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# **COTTONWOOD MALL SITE DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN**

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## **THE SETTING**

Since its beginnings, the Cottonwood Mall, located on the corner of Highland Drive and Murray/Holladay Road has been the only regional commercial development in the city and the most important asset for the city's tax base. As the first fully enclosed mall of its kind in Utah, the mall drew interest and clientele from the wider Salt Lake Valley and beyond. Situated on this prominent intersection, the property is framed by the spectacular view of Mt. Olympus and bordered by Cottonwood Creek. This area has historically been utilized for commercial enterprise and since the 1950's have been zoned for the high intensity commercial uses.

This area has always been an integral part of the community of Holladay and though the city's historic heart, now known as the Holladay Village, is located just a few blocks east from the site, the commercial enterprises located here have been the city's economic life blood. A compatible mix of uses has always kept these two centers working in harmony and any new plan for the redevelopment of this area should support and maintain that compatibility.

## **BACKGROUND**

Within a few years after the first settlers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley a short-cut of sorts was established from the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon to Salt Lake City. A portion of that route, County Road, (Highland Drive) crossed the bed of Cottonwood Creek where it fanned out creating a natural stream crossing for horse and wagons. Here the route intersected the main east-west route from Murray to the settlement of Holladay on the banks of Spring Creek. This intersection became a natural business center. Near this site, the first general store, called the Big Cottonwood Cooperative, opened in 1869 and was built by an association headed by LDS Church bishop, David Brinton. Mr. Brinton purchased most of the surrounding land from the original settlers and established a blacksmith shop on the southeast corner of the intersection. One of the earliest blacksmith shops in the valley, and the first in Holladay, the area became known as "Brinton's Corner".

In the early 1950's, most of the land was still primarily swampy meadowland and the property had to be drained to allow construction of the Cottonwood Mall by Horman Construction. During the last week in March of 1962, Z.C.M.I. and JC Penneys held their grand opening ceremonies. Setting the trend for retail markets throughout the State, a total of 53 stores were opened within that week or during the following week according to the front-page article in the Salt Lake Tribune, Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup>. In 1967 a theater building was added to the property and a traffic light was approved at the north entrance on Murray/Holladay Road.

Price Development bought the Mall from Horman Construction in 1980 and immediately launched a major remodel of the building's interior and façade including the addition of a third story over ZCMI. In 1983 the grand reopening of the mall featured a collection of prominent retailers, lush interiors, a food court featuring a

wide variety of fast food restaurants within the approximately 700 thousand plus square feet of space along with the new traffic light on Murray/Holladay Road.

The Mall continued to be a viable commercial enterprise until the mid 90's. However, with the Mall being out positioned by new freeway oriented mall developments across the Salt Lake Valley, it became evident that the retail market has taken a new direction and a new focus was needed.

Across the nation, mixed-use developments where shops and services are located close to or in conjunction with residential uses are gaining popularity. This trend has now arrived in Utah. Smaller, human scale places are desired and vast oceans of asphalt are no longer enticing or justified. The community looks forward to a greener, less auto-dependent shopping experience with opportunities for living and working near the places where services are provided as well as activities with regional appeal.

## **PLANNING OBJECTIVES**

As stated previously, any new development plan for the Cottonwood Mall site must;

1. Support the development of a flexible, appealing, and mixed-use project with retail, office and residential uses within the same structure;
2. Maintain current and establish new businesses with regional appeal;
3. Be based on a master plan that requires distinctive components such as architectural guidelines, a pedestrian oriented streetscape which includes walks, paths, and connections to the City and County trail system, public gathering spaces, and be designed to take advantage of the natural scenic views of the Wasatch Front; and include the return of the riparian habitat along the banks of Cottonwood Creek to a natural state;
4. Include where appropriate, more intense commercial development and dense residential development throughout the project;
5. Require the inclusion of environmentally sensitive building practices;
6. Limit vehicular access into the project from the neighborhoods along Arbor and Memory Lanes;
7. Mitigate potential adverse impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods; and
8. Include ample mass transit access to the wider Salt Lake Valley public transit system.

The City should support and facilitate the proposed redevelopment of the area by utilizing City supported funding for needed infrastructure upgrades and enact zone regulations that support the proposed plan while protecting the surrounding neighborhoods from negative impacts of the commercial uses and traffic.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION**

The protection of established single-family residential neighborhoods adjacent to, or in close proximity to, the present mall should be a primary concern of any adopted site master plan. Creeping commercial uses and spillover traffic and parking can be devastating to a neighborhood and only serve to undermine the overall health of a project. A plan must minimize access onto the adjacent neighborhood streets, Memory Lane and Arbor Lane and those across Highland Dr, integrate the development with the existing neighborhoods by allowing only residential uses along the eastern boundary of the project, prohibiting nonresidential uses in this section of the development and limiting access from the residential neighborhoods to the commercial areas to pedestrian connections.

