



ENVISION UTAH

A Partnership for Quality Growth

Urban Planning Tools for Quality Growth

2002 Supplement

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Forward to the 2002 Supplement	107
Introduction to Natural Resources Section	109
Chapter 5	
Water Conservation	111
Water Use and Population Growth	111
Benefits of Conservation	112
Conservation Plan Development	114
Best Management Practice and Examples	119
Tools and Resources	123
Chapter 6	
Urban Forestry	139
Introduction	139
Community Goals, Plans and Resources	146
Tree Species, Selection and Planting	155
Conclusion	168
Chapter 7	
Energy Conservation	171
Communities Planning for Energy Efficiency	171
Benefits of Sustainable Energy Communities	171
Steps to Draft an Energy Plan	174
The Energy Plan: Components and Strategies	177
Concluding Remarks	204
Chapter 8	
Strategies for Walkable Commercial Development	207
Introduction	207
Bridging the Gap: A Spectrum of Walkable Design	214
The Walkability Survey	216
Planning For Walkability	230
Conclusion	235

Chapter 9

Public Safety and Residential Street Design	237
Introduction	237
Streets and the Neighborhood	238
Balancing the Purposes of Residential Street Design	239
Residential Streets and Neighborhood Design – History	240
Residential Streets in Utah	241
Narrower Residential Streets	242
Options of Street Design to Enhance Safety	244
Examples of Traffic Calming Devices	245
Making Residential Streets Safer	247
Effects of the Traffic Calming Devices to Reduce Traffic Speeds and Volume	253
Residential Street Designs in New Developments	257
Traffic Calming Implementation Strategies	260
Safe Routes to Schools	261
Residential Street Design Standards for Utah Communities	262
General Design Principles for Residential Streets	263
Acknowledgements	271
Appendix	279
Bibliography	285

Upon its release in October 2000, Urban Planning Tools for Quality Growth, or “The Toolbox” as it has come to be known, was enthusiastically received by many municipalities. One year later, communities now regard it as an essential resource as they seek to create quality neighborhoods and projects, and to balance growth with the preservation of sensitive lands and other precious resources.

Because of the overwhelming reception of the Toolbox and continuing interest in the topics it addresses, Envision Utah decided to re-issue it with four additional chapters. When the Toolbox was first released we did not foresee a need to update and expand it. The Toolbox was published to serve municipalities, developers and other stakeholders for the foreseeable future. However, as we identified other topics and best practices, we decided to publish this new and expanded edition.

Two new chapters build on the section “Making our Community A Good Place to Walk” from the original document by providing more strategies in the area of Commercial and Retail Development and Street Design and Pedestrian Safety.

In addition, we have updated the Water Efficiency chapter due to changing data and findings since the first release. This chapter is now placed in a subdivision of the Toolbox called Natural Resources. Also included in this section are new chapters of Energy Conservation and Urban Forestry. The three areas of water efficiency, energy conservation and urban forestry touch on the everyday concerns of our cities and counties as they try to accommodate development while preserving our precious natural resources. Obviously, how we handle these challenges will significantly affect the quality of life in Utah and the Wasatch Front well into the future.

We hope this revised edition of the Toolbox will contribute to keeping the Greater Wasatch Area an incredible place to recreate, live and raise a family for many generations to come. We trust that you will embrace this second edition with as much enthusiasm and excitement as the first.

Greg Bell, Chair
Envision Utah

Natural Resources Introduction

As Utah's population continues to grow, local communities must balance consumption and conservation of the state's natural resources. How can the growing need for water in a thirsty community be balanced with limited resources and expensive infrastructure alternatives? Are there opportunities for energy savings by introducing a variety of trees into our urban landscapes? Can water conservation programs bring secondary energy saving benefits to communities trying to provide expansive services to growing communities?

Recognizing the key to successful resource management is bringing together motivated people empowered to do the right thing. Communities that focus on collecting and managing good information and providing inclusive processes that are respectful of differing values, become the stewards for progressive and responsible resource management. This stewardship is translated into comprehensive plans that support the development, conservation and management of a community's natural resources.

The first step in capturing the benefits of proactive management is understanding the interrelationships between the seemingly unrelated resources. It takes energy to capture, process and distribute water to a community. Effective water conservation programs not only reduce the need to build expensive water utility infrastructure, but these programs save energy. Trees planted strategically and managed properly in a community also help communities save money while performing street maintenance. Cooler streets and communities shaded by the urban forest reduce energy needs of community homes and businesses. A win-win situation for everyone involved.

Understanding the interdependency of our natural resources and then taking the next steps to properly manage them is an admirable goal being undertaken by many communities. Managing energy use, water use and supporting the viability of urban forests improves the quality of life for many residents along the Wasatch Front. The following chapters, Water Conservation, Urban Forestry, and Communities Planning for Energy Efficiency, include tools, strategies, and concepts to help communities take these next steps. These tools provide an opportunity to realize the benefits of addressing the needs of growing communities and their use of limited natural resources.