

*For Immediate Release*



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## **Input Requested Regarding Downtown Ogden Development – WonderBlock and Parking – Open House Event Announced**

OGDEN, UT – November 1, 2022 – Ogden City has been working on several new initiatives as part of the city’s “*Make Ogden*” plan that was adopted in 2020 – establishing a 25-year vision to guide growth and development of downtown Ogden. “The primary purposes of the Make Ogden Downtown Master Plan are to increase the City’s capacity to build sustainable vitality going forward, and to enhance the attractiveness of downtown by increasing the number of jobs, housing options, pedestrian activity, public transportation, one-of-a kind stores/restaurants/venues, and the overall downtown experience – all powerful economic factors that will improve the lives of residents and bolster the City’s financial health and prosperity,” stated Ogden mayor, Mike Caldwell. Key projects related to “Episode 1” of *Make Ogden* have already started, including:

- 26<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Improvements between Washington and Wall;
- Enhanced Public Transportation System with the new Bus Rapid Transit route between UTA’s FrontRunner Station, through downtown and to Weber State University and McKay-Dee Hospital;
- Union Station Campus Master Plan (including mixed-use development and restoration of historic Union Station facility);
- Planning for Electric Alley improvements (including unique live/work residential spaces);
- Enhanced “last-mile” transportation options (scooters, Green-Bikes);
- New and improved pedestrian paths to public parking areas and spaces – such as increased connectivity between 25<sup>th</sup> Street and The Junction; and the
- WonderBlock development plan, along 26<sup>th</sup> Street between Grant Avenue and Lincoln Avenue – which will provide hundreds of new residential units, new retail and office space, and feature a new hospitality facility.

### **WonderBlock Development Proposal**

Speaking about the WonderBlock development, Brandon Cooper, Director of Community and Economic Development for Ogden City stated: “This unique development proposes a mixed-use,

lifestyle centric, experience led project located in the heart of Downtown Ogden connecting directly to Historic 25<sup>th</sup> Street. The project will be a combination of residential dwellings, retail, office services, food and beverage, as well as hospitality.” Cooper also indicated that “All of the project elements will be connected via attractive public spaces that will support special events – creating a unique sense of place that will draw people throughout the region to our awesome downtown.” The “About WonderBlock” section of this article provides additional project details, as well as the project webpage at: [www.ogdencity.com/wonderblock](http://www.ogdencity.com/wonderblock).

### **Parking Study Results**

In anticipation of the upcoming positive developments in downtown Ogden, including WonderBlock and other key projects as outlined in the Make Ogden Downtown Master Plan, a recently completed parking study for downtown Ogden has indicated that the city’s current parking capacity is adequate in some areas but strained beyond capacity in high-demand areas. Particularly along 25<sup>th</sup> Street and Kiesel Avenue in The Junction area it appears that visitors and potential customers may even avoid trips to those areas – and some businesses are expressing frustration that parking is not easy for customers to find and it is therefore hurting their business success.

The parking study also calculated the impact of future parking needs based on proposed new development and has projected that current parking capacity will be completely overwhelmed by the positive addition of new residences, employees, customers and visitors to downtown.

Additional detail from the parking study can be found at [www.ogdencity.com/GoParkOgden](http://www.ogdencity.com/GoParkOgden).

### **New Parking Structures – Paid Parking System**

Additional parking structures and investments to improve existing parking facilities are indeed planned as part of the WonderBlock development and in support of other downtown developments. Supportive parking structures as recommended in the parking study, with easy access to pedestrians and residential/commercial/retail areas, are significant investments in the future development of downtown Ogden.

The preference is to avoid the need to increase property taxes for all residences/businesses to fund the investment in public parking infrastructure (some citizens do not even have/use automobiles for transportation). As an alternative, the parking study recommends a pay parking system across the downtown area in order to generate the revenue to build and support parking improvements via parking fees paid by just those using the parking – including many visitors to our downtown from other communities.

The parking study also indicated that a paid parking system will also help manage limited parking spaces more effectively – encouraging short-term use and public transit use, resulting in increased parking availability near existing downtown retail shops and restaurants for customers.

Regarding a new downtown parking management system, Brandon Cooper stated that “Ogden City Community and Economic Development expects that the new parking system will help create a more vibrant, connected, walkable downtown – improving access to existing business and supporting the

growth of new residential and commercial development – and enhancing the overall attractiveness of downtown Ogden as a place to visit, live, work and enjoy.”

The “About the Parking Study and Proposed Downtown Managed Parking System” section and the “New and Existing Public Parking Structures” section of this article provides additional project details, as well as the project webpage at: [www.ogdencity.com/GoParkOgden](http://www.ogdencity.com/GoParkOgden).

### **Parking System Feedback Requested**

As Ogden City Community and Economic Development works on the implementation details related to a managed paid parking system downtown to be proposed for consideration by the City Council, business owners and citizens are being asked to provide feedback regarding ways to make the new parking system operate successfully. The web page, [www.ogdencity.com/GoParkOgden](http://www.ogdencity.com/GoParkOgden) provides a summary of the work that has been done thus far regarding parking plans, including the recently completed Parking Study, the *Make Ogden* Downtown Master Plan, and a list of Frequently Asked Questions. The site also provides a feedback link for ideas and comments.

### **Community Open House Event – November 15**

In addition to the online information, an upcoming community open house event will provide an opportunity to view proposed development and parking plans, as well as ask questions. The City Council is hosting a Fact-Finding Session and Open House on Tuesday, November 15 on the third floor of the Municipal Building regarding the WonderBlock development and the proposed Downtown Paid Parking Management System. A formal presentation will be made in the Council Chambers at 4:00 pm, followed by an open house from 4:45 to 5:30 pm where residents may interact with city staff and Council members to discuss the proposal and provide comments. It is expected that the development and financing plans for WonderBlock and the proposed Paid Parking Management System, will be formally considered at upcoming City Council Meetings (dates yet to be determined), where public comments/input will also be encouraged.

## **Additional Background Information**

### **About the “Make Ogden” Downtown Master Plan**

Ogden holds within its downtown core an assemblage of historic, cultural, recreational, and natural assets that are unmatched along the Wasatch Front. Make Ogden is a master plan that envisions capitalizing on those assets through transformative infill of vacant and underutilized parcels to build a thriving Downtown that improves the lives of residents and bolsters the City’s financial health and prosperity. The plan establishes a 25-year vision for the growth of downtown Ogden through a series of catalytic projects in key locations around the Central Business District, which will occur in “episodes” or phases in which the City investment in the public realm, coupled with developer incentives, will attract private investment to increase land values, density and walkability.

Infill and development within the core of the city will be supported through social equity parameters, with a focus on keeping downtown affordable and accessible to current and future residents. Chief

among the recommendations of the plan is developing parcels that currently do not contribute meaningful tax revenue to the community. Key outcomes include: 38% increase in walkability, 92% increase in job density, 476% increase in housing density, 175% increase in taxable value per acre. In Episode 1 of Make Ogden, there is a strong emphasis on increasing the supply and variety of housing types in downtown Ogden – within easy walking distance to Historic 25<sup>th</sup> Street – to appeal to a diversity of residents. The WonderBlock project will help fulfill a portion of that emphasis.

Additional information about Make Ogden, including the complete Make Ogden Downtown Master Plan, is available for review at <https://ut-ogden.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/17312/Final-Ogden-Downtown-Master-Plan>.

### About the Proposed WonderBlock Development

- 354 Residential Units featuring high quality amenities and walkable access to Ogden’s Arts, Culture and Events.
- 100,000 square feet of Class “A” Commercial Office Space
- 50,000 square feet Street Level Retail Store Space
- 20,000 square foot Grocery Store
- Boutique Hotel
- Pedestrian Pathways and Public Outdoor Amenity Spaces
- Developer: Private/Public Partnership between JF Capital and Ogden City Redevelopment Agency (RDA).
- WonderBlock Development Capital Contribution Sources (estimates)

JF Capital Investment	\$124 M	
Ogden City RDA Investment	64 M*	<i>(max. par bond not to exceed \$75 M**)</i>
Total Development Investment	\$188 M	

- \*Ogden City RDA Capital Investment Sources (estimates)

Federal/State Grants	\$ 6.5 M	
Retained Tax Increment (TIF)	21.5 M	<i>(WonderBlock new tax revenue)</i>
Bus. Depot Ogden Lease Rev. Contrib.	36 M	<i>(return from previous City investment)</i>
Total Ogden RDA Capital Invest.	\$64M***	<i>(max. par bond not to exceed \$75 M**)</i>

\*\* PAR bond values, includes both project construction costs and financing costs – which may vary depending on market interest rates.

\*\*\* Per partnership agreement, the City RDA will be due a portion of property sales proceeds after 10 years up to 100% of investment contribution.

- Ogden City RDA Annual Bond Payment (estimate): \$3,950,000 (\$1.3M TIF, \$2.6M BDO)\*

\* Estimate may vary depending on final bond interest rate.

- Impact on City’s General Fund or Property Owner Taxes: None

Additional information about the WonderBlock development is available for review at [www.ogdencity.com/wonderblock](http://www.ogdencity.com/wonderblock).

### **About the Parking Study and Proposed Downtown Managed Parking System**

- While current downtown parking capacity appears to be adequate in some areas, other areas are strained beyond capacity. The redevelopment initiatives associated with the Make Ogden plan will ...
  - Reduce existing surface parking,
  - Increase business/residential activities,
  - Increase existing problem of limited prime parking for retail spaces, and
  - Increase overall parking demand and need for related new parking structures.
- A parking study was initiated to assess needs and develop a strategy to support the planned development.
- A professional third-party engineering consultant was engaged to conduct the study and consider management options.
- The parking study concluded that the implementation of a Paid Parking Management System to address current and future parking challenges is critical to the health and vibrancy of the developing downtown.
- Paid Parking advantages include:
  - Allows for the equitable and efficient management of a limited resource.
    - To avoid need to increase property taxes for all residences/businesses to fund the required investment in new public parking infrastructure (some do not have/use automobiles for transportation), a pay parking system will generate revenue to build/support parking improvements via parking fees paid by just those using parking – including many visitors to our downtown from other communities.
  - By charging for parking, cities can help create turn-over within the most convenient and desirable public parking supplies – generally on-street spaces – while adding and managing off-street resources appropriately.
  - Reduction in traffic congestion and increase overall attractiveness to visitors.
- Experiences from other communities include:
  - Some businesses initially felt that pay parking would be inconvenient, discourage potential customers and employees, and reduce competitiveness with suburban retail offering free parking. However, of the most economically vibrant downtowns, almost all support pay/managed public parking as a way of enhancing business.

- Pay parking is almost universal in major cities (Salt Lake, Denver, Phoenix).
- Pay parking is frequently found in smaller cities and tourist friendly destinations (Park City, Grand Junction, Fort Collins, Estes Park, Manitou Springs, Rapid City, Flagstaff).
- The proposed plan would be to start pro-actively managing existing parking supplies and add new parking facilities.
- Implementing a paid parking system is one of the first steps to allow for the catalytic redevelopment of Ogden’s downtown core – as the Make Ogden Plan proposes.
- A smaller first phase implementation of paid parking would start in the most challenging areas during the first one to two years, and then expand to other areas over the following years.
- The complete parking study is available at [www.ogdencity.com/GoParkOgden](http://www.ogdencity.com/GoParkOgden).

### **New and Existing Public Parking Structures**

- The new parking management area would include:
  - Two New Public Parking Structures at WonderBlock providing 1,134 parking spaces for new residences, new retail, new office, new hotel, existing court patrons, existing 25<sup>th</sup> Street retail/office customers/employees, etc.
  - Approximately 2,100 street and parking lot spaces throughout the downtown area.
- The new parking management area does not include private parking lots or spaces currently under contract with the city or other entities.
- The cost to build the two new city-owned/Municipal Building Authority (MBA) public parking structures at WonderBlock, outfit existing parking with automated paid parking management systems:
 

Ogden City MBA Investment:	\$ 53.5 M	<i>(max. par bond not to exceed \$85 M*)</i>
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- \* PAR bond values, includes both project construction costs and financing costs – which may vary depending on market interest rates.
- Ogden City MBA Capital Investment Source will be a Revenue Bond paid with downtown paid parking revenue.
  - Annual paid parking revenue (less costs) are projected to satisfy the estimated annual revenue bond payments of approximately \$3,975,000 (depending on final interest rates on revenue bond).

Additional information about Ogden’s proposed downtown parking plan, including the complete parking study and answers to various typical questions and the opportunity to provide feedback, is available at [www.ogdencity.com/GoParkOgden](http://www.ogdencity.com/GoParkOgden).

### **About Ogden City Redevelopment Agency**

Ogden's Redevelopment Agency (RDA) was created to encourage private investment in blighted areas of the community or areas with a demonstrated need for economic development. Members of the Ogden City Council also serve as the Ogden Redevelopment Agency (RDA) Board of Commissioners, and the mayor serves as the Executive Director. The Commission approves the RDA budget, programs and policies as well as large projects.

Priority development activity within targeted areas, known as "project areas," may be eligible for financial assistance provided by the RDA. Project areas are usually less than 100 acres in size and take between three and six months to establish.

Once a project area is created, the agency may assist in the acquisition of property or in the development of the site. The agency has the ability, with approval of a committee comprised of representatives of various taxing entities, to receive a portion of the property tax revenue (referred to as "tax increment") paid on new improvements constructed in the project area. This allows the agency to financially assist in the development of projects. Providing financial assistance is limited to those projects that the agency determines are important in building the community and helping to reach its development goals.

### **About Tax Increment Financing**

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a value capture revenue tool typically implemented by government entities that uses taxes on future gains in real estate values to pay for new infrastructure improvements. In the case of the WonderBlock development, the base value of the existing vacant land is very low compared to the taxable value once the property is privately owned and improved. The incremental difference in property tax revenues will be retained by the city each year and used to pay the annual bond payments/or contribute to the developer the financing required to facilitate the project. Once the initial financing is satisfied, the resulting increased property taxes on the property return to the existing division of taxes to the various taxing authorities (schools, county, etc.).

TIF is not a new tax or an increase in taxes for citizens.

### **More Information**

To request more information regarding the Make Ogden Downtown Master Plan, the WonderBlock Development, or the Downtown Paid Parking Management System proposal, please contact Ogden City Community and Economic Development via email at [business@ogdencity.com](mailto:business@ogdencity.com) or via phone at 801-629-8910.

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Photos attached:





Street Parking on Historic 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Ogden, UT – Ogden City Business Development



Current Vacant Lot at Proposed WonderBlock Development Site – Ogden City Business Development





WonderBlock Concept Rendering (view from Lincoln Avenue and 26<sup>th</sup> Street) – Ogden City Community and Economic Development



Make Ogden Downtown Master Plan Logo – Ogden City Community and Economic Development



Potential Graphic Sign to Promote Proposed Downtown Parking System – Ogden City Business Development