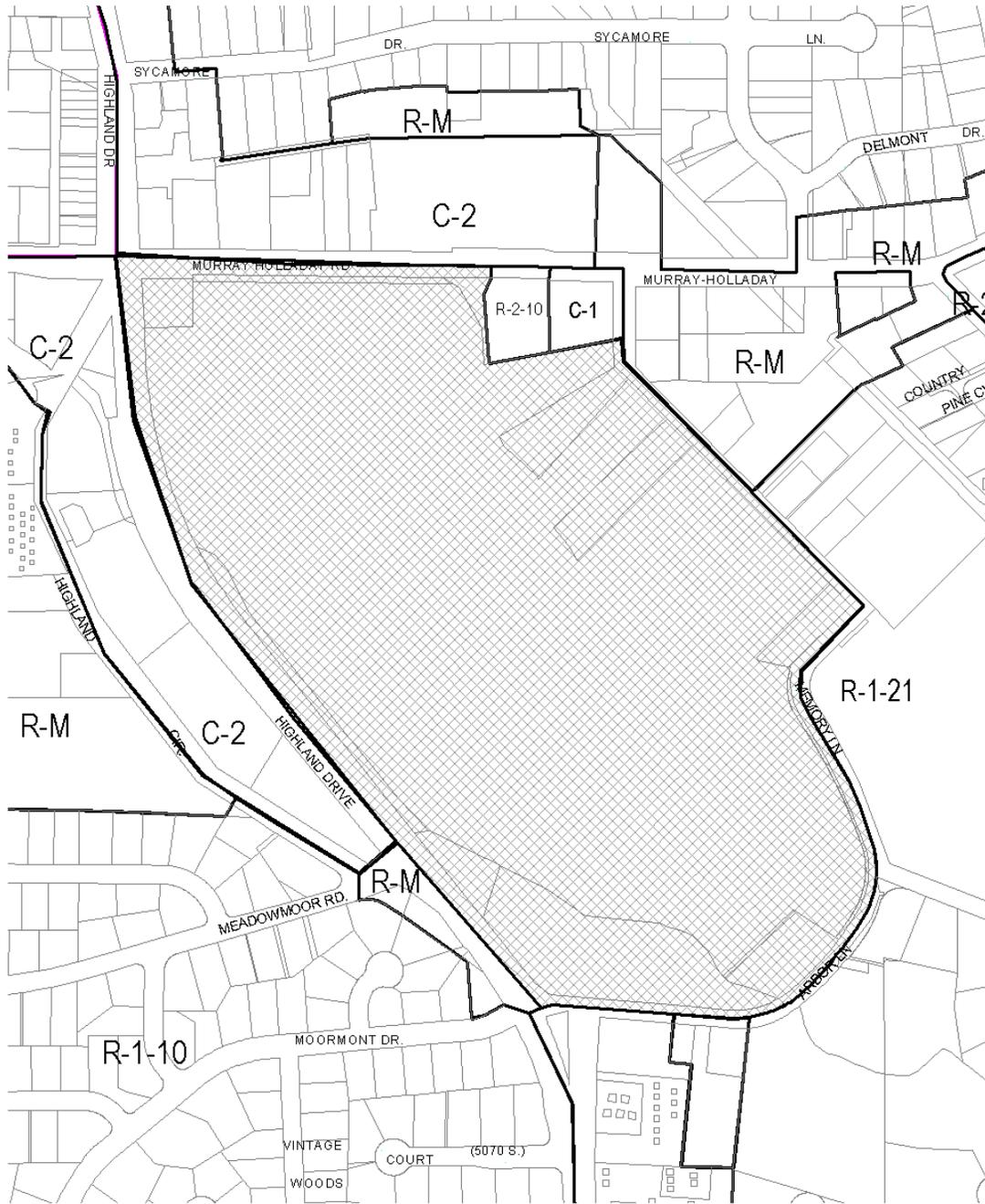
## **THE CONCEPT PLAN**

The plan for the Cottonwood Mall site should be based in the rich tradition and history of the center as a community gathering place for shopping and entertainment. Any proposed design should be respectful of its heritage as a commercial center with regional appeal.

Plans for the site should result in a dense, mixed-use, walkable neighborhood integrated into the existing community. A pedestrian-friendly design should create an inviting place to visit, live and work. The new neighborhood should include street-front shopping, offices, and the opportunity for walking along tree lined streets, through gardens, plazas, and along a creekside trail. Aligning the streets and central square with the mountain vistas to the east can create symmetry in the plan. The overall design should create an inviting residential community within a convenient neighborhood setting and provide residents' daily needs within a short walk from their home. Enhance plans for the area by including distinctive housing types overlooking a central square, fronting Big Cottonwood Creek, and cottages and single family homes that face tree-lined streets and greens on the perimeter.

Development of the structures and improvements to infrastructure should be phased to meet current and future market demands. Plans for the site should be supported by the City and the establishment of an RDA project area could be a part of the strategy.

# EXHIBIT A- COTTONWOOD MALL SITE



Cottonwood Mall Area