition and values. Our vision of the future may be largely the preservation of the existing quality of life that already exists.

While South Jordan is a unique place to live and residents enjoy a high quality of life, it is not immune to national trends and influences. An awareness of current trends also reveals the path the City is currently following. Trends become the inheritance of the future. An understanding of these trends, national and local, provides the basis for good decision-making.

### **National Trends**

Demographics are always changing. Nationally the most dramatic changes may be the aging of the population, the increasing diversity, and the decreasing household size. Baby boomers reflect the increase in fertility rates in the years following World War II. This cohort has become a significant share of the population. As the baby boomers have moved through the life cycle, they have affected the median age of the population. They are now beginning to reach retirement and the median age is increasing. As they move into the elderly years of their lives, cities will need to increase the ability to meet their needs.

Another increasing share of the population is foreign born immigrants. This is not new

to the United States as this nation was built and established by foreign born immigrants. However, the twentieth century began with the decline of in-migration. That changed in the last few decades of the century, and the foreign born population continues to gain share of the total population. While immigrants at the beginning of the century were largely from Europe, immigrants over the last few decades have largely been from Latin America. It is projected, based on this trend that by the mid twenty-first century the combined minority population will become the majority.

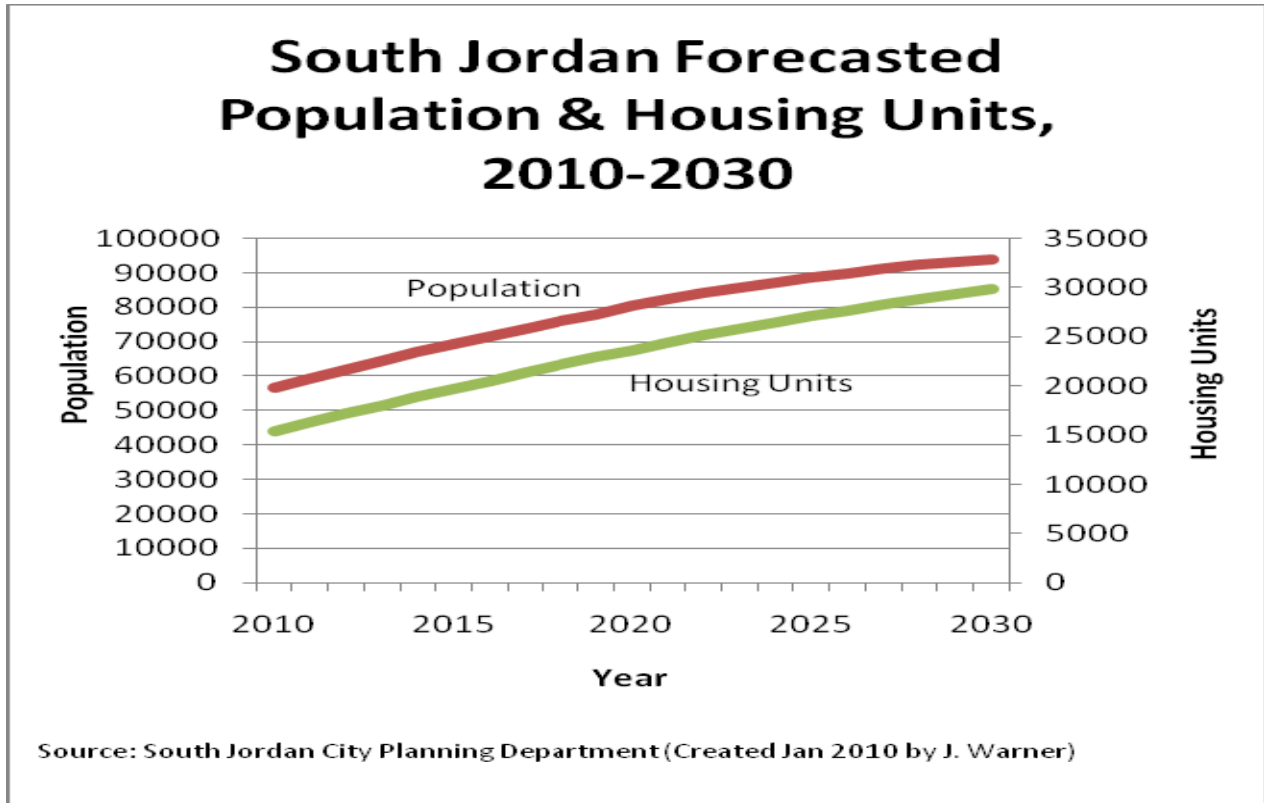
The declining trend in household size is also a significant trend that needs to be considered. Household size is a measurement of the number of people, related or not, living in the same housing unit. For decades the household size has been decreasing nationally. This is due to many factors, mainly that the fertility rate is going down among women of the majority population (categorized by the census as white and not Hispanic). Based on Census information, South Jordan appears to follow these national trends.

### **Housing and Population Baseline**

The most relevant local trend continues to be population growth. Assuming continued interest in South Jordan housing, the most obvious constraint on growth will be the availability of land. Approximately 30% of the land in the City remains undeveloped (2660 undeveloped acres). The majority of that land (64% of the total undeveloped land) lies within the Daybreak development. The development has received approval for a maximum of 20,785 residential units. It is expected that at build-out, the remainder of South Jordan will reach a total of

approximately 15,000 units. (This is based on current land use, zoning, and existing densities.) At full build-out the City could

The purpose of forecasting is an effort in predicting a future for which we must prepare, but an understanding of a



reach 35,785 housing units. It is forecasted that South Jordan will reach approximately 90% of full build-out, or 32,000 units by the year 2030. Based on the most recent census information (ACS 2006-2008), South Jordan has an average household size of 3.83 persons per housing unit. Accounting for vacancy and applying a 3.83 household size equates to a population of 122,560 in 2030. However, as has previously been discussed, household size is trending downward. Accounting for this downward trend and assuming that it will continue over the next twenty years, it is forecasted that the population in 2030 will be approximately 95,000.

plausible outcome, based on current policies and trends, in order to create the future we desire. In addressing concerns about the future, accounting for current trends and determining what future we, as a community intend to create, it becomes obvious that the process needs to be guided by some fundamental community values. The General Plan is a guiding document intended to influence decisions and manage growth within the City while incorporating these values, protecting and enhancing its tradition and character in a way that is socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable.